

BEYOND THE CLASSROOM



VOLUME X2

OCTOBER TO DECEMBER 2024

STEPS, COLORS, AND CONVERSATIONS
BRIDGING MINDS

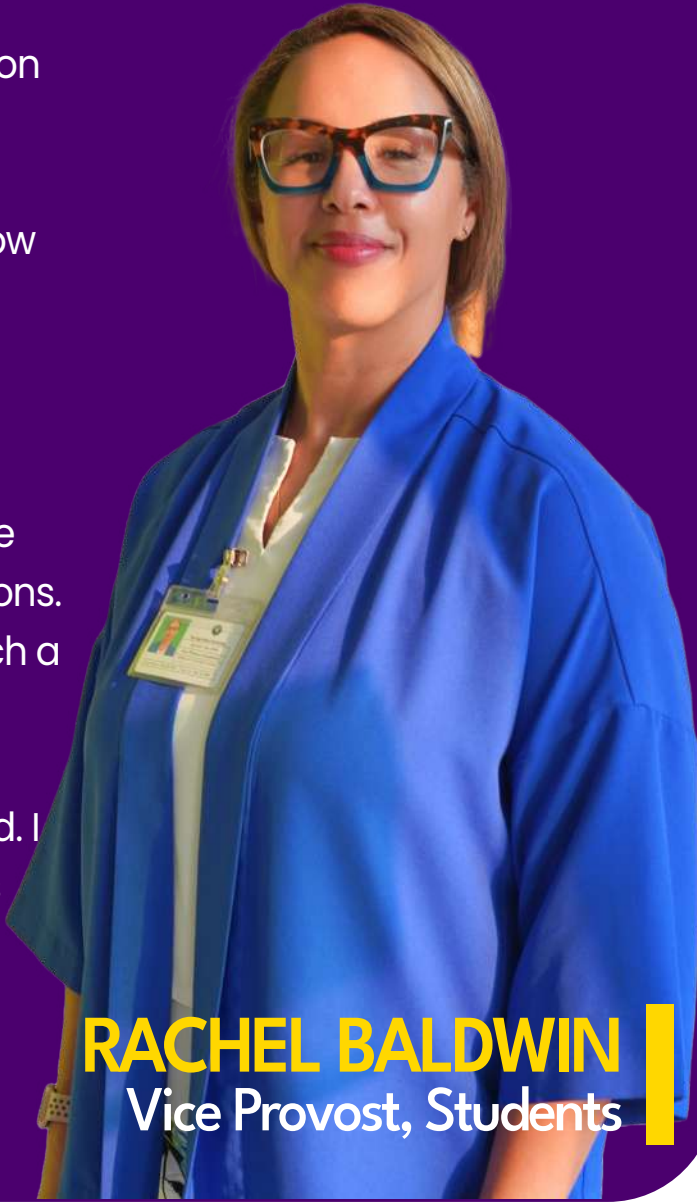


“As we reflect on this past quarter and the end of 2024, it's been a period of growth and achievement across our campuses. Our students have once again shown their dedication and drive, and it's been truly rewarding to witness the strength and unity within our community. World Mental Health Day was an important moment for us, with impactful events held in both Pakistan and Kenya. The response was moving, and I am proud of how everyone came together to support one another during such a critical time.

In addition to our focus on mental health, our sports festivals in Kenya, Uganda, and Tanzania were a huge success, uniting students to compete, collaborate, and celebrate their diverse talents. As the academic year winds down, student clubs and societies have hosted end-of-year celebrations that reflect on their journeys, milestones, and connections. These celebrations serve as a beautiful reminder of the vibrant spirit that makes AKU such a dynamic and inclusive community.

Looking ahead to 2025, I'm excited about the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. I have full confidence that our students will continue to excel, contribute, and lead in ways that will shape the future of AKU and beyond.

Let's embrace the coming year with renewed energy, dedication, and a commitment to creating an environment where every student can thrive.



RACHEL BALDWIN
Vice Provost, Students



INTRODUCTION TO VOLUME X12

Welcome to Volume X2 of the Beyond the Classroom Newsletter! We're thrilled to announce that this volume will be the first to cover student life at our United Kingdom campus, expanding the reach of our stories to include experiences across all our locations.

As we close out 2024, this issue highlights the incredible student events and achievements that have marked the end of the year. From sports festivals to mental health awareness events to end-of-year celebrations, our campuses have been buzzing with energy!

This issue's theme, "Bridging Minds," centers on the World Mental Health Day events at our Karachi and Nairobi campuses. As we have each year, we focused on raising awareness around mental health, helping to create a supportive environment for students to engage with these important topics.

Happy reading!



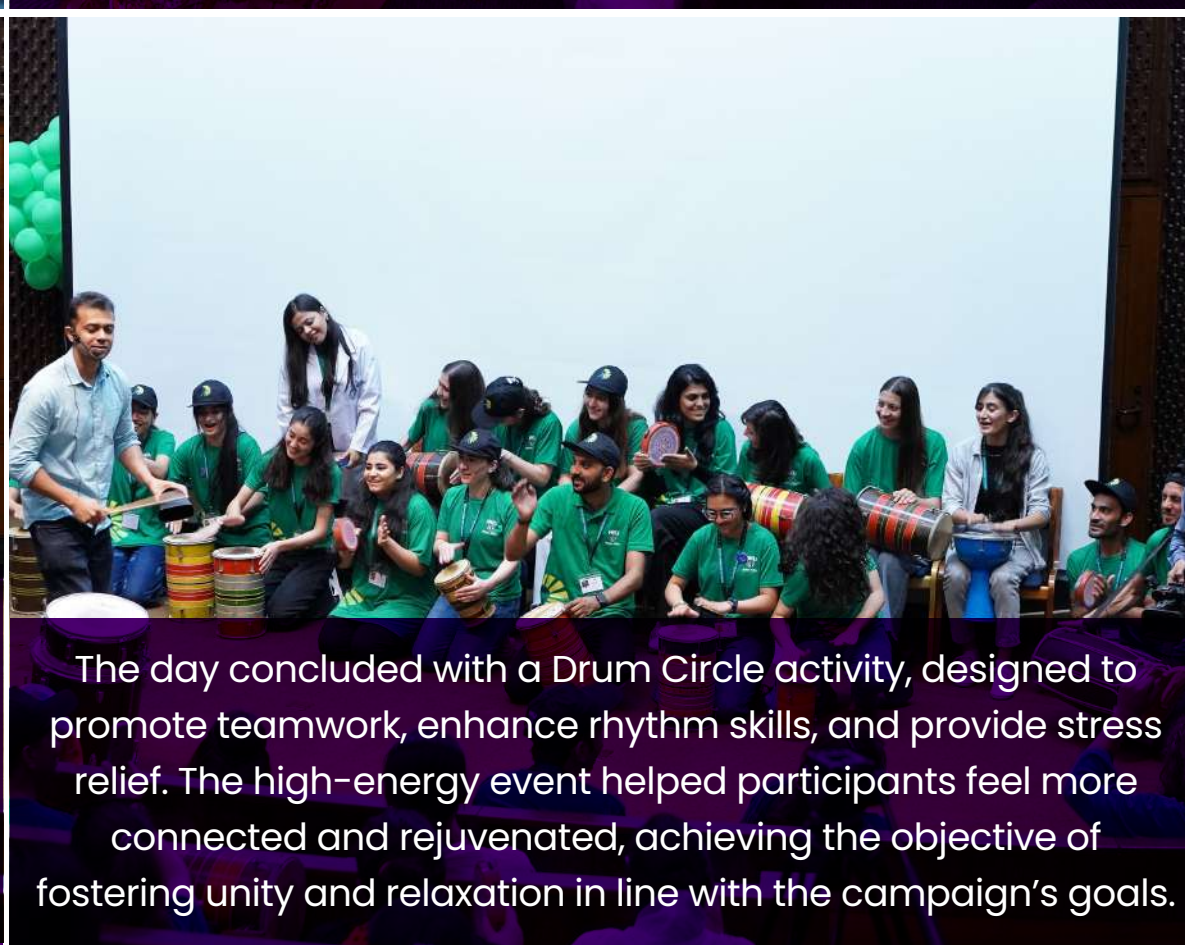
The campaign began with a clay modeling and pot painting activity, open to all students and staff, with over 500 participants. This creative activity helped reduce stress, promote relaxation, and support emotional well-being, aligning with World Mental Health Day's focus on raising awareness and encouraging activities that benefit mental health.



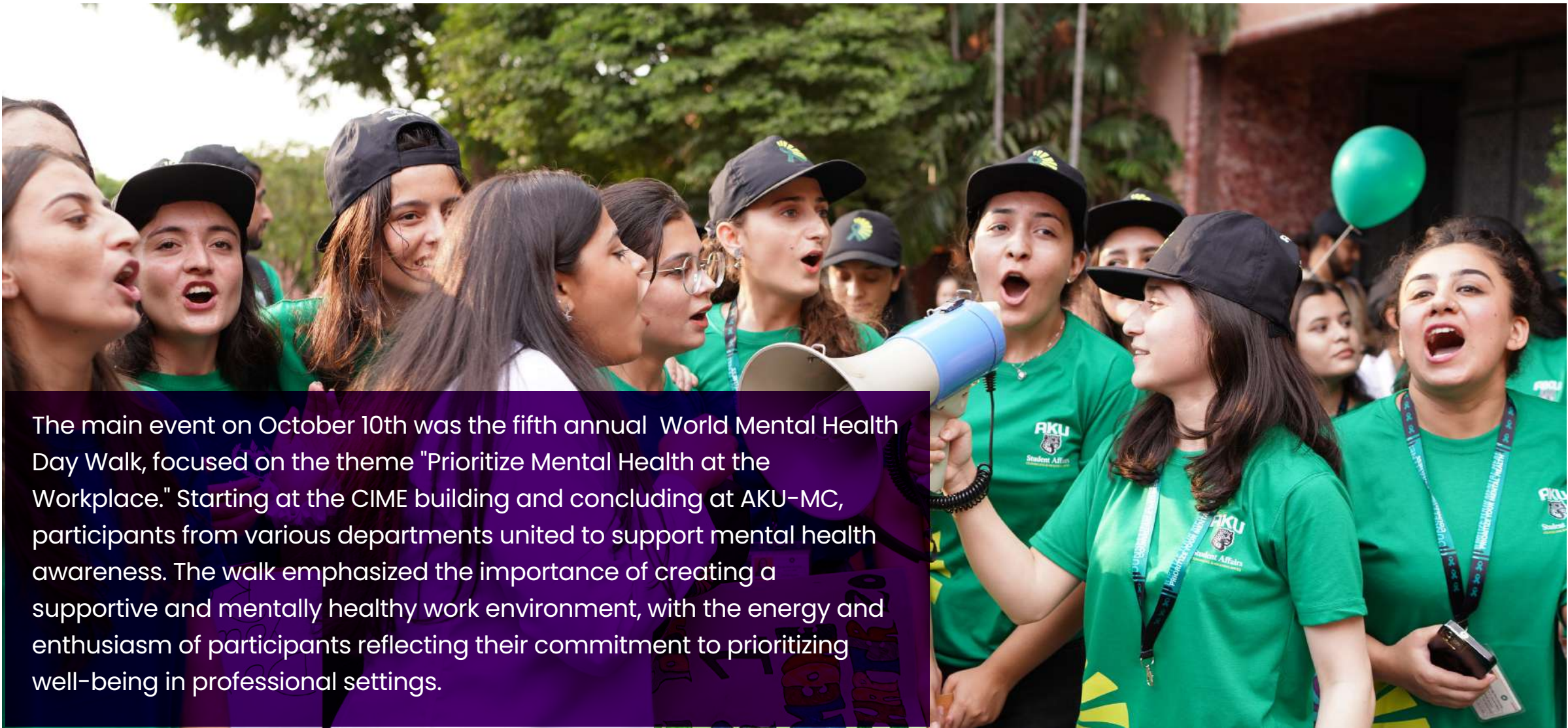
The second day of the week-long celebrations featured a Kintsugi activity at the IED campus. This Japanese art of mending broken pottery with gold reflects the idea of resilience and embracing imperfections. Participants engaged in the activity, reflecting on how challenges and setbacks can lead to personal growth.



University leadership participated in the annual panel discussion, moderated by Dr. Hadia Pasha, Director of the Counselling and Wellness office. The four deans addressed questions and shared insights on the importance of mental health, highlighting the need for support and fostering a positive environment for both students and staff.



The day concluded with a Drum Circle activity, designed to promote teamwork, enhance rhythm skills, and provide stress relief. The high-energy event helped participants feel more connected and rejuvenated, achieving the objective of fostering unity and relaxation in line with the campaign's goals.



The main event on October 10th was the fifth annual World Mental Health Day Walk, focused on the theme "Prioritize Mental Health at the Workplace." Starting at the CIME building and concluding at AKU-MC, participants from various departments united to support mental health awareness. The walk emphasized the importance of creating a supportive and mentally healthy work environment, with the energy and enthusiasm of participants reflecting their commitment to prioritizing well-being in professional settings.

This year's World Mental Health Day at AKU centered on raising awareness about mental health, particularly in the workplace. We organized a range of impactful activities, including a Kintsugi art workshop, clay modeling, and a drum circle, all aimed at fostering healing, self-expression, and relaxation. Additionally, we produced a global video on this year's theme of prioritizing mental health at work. The event received strong participation from students, faculty, and staff, with leadership playing an active role, demonstrating their commitment to supporting mental health throughout the community.



Dr Hadia Pasha
Director
Counselling & Wellness Office

Mental Health Symposium

A Mental Health Symposium for World Mental Health Day was organized, featuring Dr. Kendi Muchungi, Manager- Education, Technology & Partnership Development, BMI AKU, as the guest speaker. The session included interactive activities focused on managing mental well-being and recognizing burnout, attended by students from various programs, as well as staff and faculty.



KE

The Provost Football Tournament and Sports Fiesta, held during Mental Health Awareness Month, brought together 300 students, staff, and faculty to promote physical and mental well-being. The event, with Chief Guest Mr. Rashid Khalani, CEO of the Hospital, featured football, volleyball, swimming, and Zumba. It was a great opportunity to highlight the importance of well-being and mental health through sports.



UG

The Sports Fiesta at the Kampala campus began with the sounds of a brass band setting the tone for the event. It brought together students, staff, alumni, and faculty, along with participants from the Nairobi and Dar es Salam Campuses. Activities included Zumba, races, tug-of-war, hula hoop contests, musical chairs, football, and volleyball, ending with trophy awards and a cake-cutting ceremony.



TZ

The Sports Fiesta kicked off with a marathon walk from Salama House to Aga Khan Mzizima Sports Ground. The event continued with lively games, including balloon battles, an apple-eating contest, netball, Chair Dance Championship, track and field events, tug of war, and football.



SPORTS FIESTA EXTRA VAGANZA!

KE

National Authors Day

The Book Club celebrated National Author’s Day with a vibrant event, bringing together literature enthusiasts for an afternoon of poetry, spoken word, and trivia. The event highlighted authors' creativity and imagination while engaging participants in fun activities with exciting prizes.



TZ

Welcome Party for New Students

The first cohort of APN students was welcomed with a festive orientation. A reception for the new students of the School of Nursing and Midwifery included an informative session about the university, student reflections, and a discussion on AKU values



UG

Book Club Launch

The Book Club launch event, held on Authors' Day in the library, was a great success. It attracted a diverse group of book enthusiasts, writers, faculty, and university political aspirants. Attendees received colourful T-shirts featuring the book club's logo, and the event welcomed around 30 new members.



PK

Inaugural TEDx Event

The first-ever TEDx event at AKU was organized in collaboration with the Public Speaking Forum. The theme “Khusboo: What We Leave Behind,” drew over 500 attendees, which featured three inspiring speakers. TEDx-themed swag was distributed to all participants and attendees.

Formation of the Wellbeing Taskforce

The Wellbeing Taskforce at AKU, chaired by Dr Hadia, Director of our Counselling and Wellness Office, is was introduced to enhance mental health services, raise awareness, and foster a supportive environment for students across all campuses. Its objectives include identifying gaps in existing support systems, promoting resilience through educational initiatives, and aligning mental health services with best practices and regulatory standards.



Thanks to the support from the Provost Experiential Learning Fund, Didar Ali, a second year FAS student, was given the opportunity to represent AKU at the prestigious Conference of Parties (COP29) held in Baku, Azerbaijan. This experience allowed Didar to engage with global leaders and experts on key environmental issues, fulfilling his dream of participating and contributing to meaningful discussions on climate change.



Inter-University Qirat Competition

Ahsan Haq took 1st place in the Qirat competition organized by IIS, standing out among 12 participants from institutions like GPISH and STEP. As the only representative from AKU-ISMC, his achievement highlights dedication and talent, as we celebrate his victory.

Swearing-In New Student Leaders

The swearing-in ceremony for the new Student Executive Council (SEC) took place in the last week of November, following a thorough electoral process. The ceremony highlighted the significance of the oath and pledge of commitment taken by the newly elected members. The event was attended by students, faculty, and staff.



Data Club Workshop

The Data Club organised an engaging event titled "Turning Numbers into Stories." This hands-on workshop focused on data storytelling, empowering participants to transform raw data into impactful stories and visuals. Attendees explored interactive data presentations, visualisation tools, and creative communication methods designed to elevate their data presentation skills for academic and professional success.



Journalism Club launch first publication

The Journalism Club at our Nairobi campus launched its first publication, with Rachel Baldwin, Vice Provost, Students, joining online for the event. Supported by the Student Affairs team, the club's patron, the library team, and a guest speaker, a former BBC journalist, the launch showcased the power of journalism to amplify voices and stories.



End of Year Gala

The Nairobi Campus hosted its End-of-Year Masquerade Gala at the UC Courtyard, bringing together students, staff, and faculty for a magical evening. The event featured a delightful dinner, a music club performance, and an impressive student talent showcase, celebrating achievements and community spirit.



Beyond Border Career Opportunity

The session, hosted by the Student Research Forum, invited Dr. Zohra Lassi from Australia and Dr. Meherali from Canada, who shared valuable insights on career opportunities and professional pathways in both countries. They provided practical tips and guidance on pursuing education abroad, helping students gain a better understanding of how to advance their careers and broaden their horizons.





Inaugural Cultural Gala

Our Kampala Campus hosted its inaugural cultural gala to celebrate diversity, featuring Ugandan and other cultures. Activities included cultural dances and a showcase of different languages. The event was attended by faculty, staff, and students.

Cultural Night

Arts and Culture Committee’s signature event , celebrated diverse cultural traditions through dance, folk tales, singing, traditional attire ramp walks, and poetry recitations. FALAH set up food stalls, while the Publication and Literature Society managed the folk tales and poetry segments. Judges, selected by the Office of Student Experience in collaboration with the Arts Council Karachi, evaluated the performances and chose the top cultural representation



World Heart Bikeathon

Docs on Wheels, in collaboration with the Cardiac Sciences Society, Student Affairs, and Explorers Club, hosted a successful Bikeathon on World Heart Day. The event brought students together for a heart-healthy ride, promoting fitness and fostering a sense of community amongst students, faculty and staff alike!



UG

Students attend International Event

Three BScN students represented AKU at the 38th Federation of African Medical Students' Associations (FAMSAs) General Assembly in Nigeria, held in the first week of November. During the assembly, students learned about the cultural practices of the Osugbo people in Southwestern Nigeria.



PK

Falah Movie Night

Approximately 150 students attended the event, including those from all SONAM batches and a few from FAS. The food, including momos, brownies, Harisa, and popcorn, sold out quickly. Overall, the event was a success, raising 36,000 in donations.

PK

Book Launch Celebrations

The Publication and Literary Society (PLS) hosted a celebration for the anniversary of the book launch of "Shattered Empire". The event included an introduction to the book, a discussion, and the presentation of new poems. A stall was set up for attendees interested in purchasing the book, with all proceeds donated to AKU Hospital



IED Research Cafe

PLS recently introduced the IED Research Café, an engaging platform for informal discussions on research. The event aimed to guide participants and spark interest in exploring new research opportunities. It was a great initiative to encourage thoughtful conversations and inspire future research pursuits.



International Allied Health Day

Dr. Hadia participated as a panelist at the International Allied Health Day event, where the focus was on burnout and its impact on allied health professionals. She discussed practical strategies for addressing burnout, stressing the need for mental health support and a supportive work environment. The aim of the discussion was to encourage new approaches to reduce burnout and foster collaboration within the field, ultimately improving both personal well-being and professional performance.



MBBS Graduation Celebrations

The MBBS Class of 2024 celebrated their graduation with events like Dhol ki Thaap, Dean's Dinner, Quad Closing, and a Farewell Party. Dhol ki Thaap marked the end of their journey, bringing together students to honor their achievements, enjoy performances, and reflect on their academic journey.



Unveiling the Grind

The Entrepreneurial Society hosted their fifth and final Hustle Hub for the year, featuring Mr. Rayyan Sohail, the owner of OD Donuts. He shared his journey as an entrepreneur and the story behind founding two successful businesses, offering valuable insights to all attendees.

SONAM Graduation Celebrations

The SONAM Class of 2024 celebrated their graduation with events like Dhol ki Thaap, Cake Cutting, Dholki, Dean's Dinner, and a Farewell Party. Dhol ki Thaap marked the end of their journey, bringing together students to honor their achievements, enjoy performances, and reflect on their time at SONAM.



AKU



Student Affairs

