



Joseph Costantine and Bilal Orfali recipients of Teaching Excellence Award

5/8/2019

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In its annual honoring of its educators who excel in their mission, AUB presented this year's Teaching Excellence Award to Dr. Joseph Costantine (/pages/profile.aspx?memberId=jc14) and Dr. Bilal Orfali (/pages/profile.aspx?memberId=bo00). A university-level celebration was attended by President (/president)Fadlo Khuri, Provost (/provost)Muhamad Harajli, FAS (/fas) Dean Nadia El Cheikh, MSFEA (/msfea) Dean Alan Shihadeh, as well as colleagues and students of both professors.

The two faculty members were selected among nominees by the Teaching Excellence Award Committee, based on nominations and recommendations sent by their colleagues and their current and former students.

"It gives me a great pleasure to introduce two excellent educators and mentors," said Provost Harajli who introduced both professors before the awards were presented. "In celebrating the awardees, we celebrate the remarkable efforts that AUB faculty have been making to excel in teaching students."

Dr. Bilal Orfali is associate professor at the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages (/fas/arabic), Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). An AUB and Yale University graduate, Orfali is an expert in Arabic language and literature and the recipient of several awards. He is the editor of seven books and he published two books, 26 articles and book chapters, and 39 conference papers.

Dr. Orfali was commended by his colleagues for "succeeding in distinguishing himself as a teacher and mentor at AUB, inspiring many faculty members and students." Students that have attended some of his courses on Sufi literature, Readings in Renaissance and Modern Arabic Literature, Arabic Stylistics and Metrics, and Abbasid Poetry, describe his enthusiasm and passion for teaching as matchless. Described as a lifetime mentor for many,

he is commended for "his mastery of the presented material" and "his unique care to the wellbeing and development of his students." Dr. Orfali's care for his students, as for the content he teaches, was emphasized in his speech at the ceremony.

"My job is to set the stage for the students and then get out of their way. It is not my stage. It's theirs," said Dr. Orfali. "Harder, and yet far more important than my enthusiasm and passion about my topic is my willingness to care about my students. To truly, genuinely, honestly, care. To believe in their ability to learn, even if they do not ... When you believe in your students magical things happen, they'll stand a little straighter, a little taller and will begin to believe that they can do it, and it's an absolute privilege to witness this."

Dr. Costantine is associate professor at the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering (/msfea/ece), Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA), currently co-advising nine master's students and three doctoral students. Since he joined AUB in 2013, he has focused on developing an independent and well-defined research and academic identity, contributed to advancing a new track of entrepreneurship that encourages students to innovate and develop startup concepts as part of their projects, and developed various courses that provided students with the needed knowledge in order to attract them into the field of applied electromagnetics. A graduate of the Lebanese University, AUB, and the University of New Mexico, he is the recipient of several awards and honors and has published two books, 33 journal articles, and 105 conference publications.



With a reputation in the department of being enthusiastic and passionate about the subjects he teaches, Dr. Costantine was commended in his nominations for being the "lively," "fun," and "interactive" professor who "exemplifies the real meaning of professionalism and true mentorship." He was described as "always taking care of his students" and "a professional whose trust in his students and their abilities gave them a push to give all they have."

"I believe there must be a passion that transcends the mechanical act of reciting information, deriving equations or transferring pure facts," said Dr. Costantine. "I must be an advocate for the material being taught and must entice in students a similar excitement. In fact, there is nothing that makes me feel more satisfied, excited, and deeply motivated than witnessing students who search to expand their horizons and flock into working hard on interesting topics in my area of research... This inspiration drives me to always be better, do more, and innovate new methods of societal impact."

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