

JULY 21  
DECEMBER

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# newsbites

STUDENT AFFAIRS AND SERVICES

PAKISTAN

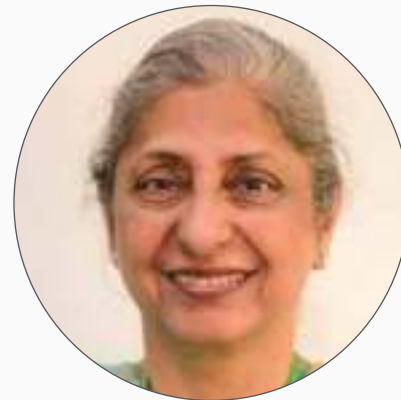


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THE AGA KHAN UNIVERSITY

# Introduction

Dr Laila Akbarali, Interim Vice Provost & University  
Registrar, Student Affairs and Services



**Students, colleagues and the AKU community,**

I hope 2022 is continuing with warmth and cheer. As we progress, let's take some time to look back at the many initiatives, endeavours and accomplishments of our students, as they came up with innovative, creative and safe methods to keep their activities going. I am proud of their commitment and dedication, especially in face of disruptions and uncertainty, and of the Student Affairs team for providing them with the necessary support and guidance.

I can say that one of the things that all of us – students, our team at Student Affairs – have learnt is that gone are the days when we had the luxury of extensive planning time. Decisions are now quick but well thought out, timely but encompassing different scenarios, and **it is a source of pride how quickly our students have adapted to this.** This newsletter reflects that unwavering spirit.

**I wish you all the best in the remainder of the year.**

# More than 250 students participate in the first intra-AKU Sports Olympiad

Since 2019, the AKU Sports Olympiad has been a student-led and student-centered event which draws in enthusiastic athletes from across Karachi. However, this time it was organised as an intra-university event due to the COVID restrictions. Nevertheless, more than 250 students, as teams or individuals, participated in 11 different sports. For the first time, residents, interns and fellows under the PGME office not only participated but also won awards.

The formal award ceremony was attended by Dean Rozina Karmaliani, Dean Adil Haider, Dean Farid Punjwani and CEO, AKUH Dr Shahid Shafi, along with other faculty members.

The 8-day long Olympiad was organised by Student Affairs and Services in collaboration with the Sports and Rehabilitation Centre (SRC). Students of the AKU Sports Society worked tirelessly to bring the event together – from confirming the availability of every class, to finalizing the sports and ensuring that the matches took place on a timely basis.





# Students' sports activities continued consistently

Outdoor sports activities provided students with much needed healthy in-person engagement throughout the year . There were **25+ sports tournaments** throughout the year, consisting of intra-batch or intra-university matches in cricket, futsal and volleyball. As the gymnasium opened and restrictions loosened, there were indoor sport events such as badminton.



*Winning teams were awarded vouchers for a meal at the Princess Zahra Pavilion (PZP).*

# Student Events

The disruption brought on by the pandemic continued to impact student activities well into 2021.

Till September, the strict limitations on in-person participation and restrictions on organising and attending activities outside of the AKU campus, led to the Student Experience team to come up with innovative and creative methods to promote student engagement and activities in a safe manner.

The eventual loosening of restrictions allowed the return of the beloved traditional activities such as farewell parties and beach trips.



*The Synergy Book Fair where senior students donate their medical books to the incoming students*





*The Arts & Culture committee members from BScN '22 organised a "Haunted House" for all SONAM students. A similar activity "Nightmare" was organised by MBBS '24*



*Falah arranged their annual Bake Sale to raise money for their patient welfare activities.*





*Falah organised their annual fundraising dance event*





*Ice-breaking session for BScN '24 organised by Synergy SONAM*

**SYNERGY SONAM PRESENTS**  
**CREATIVE WRITING COMPETITION**  
(For all SONAM students)

**COMPETITION GUIDELINES:**

- Format can be short story, poem, essay, screenplay etc.
- Submission can be in english and urdu.
- Word limit should be of 200-500.
- Single submission should be made, multiple entries are not allowed.
- You should submit your own contributions. We will not consider your submission if found plagiarized or sourced from any site.
- Cash prizes for 1st and 2nd position (prize will be through bank transfer)

Send submissions at [synergysanam@gmail.com](mailto:synergysanam@gmail.com)  
Deadline: October 17, 2021



**SYNERGY SONAM PRESENTS**  
**THE ARTSY LENS COMPETITION**  
FOR SONAM CLASS OF 2024

**COMPETITION GUIDELINES:**

- Photo should feature some aspect of the AKU campus, and not any person.
- Caption is required, which describes the photo in under 50 words.
- Professional camera equipment is not required.
- Winner will win a cash prize (via account transfer only) and will be featured on the AKU SONAM Facebook page.



Send submissions at [synergysanam@gmail.com](mailto:synergysanam@gmail.com)  
Deadline: October 10, 2021

*And many other events and competitions!*



# Introducing the new Student Psychiatrist



All current AKU students are eligible for psychiatry services, free of cost, through the Office of Counselling and Wellness Services and Student Health. Dr Ayesha Uquaily, part-time faculty at the Department of Psychiatry, Aga Khan University, was appointed as the new student psychiatrist from November 2021. She brings with her 19 years of postgraduate experience and has worked across Pakistan, accumulating a wealth experience of treating young adults and possessing a deep understanding of different cultures.

# Celebrating World Mental Health Day

Maintaining the mental health of our students is a key priority. Throughout the pandemic, it has remained essential to highlight the importance of mental well-being and to encourage access, share resources and make further investments in this key area.

Every year we celebrate World Mental Health Day, stretching it out to a week of activities and events. This year it was based on the global theme of 'Mental Health in an Unequal World'.





## Highlights during Mental Health week included

A **tree-plantation** event where President Sulaiman Shahabuddin, other members of senior leadership including Dean Adil Haider and Dean Rozina Karmaliani, staff and students gathered in the Medical College courtyard to signify the importance of, and their commitment to, investing in the mental health of the AKU community. They beautified the area by planting colourful plants and flowering shrubs so students could have a more vibrant environment to relax after their long study hours. At the event, the President AKU, Dean Medical College, and Associate Director, Counselling Services and Wellness talked about the importance of mental health, and nature's role in reducing stress and bringing inner peace.

Alongside the plantation activity, a **photo gallery** exhibited 100 selected entries of the competition "Finding Nature". Winners of the competition were announced, and prizes were awarded to them by President Sulaiman Shahabuddin.







**Informational brochures** highlighting key topics in mental well-being and self-help links were sent through email.

The brochure **Healing Stress Through Nature** was developed to reiterate the importance of mental health and to remind the AKU community how nature can facilitate wellness.

Another brochure on **Anger Management** provided information and strategies for managing anger to protect our personal well-being and social relationships. Filled with helpful resources, it was later used as a resource for participants by the Brain and Mind Institute during their global hackathon.

Staff, students and faculty were invited to participate in **Walk-for-A-Cause** around the AKU campus – with numbers limited to ensure safety of all participants – to raise awareness and highlight the importance of mental health. Wearing green and marching to the beat of the drums, students and faculty alike chanted slogans for mental health and demonstrated the strong support for mental health that the university takes pride in. Senior leadership including President Sulaiman Shahabuddin, Vice Provost Dr Anjum Halai, Dean Adil Haider and Dean Farid Punjwani also participated to show their support of the cause.







This was followed by the **screening of the student-led video** "Around the Quad: Depictions of Mental Health" highlighting the perceptions of mental health within the AKU student body



After the video screening, the Deans of all three schools, Vice Provost Student Affairs and Services, and CEO Aga Khan Hospital had an **insightful panel discussion** sharing personal experiences and words of wisdom relating to mental health. The audience, comprising largely of students, had the opportunity to voice their opinions and ask questions, such as those pertaining to student mental health and staff wellbeing. The event ended with a few concluding remarks from the President AKU and the Associate Director of the Counselling Services and Wellness Office. Although the formal event was over, the celebration continued in spirit outside the auditorium, where attendees relaxed with music, dancing and refreshments.



A big thank you to all the departments and students who worked with us – in particular Aurora (the student mental health body).



# Photography competition

receives over  
**500 student**  
submissions



The Counselling Services and Wellness Office worked with the student mental health group Aurora to organise a photo competition on the theme 'Finding Nature'. The aim was to encourage students to photograph those moments or places of nature that bought them peace and comfort. More than 500 entries were received from students across the Medical College, SONAM and IED.

Selected entries were displayed at a photo exhibition during Mental Health Day. Prizes for the first, second and third place holders were presented by President Sulaiman Shahabuddin who also honored them with a lunch after the ceremony. What a treat for the lucky winners!

**First prize: Aliya Jamil Ahmed, BScN'21**  
**Second prize: Dr. Misbah Baig MSc Epidemiology and Biostatistics '21**  
**Third prize: Qasim Hussain BScN'23**



# Specialised workshops

arranged for Residents under  
**the Post Graduate  
Medical Education**  
(PGME) department

In a series of special wellness workshops designed and conducted in small groups, Residents from years 1 – 5 learned about stress management, managing work-life balance, developing resilience and avoiding burnout. Incorporating self-help information, as well as personal assessment and relaxation exercises, these sessions were appreciated and well-received by the Residents.







**End of exam celebrations by the graduating MBBS and BScN classes**



# AKU students

participate in and **WIN** at  
The National Entrepreneurship  
Competition 2021



Six teams of students from the Medical College, SONAM and IED represented AKU at Iqra University and Akhuwat Foundation's 'National Entrepreneurship Challenge 2021'. Student Affairs and Services sponsored entry of five of the teams, connected them with CCIT who advised on their pitches (a big thank you to CCIT for this!), and ensured that our teams had all the support required to participate. On their part, the students worked hard to develop a comprehensive business plan and pitched their big idea to an engaged panel of judges.

Three teams were awarded with cash prizes and useful feedback to take their idea forward. Below is a bit more information about each of the winning teams along with some reflections about the competition:

## *Nasira Parveen*

PhD student Class of 2020, IED

Category Award Winner - Travel and Tourism

The Idea: connecting women entrepreneurs with other businesses through a mobile phone based logistics platform.

## *Faiq Amin and Sahar Khalid Zuberi*

MPhil BBS, Medical College

Category Award Winners - Science and Technology

The Idea: Electric Vehicle charging stations running on solar power made available commercially and for homes, along with two mobile apps assisting with charging stations' location and also connecting buyers with vendors.

## *Aiman Chippa*

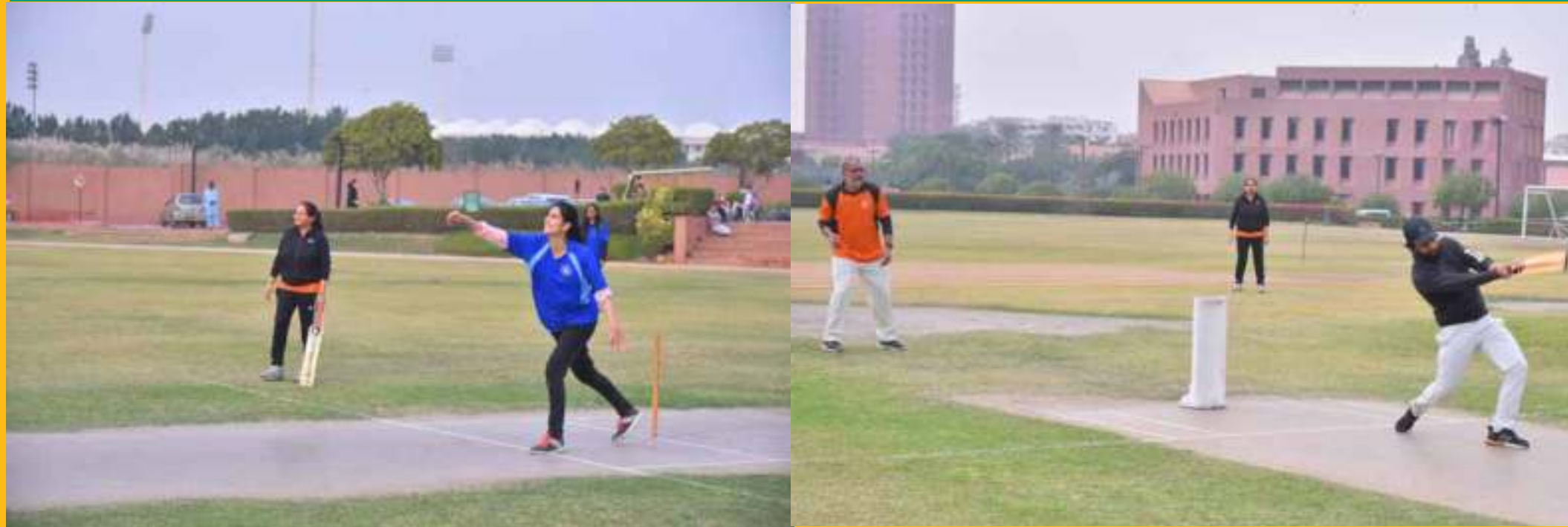
MSc in Epidemiology and Biostatistics, Medical College

Winner of Best Pitch Health and Life Sciences

The Idea: Maseeha Health (Health Saviour), a telemedicine platform that aims to improve the recovery process after surgeries



*Faculty XI win exhibition match against MBBS Class'21*



# Outdoor screenings of the ICC T20 Men's World Cup



With cricket fever sweeping across the nation, the Student Experience Office organized outdoor screenings of the ICC T20 Men's World Cup 2021 matches. Arranged in collaboration with the Sports and Rehabilitation Centre (SRC), large screens were placed at the courtyard and the poolside to allow for students to watch the matches together in a safe, open-air environment.

Food stalls selling coffee, bun kababs and French fries were also set up, giving the event a festive feel. Students were told to maintain all COVID SOPs and the SRC and Student Experience staff patrolled to ensure compliance.

# IED students welcome new cohort, say goodbye to graduands in a 'Get Together'

A welcome to the new class and goodbye to the graduating class was hosted by IED students in a fun filled evening featuring short skits, games, regional music, dances, mushairah and distribution of souvenirs. Organised by students and sponsored by Student Affairs and Services, the event ended with a dinner in the garden. Many thanks to Dean Farid Punjwani and the faculty who attended in support of the students.







# Celebrating International Teachers Day at IED

IED students organized International Teachers Day to celebrate and recognize the efforts of teachers on the theme 'Teachers at the Heart of Education Recovery'. It featured video entries submitted by K-12 teachers on their experiences of teaching during COVID, musical and poetry performances, video tributes by IED alumni thanking their professors and a panel discussion with leaders from the field of education. This hybrid event allowed for limited participation at the IED campus, providing an opportunity to learn from and network with teachers.

More details about the *event* and *photos*

# Work and Study Programme

With COVID-19 restrictions lifted in the last months of 2021, departments at AKU began offering job opportunities to current students. Through this Work and Study Programme, in 2021 more than 50 students have worked in different departments such as Central Sterile Service Department (CSSD) and Customer Services Representative at AKUH (Call Center).

Under this programme current AKU students can work on-campus or be part of projects and programmes within AKU. This allows students to earn money, make use of their free time, gain experience, develop transferable skills and boost their résumés. Jobs available are advertised through email and on the Student Life website. In the past students have worked as customer services representatives, assisted in data management and analysis, and helped in the library.

# Drop, Cover and Hold on!

## Hostelite Students join the Shakeout Drill





## Students spread awareness and tips to live comfortably within shared accommodation

The Hostel Ambassadors worked with the Hostel Team of students and staff to create and place posters on best practices for using common facilities in shared accommodation. These posters related to usage of laundry, kitchen and washrooms in the hostel premises. Such initiatives show the commitment of our students to create a comfortable and clean environment in their shared spaces.







# Our Team

The Office of Student Experience, Pakistan;  
Counselling Services and Wellness Office;  
Student Health, Registrar's Office, Hostels.

*[student.affairs@aku.edu](mailto:student.affairs@aku.edu)*