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Press Release - LCN'09

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The Lebanese Collegiate Network (LCN) hosted LCN '09 at Cal Poly Pomona on March 27-28. LCN '09 is this organization's second convention. This year over 60 students representing twelve universities nationwide were in attendance.

LCN '09 kicked off the weekend with a bonfire at Huntington Beach. The attendees were able to reconnect with old friends and build a companionship with new members. After a barbecue, students and friends enjoyed a game of tug-of-war, where different University Lebanese Clubs (ULCs) competed against each other for bragging rights, and Cal Poly Pomona showed up with the largest number of students and walked away champions.

The next day (Saturday) consisted of instructional workshops. Students had the opportunity to develop professionally, strengthen their ULCs and learn more about the opportunities of the LCN. "I am so amazed at how organized and fun the LCN is!" said Maya Nasr, a new member to the LCN and a freshman at Loyola Marymount University. Patrick Sislian, LCN President, welcomed the students and introduced the LCN board members. He also made a point to recognize each ULC and ULC President in attendance. He reminded the students of the LCN Dream he spoke of the year before in Maryland, and declared that this dream is now a reality. "Last year, we shared a dream. Today we are no longer dreaming, we are doing," continued Patrick, "this is due to the commitment and dedication of the LCN board and its members."

Patrick then invited Serge Haddad, Vice President of Events, to join him on stage. Together, they focused the crowd's attention on the LCN Constitution and Bylaws, the foundation of the organization. Patrick and Serge underlined the magnitude of these documents' importance. They discussed the important role of being an *active* LCN member and the crucial role it plays in the longevity of the LCN.

Patrick followed with the *State of the LCN* presentation. "The State of the LCN is STRONG!" Patrick affirmed. The presentation stressed the accomplishments and challenges the LCN has faced since its launch. Patrick listed several hard facts in numbers: the number of subscribing members, the number of board approved media outlets, the number of emails exchanged (a whopping 8,000 emails, equivalent to 22 emails per day!), the number of board meetings held, total minutes, reports and agendas drafted. He continued with "We also received our tax-exempt status within 4 months. To put this into perspective, most organizations expect a response from the IRS between 6 months and a year." Patrick concluded the presentation as he began, by affirming the State of the LCN as STRONG!

After a quick break, the students were divided into 9 teams in order to participate in the ULC Building Workshop. Each team was given a different question to answer. Students discussed the questions within their groups and presented their ideas to all attendees. Some questions included:

- What programs does your ULC provide to help students develop academically, socially, and professionally?
- What does or can your ULC do to eliminate derogatory stereotypes of Middle Eastern people?
- How does your ULC foster Lebanese heritage in your community?

"I learned a lot from this ULC Building workshop," exclaimed Jeff Malkoun, ULC President from Arizona State University, "I look forward to taking these new ideas back home." Overall the students brought some great insight and facilitated great discussions with the audience.

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Lunch was served and the students had an opportunity to explore Cal Poly Pomona's beautiful campus. When the students returned, the LCN board presented the "How to Run an Effective Meeting" Workshop. A mock meeting demonstrated proper and improper ways to conduct a meeting, as cited by Robert's Rules of Order. Students actively participated in the question and answer portion of the workshop, and a Robert's Rules of Order pamphlet was given to each student. "Thank you LCN for providing us with a fun activity to learn the stuff in found in Robert's Rules of Order," said Mazen Nasr, a student at Cal Poly Pomona, "I know our club will benefit from it."

The LCN Board then gathered for the formal business meeting. The board and members unanimously passed a Resolution to recognizing the Cal Poly Pomona Lebanese Club as outstanding hosts of the 2009 LCN Convention. Following the resolution was the approval of the LCN Election Committee. This committee is comprised of Kristina Windbladh (Chair), Remie Dagher and Danny Azar.

The Election Committee had the important responsibility to oversee that the elections of the new LCN Board were carried out without a hitch. "I felt honored to have been a part of this important task. It just shows me that the LCN really works hard at being transparent and open with the membership," said Remie, a subscribing member from Maryland. Each candidate was given an opportunity to speak about themselves and answer any questions from the audience. The new board, elected by the seven legislative branch ULC Presidents present, consists of

President	Serge Haddad	<i>Vice Presidents:</i>	
Secretary	Lara Saikali	Events	Thalia Jarjour
Treasurer	Sevag Sislian	Membership	Diana Ayoub
		Public Relations	Rami Haddad
		Information Technology	Karim Khoury

LCN '09 concluded with an Awards Banquet of over one hundred people. Young professionals, alumni and LCN supporters joined the students to cap the convention. The night was filled with smiles, laughter and a promise that the LCN will live on forever. The dinner opened with a Welcome by Patrick Sislian. Patrick took a few minutes to introduce the seven University Lebanese Club (ULC) presidents in attendance, the current and newly elected LCN Board and some distinguished guests such as Dr. Hany Farran (faculty advisor of the Lebanese Student Association at Cal Poly Pomona) and Consul General Housan Diab.

Numerous individuals who served as LCN volunteers and committee members were honored during the dinner. Diana Ayoub had the privilege of recognizing each individual, "these volunteers have sacrificed countless hours of commitment to serve the membership. Nothing would be possible without their active participation." Committees include Resume Workshop, Election, Financial Audit and Convention preparation. Each volunteer received a Certificate of Appreciation signed by various LCN Executive board members. In total there were over 30 certificates distributed.

The LCN has set a tradition at each Annual Convention: *the only person to give the keynote address during the Awards Dinner shall be the faculty advisor of the hosting ULC.* This tradition is inline with the LCN mission. The faculty advisor is an integral part of any ULC and should be an important voice to bridge the gap between professional and student members. This year, the Lebanese Student Association of Cal Poly Pomona honored their faculty advisor, Dr. Hany Farran, by asking him to represent them at LCN'09. Dr. Farran stepped up to the challenge. His words were inspirational and motivated the attendants to action.

After his address, Serge Haddad recapped the convention bonfire, workshops and elections. Serge then presented the Lebanese Student Association with the resolution that honored the Cal Poly Pomona





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students for their hard work, leadership and sacrifice for hosting the 2009 LCN Convention. Their unity as a team and their individual perseverance was an integral part of this year's success.

Sevag Sislian, Vice President of Membership, followed with his presentation of the two LCN Awards: the *Academic Excellence & Heritage Award* and the *Most Outstanding ULC Award*. This year's winners were Ramsey Ayass and the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB) Lebanese Club. Ramsey Ayass is an active member of the Cal Poly Pomona LSA and has earned a high GPA. His award includes a \$1,000 monetary amount. The UCSB Lebanese Club won \$500 and the honor to have their name immortalized on the LCN Most Outstanding ULC plaque. This award was especially fitting since UCSB will also be home of the 2010 LCN Convention.

The night ended on a sentimental note. LCN Founders Patrick Sislian, Ramzi Nasr and Julien Chemali were honored for their sacrifices as executive board members of the LCN. Serge, President-Elect of the LCN, spoke on behalf of Karim Khoury, Sevag Sislian and Diana Ayoub (previous founders) as he shared stories of their dedication. He presented Patrick, Ramzi and Julien with watches that were engraved with their initials and "LCN Founder". The watches had two clocks, one set for Lebanese time and the other set to American time. The watches symbolize the connection they helped shape, bringing the two cultures together.

To make a donation, or to join an LCN Committee, please visit www.mylcn.org. We hope to see you at LCN '10, hosted by the Lebanese Club of UC Santa Barbara.

