Class of 2021

You are some 320 students, hailing from nearly 80 countries. Most of you speak two or more languages. You were selected from 11,500 applicants four years ago. Since then, you have reached unimaginable heights throughout your time at NYU Abu Dhabi.

Over the past four years, you have studied away, interned with top businesses and organizations, made a difference through volunteering and outreach, earned awards and accolades, explored groundbreaking research, created works of art, and built inclusive community in Abu Dhabi and beyond. This year, you have also demonstrated remarkable resilience, vulnerability, and strength of character in the face of significant challenges wrought by a global pandemic that laid bare the vital opportunities we must embrace to forge a more equitable, caring, and connected society.

Today, we celebrate all of your qualities and accomplishments. Some that can’t be taught, endeavors that don’t make headlines, and achievements - both personal and academic - that aren’t always recognized with formal awards. You are extraordinary because of your immeasurable compassion and courage, conviction to be ethical in a rapidly evolving world, and willingness to engage in solving problems bigger than yourself.

Today, we honor each member of the Class of 2021. As graduates of NYU Abu Dhabi, you symbolize hope for a better, more cooperative world.

Congratulations, Class of 2021! Welcome to NYU Abu Dhabi and NYU’s global family of alumni.
As Nawal Ali was finishing high school in Singapore and applying to universities abroad, she knew she wanted the next step to maintain that sense of belonging to an international community that she grew accustomed to away from her home of Kenya.

NYU Abu Dhabi was a great fit from the beginning: the diverse student body; the unique location of the campus closer to Kenya; and a young university where Ali felt she could make an impact.

“Being a minority in many places makes me want to be in a more diverse space where I feel I can belong. And that is NYUAD for me,” Ali added.

Passionate about community building, Ali joined the Muslim Student Association student interest group where she worked with different groups across the University to help create events related to Islam, such as the importance of Ramadan and planning iftar and suhoor, while also facilitating dialogue between students. Ali was also a resident assistant on campus where she served as a resource for students curious about topics ranging from academia to policies, and took charge of activities that allowed students to explore Abu Dhabi city.
Moving around a fair bit since high school, Ali knows the importance of building a sense of belonging through friendship and community. With classmates located in different parts of the world each academic year, friendships naturally evolved. Despite the distance, Ali learned that there will always be friends who care and welcome her into their circles, no matter where they are located.

**Favorite Memories**

Ali said she will always remember a trip with classmates when they drove into the desert to spend a few hours watching stars with a bonfire nearby. “It’s one of those moments I had pictured before coming [to NYUAD], and it’s surreal that I was able to do it,” Ali said. Another memory etched into Ali’s mind was a ladies-only day at Yas Waterworld. Being able to enjoy the company of so many classmates while de-stressing at the waterpark before examsinations was refreshing, in more ways than one.

**Being Kind in a Difficult Time**

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Be it planning for graduate school or applying for jobs; everything now becomes a positive learning opportunity. Having spent her formative years at NYUAD learning more about herself while trying to figure out what she wants to do career-wise, Ali is now a little more sure of herself, her methods, and where she is headed.
“The level of maturity and emotional awareness of my friend group is something I am grateful for every day because it allows us to have difficult conversations in the hopes of strengthening and learning from our friendship.”

MAURICIO YANEZ
Economics | Peru
Two NYU Abu Dhabi Class of 2021 roommates finding their footing together through friendship and support.

Hoor Alnuaimi’s first impression of Maitha AlSuwaidi, her assigned roommate during Marhaba (meaning ‘welcome’ in Arabic, Marhaba is student orientation week), was not your typical first-year encounter. “I entered the room and saw this woman with her bow and arrow, and I was intrigued!” Their friendship supported each other through their time at NYU Abu Dhabi, and is partly responsible for leading both young scholars into securing one of the most prestigious scholarships in higher education.

Home Away From Home
AlSuwaidi comes from the emirate of Sharjah. “I’ve never lived in Abu Dhabi before, and I only have distant family members here,” AlSuwaidi explained. Meeting Alnuaimi who is from Abu Dhabi, changed things.

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Almost four years later, that “maybe” became a reality for both, spurred on by the campus environment that both found conducive to developing a strong work ethic.

“It was never our end goal. It was just the perfect combination of having us really immerse ourselves in our lives at NYUAD,” AlSuwaidi said.

Reflecting on the Past Four Years

“We don’t really recognize that it wasn’t just the pandemic that was the challenge, it was getting through those four years, that was a challenge,” AlSuwaidi said. Leaving one’s comfort zone to come study at NYUAD, overcoming deadlines and assignments, and navigating experiences in classes locally and abroad are just some of the obstacles that seniors overcame together, well before the pandemic became a reality in 2020. Remember to “celebrate yourself,” AlSuwaidi said, for all of the small and big accomplishments.

For Alnuaimi, NYUAD is “a utopia” where the world comes together on an island in Abu Dhabi. It is a place where every student carries a rare sense of optimism with them. “When I graduate, I’m going to take a piece of that utopia with me,” Alnuaimi said.

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“Authenticity and vulnerability are the best ways to get to know others and yourself.”

MARIA DEL MAR JARAMILLO
Computer Science | Colombia
"إن أفضل طريقة للتعرف على الذات وعلى الآخرين هي تبني الصدق في التعامل وعدم التردد في إظهار المشاعر الحقيقية".

ماريا ديلمار خراميتو
علوم الحاسوب | كولومبيا
AN OPPORTUNITY TO CHASE DREAMS
فرصة لتحقيق الأحلام

Flexibility, determination, and university support allowed Aren Chen to pursue a unique internship opportunity.

After countless resumes sent out with no response back for an interview, Aren Chen decided to try a different technique. He directly contacted the Apple team in Shanghai who specialize in talent acquisition for university students. Within a month and an interview later, Chen landed a highly coveted internship with Apple Shanghai.

Chen was finishing the rest of his semester virtually in his home city of Chongqing, China before flying to Shanghai for his three-month internship. Used to experiencing new places around the world as a student in the NYU global network, this three-hour plane trip to Shanghai did not faze the budding global citizen.

A Bright Future
At Apple, Chen was part of the instrument technology team that helps test products’ hardware and debug any issues in the early design stage and before products are shipped out into the market. When a new product or feature is implemented, the team also builds instruments that are capable of testing the new functions.

After his great stint at Apple last summer, Chen was offered a full time position after graduation. However, graduate school beckons, and Chen decided to further his education at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Until Commencement, Chen was focused on relishing the time left on campus with his friends.

Electrical Engineering
الهندسة الكهربائية
China
الصين

Aren Chen
آرين تشينغ

China
الصين

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“NYUAD has given me the space and the support I needed to really come to terms with what I value, who I am, and what I want to achieve with my life.”

NADA ALMOSA
Literature and Creative Writing | UAE

"لقد وفرت لي جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي الفرصة والدعم، ولولا توفرهما لما تمكنني من التمكّن في أهم الأشياء بالنسبة لي وفي ذاتي وفي أولوياتي الشخصية."
Sebastián Caro is leaving NYU Abu Dhabi with two important documents, an impressive degree in economics, and a friendship contract that includes a binding stipulation that commits the signees to an annual meet-up.

It’s a contract he was happy to sign as the year brought more frequent goodbyes and, on May 22, the end to a special time in Caro’s life.

“I am who I am thanks to my friends,” Caro explained. Before coming to NYUAD, Caro’s life in Colombia was a lot more homogenous. Over the past four years, he began to experience the world, both in being able to visit different countries from his new home in Abu Dhabi and becoming friends with peers from all over the world.

Caro also learned how to say goodbye during this time, as the NYUAD experience brings about a lot of movement including J-Terms and semesters abroad.

“Saying goodbye really toughens you up because even if your heart is spread into pieces all over the world, you keep on going,” Caro said.
أبوظبـي حامـاً وثيـقتان مهـمتـان
ورك
يغـادر سيباـستيان جامـعة نيويـشرـة فـي الاقتصـاد مـن إحـدى أهـم الجامعات في العالـم، وتعهد خطيّ يضمـن لقـاءاً سـنويًا مـع مجموعـة من الأصدقاء.
ولـم يردد سيباـستيان فـي التوقيـع على هـذا التعهد، وخصوصاً مع تسـارع 22 خـتـام موقـت بسبب انتهاء الصيف. وهو ما يحمل بالنسبة له دلالة خاصة.
وكمـا يقـول سيباـستيان: "لأصدقائـي الفضل في تشـكـيل شـخصيتي".
اـتـسـمت حـيـاة سيباـستيان فـي كولومبـيا بالروتـن قبـل الانضمام إلى ورك أبوظبـي، لكـن السـنن الأربـعة ماضـسة منحته فرصة لمـا تـشكلت مدينـة أبوظبـي من نقطة انطاق للسـفر المـحلـي، وبفضـل صداقاتـه مـع أقرانـه من مختلـف أنحاء العالم.
وـفي الوقـت ذاتـه، أعناـد سيباـستيان على وداع أصدقائـه، نظـراً لطبيعة تضمـن أسـفاراً متعددـة لفصول الدراسـة في أبوظبـي التـي تـكونت على مدى مـع التسـارع في المستوى الجامعي، وصولاً إلى تشكيل علاقات مع أفراد في مختلف أنحاء العالم.
ومع ذلك، بقيت حياة سيباستيان في كولومبيا بالروتين، حيث وصل في نهاية المطاف إلى جامعة كولومبيا بالروتين قبل الاحترام إلى جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي، لكن السيناريو الإيجابي منحته فرصة للاستمتاع بالمساحة المطلقة إلى نقطة انطاق للسفر المحلي، وصولاً إلى تشكيل علاقات مع أفراد في مختلف أنحاء العالم.
وفي الوقت ذاته، اعتاد سيباستيان على وداع أصدقائه، نظراً لطبيعة الدراسة في أبوظبي التي تمت في أطر زمنية متقدمة لحوار الدراسة.
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NYU Abu Dhabi enabled Dino Kolonic to better understand his own country’s history and the possibilities for his future.
Growing up in Bosnia and Herzegovina not long after the civil war in the early 1990s, Dino Kolonic had always wanted to find a way to study and understand more about the conflict in his country. When coming to NYU Abu Dhabi, Kolonic chose to major in political science to learn about the implications and better understand the politics behind the civil war that took place in his home country, and conflicts in other countries.

Through his studies, he was also able to further hone where he wanted to take his career post-graduation. During his first year, Kolonic’s J-Term class took him to Jordan where he was introduced to organizations working to improve education for Syrian refugee children. Meeting with UNICEF and USAID allowed Kolonic to see firsthand what it takes to work in such an environment, and also gave him the opportunity to ask questions regarding the challenges posed to these organizations. “I knew I wanted to work with NGOs and international organizations towards something related to peacekeeping,” Kolonic said, and the J-Term experience moved him another step forward to exploring this field.

Classes and Current Affairs

Assistant Professor of Political Science Joan Barceló’s class on civil wars and international intervention is another educational experience that deeply impacted Kolonic. The class touched on the effects of civil conflicts on society, and how the international community can help end civil wars. Despite classes being held virtually, Kolonic enjoyed every session. It allowed Kolonic to grasp the impact of the war and his life in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Kolonic’s intellectual stimulation extended well beyond the classroom. The campus community also made Kolonic more aware of issues happening around the world. With classmates sharing their experiences and news from home, current affairs become relatable on a human level, rather than just headlines.

This exposure to a diverse community is one of the reasons he had chosen to study at NYUAD in the first place. Graduating from a high school with students from over 60 countries, Kolonic wanted to continue in a dynamic study environment. “I understood the value of an international student body and the intellectually stimulating conversations that come with it,” Kolonic said. A decision Kolonic stands by: “You just feel like you’re in a place where you will get the skills and the community to actually do things that will impact the future.”
Jesutofunmi Kupoluyi taught himself Java, a computer programming language, when it was not available in his high school. Through YouTube, online resources, and sheer force of will, Kupoluyi spent countless hours learning the coding language while finishing high school. Looking back, it’s a decision that he is glad that he made.

“I realized that if I hadn’t self learned it, I would not have been able to keep up pace with the classes here,” Kupoluyi said.

Hoping to simplify the process for future high school students that may be in a similar position in the future, Kupoluyi came to NYU Abu Dhabi wanting to create an extracurricular club. “I wanted to help students get the advantage they need to be able to go into computer science and STEM fields more easily,” Kupoluyi said.

Through the StartAD Research Commercialization Summer Incubator program, Chameleon, a digital learning platform, was born. Chameleon is targeted at high school students in sub-Saharan Africa who lack the access to learn modern coding languages that would help them to compete in future studies. Once beta-testing is over, Chameleon will be introduced directly in schools as an extracurricular club to provide students with accessible, high-quality technology education.

“A COMMONALITY IN HUMAN EXPERIENCE

“NYUAD has really broadened my horizons.”

لقد وسّعت جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي آفاقی”
Expanding Horizons
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The Benefits of the Global Network
Studying remotely during his senior year was an adjustment for Kupoluyi. Without the need to step out of his room to head to lectures and classes, Kupoluyi had to create the classroom environment independently and learn better time management. But the physical limitations did come with certain virtual freedoms and opportunities that would otherwise not have been possible: Kupoluyi was able to take classes from the New York campus despite not studying there this semester.

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LASTING FRIENDSHIPS

Ivory Lee is leaving NYU Abu Dhabi with friends that will last a lifetime and an understanding of how to work across difference.

تودع آيفوري لي جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي ومعها صداقات تدوم أبداً، وسرّ التعاون رغم الاختلافات.
In her first year at NYU Abu Dhabi, Ivory Lee became friends with a senior from Hungary through their participation on the University’s basketball team. Despite their different academic schedules, the pair quickly became close friends. When Lee was studying away in Europe the following year, she made a point to visit Hungary. Even though the pair were not in touch for some time, they were able to pick up from where they left off as though nothing had changed. “I spent a whole weekend in her hometown with her family, and had one of the best experiences I’ve had to date,” Lee said.

Lee continues to experience similar strong connections with many of her friends that she made during her first year. “Through these friends, I really learned what a respectful and reciprocal friendship looks and feels like,” Lee added. “It’s classes like this one that really opened my eyes to how the arts, society, and the sciences can interact and intersect,” Lee said. “The exposures to these new perspectives and the skills culminated from these experiences have definitely made me a better critical thinker, learner, and leader.”

The remote senior year experience has given Lee plenty to consider. It changed the way Lee prioritized how she uses her time, and she cherishes the moments she gets to spend with her friends in person. While academics are essential, making efforts to establish and maintain strong friendships and relationships with others are as important for Lee. “Your GPA may land you your next job, but these friendships that we build now will last forever, inshallah.”

**A Meeting of Art and Science**

Besides the rich relationships Lee came to form at NYUAD, the interdisciplinary nature of the liberal arts curriculum has also been eye-opening. The interactive media class *Bioart Practices*, which takes students on a tour of the materials and techniques utilized by artists in the emerging field of biological art - that is art which uses life itself as a medium, was one of Lee’s favorite courses because it allowed her a glimpse into the latest technology in Biology and to learn some lab techniques despite not being a biology major. “I don’t think that I would have gotten the opportunity to use such equipment without being a biology major anywhere else,” Lee commented.

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“I've traveled to more than 15 countries, lived on four different continents, and met people I would have never come across if I had stayed back home.”

MALAK ABDEL-GHAFFAR
Literature and Creative Writing | Egypt
At the peak of the pandemic, YunKai Lee had to cut his classes short in New York to fly home to Malaysia. It was not a decision Lee made lightly. But with the unpredictability of the fast-changing travel regulations, he decided to hunker down back home to finish the rest of his courses virtually to prime himself for his highly competitive internship with J.P. Morgan, with the hope of ultimately landing a job with the banking powerhouse.

Lee had been aiming to secure this internship for almost the entirety of his junior year, and it was an opportunity he knew could really kick start his career after university, so he didn’t want to take any chances.

Passionate about Mentorship

It’s notoriously difficult to secure a finance internship, especially when one is competing with top business schools. With resources like NYU Abu Dhabi’s Career Development Center (CDC) to help with building a portfolio and provide advice on ways to approach internships, it still took Lee half a year from applying and going through a grueling three-round interview process before successfully landing the position.

To help fellow students gain a competitive edge for their internship, Lee and a few senior classmates volunteered as mentors in an investment training program under the existing Business and Finance Society student interest group where they teach students how to value stocks, read financial accounts, and prepare for job interviews.

“I think NYUAD students are unique in the sense that if life gives us lemons, we would make lemon mint.”

YOUNG KAI LEE

YON KAI NEE

ECONOMICS  الاقتصاد

MALAYSIA  ماليزيا

"ما يميز طلاب جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي هو قدرتهم على استثمار أي وضع لصالحهم مهما كان."

وتنابذ. وفهمًا لجون كاي: "أدرك حينها ضخامة الشركة، كما أف违 جيمي ديمون، الرئيس التنفيذي للشركة بأكملها، على أسماعنا خطابًا.

وقال على أذهان يون كاي عليه بالفائدة، حيث أن ساعات التدريب والتعارف التي يقضيها في جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي تكوين مهمة للمترددين المهنيين، وتشجع تشغيل مشروع عمل فيه مع مريك في هونج كونج لتقديم مشروط استشارات يمكن من خمسين صفحة. وفي مشروع أخر، أثار كاي مهاراته الإبداعية والتعليمية عندما استعرض مصريا مشروع استثمار في ماليزيا على مدير جي بي مورغان "متطفة ماليزيا بأكملها على مدى ثلاث دقائق.

وعد يون كاي لتعارض الدور الذي بذل في التنظيم وتطوير قدراته ومهاراته على مدى سنين في جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي. وساعدت الدورات والبرامج في تطويره على الوصول إلى الوظيفة التي كان يحلم بها بعد التخرج، وهي وظيفة مديرة في مؤسسة "جي بي مورغان.

يشكل المستقبل

"أعتقد أن الطلاب في جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي هم أكثر قدرة على الاستغلال أي وضع."
Lee was also part of an award winning startup, Jagged, that uses a “swipe to match” application to help high school students connect with students currently studying at their dream college to seek advice on student life, academics, and more. “The hope is to reduce existing social barriers preventing students from achieving their ambitions,” Lee said.

What it Takes to be an Intern

Although it was a virtual internship, J.P. Morgan requires interns to work in the same time zone of the office they are assigned to due to the highly collaborative nature of their work.

The skills he had accumulated at NYUAD helped him adjust to the demanding internship. The online onboarding process alone was robust. Instead of an introduction to the team based in Malaysia, Lee was part of a larger orientation that included interns from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand. “That really showed me the scale of the company. I also got to listen in during a keynote address from the global CEO of J.P. Morgan Jamie Dimon,” Lee added.

“I think NYUAD students are unique in the sense that if life gives us lemons, we would make lemon mint,” he said.

The endless collaborations for presentations and brainstorming sessions as an NYUAD student worked to adjust to due to the demanding internship. The online onboarding process alone was robust. Instead of an introduction to the team based in Malaysia, Lee was part of a larger orientation that included interns from Hong Kong, Singapore, and Thailand. “That really showed me the scale of the company. I also got to listen in during a keynote address from the global CEO of J.P. Morgan Jamie Dimon,” Lee added.

“We spent one-fifth of our lives together... in a completely unorthodox university experience. I think that is something that shapes you,” Lee said. No matter where each of his schoolmates’ lives would be five or 10 years down the road, he has no doubt the NYUAD Class of 2021 will live fully by their dreams, ambitions, the friendships he formed that helped propel him into life after NYUAD.

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The endless collaborations for presentations and brainstorming sessions as an NYUAD student worked to Lee’s advantage during his internship. The skills he learned at NYUAD really shined during a particular project that saw Lee partner with the J.P. Morgan Hong Kong team to work on a 50-page investment deck. In another project, Lee was able to show his creativity and public speaking skills through a 30-minute presentation about a potential market opportunity in Malaysia to the local J.P. Morgan CEO.

His hard work, forward planning, and the skills he accumulated at NYUAD in classes and programs helped Lee secure his dream job. As he continues his journey as an analyst for J.P. Morgan after graduating, he reflects on his university experience and the friendships he formed that helped propel him into life after NYUAD.

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DYLAN PALLADINO
دylan بالادينو

A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE
منظور عالمي

From Abu Dhabi to Shanghai, Dylan Palladino recounts his global experiences at NYU Abu Dhabi and beyond.

Dylan Palladino always desired to communicate with people in their mother tongue. So much so that when his family moved to Singapore when he was 10 years old, Palladino decided that he wanted to learn Mandarin—one of the country’s four official languages.

By the time Palladino, who is American, started his first year at NYU Abu Dhabi, he was fluent in Mandarin. It was not until his second year that Palladio realized the pleasure he got from reading and speaking in Mandarin and learning about Chinese politics. He decided to continue learning the language that is native to almost a billion people worldwide.
China on my Mind
Palladino took a semester abroad in China, attending an intensive immersion program in Shanghai where speaking a word of English during the eight-week program was not allowed. "I would actually have gotten kicked out of the program if I spoke English," Palladino said about the strict rule of the program.

The intensive eight-week program saw Palladino traveling through different parts of China and staying with various host families to learn more about Chinese culture. China had always been a place Palladino wanted to go. "It had always been something I wanted to do: Go to China, live in China, and really perfect my Mandarin skills," Palladino said.

Friendships Through the Years
Through J-Terms and semesters away, Palladino learned that friendships need to be maintained, especially when classmates are in different parts of the world for long periods of time. While Palladino makes it a priority to make new friends with classmates at local study away sites, he never forgets to keep in touch with those friends who remain in Abu Dhabi or are at a different location across the global network.

While university seniors around the world are living a similar experience this year, it does not make it any easier. Trying to be productive virtually and creating a structure to his studies are a few of the challenges Palladino has faced. On the positive side, Palladino has formed a much closer bond with friends who are living on campus this year, particularly as students gather in much smaller groups.

Palladino will also always have his memories from Candidate Weekend. "Candidate Weekend will always have a really special place in my heart," Palladino said. His first time in the region, Palladino spent a full day exploring the different parts of Abu Dhabi, and still continued great conversations in the NYUAD common area with fellow candidates until the early hours of the morning. "I slept for 19 hours straight after!" Palladino added.

The conversations have continued throughout Palladino’s four years at NYUAD. "It’s the biggest thing this University has given me: a global perspective and experiences," Palladino said.

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“I am in awe of the resilience my classmates have shown. Empathy and support for each other has grown by the day. Looking at their strength inspired and allowed me to face any obstacle that came my way.”

AMNA HASSAN
Economics | Pakistan
"لقد دهشت فعلاً لمدى صلابة زمائي، كما وأن تعاطفهم ودعمهم لبعض قد تنامى بشكل يومي. استمد مما أبدوه من قوة ثقة بقدرتي على تجاوز كل العقبات في طريقي."

أمانة حسن
الاقتصاد | باكستان
As the senior year class representative, Mehak Sangani is forging connections within the graduating class during an unusual senior year. The Senior Year Experience Committee is typically focused on activities and programming for the graduating class. This year, the role of the committee has given way to something the seniors felt was even more important: advocating for what their senior year looks like during a global pandemic. When Sangani realized Commencement for her graduating class might be different to the one she had always envisioned, she decided to take a more active role by signing up to be the senior year class representative.

As the senior class representative, Mehak Sangani has had a busy year. From assisting with residential housing situations to giving the University insights on the impact of campus operational changes during the pandemic, Sangani helped to represent the voice of seniors and share their wishes to preserve a sense of normality during their final year at NYU Abu Dhabi.

MEHAK SANGANI
ميهاك سانغاني

Biology
الأحياء

Sri Lanka
سري لنكا

COME TOGETHER
كلنا معاً
In This Together

In the tradition of the graduating class, seniors could normally be found 100 days prior to Commencement de-stressing on a sandy beach in Abu Dhabi. But health and safety measures meant things had to be done differently this year. For students who had been looking forward to some of these events, many were left feeling like they were missing out. To help, Sangani organized a virtual session for all NYUAD Class of 2021 seniors to safely attend together and vent at the same time. “The Senior Scream” saw many seniors screaming at the top of their lungs by their windows on campus, or into their computer screen with their peers on Zoom. “In some way it sounds weird, but it was really powerful. It’s the closest thing we can do together,” Sangani said.

Through her role as the senior class representative this year, Sangani had definitely grown closer to her classmates. Something to consider given that when she first started at NYUAD, she was worried about not being able to make any friends. Back home, Sangani attended the same school for over 14 years until she graduated from high school. “I have friends. I am very grateful for them. But when I first came here, I was really worried. I didn’t know anybody,” Sangani said.

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AN EMBRACING ENVIRONMENT

NYU Abu Dhabi’s diverse and multicultural character opened up new horizons of possibility for Victoria Zhu.

ساهم التنوع الثقافي في جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي في توسعة آفاق فيكتوريا زو.
Growing up in New Zealand, Victoria Zhu never really thought about leaving the country to pursue a degree elsewhere. Like many of her peers, Zhu was planning to go to a university in Auckland, and find a job in the city after graduation.

That was until a close childhood friend left for NYU Abu Dhabi. It made Zhu realize what she did not have back home. “I didn’t grow up with an international community… I pretty much lived in New Zealand and Auckland all my life,” Zhu said. Her friend’s positive experience at NYUAD sparked her sense of adventure and desire to enhance her university experience by being around people from different countries and cultures.

An Embracing Community
Zhu is a third culture person who was brought up in New Zealand by Chinese parents. “I was raised in an environment that’s different to their upbringing,” Zhu explained. Zhu had to balance her identity as a New Zealander being brought up by Chinese immigrants.

When Zhu left New Zealand for Abu Dhabi, she was not prepared for the open dialogue and level of acceptance within the NYUAD community. “I came here and realized that all aspects of my identity are valued, not just the parts of me that are from New Zealand, but also the parts of me that are ethnically and fundamentally Chinese,” Zhu said.

A Major Passion
Hearing her classmates talk about their plans to work or intern at great organizations like the United Nations, or work in countries Zhu had not heard of before really shifted her trajectory. “It made me realize that I could also have these opportunities that I thought were unattainable goals before,” Zhu said. “NYUAD has made me more ambitious,” she added.

A passion grew when Zhu landed an internship in Zambia working with children with learning disabilities. There, she began to understand more about educational attainment in public schools. “I became really interested in the kind of the nexus between child development psychology and education, and how those two things interact or necessarily inform one another to shape social attitudes,” the psychology major said. In particular, she was very interested in the psychosocial development of children during the critical age of two to 12, and how it shapes the way they negotiate the world.

Zhu’s experience at NYUAD has opened up different pathways to life after graduation. While she is still deciding between going to graduate school or taking up a job in the UAE, one thing is for sure — she is no longer the same Zhu who thought she would make a life staying in New Zealand.

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Today, you are joining a family of nearly 1,700 NYU Abu Dhabi alumni that span the globe in some 80 countries. Each of you is leveraging your world-class education to become catalysts for positive change in your community.

Alumni of NYUAD are a unique part of the extraordinary whole that is NYU. We share a common bond with graduates from across the world, whether they spent four years in Shanghai, London, or New York. The perspective that NYUAD alumni bring to the NYU community is a valuable piece of the global network to which we all belong.

You are now part of the NYU Alumni Association (NYUAA), the umbrella organization for all University alumni from every NYU school, with a network of more than 600,000 worldwide.

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• Begins upon graduation
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The NYUAD alumni network feels very much like a community, which is exemplified in how easy it is to reach out to and interact with fellow graduates in one’s vicinity. It is really comforting knowing that I will always know someone or someone who knows someone in any part of the world. As NYUAD grows, it is exciting to see the development of a strong alumni network that can leverage its unique global reach.

— Hayat Muhammed Seid (NYUAD ’17)

“إن رابطة خريجي جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي هي مجتمع مصدر يمكن من خلال التواصل بسهولة مع أي خريجي قريب، وأشعر بنوع من الراحة لمعرفتي بأنني على مسافة من أحد ما يرتبطني بهذا الصلة العميقة، وغير بشكل غير مباشر، أيما كنت في العالم، ومع نمو جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي، يتناسب نمو شبكة الخريجين المتواصل لما نوفره من فرص مثيرة حول العالم.”

— حياة محمد سعيد (جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي – دفعة 2017)

“The education of NYUAD continues even after graduation. Previously, I was based in Singapore where I had a core group of friends - most of whom were graduates of NYUAD. We stimulate and support each other both professionally and personally.”

— Shintaro Hashimoto (NYUAD ’16)

“لا تنتهي تجربة جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي بمجرد التخرج، بل تمتد إلى ما بعد ذلك. عملت سابقاً في سنغافورة لفترة، حيث تمت مجموعة أصدقاء من خريجي جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي، وواصلنا دائما الدعم المتبادل والتشجيع في سياقات مهنية وشخصية.”

— شينتارو هاشيمتو (جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي – دفعة 2016)

“NYUAD offered an unparalleled academic experience that prepared students, like me, to tackle global challenges with multidisciplinary teams from different cultural backgrounds.”

— Peter Ndichu (NYUAD ’14)

“قد وفرت جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي للطلبة، ومن فضلين أنشأ تجربة أكاديمية لا تضاهي، جُذبنا لمواجهة التحديات العالمية ضمن مجموعات متعددة الأؤل الأفكار، ومن مختلف الثقافات.”

— بيتر دنيتشو (جامعة نيويورك أبوظبي – دفعة 2014)
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نيو约ك أبوظبي