

STUDENTS GATHER OUTSIDE LAHORE PRESS CLUB TO PROTEST FOR THE REOPENING OF CAMPUS

BY AMINA OMAR '22

Around twenty-five students gathered outside the Lahore Press Club on August 22, Saturday to protest the decision of the LUMS administration to remain closed for the Fall Semester, in light of the COVID-19 threat. The demonstration was conceived with the purpose of drawing media attention to the issue of the university remaining closed in spite of demand from students, who protested against inefficiencies with online teaching, connectivity problems, difficulties with studying from home, and high fees.

Bareha Abbas, '21, organised the protest as an action against the LUMS administration with the aim of ensuring coverage from various media houses. She was strict about the procedures that were to be followed, such as imploring participants to wear a mask and insisting on an "upper cap of 40" in line with government issued SOPs. She further explained the intention behind the movement to #SmartlyReopenLUMS "in a hybrid way was because Pakistan's COVID-19 trajectory allows for that to happen," insisting on the need for students to be able to choose, and for nobody to be forced to return.

Some claimed that the protest had been mismanaged—with a lack of participation and tardiness from the students involved. "The protest was supposed to start at 2 p.m and people started showing up after 3 p.m" was one student's complaint. This sparked a debate about students taking the easy way out and participating in the online campaign to #SmartlyReopenLUMS, but refusing to take part in tangible action.

Others, however, were quick to defend the situation, commending the organizers for pulling off such a feat in the first place, and argued as to how it is difficult for many students to receive permission to participate in such events.

The protest managed to grab the attention of independent journalists as well as major local media networks. Abbas shared, "We actually got coverage from ARY, City 42, Dunya, Bol."

While Abbas apologized for the unexpectedly low turnout, she did feel that the responsibility lay on the shoulders of the students as well. "Causes require numbers. And the organizers alone can't be agents of change."

The event also drew coverage from publications such as DAWN, and was also taken note of by the LUMS administration. In the town hall conducted online just days before the protest, Vice Chancellor Arshad Ahmad had communicated the obligation of the LUMS administration "to be caretakers and gatekeepers" of students' wellbeing. In this open house, the administration cited leading immunologists and global trends as evidence that the decision keep the campus closed for the semester was the right one.

Abbas doesn't consider the protest to have been a failure, but believes that more could have been achieved.

FROM SUDDEN PARTINGS TO AN ONLINE GRADUATION...AND BEYOND

BY MANAHEL AYYAZ KHAN '22



Azka Asad '20 celebrates her graduation at home with family.*

"If this pandemic has taught us anything, it is that technology is today's truth." – Waqas Manzoor M.Phil'20

On 25th July, LUMS, like many other institutions around the world, saw an unprecedented online convocation ceremony. With Malala Yousafzai as the keynote speaker and touching tributes by the music and photography societies, the convocation was a bittersweet affair for not only the graduating class, but for all fifteen hundred of its live streaming audience.

I sat teary-eyed through the convocation in front of the screen, accompanied by my parents, to get a glimpse of what could have been my own graduation. My mother noted how many of the high achievers were female students. "Your university has a lot of brilliant girls," she said.

Four months ago, on 12th of March, HEC announced the closure of all educational institutions, leaving the graduating class with the realization of their LUMS journey being cut short.

In the initial days of the closure, there was a breakout of celebration by the student body as mid-term exams had either been cancelled or postponed. "But who'd have guessed that in that moment, those precious last days of our time here were being taken away from us too," said Azka Asad '20, "There was no closure".

Asad narrated how, despite being oblivious to the full horrors of the pandemic, she and her friends made every moment of their last five days together on campus count. "We were supposed vacate the campus on the 18th of March, but we didn't do it until the last moment. In the meantime, we were together 24/7."

By March 2020, it had not become any easier for the graduating class. They were stuck with a deep sense of nostalgia for their days at LUMS and an overwhelming feeling of missing out.

Asim Waheed '20 said, "I remember at the end of each year after each final exam that I took, I would try to summarize all that had happened in the past year in a few words. A small wave of nostalgia would run through my body at the end of every

semester. That physical sensation was missing this time."

In April, the semester resumed online and everyone was once again busy with trying to navigate through LMS, Zambel, take home essays, and Zoom quizzes and presentations. Once the semester ended, these students were faced with graduation blues. "There wasn't much we could do in the first few months of quarantine" said Waheed, "I think it was in this time that I found out I'm really not as introverted as I thought I was."

From April to July, these emotions were not just restricted to the undergraduate batch. Their seniors from graduate degrees shared the same sense of uncertainty and sadness. "From our field work cutting short to our graduation dinner at Masjid Wazir Khan being cancelled, from job uncertainty to a looming online graduation, it was horrible to sit at home—to say the least," said Waqas Manzoor, M.Phil'20.

It was not entirely blue for the graduating batches. In July and August, as people started settling into the 'new normal', these students found a way to come to terms with their new routine as well.

"It got a little easier," said Waheed. He went on to explain how he busied himself with planning out graduate school, starting a job hunt, enrolling in online courses for personal development, staying in touch with friends, and making a new meme account. "Making a new account allowed me to choose between a wholesome feed and a meme feed. Very subtle, little changes in my routine allowed me to cope with this new normal."

Similar patterns were found amongst his peers. Asad found a new job, Manzoor busied himself with his passion, street theater, and Sanha Tahir '20 seemed pleased with her placement in a well-reputed firm, "The convocation was a bittersweet affair—but I can't wait to experience my office life in person. I've heard they have massages and gyms!"

However, where the LUMS convocation was a bittersweet experience for some, for many it was fulfilling as well. Asad told us about how she and her family dressed up on graduation day just as they would have for a normal graduation and sat in their dining room. Her parents presented her with the graduation book and cap while her sisters took her pictures.

The Class of 2020 parted with a collective feeling of unity and human empathy where they learned to find happiness and gratitude in the small blessings of life. For people like Asad, it was in the shape of celebrating a rite of passage at home with her loved ones. For Waheed, it came in the form of streamlining his future and driving a sense of control out of it. For Manzoor, this happiness came from continuing to do what he loves; street theater. And for Tahir, it was in pursuing her dream job and focusing on the future rather than staying engrossed in her past.

*Note: When we reached out to our other sources for this piece for a photograph, most said that they had not taken any photographs on the day of their convocation.



THE LUMS POST SPEAKS AT SEOUL NATIONAL UNIVERSITY'S ONLINE NEWS CONFERENCE 2020

BY ABDUL WASAY ALI KHAN '22

On 6th September, *The LUMS Post* of LUMS Daily Student, participated in a virtual news conference organized by the student newspaper at Seoul National University (SNU) in South Korea.

The theme of the conference was "Sharing Your Stories: Universities and Colleges after COVID-19" and involved students from 12 different countries including America, Romania, Spain, Germany and Philippines. *The LUMS Post*, along with representing LUMS, also represented Pakistan by being the only delegation from the country.

The conference begun with three key-note speakers giving their input on learning in the age of COVID-19. Professor Jonghoon Bae of SNU talked about the importance of social networking sites, followed by Professor Thomas Kang of SNU who highlighted ways of effective learning during COVID-19. Dr Poornima Luthra, founder of TalentED, capped off the key note speaker session with a video message.

Luthra said, "Significant events in a youth's life affects a person's values, attitudes and behavior, and coronavirus can surely be classified as one such event

which will shape Generation Z going forward."

The conference featured four workshops. *The Post* was represented by speakers in each of the four sessions. Syeda Aiman Zehra '22 spoke at the first workshop on Teaching during COVID-19. Maira Asaad '21, represented *The Post* in the workshop on Evaluation during COVID-19. Manahel Ayyaz Khan '22 and Mariam Mazhar '21 co-presented at the third workshop on communication during COVID-19. Maida Tahir '21, Student Council representative, talked about the university administration in the final workshop.

During the nine hour conference, students from all around the world shared their university experiences during COVID-19 and addressed ways of adjusting to the new normal for the upcoming semester. Important issues in adjusting to the transition to an online semester that were faced by students and universities globally were discussed, and indicated that many issues that are faced by students at LUMS are in fact common to students across the world.

Learnings from this conference will be detailed on *The Post's* website soon.

SETTING EXAMPLES OF EMPATHETIC TEACHING IN THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

BY SYEDA AIMAN ZEHRA '22

When the pandemic forced classes to go online, Maha Zainab Saeed '22 found herself in a crisis. A family member was battling cancer. Her work life included two stressful jobs. Her courses were approaching exam season and here was a 2000 word “Anthropology of Energy” midterm paper that asked for her undivided attention. “I was about to have a nervous breakdown,” Saeed told *The Post*.

She approached her instructor, Professor Priya Sajjad, who immediately set up a Zoom call to hear her troubles. Saeed expressed gratitude at this response: “Would you believe it? She divided those 2000 words by 5 and asked me to send a part every day for feedback... So every day, I would take out 15 minutes just to write that small part.”

Saeed’s experience is one of many unique student struggles that took place this spring. While grievances about online education have been voiced multiple times, there are also those in the student body who have found comfort in faculty efforts to advance learning empathetically.

Anum Shah '20 found her “Religion and Existentialism” instructor, Professor Nauman Faizi creating the same collaborative spirit that his physical classrooms emulated through online features. “Students got to interact with each other, and Sir also interacted with us in different capacities. He was not only teaching; he was also involved in a discussion,” said Shah. These conversations took place in breakout rooms over videos shown in class that served two purposes. The first: ability to apply learned tools for thinking critically. The second: “We were able to talk about our lives through them. We felt heard and involved.”

On assignments, Shah said: “Both Dr. Nauman and Dr. Hassan [Professor Hassan Karar] stressed on it continuously that it is okay if we don’t reach our best potential.”

Shah added that Professor Karar shortened his lectures from 1 hour 50 minutes to 40 minutes to sustain focus. “By the time attention started getting diverted, the lecture would end.”

Where many hailing from the Humanities school preferred live lessons, a number of students from the Business and Science & Engineering expressed that real compassion lay in creating choices for them.

“Sir [Professor Zafar Qazi] would upload recorded lectures at the start of the week and hold a live question

and answer session at the end of it,” said Zafir Ansari '22 on his course, “Network and Computing.”

Ansari explained why this pleased his learning quirks: “I used to ask many questions [before the pandemic]. During online lectures, some instructors would entertain questions only towards the end. That defeats the purpose of understanding a concept while it is being explained.” With recorded lectures, one could pause, do a quick Google search for clarity, and continue on.

Muhammad Faraz Karim '22 held immense respect for instructors breaking online barriers of monotonous, isolated learning by opting for more raw and authentic teaching process. About Professor Qazi, he said, “Sir used a stylus tool to provide visual drawings that helped understand concepts, especially those based on logic.”

Professor Mian Awais, who teaches “Artificial Intelligence”, chose a similar method. “He didn’t have a stylus or an iPad. He shortened his lectures, uploaded them online, and used a pen and paper to deliver difficult concepts,” Karim told *The Post*.

When asked about class preferences, Karim decided to show rather than tell. He shared his screen on Zoom and pulled up Professor Qazi’s lecture on Youtube. His cursor circled around the playlist titled “Network-Centric Computing.” Underneath, videos were ordered as “Lecture 16 Part 1” and so on. “The best thing about recorded lectures is the archive that becomes available to us,” he said.

Some students pointed out that it was easy to zone out where attendance wasn’t mandatory. Hasma Ahmed '22 stressed on the need for some form of obligation from the students by giving the example of her “Introduction to Game Theory” class. “Sir Hasnain Faateh would hold take home and weekly quizzes so even if you weren’t attending class, you still had to review the resources to attempt those.”

Most students were apprehensive about the ease of cheating. Shaheryar Hussain '22 expressed praise for his “Statistics and Data Analysis” instructor, Professor Usman Elahi, with regards to this. “He molded every question according to your roll number so no one had the same answer. This was perhaps the only course in which my learning did not get compromised due to the circumstances I was facing.”

To understand the thought processes in motion at the other end of the classroom

that led to viable methodologies, *The Post* reached out to some instructors on their concerns and subsequent responses.

For Professor Faizi, retaining the dramatic learning arc of his classes that provoked critical thought and questions in students was the biggest priority. “A physical class allows them to shut off the world and think with the material. Now, a porous environment comes with the screen, a shared space. So, I keep thinking of how to create a focused one,” he said. The breakout room helps him create a pocket within that noise where students can share a “mental space.”

Professor Qazi recognised the significance of asking questions for students in his computer science courses. To maintain a two-way communication, he used an online tool, Campuswire, where students could post their queries if the live session wasn’t enough. “Over the course of the semester, more than a thousand questions were answered. This is unbelievable! And some of those questions were answered by the students themselves,” he said.

Professor Qazi raised another concern he had: “How will students know how long to wait in the waiting room for office hours?” He found the solution in Berkeley’s use of an online queuing system designed by Okpy that sends messages to students when their turn is upcoming.

With the news of fall being online, students across batches and schools are worried about learning standards and look eagerly towards instructors for similar patterns of empathy in teaching. The Pedagogical Partnership Programme, an initiative taken by LUMS Learning Institute (LLI), lends hope to these expectations. “This is a student-teacher collaboration where authority and autonomy will lie with the student partner too,” said Fatima Iftikhar, programme co-lead.

On COVID-19 threatening to put launch plans on hold, Iftikhar told *The Post*: “Dr. Suleman Shahid [Director LLI] pushed for it. He said it’s even more important now that instructors will be redesigning their courses in the summers... student experiences will help bring critical feedback on teaching techniques.”

Many classes saw developments in these techniques reaching a standstill up until the pandemic hit in March. Now, students recognize that room has been created for continuous and constructive dialogue on pedagogy that they anticipate will help instructors build a better class experience.

AN UNDERSTAFFED STUDENT COUNCIL WEATHERS A DEMANDING STUDENT BODY THROUGH COVID-19



BY ZOHA AHMED '23

With undisclosed political schemes underway and candidates and their lobbies preparing for a student council election due April, the COVID-19 pandemic halted these preparations when the tenure of the current student council extended indefinitely to date.

The council was forced to adapt to an online setting, a medium none of the members were trained to operate in. During the course of the pandemic, the council has dealt with critical issues that the student body demanded immediate action on. These issues are well-known at this point: the hike in fee that caused social media flurry in May, the #MeToo movement at LUMS in June and the campus reopening issue in July and onwards.

Come the end of May, half the members had graduated, leaving the council severely understaffed.

“The major issue here was that leadership was lost. [The] President, Vice President, and the chairs of half the committees were all gone,” Maida Tahir '21, Student Council representative told *The Post*.

Among a 35 member council, roughly 18 were left post graduation. The General Secretary was now acting as interim-president, committees had no one to report to and everyone was working on an individual basis.

Alongside this, communicating online posed its own unique set of problems. The council could no longer camp outside offices and deal with issues the way they could before. The administration would often not respond on time or fail to communicate entirely.

With no defined date for re-elections, the pandemic escalating and issues accumulating, the student body expressed their grievances with the council’s inefficiency on a daily basis. While the predicaments students demanded responses to were important and relevant, not much leeway was given to the council in light of the novel scenario. They were constantly criticized on every front: for being inactive to siding with the admin and for not delivering on their promises.

“I believe the student body is right to be angry at the lack of communication and the delayed responses. But the concept of immediate responses also fails to take into account a lot of logistical limitations we have nowadays,” said Tahir, while also detailing how it isn’t unfair for the student body to complain about the council’s efficiencies, but how students do not empathise with the fact that these inefficiencies are caused by a situation none of them knew how to deal with.

Council members are students simultaneously adapting to online learning in their respective classes with their own individual problems whilst being susceptible to other COVID related difficulties.

“By just accepting that things sometimes take time to be done, and that we have never chosen the admin over them,” replied Tahir when asked about how the student body can aid the council during this time.

As of now, council elections are tentatively planned for October. The next council, too, will be met with a rare and new set of problems. Although the current council will assist the incoming council to ensure a smooth transition, it is important to be cognizant of the unique setting we as a body of students find ourselves in which affects everyone in one way or the other. Consequently, it is crucial to allow room for trial and error where possible particularly in the case of a student council who are tackling a myriad of newborn issues.

IMPORTANT CONSIDERATIONS



- Students care, but circumstances compromise objectives
- Don’t expect the best-appraisal should also come for getting by
- Balance between interactivity and student convenience

KEY TAKEAWAYS ON TEACHING DURING COVID-19



- Greater availability of instructors to relieve student stress
- Student input offers vital perspectives to course design
- Effective, yet considerate, dealing of academic dishonesty
- Better feedback culture for better learning
- Involvement of student stories to battle isolated learning

INSTRUCTOR TOOL KIT



- Zoom’s Breakout feature for group discussions
- White board and stylus tool for mind mapping
- Campuswire to answer student queries
- OKPY to alert students on waiting time on Zoom
- Live sessions with recorded lectures for Q&As
- Upload recorded lectures to create archive of learning material

LUMS GOES ONLINE, BUT DO ALL ITS STUDENTS?

BY ZOHA FAREED CHISHTI '23

“The environment at home [during the semester] was difficult to say the least. There were constant disturbances—there was no proper learning space. The internet and electricity continued to be top issues. [There have been] multiple ramifications to an online semester,” Mumtaz Khan '22 said.

As the university admin geared up to take the classes online during the spring of 2020, it soon became clear that not every student was equipped with the necessary resources required to adapt to this change. The student body found themselves in an unprecedented position. While some students managed to cope with the transition, others found the online semester to be insurmountable. “I was juggling between my responsibilities at home and the workload of my four courses.” Khan, from Quetta, Balochistan told *The Post*, “The internet and electricity were another issue altogether. We were facing load-shedding and wifi fluctuations every day.” Khan also struggled with creating an isolated working space for himself. He explained, “For the past 2 years, options like the library, IST, dorm room, and DRs were available at our discretion. The drastic and sudden difference was difficult to adjust to (and still continues to be).” It was challenging for him to separate his working hours and leisure hours. The lines between the two blurred.

Wardah Noor '23 from Layyah, Punjab, found herself facing a mountain of problems, too. “I was home in the middle of the semester. I was quick to realise this was not a comfortable set-up for classes.” Her workspace had to be crafted out of the family living room.

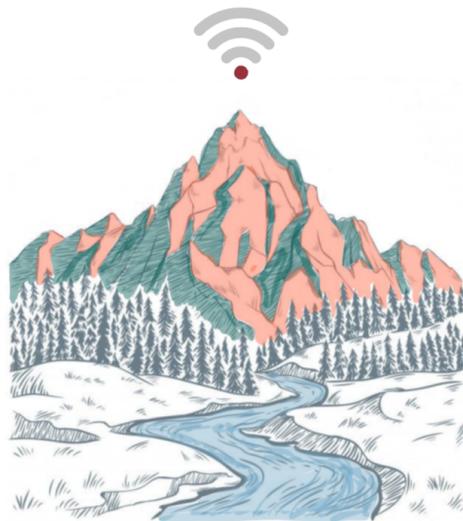
“When you are at home, there is no concept of privacy—your classes mix with all that is happening at home,” she told *The Post*. Living in a joint-family system, Noor would rarely find the peace and quiet required to attend classes. She had to deal with the incessant power cuts and poor internet connection persistent in her hometown, only adding to the hurdles.

In Rawalakot, Azaad Jammu-Kashmir, Nimra Tariq '22 struggled to keep up with her classes, with limited access to the internet. She told *The Post*, “I did not even create a proper study space for myself, I just

shifted between the places where the internet worked better.” Being unable to attend the Zoom sessions with the rest of her peers, she felt she was constantly at a disadvantage. With the lack of real-time engagement with her instructors and denied opportunities for class participation, Tariq felt a void forming in her learning process.

Karim Ahmad '22 went from living with full access to the internet on campus to a valley (Gilgit City, Gilgit-Baltistan) with a significantly low bandwidth. Ahmad said, “As most of the components were writing and research based, it normally took minutes or, in some situations, hours to load a single Google site.”

Ahmad explained that for most students living in Gilgit—and surrounding areas in the north—



keeping up with online classes was a task. Load-shedding and connectivity issues were a huge obstacle. Some of his friends had to move to other cities (with better bandwidth connection) to access online learning. He said, “I used to wait for hours to get my electronic devices recharged. I had to wait for a stable connection (which sometimes only became available after midnight) and missed some of the deadlines.”

In Lahore, Punjab, Munaal Mohsin '23 had set up her study space in her dining room. “I wouldn't say the space was conducive to learning,” Mohsin told *The Post*. “There were a lot of distractions, a lot of noise. My brother had his classes and my mother would also be working from home so this caused a lot of disruption in the WiFi.” Distractions and connectivity issues made the semester challenging for Mohsin.

On the other end of the spectrum, for Muhammad Bilal Shahid '23 from Lahore, Punjab, the shift to online classes was not particularly troubling. Shahid dealt with the occasional anxiety of his connection becoming unresponsive during quizzes or exams. Stability of the internet was not a significant source of anxiety for Shahid during the semester. For him, problem(s) arose in another way. Shahid said, “I believe your peers teach you more than your instructors. Having that resource limited was a big challenge.”

With much of its student body directly affected, the LUMS administration has been arguably mindful of the challenges attached with online learning. During the initial transition phases, several surveys were carried out by the instructors and the administration alike to ensure that course material reached most students.

The administration distributed internet devices with free data (75gb/month) to the students on full financial aid, but the extent to which these helped their circumstances is debatable. For Tariq '22, the free internet device did little to help her case considering there is no bandwidth internet connection in Rawalakot.

Similarly, Noor '22 has concerns about the upcoming fall semester. She said, “For the 2020 fall semester, LUMS must draw policies for areas with limited access to electricity and internet in order to ensure that all students can participate in remote-learning equally.”

INSTRUCTORS WARY OF ACADEMIC DISHONESTY AS FALL SEMESTER GOES ONLINE

BY ABDUL WASAY ALI KHAN '22

“It is a very tough situation to deal with,” said Ali Khan, Associate Dean of the Humanities school, when asked about the infringement of academic integrity that has come up in abundance due to the university going online in its entirety.

Academic dishonesty has turned out to be a major hassle for instructors in schools across LUMS. In Spring Semester 2020, many courses saw unprecedentedly high means and grade boundaries, and a number of students blamed cheating as the biggest reason for it.

Taha Waseem '22 said, “The mean for Calculus 1 this spring was roughly 20 percent higher than last spring without any substantial change in difficulty level.”

With another full-fledged semester announced online, student resentment over academic dishonesty has sparked and there seems to be no quick fix for it from the faculty's end.

“Maintaining integrity is the responsibility of the students,” said Omair Haroon, Assistant Professor at SDSB. He added that even though the instructors have tried to make things better from their end by asking students to turn on cameras during exams and quizzes, the logistical constraints and diverse student circumstances have hindered them from achieving a system that is completely foolproof.

Mohsin Bashir, Associate Professor at SDSB, said, “Any aggressive action by the faculty in this crisis to curb cheating is regarded as inconsiderate and is not well received by the student body because there are expectations from instructors to be more understanding in such a situation.”

Bashir mentioned two ways of going about the problem but said that he was not sure of how to make them practical. He said, “In order to curb unfair

practices, we need to overhaul our teaching methodologies that originate from the era when technology did not exist to make them more relevant to the current day and age.” He added, “There is also a pressing need for an ethical realignment of our student body along with making things less transactional and grade oriented.”

While Bashir's recommendations are more relevant than ever, he accepts that adopting these will take a long time. He labeled the current situation as “complicated” and said that the situation was a cause of concern for him and the rest of the faculty.

Many instructors have tried shifting to oral assessments in the online semester to prevent unfair practices. However, instructors argue that viva and real time virtual interactions cannot be implemented on all courses and written exams are inevitable for students to grasp concepts in certain courses.

Professor Haroon said, “While viva worked in my Auditing course and ensured fair assessment for every student in spring, it is hard to replicate the same model onto Principles of Management Accounting (POMA), which I will be teaching in the upcoming semester. POMA has a lot more to do with numbers and a viva is unlikely to be effective for this course.”

Other instructors are trying to shorten the amount of time allowed to students during exams to prevent unfair practices. Muddasar Razaq, Assistant Professor at SBASSE, said, “Shorter time durations ensure students remain focused on their own work and do not go around helping their peers.”

Fall may present a bigger challenge because instructors will be assessing students online from the very beginning. Many instructors including Professor Haroon and Professor Razaq conceded that irrespective of the number of measures being taken, the system cannot be foolproof. Professor Razaq said, “There will always be a possibility that the student gets

his exam done from someone else and it is almost impossible to hold a student accountable in such a case, for there exists no easy way of proving it.”

Students have also tried justifying academic dishonesty in many different ways. Many feel as though they have no option but to resort to dishonest academic practices because of their circumstances.

Ghazi Ahmed '22 said, “Many students do not have the resources that provide them an equal opportunity to succeed. Load shedding and connectivity issues have marred certain students more than others which essentially paves way for academic dishonesty to ensure parity.”

On the other hand, Shahir Shamim '22, a strong and vocal advocate of academic honesty said, “There's no one to draw a line to establish that a certain person is disadvantaged enough to cheat without it being morally wrong.” He further added, “In our case where there is no centralized body to draw a line to establish that a person is disadvantaged enough to justify cheating, it is just an anarchy and it does not help anyone.”

Professor Khan in his concluding remarks said, “There is always an ethical way out no matter how tough the situation is.” In response to students' justification to cheat he said, “People making excuses of unequal opportunity as a justification to cheat is merely a self-fulfilling prophecy and a way of satisfying their conscience.”

Many instructors acknowledge the intricacies involved in such a situation and urge the students to maintain integrity in their academic practices online to ensure a fair system for all. But there is only so much that the instructors and the administration can do in the face of a global pandemic to curb academic dishonesty, and the only effective way forward at present seems to stem from students taking greater amounts of responsibility.

A CASE FOR A RESTORATIVE JUSTICE PROCESS AT LUMS, FOLLOWING OVER A HUNDRED ALLEGATIONS OF ON-CAMPUS HARASSMENT

BY NAYYAB NAVEED '21

A mere slap on the wrist—that’s what most survivor-victims think will happen to their perpetrators if they approach the Sexual Harassment Committee with their stories of sexual violence. Can anyone blame them? The process is long and excruciating for the survivor-victim, haloed with the fear that new evidence in favor of the perpetrator might trump the case, along with the idea that the survivor-victim can potentially be charged with defamation if they don’t win the case. The deterrents are more powerful than the incentives in this case.

In fact, the numbers are there to show it. About 20-50 cases were made official with the Sexual Harassment Committee (SHC) out of a staggering 100+ cases posted on the LUMS Discussion Forum (LDF) and Girl Power at LUMS groups on Facebook, according to the Student Council representative, Maida Tahir '21. This goes to show that people have “very little trust in the process”, as Tahir states. “People don’t trust the administration and [think] that the process will be too long... [and] people generally do not believe that they will get closure through this,” Tahir explains.

Yet perhaps these reasons can also serve as evidence as to why more than one hundred women turned to the LUMS community online to share their traumatic stories of sexual violence rather than approach the Sexual Harassment Committee directly: they were looking for alternate forms of justice.

The term for this is Restorative Justice. It is based on the concept that harm has been done and someone is responsible for repairing it. The excruciatingly detailed accounts of sexual violence coupled with descriptions of how the sexual offenders made their survivor-victims feel, all in the presence of a large community of friends, acquaintances and fellow students along with the offenders themselves mildly emulated all three constituencies of a restorative justice process, namely: the presence of (a) survivor/victims and secondarily victimized family and friends who suffer distress along with their loved one; (b) community members who experience less safety and social connection when they perceive high levels of crime and low deterrence, yet who simultaneously may be contributing to an environment supportive of sexual violence; and (c) offenders as well as their families and

friends, who experience guilt and shame that is associated with being accused of a sexual crime or belonging to the interpersonal relationship context from which the offense arose.

Famously employed in 1995 in the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) to reconcile the victims with the perpetrators for crimes occurring under the Apartheid, restorative justice can take multiple formats which include and are not limited to sharing circles, victim-offender dialogue, victim impact panels, community reparation boards etc. The very fact that the survivor-victims in LUMS emulated a restorative justice format online themselves with victims, offenders and community all gathering together to discuss individual cases of sexual violence, indicates that it is time for the LUMS Sexual Harassment Committee to do the same, albeit in a formal manner.

Offering a parallel or alternative form of justice to survivor-victims can be promising. SUNY Albany, Siena College and Skidmore College in the United States take a similar stance in their victim-centered approach to restorative justice by providing victims a sense of justice, supporting offenders to recognize and realise the impacts of their behaviour and also include reparations for the victim and therapeutic programmes for the offender.

Participants in restorative justice practices on these campuses have reported that a greater sense of community on campus has developed because of the increased stake the community has in the process of restorative justice as opposed to the typical punitive system. Dr. David Karp of Skidmore College wrote in his paper *Restorative Justice On the College Campus*, of how “restorative processes help educate community members about the need for civic commitment and build student capacity for evaluating the impact of their behavior on the community”.

The LUMS administration and the members of the Sexual Harassment Committee can adopt restorative justice practices similar to ones adopted by the South African TRC and US colleges like SUNY Albany, Siena and Skidmore.

What would this process look like in LUMS?

The first step would be to help the survivor-victim prepare for the conference by mapping out a ‘script’ which can be followed. This would help in understanding well in advance how the conference would proceed, what questions would be asked, and what opportunities each participant would have to speak. This may help the survivor-victim and their assigned counselor (or therapist) to make sure the survivor-victim says everything they want to say and also preempt any stressors. A location is also to be selected which is familiar to the survivor-victim to ensure that they are comfortable.

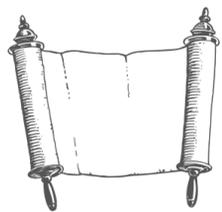
The second step should be the offender’s acceptance of responsibility as a precondition of participation in the conference. It may then be followed by an explanation by the offender for their actions. Once the offender has admitted to his offences, the survivor-victim can have the opportunity to explain how the abuse has affected them. This step is aimed to give some sort of closure, re-humanisation or the feeling of being heard to the survivor-victim. A blind participant from the South African TRC described it as a process which made him “see again.”

It is important to note that not all survivor-victims are ready to face their offender publicly and share their experience with family and friends. And that is okay. It is also important to note those who do opt for a restorative justice method might feel dangerously unhinged because of the powerful reliving of their trauma, or in simpler words, run the risk of retraumatization. And that is also okay (in the case of the latter, victims can be offered specialised help through long-term trauma therapy both before and after the restorative conference, if they opt for it.).

What’s key is that survivor-victims are at least offered the restorative justice process to run parallel with or be an alternate to the quasi-legal proceedings of the Sexual Harassment Committee and the Disciplinary Committee, an action which may inspire campuses around the country to adopt a similar approach and finally give it’s students the justice they deserve.

CHOICES AND OBLIGATIONS: TO UNDERTAKE A SENSE OF RESPONSIBILITY

BY MOHAMMAD BASIT KHAN '22



“We have a moral obligation. We have an ethical obligation. We have a legal obligation. We have a ... human obligation to be caretakers and gatekeepers of your welfare and your

wellbeing, and we take that very seriously and we want you to be with us in this enterprise,” said Vice Chancellor LUMS Dr. Arshad Ahmad, during his address at the Town Hall Meeting held on Friday, August 21.

When Dr. Arshad first addressed the burning question of campus reopening and declared the ethical standpoint the university had assumed during the 3-hour Zoom call, students were optimistic about having their demands heard at the Town Hall. After all, in the age of COVID, there is no doubt that the need of the hour is for compassion to be our guiding principle and to walk together to overcome the hardships we currently face. Yet, by the end of the meeting, the message remains lost in translation and the issue perhaps lies in understanding this sense of responsibility.

The fact that the administration has claimed an ethical standpoint on the issue is commendable. It is unfortunately true that we haven’t seen the same perspective come from a lot of leading institutions in either Pakistan or abroad, and it should be extremely reassuring to know that those leading the community at LUMS in these trying times believe in honouring these obligations. However, it seems as if the administration is not entirely cognisant of the true burden of responsibilities it is claiming to uphold. Of perhaps all the obligations that Dr. Arshad listed above, the legal appears to have most heavily influenced the decisions and actions of the administration so far—at the expense of the other responsibilities it lays claim to. The decision to shut down campus in March, the decision to disallow student presence on campus, and the decision to delay

the start of the semester to September 15 were all mandated by the law. On the other hand, at the peak of the pandemic, LUMS asked its students to travel to campus in order to vacate their belongings from the hostels, quoting the need for renovations in anticipation of a fall semester that was already expected to be fully online. And then, following the extremely controversial ‘fee hike’ saga, the university chose to announce online operations for the semester under the same fee that students paid on campus last year, while details surrounding questions of expense allocation and cost savings are yet to be shared with the student body.

It may be true that the ethical and moral obligations demand much more of the caretakers of this community, but we must not forget that they also signify the more meaningful and important duties.

Living the new normal is easier said than done, a particularly tough reality to grapple with for many, as more and more students consider opting for a semester off. The prolonged ambiguity that has become characteristic of our shared circumstances proves to be perhaps the most damaging factor of all. While graduating seniors and the course of their lives following the online convocation are no longer a direct responsibility of the institution, countless students still enrolled with the university have had to alter semester plans, delaying courses and hoping against hope for an on-campus semester in spring. This hope comes largely out of their disappointing experience of a past online semester and the uncertainty as to whether or not the coming fall is more of the same—a hope they have not been given much solid reason to have in the first place. However, let us also not forget the unfortunate truth that in the aftermath of the deadly first wave of the virus, people have lost family members and loved ones, guardians and caretakers have lost jobs, and households are in shambles. It should not be difficult, then, to understand the frustration of the student body and acknowledge the need for clear, and empathetic communication to ensure at the very least a degree of normalcy and certainty for the hurting community.

It is equally important to remember the devastating impacts of the financial crisis. How an institution deals with this in the moment is a true reflection of the ethos it claims to stand behind. During the Town Hall, the administration relayed to the student body news of budgetary cuts, instated in order to forgo the annually scheduled 13% inflationary increase in tuition fees. Yet, it is too soon to forget the events of the ‘fee hike’ issue. In an email to the student body, Dr. Arshad wrote, “(The 12-20 CH) ‘cushion’ of being able to take extra courses incentivized some students to take course overloads each term ... While the total fees remain unchanged for students taking overloads, students who take less credits (12 CH) are in effect subsidizing those who take more (20 CH). It is fairer for fees to be charged for the number of CHs taken so that some students do not pay for others who opt for overloads.”

However, a major criticism has been how this fundamental change in the financial obligation of attending university came at the height of tensions over the pandemic in May. Furthermore, the proposed model discovered through an obscure fee voucher email, in effect, mandated students to enrol for the coming summer semesters if they wished to keep the annual cost of their LUMS education the same as it would have previously been, binding them to pay out more in fees while the rate of unemployment continued to reach new levels at the same time. It should evidently be no surprise to see how the new financial model, the justifications for its validity, and the incomplete reversal were perceived by the agitated student body when it was brought to light on online forums.

In fact, amidst the onslaught of layoffs, pay cuts, and mass downsizing the families and caretakers of students are seeing, the decision to not opt for an increase in the tuition fee is unfortunately not the same as a reduction. While the semester’s fee remains the same as last year, the income and financial stability

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ACADEMIC DISHONESTY: THE MORAL DEBATE

BY MAROOF TAJ '23

The issue regarding academic dishonesty has been part of the debate among the student body for quite some time. Yet no one has tried to argue in a convincing manner. Part of the reason is that we debate only on social media, and partly, we just don't want to engage ourselves in some meaningful discussion which requires patience and effort. Although I don't consider myself an expert in any way, just to initiate the discussion in a fruitful manner, here I will try to dig deeper into the problem to see if academic dishonesty is justified or not.

How do we define academic dishonesty? We all agree that academic dishonesty is related to "ideas", their creation and citation. With every idea, there are broadly speaking two players. One who creates the idea, and second who uses the idea. If the idea has been cited to the creator, it is academia. If the idea has not been cited and has been proposed as the creation of a user, it is academic dishonesty. For example, if I do not cite an author, this means I [user] am taking the credit for the author's [creator's] ideas, and this is academic dishonesty. Fair enough.

But what if the author gives me permission to use their ideas as my own? Is this academic dishonesty? No. Instead, it is a fair trade of intellectual property (FToIP) which is normal. There are complete laws on intellectual property like any other property (house, vehicle, art, etc.). Therefore, when a user presents the creator's ideas as their own with the creator's permission, it is FToIP.

Hence, so far, we agree that getting assistance, asking for homework solutions, and posting on LUMS Discussion Forum (LDF) regarding someone to solve assignments is not theft as theft is when you violate someone's space and take something without permission.

There are two more agents in this scenario: the reader (in our case our instructors) who wants the user's ideas. But instead of the user's ideas, they are getting deceived by the user by presenting the creator's ideas as their own. So, the actual analogy that one can build is not that "academic dishonesty [as we know it] is theft," but that "academic dishonesty is deception."

Fourth player is the community, in our case—the rest of the class. If the consequences of the actions during this fair trade of intellectual property (FToIP)

were limited to the individual, we could have said that they can practice their freedom and carry on this trade. But since there are various other people involved who get affected by this trade in a negative way, it leads to the conclusion that even this FToIP is immoral.

We must accept there might exist such situations where academic dishonesty can be justified.

Why was this discussion important? To observe a pattern. When we say FToIP is immoral because it hurts others, we are trying to say that moral acts increase the overall happiness of the community. This means that actions are not inherently good or bad, consequences matter. At the same time, we want to take the position that immorality of academic dishonesty is a moral fact.

Isn't that a contradiction? We would allow a person suffering from mental health to practice FToIP but will not admit that it is in anyway moral. This means that we want to maximize society's happiness and have assumed that in all cases, opposing FToIP is the way to achieve it. Which leads to a conclusion that we must accept there might exist such situations where academic dishonesty can be justified.

Bringing the notion of intrinsic inequality under question is important too. Because not everyone has access to the same resources. In this situation, perhaps underprivileged students practicing FToIP is less immoral, or not immoral at all, than privileged ones. But the problem here is that if you are under a contract, all inequalities are considered inapplicable.

The Student Handbook mandates that students must not practise academic dishonesty, under any circumstances. This forces us to adhere to it in spite of the intrinsic inequality in society.

But recent events have occurred in another context – the pandemic. In normal times, at least LUMS is trying to provide everyone an equal ground. Like internet connectivity, access to IST, Library, and so on. But studying from home drastically changes the scenario. Here the question of whether we should compromise on academic honesty arises.

Here, the Student Handbook should take the lead in devising routes that one can take in extreme situations. Even though the Student Handbook addresses the issue of academic dishonesty in great depth, it doesn't address the special circumstances due

to the pandemic directly. It leaves all the responsibility to the people in authority, who in many cases are not fully aware of the student's circumstances.

Another notion is that FToIP can hurt us in the long run. Today's world is extremely accessible. If I copied a code in a computer science exam and got away with it, it is not going to hurt me in my future, because Google (or something similar) will be there to tell me what I don't understand. The shame of being unprepared for this exam would not make me resign from a job in the future. Think of it this way. Do you regret practicing FToIP in your high school? Did it affect your life (apart from being dishonest to your institution)? No. However, this dependence might become a habit which can hurt in the long run but not the specific act itself. The loss is that getting caught will get us a DC which can impact life in various long-term ways.

In the context of maximizing happiness, is there any way to abide by the contract; to not seed inequality in society, and still deal with the issues we face because of academic stress. The first is obvious: be prepared. The second is quite relative to the situation, but so far, what has worked is talking to instructors openly about it. There are various instances where instructors have entertained students with issues regarding lack of resources, mental health, and so on. Student Handbook 20-21 also addresses this in section 31.6: Procedure for Handling Grievances, but again, it just leaves one to the mercy of instructors and doesn't establish a clear rule.

The point is not to preach to you whether to practice academic dishonesty (or FToIP) or not. But, that these actions inculcate inequality, and makes one dishonest. One's friends who might have assisted considering one is struggling, and stakes are higher than usual, aren't to be blamed or tagged as equal partners in the act, because 1) they just traded intellectual property; 2) and, they were preferring greater good assuming one is speaking the truth. This means that the complete responsibility of the act goes to the individual and the status of the act as moral or immoral depends on the situation in which the individual is.

CHOICES AND OBLIGATIONS

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of students and their families has only decreased in the pandemic or, for some, remained the same. A higher tuition fee applies to the freshman and sophomore batches in accordance to the new per-credit hour model that was not reverted for them, while students previously being supported by the financial aid program have had funds withdrawn at this particular time of need.

When Professor Ali Khan says in his [article](#), that "the worth of a community must lie in how it safeguards the most vulnerable in that community", it is crucial to understand that the definition of vulnerability in these circumstances extends beyond physical vulnerability.

It should be a moment of great concern to see the situation boil down to a point where a large number of the student body pushing for the campus reopening actively chose to put their health at risk to justify paying the same financial cost of an on-campus semester. The onus to realise the severity of this crisis falls upon the university administration under the ethical standpoint it has assumed.

What is most important is to prove by example, by decision, and by action that the relationship between the student body and the university transcends one of a transactional nature. With the VC's promise of meaningful updates, prioritizing empathy and forging a meaningful conversation on the foundation of transparency and accountability is vital to help the student body understand the decisions that are made and what they entail with clarity—if we are to truly inculcate the trust that the administration asks of its students. What is perhaps most important, is to understand the true essence of the obligations and standards LUMS holds itself responsible for maintaining. The bigger picture dictates that compassion be our guiding principle in these trying times.

INTRODUCING THIS YEAR'S EDITORS

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF	Maira Asaad
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ART DIRECTOR	Emil Hasnain



"The sun will sometimes melt a field of sorrow that seemed hard frozen: may it happen for you."

– Sheenagh Pugh, "Sometimes".

"When despair for the world grows in me and I wake in the night at the least sound in fear of what my life and children's lives may be, I go and lie down where the wood drake rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feeds. I come into the peace of wild things who do not tax their lives with forethought of grief. I come into the presence of still water. And I feel above me the day-blind stars waiting with their light. For a time I rest in the grace of the world, and am free."

– Wendell Berry, "The Peace of Wild Things".

Readers' Editor

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