

Iraqi official gives insight into new government

The student body, faculty and staff had a unique opportunity to get insight into the former and current Iraqi government when Mohammed Al-Saady offered to give a lecture entitled "Iraq's Economy and Government: Nine Years since Change."

Since June 2010, Al-Saady has been the Vice Chairman of the Economic and Investment Committee in the House of Representatives for the Iraqi government. He offered to give this lecture when he came to the Mohawk Valley to visit his son, Daowd Al-Mula, who is a student at MVCC and will be graduating in May.

"This is a great opportunity for MVCC to welcome Mohammed Al-Saady and hear firsthand how the new Iraqi government is developing," said MVCC President Randall J. VanWagoner, Ph.D.

Al-Saady holds a Bachelor of Science in Chemistry from Baghdad University (1972) and lived through the Saddam Hussein regime. His career includes being production manager in Rafid Plastics Manufacturing Inc., manager of Al-Diaa Plastic Products Factory and eventually CEO of Rafid Inc. Since 2006, he has served as Advisor of the Iraqi Prime Minister and Director of the Follow-Up Department in the Iraqi Prime Minister Office, Alternate Chief of Staff of the Iraqi Prime Minister Office, and Chairman of Iraq's Implementation and Follow-up Committee for National Reconciliation.

"When the Ba'th Party assumed power in 1968, Iraq was a rich country. Besides oil, there were a relatively prosperous agriculture and promising and growing industry in which the private sector was playing an important role. The country was enjoying social and political stability. The freedoms were protected to certain extent," said Al-Saady, whose son translated the lecture.

After the Ba'th Party assumed power, Iraq started a strong movement into socialism as the state controlled most of the facilities of the economic life. The government began to use the fortunes of oil to militarize the society by building a strong army which in turn sparked the first gulf war due to the arrogance of power, according to Al-Saady. Iraq entered the war against Iran with reserves of \$80B and faced a debt of \$108B afterwards. In an effort to elevate this debt, Iraq turned an eye to Kuwait and its rich oil fields as a way to get out of debt.

"The regime thought that it can compensate the consequences of the war, but it put itself in the trap of the international sanctions that started destroying Iraq on all the social, economic, educational, health and service levels," said Al-Saady. "During more than 34 years, the regime only succeeded in the suppression of the people with severe cruelty. The people and opposition lost hope in getting rid of this regime that started preparing the sons of Saddam to assume power following their father."

In 2003, an international coalition came to overthrow the regime of Saddam and the Iraqi people were so happy when



TODAY'S IRAQ - Mohammed Al-Saady, Vice Chairman of the Economic and Investment Committee in the House of Representatives for the Iraqi government, discusses the state of Iraq while his son - Daowd Al-Mula - translated for him. Al-Mula is a student at MVCC.

the coalition forces toppled the regime of Saddam, says Al-Saady. He went on to point out that in the area of security, Iraq has achieved great success since 2005-2007. It was during those years, wide areas fell into the hands of the terrorists and Al-Qa'idah announced its alleged Islamic state. "Now, all areas of Iraq are under the control of the government. The markets and life returned to their normal situations and they stay open until late hours of the night."

According to Al-Saady, the Al-Qa'idah organization has crumbled and lost its ability to launch attacks on a regular basis. The organization is able to "launch a terrorist attack from time to time by which they are trying to say that they are still there, but in fact they lost their ability to distort the progress of the country that moves forward or return the situations backward."

Under the new Iraqi government, new laws encourage a market economy causing inflation to drop from 29 percent in 2003 to 4.2 percent in 2011. Oil production has increased from 600,000 barrels per day in 2003 to 2.6 million barrels per day in 2011. Oil production is expected to reach 12 million barrels per day in 2015.

Other economic recoveries include unemployment falling from 25 percent in 2003 to 15 percent in 2011. The GDP increased from \$1,300 in 2003 to \$3,381 in 2011. The federal reserve was increased to about \$60 billion.

Al-Saady closed out his lecture by answering questions for about 30 minutes. These topics covered such areas as the amount of Western investment, the current events in Syria, the safety for foreigners in Iraq, what future there is for Iraqi who fled the war, areas of economic investment, and the influence Iran has on the new Iraqi society.

PTK hosts transfer & scholarship night

More than 75 high-achieving students attended the Honors Transfer and Scholarship Night that was hosted by the Phi Theta Kappa chapter on Thursday, March 22.

The PTK chapter started this event two years ago to raise awareness of special transfer and scholarship opportunities which exist for students with high GPAs. At the event students heard from Frank DuRoss, Executive Director of Institutional Advancement, about the scholarships funded through the MVCC Foundation, and Jim Maio, Director of Career and Transfer Services, about the transfer application process.

Students were also treated to a Skype presentation from the Wayne State Honors College which provides a unique transfer and scholarship opportunity for MVCC students to transfer into their award-winning Honors program in Detroit.

PTK Scholarship Advisors Sue Smith, Robert Christman and Mary Hartz talked students through the online applications and criteria for numerous competitive national scholarships, and students also learned how to utilize the collegefish.org website which was designed to help students transferring from two-year schools identify schools of interest and scholarships.

Students who were unable to attend the event are still able to receive the information from the PTK office in the library or by contacting any of the advisors.

Sneaker Angels support Ted Moore Run/Walk

The 15th Annual Ted Moore Run/Walk is less than a month away and excitement for this event is growing with the arrival of warmer weather. The 5K Run/Walk has increased in popularity each year, with last year's event setting a record of 242 participants.

This year more than ever MVCC Faculty, Staff and Student Clubs have stepped forward to help raise money and increase awareness of the Ted Moore Run/Walk. "I'm excited each year to see how many faculty and staff members take an interested in the Run/Walk. It has become an annual event which brings much of the community together for an enjoyable morning while also enforcing an important message," said Deanna L. Ferro, Run/Walk Race Director

as the money raised goes to the Ted Moore Memorial Scholarship fund.

This year's Ted Moore Run/Walk will be held Saturday, May 7, on the Utica Campus outside of the Jorgensen Athletics/ Event Center. Back by popular demand is the sale of Sneaker Angels which can be purchased for \$2 each. These can be purchased from Ferro or any of the Ted Moore organizing committee members.

Faculty, Staff and Students are encouraged to participate in the run walk, however if you are unable to attend on Saturday, May 7, please consider sponsoring a student, a colleague or simply make a donation to the Ted Moore Memorial Scholarship Fund.

Athlete of the Week For the second year in a row, Savannah Boucher continues to raise the bar of excellence on the MVCC women's track and field team. After this past weekend, Boucher is well on her way to winning another national championship and earned the MVCC Athlete of the Week honor as well. Boucher broke her **Boucher** own school record in the 3,000-meter Steeplechase at the Hamilton College Invitational. Her winning time was time of 11:30.56, surpassing the old record by 26 seconds. The sophomore Liberal Arts major is currently leading the National Junior College Athletic Association's Division III in both the 5,000-merer and steeplechase. Boucher is a graduate of New Hartford High School.



Blackboard workshops held over Spring Break

Taking advantage of the down time for many staffers over the Spring Break, the Office of Educational Technologies offered two Blackboard workshops.

Jim Lynch, Norma Chrisman and Ben Duerr hosted these workshops with a Caribbean/Luau theme and luncheon for all those attending. In the first workshop, eight faculty and staff members took advantage to learn how to set up the new tutoring system as well as the online vertual class.

One of the new features which seemed very receptive from those in attendance was the new one-stop control panel and the ability to create a "web folder" which saves the instructor's work automatically and uploads it to Blackboard. There is also the option to do it the old way.

MY MVCC. MY STORY.

This series of videos gives you a whole new look at the college by telling the stories of the faculty, staff, and students who carry out MVCC's mission everyday.

Ep. 1: Justin Rahn, College Advisor



My MVCC. My Story.

Tales from behind the scenes of student success are now being told through technology via YouTube and www.mvcc.edu.

The College has launched a new initiative, "My MVCC, My Story," to help faculty, staff and students tell their stories through viral video. Staff from the Office of Educational Technologies and the Office of Marketing and Communications have begun production of a series of short films which highlight the work of the MVCC community. Films are available on YouTube.

"Everyone has a story. This is a chance to tell those great stories from the perspective of people here at MVCC," said Matthew Snyder, Director of Marketing and Communications.

The plan is to produce films on a regular basis as exciting things and events occur in Utica, Rome and the surrounding communities. "This is a way to take our existing tools and use them to help people volunteer their stories and better connect with each other," said Jennifer Rotundo, media content coordinator. If you are interested in sharing the story of your experience at MVCC, contact jrotundo@mvcc.edu.

MVCC hosts WISE Conference

MVCC will host a WISE (Women in Science and Engineering) conference on Wednesday, April 4 from 11 a.m. - 1 p.m. in the second floor lobby of the Information Technology Building.

The keynote speaker will be Maryrose Eannace with the mission being "to educate, advance and unite women in the pursuit of STEM related fields."

The goal of this conference is to create mentorships for young women who pursue STEM related programs and careers while also training teachers in retention/recruitment of women in STEM. Any and all those interested in helping to promote STEM programs to women are invited to attend. Other goals include identifying best practices of other institutions with respect to women in the science fields, and help perform research related to women in STEM.



Spring Transfer Fair next step for students

The Office of Career and Transfer Services hosted its Spring Transfer Fair on Monday, April 2, in the Alumni College Center with 52 four-year institutions in attendance. The event ran from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m.

This was the largest Spring Transfer Fair held on the MVCC Utica Campus with 52 schools, organized by Michael Henningsen.

Four-year institutions taking part included University at Pittsburgh-Bradford, Keystone College, Grand Canyon University, SUNY Delhi, College of St. Rose, SUNY IT, Roberts Wesleyan College Wells College, University at Albany, LeMoyne College, SUNY Oswego, Manhattan College, RIT, Niagara University, Bellevue University, University at Buffalo (UB), Alfred State College, Keuka College, SUNY Empire State College, Excelsior College, St. John's University, Southern New Hampshire University, SUNY Oneonta, St. John's Fisher College, SUNY Cortland, D'Youville College, Morrisville State College, The College at Brockport, Buffalo State College, University at New Haven, Champlain College, Bryant & Stratton College, University of Maryland-University, Burlington College, Mount Saint Mary College, Johnson & Wales University, and SUNY Plattsburgh.



Spring Meltdown

With no snow in the forecast, MVCC's Spring Meltdown turned into a sizzler with more than 2,800 fans pouring into the Robert R. Jorgensen Athletics/Event Center on Saturday for the premiere Cultural Series concert.

Headlining the event were chart-topping artists Sean Kingston and Hot Chelle Rae.

"Sean Kingston and Hot Chelle Rae are two of the biggest acts in pop music today, and we were thrilled to partner with the area's number one hit music station, 97.9/105.5 KISS FM, to bring them to MVCC and the community," says Bill Dustin, Events Administrator. "Kingston and HCR packed the house."

Both performing groups came out fired up and the audience responded with cheers erupting. They performed their hit songs as well as some of their new materials.

Sean Kingston first burst onto the music scene in 2007 with his unique blend of reggae, pop, rap and R&B. His first single, "Beautiful Girls," made history with one of the fastest ascents up the charts worldwide. More Top 10 hits followed, including "Me Love,"

"Take You There," and "There's Nothin'," propelling Kingston's self-titled debut album to No. 1 in 21 countries. His sophomore album, "Tomorrow," released in 2009, reflects the growth in his life as well as in his career, resulting in a collection of positive songs that mixed eurodance with electropop and the hit single "Fire Burning." In 2008, he received an NAACP Image Award

for Outstanding New Artist. Kingston also has won a MOBO Award for Best Reggae Act, and numerous Teen Choice Awards.

Fresh off their victory at the American Music Awards for New Artist of the Year, pop band Hot Chelle Rae has a lot to celebrate. The single, "Tonight Tonight," which peaked at No. 7 on the Billboard Hot 100 in July, was declared "one of the catchiest pop-rock anthems of the summer" by USA Today and is still getting air time months later. The success of "Tonight Tonight" and the follow-up single "I Like It Like That," has propelled the band and its new album "Whatever" into the spotlight. The album is filled with feel-good tunes that appeal to a wide audience.