

StoryCorps/Interview Project

Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Sarah Chaddad

Narrator: Tamer Aladin Sergany

Date: 21/02/12

Place: Narrators home. Bldg 5C, 1185 Square, Apt 201,
Masaken Sheraton, Heliopolis

Tamer Aladin Sergany

Sergany was born on Nov. 20, 1989. He graduated from The American University in Cairo AUC in Fall 2011 and is currently searching for jobs in New York, his home city to which he returns this coming Friday, Feb. 24, 2012. He lived most of his life with his mother, his father and his younger sister in New York City from which he earned his high school degree. He returned to Egypt after this and gained his college experience at AUC from which he graduated with a BA in general business management.

Sergany was chosen for this interview because of his background and education. Growing up in the USA, he has had an American education all throughout his life, nicely mixed with his original Egyptian culture. Topics discussed in this interview include AUC's classes' efficiency in preparing students for life after graduation, the liberal arts education and clubs at AUC and how they help shape students' capacities and skills.

12 February 2012

Persons present: Sarah Chaddad
Tamer Aladin Sergany

Chaddad: My name is Sarah Chaddad and I'm here interviewing AUC graduate Tamer Sergany.

Hi. Thank you for accepting to be interviewed.

Sergany: No problem. My pleasure.

Chaddad: Alright. Uh, I wanted to talk to you about, uh, your experience at AUC on an educational level. I, like, I know you're a fresh graduate. Just graduated in the fall semester. Now it's the spring semester. So, uhm, my first question is do you think that AUC really, uhm, prepared you for what's coming up after AUC, like, career-wise?

Sergany: Hmm, well, I'm actually gonna have to find out 'cause I'm about to enter the job market and, uh, you know, I really think AUC does have a legitimate curriculum, especially the school of business, uh, mostly because it's accredited by the AACSB [Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business]. I don't know if you know about that accreditation but it's a big accreditation for business schools and, uh, you know, they've proved themselves by getting - by being able to have that accreditation that I think it is able to, you know, it has prepared me efficiently for the future and inshalla, hopefully, you know, we'll see how- how prepared I am (laughter).

Chaddad: Yeah, uhm, what - so you're in business-

Sergany: Yeah.

Chaddad: So what kind of a job are you looking for?

Sergany: Well, my specification was general business so I'm really well-rounded in all areas of business. I mean, I've applied to logistics companies, I actually had a job in logistics for a temporary, uh, amount of time. I am well versed in marketing. I know finance decently. I'm - I have a knack for accounting. So I've really taken business in all, uh, different business, uh, fields so, uh, to be honest, yeah, I've - I'm really looking forward to entering any of the business fields. I don't know if that answered your question.

Chaddad: Yeah, it did. Thank you. Uh, what do you think would be some of the courses that helped you the most to understand what kind of a job you would look for later, what kind of field that you would wanna go into?

Sergany: Management 470 without a doubt. Hands down. I took it my last semester and I felt that was the most useful course I've ever taken in my AUC career. It gave you such a well-rounded aspect of business administration. Management 470 was actually, uh, business consulting and case applications but you really learn a lot from it and it really helped me, like, realize that I'm into management and I'm into, like, the administrative tasks of business. Maybe not so much specific field but imma have to say management 470 really helped out.

Chaddad: So would you like to manage something more along the lines of a small company that's - that's still starting out or something that's on a bigger scale?

Sergany: I think that the first thing you said would be epic for me right now because, like you said, I'm a fresh graduate, I'm looking for jobs so I - like, like I said before, I really love management but I don't think I can handle, or I'm competent enough to go manage, like, a large company at the moment, even if it was just like a mid-level or low-entry management position. I think one would have to start off small in local companies or small companies and practice management trainee skills. I - so, yeah, I think it'd be better if I looked at local companies or small companies or even stores, you know, stores need managers, too. Uh, brand, uh, many chains, you know, you could be a store manager at a specific branch. I was thinking more along the lines of that or, to be honest, any really management position. You don't have to be a manager of a store but you could - you can be employed at a specific store and still be considered doing a task of management, something managerial. So anything, you know, for an entry guy like me I think would be great, any management position would be great, yeah.

Chaddad: Do you think, uhm - Do you think it'd be important for people to look more for fresh graduates from AUC or other, uh, universities? Do you have an idea of how AUC would've made you guys, AUC graduates, more competent in the field than other graduates from different universities?

Sergany: Imma have to say AUC gives a competitive edge, you know. AUC's legit within the region. A lot of people are looking for AUCians specifically because they have this, this, this language. They have the English language. They have the - They have the Arabic language. This is something that - This is a standardization of the world. This is globalization at work and AUC delivers that globalizaton, that standardization, that liberalization they talk about so much in their academic curriculum and their education. From the moment we entered AUC, they're been hammering to us that we have a liberal education and you know what, that - that - that really gives you a well-rounded edge, other than other universities. Not to say that other universities aren't good. It's just to say AUC gives you extra stuff and you might think it's useless, but now that I look back on it, you know, I'm well-rounded in business, I have - I know I can talk about other fields that aren't just business, so I really think AUC does deliver a competitive edge but, at the same time, I'm gonna be honest, I do think AUC is also overrated.

Chaddad: How would you say that it's overrated? Like, in what fields, in what - on what level?

Sergany: Well, to be honest, employers just ag at the sight of AUC graduates. They see AUC on your resume and they think you're the most , uh, competent, most well-educated person in the world. That's not entirely true. Yes, we - we - we do turn out - we make fresh graduates every semester but there's also lots of other competent people out there. It's just the very name AUC itself gives it an edge but that shouldn't bt the

reason why it gives it the edge. It's what AUC delivers, not just the name itself. So that's when I say overrated, you know, people look at the name and they're like "wow, that's awesome". They think of how much you paid tuition, not the skills you learned, you know?

Chaddad: Do you think people could learn more skills based on their background only or do you think AUC could provide something that'd help students more, like extra classes or extra work in the classes or a different kind of approach, for example?

Sergany: Hmm. Well, to be honest, I think, uh, AUC already does, uh, give, uh, extra-curricular courses and training sessions but, um, in order to - to be honest, uh, I think - I think AUC really doesn't do much, you know? I'm - I'm not sure if I answered your question but AUC already does have things like that but I don't - I'm not sure if, you know, AUCians go for them or - or if it's worth it, you know.

Chaddad: Do you think the clubs at AUC help in that manner?

Sergany: Yes. I'll have to admit the clubs do help. The clubs really, really help out because I joined quite a few clubs and I actually learned a lot from the clubs. I learned (laughter) To be honest, I learned more in some of the clubs I was in than some of the courses I took. Like, I - I took, you know, high positions in these clubs and you, really, it's like you actually have a job. Like, you actually have a, uh, a career in AUC, you know, as business manager, as public relations manager, you need to fulfill your tasks well or

else you're not gonna keep the position. I actually think, yeah, there's a lot of good clubs and they really do help out when it comes to making more competent, more skilled graduates.

Chaddad: What do you think are some of the clubs that, like, really put you on the spot when it comes to doing your job right but having, like, the whole goal of, uh, of clubs, the whole entertainment idea as well as the hard work that comes along with it?

Sergany: True, true. Well, I - I - I'm not down with the entertainment aspect of the clubs. You know, clubs aren't made to entertain. They're there to, you know, commit and do their events. Okay, maybe there's entertainment in it but - but I'd have to say the clubs I was in, you know, The Independent newspaper really taught me more about business, how the logistics works, how the newspaper is bought. You have to deal with lots of, uh, different parties such as the OSD [Office of Student Development] in relation with the newspaper, in relation with the different offices. So, yeah, I really did get a broad scope of business when I took that position and,, uh. Yeah, I really do feel it helped with my major but that doesn't go to say, you know, you can just do that without, you know, focusing on your academics.

Chaddad: So, back to the point of liberal education.

Sergany: Yeah.

Chaddad: Do you think, uhm, these courses are really important when it comes to how many we take of them as AUC students?

Sergany: Hmm. Good question.

Chaddad: Or does it matter more on the level of quality or - what is your opinion?

Sergany: To be honest, imma have to say you need both. Like, I can't say you just, you know, crunch out the courses and the credits 'cause that's not right but at the same time you can't just say, you know, "it's all about the quality. It doesn't matter how many courses you take." Like, you do need to take a number of courses in order to, like, be competent in your field. So, I think it is actually a combination of having the good amount of quantity as well as quality. Maybe AUC lacks in one of the two. I would have to say - I mean, I think it was good quality and I think the quantity was pretty good, too. So imma have to say AUC's go tthat balanced pretty down but yeah, you can't just say, you know, it's either quantity or quality. You definitely need both and I think AUC gives both.

Chaddad: How well do you think they explain this to students as - when they come - when the students first enter AUC as freshmen.

Sergany: Hm. I think it's weak. You know, to be honest, no hard feelings or anything. When I did FYE [First Year Experience], it was a joke. In 2007, FYE was literally a waste

of my time but they're improved in FYE and I've - I'm hoping they've improved with the fact that you knew - you do need this balance 'cause, up till my junior year, I was like "why am I doing a liberal arts education? Why am I taking these courses that I don't even wanna do?" So I really do think they do need to do a better job, especially in the first year when you enter AUC, that, you know, they need to stress the importance of quantity and quality, like you said before.

Chaddad: So, do you feel like if you applied in many places that a lot of people would reply?

Sergany: To careers, you mean. Jobs.

Chaddad: Yeah, jobs.

Sergany: I have been, uh, uh, applying to a lot of places and almost all of them have replied but, you know, uh, yeah. I have applied to a lot of places and a lot of people have accepted me and I've gotten lots of interviews but, I don;t know. That's just my fault that I haven't found the right job yet but absolutely. I mean, AUC does help when it comes to finding a job and all but definitely in this region, you know, I'm about to go tackle employment in America and we'll see how it goes there but I it definitely helps out in the region for sure.

Chaddad: Do you think your education at AUC is gonna be a plus for you to be able to find a job in the, uh, in the States and be able to work there?

Sergany: I sure hope so (laughter). I sure hope so. You know, I could come at the angle that it's, you know, culturally diverse and it's in the other side of the world so, you know, I have a lot of international knowledge and background. So I do think that'll be a plus. That'll definitely be a major plus in America, yeah.

Chaddad: Alright, well, thank you so much for your time.

Sergany: It's my pleasure, Sarah. It's my pleasure.

Chaddad: It was very nice interviewing you.

Sergany: It's my pleasure, Sarah. Thank you for being so patient with me (laughter).

Chaddad: (laughter) Thank you.

Sergany: Good luck.

Chaddad: Thank you.