AES, IOWA

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7,170

MILES

MAJD’S VOICE

Award-winning podcaster pursues STEM

BY DANIELLE GEHR
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Karate enthusiast, science lover, award-winning podcaster.

These are some of the ways to describe Majd Abdulghani, 23, a Saudi Arabian woman and Iowa State graduate student who gave a 25-minute glimpse into her world after recording her daily life for two years.

This Radio Diaries project, which took place from when she was 19 until she was 21, brought up themes of marriage and the expectations of women in Saudi Arabia. The main recurring topic though was Abdulghani’s pursuit of a career in science, specifically genetics.

Now, after her time as a podcaster has come and gone, her aspirations have brought her to Ames where she is working toward a master’s degree in genetics development and cell biology.

“Your know it’s the norm for girls to study now. It’s not strange, it’s not a big deal,” Abdulghani said. “What I want to do in life is I want to be a scientist. I want to get a master’s and then I want to get a Ph.D. and then I want to do a Postdoc. This is my life plan.”

Abdulghani’s love for science stems from the environment she grew up in. She was raised in what she called a science-centered family. Her mother, a computer engineer, received her doctorate while raising her five children. Her father works as a psychiatrist.

“Their were always so many books to read and that was really our pastime, me and my brothers, as well as computers and internet because my mom, as a computer engineer, had to work with them a lot,” Abdulghani said. “I remember in the early days when she’d log me onto the Barbie website.”

Because of this exposure to science and technology, Abdulghani said she always wanted to do something with science as her career.

Abdulghani thought she’d follow her mother’s footsteps by going into a field involving computers or technology. This changed when she began to study genetics in biology classes.

From then on, this is all she wanted to pursue.

‘An opportunity to have my voice heard’

Typically, Radio Diaries seeks out their own diarists. This time, they thought they’d let the diarists come to them.

The podcast’s producers started an international search for a new teenage diarist and received over 1,000 entries.

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“My decision was more why say no when there’s nothing obviously negative about it,” Abdulghani said. “So, it was like I felt like it was an opportunity to have my voice heard and I didn’t think saying no was wise even though I didn’t really know what I wanted to say.”

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RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA

TO AMES, IA

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DACA deadline extended

What has happened so far?

BY DEVYN LEESON
@iowastatedaily.com

The Trump administration planned to end the Obama-era executive order known as DACA on March 5 unless Congress passed more permanent legislation, but the Supreme Court bought more time for DACA.

District courts out of California and New York force the Trump decision earlier in February saying it was an “arbitrary” reasoning for ending the executive order, which under the Administrative Procedures Act disallows any administration from creating or tearing down a policy without “sound legal reason.”

The White House press secretary Raj Shah said in a statement, DACA was “clearly unlawful,” and the decision from the lower courts were a “usurpation of legislative authority.”

“We look forward to having this case expeditiously heard by the appeals court and, if necessary, the Supreme Court, where we fully expect to prevail,” Shah said.

Following these statements, the Trump administration made a request to the Supreme Court to appeal the California District Court’s decision on the grounds that a district court can’t make decisions that affect the entire country.

The Supreme Court denied this request effectively allowing the litigation to go through the lower courts first.

The implications of this are still uncertain; DACA will stay intact as long as the lawsuits are being litigated, but the attorney general is currently not accepting renewal applications to DACA which means some could still lose their immigration status.

As the deadline nears, 100 DACA recipients per day have been losing their work permits and deferred status, which only puts more pressure on Congress to act, according to Time Magazine.

Reforms to the immigration system have been a growing concern for Congress over the last 30 years; this is true now more than ever as lawmakers are unable to come to a solution over the fate of over 800,000 “Dreamers” who could face deportation.

The immigrants in question are here on the basis of the Obama-era policy known as DACA or Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals. This policy allowed children below the age of 16 who were brought here by their parents before June 15, 2007 to temporarily stay in the U.S. until congress decided what to do with them. Children who are allowed to stay, often called “Dreamers,” are unable to apply for permanent residency or citizenship but are able to enroll in college, get jobs and obtain valid identification like driver’s licenses.

This temporary status means DACA recipients must reapply every two years to renew their status and is why ending the policy would lead to deportations.

Opponents have compared DACA to previous reforms in history like the ones passed by Reagan known as the Immigration Reform and Control Act of 1986. Since its passage, immigration laws have been unchanged despite multiple attempts at new reforms. This is a result of the 1986 changes being seen as ineffective by many and immigration reform slowly becoming a more divisive issue.

Dirk Deam, senior lecturer in political science, said this shift away from bipartisan immigration reform didn’t really start until the Bush era and led to a complete lack of action by Congress on the issue.

“Obama tried for immigration reform and he hit the Republican wall, so Obama acted unilaterally and passed an executive order,” Deam said.

Deam further explained that executive orders are possible because laws and statutes all have room for “discretion” when interpreting them. With DACA, Obama said current immigration laws should be enforced on a status of priority.

Children who met the criteria under DACA were put as the last priority. This means DACA essentially just pushed back any decision on deportation of an individual until DACA status.

“The is where the phrase deferred action comes from in DACA,” Deam said.

The recent urgency to have congressional action is due to President Trump’s declaration that, without changes made by congress, DACA would be phased out by March 5.

Supporters of DACA find this prospect troubling as many, if not all, of the Dreamers are assimilated into society and deportation would entail tearing apart communities. “Dreamers contribute massively to our culture and economy. To deny or deport them would be to call into question all immigration,” Deam said.

Since then, two district courts have ruled the March 5 deadline has to be pushed back following judges concerns that Trump undid the Obama policy “arbitrarily.”

Deam explained any administration, including Trump’s, has to follow the Administrative Procedures Act when creating or undoing policy. This act says laws must be done or undone with a comment period, with public hearings and with sound legal reason.

“When Obama created DACA he followed the APA and now it is being undone with no respect to the APA or immigration law.”

Dirk Deam

Last November, the Daily sat down with three Iowa State community members and asked them to share their experiences being DACA recipients. Read the stories at iowastatedaily.com.
A look into Saudi culture

People outside of Saudi Arabia have their own idea of what life is like in the Arab nations, one of these perceptions being that Saudi women are oppressed.

Sarah Kramer introduced “Majd’s Diary,” calling Saudi Arabia one of the most oppressive places in the world for women.

She added, though, that this is changing. One of the more recent changes being women getting the right to drive.

Kramer said there are more women on college campuses than men.

Abdulghani lived in London from ages 10 to 15 while her mother worked toward her doctorate there.

Upon returning to Saudi Arabia before turning 16, Abdulghani went straight to university. She said this was a big learning curve on top of adjusting to a culture she wasn’t used to.

“I feel like I grew up more in the U.K. than I did in Saudi because from 10 to 15 that’s where most of my growing up happened,” Abdulghani said.

The shift Kramer spoke of was evident to Abdulghani as she returned to Saudi Arabia.

“I definitely saw the change during my growing up especially before I left to London when I was around 10 and then when I came back,” Abdulghani said. “I felt like there was a big difference.”

For example, she said before she left pretty much every woman had to cover her hair and wear a closed abaya, a long robe-like dress.

When she came back, she saw many women not covering their hair and wearing opened abayas.

The fashion of the abaya has changed as well.

Abdulghani said women have shifted from plain black to abayas with color and designs. She said there are fashion shows for abayas and they have become fashion statements.

She also said female gyms were nonexistent before she moved to London. When she returned, there were gyms, but she came accepted in Saudi Arabia.

“I do think it’s generally restrictive, but I also think that what western culture doesn’t realize is that a lot of women are happy with how things are,” Abdulghani said. “They place these restrictions on themselves a lot of the time, so even if, for example, you might say that enforcing the abaya is restrictive, but even if that law wasn’t there, I am pretty sure a lot of women would still wear it.”

With the niqab, Westerners often view covering the hair and face as oppressive, but women still choose to wear some sort of head covering.

Another Saudi Arabian student at Iowa State, Shatha Alghamdy said she only stopped covering her face upon coming to Iowa State because of the way westerners view it. Otherwise, she said she feels more comfortable covering her face.

“It sounds counterintuitive, but for me at least, it’s kind of liberating,” Abdulghani said. “It gives me such complete anonymity. Nobody knows who the hell I am.”

She said there are both women, like herself, who want women to be able to drive and women who don’t want to drive and don’t want other women driving as well.

“[Driving], I think is an inherent restrictiveness that makes no sense. I mean, you could argue that covering our hair is part of our religion or covering our bodies in general is part of our religion,” Abdulghani said. “But you can’t argue that not allowing women to drive is and regardless, I don’t think it should be legally enforced.”

From the Arabian Peninsula to Ames

With her husband already working toward his doctorate in Ames, Abdulghani did not factor much else into the decision.

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On a college campus like Iowa State, there is a mix of people who have traveled and studied other cultures and those who have barely been outside of the Midwest.

Abdulghani said she has come across people with less exposure to other cultures, but always found the conversation to be open and without judgement.

“They might not have a big world view, but they’re always willing to ask questions for things that they don’t understand and I always appreciated that because if there’s something you want to ask, instead of making up your own answers about it, just ask the question,” Abdulghani said.

As far as moving to Iowa, Abdulghani said it has been great aside from her homesickness.

One aspect of Saudi culture she misses are the female spaces where she can take off her hijab or niqab and feel more comfortable.

When men are present, she acts more reserved than she would around other women or her family.

“I wouldn’t say I restricted myself or something. It was just something normal for me and a subconscious reaction to being in the public that I would behave a certain way,” Abdulghani said.

At King Saud University where she attended the female campus, the mood shifted for her. The expectations were no longer there and she could be herself.
CARNIVAL DANCES ITS WAY TO AMES

Kristina Hayes, dancer in the samba band Planeta Azul, dances to the music as people encircle her, cheering her on during a Carnaval celebration at the Great Hall of the Memorial Union on March 4. The event was put on by the Brazilian Student Organization to celebrate Carnaval.

POLICE BLOTTER

3.118

An officer initiated a harassment related investigation at Hilton Coliseum (reported at 12:50 p.m.).

Officers collected a department information report at Carver Hall (reported at 2:46 p.m.).

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Complete the grid so each row, columns and 3 by 3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit www.sudoku.org.uk

CORRECTIONS

The Iowa State Daily welcomes comments and suggestions or complaints about errors that warrant correction. To submit a correction, please contact our editor at 515-294-5688 or via email at editor@iowastatedaily.com.
DIS leader still waiting for group

Freshman chose other activities

The recent cold weather has been incredibly harsh on sophomore Linda Gonzalez who reportedly has been waiting for her Destination Iowa State group on the steps of Curtis since the early hours of Aug. 19, 2017. Gonzalez was one of many upperclassmen students employed as leaders for Destination Iowa State (DIS). The Iowa State Admissions website calls DIS “a program designed to ease the transition to college for new Iowa State students.”

On the first night of DIS, Gonzalez was assigned to a group of around 12 freshmen students. At the end of the first night, she excitedly told her group to meet her on the steps of Curtis for a free pancake breakfast on Central Campus at 8 a.m. the following morning.

That was the last she saw of any of her students. After a few hours, she said she started to worry: “I thought they must have gotten lost. What other explanation is there for why freshmen wouldn’t show up to an exciting day of group activities, seminars and community service?”

The Daily was able to get an exclusive interview with one of the freshmen in Gonzalez’s group, though they asked to remain anonymous.

The freshman stated he had nothing against Gonzalez as their leader. They explained they simply chose other activities that sounded more fun than that day like video games, sleeping and “anything but Destination Iowa State.”

Gonzalez told the Daily she has no plans to leave Curtis any time soon. She even has a handful of cold pancakes in case any of the freshmen “finally find their way” to central campus. Regarding the situation, the Iowa State Office of Admissions said they love the passion for Iowa State that Gonzalez is displaying as she waits for her group. They said loyalty and commitment to Iowa State are exactly what they look for in leaders.

Additionally, they asked the public to keep an eye out for the freshmen that got lost on their way to Central Campus that morning.

Surprisingly enough, many other groups reported the same problem and it is estimated that roughly 2,322 freshmen got “lost” that morning on the way to Central Campus, the largest and likely most well-known area of Iowa State’s campus.

Dreamers deserve to feel secure

Last September, President Trump announced no new applications for the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program would be processed and the program would be ended in six months.

Time has passed, and today is that final day. But the current status of the law is uncertain and the Dreamers in the U.S. are unable to make plans, get work permits or in some cases receive medical care because of inaction and chaos in Washington.

This situation is a crisis created and manufactured entirely by Trump. He created the six-month deadline; he’s the force behind ending DACA as we know it.

Nonetheless, Trump has tried to pass all responsibility for his unilateral action onto others — Congress, the Democrats, the Circuit Court of Appeals in California and, most recently, the Supreme Court. To add to the stress and confusion, Trump has taken vacillating and inconsistent positions on what he would consider an acceptable rewrite of the original 2012 DACA executive order. Some days, Trump is open to everything and welcomes Dreamers “with heart.” Other days the Mexico wall is one of four pre-conditions to any changes in DACA that the president would accept.

Dick Durbin, senator from Illinois, has commented that Trump’s vacillations make passage of a bill in Congress unlikely, even though some proposals have bipartisan support. While that environment frustrates members of Congress, the situation for Dreamers is far worse.

A California court ruled that the administration must continue to accept DACA renewal applications. Trying to bypass the appeals process, the Trump administration asked the Supreme Court to rule on that case. Predictably, the Supreme Court declined. But from September — when Trump announced the end of DACA — until the court ruling in January, Dreamers (who are all in the U.S. on renewable two-year visas) were prohibited from applying for renewal. With uncertain residency status, Dreamers are living in limbo. Responsible government officials are stymied as well; at least 20,000 people who applied before the September announcement still have not had their applications processed.

For now, Dreamers are here, but their comfort is only temporary. They cannot make plans; they cannot feel secure. Dreamers have spent most of their lives here and have gone through extensive vetting. They deserve relief from the nightmare of uncertainty they are living under. President Trump should rescind his announcement.

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Send your letters to letters@iowastatedaily.com. Letters must include the name(s), phone number(s), majors and/or group affiliation(s) and year in school of the author(s).

Phone numbers and addresses will not be published. Online feedback may be used if first name and last name, major and year in school are included in the post. Feedback posted online is eligible for print in the Iowa State Daily.

Send any questions about the editorial section to opinioneditor@iowastatedaily.com.
This week, the Iowa State diving team is going to face its final challenge in the 2018 season. Dana Liva and Sydney Ronald will head to the NCAA Zone Diving Championship, competing with over 45 divers from 24 teams.

This meet will be held in the Jean K. Freeman Aquatic Center on the University of Minnesota campus March 5 to March 7.

The diving team set the goal to qualify for the Zone Championship and prepared the whole season for it.

"Obviously, we want to compete in an upper level," said diving coach Jeff Warrick. "We are going there to qualify for the championship, that is our goal."

Warrick is satisfied with the performance of his divers this whole season, particularly in the Big 12 Championship.

In the Big 12 Conference, Liva broke the platform school record and placed third, and Ronald kept a consistent performance in the three-meter board, finishing sixth.

"I can see lots of development from our divers," Warrick said. "Dana can be strong in a good platform list already. Sydney made the most improvement, she is doing well in her three-meter."

Warrick still wants his divers to show up in larger stages and achieve a breakthrough.

Ronald believes the zones competition will be different than a normal meet the scores during preliminary rounds will be added as a sum of points.

Finally, the top nine divers in each event can qualify to the next week’s NCAA Championship.

"There are a lot of great divers there. We can’t control what the other divers do," Warrick said. "But I think, right now, it’s the best opportunity for Dana on platform."

Liva also has a clear goal for herself in the zone meet.

"I do have the expectation for it," Liva said. "I hope to be top nine, but we’ll see how it goes."

As usual, Warrick doesn’t want to give the divers more pressure.

"If we don’t qualify for the championship," Warrick said. "We will keep working hard for next year, you know, that for motivation."
Students and families gathered in the Lied Recreation Athletic Center Saturday to participate in Relay for Life, a celebration of the fight against cancer and those who have fought the battle in their own lives.

Cancer survivors and the families of survivors and victims came together for a number of events meant to raise money for the American Cancer Society, one of the biggest cancer nonprofits in the U.S.

For the participants though, the relay represents more than just a fundraiser; it's an affirmation of life, an opportunity to come together and pay respect to the struggle and strength of those who've been impacted by a disease that attacks approximately 39.6 percent of men and women.

At the kickoff of the event, cancer survivors took to the track in an honorary ceremony representing the strength they showed in their battle with cancer, as their loved ones cheered them on from the sidelines.

In the next lap, survivors were joined by the caregivers, nurses and doctors who helped make their recovery possible and then by their families in the third lap.

After the third lap, the rest of the participants were all welcomed to join.

Aside from the cancer walk, there were performances by some Iowa State clubs such as DUBH and the Stand Up Comedy Club, as well as a silent auction and a variety of games and activities.

The finale of the event was the luminaria ceremony, where participants wrote the names of a cherished survivor or loved one lost to cancer on paper bags lined up around the track, which were then lit up for a period of quiet reflection on the difficulties of the struggle.

The ceremony is meant to honor those people who didn't survive their diagnosis. However, more importantly, the event highlights the hope that can be found in every remission and the strength within every survivor.

“It reminds you why you came to the event,” said Katie Knudsen, event coordinator for the organization.

When Freddi Fennel was diagnosed with cancer seven years ago, she began attending the relay for hope and support.

“I truly look forward to this night,” Fennel said as she walked the track. “I love seeing the survivors come together and see people in the community that they can see and know there's somebody that knows exactly what they're going through.”

She said out of all the cancer organizations she is aware of, she trusts the American Cancer Society to do the most good.

“There's other organizations that don't give as much of their donations as they say they're going to,” Fennel said. “Whereas the American Cancer Society has just stepped up every time. Whenever anyone's like, 'What cancer organization should I support?', I always tell them American Cancer Society.”

Knudsen lost her mother to cancer in 2005. She has been heavily involved in the organization since she was six years old, and said she felt fortunate to be able to work with an organization she so strongly believes in.

“I see our mission at work every day and I see the importance of it. And I love to work with the college students,” Knudsen said.

A majority of the volunteers and coordinators for the event were Iowa State students and members of the Iowa State chapter of Colleges Against Cancer, which is affiliated with the American Cancer Society.

Colleges Against Cancer provides opportunities for students to get involved in programs aimed to increase the comfort and support of cancer patients.

All of the money raised from the event goes to the American Cancer Society to fund both further research and other programs, like the “Hope Lodges,” where cancer patients are sheltered and cared for free of charge during their treatment.

Students honor cancer patients

BY KEEGAN KEARNEY
@iowastatedaily.com

One of the events made possible during Relay For Life on March 3 was a Jazzercise class. Relay for Life raises money for the American Cancer Society which donates to cancer research.
IT’S AN HONOR JUST BEING NOMINATED. BUT IT’S A LOT MORE FUN TO WIN!

AGAIN.

Hy-Vee

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