

Story Corp Project  
Interview Transcript

Interviewer: Nada El Sheikh  
Narrator: Sarah Abd El Gawad  
Date: 20 February 2012  
Place: Mohdessin, El Shams Club  
College: American University in Cairo  
Professor: Kim Fox  
Date Completed: 22 February 2012

Sarah was born in Cairo on February the 21<sup>st</sup> 1989. She graduated from AUC approximately two years ago and started working in a bank ever since. She never had any work or finance experience before the bank.

I have chosen Sarah Abd El Gawad to interview because I believe she is a very smart and talented person in what she does. During her years at AUC I used to think she was one of the brightest students their. I would have loved to see college through her eyes and through this interview I have had the opportunity to do so.

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**Nada:** Today I will be talking with Sarah Abd El Gawad a student who recently graduated from AUC So Sarah tell me a little bit about yourself

**Sarah:** Umm I recently graduated uhh about a year ago from AUC uhh I'm currently working

**Nada:** Oh really Where do you work?

**Sarah:** umm I work in a bank Credi Agricole umm can I talk about the job itself

**Nada:** Yes, of course

**Sarah:** umm I'm working in a place called dealing room which basically means that I use uhh the money that the banks makes to trade with it and basically make more money specifically I work in something called the forex which is the foreign exchange market and that means I deal with currencies so I trade with Euros and dollars and Egyptian pounds uhh to make more money for the bank

**Nada:** That's really interesting uhh was that your major in uhh at AUC

**Sarah:** uhhh actually it wasn't at all my major was completely unrelated to what I'm working uhh to what I'm doing now uhh I majored in marketing which as you can tell is far away from finance as possible uhh and I didn't I didn't no and the only thing that was related to my job in terms of my major was the introductory finance course that I took and that was just simply and introduction very basic uhh very basic with finance in which they introduce the concepts and zero application so no honestly I didn't study it at all

**Nada:** So how did you cope how did you manage to progress

**Sarah:** my umm two things first the good thing about my business course was that it had a lot of different concepts that I studied it wasn't just marketing I was introduced to economics as I said before basic concepts of finance accounting umm all of these things umm helped me to properly I mean not to properly but to adequately perform my job initially and then later on with the help of uhhh of the bank the training courses that I took I had a very strong and firm grasp of the of the job description so to a certain extent the my major allowed I mean provided me with the background and the basics that I needed to further develop in any in any job so yes I did concentrate in marketing but at the same time I had an introduction in many different concepts that allowed me to fully understand what I being taught in the bank

**Nada:** umm if you had the choice to go back and study at Auc umm would you have

**Sarah:** Changed my major?

**Nada:** Ya

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**Sarah:** No No No umm my initially initially I did think I was in the wrong field completely considering I did concentrate in marketing and my job had nothing to do with marketing but what I realized was it it gave me an edge because at this moment at this very moment I do feel like I'm performing my job very well uhh and at the same time the the marketing major that I choose is giving me an edge because I have I have a different perspective on things I'm able to consider not just finance but also P.R and advertising and creativity I feel like all of these things give me uh him just I might be one step ahead of people so no I wouldn't change it because I feel like I almost feel like I have an advantage compared to the rest of the people and more than that the I have to say the core curriculum in the university uhh them forcing us to take liberal arts and humanities and all of that it really helped to shape my critical thinking uhh philosophy courses scientific thinking umm even even English all of these things enabled me to have a much shaper and faster grasp of concepts and it helped me just tackle problems in much more efficient and faster way than a lot of other people who didn't go to AUC and for that it gave it's giving me an advantage in the sense of umm id be a fast a fast learner and at the same time what I learn I'm able to apply quickly which is going to enable me to develop and all of these things I think are positives and no I would definitely not change my major although I would definitely have loved to go to travel to just transfer even just for a semester or two and I'm glad that Auc offers this as an option but unfortunately I didn't take it although I really would have wanted to because I think it would made me a lot more appreciative of the of the courses that I'm taking

**Nada:** Sorry offers what?

**Sarah:** umm offer in the sense of different course different courses different what else defiantly it would make me a lot more responsible I would rely on myself a lot more I mean traveling you your able to juggle a lot of things so its definitely something you cant experience here and at the same time the agreements that AUC has with other universities are very good like Berkeley and UCLA and Miguel and Concordia there all very prestigious universities that would enable me to to give I mean they would give me a lot of beneficial courses that I feel like I could really grow from

**Nada:** That's really interesting because most students at AUC complain about most students I've talked to complain about the core curriculum

**Sarah:** The thing is it's so normal I used to complain about it too when I was when I was in university I used to think it was completely pointless and I was being forced to take courses that I really didn't feel that I was going to use or be able to apply but after I graduated the core curriculum in my opinion is just as important as my major because it expanded my horizons it uhh it enabled me I was subjected to very different diverse topics which made me appreciate umm appreciate a lot of things like different cultures different set of beliefs the philosophical thinking course challenged the way that I think the scientific thinking course made me question things that I got I wouldn't just immediately accept things as truth I would work to get the answers and

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I would make sure that I fully understand and and and understand and grasp the topics that I'm being given and that I ask the right questions I think that what AUC provides in general is umm the ability to ask the right questions where ever I am whether I'm working whether I'm having a conversation with someone whether I'm being interviewed umm I'm comfortable with with who I am and what I've learnt and so that comfort shows in what I do regardless of what it is so no definitely the core curriculum and and my major have helped me tremendously I wouldn't change it at all but defiantly I would have chosen to to transfer

**Nada:** That's nice to know another perspective uhh if you had to advise to the students at AUC what would you give

**Sarah:** Two things and I'm sure they've heard it countless numbers of times but really focus on your core courses as much as your major courses they have a profound effect and you'll only realize this effect after you graduate and when you don't take advantage of them you'll never be able to apply them in the real world but if you do you'll be so sharp and you'll be so advanced than the rest of the people that you just really appreciate what your being taught and another thing and this I'm sure they've heard hundreds of times but engage in in actives go to clubs enter clubs enter competitions start ideas entrepreneurship all of these things are so important and they give you umm exumm experience and that something books can never teach you and professors can never tell you about its something that you actually have to go through its something that you have to immerse yourself in its really important

**Nada:** Did you join in any extra currier activities?

**Sarah:** I did I joined something called ICGE and that's basically something it's a very big group I don't want to say group thump that has simulations for many different things like for instance if your major is marketing you could form a group like you could form a mini group in ICGE and you could a campaign or an ad and you could start competing with other schools and if your in finance you could do the same thing you could do feasibility studies or appraisals and all of that I mean it gives you a chance to really understand what it's like to apply what you have learnt in the real world so that was something that really helped me a lot and also try working during umm during university something light nothing to heavy but just to teach yourself how to juggle because once you start working your going to realize that it takes almost 80 percent of your day and the rest of the 20 percent your going to have to do all of the other things with it so if that means seeing your friends or staying at home or exercising or reading what ever it is that you want to do you need to learn how to juggle because in that 20 percent you trying to put all of these things needs practice so I would definitely advise you to work during university even if it's just being a teachers assistant or during winter internships all of these things really help and it gives you such an edge

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**Nada:** Thank you Sarah for your time

(Background voice) Thank you Nada

**Nada:** I'm sure the students at AUC are gunna have

**Sarah:** I hope

**Nada:** (Laugh)

**Sarah:** Thank you

**Nada:** Bye