

OFEA's February Newsletter

From Office of Faculty Excellence and Advancement <ofea@mbzuai.ac.ae>

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To Faculty <faculty@mbzuai.ac.ae>

Mohamed bin Zayed University
of Artificial Intelligence



جامعة محمد بن زايد
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Office of **Faculty Excellence
and Advancement (OFEA)**
Newsletter

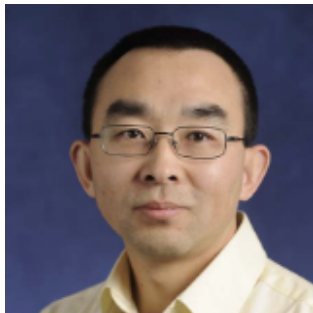
Excellence. Advancement. Community.

Welcome to the February issue of the OFEA faculty newsletter!

February brought several opportunities to connect as a faculty community, both on campus and beyond. This issue highlights recent gatherings, faculty milestones shared across our social platforms, and upcoming events in March.

Welcome to our new faculty

Join us in welcoming our new faculty members who joined MBZUAI recently.



Yingyao Hu
Visiting Professor of
Economics
[Bio](#)



Igor Jurisica
Affiliated Professor of
Computational Biology
[Bio](#)

Throughout February, MBZUAI continued to spotlight members of our faculty community across social platforms.

Recent highlights include features on [Carlos D. Bustamante](#) and [Haiyan Huang](#) as part of the Faculty Spotlight series. We encourage you to view, engage with, and share these posts within your networks:



Your engagement helps amplify the visibility of our faculty and the broader work of the university.

Faculty excellence

Congratulations to the below faculty members on the awards they received as part of MBZUAI's fifth year anniversary!

Excellence in Teaching and Learning

Hanan Aldarmaki, Assistant Professor of NLP

Recognized for outstanding teaching, mentorship, and leadership in elevating instructional standards across programs.

Martin Takáč, Associate Professor of Machine Learning

Recognized for rigorous, engaging instruction and sustained impact on student learning and academic culture.



Research Excellence Award

Le Song, Professor of Machine Learning

Recognized for pioneering contributions in machine learning, including graph neural networks and foundation models advancing biology and drug discovery.

Rising Star Award

Alham Fikri Aji, Assistant Professor of NLP

Recognized for exceptional promise and impact in multilingual and low-resource natural language processing.



Distinguished Service Award

Preslav Nakov, Professor and Department Chair of NLP

Recognized for foundational leadership and sustained institutional service shaping departmental and university growth.

Maxim Panov, Assistant Professor of Machine Learning

Recognized for dedicated committee service and contributions to strengthening MBZUAI's academic community.



Congratulations also go to:

[Sir Michael Brady](#) for being elected to the National Academy of Engineering for contributions to vision-based robotics, and image-based medical diagnosis and treatment.

[Eric Moulines](#) for taking on the (presumptive) role of Dean of Computing and Mathematical Sciences.

[Carlos Bustamante](#) for taking on the role of Acting Director of Research Translation.

[Eran Segal](#) and the HPP team for successfully hosting MBZUAI×Nature, HPP Global 2026.

Advancement opportunities

CRA Mentorship: Insights session for faculty

Wednesday, 25 March 2026 | 6-7:30p.m. | Lecture Hall 2

As part of ongoing efforts to create more structured development opportunities for early-career faculty members, OFEA is hosting a session focused on insights from the recent CRA mentorship workshop. [Abdulrahman Mahmoud](#) and [Nils Lukas](#) will share their reflections from attending the workshop, followed by an open discussion.

OFEA in action



Monthly women faculty gathering

OFEA hosted a Women Faculty Dinner in February. The gathering included a discussion on the cultural and spiritual significance of Ramadan and the tradition of iftar, providing broader context and reflection for faculty across backgrounds.

Community and belonging



Faculty Spouse and Family Program: Desert Safari

Earlier this month, faculty and their families gathered for the Desert Safari organized through the Faculty Spouse and Family Program. The evening offered an informal setting to connect across departments and welcome newer members of the community.

For more information on the program and upcoming activities, contact Maria Takacova at maria.takacova@mbzuai.ac.ae and join the Whatsapp group:



Faculty Family Iftar Night

Saturday, 7 March 2026 | 6.20p.m. | Yas Acres Golf Club

Sign up here: <https://forms.office.com/r/MYCJhJ0B8Z>

Upcoming events

International Women's Day panel

Thursday, 5 March 2026 | 2-3.30p.m. | Lecture Hall 1

OFEA will host a Women faculty and student panel event marking International Women's Day next week. The session will bring together perspectives on research impact across the University and create space for dialogue on leadership and academic pathways. Everyone is welcome to attend!

The OFEA team

Professor Thamar Solorio

Vice Provost of Faculty Excellence and Advancement,
Professor of Natural Language Processing

[Bio](#)

Luisa Vallory
Head of Academic
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Felicity Harding
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Specialist

Iman Farah
Program Manager –
Strategic Pipelines &
Academic
Development

Ana Blatnik
Policy Development
Officer

Maria Takacova
Consultant for the
Faculty Spouse and
Family Program

Looking ahead

Faculty are always welcome to share ideas, suggestions, or questions by reaching out to any member of the OFEA team or by contacting OFEA@mbzuai.ac.ae.



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