

MOHAMMAD EL-WAZZAN

École Hôtelière de Lausanne

To Whom It May Concern:

I had the honor and privilege of having Mr. Jacques Weber as my IB DP Coordinator from September 2012 until June 2014 in the British International School of Jeddah [BISJ] in Saudi Arabia. During this time, not a single day passed where Mr. Weber hasn't been able to amaze us with his teaching skills, knowledge, and his ability to care for every single one of his students. Weber wasn't just our IB DP Coordinator. My friends and I recognized him as our teacher, our counselor and advisor, and our friend, even beyond school matters.

He was the first IB DP Coordinator to independently organize a research and writing class. During these classes, he taught us how to properly reference our work using APA standards. The interesting things about these classes were his teaching methods. The 90-minute class would always fly by because they were full of funny videos and laughter that aided our learning. He found a way to make citing fun! He used to find YouTube videos related to the class material and he would incorporate them into his lesson to help us remember simple rules. Now that I am in university, I remember those classes every time I need to cite something and I am certain that his research and writing class gave me the most useful tools for my student and my professional life.

Towards the end of my senior year, I passed through a difficult time. I was struggling to juggle between preparing for my final exams, my social life, and my future decisions of what I truly wanted to study. I felt like I had to make a choice for university and that my choice would be permanent. Both my parents didn't go to university so I didn't have anyone to talk to that can relate to me. One day I arrived to school and my name was on Mr. Weber's board in the IB building (not always necessarily a good thing). When I went to see him in his office, he sat me down and he asked me if I was having any personal problems. He felt the need to ask me just because he noticed "a stressed look" on my face. He felt like it was unlike me to be so serious. Even my parents didn't realize that I was stressed, but he picked it up from a simple facial expression. I told him how I was having a difficult time choosing what I wanted to study in the future. I also told him about my difficult social life. He gave me the best advice anyone could have asked for. He told me that when your social life is bothering you "you have to drop it like it's hot," and work on what's important then everything will come together. He used the example of a bucket and the importance of fitting in your big rocks first and then all the grains of rice will fall into place. The rocks symbolized my academic life while the rice grains symbolized my social life. Then he went on to talk about his university experience and how he changed his major because he didn't like his original choice. Suddenly it felt like it was okay to make a mistake. He taught me that I shouldn't chase success; he taught me to do what I like, and if I'm the best at what I do then success will find me. I made a choice knowing that I can always change my mind if I didn't like my choice later. I went off to study Industrial Engineering at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

Mr. Weber proved to be more than just a teacher and counselor to me. One semester after I started university, I decided that engineering just wasn't for me. I decided I wanted to study hospitality because I am a very social person and I love food. My parents tried to encourage me to continue what I started, but I wasn't

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convinced. I contacted Mr. Weber and even though he had no obligation to help me, he was available for me as a friend. He helped me apply to the three top hospitality universities in the world and he helped me get detached from my fear of leaving home. Today I am a student at École Hôtelière de Lausanne, the best-ranked hospitality university in the world, and if it wasn't for his counseling and advice, I wouldn't be here doing what I love. Weber wasn't just a friend to me; he was a friend to everyone and he personally knew all his students. He proved this during our graduation ceremony. He went through the trouble of preparing his speech in Arabic and English for the Arabic-speaking parents to feel included in the ceremony. He then went on to mention every single person in our senior year, and he mentioned a unique trait about them that everyone can relate to. His speech made the crowd laugh and it showed the parents how closely involved he was in our academic and personal lives. He truly proved his friendship to us, and to many of us he is still a role model and older brother that we can always count on for help.

Jacques Weber is the most unique and devoted teacher I have ever come across in my life. I am 100% certain that my IB class feels the same way about him. He was of great value to my school and he was really missed when he left Saudi Arabia. His organization was impeccable. His teaching styles were legendary. His advice to me was life changing and his friendship was definitely irrefutable and extremely appreciated. Any institute that is fortunate enough to experience his presence will understand exactly what I am talking about. He is certainly a one of a kind and the best of the best.

Sincerely,

Mohammad El-Wazzan



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Student Ambassador

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