

For Immediate Release



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48 New Faculty Members Join AUB:

“It is the place to make a difference”

The American University of Beirut (AUB) welcomed 48 new faculty members joining AUB this Fall 2016-17 with high and diversified expertise. A three-day orientation program commenced on August 24, 2016, offering the new members several opportunities for direct interaction with the University President, upper administration, deans, and representatives of various research and service centers.

AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri welcomed the new faculty at the opening orientation session and introduced the deans of faculties. He highlighted the “incredible environment” on AUB campus and the renovation and reform taking place within the University at a time of change, opportunity, and challenge within the region.

“This is the year where we are starting to look into things such as curricular reform. What is the content we are delivering for the students? How can we deliver it here and perhaps to a broader audience? In our view as a leadership, there really has never been a time where AUB had a better opportunity since the beginning of the war to amplify our voice in an effective way, to get the message out to our community and beyond; and you’re going to be key part of that,” Dr. Khuri told the faculty. “There is a sense of optimism in this country and people want to make a difference. I think you are all coming to Lebanon and AUB at a tipping point and I anticipate that the future will be exciting, in a positive way.”

This fall, 18 out of 48 new faculty members came from the US (7), UK (3), Canada (2), Ireland (1), Spain (1), France (1), Germany (1), Poland (1), and Greece (1). Other, Lebanese and Arab professors returned to Lebanon from abroad to join AUB.

Dr. Martin Keulertz, who obtained his PhD at King’s College London and was a post-doctoral research fellow at Purdue University, USA, explained why an international scholar like him was

interested in AUB. “AUB is a regional if not a world leader in research on Agriculture and therefore it’s natural that you come across AUB scholars and the University itself through research. I have also engaged with a number of AUB graduates working in the UK and the US. There are a number of very famous people working here who have made a difference globally and therefore the University is a natural attraction to anyone interested in the field of agriculture and the food sciences,” he said. “It is an exciting moment in history to be here. We need new approaches and I want to pursue research through the guidance of my colleagues here.”

Incoming faculty members described AUB as a place for growth and for making a difference. When asked about their decision to join the University, several replied “What’s better than AUB!” The University was seen as an opportunity not to be missed in this place and time. As Interim Provost, Dr. Muhamad Harajli, pointed out in his presentation, AUB has recently been ranked 1st in Lebanon and 2nd in the Arab Region by the QS University Rankings, preceded only by the specialized school, the King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals.

Coming to AUB from the oil industry in Abu Dhabi, Dr. Kassem Ghorayeb is eager to participate in the new Chemical and Petroleum Engineering department at AUB. “Given the way we are positioned in the Middle East and the upcoming oil and gas industry in Lebanon, we need to be prepared with the right talent and, with its well-founded faculties, AUB would be the hub for educating the region in that regard,” he said.

Dr. Humam Kadara who had his own lab for cancer genomics research as Assistant Professor at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center considers this a great time to be at AUB as it expands its multidisciplinary and integrative science approach and develops disciplines across departments. He expects AUB to be a pioneer in the Middle East in emerging technologies in integrative oncology and integrative cancer biology and would like to take part in its promotion of biomedical and cancer genomics efforts at AUB and the region.

Dr. Mira Merashli used to work at Chapel Allerton Hospital, UK, known worldwide for leading in psoriatic arthritis research, returned to Lebanon after being contacted by AUB to teach in Clinical Medicine. “AUB is one of the best institutions in the Arab region, if not the world. I believe AUB is the right place to make a difference. I was happy to feel that they believe in me,” she said.

To some, AUB always had a special place in their hearts. Dr. Matthew Gordon, now Visiting Professor appointed to the Howell Chair in History at AUB, had actually come to AUB when he was only a year old and ended up living around its campus for 17 years (1958-1975) as his parents, David and Ann, taught at AUB. In fact, his parents had met at AUB when they came separately from the US to study for their Master’s degrees at AUB around the year 1950. Dr.

Gordon and his family have kept in touch with AUB over the years. His daughter is now enrolled at AUB for a semester.

The majority of the new faculty members, 23 members, joined the largest faculty, the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Twelve joined the Faculty of Medicine, six joined the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, three the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, two the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, and one joined each of the Faculty of Health Sciences and the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs.

In addition to presentations and discussions, the orientation program included a reception at the residence of President Khuri and a lunch with the respective deans. New faculty members were furnished with pre- and post-arrival check lists and helpful tips.

Two orientation sessions are held every year, with follow up for smooth transition and integration into AUB and Lebanon. “We are all invested in making sure our faculty are comfortable. The whole AUB community is committed to collaborate with us whole heartedly, share their expertise, and engage positively with the new faculty right from the first introductory session. This team work and dedication is what makes this initiative a success,” said Mrs. Rima Iskandarani, New Faculty Orientation Facilitator.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 programs leading to bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full-service 420-bed hospital.

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