

May 18, 2022

Dear Members of the AUB Community,

The American University of Beirut must respond to the current economic realities and take measures to preserve this historic institution. I therefore write to inform you of decisions the university has arrived at in order to ensure its mission remains both impactful and inclusive.

Having exhausted all other viable measures available to us, it has become necessary for AUB to collect tuition fees in the same currency in which it must pay its expenses. This was a difficult decision to make, but we are convinced this is the only way to ensure the sustainability and continued excellence of AUB. We also do this with a steadfast resolve to help students and their families through this transition to the greatest extent possible.

The final architecture for this currency adjustment and its application have been informed and indeed shaped by consultations we have undertaken with our trustees, students, faculty, and staff members over the course of the last year. Most recently, we held nine widely attended town halls where detailed university financial data was shared, and plans to make AUB more inclusive, sustainable, and excellent over the next three years were discussed.

The transition to collecting tuition in fresh dollars—or their equivalent—will be gradual, which will help families plan ahead. For a large majority of students, this will mean a 40 percent financial aid grant for this coming academic year (2022-23), and then 20 percent the following year (2023-24), on top of other financial assistance that may have been granted individually. More information about the transitional tuition model can be found [here](#). At the same time, we are significantly increasing the amount of financial support to our students, both continuing and newly admitted. This will be in the form of institutional financial aid, graduate student tuition fellowships, undergraduate merit and early admissions scholarships, and a robust roster of grant-based comprehensive scholarships.

AUB has been operating at a loss, totaling over \$134 million in fresh dollars over the past three years. Contingency funds saved from half a decade before the crisis have now been exhausted. The Board of Trustees has already committed unrestricted endowment funds to the greatest extent possible, and the university has become leaner and more efficient, but these measures alone can no longer sustain the university.

It is also critical to take this step now so that AUB can maintain its excellence as the leading university in Lebanon and top 250 in the world. An AUB education has significant, tangible value. The university ranks #1 in the MENA region for the employability of its graduates and #73 worldwide. Our alumni are consistently accepted to the best graduate schools, receive offers from top companies, match at the finest medical residencies, and are well prepared by the time they graduate to embark on attractive career paths. But maintaining educational excellence requires resources. We must be able to recruit and retain world-class faculty and staff and ensure that our students have the facilities and infrastructure they need for the transformative educational journey that AUB has long provided.

Since the onset of the economic crisis, AUB has responded with substantially increased financial assistance to students, raising the total from \$55 million to \$89 million between 2015 and 2021. We currently support over 60 percent of all students, the largest number ever, with scholarships and other forms of financial aid, and close to 25 percent of the student body have their AUB education fully covered. Fundraising efforts over the past three years have led to expanded philanthropic support as well as partnerships with multiple foundations and US government sources, with student aid persistently the top priority. These extraordinary efforts will continue, and all students, both incoming and continuing, will have the opportunity to apply for financial aid and appeal for additional assistance.

Together, as a community of people who are committed to making a difference and determined to care for one another, we will continue changing lives and creating a better future for the people of Lebanon, the MENA region, and the world. The American University of Beirut must long endure, to pursue excellence for the greater good, to create opportunities for generations, and hold fast to the values that empower and transform individuals and societies alike.

Sincerely,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD
President