

For Immediate Release



## **Lebanese Academy of Sciences elects AUB professor of medicine as member**

Beirut, Lebanon- 11/01/2011 - Dr. Fuad Ziyadeh, AUB professor of medicine and biochemistry, recently became the third AUB professor to be elected member of the Lebanese Academy of Sciences, after his research on diabetic kidney disease grabbed the attention of the prestigious academy's founding members.

Dr. Ziyadeh, who also chairs the department of internal medicine, now joins two other AUB professors, Nesreen Ghaddar and Makhluif Haddadin, in the academy. Ghaddar was invited to the academy for her research on thermal comfort and renewable energy while Haddadin's innovative research in chemistry earned him a membership at the academy. A fourth member, Dr. Kamal Badr, has just rejoined AUB as professor of medicine. Dr. Badr was elected member of the academy last year for his research on inflammatory kidney diseases.

"I am honored and happy to become a new member of the Lebanese Academy of Sciences," said Dr. Ziyadeh. "This particular membership in my career is sweeter than the rest, and means a lot to me because it is Lebanese!"

Known officially by its French name, "Académie des Sciences du Liban (ASL)," the academy is a learned society founded by a governmental decree in August 2007 with "the aim of contributing to the growth, invigoration, and dissemination of the sciences in Lebanon." According to the ASL website, membership to the ASL is a merit-based high honor conferred by election. "ASL members are prominent Lebanese scientists working inside and outside of Lebanon, as well as distinguished foreign scientists," the website added.

Dr. Ziyadeh was elected to ASL for his "lifetime contribution to the understanding and treatment of the kidney disease in diabetes mellitus."

ASL President Edgar Choueiri said in his letter announcing the Ziyadeh's membership: "Your outstanding contributions to the understanding of the pathogenesis of diabetic nephropathy, and recognized status as a leading scientist, add prestige to the Academy, and your intellectual vigor, wisdom, dedication and efficacy will be a great capital for the Academy to draw upon as it goes forward in its mission."

For Dr. Ziyadeh, recognition at the national level carries with it a special kind of value.

"To recognize the increasing worldwide importance of the devastating complication of diabetic kidney disease is both rewarding and heartwarming for me," he said. "I have worked in this domain for 20 years and it feels quite thrilling and reinforcing to have major recognition at the *national* level after both the international level and the institutional level."

Ziyadeh was also elected member of the prestigious American Society for Clinical Investigation and, later, member of the Association of American Physicians.

AUB has awarded him the Gold Medal as a distinguished alumnus by the Medical Chapter of the AUB Alumni Association in 2002.

Dr. Fuad Ziyadeh has made seminal contributions to the field of kidney complications of diabetes. He has edited a book and several monographs and has authored more than 150 cited publications in PubMed in addition to more than 40 book chapters. The number of journal citations of his published research has exceeded 9,000.

His research has positioned a key protein, Transforming Growth Factor-beta (TGF-beta), as the main causative agent of, and a critical therapeutic target for, diabetic kidney disease.

Dr. Ziyadeh is also credited with the development of the first cell culture model system to assess the influence of high glucose concentration on kidney cells, and the adoption of the obese *db/db* mouse as the most appropriate spontaneous model for type 2 diabetes and its kidney complications.

Most recently, Dr. Ziyadeh identified another mediator, Vascular Endothelial Growth Factor (VEGF) from a key kidney cell called the podocyte, as the potential agent causing the major manifestation of proteinuria, which is the leak of serum proteins into urine through diseased filtering units in the diabetic kidney. Dr. Ziyadeh has also pursued original studies in humans as a translation of these preclinical findings, and the results have become stepping stones for new potential therapies for the disease.

Dr. Ziyadeh received his B.Sc. in Chemistry-Biology (1976) and his M.D. (1980) from AUB, both with distinction, and completed his internship and residency in Internal Medicine at AUBMC. He was elected member of Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society as a junior medical student and became president of the AUB Chapter in 1982. He then joined the Renal-Electrolyte and Hypertension Division of the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia as a nephrology fellow, and after four years he was retained as a faculty member. He rose through the academic ranks and was awarded tenure in 1994 and promoted to Professor of Medicine in 1999, as one of the youngest professors there. He served as associate editor of the journal *Diabetes* and was

physician-secretary of the American Board of Internal Medicine-Nephrology. He was chosen in 2010 to represent medical schools outside North America and Europe in the International Foundations of Medicine Oversight Committee of the US-based National Board of Medical Examiners.

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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 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of more than 7,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the 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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