

For Immediate Release



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AUB holds its 152nd Commencement Ceremony **for graduates of FAS, FAFS, MSFEA, and OSB**

The American University of Beirut (AUB) concluded its 152nd Commencement Exercises with ceremonies over two nights for the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA), and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB), on September 3 and 4, 2021. This follows three ceremonies in June for graduates from the Hariri School of Nursing, Faculty of Medicine, and Faculty of Health Sciences.

Under the continuing conditions of the COVID-19 pandemic, and applying all safety and precautionary regulations, 2,182 graduates celebrated their commencement, bringing the total number of AUB graduates this year to 2,515. The ceremonies took place on the Green Field and were livestreamed for family and friends on YouTube and Facebook.

In his opening address, President Khuri spoke about how bad news frequently dominates the news cycle in periods of major historical upheaval or change. “The eras of the COVID-19 pandemic globally and the deep economic, political, and social collapse in Lebanon are no different.”

He explained that with all the negative news and examples of bad leadership, trust in leaders has collapsed. “It may well be that we expect too much of our all-too-human leaders,” President Khuri added. “The world likes its leaders wholesome, humble, wise, and yes, pure. Unfortunately, if one looks beyond the major prophets of monotheism, and a few other striking examples of great men and women... we find these examples are rare.”

He continued, “biographies of great women and men tell us their stories, but there in the background lie heroes and villains, contributors and detractors, largely hidden from view until one adjusts one’s sights.” President Khuri then listed examples of individuals who have made a positive difference in the world and in Lebanon. “Think about the examples of these individuals

who work heroically in a country groaning with despair at the lack of leadership, responsibility or even humanity of their leaders. So many of these folks I have listed and thanked individually or collectively are AUB graduates like you. Think of what they could accomplish for the benefit of others in these dire circumstances when it would be so much easier to just look away.”

He said, “think of this heroism so rarely featured in the news and then you will begin to understand that you are capable of anything. You are AUB students, masters of your own fate. You too play a positive role in societies that badly need role models.”

On September 3, a total of 857 FAS and 138 FAFS students graduated. The student speeches were delivered by pioneering social activist Ubah Ali, who received her BA in political science from FAS and graduated with distinction, and citizen-leader Kamel Wehbe, who received his BA in economics and political science (double major) from FAS and graduated with high distinction.

“During my university years, AUB taught me a lot. I have learned the importance of standing by what I believe and raising my voice even when I think it would not reach anywhere,” said Ubah Ali. “AUB taught me the importance of humanity, and the ways that all of us are interconnected. And that’s why with the help of my AUB/Mastercard Foundation friends, I co-founded an organization called Solace for Somaliland Girls, whose aim is to eradicate all forms of female genital mutilation in Somaliland.”

In his speech, Kamel Wehbe addressed the dire situation in Lebanon. “We may not be able to solve the immediate problems of the country. Things will get worse before they get better. But it is exactly these truths that push us to demand the most out of ourselves. To support one another and guide every decision with the values we’ve held true here. We don’t all need to be outspoken activists. But in doing the absolute most we can day in and day out, with relentless hunger and purpose, in whatever field we pursue, inside Lebanon or outside of it, we are writing the story of a new Lebanon.”

On September 4, 2021, a total of 715 MSFEA and 472 OSB students graduated. Delivering one of the student speeches was star athlete and leader in student government Mounzer Tabbarah who received his BE in mechanical engineering from MSFEA and completed minors in both applied mathematics and creative writing. Another student speech was delivered by distinguished nutritionist Layla Jabre who received her MBA from OSB, and who had previously graduated with distinction from AUB with a BS in nutrition and dietetics coordinated program from FAFS.

Mounzer Tabbarah spoke about the difficulties students faced during the challenging recent times, and how they made them become the best version of themselves. “We do have the capacity to change the world. We already did so.” He added, “I want you to remember the dozens of initiatives that sprouted from students sitting on these very chairs in front of me.

Initiatives that provided shelter, medicine, food, and all other forms of relief to those most vulnerable in our community.”

Layla Jabre said, “AUB marked a turning point in my personal growth and development, pushing me to my highest potential, helping me shape my professional career and become the person I am today.” She added, “AUB has also been an extension to my professional journey as it helped me acquire essential business skills throughout my master’s in business administration.”

Arrangements are in process for commencement exercises for the AUB Class of 2020, to be held in October 2021, after their commencement exercises had to be put on hold last year due to the pandemic.

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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 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 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 365-bed hospital.

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