



**USAID finances student scholarships at AUB**  
***US Ambassador: 'Commitment to higher education is our best investment in Lebanon'***

**Monday October 26, 2009**

US Ambassador Michele Sison presented on October 26 a check for educational scholarships to AUB President Peter Dorman.

The \$457, 475 check was the latest installment of \$2.3 million the United States government has paid to the American University of Beirut in scholarship assistance, over the past fiscal year. "We, at the US Embassy, believe that our commitment to higher education is the best investment we have for Lebanon's future... This is the best use of our taxpayer dollars," said Sison. "This check here represents your dreams, [and represents] us helping you fulfill them." "Through targeted educational scholarships, such as those being celebrated today, we achieve a greater mix of students from diverse regions and varying socio-economic backgrounds," said Dorman. "Education is ultimately about providing opportunities and opening doors of possibility. These can include setting the foundation for a professional career, gaining a fuller appreciation of culture and history, or becoming familiar with people and with points of view that are different than your own."

During the 2008-2009 academic year, about 740 students, from various parts of the country, could follow their education at AUB, thanks to need-based, partial scholarships offered by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), which is an annual AUB donor. A sample of these scholarship recipients met with Sison, USAID Chief of Mission Denise Herbol, and US Embassy Public Affairs Officer Ryan Gliha, on Monday, chatting with them about their plans for the future. They came from all parts of the country, sizzling with ideas and plans for improving their country.

Some told US officials about their plans to solve the current electricity problems in Lebanon, through alternative wind energy; others expressed their love of the country and their plans to contribute to their society through nursing or medicine; and still others said they wanted to work for the government, improving the output of ministries.

Herbol was very impressed with students, promising to keep them updated about the embassy's projects to promote job creation in Lebanon.

"We are proud to work on behalf of the American people to help the Lebanese people realize their dream of a peaceful and prosperous, sovereign, and secure country," said Sison.

President Dorman highlighted the importance of scholarships in "ensuring a dynamic and diverse student body."

He added: "We at AUB are committed to building a vibrant intellectual community on campus that encourages freedom of speech and fosters broad cultural understanding."

Dorman also thanked the US people for their support through USAID and the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad program, both of which have helped AUB open a pleasant, hi-tech Reading Room at Jafet Library and to establish the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service, which allows AUB to reach out beyond its walls and make a positive impact on its neighborhood.

"Broadly speaking, we aspire to foster and broaden the historic impact AUB has made for 140 years on the people of Lebanon and this region—as well as to uphold and encourage freedom of thought and expression, tolerance, respect for diversity, and common dialogue. These are lofty aims, and we need all the help we can get," said Dorman.

Attending the event were AUB Provost Ahmed Dallal, Deans Maroun Kisirwani, George Najjar, and Patrick McGreevy, as well as a number of AUB staff.