

For Immediate Release



## **AUB Recipients of the USAID University Scholarship Program Showcase their Achievements**

Beirut, Lebanon- 17/12/2015 - Put a university that has prioritized the goal of “education for all” together with generous funding to support that mission and the possibilities are endless. More than 200 student participants in the University Scholarship Program (USP) attested to this fact at an event showcasing their achievements at the American University of Beirut (AUB) on Thursday. Funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the USP provides university-bound high-school students from 26 districts in Lebanon a unique opportunity to access quality higher education that promotes tolerance and social equality, as well as challenges students to develop skills in leadership and critical thinking through community service. The USP covers tuition fees, intensive English, books, monthly stipend, housing, a laptop, and medical insurance.

In a celebratory event, attended by notable US Embassy and USAID officials, AUB President, Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, senior AUB administrators, USP scholars, and their families and friends, four cohorts of USP scholarship recipients displayed their achievements and celebrated their work at AUB’s West Hall.

In his opening remarks at the event, President Khuri emphasized the importance of awarding scholarships to students from underprivileged areas, making quality multidisciplinary education available to them. “It is scholarship programs like this that help make AUB an elite university - not just for the wealthy and privileged - but for all students who deserve an education of the quality that our academic and civic engagement bodies can provide. As we approach our 150th anniversary, I believe this is the way that we can continue for another 150 years, serving our community and the region. An undergraduate course at AUB changes lives and can change whole communities for the better and we thank the USAID for helping us achieve that.”

“The USP is a pilot project in Lebanon that is successfully redefining what a college experience should entail,” said Director of USP at AUB, Dr. Malek Tabbal, in his welcoming address that followed. “The students under this program have become well-rounded individuals with high academic credentials, leadership qualities, as well as an unrelenting commitment to civic engagement and community service.”

The audience at Bathish Auditorium heard testimonials from three students reflecting their academic and leadership work during the scholarship. The USP aims to increase its students’ job readiness and maximize their potential in supporting Lebanon’s development. While at AUB, USP scholars have set high standards in academics and community work. Roughly half

the students make the dean's honor list each year, despite their volunteering commitments on and off campus.

In his speech, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires ad interim Ambassador Richard Jones praised the scholar's commitment to give back to their communities and highlighted that the American-Lebanese partnership in the field of education dates back over 150 years. He stressed that America invests in education today because it believes it is the gateway for young people to enter and successfully compete in the 21st century job market and positively contribute to the future of their country.

After speeches and testimonials, the audience was invited to view and discuss the posters that were prepared to demonstrate the student's participation in internships, community-based projects, and a diverse array of volunteering activities. Students were stationed next to their posters to discuss their experiences.

At AUB, the program was launched in 2011 and received its first cohort of students in 2012. It graduated its first four students in May 2015. Today, the program has grown to include 208 students, divided across four cohorts - USP II, IV, V and VI. The first stage of USP VII has also taken off and the students of that cohort will join AUB in fall 2016. USAID has thus far pledged more than \$42 million in continued scholarship funding of cohorts II, IV, V, VI, and VII of the program. AUB is sharing approximately 30% of the cost of the project.

AUB's vision for a diverse student body and high quality education that is accessible to all is realized through supportive programs such as USP. Together with USAID's mission to target underprivileged students across all districts of Lebanon, this program is an example of free liberal education and multidisciplinary training for the benefit of Lebanon and its people.

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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 120 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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