

For Immediate Release



## **The American University of Beirut Launches its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebrations and Inaugurates its 16<sup>th</sup> President, Dr. Fadlo Khuri**

Beirut, Lebanon- 25-1-2016 - The inauguration of Fadlo R. Khuri, MD, as the 16th president of the American University of Beirut and its first Lebanese President took place on AUB campus on an unexpectedly sunny Monday that was further brightened by the spirits of throngs of excited well-wishers. Many traveled from around the globe to AUB for the occasion that coincided with the launching of events celebrating the University's milestone 150th anniversary. The official ceremony began at 3:00 pm with the traditional processional of university presidents and institutional delegates around the world, trustees, and distinguished academics marching in their academic robes from AUB's College Hall to Assembly Hall.

Events were livestreamed with large screen viewing areas established throughout the campus to accommodate overflowing crowds and online for friends and alumni worldwide. Following the processional, the inaugural program began in Assembly Hall with a Choral Fanfare by the AUB Choir, the singing of the Lebanese National Anthem, and a declaration of the official opening of the ceremony by AUB Chief Marshall Lara Halaoui.

Welcoming remarks were delivered by Chairman of the Board of Trustees Philip S. Khoury, followed by congratulatory messages and greetings to the AUB community by the editor of AUB's student newspaper Outlook, Dana Abed; Chief Information Officer Yousif Asfour; Interim Associate Provost and Professor of History Nadia El Cheikh; and President of AUB's Worldwide Alumni Association Wafa Saab.

"This is a historic occasion, when we can take stock of AUB's commitment to excellence in higher education over 150 years," said Chairman Philip Khoury in his remarks. "We can celebrate this University for its extraordinary accomplishments, the strength of its academic programs, the boldness and reach of its research, and its service to the people of Lebanon, the Middle East and the world."

On behalf of the faculty, Associate Provost Nadia El Cheikh spoke of three recent achievements at the outset of the appointment of President Khuri that are of importance to the faculty: The reinstatement of tenure approved by the Board of Trustees last November, the appointment of a task force to study the path of success and prominence for women faculty at AUB, and, more recently the endorsement of a

new template for the faculty contract by the Senate and Board of Trustees alleviating faculty concerns about job security and benefits.

Inspirational addresses were given by distinguished speakers from the United States: Dr. Hussein Ibish of the Arab Gulf States Institute in Washington, DC; Dr. Elias R. Melhem, of the University of Maryland School of Medicine; Dr. Waun Ki Hong, former Head of the Division of Cancer Medicine at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas; and Dr. Ruth O'Regan, Division Head of Hematology/Oncology and Associate Director of Faculty Development and Education at the University of Wisconsin Carbone Cancer Center in Madison, Wisconsin.

Keynote speaker Bermans J. Iskandar, MD, Professor of Neurosurgery and Pediatrics and Director of Pediatric Neurosurgery at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health in Madison, Wisconsin spoke of education as the key, not just to individual success, but to the very survival of nations and civil society. "Today's events are deep affirmations of faith, symbolizing a renewed commitment to Lebanon's greatest resource--its people." He advised the audience to "...keep your focus on the goal of education as the equalizer and harmonizer..." The keynote speech was followed by a musical interlude and the official induction of President Fadlo R. Khuri by Chairman Philip S. Khoury.

With a nod to AUB's milestone 150th anniversary, President Khuri's inaugural address began with a description of his first 150 days in College Hall, during which he focused on "formulating an organic and inclusive vision of excellence and shared governance."

Khuri asked the question "How will AUB continue to inspire current and future generations of smart and ambitious students?" and committed to leading through example for the promotion of "a real and durable renaissance in the humanities in the Arab world".

Khuri identified challenges lying ahead and makes his proposals. "For AUB it has become significantly more difficult to provide a world-class education for the very best and brightest, irrespective of their ability to pay[...] We must address this problem, which strikes at the core of who we are, a not-for-profit difference-maker in the domain of higher education," said Khuri. "I propose piloting a national service and teaching model coupled with a debt-forgiveness approach in collaboration with the government of Lebanon, to stem the nefarious brain drain that plagues the Middle East[...] We must increase internship opportunities within regional industries, and expand and enhance our job fairs and career services department."

President Khuri concluded by asserting that "we can and must model a fair, just, pluralistic society at AUB; one that serves as an example for Lebanon and the Arab world." President Khuri's speech infused his audience with optimism and a clear sense of purpose.

Several symposia have been scheduled as part of the festivities. These include: “Defining Moments Prospects,” held Monday, and “Cancer in Molecular Era: Promise and Prospects” and “Higher Education in the Region: Between Internationalization and Local Relevance,” on Tuesday. The events were celebratory and affirmed AUB’s enduring values of diversity, integrity, and service to Lebanon, the region, and beyond.

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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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