

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 17-1-2017

Boldly AUB campaign launched to safeguard more abundant future **President Fadlo R. Khuri announces largest gift in AUB history**

In a move that reflects its leadership, excellence and stature in Lebanon, the region and the world, the American University of Beirut (AUB) has launched "BOLDLY AUB The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve," in a large ceremony at the Charles W. Hostler Student Center auditorium on campus.

During the ceremony, AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri announced that AUB has received the largest gift in its history, from the Semaan Foundation, to bestow the name Maroun Semaan on AUB's Faculty of Engineering and Architecture which will thus be renamed the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

The ceremony began with the Lebanese National Anthem and AUB's Alma Mater. It was attended by Prime Minister Saad Hariri representing the President of the Republic General Michel Aoun. Speaker Nabih Berri was represented by MP Ali Bazzi. The ceremony was also attended by Ministers: Marwan Hamadeh, Ghassan Hasbani, Ghattas Khoury, Ayman Choukair, Inaya Ezzeddine, and Raed Khoury, former Prime Ministers Fouad Siniora and Tammam Salam, United Nations Special Coordinator for Lebanon Sigrid Kaag, U.S. Ambassador to the Lebanese Republic Elizabeth H. Richard, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to Lebanon Ambassador Christina Lassen, President of USJ Father Salim Daccache, President of LAU Dr. Joseph Jabbra in addition to representatives of the media community, AUB alumni and friends.

Among those who attended from the University are its President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Dr. Philip S. Khoury and the Board members, Provost, Vice-Presidents, faculty and staff.

Chairman Khoury was first to speak; he said: On behalf of our extraordinary Board of Trustees, it is my privilege to welcome you to this special event marking the launch of our campaign, which is also the launch of a bold new era for AUB.

“Wherever I go, I find people who tell me how important AUB is to them personally, but also how important it is to Lebanon and to the region more broadly... The 150th anniversary was not a time for self-indulgent nostalgia. It was an opportunity to remind ourselves - and the world - what AUB is all about; our core philosophy and guiding principles. Understanding who we are and what we have accomplished will help guide us to a future of even greater impact and relevance. These concepts have been distilled into three pillars: leading, innovating, and serving,” he continued.

“We must ensure that AUB can continue motivating future generations to become the thoughtful, creative, and inspired leaders that this region, and the world at large aspires to see, at a time when this informed citizenry and servant leadership is most desperately needed. We must ensure that we can bring the best and brightest to AUB: recruiting and retaining top-notch faculty and staff, and making it possible for promising young scholars to attend AUB without regard to financial constraints.” “With your help, we can accomplish the ambitious vision our new president and his leadership team. Whether through your financial generosity or by giving the gift of your time and enthusiasm, we need your support to help us make the transformative goals of this campaign a reality,” he concluded.

For his part, President Khuri said: We gather tonight in support of the single most significant human construct that we have... The highlight of my day-to-day existence is encountering AUB students and seeing the projects they develop at the same time as pursuing their arduous study schedules. It is no surprise that within a few years of graduation we see countless alumni and make a real impact on the world.

He continued: Adversity abounds, and AUB is the refuge. That is why we are launching this capital campaign, called Boldly AUB, the Campaign to Lead, Innovate and Serve. That is why we are aiming to raise \$500M so we can educate ever-greater numbers of deserving students who cannot afford our tuition, so we can put much-needed innovation and entrepreneurialism back into our society, so we can serve more of our most needy and unfortunate citizens. We are not just an educator of students. We are a model for a fairer, more just, more pluralistic society serving as an example for Lebanon and the Arab world.

“Our target is ambitious and I want to thank each and every donor who chose to partner with us as we move firmly to achieve our bold vision for a better future to our community”, he said.

Upon declaring “BOLDLY AUB, the Campaign to Lead, Innovate and Serve” formally open, President Khuri requested a confirmation of the assent of the Trustees from Chairman Philip Khoury to increase the goals of the campaign from USD 500M to USD 650M, as a result of receiving two major gifts: the largest gift in the history of AUB from the Semaan Foundation,

and another coming donation from a major donor. Chairman Philip Khoury announced the approval of the Board of the revised Campaign goal.

The Semaan Gift

President Khuri then invited the audience to watch a documentary about the achievements of Engineer Maroun Semaan, before calling to the podium Maroun's wife Tanya and their daughter Nour, as well as members of the Semaan family. Miss Nour Semaan spoke on behalf of her father; she said: Greetings to you all from Maroun Semaan, and a special gratitude to the American University of Beirut from one of its sons; my father, who is certainly following the celebration today wishing he was with us all, but his health condition and his ongoing treatment in Boston prevented that.

Semaan continued: Since my early days, he always told me about AUB and what it offered to Lebanon and the Middle East over a period of a hundred and fifty years, and what it gave him as a graduate from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

“I don't need to tell you about my father. There are amongst you people who know him probably better than me for his kindness, modesty, generosity and brightness. But I can claim to know more about his keen interest in education and his love for Lebanon, and its South. Al-Janoub where he was born and in which he grew up and received his education in the schools of its villages and cities, before he landed in the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture here at AUB. Throughout his schooling, he never relinquished the leadership position; a leadership that he extended to the business world where his reputation precedes him across the globe”, she said.

“From his early years, my father absorbed the passion for education and philanthropy from his parents. I will not recount his well-known contributions to this great institution and others throughout this country and beyond. He always wondered how someone with means could rest his head on his pillow while a neighbour of his, near or far, is unable to make ends meet? Therefore, his door was always open and we will strive for it to remain so. The Semaan Foundation was only set up to fulfil some of his dreams and aspirations,” Semaan highlighted.

Semaan said also: I have no doubt that Maroun who is in Boston, close to its famous Copley Square which holds a monument for Jubran Khalil Jubran, is happily following with us this celebration full of hope that the University from which he graduated, including the faculty which awarded him his degree, is planning - through its curricula, projects and aspirations to keep pace with modern times – for another century of excellent contributions to the graduation of future generations of students who will serve the needs of Lebanon and the rest of the Middle East.

She concluded: My dad, I am very proud of all you have achieved and what you have given. I send you a message of love from me, my mother Tania, my sisters, your brothers, sisters and your extended family and all your friends. I hope you will soon return to your homeland and to your University, faithful and loyal as we know you to be in order to participate with benefactors and people of good will in making plans for the future of Lebanon and the Middle East.

This was followed by the screening of a film about the campaign. Then the “En Fa Mi” band played a song entitled "Abundance". This song had been written by AUB President Fadlo Khuri and composed by Teddy Nasr.

The evening continued with a gala dinner and a three-dimensional display and more songs by the “En Fa Mi” band and the “Tayarat Waraq” band, which is made up of students, alumni and employees of AUB.

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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 130 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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