

PRESS RELEASE



AUB graduates 1473 undergraduate students

Dorman to Class of 2015: A liberal arts education offers possibilities for many careers

Beirut, Lebanon- 30/05/2015 -Another four years have ended; another group of students were sent off into the real world during the 146th commencement exercises for undergraduates, held on May 30, on the AUB Green Field.

Some 1473 AUB students are graduating this year, with bachelor's degrees and four years of memories and treasured experiences. One day earlier, another 535 students graduated with master's degrees, MDs or PhDs.

During the commencement exercises, which also marked AUB President Dorman's last days in office, students beamed with pride, celebrating their accomplishments and sharing them with their families.

Both outgoing President Dorman and Provost Ahmad Dallal received tributes for the illustrious accomplishments they made while at the helm of the University, during the undergraduates commencement exercises.

Showering Dorman with accolades, AUB Board of Trustees Chair Philip Khoury said: "President Dorman has led AUB with distinction since 2008. As a result of his leadership, today the American University of Beirut is academically stronger, more dynamic, and more ambitious than ever before."

Listing the achievements of the Dorman administration, Khoury noted that AUB now ranks 249 on the QS World Rankings versus somewhere in the 500s before Dorman took office. Moreover, the financial aid program has more than tripled; AUB faculty are producing more than twice the research output of all other Lebanese universities combined; and the AUB Medical Center is expanding and undergoing its most dramatic transformation in 50 years, and more than 100 physicians have been recruited from overseas. Additionally, AUB has raised more than \$350 million in grants and donations, for teaching and research, scholarships, facilities and medical care.

"Leading a university is more than a list of accomplishments," added Khoury. "It requires a combination of skills, character, and team work. And Peter Dorman's fine character is known to all: his patience, his moral fortitude, and his utter lack of vanity. He has served this university with honor and humility. We all strive to be good and virtuous people, but few of us are as uncompromising in this respect as Peter Dorman."

In turn, President Dorman paid tribute to outgoing Provost Ahmad Dallal.

“In only a few words, it is truly impossible to quantify the contributions that Provost Dallal has made to AUB during his six years in post, or the extent of his dedication to this university,” said Dorman. “As chief academic officer, he has advocated the highest standards of excellence for teaching and research, recruiting new faculty of regional and global reputation and potential. He has greatly enhanced the rigor of our faculty departments and centers, while championing the cause of interdisciplinary research and inquiry in areas central to social and environmental needs.”

The ceremony was opened by the formal procession of AUB faculty in academic regalia, followed by Chief Marshal Huda Zurayk declaring the official start of the ceremony. Then President Dorman welcomed students and their families and distinguished guests, and invited the first student speaker to the podium.

“The diplomas you are about to receive will do more than simply certify that you have completed a degree in the program of your choice,” Dorman told graduates. “Behind each diploma lie the history and stature of one of the greatest international universities in the world. Behind each diploma lie the universal values that are nurtured on this campus: diversity, freedom of thought, inclusiveness, and sustainability. Behind each diploma lie historic generations of men and women who have left their significant mark in the world, and whose ranks you are about to join.”

Dorman then invited the first student speaker to the podium.

Issam Chmaitilly, a candidate for the degree of bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, acknowledged parents’ support and sacrifice that allowed their children to seek an education at AUB.

“AUB has allowed me to grow, not only on an intellectual level, but certainly on a social and cultural scale,” Chmaitilly said. “We should never let anyone trace our decisions or dictate our life. We have succeeded in our educational journey. And now, our life-long journey of hard-work, perseverance and determination awaits us.”

Then George Debs, a candidate for the degree of Bachelor of Science in Landscape Design and Echo-Management and Diploma of Ingenieur Agricole, from the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, then took the stage.

Debs shared with fellow students what he learned at AUB, apart from the academic knowledge he obtained.

“Through my struggles and my triumphs I’ve realized that there are three components successful people need to internalize to manifest their visions,” he said.

Debs listed the three components of success as follows: inspiration, connection to one’s internal compass and guidance system, and a healthy dose of negativity to keep one pushing forward.

“I hope, through the spirit this university has instilled within each of you, that you challenge your fears and gather the courage to stand up and claim your own voice and use it to better our country, our region and the entire world,” he concluded.

President Dorman then delivered the keynote address.

He commended students for choosing to study at AUB, which gives its students a broad-based liberal arts education that teaches them how to seek knowledge, while equipping them with marketable skills for the job market.

“By itself, a liberal arts education offers no guarantee of a specific career, but—instead—offers possibilities for many,” he said.

“Your depth and breadth of understanding in the very different approaches of both science and the humanities, I believe, encompass the richness and true value of an AUB degree,” he added. But another component is Lebanon itself.”

“AUB is an indelible part of Lebanon and has a specific sense of place in each of us here present,” he added. “Lebanon is a trilingual civilization, fluent in Arabic, English, and French, that looks both East and West. Thanks to this diversity, it is culturally and historically more advantaged in terms of its size than almost any country in the world. Lebanon has its challenges to be sure, but we all partake of its unique heritage.”

Dorman then urged students to be ready for the unexpected, because “these days if you do think you know where you are going, you may wind up somewhere else.”

He added, “The world has become a fluid and entrepreneurial and infinitely varied workplace. Are you ready for it?”

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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 100 programs leading to the 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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