

For Immediate Release



Beirut: 01-6-2016

## **AUB: Khuri Appoints Nadia El Cheikh as the New Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences**

President of the American University of Beirut (AUB), Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, announced the appointment of Interim Associate Provost Dr. Nadia El Cheikh as the new Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences. Dr. El Cheikh is the first woman to be appointed as Dean of AUB's original founding faculty.

“It is a proud moment for FAS, and for this University as a whole, to witness a distinguished and dedicated woman faculty member taking charge of AUB's oldest, largest, and perhaps most illustrious faculty for the first time in its, and our, 150-year history,” the President wrote in his message to the AUB community.

President Khuri described Dr. El Cheikh as an eminent scholar as well as an experienced and talented administrator, who has made important contributions since she joined the Office of the Provost in 2015. “She has been a key figure in planning and implementing the 150th anniversary celebrations and presidential inauguration, with the undoubted highlight being her organization of the three superb presidential symposia held on January 25-26.”

“I am honored by this appointment that will allow me to lead FAS,” El Cheikh said. “I have been intimately connected to FAS, first as an undergraduate student in the department of History and Archeology, and in professorial rank since 1994 in the same department.”

El Cheikh mentioned the challenges facing the largest faculty at AUB, notably, “the status of the FAS infrastructure; the lack of funding for research; and the general lack of resources which

affects FAS in all its roles.” She proposed harnessing FAS’ “tremendous potential” and fortifying its energy in order to distinguish it as the most impactful faculty in the region, on a par with similar faculties in elite institutions in the US and Europe.

### **Vital Educational Role**

“What is required is recapturing the value of what a liberal education provides and can provide in the new creative economy,” El Cheikh said.

“The liberal education that FAS provides is vital because our students – all our students: those in an FAS major, those wishing to go to Medicine or Engineering or Business, and those simply taking their electives and requirements at FAS – will graduate having developed their intellectual, moral, artistic and civic capacities as critical and innovative thinkers with an aspiration to a lifetime of learning.”

El Cheikh will be working closely with the leadership of the university with a goal to focus attention and resources to FAS. “The university as a whole has to engage in FAS and invest in it,” she said.

Nadia Maria El Cheikh is a historian of the Abbasid Caliphate and Byzantium, with research focus on women and gender. She earned her BA in History and Archaeology with distinction from AUB in 1985 and her PhD from Harvard University in 1992. She came back to work at AUB that same year and was promoted to the rank of Professor in 2006.

She has served as Director of the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (2000-04 and 2006-09) and as Chair of the Department of History and Archaeology (2013-2015). She was Visiting Scholar at the University of California, Los Angeles in 2003 and 2004 and at Harvard University in 1998.

El Cheikh received the New York University, Global Affairs’ International Visitors Program Grant in 2004 and has been the recipient of many AUB research grants, notably, the Mellon

Summer Research Fellowship in 1995, 1996, and 1999; and the University Research Board short-term and long-term Faculty Development Grants.

In 2007 she was the Shawwaf Visiting Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University.

She has published three history books and co-edited three edited volumes, including AUB One Hundred and Fifty, AUB's main sesquicentennial academic publication issued in 2016. In addition, she has delivered more than 100 published articles, reviews, invitational lectures and conference/workshop papers.

She will take office at the Faculty on September 1, 2016. Dr. Ramzi Baalbaki, the Margaret Weyerhaeuser Jewett Professor of Arabic, will serve as Acting Dean of FAS from June 1st.

ENDS

**For more information please contact:**

Simon Kachar  
Director of News and Media Relations  
Mobile: 03427024 Office: 01374374 Ext: 2676  
Email: [sk158@aub.edu.lb](mailto:sk158@aub.edu.lb)

**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.

**Stay up to date on AUB news and events. Follow us on:**

Website: [www.aub.edu.lb](http://www.aub.edu.lb)  
Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/aub.edu.lb>  
Twitter: [http://twitter.com/AUB\\_Lebanon](http://twitter.com/AUB_Lebanon)