

For Immediate Release



## **New students join AUB with USAID Scholarships**

Beirut, Lebanon- 2/11/2015 - 208 Lebanese public school students, hailing from all corners of Lebanon, now have the opportunity to study at AUB thanks to a full scholarship provided by the University Scholarship Program (USP) funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). AUB plans to recruit 52 students each year for the next three years, supporting them for their entire undergraduate education. This brings the total number of students supported by the program at AUB to more than 350 with a total funding of nearly \$42 million dollars since 2011.

Commenting on the impact of the program, AUB President Fadlo R. Khuri said, “AUB is very proud of the USP scholars and appreciates USAID support to create more scholarship opportunities. Socio-economic diversity and inclusion is one of AUB’s top priorities; and the positive impact is three-fold benefiting the students, their communities, and the University itself. This grant from USAID-USP will have an enormous effect in developing a whole new cadre of AUB educated, world-class scholars who will be trained to meaningfully impact society.”

The USAID-USP program forever changes the lives of academically promising but financially disadvantaged youth. According to Ali Esmaeel, 18, a mechanical engineering major from Deir Qanoun - Ras el Ein, Tyre, the USAID-USP program at AUB “is a life-changing opportunity. Higher education is very crucial... Of course the USP has opened doors to many bright opportunities.” This year, there are 198 Lebanese public school graduates studying at AUB in various majors from Engineering to Media Studies thanks to the support of the USAID-USP program. In addition, USAID-USP scholarship recipients at AUB have set high standards in academics - nearly half of the students made the dean’s honor list last year. The first four USAID-USP scholars graduated in 2015 and 50 are expected to graduate this year.

The USP program provides merit-based scholarships to financially needy and academically eligible public school graduates from across Lebanon, including the most disadvantaged corners of the country. These scholarships enable students, often from marginalized families that would otherwise have no possible means to attend these schools, to study at the highest-quality Lebanese universities. Offering much more than just tuition, the scholarship also provides housing or transportation allowances, books, a laptop computer, medical insurance and stipends, as well as intensive English classes and academic support, if needed.

In the last decade, financial assistance for students has skyrocketed from \$4.5 million given to 1,600 students to \$27.7 million distributed to 3,150 students this year. Interim Provost Mohamed Harajli explained saying, “AUB demonstrates its commitment to educational access for academically-capable but financially-disadvantaged students by persistently pursuing

grant-funded scholarships such as USAID-USP as well as increasing financial assistance provided by donors and the University itself.”

Generous funding from USAID will enable USP scholars to graduate from AUB -- one of the best higher education institutions in the Middle East -- with a solid education, leadership skills and a passion for improving their communities. In fact, USAID-USP at AUB develops students’ leadership skills through a series of trainings, workshops, community service, and community-based projects. Rabih Shibli, Director of AUB’s Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service, emphasized that “The USAID-USP program at AUB combines the University’s unique resources with real-world learning opportunities in communities throughout the country to develop students into high-achieving, socially conscious scholars with significant leadership potential.”

USAID-USP students must complete a community project in their final year. The students work with local stakeholders to conduct a needs assessment, design the project including a detailed proposal and budget, and implement the project. Examples of recent community projects initiated by USAID-USP students at AUB include: “Manaraty” - a public library and reading center located within the vicinity of three local schools in the West Bekaa; the installation of a water filter system to ensure water quality in Azzibeh, a major drinking water source for the town of Jezzine; the renovation of a traditional house in Zgharta as a cultural center for local youth; and various social enterprises.

“This is a unique program in Lebanon,” concludes Dr. Samar Harkouss Rihan, Director of the USAID-USP-7 program at AUB. “It offers students a once-in-a-lifetime chance to actualize their academic and leadership potential through a well-rounded environment and a world-class education.”

ENDS

**For more information please contact:**

Office of Communications, [information@aub.edu.lb](mailto:information@aub.edu.lb), 01-75 96 85

**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.

**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)