

For Immediate Release



AUB inaugurates forward-looking, eco-friendly, and research-oriented Irani-Oxy Engineering Complex

Beirut, Lebanon- 09/08/2014 - A new cutting-edge building complex has been added to the lower campus and will serve the ambitious needs of the AUB Faculty of Engineering and Architecture.

Named the Ray R. Irani-Oxy Engineering Complex, after the donors AUB alumnus and Trustee Emeritus Ray Irani and the Occidental Petroleum Corporation, the six-story building stands behind Bechtel, and includes at least 60 highly-equipped teaching and research laboratories, six state-of-the-art classrooms, including an e-classroom and data center, two basement floors, and 85 cubicles for doctoral students.

“The Ray R. Irani-Oxy Engineering Complex will provide AUB with a facility that allows it to stay at the cutting-edge of engineering education and research,” said AUB President Peter Dorman, during the official inauguration ceremony on September 9, 2014. “The labs, workshops, and classrooms are modular and thus flexible and can be technically upgraded with ease.” He has received several awards from Lebanon and the United States, and AUB granted him an honorary doctorate in 2013.

Designed by Nabil Gholam Architects, built by La Constructa, and project-managed by AUB’s Facilities Planning & Design Unit, the building follows sustainable and eco-friendly specifications: It takes advantage of its immediate environment, using a night-cooling strategy for energy conservation and a water collection, conservation, and recycling system to reduce water usage. It also brings the campus and the Mediterranean into the heart of every floor, offering panoramic views of both.

“I am proud to say that the Irani-Oxy Engineering Complex is the first building in Lebanon registered for LEED-NC certification - the gold standard of ‘green design,’” said Dorman. “Once again, AUB is at the vanguard and I hope others in this country and the region will follow our lead.”

The project was also shortlisted for the WAN Awards Educational sector.

Attended by a host of luminaries from the world of construction, engineering, and business, as well as AUB Board of Trustee members, the official inauguration ceremony took place on the sixth floor terrace of the Irani-Oxy Complex, with a view of the setting sun. It was followed by a gala dinner held on the lower campus Oval (between the OSB and FEA complexes).

While Trustee Emeritus Ray Irani could not attend the event, his sister Nermine Irani Sibli and members of his family were among the guests.

“Today, we inaugurate this impressive new Engineering Complex and welcome it as the latest landmark on our magnificent campus. We can only imagine the research and discoveries that will take place in this science facility in the years and decades to come,” said Philip Khoury, chairman of the AUB Board of Trustees, before paying tribute to Ray Irani, the businessman and the philanthropist.

Ray R. Irani was born in 1935 in Lebanon, and studied at AUB, graduating in 1953 with a BSc in chemistry.

Recognized by his professors as a scholar, he was encouraged to study in the United States. At the remarkable age of 25, he obtained a PhD in physical chemistry from the University of Southern California, launching his career as a scientific researcher. By 1983, he had firmly established himself in the oil and gas industry. He quickly rose to assume the presidency of Occidental Petroleum Corporation, later serving as Chairman and CEO for over 20 years, and then as Executive Chairman. Under his leadership, Occidental grew to be the fourth largest oil and gas company in the U.S. with 40,000 employees worldwide.

“Throughout this period, Ray always made time for his alma mater,” noted Khoury. “AUB has benefited enormously from his leadership and his wisdom.”

Irani who has served as AUB Board member since 1986 has been very active in AUB, making significant contributions to the AUB Campaign for Excellence. “His many generous gifts to AUB have supported merit scholarships in chemistry, scholarships in mathematics in honor of his father, a legacy scholarship fund endowment, the reconstruction of College Hall, a fund to match contributions from alumni, and seed money for an energy research group,” added Khoury, before delivering Irani’s remarks on his behalf.

In his address, Irani spoke of the influence AUB has had on his life and the lives of many others in the region.

“I owe so much to my alma mater for what I have been able to achieve in both science and business,” Irani said. “AUB has had a similar effect on so many lives and, more than any other university, has positively transformed the Arab region.”

Prodding AUB to keep on striving higher, Irani reminded of the competition that is looming across the region and internationally. “The world is changing very fast and AUB must change as well,” he said. “AUB must invest, not only in modern facilities, but in its faculty. Excellent universities are recognized for the quality of their faculty and their research. The Arab world must produce research that addresses its distinctive needs and graduates who will lead this troubled region to better times. AUB has always played this role and must continue to do so. As AUB approaches its 150th anniversary, it is for all of us who care about this great institution and the people of this region, to ensure that AUB thrives for another 150 years.”

During the ceremony, FEA Dean Makram Suidan highlighted the successes and future plans of FEA, and specifically the importance it places on research.

“Despite the very limited resources available to us to perform research, our faculty members last year averaged 3.6 journal publications per faculty member per year,” he said. “This productivity is a higher productivity than that of most Engineering faculty members at U.S. institutions.”

Today, FEA is home to over 2,230 undergraduate students, 247 master’s students, and 66 PhD students. These outstanding students are supported by 94 full-time faculty, 81 part-time faculty, and 53 permanent staff, who work in the departments of civil, mechanical, electrical, and chemical engineering. Recently, three new programs have been added: Chemical Engineering, Industrial Engineering, and Construction Engineering. FEA also introduced a Petroleum Studies minor.

In addition to Irani and Oxy, several other donors have named spaces within the complex. These include, the Frem Family for the George Frem Manufacturing Technologies Hub; Khatib and Alami for the Cafeteria and Dining Room; Trustee Riad Kamal for the Structural Engineering Laboratory; Hassan and Christiane Hachem Classroom; AREEN Group for the Omar Salhab Classroom; Fadlo and Justine Touma for the Geotechnical Engineering Laboratory; Sami W. Sidawi for the Water Resources Center; The FEA Class of 1964 VLSI Circuits Laboratory Honoring Dean Hajj; Holcim for the Transportation and Construction Laboratory; and the students of the late Neddi Jouzy for naming the Transportation Laboratory.

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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.

About The Honor Society of Nursing, Sigma Theta Tau International (STTI)

Founded in 1922, STTI is a nonprofit organization whose mission is to support the learning, knowledge and professional development of nurses committed to making a difference in health worldwide. STTI has more than 125,000 members in 90 countries. Members include practicing nurses, instructors, researchers, policymakers, entrepreneurs and others. STTI’s 480 chapters are located at institutions of higher education throughout Australia, Botswana, Brazil, Canada, Colombia, Ghana, Hong Kong, Japan, Kenya, Malawi, Mexico, The Netherlands, Pakistan, Singapore, South Africa, South Korea, Swaziland, Sweden, Taiwan,

Tanzania, the United States and Wales. More information about STTI can be found online at www.nursingsociety.org.

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