For Immediate Release

AUB students combine imagination and knowledge to suggest environmentally-friendly solutions to common problems

Beirut, Lebanon- 26/04/2012 - Imagine that used cooking oil could help asphalt pavements last longer. Imagine that instead of using spent tires to set up blockades, they are recycled into activated carbon to purify water. Imagine developing a waterless shower system. Imagine harvesting rainwater to generate electric power or produce drinking water.

This is exactly what students participating at the 2013 International Biodiversity Day at AUB (IBDAA, an acronym that also means “innovation” in Arabic) set out to do on April 26, 2013: They combined their imagination with the knowledge they had gained in the classroom to come up with creative and environmentally-friendly solutions to everyday problems. They shared their innovative ideas via poster presentations set up on Agriculture Square in the lower campus.

Every year since it was first created in 2007, IBDAA, an initiative by the Nature Conservation Center (NCC), has been growing. First, it was only open to chemistry and science students; then it started attracting students from the business school and the humanities.

More than 220 students from 15 courses joined in this year’s IBDAA poster presentation and competition, under the theme of “Water and Biodiversity,” chosen to coincide with the UN designation of 2013 as the International Year of Water Cooperation.

“IBDAA has evolved beyond anybody’s imagination,” said Najat Saliba, chemistry professor, NCC director and IBDAA founding member. “It has become, for AUB professors and students, the day where innovation and creativity meet nature conservation efforts... It is always the energy of the students and their participation that makes IBDAA a vibrant event every year.”

What’s exceptional this year, noted Saliba, is that a number of students are submitting projects on their own without the guidance of course professors. “This is certainly one important measure of success in creating an innovative culture among students on campus,” she added.

For the fifth year in a row, IBDAA relied on jurors, from the private and academic sectors, whose expertise, insights, and business acumen allowed them to choose the best projects in each category. The four winning teams, by category, were each
presented with the Jammal Trust Bank Eco-Innovation Award of $1,500. The bank sponsored the event for the second year in a row.

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For more information please contact:
Maha Al-Azar, Associate Director for Media Relations, ma110@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 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 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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