President Service Excellence Awards
Long Service Awards
July 12, 2016
President Fadlo R. Khuri’s Speech

Good morning! Distinguished guests, colleagues and friends, welcome to this vital celebration.

When we called for these nominations in February we stated that we were looking for individuals who not only excel in their given tasks but go above and beyond the call of duty, who exemplify professionalism and courtesy to others, qualities to which we all aspire. We wanted individuals who make this a better place to work, study, or receive care; Individuals who are committed to a better AUB for all. I know that the American University of Beirut and its vibrant Medical Center are endowed with many, many such individuals whose dedication and commitment to excellence go far beyond the call of duty; they do this not because of contract or monthly salary check but because they genuinely love this institution. They give of themselves daily because they care about their colleagues, they believe in their institution, and they abide in AUB’s mission “that they may have life and have it more abundantly”. Their satisfaction is based on a job well done and service rendered to those who need that help.

For me there is no greater privilege and honor than to be able to recognize four such individuals, out of many outstanding nominees. These individuals were nominated by their colleagues for special recognition of those qualities that so many people in this audience today share; passion, energy, commitment to excellence, a great and positive attitude. Yes, and a sense of humor which you need at AUB and Lebanon, and a willingness to do all this without seeking attention or applause; they do this not to be acknowledged today although we acknowledged them, but they do this because they believe in the greater good of the institution.

Today we want to take the opportunity to applaud you warmly and sincerely and say thank you for your extraordinary contributions to AUB and to our community. We want to congratulate you on your richly deserved President’s Service Excellence Award while recognizing all of your colleagues who are nominated and are deeply deserving.

I would like to say few words about the particular achievements and special qualities of this year’s recipients of the excellence awards in alphabetical order:

Could Ms. Rabab Abi Shakra please join us on the stage! ...

Efficiency and dedication best describe Rabab. Rabab joined AUB in 1995 and has been consistently among those who prove to her peers as well as her supervisors her unstinting dedication, her team spirit and her willingness to serve above and beyond her “job description” to satisfy all in her department to be more organized and more efficient. Efficiency a quality we badly need at AUB. She describes herself as a mother away from home to all the students who come into her office for help, Rabab goes the extra mile to make sure all the FEA students are well taken care of. Cordial visits from former Electrical and Computer Engineering majors are testimony even after they graduate to how much Rabab has meant to them and has positively attracted the sort of team spirit that positively impacts the lives and careers of our students during their undergraduate years.

In the ECE Department, Ms. Abi Shakra is credited with various initiatives that have improved the scope of operations. One of the most significant achievements was commencing an ABET (Accreditation Board
of Engineering and Technology, Inc) recommended structural flow for the department that optimized the flow of work during the busiest times of the year at the Department, such as the registration period.

In recognition of her exemplary service, always rendered with a smile to the students of ECE, the faculty of engineering, and the AUB community at large, it’s our privilege to recognize Rabab with the President’s Excellence Award. ...

**Could Mr. Jeryis Fares join us on the stage! (Applause)…**

Jiryis Fares has been described by his colleagues as a lifelong learner, a deeply trustworthy and exemplary individual who is dedicated beyond expectation. He began his career at AUB in 2006 as a Janitor, and through his perseverance to improve and to better serve AUB, he is now an IT Office Assistant in the CIO’s office.

Jiryis is an example of the transformative effect of AUB on peoples’ lives. He’s shown that through hard work, diligence and the willingness to work above and beyond and always help others, individuals such as Jiryis are rewarded not only with promotion but by the respect and esteem of their colleagues and supervisors.

Everyone who knows Jiryis describes him as positive, serious, humble and driven in the best sense of the word.

Jiryis loves to take on more tasks and the sense of volunteerism is infectious, he learns more skills because he wants to better serve the community around him; he does all of this with a constant smile on his face.

He is loved by all who’ve worked with him throughout the years, and as an inspiration to his peers and a massive support to his clients.

Success’ stories in excellence and service are exemplified in Jiryis’ services to AUB through his personal journey at the university.... مبروك جيريس ...

We’re making sure he keeps an eye on Dr. Asfour! ...

**The next recipient of the president’s excellence award is Nibal Al-Safah! …**

Ms. Safah is a long standing extraordinary community member, her career at AUB spans over three decades. She is considered by her colleagues and her supervisors to be the pillar of success of the Psychiatry Department; as you can see by the turn out from the Psychiatry Department today who occupied several rows here.

When asked about her, she has been described by her peers and her clients as extremely dedicated and committed to service excellence no matter how difficult and demanding the requests are.

When you meet Ms. Safah and talk about her work, you are immediately struck by her enormous amount of empathy, passion, and dedication not only to the faculty but the patients in the department of Psychiatry. She treats the Psychiatry Department in its entirety from every co-worker to the
physicians and nurses and patients as her home. She is concerned about people’s well-being and tries hard to offer solutions even in the most difficult situations where the area of concern is not within her scope of services she always helps to guide people to the individuals who can best help them. She managed to change the smokers’ section near the St. Jude’s Cancer Center to another location, just because she felt that the young cancer patients and their families should not be subjected to secondhand smoke when they come to the center; something Dr. Solh will help us re-enforce in this coming year when he and the COO and EVP Sayegh will help make this a smokeless campus. Many such examples are testimonies to Nibal’s extraordinary efforts and service to all members of the AUB community.

It is citizens like Nibal that help make AUB great. Congratulations Nibal! ...

**Last but far from Least, could Ms. Asma Shihab join us on the stage!** ...

It is said that the Faculty of Health Sciences functions like a largely functional family; as such Ms. Shihab is a role model of that community spirit. A member of the AUB community since 2001, she’s variously referred to as humble, dedicated, diligent and enormously positive.

In her Department at FHS she serves and works with 10 Faculty members efficiently, wholeheartedly, and professionally. She ensures that all the needs of the faculty members and the students are met on time even if she must remain after hours to do so. She conducts her business in a low-key mannered, never complaining, never seeking credit, always making light of the many demands of her job in these complex circumstances.

She’s been described by her peers – and I love this description - as the silent mega force doing all the work behind the scenes for a major production... that I guess is the theatre of FHS. Her work is impeccable and her character is always calm despite the pressure.

All of her peers agree on Asma’s meticulousness, calm demeanor, extraordinary helpfulness all rendered with a smile.

The service excellence award is the least we can do to recognize Ms. Asma Shihab’s extraordinary contribution. Congratulations Asma! ...

**Long Service Awards**

Please don’t mistake my brevity for a lack of recognition of just how valuable these long serving extraordinary members of our community are deserving of our recognition.

This is our 150th anniversary! In this 150th anniversary year – the sesquicentennial - I want to extend my sincere thanks to our remarkable staff for their constant backing through good times and challenging times through these many years. Some of you today who are celebrated have worked with AUB and for AUBMC for 45 and 50 years. This is a testament to faithful service that words cannot adequately reflect, certainly not my own. So I’ve to say that as we indicated great citizens build great nations; and this is a nation that badly needs great citizens. We hope that your service in this community at AUB will be an example for many people to come and for the generations of individuals you’ve come into contact with.
AUB staff members are known for their extraordinary dedication, their unstinting loyalty, and their absolute commitment to this university; it is truly their university. This commitment is demonstrated daily by the number of staff who stay with us for 30 years and more and we make use of this occasion to acknowledge those who distinguished themselves through their long tenure as AUB employees.

On behalf of generations of AUB presidents—some of you have served since President Kirkwood, that would make more than the half of AUB presidents—and at least five iterations of the board of trustees.

I want to thank you sincerely for your service through good times and bad, through wars, economic declines, and through challenging times as well as wonderful times. You are the backbone of AUB! So thank you very much. ...