Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS)

Officers of the Faculty

John Waterbury  President
Peter Heath  Provost
Khalil Bitar  Dean of the Faculty
Helen Sader  Associate Dean
Zeina Halabieh  Academic Officer
Abeer Khoury  Executive Officer
Leila Knio  Student Record Officer
Nadine Rizk  Recruitment Officer

Ex Officio Members

Moueen Salameh  Registrar
Salim Kanaan  Director of Admissions
Helen Bikhaiz  University Librarian
Karma El Hassan  Director, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

Historical Background

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences was established in 1866, the same year in which the Syrian Protestant College, now the American University of Beirut, was established. On December 13, 1866, the first class was held, attended by sixteen students, and in 1870 the first five students graduated. Arabic, which was the language of instruction since the inception of the college, was replaced by English in 1882. In 1900 the School of Commerce was established and was later incorporated into the Faculty of Arts and Sciences.

AUB, in general, and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences in particular, have survived many crises since 1866, including two world wars, regional and local wars, student strikes, and economic crises. In spite of all these hardships the faculty has continued to develop and to maintain its high academic standards.

In the mid-1970s the University undertook a major planning exercise, which was known as the Horizon 2000 Plan, aimed at reorganizing the University as a whole. Several changes were introduced in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as a result: a number of departments and programs (Fine and Performing Arts, Religious Studies, European Language and Literature) were cancelled, and a few others were either merged (e.g., Psychology and Sociology/Anthropology) or became independent from the faculty (e.g., Education and the University Orientation Program). In the past few years the faculty has attempted a major self-review, particularly in its academic programs, faculty composition, and graduation requirements. Several master's degree programs were introduced (e.g., Computer Science and Financial Economics) or re-introduced (e.g., Middle Eastern Studies) and a separate Department of Computer Sciences was created. Furthermore, the faculty is the major contributor to the Center for Advanced Mathematical Studies, a research center of the University, established in 1997. In 2000 the School of Business, which was part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, became an independent school, and Education became once more a department in Arts and Sciences. In fall 2001 the Central Research Science Laboratory was established to promote scientific research in the faculty and at the University at large. Currently the faculty is trying to reactivate some of the PhD programs that it previously had in the 1960s and 1970s, including Arabic, Islamic and Modern Middle East History, and Physics, and to launch a PhD program in the Department of Biology. In 2004–05 the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR) was introduced as well as a new undergraduate program in Fine Arts and Art History.

Mission

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences represents the core of the University and is its main gateway for higher studies and professional education. It follows a liberal arts program that stresses freedom of academic choice, integrity, ethical conduct, equal opportunity and respect for diversity. The faculty offers undergraduate and graduate programs committed to excellence in research and teaching in the most fundamental disciplines of the arts, humanities, and social, natural and mathematical sciences.

Vision

The Faculty of Arts and Sciences strives to have a governance system that is transparent and based on peer participation and review. The faculty encourages and supports high quality research and teaching. The curriculum is built on a pivotal and formative freshman year. Excellence is achieved at the undergraduate and graduate levels through a continuous revision of curricula, assessment of needs for equipment and facilities, and recruitment and development of faculty profiles. The faculty is committed to academic growth through the establishment of successful and sustainable Bachelor, Master and Doctoral degrees.

Graduate Study

Master’s Degree

All applicants to graduate study need the recommendation of the academic unit concerned. The criteria for admission to graduate study is as follows:
Graduate
• A cumulative average of at least 80 in the major field of study
• A cumulative average of at least 75 in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
• A minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 204

Graduate on Probation
• A cumulative average of at least 77 in the major field of study
• A cumulative average of at least 75 in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
• A minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 204

Prospective Graduate
• A cumulative average of at least 75 in the major field of study
• A cumulative average of at least 75 in all work done in the sophomore, junior, and senior years
• Up to 18 credits of supplementary undergraduate courses in the intended field of study, to be specified by the academic unit
• A minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 203 or exemption from the course, and a minimum grade of 70 in ENGL 204
• In order to be admitted to the graduate program the applicant should take the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and should have completed the supplementary courses with an average of at least 80, based on a minimum of 18 credits in the intended field of study

Full information and general requirements for graduate work are found in the Admissions section in this catalogue.

Degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)
The Faculty of Arts and Sciences offers graduate programs of study leading to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) with majors in Arabic and Near Eastern Languages, Cell and Molecular Biology, Arab and Middle Eastern History, and Theoretical Physics.

These programs have been approved by the New York State Education Department and will be reactivated in fall 2007–08.