

*American University
of Beirut*



Presidential Inauguration Faculty Symposium May 3, 2009

***Academic Freedom and Innovation in the Middle East:
AUB and the Expansion of Higher Education in the Region***

Date and Time: Sunday May 3, 2009, 2:00-6:00 pm

Place: American University of Beirut, West Hall, Bathish Auditorium.

AUB has played a seminal role in the development of higher education in the Middle East. Its goal has been, and continues to be, to graduate men and women who are able to think critically, not only about technical and professional issues, but about political, moral, cultural, and aesthetic ones as well. In addition, AUB has historically been known as a haven for academic freedom and the open exchange of ideas.

The region is experiencing an unprecedented growth in higher education today with the introduction of affiliated and branch campuses of US and other western universities, particularly in the Gulf States, where the focus is almost exclusively on technical and professional education. Furthermore, universities everywhere are expected to encourage innovation to remain competitive in a global economy. The most significant challenges that universities face today may be the many new fields of producing knowledge.

This symposium proposes a number of questions to frame the debate and discussion:

- What are the tensions between a broad liberal arts education and an education that gives students a narrower academic focus that provides opportunities for innovation especially in technical areas?
- What is the role of academic freedom in a liberal arts style of education?
- Is the "well-rounded" student still competitive in a global economy?
- How does academic freedom at AUB compare with that in other universities in the region?
- How can AUB's experience inform the new regional educational initiatives?
- What can AUB learn from regional innovations in higher education?
- How up-to-date is AUB with current fields of knowledge production?
- How will AUB strike a balance between the demands of traditional and innovative knowledge in the future?
- How does AUB's liberal arts undergraduate education compare with other models of education (such as the European models) in promoting academic freedom and innovation?

Symposium Schedule

Time	Activity	Speakers
2:00 – 2:05 pm	Welcome by Moderators	Professor Sauoma BouJaoude Chair, Department of Education, AUB Professor David Wrisley Civilization Sequence Program, AUB
2:05 – 2:15 pm	Announcement of the Inauguration Student Essay Contest Awards	President Peter F. Dorman
2:15 – 2:25 pm	Reading of Winning Student Essay	Student Author Awarded First Place in the Inauguration Student Essay Contest
2:25 – 2:55 pm	Liberal Arts Education in the 21st Century: Anachronism or Vanguard?	Professor George Fallis Department of Economics and former Dean of the Faculty of Arts, York University, Canada
2:55 – 3:05 pm	Commentator	Professor Patrick McGreevy Director, Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR), AUB
3:05 – 3:20 pm	Discussion	
3:20 – 3:50 pm	What Development and What Education in the Arab World?	Dr. Ali Fakhro (MD '58) Former Bahrain Minister of Health and Minister of Education and recipient of AUB Gold Medal, 1982
3:50 – 4:00 pm	Commentator	Professor Ramzi Salame Former Senior Specialist in Higher Education, UNESCO Regional Bureau for Education in the Arab States
4:00 – 4:20 pm	Discussion	
4:20 – 4:40 pm	Break	
4:40 – 5:10 pm	Higher Education in the Gulf States: Challenges and Trends	Professor Christopher M. Davidson Center for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Durham University, England
5:10 – 5:20 pm	Commentator	Professor Munir Bashshur Department of Education, AUB
5:20 – 5:50 pm	Discussion	
5:50 – 5:55 pm	Closing and Recognition of Speakers	