Financial Aid
In his inaugural address on May 4, 2009, President Peter Dorman spoke of the need to provide “an AUB education for all academically qualified students in an atmosphere of broad, social, economic, and intellectual diversity.” Achieving a diverse student body is critical to our efforts to promote the values of tolerance and mutual respect that define the AUB experience and is a goal that the Board of Trustees has dedicated significant resources to achieve. Between 2002–03 and 2007–08, the number of students receiving financial aid at AUB increased from 2,031 to 2,668—an increase of more than 30 percent. Although the University has expanded its financial aid program, this dramatic rise would not have been possible without the extraordinary generosity of our alumni and friends.

We’d like to introduce you to some of the young men and women who would not be able to attend AUB without financial support. They come from diverse backgrounds and enroll in different programs, but it is their shared experience on campus that transforms their lives—and that makes AUB such a very special place for all our students.
Growing up in Baghdad, freshman Qater al-Nada Mohsen expected to attend university and build a life in Iraq as generations of her family had done. The war changed all that. She and her family fled first to Jordan and then to Lebanon. Qater credits her father’s extraordinary efforts for making it possible for her and her siblings to pursue their educations. Although she is receiving financial aid at AUB, she still worries about finances and wonders if she will be able to register next year. She is working hard this semester to raise her grades and hopes she will get the support she needs. “A university inside a botanical garden,” is how she describes AUB—a place that is opening doors she did not imagine existed in 2004 when she and her family left Iraq.

Rawad Malaeb also comes from a family that “really values education.” Although he has found juggling the demands of school and a work-study job on campus challenging, he is grateful for the opportunity to study nursing, which he loves, and the chance to meet people from different backgrounds and religions. “This is not so common in Lebanon,” he says.
Inspired by an older brother who attended AUB six years ago and encouraged her to apply, Sally Haber is grateful to be at a university that provides “the facilities we need to explore any idea or interest that we might have.” She comments that she saw her brother change while he was at AUB to “become the well-rounded individual that he is today.” A third-year Nutrition and Dietetics student, she says that being at AUB “has given me a glimpse of how to live a free, democratic, and open-minded life”—something that she says is all too rare in Lebanon. Sally praises AUB’s financial aid program that provides financial help without regard to a student’s religion or sect.

Growing up in Palestine, Dina Sanjoura dreamed of attending AUB but could not imagine that it would ever happen. In addition to the logistical hurdles she had to overcome, she also had to convince her father—a man who is a source of inspiration to her—to let her come. “Eventually,” she says, “he agreed and put all his trust in his daughter!” Although she is living in a “strange country among new people,” Dina describes AUB as “simply amazing.” She is impressed with the number of students from different backgrounds and nationalities and says that she has had the opportunity to teach many of them about Palestinian culture and traditions. Dina, who is enrolled in the Medical Laboratory Technology program, is active in many extracurricular activities on campus.
“I always dreamed of attending AUB,” remembers Nada Haidar, a second-year business student. Despite this, she had to work to convince her parents to let her apply. “They were afraid that they would not be able to afford the tuition since they were already paying for my older brother to attend university,” she says. Reflecting on her time at AUB, Nada says that she has changed. “I am now able to deal with different kinds of people from different traditions. The culture at AUB that is so diverse forces you to change.” She is grateful to those who support the financial aid program and are helping to build “a strong educated generation” and making it possible for her to attend AUB.

Hussein Zeineddine mentions the quite unusual and quite wonderful faculty-student interaction at AUB and credits it with making AUB unique in Lebanon and the region. In addition, he has noticed that “people who might not get along if they met off campus make an extra effort when they are here. I think it is because you feel that you are part of something special when you are at AUB, something that has been going on for a long time and that you want to continue.” Hussein, who is a pre-med student, says he wanted to come to AUB because “it’s the best university in the Middle East.” Looking to the future, he says that he will give money for financial aid when he can: “I want every student to have the opportunity that I have had.”
A senior business student, Sara Itawi’s score on the Lebanese Baccalaureate exam earned her a scholarship, which provides some of the support that she needs to attend AUB. “I knew it was the best when I came here because of its reputation, but still I was surprised,” she says, “because it turns out that AUB is even better than the best!” What makes it the best? The “extraordinary” resources (the Hostler Student Center, the labs, the libraries), the access to advanced technology, and “the way we are taught, the way the faculty work with us, the way they relate to us. AUB is different.”
Another student who “loves AUB because of its diversity” is Fida Nashef. A senior majoring in mathematics, Fida is hoping to do a graduate degree at AUB also in mathematics in preparation for becoming a math teacher. "That’s my passion," she says. Fida, who is working toward a teaching diploma in addition to a BS in mathematics, spent this past semester as a classroom observer. She says that it’s a bit strange but also quite wonderful to be doing an internship at IC (International College) where she was a student not so long ago. "I hope I can inspire some of my students the way my math teacher at IC inspired me."

For first-year civil engineering student Hussein Kassem, AUB has become a second home. Hussein describes AUB’s campus life as “unique in Lebanon” and is grateful for the donor who covers most of the cost of his tuition and makes it possible for him to enroll in a rigorous academic program. He also enjoys the “rich social and cultural life” on campus. "Being at AUB is allowing me to learn about life and to explore new areas," he says. Even though he has only been on campus for a very short time, he reports that he has already "widened" his plans for the future to include graduate study.
“My father always told me,” says nursing student Rayan Al Dabbah, “that a girl’s most powerful weapon is her university degree—and not just a BS, but a master’s degree.” Rayan, a Palestinian refugee who was born and grew up in Lebanon, says that despite her father’s determination that she attend AUB, she was worried that if she were accepted, the expense would make things even harder for her family. “At one point, I wished not to be accepted so that I could spare my family this financial burden,” she remembers. Rayan describes the full scholarship she has received as being much more than “just money and tuition,” it is also “the air that I breathe and the treasure I will carry all my life.” She looks forward to the day when she will be able to help others realize their dreams too.

Mher Panossian, who is majoring in electrical engineering, is an AUB student who “knows what I want to do.” Born in Armenia to a family “of different backgrounds and cultures including Polish, Russian, Armenian, and even Lebanese,” Mher moved to Lebanon when he was two years old. When he was in high school, he discovered the field of biomedical engineering and knew right away that this was the field that he wanted to work in some day. In addition to providing him with the preparation he needs to “be able to continue my studies at the best possible university,” Mher appreciates that AUB has “allowed me to meet people from totally different backgrounds, countries, cultures, and religions.” He says that this experience has caused him to “see things differently.”
Diana Salman, who is majoring in business, appreciates the opportunity she has at AUB to take interesting electives as part of a rigorous academic curriculum. “It is really rare to have this chance,” she says, “to discover new interests and to take some fun classes while also taking challenging courses in your major.” Although she is grateful for the financial aid she receives and the opportunity to participate in the University’s work-study program, she reports that some students don’t get all the assistance they need.

A fifth-year architecture student, Haig Papazian credits his department with encouraging its students to explore “outside” interests—something he has been able to do at AUB. He remembers the discussions during one Arabic course in particular that were richer because of the diversity of students who were enrolled in the class. In addition to being a skilled architect who has received several awards, Haig has helped to organize Talk20, an informal interactive gathering of local artists from different disciplines. He is also a gifted musician and a member of Mashrou’ Leila, a musical band of AUB architecture and graphic design students that has performed at many venues in Beirut. Although Haig has received a full scholarship for the last two years, he says that his first three years at AUB were “very tough.” Looking back, he describes AUB on balance as “an incredible experience that allowed me to achieve a lot academically and in different creative disciplines. I owe a lot to AUB.”
It is precisely those students that we seek to help. We believe strongly that our mission to "serve the peoples of the Middle East and beyond" requires that we make every effort to ensure that young men and women can pursue their educations at AUB and go on to build careers and lives in the region. Like all AUB students, they graduate with a deep and profound appreciation for the opportunity they had to attend a university that actively fosters tolerance, encourages responsibility, and celebrates diversity. They take this experience with them into the world. It informs what they do, how they live, and how they interact with each other.