

Message from the Medical Center Director



June 9, 2020

Dear AUBMC Community,

I would like to share with you my pride and commitment to serve alongside each and every one of you in our alma mater. Despite the very difficult times we are going through in Lebanon and their devastating impact on AUBMC, I am confident that our medical center has all the required competencies and resources to overcome the toughest economic crisis in Lebanon's history with the least damage.

As you may know, two months ago, my team and I conducted a thorough assessment of AUBMC that showed a great institution full of talented people at all levels and in all positions and having the required high-quality resources and assets to fulfill its vision. AUBMC is undoubtedly the leading medical center in Lebanon and the region. However, its negative financial results during the past two years and its chronic negative cash flow put its sustainability at risk, and could cause a major collateral damage to AUB financial stability.

Therefore, we have no choice but to change our way of doing things. Our medical center is effective but not sufficiently efficient; we do great things that cost too much. One can have two attitudes to face this situation: increasing revenues or decreasing costs. We will have to do both and act vigorously on the fixed costs. As managers and staff, we will have to think out of the box to find innovative approaches leading to the same high quality results with fewer resources. With the department chairs, we will have to find new ways to increase AUBMC activity and revenues.

Based on the assessments conducted over the past several months, 24 strategic objectives were identified and classified into three categories: critical, intermediate, and long-term. The critical risk mitigation objectives will be implemented immediately to protect AUBMC, and AUB, from the harmful effects of organizational and financial inefficiencies and from the country's economic, financial, and sanitary crisis. The critical objectives will be realized by four task forces acting simultaneously to reach the

targeted outcomes. Some of these task forces have already started working last week and the composition of the others is underway. The intermediate and long-term risk mitigation objectives will be implemented during the coming year to ensure AUBMC's financial sustainability.

Four key success factors are essential to realize this challenging and vital mission.

A shared vision already clearly defined in the message of President Khuri on May 5: "AUB has cultivated an aggressive growth model that has placed the university among the top 200 in the world by many ranking criteria and much higher than that in impact, graduate placements, and overall employability rankings. We intend to maintain these standards, but in order to do so we must first survive the current crisis in front of us. Like others among the greatest universities in the world, we must fundamentally change in order to survive." ... "Make no question and have no doubts, everyone will be affected—All will contribute in significant measure. All of us at AUB are fully dedicated to the future of the institution. There is no time for division or scoring of points while the university's survival is at stake."

Dr. Khuri concludes: "AUB will emerge a more impactful, more inclusive, more relevant, and more sustainable institution. We will do everything we can and must to save it."

A well-structured implementation plan. A project management structure has already been put in place. It is headed by AUB's president and composed of two levels: a steering committee in charge of monitoring the realization of projects and verifying their coherence within AUBMC strategy, and task forces responsible for conducting and implementing the strategic objectives. The whole process will be conducted by a Project Management Office (PMO) that will support me in project realization.

A committed management team. There are no winners in a losing team. Such a challenging project cannot be realized by one single person, no matter how dedicated or capable this person is; it can only be achieved through a collective effort. The project will be relayed throughout the structure by a robust executive management team and champions at all the levels of the hierarchy. Saving our AUBMC is our individual as well as our collective responsibility. This will be done on several levels and in close coordination with the Faculty of Medicine, led by Dean Ghazi Zaatari.

An efficient chain of command. In times of crisis, unplanned incidents can happen any time. Reaction must be quick, smart, and effective. This cannot be achieved through a complex system; the structure must be leaner, lighter, and simpler.

In conclusion, I would like to share with you again my pride and joy for having this opportunity to serve alongside each and every one of you in our AUBMC. Times are difficult and we are sailing through a tempest. Saving our medical center will require a lot of efforts and sacrifices and we will do them. We will all at AUBMC echo President Khuri's message "Saving AUBMC is our only priority. And save it we will."

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