

September 9, 2020

Dear AUB Community,

It gives me great pleasure to announce that Dr. Nadia El Cheikh has been renewed in her position as dean of AUB's foundational faculty, and that she will serve as the first Mamdouha El-Sayed Bobst Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS).

Dr. El Cheikh (BA '85) has earned and commands the full respect of students, faculty, staff, alumni, and colleagues across AUB and beyond. Since becoming Dean of FAS in 2016, she has had an enormous impact in strengthening and widening FAS's educational and research missions, especially by enhancing the critical role of undergraduate liberal arts education, and in empowering a genuine sense of self and community. Her renewal was strongly recommended by the review committee consisting of AUB Board Chair Philip Khoury, Dr. Eve M. Troutt Powell, the Christopher H. Browne Distinguished Professor of History at University of Pennsylvania, and Dean Alan Shihadeh of AUB's Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, and it was unanimously approved by the Board of Trustees.

The Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Foundation, and AUB and Bobst Foundation Trustee Randa El-Sayed Haffar are without doubt among AUB's most loyal, generous, and enduring supporters, having made generous donations across all of AUB to support teaching, research, scholarships, and medical care. It is fitting that a scholar-leader of Dr. El Cheikh's stature should be first to carry the title honoring the life and legacy of Mrs. Mamdouha El-Sayed Bobst (1925-2015), who was a distinguished alumna (BA '47) and AUB International Advisory Council member, as well as a committed philanthropist and supporter of education, healthcare, and social justice. The Bobst Foundation and AUB agreed to establish the Mamdouha El-Sayed Bobst Deanship in June 2020 through a major endowment from the Foundation.

AUB- and Harvard-educated Dr. El Cheikh embodies the values the Bobst Foundation supports, which are qualities our university aspires to inculcate in its community members and graduates. The university's liberal arts model mandates that FAS play a leadership role in AUB's educational mission, providing instruction to all 7,500 undergraduate students in its 17 academic departments. A preeminent scholar of Abbasid and Byzantine history, Dr. El Cheikh has been a fierce champion of the faculty's mission of excellence in the humanities and natural, social and mathematical sciences and its role across the university in nurturing the critical thinking,

communication, and analytical skills of our students. She led the launch of the AUB Theater Initiative to revitalize the important performing arts dimension of university life, and the Women and Gender Studies (WGS) Initiative, which is much needed at a regional level. She serves as the Principal Investigator for AUB's \$10 million MEPI 2020-2022 educational undergraduate grant, in addition to securing major grants from the Mellon Foundation and the Cleveland H. Dodge Foundation.

Dean El Cheikh has driven substantial improvements in administrative efficiency and the renovation of aging facilities, while simultaneously focusing on strengthening research by reallocating teaching loads, and successfully recruiting a significant number of new faculty members, including several acknowledged global leaders in their fields. She has been both a student-focused dean while setting the standard for world-class researchers who choose to conduct their academic career at AUB.

Please join me in thanking the Elmer and Mamdouha Bobst Foundation and Trustee Randa El-Sayed Haffar for their visionary philanthropy and congratulating Dean Nadia El Cheikh on her renewal as leader of AUB's core faculty. We wish Dr. El Cheikh every success in her plans for the continued growth and development of our beloved FAS as its inaugural Mamdouha El-Sayed Bobst dean.

Sincerely,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD  
President