

President Dorman's Letter to the Community, Spring 2013

March 2013

The spring semester is well underway at AUB, with an enrollment that stands just under 8,000 students and with the addition of fourteen new faculty members. In this letter, I must limit myself to highlighting just a few major developments at AUB. Other news and information is routinely available on our website and through our social media channels.

Fundraising Efforts for Financial Aid

A key priority for AUB is to attract the best students regardless of their financial situation. In 2009, I made a commitment to raise \$20 million for scholarships for needy students. This fall, we announced that we were successful in achieving and surpassing this goal, having raised a total of \$25.5 million dollars from many generous donors, most of whom are alumni. This was just one in a series of efforts that AUB has launched in recent years to expand its financial aid program. In 2001-02, AUB awarded just \$2.6 million in financial aid. This was boosted to \$17.1 million in 2011-12.

During the last five years, AUB has also received grants from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) totaling more than \$26.7 million to support various scholarship programs and was awarded an additional \$7.5 million through the Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which is being used to provide scholarships for young men and women who enroll from countries in the MENA region. The MasterCard Foundation also made a generous grant of \$9 million towards scholarships in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Donations to financial aid will remain a priority for us until every academically qualified student who is admitted to AUB, can take up their place, irrespective of their financial situation.

AUB's Chief Operating Officer

I am very pleased to announce the recent hire of George DeBin as Chief Operating Officer at AUB. Mr. DeBin is responsible for the strategic interface and oversight of several major administrative units: Finance, Information Technology, Facilities, Human Resources, Protection Services, and Regional External Programs. Most recently he has served as Vice President for Administration at the American University of Sharjah, so he has familiarity with the Arab region, and prior to that he held a similar position at the University of Kentucky at Lexington, an institution with a large medical center. As of this writing, George has been with AUB for less than a month, but I fully expect that his deep expertise will bring strategic coordination and efficiency to our operational units, which increasingly work together to achieve optimal results. His wife, LeeAnn, will join us at the end of this month, and I hope you will have a chance to welcome them both to Beirut.

New Academic Centers and Programs

In the last few months AUB has seen the establishment of two new interdisciplinary centers, both generously founded by trustees. International searches are now underway to identify distinguished candidates who will take on the responsibilities of the director for each center. The Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship is intended to serve as a regional hub for discourse and collaboration among academics, policy makers, practitioners, and members of the public. It will focus on the exploration of solutions to the challenges of creating civil societies in the Arab world. The question of how open societies can develop through civic awareness and engagement is an especially critical concern in the light of the citizen revolts that have been unfolding in countries in the Levant and North Africa, often with extreme violence. I firmly believe that AUB is the perfect place for such an institute.

The new Farouk K. Jabre Center for Arabic and Islamic Science and Philosophy will be dedicated to the study of the legacy of Islamic thought and scientific achievement through the ages. It will be a center for scholars of all disciplines to examine the science, medical advances, literature, and

economic and legal systems that have had great impact on the advancement of human knowledge and have preserved much of what is known of the classical foundations of western science as well. This center will bring back to the university a serious focus on Islamic science, a field first established by AUB's own Professor Edward S. Kennedy.

I would also like to note with pride that the National Institutes of Health have awarded AUB a four-year grant in the amount of \$863,000 to establish a new interdisciplinary program. Under the Scholars in **HeAlth Research Program** (SHARP) the Faculty of Medicine and Faculty of Health Sciences will administer a 12-14 credit summer certificate, open to graduates of health fields, as well as a 40-credit master's degree. Credits earned for the SHARP summer certificate can also be counted towards other master's degrees at FM, FHS, FAFS, or HSON. The grant is an outstanding recognition of interdisciplinary cooperation at AUB and I hope it will encourage many young men and women to apply.

Institutional Integrity

In the last year AUB has been revising its policies on institutional integrity, to clarify our procedures on transparency and honesty in our dealings within our university community and with the external public. A number of these policies have been posted online (<http://www.aub.edu.lb/pnp/Pages/index.aspx>) and include a general statement on the principles of ethical conduct, as well as more specific policies governing non-discrimination, sexual harassment, grievance procedures, and conflict of interest. We will soon be adopting another policy on "safe reporting," otherwise known as a "whistleblower" policy. Most of these policies have been developed in coordination with faculty committees working with the Provost, Ahmad Dallal, and VP for Legal Affairs, Peter May, and I thank them all for their diligent efforts.

Key to the success of implementing these policies will be the hiring of an "ombuds." This is an individual who will report directly to my office, and who will provide information and guidance to faculty, staff, or students who have a complaint or grievance, and is tasked to act independently of other normal chains of reporting. A second hire will be a coordinator for cases of sexual

harassment, responsible for the education of our entire community in issues of what constitutes sexual harassment and for investigating allegations of inappropriate behavior. Sexual harassment in particular is coming more into focus in Lebanon as a problem of national importance, and I see AUB once again leading the way on this issue, which so often affects women more than men. Both the ombuds and coordinator are charged with acting with the utmost confidentiality.

As a parallel exercise, I have initiated a year of reflection on AUB's core institutional values, led by AUBMC's Director, Dr. Adnan Tahir, who conducted a similar process at the medical center two years ago. Beginning with members of our faculties, Dr. Tahir is now leading small groups of people in discussions on ethical standards—ones that are crucial to the mission of our university and most clearly define the humane and responsible behavior essential to the fullest engagement of our university community. These discussions will continue with AUB's staff members and with the student body at large, and will lead eventually into the articulation of five or six core values that are fully embraced at AUB and are embedded in our student, staff, and faculty manuals. I am delighted that Trustee José Zaglul and Trustee Emerita Ann Kerr have agreed to join this process as representatives of the Board of Trustees.

Washington Visit

My trip to Washington, DC, this year was informative, as usual, and our representative to Congress, Bill Hoffman, and I spent time mainly with the House of Representatives. In this year of the sudden sequester, few of the legislators or State Department administrators we saw are willing to predict what the specific outcome might be in terms of preserving the financial aid funding we receive from the federal government or from the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program. In such budgetary times, I believe we will be fortunate to maintain the levels of funding we already enjoy. In a more positive light, the lawmakers we talked to are very interested in our perspective of developing events in the Middle East and are enthusiastically unanimous in their support of

educational institutions like AUB and their role in helping to shape the future of our region. Lebanon's Ambassador to the United States, H.E. Tony Chedid, was also kind enough to invite me to a dinner in honor of a delegation of Lebanese bankers and businessmen.

Finally, I believe a number of you already know that I have plunged into Twitter (@aubpresident), and I am finding great pleasure in the immediacy of that media, as well as the ability to connect and generate conversations across a diverse community of followers that includes students, faculty, alumni, and staff. I am still getting used to the limitations of tweeting, and can still learn much about saying a lot in a small space: so send me your guidance and suggestions. I encourage you to keep up with news from AUB by subscribing to AUB's social media channels at [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#) and on Twitter at @AUB_Lebanon.

I wish you all a very productive and rewarding spring semester.

Peter Dorman

President