

American University of Beirut  
Office of the President



June 6, 2014

Dear AUB Community,

Earlier this spring I informed the Board of Trustees of my intention to step down as President of AUB after serving six remarkably rewarding years in this post, during which I have incurred a huge debt of gratitude to so many friends of this great institution. I plan to return to academia but have agreed to remain in place until such time as the Board of Trustees is able to identify a successor.

The achievements of the past six years could not have been realized without the unstinting support and wisdom I have received from the Board of Trustees, as well as the deans and members of the senior administration, to whom I will always be deeply grateful. I also wish to salute our hugely talented faculty and dedicated staff members, all of whom have contributed significantly to our successes. Despite the recent continuing instability in and around Lebanon, AUB has been fortunate to enjoy a secure and stable campus environment.

My chief goal as President has been to ensure the vitality of AUB's educational model, fundamentally grounded in the liberal arts, yet also embedded in a rigorous culture of professional training and knowledge creation. To this end my priorities have included the advocacy of interdisciplinary collaboration on campus, active partnerships with other universities, a steadfast dedication to AUB's mission even as profound societal changes have affected the region, the expansion of our burgeoning PhD programs, a renewed emphasis on the centrality of arts and the humanities on campus, and a dramatic increase in financial aid for needy students.

Provost Ahmad Dallal has passionately championed the excellence of faculty research and teaching, the creation of centers and institutes relevant to current regional needs, student diversity and life on campus, and institutional and program accreditations. Published faculty research has pushed AUB well beyond the standards of universities in the Middle East and into contention with our American peers. In only six years, AUB has dramatically risen from the undifferentiated 401-500 category in the QS worldwide rankings to number 250.

The AUB Medical Center and Faculty of Medicine, under the inspiring leadership of Vice President and Dean Mohamed Sayegh, have made enormous strides in delivering the finest patient care, achieving operational sustainability in a demanding and shifting environment, and implementing a comprehensive hospital expansion as part of the AUBMC 2020 vision. Aggressive recruitment has brought over 100 physicians back to AUB, a welcome reversal of the perennial Lebanese "brain drain."

AUB's current fundraising campaign—the most ambitious for any private institution in the Middle East—has already exceeded the total raised during the last campaign and has yielded the single biggest philanthropic donation in the university's history, dedicated to the AUBMC 2020 vision.

As a child growing up in Beirut, aware of my family connections to the founders of AUB, I never suspected that I would be so honored as to lead this fine University. In the course of my tenure, I have met thousands of students, faculty staff, alumni, and other individuals who have shared what AUB means to them, and I have come to more deeply understand the profound importance of this institution to Lebanon, the region, and the world. I can think of no other university that is held in such high esteem and that embodies such hope.

I look forward to continuing as President until my successor is identified and to participating in this vibrant intellectual community in years to come as a professor in the Department of History and Archaeology.

Peter Dorman  
President