

American University of Beirut
Office of the President



December 9, 2014

Dear AUB Community,

As we approach the holiday season, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your ongoing commitment, engagement, and service to this extraordinary university.

Last Monday, the eloquent and inspiring addresses by Founders Day speakers Trustee Marwan Muasher and our student prize winner, Majd Nassan, reminded us of our important mission and indeed, our responsibility to this region and the world. Not only do we transform the lives of those who study and work at AUB, but also our faculty and alumni dramatically impact the communities in which we live around the globe, in a way only the best universities can.

Recently, some of you have shared with me your concerns about the impact of negative stories emanating from a single media source on the reputation of AUB. Please be assured that AUB will always welcome legitimate criticism. How else shall we improve? However, when confronted with unfair, unfounded, and irresponsible attacks upon this institution's good name, we will rise to AUB's defense. I understand and appreciate that each of us attaches our personal and professional reputations and pride to this great institution. As you know, like so many of you, my family ties to AUB are extensive and profound—going back to the days of the founders—and I cherish this university as you do.

The high standards by which we evaluate our success as a university are strong and enduring. These measurable outcomes of our academic, business, and health care enterprises are our very best indicators of the well-being and eminence of the American University of Beirut and its medical center.

- The best and brightest students still compete for admission to AUB. We are correctly viewed by students, their families, media, and employers as the very finest liberal arts university in the Arab world. Our enrollment numbers remain high and our student body is diverse and academically talented.
- We continue to recruit distinguished academics and medical professionals from around the world. Our faculty have achieved a research output more than twice that of all other Lebanese universities combined. And AUB's research productivity, measured per dollar, exceeds by several magnitudes that of any research university in the United States.

- We perennially improve our standings in important academic rankings, which in seven years have improved from somewhere above no. 500 (that is, unranked) in the QS World Rankings to no. 249 today. We continue to win prestigious accreditations for our academic and medical programs, and many of these are the first and only such designations awarded in the region.
- AUB is an essential locus for academic discourse of all kinds. Just this weekend we hosted the Third Global Conference on Public Policy and Administration as well as a two-day conference on “Public Health in Contexts of Uncertainty,” celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Faculty of Health Sciences. Visitors from leading international institutions routinely comment on the vibrancy of our intellectual community.
- AUB fundraising has reached unprecedented levels, acquiring gifts of historic proportions for new academic initiatives, financial aid, the medical center expansion, and other capital investments. The confidence and altruistic generosity expressed by our donors is of profound significance.
- Our worldwide alumni continue to achieve success in myriad professions and enthusiastically celebrate their affiliation with their alma mater. We have more alumni chapters (60) and deeper alumni involvement now than at any other time in our history.

For almost 150 years, we have made a difference to individual lives and communities across Lebanon and the Arab region. Even in the most difficult and challenging times, AUB continues to serve as a beacon of hope and a source of inspiration and opportunity.

As you approach the end of the year to celebrate with your families and look forward to the January interim break, please take pride in your valued contributions to this university and its many wonderful achievements. Together, we are AUB.

Peter Dorman
President