

AUB Reunion 2022
Honoring Ceremony
June 23, 2022

Keynote Speech on behalf of the Class of 1971
Mr. Jalal Bitar

Dr. Khuri, fellow alumni, friends, and family...

I was starting to believe that I will never get to celebrate anything with my friends and classmates. In 1971, me and my partners in crime of the student council protested so “eagerly” against a 10% increase in tuition fees that AUB had to cancel graduation that year... ahh the good old days! In 1996, which was supposed to be our 25th anniversary, AUB had to cancel the celebration due to the Israeli “Grapes of Wrath” war عناقيد الغضب against Lebanon that year. In 2021, which was supposed to be our 50th anniversary, AUB had to cancel the celebration due to the pandemic.

But receiving the invitation a couple of weeks ago, and finally getting to do this... words can't describe what I feel.

50 years.

50 years.

Just take a moment and let it sink in.

50 years!!!

I am standing here, looking at my mates... We grew older, wiser (I hope), we became parents and grandparents...

50 years!!

Recently somebody told me – Every once in a while, stop and give yourself a pat on the back, because nobody else will... Well I guess now is the time... each and every one of us should just give himself a pat on the back... for believing in yourself... for doing all the hard work... for having no days off... for never quitting... for doing more right than wrong... for being here today being honored by our AUB... you deserve a pat on the back...

And AUB deserves a big THANK YOU... not just for the education, but for the knowledge, the culture, the personality, the leadership skills... for every beautiful memory and every sad memory... I am sure we all had our share of both... but each and every one of those made us who we are today... THANK YOU AUB!

50 years!!!

I can't even begin to express how proud and happy I am to be standing in front of you today... in front of my beloved wife Alia, my lifetime partner, in front of my kids Wael and Nour who also graduated from AUB and who are still deeply attached and involved with AUB, their spouses who are also AUB graduates... and my grandkids who soon will join AUB one by one... yes

jeddo you... When you have AUB, you don't need to travel anywhere to get a great education and lifetime memories.

50 years!!!

We witnessed the world change... we witnessed our country change.. but AUB remained a beacon of knowledge and diversity... AUB remained an image of the Lebanon we aspire for.

Finally, Dr. Khuri, God help you. You are leading AUB throughout the toughest times (global pandemic, economic meltdown, civil unrest, brain drain...) but we know it is in good hands, we trust you with our legacy and the future of our children.

I speak to my fellow alumni: AUB needs us. We have a responsibility to help and stand by AUB, today more than ever. With all of us, AUB will come out stronger and will be able to fulfill its promise "That they may have life and have it more abundantly."

I hope I see you all for our 75th celebration... I wish you, AUB, and Lebanon always the best.