

Rabih Baz Radwan  
Student speech  
GRAD ceremony

When I informed my family, friends, and relatives that I am about to quit a rewarding job in the Gulf, come back to Lebanon and start my MBA at the Olayan School of Business of AUB, they all asked the same question: "If it's going to cost that much, why not go for an MBA in Europe or the States?"

Although at that moment, defensively, I presented them all with very valid reasons, honestly speaking, that question remained a dilemma in my head until the start of the first semester. Today, while I stand before you as an MBA graduate from OSB, I have a clear answer for that question.

I realized that when people used to ask that question, they were most probably assuming that the level of instruction and the quality of the education delivered at other major international business schools is far better than that at AUB. This is fair to assume! However, the predominantly young, energetic, and inspiring faculty at Olayan School of Business, made sure that both the quality of education as well as the level of instruction are at very high standards. Those standards were put to the test when I got a job, a year ago, at a multinational firm, and I interacted with colleagues and clients who had graduated from "top business schools" in Europe and the United States. Our knowledge base was at par, our business acumen was highly comparable, and between you and me, I have seen many applicants from those schools fail to make it to second round of interviews.

So you are probably wondering, if the education level is almost the same, what gives AUB the edge? Well, only after spending my graduate years at AUB did I realize the real value of an investment in education at this institution. At AUB, I met men and women from all religious sects, different economic backgrounds, various nationalities and sexual orientation. Interacting with all this mix made me realize that within all these groups, there are good people and bad people. I have learned that discriminating between a person and another should be based on their words, actions, morals and contribution, and nothing else matters. At AUB I faced problems, sometimes due to mistakes I have done, and at other times due to the uncertainties of life. But in either case, I learned that is irrelevant and that I should not blame others or fate. Instead, my classmates, my professors and I, always rushed to find the right solution to the problem at hand. It wasn't always something easy to do but it was the right thing to do.

You might still argue that other top schools also provide this experience and this culture, but my involvement tells me that at AUB you get this exposure in the middle of the sectarian, politicized and conflict-ridden context, with the much-needed, open-minded people. AUB, and more on the graduate level than the undergraduate one, sets an example of how we can, in this country, be civilized, organized, united, open minded, problem solvers, and achievers of results that we desperately need.

So here is my answer for you if anyone asked you why you did your graduate studies at AUB: You did it because, graduate education, which is of high quality at AUB, is not enough. Maturity and personal growth are the main take outs, and AUB provides that at the place it is needed the most!!

Congratulations to all my fellow graduates today. I honestly long for the day I look at the people governing this country and be proud that most of them were my class mates at AUB.