

Honorary Doctorates and Graduate Commencement Ceremony
Message of the Graduating Class
Student Speaker Jana Ghulmiyyah - Faculty of Medicine
May 27, 2016

Your excellencies, esteemed guests, faculty members, families, friends and graduating class of 2016,

Not only is it an honor to be receiving my medical degree from the American University of Beirut tonight, but it humbles me to be amongst the graduating class of 2016 on AUB's 150th anniversary.

7 years ago I arrived at the main gate, to my native country but to which I was a stranger all the same. I didn't know what to expect, all I knew is what I aspired to become one day. I had a certain dream, and just like everyone here tonight I was willing to work hard to achieve it.

Everyone told us it was going to be a long journey, that medical school would be a tough path. Well they weren't mistaken! The long hours spent with the cadavers, Saturday morning exams, rising before the sun for rounds or the dreadful sound of our pagers as we tried to fall asleep. It wasn't easy nor was it always gratifying but, however, the journey never lacked happiness. We cannot disregard the laughs we had together, the friendships we established or that feeling of pride as we walked around in our prim white coats. Today, it all feels worth it! The steps we take across this stage tonight will be the first ones we walk in our separate paths. This institution however, the institution that has become home to us, will forever bind us together.

AUB did not only give us the knowledge we have today or the degrees that we hold; it was the community that we grew fond of belonging to. In a diverse student body, that is not so easily found in our part of the world, it taught us accommodation. Placing all it's students on the same platform, it taught us justice and equality. It is here that we all learned how to communicate better, not only with our patients, but with each other. We learned how to empathize with others and how to become active members of our communities. It is here that we learned how to put our patients and their needs first. We learned how to persevere and work for our goals even when they felt forever out of reach. We learned that in order for us to become invaluable, we must reach far and beyond what is required of us.

My fellow graduates, it is from here that I hope that we will not only use our degrees in our clinics or offices, but that they become a tool in a greater quest for healing. The time has come for us to attempt to refine our own communities, to give back to those who supported us and to help those less fortunate. AUB provided us with the foundation for greatness, as it has done for the past 149 generations before us, on which we shall now build our own identities. Our turn has come to invest the knowledge we have harvested to help a community that greatly needs us in a country that still lacks proficient medical care in all of its regions. John Donne said "No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main." So let us take what AUB has taught us, along with the activism it has instilled in us, and use it to benefit each of our continents and even more, to try and benefit our main!



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Of course, none of this would have been possible without the support of those who love us. Mothers, fathers, siblings and family members, we would not be here without your continuous support and sacrifice. No words can express our gratitude. Thank you!

To our professors, your mentorship and advice guided us throughout this journey. Thank you!

To all the administrators and hospital staff; thank you for your hard work!

To every patient and their families; thank you for putting your trust in us!

Class of 2016, I wish you all nothing but luck! I am certain each and everyone of you will attain memorable achievements, will impact your communities positively and will alter this world in his or her own way. Stay curious, stay dedicated and most importantly, stay caring!

Congratulations, we made it!