

**Undergraduate Commencement Ceremony**  
**Message of the Graduating Class**  
**Student Speaker Reem Abou Ibrahim - Faculty of Arts and Sciences**  
**May 28, 2016**

Dear President Khuri, members of the Board of Trustees, esteemed Deans, faculty members, families and distinguished guests, I sincerely thank you for sharing with us this celebration. Had it not been for your ceaseless support, we would not have made it to this day.

I am honored to have been given the opportunity to stand here before you and represent the Class of 2016.

Reflecting back on the past three years that I have spent here at AUB, which have passed entirely too quickly, the only thing I am positive of is that I don't want to leave just yet.

Ladies and Gentlemen, what better exemplar for higher education can an institution be, than one which serves as a bastion of liberty, equality and academic excellence? Our dear university has not only ingrained in us those righteous principles, sanctioning our freedom and independence, but it has also stood in the face of social fissures and norms whether it was misogyny, patriarchy, gender disparities, consumerism or the many more complications our modern world suffers from. We've been fortunate enough to have received our education from one of the most esteemed universities in the region. I myself have been even luckier to have had the opportunity of studying here under the USP scholarship, to which I am forever grateful.

Being a **female** Computer Science student, people have often been taken aback as to how I could be interested in a subject reserved for the stereotypical male introvert into gaming and sci-fi. Fortunately though, I have been encouraged to not limit my ambition for the sake of social conformity. In a world where people are challenging gender and social stereotypes, our university strived to push back such barriers and thus each year graduating more diversified students in every sense of the word. How wonderful would it be for the next tech-hero, as we had Gates, Jobs, Zuckerberg, to be an AUB female graduate to shake up the establishment.

Class of 2016, some of us have realized what their next step is, others have managed to discover what they don't want to do, and maybe many are still in the process of figuring out what they want. No matter what, all of us should know that having reached this day is a great accomplishment on its own. I sincerely hope we will someday be able to pay off the abundant dedication, guidance and motivation of our parents, teachers and all those close to us, throughout our educational journey.

On this day we embark on our journey into the real world, but the real world is not as propitious as we would've hoped it to be. Most of us come from a region which suffers from both external and internal conflicts, and with our graduation comes confrontation of economic instability, social divisions and other countless hurdles. But let us not forget that this institution has moulded us into valiant citizens ready to fulfill their mission of serving the people of the Middle East and beyond. It has



taught us that apathy and complacency are the most menacing threats to our society. And by being an incubator for student activism, it has instilled in us the sense of duty towards our community as a whole. We owe it to our experiences here at AUB, whether it being student elections, clubs and societies, or student publications, to the people we grew up to be right now.

As we move to life beyond AUB, we share the same fears and aspirations. Fears of failure, which is merely a step forward toward the success of our journey, and aspirations to hopefully be able to give back and better our society. For 150 years, AUB has been making history, and rest assured with the Class of 2016, it will keep doing so.