

Student Speaker Hussein Khachfe
Faculty of Arts and Sciences
June 3, 2017

Board of Trustees, President Khuri, Provost Harajli, , Deans, Faculty, Parents, guests and most importantly: Class of 2017. It is an honor and a privilege to be speaking in front of all of you today, on behalf of my fellow graduates, and welcome you to the 148th commencement ceremony of the American University of Beirut.

I recall the first time I set foot across Main Gate, a different kind of feeling. Is this the place where the leaders of today's world got educated? Was I sitting on the same chair in Nicely Hall where a great scientist or innovator once sat? Were the department walls I would be sharing for the next 3 years, be the place that led to the conception of unrivaled ideas and achievements? Indeed, all these questions came to mind the very first day I became an AUB student. I soon realized that these questions all had one answer: Hell Yes! As we sit here today with all our pride and glory, we must think of the next step in the journey that is our lives. Friends and fellow graduates, the past 3 to 4 years have been a stepping stone in what I am certain will be a great and successful life.

My fellow graduates, as each of us embarks on their own path to come, we should not succumb to the naïve unreasonable optimism which states that tomorrow will be a better day on its own. Let me ask you this: Is this the age of post enlightenment, post modernity, the age of the science revolution? The answer is: We don't know. For the first time in a very long period we, as humans, cannot define what age we are in. And maybe that is for the best. This is not the age of categorical imperatives, nor is it the time of thought restriction, for there is no relevance in defining ourselves. We must make use of this golden opportunity, to make use of the unlimited potential we have and let go of the rigidities old societies had on themselves. This is essential to fill the spaces no generation ever has, and together we will make sure that tomorrow will be a better day.

Friends and family, we did not choose AUB fearing unemployment, nor in greed of its prestige, but because it has proven itself worthy of being deemed the best. AUB, with its 151 years, has shown us and the world the real meaning of excellence: in science, art, engineering, business, research and in so much more. What makes

AUB even more special is the student life and experience it has to offer. With the countless opportunities available such as clubs, societies, student government, and volunteer work, AUB proved to be a hub for building and molding the personalities of future leaders. I remember, being part of the USFC and a cabinet member with several other clubs, how much responsibilities one would have on his shoulders. Nevertheless, our hardwork was indeed worthwhile for we were able to change the electoral law successfully, and organize multiple events for our fellow students. All of that helped shaped us into the people we are today, similar to how it shaped countless other people throughout the years.

AUB has been a safe haven for its students, a second home and for that we will forever be grateful. Thank you, President Khuri for your tireless efforts to make AUB safe and secure, and providing us with the right mind set and opportunities for open dialogue. And thank you Dean Nizameddin for being the catalyst of guidance we all need here at AUB. You have both been role models I look up to and I am sure AUB will always be great in your hands.

Our dearest parents, كل الكلام فيكم قليل, you have been the leg we needed to stand on and the gift that kept on giving. People will be congratulating us after this night, but in truth it is you who must be congratulated. You reap the fruit of your years of efforts tonight by seeing us graduate in a setting we wouldn't have dreamed of without you.

Our beloved faculty, you have broken the rule of من علمني حرفا كنت له عبدا and changed it into من علمني حرفا اصبح لي اخا by showing us you are continuously aiming to break the student-teacher barrier and befriend and advise us rather than just teach and leave. You are the reason for our success at this prestigious institution and for that we will always remember you with gratitude and appreciation.

My fellow graduates, تواضعوا لمن تتعلموا منه العلم، ولمن تعلمونه، ولا تكونوا من جبابرة العلماء، ولا يقوم جهلكم بعلمكم. Seize the opportunities that lay in front of you, be leaders, role models, innovators, reach the heights no one else has, but always have the kind soul that AUB has enriched us with, and let it flourish along with your many accomplishments to come. Work hand in hand to create the bright future we all wish to see, for there is no solution to the problems we are facing today in Lebanon and the world without the collective efforts of us all. The night is darkest just before the dawn, and with the class of 2017, I promise you the dawn is coming.

ايها الحفل الكريم، في وطني رجال ما ابوا ذلاً ولا ضيم. نفضوا غبار العجز عن حناجرهم الصامته، عرفوا من بحور الحب حبر الوفاء، اضاءوا مصابيح العلم بعد ليال حالكة، و رسموا من قلوبهم انهر الفداء، فدافعوا عن ارضهم بالصوت بالكلمة بالفكرة فالدّم. شهداء لبنان، لكم منّا انحاء رؤوسنا خجلاً، سيل دموعنا حزناً، و بسمة عُرسنا هذا فرحاً. نأمل يوماً ما أن نوفّيكم بعض الدين، بأن نخرج من هذه الجامعة بأفكار نيّرة لإصلاح دولتنا و تغيير واقعنا و لنبني شرقاً كما حلمتم به انتم، حرّاً من الاحتلالات العسكرية و الفكرية، و يكون لبنان دولة قوية قادرة و عادلة.

My fellow class of 2017, the memories we have created together will forever remain etched in my mind, and I only hope we can create more of them together as the years pass.

Thank you everyone, thank you class of 2017, thank you AUB. Class of 2017 out.