

## **Graduate Commencement Exercises Student Speech**

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Your Excellences, honored guests, AUB faculty, families, & friends, thank you for celebrating this day with us.

Fellow graduates, Congratulations! Like all of you, I am proud to be an AUB graduate.

It is a bittersweet moment. The few years of sleepless nights spent here seem to have gone by swiftly and merrily. Although we are finally moving towards our next goal, it feels difficult to leave this valuable platform of personal and intellectual growth. Indeed, AUB helped each one of us cultivate meaningful values and principles that are influential in our community.

For many of us, it started when the AUB Hariri School of Nursing was nurturing our nursing skills. They said, to launch and sustain a successful nursing career, we need to show compassion to our patients, commit to their well-being, maintain an ethical demeanor, attend to details, and sharpen a clinical mind to support our decision making. In a few words, we need to learn how be patients' advocates. As challenging as it sometimes seems, it is not mission impossible. On the contrary, this role empowers us as nurses and enables us to make valuable contributions to our community. Our nursing skills that were cultivated in AUB have not only proven to be remarkably useful on our long duty hours, but have also molded a gratifying and disciplined practice.

Now that we are graduating, we all hope to lead a profession that continues to make a meaningful change in our community. We would like to believe that making a difference occurs intuitively and that our hard work won't go in vain. We would like to imagine that our lifelong pursuit is not far from reach. Well, it's wishful thinking! The truth is that we live in a challenging world that keeps our minds busy, and oftentimes we are in an autopilot mode. We sometimes bind our minds to a daily routine to get through our day. We restrict our awareness to trivial choices and fail to notice critical opportunities within our reach. Thus, we have to constantly remind ourselves to avoid the trappings of this daunting world. We have to continue to yearn and seize potential opportunities that have a meaningful impact on our profession.

When I attended my first course in the graduate program, I knew that pursuing a master's degree while working would undoubtedly be met with hurdles. Soon enough, deadlines started to pile up, and so did the items on the to do list of my personal and professional life. However, the reserve of opportunities that was accessible in AUB encouraged me to remain productive and, more importantly, contributed to my growth in all aspects of my life. And for that, I am eternally thankful. It was here in AUB where I learned to be resilient in moments of weakness and exhaustion. It was also here that I came to understand the importance of mindfulness to develop insight for opportunities. As I look back now, this journey, although seemed long, was well lived.

Fellow graduates, each one of us has a distinct goal in mind. After years of hardship, the path to this goal looks shorter. Well done! We must, nonetheless, commit to a shared goal among us: serving our country. Combined, our different backgrounds and the values that AUB has instilled in us prepare us to make unique contributions to our community in Lebanon.

Class of 2018, Congratulations! From this day on, let's serve as mindful advocates for our community!