

Undergraduate Commencement Exercises Student Speech
Arman Khederlarian
June 1, 2019

Dear President Khoury, trustees, deans, faculty members, guests and AUB Class of 2019,

I would like to start this speech by telling you all a story:

Wednesday, September 2, 2015. My first day as an AUB student. I had recently graduated from a small Armenian school in the heart of Beirut, and here I was - making my way from upper campus to OSB in a university with more than 10,000 students. I was overwhelmed with feelings of excitement and anticipation as I entered my first class in this prestigious university. It was an accounting course, and although I did not know anyone in my class or even had a single clue of what accounting is, I could sense that this was the beginning of a very exciting journey. Fast forward 4 years, I have completed a dual degree in business and economics, I have traveled the world: from LA to Athens, NY to Montreal, Florida to Germany representing AUB in international competitions. I have lifted multiple trophies with the AUB football varsity team and been part of a batch of AUB students that managed a 1-million-dollar portfolio in the financial markets. I was elected as a student body representative to the University Student Faculty Committee, and finally I stand here, in front of all of you today, giving this speech. I mention all of these to shed light on the fact that AUB is not just any other university. AUB is an institution that is ready to take in any student, no matter the race, ethnicity, religion, or gender – and to provide them with a pathway to success and the ability to excel. And that is what all of the students here today have done in one way or another. All of our hard work has paid off and the end of this wonderful journey is upon us, and it is now time to say goodbye and to move on to the next adventure.

On that note, on behalf of each and every student, I want to say – thank you. Thank you to all the parents and families out there who have supported us throughout our lives and sacrificed everything, to give *us* everything. To my mother, Pateel, and my father, Hrant, the love and care you have shown me throughout my life has been more than I could have ever wished for, and for that I am eternally grateful. Thank you to our professors, faculty members, administration and every other person who has helped make AUB the astounding university it is today because you have allowed us to gain an educational experience like no other in the region. Thank you to our classmates and fellow students, without whom this experience would not have been as unique and exciting as I'm sure it has been for each and every one of us.

AUB, we will miss you, we will also miss the champions league final tonight, but honestly AUB, I'm sure I speak on behalf of most if not all the students present

here today that the years we have spent on this beautiful campus will forever live in our memories as some of the most beautiful and enriching days of our lives. And even though in a few months the AUB Class of 2019 will be spread out all over the world, I know that each and every one of us will always be ready to give back to AUB and to Lebanon.

AUB has been the gel that has kept the more than 1600 of us graduating students together. But the time has come for our paths to diverge. And even though we might be chasing different paths with different goals - there must be one thing that unites us: our drive to achieve greatness. Mediocrity is the enemy, and hard work, dedication, and perseverance are the tools that will help us overcome it. Stay hungry AUB graduates. Stay motivated. Take risks. Dream big, and do not settle for anything less than what you truly want to achieve in life and do everything in your power to achieve it. We owe it to ourselves to put in all the time, talent, and effort required to change ourselves, our country, and our world for the better. The fact that we are all graduating from this prestigious university is a great step in the right direction. But it is exactly that, a step. Our journey to success has only just begun. And if our goal is to reach the stars then AUB has taught us how to get there. Be proud of what you have accomplished, and be even prouder of the things that you will accomplish in this amazing journey that we call life.

Good luck and thank you,
Arman Khederlarian