

**Mohamed Noureldein**  
**FM Student's Commencement Address**  
**June 4, 2021**

President Khuri, Esteemed Faculty Members, Parents and Friends

I have been waiting for this day, since my departure from Egypt heading to Beirut 5 years ago. Gathering here today face-to-face, despite that our parents and loved one are attending virtually and I know with the same excitement as in person shows that we are getting back step by step to normal life after the COVID pandemic. Getting out from a virtual nightmare to a reality full of hope wouldn't have been feasible if not for the resilience and patience of everyone, the efforts of the medical professionals everywhere and researchers who developed vaccines in a short period of time. They have all raised the bar of research innovation high, inspiring all of us, as graduate scientists at the AUB faculty of Medicine. Getting a graduate degree, especially a PhD is a long journey that requires hard work, dedication and perseverance but it's full of joy, teamwork and aspiration. At the day of your graduation, you look back and see that you fulfilled your first step towards an adventure which will take you a lifetime to achieve, and still won't be enough.

When I first came to Lebanon 5 years ago, my only goal was to get a PhD from the best educational and research institute in the Middle East and go back to Egypt, my home country to have an academic job. Instead, these 5 years completely changed me and shuffled my life. I have learned that a PhD is not only about obtaining scientific education and get a degree, it is also a character-building experience preparing you to be a researcher, project manager and a mentor for future generations. I was very lucky to join the AUB Biomedical Sciences PhD program which provided me with the best experience by:

- pushing me all the way to be the best version of myself,
- making me believe in my potentials and giving me all the facilities to reveal them,
- supporting me in each and every step along the way; on an academic personal level too.
- providing me with every opportunity to learn aiming in advancing my career.

The PhD program at AUB faculty of medicine is very comprehensive and allowed me to rotate in different laboratories before I started my thesis project. These rotations enabled me to experience different fields, learn so much about different research methodologies and get to know the amazing faculty members of the AUB Faculty of Medicine. Besides, the program curriculum enabled me to develop strong background knowledge about different scientific research topics, allowing me to start a journey in one of the FM Labs.

In all of that, I can cite countless examples on how AUB helped me. I can't mention all of them but it is crucial to say that during my PhD years, with the help of my advisors and professors at the faculty of medicine: we have published many scientific articles and on top of it AUB offered me the opportunity to present my work at international conferences.

Before finishing my degree, I have received an offer for a postdoctoral fellowship which I am currently pursuing at the University of Michigan faculty of Medicine Ann Arbor. An institution that an AUB delegation headed by President Khuri visited and signed an MOU with to open new horizons of collaboration and I was maybe one of the first outcome it.

The support and guidance that I have received at AUB is exceptional starting with the higher administration of the program represented by Dr. Ayad Jaffa who made things flow smoothly at the administrative level. Also, I am so grateful for Dr. Nadine Darwiche, one of the first faculty members that I was in contact with at AUB-FM. She has provided me with relentless support and advice alongside the PhD office. I was very fortunate to pursue my PhD training at the lab of Dr. Assaad Eid, one of the best renowned diabetes labs in the region. Dr. Eid is the perfect advisor and mentor that anyone can wish for. The team spirit in his lab is like no other, it's more of a family, and I have learned that this family spirit is what advances research and promote creativity and compassion.

Lab collaborations that are encouraged by AUB allowed me to experience various techniques and gain knowledge that wouldn't have been possible if I was only restricted to one lab. We collaborated with Dr. Sami Azar at our medical center on translating basic medical observations to clinical work. In addition, we collaborated with several other labs in different faculties (Engineering, Agriculture and Food Sciences) and departments including the Department of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology and Department of Microbiology and Immunology. I am

mentioning all of that because I had the chance to look at a certain disease from different perspectives. In my opinion, this is one of the greatest strengths of AUB's Biomedical PhD program.

I won't forget to mention how these years also forged my character and taught me how to manage my time, develop mentorship skills and work in a team. The environment provided by AUB is like no other. I have made so many friendships that will last for a lifetime and Lebanon has become truly my second home with a unique place in my heart.

A special recognition is due to international students everywhere who have the extra challenge of being away from their families and comfort zones, but I can tell you this is the place to be. Also, a huge thank you is due to my parents in Egypt and all the parents watching us today. This is your son, telling you that all your efforts and sacrifices have paid off.