

Laila F. Farhood
RHSON Interim Dean's Commencement Address
June 3, 2021

President Fadlo Khuri, esteemed faculty, graduating students, parents

Greetings from the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing at AUB

- It's my distinct pleasure to salute you today on your accomplishments and hard work during these unprecedented times of our history. This year we celebrate your graduation with lots of traumas and loss on the global level and much more so for our Lebanon. You will always remember these days of your study with its impact on you and your families "despite the barriers, you, men and women, are at the forefront of diverse and inclusive moments for social change" you can bring change through leadership, progress and equal opportunity for all regardless of your Gender. The theme for this year's commencement "100 years of co-education at AUB" where are we at HSON?

Here I wish to acknowledge the history of the school of Nursing in fostering co-education, though Nursing is historically known to be a female profession. Founded in 1905, one of the oldest schools at AUB, has a diverse student body from the region and beyond: both men & women all came to AUB school of Nursing for its academic reputation. We have been granted unconditional CCNE accreditation for our BSN & MSN programs. In fact, RHSON is the first school to be accredited by CCNE outside USA. Next Spring 2022, we are undergoing re-accreditation.

Here are Some facts about us and our graduates:

- Since 1905, the School of nursing has graduated more than 3000 students with BSN degrees and more than 200 students with MSN degrees.
- In 1957, 64 years ago, the graduating class at the school of Nursing included a male nurse for the first time
- The percentage of male students enrolled at HSON has increased over the years to reach 25% in 2005 and 35% in 2020, 28% in 2021 (BSN), 20% (MSN) and 11% in the PhD program
- Students from more than 65 nationalities joined RHSON throughout the years; this enriched the diversity of the student body.
- This diversity was an indication of the growing reputation of the school and of the interest our nursing education provides.
- In the last 20 years, 3 male nurses received the prestigious Florence nightingale award

We are proud of our nurses and all the health teams in the hospitals and the community. A special thank you goes to our RHSON faculty, students and staff **for** doing their utmost to keep our programs running during the pandemic and lockdown restrictions. Their stellar accomplishments in spreading awareness in the community and the volunteer work in the vaccination campaign was exemplary. We took this crisis as an opportunity and challenge to continue building our profession so as to save our people. This is important to continue our mission in graduating stellar students (BSN, MSN, PhD) who can transfer their nursing knowledge and transform the lives of their patients, clients and the communities they serve. You are entrusted in fostering a culture of resilience. You have chosen a noble profession and you are well prepared to start your professional journey: you aimed high, worked hard and earned it. Congratulations to the 50 BSN graduates and Anni the MSN graduate. Several MSN graduates did not complete the requirement due to the pandemic crisis and involvement in their clinical work.

Dear graduates:

You are now professional nurses and future leaders because of the education you earned. You have scientific education, skills that should be highlighted in the media and elsewhere in health. I challenge you to stand up and make contributions like our nurse heroes have made, speak up and fight for the vulnerable. We must paint an ethical vision of the world and inspire others to join our path. I look forward to following your progress as the next generation of nurse heroes. Always remember That you are making a difference everyday in someone's life. You will give your patients/clients the ability to live their life to the fullest. Believe in yourself and your ability to make an impact and create change.

Finally, be proud of being an AUB graduate, the school pin and awards you are about to receive today is a token of commitment and source of pride to the noble purpose of spurring the culture of professional excellence and in recognition of our Nursing mission and values.

I salute your parents and families, your professors and staff, AUB president and his leadership team not forgetting all those who supported your education. Go on to the world and be our ambassadors as our Alumni so "that you may have life and have it more abundantly"

Congratulations class of 2021