

For Immediate Release



AUB dedicates state-of-the-art lecture hall to Jordanian businessman Samir Zaabri

Beirut, Lebanon- 22/02/2011 - Arts and sciences students and faculty now have at their disposal a state-of-the-art lecture hall, thanks to a generous donation by Jordanian businessmen and AUB alumni Samir Zaabri and his son, Ahmad.

The Science Lecture Hall was dedicated to Samir Zaabri, during a ceremony held on February 22, 2011, and attended by a host of dignitaries, including former Prime Minister Fouad Siniora, ex-Minister Beshara Merhej, Chair of the AUB Board of Trustees Philip S. Khoury, trustees Farouk Jabre, Talal Shair, and Nabil Chartouni as well as a number of senior AUB administrators.

Located in the biology building on the lower campus, the hall, first built in 1960, benefited from a complete makeover over the past year, turning it into a pleasant, bright, multi-media-equipped hall that can seat up to 232 students, including eight slots that can accommodate the physically disabled.

"Our faculty and students are absolutely elated that this facility is now ready for use," said Arts and Sciences Dean Patrick McGreevy, who thanked Zaabri for his gift as well as his predecessor, former Arts and Sciences Dean Khalil Bitar, for initiating the renovation project. "This lecture hall is sure to be booked all year round," he added.

McGreevy added that the hall will help AUB enhance its capacity to teach its students not only to "receive knowledge, but also to discover it."

A power-point presentation by Hisham Ramadan, project manager at the Facilities, Planning, and Design Unit of AUB, overviewed the facility's main features, including wide writing tablets, a high-tech lectern with a document camera and touch-screen controls, as well as WiFi coverage and smooth sound distribution and superior safety features.

"Samir Zaabri left AUB in 1970 with a business degree—and has gone on to exceptional success in this realm—but he has never truly left AUB in that he continues to be a magnificent friend and benefactor," said AUB President Peter Dorman. "The spirit of philanthropy helped found AUB in 1866 ... Now, as we embark on ambitious new plans to transform the campus and medical center and enhance our academic offerings, we are so fortunate to be able to count on our many friends and supporters to help us realize these lofty goals," he added.

Zaabri, who founded the Universal Trading Group in 1973 and subsequently built up eight major companies throughout the United Arab Emirates, lauded AUB for furnishing the region with its graduates who were "always ahead of others."

"I can assert that our success in our careers and professions was the direct result of what we acquired and experienced within...this campus," he said adding that the experience gained at AUB was not limited to studies but also included participating in student activism and forging life-long friendships.

"What we give to our university is not a contribution, but a duty and an expression of gratitude," he added, inviting other alumni to support AUB and other distinguished educational institutions so that the "new generations of Arabs will be equipped with the means to raise this region to the standards [demanded by the current times.]"

Zaabri spent the first five years of his career at the Kuwaiti Ministry of the Interior before becoming Administration Manager for M/S Contracting Consolidated Co. He is currently involved in the German market through his Cologne-based company, Lindenberg.

Over the years, Zaabri has been a regular AUB donor, establishing the Samir Ahmad Zaabri Current and Endowed Scholarships to deserving scholars who have the motivation and academic means, but lack only the financial resources to attend AUB.

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Note to Editors

About AUB

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. A teaching-centered research university, AUB has more than 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of more than 7,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the bachelor's, master's, MD, and PhD degrees. It provides medical education and training to students from throughout the region at its Medical Center that includes a full service 420-bed hospital.

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