

AUB inaugurates first high-tech automation lab in the region

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Industrialists and engineering students now have access to a high-tech automation laboratory that will allow them to conduct research or receive training at AUB on complex operational components of machines in the manufacturing industry. The new OMRON Industrial Automation Lab, which is located at the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FEA) at the American University of Beirut, was made possible through a joined sponsorship by FEA, OMRON, and METACS.

It will be hosted at the faculty and will cater to students, faculty members, and industrialists alike. The lab will introduce students to the automation technology, which is widespread in all modern factories, thus enabling AUB's engineering graduates to better compete in the job market.



The leading Japanese OMRON Corporation builds operational controllers and sensing and safety components for machines in the manufacturing industry. METACS is its official distributor in Lebanon.

The lab was inaugurated last week, under the patronage of Industrialists' Association President Nehmet Frem, who said that such labs help retain bright minds in the manufacturing industry instead of losing them to the business or finance sectors which are luring many engineering graduates away from the sector.

In his welcome speech, FEA Dean Ibrahim Hajj highlighted the importance of partnerships between industries and academia, noting that the lab will soon start offering training workshops for members of the industrial sector and will also be used by researchers to optimize industrial processes.

Emile Azar, METACS general manager, lauded the marriage between academia's reservoir of analytical thinkers and technology suppliers' practical expertise and technical know-how, which will help produce better engineering graduates and enhance standards in the manufacturing sector. He added that the future will allow for an expansion of the lab with new products in order to cover additional industrial applications and machines.

Shizuto Yukumoto, the CEO of OMRON-EUROPE, noted that AUB's new automation lab is the first one in the Arab world to be supported by OMRON. Moreover, he announced a new annual prize by OMRON to be given to "the best, and most practical Industrial Automation Project executed by Engineering Students at AUB."

The inauguration was attended by a host of Lebanese industrialists and AUB faculty members in addition to a number of top-level managers from OMRON, including Seigo Kinugawa and Dogan Ugur.