



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

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**1,265 undergraduates receive their degrees
at AUB's 154th Commencement Ceremony**

Khuri: “We will watch over future generations as we have you: with love and devotion, and return them, like you, more empowered, capable, and confident.”

Over the course of two days, June 9 and 10, the American University of Beirut (AUB) held its 154th Commencement Ceremony to celebrate the graduation of a total of 2,035 graduate and undergraduate students from the university's seven faculties, and honor recipients of the honorary doctorate of humane letters for their leadership and service across various human endeavors.

After awarding doctoral, master's, and medical degrees to the graduate class of 2023 on June 9, and witnessing the honoring of four world-renowned personalities with AUB's highest accolade, the honorary doctorate of humane letters, the celebrations continued on June 10, with a ceremony that was held for 1,265 students receiving their undergraduate degrees.

Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB president, spoke about the lack of hope and opportunity in the region, leading to most young scholars and physicians to choose emigration. “As we bid farewell to yet another stellar class of AUB graduates and honorands, can we take advantage of deep ties that bind us together and to our homelands to create opportunities, not only in Lebanon but across the more than 80 countries where our students come from?”

“Tonight is a night to acknowledge a few of these Promethean efforts,” Khuri said, as he spoke about the accomplishments and impact of AUB and its community

in various fields; from lighting up villages in some of the most ignored parts of Lebanon, to rallying to provide sustenance to earthquake-devastated Syria and Turkey. And from establishing a new scholarship, and supporting access to education for the most vulnerable and marginalized, to launching technologies and companies to address an array of medical conditions. “You have created music, poetry, culture, and studied civilizations at AUB, and across the region and globe. You have produced new knowledge, insight, greater empathy, and understanding for all.”

Khuri also mentioned the nurses, physicians, faculty, staff, students, and administrators who, in the midst of the pandemic, treated the sickest patients in the country and region, vaccinated 99.7% of the AUB community, and mobilized to educate those least fortunate. He also spoke about those who cared for the wounded and rebuilt homes after the catastrophic August 4 explosion, inspiring philanthropic efforts from the diaspora and the global community. “You have become role models. You, our students, have been a major part of all these efforts, and in fact, you have often driven them forward at great personal risk and cost.”

He addressed AUB students and the graduates directly saying, “You provide a sense of empowering hope that spreads far beyond this campus, to give the people of your home countries and beyond a demonstration of the power of knowledge, resilience, faith, and yes, anti-fragility.”

Honorary doctorate recipient Dr. Dina Katabi gave the commencement address for this day of the celebrations. Katabi is a renowned computer science engineer and researcher whose work improved the speed, reliability, and security of data exchange in wireless networks and contributed to non-invasive health monitoring and disease diagnosis through wireless sensing in medicine.

She spoke about her academic and professional journey across countries and disciplines, and commended graduates of AUB describing them as “capable of independent and innovative thinking, and can solve the most difficult technical problems and succeed anywhere.”

Katabi addressed the graduates saying, “the education you've received at AUB is your secret weapon. It has prepared you to seize opportunities, tackle challenges, and excel in every pursuit.” She added that “in these complex times,

demands, and expectations will push you to the edges of your capabilities. You will be expected to navigate the complexities of our world and contribute positively to our shared future.”

“Each one of you, in your own unique way, is prepared to make a meaningful difference in this world. A difference that benefits not just you or those immediately around you, but humanity as a whole,” Katabi concluded.

Two of this year’s AUB graduates who excelled in academic achievements and community service spoke at the event on behalf of their class: Fadi Salahedin, majoring in psychology and minoring in business administration, and biology major Lynn Al Aridi.

“My journey getting here is one of how hope, perseverance, and hard work can coalesce to make what is highly improbable happen,” said Salahedin who shared his journey of how he made it from his city in Syria to AUB through one of AUB’s scholarship programs, the MEPI-Tomorrow’s Leaders Program. “Here, I found that my education can in fact be transformative. I learned to make noise about the causes I believe in, and that noise was embraced, echoed, and most importantly never silenced.”

“AUB’s environment has shaped us into better versions of ourselves. We are all a little kinder, a little smarter and a lot more accepting of opinions we do not agree with,” said Al Aridi, who earned a place on the Dean's Honor List. “We should all be proud of ourselves. We have worked hard to get to where we are today, whether emotionally or academically.”

The Penrose Award, an honorary annual award given to outstanding AUB graduates from different faculties on the basis of scholarship, character, leadership, and contribution to university life, was offered on June 10 to Faculty of Arts and Sciences graduate Tala Charif, Hariri School of Nursing graduate Mohammad Faisal Issa, Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture graduate Joseph Elias El Soueidy, Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences graduate Riwa Baalbaki, Faculty of Health Sciences graduate Cynthia Alame, and Suliman S. Olayan School of Business graduate Mohammed Adel Assad. The award was also offered to Faculty of Medicine graduate Angie Henry Fares during the first day of the commencement celebrations on June 9.

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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 800 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 8000 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 programs leading to 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 365-bed hospital.

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