

For Immediate Release



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AUB and LAU welcome Tomorrow's Leaders **for the new academic year**

New graduate and undergraduate scholars of the Tomorrow's Leaders (TL) Scholarship Program funded by the U.S.-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) were welcomed to academic year 2019-20 at both the American University of Beirut (AUB) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) in a joint reception held at AUB's Maamari Auditorium.

The Tomorrow's Leaders program supports academically qualified and financially disadvantaged students with leadership potential in the MENA region, through providing scholarships to pursue their graduate and undergraduate studies at leading institutions in the region, in line with the program's vision to prepare the next generation of MENA leaders for the 21st century. The program offers academic and civic education to its scholars, with a focus on leadership development and community service opportunities, aiming to equip them with the knowledge, skills, attitude, and commitment necessary to develop their potential as future leaders. It also seeks to foster among them the professionalism, ethical conduct, and tolerance that will enable them to become globally competitive leaders and change agents in their respective societies.

The Program is funded by the US Department of State's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) program within the Bureau of Near Eastern Affairs Office of Assistance Coordination, and partners with two host institutions in Lebanon, namely AUB and LAU. There are currently 217 MEPI-TL students attending both AUB and LAU, and to date a total of 193 have graduated from the two universities. The scholars are from various parts of the MENA region including Libya, Yemen, Bahrain, Egypt, Syria, Tunisia, Algeria, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Morocco.

Attending the reception for the new MEPI-TL cohort were AUB President Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB Provost Dr. Mohamed Harajli, LAU's Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management Dr. Elise Salem, Deputy Chief of Mission at the US Embassy in Beirut

Win Dayton, MEPI–TL directors from both LAU and AUB, in addition to MEPI-TL graduate and undergraduate scholars as well as staff from both universities.

President Khuri delivered his welcome remarks saying, “All of you, the students who come through this program are consistently among the best and brightest, even in this high-achieving academic environment. And, as any seasoned educator will tell you, any institution benefits just as much—if not more—from a diverse range of highly talented students, just as much as the students themselves benefit.”

MEPI–Tomorrow’s Leaders Program Director at LAU Dina Abdul Rahman then spoke on behalf of LAU. “Indeed, the primary objective of MEPI–Tomorrow’s Leaders program is to build a cadre of young leaders who are civic minded, intellectually able, and professionally skilled, who will become the community and national leaders of the future.”

Deputy Chief of Mission Dayton also addressed the audience saying, “Today, we honor a new group of tomorrow’s leaders who will dedicate themselves as active and informed citizens to build better societies.” He added, “Collectively, with the hundreds of tomorrow’s leaders who have preceded you, and with hopefully hundreds more that will follow your good footsteps, we believe that your leadership and contributions will have far reaching positive impacts in your communities, in your countries, in the region, and in the world.”

MEPI–Tomorrow’s Leaders Graduate Program at AUB Director Dr. Rabih Talhouk in turn welcomed the students of the new cohort, assuring them that they will have a very positive impact on AUB. He stated that an application has been made for future funding in order to host more students in the next academic year. “We are hoping that this program continues to grow,” Talhouk said, thanking the Department of State, as well as AUB and LAU for hosting this program.

MEPI–Tomorrow’s Leaders Undergraduate Program Director at AUB Hani Hassan finally shared with the attendees that since its inception, the program at AUB and LAU has had a total of 410 students who graduated or are currently studying, noting that around 58 percent of them are young women. He then advised the scholars that even though the program may seem challenging at times, they must not allow these challenges to overcome them, and that they should remember the challenges, big and small, that they had already overcome to get to where they are now. “We are more than confident of the impact you will have before you even graduate. Your presence in our institutions is not only life changing for you but it is also life changing for us.”

AUB MEPI TLG student Rania Bou Said from Lebanon, and LAU MEPI TL student Manel Roumaissa Benabid from Algeria, also took the podium and shared their stories and experiences of getting accepted to the program and joining their universities. Scholars of the new cohort then joined the officials for a group photo.

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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 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 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 420-bed hospital.

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