

For Immediate Release



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## **AUB opens the new Munib and Angela Masri** **Building with an inaugural symposium**

American University of Beirut (AUB) newest state-of-the-art facility—the Munib and Angela Masri Building—was launched with an “Inaugural Symposium on Energy, Natural Resources, and the Environment,” coordinated by the Munib and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources at AUB. The opening was held on September 4, 2018 in the presence of Chairman of the AUB Board of Trustees Dr. Philip Khoury, members of the Board of Trustees, AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri, Provost Mohamed Harajli, senior administrators, faculty, staff, students, dignitaries, and other distinguished guests. Guests of honor were Trustee Emeritus Munib R. Masri (Hon. DHL 2012) and his wife Angela—the building’s namesakes—along with other members of the Masri family.

The new building will house the Munib and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources, an interdisciplinary research hub that was established in June 2007 through a generous endowment by Munib Masri of the Munib R. Masri Foundation. The Masri Institute is committed to addressing the sustainable and responsible use, management, and conservation of natural resources and energy, particularly in the Arab world. The building will also house other functions related to the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA), including the Bahaa and Walid Bassatne Department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, the Energy Studies Program, the Program in Green Technologies, MSFEA Student Services Center, and computer labs and IT support.

President Khuri addressed the packed auditorium, thanking Munib and Angela Masri along with the entire Masri family, as well the many people who worked diligently to realize this project. He also spoke about AUB’s vision for this new facility.

“This building is meant to signify the education, research, and further development within the sectors of natural resources, energy, and the environment in hopes of creating a transformative

impact on the future wellbeing and prosperity of Lebanon and the region,” said Khuri. “This building is supposed to be about student-centric learning as much as anything else, about interactivity, and about a relationship between teacher and student that is different than things that we’ve done before. As such, it is also enabling the expanding of our research facilities for the Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources, and as a hub for interdepartmental interaction.”

Munib R. Masri, chairman of the Engineering and Development Group (Edgo) and AUB trustee emeritus since 2011 and trustee since 2001, addressed those assembled for this event and said that even though he did not have the privilege of attending AUB himself, it is a university that is always in his heart and in his mind.

“We hope we can contribute more to AUB because we think AUB is the answer,” said Masri. “I think AUB is going to lead the research and I think the Masri Institute will be—through AUB—the voice of the people.” He added: “Sometimes dreams come true, and one of these dreams, my dream, came true: this institute.”

After delivering his own speech, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Philip S. Khoury presented plaques to both Angela and Munib Masri in appreciation and recognition of their invaluable support, exceptional dedication, and contributions to the success and advancement of the university and the empowerment of persons across this region through exemplary education and training.

MSFEA Dean Alan Shihadeh also spoke at the ceremony, talking about MSFEA’s agenda for a “viable, liveable, and equitable world,” as well as how this new building would not have been completed on time and under budget without the heavy involvement of Munib Masri himself.

The symposium continued with two keynote addresses. The first was given by Dr. Sharon Mosher, dean of the Jackson School of Geosciences at the University of Texas at Austin, which is the alma mater of both Munib and Angela Masri. Mosher spoke about the role of universities in addressing 21st century global Earth challenges, which includes preparing students with the knowledge and skills necessary to confront these challenges, as well as collaboration between global universities with common goals who can facilitate finding solutions to these challenges.

The other distinguished speaker for the event was Dr. David Mohrig, associate dean for research at the Jackson School of Geosciences, who spoke on the need to better monitor our environment using more data, new tools, and better predictions.

Concluding the symposium was Dr. Nesreene Ghaddar, director of the Masri Institute since its inception, who President Khuri praised as a “visionary and pioneering researcher.” She spoke

about the work the institute has been doing since 2007 and also revealed how the institute is going to reorient towards priorities that will influence society and address the energy challenges of this region.

“We would like to reorient the strategic allocation of funds centered on impacting future energy priorities of the region and collaborate across disciplines, optimize resource distribution, and advance viable solutions for societal development,” said Ghaddar. To accomplish this, the Masri Institute is going to change from open calls for research to focused calls for research where they support two multi-year projects focused on a single topic per call.

Following the symposium, invited guests were taken on a tour of the facilities and enjoyed a luncheon on the rooftop of the new building.

**ENDS**

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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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