

For Immediate Release



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Documentary film released to tell the story of AUB

The newly released documentary film “On the Edge of Time – The Story of AUB” chronicles AUB’s endurance as the hub of knowledge in the region over 150 years of its history, driven by the passion of its students, faculty, and staff.

The film project was initiated by the American University of Beirut (AUB) 150th Committee to celebrate AUB’s history. Directed and produced by Toni Oyry, film director and instructor of journalism at AUB, and Sisu Beirut Production Company, the project engaged 40 members of the AUB community over the past year to conduct interviews with 17 AUB personalities in Lebanon and the US that narrate unique first-hand experience during major events that designed AUB’s history.

“Even though the film is a historical documentary feature, my aim was to take the audience to a journey through the history of AUB from the perspective of the people who have made it what it is today,” said Oyry. “I wanted to tell a story that would be accessible and engaging to everyone, regardless whether they are currently at AUB, alumni, or have no previous knowledge of the University or even the history of the region. As a filmmaker, you are constantly searching for unique stories to tell and the story of AUB has them all.”

The production uses parallaxing, a 3-D imaging technique, with over 180 archive images. It takes the viewer through an audio-visual, “refreshing, flowing, and very moving” journey, as described by President Fadlo Khuri who was engaged in the film-making project from the onset.

“It was an honor for me to be interviewed on the occasion of AUB’s 150th, this was a way for me to express how AUB has affected me personally as well as thousands of people from Lebanon and the area to become better human beings,” Trustee Emeritus Farouk Jabre, interviewed in the film, told us. “What we had at AUB was an unforgettable experience. The film documents the history of AUB through troubled periods of time that only left AUB stronger.

I personally believe that, today, we are going through the second or third renaissance of AUB for a better future for the region.”

International award-winning film director and producer, Mohammad Ali Atassi, who refers to himself as “married to AUB” (as his wife, Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, is chairperson of the English Department at AUB) and living in Lebanon for the past 15 years because of AUB, said he came to the film-screening because “we are all concerned. This is part of our family history, our personal history. We want to see our relation to this place and University through this film.”

“This film depicts the richness of AUB’s history, as well as that of Ras-Beirut and Lebanon and tells the story of how the University survived through the willpower of some its faculty, staff, and students in the past” he told us. “It would have liked to hear more from today’s students on how they see AUB. Perhaps students can make their own movie to complement this one, because AUB is not only history and great leaders. It stands out with its students of today.”

AUB’s milestones are many and the personal narratives are many more; but the journey is one and it is ongoing. Throughout, and despite, all circumstances, AUB has endured. Its principles, message, mission, and role stay anchored as the University continues to “make history”.

“This part of the country has remained a beacon for tolerance, and hope, and enlightenment, and innovation. That’s the impact of AUB,” said AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri.

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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 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 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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