

For Immediate Release



AUB research output beats US peer universities at lower cost

Beirut, Lebanon- 05/06/2012 - The American University of Beirut produces more research per faculty member than any other university in the Arab world. Moreover, AUB figures for research output and quality often exceed those of four peer universities in the United States: George Washington University, Loyola University, Villanova University and Howard University.

These figures were highlighted during the 3rd Kamal A. Shair Central Research Science Laboratory (KAS CRSL) Research Conference on June 4, 2012 at Charles Hostler Auditorium. The conference also underscored graduate studies at AUB and the role the lab has played in propelling the University as a top educational and research institution both regionally and internationally.

“Over the past 10 years, AUB has expended considerable resources on the systematic and ongoing modernization of material and human resources, strengthening existing academic programs and supporting the development of new ones, particularly master’s and PhD programs,” said Provost Ahmad Dallal. “With the introduction of doctoral programs in eight disciplines in 2007-08, AUB became the first US-accredited university in the Arab world to offer PhDs.”

Statistics show that over a five-year period (2002-2010), AUB faculty had the highest research productivity in the Arab world in the number of publications per faculty member; the number of times that these papers were cited in literature; and the percentage of papers appearing in top research journals.

“What is staggering is that the average research expenditure for an AUB paper was about \$8,600, while the average for papers from these four institutions ranged from about \$26,600 to \$77,100,” said Dallal. “An economist would say that this is productivity and quality at its best.”

Dallal noted that in terms of internal funding, AUB is quite generous, with a total budget of just under \$2 million and grants averaging \$10,000 per faculty member. AUB also ranked at 300 on the highly respected QS World University Rankings, exceeding those of both Loyola and Howard, with George Washington at 296 and Villanova not listed at all.

“These findings reinforce our conviction that AUB is well positioned to make an effective contribution not only regionally but also internationally through research, particularly interdisciplinary research,” emphasized Dallal.

“Our state of the art research lab has had 1,330 users for various projects since its creation in 2000,” said KAS CRSL Director Youssef Mounemne in his welcoming address. “Our state of the art facility has cost \$4.75 million so far and we are projecting to infuse another \$2 million to stay on par.”

“When AUB reinstated PhD programs a few years ago, no one was under the illusion that these programs would immediately be the equal of the best programs in the world,” said Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dean Patrick McGreevy. “This conference is proof that our graduate students have taken up the challenge to produce new knowledge.”

McGreevy recognized the pivotal role played by the CRSL in reinstating a research culture at AUB, particularly in the experimental sciences, and initiating research in both applied and fundamental sciences at AUB. McGreevy highlighted the latest external funding of \$167,000 granted to Professor Antoine Ghauch from chemistry, under the extremely competitive program “Partnerships for Enhanced Engagement in Research” awarded by the National Academy of Sciences.

“More than a decade after the inception of the CRSL, much of the research equipment in the lab needs to be upgraded or replaced to allow AUB faculty and students to perform cutting edge research,” he added.

“Our initiative highlights for 2012-2017 include introducing new graduate programs to respond to job market needs, strengthen existing programs and improve infrastructure,” said faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences Dean Nahla Houalla. “We also aim to establish new centers of excellence, promote offering interdisciplinary degrees and establish a strategy for research.”

“Our future plans include full support to students joining the accelerated PhD programs through endowments and promote multi-disciplinary and inter-faculty research cooperation,” said Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Associate Dean Fadl Moukalled. “Our research focus areas are centered on energy resources and management (smart buildings), environmental sciences and technologies (water and air quality), and information and communication technologies (networking and security).”

“Our Graduate Public Health Program (GPHP) is the only Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited program of public health in the region,” said Faculty of Health Sciences Associate Dean Rima Affi. “Our research and public health practice activities cover the whole of Lebanon, reach the Arab region and beyond, and we are building an integrated system of research, practice and knowledge translation.”

“Our mission is to train biomedical scientists who translate basic science discoveries into patient care, from the bench side to bedside and vice versa,” said Faculty of Medicine Assistant Dean Ayad Jaffa. “Stem cell biology, cardiovascular sciences, cancer biology and genetics are our centers of excellence for graduate studies.”

The conference included the presentation and talk session of 20 projects and 13 posters prepared by graduate study students. The winner of the talk session was Layla Kamareddine, with her “The Role of Melanisation in Anopheles Anti-fungal Immunity” whereby her work displayed that melanisation response, a potent immune response in arthropods used for pathogen eradication and wound healing, in the malaria vector plays a crucial role in defense against fungal infection. The winner of the poster contest were Lori Malkhassian, Moath Al Qoraini, Hind Zahr, Ghanem Oweis and Diana Jaalouk for their “Investigating the effects of residual HIFU exposure on cellular viability and mechanosensitive gene expression in MCF-10A and MDA-MB-231 human mammary epithelial cells,” whereas they probed the sub-lethal effects of High Intensity Focused Ultrasound (HIFU) in vitro exposure on human cancer cells.

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For more information please contact:

Maha Al-Azar, Associate Director for Media Relations, ma110@aub.edu.lb, 01-353 228

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 600 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,000 students. AUB currently offers more than 100 programs leading to the 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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