

For Immediate Release



Keynote speaker Wadad Kadi to Class of 2012: ‘Do not forget your debt to society’

1558 AUB students graduate with a bachelor’s degree

Beirut, Lebanon- 23/06/2012 - For the second installment of this year’s 143rd Commencement exercises, 1558 undergraduate students received their diplomas from the American University of Beirut on June 23, 2012.

They joined 493 graduates, including 79 MDs and nine PhDs, who had received their degrees a day earlier on June 22, 2012. In total, 2051 students graduated from AUB this year, a record number.

A procession of professors and trustees in academic regalia, led by Chief Marshal Samir Makdisi, opened the 143rd commencement exercises on both evenings, held at the AUB Green Field.

“The diplomas you are about to receive will do more than simply certify that you have completed a degree in the program of your choice,” Dorman told graduates. “Behind each diploma lie the history and stature of one of the greatest international universities in the world... [and] the universal values that are nurtured on this campus: diversity, freedom of thought, inclusiveness, and sustainability. Behind each diploma lie historic generations of men and women who have left their significant mark in the world, and whose ranks you are about to join.”

On June 23, two undergraduate students, Mohamad Baker Dia who majored in electrical and computer engineering and Timmy Malkoun who majored in business, shared their thoughts with their classmates.

Dia noted that it is up to his generation to be leaders of change in Lebanon and the region and he urged his classmates to keep AUB and Lebanon in their hearts and minds.

For his part, Malkoun said that AUB students all share passion and drive while tackling any challenge that comes their way. He reminded his classmates that AUB is not the

summit and destination that they should reach, but it equipped them with the tools to climb bigger summits and reach further destinations.

In her keynote speech to undergraduates, Islamic studies and Arabic literature scholar Wadad Kadi left the Class of 2012 with three thoughts: their debt to society, the imperative of leadership, and books.

Kadi reminded students not to forget that their achievements are the result of the support they have received from society and those around them, whether in the form of meals cooked or help with understanding a concept. “I would characterize the past [three to] four years of your lives as years of taking, and the coming years as years of giving -- to society,” she said. “So do look to the future and to building successful careers, but don’t forget your societies.”

Kadi also held them responsible for using the unique skills they have developed while at AUB to lead their societies to better places, noting that the region needs “fresh, bold, enlightened leadership... and they cannot turn a deaf ear” to that call.

“AUB... has been able...to impart to its students, since its inception, ... a unique balance between belonging to the region with its specific, multi-layered heritage, and propagating an open, comprehensive, forward-looking approach to education, one in which the mind can explore things freely and create something new out of them,” she added. “And this, too, constitutes the fabric of what leadership is all about.”

Quoting al-Jahiz, the ninth-century Arabic prose writer and scholar, in praise of books, Kadi urged graduates to be avid readers and to keep books as their constant companions, “for the modern tools of quick, restive access to information do not replace them, nor can they provide one with the wisdom, inspiration, and joy that books can.”

The AUB choir led by Professor Thomas Kim performed several musical pieces, including the alma mater, during the graduation.

At the end of Commencement exercises, the graduates performed an impromptu dance, flash mob-style, to music by Pink Floyd, Mashrou’ Leila, and Queen.

ENDS

Full keynote speech and student speeches attached

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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 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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