

For Immediate Release



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AUB Graduates 1566 Students

Khuri: “You are Now Ambassadors of This Great University”

The American University of Beirut (AUB) completed the second phase of its commencement ceremonies for the current academic year, by graduating 1566 fresh undergraduates.

The impressive ceremony, held on the Green Field in AUB’s lower campus, was attended by members of the Board of Trustees, parents, alumni, and friends.

After the arrival of the graduates’ procession and the procession of the university President, Provost, Deans, Faculty members and Trustees in their full academic regalia, the ceremony began with the Lebanese National Anthem. AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri then spoke.

President Fadlo R. Khuri:

President Fadlo Khuri said: Class of 2016, it has been a long, winding, and unforgettable road. Three, four, five years or more before today, you came here full of hopes and dreams and expectations, hopes and dreams that we hope we have nourished and enhanced, even in the midst of emotional, economic and political turbulence. You leave today equipped with knowledge, with power, and with the belief that you can effect positive change in this world. You have learned much while you were at AUB. You gained knowledge and confidence and resilience and you learned teamwork. Like our magnificent sportswomen and men who sublimate their own egos

for the greater good of the team, you have had to play intellectual tennis, social football, and mental jujitsu. You have emerged stronger and wiser, and now you are ready to start to fly without a safety net. You, the best and the brightest, emerged from your parental cocoon of safety into the social maelstrom that is AUB, immersed in Lebanese and regional and international politics and economics. Now you enter the world with your judgment sharpened and your views, whatever they may be, tested, remolded and strengthened.

“Look around you at your classmates. Today, you will celebrate together. Tomorrow you will step forth into the world, knowing that you are more confident, more able, more resilient, and more determined than you were when you first walked through these timeless gates to be forever transformed”, he added.

“Eschew violence and cruelty, and struggle against social and economic disparity. Understand all that you have seen that keeps our societies from being more just. Inspired by what you have done individually and collectively here, go out and change the world for the better. You are ready now. Now and forever you are AUB's past, present and future, the ambassadors of this iconic city set on a hill which, at 150 years old, taught you—as past generations were taught before us—to dare to dream that you will do what we know you are capable of, that you will change Lebanon, the Arab world, and the broader universe for the better. Congratulations to you, your families and teachers, AUB Class of 2016, our sesquicentennial year, and go forth with pride, purpose and humility and most of all go with and in peace”, Khuri ended.

The Graduating Class Speech:

Faculty of Arts and Sciences student Reem Abou Ibrahim, and Faculty of Engineering and Architecture student Ali Ayoub, delivered a speech on behalf of the graduates.

About Ibrahim:

“Reflecting back on the past three years that I have spent here at AUB, which have passed entirely too quickly, the only thing I am positive of is that I don’t want to leave just yet”.

“We’ve been fortunate enough to have received our education from one of the most esteemed universities in the region. I myself have been even luckier to have had the opportunity of studying here under the USP scholarship, to which I am forever grateful,” she added.

“Class of 2016, some of us has realized what their next step is, others have managed to discover what they don’t want to do, and maybe many are still in the process of figuring out what they want. No matter what, all of us should know that having reached this day is a great accomplishment on its own. I sincerely hope we will someday be able to pay off the abundant dedication, guidance and motivation of our parents, teachers and all those close to us, throughout our educational journey”, she said.

Ayyoub:

“Right from the start, I found myself getting involved in social activities, student movements, and student representation. The days have gone by much too quickly, as I am sure most of you feel like the first day of university was just yesterday. But friends and colleagues don’t be deceived; your journey has actually just begun, you are the leaders of the future and by you, prosperous nations are built.”

“At this university, we are leaders in research, and we publish many papers, but that is not what makes us special. What makes us special is the environment which every one of you has contributed in creating. Over the past four years, I can recall some formative episodes in my AUB journey that I like to call “personality builders”, he added.

“I would like to give a special thanks to Dr. Talal Nizameddine, our dean of student affairs, for always being there for students and representing their interests on the administrative level. You have been an inspiration to me and, I’m sure, an excellent role

model for others. And of course, our President, Dr. Fadlo Khuri, you have been a catalyst in improving student-administration dialogue, and we are confident that the future of AUB is in good hands”, he ended.

Nadine Labaki:

“Thank you Dr. Fadlo Khuri, thank you AUB, proud loving parents, friends, distinguished guests, beautiful graduating class of 2016... Apparently I am here today to give you advice...to inspire you in a way! But it is actually you who have been my inspiration for the past few weeks...”

“I learned that happiness for me is not at the top of the mountain but on the road uphill to it, it is not eating the carrot but running after it... I heard somebody say something in a conference one day , I don't recall who it was of course-because I have the memory of a very old fish-but I do remember what he said: Human beings are born butterflies, and die caterpillars and it stuck with me since because I think it is true. Look at babies and children; look at how free they are when they are only babies. They do as they please, talk as they please, behave as they please, free like butterflies. And it is only with time, when they start growing up and looking at this pointed finger telling them what they should or shouldn't do, who they can be or cannot be that their wings start to shrink and their backs start to bend under the pressure of society, and its stare and what other people think”, she added.

“I'm sure many of you see your degree as a ticket out of this country. To a big city where you can make it big and conquer the world! I also left Lebanon for a short while. But I asked myself, what is my mission in life and where am I needed most? My answer and the answer for many more of you than you think, graduating class of 2016, is right here. Lebanon. France doesn't need another architect, London doesn't need another biologist, and Munich doesn't need another engineer,” she said.

“To the beautiful graduating class of 2016 congratulations; out there is world waiting for your ideas, for your talents, for your capacities, there is a country called Lebanon waiting to be saved! Waiting for you to save it. And as you take off those hats today, whatever your goals is, weather your dream is to see your plant grow or to solve world hunger promise me to ask yourself one question every morning as you open your eyes: Am I happy? Because it is only then that you can be the best version of whom you are?” she ended.

The Degrees:

President Khuri and the deans then distributed degrees to the 1564 undergraduate students:

Faculty of Agriculture and Food Sciences 129

Faculty of Arts and Sciences 590

Faculty of Engineering and Architecture 476

Faculty of Health Sciences 55

Suliman S. Olayan School of Business 276

Rafic Hariri School of Nursing 40

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 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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