

For Immediate Release



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The Makhlouf Haddadin Symposium at AUB brings together seven of the world's top pioneers in Chemistry

In an unprecedented academic event bringing together seven world-renowned scientists in the field of Chemistry, the 2016 Makhlouf Haddadin Symposium was held as part of the American University of Beirut (AUB) celebration of its 150th anniversary. The two-day symposium offered an opportunity for prominent researchers and scholars, as well as faculty and students from different universities in the region, to engage in discussions on reinventing chemistry, non-linear optics, nanotechnology, solar energy, hybrid responsive materials, cystic fibrosis, new reactions, and career paths in the field.

The scholars participating at the symposium were Professor George M. Whitesides from Harvard University; Professor Samir Z. Zard from L'École Polytechnique-Paris; Professor Gerald J. Meyer from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; Professor Seth R. Marder from the Georgia Institute of Technology; Professor Mark J. Kurth from the University of California at Davis; Professor Luisa De Cola from the University of Strasbourg; and Professor Paul S. Weiss from the University of California, Los Angeles. (Chek the booklet for more information on their backgrounds)

AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri spoke at the event opening about the importance of symposia of this caliber to the sustainability and development of AUB which has increased its research budget by 60% in the past year alone.

“This symposium is something that a great research university must have if it is to be taken seriously, to be competitive for funded grants, and to really make an impact in knowledge,” he said. “A great institution can afford to find both great scholars and great leaders and the two are not in opposition. Our administration believes that to make a difference in the realm of science, we must select, mentor, and nurture great scientists.”

President Khuri added that the interaction of the seven preeminent scholars with AUB researchers, faculty, and students, not only brought mentorship but also collaboration,

collegiality, and enlightenment that together create ‘teams of excellence’. In a gala dinner held as the symposium concluded, President Khuri honored the scientists with special plaques in recognition of their contributions to science.

“At a historic juncture for AUB and considering the momentous events that have been engulfing our region, we believe that AUB has to live up to its extraordinary history by playing a predominant role in shaping the future of Lebanon and the region,” said Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, Dr. Nadia El Cheikh. “Building bridges regionally and internationally are an essential step in this mission. I hope that this symposium will create new opportunities for our faculty and students to initiate new productive research collaborations.”

Organized by Dr. Bilal Kaafarani from the Department of Chemistry and the students of the AUB Organic Chemistry Club, the symposium was held as the 150th anniversary element of the newly established Makhlouf Haddadin lectureship. The lectureship was established on Dr. Haddadin’s 80th birthday in 2015, using the Makhlouf Haddadin Endowment, which was founded in 2011 to grant awards to distinguished graduating chemistry undergraduates.

"I am overwhelmingly honored to have these internationally renowned chemists present their groundbreaking research at this symposium," Dr. Makhlouf Haddadin – who has served AUB for over 52 years as Professor of Chemistry; Chair of the department; Acting Dean, Acting Provost, and Acting President; and now Senior Advisor to AUB President Khuri – told us . “I am very grateful to President Fadlo Khuri for his presence and his remarkable speech. I am indebted to Dean Nadia El-Cheikh for her kind words. And how can I thank enough the originator of this idea who worked very hard for its realization, my colleague, Professor Bilal Kaafarani. Long live AUB. Long live Lebanon."

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For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar
Director of News and Media Relations
Mobile: 03427024 Office: 01374374 Ext: 2676
Email: sk158@aub.edu.lb

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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