

For Immediate Release



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AUB Student Elections Held on Proportional Basis

**Khuri: “We are proud of our students
who have shown a great sense responsibility”**

The American University of Beirut (AUB) students proved once again their trust in AUB’s electoral system as they successfully completed a smooth and impeccable election process this year for the Student Representative Council (SRC) and the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC). This trust is proven by students’ participation rate in terms of number of candidates as well as voter participation, by the campaigns held in sophisticated and democratic fashion, by the level of interest expressed by all, by debates held on campus during the campaigns, as well as the fact that several groups were involved and all were represented in the process.

AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri toured all the faculties, inspecting the polling stations and speaking to the students and the officials. He was accompanied by Trustee Abdulsalam Haykal, Vice President for Advancement Dr. Imad Baalbaki, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Dr. Nadia El Cheikh, Dean of the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture Dr. Alan Shihadeh, Dean of the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences Dr. Rabi Mohtar, Chief of Protection Retired General Fadi Ghorayeb, Special Advisor to the President for Protocol and External Relations Ibrahim Khoury, and Director of News and Media Relations Simon Kachar. Dr. Talal Nezameddin, Dean of Student Affairs at the University, supervised the electoral process, assisted by a number of university professors and administrators. President Khuri commented on the electoral process saying, “We passed by seven schools and faculties and saw a diverse group of students voting their opinions in considerable numbers. We know for a fact that they are voting for platforms that are different than those in the country outside of AUB. We are proud of our resourceful and brave students who are exercising their civic responsibility through the right to vote.”

63.7% of the student body voted for their respective faculties through an electronic voting system that was held Friday 10 am to 5 pm at polling stations throughout AUB faculties in a calm yet competitive manner. This came after a two-day campaign on Tuesday and Wednesday that followed a new process of campaign allocation [booths] and presented sophisticated platforms per party. A live and lively debate took place at the end of the campaign on Wednesday allowing representatives of all groups to answer on a stage questions from the AUB community.

The electronic voting system is a pioneering first in Lebanon, fully homegrown at AUB by experts from its IT team, who coordinated for months with AUB's Dean and Associate Dean of Student Affairs to design a system that is meticulous, reliable, and most importantly fool-proof as well as hack-proof. It is not an internet system for online voting but an internal server for e-voting to protect from hacking or other outside manipulation. The result is a simple yet accurate system that is accessible only to the students on the day of elections. The only hardware cost was that of the ID scanners.

Solid team-work between AUB's Offices of Student Affairs, Registrar, and Information Technology not only guaranteed that an automated list of eligible candidates was crafted based on received online applications and shared within 48 hours of nominations, but it also continued and intensified throughout election time. Each voter had their ID scanned and checked for eligibility to vote as a fulltime AUB student. Cases of ambiguity regarding inter-faculty transfer, or exact number of academic credits that render the students of a specific year (as SRC votes are cast by class or year), are some of the issues that all three offices collaborate with to clear things out on the spot on the day of elections. A fully updated banner list is provided in advance by the Registrar's office with the names of eligible students and the classes they are in, inserted into the synchronized system and accessible at all polling stations. All else was left for the students: from nominating themselves, to voting and electing their favored candidates.

In his comment about this year's elections, Dean of Student Affairs, Dr. Talal Nezameddin said, "The electoral process has really been excellent today, with a great turnout in the morning, and enthusiasm showing right through the day. We are proud of our students, they have performed excellently. The campaign is held in great spirit, and we believe this will be one of the best elections yet."

A significantly high number of candidates 220 (compared to 218 last year) represented various factions, including the major: Leaders of Tomorrow, Students for Change, and the Campus Choice secular club, who ran for spots on the Student Representative Council.

In a ritual of enthusiasm, the results were out within the hour from end of voting. A large computer-linked screen set up facing West Hall broadcast election results to spirited students.

As in every election, access to campus was confined to students and staff with valid AUB IDs, in addition to print, radio and TV reporters covering the event. The Office of Student Affairs, which oversees elections every year, enforced voting rules in the strictest fashion and banned all political flags, posters, flyers, and photos on campus.

Student elections at AUB have a long history that dates back to 1949, when the first general elections took place. This annual event was interrupted in 1982 at the height of the 1975-1990 Lebanese war, only to resume in 1994.

The cabinets for both the SRC and USFC will be elected in the coming few days.

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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 900 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 9,100 students. AUB currently offers more than 120 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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