



Opening Ceremony 2018: A call for inclusivity and excellence through diversity

9/3/2018

Safa Jafari Safa, (ss152@aub.edu.lb), Office of Communications

AUB declared the start of its 152nd academic year with the annual Opening Ceremony held at Assembly Hall. Gathering new and continuing students, the official ceremony welcomed the new academic year in the presence of AUB President Fadlo Khuri, Chairman of the Board of Trustees Philip Khoury, members of the Board of Trustees, administration, faculty, and staff.

"Today, we have the privilege and the responsibility to get us launched towards an even more energetic, successful, and controversial 2018, after a highly impactful and successful academic year just concluded," said President Khuri.

In his address which aimed to welcome the AUB community to the new academic year and inspire the students, old and new, for a successful year ahead, President Khuri spoke about "excellence through diversity," giving examples of universities that "have taken on the mantle of inclusive education as a tool for social mobility and societal cohesion... and that consider the fostering of diversity a means to a healthier society and a goal in its own right," drawing a parallel with AUB.

"We inhabit, lead, and embody a patch of fertile dissonance in the Middle East, ever since 152 years ago, when Presbyterian missionaries founded the American University of Beirut as the Syrian Protestant College," said Khuri. "The university took advantage of Lebanon's liberal and diverse population to become a world leader in inclusive education. Battered but unbowed by the Lebanese Civil War, the university has gradually emerged that much stronger for its role as the preeminent seat of higher learning in the Arab world, all while maintaining the spirit of a liberal arts school.

"One thing we cannot compromise on—and something the American University of Beirut does very well—is to dispel the myths that contribute to the fear of the other. We accept students from every political spectrum, every religious background, and 22% of our students are international."

This year's guest speaker was Sir Fraser Stoddart, a chemistry Nobel laureate (2016) who spoke about the "University of Life" that taught him many skills that ultimately contributed to his success. He also spoke about the challenges faced in research and the struggle and passion in tackling "big problems." In giving a recount of his life and career, Dr. Stoddart spoke about difficult times, lack of funding, and unpleasant circumstances that confronted him. Even then, he emphasized, "You don't sit down and do nothing, you act... Life is not a bowl of cherries - the chances are that you will meet these occasions when everything seems to be against you and this is the real test in time."

Stoddart emphasized the importance of diversity, competition, and contribution from different sources. He himself cultivated a diverse culture in his laboratory, working with students from various parts of the world, including Lebanon.

HOME (/ARTICLES)

SPOTLIGHTS

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/SPOTLIGHTS.ASPX)

STUDENTS

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/STUDENTS.ASPX)

UNIVERSITY

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/UNIVERSITY.ASPX)

PARTNERSHIP

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/PARTNERSHIP.ASPX)

RESEARCH

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/RESEARCH.ASPX)

RECOGNITION

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/RECOGNITION.ASPX)

SEARCH

(/ARTICLES/PAGES/SEARCH.ASPX)

President Khuri explained his observations on inclusivity from over 23 years of working at the University of Texas MD Anderson, Emory University, and AUB. "Inclusivity allows you to select, admit, nurture and unleash the very best and brightest, the very people who we can help to ensure a better, fairer, more just and more inclusive world," he said, arguing that immigrants bring with them "drive, diversity, as well as a palpable thirst for a better tomorrow."

In his emphasis on inclusivity and excellence through diversity, President Khuri announced his prioritization and commitment to creating a \$100 million fund to get the best and the brightest from Lebanon, Palestine, Syria, and Iraq to study at AUB and bond together as leaders: "We are committed to raising this money so that these people can create lives that are more abundant, more meaningful, and more powerful."

Contact Us

For various questions, please try contacting us via social media first!
[read more \(/Pages/ContactUs.aspx\)](/Pages/ContactUs.aspx)

Disclaimer

In no event will AUB be liable to any party for any consequential damages for any use of this website.
[read more \(/Pages/Disclaimer.aspx\)](/Pages/Disclaimer.aspx)

Copyright

Written permission is needed to copy or disseminate all or part of the materials on the AUB website.
[read more \(/Pages/CopyRight.aspx\)](/Pages/CopyRight.aspx)

Title IX, Non-Discrimination, and Anti-Harassment

AUB is committed to providing a safe, respectful, and inclusive environment for YOU.
[read more \(/president/Pages/TitleIX.aspx\)](/president/Pages/TitleIX.aspx)

(https://www.snapchat.com/add/aubbeirut) (https://www.instagram.com/aubbeirut) (https://www.facebook.com/aubbeirut) (https://www.linkedin.com/company/aubbeirut) (https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC9n294353310677333/posts?)

university-
of-
beirut)



(https://appsto.re/lb/UuwT_i)

(https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=edu.aub.aubbuzz&hl=en)