



Dear friends and colleagues in the AUB community,

I want to salute the entire community for the abundance of world-class activities being staged at AUB at this busy time in the University year. In the last two weeks or so AUB collaborated with the Constantine Zurayk Cultural Foundation to host a seminar on the impact of that renowned thought leader; the Olayan School of Business hosted entrepreneur Tony Fadell who electrified students with his talk on “Technology as a Disruptive Change”; the School also staged an international conference on Cognitive Analytics Management; the Arab Foundation for Environment and Development (AFED) held its annual conference on sustainable development in a changing Arab climate at AUB; and the Faculty of Arts and Sciences celebrated the publication of more than 40 scholarly books by faculty members published in the last year. On the health front, the Office of Strategic Health Initiatives signed a memorandum of understanding with the Municipal Council of Beirut to cooperate in establishing the “Beirut: Healthy City 2022” vision.



Among our engineers, all eyes are on mechanical engineering instructor **Sevag Babikian**, a strong contender for the Stars of Science TV reality show, whose final is next Saturday (you can vote at [www.starsofscience.com](http://www.starsofscience.com) until November 17). Good luck, Sevag! And that’s just a small taste of the pulsating and accomplished goings-on in our community, edited down for reasons of space!

### **State-of-the-art emergency medicine**

Having recently had cause to visit a patient at the Emergency Department (ED) at the AUB Medical Center, I was struck by and wanted to take this opportunity to highlight the great strides that have been taken in the key area of Emergency Medicine (EM) in recent years, setting us apart in many ways. AUBMC has the only ED in Lebanon which has moved to 100% attending physician-level coverage for every patient who comes through the door—the norm being that the least trained medical personnel usually care for these most critical patients—and all seven faculty are American Board of Emergency Medicine certified from top US universities.



Under the leadership of **Dr. Eveline Hitti**, a new emphasis has been placed on improving processes, with protocolization of emergency procedures following global best practice, ensuring the provision of optimum levels of care and quick access to all clinical services around the Medical Center, so that all emergency patients get the attention they deserve irrespective of the time of day.

This is a landmark year for the Department of Emergency Medicine as 2016 has beheld the graduation of the first members of its residency program, which started in 2012. The fact that Lebanon can produce its own, internationally accredited, emergency specialists—small in number now, but gathering momentum—is a major advance, allows the seeding of new standards for emergency medical service throughout the country. Moreover, its burgeoning toxicology specialism is not just unique in the region but has global impact, given the research potential with the types of poisonings which are seen in this country, organophosphates being an example. Other foci of exceptional work include the provision of pediatric emergency care, led by **Dr. Rasha Sawaya**, which is unique to Lebanon, and work done by **Dr. Mazen El Sayed** with pre-hospital care providers, so that time spent in ambulances in traffic can be used to save patients. A few months ago, the department took formal responsibility for emergency cases on campus, which has certainly improved the speed of response and standard of care available to our community here. All told, AUBMC is now unequivocally the home for EM in Lebanon which contributes significantly in building trust and patient satisfaction in our community, especially now that the ED evaluates more than 58,000 patients annually.

## Transforming our schools

I want to shine a light on another extraordinary service where our faculty have been a pioneering force—that is the school-based improvement project known as Tamam (from the Arabic التطوير المستند إلى المدرسة).



**Drs. Saouma Boujaoude and Rima Karami** and their colleagues in the Department of Education hold the distinction of receiving the longest-running single-source research and development grant that we are aware of, which they use to conduct “action research” in schools around the Arab world. Ten years and much hard work later, they have now made durable connections with more than 40 schools

across the Arab world which have adopted and helped refine the Tamam “journey” leading to the transformation of educational practices and governance structures. Excitingly, the latest schools to join this growing family this semester are in Palestine and Sudan, in addition to existing partners in Egypt, Jordan, KSA, Lebanon, Oman and Qatar.



The journey is so effective because it is the educational practitioners themselves, teachers, principals, with parental backing, who choose their improvement needs, set their own goals, design and plan their interventions, and evaluate and document their own work. Unusually, in this part of the world, the top-down, governmental influence is one of support and reinforcement, not enforced policy

implementation or change for change’s sake. This makes the transformation not only more impactful, but focused as it is on participative leadership for continuous improvement, the model is genuinely self-sustaining and it evolves and spreads. If we are to change this region for the better, schools need to become the centers of their communities, providing leadership and opportunities for all members to become their best possible selves. There is no doubt that Tamam has done incredible work in this field, and we can look forward to even greater impact as the project continues and spreads, like the ripple effect that the team has adopted as its emblem.

## Community architecture for senior citizens



Finally, I would like to congratulate fourth-year architecture students **Yasmine Arkadan** and **Yasmine Atoui** who split this year's \$15,000 Fawzi Azar award for outstanding achievement in the field of architectural design. This year's theme was "a community for seniors" with the proposed site in the Abadieh municipality in Mount Lebanon. Students worked alone throughout the summer vacation to develop designs that addressed and proposed innovative spatial configurations for a community catering for the needs of seniors (health, living facilities, supported and independent living, etc). The jury decided to split the first prize because both students had developed outstanding projects with strong design concepts and great quality of architectural graphic presentation techniques, that provided comfortable facilities for the elderly while enhancing the relationship with the community and their provision of indoor and outdoor activities. Thank you to the Azar family for their generosity, which goes towards covering the students' final year's tuition. You are among many, many unstinting donors who give so much support to AUB and its students by recognizing and rewarding excellence and achievement.

Best regards,

Fadlo R. Khuri, MD  
President

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