



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

The Higher Education Scholarships (HES) Program Graduation

June 2, 2026

Director Dr. Samar Harkouss

President Fadlo R. Khuri, Provost Zaher Dawy, Mr. Keith Hanigan, dear colleagues and our 93 incredible graduates,

Standing here today, I do not simply see a graduating class. I see 93 success stories of courage, resilience, and hope.

For fifteen years, this program has been much more than a scholarship. It has been a home, a family, and a space where we all grew together. learned from each other supported one another, and transformed together.

Dear graduates,

You truly shined at AUB. More than half of you are graduating with distinction and those who did not were only a heartbeat away. But your success was never only about grades. We know your value goes far beyond numbers and transcripts.

You balanced academics with service, leadership, and growth. You spent hours in classrooms and labs, but you were also deeply involved in your communities. You completed internships, participated in exchange programs, attended trainings, and embraced civic engagement opportunities—all while carrying one important question in your hearts: *How can I give back?*

But what makes this graduating class truly exceptional is your resilience. Yours was not an ordinary university journey. You survived two devastating wars. You lived through uncertainty, fear, displacement and instability. You also experienced the painful uncertainty of the program freeze—a moment when many of your dreams suddenly felt fragile and at risk.

I remember those difficult days very clearly. We were worried, but we never lost hope. And with the extraordinary support of AUB leadership, we kept

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moving forward together. AUB refused to let your dreams fade, and you refused to give up on yourselves.

Success like this never happens alone. It takes an entire institution working together with care and dedication. I would like to thank the Center for Civic Engagement, the University Preparatory Program, the Office of Grants and Contracts, Admissions and Registrar, the Comptroller's Office, Student Affairs, and all AUB faculties and professors who supported our students throughout this journey.

President Fadlo Khuri and Provost Zaher Dawy, thank you for your unwavering belief in this program. Your support gave us the strength to continue during the hardest moments.

And finally, our deepest gratitude goes to the American people. Their generosity and belief in education made all of this possible.

To our graduates: we will miss you deeply. Be bold, be compassionate, and continue to lead with courage and integrity. You are exactly the kind of young citizens this country needs today more than ever. . Go out into the world and show everyone what an AUB HES graduate can do—not only for themselves, but for their communities and for the country they love.

And always remember that AUB will forever remain your home.

Congratulations, Class of 2026. We are so proud of you.

Allow me to give the next couple of minutes to our students. In their own words, and from Lebanese landmark cities, Tripoli, Jbeil, Chouf, Beirut, Saida, Baalbak and Sour; The Places that made them; they'll tell you what HES means far better than I can. Let us watch together."

He is not only a champion of our university, but a tireless advocate for educational equity, whose unwavering belief in this program gave us the backbone to keep going when times were hardest. Please join me in welcoming a leader who has stood by us and believed in your dreams every step of the way—our President, Dr. Fadlo Khuri.

It is my absolute privilege to welcome a student who truly embodies the heart of our HES family. From Zahleh to her inspiring AUB journey majoring in Medical Lab and volunteering tirelessly at AUBMC—she has lived our mission of giving back. Please join me in welcoming Jamila Abu Latifa.

It's my pleasure to welcome to the stage Charge Daffaires, Mr. Keith Hanigan. A member of the Senior Foreign Service since 1995, Mr. Hanigan has served eight overseas tours across four continents and has been a lifelong champion of education among other causes. Please join me in giving him a warm welcome.

And now, we come to the moment of recognition.

While we are not handing out certificates today, we want to celebrate each of you individually. We will now call our 93 extraordinary graduates to the stage to say your names, honour your journey, and highlight those who have earned special distinctions and awards.

Graduates, please come forward as your name is called!