

## Founders Day 2014

### Program

Processional

National Anthem

President Dorman, welcome and announcement of student essay winners

Majd Nassan, reading the winning essay

Choir "Cry Out and Shout"

President Dorman, introduction of keynote speaker

Marwan Muasher, speech

Alma Mater

Recessional

Full speeches and essays: <http://www.aub.edu.lb/news/2014/Pages/founders-2014-148.aspx>

### Remarks by President Peter Dorman

Dear trustees, students, faculty, staff, and friends of AUB, I am pleased to welcome you to this year's Founders Day ceremony, which commemorates the establishment of our university 148 years ago. Founders Day is an annual opportunity to consider what makes this university unique in the region and in the world. It is a time to reflect upon our history as well as our aspirations for the future.

To say the least, these are challenging times in the Arab world, but let us remember that is nothing new for AUB. Since the university's founding in 1866, AUB has witnessed the end and division of the Ottoman empire, two World Wars, numerous medical epidemics, the Palestinian *nakba*, Civil War, violent conflicts with Lebanon's southern neighbor, and now the initial hope of the Arab Spring, only to be followed by violence, despair, and questions about the future of the region.

The importance of liberal arts universities are especially apparent during times of uncertainty such as this. Universities such as AUB play a unique role as institutions of cultural continuity and positive instruments of social change. They are vessels of academic ferment, guarantors of stability and future promise, exemplars of community engagement, and producers of future leaders. They serve as resilient and influential anchors wherever they exist—but in no place more so than in today's globalizing world.

Despite challenges that few universities have experienced, AUB has never closed its doors and has grown to become one of the finest and most respected universities in the Middle East. In his keynote address today, Dr. Marwan Muasher will speak at greater length on AUB's place and role in the current Arab context.

But first, we have the opportunity to celebrate the creativity of our students with the annual Founders Day Student Essay Contest, now in its 16<sup>th</sup> year. This year, we gave the students two quotes as "prompts". These quotes are similar in content, and are both from the MENA region, but are separated in history by over 4,000 years. The first is from AUB's founder, the Reverend Daniel Bliss:

*"Make this your rule: lay aside pride and be willing to learn from anyone, be willing to be taught by the most ignorant if he can impart any new thought, unknown to you."*

The second quote is translated from an ancient Egyptian wisdom text, "The Teaching of Ptahhotep (written ca. 2300 BC):

*"Do not be proud on account of your knowledge,  
but discuss with the ignorant as with the wise.  
The limits of art cannot be discerned;  
there is no artist whose talent is fulfilled.  
Fine words are more sought after than malachite,  
but can be found with the women at the grindstone."*

With these ideas in mind, I asked the students to **write about a time when they learned something important from an unexpected source.**

In essence, this essay theme goes to the very heart of the liberal arts model of higher education: that profound learning and knowledge comes from many sources and from a multitude of experiences, both inside and outside the classroom.

Before announcing the winners, I want to extend my special thanks to the faculty committee who were asked to review and judge the submissions: Dr. Amy Zenger, Associate Professor in the English

Department as well as Director of the Writing Center; Dr. Issam Srour, Assistant Professor in the Engineering Management Program; and Dr. Emily O'Dell, Visiting Professor in the Civilization Studies Program. I also want to express my personal appreciation to all of the students who took the time to write an essay this year.

The committee chose to recognize three outstanding essays this year, all of which can be read on the website of the President's Office, after today's ceremony:

- Third prize has been awarded to **Rayan Al Barry**, a sophomore Biology major in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, for his essay entitled, "A Summer to Live."

[President gives Rayan Al Barry the gift, certificate, and envelope]

- Second prize goes to **Norma Zoghbi**, a freshman student in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, for her essay, "The Harmonious Cure."

[President gives Norma Zoghbi the gift, certificate, and envelope]

- First prize has been awarded to senior **Majd Salim Nassan**, who is also in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences and majoring in Political Studies. I'd also like to note that in 2012, Majd initiated the student project "Hand in Hand" to aid Syrian refugees, coordinated by AUB's Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service. He also worked as a field officer for the local Lebanese NGO, Alef, in the summer of 2013 and was hired by UNRWA as a research consultant for a project last spring. Please welcome Majd to read his essay, "Never Forget Passion."

[President gives Majd Nassan the gift, certificate, and envelope]

[Majd Nassan reads his essay]

[CHOIR sings]

I want to express my great appreciation for the choir's contribution to this ceremony today, and to remind everyone in our audience that tonight and tomorrow night, the AUB Choir and Choral Society

will be giving their annual Christmas concert here in Assembly Hall at 7:30 PM. The concert this year will feature the choral music of Eastern Europe.

I hope you will join us for this festive occasion, ushering in the holiday season.

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It is a distinct pleasure for me to introduce the keynote speaker for Founder's Day 2014, Dr. Marwan Muasher, vice president for studies at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, a distinguished member of AUB's Board of Trustees since 2007, and a former AUB student.

Prior to joining the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Muasher served as senior vice president for external affairs at the World Bank. Before that, he held numerous high-level governmental positions in his native country of Jordan. Over two decades, Muasher served as foreign minister, deputy prime minister, ambassador to the United States, minister of information, senator, and government spokesperson for the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan.

Throughout his career and in all capacities, Marwan Muasher has been a tireless advocate for peace in the Middle East and the advancement of this region. In his current position, he oversees research on the Middle East for the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. He is author of "The Arab Center: The Promise of Moderation" (2007, Yale University Press) and is a prolific writer who offers an incisive perspective on current events in this region.

Please join me in welcoming Marwan Muasher, to deliver this year's Founders Day address on *AUB's Role in the Second Arab Awakening*.