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AUB Students Shine at Abu Dhabi's Arabic Creative Industries Congress

Six graduate students from the American University of Beirut (AUB), all affiliated with AUB's Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies, took part in the Congress of Arabic and Creative Industries (Congress ACI) held at Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi. The students, pursuing master's and doctoral degrees, were invited by the Abu Dhabi Arabic Language Centre (ALC) to attend panel discussions and hands-on workshops at the two-day congress, which convened leading Arab and international creatives and experts to explore the future of Arabic in the creative industries.

The congress, themed "Arabic Creativity Reimagined: Innovation in Storytelling and Audience Engagement," served as a major platform for forward-looking conversations on Arabic content in media, technology, literature, and the arts. Organized by the ALC, the event has become a leading international forum dedicated to championing the Arabic language and its cultural expressions in creative fields. Now in its fourth year, the annual gathering showcases Arabic creativity to global audiences and helps build a thriving ecosystem for Arab cultural and creative industries.

The Sheikh Zayed Bin Sultan Al-Nahyan Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at AUB facilitated the students' participation as part of its mission to support young scholars. The endowed chair provides master's and doctoral scholarships in Arabic and Islamic studies and sponsors conferences, public lectures, workshops, and research forums to promote scholarship in the field. "We are proud to see our students engaging in such a high-level international forum," said Professor Bilal Orfali, the Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies at AUB. "This congress offered them a life-changing opportunity to witness how Arabic is a living language—one that is actively shaping and being shaped by various modern industries. Such experiences enrich their academic journey and inspire them to contribute to the future of Arabic language and culture."

The six AUB students found the experience deeply enriching, both academically and culturally. They participated in specialized panels and workshops on topics ranging from Arabic storytelling and digital publishing to the role of artificial intelligence in Arabic content creation. Beyond the

American University of Beirut

PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
T +961 1 35 00 00 – Ext 2650 | communications@aub.edu.lb

aub.edu.lb

conference halls, they joined a cultural program with visits to museums and heritage sites in Abu Dhabi, gaining a deeper appreciation of the UAE's cultural landscape.

"I am deeply grateful for the enriching experience I've had at this congress, and for the joy it brought me. It was a true pleasure meeting creative minds from across the Arab world, each adding their own spark to this gathering," said Malek Chaker, a PhD student, reflecting on the opportunity.

"As a member of the Sheikh Zayed Chair for Arabic and Islamic Studies research team, attending the Arabic Congress in Abu Dhabi last September was a meaningful opportunity to engage with scholars and contribute to the advancement of Arabic and Islamic thought," noted Aida Abbas, another participant.

Rana Roukoz, a master's student, highlighted how the congress expanded her vision of Arabic's evolving role: "Our trip to Abu Dhabi was truly amazing. We felt valued, welcomed, and given real space to grow as youth with a future that Abu Dhabi is genuinely committed to nurturing. The panels were insightful, and the workshops offered valuable perspectives on the Arabic language—its future, new ways of teaching it, and its role in AI. The ACI Congress was an eye-opening reminder of how vast the potential of Arabic truly is, and how essential it is to keep investing in it rather than letting it fade in the face of other foreign languages. It also reminded us to embrace our culture, nurture it, and grow with it through AI—working with technology, not against it."

As a further testament to their experience, the AUB students each received a certificate of participation from the congress organizers and have been invited to two major upcoming events. They will take part in the Emirates Airline Festival of Literature in Dubai in January 2026, one of the region's premier literary gatherings. They were also invited to the "Arabian Days" festival in Abu Dhabi in December 2025, a cultural celebration coinciding with World Arabic Language Day that highlights the Arabic language through poetry, arts, and intellectual discussions.

These opportunities will allow the students to continue engaging with the broader Arabic literary and cultural community. Their participation in such high-profile events underscores AUB's commitment to nurturing the next generation of Arabic scholars and creatives and highlights the vibrant and growing role of the Arabic language on the global stage.

ENDS

For more information please contact:

Simon Kachar, PhD

Executive Director of Communications
Lecturer – Political Studies and Public Administration Department
Founding Director – Good Governance and Citizenship Observatory
Former Fellow – Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
Member of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences Research, Innovation, and Creativity Hub

T +961 1 37 43 74 Ext: 2676 | M +961 3 42 70 24
sk158@aub.edu.lb

Note to Editors

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PO Box 11-0236, Riad El Solh, Beirut 1107 2020, Lebanon
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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 790 full-time faculty members and a student body of over 9000 students. AUB currently offers more than 140 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 365-bed hospital.

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