

For Immediate Release



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AUB recognizes its devoted and excelling employees

In a ceremony of appreciation and inspiration, the American University of Beirut (AUB) administration presented this year's President's Service Excellence Awards and the University's Service Awards to its best and longest-serving employees.

The President's Service Excellence Awards have been presented annually since the year 2000 to permanent, non-academic staff who are nominated by their colleagues as examples of dedication to excellence in their service. To date, more than 80 employees have been awarded for their excellence service to students, patients, and colleagues over the years.

"We are looking for individuals who not only excel in their given tasks but go above and beyond the call of duty," said AUB President Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri. "Individuals who exemplify professionalism and courtesy to others with qualities to which we all aspire such as passion, energy, commitment to excellence, a wonderfully transparent and positive attitude, and a willingness to do all of this without seeking attention or applause. You do this because you genuinely believe in the greater good of the institution. Thank you for your extraordinary contributions to AUB and to your community."

Samia Ibrahim Azar, one of the four awardees, has been working at AUB for the last 40 years. Described by the University President as "the universal lifer, the universal giver," Samia was described by her colleagues both at AUB and AUBMC as someone who always strives to serve her community to her utmost abilities, and an altruist and empath who has always helped leaders and students with equal dedication, persistence, and enthusiasm.

"I feel like AUB runs in my blood, it is my life," she told us. "I love my work and my colleagues and we have worked together to sustain and support AUB who has given us a lot. I want AUB to stay forever and I will do anything I can to show how great this institution is."

Ali Juni started off his career in AUBMC in 1997 as a Practical Nurse and was promoted to the position of Nurse Surgical Technologist. Known for his meticulousness and exemplary organizational skills, he was described as proactive, compassionate, steadfast, always ready to provide support to enable and empower future doctors to fulfill their utmost potential, and loyal to AUB which he calls his *raison d'être*.

“There is no secret recipe to excellence, we are only doing our job as it should be done,” Ali told us. “I strive to give more than others, as I feel I have been given more than others. Three of my children have studied here at AUB and I am grateful and proud of that. AUB has given me what no one else could.”

Jamal Omar is known by most departments as the energetic initiative-taking janitor who takes lead in helping out in most of the University's major events. He was described by his fellow employees as dedicated, positive, hardworking, congenial, and an example of what makes AUB shine as a service excellence institution.

“I give my best driven by a thrill to see a great outcome as a result,” Jamal told us. “I am convinced that I should do what is right, always, and work conscientiously. AUB is good for all people, on and off campus; it is good for us and good for our children. I don't think I would have been so motivated to serve with all my heart if it wasn't for AUB.”

Rafika Zaatari, an AUB BA and MA nursing graduate, said she acquired many of the ethics she works by at home and at AUB, her other home. She started as a bed-side critical care nurse in the Adult Intensive Care Unit at AUBMC in 2003 and was promoted in 2006 to become Clinical Educator for Adult Critical Care Units. Her demanding job was met with her sincere eagerness to help others at all cost, in a humble, effortless manner. Rafika was described by her colleagues as a role model who exemplifies AUB's message of excellence and dedication.

“It is innate in me to present a job that is perfectly accomplished. I believe this is necessary in order to be able to help others. That, after all, is my job. I work with acute care patients – a tough but rewarding profession – and it is a job that should only be done in the best form possible.”

Deputy Executive Vice President of AUBMC, Deputy Dean of the Faculty of Medicine at AUB, Dr. Ziyad Ghazzal, spoke on behalf of the Raja N. Khuri Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Vice President of Medical Affairs, Dr. Mohamed Sayegh. “Service excellence means exceptional performance and endless giving but it also entails overcoming the obstacles and challenges that we face on a daily basis for the best of this University,” he told the honored employees. “With your distinguished service, you contribute to the sustainability, history, and legacy of this Institution. You exemplify the ‘good citizen’ of an institution, one who gives before asking to be given, and we thank you for this.”

During the ceremony, 62 employees from different departments at AUB and AUBMC were recognized for their service of 30 and 35 years to the University. They were presented with the University's Service Award, offered annually since 1968.

"These employees are the foundation stone of this great Institution," President of the AUB Workers and Staff Syndicate, George Jurdi, told us as he explained progress made regarding employee benefits and compensation. "Over the years, and despite various challenges, they have and, with their sacrifice and unlimited giving, will continue to contribute their hard work and expertise to keep AUB the leading University in the region."

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Note to Editors

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 700 full-time faculty members and a student body of about 8,500 students. AUB currently offers more than 130 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 420-bed hospital.

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