



**AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

AUB Announces Plans for School of Computing and Data Sciences

The American University of Beirut (AUB) held a project launch event on May 29, 2025, to announce the forthcoming establishment of a School of Computing and Data Sciences (SCDS) at the university. The event was held as part of the annual meetings of the AUB Board of Trustees, in the presence of upper administration, faculty and researchers, partners, distinguished guests, and media representatives.

“The School of Computing and Data Sciences will be our answer—not a reaction, but a deliberate next step in a shared vision that emphasizes the need to remain agile and forward-thinking as we navigate the rapidly changing global landscape. A keystone of the VITAL 2030 strategic plan,” said AUB President Dr. Fadlo Khuri. “It is envisioned to welcome and nurture students who will learn to ask deep and impactful questions, to model the world with courage and humility, and to imagine and shape futures where technology is not an escape from complexity, but a deep engagement with it.”

The establishment of a School of Computing and Data Sciences was approved through a unanimous vote by the Board of Trustees in June 2024, and will offer bachelor’s, master’s, and PhD degrees. The school aspires to further advance AUB’s excellence in teaching and learning, research and innovation, medical care, and institutional effectiveness, thereby leveraging its legacy to transform societies through knowledge and service, and uphold its mission as the premier higher education institution in the region and beyond.

The school will embrace a systems view of artificial intelligence, and the role of data of all scales and across diverse disciplines—from health and medical sciences to Arabic language and the environment. It shall house a world-class interdisciplinary faculty body covering the full spectrum of expertise from theory and fundamentals to tools and applications, aiming to cultivate a generation of wise leaders, thinkers, designers, and builders.

As someone who has worked in Silicon Valley for 43 years, AUB Board of Trustees Chair Abdo Kadifa spoke about how artificial intelligence is going to transform the world, and said: “We felt at AUB that we have to drive and innovate and be the leader in this field. Not just not in this region, but on a global level. We intend to amass the expertise, the capabilities, the computing talent, as well as researchers in a variety of fields to deliver a new way for artificial intelligence to prosper, and to deliver prosperity for us here in the region.”

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Chair Kadifa also noted that the university and its board are fully committed to finding the resources “to make this work,” including a target of raising \$100 million, which highlights their belief in the strategic importance of establishing this new school.

Expected to launch in September 2026, the School of Computing and Data Sciences will be part observatory, part educational and experiential, and part computational powerhouse with machines trained on data streams—from the subatomic to the astronomical—and capable of analyzing phenomena as complex as epidemics over networked societies.

“Lebanon and the region are in dire need of solutions that cut across disciplines and sectors,” said Khuri. “Whether it’s mitigating water scarcity, addressing health disparities, or understanding the shifting dynamics of migration and labor, we need the kind of insight that computing and data science can provide ... May this school become a new observatory for our age. May it turn its lens to the complex patterns of society, the data hidden in plain sight, and the frontiers of knowledge that still lie ahead.”

The event included a presentation by AUB Provost Dr. Zaher Dawy and Dr. Jihad Touma, the school’s founding director, as well as a team of AUB researchers who presented on a pioneering experiment to develop “large percussion models.” A reception followed to conclude the project launching event.

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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 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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