



**AMERICAN
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OF BEIRUT**

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The Suliman S. Olayan School of Business at the American University of Beirut Celebrates 125 Years of Business Education

The Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) at the American University of Beirut (AUB) celebrated 125 years of business education, marking a historic milestone for the university and the region. The day-long celebration brought together members of the AUB community and distinguished guests in a series of events that honored the school's legacy while looking forward to its future.

The festivities began with a morning of student-led activities, filling the OSB campus with music, games, food, and spirited engagement. Addressing the students, Professor Yusuf Sidani, dean of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business, emphasized their role in shaping the future of the school. "We have thousands of students who graduated from the school of business. You should take pride in your school. We've been celebrating the past, but today we want to talk about the future. This is a school about the future, and the future holds excellent things to come."

Yara Haddad, marketing manager at OSB, welcomed guests, faculty, alumni, students, and staff, and extended special thanks to Spinneys, 7 Management, Middle East Airlines, SACO, and Bliss Hall for their invaluable support in bringing the milestone celebration to life.

Representing Dr. Fadlo Khuri, AUB president, Mary Jaber, vice president for administration and chief of staff at the university, delivered the official welcome address. She highlighted the long and distinguished history of business education at AUB, tracing its roots to 1900. "Over the decades, this foundation grew steadily, first into a department and then into a dedicated school of business in 2000. The school has established itself as a center of academic and practical innovation. Its global accreditation and recognition further affirm AUB's dedication as a leading institution of higher education in the region."

Following the welcome, Dean Sidani reflected on the role and purpose of business education in today's world. He shared that he is often asked about the legitimacy of business schools and their place within the broader university mission. In response, he emphasized that business schools serve a vital role beyond technical training: they shape and strengthen the character of their students. "This is where OSB, I believe, is very important," he noted.

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

The evening program then shifted toward reflection and dialogue, beginning with a project recap presented by Dr. Makram Rabah, assistant professor of history at the AUB Faculty of Arts and Sciences; and Charles Al-Hayek, researcher, who led the OSB archive team. Over the past year, their research uncovered more than 2,000 historical documents that shed new light on the evolution of business education at AUB. Guests received a commemorative booklet detailing the school's rich history, connecting its origins to the present milestone.

Building on this historical perspective, the spotlight turned to the future through a panel discussion titled "From Legacy to Leadership." Moderated by Dr. Imad Bou-Hamad, associate professor at OSB, the panel brought together distinguished alumni who have made their mark as changemakers in business and society: Rabih Fakhreddine, 7 Management founder and group CEO; Yasmine Barbir, Fusion Minds AI co-founder and chief impact officer; Jean Nakhoul, journalist, MTV producer, and founder of Statify; and Dalia Jubaili, AUB Nature Conservation Center vice president and Jubaili Bros board member.

The panelists reflected on their experiences at AUB and the values that shaped their leadership. Fakhreddine recalled how his early event management experiences at AUB laid the foundation for his career in hospitality and entertainment. "I know for a fact that I started creating events when I was at AUB. I was very active in the student body as well, and this helped a lot in shaping me," he said.

Nakhoul spoke about his decision to pursue an MBA despite two decades of professional experience in the media industry, adding that his AUB experience allowed him to amplify his impact. Barbir highlighted the importance of values in leadership, noting that it is "the strong values that were seeded in us, coupled with our upbringing that shapes us." Jubaili drew on the metaphor of the Chinese bamboo tree to illustrate her growth at AUB. "For the first four years, nothing happens above ground; in the fifth year, a tiny shoot finally breaks through the soil. To me this is leadership. You invest wisely, you build the values, and then you see the results. This to me is OSB. I went in curious, eager, and OSB gave me the roots," she said.

Following the panel, guests gathered for the gala dinner, where Dean Sidani delivered a keynote speech on the significance of this milestone. "There are many reasons why we embarked on this journey: to learn from the past, to thank our predecessors, to reflect on both successes and failures, and to connect our past to our future," he said. "Tonight, I want to focus on one reason. One that speaks to the heart of this great institution. We cannot imagine Lebanon, or Beirut, without AUB."

Sidani honored the event supporters with tokens of appreciation, then guests viewed a [commemorative video](#) capturing OSB's legacy and future vision. The evening also featured portraits of 125 OSB alumni who have shaped the business industry, celebrating the global impact of the school's graduates, and concluded with a special musical performance by renowned singer Marc Hatem.

The celebration served as a powerful reflection on OSB's 125-year journey and a reaffirmation of its mission to educate, inspire, and empower future leaders of business in Lebanon, the region, and beyond.

For more information about OSB's 125th anniversary celebrations, please visit the [OSB website](#).

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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

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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