



AMERICAN
UNIVERSITY
OF BEIRUT

Office of
Research

NEWSLETTER RESEARCH@AUB MATTERS

ISSUE NO 4 / JUNE 2026



Mariam El Hajj - Flowers at Sunset

Artwork by Next Step Students at AUB



Welcome Message

Dear members of the AUB community,

This fourth issue of **Research@AUB Matters** reflects how AUB's research community navigated a period marked by war and uncertainty. The community continued to advance ideas, build collaborations, and sustain critical research activities.

From inter-campus and SmART internally funded projects to AI in research training, faculty lab visits, and capacity building initiatives, this issue highlights a research ecosystem that remains adaptive, impactful, and forward-looking.

I thank our faculty, research staff, students, administrators, and Office of Research team members for their continued dedication to **#AUBResearch** mission.



Research Updates



LEVERAGING INTER-CAMPUS NETWORKS FOR KNOWLEDGE ADVANCEMENT (LINK) STIMULUS FUNDING AWARDEES

The LINK stimulus funding call invited joint research submissions by researchers from AUB and AUB Mediterraneo to strengthen collaboration and connections between the two campuses. Recipients are expected to later pursue external funding opportunities, particularly from the European Commission.

PI AUB	Faculty	PI AUB Mediterraneo	Faculty	Title
Mohammed Merhabi	OSB	Yaozhi Zhang	FoB	"I Miss You, So I Create You": Responsible Marketing for Generative AI-Enabled Digital Resurrection
Martin Keulertz	FAFS	Roland Riachi	FAS	A Political Ecology of Wine in Lebanon and Cyprus: Terroir and the Agrarian Transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean
Anies Al-Hroub	FAS	Georgios Charalambous	FAS	AI-Supported Cross-Linguistic Dynamic Diagnostics of Dyscalculia and Hidden Mathematical Giftedness
Bilal Kaddouh	MSFEA	Rafael Papallas	FAS	Autonomous Robotic Inspection and Validation for Construction Environments (ARIVE)
Nadia Bou Ali	FAS	Ana Ilievska	FAS	Convivial Machines: Automation, Translation, and the Human in Heterogeneous Societies (COMETS)
Bacel Maddah	MSFEA	Noura El Hassan	FoE	Optimizing Epidemic Preparedness: A Generalized Markov Decision Process Framework
Ali Chehab	MSFEA	Zinon Zinonos	FAS	PROACT-LoRa: Proactive Climate- and Interference-Aware Control for Smart City LoRaWAN Networks
Nikolas Kosmatopoulos	FAS	Leandros Fischer	FAS	The Mediterranean East as an ecology of maritime commons
Karim Zahed	MSFEA	Claudia Franze	FoE	NeuroTwin-Sport: An Integrated Wearable and Digital Twin Framework for Early Physiological Risk Monitoring in Combat Sports



SCIENCES MEET ARTS & HUMANITIES (SmART) STIMULUS FUNDING PROGRAM AWARDEES

The findings of the awarded projects are expected to be presented at the Sciences meet Arts & Humanities (SmART) international conference that is being planned at AUB for Spring 2027.

Lead PI	Faculty	CoPIs	Title
Joseph Bakarji	MSFEA	Joelle Khoury (Fine Arts & Art History, FAS)	Algorithmic and Generative Music Creation With Co-Design of Mechatronic Interfaces
Fatima Abu Salem	FAS	Shady Elbassuoni (Computer Science, FAS) Hans D. Muller (Philosophy, FAS) Ana Ilievska (Global Liberal Arts, AUB-M)	On the obsolescence of hate speech detection frameworks and Multi-Agent Systems for risk-of-harm speech detection
Joelle Abi Rached	FM	Robert Myers (English, FAS) Lucien Bou Rjeily (English, FAS) Beatrice Khater (Family Medicine, FM) Marianne Nimah Majdalani (Pediatrics and Adolescent Medicine, FM)	Staging End-of-Life Care: Communication and Dilemmas through Wit
Amer Mouawad	FAS	Khaled Yassine (Resident Musician, CAMS)	Large percussion models: From the Lebanese derbakeh to real-time co-improvisation and intelligent augmentation
Nadia Bou Ali	FAS	Ana Ilievska (AUB-M)	Convivial Machines: Automation, Translation, and the Human in Heterogeneous Societies (COMETS)

UPDATES ON RESEARCH RELEVANT GUIDELINES & POLICIES

- AUB guidelines for the Use of Generative AI in Research
- Guidelines for Listing AUB Affiliation in Research Publications, Grant Submissions, and Collaborative Agreements
- Guidelines for Non-professorial Track Affiliations in Support of Research at AUB

Pivot-RP SUPPORT

The Office of Research offers one-on-one training sessions on Pivot-RP for AUB faculty members and the research community to help identify funding opportunities and optimize research funding searches. To book a session, please contact the grant development officer, Yasmina El Achkar.

Pivot-RP

Contact us

World Health Organization (WHO) Collaborating Centers at AUB

AUB stands among the leading institutions in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, with one of the highest numbers of WHO Collaborating Centers hosted by a single university in the region.



Center for Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice (K2P)

[Read more](#)



Center for Osteoporosis & Metabolic Bone Disorders

[Read more](#)



Center for Reference and Research on Bacterial Pathogens

[Read more](#)



Center for Bioethics and Professionalism Program

[Read more](#)



Center for Family Practice

[Read more](#)

Research Events



AMERICAN
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FACULTY OF MEDICINE



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OFFICE OF
RESEARCH

CRI SERIES:
AI TOOLS FOR RESEARCH

THURSDAYS, APRIL 2026, FROM 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM (BEIRUT TIME)

OFFERED ONLINE VIA ZOOM

SESSION 1 | APRIL 9

AUB GUIDELINES OF AI USE IN RESEARCH
• ZEINA HARKOUS, PhD

OVERVIEW OF AI INTEGRATION IN RESEARCH
• MARIETTE AWAD, PhD

SESSION 2 | APRIL 16

RESEARCH IDEATION
• LILI ZEIDAN, BS, MPH • MACY ZAATAR, Pharm D, MSc

SESSION 3 | APRIL 23

LITERATURE REVIEW
• OLA EL ZEIN, PhD • RAZAN YOUSSEF, BS, MSc

SESSION 4 | APRIL 30

STATISTICS USING AI TOOLS
• SOUHA FARES, PhD • MAHA MAKKI, MSc

AI TOOLS FOR RESEARCH

A four-part series, launched by the Office of Research at AUB in collaboration with the Clinical Research Institute (CRI), explored how AI can support research workflows, including ideation, literature review, data synthesis, and statistical analysis.

INSIGHTS & PREPAREDNESS FOR RESEARCH CONTINUITY

In April 2026, the Clinical Research Institute hosted a session focused on practical strategies for sustaining medical and health research during crises. As part of the program, May Awar Ammar from the Office of Research delivered a presentation titled “Safeguarding Research: A Roadmap for Communication and Operational Continuity.”



AMERICAN
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FACULTY OF MEDICINE



CLINICAL
RESEARCH
INSTITUTE

INSIGHTS AND PREPAREDNESS
FOR RESEARCH CONTINUITY

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2026 | 12:00 PM TO 1:30 PM (BEIRUT TIME)



EIC PROPOSALS & AI TOOLS ACADEMY

Across May & June 2026, May Awar Ammar and Alaa Mounzer from the Office of Research participated in the EIC Proposals & AI Tools Academy and engaged in webinars focused on connecting diaspora entrepreneurs and local innovators, as well as sessions on EIC proposals and AI tools designed to support universities and research centers in accessing EU funding.



“Finding Funding Opportunities” POSTDOCTORAL WORKSHOP

The Office of Research organized a workshop for postdoctoral researchers on “Finding Funding Opportunities,” aimed at strengthening participants’ ability to identify and secure research funding.

[Read more](#)



FACULTY LAB VISITS INITIATIVE

The Office of Research has launched the Faculty Lab Visit Initiative, a new effort aimed at strengthening engagement with AUB’s research community. The first visit under the initiative took place at the laboratory of Dr. Hiba El Hajj.

[Read more](#)



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH GRANTS ADMINISTRATORS COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (UrCOP)

On 27 April 2026, the Office of Research organized an intensive workshop on sponsored programs management, offering participants practical insights into the lifecycle of grants from inception to closeout. The workshop was followed by a hands-on training session with the grants management team.

[Read more](#)

Office of Research News

The Office of Research launched a Quality Assurance/Quality Improvement (QA/QI) initiative aimed at enhancing the operational efficiency and quality of the services offered. A special thank you goes to Abir Sinno, Director of Strategic Initiatives and Continuous Improvement at Olayan School of Business (OSB), for leading this effort. Feedback received from multiple sources was highly positive and reflected strong satisfaction and appreciation for the team's work and commitment.



MEET THE INSTITUTIONAL PROJECTS & COMPLIANCE TEAM



Makram Halawani

director

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Makram oversees institutional funding portfolios, grants operations, and compliance frameworks, with managing major grants and scholarship programs supported by organizations such as USAID and the U.S. Department of State. With over 15 years of experience, his work focuses on strengthening institutional funding strategy, operational excellence, and long-term organizational sustainability.



Saada Dakroub

grants officer

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

With a background in science and experience in the health sector, she joined AUB in 2018 as a Medical Staff Officer. She supported the implementation of externally funded institutional response projects, including major COVID-19 and crisis medical response initiatives. Her work later evolved into grants management, where she now manages a portfolio exceeding \$130 million in scholarship grants and institutional projects, bringing scientific, administrative, and compliance expertise to her role.



Jamal Itani

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

With over 20 years of experience in corporate banking, business development, and relationship management, Jamal joined the AUB Office of Research in May 2024. She holds an MBA from ESA (ESCP-EAP) and a B.S. in Computer Science from LAU. In her role, Jamal manages a diverse portfolio of grants while ensuring compliance with funder and institutional policies. Known for her communication and strategic mindset, she liaises seamlessly between principal investigators, funders, and university administration.

grants officer



Ani Sandra Barikian administrator

CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

Ani brings 19 years of experience in retail and investment banking, with strong expertise in customer relations, financial operations, and team supervision. She holds a Master's degree in Finance and is fluent in four languages. She currently serves as a Grant Module Administrator, where she manages grant-related system processes and financial administration. Her work includes handling grant account setup, budget modifications, and other award management system requests.

grants module

TEAM ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS



AI Starter Kit Professional Certificate

Team members are completing an eight-week certificate program on AI applications offered by the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) in partnership with Zaka AI.

Participation in EARMA Conference 2026 in Utrecht, Netherlands

Yasmina El Achkar, grant development officer at the Office of Research attended the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA) Conference in Utrecht, Netherlands in May 2026, a leading international gathering for research management professionals with more than 1,800 attendees.

[Read more](#)



THANK YOU FOR YOUR FEEDBACK

The Office of Research has launched a feedback initiative to better understand and improve the services we provide to our research community.

Your feedback is highly valued. Please scan the QR code to share your anonymous feedback.



Here's a glimpse of what our community have shared so far.



“Thank you very much for your prompt follow-up and for preparing the subcontract draft so efficiently — I truly appreciate your efforts in keeping this process moving.

“Thank you for your outstanding efforts over the past few days. You have been a true star, and we sincerely appreciate your dedication and support.”



“Very timely + useful training, especially for new staff or personnel shifting from pre to post award or vice versa. Thanks!”

“The Research Development team was very helpful with all the guiding and fast response.”



Editorial Team

Antonio Bakhos, editor-in-chief

Contact Us

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