

One minute speech:

When I was five years old my family lived in Beirut and I attended a nursery school run by AUB for faculty children. When house guests asked me if I was going to school, I replied proudly: “Yes, I’m going to AUB!” I guess I was precocious, but not that precocious. My parents met at AUB in the 1930s where my father was teaching and researching and my mother was teaching at American Community School, so I owe my very existence to the intellectual and artistic magnetism that drew my parents to this beautiful place. So for over three quarters of a century I have considered AUB my alma mater, my academic home. I was honored to be a visiting professor here in 2011, and was very impressed with the students and faculty I worked with then, and with the outstanding sense of mission here. Academic freedom requires political freedom, and political freedom requires constant informed attention if it is to survive at all. We are counting on AUB to continue its traditions, spreading its wisdom and tolerance far and wide and educating the leaders of tomorrow’s democracies as it has done for over 150 years. I am grateful for this honor, and proud to say that, like you, I now *finally* have a degree from AUB.