American University of Beirut

Rafic Hariri School of Nursing Inauguration

Address of VP/Dean Nadim Cortas

February 19, 2009

Excellencies:

- Minister of Health, Dr. Mohamad Khalife, representing Prime Minister Fouad Siniora,
- Vice President of Parliament, MP. Farid Makari,
- Minister of Education and Higher Learning, MP Bahiya Hariri,
- Last but not least, MP Saad Hariri, trustee of AUB, who carries the late Rafic Hariri’s torch of philanthropy and is here with other members of the Hariri family,
- Chairman and Members of the Board of Trustees of AUB,
- President Peter Dorman,
- Distinguished guests and friends:

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to welcome you all to this inaugural ceremony of the Rafic Hariri Building and the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing. This is an exciting day for all of us at the Faculty of Medicine that includes the School of Nursing and the Medical Center, for whom this state of the art building is a timely dream-come-true. It is not surprising that this dream is transformed to a reality through the generosity of an open handed visionary, MP Saad Hariri. The generosity of the Hariri family is boundless in its support for AUB, Lebanon and its people.

The Rafic Hariri Building, houses in addition to the School of Nursing, a state of the art shared skills and simulation facility that occupies a whole floor, and a multipurpose auditorium.

After the establishment of the Medical School in 1867, the founding of the School of Nursing in 1905 at the same time as the establishment of a 200 bed hospital was a pioneering endeavor that formed the first Medical Center in the region and created the
necessary synergy for excellence in both theoretical and practical nursing education. Today, the Rafic Hariri building magnifies greatly this synergy by bringing together the School of Nursing that made a monumental impact throughout the evolution of the nursing profession in Lebanon with the prestigious Clinical and Professional Development Center of the Nursing Service that greatly improved the quality and retention of nurses in Lebanon, all within a vibrant Medical Center.

Allow me here to pay homage to the founders, past and present directors, faculty, staff and students of the School of Nursing and of the Nursing Service at AUBMC who have been so much a part of all the developments and achievements since their inception. We are where we are today because of all of them. I applaud our nurses who have always been at the front lines of care at all times, and their dedication to their profession and their compassion for their patients exemplify the best of our institution’s spirit.

As you all know there is a great shortage of nurses in Lebanon and world wide. The most important determinant of this shortage is the demanding and stressful environment that a young new graduate has to deal with. It does not take more than a few years before a nurse leaves because of the nature of the profession. 55% of nurses at AUBMC are less than 3 years on the job and this is not unique to AUBMC. In Medicine, this situation existed in the past and is now attenuated by the development of formal post graduate residency programs that helped young graduates in building the necessary skills and stamina for the professional career. A similar “residency” program is starting to develop for nursing. AUBMC started two years ago with a one year nursing residency program which already reduced the departures from the first year on the job by half (from 20% to 10%). Today, we are on the cusp of a bright future. The Rafic Hariri building with all its components will provide AUBMC with the capabilities of bringing in graduates from AUB and other nursing schools into its post graduate programs that will markedly strengthen the Nursing profession. It will also, energize the faculty of the School of Nursing to provide the academic environment and support needed, for a select group of students, to pursue more advanced nursing or hybrid graduate education.
MP Hariri, I thank you wholeheartedly and I assure you that AUB with its commitment to education and health care will make you proud of this gift. I am confident that this gift will bring a new energy and help AUB to graduate nurses, better prepared for their careers; and to create programs for post graduate clinical training (residencies) to improve their skills and readiness to face a very demanding and stressful profession. The impact of this generous gift will greatly improve healthcare and the wellbeing of our society for generations to come.

Thank you all.