



## Five Years and Counting: USAID Provides Vital Support to LAU Students

Over 300 Lebanese students with limited means from all over the country have enjoyed the benefit of an LAU education courtesy of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID)-University Scholarship Program (USP).

Now, five years after the LAU enrollment team set out to first introduce the program and the university at each one of Lebanon's 250 public schools with tertiary education, they are at it again for a fifth time, thanks to the support of the American people through USAID.

"We have received over \$33 million in grants over five years, since USP first launched in 2010," explained

Dr. Elise Salem, Vice President for Student Development and Enrollment Management at LAU. "I was fairly new to LAU when the first USP call for proposals was announced and I was so excited because it reflected exactly LAU's mission—to help the underprivileged gain a strong education," said Dr. Salem, adding that of all her achievements, USP is among those making her most proud.

The first intake of USP students in 2011 included 52 students, 18 of whom have since graduated. "They go back to their home towns and are treated like celebrities. It's like they've won the lottery. When we launched the program, many of these small rural schools were

skeptical and didn't believe us. It seemed too good to be true. Over 300 students later, they are all eager to see their students selected."

Selection is based completely on merit and criteria agreed upon between USAID and LAU. "In the first year we were opting to select one girl and one boy from each of the districts of Lebanon," said Dr. Salem, laughing as she recalls how difficult it was. "The aim was to ensure that women were not marginalized, but we had far more difficulty finding strong male candidates. The women were very impressive and applied in great numbers."

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## Alumni Spotlight: Elizabeth Apkaria Agbabian



We recently received a letter from Elizabeth Apkaria Agbabian, an alumna from Beirut College for Women, which later became Lebanese American University in 1994. From its inception as the American School for Girls in 1835, LAU has a long and proud tradition of educating women and future female leaders in the Middle East and throughout the world.

We would like to share with you Elizabeth's letter, displaying her illustrious professional career and personal accomplishments. Her achievements are a testament to LAU students' desire for lifelong learning and community engagement.

I am sending my graduation picture from Beirut College for Women showing me receiving my diploma from President William Stoltzsfus and Academic Dean Rhoda Orme during the 1950 Commencement ceremony (See right).

I continued my studies at Schaufler College in Cleveland (now part of Oberlin College) in Social Welfare and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1952. I married Mihran Agbabian, an engineer and professor at the University of Southern California, who in 1991 became the Founding President of the American University of Armenia, one of the American accredited universities abroad. I have been active as a volunteer member of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Affiliates and have participated in charitable and educational organizations in my community in the United States and Armenia.

In 2006, I received the prestigious Ellis Island Medal of Honor, recognized by the U.S. Government, which is awarded to U.S. citizens from various ethnic backgrounds who "exemplify outstanding qualities in both their personal and professional lives, while continuing to preserve the richness of their particular heritage" (See above for photo).

I am currently involved in development projects for the American University of Armenia and the Institute of Armenian Studies at the University of Southern California. I enjoy keeping up to date with LAU's achievements, accomplishments, and future prospects by reading LAU Matters and LAU Magazine, and I am proud of being an alumna of the University.



### ON OUR WEBSITES

Visit the LAU Matters website for additional information on events, alumni news and updates:  
[www.laumatters.org](http://www.laumatters.org)

Check out the website for *Fulfilling the Promise: LAU Campaign for Academic Excellence*:  
[campaign.lau.edu.lb](http://campaign.lau.edu.lb)

If you would like to make a donation to *Fulfilling the Promise* please visit:  
[campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate](http://campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate)

The *Fulfilling the Promise* website includes:

- Updated information about the campaign
- Its goals and progress
- Additional information, profiles and articles not included in the newsletter

Be sure to visit often for the latest news and updates.

#### LAU matters

*LAU Matters* is published quarterly by the New York Headquarters and Academic Center of Lebanese American University and distributed free of charge to alumni, friends and supporters of the university in North America.

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From left to right: 1) Attendees at LAU Alumnus Dr. Rand Ghayad's distinguished lecture, "The Jobless Trap in the U.S.," on October 30. 2) Dr. Shahla Haeri's book discussion, "Law of Desire: Temporary Marriage in Shi'i Iran," on November 6. 3) Drs. Shahla Haeri and Lina Beydoun after the book discussion.

## Center for Learning

In July, the New York Headquarters and Academic Center welcomed Dr. Lina Beydoun as the Academic Executive Director of the LAU NY Academic Center. Dr. Beydoun is responsible for managing all of the center's academic programs, including courses, lecture series, and annual conferences, as well as collaborative efforts with other academic institutions and professional organizations in the United States.

"I envision the center to be a place of interaction for students, faculty and professionals from American and Middle East institutions in order to fulfill LAU's mission of cross-cultural understanding," said Dr. Beydoun.

Dr. Beydoun has already held four public events at the center and brought prominent Arab and non-Arab intellectuals, academics and notable LAU alumni to speak to alumni, supporters, board members, faculty, staff and students. These events have also attracted people from outside of the university

including diplomats, professionals from various organizations such as the United Nations, and media personnel.

"The center showcases the work of scholars and experts on cutting-edge issues. These events also offer an opportunity for networking and for LAU to gain more visibility," explained Dr. Beydoun.

In 2015, the center plans to have a series of events in collaboration with other institutions. In partnership with the Arab Bankers Association of North America (ABANA), the center will provide a training workshop on business in the Middle East and on Islamic banking and finance. In collaboration with the American University of Beirut (AUB), the center will host a series of events in April 2015 on stereotyping, featuring distinguished lectures by Dr. Jack Shaheen, author of "Reel Bad Arabs," as well as by LAU and AUB faculty.

Currently, the center offers Arabic language classes, a Model United

Nations intensive summer course, and a summer Global Outreach and Leadership Development program for LAU and high school students. In the summer of 2015, the center will launch intensive classes and workshops on Lebanese politics, the Syrian refugee crisis, and architecture, for both LAU and non-LAU participants. Next fall, the center will hold a conference on women and leadership in the Middle East.

Prior to joining LAU, Dr. Beydoun had ten years of teaching and research experience at various universities and a think tank. She was a Brookings Doha Center and Qatar University joint fellow, assistant professor of sociology at Adelphi University, faculty director in the Center for Global Education at George Mason University, and lecturer in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies at Wayne State University.

To learn more about the LAU NY Academic Center, please visit  
[www.lau.edu/nyac](http://www.lau.edu/nyac)

# LAU events

From top to bottom: 1) LAU President Joseph G. Jabbara and LAU Chairman of the Board of Trustees Dr. Paul Boulos in front of the recently installed "Founder's Wall." 2) LAU's Board of Trustees in front of the New York Headquarters and Academic Center. 3-4) The Chairman's Dinner at the Metropolitan Club on September 18.



## New York Board of Trustees Meeting and Chairman's Dinner



### UPCOMING EVENTS

**January 2015:** TGIF at the Museum of Modern Art - New York/New Jersey Alumni Chapter

**January 31:** Lecture and Book Signing with Anthony Rabih Ballout and Dr. Tali Bashour - Northern California Alumni Chapter

**March 2015:** Spring Dinner - Toronto Alumni Chapter

**March 26-27:** Board of Trustees Meeting - New York Headquarters and Academic Center

**April 2015:** Spring Dinner - Detroit Alumni Chapter

**May 11:** LAU Annual New York Gala - New York Athletic Club

**Watch your email for more information on upcoming events!**

If your alumni chapter has an upcoming event, please contact:

**Ed Shiner, Director of Alumni and Special Projects**  
(646) 255-1099, ed.shiner@lau.edu

## Washington, D.C.



The Washington, D.C. Alumni Chapter hosted a screening of "Blind Intersections" on November 2. Previous LAU President, Dr. Riyad Nassar (center), who was visiting family in D.C., was present along with the entire chapter committee. Over 130 people were in attendance at this fundraiser for LAU's scholarship fund.

## Houston



On September 24, while visiting Houston, Dr. Jabbara held a dinner gathering with LAU's pharmacy students doing clinical rotations at Methodist Hospital. VP for University Advancement, Marla Rice-Evans, representatives of Methodist Hospital, other LAU alumni and friends also attended.

## Chicago



The newly formed Chicago Alumni Chapter gathered on September 27 at Cucina Biagio Ristorante in Chicago. Dr. Jabbara, Marla Rice-Evans, Bob Hollback, Assistant Vice President of Development for North America, and Ed Shiner, Director of Alumni and Special Projects also attended the event.

## Toronto



The Toronto Alumni Chapter held its annual Family Picnic in the park on September 7 at Adams Park with over 150 in attendance. This is one of three annual events held by the alumni chapter, which raises funds for LAU's scholarships.

## Detroit



From top to bottom: 1) The Detroit Alumni Chapter held a dinner gathering and planning session on November 1 at Alexandria Mediterranean Restaurant in Novi, Michigan. 2) Fr. Alfred Badawi (second from right) hosted LAU alumni and friends for a dinner at La Saj on October 3 while Marla Rice-Evans and Bob Hollback were in Detroit meeting key alumni and donors. Their trip was featured in The Lebanese Examiner. Photo credit Charlie Kadado (at far left).

## Southern California



The Southern California Alumni Chapter coordinated the welcome reception at the House of Lebanon in conjunction with the "Beyond Borders" Art Exhibition on October 18. (From left to right) Leila Khoury Blackstone '67, Doris Siksik Muna '59, Marla Rice-Evans, Ed Shiner and Susan Qaundah '66.

Eva Farha (center) with Dr. Boulos (left) and Dr. Jabbra (right).



## Giving Back Three Times as Much to Your Alma Mater

This fall, LAU North American alumni had the opportunity to triple their donation to LAU! Alumna Eva Kotite Farha, along with the Development Office at New York Headquarters and Academic Center, created a matching grant challenge for alumni. For every dollar donated by our alumni of North America, Eva doubled that donation. Alumni giving and Eva's matching gifts have resulted in over \$10,000 to LAU.

"The matching grant challenge is a great way to encourage alumni to start giving and continue giving to their alma mater. In our region, the only way people can survive is through education. I believe in educating our kids and future generations. My heart is in helping students and the

needy, especially through financial aid," said Eva.

Eva has been a long-time supporter of LAU. In the 1990s, she became a member of LAU's Board of Trustees and is one of the few alumni members on the board. She also established a scholarship for needy students and an endowment specifically for students coming from her hometown, Merjayoun, in Lebanon.

Eva graduated from LAU — then Beirut University College (BUC) — in 1974, majoring in mathematics and minoring in computer science. She attended BUC when it made the transition from an all-women's school to a co-educational institution. In 1976, she married Dr. Peter Farha and moved to the United States.

They lived in Kansas for three years and then moved to Houston in 1979, where they live today. Eva is passionate about issues focused on education, women and the Middle East. She was involved with the United Nations Arab American Women Organization, and was on the board of the Arab American Foundation at Rice University. She is currently on the boards of Teach for Lebanon and Methodist Hospital.

"Through the matching grant challenge, I hope my fellow alumni and I can help provide an opportunity for bright students to attend LAU and obtain the world-class, enriching education all of us received from LAU."

To make a donation to LAU, please visit [campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate](https://campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate)

## LAU's Scholarship Program Now In Its Fifth Year

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Around 1,000 students apply each year to join the program; with approximately 200 making it to the interview stage. "The interview is very important. You get so many amazing kids and their personalities have to be receptive to what's going to be required of them in this grant. It's not just academics."

All the students lucky enough to gain one of the 40-60 places offered each year have one thing in common. It is not their religion or cultural background, nor their proficiency in English or their choice of major. It is their dedication to civic engagement, which is further nurtured through the program.

"As part of their time at LAU, the students have to run a project in their own village. They gain a lot of support from the Outreach and Civic Engagement Office at LAU, who from day one offer training and workshops to help the students settle into university life and life away from home," said Dr. Salem.

The workshops include those addressing sectarian differences and conflict resolution, "and many say this was the first time they were living and working on projects with someone from another sect. There is a strong agenda for citizenship building and it continues throughout the four years," explained Dr. Salem, who writes project proposals every year to USAID.



### One Gift. Every Year. Any Amount.

Once a year, make a gift of any amount to the LAU Annual Fund. Every gift makes a difference—especially yours.

Visit [campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate](https://campaign.lau.edu.lb/donate) to make a gift now.

## Thank You For Your Generous Support

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This list includes donors from North America who have graciously supported LAU during the third quarter of 2014.

From top to bottom: 1) The Audi family, from left to right: Alfred Audi, Aminy Audi, Edward Audi, Andrea Audi, and Carolyn Audi Fischli. 2) Edward and Aminy accepting an award for Alfred Audi's induction into the American Furniture Hall of Fame in 2008.



### Where do you live and what do you do?

I live in Syracuse, New York, about 250 miles northwest of New York City. I am CEO and Chairman of the Board of L. & J.G. Stickley, a manufacturer and retailer of high-end furniture since 1900. My late husband, Alfred Audi, and I purchased the company in 1974 and led this company from 25 employees and an antiquated factory, to our current success: three state-of-the-art manufacturing facilities and more than 1400 wonderful employees. When my husband passed in 2007, our son Edward became responsible for all manufacturing operations at Stickley.

### When did you attend LAU and what courses did you study while you were there?

When I attended LAU in the early 1960s it was known as BCW – Beirut College for Women. It was still an all-girls school with only one campus in Beirut. I studied Arabic Literature, which to this day remains one of my favorite subjects. It was also of great help to me when I worked as a free-lance writer and reporter for the Voice of America.

### How do you continue to stay involved with LAU in North America?

The LAU Alumni Association has been a very good source of information and

connection for me. Several of my nieces and nephews attended LAU, and we often compare notes on our times at LAU and the life-long lessons we learned there. It has been gratifying to witness the growth and transformation of LAU, especially the Byblos campus. At a time of such turmoil in the Middle East, LAU remains a beacon of hope for embracing diversity, preparing students to meet the challenges of an ever-changing world and contributing as a major economic engine that supports the Lebanese economy.

# Aminy Inati Audi