

# A STUDENT-CENTERED ENVIRONMENT

Caring for and educating the “whole person” stands at the very heart of LAU’s identity. Our university offices provide students with a constantly expanding range of advising and counseling services, beginning as early as the recruitment and admissions process and continuing all the way through graduation. Meanwhile, a plethora of student organizations nurtures their members’ skills and abilities through extracurricular activities. This student-centered approach has led directly to LAU increasing enrollment even in these difficult times. Here, we give only a glimpse of what our students experience throughout their time at LAU.

In 2016, a new Student Services division within the Deans of Students offices was created to strengthen LAU’s recruitment, retention and employability record, an initiative that is already yielding positive results. To take just one example, a new paperless admissions portal was fully operationalized.



## SOME STATISTICS:

- In 2016-2017, our enrollment increased by 2 percent
- LAU’s retention rate stands at an exceptional 90 percent
- SAT scores of entering students increased by 1.3 percent
- Fall 2016 saw a steep 16 percent increase in undergraduate applications

## STUDENT PROFILE AS OF FALL 2016:

- Gender: 51 percent female and 49 percent male
- Nationality: 19 percent non-Lebanese and 81 percent Lebanese
- Undergraduates: 94 percent full time, 6 percent part time
- Graduates: 25 percent full time, 75 percent part time
- Professional: 100 percent full-time

## A. Financial Aid

The university's efforts to attract the best and brightest young people from across Lebanon and beyond are carried out in tandem with a commitment to ensuring that all accepted applicants can afford an LAU education. Indeed, at the core of LAU's student-centered educational mission lies the obligation to ensure that each and every student graduates from the university with minimal debt, if any.

This past year, applications for Financial Aid increased by eight percent, while the number of merit-based awards given out rose by 12 percent. This significant growth is a telling indicator of LAU's success in attracting high academic achievers.

In total, 45 percent of LAU undergraduates received some form of aid from the university, whether need-based or merit-based.

As of fall 2016, 241 students across five cohorts were supported with full scholarships and stipends through the USAID USP grant program. Meanwhile, MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders grants facilitated the study of 67 young scholars from — three cohorts — across the MENA region.

Type of Aid	Number of recipients		
	Fall 2015	Fall 2016	% Change
Entrance Scholarships	232	250	8%
BACC Scholarships	37	87	135%
Honor Scholarships	622	698	12%
Merit Scholarships	69	77	12%
NCSR 100% Scholarship	12	12	0%
Athletic Scholarships	78	100	28%
Talent Awards	113	158	40%
Work Aid	2,194	2,391	9%
LAU Grants	1,990	2,174	9%
LAU Loans	1,381	1,467	6%
MEPI-Tomorrow's Leaders	53	67	26%
USP	253	241	-5%
Pharm.D. (Grants & Scholarships)	16	16	0%
Medical Student Grants	106	108	2%
Medical Student Merit Scholarships	21	23	10%
FAFSA Loans	35	40	14%
Restricted Donors Grants	113	199	76%
<b>Total Financial Aid &amp; Scholarship recipients headcount</b>	<b>3,124</b>	<b>3,501</b>	<b>12%</b>

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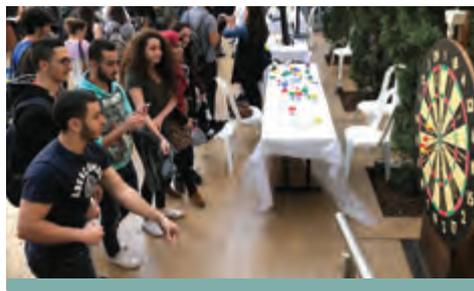
In addition to scholarships, LAU has worked with the local banking industry to make sure that students have access to favorable terms should they need to take out loans to pay for their education. For example, this past year the university initiated an agreement with Fransabank to offer needy students the opportunity to apply for an educational bank loan to subsidize tuition fees. The interest charges shall be borne by LAU during the student loan eligibility period. Offered in spring 2017 to a small number of applicants, the program will be offered to all interested students as of fall 2017, gradually replacing existing LAU institutional loans.

### B. Mentoring Our Charges

Advisors from the Deans of Students' Offices on both campuses spent 2016-2017 advising close to 2,000 undergraduates on topics as wide-ranging as changing majors, SAT requirements, and preventing withdrawal, among others. In fall 2016, the Learning Center – a student tutoring service – was launched in Beirut, following the successful implementation of an analogous center in Byblos last year. Hundreds of students on both campuses were provided with counseling for various mental health, family, addictions and academic issues. More than 2,000 students benefitted from services provided by the Health Services Offices.



Healthy Vision Day



Beat Your Stress



World AIDS Day



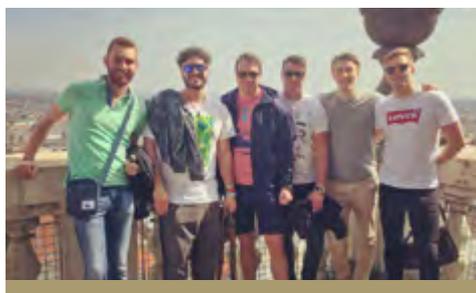
First Aid and CPR/AED Training

In coordination with the IT Department, LAU's Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) unit introduced LAU's students, faculty and staff to STARFISH, a retention software that helps identify students at risk, simplifies communication between all members of the LAU community, and optimizes how student success resources are utilized and managed.

## C. Citizens of the World

Complementing and working together with the exchange programs available through LAU's seven constituent schools, SDEM's recently established Office of International Services (OIS) has hit the ground running, effectively promoting and strengthening student exchange programs with more than 40 partner institutions worldwide. Dozens of LAU students spent semesters abroad in exciting international cities from Copenhagen, London, Porto, and Berkeley to New York, immersed in the intellectual environments of some of the world's best universities.

This year, LAU opened up new opportunities for exchange by signing a partnership with the Coimbra group of Brazilian universities and as a result with 77 institutions of higher learning in Brazil.

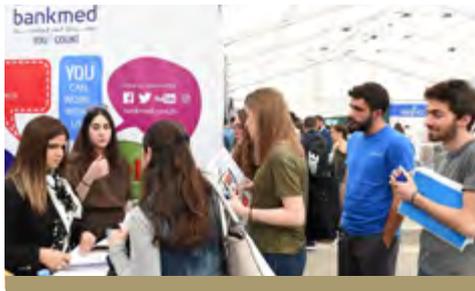


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## D. Spreading Their Wings After LAU

Long before graduation, LAU students benefit from a wide variety of services provided by the university's Career and Job Placement offices. Over the fall and spring semesters, both campuses welcomed numerous workshops preparing students for job interviews and honing skills appropriate to today's job market, such as CV writing and job search strategies. This year for the first time, career and internship fairs were held during both semesters instead of once a year as previously.

Throughout AY2016-2017, a large number of local and multinational companies and other employers — such as United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA), Kraft Heinz, American United Schools of Kuwait, and LOYAC – Organization in Kuwait for Youth Development — visited both Beirut and Byblos campuses, holding recruitment presentations and on-campus interviews. Despite Lebanon's economic instability, many LAU graduates are successfully finding immediate employment.



## E. Extracurricular

This year, LAU was the first university in Lebanon to successfully introduce online student elections resulting in the highest voter turnout in the institution's history, reaching 74.2 percent. Totally anonymous and transparent, it was closely monitored by the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections.

LAU launched the "Broadening Perspective" program, an initiative to bring leaders of different political parties together in a transformative setting on the Byblos campus. Participants of the event, which is slated to become an annual occurrence, were required to attend team-building and bonding workshops along with a First Aid session prior to embarking on an extensive wilderness hike followed by open discussions on trust, empathy, teamwork and Lebanon.

LAU's many clubs, in collaboration with the Dean of Students' Offices, spearheaded countless fundraising and community service volunteering activities, reflecting the university's solid reputation as an institution dedicated to serving the community in which it is embedded. Among many other highlights:

- Over 180 students volunteered in the Byblos Orphan Fair, in which 500 orphans were invited to a full day of entertainment, meals and gifts.
- Volunteers regularly helped out in soup kitchens at Palestinian and Syrian refugee camps, providing food for the needy.
- Members of the LAU community distributed food, clothes, toys and blankets to more than 300 needy families, including Syrian refugees, in partnership with 12 organizations across Lebanon.
- Assisting local schools in self-assessment.

While the above activities nurtured the growth of empathy and compassion, other goings-on on both campuses fostered the physical health of our students, through hiking and other athletic endeavors and health-related campaigns.



In July, LAU student volunteers headed to the Ketermaya refugee camp to celebrate the Family Festival for Syrian Refugees. In collaboration with the Universal Peace Federation and the International Friendship Foundation (Germany), the volunteers sought to spark some happiness in the hearts of the camp's residents, making their day as pleasant as possible through means as varied as distributing basic necessities, organizing games for children, and simply engaging in conversation.

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Two years after successfully climbing Mount Kilimanjaro, a team of students and staff climbed Mount Elbrus, Russia, the highest peak in Europe, in support of children with cancer being treated at LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital.

And finally, as always, student clubs and the Deans of Students Offices sponsored extracurricular events aimed at stimulating the cultural and intellectual life of the university community, including but not limited to lectures, debates, concerts and dance competitions.



Physicist and astronaut Donald Thomas speaks to LAU students.



International Heritage Day



The Citizenship Student Club hosts a lecture on the role of youth in civil society.