For Immediate Release

AUB 2011 Student Elections: Damp weather does not dampen democratic spirit

Beirut, Lebanon- 16/11/2011 - Student elections at the American University of Beirut were held all day on November 16, 2011 and were marked by rainy weather and a competitive yet calm spirit.

Some 233 students ran for spots on the 109-member Student Representative Council (SRC), with students campaigning for one of two main coalitions--the red-and-white "Students at Work" and the "ICAN" grouping against the green-and-yellow "Active Students" and "Order of Engineers" grouping. A motley group of independents also ran in the elections, including some who called for blank balloting and keeping politics out of student elections.

From 10 am to 5 pm, students voted in their respective faculties, before gathering outside West Hall in the late evening to find out whether their favorite candidates had won or not.

Student Affairs Dean Talal Nizameddin described the election process as "competitive, yet calm and organized."

"Student elections and campaigning are part of the educational process, especially if conducted under transparent and professional guidelines," said Nizameddin. "Here, at AUB, we pride ourselves for upholding this decades-old tradition of democratic expression and participation."

For the second year in a row, results were tweeted within a few minutes of their being released, and they were also published on AUB's official Facebook page. AUB has 3900 followers on Twitter as well as 8700 fans on Facebook. For the first time, AUB also posted results on Google+ with its 265 fans. The University also posted photos from Election Day on Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and Google+.

Just like last year, observers from the Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections oversaw Election Day on campus with their 19 observers weaving in and out of faculties and ballot counting areas. LADE Coordinator at AUB Tamim BouKarroum lauded AUB's organization process, describing it as "stellar."

As usual, access to campus was confined to students and staff with valid AUB IDs, in addition to the drove of print, radio, and TV reporters covering the event.

By 5:30 pm, shortly after voting had ended, two large computer-linked screens were set up on West Hall's colonnaded porch. The screens beamed election results to spirited students over a three-hour period. All results were out by 8 pm.

In the coming days, a rematch will be held for all tied candidates. Once that is done, newly-elected SRC representatives will vote for SRC cabinets as well as the 17 representatives on the 24-member University Student-Faculty Council (USFC).

Student elections at AUB have a long history that dates back to 1949, when the first general elections took place. This annual event was interrupted in 1982 because of the Lebanese war of 1975-1990, only to resume in 1994.

PHOTO ALBUM from AUB ELECTION DAY:
https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.281751068530743.66159.135363989836119&type=3

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