AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT | Office of Research

NEWSLETTER
RESEARCH@AUB MATTERS

ISSUE NO 2 / DECEMBER 2025



Omar Musa - Sunshine Petals

Artworks by Next Step Students, featured in « **Beyond the Frame: An Exhibit of Possibilities** » an art exhibition organized by the Title IX Student Committee - hosted by the Office of Equal Opportunity & Title IX - in collaboration with the Next Step Program at AUB.



Welcome Message

As we approach the holiday season and the close of another eventful year, I am pleased to present this second edition of our newsletter. You will find key updates from the Office of Research and learn about the initiatives shaping our path forward. AUB continues to drive research for impact through knowledge generation, innovation, and creative expressions. We extend our sincere appreciation to our partners and donors whose trust and support make this work possible. Wishing you a warm and joyful holiday season, and a hopeful and energetic start to the new year.

AUB RESEARCHER HONORED WITH BOTH NATIONAL AND REGIONAL PRIZES

Dr. Rita Hleihel from the Faculty of Medicine at AUB was recently awarded both the 2024 AUF Dolla Karam Sarkis Prize and the 2025 L'Oréal-UNESCO For Women in Science Levant Young Talent distinction. These recognitions honor her innovative research on cancer metastasis and her growing impact in advancing targeted therapies.

Dolla Karam Sarkis Prize **L'Oreal-UNESCO Prize**



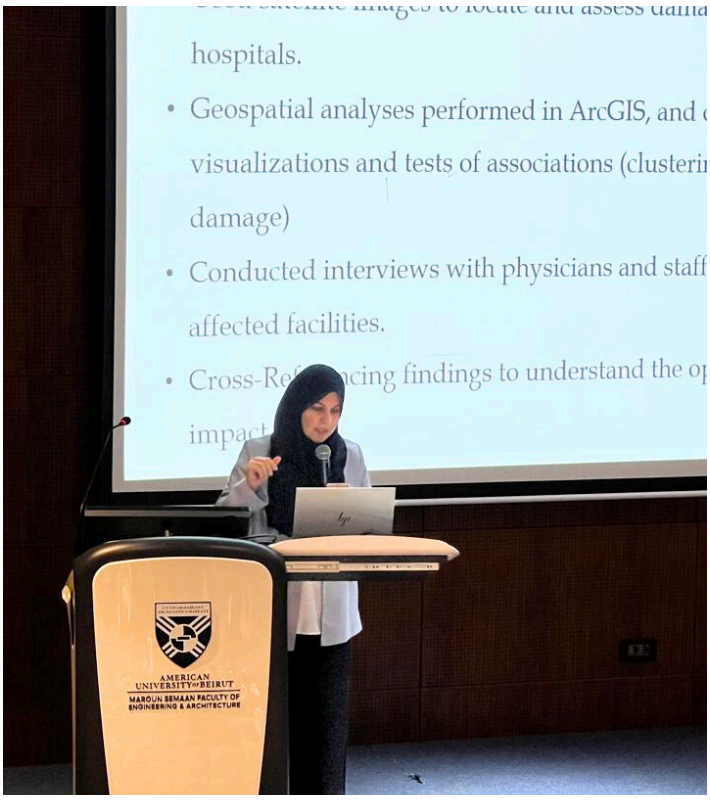


AUB INNOVATORS RECOGNIZED AT LIRA 2025 CEREMONY

The American University of Beirut (AUB) proudly celebrated the achievements of its innovators at the LIRA 2025 Ceremony, held under the EU-funded Lebanon Innovate initiative and implemented by Industrial Research Achievements Lebanon (IRALEB). AUB researchers and students played a leading role in advancing research-based innovation, with several teams recognized among the top startups and winners

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Research Updates



STIMULUS FUNDING FOR RESEARCH ON THE WAR IN LEBANON

On November 1, 2024, the Office of Research launched a stimulus funding opportunity to support high-quality, interdisciplinary, and impactful projects related to the war. Selected proposals received up to $20,000 and officially commenced on March 1, 2025. Progress update meetings were held on November 27 and 28, 2025, where the principal investigators highlighted their progress to date, outcomes, and next steps toward impactful, interdisciplinary research.

Research Opportunities

LEVERAGING INTER-CAMPUS NETWORKS FOR KNOWLEDGE ADVANCEMENT (LINK) STIMULUS FUNDING



The Office of Research announced the LINK Stimulus Funding to promote collaboration between AUB and AUB Mediterraneo. Open to all disciplines, the program offers up to $25,000 for joint projects fostering interdisciplinary research and future external funding opportunities. Deadline: February 28, 2026.

Check the guidelines

TRANSITION TO PIVOT-RP

The Office of Research is pleased to announce the acquisition of Pivot-RP, a comprehensive funding discovery and research profiling platform that will enhance the office's ability to identify opportunities and support collaborative research through the use of AI. The new system brings improved search functionality, personalized recommendations, and streamlined tools for managing funding alerts. The Office of Research will soon offer a training session to guide faculty and staff through the platform's features. Once the full transition to Pivot-RP is completed, the "Research Professional" platform currently in use will be discontinued BY FEBRUARY 28, 2026.

To help you make the most of Pivot-RP, we've partnered with Clarivate for a hands-on training session:

- **Monday, January 12, 2026 at 2:00–3:00 PM**
- **Wednesday, January 21, 2026 at 2:00–3:00 PM**

Pivot-RP

Sign Up Here

Events

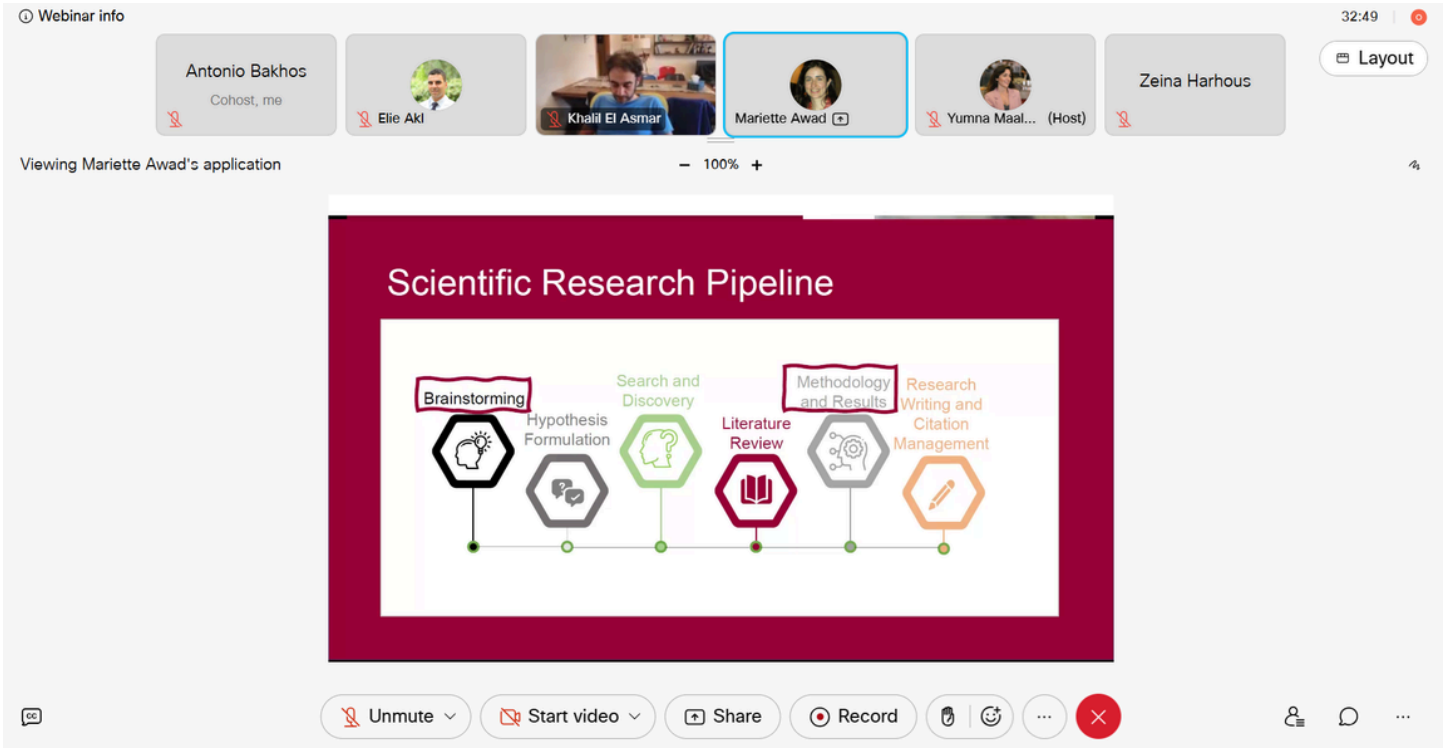


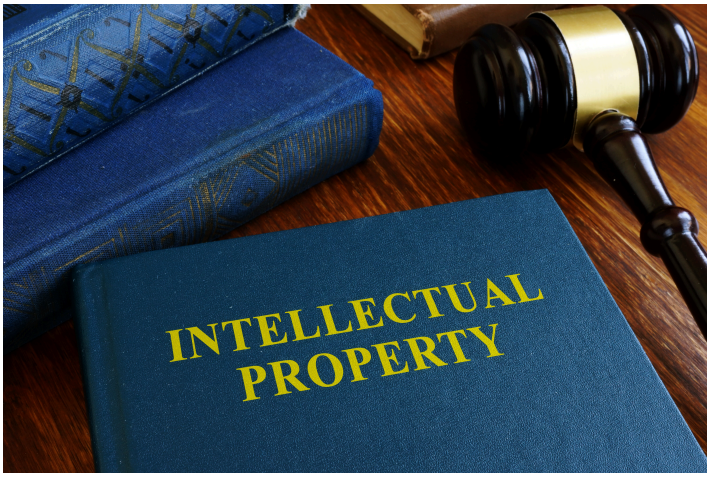
LEBANON INNOVATE SOFT-LANDING MISSION IN EUROPE

May Awar Ammar (Office of Research) and Dr. Jacques Abboud (MSFEA) participated in the Lebanon Innovate Soft-Landing Activity from November 16–22, 2025, visiting innovation hubs in France and Belgium and engaging with the European Business Network (EBN). The mission included visits to IncubAlliance, the Grand Nancy Innovation Center, and participation in EBN Techcamp 2025. Representatives from six Lebanese universities and key national institutions joined the delegation, which concluded with a meeting at the Lebanese Embassy in Brussels with European Commission directorates to advance cooperation in EU-funded projects, academic mobility, and research and innovation.

AI FOR RESEARCH WORKSHOP

The Office of Research recently hosted an online workshop, *“AI for Research: Overview of Available Tools,”* on November 12 and 14, 2025, for over 300 participants. The sessions introduced researchers to practical AI tools that can streamline data analysis, literature review, and academic writing.





TECHNOLOGY TRANSFER AT USJ

On November 14, 2025, Director of Sponsored Programs and Technology Transfer May Awar Ammar delivered an awareness session on technology transfer to faculty and researchers at *Université Saint-Joseph de Beyrouth* (USJ). The session covered the role and structure of technology transfer offices (TTOs); their functions in supporting innovation, entrepreneurship, and industry collaboration; and the strategic importance of intellectual property (IP) in academia. It also clarified the distinction between ideas and inventions in research and highlighted the value of IP protection for enhancing visibility and funding opportunities.



AUB HOSTS BRAZILIAN EMBASSY DELEGATION

On October 24, 2025, AUB's Office of International Programs (OIP), in collaboration with the Office of Research, welcomed a delegation from the Brazilian Embassy in Lebanon to renew the memorandum of understanding with the International Cooperation Group of Brazilian Universities (GCUB), reinforcing academic and research ties between Lebanon and Brazil.



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (URCOP) KICKS OFF NEW SEASON

UrCOP held its first session of the academic year on November 26, 2025, bringing members together to launch the proposals season, exchange ideas, and shape upcoming initiatives.

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EARMA AI DAY 2025

On November 18, 2025, the Office of Research attended EARMA AI Day 2025 online, organized by the European Association of Research Managers and Administrators (EARMA). The event, titled “AI in Research Management: From Workflows to Widening,” brought together research managers, policy officers, and administrators from across Europe and beyond. A key focus throughout was the ethical and equitable AI adoption, ensuring advancements benefit all institutions and promote fairness.



VISIT FROM AUB MEDITERRANEO

On November 5, 2025, the Sponsored Programs and Technology Transfer Unit at the Office of Research hosted Monica Tsartsali, grants officer from AUB Mediterraneo in Cyprus. One-on-one sessions were held to provide an overview on the various functions performed by the pre-award and post-award teams with a focus on the EU application process and grant management process.

HIGHLIGHT ON THE CENTER FOR ARTS AND HUMANITIES (CAH)

The Center for Arts and Humanities (CAH) at AUB, led by Dr. Sonja Mejcher-Atassi, fosters interdisciplinary exchange and collaboration across the arts and humanities, and related disciplines. Through its programs, CAH promotes cutting-edge research that bridges disciplinary and epistemological boundaries, supports new approaches to teaching, and connects academia with cultural practitioners and communities. By advancing humanistic and artistic inquiry rooted in the Arab region yet globally engaged, CAH seeks to position AUB as a hub for interdisciplinary research and teaching, highlighting the critical and creative role the arts and humanities play in envisioning better futures.

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MEET THE TEAM



Razan El Ghoussaini
post-award team leader
CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

With over 15 years of experience, Razan has managed more than 300 research and development projects, including major initiatives like the $26M Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program, and oversees a wide portfolio of NIH, EU, IDRC, WHO, UN, and foundation-funded grants. Known for her leadership and solution-oriented approach, she excels in managing complex projects and ensuring compliance.



Rania Tohme
grants and contracts manager
CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

With a background in nutrition, business administration, and a decade of experience in financial consultancy and project management, Rania joined AUB in 2005 and has since built a long-standing career in grant management, supporting and advancing research efforts.



Dounia Bazzi
grants officer
CURRENT TEAM SPOTLIGHT

With extensive experience in banking, customer service, and financial administration, Dounia brings strong communication, precision, and stakeholder support to AUB's grants management, ensuring efficient processes, timely reporting, and seamless coordination with funders and researchers.



Ani Sandra Barikian
grants module administrator
NEW RECRUIT

Ani Sandra Barikian, who recently joined the office with over 18 years of experience in banking, finance, and client support and who has fluency in multiple languages. Ani brings exceptional analytical, operational, and organizational expertise to the team.

TEAM ACTIVITIES HIGHLIGHTS

Office of Research Attends NCURA Regional Meeting

Saada Dakroub and Dounia Bazzi from AUB's Office of Research attended the National Council of University Research Administrators (NCURA) Regional Meeting in Costa Mesa, California in November 2025, gaining insights on federal regulations, grant management, and best practices in research administration. Their participation supports AUB's commitment to excellence and alignment with international standards.

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Abu Haidar Neuroscience Institute (AHNI) 2025 Retreat

Dr. Elie Akl and Yara Haydar participated in the AHNI Retreat 2025 on November 8, contributing to discussions on strengthening collaborations and advancing AHNI's regional leadership in neuroscience research and care. Dr. Akl highlighted opportunities for academic partnerships across and beyond AUB, while Haydar, presenting on behalf of May Awar Ammar, outlined best practices for engaging with pharmaceutical and industry partners in clinical trials and AI/biotech initiatives, clarifying processes for applications and agreements.





Office of Research Team Completes AI Starter Kit Professional Certificate

Four members of the Office of Research, Antonio Bakhos, Yasmina El Achkar, Zeina Harhouse, and Jamal Itani successfully completed the eight-week "AI Starter Kit Professional" certificate offered by the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture at AUB in partnership with Zaka AI, strengthening the team's capacity in artificial intelligence applications for research and innovation.

"Speak to Connect": Presentation Skills Training Workshops

As part of its internal capacity-strengthening initiatives, the Office of Research organized "Speak to Connect," a presentation skills training aimed at enhancing staff communication, storytelling, and public speaking abilities on November 19, 20, and December 5, 2025, delivered by Rita Diab, senior learning and development leader, who has over 18 years of experience in the field.





“The Sage” by Alaa Mounzer Selected for International Anthology

The Sage, a short story by Alaa Mounzer, grants officer, was selected as a finalist for the Adelaide Magazine Anthology Award and published in the 2025 short story anthology. Blending elements of fantasy and fiction, the story reflects a compelling narrative voice and creative storytelling, marking a notable literary achievement.

COMMUNITY EVENTS

On October 2, 2025, the Office of Research hosted a team lunch in celebration of the successful completion of the Research in Crisis Settings Conference. The event served as a token of appreciation for the collective effort and dedication that contributed to making the conference a milestone in interdisciplinary collaboration and community engagement.

On December 11, 2025, the Office of Research hosted a team lunch to celebrate the holiday season and reflect on the collective efforts of 2025.

The gathering served as a token of appreciation for the team’s dedication and collaboration, marking a warm close to a year of shared achievements and community spirit.





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