



**Address by Rev. Fr. Hady Mahfouz, President of the Holy Spirit University of
Kaslik (USEK)**

Post-Graduate Certificate in Learning and Teaching in Higher Education

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I am looking around and I can see that this commencement ceremony is creating a positive ambiance.

First of all it is held in Lebanon, our beloved country, as a sign of a determined will to be positive in all circumstances. It is a sign that we love our country and we will spare no effort to bring things forth in it, always towards excellence, in all fields. That is the belief of our university.

Second, this ceremony is presided by Mr. Elias Abi Saab, Minister of Education and Higher Education. Your Excellency, your acceptance of my invitation to be the guest of honor in this ceremony meant a lot to me and to the University. Again, please accept my deep compliments for your appointment over the ministry of Education and Higher Education in Lebanon. This appointment brings trust given your outstanding achievements in your professional and academic career. Let me double my thanks because I know you came back last night from the Arab Emirates, though you traveled only the other day, to honor us with your presence. Be sure we consider you a friend of our university. Many thanks. Talking about friends, I would like to address Prof. Ahmad Jammal, Director General of Higher Education,

thanking him for his friendship and for the fruitful collaboration between the ministry and our university. We are happy to be actively partaking in many activities being held within the ministry and aiming at advancing higher education in our country. Also within the same spectrum of friendship I would like to address Eng. Jean Gebran for his belief in our university and for promoting its cause in many ways.

Third, this event stresses our internationalization policy. We have been tying many bonds with universities around the world, witnessing for globalization, and interacting with our partners. I had the pleasure to visit the University of Chester three years ago and to conclude a general agreement one of its fruits is the ceremony of today. Please Dr. Julie Ann Reagan, allow me to ask you to relay my greetings to your Vice Chancellor and Principal: Canon Professor Timothy Wheeler.. I would like also to thank you for all your endeavors that led to this program. I would like also to extend a word of thanks to Ms. Donna McGawn, Director of the British Council for her presence with us today.

Fourth, I was told it is a unique event in Lebanon, because it is a post-graduation of faculty members in teaching and learning. I am so happy that fourteen faculty members among whom are four board members, the dean of the faculty of Law, the dean of the faculty of agricultural and food sciences, the director of Political Sciences Institute and the Director of international affairs office in addition to chairpersons and faculty members have been awarded a postgraduate degree in such a prestigious program. We are proud of you and on behalf of the University, I address my sincere congratulations to all and to each and every one of you. I am also exhilarated that you became fellows of the Higher Education Academy in the UK. I know also that by enrolling in this program and earning this postgraduate degree, you have been promoting a competitive atmosphere at the university, which is very healthy for our evolution. In fact, I knew that many other faculty members registered for a similar program to be held this year jointly with Norwick University in Boston.

Fifth, this ceremony is promoting advanced techniques in teaching yet it is held in a museum. That is of meaning at USEK for, it mirrors somehow its identity and its strategy. While rooted in an old and precious tradition of higher education, our aim is to be up to an always

changing world for the good of every stakeholder and of the global society of the world. Many good practices are now a custom at the university. Since we created the Quality assurance and institutional effectiveness office, we were classified among the 5 top universities in the MENA region, according to a World Bank study. The European accreditation from Evalag also witnesses to our action in good practices. Now we are heading to American institutional and program accreditations, which would require again a continuous review of our bylaws and practices. Lately, we have created the Teaching excellence office that is working on the creation of a Center for Teaching excellence and I am happy to know that a competition among the students of architecture will aim at designing the locale where teachers will have all needed material allowing them to be updated in this field. It is also worth mentioning that this office organized lately more than 10 workshops on teaching and learning and instructional technologies with prominent experts from all over the world. I can't but thank, very warmly, Dr. Georges Yahchouchi, one of the today awardees, and Deputy president for quality assurance and teaching excellence, for the many good things he has been doing at the university. Having set a master plan for the architectural development of the university, we spare no effort to promote teaching and learning, besides research, in order to honor our mission and fulfill our goals.

Sixth, I know I boasted our university but I am happy to do that because from one side I am acknowledging the excellent and outstanding work and commitment of many persons at the university and because, on the other side, it is somehow one of the tasks of a president. But let me stress our belief that a good marketing can't be done without a good identity.

Seventh, you know from my previous speeches that I like the number 7 because it is the number of perfection in the Bible, and with it I am ending my speech.

So, seventh, we are celebrating here a shared happiness; I hope this ambiance could be reflected through every one of us in our society, and of course such a reflection will create no less than a positive ambiance.