

Haigazian University  
52<sup>nd</sup> Commencement Exercises  
June 29, 2012

### **President's Word**

Since education is a promise, universities try to turn the promise into a profession.

Universities promise development, the opening of the minds into objectivity and method, depth and breadth of knowledge, the training of the total person, the transformation of society: they promise many opportunities for the students, the graduates and the marketplace.

Universities take upon themselves the task of responding to the challenges of the future, more so than governments may succeed in doing.

But do we, as a university, succeed in delivering some of the promises? I certainly believe we do. And it is the successes of our graduates that determine whether and how we deliver what we promise. Therefore, dear class of 2012, I place on your shoulders the heavy load of turning your education into good service, professional and ethical behavior, and a forward looking faithful confidence.

A key word of advice for you today:

What you need to know, dear graduates, is not the fact that your name is written on a degree, but that the content and spirit of the degree are imprinted in you.

- When you break any boundary of ignorance and prejudice, ...
- When you become an instrument of peace and an agent of reconciliation somewhere, anywhere, ...
- When you combine acquired knowledge with self-critical openness to new learning, ...
- When you face the worship of materials, systems, and self with humble outreach to others,
- When you do any of these, anywhere, anytime, it will be considered as delivering what we promised. Then, we will indeed consider that we have been good stewards of one of God's gifts, named Haigazian University.

Dear graduates, our hope, as faculty and staff, is that you will soon become agents of noble promises to the world, in Lebanon and beyond.

Our world is hungry for honorable promises. We are not living in comfortable days. Therefore, becoming young professionals who promise what is good, is the best place to start, and God will bless your efforts.

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**Guest Speaker:**

Now, it is my pleasure to introduce the keynote speaker of the day.

Having earned his BA and MA from Harvard University, he completed in 1987 his Ph.D. from Harvard as well, specializing in Political Science with a Thesis on "Modern Arab Political Thought."

Since 2006, he has been Director of the Carnegie Middle East Center, and has established the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace's Middle East Center in Beirut,

Prior to that, he was the director of a major Lebanese foundation, the Fares Foundation.

In 1989, he founded and became Director of the Lebanese Center for Policy Studies, Lebanon's leading public policy think tank.

For more than 10 years in the 80's and 90's he has been a professor at the AUB.

He has been on most of the recent committees and councils of electoral law and conflict resolution networks, too many to name.

With numerous books on political thought and policy matters, and a number of forthcoming books, he has authored and edited hundreds of publications and articles.

He is a sought after consultant, lecturer, teacher and politicians, a critical and constructive mind, yet another positive embodiment of the Lebanese human capital.

Ladies and Gentlemen, please welcome our guest, Dr. Paul Salem.

*Rev. Paul Haidostian, Ph.D.  
President*