



COUNCIL FOR ADVANCEMENT
AND SUPPORT OF EDUCATION

The CASE Asia-Pacific Distinguished Service Award recognizes inspirational advancement professionals whose accomplishments have made a significant and lasting impact on institutional advancement and whose life and character have earned the respect and admiration of fellow colleagues. Overall, nominees must demonstrate leadership in their profession, embrace best practice and innovation in institutional advancement and volunteer their service to the CASE Asia-Pacific community of practice.

Citation for 2024 CASE Asia-Pacific Distinguished Service Award Recipient

Salma Oueida
Associate Vice President of Development, Alumni Relations, and University Events
American University of Beirut

Over her 20-year tenure at the American University of Beirut, Salma Oueida has ascended through the ranks to assume roles of increasing responsibility. A visionary leader, Salma has nurtured a network of donors, reinvigorated 42 AUB alumni chapters outside North America, and strengthened the connections of 78,000 alumni residing in 120 countries to their alma mater. She has been the liaison with the University for volunteer groups at the University including the President's Club, which was established to raise funds for projects that enhance student life at AUB; the Zaki Nassif Program for Music, which has transformed the musical landscape in Lebanon and the region; the Nature Conservation Center, the leading multidisciplinary academic center addressing nature conservation in the MENA region; and Khaddit Beirut, which was launched following the August 4, 2020 Beirut port explosion to co-build local alternatives, best practices, and growth opportunities that ensures the well-being and dignity of the inhabitants of Lebanon.

Salma was a key player in taking the Advancement Office from a small operation that raised just a few million dollars in 2000 to a university that raised more than US\$80 million in 2022. She played an instrumental role in both AUB's *Campaign for Excellence* (2002-07), which raised US\$171 million, and in AUB's recent US\$650 million fundraising campaign: *BOLDLY AUB: The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve*, which will conclude on June 30, 2024.

AUB's *Campaign for Excellence* was the University's first major fundraising campaign in its (then) 140-year history. It was an extremely ambitious campaign at the time in terms of its fundraising goals - US\$140 million over a 5-year period. The momentum and the results of the Campaign for Excellence were maintained in the post-campaign period, taking AUB to totally new levels of fundraising, as well as

alumni and donor engagement. The current fundraising campaign *BOLDLY AUB* (launched in 2017) has a target of US\$650 million. AUB exceeded the US\$650 million target ahead of schedule. The total amount that has been raised as of February 15, 2024, is US\$777 million.

Salma is an invaluable asset to AUB, demonstrating unwavering commitment and dedication to the University's advancement, growth, and prosperity. Her role in the Office of Advancement has helped to transform it into a destination for philanthropists seeking to connect with and invest in AUB, Lebanon, and the region.

Throughout her career, Salma has honed the skill of translating complex technical concepts into accessible and compelling narratives for donors. Her ability to communicate and connect with individuals from diverse backgrounds, varying educational levels, cultural interests, and ages, both at AUB and internationally, is commendable – and widely recognized.

Not surprisingly, Salma has earned a reputation in Lebanon and the region as a savvy and experienced Advancement professional. She has shared this expertise with other institutions in Lebanon and the region that are interested in establishing and growing their development and alumni relations offices.

She has been an active CASE volunteer speaker and served twice on the planning committee for the CASE Advancement Conference in the Middle East – in Dubai in 2020 and in Abu Dhabi in 2024.

Salma approaches her work with a professional attitude. She is also friendly and approachable. She gets things done. After only seven years of dedicated and exemplary service at AUB, she was selected to receive a President's Service Excellence Award, the highest service honor that AUB awards to its staff, in 2010 for her "continuous outstanding performance ... (and for going) beyond the call of duty in helping students, patients, and fellow employees."

Salma was a key member of the team at AUB that responded quickly after the devastating explosion in the Beirut port on August 4, 2020 helping to raise money to assist victims and support local institutions working to rebuild Beirut.

A perfect example of Salma's management skills under pressure is her partnership with doctors and senior leadership of the University during a global cancer telethon in December 2022. The telethon took place at a time when there was an urgent need to assist cancer patients who had been all but abandoned due to the total collapse of the public health system in Lebanon. AUB raised US\$5 million during the telethon to treat needy cancer patients from across the country and refugees from neighboring countries. Salma played a critical role in bringing all the parties together in support of this far-reaching and impactful initiative.

As a private not-for-profit academic and healthcare institution, AUB has had to endure a disproportionate share of crises and challenges. It has stood the test of time because of dedicated, determined, and talented people who were at the helm and who embodied the mission of AUB and its core values. Salma is one of those few people.

At a time when Lebanon suffered a drastic currency devaluation, coupled with the total collapse of the public sector and its services, people fled the country looking for employment and life opportunities elsewhere. Salma did not pursue that route, although she was headhunted for leadership Advancement positions in the region. She stayed at AUB and in Lebanon because her community needed her and because she knew that her contributions would have much greater impact at AUB than anywhere else. Salma is a role model to many at AUB. A professional woman with a proven track record of performance and accomplishment, dedicated to her work, university, family, and community, guided by a determination to make good things happen whatever the challenges.

In recognition of her inspiring leadership, accomplishments, and service to the community of practice, and the development of a strong culture of Advancement at the American University of Beirut, the Council for Advancement and Support of Education proudly presents Salma Oueida with the CASE Asia-Pacific Distinguished Service Award.