

President's Address

13th Commencement

June 12, 2010

Mr. Chancellor,
Honorable members of the Board,
Distinguished Guests,
Parents,
Graduating Students,
Faculty and Staff,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of AUI faculty, staff, and students, I am happy to convey warmest welcome to all on this special occasion: **the graduation of the 13th cohort**. As we celebrate these graduates and their many achievements, we also celebrate the 15th anniversary of Al Akhawayn University. Thus, today marks a very special day for our graduates, their families, and the entire Al Akhawayn community.

This is an occasion to celebrate and congratulate our graduates for their perseverance and hard work, to express thanks to the parents for their steadfast commitment to AUI, and to show appreciation to the AUI Faculty and Staff for their continuous encouragement, leadership, and mentoring.

On behalf of the AUI community, I would like to express deep gratitude to the distinguished members of the Board for their continuous dedication to the University and their unwavering support for its mission.

Class of 2010,

During your years at Al Akhawayn, you have been introduced to a broad program of study in the liberal arts. In the spirit of this academic tradition, you are not training for a particular job only, but rather developing a range of tools and strategies that prepare you to experience a full and rich life. The goal of a liberal arts education is to prepare people for active and engaged citizenship both in a local context and also in a world that is increasingly connected. At Al Akhawayn University you have learned about foreign cultures, linguistic variations, and new ideas, sometimes here on campus, and, for many of you (36%), through a study abroad program in one of our partner universities around the world. Even now as we celebrate this commencement, 54 of our students are studying in Europe, North America, Asia, and Latin America, and Al Akhawayn continues to expand its relationships with other prestigious universities around the world.

As students in the liberal arts tradition, you have become avid readers of either hard or soft copies, staying abreast of current developments in your fields, solving complex problems, and adapting to changing conditions. You have become prolific writers

in several languages, learning to bridge theoretical concepts into practice. You are equipped to reason and act considerately regarding your political and ethical choices.

As students at Al Akhawayn, you developed advanced communication skills in English and other languages, opening your minds to new ways of thinking. You have seen how social scientists examine the structures of communities and how we might envision our future. You have learned how scientists and mathematicians observe phenomena, express hypotheses, and evaluate degrees of certainty. You have met physical challenges in your athletic courses and competitions. You have analyzed the aesthetic pleasure of artistic creations. You have come to understand the perspectives of others and to see the role of history in our current global context. Whether discovering the beauty of poetry, peering into a cylinder radio telescope, or unraveling the mysteries of human history, you are learning more than facts: you are learning to think independently and make sound judgments. You are expanding your horizons, discovering new perspectives, and acquiring the tools to defend your points of view.

The university is often the site of invention and innovation, and Al Akhawayn is a place where many students become increasingly knowledgeable about technological advances, from advances in protecting our environmental resources to the ever-changing world of telecommunications and internet capacity. Just think of the bandwidth required to satisfy your curious minds, your social networking interests, and your tastes in music and film! Al Akhawayn has adjusted successfully to the changing demands of technology in recent years, but not without difficulties, as you well know.

The strength of Al Akhawayn University comes in great part from its dedicated and accomplished faculty, who have studied or taught at many prestigious universities around the world. At this time, I would like to personally thank every one of them for being excellent role models for our students, for guiding and mentoring them, and for attending to the academic and personal growth of each student.

Your cohort of 259 students is very special to us. Today 63 students receive graduate diplomas, an increase of 66 percent over last year, with one executive MBA, 29 in the School of Business Administration, 22 in the School of Science and Engineering, and 11 in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. We also celebrate the commencement of 196 undergraduate students, with 117 in the School of Business Administration, 50 in the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and 29 in the School of Science and Engineering. At the end of this summer session, 52 additional students will graduate. At Al Akhawayn, we aim to educate women and men equitably and eradicate the negative effects of sexism in society. Our results today indicate our success in this endeavor. Women not only comprise 69 percent of today's undergraduates (135 women, 61 men), but they also comprise 69 percent of those students earning distinctions (54 women, 24 men).

During your time at Al Akhawayn, you may have participated in the Harvard University exchange program or played football for a national title. You may have conversed with an Ambassador or held dialogue with the International Monetary Fund. Maybe you hosted visitors from the Global Liberal Arts Alliance, the International MBA workshop, or the Islamic Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization. Perhaps you contributed to one of three fine campus newspapers, traveled to Tetouan as a Biotechnologist, or volunteered for one of our summer camps for Palestinian, British, and local children.

Did you participate in the Fun Run, plant trees on Earth Day, or kick-box with a world champion? Were you a medal winner at the Beirut Unisports Festival or an officer in student government? Were you there on International Women's Day when our women's soccer team won the regional tournament? Did you travel to Poland for Microsoft's Imagine Cup or perform for a talent show on campus?

Our student associations this year, along with faculty and staff volunteers, provided assistance to over 3000 local people in Azrou, Immouzer, and Ashada, not only giving them hope for the future but also equipping them with the necessary skills to become independent. You, our students, provided medical care, school renovations, and technical training for the local community. You helped flood victims by giving blankets, mattresses, books, and school supplies; you tutored high school students and adult women in need of literacy skills; you learned sign language to help deaf children. You donated your blood, supported local cooperatives, and created safe havens for those in need.

No matter how you shaped your experience at Al Akhawayn, we know that your time here was very meaningful in more ways than are apparent to you today, and we are proud and happy to have been in your company.

As of tomorrow you will be leaving AUI, **but only physically**. Your name is etched in our hearts, and tomorrow you will become a full member of the Alumni Association, which creates excellent mentoring and networking opportunities that are of tremendous benefit. The association maintains a strong bridge with the many companies, institutions, and agencies around the world that benefit from the contributions of our graduates, and I commend the various officers of the Alumni Association for their outstanding work.

Dear alumni-soon-to-be,

On behalf of university officers, faculty, and staff, I extend our warmest congratulations for a job well done, a successful completion of requirements, and, for some, outstanding results with various distinctions. I am confident that you will continue to succeed and to honorably represent your institution by giving your best in every undertaking.

Very much looking forward to hearing reports of your many successes to come and sharing in the celebrations, I wish you all the best.

Thank you for your attention.