

President's Speech on the RHU Convocation AY 2024-2025

- Good morning! And welcome to RHU 2024-25 Faculty and Staff Convocation.
- I thank you for your presence
- I am so pleased that we are all gathered to celebrate the new academic year.
- **My dear colleagues**, It is my distinct honor to stand before you and report on the state of RHU.
- Meeting you **all and listening to your input**, achievements, and challenges has been such an educational and rewarding experience.
- I noticed a FEW things in common.
- You all have a strong affinity to RHU
- I felt a strong sense of corporate responsibility and loyalty
- You all came together during rough times, and you shielded RHU and kept it going (this is something I admire)
- Looking at you, I see people **with purpose, determination, and discipline** who have turn around the status quo (you have succeeded. There is lots more that needs to be done).
- I am looking at proud RHU leaders who are determined to leave this place better than they have found it.
- I could feel it; there is a high spirit of collegiality in the air
- For all that and more I applaud you

- **I am here to tell you that the difficult days are behind us**
- **Let us work together to lay the foundations of a better and brighter RHU future.**
- Listen, last time we met for brunch, I got myself in hot water.
- I will begin by thanking the people whom I missed last time.
- Thank you Nidal and the whole registrar team, thank you to the folks in Finance, the DAs, and to the people in student services. That is it.
- I thank all the people who planned and executed the wonderful commencement. You all have delivered a world-class, A1 event.
- **Thank you all for your** collaboration.
- Thank you for your passion.
- Thank you for making RHU a fantastic place for us all.
- Thank you for being the pioneering generation who is entrusted to pass RHU on to the next generation of faculty and staff.
- That is something.

Now,

- I would like to extend a special welcome to all new faculty and staff who are with us for the first time.
- In alphabetical order by school name, I call on Dean Salameh, Dean Hammond, and Dean Hijazi to introduce the newest additions to our faculty.
- **Time to Introduce Dr. Sally Hammoud. Dr. Hammoud is no stranger to you all. She will be serving as** Special assistant to the president for media relations.
- Welcome to the RHU family. We are very pleased to have you among us!

I would like to acknowledge those who have taken on new leadership roles this year:

- Mr. Abed Baba
- Mrs. Marwa Khanji
- Mrs. Ferial Samra
- Mrs. Lina Basho

Let us all give them a round of applause for a job well done.

We are proud of you

I want to recognize and thank our Board of Deans, Department chairs, and Chairs and members of the following RHU committees.

- Academic and Curriculum Committee
- Marketing, Enrollment and University Promotion Committee
- Student affairs and services Committee
- Financial Assistance Committee, and
- Sustainable Campus Initiative (SCI) Committee

Now it is time to recognize two RHU who have met the promotion requirements and were promoted.

Dr. Najwa Fares, Full Professor

Dr. Grasiella Harb, Associate Professor

Would Dr....., the provost, and Dr. Salameh come forward?

Another colleague in the college of Engineering has made the entire RHU community proud. Mr. Mohamad Kaderi. Mr. Kaderi is an award-winning engineer. He is a leader, an innovator, and an exemplary individual to all of us.

Mr. Kaderi, please come forward.

Mr. El Kaderi has represented RHU at World Robotics Olympiad (WRO).

Mr. El Kaderi led RHU Robotics and Technology Club to win The first place in the Robomission, Future Engineers, and The second place in the Robosports category:

He competed against participants from 85 countries.

He is a role model and an inspiration to all of us. An exemplary RHU agent.

I call on the provost COE Dean Salameh and Mr. Kaderi Department chair to come forward. **Please Stay on the Podium**

- **Now I call on Ms. Rayan Kaddoura, who won the Pan Arab Award in graphic Design for designing an innovative packaging (May 2024).**

Dear Colleagues:
My friends

A new dawn is rising over RHU.

This dawn brings with it new hopes, new aspirations, new ways of doing things, new orientations to problem solving, and certainly new work culture and a strong desire to serve and make an impact.

In my presentation today, I will focus on five areas

1. People,
2. Governance and partnerships,
3. Academics,
4. Research and
5. Infrastructure

1) People:

- This beautiful oasis, this bastion of knowledge, would be a dull place if it were not for all of you.
- Each one of us comes to RHU with a different background, different academic specializations, different schools of thought, different aspirations, and different career goals.
- On the exterior, we are a heterogenous group of people. **(A mosaic)**
- On the interior, we certainly are and will be a homogeneous group of people. People with common values, common beliefs, common interest, with a strong desire to serve and make an impact.

- That is what makes us so special.
- The challenge is to find a way to align our best practices, our best thinking, our best aspirations with that of RHU.
- Thus, bringing down the communication barriers.
- We got to trust one another. Got to believe in the common good of the institution.

You the people. RHU men and women are the heartbeat of this institution.

- I am here to tell you that your voice will be heard, your ideas are welcome.
- You are already at home.
- Feel comfortable,
- Take ownership of the place and of every single task that you do.

Enough about us. Let us move to item number two.

2) Governance and partnerships:

In a few words:

Like you all:

- I believe in shared governance
- I believe in open communication
- I believe in building bridges
- I believe in transparency (there is nothing to hide); we run a transparent operation at the highest level of professionalism
- I believe in accountability
- I believe in responsible management (Do not ask me to do things that could not be done- Things that may be borderline illegal or unethical),
- **I will not do it.**
- **Let us hold ourselves at the highest level of ethical responsibility**
- Let us not spend our time bickering or in nonsense office gossip.
- Let us shoulder one another to serve RHU
- RHU needs your help.
- I am banking on you all to pitch in so we all collectively transform RHU
- Yes, there may be different approaches to solving a problem. However, once we all vote, we shall rally together (in one hand, one spirit) until the effective implementation of our best ideas that have surfaced to the top.
- **Concerning Partnerships,**
- As it stands right now, RHU has only 4 international partnerships.
- You all know RHU deserves better.
- RHU does not live or operate in a vacuum,
- Interacting with International partners brings added recognition and visibility
- For our 25th anniversary we got to exceed 25 partnerships (Signed MOUs).
- I am calling on you and the RHU faculty to reach out to your Alma Mattar to nominate this university for a partnership.
- A prototype letter is available for you.

- Kindly share the name of your nominated institution and the concerned contact person with your dean
- RHU got to establish a large web of local, regional and international partner institutions.
- We have to send all the letters soon.

Concerning the Ministry of Education

LORD HELP US

We have lots of challenges
Our files are not all in order.

RHU Provost and Ms. Nidal Khalaf have accepted to champion this task and get our files in order at the ministry.

I am asking the deans, department chairs, registrar, and VP Kobrosli to support the provost as he champions this important initiative.

3) Academics:

- RHU has the finest academic programs, majors, and specialties.
- Hats OFF to you all.
- You should be proud of your world-class curriculum.
- Thanks to you all, to the leadership of the schools (Deans, Department Chairs, faculty, accreditation champions, steering committee members) for being ABET and ACBSP accredited.
- ABET accreditation visit is around. Let us support participating colleges to enable them to renew our accreditation.
- I guess it is time for RHU to seek accreditation from a larger, world-renowned accrediting body.
- In due time, and upon further consultation with the Board of Trustees, various RHU bodies, and various internal and external stakeholders, further information will be released.
- Certainly, the schools are encouraged to expand their basket of program offerings.
- Let us offer new degrees in STEM areas to ensure the employability of our graduates.
- As of Spring 2024, the department of State considers Accounting and Economics as STEM. Let us build bridges with schools that offer such programs to get our students US-sponsored and employed.

- We will study all options, and available resources and will come back to report on our next course of action.

Concerning RHU students.

- **For this year our student new students count is:**
- **Total population is:**
- I am proud to see your graduates in the C-Suite and in top leadership positions around the country and around the world.
- I have read about some graduates who have gone on to earn their Ph.Ds. and they are faculty at top universities.
- Others, are top entrepreneurs, inventors, innovators, or business leaders

What an accomplishment?

- We will continue to recruit the most qualified students.
- We will challenge the students to actualize themselves.
- We will provide them with a second-to-none education.
- We will provide them with a basket of skill sets (to compete, to rise, and to stay ahead of the pack)

Concerning learning outcomes.

We shall make sure that all our students have the right mix of the following skills:

- Quantitative skills,
- Analytical skills,
- Problem-solving skills,
- Public speaking skills, and
- All is guided by moral reasoning and the highest ethical standards.

4) Research:

- Research remains a priority; and we will do our best to support that. We do acknowledge and very much appreciate that some of you are producers of new knowledge.
- We are committed to do our best to provide you with the right tools to do your research.
- We all must participate in the production of new knowledge.
- We have to engage our students in the pursuit of new knowledge.
- Let us continue to inspire the students to experiment, to think outside the box, to try, to fail, to repeat again until the emergence of a satisfactory outcome.

- Responsibility in Research. We must find a way to encourage research on responsibility-related topics, conduct responsible research, and ensure that responsibility becomes core to our research mission and excellence.
- Let us include ethics, responsibility, and sustainability as a metric for ranking and recognition.
- Likewise, in due time, more information will surface about venues of publications, research support, grants, etc.

- Concerning the availability of databases for research.

I tell you things as they are.

For now, we will be using databases provided to us through shared MOUs with local universities.

When RHU financial means become healthier we shall have our own databases, and many other things that you all have been asking for.

5) **Infrastructure:**

- RHU's infrastructure is enormous and requires lots of upkeep and financial resources.
- Priority number one is to use our collective wisdom to enable RHU to be a sustainable institution.

Sustainability here means:

- Administrative (we must trust one another. Need a negativity free work Env.)
- Financial,
- Ecological,
- Infrastructure,
- Resources (labs, hardware, software, licenses, library, university fleet, etc.)
- Business model including policies and procedures (got to be periodically updated),
- Again, people, you are our biggest asset.

My friend, we are not just a group of people working together.

We are one team. One Soul. One Spirit.

We are committed to leading RHU into the next level of excellence.

There is a lot of work that needs to be done.

The ONUS is upon us all to roll up our sleeves and to swing into action.

Without a doubt we will deliver on the promise.

Long lived the legacy of Prime Minister Rafik Hariri

RHU for all

RHU is here to stay

May you all have a good day.
Thank you.

The floor is open for questions:

Questions from faculty

Questions from staff.