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**AUC WELCOMES STUDENTS FOR 2020 FALL SEMESTER,**  
**BEGINS HYBRID CLASSES**

September 6, 2020, Cairo – The American University in Cairo (AUC) started its first day of classes last Thursday, implementing a hybrid model of classes with an emphasis on maintaining a low-density campus. This move comes as one of several precautionary measures that the University is taking in an effort to help limit the spread of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). In the new hybrid model of classes 93% of classes will be online and only 7% will meet face to face.

Made up of approximately 1,200 undergraduates — 58% females and 42% males — and more than 340 admitted graduate students — 70% females and 30% males — the incoming class hails from 26 diverse countries, including the United States, Canada, Spain and Brazil, as well as different parts of Africa and the Middle East such as Nigeria, Syria, Yemen, Algeria, Palestine, Tunisia and, of course, Egypt. Egyptian students are joining AUC from 20 governorates across the country, including Ismailia, Alexandria, Dakahlia and The New Valley.

"I warmly welcome both new and returning AUCians to this bright new academic year, promising an unusual wealth of challenges and opportunities," said AUC President Francis Ricciardone in his welcome message to the AUC community. "I am pleased to welcome an especially strong incoming freshman class."

This year also marks the kickoff of the USAID Scholars program, implemented and managed by AUC, which received more than 4,000 applications from all of Egypt's 27 governorates. This year, more than 100 new international students are studying at AUC, and around 3.4% of undergraduate students are international.

Alba Fernandez, who is studying translation at UAB Barcelona, came to AUC to learn Arabic. "I am pleasantly surprised. I love the people here; I love the place. The University is amazing. I am very happy to be here," she said.

Rachel Campbell is joining AUC from Canada to pursue a master's in teaching English to speakers of other languages (TESOL). "My experience in Egypt has been great," she said. "I've lived here for a year already, but my experience at AUC has been fantastic. The organizing team has been great."

Approximately 200 of the enrolled undergraduates have already declared majors in sciences and engineering, while other students will navigate courses before deciding on their majors.

For freshman Omar Mehanna, one of the main reasons he applied to AUC is its liberal arts education. "I expect to meet a huge number of people with diverse backgrounds and with different perspectives on life than I have. I also expect to take part in cocurricular activities to develop my skills professionally and personally," he said.

Sarah Koura, a freshman intending to major in either political science or business administration, decided to join AUC for the global experience, cocurricular activities and victorious sports teams. "AUC is unique," she said. "It's the only University in Egypt that gives you the 'abroad' experience in your homeland," she said.

For the first time, AUC's First-Year Program (FYP) for incoming students was blended this fall. The integrated orientation was mostly virtual with two days of face-to-face interaction on campus that included the Engagement Fair as well as other on-ground activities, where students were divided into small cohorts to visit the campus on different days.

For regular updates from the University during coronavirus visit [www.aucegypt.edu/coronavirus](http://www.aucegypt.edu/coronavirus)

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