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The past year was a rollercoaster for each one of us and made us value even the simple blessings in our life. It was the most challenging time in the history of Lebanon and in that of our beloved University. The unstable political and financial system, the protests, the COVID-19 pandemic, and the Beirut port blast made us all reconsider the future of Lebanon. However, we must overcome the adversities, and this is how countries have survived throughout centuries. Soldiers do not give up during battlefields, but they continue to fight for their country until their last breath. We are the warriors of Lebanon. We must fight the internal and external destitutions to stand tall like the Cedar of Lebanon and rise again like a phoenix. What we need now is a vision to maximize our capability to face the current and future predicaments. A vision of hope and devotion to keep us going, and unity to emerge from these hardships stronger, more prepared, and more powerful.

Our University's value creating asset is the outstanding human resources: students, professors, and employees. You are the image and the building blocks of our institution. It is true that we cannot change the situation of the country very quickly or even ameliorate its conditions that fast, but it does not mean that we should give up. Giving up is easy and anyone would give up, but not us. We have each other to support and look after, just like after the explosion when the Lebanese citizens started to help each other in any way possible. Selflessness, resilience, and devotion are characteristics that Lebanese people possess. We believe in God and we know that He would bestow upon us the strength to endure and carry on just like in previous times.

I cannot convince anyone of you to stay. I cannot even tell you to leave. All I can tell you is to rethink – to consider both of your family and USJ which is your second family – second home. What would they do without you? How would they strive during your absence? Why would these beautiful families pay for the price of the wrongdoing of the corrupt government? Things will worsen if you give up on your families; but if you stay, they will thrive and maybe, hopefully and one day we will all be strong enough to defeat the corrupt political system. Believe me when I say, the more we stay, the more we adapt until we become able to stand against the difficulties. We are in this together and we are on this journey together just like Noah who directed his ark in the raging floodwaters. We should work relentlessly towards upholding our position among the leading universities in the region. Strive to inspire others and set a good example. USJ appreciates you for everything you have done, are still doing and will do. USJ needs you. Your family needs you. Your country needs you. Thank you and may God bless you.