

Antonine University's Response to the War:

Holding Hearts, Sustaining Learning

Students of Antonine University (UA), particularly those at the Hadat–Baabda Campus facing the Beirut suburbs and the Nabi Ayla–Zahle Campus, have been deeply affected by the ongoing war and the displacement it has caused. Many have experienced disruptions to their studies, financial instability, and psychological strain. In response, UA has mobilized a comprehensive support system to accompany students on multiple levels, ensuring that education and well-being remain priorities, even in times of war.

1 | Communication: Echoes of Care

UA recognized that clear, transparent, and empathetic communication between the university and its students is essential during this crisis.

- **Pause in online posting:** The University deliberately avoided posting on social media during the war to reduce unnecessary anxiety and respect the sensitivity of the situation. Only one post was shared, focusing on mental health tips and emergency hotlines (see Section 4).
- **Transparent updates:** Every detail regarding academic schedules, safety measures, and institutional decisions was shared directly with students through official circulars and an official WhatsApp channel, ensuring that no one felt left in the dark.
- **Office of Student Affairs hotline:** A dedicated hotline was established to provide immediate answers to student inquiries, ranging from logistical concerns to urgent updates.
- **Counseling Service hotline:** A 24/7 hotline and email address were made available for students in need of emotional support.
- **Student representatives:** UA maintained constant communication with student representatives, creating a bridge between the administration and the student body for rapid feedback and clear messaging.
- **Staff accessibility:** Faculty and administrative staff remained reachable via phone and email, reinforcing the sense of community and ensuring that students could always find someone to answer their questions or listen to their concerns.
- **Individual Communication:** Every email and social media message received from students is handled individually, with responses carefully tailored to each situation rather than delivered through mass communication.

2 | Academic: Light of Learning Amid Chaos

UA adapted swiftly to safeguard learning continuity.

- **Transition to online learning:** Courses were moved online, supported by upgraded digital platforms and resources to ensure accessibility for displaced students and those unable to commute.
- **Session recordings:** All sessions are recorded, allowing students facing connectivity, electricity, or device challenges to access content at a later time.
- **Attendance follow-up:** Attendance is monitored to identify students at risk of disengagement. Those frequently absent will be contacted by the administration to assess their needs and provide support.



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- **Antonine Learning Lab (ALL) support:** ALL provided instructors with innovative tools and teaching strategies, helping them optimize the online classroom experience and maintain high-quality education despite the challenges.
- **Flexible academic calendar:** The academic calendar was extended and adapted to account for disruptions, giving students more time to complete coursework and reducing pressure during uncertain times. Several scenarios were developed based on the expected duration of the war, noting that reading weeks were added to ensure students are well equipped for in-person assessments once on-campus activity resumes.

3 | **Financial:** The Currency of Compassion

Understanding the economic toll of displacement and instability, UA has implemented financial support measures.

- **Financial guidance:** The Office of Social Affairs offers personalized support via phone and email to students facing financial burdens or concerns, emphasizing that their safety and ability to attend classes remain the priority.
- **Rescheduled payments:** Students who contact the Office of Social Affairs to reschedule their payments are provided with flexible options. It should be noted that payment due dates have been automatically postponed for all students.
- **Student emergency support initiative:** A dedicated initiative, to be launched after the war, will provide targeted financial assistance to those most affected (loss of home, employment, or family members, etc.). It aims to cover tuition relief, emergency scholarships, and exceptional hardship grants, ensuring that financial burdens do not prevent students from continuing their education. By planning ahead, UA demonstrates its commitment to long-term recovery and student success beyond the immediate emergency.

4 | **Psychological:** Whispers of Inner Strength

UA prioritized mental health and integral human development, recognizing their critical role in such situations.

- **Mental health tips:** The only post shared on social media (ua.studentlife on Instagram) provided practical advice, offering students coping strategies and tips to navigate these challenging times.
- **24/7 hotline:** A dedicated counseling hotline was made available, ensuring that students could reach out at any time for emotional support.
- **Free consultations:** Students were reminded that online counseling sessions are available free of charge, encouraging them to seek support when needed.

5 | **Community Action:** From Student to Changemaker

UA is proud to continue supporting one of its own students who, in the face of adversity, took initiative by opening a community kitchen to provide hot meals and food assistance to over 500 displaced families during the war. The University has stepped in to support this humanitarian initiative by regularly supplying ingredients to keep the kitchen running, especially when students become agents of change in their communities.

Building on Past Resilience

The collective memory of past hardships, particularly the lessons learned during the COVID-19 pandemic and the Lebanese war of 2024, has shaped a generation of students who are more adaptable and resourceful. For Antonine University, this meant that developing an emergency plan was not starting from scratch. Both the institution and its students had already cultivated a toolkit of resilience, including flexibility in learning, reliance on digital platforms, and a stronger emphasis on community support.

This crisis has reaffirmed UA's vocation: to stand by its students not only as an academic institution, but also as a pillar of social, financial, and psychological support.

With you, through it all.

Fr. Jean Al Alam

Vice Rector for Integral
Human Development

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