

**Address of Professor Salim Daccache s.j. at the University Innovation Fellows ceremony**

**February 24, 2020, 6pm – Auditorium François Bassil, CIS, USJ**

Allow me to say a few words in this event - because it is truly an event.

1. Our University provides an excellent academic process but mostly educates its students and guides them into learning cross-cutting skills like design thinking and critical thinking, developing good judgments and, above all, becoming good and true citizens by acquiring social and civic values not only in theory but also in practice, especially today in our Lebanon in crisis.
2. Design thinking is a part of the education of the youth as a life skill for the future, and it has been an objective of the Jesuit education in schools and universities since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, where the Jesuits' concern was to form well-ordered minds (*tête bien faite*) rather than data-stuffed minds (*tête bien pleine*). In that context, design thinking also nurtures critical thinking since it works on creativity and problems solving all together. These two components are essential to our life and to our day-by-day operations.

We are called to achieve more but we are also called to enhance our lives through the design thinking. It should be a way of life within our family, friends and community circles, and in our professional work; if it seems unnecessary now, it will become necessary in the future. As a practical example, the talk in today's world is about artificial intelligence and the power of artificial intelligence: we should complement the talk by showing the obligation to enhance our natural intelligence in order to accompany the progress of artificial intelligence. Our natural intelligence guides us in our way of seeing the world and in our way of being and becoming as humans aspiring for a better future where we are all together working towards the same mission: the common good in the context of citizenship.

3. This project became a reality thanks to people who believed in you, dear students, and who gave you the means to realize it. I would like to thank your mentor, Dr. Flavia Khatounian; your inspiring spirit, Mrs. Ursula el Hage; Father Fadi, your companion in your trip to the States; and the sponsor for this year: the Alumni Federation of USJ and its President Dr. Christian Makary. I would also

like to thank the authorities of Stanford University and its UIF team for choosing USJ and its students to participate in this project and thus become fellows.

4. Bravo dear students: we are happy to launch today with you the USJ Chapter of the UIF community.
5. My message for you dear students, the team members and the other students, friends today and maybe UIF members tomorrow: do your best to be the change-makers and the change-champions of tomorrow: Lebanon needs you today and tomorrow!

We are here to support you and help you grow, through the Office of the Student Life with the help of Mrs. Gloria Abdo and her team. We will be here to support your projects for your own interest and for the greater good of the community of Lebanon and USJ.