

VISITE D'UNE DÉLÉGATION DE PALESTINE-CISJORDANIE À L'UQAM

Allocution de la rectrice Magda Fusaro (en anglais)

8 octobre 2019

La version prononcée fait foi.

Dear colleagues, dear guests, good afternoon everyone,

On behalf of UQAM and as the rector of the University, I am delighted to welcome you today.

As you may know, UQAM is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. In 50 years, it has become one of the major French-language universities in North America. UQAM is also an urban university, located in the heart of 2 of central Montreal's liveliest districts: the Latin Quarter and the Entertainment District.

We welcome nearly 40,000 students each year, including 3,800 foreign students from 95 countries. More than 269,000 have graduated since our foundation, and 1,155 professors are also contributing to shaping the minds and knowledge, abilities and motivation to learn.

Speaking of students, our records indicate that 2 Palestinian students were enrolled at UQAM this year. One is registered as an undergraduate at the School of Management and the other as a PhD candidate in Chemistry. One has a study permit, while the other is a permanent resident.

UQAM offers more than 300 study programs in 7 main areas: arts, communications, education, management, political science and law, science, and social sciences. Many of these programs are unique in North America.

UQAM is ranked 1st in Quebec and 6th in Canada in terms of research funding for comprehensive universities. The University's researchers, working in more than a hundred research and creative units, are awarded numerous prizes and distinctions each year.

UQAM is a university that has repeatedly demonstrated its accessibility, its humanism, and above all, I might add, its excellency. And how better to highlight those qualities, so unique to us, than by opening our doors to representatives of Palestinian universities.

Under the scientific research collaboration agreement jointly signed by the Fonds de recherche du Québec (FRQ) and the Palestine Academy for Science and Technology (PALAST), we have been able to set up an integration program in Québec universities consisting of scientific missions for researchers from Palestinian universities.

For more than a year, nearly 60 missions have been held in Quebec universities, in very different fields: health sciences, natural sciences and engineering, social sciences and humanities (including economics), as well as arts and letters.

Numerous projects have been completed or are underway between UQAM professors and Palestinians teachers and researchers. I will not have time to quote all of them but here are some of them:

- Olivier Arvisais and Dr. Amjad Joma, from Al-Quds Open University in Gaza, worked to develop a research project on the psychological and physical well-being of students in Gaza schools and its impact on their cognitive development and academic success.
- François Audet, Director of The Montreal Institute of International Studies (IEIM) and Executive Director of the Canadian Research Institute on Humanitarian Crisis and Aid (OCCA), is working on a project in the West Bank camps.
- In the winter of 2019, Anne Latendresse, a professor in the Geography Department, gave 4 lectures on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: 1 as part of a geography course and the other 3 at CEGEPs.
- From May to July, professors Kadri Boualem and Mohamed Khomsî, hosted Professor Jafar Subhi Hardan Abahre from An-Najah National University in Nablus. An article by Professor Jafar on tourism in Palestine ("A SWOT Analysis of the Tourism Industry in the State of Palestine: Steadfastness and Aspiration") was proposed for the thematic issue of the journal *Téoros*, which is being prepared in connection with their research program. Following his stay, Professor Jafar would like to receive teachers in Palestine to provide academic training on tourism.

Nearly all of the professors who hosted a Palestinian researcher under the FRQ-PALAST program mentioned that they would like to see a program created to enable the funding of Palestinian student mobility at the graduate level.

I will conclude my speech with thanks to all of you for your work, and I sincerely hope that your visit will lead to new partnerships, in order to ensure our already rich and fruitful relations.

Now, let me introduce to you my dear colleague, Louise Poissant, former Dean of the Faculty of Arts at UQAM, and current Scientific Director of the FRQ.