

July 9, 2019


Dear Professors Tucker and Brand,

I write in response to your letter of June 7, 2019 with regard to the elimination of the title "Abdulhadi H. Taher Chair in Comparative Religions" at the American University in Cairo. This title ceased to exist on July 1, 2017.

I do so with a sincere sense of collegiality as well as a deep appreciation for the Middle East Studies Association, its Committee on Academic Freedom, and the valuable work that you do. In a profound sense, MESA and AUC have overlapping and complementary missions. And we overlap in a personal way as well: many of our faculty scholars, alumni, students and trustees have close connections and a deep affinity with MESA. We, therefore, take your concerns on this matter seriously.

In light of the sorts of concerns raised in your letter as well as public controversy, I have conducted a review with other leaders of the AUC community of our actions and procedures. I hope you will understand that like most similar institutions, AUC avoids public discussions of personnel matters. That prevents me from discussing all the details of the case or of our internal review. But I do wish to address the concern about general principles. While any dispute among members of our community is unfortunate, I am confident that AUC upheld the sacred values of academic freedom, freedom of expression, and freedom of religion. As a beacon of academic rigor, and perhaps the leading voice for the American liberal-arts tradition in our region, AUC fully appreciates the value of these principles in themselves and as a foundation on which our 100-year legacy is built.

Sincerely,


Ehab Abdel Rahman
Provost
The American University in Cairo