

Dear Ambassador Haddad, Ambassador Mahmoud, dear Dr. Kahwaji, Carla Zarifeh, and Nicolas Haddad, esteemed guests,

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to Simon Fraser University's Burnaby Campus.

As in previous years, we are here to celebrate the International Day of the Lebanese Emigrant and to remember how much our Lebanese friends contribute every day to the cultural richness and diversity that make Canada so unique.

My special thanks go to all those who worked with so much dedication to make this event possible.

Ever since the World Lebanese Cultural Union – BC Council, SFU, and the Centre for the Comparative Study of Muslim Societies and Cultures joined forces in 2009 to honor the life and work of the great Lebanese poet Khalil Gibran with this beautiful monument, SFU's relationship with the Lebanese community in British Columbia and beyond has been a very special one.

I look forward to many years of joint projects and fruitful cooperation.

Enjoy the event.

**Dr. Thomas Kuehn,
the Director of the Centre for the Comparative Study of
Muslim Societies and Cultures**