"When this Institution was first conceived, those who participated in its conception, particularly the Harvard Team, underlined the severe lack of research capacity, research activity in higher education in the Third World. So from the earliest days of the thinking of this institution it was underlined how essential research would be to make this institution a significant player in the teaching of medicine in the sub-continent and indeed further a field. It was also underlined that in our own Islamic tradition, research has been fundamentally important and whether its in medicine, whether its in ophthalmology, whether its in astronomy, there are numerous names of Muslims who have been part of our civilisations in the past whose methodologies, and not only their discoveries, but their methodology contributed significantly to knowledge at the time and on which modern knowledge is significantly based.

"Another aspect was that it was unlikely that our Faculty or that our Graduate students, those who are going for Masters or Doctors Degrees, could give real meaning to their work without research....

"Hopefully, one day, our research will be meaningful for much of Asia and Africa because it is here that we should be doing research. I would like to point out also that whereas the Trustees, the Chancellor have been invited to sustain research at AKU. It is really our society that has to sustain research not just our university. And I think this is time for us to look at this issue on a national basis and not just on an institutional basis, because it is only when a nation commits to forward thinking that it can really aspire to be a significant player in world affairs."
"[T]he university must continue to expand its programmes of research. The true sign of maturity and excellence in a university is its ability to contribute to the knowledge of mankind, in its own society and beyond. It is equally essential that its faculty be challenged, as a matter of university policy, to expand the boundaries of human knowledge. Any vestige of dependence is cast off, any suspicion of a young scientist or scholar that he or she may sacrifice intellectual excitement by leaving the West is allayed, when a university becomes known for generating new ideas, making new discoveries and influencing events.

"Some of this research will be in advanced realms of the medical sciences, for AKU, and Pakistan, must be part of the international edifice of inquiry in such fields as microbiology and biochemistry that will contribute much to the quality of human life in the coming century. But, because this is AKU, such work will usually be targeted, like the genetic research mentioned by the President, in an area, such as hypertension, of great concern to the people of Pakistan.

"Much AKU research, however, will focus on pressing issues of public policy. This naturally follows the precepts of Islam, that the scientific application of reason, the building of society and the refining of human aspirations and ethics should always reinforce one another. The university -- and notably the Department of Community Health Sciences -- is already developing strength in applied research. This has enabled it to develop very productive relations between AKU scholars and scientists and provincial, federal and aid agency policy makers in such fields as nutrition, educational testing, maternal and child health, immunisation strategies and vaccine development and epidemiology."
"So important is this growing research capacity and informed discourse with policy makers, that the university must strengthen its public policy commitment. Large problem areas, for human development, and bio-ethics, to economic growth, and human settlements, desperately need systematic thought and information, and, whether through an Institute of Public Policy, or through policy units in existing departments, or even fully developed new faculties, AKU will pledge its energies and imagination to advancing effective public policy."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2003 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/6830/

"[L]et me mention two investment areas that are most sadly short-changed in the developing world. The first is research, and the second is education.

"The intimate link between quality research and quality health care is well established. Productive research needs to be rooted in patient-based experience, even as sound practice must be informed by new knowledge. The two dimensions are mutually dependent.

"This combination of informed practice and creative research will also provide an ideal context for superior medical education -- and thus for building an expanded corps of accomplished medical professionals here in East Africa."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2011 Heart and Cancer Centre Opening Ceremony, Aga Khan University Hospital, address (Nairobi, Kenya)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/9951/

"After thoroughly examining a wide range of alternatives, the university focused on development concepts which emphasised offering educational programs of excellence to students who are
likely to make significant contributions to their societies. It stressed the need to develop more insightful research on critical issues, and to set examples of high quality education that could exert a constructive influence on other centres of learning within and beyond the Muslim world. In summary, if our university is to be useful to Pakistan and the developing world, we must not simply do things which are done well elsewhere. We must, rather, focus on what needs to be improved, and resolve to do it better than before and, indeed, better than at most other institutions. To fulfil its role, and remain true to its Charter, the university must continue to grow. It must continue to improve its capabilities to impart knowledge and solve complex problems which increasingly have their roots in global issues. It must increase its capability to operate on a world scale in order to be effective at a community level. It must not be time-bound if it is to stay ahead of the rapid pace of global technological change."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 1996 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/5197/

"We are strengthening our research activities. Universities have a special obligation to produce new knowledge -- though always within ethical bounds. But in the Knowledge Society, productive research is most often partnership research -- as universities work closely with businesses, industrial associations, engineering centres and scientific laboratories -- sharing agendas and exchanging insights. New knowledge is a constantly unfolding gift of God -- but it is rarely something that is achieved in isolation.

"We will be building alliances with other Universities around the world -- opening study and research opportunities for students and faculties alike. The result will be the development of truly global citizens, graduates who have studied in a variety of places -- among people from a variety of backgrounds, fostering a better understanding of a diverse and complex world. In an era of breath-taking change and bewildering complexity, we choose not to pull
back or to settle down, but instead to reach out and push forward.

"The path we have chosen is not easy to chart -- and it is certainly not risk free. But it is both a necessary and an exciting road -- filled with the promise of high adventure."

His Highness the Aga Khan's 2006 Aga Khan University Convocation Ceremony address (Karachi, Pakistan)
http://www.nanowisdoms.org/nwblog/7997/

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 1/5: Rational, vision and hopes

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 2/5: The School of Nursing

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 3/5: Institute for Educational Development

See also: His Highness the Aga Khan on the Aga Khan University - Part 5/5: The Future