



Self-Study Report

Prepared for
The Middle States Commission on Higher Education

American University of Beirut
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Glossary of Key Acronyms

AAC&U: Association of American Colleges & Universities
AAU: Academic Assessment Unit
ABET: Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology
ADA: Americans with Disabilities Act
ADPR: Annual Departmental Progress Report
AEO: Accessible Education Office
AI: Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship
AREC: Advancing Research Enabling Communities Center
ASP: Academic Strategic Plan
AUB: American University of Beirut
AUBMC: AUB Medical Center
AVP: Associate Vice President
AY: Academic Year
BOD: Board of Deans
BOT: Board of Trustees
CAAP: Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency
CCECS: Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service
CCNNE: Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education
CEC: Continuing Education Center
CFO: Chief Financial Officer
CHSC: Charles W. Hostler Student Center
CITI: Collaborative Institution Training Initiative
CIO: Chief Information Officer
CMP: Campus Master Plan
COO: Chief Operating Officer
COS: College Outcomes Survey
CPHP: Center for Public Health Practice
CRInn: Centre for Research and Innovation
CRPH: Center for Research on Population and Health
CRS: Collaborative Research Stimulus
CTL: Center for Teaching and Learning
ELT: Executive Leadership Team
ESMU: the Enrollment Statistics and Management Unit
EVP: Executive Vice President
FAFS: Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences
FAS: Faculty of Arts and Sciences
FHS: Faculty of Health Sciences
FM: Faculty of Medicine
FPC: Financial Planning Committee
FPDU: Facilities Planning and Design Unit
FY: Fiscal Year
GA: Graduate Assistantship
GE: General Education
GHI: Global Health Institute
HERI: Faculty Surveys
HIP: High-Impact Practices
HR: Human Resources
HSO: Hariri School of Nursing [Rafic]
IAC: Institutional Assessment Committee

IAO: Internal Audit Office
ICE: Instructor Course Evaluation
IFI: Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs
IOEC: Irani Oxy Engineering Complex
IRB: Institutional Review Board
JFRL: Junior Faculty Research Leaves
K2P: Knowledge-to-Policy
KPI: Key Performance Indicators
LDEM: Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management
LEAD: Leadership, Equity, and Diversity
LEED: Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design
MENA: Middle East and North Africa Region
MEPI: Middle East Partnership Initiative
MSCHE: Middle States Commission on Higher Education
MSFEA: Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture
NSSE: National Survey of Student Engagement
NYSED: New York State Education Department
OFA: Office of Financial Aid
OFFP: Office of Financial Planning
OGC: Office of Grants and Contracts
OIRA: Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
OSB: Suliman S. Olayan School of Business
OSA: Office of Student Affairs
Policy on Policies: Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals
PPD: Physical Plant Department
PPRC: The Policies and Procedures Review Committee
PLOs: Program Learning Outcomes
PPR: Periodic Program Review
PPRL: Periodic Paid Research Leaves
PRO-GREEN: Professional Post-Graduate Diploma in Green Technologies
REP: Office of Regional External Programs
ROA: Requirement of Affiliation
SC: Self-Study Steering Committee
SCFA: Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs
SBS: Social and Behavioral Sciences
SFPSC: Strategic and Financial Planning Steering Committee
SoTL: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning
SSC: Senate Steering Committee
TDC: Tenure Design Committee
UPP: University Preparatory Program
URB: University Research Board
UL: University Libraries
USFC: University Student Faculty Committee
USP: University Scholarship Program
VP: Vice President
WAAAUB: Worldwide AUB Alumni Association
WFME: World Federation for Medical Education
WG: Working Group



Executive Summary

This report is the result of a two-year self-study of the academic and administrative operations of the American University of Beirut (AUB) by faculty, staff, and graduate and undergraduate students, in application for reaccreditation by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE). The report provides evidence of the university's delivery of high quality teaching, learning, scholarly research, and administrative services while fostering an atmosphere of inclusivity, integrity, and transparency. These achievements are made despite the university existing in a setting marked by considerable external challenges, which include the legacy of civil war in Lebanon's recent past and the continuing structural weakness of the state, as well as ongoing conflicts in the region. However, it is shown that the university has been able and continues to apply itself to these conditions by addressing urgent humanitarian needs and implementing longer-term strategies to elevate and impact society. AUB has also increased its efforts to make higher education more accessible to students from underserved communities, including refugees whose population per capita in Lebanon is the highest in the world.

The main body of the report consists of analysis of the university's key operations carried out by seven dedicated working groups (WGs) following a self-study design put forward by the AUB Self-Study Steering Committee (SC), chaired by Provost Mohamed Harajli, reflecting the seven standards for accreditation specified by the commission. These cover 1) the university's mission and goals, 2) its ethical standards, 3) the student learning experience, 4) its effective support of students, 5) assessment of educational effectiveness, 6) planning, resources, and institutional improvement processes, and 7) its governance and administration. Each WG engaged in a process of open inquiry to recognize institutional strengths, challenges, and areas that require further attention and improvement.

The working groups' inquiries found the university to be in compliance with the requirements for re-accreditation, while identifying potential areas for improvement. The principle findings were as follows: 1) AUB has a clearly articulated and relevant mission which guides research, teaching, and service activities and the university develops its strategic goals in close alignment to this mission; 2) a properly communicated ethical framework underpins the culture of the university and is used to conceive and implement improvements to existing systems and practices; 3) the student learning experience is designed and delivered by qualified faculty members who undergo regular evaluation and are given the resources they need to fulfill the educational role; 4) a holistic student experience is provided through extracurricular activities, with financial assistance to foster a diverse student body and programs in place to support student success where required; 5) the assessment and review of programs is based on data gathered within a range of disciplines and ensures the provision of quality education that responds to the needs of employers and society; 6) the leadership of administrative and academic units at all levels is accountable and effective, with separation of powers to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of university operations.

The different WGs identified 21 areas for improvement within their purviews. The SC reviewed these and proposed a subset of 12 chapter-specific recommendations and one overall recommendation, which are actionable and tied to strategic priorities, and will have an immediate and substantive impact on the institution.

To support its mission and goals, the university should (1) create mechanisms for triggering a review of the mission statement and development of strategic plans and (2) develop initiatives to illustrate how the mission fosters personal integrity, lifelong learning, and commitment to freedom of thought and expression. To foster ethics and integrity, the university should (3) create sustainable and well defined systems for their improvement on a continuous basis, including hiring an ombuds and creating an office for ethics and integrity. For student learning, the university should (4) assess the sustainability of some graduate master programs and reduce time to degree for graduate programs, and (5) assess and address the low retention and graduation rate of freshman students. To support the student experience, the university should (6) transform its advising system to a clear, comprehensive, and fully integrated model which prepares and motivates advisers and assesses performance and (7) expand the athletic program with scholarships. For academic assessment, the university should (8) establish a well-defined mechanism for the integration and continuous improvement of educational assessment processes and (9) review all program learning outcomes and make assessment of graduate programs mandatory. For planning, resources, and institutional improvement, the university should (10) ensure all planning for non-academic units is aligned with their strategic goals, and coordination and streamlining takes place among non-academic units and with academic units. Regarding governance, leadership, and administration, the university should (11) develop guidelines for assessment of administrators and unit heads and link it to strategic goals and (12) enhance the culture of accountability with a sustainable, effective, and well-publicized compliance program.

Overall, the self-study revealed the need to develop a strategy for effective communication among the different AUB constituencies, especially for the promotion of transparency, and for the purposes of disseminating and increasing awareness of institutional values and of the university strategic plan and its related initiatives.

AUB embarked on this self-study report as it was celebrating its sesquicentennial, with an extensive 12-month calendar of events to mark its academic and social impact over a century and a half. At the same time, the university started drawing up a new academic strategic plan and a campus master plan guided by the institutional mission, and was preparing to launch the most ambitious capital campaign in its history to fund a sustainable future. As the report has taken shape, the university has made tangible progress on all of three tracks, as the community has been galvanized by a renewal sense of the AUB's purpose amid difficult circumstances. While challenges remain, there is consensus that the objective scrutiny and communication of strengths and areas of improvement has been a salutary process that will help secure advances towards the university's educational and institutional future.





Introduction

Founded in 1866, the American University of Beirut (AUB) is a private, non-sectarian, non-profit university whose campus is located in the heart of Beirut, Lebanon, overlooking the Mediterranean Sea. It is governed by a private, autonomous Board of Trustees (BOT). AUB is one of the oldest and most reputable institutions of higher education in the Middle East. Since its establishment, AUB has been the most influential proponent of liberal education and high-quality research in the Arab world.

The AUB campus includes the [Charles W. Hostler Student Center](#), five [libraries](#), computer labs, dormitories, an [archaeological museum](#), [art galleries](#), a [natural history museum](#), athletic fields, a private beach, a repository of native and non-native trees and shrubs, and one of Lebanon's few geological collections. As such, it has become a much-loved feature of the city of Beirut. In addition, AUB maintains a 247-acre [Advancing Research Enabling Communities Center](#) (AREC) located in Lebanon's Beqaa Valley. To reaffirm its commitment and responsibility as a custodian of its natural environment, AUB designated its campus as a [botanic garden](#) in 2016.

I. Brief Institutional Overview

The university's seven faculties/schools include: the [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences](#) (FAFS), the [Faculty of Arts and Sciences](#) (FAS), the [Faculty of Health Sciences](#) (FHS), the [Faculty of Medicine](#) (FM), the [Rafic Hariri School of Nursing](#) (HSON), the [Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture](#) (MSFEA), and the [Suliman S. Olayan School of Business](#) (OSB). In 1902, the [AUB Medical Center](#) (AUBMC) was created to educate medical students and professionals, provide clinical care, and conduct research.

AUB operates under a charter granted by the New York State Education Department (NYSED) which registers the university's degree programs. AUB degrees are also recognized by the Lebanese government through the equivalence committees of the Ministry of Education and Higher Education. The university offers degree-seeking academic programs leading to bachelor's (51), master's (77), doctoral (12) and MD degrees. It also offers certificates and diplomas (36). With the reintroduction of PhD programs in eight specialties in 2007–08, AUB became the first US-accredited university in the Arab world to offer doctoral degrees.

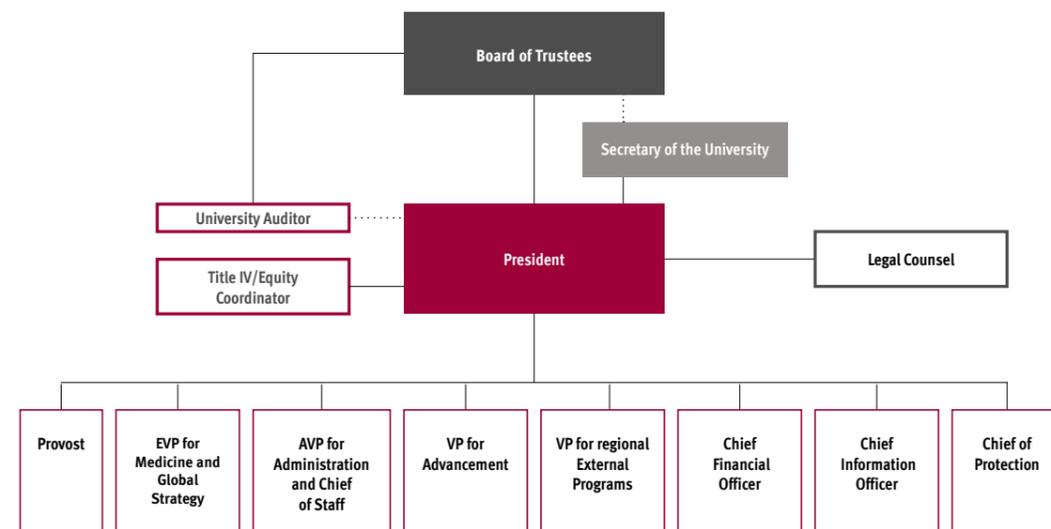
In AY 2018–19, the university student body numbered 9,468 students, of whom 7,338 were undergraduates, 1,475 were graduates (master students), 166 were doctoral students, and 432 were studying for their MD. There were 57 students enrolled in the Online Progreen Diploma Program. Female:male gender distribution stands at 49:51 for undergraduates and 68:32 for graduate students. Around 26 percent of undergraduate students hold a non-Lebanese passport (including dual nationals); whereas for graduate, doctoral, and medical students, the percentage of holders of a non-Lebanese passport, who represent some 89 countries, is around 18 percent.

The total number of full-time instructional faculty in AY 2018–19 was 646; in addition, there were 268 full-time clinical faculty in FM, which brings the total full-time faculty to 914. The faculty headcount, including clinical and part-time faculty, is 1,200. Around 37 percent of the faculty members are international. The female:male gender distribution is 42:58. The student:faculty ratio is about 11:1.

The total number of full-time non-academic staff at AUB and AUBMC is 4,395. The headcount includes employees in all grades. The gender distribution is 40% female and 60% male at AUB, and 52% female and 48% male at AUBMC.

The university leadership consists of the president, the provost, the executive vice-president (EVP), the associate vice-president (AVP) for administration and chief of staff, two vice-presidents (VPs), the chief financial officer (CFO), the chief information officer (CIO), and the chief of protection, as seen in [Figure 0.1](#).

Figure 0.1 University leadership



Dr. Peter Dorman stepped down in 2014, after six years of distinguished service as president of AUB. He remained in place until the following year and President Fadlo R. Khuri, MD assumed office in September 2015, as AUB’s 16th president. Also in 2015, Dr. Mohamed Harajli succeeded Dr. Ahmad Dallal who served as provost of AUB between 2009 and 2015. In the three years of Dr. Khuri’s tenure as president of AUB, there has been considerable administrative renewal. Four new deans have been appointed, with one more search still under way in 2018; and some reorganization in the leadership team took place, including at the level of the chief operating officer position. This was mainly due to retirements, departures for leadership roles at other institutions, and for the purpose of strengthening the operations.

This reorganization also coincided with major projects to expand and renovate AUB’s academic spaces [R0.1]. AUB purchased new lots to relocate some administrative and servicing units and open the way for the expansion of existing buildings and the construction of new ones. In June 2018, the Facilities Planning and Design Unit (FPDU) completed the construction of the Munib and Angela Masri Building, designed to accommodate additional research spaces and faculty offices, as well as classrooms. Penrose Hall, one of two on-campus men’s dormitory buildings, is undergoing a major rehabilitation, which is expected to be completed in spring 2019. FPDU also oversaw the upgrade of old classrooms in various buildings across campus, the renovation of the reserve reading room in Jafet Library, and the relocation of the AUB Bookstore to a more central location on campus.

II. Mission, Vision and Strategic Themes

AUB’s institutional goals, as expressed in its **mission**, are “to provide excellence in education, to participate in the advancement of knowledge through research, and to serve the peoples of the Middle East and beyond.” This mission also affirms AUB’s identity, values, and its founding principles: “the university bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. The university believes deeply in and encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue. Graduates will be individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership.”

When Dr. Khuri assumed office in September 2015, it was a top priority to respond to the challenges of rapidly evolving national, regional, and international demands and changes, and to set AUB on the path towards 2030. VITAL, an acronym representing the five main strategic themes in President Khuri’s vision for AUB in 2030, supports AUB’s institutional goals and builds on its mission (A0.1, A0.2). **VITAL** stands for: **V**aluing our community and sharing our values; **I**ntegrating a humanities, technology, and purpose-based education; **T**ransforming the university experience; **A**dvancing a world-class research agenda; and **L**ifting the quality of health and medicine across our region. The aim is to continue producing young leaders who will make a difference in Lebanon, the region, and beyond, through a commitment to supporting innovative and impactful teaching and research, and to an inclusive campus that is also economically, environmentally, and ethically sustainable. This strategic vision was presented to the BOT in November 2018. It

integrates the 2016 Academic Strategic Plan (ASP), which was developed in alignment with the campus master plan and the most ambitious capital campaign to date (see [Chapter 1](#)).

III. Recent Developments and Initiatives

In 2019, **AUB ranked 237th**, according to QS World University Rankings, and second in the Arab world, according to QS Arab Region University Rankings. AUB’s strong performance in these rankings is attributed primarily to its outstanding regional and international academic and employer reputations, faculty-to-student ratio, and research quality and quantity (being one of only two universities to rank among the top 10 in the Arab world in all these five categories). According to both Scopus and Web of Science databases, AUB takes the lead (as first or corresponding author) in its research, more than any other four-year university in the Arab world, and publishes half of its research papers in Q1 and Q2 journals, similar to its US peer institutions—Drexel, George Washington, Loyola Chicago, and Saint Louis. When rankings provided by QS, Times Higher Education, and US News and World Report global university rankings are examined collectively, AUB is found to be the only university in the Arab world to rank among the top in all of the following areas together: arts and humanities, business, engineering, health sciences, medicine, nursing, and social sciences. These rankings and the reports from the faculties and other units on their new initiatives and key achievements during the past five years are a clear attestation to AUB’s drive for continued excellence in teaching, research, and service, and for a leading role in the region and worldwide (A0.3). Further evidence can be found in the various recent developments and initiatives AUB has undertaken in pursuit of its vision and strategic goals.

1. Capital Campaign and Campus Master Plan

In 2016, AUB celebrated its **sesquicentennial** with a successful and diverse anniversary calendar, which concluded with the launching of **BOLDLY AUB: The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve**, the largest and most ambitious capital campaign in the history of the university (and the largest for a private not-for-profit institution of higher education in the Middle East), with a target of \$650 million, in support of AUB’s 2030 vision.

The five objectives of the campaign, which constitute its pillars, are: enriching education and research, enhancing healthcare, supporting interdisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship, solidifying community relevance, and ensuring sustainability. The capital funds are intended to support resourcing more doctoral programs, establishing centers of excellence, and building new infrastructures and facilities to foster innovation, enhance cross-disciplinary collaborations, and house a planned growth of the student body. To date, the campaign has raised around **\$449 million** towards fulfilling its objectives. The president, the provost, the EVP, and all the academic deans have been personally involved in approaches to and negotiations of several key donations.

The capital campaign is coupled with a campus master plan meant to redesign the campus in such a way as to make it friendly to faculty, students, and staff, keep it in harmony with nature, and offer more opportunities for sharing, integrating and consolidating space. AUB constituents were engaged to inform and shape the concept master plan. Since this effort has started in March 2016, over 500 faculty, staff and students, along with teams from Dar al-Handasah and Perkins+Will, have come together in extensive meetings spread over three rounds (August 2016, January and April 2017) to move the strategic and master planning efforts forward. The final project report was presented to the BOT in June 2017 and approved in November of the same year. The projects arising from the campus master plan entail having new academic buildings, including a science complex and a health sciences complex, a performance art center, new and improved amenities for students, and an energy and an infrastructure tunnel to serve the whole campus.

BOLDLY AUB maintains a balance between capital/infrastructure priorities and academic priorities, which was the result of diligent work integrating AUB’s academic strategic plan and the campus master plan, and aims at diversifying the revenue stream of the university and supporting its 2030 vision.

2. Gender, Equity, and Title IX

Institutional programs and initiatives related to gender and equity are thriving across the university. Presidential initiatives include the Task Force on the Lives and Careers of Women Faculty, which developed recommendations based on collection and assessment

of quantitative, qualitative, and comparative data. A [standing committee](#) was established in March 2018 to institutionalize these efforts. The Equity and Title IX Policy Working Group conducted a comprehensive review of the organizational structure, policies, and practices for addressing discrimination, with a particular focus on harassment prohibited by the gender equity law. Based on its recommendations, the policy framework for non-discrimination and harassment is being substantively revised. Since September 2015, strong leadership by the administration has engendered a foundational yet robust Equity and Title IX program. Awareness, prevention, and training efforts were significantly expanded beginning in 2016 and until today.

3. *AUB's Research Profile*

In addition to being effective teachers, faculty members at AUB are accomplished scholars and active participants in their fields. It is thanks to their professional engagement and commitment that AUB has managed to continue increasing its research output on an annual basis, moving from some 490 journal articles in 2007 to over 1,000 articles in 2018, according to Scopus. Although considered small in size in comparison to most of the Arab world's 1,000 colleges and universities, AUB continues to rank among the 15 most published universities, producing over 1.5 percent of the entire region's total output of journal articles (Scopus and Web of Science, November 2018). AUB generates or contributes to 40 percent of Lebanon's entire research output.

4. *Reinstatement of Tenure*

A historic achievement of the university was made on November 20, 2015, when the BOT voted to reinstate tenure after a hiatus of more than 30 years. Following this decision, a university-wide Tenure Design Committee (TDC), composed of faculty, administrators, and BOT members, was appointed with the charge to develop a comprehensive design for the tenure system. The TDC submitted its report with a proposal for the design of the new tenure system, including mechanisms for the transition of in-post faculty members. The proposal was approved by the University Senate, the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT and the full BOT for effective implementation in September 2017. In November 2017, the BOT awarded tenure to the president. The provost and the EVP for medicine and global affairs were granted tenure in January 2018. In March 2018, the BOT approved the grant of tenure for all the deans and the director of HSON. In June 2018, for the first time in 33 years, a new cohort of 73 faculty members was granted tenure. The Office of the Provost has overseen the process of developing and revising the necessary policies for the reinstatement of tenure, which required the creation of several [ad hoc committees and task forces](#) to ensure that all the relevant dimensions of this important initiative are put in place.

With tenure, AUB will be able to better attract and retain top faculty who can offer high-quality and high-impact research and provide faculty members the academic freedom to explore new areas of inquiry, focus on innovative scholarship, and set long-term research agendas. Tenure will enhance and enforce AUB's position as the premier liberal arts institution in the Middle East.

5. *Education*

At FM, the Impact Curriculum was introduced in the fall of 2013: a new, student-centered, integrated, and competency based medical program that primarily uses active and contextual learning approaches to develop the knowledge, skills, attitudes and behaviors expected of a physician. The mission of the curriculum is to graduate physicians with the requisite knowledge, skills, and attributes to become the healers, educators, scientists, and patient advocates of the future. All the educational outcomes of the program, as well as the details of the Impact Curriculum, are continuously communicated to students and available to the public primarily through the FM website.

In fall 2017, AUB initiated an extensive revision of its general education (GE) program. In order to create a new model, unique to the region, and a more coherent and shared university experience, a new core curriculum is being developed, under the leadership of a newly appointed director of the GE program. This university-wide project uses a participatory approach to curriculum development and aims to give students the opportunity to nurture their habits of mind in critical thinking and evidence-based analytic reasoning, while sharpening their communicative and demonstrative skills, as well as

infusing their common learning experience with a thoughtful and ethical sense of civic responsibility. Five task forces have been formed in April 2018 to lead the design phase of the project. They comprise more than 50 faculty members representing all the faculties/schools at AUB. These task forces will work towards the projected timeframe of launching the project in the spring of 2020.

6. *Diversity and Access*

In light of AUB's educational mission and commitment to making higher education more accessible and responsive to underserved communities, AUB established the Leadership, Equity, and Diversity (LEAD) initiative in 2016 to promote the principles of inclusion, diversity, and equity in higher education. This initiative helps in facilitating educational opportunities to academically qualified but financially disadvantaged students who have leadership potential. Currently, LEAD hosts several existing scholarship programs including the MasterCard Foundation Scholars Program that will offer 180 scholarships over 6 years to graduate and undergraduate students from Africa (50 percent) and Lebanon; the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI), which currently offers over 60 comprehensive scholarships to undergraduate students from the Middle East and North Africa Region (MENA), with emphasis on countries and territories in conflict; the USAID University Scholarship Program, which offers, every year, undergraduate scholarships to over 50 male and female public school students from the 26 districts of Lebanon; and the Abdulla Al Ghurair Foundation for Education program which, through its STEM Scholars Program, offers scholarships to around 87 eligible graduate and undergraduate students ([Chapter 3, Section II](#)).

The [Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service](#) (CCECS), established in 2008, helps to build bridges between the AUB community and stakeholders, and humanitarian agencies, in order to facilitate change in marginalized landscapes and support transformative education for AUB students. As a confirmation of the scale and impact of AUB's transformative initiatives, it was ranked as the "most civically engaged campus" in the MENA in a first regional annual competition held by the Ma'an Arab University Alliance in 2015. In 2018, AUB received the Honorary Award at the SXSW EDU Learn by Design competition held in Austin, Texas for CCECS's Ghata (Arabic word for "cover"), a project that tackles the education of Syrian refugees in informal settlements. Ghata has also been shortlisted for the 2018 WISE (World Innovative Summit for Education) Award.

7. *Local and Social Impact*

To fulfill its service mission, AUB has always sought to have greater impact on the societies and communities of Lebanon and the region. In line with these goals, the [Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy](#) (IFI) was inaugurated in 2006 to harness and disseminate the policy-related research of AUB's faculty and scholars. [IFI's programs](#) aim to create a space for the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas among researchers, civil society actors, and policy makers. More recently, in 2012, the [Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship](#) (AI) was established as a regional hub for advancing evidence-based and realistic solutions to the obstacles to effective civil society and citizenship in the Arab World. Through education and research, AI aims to support the development of an informed and engaged citizenry. Furthermore, in a region of continuous unrest, AUB has always played a pivotal role in addressing urgent societal needs. The past decade specifically was a period of major leaps made with regard to significant initiatives which started at individual faculties/schools and then expanded to the university level and beyond. Overall, there are nearly 70 projects and initiatives across AUB faculties/schools and interdisciplinary institutes and centers, all addressing societal issues and making a significant impact. Those include: the [University for Seniors](#), founded in 2010, a life-long learning initiative for older adults who are given the opportunity to share their wisdom and passion, and to learn things they have always wanted to learn; the [#AUB4Refugees](#) initiative, launched in fall 2016, which provides a platform for more than 60 cutting-edge projects undertaken by AUB teams with Syrian refugees and their host communities in Lebanon; the [Neighborhood Initiative](#) established in 2007 to lead AUB's engagement with its neighborhood and promote livability, vitality, and diversity in the surrounding area of Ras Beirut, through innovative outreach activities and multidisciplinary research; and the [Nature Conservation Center](#), founded in 2002, as a unique academic center in the region, whose vision is to empower people to become guardians of their nature, by disseminating knowledge grounded in research and organizing outreach activities in the community, and in collaboration with the public sector. In July 2017, the first [Global Health Institute](#) (GHI)

in the region was established, as “part of AUB’s efforts towards the development of a sustainable future for health in the Arab World.” GHI has launched three interdisciplinary programs: conflict medicine, refugee health, and nutrition, obesity and related diseases, all of which have included capacity-building events and outreach activities.

8. *AUB’s Global Reach*

AUB maintains partnerships with more than 300 institutions, including universities, international organizations, and private businesses. The university administration has recently sought to build its partnerships strategically, as a path to synergy in areas where all partners are outstanding. Recently, AUB has signed partnership agreements with Trinity College Dublin, Johns Hopkins University, University of Michigan, and Emory University; a cotutelle PhD agreement with Paris Descartes University; a major joint grant with the University College London on how to create partnerships between displaced persons and the villages and towns they reside in; and a strategic framework for collaboration with Médecins Sans Frontières. In January 2018, and for the first time in history, AUB and its sister Université Saint-Joseph, the two oldest institutions of higher education in Lebanon, signed a partnership agreement designed to allow the exploration of joint academic programs, the identification of joint funding opportunities, and student and staff exchanges.

The [New York-Beirut Briefings](#) series is a presidential initiative launched in August 2017, which uses AUB’s New York office as a platform to disseminate AUB’s research and reach out to colleagues and audiences in the US and around the world. Monthly live briefings at the AUB New York City Office invited professors in Beirut and New York to discuss their latest research on timely topics (e.g., climate change, women in Arab politics, food security, foreign media coverage of the Middle East, water, etc.) Video-linked discussions follow among faculty, students, and invited guests in Beirut and New York, with key results of each 90-minute event disseminated widely via [social media](#).

IV. The Self-Study

1. *Brief Accreditation History*

AUB was first accredited by the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) in June 2004. Accreditation was reaffirmed in 2009 and 2014. Six of AUB’s faculties/schools have earned accreditation from relevant accrediting bodies as listed below. In many cases, AUB’s faculties/schools are the first or the only ones of their kind outside of the United States to have programs accredited by US agencies:

- FAFS’s undergraduate Nutrition and Dietetics Coordinated Program (NDCP) was the first nutrition and dietetics program in the Middle East to receive US accreditation, in 2013, from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND), which is the Academy of Nutrition & Dietetics’ accrediting agency of nutrition education programs. The program secured full re-accreditation, for the maximum allowable time of seven years, in 2017.
- MSFEA’s BE in civil engineering, BE in computer and communications engineering, BE in electrical and computer engineering, and BE in mechanical engineering were accredited by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) in 2008 (reaffirmed in 2016). MSFEA’s undergraduate program in chemical engineering was also accredited by ABET in 2013.
- FHS’s Graduate Public Health Program became the first such program to be accredited by the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) outside of North America in 2006 (reaffirmed in 2012)
- FM’s residency training programs in internal medicine, family medicine, emergency medicine, and obstetrics and gynecology acquired Foundational and Advanced Specialty accreditations from the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education-International (ACGME-I) in 2015 (reaffirmed in 2017). They were followed by the residency training programs in general surgery, and psychiatry in 2016 (reaffirmed in 2018), and the residency training programs in anesthesiology, diagnostic radiology, ophthalmology, otolaryngology, neurology, pediatrics in 2016 and the residency training programs in dermatology, neurosurgery, plastic surgery, radiation oncology

and orthopedic surgery in 2017. In 2018, six residency programs applied for “continued accreditation” (Anesthesiology, Diagnostic Radiology, Ophthalmology, Otolaryngology, Neurology, and Pediatrics) and one residency program applied for “initial accreditation” (Urology). [Effective July 1, 2019](#), graduates of FM ACGME-I accredited residency programs will be eligible to apply for US ACGME fellowship programs in all fields except for fellowships in neurosurgery.

- FM was recently accredited by the Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs, the authorized medical school accrediting body of the World Federation for Medical Education (WFME) based in Turkey (December, 2018). This accreditation places FM in compliance with the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates requirement.
- HSON became the first nursing school outside American territories to have its BSN and master’s of science in nursing programs accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) in 2007 (reaffirmed in 2012).
- OSB is accredited by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business. It was the first school of business in Lebanon to earn this accreditation in 2009 (reaffirmed in 2014).

2. *Self-Study Process*

For the purpose of the self-study, AUB used a comprehensive model to address the seven standards for accreditation and for the verification of compliance with accreditation-relevant federal regulations.

The AUB Self-Study Steering Committee (SC) was appointed by the president on December 2, 2016. The SC is chaired by Provost Mohamed Harajli and co-chaired by former Interim Associate Provost Hala Muhtasib, with Dr. Saouma Boujaoude serving as vice chair. Having served as chairs of working groups (WGs) for the previous two self-studies that AUB undertook, the SC leadership has extensive experience with accreditation. The SC members included faculty, staff, and both graduate and undergraduate students, and were selected for their expertise in key functions of the university as well as their overall knowledge of and commitment to AUB. The seven faculties/schools at the university are represented on the SC. Having the provost serve as chair together with Dr. Boujaoude, who is FAS associate dean and director of AUB’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), as the vice chair reflects the university’s commitment to shared governance. The SC consists of 25 members, 14 of whom serve as co-chairs of the seven WGs, with each WG charged with addressing one of the seven standards for accreditation, and a chair who leads the eighth WG concerned with the verification of compliance. Three members of the SC serve as the editing subcommittee comprised of the AVP for communications and two faculty members in the Department of English.

On December 15, 2016, the president issued an invitation [letter](#) to solicit volunteers from the AUB community (faculty and staff) to serve on one of the eight WGs. Members were also appointed by the provost and by the WGs’ co-chairs for the scope of their work and for representation required from various constituencies. As for students, the deans of faculties/schools nominated students (undergraduate and graduate) to serve on the various WGs. Overall, **150** faculty, staff, and students participated in the self-study, thereby representing both the academic and administrative units of AUB.

The SC developed the self-study timeline and attempted to give sufficient time to the WGs to address the standards; conduct research; analyze findings; and draft, discuss, and review the reports with campus stakeholders. A draft Documentation Roadmap was also developed and was continuously reviewed and updated by the WGs. WGs drafted [questions stated in the Self-Study Design](#) that address the standard criteria, the requirements of affiliation (ROAs) aligned with their respective standards, and others linked or related to institutional strategic priorities.

During the development of the self-study, areas of improvement for which quick fixes were identified were promptly addressed, especially if they related to the absence of published processes, which were nevertheless shared and practiced in the AUB community. For instance, the absence of a clear process for following up on student complaints was quickly remedied by creating an [online platform](#) for students to lodge different types of complaints, which allowed those complaints to be documented and facilitated follow-ups.

3. *Self-Study Timeline*

- **December 2016:** Selection and kick-off meeting of the SC members
- **December 2016–February 2017:** Creation of eight WGs (each co-chaired by two SC members)
- **April 2017:** Creation of the self-study design and submission to the MSCHE liaison
- **April 2017:** Meeting with MSCHE liaison held via videoconference
- **May 2017:** WGs begin their analyses
- **September–October 2017:** Progress updates from co-chairs of each WG
- **December 2017:** First drafts of WG reports due
- **February–March 2018:** Second drafts of WG reports due
- **June 2018:** Co-chairs of SC compose first draft of complete self-study
- **July–August 2018:** Community review and discussion of self-study draft
- **October 10–12, 2018:** Chair of the MSCHE Evaluation Team visits campus
- **January 2019:** Final draft of self-study sent to MSCHE Evaluation Team
- **March 3–6, 2019:** MSCHE Evaluation Team visit campus

List of Appendices (A)

[\(A0.1\) Strategic Planning Framework](#)

[\(A0.2\) VITAL A vision for AUB for 2030 and beyond-Latest](#)

[\(A0.3\) Report on the Highlights of Achievements of the Faculties/ Schools and Academic Units](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R0.1\] Narrative for Accreditation Board](#)





Standard I: Mission and Goals

I. Working Group Charge Overview

Working Group I (WG) examined the mechanisms by which AUB’s mission and strategic goals are developed, reviewed, assessed, and revised; the extent to which they are communicated to and adopted by the various constituencies; and the degree to which they inform decision-making in terms of academic, financial, and infrastructural planning and development. The group assessed how well the strategic priorities align with and realistically implement the educational, research, and service components of the university mission. In particular, WG1 looked at how well AUB provides a holistic student experience that fosters citizenship and leadership, and the extent to which it engages with its local and regional environment. In addressing these issues, the group also examined compliance with ROAs 7 and 10, relating to mission and strategic planning.

II. Development and Revision of Mission and Goals (Criteria 1a, 1c, 1f, 1g, and 4; Question 3; ROA 7)

1. AUB’s Mission Statement

AUB’s mission statement serves as the foundation and purpose of the university within Lebanon and the wider world. It is disseminated on [AUB’s website](#), in publications, [catalogues](#), and in reports (e.g., departmental self-study reports). The [current mission](#) statement reads as follows:

“AUB is an institution of higher learning founded to provide excellence in education, to participate in the advancement of knowledge through research, and to serve the peoples of the Middle East and beyond. Chartered in New York State in 1863, the university bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education. The university believes deeply in and encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue. Graduates will be individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership.”

AUB’s mission statement was last revised in 2005 in response to a recommendation in the 2004 self-study and feedback from the MSCHE visiting team. AUB’s mission statement was redrafted by the provost in consultation with the associate provost at the time and the chairperson of the 2004 Self-Study Task Team on Mission [R1.1]. The new draft was sent to members of the AUB community for feedback in February 2005, and was subsequently approved by the University Senate and forwarded to the BOT, which introduced minor additions before ratifying it in November of that year [R1.1]. That mission statement was last reviewed in 2010 and no substantial changes were introduced [R1.2].

2. Academic Strategic Goals

In 2009, the university adopted eight strategic goals in order to introduce new initiatives aligned with its mission [R1.3]. Since then, two new strategic plans were introduced by two consecutive administrations: one in 2014 and another in 2016 [R1.4], [R1.5]. The 2014 academic strategic plan (ASP) advanced four strategic goals (AI.1):

1. Deliver a world-class student experience/Develop critical thinkers and ethical leaders
2. Create knowledge and advance quality research/Promote interdisciplinarity and innovation
3. Maximize impact for positive change in the region
4. Invest in the health of the community and the Arab world

Four critical enablers were also identified to provide the requisite institutional structure for the achievement of the 2014 strategic goals: governance and accountability, people, physical and IT infrastructure, and strategic budgeting and financial health.

In 2016, the president launched a comprehensive process to develop a new strategic plan that builds on AUB’s strengths and sets the path forward until the year 2030. This process refined the 2014 ASP, and was integrated into and aligned with other planning activities such as the campus master plan and the capital campaign, as noted in the Introduction and described below. The process identified five key academic priorities that were adopted in order to achieve AUB’s mission and to express AUB’s core values for the coming decade [R1.5], [R1.6]. These key priorities, articulated in the 2016 Integrated ASP, are (A1.1):

1. The student learning experience
2. Infrastructure and academic support
3. Collaboration, engagement, and outreach
4. Scholarship and service
5. Enrollment management plan

The university thus fulfills ROA7 through its mission statement and related goals that define its purpose within the context of higher education.

3. *Development of the Strategic Plan: Integration and Alignment across the Planning Process*

The 2016 strategic planning process adopted an integrated approach for the development of the ASP, by linking it to a new campus master plan, and a new capital campaign. The development of the ASP involved several phases that started with the development of faculty-specific strategic plans. These, in turn, were integrated into one coherent strategy that identified the five key priorities listed above. The process involved numerous workshops, meetings, and strategic planning retreats [R1.5], [R1.6]. During the ASP retreats and meetings, each faculty/school presented its planned initiatives [R1.7], strategic priorities, and needs. The process culminated in the 2016 integrated ASP, which thus ensured that the strategic plans of the various faculties were aligned with the integrated university plan, and with the development of corresponding key performance indicators (KPIs) [R1.8].

The master planning team engaged in a “detailed review of the university in a thorough process of needs assessment, validation, visioning, and prototyping, and SWOT analysis based on strategic goals, and charrettes to engage all university stakeholders” [R1.5]. In addition, “the team interviewed over 500 individuals to determine overall gaps, strengths, opportunities as well as threats to the master plan. Students in particular were engaged through in-person interviews as well as meetings and online web surveys to better understand their needs, flow patterns across the campus, and spatial options to enhance the overall student experience” [R1.5].

A large number of stakeholders were involved in these processes, including faculty members, students, and staff, the university leadership, the academic deans, and a number of consultants from the Dar Group, Perkins+Will, and Michael G. Dolence and Associates [R1.5].

The AUBMC 2020 vision, for the medical center and Faculty of Medicine, is also in line with the university’s strategic priorities, as evidenced by the “six major paths” which are: high standard of patient care, recruitment of top faculty, creation of clinical and research centers of excellence, establishment of strategic partnerships and collaborations, expanding facilities to meet the needs of people from Lebanon and the region, and ensuring access of patients to healthcare [R1.5]. The Health 2025 vision, through the creation of a Health Science Campus, will coalesce the major core health faculties and schools to optimize AUB’s health mission of social and human wellbeing [R1.5].

In parallel to the above initiatives, AUB publicly launched a capital campaign in 2017 with a target of \$650 million and with an end date set at Dec 31, 2021 [R1.5]. The overarching

common themes, which are in line with the academic strategic plan and the campus master plan, are the following:

- Student life and the holistic learning experience
- The patient and population health experience
- Innovation and entrepreneurship
- Community relevance and impact—on the environment, the people and the institution
- Sustainability

The simultaneous development of the academic strategic plan, the campus master plan, and the capital campaign “ensures that these strategic initiatives are in tandem and that the fundraising phase is as close to the planning phase as possible, thus ensuring timely execution and continued relevance of priorities” [R1.5].

4. *Evaluation and Revision of the Mission Statement*

The Corporate Bylaws of the university assign the responsibility of strategic planning to the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT (Article IV, Section 3) and to the president (Article V, Section 4f), but no specific document alludes to the process by which the mission and global strategic goals ought to be developed or reviewed (A1.2).

The Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals (Policy on Policies) stipulates that university-wide policies ought to be comprehensively reviewed at least every three years to determine whether the policy objectives are being achieved; presumably a similar principle can be considered for the “universal” policies reflected in the mission and goals, albeit on a longer-term timescale. The above policy notwithstanding, no clear policies or procedures were found to describe how, when, or what triggers a review or revision of the mission and/or goals of the university. In an interview, the provost indicated that, in general, periodic assessment of the mission statement takes place every five to 10 years, and usually coincides with the self-study that the university carries out for re-accreditation. The process encompasses all stakeholders, including prominent social, political, and intellectual figures of the country, particularly those who graduated from AUB.

It is clear that the process of development of the mission and goals is inclusive, collaborative, and involves all key stakeholders. However, the development of two separate long-term strategic plans within a two-year interval, both of which were large endeavors that involved input from the same constituency and stakeholders at multiple levels of the university hierarchy raises certain questions. A more systematic mechanism for the revision and development of the mission and goals may be appropriate in order to ensure continuity and smooth operation of the university, and to prevent unnecessary duplication of effort and delays in the implementation of important initiatives. This forms the basis of WGI’s first recommendation at the end of this chapter, to develop guidelines that signal when the university should consider large-scale review of its mission statement and/or strategic plan.

III. **Appropriateness of the Mission to Higher Education and Alignment of the Goals with the Mission (Criterion 2; Question 3)**

The mission and strategic goals focus on the basic tenets of higher education: excellence in education, and focus on research and creative activity, with the aim of graduating leaders, self-learners, and global citizens [R1.5]. A review of the strategic initiatives reveals a close alignment between the mission and the strategic goals set forth by two different administrations, as shown in Table 1.1 (which compares the 2014 and 2016 strategic plans) [R1.4], [R1.5]

In addition to the alignment between the strategic goals and the mission statement, WGI notes with approval that there is clear alignment of the campus master plan with the strategic goals relating to the student learning experience, infrastructure and academic support, collaboration/engagement, and scholarship and service. This manifests in the master plan components [R1.5] that aim to enhance student life (e.g., new student center, library renovation, new residence halls), academic life (new basic science complex, school of design, performance arts center, health science complex), campus life (alumni club, art gallery, mixed use sites outside campus), patient life (expansion and renovation of AUBMC), and public life (campus-street interfaces, public transport

infrastructure). These in turn are aligned with the capital campaign’s common themes articulated earlier in the chapter.

Nevertheless, some elements of the mission are not adequately reflected or elaborated on sufficiently in the strategic planning documents. These include the commitment to personal integrity, freedom of thought and expression, tolerance, and dialogue. In addition, the commitment to fostering life-long learning and critical thinking does not come across explicitly, although it may be implicit in the items addressing excellence in education and research. Thus, it may be appropriate to have better articulated strategic goals that are linked to these themes of the mission. This reasoning informs WGI’s second recommendation below, to have more explicit strategic initiatives that address the above components in the mission statement relating to personal integrity, lifelong learning, and freedom of thought and expression.

Table 1.1 Alignment between mission statement themes and strategic goals: 2014 and 2016

Mission Theme	Goals: 2014 Strategic Plan	Priorities: 2016 Strategic Plan
Excellence in education	Goal 1: Deliver a world-class student experience.	Priority 1: Transform student education into a holistic student learning experience.
Advancement of knowledge through research	Goal 2: Create knowledge and advance quality research Goal 4, Initiative 2: Leadership in health research.	Priority 4: Encourage and properly resource scholarly work that addresses contextual problems, serves our society and influences public and scientific policy and practice.
Serve the people of the Middle East and beyond	Goal 3: Maximize impact for positive change in the region and beyond.	Priority 3: Strengthen AUB’s impact and role internally within the institution as well as locally, regionally and globally. <i>AUBMC 2020 vision:</i> Expand our facilities to meet the needs of the people of Lebanon and the region. Health 2025: Enhance the social and human wellbeing of populations in Lebanon, the region and beyond.
Based on the American Liberal arts model of higher education	Goal 1, Initiative 2: Emphasize the liberal arts foundation of education to ensure students master a range and reach of knowledge.	Not explicit in the strategic goals. Addressed in policies (Chapter 2 – Section II.2).
Freedom of thought/ expression	Not explicit in the strategic goals.	Not explicit in the strategic goals. Addressed in policies (Chapter 2 – Section II.2).
Tolerance, respect for diversity and dialogue	Goal 1, Initiative 5: Ensure a diverse student body to enhance the AUB learning experience. Diversity stimulates dialogue and increases understanding of peoples, cultures and perspectives.	Priority 1: Items 4 and 5: Increase the student body and enhance financial aid. Priority 5: Increase number of international students to increase diversity.
Creative and critical thinking	Goal 1, Initiative 2: Emphasize the liberal arts foundation of education to ensure students master knowledge conducive to free inquiry, critical and imaginative thinking, and ethical reasoning.	Priority 4: Build and enhance scholarly and creative work capabilities.
Lifelong learning	Not explicit in the strategic goals.	Not explicit in the strategic goals.
Personal integrity	Goal 1, Initiative 2: Provide opportunities for students to develop as ethical leaders.	Implicit in Priority 1: Infuse the values of citizenship, social responsibility ... in our student body.

Mission Theme	Goals: 2014 Strategic Plan	Priorities: 2016 Strategic Plan
Civic responsibility	Goal 3, Initiative 4: Engage with communities from Lebanon and the region to enhance social, economic and cultural well-being.	Priority 1: Infuse the values of citizenship, social responsibility, environmental sustainability, and globalization in our student body and community.
Leadership	Goal 1: Develop critical thinkers and ethical leaders.	Priority 1: Nurture leadership, service and innovation to graduate high performance learners, global citizens and leaders.

IV. Assessment of the Mission and Goals (Criteria 1g and 4; ROA 10)

The university has defined a number of initiatives to achieve the stated goals and has also, in parallel, developed detailed assessment mechanisms to monitor the achievement of the goals by identifying measurable KPIs and metrics for every initiative [R1.8]. An abbreviated version of the KPI document is included as (A1.2).

The periodic review of KPIs allows for the evaluation of any project, program, or initiative [R1.4], [R1.8]. The **Academic Assessment Unit** (AAU) monitors the implementation of the ASP and the achievement of the set targets. AAU also monitors the strategic plans of the faculties and schools, and ensures that their initiatives maintain alignment with AUB’s key initiatives. AAU has recently implemented a process that collects data from all academic departments and units in the university, and provides this data for allocation of resources, budgeting, and as input to strategic planning [R1.9]. In addition, reports are periodically submitted to the provost by the various schools, faculties, and academic units that highlight their progress towards achieving their strategic goals (see November 2018 report [R1.10]).

V. Addressing Internal and External Constituencies (Criterion 1b; Questions 3, 4 and 5)

The **mission statement** addresses external as well as internal contexts and constituencies. Internally, it guides faculty, students, and staff, engaged in teaching, research, and service; it also refers to graduates of AUB as creative and critical thinkers, with integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership. The statement addresses somewhat indirectly the work of staff and administration, who are also part of the environment of learning and research, in which values such as freedom of expression and diversity are highly prized. Externally, the statement makes a clear and direct reference to the region in its service statement: “to serve the Middle East and beyond.”

The goals expressed in the 2014 and 2016 strategic plans are designed to address external as well as internal contexts and constituencies [R1.4], [R1.5]. Appendix (A1.3) indicates how each initiative in the 2016 strategic plan targets internal and/or external constituencies. The implementation of the academic assessment and planning processes of all units analyzes and acts upon both internal and external data (e.g., program learning outcomes (PLOs) assessment data, self-study recommendations, alumni surveys, employer surveys, etc.) [R1.9].

1. Case Study: Recruitment of Students from Various Economic, Academic, and Geographic Backgrounds

Members of WGI interviewed the director of admissions to inquire about strategies to recruit a more diverse student body. He asserted that maintaining diversity is a central issue of interest at AUB, and that it is targeted across three main axes: nationalities, educational backgrounds, and socio-economic backgrounds. Scholarships are recognized as key to attracting the high-achieving students from Lebanon, the MENA region and Sub-Saharan Africa. He further indicated that strategies for increasing diversity involve both recruitment and financial support, and include diversifying and increasing the number of Lebanese schools regularly visited by personnel from the Office of Admissions and hosted at the annual AUB School Fair (more than 90 schools visited AUB in 2018), increasing recruitment visits to a number of Middle Eastern countries, and increasing financial aid.

In 2016, AUB established the [Leadership, Equity, and Diversity \(LEAD\)](#) initiative to promote and increase the availability of comprehensive scholarship programs for academically qualified but financially disadvantaged students at the university, through enhanced coordination, efficiency, and synergy among the various bodies running these programs. LEAD scholarship programs currently include [the Mastercard Foundation Scholars Program](#) (offering 180 scholarships to students from Africa and the Levant), [the US-Middle East Partnership Initiative](#) (offering over 60 scholarships to students from the MENA region), [the USAID University Scholarship Program](#) (offering scholarships to over 50 public school students per year) and [the Al Ghurair STEM Scholars Program](#) (which has funded 87 high-achieving Arab students at AUB since AY 2016–17). Starting in AY 2019–20, these will be joined by the Education for Leadership in Crisis program to support the education of 16 young women from Afghanistan on full scholarships funded in collaboration with the US Embassy in Kabul.

In 2018, OSB was awarded a \$1.5 million federal grant by the US Department of State Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) to create the first index measuring the economic contributions of, and challenges faced by, women across the Arab MENA region -The KIP Index. Building on the earlier work and momentum created by the [KIP Project](#), the Index is the inaugural initiative of the Center for Inclusive Business and Leadership (CIBL) being established at the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB). CIBL will house various initiative and will serve as a place for action research aimed at inclusive workplace practices. The primary goal of CIBL will be in developing female talent and readying gender-inclusive business systems across the region through engaging decision-makers in the Arab MENA region.

AUB also offers merit [scholarships](#) (full tuition) to 10 newly admitted students every year; and offers, in collaboration with the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research, around 15 full scholarships per year (covering full tuition, accommodation, and monthly stipend) to the top achievers in the Lebanese Baccalaureate High School examinations. More recently, AUB announced the [Advanced Student Scholarship Initiative](#), a merit scholarship-advance plan to provide overall coverage of 80 percent of tuition fees (including 30 percent low interest loan) for up to 130 academically qualified students from the 26 districts of Lebanon—an initiative which is intended to further increase the geographic and socio-economic diversity of AUB’s student body.

2. *AUB’s Service Mission: Case Studies and Examples*

AUB identifies and engages in relevant research with governments, civil society, professional bodies, and industry, through publications, conferences, the media, and consulting. AUB engages its wide community by developing new degree programs to address regional challenges and community needs (e.g., rural community development, health research, and energy studies, master of science in nursing/master of business administration, and agribusiness) [\[R1.11\]](#), expanding engaged scholarship and community-based learning, and offering educational programs geared towards professionals and practitioners. The [Office of Regional External Programs](#), which provides consulting services and technical expertise for institutions across the region, is AUB’s gateway to the corporate world.

Case Studies:

- a. **Research and Service:** A noteworthy example of how academic and service missions are intertwined and how AUB’s mission of service to the region allows it to respond to developing regional contexts is the [Asfari Institute for Civil Society and Citizenship \(AI\)](#), which was established in 2012. The [mission](#) of the institute states that it “will encourage evidence-based research; disseminate research findings and policy/practice recommendations; provide education and training for active citizenship and effective civil society; promote awareness of civil society and civic engagement in the region; and stimulate fruitful dialogue among the region’s varied publics.”
- b. **Syrian Refugee Crisis:** To increase the impact of research, practice, and community-based teaching being undertaken by members of the AUB community in the wake of the Syrian refugee crisis, the university launched the [#AUB4Refugees](#) initiative in September 2016. More than 60 different projects related to refugees and their host communities were brought together under this initiative, whose role is to nurture cooperation and build partnerships on campus and beyond.

In March 2018, Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) launched [the Lancet-AUB Commission on Syria](#) in partnership with one of the world’s oldest and most influential health and medical journals, The Lancet. The commission is charged with examining the regional impact and global meanings of the Syria crisis regarding the health of populations,

developing recommendations to address the needs of those affected, and mobilizing a stronger international response. In 2016, Faculty of Medicine (FM) launched [AUBMCares](#), a joint student-faculty initiative that aims to provide healthcare to the marginalized, the vulnerable, and the underserved in Lebanon.

- c. **Public policy:** The [Issam Fares Institute](#) for Public Policy and International Affairs has recently expanded its six existing programs on refugee research and policy, climate change and environment, education and youth policy research, social justice and development policy, as well as Arab and international affairs, and established programs on [social justice and the city](#), [energy policy and security in the Middle East](#), and [civil society and policy-making](#).
- Collaborations with [regional and international](#) universities increase educational and research opportunities and enhance knowledge-dissemination efforts. AUB also engages with governmental bodies in multifaceted ways. For example, memorandums of understanding between [Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture \(MSFEA\)](#) and the [Lebanese Ministry of Energy](#), and between [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences \(FAFS\)](#) and the [Ministry of Tourism](#), promote economic and sustainable development. Faculty members across the university regularly serve as advisors for national policy makers and boards. Collaborating with the business sector is also pursued. Mutually beneficial partnerships with the business sector provide training and employment opportunities for students and increase the use of best practices in industry. AUB has also established and sustained reciprocal relationships with local, regional, and international civil society organizations, which enable the university to understand existing needs and contribute to societal improvement.
- d. **Partnerships:** Partnerships provide training opportunities and cater to academic exchange [collaboration](#), and international agreements ([Introduction, Section III.8](#)). FM/AUBMC is the institution of choice for medical institutions in the region looking for a partner to help with capacity building in the establishment, operation, and assessment of healthcare institutions, as well as education and training of physicians, students, nurses, and other healthcare providers. In the domain of education, the [TAMAM](#) project is a collaboration between AUB, the Arab Thought Foundation, and the LORE Foundation that supports school-based initiatives for sustainable school development and ultimately for the improvement of student learning.
 - e. **Public Service and Outreach:** AUB students and faculty members participate in myriad public service and outreach activities through the faculties/schools as well as specialized centers. AUB’s ongoing efforts to strengthen its relationship with the local community translate through many initiatives such as the [Nature Conservation Center](#) and the [Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service](#). Since 2015, the [Knowledge is Power](#) project housed in the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) has been building bridges between various stakeholders concerned about gender and sexuality issues in Lebanon. In response to the 2016 strategic plan, the [GE Board recommended](#) that every undergraduate student acquire community service experience by completing one service learning course and two community service projects by the time they graduate [\[R1.12\]](#), thus recognizing community service as a high impact practice and a university learning outcome for undergraduate students.
 - f. **Community Health:** AUB’s capacity to contribute to individual and community health through AUBMC, and the various faculties/schools, including FM, FHS, Rafic Hariri School of Nursing (HSON), FAFS, and Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS), is evident in leading the region in medical, nursing, and public health research and practice. Human suffering, whether from disease, political conflicts, economic inequality, or environmental degradation, takes on specific regional dynamics that AUB is uniquely poised to address. Strategic initiatives to invest in the health of the community and the Arab world enable AUB to provide leadership in the development of the necessary human and intellectual resources to respond to the health issues of our times. This is evident in the recent launching of the [Global Health Institute \(GHI\)](#) in 2017, whose mission is to address health challenges that have a global effect such as refugee health, non-communicable diseases, conflict medicine, and other challenges, with a focus on contextual factors, especially those relevant to the MENA region, as well as the establishment of clinical centers of excellence to develop and provide pioneering healthcare aligned with the needs of communities in Lebanon and the region. Moreover, FHS has established an institutional model for impact on people’s health, with three centers that: (i) drive its research on population and health (CRPH), (ii) advance public health practice (CPHP), and (iii) translate knowledge to policy (K2P). The Center for

Research on Population and Health (CRPH) serves as an incubator of research networks and innovative research ideas; the Center for Public Health Practice (CPHP) promotes evidence-based public health practice in Lebanon and the region; and the Knowledge-to-Policy (K2P) Center translates tacit knowledge and scientific evidence into policy options and builds capacity. In addition to the above, five new and existing centers in FM are worthy of mention here: the [Abu-Haidar Neuroscience Institute](#), the [Children’s Cancer Center of Lebanon](#), the [Multiple Sclerosis Center](#), the [Naef K. Basile Cancer Institute](#), and the new [Heart and Vascular Center for Excellence](#).

In conclusion, it is clear that the university has gone a long way towards achieving its mission of engaging with and serving its community: locally, regionally and beyond. As a confirmation of the scale and impact of its transformative initiatives, AUB was ranked as the “[most civically engaged campus](#)” in the Middle East and North Africa in a first regional annual competition held by the Ma’an Arab University Alliance. It is worth noting as well that AUB won first place in the 2016 [MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship](#). AUB was [recognized](#) “for actively addressing the refugee crisis in Lebanon through student-based projects such as waste management campaigns, workshops, and toolkits to improve the communication and interpersonal skills of refugee students.”

VI. Supporting Scholarly Inquiry, Student Learning and Leadership (Criteria 1e and 3; Question 4; ROA 10)

A large number of programs, centers, practices, and policies exist to support scholarly inquiry and student learning, and to provide a transformational educational experience for students.

1. Scholarly Inquiry

The university values research and scholarly output and uses them for evaluation and promotion of faculty members (see [Chapter 2, Section 3 of the Faculty Manual](#)).

- [New mission-driven graduate programs](#), including PhD programs, are regularly introduced in response to local and regional needs and to emerging trends. Several departments are in the process of preparing PhD program proposals, and various units are designing and creating relevant programs.
- Numerous research centers and centers of excellence contribute to the vibrant intellectual life of the university ([AI.4](#)).
- [University Research Board \(URB\)](#) grants, collaborative grants (e.g., the [Farouk Jabre Biomedical Research grant](#)), and other [internal funding mechanisms, including faculty development](#), junior faculty research leaves (JFRL), and periodic paid research leaves (PPRL) ([R1.13](#)) are available to support faculty research.
- The university provides funding for faculty and PhD student travel to international conferences.
- In [FAFS/ AREC](#), [FAS](#), [FM](#), and [MSFEA](#) in particular, the university provides substantial resources for experimental facilities, equipment, and space as core laboratories that support research and scholarly activities.
- Faculty seminar series, local conferences, workshops, and various events which bring international speakers to campus are regularly held.

2. Student Learning

Student learning has a prominent role not only in the institutional goals but also, and more importantly, in the routine practice of faculty in their teaching and mentoring of activities. Student learning runs deep in the fabric of the university and guides much of what is done at both the faculty and administration levels. In this respect, academic programs have explicit and clearly articulated [PLOs](#) that show how and where every course (whether required or in a basket of electives) fits in the curriculum. Every course has its individual learning outcomes (see [guidebook](#)) that are consistent with and feed into the overall PLOs. The learning outcomes, which are periodically assessed, are student-centered and focus primarily on student development and intellectual growth.

The [Instructor Course Evaluation \(ICE\)](#) survey is administered by the [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment \(OIRA\)](#) at the end of each term and for every course, to collect data about teaching effectiveness for all faculties/schools except FM, where teaching evaluations are administered by the [Medical Education Unit](#). In addition, PLOs are periodically assessed, both for appropriateness and in terms of whether these learning outcomes are achieved by students. These assessments are used to decide on appropriate actions for improvement. Departmental faculty members lead these continuous improvement exercises in order to keep PLOs relevant and up-to-date. These activities are guided and monitored by [OIRA](#), the [Center for Teaching and Learning \(CTL\)](#), and [AAU](#), which are the university hubs for matters related to enhancing student learning. Also of note here is that many of the existing AUB programs are [accredited](#) by international accrediting bodies.

Furthermore, the university has in place periodic assessment processes ([R1.14](#)), ([R1.9](#)) and evaluation of the physical facilities needed to support student learning in the form of classrooms, computer-equipped rooms, laboratories, studios, and others. At the request of the provost, deans solicit suggestions from academic departments every year aimed at improving the physical facilities, and these requests are integrated into the overall budget proposal.

As part of supporting and enhancing student learning, the university strives to make learning experiences as accessible as possible and to accommodate students with special needs. An [Accessible Education Office](#) has been established and works closely with instructors from all departments to facilitate and establish reasonable accommodations as needed, while ensuring the privacy of the concerned individuals. The Student Wellness Outreach Units within the [Office of Student Affairs \(OSA\)](#) also provide workshops, awareness sessions, and online resources, to widen psycho-social support that helps students refine study skills or improve overall emotional intelligence in coping with their new educational setting.

[Student Societies](#) add to student learning. Student teams under the supervision of faculty mentors are involved in various local and regional competitions in [computer programming](#), [robotics](#), [televised science competitions](#), and others.

3. Student Leadership

One of the differentiating characteristics of the AUB experience, and another reason for its exemplary [employer reputation](#), is its nurture of the skills students need to lead, guide, influence, and shape the organizations and societies that they become part of. Through both curricular and broader campus activities, students are engaged with their communities and reflect on the effect of their contributions on their surroundings.

[Speeches, interviews, and announcements](#) by the president, and his biweekly [President’s Perspective](#) message to the community, frequently articulate these ideas and encourage students to be agents for change and use what they learn at AUB to influence society at large. Through various visibly displayed and broadly advertised initiatives, the university shows students what aspirations modern societies have. As examples, this year saw campaigns for a [harassment-free environment](#) and for a [tobacco-free environment](#), both serving as models of what societies in the Middle East should aspire to.

Students are also given channels to contribute to and develop the organizational and administrative skills needed to play key roles in their future work environments. Examples include [Outdoors](#), a wholly student-led activity, many [student clubs](#), and local chapters of [professional societies](#) (e.g., the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) club). [Student elections](#) are another prominent demonstration of how AUB encourages students to participate in civic affairs and influence their communities. It is worth mentioning that the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC) developed in January 2016 a new electoral system for student elections based on proportional representation. The system has been adopted subsequently in the last three cycles of student elections.

VII. AUB Mission is Known by the AUB Community, and Guides Faculty and Administration (Criteria 1d and 1f; Question 2; ROA 10)

1. The Mission is Widely Known and Applied as a Reference

The mission statement and strategic goals are readily available on the university’s main website and the provost’s website. The mission statement is disseminated in [university catalogues](#), reports and publications. The strategic goals of the university are clearly

inspired and informed by the mission statement (as demonstrated in [Table 1.1](#)). Indeed, the document entitled “In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research” [\[R1.15\]](#), which was issued by the provost, is fronted by the mission statement and is full of references to the mission.

A review of [presidential addresses](#) in the last decade or so clearly reveals that the mission provides the foundation upon which presidential initiatives and commentary are formed, often to emphasize the role and function of AUB, both internally and in relation to its environment. Explicit references to the mission are often associated with specific announcements regarding policy and planning related to strategic initiatives, programs of study, and plans for responding to and engaging with both internal and external players who help shape the evolution of AUB.

2. *The Mission is Aligned with and Guides Development of Academic Programs*

Mission and goals within the faculties/schools, departments, and units: Just as the strategic goals of the university are aligned with its mission statement, so are the strategic plans of the various faculties/schools in turn inspired and informed by the mission and the overarching strategic goals of the university [\[R1.16\]](#). In addition, every department, program, and unit at AUB publishes its mission statement that is aligned with the university mission [\[R1.17\]](#). This alignment is assessed by external reviewers through periodic review [\[R1.18\]](#), [\[R1.19\]](#).

Programs and syllabi within departments: Members of the WG reviewed a selection of available documentation related to the development of new programs, and the restructuring of academic programs, course designs, and syllabi. For the most part, this documentation did not contain direct references to the mission statement and strategic goals. There are exceptions, however, most notably for recently proposed or approved programs at the graduate level. Members of WGI corresponded with the chair of the Graduate Council, who is also associate provost, and received a [PhD proposal in biomedical engineering](#) that makes explicit references to the university’s mission and to strategic plans such as the AUBMC 2020 vision. We expect that future proposals, especially at the graduate level, will directly discuss alignment between the proposed program and the mission and goals, especially that the guidelines for proposing a new graduate program to the Board of Graduate Studies have recently added a procedure to prepare a two-page [Notice of Intent](#) to start the process; also, the guidelines for the Notice of Intent specifically ask for these questions to be addressed [\[R1.20\]](#).

Even in existing program descriptions that do not explicitly reference the university mission, it can be convincingly argued that the mission and goals form the basis of the ethos that underpins these activities. This is manifested in the inclusion of the [GE requirements](#) in all curricula at the undergraduate level in the spirit of a liberal arts education: emphasis on learning skills (for life), encouragement of critical thinking and debate, exposure to major controversies in the disciplines, provision of ethical studies that stress civic responsibility and personal integrity, and promotion of leadership skills. In addition, there is clear emphasis on academic excellence and the provision of an elaborate system of quality assurance in the service of this excellence, best exemplified by a [university-wide learning outcomes plan](#) that includes a concept paper, guidebooks for program and course learning outcomes, a course learning outcomes plan, as well as appendices providing various tools and techniques.

3. *Influence of the Mission and Goals on Research Activity and Scholarship*

Research activity tends to be driven by the academic interests of faculty members. This is in line with the tenets of higher education that support free inquiry and the pure pursuit of knowledge, and the contemplation of truth for its own sake. At the same time, there has been continued debate about the issue of relevance, with some arguing that the difference between the local and the global is in fact irrelevant in many disciplines, and others emphasizing the importance of relevance to local and regional needs and problems. It is evident that substantial research activity is geared towards fulfilling the service mission of the university in areas such as education, agriculture, medicine, public health, business studies, engineering, and environmental studies. Furthermore, the recent strategic plan of 2016 seems to place greater value and specific emphasis on the applied nature and local context of research (“encourage focused scholarly work that addresses contextual problems, serves our society, and influences public and scientific policy and practice”). While these are indeed worthy endeavors, the strategic plan should also explicitly value and encourage pure research and the pursuit of knowledge for its own sake, which ought to be the prime motivator for research in any institute of higher learning such as AUB. Hence the third recommendation of WGI is that university

strategic goals should more clearly support pure research and the free pursuit of knowledge, while keeping existing language that supports applied research.

4. *AUB Community Awareness of the Mission and Goals*

- **Employees (faculty and staff):** The [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) conducted by OIRA in 2015 revealed that 88 percent of AUB employees (both academic and non-academic) indicated that they understood AUB’s mission and 74 percent believed that the mission made them feel their job was important. The gap between these numbers suggests that understanding the mission does not uniformly imply that an employee agrees with or is invested in it. There was an even wider gap between the employees’ awareness of their departmental goals and their awareness of global university goals: 79 percent had a clear understanding of their department’s goals and priorities, meaning a local view of their work at AUB, but only 46 percent were aware of campus-wide plans and strategies, indicating that large-scale decisions about the university are not sufficiently communicated to all employees. Data summarized in [AI.5](#) answers other related questions and shows that while there is a high degree of dissemination of the mission statement and awareness of it, there is much less familiarity among the employees with the general strategic plans for the university as a whole, and a lower confidence in the administration’s clarity of vision. This gap is particularly pronounced for employees outside AUBMC as compared to employees within AUBMC, and is similarly more pronounced for academic as compared to non-academic employees. More recent data, being collected in Fall 2018, is not yet available to assess the awareness of employees of the current strategic goals.

Our conclusion from the above 2015 data drives the fourth and fifth recommendations, which are closely related. On the one hand, we recommend that the university should renew its efforts to disseminate awareness of its strategic initiatives, a recommendation echoed in the overall recommendation of this entire self-study for more effective communication across AUB. On the other hand, we recommend that the university should assess more systematically the extent to which employees are aware of, guided by, and in agreement with the mission and strategic plans of the university.

- **Students:** Members of the WG conducted a small sample survey of students with the help of the [Office of Student Affairs](#). The survey was sent to all cabinet members of all the different clubs and societies, and posted on the AUB GURU Facebook page, followed by around 18,000 students and alumni. One hundred students and alumni responded, of whom only 16 percent were not cabinet members of clubs or societies; hence the answers are skewed in favor of students who have active or leadership roles in student clubs or societies. (The percentage breakdown by class was: 38 juniors, 33 seniors, 10 sophomores, and 19 alumni or graduates). Seventy one percent of the students had an idea about the mission and goals of AUB while 29 percent did not. Ninety one percent of students do care about the mission and are interested in helping AUB achieve it.

VIII. Conclusion

- **Criteria for accreditation:** The university’s mission and goals are approved by the governing body, define its purpose within the context of higher education, and are periodically assessed and revised. The goals are developed through an inclusive process encompassing the university’s diverse stakeholders; they are closely aligned with the mission; are monitored and assessed based on specific and detailed KPIs; and are supported by numerous academic, administrative, and infrastructural initiatives. AUB’s mission and goals address external and internal contexts and constituencies, and guide faculty, administration, and staff in planning and decision making. They are relatively well-publicized and known by the constituency. The university’s mission supports scholarly inquiry and creative activity at the level of a research institution. Thus, the university meets the criteria of Standard I and ROAs 7, and 10.
- **Summary of key findings:** AUB’s mission statement, which has not changed substantially since its last revision in 2004, has been a steady and consistent source of guidance for broad campus-wide strategic initiatives through different administrations. Its firm and enduring affirmations are testimony to the critical values that AUB embodies and that have been historically guiding its unique role in the Middle East and beyond. The strategic goals and priorities are developed through an inclusive process that involves internal and external stakeholders. The approval process of both the mission statement

and strategic plan follows a path that starts with the immediate stakeholders, passes through several levels of review and revision, and ends with the Board of Trustees.

There is no explicit mechanism or specific written policy that details why, when and how the mission of the university should be revised. A review of the academic strategic goals/priorities reveals a very close alignment with most components of AUB's mission statement, but some aspects do require more elaboration (e.g., freedom of thought, personal integrity). The Academic Assessment Unit monitors the implementation and achievement of specific key performance indicators that are matched with the various academic strategic initiatives. Through its emphasis on excellence in learning, research, and infrastructure, the strategic plan of 2016 focuses on internal constituencies, while initiatives in the domains of collaborative research, community development, outreach, and service target external constituencies. WGI notes particularly the high degree to which AUB fulfills its mission of service to its region and beyond.

AUB supports its mission of achieving excellence in learning and research in multiple ways, including assessment of all program learning outcomes, funding of research projects, development of new graduate programs, establishment of numerous academic centers of excellence, granting of research leaves to faculty, upgrading the physical infrastructure for teaching, including technologically advanced classrooms, etc. Special attention is given to providing a comprehensive and holistic learning experience to students and nurturing their leadership skills through numerous student clubs, student-targeted initiatives, student-led activities, and democratic student elections of representative bodies in each faculty/school and in the University Student-Faculty Committee.

The university's mission is well publicized and known by the university constituencies; it is also frequently used as a basis for initiatives, clearly demonstrated in the president's speeches and messages, and for development of new curricula, programs and centers. However, the internal constituencies are less aware of the broad university-wide strategic goals of the university; hence more effort should be directed to disseminating them.

IX. Areas of Improvement

Five important areas of improvement have been identified in the self-study regarding Standard I:

1. The university needs to develop systematic and sustainable mechanisms and guidelines for triggering a review of the mission statement and/or the development of strategic plans.
2. It is important to have more explicit and well-defined initiatives through which the university can illustrate how the aspects of the mission related to the development of personal integrity, lifelong learning, and commitment to freedom of thought and expression will be achieved.
3. The strategic goals should explicitly support the free pursuit of knowledge and not restrict this support to applied research only.
4. There should be a renewed effort to disseminate more effectively the specific strategic initiatives of the administration to the constituencies on campus.
5. The university should systematically assess the extent to which employees across different units of AUB are aware of, agree with, and are guided by both the mission and the current strategic goals in their work at the university.



List of Appendices (A)

[\(A1.1\) Goals, Priorities and Initiatives in the 2014 and 2016 Strategic Plans](#)

[\(A1.2\) Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking](#)

[\(A1.3\) How the Strategic Goals Address Internal and External Constituencies](#)

[\(A1.4\) Research Centers, Institutes and Initiatives that Support the Scholarly and Teaching Mission of AUB](#)

[\(A1.5\) Employee responses to selected items in the Employee Survey](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R1.1\] Self-Study Report 2008](#)

[\[R1.2\] Periodic Review Report 2014](#)

[\[R1.3\] AUB Strategic Plan 2009](#)

[\[R1.4\] Academic Strategic Plan September 2014](#)

[\[R1.5\] November 16 Strategic Planning Retreat](#)

[\[R1.6\] Integrated Academic Strategic Plan Overview 2016](#)

[\[R1.7\] Strategic Planning Retreat Summary Oct 14–15, 2016](#)

[\[R1.8\] Academic Strategic Plan 2016 KPIs](#)

[\[R1.9\] Assessment and Planning Processes](#)

[\[R1.10\] Report on the Highlights of Achievements of the Faculties/ Schools and Academic Units](#)

[\[R1.11\] AUB New Degree Programs](#)

[\[R1.12\] Proposal for General Education Revitalization](#)

[\[R1.13\] Dean's Annual Reports 2016–2017](#)

[\[R1.14\] Self Study Report Guidelines](#)

[\[R1.15\] In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research](#)

[\[R1.16\] Aligning Faculties SP – Matching KPIs](#)

[\[R1.17\] Missions of Units and Departments](#)

[\[R1.18\] Guidelines for Reviewers](#)

[\[R1.19\] Guidelines for Unit Reviewers](#)

[\[R1.20\] Guidelines for Notice of Intent](#)



Standard II: Ethics and Integrity

I. Working Group Charge Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to examine how professional and ethical conduct and processes at AUB meet the criteria of Standard II and satisfy ROAs 5 and 6. It begins with a description of the support that AUB provides to foster an organizational culture that promotes integrity and fairness, avoids conflicts of interest, and encourages the open and critical discussion of ethical issues. This chapter also describes the policies and practices that enhance ethics and integrity, and examines the areas of freedom of expression, respect, fairness, transparency, tolerance, and non-discrimination in employment and promotion practices, student affairs, teaching, disciplinary and grievance matters, procurement, financial management, and conducting research. It also examines to what degree AUB's constituencies apply these policies and practices, and behave ethically and with integrity in these areas. The chapter evaluates how effectively and regularly AUB assesses compliance with policies, procedures, and practices, and uses assessment results for improvement. Based on these findings, the Working Group (WG) identified strengths and potential areas of improvement and made recommendations.

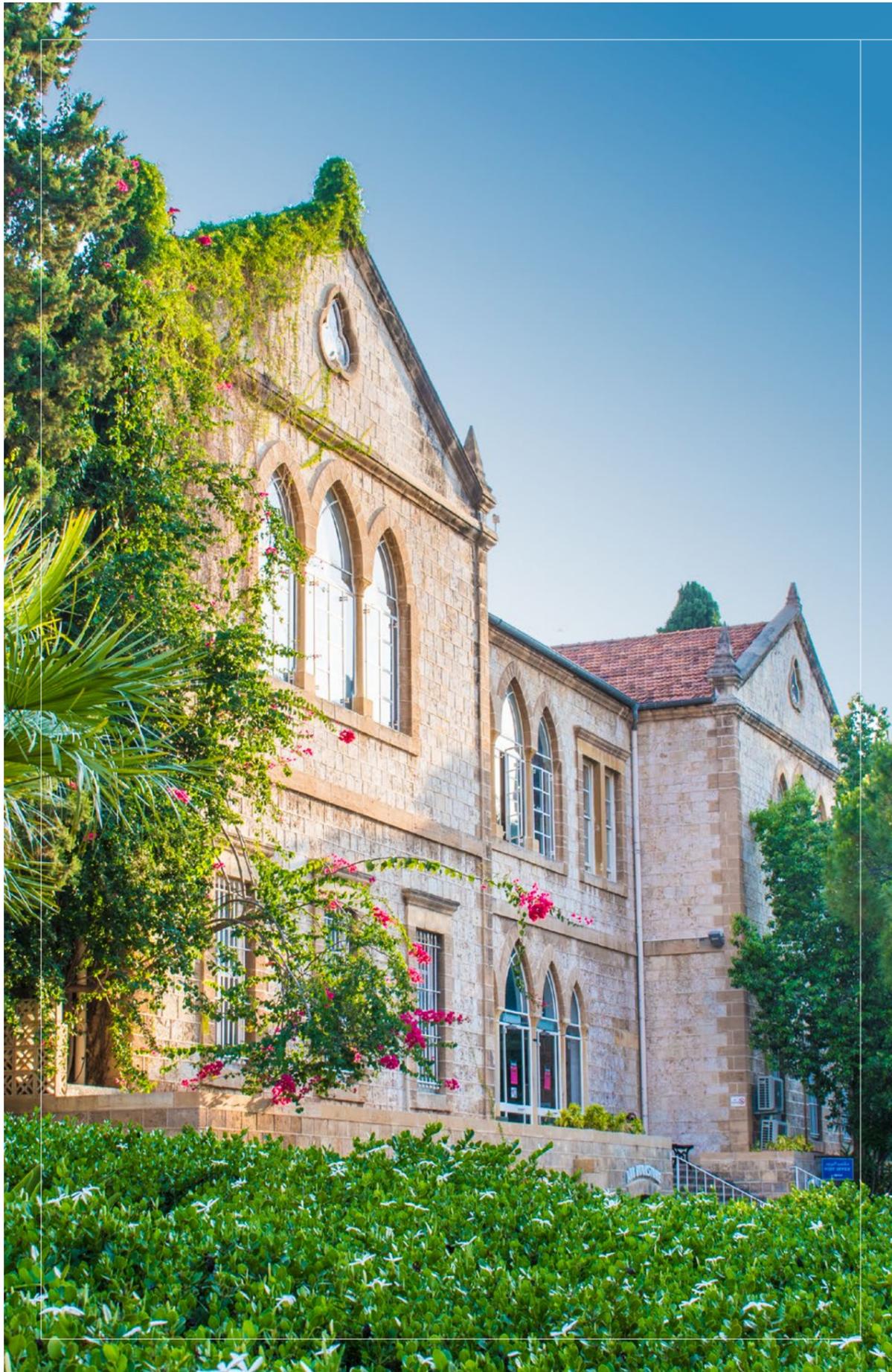
II. Professional and Ethical Conduct at AUB (Criteria 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7; Questions 1, 2, 3 and 4)

1. University Support for Promoting a Culture of Ethics

AUB has developed impartial policies and practices that enhance integrity, fairness, transparency, tolerance, respect, and non-discrimination in employment and promotion practices, student affairs, teaching, disciplinary and grievance matters, procurement, financial management, and conducting research. The [Principles of Ethical Conduct](#) is a framework for existing policies. AUB affirms its commitment to ethics and integrity throughout its academic programs as reflected in program and course learning outcomes ([All.1](#)). Graduates of several faculties/schools such as the [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences](#) (FAFS), the [Faculty of Medicine](#) (FM), the [Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture](#) (MSFEA), and the [Rafic Hariri School of Nursing](#) (HSON) make pledges of professionalism at commencement exercises. The [Office of Student Affairs](#) (OSA), with the assistance of academic staff, is responsible for defining, monitoring, and responding to ethical issues involving students. Standard II is also supported by the results of several [surveys](#) ([All.2](#)). For example, in the 2014–15 [College Outcomes Survey](#) (COS), all items relevant to ethics, integrity, and morals were satisfactory.

The university leadership communicates frequently with the university community in support of ethical values and conduct ([All.3](#)). Senior management initiates, endorses, and promotes ethical awareness in priority areas. Awareness and adherence to AUB's non-discrimination policy framework, and compliance with [Title IX](#) of the Education Amendments of 1972, is endorsed and championed by the president through mandatory training for students, faculty, and staff [[R2.1](#)]. Requirements include a two-hour workshop for all non-academic staff [[R2.2](#)], and an online training course for faculty and managerial staff. Students are also required to complete an online module related to discrimination and harassment. The online platform offers approximately 40 additional courses for employees on topics related to professional and ethical conduct, and compliance issues.

The [Human Research Protection Program](#) at AUB is “responsible to safeguard the rights and welfare of human subjects participating in Biomedical and Social and Behavioral Sciences (SBS) research activities conducted under the auspices of AUB/AUBMC”. The university has a required training on human subject research ethics for all AUB investigators provided online by the Collaborative Institution Training Initiative (CITI). Certificates of completion are valid for three years. The [Institutional Review Board](#) (IRB) requires external investigators collaborating with AUB faculty or students to submit CITI certification or equivalent evidence. Graduate students who deal with human subjects



are also required to meet this certification requirement. In addition, the IRB provides materials to support research conduct and raises awareness of research ethics by conducting workshops for faculty, students, and research assistants. IRB members and senior analysts respond to invitations from faculties/schools to discuss ethical issues. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ensures humane care and use of animals in research and teaching.

The [Salim El-Hoss Bioethics and Professionalism Program at FM](#) is an interdisciplinary resource for faculty, students, healthcare providers, and policy makers. The program's activities are primarily focused on bioethics and the learning needs of physicians and medical students and the practice of medicine. It raises awareness of the importance of ethical issues in healthcare through public lectures, workshops, and seminars. The program presents annually the Humanism and Professionalism Award; it regularly distributes recent articles on controversial issues of high public importance; and it publishes [Al-Mashrabiya](#), an English language newsletter.

Perceptions were acquired from the WG's survey, in which the opinions of 19 male and female faculty, staff, and student representatives, from diverse professional and disciplinary backgrounds, were solicited. Eleven responded to six open-ended questions ([All.4](#)), and these responses were subjected to a qualitative thematic analysis. When asked about AUB fostering a culture of promoting ethics and integrity, the majority of the respondents (7/11: about 64 percent) indicated that AUB to some extent did so through its policies and procedures. Manifestations and venues where ethics and integrity (mentioned once) are communicated include town hall meetings ([R2.3](#)), orientation programs, course syllabi, and codes of conduct. They also noted that AUB offers orientation for all [new staff](#) and faculty members through the [Human Resources \(HR\) Department](#) and the [New Faculty Orientation](#) to share expectations of behavior or professional conduct. ([R2.4](#)) Two examples reported include the sexual harassment policy and conflict of interest declaration. The rest of the respondents reported being unsure or hesitant to give a response: one reported that AUB has overcome mistrust which emerged a few years back, and one reported that ethics and integrity have "not been addressed over the last 10 years and they will never be."

It is important to note that comparison of the [Employee Satisfaction Surveys](#) administered in 2012 and 2015 indicates that there has been a substantial improvement in employees' awareness of AUB institutional integrity policies (principles of ethical conduct, non-discrimination, sexual and other discriminatory harassment, duality/conflict of interest) as the percentage of respondents who reported being aware of AUB institutional integrity policies has risen from 52 percent to 90 percent. General knowledge of the Equity and Title IX program and its [non-discrimination, and anti-harassment initiatives at AUB](#), virtually unknown on campus three years ago, is now widespread as a result of extended in-person and online training ([R2.5](#)), targeted awareness campaigns, and student-centered dialogues. The number of reported incidents of discrimination (including sexual harassment) increased significantly from 17 in Academic Year (AY) 2015–16, to 52 in AY 2016–17, and 54 during the first seven months of AY 2017–18. Notably, student reports increased from six in AY 2015–16 to 28 in AY 2016–17. This upward trend reflects greater awareness, willingness to report, and understanding of reporting obligations, as well as progress towards a level of reporting commensurate with the size and complexity of the AUB community. Increased reporting also suggests improved confidence in the fairness of the process, and in a timely and effective institutional response.

2. *Academic Freedom and Intellectual Property Rights*

According to its mission statement, AUB "encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue". In this vein, AUB has established ethical standards, policies, and procedures that support and safeguard academic freedom to enhance the process of learning, research, and creativity, and to foster a climate of academic inquiry and engagement. A major commitment to bolster academic freedom, intellectual freedom, and freedom of expression was the recent decision of the AUB Board of Trustees (BOT) for reinstatement of tenure for academic staff, which was shepherded by the current president. The president's commitment to freedom of expression is also supported by many and frequent statements to diverse constituents and by policy ([Faculty Manual](#), page 13).

Many offices on campus support academic freedom and intellectual rights. The [Office of the Provost](#) is responsible for policies concerning academic freedom and intellectual property rights. The Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC) implements the university policy on intellectual property. The intellectual property policy establishes standards for determining the rights and obligations of the university and AUB inventors, developers, and authors.

3. *Diversity and Climate of Respect*

AUB is committed to building a climate of respect on campus. One of the pillars of this commitment is the inclusion of a diverse body of students and faculty. AUB values diversity in student socio-economic background, nationality, and cultural background, and monitors how much the different constituencies are accepting of, respecting, and reflecting on diversity by surveys. Admitting a diverse and academically qualified body of students is ensured through recruitment efforts that target prospective students from inside and outside Lebanon, from both public and private schools ([Chapter 1, Section V; Chapter 4, Section II](#)).

The AUB administration has created a number of initiatives to encourage a climate of respect for diversity and inclusion, including establishment of a more robust Equity and Title IX program that has significantly expanded the university's response to discrimination on campus, the establishment of the Accessible Education Office to facilitate equal access for students with disabilities to the university's academic, social, and recreational activities and programs, and the [Leadership, Equity, and Diversity \(LEAD\) Initiative](#) (a structure for scholarship programs) for improving geographic and socio-economic diversity of the student population. Accessible education at AUB operates in accordance with AUB's non-discrimination policy and applicable laws. The university president frequently makes statements supporting respect and diversity, especially for gender issues, and has engaged in dialogue with students, staff, and faculty through town hall meetings. The university has improved mental health support since 2016 through the recruitment of an additional full time counselor and a wellness outreach officer ([Chapter 4, Section IV](#)).

The university policies that address respect include the Non-Discrimination Policy, the Policies Concerning Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment, Procedures to Address Formal Allegations of Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment, the Non-Academic Staff Manual, and the [Employee Handbook](#), which contains links to various policies including non-discrimination and harassment policies.

Indirect evidence for the climate of respect is shown in the results of the [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) administered in 2013 and 2015, where the majority of AUB employees who responded to the survey agreed that their supervisors value their views and participation. Moreover, according to these surveys, more than 65 percent of respondents agree that AUB management treats employees with respect and that AUB management respects individual differences. Another relevant question from the 2013–14 [HERI Faculty Survey](#), "Indicate how well the following describes your university: There is respect for the expression of diverse values and beliefs," provided a favorable result with 82 percent of responses registering "very descriptive" or "somewhat descriptive."

According to the most recent National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE, 2015–16), 21 percent of the first year students that replied to the survey reported that their courses never included diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments. The results for including diverse perspectives (political, religious, racial/ethnic, gender, etc.) in course discussions or assignments at AUB were lower than the comparison group and all NSSE results with a large effect size and statistical significance for first year students. However, for senior students, there was no significant difference in results from any of the peer institutions, which is consistent with the conclusion that, over their course of study, students address diverse perspectives. The NSSE results also indicated no significant difference from peers on how much students' experience at AUB contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of developing a personal code of values and ethics. Students reported that their experience at the institution contributed to their knowledge, skills, and personal development in the area of understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.). According to the Universum Student Survey of 2016, AUB students' responses were similar to Middle

East students on a variety of related issues such as ethical standards, commitment to diversity and inclusion, and support for gender equality being attractive attributes of the institution. According to Question 59 of the 2014–15 [COS](#), the majority of students were satisfied with freedom from harassment on campus. Furthermore, a high proportion of the students who responded to the survey agreed to a great extent that the faculty/school in which they studied was equally supportive of women and men.

Respect is also evidenced by the results of the [HERI Faculty Survey](#) of 2013–14 and 2016–17 where the majority (94.4 percent) of faculty members who responded indicated that “teaching the students tolerance and respect for different beliefs” was essential/very important, and all faculty respondents (100 percent) agreed that “a racially/ethnically diverse student body enhances the educational experience of all students.”

4. *Avoidance of Conflict of Interest*

Avoidance of conflict of interest is addressed by policy statements, including the [Duality of Interest or Conflict of Interest Policy](#), [Employee Handbook](#), [Campus Procurement and Contract Administration Manual](#), [Bylaws of the Faculties](#), and [Faculty Manual](#). All AUB full-time staff and faculty members are required to fill a conflict of interest form every year where they disclose any conflict of interest they have. HR receives these forms and sends summaries of disclosed potential conflicts of interest to the respective administrators (to the respective department heads for non-academic units, and to the respective deans with a copy to the provost for those under the faculties/schools) in order for them to review the conflicts in their respective areas and take necessary action. HR also informs [Procurement and Contracts Administration Department](#) about declared conflicts of interest involving companies.

5. *Fairness and Impartial Practices*

Fairness and impartial practices are addressed by policy statements, including [Guidelines for Searches and New Appointments](#), [Promotion Procedures and Guidelines](#), [Non-Academic Staff Manual](#), and other HR policies and procedures. Some of the controls related to monitoring and measuring compliance with these policies do not detect, prevent, or correct for non-compliance. Full-time professorial appointments and promotions are subject to clearly defined and documented processes, however. Other academic appointments procedures are under revision.

All faculty members at AUB, irrespective of their ranks and administrative duty, are subject to an annual performance evaluation. Although the faculty evaluation forms [\[R2.6\]](#) are not uniform across faculties/schools, they all address areas of research, teaching, and service. Variations in AUB faculty annual evaluation are with regard to the period being evaluated, the documents required (CV, personal statements, teaching evaluation scores), and specific indicators that could be generated from the forms, especially in the area of service. The department chair comments and discusses the evaluation with faculty members, who can also provide feedback on the appraisal, and communicates the evaluation to the dean. Similarly, all non-academic staff have an annual performance appraisal using a standardized form filled by the staff member’s immediate supervisor. The staff’s performance on several domains is rated on a scale from one to five and it demonstrates how well the person is performing the duties outlined in the job description, goals established, and performance competencies. These appraisals constitute the basis for the annual merit salary increase and promotion for non-academic staff and help identify gaps for professional development. Thus, although fairness is difficult to quantify, the critical processes of reviews are well-defined and documented.

A large proportion of employees who completed the [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) administered in 2012 and 2015 were not satisfied with regards to fairness and objectivity of job promotions, and this percentage increased from 38 percent in year 2012 to reach 45 percent in year 2015. Similarly, the [HERI Faculty Surveys](#) of 2013 and 2016 indicate that a considerable proportion of faculty respondents (around 40 percent) disagree that “the criteria for advancement and promotion decisions are clear.”

According to the Employee Satisfaction Survey of 2012 and 2015, a good proportion of favorable responses were received from employees regarding the extent to which AUB is ethical in its dealings (66 percent agreeing and 14 percent disagreeing), and favorable responses (71 percent) were recorded concerning supervisors treating their

employees fairly. As for external parties, the great majority of suppliers who completed the Suppliers’ Satisfaction Survey reported that the bidding process of AUB is fair and transparent [\(All.5\)](#).

Six respondents to the survey conducted by the WG reported seven stories of unethical behavior and what they described as incomplete or unfair responses to them [\(All.4\)](#). The examples involved the purported wrongdoer not being penalized, AUB’s negative response to a botched academic appointment, lack of investigations, removal of competent colleagues, and secrecy around cases of hiring and purchasing bids. The respondents’ explanations included: variations in interpretation pertaining to what ethics meant, different units having different cultures, and full information being unavailable. The outcomes reported included, for instance, the issue not being addressed and people being left in the dark with no convincing explanation. These findings suggest transparency is an essential element in assuring fairness. In a related matter, the university is making strides toward gender equity: the Task Force on the Lives and Careers of Women Faculty at AUB is now a standing [committee](#) with the mandate to examine the lives of women staff and to develop an action plan to improve more generally the lives and careers of women at AUB.

6. *Honesty and Transparency*

Two AUB policies were found addressing this criterion, the [Privacy Policy on Electronic Communications and Files](#), which emphasizes the importance of electronic privacy, and the [Code of Business Ethics](#), which details how honesty and integrity are required in all university matters.

The [Office of Admissions](#) website provides clear and updated information for students regarding admissions. Information on specific criteria for admission, admission scores, and financial aid are published every year and individual scores are reportedly disclosed to students upon request. As for recruitment, the admissions office reports that it carries out recruitment activities to provide prospective students complete and accurate information about AUB and its different academic programs.

Some indirect measures are available to support this criterion. The related concept of transparency may be relevant as a marker of the perception of honesty and truthfulness. Although the responses to the 2013–14 [HERI Faculty Survey](#) question “Indicate how well the following describes your university: The administration is open about its policies” were relatively low (51 percent of responses were Very Descriptive or Somewhat Descriptive), they were comparable to what was found in the US (59 percent). This suggests that increased attention to communication and transparency is essential. The 11 respondents of the survey conducted by the WG [\(All.4\)](#) were hesitant in their replies to describe AUB as a transparent institution. Only two reported that AUB seems to have improved in this aspect. However, all of them voiced their doubts about transparency being applied consistently with concerns reported about tuition fees, grading, financial aid, and budgeting issues.

To promote a culture of transparency, the university leadership has been conducting town hall meeting with faculty, students, and staff to discuss and solicit feedback on issues of an academic or personnel nature [\[R2.3\]](#), [\[R2.7\]](#), [\[R2.8\]](#), and [\[R2.9\]](#).

7. *Promotion of Affordability and Accessibility*

There are several indicators as to how AUB promotes affordability and accessibility to its students. The university president has often stated the university’s commitment to financial aid and affordability. The administration is exercising efforts to contain increases in tuition (minute 31:10 in interview). The [Office of Financial Aid](#) (OFA) promotes affordability through its aid programs that includes a variety of need-based grants, merit scholarships, and low-interest loans. [LEAD](#), the umbrella for comprehensive scholarship programs at AUB is intended to attract more scholarship support from Lebanon and the region in order to make AUB’s education affordable to bright and financially underprivileged students. The recently established Accessible Education Office provides accessibility guidance and support for students and faculty that are well-communicated on its website and via direct contacts to students and faculty.

In addition, prospective students/applicants are informed of available funding sources and option management of loans. On its Tuition and Financial Assistance website, the

Office of Admissions provides explanations of tuition and funding, including a “Tuition Calculator” and links to the [OFA](#). Detailed description is provided about the types of financial support available, including scholarships, student loan programs and work study programs. However, the AUB Student Satisfaction Feedback Survey of 2016 indicates that less than half of the student respondents were satisfied with their overall experience with the OFA ([AIV.1](#)). The same is true for previous years 2014 and 2015.

III. Policies and Procedures (Criterion 3, 8, and 9; Questions 1, 3 and 5)

1. Institutional Policies and Procedures

The [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) reports of 2012 and 2015 reveal that 58 percent of AUB employees who responded to the survey were satisfied with AUB policies and procedures. Slightly more than half of the respondents agreed that AUB policies and procedures are up-to-date. There has been an increase in the percentage of employees who responded that AUB policies and procedures are “clear” and “easy to use” from 2012 to 2015. Based on the survey in the report of the Task Force on the Lives and Careers of Women Faculty at AUB ([R2.10](#)), a majority of faculty members (80 percent men and 74 percent women) were aware of the existence of AUB policies on harassment and discrimination but much less knew about the procedures for reporting when an incident happens.

The [Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals](#) (Policy on Policies) was comprehensively revised and updated in 2017. Significantly, the policy clarifies for the first time the approval hierarchy required for academic and non-academic university-wide policies. The hierarchy was agreed upon after consultation by the provost with the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs. In parallel and based on the recommendation of the Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC), the university implemented PolicyTech, a professional policy development software. The system ensures access to a single latest version of each policy; provides security with role-based permissions to view, edit, and approve based on both department and document type; supports appropriate inclusion and shared governance in the policy development process; and provides a comprehensive history of the policy revision and approval process. The system also offers a convenient online mechanism for policy education and awareness initiatives. A policy management system is an important component of an ethics and compliance program, lessening institutional risk of reliance on non-approved policies or multiple versions of a policy, and improving institutional response to administrative and legal challenges.

Since mandatory anti-harassment and Title IX training was introduced in fall 2015 for all employees ([R2.5](#)), 824 campus staff members (84 percent of managerial staff and 61 percent of non-managerial staff) have participated in specialized two-hour training sessions, provided in either English or Arabic depending on the cohort. Similar sessions for AUBMC staff were initiated in fall 2017, with 214 non-managerial employees and contractors receiving a modified version of this training.

In 2017, an online learning platform (Everfi) was introduced for faculty, staff, and students ([R2.5](#)). The platform has allowed Title IX awareness training to be scaled up in a timely and cost-effective way. There are separate learning management systems for students (Everfi/CampusClarity) and for faculty/staff (Everfi/Lawroom), and administration of the platforms can be decentralized by groups (such as academic, staff, etc.) or location (department, unit, etc.). The online course “[Anti-Harassment and Title IX](#)” was made available in July 2017 to faculty to increase awareness of the issues surrounding Title IX and related AUB policies. All faculty and managerial staff will be required to complete this course by August 2018. A separate online Title IX course “[Think About It](#)” for students was launched in 2017 with more than 10,000 participants completing the course over three semesters (a participation rate of approximately 93 percent). The Everfi/Lawroom platform offers approximately 40 other courses on compliance and workplace issues. The [Office of Financial Planning](#) piloted the use of the platform with 74 finance staff (97 percent) completing the Title IX training and an additional eight to 10 courses, on average, on compliance topics such as Ethics and Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Data Security and Privacy, and the Foreign Corrupt Practices Act.

Multiple policies directly address ethical issues including, [Grievance Policy and Procedure](#); [Non-Discrimination Policy](#); [Policies Concerning Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment](#); [Procedures to Address Formal Allegations of Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment](#); [Non-Academic Staff Manual](#), Chapter XVI – Labor Relations; [Employee Handbook](#); [Student Code of Conduct](#); [Arbitration of Authorship Disputes Policy](#); and [University Policies and Procedures Concerning Research Misconduct](#). Public policies are accessible to all AUB constituents through the Policies and Procedures website and are disseminated by their custodians to their respective units/constituencies. A close review of these policy documents does not show the policies to be unfair or partial, yet perceptions of fairness lag, suggesting that improvements in communication or implementation are important.

The [Office of the Registrar](#), the [student code of conduct](#), and the [university catalogues](#) (undergraduate and graduate) are the major sources that describe academic and non-academic policies and procedures, and provide an academic calendar in addition to course descriptions.

Importantly, there is the need to fill the ombuds position that was recommended in the 2008 self-study report and by two successive policy working groups in 2010-11 and 2016-17. There was an opening and search process in 2013 for an ombudsperson ([R2.11](#)), ([R2.12](#)), but the position was not filled because a suitable candidate was not found. Since 2012, the ombuds position has been extensively referenced in the two primary policies for addressing non-academic misconduct: the [Grievance Policy and Procedures](#), and the [Policies Concerning Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment](#). The WG recommends the hiring of an ombudsperson.

2. Compliance with Federal, State, and Commission Reporting Policies (ROAs 5 and 6)

AUB practices full disclosure of institutional-wide assessments relating to Middle States accreditation, including actions taken to comply with the Commissions’ ROAs. All relevant documents are accessible on the accreditation page of the [Office of the Provost website](#). The areas in which the university must respond to MSCHE Verification of Compliance Regulations are published to the AUB community. Accredited academic programs are listed by faculty on the accreditation [website](#).

AUB must comply with applicable laws of the United States as well as the laws of Lebanon, the country in which it operates. For example, relevant AUB units are required to handle student data in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) guidelines. Senior management initiated during spring 2017 a training workshop for university leaders on compliance with US legislative requirements. The workshop was attended by the president, provost, vice presidents (VPs), members of the Board of Trustees, deans, directors, senators, senior administrative staff, and AUB’s corporate legal counsel. In addition, AUB has established a Compliance Program ([R2.13](#)) following the US Federal Sentencing Guidelines including a [Policy on Compliance with the US Economic Sanctions Program](#). The program aims to ensure compliance with sanctions and regulatory requirements; as well as completeness of policies, establishment of procedures where needed and ensuring compliance with related policies and procedures. The plan is to have each of these components managed by a compliance officer with oversight from a senior executive reporting directly to the president. Educational sessions with all the faculties/schools have been conducted and a process to assist them in compliance matters through the compliance officer and the executive director has been established ([R2.14](#)), ([R2.15](#)).

3. Compliance with US Economic Sanctions Program (ROA 5)

In 2017, and in response to a False Claims Act (FCA) claim settlement, AUB Administration revised its compliance practices, established a Compliance Office, and implemented a Policy on Compliance with the US Economic Sanctions Program. As a result of the claim, AUB worked to improve its compliance program and make it more robust to ensure among other compliance issues that there were no inadvertent sanctions violations. In addition to a senior executive, a compliance officer was recruited, and AUB continues to engage legal experts from the US in compliance-related matters. Since then, educational sessions with all faculties/schools have been conducted and a process to assist them in compliance matters through the Office of

Compliance has been established. Training sessions were held for the administrative staff in academic and administrative units. Additionally, a vetting software “Visual Compliance” was acquired and is being deployed across AUB.

4. *Compliance with AUB Policies and Procedures*

The [Policy on Policies](#) requires that all policies be consistent with principles of ethical conduct and applicable law, and communicated and monitored for implementation and compliance. The executive sponsors and policy owners are responsible and accountable for implementation. Nonetheless, clear mechanisms on how to track and monitor incomplete compliance are lacking.

The [AUB Code of Business Ethics](#) advises employees to report violations and/or suspected violations of applicable laws, regulations, contract requirements, or any aspect of the Code of Business Ethics through standard management channels, beginning with the immediate supervisor. Anyone can contact the president directly should they have ethical concerns and be reluctant to report them. In addition, anyone who has questions about the interpretation or application of AUB policies or believes there may be a conflict with AUB principles is advised in the Code of Business Ethics to contact the provost, dean, or vice-president of the relevant area.

Alternatively, employees can report suspected misconduct anonymously on the safe reporting site maintained by the [Internal Audit Office](#) (IAO). The IAO is assigned to implement the Fraud Policy, which describes policies, responsibilities, and procedures concerning violations of laws and university policies.

Consistent with best practices and to encourage reporting by providing alternative mechanisms, a third-party reporting site (Ethics Point) has been piloted by the [Office of the President](#) for discrimination and harassment incidents, with reports directly received by the Title IX coordinator.

Due process monitors oversee compliance with university policies on promotion of faculty from assistant professor to associate professor and from associate professor to full professor. Due process monitors are charged with reporting anomalies in the promotion process to the provost immediately when they occur. Corrective action is to be taken promptly when monitored. The elected chair of the due process monitors submits recommendations for improvement with input from members for submission to the provost. The process supports adherence to AUB Promotion Procedures and Guidelines.

The general sense from the survey data ([All.4](#)) was that AUB fosters ethics and integrity, and two out of 11 respondents reported that, in their departments, this is done consistently and is required. However, five out of 11 answered that they were not sure that compliance is evaluated, and the rest (four out of 11) reported that “AUB has a weakness in this area” and does so haphazardly, only when the policies and procedures are violated, and breaches are dealt with hastily. But nearly all respondents answered that AUB has a weakness in evaluating compliance. Overall, the most important opportunities for improving ethics and integrity at AUB appear to be in expanding transparency and creating sustainable mechanisms for monitoring and continuous improvement. This situation is expected to improve with the recent appointment of the compliance officer.

5. *Grievance Policy*

The [Grievance Policy](#) and Procedures is one of two distinct AUB policies for addressing most categories of non-academic misconduct. Members of the university can seek redress if they believe they have a grievance on issues such as academic freedom, academic integrity, work conditions, discrimination, non-discriminatory harassment, professional misconduct, and/or stipulations in their employment contract.

A separate policy and process are applicable for reports of sexual or other discriminatory harassment: Policies Concerning Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment and Procedures to Address Formal Allegations of Sexual and Other Discriminatory Harassment. Based on the recommendations of a policy working group (2016-17), the non-discrimination policies are currently under revision with the goal of creating a unified policy to address all forms of discrimination including discriminatory harassment. In fall 2017, the Equity and Title IX initiative, based in the Office of the

President, established an institutional network of highly qualified faculty and staff to actively support these efforts. In addition to the Equity/Title IX coordinator, the network includes a six-member presidential advisory council, 15 deputy Title IX officers representing all faculties/schools, and 33 additional faculty/staff—all certified by a leading professional development organization. The collective work of the network has significantly strengthened the university’s capacity to respond to discrimination and harassment, facilitated greater alignment of practice with policy, and improved compliance with US regulatory requirements related to Title IX ([R2.2](#)).

6. *Periodic Assessment of Ethics and Integrity*

The [Policy on Policies](#) requires that all policies should be monitored for implementation and compliance and reviewed every three years. Annual reports on institutional integrity have been compiled by the [Office of the President](#) since AY 2013-14 and published online. The reports for AY 2013-14 and 2014-15 summarize the university’s achievements in the areas of transparency, policy development, Title IX protections, and allegations of misconduct received on the safe reporting website and their disposition.

IV. **Conclusion**

WG II finds that AUB meets the criteria of Standard II. Criteria 1-6 are met by policies, procedures, training programs, workshops, and frequent communications. Criterion 7 is met since AUB informs students about financial aid and scholarship, and importantly, the containment of tuition increases. Criterion 8 is met by full disclosure of institution-wide assessments relating to the Middle States accreditation and by compliance with US federal policies. Criterion 9 is met by the [Policy on Policies](#) that requires the review of all bylaws, policies, procedures, and manuals every three years.

Nonetheless, one key finding of this chapter is the lack of consistent and centralized mechanisms to ensure ethics and integrity generally throughout the university. Also, the WG has found information that is fragmented and compartmentalized to the extent that it becomes functionally opaque. Faculty trust and belief in consistent fostering of ethics and integrity (including hiring, financial matters, and grading) is limited. Nonetheless, there exists notable successes in Title IX ([Report of Taskforce on Women Faculty at AUB R2.10](#)), policy development ([Policy on Policies](#)), building up trust between faculty and administration by sustained communications by university administration (Provost’s Vision and Goals/Rebuild Trust; Transition to Tenure [R1.15](#)), and integrating ethics and integrity into learning outcomes (by including ethics in PLOs [All.1](#)).

Formation of sustainable and well-defined systems by which ethics and integrity are improved on a continuous basis are needed. The formation of an ethics and integrity office (Search Committee for Ombudsperson and Institutional Integrity Officer [R2.11](#)), with an ombudsperson and institutional integrity officer to identify gaps, will provide reasonable expectations that improvements in ethics and integrity will accelerate.

V. **Areas of Improvement**

Two foundational areas of improvement have been identified in the self-study regarding Standard II:

1. Create sustainable and well-defined systems by which ethics and integrity are improved on a continuous basis. In part, this will require forming an ethics and integrity office for monitoring adherence to institutional policies and procedures. Also, it will require hiring an ombudsperson to support compliance through training and awareness activities.
2. Transparency should be recognized as being a key aspect of, a means to assess, and a mechanism to improve ethics and integrity.

List of Appendices (A)

[\(All.1\) Ethics included in PLOs](#)

[\(All.2\) Ethics and Integrity Survey Questions](#)

[\(All.3\) Support of Ethics in Leadership Communications](#)

[\(All.4\) Stakeholders' views/opinions on Integrity and Ethics at AUB](#)

[\(All.5\) Supplier Satisfaction Survey](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R2.1\] Nondiscrimination Anti-Harassment Training Update](#)

[\[R2.2\] Email Reminder of Nondiscrimination Policies and Procedures](#)

[\[R2.3\] Town Hall Meeting for Students](#)

[\[R2.4\] New Staff Orientation](#)

[\[R2.5\] Mandatory Online Title IX Course](#)

[\[R2.6\] AUB Faculty Annual Evaluation](#)

[\[R2.7\] Town Hall Meetings for Faculty](#)

[\[R2.8\] Town Hall Meeting on Tenure](#)

[\[R2.9\] Town Hall Meeting on Tobacco Free](#)

[\[R2.10\] Report of Taskforce on Women Faculty at AUB](#)

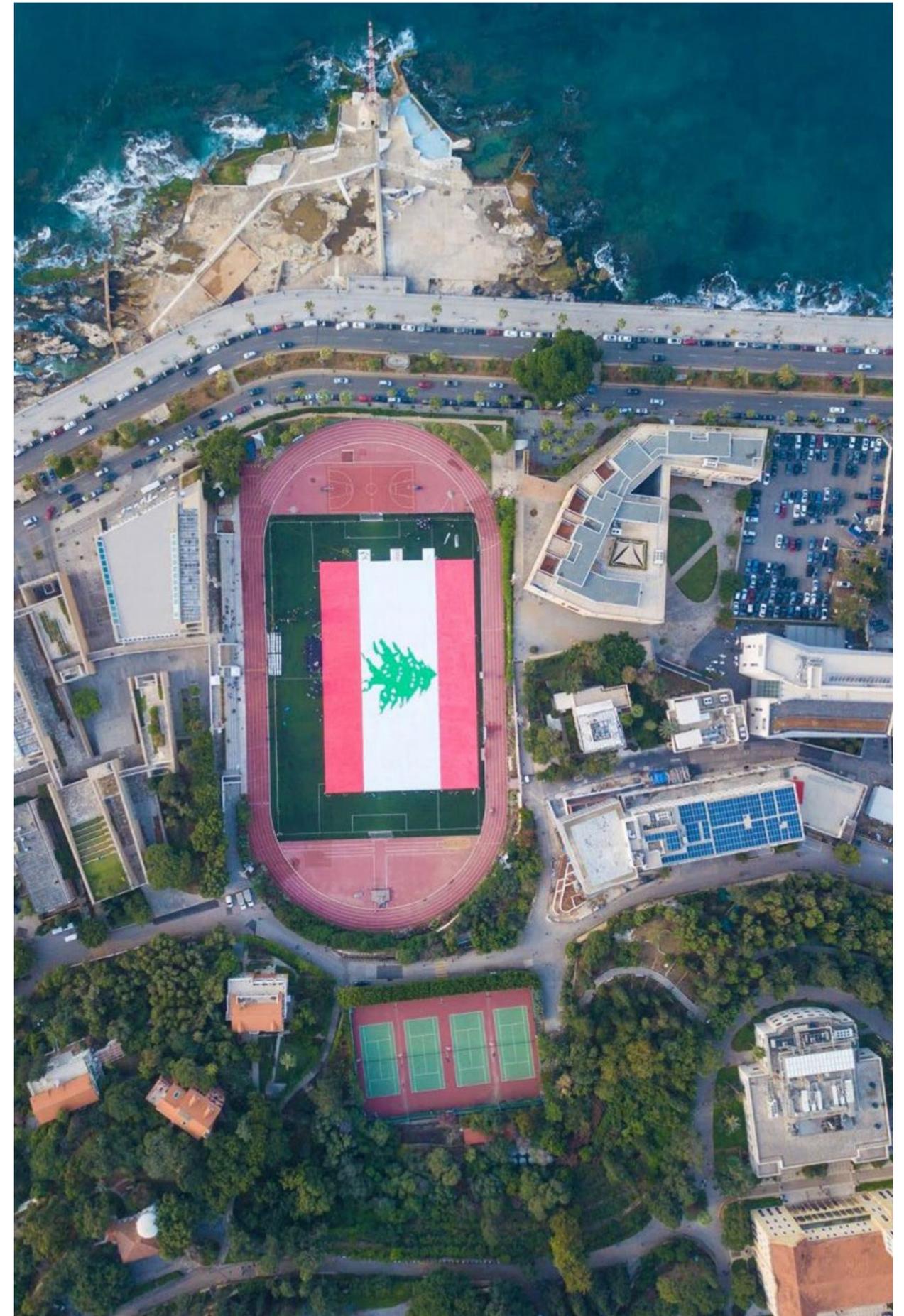
[\[R2.11\] Search Committee for Ombudsperson and Institutional Integrity Officer](#)

[\[R2.12\] Ombuds Job Description](#)

[\[R2.13\] AUB Integrated Institutional Compliance Program](#)

[\[R2.14\] AUB Integrated Institutional Compliance Program Groups Assignments](#)

[\[R2.15\] AUB Integrated Institutional Compliance Program1 Breakout Groups Objectives](#)





Standard III: Design and Delivery of the Student Learning Experience

I. Working Group Charge Overview

Working Group III (WGIII) was charged to document the degree to which the AUB student learning experience meets the criteria of Standard III and satisfies ROAs 8, 9, 10, and 15. The chapter begins with a brief overview of the student population at AUB and their learning experience. It then examines how adequately the contents and structures of the academic programs are described and made accessible to students. In section [Section IV](#) of this chapter the faculty are presented along with their activities, and how often they are reviewed. [Section V](#) presents and discusses the resources available to the faculty in carrying out their academic responsibilities (teaching, assessment of student learning, research, and service). [Section VI](#) outlines the [general education](#) (GE) program at AUB and examines the effectiveness of the GE requirements in achieving their desired objectives in support of the institutional mission. The assessment of academic programs is summarized in [Section VII](#), and detailed in [Chapter 5](#). Based on the findings, the WG identified strengths and areas of potential improvement and made recommendations to that effect.

II. Overview of Student Learning Experiences at AUB (Criteria 1-8; Questions 1 and 2)

A discussion of the student learning experience is best started by a brief description of the student population at AUB, their background and admission process. Admission to AUB as a regular undergraduate student can be at either the freshman or sophomore levels. The eligibility to apply to either status is contingent upon the number of years of study and preparation in the variety of primary and secondary education systems. Since the last year of the Lebanese education system (Lebanese Baccalaureate) is equivalent to the freshman year, students with the Lebanese Baccalaureate or its equivalent are admitted at the sophomore level. Out of approximately 1,800 new undergraduate students admitted in the fall semester of each academic year, about 19 percent are admitted at the freshman level. The admission process at either the freshman or sophomore level does not consider gender, nationality, or socio-economic background of the applicants. The students accepted at the sophomore level are mainly the product of Lebanese, French or International Baccalaureate (BAC) programs, or their equivalent. Whereas admission at the freshman level is typically at the end of an American High School diploma, A levels, or equivalent. The fact that roughly 50 percent of freshman students come from outside Lebanon enriches diversity of the student population which AUB has consistently been trying to improve through several means, including existing and/or forthcoming scholarship programs (such as the [Mastercard](#), [USAID](#), [Al-Ghurair](#), and [MEPI](#)).

Unfortunately, the retention rate for the freshman class (currently at around 85 percent) is lower than that for sophomore students whose retention is at around 95 percent. AUB loses about 15 percent of newly admitted freshman students before their second fall term, another 12 percent before their third fall, and another eight percent after that, leading to an average graduation rate of 65 percent. The main reason for attrition is poor performance. However, other factors may have been contributing to this attrition, which may need to be verified. One factor could be “pre-planned” attrition by completing the freshman year at AUB which allows many Lebanese students to have their freshman year equated to Lebanese BACII for Order of Professionals membership, and then continue their undergraduate education in the US or Europe. Another factor could be that some students have weak chances of joining competitive or sought-after programs at AUB after completing the freshman year.

Standard III addresses the commitment of the institution to deliver a comprehensive set of rigorous programs and courses taught by qualified faculty. AUB is strong in all aspects of this standard and has improved the student learning experience since the last self-study in 2008. All of AUB’s degree programs are adequately, accurately, and clearly described in the [university catalogues](#), [website](#), and other official publications in a way that is accessible to students and their advisors. These programs are sufficiently resourced and are internally and externally assessed, in regular and periodic fashion, respectively. These programs are designed, delivered,

and assessed by faculty members who are highly qualified. Overall, the teaching evaluations of AUB faculty members are positive as evidenced by the consistently high [Instructor Course Evaluation](#) (ICE) scores that are obtained at the end of each course. Faculty members are regularly assessed internally and externally based on annual activity reports, as is clear from the sample [Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture](#) (MSFEA) Faculty Annual Performance Review Form [\[R3.1\]](#), and on promotion reviews ([Faculty Manual](#), Chapter Two). The student-to-faculty ratio is generally good (11-to-1, page 25 in [Common Data Set](#) 2017–18), yet enrollment continues to expand at a pace faster than those of the university’s infrastructure and services ([Chapter 6, Section IV](#)). The university provides faculty members with many opportunities, resources, and support for professional growth and innovation. Yet, the faculty workload at AUB may still be considered as “heavy” given the number of hours that faculty devote to committees and other service activities, in addition to their teaching and research. The faculty workload balance can benefit from efforts to streamline and improve it. The university’s well-established GE program already responds to a number of the learning needs identified and expressed in essential learning outcomes and high-impact practices (HIP), as per the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U). In line with a drive for continued improvement, an effort is currently under way to update and revise the GE program structure and offerings, and to develop a new vision and mission for the liberal arts at AUB. This effort is facilitated, guided and overseen by the [Office of the Provost](#).

The elements identified and discussed above, further expanded upon in this chapter, satisfy ROAs 8, 9, 10, and 15. They are clearly aligned with a number of academic strategic priorities that AUB has set, specifically, those related to the student learning experience, investment in faculty recruitment and dedicated resources.

III. Academic Programs (Criteria 1 and 3; Question 3; ROAs 8, and 9)

1. Programs and Degrees

As of AY 2018–19, AUB has 51 bachelor’s [degree programs](#), 77 master’s [degree programs](#), 12 PhD programs, a professional MD program, as well as 36 certificates and diplomas. These programs are divided across AUB’s seven faculties/schools. AUB offers bachelor’s degrees in all the different faculties/schools, with requirements ranging between 90 and 143 credits beyond the freshman year and depending on the program. A growing number of graduate and undergraduate programs in the various faculties/schools are [accredited](#) from relevant professional/academic bodies.

A total of 1,200 instructional faculty members (914 full-time and 286 part-time) deliver the instruction and perform all related duties at the university. Faculty members play a pivotal role in designing and delivering academic programs that define to a large extent the student learning experience. The content and structures of academic programs are designed by faculty members, who are also responsible for the initiation of new programs and majors. New proposed programs pass through a number of steps. For instance, [graduate programs](#) are reviewed by the respective graduate committees of the faculties/schools. They are then voted at the faculty level and presented to the university’s Board of Graduate Studies, which in turn presents them to the University Senate. Every program offered, along with its structure and content, is reviewed and approved by the [University Senate](#). Once a new program receives approval by the University Senate, it is then reviewed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT), before being finally approved by the full BOT. A similar process is followed for the establishment of undergraduate programs. All programs are [registered](#) with New York State Education Department (NYSED) and saved on their Inventory of Registered Programs.

2. Programs’ Descriptions and Requirements

AUB relies primarily on its undergraduate and graduate catalogues to describe all its programs of study. These catalogues exist both in print and in [digital format](#) on the website of the [Office of the Registrar](#). In addition to providing general information about the university, the catalogues describe in detail each of its faculties/schools, breaking up each one into departments, programs, and courses. Each program description includes the course requirements and attributes (major courses and electives, humanities, social sciences, etc.) and any required summer training/internship and capstone course/project necessary for graduation. The catalogues also include any

minors or special tracks a program might offer. Students can also access a [webpage](#) which provides links to each and every program included in the catalogue. This resource has been regularly/heavily accessed by students; in fact the link recorded a total of 114,178 views in the AY 2016–17. In addition, the student learning outcomes of all academic programs are published on departmental/program websites. AUB also offers students online curricular advising tools which improve academic planning and help them complete their [GE requirements](#). This information on program and degree requirements is readily accessible to students, but the system could be improved by expanding online academic planning and advising to all programs.

AUB is moving towards integrating e-learning into the curriculum offerings in the various faculties. An initiative to encourage [blended/hybrid learning](#) was launched in 2009. At this time, 80 courses have been re-designed to be offered in a blended format, with 40 more in the works. A customized five-week faculty development program for blended course (re-)design is offered every semester by the [academic services](#) of the [Office of Information Technology](#). More than 100 faculty members have completed this training program to date. While the exclusively online mode of delivery is not yet accepted by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education for degree granting programs, AUB offers one “distance education” diploma program: the Professional Post-Graduate Diploma in Green Technologies, which was approved by MSCHE in 2017.

3. Graduate Education

AUB continues to be an institution that offers a rigorous graduate education. The number of master’s programs has consistently increased from 54 in 2008, to 77 in 2018. The number of students enrolled in these programs increased from 1,044 since 2008 to 1,475 in fall 2018–19. However, the fact that the increase in the number of graduate students is incommensurate with the increase in the number of graduate programs [\[R3.2\]](#) may require evaluation of the current graduate programs before new master’s programs are introduced. Also, while the overall six-year graduation rate of undergraduate students (admitted at the freshman and sophomore levels) has been hovering between 82 percent and 84 percent, which is on par with international peer institutions, a regrettably high proportion of graduate students, about 22 percent, spend more than three years to complete the master’s program requirements [\[R3.3\]](#).

The number of PhD programs has increased from eight to 12 since 2008, and the number of students enrolled in these programs increased from 24 to 166 in fall 2018–19 ([AIII.1](#)). The funding available to support PhD students continues to increase. Specifically, institutional support for PhD housing and the monthly stipend has more than doubled since 2012, reaching \$1,847,217 in the 2017–18 budget cycle. The total number of research assistants employed by the university has also increased in the last five years ([AIII.2](#)).

The university is committed to pursuing the expansion of its graduate program offerings and its graduate student population in terms of quality, quantity, and diversity. To achieve this, several initiatives are ongoing and planned to focus on revamping certain master’s programs, introducing new, attractive, and emerging graduate degrees at the master’s and PhD levels, and enhancing the university’s scholarships portfolio at the graduate level.

IV. AUB Faculty (Criteria 2, 4 and 6; Question 4; ROA 15)

1. Faculty Qualifications

In AY 2018–19, at total of 914 full-time faculty members can be counted at AUB. Around 80% of full-time faculty members hold a doctorate or other terminal degree in their respective fields and serve in professorial ranks. This demonstrates the high level of preparedness of the instructional faculty. It is anticipated that the re-instatement of tenure will further enhance the research profile of faculty and improve recruitment and retention of tenured or tenure eligible scholars. The distribution of full-time faculty members amongst the various ranks and faculties/schools is shown in [Table 3.1](#). In any given year, a number of these full-time faculty members would be on a form of paid research leave. That number has varied from 37 to 52 over the past four academic years, AY 2018–19 inclusive.

Table 3.1 Breakdown of full-time faculty based on rank

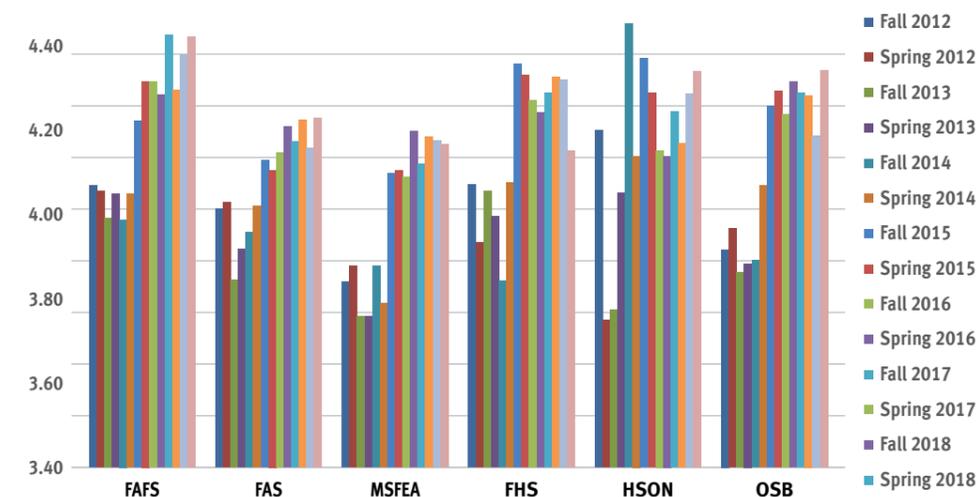
Rank	FAFS	FAS	MSFEA	FHS	FM	HSON	OSB	Total
Professor	12	70	42	10	90	4	9	237
Associate Professor	7	49	26	11	84	2	13	192
Assistant Professor	11	83	34	8	93	12	25	266
Senior Lecturer		5	4				5	14
Lecturer	2	30	7	1			7	47
Instructor	7	73	12	12	39	5	2	150
Assistant Instructor		2	6					8
Total	39	312	131	42	306	23	61	914

In addition to the regular (including part-time) teaching staff, graduate assistants (GA) contribute to the delivery and supervision of parts of courses and laboratory and recitation sessions (ROA 15). The healthy distribution of teaching faculty into various ranks reflects diversity in the teaching body and a mix of junior and senior faculty members.

2. Faculty Evaluation

Faculty members are assessed in the areas of teaching, research, and service. Teaching effectiveness is evaluated per course at the end of every semester through the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE). ICE surveys collect student feedback on three instructional aspects: instructor evaluation, course evaluation, and learning outcomes. An analysis of ICE data for the past six years across the university (AIII.3) indicates that AUB faculty members are achieving high scores on all three aspects (Figure 3.1). For instance, results for fall 2015 show that the average university score on students' rating for instructors is 4.23, while the average score for course satisfaction is 4.18, and the average score for learning outcome is 4.08. Seven-year results show stability of ICE survey ratings on these subscales over time, except for the past three years, which indicate even higher averages as shown in Figure 3.1. It is worth noting here that the student participation rates in ICEs have witnessed recent increases as a result of the implementation of a system which links the student's access to their semester grades to the timely completion of their respective course evaluations.

Figure 3.1 ICE average scores by faculty



As faculty promotion and tenure evaluation procedures and guidelines are being revised and updated, the university is moving towards a more systematic, comprehensive and reliable process, which includes additional input that complements the student surveys and ICE scores. In response to a Senate request to systematize the assessment of teaching, a proposal was prepared in which direct assessment methods such as teaching portfolios, peer observation/evaluation, etc. will be incorporated in the evaluation of teaching effectiveness.

The university has established the **Teaching Excellence Award** through the **Center for Teaching and Learning** (CTL). The objective of this initiative is to honor and recognize individuals who have exhibited excellence in teaching at AUB (R3.4). By recognizing such individuals, the university demonstrates its commitment to teaching as a scholarly endeavor, emphasizes the importance of outstanding teaching, and provides incentives for faculty members to pursue activities which could enhance their teaching abilities. The award is based on evidence of teaching effectiveness and contributions to the advancement of AUB's educational programs as implied by the excellence in teaching mission of AUB.

At the time of the preparation of this report, some discrepancies in faculty teaching workloads among and within faculties/schools at AUB are still noted. The situation remains similar to the one described in the last self-study report of 2008. An analysis of the available data identifies disparity in class sizes across departments and faculties/schools (AIII.4). Additionally, the existing teaching workload does not provide for balance between research, teaching, and service; nor does it address faculty or discipline specificities. In response to this, a **faculty workload taskforce** was appointed by the provost in October 2017 to address these discrepancies and propose a revised faculty workload policy.

Scholarly output is evaluated using several quantitative and qualitative indicators. The average number of journal papers per faculty at AUB is around one per year (total of 1,000 articles in 2018), and compares very well to the benchmark pool of universities in the US. About half of the papers published by AUB faculty are in venues which fall within the first two quartiles (R3.5).

Assessment of faculty service to the university and beyond is more complex as many initiatives and efforts are not necessarily documented or structured in a way to generate data in a regular and consistent manner. Nonetheless, full-time faculty members are engaged in service-related activities, faculty-specific or university-wide committees, professional societies, community work, and/or in the forms of consulting and training.

3. Faculty Review Process

The faculty review process at AUB is geared towards promoting excellence and continuous improvement in research, teaching, and service. Publicly published documents on the AUB website—including the **Academic Appointment, Reappointment,**

Tenure and Promotion Policy, as well as **Section 4.2 of the Faculty Manual**—clearly delineate the faculty review process. The process encompasses several periodic reviews including: annual performance, reappointment, and promotion reviews.

Female faculty members are entitled to a one-semester maternity leave, and their promotion deadline is extended by one year for each child, unless the faculty member chooses to opt out of this benefit. However, challenges remain for women faculty at AUB, partly due to the compounded effect of societal expectations typical of the region. In an attempt to address those challenges, the president appointed a **task force** in December 2015 to study the lives and careers of women faculty at AUB. Their report to the president identified a number of issues that will be addressed in the coming months/years, and the taskforce has been succeeded by a standing **Committee on the Lives and Careers of Women at AUB** [R3.6].

Performance reviews are submitted annually by full-time faculty to department chairs and then to deans for review and feedback, as shown in the sample MSFEA Faculty Annual Performance Review Form [R3.1]. They are intended to give faculty annual feedback on their progress as well as advice for path correction when needed. Reappointment or mid-tenure reviews are more comprehensive and involve a departmental evaluation and a positive vote of faculty from ranks higher than the applicant's to move the process through towards eventual reappointment by the provost. Upon the implementation of tenure, post-tenure reviews are to take place every five years to ensure that tenured faculty members are continuously engaged in research, teaching, and service.

The re-instatement of tenure was approved by the BOT in 2015. The Tenure Design Committee (TDC) **report** on tenure design and implementation was approved by the University Senate and the BOT in 2017. The **Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Evaluation** of Tenure-Eligible Faculty Members describes seven layers of review in the process to tenure: 1) a) peer review committee at the departmental level, b) department/track meeting for voting faculty in the presence of the due process monitor, and c) the chair's report to the dean; 2) the faculty/school advisory committee; 3) the dean's report; 4) meeting of the University Promotion and Tenure Committee; 5) the provost's report; 6) the president's recommendation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT; and 7) the BOT decision.

4. *Assessment of Job Satisfaction*

According to the **HERI Faculty Survey** 2016–17 conducted by the **Office of Institutional Research and Assessment** (OIRA) and which included two comparison groups, AUB faculty have lower overall job satisfaction (59 percent) than norms (75 percent for comparison group 1 and 85 percent for comparison group 2). The difference is not related to flexibility issues (62 percent), but more to relative equity of salary and job benefits (34 percent). Of the three dimensions of job satisfaction, AUB faculty members have significantly lower satisfaction on the compensation dimension, while they are satisfied with the workplace environment. In answering questions related to the sources/causes of stress they face/feel, faculty members identified the following: review/promotion process (85 percent), lack of personal time (83 percent), research or publishing demands (81 percent), institutional procedures and “red tape” (81 percent), committee work (73 percent), teaching load (71 percent), job security (69 percent), increased work responsibilities (69 percent), and institutional budget cuts (66 percent).

V. **Resources for Research and Teaching (Criteria 2, 4, and 6; Question 4)**

AUB faculty members are provided with a number of opportunities and resources to support their professional growth and innovation.

1. *Funding Opportunities*

AUB funds the upgrade/establishment of facilities and equipment in various disciplines. According to the Office of the Provost, in the current year, AY 2017–18, the university allocated the amount of \$1,963,000 of capital budget to faculties to be spent on items that cost more than \$5,000, which may be channeled mainly to improving labs and teaching facilities.

Research funding available to AUB faculty members includes **travel funds** to attend international conferences, summer long-term travel grants, periodic leaves, and intramural and extramural grant opportunities. Short-term and long-term development grants are travel grants that support faculty members in presenting their scholarly work at international conferences or in spending time during the summer term conducting research in a university or a lab. The budget for travel is managed by the faculties/schools.

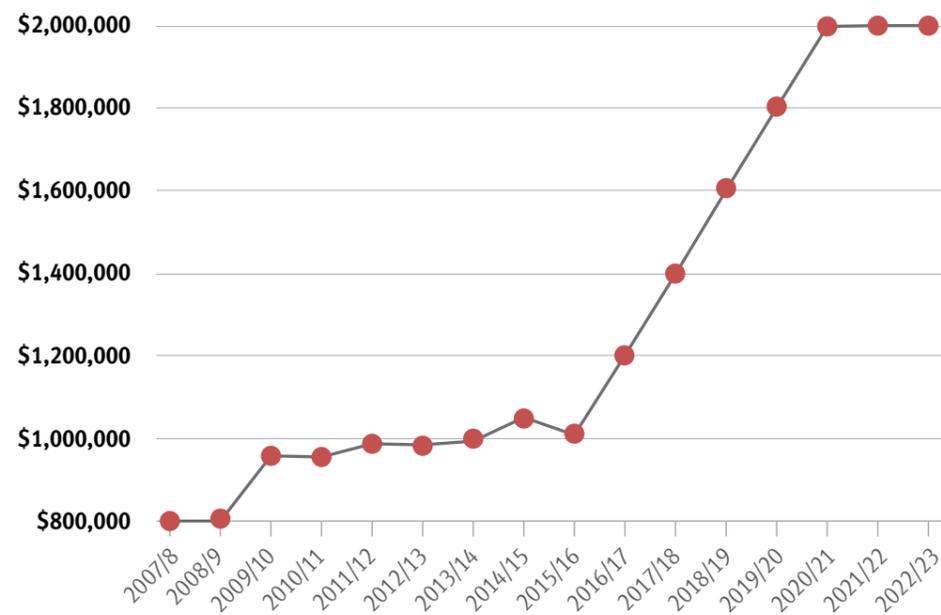
AUB offers two kinds of research leaves: **Junior Faculty Research Leaves** (JFRL) are offered to assistant professors in their third or fourth year of appointment, and **Periodic Paid Research Leaves** (PPRL) are offered to associate and full professors, to promote research activities, which are central to the university's mission. The total number of faculty members who have been on junior faculty leaves and paid research leaves during AY 2015–16 through AY 2018–19 is shown in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2 Count of faculty members on PPRL or JFRL over four years

	2015–16		2016–17		2017–18		2018–19	
Faculty	JFRL	PPRL	JFRL	PPRL	JFRL	PPRL	JFRL	PPRL
FAFS	2	3	2	1	2	1	1	
FAS	5	23	7	14	14	17	14	16
FHS		2						1
FM				1		2		2
MSFEA	1	6	6	2	1	8	7	6
OSB	1	2	1	3		7	2	1
Grand Total	9	36	16	21	17	35	24	26

AUB provides faculty with an opportunity to compete for internal seed grants, including **University Research Board** (URB) grants, AUBMC's Medical Practice Plan funding, and other interdisciplinary research funding programs such as the collaborative research stimulus (CRS), the Farouk Jabre interfaculty grants, and the joint National Council for Scientific Research – Lebanon (L-CNRS)/AUB grants. In AY 2017–18, the total internal funding exceeded \$5 million. This includes \$1.4 million for the URB, \$1.6 million equally distributed between AUB and the L-CNRS, \$400,000 for the CRS, around \$1.4 million for the AUBMC MPP, and around \$100,000 for the Farouk Jabre interfaculty grants. The URB funds are expected to be \$1.8 million in 2018-19 and increase and stabilize at \$2 million in 2019–20 and beyond. **Figure 3.2** shows the increase in URB funds over the past 10 years.

Figure 3.2 URB funds over the past 10 years and projected for the coming 5 years



The [Office of Grants and Contracts \(OGC\)](#) provides support for faculty as they identify potential grant sources, prepare and submit their proposals, and manage funds when those are received. In addition, the OGC reviews and documents all compliance-related issues for all proposals, grants, and service in line with published university policies. Through its Technology Transfer Unit, OGC also manages inventions and their disclosures across all faculties/schools. OGC encourages and assists with technology development and facilitates the protection of intellectual property and its transfer to business and industry. Through its Centre for Research and Innovation (CRInn), OGC supports entrepreneurship training and learning, and provides faculty and students with resources and common office space. According to OGC, while the amounts of external funding are increasing, the number of externally funded projects has not increased significantly over the past five years. For the period extending between January 1, 2018 and April 23, 2018, the total approved research and development grants amounted to \$9,291,691, out of which \$8,172,168, a total of 93 grants, are funded from external sources.

AUB’s continuous support and investment in developing research does not yet compensate for the absence of a local/regional culture that values local and regional foci in research and development funding. The environment for attracting substantial research funds continues to be challenging.

2. University Libraries

The [university libraries \(UL\)](#) serve as a hub for research and campus activities. According to the 2016 [UL Self-Study Report](#), the collections consist of 400,000 print books and 5,600 print periodical titles (2,000 in Arabic). The libraries also own one million electronic books, provide access to 130,000 electronic periodical titles, and subscribe to 350 electronic databases. There are about one million audiovisual items of all formats, the majority of which are microforms of a substantial number of local and regional journals and newspapers going back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Archives and Special Collections contain 1,000 linear feet of archival material, 1,800 manuscripts, most of which are in Arabic and some are uniquely and/or rarely held resources, 10,000 AUB theses and dissertations going back to the early 20th century, 6,000 posters, 800 postcards, and 2,000 maps, as well as 72,000 photographs (including over 20,000 negatives) of unique and historical nature. These print and electronic collections are developed and enriched on a regular basis to support the academic and research programs of the university.

3. Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL)

The mission of [CTL](#) is to “promote and support high quality teaching and learning at AUB in keeping with the mission of the university, particularly the university’s commitment to excellence in teaching and the enablement of students to think independently and become life-long learners.” To realize this mission, CTL states nine goals that can be summarized under promoting learner-centered methodologies of teaching and assessment, in order to enhance effectiveness of teaching and learning. Furthermore, the goals refer to supporting individual faculty, to the [Scholarship of Teaching and Learning \(SoTL\)](#), as well as to CTL being a “resource center that archives and disseminates teaching and learning resources in order to assist faculty members in their efforts to become more effective teachers”. CTL schedules its activities based on a needs assessment survey administered to AUB faculty university-wide every two years [[R3.7](#)]. In addition to hosting the annual [International Conference on Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education](#), CTL offers AUB faculty different types of professional development activities, including SoTL grants and individual consultations, and it coordinates the university-wide [Teaching Excellence Award](#). Turnout of faculty in training and professional development activities can be characterized as moderate, with [Faculty of Arts and Sciences \(FAS\)](#) and [Faculty of Medicine \(FM\)](#) being the most active ([AIII.5](#)). Evaluations of CTL’s professional development activities ([AIII.6](#)) consistently reflect faculty perceptions as “satisfied” with CTL’s support of their teaching responsibilities. Faculty members indicate that the time needed to involve themselves in the learning and application of such activity themes is difficult to find, given their other duties and workload.

CTL has been carrying out [training workshops](#) for AUB faculty on developing and assessing learning outcomes at both the program and course levels since December 2004. These workshops are either embedded within course syllabus design/capstone courses or dedicated and focused workshops ([AIII.7](#)). All faculty members (including new faculty members as part of their orientation) are encouraged to attend these workshops. Specifically, the faculty assessment officers, assessment committees, and department chairs are invited to participate in these workshops. In addition, individual consultation sessions are held for this purpose upon the request of interested faculty members. More details on the assessment of program learning outcomes (PLOs) are presented in [Chapter 5](#).

OIRA reported on faculty satisfaction in a [HERI Faculty Survey \(AIII.8\)](#) conducted for AY 2016–17, AY 2013–14 and AY 2010–11, and in reference to two comparison groups. Findings show that there was a drop in faculty participation in organized activities to enhance pedagogy and student learning from 63 percent in AY 2010–11 to 41 percent in AY 2013–14, followed by an increase to 53 percent in AY 2016–17. This recent percentage is still lower than both comparison groups (73 percent and 66 percent). The reason may be that faculty members have already benefited from most teaching and learning workshops in previous years and that only new faculty members are attending such workshops. Similarly, participation in funded workshops outside AUB focusing on teaching dropped from 13 percent to eight percent in 2013–14 and then increased to 34 percent in 2016–17, but it is still lower than the percentage of both comparison groups (around 50 percent). However, training for administrative leadership remained low six percent in 2010–11 and eight percent in 2013–14 and lower than both comparison groups (13 percent). Receiving incentives for developing new courses decreased from 24 percent in 2010–11 to 16 percent in 2013–14, and was 15 percent in 2016–17, which is similar to comparison group 2. How faculty in a department valued teaching slightly increased from 79 percent to 82 percent and then to 89 percent in 2016–17, and is comparable to both comparison groups. Support for faculty development remained constant over the past years (68, 65 and 66 percent respectively) and is better than the first comparison group but less than the second comparison group (78 percent).

4. Faculty Mentoring

[Mentoring](#) opportunities are presented and discussed during the [orientation of new faculty](#) members and by department chairpersons. Based on feedback from faculties/schools on campus, it is noted that faculty mentoring is practiced using different models, formally in some schools and faculties, namely the [Faculty of Health Sciences \(FHS\)](#), [FM](#), the [Rafic Hariri School of Nursing \(HSON\)](#), the [Suliman S. Olayan School of Business \(OSB\)](#), and [MSFEA](#), and informally in others, namely [FAS](#) and the [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences \(FAFS\)](#).

VI. General Education Program (Criteria 2, 3, and 5; Questions 2 and 5; ROAs 8, and 9)

The [mission](#) of the GE program at AUB is to “provide students with essential skills in research and communication, familiarity with significant modes of thought, and broad exposure to fields of learning in a wide range of areas (cultural, societal, and scientific) so that they better learn to think critically and analyze intellectual and social issues in their historical and contemporary contexts from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, and thereby, to enrich their lives by fostering problem-solving skills and promoting life-long learning, in a program that embraces the principles of student choice and active learning.”

The GE program is common to all university undergraduate programs and consistent with AUB’s commitment to the American liberal arts model and emphasis on critical thinking, respect for diversity, personal integrity, and civic responsibility. The AUB mission statement and GE outcomes and requirements focus on student achievements of a number of goals in line with the principles of contemporary liberal education. The mission and [academic strategic plan](#) (ASP) of AUB emphasize the role the university in the region as a leader in addressing its most complex issues and its responsibility in impacting the lives of its people.

A brief historical overview of the GE program at AUB, and a description of its governance, processes, and tools are given in [Chapter 5, Section IV](#). This section presents the current GE requirements at AUB as well as a brief summary of its review.

1. Requirements of the GE Program at AUB

The GE program at AUB addresses a number of skills and competencies identified by the AAC&U as essential learning outcomes and HIP. All AUB students must satisfy the [GE requirements](#) by taking a minimum of 36 credits distributed as follows:

- 3 credits in Arabic communication skills
- 6 credits in English communication skills
- 6 credits in natural science
- 12 credits in humanities
- 6 credits in social science
- 3 credits in quantitative thought

In addition, all undergraduate students are required to take a three-credit “Writing in the Discipline” course normally offered in the major.

2. Assessment and Review of the GE Program

Periodic assessment of the GE [PLOs](#) aims to improve GE courses, the GE program, and the students’ learning experience. An assessment plan was implemented, including both direct and indirect forms of assessment over a three-year cycle.

The GE program was reviewed in accordance with the first key initiative of the 2016 [ASP](#), and with the findings of the assessment results collected during the first and second assessment cycles, as well as the AAC&U benchmarks [\[R3.8\]](#). The recommended revisions are explained and discussed in [Chapter 5](#). As part of the current effort initiated by the Office of the Provost to revise and update the GE program, a new director has been appointed and a roadmap for a new core curriculum for AUB has been drawn which addresses the following recommendations: The new GE program should focus on common intellectual experiences; it should engage students with AUB’s values of social responsibility and integrity; it should provide a holistic experience, with a strong emphasis on AUB’s regional role and impact [\(AIII.9\)](#).

VII. Review and Assessment of Academic Programs (Criteria 7 and 8; Questions 4 and 6; ROAs 8, 9, and 10)

1. Programs Provided by Third-Party Vendors

AUB degree-granting programs have so far been designed and delivered almost exclusively by AUB personnel. Recently however, AUB’s FHS, in collaboration with the Escuela de Agricultura de la Región Tropical Húmeda (EARTH) University in Costa Rica, has designed a program for a joint global master’s in health and sustainable development (GMP), which has been approved by the BOT. The GMP is a 43-credit program to be delivered over 18 months. Students spend time on both AUB and EARTH University campuses, and complete a social entrepreneurship project in their home country. The GMP will be governed by a Program Committee co-chaired by one AUB-FHS and one EARTH coordinator. AUB’s [Office of International Programs](#) will coordinate with EARTH to ensure the timeliness of program evaluation components and the integration of feedback into the program design. A GMP Steering Committee consisting of the dean and associate deans of FHS and the president and the provost of EARTH University will be responsible for strategic guidance of the GMP, periodically reviewing evaluation results, and approving any major program changes.

In addition, AUB has one diploma program, the [Professional Post-Graduate Diploma in Green Technologies](#) (PRO-GREEN), which involves third-party providers. PRO-GREEN is a joint/dual diploma offered by MSFEA in collaboration with the Lebanese American University (LAU) and the American University in Cairo. It requires the completion of 18 credits within a period of one or one-and-a-half years with a focus on renewable energy, green building, and water resources. The courses are offered online. The creation of the diploma was funded by an EU TEMPUS grant and supported by the [Munib and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources](#). Curriculum development and course offerings at the three institutions with quality assurance and monitoring plans started in October 2012, and the program was launched in January 2015. Details of the academic program including eligibility requirements can be found on the program’s website. As of September 2018, the program will partner up with the [Academic Assessment Unit](#) (AAU) for further evaluation of the curricula and program under the regular [periodic program review](#) (PPR) process.

2. Periodic Assessment of Degree-Granting Programs

AAU provides campus-wide resources for undertaking the following activities: [PPRs](#), assessment of [PLOs](#), in addition to [tracking of Key Performance Indicators \(KPIs\)](#).

All undergraduate programs and majors at AUB have developed and implemented a comprehensive [PLO assessment plan](#) which follows a three-year cycle. This assessment plan includes the learning outcomes for the program or major, the tools and methods used for assessing these PLOs, and a timeline for implementing the plan during an assessment cycle.

All undergraduate and graduate programs and departments without professional accreditation undergo a [PPR](#) at least once every eight years. Accredited programs and departments follow the timeline required by their respective accrediting body. Departments that review programs for professional accreditation by external boards, commissions, or other agencies follow the schedule and requirements of that body for their accredited programs.

[PPRs](#) at AUB stipulate that departments prepare reflective self-studies that examine educational programs and practices in addition to assessing their quality and monitoring their progress. This self-study should also identify program needs, directions and priorities. The academic review process for a department typically follows a 21-month timeline from written notification of program review to the submission of the final improvement plan report to the provost.

In addition, all new applications for master’s and PhD programs and for professional programs require a review by external reviewers as part of the registration process with NYSED. Some programs are registered on the condition that follow-up reviews are conducted at first graduation or after a defined number of years (e.g., MS in orthodontics, BS in landscape design and eco-management program).

It is worth noting that the [Office of the Provost](#) started working recently on a plan to assess existing graduate programs at the master’s and PhD levels to capture their impact and

potential and to identify areas of improvements and any needed support for growth. This will also inform decisions to expand the graduate student population through mechanisms to recruit qualified students to existing programs and initiatives to introduce new attractive degrees. The assessment process will take into account the academic value and learning outcomes of each program and its relation to the university's mission, in addition to the potential for sustainability and growth based on data indicators such as applicants, enrollment, time-to-degree, course offerings, and post-graduation career opportunities

Outcomes of the various concerted assessment efforts described herein are examined in depth in [Chapter 5](#).

VIII. Conclusion

In conclusion, the university does meet the criteria of Standard III and ROAs 8, 9, 10, and 15. Criteria 1 and 3 are met since AUB has degrees and programs that are adequate in content and structure, well described in catalogues and websites, and accessible to students. Criterion 2 is met since faculty at AUB are qualified, sufficient in number, and well-resourced for their teaching, research, and service activities. Criterion 4 is met due to the various learning opportunities and resources. AUB's GE program (and its requirements) are evidence that Criterion 5 is met. Criterion 6 is met since AUB offers graduate and professional programs that contribute to the research productivity of the faculty. Criteria 7 and 8 are met since AUB reviews any student opportunity that is designed and delivered by third-party providers and assesses the effectiveness of all its educational programs.

The key findings of this chapter can be summarized as follows: AUB attracts and retains high quality students at both the freshman and sophomore entry levels, with the latter being the most predominant given that it applies to local students who have completed their Lebanese, French or international baccalaureates. New and forthcoming scholarship programs contribute to increasing the diversity of the student body. Programs are periodically and thoroughly reviewed and clearly communicated and shared with the students and advisors through the university catalogues, website and other publications. Faculty members who are tasked with designing and delivering the various programs are highly qualified, adequate in number, and regularly assessed with reference to their teaching, research and service. In general, the university provides its faculty with adequate resources to support their teaching and research activities. The recent decision of the Board of Trustees to restore tenure is expected to help the university in attracting and retaining highly qualified scholars, and in enhancing the research profile of the institution in support of its mission and strategic goals. The university has a well-established general education program that reflects its enduring commitment to a liberal education. In response to two cycles of assessment and in line with AUB's 2016 academic strategic plan, the GE program is being revised and updated.

IX. Areas of Improvement

Nevertheless, based on its findings, the WG identified the following areas of potential improvement:

1. Assess the sustainability of some graduate master programs, vis-à-vis their relevance, cost of operation and financial sustainability, taking into account their need for achieving the mission of the institution. Also, evaluate and try to reduce time to degree for graduate programs.
2. Initiate a process for assessing the reasons behind attrition and hence low graduation rate of freshman students.

List of Appendices (A)

[\(AIII.1\) Graduate Enrollment](#)

[\(AIII.2\) Number of RAs Hired During the Relevant AY](#)

[\(AIII.3\) Instructor Course Evaluations \(ICE\) \(AIII.4\) Average Class Sizes per Department](#)

[\(AIII.5\) CTL Activities 2013-2017](#)

[\(AIII.6\) CTL Evaluation Form](#)

[\(AIII.7\) CTL Workshops on Learning Outcomes](#)

[\(AIII.8\) HERI Faculty Survey](#)

[\(AIII.9\) AUB Core Curriculum, December 2017](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R3.1\] MSFEA Faculty Annual Performance Review Form](#)

[\[R3.2\] Provost Report on Enrollment Management to BOT, Nov. 2017](#)

[\[R3.3\] Provost Report on Graduate Studies to BOT, Nov. 2017](#)

[\[R3.4\] Teaching Excellence Award 2018](#)

[\[R3.5\] AUB Rankings 2018](#)

[\[R3.6\] Report of Taskforce on Women Faculty at AUB](#)

[\[R3.7\] Needs Assessment Survey Report 2016–2017](#)

[\[R3.8\] General Education Assessment Report](#)

Standard IV: Support of the Student Experience

I. Working Group Charge Overview

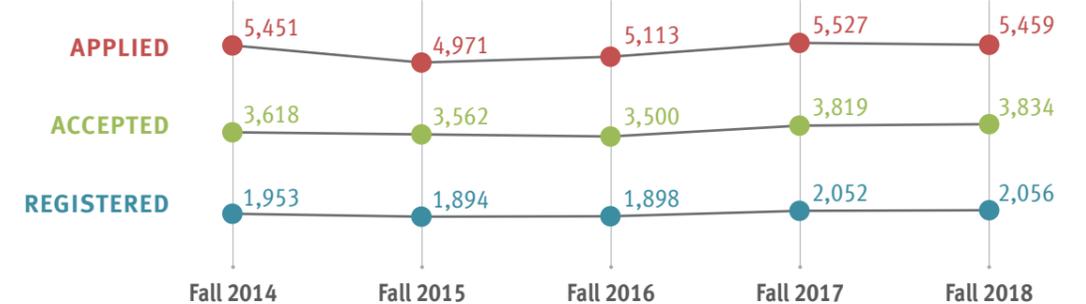
The purpose of this chapter is to determine how AUB's support of the student experience meets the criteria of Standard IV and satisfies ROAs 8 and 10. [Section II](#) of this chapter shows how recruitment and admissions criteria and processes are well-defined, transparent, accessible to the community at large, and compatible with AUB's mission. [Section III](#) examines the adequacy and accessibility of financial assistance programs. [Section IV](#) presents the main areas of student academic support and services leading to student success, with special attention to the options that are available to support inadequately prepared students. [Section V](#) examines the range of extracurricular activities that promote the intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development of students, and strengthen students' educational and learning experiences. [Section VI](#) presents the Office of the Registrar's role in graduation, transfer, and release of student information. Finally, [Section VII](#) describes the assessment of the effectiveness of programs that support student experience and the use of assessment results for improvement. Based on these findings, the WG identified strengths and potential areas of improvement and made recommendations.

There have been tangible, meaningful and effective developments since the last accreditation report. New units such as the [Accessible Education Office](#) and the [Student Wellness Outreach](#) center have been critical for psycho-social inclusion and support for students with special needs. Financial support for students continues to grow including major scholarships for incoming public school programs. The chapter will also show that continuous efforts to improve advising are being capped with steps towards implementation. Each section below will address a key component of the support of the student experience and link it to the university's mission and its strategic objectives.

II. Recruitment and Admissions (Criterion 1; Questions 1 and 2)

The [Office of Admissions](#) is charged with recruiting at the undergraduate level, simplifying the admissions process, and centralizing transparent and purely quantitative decision-making. The [Graduate Council](#) is charged with recruitment into graduate programs, simplifying the application process, and streamlining the decision process which is centralized at the level of each faculty. [Figures 4.1 and 4.2](#) show admissions trends over the last five years for undergraduate and graduate (master) students.

Figure 4.1 Undergraduate admissions



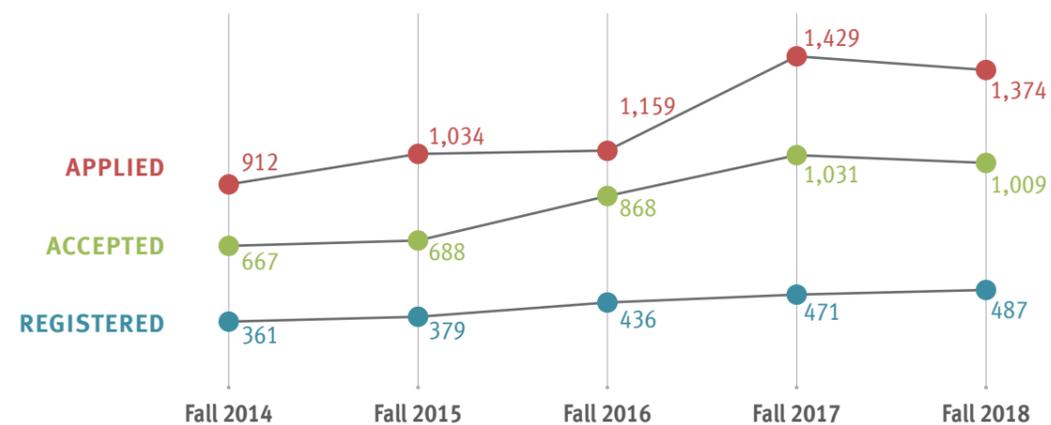
(Source: Admission's office annual report 2017-18)

For undergraduate recruitment, school visits (698 school visits and fairs in 2017-18 [\[R4.1\]](#), [\[R4.2\]](#), and [\[R4.3\]](#)) are conducted on a yearly basis in an attempt to reach out to 11th and 12th grade students in Lebanon and in the region, and inform them about the admissions processes. AUB participates in school fairs, both in Lebanon and the region [\[R4.1\]](#), and schools are invited to visit the AUB campus where information about AUB and its admissions processes are presented and relevant materials distributed. The admissions recruitment officers are dispatched throughout



the country, and within the Middle East region, to promote a sufficiently diversified student body. These officers are tasked with replying to **inquiries received by e-mail or through phone calls**. There is a recognition that enrollment marketing would benefit from more concerted outreach on digital platforms, which is currently the subject of discussion in the Office of the Provost and relevant administrative units.

Figure 4.2 Graduate admissions



(Source: Admission's office annual report 2017–18)

At the graduate level, the Graduate Council, in collaboration with the different AUB faculties/schools, holds an **annual graduate open house** for potential applicants, where they are informed about the application process, admission requirements, and the different graduate programs. A quarterly graduate newsletter and other **social media tools** are also utilized for enhancing graduate recruitment. In addition, the Office of Admissions informs potential graduate applicants during international fairs and exhibitions about the graduate admission process. Individual graduate programs or faculties/schools may also hold their own recruitment events [R4.4]. The AUB New York Office also contributes to recruitment efforts in North America [R4.5].

To ensure that the incoming student body is sufficiently diversified, both culturally and socio-economically, several initiatives have been launched. For example, the **Liberal Arts Scholarship** initiative and the **Advanced Student Scholarship Initiative** help AUB in diversifying its student body as well as their educational interests in a society that still values professional degrees above all others. Scholarship programs that cater for non-Lebanese students ensure diversity at the international level. For the first time in 2018, the Office of the Provost commissioned the Office of Communications and a commercial agency to produce a video commercial to promote financial assistance opportunities at AUB for release on social media platforms. Scholarships are discussed in more detail in **Section III**. AUB is also using web-sellers to increase and diversify the student population at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. It has subscribed to **Big Choice** [R4.6] which uses three microsites (one for undergraduates and two for graduates) to attract applicants from Asia, South America and Africa. AUB also subscribes to **Go Abroad** [R4.7], **II E Passport** and **Diversity Abroad** to enhance the visibility of AUB among students interested in full degree programs or a study abroad program. On another note, the AUB application is now part of the Common Application that is used by US-based institutions [R4.6].

The decision-making process for admitting undergraduates is, for the most part, based on mathematical and statistical methods which combine high school records and SAT scores (math score and evidence-based reading and writing score). It is handled by a unified campus-wide admissions committee. Chaired by the provost, the unified admissions committee is composed of the director of admissions and financial aid, director of the Office of Enrollment Statistics and Management Unit, and representatives from the different faculties/schools.

Admissions to the graduate programs are based on several criteria, depending on the program, and include the undergraduate GPA for master's degree applicants or the most recent post-graduate degree for PhD applicants, in addition to, and as applicable, GRE scores, work experience, publications, and interviews, among other criteria. Admission processes for all applicants are geared towards determining the likelihood of success of the applicants, while at the same time ensuring that all applicants from all educational institutions are treated equally, in line with AUB's aspiration for fairness and diversification. For example, 20 percent of students

from Lebanon who applied to graduate programs in fall 2016–17 came from public schools and universities [R4.8], [R4.9]. For graduate applicants, the admissions decision is at the program/faculty level. All acceptance decisions for both graduate and undergraduate applicants are communicated to the applicants by the Office of Admissions via electronic mail and are placed on the Admissions' website [R4.10], as soon as the results are out for each cycle of admissions.

III. Student Financial Assistance Programs (Criterion 1; Questions 1 and 3)

The financial aid programs include those that are under the **Office of Financial Aid** (OFA) that provide need-based grants and loans (both local and federal), and others that offer GAs and PhD fellowships under the various faculties/schools of AUB, and certain federal and non-federal grants that also offer financial aid.

OFA is charged with identifying qualified applicants in need and providing them with adequate financial support to attend the institution. The financial aid application process is advertised in **catalogues** and on the AUB **website**, and explained during recruitment events. The award system is guided by a mathematical formula, and aided by individual interviews with the applicant and family when needed. Family income, family wealth, family debt and encumbrances, number of dependents in a household, and number of siblings still in school are all part of the equation for determining need. A financial aid committee consisting of financial aid officers, administrators, and faculty representatives from all faculties/schools at AUB oversees the awarding process to ensure transparency and fairness. Decisions about financial aid awards are communicated to the applicants within 1.5 months of the acceptance decisions.

OFA awarded in AY 2017–18 the amount of \$32 million in donor and institutionally funded financial aid to 3,495 students representing 80% of financial aid applicants and close to 44% of the overall undergraduate student population [R4.11]. These awards ranged between 15-100 percent with an average of 33 percent of tuition fees. In addition, an average amount of \$3,754,458 in student loans was paid in the same year by affiliated banks to 459 students, and 70 students received US Direct Loans amounting to \$0.8 million through US federal financial aid.

Table 4.1 shows that up to 44 percent of AUB's graduate student population is on partial or full-time graduate assistantships (GA), which cover partial or full tuition waiver and include academic services rendered to the department/faculty awarding the assistantship. In addition, graduate master's students are eligible to benefit from financial aid support up to a maximum of a 20 percent tuition fee waiver. All PhD students receive full support in the form of fellowships which cover all tuition fees in addition to a monthly stipend.

Table 4.1 Graduate assistantships

Semester	GR Enrollment	GA Count	% w/GA
Fall 2015–16	1,138	475	41.7%
Spring 2015–16	1,159	454	429.2%
Fall 2016–17	1,240	535	43.2%
Spring 2016–17	1,225	537	44.0%
Fall 2017–18	1,351	603	44.6%
Spring 2017–18	1,349	571	42.3%
Fall 2018–19	1,475	629	42.7%

(Source: Graduate Council)

In line with AUB's diversification initiatives, the **financial aid programs** attempt to assist students from middle-class and low-income families as well as students coming from disadvantaged

schools in Lebanon and the region. Programs like the University Scholarship Program (USP) supported by USAID (over 50 scholarships per year), US-Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI) (over 30 comprehensive scholarships per year), MasterCard Foundation (180 scholarships over 6 years), and Abdallah Al-Ghurair STEM Scholars Program (87 comprehensive scholarships to date) support undergraduate and graduate students from different nationalities, including Lebanese, based on both academic merit and financial need. In AY 2017–18, out of the undergraduate student population of about 7,100, 242 students were supported on the USP Program, 85 supported on the MEPI Program, 48 on the MasterCard Foundation Program, and 57 on the Al-Ghurair STEM Scholarship Program. In addition, 36 graduate master students were supported by the Mastercard Foundation and another 11 supported by Al-Ghurair. The total financial support awarded in AY 2017–18 by these scholarship programs amounted to \$13.3 million, which includes about 22.5 percent cost-share by AUB.

A question on the Student Satisfaction Feedback Survey pertaining to the “Overall Experience with Financial Aid Process” shows overall satisfaction with means ranging between 2.9/5 and 3.2/5 in years 2016–2018 (AIV.1). However, financial aid decisions for new undergraduate applicants are not issued in a timely manner in comparison with admission decisions, which may result in losing few bright students from low-income families. While some measures have been taken in the past few years to expedite the financial aid decisions, more effort should be made to align these decisions with the admissions decisions.

IV. Student Academic Support Services (Criterion 1; Questions 1, 4, and 5)

Valuable information about the university, including support services, is described in the [Student Handbook](#). The handbook is printed and updated every year and a copy is given to all new students during the orientation program at the beginning of each semester. It contains maps, key areas of student interest, and the Student Code of Conduct which students are requested to read to ensure they understand their rights and responsibilities. The AUB [Writing Center](#) offers academic support to all AUB students. Additionally, the [Student Wellness Outreach Units](#) within the [Office of Student Affairs](#) (OSA) organize workshops, awareness sessions, and provide online resources, to widen psycho-social support that helps students refine study skills or improve overall emotional intelligence in coping with their new educational setting. The question “Using learning support services (tutoring services, writing center, etc.)” of the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) (AIV.1) in 2018 shows a satisfaction of 56 percent among first-year students and 47 percent among senior students.

1. Support of Inadequately Prepared Students

Inadequately prepared students are generally those who have met high school and university requirements but require additional preparation to be fully admitted into a degree program. The [University Preparatory Program](#) (UPP) provides inadequately prepared undergraduate and graduate students with the opportunity to become regular AUB students and to succeed in their learning at AUB (AIV.2). UPP offers [remedial courses](#) (in English, IT, Introduction to Humanities and Social Sciences), workshops on social and academic life skills, and a first-year seminar; students are required to produce a [Reflective e-Portfolio reflecting on their learning progress](#).

2. Student Work and Study Program

Other important areas to note are student [work study](#) experiences, in which more than 650 students are provided work each semester in the faculties/schools and departments. The types of work include research, graphic design, IT support, and library assistantship, among many others. Remuneration rates are typically 6,000LL or 7,000LL (\$4 or \$4.66) per hour.

3. Academic Advising

Student advising is critical for monitoring student success and retention. Recommendations to improve advising resulted from the periodic review of 14 out of 15 academic departments (Chapter 5, Table 5.2). The question “Student Satisfaction with Overall Experience with the Advising Process” of the Student Satisfaction Feedback Survey (AIV.1) in 2016, 2017 and 2018 shows a mean satisfaction of 3.2-3.4/5, with 22-25 percent of students dissatisfied.

The advising system varies among faculties/schools. In some faculties/schools, all full-time faculty members are expected to advise students, while in others (Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA)), advising responsibilities are assigned to a few faculty members. In many cases, the role of advisers has been undermined by the problems faced by students in finding places when registering for courses, with the result that advisers and students focus almost exclusively on course registration. Some students transferring between faculties or even majors have faced difficulties in aligning requirements leading to delayed graduation.

In June 2012, an advising committee [R4.12] was established to propose ways to review the advising process. The committee reviewed previous university reports on advising and studied existing advising manuals and advising practices across faculties/schools. The committee identified several challenges facing proper advising at the levels of the university, the faculty, the adviser, the student, as well as IT. The committee proposed an advising system with clear, reasonable, and appropriate expectations and detailed recommendations for improvement in the Proposal for Improving Academic Advising at AUB [R4.12] that included governance of academic advising, advising processes, and advising tools. Faculty advisers were provided with training materials, manuals, and handouts. Currently, advising is being evaluated annually at the department, faculty, and [institutional levels](#) (Section 6 in the registration survey, NSSE Advising Module), and results of evaluations are shared with the deans.

However, despite university wide attempts at improving advising, many students are still not satisfied with the advising processes. Improving advising is one of the recommendations of the WG.

At the graduate level, advising is carried out mostly by department chairs or graduate advisors and varies widely across the university in the absence of institutional guidelines and policies that regulate such a process.

4. Student Counseling

Another essential guarantor of student success is the Counseling Center (CC) that offers free and confidential one-to-one services to students. The CC helps students identify and clarify their academic and personal goals and set objectives to attain them. It also helps students reduce stress, adjust to university life, and/or address personal issues and psychological problems, thus enhancing their productivity and ability to thrive while at AUB and beyond. The CC operates in accordance with AUB’s mental health resources and response protocols. During peak months, more than 1,000 students (10 percent of whom are new first-year students) visit the counseling center each month. The average daily number of students who visited the counseling center increased from 35 in 2015 to 45 in 2016 [R4.23].

The university has improved the level of mental health support since 2016. This includes the recruitment of an additional full-time counselor as well as a wellness outreach officer conducting research and organizing community support events, including psychosocial support and awareness sessions. The question “Providing support for your overall well-being (recreation, health care, counseling, etc.)” of the NSSE Survey (AIV.1) in 2018 shows a satisfaction of 65 percent among first-year students and 57 percent (from 49 percent in 2016) among senior students.

5. Career Services

[Career Services at AUB have for many years provided high-quality](#) support reflected in part through the 2019 QS Employability Rankings which placed [AUB at 45 globally and first in the Arab region](#), indicating AUB’s success in preparing graduates who are actively engaged with employers. The rebranded career hub, launched in 2017, offers all AUB students and alumni support including workshops and events on: job-related skills (teamwork, project planning, problem solving, etc.), [CV and cover letter writing](#), navigating the [job interview](#), [negotiating a job offer](#), social media networking, and [other specific skillset](#) development. Career services also provide one-to-one career advising sessions, in addition to psychometric and vocational interest testing. These activities often involve close collaboration and coordination with [partner employers](#) who provide formal and informal feedback on a regular basis and are featured as subject matter experts in the workshops. There are also regularly scheduled networking and recruitment events held by local, regional, and multinational companies [R4.13], [R4.14]. In addition, each faculty/

school has its own specialized career officers that tailor services, including workshops and internships, to their students in coordination with the OSA.

The major annual event of AUB's career services is the campus-wide [AUB Job Fair](#), a major showcase in the spring semester which attracts more than 140 firms. A homegrown [career portal](#) has been developed and added to the AUB website to help students find jobs and internships and also make possible more direct and accurate data gathering for better future planning. The question "Did AUB provide you with career services?" of the Exit Survey ([AIV.1](#)) in 2017–18 was positively answered by 51 percent of the students.

6. Accessible Education Office

The [Accessible Education Office](#) (AEO) oversees support and services for students with disabilities to ensure that they are granted reasonable accommodations which promote equal access to the student academic experience. The goals of the AEO are aligned with the university's mission to serve and support a diverse student body as well as to foster tolerance and respect for such diversity. The AEO operates within the OSA and is aligned with AUB's [Non-Discrimination policy](#), which prohibits discrimination on any basis, including that of disability or special needs. Students are informed about this office upon acceptance to the university, and during [orientation sessions](#), while faculty members are encouraged to include a statement on their syllabi directing students to register with the office if they are in need of academic support due to disability, mental health issues, or health conditions of any kind. [\[R4.15\]](#) The AEO was established in March 2016 and currently serves over 200 students requiring accommodations.

To ensure that all faculty and staff are aware of all aspects of AEO work and to help enhance faculty understanding and responsiveness to inclusivity and accessibility issues, AEO worked with all units on a relevant [AEO Faculty Handbook](#). In addition, AEO is piloting a peer support program to enhance the network of student support.

V. Extracurricular Activities (Criterion 4; Questions 1 and 9)

AUB offers a range of extracurricular activities that promote the intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development of students. The [Office of Student Affairs](#) is the hub for student life and learning beyond the classroom. The student is the focus and the university believes that: a) every student, irrespective of origin, personal beliefs, sexual orientation, physical disabilities, gender or religion, has dignity and worth, and there is value in diverse communities; b) learning includes the intellect as well as many other areas of human development (e.g., personal, interpersonal, physical, artistic, career, spiritual); and c) learning is everywhere the student goes and recognizing the power of learning in these many places is central to enhancing students' experience. A range of activities and programs are offered to cater for student needs and develop the student learning experience critical to a well-rounded education.

1. University Sports

University Sports programs strive to accommodate student sport and fitness interests, in addition to creating and maintaining an enjoyable educational atmosphere. AUB boasts a diverse number of sports and competitive varsity teams. The university particularly encourages women's participation in sports, having been underrepresented in the past, initiating women's rugby and, more recently, a league in women's handball that other universities are now joining. Thirty varsity teams with 513 AUB student athletes for both men and women (313 men and 200 women) compete in league and championship tournaments throughout the year, locally as well as internationally [\[R4.16\]](#). The [Charles W. Hostler Student Center \(CHSC\)](#) includes many athletic and recreational facilities to invigorate athletic life at AUB. Between May and October, students may visit the AUB beach for swimming, water sports, recreation, and/or relaxation. Professional tennis and swimming lessons are available for a nominal fee. There are almost 1,000 registered users in yoga, Pilates, aerobics, Zumba, mixed martial arts, and swimming classes for both beginners and children, offered throughout the fall and spring semesters [\[R4.17\]](#), [\[R4.18\]](#). Fitness education courses are provided to all those interested in getting certified for a fitness career. University Sports—in coordination with the Nutrition and Food Sciences Department at the [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences \(NFS/FAFS\)](#)—is operating a diet clinic at CHSC to provide dietetic services to AUB's students/athletes and CHSC members, and to assist in workshops and informational sessions on sports nutrition.

In recognition of the importance of sports activities and to support student athletes, a scholarship-endowed fund valued at more than \$1 million offers awards to top athletes to help cover tuition expenses [\[R4.19\]](#). This covers participants in team and individual sports and is also distributed equally between men and women. This critical funding serves to ensure equity in sports by providing financial support for talented athletes who are also successful academically, by incentivizing them to train and participate rather than having to find work to make ends meet. Moreover, funding for travel ensures students not only feel motivated and have financial assurance but also gain from the enriching experience of competing against other universities from other countries and learn about different cultures and communities. The questions on "Satisfaction with the level of sports facilities", "Satisfaction with University Sports Staff", and "Satisfaction with overall experience with the University Sports Department" in the Satisfaction with Athletic Facilities Survey of 2017 resulted in mean values of 4.5/5, 4.2/5, and 4/5 respectively ([AIV.1](#)).

2. Other Extra-Curricular Activities

Students at AUB are involved in extra-curricular activities through clubs and/or societies, student governance, and other voluntary activities. During the new student orientation in fall 2018, 107 guides (current students) helped as volunteers during orientation week in welcoming 2,147 new students.

Students attend clubs/societies days on campus to discover the range of available clubs and societies. There are around 70 clubs and societies, with the most popular attracting between 100 and 200 members. Clubs organize a host of cultural, political, educational, and social activities each semester and a total of about 3,400 students participate in them. Societies are normally based in academic departments or in programs which involve students in academic-related events. A list of these societies and a list of the top 26 clubs on campus along with their enrollment figures can be found in [AIV.3](#). Students lead publications, such as the Yearbook and the Outlook newspaper. In addition, students can experience the challenges of running for elections and winning a seat in the Student Representative Committee, [University Student Faculty Committee](#) (USFC), or both. [Outdoors](#) is an annual event organized by OSA, which takes place over one weekend towards the end of the spring semester. The two-day outdoors event boasts about 20,000 visitors. AUB student elections are a model for the region and enjoy an international reputation for showcasing a civilized political process to ensure student representation and participation in university life. Over 60 percent of students vote each year for their representatives, and in some faculties/schools this exceeds 90 percent. In 2018, just under 5,400 students took part in student elections. Community life is enhanced and social interaction is nurtured through different activities that help students learn how to accept others and to increase their tolerance by embracing diversity in their daily lives.

Elected student representatives sit on various faculty and university committees and are encouraged to become good citizens and partners in decision-making. These committees include the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC), University Budget Committee, University Disciplinary Committee, University Libraries (UL) Committee, University Admissions Committee, University Graduation Planning Steering Committee, Financial Aid Oversight Committee, student affairs committees for each faculty, and the Academic Development Committee.

The student experience at AUB is also enabled by campus [residential life](#), with six residential buildings within the campus walls and one nearby off-campus residence. The question on "Student Satisfaction with Overall experience with Dormitories" of the Student Satisfaction Feedback Survey ([AIV.1](#)) in 2016-2018 indicate overall satisfaction, with respective means of 3.4/5-3.9/5 with dissatisfaction ranging between 10 percent and 23 percent of students applying to student housing.

AUB has guided innovation competitions to prepare students to lead in the entrepreneurial world. These initiatives include the [Darwazah](#) Student Innovation Contest, the undergraduate poster forum celebrating International Biodiversity Day At AUB ([IBDAA](#)), the Center for Research and Innovation ([CRIIn](#)), and the [Entrepreneurship Initiative](#) in MSFEA. In the last 2.5 years, CRIIn has helped increase student drive for entrepreneurship training and for starting their own businesses. In MSFEA, between 30 and 50 undergraduate students take part in the sequence of activities of the Entrepreneurship Initiative, including a hackathon, an undergraduate course on entrepreneurship [\[R4.20\]](#), an internship at a startup, and a final-year project.

Thus, AUB provides its students with a wide range of activities and creates opportunities that strengthen their educational and learning experiences in a manner directly aligned with AUB's mission statement and with its institutional priority of transforming student education into a holistic learning experience. All extra-curricular activities target the intellectual, physical, emotional, and social development of students, and provide them with tools to be resilient when it comes to facing life's challenges inside and outside AUB. One strategic initiative which might be put in place is establishing a degree program in sports sciences and management, encompassing all areas of sports including ethics, marketing, medicine, technology, politics, and nutrition, in one holistic, transformative learning experience.

VI. The Office of the Registrar's Role in Graduation, Transfer, and Release of Student Information (Criteria 1, 2, and 3; Questions 1, 6, 7, and 8)

The [Office of the Registrar](#) serves as the central unit for preparing graduation lists and commencement booklets, issuing certificates and grade transcripts, evaluating credit transfers, coordinating the production of university catalogues and the university calendar, and preparing final exam schedules ([Registrar Manual](#)).

1. Screening Graduation Lists

The university follows rigorous and multiple processes for screening graduation lists, diplomas, and certificates against graduation requirements. The preliminary list of expected graduating students is published on the web at least two months before graduation. This list is extracted from the Curriculum Advising and Program Planning (CAPP) module of the Banner [Student Information System](#) (SIS), which is the tool that the university uses to check compliance against program requirements. This preliminary list is checked consistently and continuously by a staff member at the [Office of the Registrar](#) responsible for the degree audit. The list is updated accordingly in order to generate the final graduation list of students.

Diplomas are printed and checked against the final list of expected graduates. Certificates are also issued after checking against the expected list of graduating students. This list is later voted on in the concerned faculty and later in the senate prior to diploma conferrals. Following the senate's vote, the student record is updated on SIS to reflect his/her graduation status.

2. Credit Transfer

AUB has put into place a number of guidelines for the evaluation of transfer of credits. These [guidelines](#) are adequate, fair, and available in both academic catalogues, the [Undergraduate Catalogue](#) 2018–19, pp. 58-59, and the [Graduate Catalogue](#) 2018–19, pp. 57-58, and on the Office of the Registrar's website. Cases of non-conventional transfer of credit are evaluated by the concerned faculty committee on a case-by-case basis. The basis for approval is communicated to the Office of the Registrar for filing only. Students transferring from other institutions must earn a minimum of 45 credits while in residence at AUB to be able to earn their undergraduate degree from the institution.

[Study abroad](#) and exchange students: Students who have completed a minimum of 24 credit hours at AUB at the sophomore level, and graduate students who have completed six credits at AUB, may opt to study abroad for one or two semesters. The procedure that needs to be followed is available [online](#). Interested students must secure [preapproval of courses](#). Upon their return, students must provide a copy of the transcript of records from the host university, in addition to the syllabus of the course taken, to the appropriate faculty committee for final approval. Once approved, the form is sent to the Registrar's Office where the transfer of credits takes place. Consequently, the course shows on the transcript of records as pass (P) for the given semester.

Students admitted as transfer students from other institutions must submit the [course equivalence form](#), together with a copy of the syllabi of all courses completed at the other institution and the official transcript of the courses issued by that institution. This form should be signed by the chair of the relevant AUB department offering the course, as well as by the concerned faculty committee, and the approval of the credits transferred is

contingent on achieving a grade equivalent to a 70 at AUB. Credits transferred from other institutions will show as pass (P) on the AUB transcript.

The database listing courses accepted by the university is [available online](#) at the Office of the Registrar's website. This database shows equivalence in content rather than grade, and is updated periodically. The Office of the Registrar also keeps a log of accepted grade equivalencies for courses offered by local, regional, and international universities to ensure consistent implementation across all university programs of the grade equivalence policy for credit transfer. For US and European universities, grade equivalencies are posted [online](#).

3. Student Information and Records

AUB's policies and procedures for release of student information respect the privacy of students and are published in the Undergraduate Catalogue 2017–18 on page 59, and in the Graduate Catalogue 2017–18 on page 72. All AUB departments, including the Office of the Registrar, are required to handle student data in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act ([FERPA](#)) guidelines.

Documents (certificates, transcripts, and diplomas) that are requested by students are normally picked up by the individual concerned. In case this person is unable to pick up the documents, they may authorize a third party to do so. The [form](#) and corresponding procedure to release student records, certificates, or diplomas to third parties is published on the Office of the Registrar's website. Undelivered documents are kept in the Office of the Registrar for a period of two months, beyond which they are destroyed.

With regard to records, the original of the application submitted by every student is maintained in the Office of the Registrar archive room in hard copy. Petitions and other documents related to students are maintained electronically on their related in-house systems. Grades, academic records, and student biographies are maintained on SIS. Confidentiality of the data is maintained in that only concerned students are able to access their own records. University employees are granted access to SIS on a need-only basis, after securing necessary approvals from the faculty/office and the registrar. Individual access is reviewed once per year, and users are forced to change their passwords every six months.

In summary, SIS is the main source of data for graduating students; disclosure of student information is well governed by AUB's internal policies and procedures; minimal human intervention is required for the screening of graduating students' lists, and multiple sources of checking for the credit transfer procedure are available. The processes mentioned above are monitored by the Office of the Registrar in collaboration with the relevant faculties/schools.

VII. Evaluation of Effectiveness of Student Experience (Criterion 6; Questions 1 and 10; ROAs 8, and 10)

All student support services undergo periodic assessment both through [annual unit outcome](#) assessments requested by the [Academic Assessment Unit](#) (AAU) and through institutional assessments using surveys conducted by the [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment](#) (OIRA). These assessments are part of OIRA's annual Institutional Assessment Plan, developed in consultation with the provost and the [Institutional Assessment Committee](#) (IAC). In addition, major academic support units conduct self-studies and strategic planning. For the past three years, 13 academic support units submitted annual reports to the [Office of the Provost](#) which include recommendations for improvement, and suggestions for new initiatives or activities. They are discussed at the unit level, shared with the provost and posted on the [AAU intranet](#) for access by different stakeholders ([AIV.4](#)). Three academic support units have also engaged in strategic planning (UL, OSA, and the Office of Grants and Contracts) and one unit (UL) has completed an external self-study. For example, the UL have developed in recent years the following: [Strategic Plan 2015–2020](#), [Annual Unit Outcomes Assessment Reports](#), and the Annual Progress Report for 2016 and 2017 [[R4.21](#)].

In all assessment activities, several methods are used, including user surveys, interviews with staff, internal statistics and information, and other resources. As a result, recommendations and action plans are prescribed. In addition, assessment data (units outcomes, unit review, and strategic planning) that are consolidated in an annual progress report (Example: Libraries Annual

Progress Report) are included in the university assessment report (AV.6) and fed into budgeting and strategic planning processes (R1.9).

OSA is a major contributor to the assessment of various units under its jurisdiction (Student Housing, Career and Placement Services, Student Activities, Counseling, University Sports, Accessible Education Office, and Work Study Program). OSA has engaged in strategic planning (R4.22) and conducts annual assessments of its units' outcomes with several measures for each, as reported in the OSA Unit Outcomes Assessment Report 2016–17 (R4.23).

In addition to unit outcomes, the Office of International Programs (OIP) receives weekly reports submitted to the OIP director by each staff member. OIP also receives the international visiting and exchange student evaluations of OIP processes and services.

In addition to the assessments conducted annually by various student support units, OIRA periodically reviews various student-related processes and services. Through its annual assessment plan, OIRA evaluates student satisfaction with teaching and instruction, admission, registration, orientation, advising, housing, financial aid, payment of fees, and drop-and-add processes. Similarly, various student services are being evaluated, like counseling, student activities, career services, food services, use of technology, library services, etc. Furthermore, the NSSE is administered annually to undergraduate students to identify the extent of their engagement in meaningful experiences and high-impact practices (HIP).

Alumni input is annually solicited to monitor employability of AUB graduates, their satisfaction with their AUB experience and their willingness to contribute and support AUB. Moreover, faculty and staff satisfaction with their working conditions are periodically assessed. Results of these assessments are communicated to various stakeholders and shared on the OIRA web page. Subsequently, meetings are held with concerned administrators to identify areas of progress and the challenges that need to be tackled. Based on deliberations in these meetings, revisions to existing processes are undertaken and/or new steps or processes are initiated. An example can be provided from information received from the annual student registration survey where several improvements on the registration, orientation, and payment processes were introduced based on student evaluations and comments. Online registration and payment procedures were enhanced based on feedback obtained from the survey, in addition to shortening the orientation activities and making them more engaging for students.

An advising initiative addressed results obtained from various surveys (AIV.1) by increasing the number of advisors, providing them with clear guidelines, handouts, resources, and training, then periodically monitoring their work (Section IV.3). Also, complaints about some student housing matters were immediately attended to, and subsequently an initiative was launched for modernizing and refurbishing the dormitories. Similarly, as student satisfaction with career and student placement services was lower than with other services, several initiatives were launched, especially by the Development Office, Career and Placement Services, and various faculty career offices, to help students in career exploration, resume and cover letter writing, interviewing tips, and connecting with both alumni and employers.

The Graduate Council also conducts a post-graduation survey (R4.24) for every cohort of students that graduate with a master's or PhD degree. The survey interrogates graduate students' satisfaction in areas related to program and student funding, overall graduate experience, graduate experience within the respective department/program/faculty, and graduate policies, among others. The survey has previously been on a voluntary basis, with a low response rate varying between 10 and 15 percent, so in spring 2018, it was integrated into the student's clearance process.

As a measure of effectiveness of student experience, the provost, with the Enrollment Statistics and Management Unit (ESMU), regularly monitors student retention, examining trends and attempting to ascertain the reasons for attrition. Analytical reports on attrition by ESMU are regularly presented to the provost and shared with the deans of faculties/schools and the BOT.

Overall, student support service units are assessed regularly. They all have mission and goal statements directly linked to AUB's mission and goal statements, and they perform assessment activities through their strategic plans, annual unit outcome assessment plans, and/or self-study. In addition, they are providing evidence of their progress towards attaining these missions and goals. This is done in parallel to annual assessments conducted by OIRA to ensure that all student support services and processes are objectively assessed, and that results of the assessments are disseminated and made use of in future planning and decision-making. More details are reported in Chapter 5.

Nonetheless, for comprehensive improvement of the student experience it is vital to refine and cultivate meaningful data collected by AAU, ESMU and OIRA, and analyze them effectively for targeted decision making that ensures all programs and support services dedicated to students are fully aligned with the mission and strategic goals of the university. Recently, the Student Data Governance Council was established to integrate and ensure consistency of institutional data related to students.

VIII. Conclusion

AUB is guided by its mission and its strategic goals (Chapter 1), which drive the efforts to transform the student experience, as described in this chapter. AUB's leading role in areas of student life, including clubs, student elections, and athletics enrich the extra-curricular educational experience in terms of tolerance, leadership, resilience, teamwork, and broader soft skills that are critical for career success, as well as social and civic awareness and participation. Financial aid support is based both on attracting the most talented students and on promoting diversity, which aligns with the values outlined in the mission of the university and its strategic goals. The evaluations and assessment activities that were discussed in Section VII show that the support of the student experience at AUB fully addresses ROAs 8 and 10. One potential indicator of the effectiveness of the overall support services is the consistently high retention rate of undergraduate students, particularly those admitted at the sophomore level, which varies between 93 and 95 percent (R3.2). In addition, the university meets criteria 1 to 4 and 6 for Standard IV with its commitment to student retention, persistence, completion, success, and experience, through an effective support system.

Financial assistance and scholarships can help grow AUB's athletic program, which caters for hundreds of students by providing them with an opportunity not only to develop their sporting talents and passions but to gain a fulfilling experience that is a cornerstone of the AUB mission.

IX. Areas of Improvement

Three areas of improvement were identified in the self-study in relation to Standard IV:

1. Continue improving the current advising system by transforming it into a comprehensive, fully-integrated advising system that clarifies what is expected from all stakeholders (advisers, students, the Office of the Registrar, individual faculties/schools and the Office of Student Affairs), prepares and motivates academic advisers, and includes periodic assessment of the academic advising process and of advisers' performance.
2. Expand the athletic program at AUB by strengthening its athletic scholarships program.
3. Refine and cultivate institutional data and analyze them effectively for informed decision making in support of the student experience.

List of Appendices (A)

[\(AIV.1\) Student Satisfaction with Services](#)

[\(AIV.2\) UPP Activities](#)

[\(AIV.3\) List of Student Clubs, Varsities, and Societies](#)

[\(AIV.4\) Sample Outcomes, Assessments, and Use of Results from Various Units](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R4.1\] Admissions - Schools and Fairs Inside and Outside Lebanon](#)

[\[R4.2\] Admissions - Schools Visited in Lebanon 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.3\] Admissions - Schools Visited Outside Lebanon 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.4\] GC promoting recruitment events by other AUB entities](#)

[\[R4.5\] GC OIP Recruitment Fairs](#)

[\[R4.6\] Registrations in Common App and Big Choice](#)

[\[R4.7\] Registration in Go Abroad.com](#)

[\[R4.8\] Graduate Applicants Diversity Fall 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.9\] Graduate Applicants Diversity Fall 2017–18](#)

[\[R4.10\] Admissions Acceptance Email](#)

[\[R4.11\] Financial Aid Annual Report 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.12\] Proposal for Improving Academic Advising at AUB](#)

[\[R4.13\] MSFEA Career Development Center Activity report 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.14\] MSFEA Career Development Center Annual Report 2015–16](#)

[\[R4.15\] Accessible Education in Course Syllabi](#)

[\[R4.16\] CHSC Varsity Teams](#)

[\[R4.17\] CHSC Classes](#)

[\[R4.18\] CHSC Classes Numbers](#)

[\[R4.19\] Scholarship Top Athletes](#)

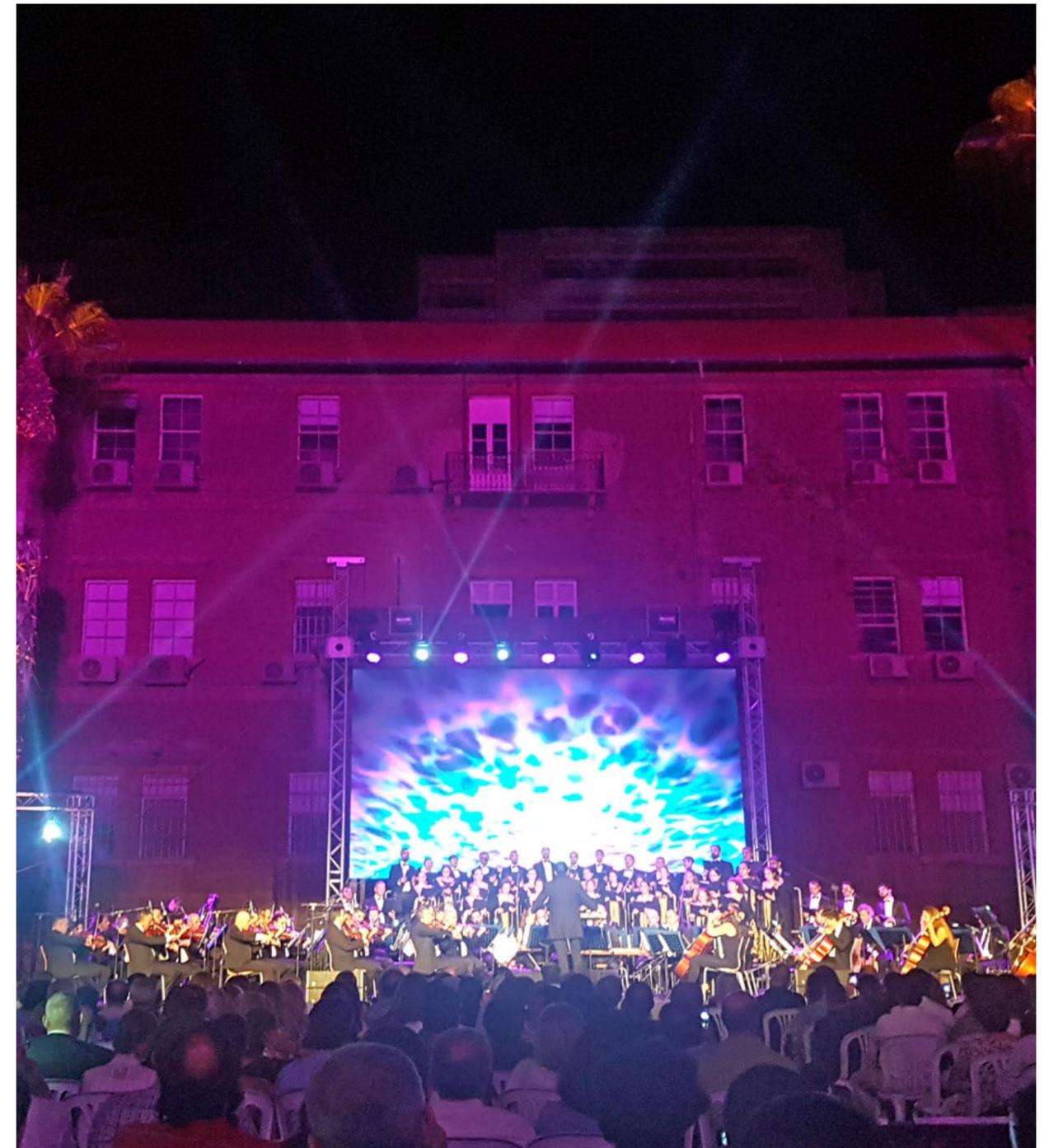
[\[R4.20\] Entrepreneurship Courses](#)

[\[R4.21\] Libraries Annual Progress Report 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.22\] OSA Strategic Plan 2015–20](#)

[\[R4.23\] OSA Unit Outcomes Assessment Report 2016–17](#)

[\[R4.24\] Graduate Exit Survey AUB](#)



Standard V: Educational Effectiveness Assessment

I. Working Group Charge Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate how AUB's educational assessment activities meet the criteria of Standard V and satisfy ROAs 8, 9, and 10. This chapter begins with a brief overview of the university's progress in the area of educational assessment since the 2008 institutional self-study. It describes and evaluates the assessment processes and tools that are used in assessment activities. The chapter also examines the ongoing formal assessment of educational offerings, including student learning outcomes assessment, [general education \(GE\) outcomes assessment](#), [periodic program review \(PPR\)](#), and the links between Standard V and AUB's mission and institutional strategic priorities. It describes how assessment results are disseminated to different AUB constituencies and how these results are used to improve students' overall educational experience. It also demonstrates how improvement initiatives are monitored to gauge their effectiveness. It includes a discussion of how often AUB evaluates its assessment processes. Based on these findings, the WG identified strengths and potential areas for improvement and made recommendations.

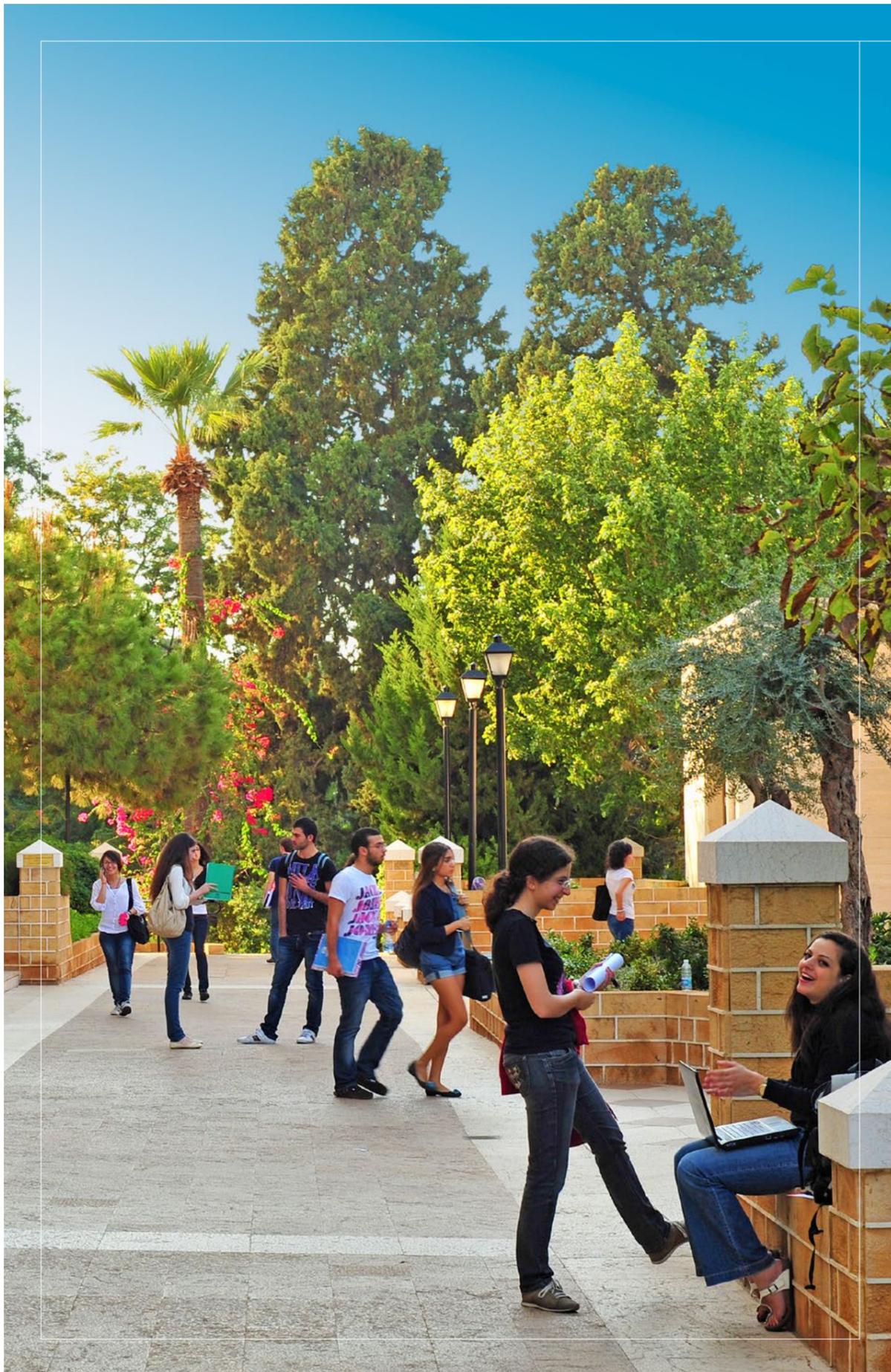
II. Assessment Initiatives at AUB (Criterion 1 and 2; Questions 1 and 2; ROAs 8, 9, and 10)

Since the 2008 institutional self-study, AUB has made significant progress in the assessment of student learning. All academic departments at AUB have departmental missions that are aligned with AUB's mission ([Chapter 1, Section VII.2](#)); all programs have program missions that are aligned with their departmental missions; and 23 percent of programs define educational goals and/or objectives. Program learning outcomes (PLOs) were defined and assessed within a three-year cycle for all undergraduate programs in all faculties/schools, for some graduate programs, and in the [Faculty of Medicine \(FM\)](#). FM is working on the improvement of its assessment processes [[R5.1](#)]. General education learning outcomes (GE LOs) were also defined, aligned with the university mission, and assessed within a three-year cycle. Not only do the GE LOs complement the outcomes in undergraduate majors, but there is also a clear interrelationship since 90 percent of the programs that defined LOs have common outcomes with the GE LOs. PPRs started in fall 2010 for the purpose of reviewing all academic departments and/or programs that are not subject to review by accrediting bodies. By the end of AY 2017–18, all academic programs at AUB had undergone at least one program review. PPRs were initially coordinated by a program review coordinator and sponsored by the [Office of the Provost](#), but in 2013, they became the responsibility of the [Academic Assessment Unit \(AAU\)](#).

In the AUB [academic strategic plan \(ASP\)](#), many initiatives were integrated with the goal of transforming the student learning experience across the university. All faculty/school strategic plans included initiatives that are aligned with the ASP. AAU identified [key performance indicators \(KPIs\)](#) to assess progress made towards the fulfillment of the strategic initiatives at the levels of both the university and the faculties/schools ([AV.1](#)).

AAU was established in November 2013. It centralizes university academic assessment functions and integrates the following activities: PPRs, PLOs assessment, GE LOs assessment, and KPI tracking of strategic plans. AAU coordinates all academic assessment and planning activities following one- and three-year action plans in order to identify program/department/unit needs. AAU also coordinates the PLO assessment process with different faculties/schools, collects and stores these reports on the AAU intranet, analyzes assessment findings, and reports summary results to different constituencies, including the Office of the Provost. AAU helps academic departments prepare PPR self-study reports and their [Annual Departmental Progress Report \(ADPR\)](#); it also helps academic support units prepare annual [Unit Outcomes](#) and assessment reports. AAU supports institutional assessment in monitoring the ASP KPIs on the AAU dashboard. AAU has also developed tools and processes to collect data and to follow-up on the implementation of improvement plans for all these assessment activities. AAU saves all assessment reports on the AAU [intranet](#) for access by different stakeholders.

With respect to strategic planning, AAU developed KPIs to track the performance of the strategic initiatives of the ASP. The AAU team has implemented and is maintaining a dashboard ([AV.2](#))



that tracks the KPIs of the ASP. Strategic plan dashboards (AV.3) for all faculties/schools were also developed and populated with data for KPI tracking. Conclusions drawn from KPI tracking will be included in the faculty/school assessment report and used for linking assessment data to resource allocation (AV.1).

All assessment activities are coordinated by AAU and supported by the [Center for Teaching and Learning](#) (CTL), the [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment](#) (OIRA), and the [Institutional Assessment Committee](#) (IAC). CTL provides assistance to programs in preparing and revising their PLOs and assessment plans, and in presenting assessment results in annual and three-year PLO summary reports. CTL regularly offers workshops related to the development and assessment of learning outcomes, and has offered 12 training activities (seminars, workshops, and institutes) on developing and assessing PLOs since 2007. Faculty members and assessment officers were trained to use the [PLOs templates](#) for reporting annual assessment results and for preparing the three-year summary assessment reports. PLO assessment activities were coordinated by CTL before they became the responsibility of AAU in 2013.

In addition to administering and analyzing different surveys and tests, OIRA collects and analyzes other forms of institutional data for internal/external assessment and reporting, such as the [Instructor Course Evaluation](#) (ICE), the [National Survey of Student Engagement](#) (NSSE), the [College Outcomes Survey](#) (COS), the [HERI Faculty Survey](#), the [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#), the [Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency Test](#) (CAAP), the [Exit Survey](#), and the [Alumni Survey](#). OIRA publishes analysis reports on various survey data on its website including CAAP, NSSE, COS, and others.

Several surveys provide information on how AUB students are prepared for [successful careers](#), meaningful lives, and further education. For example, the COS survey includes questions related to student skills, university services, and the learning environment, and the exit survey includes questions related to current student status and future plans. According to the most recent published COS results ([Annual Assessment Report 2015](#)), the highest outcomes achieved by AUB students are: “learning to think and reason,” “developing openness to new ideas and practices,” “developing problem-solving skills,” “speaking more effectively,” and “thinking objectively about beliefs, attitudes, and values.” The lowest outcomes that are still close to the norms are: “acquiring knowledge and skills needed for a career,” “learning about the role of science and technology in society,” “understanding and applying math concepts and statistical reasoning,” “appreciating the fine arts, music, literature, and the humanities,” and “developing effective job-seeking skills (e.g., interviewing, resume construction).” Scores lower than the norm were obtained in the following items: “constructively expressing both emotions and ideas,” “understanding myself, my talents, and my interests,” “learning how to manage finances (personal, family, or business),” “becoming more aware of local and national political and social issues,” and “recognizing my rights, responsibilities, and privileges as a citizen.” According to the students’ exit survey conducted in AY 2017–18, 18 percent of students accepted a job before graduation, 23 percent were going to a graduate or professional school full-time, and 51 percent used the career services that AUB provides. It can be concluded from survey data that AUB students are properly prepared for successful careers, meaningful lives, and further education, but improvement is required. The [QS Graduate Employability Rankings](#) for 2019 confirmed AUB as the second university in the region and among the top 50 worldwide in producing employable graduates.

In late fall 2010, the Office of the Provost created the [IAC](#) which was charged with coordinating different assessment activities and ensuring institutional effectiveness to support the educational, research, and service activities of faculty and students. More recently, in summer 2017, the IAC was restructured and its mandate was revised to provide leadership in the implementation of the university assessment results. The IAC recommended in October 2017 that all academic departments combine their improvement actions that result from PLO assessment, PPRs, accreditation recommendations, and strategic planning into an annual departmental program review (AV.4). This report also includes updates on the execution of the improvement plans, planned activities, and estimated resources needed for the coming year and for the two years that follow. All departments are asked to fill these reports annually, before the end of October. Assessment officers in faculties/schools are charged with consolidating all annual departmental program reviews into one faculty assessment report (AV.5) by using a [template developed](#) by AAU. The template shows all requests for resources made by the faculties/schools, both prioritized and linked to assessment data and to the strategic plans’ initiatives. AAU consolidates all faculties/schools reports into a university assessment report (AV.6) that guides the budget process.

III. Program Learning Outcomes Assessment (Criteria 2 and 3; Questions 2, 3, and 4; ROAs 8, 9, and 10)

[Assessment of PLOs](#) is a requirement for all undergraduate programs at AUB and academic departments have been reporting program assessment results since AY 2010-2011. The assessment process is based on a three-year cycle where departments develop their own assessment plans. According to Section 6 in the Faculty Bylaws, the “chairperson/convenor or director leads departmental faculty in the annual assessment of departmental/track programs, and submits summary reports on assessment activities”. AAU annually requests the PLO assessment reports from all faculties/schools. Annual assessment reports (AV.7) are collected by the faculty assessment/accreditation officers/directors from all departments on PLOs that are assessed during the academic year; and a summary report (AV.8) is collected every three years about the assessment of all PLOs in the program. The submitted PLO assessment reports describe the PLOs that are assessed, the assessment methods, data analysis, findings, and improvement plans. The PLO assessment reports are submitted before the end of July to AAU where they are analyzed and stored on the AAU intranet. They are used by departments for program improvement and decision-making (AV.7 and AV.8) and by the leadership for institutional planning (AV.5 and AV.6). PLOs are required for proposals of new graduate and undergraduate programs. PLOs of undergraduate programs are published on departmental websites.

There is currently no university requirement to develop and assess PLOs for graduate programs. As a result, only 19 percent of graduate programs have defined PLOs, and eight percent are assessing their PLOs and using assessment data for improvement, mainly for faculty/school or program accreditation.

For all undergraduate programs, departments have developed an assessment plan (excluding Architecture and Graphic Design who are starting this activity) that includes PLOs, direct and indirect assessment measures, and methods for assessing student learning and achievement at the program level. [Accredited programs](#) define/assess their programs learning outcomes following the guidelines of their accredited bodies. For example, the engineering undergraduate programs in the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) use the [student outcomes](#) that are drafted by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), and report their assessment results to AAU on an annual basis. Indirect assessment methods include: alumni surveys, employer surveys, exit surveys, end of courses surveys, focus groups, interviews, etc. Direct assessment methods and tools include: final grades, embedded questions in exams, rubrics, essays, final-year and senior projects, exit exams, portfolios, and reflection papers. In addition, GE assessment uses standardized testing and rubrics that are adapted from the Association of American Colleges & Universities (AAC&U) VALUE rubrics.

Assessment information is shared with faculty members in the department, with the dean, and with the provost. This assessment information is collected by AAU, categorized by faculty and by area, and provided upon request to stakeholders. Improvement actions are added to the annual departmental program review and linked to requests for resources. The recommendations for improvement that resulted in the latest assessment summary reports are distributed as follows: 25 percent of the recommendations are about improving teaching, learning, and curricula. The largest number of the recommendations (56 percent) is related to the assessment process and tools, where 12 percent recommend revisions of their learning outcomes, and 44 percent relate to the improvement of the assessment process. As a first example of using assessment results, the [Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management](#) (LDEM) department was engaged in a process of curriculum adjustment in the wake of the program review and the PLO/CLO assessment results. On April 13, 2016, the bachelor of landscape architecture curriculum adjustments voted upon by LDEM were approved by the Academic Curriculum Committee at FAFS. Changes were effective in fall 2016 for new students. These changes were mostly organizational and did not include any radical modifications. As a second example, in response to the assessment of the PLO “Demonstrate effective use of personal, interpersonal, and group communication skills in practice”, the division of undergraduate studies in HSON has conducted student workshops since AY 2016–17 that include communication skills at different levels (sophomore, junior, senior) in addition to addressing communication in each nursing course.

AUB has made significant improvement in the past decade in the area of PLO assessment. A process is in place by which all undergraduate programs assess their PLOs by using diverse direct and indirect methods, and use assessment results for both improvement and resource allocation. The PLO assessment process is coordinated by either departmental chairs or departmental assessment committees and supported by assessment officers in AAU, OIRA,

and CTL. This chapter has identified areas of improvements that would potentially maximize the benefits that can be reaped from this assessment effort. These include careful re-examination of the PLO assessment process to better engage faculty, a formal requirement for graduate programs to define and assess PLOs, and ensuring the sustainability of all assessment activities.

IV. General Education Program Assessment (Criteria 2 and 3; Questions 2, 3, and 4; ROAs 8, 9, and 10)

In the past decade, the **General Education** (GE) program has been subject to major changes in terms of governance, processes, and tools. The current GE requirements have been in place since late 2004. In May 2008, the University Senate approved the recommendation of the Academic Development Committee that a new standing committee be established to oversee the university-wide implementation of the GE requirements. In December 2009, this standing committee defined the **GE learning outcomes**, and then approved and implemented a process for the certification of new GE courses. The GE learning outcomes are directly related to the GE mission statement, itself aligned with the institutional mission. The GE committee was replaced in 2013 by a GE director, an assistant director, and a board consisting of faculty members representing all AUB faculties/schools, especially major GE servicing departments. The **GE board** is responsible for overseeing and assessing the quality of the GE program/courses. A first **GE assessment** cycle was completed in 2013 and a second assessment cycle ended in 2016.

1. Process for Assessment of GE Learning Outcomes

The GE Program started in 2009, initially with 22 Learning Outcomes (LOs) which were consolidated to 18 in 2014. The GE LOs are distributed into the following areas: general (five LOs), communication skills (four LOs), humanities (two LOs), social sciences (two LOs), natural sciences (two LOs), quantitative thinking (one LO) and writing in the discipline (two LOs). Evaluation and assessment of GE courses include four activities:

1. Evaluation of new courses for GE designation
2. Evaluation of transfer or study abroad GE courses
3. Re-certification of existing GE courses
4. Assessment of GE LOs

A process for submission and **certification of GE courses** was implemented in spring 2010. This process requires faculty members to fill out an online GE application that demonstrates how a course addresses each of the GE area learning outcomes, and how these outcomes are assessed in the course. The submission is reviewed by members of the GE Board before a decision is taken to certify the course or not. This process was initially made simple for the purpose of starting a culture of evaluating courses for GE designation. It was improved in 2013 by requesting that faculty members provide detailed course syllabi along with the online application. The application is reviewed by a GE Board member, and subsequently a GE certification is given upon approval for one year. Re-certification of existing courses is required at the end of the first year and every three years after that. For re-certification purposes, one or two GE Board members with relevant expertise examine course materials that include evidence of meeting the GE LOs, such as sample student assignments, presentations, projects, and exams. The evaluators may accept, reject, or suggest revisions to the course. The total number of GE courses in fall 2018 was 574 distributed as follows: Three English communication skills, 41 Arabic communication skills, 373 humanities, 93 social sciences, 43 natural sciences, and 21 quantitative thinking courses. **Table 5.1** provides the number of GE courses that were evaluated in the past five years.

Table 5.1 Number of evaluated GE courses in the past five years

	Approved New AUB Courses for one year	Re-certified AUB Courses for three years	Approved Transfer and Study Abroad Courses
AY 2013–14	31	72	96
AY 2014–15	37	151	76
AY 2015–16	3	58	78
AY 2016–17	68	106	87
AY 2017–18	57	151	55

A three-year cycle GE assessment plan (**AV.9**) was approved and executed starting in fall 2010. Direct and indirect assessment tools were used. In the absence of GE core required courses, and given the large number of GE courses, embedded assessment is applied to a pool of courses that are attended by at least two-thirds of AUB undergraduate students. This form of assessment is an estimate since it excludes about one third of the student population and does not assess all GE courses. However, the assessment data is statistically valid given the large sample size.

In standardized testing, the scores of the sample of students who have taken GE courses and participated in the CAAP standardized testing program are used. According to the 2017 CAAP results:

On the written tests, AUB students consistently perform above the norm in usage/mechanics and in some cases in rhetorical writing.

On the reading tests, they met the norm in social science readings, but reading in arts/literature fell below the norm.

On the math tests, AUB students do very well on both sections of the test and score much higher than the norms.

Indirect assessment consists of gleaning relevant results from 3 surveys:

College Outcomes Survey (COS): The COS has been administered annually by OIRA towards the end of the academic year to a representative sample of undergraduate students. Scores on items related to GE learning outcomes were computed and analyzed with respect to their adequacy and to any progress made. In 2015, COS was discontinued and was recently replaced by the NSSE.

Exit Survey: As part of the clearance process, all graduating students take an exit survey in their last term. Questions aligned with GE learning outcomes were added to the exit survey.

Alumni Survey: OIRA conducts an annual alumni survey to recent graduates and to those who graduated five and 10 years earlier. The survey assesses their perceptions of the AUB experience, their personal development, progress in critical areas (critical thinking, writing, speaking, teamwork, use of technology, etc.) and the extent to which they were exposed to high-impact practices (HIP).

2. Results and Dissemination of Assessment Information

The evaluation and recertification form of any AUB GE course is used by one or more evaluators from the GE board to evaluate a GE course. These forms have a “comment” section that may include recommendations to improve the course which are shared with the course instructor. Results of the evaluation and recertification processes are shared with the GE board, and the active list of GE courses is updated accordingly.

Assessment data indicates weaknesses in the following areas: ethics, teamwork, information technology, development of world cultures, and quantitative thinking. Some of the PLOs, such as the “intellectual independence in pursuit of knowledge,” were difficult to assess, so it was decided to move the assessment of this PLO into the majors. Sub-committees were also formed to address other weaknesses. For example, it was recommended to require a capstone course from the (four) majors that do not yet have this option. The weakness in the “development of world cultures” resulted in revising the humanities LOs and reducing them to two LOs instead of three LOs.

3. GE Program Revitalization

In response to the assessment results and in accordance with a key initiative of AUB’s ASP to revisit the core curriculum and GE requirements, AUB has recently embarked on revamping the GE program (Chapter 3). The GE director prepared a draft proposal [R5.2] for a new core curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences that meets the university’s strategic planning directives and embodies the university’s historical intellectual mission and academic identity as a liberal arts institution of higher education. The new GE curriculum will facilitate a holistic, interdisciplinary, and integrative learning experience that results from joining together the longstanding program in civilization studies and the current GE program. The revitalization project uses a participatory approach: five task forces have been formed in April 2018 to lead the design phase of the project. They comprise more than 50 faculty members representing all faculties/schools at AUB.

V. Periodic Program Review (Criteria 2, 3, and 4; Questions 2, 3, and 4; ROAs 8, 9, and 10)

Implementation of the PPR process began in October 2010 and the first cycle was concluded in June 2018. The PPR cycle was set to six years, before being changed to an eight-year cycle with the possibility of an earlier review of some departments if needed. According to the PPR guidelines, “Academic program reviews promote and maintain high quality undergraduate and graduate programs that are effective and consistent with the mission and resources of the department and the university. They verify that AUB’s existing programs meet or exceed international standards of academic excellence and also aid in the identification of promising new areas for programmatic offerings. A successful review depends on the proper assessment of course and PLOs and on the use of assessment results to improve student learning. While such improvements can and should be made on an annual basis, major programmatic changes usually require a formal process of review”. The review process is systematic and is coordinated by AAU [R5.3].

All assessment information and progress reports are stored on the AAU intranet and are made available to all departmental faculty members, the relevant dean, the provost, and the president. In addition, AAU analyzes and groups the PPR recommendations into categories for different stakeholders. For example, AAU can extract all recommendations related to graduate programs to inform the Graduate Council. The most common recommendations identified for all programs through the PPR process are listed in Table 5.2.

Table 5.2 PPR types of recommendations

Recommendation / Department	Recommendation Categories														
	Curricular Reforms and Changes	New Programs	Additional/Optimization of Space	Student Advising/Interactions	Teaching Load Issues	Hiring/Requesting New Line(s)	Strategic Planning	Administrative Support/Staff Issues	Student Enrollment/Recruitment	Additional Funding	Governance and/or Faculty Relations	Renovating classrooms/offices/labs	Upgrading labs/equipment/computers	Seeking Research Grants	Safety Issues
Physics	x	x		x		x			x			x	x		
Chemistry	x	x	x	x		x	x		x		x	x	x	x	x
Philosophy	x	x	x			x		x		x			x		
Political Studies and Public Administration	x					x		x							
History and Archaeology	x		x	x		x		x	x	x			x		
Mathematics	x	x	x			x		x	x		x				
Nutrition and Food Sciences	x	x		x		x		x	x	x			x	x	
Medical Lab Sciences	x		x	x	x	x					x		x		x
Environmental Health	x		x			x		x	x		x		x	x	
Engineering Management	x	x					x				x				
Civil & Environmental Engineering	x		x	x				x	x					x	
Mechanical Engineering	x					x	x	x	x				x		x
Computer Science	x	x	x			x			x		x		x		
Education	x	x	x			x			x		x	x	x		
Agricultural Sciences	x		x	x		x	x		x			x	x		
Electrical & Computer Engineering	x		x			x		x	x				x	x	

Recommendation / Department	Recommendations														
	Curricular Reforms and Changes	New Programs	Additional/Optimization of Space	Student Advising/Interactions	Teaching Load Issues	Hiring/Requesting New Line(s)	Strategic Planning	Administrative Support/Staff Issues	Student Enrollment/Recruitment	Additional Funding	Governance and/or Faculty Relations	Renovating classrooms/offices/labs	Upgrading labs/equipment/computers	Seeking Research Grants	Safety Issues
Landscape Ecosystem Management	x		x	x	x	x				x	x	x			
Fine Art & Art History	x	x	x	x	x	x		x	x	x	x	x	x		x
Biology	x		x	x	x		x		x			x	x	x	
English	x		x	x		x				x	x	x			x
Psychology	x		x	x	x	x			x	x		x			x
Architecture and Design	x		x					x	x		x	x	x		
Sociology-Anthropology and Media Studies	x		x			x	x		x	x					x
Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies	x								x						x
Geology		x	x	x	x	x			x		x				
Civilization Studies Program	x					x		x			x				
Economics	x	x	x	x	x	x	x			x	x	x			
Arabic and Near Eastern Languages	x					x			x		x	x			

Many recommended actions have contributed to the improvement of student learning. These include the following:

1. Curricular revisions: Curricular revisions emerging from PPR recommendations vary in complexity and needed resources. Some of the curricular recommendations are minor and do not have budget implications and are therefore usually addressed by the reviewed departments during or soon after the review process has been completed. For major curricular changes, the department forwards the proposed academic aspects of the program action plan to the Academic Development Committee (or Board of Graduate Studies, if applicable), which then reviews and forwards the plan to the

University Senate for approval. CTL supports departments in many related activities, such as revising missions, objectives, and learning outcomes, and through offering workshops and training sessions on diverse teaching methodologies. As an example, a recommendation was made in 2013 to revise the undergraduate program in nutrition and dietetics as a result of the periodic review. This revision has been completed and a new curriculum was approved in the senate on April 25, 2014. The revised curriculum was implemented during the AY 2014–15. As another example, it was recommended in 2014 that the computer science department modernize coverage of curricular topics. Many new courses were introduced including parallel computing, machine learning, distributed systems, introduction to data science, and computer and information security.

2. New programs: Departments are proposing to introduce additional programs, mainly at the PhD level. For example, in 2012, the Department of Chemistry proposed in its self-study to reinstate the PhD program. Consequently, in 2013, a proposal, first submitted to the [Faculty of Arts and Sciences](#) (FAS) Graduate Committee, was approved by FAS in 2014 and by the University Board of Graduate Studies in 2016. The program was evaluated by external reviewers in January 2018 as a requirement for New York State Education Department (NYSED) registration and the final application proposal was reviewed and submitted to NYSED in August 2018.
3. Renovation of classrooms/offices/labs: Several departments across the university highlight the need to upgrade or add facilities to improve the learning experience. This is usually subject to space availability and financial resources. Several departments have been able to upgrade their facilities within minimal university and/or department capital budgets. For example, the Department of Landscape Design and Ecosystem Management proposed a move from Agriculture Building A to Reynolds Hall after a space analysis study to increase studio teaching spaces and faculty offices. Following the dean's approval of the proposal, faculty resources were allocated and the move was completed in early 2016.
4. Upgrading lab equipment and computers: Several labs and computer labs were upgraded and renovated in the [Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences](#) (FAFS) through incremental small-scale budget renovations over a period of four years, from 2013 to 2017. The PPR recommendation in 2013 to improve undergraduate and graduate labs and computing facilities of the Department of Physics was fully completed in 2016.
5. Reviewing student advising: Details on improving advising are given in [Chapter 4](#).

The PPR process has been a beneficial experience for all departments that completed this review because it helped in identifying strengths as well as areas for improvement. However, some recommendations that require significant resource allocation were not implemented. One example is the Department of Chemistry whose 2012 recommendation to renovate main classrooms and modernize teaching labs were not implemented due to lack of resources. In a PPR meeting on October 26, 2018, the faculty in this department questioned the usefulness of the PPR process if no resources can be allocated to some essential recommendations. The same concern was also shared by other departments. Therefore, conducting PPRs without readiness or allocation of funds to implement recommendations discourages faculty involvement in the process. As a result, many faculty members suggested that engaging them in the assessment process may become a problem that needs to be addressed in the next PPR cycle which started in fall 2018.

The PPR process is running well, but there is a concern that faculty members will become less motivated to contribute to this process. There is a need to implement measures that ensure the full engagement and motivation of faculty members in assessment processes. What is also needed is that faculty members understand that the PPR process is for program improvement as well as resource allocation.

VI. Evaluation and Improvement of Assessment Processes (Criterion 5; Question 5)

Both the evaluation and the assessment of the assessment processes are conducted inconsistently at the departmental or unit level, as well as the institutional level. In the past few years, some academic departments have worked individually on improving their PLO assessment processes using assessment data and their past experiences. AAU has been doing the same by annually evaluating and improving the PPR processes and developing templates. As an example,

the AAU chair and the provost decided in fall 2016 to change the PPR cycle from six to eight years in response to feedback from departments that reported having no major changes that warranted a new self-study. The IAC recommended in November 2017 the assessment of all assessment processes.

The university should consider starting a periodic assessment of the educational assessment processes and using the findings for improvement. This assessment includes the following activities:

- Assessment of the PLOs assessment processes, methods, and tools
- Assessment of the PPR processes, reports, and tools
- Assessment of the academic departments program review reports
- Assessment of the effective use of assessment results for improvements and resource allocations.

VII. Conclusion

The university meets Standard V criteria 1 to 4 and ROAs 8, 9, and 10. All undergraduate programs have learning outcomes that are aligned with departmental and university missions and interrelated with the GE LOs. Most of the programs are subject to at least one assessment activity (PLO, PPR, or accreditation) that provides data on the extent of students' progress towards degree and program goals, and to what extent students are well-prepared for successful personal and professional lives. Assessment results are summarized annually in an ADPR that includes all types of recommended actions for the improvement of educational effectiveness. These actions are linked to allocation of resources, planning, and budgeting. Criterion 5 is partially met through IAC that evaluates assessment activities at the institutional level.

This chapter identified some improvements that allow better fulfillment of all the criteria in this standard. In PLO assessment, there is a need to review all programs assessment plans, to better engage the faculty, and to make the PLO assessment of graduate programs mandatory. GE assessment results and ASP implementation necessitate the revision of the GE curriculum toward a holistic, interdisciplinary, and integrative learning experience. The PPR is running well, but there is a concern that faculty members will become less motivated to contribute to this process due to lack of resources that are needed to close the loop. In addition, there is a need to sustain all assessment activities. Finally, it is important to continuously assess and identify areas of improvements to the assessment processes. All these suggested improvements are directly related to key Initiatives (namely, the Student Learning Experience) in the ASP.

VIII. Areas of Improvement

WG V identified the following areas of improvement:

1. Establish a well-defined mechanism for the integration and continuous improvement of the institution's educational assessment processes.
2. Make assessment of the Program Learning Outcomes of graduate programs mandatory, and review all existing PLOs for their alignment with program and university missions.

List of Appendices (A)

[\(AV.1\) Academic Strategic Plan Progress Report](#)

[\(AV.2\) Key Initiative 1 Dashboard Output AAU](#)

[\(AV.3\) Strategic Plan Dashboard HSON](#)

[\(AV.4\) Annual Departmental Progress Report HSON UG](#)

[\(AV.5\) Annual Faculty Assessment Report HSON UG](#)

[\(AV.6\) University Assessment Report 2017-2018 AAU](#)

[\(AV.7\) Annual PLO Assessment Report - Computer Science](#)

[\(AV.8\) PLO Assessment 3-Year Summary Report - Computer Science](#)

[\(AV.9\) General Education Program Assessment Report](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R5.1\] Self-Evaluation of the UG Medical Education](#)

[\[R5.2\] AUB Core Curriculum - December 2017](#)

[\[R5.3\] Guidelines to Periodic Review Policy September 2016](#)



Standard VI: Planning, Resources, and Institutional Improvement

I. Working Group Charge Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to demonstrate whether the institution's planning processes, resources, and structures meet the criteria of Standard VI and satisfy ROAs 10 and 11. [Sections II and III](#) describe the extent to which the strategic and financial planning processes are documented, communicated, and linked to the strategic priorities of the institution. [Section IV](#) describes the extent to which financial, human, and physical resources, and infrastructure, are adequate to support the university's and units' operations and are aligned with the institution's and units' strategic objectives. [Section V](#) describes the mechanisms used for assigning responsibility and accountability regarding decision-making. [Section VI](#) examines the independent audit conducted and evaluates the follow-up on measures or concerns reported by the audit in the management letter. [Section VII](#) describes the assessment of planning, resource allocation, and institutional renewal processes, which support the institution's mission and its goals. Based on its findings, the WG identified strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations for improvement.

II. Assessment and Planning at AUB (Criteria 1, 2, 6, and 8; Questions 1 and 2; ROAs 8, 10, and 11)

AUB's [mission](#) and its goals are the main guides for faculty, administration, and staff in planning and resource allocation (Chapter 1). All faculties/schools have developed missions and goals, and all units/programs have developed missions and outcomes [[R1.17](#)]. The missions of all units, as well as the program learning outcomes (PLOs) of all undergraduate programs, are published on the programs' and units' websites. The missions of all units/programs are aligned with AUB's mission, and this alignment is checked by external evaluators in the periodic review process [[R1.18](#)], [[R1.19](#)]. In addition, the missions of academic departments/programs within a faculty/school are aligned with the respective faculty/school missions.

Assessment and planning activities include strategic planning, outcomes assessment, and periodic reviews. These activities are described in this section, and a process that uses assessment results for planning and resource allocation is discussed.

1. Assessment and Planning Frameworks

Academic Strategic Planning: The [academic strategic plan \(ASP\)](#) was developed under the guidance of the president to supersede the ASP developed by the previous administration. Following his appointment in 2015, President Khuri invited over 100 faculty and staff members to discuss the main goals of the new strategic plan. He later asked each faculty to develop its own strategic plan, which were discussed at a Board of Deans (BOD) retreat, and subsequently approved by the board of Trustees (BOT). As detailed in Chapter 1, the 2016 strategic planning process also fed into the development of the campus master plan (CMP) and [BOLDLY AUB: The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve](#).

The [academic strategic priorities](#) cross the boundaries of faculties/schools and connect them with regard to teaching, research, and innovation. The overarching key initiatives identified in the ASP include the student learning experience, infrastructure and academic support, research, engagement and outreach through various centers [[R6.1](#)], scholarship and service, and enrollment management. The academic assessment unit (AAU) has developed key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics for every ASP initiative ([AI.2](#)), and a dashboard was implemented to track those KPIs ([AV.2](#)).

Strategic plans of all faculties/schools are aligned with the ASP [[R1.16](#)]. Faculties/schools have also developed initiatives, KPIs, and metrics to monitor the implementation of their strategic plans. AUBMC has its own strategic plan which is expressed in the [AUBMC 2020 Vision](#). Strategic initiatives of AUBMC and the campus must therefore be coordinated by the AUB leadership.

2. Formalization of Current AUB Leadership Structure

Since the introduction of the position of the chief operating officer (COO) in 2013, which was subsequently discontinued in 2017, the senior leadership of the university has met regularly as the top four administrators: president, provost, executive vice president (EVP) and COO. Currently at AUB, there is regular reference made to the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), referring to the president, provost, EVP, associate vice president (AVP) for administration, and the senior advisor to the president. No formal documentation related to the ELT could be found. Therefore, the self-study group recommends that the ELT needs to be formalized as a university committee with clear bylaws (i.e. frequency of meetings, how decisions are taken, coordinated with the BOD and communicated to faculty and staff at large etc.) as it represents the highest decision-making group at AUB.

In the current status, three main entities are responsible for the implementation of Standard VI: (a) the [AUB leadership](#) (president, provost, EVP and AVP for administration), (b) the academic units comprising the seven faculties/schools (faculty, staff, and deans) and their associated academic departments and programs; and (c) 13 academic support units and 12 administrative units consisting of staff and directors ([AVI.1](#)). All three entities work together to fulfill the mission and the strategic plan of AUB.

ELT meets weekly to discuss administrative, financial, planning, and academic affairs, based on an agenda set by the president. The BOD is scheduled to meet once per week, chaired by the president (or in his absence, the provost) to discuss issues of relevance to academic, administrative, educational, and service issues. Members of the BOD include all deans of faculties/school, together with vice presidents, provost and dean of students.

3. Financial Strategic Planning

Under the oversight of the president, the EVP, and the provost, the strategic planning process is divided into two separate, yet complementary, processes for the medical center and campus. Financial planning and budgeting is overseen by the AUB leaders at the medical center and campus operations. The EVP for medicine is responsible for the strategic, operating, and capital planning of the medical center, and the Faculty of Medicine (FM). The provost oversees the strategic, operating and capital planning exercises for the campus.

AUB's process for strategic planning, financial planning (operating and capital budgets), and assessment is illustrated in the strategic and financial planning [flowchart \[R6.2\]](#) which presents how the academic and medical center strategic plans drive the prioritization of initiatives that begin at the executive level with the Strategic and Financial Planning Steering Committee (SFPSC) [\[R6.3\]](#). The chief financial officer (CFO) coordinates the integration of the operating and capital planning processes of both the medical center, campus, and New York Office in order to compile a unified capital budget and three-year operating plan for the organization. Once the main strategic direction is set by the SFPSC, the quantification of those initiatives and plans is assembled at the unit level by the deputy CFO of the AUBMC, for the medical center, Faculty of Medicine (FM) and Rafic Hariri School of Nursing (HSON), while the [Office of Financial Planning](#) (OFP) is responsible for the same duties for the campus and the New York Office. These plans produce the annual capital budget and annual operating budget (year one of the three-year operating plan) that are reviewed by the [Financial Planning Committee](#) (FPC) [\[R6.3\]](#) and also presented to the University Senate.

4. Shared Governance

Both the operating and capital budgets are reviewed by FPC and presented to the University Senate. FPC includes SFPSC members, academic deans, senior administrators, the chair of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, the student treasurer of the USFC, and the president of the Labor Union (commonly referred to as the "syndicate"). The academic strategic planning process includes deans and academic and non-academic administrators, but has not historically involved faculty members from the University Senate which is a recommendation being made by this self-study group. Unfortunately, the FPC has not been meeting regularly, and its central role in the planning process (see flow chart) needs to be reasserted as an important indicator of shared governance.

5. Campus Master Plan

The last time that AUB conducted a campus master plan was in 2002. In 2017, AUB received a generous gift-in-kind in the form of a highly detailed and professional campus master plan (CMP) from the Dar Group. The plan was aligned with AUB's comprehensive ASP and was put together through exhaustive data collection, site surveys, and many comprehensive meetings with faculty members, staff, and students [\[R6.4\]](#). The BOT approved the new CMP that calls for expansion of academic spaces, creating new student center, and preserving and improving existing spaces to meet the strategic vision as set by the administration, in November 2017. The CMP represents a transformational gift to the university that has a significant impact on AUB's long-term planning and resource allocations in particular [\[R6.5\]](#).

III. Strategic Planning, Financial Planning and Budgeting (Criteria 3 and 6; Questions 1 and 2; ROAs 10, and 11)

1. Capital Budget Resource Allocation

Resources of the university are allocated in two main segments: capital expenditures and operating expenses. The CFO annually prepares a capital schedule for the SFPSC that shows available capital funding for the coming fiscal year (FY) taking into account major capital construction projects that were previously approved by the BOT and are funded over a multiple-year time horizon ([AVI.2](#)). The SFPSC then determines the capital allocation for university-wide projects and those for the campus and medical center (major equipment and renovations). Once those monetary amounts are allocated, the respective teams for the AUBMC and campus prepare their capital budgets in keeping with strategic priorities. Donor funding and loan funding are also major components of major capital projects and are incorporated into multiple-year plans for each major capital project that are budgeted and monitored individually. Capital projects of \$10 million or more are monitored by the BOT oversight committee (BOTOC). The university also has a self-imposed debt ceiling of \$190 million as described in its [Debt Management and Hedging Policy](#).

Operating budget resource allocations are driven primarily by SFPSC decisions concerning main revenue streams which are predominantly those related to patient care and students. Both the campus and the medical center are expected to produce operating budgets that break even financially. For the campus, once the SFPSC has determined the strategic direction for enrollment (driven by the academic strategic plan) and tuition pricing, the revenue budget of the university can be compiled by OFP. The SFPSC will also provide guidance on university-wide decisions that impact the expense budget such as pools for salary increases, hiring initiatives, and cost containment measures. OFP then works with campus units to arrive at a balance of revenues and expenses that reflects the guidance given by the SFPSC and accounts for strategic initiatives that are quantified from the academic strategic plan and linked to the operating budget. For the campus, draft academic operating budget submissions are reviewed by the provost with the director of financial planning as a key intermediary working with multiple iterations of unit operating budgets until a balanced budget is developed.

The capital budget and a draft operating budget are presented to the finance committee of the BOT in March of every year for approval by that committee and the full board. The final operating budget and three-year operating plan are presented in the May/June board meeting for approval by the finance committee and the full board. Current-year operating budget forecasts are also reviewed by the finance committee throughout the year at their regularly scheduled meetings. The audited financial statements are presented to the audit committee in November of each year for approval by that committee and the full board, while the annual finance report is presented to the finance committee each November.

2. Linking Strategic Plans to the Implementation

The planning process starts in October of every FY, when leaders (deans for academic units, vice presidents, and chief officers of major units for non-academic units) meet together with the university leadership team to discuss the academic strategic plan, the university's strategic plan and major units' strategic plans, and the alignment of budget to these plans. After agreeing and setting priorities, the plans are shared with the office of financial planning for resource allocation and preparation of the budget plan [\[R6.2, R6.6\]](#).

Examples include the renovation project proposed by OSB, which was allocated \$264,000 in capital funding in FY 2017/18 linked to the academic goal of maintaining infrastructure and academic support [R6.7], and the information technology (IT) project to improve bandwidth, which was given an additional budget of \$300,000 per year starting FY 2016/17 [R6.8] as it is aligned with academic goals of supporting research, teaching, and learning.

In 2018, AUB was able to begin linking the strategy-driven projects embedded in the master plan with its capital budget for FY 2019. The 2018/19 capital budget includes funding for a critical component of the CMP which is the Penrose Dormitory Renovation (total project funding of \$10 million). In addition, during the development of the CMP, the BOT provided exceptional funding of \$8.5 million that was employed for three areas of top priority as detailed in the master plan which are:

1. Renovation of existing academic facilities (\$3 million)
2. Partial funding of the enhancement of the Dar Al-Handasah Architecture Building (\$1.5 million), and
3. Acquisition of real estate for development of administrative space (\$4 million)

At the writing of this report, the 2019/20 capital budget is being assembled with the following strategic, master plan components planned for inclusion:

Project	Master Plan Priority Addressed
1 Humanities Building	Arts and Sciences
3 Asfari Institute	Arts and Sciences
4 Mikati Science and Engineering Library	Library Space
5 Final Funding for Dar Al-Handasah Architecture Building	MSFEA Architecture Space
6 Real Estate	Strategic land acquisitions

The university also formed AUBotanic as the first step in establishing the Botanical Garden outlined in the campus master plan.

3. Campus Master Plan Communication

Although a large number of AUB community members took part in the development of the CMP and it was shared in a final presentation with a group of more than 200 individuals, there is no summary of the CMP on the AUB website. We recommend that the AUB administration communicate the components of the CMP to the AUB community and that changes to the CMP are discussed with the university stakeholders.

IV. Adequacy of Financial, Human and Physical Resources, and Infrastructure (Criterion 4; Questions 1 and 3; ROA 11)

This section evaluates the sufficiency of the university's financial, human and physical resources along with its technical infrastructure (Standard VI, Criterion 4).

1. Record-Breaking Capital Campaign

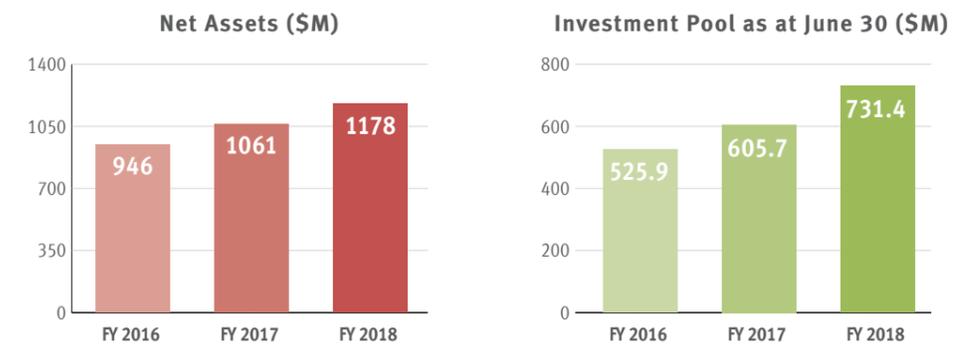
As of the writing of this report, AUB had reached 70% of its \$650 million capital campaign goal. This is the most significant inflow of philanthropy that the university has ever witnessed in its history especially when compared to its last capital campaign which raised \$171 million. This section evaluates the sufficiency of the university's financial, human, and physical resources along with its technical infrastructure.

2. Financial Resources

AUB's operating revenues for FY 2018 totaled \$492.8 million. As we enter into an era where the operations of the organization will now exceed half a billion dollars a year, we note that the size, scale, and complexity of the university has grown considerably. Net assets have also grown over the past two years with AUB's largest annual increases in history taking place in FY 2017 at \$115 million followed by an increase of \$117 million in FY 2018. The university's investment pool (inclusive of endowment) continues to attain record highs. At the end of FY 2018, AUB's investment pool totaled \$731.4 million as compared to \$605.7 million at the end of FY 2017.

The growth in the investment pool of AUB has come about primarily because of the following key factors:

1. Investment returns above benchmarks
2. Lowering of the draw rate from 4.75% to 4.0 %
3. Large inflows in endowed funds from philanthropy



The university currently has a debt ceiling of \$190 million and a healthy viability ratio of 7.7. The university's debt portfolio includes borrowing agreements with lending terms that are not found readily in the market. This places the university at a significant advantage in terms of its debt burden. As mentioned before, AUB has reached 70% of its capital campaign goal of \$650 million with three more years left to go to attain its target. The success of the BOLDLY AUB campaign is a strong attestation to the support the university enjoys from its generous donors and alumni and to the development professionals that comprise the university's advancement team. As AUB operates in an environment that poses certain challenges from a variety of perspectives, the university has undertaken a formal risk assessment and management exercise that involves the ELT members and certain key administrators. All aspects of the university's operations are reviewed from a risk assessment standpoint. Recent risk-related actions taking place in the past few years alone in this respect are the following:



- Considerable funds have been set aside for operating contingency matters
- The university has a Debt Management and Hedging Policy with a recently revised debt ceiling of \$190 million
- A new Anti-Bribery Policy has been adopted
- Steps have been taken to protect the university in the event of adverse economical situations that Lebanon might be subjected to

3. Human Resources

Along the goals set forth by ASP of enhancing the education experience and research at the university, the number of faculty members has been increasing steadily while the faculty-to-student ratio has decreased as shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2. Currently, the university has about 914 full-time faculty members and 1,250 full-time staff who offer the support needed across campus. The Human Resources (HR) Department manages the contract of faculty members and participates in the New Faculty Orientation sessions on a regular basis, and organizes distinct workshops [R6.9], [R6.10] including orientation sessions for newly-recruited staff.

HR also plays a key role in the recruitment process for non-academic positions by setting criteria for shortlisting candidates for each advertised position, introducing competency-related interview questions, and participating to interviews meetings. HR administers the New Employee Orientation Program and is coordinating with IT to revamp it and transform it into a hybrid program with an online component. Employee Satisfaction Survey data (AVI.3) shows an overall satisfaction level of employees with HR services (Question 88) between 2009 and 2015.

HR is continuously updating its tools and processes. For example, HR played a role in the introduction of an Oracle-based Human Capital Management (HCM) system for core HR, payroll, and self-service (in January 2018), which necessitated introducing several process changes. HR has also recently drafted a staff planning process/workflow for non-academic positions at AUB campus that will guide/evaluate requests for new resources and to repurpose current resources, as well as ensure that resources are leveraged to support the institution's mission and goals. Phase 2 of the HCM project is envisioned at some point in the future dependent on funding and other project variables.

Figure 6.1 FTE Instructional faculty - clinical excluded

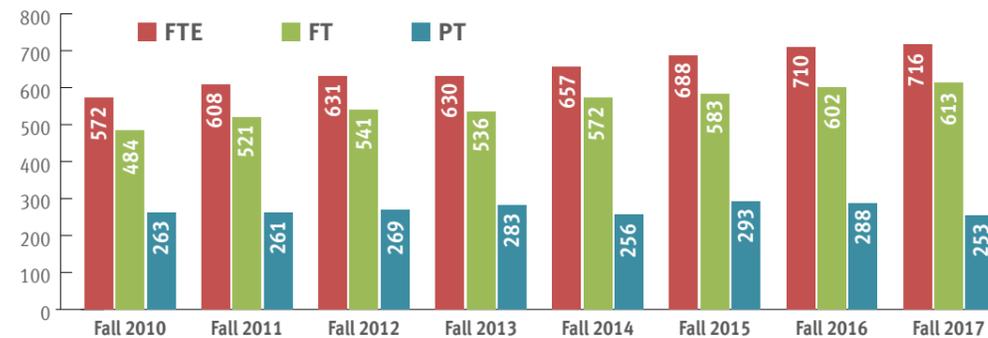
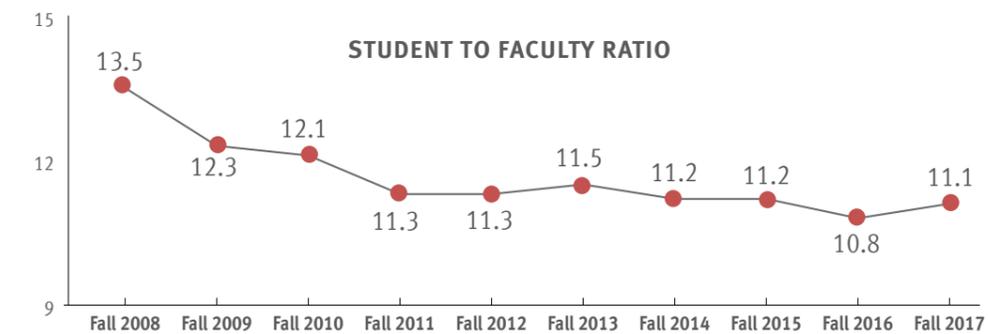


Figure 6.2 Student FTE per FTE faculty - clinical faculty and students are excluded



4. Physical Resources

AUB possesses a Beirut campus of 61.2 acres and a 247.5 acre facility in the Beqaa Valley. The university has at its disposal 350,954 m² of building space in Beirut and 15,281 m² in Beqaa.

CMP marks the continuing efforts of AUB to invest heavily in new structures and infrastructure as well as in maintaining its existing facilities through regular and deferred maintenance. In June 2018, the university made a historical purchase (\$2.2 million) of a small property neighboring AUB on the north-east side of the campus called "lot 485". The purchase was integral to the strategic expansion of AUB to relocate administrative and servicing units and open way for the expansion of existing buildings and construction of new ones. The new school of design is one building of many that was listed as a priority project by the master planners. The building will connect to the existing Dar Al-Handasah Architecture Building and support the growing program and students' needs for studios and assembly spaces where students can informally interact with their fellow students from across the different faculties. Towards the same goal, AUB has also invested in the purchase of a new building (Lot 518 - \$10.1 million) on the north side of the campus. This building will house many administrative units that will relocate to leave the space for needed academic use. AUB continues to work on many other fronts to purchase other lots on the north side of the campus that are integral to the master plan implementation.

In June 2018, the facilities planning and design unit completed the construction of the Munib and Angela Masri Building on the west side of the Bechtel Building (\$7.4 million). This building houses the Munib and Angela Masri Institute for Energy and Natural Resources in addition to accommodating additional student spaces, a state-of-the-art auditorium, classrooms, conference rooms, and faculty offices.

The current administration has also invested in the rehabilitation of existing buildings to improve student living and academic spaces on campus. This effort was crowned with the investment in the long awaited rehabilitation of the men's dormitory Penrose Hall (\$ 9.8 million) which includes an additional floor of bedrooms and utilization of the basement floor to provide for student study space, lounges, and assembly space. Reopening the building is planned in fall 2019 with the goal of receiving LEED silver certification. The planned rehabilitation of the Dar Al-Handasah Architecture Building is scheduled in early 2019 (\$7.5 million), which includes a new auditorium equipped with modern AV systems, improved and modern studios, in addition to classrooms, offices, assembly space, common and public spaces. The building will meet high standards and related code requirements (NFPA, ADA, ASHREA, ACI, AISC, ASTM, UBC, LEED, etc.)

The effort to upgrade old classrooms, laboratories, student spaces in all faculties, and other service spaces is an ongoing process through a planned program in order not to interrupt ongoing academic activities. The newly renovated reserve reading room in Jafet Library is a typical success story of how continuous renovations and upgrading of spaces are necessary for improving student learning and experience on campus. Also, the relocation of the bookstore to a central location on campus made it easier for students from all faculties to reach the store with minimum traveling distance. The renovation of the Agriculture Lecture Hall, ongoing renovations of Nicely Hall classrooms, Fisk Hall classrooms, some of the Biology Laboratories, student services spaces in OSB, and classrooms, laboratories, and common spaces across the campus are all examples of improving student learning experience and life on campus.

Any request for renovations or additional space is conveyed to the provost and president through the deans or directors/heads of the different administrative units. Proposed major capital projects are discussed by the ELT before they are approved and presented to the BOT for final approval. One example of a capital project is the BOT-approved plan for the school of business in 2004 that materialized partially through fundraising in 2011. The same applies to the Charles Hostler Student Center (CHSC), Issam Fares Institute (IFI), Irani Oxy Engineering Complex (IOEC), and Medical Administration Building (MAB). Other renovations can be initiated by the deans if they are able to secure the budget from their own fundraising campaigns, e.g. renovation of MSFEA-Bechtel offices, conference rooms, and classrooms, as well as bathrooms and offices in FAFS.

The current planning cycle intends to include the following projects into the future capital plans of the university beginning in 2019/20:

- Humanities building
- Asfari Institute
- Mikati Science and Engineering Library
- Final funding for Dar Al-Handasah Architecture Building
- Real estate acquisitions

The Facilities Planning and Design Unit (FPDU) is entrusted with major capital renovations/constructions and projects. The Physical Plant Department (PPD) is responsible for annual preventive maintenance considering the equipment status and lifetime (e.g. diesel generators, fire extinguishers). Survey data (AVI.2) shows an overall satisfaction level of employees with FPDU (Question 80) and PPD services (Question 81, 82, and 83) between 2009 and 2015 (AVI.3).

AUB continues to invest heavily in new structures and infrastructure as well as maintaining its existing facilities through regular and deferred maintenance (evidence can be provided in hard copy). Eight new facilities have been constructed and 20 renovated since 2008 (AVI.3). All newly-built and renovated lecture halls/auditoriums are equipped with the latest technologies of audiovisual systems, computer networking, and WIFI system which has eliminated deferred maintenance needs in some areas as older buildings were replaced. Fifty-two classrooms in several buildings have also been converted into e-classrooms for improved student learning. Examples include Antoun Ghattas Karam e-classroom in Jafet Memorial Library, Agriculture Lecture Hall, Bechtel, Scientific Research Building (SRB), IOEC, and IFI. The cost is either secured through donors or AUB's yearly capital budget. The Science Lecture Hall, the Engineering Lecture Hall, and the Agriculture Lecture Hall have been renovated through donations at a cost of \$500,000, \$350,000, and \$300,000, respectively.

5. Sustainability and Accessibility Measures

Part of the newly constructed facilities received worldwide recognition: CHSC has won the American Institute of Architects' Committee on the Environment (COTE) Top Ten Green Projects award; IOEC received the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) gold certification; OSB was nominated for the Agha Khan Award; and IFI designed by Zaha Hadid received the Agha Khan Award. The Penrose Dormitory Renovation is also expected to receive LEED Silver certification. All these new buildings are sustainable with solar heating panels, rainwater collection, grey water collection systems, and energy efficient lighting. A few other existing buildings have photovoltaic panels and energy-efficient LED lighting. Furthermore, the AUB power plant is equipped with a heat recovery system that produces steam for the AUBMC laundry. It was noted that not all of the campus facilities are accessible in keeping with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), although progress has been made in recent years in this respect.

This report recommends that AUB continue to invest in LEED-certified buildings, solar energy, and other sustainability endeavors, as well as bolstering the campus' ADA compliance with its buildings and other parts of campus to make AUB as accessible as possible.

V. Responsibility and Accountability Regarding Decision-Making (Criterion 5; Questions 1 and 4)

Decision-making is done at different levels of AUB's **governance structure** through committees, boards, chairpersons, directors, deans, SFPSC, ELT and BOT. Memberships and mandates of the academic governing bodies mainly for faculty and staff are well defined in manuals and individual job descriptions, such as the **Faculty Manual (Chapter 2)**. All faculty and staff are responsible and accountable for their actions, and they are annually evaluated by their immediate supervisors. All units (faculties/schools, academic support units, administrative units) submit annual reports and are evaluated by the next-level supervisor, as exemplified in the Units Annual Reports 2016–17. Assessment, effectiveness, and accountability are explained in detail in **Chapter 7, Section IV**.

In addition, all decisions are regulated by policies (Chapter 2), and actions that are linked to assessment and planning are monitored by KPIs.

In order to enhance evaluation and accountability in administrative units, some have developed and implemented their own decision making processes. In 2017, HR initiated the process for reviewing the non-academic staff manual and is currently coordinating with the Office of the Provost to review the Faculty Manual, in order to align the mechanisms of assigning responsibility and accountability regarding decision-making across all units. The accountability of IT, for example, lies with the IT leadership team. This accountability is monitored and managed through regular reviews by different stakeholder groups, and ultimately by the **BOT IT Committee**. OGC has drafted research-related policies and a procedural manual for **award management and technology transfer**, all of which are published on the OGC website. FPDU has also set **clear mechanisms of accountability** and decision-making for internal staff and outside contractors. Lastly, the Finance Division undergoes an annual external audit to confirm the accuracy of AUB's financial records and follow up each year on audit observations (discussed in detail in next section).

This report recommends that decision-making bodies in the upper administration (BOD, SFPSC, and ELT) and other administrative units, which have not already done so, clearly specify their accountability mechanisms.

VI. Internal and External Auditing (Criterion 7; Questions 1 and 5; ROA 11)

Auditing at AUB is done through an independent **Internal Audit Office** as well as through external auditing.

The external audit firm that has assessed AUB since 2008 is Deloitte. External auditors evaluate the **accounting policies** that are used, the accounting estimates made by management, as well as consolidated financial statements. **Accounting policies** are used to prepare the university's financial statements and to present disclosures. The external auditors assess whether these policies are appropriate and being correctly implemented. They also test the adequacy of any accounting estimate presented by the finance team in the consolidated financial statements (Example: estimates related to end of service indemnity). As a not-for-profit entity with a charter granted by the State of New York, the external audit evaluates AUB's consolidated financial statements in accordance with Generally Accepted Government Auditing Standards (GAGAS), issued by the Comptroller General of the United States. In addition, a test of compliance to certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts, and grant agreements is annually performed to ensure that the AUB's consolidated financial statements are fairly presented.

Deloitte's independent findings and recommendations are presented to the Audit Committee of the BOT each November when the audited financial statements of the university are presented and reviewed. The full BOT also approves the audited financial statements each year in November. AUB incorporates the assessment of the external audit in its yearly operation which might impact policies and procedures, provisions, cash flow etc. Deloitte's Annual Report to Management ("management letter") is also reviewed annually by the Audit Committee of the Board. The management letter is organized into three main sections which are: a) Current Year Observations, b) Prior Year Observations not Yet Completed and c) Prior Year Observations Substantially Complete or Completed. Management responses for observations are recorded and reviewed with the Audit Committee, and progress is monitored every year by Deloitte with management and the Audit Committee. AUB has no observations which are deemed to be a material weakness or significant deficiency as defined by **AU Section 325** under Government Auditing Standards.

The scope of **internal audit activities** is fully described in university policies. The University Auditor **reports functionally to the Board** of Trustees, via the **Audit Committee**, and administratively (i.e., day to day operations), to the president of the university. The internal audit plan is reviewed and approved annually by the Audit Committee, and individual internal audit reports are submitted to the Audit Committee upon completion and discussed during their regularly scheduled meetings throughout the year.

VII. Assessment of Planning, Resource Allocation, and Institutional Renewal Processes (Criterion 9, Questions 1 and 6)

This section reviews the assessment and planning process at the university, the resource allocation process and institutional renewal. In particular the working group focused on AUB's observance of Standard VI criteria 1, 2, 6, 8 and 9.

1. *Assessment and Planning Framework*

Three main entities are responsible for the implementation of Standard VI: (a) the AUB leadership (president, provost, executive vice president (EVP), associate vice president for administration (AVP)), (b) the academic units comprising the seven faculties/schools (faculty, staff, and deans) and their associated academic departments and programs; and (c) 13 academic support units and 12 administrative units consisting of staff and directors (AVI.1). All three entities work together to fulfill the mission and the strategic plan of AUB.

Faculties/schools offer more than 130 undergraduate and graduate programs. Assessment of educational offerings is mainly conducted in academic departments through the assessment of PLOs, periodic program reviews (PPR), and strategic planning. These activities measure and assess the adequacy of the available resources, and identify additional resources needed to support the faculty/school in line with the university's mission and its goals.

Assessment and planning in academic support units is conducted through the assessment of unit outcomes, periodic unit reviews and strategic planning (Example: University Libraries). Assessment and planning in major administrative units is conducted through strategic planning [R6.11], [R6.12], [R6.13]. In addition, it was conducted prior to 2017 through the assessment of unit outcomes [R6.14].

As reported in Chapter 5, assessment activities are coordinated by the Academic Assessment Unit (AAU) and supported by the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), and more recently by the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC). Assessment data and improvement plans are collected and compiled into a university assessment report (AV.6). This report is then shared with the IAC.

2. *Periodic Unit/Program Reviews*

PPRs require that a unit/department conduct a self-study and draft a self-study report that includes an action plan. A thorough description of PPRs is given in [Chapter 5, Section V](#). The PPR process is overseen by a unit/department internal review committee. A thorough description of PPRs is given in [Chapter 5, Section V](#). It includes the following steps [R5.3]:

- A unit/departmental review committee conducts the review(s) and drafts the self-study report.
- The report is examined by one or two reviewers from outside the university.
- An onsite review visit is conducted by the external reviewers who meet the unit constituents and examine facilities and resources. The reviewers submit their findings in a report.
- The unit/departmental chair provides a formal response to the reviewers' report.
- The dean/unit director writes her/his independent response.
- The AAU chair summarizes the findings in a final report that contains an improvement plan.

This report is discussed and approved in a final meeting attended by the provost, dean, and departmental chair.

Assessment information in the report is used for planning, allocation of resources, and budgeting.

AAU coordinates the periodic review process and provides guidelines for writing the self-study report and templates for reporting progress on the implementation of the improvement plan [R6.15].

3. *Assessment of Learning Outcomes and Unit Outcomes*

As detailed in Chapter 5, assessment of student learning outcomes is a requirement for all undergraduate programs at AUB. Academic departments have been reporting program assessment results annually since AY 2010–11 (AV.7 and AV.8).

A process for the assessment of unit outcomes for both academic support units and administrative units started in fall 2015–16. AAU worked closely with all units in defining a set of outcomes, developing KPIs, and then collecting outcome measures. Twenty one out of 25 units submitted a complete outcomes assessment report, which included improvement plans [R6.14]. AAU is currently collecting the annual unit outcomes assessment reports from academic support units only. All non-academic units produce interim and final annual reports in June of each year which are submitted to the Office of the President. Because of turnover in senior administrative leadership in the past few years, the non-academic assessment process has not yet been fully developed.

4. *Assessment and Planning Process*

The assessment and evaluation of academic unit planning processes, resources and structures differ according to the function of those units in the university. Departmental program reviews seem to be more systematic than the evaluation processes conducted at the faculty/school level, where KPIs have not yet been tied to strategic planning. The only exceptions are the initiatives that have been developed in alignment with the university's ASP. As for non-academic units, their missions are in line with that of AUB. All units developed their outcomes and/or strategic plans in line with the strategic plan of the university, and defined KPIs to monitor their progress. A follow-up on improvements and shortcomings of certain KPIs has not yet taken place but is expected to start, in coordination with the IAC. One challenge is to increase communication and planning within the different units in order to minimize duplication and increase efficiency.

In AY 2017–18, a newly-restructured IAC approved an assessment and planning process that is composed of three levels [R1.9]:

Every department establishes a departmental assessment committee [R6.16] that is responsible for the assessment of PLOs, the PPR, and the accreditation of academic programs. This committee reports annually to the dean's office in a departmental progress report that includes updates on previous and planned improvement actions that are concluded from assessment activities. These improvement actions imply mainly a request for resources. Similarly, academic support units prepare annual progress reports based on their unit outcomes assessment, periodic unit review or strategic plan, if applicable, and submit it to AAU. There is also no clear follow-up on improvement actions that appear in the PPR and how many of these are implemented every year. AAU is in the process of developing a monitoring mechanism to attend to this gap as presented in [Chapter 5](#).

Every faculty/school consolidates all departmental progress reports into a faculty assessment report that includes planned activities/projects/initiatives that are linked to resources and to their strategic plan (AV.5). These planned activities consist of the major departmental activities in addition to those at the faculty level, including renovations, new computer labs, etc. These activities imply a request for resources and may result in a revision of the faculty's strategic plan.

AAU collects and consolidates all faculty/school and unit assessment reports into a university assessment report (AV.6). This report includes all the planned activities/projects/initiatives resulting from assessment along with the requested resources and proposed funding sources. These planned activities are categorized and linked to the priorities in the ASP. This report is used in meetings on capital budgets and staff and resources allocation. It is also used to recommend updates on the ASP.

This process is in its first year and needs to be streamlined, evaluated, and improved where possible.

5. *Assessment of Non-Academic Administrative Units*

Following the restructuring of the COO Office and the partial replacement of the COO by the Associate Vice President for Administration (AVP) and the Chief of Staff in October 2017, five key administrative units currently report to that new position, namely human resources, benefits, communications, facilities, and physical plant. Each unit developed a strategic plan aligned with the strategic priorities of the university and identified milestones, KPIs, and resources (AVI.4). A similar process will be applied to other administrative units such as Information Technology (IT), Protection, Advancement, and Regional External Programs (REP). Finance is externally reviewed every year through the external audit performed by Deloitte.

Currently, some units, like IT, have created an internal budgeting process through the IT internal Request Review Board (RRB) that meets regularly to assess all new requests and to prioritize project implementation resources and timelines based on the ever-changing needs of the university. The RRB coordinates with other project steering committees on campus through the IT leadership team. Also, FPDU projects are internally planned in coordination with the end users so that estimated costs per square meter are evaluated and submitted for fundraising or to the Financial Planning Committee. The internal evaluation mechanism does not seem to be associated with an effective evaluation process: a practice that will be changed with the new AVP-Chief of Staff office.

VIII. Conclusion

Overall, the university meets criteria 1 through 9 of Standard VI, yet, there is still room for improvement in some areas. Criterion 1 is met since the institutional objectives are clearly stated, assessed appropriately, linked to mission and goal achievement, reflect conclusions drawn from assessment results, and are used for planning and resource allocation. Criterion 2 is met by the follow up of AAU and the newly developed monitoring plan for administrative unit that provide for constituent participation and incorporate the use of assessment results. Criterion 3 is met as reflected in the financial planning and budgeting process that is aligned with the institution's mission and goals, and is linked to the institution's and units' strategic plans/objectives. Criterion 4 is met as the fiscal and human resources as well as the physical and technical infrastructure are adequate to support the institution's operations wherever and however programs are delivered. Criterion 5 is met as assignment of responsibility and accountability at the academic faculty and departments and in administrative units are well articulated in the faculty manual and the university manuals for policies and procedures. Criterion 6 is met as the campus master plan developed in 2017 presents comprehensive planning for facilities, infrastructure, and technology that includes consideration of sustainability and deferred maintenance and is linked to the institution's strategic and financial planning processes. Criterion 7 is met in conducting an annual independent audit confirming financial viability of the university. Criterion 8 is met as strategies to measure and assess the adequacy and efficient utilization of institutional resources is developed and reviewed frequently to support the institution's mission and goals. Criterion 9 is met by implementing a periodic assessment of the effectiveness of planning, resource allocation, institutional renewal processes, and availability of resources.

The key findings of this chapter are as follows. The new president was able to present to the BOT a new ASP soon after he took office in 2016. The ASP was developed in consultation with over 100 faculty members and staff and the deans. This process also resulted in the development of ASPs for the different schools, the CMP and BOLDLY AUB campaign. The administration structure underwent substantive changes: Some executive committees were developed (e.g. ELT) or revisited (e.g. SFPSC), as reflected in AUB's current financial organizational structure. The new CMP is a transformational gift to the university that has a significant impact on its long-term planning. It calls for expansion of the academic spaces, creating new student center, and preserving and improving existing spaces to meet the strategic vision as set by the administration. One of the important achievements that resulted from the CMP is the purchase of Lot 485 and the purchase of a new building (Lot 518) in a highly populated city with a very high real state purchase value. AUB entered a new era where the operations of the organization exceed half a billion dollars a year counterbalanced with an investment pool totaling \$731.4 million in FY 2018 as compared to \$605.7 million at the end of FY 2017. This is mainly due to the ability of AUB to attract high inflow of philanthropy to reach 70% of its \$650 million capital campaign goal. The university has also set aside considerable funds for operating contingency matters, introduced a Debt Management and Hedging Policy with a recently revised debt ceiling of \$190 million, adopted a new Anti-Bribery Policy and steps have been taken to protect the university in the event of adverse economical situations that Lebanon might be subjected to.

The challenge remains in presenting ASP as a written document as it is currently available only as a powerpoint presentation, formalizing responsibility and accountability procedures for the executive leadership committees, and defining the link between the administrators' decisions and the strategic goals of the university. AAU has been instrumental in developing KPIs for the academic units, and the AVP is also following a systematic approach to define the objectives, the KPIs and the assessment processes of key administrative units on AUB campus and AUBMC. Shared governance is also one major challenge that needs to be attended to. While the FPC includes a wide number of stakeholders (e.g. SFPSC members, academic deans, senior administrators, the chair of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, the student treasurer of the USFC, and the president of the Labor Union (commonly referred to as the "syndicate"), it has yet

to be sufficiently empowered in the decision-making process. Similarly, access to the CMP plan has not been made available to the AUB community, and this needs to be addressed.

IX. Areas of Improvement

The following are therefore the areas of improvement that have been identified by the WG for Standard VI:

1. Clearly specify the accountability mechanisms of decision-making bodies in the upper administration (BOD, SFPSC, and ELT) and other administrative units, which have not already done so.
2. Develop by-laws for the executive committees like ELT, SFPSC and FPC, or engage in a more systematic revision of governing structures and bodies at AUB. Ensure that assessment and accountability mechanisms are built within the bylaws of each committee. ELT to be formalized as a university committee with clear bylaws.
3. Develop more venues for shared governance, with particular emphasis on a shared financial and resource plan assignment and implementation, and more direct involvement of stakeholders (e.g. faculty, students).
4. Link assessment of KPIs of the academic and administrative units to the strategic plan of the university including the assessment of resources. Ensure that ASP is published as a reference document on AUB website.

List of Appendices (A)

[\(AVI.1\) Academic Support and Administrative Units at AUB](#)

[\(AVI.2\) Construction and Renovation Projects since 2008](#)

[\(AVI.3\) Satisfaction with AUB Services and Facilities](#)

[\(AVI.4\) Administrative Units' Assessment And Roadmaps](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R6.1\] Centers, Institutes, and Programs at AUB](#)

[\[R6.2\] Strategic and Financial Planning Flow Chart](#)

[\[R 6.3\] Charge of the Strategic and Financial Planning Steering Committee \(SFPSC\) and Financial Planning Committee \(FPC\)](#)

[\[R 6.4\] Charrettes](#)

[\[R 6.5\] BOLDLY AUB Narrative](#)

[\[R 6.6\] Assessment And Planning Processes Flowchart](#)

[\[R 6.7\] OSB's Strategic plan Linked to Budget](#)

[\[R 6.8\] IT's Strategic plan Linked to Budget](#)

[\[R 6.9\] HR Workshops](#)

[\[R 6.10\] May 2018 Workshops](#)

[\[R 6.11\] FPDU Strategic Plan](#)

[\[R 6.12\] IT Strategic Plan – 20151028](#)

[\[R 6.13\] Physical Plant Department Strategic Plan](#)

[\[R 6.14\] FPDU Unit Outcomes Assessment Report 2017](#)

[\[R 6.15\] CAMES Annual Progress Report 2016](#)

[\[R 6.16\] Departmental Assessment Committee](#)

Documents Available in the Office of the Provost

2017 Campus Master Plan

2018 Annual Finance Report

2017 Annual Finance Report

2017–18 Audited Financial Statements

2016–17 Audited Financial Statements

2015–16 Audited Financial Statements

2017–18 Report to Management

2016–17 Report to Management

2015–16 Report to Management

2018–19 Capital Budget

2017–18 Capital Budget

2018–19 Draft Operating Budget

2017–18 Draft Operating Budget

2018–19 Operating Budget and Three-Year Plan

Final 2017–18 Operating Budget and Three-Year Plan

2017/18 Operating Forecast (Dated May 22, 2018)

2015 Facilities Condition Index

2018 Internal Audit Plan

Internal Audit Projects

Deferred Maintenance Summary



Standard VII: Governance, Leadership, and Administration

I. Working Group Charge Overview

The purpose of this chapter is to examine AUB's leadership, governance, and administration, in terms of structure, roles and responsibilities, accountability, and operations, with a focus on their effectiveness in fulfilling the university's mission and its strategic goals. The Working Group (WG) examined the extent to which AUB fulfills the criteria of Standard VII and satisfies ROAs 12 and 13. This chapter begins with a description of AUB's governance structure and administration. The next section examines the extent to which the bylaws, manuals, policies, and procedures, all related to governance and administration, are clearly documented, periodically assessed, updated, adequately disseminated, implemented, and acted upon. [Section IV](#) discusses the effectiveness and accountability of the governing body, leadership, and administration in meeting AUB's mission and its strategic goals with education as a primary purpose. [Section V](#) describes the extent to which shared governance at AUB provides sufficient opportunities for the various constituencies to participate in initiatives and decision-making. Based on these findings, the WG identified strengths and weaknesses and made recommendations for improvement.

II. Governance Structure and Administration (Criteria 1, 2, 3, 4; Question 1; ROAs 12, and 13)

AUB has a clearly articulated governance structure with the Board of Trustees (BOT) as the governing body, the president as the chief executive officer, and an administration composed of the provost as the chief academic officer, executive vice president (EVP) for medicine and global strategy, vice presidents (VPs) and chief officers, deans of faculties/schools, dean of student affairs, university librarian, chairs of departments, directors of centers and institutes, directors of academic support units, and directors of administrative units. Faculty, staff, students, and alumni are also an integral part of the overall governance structure on various levels of active engagement. Institutional governance at AUB is guided by five sets of [bylaws](#): [Corporate Bylaws](#); [Senate Bylaws](#); [bylaws of the faculties](#); bylaws of the [University Student Faculty Committee \(USFC\)](#); and [bylaws of the Student Representative Committee](#). These bylaws delineate the roles, responsibilities, duties, regulations, structures, composition, and functions of various standing committees. In addition, various policies and procedures for staff are described in the [Non-Academic Staff Manual](#).

The BOT governs the university and oversees its affairs through several board committees. The BOT is currently composed of 40 members with diverse backgrounds, expertise, and nationalities. The BOT members ensure that the university fulfills its mission and operates strategically to achieve its goals. The BOT is subject to the Internal Revenue Code of the Internal Revenue Service, NY State accreditation laws, and Lebanese laws. The university publishes its [governance structure](#) online, and the [Corporate Bylaws](#) describe the function of the BOT.

The BOT empowers the president to lead the university and maintain its autonomy. The president has authority to manage the day-to-day institutional operations including academic, personnel, fiscal, and facility affairs, relations with governments, institutions, alumni, and the public. The role of the BOT is focused on supervision, guidance, encouragement, and approval, with or without amendment of plans and recommendations submitted by the president. The BOT functions through several committees that are defined in the [Corporate Bylaws](#).

According to the Corporate Bylaws, the Trusteeship Committee regularly reviews the composition of the BOT and recommends suitable candidates. Trustees are appointed for a renewable three-year term and are subject to regular assessment. Typically, around every five years, an external consultant is appointed to assess the overall operation of the BOT in order to identify areas for improvement.

The Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT is the penultimate body responsible for the quality of teaching and learning; it oversees the development and revision of academic policies, supports academic initiatives, approves proposals for new programs, and makes



recommendations for faculty appointments, promotion, and tenure. The committee contributes to academic strategic planning by taking into account [reports presented](#) to it by the provost.

Trustees fulfill the fiduciary responsibility of the BOT by following global best practices in financial planning and management, making generous donations, and seeking out new sources of funding to ensure medium to long-term fiscal sustainability. The Finance Committee evaluates and assesses the university's operating and capital budgets, reviews requests for expenditures, and advises the BOT accordingly. The Investment Committee manages the investment and reinvestment of university funds. The Development Committee joins forces with the university's Office of Advancement to find major donors to support the university's mission by increasing its endowment and raising funds for strategic initiatives. In January 2017, the university launched the most ambitious fundraising campaign in its history, [BOLDLY AUB: The Campaign to Lead, Innovate, and Serve](#), to raise \$650 million by the end of 2021 to support ambitious initiatives to lead, innovate, and serve Lebanon and the region.

The diligence, experience, and reputation of the BOT members, their accomplishments, as well as existing policies and procedures, protect the university from narrow sectional interests. No member of the university, including the president, can serve as chair or co-chair of the BOT. The Corporate Bylaws require full disclosure of all current and potential conflicts of interest. The Audit Committee reviews the university's annual audited financial statements, internal audit plans, and reports, and examines all matters related to the integrity of the university's finances. Importantly, the Audit Committee oversees compliance with conflict of interest policies adopted by the BOT. According to the BOT Chair, in the case of a conflict of interest, the involved trustee is asked to recuse herself or himself from all relevant activities and deliberations. According to the existing [Conflict of Interest and Disclosure Policy](#), trustees must annually complete, sign, and submit a disclosure statement. Completed disclosure statements are provided by the secretary of the university to the chair of the Audit Committee.

The BOT appoints and defines the duties of the following officers of the university: the president, and, on the recommendation of the president, the VPs, the provost, the deans of the faculties/schools, and the comptroller. The [current president](#) assumed office in September 2015, following an international search led by a committee appointed by the BOT and representative of various constituents [\[R7.1\]](#). The selection was based on a combination of criteria including academic, scholarly, and professional credentials and expertise, in addition to a deep understanding of the university and of ways to help it advance as an institution, better achieve its mission, and play an even more significant role in addressing challenges facing Lebanon and the region.

The communication between the BOT and the university's leadership and constituents is regular and includes five three-day meetings per year (three in Beirut and two in New York City), a monthly teleconference meeting with the BOT executive committee, a weekly teleconference meeting between the president and the BOT chair, in addition to on-demand meetings to discuss emerging issues or as part of existing task forces and ad hoc committees. In an interview, both the president and the BOT chair confirm that the president has the autonomy needed to effectively manage the day-to-day operations of the university.

The president is supported by a cohesive team of qualified senior administrators. Upon his appointment in 2015, the president made notable changes to the senior administration to form a core team that has sufficient experience and skills to enhance efficiency and achieve goals and objectives in support of the mission of the university. Most were appointed through international searches and consultation with key stakeholders, and all decisions were communicated promptly to the university community with details about the search process and the credentials and work experiences of the appointees. The appointment of the provost without an international search led to notable discussions between the faculty and the president. The provost was appointed in March 2017 after having served as interim provost for a period of almost 1.5 years. The president formed a consultation committee on the appointment in order to obtain feedback from the faculty at large; the members of the committee included two trustees, nine administrators, two students, two alumni, and seven faculty members. The VP for medical affairs and Faculty of Medicine (FM) dean was allocated additional responsibilities and promoted to the position of EVP for medicine and global strategy in 2015. The EVP position was created to better streamline planning and operations between the campus and AUBMC and to contribute effectively to strategic initiatives, such as the [Global Health Institute](#) (GHI) and fund-raising campaigns. AUB's [organizational chart](#) lists all the communication and reporting lines between and among the president and key members of the administration.

Since 2015, appointments have been made for the positions of: [provost](#), [chief operating officer](#) (COO) (resigned in 2017), [VP for advancement](#), [associate vice president \(AVP\) for administration](#)/Chief of staff, [Equity/Title IX coordinator](#), [AVP for communications](#), Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) [dean](#), Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA) [dean](#), Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) [dean](#), Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS) [dean](#), director of human resources (HR) [\[R7.2\]](#), and [director of benefits](#).

As chief academic officer, the provost leads academic affairs and oversees academic strategic planning. He is supported by two associate provosts and an assistant to provost for academic affairs. Deans of faculties/schools, directors of academic support units, and some directors of centers, and institutes report to the provost. The Office of the Provost [Organizational Chart](#) is published online and includes all direct reports to the provost. The Board of Deans (BOD) is the academic executive body of the university and is responsible for implementing policies that affect the operation of faculties/schools and for assisting the president, the provost, and other administrative officers, in carrying out and securing compliance with policies and procedures. The BOD includes deans, VPs, chief officers and internal audit, and is chaired by the president; it normally meets once per week.

The provost, EVP, associate vice president (AVP) for administration, VP for advancement, VP for regional external programs (REP), deans, chief financial officer (CFO) and CIO have the needed support in terms of academic and/or administrative personnel, facilities and resources (AVII.1). They have their own hierarchical governance structures that include divisions, units, and standing committees, as needed, and all with defined roles, responsibilities, duties, and mandates.

The president formed the Executive Leadership Team (ELT)—composed of the president, provost, EVP, AVP for administration/chief of staff, and the special advisor to the president—to serve as a senior advisory group and contribute to the governance of the university ([Chapter 6, Section II.2](#)). The ELT meets weekly to discuss planning as well as administrative, financial, and academic affairs, based on an agenda set by the president. As the need may arise, the president invites VPs and the Medical Center director to the ELT meeting.

Through the [Office of Information Technology](#) the university has recently been highly active in initiating, developing and supporting a broad range of projects to enhance automation, reporting, documentation, and operational efficiency. These advancements add significant value to all constituents, including the administration, students, faculty, staff and alumni. Among the key academic IT projects are the upgrade of the Banner [SIS](#), the automation of online applications/admissions procedures, and the development of a state-of-the-art e-voting system for student elections, an online student complaints system, a new system for career services, and a Faculty Management Information System to automate faculty performance reporting and annual evaluations. Administrative and financial applications that support more efficient day-to-day operations include the HR Management System, the Enterprise Asset Management, and improved wireless coverage and internet connectivity across the university. The office also plays an active and supportive role in advancing blended and online education through state-of-the-art technologies, platforms, and processes.

III. Policies and Procedures (Criterion 2; Question 2)

The development, management, and revision of bylaws, manuals, policies, and procedures, all related to governance and administration, follow the guidelines listed in the [Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals \(Policy on Policies\)](#), which also aims at ensuring clarity and consistency of existing policies (developed in 2011, revised in 2014, 2016, and most recently in 2017). The [Policies and Procedures Review Committee](#) (PPRC) is composed of representatives from major administrative and academic units. It serves as an advisory group to the president and supports the university's mission by promoting best practices in policy governance, including the development of new policies and revision of existing ones.

In 2015, the senate recommended the automation of the policy management process. The [PolicyTech software](#), chosen as the professional policy management solution and implemented by the Office of the Provost, was launched in 2016 to facilitate and document stakeholder input, the policy approval process, and policy revisions, and to provide a convenient online mechanism for policy education and awareness initiatives. After implementation, ownership of policy management was transferred to [Academic Assessment Unit](#) (AAU). This system allows the tracking of policy changes in terms of when and what was revised. University-wide bylaws,

manuals, policies, and procedures related to governance and administration are available online and [accessible to the university's constituents](#).

According to the [Policy on Policies](#), each university-wide policy should have an owner and an approval hierarchy based on its category. The approval process is typically initiated by a recommendation from the BOD with final approval by the president and the BOT, when applicable. In addition, policies related to academic affairs, students, and research, and policies related to faculty affairs, require recommendation for approval by the senate. Moreover, each policy should be reviewed by its owner every three years to determine whether its objectives are being met and whether any amendments are needed. However, this periodic review has not been enforced in the past. To address this, the PPRC is developing a schedule to review all existing policies starting in 2019. Once this initial revision is completed, the three-year periodic review notification will be implemented automatically via PolicyTech. It is important to highlight that bylaws, manuals, policies, and procedures can be reviewed at any time, as needed, for improvement or modification. For example, in relation to governance and administration: the Corporate Bylaws were last amended in 2016 to include a range of changes throughout the document; the bylaws for USFC were last amended in 2016 to include the new electoral system and process; the Senate Bylaws were last amended in 2016 to include revised composition and functions of the University Research Board; the bylaws of the faculties were last amended in 2016 to change the composition of some faculty standing committees in MSFEA and FM.

In addition to having all policies available online, AUB constituents are informed of relevant policies and procedures during faculty, staff, and student orientation sessions; and new and revised policies are normally disseminated through email by the policy owners. Moreover, the provost delegates to the deans of the faculties/schools the dissemination of policies and procedures to their faculty, staff, and students, as applicable. Employee Satisfaction Surveys conducted regularly by the [Office of Institutional Research and Assessment](#) (OIRA) have shown improvement in the last few years in terms of dissemination of policies. In the 2015 survey, the highest rated items related to policies and procedures were “I am aware of AUB’s institutional integrity policies” (score: 4.3/5), and “I am well-informed of policies and procedures related to my work” (score: 4/5) ([AVII.2](#)). The [HERI Faculty Survey](#) conducted with faculty members in 2016 showed that 57.5 percent considered the statement that “Administrators consider faculty concerns when making policy” as descriptive/very descriptive and 43.3 percent believed “that they are sufficiently involved in campus decision-making”.

One area recently under consideration is monitoring compliance at various levels. AUB has recently established an Integrated Institutional Compliance Program based on the US Sentencing Commission Guidelines ([Chapter 2, III.3](#)), which outline the elements of an effective compliance program. The program has two components: legal, ensuring compliance with sanctions and regulatory requirements; and operational, ensuring completeness of policies, establishment of procedures where needed, and ensuring compliance with policies and procedures. In addition, the scope of the [Internal Audit Office's activities](#) covers ensuring compliance with AUB’s policies, procedures, applicable laws, regulations, and governance standards by AUB’s officers, directors, employees, and contractors.

IV. Assessment, Effectiveness and Accountability (Criteria 1 and 5; Questions 3 and 5; ROAs 12, and 13)

Assessment is an integral part of the university’s operations, at all levels, in order to evaluate effectiveness, enhance operations, build a culture of accountability, and identify areas for improvement and growth. At the level of the BOT: the Trusteeship Committee is responsible for evaluating the performance of trustees and for reviewing governance issues; the Audit Committee is responsible for reviewing accounting and financial reporting processes, for auditing financial statements with the help of an independent auditor, and for implementing and complying with policies about conflict of interest and safe reporting. In addition, each year all trustees fill out a Trustee Self-Assessment Form ([AVII.3](#)) that includes sections on the board’s organization and operation, discussions and deliberations, stewardship, strategy, discernment, and overall experience and assessment.

The president is subject to a stringent process of performance review and is accountable for the execution of all programs and plans approved by the BOT. The president presents an annual report to the BOT on the university’s condition and its operations that includes all aspects related to academics, personnel, finances, facilities, public relations, and others. The financial part of the annual report is prepared by the comptroller and the CFO and is audited by a certified public accounting firm appointed by the Audit Committee of the BOT. The president also submits

a self-assessment report as part of the performance review process, and is evaluated based on a set of key performance indicators (KPIs) in line with the university’s mission, goals, and strategic plans. In addition to the annual review, the BOT normally performs a comprehensive assessment of the president every five years.

The president evaluates the provost and VPs, on an annual basis using a self-assessment template ([AVII.4](#)) that they fill and that includes questions on their accomplishments and objectives achieved in the last year, challenges and obstacles encountered, areas for improvement, and aspirations for the following year. Those evaluated also present recommendations for any needed support, and resources needed to improve effectiveness. After the submission of the self-assessment form, individual one-on-one meetings are held between the president and the member being evaluated to discuss the evaluation together. Then, the president provides written feedback that is shared with the evaluated member for approval. These reports are also shared with the Compensation and Benefits Committee of the BOT that decides on annual merit increases for senior administrators. To streamline the assessment process, the president asked the provost and the EVP to follow the same procedure for evaluating all deans and directors who report directly to them starting in 2017 ([AVII.5](#)). Recently, three deans were evaluated for contract renewal using a comprehensive approach that involved all stakeholders in addition to an external review panel; one of the deans who went through this process noted that it was an “extremely useful experience”. Even though the newly-adopted process of self-assessment of senior members of the administration is being systematically implemented, it has not yet been referenced in any documents pertaining to policy or guidelines ([AVII.1](#)).

The process for evaluating the directors of academic and/or research institutes and centers is not as well-defined as that for deans and chairpersons of academic departments in faculties/schools. This was confirmed by the director of one of the major institutes on campus, who also noted areas for improvement in terms of enhanced governance structures and alignment with academic departments in faculties/schools. Currently, a plan set forth by the Office of the Provost is underway to develop principles and guidelines for establishing and reviewing centers and institutes, supporting their functions, and aligning them with the strategic priorities of the university ([AVII.6](#)). This includes guidelines on the governance structure of centers and institutes, as well as processes to evaluate their personnel’s performance and their contribution to the intellectual life of the university.

Faculty members are evaluated by both their students and academic administrators. Each semester, OIRA conducts the [Instructor Course Evaluation](#) (ICE) survey that students are required to fill out for every class taken ([Chapter 3, Section IV.2](#)). In this survey, students evaluate the instructors as well as the course materials, and results are shared with faculty members, their chairpersons, and deans. Each faculty member is evaluated annually and in writing by her/his chairperson, who shares the evaluation outcome with both the faculty member and the dean. These annual evaluations are used to provide feedback on performance for improvement and to decide on annual merit increases.

Staff members are [appraised on an annual basis](#) by their direct supervisors using a [Performance Planning and Appraisal Form](#) that is available online. The form is filled out and signed by the supervisor, reviewed and signed by the second-level supervisor, and finally reviewed and signed by the employee. In this process, evaluators assess staff members based on how well they carry out their duties with respect to functions and accountabilities listed in their job descriptions against pre-defined expected standards and outcomes. This evaluation is used to provide feedback on performance, identify areas for improvement, agree on a development plan, and determine merit increases; however, since it has not been systematically documented, it is hard to track compliance. Since AY 2015–16, the HR Department has adopted a new online performance management system that provides a more efficient and thorough way to evaluate staff performance based on job competencies instead of functions. This requires that the employee and their supervisor agree on a set of objectives and competencies for the annual evaluation. In 2016, the new online system was piloted with only three non-academic units/departments; in 2017, utilization reached around 50 percent and is expected, in 2018, to reach 100 percent. This new online evaluation system is expected to enhance transparency, accountability, and oversight, and to provide a platform for feedback, documentation, and tracking ([AVII.1](#)).

A key mechanism for assessing the effectiveness of leadership and administration is monitoring the outcomes of strategic initiatives and the extent to which they serve the university’s mission and goals. As detailed in Chapter 5, AAU gathers annual assessment reports about academic programs and functions/services of units from the deans and directors of various units. These assessment reports, which describe achievements of the previous year and projections for

the next one, are analyzed and sent to the provost. Based on these reports, the requested resources are included in the budget that is submitted to the Finance Committee of the BOT for approval. This ensures linking the assessment findings to the allocation of resources during the assessment phase, improving the utilization of the assessment results, and enhancing transparency and accountability in both financial allocation and spending which, in turn, enhances institutional effectiveness.

Some surveys administered regularly by OIRA include questions for assessing aspects related to governance, leadership, and administration at the university. The [Employee Satisfaction Survey](#) is conducted regularly and filled out by faculty and staff. In this survey, there are some questions related to AUB management, leadership, and organizational structure. The overall scores on these questions have improved since 2005. For instance, the question “AUB leadership has a clear vision of the future” scored 3.8 in 2015, compared with 3.7 in 2012, and 3.6 in 2009 on a five-point scale. Some survey items remained constant like the question “AUB leadership is responding to important internal issues” that scored consistently 3.4 on a five-point scale on the last three surveys. It is worth noting that non-academic staff are more satisfied than academic faculty members on these questions, even though both groups have above average overall scores. In the [HERI Faculty Survey](#) conducted in 2016-17, around 77 percent of faculty agreed that they “have good working relationships with the administration” (AVII.2).

In line with its mission, the university is also accountable for providing service to its neighborhood and the society at large. There have been several efforts in the past few years in this direction, including expanded roles and new initiatives/projects by the [Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service](#) (CCECS), the [Nature Conservation Center](#), the [Neighborhood Initiative](#), [Regional External Programs](#) (REP) and the Education Department ([Tammam Project](#)).

The current administration continues to provide strong leadership to the [Equity & Title IX](#) program housed in the Office of the President. The program coordinates the university’s response to discrimination and harassment, with a focus on sex-related and gender-based discrimination prohibited by university policy and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972. The Equity & Title IX [Policy Working Group](#) (2016–17) conducted a comprehensive review of the organizational structure, policies, and practices for addressing discrimination, and policies are currently being revised based on key recommendations and review of best practices. Dedicated resources were allocated to this program beginning in 2016, supporting a significant expansion of prevention and awareness activities. More than 1,000 professional staff members have been offered anti-harassment training since fall 2015, and 10,000 participants over three semesters have completed an online Title IX course initiated in 2017 for students, faculty, and staff. The program also established an [institutional network](#) that includes a six-member advisory council appointed by the president, 15 deputy Title IX coordinators representing all faculties/schools, and a pool of 33 additional faculty and staff for investigative panels. All members of the network participated in certification training on campus in 2017, positioning AUB as a university with a robust non-discrimination program supported by an extensive and highly-qualified network of volunteer faculty and staff. There is a significant upward trend in reporting ([Chapter 2, Section II.1](#)), reflecting greater awareness and willingness to report, and progress towards a level of reporting commensurate with the size and complexity of the university. Future plans for Title IX training include offering courses for employees on additional compliance topics such as Ethics & Code of Conduct, Foreign Corrupt Practices Act, and Conflict of Interest. Extended use of the system was piloted by the Office of the CFO in fall 2017, with finance staff completing eight to 10 courses on average, including the anti-harassment training.

Accountability has been further encouraged by rewarding [highly-performing faculty members](#) and staff, who then serve as role models and effective mentors. To this end, the university has been offering [Teaching Excellence Awards](#) since 2003 to honor and recognize annually two faculty members who have exhibited excellence in teaching [[R7.3](#)]. In addition, the university has been offering [President Service Excellence Awards](#) since 2000 to four-to-six staff members who have shown continuous outstanding performance over a period of time and have gone beyond the call of duty in helping students, patients, and fellow employees.

V. Shared Governance (Criterion 1, Question 4; ROA 12)

The university is committed to the principles of shared governance as reflected by its institutional policies and in practice. The most recent evidence in this direction is the reinstatement of tenure after a more than 30-year hiatus. Following the historic vote by the BOT in November 2015 to reinstate tenure at AUB, the president formed the Tenure Design Committee (TDC) in February 2016, composed of faculty members, administrators, and trustees, with the

mandate to develop a comprehensive design for a tenure system implementation. The TDC was chaired by the provost and co-chaired by a trustee and a faculty member. The [TDC report](#) on tenure design and implementation was approved unanimously by the University Senate in December 2016 and unanimously by the [BOT in March 2017](#). The process of engagement through which the TDC report was developed, presented, revised and approved is also a reflection of shared governance in action; the TDC held four town hall meetings with all faculties/schools and presented progress and details in several senate and BOT meetings over a period of six months. These meetings provided an ongoing stream of feedback that led to notable changes and enhancements which, in turn, led to the final unanimous votes by both the senate and the BOT. Among the core goals of tenure reinstatement at AUB are enhancing effective faculty governance, supporting professional integrity, and fostering long-term institutional loyalty. The first cohort of 107 full professors applied for tenure in summer 2017. In June 2018, 73 faculty members were [awarded tenure](#).

Formally, the [University Senate](#) is the academic legislative body for academic affairs that reflects the needs and recommendations of faculty members regarding curricula, personnel, and other matters affecting the academic functions of the university. The University Senate is responsible for the academic policies that affect the interrelationships among the different faculties/schools; it may recommend to the BOT, through the president, modifications or amendments to academic policies. The senate is composed of 29 elected faculty members representative of the various faculties/schools, in addition to ex-officio members who include the president as chair, provost, EVP, deans, VPs, and the registrar. The senate has 10 standing committees and boards that cover functions related to academic programs, student affairs, research, and faculty affairs, among others. Besides the ability to vote on academic matters, senators do bring issues to the attention of top administrators, all of whom are usually present in the monthly meetings; this allows for open communication and involvement in decision-making on important and critical issues.

The senate has been very active in the last few years in addressing core issues of interest to the faculty body at large, and in providing a formal channel of communication between faculty members and the administration. Two senators, who have served in the last few years as leading members in the Senate Steering Committee (SSC) and Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA), have noted overall improvement in the senate’s level and mode of engagement with the administration, in addition to a greater impact on policies, procedures, and key affairs related to academics and faculty benefits. Yet, they also noted that the level of involvement and impact depends on the willingness of the administration, and that it would be worthwhile to initiate a discussion on changing the role of the senate from advisory to binding on core academic issues (AVII.1).

The following are examples of the senate’s active involvement in shared governance in the last few years: a) a major milestone is the recent inclusion of an elected senator to serve as a non-voting member on the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT, a fact which will provide a deeper and uninterrupted involvement as well as an improved communication between the faculty and the trustees; b) SCFA played a central role in revising the [Policy on Policies](#) to determine the policies that require senate approval for recommendation and to include in the PPRC composition two faculty members elected by the senate from the faculty at large; c) the SCFA chair represents the senate and the faculty body on the Employee Benefits Committee and Financial Planning Committee (FPC), but the level of participation in the FPC has been more informational, with a limited contribution to decision-making; d) the lengthy but successful negotiations between SSC and SCFA and members of the senior administration to revise the faculty appointment letter (contract). The new contract template was discussed with the faculty body at large in a town hall meeting with the president and provost before being finalized (AVII.1).

In addition to faculty involvement in shared governance through the senate, faculty members serve on and chair a wide range of task forces and ad hoc committees that deal with academic, student, and faculty issues. Among the recent examples is the [Task Force on Faculty Compensation](#), which included representation from the faculty and administration, and performed a comprehensive study of salaries across faculties/schools, ranks, and genders. The findings of the task force were presented to the senate and to the administration and have led to changes in budget allocations to address salary anomalies. In the past two years, faculty members have served on search committees for the deans of [FAS](#), [FAFS](#), and [MSFEA](#). In AY 2015-16, the search committee for the dean of FAS included one trustee, the provost, six faculty members, and one student. Similar faculty representation was also noted in the MSFEA and FAFS dean search committees. Triggered by the president, another important initiative with active faculty involvement is the [Task Force on the Lives and Careers of Women Faculty](#), formed in December 2015. This task force was charged with looking into the status of women

faculty members and making recommendations to address existing challenges and enhance overall working conditions. The task force completed its charge in spring 2017 and presented its findings and recommendations to the administration. In March 2018, the president announced the transformation of the task force into a standing [Committee on the Lives and Careers of Women](#) at AUB. The mandate of the committee is to follow up on the implementation of the recommendations proposed by the task force, to study the lives of women staff, and to develop an action plan to improve the lives and careers of women faculty, students, and staff in general terms at AUB.

The students' formal governing body that provides the link between them and the administration is the USFC, composed of elected faculty and student members from different faculties/schools. The USFC has several standing committees and meets normally twice per month; it is chaired by either the president or the dean of student affairs. A major recent milestone in shared governance was the empowerment of students to develop a new electoral law based on proportional representation. The USFC treasurer is a member of the University FPC and, thus, represents student views in relation to budget planning and resource allocations. There is also one student representative on various senate standing committees, including the Admissions Committee, the Disciplinary Committee, the Library Committee, the Committee on Student Affairs, and the Academic Development Committee. In addition, elected students serve on many standing committees within faculties/schools, and students are invited frequently to serve on a wide range of ad hoc committees and task forces. This representation demonstrates the students' active role and responsibility in contributing to shared governance at the various levels of the university.

Staff members at AUB are represented by the Workers and Staff Syndicate that holds regular negotiations with the administration in order to [add enhancements](#) to the [collective labor contract](#). The syndicate council, composed of 12 members who represent workers and staff from AUB and AUBMC, works with the university's administration with the aim of arriving at a rewarding work environment and a high degree of harmony between the university and its non-academic employees and workers. In addition, several senior staff serve as members of existing governing committees and task forces. For example, all VPs are regular non-voting members of the senate; the BOD has been recently expanded by inviting several senior staff members to its meetings (VP for advancement, CFO, HR Director, chief information officer (CIO), AVP for communications, librarian, and internal auditor).

Notwithstanding the involvement of some senior staff members and directors in selected university committees, it is important to stress that the inclusion of the non-academic staff should be made more regular as part of shared governance, given that this group represents a significant internal stakeholder. Staff members are not congruently represented on the BOT, senate, or university/faculty committees as voting members, and their voice is therefore sometimes excluded from university-wide surveys, such as in the recent polling which only targeted faculty and students as part of the Campus Master Plan. Despite some recent efforts to better streamline the non-academic annual evaluation process, there continues to be a lack of clarity about creating a coherent staff development plan based on periodic evaluations and targeted training; such responsibilities are pushed to the direct-line supervisor who may not necessarily have the required qualifications to develop their subordinates. In more recent years, more town hall meetings have been organized to encourage an open dialogue between staff and the administration, including meetings between representatives of staff from various units and BOT members during their visits to AUB. Another positive step is the recent announcement by the president, in March 2018, to transform the Task Force on Lives and Careers of Women Faculty into a Standing Committee on Lives and Careers of Women at AUB with a special focus on women staff.

The formal channel of alumni communication with the university, through which it contributes to its governance, is the Worldwide AUB Alumni Association (WAAAUB), which works in conjunction with the [Office of Alumni Relations](#). Currently, the WAAAUB is going through a transitional phase; in 2017, the BOT, the university's administration, and the alumni leadership began deliberations regarding a new vision and governance structure for the WAAAUB. It is envisioned that the new alumni volunteer association will serve more directly as emissaries of the university under the direction of its president in matters pertaining to fostering meaningful connections among each other and promoting the university's educational mission, as well as its rich heritage and values. In recognition of the important role of alumni in shared governance, the BOT includes three trustees elected by the alumni at large from among the entire global alumni population. The role of these trustees is equal and comparable to the service of all trustees on the BOT.

One of the pillars of effective shared governance is open and transparent communication between the leadership and the constituencies. To this end, the BOT has been holding

meetings with faculty, staff, and students during its Beirut meetings in recent years. The president maintains constant communication with the AUB community through his biweekly [AUB President's Perspective](#), in which he shares recent news, provides information on major initiatives, and reports developments that affect students, faculty, staff, and alumni. The president and the provost organize several town hall meetings during the year in order to engage with the community at large and get feedback on emerging issues and themes. In the last two years, these included town hall meetings on planned changes to the grading system (from numeric to letter grades), tenure design and implementation, changes to the retirement plan, transition towards a tobacco-free campus, the new faculty appointment letter, the campus master plan, etc. At the level of faculties/schools, deans hold several faculty meetings per semester for discussions, updates, feedback, and voting. The president also shares with the senate a detailed summary of main decisions and plans from the BOT in the first senate meeting following each BOT meeting. These are documented in [senate minutes](#) that are published online.

VI. Conclusion

Overall, the university meets criteria 1 through 5 of Standard VII and the requirements for affiliation 12 and 13. Yet there is still room for improvement in some areas. Criterion 1 is met since the governance structure is articulated through the organizational structure, corporate bylaws, faculty and staff manual, among others. Criterion 2 is met by the BOT having an independent role in overseeing the integrity of the university and the quality of its operations, and as reflected in policies and bylaws of the university, including the corporate bylaws. Criterion 3 is met as reflected in the profile of the president, his support by the BOT, and the adequate administrative support from his office. Criterion 4 is met as the organizational structure and policies and procedures outline clearly reporting relationships, and since the academic and administrative units are well staffed to ensure effectiveness and efficiency of the university operations, including IT. There is also regular engagement of faculty in promoting the university goals; however, more involvement of non-academic staff in governance is needed. Criterion 5 is met as assessment practices are well articulated and regularly conducted at the individual level (students, faculty, staff, and administrators), and at the level of departments and faculties/schools.

Some of the key findings in this chapter are:

- The AUB administration structure underwent substantive changes: Some key administrative positions were either developed (e.g., executive vice president for medicine and global strategy) or revisited (e.g., chief operating officer), as reflected in AUB's current organizational structure. An executive leadership team provides support to the president for the purpose of better streamlining the campus and the medical center operations and meeting the overall strategic goals of the university.
- The BOT continues its independent oversight of the university's operations, but has been much more involved in supporting AUB's initiatives with regards to its master plan by actively engaging in the BOLDLY AUB fund raising campaign.
- The documentation and publication of academic and administrative policies and procedures improved with standardization through the use of PolicyTech, the creation of the PPRC, and the approval of the Policy on Policies. The challenge in this area remains in monitoring and documenting compliance with these policies.
- Assessment of key administrators of the university is developed and well-articulated. Yet it needs to be documented in a guideline or a policy. The challenge is in articulating the link between the administrators' performance assessment and the achievement of AUB's strategic goals. The reinstatement of tenure is an achievement towards fulfilling AUB's vision of becoming a research-intensive university. The implementation of tenure is a notable example of the engagement of faculty in shared governance. Another success story in shared governance is having faculty representation at the BOT. Similar faculty engagement in shared governance was evident in the development of the university's campus master plan. The challenge remains in involving non-academic staff more consistently in such university wide initiatives.

VII. Areas of Improvement

The following are areas of improvement identified by the WG for Standard VII:

1. Develop guidelines for the assessment of members of the university administration, including senior administrators, deans, chairs/conveners of academic units, and directors of centers and institutes, and articulate clearly the link between this assessment and the strategic goals of AUB.
2. Develop more venues for shared governance, with particular emphasis on a more systematic and formal inclusion of staff in key committees and new strategic initiatives.
3. Enhance the culture of accountability across the university and engage in a sustainable and effective compliance program that includes a regular enforcement and revision of policies and procedures coupled with awareness sessions, and training activities.

List of Appendices (A)

(AVII.1) Interviews with Selected AUB Administration

[\(AVII.2\) Selected Questions from Employee Satisfaction Survey](#)

[\(AVII.3\) Trustee Self-Assessment form](#)

[\(AVII.4\) Provost Self-Assessment form](#)

[\(AVII.5\) Dean Self-Assessment form](#)

[\(AVII.6\) Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Evaluation of Centers and Institutes](#)

List of References (R)

[\[R7.1\] Search Committee for President](#)

[\[R7.2\] Appointment HR Director](#)

[\[R7.3\] Teaching Excellence Award 2018](#)





Conclusion

The process of reaccreditation with the Middle States Commission on Higher Education has been a valuable opportunity for self-examination involving different stakeholders at the American University of Beirut (AUB). The institution has a great inheritance as the oldest and most prestigious seat of higher education in its geographical region, but the AUB community also understands the need to be forward-looking and vigilant in maintaining its leadership, so the university may continue to extend its long-term educational and service missions. A detailed, transparent evaluation of current operations by the full range of stakeholders is a welcome exercise, therefore, while the university embarks on a new campus master plan (CMP), engages in its most ambitious fundraising campaign to date (BOLDLY AUB), and undertakes major initiatives such as the reinstatement of academic tenure following a 30-year hiatus triggered by the Lebanese war, to fulfill its strategic goals and achieve its mission.

The self-study report lays out how the university functions as an institution with a clear mission of education, research and service, and strategic goals aligned with the mission. Strategic priorities inform decision-making and outcomes are measured through KPI tracking and internal and external review. The university prioritizes the provision of a holistic student experience, in the liberal arts tradition, fostering leadership, citizenship, and academic excellence among a diverse population, while engaging positively with the local and regional environment. Academic strategic planning is a central activity, with a plan formulated in 2014, being revisited and revised in 2016 under a new administration. Hundreds of members of the community have been invited to participate in the Academic Strategic Plan (ASP) and the CMP, which was supported by expert consultants funded through a donation, setting the university on a sustainable and broadly supported path to 2030, building on AUB's key strengths and addressing society's most pressing needs in health, education, economic development, resource security, and the environment. A number of case studies in the report illustrate the breadth and seriousness of AUB's efforts towards fostering diversity and upholding the service mission, locally, regionally and internationally.

Ethics and integrity are underpinned by a rules-based organizational structure backed by compliance mechanisms and a culture of fairness and respect, in which open and critical discussion is encouraged. The university leadership takes the lead in setting the tone of ethical conduct, building on the structures in place to ensure compliance, offering training to grow awareness of where boundaries lie, and encouraging greater willingness to report transgressions. Frequent references are made in university pronouncements to the importance of upholding freedom of expression, transparency, tolerance, and non-discrimination in academic, professional, and student life, including disciplinary and grievance procedures, procurement, financial management, and the conduct of research. Efforts to strengthen a climate of respect, root out conflicts of interest, and ensure fairness seem to be making headway at AUB (as illustrated in employee survey data). While noting the improvements, the report identifies a need for the framework to safeguard ethical conduct to be more consistent and centralized to allow for continuous improvement, with an ombuds position ensuring independent oversight.

Student learning takes place in an academic setting in which 80 percent of faculty are trained to doctoral degree or equivalent terminal degree, with a high level of preparedness for their educational roles, and a good student-to-faculty ratio of 11-to-1. Sufficient resources are available for teaching, research, and service activities, although there are concerns among faculty about the heavy workload. The student body is relatively diverse in terms of nationality, ethnicity, and economic background, and students have access to a wide array of degrees and programs that are transparently described in catalogues and online, and evaluated through direct and indirect means, with many programs featuring prominently in regional and international subject rankings. The university's general education program is being revitalized as a new core curriculum, which is currently being developed using a participatory approach. Support is provided for inadequately prepared students, and the suite of student services includes writing support, academic advising, and career services. The university is on course to integrate more e-learning, blended, and/or hybrid courses, as well as increasing the number of master's and doctoral programs with a focus on new, attractive, and relevant topics, while assessing the sustainability of some of the current crop of master's programs.

Outside the classroom, university activities include sports, clubs, and societies that promote the intellectual, social, cultural, and physical development of students, and strengthen their educational and learning experiences. Many students get to sample life on campus in dormitories, as well as through extra-curricular pursuits such as civic engagement and entrepreneurship, which build soft skills. Ensuring educational opportunities to underrepresented communities remains

a challenge given the rising costs of higher education and the extremes of economic inequality that persist in Lebanon and the Arab world. Scholarship provisions and financial aid budgets have been growing steadily to further develop a more diverse campus community, with new scholarship programs being introduced in the liberal arts and for advanced students from public schools throughout Lebanon and beyond. At the same time, the university offers “work study” opportunities, graduate assistantships, a counseling service, an accessible education office for students with learning disabilities or special needs, and a student wellness outreach program which raises awareness of the different resources available.

Assessment of educational effectiveness is carried out by several separate, but interrelated, units responsible for disseminating results which are used to improve students’ overall educational experience at AUB. The Academic Assessment Unit (AAU) helps academic departments prepare their own self-study and progress reports, and monitors and assesses initiatives to ensure they are aligned with the university ASP. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment collects and analyzes other forms of data for internal and external reporting. The Institutional Assessment Committee is charged with coordinating different assessment activities and ensuring institutional effectiveness to support the educational, research, and service activities of faculty and students, and to provide leadership in implementing results. The AAU consolidates all departmental reports into a university assessment report that guides the budget process. A periodic program review to identify strengths and areas for improvement is ongoing following a six- or eight-year cycle, according to the nature of the program, although some concerns exist around faculty motivation to participate in the reviews as some recommendations requiring significant resources have not been implemented. Overall, the assessment of activities has shown significant improvement in the last decade, although there is need for a well-defined mechanism to ensure continuity, and for inconsistencies across the institution to be ironed out.

The report outlines in detail the processes in place to properly maintain university operations and implement the ASP and campus master plan, by way of illustrating the level of planning, resource allocation, and institutional improvement at AUB. The financial strategic planning of operational and capital budgets go through several stages of oversight up to the Board of Trustees (BOT), including being presented to the university senate, and overseen by internal and external auditors. Capital projects of more than \$10 million are monitored by a BOT oversight committee and AUB and AUBMC annual operating budgets are expected to break even financially. Strategic plans are implemented through a planning process beginning each October, prioritizing strategy-driven projects. AUB’s financial resources include an annual operating revenue of \$492.8 million, and investment pool of \$731.4 million, and net assets of \$1.18 billion with a debt ceiling of \$190 million. The success of the BOLDLY AUB campaign, which has reached 70% of its fundraising goal after two years of its five-year lifespan, is a strong attestation to the support the university gets from donors.

Governance and leadership are ensured through a clearly articulated governance structure, with all the main constituencies—faculty, staff, students, and alumni—integrated into the structure with various levels of engagement. The president is empowered by the BOT to manage day-to-day institutional operations, while trustees provide supervision, guidance, encouragement, and approval of the president’s plans. A trusteeship committee reviews composition of the BOT, and a five-yearly external consultancy is conducted to assess its operation overall. President Khuri has made notable changes to the senior administration since his appointment, forming a core team with expertise and skills to achieve objectives in support of the university mission. Policies and procedures (including a pivotal “Policy on Policies”) ensure clarity and consistency at AUB and involve a wide range of representatives and stakeholders. The elected university senate participates in governance with the administration, achieving a number of important agreements in the past three years, and a number of task forces have been established to tackle complicated challenges, such as faculty compensation and increasing gender equity, as do students, whose elected representatives sit on all major committees, alumni, and the employees’ syndicate. Communication channels are kept open through briefings of the Board of Deans, President Khuri’s widely circulated two-weekly “president’s perspective” message, regular town hall meetings and meetings at faculty level, and the dissemination of BOT decisions and plans in minuted meetings of the university senate.

Overall, this self-study has found that AUB meets the criteria for reaccreditation in every respect. At the same time, it has identified a number of areas for improvement, making a series of useful recommendations that the administration and concerned parties have welcomed and scheduled for further consideration and action. The university community understands that operating an elite institution of higher education in a context of chronic instability is a complex and challenging endeavor which requires all stakeholders to work together in a collegial and strategic manner to be able to fulfill the university’s joint mission of education, research, and service. This self-study

report is a snapshot of an institution engaged in just such a process, as well as being a valuable resource for possible course correction and strategic refinement in the immediate future.





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Appendices / References

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- **(AIII.3)** Instructor Course Evaluations (ICE)
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- **(AIII.9)** AUB Core Curriculum, December 2017
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- **[R3.1]** MSFEA Faculty Annual Performance Review Form
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-III/Reference3.1MSFEA-Faculty-Annual-Performance-Review-Form-Engineering-Faculty-Members.pdf>
- **[R3.2]** Provost Report on Enrollment Management to BOT, Nov. 2017
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-III/Reference3.2Provost-Report-on-Enrollment-Management-to-BOT-Nov.2017.pdf>
- **[R3.3]** Provost Report on Graduate Studies to BOT, Nov. 2017
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-III/Reference3.3Provost-Report-on-Graduate-Studies-to-BOT-Nov.2017.pdf>
- **[R3.4]** Teaching Excellence Award 2018
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- **[R3.5]** AUB Rankings 2018
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- **[R3.6]** Report of Taskforce on Women Faculty at AUB
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-III/Reference3.6Report-of-Taskforce-on-Women-Faculty-at-AUB.pdf>

- **[R3.7]** Needs Assessment Survey Report 2016-2017
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-III/Reference3.7Needs-Assessment-Survey-Report2016-2017.pdf>
- **[R3.8]** General Education Assessment Report
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- **(AIV.4)** Sample Outcomes, Assessments, and Use of Results from Various Units
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- **[R4.1]** Admissions - Schools and Fairs Inside and Outside Lebanon
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.1Admissions-Schools-and-Fairs-Inside-and-Outside-Lebanon.pdf>
- **[R4.2]** Admissions - Schools Visited in Lebanon 2016-17
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- **[R4.3]** Admissions - Schools Visited Outside Lebanon 2016-17
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- **[R4.4]** GC promoting recruitment events by other AUB entities
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- **[R4.5]** GC OIP Recruitment Fairs
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- **[R4.6]** Registrations in Common App and Big Choice
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- **[R4.7]** Registration in Go Abroad.com
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- **[R4.8]** Graduate Applicants Diversity Fall 2016-17
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- **[R4.9]** Graduate Applicants Diversity Fall 2017-18
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- **[R4.10]** Admissions Acceptance Email
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.10Admissions-Acceptance-Email.pdf>

- **[R4.11]** Financial Aid Annual Report 2016-2017
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.11Annual-Report-FAID-2016-2017.pdf>
- **[R4.12]** Proposal for Improving Academic Advising at AUB
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.12Proposal-for-Improving-Academic-Advising-at-AUB.pdf>
- **[R4.13]** MSFEA Career Development Center Activity report 2016-17
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.13MSFEA-Career-Development-Center-Activity-Report2016-17.pdf>
- **[R4.14]** MSFEA Career Development Center Annual Report 2015-16
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardIV/Reference4.14MSFEA-Career-Development-Center-Annual-Report2015-16.pdf>
- **[R4.15]** Accessible Education in Course Syllabi
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- **[R4.16]** CHSC Varsity Teams
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- **[R4.20]** Entrepreneurship Courses
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- **[R4.21]** Libraries Annual Progress Report 2016-2017
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- **[R4.22]** OSA Strategic Plan 2015-2020
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- **[R4.23]** OSA Unit Outcomes Assessment Report 2016-17
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- **[R4.24]** Graduate Exit Survey AUB
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- **(AV.2)** Key Initiative 1 Dashboard Output AAU
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- **(AV.3)** Strategic Plan Dashboard HSON
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/AppendixV.3Strategic-Plan-Dashboard-HSON.pdf>
- **(AV.4)** Annual Departmental Progress Report HSON UG
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- **(AV.5)** Annual Faculty Assessment Report HSON UG
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/AppendixV.5Annual-Faculty-Assessment-Report-HSON.pdf>
- **(AV.6)** University Assessment Report 2017-2018 AAU
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/AppendixV.6University-Assessment-Report2017-18.pdf>
- **(AV.7)** Annual PLO Assessment Report - Computer Science
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/AppendixV.7Annual-PLO-Assessment-Report.pdf>
- **(AV.8)** PLO Assessment 3-Year Summary Report - Computer Science
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/AppendixV.8PLO-Assessment-3-Year-Summary-Report.pdf>
- **(AV.9)** General Education Program Assessment Report
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- **[R5.1]** Self-Evaluation of the UG Medical Education
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/Reference5.1Self-Evaluation-of-the-Undergraduate-Medical-Education-Program-at-AUB.pdf>
- **[R5.2]** AUB Core Curriculum - December 2017
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/Reference5.2AUB-Core-Curriculum-December2017.pdf>
- **[R5.3]** Guidelines to Periodic Review Policy September 2016
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardV/Reference5.3Guidelines-to-Periodic-Review-of-Academic-Programs-September2016.pdf>

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- **(AVI.3)** Satisfaction with AUB Services and Facilities
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- **[R6.2]** Strategic and Financial Planning Flow Chart
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- **[R 6.4]** Charrettes
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- **[R 6.5]** BOLDLY AUB Narrative
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- **[R 6.6]** Assessment And Planning Processes Flowchart
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/StandardVI/Reference6.6Assessment-Planning-Processes-Flowchart.pdf>
- **[R 6.7]** OSB's Strategic plan Linked to Budget
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- **[R 6.8]** IT's Strategic plan Linked to Budget
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- **[R 6.9]** HR Workshops
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- **[R 6.10]** May 2018 Workshops
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- **[R 6.12]** IT Strategic Plan – 20151028
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- **[R 6.13]** Physical Plant Department Strategic Plan
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- **[R 6.14]** FPDU Unit Outcomes Assessment Report 2017
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- **[R 6.15]** CAMES Annual Progress Report 2016
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- **[R 6.16]** Departmental Assessment Committee
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- **(AVII.6)** Principles and Guidelines for the Establishment and Evaluation of Centers and Institutes
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- **[R7.1]** Search Committee for President
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- **[R7.2]** Appointment HR Director
<https://www.aub.edu.lb/selfstudy/selfstudyappendices/Standard-VII/Reference7.2Appointment-HR-Director.pdf>
- **[R7.3]** Teaching Excellence Award 2018
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