Report by the Office of the Provost
Academic Year (2010-2011)

The academic imperative for AUB in the coming years is to prepare our students for a future that requires new skills and the ability to cross intellectual boundaries. In education and research, we must be accountable to the increasingly interconnected challenges of the future. For this reason, much of this year’s work has focused on the promotion of interdisciplinarity and collaboration in education and research. This year, issues of interdisciplinary governance are being addressed seriously, four graduate interdisciplinary programs have been proposed, and the role of AUB’s centers and institutes has been studied, as catalysts for collaboration. The year has also been one of sustained effort in the development and refinement of academic policies, and the strengthening of academic services. Several major initiatives have been started at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and in the area of enrollment management.

The following report reflects work undertaken in the academic year 2010-2011.

I. Academic Policies and Governance

A. Shared Governance
1. Major effort has been devoted by the provost and academic deans to finalizing the unified faculty bylaws that are now ready for a final vote by the Senate. Changes include:
   - the unification across faculties of the names of faculty committees to reflect their functions;
   - the separation of undergraduate and graduate curricular committees for more efficient focus;
   - the clarification of the roles of the provost and deans in academic budgeting processes;
   - the development of new procedures for establishing new departments.
2. The provost presented a proposal on the governance of interdisciplinary programs to the Board of Deans (BOD), based on the work of the appointed university-wide Interdisciplinary Programs Committee. The proposal includes policies to reform and support current interdisciplinary programs and policies to enhance evaluation of faculty who engage in interdisciplinary teaching and research. In addition, the creation of a Division of Interdisciplinary Programs (DIP) has been proposed (currently with the BOD), with policies and structures to provide a responsive environment for fostering new interdisciplinary graduate programs.
3. A governance structure for centers and institutes has been proposed, which includes the appointment of a steering committee for each center and institute to advise on resource allocation and activities, and to function as the governing body of the unit.
4. Departments continue to be empowered through an update to the chair’s manual; the revision and unification of faculty bylaws to the extent possible, and implementation of the newly developed chair compensation and evaluation policy.
5. The University has also been implementing a recruitment protocol/policy, and improving the allocation and replacement of faculty lines.

B. Graduate Studies
1. The Graduate Admissions Policy was implemented for the first time in 2010-11. The new online graduate admissions application and workflow are being tested in the Fall 2011 semester.
2. The Senate and BOT approved Unified University Graduate and PhD Academic Policies which are consistent across degree programs and in alignment with the requirements of the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education.
3. The Senate and BOT have approved the establishment of the Graduate Council. The council will be an independent unit reporting directly to the provost, and working closely with academic deans, the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS), and faculty graduate studies committees. Its responsibilities include: facilitating and coordinating graduate education; managing and coordinating the recruitment and admission of graduate students; administering unified graduate policies; and monitoring the implementation of policies for graduate assistantship appointments.

4. The Senate has approved modified functions for the BGS (March 2011) and faculty graduate studies committees (October 2011). The BOT approved the former in June 2011.

5. The BGS has introduced rigorous internal review procedures for the approval of new Master’s and PhD programs.

6. The University Preparatory Program introduced a Graduate Preparatory Summer Intensive English Program in the summer of 2011 to prepare selected students for the specialized needs of professional graduate study in English. The program will be assessed in the coming year.

C. Faculty – Policy Refinement and Implementation

The following policies relating to faculty were refined and approved: faculty promotion, reappointment, and recruitment policies; chair appointment, compensation, and evaluation policy; and faculty development (travel to conferences) policy. The shift to, and implementation of, the policy of offering long-term contracts to associate and full professors has been well-received by faculty. The new processes involve faculty input and demand rigorous review, starting at the department level. The requirements for new appointments have been standardized, and reappointments and recommendations are more content-based, with thorough evaluation of scholarship.

II. Academic Excellence

A. Strategic Academic Initiatives

1. A proposal has been prepared to establish a named Center for Arts and Humanities to respond to the critical need to support related disciplines at the University. The center will be a locus for interdisciplinary approaches to research, education, and outreach, and will be a catalyst for the transformation of the arts and humanities at AUB and in the region.

2. A proposal has been prepared for a Graduate Research Center to foster interfaculty collaboration in the sciences, technology, medicine, social sciences, and humanities; and to consolidate the governance of graduate education and the unification of policies. The center will increase AUB’s international profile and activities, promote academic leadership at all levels, and build a community that embraces scholarship on every front.

3. Interdisciplinary programs under various stages of development:
   - **MS Environmental Studies**
     This degree will replace the Master’s programs in environmental science, technology, health, and policy in FAFS, FEA, FHS, and FAS respectively.
   - **MS Energy Studies**
     The MS in Energy Studies will be a broad institution-wide energy program with tracks addressing energy science, technology, and management and policies. Participating departments/programs include Chemical, Mechanical, Electrical and Computer, and Civil Engineering; Chemistry; Geology; Physics; Engineering Management; Economics; Political Science and Public Administration; and Architecture.
• **MA Islamic Studies**
  This new program will expand knowledge and understanding of classical and modern Islamic religious thought and textual traditions; and offer critical insight into the political, intellectual, literary, and social history of Islam up to the present day. Participating centers and departments include CAMES, Arabic and Near Eastern Languages, and History and Archaeology, among many FAS academic units.

• **MA Public Policy and International Affairs**
  This MA program will build problem-solving and analytical capacity in public policy and international affairs, while furthering interdisciplinary knowledge, understanding, and critical insight into the relevant processes and structures present in the region. Participating units include the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, and departments/tracks/programs at FAS (Political Studies and Public Administration, Economics), FHS (Health Policy and Management), OSB, and FEA (Urban Planning).

4. **A Center for Citizenship Studies** is in the early stages of development. The center is envisioned as a hub for new collaborative networks producing and supporting original research on key themes in the construction and enactment of citizenship in the MENA region.

B. **Quality of Academic Programs**

1. On June 23, 2011, the *Middle State Commission on Higher Education* acted to accept AUB’s *monitoring report*, which addressed the implementation of a sustained assessment process to evaluate and improve student learning. A periodic review report is due on June 1, 2014.

2. The six-year cycle of *periodic program reviews* was initiated in Fall 2010 starting with FAS Chemistry, Physics, Philosophy, and PSPA departments, which will complete their assessments in June 2012. In Fall 2011, departments in a broader range of faculties began their reviews, including Nutrition and Food Science, Engineering Management, Mathematics, History and Archaeology, Environmental Health, and Medical Laboratory Science.

3. An *Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC)* was appointed to advise on institutional academic assessment plans and their periodic review, coordinate assessment activities, ensure the appropriate use of assessment information, and identify assessment results for dissemination to appropriate sectors of the campus community. The IAC developed an *institutional academic assessment policy* in February 2011, clarifying the methods and role of various academic units in the assessment and continuous improvement of student learning outcomes, and oversaw the development of standardized templates for annual reporting by departments and faculties.

4. During the spring and summer of 2011, the Center of Teaching and Learning continued to train department chairs and faculty members in FAS and FAFS on the assessment of program learning outcomes.

5. An *accreditation-regulation matrix* of all academic programs at AUB is now maintained with up-to-date information on degree registration at the NY State Department of Education, the Lebanese Ministry of Higher Education, and the external accrediting bodies of professional programs.

6. AUB is working with the *Ministry of Higher Education* in developing and approving academic policies and governance for institutions of higher education in Lebanon. AUB’s faculty are also actively engaged in quality assurance policy development for program review at Lebanese institutions.

7. In the second year of the implementation of the new General Education (GE) program, the *number of GE courses* has increased from 279 courses in March 2010 to more than 300 courses in May 2011. The *GE assessment plan* has been put into effect, starting with humanities, social science, and quantitative thought learning outcomes.
C. Promotions and New Appointments in 2010-11
1. Thirty-three out of 39 applicants for promotion advanced in rank in June 2011: 12 to the rank of professor, and 21 to the rank of associate professor.
2. Fifty-two new faculty were appointed, including 22 to the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, and 20 to the Faculty of Medicine.
3. Dr. Makram Suidan was appointed dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture as of August 1, 2011. Dr. Suidan comes to AUB from the University of Cincinnati, where he was the Herman Schneider Professor of Environmental Engineering in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, and the director of the School of Energy, Environmental, Biological, and Medical Engineering.
4. Dr. Talal Nezameddin was appointed dean of students and took up his new responsibilities in November 2010. Dr. Nezameddin was the associate dean of students since 2005.
5. Dr. Rabih Talhouk, Professor of Cell and Molecular Biology, was appointed chair of the Graduate Council starting October 1, 2011. Dr. Talhouk previously served as chair of the Biology Department and held leadership positions on University committees.

D. Faculty Scholarship and AUB Rankings
1. The Provost’s Office, in coordination with University Libraries celebrated a Decade of Research and Writing by AUB Faculty with the launch of a book exhibition on June 23, 2011. A total of 122 books authored by AUB faculty were on display in the lobby of Jafet Library over the summer of 2011.
2. The newly-formed University Ranking Committee (URC) has begun to identify appropriate ranking bodies, collect information on them and their metrics and methods, and propose a process for the sustained completion of ranking surveys. The URC’s major recommendation to date is to institutionalize a sustained process of collecting and updating relevant data and completing ranking surveys.
3. Faculty publication and citation counts based on ISI five-year interval show that, during the period 2006-10, AUB faculty published 2,947 peer-reviewed documents for a citation count of 8,491. This represents a significant rise over 2001-05, when the figures were 1,947 and 3,869 respectively.

E. Undergraduate and Graduate Studies
1. New departments:
   a. Department of Psychology at FAS (separated from the Department of Social and Behavioral Sciences)
   b. Department of Neurology at the Faculty of Medicine
2. New policies have been initiated for the assessment and review of the English Language Proficiency Requirements and English Placement. The University Committee on English Language has been established to advise, review, recommend, and facilitate the implementation of recommended policies with respect to English language matters that affect undergraduate and graduate admissions and placement.
3. New, internally approved graduate program:
   a. Master of Science in Human Resource Management (OSB)
   b. Master of Science in Finance (OSB)
   c. Master of Arts in Clinical Psychology (FAS)
   d. Master of Arts in Media Studies (FAS)
   e. Non-thesis option in the MA Program in Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES)
III. New or Enhanced Academic Support Services

A. Enrollment Management
   The Enrollment Management Task Force addressed the following issues: facility reservation system for labs, classrooms, and auditoriums; a global solution for registration problems; revised admissions applications; closer assessment of freshmen admission applications; freshman admissions to majors (proposed); clarification of IB/GCE admissions requirements; advising and registration of visiting international students; online payment of application/commitment fees; student orientation and registration.

B. Financial Aid and Student Loans
   1. Undergraduate Students: Two grant applications were submitted to USAID and approved:
      a. USAID financial aid bridge funding of 2.5 Million USD
      b. USAP II proposal for 6.768 Million USD
   2. Graduate Students: A Graduate Financial Aid Policies Manual is under discussion with the BOD. The proposed policies address unified procedures and criteria for the allocation of resources to full-time graduate assistants.

IV. Roadmap

A. Strategic planning has proceeded this year in the areas of 1) enrollment management; 2) academic centers, institutes, and museums; and 3) academic support units. Reports from the three strategic planning committees focused on these areas have been submitted to the provost and will undergo review and evaluation by University committees appointed in coordination with the Office of Strategy Management.

B. Specific issues of importance for future discussion/resolution include:
   1. Office of International Programs (hiring staff, improving student services, implementing partnership agreements for student exchange)
   2. Financial aid policy for graduate students
   3. Services for students with special needs (task force to be appointed)
   4. Institutional integrity, including principles of ethical conduct, and policies and procedures to address harassment allegations and grievances
   5. Research integrity policy and procedures for research misconduct
   6. Conflict of interest policies to ensure rigorous process with monitoring and accountability
   7. Ombuds Office (hiring ombuds, ethics training, harassment workshops for students, faculty, staff)