American University of Beirut

INSTITUTIONAL SELF-STUDY

2008

Final Draft

Prepared for:
Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools
Commission on Higher Education
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>GLOSSARY</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</td>
<td>ix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Meeting MSCHE's Recommendations: Strategic Planning and Assessment</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. AUB's Strategic Goals and Achievements since 2004</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Principal Recommendations in the 2008 Self-Study</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>xv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Institutional Background</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Self-Study Process</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: Mission, Goals, Objectives and Integrity</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mission, Goals and Objectives (Standard One)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Revision of Mission Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Alignment of University, Faculty and Department Mission Statements</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Alignment of Proposed Institutional Goals with Mission Statement</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Compliance of Administrative and Academic Decisions with Mission and Goals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Effectiveness in Achieving Mission</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Integrity (Standard Six)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Institutional Integrity: Policies and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Implementation of Policies and Procedures</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I. Academic and Intellectual Freedom</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J. Adherence to Ethical Standards</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>K. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Resources</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal (Standard Two)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Strategic Planning at AUB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Resource Allocation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Resources (Standard Three)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Institutional Resources at AUB</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Financial Stability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: Leadership, Governance and Administration</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership and Governance (Standard Four)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. Governance Structure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Changes to Bylaws</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Effectiveness of Governing Bodies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration (Standard Five)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Organizational Structure and Clarity of Roles</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Human Resources</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Systems and Information Management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>H. Recommendations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER FOUR: Student Admissions, Retention and Support Services

Student Admissions and Retention (Standard Eight)
A. Goals and Strategies
B. Undergraduate Admissions
C. Graduate Admissions
D. Acceptance, Yield, Retention and Graduation Rates
E. Diversity of the Student Population
F. Recommendations

Student Support Services (Standard Nine)
G. Academic Advising
H. Registrar’s Office
I. Office of Student Affairs
J. Food, Health and Protection Services
K. Recommendations

CHAPTER FIVE: Faculty

Faculty (Standard Ten)
A. Faculty Role in the University Mission
B. Faculty Size and Composition
C. Faculty Workload: Teaching, Research and Service
D. Procedures for Attracting, Reviewing and Retaining Faculty
E. Faculty Participation in Formulation of Academic and Institutional Policies and Practices
F. Supporting Faculty Excellence
G. Academic Environment and Faculty Engagement
H. Contractual Security, Salary and Benefits of Faculty
I. Recommendations

CHAPTER SIX: Educational Offerings

Educational Offerings (Standard Eleven)
A. Congruence with Mission, Goals and Objectives
B. Relationship to Intellectual and Professional Development of Students
C. Responsiveness to Needs of Students and Market
D. Development, Assessment and Revision of Educational Programs
E. Development of Learning Resources
F. Recommendations

CHAPTER SEVEN: General Education and Related Educational Activities

General Education (Standard Twelve)
A. General Education at AUB
B. Recommendations

Related Educational Activities (Standard Thirteen)
C. Related Educational Activities at AUB
D. Recommendations

CHAPTER EIGHT: Institutional Assessment and Student Learning Assessment

Institutional Assessment (Standard Seven)
A. Institutional Assessment Initiatives at AUB
B. Summary of Self-Study Findings
C. Analysis of Findings
D. Recommendations

Student Learning Assessment (Standard Fourteen)
E. Learning Outcomes Assessment: Process and Tools
F. Dissemination and Use of Assessment Information
G. Institutional Support for Student Learning Assessment
H. Analysis of Findings
I. Recommendations
CONCLUSION ........................................................................................................................................ 117

APPENDICES ...................................................................................................................................... 118

APPENDIX A: Membership of the Self-Study Steering Committee and the Eight Working Groups .................................................. 120

APPENDIX B: Recommendations Appearing in 2004 Institutional Self-Study .................................................. 125

APPENDIX C: Questions from the 2007 Self-Study Design ............................................................................. 145

APPENDIX D: Appendices to Chapters Two to Eight of the 2008 Institutional Self-Study .................................................. 155

Appendices to Chapter Two .......................................................................................................................... 155
  Appendix D 2-1: Developing Academic and Administrative Strategic Plans (Ver. 1.6)
  Appendix D 2-2: Draft [Campus] Strategic Plan Overview 2008 (Ver. 3.17)
  Appendix D 2-3: Selected Financial Indicators, 2004-06

Appendices to Chapter Three .......................................................................................................................... 179
  Appendix D 3-1: BOT Meetings since 1 January 2004
  Appendix D 3-2: Summary of Actions Taken to Meet Major Challenges Identified in 2004 Institutional Self-Study
  Appendix D 3-3: Internal and External Recruitment at Campus and AUBMC between 2004 and 2007
  Appendix D 3-4: Policies and Procedures Manuals in Progress
  Appendix D 3-5: ACC Accomplishments since 2004

Appendices to Chapter Four .......................................................................................................................... 187
  Appendix D 4-1: Admissions Criteria and Procedures Adopted by the Unified Admissions Committee (UAC)
  Appendix D 4-2: Further Information on Transfer and Non-Degree Students
  Appendix D 4-3: Figures and Tables Relevant to Student Admissions and Retention
    Figure 4.1. Distribution of Undergraduate Students, Fall 2007-08
    Figure 4.2. Distribution of Graduate Students, Fall 2007-08
    Figure 4.3. Undergraduate and Graduate Enrolment Growth
    Figure 4.4. Student Retention Rates
    Figure 4.5. Distribution of Undergraduate Students by Nationality
    Table 4.1. Variation of Student Enrolment, Fall 2002-Fall 2007
    Table 4.2. Acceptance and Yield Rates for PhD Applicants (as of Fall 2007)
    Table 4.3. Financial Aid
    Table 4.4. Variations in Student Nationalities since 1970
    Table 4.5. Office of Student Affairs, Expenditure and Revenues, 2004-08 (US$ 000s)
    Table 4.6. Office of Student Affairs, KPIs from 2004-05 to 2007-08
    Table 4.7. Do Students Believe Their Opinions Are Solicited/Considered?
    Table 4.8. Occupancy in University Residence Halls, 2004-08
  Appendix D 4-4: Findings of the Academic Advising Process Improvement Team Focus Groups
  Appendix D 4-5: List of Updated Processes in Registrar’s Office, 2004-07
  Appendix D 4-6: Psychologically Distressed Students and Staff Committee, Final Report
  Appendix D 4-7: Activities/Tasks of Career and Placement Services, 2003-07

Appendices to Chapter Five .......................................................................................................................... 206
  Appendix D 5-1: Tables and Figures Relevant to Chapter Five on Faculty
    Table 5.1 (a). Faculty Distribution by FT/PT, Gender, and Degree
    Table 5.1 (b). Instructional Faculty FTEs Distribution by Faculty
    Table 5.2. List of Endowed Chairs and Holders
    Table 5.3. HR Data on Research Assistants
    Table 5.4. Growth in Research Funding and Number of Funded Research Projects
    Table 5.5. External Grant Distribution by Faculty (in US$)
### GLOSSARY OF SELECTED AUB ACRONYMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AACSB</td>
<td>Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABET</td>
<td>Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACC</td>
<td>Academic Computing Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADC</td>
<td>Academic Development Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AREC</td>
<td>Agricultural Research and Education Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASHA</td>
<td>American Schools and Hospitals Abroad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUB</td>
<td>American University of Beirut</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>American University of Beirut Medical Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBsis/SIS</td>
<td>AUB Student Information System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BC</td>
<td>Budget Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOD</td>
<td>Board of Deans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BOT</td>
<td>Board of Trustees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BRC</td>
<td>Budget Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BSC</td>
<td>Balanced Score Card</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMES</td>
<td>Centre for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMS</td>
<td>Center for Advanced Mathematical Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CASAR</td>
<td>Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Center for American Studies and Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCECS</td>
<td>Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CCNE</td>
<td>Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEC</td>
<td>Continuing Education Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEPH</td>
<td>Council on Education for Public Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHSC</td>
<td>Charles Hostler Student Center</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CMP</td>
<td>Campus Master Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNS</td>
<td>Computer and Networking Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>College Outcomes Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Career and Placement Services (of Office of Student Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRPH</td>
<td>Center for Research on Population and Health</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRSL</td>
<td>Central Research Science Laboratory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CTL</td>
<td>Center for Teaching and Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFS</td>
<td>Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAS</td>
<td>Faculty of Arts and Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEA</td>
<td>Faculty of Engineering and Architecture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHS</td>
<td>Faculty of Health Sciences</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM</td>
<td>Faculty of Medicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRIP</td>
<td>Faculty Research Incentive Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPDU</td>
<td>Facilities Planning and Design Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FTE</td>
<td>Full-Time Equivalence/Equivalent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HIP</td>
<td>Health Insurance Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HR</td>
<td>Human Resources</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IAO</td>
<td>Internal Audit Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IFI</td>
<td>Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IPPI</td>
<td>Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement (formerly SQOI; now OSM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISSO</td>
<td>International Student Services Office (of Office of Student Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JCI</td>
<td>Joint Commission International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LNCSR</td>
<td>Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MPP</td>
<td>Medical Practice Plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACUBO</td>
<td>National Association of College and University Business Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSOP</td>
<td>New Student Orientation Program (of Office of Student Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSSF</td>
<td>National Social Security Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYO</td>
<td>New York Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Name</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NYSED</td>
<td>New York State Education Department</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OFPB</td>
<td>Office of Financial Planning and Budget</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGC</td>
<td>Office of Grants and Contracts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIRA</td>
<td>Office of Institutional Research and Assessment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>Suliman S. Olayan School of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSA</td>
<td>Office of Student Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSM</td>
<td>Office of Strategy Management (formerly IPPI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCC</td>
<td>Personal Counseling Center (of Office of Student Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPRC</td>
<td>Policies and Procedures Review Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REP</td>
<td>Regional External Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAU</td>
<td>Student Activities Unit (of Office of Student Affairs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SML</td>
<td>Saab Medical Library</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SON</td>
<td>School of Nursing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPSC</td>
<td>Strategic Planning Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SQOI</td>
<td>Service Quality and Organizational Improvement (now OSM)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SRC</td>
<td>Student Representative Committee (in each faculty)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TFRCS</td>
<td>Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UAC</td>
<td>Unified Admissions Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDC</td>
<td>University Disciplinary Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UHS</td>
<td>University Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UL</td>
<td>University Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ULOCC</td>
<td>University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UPP</td>
<td>University Preparatory Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URB</td>
<td>University Research Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USFC</td>
<td>University Student Faculty Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAAAUB</td>
<td>Worldwide Alumni Association of AUB</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The mission statement of the American University of Beirut (AUB) describes it as “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.” One of the oldest and most successful universities in the region, AUB “bases its educational philosophy, standards, and practices on the American liberal arts model of higher education…. [It] believes deeply in and encourages freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue.” Its objective is to graduate individuals “committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity and civic responsibility, and leadership.”

The core of the University’s mission is education, research and service, and the formation of young men and women who possess the skills and values needed to realize their potential and shape the future of the region. In early 2004, when AUB conducted its first Institutional Self-Study for accreditation through the Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE), it demonstrated a firm commitment to setting strategies and strengthening policies, procedures and operations in order to achieve its mission. The University’s accomplishments at that time served as a springboard for further improvements to provide students, faculty and staff with an environment that enables them to succeed in their endeavors.

A. Meeting MSCHE’s Recommendations: Strategic Planning and Assessment

In its 2004 accreditation report, the MSCHE visiting team advised AUB to focus on two basic areas for improvement: strategic planning for institutional renewal and student learning assessment. It recommended the development and implementation of “a comprehensive institutional strategic plan that links long-range planning to decision-making and budgeting processes, and to institutional assessment data.” In addition to evaluating institutional effectiveness more formally, AUB was also urged to devise and execute a university-wide plan for the assessment and improvement of student learning.

The University had already identified the need for a formal strategic plan. In February 2004, a month before the arrival of the visiting team, President John Waterbury articulated ten guiding principles in his “State of the University” address that would provide the necessary framework for the multi-year planning process. By early summer, the Provost’s Office was overseeing the revision of AUB’s mission statement, another fundamental reference point, while a new in-house unit, the Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement (now the Office of Strategy Management or OSM), had begun devising a formal process for the development of a ‘Campus’ strategic plan. Its first step was the development of a manual and templates to guide and organize the work of over 20 teams: four committees to study areas of broad institutional importance, namely, enrolment management; general education; graduate education and research; and information technology; seven teams for each of AUB’s six faculties as well as the School of Nursing; and another eight teams representing major administrative units. Drafts of individual strategic plans were completed during the 2005-06 academic year. In Fall 2006, the university-wide Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC), chaired by the president, started analyzing the unit-level plans to align key initiatives with the necessary resources before distilling them to create the Campus Strategic Plan Overview. This overview is presently being merged with a separate plan for ‘Medicine’ (AUB Medical Center, the Faculty of Medicine, the School of Nursing and medical research). It will also be updated and enriched by incorporating a number of the recommendations found in the current document, namely, the 2008 Institutional Self-Study, once the SPSC has determined whether or not the University can meet any related financial obligations during the current planning cycle. The final text will be presented to the University Board of Trustees for endorsement in 2009.
The main institutional goals in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview (see Appendix D 2-2) include: strengthening undergraduate education, including the core liberal arts curriculum; diversifying the student population; reinforcing faculty excellence; increasing capacity in pure and applied research; fostering community service at all levels; contributing to the enhancement of the University's urban environment; utilizing cutting-edge information and communications technology; strengthening institutional governance; and maintaining AUB's fiscal balance. Informed by the University's mission and by the president's guiding principles, these nine goals are as much an expression of continuity in AUB's strategies for educational excellence as they are new parameters for short- to medium-term initiatives leading to institutional renewal. Their consistency with AUB's direction and achievements since 2004 is demonstrated below.

Strategic planning is necessarily connected to resource allocation and institutional assessment. One important step early in the planning cycle involved the prioritization of initiatives by planning units and a cost-benefit analysis by the SPSC. Total anticipated revenues from the new initiatives covered about two-thirds of their estimated costs. The OSM also quantified the data to determine incremental changes over five years in the total number of faculty, staff and student FTEs (full-time equivalents) as well as operating and capital costs and revenues; these figures were broken down by implementing unit, including support units. In order to ensure that the selected initiatives are put into action, the OSM has begun working with unit heads to identify discrepancies between the five-year cost and revenue estimates for the new initiatives and the amounts budgeted for them on an annual basis.

AUB has also made good progress in the area of institutional assessment. The University was making limited use of Kaplan-Norton Balanced Scorecard (BSC) methodology prior to the start of its first strategic planning cycle. Since 2004, the OSM has continued monitoring BSC Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and coordinating management performance review meetings to assess the University's progress in achieving its goals. The focus at present is on revising the Institutional BSC to improve the alignment of KPIs with the objectives of the Campus Strategic Plan Overview. The revision entails eliminating some KPIs, developing new ones and modifying others or cascading them to academic and administrative planning units, many of which are finalizing their own BSCs and KPIs. To date, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) has served as the measure leader for many academic KPIs. OIRA conducts a program of academically oriented surveys on a regular basis: these include exit interviews, which are being used more actively at the department level. Generally speaking, the University is now spending more time assessing and acting on the results of the information collected by OIRA.

Institutional assessment in a university setting is incomplete without a functioning process of student learning assessment. This requires the development of clear program and course learning outcomes, as well as the tools needed to measure them. Accomplishing this objective has been a major focus of attention at AUB since 2004 and one of the principal reasons behind the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning, which began by offering a regular program of two-and four-hour faculty seminars on program and course learning outcomes. In 2006-07, an eight-member core group was formed to prepare initial guidelines and training documents for a formal initiative to establish learning outcomes and assessment mechanisms across faculties. A new University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee focused efforts on those faculties which have not sought professional accreditation and completed the first phase of a three-stage action plan in 2007-08. Articulating learning outcomes and delineating assessment plans is a major project, but substantial progress is being made.

B. AUB's Strategic Goals and Achievements since 2004

The University's nine strategic goals were extracted from principles established by President Waterbury at the conclusion of the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, which provided AUB with an opportunity to assess its progress during the first half of his presidency and to target specific areas for further attention. The University's principal accomplishments since 2004 may thus be categorized according to these goals, although they await formal approval.

AUB has continued to invest significant effort in strengthening undergraduate education during the last five years. The University has improved its English language and composition courses, reduced the number of core courses required for professional schools, introduced minor courses of study and rethought its general education requirement, which is now aligned with the development of specific skills. New academic programs, majors, and minors are also being
introduced on a continuing basis while current programs undergo periodic review and revision. Accreditation efforts at several faculties have helped to drive this process. AUB has established a Writing Center and a Center for Teaching and Learning, expanded the operations of its Academic Computing and Library Information service units and broadened data collection by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment to include information that aids in academic assessment (see below). Fresh graduates receive more assistance in finding jobs than ever before with the introduction of faculty-specific career centers and an annual Job Fair that attracts about 150 firms each year. The extremely successful Campaign for Excellence, which raised over $170 million, has provided funding in support of academic programs and various forms of financial aid to students and has helped to finance projects to renovate and construct new laboratories and faculty and student services buildings in accordance with the Campus Master Plan.

The Campus Master Plan is a long-term initiative to manage the University's physical space, partly in response to the increase in the number of undergraduate students and in the research activities of AUB faculty. The AUB Archeological Museum was completely renovated and reopened in June 2006. The CCC Scientific Research Building, a 5000-sqm laboratory facility designed to provide flex space during renovations of other similar buildings, was completed in February 2007 and is currently being occupied by Engineering departments. The Charles Hostler Student Center, which provides one of the country's best spaces for student athletics and other activities, opened in late Spring 2008. The new home of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business is under construction and will be completed in early 2009, shortly after renovations end at the School of Nursing. The Irani Ox Engineering Complex is scheduled to be finished in 2011. Renovations are also planned for the Bechtel Engineering Building, the Dar al-Handasah and Shair Partners Architecture Building, and the Science and Engineering Library. On the medical campus, major renovations were completed that included the expansion and renovation of the Emergency Unit, new private physician clinics in two locations and a building devoted to interdisciplinary research and clinical centers for cancer and neuroscience, which now also houses the University Health Services. The noted Iraqi architect, Zaha Hadid, won an international competition to design the new Issam Fares Institute (ISI) for Public Policy and International Affairs. Additional projects are waiting for funds to become available.

Diversifying the student population remains a central goal, but achieving regional diversity has been hampered by the unsettled security situation in which Lebanon has found itself these past years (a string of political assassinations and bombings; a war in the summer of 2006; and incidents of civil conflict in 2008). Nonetheless, the University continues efforts to expand its full scholarship programs to attract promising but economically disadvantaged students from all areas of Lebanon and the Middle East. One very recent example of this is AUB's participation in the "Tomorrow's Leaders" program that has been funded by the US State Department's Middle East Partnership Initiative: the program partners AUB with the Lebanese American University and the American University in Cairo.

The strategic goal of reinforcing faculty excellence has been addressed by maintaining the percentage of full-time faculty FTEs at 84 percent and the overall faculty/student ratio at 1/13. Needless to say, the creation of the Center for Teaching and Learning, which offers a variety of seminars and forums each year and presents an annual Teaching Excellence Award, benefits faculty as much as it does students. AUB has also looked at salaries, initiating a comparative review of academic salaries with peer institutions (US and regional) and providing an annual budget for salary adjustments requested by deans for their faculties. A completely revised policy for academic appointments and promotions was approved in 2004 subsequent to the University's first Institutional Self-Study. Promotion committees have now been expanded at the dean's advisory committee and the Board of Deans levels to include broader faculty representation. At each step of the promotion process, a neutral senior faculty member serves as a non-voting due process monitor to ensure that the promotion procedure is strictly followed. This new policy has further improved AUB's system of shared governance, which is another institutional goal. The University also undertook a thorough review of the issue of reinstating faculty tenure; however, no final decision has been made as yet.

AUB has demonstrated its commitment to pure and applied research through the initiation of a block budgeting system to ensure a constant influx of research equipment and library resources; implementation of major renovation and building projects affecting such disciplines as Medicine, Nursing, Engineering, and Business; expansion of the faculty leave policy, intramural research budget and the recently established Office of Grants and Contracts; and, most
significantly, the decision to reintroduce PhD programs in eight disciplines after a 20-year hiatus. Funded faculty research centers also continued to be established, such as the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Center for American Studies and Research (Faculty of Arts and Sciences), the Center for Research on Population and Health (Faculty of Health Sciences), the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs and the Initiative for Biodiversity Studies in Arid Regions (both of which fall under the Provost’s Office).

Service has been a major component of the University’s mission since it was founded. The commitment to fostering community service at all levels received new impetus during the July 2006 war and with the subsequent creation of the President’s Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service, which was institutionalized as AUB’s Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service early in 2008. The new center has a number of objectives, including the expansion of student and faculty volunteer activities and the further development of in-service learning in selected courses. In Fall 2007, President Waterbury announced a new initiative aimed at enhancing AUB’s urban environment: the “Neighborhood Initiative.” Currently the University is studying housing patterns among faculty and students living in its vicinity and the financial impact that AUB’s approximately 10,000 students, faculty and staff have on its immediate external environment. The goal is to determine how the University can and should shape its relationship with its neighbors.

AUB’s last three goals are foundational in nature and are intended to support the institution in the overall achievement of its aims. One of the four strategic planning committees created at the start of the planning process recommended the establishment of a central Information and Communications Technology Steering Committee to oversee, harmonize and maintain AUB’s competitive technological edge in its administrative, academic and clinical endeavors. The new committee is now actively engaged in developing and implementing a cohesive strategy to meet the challenges – including the costs – that accompany technological change. Other developments since 2004 include wireless internet coverage for the campus and medical center, and significant progress in the use of technology for teaching, with roughly half of all course and instructors using the Moodle course management system by Spring 2008.

Shared governance lies at the heart of the US model of higher education. At AUB it is a core institutional goal. The Board of Trustees, University Senate and faculties have all voted changes to their bylaws in recent years. AUB’s Policy and Procedures Review Committee works to ensure that published policies are clear and up-to-date; it also reviews new policies to ensure clarity, consistency and adherence to high ethical standards. An important part of governance is concern for integrity. Faculty research and consulting policies have been reviewed and revised to reduce the likelihood of conflicts of interest. Policies for staff integrity are also assessed regularly. The effectiveness of the Student Code of Conduct has been monitored and minor adjustments have resulted. Each new student is now required to take an online mini-course on plagiarism and to pass the accompanying test.

Maintaining fiscal balance has remained an institutional imperative. AUB is heavily reliant on student tuition and hospital revenues, supplemented by endowment income. To broaden its resources, the University dramatically expanded fundraising activities during its recently concluded Campaign for Excellence, a five-year initiative aimed at raising $140 million to build endowment, fund a number of new and critically important capital projects and increase the level of annual contributions supporting University operations. Additional endowment funds were needed to strengthen AUB’s research infrastructure, build academic programs, support professorships and research fellowships in different faculties, help pay for the launch of doctoral programs and increase student financial aid—the single largest component of this campaign. At the Campaign’s conclusion, AUB had raised over $170 million in the largest private University fundraising effort in the Middle East, while simultaneously creating the institutional fundamentals for future fundraising initiatives.

C. Principal Recommendations in the 2008 Self-Study

As one of the final steps in the 2008 Institutional Self-Study process, the co-chairs of the eight working groups were asked to choose the two recommendations that they deemed the most important for the standard or standards that had been the focal points of their particular chapters. Three principal themes emerged from their responses: assessment, empowerment, and communication and transparency. The selected recommendations are as follows:
• Ensure that faculty and departmental mission statements are aligned with the mission of the University. **Standard One: Mission and Goals**

• Institutionalize the process of reviewing and monitoring implementation of strategic plans in faculties and major administrative units. **Standard Two: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal**

• Explore, in depth, the possibility of generating additional revenue by broadening continuing education programs to include evening and for-credit courses. This would improve the efficiency of facility utilization and further the achievement of AUB's educational mission to the broader community. **Standard Three: Institutional Resources**

• Reinstate tenure with appropriate safeguards to meet the needs of both faculty and the University. **Standard Four: Leadership and Governance**

• Identify communication gaps within the AUB community and develop processes to eliminate them. Better mechanisms are required to improve overall communications between senior administrators, including deans, and faculty. The publication of summaries of BOD and Cabinet minutes might be helpful in this respect. **Standard Five: Administration**

• Develop specific mechanisms to monitor adherence to AUB policies and procedures. In particular, develop the software necessary to track violations of the revised Student Code of Conduct. **Standard Six: Integrity**

• Strengthen and expand assessment efforts at the institutional level (strategic planning, BSC, OIRA assessment survey cycle) to support the development of a comprehensive university-wide assessment plan. **Standard Seven: Institutional Assessment**

• Establish a formal and robust enrolment management unit to improve fulfillment of AUB’s mission and strategic enrolment goals. In addition to assuming the current functions of the Unified Admissions Committee, the unit should be actively and systematically involved in the continuous assessment and improvement of the following: (i) admissions criteria and processes and their effectiveness in attracting and admitting qualified students; (ii) means to increase the pool of applicants; (iii) retention and graduation rates of enrolled students, particularly the freshman class; (iv) geographic and socio-economic diversity of the student population; and (v) financial aid programs and practices and their impact on the size of the pool of applicants, yield of accepted students and diversity of the student population. **Standard Eight: Student Admissions and Retention**

• Explore means to promote an ‘advising culture’ and improve advising load distribution and the advising process, including advisor training and assessment. One possibility is to appoint advising officers at the faculty level. **Standard Nine: Student Support Services**

• Provide better training for chairs on the critical issues of faculty development, annual evaluation and promotion. Learning ‘on the job’ is inadequate. **Standard Ten: Faculty**

• Take serious steps to promote bottom-up initiatives in faculties/programs. **Standard Ten: Faculty**

• Develop university-wide policies and mechanisms for the periodic and systematic review of all educational offerings at AUB. **Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings**

• Accelerate the development of course and program learning outcomes and their assessment tools to ensure that educational offerings are adequately and regularly evaluated. Continue providing the CTL with the means and resources appropriate for the completion of the learning outcomes initiative coordinated by ULOCC. **Standard Eleven: Educational Offerings**

• Review and assess AUB’s general education program periodically. This should be the task of the Senate’s new General Education Committee, which should also develop standards for the classification of general education courses; re-evaluate these standards periodically; oversee the classification process; and actively solicit the creation of new general education courses. The committee should also set university-wide standards for writing excellence. **Standard Twelve: General Education**

• Encourage deans to support members of their faculties in the identification of REP projects that draw on their expertise, thus widening faculty involvement in REP activities. **Standard Thirteen: Related Educational Activities**
• Continue to support faculties in establishing processes to assess student learning outcomes when these processes do not yet exist. Faculties with student learning assessment processes should develop systems for the periodic evaluation and continuous improvement of these processes. *Standard Fourteen: Assessment of Student Learning*

Many of these recommendations are expected to be included in the Institutional Strategic Plan Overview discussed above.
American University of Beirut  
Institutional Self-Study  
Commission on Higher Education, Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools

INTRODUCTION

A. Institutional Background

Established in 1866, the American University of Beirut (AUB) is a private, independent, non-sectarian, non-profit institution of higher learning located in Lebanon’s capital city. It functions under a charter from the State of New York and is governed by a private, autonomous Board of Trustees. The University has six faculties: Agricultural and Food Sciences; Arts and Sciences; Engineering and Architecture (which includes Graphic Design); Health Sciences; Medicine (including the School of Nursing); and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business. It offers over one hundred programs leading to Bachelor’s, Master’s, PhD and MD degrees. With the reintroduction of PhD programs in eight specialities in 2007-08, AUB became the only US-accredited university in the Arab world to offer doctoral degrees. Approved in 2007 by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), these PhD programs are evenly divided between the faculties of Arts and Sciences (Arab and Middle Eastern History; Arabic Language and Literature; Cell and Molecular Biology; and Theoretical Physics) and Engineering and Architecture (Civil Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Environmental and Water Resources Engineering). AUB’s goal for these programs is to attract a select group of Lebanese and regional students to support faculty research agendas and enhance the University’s overall research environment.

In 2007-08, the University’s total student population was 7310: 6058 undergraduates, 934 graduate students and 318 medical students. Coeducational since 1922, AUB has a student body that is almost evenly composed of males (49 percent) and females (51 percent). Incoming students tend to have strong scholastic records, with about 29 percent graduating in the top 10 percent of their secondary school classes and 80 percent in the top 50 percent. AUB’s retention rate is 92.5 percent and the graduation rate is 84 percent. AUB has 635 instructional (undergraduate) faculty and 482.3 full-time equivalents (FTEs), most of whom (84 percent) are full-timers. The ratio of faculty to students remains steady at about 1:13. English is the language of instruction in all programs, except for coursework in the Department of Arabic and Near Eastern Languages and in other foreign language courses in the Civilization Sequence Program. AUB’s endowment, which was approximately $462 million as of May 2008, is estimated to have declined 21.2 percent during the global financial crisis of late 2008.

Most of the faculty, students and staff at AUB are Lebanese and constitute a representative cross-sample of the country’s mosaic of confessional backgrounds. In recent years, the University has devoted intense efforts to broadening its regional appeal and to achieving greater geographical diversity in student and faculty recruitment. Currently, almost one-fifth of its students attended secondary school or university outside of Lebanon before arriving at AUB, although many of these are dual nationals. The number of undergraduates from the region (the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Syria and Kuwait) has increased marginally in recent years.

The University has enjoyed greater success in expanding socio-economic diversity with the launch of several initiatives targeting outstanding students from economically disadvantaged families. It persuaded local lenders to create student loan programs for new applicants to professional schools and is currently pursuing the expansion of this service in association with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC). It also increased the value of need- and merit-based scholarships and other financial aid to over $12 million and broadened scholarship distribution to benefit about 38 percent of all undergraduates. Over half of AUB’s Master’s students receive graduate assistantships, while all PhD students presently benefit from tuition waivers and stipends that allow them to focus on their studies.

In configuration, AUB adheres to the American model of higher education which consists of a strong liberal arts core complemented by quality professional schools. In terms of its academic programs and student interest, it reflects a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and
Medicine) profile. The majority of the University's students major in the sciences, engineering, architecture and business. Also favored are programs in Arts and Sciences, such as biology, chemistry, computer science and economics, that are often viewed as being pre-professional or professionally oriented. Despite the STEM orientation of many of its students, AUB seeks to educate undergraduates broadly and deeply, and to offer them an exciting choice of courses for the fulfillment of their general education requirement. Courses in humanities and social science disciplines are full and programs are active although the number of undergraduate majors in these areas is generally low. The University is currently making good progress on initiatives to strengthen general education across faculties.

A vital operational dimension of the University is its Medical Center (AUBMC), a private, not-for-profit, in-patient and out-patient teaching facility of the Faculty of Medicine. This is a state-of-the-art tertiary medical center that operates 334 beds (capacity 420), serves around 22,000 in-patients per year and has an out-patient facility that annually receives over 220,000 visits (147,000 private; 37,000 general; and 40,000 emergency). It provides a wide spectrum of medical, nursing and paramedical training programs at the undergraduate and post-graduate levels in different specialties and subspecialties to 270 interns, residents and fellows. It is predominantly served by 220 highly credentialed physicians, most of whom received training in the US. AUBMC is considered the most prominent tertiary referral medical center in Lebanon and neighboring countries. It is fully equipped and hosts a number of centers of excellence. Medical standards of practice at AUBMC compare with similar institutions in the US. In 2008, AUBMC received official accreditation from Joint Commission International (JCI). It is also accredited by the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC) as a provider of continuing nursing education.

Degrees awarded by the American University of Beirut are officially registered with the Ministry of Higher Education in Lebanon and with the New York State Department of Education. AUB was granted institutional accreditation in June 2004 by the Commission on Higher Education of the Middle States Association of Colleges and Schools. In September 2006, the Faculty of Health Sciences' 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. Similarly, in October 2007, the School of Nursing became the first nursing school beyond American territories to be accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). AUB's Engineering programs are in compliance with the standards of the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture is awaiting a formal visit from the board's evaluation team. Finally, the Olayan School of Business is a candidate for accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSBB).

The University is also a member of the Association of American Colleges and Universities (AACU); the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS); the Association of American International Colleges and Universities (AAICU); the American Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (AACRAO); the Arab Association of Collegiate Registrars and Admissions Officers (Arab ACRAO); the Association for Institutional Research (AIR); the College Board; the Council on International Educational Exchange (CIEE); the Association of International Educators (NAFSA); Student Affairs Administrators in Higher Education (NASPA); the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO); the American Society for Quality (ASQ); the American Productivity and Quality Center (APQC); the National Association for College Admission Counseling (NACAC); the National Institute for Technology and Liberal Education (NITLE); the Overseas Association for College Admission Counseling (OACAC); the American International Consortium of Academic Libraries (AMICAL); and the European Council of International Schools (ECIS). Members of the AUB administration regularly attend meetings and professional development activities organized by these and other international organizations, as well as associations, syndicates and other formal groupings located in Lebanon and the region.

1. Leadership transition

In 2007, AUB's president, Dr. John Waterbury, announced his retirement as head of the University effective 30 June 2008. President Waterbury's ten years in office, five of which are covered in this report, will be remembered as a period of remarkable institutional improvement. He remained in Beirut as a full professor in AUB's Department of Political Studies and Public Administration and a senior fellow at the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and
International Affairs. Three months before Dr. Waterbury’s term ended, the University’s Board of Trustees announced that he would be replaced as president by Dr. Peter F. Dorman, professor of Egyptology at the University of Chicago. In other leadership changes, Provost Peter Heath became chancellor of the American University of Sharjah on 1 August 2008, while Dr. Nadim Cortas, vice president of Medical Affairs and dean of the Faculty of Medicine, announced in May 2008 that he would also be stepping down. International searches for a new provost and VP/dean of Medicine were ongoing at the time of writing (Winter 2008-09). With these changes in the University’s top leadership coming in rapid succession, the overall transition period is likely to take longer than initially expected.

2. External educational context

AUB is the oldest and most respected private university in the Arab world. Its competitive advantages include its long history, academic reputation, brand recognition, STEM configuration and the quality of its graduates. These strengths have allowed the University to meet increased competition from the many new educational institutions being founded in Lebanon and the region. Nonetheless, AUB must constantly reassess its competitive position.

Lebanon’s educational environment contains a dozen or so established universities, such as the Lebanese American University and Université Saint-Joseph, as well as over 20 recently created, mostly for-profit institutions with programs that tend to focus on business and information technology. AUB’s competitive position in regard to both of these groups is stable. AUB continues to co-exist with long-term competitors in a spirit of friendly rivalry and cooperative collaboration, while the viability of the ‘new universities’ as institutions of higher education is still being tested.

In the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), AUB maintains good relations with the American University in Cairo, also a well-known institution, and collaborates on higher education projects with universities in at least seven different MENA states. The Gulf region has recently seen a dramatic rise in the number of private educational institutions: some are new universities; others are branch campuses of US, European, or Australian universities and vary in size and scope. The long-term implications of this phenomenon for AUB’s regional competitive position remains unclear. The University’s administration continues to track developments actively and adjust strategies for marketing and recruitment (both students and faculty) accordingly. Its basic stance is that competition is welcome since it offers students greater choice and that serious academic endeavors strengthen networks for joint research and other cooperative ventures.

3. External political and economic context

AUB’s numerous institutional advances since 2004 have occurred despite complications arising from its geographical location and the local and regional political context. The University suffered no physical damage during the July 2006 war; however, it did face a budgetary setback as educational and medical operations failed to generate anticipated revenues during the summer months. Moreover, although the number of Lebanese students registering in Fall 2006 actually rose, the number of international and regional students declined, negatively impacting achievement of AUB’s goal of increasing student diversity. Faculty attrition was modest, but political tension and uncertainty, which have remained fairly constant since 2006, support neither faculty recruitment nor retention. The number of academic visitors from abroad has also decreased and lectures and talks have often been postponed due to unsettled conditions. The economic situation in the country worsened during the years of political stalemate and it seems unlikely that the government formed in Summer 2008 will be able to improve the economy before parliamentary elections in Spring 2009. Lebanon is a small country and changes in direction can occur quickly; however, years of political tension and economic stagnation have taken their toll on the country and on the AUB community.

B. Self-Study Process

At the start of the re-accreditation process, President John Waterbury appointed Provost Peter Heath to lead the Self-Study Design Committee (SSDC), which included Associate Provost Waddah Nasr and other faculty and staff with appropriate knowledge and skills related to their specializations (statistics, education) or acquired through involvement in the 2004 Institutional
Self-Study. The president, provost and SSDC members reviewed the self-study models in MSCHE’s *Self-Study: Creating a Useful Process and Report*, bearing in mind the fact that AUB was obliged to undertake a thoroughgoing study since initial accreditation had been granted just four years earlier. “The Comprehensive Report Reordering Standards to Reflect an Institution” (Figure 10) was deemed the model most appropriate to the University’s circumstances at this point in time. It provides for eight reports or chapters, six of which treat two MSCHE standards apiece and two of which focus on single standards recognized as being especially important to any university, namely, Faculty and Educational Offerings. One of the perceived advantages of this model was that it combined depth with efficiency since it involved a smaller number of working groups investigating AUB’s progress through the lens of related standards. The SSDC also met to determine the most effective approach to drafting the self-study questions.

Responsibility for the final design, its effective implementation, coordination of efforts and the Self-Study itself lay with the Self-Study Steering Committee (SSSC), which was also created in January 2007. The SSSC’s members were selected on the basis of previous active participation in accreditation initiatives and to be broadly representative of all six University faculties. Most members of the design committee continued as members of the SSSC. Senior administrators, managers, staff and students also sat on the committee, which was chaired by Dr. Heath until 31 July 2008, when Dr. Nasr, the vice chair, became acting provost and assumed many of Dr. Heath’s duties.

Sixteen SSSC members served as co-chairs of the eight working groups, which included some individuals who had taken part in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study. The majority of participants had responded to open messages sent out by Provost Heath urging members of the AUB community to take part in the process. (See Appendix A for a list of participants.) The working groups varied in size from 10 to 19 members, including co-chairs. Their first task was to draft the self-study questions that would guide and focus their investigations. This was accomplished with assistance from the SSSC and a small group from the design committee that included Dr. Nasr and the head of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). In July 2007, the two committees produced a 43-page report on their planning activities entitled “American University of Beirut: Institutional Self-Study Design.”

Many of the working groups chose to divide themselves into two or more sub-groups focused on particular standards or questions. Their research was facilitated by the inventory of institutional reports, surveys and other documents compiled by the SSSC with assistance from the Provost’s Office. After familiarizing themselves with the relevant documents, each working group was invited to contribute questions to the 2008 Institutional Survey of academic and administrative heads, faculty, staff and students, which was conducted by OIRA in early 2008 (see below). Some groups also interviewed senior administrators and/or assembled focus groups made up of faculty, staff, or students, particularly when one of these constituencies indicated strong dissatisfaction or responded inconclusively during the survey. On occasion, anonymous focus group results were shared with other working groups. (For more specific information, see the Methodology section of each chapter.)

When conducting their studies, working groups were asked to:

- Be informed by the mission statement – particularly its emphasis on AUB’s regional role and its commitment to serve the peoples of the Middle East and beyond.
- Address the conditions and policies needed to implement the mission, goals and objectives.
- Prescribe and describe outcomes assessment.
- Relate allocation of resources to long-term planning.
- Address issues of intellectual climate, collegiality and sense of community.

In early Spring 2008, as drafts of the self-study chapters started trickling in, an assistant for special projects at the Provost’s Office began the process of reading, querying and editing the drafts to identify omissions and errors, improve internal coherence, reduce redundancies and otherwise ready them for review by the SSSC. As work on each chapter progressed, the relevant co-chairs were encouraged to make corrections, changes and additions to the edited drafts. Six of the eight chapters went through this process before all were sent as email attachments to SSSC members for feedback. The comments of individual committee members, which were often quite detailed, were collated according to chapter and disseminated to the full SSSC. A separate editorial committee composed of the SSSC chair and vice chair, the editor and another assistant
from the Provost’s Office was also created to provide each pair of co-chairs with further input pertinent to the cohesiveness of individual chapters and of the full self-study. During a special series of four SSSC meetings, the co-chairs of each working group were given the opportunity to discuss the points that had been raised and to explain how they planned to address them. All working groups subsequently submitted new drafts to the editor, who worked with co-chairs to improve them before their integration into a single, unified document that would be equally accessible to internal (faculty, students, staff, administrators and trustees) and external (MSCHE and the visiting team) constituencies.

The integrated 2008 Institutional Self-Study and its appendices were sent to the SSSC on 5 September and endorsed as a working draft requiring no further substantial changes during a meeting of the committee held ten days later. The same documents were also sent to AUB’s new president, Dr. Peter Dorman, and to the former president and provost (Drs. Waterbury and Heath) for their information and input. Co-chairs were asked to identify a few recommendations from each of their chapters for possible inclusion in the executive summary.

The editor continued to receive requests from SSSC members for minor corrections and additions to their own and other chapters after the 2008 Self-Study was approved in principle. Some of these changes were incorporated into the working draft sent to Dr. Tim Sullivan, the chair of the MSCHE visiting team, on 22 September, two weeks before his preliminary visit to AUB. Further modifications made before, during and after his visit – and particularly in response to his oral exit report – were flagged in a revised (D2) draft of the full Self-Study disseminated to all SSSC members a few days after the report went online for university-wide review. Both Acting Provost Nasr and President Dorman wrote to members of the AUB community encouraging constituents to submit written feedback by 5 December. Hard copies of the report were provided to trustees, VPs, deans and unit heads. Open meetings were also organized so that faculty, staff and students might meet with SSSC members to ask questions, discuss the report and raise their concerns. These meetings were rather poorly attended, although the quantity and quality of the written feedback was more satisfactory. Alone and in conjunction with the editor, the co-chairs of the eight working groups made modifications to their chapters in line with this input. The final D3 draft of the Self-Study was sent to SSSC members a week before they voted to approve it during meetings on 8 and 9 January 2008. After some reformatting, it was sent to members of the MSCHE visiting team on 12 January 2008.

1. 2008 Institutional Survey

Conducted by OIRA in January 2008, the Institutional Survey was actually made up of five separate surveys tailored to specific AUB constituents: administrative heads; academic heads; faculty; staff (grades seven and above); and students. Although all heads and faculty were asked to take the survey, the same request was not made of all staff and students, and representative samples were selected. Frequent reminders were sent out by OIRA in all cases. The overall response rate ranged from good to poor, as the following table indicates:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Sample</th>
<th>Submit</th>
<th>% Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic Heads</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative Heads</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>412</td>
<td>214</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>630</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>498</td>
<td>143</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of the data by OIRA showed that responses covered all faculties and levels. The fact that the surveys were conducted online and that concerns about anonymity were raised by some potential participants may partly explain the low response rate of staff and students. This is an issue that requires further analysis and the development of mechanisms to allay such concerns in future surveys. When disseminating the survey results and during SSSC meetings, the head of OIRA recommended that low response surveys and questions be validated with focus groups and/or interviews. The results of the 2008 Institutional Survey are posted on OIRA’s website (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~weboira/reports_accreditation.html). Links marked with an asterisk are
Excel booklets with two sheets, one for objective and one for subjective responses. Sheet One reports descriptives (means and standard deviations) and the frequency of choice selection as percentages; it also includes the number (N) responding to every item. The links without an asterisk are Word files containing the original questions and have been posted for easy reference, although they appear on the Excel sheets.

When reporting survey results in the 2008 Institutional Self-Study, co-chairs were asked to provide a single figure for agreement/strong agreement among members of a given group, unless strong agreement existed and was pertinent to their analysis. In general, co-chairs only reported disagreement/strong disagreement, neutral responses, ‘don’t knows’ and omissions when the percentages were very high or had changed significantly since the last institutional survey in 2002-03.
Chapter One

MISSION, GOALS, OBJECTIVES AND INTEGRITY

Purpose: The purpose of Working Group One (WG1) on Mission, Goals and Objectives (Standard 1) and Integrity (Standard 6) was to examine the University’s progress in these areas since the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, particularly in relation to the recommendations that it contained. WG1 aimed at studying AUB’s mission statement in terms of its history, comprehensiveness, clarity, distinctiveness, integrity, implementation, utility, adequacy, visibility and means of change. It also sought to examine the extent to which the University’s stated goals were consistent with the aspirations and expectations of higher education and AUB’s fulfillment of its mission. Of primary importance was the University’s role as a leading institution of higher learning in the Middle East, the ways in which mission and goals were communicated to and embraced by its various constituencies, and the mission’s relevance in a changing environment. A further consideration was how AUB addressed the concept of institutional integrity and whether it was successful in creating an intellectual and scholarly environment that promoted openness and honesty, protected academic freedom and freedom of expression and thought, and was generally conducive to higher learning. WG1 was also asked to address issues of academic and administrative integrity and transparency in the following areas: student recruitment, admissions and retention; student assessment; curriculum development; faculty and staff recruitment, retention, promotion and training; diversity of students, faculty and staff; clarity of academic and administrative rules and regulations; and service to the institution and to the community.

Membership: WG1 was composed of eleven members including six faculty members of varying rank from the faculties of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Health Sciences (FHS) and Medicine (FM), including the School of Nursing (SON); among the six were the assistant dean for Medical Education, the coordinator of the Medical Lab Technology program (in FHS) and the chair of the Environmental Health Department. The remaining five members included the directors of the Clinical Research Unit and the Central Research Science Laboratory; a grants and contracts officer; a trustee; and an undergraduate student from FAS. WG1 was co-chaired by two full professors, the coordinator from FHS and the assistant dean of FM, who was also a medical doctor.

Methodology: WG1 relied on three major sources of information. First, it conducted an extensive review of documents, including the mission statements of all faculties, departments and programs; AUB policies and procedures; historical documents and publications; student achievement results; and the findings of various surveys conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The group also interviewed the following individuals: the provost, academic deans, dean of student affairs, director of admissions, director of internal audit, director of human resources and vice president of the University Student Faculty Committee. Finally, WG1 examined the results of the 2008 Institutional Survey of students, faculty, staff and academic/administrative heads in order to determine the general impressions of AUB constituents on various matters related to institutional mission and integrity. Some survey results were further explored through interviews or by reference to the findings of other working groups; results were also compared to those obtained in the 2002-03 Institutional Survey and 2004 Institutional Self-Study.

This chapter is divided as follows:
Mission, Goals and Objectives
  A. Revision of Mission Statement
  B. Alignment of University, Faculty and Department Mission Statements
C. Alignment of Proposed Institutional Goals with Mission Statement
D. Compliance of Administrative and Academic Decisions with Mission and Goals
E. Effectiveness in Achieving Mission
F. Recommendations

Integrity
G. Institutional Integrity: Policies and Procedures
H. Implementation of Policies and Procedures
I. Academic and Intellectual Freedom
J. Adherence to Ethical Standards
K. Recommendations

MISSION, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Since the completion of the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, AUB has revisited and redrafted its mission statement to clarify its purposes and characteristics as an institution of higher learning and what it expects to achieve in the educational context. The University also embarked on its first formal planning cycle and devised goals and strategies to specify how it will accomplish its mission in coming years. As Chapter Two indicates, the planning process was thorough and lengthy, and it ultimately resulted in the dissemination of a Campus Strategic Plan Overview to AUB community members in June 2008 (see https://cgi.aub.edu.lb/services/ssl/community/draft-strategic-plan.doc). Elements of a separate strategic plan concluded by the University Medical Center (AUBMC) and FM, as well as selected recommendations from the 2008 Institutional Self-Study, are being merged with this overview and the final text will be submitted to the Board of Trustees (BOT) for approval in 2009.

WG1 faced a dilemma when attempting to answer the questions posed in the Institutional Self-Study Design. Many of these questions referred to AUB’s “stated” or “educational” goals, but the nine goals selected for the Campus overview had neither been disseminated to the community nor endorsed by the BOT while the working group was meeting. Under the circumstances, WG1 decided to interpret some of the references to goals in the Self-Study Design as indicating goals implicit in the mission statement and focused its efforts on evaluating that document. This approach seemed especially appropriate since the University’s mission statement had recently been redrafted. Nonetheless, some of the sections of this chapter make reference to the Campus goals, particularly the extent of their alignment with the new mission statement.

Below AUB’s mission statement is reviewed to determine its compatibility with the 2004 recommendations for amendment; its continued fidelity to the vision of the University’s founders and AUB’s unique heritage; and its clarity, transparency and dissemination. This is followed by an examination of the alignment between the mission statements of the University, faculties and academic departments and a discussion of how they guide decision-making in relation to admissions practices and curriculum/program development. Next comes a study of the alignment between AUB’s mission and the goals articulated in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview, as well as how these are linked to budgeting and assessment. The first part of the chapter ends with a review of AUB’S effectiveness in achieving its mission and recommendations for improvement.

A. Revision of Mission Statement

In 2005, AUB’s official mission statement, which had first been developed some five years earlier, was revised in response to a detailed recommendation in the 2004 Self-Study and feedback from the MSCHE visiting team. The University’s mission statement originally read as follows:

*AUB is a teaching-centered research university, convinced that excellence in teaching and research go hand-in-hand. Its mission is to enhance education, primarily the education of the peoples of the Middle East, to serve society through its educational functions, and to participate in the advancement of knowledge. AUB bases its educational perspective and methods and its academic organization on the American model of higher education.*

*The University emphasizes scholarship that enables students to think for themselves, stresses academic excellence, and promotes high principles of character. It aims to produce men and women who are not only technically competent in their professional fields but*
also life-long learners who have breadth of vision, a sense of civic and moral responsibility, and devotion to the fundamental values of human life. The University believes in and encourages freedom of thought and expression. It expects, however, that this freedom will be enjoyed in a spirit of integrity and with a full sense of responsibility.

The Self-Study recommended that the revised mission statement dispel any uncertainty about the relative importance of research and teaching at AUB by giving equal emphasis to both. The report of the visiting team noted in this regard that AUB’s definition of itself as a research university “according to the Carnegie classification... [was] more of a vision for the future of the institution than a description of its current operations.” (This observation was made four years before the University’s reintroduction of doctoral programs in eight fields of specialization.) Another Self-Study recommendation proposed that emphasis be placed on the tenets of the American model of liberal education and other values, such as freedom of thought and expression, critical thinking, leadership and diversity.

The new mission statement adequately fulfills these recommendations. However, some of the points raised in the 2004 Self-Study did not find expression in it. For example, it does not mention AUB’s historical role and accomplishments in its Middle Eastern environment, although the University has a long and unique tradition that is a source of pride to alumni, faculty, staff and students and that serves to distinguish it from American-style universities newly established in the region. Moreover, the Self-Study suggested a clearer commitment to ethics and morality, but this became even vaguer in 2005, when “moral responsibility” was dropped in favor of “personal integrity,” which is not synonymous with ‘moral’ integrity. Finally, while the original mission statement gave importance to producing “men and women ... technically competent in their professional fields,” the current statement makes no mention of the proficiency of graduates in major fields of study.

AUB’s mission statement was redrafted by Provost Heath in consultation with the associate provost and the chair of the 2004 Self-Study working group on Mission. During these discussions, some of the working group’s recommendations were accepted and others were rejected. A copy of the new draft, accompanied by an explanation of the drafting process, was sent to members of the AUB community for feedback in February 2005. The new mission statement was then referred to the University Senate, which approved it and forwarded to the BOT, which introduced minor additions before ratifying it in November that same year. The revised mission statement reads as follows:

The American University of Beirut (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 and civic responsibility, and leadership.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 40 percent of students and 47 percent of staff indicated that they had participated in developing the mission statement, while only 25 percent of faculty and academic heads and 30 percent of administrative heads responded in the same fashion. This is a somewhat unexpected result that cannot be explained, particularly since most current students were not enrolled in 2004-05, when the mission statement was redrafted.

1. Congruence of mission statement with historical vision and mission

As indicated above, heritage and continuity are extremely important to AUB’s constituents even as they face the challenges of the twenty-first century. A core element of the University’s heritage is the vision of its founders and the institutional mission implicit in their statements. Indeed, AUB’s motto continues to be the one formulated by its founders: “That they may have life and have it more abundantly.”

For the purposes of the present study, therefore, the new mission statement was compared with historical documents, including speeches made by the founders of the Syrian Protestant College (as AUB was originally known) during the first four decades of its existence. One
statement frequently cited as reflecting their guiding principles in establishing the college is from a speech made in 1871 by Dr. Daniel Bliss during a ceremony to lay the cornerstone for College Hall, the first building on campus:

This college is for all conditions and classes of men without regard for color, nationality, race or religion. A man, white, black or yellow, Christian, Jew, Mohammedan or heathen, may enter and enjoy all the advantages of this institution for three, four or eight years; and go out believing in one God, in many gods, or in no God. But it will be impossible for anyone to continue with us long without knowing what we believe to be the truth and our reasons for that belief.

These words express a number of values and principles also alluded to in AUB’s current mission statement: tolerance; non-discrimination; respect for diversity; freedom of thought and belief; and the pursuit of truth or knowledge, even though the nature of that ‘truth’ is now more secular than religious. Emphasis is placed on the “reasons” for believing the truth, indicating a commitment to critical thought that is also expressed in the current mission statement. This same commitment is clearly stated in Bliss’s 1902 farewell address: “The great value of education does not consist in accepting this and that to be true but ... in proving this and that to be true.” He expanded on this theme later in the same speech: “[I]f you prove them [facts] to be true by reasoning..., your mind, your intellect, the whole man is strengthened, and this strength will remain when the facts are forgotten, and will give you power in the study, in the office, and in the church and in the state, and around the beds of the sick and the dying.” Bliss believed, therefore, that the point of a college education was not only to disseminate knowledge, but to train life-long learners capable of meeting all eventualities with equanimity.

At the start of his address, Bliss said that the college had been founded in accordance with St. Paul’s text, ‘Prove all things; hold fast that which is good’: “The great object of the college is to educate men so that they can understand the things that exist that we call nature, and the relation between those things.... But that is not all.... The value of each thing... is measured by its power to develop and build up the latent possibilities of the moral and the spiritual.” Later: “This then is the purpose, the object of the college. To make noble men, manly men, perfect men.” Hence, in addition to educating students, the college had the goal of developing character and fostering moral and spiritual virtues, aspirations somewhat, but not fully, represented in AUB’s current mission statement, which emphasizes tolerance, civic responsibility, personal integrity and leadership.

A commitment to life-long learning was articulated more plainly by Dr. John Wortabet, a co-founder of the college who said in an 1880 commencement address that its aim was to discipline the minds of students through mental exercises that would render them capable of independent study and of investigating one topic in depth – in other words, of research. Wortabet also said that the role of faculty was to train students to teach themselves so that they would continue to seek knowledge once they had graduated. He said that righteousness, purity, honesty, kindness, humility, meekness and charity were the pillars of every religion and that it was through the acquisition of such lofty traits that the self truly matured. Yet again emphasis was placed on the development of student character.

In 1885, Dr. Harvey Porter, a professor of history who joined the college in 1870, made a commencement speech in Arabic on the service component of its mission: “The aim of the school is not only to benefit the students who seek learning at it, but the good of the land and the world so that its sons will serve humanity wherever they go.” The fact that one of the college’s earliest faculties was a School of Medicine also highlights the value that the founders placed on service, a responsibility clearly articulated in AUB’s mission today.

These extracts demonstrate that the vision of AUB’s founders is largely reflected in its current mission statement, which emphasizes teaching, research and service as its main activities and a commitment to freedom of thought and expression, tolerance, diversity, life-long learning, creative and critical thinking, personal integrity, civic responsibility and leadership. What may be missing from today’s statement is a clearer or stronger articulation of the commitment to develop the moral character and ‘spirit’ of students.

2. Clarity, transparency and awareness of mission statement

AUB’s mission statement is published on its website (http://www.aub.edu.lb/about/mission.html)
and in its undergraduate and graduate catalogues. It was recently translated into Arabic, in line with a recommendation in the 2004 Self-Study, but this version has not yet been disseminated to the AUB community.

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that the overwhelming majority of students were aware of AUB’s mission statement (90 percent) and believed it to be clear and transparent (86 percent). Similarly strong agreement was observed for faculty, staff and academic/administrative heads of department (range 90-100 percent). Figures were much lower (range 55-65 percent) when these groups assessed the adequacy of efforts to communicate the mission to members of the AUB community, although they did show significant improvement over findings in 2002-03 (range 29-47 percent).

The discrepancy between the high degree of respondent awareness concerning AUB’s mission statement and the impression that it is poorly communicated seems paradoxical. One possible explanation is that respondents may have become familiar with the mission statement on their own initiative or through involvement in associated activities, but believed that insufficient effort was being made to communicate the University’s mission to the broader constituency in a systematic way. Whatever the case, there is evidently more work to be done in the area of disseminating and communicating the mission statement, particularly the Arabic version.

B. Alignment of University, Faculty and Department Mission Statements

Academic units, whether faculties, schools, or departments, are charged with the development of educational goals, programs and curricula, and the assessment of student learning outcomes. They are guided in their efforts by their mission statements, which must demonstrate alignment with the mission of the University.

In order to determine the degree of their alignment with AUB’s revised mission statement, WG1 collected all mission statements published by faculties and academic departments in AUB’s catalogue or on its website and also contacted departments to track down others that were less widely disseminated. To check for alignment, the assembled mission statements were assessed against a list of 14 values and other basic elements that the working group identified in the University’s new mission statement, namely, excellence in education; research; service; Lebanon, the Middle East and beyond (as geographical focus); diversity; liberal education; freedom of thought; tolerance; dialogue; creative/critical thinking; life-long learning; personal integrity; civic responsibility; and leadership.

The following were the results of the review:

- All six AUB faculties possessed mission statements; however, none of them referred to all of the values appearing in the University’s mission statement. The most notable omission in all cases was a commitment to diversity. Education, research and service, the essential business of any university, and references to Lebanon and/or the region appeared in the statements of FM, FEA (Faculty of Engineering and Architecture), FHS and OSB (Suliman S. Olayan School of Business). Service was not included in the mission statements of FAS and FAFS (Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences), while a geographical area was not defined by FAS.
- All departments in FEA and FAFS had mission statements, whereas the same was true of only five of 17 departments in FAS (29 percent), six of 20 in FM (30 percent) and two of five in FHS (40 percent). Departments without mission statements reported that they were in the process of formulating them, along with program learning outcomes, with the assistance of the University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee (ULOCC). This initiative was successfully concluded in June 2008. (See below and Chapters Six and Eight for more on this subject.)
- The degree of alignment between departmental and University mission statements varied considerably. For example, of all departments with mission statements at the time of the review, 81 percent mentioned education, 62 percent referred to research, 52 percent cited service, 29 percent indicated a regional perspective and a mere 14 percent alluded to diversity. Of the remaining values, the most commonly mentioned were creative/critical thinking (52 percent) and life-long learning (24 percent). Others were mentioned by 5-19 percent of departments.
These findings indicate marked variability in the prevalence and content of mission statements at AUB. While it is understandable that different departments may wish to emphasize some aspects of the University's mission more than others, greater harmony and alignment are preferable, particularly in core values. AUB has identified the need to develop an explicit statement of values.

C. Alignment of Proposed Institutional Goals with Mission Statement

In addition to mission statements, faculties and major administrative departments now possess unit-level strategic plans which were amalgamated and distilled to form the Campus Strategic Plan Overview. During the planning process, all unit-level teams were asked to align their plans with certain essential points of reference: the ten principles found in President Waterbury’s 2004 “State of the University” address; guidelines provided by four committees that had investigated issues of university-wide importance; and, of course, AUB’s revised mission statement.

The overview was examined to confirm its alignment with the institutional mission statement. Goal One reaffirms the University’s strong commitment to “strengthening undergraduate education, particularly in the liberal arts, which form the core academic component of an AUB education” and identifies the expected outcome as “strengthening the powers of critical thought in students and preparing them for roles as lifelong learners and community leaders.” These three outcomes are also mentioned in the last sentence of the University’s mission statement. Each goal is also written with an outcome in mind and is followed by specific strategies for its achievement. Goal Two emphasizes the importance of increasing the socio-economic and geographical diversity of the student body and notes that this will “broaden the learning experiences of young people in Lebanon and throughout the region.” The various initiatives to accomplish these two goals include continued development of remedial English programs, revision of admissions criteria, increased financial aid and improved residential facilities.

While the first two goals focus on students, the next two are of particular relevance to faculty. Goal Three further supports the University’s educational mission by focusing on the recruitment of first-rate faculty who will attract and retain outstanding students in their turn. Goal Four sustains AUB’s research mission and the importance of nurturing PhD programs, increasing interdisciplinary research and raising funds for targeted research projects. The fifth and sixth goals are oriented toward serving the community. Goal Five aims at enhancing local and regional community service activities by promoting related values among undergraduate students; expanding the service and other initiatives of the Office of Regional External Programs; developing for-profit and not-for-profit subsidiary entities; and advancing AUB’s “Neighborhood Initiative” to reinvigorate Ras Beirut. Goal Six concentrates on another aspect of service, namely, AUB as a model of sustainable urban development.

The last three goals are foundational in nature and focus on strengthening the institution. Goal Seven recognizes the importance of advances in information and communications technology to AUB’s educational and research missions. Goal Eight deals with institutional governance and engaging and aligning organizational structures with human capital to achieve institutional objectives. Initiatives falling under this goal include delegating authority when appropriate; re-examining bylaws; and systematizing regular planning and assessment cycles to improve service quality and delivery. Goal Nine focuses on ensuring that AUB has the financial resources needed to achieve its mission, both now and in the future. Strategies for this goal include enhanced fundraising, reducing accounts receivable and balancing the AUBMC budget.

It is clear that these nine goals address important and relevant aspects of AUB’s mission statement, particularly teaching, research and service excellence, the continued diversity of the student population and the achievement certain learning outcomes. Sufficient consideration is also given to operational issues. The plan does not, however, explicitly say how AUB will encourage freedom of thought and expression, stimulate creative thinking, or instill a commitment to personal integrity. The cultivation of these values, skills and habits has traditionally been a defining feature of AUB’s unique regional profile.

D. Compliance of Administrative and Academic Decisions with Mission and Goals

Three areas of particular importance were selected and evaluated to determine whether decision-
making at the University was in compliance with or advanced its educational mission and goals. The areas chosen were admissions practices; resource allocation; and curriculum, program development and learning outcomes. As demonstrated below, AUB continues to fulfill this requirement in all three of the selected areas.

1. Admissions practices
Despite being mentioned in relatively few departmental mission statements (see above), student diversity is the focus of considerable attention at AUB. Up until the mid-1970s, the majority of the University's students came from the Middle East – or even further afield – and less than half were Lebanese. After the conclusion of the Lebanese civil war, foreign students began to return and today about 20 percent of undergraduates are from other Arab states, North America, or elsewhere in the world. (This figure includes some Lebanese students who are dual nationals.) AUB realizes that international students and faculty provide the cosmopolitan environment needed to nurture the qualities of tolerance, dialogue and respect for diversity that feature prominently in the mission statement. Moreover, by focusing on “attracting more undergraduate and graduate students from diverse national, economic and social backgrounds,” Goal Two of the Campus Strategic Plan Overview reflects the University's awareness that by promoting diversity it also increases opportunities for socio-economic advancement.

AUB has already attempted to enhance the national diversity of the student body by increasing the number of Lebanese schools regularly visited by Admissions Office personnel to 150. These same personnel also provide 20 general presentations each year at hotels (and embassies) in Lebanon and organize and participate in educational fairs throughout the country. The largest is the annual AUB School Fair, where 6000 eleventh-grade students from 130 schools tour the campus and attend live or video presentations arranged by the various faculties. The Office of Admissions has also increased its recruitment visits to a number of Middle Eastern countries. National, regional and socio-economic diversity have further been targeted by consistent efforts to increase various forms of financial aid, which reached $12.5 million in 2007-08. AUB also offers 20 USAID-funded Franklin Scholarships to needy Lebanese students and 12 Baccalaureate Merit scholarships to the highest scoring students in Lebanese Baccalaureate examinations. Students from other Arab countries are eligible for Presidential Merit Scholarships, Tomorrow’s Leaders Scholarships and AUB's longstanding Merit Scholarship Program. Many of these programs have been instituted since 2004, indicating the sustained interest of AUB decision-makers in achieving the goal of student diversity.

AUB's admissions practices are intended to ensure the diversity of the student body without sacrificing quality. The high quality of undergraduate applicants is reflected in the fact that roughly one-third of new sophomores (the largest category of entering students) reporting school ranks in 2006-07 had placed in the top five of their classes during two of their last three years of secondary school. The retention rate for such newly admitted sophomores is a high 95 percent. Excellence in education also requires the recruitment of the most qualified faculty possible. Most AUB faculty hold terminal degrees obtained at respected institutions in the US or Europe.

Since the University's admissions system currently depends solely on applicants' scholastic achievements, it may be disadvantageous to students with special needs or talents. Several deans expressed a desire to broaden admissions criteria, for instance, by including interviews, in order to assess the character and special talents, interests and needs of applicants to AUB. This is an area for future improvement. (See Chapter Four for more on all of these points.)

2. Resource allocation
AUB allocates appropriate resources for the achievement of its educational and medical missions. Roughly 65 percent of the Campus budget is channeled directly to academic activities and 35 percent to non-academic support for them. AUB has secured funds to promote research among junior faculty (full-time assistant professors entering their third or fourth year), who can now take one semester off from their teaching and administrative tasks to focus on scholarly pursuits. This is in addition to other research and professional development grants described in Chapter Five. AUB has also invested considerable sums in the construction and renovation of buildings, the refurbishment of classrooms and laboratories, and the enhancement of campus green spaces. A few deans, however, disapproved of some of these recent projects; they felt that they increased the financial burden on the University and deserved less priority than other urgent academic needs. Several deans indicated that they were not involved or consulted in the process of
university-wide budget allocation and prioritization despite being the primary custodians of academic programs at their faculties.

Resource allocation for initiatives associated with campus strategic goals was an important consideration of the Strategic Planning Steering Committee during the planning process. The OSM is currently working with academic and administrative units to identify initiatives that may have insufficient or ambiguous funding and to ensure that they become part of the budgeting cycle. (Resource allocation is discussed more fully in Chapter Two.)

3. Curriculum, program development and learning outcomes

A core element of AUB’s mission statement, the commitment to excellence in education, has been a driving force behind continuing efforts to accredit programs across faculties. In the last few years, one AUB faculty and one school sought and obtained program accreditation: the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited the Graduate Public Health program at FHS; and the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accredited BS and MS programs at SON, which is part of FM. Two other faculties, FEA and OSB, are in the process of obtaining professional accreditation. In January 2008, the AUB Medical Center was also accredited by Joint Commission International (JCI); its Nursing Services are now seeking the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s Magnet Recognition Program Designation.

In most cases, accreditation initiatives are accompanied by the revision of existing programs, the development of new ones and the establishment of learning outcomes and assessment measures. This has occurred in the AUB faculties referred to above. FAFS and FAS, which are not currently seeking accreditation, have also revised and augmented curricula and programs. These two faculties were at the center of ULOCC’s successful 2007-08 initiative to develop program and department mission statements and learning outcomes aligned with the mission statements of the University and appropriate faculty. They will continue to be a focus of attention in 2008-09, when course learning outcomes and assessment plans take center stage. The reintroduction of PhD programs in eight fields represented another important step in the expansion and full expression of AUB’s mission of education and research. This initiative was originally part of the Campus Strategic Plan Overview, but was deemed so critical that the Board of Trustees gave special permission for it to proceed while the overview was being completed. As currently drafted, the plan expresses AUB’s full support for the new doctoral programs in the context of Goal Four on research excellence. (See Chapter Six for more on progress in all of these areas.)

E. Effectiveness in Achieving Mission

Efforts are ongoing to develop precise metrics to measure the achievement of the University’s mission and goals (see Chapters Two and Eight). The OSM is presently revisiting Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) created before the start of AUB’s first strategic planning cycle. Its aim is to identify KPIs that are specific to mission elements and to each of the nine university-wide goals, to revise KPIs as necessary and to develop new ones to fill any gaps. It is also working to align all KPIs with each of the nine goals in the Strategic Plan Overview. Some existing KPIs will be cascaded to faculties and large administrative units, which are already receiving the OSM’s assistance in developing dedicated indicators focused on their own activities. All of these actions will help to ensure the effective use of data collected by the University. (A full list of AUB’s KPIs as of Spring 2008 appears in Appendix D 8-1.)

Several KPIs now in use at AUB center on the ACT College Outcomes Survey (COS), which assesses students’ perceptions of their intellectual and social growth and career preparation while at university. The 2006-07 COS revealed that AUB had achieved its preset target in all three of these areas. Indeed, AUB’s scores for intellectual and social growth equaled or exceeded US national norms for all institutions and for private colleges; the University scored slightly below the norm, however, when it came to preparing students for a career. This may reflect a continued lack of understanding on the part of students about the importance of the General Education Requirement (see Chapter Seven), which is not commonly found in Lebanon or the Middle East. The creation of teaching awards across and within faculties is only one indication among many of the University’s strong support for the achievement of its teaching mission (see Chapters Five and Six for more examples).
When interviewed, some deans mentioned that a number of employers in the region specifically sought AUB graduates to fill positions. AUB graduates applying to and accepted at FM have MCAT (Medical College Admission Test) scores that place them within the range of applicants to the top 25 US medical schools. Medical students who spend elective months in American medical schools are highly rated by their preceptors: according to the dean of FM, about 80 percent of them are awarded a grade of ‘excellent’ on their electives. Based on past experience with AUB graduates, some US medical schools (such as Columbia and George Washington) set aside positions for them on an annual basis.

There is much evidence to support the conclusion that AUB is also effective in accomplishing its research mission. Over the past 10 years, the University’s culture has changed considerably to become one in which research productivity is viewed as an essential factor in the recruitment, retention and promotion of faculty. The reintroduction of PhD programs in eight areas of study in 2007-08 and the continued revision and development of Master’s programs both attest to AUB’s commitment to research, higher learning and knowledge creation and dissemination. A recent FEA report evaluated the University’s research productivity relative to universities in North Africa, Jordan, Syria, the Arab Gulf, Iran and Turkey. It showed that AUB had the third highest publication/faculty ratio (2.34) in the sample, surpassed only by Tehran University (6.23) and Ankara University (2.45). The value achieved by AUB exceeded those for all universities in the California State System offering Master’s degrees. Another FEA report using data extracted from the Scopus database noted that more than 62 percent of all foreign-language research output in Lebanon originates from AUB. (See Chapter Five for more on research output.)

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that 81-90 percent of all respondents believed AUB’s mission to be realistic and achievable. These figures represented an improvement over 2002-03, when the range was 69-87 percent. When interviewed, some of the deans suggested that AUB’s mission statement might be too ambitious and that it was difficult to achieve some of the goals implicit in it. For example, the advancement of knowledge through research is a major and uncontestable element of the University’s mission and AUB evaluates the research productivity of faculty using some of the same high standards as US-based institutions. However, Lebanon provides only meager resources to support first-rate research, so it is a constant challenge to balance the University’s aspirations with the means available to it (see Chapter Five for more on how this is done). Similarly, AUB’s mission statement values student diversity, but the achievement of this goal is hampered by the security concerns of prospective applicants and by the University’s insistence that diversity should not come at the expense of the academic quality of admitted students (see Chapter Four).

Most participants in the 2008 Survey believed that AUB was successful in achieving its mission, with positive responses ranging from 56 percent (for academic heads) to 70 percent (for students, faculty and academic department heads) to a high of 75 percent (for staff). These values showed improvement over 2002-03, when the range was 39-75 percent. The very significant rise in faculty perceptions of success (from 39 to 70 percent) represents a strong vote of confidence in the University and its achievements.

**F. Recommendations**

1. Consider including a more emphatic reference to the development of the moral character of students in AUB’s mission statement.
2. Set goals and priorities during the next strategic planning cycle that clearly articulate how AUB will endeavor to foster freedom of thought and expression, creative thinking and a commitment to personal integrity among its students.
3. Ensure that faculty and departmental mission statements are aligned with the mission of the University.
4. Correlate precise Key Performance Indicators with elements of university-wide and unit-level mission statements.

**INTEGRITY**

AUB’s commitment to providing an environment that favors the achievement of its mission is a major test of its integrity. One essential indicator in this regard is the seriousness with which the
University addressed not only the two recommendations made by MSCHE in 2004, but also those resulting from the Institutional Self-Study that same year (see Appendix B). AUB reported its progress in these areas in two accreditation status reports (2005 and 2007) and a monitoring report (2006), which were posted online (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webaccr/documents.htm) after being sent to MSCHE. The current study also makes numerous references to recommendations from the 2004 Self-Study and frequently explains how they were met and the resulting outcomes. In those cases in which recommendations were not implemented, other measures have generally been taken or are being planned to address the concerns identified. It should be noted, however, that AUB was almost a year late in reporting the reintroduction of PhD programs to MSCHE; as soon as the omission was recognized, the University sent MSCHE all of the documents earlier submitted to the New York State Education Department, which had approved the programs before implementation.

In what follows, institutional integrity is assessed by examining the alignment of policies and procedures with mission; their transparency and dissemination; and the compliance of departments with them. However, the real test is implementation and the extent to which AUB has made an honest effort to match words with deeds. The final part of this chapter looks at the ways in which the University has promoted academic and intellectual freedom, and encouraged and abided by ethical standards.

G. Institutional Integrity: Policies and Procedures

The responsibility for developing and revising University policies belongs to AUB administrators, such as the president, provost, vice presidents, deans and/or department heads – in other words, their ‘champions.’ The relevant departments devise appropriate procedures and compile manuals that detail them. New and revised university-wide policies, procedures and manuals are studied by the Policy and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC) before being submitted to the president and sometimes the BOT for approval. The PPRC ensures that new policies are in harmony with existing policies and procedures, including those related to ethical behavior: if they are not or if they are inconsistent with the University’s mission statement, they are sent back to their champion for amendment. This is one reason why there tends to be good congruence between policies and procedures and the mission statement and goals.

This congruence was confirmed by assessing a number of policies and procedures within AUB for alignment with the mission statement and the 14 values and elements that were identified in it (see above). The policies and procedures of the Office of Student Affairs (OSA) are of particular interest since students are the focus of AUB’s educational mission. The objectives of the OSA include “enabling the student to live, learn and practice the values of tolerance, civic and moral responsibility, inclusiveness and excellence in learning and leadership, values that best represent the mission of AUB.” When interviewed, the dean of student affairs gave a number of examples indicating the University’s efforts to encourage freedom of expression among students: the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC), which is a university-wide advisory body largely composed of students; the student representative committees established for each faculty; the 36 student clubs promoting various interests and activities; the 10 student societies representing specific academic disciplines; and the student newspaper (Outlook) and yearbook (Campus), both of which are funded and produced solely by students. Student organizations also invite a wide range of speakers to AUB. President Waterbury was very positive about AUB’s success in providing students with an environment that promotes honesty, openness and freedom of expression, noting that AUB was the only university in Lebanon to hold student elections consistently and without incident during recent periods of political polarization and volatility. In their studies, students are expected to adhere to norms of academic integrity compatible with international ethical standards and the Student Code of Conduct (see below).

All policies, procedures and manuals are published on the University’s website (see http://pnp.aub.edu.lb) and most can be accessed by any member of the University community. (A few operational manuals may only be viewed by staff in relevant departments.) New policies or changes in policy are communicated to constituents by e-mail. This level of dissemination is intended to help raise the level of compliance with policies. The Internal Audit Office assesses compliance and the internal controls designed to strengthen it during operational or other audits of AUB departments. Mechanisms to assess compliance in academic departments are less clear. One of the few exceptions involves the requirement that all promotion committee meetings
Chapter One: Mission, Goals, Objectives and Integrity

should be attended by non-voting due process monitors from outside of the concerned department to ensure adherence to policies and procedures. Similarly, three external faculty participate as voting members in the promotion deliberations and decisions of faculty advisory committees. During each promotion cycle, the Board of Deans (BOD) is expanded to include three full-time faculty members holding the rank of full professor who participate in BOD meetings held to make promotion decisions.

Policies tend to become more comprehensive each time they are reviewed and updated by their champions and/or the PPRC. An analysis of all institutional policies and bylaws in 2006-07 showed that 74 percent had been reviewed or confirmed by champions during the previous 24 months. The PPRC has requested that the Policies and Procedures Office regularly contact champions to ask them to review and update policies or confirm that they are still current. (For more on the PPRC, see Chapter Three.)

About two-thirds (68 percent) of all faculty and staff respondents to the 2008 Institutional Survey agreed with the statement that AUB's policies were clear and properly disseminated; however, fewer faculty and staff (56 percent) thought that they were actually followed. There was somewhat less agreement with these two statements among academic heads (55 and 50 percent respectively), but considerably more agreement among administrative heads (90 and 70 percent respectively). In interviews, the deans also expressed the opinion that policies were generally followed. Hence, although there was general agreement that policies are reasonably well-publicized, the broader constituency viewed adherence to them as sub-optimal.

H. Implementation of Policies and Procedures

Integrity in the context of policy implementation was examined in relation to three areas of particular concern to students, faculty and staff: student admissions; student misconduct and grievances; and the recruitment, promotion and reappointment of faculty and staff.

1. Student admissions

AUB's catalogue notes that admissions are made in accordance with the principles of non-discrimination espoused by the University's founders and later expanded – for instance, by including women, who make up slightly more than half of AUB's student body. Indeed, AUB follows a very strict, equitable and standardized procedure for student admissions. As explained by the director of admissions (and in Chapter Four), students are offered a place at the University on the basis of composite scores that give equal weight to standardized school averages and SAT I scores. The standardization of school averages involves calculating the average grades achieved by students during grades 10 and 11 relative to their own schools. Hence, AUB does not discriminate between feeder schools despite variations in their quality and in the grading scales that they employ. This helps to ensure that entering students are broadly representative of different educational systems as well as different geographical areas, whether nationally, regionally, or internationally, and different socio-economic strata. (See Chapter Four for more on admissions criteria.) While this process obviously contributes to the diversity of the student body and indicates the serious nature of AUB's commitment to its strategic goal of enhancing diversity, it may also discriminate against some highly qualified students since it does not take into account the academic level of feeder schools. It also fails to address the question of individual uniqueness.

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that 55 percent of academic heads, faculty and students agreed that AUB demonstrated impartiality in admissions practices. The percentage was slightly higher among administrative heads (57 percent), but lower among non-academic staff (42 percent). When asked whether the University was honest and transparent in its conduct and communication, 77 percent of students agreed. There is a need to examine in more detail the reasons for the relatively low level of confidence in the impartiality of the admissions process.

2. Student misconduct and grievances

Most AUB faculties have specific staff or offices to deal with the academic concerns of students. Some, like OSB, hold periodic town hall meetings with students to hear their opinions and complaints. However, all faculties have established permanent committees, individuals, or offices to handle any grievances that students may have.
A task team was formed in January 2006 to revise the Student Code of Conduct and to achieve several other objectives, including the ability to consolidate and compile statistics and to report trend lines related to violations of the Code. The revised version of the Code, which has been widely disseminated since being passed by the University Senate in May 2007, clearly states what constitutes a violation of AUB's rules and regulations. The most important academic violations are cheating and plagiarism. During interviews, academic deans expressed their general impression that instances of cheating and plagiarism had decreased significantly in recent years. However, they could produce no statistics or reports to support this view. Prototype software developed by the task team to track violations of the Student Code of Conduct, including prohibitions against plagiarism, has not yet been finalized. Entering students are now required to pass an online plagiarism test after reviewing a module explaining what constitutes plagiarism. Faculty can also submit students' written work to the online plagiarism detection service, “Turn-it-in.” Students accused of cheating or plagiarism are referred to the Student Affairs Committee (SAC) of the faculty concerned. These committees consist of five faculty members, a representative of the Office of Student Affairs and a member of the faculty's Student Representative Committee. The SAC listens to the reporting instructor and to the defense of the student concerned, deliberates and reaches a decision.

Students may be reported to the dean of student affairs for non-academic misconduct by anyone (student, faculty, or staff, especially Protection Office employees) who witnessed the alleged violation. The dean questions them and confronts them with any existing evidence. Depending on the seriousness of the violation, disciplinary action can range from a reprimand to a dean's warning. Very serious cases which may, in the dean's judgment, warrant suspension or expulsion are referred to the University Disciplinary Committee (UDC).

Students have the right to appeal decisions concerning academic and non-academic violations to the deans of their faculties or to the UDC. The appeal process is described in the Student Code of Conduct, which is distributed to all students in hard copy and is available on the AUB website.

While no statistical data exists to assess the effectiveness of these measures, the dean of student affairs reported that students seemed to trust the process and that neither the individuals concerned nor the USFC have questioned it over the past seven years. This may be due to the transparency of the process and the involvement of students, faculty and deans (or their representatives) in it.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, approximately 65 percent of students and faculty agreed that student concerns regarding fair academic assessment, student conduct and alleged disciplinary violations were addressed promptly, appropriately and fairly. Agreement was higher (75 percent) among academic heads.

### 3. Faculty and staff recruitment and promotion

Full-time faculty vacancies are advertised on the AUB website and in international journals, with all advertisements clearly stating that the University is an equal opportunity employer according to US Labor Law, which it follows. Each candidate is screened at the level of the department, Faculty Advisory Committee and Board of Deans (BOD). The screening process varies among faculties: some require all short-listed candidates to visit the campus and present seminars or teach classes; others merely require an interview with the dean, other officials (such as the department chair), or faculty members.

As noted earlier, the impartiality of the promotion process has been improved by the introduction of due process monitors and by the addition of external members to faculty advisory committees and to the BOD. In FM, different tracks with slight variations in promotion criteria have been created to reflect the fact that different roles and talents (research, teaching and clinical service) are required for the faculty's optimal operation; however, some members of the faculty believe that educational contributions are not given sufficient recognition. A similar sentiment exists in other faculties, where most faculty members believe that the main – and perhaps only – determinant of promotion is research productivity and that teaching, in particular, is only recognized and rewarded to a very minor degree. This somewhat contradicts the policy on academic appointment, reappointment and promotion, which states: “The decision whether to reappoint full-time faculty members should be based on the general criteria of teaching, research, and service... The above criteria are not to be equally weighted, but teaching and research are to be assigned greater weights than the other criteria.” (For more on faculty recruitment and promotion, see Chapter Five.)
While the Human Resources (HR) department is not involved in the recruitment of faculty, it does process their contracts. It also oversees the recruitment of non-academic staff in accordance with US Labor Law (as above). Its website promotes free staff training programs, which are usually provided by external consultants. Staff performance is reviewed annually by managers. To compensate for any subjectivity in these assessments, the HR department adjusts results using bell curves and standard deviations. In recent years, the department has trained 32 staff to become certified HR professionals.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 42 percent of faculty perceived recruitment at AUB to be impartial, while 34 percent said the same about promotion. While the latter figure, in particular, was quite low, it was an improvement over 2002-03, when 22 percent of faculty thought that the promotion process was impartial. The responses of academic heads confirmed that progress has been made, with 50 percent saying that recruitment was impartial (up from 34 percent in 2002-03) and 40 percent saying the same about promotions (up from 19 percent). The 2008 Survey recorded similar findings for administrative heads: 47 percent for impartiality in recruitment and 40 percent for impartiality in promotion. Despite the improvement, however, these figures are still disturbingly low since both academic and administrative heads presumably had an insider’s view of recruitment and promotion. Non-academic staff were the least enthusiastic of all, with only 37 and 31 percent believing that recruitment and promotion were impartial.

Although the 2008 results showed that confidence and trust in the system had grown, they also suggested the need for greater transparency and better communication within the University community. This observation is substantiated by responses to another question, namely, whether AUB promoted honesty and transparency in its conduct and communication. Positive responses were given by 50 percent of academic heads, 57 percent of faculty and 60 percent of administrative heads and non-academic staff. Once again, this was an improvement over 2002-03, but it was still not optimal.

I. Academic and Intellectual Freedom

According to the Faculty Manual, the University strongly endorses academic and intellectual freedom and envisions itself as “an environment in which free scholarship may flourish.” The manual, which is posted online, contains a clear “Statement on Academic Freedom and Responsibilities” (http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/university/academic/Faculty%20Manual/148020040.html) that was drafted in conformity with recommendations by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP). Infringement of academic freedom is one of two areas (the other being “allegations of procedural irregularities”) that may be investigated under AUB’s current faculty grievance procedures (see below). The Student Handbook also contains a separate section on “Academic Freedom” (http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/university/handbook/158010006.html), which gives information on freedom in the classroom; on freedom of inquiry and expression; and on freedom of association (in terms of forming student clubs and societies, which should not, however, represent particular political, sectarian, or religious entities).

The majority of students (89 percent) who responded to the 2008 Institutional Survey believed that AUB’s environment was conducive to teaching, learning and research. Agreement was also high among administrative heads and staff (80-86 percent), although lower among faculty and academic heads (60-68 percent). When asked whether AUB guaranteed the intellectual and academic freedom of its entire constituency, 74 percent of staff, 62 percent of faculty and only 50 percent of academic heads agreed. Taken together, the responses to these two questions seemed to indicate that the University’s faculty were rather skeptical about the status of academic freedom at AUB and the support and environment provided for its academic mission.

These low figures were surprising because none of the academic deans reported that they had ever received a complaint about interference in or restrictions on the academic pursuits of faculty. A review of minutes from the faculty focus groups organized by WG5 revealed a possible explanation for this omission. The lack of a tenure system at AUB has caused faculty to feel insecure about their positions and constrained them from voicing frank opinions on various topics. This issue and related concerns are discussed in some detail in Chapters Three and Five.

J. Adherence to Ethical Standards

AUB expects a high level of ethical behavior from all constituents and has established policies
that explicitly address integrity issues. The representative sample below includes policies on discrimination and harassment; conflict of interest; internal audit, purchasing and fraud; faculty and staff grievances; and research ethics.

1. Discrimination and harassment
The University prohibits discrimination or harassment of any kind by or against all members of its community, be they students, staff, or faculty. It is AUB's policy to “provide equal employment opportunities to all candidates for academic and non-academic employment, regardless of their gender, race, religion, color, national origin, disability, marital status, age, creed, citizenship, or veteran status, except as required by Lebanese law concerning employment.” Policies on both the recruitment and the promotion of faculty stress that they must provide evidence of educational, research and service excellence and accomplishment. The policy on the recruitment of non-academic staff clearly states that positions must be filled by the candidates best qualified to perform the specified tasks.

AUB's policies on discrimination and harassment are easily accessed through the Policies and Procedures webpage. They are also summarized in the Student Handbook, which directs students to the full text (available online) and encourages them to learn more about gender discrimination and sexual harassment. According to the deans, very few cases of discrimination or harassment have been brought to their attention by students, faculty, or staff. Some deans indicated that the number of cases had fallen in recent years and that they may only hear of one case annually. The director of the Internal Audit Office confirmed this low figure and said that, to his knowledge, the committee on harassment had never had to convene. The VP for HR stated that, on average, five complaints were received from non-academic staff per year; he believed that this figure was reasonable for an employee pool of 3600 people. Most of these complaints were solved without an official grievance being filed.

Nonetheless, only 50-55 percent of surveyed faculty and academic/administrative heads thought that AUB offered them protection from harassment, discrimination and inappropriate pressure. Staff (64 percent) and students (71 percent) tended to be more positive in this respect. The discrepancy between the perceptions of the constituency and the reality as described by deans and administrators may represent a failure of communication on the University's part.

2. Conflict of interest
AUB has established conflict of interest policies for members of the Board of Trustees and for faculty and staff. The former is consistent with the State of New York’s Not-for-Profit Corporation Law (N-PCL) and describes the procedures for disclosing, addressing and documenting conflicts of interest, as well as sanctions for violations. The latter additionally provides clear definitions of what constitutes conflict of interest. The policies for faculty and staff are well publicized, but the director of the Internal Audit Office cautioned that they are probably less well understood. Each year, management and academic staff must submit a disclosure form declaring any activities that may involve a conflict of interest. Non-academic employees must declare any change of status. There is no process to monitor adherence to the policy, although violations have been detected and have resulted in sanctions, including official warnings and, in at least one case, termination.

3. Audit, purchasing and fraud
Control measures in place to monitor AUB’s operations are periodically evaluated by the Internal Audit Office, which offers its recommendations to senior management. The role of the Internal Audit Office is well-defined and is intended to ensure the transparency of all AUB operations. One of the most sensitive areas at the University is Purchasing and a detailed manual has been created that provides staff with a code of ethics and other guidelines on public relations, conflicts of interest, gifts/gratuities/kickbacks and the tender process. In addition, AUB’s policy on fraud is unambiguous. It defines fraud in unmistakable terms; warns employees against fraudulent activities; clarifies the role of management in fraud prevention and monitoring; explains the procedure for reporting and investigating alleged instances of fraud; and details the penalties for fraudulent acts.

4. Faculty and staff grievances
For non-academic staff, the policies and procedures for handling grievances are described in the
Staff Manual and the collective agreement. For academic staff, they appear in the Faculty Manual. The director of the Internal Audit Office indicated that remarkably few grievances have been filed at AUB. Although this suggested that the University had a very good record in labor relations, some non-academic staff had told him that they feared some form of retaliation from managers if they filed a grievance. The VP for HR reported that 10 non-academic and 13 academic staff grievances have been adjudicated since 2004. However, the 2008 Institutional Survey showed that, although 70 percent of academic and administrative heads were aware of existing procedures to handle grievances, only 46 percent of faculty and 50 percent of students knew of them. Non-academic staff showed greater (61 percent) awareness of grievance procedures than faculty. It appears that the University has failed to transmit this message to faculty and students in particular. Furthermore, few faculty (21 percent) and staff (38 percent) believed that grievances were dealt with efficiently.

It is noteworthy that the policy on academic grievances stipulates that all claims must be submitted to the president of the University who then decides whether or not to appoint an ad-hoc committee to look into the matter. Suggestions were made to alter existing policy so that an independent committee – and not the president alone – decides whether to pursue a case.

5. Research ethics

All experimental research at the University, whether on humans or animals, must comply with international ethical standards of practice. The Institutional Review Board reviews all research involving human subjects conducted by AUB faculty and staff or on AUB premises to ensure that the safety, welfare and rights of individuals are protected. It follows international guidelines as represented in the Belmont Report, US Code of Federal Regulations, as well as the guidelines of the International Conference on Harmonization (ICH). Its policies and procedures are published on the AUB website. The Institutional Animal Care and Use Committee ensures the ethical and humane treatment of experimental animals and complies with the US Public Health Service (PHS) Policy on Humane Care and Use of Laboratory Animals and the Animal Welfare Act.

K. Recommendations

1. Develop specific mechanisms to monitor adherence to AUB policies and procedures. In particular, develop the software necessary to track violations of the revised Student Code of Conduct.
2. Explore and address the reasons for the low level of confidence in the impartiality of the admissions process.
3. Improve transparency and communication with the AUB community in relation to admissions, recruitment and promotion.
4. Address the lack of faculty confidence and security with a view to enhancing freedom of expression.
5. Raise faculty, staff and student awareness of policies that address discrimination and harassment and of existing procedures to handle grievances.
6. Improve documentation of breaches of student integrity.
Chapter Two

PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL AND RESOURCES

Purpose: Working Group 2 (WG2) on Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal (Standard 2) and Institutional Resources (Standard 3) was charged with assessing the effectiveness of the University's strategic planning process in establishing directions and priorities for institutional innovation and renewal. Although the primary focus was on planning and resource allocation at the university-wide decision-making level, the group also aimed at studying the extent to which these processes were followed by academic and administrative units. WG2 further considered AUB's current and future financial stability and the adequacy of its human, technical and physical resources, both internal and external, for the implementation of its mission and goals.

Membership: WG2 was composed of 15 members, four of whom were faculty members of varying rank from the faculties of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Engineering and Architecture (FEA) and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB); one of these faculty members was also an associate dean in FEA. The group further included the vice president for Finance; the University comptroller; the directors of the offices of Development, Internal Audit, and Strategy Management (OSM); two human resource officers (the organizational design manager and a systems and procedures analyst); a trustee; and three students (two undergraduates and one medical student). The group was co-chaired by the director of OSM and an associate professor from OSB.

Methodology: The research methodology that informed the findings, conclusions and recommendations of WG2 included the review of documents pertaining to planning and research allocation as identified in the Self-Study Design; the analysis of results from the 2008 Institutional Survey with regard to the heads of academic and administrative units, faculty members and administrative staff; and interviews conducted with the president, provost, deans and vice presidents.

The principal sections of this chapter are as follows:

Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal
A. Strategic Planning at AUB
B. Resource Allocation
C. Recommendations

Institutional Resources
D. Institutional Resources at AUB
E. Financial Stability
F. Recommendations

PLANNING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION AND INSTITUTIONAL RENEWAL

A. Strategic Planning at AUB

In 2004, AUB’s Institutional Self-Study recommended the development of a comprehensive, integrated strategic plan that was “stakeholder-based” and used “building blocks already in place” at the University. It outlined a strategic planning infrastructure that included committees for Board of Trustees (BOT) oversight and university-wide coordination; task teams for special-
purpose initiatives and major academic/administrative units; and a dedicated office established to facilitate the process. This recommendation was endorsed by the MSHE visiting team and became one of two MSHE requirements for AUB’s peer accreditation with the organization.

The Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement (IPPI) was created in June 2004 from AUB’s Office of Service Quality and Organizational Improvement. IPPI’s predecessor had begun developing metrics or Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the achievement of a limited number of objectives targeted by senior leadership during informal planning exercises. Using the infrastructure sketched out in the 2004 Self-Study as its starting point, IPPI designed a formal planning process for the development of a ‘Campus’ strategic plan and related KPIs. Planning for ‘Medicine,’ which includes the Medical Center (AUBMC), the Faculty of Medicine (FM), the School of Nursing (SON) and medical research, was similarly organized.

A total of 23 teams played significant roles in the Campus planning process, including:

- A Board of Trustees strategic planning committee, which oversaw planning and approved strategic initiatives recommended by the steering committee.
- A University steering committee chaired by President Waterbury and broadly representative of the AUB community (provost, VPs, deans, faculty, staff and students), which monitored the progress of planning teams, reviewed the plans that they prepared, assessed the financial implications of proposed initiatives and integrated a broad selection of these initiatives into a single Campus plan.
- Four committees to study strategic issues of broad institutional importance identified by the administration, namely, enrollment management; general education; graduate education and research; and information technology.
- Seventeen unit-level teams focusing on the strategic issues faced by faculties and major administrative departments. Each team was chaired by the head of the relevant academic or administrative unit and composed of representatives of the unit’s various sections. Fifteen of the 17 teams completed aggregate plans: all six faculties, as well as SON, which falls under FM; the offices of Development, Human Resources and Regional External Programs; the Finance Group (offices of VP for Finance; Financial Planning and Budget; and Comptroller); the Facilities Planning and Design Unit; the Physical Plant; the Student Affairs Office; and the University Libraries. Business Services joined in the planning process, but was unable to create an aggregate plan due to disparities in the functions and needs of its many small sections. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment did not complete its plan.

In the month between the conclusion of the 2004 Self-Study and the arrival of the MSHE visiting team, President Waterbury articulated ten guiding principles in his “State of the University” address (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webpres/speeches/2004/souaddress-23feb04.pdf) that provided the necessary framework for AUB’s first formal planning cycle. Another fundamental reference point was the University’s revised mission statement, which was disseminated to all constituents for feedback in February 2005 and endorsed by the BOT the following November (see Chapter One). Unit-level planning teams additionally benefited from the nuanced analyses of the four committees tasked with investigating issues of overarching importance and were specifically asked to align their own plans with the committees’ guidelines where applicable.

The planning process was overseen by IPPI, which trained and coached participants and provided quality control as needed. Members of unit-level teams attended workshops on strategic planning and were given a brief but comprehensive manual (see Appendix D 2-1) containing templates to guide and systematize their planning efforts. They were also provided with training in Kaplan-Norton Balanced Scorecard (BSC) methodology to assist them in the recognition of potential KPIs for assessment purposes. Between April 2005 and May 2006, each team followed a step-by-step process to pinpoint and analyze issues of strategic importance to the unit and to articulate goals, objectives and initiatives that met specific unit-level needs while following the guidelines set by the four university-wide committees. IPPI assisted them in conducting the research and analyses needed to build successful and sustainable long-term strategies. The plans prepared by the unit-level teams (all available at http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~websm/index.html) generally adhered to a well-defined structure that began with the articulation of the unit’s mission statement and ended with a schedule of strategic performance reviews. Cost estimates were prepared for each of the proposed initiatives and sources of possible funding identified. There were variations, however, in the process by which units prioritized their own initiatives.
In the last phase of the top-down planning process, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee (SPSC) ensured broad correspondence between high-priority initiatives and available resources, particularly funding, before synthesizing institution-wide goals and unit-level initiatives into a comprehensive Campus overview. This process was meant to culminate in formal BOT approval of the overview in November 2006. The SPSC’s schedule was seriously disrupted by the July 2006 war, however, and the BOT subsequently decided to await completion of Medicine’s strategic plan and the merger of the Medicine and Campus overviews into a comprehensive institutional plan. While work proceeded on the Medicine plan, the Campus overview was presented twice to the Board of Deans and once to senior staff for feedback, resulting in multiple drafts of the text, but no real changes to goals or strategies; a more or less final version of it (see Appendix D 2-2) was disseminated to the AUB community in June 2008. A handful of important initiatives, such as the reintroduction of PhD programs in eight fields of specialization, received BOT approval for early implementation. In December 2008, President Dorman decided to update and enrich the strategic initiatives in the merged overviews by adding recommendations selected from the 2008 Institutional Self-Study. OSM (formerly IPPI) will study these recommendations to ensure that AUB is able to meet related financial commitments during the current planning cycle. The Institutional Strategic Plan Overview will be reviewed by the University’s constituents before it goes to the BOT for formal approval, most likely in June 2009, and will cover the period 2009-14. The full plan will take effect immediately once it is formally endorsed. The next strategic planning cycle is scheduled to begin in January 2012 and will cover 2014-19.

IPPI was renamed the Office of Strategy Management (OSM) in October 2008 to mark the start of a new stage in AUB’s strategic planning cycle. OSM continues to track university-wide KPIs and coordinate management-level performance review meetings to monitor the University’s progress in achieving its goals. It is presently revising the Institutional BSC that has been used by the president’s Cabinet over the last few years in order to improve the alignment of KPIs with the objectives of the new strategic plan. An earlier revision for the March 2008 Cabinet review resulted in the reduction of the number of KPIs from almost 100 to 83, about 20 of which apply exclusively to AUBMC. (See Appendix D 8-1 for the full list.) During the current revision, some KPIs are being dropped, new ones developed and others modified or cascaded to academic and administrative planning units, many of which are in the process of finalizing dedicated BSCs and KPIs of their own. Input from faculty and staff regarding the choice of KPIs is being solicited to varying degrees depending on the unit. OSM is assisting planning units in these activities and will train performance owners, measure leaders and other unit users in new BSC software, which OSM will administer. It will also participate in unit-level review meetings held annually so that the heads of planning units and their direct reports can study results for their own units. During the 2008-09 academic year, unit-level BSC coordinators and support teams, which are made up of faculty and/or staff, are being asked to commit one full day each week to develop their BSCs and prepare for their first review. The implementation of unit-level BSCs should commence as soon as the institutional strategic plan is endorsed by the BOT.

In the past, IPPI built upon its origins as a service quality unit by playing a leading role in improvement projects identified during institution-wide management performance reviews. OSM will take this a step further by serving as a resource for major academic and administrative units undertaking projects like these, which require immediate action, and by reporting their progress on its webpage. In the longer term, it will monitor the progress of strategic initiatives, issuing regular reports every second year (March 2011, 2013, 2015), while also communicating strategy-related messages from AUB’s senior leadership. A version of the Institutional BSC designed for the community at large will be published on its website beginning April 2009.

OSM accomplishes its tasks with three full-time non-academic staff: a director, a strategy implementation manager and an executive officer. Planning for Medicine is coordinated by a separate staff member attached to AUBMC/FM. Other resource persons are called upon for assistance as necessary. Current staffing is sufficient for the planning activities described above. However, devolution of two OSM functions – service quality assurance and the coordination of legal matters affecting AUB – would enable staff to focus their efforts on planning. Service quality activities now tend to be training-related, which points to the possibility of decentralizing them and placing them under Campus and AUBMC Human Resources departments. New strategic plans and KPIs have clarified the activities of various service departments; the modification of existing satisfaction surveys might also be beneficial in this respect.

2008 Institutional Self-Study

18
1. Assessment of AUB’s first strategic planning cycle

At present, there is no formal process to assess the effectiveness of strategic planning activities at the University. The 2008 Institutional Self-Study and the Institutional Survey undertaken in conjunction with it thus provided AUB and its constituents with a timely opportunity to assess the progress made to date. Survey questions concerning the first strategic planning cycle were drafted in late 2007 and posed to academic and administrative heads, faculty and staff in January 2008, while the Campus Strategic Plan Overview was still being drafted. The subject was discussed in greater detail during interviews with senior administrators.

Survey respondents rated the clarity of strategic planning goals and objectives rather high when they were the head of an academic (75 percent) or administrative (83 percent) unit and were describing the plans of their own faculties/divisions; rather unsurprisingly, perceptions were significantly less positive (30-40 percent) when they were asked about the clarity of university-wide goals and objectives. Similarly, the heads of academic/administrative units reported high awareness (85-90 percent) of the content of their own strategic plans, but only 70 percent of administrative heads and a very low 35 percent of academic heads indicated that they were familiar with the content of the Campus plan. Non-academic staff were somewhat better informed (43 percent) about the Campus plan than academic heads, while faculty were the least informed (33 percent) of all. These findings reflect the fact that the 2008 Survey was conducted before the Campus Strategic Plan Overview was widely disseminated.

About 55 percent of academic heads and 70 percent of administrative heads said that they had participated in the development of the strategic plan for their respective faculty/division. The degree of participation reported by faculty (40 percent) and staff (44 percent) was lower still and fell further when the subject was the university-wide plan: merely 14 percent of faculty and 30 percent of staff played some role in the broader planning process. These gaps represent an opportunity for improvement that will be elaborated in the recommendations section below.

During interviews, senior administrators agreed that the University had progressed significantly in terms of developing strategic plans and using performance indicators. They also said that the 15 unit plans were well aligned with AUB’s mission statement and the Campus plan. However, they felt that strategic planning had not yet become part of AUB's culture. They also said that the University had too many KPIs, some of which were not useful. (As noted above, about 20 percent of KPIs were culled from the Institutional BSC by March 2008.)

Some suggestions for the improvement of the planning process made during interviews included:

- Increased communication about the strategic planning process, the plans that result from it and the outcomes once plans are implemented.
- Wider involvement (including the Senate) in the strategic planning process.
- More synchronized plans across units, particularly academic units.
- Fewer and better prioritized strategic objectives.
- Better prioritization of initiatives.

B. Resource Allocation

1. Strategic initiatives

As part of the planning process described above, the 15 academic and administrative units prepared financial estimates for each of their proposed initiatives. Approximate operating and capital costs and revenues were calculated on an incremental basis, in other words, to determine the degree to which any particular initiative would add to base year costs and/or revenues. After reviewing the plans and the figures, the Strategic Planning Steering Committee selected for inclusion in the Campus Overview those initiatives carrying the highest priority rating as specified by the planning units. Their affordability was determined by comparing their costs with the revenues that they were expected to generate. The total anticipated revenues from these initiatives covered a substantial portion (65 percent) of their estimated costs. The strategic plans called for no new major capital investments, partly due to the fact that many related expenditures have already been factored into the Campus Master Plan, an ambitious blueprint for new construction and renovation which is adequately funded (see below). Further initiatives taken from the strategic plan for Medicine or recommendations in the 2008 Institutional Self-Study to form the Institutional Strategic Plan Overview will be vetted in the same way.
The planning templates used by the unit-level teams aided SPSC members in their task since they ensured consistency across units when consolidating and quantifying initiatives. Template data was entered into the IPPI (now OSM) database to generate very specific tables indicating incremental changes over five years in the total number of faculty, staff and student FTEs (full-time equivalents) as well as operating and capital costs and revenues. All of these figures were broken down according to implementing unit, including support units, regardless of whether they had their own strategic plans. For instance the Office of Admissions, which includes the Financial Aid Office, stands to gain one additional staff FTE and an extra $3.75 million in its operating budget over the plan’s five years, subject to BOT approval. Table 2.1 summarizes the allocation of financial resources for strategic initiatives between 2009-10 and 2013-14.

Table 2.1. Allocation of Resources for Strategic Initiatives over Five Years

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2009-10</th>
<th>2010-11</th>
<th>2011-12</th>
<th>2012-13</th>
<th>2013-14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Operating COSTS</td>
<td>$5,624,631</td>
<td>$8,578,477</td>
<td>$10,440,632</td>
<td>$12,578,572</td>
<td>$13,992,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Minor Capital COSTS</td>
<td>$542,000</td>
<td>$1,069,000</td>
<td>$674,000</td>
<td>$562,000</td>
<td>$674,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating REVENUES</td>
<td>$3,458,795</td>
<td>$5,306,705</td>
<td>$7,523,854</td>
<td>$8,840,293</td>
<td>$10,450,642</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The actual allocation of funds to strategic initiatives occurs during the annual budgeting cycle (see below), when all activities, including strategic initiatives, compete for limited resources. In order to ensure implementation of the selected strategic initiatives, OSM has begun identifying those with inadequate or unclear funding and to raise this issue with the heads of the appropriate planning units. This is in line with OSM’s new role of reviewing and highlighting discrepancies between the five-year cost and revenue estimates for strategic initiatives and the amounts budgeted for these estimates on an annual basis. The monitoring process has evolved to become more dynamic than originally envisioned in the 2005 Strategic Planning Guide put together by IPPI; however, the end result should be increases in accountability and productivity at all levels. OSM will be developing an incentive program tied to certain BSC metrics with the offices of Human Relations and Finance. This is also an instance of resource allocation for the achievement of institutional goals and renewal.

2. Operating and capital budgets

While it is still too early to assess the effectiveness of overall resource allocation for the achievement of strategic initiatives still requiring BOT approval, much can be said about the way in which the University currently allocates financial resources, in particular, for the achievement of its mission and goals. (For more on institutional resources, see Section D below.)

2.1. Budgeting process

AUB’s operating budget uses revenues from student tuition, ancillary services (such as residence halls and cafeterias) and hospital fees to cover core support costs – principally salaries/benefits, supplies, utilities and maintenance. Funding for the capital budget comes from investments; fundraising; US-government aid; depreciation; and accrued interest and dividends on the plant depreciation fund. These funds are used to finance short- to medium-term capital expenditures (repairs and replacement of equipment) and long-term projects (construction and renovation of facilities) in accordance with the Campus Master Plan.

The University’s operating and capital budgets are the financial expression of academic and strategic objectives that have been approved by the Board of Trustees. They are carefully developed and organized over a period of several months. Budget preparation begins with the heads of departments, who submit their recruitment and, later, major and minor (valued at less than $5,000) capital requirements for the following year to the deans of their respective faculties. Recruitment requests are studied by the dean and the provost and are ultimately presented to the BOT during their March meeting, one of three held in each fiscal year (1 October to 30 September). Capital requests are combined and prioritized by the various faculty administrative committees before being presented for approval to the university-wide Budget Committee, which
is composed of the president, provost, VPs, comptroller and the directors of AUBMC, Finance for Medicine, Internal Audit, OSM and the Office of Financial Planning and Budget (OFPB). The only dean on the committee is the dean of FM, who attends in his capacity as VP for Medical Affairs; the provost, therefore, represents academic interests. This committee prepares an aggregate capital budget with a three-year time horizon and presents it, together with a draft operating budget, for approval by the BOT during its June meeting. It also provides the BOT with a scenario for operations over the next five years.

Before the Budget Committee submits its recommendations, senior administrators and OFPB work alongside deans and department heads to assist them in determining the best allocation of available resources. OFPB plays a central role in budget preparation: it is responsible for planning, coordinating and facilitating the process; it determines all schedules, formats and procedures; and it prepares estimates of revenues and expenditures. OFPB also works with AUBMC's finance team to consolidate the operating budget into one document with a balanced fiscal result. The operating budget is subject to amendment until its final approval at the November BOT meeting. (Budget preparation policies and procedures are available online at http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/departmental/Financial%20Planning%20and%20Budgeting/index.html.)

Budget activity is monitored at several levels. Deans and department heads are responsible for overseeing their own areas of the budget; they are thus expected to have been actively involved in its development so that they understand its contents fully and are knowledgeable about activities planned for the budget year. OFPB also reports and reviews budget variances with deans and heads according to a mutually agreed schedule. The Comptroller's Office further monitors expenditures or revenue charges to ensure that they are consistent with approved budgets. The financial management system prevents external purchase orders from being processed if there are insufficient funds for the proposed acquisition. Finally, the Budget Committee reviews reports depicting year-to-date results and year-end forecasts relative to the approved budget approximately every three months. It also studies annual performance against the five-year plan on an annual basis and communicates its findings to the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees, generally at their March meeting.

During the course of the year, when operating budgets for staffing or other expenditures are inadequate, as in the case of position upgrades (which are pre-reviewed by Human Resources) or simple over-spending, deans and department heads may submit the proposed expenditure to the Budget Review Committee for consideration.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, only a few faculty members said that they had participated in or were even aware of the content of campus-wide, faculty, or department budgets: the level of awareness, input and satisfaction reported by non-academic staff was much higher in all three cases. Department heads were much more focused on their own budgets than those of their faculties or the University.

### 2.2 Budget allocation

Allocation of the operating budget is largely based on precedents set the previous year and their outcomes; allocation of the capital budget follows a thorough review with broad representation to prioritize requirements. The aim of the budget process is the most effective distribution of resources in support of the University’s mission, goals and objectives. The role of academic and administrative heads is to ensure that the development of budget proposals is consistent with AUB’s strategic plans for their areas of responsibility.

Since budget preparation begins at the departmental level, it can be described as a bottom-up process. However, this view has been contested by some deans and at least one VP, who expressed dissatisfaction with the budgeting process on various grounds: most felt that they had insufficient input in the formulation of operating and capital budgets and were not really part of the budgeting process; some said that they did not adequately comprehend the allocation methodology employed, for example, when utilities or other costs were charged against their budgets. By contrast, OFPB personnel believed that they were actively engaged with the deans and chairs of all faculties when it came to setting budgets. Finally, there was also an apparent lack of transparency, confirmed by Provost Heath, in that deans are informed about their own budgets, but not those of colleagues.

One specific complaint from deans was that AUB’s “top-down,” same-as-last-year methodology left them with minimal discretionary funding and insufficient funds for capital equipment or badly needed renovations to facilities. Another concerned the discrepancy between
the amount of revenue attributed to a given faculty and the budget allocated to it. Two deans said that their faculties received 35 percent or less of the revenues that they generated. However, one of them, the dean of OSB, noted that FAS carried a large share of his faculty's teaching load and that OSB's rapid expansion had entailed the recruitment of a number of academic staff and a new building that was almost ready for occupancy. FAS's load may continue to increase due to changes in the general education requirement for students enrolled in professional schools.

One solution proposed by deans to address unsatisfactory budget allocations was to base the distribution of tuition revenues on students' credits rather than their majors. This would significantly impact the operating budget of FAS in particular. Another dean suggested that managers of service departments be "held accountable" and "bear the consequences" when their units do not perform and lose money, rather than spreading losses across faculties/departments.

Resource allocation is all about compromises and the level of acceptance or frustration expressed regarding these compromises is one measure of budgeting success or failure. Deans are rightly concerned that newly established universities in the Gulf states will use their generous budgets to attract faculty and students away from AUB. Moreover, complete transparency, good communications and meaningful involvement in the negotiating process are all necessary elements for genuine compromise. Still, the University's overall financial, material and human resources have improved steadily since 2004 (see below) and resource allocation has occurred in the context of institutional planning.

C. Recommendations

1. Engage more members of the AUB community in the preparation of unit-level and institution-wide strategic plans during the next planning cycle. Communicate finalized plans to the relevant constituencies more effectively.
2. Form an institution-wide strategic planning committee to facilitate inter-faculty and interdisciplinary coordination.
3. Institutionalize the process of reviewing and monitoring implementation of strategic plans in faculties and major administrative units.
4. Improve communication regarding the budget process at all levels. Increase participation by chairs, faculty and line managers. Special attention should be given to raising the awareness and involvement of faculty.
5. Include the Board of Deans as a body in the budgeting decision-making process. Involve all academic units and sub-units, as well as the Senate, in the processes of planning and preparing budgets, monitoring expenditures and fundraising. This will help to ensure that resource allocation is consistent with the needs of each faculty.
6. Issue annual guidelines and criteria for the budgeting process, including final approval.
7. Improve reporting of budget revenues/allocations for the previous year to key stakeholders, especially deans. Reports should clearly indicate where the balance of the revenues generated by each faculty was allocated and the rationale behind such allocations. Misconceptions concerning budget allocations will be less common if stakeholders are provided with a more comprehensive picture of the University's priorities and initiatives.
8. Study the possibility of implementing a credit-based system for the allocation of tuition revenues to faculties. Such a system might increase revenues from students taking more than the 12 credits/semester required for full-time status, improve the accuracy of revenue distribution between faculties and strengthen overall resource allocation.

INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

D. Institutional Resources at AUB

1. Financial resources

The University's main sources of income include tuition and medical fees; contributions and grants; and investment returns. Tuition and medical fees have historically been the primary sources of operating revenues (about 75-80 percent combined), followed by grants and donations (8-12 percent). Generally speaking, AUB is more tuition dependant than academic institutions in North America. The University spends approximately 45 percent of its total operating budget on
educational services (Campus), 40 percent on health services (AUBMC) and 15 percent on management, public relations and auxiliary expenditures (see Appendix D 2-3).

Despite AUB’s best efforts to reduce tuition dependence through fundraising initiatives over the past few years, tuition as a proportion of total revenues has actually risen slightly, from 74.4 percent in 2002-03 to 78.0 percent in 2006-07. Fundraising now brings in about $27 million each year, more than three times the amount attracted before the University’s successful Campaign for Excellence, which ended in December 2007. This means that AUB has been able to generate sufficient funding to carry high-priority capital projects to completion, while simultaneously expanding its range of educational programs and increasing support services for students and faculty. It has also worked to enhance research funding, both by raising the budget of the University Research Board and by establishing the Office of Grants and Contracts, which assists faculty in identifying and obtaining external funding (see Chapter Five), often from international donors.

In recent years, the University has balanced its consolidated budget for the campus and AUBMC. Several factors have contributed to this achievement including the strong performance of the restructured Development Office in fundraising; improved alignment of tuition fees with academic support costs; and reductions in the operating deficit at the medical center. The establishment of the Medical Practice Plans (MPPs) at AUBMC has continued to have a positive effect on its financial performance by expanding the number of physician referrals to ancillary hospital units. However, as President Waterbury has observed, AUBMC continues to present AUB with a singular challenge that is not shared by peer institutions in the US, namely, difficulties in collecting fees accrued by patients who are covered by the Lebanese government’s National Social Security Fund (NSSF). Not only does it take considerably more time to receive final payment from the NSSF than from private insurers, but the amounts recovered from the government can be discounted by more than 30 percent. Thus, although AUBMC is central to the University’s most prestigious academic program, it has also contributed $80 million in operating deficits since 2004. These deficits have been funded by AUB at the expense of other academic and administrative sectors. According to its current operating plan, AUBMC should break even by 2012. The University has not indicated that it will work to recuperate past financial support to benefit other academic endeavors after that date.

2. Physical and technological resources

Since 2004, AUB has continued to construct new buildings and upgrade existing facilities in accordance with the Campus Master Plan (CMP), which was completed in 2002 and committed the University to expenditures totaling $140 million over 20 years. The CMP set parameters for the development of AUB’s Beirut campus, which extends over 73 acres and is divided into the historic Upper Campus (including AUBMC), the Middle Campus green space and the seaside Lower Campus, the site of most new construction projects. The aim of the plan is to provide a state-of-the-art teaching environment that supports the achievement of the University’s mission and its long-term goals. The plan estimates the number of students that AUB’s academic space will be able to accommodate in conditions of medium or high growth after five (6300-7200), ten (7200-9000), or twenty (8000-10000) years. This is solely in terms of physical infrastructure, of course, and does not necessarily mean that the University will increase enrolment to these levels. Two ‘enablers’ involved in the implementation of the CMP, namely, the Facilities Planning and Design Unit and the Physical Plant, have completed five-year strategic plans to sustain their facilitating roles during AUB’s first planning cycle. (The plans are available online at http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html).

Construction/renovation projects valued at $103 million are either completed, ongoing, or still in the planning stage. Table 2.4 indicates the status of major projects begun since the 2004 Institutional Self-Study. Only minor work remains to be done on some projects described as ongoing, such as the School of Nursing and the Olayan School of Business, which are scheduled for completion in January 2009 and March 2009 respectively. By contrast, construction of the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, another ‘ongoing’ project, depended on the demolition of the Gulbenkian building, which took place in September 2008, once the infirmary had moved to new premises at AUBMC.

Chapter Two: Planning, Resource Allocation and Institutional Renewal and Resources 23
**Table 2.4. Major* Building and Renovation Projects at AUB since 2004**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Description of Work</th>
<th>Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Abu Khater Medical Arts Building – Private Clinics (Phase I/II)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Renovation and Expansion of the Emergency Room</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Renovation of 4th Floor – Abu Haidar Neuroscience Center (Phase II)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Renovation of 8th Floor – Basile Cancer Center (Phase II)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Renovation of Neonatal Intensive Care Unit (NICU)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AUBMC</td>
<td>Renovation and Expansion of Surgery Suites</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Jafet Library HVAC Distribution Systems</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>MEP Infrastructure Utility Tunnel (Phases I-III/IV)</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>New Pilot Plant</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Post Hall - Renovation of Archaeological Museum</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Van Dyck Hall - Renovation of 4th Floor (Environmental Health department and labs); Renovation and refurbishment of auditorium; Redesign of courtyard</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>New CCC Scientific Research Building</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Central Chilled Water Plant</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Nicely Classrooms</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>New Charles Hostler Student Center</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Track and Green Field Rehabilitation Works</td>
<td>Completed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>School of Nursing</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Olayan School of Business (OSB)</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Overhaul and Concrete Casing of the Fuel Tanks</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Irani Oxy Engineering Complex</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>New Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Campus</td>
<td>Redesign and Renovation of Engineering Lecture Hall</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off Campus</td>
<td>Mayfair Residence Refurbishment Works</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*‘Major’ refers to projects involving at least an entire floor.*

The Olayan School of Business is expected to be a major catalyst for the enhancement of the Lower Campus, helping to transform AUB’s public face on Beirut’s Corniche. Its classrooms will also serve as ‘swing’ space during the renovation and remodeling of other AUB buildings. Accommodating classes during implementation of the Campus Master Plan has been a major consideration during planning. The Consolidated Contractors International Company (CCC) Scientific Research Building was specifically designed as a multi-purpose modular building to house engineering laboratories before conversion to multidisciplinary research labs for such disciplines as biology, medicine, physics, chemistry, mathematics, computer science and engineering. Once it is completed, the new Irani Oxy Engineering Complex will support advanced research in engineering and architecture. Smaller projects that do not appear in Table 2-4 include the extensive renovation of about 15 laboratories serving the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS), FEA, FAS (specifically, biology, physics and chemistry) and others.

By end September 2008, 13 classrooms in the Nicely building were also updated; some were simply refurbished, but others were transformed into electronic classrooms. ‘Smart’ classrooms like these, which are installed almost routinely in new buildings (such as OSB), represent the
latest stage in the development of AUB's technology infrastructure, which is discussed at length in Chapters Three and Six.

Implementation of the Campus Master Plan has been funded in part by donor support solicited during AUB's successful Campaign for Excellence. However, because capital projects were not the only beneficiaries of this fundraising initiative, some debt financing has also been necessary. All major projects have been equipped with Building Management System (BMS) stations, which also collect data on operation modes and consumption from newly installed water and energy monitoring devices.

Despite all of the above activity, some academic administrators, faculty and staff feel that the renovation of classrooms, laboratories and dormitories has not proceeded with sufficient speed (see Chapter Four) or that the work and frequent changes in premises have disrupted classroom and laboratory activities unnecessarily (see Chapter Five). FAS would like to see funding immediately increased for further upgrades to classrooms in the Nicely building, which is largely used for classes in the humanities and social sciences, and for renovations to the Lower Campus buildings housing biology and physics departments, both of which reactivated PhD programs in 2007-08. The Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) is pressing for a new agriculture building, also on Lower Campus. In the 2008 Institutional Survey, students expressed general appreciation of the educational and technological facilities on campus, but were less satisfied with facilities for sports and fine arts. (The survey preceded the spring opening of the Charles Hostler Student Center, which is mainly an athletic facility.)

3. Human resources

By most standards, AUB has done exceptionally well in attracting and retaining sufficient numbers of qualified academic and administrative staff. However, mounting regional competition for human resources is a concern, particularly since it comes at a time when the University has committed itself to reinforcing its faculty base with a view to encouraging pure and applied research. According to some deans, the absence of PhD programs in various areas contributes to AUB's inability to sustain regional leadership in certain programs.

Between 2003-04 and 2007-08, the total number of instructional faculty full-time equivalents (FTEs) teaching undergraduates increased from 453.2 to 482.3. Undergraduate enrolment also grew, but the institutional faculty-student ratio held steady at about 13:1. Faculty received adequate funding for professional development and research activities through the Provost's Office, University Research Board and the Office of Grants and Contracts, and also benefited from professional support offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning, which held biannual seminars on portfolio development for promotion, as well as other offerings. (For more on faculty, see Chapter Five.)

The number of administrative staff has remained fairly steady, with the University continuing its policy of increasing productivity, rather than hiring new employees. AUBMC has proven the exception to the rule, with about 50 new hires; however, their salaries and benefits have been outweighed by the revenue streams that their services have generated. The University's two Human Resources departments (Campus and AUBMC) are currently in the process of developing competency-based training programs for staff. Thirty-eight percent of all non-entry level positions were filled internally between 2004 and 2007. (For more on staff, see Chapter Three.)

4. Educational resources

Capital investment in academic equipment and in upgrading facilities and equipment for academic support services is budgeted at $6.3 million for 2008-09. (It reached $3.2 million in 2007-08 and $5.1 million in 2006-07.) Most of the University's educational resources, including its new Writing Center, are amply treated in Chapters Three and Six.

4.1 Centers, institutes, programs and groupings

The October 2005 report of the Strategic Planning Committee on Graduate Education and Research contained a number of important recommendations relevant to the University's approximately 20 research centers, groupings and programs. In addition to the reintroduction of the PhD in select fields of study and enhanced efforts to strengthen existing Master's programs and their structures, the report recommended the promotion of 'thematic' multi-disciplinary and interdisciplinary research and graduate programs; the formation of virtual and, ultimately, real
research centers that would also transcend departmental and faculty boundaries; and the elaboration of governance structures and regulations to “enhance academic and quality assurance structures, policies and procedures.” The report recognized that establishing “effective mechanisms and an infrastructure to facilitate creating and sustaining centers of excellence in research” would be a major task over the next ten years and suggested two measures to advance this goal: supporting faculty applying for research grants and providing them with additional incentives to compete for international funding. A number of these recommendations made their way to the Campus Strategic Plan Overview, where Goal Three (Faculty Excellence) has as one of its initiatives increasing intramural support for research and Goal Four (Pure and Applied Research) has a number of related strategies, including restructuring the governance system to increase interdisciplinary research collaboration and raising funds for new academic centers of excellence and for research in selected areas. The strategic plans of AUB’s six faculties also demonstrate commitment to interdisciplinary programs and to the establishment of centers of excellence for education and research.

The major sources of financial support for the University’s existing centers, virtual or real, vary considerably, as do the amounts involved. There is no single source of information concerning their funding, which may involve AUB-granted budgets, endowment income, research grants, income earned through activities under the aegis of the Office of Regional External Programs (REP; see Chapter Seven), or some combination of these four possibilities.

Just under half of the centers receive operating budgets through the University, which provided slightly less than $2 million to eight centers in 2004-05 rising to $2.29 million in 2007-08 and $2.97 million in 2008-09. The Agricultural Research and Education Center (AREC), a 100-hectare facility located in Lebanon’s Beq’a Valley, received the largest share of funding, namely, a little over $1 million in 2008-09 to cover its administrative, physical plant and production costs. A semester at AREC is required of students in FAFS’s Agriculture program (see Chapter Seven for more on AREC). FAS’s Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies (CAMES), home to the largest concentration of international graduate students at the University and the only AUB center to offer an advanced degree, saw its operating budget rise to $707,863 in 2008-09. Significant amounts were also budgeted for the Center for Research on Population and Health (CRPH) at FHS and the Center for Advanced Mathematical Sciences (CAMS), which received $553,055 and $216,152 respectively during the same year. The remaining $343,711 was split between five other centers, the Initiative for Biodiversity Studies in Arid Regions (IBSAR), the Science and Mathematics Education Center (SMEC), the Center for Behavioral Research (CBR), the Energy Research Group (ERG) and the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), which began operations in the spring of 2008 on a start-up budget from USAID. All or most of these centers also pursue and attract external research grants with assistance from the Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC), which has played an increasingly important role at AUB in recent years (see Chapter Five). A few also receive funding from endowments controlled by their faculties.

Five other AUB centers and programs rely primarily on endowments. The Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Alsaud Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR), which offers a minor program to undergraduate students, earned $261,763 in 2006-07, the last year for which income figures were available. The new Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) will be the first research center at the University to use part of its endowment for the construction of separate on-campus premises. Other endowed centers and programs include the Institute of Financial Economics (IFE), the Anis Maksoud Program in Literature (AMPL), the Munib R. and Angela Masri Institute of Energy and Natural Resources, which is still growing its endowment, and the Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum Center for Entrepreneurship and Innovation (MCEI), a new initiative announced by OSB in July 2008. AUB’s remaining centers and groupings are funded largely through research grants or income earned through REP activities or other contracts. They include the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit (ESDU), the Water Resources Center (WRC), the Transport Research Unit (TRU) and the Center for English Language Research and Teaching (CELRT), which sponsors a program leading to an MA in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL).

The activities and underlying structures of these centers, groupings and programs are extremely diverse. Activities range from the organization of conferences, seminars and workshops to pure and applied research projects and collaborations. A few centers have their own publications. Some centers are listed in AUB’s undergraduate and graduate catalogues, while
others are mentioned solely on faculty websites. Some are associated with undergraduate or graduate degrees, while others are research- and/or service-oriented. Several centers which concentrate on research activities have developed their own bylaws and many report annually to their host faculties or, if interdisciplinary in nature, to the Provost’s Office. Others function more informally as groups of faculty with common research goals and use part of their external funding to support their own centers. This strategy has improved the success rate in attracting additional funding from local, regional and international partners. Broadly speaking, these centers now have higher profiles than they did in 2004, when many of them had only recently been established, although more can probably be done to increase their visibility.

There is no set policy at AUB regarding the establishment, operation, or assessment of research centers or groupings. In FEA, which has been particularly active in this area, centers or research groupings need to be approved by the relevant department, the faculty strategic planning committee and the dean to ensure that sufficient space and resources, including administrative support, will be available and that the center’s goals are in alignment with those of the faculty. The dean coordinates fundraising for approved centers with the Office of Development, which has recently worked on proposals to solicit endowment funds for TRU, ERG and the proposed Center for Infrastructure Research and Development (CIRD). Research centers funded in this way also require formal approvals at levels higher than individual faculties. However, AUB bylaws regarding fundraising for new projects/initiatives do not mention the words ‘center’ or ‘institute,’ or any periodic evaluation or review of the results achieved.

E. Financial Stability

AUB has experienced continued success in meeting financial challenges despite the volatility of Lebanon’s political and economic environment, which can affect operating revenues, and of US stock and financial markets, which influence endowment and donor revenues. In recent years, the University has maintained a balanced budget, barring a $4.6 million loss as a result of the July 2006 war, which temporarily halted AUB’s operations and normal economic activity throughout the country. The University was able to absorb this financial setback with minimal discomfort and the budgeting process remained largely on track, meeting deadlines and institutional objectives. The impact of the loss was partly cushioned by AUB’s significant endowment, which reached $462 million by May 2008. (The endowment had broken the $400 million mark in 1998, but was adversely impacted by US stock market corrections in 2002, when it fell to $261 million, and in 2008, when it fell to an estimated $364 million.)

Goal Nine of the Campus Strategic Plan Overview stresses the importance of fiscal responsibility to the continued advancement of AUB’s educational mission. As the preamble to this goal notes, “We need to fit the scale of our operations to our constrained resources even as we actively seek to expand the resources available to us.” Three KPIs (F3c, F3d and F3e) from the University’s Institutional Balanced Scorecard (see Appendix D 8-1) assess its ability to achieve and maintain fiscal balance.

While the University’s long-term stability seems certain, it faces numerous short- and medium-term challenges with financial implications. Competition for qualified students, outstanding faculty and scarce research funding has increased in recent years, both from established universities in Lebanon and from newer institutions in the region, particularly in the stable and wealthy Gulf states. If AUB is to realize some of its other strategic goals, such as diversifying the student body, attracting and retaining quality faculty and promoting pure and applied research, it must allocate financial resources for the initiatives designed to achieve these goals.

AUB’s challenges over the next five years will involve balancing increases in tuition and ancillary fees against the capacity of students to absorb these burdens; ensuring new program growth while also respecting the cap on student enrolment (see Chapter Four); maintaining investment in infrastructure without relying too heavily on debt financing; continuing to improve the financial performance of AUBMC; and identifying alternative revenue streams to reduce the University’s dependence on tuition.

Although containing non-academic support costs is one of the strategies for the achievement of AUB’s goal of a balanced budget, core support costs rose recently. In September 2008, the Lebanese government legislated the first increase in the minimum wage (66.7 percent) since 1997. The immediate impetus was a stiff rise in the cost of living, which climbed 12.43 percent.
(excluding rent, according to official figures) between June 2007 and June 2008. Since staff NSSF payments are based on the minimum wage, this impacted the cost of benefits to the University. Personnel earning salaries in excess of the minimum wage, in other words, almost all staff, also received a one-time salary increase of about $133 per month retroactive to May 2008. AUB’s energy costs doubled over the past two years to reach $9.5 million and were forecast to rise to $14.5 million in 2008-09 before the global economic crisis began in Fall 2008 and fuel prices fell. Significant increases in the prices of other commodities, such as steel and cement, also impacted costs in recent years due to the University’s new construction and renovation projects.

1. Donor support

The University has successfully avoided extensive reliance on debt financing to meet its capital budget needs, most notably, expenditures related to implementation of the Campus Master Plan (see above). AUB has continued to maintain a reasonable viability ratio largely because of strong donor support, as evidenced by the remarkable success of the Campaign for Excellence, which yielded more than $171 million, an unprecedented sum for a University fundraising initiative in the Middle East, and increased the University’s ability to attract donor funds from $6 million to over $27 million per annum. Due to AUB’s proven ability to generate support from its significant alumni base, the University trustees and the incoming president are actively considering a new capital campaign. The expansion of Development Office activities in support of fundraising is one of the initiatives mentioned in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview. AUB currently has three KPIs (F1a, F1b and F2e) to assess donor support and endowment.

2. Endowment

With the market value of its endowment nearly doubling between September 2002 ($261 million) and May 2008 ($462 million), AUB reached and maintained an endowment level comparable with the top 150 US colleges and universities and higher than two peer universities (Villanova University and the American University, Washington) according to recent statistics published by the National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO). During this period, the University continued to adhere to its policy of drawing funds from its investment portfolio at the average rate of 4.75 percent over a rolling 20-quarter moving average. This rate is in line with the NACUBO average endowment spending rate for institutions with endowment assets in the range of $100 million to $500 million. By end 2008, the portfolio value of AUB’s endowment was estimated to have dropped 21.2 percent, a decline similar to those reported in the press for Harvard (22 percent) and Yale (25 percent) universities.

3. Investment returns

In response to the rather severe downturn in US equity markets in 2001 that adversely impacted the value of AUB’s portfolio, the Investment Committee of the BOT invested more broadly and reduced asset allocation targets for US equities from 70 percent to 46 percent. These changes in policy enabled the University to keep pace with its NACUBO endowment size benchmark ($100 million to $500 million) for fiscal year 2007, outperforming the one-year, three-year and five-year returns as shown in Table 2.2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>3-Year</th>
<th>5-Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUB</td>
<td>19.3%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NACUBO</td>
<td>18.0%</td>
<td>13.1%</td>
<td>11.5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. Accounts receivable

Collecting on hospital receivables due from the Lebanese government continued to be a significant challenge for all large hospitals in Lebanon, including AUBMC. Outstanding balances doubled from $27.9 million in September 2003 to $53.5 million in September 2007 and were largely incurred by patients treated under the National Social Security Program. Amounts due from the Lebanese government comprised 79 percent of total hospital receivables (KPIs: F3a, F3a.gov, F3a.prv). In contrast, accounts receivable balances due from private insurers and self-
pay patients have actually decreased by $1.7 million (or 10 percent) within the past two years in response to enhanced collection efforts directed at these groups.

5. Operating performance
The University has steadily closed the gap between operating revenues and expenses (before mark-to-market gains/losses), which stood at a deficit of $7.5 million at the end of fiscal year 1998, was reduced to $1.1 million by 2002, and was totally eliminated in fiscal year 2007. A major success factor contributing to the elimination of the deficit was the introduction of Medical Practice Plans to provide physicians with incentives to generate more business for the hospital. As the July 2006 war demonstrated, however, the current breakeven status is very fragile and totally dependent on the country’s political and economic stability. Moreover, operating costs are constantly increasing as new facilities come online and as the University repays the loan that helped to finance their construction. As noted above, AUBMC still operates at a deficit that the University covers at the expense of its educational mission (see KPI F3b).

6. Internal and external audit
The Internal Audit Office is an independent function that continually reviews and evaluates the accuracy of financial data and the effectiveness of operations (including non-accounting activities), controls and electronic data processing. It provides objective analyses and constructive recommendations to management, which retains full control over their implementation. The Office, which is staffed by a director, two managers, four staff and an administrative assistant, regularly reports to AUB’s president and the BOT Audit Committee. Over the past 10 years, it has experienced the highest staff turnover rate of any AUB department, largely due to low starting salaries, the promotion of personnel to other units and, more recently, strong local and regional demand for qualified internal auditors.

The University is also audited by an international external auditing firm (Deloitte as of 2008; previously KPMG) appointed by the Board of Trustees and has consistently received unqualified audit reports. Although the New York State Legislature has not yet enacted legislation for non-profits similar to the Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX) Act, AUB is broadly compliant with SOX auditing requirements. This includes protection for whistleblowers and implementation of a process for the anonymous reporting of fraudulent practices.

7. Funding diversity
A fundamental component of the University’s long-term sustainability is income generation from various sources. At the macro level, funding diversity exists in terms of the even split between traditional university revenue streams and hospital services. This diversity has enabled AUB to leverage fundraising efforts across two donor bases – those connected to the various faculties and those interested in supporting the University’s medical mission. However, funding diversity is less apparent when each of these two components is examined separately.

Tuition fees are the main source of income for the achievement of AUB’s educational mission when the operations of AUBMC and the University’s New York Office are excluded. Since the 1999 fiscal year, AUB’s tuition-to-total-revenue ratio for strictly educational operations has been 80 percent or greater. This high dependence on undergraduate tuition in particular, coupled with the fact that roughly four-fifths of all students are Lebanese and live in an environment characterized by economic stagnation and political instability, has the potential to affect the University’s ability to generate sufficient revenue streams to sustain operations.

For example, AUB has not always had the flexibility to adjust tuition rates to keep pace with increases in core support costs, such as employee salaries/benefits, utilities and maintenance, as well as other academic and administrative expenditures. A recent comparison of AUB’s tuition rates with those of other universities in Lebanon and the region revealed that its rates were lower than the Lebanese American University, American University in Dubai, American University in Cairo and American University of Sharjah. In 2005-06, AUB set a plan in motion to increase tuition fees across faculties while converging the lower rates charged by FAS with the higher rates of the professional schools. Overall tuition rates were forecast to increase at between four and five percent per annum over the next five years. The execution of this plan was deferred by one year due to the July 2006 war, when AUB gave precedence to maintaining enrollment over increasing revenues. The University’s 2008-09 Budget Summary is the source of the
following table (see http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webfpbo/Files/2009_Budget_Summary.pdf), which illustrates rises in tuition for 2007-08 and 2008-09:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2007-08</th>
<th>Undergraduate 2008-09</th>
<th>Graduate 2008-09</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FAS – New Students</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>8.5%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAS - Continuing</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSB</td>
<td>4.0%</td>
<td>6.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAFS</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FEA</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FHS</td>
<td>2.5%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FM and SON</td>
<td>3.0%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual Average</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>6.1%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Financial support for students will also increase during 2008-09, rising by $1 million or 9.3 percent over the previous year, when it totaled $11.7 million.

**F. Recommendations**

1. Study ways to attract more research funding and other grants to the University.
2. Explore, in depth, the possibility of generating additional revenue by broadening continuing education programs to include evening and for-credit courses. This would improve the efficiency of facility utilization and further the achievement of AUB’s educational mission to the broader community.
3. Redouble Development Office efforts to secure funds needed to support the geographical and socio-economic diversity of students and the new PhD programs.
4. Conduct a comprehensive review of the missions of all AUB research centers and on current practices, policies and procedures pertaining to their establishment, funding, management and assessment. Propose, in consultation with the directors of the centers, the appropriate deans, the provost and other University officers as needed, clear and consistent policies and procedures that cover these areas.
5. Produce financial reports for each research center/program/grouping that aggregates all sources of funding.
Chapter Three

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Purpose: Working Group 3 (WG3) on Leadership, Governance and Administration (Standards 4 and 5) was charged with examining the University’s effectiveness in clarifying the roles and responsibilities of constituencies in policy development and decision-making and in providing the direction and administrative structure needed to facilitate quality improvement and the achievement of AUB’s mission, goals and objectives. Regarding Standard 4, the group also aimed at examining the adequacy of corporate bylaws in relation to governing bodies and the effectiveness of such bodies. For Standard 5, it further sought to gauge the adequacy and effectiveness of administrative and staff resources; communications and working relationships; adherence to policy and procedures; and information and decision-making systems for senior administrators. During its investigation, the working group attempted to determine whether improvements to the University’s system of governance and its administrative and functional structures have provided a climate of collegiality and good working relations from the perspective of constituents.

Membership: WG3 was composed of 10 members, including three full professors from the faculties of Arts and Sciences (FAS) and Engineering and Architecture (FEA); one member was also the director of CASAR (Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saud Center for American Studies and Research). The remainder of the group included the vice president for human resources (HR), the assistant director of the Development Office, a process improvement manager, an assistant for special projects and an administrative assistant, as well as a trustee and a student. The group was co-chaired by the VP for HR and an FEA professor.

Methodology: From October 2007, WG3 held regular meetings that took place every two weeks on average. Its first major task was to propose and review a set of questions relevant to Standards 4 and 5 for the 2008 Institutional Survey. WG3 then formed sub-groups on each standard to review relevant documents, including corporate, Senate and faculty bylaws, and AUB’s organizational chart (see Appendix E); interview the president, provost, vice presidents and deans; organize focus groups made up of faculty (including senators), staff and students; and analyze the survey results. Nineteen professors of all ranks representing five of the six faculties participated in two faculty focus groups; 27 students from all years and faculties made up two student focus groups. WG3 discussed the findings of each sub-group and reviewed the draft report, which was prepared and edited by the co-chairs and a staff member from the Office of the VP for HR.

This chapter is divided into the following sections:
Leadership and Governance
   A. Governance Structure
   B. Changes to Bylaws
   C. Effectiveness of Governing Bodies
   D. Recommendations
Administration
   E. Organizational Structure and Clarity of Roles
   F. Human Resources
   G. Systems and Information Management
   H. Recommendations
LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

AUB has been striving to foster a climate of shared collegial governance among all constituents by involving trustees, administrators, faculty and students in policy development, program planning and resource allocation designed to meet the goals and objectives of its educational mission.

A. Governance Structure

The definition of governance chosen for this study is offered by Frederick Balderston, who states:

A general definition of governance refers to the distribution of authority and functions among the units within a larger entity, the modes of communication and control among them, and the conduct of relationships between the entity and the surrounding environment. When that entity is a contemporary U.S. university, the conventional building blocks for governance within the university are its trustees, the executive administration, the faculty, and other groupings and units, such as student government and alumni. The traditional discussion of the basic internal and external relationships of a private university focuses on the ways boards of trustees, presidents, and numerous other actors discharge their institutional responsibilities. [F. Balderston, *Managing Today's University: Strategies for Viability, Excellence, and Change*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1995), 55.]

AUB has a governance structure very similar to those of most private universities in the United States. Under the provisions of its corporate charter, an autonomous Board of Trustees (BOT) is custodian of the University's properties, endowment and mission, and is ultimately responsible for everything that AUB does. The BOT administers the invested funds, sets the annual budget and determines policies for the University's direction and operation as well as its own functions. It specifies the duties and responsibilities of its chairman, its vice chairmen, the University president and, in consultation with the president, AUB's vice presidents, provost, deans, Senate and Board of Deans (BOD), as well as the New York office and its senior representatives. It appoints the president, who is given broad authority to operate the University, assigns limited powers to various University officers through the president and delegates certain academic matters to faculty through the University Senate.

The BOT consists of up to 45 members who are appointed on the recommendation of its Membership and Nominations Committee and who serve terms of three years or less. There is presently no limit to the number of terms they may serve, although such a cap is being considered by the committee. The BOT elects, as officers of the corporation, a chair or co-chairs, one or more vice chairs, a secretary, a treasurer and an assistant treasurer, all of whom exercise duties typical of their respective offices. It may further elect and define the duties of additional officers and agents at its discretion. The BOT also elects the members of its standing committees, namely, the Executive Committee and six other committees: Membership and Nominations; Buildings and Grounds; Investment; Finance and Budget; Compensation; and Audit. As the names of most of these committees indicate, the BOT has complete fiduciary responsibility for the institution and exercises close supervision over all related matters. The Board may designate other or special committees as required.

The University Senate and the Board of Deans are the major organizational units responsible for ensuring that the academic mission of AUB is achieved. The Senate is chaired by the president and consists of 29 elected members from the six faculties (Agricultural and Food Sciences; Arts and Sciences; Engineering and Architecture; Health Sciences; Medicine, which includes the School of Nursing; and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business), the academic deans and certain ex-officio members, such as the vice presidents. The latter do not have voting rights. The Senate is a legislative body that reflects and responds to the needs and suggestions of the various faculties with respect to curricula, personnel and other matters that affect interfaculty relations and the academic functions of the University as a whole. It recommends to the BOT, through the president, new academic policies or modifications to existing ones. Much of the Senate's work is done through ten committees: a steering committee and other
committees/boards for academic development, admissions, faculty affairs, graduate studies, libraries, student affairs, research, publications and disciplinary questions. In Spring 2008, the Senate voted to establish a new standing committee to oversee proper implementation and periodic review of AUB’s general education requirement (see Chapter Seven). Most Senate committee members are elected by faculty; the rest are members by virtue of their office (see http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~websenate/).

The BOD is chaired by the president and composed of the provost, academic deans, dean of student affairs and the vice presidents (the latter do not vote on academic decisions). None of these officers is elected. AUB’s corporate bylaws call on the BOD to “exercise responsibility for implementing the policies developed by the Senate, the various faculties, or other sources affecting the operation of the faculties” and to “assist the president and other administrative officers of the University in carrying out and securing compliance with the non-academic policies and requirements of the University.” Separately, the academic deans head their own faculties and schools, and are assisted by department chairs, who are appointed by their deans after consultations with members of the relevant department, and advised by some nine faculty standing committees that have areas of responsibility roughly corresponding to the Senate committees.

The University Student Faculty Committee (USFC), which is the main representative body for students, and six student representative committees (SRCs) – one for each faculty – round out AUB’s governance structure. SRC members are elected by peers in the same class and faculty for one-year terms. The 17 students on the USFC are elected from the 95 members of University SRCs. The USFC also includes seven faculty members elected by peers in their own faculties, three ex-officio members (the dean of student affairs, the director of student activities and the chair of the Senate’s Student Affairs Committee) and the president as chair. The USFC oversees the activities of the SRCs, reviews and recommends budget allocations for them and exercises an advisory role in policy-related matters. (For more on student representation, see Chapter Four.)

The University endeavors to provide clear lines of authority, broad consultation and appropriate representation. As indicated above, final authority for the University’s governance is vested in the BOT and delegated by the board to the president. The president exercises that authority through the provost, vice presidents, deans, directors and other administrative officials in consultation, as fitting, with individual departments and with faculty, professional and support staff, and students. Authority is defined in the bylaws of the component units of the governance structure.

In order to facilitate open communication, the president and other administrative officers of the University consult with faculty, staff, students and external constituents on issues affecting them. Consultation is characterized by early discussions with the concerned parties; jointly formulated procedures for these interactions; reasonable deadlines (within the constraints of the academic calendar); access to appropriate information; adequate feedback; and the timely communication of decisions to those affected by them.

To the extent possible, AUB also strives to ensure that all constituents are represented on bodies that set budgets, policies and procedures (see Chapter Two); and that elected and appointed representatives are suited to the roles in which they serve. When temporary special committees, study groups, or task forces are established by the president to address matters affecting the University’s mission, the majority of the membership is drawn from the general faculty. Staff, students and alumni are included as appropriate. The chairs of these bodies are normally appointed by the president.

Good institutional governance is important to AUB and the subject of one of nine goals in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html). Goal Eight clearly links the goal to the expected outcome: “By constantly reviewing governance at AUB, we will ensure that organizational structures and human capital are actively engaged and aligned to achieve institutional objectives.” The preamble to the goal stresses transparency and active participation and the strategies for its achievement begin with the re-evaluation of governance bylaws (see below) and include the delegation of authority wherever appropriate.

1. Organizational realignments

Since the 2004 Self-Study, AUB has made certain organizational changes to improve consultation and representation and thus strengthen the contribution of various groups to the fulfillment of its mission and goals. One major shift involved the establishment, in October 2006, of the
president’s ‘Cabinet,’ which includes the six vice presidents (of the offices of Development, Facilities, Finance, Human Resources, Medical Affairs and Regional External Programs), the directors of the offices of Strategy Management and Internal Audit, the head of the Protection Office and the provost, who represents academic interests. The Cabinet’s role is to improve administrative alignment and communication, particularly for units that once composed the now defunct Office of the Vice President of Administration, which was dismantled when the complexity of managing major functions demanded a new organizational approach (see below). On the academic side, a Unified Admissions Committee (UAC) was set up in 2005-06 to coordinate, review and approve undergraduate admission applications, a task previously handled at the faculty level (see Chapter Four). Two new interdisciplinary research centers, namely, the Issam Fares Institute (IFI) for Public Policy and International Affairs and the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), were also created and placed under the jurisdiction of the provost.

Another significant change was the establishment of the Worldwide Alumni Association of the American University of Beirut (WAAAUB) in October 2007. Previously, many of AUB’s 50,000 alumni belonged to a loose confederation of alumni chapters in various countries and localities and did not have a worldwide body to represent their interests and focus their efforts. The mission of the WAAAUB is to “strengthen the ties between the American University of Beirut and all its alumni, engage all alumni in advancing and supporting the goals and the educational, research and service mission of the University, foster the educational, career and social interests of the University’s alumni, and work to preserve and promote the rich heritage and values of the University.” It also oversees the nomination of three alumni to serve on the BOT. The first annual meeting of the WAAAUB was held in Beirut in January 2008.

It is still too early to know whether most of these changes have had a positive effect on authority, representation, consultation, transparency and alignment at the University. The effectiveness of the UAC is evaluated in Chapter Four.

B. Changes to Bylaws

The Board of Trustees must endorse all changes to bylaws and all major changes to AUB’s academic and administrative policies. Recommendations for bylaw changes are made to the BOT by relevant organizational bodies through the president. In some cases multiple approvals are necessary. Although the BOT has the authority to enact changes without the approval of these bodies, there is no evidence that this has ever occurred. The latest versions of all AUB bylaws approved by the BOT are available in the policies and procedures page of the University website (http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/). What follows is a review of actual and proposed changes to corporate, Senate, faculty and student representative bylaws in recent years.

1. Corporate bylaws

AUB’s corporate bylaws were revised in 2005, 2007 and again in 2008. These revisions were part of a continuing process to strengthen principles and practices related to authority, consultation, representation and transparency and to respond to changes in governmental legal requirements. Examples of the former include the BOT’s unanimous 2007 decision to increase its membership from 40 to 45, as well as a 2008 decision to add three WAAAUB members to the board. Revisions to the corporate bylaws in November 2008 were designed to streamline certain corporate processes (such as eliminating ‘members of the corporation,’ a category that no longer serves a function); clarify the roles and jurisdictions of a number of BOT standing committees; normalize current practice regarding BOD votes on academic matters; and generally update governance practices.

2. Senate bylaws

An ad-hoc Senate committee was recently charged with the careful review of Senate bylaws to propose changes that might help in clarifying the Senate’s role and increasing its effectiveness in examining and representing University and faculty affairs. This led to a modification of Senate voting procedures so that motions are carried by a majority of voting members in attendance as opposed to all voting members: this change was expected to speed the work of the Senate. Other committee recommendations subsequently passed by the Senate included a proposal that all Senate committees and boards review their bylaws with a view to establishing consistency in
elections for, or appointments to, the position of chair; a proposal that all such chairs be elected or appointed from among serving senators to ensure their familiarity with Senate deliberations and to facilitate direct annual reports to that body; and a proposal that deans provide senators and Senate committee members with opportunities to share issues of concern with their constituencies during faculty meetings. As noted above, the Senate also voted to create a new standing committee to oversee the transition to new general education requirement for undergraduate students. These proposals were sent to the president for final approval and implementation.

3. Faculty bylaws
The Provost’s Office has begun an initiative to review and update the aims and functions of standing committees in all faculties and to align and streamline committee structures across faculties to the extent possible. FAS and FHS have reviewed their committees as requested, while FM and FEA have made other changes to their bylaws. Faculties have begun sending the bylaws to the Senate. Separately, OSB bylaws were amended in February 2007 in line with accreditation requirements and the amendments were subsequently approved by the Senate and BOD. The most significant changes involved granting “non-professorial full-time faculty members, visiting professorial and non-professorial faculty members, and a select number of part-timers chosen according to announced criteria the right to attend, participate in, and vote in selected [faculty] committees,” excluding those responsible for “personnel decisions” and the admissions and administrative committees.

4. Student representative bylaws
The Senate Committee on Student Affairs has proposed, for possible Senate consideration and approval, revisions to bylaws governing the formation and operation of the six SRCs. The proposed changes relate to student eligibility for election and SRC composition, funding, meeting frequency and voting procedures. In late Spring 2008, these proposals were sent to the president in his capacity as chair of the University Student Faculty Committee, which determines policies and procedures for the SRCs. Their further development requires USFC input before the Senate can take further action.

During focus groups and interviews, faculty and administrators generally agreed that changes to the bylaws enacted or under review represented an improvement over 2004.

C. Effectiveness of Governing Bodies
Feedback from interviews and focus groups on the effectiveness of the various bodies providing leadership and/or taking part in governance at the University indicated that this occurred with due regard for authority, communication and representation given assigned roles and functions at different levels of the governance structure. As always, there is room for improvement.

1. Board of Trustees
The BOT takes its responsibility for self-regulation very seriously. It recently revised its new member orientation guide and implemented a stricter conflict of interest policy and code of conduct for trustees. It has also taken steps to improve communication between trustees and other members of the AUB community. The BOT holds three full board meetings (in March, June and November) and an average of 54 committee meetings per year. Despite the challenges posed by Lebanon’s security situation, 48 committee meetings have taken place in Beirut, rather than New York, since 2004 (see Appendix D 3-1.) The presence of trustees on campus for committee meetings in February, May and October has increased opportunities for interaction with faculty. Meetings with administrators and faculty also regularly occur by video and/or teleconference: for example, the BOT Audit Committee is currently conducting regular biweekly teleconferences with the directors of the Office of Strategy Management (OSM) and Computing and Networking Services (CNS), the VP for Finance and members of his staff in order to monitor and improve business practices. For the last several years, the Senate has elected one senator to attend meetings of BOT committees (particularly those held in Beirut) and of the full Board (generally the annual June gathering in New York, where he or she presents a statement approved by the Senate). The 2008 presidential search committee was composed of BOT members and one dean, and the search process included consultations with representatives of AUB’s academic
community, including student leaders. Search committees for a new provost and VP/dean for AUBMC/FM (AUB Medical Center/Faculty of Medicine) each have at least one faculty member on them. BOT decisions are communicated to constituencies by the president, who occasionally publishes them on the University website.

During interviews and the 2008 Institutional Survey, the general consensus was that the BOT has been diligent in exercising its role. Senior administrators noted that the BOT monitors its own functions at its discretion. Many faculty members said that they were not in a position to assess the effectiveness of the BOT since its work takes place largely behind the scenes. Others said that they were informed only briefly of decisions made by the BOT on matters that it considered important. According to the 2008 Survey, 17 percent of faculty believed that they were not routinely consulted by the BOT or academic administrators concerning institutional matters and decisions related to governance and leadership; the balance of faculty respondents said that they were consulted (12 percent) or remained noncommittal.

2. Senior officers and BOD

The president, provost, vice presidents and deans make up the administrative and academic executive of the University. President Waterbury and Provost Heath recently completed rigorous and lengthy evaluations of each vice president and dean, and were themselves evaluated (by the BOT and president respectively), establishing procedures for annual performance reviews of all executive officers. This process will be further strengthened by the introduction of periodic reviews against performance of the institutional strategic plan (using Kaplan-Norton Balanced Scorecard methodology). Annual performance reviews of senior administrative staff also take place, but with varying degrees of formality. There is room for increased transparency in some of the faculties in this regard. Improvement opportunities also exist for the inclusion of faculties in the strategic plan review process. (Chapter Two indicates how this is being addressed.)

Faculty respondents to the 2008 Survey clearly indicated their belief that the president and senior administrators were effective in guiding AUB to accomplish its educational and financial objectives: only 4 percent of faculty disagreed with this statement. A larger proportion of faculty members, 26 percent, reported that they had little or no say in the selection and evaluation of academic administrators, including the heads of their own faculties.

All of AUB’s executive officers come together during weekly meetings of the Board of Deans. When votes occur during a meeting, VPs are not eligible to vote if the subject is academic in nature. As noted above, the role of the BOD in the University bylaws is to implement policies, which also implies their elucidation. In focus groups, some faculty expressed the opinion that the BOD often exercised its interpretive prerogative without seeking input from faculty members. Some faculty and Senate members also expressed dissatisfaction with the BOD’s interpretation of its own role in relation to that of the Senate (see below). They pointed to a similar lack of clarity concerning the respective roles of the BOD and the provost, saying that some deans believed that the BOD ranked higher than the provost in the governance structure and that the provost did not have authority over them when they acted in concert.

Some faculty focus group members stated that the arrival of a new president and provost would be an excellent opportunity to send faculty a message concerning the continuing commitment of the University and its senior academic and administrative leadership to shared governance in word and deed. The VP for HR stated that a firm belief in shared governance was highlighted in the new president’s position description and in revised position descriptions for the provost and VP/dean AUBMC/FM.

3. Senate

The Senate represents faculty and communicates their recommendations on matters of academic interest to the BOT through the president. Professors who represent or have represented their faculties in the Senate view its role as clearly defined in the bylaws, which describe it as “the academic legislative body for the academic affairs of the University as a whole.” While this role is reported as being effectively fulfilled in terms of approving curricula, voting degrees and similar issues, senators say that they are given remarkably little real power by the administration when it comes to personnel, policy and matters of a controversial nature, such as tenure, which also affect the University’s academic functions. In their view, these areas also fall under ‘academic affairs,’ but this interpretation does not seem to be generally shared by senior administrators. Senators favor the process recently followed when improving faculty maternity benefits: the
change in policy was reviewed by the Senate, recommended to the president and ultimately approved by the BOT.

Some deans and Provost Heath responded that the Senate was supposed to work for the benefit of the entire University and not just faculty members and that senators did not always seem to realize that. They argued that some senators were insufficiently knowledgeable about AUB’s bylaws and the true role and functions of the Senate.

Faculty focus groups indicated that the Senate was often regarded as somewhat ineffectual since its recommendations are not binding. Quite recently, upon the advice of the Senate, the president approved a tracking system for Senate recommendations. Even when such tracking takes place, however, the mechanism by which a Senate resolution/recommendation affects the policy- or decision-making process remains fuzzy at best. There is still a backlog of Senate resolutions whose status is unknown since there is no official response to them if no action has been taken. Faculty members expressed the need for senators to report back to them concerning Senate debates and their outcomes. Senate minutes, which are posted online and sent to faculty members, were deemed inadequate substitutes.

Senators participating in focus groups reported that some of their fellows occasionally felt constrained from freely expressing their views and casting their votes. They said that expressing one’s opinion and voting on controversial matters by a show of hands were not always expedient in the presence of academic administrators. A number of senators also had the perception that deans have “double voting rights” in that they vote on the same academic issues in both the BOD and the Senate. According to the Senate bylaws, the deans are ex-officio Senate members with voting rights by virtue of their positions as faculty deans; according to the University bylaws, the BOD is an executive body that implements policies set by the Senate.

4. Heads of academic units
Department chairs reported that they exercise authority regarding teaching-related issues, such as course schedules and instructor assignments; they are also entrusted, to the extent prescribed in the relevant bylaws, with ensuring that academic rules and regulations are being followed. In almost every other area, however, including strategic planning, budgeting and faculty lines, they make recommendations to their deans, who ultimately have the final word. Once budgets have been allocated, they normally have autonomy in managing their disbursement. (For more on these points, see Chapter Five.)

There are differences among faculties regarding the appointment of chairs, but similarities as well. The position of department chair is not normally advertised and there is no guarantee that the successful candidate is fully aware of the responsibilities that the position entails or possesses appropriate management and people skills. Chairs are normally chosen for a three-year renewable term. Their annual performance as chairs is not subject to academic or administrative evaluation. They receive no formal training and are given no manual that clearly explains their duties and the internal administrative deadlines for various tasks (for example, budget proposals for major equipment and renovations; class schedules and teaching loads; recommendations for appointment and reappointment; staff evaluations). These tasks may be more or less numerous depending on the size of the department and may be overwhelming for new chairs. During interviews, all deans agreed on the importance of chairs and the need for formal training. The Provost’s Office had done some preliminary research to determine how to better support chairs and possibly give them more authority. Greater authority for departments and their chairs should be accompanied by the consolidation of departments when possible and appropriate.

Forty percent of academic unit heads reported that they did not provide any form of input (counsel, data) to develop the operating plans of their faculties. A somewhat smaller proportion of faculty, 32 percent, also said that they had no role in the budgeting process. Some faculty focus group members said that chairs should have more involvement in budgetary decisions made for their units. Only 40 percent of chairs stated that they were aware of their faculty’s budget.

5. Faculty
Faculty members are well represented in various governance structures. They elect colleagues to the Senate, serve on committees in their own faculties and form the majority of members in university-wide standing committees with academic functions. This level of representation is seen as problematic in smaller faculties, where there are fewer faculty members to cover service
activities, and as insufficient in larger ones, where many faculty play no governance role. In all of these cases, faculty input is advisory in nature.

Faculty feedback revealed considerable disenchantedment with institutional governance at AUB. During the 2008 Institutional Survey, 26 percent of faculty reported that faculty committees had no impact on administrative policies (pension, health insurance, paid research leave) related to their working conditions; 22 percent said that they did have influence, 19 percent were neutral and 24 percent said that they did not know, with another 10 percent omitting the question entirely. Most reported that they had no influence in budget prioritization for the institution (75 percent), their faculties (65 percent), or their departments (50 percent). In focus groups, some faculty said that they had largely given up on articulating their needs because they had been ignored in the past or even criticized by their immediate superiors; these same faculty confirmed, however, that it had become easier to speak freely to senior administrators during the Waterbury administration (1998-2008). In general, faculty feedback indicated the need to increase faculty involvement in the governance structure, to improve communications with them on issues of importance to the University and to motivate them to be more proactive in involving themselves in governance-related issues.

In the context of governance, security of employment was the concern expressed most frequently by faculty. (See Chapter Five for other major concerns.) Discussions over the last year or so about the possible reinstatement of tenure and the proposed transition mechanism were inconclusive, which frustrated a major group of faculty members. (See Chapter Five for more on tenure.) This lack of progress, coupled with insufficient transparency on how long-term (seven-year) contracts are or can be awarded, also gave rise to skepticism concerning the University's view of the quality and integrity of its faculty. Some faculty members further said that the shared governance role of their elected Senate representatives had been undermined by the appointment of a presidential task force on tenure, rather than by calling on the Senate to examine the issue of its reinstatement. The task force's membership was decided by the president in consultation with the academic deans, rather than by election, and included faculty who were also assistant or associate deans. Some faculty members thought that the assistant or associate deans did not fully represent them, while others raised no such objections.

Faculty also indicated the absence of a set policy on academic compensation at AUB. When faculty members were asked, during the 2008 Survey, if they were aware of the criteria for merit increases in their faculties, 39 percent of them responded negatively. Sixteen percent confirmed that they had some knowledge of the criteria and the rest gave neutral responses. During interviews, the deans stated that they had policies, written or not, to guide merit increases, but that they seldom communicated them directly to members of their faculties.

Finally, the grievance system appears to be functioning satisfactorily for faculty, with 13 cases adjudicated since 2004. All but 13 percent of faculty indicated awareness of the existing system. (See Chapter Five for more faculty views.)

6. Students

The University Student Faculty Committee is an active body which serves as AUB’s central student government. Students sitting on the USFC are elected from the membership of student representative committees for each faculty. Student focus groups and the 2008 Survey confirmed that most students were informed about the USFC and its functions: 40 percent of survey respondents, for example, agreed that they were aware of it, while only 15 percent said that they were not. The principal complaint of students regarding the USFC and SRCs concerned the lack of interaction between elected representatives and student body members once elections are over. Twenty-seven percent of student survey respondents said that they were not consulted on matters affecting them before administrative decisions were made; 18 percent of students indicated that they were consulted. Similar responses were heard in student focus groups.

Faculty SRCs, departmental student societies and student clubs (for cultural and heritage activities) continued to play important roles by providing students with a rich array of activities to broaden their educational experience. Despite the political turmoil that Lebanon has been passing through and the inevitable impact it has had on all strata of society, these groups have sustained their commitment to preserving AUB's positive social and intellectual climate and to leaving external conflicts off-campus. Still, some student focus groups suggested that the student government is politicized to such an extent that the adequate student representation is impaired.
by external political affiliations. Others said that appropriate SRC representation for AUB's 1,400 foreign students (including dual nationals) was one of the casualties of this politicization.

7. Alumni
The newly established WAAAUB provides an official mechanism for the participation of AUB alumni worldwide in the University's mission and in governance at the BOT level. It will be some time before an effective assessment of this attempt to include alumni in the overall governance structure is possible.

D. Recommendations
AUB has continued to make significant progress in leadership and governance since 2004 (see Appendix D 3-2 for a brief summary of developments). Authority levels are reasonably well-defined in corporate bylaws, although interpretations vary, and consultation and representation are found at appropriate levels and with adequate frequency. Indeed, one telling measure of the resiliency, depth and strength of the University's leadership, governance and administrative structures was the response of AUB constituencies in meeting the challenges presented by the July 2006 war. (See the website of the President's Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service or TFRCS at http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webtfrcs/). Nonetheless, there is a clear need to continue building on recent improvements in shared governance.

The revision of AUB's administrative structure in 2006 was a strategic move that provided several opportunities to enhance leadership and governance, while the institutionalization of strategic planning (see Chapter Two) focused attention on strategic direction, the alignment of goals and quality improvement at all levels. As efforts in these areas continue, there is still room for improvement in terms of the operational alignment between AUB's mission and strategic goals, on the one hand, and actual procedures and decisions, on the other. The arrival of a new president and other pending changes in the senior leadership (provost; VP/dean AUBMC/FM) will mean a longer transition period than originally anticipated, but will also provide a unique opportunity to address leadership and governance issues as follows:

1. Review and update all University bylaws periodically (every two to three years).
2. Improve shared governance by allocating academic departments greater control over budgeting (for instance, by creating cost centers for departments), as well as hiring and promotion processes.
3. Provide better training for department chairs. Ensure that all chairs are aware of the academic/administrative calendar, which provides all deadlines set by the University and the deans on a broad range of issues including budgeting.
4. Change the structure of the Budget Committee to allow greater academic and perhaps student representation. There are several ways this could be done: the deans could be made permanent members or could serve on a rotating basis; the Senate could appoint a representative; and the USFC could also do the same.
5. Reinstate tenure with appropriate safeguards to meet the needs of both faculty and the University.
6. Explore and address the reasons for faculty disinterest and lack of engagement in AUB's governance structure and governance-related issues. Define “academic affairs” in the Senate bylaws and elaborate on the responsibilities of senators toward the Senate and their constituencies. Produce a high-level governance process chart indicating the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Deans and the Senate.
7. Clarify the role of the provost in terms of the academic and administrative management of the Board of Deans, the deans and their faculties.
8. Require all academic committee chairs to be elected by faculty and not appointed by the president or the deans.
9. Draft and disseminate written texts containing the rationale and policies/procedures for academic compensation.
ADMINISTRATION

E. Organizational Structure and Clarity of Roles

1. Structure and organization

Good administration is essential to good governance. This close relationship is underlined in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview, where a number of initiatives falling under Goal Eight target administrative functions, including organizational and assessment structures and indicators. While the BOT is ultimately accountable for all AUB activities, including administration, it delegates appropriate levels of authority and responsibility to various officers through the University’s president; thus, the provost and BOD represent the academic community on administrative as well as academic matters, while the various VPs and senior staff represent the non-academic community on non-academic administrative matters.

AUB’s organizational configuration has witnessed a number of changes over the last several years in response to the identification of important structural gaps and the development of new strategies to reinforce the three pillars of governance discussed above, namely, lines of authority, communication and representation. Many of these changes involved units that formerly made up the Office of Administration, which was disbanded in coordination with the retirement of its last VP. Two of them, Facilities and Human Resources (formerly Personnel), became major offices in their own right, while Business Services and the units under it were migrated to the Office of the VP for Finance. The director of the Protection Office began reporting directly to the president, while the director of the Office of Strategy Management (known as the Office of Service Quality and Organizational Improvement before Summer 2004 and the Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement to Fall 2008), which already reported to him, was given responsibility for the coordination of all legal matters within the University. To ensure that AUB’s strategy for information technology and systems supported its academic mission, Computing and Networking Services moved to the Provost’s Office, which was also reorganized.

Since the reorganization, the coordination of these units has been achieved through the president’s Cabinet, which first convened in Fall 2006. The Cabinet includes all 10 direct reports to the president: the VPs for the offices of Development, Facilities, Finance, Human Resources, Medical Affairs and Regional External Programs; the directors of the offices of Protection, Strategy Management and Internal Audit; and the provost. It meets weekly to review administrative issues and make recommendations to the president.

AUB’s overall organizational chart was updated by Campus Human Resources to reflect these changes and the charts of the vice presidents and provost were also revised accordingly. Most major units/functions either created websites or updated existing ones, which include their mission statements and organizational charts. With one exception, the overall structure, number of direct reports and span of control of the vice presidencies is typical of an organization of AUB’s size. The exception is the Office of the Provost, which has 20 direct reports, twice as many as the President’s Office, partly due to Provost Heath’s commitment to supporting newly created units and centers, such as the Issam Fares Institute (IFI) for Public Policy and International Affairs or the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS), which institutionalized the activities of the President’s Task Force for Reconstruction and Community Service. This large number of direct reports warrants review and possible revision. The provost also meets on a regular basis with the deans as circumstances warrant.

Some other major changes improved administrative alignment as well as planning and performance in support of AUB’s academic mission and goals. At the time of the 2004 Self-Study, the dean of the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) was also the VP of the Office of Regional External Programs (or REP; see Chapter Seven). This anomaly was rectified in 2006, when a full-time VP for REP was appointed, allowing the dean to devote all of his efforts to leading the OSB. The Beirut and New York Development Offices underwent significant realignment as well, with resources increased accordingly. Five FTEs (full-time equivalents) replaced 1.5 FTEs assigned to fundraising; the alumni relations unit added two co-directors for alumni, one based in Beirut and one in New York; and the campus Publications Office increased full-time staffing from three to six.

The Senior Staff Committee was re-activated in 2007-08 to serve as a platform for discussions and feedback on new developments and major challenges facing the institution. The monthly
meetings are chaired by the president and attended by the provost, vice presidents and directors of University and AUBMC units, who represent their departments and the interests of middle management. Over 1,900 of AUB’s 2,850 non-academic employees are represented by a workers’ syndicate with contract negotiations occurring biennially. Most issues of governance and administration in relation to non-academic personnel are prescribed by the contract, which is published in the staff policy pages of University website. Syndicate membership is voluntary and non-members pay no dues. AUB grants some of the benefits negotiated in the contract to staff who are not syndicate members.

The University’s Employee Benefits Committee is charged with ensuring that academic and non-academic benefits, including the health and pension plans, are up-to-date and competitive. In June 2008, the committee’s membership was expanded to include a senator, bringing the total number of members up to eight, three of whom, including the senator, are faculty.

AUBMC is continuing the process of establishing itself as a separate business unit. To date, financial, human resources, physical plant and computing/networking functions have been devolved to the medical centre, although dotted line responsibilities remain with the corresponding vice president on campus. The University retains authority over audit, safety and risk management, the operating deficit and receivables, and negotiations with the syndicate, which is a single organization and not divided between the Campus and AUBMC. There is only one labor agreement.

2. Clarity of roles at the University

2.1 Job descriptions

Overall there appears to be good clarity of roles as supported by job descriptions. The University provides job descriptions in English and/or Arabic for all new and existing positions on campus and at AUBMC. Changes in the responsibilities assigned to a position result in the modification or revision of the relevant job description; all changes are documented and the job description databases at both locations are updated. Since March 2004, announcements of vacancies on the campus and medical center HR websites have included job descriptions. This has increased recruitment efficiency while helping applicants to build clear expectations concerning prospective positions. In 2008, both HR offices began implementation of a new system of compensation and classification that will result in improved job descriptions based on competencies.

2.2 Communication within faculties and departments

While all faculties and academic departments held periodic meetings of faculty members, there were variations in the frequency and nature of these gatherings. Faculty focus groups expressed concerns about the quality of communication, particularly in large faculties and departments, where some faculty do not have the opportunity to express themselves or discuss issues to their satisfaction in the time allotted for meetings. They said that attendance at meetings and even electronic communications with colleagues were also negatively impacted by heavy teaching, research and service loads. Some faculties have organized annual retreats to raise communication and participation levels among their members. In contrast to these findings, staff focus groups and survey results indicated that communication within administrative units was at an acceptable level.

Email continued to be the most efficient means of overall communication as AUB moved further away from paper-based solutions. Services like “Doodle” have also been utilized to arrive at suitable meeting times for the members of large committees. AUB currently has over 50 ad hoc committees addressing academic or administrative issues. While the large number of committees may indicate broad faculty and staff representation on advisory bodies, its implications for communication at the University are less clear: for example, academic focus groups pointed to a lack of information concerning the terms of reference for AUB committees and also suggested that meeting results be disseminated more widely. Most committee minutes now have an “action” column to track and manage unresolved issues.

3. Departmental performance

The Balanced Scorecard (BSC) approach to assessment predated formal strategic planning at AUB. Since the start of the University’s first strategic planning cycle in 2004, the Institutional BSC has been substantially improved, with fewer Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) that are more strategically aligned. KPIs are used by administrative units and evaluated by the Office of
Strategy Management during periodic reviews. The KPIs of several departments, for example, the physical plant, auxiliary services and libraries, include web-based client satisfaction surveys to assess their performance and to indicate areas for improvement. Administrative KPIs based on other assessment tools continue to be refined and developed. Academic KPIs and processes to assess them are currently being rolled out at an accelerated pace. In the meantime, faculties discuss faculty and departmental performance during annual meetings or retreats (For more on institutional- and unit-level assessment, including progress toward student learning assessment, see Chapters Six and Eight.)

4. Fundraising and alumni relations
The reorganization of the Beirut and New York Development Offices in 2004-05 has proven extremely beneficial in enhancing fundraising efforts. In the 1990s, the average amount raised by AUB each year was approximately $6 million; at present, the average is $27 million per year. The Campaign for Excellence, which was designed to raise $140 million to sustain AUB's role as a regional leader in education and research, exceeded all expectations by bringing in a record-breaking $171 million by 31 December 2007. The integration of alumni chapters from around the world to form the WAA-AUB was a strategic initiative jointly undertaken by the BOT and VP for development (whose office is responsible for alumni relations) between 2005-06 and 2006-07. The new association has two governing bodies (a council and a board of directors) selected in direct elections involving all alumni as well as representation (three members) on the BOT. It has its own website (http://www.waaaub.org/) and offices, and held its first annual convention in Beirut in 2008. (See Chapter Two for more on the WAA-AUB.) Both the Campaign for Excellence and the creation of the WAA-AUB were important elements of the strategic plan formulated by the Office of Development (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~weosm/planning/committees.html) during AUB's first formal planning cycle. The Development Office also owns three Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) on the Institutional Balanced Scorecard (F1a, F1b and F2e).

F. Human Resources

1. Overview
AUB's Human Resources (HR) function underwent major changes following the administrative realignment discussed above. An HR Transformation Plan was developed in 2005 to enhance its transition from an administrative and transactional “gopher and order taker” to a provider of value-added services to all segments of the University workforce. The successful completion of this plan became the first priority of the department’s strategic plan, which was developed later the same year (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~weosm/planning/committees.html) in the context of AUB's first formal planning cycle and contains one of the most rigorous schedule of continuous strategic performance reviews found at the University.

One of the value-added services falling under the HR Transformation Plan is the compensation and classification review currently being conducted on behalf of non-academic staff. This initiative, which bases compensation and job classification on competencies, is expected to further strengthen the University's ability to compete for staff in the marketplace. It is a long-term investment which first began in 2004 and is expected to reach its final phase in 2010. Another value-added service is the provision of comprehensive benefits. Non-academic employees have long enjoyed a benefits package that included a health plan, transportation allowance and tuition aid for themselves and their children; they have not, however, been provided with life insurance coverage, so steps began to be taken in 2008 for its provision.

HR additionally recruited an organizational design manager whose responsibilities include policy development and database management. It administered an eight-week HR certification program to improve the overall competency levels of 29 individuals from HR departments as well as four administrative staff from the faculties. It also clarified the devolution of roles between HR Campus and AUBMC through high-level process mapping. Strong human capital gains were evidenced by the recent accreditation of AUBMC by JCI (Joint Commission International), which demands the highest quality and safety standards from hospitals.

According to the 2008 Institutional Survey, 64 percent of non-academic respondents were satisfied with AUB’s HR policies. Overall there was also general staff satisfaction with issues related to integrity, leadership and governance: 31 of 32 questions surveying the satisfaction levels of staff with these areas showed dissatisfaction rates of less than 10 percent.
On the academic side, the revision of the new hire orientation process in 2006-07 resulted in a major improvement in participant satisfaction. The total number of instructional faculty full-time equivalents in the workforce increased from 453.2 in 2003-04 to 482.3 in 2007-08 (see Table 5.1 (b) in Appendix D 5.1).

2. Empowerment

Various measures have been taken to increase faculty and staff empowerment. All executive officers in University faculties received the abovementioned HR training and certification to enable them to handle their own human resources issues more efficiently and effectively. Employees were given increased access and higher purchasing authorities on the ORACLE online purchasing module.

The introduction of a policy in 2007 covering the licensing of technologies developed at AUB is facilitating greater faculty and staff involvement and interest in technology development. The first licensing agreement, which covered an AUB-developed technology for exam scheduling, was signed in February 2008.

Academic and non-academic grievance processes continued to experience reasonable levels of utilization. Ten staff and 13 academic grievances have been adjudicated since 2004. As noted above, faculty would like to see their grievance process revised to include non-academic issues.

3. Resources

The 2006 Employee Satisfaction Survey showed that 58 percent of respondents believed that they had adequate resources (in the form of personnel, funds, money, materials and equipment) to do their work effectively. They also agreed that management allocated the resources that they required in a timely manner.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, the majority of staff respondents reported that their supervisor was competent in managing his/her reports, treated them fairly, valued their views and participation, supported knowledge transfer and provided ongoing guidance. Faculty respondents gave similar responses. Some faculty focus group members said that they would like to see greater involvement by the academic community in resource allocation decisions.

4. Recruitment, promotion and professional development

Most non-academic openings are advertised on the AUB website. In a departure from previous practice, a selection committee with representation from HR is formed every time such a position is advertised. Appendix D 3-3 provides statistics on the number of applicants who were recruited internally and externally through Campus and AUBMC HR from 2004 until 2007. All in all, 38 percent of non-entry level positions were filled internally during the period. The VPs for the offices of Facilities, Human Resources and REP, and the director of the Facilities Planning and Design Unit were internal promotions. The senior level positions of president, VP for finance, chief financial officer for AUBMC and assistant VP for REP were filled externally. The 2008 Survey found that 30 percent of academic respondents believed that AUB showed impartiality in promotion, while a rather high 22 percent disagreed with this statement.

AUB is addressing staff training in conjunction with its ongoing compensation and classification initiative. A module on the ‘client focus’ competency has also been added to the staff training program in order to reinforce gains made by the previous service excellence program in improving overall client servicing. Due to the importance of training to staff promotion, greater emphasis should be placed on identifying training needs and providing the budget necessary to meet them. When asked, in the 2008 Survey, if they were satisfied that AUB currently provided the training and development that they needed to do their jobs, 65 percent of staff agreed. The establishment of job families and competency-based training will represent a new approach to training and development in 2008-09 and beyond, and is expected to raise staff satisfaction to higher levels.

Academic recruiting is handled by the individual faculties, which advertise vacancies in professional journals and online venues frequented by members of the academic community. HR provides faculty members with after-hire support on contractual and other human resource issues. In 2007-08, the Provost’s Office provided $335,000 in grants for the professional development of faculty, while the University Research Board disbursed $833,184 for faculty research and related activities. Another $1.5 million was budgeted for the Center for Teaching and Learning, which provides seminars on teaching excellence; Library Information Services,
which promotes information literacy; and the Academic Computing Center, which trains and supports faculty and students in the use of Moodle, AUB’s course management platform, and other applications. (See Chapters Five and Six for more on these subjects.)

5. Policies and procedures: Review and access
The six members of the Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC) meet regularly to study the University’s new and existing policies/procedures. They identify areas in which updates to policies/procedures are required and agree, in conjunction with the appropriate department, on the scope of the proposed revision and a timeline for completion. The responsibility for the actual revision or drafting of policy documents rests with the relevant managers. The PPRC provides advice, exercises editorial oversight and reviews completed documents for consistency with other policies and procedures before recommending them to the president for approval. It also determines, in coordination with end-users, the appropriate accessibility classification for each published policy or procedure. The PPRC keeps the president informed of the status of all policies being reviewed.

The PPRC has taken an active role in assisting departments which have not submitted manuals. Manuals currently being developed are itemized in Appendix D 3.4. Some problems still exist in communicating changes in policies and procedures.

The PPRC has held a total of 60 meetings since January 2004 as per the schedule shown below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2004</th>
<th>2005</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2007</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of meetings</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of new policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>completed</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No. of revised policies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The July 2006 war necessitated the development of a crisis management process which has now been institutionalized as part of AUB’s overall policies and procedures.

The policies and procedures website (http://ppnpc.aub.edu.lb/) contains all AUB bylaws; handbooks for faculty, staff and students; a selection of departmental manuals; and almost 40 general University policies on a variety of subjects. Access to these texts is categorized as follows:
- Policies available to the general public.
- Policies that are for internal use and can only be accessed with an AUB user ID and password.
- Departmental operating manuals and procedures that are restricted to specific persons in a department.

More than 60 percent of staff who participated in the 2008 Institutional Survey agreed that AUB’s policies and procedures were clear, up-to-date, easy-to-use, sufficiently flexible and generally helpful. Some focus group members said that the Campus HR manual for non-academic employees needed to be updated.

G. Systems and Information Management

AUB has continued to strengthen its infrastructure for systems and information management. Computing and Networking Services (CNS) manages most administrative systems, including those used by faculties, in addition to networking and internet services; many departments also have their own information technology (IT) systems and support staff. Teaching and learning technologies are the responsibility of the Academic Computer Center (ACC). (See Chapter Six for more on these units and Appendix D 3-5).

After the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, a strategic planning committee was formed to identify AUB’s strategic IT goals for the next five years and to align them with the overall goals of the University (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosim/planning/committees.html). The IT goals included maintaining excellence in IT education and contributing to the advancement of technology; promoting the use of technology and providing appropriate training to enhance teaching, research and service delivery; and coordinating the planning, acquisition, networking
and integration of AUB systems and equipment to achieve the most effective return on investment. The advantages accompanying technological innovation were subsequently recognized in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview, where Goal Seven reads: “By appropriately structuring and continuously upgrading AUB’s ICT capabilities, we will ensure the efficient delivery of academic and administrative services to faculty, staff and students, and provide the technological tools and support needed for effective research, teaching and learning.”

To benchmark computing services against peer universities in the US, AUB joined the Educause Core Data Survey (CDS) initiative, which provides higher education ICT benchmarking trends, rather than ICT service metrics. CDS analysis showed that AUB fared well in terms of types of service offered even though the ICT budgets of peer institutions were at least five times larger, permitting higher redundancy, greater capacity, better response and/or more frequent renewal. AUB has not, however, experienced any major failures or delays in providing ICT services because infrastructure is normally updated when used capacity exceeds 60 percent during peak periods. Bandwidth has tripled during the past four years, although availability remains a serious concern.

In Spring 2008, the University set up an ICT Steering Committee to oversee the campus environment and management, development and budgeting priorities. Two ICT tactical working groups are also being planned, one for campus and one for AUBMC. A senior project manager has been named to work closely with the steering committee and the working groups.

In 2008, the University had a total of 3,656 personal computers, including 3,206 connected to CNS’s active directory and 450 portables that were not linked. Slightly more than 70 percent of these computers (2,609) were assigned to faculty and staff; the rest (1047) were public PCs largely concentrated in libraries and computer labs. The majority of students have their own laptops and access the intranet and the internet through wireless connections available across campus. In January 2008, AUB’s wireless network had more than 4,000 active subscribers.

1. Systems and services available to academic/administrative heads

E-mail remained the most popular means of communication at AUB. The University’s intranet was also used for educational purposes, data and policy access, and the downloading of information and software stored on campus servers. Access to data was facilitated by university-wide wireless connectivity.

Heads of academic departments reported that they utilized the SCT Banner system for both operational and decision-making purposes. They continued to be the Banner’s principal users, while administrative heads relied more on financial, payroll and specialized decision support systems. Support for these PC-based software applications has improved with the recruitment of additional CNS staff. The total number of staff rose from 24 in 2004 to 34 in 2007-08; however, employee retention has become an issue due to the relatively high salaries now being offered by IT firms in Lebanon and especially the Gulf states. During the same period, the operating budget allocated to CNS increased from $1.7 to $2.1 million.

Many routine HR processes have been automated since 2004, such as those to request certificates, obtain clearances and post time reports. Employees can now view their vacation records, pay slips and accounts receivable online as well. In 2007-08, a major consulting project was undertaken to address the quality of data content, ease of use and downloading capabilities of both the financial management and payroll systems.

The Moodle course management platform, Oracle Library Management System, OIRA survey reports and different online tutorials were used by members of the academic and administrative community to varying degrees. Moodle is managed by the ACC and its use has risen dramatically in recent years: in Spring 2008, 55 percent of all AUB course sections utilized it, a rise of 12 percent over Spring 2007. The number of online tutorials offered by the ACC also increased, from 39 applications in 2004 to 92 in 2007. Other ACC initiatives included the creation of a multimedia center (2006) to serve the AUB community and the establishment of AUB’s YouTube channel (2008) to promote the University to prospective students and donors. To accommodate its increased workload, the ACC has recently doubled its staff from four to eight full-timers.

I. Recommendations

Since the 2004 Self-Study, AUB has introduced significant organizational changes in response to
the increased complexity of managing major functions at the University. These changes improved administrative efficiency, permitted the introduction of value-added services in several areas and sharpened the focus for strategic planning and resource allocation. The introduction of a formal strategic planning process also benefited planning and allocation and provided all departments with the opportunity to structure and measure their annual performance goals in relation to institutional goals.

The University's overall administrative structure is adequate for a private educational institution of AUB's size. Management's span of control is also reasonable, barring concerns noted with respect to the Office of the Provost. Directors, managers and department heads continued to be satisfied with resource allocation, although communications in this area need to improve at all levels. The large number of committees for both the academic and non-academic communities were indicative of inclusion and transparency in decision-making.

Role clarity was generally widespread and staff development continued to be healthy as evidenced by the large number of positions filled by internal candidates. All training processes will soon be based on required competencies. The needs of constituents are also being met by AUB's ICT platform. (See Appendix D 3-2 for a brief summary of major administrative developments since 2004.)

WG3's recommendations are organized into three sections mirroring the above themes:

1. Organizational structure and clarity of roles
   1. Develop an organizational chart showing the principle areas of responsibility for each vice president and dean. The chart should be posted on the AUB website for greater transparency.
   2. Create an organizational chart for committees that shows their terms of reference and post it on the website.
   3. Identify communication gaps within the AUB community and develop processes to eliminate them. Better mechanisms are required to improve overall communications between senior administrators, including deans, and faculty. The publication of summaries of BOD and Cabinet minutes might be helpful in this respect.
   4. Complete the revision of the policy manual for non-academic staff.
   5. Review the role of the provost and the number of direct reports that he/she manages.

2. Human resources
   1. Finalize implementation of the classification and compensation study and address issues related to changes in management.
   2. Use the competency-based system for more effective identification of training gaps and secure the funding needed to address those gaps.
   3. Revise benefits to include short- and long-term disability provisions as well as life insurance. The pension plans for academic personnel should also be revised to provide equity in benefits for US and non-US faculty (for example, both plans should have a loan provision).

3. Systems and information management
   1. Address the critical issue of employee turnover in the CNS group through appropriate compensation and retention programs.
   2. Redesign the AUB website and functional/academic websites to provide a more user friendly system that enhances the dissemination of information. A great deal of information is already available, however, it needs to be organized more effectively.
   3. Find a cost-effective way to increase bandwidth.
Chapter Four

STUDENT ADMISSIONS, RETENTION AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Purpose: Working Group 4 (WG4) on Student Admissions, Retention and Support Services (Standards 8 and 9) was charged with assessing AUB’s progress in these areas since the time of the 2004 Institutional Self-Study and in response to the recommendations that it contained. WG4 aimed to determine the extent to which AUB’s admissions policies, procedures and practices were clearly stated, understood, communicated, implemented and reviewed, as well as their consistency with and contribution to AUB’s mission, goals and objectives, particularly the ideals of liberal arts education and the aspiration to provide impartial service to all constituents. Student support services were also scrutinized individually and jointly for consistency with institutional mission, goals and objectives, and to determine how effectively they contribute to enriching the quality of student life and promoting the “comprehensive development” of students as individuals.

Membership: WG4 was composed of five faculty members of varying rank from the faculties of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Engineering and Architecture (FEA) and Health Sciences (FHS); the University registrar and associate registrar; the directors of computing and network services, student activities, and financial planning and budgeting; the associate director of admissions; the associate dean of student affairs and athletics; a laboratory engineer; a librarian; a trustee; a career counseling and placement specialist; and three undergraduate students (FAS, FHS and Suliman S. Olayan School of Business or OSB). The working group was co-chaired by a research associate from FAS and a professor from FEA.

Methodology: After an initial meeting, WG4 divided itself into five sub-groups (two for admissions/retention, and three for student support services), each of which examined available documents and data before devising methodologies to address subsets of questions from the Self-Study Design. WG4 decided to conduct additional research involving written or personal interviews with various University officers (president, provost, academic deans, dean of student affairs, director of admissions/financial aid and directors of service-delivery units) and the 2008 Institutional Survey. All sub-groups contributed questions for both interviews and survey, and the responses and findings, along with documentary evidence, informed their separate reports. The co-chairs of WG4 integrated most of these reports into this chapter. Due to overlap between chapters, reports on libraries and computing services were incorporated into Chapter Six, while the report by WG6 on transfer students contributed to the present chapter.

This chapter is organized as follows:

Student Admissions and Retention
A. Goals and Strategies
B. Undergraduate Admissions
C. Graduate Admissions
D. Acceptance, Yield, Retention and Graduation Rates
E. Diversity of the Student Population
F. Recommendations

Student Support Services
G. Academic Advising
H. Registrar’s Office
I. Office of Student Affairs
J. Food, Health and Protection Services
K. Recommendations
STUDENT ADMISSIONS AND RETENTION

A. Goals and Strategies

Over the last decade, AUB has been rethinking its enrolment management goals and strategies to determine the best way to achieve its basic mission of providing excellence in education to students in the Middle East and beyond. This process began to be formalized in 2005, in the context of the University’s first strategic planning cycle, when one of the four committees set up to study issues of broad institutional importance was charged with examining all aspects of undergraduate enrolment at AUB and proposing a strategy for its management over 5-10 years (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/reports/1_institutionwide_committees/enrolment_management.pdf). The committee’s highly nuanced report contained guidelines for faculty- and unit-level strategic plans that are expected to obtain formal BOT approval in 2009 (see Chapter Two). The most important guidelines were increasing the geographical and socio-economic diversity of the student population, improving the academic quality of applicants and balancing enrolment among faculties, which entailed a slight overall reduction in the number of undergraduate students and a corresponding increase in the number of graduate students for a total of about 7000 (approximately 5500 undergraduates and 1500 graduates).

Some of these guidelines were emphasized more than others when AUB’s three largest faculties, FAS, OSB and FEA, devised their strategic plans. Since FAS anticipated no change in enrolment, it concentrated on student diversity, already a focal point: most of the University’s foreign undergraduates are freshmen in the faculty and most foreign graduate students are enrolled in its Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies. OSB, which had separated from FAS a few years earlier, was interested in developing its graduate programs, so it adjusted undergraduate enrolment figures accordingly. FEA also focused on educational offerings, specifically, the introduction of minors, new BA and Master’s programs and four PhDs, its first doctoral programs in over 20 years, in response to extremely high regional demand for engineers.

All faculty-level strategic plans (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html) were completed just months before the July 2006 war, which had serious consequences for enrolment management at AUB. It was impossible to foresee the conflict’s effect on the number of new applicants and returning students for the Fall 2006 semester. As the University is highly tuition dependent (see Chapter Two), these figures could not be allowed to drop, so the decision was made to lower the composite scores required for admissions to some faculties, particularly OSB and FEA. The result was totally unexpected: the yield increased, rather than falling or remaining constant. Fortunately, AUB was able to accommodate the rise in enrolment with only minimal discomfort, partly because of a continuing decrease in the number of graduate applicants, as students entered the booming regional job market immediately, rather than pursuing advanced degrees, and partly because of significant improvements to facilities, in accordance with the Campus Master Plan (see Chapter Two), and the steady rise in the number of faculty full-time equivalents (see Chapter Five). In Fall 2008, senior administrators decided to raise the current undergraduate enrolment target slightly, from 5800 undergraduates to 6000-6100, while maintaining the graduate figure at about 1200.

At present, AUB’s priorities in the area of enrolment management may be summarized as follows:

- Continue to improve admissions criteria and streamline procedures to manage enrolment more effectively and to support the achievement of the institutional mission.
- Broaden the pool of undergraduate/graduate applicants while continuing to require strong academic qualifications and to maintain high academic standards.
- Maintain a steady state of about 7200 students (6000 undergraduates, 1200 graduates).
- Improve the yield rate of accepted students and the relatively low retention and graduation rates for admitted freshmen despite ongoing political instability. Simultaneously, maintain the high retention and graduation rates for students admitted as sophomores.
- Strengthen financial aid packages as a means to attract highly qualified students and enhance the diversity of the student population.
- Explore other means to increase the geographical and socio-economic diversity of the student body without compromising academic standards.
The remainder of this chapter assesses the effectiveness of these strategies and the University's progress in achieving its admissions and retention goals. Based on this assessment, a number of recommendations are outlined for further adjustments to enrolment strategies and more effective achievement of related objectives.

B. Undergraduate Admissions

Students may apply for admission to AUB's four-year undergraduate program as freshmen in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, as sophomores/first year professionals (FYPs) in all faculties, as transfer students from other universities, or as visiting, special (part-time/not working for a degree), or second degree applicants. They may apply for entrance in either the fall or spring semester. Before they can enroll, all admitted students must satisfy the English Language Proficiency Requirements (ELPR). Admissions requirements (including the ELPR), procedures and deadlines are clearly stipulated in AUB's catalogue and on its website. Most figures cited below are taken from relevant institution-wide Key Performance Indicators (CI1f1, CI1f2, C3a1, C4b_UG, IP4b_G, IP4c_UG, IP4c_G, F2a_UG, F2a_G and F2c; see the list in Appendix D 8-1).

1.1 Admissions criteria

AUB has continued to use undergraduate admissions criteria established about 12 years ago and based on a 'composite score' giving equal weight to SAT I scores and standardized school averages. These criteria have not yet been re-evaluated and improved in line with a 2004 Institutional Self-Study recommendation. However, internal AUB studies show that the best indicators of students' future academic performance are the grades that they achieved at school or their composite scores, followed by SAT scores alone. In light of these studies and AUB's high sophomore graduation rate of about 85 percent, the Board of Deans (BOD) and Senate have deemed the composite score to be adequate for the admission of qualified students.

Depending on the popularity and capacity of the programs to which students apply, cut-off composite scores vary between highs of 600 for Computer and Communications Engineering majors and 590 for Biology majors to a low of 450 for Nursing students. The cut-off composite score for freshman applicants has regularly been set at 460. (Most freshmen apply from schools outside of Lebanon and hold the equivalent of high school diploma. Students with the Lebanese Baccalaureate are usually admitted as sophomores since their diploma is officially recognized as equivalent to the freshman class.) In standardizing school records to calculate the composite score, it is assumed that the academic standards of all feeder schools are roughly the same. While this assumption may not be accurate since academic standards vary for different reasons (such as resources and budget), it does give advantage to students coming from less privileged schools and thus helps to fulfill AUB's strategic admissions goal of increased socio-economic diversity.

Despite general satisfaction with use of the composite score, Provost Heath and some deans thought that admissions criteria could be improved by taking other evidence into account, for example, CVs (experience), portfolios (creative ability), recommendations and the like, which may also be important indicators of the potential success of students, particularly those applying to majors that require special aptitudes.

1.2 Office of Admissions

In recent years, significant effort has been devoted to making admissions procedures at AUB more efficient and effective. The Office of Admissions (OA), which was established in 1999, has worked diligently to disseminate information to prospective applicants and school counselors; process undergraduate and graduate applications; and generally enhance and facilitate the entire admissions process. It conducts intensive recruitment visits to inform high school students, their parents and counselors about the University's ability to assist students in the achievement of their educational and career goals. In recent years, AUB has restructured educational programs, introduced new ones (including minors) and improved educational facilities (see Chapter Six for more). These initiatives, as well as specific program information and AUB's reputation for quality in education, are now being communicated to more prospective undergraduate applicants than previously.

Between 2003-04 and 2007-08, the number of OA visits increased dramatically for schools inside of Lebanon (from 46 to 237) and those elsewhere in the region (from 110 to 153). Concurrently, the number of sophomore applicants to AUB rose approximately 25 percent from
Fall 2002 (2125) to Fall 2007 (2670), while the number of freshman applicants rose 23 percent between Fall 2002 (785) and Fall 2006 (966) before slipping 7 percent to 902 in Fall 2007. Since many freshmen come from schools outside of the country, the decline may have been due to negative external perceptions of the security environment since 2006.

According to the 2008 Institutional Survey, about 75 percent of student respondents were satisfied with the availability and clarity of admissions information received prior to enrolment (via such sources as the AUB catalogue, website, brochures and e-mail) compared to only 6 percent who were dissatisfied. This is a strong improvement over 2002-03 when the clarity and accuracy of admissions information were deemed satisfactory by 59 percent of admitted students and unsatisfactory by as many as 17 percent. Approximately 67 percent of students surveyed in 2008 also expressed satisfaction with the overall application process, timelines of admissions decisions and responsiveness of admissions staff.

1.3 Academic standards of AUB applicants
Many of the students accepted into AUB were high achievers in secondary school. In 2007-08, 33 to 35 percent of sophomores enrolled at the University who reported school ranks had placed fifth or better during two of their last three years of high school. Among freshmen, 25 to 32 percent of those providing ranks were in the top 10 percent of their high school graduating classes, while 75 to 88 percent placed in the top 50 percent. In terms of SAT I scores, approximately half of all sophomores accepted in Fall 2007 performed remarkably well, scoring between 1200 and 1400; almost the same proportion of accepted freshmen achieved reasonably high SAT I scores of 1000 to 1200.

Early admission is one means that AUB has been using successfully since 1999 to attract highly qualified applicants to its programs before they commit elsewhere. To be granted early admission, applicants must rank in the top 40 percent in each of their last two school years and achieve SAT I scores above 1050 to 1250 (depending on major). Since Fall 2002, early admitted students have consistently made up some 8 to 10 percent of all undergraduate acceptances. Financial aid (see below) is another important way to attract exceptional students while simultaneously increasing the socio-economic diversity of the student body.

1.4 Undergraduate enrolment management and growth
Prior to 2004, undergraduate admissions at the University were the exclusive responsibility of separate faculty admissions committees, which lacked sufficient coordination and tended to be inattentive to AUB’s strategic enrolment goals. This had a negative impact on the oversight and control of overall enrolment; produced imbalances in student distribution across programs and faculties (an issue debated by the strategic planning committee on enrolment); and, according to the director of admissions, often led to delays in communicating acceptances and other decisions to applicants.

These challenges were highlighted in AUB’s 2004 Self-Study, which recommended the creation of a Unified Admissions Committee (UAC) to integrate criteria, streamline procedures and evaluate applications for undergraduate admissions (regular, early, non-degree and transfer) across faculties. Established in the same year, the UAC is composed of members of AUB’s six faculties, a student representative and the director of admissions. Student officers from all faculties and, most recently, the registrar, have also been invited to attend meetings as resource persons. Graduate admissions are still handled by the concerned department or program and faculty graduate studies committee (see below).

During interviews, several deans and Provost Heath agreed that the UAC had succeeded in systematizing the undergraduate admissions process at AUB. This systematization, which rendered the admissions process more efficient, was achieved through coordination and collaboration among the UAC, Admissions Office and University statistician (working through the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment or OIRA). A summary of the undergraduate admissions criteria and practices implemented by the UAC since its creation may be found in Appendix D 4.1. The UAC also generally succeeded in controlling enrolment across programs, faculties and the University through the use of several parameters, including detailed statistical information about the retention of enrolled students, the projected yield of accepted students, program capacities and available human and material resources. These parameters are determined in coordination with the provost, director of admissions, statistician and faculty deans during each admissions cycle, before the UAC makes admissions decisions.
Since 2002, total student enrolment at AUB has increased by 11 percent. Undergraduate enrolment grew approximately 8 percent from Fall 2002 (5350) to Fall 2004 (about 5800), when the UAC was formed, and held fairly steady during 2005 and 2006 in conformity with the University's strategic enrolment goal. Contrary to projections and expectations, however, the number of newly registered undergraduates surged in Fall 2007 and enrolment rose from the planned 5800 to about 6050 students. Total enrolment was 7310 and included 920 Master's, 318 MD and 14 PhD students. (See Figures 4.1-4.3 and Table 4.1, Appendix D 4-3.) This increase, which put pressure on human resources and facilities during the semester, was mainly attributed to the difficulty of making accurate yield projections in Lebanon's unstable security environment. AUB originally decided to reduce undergraduate admissions over the next three years to bring the student population down to its target limit, but has since raised the undergraduate target to about 6000 (see above).

The rise in enrolment over the last five years has been accompanied by considerable growth in human and material resources. For instance, the total number of FTE teaching faculty also rose steadily, from 430.7 (2002-03) to 482.3 (2007-08), resulting in a consistent university-wide student/faculty ratio of about 13:1. This figure varies by faculty from a low of 10:1 in each of FAS, FHS and SON (School of Nursing), to highs of 18:1 in FAFS (Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences), 20:1 in FEA and 23:1 in OSB. (These ratios are based on the total number of students enrolled in each faculty rather than the total number of credits that each faculty provides to students across majors.) At the same time, significant sums continue to be invested in the renovation of existing buildings (dorms, labs, classrooms and so on), the construction of new ones (in accordance with the Campus Master Plan) and the improvement of services/facilities (such as libraries). (See Student Services, below, and Chapters Two and Six.) It is not clear, however, whether new facilities and others still in the planning stage are being regularly reassessed with a larger student body (since March 2002, when the Campus Master Plan was completed) in mind.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, about 55 percent of students agreed that AUB exercised impartiality in admissions, while a much lower proportion (9 percent) believed otherwise. Although this question was not asked in 2002-03, students did report on the consistency of admissions criteria and practices at that time, with 57 percent saying they were satisfied and 17 percent indicating dissatisfaction. Although these two questions are only roughly comparable, they still confirm that the University has made progress in this general area.

1.5 Transfer/Non-degree students and disabled/special students
Recent changes in admissions have also affected transfer students (see Appendix D 4-2) and those applying for non-degree status to take a limited number of courses. The number of applicants wishing to transfer to AUB from other universities has increased steadily over the last several years, rising from about 40 in 2000 to about 230 in 2007, when some 40-50 such students registered. Similarly, the number of non-degree applicants has also risen, reaching roughly 50 per year, with about 60 percent registering. In order to improve the admissions process for transfer students applying to AUB, the University has begun addressing a 2004 Self-Study recommendation that they be informed of their transferable credits before deciding whether to enroll. The UAC evaluates non-degree applicants on the basis of their cumulative average at their current university and the availability of places at AUB; previously, this category of applicant was vetted by the admissions committees of the various faculties, which had their own admissions criteria. As non-degree applicants are mainly from the Western hemisphere, they contribute positively, despite their limited number, to the international diversity of the student population.

While AUB has clear admissions policies for certain categories of non-traditional degree students (namely, part-time, extension program and University Preparatory Program students), the same is not true for students with disabilities or special talents or for their support once admitted. In order to address this and other crucial issues, a Psychologically Distressed Students and Staff Committee was set up in 2006; its recommendations included the formation of a University Mental Health Committee. One of the new committee's charges was to draft a policy addressing the challenges facing students with learning disabilities. For the present, the admission and support of these students, who are few in number, takes place on a case-by-case basis.
C. Graduate Admissions

Students are admitted to Master’s programs if they have earned an undergraduate degree from a recognized institution with a minimum acceptable grade average. Specific faculties/programs may have additional requirements, such as an interview, work experience and/or the GMAT (OSB), MCAT (Faculty of Medicine or FM), or GRE (FAS; ECE program in FEA). Requirements for admission to the reinstated PhD programs include “outstanding academic ability” at the Master’s level and acceptable GRE scores. Graduate admissions are made by the Board of Graduate Studies upon the recommendation of the concerned department/program and graduate studies committee.

In early 2007, an ad hoc Graduate Admissions Process Improvement Committee (GAPIC) was formed to study ways to strengthen communications and coordination among the various units involved in admissions to graduate programs. At the semester’s end, the committee submitted recommendations covering several aspects of graduate applications, admissions, registration and assistantships. GAPIC also recommended that AUB produce an independent graduate catalogue to assemble, streamline and clarify available information on graduate programs and admissions. The catalogue first appeared in Fall 2007.

While graduate admissions requirements are now clear and well articulated, some related issues require further study. For example, the averages of students applying from universities other than AUB are calculated differently by the various faculties. Some specialized fields of graduate study put emphasis on criteria (such as professional experience) other than grades.

At the Master’s level, the number of applicants rose about 44 percent (from 695 to 998) between Fall 2002 and Fall 2005 before dropping in Fall 2007 to 823, 17 percent less than in 2005. Fresh graduates have been attracted by job offers from firms in GCC states, where economic activity has been robust, reducing interest in advanced degrees requiring full-time residency in Lebanon. Graduate enrolment, which rose from 1212 in Fall 2002 to peak at 1478 in Fall 2004, has been slowly decreasing toward the 1200 mark in line with AUB’s enrolment management strategy. It reached 1243 (including 14 PhD students) in Fall 2007.

With the recent return of PhD programs and the broader drive to strengthen graduate education, it is essential that AUB focus more attention on recruiting and retaining graduate students. This subject was central to the deliberations of the Strategic Planning Committee on Graduate Education and Research (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html), which strongly recommended the creation of a School of Graduate Studies to centralize graduate activities. AUB would also benefit from more comprehensive and systematic assessments of graduate satisfaction with the dissemination and clarity of admissions information; the application process; graduate and/or graduate research assistantships; and the overall graduate experience.

D. Acceptance, Yield, Retention and Graduation Rates

1. Acceptance and yield rates

The acceptance rate (ratio of accepted to applied) for sophomore applicants across AUB decreased steadily and favorably from 85 percent in 2002 to a consistently lower value of approximately 68 percent since 2005. The sole exception was in 2007, when the University accepted 75 percent of students on the mistaken assumption that the yield would fall owing to uncertain political conditions in the country. The freshman acceptance rate for the last five years has been fairly steady at about 71 percent. Yield rates (ratio of registered to accepted) during this period ranged between 65 and 68 percent for sophomores and 55 and 59 percent for freshmen.

The graduate acceptance rate has been about 70 percent for the last five years, while the yield fell from 57 percent in Fall 2002 to 39 percent in Fall 2006 (the immediate post-war period) before rebounding somewhat to 45 percent in Fall 2007. The overall dip in graduate yield was due less to politics than economics, since many AUB graduates were pursuing job opportunities in the Gulf region. Reactivated PhD programs attracted some 50 applicants, of whom 21 were accepted, with 14 registering in Fall 2007 and three in Spring 2008 (Table 4.2, Appendix D 4-3).

2. Retention and graduation rates

As part of AUB’s enrolment management process, the retention and graduation/persistence rates (KPIs: C1f1 and C1f2) of students are continuously and systematically monitored by OIRA and
the Office of Strategy Management. Retention rates for newly admitted students (defined as the percentage of newly admitted who return the following fall) varied from 95 percent for sophomores to 85 percent for freshmen (see Figure 4.4 in Appendix D 4-3). The overall rate (freshmen and sophomores combined) continued to be extremely high, about 93 percent, which is comparable to US Ivy League schools. Following the July 2006 war, the sophomore retention rate dropped 5 percent and the freshman rate fell 11.3 percent (cohorts of Fall 2005) for a combined retention rate of 89 percent; in Fall 2007, these figures bounced back to 91.8 percent and 84.5 percent respectively or about 92 percent for all students who entered in Fall 2006. (As noted elsewhere, most AUB students enter as sophomores.)

No significant changes have occurred in graduation rates over the last five years. The six-year graduating rate has been extremely high for sophomores (about 86 to 88 percent) and relatively low for freshmen (about 65 to 68 percent). According to figures averaged over four admission years, approximately half of all graduate students successfully complete their studies, although there are significant variations across faculties, from a low of 40 percent in FAS to highs of 72 and 71 percent in FM and FHS respectively. The University's consistently strong performance in terms of graduating rates for sophomores and freshmen may be related to sustained efforts to improve academic and physical facilities and student services (registration, advising, counseling, activities and so on) in the face of rising regional competition. These services and student satisfaction with them are discussed below.

E. Diversity of the Student Population

1. Socio-economic diversity: Scholarship and financial aid programs

According to market surveys and data from the Financial Aid Office, a significant proportion of AUB students (35 to 39 percent) come from families with total monthly incomes ranging from $1000 to $3000. Curiously, by North American standards, no more than 1.5 percent of these students attended public (state) secondary schools: in metropolitan areas like Beirut, which feed AUB and where private schools are common, parents provide their children with the best education that they can afford. University tuition fees are much higher than school fees, however, so AUB's financial aid and scholarship programs provide vital assistance to students and their families, while also attempting to support the socio-economic and geographic diversity of AUB's student population.

Statistics from the Financial Aid Office showed that over 40 percent of students benefited from more than $12 million in financial aid in 2006-07. The types of aid available included need-based tuition grants and loans, merit scholarships, employment through AUB's work-study program and graduate assistantships. Tuition grants are largely administered by the Financial Aid Office, merit scholarships by the Provost's Office and the work-study program by the Student Affairs Office. Graduate assistantships are directed by departments/faculties. According to President Waterbury, AUB opposed adoption of the widespread US practice of using tuition discounts to attract students with very high SAT scores regardless of need; instead, it held to the principle of maximizing the possibilities for as many needy, academically qualified students as possible.

One of the goals of the recent Campaign for Excellence (2002-07) was to raise $15 million to endow financial aid at the University. By the end of the campaign, AUB alumni and friends had generously contributed almost twice that amount. Unfortunately, the simultaneous deterioration of the Lebanese economy caused the number of applicants for need-based aid to rise steadily from 2060 students in 2002-03 to 3090 in 2006-07. Although the University's budget for need-based aid also increased at that time (from about $6.4 to $9.5 million) as did the proportion of enrolled students actually receiving such aid (from 28 percent in 2003-04 to 40 percent in 2006-07), the aid packages were devalued due to increases in tuition fees ranging from 3-6 percent according to faculty and, most recently, a steep jump in Lebanon's cost of living. (See Table 4.3 in Appendix D 4-3.)

Another need-based financial aid component is the student loan, which AUB introduced in FM in 2003-04 and has since extended to FEA, SON and OSB as part of its plan for university-wide coverage. The University is currently working with the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), a US government organization, to increase the number of student loans further by 2009-10. The total value of student loans disbursed reached $1.9 million in 2006-07. Students repay the loans over a period of 4-6 years (depending on their course of study) after
graduation. Needy students may also apply to the work-study program supervised by the Office of Student Affairs (OSA), which has placed about 400 students in each of the last five years.

Despite the University's strong efforts to improve the application and award processes for need-based aid, data from the 2008 Institutional Survey showed that only 52 percent of students were satisfied with the availability of aid information (including bank loans and student employment) and only 45 percent were satisfied with the application process. Dissatisfaction with the award process (62 percent) was higher still. It appears that students' expectations exceed the ability of AUB's financial aid program to deliver. Moreover, the size of the average financial aid package may not be commensurate with the time and effort that these processes can require from students.

AUB has radically increased the number of annual merit scholarships that it offers to attract highly qualified applicants and increase the diversity of its student body. At the time of the last self-study in 2004, AUB's only merit scholarships were full-tuition awards to about 10 new freshmen and sophomores who ranked at the top of their high school graduating classes. These scholarships have recently been augmented by others benefiting some 45 additional students to date. In 2006-07, the Lebanese Baccalaureate Merit Scholarships were instituted in association with the Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research to cover all tuition and residence expenses for 12 students (the three highest scorers in exams in each of the four tracks of the Lebanese Baccalaureate program). In 2007-08, AUB began the Presidential Scholarship program to provide full tuition to six students from outside Lebanon; eight students were registered under the program by Fall 2008. Also in 2007-08, the University began to participate in the USAID-funded Franklin Scholars program, which provides full tuition to some 20 needy Lebanese students. In Fall 2008, the first five regional students arrived at AUB to take part in the 'Tomorrow's Leaders' program, fully funded by the US government's Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI); more than 20 additional students will join the program in Fall 2009. Graduate students from the region are also eligible for a limited number of scholarships and fellowships attached to particular faculties; FHS has been particularly active in offering such scholarships with support from the Arab Fund, the Ford Foundation and the Wellcome Trust in 2007.

Graduate assistantships, which cover full tuition and pay a modest stipend, are intended to help attract and retain qualified students for advanced studies. The Provost's Office recently indicated that the number of graduate assistantships at AUB grew from 231 in 2002-03 to about 347 in 2007-08. Successful student applicants to AUB's new doctoral programs can also apply for scholarships that cover their tuition and pay monthly stipends of up to $900.

2. National, regional and international diversity
The national, regional and international diversity of the student population is inherent in the mission of the University and continues to be one of its most important strategic goals. National diversity is an issue because many of AUB's current feeder schools are located in the capital, Beirut. Regional and international diversity fell dramatically during the 17-year Lebanese civil war and never fully recovered, partly because of the volatile political and security situation in recent years. Table 4.4 (in Appendix D 4-3) shows the decline in the proportion of non-Lebanese students at AUB from 60 percent in 1970 to about 20 percent today.

According to OIRA statistics, the 7300 students enrolled at AUB in Fall 2007 represented 68 nations. About 10 percent identified themselves as Arab nationals (excluding Lebanese), 8 percent as North Americans and 5 percent as citizens of other states. These statistics would seem to indicate that the proportion of North American students has doubled since 2001, however, the data must be interpreted cautiously since many Lebanese are dual nationals. Indeed, other figures show that the overall percentage of students who received their secondary education outside of Lebanon has not varied significantly over the last five years, hovering at some 67 percent for freshmen and 8 percent for sophomores and above. The proportion of non-Lebanese students in the undergraduate population has risen only marginally since 2001, from 19 percent to about 21 percent (Figure 4.5 in Appendix D 4-3). The percentage of non-Lebanese graduate students has varied between 13 and 15 percent (6 percent North Americans, 5 percent Arab nationals and 3 percent other nationalities) since 2003.

AUB has set a realistic and attainable goal of about 30 percent regional/international diversity and has devoted substantial effort to achieving it. This goal was one of the primary reasons for the establishment of the Office of Admissions, which has increased the number of visits to schools in Lebanon and beyond. Other initiatives to increase the pool of applicants and
improve overall diversity have included the annual AUB Fair, which gives junior high school students the opportunity to visit the campus; the University Preparatory Program (UPP), which strengthens the academic skills of future applicants; the revision of existing academic programs and the introduction of minors to enrich academic life; and the regular increases in AUB's financial aid budget (discussed above), which are especially important for national diversity.

Several factors have contributed to the University’s limited success in achieving its strategic goal for geographical diversity. The most notable of these has been Lebanon’s political and security environment, which has led AUB to explore the possibility of initiating off-campus programs in the Gulf region. Another reason is increased competition for students due to the rise in the number of well-financed universities in the Arab world. A third relevant point may be the lack of attractive niche programs to meet the region’s evolving technological needs. AUB began addressing this concern in 2007, when it proposed two regionally relevant BS programs in Construction Engineering and Chemical Engineering. These new FEA degrees require only 110 credits rather than the 140 needed for BE degrees at AUB and appeal to regional students with no plans to join Lebanese professional organizations. Finally, AUB's admissions criteria include SAT I scores, but many regional students suffer from deficiencies in English and achieve low scores, despite ranking well in their schools. Even if this hurdle can be overcome, AUB's English language requirement is very strict and the University is also perceived to be highly competitive.

3. Gender diversity

Gender diversity, always very strong at AUB, improved further between Fall 2003 and Fall 2007, when the percentage of female undergraduates increased from 47 to 51 percent. However, gender distribution still varies by faculty, sometimes radically: in SON, for example, female students made up 81 percent of undergraduates (compared with 74 percent in 2002) while, in FEA, only 31 percent were female (27 percent in 2002). Among graduate students, the percentage of females increased gradually from an almost constant 56 percent in 2002-04 to a significantly higher 64 percent in 2007. This trend has been mainly attributed to the steady decline in the number of male applicants who have migrated in greater numbers, often to assume positions in the Gulf.

F. Recommendations

During the last five years, AUB has made good progress in the improvement of policies and practices for undergraduate and graduate admissions and retention. However, faced with a changing national and regional environment, there are a number of challenges that the University must address before fully realizing its strategic admissions goals.

1. Undergraduate admissions criteria, processes and retention

1. Continue evaluation of the 'composite score' criteria used for undergraduate admissions, particularly the optimum relative weights of SAT scores and standardized school averages vis-à-vis academic performance at AUB and related retention and graduation rates. Explore other possible criteria, where applicable, such as special talents or experience, portfolios and recommendations. Establish mechanisms to identify and recruit students with special talents from Lebanon and the region.

2. Study the possibility of making the SAT optional for students coming from abroad, particularly those seeking admission as freshmen, for better alignment of admissions criteria with AUB's diversity mission.

3. Adopt a uniform system across AUB faculties and programs to evaluate the grades of transfer applicants from other universities. This will entail conducting studies to evaluate and compare the academic standards and GPAs reported by different universities with ones acceptable to all AUB programs and faculties.

4. Formulate special policies, procedures and criteria for the admission of students with disabilities and improve facilities to accommodate the needs of those who are admitted.

5. Identify the factors, particularly those of an academic nature, behind the relatively low retention/graduation rates of freshmen and put in place measures for improvement.

2. Enrolment management

1. Establish a formal and robust enrolment management unit to improve fulfillment of AUB's mission and strategic enrolment goals. In addition to assuming the current functions of UAC,
the unit should be actively and systematically involved in the continuous assessment and improvement of the following: (i) admissions criteria and processes and their effectiveness in attracting and admitting qualified students; (ii) means to increase the pool of applicants; (iii) retention and graduation rates of enrolled students, particularly the freshman class; (iv) geographic and socio-economic diversity of the student population; and (v) financial aid programs and practices and their impact on the size of the pool of applicants, yield of accepted students and diversity of the student population.

3. Graduate admissions

1. Carry out comprehensive assessment of graduate student satisfaction with the clarity and dissemination of admissions information; the application process; graduate and/or graduate-research assistantships; and the overall graduate experience at AUB.

2. Sustain, improve and expand PhD programs and attract applicants to them. The creation of an independent School of Graduate Studies would be both timely and justified, particularly to assist in promoting and marketing AUB's graduate programs outside of Lebanon.

4. Diversity and financial aid

1. Continue current efforts and new strategies to improve the socio-economic and regional/international diversity of the student population. In this context, the idea of offering off-campus programs in the Gulf region, which is in perfect alignment with AUB's institutional mission, is encouraged and should be actively pursued. Exchange programs with regional and international partners should also be strengthened and expanded.

2. Initiate more niche or regionally attractive programs in response to changes in the social, cultural, economic and technological needs of the Middle East and to help AUB further distinguish itself from other institutions in the region.

3. Assess the impact of awarding generous financial aid packages to small numbers of students as opposed to slender packages to relatively large numbers of students on improving socio-economic and regional diversity as well as yield and retention.

4. Exercise more transparency in explaining to students the limitations of the financial aid budget and in raising awareness of financial aid programs.

STUDENT SUPPORT SERVICES

The University has long provided some of the best student facilities and services in the region. The last ten years have witnessed major initiatives for further improvement including the expansion of the Office of Student Affairs and related facilities, such as student residence halls and a state-of-the-art sports complex, as well as the appointment of new directors and staff to enhance service delivery. Academic advising and registration, two areas of importance to academic life, have also been the focus of attention. AUB firmly believes in a holistic approach to education and in the importance of student support services in attracting, retaining and graduating well-rounded students. Four of the KPIs on the Institutional Balanced Scorecard help in the assessment of the University's success in providing satisfactory student support (see C1b, C3a2, LG4a and IP4a in Appendix D 8-1).

G. Academic Advising

AUB recognizes the importance of academic advising, which enhances student learning and development and helps to create lasting bonds between students, faculty and the University. In recent years, the advising process has received significant institutional and academic support that has driven numerous improvements, although the implementation of new mechanisms has sometimes been hindered by external events. On an annual basis, about 300 newly admitted freshman students are assigned to 13 FAS freshman advisors who are compensated with $2,000 annually in the way of research funding. Most new students, namely, those admitted directly to faculties as sophomores, are assigned advisors from their own departments, who receive no additional recompense for an assignment that is considered part of their regular duties. In large FAS departments, however, where the number of students per advisor is quite high, some advisors are given teaching release to offset their heavy advising load. Non-freshmen who are
undecided about their majors are assigned to one of two ‘Majorless’ advisors, who help them to select and join a department. AUB has developed an academic advising guide, which is updated regularly by the Center for Teaching and Learning and is accessible through its webpage (http://staff.aud.edu.lb/~webctl/). The various faculties also have their own student guides with sections on advising. Some coordination of advising within faculties is done by the student officers in the various Deans’ Offices.

In line with suggestions by the 2004 MSCHE visiting team and in response to less than satisfactory assessments of academic advising by AUB advisors and advisees, AUB formed a task team in Fall 2005 to study and suggest improvements to the process. The team studied advising in the various faculties and conducted numerous interviews and focus groups involving advisors and advisees. A summary of focus group findings appears in Appendix D 4-4. In May 2006, the team concluded a substantive report that proposed the development of an advising mission statement aligned with AUB’s institutional mission and the detachment of advising from course registration. Recommendations included creating registration help teams; improving information availability; achieving an equitable distribution of advisees among advisors; and appointing a director for advising, who would supervise the process, including advising training and assessment. Unfortunately, the outbreak of the July 2006 war impeded further action at that time. In October 2007, the Provost’s Office revisited these initiatives and began focusing attention on FAS, where advising is particularly complex due to the large number of electives included in program requirements and the ever-increasing number of minors. Once a successful system is established in FAS, it may be possible to carry it over to some other faculties.

AUB assesses academic advising annually through its Student Satisfaction Survey. During the last four years, the satisfaction of students with advising has remained rather low, but stable, with 35 percent rating it positively and 36 percent negatively. Student displeasure appeared to stem from a perceived lack of ‘helpfulness’ on the part of advisors. While 47 percent of students indicated satisfaction with advisor availability and responsiveness, only 37 percent said the same about advisor ‘helpfulness’ and the overall advising experience; an even greater proportion, 39 percent, were either moderately or deeply dissatisfied with the latter two. The 2008 Institutional Survey indicated higher satisfaction, but the sample was smaller (134 compared to about 700) and differences were within the standard error. Generally, students’ responses in both cases may have been adversely affected by their dissatisfaction with course offerings and their belief that advisors should be able to help them obtain places in the courses of their choice. In the 2008 Survey, only 24 percent of students were satisfied with the availability of places in courses. Interestingly, the advising process in FHS, which has put ‘registration advisors’ in place, was perceived much more positively than those in other faculties. Provost Heath and the academic deans recognized the shortcomings in academic advising and the importance of cultivating a university-wide culture of academic advising. They would like to see advising detached from the technical aspects of registration; increased student and advisor awareness of the value of advising; improved advisor training; and a system of accountability for both advisors and advisees. For faculty feedback on advising, see Chapter Five.

H. Registrar’s Office

The Registrar’s Office is the guardian and administrator of University regulations concerning student graduation, promotion, probation and transfer of credits. It is responsible for the registration process, maintains all student records, certifies degrees and issues official transcripts. It also administers the government health insurance plan for Lebanese students, prepares the University calendar and coordinates the production of University catalogues.

The Registrar’s Office has been progressively updating many of its services and introducing new ones. Efforts are currently underway to automate more of its processes. This requires the continuous monitoring of risks and controls for such critical items as registration; Banner Student Information System (SIS) data maintenance; grade changes; student clearance; degree preparation/authentication; and issuance of transcripts/statements. Since new technologies give rise to new challenges for the maintenance of secure records, staff are being alerted to security issues, a special unit has been created to oversee security measures and a weekly owner audit report is being generated by the CNS to track all data changes. A list of processes updated in the Registrar’s Office over the last four years appears in Appendix D 4-5.
AUB’s annual Student Satisfaction Survey also assesses various registration components in order to monitor sources of discontent expressed in previous years. During the past four years, student satisfaction with the overall registration process held fairly steady at about 35 percent, with roughly one-quarter of students indicating that they were dissatisfied. Forty-seven percent of students indicated satisfaction with the performance of staff at the Registrar’s Office. More than half (60 percent) were extremely unhappy with course capacity, over which the Registrar’s Office has no control. On the other hand, only 30 percent of students were dissatisfied with the drop-and-add process, which depends mainly on course capacity; this would seem to indicate that problems in this area get sorted out eventually and may be less dire than they seem at first glance. In 2006, focus groups organized by the advising task team indicated some advisor dissatisfaction with the implementation of course registration restrictions on SIS; furthermore, students were either unaware of WEB-CAPP (the degree evaluation module in SIS) or did not find it user friendly.

I. Office of Student Affairs

The Office of Student Affairs (OSA) went through a process of strategic planning in 2005 that involved the alignment of its mission and vision with those of the University and the revision and modification of the visions and missions of the various units falling under its jurisdiction. According to the OSA’s new mission statement, it provides “opportunities that enrich and broaden the educational experience of students by promoting their personal development and psychological well-being through social, physical, cultural, professional and intellectual activities that complement their academic life.” This holistic approach aims at enabling students to live, learn and practice values that AUB cultivates – tolerance, inclusiveness, leadership, civic and moral responsibility and, of course, learning excellence.

While Lebanon’s security situation has impeded the full implementation of the OSA’s strategic plan since 2005, the Office has nonetheless managed to improve and increase its staff, programs and funds. Its expenditures have risen from $2,269,000 in 2004-05 to $3,839,000 in 2007-08. The steep increase in 2007-08 was largely due to expenses associated with the new sports complex, which will amount to about $1.7 million annually once it is completely operational (see Table 4.5 in Appendix D 4-3). Assessment data has been compiled on 21 unit-level KPIs since 2004-05 and year-on-year progress has been generally satisfactory (see Table 4.6 in Appendix D 4-3).

AUB students are first made aware of support services/activities during orientation (see below) and continuously reminded to make use of them through SIS and e-mail campaigns. Institutional Surveys in 2002-03 and 2008 asked students if they feel that their opinions concerning service delivery were solicited and considered. Responses for all student services (and not merely those provided by the OSA) appear in the table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 4.7. Do Students Believe Their Opinions Are Solicited/Considered?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>2002-03 Institutional Survey (N=250)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solicited</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Considered</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values for individual services fluctuated by no more than 5 percent around the mean value, with the exception of financial aid services: in both 2002-03 (19 percent) and 2008 (20 percent), just one-fifth of students felt that their opinions on financial aid were solicited or considered. The percentage of students who believed that their feedback was sought or taken into account by AUB correlated to student satisfaction. Generally, students indicated that their opinions had a greater impact when they were more satisfied with the service in question. On the
whole, student perceptions of the importance of their opinions has increased slightly since 2002-03, particularly in terms of being asked for input. This is probably due to the increase in the number of online surveys conducted through SIS. Still, about one-third of students felt that their opinions were neither solicited nor considered. This may reflect that fact that changes are not very perceptible over the three to four years that a student spends at the University.

1. Athletics

The University provides a wide range of sports/fitness programs and activities ranging from the recreational to the competitive, with varsity teams, in particular, seen as enhancing AUB’s regional visibility, reputation and image. The Athletics Department also organizes intramural competitions, the Aggie Olympics (in coordination with FAFS students), a martial arts festival and a field day. During construction of the new Charles Hostler Student Center (CHSC) between 2004-05 and 2007-08, the department reduced its services and activities and rented external facilities for core programs, including 19 intercollegiate sport teams involving over 400 male and female students and a variety of intramural activities and special events. CHSC, which includes three full-size basketball courts, a 25-meter pool, two squash courts, a martial arts/dance room, a 400-meter six-lane track, and an artificial turf soccer field, began providing services to students, faculty and staff at the end of May 2008. Eighteen employees have already been hired to staff the CHSC under the associate dean for University athletics (a new appointment in line with the OSA’s strategic plan), who will supervise activities at athletic and related facilities and develop and realize a new vision for sports and fitness at AUB.

The 2008 Institutional Survey indicated a moderate decrease (from 30 to 24 percent) over 2002-03 in student satisfaction with athletic facilities. Fewer students seemed to be using these facilities, but that is unsurprising under the circumstances. Nonetheless, the number of students who did not use AUB’s athletic facilities was very large. In 2008, more than 50 percent of a sample of 71 students did not use them compared to 37 percent of a larger sample (360 students) in 2002-03. The results of ongoing efforts to increase student participation should be monitored closely.

2. Student Activities Unit

The Student Activities Unit (SAU) encourages a wide range of academic and co-curricular student activities, including clubs, societies and publications that are managed by students with the help of faculty members. Club membership is open to all registered students for a nominal fee. *Outlook*, the weekly newspaper, and *Campus*, the annual yearbook, are run by students and distributed free of charge. Some clubs and societies sponsor their own publications, while also organizing events, lectures and debates. The SAU organizes and oversees such major annual events as the AUB Folk Dance Festival, the Outdoors festival, and the AUB Fair (for high school students, in collaboration with the Admissions Office). It also has a program in place to encourage student volunteerism. Finally, the SAU oversees the production of the AUB Student Handbook, which contains the Student Code of Conduct, in addition to other useful information. The SAU cooperates closely with the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC) and the student representative committees (SRCs) of the various faculties.

In recent years, the SAU has reviewed and rewritten its mission and vision statements to align them with the OSA’s new strategic plan, appointed an assistant to the director of student activities and launched a series of leadership training workshops for the heads of student organizations. The recently named director of AUB’s new Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service will coordinate the SAU’s existing initiatives in support of student community service and explore new ways to tie them more closely to curricula.

Student satisfaction with club facilities and activities increased from 13 percent in 2003 to 35 percent in 2008; dissatisfaction dropped from 18 percent to 4 percent during the same period. Slightly lower satisfaction rates were obtained for *Outlook* and *Campus*. Students seemed to be reasonably happy (23 percent satisfied) with events, activities and venues related to theatre, music and the arts, although the vast majority were neutral on this subject. While overall satisfaction levels were relatively good and improving, about 45 percent of students were uninvolved in co-curricular activities. In the 2008 Institutional Survey, only 8 percent of students said that activities, clubs and even counseling should be given high budgetary priority. More effort is needed to involve students in co-curricular activities.
3. New Student Orientation Program

Before starting life at AUB, students are invited to participate in the New Student Orientation Program (NSOP), which takes place in late September and involves four consecutive days of recreational, instructional and advising activities organized for new sophomore, freshman, international and graduate students. In 2007, the International Student Orientation Program (ISOP) was added to provide a weekend of special ‘social’ orientation to students arriving from outside of the country before introducing them to the mechanics of advising, registration and other services through NSOP. Another change was also introduced in 2007, namely, a special week of advising and registration held in July for the majority of new sophomores, who tend to be residents of Lebanon. This session helps in reducing congestion during the September orientation and in assessing course capacity needs well before the start of the academic year. New students attending the session can also join in September’s activities, which includes several social events.

Annual Student Satisfaction Surveys show that almost half of students (49 percent) were satisfied with orientation over the past five years. In 2007, the mean satisfaction score (on a scale of 1-5) varied from 3.3 to 3.9 across faculties, with satisfaction highest in the small faculties, FHS and SON. Broad satisfaction with the orientation program was confirmed by institutional surveys in 2002-03 (48 percent) and 2008 (50 percent). However, the overall attendance rate for orientation is below 50 percent, which indicates that there is room for improvement.

4. Student grievances

The Student Code of Conduct (http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/general/conductcode/) distinguishes between academic and non-academic violations. Student affairs committees at the various faculties look into cases of reported academic misconduct, while the dean of student affairs deals with non-academic violations. When a violation is deemed to warrant suspension or expulsion, the case is referred to the University Disciplinary Committee, whose membership includes all deans. Students’ rights to a fair hearing and to appeal are clearly spelled out in the Code. However, there is a grey area concerning student grievances about administrative/academic wrongdoing, such as bias or abuse of authority; no set procedure exists to deal with these grievances.

The 2008 Institutional Survey revealed that half of student respondents were aware of the presence of a system to submit grievances. Thirty-six percent of students agreed that the system was efficient and 3 percent said that it was not. Twenty-one percent of students believed that grievance procedures were transparent and fair, while 11 percent disagreed. Some faculties are making efforts to clarify procedures for the handling of student grievances but, in the opinion of the dean of student affairs and Provost Heath, this issue is best addressed at the University level. About three-quarters of surveyed students agreed that AUB protected members of its community from harassment.

5. Student housing

The Student Housing Unit operates six residence halls (two for men and four for women) that are intended to provide living environments conducive to student learning, friendship and personal development. Since the appointment of a new coordinator for student housing, a number of improvements have been made and occupancy rates in the men’s halls, in particular, have improved greatly, from 62 percent in 2004-05 to 89 percent in 2007-08 (see Table 4.8 in Appendix D 4-3); however, these halls still need more work. Within its plan to upgrade student housing and to meet the need for additional women’s accommodations, AUB recently bought an off-campus building (the Mayfair Residence), which is being renovated with an expected occupancy date of June 2009. Additionally, there are plans to renovate Mary Dodge Hall, which is close to the women’s residences, to provide study areas and a computer lab for about one hundred students.

Although the 2002-03 and 2008 institutional surveys both assessed satisfaction with student housing, there were variations in the way that questions were posed, making comparisons difficult. In 2002-03, 33 percent of student respondents were satisfied, 12 percent were dissatisfied and 55 percent were neutral; the survey did not ask, however, whether respondents were actually using the facilities. In 2008, 67 percent of respondents indicated that they did live in residence halls. Of those who did, one-third were neutral and the majority were satisfied with the availability of accommodation and staff responsiveness; in terms of quality, one-third were satisfied and another third dissatisfied. The OSA dean is strongly concerned about the quality of these facilities.
6. **International Student Services Office**

Over the past five years, the number of international students at AUB has increased from 1260 to 1410; about two-thirds of them also hold Lebanese passports. Their smooth transition into the AUB community and Lebanese culture starts with the International Student Services Office (ISSO), which provides an airport shuttle, a special one-on-one orientation program (see also the section on new student orientation above) and ‘international peers’ – local students who have volunteered to help newcomers adjust through AUB’s Ambassador Program. ISSO also provides support services to AUB students interested in studying abroad. At present, there is no survey in place to assess the satisfaction of international students with ISSO.

7. **Personal Counseling Center**

Personal counseling was separated from career counseling at AUB in 2004. During the last four years, the Personal Counseling Center (PCC) continued to offer free confidential counseling services to help students explore and address personal problems. Two qualified psychologists offer personal counseling sessions to 80 students each week. Since retention rates are very high, the heavy burden leaves them with little time for other activities, such as a wellness program and workshops. Two years ago, however, the PCC did organize a two-day seminar on drug abuse and, in 2006-07, it was involved in the work of the Psychologically Distressed Students and Staff Committee, which studied issues related to psychological problems and learning disabilities and recommended procedures to handle them (see Appendix D 4-6 for the final report.) In Fall 2007, the University Mental Health Committee was created to set up a training program enabling frontline staff to recognize psychological problems and to create procedures for the reporting and handling of such cases on both regular and emergency bases.

According to the 2008 Institutional Survey, 52 percent of student respondents had not used AUB’s counseling services. Of those who did, 50 percent were satisfied and 10 percent were dissatisfied with the overall service. Comparison with results from 2002-03 is difficult; however, the mere fact that more students are using the service is indicative of need and justifies increased staffing to meet demand.

8. **Career and Placement Services**

Career and Placement Services (CPS) help AUB students and alumni make the transition into an increasingly complex marketplace through a variety of means. Career and placement counseling sessions ranging from 15 to 20 minutes in length are available to all AUB students and alumni. Group sessions are also provided. In addition, CPS posts notices of job vacancies; organizes career skills development workshops, recruitment presentations and career seminars; and helps students to find internships and summer placements with local, regional and international firms. Lebanon’s prevailing political/economic uncertainty has led to a reduction in local job openings, making the task of CPS more challenging in recent years. CPS has responded by putting greater effort into the organization of AUB’s annual Job Fair, which had 58 registered participating companies in 2004 and 165 in 2007. Attendance in 2008 was expected to surpass the level reached in 2007, but the Job Fair was negatively impacted by sudden political conflict in the capital. CPS organized a special two-day event in October 2008 to compensate. CPS is presently managed by one full-time staff supervising part-time student research assistants; to cope with the load, approval has been given to hire a full-time administrative assistant. Some of the achievements of CPS over the past five years appear in Appendix D 4-7; the CPS web address is http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webcps/.

In addition to the central CPS office, three faculties have developed their own career services. FEA provides students and alumni with online access to a specialized database of potential employers and positions (see http://webfea.fea.aub.edu.lb/career/), while OSB offers similar services (http://sb.aub.edu.lb/CareerCenter/Default.aspx). FAS employed a career services officer about a year ago and has not yet established a web presence.

Exit Surveys in recent years indicated that 42 (2005), 50 (2006) and 54 (2007) percent of students benefited from CPS. Student satisfaction in the 2007 Exit Survey (1254 participants) was a high 78 percent, with about half saying that they were very satisfied. The addition of faculty-specific career offices is expected to improve services that are already fairly successful.

9. **Student representation**

All full-time students in good academic standing are eligible to vote and/or seek election to their
faculty’s Student Representative Committee (SRC). Student representatives are elected by peers in the same class for a one-year term. The number of representatives that each faculty may elect is roughly proportional to the number of its students. The introduction of new academic programs in 2006 caused the total number of elected student representatives at AUB to increase from 93 to 95. In January 2008, 72 percent of students participated in SRC elections.

SRC members are eligible to seek election as one of the 17 student members of the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC), which is chaired by AUB’s president and also includes seven faculty members (elected by peers in their respective faculties). In addition to these voting members (with the chair voting solely to break ties, the committee has three ex-officio members: the dean of student affairs, the director of student activities and the chair of the Senate’s Student Affairs Committee. The role of the USFC in policy-related matters continues to be advisory in nature; its decisions are merely recommendations to the relevant administrative authorities.

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that 88 percent of student respondents were aware of the elections. Sixty-seven percent reported that they were well informed about the role of the SRC (up from 52 percent in 2003) and 54 percent said the same about the USFC (up from 37 percent). Students were less likely to agree that these committees effectively expressed their opinions to the administration, although agreement in 2008 (23 percent) was significantly higher than in 2002-03 (14 percent). It is possible that increased awareness of student representation in recent years has also impacted student perceptions of its effectiveness. Almost half of the students surveyed in both years felt that alternative means for student representation should be found.

J. Food, Health and Protection Services

1. Food services

Campus food services at the main cafeteria, faculty lounge, engineering cafeteria and agriculture kiosk (lower campus) were outsourced in 2004. A new cafeteria in the recently completed Charles Hostler Student Center will replace the agriculture kiosk; the lower campus will also be served by another small cafeteria in the new OSB building once it is ready for occupancy. This means that food service facilities are generally well distributed on campus and that availability will continue to improve. However, restaurants and food stands located on Bliss Street continue to provide strong competition despite the many enhancements to AUB’s facilities since 2004. Current food choices remain unappealing to some students, possibly due to pricing and the limited variety of food items. The AUB Medical Center (AUBMC) cafeteria, which caters to patients, staff and students, is still operated by the University.

Student satisfaction with cafeteria food quality increased to 53 percent in 2008 from 35 percent in 2002-03. Cafeteria premises also garnered high marks (66 percent) in 2008. By contrast, satisfaction with food cost declined from 37 percent (2002-03) to 31 percent (2008). Only 6 percent of respondents indicated that they do not use the service. Changes in food service operations since 2004 seem to have produced the desired outcome, although cost is still a concern. Unfortunately, recent increases in the cost of ingredients have led to higher menu prices.

2. Health services

AUB enrolls all students in its own Health Insurance Plan (HIP) unless they already have comprehensive coverage. Effective September 2006, the University outsourced HIP management to a private insurer, MEDNET. During normal working hours, HIP subscribers can obtain ambulatory medical services or appointments with family medicine physicians at the University Health Services (UHS) clinic, which moved to a renovated building near AUBMC in late Spring 2008. Physicians are supported by a team consisting of nurses, research assistants and other staff, who offer additional health services. Evenings and Saturdays, walk-in medical care is available at the same clinic, as well as at the emergency rooms of AUBMC and, most recently, MEDNET’s network of health-care providers. When the need arises, patients are referred to qualified medical specialists at AUBMC.

In 2006-07, 6.5 FTE physicians received more than 43,000 visits from 17,933 subscribers, 5,007 of whom were students; five years earlier, 6.6 FTE physicians received 27,500 visits from 13,814 subscribers, including 3,467 students. The current heavy load has put more stress on health care providers and may be affecting the quality of care and student satisfaction. At the start of 2007-08, UHS retained four clinical associates and increased the physician FTE to 6.65.
In July 2006, AUB began a Wellness Program that is currently focusing efforts on health education, vaccination campaigns, smoking cessation, weight control, eating disorders, guided exercise programs, stress management, and back care and injury prevention. It also sponsors a Wellness Fair that includes health screening and information on the prevention of repetitive trauma disorders.

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that student satisfaction with access to health services was quite positive (57 percent). Dissatisfaction with service quality and staff responsiveness fell from 20 percent in 2002-03 to 8 percent in 2008. Although some faculty and staff have expressed unhappiness with MEDNET’s administration of the HIP program, student satisfaction does not seem to have suffered.

3. Protection services
The Office of Protection, which is in charge of campus access and security, coordinates its efforts with other units, especially the Office of Student Affairs, to ensure the safety of students. It is regularly assessed through the Student Satisfaction Survey, which showed that an average of 64 percent of students were satisfied with the service between 2004 and 2007. This finding was congruent with the 69 percent satisfaction recorded by the 2008 Institutional Survey. These figures compare quite favorably with those for other student services.

K. Recommendations

1. General
1. Increase the participation of students, as stakeholders, in decision-making concerning all aspects of student support services; hold town meetings with students to inform them of available services and of changes and improvements in processes. Students should be made to feel that their opinions matter.
2. Include assessment of all support services in the annual Student Satisfaction Survey.
3. Provide communication skills training to student support staff.

2. Academic Advising
1. Explore means to promote an ‘advising culture’ and improve advising load distribution and the advising process, including advisor training and assessment. One possibility is to appoint advising officers at the faculty level.
2. Improve and update the information available to students and advisors.

3. Registrar’s Office
1. Maintain accurate registration information that is promptly updated to reflect continuous changes in rules and regulations.
2. Facilitate the process of increasing course capacities.
3. Improve WEB-CAPP to make it a user-friendly advising system that allows each student and his/her advisor to monitor the student’s academic progress.

4. Office of Students Affairs:
   i. Athletics
1. Maximize use of the Charles Hostler Student Center by launching attractive sports, exercise and fitness campaigns.
2. Increase the number of intramural games/competitions; these can bring students together as participants and/or supporters.

   ii. Activities
1. Increase the number of hands-on training workshops for students in leadership positions.
2. Increase student involvement in Outlook and Campus by aggressive campaigning; use Outlook to increase student awareness and involvement in student support services.

   iii. Orientation program and International Students Services (ISS)
1. Review the orientation process; find ways to make it more appealing; increase participation through more hands-on and team-building sessions and fewer and shorter lectures.

iv. Student government and grievances
1. Revise USFC bylaws and introduce necessary amendments to allow USFC student members to participate in and influence the decision-making process in a responsible way.
2. Hold regular town meetings that include students and SRC/USFC members to ensure proper two-way communication.
3. Establish procedures to address student grievances against faculty, staff, or administrators using impartial arbitrators.

v. Personal Counseling Center (PCC)
1. Enhance the capabilities of PCC by recruiting another psychologist.
2. Expedite the work of the University Mental Health Committee; set up a training program enabling frontline staff to recognize psychological problems and to create procedures for the reporting and handling of such cases on both regular and emergency bases.

vi. Career and Placement Services (CPS)
1. Improve the space, equipment and staffing of CPS. In particular, CPS needs a resource room equipped with print and video career-related material, as well as computer programs to help assess student aptitudes, skills and interests.
2. Develop an electronic and/or printed career newsletter that periodically introduces students to various career options in local and international job markets.
3. Coordinate the work of career planning services in the various faculties.

5. Food, housing and health services
1. Examine and assess the menu and premises (appearance and cleanliness) of cafeterias continuously to ensure that both are appealing to students.
2. Persist in improving residence halls, particularly men’s facilities: improving bathroom allocation must be a top priority.
3. Expand the Wellness Program to promote health education.
4. Increase staffing in University Health Services to reduce workload and waiting times.
Chapter Five

FACULTY

Purpose: Working Group 5 (WG5) on Faculty (Standard 10) was charged with examining the extent to which, and the effectiveness with which, faculty fulfill their primary responsibilities of teaching, research and service, as well as their related roles in student advising, curriculum development, academic policy-making and governance. WG5 addressed issues related to faculty recruitment and retention, assessment and promotion, and engagement. It further analyzed the role of faculty members and of the University in strengthening and sustaining AUB's academic environment.

Membership: WG5 was composed of fifteen members, twelve of whom were faculty members (eight professors, three associate professors and one assistant professor) representing all University faculties and schools barring the School of Nursing (SON), which is part of the Faculty of Medicine (FM). These faculty members included the chairs of the departments of Biology, Social and Behavioral Sciences, Architecture and Design, and Plant Sciences, and the acting chair of Biochemistry. The other three members of the working group were a trustee, a statistician and an undergraduate student from the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FEA). WG5 was co-chaired by two full professors, one from FEA and one who was also a department chair in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS).

Methodology: The committee was initially divided into three sub-groups, each of which was responsible for gathering information relevant to a selection of questions from the 2008 Self-Study Design. Individual team members then chose specific questions, analyzed the information collected and submitted their summaries and recommendations. The entire team reviewed these sub-reports for inclusion in this chapter.

To write this chapter, the following sources were consulted: the 2004 Institutional Self-Study; the 2005 report on the Higher Education Research Institute (HERI) Faculty Survey; internal AUB documents; statistics provided by the administration and faculties; the 2008 Institutional Survey; four focus group meetings with full-time faculty of different ranks and one with part-time faculty; and interviews with the provost, all academic deans and some chairs of departments with numerous part-time faculty members. Respondents to the 2008 Institutional Survey included 100 faculty, 20 academic heads (chairs) and 120 students. Participants in focus groups were selected randomly and included: Group 1, nine faculty from FEA, the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) and the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS); Group 2, 12 faculty from FAS science and math departments; Group 3, seven faculty from FM, SON and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS); Group 4, six faculty from FAS humanities and social science departments; and Group 5, three part-time faculty from FAS and FEA.

Findings are presented in the following sections of this chapter:

A. Faculty Role in the University Mission
B. Faculty Size and Composition
C. Faculty Workload: Teaching, Research and Service
D. Procedures for Attracting, Reviewing and Retaining Faculty
E. Faculty Participation in Formulation of Academic and Institutional Policies and Practices
F. Supporting Faculty Excellence
G. Academic Environment and Faculty Engagement
H. Contractual Security, Salary and Benefits of Faculty
I. Recommendations
A. Faculty Role in the University Mission

The role of faculty at AUB emanates from the University's mission 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.” According to the Faculty Manual (http://pnp.aub.edu.lb/university/academic/Faculty%20Manual/index.html), their specific responsibilities are to teach students enrolled in undergraduate and graduate degree programs; advise and mentor students in the achievement of career goals; share in academic policy- and decision-making; conduct and publish quality research; participate in AUB's governance; and serve the broader community.

Since faculty are essential to AUB's activities, improving their qualifications and performance has a positive impact on the University's capacity to achieve its mission. During the past few years, AUB faculty, deans and administrators have invested significant energy in the creation of effective structures and mechanisms, including those related to recruitment, reappointment and promotion, to enhance faculty excellence and to maintain high standards in all academic functions. This concerted effort reflected strategic goals set by President John Waterbury in 2004 and disseminated, with slight amendments, in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview in 2008 (https://cgi.aub.edu.lb/services/ssl/community/draft-strategic-plan.doc), particularly AUB's aim of recruiting, developing and retaining “world-class faculty” who are “committed to the proposition that excellent research and superior teaching go hand-in-hand.” Two of the nine strategic goals in the overview focus on promoting faculty excellence and pure and applied research, and highlight strategies to foster a dynamic and supportive environment for teaching, learning and knowledge generation. The same goals are clearly articulated at the faculty level, where faculty excellence appears on the strategy map for each of the University's faculties and where metrics are being developed specifically to assess faculty excellence and the support provided to encourage it – both in terms of services, policies and processes, and in terms of budget allocation for facilities, equipment and other research and teaching needs (see Chapter Two). Some of these metrics will be based on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) already used for institutional assessment (see Appendix D 8-1), nine of which are referenced in this chapter alone (LG1e1, LG1e2, LG1a, LG1b, LG1c, LG1d, LG1e, F2a_G, F2c).

AUB's efforts to recruit faculty through international scholarly publications and networks have been successful, with 79 new faculty members hired in 2006 and 2007, despite political unrest in Lebanon. The University's objective of enhancing the quality of teaching and research has led it to rethink the ways in which faculty are supported and evaluated. Another major step forward has been the introduction of eight PhD programs in 2007-08. AUB realizes that the promotion of quality research strengthens not only graduate, but also undergraduate education; attracts superior students at all levels; helps to retain valuable faculty members; encourages faculty to pursue external funding for long-term research programs; contributes to the generation of knowledge; and enables the University to be effective in serving the community. AUB endeavors to support faculty by providing them with the environment, resources, services, procedures and incentives needed to carry out these responsibilities. Faculty performance indicators show improvement over the past few years in line with expectations. Additional or new resources provided by the University to support teaching and research have had a demonstrable impact.

The increase in student enrolment over the past few years has put pressure on faculty to adapt. In the current period of growth and transition, continued alignment of efforts/initiatives among AUB's various entities will help to support faculty in their quest for excellence and harmonize academic and administrative endeavors in support of the missions of faculties and the institution.

B. Faculty Size and Composition

Between 2003-04 and 2007-08, the number of full-time instructional faculty at AUB increased by 14 to reach 406 (see Appendix D 5-1, Tables 5.1 a and b). During the same period, the number of part-time faculty rose by 45, from 184 to 229. Although AUB is the only private STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Medicine) university in the region, these figures exclude medical faculty (who teach only graduate-level courses) in accordance with the Common Data Set (CDS) guidelines followed by OIRA. In 2007-08, there were 162 full-time and 63 part-time FM faculty, who indirectly contributed to the quality of undergraduate education through FM's basic sciences.
department. In determining full-time equivalents (FTEs), CDS methodology further considers three part-time faculty to be equal to one full-time faculty member, even though the actual teaching load of AUB part-timers varies from 25 to 100 percent of full load over one or two semesters. Thus, using CDS guidelines, AUB's total instructional faculty FTEs increased from 453.2 in 2003-04 to 482.3 in 2007-08. Since 14 of these were full-time faculty, the total rise in part-time instructional FTEs was 15.1. According to the University's strategic plan, the number of faculty FTEs is scheduled to rise by 68 over the next five years; the largest faculty, FAS, will benefit most, with the addition of 29 FTEs.

The majority of full-time faculty (more than 85 percent) have PhDs/MDs from recognized universities in US, Europe and Australia, with the balance holding Master's degrees. All AUB instructors, who perform supportive teaching roles, hold at least a Master's degree. The university-wide student-to-faculty ratio has ranged from 13 to 14 students per faculty member over the last five years, although this ratio is much higher in some majors, for example, Biology and Engineering. The number of endowed chairs at the University increased from four in 2002 to 10 in 2007, of which six are currently active (see Appendix D-5-1, Table 5.2).

In 2007-08, 84 or 24 percent of all instructional faculty FTEs were full professors who had held the same rank for an average of 6.93 years; this represented an increase over 2003-04, when 72 or 20.6 percent of FTEs were full professors who had averaged 6.4 years at this level. Forty-eight or 14 percent of all FTEs in 2007-08 were associate professors with an average of 3.44 years in the rank; and 125 or 36.3 percent were assistant professors who had been in their positions for 2.74 years. (Approximately 150 FTEs were full-time faculty of non-professorial ranks.) Although the percentage of part-time FTEs increased somewhat from 11.5 percent in 2003-04 to 15.83 percent in 2007-08, the current high proportion (84 percent) of full-time faculty places AUB in the top 2 percent of US universities for this indicator.

AUB faculty members continued to be reasonably diverse in terms of nationality and gender. Sixty-three percent of all faculty members (including administrators, full-timers, part-timers and clinicians) were Lebanese citizens. Of the remainder, 23.6 percent held Lebanese and another (often North American) nationality, while 13.4 percent were non-Lebanese. In 2007-08, women comprised 37.2 percent of full-time faculty (roughly the same proportion as in 2003-04); 17 percent (8 of 46) of department chairs; and 33 percent (2 of 6) of faculty deans. Faculty diversity by nationality is expected to improve more as the Lebanese political situation stabilizes.

C. Faculty Workload: Teaching, Research and Service

1. Teaching and academic advising

Full-time faculty at AUB devoted 30 to 50 percent of their time to teaching, advising and supervising undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a wide variety of degree programs. The rest of their time was spent on research, administrative tasks and service activities (2005 HERI Faculty Survey). Teaching performance measures and assessment are slowly becoming part of University culture and there has been continuous improvement in instruction, pedagogy and advising since the 2004 Self-Study.

Data from faculty and student surveys, instructor course evaluations and focus group meetings indicated that faculty were mainly concerned about their teaching and advising loads. According to AUB's 2008 Institutional Survey, 75 percent of department chairs believed that teaching load distribution and course offerings were adequately discussed in their departments. Faculty participants in focus groups, however, raised the issues of heavy teaching loads and load inconsistencies across faculties and indicated that both impact negatively on faculty morale. Interviews with AUB deans clarified the policies of the various faculties: in FAFS, the minimum teaching load was six credits per semester; in FAS, faculty were required to teach 15 credits per year distributed as a 9/6 (fall/spring) load in classes controlled for size; in FEA, faculty taught six credits and supervised at least three senior year projects each semester; in FHS, the teaching load was normally six credits per semester and class size was not taken into consideration; and, in OSB, full-time faculty generally taught nine credits per semester, but assistant professors were assigned light loads in their first year at the University. OSB has also introduced a ‘credit bank’ that allows faculty to assume heavier loads and then draw on their ‘credit’ at a future date.

The offices of the Provost and Registrar developed a system to track faculty loads that weighs different course activities and takes account of such factors as the number of students and contact hours, whether lectures are repeated or instructors/graduate assistants provide support,
and project and thesis supervision. For example, a three-credit lecture-type course with 25-35 students and three contact hours generally totals three points. This system was unnecessarily complex, requiring several interventions during a semester to correct the numbers, and was not favored by deans. In Fall 2006-07, the workload point system showed variations of 5.5 to 10.0 points between faculties. These variations were also apparent in data on class size obtained from the Registrar’s Office. In Fall 2006-07, an average of 28.59 students attended each of 868 undergraduate lecture-type courses, while an average of 10.59 students attended 417 graduate courses. During the same semester, an increase in student enrolment caused the total number of lecture/seminar courses attended by more than 100 students to climb to 72 from 62 a year earlier. Class size also varied between faculties. In FAS, for example, capacity in lecture-type courses was limited to 30-35 students per section, but in FEA the figure was 50-60 students per section. When interviewed, Provost Heath said that it would take a significant investment of resources to improve uniformity in load distribution across faculties.

Approximately 52 percent of faculty who responded to the 2008 Institutional Survey reported that teaching load and course offerings were adequately discussed in their departments. When asked if their workload was satisfactory and properly measured, about 40 percent of faculty agreed. Another 30 percent expressed dissatisfaction with the workload. Forty-two percent said that they were satisfied with teaching tools/equipment. Focus group discussions revealed that faculty members were reasonably happy with their teaching loads and with the various resources at their disposal. Faculty did raise concerns about occasionally being asked to teach subjects outside of their areas of expertise merely to meet their loads and also noted that neither their contracts nor the faculty bylaws explicitly mentioned teaching loads.

The survey also indicated that 42 percent of faculty were satisfied with the effectiveness of student evaluation. However, only 35 percent expressed satisfaction with the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) in its current form, while almost as many (30 percent) reported dissatisfaction. See Chapter Eight for recommendations relevant to the ICE. (In Spring 2006-07, mean ICE scores ranged between 4.0 and 4.3. For the past six semesters, mean ICE scores for FAFS and FHS have fluctuated in the vicinity of 4.2; FAS and OSB scores at about 4.1; and FEA scores at approximately 4.0. SON scores ranged between 4.1 and 4.3.) Eighty percent of student respondents to the survey said that the overall quality of instruction at AUB was excellent, very good, or good; only 2 percent expressed dissatisfaction. Similarly, 78 percent of students said that the intellectual climate on campus ranged from good to excellent, while 14 percent deemed it fair.

Most faculty reported that they transferred their research findings into the classroom/laboratory (60 percent agreed, 7 percent disagreed). According to the earlier (2005) HERI Survey, 47 percent of faculty have also worked with undergraduates on research projects. In the 2007 Student Exit Survey, 25 percent of the graduating class said that they planned to pursue graduate degrees and 19.5 percent of the class had already been accepted by a graduate/professional school.

Student advising, which is discussed in Chapter Four, was another area of general concern. The 2008 Institutional Survey found that 58 percent of faculty understood their advising role. Only 23 percent of them, however, believed that advising loads were properly accounted for in teaching loads and performance evaluations by chairs; a larger proportion, 28 percent, said that it was not. A similar percentage of department chairs (25 percent) also thought that the load was not properly accounted for, although many more (40 percent) said that it was. Ten percent of department chairs did not think that the advising load was appropriately distributed among faculty.

Forty-two percent of faculty agreed that administrative support for advising was adequate, with student guides, online resources and updated FAQs available to advisors and students alike. When asked if their administrative workload as advisors was acceptable, 43 percent of faculty agreed and 19 percent disagreed.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, more than half of all student respondents indicated satisfaction with accessibility to advisors (61 percent), time spent with them (57 percent) and their responsiveness (64 percent). Sixty-two percent of students also said that communication with faculty was generally satisfactory. These findings corroborated the 2005 HERI Survey, in which 41 percent of faculty said that one of AUB’s distinguishing characteristics was the ease with which students can meet with faculty outside of regular office hours. Students were less satisfied with their advisors’ knowledge of policies and procedures (42 percent satisfied, 21
percent dissatisfied) and the overall effectiveness of academic advising (43 percent satisfied, 18 percent dissatisfied).

2. Research and practice

Over the last few years, there has been a marked improvement in AUB's research environment and in the research output of faculty despite the challenges posed by Lebanon's unstable political environment. This progress resulted from the University's strategic decision to strengthen support for faculty research, which has recently benefited from an upsurge in funding, particularly in FHS, FM and FEA (see below). The rise in research funding is expected to have a strong impact on the research infrastructure (equipment) and human resources (research assistants and graduate students) of AUB faculties.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 44 percent of faculty agreed that AUB provided adequate administrative support to secure external research funding. However, only 22 percent said that their research productivity had improved with the expansion of graduate programs in their departments. Many departments do not have a large number of graduate students and not all graduate programs have thesis options. Over the past five years, 16 departments with thesis options each graduated more than five Master's students annually. FHS, which has the highest level of external research funding, also graduated the largest number of Master's students. Most graduate students received graduate assistantships from their faculties to cover tuition, as well as research assistantships through faculty grants to pay some living expenses. When the number of graduate students is low, faculty hire research assistants who are not graduate students to assist them in their work. According to AUB's HR department, 204 full-time and 224 part-time research assistants were employed across faculties in 2004-07 (see Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.3). Both OSB and FHS had fewer paid research assistants than FAS, FEA and FM.

Analysis of data on external research grants from 2004 to 2007 supports the following remarks:

- **LNCSR**: The number of Lebanese National Council for Scientific Research (LNCSR) grants rose from 18 in 2004 to an average of 40 per year by 2007; the number of professors of all ranks involved in research was constant during the same period (see Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.4). The increase in grants seems to indicate the LNCSR's appreciation of the quality of research conducted at AUB.

- **External grants**: AUB's funding level has increased substantially, rising from about $4 million in 2004 to $6.7 million in 2007 (see Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.5). Although FHS, FM and FEA received the most funding in 2007, the total for each faculty varied considerably from year to year. The reintroduction of eight PhD programs in 2007-08 is expected to strengthen AUB's ability to attract external grants in the near future. In 2008, two major research grants were awarded, one for $2.8 million from the US National Cancer Institute and another for $1.75 million from the Dubai Harvard Foundation for Medical Research.

- **Publications across faculties**: The publications record across faculties showed at least one journal publication per faculty member each year (see Appendix D 5-1, Tables 5.6, 5.7 and 5.8). FAS had an overall average of 1.4 journal publications per faculty member in 2006, with 63 percent of these articles appearing in peer-reviewed journals. In the other faculties, the average annual number of journal publications per faculty member for 2004-07 was 1.65 in FAFS, 1.0 in FM, 1.28 in FEA, 1.8 in FHS and 0.64 in OSB. Despite their apparent precision, these figures can only provide a rough cross-comparison of research output since they are based on data supplied by the faculties, each of which has its own definition of the denominator ‘faculty' and of the types of publications to be included, as well as its own policy on multiple authorship and related issues. According to Elsevier's Scopus database, the University accounts for over 62 percent of Lebanon's total scientific output in foreign-language (mainly English) journals. The number of articles by AUB faculty appearing in the database increased from a steady 300-360 per year in 2000-03 to 499 in 2007. While this number cannot indicate research quality, it is a measure of increased research output.

AUB's research environment is benefiting from the greater availability of research tools and infrastructure like core research laboratories and interdisciplinary research centers (see Chapter Two). According to the 2008 Institutional Survey, most faculty (68 percent) were involved in
research projects. However, only about 42 percent considered their research tools/equipment to be satisfactory, while an even lower proportion, 36 percent, thought that AUB met their research needs with sufficient speed.

Increased faculty productivity has been reflected in higher promotion rates, which have risen from 50 percent in 2005 to 69 percent in 2006 and 72 percent in 2007. The rise may indicate improvements in the promotion process, recruitment efforts and/or faculty mentoring. Another possibility is the growing number of interdisciplinary research/teaching centers, which provide inviting forums for faculty collaboration. However, despite the fact that interdisciplinary research is encouraged at AUB, some departments are still struggling with issues of ownership.

Deans, chairs and faculty have been setting up research/educational labs and centers and rebuilding departments/programs despite space limitations and the disruptions or relocations necessitated by major building projects on campus (see Chapter Two). In some programs, labs have been relocated twice owing to construction. These displacements, although necessary, have negatively affected the quality of education and research at the University. In addition, faculty research plans and priorities have not always been respected by the Facilities Planning and Design Unit (FPDU), which has omitted promised deliverables, such as accessible roofs and terraces to accommodate equipment for teaching and research on renewable energy. Moves to new or renovated facilities have sometimes taken place before the buildings and their systems were complete and operational. Several renovation and construction projects have faced major delays, seemingly due to shortfalls in funding. As a consequence, the development of new academic programs is well in advance of AUB's ability to deliver the facilities that they require. Decisions about the allocation of physical space and funds at AUB are made by committees in which the provost is the sole representative of academic units. The lack of representation by academic units does little to improve coordination with the FPDU and to meet the needs and priorities of units and programs.

Space for graduate students has also become a problem. The lack of dedicated research space in most departments has meant that graduate students often have to vacate a lab when a class is scheduled. This is not conducive to the creation of the 'late night research culture' that exists at US universities. Without a 'home,' graduate students interact less with faculty members and it becomes more difficult for faculty to find them on short notice. AUB's scientific research culture is further challenged by the fact that campus parking lots are not only distant from faculty offices, but are also inaccessible after hours. Finally, part of creating a research culture is celebrating the accomplishments of faculty by publicizing their research and devising incentives that include awards. Despite the best efforts of the academic leadership, AUB's management is still perceived (according to focus group meetings and interviews with academic deans) as controlling the work environment, rather than supporting faculty in the fulfillment of their institutional role.

3. Service

Faculty are heavily represented on all standing University/faculty committees with academic functions and participate in structured service centered on departments, faculties and the University. They also provide formal consulting services through Regional External Programs (REP) assignments that range from providing workshops in Lebanon or the Gulf to helping in the establishment of programs or universities elsewhere in the region (see Chapter Seven). Although such appointments require the approval of the concerned chairs and deans, the process used by deans to select participants in REP assignments has not been documented.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 42 percent of faculty respondents said that they were involved in service programs and activities, while 68 percent said that they had played a part in developing such programs. The distribution of service load varies among faculty members. According to the 2005 HERI Survey, 52.3 percent of faculty spent 1-4 hours/week on committee work and meetings, 18.3 percent spent 5-8 hours/week on these service activities and 4.6 percent spent 9-12 hours/week. The survey further showed that 44 percent of faculty engaged in research and scholarly writing for 5-12 hours/week, 12 percent pursued these activities for 15-20 hours/week and 4.1 percent did so for over 20 hours/week. The majority of faculty (65 percent) spent 10-24 hours/week teaching and preparing to teach.

The HERI Survey also found that 49 percent of faculty engaged in unpaid public service/professional consulting activities. Nationally, regionally and internationally, AUB faculty serve as editors or on the editorial boards of professional journals; as members of governmental or
international panels or committees; as organizers of conferences; and as peer reviewers. The annual reports of AUB faculties provide specific data illustrating the wealth of faculty involvement in outreach and service activities.

The faculty workload at AUB is heavy considering the number of hours that faculty devote to committee work and other activities. The heavy load may be partly attributed to the period of transition and growth that AUB initiated ten years ago. Unfortunately, enrolment expanded at a more rapid pace than infrastructure and services. As Provost Heath put it: "The student population increased from 5,000 students to 7,000 students, deans have been rebuilding faculties, faculty populations have changed and only a few of those who were here 15 years ago are now present. This has continually added to administrative and academic demands on faculty and increased expectations. Faculty research has been stressed, although the research support provided is limited and the environment for attracting funds is very challenging. There are therefore many reasons for faculty not to be comfortable. There is a constant increase in expectations and a constant change in faculty members because of these factors. There are variations in faculty load depending on the size of the faculties and departments. Given the environmental challenges faced by faculty within and outside of the University, their achievements have been remarkable."

D. Procedures for Attracting, Reviewing and Retaining Faculty

1. Recruitment

AUB has an open and transparent recruitment policy and there is general agreement that it demonstrates impartiality in the recruitment process. AUB competes in the international market for the most qualified faculty in their fields. All full-time faculty positions are advertised on the AUB website and in such international journals as the Chronicle for Higher Education; these advertisements clearly affirm that the University is an equal-opportunity employer. AUB's bylaws unambiguously state that the best-qualified candidates are chosen on the basis of educational background and proven capabilities as demonstrated by prior experience and appropriate references. Applicant records are kept after the selection of the successful candidate. Since priority in recruitment is given to newly established programs and departments, new faculty lines will ultimately be introduced in departments that have reinstated PhD programs.

In all faculties, the Dean's Office plays a central role in the recruitment process. It advertises vacancies, collects CVs and reference letters, and authorizes departments, upon their request, to conduct on-site or telephone interviews for short-listed candidates. In some cases, the deans conduct these interviews. At the department level, all faculty of professorial rank review the applications, although voting is restricted to faculty equal or higher in rank to the applicant. When the opening is for an assistant professor, the dean makes an offer to the preferred applicant after consultations with the relevant department and faculty advisory committee. At higher ranks, the appointment also requires the approval of the Board of Deans (BOD) and Board of Trustees (BOT). Although all deans follow similar procedures, there are some variations across faculties: for example, candidate visits to the AUB campus are not always possible. Deans expect chairs and faculty to play a proactive role in the recruitment of qualified candidates. In focus group meetings, faculty indicated that all faculty positions are advertised, due to AUB's lack of tenure, as teaching or short-term (3-year) positions and that this reduces their appeal to good candidates.

The 2008 Institutional Survey indicated improvement in policies and practices related to faculty recruitment over the last few years, with 56 percent of faculty declaring that they are aware of recruitment policies in their faculty or department, 50 percent saying that they played an active role in recruitment and 32 percent agreeing that the overall process had improved. The latter perception may be attributed to faculty participation in recruitment planning and decision-making, as well as the fact that, in most cases, a candidate interview and visit take place. The increased involvement of faculty in recruitment has led to greater awareness of recruitment practices and policies, while strengthening their alignment with department missions and goals.

Policies and procedures for the recruitment of visiting faculty are the same as those for full-timers. The recruitment of part-time faculty is more ad hoc and is based on instructional needs. No advertisements are posted for these teaching positions although all appointments are subject to rigorous approval processes at the department and faculty levels. About 40 percent of faculty surveyed in 2008 believed that part-time faculty appointment criteria and procedures ensure the
hiring of qualified teaching faculty. Twenty-one percent disagreed. Contract renewal is an issue for part-timers even if they have worked at AUB for many consecutive years. Some part-timers expressed frustration about access to the campus, library and computers between semesters or in summer because their IDs are taken away or deactivated when they receive their final salaries for the contract period. About 65 percent of chairs thought that part-time faculty received adequate administrative support from their departments.

2. Reappointment/Promotion

Criteria for the periodic evaluation and promotion of faculty include research output, teaching effectiveness, and University and professional service. Policies and procedures for reappointment and promotion were developed over three years by the promotion task force appointed by President Waterbury and the Senate Steering and Faculty Affairs committees before being approved by the Senate in June 2004. They are clearly articulated in the Faculty Manual, which is available in print as well as on the AUB website, and communicated orally to faculty during new faculty orientation sessions. Wide dissemination was confirmed by the 2008 Survey, in which half of faculty respondents strongly agreed that they were aware of these policies; only 15 percent disagreed/strongly disagreed. More than half of all faculty also agreed that they received advance notification of changes in promotion criteria. Chairs supported these statements even more emphatically, with 95 percent confirming awareness of reappointment/promotion policies and 85 percent stating that they were notified of changes in advance.

Opinion was more varied on whether these policies and procedures are applied consistently and fairly. On this point, 38 percent of faculty agreed or strongly agreed, 15 percent disagreed or strongly disagreed and nearly 40 percent said that they did not know. A comparable picture emerged for department chairs. Other questions related to fairness and consistency showed a similar tendency, with an equal number of faculty at either end of the scale and many others opting for ‘I don’t know.’ When asked about due process monitors and transparency, faculty were generally of the opinion that they fostered fairness and consistency. This positive assessment was particularly pronounced among department heads. These findings represented a marked improvement over the last institutional survey, when the main concern of faculty was the lack of transparency in the promotion process. Focus group meetings indicated that this was now less of an issue than trying to understand the evaluation criteria and the University’s expectations.

As for questions regarding annual performance reviews and how the different criteria (research, teaching, service) are acknowledged in the promotion and reappointment of faculty, faculty were, again, quite varied in their responses, but tended to respond positively. Taken together, their responses indicated that fairness and consistency in the reappointment and promotion of faculty has advanced steadily, although considerable scope for improvement remains.

According to the 2008 Institutional Survey, 32 percent of faculty also believed that the recommendations of faculty committees largely determined standards for retention/promotion as well as decisions to retain or promote individual faculty members; 16 percent disagreed with this statement. Here it should be noted that 25 percent of survey respondents were professors, 12 percent were associate professors and 34 percent were assistant professors. Since faculty reappointment/promotion committees involve only higher ranks, this finding may be interpreted as indicating that junior faculty trust senior faculty to set reasonable standards.

No general trend was discernable concerning faculty productivity, professional growth and retention over the past five years. In terms of research output, for instance, the publications per faculty ratio increased only marginally, with some faculties showing slightly stronger numbers than others. The same was true of the retention rate, which also failed to change significantly. In any case, such data is correlational and would only suggest, at best, how changes in policies and procedures affected faculty productivity, professional growth and retention.

3. Annual performance review

Consistent with AUB’s academic policies and procedures, all faculty members, including the few with tenure, are subject to annual performance reviews at the department/track level. Faculty members due for contract renewal (reappointment) are also subject to a thorough review one year prior to the contract’s expiry (see Faculty Manual, Chapter 2, Section 3). Evaluations are based on the professional responsibilities of faculty (teaching, research and service), with research being given the greatest weight.
Most faculties began conducting annual reviews in 2004-05. The review process varies within and between faculties, with departments generally using standardized forms, some of which are longer and more comprehensive than others. Some faculties have more explicit criteria for evaluating and rating faculty and more structured ways of providing faculty with feedback. Review forms are distributed to faculty in March or April so that they can summarize their accomplishments for the current year before submitting the form to the department chair. The department chair or senior faculty evaluate/rate each faculty member on the basis of their personal knowledge of his/her performance using the completed form as an assessment aid. The form must be signed by the evaluator. Faculty receive comments to support their ratings either orally, from chairs or deans, or in writing. In some faculties, faculty members review the evaluation and indicate whether they agree/disagree with it or wish to appeal it.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, a substantial proportion of faculty reported that the annual performance reviews largely acknowledged their research (60 percent) and their teaching (51 percent). Approximately one-third of them said that service to AUB or the community was recognized only slightly if at all. Although all chairs reported that review results were discussed with faculty to some or a great extent, one-fifth of surveyed faculty reported receiving little or no advice from chairs after the evaluation. When asked if such feedback was helpful, about half of faculty agreed, while the rest disagreed (25 percent) or said that they did not know (23 percent). When interviewed, all deans indicated that they received evaluation reports from chairs and allocated merit increases fairly based on faculty performance in teaching, research and service. The deans said, however, that the methods by which they perform the allocation are seldom explained to faculty; they assume that chairs understand it by virtue of the kinds of information that they are asked to submit to deans. In large faculties, it is the responsibility of the chair to discuss performance evaluations with individual faculty members, but it is not clear if these conversations actually take place in all cases. The deans agreed that chairs need to receive formal leadership and management training, but this has not yet been done. Moreover, there are no clear written criteria for the appointment of chairs. Appointments are mainly based on consultations with individual faculty members in the department and willingness to serve irrespective of management and people skills. One possible solution, at least for large departments, is the recruitment of long-term chairs who would be required to elucidate a vision for the department before appointment. They would be given stronger leadership and fundraising roles, and assessed accordingly, and would necessarily have greater say in decisions to appoint or terminate faculty members.

It is still premature to report on the impact of annual reviews on institutional growth and teaching excellence. Data are too recent and the current information is insufficient to make an informed statement on these points.

4. Tenure at AUB: Will we ever be there?

Reappointment and promotion policies at AUB have driven serious discussions and steps to reinstate tenure, which was frozen in 1985, during the Lebanese Civil War. In 2004 and 2005, the Senate unanimously approved and presented formal requests to President Waterbury asking that the University take action toward the reinstatement of the tenure system. The president responded by appointing a reputable external consultant (Charles Vest, the former president of MIT) to prepare an independent report to evaluate the proposal. On the strength of this evaluation, the BOT authorized the president in June 2006 to take further measures to explore the tenure issue. The president appointed a University task force to study the Vest report and to prepare a report of its own which was consistent with the original Senate recommendations. After 18 meetings, the task force submitted its final report, which recommended the adoption and implementation of a “formal and uniform tenure system,” suggesting that “current promotion criteria be refined to achieve greater clarity of expectations, without falling into prescription.” However, it went on to say that, “while the recommended refinement is desirable, it is by no means essential for the tenure enterprise to proceed,” implying that existing criteria were sufficiently clear and rigorous. The report also argued that the reintroduction of PhD programs had put the University “well on the way to becoming a Doctoral/Research university, which should make introduction of a tenure system even more urgent.” The Senate considered the report over two meetings in February 2008, but the task force’s recommendations did not get the majority needed to pass without amendment. Major objections concerned the proposed external promotion committee (College of Evaluators) and the lack of a clear process to review the current
154 full professors on periodic contracts for tenure appointments. (See Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.9 for more on the steps taken to reinstate tenure. The reports of Dr. Vest and the tenure task force were widely disseminated upon completion and appear on the accreditation website.)

Junior and senior faculty had different concerns about the transition from the current system of academic appointment to the tenure system. Assistant professors wondered if AUB would be able to provide the working conditions and facilities needed to reach the level of achievement expected of candidates for tenure. Some full professors objected to the idea of being reviewed yet again. The task force chair indicated that no university would grant automatic tenure to all full professors despite their accomplishments. Below are some points raised during faculty focus groups:

- Tenure may affect undergraduate education at AUB since faculty might focus on research rather than teaching.
- Tenure should involve early retirement in order to avoid discrimination against younger faculty. Incentives for early retirement would be put in place by the University.
- The promotion criteria to attain the rank of full professor are stringent enough and another promotion cycle seems unnecessary. Full professors are likely to be deserving of tenure and should be tenured automatically. Some felt that the task force’s report provided a solution to this concern since it states that “a full professor who chooses not to apply for tenure or fails to gain tenure would continue to be employed under the current system.”
- Tenure should be linked to the satisfaction of some minimal expectation of service, teaching and research. AUB needs to design a proper workload system to balance these various contributions. Universities normally compensate faculty who participate in major committees either financially or by reducing their academic duties: AUB does neither. The research productivity of professors involved in such activities is consequently impaired.
- If promotion is tied to tenure, the current promotion criteria will become more stringent. This may result in a loss of continuity, since assistant professors may leave before applying for promotion and tenure and risking a negative response.

Tenure remains an open issue for consideration by the Senate and Board of Trustees. A solution will depend on the vision of AUB President Peter Dorman, who assumed office in August 2008.

E. Faculty Participation in Formulation of Academic and Institutional Policies and Procedures

The formulation of academic policies and procedures is normally initiated within departments. Faculty involvement in curricular revision and development is extensive. They also play integral roles in recruiting and promoting colleagues and evaluating the performance of individual faculty members and programs. They are consulted in the selection of department chairs and participate in developing and updating the procedures set down in the Faculty Manual. All AUB faculties have standing committees for academic policy (administrative), curriculum, research, graduate studies, promotion/appointment (advisory) and student affairs. Standing committees at the faculty and University levels are largely composed of faculty members, most of whom are elected for specific terms. The faculty academic and/or curricular committees are responsible for overseeing the development of courses of study and academic policies for their students. Deans refer faculty decisions that may affect AUB’s financial commitments or the academic policy of the University as a whole to the president and the provost for consideration.

In the past few years, the University relentlessly revised existing programs, introduced new ones and launched several minors. Minors are normally initiated at the department level before being approved by the academic and/or curriculum committee of the appropriate faculty and then by the faculty’s dean. Since 2004, 19 minors have been introduced in FAS, two in FAFS, three in FEA, one in OSB and two in FHS. New or restructured undergraduate programs require the approval of the university-wide Academic Development Committee (ADC), the AUB Senate and the BOT Academic Committee. These bodies recently approved two new undergraduate programs in FAS, two in FAFS and three in FEA; the newest is the BS in Agribusiness announced following the BOT's November 2008 meeting. New or restructured graduate programs require
the approval of the Board of Graduate Studies and the Senate; new programs must also be endorsed by the BOT Academic Committee. All new undergraduate and graduate degrees have been registered or are in the process of being registered with the New York State Education Department (see Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.10 for a full list).

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, more than 80 percent of chairs agreed that faculty members were sufficiently involved in developing academic, research and service programs and activities in their departments. Faculty corroborated this finding, with 78 percent stating that they were involved in developing academic and research programs and 68 percent saying that the same about service programs. They confirmed their strong role in developing new minors and restructuring existing undergraduate and graduate programs. Moreover, graduate programs in departments that reactivated the PhD went through a process of external evaluation and assessment before the degrees were registered. However, AUB does not require frequent reviews of graduate programs, which are normally initiated by departments or deans. Efforts have been made to reduce course overlap; cross-list courses meeting the requirements of interdisciplinary programs; optimize graduate resources among faculties; and equip core labs with state-of-the-art research equipment. In recent years, some departments have solicited external funding, largely from the European Commission, to develop curricula, graduate programs and minors.

During each of the last two years, FEA faculty members have participated in a one-day ‘working retreat’ and have made recommendations on their own activities that are tracked by the faculty’s Strategic Planning Committee. Progress made in addressing these recommendations is one of FEA’s Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and measures the faculty’s climate for continuous improvement. Of 40 recommendations coming out of the 2007 retreat, some 70 percent were acted upon by end November 2008, when a complete report was made to faculty members at the annual retreat. Staff are also involved in the formulation of policies and procedures, with another KPI tracking recommendations that appear in the annual reports of support units.

In focus group meetings, faculty spoke about their extensive involvement, through formal AUB channels, in the introduction of new courses, revision of curricula, restructuring of programs and establishment of multidisciplinary research areas (on their own initiative). They expressed different views on how they would like this involvement to be linked to the long-term vision of programs and thus regularized. The recent launch of PhD programs in seven departments gave some faculty the opportunity to review the vision of research programs as well as resources. Focus group members questioned the depth of support for PhD programs, saying that PhD stipends and funding for equipment and laboratories were insufficient. They said that departments starting these programs were handicapped by reductions in operating budgets. President Waterbury noted that sources of support for PhD candidates had been identified during the program development stage and had included reallocating funds from Master’s to doctoral programs and drawing on endowed funds where available.

The 2008 Survey found that 43 percent of faculty respondents periodically reviewed/proposed changes to faculty manuals; faculty and Senate bylaws; and similar documents. This shows major involvement by faculty in the formulation of academic policy. However, only 21 percent of faculty said that faculty committees largely determined administrative policies relevant to them (health insurance, pension, paid research leave); a larger proportion, 26 percent, disagreed. Even fewer faculty (12 percent) said that they influenced the setting of budgetary priorities; most (36 percent) disagreed with this statement. By contrast, 90 percent of department chairs reported that they provided input for department budgets and 30 percent said that the same was true for faculty budgets. However, only 40 percent of chairs stated that they were aware of their faculty’s budget. This indicates a lack of empowerment among chairs, many of whom have little interest and involvement in decision-making for resource allocation to their departments and in shaping the direction and quality of programs.

While part-time faculty are essential to meeting the instructional needs of students, they have little involvement in academic development. Some part-time faculty have expressed a desire to be more involved in decision-making at the department level, at least in terms of differences in evaluation and compensation. The OSB is developing new categories of part-time faculty that might be used by other faculties. Thirty-eight percent of faculty respondents to the 2008 Survey said that part-time faculty in their departments participated in academic activities, while 45 percent of academic heads agreed that part-time faculty received adequate academic orientation.

Chapter Five: Faculty

75
F. Supporting Faculty Excellence

1. Supporting teaching excellence

The University provides faculty with opportunities to improve their teaching skills through the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), established in 2004, which offers a series of workshops and seminars on various teaching strategies, tools and resources. (For more information on the CTL, see Chapter Six.) A total of 117 faculty members participated in CTL seminars in 2004-05 and 144 in 2005-06. The seminar on developing a teaching portfolio attracted the highest number of faculty in both years, possibly because teaching portfolios are part of promotion files. In addition, AUB's Academic Computing Center (see Chapter Six) trains faculty in the use of the Moodle Learning Management System, as well as Microsoft and other software. In 2002, AUB established a University Teaching Excellence Award, which has been presented to 12 faculty members to date (see http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webctl/excellence_awardees.htm).

Since 2001, AUB has offered a two-day orientation program (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webnfo) to new faculty that takes place prior to the start of the fall and spring semesters. During the first day, new faculty are familiarized with University services and resources, while the second day focuses primarily on teaching responsibilities. The program has an appointed facilitator and is coordinated by the Office of the Provost. Department chairs are also asked to appoint mentors for new faculty. Faculty feedback on the program is sought and it has been positive. According to the facilitator, the program is updated annually based on faculty suggestions.

In the 2008 Survey, 51 percent of faculty were satisfied with available teaching resources, whether graduate assistant support, equipment, computing labs, or facilities, while 23 percent of faculty were not. Satisfaction with the University's response to the specific teaching and research needs of faculty was much less marked (36 percent agreed and 24 percent disagreed). Although half of all chairs said that graduate assistant support for their departments was satisfactory, a large minority (30 percent) deemed it inadequate. Part-time faculty complained that they did not have access to campus facilities to prepare for classes before the term began since they normally sign their contracts four weeks after the start of semester. This also meant that they were not paid in a timely manner early in the contract period.

2. Supporting faculty scholarship and research

AUB has shown growing interest in the professional development of faculty and budgets about $350,000 annually to help fund such activities as participation in international conferences and research summers abroad. The number of faculty who benefited from this funding during 2004-07 ranged from 138 to 145 annually or about one-third of all full-time faculty. The impact of faculty development on research productivity and teaching appeared to be quite positive: 58 percent of AUB faculty said that development opportunities through University Research Board (URB) grants and paid research leaves met teaching needs and 47 percent said that they met research needs. Junior faculty are given priority for faculty research grants and assistant professors entering their third or fourth year are also eligible for paid research leaves lasting one semester.

Research is an important criterion for promotion at AUB. The ability to conduct research depends on the availability of financial and material resources. The University has supported research by establishing an Office of Grants and Contracts (OGC); increasing internal research funding opportunities through the URB and the Medical Practice Plan (MPP); establishing two core lab facilities in FAS and FM; and providing modest seed grants for new faculty. In 2007, the URB awarded 135 grants totaling $833,184, and the MPP awarded 46 grants worth $431,526. The Central Research Science Laboratory and other core facilities have helped to provide infrastructure for research in Biology, Physics, Chemistry and Engineering. Between 2002 and 2007, 50 Master's students used the laboratory for thesis work and 15 periodical articles acknowledging its support emerged from their research. Library resources have also expanded over the past few years, with the book and periodical budget expanding from $2,545,780 in 2003-04 to $3,282,623 in 2006-07. In 2007, University Libraries processed 6,947 requests for books from professors out of 11,421 requested titles. Policies are now in place to permit faculty and graduate students to use the Document Delivery Service to obtain articles that are not in the Libraries' holdings. (See Chapter Six for more on library services.)

The creation of the OGC was an important step in encouraging faculty to solicit external funding and in facilitating and improving policies for the administration of grants. The 2008
Institutional Survey found that 44 percent of faculty believed that AUB provided adequate support for efforts to secure external funding. In 2006-07, the LNCSR provided $201,733 for 41 projects and international agencies gave $6,733,290 for another 78 projects. These numbers show that approximately 35 percent of faculty are now receiving external funding for projects compared to 2 percent four years ago. OGC personnel continue to increase in number and policies are also being introduced to encourage faculty to seek external research funding, notably, the Faculty Research Incentive Plan (FRIP), an arrangement to supplement faculty salaries that was approved by the Board of Deans and took effect in October 2007. This and other research policies/procedures are posted on AUB’s website (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webgrant/research/policies.htm).

Faculty are less satisfied with AUB administrative offices that provide support for externally funded research projects, such as the Comptroller’s Office, Purchasing Department and other related units. Extramural research grants are inherently driven by deliverables, which in turn compel faculty and their graduate assistants to work at a steady if not rapid pace. Focus group meetings brought to light several complaints concerning the Purchasing Department’s slow response to requests for supplies; the irregular release of up-to-date financial statements; the time taken to process payment vouchers for small items; and delays by the Admissions Office in processing PhD applications. When interviewed, Provost Heath said that AUB had hired a service quality director, but he was later assigned to strategic planning and special projects rather than to sustaining the service excellence initiative that started in 2002.

3. Supporting faculty service

AUB encourages faculty involvement in community and professional service activities. Policies that govern consulting activities are in place for individual faculties and the REP office. However, in the 2008 Survey, only 40-44 percent of faculty agreed that service to the University and community is adequately acknowledged in promotion and annual performance reviews.

AUB announced the establishment of a Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service in December 2007 and has since appointed an experienced part-time director to head it. The new center will support community-based research initiatives, develop curricular opportunities for student service learning, organize a strong student volunteer program, integrate its activities into academic programs at the University, and foster productive working relations with project leaders in the community.

It is clear that the University has made a good effort to support faculty service, but the faculty teaching load must be adjusted to provide more time for service and research activities.

G. Academic Environment and Faculty Engagement

Faculty think of AUB as a very special and unique place where they contribute to education and research at the international level despite having fewer resources than neighboring universities in the broader region. However, low faculty morale was clearly observed during focus groups, with faculty perceiving the University administration as distant. Faculty sought less top-down decision-making and greater empowerment – not a formal change in structure, but a delegation of powers from deans’ offices to departments that goes beyond teaching to more strategic roles in space allocation, research programs, and recruitment and promotion decisions.

During interviews, deans made it obvious that they are working rigorously to increase faculty resources and to diversify measurable quality indicators related to research, teaching and services at all levels, for instance, student satisfaction, faculty productivity, graduate career placement, academic program success, space and funding. Interaction between deans and faculty members in large faculties (FAS, FM) differs from that in smaller faculties (FAFS, FHS). Deans discuss/communicate decisions to chairs, who are responsible for informing faculty of changes in policies and methods of evaluation and for identifying/communicating faculty needs. The formal process by which information and decisions are conveyed is not well documented, although the minutes of Senate and faculty meetings are distributed to faculty. All deans agreed on the importance of training newly appointed chairs to follow set standards, rather than depending on individual personality and style. Training and empowering chairs is also important for good communications with deans and the administration.

In focus groups, faculty expressed the need for a greater sense of connection with their colleagues and opportunities for informal faculty engagement within and across disciplines. These issues were of particular concern in large faculties like FAS and FM. Faculty complained.
about the lack of faculty lounges and small meeting rooms at AUB, the reduction of the area and
function of the faculty lounge on the upper campus and the lack of a similar space on the lower
campus. When asked about this issue, FEA and FAS deans said that they shared this concern
and were planning or had created faculty lounges in some buildings. FEA currently has a
meeting/class room that is reserved for faculty use as a lounge one hour every day, but it is not a
dedicated furnished lounge. FHS and FAFS do have faculty lounges, but they are not often used
by faculty. FM has lounges that are rarely used by faculty who prefer meeting places nearer to
their departments. OSB is currently short of space, but faculty lounges are planned for the
School's new building. Gatherings and retreats are held frequently in many faculties. Faculty-
level FAS retreats have not been feasible due to its size, but chairs have been encouraged to hold
retreats for department members and have begun to do so.

Faculty focus groups discussed how best to address the issue of informal faculty engagement
with senior academic administrators for discussions about space, funds and policies. One faculty
member suggested that all faculty mingle with the president and deans at least once per year to
learn where they stand on different questions. Another suggestion was to have a full-time liaison
with the president to ensure that he is aware of faculty problems. One senior faculty also decried
the absence of a community of faculty, saying that activities which are not structured by the
institution rarely inspire faculty enthusiasm. He thought that FAS, in particular, tended to treat
faculty like employees. Others complained that “the administration gave too much attention to
fundraising and too little to faculty.” Many faculty felt unappreciated.

H. Contractual Security, Salary and Benefits of Faculty

The absence of tenure at AUB is a primary cause for concern about the continuity and coherence
of the University's educational and particularly doctoral programs. It is currently difficult to
recruit faculty who already have tenure elsewhere, especially at the levels of associate professor,
chair and dean. Moreover, faculty acting as PhD advisors only have contracts for three years –
less time than is needed for the completion of a doctoral degree. Reinstating tenure and making
AUB's financial package more competitive may reduce disquiet regarding the continuity of PhD
programs.

The salaries of AUB faculty are marginally lower than average salaries at peer institutions
with Master's level programs in the US. (Information on salary ranges is posted on the AUB
website and appears in Appendix D 5-1, Figure 5.2.) However, AUB also offers a benefits package
that often includes partially subsidized housing and fully subsidized school tuition for the
dependent children of faculty. Other benefits include the Housing Purchase Plan (HPP), which
was initiated in 2000 and provides a grant of LL 7,500,000 ($5000) annually for up to 10 years.
To qualify, faculty must be either full professors or occupants of on- or off-campus AUB housing
who have served full-time for at least three years. Between 2000 and 2007, 85 faculty from across
the University benefited from the plan. However, the grant amount has not been revised to
reflect significant increases in housing prices since the plan's introduction.

Over the past three years, faculty have received annual merit increases that ranged from 2-4
percent. These raises were perceived to be lower than increases in the cost of living. The 2008
Survey showed that 49 percent of faculty were not aware of the merit increase criteria for their
faculties and 69 percent could not say whether it was equitably implemented. When interviewed,
the deans clearly explained the criteria that they followed to allocate merit increases. In large
faculties, however, deans did not communicate directly with faculty members to explain why
their raises differed from those of peers in the same faculty.

Salary adjustments are periodically made on an individual basis when salaries are found to
be significantly out of line with those of peer faculty. (Salaries and benefits for specific positions
are communicated directly to potential candidates during the recruitment process and salary
ranges are not generally provided in advertisements for positions.) In 2005, an ad hoc Senate
committee looked at the issue of salary discrepancies. One area of focus was salary discrepancies
between male and female faculty of the same rank and with the same number of years of service.
In all faculties besides FM, which was excluded from the survey, females of all ranks had lower
salaries than males except for one particular case. The study resulted in major adjustments to
faculty salaries in those faculties with obvious discrepancies effective 2006-07. AUB budgets for
further adjustments which may be needed on an annual basis.
Salary discrepancies were discussed in focus group meetings, where the following points were made:

- Salary discrepancies even exist between members of the same department.
- New recruits are given significantly higher salaries compared to more experienced faculty.
- Nonetheless, these higher salaries are not commensurate with what other universities offer and are not enough to attract qualified faculty.

1. *Health Insurance Plan*

As part of the benefits package, faculty and their families are eligible for enrolment in the University Health Insurance Plan (HIP) charges a monthly premium for professional medical and hospital coverage (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webhr/benefits/academics/HIP_AC.htm). Since the 2004 Self-Study, HIP has undergone major changes, including outsourcing administration of the plan to a private insurer, MEDNET, and amendments to policies (see Appendix D 5-1, Table 5.11), for example, the cancellation of post-retirement coverage for new recruits and the introduction of co-payments for doctor, emergency room and primary care visits. Faculty participating in focus groups expressed strong dissatisfaction with modifications to the plan and some have suggested that these changes are one of the reasons for low faculty morale.

2. *Maternity leave*

Based on a new policy introduced in 2005-06, female faculty of all professorial ranks are entitled to paid maternity leave without stopping the promotion clock. During the leave, the faculty member is relieved from teaching but not research duties and activities. Eight female faculty members from various faculties benefited from this policy in the past three years. In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 25 percent of faculty expressed their satisfaction with AUB’s maternity leave policy, while 55 percent said that they were unfamiliar with it. (Thirty-two percent of survey participants were women.)

I. *Recommendations*

1. *Faculty teaching, research and service*

   1. Improve equity in faculty teaching loads and adopt a clear and simple system for their measurement that takes class size and the nature of the course into consideration.
   2. Standardize procedures and forms for the annual faculty performance review to provide a suitable basis for merit increase distribution. There is a need to define the indicators, weights and categories for these increases.
   3. Determine a satisfactory method to calculate the student-to-faculty ratio in relation to teaching. Prioritize the allocation of new faculty lines in a way that addresses major discrepancies in this ratio across faculties.
   4. Coordinate recruitment between faculties and/or departments, especially those in which research areas overlap (for example, Biology and Medical Sciences; Computer Science and Computer Engineering), and consider joint appointments. Increase public recognition of scholarly achievements. Academic officers need to do more to acknowledge the successes of their faculty in order to cultivate a culture of scholarship and reward.
   5. Encourage participation on faculty and University committees by recognizing service in annual performance reviews and offering incentive packages to participants. Such packages might include additional support for research funding, co-sharing of research assistant stipends and travel grants for international conferences.
   6. Devise faculty-level procedures to standardize the selection of faculty experts for REP projects and make it more transparent.
   7. Develop policy guidelines regarding the conduct of research and other scholarly and creative activities at AUB.
   8. Clarify and enhance the responsibilities of department chairs and offer faculty members inducements (accelerated paid research leaves, supplementary leave compensation) to serve as chairs in order to encourage rotation and maintain the scholarly level of chairs.
2. University support for faculty excellence

1. Improve/initiate the process by which faculty concerns about AUB’s non-academic service units (for example, the Purchasing Department, Facilities Planning and Design, and Comptroller’s Office) are directly reported to a service quality officer authorized to investigate them and take action. The current process of reporting to chairs and then deans is not effective in producing timely action by such units.

2. Create opportunities for improved intellectual life and faculty engagement. Faculty lounges or small meeting rooms across campus are essential to cultivate a greater sense of connection between faculty. Space should be provided for such facilities and their presence should be publicized among faculty.

3. Initiate campaigns to support the new PhD programs with help of the admissions and publications offices. Create quality work spaces for Master’s and PhD students.

4. Reduce the number of routine service tasks asked of faculty in order to protect faculty research time. Review academic and administrative service and governance expectations in small faculties.

5. Consider stopping the promotion clock for female faculty for a period of one year after childbirth.

6. Review and improve the role, evaluation process and administrative support for part-time faculty members. This includes activating email addresses and campus IDs in a timely manner; extending email addresses for one month after the semester ends; and developing a manual to clarify the rights and responsibilities of part-timers and the academic policies and processes involved in their contract activation and reappointment.

7. Provide better training for chairs on the critical issues of faculty development, annual evaluation and promotion. Learning ‘on the job’ is inadequate.

3. Communication between faculty and administration

1. Create a mechanism for the timely update of published policies. All service/administrative units should also publish their mission statements, composition, responsibilities and faculty service roles. This is particularly important for the Facilities Planning and Design Unit, which does not publish information and which faculty perceive as interfering with academic priorities and unresponsive to their needs.

2. Take serious steps to promote bottom-up initiatives in faculties/programs.

3. Senior AUB academic administrators should hold regular open informal meetings where faculty members can raise issues of concern.

4. Faculty security and benefits

1. Continue efforts to reinstate tenure, which will enhance faculty freedom of expression, attract qualified candidates to the University and ensure the continuity of programs.

2. Adjust faculty salaries periodically to the cost of living and to salaries at peer universities to aid in faculty recruitment and retention.

3. Assess and improve HIP procedures and services. Provide online venues for faculty to report and receive feedback on issues related to HIP service quality.

4. Adjust the amount of the faculty housing purchase plan supplement periodically to reflect increases in housing prices.
Chapter Six

EDUCATIONAL OFFERINGS

Purpose: Working Group 6 (WG6) on Educational Offerings (Standard 11) was charged with examining the content, rigor and coherence of undergraduate and graduate academic programs and with determining the extent to which these programs serve AUB's goals of developing professional competencies and the habits and skills necessary to life-long learning. WG6 also aimed at examining each program's expected student learning outcomes, including knowledge, skills and values. Individual courses, programs and sequences of study were reviewed for their dynamism and responsiveness to new research findings and modes of inquiry. Attention was further given to the policies and procedures by which degree requirements were established and student performance evaluated. WG6 looked for coherence between curricular offerings and co-curricular activities, and reviewed the sufficiency and effectiveness of the resources – human, physical, information, learning and technological – used to support programs.

Membership: WG6 included seven faculty members of varying rank from the faculties of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), Arts and Sciences (FAS), and Engineering and Architecture (FEA), as well as the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB); one was an associate dean (FAS); another was chair of the Department of Agricultural Sciences; a third was chair of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering; and a fourth was associate director of the Center for Teaching and Learning. The group's other five members were the assistant registrar, two librarians (Jafet and Saab Medical libraries), a trustee and an undergraduate student (FEA). A staff member from the Provost’s Office helped to identify and collect data. WG6 was co-chaired by two faculty members, one from FAS (professor and associate dean) and one from FEA (assistant professor).

Methodology: The working group was divided into four sub-groups (program missions; graduate offerings and learning resources; learning outcomes; credit transfer), each with a coordinator responsible for calling meetings, synchronizing the work of members and drafting the sub-group’s report. Together, the members of WG6 collected and analyzed data found in the following documents: the 2004 Institutional Self-Study and follow-up reports to MSCHE from 2005 to 2007; internal documents and reports, including those from University Libraries and the Center for Teaching and Learning; University policy statements; faculty strategic plans; faculty and departmental websites; AUB catalogue; ULOCC (University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee) survey results; and course syllabi. The working group also interviewed the head of admissions and participated in AUB’s 2008 Institutional Survey. Due to overlap between chapters, WG6’s report on transfer and special students was integrated into Chapter Four, while WG4’s reports on libraries and computing services informed findings presented in this chapter.

This chapter is organized according to the following headings:

A. Congruence with Mission, Goals and Objectives
B. Relationship to Intellectual and Professional Development of Students
C. Responsiveness to Needs of Students and Market
D. Development, Assessment and Revision of Educational Programs
E. Development of Learning Resources
F. Recommendations

A. Congruence with Mission, Goals and Objectives

AUB has continued to direct its efforts toward improving and expanding educational offerings in fulfillment of its institutional mission. Not only has the University strengthened undergraduate
programs in its endeavor to provide quality education, but it has also introduced numerous new graduate programs while providing faculty and students with additional facilities and support to participate in the advancement of knowledge through research. All of this activity comes with a certain amount of creative tension as these initiatives are balanced and valued according to AUB's mission, institutional priorities and ability to devote adequate resources to them, as well as the requirements of today's Lebanese, regional and international students.

As of Winter 2007, AUB had approximately one hundred active degree programs registered with the New York State Education Department (NYSED), including PhDs in eight specialties, 55 Master's degrees and 36 Bachelor's degrees. Almost 40 percent of them (largely graduate programs) were first registered in 2004-07. In the context of professional accreditation initiatives, three of AUB's six faculties (FEA, OSB and Faculty of Health Sciences or FHS), as well as the School of Nursing (SON), which falls under the Faculty of Medicine (FM), have developed mechanisms to evaluate the alignment of their educational offerings with faculty and department mission statements. In September 2006, 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. Similarly, in October 2007, SON became the first nursing school beyond American territories to be accredited by the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE). For the past few years, FEA Engineering programs have been in compliance with standards set by the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET) and the faculty is now awaiting a formal visit by the evaluation team. OSB is also a candidate for accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). The remaining two faculties, FAS and FAFS, have not benefited from the impetus that accreditation initiatives bring to the development of formal assessment mechanisms, leading AUB to devise its own strategies.

In the 2008 Institutional Survey, 80 percent of academic heads reported that their programs had stated missions, objectives, goals and outcomes; 82.5 percent of them believed these statements to be clear; and 86 percent thought that their educational offerings were consistent with the mission of the University. However, 25 percent of academic heads reported that they seldom or never reviewed their programs for congruence with AUB's mission statement. When asked if they agreed that missions, goals and objectives were achievable and inter-aligned, only 70 percent of them replied in the affirmative.

Although many AUB faculties have mechanisms to assess the alignment of educational offerings with department and faculty mission statements, the relevant data have not yet been collected. When these mission statements were analyzed for the present study, however, they were generally found to be well-aligned with the mission of the University. More conclusive results will have to await the development of university-wide policies and procedures for the periodic and systematic evaluation of all of AUB's education programs for alignment with department, faculty and University missions, objectives and goals.

The missions, objectives and goals of most AUB faculties and departments are currently published in accreditation self-studies or strategic planning reports and are thus not easily accessible; a few appear in AUB's catalogue and/or on its website. Academic heads responding to the survey listed the following methods of communicating program mission statements to stakeholders: during orientation, advising and class discussions; in course syllabi; by email; and on the University website.

B. Relationship to Intellectual and Professional Development of Students

AUB's educational offerings aim at providing students with the knowledge, skills and values that derive from its commitment to the liberal arts and to excellence in education. During the past three years, the University has rethought the core general education component required of all AUB undergraduates and has revised it significantly (see Chapter Seven) to help students acquire breadth of knowledge in areas beyond their major fields of study; experience a variety of modes of learning and analysis; and develop important personal skills and values. When they completed the 2008 Institutional Survey, student respondents had not been exposed to the revised general education requirement, which does not go into effect until 2009-10; nonetheless, more than 66 percent of them said that AUB's current general education requirement had broadened their knowledge; expanded their communication and critical analysis skills; and developed their ability to make independent judgments.
The mission statements of all AUB faculties, except for FAS, make explicit reference to preparing students for successful professional careers. In order to provide students with an education that balances theory with practice, each AUB faculty includes a selection of the following components among its program requirements: lab courses; summer internships; site visits; hands-on course projects; field training; case competitions; graduation projects; and so on. Some supporting examples include the summer internship in local, regional, or multinational companies required of all FEA and OSB undergraduates; the spring semester and summer session spent by all agriculture undergraduates at AREC (Agricultural Research and Education Center); the mandatory summer field training for all undergraduates in FHS; and the fieldwork and/or practicum required of undergraduates majoring in some humanities and social science departments in FAS. More generally, lab courses are a strong component within various academic units in FEA, FAS and FAFS; for example, every semester approximately 40 lab sections are offered by the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering, while the Department of Biology offers more than 50.

AUB's learning outcomes at both the undergraduate and Master's levels now refer plainly to expectations aligned with the University's mission such as critical thinking and freedom of thought and expression. Learning outcomes in support of independent thinking and problem solving are indicated on the websites of most PhD programs. In addition, as can be seen from objectives listed in the graduate catalogue, AUB faculties endeavor to foster research that emphasizes community-based solutions in real-life settings. One example from FAFS is the work of the Environment and Sustainable Development Unit, which encourages research links with the private and public sectors.

C. Responsiveness to Needs of Students and Market

AUB's professional faculties endeavor to provide students with superior training that makes them attractive to regional employers and prepares them for meaningful roles in their chosen fields. While the general education requirement and the practical components of University programs (mentioned above) both contribute to the overall intellectual and professional development of students, AUB has also devised new programs to meet specific local and regional needs. For instance, OSB has created and activated an Executive MBA (EMBA) program tailored to fit the requirements of Middle Eastern executives and the organizations that they lead. Another example is the graduate program in Information and Communications Technology (ICT) that FEA designed following consultations with local and regional companies working in this field. The program includes business/management courses as core requirements, special courses provided by industry experts and an internship that can take as long as six months.

In spite of the University's commitment to a strong general education component, a 2007 survey of 360 firms (local, regional and multinational) which recruited AUB graduates from various disciplines indicated that they were dissatisfied (satisfaction rate below 20 percent) with their creativity, well-roundedness and leadership abilities. The survey was conducted by Career and Placement Services at the Office of Student Affairs. By contrast, results from AUB's 2006-07 College Outcomes Survey, which involved 777 student participants from all faculties, indicated that many students believed that they had achieved the following outcomes: learning to think and reason; cultivating openness to new ideas and practices; developing problem-solving skills; and receiving a well-rounded general education. One possible explanation for the divergence in perceptions may be found in the 2008 Institutional Survey, which indicated that 50 percent of academic heads seldom or never reviewed programs for congruence with market requirements in Lebanon and the region. Whatever the cause, these three survey results provide strong motivation for the development and implementation of assessment methods to evaluate AUB's effectiveness in providing students with the knowledge and skills needed to meet the demands of the marketplace. This will require, in turn, the creation of appropriate mechanisms to determine market expectations in relation to various disciplines.

D. Development, Assessment and Revision of Educational Programs

1. Development and revision of educational offerings

In line with recommendations in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, AUB has continued working to improve and expand its educational offerings and to provide the human and material resources
necessary to support them. Between 2003 and 2007, almost 40 undergraduate and graduate programs (see Appendix D 6-1 for a full list) were proposed, evaluated and registered for the first time with NYSED. This process built on work done in 2002-04, when all existing BA/BE/BS/MA/ME/MS programs were thoroughly reassessed for compliance with NYSED standards. At the time, some programs were changed and updated in minor ways, while others underwent substantial revision. Although this evaluation took place fairly recently, AUB faculties continue to review educational offerings periodically in order to improve curricula and develop new programs at all levels. In FAS, for example, the establishment of the new Computational Science program was preceded by a thorough revision of Mathematics and Computer Science programs. These revisions continue to be done on an ad hoc basis since no university-wide policy and mechanisms to revise programs have been established.

AUB’s newest educational offerings include reinstated PhD programs in eight separate fields. This initiative largely emanated from faculty members in departments with large graduate (Master’s) student populations and was pursued with support from faculty deans. It figured prominently in the deliberations of the 2004-05 Strategic Planning Committee on Graduate Education and Research (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html) and was the subject of a January 2006 report entitled “Assessment of AUB’s Readiness for the PhD Level”, which was presented to the AUB community, independent consultants and NYSED. The report considered several important points, including the impact of the new degree level on existing programs and whether the University had the financial and other resources necessary to support it. The PhD was expected to have a positive impact on undergraduate education since it would create an environment conducive to scholarly research and innovation, and as being a natural step in the expansion of regional graduate programs. Material resources stemmed from ongoing faculty research facilities and activities, and deans identified possible donors for endowment funds for the support of doctoral students. In March 2006, AUB was visited by a team that reviewed the University’s preparations at the program and institutional levels in light of NYSED requirements and issued its own report. This process culminated in NYSED approval of eight doctoral programs: four in FAS (Arab and Middle Eastern History; Arabic Language and Literature; Cell and Molecular Biology; and Theoretical Physics) and another four in FEA (Civil Engineering; Mechanical Engineering; Electrical and Computer Engineering; and Environmental and Water Resources Engineering). The reintroduction of the PhD, suspended some 20 years earlier during the Lebanese Civil War, represented a major step toward the realization of the vision of the University as a research ‘power house’ for the Arab world. AUB officially announced that it was accepting applications from students interested in these programs in Spring 2007.

Fourteen students were admitted as doctoral pre-candidates in Fall 2007 (see Appendix D 4-1, Table 4.2 for acceptance and yield rates), with three more beginning their studies the following semester. All 17 were Lebanese nationals and many had learned about the reintroduction of the PhD from current or former professors. The brief application period coupled with anxiety about security and stability in Lebanon may explain the absence of international students in the first year. In the future, AUB must aggressively promote its doctoral programs in the regional marketplace. The programs are currently advertised on the websites/pages of the University and the relevant faculties and departments. They are fully described in AUB’s Graduate Catalogue. The deans of FEA and FAS promote and market them widely during development trips in the region. There is presently no program, however, to support faculty visits to meet with prospective PhD candidates at universities in Lebanon and the region (for instance, the Gulf, the Levant, Turkey and Iran).

Alongside curriculum revision and expansion, AUB has also improved faculty recruitment and strengthened faculty development (see below and Chapter Five). PhD registration documents sent to NYSED indicated that two new lines would be authorized for each department reinstating
or introducing a doctoral program. These lines are included in the 69 new faculty FTEs that will be hired over five years to support initiatives described in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview. Overall, these FTEs will be distributed as follows: FAFS, 4; FAS 29; FEA, 12; FHS, 1; OSB, 19; SON, 3. (For information on the alignment between planning and budgeting for faculty, staff and student FTEs, see Chapter Two.)

In their strategic planning reports, several faculties have described initiatives to develop new programs in coming years in order to address emerging trends and areas of interest and to accommodate a broader general education component. For example, FEA listed the following initiatives in its report of February 2007: undergraduate programs in Construction Engineering, Chemical and Petroleum Engineering, Biomedical Engineering (jointly with FM) and Software Engineering; a Master's program in Architecture (with major in History, Theory and Criticism); and a PhD program in Engineering Management. FAFS's report, released in June 2006, included these new initiatives: an undergraduate program in Agribusiness (approved by the BOT in Fall 2008); Master's programs in both Rural Community Development and Landscape Design and Planning; and a PhD program in Nutrition. The July 2006 report of FHS contained two such initiatives, namely, the establishment of an MPH executive program and the development of an interdisciplinary DrPH program.

2. Assessment of educational offerings

The formal assessment of educational offerings depends on the development of program and course learning outcomes as well as the tools needed to measure them. Achieving this objective has been one of the University's main concerns since 2004 with several actions taken to expand the assessment of student learning across faculties in order to develop outcome-based evaluation plans for educational offerings.

AUB's earliest steps in this direction involved two- and four-hour faculty seminars offered by its Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) on the development and assessment of program learning outcomes (PLOs) and course learning outcomes (CLOs). Since 2004, a major component of the Mellon Summer Seminar on Creative Use of Resources in Course Design has also focused on CLOs. In all cases, seminars have been attended by faculty from across the University. (A breakdown of faculty participation and seminar offerings appears in Appendix D 6-2.) In 2006-07, an eight-member Learning Outcomes Core Group was formed to draft a concept paper on developing and implementing PLOs and CLOs; produce handbooks on articulating learning outcomes at both levels; and devise a two-year action plan for immediate implementation.

To put the plan into practice, the Provost's Office transformed the Core Group into the University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee (ULOCC), which included ten representatives of AUB faculties and schools and the interim and associate directors of the CTL. Although ULOCC was charged with the plan's university-wide implementation, it focused first on FAFS and FAS, where an urgent need for the development of learning outcomes was identified.

ULOCC came to this conclusion after all AUB faculties/schools were surveyed in 2006-07 to determine whether PLOs and CLOs existed and how they were being assessed. The survey results (see Appendix D 6-3) showed that the situation differed radically across faculties. On the whole, faculties seeking professional accreditation were considerably ahead of those which were not. For example, one faculty and two schools had developed program and course learning outcomes and measurement tools: FEA (following ABET standards) for Engineering, but not Architecture and Graphic Design programs; OSB (following AACSB guidelines); and SON (following National League for Nursing criteria). FHS had developed PLOs and CLOs, but lacked sufficient and comprehensive measurement tools. FM, which only has graduate programs, had developed goals and objectives for four out of them and was still in the process of developing PLOs and CLOs. FAFS was revising its programs, so only some of its courses had developed learning outcomes. Finally, in FAS, no systematic work had been done on PLOs, CLOs, or their assessment tools. Respondents to the 2008 Institutional Survey indicated that just 70 percent of University departments had written PLOs.

Although most course syllabi in FAS and FAFS had learning outcomes, the ULOCC survey indicated that there was no consistency in their formulation. Learning outcomes featured in 79.5 percent of the 44 course syllabi posted on the FAFS website and in 66.66 percent of the 342 syllabi on the FAS website. However, these LOs showed no real evidence of a common understanding of what learning outcomes were in relation to, say, teaching objectives and goals.
In the 2008 Institutional Survey, a mere 65 percent of academic heads agreed that there was alignment between course and program LOs and objectives.

In FEA, SON and OSB, the alignment and coordination between PLOs and CLOs is mapped on charts for all basic and required courses. However, while all three faculties had clearly formulated program and course learning outcomes, none were easily accessed. LOs for FEA were posted on its website, but appeared in lengthy, password-protected accreditation reports; LOs for SON could be viewed by non-faculty, but solely in an online accreditation report; LOs for OSB were available through Moodle, but could only be retrieved by OSB faculty. Within other faculties, inconsistencies existed in communicating program and course learning outcomes.

With the exception of FEA and SON, PLOs were not communicated on the websites of the various faculties, schools and departments; in all cases, they were not published in the University catalogue. CLOs were usually communicated to students in course syllabi.

As noted above, ULOCC began its work by helping departments in FAS and FAFS to develop PLOs, a process completed at the end of the Spring 2008 semester. In a presentation to the Board of Deans in April 2008, the chair of ULOCC stated that there was no real obstacle to developing program learning outcomes at AUB. Appropriate resources had been identified and utilized, and the chosen approach had proven effective, if slow, owing to the time needed for departments to develop and then vote on PLOs. He also explained the next phases of ULOCC’s plan, which should see CLOs in place in all faculties and the creation of a detailed strategy for the university-wide assessment of LOs by June 2009.

In the University’s 2008 Institutional Survey, 60 percent of academic heads considered their PLO statements to be clear and 55 percent believed that they were achievable. These low figures can be explained by the fact that the largest faculty, FAS, had virtually no clear LOs when the survey was taken, although this has already begun to change. Only 54 percent of surveyed faculty said that they shared and discussed assessments of student learning (see Chapter Eight for more on this and other related points).

Faculties and schools with PLOs and CLOs have also developed relevant assessment tools. Since many of these tools were only created during the last three years, it is premature to find evidence that they have all been used in a systematic and comprehensive way for the continuous improvement of student learning. (Older tools like ICE were not designed to collect data appropriate to this purpose.) FAFS and FAS will not be developing specialized assessment tools and mechanisms before 2009 and seldom make use of data provided by OIRA, such as university-wide exit and alumni surveys. In 2003, however, FAS’s Education department did thoroughly assess its undergraduate program in order to revise the curriculum and develop a new mission statement and learning outcomes. During the review process, the department surveyed faculty members, student advisors, enrolled students, graduates, cooperating teachers (outside of AUB) and actual and potential employers.

The University’s ultimate goal, described in ULOCC’s learning outcomes concept paper [see Appendix D 6-4], is the development of Continuous Improvement Plans (CIPs) across AUB. A number of programs have already established formal evaluation plans based on the regular and systematic assessment of their CLOs and PLOs, while others have taken steps in this direction. Here, again, the advantage tends to belong to those faculties and schools which have sought or obtained professional accreditation. For instance, extracts from the CIP of FEA’s Mechanical Engineering department were given as examples of ‘best practice’ in the LO concept paper. The departments of Electrical/Computer and Civil/Environmental Engineering adhere to the same high standards. Regular reviews of courses (semi-annually or annually), programs/curricula (annually) and educational objectives (every three years) have led to changes in the faculty’s educational offerings and infrastructure. These adjustments are closely monitored in subsequent years to gauge their effectiveness. Ultimately, the continuous evaluation process may lead to changes in CLOs and PLOs, opening a new cycle of evaluation.

SON developed its own Comprehensive Evaluation Plan in 2006-07, creating and testing a number of specialized assessment tools (exit, satisfaction, alumni and employer surveys) in the process. (See SON’s 2007 Self-Study at http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webson/docs/selfstudy.pdf.) Its curriculum committee regularly analyzes student evaluations of curriculum design and delivery modes in order to assess course and program effectiveness and make improvements as needed. Formal program evaluations take place every three years, most recently in early 2006, when SON decided to introduce two extra practicas to increase clinical experience before graduation: a trial practicum for Level IV students began at the start of AY 2006-07.
OSB is the only faculty with a dedicated director of continuous improvement. It also has systematic learning outcomes assessment systems for each of its degree programs. Most recently, regular semester assessments of core management, business law, statistics and strategy courses for the BBA program led to their revision for AY 2007-08.

Assessment of student learning is only one aspect of program assessment. Unfortunately, AUB has not yet devised a strategy, plan, or mechanisms for the systematic revision of educational offerings across faculties. Moreover, it has not studied the effects of a major change in course distribution first unveiled in “AUB 2004: A Plan for Academic Restructuring” (available online at http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webaccr/PDF_Files/AUB%2020041.pdf). This policy paper recommended reducing the number of major courses required by most undergraduate programs with a view to decreasing faculty teaching loads (to free up more time for research) and enhancing liberal arts education (partly by giving students greater freedom of choice). The new policy was subsequently implemented in all faculties and major courses were reduced in number to the minimum required for degree recognition by the Lebanese government. While no assessment of the policy’s effects has occurred, it can be said that one goal, reducing teaching load, has only been met in part. In FAS, for instance, basic science departments were able to reduce the load from nine to seven credits, but humanities and social science departments saw no such reduction.

In addition to devising mechanisms for the systematic revision of existing educational offerings, it is also important that all proposals for new offerings contain a section on program evaluation and assessment plans so that these may be evaluated during the proposal approval process. Currently, there is no such requirement at AUB. For example, proposals for the four PhD programs reinstated at FEA all included plans for program evaluation, but the same was not true of the four doctoral programs reinstated at FAS.

E. Development of Learning Resources

In response to recommendations appearing in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study and in line with its commitment to excellence in education, AUB has taken several concrete steps to develop learning resources on campus. These steps have included creating new units, services and facilities to support teaching and learning, enhancing others established earlier to meet the same aims and providing appropriate training to students, faculty and relevant non-academic staff.

1. Academic Computing Center

The Academic Computing Center (ACC) promotes and supports the use of teaching and learning technologies at AUB. It provides advice, resources and individual and group training in computer applications and for the integration of new technologies into faculty teaching and research activities. One such tool is Moodle, AUB’s current Learning Management System (LMS), which is administered by the ACC. In 2003-04, only 14 percent of course sections and 16 percent of instructors used an LMS; by 2006-07, these numbers had jumped to 42 percent and 37 percent respectively. Currently, more than half of courses and instructors use Moodle. In some cases, lectures for large enrolment courses have been videotaped and made available to students through Moodle. The ACC also helps faculty with assessment by organizing and managing online exams upon request, particularly those for large enrolment classes. It has been assisting faculty in the use of the anti-plagiarism software, “Turn-it-in,” since 2004-05.

Over the past five years, the ACC has supported other AUB projects, including two in 2005-06: the SOLIA Connect Program, which permitted collaboration between students in the Middle East and US through web-conferencing; and the Shared Content project, which helped to ensure consistency across sections in English courses. The ACC is also a partner in the ongoing Mellon Summer Seminars in the Creative Use of Resources in Course Design, which assists faculty in integrating instructional technologies, information literacy and syllabus design into their courses over a five-week period. Finally, the ACC hosts an annual AUB Faculty Seminar on Teaching and Learning with Technology, during which guest lecturers give presentations and workshops, and faculty share their classroom experiences with colleagues.

Through its partnership with the Illinois Online Network (ION), the ACC registers selected faculty interested in pursuing blended/hybrid learning in ION’s “Online Learning: An Overview.” It also encourages faculty to attend annual online conferences (such as those hosted by ION and MoodleMoot Canada) where they can participate in live discussions on how to make use of
technology in their teaching. (More information on ACC initiatives may be found in Chapter Three and Appendix D 3-5.)

Technology at AUB remains a supplement rather than a major vehicle for instruction via blended/hybrid courses. To date, only one course (in Nursing Informatics) has had a significant (90 percent) online component. The 2008 Institutional Survey indicated low interest in fully online courses among faculty and students. When asked if they believed that such courses would be beneficial, 7 percent of faculty said “to a great extent,” 25 percent said “to some extent” and the rest were not very enthusiastic. Students showed more interest in fully online courses (41 percent).

The same survey indicated insufficient use of grading rubrics in AUB courses (46 percent of students and 51 percent of faculty indicated absence of rubrics for assessment). However, the technology exists and faculty should be encouraged to provide rubrics and to post them through Moodle for fairer, more transparent assessment.

2. AUB libraries

AUB’s library system includes the University Libraries (UL), which consists of the central Jafet Memorial Library, the Engineering/Architecture Library and the Science/Agriculture Library (with its annex Farm Library), and the Saab Memorial Medical Library (SML). UL collections contain almost 600,000 monographs, growing at an average rate of 11,000 annually; 2,295 periodicals, of which 207 are in Arabic; and well over one million A/V items, most of which are microform copies of local and regional newspapers and journals dating to the early 20th century. The Archives and Special Collections contain about 1400 manuscripts, some of which are museum pieces. Faculty and students also have access to over 34,000 electronic periodicals in some 110 databases. Since the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, the UL budget has increased by 10 percent annually to enrich print and electronic resources.

In addition to expanding their holdings, AUB’s libraries have hired three new professional staff; provided current staff with professional development opportunities (professional education for succession purposes, in-house training, conferences abroad); and enhanced services and service delivery accordingly. With two new librarians in UL’s Information Services Department, the number of information literacy sessions offered in each academic year has increased from 101 in 2003-04 to 299 in 2007-08 for English communications skills courses alone. SML also provides formal information literacy sessions, as well as classes in evidence-based medicine, and a 2-credit Introduction to Medical Science Literature course to FM graduate students in Basic Medical Sciences. All AUB libraries cooperate closely with the ACC and CTL – as well as AUB faculty – in the annual Mellon Summer Seminars, where the libraries’ focus is on faculty integration of library resources in courses. Recent UL innovations include a Document Delivery Department, which now serves graduate students as well as faculty; online help and guidance (Ask a Librarian) for website users; and enhanced search efficiency using MultiSearch, a federated search engine. Like many other major units at AUB, UL also devised a strategic plan (see http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html) to strengthen it as a teaching and research ‘enabler.’

AUB’s libraries are constantly improving their physical environment to meet the needs of the student body. The libraries are fully automated and many of their electronic resources are remotely accessible. They also offer secure and reliable wireless connections and computer labs with continuously upgraded equipment. In Jafet Library, a state-of-the-art electronic classroom was constructed in 2004 and a major structural redesign in the Serials Department in 2006 resulted in the addition of 30 more seats to the reading area, which was declared a Quiet Study Area. Work is currently in progress to transform Jafet’s reading and research areas into Information Commons.

The libraries measure user interest and satisfaction through biennial (since 2002) Library Satisfaction Surveys and by monitoring statistics on circulation, information literacy sessions, reference transactions and access to electronic resources. The 2006 UL satisfaction survey found that respondent attendance at library training sessions had almost doubled to 50 percent from 26 percent in 2004, with roughly three-quarters of students rating the sessions as useful or very useful in both years. However, satisfaction rates fell somewhat for library equipment (from 58 to 56 percent) and premises (from 70 to 64 percent) in the same period: noise and space limitations were the major causes of complaint. Expediting library building and renovation plans,

2008 Institutional Self-Study
particularly the construction of the new Science and Engineering Library, would be one response to these complaints.

The 2008 Institutional Survey showed that the majority of department heads and faculty members were satisfied with the books, journals and databases available at UL. Indeed, the following percentages of respondents indicated “great” satisfaction: 70 percent of heads and 50 percent of faculty for books; 60 percent and 50 percent respectively for journals; and 75 percent and 45 percent for electronic databases.

In spite of systematic efforts to promote the integration of library resources and services into the teaching and learning process, there is no clear evidence of faculty interest or broad student awareness of such endeavors.

3. Computing and Networking Services
Responsibility for Information and Communications Technology (ICT) at AUB is largely shared by two units. The ACC, discussed above, provides faculty and students with training/support for academic applications. Computing and Networking Services (CNS) handles most administrative systems, in addition to networking and internet services. Many departments also have their own information technology systems and support staff.

ICT was one of four subjects of institution-wide importance studied by a strategic planning committee during the University’s first formal planning cycle; it is also one of nine goals in the Campus Strategic Plan Overview (http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/committees.html). As the Overview notes, “Competency in these technologies is critical if AUB’s faculty and students are to excel in today’s information society.” However, competency is dependent on infrastructure and one of AUB’s biggest disadvantages continues to be internet bandwidth. Although the University managed to triple bandwidth over the last four years, Lebanon is experiencing a shortage of international bandwidth that is not expected to end until the telecom infrastructure is privatized. For the present, CNS has developed a comprehensive set of procedures and tools to optimize the use of AUBnet internet bandwidth and maximize availability and access.

In the last four years, AUB has deployed a secure wireless infrastructure (AUBwlan) covering most of the campus (more than 95 percent of classrooms), including student residence halls and the AUB Medical Center (AUBMC). AUBwlan now provides over 600 access points for more than 3,800 active subscriptions, the majority of which (3,500) are for student portables. CNS also continues to develop AUB’s ICT security layer in compliance with emerging regulatory requirements.

Averaged scores from four years of Student Registration Satisfaction Surveys indicated varying approval for such online services as registration (40 percent), statement of fees (65 percent) and validation/net activation (70 percent). Roughly half of students were satisfied with off-campus access. The 2008 Institutional Survey showed improvements of 10-20 percent over 2002-03 and strong student satisfaction with internet access (85 percent), technology training (65 percent), computer centers/help desk (62 percent) and hardware/software availability (57 percent). Academic deans have expressed some dissatisfaction with IT equipment, security complications and bandwidth limitations.

4. Center for Teaching and Learning
Even before its formal creation in 2004-05, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) was providing faculty with professional development opportunities through a selection of seminars and forums. In 2006-07, the CTL offered three half-day seminars, including Teaching Strategies in Large Classes, Peer Observation and Feedback in Higher Education, and fall and spring sessions of Developing a Teaching Portfolio. It also continued to hold the annual Faculty Seminar on Learning and Teaching Excellence, which is made up of five weekly sessions on teacher- and student-oriented modes of learning and assessment, and to participate in the intensive Mellon Summer Seminar alongside the ACC and Library Information Services.

Through its activities, the CTL promotes cooperative learning and independent thinking and encourages faculty to make better use of resources and facilities. One criterion of eligibility for AUB’s Teaching Excellence Award, offered through the CTL, is evidence of promoting critical thinking among students.

While the multiple sessions of the Teaching Portfolio seminar indicate a high level of interest and success in meeting faculty needs, participation in some CTL activities has been declining (see a partial list in Appendix D 6-2) and the CTL faces the challenge of attracting more faculty
to its regular program of seminars or expanding its offerings. However, the CTL is currently focused on developing a university-wide plan to assist faculties and departments in the articulation of program and course learning outcomes (see above and Chapter Eight). To better meet faculty needs, the Center is in the process of obtaining a permanent director and full-time staff.

5. Writing Center

Inaugurated in Fall 2004, the Writing Center offers free consultations to undergraduate and graduate students from all faculties with the aim of promoting a ‘culture of writing’ at AUB. The center’s tutors, currently graduate students in English, are trained to work individually with student writers in order to support them throughout the composing process, from developing and connecting ideas to editing and proofreading the finished product. Writers receive assistance on a first come, first served basis, meaning that some cannot be helped in time to meet deadlines for assignments or papers; a few are turned away because they request help with lengthy personal projects that will require too many tutor hours. The number of users reported by the Writing Center was 130 for 2004-05, 332 for 2005-06 and 264 for 2006-07. The number of tutors depends on the total graduate student hours that the English Department can provide, which fluctuates from one semester to another. This fluctuation may account, in part, for the drop in the number of students using the center between 2005-06 and 2006-07. Another possible factor was the dual role played in 2006-07 by the center’s director, who also coordinated the Communications Skills Program and had less time to promote the Writing Center. The center has made plans to improve staff training and is devising a feedback system to help orient changes in existing policies and procedures. Physical expansion may also soon become necessary to increase privacy and reduce noise for users of the facility and its services. (For more on the center, see Chapter Seven.)

6. Classrooms

For the last several years, AUB has been renovating existing facilities and building new ones in accordance with its Campus Master Plan. The most recent additions are the Kamal A. Shair Central Research Science Laboratory, one of two multi-million dollar core laboratories (the other being the Environmental Sciences Laboratory at AUBMC), and the Consolidated Contractors International Company (CCC) Scientific Research Building, an innovative, multi-purpose modular structure. Construction is ongoing at the Irani Oxy Engineering Complex, which will support advanced research in engineering and architecture, while the new Suliman S. Olayan School of Business and the renovated School of Nursing are almost ready for occupancy.

AUB has also continued to invest in high-tech classrooms. In 2004, a new electronic classroom was inaugurated in Jafet Library, mainly – though not exclusively – for use by the Information Services Department. In February 2006, five upgraded classrooms reopened in Nicely Hall after being completely redesigned and equipped with such improvements as electrically operated curtains and state-of-the-art lighting. By September 2008, eight additional Nicely classrooms had been refurbished. The Facilities Planning and Design Unit (FPDU) will be soliciting feedback from users through questionnaires. At AUBMC, the Saab Medical Library has ordered computers and other equipment for new problem-based learning rooms being constructed by the FPDU; also in the works at SML are a new electronic classroom and a History of Medicine room. (For more on new buildings and renovations, see Chapter Two.)

F. Recommendations

1. Develop university-wide policies and mechanisms for the periodic and systematic review of all educational offerings at AUB. The University has taken important steps toward revising its curricula, however, it must also devise supporting mechanisms for program revision and development, such as the collection of accurate student employment statistics to evaluate whether students are meeting the needs of local and regional markets and communities.
2. Assess all eight PhD programs five years after implementation in accordance with plans detailed in AUB readiness and strategic planning reports.
3. Require all educational offerings to include an explicit plan for program evaluation using applicable mechanisms and tools. Newly proposed programs should begin implementing this recommendation henceforth.
4. Review educational offerings periodically for alignment with University, faculty, department and program mission statements. Investigate the doubts expressed by some academic heads concerning the achievability of program goals and objectives. Publicize program missions, objectives and goals to ensure that they are accessible to stakeholders.

5. Strengthen the University’s commitment to and implementation of the general education requirement, particularly regarding the development of creative thinking and leadership skills. Communications with stakeholders should aim at explaining the relationship between the general education requirement and market needs.

6. Accelerate the development of course and program learning outcomes and their assessment tools to ensure that educational offerings are adequately and regularly evaluated. Continue providing the CTL with the means and resources appropriate for the completion of the learning outcomes initiative coordinated by ULOCC.

7. Continue to develop and improve learning resources and to encourage information literacy among undergraduates.

8. Online tools should be used not merely for teaching, communication and summative assessment, but also for formative assessment.

9. Expedite library building and renovation plans, particularly the construction of the new Science and Engineering Library. Identify ways to encourage faculty and students to take advantage of the support services provided by library staff. Provide a clear mechanism to entertain and pursue student suggestions and complaints concerning libraries, for example, through student representatives on both faculty and Senate library committees.

10. Increase investment in the University’s learning environment. Although renovations are currently ongoing and more are planned for the future, classrooms and laboratories should be regularly surveyed to ensure that they are sufficient in quantity and quality.

11. Determine the resources that the Writing Center will need to meet rising student demand. Recruit dedicated faculty to staff the Center in order to offset fluctuations in the number of available graduate students from the English department.

12. Identify ways to increase the relevance and appeal of CTL’s professional development activities to faculty, for example, by increasing the weight of teaching excellence in promotion and evaluation criteria, acknowledging faculty participation in CTL activities, or staffing the CTL with specialized full-timers to offer faculty more comprehensive services.
Chapter Seven

GENERAL EDUCATION AND RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

Purpose: Working Group 7 (WG7) on General Education and Related Educational Activities (Standards 12 and 13) was charged with studying the progress made since 2004 in solidifying general education at AUB and in strengthening support for programs and training conducted in AUB’s name, yet falling outside of its traditional degree-granting activities. WG7 aimed to assess the extent to which AUB has lived up to its commitment to the ideal of liberal arts/general education and how the general education requirement has contributed to the achievement of AUB’s fundamental mission. It was asked to examine basic skills programs, certificate and non-credit non-degree programs, and various other projects, programs and consultancies that are contractual in nature. A corollary responsibility of the group was to measure AUB’s progress in addressing relevant recommendations appearing in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study before formulating its own well-conceived proposals which, if appropriately implemented, might be expected to improve current practices and enable the University to realize its objectives more effectively.

Membership: WG7 was made up of fourteen members including ten faculty of varying rank representing the faculties of Arts and Sciences (FAS), Engineering and Architecture (FEA) and Medicine (FM); the ten included the vice president for Regional External Programs (REP), the chair of the English department and the associate provost. The balance of the working group’s members included the assistant vice president of REP, a trustee and two students, one undergraduate (FEA) and one graduate (FM). WG7 was co-chaired by two full professors from FEA, one of whom was the REP vice president.

Methodology: WG7 held a total of six general meetings over a period of five months. At the second meeting, it divided itself into two sub-committees: one on General Education, which reviewed AUB’s current practices in pursuit of general education objectives and the success of measures taken to implement the 2004 recommendations; and another on Related Educational Activities, which examined the University Preparatory Program (UPP), the Office of the Vice President for REP, the Continuing Education Center (CEC) and the Intensive English Program (IEP) to see if they prepared students and clients to meet their goals; if they were designed, administered and evaluated according to established institutional procedures; and if they supported AUB in the fulfillment of its mission and goals.

WG7 consulted institutional documents (such as catalogues and program brochures) and interviewed key university officers (the provost, academic deans, UPP and CEC directors, communications skills coordinator and English 100 course director). Two key sources, namely, the VP and assistant VP of REP, were already members of the group. WG7 also agreed on the interview questions, which were sent to officials before the interviews took place. The group contributed six questions for students and five for faculty taking the 2008 Institutional Survey.

At various stages, the sub-groups prepared progress reports on data collection and analysis for presentation and review during working group meetings. The draft reports of the two sub-groups were sent by email to all members of WG7 for review. A member of the group integrated these reports into one document and the entire working group met to discuss the document, reach consensus on each point and edit the report.

The findings are presented in the following principal sections of this chapter:

General Education
A. General Education at AUB
B. Recommendations

Related Educational Activities
C. Related Educational Activities at AUB
D. Recommendations

GENERAL EDUCATION

A. General Education at AUB

AUB has played a pioneering role in introducing and promoting the concept of general education (GE) in the Middle East. Its example has been followed and, in some cases, imitated by many universities and colleges in Lebanon and in the broader region. Its commitment to the ideal of liberal arts education continues to be one of its defining and distinguishing characteristics as an institution of higher education in the Arab world. The University’s current challenge is to ensure that the ideal to which it is strongly committed in principle is properly and effectively implemented in fact.

In late 2004, AUB established a General Education Strategic Planning Committee (GESPC) in order to “review and, if necessary, restructure the general education program in order to maximize current strengths and build upon them and thereby enhance the program to better meet the needs of students.” The committee met 15 times during the next six months before presenting the University Senate with a full report containing concrete recommendations (see http://staff.aub.edu.lb/~webosm/planning/reports/1_institutionwide_committees/general_education.pdf) for the future shape of general education at AUB. These recommendations would later form the basis for Goal One of the Campus Strategic Plan Overview: “By strengthening undergraduate education, particularly in the liberal arts, which form the core academic component of an AUB education, we will also strengthen the powers of critical thought in students and prepare them for roles as lifelong learners and community leaders.” The improved GE program, which is discussed in greater detail below, has been endorsed by the Senate and is scheduled to take effect for entering freshman and sophomore students in Fall 2009. It is envisioned as a coherent and distinct program that will foster students’ appreciation of the fact that courses in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities and quantitative thought are all equally important constituents of general education. It aims to compensate for lacunae in the educational programs that precede and surround it, particularly the tendencies toward early specialization and passive learning that pervade AUB’s Middle Eastern environment. The new GE mission statement reads as follows:

*General education at AUB seeks 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 diversity 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.*

In the lead up to implementation, faculties and departments have been introducing the changes needed to support the improved GE program and to strengthen liberal arts education as a core component of the University’s mission (see below).

1. Communication and dissemination

AUB has been amply proactive in communicating its commitment to liberal arts and general education, which lie at the heart of the University’s undergraduate program. All brochures and marketing materials prepared by the Office of Admissions mention, in the words of the director, the “commitment of AUB to critical thinking, open debate and mutual tolerance in addition to liberal arts education.” Admissions Office staff also highlight AUB’s GE commitment in all presentations to potential students, their teachers and parents. University catalogues are required to provide a detailed description of AUB’s educational philosophy, clearly stating that it is based on the “American liberal arts model of higher education,” and AUB’s GE requirement. The latter is clearly elucidated in documents distributed to faculty advisors to ensure that students meet all requirements for graduation.
Analysis of data from the 2008 Institutional Survey showed that the majority of student (84 percent) and faculty (72 percent) respondents considered themselves informed about AUB's general education requirement. Students cited the AUB Catalogue (48 percent) as the primary source of relevant information, followed by other students (19 percent) and academic advisors (11 percent). (See Appendix D 7-1 for relevant survey results.) No equivalent questions were asked in the 2004 survey so comparative statistics were not available.

2. Establishment of an inter-faculty Senate committee on general education

The 2004 Institutional Self-Study recommended the establishment of a new Senate standing committee on general education that would be charged with the proper implementation and periodic review of AUB's GE requirement (see Appendix B for all 2004 recommendations). The first step in this direction was the creation of GESPC, which reported its findings to the Senate in Spring 2005. The Senate endorsed these findings and initially voted to assign responsibility for the GE program to an existing standing committee, the Academic Development Committee (ADC). In 2007-08, the ADC oversaw the completion of several important tasks. First, all faculty deans recalculated the credits in their undergraduate programs to reflect the new distribution of the four (previously three) GE disciplinary fields (see below). Second, FAS, the faculty traditionally associated with general education, identified those of its courses which met the new GE criteria: fortunately, none of them should need significant modification, although the field distribution will have to be clarified in some instances. Third, the Registrar's Office began discussions on how the undergraduate catalogue will present the GE program during the transition period, when there will be one requirement for students who entered AUB before 2009-10 and another for those entering in 2009-10 or later.

In May 2008, the Senate approved the ADC's recommendation that a new standing committee be established to oversee the university-wide implementation of the GE requirement. The new General Education Committee (GEC) has nine elected members – four from FAS (one for each GE field) and five representing the remaining faculties, namely, FEA, FM, the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS) and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB) – and the provost or his/her designee as a tenth ex-officio member. Its first priority in the 2008-09 academic year is to establish specific criteria for the approval of individual courses from all faculties that fulfill the general education requirement. (To date, many faculties and departments have been handicapped by the lack of formal parameters to define and categorize GE courses.) The GEC is also the body that will approve all such courses. Its third function is to review periodically AUB's GE requirement with reference to the stated goals and to recommend revision as necessary.

3. Core plus distribution

The 2004 Self-Study recommended a particular distribution for the eight or nine courses (33-36 credits) required of undergraduate students to satisfy AUB's general education requirement. This distribution was slightly modified by GESPC in the following year. For example, the Arabic placement test has become optional and all students proficient in Arabic must automatically take Arabic 201B or another course at a higher level. The minimum course distribution was also expanded for the quantitative thought category.

AUB's new general education distribution is diagrammed in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Number of Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Natural Science</td>
<td>1) Sophomore level and above.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2) At least one science course, <em>preferably</em> having a lab component, that emphasizes the use of logic and empirical experimentation to understand and explain the structure of the universe and the laws of nature.</td>
<td>6 credits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3) A second science course that illuminates the impact of science on society. Disciplines include Biology, Chemistry, Geology and Physics, and applicable courses from Nutrition, Agricultural and Food Sciences, Health Sciences and Environmental Sciences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Chapter Seven: General Education and Related Educational Activities

Humanities

1) Sophomore level and above.

2) Close analysis of primary texts and/or artifacts in their cultural and historical contexts, understanding past or contemporary cultures and societies, aesthetic appreciation of art and literature, analytic reasoning, and investigations into ethics and issues of moral value.

3) No more than two courses from the student’s major may fulfill this requirement. The humanities include Archeology, Civilization Sequence Program, English, Fine Arts and Art History, History, Philosophy.

12 credits

Social Science

1) Sophomore level and above.

2) Use of methodologies investigating the relations and institutions involved in humanity’s existence and an individual’s well-being as a member of an organized community.

3) No more than one course from the student’s major may fulfill this requirement. Social sciences include Anthropology, Communication, Economics, Political Studies, Psychology, Public Administration and Sociology; applicable courses in Health Sciences, Environmental Studies (policy-driven as opposed to science-driven courses), Urban Planning and Gender Studies could also count.

6 credits

Quantitative Thought

1) Freshman level and above.

2) Use computational notation or symbolic systems governed by a clear set of rules to represent the natural universe or patterns of human reasoning.

3) Applicable courses from Computer Programming, Mathematics, Statistics and Logic are eligible for inclusion.

3 credits

The total number of required GE credits includes two writing intensive courses, which may overlap with courses satisfying the distribution described above. Indeed, in order to ensure an active learning environment, humanities and social science courses (and other courses where possible) will be asked to demonstrate at least two of the following features: small class size (20-25 students or less) with discussion-based or seminar format; writing-intensive requirement; focus on primary texts; individual or group research; and oral presentation. As foreseen by GESPC, meeting some of these criteria may have budgetary consequences for FAS in terms of extra faculty lines or the amount of teaching or office space required. In its report, GESPC estimated the cost of implementing the writing-intensive requirement alone at $400,000 to $534,000. At present, AUB is preparing a funding proposal to support faculty training in making courses writing intensive across faculties.

4. Course syllabi

Although FAS courses are currently the mainstay of AUB’s GE requirement, the analysis of 40 random syllabi from the faculty revealed that none explicitly referred to general education objectives or assessment criteria. Once the Senate GEC has set formal parameters for the definition and classification of general education courses in 2008-09, faculties and departments, irrespective of domain of knowledge or area of specialty, will face no obstacles to identifying GE objectives and to stating them clearly in course syllabi. This will be the first step toward the development of university-wide criteria and a formal process for the review of current general education courses and the introduction of new ones. As confirmed by Acting Provost Nasr, GE courses are still being assessed on an ad hoc basis. For example, the FAS Curriculum Committee considers general education when discharging its obligation to review curricula and approve the addition, modification, or elimination of courses, as well as the adoption of new majors, minors, or interdisciplinary programs. The committee’s chair said that general education courses undergo the same review process as other FAS courses with special attention paid to the ‘general’ component of the course. The committee can approve, suggest modifications, or reject the course; however, it has no mechanism to assess course outcomes or to make specific recommendations.
concerning new general education courses. New criteria and a formal process will also be needed to evaluate the effectiveness of the improved GE program.

5. **Skill development**

AU B's courses and programs are designed to provide students with opportunities for the acquisition and enhancement of a broad range of skills beyond those related to professional competencies. Some of these skills are described in the GE mission statement (reproduced above), which reflects outcomes found in AUB's mission statement. AUB's general education program, which is expected to be uniformly implemented across faculties in 2009-10, is intended to promote the following skills:

1. Excellence in written and spoken English communication and information literacy skills.
   a. Communication skills courses through English 204 (3-6 credits).
   b. In order to ensure information literacy, each entry-level Communication skills course (203, 204, 206, 208) and relevant courses at later stages of study should ensure that students receive professional training in library and web-based academic sources and learn how to access, evaluate and utilize them.
   c. In addition, each student must take two courses (at least 6 credits) designated as 'writing intensive,' usually one early in the course of study and one later. These courses should be selected from those that the student takes in his or her normal course program, whether general education courses, electives, or major courses.

2. Aptitude (where applicable) in written Arabic (3 credits).

3. Competence in the basic intellectual approaches of four major disciplinary fields of learning: natural science (6 credits), social science (6 credits), humanities (12 credits) and quantitative thought (3 credits). (See above.)

Respondents to the 2008 Institutional Survey answered questions with AUB's current general education requirement in mind. The majority of students and faculty agreed that GE courses broadened students' knowledge (77 and 81 percent respectively); enhanced their understanding of values and ethics (69 and 65 percent); and developed their independent judgment (66 and 62 percent). Slight majorities also agreed (students, 53 percent; faculty, 52 percent) that GE courses strengthened students' sense of civic responsibility and leadership. (For complete statistics, see Appendix D 7-1, Tables 5-6.) These results indicate that AUB's existing general education program has been reasonably successful.

6. **New courses**

According to the dean of FAS, the regular introduction of new general education courses has accompanied the establishment of the American Studies Program at the Prince Alwaleed Bin Talal Bin Abdulaziz Al Saoud Center for American Studies and Research (in 2003-04) and the faculty's new Department of Fine Arts and Art History (in 2005-06). While most courses developed in FAS humanities departments are also open to students enrolled in other majors, the same cannot be said of courses in the natural sciences, mathematics and economics or of those offered by AUB's professional schools. The Senate's General Education Committee is expected to assist in the evaluation and approval of new and existing courses from these disciplines to fulfill the general education requirement.

7. **Human and material resources**

The 2004 Institutional Self-Study urged AUB to do more to provide the human and material resources and facilities needed to support the effective implementation of the general education components of its educational offerings.

Between 2003-04 and 2007-08, approximately 20 new instructional faculty FTEs were hired by the Faculty of Arts and Sciences, a number of them for humanities disciplines, including the new Department of Fine Arts and Art History. According to the Office of Strategy Management, FAS stands to gain another 29 faculty FTEs over five years once initiatives in its strategic plan are approved by the BOT and implemented; this represents about 45 percent of all new faculty FTEs related to the current strategic planning cycle.

The establishment of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL) in October 2004 also supported and enhanced the University’s commitment to the ideals of liberal arts/general education, particularly its mission to graduate life-long learners capable of creative and critical thinking. The CTL has been working to achieve this goal by providing professional development
seminars for faculty and by collaborating with academic support services at the University Libraries, the Academic Computing Center and the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment. (For more on the CTL, see Chapter Six; for more on faculty support, see Chapter Five.)

At FAS, humanities courses have been kept in mind when designing new classrooms capable of accommodating roundtable discussions and theatre trials (stepped classrooms), with wireless internet access provided to attending students. Eight classrooms in Nicely Hall were renovated in Summer 2008 in the same spirit and to meet the same purpose. With their completion, the total number of FAS classroom renovations since 2004 doubled to reach 16.

According to the vice president for Facilities, all facility upgrades across the University are being made with the input of the concerned deans, who are taking all factors, including the needs of general education, into consideration. Classrooms are being refurbished to include the latest technology for language training, for example, as well as interactive learning and progressive multi-media enhanced teaching. Breakout rooms now feature in space planning to allow for a greater flow of ideas and discussion among students. Spaces in the CCC Scientific Research Building and West Hall are being retrofitted to serve as galleries for students from all faculties. These improvements are expected to have positive repercussions for general education.

B. Recommendations

1. Review and assess AUB’s general education program periodically. This should be the task of the Senate’s new General Education Committee, which should also develop standards for the classification of general education courses; re-evaluate these standards periodically; oversee the classification process; and actively solicit the creation of new general education courses. The committee should also set university-wide standards for writing excellence.

2. Involve all stakeholders in assessing implementation of the general education requirement.

3. Establish Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to measure the extent to which the desired skill development is taking place as a result of the new general education requirement.

4. Designate general education courses more explicitly in the University catalogue and other promotional publications. Establish a GE website accessible through AUB’s homepage. Publish the list of approved GE courses on this website and provide links to course syllabi to ensure that students and faculty have all necessary information. The list should be updated after the annual review of GE courses mentioned above.

RELATED EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES

In line with its mission to serve the peoples of the Middle East and its commitment to lifelong learning, AUB offers a variety of certificate programs and non-credit, non-degree programs and workshops through the Office of Regional External Programs (REP), the Continuing Education Center (CEC), which is a division of REP and three of its faculties, including the English Department at FAS.

REP consolidates the academic and professional experience of AUB faculty and staff to provide consulting, technical assistance and training services to clients in 12 countries in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). Many of its contracts are with institutions of higher learning and some involve bringing the concept of general education to students, their communities and their countries (see below). REP’s project portfolio has provided AUB with an extremely high level of regional visibility, which is essential if the University is to enhance the geographical diversity of the student body.

CEC, formerly AUB’s Extension Program, offers non-credit courses and programs that can lead to professional certificates to non-traditional students from varying backgrounds. Interfaculty and multidisciplinary in nature, CEC programs are designed to further personal and professional growth in a wide variety of areas, including business, information technology, education and languages. All CEC courses are overseen by full-time AUB faculty. In addition to offering courses at AUB, CEC provides tailored in-house workshops to corporations in Lebanon and the region.

Non-degree programs are currently provided by the faculties of Health Sciences and Medicine. FAS’s English Department offers the non-credit Intensive English Course, which
provides one or two semesters of instruction to students who have already been admitted to AUB, while the UPP, an independent unit within FAS, caters to students who wish to attain the required level of English proficiency before applying to AUB or another English-language university. At present, UPP students are usually referred to AUB by the Office of the Cultural Attaché at the Embassy of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in Beirut. As a result, UPP enrolment tends to be sensitive to perceptions of political instability in Lebanon.

C. Related Educational Activities at AUB

Chapter Thirteen of the 2004 Institutional Self-Study found that the University had significant certificate, non-credit/non-degree and basic skills programs, as well as an off-campus location in the Beqa’a valley, all of which were reasonably congruent with AUB’s mission, goals and objectives. It also identified a number of challenges and made recommendations (see Appendix B) to address them. The remainder of this chapter is organized according to these recommendations and reports on their implementation as well as other important developments identified by WG7 when answering the Self-Study Design questions.

1. University-wide REP advisory committee and faculty involvement

As recommended in the 2004 Self-Study, AUB formed the REP Interfaculty Advisory Committee (RIAC) in academic year 2006-07. Chaired by the president and composed of the provost, all deans (who represent their respective faculty members), the president’s special advisor and REP’s current vice president, RIAC proposes new ideas and projects, champions product development and offers guidance on REP activities. Its establishment has ensured that deans are properly consulted about the involvement of faculty members in REP projects, which was an area of concern identified in 2004.

The involvement of the broader University community in REP activities has also increased. Staff from SON and AUB Medical Center have been referring more projects to the REP Office, leading to a rise in the number of external programs conducted in cooperation with FM. The overall number of AUB faculty participating in REP projects grew from 72 in the 2005-06 fiscal year to 84 in 2006-07, when 1,610 man-days were delivered by REP consultants. This represented 363 or 27 percent more man-days than the average since 2001-02.

2. Faculty awareness of REP policies, procedures, budgeting and incentives

REP considers its single most valuable resource to be the University’s faculty and staff, who serve as consultants, workshop leaders, secondee s and quality assurance implementers for its various projects and training programs. Several initiatives are currently underway to strengthen faculty and staff awareness of REP policies and procedures, the opportunities available to them via REP activities and the importance of their participation in REP work to AUB and the region. REP has produced a new and comprehensive policies and procedures document that contains information on the process followed when initiating, accepting, or rejecting projects; AUB guidelines on the time that faculty may spend on consultancies; financial compensation for consultants involved in REP activities; allocations of overhead recovery to the faculties/units involved; and other related topics. This updated manual is currently being studied by the Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC). Once it is finalized, REP’s assistant vice president, with the permission of the deans, will make group presentations at the various faculties (and meet with individual faculty members as needed) in order to introduce REP’s activities, its policies/procedures and the opportunities that it offers to potential participants.

REP has already taken other steps to broaden involvement in its activities. To stimulate the interest of academic and administrative heads, the proportion of the generated overhead distributed to faculties and units increased by 15 percent in Fall 2007. They now receive 35 percent of overhead recovery for project implementation and an additional 10 percent if they also initiated the project. These earnings are paid out quarterly based on calculations made by the Comptroller’s Office. REP also proposed the creation of an annual award for consultants whose outstanding contributions reflect AUB’s core values and assist REP in realizing its mission to provide quality professional services. The endowed award was unanimously approved during the June 2008 Board of Trustees (BOT) meeting. The new Abdul Hamid Al-Hallab REP Service Excellence Award is intended to increase the visibility of REP consultants and help to attract AUB faculty to REP projects.
With assistance from the Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement (now the Office of Strategy Management), REP completed its five-year strategic plan in Spring 2006 and began implementation during the following academic year. Each activity pursued since that time has contributed to one or more of REP’s strategic initiatives and its seven institutionally mandated Key Performance Indicators (see F2f, F2g, F2h, F2i, F2j, F2k and F2l in Appendix D 8-1). During the last Cabinet review of the Institutional Balanced Scorecard (BSC) in March 2008, REP’s performance in all of these indicators exceeded target levels for 2007. Targets were set at the onset of REP’s strategic planning process in 2006 and will be reassessed in 2011 during finalization of the next five-year strategic plan. As an income-generating unit at the University, REP pays for itself.

3. REP project selection

The 2004 Self-Study recommended greater emphasis on public sector projects to improve the alignment between REP’s objectives and AUB’s mission. During the 2004-05 academic year, 52 percent of REP clients were from the public sector; however, this figure fell to 29 percent in 2006-07, when the strategic plan was first implemented. The decrease reflected a new target market chosen and approved during the strategic planning process – ‘up-market clients,’ a category including private companies, international organizations and regional universities. This choice was in line with one of the guidelines provided by the Graduate Education and Research Strategic Planning Committee, which suggested that building alliances with selected regional universities through REP might increase the number of applicants to AUB’s graduate programs and enhance the geographical diversity of the student body.

The percentage of clients falling into the ‘up-market client’ category rose from a low of 50 percent in 2005-06 to 68 percent in 2006-07, when AUB increased its involvement in regional higher education projects to a level not seen in over a decade. Its partners included eight institutions in six different countries: Qatar University, Qatar; Fahd Bin Sultan University (Tabuk), University of Allied Health Sciences (Jeddah) and Mohammed Al Mana’ College of Health Sciences (Al-Khobar), all in Saudi Arabia; University College of Bahrain, Bahrain; University of Sharjah, UAE; Dhofar University, Oman; and University City, Syria. Projects undertaken in coordination with other Middle Eastern universities, some of which are non-profit, have proven to be viable means for the alignment of REP objectives with AUB’s mission. For instance, during the past year, REP consultants designed curricula for the departments of Nursing, Pharmacy and Medical Laboratory Technologies at the Mohammed Al Mana’ College of Health Sciences. Each of these curricula included general education requirements, helping to bring the concept and benefits of liberal arts education to Saudi Arabian students and their communities. As part of the project, instructors at the college also received training in effective teaching and educational leadership. At Dhofar University (DU), the first liberal arts, American-style institution of higher education in southern Oman, AUB personnel have taken on positions of leadership, including the presidency and deanships. These individuals are working with REP on DU’s first institutional self-study for peer accreditation. The 2006-07 fiscal year also saw a strong rise in the number of REP projects involving embassies and international organizations, including a number of United Nations agencies.

Project selection has also been improved and clarified through the development of unambiguous criteria for the initiation, acceptance, or rejection of proposed projects. These criteria inform the selection process described in the draft policies and procedures document currently being reviewed by the PPRC. However, there continues to be a need for formal market surveys and other research to enhance the University’s overall response to regional needs.

4. Rewards for faculty service as REP consultants and project coordinators

REP has established and implemented a new payment scale that rewards all consultants on the basis of academic seniority, in other words, according to whether they are full, associate, or assistant professors, senior or junior lecturers, or instructors. The actual amounts paid to professors, assistant professors and instructors recently rose by over 25 percent.

Project coordinators are compensated as consultants for managerial and coordination activities. They will also be eligible for the Abdul Hamid Al-Hallab REP Service Excellence Award, which includes a monetary prize of $1,000. There are no immediate plans to provide faculty initiating or accepting projects with further incentives, including public recognition: REP’s current focus is on service excellence.
The appointment of project coordinators continues to be based on expertise, time and research opportunity, as well as commitment to community outreach. Coordinators are selected for their experience in the project field upon the recommendation of the dean of their faculty, who actively assists REP staff in matching faculty members to project specifications. A project in hospital administration, for instance, would require a coordinator with relevant expertise, the support of the dean of FM and previous experience on a REP project. A consultant working on the same project would not need previous REP experience, no matter how desirable that might be.

5. Time allotted to faculty for external consultancies

The 2004 Self-Study recommended the formation of an ad-hoc committee of faculty and administrators to study the solutions of other universities regarding the incompatibility between participation in REP projects and limitations on faculty consultation time and to make appropriate recommendations. AUB continues to be the only university in the region with a dedicated office offering quality professional consulting services to clients in the MENA region and, most recently, in the broader geographical expanse between Europe and South Asia. Although the American University of Cairo has a highly developed continuing education program and Beirut’s Lebanese American University has begun providing some consultancy services, neither institution has surmounted challenges similar to those faced by AUB when developing and improving REP programs and the internal administrative processes that support them. Due to REP’s unique mission in the region and the absence of an equal or model among universities in the Middle Eastern environment, comparative studies were deemed impossible at this time. Moreover, the 2004 Self-Study erroneously reported that University policy only allowed faculty members to participate in REP projects for 16 man-days (excluding weekends) per semester. In fact, 16 days was the limit for all external consultancies involving faculty and staff, but those involved in REP activities were given another 14 days for a total of 30. These latter figures have since been increased to 16 and 32 respectively. In addition, most faculty are free to work full-time on REP projects during the three summer months.

6. Review and redesign of CEC programs

In 2004, the Institutional Self-Study called upon deans, school directors and CEC administrators to review and redesign, as appropriate, their current CEC programs with regard to nature, currency, appeal, objectives, standards and outcomes.

According to the acting director of CEC, a five-year business plan intended to focus the center’s work was adopted in April 2007 and presented to RIAC the following month. Effective October 2008, the plan began guiding all program development, facility expansion, marketing initiatives and personnel recruitment. It sets financial goals based on student registration and workshop consumption and emphasizes the enhancement of quality assurance measures for all programs. Responsibility for ensuring the quality of CEC certificate and non-certificate programs and local and regional workshops falls to program coordinators (selected from AUB’s full-time faculty), who are now being included in the center’s organizational structure.

The syllabi and requirements for certificate and non-certificate courses were updated in 2007. A detailed 25-page listing of all CEC programs with certificate requisites, admission requirements and course descriptions was created and included in the 2007-08 University catalogue, replacing the one-page description of the center formerly found there.

While CEC students used to register in person at the CEC office, they were able to use the Banner system for the first time in the Fall 2007 semester. Integration into the Banner system will help to ensure accuracy in all CEC registration procedures and data. It will also facilitate future reporting and the generation of statistical charts.

With the support of deans, new programs were also developed to meet community needs. In Fall 2007, OSB created a new diploma program that built on an established certificate in Human Resource Management (HRM). During the same year, FM approved two new training programs, the Emergency Health Rehabilitation Project and the Advancement in Hospital Management Program, to serve existing clients. The dean of FAS assigned a faculty member to the steering committee of the Journalism Training Program, which provides year-round multi-lingual (Arabic, English, French) training to regional journalists on a variety of topics, including basic news reporting and writing, editing, war/safety coverage, online journalism and media ethics. It also offers workshops in media literacy and corporate communications/media crisis management.


7. **Assessment of programs and projects**

Although many of AUB’s non-degree programs and workshops already had program and faculty evaluation procedures in place by 2004, the Self-Study recommended that care be taken to ensure that these evaluations were consistent and congruent with project objectives, AUB’s mission, faculty involvement and client needs. According to CEC’s acting director, a mechanism now exists for the regular review of policies for services and activities. Program coordinators assigned by faculty deans to CEC programs currently assess them using the methodology that they deem appropriate. Assessment generally relies on student and instructor questionnaires that were established in 2006-07 and derived from surveys developed by OIRA for degree programs.

8. **University Writing Center**

In Fall 2004, AUB created a pilot Writing Center to support the academic writing skills of AUB undergraduate and graduate students. The principles informing its establishment included certain widely held tenets of writing center practice, namely, that the primary purpose of such a center is not remediation; that tutors intervene in the writing process, but do not edit writing; and that writing centers are sites for research, as well as teaching and learning. Faculty and graduate assistants from the English department and student volunteers have staffed the center since its inception. Open during the fall and spring semesters, it offers free, one-hour individual writing consultations not only to students, but also to faculty and staff.

According to the Writing Center Pilot Project report of October 2007, “the steady growth in the use of the Writing Center over the course of its first three years indicates that this approach to supporting writing works with the population of writers at AUB.” In its first year (2004-05), the center was open for 18 weeks and worked with 130 writers, completing 192 hours of tutoring. In 2005-06, it was open for 28 weeks and worked with 332 writers, providing 633 hours of tutoring. In 2006-07, the center was open for 27 weeks, working with 264 writers over 595 hours. Users of the Writing Center come from all AUB faculties. (For more information, see Appendix D 7-2 and Chapter Six.)

9. **Remedial English across academic departments**

The 2005 report of the General Education Strategic Planning Committee partly addressed the issue of involving all departments in remedial English by proposing that the University’s new general education requirement include two courses designated as ‘writing-intensive,’ in addition to the two communications skills courses required of every AUB student. The new writing-intensive category will help to ensure that students improve their composition skills in the courses more closely related to their majors and by means of analytical and reflective papers; lab, project and other reports; essay-style responses to exam questions; and other relevant exercises, including those involving new technologies. The choice and enrichment, if necessary, of existing courses for this category has not yet begun.

The Writing Center Pilot Project report cited above provides indirect evidence of the increased involvement of AUB departments in improving writing skills. Not only did the number of tutoring hours rise dramatically from 2004-05 to 2006-07, but the number of users from each AUB faculty more than doubled during the same period (see Appendix D 7-2, Table 3). While this increase substantiates the center’s effectiveness, it also reflects the importance that faculty are giving to composition skills and to encouraging their students to seek help in improving them. What is still lacking, however, is a university-wide standard of writing excellence and a mechanism to assess the impact of the work of the Writing Center on the academic achievement of students. AUB currently relies on a KPI (C1e) that tracks the average score of junior students on the CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance) writing test. Although gains in essay writing have been recorded since the establishment of the Writing Center, these results are not specific to the center’s clients.

10. **Agricultural Research and Education Center**

The Agricultural Research and Education Center (AREC) is a 100-hectare facility located about 80 kilometers east of Beirut in the Beqa’a Valley, the agricultural heartland of Lebanon. AREC is operated by FAFS and includes a research farm, laboratories, a seed bank (for the conservation of the endogenous genome of Lebanon and the region) and a weather station, in addition to classrooms, a lecture hall, an agricultural library and accommodation for students, faculty and staff. Education is a major activity at AREC, which provides agriculture and landscape students.
with experiential learning and offers members of the local community workshops and other types of training. Greater emphasis is currently being given to AREC’s demonstration/pilot projects, particularly in the areas of organic agriculture, renewable energy and water management. In June 2006, FAFS reported that it had achieved a return of close to $2,500 per hectare, roughly three to four times the average rate of return of farms in the Beqa’a plateau. During the last two years, the facility has focused on ‘solving farmers’ problems’ in relation to dramatic increases in the cost of raw materials and the need to improve the marketability of products. Alongside initiatives to promote conservation agriculture, which aims at protecting the environment while reducing the cost of operations, AREC conducted several studies to determine the water and nutrient requirements of major crops grown in the Beqa’a. This is in line with ongoing research conducted by FAFS professors and students in the areas of crop production, animal sciences and irrigation. AREC is the site of continuing vegetable variety, forage crop, oil seed and fruit trials. Animal production researches focuses, in particular, on nutritional studies involving poultry, small ruminants and dairy cattle.

FAFS recently appointed an associate dean to oversee and develop AREC’s educational and research activities, including the achievement of FAFS’s strategic goal, established in June 2006, of “strengthening the ties between AREC and... [AUB’s] various departments and program areas.” Some major renovations are in the planning stage, including improvements to student, faculty and visitor housing, the workshop and the creamery, while groundwork has been laid for a feasibility study of AREC’s operations, the establishment of a dedicated website (now that the internet connection is stronger) and other improvements in structure and content. This study will form the basis for a separate strategic plan for the facility. In the last two years, AREC collaborated in an education and research project with the Agricultural Research and Extension Centers of Mississippi State University and began discussions on a new partnership with Earth University in Costa Rica.

Since AREC’s priorities are not solely a function of agricultural productivity, its operating costs are significantly higher than those of other farming concerns in the Beqa’a. It also provides staff and laborers with equitable wages and benefits that exceed regional norms. The operating budget for AREC’s administration, physical plant and production amounted to $707,913 in 2003-04, rising to just under a million dollars two years later before dropping to $799,931 in 2006-07. Since that time, the budget has increased steadily, reaching $842,214 in 2007-08 and $1,045,122 in 2008-09. However, AREC’s deficit fell by approximately $180,000 during 2007 and 2008 despite significant cost increases for casual labor (65 percent) and supplies (74 percent for fuel; 120 percent for minerals and vitamins; 125.1 percent for fertilizer; 69 percent for feed). Farm revenues rose during the same period, by $53,500 in 2007 and by an additional $30,500 in 2008.

D. Recommendations

1. Encourage deans to support members of their faculties in the identification of REP projects that draw on their expertise, thus widening faculty involvement in REP activities.
2. Set up mechanisms to assess consultant satisfaction, client satisfaction and the regional impact of REP’s activities. This process will help to determine whether REP work promotes the professional development of consultants and increases their research opportunities. It will also monitor whether clients are sufficiently satisfied with REP consultants to conclude new contracts with the Office or to recommend its services to other potential partners. Regional impact will be determined through feedback from regional actors such as executives and officials from leading firms, government agencies and non-government organizations.
3. Create a system to follow the academic performance of students in their major fields after they have completed the UPP/IEC and/or received tutoring at the Writing Center.
4. Conduct market surveys and research to improve the University’s overall response to regional consulting needs.
5. Carry out yearly reviews of the policies and practices of the University Preparatory Program and Intensive English Course with regard to extracurricular activities, counseling services, and cultural and social programs.
6. Establish a committee chaired by the director of admissions to promote the UPP and recruit academically strong students who are potential applicants to AUB.
7. Ensure that all continuing education programs offered by AUB faculties, departments and institutes are delivered via the CEC. This will maximize resources, reduce redundancy and...
strengthen coordination and communication. It will also guarantee the participation of all faculty deans and department heads in the review of continuing education activities for quality, currency, appeal, objectives, standards and outcomes.

8. In collaboration with the respective faculties, enhance the assessment tools and procedures used to review each CEC certificate program.
Chapter Eight

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT AND STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

Purpose: Working Group 8 (WG8) was charged with examining the University’s progress in the areas of Institutional Assessment and Student Learning Assessment (Standards 7 and 14) since the 2004 Institutional Self-Study. The group’s purpose was to establish the extent to which an appropriate assessment plan and process have been used for the periodic evaluation of AUB’s institutional effectiveness. It also aimed to study how information obtained in this way has been used to assess the University’s effectiveness in meeting stated goals and in institutional planning and resource allocation. WG8 was further asked to examine the process by which AUB gathers and evaluates data on program and course learning outcomes to demonstrate that students have knowledge, skills and competencies consistent with the mission and goals of the institution and the educational objectives of its programs and academic units.

Membership: WG8 was composed of 14 members, seven of whom were faculty members of varying rank from the faculties of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS), Arts and Sciences (FAS), Engineering and Architecture (FEA), Medicine (FM), the School of Nursing (SON) and the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB); one of these faculty members was also director of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). Three other working group members were also unit directors (student activities; environmental health, safety and risk management; and institutional planning and process improvement). The other four members of WG8 included a trustee, an undergraduate student from FAS, a statistician and one AUB staff member. The group was co-chaired by a professor and associate professor from FAS, one of whom was the director of OIRA.

Methodology: This chapter is based on specific questions developed from the fundamental elements of Standards 7 and 14 in Characteristics of Excellence in Higher Education; additional information on assessment found under other standards; and recommendations appearing in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study. In order to address these points, WG8 divided itself into two sub-groups, one for each standard. The sub-groups examined University, faculty and program documents relative to institutional and learning outcome assessment plans, processes, criteria and indicators. They evaluated the effectiveness of these plans and processes in numerous contexts, identified strengths and weaknesses, gauged sustainability, and identified significant gaps.

Toward the conclusion of their separate evaluations, group members prepared questions for the 2008 Institutional Survey. Questions pertinent to Standard 7 were set for all administrative heads and a representative sample of staff. While 85 percent of administrative heads responded, only 19 percent of staff did so, with nearly half of them management. To compensate, the subgroup attempted to hold a staff focus group, but the response rate was too low for a successful meeting. Questions pertinent to Standard 14 were addressed to academic heads, faculty and students.

Members of the two sub-groups also had recourse to documentary sources other than those mentioned above, particularly the 2007 Accreditation Status Report; faculty, department and unit strategic planning reports; Balanced Scorecard reports; and assessments appearing in professional accreditation reports.

The results of WG8’s investigation and analysis, as well as its recommendations, appear in the principle sections of this chapter:

Institutional Assessment

A. Institutional Assessment Initiatives at AUB
INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT

A. Institutional Assessment Initiatives at AUB

In order to monitor the performance of the University and its administrative and academic units from a variety of perspectives, assessment activities at AUB are conducted at both institutional and unit levels. These activities include the continuing development and implementation of strategic plans and relevant indicators; the collection, analysis and dissemination of information by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA); and several measures to monitor financial performance.

1. Strategic planning and assessment

Since the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, AUB has revised its mission statement and embarked on its first strategic planning cycle with the development of plans for eight major administrative units and seven faculties/schools. Each stage of the planning process involved assessment in some way. The 15 units conducted formal SWOT analyses to identify their own strengths and weaknesses; evaluated external trends and influences relevant to their separate operations; and articulated their vision statements using the Strategy Map. As discussed in Chapter Two, the plans that they devised were guided by the institutional mission statement, the goals presented in President Waterbury's 2004 “State of the University” address and the reports of four committees which investigated issues of university-wide significance (enrolment management; general education; graduate education and research; and information technology) identified by the president and senior administrators in light of the 2004 Self-Study. Strategies devised to meet unit and institutional goals were then scrutinized at the highest level to ensure that AUB possessed the financial and other resources required to implement them. With the conclusion of this step, a Campus Strategic Plan Overview (see Appendix D 2-2) was drafted, reviewed and merged with a similar document prepared for the AUB Medical Center (AUBMC), FM, SON and clinical research centers. The resulting Institutional Strategic Plan Overview will be updated and enriched with recommendations from the 2008 Institutional Self-Study before being presented to the AUB community and then to the Board of Trustees (BOT) for approval in 2009. University-wide implementation of AUB's plan will immediately follow BOT approval, although a handful of important initiatives, such as the reintroduction of PhD programs in eight fields of specialization, have already been put into effect.

2. Balanced Scorecards and Key Performance Indicators

When the strategic planning cycle began in 2004, the University had already taken steps toward the use of Kaplan-Norton Balanced Scorecard (BSC) methodology to measure the achievement of objectives established by less formal means. Since that time, AUB has continued developing and using this performance management system, which articulates the University’s vision in terms of operational objectives involving stakeholders (students, patients, faculty, employees and external actors), business processes and financial resources. AUB has 83 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as the BSC metrics are known, with about 25 percent of them applying solely to AUBMC. (The full list appears in Appendix D 8-1. See Chapter Two for information on the current initiative to revise and develop new Campus KPIs in line with strategic planning.) The BSC measures the University’s achievements as an institution of higher education in relation to the following objectives:
• AUB’s contribution to the intellectual and social growth of students, to developing their writing skills and to preparing them for careers;
• Student satisfaction with various processes (for instance, admissions and registration), the accessibility of faculty members, course design and delivery, and the way in which their feedback is solicited and used;
• The level of faculty and staff preparedness, productivity and satisfaction;
• Several factors related to the University’s financial stability.

The Institutional BSC is reviewed annually by the president and his ‘Cabinet,’ in other words, the executives who report immediately to him. The review process looks at trends indicated by KPIs and the steps to be taken to improve performance when required. The results of the review are circulated among Cabinet members, but not communicated to the broader AUB community. The Office of Strategy Management (OSM) has plans to publish an annual update of the BSC that excludes confidential information and can therefore be shared with all constituents.

Of the 63 Campus KPIs tracked between 2002-03 and 2006-07, the performances of 40 (or 63 percent) were compatible with the desired trend, while the remaining 23 (or 37 percent) were out of phase. KPIs and other assessment tools have helped in the identification of specific challenges, which the University has addressed by launching short- and long-term initiatives to investigate and improve:

• Student satisfaction with the advising process (process improvement team);
• Geographic and socio-economic diversity of the student population (university-wide strategic planning committee);
• Faculty preparedness and satisfaction (focus groups);
• Non-academic human resources and compensation management (consultant: Towers Perrin);
• Procurement process (consultants: Ernst & Young, FM²)

The Institutional BSC is currently being revised to improve alignment between KPIs and the objectives of AUB’s new strategic plan. Moreover, during the strategic planning process, each of the University’s 15 major administrative and academic units developed lists of KPIs for their own BSCs. The selection of KPIs ensured that these units decided in advance how to measure performance and define success in a clear and explicit way. Units also created schedules for regular performance reviews to monitor the implementation of their plans (see Items 4, 7, 8, 9 and 13 in the Common Planning Outline, Appendix D 2-1). Plan implementation is expected to commence in 2008-09. In the meantime, all units continue to receive assistance from the OSM in the development of new indicators and the modification of existing ones (when required). Some institutional KPIs are also being cascaded to administrative and academic units. Hence, full BSC implementation should quickly follow plan implementation, setting the stage for regular reviews of plan performance. Many administrative units currently assess their operations at fixed intervals using a selection of assessment tools (see 2008 Institutional Survey results below), including KPIs.

3. Office of Institutional Research and Assessment

OIRA coordinates institutional assessment and research activities, and collects, analyzes and disseminates accurate and timely information about AUB’s performance and environment. After its establishment in October 2001, OIRA initiated a periodic survey cycle (see table below) that includes the use of standardized measures to obtain and assess data on entering students; learning outcomes; institutional processes; faculty, staff and alumni; and the University’s overall environment. OIRA further collects, on a continuous basis, client feedback from students, patients and other service recipients to gauge program performance and identify areas for improvement. In many of its activities, OIRA faces challenges with data extraction since there are discrepancies in the calculation methods and/or data sources used by the University’s various faculties. This means that extracted data might not be uniform and points to the necessity of better integration of methodologies and sources across faculties.

Surveys of student satisfaction with the registration process have revealed substantial year-on-year progress; similar surveys on orientation, advising and library services have also been positive. In addition to soliciting student feedback through the Instructor Course Evaluation, OIRA has also studied the satisfaction of professors, instructors and students with the faculty evaluation process. Since 2004, two extensive market studies, one local and one regional, were
undertaken to assess AUB's competitive positioning. Both involved surveys of high-school students, principals, counselors, university students and employers. The analysis of their responses shed light on AUB's strengths and weaknesses and on ways to improve enrolment management (see Chapter Four), a key area of strategic planning at the University.

**OIRA's Periodic Survey Cycle**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey</th>
<th>Student Population</th>
<th>Time Period Administered</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Entering Student Survey (ESS), ACT*, Registration Survey</td>
<td>Admitted students</td>
<td>Fall (orientation week), annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College Outcomes Survey (COS), ACT</td>
<td>Representative sample of undergraduate students</td>
<td>Spring (May), annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP), ACT</td>
<td>Enrolled junior students</td>
<td>Spring, annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduating Senior Exit Survey (GSS)</td>
<td>Graduating students</td>
<td>Spring/Summer (June), annually</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE)</td>
<td>All students in courses</td>
<td>End of every semester</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty Survey, HERI**</td>
<td>Faculty</td>
<td>Spring, every three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alumni Survey (AS),</td>
<td>Alumni</td>
<td>Summer, every five years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employee Satisfaction Survey (ESS)</td>
<td>All AUB employees</td>
<td>Fall, every three years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Special Studies/ Satisfaction Surveys</td>
<td>Constituent groups</td>
<td>Fall and spring, annually, 10 departments/year.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Common Data Set (CDS), College Board Data, Peterson’s, etc.</td>
<td>Institution</td>
<td>Annually</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*American College Testing  **Higher Education Research Institute*

Due to OIRA's collection activities, trend analysis data for various institutional indicators are now available and have been benchmarked against parallel data from seven 'peer' institutions, permitting useful comparisons. For example, trend analysis of junior student performance on the CAAP (Collegiate Assessment of Academic Performance) writing test revealed that AUB's performance was below average relative to comparable 4-year institutions. To remedy the situation, a writing center was established at AUB (see Chapter Six): CAAP results during the last two years have shown substantial student improvement in the essay writing component.

OIRA is also the measure leader of numerous indicators for the institutional Balanced Scorecard and the BSCs of different faculties and administrative units. As the use of BSCs and KPIs becomes more common, OIRA continues to improve its survey cycle and measurement reporting to better meet the needs of its various constituents. Some surveys, such as those involving newly registered students or AUB alumni, are reviewed or revised each time they are administered. In 2006, OIRA assessed stakeholder satisfaction with the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE) since its introduction five years earlier. All ICE forms, as well as the evaluation process, are currently undergoing complete revision in line with a literature review and the feedback received. OIRA's performance was evaluated during the 2002-03 Institutional Survey and will be assessed more regularly in the future. In addition, OIRA has been working on the development of a strategic plan for the unit, which should be finalized in 2009.

All OIRA reports appear on its webpage (http://wwwlb.aub.edu.lb/~weboira/) and are shared with stakeholders by e-mail and through print publications. Once results are disseminated, focus groups, forums and special meetings are scheduled to discuss findings, highlight improvements and challenges, and aid in future planning.
4. Monitoring budgets and expenditures

AUB has a number of existing processes to document, track and assess financial performance at various levels. The University's operating budget is phased over 12 months to facilitate monthly comparisons with actual revenues/expenditures. The Office of Financial Planning and Budget (OFPB) identifies variances and brings them to the attention of the Budget Committee and the BOT; throughout the fiscal year, it also provides them with revised annual projections or operational forecasts. This is a good assessment tool for senior management since it helps them to make informed decisions regarding expenditures.

Deans and department heads are responsible for monitoring expenses relative to their approved budgets. They have direct system access to data pertaining to their units. Additionally, the OFPB periodically provides them with reports and reviews of budgetary variances at intervals mutually agreed in advance. The Comptroller's Office monitors expenditures/revenues to ensure that they are consistent with approved budgets. The financial management system prevents external purchase orders from being processed if funds are inadequate to support the proposed acquisition. (For more on budgeting, see Chapter Two)

4.1 Internal audit monitoring

Since the 2004 Self-Study, AUB’s Internal Audit Office has performed 70 audits covering several areas, for instance, finances, operations and processes, and information technology. Its reports help to assure the effectiveness and efficiency of University operations in targeted areas. The director of Internal Audit is the only AUB official with dual reporting lines – to the president and to the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees. (See Chapter Two for more information on the Internal Audit Office and other auditing bodies.)

B. Summary of Self-Study Findings

The following sub-sections report on questions related to institutional assessment that were raised in the Self-Study Design and answered during the 2008 Institutional Survey. The survey results presented below focus on non-academic units, personnel and activities. Findings relevant to academic units appear under “Student Learning Assessment.”

1. Statements of mission and objectives

The analysis of internal documents and of data from the 2008 Survey indicated that AUB has made significant progress in elaborating mission statements and objectives for non-academic units and programs and in aligning them with the University’s mission.

The survey revealed that most units have developed specific statements of mission, objectives and outcomes. Almost all administrative heads reported that their units had mission statements (97 percent) and explicit objectives (90 percent), assertions that were confirmed by large proportions of staff in both cases (83 and 86 percent respectively). These results compared very favorably with those cited in the 2004 Institutional Self-Study, where only 76 percent of heads and 65 percent of staff reported having unit mission statements and about 70 percent of both groups agreed that their units had stated objectives.

Ninety-four percent of administrative heads and 61 percent of staff revealed that they had participated in the development of their unit mission statements to some/a great extent, which indicated good general involvement in the process. Moreover, the majority of heads (96 percent) and staff (82 percent) found their mission statements to be fairly/very consistent with the University’s mission, which was also an improvement over the previous survey, when agreement was much lower (56 percent for staff). Finally, most heads (90 percent) and staff (80 percent) believed statements of their unit’s mission and objectives to be clear and realistic. These findings were comparable to 2002-03 survey results for heads and represented an improvement in results for staff (previously 55 percent for ‘clear’; 69 percent for ‘realistic’).

2. Assessment plans

Similarly, the University has made progress in the development of multiple quantitative and qualitative assessment measures and appropriate criteria for determining whether key goals have been met. A high percentage of administrative heads (83 percent) reported that they now have unit assessment plans, about half of which were developed during the last five years. Fewer staff (63 percent), however, indicated that their units had plans and they also seemed less certain
as to when the plans had been devised; approximately half of them omitted the question, while about 20 percent said that the plans were developed in the last five years. Eighty percent of heads and 59 percent of staff described the plans as aligned with mission, possessing a clear timetable, and sufficiently simple, practical, clear and detailed. One quarter of staff respondents omitted all survey questions pertaining to the assessment plan.

Fewer respondents, namely, 70 percent of heads and 45 percent of staff, indicated that these plans had been implemented. When asked about frequency of assessment, approximately 40 percent of all respondents said that they conducted evaluations on an annual basis, while about 23 percent of heads and 12 percent of staff said that they were carried out quarterly.

The presence of KPIs in assessment plans was confirmed by 70 percent of administrative heads, but only 50 percent of staff. Approximately half of heads and 37 percent of staff reported that these KPIs were benchmarked against comparable institutions, while lower numbers said that other standards were used. A large proportion of staff did not respond to this question.

Although 80 percent of administrative heads reported that assessment results were largely used for improvement purposes, staff responses were more diverse, with only 50 percent agreeing with this statement and about 18 percent saying that they were used for staff evaluations. Thirty-two percent of staff did not respond to the question. A high percentage of administrative heads said that assessment results were generally shared with peers and immediate supervisors, while 44 percent of staff said they were shared with immediate supervisors/chairs.

With respect to the evaluation of assessment plans, 73 percent of heads and 46 percent of staff reported that this occurred annually.

3. **Assessment tools**

The 2008 Institutional Survey revealed the types of institutional assessment tools in use at AUB. More than half of the sample of administrative heads and staff reported using the following four quantitative measures: volume of activity (number of clients served and circulation data); service quality (error rates and accuracy of information reported); staff discussions/evaluations of services to clients; and review of existing data (routine department records, institutional data and audits). In fact, at least 50 percent of heads and staff said that they used all quantitative and qualitative tools listed in the survey, with the exceptions of benchmarking and external evaluators, which were mentioned by less than half of the staff surveyed.

The responses of administrative heads in 2008 showed a significant increase over 2002-03 in the use of such tools as service quality measures, staff discussions, existing data and benchmarking. Declines were registered in the use of other tools, for example, external evaluators, focus groups and suggestion boxes. About 30 percent of staff omitted this section of the survey, probably due to lack of information. Comparisons with previous survey results for staff showed little change despite reported rises in the use of some tools (service quality measures, benchmarking, focus groups and suggestion boxes) and decreases in the use of others (staff discussions).

4. **Institutional culture and support**

The adequacy of administrative support for a culture of institutional assessment was rated as good/very good by 40-50 percent of administrative heads and staff. When asked to identify what this support entailed, heads most frequently chose availability of resources (53 percent), followed by policies and governance (47 percent). Professional development opportunities ranked lowest (34 percent). Twenty-five percent of staff did not respond to the question; of those who did, 55 percent cited administrator support, 52 percent mentioned policies and governance, and 41 percent said professional development.

With respect to the existence of such a culture, nearly all heads understood their assessment role; however, only half said that their views on assessment had been taken into consideration, while fewer still (40 percent) said that AUB’s efforts to encourage assessment were adequate. More than half of staff (58 percent) understood their assessment role, but just 44 percent believed that their views were considered and that institutional efforts in this direction were adequate.

C. **Analysis of Findings**

During the past four years, the University has greatly improved its assessment initiatives in terms of the quantity and quality of processes and tools; participation in developing, sharing and
communicating results; and the use made of these results in planning for the future. Most AUB administrative units have clear, consistent and achievable statements of mission/objectives that have been developed through collaborative efforts. However, staff involvement in other areas appears to be insufficient and clear differences in perception have been revealed between administrative heads and staff. Nearly one-quarter of staff respondents to the 2008 Survey did not answer questions related to assessment plans, tools and their use. Most importantly, a well-defined comprehensive institutional assessment plan has not yet been fully elaborated.

Strategic plans, BSCs and KPIs articulated by the institution and by major administrative and academic units constitute the basis for an integrated university-wide plan. Most administrative units possess assessment plans that have already been implemented and that are or will be reviewed periodically. These plans provide clear criteria for determining whether goals have been met and also make greater use of KPIs and benchmarking, although the latter tool has not yet been extensively employed. Assessment results lead to improvements in policies, procedures and service delivery, although staff also believe that they are used to evaluate staff performance.

AUB is currently employing multiple quantitative and qualitative tools and has increased the use of service quality tools in accordance with recommendations in the 2004 Self-Study. Service quality and efficiency are closely related to outcomes and the achievement of desired outcomes is the ultimate aim of assessment.

Judging by responses to the 2008 Survey, administrative support for assessment has only been average: unit heads and staff require more professional development opportunities to learn how to conduct assessments. In addition, although administrative heads and staff felt that they understood their assessment roles, many did not believe that their views were being taken into consideration or that university-wide efforts to encourage assessment and raise awareness of its value were sufficient. AUB needs to increase efforts to promote a culture in which assessment is encouraged and valued, and to involve more administrative heads and staff in assessment.

Generally speaking, the assessment processes currently in place at AUB adequately evaluate the full range of programs and services and the achievement of institutional mission, goals and objectives. Some challenges remain, however, and they are addressed in the recommendations.

D. Recommendations

1. Strengthen and expand assessment efforts at the institutional level (strategic planning, BSC, OIRA assessment survey cycle) to support the development of a comprehensive university-wide assessment plan.
2. Cascade development of a comprehensive assessment plan to faculty and major department levels. Now that these academic and administrative units have missions, objectives and plans, there is a need to assess them and monitor their effectiveness.
3. Share assessment plans with all University constituents to ensure proper implementation and utilization of results.
4. Require administrative heads to increase staff engagement in the development of unit mission statements and assessment plans. Improve staff training on the significance, formulation and use of statements and plans.
5. Raise staff awareness of the importance of benchmark comparisons with peer institutions, encourage their use and provide training on how to make effective use of them.
6. Enhance institutional support for assessment, especially in terms of training unit heads and staff to conduct assessments.
7. Work to establish a culture of assessment that encourages and values assessment efforts. The administration needs to play a significant role in this respect by providing assessment support and ensuring staff input in the assessment process.
8. Continuously monitor and upgrade OIRA services and its website.
STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT

E. Learning Outcomes Assessment: Process and Tools

One of two major recommendations in the 2004 report of the MSCHE visiting team was that AUB “develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the assessment of student learning.” During the last four years, the University has made great strides in this direction. Efforts to develop and implement a comprehensive institutional plan to assess student learning were led by the Provost’s Office, with the assistance of faculty associated with the Center for Teaching and Learning and volunteer faculty from across the University. Much credit also belongs to faculties who are seeking or have sought professional accreditation. The remainder of this chapter describes the strategies followed, the achievements to date and the outstanding issues that still need to be addressed.

1. Learning outcomes

Significant progress has been achieved in the development of learning outcomes (LOs) as part of accreditation initiatives at AUB’s professional schools, namely, the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FEA), the Suliman S. Olayan School of Business (OSB), the School of Nursing (SON), which is part of the Faculty of Medicine (FM), and the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). FM has achieved relatively less progress because of the nature (graduate professional) of its programs. Efforts to develop LOs at the faculties of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS) and Arts and Sciences (FAS) are ongoing.

At FEA, which is awaiting a visiting team from the Accreditation Board of Engineering and Technology (ABET), Program Educational Objectives (PEOs) were developed in concert with the educational objectives of AUB, the faculty and the appropriate Engineering department. The general themes embedded in the missions of the University, faculty and department relate directly to the subcategories for each PEO. In addition, all Engineering programs have Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) that correlate to PEOs and all Engineering courses have stated Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) that are mapped onto PLOs. All of these PLOs are also addressed in one or more CLO. At the start of Fall 2007, FEA’s Architecture and Graphic Design departments formed a committee to pursue professional accreditation with the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD). Since that time, the two departments have also been developing program and course learning outcomes, benefiting from the experience acquired by colleagues in Engineering.

OSB developed Learning Goals (LGs, which are equivalent to PEOs) after reflection by faculty on the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of students graduating from the faculty’s degree programs. Each OSB program has its own set of six LGs, which serve as roadmaps for program curricula and foundations for assessment. General Learning Objectives (GLOs, which are equivalent to PLOs) are specific, measurable articulations of LGs. They identify observable behaviors and actions related to an LG that faculty members can use to describe, monitor and assess student achievement. Each degree program LG has one or two GLOs. OSB is a candidate for accreditation from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

SON has specific PLOs for both undergraduate and graduate programs. Undergraduate PLOs are further subcategorized according to level (sophomore, junior and senior) in recognition of the increasing complexity and incremental nature of learning in this discipline. The syllabus of every nursing course includes specific, measurable LOs, which are congruent with PLOs. SON’s mission statement is aligned with that of the University and its mission, goals and expected outcomes (program, level and course) are reviewed and revised regularly in accordance with the School’s Comprehensive Evaluation Plan. The Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accredited SON in 2007.

FHS has revised its mission and vision statements and elaborated faculty goals and objectives. At the undergraduate level, it has developed PLOs (but not CLOs) for the Environmental Health and Medical Lab programs. At the graduate level, it has articulated PLOs for both its Master of Science (MS) and Master of Public Health (MPH) programs, while also revising all MPH courses and establishing competencies for them. Attention is currently focused on a review of MS PLOs and a re-evaluation of the MPH program. In 2006, the Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accredited the Graduate Public Health Program in FHS.
In FM, each of the six MS programs has developed a mission statement and objectives. The four years of the MD program, namely, Medicine I, II, III and IV, all have very broad learning objectives, as does the overall program itself.

By contrast, there has been less progress at FAFS, one of the University’s smaller faculties, and FAS, which is still the largest. FAFS initiated a process for the formulation of CLOs in 2006-07 and most course syllabi now have sections on LOs. Departments at FAFS are currently in the process of drawing up mission statements and LOs for five programs (Agriculture; Landscape Design and Eco-Management; Food Science and Management; Nutrition and Dietetics; and Veterinary Science) before further action by the faculty’s Academic and Curriculum Committee. FAS has also been updating mission statements and developing PLOs, but no systematic work has been done on CLOs or on the assessment of LOs where they exist.

Both FAFS and FAS have been targeted for special assistance from the University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee (ULOCC), which was formed to coordinate and monitor implementation of a two-year Center for Teaching and Learning plan for the articulation of LOs across AUB. The plan was devised by a core group of facilitators from the Center for Teaching and Learning who also prepared an LO concept paper and handbooks on CLOs and PLOs. In Fall 2007-08, ULOCC recruited and trained some interested members of FAS and FAFS to guide chairs in the revision of department mission statements and the development of PLOs. This task was successfully completed by the end of the academic year. In 2008-09, it will begin work on formulating CLOs and assessment plans for departments. (See Chapter Six for more on the work of ULOCC and an overview of the assessment of AUB’s educational offerings.)

For the purposes of the 2008 Institutional Survey, the learning outcomes embedded in AUB’s mission statement were identified by the WG8 sub-group on LO assessment and questions were formulated about them. The great majority of students and faculty agreed that AUB courses in general helped to develop critical thinking, life-long learning, creativity, openness and a commitment to honesty. Students and faculty deemed courses to be less successful in developing an appreciation of the liberal arts or a commitment to exercising the rights and responsibilities of citizenship. While only 46 percent of faculty believed that AUB succeeded in developing student leadership skills, the response of students was more positive, with 76 percent indicating their agreement with this statement.

2. Learning outcomes assessment process

Many of the University’s faculties have developed assessment processes to meet the needs of their disciplines and/or professional accreditation requirements. Others, particularly FAFS and FAS, have not yet reached the assessment stage.

FEA has put in place an assessment process for Engineering PEOs. Each of these objectives possesses its own performance criteria, implementation plan, evaluation methods and logistics for data collection, while also specifying exactly who provides feedback to students. The primary assessment tools consist of the Exit, Employer and Alumni surveys, which are translated into quantitative measures, as well as personal communications between graduates and their former advisors; input from the External Advisory Board, which is largely composed of CEOs and managers working in the field; and the ABET Course Self-Assessment form. It is the responsibility of department chairs to ensure that assessment is carried out in a timely fashion. Assessment tools are evaluated and improved by the FEA ABET Committee. A plan has also been approved to review PEOs every three years. The three-year review cycle provides a degree of stability and allows reviewers to examine a larger pool of data than a one-year cycle would provide. In the meantime, FEA is in the process of establishing a database to collect assessment results that will be accessible to all Engineering faculty.

OSB measures the achievement of LGs (or PEOs) and GLOs (or PLOs) for each degree program using two principal types of assessment. The first is a stand-alone comprehensive evaluation of foundation business knowledge. At the BBA and MBA levels, the OSB relies on the Educational Testing Services (ETS) major field test in business, which contains 120 multiple choice questions designed to measure students’ knowledge and ability to apply facts, concepts, theories and analytical methods. The second type is course-embedded evaluation using instructor-developed rubrics (one per program GLO to be applied in one core or foundation course). Rubrics include a set of guidelines, usually in matrix form, that faculty use to evaluate student work and provide feedback. The full Assurance of Learning or assessment cycle for OSB degree programs involves four steps: administration of stand-alone and course-embedded
assessments; collection and analysis of assessment results; presentation of results to the Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC); and discussion of implications for curriculum improvement at both the track and ASC levels. This cycle is repeated every regular academic semester for all LGs/GLOs in all three degree programs, with one rubric per LG/GLO applied in every section of one core course.

At SON, revision of program, level and course LOs is based on the results of the Instructor Course Evaluation (ICE); the Course Evaluation Summary (in which the instructor analyzes teaching-learning practices based on feedback from several sources); and surveys of undergraduates, exiting students, alumni, primary employers and faculty. In addition, anecdotal and aggregate data regarding job placement and certification examination pass rates are obtained to assess PLOs. Hence, both quantitative and qualitative assessment measures are used to evaluate PLOs and CLOs. Learning outcomes are periodically reviewed by the Academic Curriculum Committee. The achievement of PLOs for the BSN and MSN programs is evaluated through the assessment of CLOs in the respective programs.

FHS assesses achievement of PLOs using a variety of means. In the undergraduate program in Environmental Health, the environmental impact assessment conducted by students, as well as the walk-through surveys and the summer field training, are used as tools for assessing PLOs. In the undergraduate Medical Laboratory Technology program, the practical exams during each laboratory rotation and student presentations in the senior seminar course serve the same purpose. At the graduate level, the MS programs in Epidemiology and in Population Health both require students to take comprehensive examination; these programs, as well as the MS in Environmental Health, also use the thesis to assess achievement of PLOs. In the MPH program, both the practicum and the culminating experience report and poster session are the tools used.

FM organizes workshops to train faculty on the assessment of expected course outcomes; provides students with a written plan for assessment in each course and program; and has put in place a process for course evaluation, the collection and analysis of assessment results, and the use of results for continuous curriculum improvements.

3. Learning outcomes assessment tools

As noted above, OIRA uses a variety of tools to assess LOs at the institutional level. Two standardized instruments employed for this purpose are the College Outcomes Survey (COS) and the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP). COS measures student perceptions of their own growth in relation to various LOs (social, intellectual and career preparation) achieved at AUB. The two outcomes that students have consistently ranked highest are ‘learning to think and reason’ and ‘acquiring the knowledge and skills needed for a career.’ Both of these are important components of AUB’s mission statement. CAAP measures critical thinking, mathematical and scientific reasoning, and reading and writing skills. In comparison to US national norms, AUB’s performance in mathematics and science has been exceptional, while no significant differences exist in the other areas tested. In 2006-07, the University’s performance improved over previous years in all of these subjects. In addition to COS and CAAP, OIRA regularly conducts exit and alumni surveys which may indirectly measure University and program learning outcomes.

Faculties have developed assessment tools to meet their distinct needs. At the course level, tools complement course type according to whether they are purely theoretical or possess practical components. In the 2008 Institutional Survey, faculty said that the tools most frequently employed to assess CLOs were homework, written subjective and objective tests, term papers and the ICE. In courses with an application component (lab work, field experience, or internship), the tools most often used included appraisal forms, rating scales and rubrics. The survey also indicated that the use of tools capable of measuring complex abilities over time was infrequent: such tools included oral exams, take-home tests, rubrics, peer (student-to-student) evaluation, self-evaluation and reflection, and assessment of student research.

At the program level, faculties with program assessment processes in place use a variety of direct and indirect tools to assess PLOs. Direct tools include capstone or final year projects (FEA), comprehensive standardized major field tests (OSB) and course-embedded assessments (FEA, OSB, SON). Indirect assessment largely involves student, exit, employer and alumni surveys (FEA, SON). As noted above, FEA also relies on contact between graduates and former advisors and input from its External Advisory Board, as well as the observations and
recommendations provided by departmental Student Advisory Committees after they examine self-assessment results and other course data.

In the 2008 Survey, 100 academic heads were asked about the tools used to assess PLOs in their departments. Since 45 of them were from FAS and FAFS, which do not have LO assessment processes in place at present, this may account for the high percentage of respondents who said that they ‘never used any of the listed tools.’ Of the remaining 55, the great majority reported using the following tools for the assessment of PLOs:

- student performance evaluation
- grade analysis and grade correlations to student learning
- course file upgrade
- admission vs. attrition rates
- senior exit survey
- employer survey
- graduate school admission rates (international institutions)
- standardized tests

FM also uses a variety of tools for the assessment of program learning outcomes, for instance, student performance evaluation, grade analysis and grade correlations to student learning, and course file upgrades.

F. Dissemination and Use of Assessment Information

1. Sharing learning outcomes assessment information

At the faculty level, the communication of assessment information is quite limited. Program assessment information is restricted to committees designated to study the data and act on them. The main targets of assessment, namely, students, seldom see or discuss assessment data except when it relates to a specific course. While course assessment information is shared not only with students, but also with course instructors/coordinatees, department chairs and faculty deans, few departments have processes in place to disseminate such data among other faculty members in the same department. As noted above, FEA is presently establishing an assessment information database accessible to all Engineering faculty.

At the institutional level, OIRA is the unit in charge of university-wide assessment as well as the dissemination of assessment information. OIRA publishes its assessment data on its website, which is accessible to all constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, management and the public at large. For example, while OIRA provides ICE reports to individual faculty members, it also makes ICE data public in summaries organized by faculty and department. However, OIRA has yet to link its findings with those of individual faculties in order to make all learning outcome assessment data generally available in a single location.

2. Use of assessment information to improve teaching, learning and curricula

In the 2008 Accreditation Survey, faculty were asked if they believed that ASL (Assessment of Student Learning) and ICE data were being used by faculty to improve teaching and student learning; those who answered ‘yes’ were asked how these data were employed. Many respondents said that assessment data were used to modify teaching methods (56 percent agreed; 6 percent disagreed; 38 percent were neutral) and to change the content, objectives and syllabi of courses (48 percent agreed; 12 percent disagreed; 40 percent were neutral). The following examples show how this is being done in three faculties that are currently using assessment information to improve teaching, learning and curricula.

After the completion of every course, FEA students fill in an ABET Course Self-Assessment form, which measures PLOs as well as CLOs. Results are discussed during a meeting of the course coordinator, course instructors and any other involved faculty. The coordinator subsequently fills in a brief preformatted report indicating whether the majority of instructors felt that CLOs were being achieved and identifying specific weaknesses, proposing remedial actions (with timelines) and recommending deeper changes to the course. As CLOs are mapped onto PLOs, indirect but useful information is obtained on how well PLOs are being met.

At the end of every regular academic semester, OSB instructors teaching core courses with rubrics submit completed student rubrics to the School's Continuous Improvement Office (CIO) for analysis. The results of this analysis are presented to these same instructors and to the

2008 Institutional Self-Study 114
Accreditation Steering Committee (ASC), which decides what steps, if any, should be taken. Track conveners share the assessment results with their instructors; appoint instructor teams to study performance gaps/shortfalls and propose possible improvements; and then report back to the ASC to obtain approval for any modifications to the curriculum. If the ACS agrees to these changes, they are then ratified by the Curriculum Committee. As a result of this process, instructors of core courses with rubrics have the opportunity to improve their rubrics semi-annually based on the findings of the previous semester; rubric revisions must be approved by the core course coordinators, track conveners and the director of the CIO.

At SON, each course is evaluated using the Course Evaluation Summary form, which is a tool to analyze teaching/learning practices based on feedback from several sources, including ICE results. This is the basis for the revision of the content, teaching methodology and assessment of the School’s courses.

In 2005-06, the Office of Institutional Planning and Process Improvement (now Strategy Management) supported AUB faculties in the development of strategic plans. An examination of these plans suggested that the assessment of student learning outcomes, which was supposed to be an important KPI in the Balanced Score Cards of University faculties, had not yet been used effectively by them. The strategic plans of all faculties described, in varying degrees of detail, their educational objectives and expected learning outcomes; however, only some of them discussed measures for the assessment of learning outcomes and included assessment results as KPIs. Faculties which did so included OSB (ICE course content results; AACSB Assurance of Learning measures/benchmarking to peer schools; ETS field test results vs. peers; and general CAAP test results vs. AUB average); SON (College Outcomes Survey; SON Graduate Exit Survey; and SON Alumni Survey) and FEA (department exit surveys). There is little indication that learning outcomes assessment data are used in academic planning, especially when it comes to proposing new academic programs or revising existing ones.

G. Institutional Support for Student Learning Assessment

During the last few years, the University has provided significant and varied forms of support for student learning assessment. It worked to raise assessment awareness among academic administrators, including deans and chairs. It established the CTL to provide faculty with workshops for professional development. It provided moral and material support for related university-wide activities, such as the formation of a Learning Outcomes Core Group, which produced a concept paper, two training manuals and an action plan for LO assessment, and of ULOCC, which trained resource faculty to support LO development in FAS and FAFS and will start implementing the second stage of the action plan in AY 2008-09.

Institutional support like this is expected to pave the way for the establishment of a culture of learning assessment at AUB. Academic administrators and faculty members have increased their understanding, appreciation and participation in student learning assessment. Faculties which developed assessment activities in their quest for professional accreditation seem to have benefited from the experience. Obviously a culture of learning assessment needs time to take root. It also needs institutional support to identify needs and to respond to them. Some of these needs are addressed in the recommendations below.

H. Analysis of Findings

Since the 2004 Self-Study, the University has done much to meet MSCHE’s recommendation that it “develop and implement a comprehensive plan for the assessment of student learning.” AUB has devised such a plan and established the processes needed to assess student learning in all faculties. Still, the University must establish a system for the continuous improvement of assessment processes in the faculties that have them and maintain support for those faculties that are working to develop them.

Students perceive some mission-embedded learning outcomes as being underrepresented in courses. The predominant tool used to assess learning outcomes at AUB is the written test rather than any of a variety of assessment tools that lend themselves to measuring complex abilities over time. In all faculties except FEA, departments do not have systems to assess the perceptions
of students regarding the specific learning outcomes of their programs and courses. Moreover, learning outcomes assessment data are not shared among faculty, students and the AUB community, used optimally to improve teaching and learning, or employed efficiently in institutional assessment and planning. Finally, faculties lack support in managing learning outcomes assessment data.

I. Recommendations

1. Continue to support faculties in establishing processes to assess student learning outcomes when these processes do not yet exist. Faculties with student learning assessment processes should develop systems for the periodic evaluation and continuous improvement of these processes.

2. Take measures to strengthen the representation of the following three mission-embedded learning outcomes in courses and programs:
   a) Develop an appreciation of liberal arts.
   b) Develop a commitment to exercise the rights and responsibilities of citizenship.
   c) Develop leadership skills.
   These three outcomes were viewed by students and faculty as being less strongly represented in courses than other mission-embedded outcomes. It should be noted, however, that AUB has recently begun to address point b) by establishing the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service.

3. Faculties and departments should expand their assessment tools to include those which lend themselves to measuring complex abilities over time, for example, oral exams, take-home tests, rubrics, peer (student-to-student) evaluation, self-evaluation/reflection and student research assessment.

4. Departments should adopt the policy of assessing students’ perceptions of the achievement of specific course and program learning outcomes. Departments should be in charge of implementing this policy, which already exists in FEA.

5. Develop policies and mechanisms to share learning assessment data:
   a) Departments should develop systems to share learning outcomes assessment data among their own faculty members.
   b) More assessment information should be shared with students.
   c) Faculties should share student learning assessment data with the rest of the University community by linking such information to the OIRA website.

6. Use learning assessment data more systematically to improve teaching and learning.

7. Make learning outcomes assessment a key performance indicator in the strategic plans of the institution, faculties and departments.

8. Provide faculties with the needed resources to manage student learning assessment and to use assessment data in improving teaching and learning and in strategic and other types of planning.
CONCLUSION

Throughout its history, AUB has encountered and overcome numerous challenges, but as the University honors its past and deals with its present, it also keeps its eye on the future. The University will continue to embody the efforts and aspirations of literally thousands of men and women who believe in the importance of promoting the values of objective inquiry, rational discourse, and mutual understanding between peoples of differing cultural backgrounds. AUB is a university that promotes the ideals of critical thinking, personal integrity, honesty and tolerance. Although these values have always been important, we believe that they are needed today more than ever.

During the past decade, AUB has compiled a great deal of institutional information and engaged in significant self-examination. Much of this self-reflection has been spurred by its efforts to attain accreditation on the institutional and professional school levels. As a result, AUB has enhanced its ability to pursue its mission and achieve its goals. A major aspiration for this current MSCHE self-study is that it serve both as a continuation of the various forms of institutional self-assessment that the University has already undertaken and that it also be a bridge to the future. We expect that this self-study charts a course for institutional improvement that will accentuate and direct AUB’s drive for continued self-reflection, objective assessment, operational efficiency and academic advancement.