Dear Campus Community,

I apologize for not communicating with you earlier to acknowledge the series of connectivity and email issues that have emerged in the past several weeks. I appreciate your patience. Over the last few weeks, I have been focusing on getting to the root causes of these issues so that I am able to report more substantially on what’s wrong and what we are doing about it. Let me begin by outlining the issues that present immediate impediments to productivity on campus.

We are experiencing slow connectivity and continuous authentication popups. Access to Moodle is limited.

- Slow connectivity is caused by the failure of a load balancer, which helps manage and distribute the volume of network requests we receive minute-to-minute. We are now working with a vendor to test new balancers and caching engines that can handle reliably the heavy demands on our network. We anticipate the situation will be fully resolved in five weeks.
- The growing number of devices that associate with our network is causing connectivity issues. In the past, students might access AUB’s network using a laptop or desktop that only required the allocation of one IP address. Now, in addition to the laptop and desktop, most students carry a tablet and a smartphone for a total of three to four registered devices. To accommodate this increase in the number of devices, IT added 1200 new IP addresses last week.
- Continuous authentication popups have been a frustrating distraction. To eliminate these pop-ups, we’re testing a new cache engine and we will complete implementation of a new transparent proxy system in about five weeks. Once the testing is completed, you will be also able to use some new applications that are not accessible under the current configuration.
- Access to Moodle is imperative for students and addressing this issue is an urgent priority. Please, keep us informed about any access difficulty you experience with Moodle. In the meantime, IT will immediately review the current application setup and configuration for optimum performance.

Wireless coverage on campus is not optimal.

- IT has added additional wireless access points to all the dorms with the exception of Penrose and Mayfair. In these situations, there are issues associated with older construction that need to be resolved before we can fully restore wireless Internet access. We are committed to resolving those issues within over the next four weeks so that Penrose and Mayfair residents have fast and reliable wireless service.

The migration to Outlook 365 was not communicated effectively.

- Simply stated, we let our students and alumni down and I apologize for the breakdown in our communications about the migration of emails to Office Outlook 365. An email communication was prepared days in advance to advise students and alumni about the new platform and to provide login instructions. Unfortunately, that email was not released through our mailing list and many of you were frustrated and alarmed when you could not access your email. On the same day, we resolved the problem and caught up with everyone who experienced difficulty with email access. If you or someone you know has not yet been able to log into their mail on the Office Outlook 365, please have them contact the Help Desk at #2260. For more information, students can visit [http://www.aub.edu.lb/it/live](http://www.aub.edu.lb/it/live).
As consumers, students have every right to expect that your technology fees are being used to improve and expand our campus network and systems. First, let me explain how your fees are being invested.

You may know that AUB's information infrastructure is complex and aging. Since last year, AUB has been engaged with Cisco Systems to replace our entire network infrastructure. Through fees and other revenues, we're investing nearly $7M to create a network environment that will accommodate the needs of a highly productive campus community not only for today, but over time - even as new technologies evolve. This will be a two-year project that will begin in the new year. With each incremental installation of new network infrastructure, you will notice significant improvements in services, including email capacity, storage capacity, Internet and wireless service, and support.

You have been patient in the past several weeks, and I sincerely thank you for enduring the inconveniences presented by our recent network issues. I assure you that within a few short weeks, you will begin to see improvement.

Next week, I will reach out to you again with details about new ways to communicate with IT for questions and service. In the meantime, for all questions and service requests, please continue to contact the IT Help Desk (#2260.)

Sincerely,

ALI RAMMAL
Interim CIO