

Office of Student Affairs

American University of Beirut

Strategic Planning Report Summary

Statement of Intent

"The concepts of learning and personal development are inextricably intertwined and inseparable"- American College Personnel Association - The Student Learning Imperative (1996).

In the document (The Role of Student Affairs and Services in Higher Education, 2002) produced by the International Association of Student Affairs and Services Professionals (IASAS) following the World Conference on Higher Education convened by UNESCO (Paris, 1998), it was clearly stated:

"Education of students must be done in a holistic fashion, treating the student as a whole person. This is in keeping with the idea that education is for the purposes of enhancing life, developing employability at appropriate levels of the workforce, transmitting and improving culture, and liberating the minds of students to pursue liberty as responsible and intellectually curious citizens".

In that spirit and as a contributing partner to the University mission, and because we strongly believe that education also occurs outside the narrow confines of the classroom, the Student Affairs Office provides leadership and guidance extending beyond the classroom of a student-centered living-learning environment at AUB. This can be achieved by providing the highest quality programs, services, and opportunities, as a means of supporting and facilitating academic and student development as well as and institutional excellence.

The modern, globalized institution of higher learning of today strives to meet the demands of a young and dynamic population by: a) proactively engaging in providing a 'holistic' education i.e. covering 'all-round' or 'whole person' development of students through additional learning platforms outside of the formal academic curricula and research programs in a conscious and deliberate way; and b) understanding that the powers endowed by academic achievements are no

longer sufficient, nor a sole guarantee that our graduates would be able to function, let alone succeed and contribute effectively to society, local or global. Our students need to be educated, cultured and socially aware and responsible citizens in order to be successful role models for future generations.

AUB remains to this day proudly committed to its liberal arts tradition; a corner stone of this tradition being the values placed on the learning beyond the confines of the classroom to supplement curricular, academic, and professional programs. We believe that our primary goal at AUB Office of Student Affairs is to maintain and improve upon an effective student affairs and services operation that places students at the center of all efforts by supporting them in their academic endeavors and broadening their personal, social, cultural and cognitive development.

Students encounter three major transitions during their higher education experience: The first is when they transition from school into higher education; The second is the transition within the system from a new college student through collegiate life to a fulfilled young adult ready to face the challenges of the world; The final transition is the move from higher education into the workplace and lifetime careers. The Office of Student Affairs plays a major role in providing support to students during these difficult-to-navigate transitions.

Mission Statement

“The Office of Student Affairs is an integral part of the educational process at the American University of Beirut providing services, programs, and facilities that foster academic success and promotes student assured self-awareness and better informed career planning in a changing world. The Office of Student Affairs is committed to a holistic approach to student development - intellectual, social, physical, psychological, cultural - in an environment that promotes diversity, tolerance, civic and moral responsibility, local and global awareness, psychological and emotional well-being”.

Vision Statement

The Office of Student Affairs at the American University of Beirut strives to be a leader in the field of student affairs in the region and beyond. The Office of Student Affairs will stay at the forefront in terms of providing exemplary student centered services and programs that assist students explore and discover their academic and personal potential in a rapidly changing and complex world.

Goals, Objectives, and Initiatives

The challenges and expectations that AUB students face are in some areas typical of what other students around the world would face but in other areas they are quite unique. In the spirit of offering students an abundant life the SAO encourages participation in extra- and co-curricular activities to help students in finding their potential within. Moreover, another challenge that students face today is finding proper employment after graduation. Therefore, in addition to the presently offered services by the career placement center more coordination with the various academic faculties is needed to develop leadership skills that are in demand by the various firms employing our students. Another challenge that students face is that professional counseling is not something readily accepted. The SAO office strives to make students understand the benefits of professional counseling that it offers. Since New Student Orientation Programs are critical to the first year experience and are the bridge between the last stages of recruitment and first stages of retention, cramming the many orientation topics, need to meet with the adviser and course registration into a two-day event need to be rethought. Orientation should be done through a comprehensive, multifaceted orientation process beginning at the time of admission and continuing throughout the entire first year (Mullendore and Banahan, 2005).

1. Dean's Office of Student Affairs (DOSA)

Goal 1: Implement programs that contribute to enhancing AUB's reputation and activities to build pride in AUB

Objective 1.1: Enhance opportunities to build life-long ties between students, their families and the University.

1.1.1 Add an invitation to parents in the student acceptance package and develop a program where parents are formally welcomed and advised by the institution during the orientation program of new students.

1.1.2 Introduce students and families to AUB Alma Mater and history.

Objective 1.2: Support university-wide efforts that promote pride in AUB and its traditions

1.2.1 Develop a common understanding among the SAO divisions about AUB experience.

1.2.2 Student affairs will work with non-AUB entities to host events at AUB.

Mullendore, R. H., & Banahan, L. A. (2005). Designing orientation programs as found in Challenging and supporting the first-year student by Upcraft, M. L., Gardner, J. N., and Barefoot, B. O. National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Student in Transition (2005).

1.2.3 Promote athletic activities to inspire campus spirit and pride in AUB.

1.2.4 Support the formation of an AUB marching band that can promote AUB pride and tradition and serve as ambassadors at on and off campus events.

Objective 1.3: Provide programs and services that encourage, welcome, and support community participation.

1.3.1 Enhance campus engagement with events and programs through an enhanced web presence.

1.3.2 Install an information board and display screens at West Hall and Hostler Center.

1.3.3 Increase efficiency of the student affairs office through adoption of novel online processes and services.

1.3.4 Publish a student affairs newsletter.

Objective 1.4: Create opportunity for students to participate in local, regional and international activities.

1.4.1 Increase communication with local, regional and international universities

1.4.2 Give students the opportunity to participate in online conferences with other students from other universities or in short term student exchange.

Goal 2: Advance AUB's mission by enhancing collaboration with academic and academic support units

Objective 2.1: Provide quality student affairs programs and services that support student academic success

2.1.1 Identify student interests through various methods

2.1.2 Expand the student activities unit to enable it to work on impact and outcomes rather than process and task completion.

2.1.3 Develop learning outcomes for each unit where applicable.

2.1.4 Develop measurement strategies for the learning outcomes.

Objective 2.2: Actively engage more faculty participation in Student Affairs programs and services

2.2.1 Identify key responsible positions/parties in the various academic units to collaborate with SAO to enhance the intellectual focus of various student affairs programs.

2.2.2 Develop shared goals with collaborators.

Goal 3: Continually improve service quality and efficiency

Objective 3.1: Improve service delivery, quality and efficiency (through technology) in order to exceed student/customer expectations

3.1.1 Continue assessment of student/customer needs and satisfaction.

3.1.2 Perform periodic comprehensive program review in every division.

3.1.3 Implement professional development programs for staff to enhance understanding and ownership of their role in student affairs.

3.1.4 Inventory all items all units of the SAO to assess conditions.

Goal 4: Improve AUB's programs and services to enhance recruitment, retention, and graduation.

Objective 4.1: Support enrollment efforts and successful transition into university life.

4.1.1 Design programs for new students to facilitate peer interactions, development of social networks and get familiar with campus life.

4.1.2 Create an assessment tool to measure the impact of involvement in campus student life on student persistence and retention.

Goal 5: Promote understanding and respect for diversity

Objective 5.1: Ensure that Student Affairs services and programs respect the multicultural and intercultural dimensions of our campus environment.

5.1.1 Conduct surveys to evaluate acceptance of diversity among students/staff.

5.1.2 Provide training and education necessary to improve inclusiveness.

5.1.3 Organize activities to increase intercultural engagement.

Goal 6: Offer co-curricular learning opportunities that foster student development.

Objective 6.1: Assist students in developing social skills by providing opportunities for community building

6.1.1 Facilitate the application process for organizing community building events.

Goal 7: Provide an environment that fosters healthy and safe living, working and learning.

Objective 7.1: Improve the delivery of and access to essential services for students

7.1.1 Utilize all possible venues to better reach the students we serve.

7.1.2 Identify students with special needs and introduce initiatives that target them.

Objective 7.2: Improve emergency and problem response

7.2.1 Develop and implement a risk management plan for all facilities.

7.2.2 Train personnel to respond to specific emergencies and problems

7.2.3 Develop and implement effective protocols, policies and procedures to effectively handle student crises.

Goal 8: Increase Satisfaction of New Students

Objective 8.1: To efficiently provide new students with all information needed to facilitate their registration process and transition to AUB life.

8.1.1 Write a brief description of orientation in the welcome package to encourage students to attend orientation.

8.1.2 Reformat the orientation page on the website to include all important information and dates.

8.1.3 Have a helpdesk on campus to answer all questions during orientation

8.1.4 Improve streamlining through better coordination among various stakeholders

8.1.5 Expand orientation program by offering follow up workshops over the entire first year.

2. Career and Placement Services (CPS)

Goal 1: CPS will help students plan for future careers and assist them in transitioning from being students to becoming professionals

Objective 1.1: Expand student awareness to the variety of educational and career options at an early stage to help them make mature and well-informed professional decisions.

1.1.1 Initiate Career Course Seminar for all registered junior students in order to ensure their career preparation for the work force.

1.1.2 Launch Mentor Mentee Program to act as support system for AUB students wishing to enhance their awareness of the professional world.

1.1.3 Launch a Career E-Library

1.1.4 Publish the CPS newsletter as a section of the Student Affairs Newsletter

1.1.5 Purchase an official Career Self-Assessment E tool such as Myers Briggs Type Indicator, Strong Interest Inventory (SII) and Self Directed Search (SDS) to be accessible to students/alumni.

Objective 1.2: Promote student self-discovery of personal talents and develop confident leadership skills and participation in career activities

1.2.1 Organize a series of seminars by Successful Alumni Leaders in various fields of study

1.2.2 Implement student career leader program

1.2.3 Utilize the employment opportunity board of the Student Affairs Office (magnetic board)

Objective 1.3: Increase student/alumni satisfaction with the CPS Services by enhancing career development and recruitment programs

1.3.1 Increase events and fairs related to part and full time job opportunities, summer jobs, internships, career orientation seminars, recruitment presentations and annual employment fairs

1.3.2 Benchmark with other university career centers to identify and adapt the best practices being used regionally and internationally

1.3.3 Expand databank of organizations and companies that we work with

1.3.4 Increase the number of student peer counselors and research assistants in the CPS to accommodate student's needs

1.3.5 Update career and educational procedures, tools, materials and processes continuously

1.3.6 Act upon results of satisfaction surveys

Objective 1.4: Increase employer satisfaction with AUB students and alumni.

1.4.1 Act upon results of surveys addressing employer satisfaction with AUB students and alumni.

1.4.2 Forward recommendations on how to meet potential employer requirements to the administration and various faculties.

Objective 1.5: Build and expand a strong network between the CPS and various firms

1.5.1 Create on campus interview and recruitment facility

1.5.2 Organize a group of successful and prominent career leaders from various industries to strengthen connections between the CPS and potential employers

Objective 1.6: Achieve and maintain fiscal balance/ annual budget

1.6.1 Increase funding opportunities for CPS services

1.6.2 Attract more sponsors to support CPS activities

3. Counseling center (CC)

Goal 1: Provide psychological well-being among AUB students

Objective 1.1: Provide awareness about the counseling center and the services it provides

1.1.1 Promote counseling center via info campaign

1.1.2 Introduce counseling center to new faculty members

1.1.3 Initiate discussion groups amongst residence halls students about their university life

Objective 1.2: Promote prevention and awareness about psychological problems among students.

1.2.1 Initiate talks, workshops and lectures for students

Objective 1.3: Offer psychological services to help students with issues that affect their well-being

1.3.1 Initiate thematic discussions on issues like eating disorders, drug use, depression and other topics that are of interest and concern to students.

Objective 1.4: Establish a case database based on major diagnosis and problems

4. Student Activities (SA)

Goal 1: To Promote Students Membership of Organizations at AUB.

Objective 1.1: Encourage clubs and societies to inspire students and develop their personal talents.

1.1.1 Organize a “Clubs’ Days” twice yearly at the beginning of Fall and Spring semesters.

1.1.2 Make efficient use of SAO information board

Objective 1.2: Regularly review bylaws and procedures related to student organizations.

Objective 1.3: Create an environment that is conducive to support new clubs and organizations.

1.3.1 Facilitate the process of starting novel clubs.

Goal 2: To Encourage Student Participation in all AUB Events.

Objective 2.1: Increase the student awareness about AUB events

2.1.1 Collaborate with other departments, faculties and faculty advisers to facilitate involvement of students in events.

Goal 3: Promote social and political development of students

Objective 3.1: Encourage student participation in electing Student Representatives

3.1.1 Conduct workshops about the importance and purpose of elections

Objective 3.2: Improve the election process

3.2.1 Use technology in the voting and counting processes.

Objective 3.3: Educate student on transparency in the political and democracy process.

3.3.1 Organize seminars, debates, and lectures on the importance of transparency.

5. Student Housing

Goal 1: Offer students quality housing facilities and services.

Objective 1.1: Renovation and expansion of on-campus housing.

1.1.1 Request and work with other university units to develop timeframes and plans for building renovation

Objective 1.2: Assist students in finding suitable off-campus housing.

1.2.1 Create an online forum and/or website to assist students in finding housing facilities

1.2.2 Develop agreements with off-campus housing providers

Objective 1.3: Improve building services such as maintenance, repair, and cleaning.

1.3.1 Coordinate with Physical Plant Department to reduce response time for maintenance requests

1.3.2 Create an online follow-up system

1.3.3 Increase janitorial service times cleaning to cover week-ends

1.3.4 Improve dorm services and residence conditions.

1.3.5 Increase and standardize routine general maintenance/checks

Objective 1.4: Improve professional development of staff in the Student Housing Office and of the Head Residents and Resident Assistants in the student residences.

1.4.1 Develop regular training programs and workshops

1.4.2 Coordinate with Safety Department to develop first aid and risk management workshops and strategies

1.4.3 Develop community building workshops and activities

Objective 1.5: Review and improve student housing policies and procedures.

Objective 1.6: Improve residence application process.

1.6.1 Create an online application system for dorms

1.6.2 Acquire a software system for housing applications and assignments

Goal 2: Provide students a wholesome living environment that enables them to thrive personally and academically and that promotes community building.

Objective 2.1: Offer students better and more diverse university residence experiences.

2.1.1 Encourage communication and learning through cultural and social diversity

2.1.2 Promote awareness on a variety of social, cultural, and health issues

2.1.3 Coordinate with Student Counseling to identify students with counseling needs and develop a follow-up system

2.1.4 Ensure better and healthier food services/delivery

Objective 2.2: Provide a propitious environment for academic development.

2.2.1 Improve internet services

2.2.2 Create group study areas

2.2.3 Develop tutorship programs in dorms

Objective 2.3: Develop social and cultural activities for dorm residents.

Objective 2.4: Act upon student satisfaction surveys to increase student satisfaction.

2.4.1 Develop a more efficient reporting system and a timely response mechanism

6. University Sports

Goal 1: Meet the sport, athletic, and fitness needs of a diversified student population.

Objective 1.1: Provide and maintain an enjoyable and educational sport and fitness atmosphere.

1.1.1 Continuously increase the number of activities for all participants to choose from.

1.1.2 Maintain a safe and clean environment for participants.

1.1.3 Develop a sports program where everybody can participate, irrespective of age and level of physical ability

1.1.4 Provide access for participants with special needs (handicapped, blind)

1.1.5 Organize activities that encourage students to participate in sports and have fun.

Goal 2: Promote and encourage a healthy lifestyle through sports for AUB community (students, staff, faculty and alumni)

Objective 2.1: Emphasize, advocate and promote the concept of “opportunity to participate for all.”

2.1.1 Provide a wide range of activities for all participants to choose from.

2.1.2 Develop a sports program where everybody can participate, irrespective of age and level of physical ability

2.1.3 Provide the means and ways for participants with special needs (Handicapped, Blind)

2.1.4 Create a culture of positive reinforcement.

Goal 3: Promote the image and reputation of AUB throughout the region, Middle East and beyond.

Objective 3.1: Foster enthusiasm, and sense of pride in the University.

3.1.1 Remind coaches and students that they are ambassadors of AUB and the athletic program in every way and at all times.

3.1.2 Participate in regional events

7. Work Study Program (WSP)

Goal 1: The WSP will help students find relevant work experiences that develop career skills and provide them with employment opportunities for financial support.

Objective 1.1 Increase students and employer awareness about the WSP, its rules and its regulations.

1.1.1 Participate in the new student orientation program.

1.1.2 Advertise and communicate all necessary information to students and departments about the WSP, its rules and regulations.

Objective 1.2 Improve the coordination among WSP, students and departments to better meet rules and regulations of student employment at AUB.

1.2.1 Establish a system of close communication and follow up with students, departments, and faculty members.

1.2.2 Develop a method to obtain participants' feedback following partnership with WSP

1.2.3 Ensure timely remuneration of students

Objective 1.3 Ensure equity, transparency and fairness for all students applying to WSP.

1.3.1 Review policies and procedures periodically to ensure equity, transparency and fairness.

1.3.2 Improve oversight of implementation of WSP rules and regulations.

1.3.3 Upgrade the online system of the WSP to better serve this objective.

Objective 1.4 Provide students with job experience related to their careers.

1.4.1 Establish close coordination with employing departments and personnel.