

**A Message from President Mawad
To The LAU Family**

A Major Leap Forward to Sustainability

LAU is now on the verge of a major leap forward into sustainability on several fronts. This multi-pronged breakthrough is essential for our plans to incorporate and move beyond lessons learned the hard way over the past four years. The crisis in the midst of which we have been since fall 2019 has clearly revealed several weaknesses LAU needs to overcome. One of them was the precariousness of our multi-currency business model almost solely based on tuition revenue. Another was our vulnerability to attrition involving faculty, physicians and staff. A third vulnerability was the sudden need to accelerate shifting our entire delivery structure into an online mode with all the necessary preparations and resources this entailed. No less significant was our being geographically confined to Lebanon which made us face risks and vulnerabilities that amounted to existential threats.

A strategic review of these risks and the threats they pose is bound to lead to one conclusion: LAU needs to put in motion programs and processes that enhance our resilience, improve our sustainability score, and ensure a better level of future preparedness for threats. This is also the very dynamic that is needed to see us through the next quantum leap LAU is now poised for. This translates into a strategy designed to address key vulnerabilities revealed by the crisis.

Such a strategy is already taking shape in terms of specific initiatives that are currently underway, led by the Office of the President. I would like to specifically address 6 key initiatives that are currently in the pipeline. The idea is creating awareness, building support, and inviting participation. Below is a listing of these initiatives:

OUR BUSINESS MODEL

1. A major improvement in our business model is already starting to show as a result of our decision to shift to a dollar-based tuition structure. The same is expected when we implement our “LAU Without Borders” policy by going to Iraq and upgrading the NY Center to a degree-granting facility. The three steps together will add up to a quantum leap.

A SUSTAINABILITY OFFICE AND A SUSTAINABILITY OFFICER

2. A sustainability officer will be appointed soon with a clear mandate to facilitate the evolution of a sustainability culture within LAU. The sustainability officer’s mandate will also include awareness creation, a sustainability plan, monitoring, recommendation of corrective measures, and the development of cross-departmental sustainability initiatives. This will be a first-of-a-kind among universities in Lebanon. It will usher in a new era for LAU.

THE LAU LEADERHIP PROGRAM

3. LAU is acutely mindful of the major vulnerability revealed by the crisis in terms of attrition of human capital covering faculty, physicians, technical and administrative staff. To address this threat proactively we are in the process of putting in place an “LAU Leadership Program”. Leadership programs of this kind exist at many leading universities in the U.S. and some in Lebanon and the Middle East. Such programs are meant to develop, reinforce, empower, and regularly sustain a cross university leadership group that multiplies into more leaders at all levels. It also answers the university need for talent retention, human capital leveraging, and succession planning.

In other words, the purpose of the intended LAU leadership program is to facilitate the emergence, support and empowerment of a critical mass of LAU Leaders. This select group will be vital to sustain the university through the upcoming growth and expansion phase - covering both the academic and healthcare delivery components. It will also amount to insurance policy against crisis and upheavals. Emphasis in this program will be on:

- a. Strategic thinking at different decision-making levels
- b. Leadership skills and competencies at various levels.
- c. Strategic planning and execution as a key leadership function
- d. Behavioral aspects of leadership particularly emotional intelligence, effective communication, conflict management, creativity, lateral thinking, and organizational behavior. Concerted emphasis on soft skills.
- e. Practical hands-on examples including role playing, simulations, case studies, critical incidents, and analysis of real-life situations.
- f. LAU examples across the board.

With the specifications outlined above, the program will be: **Informative** (leadership content), **Operative** (practical and impactful practices), **Normative** (Setting leadership performance standards and criteria), and **Transformative** (having a drastic change effect intuitively and individually for participants).

THE LAU HEALTHCARE PROVIDER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

4. The Physician / Healthcare Worker Management Program

Parallel to the LAU Leadership Program outlined above is the Physician / Healthcare Worker Management Program which is also under planning now. The essence of this program is to provide state-of-the-art management exposure to a group of physician executives and healthcare providers. The underlying reason is to further sharpen the management skills of this select group of health professionals who also have managerial responsibilities in addition to their medical/healthcare work. Such a group would typically include Department Chairs, Division Directors, key hospital administrators, key academic administrators for the three health schools etc...

The program will have three major components: A technical component involving skill sets such as organizing, planning, decision-making, costing, pricing, budgeting, marketing etc. Another key component is soft skills involving communication, emotional intelligence, conflict management, change management, team-building etc... A third component will be patient-centered involving patient care with compassion, empathy, role reversal and behavioral dynamics. The net result should be an impactful difference leading to widening our institutional competitive edge as a healthcare provider covering LAUMC-RH, St. John's and any other medical centers we might end up acquiring in the future. This program is a natural sequel to the customer care program successfully delivered at LAUMC and St. John's.

CENTER FOR PUBLIC GOOD

5. The Center for Public Good

This is another major asset LAU is currently working on with a view to building institutional policy analysis and advanced community engagement capacity. This new center will be the country's first think tank for purposes of preparing informed public policy and community service studies bearing on real public issues in Lebanon with broad and assured societal impact. Its range will be broad, covering economic, environmental, social, educational, energy-related and a whole host of other issues critical to the recovery of Lebanon.

OFFICE OF PROFESSIONAL ETHICS AND STANDARDS

6. Given the extreme importance of on-the-job ethics and strict adherence to professional standards, LAU is determined to lead the country and be the first to establish an "Office for Professional Ethics and Standards". The purpose will be to set norms, create awareness, encourage internalization, monitor compliance and generally advocate for a healthy work environment where integrity, transparency and self-imposed moral fortitude are effective guidelines.

What all six new initiatives have in common is that they are all institutional in focus with a university-aside reach. They touch every aspect of the university including academic issues, administrative and technical support services, the way we manage resources be they financial, human, or physical, our healthcare delivery process, and our corporate social responsibility towards our community. They are also at the heart of our branding process, our corporate culture, our community image, and, most of all, our ability to future-proof LAU for the next hundred years of our life.

For all these reasons combined, all five initiatives will be part of the President's office and the president will be personally involved in overseeing each and all of them. These five programs will

also go hand-in-hand with other initiatives intended to make us more efficient in our administration and service delivery processes.

Post Implementation

Upon the successful completion of all six initiatives, LAU will have:

- 1- Long-term financial stability with built-in immunity against crises and sharp fluctuations.
- 2- A level of sustainability capacity-building never before attained covering practically every aspect of our operations.
- 3- A critical mass of LAU leaders at all levels of decision-making and across the board. This will contribute significantly to talent retention, high productivity and long-term competitive advantage.
- 4- Another critical mass of management trained physicians and healthcare educators and providers to ensure the long-term competitiveness of our medical centers and clinics.
- 5- Policy analysis country leadership with structured community engagement channels.
- 6- Assured leadership position in promoting professional ethics and integrity standards as part of a world-wide trend underscoring moral dimensions at the workplace especially in light of modern disruptive technology.

None of that would be possible without the support and willing participation of the LAU family. I am counting on each of you to come forth in support of all six initiatives.