



LEBANESE AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

Beirut and Byblos, Lebanon and New York Academic Center

Interim Report

**For submission to the
New England Commission of Higher Education (NECHE)
in fall 2019**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	4
Institutional Overview	5
Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis	6
Area of Emphasis #1: “Providing sufficient resources to support the University’s expansion plans and also its goal to develop a research-active faculty”	6
Area of Emphasis #2: “Enhancing communication with and managing the expectations of faculty, staff, and students given the University’s rapid and notable growth”	8
Area of Emphasis #3: “Ensuring the integration of the hospital is transparent and has strong oversight, and assessing its financial implications on the University”	10
Area of Emphasis #4: “Utilizing the Office of Research and Assessment to comprehensively assess student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes”	13
Standards Narrative	15
Standard 1: Mission and Purposes	15
Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation	15
Standard 3: Organization and Governance	17
Standard 4: The Academic Program	19
Standard 5: Students	20
Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship	22
Standard 7: Institutional Resources	24
Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure	29
Reflective Essay on Educational Effectiveness	31
What students gain as a result of their education	32
Assessment of student learning: “What and how students are learning”	38
Measures of student success, including retention and graduation	50
Satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes	51
Institutional Plans	53
Appendix.....	56
Affirmation of Compliance	
Most Recent Audited Financial Statement	
The Auditor’s Management Letter	
Interim Report Forms	
Making Assessment More Explicit (The E Series) forms	

List of Tables and Figures

Tables

Table 1: Number of external grants awarded.....	8
Table 2: Funding sources for LAU medical centers.....	12
Table 3: SPIII budget	16
Table 4: Status of Nursing graduates six months after graduation	22
Table 5: Analysis of tuition share	25
Table 6: Analysis of actual and projected spending	25
Table 7: NSSE First year LAU USP vs. Non-USP students' results.....	35
Table 8: Means and significance levels of all participating comparison groups in CAAP	36
Table 9: ARCSON student licensure passing rates	43
Table 10: SOP student licensure passing rates	43
Table 11: SOM student scores on the USMLE and national colloquium	45
Table 12: Graduation rates 2003-2010	50
Table 13: Retention rates by School for fall 2018.....	51

Figures

Figure 1: Research output as extracted from Scopus	6
Figure 2: NSSE Survey benchmark scores for first year and senior students at LAU with selected peers .	14
Figure 3: NSSE LAU senior students' results compared to peer groups	36
Figure 4: Responses to core items in course evaluations by School	46
Figure 5: Institutional exit survey sample results by campus and year	47

I. Introduction

LAU's NECHE Interim Report is the product of significant time and the effort of individuals and offices across the institution. Planning for the report started soon after the official letter was received from NECHE (then NEASC) under the previous provost, Dr. George Najjar, and then Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Mona Majdalani, and included Dr. Diane Nauffal, Assistant to the President for Institutional Research & Assessment, Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, Institutional Development Officer, and Ms. Maya Choueiri, Assistant to the Provost. The undertaking was then taken on seamlessly by our new provost, Dr. George Nasr, and new Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs, Dr. Rula Diab, in late summer 2018. A Steering Committee comprising individuals from all academic schools and offices/departments on both campuses did the bulk of the work in evaluating, documenting, and ultimately writing their respective sections. The Department of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA) supported the process throughout with the provision of institutional data and its interpretation. When all sections of the report were completed, they were sent for comments and changes to the Steering Committee, the Faculty Senate, and the Council of Deans (CD). All of the sections were also sent for review by the Vice Presidents. The report was then compiled per NECHE guidelines and sent to the Provost, Dr. George Nasr, and to the President, Dr. Joseph Jabbra, for final review.

As was the case with our previous self-studies and interim reports, going through the process was a great learning experience. It was particularly encouraging to see through the process that we are, as an LAU community, well beyond the fragmented view of accreditation as a pass/fail exercise, and very much into understanding accreditation as a culture of continuous improvement. NECHE accreditation has transformed LAU irreversibly away from a mere "quality assurance" paradigm into a "collaborative assessment" paradigm where quality is not seen as a static end state but rather a dynamic interaction of experiences, practices, and methodologies that enable us to describe, assess, and project progress effectively. This substantial undertaking was approached with a spirit of transparency and honed through LAU's now institutionalized practice of self-reflection and evaluation. We were able to keep to our schedule while many changes in leadership of various units of the institution have taken place. Acknowledging that the pursuit of quality is an ongoing practice, we took the opportunity to use the Interim Report process to take stock of our strengths and weaknesses as well as to plan for the future.

List of Steering Committee Members:

George Nasr – Provost
Abdallah El Khal – Assistant VP for Alumni Relations
Abdo Ghie – Assistant VP for Enrollment Management
Annie Lajinian-Magarian – University Registrar
Camille Abou-Nasr – Assistant VP for Information Technology
Cendrella Habre – University Librarian
Charbel Aoun – Assistant VP for Human Resources
Charles Abou Rjeily – Vice President for Finance
Diane Nauffal – Assistant to the President for Institutional Research and Assessment
Elie Samia – Assistant VP for Outreach and Civic Engagement
Gabriel Abiad – Assistant VP for Strategic Communications
Georges Hamouche – Assistant Vice President for Facility Management
Jean Chatila – Engineering Programs Coordinator – Associate Professor, Civil Engineering Department
Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss – Institutional Development Officer
John El Khoury – Chair, Faculty Senate
Maya Choueiri – Assistant to the Provost

Michel Mawad – Dean, Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine
Mirvat El Sibai – Vice-Chair, Faculty Senate
Nahla Bacha – Professor, Department of English, School of Arts and Sciences
Rima Bahous – Chair, Department of Education, School of Arts and Sciences
Rula Diab – Assistant Provost for Academic Affairs
Samer Saab – Interim Dean, Graduate Studies and Research
Sami Baroudi – Associate Chair, Department of Social Sciences, School of Arts and Sciences
Sola Aoun Bahous – Assistant Dean for Clinical Affairs, School of Medicine

II. Institutional Overview

Lebanese American University has a long history as an institution that seeks to provide a solid liberal arts-based education. Established as the first school for girls in the Ottoman Empire, the institution became a junior college for women in the 1920s, and then in 1955, the College was chartered by the Board of Regents of the State University of New York. In 1970, the Lebanese Higher Education authorities recognized our bachelor's degree. Four years later, the College became co-educational and assumed a new name: Beirut University College, which it kept until it took its current name in 1995: Lebanese American University. The protracted Lebanese war threatened the very viability of the institution, but LAU managed to rise to the occasion and faced down the challenges with the support of faculty, staff, and students and guided by the spirit of its founders.

By the early nineties, the university had two campuses in Beirut and in Byblos. Up to the early nineties, program offerings were limited to majors in the Schools of Arts and Sciences and Business. Engineering, Architecture, and Pharmacy were added to the liberal arts and business offerings. In 2009, a teaching hospital was acquired, and a New York Academic Center (NYAC) was added in 2013. Medicine and Nursing came later. Due to its roots, LAU was for a long time the “university of choice” for women's education in Lebanon and the region. Its transition to co-education transformed its reputation to that of an institution that is student-centered, and the percentage of Lebanese students relative to total enrollment increased during the eighties; whereas Lebanese nationals were under 45% in the mid-seventies, they now stand at about 80%. Regional enrollment now counts for about 10%, and the remaining 10% come from other parts of the world. Lebanese students belong to the mosaic of 17 different religious denominations that comprise the country. Most students come from middle class families and from private secondary schools that provide the quality education needed to join LAU.

In August 2004, the new university President, Dr. Joseph Jabbra, committed himself to creating a university-wide strategic planning process that focused on the sustainability of the institution through building on our strengths while working to develop new opportunities for excellence. Now in the midst of our third strategic plan, the university has institutionalized planning and shared governance that includes not only faculty but also staff and students. A culture of innovation is being nurtured in teaching, scholarship, and community engagement. The School of Medicine is now part and parcel of the university although work continues in earnest towards better integration within the university (see Area of Emphasis #3). In line with its long tradition of planning for all contingencies, LAU continues to protect its future viability in a country and region facing chronic economic and political challenges. The transition from Dr. Jabbra to a new President in fall 2020 is being planned for in detail, though none is worried that the solid base of excellence constructed during his tenure will be shaken. Today, LAU is better known than ever before nationally and internationally for its effective and innovative teaching, the accomplishments of its students and alumni, its dedicated and talented staff, faculty scholarship, and ongoing service to the wider community.

III. Response to Areas Identified for Special Emphasis

Area of Emphasis #1: “Providing sufficient resources to support the University’s expansion plans and also its goal to develop a research-active faculty”

The impact of university rankings on attracting students has led LAU to increase emphasis on the quality and quantity of research and to expect more of its faculty to be research-active. Recruitment of excellent faculty and attracting more funding opportunities also pushed the university to increase the quality and quantity of the research that it produces. LAU faculty have been recently producing more research and publishing more articles and other scholarly work, with research output increasing by 113% from 2012 to 2018, as seen in Figure 1. Nevertheless, the quantity and quality of research produced still fall short of our aspirational goals.

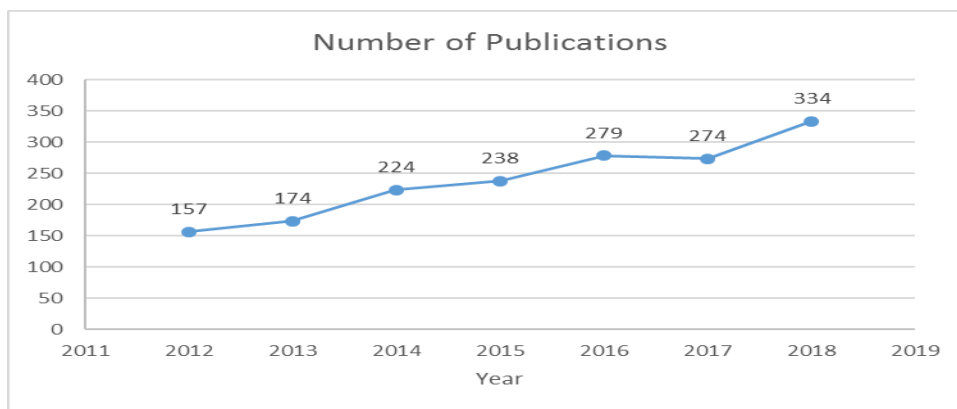


Figure 1: Research output as extracted from Scopus

To address this challenge, LAU began to provide more resources for developing a more research-active faculty in its hiring of 116 new recruits between Fall 2014 and Fall 2018, increasing support for grant applications and funding for faculty research, reducing faculty teaching loads, and providing support for graduate programs. While LAU decided to retain its mission as a teaching university that is student-focused, it has definitively moved to commit the resources to develop research-active faculty. As a result we see that the Adnan Kassab School of Business (AKSOB) increased its publications by 320% between 2014 and 2018, while the number of publications in the Department of Natural Sciences increased from 18 to 32 from 2015 to 2018 or by 78%. Knowing the importance of increasing its international rankings, LAU decided to emphasize research in its third strategic plan 2017-2022 (SPIII). Even prior to this, LAU demonstrated its commitment to increasing faculty research output through the creation of the Office of Graduate Studies and Research (GSR) in 2013 (<http://gsr.lau.edu.lb/about/>).

Nevertheless, conducting research at LAU still faces some challenges, such as the ones highlighted in the Faculty Research Resources Survey 2018 conducted by the LAU Senate in 2018. The survey found that challenges include lack of faculty research grant expertise; need for further awareness of ethical conduct of research; need for further awareness of ethical conduct of research; limited external collaboration and internal coordination; limited research funding; lack of infrastructure for animal research; and lack of sustained research focused clusters or niches at the institution. These challenges highlighted by faculty have largely been mapped to initiatives/activities currently under development or scheduled for implementation and most have already been addressed, as discussed below.

LAU has sought to address the lack of grant research expertise through training and various grant process support. The GSR Office conducted numerous training sessions on ethical conduct of research, researcher responsibilities, Institutional Review Board (IRB) submissions, and informed consent (<https://gsr.lau.edu.lb/irb/>). In November 2016, the GSR Office launched a weekly Research Tips newsletter (<https://csglau.lau.edu.lb/gsr/index.php>). To address the problem of insufficient statistical knowledge expertise, the GSR Office will recruit a research statistician who will provide LAU faculty from various disciplines with professional training, advice, and guidance on research design, execution, and statistical analysis support as well as research grant applications and other research-related matters. The GSR Office also offers help with the review of faculty proposals and support in the proposal submission process. This support has resulted in the awarding of NIH and PEER grants. LAU has also signed an MoU with an editing services provider, Enago. Accordingly, LAU faculty can benefit from services like Language Check, Copyediting, or Substantive Editing.

LAU has also worked to streamline its grant support processes through building more infrastructure (e.g., the new Grants Office in the Office of the President) as well as clarifying procedures and ensuring that staff and faculty alike are aware of them. Ignorance of the correct Relative Global Positioning System (RGPS) Process has too often resulted in the loss of grant opportunities and financial compliance problems after award. The GSR Office in coordination with the Finance Department developed a process with clear deadlines for faculty to follow. Currently, the Office is studying the possibility of automating the process internally in order to ensure timely approval of all concerned parties.

The administration has sought to involve the University in various research consortia to institutionalize collaborative research across institutions, for example, DAAD (German Academic Exchange Service) and UCDAR (University of California—Davis Arab Region) agreements. In its hiring practices and in its annual faculty review processes, the institution has sought to reward external research collaboration. As for internal research collaboration, in order to identify areas of common interest between departments and schools, the GSR Office is gathering data on the research interests of faculty through an in-house developed application. Data gathered through the above-mentioned application will also be available for researchers outside LAU who are looking for partners in specific fields. The GSR Office also formed in September 2019 a Research Advisory Council, which in turn has identified several research niches. As a result, forty research clusters were formed during Spring 2019. Clusters represent an opportunity for a group of investigators from various disciplines to collaborate on joint research activities with additional university support. Taking into consideration the interdisciplinary research areas identified in the research clusters, 20 post-doctoral fellows have been strategically recruited for AY 2019-20 so far.

A near universal call from faculty is for more research funding. Since July 2015, the GSR Office has communicated a total of 400 funding opportunities, for all schools, focused on research grants, research awards, and project grants, averaging around nine calls per month (<http://gsr.lau.edu.lb/research/external-funding/opportunities.php>). LAU signed an agreement with the (Lebanese) National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS) whereby the two institutions will each contribute 50% every two years to fund research projects by LAU faculty for a total of \$400,000. In 2018, 21 projects were awarded. The number of external grants awarded has increased by 106% from 16 in AY 2012-2013 to 33 in AY 2017-2018 and the total monetary value of the awards has increased by 367% from around 6.9 million in 2012-2013 to 32.3 million in 2017-2018, as seen in Table 1.

	AY 2012-2013	AY 2013-2014	AY 2014-2015	AY 2015-2016	AY 2016-2017	AY 2017-2018
No. of Grants	16	23	14	20	21	33
Total	\$6,922,887.52	\$8,381,837.55	\$18,235,926.70	\$4,542,220.08	\$7,364,203.76	\$32,333,376.91

Table 1: Number of external grants awarded

Faculty also point to the need for more and better graduate students to support faculty-led research. While some graduate programs (e.g., International Affairs) already offer significant tuition remission to their students, no program at LAU offers full-tuition remission or graduate stipends to attract the best graduate students and then to allow them to focus on research rather than seeking out full- or part-time jobs while they study. LAU is looking to expand current graduate programs, provide greater funding for graduate students, and also launch new, innovative graduate programs that can serve as crucibles for quality research. Still, faculty and students do collaborate on research, such as Associate Professor of political science Dr. Bassel Salloukh's and graduate student Venko Verheij's joint publication in *Middle East Law & Governance* in 2017 entitled "Transforming Power Sharing: From Corporate to Hybrid Consociation in Postwar Lebanon."

To address the issue of full tuition remission, as part of LAU's efforts to support research at LAU and enhance research output, we have recently come up with a plan that aims at supporting graduate programs by providing, as a first step, fully paid Research Assistant (RA) positions to select new graduate students in most of our graduate programs. Graduate recipients of the scholarships will have their tuition fees fully waived in addition to receiving a moderate stipend (\$500/month, 12 months/year) and are expected to be fully dedicated to research. The President has just approved, for the 2019-2020 academic year, 24 scholarships for fully-paid RA positions to be distributed to graduate programs. At the end of the academic year, Schools will be asked to report on the outcome of these scholarships assigned to their programs, highlighting signs of improvement in research activities and output.

A key component for producing more and better research in the hard sciences is the ability to conduct animal research. LAU has long lacked adequate animal research facilities. Finally in 2016, a task force was created with representatives from the health sciences with the support of the GSR to draft requirements for the animal lab facility. Per the drafted policies, a veterinarian for the new animal facility will soon be hired and a location has already been secured. To ensure ethical compliance, all faculty and staff who want to include animals in their research will need to complete an online training module (CITI Training).

Building a more research-active faculty and ensuring that the university can finance such development is key to LAU's future. Concurrent with the measures outlined above, the requirements for faculty promotions place significant weight on research productivity, helping further to create a new class of faculty with higher expectations in scholarship and research. LAU will remain tangibly committed to successful expansion as well as supporting a more research-active faculty by providing the necessary infrastructure conducive to faculty research.

Area of Emphasis #2: "Enhancing communication with and managing the expectations of faculty, staff, and students given the University's rapid and notable growth"

Recruitment of new faculty and staff, increased student enrollment, launching of new Schools and programs, and the addition of facilities and buildings need to be publicized internally and externally to ensure that LAU retains the solid esprit de corps for which it is well known. Feedback about how well the university "communicates with and manages the expectations of faculty, staff, and students given the University's rapid and notable growth" has been uneven, prompting NECHE to request that LAU provide an assessment of what is being done in order to meet these critical goals.

The University strives to leverage the established planning and communications forums to exchange information. The University Planning Council, which includes Faculty and Staff leadership, meets on a yearly basis to conduct strategic planning. The planning process involves two-way communication across the entire university. Town Halls are organized by the President with faculty and staff twice a year, and each time on both campuses, to share updates from the Board of Trustees (BOT) report and BOT meetings, and to address questions from faculty and staff.

The University's SPIII, and the Integrated Plan of the School of Medicine and Medical Center, provide an overarching strategic communications platform. These plans have been communicated through town halls and meetings and are available online. The progress of the execution of the plans is regularly covered.

Moreover, the President launched in 2018 a biweekly newsletter, the "President's Dispatch," to bring forward the highlights of the University and invite feedback. In addition, an assigned communications role was appointed in each School, and the Marketing & Communications Department (MarCom) was restructured into Strategic Communications (StratCom) in 2018 under the guidance of the VP for Advancement, creating a focal point unit to facilitate the access of the University community to the communications resources.

More specifically, the University has been seeking to enhance communications through a variety of approaches to its major constituencies: faculty, students, and staff:

Faculty Communications: Led by the Faculty Senate, a new reference document for Shared Governance was recently finalized and recognized by the Board of Trustees. Communications between the administration and faculty are enhanced through the Faculty Senate, whose representatives are frequently invited to the Council of Deans (CD) meetings, and through the regular communications from the CD, whose minutes of meetings are always circulated in a timely fashion by email to all faculty and staff. Schools also hold regular School meetings at least twice a year. Faculty are actively engaged in their departments as well as to a more varying degree in their Schools; both departments and schools have sought to regularize communications with and between faculty via in-person and remote meetings, email, workshops, and annual retreats.

Student Communications: The Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) unit has assigned communications duties to a newly created function "Communication Manager" to coordinate communications with both prospective and current students. This position, now under StratCom, is tasked with the role of integrated communications. Communication with students is also facilitated through regular emails from the Deans of Students and through the student governance forums. The Student Council, elected yearly, is represented on many Councils and Committees, including the Student Integrity Committee and in the University Budget Council. Campus student councils conduct weekly meetings and have regular access to the Dean of Students of each campus, and to the Vice President and other administrators as needed. The University also regularly communicates with current students through the Office of Outreach & Civic Engagement (OCE) and Office of International Services (OIS).

A suggestion box on each campus is placed to collect information. The Office of the Dean of Students in Byblos has also initiated a regular e-newsletter targeting students. Communication with students is also conducted on an ad hoc basis for key elements of student life. For example, for Academic Integrity, the University worked with the Student Integrity Committee to develop a new Student Code of Conduct

(discussed in detail in the Standard 9 narrative), and an Academic Integrity campaign through campus communications and social media was launched.

Staff Communications: The HR department is keen on ensuring the best services to LAU's employees by providing adequate communication and support in various areas involving their well-being. In an effort to further engage the University Staff in community life, the HR department underwent restructuring to include a "Staff Relations and Development" unit that works on strengthening the communication channels with staff, adopting an open-door policy to handle issues, concerns, and complaints. It also offers Q&A sessions and awareness campaigns related to its policies and procedures, and different roundtables for any newly arising topics. Accordingly, the frequency of Staff-Administration communication has increased significantly.

Furthermore, the Staff Advisory Committee (SAC) has been active, receiving the needed support from HR. SAC represents an additional venue for communication between staff and the administration. Present at several key committees such as the University Budget Committee, the University Planning Council, and the University Insurance Committee, SAC has consulted with staff on various matters and has made several recommendations adopted by the university (e.g., the Marriage Leave policy).

The restructuring of the Marketing and Communications Department (MarCom) into Strategic Communications (StratCom) in 2018 sought to bring together diverse communications and public relations that had previously lacked coordination. With the restructuring, it is hoped that messaging will be tighter and how and when news is shared will be regularized. Furthermore, the ongoing institutionalization of the 'one university, two campus' model through faculty and staff interaction (to a lesser degree involving students) will also further improve communications on a day-to-day as well as at strategic levels. While LAU plans to continue to develop and expand, new initiatives are being identified and planned through the Strategic Planning process, which itself is being institutionalized successfully overall. Nevertheless, the University will need to stay vigilant in its commitment to widely sharing information internally, and sharing externally as warranted to maintain its reputation for transparency and integrity.

Area of Emphasis #3: "Ensuring the integration of the hospital is transparent and has strong oversight, and assessing its financial implications on the University"

Rizk Hospital - now LAU Medical Center-Rizk Hospital (LAUMC-RH) - was acquired by LAU in 2009 to act as an academic site to support LAU's health science schools, including the new Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine (SOM) as well as the School of Pharmacy (SOP) and the Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing (ARCSON). The model initially planned by the University imitates institutions in the greater Boston area where health education programs are supported by private hospitals. Such a model did not prove to be workable in the context of Lebanon, and the University took a bold and courageous step to purchase a hospital to provide the quality education in these critical disciplines to its students. The hospital soon faced significant difficulties with lack of effective management, high levels of upper-administration turnover, and decreased revenues. In addition, up until recently (2016), LAUMC-RH was not a constituent part of LAU. In 2016, the BOT, led by the Health Services Committee (HSC), approved a new dean for the School of Medicine, Dr. Michel Mawad, and the return of Mr. Sami Rizk, who had directed the hospital prior to its purchase, as CEO. The BOT also required from President Jabbra and the new leadership of the hospital that an integrated strategic plan be crafted prior to any further infusion of funds into the hospital from the University.

The creation of an Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP) for the LAU Medical Center (LAUMC-RH) for 2017 to 2022 and beyond thus was a significant accomplishment that marked a key turning point in the development of the hospital into an academic medical center and an integral part of the University. The creation of the ISP brought together key stakeholders at the university and the hospital: Dr. Michel Mawad, Dean, SOM; Dr. George Ghanem, CMO of LAUMC-RH; Mr. Sami Rizk, CEO of LAUMC-RH; Mr. Charles Abou Rjeily, VP for Finance, LAU; Mr. Roy Majdalani, VP for Human Resources and University Services; and Mr. Saad El Zein, Assistant to the President for Special Projects. Dr. Joseph Jabbara, LAU President, chairs the committee and Ms. Nour Hajjar, University Legal Counsel, regularly attends to provide legal insight. Meetings are usually held twice per month. The ISP sets forth the overarching goals and objectives as identified by the different departments, services, and hospital administration, in addition to complementing the academic needs of LAU's health related schools. The ISP Steering Committee works to make sure that the SOM's dean and faculty have been integrated into the various internal governance bodies such as Council of Deans (CD), University Curriculum Council (UCC), etc.

The ISP addresses the concerns of NECHE by making the goals of the SOM and hospital—and the processes needed to attain them—transparent as well as making accountability processes more explicit. In developing and then implementing the ISP, a close partnership has evolved between the medical school, the administration of the hospital, and the practicing physicians, with clear oversight by the LAU and LAUMC-RH leadership. The ISP is comprised of five key pillars:

Pillar One focuses on *"Sustaining the Academic Mission"* through the joint efforts of the SOM and LAUMC-RH to continue to build medical education from the moment students enter through their residencies and other training. In addition, the SOM and LAUMC-RH are working together to increase and enhance research to benefit the academic program as well as to reinforce clinical care and practices. To this end, Pillar Two, *"Building the Clinical Enterprise"* focuses on recruiting highly trained physicians in targeted specialties. Between 2014 and spring 2019, 32 new full-time physicians were hired; 30 positions are planned to be filled by the completion of the ISP in 2022. In order to have the facilities necessary to attract and retain such physicians, a critical component of the ISP is renovating and building quality facilities at LAUMC-RH as well as outfitting the newly acquired space in winter 2018 at LAUMC-St. John's Hospital (LAUMC-SJH) in Jounieh, a town which is half way between the Byblos and Beirut campuses. The new entity will address a number of important needs: expanding the revenue base for LAUMC-RH, providing additional patients for newly recruited and already established LAUMC-RH physicians, and training opportunities for LAU students and residents. St. John's will be operational in early 2020. Deliberations over its acquisition were approved by both LAU Administration and the BOT.

Integrating these two entities further into LAU and ensuring that the IT throughout is up-to-date is also critical. Pillar Three: *"Enhancing Infrastructure & Support Services"* seeks to integrate the hospital into the planning, facilities management, and IT environment of LAU, which is most clearly shown through the Master Plan. The successful completion of the ISP also rests on the hospital's financial viability. Pillar Four: *"Boosting Financial Sustainability & New Business Development"* establishes clear benchmarks while regular meetings with the BOT work to ensure that investment in LAUMC-RH benefits the university overall through improved scholarship and training, quality patient outcomes, and financial sustainability. Finally, Pillar Five, *"Implementing a Dynamic Communications & Marketing Strategy"* seeks to transform the internal relationship of LAUMC-RH with the rest of LAU as well as to position LAUMC-RH as a premier university medical center in the country and region.

The funding of the LAUMC-RH project is fully dependent upon LAU's ability to secure needed resources. These resources are secured through equity injection from the university in addition to loans from banks,

the endowment, and fundraising. The adopted funding model is duly reflected in the approved five-year financial plan of the university. For perspective, the university is investing \$128.5 million and \$20.0 million in LAUMC-RH and LAUMC-SJH projects respectively. Funding sources are shown in Table 2:

Funding type	LAUMC-RH	LAUMC-SJH	Total
Bank loans	\$20,000,000	\$13,000,000	\$33,000,000
Loan from endowment	\$60,000,000		\$60,000,000
Equity (From LAU)	\$48,500,000	\$7,000,000	\$55,500,000
Total	\$128,500,000	\$20,000,000	\$145,000,000

Table 2: Funding sources for LAU medical centers

Bank loans shall be secured from local banks at competitive rates and shall be extended for a minimum period of 10 years, including a two-year grace period. Loan from endowment is for a period of 10 years, including a drawdown grace period of five years. The interest rate has been set at 5.5%, reflecting the endowment projected return rate. Both loans are approved by the BOT.

LAUMC-RH has benefitted from an ASHA grant (US AID) for an amount of \$1,000,000 to fund the purchase of medical equipment. This grant is due for a final closure in 2019. The university and hospital administration are currently working on a new grant from ASHA to fund a series of highly needed equipment at the hospital. The grant is for a financial consideration of \$1,200,000.

The BOT also approved a three-year budget for the hospital reflecting realistic financial projections in line with the various phases of the project. The board has also approved the business plan of LAUMC-SJH. The budget for fiscal year 2020 with projections for fiscal years 2021 and 2022 are in progress.

No new commitment decisions on behalf of LAUMC-RH and LAUMC-SJH can be made without the approval of the ISP Steering Committee and in the case of significant financial commitment, without the approval of the BOT. For example, the ISP Steering Committee and BOT approved a commitment to lease a property needed for the expansion of LAUMC-RH. The lease is for a period of 40 years with a total rent fee ranging between \$36.4 million and \$48.2 million depending on the periodic valuations of the leasehold property. The board also approved the leasing of LAUMC-SJH property for a period of 18 years, renewable for an additional 18 years, for a monetary consideration ranging between \$13.9 million and \$16.0 million, also depending on the periodic valuations of the property.

Hospital operations are relatively small compared with those of US-based teaching hospitals, with operating revenue of about \$41.7 million for fiscal 2018. Additional significant investments are needed to increase capacity at the hospital. These investments were estimated at \$128.5 million over a period of five years and are systematically instituted at phases ensuring safe transition from a 137 bed to a more than 400-bed capacity by 2023. Hospital operations are expected to post a break-even position by the end of 2019 after which positive bottom lines are foreseen.

As further evidence of SOM and LAUMC-RH integration, all full-time physicians at the medical center are also full-time faculty at the SOM. Moreover, these faculty-physicians have all signed exclusivity contracts to enhance the revenue generation capabilities of the hospital while also harnessing the expertise of the physicians for LAU SOM students and residents.

Significant progress has been made in integrating LAUMC-RH into the University at the financial, administrative, planning, and academic levels. The integration of the two entities in regard to staff (and

students) has been less due to different organizational cultures and physical separation. Seeing Pillar 5 (marketing and communications) through to completion will be critical to further integrating the hospital into LAU at all levels. Also, while LAUMC-RH is now a constituent part of LAU, there are still salary and benefits differences. These will need to be addressed in various ways for reasons of institutional equity as well as perceptions of fairness. Last, there is significant excitement about the acquisition of the St. John's Hospital and the many academic, revenue, and professional benefits that it should bring. The addition of another medical care entity in yet another location and the need to equip and staff, and then run the hospital will also require significant work. To this end, the ISP Steering Committee will oversee the St. John's project to facilitate the appointment of administrative and medical leadership to ensure success.

Area of Emphasis #4: "Utilizing the Office of Research and Assessment to comprehensively assess student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes"

The Department of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA) was established about a decade ago, at about the same time LAU was initially accredited by the then Commission on Institutions of Higher Education CIHE - NEASC. During the initial years, DIRA's activities focused on collecting, analyzing and disseminating data about various aspects of LAU's institutional operations. DIRA is headed by a director and staffed with 6 full-time members in addition to two part-time staff. It is instrumental in ensuring the integrity and consistency of available information for official reporting purposes and in providing support for planning and policy formulation. Recently, however, DIRA has become more actively involved in assessment and institutional effectiveness initiatives. DIRA has engaged with many units of the LAU community to assess student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes, which take place at three levels: the course level, the program level, and the institutional level. At each level, both direct and indirect methods are employed. In this report, we take a specific look at the role DIRA plays in the assessment of student learning outcomes and the instruments used to assess these outcomes.

Given the significant overlap between this area of emphasis and the Reflective Essay, much of how DIRA comprehensively assesses student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes is detailed in the latter. The following is thus a summary of DIRA's work.

Indirect assessment takes place via course evaluations (which were recently substantially revised and a core template adopted across the university), the National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey (Figure 2 Benchmarks LAU's first year and senior students' scores on engagement indicators with selected peers), Institutional Exit Survey, Institutional Alumni Survey, Institutional Employer Survey, and the Universum Survey (which is particularly good for benchmarking purposes). DIRA has well-established relationships with the schools and administrative departments to create (or adopt), implement, and then interpret results of surveys. DIRA also works closely with IT in order to continually improve the user experience of the various indirect assessment tools. How and when results are used to influence curricular and co-curricular changes is addressed in different ways. At the institutional level, DIRA often takes the lead in championing for changes—for example, DIRA conducted research on 'best practices' regarding course evaluations and then proposed a core course evaluation template. Working with the CD and then an ad-hoc committee, DIRA was able to implement a new core course evaluation template across all Schools, which will substantially aid in internal benchmarking among other uses.

First-Year Students		Your first-year students compared with	Your first-year students compared with	Your first-year students compared with
Theme	Engagement Indicator	New England Region	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2016 & 2017
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning	--	--	--
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	▼	▼	▼
	Learning Strategies	--	--	--
	Quantitative Reasoning	▼	▼	--
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning	▼	▼	▼
	Discussions with Diverse Others	--	--	▲
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction	▼	▼	--
	Effective Teaching Practices	▲	▲	▲
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	▼	▼	▼
	Supportive Environment	▼	▼	--

Seniors		Your seniors compared with	Your seniors compared with	Your seniors compared with
Theme	Engagement Indicator	New England Region	Carnegie Peers	NSSE 2016 & 2017
Academic Challenge	Higher-Order Learning	--	--	--
	Reflective & Integrative Learning	--	▼	--
	Learning Strategies	--	--	--
	Quantitative Reasoning	▼	▼	▼
Learning with Peers	Collaborative Learning	▲	▲	▲
	Discussions with Diverse Others	▲	▲	▲
Experiences with Faculty	Student-Faculty Interaction	--	▼	--
	Effective Teaching Practices	▲	--	▲
Campus Environment	Quality of Interactions	▼	▼	▼
	Supportive Environment	▲	--	▲

Figure 2: NSSE Survey benchmark scores for first year and senior students at LAU with selected peers

Another example of indirect assessment results leading to positive changes at LAU can be seen in the use of the results of the Institutional Exit Survey for proposed changes to dorms, student advising, and other non-academic student experience-related functions at LAU. Results from the Institutional Exit Survey are shared with SDEM, which then reflects on them at their annual retreat.

DIRA also takes the lead in direct assessment. LAU has used the Collegiate Assessment of Academic Proficiency (CAAP) to assess a variety of different groups. Following the discontinuation of the CAAP, LAU has adopted the ETS Proficiency Profile, which in many ways is similar to the CAAP to determine gains in critical thinking and quantitative analysis at point of exit from LAU. For some time, LAU has grappled with how to adequately assess what and how much students were learning from the University's Liberal Arts Core (LAC) curriculum, renamed as Liberal Arts & Sciences (LAS), in compliance with the New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidelines <https://catalog.lau.edu.lb/2019-2020/undergraduate/lac.php>. DIRA has played an instrumental role in coordinating the assessment of LAS learning outcomes. In fall 2018, the Student Learning Outcome: "Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication" was assessed. Results point to LAS courses as contributing significantly to LAU students' communication skills; details are provided in the Reflective Essay. Moreover, a new administrative structure for LAS headed by a Director was established in fall 2018 and a LAS oversight committee was formed to provide oversight and ensure proper and quality delivery of the LAS curriculum and regular assessment of LAS learning outcomes.

Assessment of co-curricular Learning Outcomes has only recently started to be implemented. While co-curricular learning has long been emphasized by LAU, identifying specific learning outcomes as well as creating and implementing assessment is rather recent and still not addressed across the institution. With DIRA now taking the lead in this area, it has been working to increase capacity among staff to identify and assess co-curricular learning outcomes as well as have staff and faculty work with the administration to better reflect on the totality of student learning inside and outside of the traditional academic curriculum.

DIRA has played a key role in supporting schools at LAU to assess the attainment of their student and co-curricular learning outcomes primarily through its accreditation and assessment software "Tk20" and its survey software, *Explorance*. Several schools are now using different modules in the Tk20 platform. These include the e-portfolio module, field experience binder, and the faculty qualifications module among others. A detailed description of the different assessment modules and tools used to assessment student and co-curricular outcomes by school or program can be found in the Reflective Essay.

DIRA will continue to work to institutionalize assessment of educational effectiveness throughout the university. Working on university-wide initiatives as well as working with individual programs and/or schools, DIRA will continue to provide critical assessment knowledge and software to enable stakeholders throughout the university to identify, design, collect, and assess data “to comprehensively assess student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes”. In addition, while DIRA has taken the lead on assessment in many instances, truly institutionalizing an assessment culture for curricular as well as co-curricular learning outcomes will require more buy-in on the part of programs and Schools, which to date, has been uneven. To increase assessment buy-in, DIRA will continue its incremental and multi-pronged approach of highlighting best practices in assessment in American-style higher education, participating in global partnerships identifying and implementing best practices (e.g., Dr. Nauffal, Director of DIRA, is a co-principal in Professional Standards Framework for Excellence in Teaching and Learning in Lebanese Universities (E-Taleb) and Programme Evaluation for Transparency and Recognition of Skills and Qualifications (TLQAA+) Erasmus research grants), and providing the guidance and expertise in crafting, conducting, and interpreting results of direct and indirect assessment tools. Continued support by the Provost, the CD, and the President will also be required.

IV. Standards Narrative

Standard 1: Mission and Purposes

LAU’s mission statement is a reflection of the university’s growth and expansion over time. Revised and amended in 2011, the mission was approved by the CD and the PC and formally adopted by the Board of Trustees (BOT):

Lebanese American University is committed to academic excellence, student centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of leaders in a diverse world (<http://www.lau.edu.lb/about/mission>).

Individual school missions are aligned with the university mission. SPIII 2017-22 is based on the current mission statement. The mission statement appears in several institutional publications as well as on the university website. In addition, the mission statement is now on electronic boards in many locations around the university as was recommended in the previous strategic plan.

Each component of the mission is clearly understood by the various constituencies of the University. The only change that has taken place regarding how LAU enacts its mission is in the area of scholarship. LAU has strengthened its commitment to and investment in scholarship and research. The University Research Council (URC), Graduate Studies and Research Office (GSR), and School Research Committees are active and provide tangible results through the increased number of faculty publications, faculty development funds, Institute Research Board (IRB) activity, and student and faculty participation in Erasmus and other exchange programs (see Area of Emphasis #1 for more details).

It has been recommended to place the mission in Arabic on electronic boards as well to expose new students to the university mission statement during orientation. The mission statement will be evaluated periodically by the SP Steering Committee and in turn the mission statements of the different Schools will be assessed to be properly aligned to the institution’s mission statement.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

Since the 2014 Self Study, LAU has further institutionalized planning and evaluation at all levels: Institutional, school, department (academic and administrative), and program. In particular, the academic

units have improved their planning processes in reaction to external accreditation and/or to ensure programs conform with globally recognized ‘best practices’. Planning is done by groups of individuals who have the requisite knowledge of and commitment to improvement of existing practices and policies.

External perspectives are included in the planning process in the academic units through the accreditation process for professional programs (e.g., ABET) and for all other programs, via the Program Review Cycle in which external reviewers are commissioned to review the existing program and plans as well as to recommend revisions in keeping with best practices in specific disciplines. In addition, many programs/schools are creating Advisory Boards to better link their teaching and research with the needs of industry, government, and graduate education. Program Reviews are on a five-year cycle.

A critical component of the program review cycle is assessment data and the lead role taken by the Department of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA). These activities are discussed in detail in the Reflective Essay and summarized under Area of Emphasis #4.

Planning at the highest level started in SPI in 2004, followed by SPII in 2009, and more recently through the creation and implementation of SPIII, which was conceived both as a ‘paradigm shift’ for the institution and as a means to synthesize the strengths already present throughout the schools while seeking to complement identified weaknesses. Given the increasingly competitive higher education environment in Lebanon and the region, and after significant debate that included various stakeholders at all levels at LAU, it was decided that LAU would remain a mainly teaching-focused institution but with an added emphasis on research and knowledge creation. The SPIII budget of \$6.5 million (see Table 3) demonstrates the significant and broad input from stakeholders across the university and careful oversight from the Finance Department and the BOT to support these goals.

Pillar	Budget					
	Y1	Y2	Y3	Y4	Y 5	Total
Pillar 1 – <i>Intellectual Capital and Knowledge Management</i> (includes a 300K additional allocation for research for each year of SPIII)	390,000	440,000	440,000	440,000	440,000	2,150,000
Pillar 2 – <i>Pedagogical Innovation and Integrated Delivery</i>	105,000	250,000	280,000	260,000	290,000	1,185,000
Pillar 3 – <i>LAU Without Borders</i>	300,000	300,000	250,000	250,000	100,000	1,200,000
General Personnel Support, Facilities upgrade, and IT need for the three pillars	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	400,000	2,000,000 This is a budget cap subject to implementation priorities.
Total	1,195,000	1,390,000	1,370,000	1,350,000	1,230,000	6,535,000

Table 3: SPIII budget

As the University expanded in size and disciplines, its tightly knit community spread thinner and sharing communications such as results of planning and evaluation became more difficult. Actions taken in this regard are covered under Area of Emphasis #2. LAU reconfigured its Marketing and Communications (MarCom) Department into StratCom, which integrates internal and external communications, as well as institutionalized information sharing between and among the Faculty Senate, the Staff Council, the CD, PC, and faculty and staff. In addition, communication with students (discussed in more detail under Standard 5 and Area of Emphasis #2) is done via a number of means. Specifically regarding planning, SPIII has been widely shared with faculty and staff via participation in its creation and now in its implementation.

Three oversight committees were established to plan, monitor, and communicate the implementation of SPIII. Each committee, which includes representation by all seven schools, is handling one of the SPIII pillars. The committees started by devising an implementation plan that sets a proper timeline, KPIs and targets, and budget allocation for each school. The committee chairs are reporting the progress regularly to the CD, Provost, and in turn to the PC and the Board of Trustees.

Planning for administrative and support units comes in response to the needs and plans of the academic units and institution-level plans. To facilitate input from academic planning into institution-wide administrative planning, facilities, IT, libraries, and other entities include members from academic units.

A notable success since the drafting of the 2014 Self Study was the creation of the School of Medicine (SOM)/LAUMC-RH Integrated Strategic Plan (2017-2022). The integrated plan of the School of Medicine and the hospital was covered under Area of Emphasis #3. The strategic plan is multifaceted and translates into sub-plans for facilities, academics (teaching and research), IT, enrollment, and other areas. In turn, these sub-plans translate into budgets for implementation. Given the instability of Lebanon and the region, LAU maintains a conservative financial plan and also is careful to craft contingency plans in case of unexpected external events, such as the devaluation of the Lebanese currency or the Byblos and Beirut campuses being cut off from each other. In a similar vein, LAU has endeavored to build redundancies to deal with weaknesses in the country's infrastructure as well as to protect the university from unforeseen external disruptions in electricity, internet access, and other facilities.

Reflecting back on SPII, it included carefully crafted implementation steps, budgeting, and monitoring over its timeframe. The accomplishments related to SPII can be grouped into four broad categories: raising academic standards; building a research culture; strengthening accountability and effectiveness; and raising the reputation of LAU. Goals that were not realized in SPII were either carried to SPIII or dropped as needs assessment studies showed that these initiatives were no longer needed or had a much lower priority.

The library has long utilized effective planning. It has an assessment plan that it follows, and findings have led to many improvements. Other administrative units evaluate their operations regularly through surveys such as those conducted by the dean of students' offices, cafeterias, dormitories, etc. In 2015 a University Assessment Resource Cluster (UARC) was established to provide oversight of the university's assessment initiatives.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the main body in charge of overseeing the University at the administrative, organizational, educational, social, and financial levels. The BOT ensures that there is a concrete and

realistic long-term plan for the University's development, growth, and sustainability. The role and responsibilities of the BOT chair and members are mentioned in the University Bylaws. The BOT appoints the President, ensures that the university mission reflects its historic purpose, and aids in fundraising in numerous ways. A critical responsibility of the BOT is overseeing the financial assets to protect the future of the University. The BOT acts as a leader, a steward, and an auditor.

In 2018, the BOT approved the disbandment of the Board of International Advisors (BIA) which resulted in the amendment of LAU Bylaws. The BIA was dissolved as it had ceased to perform its roles as an advisory to the President and to the BOT by providing guidance and advocacy for the University. This action was duly vetted and executed per University Bylaws (https://www.lau.edu.lb/files/lau_bylaws.pdf). The BOT also adopted a series of new policies related to Compliance Program for US Sponsored Programs and Procurement Contracts, and amended many others such as the Fraud Policy, Student Code of Conduct, Discrimination, Harassment, Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy etc. All LAU policies can be found at <http://www.lau.edu.lb/about/governance-policies/policies/>.

In 2016, the BOT amended the number and prerogatives of committees to match the present state of the institution with more Schools, the acquisition of the hospital, etc. All committees act in accordance with the Board's policies, its Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws, and the New York Not-For-Profit Corporation Law ("NPCL"). Furthermore, the BOT set up new recruitment criteria for selecting board members that enrich the board with members having an academic profile. BOT committees reflect 'best practices' in governance in overseeing the management of the Institution. BOT members have sufficient autonomy to identify and promote the best interests of the University, including its financial interests.

President Joseph Jabbra informed the Board that he does not wish to serve beyond the end of his current term on September 30, 2020. The BOT, in accordance with the Bylaws, immediately established a Presidential Search Committee, hired a search consultant, Witt/Kieffer International, established a road map with specific timelines and drafted a profile for the new President (<https://www.lau.edu.lb/about/governance/president/files/candidate-information-pack-lau-february-2019.pdf>). The search is underway in earnest and started off with consultative meetings that included the BOT Chair, the search consultants, and the Vice Chair of the Presidential Search Committee with faculty, staff, and students. It is understood by all university stakeholders that the succession process will be transparent and that the new president will continue the implementation of the third five-year strategic plan and the Integrated Strategic Plan for LAUMC-RH and the allied health schools.

Faculty have primary authority over academic matters mainly through departments, Schools, and university academic and curricular committees. Off-campus, continuing education, distance education, and weekend programs are clearly integrated and incorporated into the policy formation, academic oversight, and evaluation system of the institution.

The institution substantively updated its organizational chart in 2016. The institution continues to evaluate and revise when necessary the Faculty Bylaws. SPIII has a structure in place to follow up on action items and note developments. Planning drives budgeting and resource through an institutionalized process overseen by the President and other University leadership.

A culture of shared governance among different constituents of the University has been in place for some time and is taking root. LAU's system of governance involves the engagement of all constituencies and includes regular communication among them. Participation in decision making is balanced with accountability. The shared governance structure consists of established governance bodies including the

BOT, the PC, the CD, the Faculty Senate, and Faculty Welfare and Promotion Council (FWPC), SAC, Student Council (there is student representation on many university councils and engagement in major strategic decisions, including retreats, presentations to BOT, etc.), and the academic and administrative councils and committees that are elected by faculty and staff to represent them at the department, School and university levels. In 2018, a revised shared governance document was developed by the Faculty Senate with input from the CD, then approved by the BOT in September 2018. Additionally, shared governance is evaluated by higher education regulatory bodies in Lebanon and the US and accreditation organizations. The composition and mandate of and the communication lines between such bodies are clearly established. Faculty at large participate in shared governance through general faculty meetings as well as school and departmental meetings. Staff and students participate through their various offices and organizational structures (e.g., standing committees such as the Admissions Committee).

The multi-layered system of governance assures the quality and integrity of the academic programs at the University. The introduction of new programs and changes to existing programs undergo an extensive filtering process before taking effect. The diverse membership in the School and university councils are additional guarantees of integrity and quality. The introduction of new programs and schools requires the approvals of the relevant school curriculum committees, University Curriculum Council (UCC), the CD and the BOT. LAU has retained control over arrangements to ensure quality in the academic program, including ending participation when deemed warranted.

The strategic decision to appoint one dean for each school and to unify departments when they operate on two campuses has been in place since 2010-11 when we first started implementing the “one university” initiative. While the schools have adjusted well to the unified structures overall, the unification of departments took longer to become established. Committees and meetings are now held in common across campuses, via video conferencing, and the chair and associate chair cooperate consistently in managing the administration of departments.

The PC has initiated a review process of the representation on and bylaws of SAC to make staff governance more effective as well as to review Faculty Senate membership and responsibilities and the mandates of other university councils and committees such as the University Research Council (URC) and University Graduate Council (UGC). The action plans in SPIII are followed up on by the Strategic Plan Pillar Chairs' Committee (PCC) that meets regularly to work and plan as well as meet the timeline. A study by the World Bank on university governance rated LAU among two other universities in Lebanon and the MENA region as having the highest effective governance ratings.

Standard 4: The Academic Program

LAU offers 61 degree programs (40 undergraduate, 18 masters, two professional) through seven schools: School of Architecture & Design (SArD), School of Arts & Sciences (SAS), Adnan Kassar School of Business (AKSOB), School of Engineering (SOE), Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury School of Medicine (SOM), Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing (ARCSON), and School of Pharmacy (SOP). One graduate program, the EMA in Actuarial Science, is an inter-disciplinary degree offered by SAS and AKSOB and managed by the Graduate Studies and Research (GSR).

LAU ensures the integrity of grades through an online grade submission process. In addition to the secure grade entry system, when any change of grade is implemented in the system, email notification is sent to the student, instructor, and the Registrar. The change of grade procedure entails the instructor filling out a change of grade form with justification and evidence, to be approved by the department chair and

relevant dean before being sent to the Registrar for processing. Moreover, there is a clear student Code of Conduct to reinforce ethical behavior while also making clear the sanctions in case of any infraction.

Schools continuously review and update their programs through a well-vetted process that includes the review and approval of School Curriculum Councils, the approval of the University and Graduate Curriculum Councils, and the final approval of the Council of Deans. All of the professional schools have secured or are in the process of securing accreditation from the leading international accrediting bodies who provide regular program reviews through their accreditation and re-accreditation cycles.

All graduate programs report to the Dean of the School that offers the programs except for the interdisciplinary programs which report to the Dean of Graduate Studies and Research. Graduate students in good academic standing may apply for Graduate Assistantship (GA). A limited number of full tuition waivers already exist via the MEPI Tomorrow's Leaders and Teach for Lebanon programs as well as a 50% tuition waiver for members of the Lebanese Armed forces. In some programs, graduates may be compensated for assisting in teaching freshman and sophomore courses (Applied Math and Computer Science); some other graduate students are recruited as research assistants by faculty members who have research funding. Importantly, a new full tuition remission for RAs in niche research areas is now in place and will start to be implemented in AY 2019-20 (discussed in Area of Emphasis #1). All graduate programs are encouraged to emphasize the research component in their curriculum and to strengthen the thesis/project component. Students and advisors are encouraged to submit the outcome of the research for publication.

The University is committed to a periodic review of the undergraduate Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS). All undergraduate students must complete the LAS, which comprises courses in the liberal arts and sciences, in compliance with the New York State of Education Department requirements. The revised LAS curriculum consists of a required set of core courses (ENG202 / Advanced Academic English and COM203 / Fundamentals of Oral Communication) and a set of elective courses in specific areas. The LAS covers the major areas of knowledge in the liberal arts and seeks to provide students with flexibility in fulfilling their requirements (<http://www.lau.edu.lb/academics/common/lac.php>). Because the overwhelming majority of students are not native English speakers, it is imperative to measure their proficiency and competency in written and oral English. Adequate English writing skills are one of the learning outcomes identified by LAS and are now being regularly assessed (discussed in the Reflective Essay). The LAU Writing Center with "branches" on both Beirut and Byblos campuses aims at promoting a general culture of writing at the University and at helping students develop as more thoughtful, independent, and rhetorically effective writers. The Writing Center offers its free services to the whole LAU community (<http://sas.lau.edu.lb/english/facilities/writing-center.php>).

Standard 5: Students

Despite consistent challenges, LAU has been able to remain focused on attracting students from across Lebanon and, to a lesser extent, from the region and beyond, and to provide them with a world-class education. Despite the unstable political situation and the decline in the economy in Lebanon, up until 2018, the University was able to increase its overall enrollment, standing at 8406 in 2018 vs 8221 in 2014 with a 48/52 male to female ratio and an 18% international student body.

The Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) unit is responsible for all student affairs. The University's centralization of the Student Recruitment and Admissions offices under SDEM resulted in additional enrollment yield. An early acceptance program and improved communication with

prospective students and their parents proved to be effective. LAU uses SAT scores, high school grades, and English tests to evaluate student readiness as well as to provide any necessary remedial courses to admitted students to support their success. Admission criteria for undergraduate and graduate programs have remained unchanged or were slightly tightened in specific areas since 2014.

The Bridge and Undecided programs for students with special academic needs continue to fulfill their mission with an overall of 65% and 72% of students continuing on in regular programs after two and three consecutive semesters respectively. LAU continues to pay special attention to academically challenged students through a system of detecting early warning signs of students at risk, and consequently offering advising and tutoring services. The percentage of enrolled students on academic probation (GPA of < 2.0) has decreased, while the percentage of enrolled students with honors and distinctions has increased. In addition, the Institution has acquired the “Starfish” advising software to facilitate communication among students, academic advisors, and faculty. The University opened liaison offices in Zahle, in the east, two years ago, and more recently in Tripoli, in the north, and Saida in the south, to serve students and prospective applicants in these areas.

The LAU Academic catalog clearly outlines credit hour requirements for graduation in its section on academic rules and procedures (<https://catalog.lau.edu.lb/2019-2020/undergraduate/academic-rules-procedures.php>). With respect to off-campus courses, exchange, or study abroad programs, LAU safeguards the fulfillment of degree requirements and applies its transfer rules as stipulated in the LAU academic catalog. Students are encouraged to broaden their learning experience by taking a semester abroad in another country, with a university with whom LAU has an official exchange agreement. The Office of International Services oversees and implements the MoUs with these higher education institutions. Students have ready access to and support in using appropriate learning resources whether they are on or off campus.

The newly created student services area at the Registrar’s Office and the introduction of online services has led to improved customer service. Our strategy is to become a fully paperless environment. The Student Portal is being expanded to further improve communication with current and prospective students and an Electronic Documentation Management System (EDMS) is in full implementation.

The Dean of Students Offices (Byblos and Beirut campuses) offer many services, including counseling, advising, and health, which are available to all students, and promote the formation of student leaders (<https://www.lau.edu.lb/experience/activities.php>). A Career Guidance Office (<http://students.lau.edu.lb/career-guidance>) provides assistance and advising to LAU students and alumni in their career planning process by providing the latest high quality training, tools, and resources to apply for a job. Each campus has many student clubs and there are currently more than 80 official clubs operating on both campuses (<http://students.lau.edu.lb/activities>). LAU provides five residence halls with full-time supervisors, security personnel, and student floor assistants (<http://students.lau.edu.lb/housing/>).

Financial Aid and Scholarships are offered to undergraduate students, regardless of their nationality, race, religion, or gender (<http://admissions.lau.edu.lb/aid/>). Scholarship offerings based on academic performance vary and include merit, entrance, and honor. Athletic scholarships, program scholarships, and other types of specific scholarships are also offered (<http://admissions.lau.edu.lb/aid>). LAU also participates in the Federal Direct Loan Program for U.S. citizens and eligible non-U.S. citizens (<http://aid.lau.edu.lb/us-federal-loans/>). In 2018, 48% of undergraduate students received some form of financial aid or scholarships. LAU has been able to significantly increase donations directed at financial aid

as well as many other projects while also successfully pursuing scholarship aid through various funders. LAU has expanded its financial aid to be \$34 million in AY 2017-18. The institution has long included student employment to make tuition more affordable for families.

A noteworthy population is scholarship students in Nursing. Given the global nursing shortage and the fact that ARCSON was founded less than ten years ago, a special LAU scholarship fund was created for the nursing program. All students who complete an LAU financial aid application receive a Nursing Program Grant. The amount of the scholarship will vary depending on the other scholarship and financial assistance. The total amount of your Nursing Program Grant plus other scholarships and financial aid may cover as much as 100% of your tuition. The Nursing Program Grant applies for all three years of the B.S.N. program. To date, 127 students have graduated from the Nursing program up till Spring 2018, 146 up till Spring 2019. Table 4 summarizes status of graduates six months after graduation.

Outcome and KPI	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018
Employment 6 months after graduation, any position	100%	87%	100%	78.20%	97%	88%
Enrolled in graduate studies	--	4.30%	--	--	3%	6%
Travelled abroad to work	--	4.30%	--	13%	--	--
Not working	--	4.30%	--	--	--	--

Table 4: Status of Nursing graduates six months after graduation

LAU makes clear to students what will be included in their permanent academic record as well as has policies regarding the retention, safety and security, and disposal of records (<https://www.lau.edu.lb/about/policies.php>). Its information release policies respect the rights of individual privacy, the confidentiality of records, and the best interests of students and the institution (<https://www.lau.edu.lb/about/policies.php>).

Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

LAU is a teaching institution and continues to prioritize the recruitment of PhD and terminal degree holders who are committed to both high-quality teaching and the production of meaningful scholarship. In fall 2018, the university employed 393 full-time faculty members, 70 of whom are full-time physicians. The recruitment of faculty follows established policies and procedures (<http://www.lau.edu.lb/faculty-staff/>). At present, the number of full-time faculty versus part-time faculty teaching is 323 vs. 509 university wide (630, if physicians are included). There has been an increase in faculty numbers over the years.

The workload of faculty members at LAU consists of teaching duties and responsibilities in the areas of scholarly, creative, and professional activity as well as service. LAU has a salary structure that depends on rank and area of specialty. The Personnel Policy–Faculty section mandates annual faculty performance evaluation. Merit increases are awarded to faculty based on the outcome of their performance evaluation. Cost of living increases have not kept up with inflation over the past few years while merit salary increases are regarded as nominal, according to a recent Faculty survey. Current faculty benefit packages include health insurance at 75% coverage, a group life and long-term disability insurance policy, educational benefits for dependents including schooling and four years of higher education, and a pension plan. All these benefits are in addition to US Social Security benefits for US citizens and an end-of-service indemnity

for non-US citizens. Part-time faculty members are compensated at an hourly rate established in accordance with the average salary based on their highest earned degree. This rate is based on their discipline, training, experience, and an assessment of their ability by the Chair and the Dean.

LAU's faculty development consists of sabbaticals, study leaves, summer research grants, course releases, faculty seed fund, and travel grants. Faculty are encouraged to pursue professional development by attending in-house and/or international workshops and conferences. For example, in the School of Arts and Sciences, seven professional workshops on topics ranging from Assessment of Students' Critical Thinking to Development of Assessment Rubrics among others were delivered during AY 2017-2018 and were attended by 174 faculty members. The publication output of full-time faculty in SAS has more than doubled over the past five years.

Recruiting more research-active faculty is expected to yield a better positioning in local, regional, and global rankings for the university. The 2020 edition of the QS World University Rankings placed LAU among the top 55 percent universities globally, up from the 70th percentile in 2015. Over the six years considered by QS, the university has in fact moved up twice, always presenting positive performances. It also ranked second in Lebanon, and 16th in the Arab World out of 123 universities in the QS Regional Rankings of the Arab World 2019. LAU was ranked for the first time in Times Higher Education (THE) in 2019, coming second in Lebanon and tenth in the list of top universities in the Arab World. LAU also made the first-ever THE impact rankings based on the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This is being done while making sure that faculty are awarded reasonable teaching load to allow them to do research.

Promotion and tenure are based on a peer review process that focuses on teaching, research, and service with input from external evaluators. Academic administrators are also evaluated regularly. Evaluation of part-time faculty relies on student evaluations and course files, as well as classroom observations in some departments, per approved procedure. Guidelines for part-time faculty evaluation were recently set by the CD in fall 2018 for school-specific implementation.

Teaching effectiveness is assessed in multiple ways: student course evaluations, annual faculty evaluation, and program reviews. Students in most majors are taught by a diverse faculty body to ensure their exposure to different academic strengths and viewpoints. Schools work hard to ensure that programs offering multiple sections of the same course balance consistency in learning outcomes with academic flexibility.

All policies and procedures that affect faculty are put together in the Faculty Handbook. Membership in the Faculty Senate includes voting representatives from every department and from each of the schools with proportional representation from both campuses. Faculty-related issues and an archive of past Senate Actions and Resolutions are posted on the Senate website (<http://facultysenate.lau.edu.lb/>). The Senate has been quite active as a medium for faculty to exchange views and review all policies related to faculty matters, noting that the Senate remains a recommendatory body. In the spirit of shared governance, a document was prepared by the Faculty Senate with input provided by the CD, which was then approved by the President and the BOT, delineating the roles and responsibilities of all University constituencies in the governance of LAU.

As for students, they are made fully aware of their rights and responsibilities, through documents such as the Student Code of Conduct, which is widely disseminated, including through orientation. Policies on various student rights and responsibilities, including student conduct and grievance procedures, are

clearly stated, well publicized and readily available, and fairly and consistently administered (https://www.lau.edu.lb/about/policies/student_code_of_conduct.pdf).

As a mainly teaching focused institution, LAU is committed to high quality teaching that enhances student learning. Workshops on teaching and learning are held at the program, school, and institutional levels, supported by the newly revamped Center for Innovative Learning (CIL). The CIL recently launched in July 2019 the Faculty Fellows Program, which is the heart of the CIL that aims to bring together faculty members from different schools to promote excellence in teaching, learning and assessment through technologies and high impact pedagogies. Following a general call for proposals to all full-time faculty, nine proposals were submitted for the Summer 2019 CIL Faculty Fellows Program, out of which six were selected based on a thorough review by a peers committee, keeping in mind the strategic directions of the university, such as expanding our online course delivery in graduate programs; revamping liberal arts and sciences courses; expanding offerings in areas of data science, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI); implementing active learning instruction in courses; and finally implementing adaptive learning techniques in courses. The Faculty Fellows participated in training sessions held on July 2-29, 2019, during which they worked with the CIL faculty and staff, completing relevant online courses, attending 12 especially designed workshops, and redesigning their own courses.

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

Human Resources

The HR department at LAU consists of 26 full-time employees and had an annual operating budget (2017-18) of \$1.65 million. A full-fledged Staff HR study was conducted in partnership with the Job Assessment Committee (JAC) which resulted in a new staff-grading grid and a new salary scale was successfully implemented in December 2018. This study aimed at retaining and motivating LAU's highly competent workforce through the creation of new career ladders, internal equity amongst jobs and employees, and a sustainable promotion system that ensures transparency within well-defined career ladders. A giant step was taken towards incorporating the training and development of staff within our culture, especially that training was previously conducted separately without HR's involvement, mainly on an individual basis through the department/office, and at times such trainings had no direct relevance to the staff's work scope. In terms of Staff Relations, HR will be finalizing a new "Staff Onboarding and Orientation Program" that aims to fuel staff engagement, productivity and retention.

In terms of Compensation and Benefits, HR is working on developing a standardized process across campuses; launching an automated contract approval and payroll processes; integrating the Various HR Systems into the Human Resources Management systems (HRMS) in collaboration with IT; and revisiting the Personnel Policy – Faculty Section, in coordination with the Provost Office and the Legal Counsel.

Financial Resources

LAU operates from Lebanon where the local as well as regional political and economic instabilities adversely affect the Lebanese economy. Still the monetary conditions have been stable thanks to regulatory measures and healthy reserves held by the Central Bank. In addition, the 2018 Cedar conference promised an influx of support funds from several countries once its execution starts. LAU is mainly student enrollment dependent, with tuition and fees accounting for approximately 95% of fiscal 2018 operating revenues. While revenue diversity remains stable, distribution may change slightly given the increasing focus on research and the health care operations, which accounted to around 26% of LAU group fiscal 2018 revenues, or \$57.3 million. An analysis of tuition share based on actual revenues of 2018 together with projections for three ensuing years is set out in Table 5.

<i>\$000</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021
Tuition and student fees	166,030	167,347	165,444	171,592
Fundraising for operations	1,266	834	842	851
Other revenues	7,038	5,686	5,760	5,783
Endowment spending	-	2,600	4,000	4,000
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>174,334</i>	<i>176,467</i>	<i>176,046</i>	<i>182,226</i>
Tuition share of total LAU revenues	95%	95%	94%	94%
LAUMC-RH revenues	50,409	62,414	71,446	82,530
LAUMC- SJH	-	-	5,986	9,293
<i>Sub-total</i>	<i>50,409</i>	<i>62,414</i>	<i>77,432</i>	<i>91,823</i>
Total revenues	224,743	238,881	253,478	274,049
Tuition share of total LAU group revenues	74%	70%	65%	63%

Table 5: Analysis of tuition share

The university policy budgets for a 4% spending from endowment returns to support operations and expansion, but effectively spent around 2%, or \$10.3 million, of its endowment in fiscal 2018. Table 6 provides an analysis of the actual spending of endowment during 2018 together with projected spending for the three ensuing years:

<i>\$000</i>	2018	2019	2020	2021
Total endowment - Beginning balance	481,978	526,302	545,983	570,832
Allowed spending from endowment (4%)	19,279	21,052	21,839	22,833
Actual/projected spending from endowment	11,835	8,218	10,460	9,548
Percentage spending from endowment	2.5%	1.6%	1.9%	1.7%

Table 6: Analysis of actual and projected spending

LAU continues forging ahead with its expansion projects of the university and hospital supported by its positive operating results and fundraising. The operating performance of the university is solid as evidenced by a sufficient and strong balance sheet. The debt position is at controllable levels and is balanced by a solid unrestricted cash and investment profile. Even with the potential additional debt of \$120 million there is capacity for this debt given the amortization and drawdowns models adopted within cash projections. Almost 71% of debt is long term. The series 2013 bonds have been fully settled in August 2018, as planned.

The university is currently operating under SPIII in which key initiatives have included expanding research capacity and building on program strength nationally and regionally. It regularly updates the five-year financial plan depending on changing circumstances and conditions. Hospital operations are relatively small compared with those of US-based teaching hospitals, with operating revenue of about \$41.7 million for fiscal 2018. Additional significant investments are needed to increase capacity at the hospital. These

investments were estimated at \$128.5 million over a period of five years and are systematically instituted at phases ensuring safe transition from a 137 bed to a more than 400 bed capacity by 2023. Hospital operations are expected to post a break-even position by the end of 2019 after which positive bottom lines are foreseen (see Area of Concern #3).

LAU's significant unrestricted endowment portfolio relative to debt is a key credit strength. Nearly all of the university financial assets (cash and investments) are unrestricted. Additional comfort is derived from the fact that the endowment is 100% invested through US-based investment managers with a New York based active investment committee providing oversight. Further, the asset allocation model adopted by the university is key to the university success. LAU carries around \$120 million of cash and cash equivalents that are sufficient to cover debt. Projected cash flows, as reflected in the five-year financial plan, reveal the clear ability of the university to meet its expansion commitments without fully exhausting its reserves.

Because the majority of tuition and fees are remitted in US dollar denominated funds, in addition to maintaining the majority of bank holding in US currency, currency risk is maintained at very low levels. Moreover, the fact that the majority of the university debts is in Lebanese pounds (LBP) represents another safety cushion for the university. However, this is slightly offset by a moderate currency risk associated with the operations of the hospital where a significant portion (40%) of medical services collections is remitted in national currency. Nonetheless, given the small size of the health care business, at the consolidation level, coupled with a significant portion of the hospital expenses being LBP, keeps this risk at controllable levels.

Given the political instability, management continues with its long-standing practice of building significant reserves in the annual operating budget, along with conservative budget assumptions. The university also includes adequate depreciation expenses in the budget reflecting best practices. These financial practices have led to consistently positive results. While the positive margin is relatively good, it is lower than historical levels. Moreover, projections show relative operating stability but not a return to historical levels of profitability. The margin compression reflects aid increases, stable enrolment, and expense increases. Hospital performance also affects the consolidated financial statements.

There are concerns of a reduction in US grants. The university is aware of this fact and has developed a contingency plan that deals with the possibility of a significant drop in enrolment as a result of loss of grants as well as other factors related to the economic conditions in the country. Moreover, one of the important tools for the evaluation of the financial and operating strength of the university is the rating done by international rating agencies like S&P. On June 4, 2018, S&P issued their report on the university affirming its AA- long-term rating; it also revised the outlook from negative to stable.

Fundraising is key to the financial success of the institution. Tuition has become saturated to an extent that limits its ability to fund further growth in opportunity costs. A plan is being currently devised to bolster fundraising with more emphasis on private giving. Management has set off a cost saving initiative with a target of \$3.0 million for fiscal year 2018. Moreover, efforts are underway to carry out an overall assessment of the operating budget aiming at strategically normalizing costs through optimization rather than reactive minimization. Recourse to endowment for support must be carefully managed. The endowment must be further reinforced to reach levels that are safe for the size of the university. The ratio of endowment to operating budget must not fall below the benchmark set by the board of 2.5 times. This can be achieved through proper management of the investment portfolio, a well thought-out resource optimization plan, more revenue diversification, etc. Management is convinced that spending from the endowment must not limit its growth abilities.

Physical Resources

LAU has lately engaged in the acquisition, renovation, and construction of a multitude of new facilities on both campuses. The five-year (2016-21) capital budget for construction and renovations, prepared in 2016, is divided as follows: \$112 million for Beirut campus projects and \$167 million for Byblos campus projects.

In response to the rapidly growing needs of the university and in line with the university's SPII & SPIII and the necessity of providing modern physical resources to all constituents, Facilities Management (FM) updated the existing capital plan by addressing the needs of the university in terms of new acquisitions, new construction and necessary renovations on both campuses. At LAUMC-RH, the hospital administration identified urgently-needed upgrading and renovation projects necessary for the sustainability of the hospital mission; moreover, a comprehensive strategic plan was developed by the administration and the School of Medicine whereby all future facilities needs and projections were identified, in view of transforming the hospital into an academic hospital and aligning its strategic plan with the School of Medicine's academic mission and strategic plan.

LAU Libraries

LAU's Beirut, Byblos, and Health Sciences libraries are well-equipped to meet students' needs, with spacious facilities that include conference rooms, computer centers, group study areas, and open stacks of 548,816 books in total. In addition, the libraries offer 337,615 e-books, 113,208 print and e-journals, and 160 databases, ensuring that students, faculty and staff have an ample of scholarly resources at their fingertips. The libraries are also able to secure on-demand materials otherwise unavailable in Lebanon through agreements with institutions abroad. The new Byblos Library is a state-of-the-art, eco-friendly facility providing a diverse set of services that have a significant effect on the management of the library's day-to-day functions.

The Library Assessment Plan (LAP) was launched identifying three goals related to collection development, learning and research environment, and university heritage. The total annual budget for the libraries in 2016-2017 was \$4,933,700 of which \$2,377,400 was allocated for the purchase of/subscription to library material including print, electronic, and AV material with more emphasis on e-resources. All campus libraries perform as one entity except for the New York Library (NYL) which is not fully functional yet.

In parallel with the implementation of the new Human Resources Study in December 2018, a new Library structure was introduced. LAU Libraries always advocate for American and Lebanese copyright laws (<http://libraries.lau.edu.lb/research/databases/>). In line with the library strategic plan that calls for further investment in the e-book/e-journal collections, the number of eBooks was increased by 11.4% in 2017-2018, 70% of the print journal subscriptions were traded for online subscriptions to date, and several new databases were added (<http://libraries.lau.edu.lb/research/databases/>). The Inter Library Loans/Document Delivery Service (ILL/DDS) saw a significant increase of 16% in 2017-2018.

In compliance with SP 2011-16, Goal 1.9, a new library website was launched in September 2015. The new website marked a significant increase in the number of visits equal to 359.7% when compared with the number of visits to the older website in the previous year. According to the survey, 71% of the students find it easy to use.

Technological Resources

LAU's IT systems are hosted in four data centers, two in Beirut and two in Byblos. All major LAU applications are hosted in the Beirut data centers. Since 2014, LAU IT has upgraded almost all of its

infrastructure and services and implemented new services in order to provide the best support for the LAU community. In terms of IT Services, IT has implemented a new Help Desk system in order to enhance our support services and allow users to have instant updates on the status of their calls. In addition, IT merged the computer and multimedia support units into one in order to provide faster support to the community.

With cyber-attacks increasing in frequency and volume, IT is dedicating more resources in that domain. On the network level, IT implemented a next generation firewall, Web application firewall and mitigation in the case of a Distributed Denial of Service Attack (DDoS). In addition a new set of IT regulation were drafted and approved by the BOT and published online.

IT at LAUMC-RH has seen rapid growth since the hospital was acquired, driven by the need to automate administrative and patient processes. The hospital recently implemented SAP state of the art ERP and patient management system. In addition, the medical lab processes have been automated, as has the Radiology department. A new CCTV system and cameras were installed as was a CISCO call center to manage the incoming calls to the hospital and clinics. LAU acts as a cloud provider for LAUMC-RH and the New York campus infrastructure needs, namely for network, internet, email, active directory, course management system, library database and other services. The IT department at LAU provides high-end infrastructure and services that support academic, student, and administrative functions effectively. A new comprehensive set of IT policies have been drafted by IT and approved by the legal office and the BOT. The policies cover all aspects of IT and form the basis for a secure IT operation at LAU.

Management and Operations

Facilities planning, construction, renovation, and maintenance are the responsibility of the FM. This department consists of the following four divisions: program management & contract administration, planning & renovations, physical plant-Beirut, and physical plant-Byblos. The FM department at LAU employs 70 full-time staff and has an annual operating budget (2017-18) of \$9.78 million.

Facilities are constructed in accordance with applicable Lebanese construction law and regulations. However, there are minor non-conformities with the local construction laws in old existing facilities on both campuses which are being addressed and resolved; one major initiative consisting of amending a regulatory planning decree affecting the Beirut campus was completed in 2018. Newly constructed buildings are in accordance with local construction laws and international standards and codes.

FM develops long-term and short-term plans in close coordination with concerned university entities in an effort to timely respond and react to the continuously evolving facilities and space needs of the university constituencies. The developed plans undergo thorough periodic examination by the different FM division followed by thorough review by the Central Facilities Committee and finally the PC when space allocations are envisaged in order to prioritize space allocation. FM aligns the goals of its own strategic plan with those of the institutional strategic plan and with other university needs by devising a yearly plan for new FM initiatives.

LAU is in the process of acquiring and operating a small hospital in the Jounieh area, midway between Beirut and Byblos. The hospital will be named LAUMC-SJH (Saint John's Hospital). Separate Facilities Management, IT, and HR committees are in place to ensure proper operation and integration of this new hospital with the current hospital and university services (see Finances and Area of Emphasis #3 for more details).

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency and Public Disclosure

Since 2014, a number of policies with a major bearing on professional and academic integrity, primarily for faculty members and staff, were introduced: “Non-Fraternization Policy,” “Confidentiality Policy,” and the “Medical Practice plan” that applies to the School of Medicine. Other pertinent policies that were recently amended, in light of best practices internationally, include the “Discrimination, Harassment and Sexual Misconduct Prevention Policy” and the “Conflict of Interest Policy.” All LAU policies and procedures that pertain to faculty and staff can be found at: <http://www.lau.edu.lb/faculty-staff/>. The University continues to place major emphasis on comprehensive orientation sessions for new FT faculty. New part-time faculty members are invited to the School Orientation sessions and/or receive orientation on the rights and responsibilities of students, and their own rights and responsibilities, by department chairs.

LAU observes the spirit as well as the letter of applicable legal requirements. The University derives its authority to grant all degrees it awards from both the (Lebanese) Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) as well as the New York State Education Department (NYSED), and it scrupulously adheres to the requirements of both. LAU works to ensure that when students, prospective students, or members of the public are interacting with an individual acting on behalf of the institution, the relationship of that individual to the institution is clear. LAU is responsible for all activities that are sponsored by the institution or carry its name and assumes responsibility for the appropriateness and integrity of such activities.

The President makes public presentations to the faculty and staff at least twice a year, where he updates them on the most salient issues at the University (e.g., student enrollment and finances), especially in light of the latest decisions of the BOT. The Provost’s Office updates the Faculty Handbook on a regular basis (<https://myportal.lau.edu.lb/sites/FS/myacademic/Pages/default.aspx>) as well as the Faculty Handbook for Academic and Professional Integrity, which can be accessed through the University Portal as well. LAU prides itself on its commitment to the free pursuit and dissemination of knowledge as an integral component of a liberal arts education and the scientific method.

LAU completed recently a major overhaul of its “Student Code of Conduct”, which was expanded to cover violations of academic integrity. The revised Student Code spells out the penalties for each type of academic, and non-academic, violation. The University recently placed all material pertaining to student academic integrity on one website (<http://students.lau.edu.lb/academic-integrity/>).

Faculty members refer to the Student Code of Conduct in their syllabi. In light of program specificities, schools provide supplementary material on academic and professional integrity, including plagiarism. In the healthcare fields (Medicine, Nursing, Nutrition, Pharmacy), students are required to protect patient privacy and maintain confidentiality of information obtained during clinical practice. Healthcare students are expected to provide patient care in accordance with professional accreditation standards. Before joining their clinical clerkships, all healthcare students need to sign a confidentiality agreement and the specificities of confidentiality in their respective fields are stressed in courses.

All students are entitled to see all graded assignments and review their grades with the concerned faculty. Students may also request a formal grade review as per the “Grade Review Procedure,” found on <http://students.lau.edu.lb/rules.php>. Each faculty member presents at semester-end a course file that includes the distribution of grades for all graded assignments.

Having recently appointed a Title IX coordinator, Dr. Jennifer Skulte-Ouaiss, who will officially assume responsibility and duties in AY 2018-19, the University will disseminate to LAU constituents more information on the mandate of the coordinator. The Title IX Office will also launch various educational campaigns to raise awareness of gender discrimination, harassment, sexual misconduct, and other pertinent topics.

The University requires that faculty members and students who seek to undertake research that involves human subjects must receive the prior approval from the University Institutional Review Board (IRB) (<http://gsr.lau.edu.lb/irb/>). The Office of Graduate Studies and Research (GSR) will launch an awareness and training platform for the responsible conduct of research across all disciplines. This training will be via an online platform through the “Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative” (CITI) (<https://about.citiprogram.org/en/homepage/>). GSR will further develop the procedures and processes for the oversight of research involving animals and will establish a committee to review research projects on animals. It will also develop a policy on research misconduct that is aligned with the stipulations of the US Public Health Services (PHS) and Lebanon’s National Council for Scientific Research (CNRS).

Finally, a new “Staff Handbook” is under development to provide adequate and comprehensive information useful for newcomers and to serve as a “refresher information source” for staff members. Awareness campaigns are planned to be conducted regularly across the university to inform employees about new policies and procedures and remind them of important policies, outlining the essential parts that require their attention and diligence.

Transparency

The website is the primary information dissemination vehicle at LAU; and continues to include all relevant and updated information. The processes for admissions are included in a newly designed website (<https://admissions.lau.edu.lb>) where the information has been reorganized for greater clarity. Financial statements are available in the President’s Report, which are accessible online and in print. The Department of Information and Research Assessment (DIRA) publishes, online and in print, complete reports on the performance of the institution through the flagship Facts & Figures publication. All statements made by the institution about its performance are based on data collected with established methodologies (such as the National Survey of Student Engagement “NSSE”).

Public Disclosure

Key codes such the Faculty Code of Ethics, the new Student Code of Conduct are communicated on the website. The university’s overall mission continues to be communicated through the website and on electronic boards around campus, through key publications such as the *President’s Report* and the *Admissions Viewbook* (the latter in a style and language more accessible to the target audience of students). The website continues to include our governance chart, and key articles in the news section of the website reflect how this governance is operationalized on a regular basis (BOT report articles).

Fees are stated online and in the academic catalog (<http://catalog.lau.edu.lb/2019-2020/undergraduate/tuition-fees-aid.php> and <http://catalog.lau.edu.lb/2019-2020/graduate/tuition-fees-aid.php>) and are kept up to date (lau.edu.lb/fees). The types of financial aid are available online (<https://admissions.lau.edu.lb/aid/>), and are in relevant printed publications.

Faculty lists are available online, clearly identifying the faculty by school, with date of joining, education, and published research. All programs are identified by campus location on the public website for prospective students (<https://admissions.lau.edu.lb/apply/programs.php>). All courses are furthermore

identifiable on the Student Portal. In addition, most courses not taught for two consecutive years that will not be taught during the third consecutive year are marked as such in the academic catalog.

The size and characteristics of the student body, in addition to student enrollment and retention rates, are published on the website (<http://www.lau.edu.lb/about/facts/>), and are included in a detailed report, the LAU Fact Book which is available online (<http://dira.lau.edu.lb/fact-book/>) and printed (<https://dira.lau.edu.lb/images/Factbook%202017-2018%20-Enrollment.pdf>).

LAU's accreditation status is communicated on the website, and in various publications (Fact Book, LAU at a Glance). The University expects to continue to provide timely communications, enhancing the amount of information available on its website, and by increasing the frequency of its internal communications through regular updates and special announcements.

V. Reflective Essay on Educational Effectiveness

LAU promises an American-style, liberal arts education rooted in and devoted to enriching Lebanon, the region, and increasingly the world. Drawing on its founding as a girls' school and on its Presbyterian missionary roots, it endeavors to educate the whole person to be a contributing member of their community and the world. Do students actually reach these goals while at LAU? How does LAU know how well students match up to these when they arrive and then what value-added additions does a LAU education contribute?

Until ten years ago, LAU had unevenly distributed and too often ad hoc knowledge about how, when, and why LAU affected student learning. With the creation of the Department for Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA) and the concomitant turn to identifying, gathering, and evaluating assessment data, LAU finally started to try to answer these important questions in a rigorous manner. Having moved beyond the early stages of basic assessment, a number of actors at the institution now go further in gathering assessment data to reflect on the meaning of the data we gather, how to better capture the data that we want, and, most importantly, how to use assessment data to improve programs and program delivery and ultimately advance student learning at LAU. While significant progress has been made in assessing, reflecting on, and 'closing the loop' on institutional effectiveness vis-à-vis student learning, success remains uneven. LAU is thus using this Reflective Essay as a tool to evaluate where we stand today, where we want to go tomorrow, and how we will get there.

We also sought to reflect on how the information gathered has impact beyond student learning via curricular planning and improvement. Furthermore, the story that we craft for ourselves and for external audiences is also an important reflection of our values. In an increasingly competitive higher education sector in Lebanon, the region, and globally, how is LAU retaining its values for student-centeredness while ensuring that it is able to retain and increase its standards for quality?

This Reflective Essay is organized to address four key areas:

- a. What students gain as a result of their education;
- b. Assessment of student learning—"what and how students are learning";
- c. Measures of student success, including retention and graduation; and
- d. Satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes

A. What students gain as a result of their education

While universities have always been a mix of furthering knowledge and preparing (usually) young people for careers, there is significant pressure to demonstrate what tangible gains students make as a result of their education. LAU's Schools focus on ensuring that students will be able to transition from university life to adults who are active and engaged in developing the world around them in a variety of ways. LAU seeks to prepare all of its students to meet their goals while at the university as well as after they graduate. The following section provides details on what our various student groups—undergraduate, graduate, and continuing education/adult—are gaining as a result of their expenditure of time, energy, and other resources at LAU.

One of the more tangible outcomes of an LAU education is the high employment rates of our graduates. Demonstrating the desire to capture data that can be used to assess student learning and achievement as well as be used to inform policy, DIRA spearheaded an in-depth employability study that was later published in *Education and Training* (Nauffal & Skulte-Ouaiss, Quality higher education drives employability in the Middle East, 2018). The study found that the employment rate of LAU graduates of the academic year 2015-2016 was high: 82% of USP alumni are employed or pursuing further studies within 12 months of graduation, which surpasses the institutional employment rate of 74% for a similar cohort of graduates. This is particularly noteworthy since as noted earlier, USP students come from disadvantaged backgrounds and do not enter the university with the social and economic networks that often characterize LAU students, whose families tend to have high levels of social and economic capital. Thus, USP students' time at LAU seems to provide them with previously absent skills and/or social networks that facilitate their finding good jobs.

Moreover, while Lebanon and the Middle East overall have some of the lowest rates of female labor force participation in the world, our survey found that 56% of those employed were female. Findings also suggest that over 80% of employed alumni are in jobs relating to their undergraduate major. Our best source of information to explain this is the employer survey that LAU conducted. According to this survey, employers believe that to a great extent, LAU degrees and experience match Lebanese and regional labor market needs, though there was interest in more graduates with specific knowledge in accounting, computer science, various engineering fields, information management systems, pharmacy, and nursing. This is all more notable when the World Bank and International Monetary Fund surveys have found that employers in the Arab world are more likely to complain about the lack of skills amongst youth, when compared to employers in other regions of the world. Employers not only valued the theoretical and technical skills of LAU's graduates but also the soft skills that they developed during the course of their studies.

Likewise, alumni who participated in the survey and the focus groups appreciated their curricular and co-curricular experiences, which they believed helped in the development of the intellectual, emotional, social, moral and aesthetic domains of their personality. Furthermore, the soft skill set alumni perceived as needed in the workplace largely coincided with those sought in employees by employers. Last, employers felt that LAU did a good job of providing and developing career networks for its graduates. Alumni who participated in the focus groups reinforced this view, particularly the alumni who transferred from another university to LAU to gain the competitive advantage in the market place. Three quarters (394 of 516) of alumni reported completing an internship before graduating, approximately a third of whom were offered a job upon graduation. This demonstrates the importance of engaging students in contexts where they can connect their academic experience with the professional work arena. Internships were also identified as a preferred mode of recruitment by employers. As one employer noted, internships

allow employers to spot talent and identify leaders who have a high degree of emotional intelligence needed to mobilize and inspire people or teams.

The annual exit survey and 2017 NSSE also provides insights into what students gain from their education at LAU. Senior students at LAU reported significant gains in soft skills as compared to first year students, however, both cohorts reported significant gains in soft skills compared to their New England peers and all 2017 NSSE peers. The results of these surveys allows LAU to determine gaps in its students' preparation for the workplace which then feeds into accreditation and program review studies as well as the level of attainment of student and co-curricular learning outcomes. For example, students expressed not having enough opportunities of solving real-world complex problems. The "Trireme" project (<http://students.lau.edu.lb/trireme.php>) allowed students from different backgrounds to put their theoretical knowledge to practice addressing a number of complex issues while enhancing their collaboration and leadership skills and raising awareness around environmental, social and ethical issues.

How are the attributes that make LAU graduates sought after as employees, collaborators, and artists developed while at the university? The Schools collaborate with the Outreach and Civic Engagement (OCE) and Career Guidance in the Dean of Students office to ensure career development opportunities for students to provide them with the soft skills needed for the job market from effective team building skills to leadership and communication skills. Students from SOP, the Honors Program, and University Scholarship Program (USP) have received training in emotional intelligence and conflict resolution. 840 LAU students have participated in outreach and corporate field trip visits providing them with opportunities to explore the work and civic engagement environment in various institutions. Our students excel by engaging in numerous ways with their communities and society at large.

A critical way in which LAU students develop a broad spectrum of skills and knowledge is through providing training to middle and high school students through the Model United Nations (MUN), Model Arab League (MAL), and Model European Union (MEU). LAU is renowned for its use of simulations to teach students a variety of soft skills critical to professional and personal success. This past year, LAU students again won a record high 12 diplomacy awards at the Harvard World Model UN Conference which was held in Madrid, Spain. Harvard world Model UN is considered to be the Olympics of Model UN, and 2,000 graduate and undergraduate students coming from 130 capitals of the world compete in creative negotiations and in reaching UN-inspired resolutions. LAU students organized their annual two-mega conferences of Global Classrooms International Model UN at the UN Headquarters in New York City – (Global Classrooms International Model UN is a brand owned by LAU in partnership with the United Nations Association of the USA.) This culture of simulation honors LAU's mission statement centered around civic engagement and the formation of leaders in a diverse world. Every year at LAU, the Outreach & Civic Engagement Department mobilizes 600 LAU students from multiple majors to train around 5,000 students coming from 200 public and private schools from all over Lebanon in diplomacy, under the auspices of Model UN, Model Arab League and Model EU.

Indeed, everyone involved with the simulations can provide numerous stories about how the experiences are transformative on multiple levels. Because of this success, we made sure to analyze and identify what co-curricular learning outcomes are involved in LAU's simulations. Two of the co-curricular learning outcomes assessed were 1) leadership and global perspective and 2) collaboration. We found that 98% and 99% respectively of the students exceed expectation in meeting these co-curricula learning outcomes. We now have begun to not only formally evaluate student outcomes in the various simulations but also investigate how we can transfer such successful active learning into other co-curricular experiences.

It remains that students are informed of “what they are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program” primarily via course syllabi as well as materials stating the mission program objectives, and descriptive materials regarding internships and employment of recent graduates. Program learning outcomes are shared with students through the catalogue. Student success rates (retention, progression, graduation, academic standing and employment rates) are shared with students through the DIRA website (<http://dira.lau.edu.lb/assessment/students-success.php>). Year-to-year retention, graduation and attrition rates have hovered around 70%, 21% and 9% respectively over the past five years. In cases where external exams and/or licensure are critical to professional practices, the student passing rates are shared with prospective and current students. For example, the average pass rate over the past five years for LAU SOP students in the US and in Lebanon is 91% and 93% respectively

(<https://pharmacy.lau.edu.lb/images/NAPLEX%20MPJE%20and%20Colloquium%20March%202018.pdf>). Responsibility for meeting learning outcomes is with the Schools while DIRA works to support assessment and to gather and analyze data within and across the Schools. To this end, the following section will focus on each of LAU’s seven schools and then turn to the critical work being done by DIRA on direct and indirect assessment.

Feedback to the students in the School of Engineering (SOE) regarding what and how well they are learning is consistently provided through exams, projects, quizzes, and homework. All engineering students culminate their studies by a capstone project that is designed to mimic the various components of a work project of a professional engineer. During the project, close faculty attention and feedback is provided to the student. The SOE further prepares students for the profession in many ways, such as ensuring good career advising, providing academic opportunities, completing internships and encouraging extra-curricular activities related to engineering disciplines. The school also monitors long term professional outcomes using surveys, such as the Mechanical Engineering Employer Survey and Alumni Survey. Results of the alumni survey show overwhelming evidence about the importance/relevance of each of the SOE program’s educational objectives. Surveys of employers are also deployed to provide a complete picture of the employment and working capabilities of our alumni and gauge the importance and relevance of each program’s educational objective, and results demonstrate that the educational objectives of the SOE programs maps very well to the market needs from an employer’s perspective.

In a similar vein, School of Architecture and Design (SArD) students are continuously provided with feedback on their performance through jury evaluation, and all design programs at the school include external perspectives in the assessment of student learning through the internship required for study completion. The jury evaluation procedure has been in place for the past five years, re-assessed and amended to improve input/feedback of external reviewers, by implementing a set of rubrics, each designed specifically for the courses, in order to assess each student’s fulfillment of Student Learning Outcomes.

The School of Pharmacy (SOP) qualifies graduating students to sit for the National Competency Assessment Examination (Pharmacy Colloquium) in Lebanon, and for the North American Pharmacy Licensure Examination (NAPLEX) in the United States. The passing rates for both are above 90%. Support for student learning is ensured through monitoring of student performance, advising, continuous review of the program and achievement of goals and outcomes, and through ensuring exposure to adequate learning environments. The latter is guaranteed by the availability of optimal teaching laboratories, and the development of partnerships with pharmacies and hospitals, both locally and the US. To date, the SOP has 4 agreements with U.S.-based institutions including universities, hospitals, and retail pharmacies and sends an average of 32 doctor of pharmacy (PharmD) students for internships/practicums annually.

To date, assessment of Honors Program graduates has demonstrated that the academically high-performing students in the program benefit significantly from co-curricular focus on soft skills, providing them with the ‘extra something’ sought by employers even when their academic grades are exemplary.

When we seek different types of external evaluation of what students gain for their education at LAU, standardized surveys and tests generally demonstrate that our graduates are gaining the knowledge and skills that we promise. Where weaknesses are identified, changes are sought in the academic curricula and/or co-curricula. Comparing first year LAU students to all NSSE 2016 and 2017 students, the scores of LAU’s students were significantly lower on the integrative learning experiences, collaborative learning, and quality of interaction engagement indicators; however, they scored significantly higher on effective teaching practices and discussions with diverse others indicators. LAU senior students, on the other hand, scored higher than all NSSE 2016 and 2017 peers on the collaborative learning, discussion with diverse others, effective teaching practices, and supportive environment indicators while they scored lower on the quantitative reasoning and student-faculty interaction benchmark.

The NSSE has been used to compare the performance of a special group of LAU students, namely LAU University Scholarship Program (USP) students with that of regular LAU students. LAU USP students are an underprivileged yet academically outstanding group of students who receive scholarships through a USAID grant. LAU has administered this grant since 2011. Findings show that while there are no differences between first-year LAU USP students and first-year LAU regular students on academic challenge and learning with peer indicators, LAU USP students report significantly more experiences of interaction with faculty and a more significantly supportive campus environment. Furthermore, they report being engaged more in leadership roles in civic engagement activities. On the other hand, LAU students report being more actively involved in civic engagement activities and related leadership roles when compared to all NSSE 2016 and 2017 peers.

	First Year				
	LAU USP	LAU Non-USP			
	Mean	Mean	Effect size	Sig	
<i>How much has your experience at this institution contributed to your knowledge, skills, and personal development in the following area</i>					
Writing clearly and effectively	3.2	2.9	.3	*	↑
Speaking clearly and effectively	3.1	2.9			
Thinking critically and analytically	3.4	3.2	.3	*	↑
Analyzing numerical and statistical information	2.9	2.8			
Acquiring job- or work-related knowledge and skills	2.8	2.6			
Working effectively with others	3.2	2.9	.4	**	↑
Developing or clarifying a personal code of values and ethics	3.0	2.7	.2	*	↑
Understanding people of other backgrounds (economic, racial/ethnic, political, religious, nationality, etc.)	3.4	3	.4	**	↑
Solving complex real-world problems	3.0	2.6	.4	***	↑
Being an informed and active citizen	3.2	2.7	.5	***	↑

Table 7: NSSE First year LAU USP vs. Non-USP students’ results

When asked to reflect on how the institution contributed to their knowledge, skills and personal development, significant differences between the two groups were found. First year LAU USP students reported substantial gains in their ability to write and speak clearly and effectively, think critically, work effectively with others, develop a personal code of ethics, solve complex real-world problems, become informed and active citizens, and understand people of other backgrounds in comparison to their first year LAU non-USP counterparts, as shown in Table 7. Furthermore, LAU first-year and senior students also reported significant gains in these areas in comparison to their New England, Carnegie and all NSSE 2016 and 2017 peers. Figure 3 shows findings for LAU senior students compared to their peer groups.

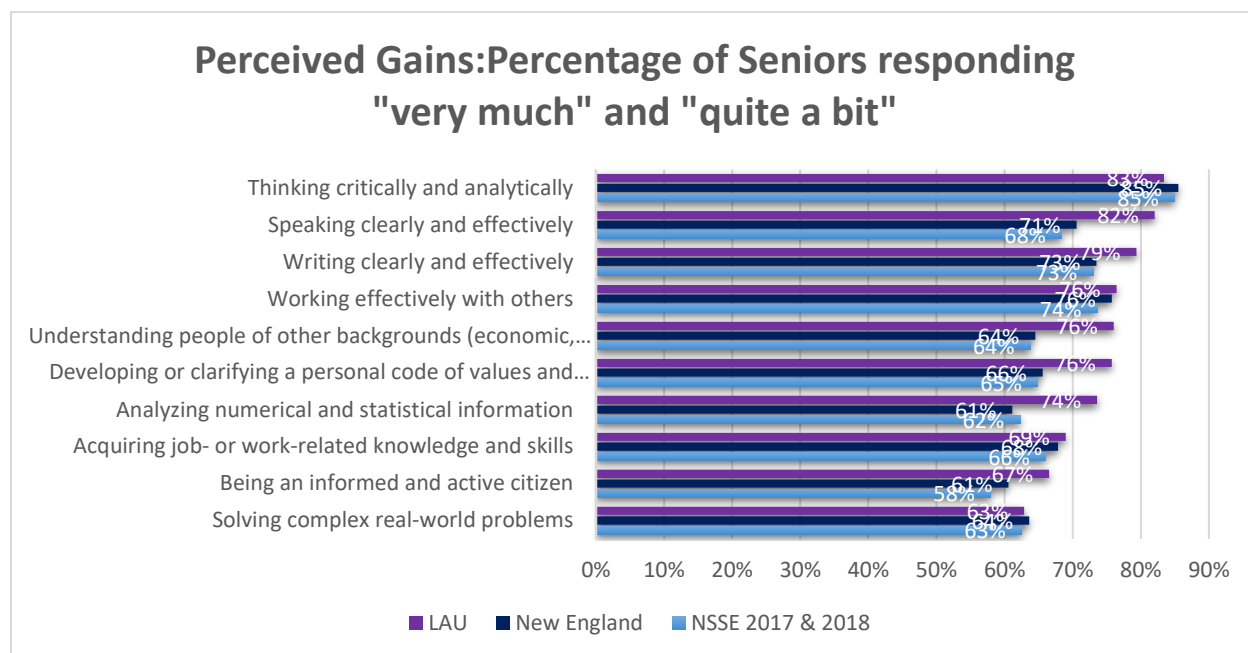


Figure 3: NSSE LAU senior students' results compared to peer groups

Regarding the annual CAAP exam, in AY 2016-2017 only the critical thinking module was taken by a sample of LAU students at the freshman, sophomore, and senior levels. Significant gains in critical thinking were recorded by students as they progress through LAU, particularly for the first year LAU USP students. In AY 2017-2018, results were obtained for both the critical thinking and the science test from point of entry to LAU to point of exit. Similar results prevailed for the critical thinking test; however, no significant differences among levels were found on the science test. The results are summarized in Table 8.

	LAU USP (FY)		LAU Non-USP(FY)		LAU Juniors		LAU Seniors	
	Mean		Mean	Sig	Mean	Sig	Mean	Sig
Critical Thinking	59.20		60.50		62.19		62.62	**
Science	58.76		59.44		61.00		61.50	

Table 8: Means and significance levels of all participating comparison groups in CAAP

More difficult to assess is how students are doing with regards to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are the foundation of the liberal arts. While LAU has long placed a high value on the liberal arts—creating a core of coursework that each student must complete to graduate, that is, the Liberal Arts and Sciences (LAS)—assessing how and what students learn, versus how and what we wanted them to learn, was a significant challenge. In the past couple of years, LAU has finally created a liberal arts core curriculum and an assessment plan, and implementation began in AY 2018-19.

The Provost's Office and DIRA have played leading roles in the revision of the LAS. DIRA has been instrumental in coordinating the assessment of LAS learning outcomes. In fall 2018, the Student Learning Outcome: "Demonstrate proficiency in oral and written communication" was assessed. The course chosen to assess proficiency in oral communication was COM 203 using the Problem-Solution Persuasive Speech-Argument and Counter Argument Rubric. Overall, 96% (116 out of 121 students from 7 sections) met or exceeded expectations in terms of demonstrating proficiency in oral communication with 94%, 97% and 96% of students meeting or exceeding expectations with regard to the content, the delivery and the impact and critical mind competencies respectively.

The course chosen to assess proficiency in written communication was ENG 202. 86 students from four sections were assessed using the Introduction + Literature Review Rubric. 84% (72 students) met or exceeded expectations in terms of demonstrating proficiency in written communication with 81% and 80% of students meeting or exceeding expectations with regard to the content and the language and organization competencies respectively.

Two co-curricular learning outcomes were chosen for assessment in spring 2018. These are the Collaboration learning outcome and the Leadership and Global Perspective learning outcome. The "Trireme" project involved the construction of "a seaworthy ship" out of plastic bottles, embodying the revival of Phoenician heritage, whilst raising environmental awareness. 96% of students met or exceeded expectations in terms of collaboration. More specifically, all students facilitated the contribution of team members, worked on building consensus, demonstrated good interpersonal skills and responded to conflict. A third of the students needed to enhance their ability to contribute individually outside of team meetings. The same students were evaluated using the Leadership and Global Perspective Rubric. 94% of students met or exceeded expectations in terms of leadership and global perspective; 6% were still developing their leadership skills. All students empowered others and valued diversity, while a quarter of the students needed to enhance their ability to navigate and affect change from anywhere within an organization.

LAU's foray into creating and then assessing co-curricular learning outcomes came later than the institution's emphasis on the importance of co-curricular learning. Now that LAU has worked out the necessary structure and process for such assessment and trained staff to evaluate students, moving forward, LAU will have data with which to assess how and what (and when) our students are learning from our diverse array of co-curricular programming. For instance, the co-curricular training of OCE to the School of Pharmacy students is thoroughly assessed at the end of each session whereby students' learning objectives and outcomes are evaluated pre and post training in order to measure the positive outcome of the training and skill-building. This co-curricular has become embedded within the curriculum of the school with the assistance of OCE. Examples of student skills and outcomes related to OCE activities such as MUN simulations include:

1. Prepare for the conference by researching their assigned countries and topics in advance;
2. Represent the viewpoint and policies of simulated countries;

3. Address thoroughly all aspects of the background guides by accurately analyzing and interpreting the documents;
4. Express outstanding knowledge of topics based on additional research outside background guide;
5. Exhibit depth and complexity of policies supported by rich, engaging and pertinent details
6. Demonstrate exceptional knowledge of UN structure and function throughout debate
7. Participate actively in the committee's debate, including (but not limited to) making speeches, caucusing, proposing resolutions and amendments and voting;
8. Communicate ideas with full control and understanding of the conventions of English language;
9. Refer to numerous international treaties, international organizations and real-world stakeholders;
10. Follow and abide by the code of conduct and Rules of Procedure throughout debate, and use them to the country's advantage;
11. Initiate committee proceedings in formal and informal debate and show exceptional willingness and leadership; and,
12. Carry himself/herself in diplomatic manner during speeches, negotiations and committee proceedings, and use sophisticated language.

Results of assessment are very positive:

- 92% demonstrate outstanding performance in role playing;
- 92% exceeding expectations in diplomatic and leadership skills;
- 92% exceeding expectations in excellent display of knowledge;
- 92% demonstrate exceptional public speaking and oral communication skills; and,
- 92% exceeding expectations in consistency, commitment and remaining in-character.

From this more general overview of what students have gained by the time they leave LAU, the following section seeks to describe what and how students are learning while at LAU.

B. Assessment of student learning: “What and how students are learning”

LAU is proud of its work to institutionalize planning at every level of the institution; a critical component of the planning success is building in assessment and feedback loops. SPIII was used to force reflection on the institution's mission and purposes given the changes undergone internally and externally since the 2014 Self Study. With increasing competition at the national and international levels, it was decided that LAU would work to capitalize on its reputation as a teaching, student-centered institution but also add a focus on research and knowledge creation. The three primary components of SPIII are Intellectual Capital and Knowledge Management; Pedagogical Innovation and Integrated Delivery; and LAU without Borders. The budget of \$6.5 million is the tangible result of a strategic plan that had significant and broad input from stakeholders across the university and from the beginning, careful oversight from the Finance Department and the BOT.

How does institution-wide planning affect assessment of student learning? What is going on inside of the classroom as well as in internships, field experience, and other learning experiences is critical to student success at the university and after graduation. In order for planning to create an environment that fosters such learning to take place, LAU has endeavored to set up the appropriate framework for the gathering of assessment data, reflect on it, and to the best extent possible, convert it into appropriate revision of program content and/or teaching, in all of its undergraduate and graduate programs in its seven academic and professional Schools. Support for developing and sustaining an assessment culture has come from the top, with the President and Provost, as well as the deans, pushing for transparent assessment to make

the institution more knowledgeable about its strengths and weaknesses, particularly regarding student learning but also throughout the university (e.g., Staff Evaluation, Libraries Evaluation, etc.). DIRA in addition to Assessment Officers in each of the schools identify appropriate variables for assessment, conduct proper assessment (e.g., exit surveys, teaching portfolios, field experiences binders, etc.), and then synthesize the data into useable documents.

Assessment is not only discussed at LAU, it is supported through funding priorities, staff, through faculty evaluation, and extra training for faculty and staff. Dedicated assessment staff are in place at each school. The Provost's Office ensures that assessment is institutionalized in program planning and revision through the oversight of an Assistant Provost and with the support of DIRA, which seeks to provide the technical and 'best practices' know-how to craft assessment tools and then conduct assessment and produce the data.

Faculty and Student Assessment conducts its mandate in terms of two parallel tracks respectively focusing on faculty and students. The faculty track serves as a repertoire for methodologies and modalities pertaining to assessing faculty performance particularly in terms of research and teaching and the inclusion of proven best practices in both areas. Through this track, criteria for a teaching excellence award and a research excellence award were developed and these awards have been awarded annually since 2017.

Student assessment extends beyond course evaluation into the equally important domains of aptitude tests and comparative tests designed to evaluate LAU students in a global setting, i.e., the context of their counterparts at other international universities. DIRA has played an important role here where it initiated the process for the revision of student course evaluations. Course evaluations are one criterion used in the teaching award but they are also used to benchmark the performance of faculty with their peers within schools. DIRA is also now preparing program reports comparing student feedback on courses within programs. Assessment of LAS learning outcomes such as oral and written proficiency is also being undertaken with the aim of benchmarking the performance of LAU students with international students through the CAAP and the ETS Professional Proficiency test in addition to comparing the performance of special groups of students within LAU among each other (see detailed discussion under Direct Assessment).

As detailed in the previous section, LAU has also begun to formally assess co-curricular learning although the importance of co-curricular learning has always been emphasized at the institution. In a similar vein, LAU's emphasis on development of the 'whole person' through a liberal arts education has meant that student activities as well as direct student participation in university governance has long been important, even when such activities have not been the norm in Lebanon (e.g., student elections are often cancelled/postponed when political tensions are running high in the country).

Assessment data is collected and retained by Assessment Officers at each school while assessment committees at the school level seek to bring institutional memory and best practices to review of assessment plans at the program and department levels. The following section identifies how and when the individual schools assess student learning.

School of Arts and Sciences (SAS)

SAS established the necessary infrastructure to support assessment, including the hiring of one assessment officer and the formation of a school-wide council that fosters and facilitates assessment, the School Learning Assessment Council (SLAC). The SLAC includes representatives from all SAS departments

and meets on a monthly basis to lead and guide departmental assessment efforts. SAS also has further institutionalized systematic learning assessment, program accreditation, and cyclical programs reviews. The Computer Science program has been accredited by ABET since 2010. The school has also set a plan to accredit the following undergraduate programs: Coordinated Program in Nutrition and Dietetic (BS), BA in Education, and BA in Journalism and Media Studies. Those programs for which external accreditation is an option use the process and the outcomes of the process for assessment as well as implementing relevant outcomes when revising curricula.

All active school programs are required to develop learning assessment plans. Programs that are either under-enrolled or inactive finalized their plans in spring 2014. The school has also set guidelines and a cyclical schedule for the systematic review of SAS programs. The school has consequently reviewed all SAS programs that have been active for at least five years. All reviewed programs have closed the loop and changes are typically implemented within a year.

Student outcomes are measured and evaluated using a variety of instruments such as embedded assessment, rubrics, portfolios, standardized tests, course evaluation surveys and student exit surveys. Program educational objectives are assessed using program advisory councils, employers and alumni surveys. For example, as a result of the data gathered during the 2015-18 assessment cycle of the BS in Computer Science, an Ad-Hoc Committee that includes the Department Curriculum Committee (DCC) and some select administrators (assistant dean, chairperson, and associate chairperson) met during Fall 2018 and Spring 2019 with the objective of closing the loop and made several recommendations for curricular change. More specifically, the program outcome “students shall be able to apply their computational and mathematical knowledge in order to solve various computational problems” was assessed based on 5 KPIs. Two of the five KPIs were not met while three KPIs were minimally met. Thus, the outcome was deemed to be unmet. The KPIs that were not met were: a) Students shall demonstrate the ability to analyze and interpret statistical data and b) Students shall be able to apply fundamental concepts of discrete mathematics (Logic, Boolean algebra, proofs, set theory, relations, functions, and combinatorial mathematics) in order to model computational problems. The first KPI was assessed using a locally designed assessment exam in MTH305. The KPI was met by 57.8% of the students, which is below the 75% desired threshold. Thus, the KPI was deemed to be “Below Expectations.” The DCC decided to increase the numbers of tutorial sessions whereby the instructor would prepare a set of exercises and a graduate mathematics students would solve these problems with the students with the objective of reinforcing various concepts. Moreover, the second KPI was assessed using a locally-designed assessment exam in CSC322. Since only 36% of the students met the outcome, below the 75% desired threshold, the KPI was deemed unmet. At the DCC meeting, it was recommended to acquire more FPGA hardware whereby every student would have his/her board. Furthermore, it was recommended to break the lab session into two sessions: 2+1 whereby students are provided with a one-hour lecture on one day and the two-hour hands-on lab on a different day.

Adnan Kassar School of Business (AKSOB)

Learning goals for the eight programs offered by AKSOB cover key general, management-specific, and appropriate discipline-specific knowledge and skills derived from the AKSOB, and cover expected characteristics of the graduates of the school. Each of the program learning goals has at least one specific and measurable learning outcome defined.

The programs at AKSOB go through a continuous improvement review cycle, at least once every five years. In 2011-12, the school embarked on an internal evaluation of its programs for the purposes of continuous improvement and pursuit of accreditation. Thus, AKSOB achieved the Association to Advance Collegiate

Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation in 2016 and is currently pursuing other accreditation ventures. In preparation for accreditation and in pursuit of continuous improvement, the school has revisited all the degree programs it offers and made recommendations for changes. For example, in fall 2018 the KPI for the essential knowledge and technology in the BS in Hospitality and Tourism Management program was not met. This was assessed during a direct embedded exam. Some students lacked demonstrating essential skills in the use of hospitality technologies/ software material and equipment that closely simulate the workplace. Upon learning this, the assessment committee in coordination with the chairperson and relevant faculty members decide on the two following actions: To expose students on a weekly basis to RM technology software for data analysis in hospitality Revenue Management HOM 455. The learning outcomes are assessed yearly to ensure closing the loop. Such ongoing assessment is required for continued AACSB accreditation. According to the QS Subject rankings, LAU was ranked 451-500 in Business and Management Studies globally and second in Lebanon.

School of Engineering (SOE)

The SOE offers seven Bachelor of Engineering (BE) degree programs, five of which have attained accreditation from the Engineering Accreditation Commission (EAC) of ABET until September 30, 2023 (<http://main.abet.org/aps/AccreditedProgramsDetails.aspx?OrganizationID=837&ProgramIDs>). The remaining two programs will be accredited upon graduating a sufficient number of students. All undergraduate and graduate programs offered by the School have clear learning outcomes and educational objectives published online (<http://soe.lau.edu.lb/> and in the Academic Catalog at <http://catalog.lau.edu.lb/2018-2019/>). Evaluation of all the graduate programs is planned to take place over the next three years.

After gaining ABET accreditation for the first time in 2011, the SOE embarked on continuous improvement guided by its rigorous assessment program. All seven BE programs in the School have developed and followed comprehensive three-year assessment plans. The Office of the Dean supervises the process and receives an annual assessment report from each program chair by the end of September each year.

At the end of the academic year the Program Review Committee (PRC) closes the loop in an annual retreat. The PRC reviews all assessment results, discusses the report of the Program Advisory Council meeting, addresses the needed changes in the Learning Outcomes, and initiates improvement to the curriculum.

External assessment is performed using input of alumni, employers, and Programs Advisory Councils (PACs), composed of industrial representatives, employers, and recognized alumni members. These councils provide the programs with useful data about the job and market trends and recommendations for continuous improvement. Often times, PAC members help in providing ideas for the Capstone Projects that are challenging and industry driven. It is worth mentioning that, on average, SOE students perform very well on their capstone projects. Surveys assessing the preparation and skills of those students who are in pursuit of their internship are also deployed on a yearly basis. Results of these surveys mostly fall within the “satisfactory and exemplary” range.

School of Architecture and Design (SArD)

Learning outcomes and educational objectives for the six undergraduate programs and one graduate program offered at the SArD are clearly identified. The Bachelor of Architecture program first received an equivalence with the French “Diplôme d’Etat d’Architecte Français” from the French Ministry of Culture and Communication in 2003, was renewed in 2011, and then in 2016 renewed for a five-year period. Additionally, the program applied to the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) in 2011 and received candidacy status in 2013, and the continuation of candidacy in 2015 and 2017. The program

submitted its request for Initial Accreditation in March 2018, and the NAAB Team visit for this purpose will take place in October 2019. In this respect, the mission, program objectives, and learning outcomes were revised to meet the NAAB Conditions.

In 2012, SArD developed its first strategic plan in which all programs were requested to conduct reviews and pursue accreditation. In this regard, the Architecture program has completed its initial accreditation report, and all art and design programs (Interior Architecture, Interior Design, Graphic Design, Fashion Design, Fine Arts, and Islamic Art) went through internal revisions and self-studies for the purpose of the National Association of Schools of Art and Design (NASAD) Accreditation. A Steering Committee has been created and an accreditation visit took place in March 2019.

In 2018, SArD developed its second strategic plan which builds upon the first one as well as upon feedback from the accrediting bodies, to address several pending issues. The main objectives of the School SP II, which aligns with the University's third strategic plan that was approved in spring 2018, are to maintain the School's growth and momentum, to raise the quality of research, and to respond to new pedagogical models in the design fields, in order to contribute to the success of LAU's Strategic Plan III. Despite initiatives to improve on teaching and learning, more effort is still required, specifically in the areas of assessment, eliminating plagiarism, invigorating studio culture, and strengthening the model of studio based education. The School will now implement the Second Strategic plan, which aims at improving on all these issues, and addressing any remaining loopholes in the system, in a regular way.

The assessment plan in architecture has been comprehensively developed to meet NAAB standards. Other design programs are currently working on the development of an assessment process that links assessment tools to program goals and learning outcomes, leading to curricular improvements and alignment of the programs to the accreditation standards. Closing the loop in the architecture program will be ensured every five years and is planned to be applied on regular basis to other programs at SArD.

Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing (ARCSO)

The Bachelor of Science in Nursing (BSN) program offered by ARCSO was launched in 2009. The first class of students enrolled in fall 2010 and in July 2013, the first BSN class graduated. Since 2009, the Dean's Office and the faculty have developed the program's curriculum and assessment plans. The school applied for and in November 2013 was granted accreditation for the BSN program for a period of five years, April 2, 2013 through December 31, 2018, and then reaccredited to December 31, 2028, from the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE), a US Department of Education-recognized nursing accreditation agency. The BSN program has an established mission, vision, objectives, and student learning outcomes for which an assessment plan has been identified. Student learning takes place in three different settings: classroom, laboratory or simulation center, and clinical sites. Assessment of student learning is performed using formative and summative methods in classrooms and experiential learning.

Faculty members assess student performance in line with the student learning outcomes of each course. Feedback and advising are consistently delivered to students, especially those with academic weaknesses using the Meeting with the Student form. Details of the course assessment plans are available to students in the course syllabi, which are posted on Blackboard. Since its inception, ARCSO has worked on developing an evaluation plan that integrates a number of evaluation tools/methods to measure achievement of expected outcomes and program effectiveness at three levels: students, employers of graduates, and alumni. Formal program reviews are conducted on a five-year cycle basis. Furthermore, external reviews are planned to be consistent with the CCNE accreditation process and cycle. Table 9 shows Nursing students' licensure passing rates over a three-year period.

NURSING									
National Licensure Passage Rates		2015		2016		2017		2018	
School	Name of exam	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed
Nursing	Colloquium - Nursing	22	100%	19	100%	34	100%	17	100%

Table 9: ARCSO student licensure passing rates

School of Pharmacy (SOP)

The SOP mission, vision, core values, and the program educational goals (PEG) and outcomes (PEO) are identified and are subject to continuous revision following a specific timetable. Based on assessment results, some were later revised in order to ensure that they are measurable and are in line with the LAU mission, SOP mission, national goals of pharmacy education, and ACPE (Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education) standards. A new cycle of the school's comprehensive assessment plan was launched in 2016 and is now geared towards a programmatic and documented assessment of learning outcomes as well as the other school programmatic components with a clear schedule, instruments, and strategy for their application. The assessment of the mission and PEGs is based on the input of the following program constituencies: students, alumni, employers, and prominent leaders in the pharmacy field and higher education (School Advisory Council). Assessment is done on a five-year cycle. The input of students and Advisory Council members on PEGs is gathered annually through focus groups. The input of alumni and employers is collected through surveys once every five years. The assessment of the Program Educational Outcomes triangulates direct, indirect, summative and formative assessment data from various sources. The assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) is repeated every three years and findings are incorporated within the plan for periodic feedback and improvement of the curriculum. Table 10 shows Pharmacy students' licensure passing rates over a four-year period.

PHARMACY									
State Licensure Examination Passage Rates		2015		2016		2017		2018	
School	Name of exam	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed
Pharmacy	National American Pharmacist Licensure Examination (NAPLEX)	8	87.50%	7	100.00%	10	90%	7	85.70%
National Licensure Passage Rates		2015		2016		2017		2018	
School	Name of exam	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed
Pharmacy	Lebanese National Competency Assessment Examination (Colloquium) - Pharmacy	50	100%	87	100%	64	100%	63	100%

Table 10: SOP student licensure passing rates

School of Medicine (SOM)

The objectives of the MD program, such as demonstrating ethical and professional behavior in the practice of medicine, providing patient-centered care, employing evidence-based practice, becoming a life-long learner, applying critical thinking in healthcare practice and promoting inter-disciplinary and inter-professional practice, in addition to core competencies, constitute the cornerstone of the curriculum. Course and clerkship learning objectives were defined based on these competencies. The assessment system at the school was designed not only to test for learning but also to enable learning. It serves multiple purposes including identifying and screening for student weaknesses, facilitating interventions; assessing achievement level and informing decision-making; improving instruction; and measuring outcomes.

The assessment system has three main characteristics: first, it involves multiple methods for assessment as measures of different but inter-related constructs; second, it serves both formative (for student improvement) and summative (for decision-making) purposes; and third, it involves multiple raters to minimize the potential limitations of subjectivity and to improve reliability of obtained grades. Furthermore, faculty who may have a conflict of interest with a student are not allowed to rate the performance of that student in keeping with transparency and fairness of assessment practices. The assessment toolbox includes testing in the workplace and outside the “real” clinical environment, and relies on frequent administration of tests that facilitates longitudinal monitoring of performance. The assessment system is designed to enable monitoring of achievement within each competency domain (graduating competencies) and to facilitate decision-making about graduation (satisfactory completion of the MD program).

The SOM and LAU administration ensure that students gain the best teaching and preparedness for the practice of medicine and for pursuing further post-graduate studies, both locally and internationally. This is ensured through the identification and recruitment of qualified teaching faculty, monitoring and maintenance of teaching quality, offering international clinical experience, and through the availability of the physical structure, with new technologies to meet teaching requirements. Students are encouraged to seek international elective rotations, especially in the US, and are helped in ensuring such rotations through affiliations that the SOM has and is still seeking, and through the direct contacts that LAU SOM faculty have internationally.

Evaluation of the curriculum includes assessment of teaching activities, of the modules/rotations/courses, and of clinical sites. The MD curriculum is reviewed each year by the faculty and committees following the feedback received from students. Furthermore, many workshops are organized by the team of PHMI first, then by experts in medical education that addressed specific aspects of the program, aiming at providing suggestions for improvement. The National Board of Medical Examiners (NBME) was invited for program review in June 2011 and the team provided their report that included suggestions for improvement, such as the need to set clear criteria for assigning an interview score for admissions and the necessity of setting passing standards for exams. Student performance on international exams is considered central to our program review. In this regard, the SOM started using the NBME exams, which are standardized exams, to test student knowledge acquisition in a more reliable way and to prepare them for international tests. Furthermore, the SOM encourages its students to take the United States Medical Licensing Examination (USMLE) steps and uses aggregate scores provided by the Educational Commission for Foreign Medical Graduates (ECFMG) to compare LAU student performance with that of all international medical graduates (IMGs). The school currently uses the ECFMG Medical School Web Portal (EMSWP) services in order to track student performance on USMLE testing. Results to date show very good performance among those who took the test, as shown in Table 11.

MEDICINE									
State Licensure Examination Passage Rates		2015		2016		2017		2018	
School	Name of exam	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed
Medicine	USMLE Step 1	28	92.85%	27	92.52%	29	100%	23	91.30%
	USMLE Step 2 Clinical Knowledge	19	78.94%	25	96%	14	92.85%	21	90.47%
	USMLE Step 2 Clinical Skills	15	100%	24	87.50%	20	90%	22	72.72%
National Licensure Passage Rates		2015		2016		2017		2018	
School	Name of exam	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed	# who took exam	% who passed
Medicine	Colloquium - General Medicine	34	100%	40	100%	37	100%	38	100%

Table 11: SOM student scores on the USMLE and national colloquium

Following the graduation of the first class in 2013, the school started planning to review the program objectives, mission and vision, and learning outcomes, and implement necessary changes. In May 2017, a retreat aiming at revising the learning outcomes and assessment practices was conducted and culminated in significant changes in these two areas. There is currently no US-based accrediting body that accredits MD programs outside the US. Furthermore, there is currently no accrediting body for MD programs in Lebanon but all local medical schools are recognized by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). Following the ECFMG initiative put forward in 2018 and mandating accreditation of medical schools by a World Federation for Medical Education (WFME)-approved body as a requirement for ECFMG certification (and hence for eligibility for graduate studies in the US), SOM has embarked on identifying a recognized body for accreditation and developing its Self-Evaluation Report (SER). The Association for Evaluation and Accreditation of Medical Education Programs (TEPDAD) in Turkey was identified by all Lebanese medical schools and approved by the local government as an accrediting body. The SOM is currently working on its SER that should be submitted in November 2019 for evaluation.

LAU Honors Program

The Honors Program was established as part of the SPII initiative and has existed for just over four years. It graduated its first group in spring 2017. Assessment data was gathered from the start but the program lacked a formal Assessment Plan. Still, the small nature of the program, and the insistence of the program director to reflect each semester in the evaluation data that was being collected allowed for a retrospective evaluation of the program as well as a provided a critical feedback mechanism for the program that allowed change semester by semester. This was rectified in spring 2018, with the creation of formal assessment plan. Given the program objectives, assessment seeks to evaluate not only academic

progress but also progress on ‘soft skills’. This is an important addition to LAU’s assessment culture, which has incrementally included the evaluation of soft skills developed through academic program. Consistently, Honors Program students show significant improvement upon graduation in the following skills: communication, team building, stress management, and decision making.

Direct and Indirect Assessment

As previously noted, DIRA acts as support for as well as synthesizer and analyzer of all aspects of the assessment of learning process. To most efficiently describe these roles, we have grouped DIRA’s work with assessment into the categories of indirect and direct (see Area of Emphasis #4 for a summary). Below is a more detailed description of the instruments and how they are used in the assessment of student learning outcomes. The overlap between DIRA and the Schools can be seen here and reflects reinforcement and support.

Indirect assessment

1. Course Evaluations are used primarily for assessing the course in terms of learning experience and delivery. All courses offered at LAU are evaluated by students regardless of the major or level (undergraduate, graduate, doctoral-professional practice). They include statements soliciting students’ perceptions on the effectiveness of teaching practices adopted and the level of attainment of course learning outcomes and where applicable program learning outcomes. The current practice does not allow benchmarking across schools. DIRA in coordination with the Office of the Provost proposed a set of core questions, which would support benchmarking at the level of the institution, school and department. The proposal was approved by the CD in February 2019 and will be used in conjunction with a range of assessments currently employed to measure teaching effectiveness. The new course evaluation survey was administered in Spring 2019. Figure 4 compares results of two core items in the course evaluations across Schools.

A. Evaluation of the course

A syllabus reflecting the content and requirements of the course was explained at the beginning of the course.							
School	Respondents	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Not Applicable	Mean
Overall	9232	66.94 %	27.21 %	3.41 %	1.27 %	1.17 %	3.62
Architecture & Design	339	58.41 %	30.09 %	5.90 %	2.65 %	2.95 %	3.49
Arts & Sciences	5001	67.07 %	26.75 %	3.76 %	1.34 %	1.08 %	3.61
Business	2014	72.39 %	23.68 %	2.18 %	0.94 %	0.79 %	3.69
Engineering	1193	58.34 %	34.20 %	3.60 %	1.76 %	2.10 %	3.52
No College Designated	8	75.00 %	12.50 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	12.50 %	3.86
Nursing	47	55.32 %	38.30 %	4.26 %	2.13 %	0.00 %	3.47
Pharmacy	630	70.16 %	26.67 %	2.86 %	0.00 %	0.32 %	3.68
The course material was well-organized.							
School	Respondents	% Strongly Agree	% Agree	% Disagree	% Strongly Disagree	% Not Applicable	Mean
Overall	9232	61.43 %	28.36 %	6.65 %	2.78 %	0.78 %	3.54
Architecture & Design	339	55.46 %	30.38 %	7.96 %	4.13 %	2.06 %	3.40
Arts & Sciences	5001	61.07 %	28.15 %	6.90 %	3.06 %	0.82 %	3.48
Business	2014	67.03 %	25.32 %	4.97 %	2.28 %	0.40 %	3.58
Engineering	1193	55.32 %	31.35 %	9.05 %	3.10 %	1.17 %	3.41
No College Designated	8	87.50 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	0.00 %	12.50 %	4.00
Nursing	47	46.81 %	46.81 %	4.26 %	2.13 %	0.00 %	3.38
Pharmacy	630	61.90 %	31.90 %	5.08 %	0.95 %	0.16 %	3.55

Figure 4: Responses to core items in course evaluations by School

2. NSSE (National Survey of Student Engagement), administered annually, collects information from first-year and senior students about the characteristics and quality of their undergraduate experience. By benchmarking LAU's performance on the NSSE items with peer institutions, LAU is able to determine how effectively it is achieving its mission and what is the impact of an LAU education on the attainment of general education (LAS) and co-curricular outcomes. Examples of NSSE results are shared in the first part of this essay and in Area of Emphasis #4.
3. The Institutional Exit Survey, administered annually, solicits feedback from senior and graduating students regarding their satisfaction with university services including advising, registration, career guidance and the library, among others, as well as the campus environment and their overall academic experience. In addition, respondents provide input on their future career prospects and academic endeavors as well as the institution's strengths and weaknesses, and the features that make it an attractive choice for prospective students. They also include statements tailored to the needs of individual programs soliciting students' perception of the level of attainment of program learning outcomes. Findings are shared with the faculty and staff, the CD and the PC. Areas where expectations are not met are discussed and acted upon. Results of exit surveys are used in program reviews, accreditation reports, and for the assessment of student satisfaction with various aspects of their academic life. For example, students complained of the quality of computer labs on both campuses, in particular the Byblos campus, after which the institution created more lab facilities and upgraded the existing ones and thus we see satisfaction increasing from 40% to 65% in Byblos from 2015-2016 to 2017-2018. A sample of student responses to the institutional exit survey by campus and year is shown in Figure 5.

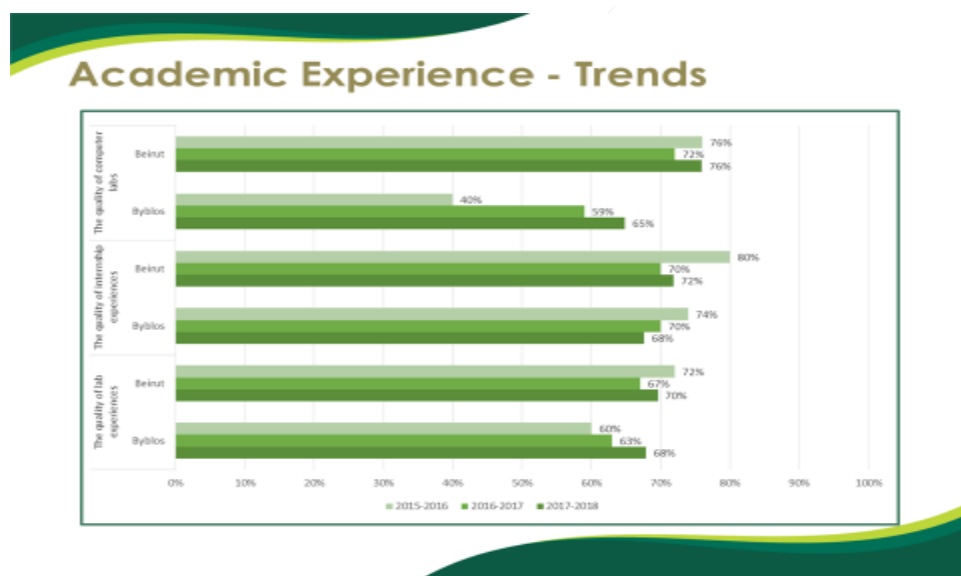


Figure 5: Institutional exit survey sample results by campus and year

4. The Institutional Alumni Survey, administered three times per year, targets graduates 12 months after graduation. The survey mainly allows respondents to share their perceptions of the impact of their LAU education on their careers. Alumni are prompted to answer questions regarding their employment and educational status, the time they spent and the tools they used to search for their first job, and current employer details. In addition, alumni provide insights related to career challenges they face and their workplace preparedness as a result of their LAU education and training acquired through high impact practices and specialized workshops. The results of the

survey are used to determine student success and institutional effectiveness. For example, when internship was identified as impacting employment, the Career and Placement Office began a process of strengthening relationships with existing employers and establishing new relationships as well as developing MoUs to ensure quality internships for students and possible employment opportunities. In 2018 alone, 36 new MoUs with employers were signed to ensure internship and career placement.

5. The Institutional Employer Survey, administered once every three years, solicits feedback from employers on their satisfaction with the theoretical knowledge as well as the technical and practical skill training of LAU students in addition to their general level of preparedness for the workplace. Employers find LAU degrees and experience match Lebanese and regional labor market needs, value the theoretical, technical, and soft skills of LAU's graduates but were interested in more graduates in specific fields such as accounting, computer science, various engineering fields, information management systems, pharmacy, and nursing.
6. The Universum Survey, administered annually, solicits feedback from students about their educational background, academic experience, and perception of potential employers, priorities in the workplace and career goals, in addition to other aspects that might determine employment outcome after graduation. The Universum Survey is a good benchmarking tool allowing LAU to compare its performance on a range of employment-related outcomes and indicators with those of other universities nationally and regionally across disciplines. The findings of the Universum Survey help LAU understand its students' career aspirations and employer expectations, adopt best practices for employer relations, and improve career services quality and position their brand. For example, LAU students identify themselves as being 1) future-oriented, 2) solution-focused, and 3) taking time to think.

Direct Assessment

1. CAAP, administered annually, is a nationally recognized American exam designed to measure student learning. It enables postsecondary institutions to assess, evaluate, and enhance the outcomes of their general education programs offering six independent test modules, available in the subject areas most commonly covered in postsecondary general education programs: Reading, Writing Skills, Writing Essay, Critical Thinking, Mathematics, and Science. LAU students participated in the critical thinking, science and math modules.
2. ETS Proficiency Profile, which in many ways is similar to the CAAP, was recently adopted by LAU as an alternative to the discontinued CAAP. The online version was administered to the 2018 USP cohort of students who applied to LAU (those who were accepted and those who were not) with the aim of determining the effectiveness of the admissions process. This same cohort will take the test when they are seniors to determine gains in critical thinking and quantitative analysis at point of exit from LAU. It is planned that the online test will be administered to a cohort of first-year and senior students in 2019.
3. Assessment of Co-curricular Learning Outcomes
DIRA worked with various institutional support units such as SDEM, Dean of Students Offices, special academic cohorts (Honors Program), and academic schools to develop an assessment plan for co-curricular learning outcomes. The following were identified as the core co-curricular learning outcomes:
 - Critical and Creative Thinking

- Leadership and Global Perspective
- Civic and Social Responsibility
- Communication
- Collaboration
- Professionalism and Work Ethics
- Wellness
- Sustainability

The assessment plan was approved by the University Curriculum Council and the CD. Workshops were conducted to explain the assessment process to those new to the process - mainly staff in the support units. DIRA worked with the units to develop assessment tools including rubrics and surveys. DIRA will continue to facilitate the administration of the tools using a range of platforms and analyze the results. The results of the first implementation of assessment of co-curricular outcomes were discussed earlier.

Support of Assessment

Even when not leading assessment efforts, DIRA has played a key role in supporting schools at LAU to assess the attainment of their student and co-curricular learning outcomes primarily through its accreditation and assessment software “Tk20” and its survey software, Explorance. Several schools are now using different modules in the Tk20 platform. These include the e-portfolio module, field experience binder, and the faculty qualifications module among others. Below is a detailed description of the different assessment modules and tools used to assessment student and co-curricular outcomes by school or program.

School of Pharmacy

In the assessment of their learning outcomes and performance criteria, the School of Pharmacy is using the field experience module in Tk20 to evaluate student performance in all four professional years. These evaluations consist of two sets of defined rubrics: the first set is used by students for self-assessment at three stages of each rotation (start, mid, end), while the second set of rubrics is used by preceptors to evaluate students’ performance at the mid and end of each rotation in addition to a final scoring rubric. These rubrics are mapped to different performance criteria of the program assessment plan and the results can be extracted automatically through a customized report created to serve the purpose.

DIRA will eventually combine all of these forms in one student portfolio that includes student artifacts, projects, presentations and CV in addition to all the evaluations forms from field experience binders, throughout their academic journey and professional years.

Education Program

Students enrolled in the BA in Education program are required to collect evidence from different assignments they prepare in their courses throughout their academic journey, and map these artifacts to the ten INTASC standards. For this purpose, a portfolio has been created on Tk20 to gather this evidence and allow students to describe, analyze and reflect on their experiences, separately for each standard. Students are able to retain and even add to their portfolios after graduation in order to aid them in their professional development. A striking element of the portfolio is that it allows students to keep on revising and adding to it while taking more advanced courses in their major. The portfolio also allows students to show evidence of what they have learned to future employers.

AKSOB

In addition to core and elective business and related courses, BS in Business students are required to take the BUS299 designed to enhance student civic engagement in which they are required to complete 12 hours of volunteering in an assigned NGO. Four different parties are involved in this process after the student placement: 1) the student who submits a report about the internship experience, 2) the NGO evaluating the student work, 3) the course instructor ensuring student attendance, and 4) the faculty responsible for assessment evaluating the student's written report. In addition, the written communication rubric completed by the faculty member responsible for assessment is also mapped to outcome 5.2 of the program's assessment plan. Since the implementation of the mandatory civic engagement course for all students in the B.S. Business Studies program, AKSOB has found that students:

- Demonstrated an active engagement in civic service, and a guided community service experience based.
- Developed a deeper understanding in civic and leadership skills
- Acquired more confidence in being involved in their culture and developed their network
- Extended knowledge from professionals and community members
- changed their perception of life and viewed this activity as an eye opening experience
- Gained better written communication

In addition to the above it was noted that students were able to improve their communication skills as evidenced in their report submitted on Tk20 at the end of the course. This report followed specific guidelines and rubrics. In addition, it was noted since the implementation of this requirement that students were exposed to a network of more than 50 different types of NGOs with a variety of missions and services.

C. Measures of student success, including retention and graduation

There are many different ways to evaluate success and LAU is getting better at identifying and describing them to its various stakeholders. Starting at the macro level, as noted earlier, SPIII pushed the institution to reflect on its mission amidst a rapidly changing national and international higher education environment. LAU recommitted to high quality and innovative teaching and student learning. Related to this is the university's commitment to a diverse student body that reflects our goals for developing citizens who will improve the communities and societies in which they live. In order to meet goals relating to a diverse student body and remaining student-centered, LAU has increased its efforts to recruit students from diverse backgrounds including all regions of Lebanon. From survey and other data, we know that affording a private, liberal arts, American-style education is a challenge for many students, particularly given the ongoing weakness of the Lebanese and regional economies. In response, LAU has been able to significantly increase donations directed at financial aid as well as many other projects while also successfully pursuing scholarship aid through various sources of funding and donors. More specifically, LAU has expanded its financial aid to \$34 million in AY 2017-18, and the institution has long included student employment to make tuition more affordable for families.

An example of graduation rates over eight consecutive years is shown in Table 12, revealing an increase from 64% for the cohort of 2003 to 80% for the cohort of 2010.

YEAR	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
First-Time Cohort (N)	772	710	856	822	1,019	997	1,289	1,216
Graduation Rate (150%)	64%	70%	73%	74%	77%	71%	75%	80%

Table 12: Graduation rates 2003-2010

Retention rates have also improved (see Table 13) and are at around 89% for first year degree seeking undergraduates.

School	Entering Cohort	Return Rate
School of Architecture & Design	124	92.7%
School of Arts & Sciences	501	88.4%
Adnan Kassar School of Business	371	89.8%
School of Engineering	293	88.4%
Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing	31	87.1%
School of Pharmacy	109	89.0%
	1429	89.2%

Table 13: Retention rates by School for fall 2018

As for employability, the most recent survey showed that 84% of LAU students are employed within 12 months of graduation or are continuing their higher education. As noted previously regarding the results of LAU's extensive Employability study, 80% of students work in fields directly related to their university majors. Furthermore, LAU has long graduated students who seek to remain in academe and go on to further study in Lebanon, Europe, and North America; 27% of LAU graduates do graduate work.

D. Satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes

As discussed under Standard 1, LAU's mission statement is a reflection of the university's commitment to delivering an American-style, liberal arts education that prepares graduates to be productive members of society writ large:

Lebanese American University is committed to academic excellence, student centeredness, civic engagement, the advancement of scholarship, the education of the whole person, and the formation of leaders in a diverse world (<http://www.lau.edu.lb/about/mission>).

Reflecting on the mission, students should gain not only the skills and knowledge of a particular field but also an orientation toward lifelong learning and the willingness to contribute to their communities and societies in positive ways. Academic Excellence is demonstrated through LAU's diligence in conducting academic program reviews that always involve external review on best practices. More support has been given in the past five years to constantly seeking to improve and increase faculty scholarship as evidenced by increase in faculty development opportunities and research output. Our students and alumni are also recognized for their excellence in academic studies and community leadership. For example, LAU senior students significantly reported helping people resolve their disagreements and resolve conflicts that involve bias, discrimination and prejudice more than their 2017 NSSE counterparts.

LAU's commitment to Student Centeredness has clear returns. Student representation on university councils, participation in teaching/learning workshops (e.g. active learning), clubs, sports, societies, MUN and other simulation programs run by students, a Writing Center found present in both Beirut and Byblos campuses that employs regular as well as peer tutors (<http://sas.lau.edu.lb/english/facilities/writing-center.php>), outreach and enterprise activities and programs has increased with greater 'real' participation on the part of students.

As detailed in Area of Emphasis #1 as well as in various standards, LAU has strengthened its commitment to and investment in Scholarship. The University Research Council (URC), Graduate Studies and Research Office (GSR), and School Research Committees are active and provide tangible results through the increased number of faculty publications, faculty development funds, Institute Research Board (IRB) activity, and student and faculty participation in Erasmus and other exchange programs.

While LAU has long committed itself to Civic Engagement, what students learn and ultimately gain from their involvement is best seen through the work of the Outreach and Civic Engagement Office (OCE). The Offices of the Dean of Students also spearhead numerous activities and projects, many of them involving volunteering and charity work. However, it is student leadership in clubs and particularly in the co-curricular Model United Nations, Model Arab League, and Model European Union that LAU students really shine. Bringing their hands-on experience with simulations of political institutions, LAU students have demonstrated that politics in Lebanon can be more than only a reflection of sectarian identity—that politics can be about ideas and better meeting the needs of a community. Though Lebanese politics beyond our campuses are often fraught with corruption and sometimes violence, LAU students have worked with faculty and staff to keep the tradition of elected student government alive and to work continually to make it better. The high voting rate (around 80%), the campaign platforms, and the absence of violence around the LAU Student Government Elections are clear demonstrations of students embodying LAU's mission. They and all of us at LAU are rightfully proud.

The Continuing Education Program (CEP), which offers opportunities for a variety of adult education programs and degrees/certificates for the community, both locally and regionally (<http://cep.lau.edu.lb>) has increased substantially. LAU views CEP as integral to its mission and its commitment to be engaged in the community.

As already noted and demonstrated by the Employability Survey as well as various exit surveys and program reviews, internships have been crucial to LAU student success while at university and even more so after graduation. These findings were crucial in supporting revision of curricula in professional schools as well as the School of Arts and Sciences to make internships a key component of programs. Building on this, internships are now more rigorously overseen as well as assessed for student learning during and following the internship period.

LAU is doing a better job in meeting the promises laid out in its mission than it was previously. By this we do not mean that prior students weren't learning what we wanted them to learn, rather, that we didn't have the tools we have now to assess whether they were or not. In the past few years, LAU has made great strides in better articulating student's learning goals, sharing them with students, and then assessing the attainment of those goals. The institution is following through better on both enlarging the numbers and diversity of students it enrolls while ensuring that all enrolled students can make it through to graduation. The scholarly level of its faculty is increasing while retaining LAU's traditional focus on teaching excellence. LAU is doing a better job of identifying when it is not living up to its own standards through institutionalized assessment and evaluation. We have laid solid groundwork for institutionalizing self-reflection at all levels of the university. And we are getting better at sharing these strengths as well as areas that we are continuing to work on with external audiences. Lastly, LAU is working to keep its sense of creativity in developing the means and environment to improve student learning and develop the innovative and ethical leaders for a country, region, and world that desperately needs them.

VI. Institutional Plans

LAU has used the Interim Report process to describe and assess our current performance and to reflect on how this performance can be further improved moving forward. Drawing heavily on our now institutionalized strategic planning process, the work of DIRA, and our community articulation of what LAU is looking for in a new President following the excellent development of the institution under the leadership of Dr. Jabbra, we have clearly identified goals and the means to reach them. Given the challenges that LAU has faced in its long history, and cognizant of the chronic economic and political challenges facing the country and the region in addition to those that face higher education at large, LAU has long been committed to acting conservatively with our finances and planning despite seeking innovation in our teaching and scholarship. LAU has been steadily growing its endowment under the guidance of the Board investment committee. The performance of the endowment portfolio is in the top percentile against all indexes, and LAU aims to grow its endowment to an operating budget ratio to 3.5 in approximately 8 years. This is considered safe for the unstable situation in Lebanon and the region.

An important and critical milestone in the coming year will be the choice of a new LAU President by fall 2020. The leadership transition has been and is expected to be smooth, with Dr. Jabbra having given ample notice of his date of departure, and the BOT, administration, faculty, and staff weighing in with their opinions from the start of the search. As written in the search document posted on LAU's website,

"The next president of LAU is expected to continue the university's momentum and steer its successful trajectory for the future. To succeed, the next president must personify the mission and commitment of the university to serve young people and society as a whole, by providing innovative educational programs to a diverse and talented student body, real-world solutions through research and application of knowledge, and leadership in a dynamic society. The president must embody the inclusiveness and student centeredness of LAU by being a constant and familiar presence on both campuses, whose door is always open. The president must bring outstanding credentials, skill, and experience to the intellectual, social, political, financial and human aspects of the role, connect joyfully and empathetically with all of the university's constituents, and serve indefatigably, humbly and enthusiastically as the leader of this multi-faceted enterprise" (<https://www.lau.edu.lb/about/governance/president/files/candidate-information-pack-lau-february-2019.pdf>).

Since 2004 when Dr. Joseph Jabbra assumed the role of University President, he has committed himself to creating a university-wide strategic planning process that focused on the sustainability of the institution through building on our strengths while working to develop new opportunities for excellence. Now in the midst of our third strategic plan, the university has institutionalized planning and shared governance and a culture of innovation in teaching, scholarship, and community engagement. The School of Medicine (SOM) is now part and parcel of the university, and the integration of the hospital with the university remains ongoing, with the solid commitment of the LAUMC-RH leadership, the SOM, and university leadership. The Integrated Strategic Plan (ISP) provides the structure as well as the schedule for the necessary development of the hospital into a high-quality academic medical center. The financial oversight and guidance provided by the BOT ensures that LAUMC-RH achieves its goals and contributes to the overall excellence of the university. Moreover, the acquisition of St. John's Hospital (LAUMC-SJH) will certainly bring academic, revenue, and professional benefits, ensured by the ISP Steering Committee overseeing the LAUMC-SJH project and the appointment of administrative and medical leadership.

The three major pillars in our third institutional Strategic Plan 2017-2022 (SPIII) clearly identify our major goals: *Intellectual Capital*; *Pedagogical Innovation and Integrated Delivery*; and *LAU without Borders*. As seen throughout this Interim Report, LAU will remain a student-centered teaching-focused institution but with an added emphasis on research and knowledge creation. Building a more research-active faculty and ensuring that the university can finance such development are key to LAU's future and are major institutional goals for the coming five years. In the spirit of increasing the quality and quantity of faculty research produced at LAU, we have been recently discussing, proposing, and implementing ways of incentivizing faculty to conduct more research and increase quality research productivity. Since promoting graduate education and recruiting Research Assistants (RAs) and Post-Doctoral Fellows (PDFs) will positively impact research productivity, we have very recently, in spring 2019, developed guidelines for recruiting PDFs as well as procedures for employing faculty post retirement and for conducting post-tenure reviews, which were discussed with the Faculty Senate and FWPC Executives in a joint meeting and were shared by said executives with their constituents. These procedures were approved by the President for implementation as of fall 2019. In addition, as of the time of this report, we have recruited 20 post-doctoral fellows so far for AY 2019-20, and the President has approved 24 fully paid RAs to be strategically distributed to graduate programs across the schools in AY 2019-20. These strategies will hopefully increase scholarship and play a major role in enhancing LAU's ranking and visibility.

LAU also remains a student-centered teaching-focused institution and continues to be a pioneer in the use of technology to enhance students' learning experience and university services. During AY 2018-19, each school aligned its strategic initiatives and directives to achieve the goals of Pillar 2: *Pedagogical Innovation and Integrated Delivery*. Importantly, the newly revamped Center for Innovative Learning (CIL) has recruited a deputy director, an instructional technologist, and has launched its Faculty Fellows Program in July 2019, with six Faculty Fellows participating in 12 especially designed faculty development workshops focusing on pedagogical innovation, and working on redesigning their own courses, during July 2-29, 2019. We plan on having an increasing number of faculty participate in the Faculty Fellows Program each summer, who will in turn serve as mentors for other faculty, promoting effective pedagogy among peer faculty, and leading workshops, seminars, and possibly program consultations.

In addition, in line with the Fourth Industrial Revolution and the corresponding university direction regarding expanding offerings in the areas of data science, data analytics, and artificial intelligence (AI), a minor in Data Analytics and a new course entitled "An Introduction to Artificial Intelligence" were recently developed and both will be offered starting fall 2019. An MS in Artificial Intelligence is also being developed, to be offered in fall 2020. In parallel, our liberal arts and sciences (LAS) general education curriculum ensures that students develop proficiency in writing and oral skills; demonstrate an understanding of aesthetics and of the importance of art in human culture; and are equipped to critically analyze themes such as ethics, human rights, and social justice and their impact on individuals and communities. We also plan on infusing in LAS courses opportunities for students to develop contemporary soft skills that are essential for the future success of LAU graduates, such as creativity, leadership, life-long learning, and emotional intelligence.

Moreover, state-of-the-art technological pedagogical tools such as Augmented Reality / Virtual Reality are also currently being used in the School of Medicine and School of Arts and Sciences, as part of an ASHA grant, in addition to adaptive learning for personalized education and advanced mobile applications. We plan on expanding such state-of-the-art pedagogical innovation in the various Schools. A second area of technological use at LAU is supporting research activities in establishing High Performance Computing (HPC) and data collection and storing for the purpose of research and developing software applications to help SDEM in recruitment through financial aid simulators and in

streamlining students' access to the services of the Registrar, Business Office, career offices, student activities, counseling, health, student government and clubs, athletics, and residence halls. Plans for the use of Data Analytics and Visual Analytics to the LAU governance process are also underway, in areas such as enrollment management, fundraising, and assessment.

As for our third Pillar in SPIII, *LAU without Borders*, establishing external degree and non-degree programs outside of Lebanon is being handled largely by LAU Consult and the Office of the Provost in cooperation with the various Schools, and national as well as international MOUs are regularly established, dealing mostly with university exchange, student exchange, and corporate ones related to student internships. A few recent examples of MoUs established in AY 2019-20 include those with New York University, Wayne State University College of Pharmacy, FEV and VEDECOM (France), the (Lebanese) Litany River Authority (LRA), the (Lebanese) Traffic Management Office (TMO), and the (Lebanese) Ministry of Economy and Trade. We plan on continuously exploring further opportunities for similar types of collaborations.

Finally, working on university-wide initiatives as well as with individual programs and/or schools, DIRA continues to provide critical support to enable stakeholders throughout the university to identify, design, collect, and assess data to comprehensively assess student achievement of academic and co-curricular learning outcomes. LAU is also staying vigilant in its commitment to widely sharing information internally, as well as sharing externally as warranted to maintain its reputation for transparency and integrity.

Today, LAU is better known than ever before nationally and internationally for its effective and innovative teaching, the accomplishments of its students and alumni, its dedicated and talented staff, faculty scholarship, and ongoing service to the wider community. Continuing in its long tradition of planning for all contingencies, LAU continues to securely protect its future viability in a country and region facing chronic economic and political challenges.