



SELF-STUDY 2018

SUBMITTED TO THE NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS AND
COLLEGES-COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION



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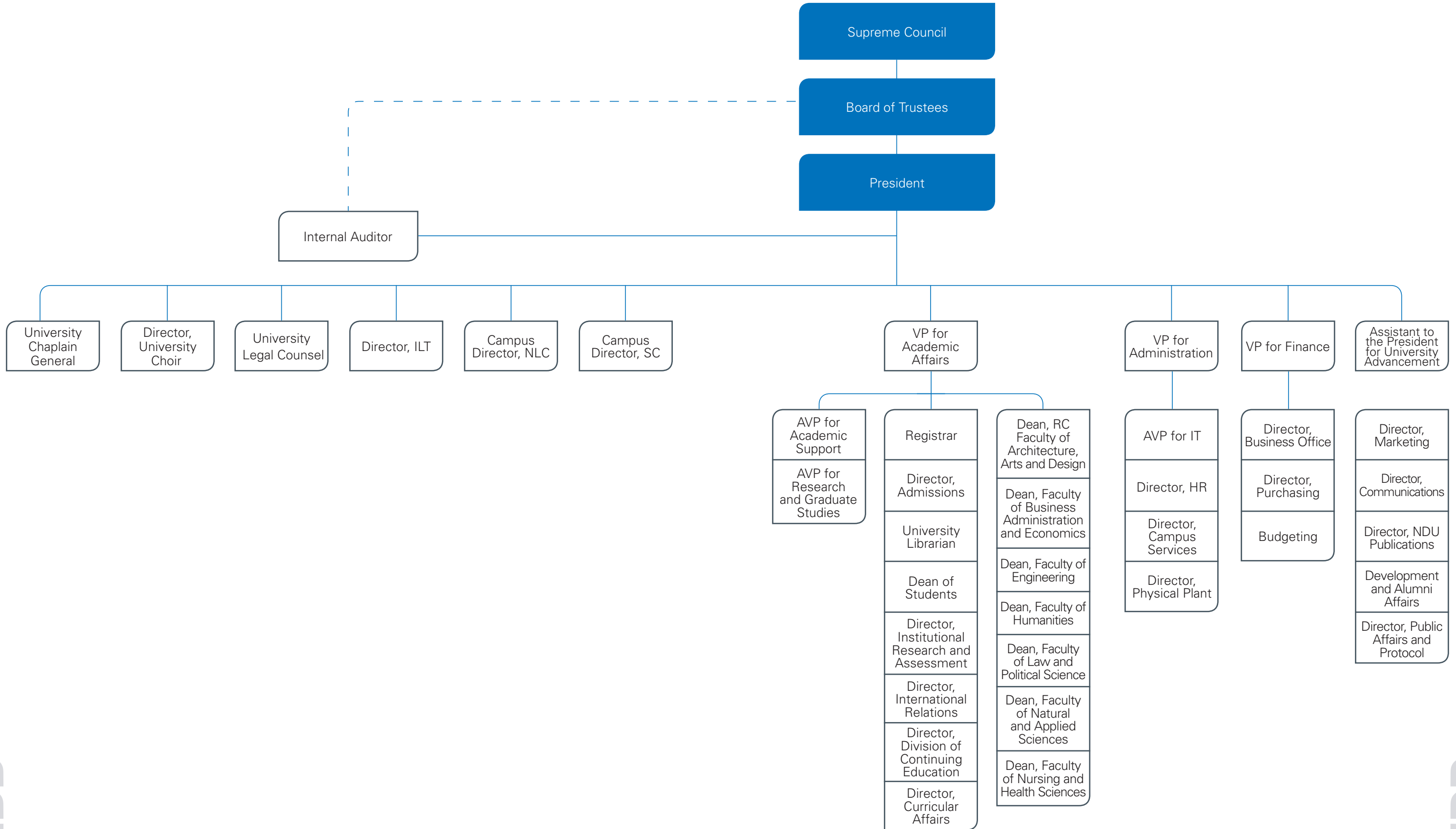
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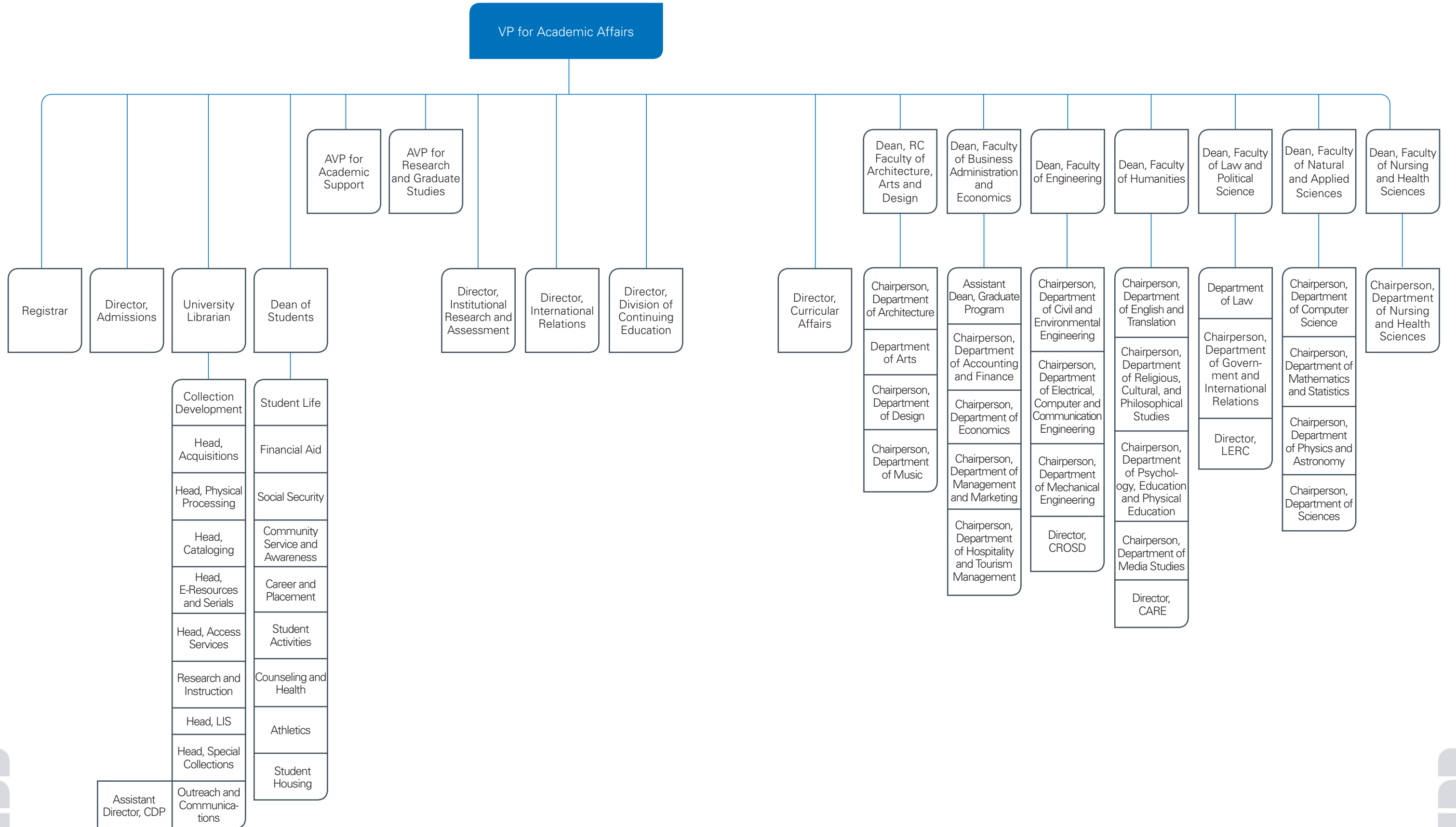
The members of the University administration would like to thank former NDU President Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa for initiating and guiding the accreditation process during his dynamic tenure.

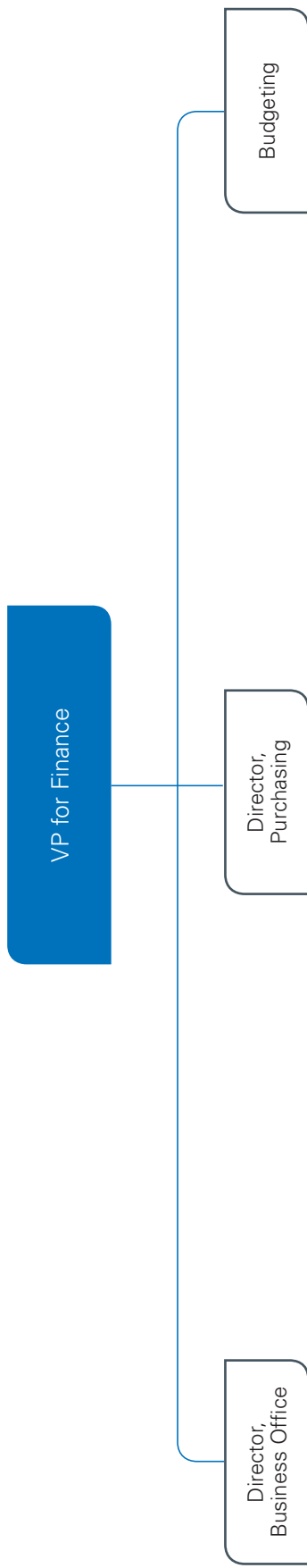
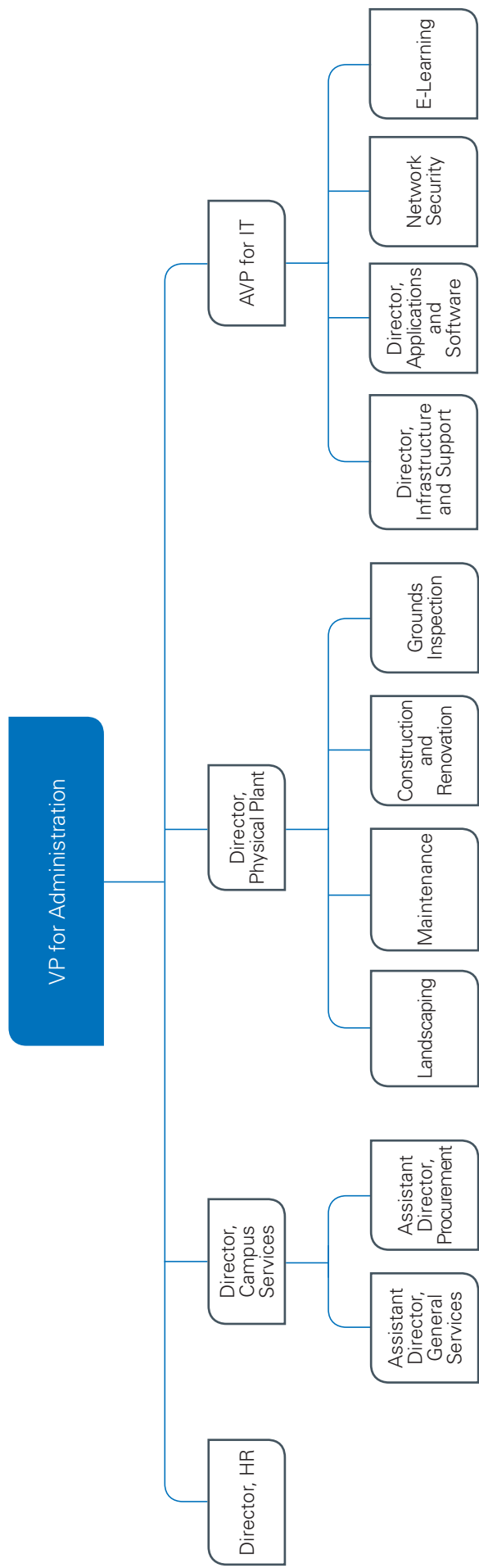
Also worthy of praise is former NDU Vice-President for Finance Rev. Fr. Bechara el-Khoury who staunchly supported the process from the start. We trust this *Self-Study* fittingly realizes their undertaking and does justice to their dedicated efforts.

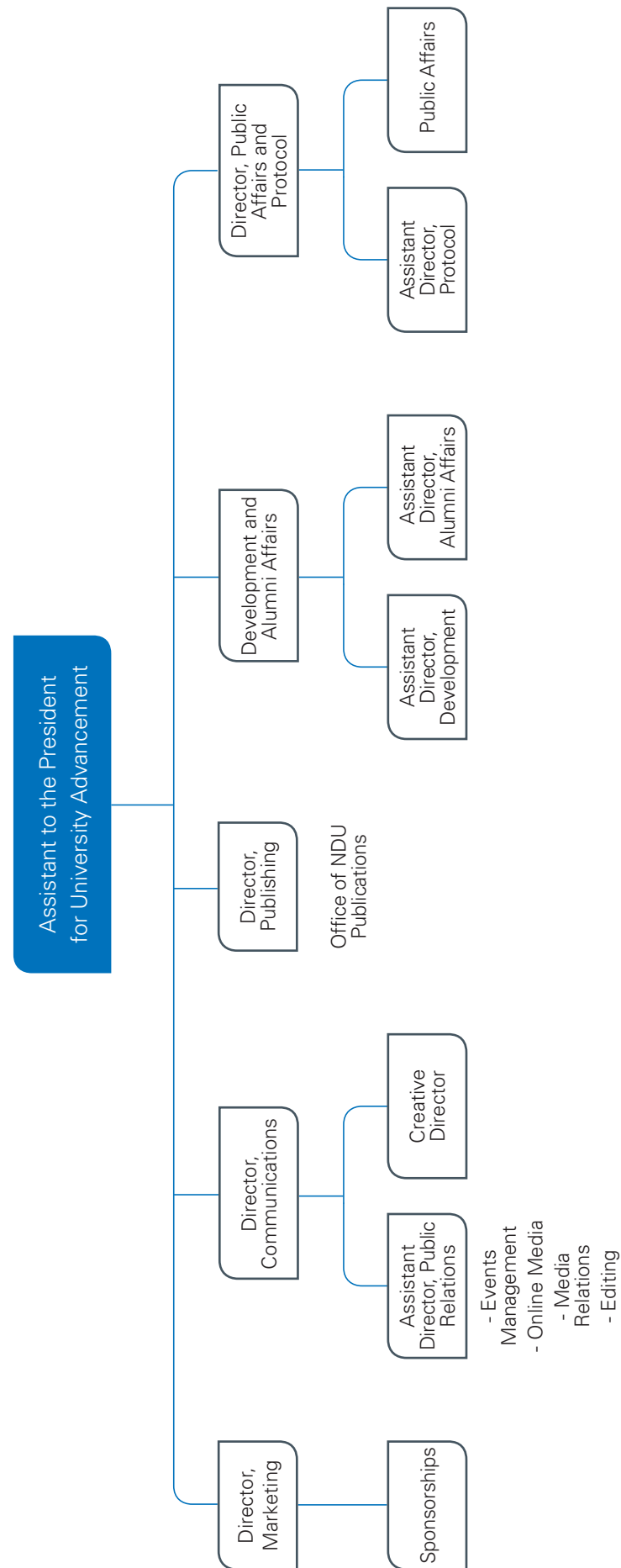
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Institutional Characteristics Form









19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

IMPORTANT DATES:

| year | Title | Details |
|------|--|--|
| 1978 | Louaize Center for Higher Education (LCHE) was founded under the wing of Beirut University College (BUC) | Louaize Center for Higher Education (LCHE) was founded under the wing of Beirut University College (BUC), now the Lebanese American University (LAU), by the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, the sponsoring society of NDU. |
| 1987 | NDU license was acquired for the three funding faculties: FH, FBAE, and FNAS | NDU license was acquired in the form of a presidential decree numbered 4116 and thus NDU was founded as the only Catholic university based on the American system of Education in Lebanon and the Arab Middle East Region. The three faculties which were licensed are: the Faculty of Humanities (FH), the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE), and the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS). |
| 1990 | Establishment of the OCP | Establishment of the Off Campus Program (OCP) in North Lebanon. |
| 1992 | Launching graduate studies | Launching of the graduate program recognized by the Lebanese Government for Computer Science, Business Administration, International Affairs and Diplomacy, English Literature, Applied Linguistics and TEFL, Arabic language and Literature. |
| 1996 | The FE was licensed | The Faculty of Engineering (FE) was established by decree numbered 9278. The five majors in the initial decree were: Civil Engineering, Architecture, Mechanical Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Computer Engineering. |
| 1998 | The main campus was inaugurated | Inauguration of the new main campus. |
| 1999 | FAAD licensing | The Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD) was founded. |
| 1999 | New campus in North Lebanon | A new campus was founded in Barsa, El Koura, North Lebanon, now known as North Lebanon Campus. |
| 1999 | License for the FPSPAD | The Faculty of Political Science, Public Administration, and Diplomacy (FPSPAD) was licensed. |
| 1999 | IAA accreditation for BA degree in Advertising and Marketing | The Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities, has received the formal accreditation from the International Advertising Association (IAA) for its BA Degree in Advertising and Marketing. |
| 2001 | Shouf Campus was founded | Another new regional campus was founded and inaugurated in Deir el-Kamar, Shouf, known as Shouf Campus (SC). |
| 2008 | FNHS was licensed | Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS) was officially licensed with three programs of studies: Nursing, Nutrition and Dietetics, Medical Lab Technology. |
| 2012 | FLPS was established | The FPSPAD name was changed to Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) on Dec.18, 2012 by decree number 9555. |
| 2013 | NEASC Candidacy | Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) has been granted Candidate for Accreditation status by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Inc. through its Commission on Institutions of Higher Education. |
| 2016 | ABET for FE | The Bachelor of Engineering degree programs were accredited in all campuses by the Engineering Accreditation Commission of Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET). |
| 2016 | FBAE | The Faculty Business Administration and Economics was declared as eligible for the accreditation of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB). |

CIHE - Table of Items of Special Attention

| year | Title | Details |
|-----------|--|--|
| 2016-2017 | Computer Science Program | The Department of Computer Science submitted an initial self-study of the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science program for ABET Accreditation Readiness in October 2016. The report was approved in January 2017 and an ABET visit was conducted in November 2017. |
| 2017 | CILECT accreditation eligibility for Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts – Radio/TV | The Department of Media Studies, Faculty of Humanities , Bachelor of Arts in Communication Arts – Radio/TV , was declared eligible for accreditation in September 2017 by the International Association of Cinema and Television Schools (Centre International de Liaison des Ecoles de Cinéma et de Télévision-CILECT). |

PRESIDENTS

| Name of the President | Year |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| Patriarch Cardinal Bechara el-Rahi | 1978 - 1984 |
| Abbot Antoine Sfeir | 1984 - 1987 |
| Father Boutros Tarabay | 1987 - 1993 |
| Bishop Francois Eid | 1993 - 1999 |
| Abbot Boutros Tarabay | 1999 - 2005 |
| Father Walid Moussa | 2005 - 2017 |
| Father Pierre Najem | 2017 - Present |

Acronyms

| | |
|-------|--|
| AACSB | Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business |
| AAO | Academic Advising Office |
| ABET | Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology |
| ACEND | Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics |
| ACM | Association for Computing Machinery |
| AGB | Association of Governing Boards |
| AVPAS | Assistant Vice-President for Academic Support |
| BMS | Building Management System |
| BOT | Board of Trustees |
| CAE | Centers for Actuarial Excellence |
| CARE | Center for Applied Research in Education |
| CC | Creative Commons |
| CCTV | Closed-Circuit Television |
| CEE | Civil and Environmental Engineering |
| CIHE | Commission on Institutions of Higher Education |
| CLOs | Course Learning Outcomes |
| CM | Campus Ministry |
| COD | Council of Deans |
| COIC | Course Offering Implementation Committee |
| CRVP | Council of Research in Values and Philosophy |
| CS | Computer Science |
| CSA | Community Service and Awareness |
| DCC | Department Curriculum Committee |
| DCS | Department of Computer Science |
| DET | Department of English and Translation |
| DOAC | Department Outcomes Assessment Committee |
| DPC | Department Personnel Committee |
| ECCE | Electrical, Computer and Communication Engineering Department |
| ECTS | European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System |
| EET | English Entrance Test |
| EY | Price Water House and Ernst and Young |
| FAAD | Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Design |
| FAB | Faculty Advisory Board |
| FBAE | Faculty of Business Administration and Economics |
| FCC | Faculty Curriculum Committee |
| FE | Faculty of Engineering |
| FGC | Faculty Graduate Committee |
| FH | Faculty of Humanities |
| FLPS | Faculty of Law and Political Sciences |
| FNAS | Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences |
| FNHS | Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences |
| FOAC | Outcome Assessment Committee |
| FPC | Faculty Personnel Committee |

| | |
|-------------|--|
| GCC | Goal Chairs Committee |
| GEEC | General Education Executive Committee |
| GERs | General Education Requirement |
| GMAT | Graduate Management Admission Test |
| GPA | Grade Point Average |
| GRA | Graduate Research Assistant |
| GTA | Graduate Teaching Assistant |
| IEEE Xplore | Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Xplore |
| IELTS | International English Language Testing System |
| ILT | Institute of Lebanese Thought |
| IPEDS | Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System |
| IRB | Institutional Research Board |
| iSER | initial Self Evaluation Report |
| LAC | Liberal Arts Curriculum |
| LBII | Lebanese Baccalaureate II |
| MEHE | Ministry of Education and Higher Education |
| MLT | Medical Lab Technology |
| MO | Mission Office |
| MoU | Memorandum of Understanding |
| MPC | Master Plan Committee |
| MSSC | Mission Self-Study Committee |
| NAAB | National Architectural Accrediting Board |
| NDU | Notre Dame University-Louaize |
| NEASC | New England Association of Schools and Colleges |
| NFOP | New Faculty Orientation Program |
| NGOs | Non-Governmental Organizations |
| NLC | North Lebanon Campus |
| NSSE | National Survey of Student Engagement |
| OAC | Outcome Assessment Committee |
| OC | Office of Communications |
| OCSA | Office of Community Service and Awareness |
| OCSA | Office of Community Service and Awareness |
| ODBG | Office of Design and Brand Guardian |
| OER | Open Educational Resources |
| OGS | Online Grading System |
| OHR | Office of Human Resources |
| OIRA | Office of Institutional Research and Assessment |
| OIT | Office of IT |
| OMM | Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary |
| OTME | Office of Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation |
| PEI | Program Educational Objectives |
| PEC | Program Evaluation Committee |
| PLOs | Program Learning Outcomes |

| | |
|-------|--|
| SAO | Office of Student Affairs |
| SAT | Scholastic Aptitude Test |
| SC | Shouf Campus |
| SIS | Student Information System |
| SOC | Society of Actuaries |
| SPC | Student Performance Criteria |
| SPRIC | Strategic Plan Review and Implementation Committee |
| SSS | Student Satisfaction Survey |
| SWOT | Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats |
| T1 | Teaching and Course Evaluation Form |
| TOEFL | Test of English as a Foreign Language |
| TRS | Teaching, Research, Services |
| UAC | University Appeals Committee |
| UC | University Council |
| UCC | University Curriculum Committee |
| UFPC | University Faculty Personnel Committee |
| USAC | University Student Affairs Committee |
| USDC | University Student Disciplinary Committee |
| VPA | Vice-President for Administration |
| VPAA | Vice-President for Academic Affairs |
| VPF | Vice-President for Finance |
| VPPAC | Vice President for Public Affairs and Communications |
| WSG | Work Study Grant |

Preface

Walking the path toward an inclusive quality education

On behalf of Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU), it is my honor and privilege to present this *Self-Study* to the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC).

In my capacity as the newly-appointed President of NDU, I would like to take this opportunity to praise the achievements of my predecessor Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa and to thank the Steering Committee and all sub-committees that continue to work diligently to comply with the Commission's Standards for Accreditation. I am pleased to see the progress recorded in many of the Standards reported herein.

Meeting the requirements of these Standards comes at a timely juncture in the life of our University, especially since NDU aims to align its *modus operandi* with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly SDG4: "Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning."

As a Catholic University, we have benefited from this formal *Self-Study* process to identify the best possible means to ensure an inclusive and quality education for all.

The process of preparing this Self-Study triggered an impactful transformational journey within our University; it has allowed us to measure our effectiveness, assess our strengths, and identify our challenges.

We succeeded in evaluating our development within the framework of the Commission's nine Standards, but most important, we benefited from this diagnostic to clearly identify the bridges we need to cross to overcome the obstacles hindering our progress.

I must admit that we have used this *Self-Study* as an opportunity to review our *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, redefine our priorities, and remap our road to excellence. This review has instilled us with greater confidence regarding our institutional direction and has resulted in a unique plan crafted around examining our present while continuing to draw inspiration from our past, in order to anticipate trends and prepare for the future.

The University *Strategic Plan* deeply reflects our unique identity, which made us a university of choice for our students and alumni who seek quality education embedded in an "advanced" Catholic framework while being open to diversity. This distinctive identity is our pride and we hope to transmit our mission and values for generations to come.

We, at NDU, are determined to benefit from the current momentum of change and adaptation that coincides with my tenure where we put on the table a collective vision for our future that builds on the legacy created since our founding in 1987.

In a relatively short space of time, we have succeeded across our curricula to nurture a culture of continuous assessment and improvement.

The new governance system, established to respond to the Commission's Standard Three, has taken shape and

is being implemented throughout the spectrum of University bodies/entities—from the Supreme Council and the Board of Trustees (BOT) to the President, reaching to faculty, staff, and students.

I am particularly pleased to see that the philosophy of shared governance has reached our students, as we encourage them to adopt transparency during their student years and beyond, a truly needed virtue in Lebanon and the region.

In the reporting period of this self-assessment, we transitioned to the actual implementation of our policies and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), which boosted our confidence as regards our plans.

Among our numerous achievements, we succeeded in reinstating the importance of our Library by enhancing its human resources and enriching it with new titles and subscriptions, with the aim to better serve our students and research community.

At the administrative level, we have adopted the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP), and started auditing our financial operations accordingly. Because we are aware that we still need to strengthen our human resources with qualified finance staff to enhance our business operations and establish the internal audit function, an Internal Auditor and a Director of Finance are being recruited.

Filling key University positions is an ongoing process, and we are prioritizing key hires, including the recruitment of a Legal Counsel to update our policies and procedures, to help us stay abreast of the changing legal environment, and to develop key governance documents.

A promising future lies ahead given that we have initiated mitigation measures to address our gaps and challenges. Our plans include the deployment of our University Office of Advancement, and we are working on completing its supporting units to optimize its performance across its different disciplines.

As President, I intend to spearhead and promote the adoption of a planning culture among all units, academic and para-academic, to attain a status where planning becomes firmly rooted in our culture and constitutes the foundation of our institutional development.

We shall remain loyal to our mission, to the founding idea that aims to make higher education accessible to all, with an eye on inclusiveness and quality. This ideal remains at the core of our ethos and transcends belief and conviction given that it parallels our guiding principle as a Catholic University born from the heart of the Church.

Fr. PIERRE NAJEM, OMM
President

Introduction

Adhering to the process of writing a self-study and following the comprehensive evaluation visit in November 2015 by a team representing the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) embarked in the academic year 2016-2017 and in fall 2017 on a self-evaluation process toward meeting the NEASC standards. In this framework, NDU continued its work to achieve progress in addressing the NEASC concerns (reiterated below) in a letter addressed to the University dated July 11, 2016. The concerns were:

- Meeting the expectation that the University audited financial statements will be prepared, according to U.S. Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) procedures;
- Continuing to develop an institutional culture of assessment particularly with respect to the assessment of student learning, academic program review, and University-wide planning;
- Implementing and using policies and procedures for institutional governance and involving Faculty governance;
- Strengthening library and research staff and support; and
- Continuing to implement and assess the effectiveness of newly developed policies and initiatives.

NDU formed in October 2016 a Steering Committee — composed of 21 members and 11 separate sub-committees — charged with collecting, reviewing, and analyzing evidence to produce this *Self-Study Report*, according to the *NEASC-CIHE Self-Study Guide*. Each of the 11 sub-committees was assigned a fact-finding mission for a specific NEASC standard with the exception of Standard Four, which was assigned to three different committees given its sheer size and multiplexical nature. The five NEASC concerns, moreover, were distributed among the committees, according to their nature and subject matter.

The work of the Steering Committee and sub-committees was divided into three phases:

- Phase 1 (5-month duration) was dedicated to fact-finding;
- Phase 2 (5-month duration) was dedicated to critically evaluating the data and facts; and
- Phase 3 (3-month duration) was dedicated to drafting and agreeing on a set of projections considered essential by the University administration, faculty and community to keep NDU advancing and to answer the needs of the population it serves.

The last few remaining months focused on updating the *Self-Study* and finalizing the stylistic design.

Institutional Overview

NDU is a Lebanese non-profit Catholic institution of higher education, which adopts the American model of liberal arts education. The University first came into being in 1978, as the Louaize Center for Higher Education (LCHE). The Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary (OMM), the sponsoring Order of NDU, founded the LCHE under the wing of Beirut University College (BUC), now the Lebanese American University (LAU).

A report submitted on January 16, 1981, by the OMM titled, “*Louaize Center for Higher Education: A Detailed Statement from 1978 to 1981*,” provides information on the establishment of the LCHE and details its objectives, structure, aspirations, and regional importance. The report purports the need to establish in Lebanon a non-profit Catholic institution of higher education that follows the American system of higher education. The LCHE achieved this ambition in 1978 when 72 students enrolled and that number quickly grew to 305 by 1980. During those years, the BUC supervised all academic programs while the OMM took charge of all administrative and financial matters.

True to the mission of the Order, which insists that the country needs a national university, Catholic in spirit, Maronite in tradition, and American in system, the LCHE applied on April 26, 1984, to the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) for a license to establish an independent university. On August 14, 1987, the recognition of the University was sought in the form of a Presidential Decree numbered 4116; thus, NDU was founded.

Although NDU is religiously affiliated, it does not impose any sectarian obligations on students, faculty, or staff. The cultural and spiritual heritage of the OMM reflects a belief in a unified Lebanon, despite it being a multi-confessional state; a belief in education as a means of protection against fanaticism and corruption; and a dedication to freedom of thought and expression. The University espouses such values and beliefs irrespective of color, faith, race, or gender and seeks to enhance those values through its liberal arts education and the career preparation that caters to the real needs of Lebanon and the region.

During the University commencement ceremony in July 1994, then NDU President Fr. Francois Eid announced in his address the completion of the study, design, and architecture of a new campus. The foundation stone was laid on November 19, 1994. Five years later, in 1999, NDU opened a new campus in Barsa, Koura (North Lebanon), the North Lebanon Campus (NLC). NDU’s mission-driven approach to education encouraged the University to write a new chapter in its evolving history by extending its services to the rural Shouf region where it established a branch campus in Deir el-Kamar, the Shouf Campus (SC). The OMM Supreme Council endorsed this proposal in a meeting held on March 8, 2001, and the Board of Trustees (BOT) granted immediate approval. The establishment of the SC in Lebanon’s most densely-populated Druze communities aspired to meet the needs of both Christian and non-Christian communities, particularly in promoting dialogue, celebrating diversity, and cementing national cohesion.

On the academic front, the degrees offered over the years at NDU, following its founding continued to evolve and expand exponentially. In October 1992, the University launched its government-recognized graduate programs, offering master’s degrees in Computer Science, Business Administration, International Affairs and Diplomacy, English Literature, Applied Linguistics and TEFL, and Arabic Language and Literature. In April 1994, NDU established the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, and in October 1996, the Lebanese government issued Decree numbered 9278; thereby, officially recognizing the University’s new Bachelor of Architecture and Bachelor of Engineering in Civil Engineering, Computer and Communication Engineering, Electrical Engineering, and Mechanical Engineering. Afterward, the Architecture and Design programs were separated from the Faculty of Engineering into their own entity: the Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Design. In 2012, a Bachelor of Law degree was established. The most recent additions to the academic programs at NDU are bachelor’s degrees in the following subjects: Petroleum and Chemical Engineering, Biochemistry, Nutrition Business, and Health Communication as well as a Master of Science in Business Strategy. At present, NDU is home to seven Faculties (schools), namely:

- i. Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts & Design (FAAD).
- ii. Faculty of Engineering (FE).
- iii. Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE).
- iv. Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS).
- v. Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS).
- vi. Faculty of Humanities (FH).
- vii. Faculty of Law and Political Sciences (FLPS).

NDU firmly believes that the distinction of an institution of higher education depends primarily on the quality of its faculty and students. As of fall 2017, a headcount enrollment by campus, i.e. main campus and the two branch campuses, reveals a total enrollment of 6,256 students served by 269 full-time faculty members and 420 part-time faculty members. The significant difference between full-time and part-time faculty members arises from that fact that since fall 2014, NDU has constantly been adding faculty to full-time ranks and relying less on the part-time category. As of fall 2017 the full-time equivalent (FTE) and part-time equivalent (FTE) count is 270 and 127, respectively.

Another milestone in the history of the institution and part of its commitment to proper planning and decision-making was the establishment of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA). The OIRA supports the NDU mission by promoting a campus culture in which the decision-making process at every level is based on sufficient and appropriate quantitative and qualitative evidence. The office carries out this objective by preparing standard statistical reports (*Factbook*), conducting surveys, and performing data analysis that provide an understanding of internal operations and the external environment. A case in point, each academic year starts with a University leadership retreat where presentations and decisions are all data-driven (based on the data supplied by the OIRA). In addition, the office is responsible for conducting surveys, particularly those related to teaching effectiveness, while ensuring that all institutional information supplied to external parties is accurate, consistent, and delivered in a timely manner.

It is noteworthy to mention that the cultures of quality assurance and assessment have become firmly rooted at NDU. To illustrate this point, the Faculty of Engineering (FE) received in summer 2016 Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accreditation, and the decision was retroactive to fall 2013. The Computer Science program also underwent in November 2017 a comprehensive evaluation by the ABET Computing Accreditation Commission. The Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) became eligible in summer 2016 for AACSB accreditation and will submit in spring 2018 its initial *Self-Evaluation Report*. The International Advertising Association (IAA) has accredited since 1999 the B.A. in Advertising and Marketing. Furthermore, the B.A. in Communication Arts - Emphasis Radio-TV is currently seeking International Association of Cinema and Television Schools (CILECT) accreditation.

Lastly and most importantly, another milestone has been reached in the history of NDU; a landmark related to governance and specifically the shared governance between the Supreme Council and the BOT. This shared governance was recently manifested through the election of a new University President in the person of Fr. Pierre Najem who succeeded Fr. Walid Moussa after the completion of the latter’s third term in office. The Supreme Council met on July 19, 2017, and elected Fr. Najem as NDU President, and the BOT approved his election on August 8, 2017.

Structure of the Report

The *Self-Study* was structured, according to pertinent NEASC-CIHE-related guidelines and procedures, and addresses all areas of emphasis requested by the NEASC-CIHE based on the interim comprehensive visit. This Report also addresses each standard, relying on the *Interim Report*, the *Visiting Team Report*, and the NEASC letters, especially the letter dated July 11, 2016. Each area of emphasis was addressed, as appropriate, in the relevant chapter for each standard. In this regard, the overall aim of this *Report* is to ensure that NDU not only builds on the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*, the *Interim Report 2015*, and NEASC-CIHE letters but also continues to tell its unique story on its journey toward achieving full accreditation. Finally, the *Report* also integrates all pertinent NEASC-CIHE forms duly filled-in with relevant data and exhibits to support our developing story.

Standard One: Mission and Purposes

DESCRIPTION

The mission of NDU has evolved since its establishment, although its core tenets have remained largely unchanged. The current University mission statement, adopted in spring 2008, states:

“As a Catholic institution inspired by the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) seeks to provide comprehensive quality education that fosters excellence in scholarship, lifelong learning, enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, moral integrity, and belief in God. In designing its curricula, NDU is committed to the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education. Conceiving itself as an authentic academic community, NDU promotes diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good. Its profound aspiration is to prepare its students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love, and freedom.”

This mission statement heralded a number of planning initiatives, such as devising in 2009 a research strategic plan and new business plans, including Faculty-wide plans that were expected to expire in 2012. The University conducted a *Candidacy Self-Study 2013* from April 2011 to January 2013 and produced a report, which it submitted on February 25, 2013, to the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) ([Exhibit 1.1](#)). Academic planning continued in earnest in the year 2013-2014, and in summer 2015, the Strategic Plan Review and Implementation Committee (SPRIC) adopted a new strategic plan, which the Board of Trustees (BOT) approved in September 2015. Since the last *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*, many positive changes occurred against the backdrop of the mission-dominant statement as well as its accompanying vision and value statements. Of those were: The 5 strategic institutional goals (see <http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/accreditation/strategic-plan-2015-2020>), the mission statements of the individual Faculties, departments, and other institutional units (see <http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/administration/offices/registrars-office/catalog>). The resulting outcomes included the development of multiple plans designed to embed into the fabric of the institution the mission’s 5 main themes: liberal arts foundation, scholarly initiatives, student life and outreach activities, affordable education, and mission visibility.

Liberal arts foundation

Building on earlier efforts to integrate the mission across the curriculum, new educational and administrative initiatives and measures have been taken to uphold the University core values, which are rooted in the Maronite Catholic and liberal arts traditions. Among those values are: diversity, belief in God, community service, moral integrity, and respect for human dignity and rights. The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC), guided by the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education, drafted a report in April 2015, and presented it on May 6, 2015, to the Council of Deans (COD). [Exhibit 1.2](#) outlines the 6 categories that constitute the new Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) program along with their corresponding mission values. Standard Four presents an extensive overview of the new LAC.

Scholarly initiatives

The establishment of mission-centered units since 2013 continued to increase, such as through the launch of the:

- Institute of the Lebanese Thought (ILT), ([Exhibit 1.3](#));
- NDU open dialogue initiative through hosting the “*Observatory on Decentralization in Lebanon*,” the purpose of which is to enhance the values associated with social justice (equity) and pluralism in Lebanon. Former University President Fr. Walid Moussa announced on May 8, 2015, that NDU would not only host this open dialogue but also would contribute to its success through a variety of scholarly activities and initiatives ([Exhibit 1.4](#)); and
- Benedict XVI Endowed Chair of Religious, Cultural and Philosophical Studies at the Faculty of Humanities (FH), ([Exhibit 1.5](#)).

Outreach activities and student life

Student life outside the classroom is the venue where the mission values are integrated. Most programs, if not all, organized by the Office of Student Affairs (SAO) provide orientation, ongoing formation programs, outreach opportunities, and services ([Exhibit 1.6](#)). Also, the University Department of Community Service and Awareness (CSA) is one of the venues for outreach activities in regard to students, faculty, and staff. This office offers a variety of programs associated with the “common good,” food quality, safety, and health (e.g., tobacco hazards), sports. Those programs take the form of exhibitions, orientation sessions, trips, and fairs, just to name a few. The CSA teams up with NGOs to launch clothes and food donation campaigns. News and events can be found on the University website.

Continuing on the topic of civic engagement and services, both the North Lebanon Campus (NLC) and Shouf Campus (SC) engage in community outreach activities, including visits to nursing homes and hospitals as well as organizing charity lunches and blood drives. Also, the SC organizes lectures in partnership with Shouf municipalities and civil servants and local businesses.

Another venue for student activities is the University Campus Ministry (CM), which hosts an array of pastoral work liturgies, retreats, and faith formation programs associated with the mission themes of love and common good ([Exhibit 1.7](#)).

Financial aid program

Since its inception, NDU established the Financial Aid Program to help students, “regardless of color, race, gender, religion, nationality, or political affiliation,” benefit financially through different types of financial aid, i.e. merit-based or need-based. Merit-based financial aid is granted automatically (no application is required) provided eligible students meet the conditions. NDU also offers a Deferred Payment Plan to help students with limited financial resources cover their tuition. This plan allows students to conveniently divide their annual tuition fees into twelve monthly installments with no additional charges. Furthermore, a newly-approved policy, effective in fall 2017, grants a Financial Aid and Scholarship Upon Admission to help students choose NDU over others ([Exhibit 1.8](#)).

Diversity

The diversity profile at NDU is reflected in the composition of the student body based on nationality, gender, region, and religious affiliation (*Data First Forms*). On the other hand, the University has 28 students clubs and societies, which render opportunities for students to conduct activities that promote Lebanon’s rich historical and cultural diversity. Dissemination of all these activities is made through the University website and social media platforms (see www.ndu.edu.lb).

Visibility

The mission is communicated by means of digital channels, art, symbolism, and campus architecture. The University website, publications along with digital panels, statues, and sculptures reflect elements related to the University identity and mission values. In addition, Faculty buildings have been dedicated to saints’ names. A new theater is named after His Beatitude Patriarch Cardinal Bechara el-Rahi, Head of the Maronite Church in Lebanon. New offices have been established to promote the mission; these are: Office of Design and Brand Guardian (ODBG) and Office of Communications (OC), (September 2, 2014), ([Exhibit 1.9](#)).

APPRAISAL

Designed as an articulation of identity, vision, and values, the mission statement not only encourages opportunities for growth and advancement but also equally affirms the University core values that help develop engaged citizens who are prepared to lead and serve the common good and foster a just society.

Building from the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*, the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, and the *Biennial Report* in 2015, this section evaluates the lived reality of the mission culture in curricular and co-curricular activities and initiatives, and identifies meaningful information about the actual integration of mission. The information gathered and the data collected are analyzed to see whether an improvement has been made. To that end, a questionnaire has been devised ([Exhibit 1.10](#)), a number of interviews have been conducted, and several brainstorming sessions have been held ([Exhibit 1.11](#)) to better evaluate —identify and interpret— the evidence pertaining to the pervasive presence of the mission experience across the NDU community.

Strengthening the LAC foundation

“In designing its curricula, NDU is committed to the philosophy and standards of the American model of **liberal arts** education.”

As of fall 2016, the revised LAC has vividly shaped the above-quoted purpose, seeking to inspire students to examine fundamental questions with intellectual curiosity, critical insight, mature judgment, social responsibility, and moral development. Indeed, all these questions are perceived as a means of developing a full-fledged human being, i.e. intellectually, emotionally, morally, and socially. Nonetheless, being mindful that past and present curricular changes are steps toward improving a program, the Mission Self-Study Committee (MSSC) explored ways to access student and faculty perceptions of the new LAC experience. Given that a recurring assessment cycle will be necessary to evaluate the LAC experience, and that the LAC Committee shall continue reviewing the LAC structure, categories, rationale, learning goals, and their correlation with mission values, this year’s indirect evaluation, accomplished via a 5-point scale questionnaire, has made a valuable source of evidence, regarding student and faculty perceptions. The MSSC members, in collaboration with the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), agreed upon a common 8-statement survey to send to students and faculty near the end of spring 2017. The survey results offered an interesting perspective.

The responses from 423 students and 119 faculty members suggest the following interpretations:

Although students seem to agree that the LAC “helps develop their intellectual, personal, and moral development” (*item 23*), “covers multiple disciplines” (*item 24*), “nurtures a critical, analytical, and creative mind capable of differentiating between biased assertions and informed interpretation” (*item 27*), and “cultivates environment-friendly citizens” (*item 28*), they rate lower scores on items related to “social responsibility” (*item 25*), “healthy and physical well-being” (*item 29*), “transferable skills” (*item 26*), and “sustainable environment” (*item 30*). In contrast, faculty members endorse high scores on all items except for *items 26 and 30*, which relate to “transferable skills” and “sustainable environment” respectively ([Exhibit 1.12](#)).

Perhaps related to this apparent difference between perceptions of the current program is that NDU students do not appear to sufficiently understand the values embedded in the LAC program and the importance of those values on their professional and social life. Another existing possibility is that not all NDU Faculties have given the needed attention to some LAC courses.

Nurturing leadership skills

Consistent with its mission, “NDU aspires to prepare its students to be **future leaders** who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love, and freedom.”

By means of both its curricular and co-curricular activities and programs, NDU prepares students to be leaders in their communities. Through nurturing critical thinking, clear and academic communication skills, thoughtful and reasoned inquiry, cultural diversity, and the love of engagement in learning, the University enriches students’ curiosity and develops their gifts and interests. The 7-statement *Leadership Survey* (*items 16-22*), ([Exhibit 1.13](#)), indicates that students and faculty agree that the LAC program, community service, teamwork, lifelong learning skills, and academic policies help students develop leadership skills necessary for their future professional life.

Celebrating values through scholarly and outreach activities

“As a Catholic institution inspired by the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary, Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) seeks to provide comprehensive quality education that fosters excellence in **scholarship, lifelong learning, enlightened citizenship, human solidarity, moral integrity, and belief in God.**”

Driven by a Catholic perspective and inspired by the legacy of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary (OMM), NDU’s founding Order, students, faculty, and staff continued to celebrate and uphold the distinctive intellectual, spiritual, and social values entrenched in the mission statement. Those values center on scholarship, faith, service, diversity, and citizenship. In the past three years, and in the absence of the Mission Office (MO) and/or committee, the NDU commitment to those values has grown more evident in a variety of ways.

First, several University units have actively engaged in promoting the values, such as the SAO, the CSA, the CM, the Benedict XVI Chair of Religious, Cultural and Philosophical Studies activities, the ILT, and the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE). Second, new and successful mission-centered units have been launched, namely the University open dialogue initiative through hosting the “*Observatory on Decentralization in Lebanon*,” and the Benedict XVI Endowed Chair. Third, the wide range of mission-centered initiatives (opportunities, programs, services, activities, etc.) continued to expand ([Exhibit 1.14](#)). Through these initiatives, the NDU community continued to bring the mission to life. Today, the Catholic identity and mission are well-captured in the spirit of its students, faculty, and staff.

To learn about the scope of those activities and programs as well as their perceived values, the MSSC members conducted interviews with the SAO dean ([Exhibit 1.15](#)), the University Chaplain-General ([Exhibit 1.16](#)), and the CSA officer ([Exhibit 1.17](#)). In regard to their roles and responsibilities, the SAO personnel view themselves as catalysts and facilitators who lead by example. Their main activities have centered on: developing and implementing community service programs, overseeing development and orientation activities, conducting activities related to leadership, and consulting on and enhancing social ethics.

As for the CM, they see their role in assuming the responsibility for the University’s religious identity and mission, and encouraging and assisting students, faculty, and staff in enhancing their spiritual development through diverse its religious activities and initiatives. Besides, the CM has been restructured to better serve the pastoral needs of students, faculty, and staff across the three campuses ([Exhibit 1.18](#)).

The CSA, on the other hand, aims at providing students with opportunities to be civically engaged. For the past three years, the office has with great effect increasingly teamed up with numerous NGOs ([Exhibit 1.19](#)). Its rich and diversified activities have subtended several themes, such as social cohesion, common good, and development and capacity building beyond the University community ([Exhibit 1.20](#)).

To understand the effectiveness of those units, the MSSC administered, in collaboration with the OIRA, a 10-statement survey across the three campuses. The purpose was to help amass a sufficient body of indirect evidence on the University community’s perception in regard to social and spiritual values, and the opinions of its constituents regarding their integration with curricular and non-curricular activities and programs. Based upon 637 responses, the members of the committee concluded the survey demonstrates a high inculcation and appreciation of the social and spiritual values among faculty (81.4 percent) and staff (90.1 percent), and a satisfactory awareness and understanding among students (65.5 percent), ([Exhibit 1.21](#)).

Building community in diversity and human solidarity

“Conceiving itself as an authentic academic community, NDU promotes **diversity**, respect for **human dignity and rights**, and concern for the common good. Its profound aspiration is to prepare its students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love, and freedom.”

As affirmed in the mission statement, diversity at NDU is conceived as an essential quality of excellence. Excellence here means a value, which encompasses acceptance and respect among the different Lebanese communities. It also means recognizing and understanding individual differences along the dimensions of gender, age, socio-economic status, physical abilities, religious beliefs, political affiliation, etc.

The diversity profile at NDU during the past three years is well-reflected in the composition of the student body based on nationality, gender, and religious affiliation. The demographic profile of newly-enrolled students in terms of nationality in fall 2015 is well depicted in [Exhibit 1.22](#), and that of 2017 as released in the *Data First Forms*. The analysis confirms that NDU is an acceptable place for foreign and dual nationality students since the percentage is constant and set around 8 percent despite Lebanon's volatile political climate. The breakdown of the enrolled students by gender reassures the undeniable diversity aspect that has been maintained throughout the past three years. In addition, the slight increase in the percentage of non-Christian students (up from 13 percent to 19 percent) promotes once again the idea that NDU has deployed efforts to enhance diversity during the past couple of years ([Exhibit 1.23](#)).

On another front, diversity has been well featured in the works of the CSA, which brought together students with diverse talents and from different educational backgrounds to capably plan, adopt, and work together on projects that would enhance their civic engagement.

To further assess the impact of diversity within the University community, the MSSC surveyed students, faculty, and staff perceptions on diversity through a 5-statement questionnaire. The 3 constituents endorsed high scores ranging between 73.9 percent and 90.2 percent ([Exhibit 1.24](#)).

On the other hand, in order to retain and strengthen academic quality and diversity, NDU has adequately enhanced its Financial Aid Program to meet the needs of those students who have academic credentials but suffer financial difficulties. In 2015-2016, more than 40 percent of undergraduate students received financial aid. In 2016-2017 the student distribution on financial aid was 29 percent out of those enrolled in main campus, 43.5 percent out of those enrolled in NLC, and 36.5 percent out of those enrolled in the SC ([Exhibit 1.25](#)).

Merit-based financial aid is granted automatically (no application is required) if the eligible students meet the conditions. NDU also offers a feasible Deferred Payment Plan to help students with limited financial resources cover their tuition. This thoughtful and efficacious plan allows students to conveniently divide their annual tuition fees into twelve monthly installments with no additional charges. The new policy regarding Financial Aid and Scholarship Upon Admission will further enhance the financial support granted to students with financial difficulties (see [Exhibit 1.8](#)).

Promoting the mission through public activities and diverse digital initiatives

Both the Public Affairs and Communications teams led a fruitful launch of the University mission throughout 2013-2016. The public activities and events, in addition to the diverse digital initiatives, featured NDU as an institution of the third millennium ([Exhibit 1.26](#)).

The University OC made great strides in the past two years to promote a positive image of the mission, both on campus and beyond the University gates. New platforms were created and obsolete ones closed. Social media platforms communicate all University news and events around the clock. The new website was benchmarked to the websites of international universities and was specially designed to follow the latest interactive digital-trend naming: *Live Chat*, *Discussion Forum*, and *Find Your Interest* in addition to *NDU Success Stories*. The digital platforms were launched on November 30, 2015. They included revamping the NDU website, mobile application, social media, and intranet to provide clear and informative two-way communication ([Exhibit 1.27](#)). More details on the OC's latest potent efforts are described in Standard Nine.

Furthermore, the mission is more vividly promoted through new print publications, such as *The Virgin Mary in Lebanon series*, and electronic ones, such as the monthly *e-Newsletter*. More artifacts in the form of statues, sculptures, and paintings, which appropriately portray the University identity and values, are seen in every corner of the three campuses.

PROJECTIONS

The integration of the mission values in planning, curricula, and campus life has contributed to institutional transformation. Based on the Appraisal, several elements have surfaced, such as areas that require further attention. The following actions ensure an increasing commitment to the mission and its core values:

- Some of the challenges encountered in the mission integration work may be met through establishing an institutional structure and appointing a mission officer. The President initiated the appointment process during fall 2017 and is well underway. Also, a proposal providing a framework for selecting a proper candidate for the job (outlining duties and responsibilities, competencies, and qualifications) has been submitted to the President. As of spring 2018, the newly-established MO will assist the President in all mission-related activities and discussions and will offer tailored orientation sessions to students, faculty, and staff, such as diversity awareness activities and leadership training workshops;
- The CSA will continue working with civic agencies and NGOs with the aim to continue involving the student body with activities that enrich their education while providing ample opportunities for civic responsibility and community service. Moreover, the University Strategic Plan 2015-2020 (Goal 1, Objective 5) calls for "incorporating service learning within the educational requirements of every graduating student" and NDU remains committed to achieve this objective;
- Through its international seminars, conferences, workshops, publications, and especially through its World History Through the Eyes of Lebanon SAIL (Study Abroad in Lebanon - SAIL) program, which has brought to Lebanon students and faculty from Brazil, Ukraine, Iran, and Nigeria, the Benedict XVI Chair, in alignment with the mission statement, will continue efforts to advance open dialogue and tolerance among the world's diverse peoples; and
- In keeping with the spirit of its founders, NDU will ensure that education is accessible to financially handicapped students with academic credentials. NDU, through its President, will uphold the financial aid budget and will seek to increase it through the newly-established Advancement arm (see Standard Three). More specifically, the Advancement Committee of the BOT came up with two initiatives that aim to raise funds for student scholarships, namely the "NDU 1001 Knights" and the "NDU Benches." The NDU 1001 Knights is a circle of 1001 friends whereby each friend will donate an annual amount of US\$1,000 that will feed a scholarship endowment fund. The University is introducing naming opportunities against small contributions through the NDU Benches project that includes around 80 garden benches located across the main campus; and
- During 2018-2019, the MO, in collaboration with OIRA, will seek further assessment of the effectiveness of the mission activities and initiatives. Such an annual practice will help NDU gauge whether its efforts and action plans have worked well or not, or whether some other approach could produce better results.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

DESCRIPTION

Planning

NDU has engaged in various forms of planning and evaluation since its establishment, and in 2013, the University began designing its second strategic plan. This University-wide process was described in detail in the 2015 NDU *Biennial Report* ([Exhibit 2.1](#)). The Board of Trustees (BOT) approved in summer 2015 both the 5-year University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* and its budget ([Exhibit 2.2](#)). Since that time, efforts have revolved around implementing this plan.

The Strategic Plan Review and Implementation Committee (SPRIC), formed in 2014 by the University President ([Exhibit 2.1](#)), today serves as the main University body charged with oversight of the plan's implementation. The SPRIC formed the Goals Chairs Committee (GCC) chaired by the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), whose role ([Exhibit 2.3](#)) is to serve as the main coordinating body, following up with all champions on the actual implementation of the various action plans. To ensure greater scrutiny, coordinators for each objective were appointed ([Exhibit 2.4](#)) to monitor, along with champions, the implementation of their respective actions upon the request of the GCC.

Reports are based on a simple form ([Exhibit 2.5](#)), which are compiled into a *Goal-by-Goal Report* and reviewed by the GCC to cross-check completion of a specific action and to validate the Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), ([Exhibits 2.6 and 2.4](#)). To date, three reports have been produced, documenting progress on each of the action plans. Before a report is finalized, it is discussed in a joint GCC and Council of Deans (COD) meeting ([Exhibit 2.7](#)). Any proposed modification to the plan affecting the budget and/or goals is forwarded to the SPRIC to recommend to the BOT such modifications for final approval. By design, the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* is based on an accurate SWOT analysis ([Exhibit 2.1](#)), and includes objectives and goals aimed at mandating, directing, and monitoring through follow-up the various Faculty and department implementation plans ([Exhibit 2.6](#)). Two Faculties are currently reviewing the implementation of their respective strategic plans ([Exhibit 2.8](#)).

Planning efforts are aimed at increasing student enrollment, improving faculty recruitment and retention, and developing financial planning ([Exhibit 2.9](#)). The fall 2016 administrative retreat helped produce a blueprint for a comprehensive enrollment plan ([Exhibit 2.10](#)), and many key elements discussed and agreed upon are being implemented, such as new plans for the Financial Aid Program and Scholarships Upon Admission ([Exhibit 2.11](#)). During the fall 2017 retreat, and in light of the decline in enrollment over the past three years, the following were reconsidered: admission, enrollment, retention data, and the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* implementation status. The main outcome was to revise the objectives and actions of the *Plan* while considering the implementation status and the current realities of the University ([Exhibit 2.10](#)).

A Master Plan Committee (MPC) was formed in 2015 ([Exhibit 2.1](#)) to communicate with all Faculty deans and unit directors, regarding the University *Master Plan* implementation and the definition of an updated plan, including all needs and projects under study, such as the planned construction of the library/cultural center and additional office space. The committee also called for short-term and long-term expansion plans to be defined. To date, the committee has met twice since its creation to discuss necessary building and infrastructure expansion plans that serve the institution's needs ([Exhibit 2.12](#)). The committee received from University services in fall 2016 the original construction blueprints of the three campuses and is currently in the process of updating the *Master Plan*. Kindly be advised that the planned expansion of the North Lebanon Campus (NLC) branch was completed in spring 2017.

When it comes to physical plant and campus issues, the current University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* shows in many instances the various concerns highlighted in the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*, such as fire safety, Closed-

Circuit Television (CCTV), (Apave-Risk Assessment project) disabled persons accessibility, classroom/labs. Many of those concerns have been addressed or are being tackled (see *Standard Seven*). The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) recommendations, regarding physical resources in the Faculty of Engineering (FE) were completed during the academic year 2015-2016; The Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) recommendations are currently being prepared ([Exhibit 2.13](#)).

The BOT has approved a number of University policies that have since been posted on the website, including the important *Financial Policy* (approved on May 9, 2016), ([Exhibit 2.14](#)), which sets the tone for financial planning, the budget creation process, and its implementation at the level of different units. Following the call for budgets by the President, the preparation of individual budgets by the different schools and units are being implemented. The procurement and budget spending procedures established by the administration comply with the budget tracking process ([Exhibit 2.15](#)). The budget process is now in its fourth year of implementation after being tested and refined throughout 2013 and approved in 2014 ([Exhibit 2.1](#)). All annual budgets are submitted to the BOT for approval ([Exhibit 2.16](#)). An effort to implement the budget expenditure update of different units is still in progress.

In January 2016, a new Human Resources (HR) director was appointed to head the Office of HR (OHR), ([Exhibit 2.17](#)), and he has, in coordination with the Vice-President for Administration (VPA), reviewed the University ranking scale and organizational charts ([Exhibit 2.18](#)), and produced a set of competencies, aiming at developing a University-wide Staff Performance Management system. A consultant gave managers at all levels daylong training sessions on the system, which was implemented for the first time in July-August 2017 ([Exhibit 2.19](#)).

A Course Offering Implementation Committee (COIC) was formed in 2016, and it sent its recommendations to the VPAA. The recommendations received COD approval in fall 2016 and are currently being implemented. The main aim is to ensure that all programs offer timely courses to students and further reduce reliance on part-time faculty through redesigning the course offering procedures. An Early Registration System is now in place, and fall 2017 was the trial semester ([Exhibit 2.20](#)). Faculty participation in decision-making is implemented through the committees with Faculty representatives in the University Council (UC) and in the University standing committees. Decisions are based on input from these committees ([Exhibit 2.21](#)).

Evaluation

Institutional research is ongoing. According to the *Data Access Policy* and *DASC Access Matrix* ([Exhibit 2.22](#)), the data stewards operate under the data trustees, who are basically the VPAA and Vice-President for Finance (VPF). The Office of the Registrar, Office of Admissions, Medical Lab, Library, and Faculty deans are data stewards, operating under the VPAA. The Office of Finance is the data steward, operating under the VPF. The Office of Alumni Affairs is also a data steward. Institutional data is stored under the custody and supervision of the data custodians, Office of IT (OIT) for all offices and the Librarian for the NDU Libraries. The dataflow to and from the database is managed in coordination between the data stewards and data custodians. The custodians are responsible for the dissemination of proper data (data views), guidelines (safe computing standards), and prevention of unauthorized access (data availability and security). Requests for institutional data are directed to data stewards, the IT, and Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA).

An OIRA director was first appointed in 2011; another replaced him in 2013, and a new director was appointed in March 2016 ([Exhibit 2.23](#)). Upon its initial creation, the OIRA statement of purpose charged it with collecting University-wide statistics, information, and policies. Additionally, its role included: planning for and organizing the assessment of degree programs and student and faculty performance to support academic improvement; organizing surveys, interviews, and focus groups for data gathering and analysis; building up and directing assessment tools for all education purposes; administering instructor and course evaluations; and providing faculty members with feedback to improve learning outcomes ([Exhibit 2.24](#)). In 2014, the OIRA gained access through QlikView (a business intelligence software) to a data warehouse devised by the IT. The fields available through QlikView are related to student demographics, admission, registration, retention, and graduation ([Exhibit 2.25](#)). A view of other data (i.e. financial, medical, faculty, staff etc.) may be made available to the OIRA upon securing necessary approvals from data stewards ([Exhibit 2.26](#)).

Annually administered surveys include entry, exit, advisor evaluation, and the Office of Student Affairs (SAO) *Office Evaluation Survey*. Course evaluation surveys are administered every semester and other surveys, such as deans' evaluation, chairpersons' evaluation etc., are produced upon request. The resulting reports are disseminated to the University members concerned.

(Faculty deans receive reports on entry surveys, exit surveys, advisor evaluation surveys, chairpersons' evaluation surveys, and faculty members in their faculties. Chairpersons receive reports on course evaluation surveys and advisors' evaluation surveys, concerning faculty members in their departments. Faculty members receive their own course evaluation surveys. The VPAA receives reports on all deans' evaluation surveys and chairpersons' evaluation surveys.)

Some Faculties discuss survey outcomes, such as the Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Design (FAAD) where results are debated within the Council of Chairs to extract material for the review of Faculty programs ([Exhibit 2.27](#)). The OIRA also answers data requests needed by Faculty and departments for self-studies, annual reports, and program reviews ([Exhibit 2.28](#)); reports official University data needed for accreditation; and publishes the Factbook annually, now in its fourth year ([Exhibit 2.29](#)).

The current University mission statement emphasizes three primary values: education, social, and spiritual. It stresses the commitment to the philosophy and standards of a liberal arts education in addition to sustaining the values of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary (OMM). The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) reviewed the General Education Requirements (GERs) and replaced them with Liberal Arts Curriculum courses (LAC), (see *Standard Four*). The work of the GEEC included defining course groups, required number of credits to be completed in each group, selection and eligibility of new courses, the definition of Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs), and course assessment methods. The GEEC is also developing a Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) specific to the LAC, based on the University mission. Such an assessment is part of *Goal 1, Objective 3*, of the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* ([Exhibit 2.9](#)).

The main evaluation focus at NDU is related to its academic programs, as reflected in the different mission and vision statements of its Faculties and departments. Program and CLOs are now well-established at the University ([Exhibit 2.1 and Standard Eight](#)). Some Faculties have now completed the assessment cycle of learning outcomes (see *Standard Eight*). Programmatic accreditation has helped support such exercises in many Faculties. In August 2016, the FE was given ABET accreditation, retroactive effective from 2013, including all branch campuses ([Exhibit 2.30](#)). The Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) was declared eligible for accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and is now preparing its initial *Self-Evaluation Report*. The FAAD is preparing for the accreditation of their architecture program by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) and is setting up required practices while conducting a mock NAAB visit examination ([Exhibit 2.31](#)). At the FNAS, the Computer Science (CS) program's preliminary self-study report was accepted by the ABET Readiness Review Committee and the final self-study was submitted in July 2017 to ABET's Computing Accreditation Committee. An ABET team visited the CS Department between November 4 and 7 2017 ([Exhibit 2.32](#)). Furthermore, based on the COD-approved program review procedures ([Exhibit 2.33](#)), other academic programs at NDU are undertaking similar reviews. In fall 2015, the VPAA launched the first round of reviews. Within Faculties, departments select the members of the Department Outcomes Assessment Committee (DOAC) in charge of conducting the self-study and managing the program review ([Exhibit 2.34](#)). In fall 2016, 5 programs completed their reviews, including external perspective. Eight reviews started in 2016-2017, 3 of which have closed the loop in fall 2017 and 3 more programs have started their review in 2017-2018 ([Exhibit 2.35](#)).

APPRAISAL

Planning

The University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, framed by its mission and vision statements, is the most prominent planning vehicle, guiding the institution's overall progress. Since there has never existed before in the history of NDU a BOT-approved strategic plan, the University committed in the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013* to produce such a *Plan* and ensured to follow it up until ready for BOT approval ([Exhibit 2.36](#)). The *Interim Report 2015* showed that the process and objectives set in 2013 were met. The BOT-approved University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* is today being competently implemented. As described earlier, the University has tasked the COD and the GCC with the follow-up on the implementation of the *Strategic Plan*, and has already produced and posted on the intranet3 status reports reflecting the progress of the *Plan*. The reports show a varying rate of action implementation (some objectives have been achieved while others are still in different stages of progress). Given the adverse conditions currently plaguing the Lebanese economy, most elements related to financial achievements or University resources have been affected more negatively than others. The fall 2017 retreat, devised as a major revision milestone of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, helped the University stay focused on its various initiatives and goals, and realigned objectives and actions within the realm of these realities ([Exhibit 2.10](#)). The COD also places the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* as a standing item on the agenda in all its regular meetings. Furthermore, the structure put in place to follow up on implementation involves, in addition to all members of the COD and the GCC, 39 faculty members from all 7 Faculties. With the various calls for reports, all champions are regularly reminded to keep the *Plan* moving forward, along with its policy for continuous development. This underlines NDU's unwavering commitment and progress to establish a complete planning, implementation, and evaluation cycle.

The process of producing the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* helped to produce Faculty and department 5-year academic plans as well as plans in other units that were produced either simultaneously or at a later stage. The University-wide plan (*Goal IV*) also calls for the implementation of those plans. As noted earlier, while evidence abounds for the implementation of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, the implementation of lower-level academic plans is uneven; however, evidence to establish this statement is hard to find. Taking from scanty evidence regarding the ad-hoc implementation of elements of the Faculty academic plans, which is mostly derived from interviews with Faculty deans, the existence of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, as a standing item on the COD agenda and its implementation process, has again bolstered efforts to seriously focus on the purposeful implementation of these plans. As of fall 2016, some Faculties started adopting and experimenting with different approaches to implement their respective plans, which include a task list to identify actions related to the *Strategic Plan*. The Council of Chairs, and/or faculty members follow up on the implementation of these actions ([Exhibit 2.37](#)). In the other units that have also adopted long-term plans, the same situation prevails. Interviews with unit heads reveal that as of fall 2016 different approaches are being used to kick-start a process of purposeful implementation and revision of the plans. Such efforts attempt to discover the best approach to evaluate, revise, and monitor the implementation of unit plans, when needed. Kindly be advised that almost all initiatives adopted during the fall 2016 administrative retreat, concerning enrollment, have been set in motion; for many, implementation started as of spring 2017 ([Exhibit 2.38](#)).

Three successful cycles of the budget process have been completed and the fourth has been produced. The VPF meets with each unit's respective reporting officer to discuss in detail the proposed budget. Once approved, the various budgets are incorporated into the overall University budget and submitted to the BOT for approval ([Exhibit 2.39](#)). Although this process has been operational for a few years, it is still lacking in many instances, because the particular Faculty or unit concerned does not regularly receive updates, regarding current account balances of their approved budgets, and feedback on the financial position of the various budget lines is almost non-existent. Units build the subsequent year's budget without any input on the implementation of the previous year's budget. In addition, some unit heads have voiced concerns, regarding the accuracy of the figures stated in relation to unreported expenses.

In view of the difficult economic environment in Lebanon and the Middle East, and in light of the decline in the number of enrolled students over the past two years (a decline of 900 students approximately), the University has requested unit heads responsible for budgets to exercise self-restraint, which is oftentimes affecting the

implementation of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* initiatives. For example, some projects related to Physical Plant have been deferred. Accessibility for physically challenged persons and completion of fire/CCTV coverage, as originally planned, has been postponed. NDU, however, has made effective efforts to avoid disrupting crucial functions. On a positive note, the integrity of the academic process was preserved. Although a certain degree of restraint was required, a workable benchmarking exercise allowed the University to achieve the following results: adjust salaries and scales, effective fall 2017, improve, within reasonable bounds, faculty retirement plans and benefits and hire more full-time faculty members (*see Standard Six*). In that regard, and in line with the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, NDU hired in April 2017 a director for the Office of Advancement, whose role will be to support fundraising efforts and develop a sturdier endowment plan. In the same vein, the Office of Alumni Affairs is planning regular fundraising activities to support students' financial aid. Two fundraising dinners were held in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE), and raised US\$750,000. The Alumni Association was brought back to life with elections held on December 15, 2016. The association is expected to play an important role in various aspects of the planning and financial support regarding the University. As a first step, the new association's governing board has been active recently in bringing together alumni.

Evaluation

Data stewards systematically gather relevant and accurate data sufficient to support planning and evaluation. The data includes admissions data, i.e. applications, acceptances, enrollments, which the Office of Admissions collects and enters within two weeks following the beginning of every semester, and students' grades collected by the Office of the Registrar 72 hours after each scheduled final exam etc. In addition to other data identified and discussed in the *Description*, data stewards relay information to appropriate decision-makers upon request. While data is made available upon request, the University *Data Access Policy* provides stewards with on-demand access to data relevant to their respective units. To date, new software has been purchased and dashboards have been set up to streamline data stewards' access to data crucial for planning and evaluation. Furthermore, while the OIRA is being provided access to most academic data, the office still has to send requests to various offices, such as the Office of Admissions to obtain certain data. The OIRA is provided, albeit irregularly, with a partial snapshot of the data available in the Student Information System (SIS). This hindrance sometimes makes it necessary for the OIRA to request data from the Office of IT. Data and reports prepared by the stewards reporting to the VPAA provide reliable information for academic planning. Faculties also request data from different sources to conduct program reviews or self-studies to enhance institutional effectiveness. These requests are usually channeled to one of two offices: the OIRA and the Office of the Registrar. Some data requests, on different dates from the same person and for the same purpose, are sometimes directed to more than one steward (e.g., the Office of the Registrar and the OIRA), and requesters end up receiving different figures—even though the data source is the same (the OIT is the data custodian). Two possible causes are identified: first, either different stewards use different filters while making two identical requestor, or second, census dates differ.

An evaluation of program review outcomes indicate an effective use of data provided, and are used as evidence to identify in the curricula areas of concern or areas in need of improvement and/or modification ([Exhibit 2.31](#)). In the academic year 2016-2017, program reviews based on the COD guidelines are in their second year, with a requirement to conduct at least one review every 6 years. Due to the natural cycle of program reviews and the University process to approve changes to the curricula, the outcomes will gradually become effective in fall 2017. It is, thus, far too early to assess the efficiency of the process and, if needed, decide on possible modifications. The fact that all program reviews have included an external perspective, in line with approved procedures, remains a strength in the cyclical evaluation of the curricula.

The University Office of Finance gathers financial data through the Business Office records. The collected data is used to accurately plan and evaluate the fiscal performance of individual Faculties and units across the University. According to the budget officer, a cost center statement is prepared monthly for all Faculties and units but is not automatically relayed to faculty and unit heads, a fact that has been difficult to ascertain. As noted earlier, however, this data currently appears to lack the complete organizational structure, which should ideally allow for the complete and accurate reporting to units. Some of these glitches may originate from the difficulty to unravel from a single expense source the various allocations to the different units.

The evidence presented herein clearly indicate that academic programs offered at NDU adequately meet the academic standards of quality and excellence in education, as supported by being given Faculty accreditation (Engineering, ABET), or by being in the process of seeking accreditation (the ABET for the CS, the AACSB for the FBAE, and NAAB preparation for Architecture). The CLOs based on PLOs, and Student Performance Criteria (SPC)/ SLOs are assessed in a number of degree programs, and/or in some pilot courses. The majority of Faculties are today making concerted efforts to gradually disseminate the learning outcomes assessment and to close the assessment loops. While some Faculties have already achieved many complete assessment cycles, some have yet to close the loop on their first cycle or find themselves having to extend the initial efforts to the whole Faculty. The role of self-studies is to ensure that all programs across the three campuses are delivered at the same quality. In particular, program accreditation has played a major and positive role in helping to develop a sustainable and efficient system of assessment at NDU. These programmatic accreditation systems have helped other programs adopt such means to their own needs. Details on the individual Faculty efforts and a detailed assessment of their status are detailed in Standard Eight.

In an effort to provide a larger input on assessment, all Faculties have formed advisory boards composed of local and international experts in their respective fields and/or employers of NDU graduates. All Faculty boards have met at least once since their formation. While inputs have been compiled, and while boards are not directly related to the program review process, except in some programmatic accreditations, sufficient time has not elapsed to begin to search for any indirect contribution of the boards on the programs reviewed.

The evaluation of the mission statement is indirectly assessed through *Goal 3, Action 1.3.1* of the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. This evaluation targets the GERs (now the LAC), and the mission-derived CLOs. The mission, thus, will be assessed based on whether the learning outcomes, as related to the mission statement, are met or not. The GEEC is currently establishing a partial evaluation system to assess them. As a start, the GEEC have devised an assessment plan for ethics courses based on rubrics. These rubrics will be added to the *T1* forms section in which students evaluate the CLOs. The GEEC is also expected to soon provide a system for all LAC learning outcomes, thus, providing, once implemented, a better understanding of the implementation of the mission, at least in terms of curricula and liberal arts. Another useful assessment would come from the assessment of extracurricular activities that relate to the University mission, such as the CSA, Campus Ministry (CM), and other such activities and services. The expected Mission Office (MO) described in Standard One is also expected to play an effective role in assessing the University mission.

To date, the MPC has not drawn a comprehensive *Master Plan* to update the original 1994 plan. Meanwhile, the University continuously updates the “as built” plans. Although the BOT is continuously updated on the University’s construction projects and plans, and while a plan does exist that includes some of the proposed new facilities (e.g., Cultural Center), the BOT has yet to formalize and adopt a new *Master Plan*. The University is currently projecting its expansion across all three campuses based upon the needs of each Faculty. Kindly be advised that the NLC opened its new buildings in spring 2017.

The OHR undertook and successfully completed the charge of creating organizational charts for all offices. A new Performance Management system has been put in place with workshops held separately for managers and staff. This 7 basic competency-based system is designed, in principle, to be scalable to all University staff levels. The HR director independently designed this system; a consultant was hired to give the training sessions. Workshops held with the managers have identified a number of modifications that may be needed, such as the inapplicability of some of the criteria to all staff levels. It was decided that these modifications would be introduced immediately following the first assessment cycle. Standard Seven includes more details on the work of the OHR on this subject.

PROJECTIONS

Planning

The University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* has established an applicable implementation and monitoring mechanism that continues to produce regular reports on the *Plan’s* progress, offering reliable feedback through constant revision and evaluation of the *Plan*. Other steps include the following:

- At the University unit levels, efforts are underway to implement unit-specific strategic plans. To that end, and to help sustain this effort, each dean will devise for their Faculty by end of spring 2018 structures and mechanisms to help monitor implementation and evaluate on a continuous basis Faculty and department strategic plans, wherever such plans have been drawn. Within the same timeframe, unit heads who have drawn strategic plans will also devise mechanisms and forms to be submitted for approval to the respective vice-presidents to whom they report. Kindly be advised that the FE has already established a monitoring system for its strategic plan;
- Although a budget process has been established, it still lacks proper regular feedback to unit heads responsible for budgets. To that end, the budget officer, in coordination with the director of the Business Office, will identify all needs for proper and accurate period reporting. They will report to the VPF no later than the end of spring 2018. The VPF will then ensure that all needs and mechanisms are put in place for the fiscal year 2018-2019;
- The budget process will be launched in March 2018 for the fifth time. In that regard, and by the start of fall 2018, the President will set up a committee chaired by the VPF and co-chaired by the VPAA. It will be composed of some unit heads in charge of budgets in addition to the budget officer. The committee will revise the budget process in place, identify areas that require improvement, and propose modifications to the process before submitting its findings to the President, no later than the start of spring 2018, with the aim of establishing approved changes for the launch of the fiscal year 2018-2019; and
- The VPA will reconvene a MPC that will meet regularly to produce a draft 10-year Master Plan to be reviewed every 5 years. The President’s Cabinet will revise the draft before submitting it to the BOT for approval. A BOT-approved Master Plan shall be finalized by end of fall 2019.

Evaluation

The undermentioned steps will have to be taken to ensure greater overall efficiency:

- For the past few years, the *Data Access Policy* has governed data access. With the creation of the OIRA, and the need to provide it a central role in the provision of reliable data and analysis, the *Data Access Policy* will have to be revised and the role of the OIRA as the sole provider of official data and analysis will be ascertained. To that end, the President will form in spring 2018 a committee to revise this *Policy* in light of the previous requirements. The President will also work with all units concerned to ensure that all University raw data is made accessible to the OIRA; thereby, removing the need for the office’s director to lodge requests for data. This task should be completed by end of spring 2019;
- Program reviews have been running for three years, and NDU commits to continue the process. The COD will continue to evaluate program review results and outcomes and will continue to make sure to close the loop for each review; and
- To extend the culture of evaluation outside the boundaries of the academic programs and University strategic plans, the President, through his Cabinet, will launch in spring 2019 the project of devising means and methods for continuous internal evaluation of the operation, organization, and efficiency of all non-academic University units. All units shall submit their first internal self-study no later than the end of spring 2021. Vice-presidents will then initiate actions based on these self-study reports, as of fall 2021. The first cycle of evaluation and implementation shall be completed by spring 2023.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

DESCRIPTION

In a letter dated July 11, 2016, from the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) Commission on Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) addressed to the NDU President, regarding both the University *Biennial Report* in 2015 and the NEASC *Visiting Team Report*, the Commission recommended the *Self-Study* emphasizes the institution's success in various points subtending, among others, "implementing and using policies and procedures for institutional governance and involving faculty in governance."

Furthermore, the Commission cited various reasons for its decision and "noted with favor the institution's success in developing a transparent governance system and its work with Association of Governing Boards (AGB) to enhance the effectiveness of the governing board." In the letter, the Commission noted, "NDU has made many changes to its governing structure since its candidacy evaluation. These include the adoption of a new constitution and by-laws for the Board of Trustees, a University constitution, and by-laws for the University." The Commission also "took favorable note that shared governance has also taken shape and is being practiced assiduously." Nonetheless, the Commission underlined, and in conformity with the *Visiting Team Report*, that "these changes have been adopted recently and it will take time to realize their full implementation."

The following sub-sections under this heading highlight and summarize the underlying "Organization and Governance" components in light of NDU's initial *Candidacy Self-Study Report 2013* and *Biennial Report* in 2015. The current institutional governance and organizational structure comprise the Supreme Council of the Maronite Order of the Blessed Virgin Mary (OMM), Board of Trustees (BOT), President, administration, faculty, staff, and students.

Governing board

Supreme Council, the BOT, and the President

A structure was devised to ensure shared governance among the three entities of the governing board composed of the Supreme Council, the BOT, and the President.

As per the University Constitution, the Supreme Council is designated as the "Council of Elders" and is the highest University body, exercising a range of authorities, including the authority to "elect" a Presidential candidate in compliance with the University Constitution and By-laws. The Supreme Council is represented on the BOT, supervises its performance, and supports the President through OMM members who must be appointed to fill key positions in the University administration. Furthermore, the Supreme Council is custodian of the mission statement and monitors the achievement of its goals and objectives through the President, who is subject to the Supreme Council's (as well as BOT's) appraisal and reappointment processes. Also, the Supreme Council manages and guarantees the welfare of all University properties ([Exhibit 3.1](#)).

The BOT is composed of a minimum of 15 members and a maximum of 25, including a maximum of 5 members representing the OMM. BOT members have considerable expertise in the academic, financial, and administrative arenas, and are leaders in the civic, education, and social sectors. The BOT exercises control over the "appointment" of the President through approval power. It assists the Supreme Council in supervising and supporting University-wide operations and approves the University By-laws and Policies, the *Annual Budget*, the appointments of vice-presidents, deans, and branch campus directors, and the promotion of faculty members as well as the of monitoring fiscal auditing and clearance. BOT members autonomously and completely independent of any other constituent elect the BOT's chairperson, deputy chairperson, treasurer, secretary, and committee

chairs ([Exhibit 3.2](#)). As per the recommendations put forth by the AGB, the BOT has been restructured to include, in addition to the Executive Committee, 3 committees, which are Education, Advancement, and Finance-and-Audit. This restructuring took place after securing the AGB to conduct workshops for BOT members. Those workshops took place over a two-week period in spring 2016 through the platform of teleconferencing and included presentations by AGB staff on proper BOT governance and fiduciary duties ([Exhibit 3.3](#)). The AGB was also contracted to propose two new policies: *Board Performance Policy* and *Board Policy on Presidential Performance Review*. Kindly be advised that the BOT, in a meeting held on November 23, 2017, approved these two policies

The BOT meets biannually, while its Executive Committee meets monthly. The Executive Committee comprises the BOT chair, deputy chair, secretary, treasurer, committee chairs, and President, as an ex-officio member. This committee assumes the role and duty of approving University business brought to its agenda in between BOT meetings. The BOT approved on May 7, 2016, 14 policies that were reviewed by the different University committees and Council of Deans (COD), and approved by the University Council (UC). The BOT held its elections on January 16, 2017, in which a new BOT chair and deputy-chair were elected as well as new committee chairs ([Exhibit 3.4](#)).

In turn, the President is the University chief executive officer charged with managing its overall direction and operation in accord with the University identity, mission, vision, and values, and in accord with the University Constitution and By-laws, and the laws governing higher education, as established by the Republic of Lebanon. As stated above, the President appoints Supreme Council-nominated OMM members to fill key University positions, such as Vice-President for Finance (VPF), Vice-President for Administration (VPA), and branch campus directors. Furthermore, he supervises the performance of the University administrators and offices, and represents the University in all legal and judicial matters.

Finally, the University Constitution underlines an evolving relationship between the Supreme Council and the BOT, and the By-laws mandate a new governance framework, including the President's Cabinet and various vice-presidents and assistant vice-presidents, all newly-created positions with specific roles, objectives, and duties. The President's Cabinet is composed of the President, all vice-presidents, the legal counsel, and the advisor(s)/assistant(s) to the President invited by the President to the Cabinet, in compliance with the Commission's observation to create a structure that "acts as a coordinating body among the Officers of the University and serves as a consulting and advisory body to the President on all matters of broad institutional significance."

Internal governance

University By-laws: Administration, Faculty, Staff, and Students

On September 17, 2013, the UC approved the new University By-laws after rounds of reviews, modifications, and feedback from faculty members. The By-laws were amended and approved by the BOT on October 21, 2013. The new By-laws re-emphasized warranting opportunities for faculty, staff, and students to partake in the decision-making processes ([Exhibit 3.1](#)).

The administration, composed of University officers and administrators, the UC, the COD, the University and Faculties standing committees, assist the President in managing NDU. The organization is clearly described in hierarchical tables and charts. For instance, the UC is chaired by the President and constitutes the University legislative body and "it shall act in that capacity in response to the needs of the various University units. It is the highest council within the University." Members of the UC are all University officers and all Faculty representatives. All members of the UC shall be voting members with the exception of the President and his advisors/assistants. The UC is mandated to hold regular monthly meetings, or whenever called by its chairperson.

The COD is composed of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA), as its chairperson, the various Faculty deans, the Dean of Students, the Assistant Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS), and the Assistant Vice-President for Academic Support (AVPAS). As mandated in the University By-laws, the COD "acts as the academic executive body of the University and has the task of ensuring proper implementation of the strategies, plans, and policies approved by the University Council and/or the BOT and serves as a coordinating

body among the Deans in the management of the academic affairs of the University.” All draft policies, proposals, and recommendations, pertaining to faculty, students, and curricular activities produced by University, Faculty, and department standing and ad-hoc committees are sent to the COD for revision and execution, which in turn forwards any proposed policies or amendments to the UC for deliberations and legislation, where necessary. The COD holds regular weekly meetings. Faculty members are active participants in University governance at all levels, which are:

University level

- The University General Assembly serves as the highest representative body of full-time faculty members. It is expected to hold two regular meetings each academic year. It addresses the academic and administrative issues and concerns of full-time faculty members. The recommendations of the General Assembly are submitted by the VPAA to the President for review, decision, and action;
- The UC includes elected representatives of faculty members per Faculty, based on the overall percentage of the total number of faculty members with a minimum of one representative per Faculty and for every 15 percent thereafter; and
- The University standing and ad-hoc committees are mostly composed of faculty. Kindly be advised that there are 11 University standing committees with wide academic and administrative scopes with a majority vote for faculty members (except for the Financial Aid Committee). These committees set their own agendas and meeting schedules based on need.

Faculty level

Kindly note that new Faculty and departmental by-laws were drafted. These new draft by-laws originated from the Special Committee on University Policies, and the VPAA sent them at the beginning of academic year 2015-2016 to all Faculties for deliberation and recommendations. Afterward, these by-laws were vetted by the COD, the UC, and the BOT Executive Committee, and received final BOT approval on June 8, 2017, becoming effective in fall 2017 when all Faculties held elections to form all related committees. These by-laws include the following governance structure for Faculties and departments:

- Each Faculty has its General Assembly that meets once per semester, at least. All full-time faculty are voting members of the General Assembly, while part-time faculty and staff are non-voting members ([Exhibit 3.5](#)); and
- The Faculty standing committees include — in addition to the Council of Chairpersons — Faculty Curriculum Committee (FCC), Faculty Graduate Committee, Faculty Personnel Committee, Faculty Promotion Committee, and Faculty Graduate Committee. These committees meet weekly, biweekly, or based on need.

Department level

- Each department has its General Assembly that is expected to meet at least twice per semester. All full-time faculty are voting members, while part-time faculty and staff are non-voting members of the General Assembly; and
- The Department standing committees include Department Curriculum Committee (DCC), Department Personnel Committee, Department Graduate Committee, and Department Outcomes Assessment Committee. Department committees meet weekly, biweekly, or based on need, as deemed necessary by the members themselves.

Ad-hoc and/or taskforce committees at all levels offer faculty members pertinent and effective venues to address academic and personnel issues related to curriculum, policies, promotion, pension, indemnity, appointment and reappointment, student admission, scholarships, etc. They also entrust faculty members with the responsibilities to participate in producing University, Faculty, and department strategic plans and action plans. Finally, all policies and procedures related to the decision-making processes have been made available on the University intranet, as of academic year 2015-2016.

As mentioned above, staff members participate in Faculty and department governance in a non-voting capacity, and through specific ad-hoc committees dealing with issues of concern. Currently, staff members are engaged in a renewed attempt to devise an effective staff assessment system through a series of workshops and orientations. Lebanese Labor Law governs staff employment issues. At the University level, the VPA represents staff in the UC and the President’s Cabinet.

Students are represented in various University committees where they enjoy the opportunity to express their concerns and submit proposals and suggestions. Furthermore, the elected Student Union allows the student body to work closely with the administration through the Dean of Students to ensure their welfare and provides them with a platform to voice their issues and interests. Student elections took place in fall 2016, following a 3-year interruption during which a new electoral law was debated. In fall 2016, elections were held, according to a draft law that was accepted by the different student clubs representing the student body. Another round of student elections took place in fall 2017. This draft law was reviewed by the University Student Affairs Committee, and will be on the agenda of the COD and UC for approval in spring 2018 and subsequently will be sent to the BOT for final approval. Additionally, some Faculties have student advisory boards while others are working on creating them to participate in program review and academic-related topics.

Intra/inter campus management

In summer 2013, a three-day administration retreat was held to tackle several concerns submitted by the NEASC-CIHE, including the role of directors and coordinators at the branch campuses. The principles guiding the operational framework among the three University campuses were outlined; it was ascertained that all campuses form one University with a single mission and integrated administrative hierarchy, and that the core academic unit is the Faculty, which reveals no geographic boundaries. A committee including the VPA, the assistant to the President, the dean of the Faculty of Engineering (FE), and the director of the North Lebanon Campus (NLC) was formed to propose a draft elaborating the branch campuses’ operational framework. The committee met several times to work on a set of draft guidelines and submitted its report to the President in November 2014. Subsequently, another committee was established by the VPAA in spring 2015, including the AVPAS and three deans, to further work on this matter. The latter committee finalized the guidelines in fall 2015. The final draft was submitted to the COD and was approved in fall 2015. It was further amended and approved by the President in spring 2016 and is currently governing the relationships between the main campus and the two regional campuses ([Exhibit 3.6](#)).

APPRAISAL

The University Organization and Governance is an integrated process that effectively incorporates interaction and cooperation among all the constituents: The Supreme Council, the BOT, President, administration, faculty, staff, and students. All constituents have a role to play to ensure the proper functioning of NDU and its consummate success in upholding its mission and objectives. To varying degrees, they all share the responsibilities.

Governing board

The Supreme Council

The University Supreme Council is the highest elected OMM authority that owns the University and is ultimately entrusted with the promulgation of its mission and the “moral and financial obligations” ([Exhibit 3.1](#)). Upholding those obligations, the Supreme Council has consistently provided leadership, supervision, support, assessment, and the all-important decisions of electing the President and other priests to help him administer the University. The Supreme Council efficiently and effectively performs these functions in harmony with the BOT. This harmonious relationship is best demonstrated by the Supreme Council appointment of a voting minority of 5 priests from the OMM to serve as members of the BOT, usually composed of 15 to 25 members, in addition to electing the President and the BOT approving or confirming him ([Exhibit 3.2](#)). Evident by the latest election and appointment of the President in August 2017, this power sharing between the Supreme Council and the BOT is working exceedingly well and this milestone has injected into the University a newfound breath of positivity.

The Supreme Council leadership and support are also exercised through the election of other priests, such as the VPF, VPA, chaplains, and branch directors. These leadership posts form an important aspect of University Organization and Governance. As such, these critical posts are subject to the OMM's normal 3-year mid-term assessment and review processes and elections of a new Supreme Council every 6 years. The fact that the incumbent Supreme Council has a standard cycle, which may include a change in the Presidency, this act may trickle down through the structure to affect lay posts (officers and administrators), such as the VPAA, VPPAC, deans, and directors. Kindly be advised that NDU's new President that took office in August 2017 and has since that date made a radical and potentially potent change in the public affairs and communications area by eliminating the VPPAC position and replacing it with the newly-established Vice-President for Advancement position that has completely restructured it. This move is lauded given the importance in this era of advancement functions in best-in-class higher education institutions. The President presented this move to the BOT during its meeting on November 23, 2017, and received preliminary approval, pending pertinent changes to the University By-laws.

The Supreme Council also provides another form of critical support: real-estate and related financing. The OMM allocates the entire property of over 1 million-m² with over 220,000-m² of built structures for University use and foregoes most of the estimated rental revenues to be reinvested in University development and operational budgets.

Board of Trustees

The BOT attained the required level of independence and responsible authority in overseeing the University, regarding the restructuring that took effect in 2013, which separated the Supreme Council and emancipated the BOT with well-defined statutes and by-laws ([Exhibit 3.2](#)). Throughout, the BOT members expressed the public interest in their support for proper operations and strict adherence to the University mission. They recruited renowned national public figures, economic leaders, and leaders in education. They perform their direct responsibilities far removed from any conflict of interest. Its continuous self-reassessments and developmental efforts led cooperation successful collaboration with the AGB in organizing workshops to enhance members' awareness of the latest tools and procedures. Although not all the members attended, those participating shared the information with their colleagues and facilitated the reorganization of the BOT committee structure and workflow procedures.

Currently, the BOT's work is effectively accomplished through its general biannual meetings and the monthly convening of the Executive Committee and the 3 standing committees, i.e. Education, Advancement, and Finance-and-Audit. In its meeting held on January 16, 2017, it actively held a vote to elect a new BOT chair and Executive Committee. In that same meeting, it appointed members to its 3 committees, launched a review procedure to assess itself as well as the University President, and approved University policies ([Exhibit 3.4](#)). In a meeting held on June 8, 2017, the BOT approved amendments to the University By-laws and the UC-approved Faculty and department updated by-laws, *Student Code of Conduct*, and *Student Housing Policy* ([Exhibit 3.4](#)). More recently, the BOT has embarked on a general review of its by-laws and procedures, enlisting the legal expertise of one of its members. The BOT, in its meeting held on November 23, 2017, approved the revised BOT by-laws.

The BOT's committee work is advancing at a standard pace while maintaining satisfactory interaction with relevant University officers and administrators. This interaction is reflective of the individual committee chairs' and members' initiatives and time commitments. Advancement remains the key area with the greatest potential for growth to match the important fundraising needs and expectations, which reflects the interconnecting interests of the University and the community it serves.

President

The University Organization and Governance is a true presidential system. The presidency is the one critical post that interconnects all the constituents and leads all operations. Former University President Rev. Fr. Walid Moussa ended his term in office in August 2017 after having made great strides in favor of NDU. His achievements may be

grouped into three basic areas: external relations and presence, restructuring governance frameworks at all levels, and the effective execution of daily management.

During his dynamic tenure, the former President invested enormous effort to achieve substantial recognition and improve the standing of NDU on the national and international levels. He served from 2011-2017 as the chair of the Universities Association of Lebanon, which testifies to the overall University commitment to community engagement. He also represented the University as a member in many of the most renowned international educational associations (such as Association of Governing Boards, Association of Catholic Colleges and Universities), and committed the University to NEASC accreditation, which to date is still NDU's ultimate global comprehensive experience. All these engagements have provided the University with invaluable benchmarks and have helped in aligning its administrative and academic performance with internationally accepted standards and best practices.

Fr. Moussa applied international standards in his steady effort to overhaul the entire University Organization and Governance structure, which he achieved by:

- Separating the Supreme Council from the BOT;
- Empowering the BOT with new by-laws and membership;
- Injecting a sense of ownership;
- Launching a prolonged review of the University By-laws, which led in 2013 to the current ones ([Exhibit 3.1](#)); and
- Completing the transition to the new governance with the newly-established Faculty and departmental by-laws and with the ongoing reassessing and updating of all University Policies and Procedures along with consistent and complementary job descriptions for all University officers and administrators.

At NDU, Presidential power includes processing and directing all platforms through the vice-presidents individually and collectively through the President's Cabinet, UC, and the COD. This integrated operation provides for an inclusive, effective decision-making that ensures the proper functioning of the institution and all its units. Still, the different units function at varying rates of efficiency and effectiveness, and as such require disproportionate administrative attention to maintain the quality of professional productivity in the service of the University mission and objectives.

Internal governance

University Council

The University By-laws define the UC as "the highest council of the University" and vests in it all legislative powers, covering "any academic and administrative matter." The UC's format, too, is the embodiment of shared governance, combining administration officers and elected faculty representatives. All University standing committees, except for the Appeals Committee, report to the UC and provide it with their respective policy proposals.

The work of the UC appears to have slowed drastically since the adoption in 2013 of the new University by-laws. During the first year, 2013-2014, the UC met monthly, considered the different proposals presented by the various committees, and even voted down the University Faculty Personnel Committee-proposed new *Promotion Policy* ([Exhibit 3.7](#)). The following year, the UC approved new internal procedures to organize its work operations and communications in anticipation of a demanding workload. The load actually got lighter and the meetings became rarer as the majority of legislative matters had been dealt with in the past two years. The University standing committees produced few proposals that never reached the UC ([Exhibit 3.8](#)). Some proposals went to the COD, and were enacted by Presidential decisions, such as the new merit system, salary contracts, pension plan, and the *Financial Aid Policy*.

Council of Deans

The University By-laws assign to the COD the executive academic authority and the responsibility to “ensure proper implementation of the strategies, plans, and policies approved by the UC and/or the BOT.” To that end, the COD meets weekly with an extensive academic agenda submitted to it by any of its members on behalf of the administration, Faculty, or University committees. The COD deliberates, decides, and publishes its approved minutes on the intranet ([Exhibit 3.9](#)).

The COD, chaired by the VPAA, upholds the responsibilities of maintaining the set standards, quality, and integrity of the academic programs. It has coordinated effectively among the different deans on the consistent implementation of their individual Faculty-specific matters and strategic plans and the comprehensive University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. The COD follows closely on standing items on its agenda and these include NEASC and programmatic accreditation, learning assessment systems and processes, registration issues including branch campuses matters. Whenever possible the COD also ensures to hold few of its meetings at the branch campuses. The COD is providing effective oversight over all academic matters.

Faculty

NDU faculty members are integrated into the University Organization and Governance structure at all administrative levels, as defined in the *Description*. At the University level, the University By-laws ensure faculty presence at the General Assembly, the UC, and University and Faculty standing committees.

General Assembly meetings are only held once a year under the umbrella of a format that is more informative in nature, rather than following a preset agenda. Assembly recommendations are usually deliberated during this meeting ([Exhibit 3.10](#)). Nevertheless, faculty members are always invited to express their opinions and present convincing arguments to support their concerns.

Faculty participation in the University standing committees is another important opportunity to shape University policymaking ([Exhibit 3.11](#)). Overall, all University standing committees have been active in running the University business, as attested by the number of meetings and recommendations produced every academic year. Faculty input has been and will always be crucial in the more academic areas, such as curriculum, research, graduate studies, admissions, Library, and student affairs. The Faculty Personnel Committee has also been active in carrying out its mission and producing policy proposals, many of which were adopted, such as the new Faculty merit system.

There is greater opportunity for faculty participation at the Faculty and department levels where they dominate the committee work and the issues are more academic in nature and of direct concern. This opportunity has been assiduously exercised through the newly-adopted Faculty and departmental by-laws.

Staff

Staff members adeptly provide all the support academia needs to succeed and advance at NDU. They are integrated into the Organization and Governance structure through the normal web of committee memberships based on need, by being non-voting members in the Faculty and department general assemblies, and through the elaborate system of reviews and assessments. In the last three years, the new director of the Office of Human Resources (OHR) engaged in a reorganization of the staff structure, placing high emphasis on enhancing cooperation among administration, faculty, and students ([Exhibit 3.12](#)). Standard Seven elaborates more on the work of the OHR, especially in the area concerning the new performance-based evaluation system and training that took place in academic year 2016-2017.

Students

Students are integrated into the Organization and Governance structure through the elected Student Union, participation in committees at all levels based on need, and formal assessments of Faculty and courses. As can

be expected, not all students are proactive, but a good many of them are highly engaged in organizing their clubs activities and engaged with the administration through the Office of Student Affairs (SAO). They also do not hesitate to lobby the key University officers on matters of important concerns. As mentioned in the *Description*, student elections were successfully held twice so far, according to the new student electoral law.

PROJECTIONS

Sustainable and essential improvement has been achieved by virtue of the accomplished projections related to the amended University By-laws and organizational chart. The institution is presently governed and organized in relation to the NEASC Standards with the aim of promoting overall success and effectiveness. The governance system in place endorses the institutional ability to make major decisions in conformity with its identity, mission, vision, and core values. NDU will always be committed to conducting periodic reviews of the amended structure and addressing shared governance among its concerned constituents to sustain the requirements for assiduous growth and development.

Listed below are specific projections to enhance governance effectiveness:

- During the fall 2017 retreat, the President announced a major restructuring initiative. This initiative eliminated the need for the VPPAC position and established the Vice-President for Advancement position. This initiative will be on the agenda of the BOT meeting in November 2017 for approval and subsequently will be reflected in the amended University By-laws. This new entity will oversee the following functions: marketing, communications, publishing, development and alumni affairs, and public affairs and protocols. The President appointed in fall 2017 an Assistant to the President for Advancement to oversee this new entity and will launch a search for a Vice-President for Advancement in fall 2018;
- The President will finalize and approve the comprehensive list of job descriptions for all University officers and administrators during the academic year 2017-2018;
- The President will launch during 2017-2018 a search for 3 key administrative positions that are necessary to complete the institutionalization process of the University, namely an internal auditor, a full-time legal counsel, and a director of finance. The latter will assist the VPF to drive the University financial planning by analyzing its performance and ascertaining its risks while keeping in mind the University's financial position and acting to prevent problems. Among other duties, the director of finance will advise on the structure of the University's financial IT system;
The University administration needs to redefine and clarify the University By-laws regarding the assigned role of the UC, being the core embodiment of the acclaimed shared governance at the University level. The President will lead a taskforce to review the University By-laws and propose desired amendments, during the academic year 2017-2018;
- The Office of the VPAA will continue to regularly update Faculty and student handbooks. During academic year 2017-2018, the VPAA, with the help of the University Faculty Personnel Committee and the COD, will complete the draft of the *Faculty Rights and Responsibility Policy* and in due course, this draft will be presented to the President for UC and BOT approval; and
- As described earlier, a smooth and effective interrelation between campuses is presently observed, as a perspicuous approach has been put in practice. Principles guiding the operational framework for intra/inter campus management have been developed to ascertain that all campuses form one University with an integrated hierarchy and that all constituents shall support the Faculty, which represents the educational and academic programs, i.e. the core service of the University. The President shall routinely revisit the procedures and regulations to further enhance the interaction between academic and administrative subject matters that pertain to the relationship among the three University campuses.

Standard 4: The Academic Program

DESCRIPTION

Academic programs at NDU are purposely designed to provide education that is firmly rooted in liberal arts and marked by excellence. The University offers 50 undergraduate degree programs with 17 emphasis areas, leading to bachelor's degrees, as follows: 16 Bachelor of Arts (B.A.); 16 Bachelor of Science (B.S.); 5 Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA); 1 Bachelor of Architecture (BArch); 1 Bachelor of Hotel Management and Tourism (BHMT); 6 Bachelor of Engineering (B.E.); 1 Bachelor of Law (B.L.); 1 Bachelor of Nursing (B.N.); and 3 Bachelor of Music (B.M.). Also offered are 24 master's degrees with 10 emphasis areas that include 10 Master of Arts (M.A.); 13 Master of Science (M.S.); and 1 Master of Business Administration (MBA), ([Exhibit 4.1.1](#)). As described in the *Data First Form 3.2*, NDU consists of three campuses: the main campus and two branch campuses known as the North Lebanon Campus (NLC) and the Shouf Campus (SC). Branch campuses offer many of the undergraduate programs offered at the main campus (*Data First Forms*).

In addition, 9 teaching diplomas are offered in Arabic Language and Literature, Basic Education, Life Science, Chemistry, Computer Science, English, Mathematics, Physics, and Physical Education; 2 teaching certificates for students who have earned the Lebanese Baccalaureate II (LBII), or its equivalent; and 1 college-preparatory intensive English program. Students may pursue 38 undergraduate academic minors alongside their major ([Exhibit 4.1.1](#)). All programs at NDU abide by the academic requirements established by the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), which grants the University its operating license. As of fall 2017, the total number of students served is 5,878 undergraduate and 378 graduate (*Data First Forms*).

The University consists of 7 Faculties, namely the Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts, and Design (FAAD); the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE); the Faculty of Engineering (FE); the Faculty of Humanities (FH); the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS); the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS); and the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS). No policies are established with respect to off-campus, distance, and/or correspondence programs, as these are not currently applicable to NDU. All degree programs and service courses are housed in a designated Faculty, depending on corresponding discipline.

Assuring academic quality

Typical evaluation tools vary by course and level but are standard modes of assessment of student learning. According to the published University *Student Handbook*, students can expect and be prepared for exams, quizzes, assignments and projects, essays, term papers, and verbal presentations as well as final examinations, the latter being "comprehensive by nature" not totaling more than 40 percent of the total grade. The *Handbook* also states, "The remaining 60 percent account for quizzes, progress projects, tests, term papers, and other requirements, as specified by the respective department." The University *Attendance Policy* sets a limit to the number of permitted absences and details the rules and procedures affecting students such matters ([Exhibit 4.1.2](#)).

All academic programs at NDU have published program mission statements, Program Educational Objectives (PEOs), and program Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) that are published online ([Exhibit 4.1.3](#)), in the University *Catalog* ([Exhibit 4.1.1](#)), and in various publications. All NDU syllabi also contain Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and, for majors, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Syllabi for major courses show the alignment of course and program outcomes in a visual matrix that specifies the contribution of the course to meeting broader program outcomes. Syllabi also detail information, regarding methods of instruction (as relevant to level and discipline), theoretical orientation, the role of technology, all course requirements, assessment modes, and other sources of academic support ([Exhibit 4.1.4](#)). As of fall 2015, CLOs are also included in the student T1 course evaluation form and students are asked to evaluate the degree to which they have met course outcomes. Student responses

to their self-assessment vis-à-vis CLOs are reported to course instructors for self-assessment, as per T1 results ([Exhibit 4.1.5](#)).

Departmental chairpersons, under the supervision of the Faculty dean, prepare the University course offering, ensure that teaching loads are met, manage part-time and adjunct faculty, and evaluate syllabi to ensure that course content aligns with course descriptions and adheres to the mission and objectives of programs. The Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) collects all syllabi for further review.

While academic decision-making occurs at the main campus, chairpersons and deans ensure that a single academic standard also applies to the two branch campuses. This process is facilitated by the role of regional coordinators who serve as liaisons to the main campus and who help implement departmental decisions in each of the branch campuses. For example, multi-section courses, especially of such service courses as English, Arabic, and Mathematics follow a single syllabus, textbook, and grading system. All grades assigned in branch campuses are routed, first through the office of chairpersons, and then to the Faculty dean before submission to the Office of the Registrar ([Exhibit 4.1.6](#)). To ensure a proper oversight and common standard across campuses, the Council of Deans (COD) meetings take place in one of the branch campuses.

In fall 2014, the Office of the VPAA together with the COD developed a *Program Review Guide*, outlining the various steps for program review. Those steps include a thorough examination of curricula in relation to broader program outcomes resulting in a comprehensive report. In turn, an internal Faculty committee, nominated by the department chairperson and approved by the Faculty dean, reviews this *Report*. Key to the process is the recruitment of an external reviewer with established expertise who visits the campus to evaluate the *Report* and makes recommendations for program improvement. The first cycle of program review occurred in 2015-2016, and the University is currently in its third cycle (*E-Series*).

In September 2015, the Board of Trustees (BOT) approved the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, a comprehensive academic plan to guide the University in its academic development, including innovation in teaching and learning. Each strategic goal and corresponding action items are supported by a budget reserved solely for the meeting of strategic plan objectives ([Exhibit 4.1.6](#)). An example of such a strategic item includes the establishment of an academic development policy by Faculty deans with a specified timetable, goal coordinator, and relevant champions ([Exhibit 4.1.6](#)). Departmental budgets are developed by chairpersons in consultation with faculty members and are submitted to Faculty deans to support the broader goals and objectives of the University *Strategic Plan* ([Exhibit 4.1.7](#)).

A sequence of steps spells out academic decision-making and curricular review at NDU. As per Faculty and department by-laws approved by the Board of Trustees (BOT) on June 8, 2017 ([Exhibit 4.1.8](#)), every Faculty and department consists of a Standing Department Curriculum Committee (DCC) and a Faculty Curriculum Committee (FCC), respectively (the new University By-laws also stipulate the creation of a Department Outcomes Assessment Committee—DOAC, to assess program outcomes and measure student achievement). Curriculum committees examine proposals, revise curricula, approve new courses or programs, and lend broad oversight of the quality of academic programs and courses. Standing committees at the University level in turn approve or reject recommendations by those committees, including the University Council (UC), the University's highest legislative body, and the COD as NDU's highest executive academic body. Each Faculty also consists of a Standing Graduate Committee that oversees graduate academic matters and reviews curricular changes, approves thesis research topics, and endorses advisers and readers in addition to other matters pertaining to graduate studies. Also, each Faculty and department consists of a Personnel Committee whose primary responsibility is to review faculty files for reappointment and fill faculty vacancies in light of program needs. All Faculty and department standing committees are composed solely of faculty members, while the UC counts among its members a representative from each Faculty nominated and elected for that role ([Exhibit 4.1.9](#)).

Program accreditation is a feature of NDU's academic offering. Four of the Bachelor of Engineering degrees received accreditation in 2016 from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), subject to

review in 2021-2022 ([Exhibit 4.1.10](#)). The other two Engineering programs, namely Petroleum and Chemical Engineering, were established in fall 2017, and thus are not yet eligible for ABET accreditation. The Department of Computer Science (CS) submitted in October 2016 a self-study report for ABET Accreditation readiness, which ABET approved in January 2017 and sent a visiting team between November 4 and 7, 2017. The Department of Architecture is in the process of exploring accreditation with the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), but may apply only after NEASC institutional accredited status is granted; the Department of Mathematics and Statistics completed a program review that may lead to an application for program designation by the Centers for Actuarial Excellence (CAE), which is associated with the North American Society of Actuaries (SOA), for its Actuarial Science program (date yet undetermined). In fall 2016, the FBAE earned eligibility status from the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), (*E-Series and Data First Forms*). The initial *Self-Evaluation Report* for AACSB candidacy will be submitted in spring 2018. For majors not undergoing accreditation, program review addresses periodic modernization of curricula, program needs, and Faculty expertise in the teaching of various fields.

Information literacy

Based on evidence collected, a plurality of courses at NDU incorporates the use of Library and information resources in various forms ([Exhibit 4.1.11](#)). Courses in different Faculties assess students' information literacy through research papers, projects, and presentations ([Exhibit 4.1.4](#)). A University-wide requirement in English, namely ENL 213: Sophomore English Rhetoric, uses Open Educational Resources (OERs), carrying open licenses and integrates Library resources resulting in a final analytical research paper. At the undergraduate level, students progress from basic research assignments in entry-level undergraduate courses to more complex research projects, involving sophisticated use of information resources in upper level courses ([Exhibit 4.1.4](#)).

Undergraduate degree programs

All NDU baccalaureate programs are developed to meet a minimum of 120 credits of college level curricula, inclusive of 30 credits transferred from the freshman year, as stipulated by Lebanese law. The freshman year being the last year of high school. After meeting the freshman-year equivalency, most undergraduate degree programs require between 90 and 108 credits that include (1) "major" and "core" courses required for successful completion of major requirements; (2) a University-wide General Education Requirement (GERs) known as the Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC); and (3) free or technical electives allowing students choice in pursuit of other academic interests. In accordance with Lebanese law, all student majors start at the sophomore level, which is the defined entry level for Lebanese students who have passed the LB II. As aforementioned, every student, holder of the LB II and admitted to NDU has to his or her credit 30 transferred credits. In accordance with Lebanese MEHE requirements, certain degree programs exceed the maximum 108 credits required for graduation, as follows: the BArch (172 cr.), the B.E. (150 cr.), the B.A. in Education (120 cr.), the B.A. in Physical Education and Sport (120 cr.), the B.L. (140cr.), and the B.A. in Interior Design (136 cr.). Students who do not have the LB II may be granted authorization from the MEHE to complete a 30-credit Freshman Program at NDU that, upon completion, is equated by the ministry as a LB II, allowing them to register as sophomores ([Exhibits 4.1.12 and 4.1.1](#)). The Freshman Program also applies to international students lacking equivalence for their 13th year of study. Students who have not earned the LBII, or its equivalent, may not join any of NDU's degree programs. As per University policy, all undergraduate students must meet a minimum residency requirement of 6 semesters, with every 2 summer sessions of study being the equivalent of 1 semester. Exceptions to this are programs in Architecture, Law, and Engineering, which have a minimum residency requirement of 10 semesters.

As part of its admissions requirements, NDU requires that to be admitted all incoming undergraduate students must satisfy a level of English proficiency, as evaluated either through the English Entrance Test (EET) administered by NDU, the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL), the writing section of the Scholastic Assessment Test (SAT I), or the International English Language Testing System (IELTS) administered by the British Council. Students are required to achieve a set score outlined in the University *Admission Guide* on one of those exams to be admitted, and they are further required to achieve a significantly higher set score to be admitted without remedial English courses ([Exhibit 4.1.13](#)). Upon fulfillment of the remediate level, all students are required to complete an additional 6 credits of non-remedial English courses that are part of the LAC, including the above-

mentioned ENL 213 course in argumentation and research ([Exhibit 4.1](#)). A uniform method of direct assessment of English-language skills upon graduation or completion of English-language requirements does not currently exist; as such, assessment has thus far been carried out at the course level. As of spring 2016, however, a survey of students who have completed ENL 213 is being administered wherein students evaluate the success of meeting CLOs. The survey provides indirect feedback on the state of English writing and information literacy skills developed in this University-wide requirement.

General education

English-language competency is a key element of the University institutional mission, which states, "In designing its curricula, NDU is committed to the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education" ([Exhibit 4.1.14](#)). The LAC at NDU is the University-wide liberal arts requirement previously known as GERs. The current LAC is the product of curricular review carried out by a General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) appointed by Presidential decree in fall 2013 to review the University's liberal arts requirement, which, along with major requirements and free and technical electives, is the third main pillar of every undergraduate program of study.

All NDU undergraduates are required to complete the LAC to fulfill University requirements for graduation. Following changes instituted as of fall 2016, the LAC requirement ranges between 27 and 30 credits for professional and non-professional degree programs respectively. The B.L. under the FLPS is a unique program, which, in abiding by Lebanese law, requires 12 credits of LAC courses for graduation requirements. Additionally, to the 27 to 30 credits worth of LAC courses may be added 30 credits of liberal art courses transferred from the official LB II equivalent to the freshman year, making LAC account, on average, at least 40 percent of the total credits required for a degree, save for professional degree programs in Architecture, Engineering, and Law that are closely regulated by Lebanese law. Based on the above, all degree programs include at least 40 general education semester credits.

The LAC courses are designed to shape the profile of NDU's graduates with broad knowledge across the main knowledge disciplines of the sciences, social sciences, and humanities. Also, the LAC aligns with key institutional outcomes, expressed in the institution's mission statement that students graduate with a sense of moral and citizenship values as well as knowledge of the religious and cultural Maronite Mariamite tradition, the founding order of NDU as an institution. The LAC is constituted of 6 broad distributional requirements: (1) Communication Skills in English and Arabic (9 cr.); (2) Religion (3 cr.); (3) Ethics (3 cr.); (4) Citizenship (3 cr.); (5) Cultural Studies and Social Sciences (6 cr.); and (6) Applied and Life Sciences (6 cr.). All 7 University Faculties contribute to the pool of courses constituting the LAC ([Exhibit 4.1.15](#)). Each category furnishes students a range of courses with the exception of Ethics, which, beginning fall 2016, is fulfilled by a single course within respective Faculties.

The Major or Concentration

Without exception, all undergraduate degree programs at NDU follow the traditional trajectory from sophomore to senior level. Curricular review carried out in 2013 in preparation for accreditation showed a balanced distribution among introductory- (200 +), intermediate- (300 +), and advanced (400 +) -level courses for degree programs ([Exhibit 4.1.16](#)). Programs of study follow a sequence of planned study from first-year onward and are continuous, culminating in a senior-style seminar, special topic, project/thesis, practicum, or a service learning, credit-earning activity. The sequential organization of the NDU curricula is evident in course numbering: freshmen courses are 100 + level courses, whereas 200+, 300+, and 400+ are assigned to undergraduate courses, according to level of difficulty. Some programs offer 500+ level courses. All 600 + level courses are reserved for graduate programs. In the event of needed co- or pre-requisites, these are clearly stated immediately following course descriptions and on student contract sheets ([Exhibits 4.1.17 and 4.1.1](#)).

APPRAISAL

Assuring academic quality

NDU meets the minimum quality standard of an academic program by offering 42 active undergraduate degree programs, leading to a bachelor's degree in recognized fields of study that require a minimum of 3 years to complete. A credit policy is stated in the University *Catalog*, according to which the University adheres to the credit equivalent definition of 1 credit per 1 hour of face-to-face instruction in addition to the equivalent of 2 hours outside the classroom ([Exhibit 4.1.1](#)).

In a relatively short period, the University has institutionalized educational goals by articulating SLOs at all levels and publishing these in different venues. Because articulating SLOs is a vital step toward measuring student achievement and thus an important sign of quality assurance (even in light of divergent assessment strategies across Faculties) the academic program is clearly enhanced by a greater clarity of educational goals at all levels. The evidence shows that each Faculty has (a) Faculty, department, and program mission statements; (b) PEOs; (c) program- and course-level SLOs; and (d) readily available admission and graduation requirements ([Exhibit 4.1.1](#)).

There is concern, however, about the lack of consistency between the University website and Catalog as well as students' contract sheets and University brochures/posters, regarding the academic offering. While this discrepancy does not affect the substance of the academic program per se, public disclosure and reporting is an essential part of program quality, something more thoroughly assessed and projected in Standard Nine. To cite an example, the number of credits required for graduation in some majors is inconsistent across website and *Catalog*, i.e. inconsistencies apparent in terms of free electives, LAC requirements, and core and major requirements. In another instance, the LAC pool and core/major requirements of a specific major differ, depending on whether the source consulted is the website or the student's contract sheet ([Exhibit 4.1.18](#)).

A representative sample of recent syllabi from all Faculties shows consistency, coherence, and organization with clear course description, course objectives, and grade distributions that are in line with higher education good practices. A sample of major course syllabi list SLOs in their correlation to PLOs, expressed in actionable language suitable for assessment purposes ([Exhibit 4.1.4](#)). As such, it is clear that a culture of articulating learning outcomes has been successfully institutionalized at course and program levels across Faculties.

Information literacy

The evidence presented, through an examination of representative syllabi from all Faculties and internal communication emanating from deans, suggests that information literacy is well attended at NDU. Beginning with foundation courses in English and continuing through major and capstone-style seminars and projects, students are expected to engage in research by making use of Library digital resources, as well as through desktop research and more traditional, print-centered research tasks. While the promotion of information literacy, like other key academic initiatives are ongoing by nature, NDU fulfills this key academic function.

Undergraduate degree programs

All undergraduate programs include a GER and a major or concentration in addition to electives (free and/or major electives). The Office of the Registrar staff controls these requirements and ensures that upon graduation students have fulfilled all requirements, including the residency. The diversity of the University curricula, as described in the *Catalog*, ensures that students, upon successful completion of the program, gain broad areas of human knowledge in addition to an in-depth mastery of the discipline studied.

As of yet, there does not exist a comprehensive strategy for determining whether students meet collegiate levels of English-language use expected of university graduates, especially in upper-level courses, beyond completion of the University's English Communications Skills program. However, a sign of the importance granted by the University to students' English level competency is apparent in the University's currently stated goal, articulated

in its *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, including English-language usage as a vital CLO in 20 percent of all curricula by the completion date of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* ([Exhibit 4.1.6](#)). Although writing across the curriculum is a common higher education practice to redress students' writing deficiencies, this initiative is still in its infancy for proper evaluation of success.

General education

In 2013, the NEASC team's *Report to the Faculty, Administration, Trustees, and Students* identified three salient themes in regard to the GERs that required attention, namely (a) the need for sustained curricular review; (b) "confusion in defining general education courses;" and (c) assessment of the LAC on the "formation" of the NDU student ([Exhibit 4.1.19](#)). The University's efforts to improve the existing GERs, now known as the LAC, go back to an ad-hoc General Education Committee in 2007-2008, though review efforts began in earnest with the appointment of the GEEC, following the projection of *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*, a committee composed of one representative from each Faculty to address the team's academic concerns.

Based on the evidence provided, the University has made significant progress in addressing Item 1 in the NEASC team's letter by initiating a process of curricular revision of the LAC. Beginning in 2016, more specifically, all entering students were subject to a new, revamped LAC requirement that, among other features, expands the pool of courses available while reducing (in all but one Faculty) the number of disciplinary categories on student contract sheets ([Exhibit 4.1.15](#)).

"Moral integrity," a key institutional outcome, is now anchored in the LAC as an Ethics requirement, according to which all NDU students explore ethical issues in a course sponsored by his or her respective Faculty. While exposed to a common curriculum across Faculties, students examine case studies in their respective field of professional study to better understand the application of ethical philosophy to everyday concerns; thus, aligning the LAC with the University mission. The GEEC's continuing work with Ethics instructors on issues of pedagogy and content further confirms the attention granted to the review of the LAC ([Exhibit 4.1.20](#)). Further evidence clearly shows that future items on the GEEC's agenda include (a) how best to assess the LAC outcomes; (b) constructing and using rubrics for the assessment of LAC specific courses; and (c) the piloting of new Ethics curricula ([Exhibit 4.1.21](#)).

While sound progress has been made in reconfiguring the LAC, however, some key problems cited in the University's *Candidacy Self-Study 2013* continue to be in critical need of attention. This assessment is derived from an analysis of the distribution of courses constituting the LAC ([Exhibit 4.1.22](#)) and summarized as follows:

(a) Definitions and categories: The revised LAC perpetuates a misunderstanding of the meaning of the major three disciplines constituting liberal study — Humanities, Social Sciences, and Sciences — and of the centrality of the first in a liberal arts curriculum. In terms of disciplinary classification, the new LAC dismantles the distinction between Humanities (or "Cultural Studies" in its current nomenclature) and the Social Sciences, placing all courses under the same 6-credit disciplinary pool. Selected new courses (TTM 201, ENG 210, or MRK 201, for example) are professional in nature and fall outside the scope of traditional liberal arts curricula even under the most flexible of definitions. Some key liberal arts course options, namely those in philosophy, have not been offered regularly. Moreover, under the current system, a student may fulfill the 6-credit requirement of Humanities/Social Sciences by taking business courses (BAD 201, MRK 201) or other such combination without ever being exposed to the Humanities.

(b) Coherence and inconsistency: There is evidence that the LAC, as the University's core curriculum, is not consistently followed across Faculties. The FBAE, for example, exempts students from Social Science courses altogether, requiring only 3 credits in Cultural Studies. The FNAS maintains a "Group 7" option in pure sciences albeit with a reduced number of course options for students, the sole Faculty to do this. The program in Law requires students to take only English, Arabic, and Religion courses to fulfill the LAC, without a clear rationale as to why, of all LAC requirements, Religion should take precedence. With regard

to the Ethics requirement, three Faculties grant students the full range of the Ethics pool, countering the redesign of this component in 2016 by the GEEC.

(c) *Assessment*: The GEEC has initiated discussion on how best to assess the ethical component of the LAC and already there are forms of indirect assessment that relay information about fulfilling this key University mission. There is a need, however, for more direct forms of assessment to determine whether the objectives at the heart of the LAC are met.

Those three areas of concern clearly indicate that, while the GEEC has done much to initiate a discussion about the overall direction of the LAC vis-à-vis University mission, there is a larger, philosophical paradigm regarding the meaning of the liberal arts, as a universal student requirement regardless of Faculty, but more importantly in terms of the categorization of knowledge disciplines and the importance attached to each one of them.

The Major or Concentration

All undergraduate programs at NDU satisfy and exceed the minimum number of credits and residency needed to grant an undergraduate degree. Programs are well-structured and progression of student knowledge is evident in the sequential courses across the program years with appropriate prerequisites. All the above claims can easily be read in the course descriptions included in the University Catalog.

PROJECTIONS

The preceding analysis of the academic program indicates two areas of concern that, while already the subject of ongoing efforts for improvement, are in need of a more systematic and institution-wide rethinking. These areas of concern are “nodal” in nature: addressing them will greatly enhance student levels of achievement in related areas of learning through revised curricula and structured modes of assessment.

These two areas of concern along with their projections are delineated here:

- First is determining students’ collegiate level of English, including assessment and improvement of college-level writing, research skills, and information literacy. The most effective, systematic way to institutionalize a process of review and assessment is to seek program accreditation for NDU’s Communication Skills program, that series of English-language courses from basic intensive through remedial and finally upper intermediate course (ENL 002-ENL 230), which is currently required of all NDU students. The designating agency best suited to this purpose is the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA), (www.cea-accredit.org). The standards-driven commission offers a blueprint for accrediting language programs akin to the one used by NDU, which focuses on quality of teaching and assessment/reporting of student achievement. In fall 2017, the Department of English and Translation (DET) formed an exploratory committee to lay the groundwork for accreditation and a self-study report. Adopting and supporting this initiative formally will serve as the first key projection for addressing this important area of student learning; and
- Second is the University’s effort to strengthen its liberal arts mission by building on the work of the GEEC and its review of the LAC. As stated under Appraisal, much work has been carried out by the GEEC to rethink this important institutional outcome, but appraisal identified certain areas in need of further attention, such as the internal coherence of the curriculum and classification of courses. This area of concern is best addressed by subjecting the LAC to the type of periodic program review currently underway for degree programs at the University, including the presence of an external reviewer to offer fresh insights into the redesign of a program.

These two projections may be summarized as follows:

| Projection | Key Champion | Timeline | Description |
|------------------------------|--------------|-------------------------|--|
| English-language Designation | DET | Fall 2017-Fall 2020 | Designation of the NDU’s Communication Skills Program by the CEA |
| LAC Program Review | GEEC | Spring 2018-Spring 2020 | -Program review by a newly-appointed GEEC; and -Appointment of external reviewer. |

GRADUATE DEGREE PROGRAMS

DESCRIPTION

NDU continues to enhance oversight measures in its ongoing efforts to improve mechanisms that assure academic quality across its 7 Faculties (FAAD, FBAE, FE, FH, FNAS, FNHS, and FLPS), which offer a combined total of 24 master’s programs, including 10 emphasis disciplines ([Exhibit 4.2.1](#)). The University currently offers 10 Master of Arts (M.A.), 13 Master of Science (M.S.), and 1 Master of Business Administration (MBA). Also included in this offering is a MEHE-licensed joint master’s degree established in fall 2010 between NDU and Saint Joseph University (USJ), a 142-year-old Jesuit university in Beirut that follows the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). A Master of Architecture in Environmental and Urban Planning (MArch) remained active until the academic year 2015-2016 when it was frozen due to low enrollment, 2 new MArch in Urban Design and in Sustainable Architecture have been developed and submitted to the MEHE for licensing. Kindly note that the joint master’s degree with USJ has been fully described in the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013 and Biennial Report in 2015*. While this degree is a joint venture, NDU dominates its course offering in such a way that out of the 30 credits needed for graduation, 70 percent of those credits are taken by students at NDU and taught by NDU faculty.

At the graduate level, full-time and part-time faculty may be assigned to teach a graduate course or two per academic year with the provision that they hold terminal-level degrees relevant to the program they will teach and also meet the intellectual contributions requirement, except for programs or courses, requiring extensive expertise and experience. The University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* calls for the definition of faculty qualifications for those teaching at the graduate level, which on February 3, 2016, the COD defined, approved, and applied across all Faculties ([Exhibit 4.2.2](#)). Of the total credits taught at the different graduate programs offered across Faculties, full-time faculty taught about 73 percent, 79 percent by holders of doctorate degrees, 16 percent by holders of professional degrees and 5% by non-Ph.D. holders ([Exhibit 4.2.3](#)). The research component is part of the evaluation of professorial-rank faculty, and the research output in refereed publications (journal articles and proceedings) for the academic year 2016-2017 is 0.60:1, i.e. ratio of publications to full-time professorial-rank faculty ([Exhibit 4.2.4](#)).

Whether theoretical or practical, graduate-level programs have a rationale and requirements, such as number of credits per program, program mission, program objectives, course descriptions, pre-requisites, etc., which are outlined in Faculty handbooks and the University *Catalog* and website. Also, among other details, syllabi list the CLOs, showing links to corresponding program goals and outcomes that have general, specific, and research attributes ([Exhibit 4.2.5](#)). Graduate-level offerings are delivered through lectures in small class sizes, limited to

25 students, and practical and research work are carried out in laboratories ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)). The University Library, moreover, provides post-graduate students with access to academic and professional databases ([Exhibit 4.2.7](#)), which in the academic year 2016-2017 totaled 78,939 and 319,449 titles respectively in terms of electronic books (perpetual and subscription-based access).

For admission into a master's program, the requirements are: a bachelor's degree, or its equivalent, from an accredited institution of higher education, a minimum Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.0, and two letters of recommendations. Applicants, from institutions where English is not the language of instruction, are expected to sit for one of the following recognized tests: the EET, TOEFL, or IELTS. Additionally, applicants may be expected to take up to 9 credits as pre-requisite requirements to get accepted into a master's program provided the applicant is a non-major to the selected master's discipline. Additionally Faculty-specific requirements include Graduate Record Examination (GRE) or Graduate Management Admission Test (GMAT) as well as the requirement for graduate-level applicants to submit a curriculum vitae, employment certificates, work experience or leadership involvement, auditions, portfolios, or to sit for an interview. Those requirements are clearly stated in the University *Graduates Admissions Selection Process* guidelines posted on the University website and published in its Catalog, listed within each Faculty by department *Master Graduate Program* guidelines and requirements ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)). It is possible for applicants with a GPA of less than 3.0 to be given probationary admission into a graduate program. An applicant's "Letter of Acceptance" clearly outlines the specific program admission conditions or the additional requirements needed ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)).

Graduate-level programs offer students cohesive curricula, including pre- or co-requisites courses. Such courses are interconnected, as seen in various examples from different Faculties, such as NTR 691-693; EDU 641-644; EDU 661-664; EDU 651-654; EEN 650-651; and AST 601-604 ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)). Each graduate program has a clear contract sheet, listing the courses students are expected to take to fulfill the program requirements. The PEOs, the PLOs, and the CLOs are clearly mapped on course syllabi ([Exhibits 4.2.9 and 4.2.10](#)). Program developments are structured by set objectives. Courses include theory, practice, and application as well as research methodology and research development, thesis or non-thesis options. The 24 master's programs include unified, interconnected, and organized courses, which, in line with the Commission's stipulations, are "designed to advance student substantively beyond the educational accomplishments" of bachelor's degree-level programs.

Master's programs at NDU place considerable demand on students' admission requirements, intellectual capacities, and graduation requirements, according to expectations commensurate with graduate-level work ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)). Compared with the bachelor's programs offered at NDU, the master's programs are designed to fully engage students in their graduate coursework or program activities. The course structures and their learning outcomes reflect activities that go beyond those in similar undergraduate programs ([Exhibit 4.2.11](#) compared with [Exhibit 4.2.12](#)), whereby common analyses in undergraduate courses targets educational outcomes rather than scholastic ones, as is the case in graduate-level work.

Graduate students are actively involved in course and other academic work across the disciplines, which may include the following:

- Projects and/or research papers ([Exhibits 4.2.13; 4.2.14; 4.2.15; 4.2.16; 4.2.17](#));
- Laboratory work ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#));
- Seminars or special topics ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#));
- Technologies ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)); and
- Thesis ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)) and/or in discipline-related work in the workplace, such as research work in the industry or educational institutions ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)).

The FNAS has an ongoing agreement with INDEVCO (a multinational manufacturing company) to involve graduate students in research work on the industrial level ([Exhibit 4.2.18](#)); thereby, ensuring sufficient exposure to scholarly activities to advance their graduate endeavor.

Graduate programs design professional activities to provide students with exposure to discipline experts. Course work, seminars, or special topics courses are used to help students acquire practical skills and knowledge through case studies, projects, simulations, or department activities. Some departments, moreover, invite practitioners or professionals in a specialized field to give lectures to a wide-based graduate-level student audience while other departments invite experts on a weekly or monthly basis to visit classes as guest speakers. To cite some examples across Faculties, the FAAD invites experts from partner universities that have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NDU to conduct workshops or seminars; the FH flies its Literature students abroad to attend international Byron Conferences; and the FNHS invites specialists working for local NGOs to give workshops and introduce new technologies in food processing. Furthermore, the FNHS has signed an MoU with the Lebanese Industrial Research Institute (IRI) to facilitate expert exchange and facilities sharing as well as to expose students to recent developments in pertinent technologies ([Exhibit 4.2.19](#)). Many programs in most Faculties require their students to write technical/field research papers on specified topics to present at international, regional, or national conferences, workshops, or panels ([Exhibits 4.2.20 and 4.2.21](#)). Besides, if graduate students are unable to present their work at the aforementioned venues, the program design encourages them to attend workshops and conferences. Music students are encouraged to organize concerts, perform at different events, compose for different purposes, and write music reviews online.

All graduate-level offerings, requiring research papers, product creation, or literary composition demand students produce work that stretch intellectual and creative capacities in order to measure the level of professional development in their particular discipline. Thesis topics are discussed with advisors to ensure original, innovative, and resourceful dimensions. Graduate students are expected to select a topic and write a thesis proposal that they defend orally before working on the thesis topic ([Exhibit 4.2.22](#)). Faculties provide graduate students with budgeted funds for the implementation of their research project ([Exhibit 4.2.23](#)). In the case of the FE, the graduate program is new (started academic year 2015-2016), and the program research requirements still need to be assessed and evaluated, as do the CLOs.

Through course requirements and research endeavors, graduate-level programs build upon and test students' ability to develop their acquired specialized knowledge aptitude and capabilities. Program instructors work with students to challenge and strengthen their critical thinking skill development. At the FNHS, for example, students throughout their program become more skeptical about the knowledge they acquire and are taught to always defend their viewpoint based on evidence—a practice that helps them develop the needed skills to address the emerging needs of the field once they start their practice. Design graduates at the FAAD are also challenged similarly to help them use theory to support design decision-making. Education students at the FH are expected to take into the school setting theory-based discussions and case studies to measure effective teaching and learning of school students and leadership development opportunities. Business, Computer Science, Science, Physics and Astronomy, and Engineering students in their program coursework cover contemporary topics, encouraging both student and instructor to delve into research and learn more about the developments in those fields.

The relationship between graduate and undergraduate programs shows course-related interdependence. The graduate curriculum fosters advanced-level exposure, calling on students' in-depth knowledge exploration and cognitive reasoning and questioning; the course numbers, titles, descriptions, program, and CLOs clearly show this in the University *Catalog* and syllabi. Course similarity may sometimes be revealed in the description, but the focus involves a more in-depth look at theories and issues as well as ways to improve skills in conducting research ([Exhibit 4.2.9](#) compared with [Exhibit 4.2.24](#)).

All the 24 programs currently offered have either mission statements or program objectives ([Exhibit 4.2.25](#)), which are posted on the University website and published in the University *Catalog*. In addition, most programs also include PLOs. The mission statements, program objectives, and PLOs are intended to convey the program purpose, long- and short-term goals ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)).

Graduate programs curricula include research methodology, thesis, and practical/professional courses. Only the FAAD and the FNHS offer all three types of courses in all of their master's programs. Some programs do not

include research methodology courses, and practical/professional courses are not offered in those programs, which are mostly theoretical in nature ([Exhibit 4.2.1](#)). Research methodology and thesis courses designed to teach and underline the process of acquiring, compiling, analyzing, and disseminating knowledge are verified by examining their course descriptions, which may be accessed through the University website or *Catalog* ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)). With the exception of the FE, whose graduate program started in academic year 2015-2016, the other 6 Faculties offer programs with practice-oriented/professional courses intended to provide students with relevant hands-on/practical experience ([Exhibit 4.2.26](#)).

Seventeen graduate degrees entail both research and professional components within the same track ([Exhibit 4.2.27](#)) and have program objectives for both the research activities and professional practice sought by each program. In certain programs, a thesis (research-oriented) or non-thesis (applied research or practice-oriented) options are offered within the same graduate degree.

In general, all Faculties assess whether graduates have or have not acquired the knowledge and developed skills identified in the program objectives through thesis work, percentage of graduates accepted into Ph.D. programs, publications in refereed journals, and contributions to conferences as well as other relevant industry feedback.

APPRAISAL

When evaluating graduate programs offered by all 7 Faculties today, and broadly comparing them with those presented a few years ago, it can be gleaned from the current assessment that significant progress has been made in a relatively short space of time. Faculties target continuous improvement in their curricula; their programs delve deeply into complex fields of study, especially when compared with similar undergraduate fields. As reflected directly or indirectly through the missions, objectives, and PLOs ([Exhibits 4.2.28](#)), the high-level of activity that transpires not only require general skills but also require specific and research attributes. The FNHS and the FBAE, for example, explicitly categorize their PLOs under general, program-specific, and research abilities, as published in the University *Catalog*, website, and in Faculty handbooks, clarifying the program rationale, the number of credits, and the sequence of courses along with the pre-requisites needed to successfully fulfill all the requirements for eventual graduation. At the FBAE, for example, the MBA program consists of major core and professional enhancement courses that are supported with quantitative techniques and research methods. The sequence is such that students finally end up writing a thesis or an applied research project, after grasping complex advanced studies, from which articles are published in refereed academic or professional journals, and/or conference proceedings, reflecting students' learning outcomes ([Exhibit 4.2.21](#)).

Faculty members are sufficiently deployed in the University graduate programs, with a large majority fully-engaged in teaching, contributing to Faculty governance and to scholarly contributions ([Exhibit 4.2.3](#)). More than 50 percent of faculty members have an extensive teaching record in their field of expertise, exceeding 10 years' of experience, which firmly conforms to the COD-approved criterion for faculty qualifications. In fact, the Office of the VPAA closely monitors who is teaching at the graduate programs through the assistant to the Assistant Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS) by requesting for justifications from Faculty deans related to the deployment of its faculty members. In graduate programs, more than 60 percent of the faculty members have intellectual contributions, as peer-reviewed journal articles, joint publications from theses, professional publications, and conference proceedings.

Graduate classes are highly interactive and effective, in addition to competent practical and research work that is carried out in laboratories. Moreover, students have access to an impressive continuous increase in academic and professional databases provided by the Library ([Exhibit 4.2.7](#)). Compared with academic year 2015-2016, the Library collections of electronic book titles, perpetual, and subscription-based access in academic year 2016-2017 increased by 43 percent and 20 percent respectively. Further, for the same aforementioned years, database subscriptions and electronic periodical subscriptions (perpetual access) increased by 18 percent and 42 percent respectively.

According to *Part B* of the *Graduate Program Appraisal* answers, both faculty and students of the graduate programs perceived the Library collection as relevant to their graduate study needs. Reference books, journals, databases, e-books, and e-journals made readily available in the Library are sufficient for all Faculties ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). Appraisal results also showed that the Library collection was continuously updated and the Library responded to instructor suggestions for updates and new reference resources. For example, graduate students and faculty in the FE have access to IEEE Xplore; in the FNAS, they have access to major publishers of computer science articles, including ACM, IEEE, Elsevier, Springer, and Wiley; and in the FNHS, they have access to all journals needed for educational and research purposes ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). Graduate students in their coursework and reflection, papers, projects, and theses use reference material to support their ideas; they integrate the material and document using American Psychological Association (APA) format when citing sources in writing or verbally when communicating in class discussions or presentations.

Graduate-level offerings provide students with a cohesive curriculum and interconnected courses. Overall, students took courses in advanced theory before taking research methodology, which when combined became the cornerstone for accomplishing one of their end products—a thesis. According to the *Appraisal Survey* administered to faculty members across Faculties ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)), respondents show the totality of the graduate courses in the different concentrations serves to better-equip students and make them more well-rounded, allowing them the opportunity to successfully reach program objectives ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)). Faculty member familiarity with both the undergraduate and graduate programs would help minimize the overlap, if any, and update the needs of the community as well as focus more on bringing in real-world case models and expertise ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

Across Faculties, graduate programs offered show realistic involvement to real-world practices. For example, graduate courses in Education encourage students to relate and be active within the education institutions in which they worked, i.e. working in a school setting and with students. As outlined in the course syllabi, students are expected to have lesson plans related to the official Lebanese curriculum based on the school grade they teach; to plan and carry out activities and assessments related to the topic being taught, and to carry out field research related to the education setting. Whereas, in the FAAD, graduate students are requested to become involved with Lebanese designers in more than one course; moreover, students are also requested to choose thesis topics that address current design issues. To this end, students interview local designers and document their work, explore current trends in design, and develop theses that demonstrate in-depth understanding of design issues in the local context. Students then propose by using critical thinking strategies recommendations, guidelines, or design solutions. Graduate students at the FNAS, moreover, are given real-world case studies in class, and are also expected to work in NGOs or food facility centers. Faculties, each in their own way, involve their students in real-world endeavors ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

Generally, the research topic within each Faculty is perceived as innovative and resourceful; however, many are also original in thought, topic, process, and development. Education graduate students select research topics as thesis topics that are original, innovative, and/or resourceful to their chosen field of study. Media Studies graduates tend to tap into original and resourceful topics rather than innovative ones. Accordingly, culture-driven topics tend to direct them to current international issues and insights.

None of the graduate programs across the Faculties has exit benchmarks to assess acquired specialized knowledge aptitude and capabilities. The assessment of such knowledge, accordingly, is measured within each of the graduate programs respectively in their own way. Although they all acknowledge that an exit benchmark is needed, they seem satisfied with the process as it currently stands ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

For example, in the FH most M.A. Education graduate courses have measures in place for the operational assessment of students, determining whether they had acquired the specialized knowledge aptitude and capabilities or not. Measuring student outcomes is assessed through the lesson plans, activities, assessments, computer support integration needs, and assessment and recommendation, and field research-related education issues – proposal, field data collection, result analysis, recommendation, and implications within the education set-ups. Likewise, all Faculties perform similar assessments related to the professions they develop. For example,

the Psychology graduate program assesses students in varied ways: through comprehensive exams, oral presentations, in-class participation, thought papers, research papers, and progress diaries. The FNAS Math and Computer Science proficiency is measured through a variety of courses, and the thesis research compilation and defense. For the FAAD design program, knowledge acquisition within the program is also measured by the thesis, as a second benchmark and ultimate test to course projects ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). Faculties will next need to address exit benchmarks.

In order to better ascertain the quality of the 24 graduate programs currently offered at NDU, data is collected on key points related to research methodology, depth, and level of sophistication of graduate courses (as compared with undergraduate courses), and practicum courses or hands-on experience, highlighting how instructors in the different Faculties convey these topics to students ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

In terms of research methodology and how students are being taught to acquire, process, and disseminate knowledge, a Faculty-wide compiled feedback reveals that, with the exception of the Department of Electrical, Computer and Communication Engineering (ECCE), all Faculties reported that research methodology instruction is adequate. The ECCE is the only department to report that it lacks sufficient data to make an informed judgment in this matter, citing the fact that their M.S. program is still in its infancy, and that it is still too early to draw meaningful conclusions. It is to be noted here, however, that all three master's programs at the FE started at the same time, yet the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (CEE) has not reported any issues, regarding the proper teaching of research methodology ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

For the most part, the justifying explanations provided by all other Faculties point to the research methodology courses, which they offer and which teach students about research basics, including acquiring research skills by initiating and involving students in literature review, real-world projects and proper analysis, and reporting of results. In addition, paper assignments and presentations are meant to enhance student communication skills and serve as a means to convey information properly. Consequently, NDU graduate students are being initiated to research since certain faculty members, especially from the FBAE, FE, FNHS, and FNAS, are publishing and will continue to publish articles jointly with students ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). As for the depth and sophistication level of graduate courses, as compared with undergraduate courses, again the feedback received from all Faculties is overly positive.

Faculty members responsible for graduate programs note the quality of work in which graduate students are involved, which is more advanced than work assigned to undergraduate students. They also emphasize the fact that, in general, graduate work requires, and is built upon, theories and principles acquired in undergraduate courses. The fact that graduate courses tend to be more specialized than the generalized and introductory nature of undergraduate courses is also one criterion mentioned by some. Besides, graduate students are sometimes asked to study articles selected from research papers. Not only is this proper to graduate students, but it also gives them the opportunity to treat contemporary research topics and stay abreast of recent developments. Finally, critical thinking beyond what is usually expected of undergraduate students has been noted to further prove that the depth and sophistication of graduate studies exceed those of undergraduate studies ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)).

As regards practicum or hands-on experience, it should be emphasized that certain programs do not have practicum courses, because they are not needed. For those that do have practicum courses in their curricula, evidence that their master's students are indeed gaining the necessary practical experience can be found in the lab/studio work compiled within the theses of the FE and FAAD students, for instance, or training in a health/lab/nutrition facility for FNHS graduate students. While conducting the survey ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)), deans conveyed positive employer feedback, regarding graduate students' University experience ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). Consequently, NDU believes that graduate students in certain programs are receiving adequate hands-on experience, as demonstrated by the various activities, such as the ones mentioned above discussing the activities graduate students are required to be involved in.

Analytical techniques are mentioned in some graduate programs to indicate that students are acquiring the

necessary experience in practicum courses. There may be, however, a misconception of what practicum really means, or, alternatively, what the expression "analytical techniques" means, because analytical methods do not generally substitute for practical experience. This issue will need to be adequately addressed to eliminate this confusion so that the University can better assess, with some level of assurance, whether the students are being adequately prepared in terms of practical experience or not.

The major progress and experience in developing program objective and learning outcomes at the undergraduate level started to clearly reflect upon the graduate programs ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). All graduate programs have clearly defined program objectives and CLOs ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)). Despite the difference in the level of advancement in outcome learning assessment that different Faculties have achieved, the extrapolation of knowledge and practice from established Faculties to others has led to the current satisfactory level of assessment across all Faculties. The CLOs of all graduate programs have evidently been set in accordance with the PLOs (survey), and have displayed them clearly linked and showing the degree of relationship ([Exhibit 4.2.5](#)). In addition, all Faculties have established PLOs associated with the PEOs, but only two Faculties (the FBAE and FNHS) have displayed them clearly linked and showing the degree of relationship ([Exhibit 4.2.6](#)). The latter needs to be completed and displayed across the graduate programs in all Faculties.

Very few programs, including ones that started in academic year 2016-2017, such as the M.S. in Engineering, have not developed program objective assessment and CLO assessment systems ([Exhibit 4.2.29](#)). Discussions by different focus groups, however, reveal that outcome learning assessment up to the program objectives has only been achieved in the FBAE and considerable work still needs to be done in this area for all other Faculties. The assessment process at the graduate level lags behind when compared with the pace the undergraduate programs have undergone, and therefore, needs to be considered equally and as importantly. The program objectives of the graduate programs, including both research and practical aspects, clearly define the difference and are reflected in the curricula and program requirements ([Exhibits 4.2.6 and 4.2.8](#)). The difference between the two aspects is also evident in the course description and the CLOs ([Exhibit 4.2.5](#)).

This commendable outcome, regarding research/practice components in graduate programs, is represented by a high number of scholarly activities, originating in academic year 2016-2017 from thesis defenses or professional reports ([Exhibit 4.2.21](#)) published in refereed academic/professional journals/conference proceedings ([Exhibit 4.2.21](#)). Such scholarly outcomes may be considered a satisfactory assessment of the depth and sophistication level of courses offered at the master's level compared with those at the undergraduate level.

PROJECTIONS

Based on keen follow-up and in-depth analysis, the following have been identified and slated for development:

- All Faculties have defined and exhibited graduate PLOs, with the exception of the FE and FAAD that have both started working on their PLOs at the beginning of academic year 2017-2018 (see Table 1). The FE and FAAD deans will oversee that graduate programs pertaining to their Faculties will have PLOs established and displayed by the end of summer 2018;
- Some Faculties have their graduate program learning outcomes linked to graduate degree programs objectives (the FBAE, FH, and FNHS), (see Table 1). All other Faculty deans will supervise establishing the level of relationship defined and clearly displayed by the end of October 2018;
- In addition to the sound processes observed in most Faculties, and specifically the FE and FBAE at the undergraduate level and the FBAE at the graduate level, to assess learning outcomes (Table 1), Faculty deans will extrapolate the undergraduate experience into the graduate programs, and learning outcome assessment for all graduate programs will be set in cycle, and results gathered will be used to inform planning and decision-making by the end of July 2019; and

- Although the Faculties surveyed expressed their satisfaction with Library resources, indicators on the level of learning graduate students obtain from using those resources need to be identified by the deans by the end of July 2018 to be used to inform programs or courses amendments, where needed.

Table 1 Graduate degree programs learning objectives and outcome assessment plan.

| Faculty | Faculty has graduate program learning objectives | Faculty has graduate program learning outcomes linked to program objectives | Faculty has set process for learning outcome assessment |
|---------|--|---|---|
| FAAD | Pending; to be completed by end of summer 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of October 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |
| FBAE | Affirmative and will continue | Affirmative and will continue | Affirmative and will continue |
| FE | Pending; to be completed by end of summer 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of October 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |
| FH | Affirmative and will continue | Affirmative and will continue | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |
| FLPS | Affirmative and will continue | Pending; to be completed by end of October 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |
| FNAS | Affirmative and will continue | Pending; to be completed by end of October 2018 | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |
| FNHS | Affirmative and will continue | Affirmative and will continue | Pending; to be completed by end of July 2019 |

INTEGRITY IN THE AWARD OF ACADEMIC CREDIT

DESCRIPTION

NDU assures the integrity, continuity, and quality of its academic programs, whenever offered or however delivered, in terms of program duration, content, and level, and follows best practices common to institutions of higher education in the United States of America. Every undergraduate and graduate degree program at the University is appropriately named and each requires the completion of a predetermined number of credits. Undergraduate degree programs require between 90 and 108 credits, starting at the sophomore level, which is the typical entry level for Lebanese students who pass the LBII exams. As mentioned previously, every student, holder of the LBII and admitted to NDU has to his or her credit 30 transferred credits. A number of undergraduate degrees require more credits, namely Law (140 cr.), Architecture (172 cr., as of fall 2016), Engineering (150 cr.) and Interior Design (136 cr.). These degree requirements comply with Lebanese law and also comply with the minimum U.S. requirements, as specified in NEASC Standard 4.29. Upon applying and receiving authorization from the MEHE, students who do not hold a LBII may enroll and complete a 30-credit freshman year, which the MEHE equates as a LBII. All graduate programs meet the minimum U.S. requirement of 30 credits for master's program.

Relevant information is made public on the NDU website where a complete version of the University *Catalog* can be found and downloaded.

University programs abide by the academic requirements set by the MEHE, which has granted the license under which NDU operates. The license specifies face-to-face teaching/learning in each major with a residency requirement; therefore, the University cannot offer programs through distance or correspondence learning. Further, NDU neither offers programs and courses for abbreviated or concentrated time periods nor awards credits for prior experiential or non-collegiate sponsored learning.

NDU maintains continuous authority and administrative oversight over the academic elements of all courses for which it awards credits. Additionally, CLOs are mapped to their respective PLOs. The course syllabi state these mappings and the evaluation criteria of their outcomes. Whenever a new course is to be developed, the faculty member concerned fills in a *Course Proposal Form*, which details, among others, the course description, title, type, number of credits, the CLOs, pre-requisites, and co-requisites. Approval is sought through the following process flow: DCC, FCC, University Curriculum Committee (UCC), and finally the COD.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) also plays a role in assisting the University to maintain oversight over academic elements by gathering information to support proper decision-making and institutional effectiveness efforts, assessment, and analyses. This office compiles data and issues regular reports on enrollment, degrees conferred, and retention and graduation rates.

Other academic elements include program delivery and selection, approval, and continuous professional development, and regular evaluation of faculty ([Exhibit 4.3.1](#)). Teaching effectiveness is measured by students and by peers through the following forms: T1 Teaching and Course Evaluation ([Exhibit 4.3.2](#)) using T2 Peer Class Observation respectively ([Exhibit 4.3.3](#)). To better ensure professional development, faculty members are provided access to training sessions offered by the University's OIT ([Exhibit 4.3.4](#)) and the Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE), ([Exhibit 4.3.5](#)). Moreover, all professorial-ranked faculty members are awarded annual grants to attend local and international conferences.

Most NDU undergraduate programs require students to complete their internships/practicum as part of the program requirements. The internship/practicum credit hours vary among programs as do the work environments (hospitals and clinics for health-related majors; companies and agencies for other majors). Faculty members supervise students and company experts in the type of work students are to perform. Students are required to submit a written report and/or presentation upon the completion of the internship/practicum ([Exhibit 4.3.6](#)).

In the recent past, students were able to choose and register in courses throughout the pre-registration period, during which they sought the guidance of their respective advisors. They were permitted to pre-register for a course not yet offered; however, necessary for them to take to graduate on time. This preliminary course offering was then adjusted according to demand. In programs with limited enrollment, a course was offered on a tutorial basis to avoid a delay in graduation. Based on the recommendation of the COD, a committee was appointed in March 2016 to enhance the course-offering scheme. One of the committee's recommendations was to develop an early registration process to replace the existing preliminary pre-registration. This new registration would provide departments with reliable data, concerning the number of sections required the following semester. The first early registration exercise took place in April 2017.

At the end of each semester, the Office of the Registrar updates students' transcripts, listing the attempted and passed credit equivalencies. Students have access to their transcripts through the Student Information System (SIS), and can request official transcripts from the Office of the Registrar.

The University publishes rules and regulations, concerning degree requirements in terms of courses and GPA, which directly correlates to a student's academic standing. Rules that regulate academic standing, such as good

standing, academic probation, academic suspension, and academic dismissal are also clearly indicated in the University *Catalog 2017-2018* (p. 67-68). At the end of each semester, the Office of the Registrar sends the system-generated academic standing lists to the Faculty deans. Using the SIS, advisors can monitor the academic status of their students. The SIS also warns students about probation and strictly forbids them from registering and continuing in the program if they are placed on suspension.

As of fall 2015, the COD periodically collects and studies statistics on students with poor academic performance to analyze trends and to devise early alert systems ([Exhibit 4.3.7](#)). As a result, in fall 2016, an Advising Tracking System was created to detect academically-at-risk students and put their registration on hold until they meet with their assigned advisor. The latter ensures that students are aware of the academic rules and regulations that govern their academic standing and have access to needed advice and support.

Students with good academic standing are given certificates and other forms of academic recognition based on the academic standing they achieved in their courses, which is reflected every term in the GPA and upon graduation. NDU has two kinds of academic recognition: the Dean's Honor List (per semester) for full-time students who obtain a GPA of 3.20/4.00, and the Cum Laude (Distinction), Magna Cum Laude (High Distinction), and Summa Cum Laude (Highest Distinction) awarded to students upon graduation. These distinctions appear on the student transcripts and degrees.

Graduation requirements are clearly stated in the University *Catalog* for under graduate (p.70) and graduate students (p.88). The *Catalog* also lists the courses and the minimum GPA requirement for each degree. For degree audit and graduation evaluation, the Office of the Registrar's staff, students, advisors, chairpersons, and deans can verify the completion of the program sheet and graduation requirements through the SIS. For each student on the graduation roster, the Office of the Registrar closely checks that all requirements are met before granting graduation clearance.

Faculty members safeguard, with administrative support the academic integrity of the grades awarded. Faculty members include in their syllabi a detailed grade distribution, which shows out of 100 percent the percentage, placed on exams, quizzes, projects, portfolios, and other course requirements. Students are entitled to knowing at least 40 percent of their grade before the official withdrawal deadline.

Once the final course grade is calculated, it is transformed to a letter grade, in accordance with the University System of Grades (*Catalog 2017/2018*, pp. 65-66). Instructors submit the letter grade through the Online Grading System (OGS). The grades are then approved and electronically signed by the chairperson and the Faculty dean concerned before they become available to students (*Catalog 2017/2018*, p.64). Faculty chairpersons and deans can also generate through the OGS statistical data to compare between multi-section courses – a process that allows them to prevent grade inflation and further ensure grade integrity.

Following Faculty approval, a grade is considered final. The instructor can change the grade, within the first five working days, following its final submission, and only under justifiable circumstances through filling in a *Change of Grade Form*. The department chairperson and the Faculty dean must approve the new grade. Provisional grades, not counted on students' GPA, such as "I" (Incomplete) and "PR" (Progress), may be given under justifiable circumstances.

NDU actively works to prevent academic misconduct and plagiarism and deals with such cases directly as soon as they occur. The definitions and policies related to cheating and plagiarism are detailed in the University *Catalog* (*Catalog 2017/2018*, pp.68-69) and outlined in all course syllabi. The academic penalties for such cases are also detailed in the *Catalog* and range from failing a course to outright dismissal. While academic violations are dealt with at the Faculty level, non-academic violations, such as violence, theft, and bribery, etc. all of which fall under non-academic misconduct, are dealt with by the SAO. The SAO forwards these cases to the University Student Disciplinary Committee (USDC), which investigates the violations and suggests the appropriate sanctions in accordance with the *Student Code of Conduct*. This code details types of misconduct along with their related

penalties. The code was approved on January 22, 2016, by the University Student Affairs Committee (USAC) and then by the COD on October 26, 2016, the UC on March 8, 2017, and the BOT on June 8, 2017.

NDU applies approved policies and procedures in accepting undergraduate transfer credits from another institution. Courses earned at other institutions recognized by the MEHE, graded "C" or higher and matched with courses offered at NDU, are considered transferable. These courses are transferred once the Faculty and department concerned verify their applicability to the corresponding degree program. The accepted credits do not count toward a student's GPA at NDU. Depending on the Faculty, a transfer student is required to complete at least 30, 45, or 60 credits at NDU to become eligible for a degree. Students coming from non-collegiate institutions are not eligible for evaluation or the award of university transfer credit.

Newly-accepted transfer students must secure prior approval of courses, which is tentatively completed by the University registrar prior to registration and approved by the Faculty dean concerned. The transferred credits will then be recorded on the student's NDU academic record. At the graduate level, the institution accepts 9 transfer credits to preserve the integrity of the degree awarded. The NDU *Transfer Policy* is made available to students in both the *Catalog* and on the website.

APPRAISAL

The main reason for the differences in the varying duration of programs of study offered by the University rests on the fact that NDU is obligated to follow the American liberal arts model of education and still has to abide by the education requirements stipulated by Lebanese government under law. The Integrated Post-Secondary Education Data System (IPEDS) graduation data reported in the *Data First Forms* shows that an average of 71 percent of bachelor's degree students graduate within 150 percent of their published program duration at the main campus. This figure favors the hypothesis that NDU offers sufficiently available required and elective courses to provide students with the opportunity to graduate on time.

A closer analysis of the various Faculty academic offerings over the course of the past four years shows the University has been committed to offering students the required program courses. An average of 83 percent of required courses are offered on a yearly basis, and 97 percent in the FE. A lower percentage (38 percent) for elective courses shows that more efforts should be made to clean up the pool of electives and eliminate dormant courses. (The issue of dormant courses is described and projected in Standard Nine.) Nevertheless, offering a lower percentage of elective courses does not affect a student's ability to graduate on time. The lower percentage indicates that the University, while upholding the academic integrity of its course offerings and curricula, is adamant to closely monitor its resources and uphold elective courses that meet the minimum number of enrolled students per course ([Exhibit 4.3.8](#)).

For graduating students, non-offered and required courses are given on a tutorial basis to prevent a delay in graduation. In some cases, at the branch campuses, students are advised to enroll in courses at the main campus to enable them to complete their degree requirements on time.

Required Courses

| FAC | Status | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | Mean Percent |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| FNAS | Offered | 81.50% | 81.40% | 83.24% | 74.57% | 80.30% |
| FBAE | Offered | 94.83% | 93.91% | 92.24% | 91.38% | 93.08% |
| FH | Offered | 72.45% | 72.45% | 68.18% | 66.16% | 73.56% |
| FE | Offered | 97.67% | 97.67% | 97.67% | 96.51% | 97.21% |
| FAAD | Offered | 82.30% | 89.47% | 92.86% | 87.62% | 85.81% |
| FLPS | Offered | 56.76% | 56.76% | 59.46% | 54.05% | 62.79% |
| FNHS | Offered | 92.42% | 95.45% | 71.21% | 75.76% | 83.23% |
| Total | Offered | 82.79% | 84.56% | 82.84% | 79.35% | 83.10% |

Electives Courses

| FAC | Status | 2013-2014 | 2014-2015 | 2015-2016 | 2016-2017 | Mean Percent |
|--------------|----------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| FNAS | Offered | 27.03% | 23.38% | 24.36% | 26.25% | 24.47% |
| FBAE | Offered | 58.82% | 61.76% | 53.06% | 42.86% | 53.01% |
| FH | Offered | 33.76% | 34.76% | 37.06% | 38.01% | 35.95% |
| FE | Offered | 48.72% | 48.72% | 46.84% | 47.50% | 47.94% |
| FAAD | Offered | 34.21% | 38.46% | 38.46% | 35.00% | 36.54% |
| FLPS | Offered | 35.09% | 29.41% | 32.50% | 44.17% | 35.34% |
| FNHS | Offered | 83.33% | 37.50% | 60.71% | 66.67% | 60.00% |
| Total | Offered | 38.06% | 36.05% | 38.37% | 40.70% | 38.36% |

The Office of the Registrar has been extremely diligent to ensure that the degree requirements, including courses taken, residency, and GPA, are met before issuing its lists to graduating students. Officers of this office utilize the in-house developed electronic program sheet to ascertain that all graduation requirements have been duly met. The automated sheet is an excellent tool that compares the courses completed by student with those required by the degree; thereby, displaying the completed and missing credits, the cumulative GPA, the core and major GPA, and residency information. For the FE, the final clearance is preceded by the vote at the Faculty and departmental levels. The electronic program sheet is also available for students, advisors, chairpersons, and deans, making the degree evaluation a transparent process.

Counting from the day all course grades become available, the final confirmation of awarding degrees is completed in a timely manner. For 864 students on the graduation roster of spring 2017, between two and three working days were needed to communicate the graduation decision to all students. Improvements to the program sheet could include showing the necessary passing grade for the major courses besides showing the completed LAC courses; thereby, showing which LAC groups' requirements were fulfilled and which were not.

All faculty members are required to fill in course grades on the OGS. Alongside the submission of grades, they are required to submit a Microsoft Excel sheet, justifying each student's grade distribution by detailing the grades earned in fulfillment of course requirements.

The University continuously works on updating instructor information on student evaluation by organizing training sessions on evaluation, assessment, rubric formation, Blackboard use, and available facilities, among others. The OIT ([Exhibit 4.3.4](#)) and the CARE ([Exhibit 4.3.5](#)) offer these training sessions. As the exhibits referenced herein clearly indicate, however, faculty member attendance at those different sessions is relatively low, especially when considering the large faculty count and the potential to attend.

NDU has incorporated into its culture the systematic application of methods that continuously foster an environment that is more conducive to academic integrity by actively working on raising awareness among students about the ills of cheating and plagiarism. Policies related to those topics are clearly outlined and communicated in the University *Catalog* and course syllabi, and are generally discussed with students at the beginning of every semester. Although these policies are well-implemented across the board, there is still room for improvement. Instructors who still accept assignments and coursework in hardcopy can and should be encouraged to use Safe Assign on Blackboard to ensure quicker and more efficient detection of plagiarism. Additionally, the human trait for leniency must be discouraged in the case where students are caught in the act of academic dishonesty and instructors must be encouraged to strictly enforce cheating and plagiarism policies, whenever necessary.

Transfer of courses is done in accordance with the policies governing the Office of the Registrar and respective Faculty. The registrar, before enrolling a newly-accepted transfer student, evaluates transfer credits. The Dean concerned approves the evaluation before the final transfer results are entered to the student's SIS. This system of check and balances is satisfactory and ensures that correct credits are transferred toward the degree program concerned. A major advantage of this system is that the student is made aware of the transfer evaluation before registration. Transfer students who have not taken liberal arts courses in their university of origin are required to do so at NDU. Usually, such students transfer from either French or European higher education systems.

The evaluation of transfer courses, especially transfer courses from non-American higher education systems prove challenging due to differences in grading scales and curricula. To ensure greater fairness, accuracy, and consistency during this evaluation process, NDU should work toward creating a grading scale used by the universities from which NDU receives the most students.

Rules governing the award of an academic credit are published in the University *Catalog*. The academic standing rules that govern probation and suspension are listed under the *Office of the Registrar* section in the University *Catalog* and posted on the website. An in-house computer system automatically generates the probation and suspension lists shortly after the posting of grades.

At the end of each semester, students can check their new academic status on the SIS, which an advisor, chairperson, and dean can also access. The interface, however, does not list neither the steps needed to be removed from academic probation nor the process for readmission after suspension. The required information that rules the academic standing is found, instead, on other media platforms, including the University Catalog and website.

In the academic year 2016-2017, and upon the recommendation of the COD, the VPAA commissioned the AVPAS,

the Dean of Students and the registrar to identify the causes behind the pool of students with poor academic performance and recommend workable solutions (*Exhibit 4.3.7*). Consequently, academically-at-risk students have been warranted special attention through the creation of the Advising Tracking System, which warns students of their status and delays their registration, pending a visit with their advisor. Moreover, the Department of Academic Advising was created to provide students facing academic difficulties with the advice and support they need.

PROJECTIONS

In a concerted effort to ensure that NDU continues to increase academic excellence, the below measures will be considered and put into implementation, following the necessary approvals:

- NDU openly publishes all rules related to the award of the academic credit and ensures these rules are properly applied. Among those rules are the academic standing rules that govern probation and suspension, repetition of courses, deadline for incompletes/progress grades and others. These aforementioned rules were revised in fall 2001. By the end of fall 2018, the COD, in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar, will reassess them and alter them, as needed;
- Regarding transfer courses and credits, by the end of academic year 2017-2018, the registrar and the Faculty deans will begin work on developing a set of University-wide guidelines that clearly describe equivalence between the University grading scale and that of French/European universities; and
- Over a two-year period, the Faculties will reassess their internship and/or practicum programs, focusing mainly on their duration. In addition, different Faculty departments will cooperate closely with the Department of Career and Placement to establish wider connections with both local and international market players to help place NDU students in high quality internships.

(cont'd.)

Standard 5: Students

DESCRIPTION

NDU is committed to offering its students a distinctive liberal arts education, including a wide spectrum of co-curricular activities designed to promote student engagement and learning. The University uses its resources to help both privileged and underprivileged gain access to quality education, a promise grounded in the NDU mission. As of fall 2017, total full-time and part-time undergraduate and graduate enrollment across all campuses stands at 6,252 students of which 83 percent are registered at the main campus, 10 percent at the North Lebanon Campus (NLC), and 7 percent at the Shouf Campus (SC).

The total of 6,252 students includes 5,874 undergraduate students (5,314 full-time and 560 part-time) and 378 graduate students (81 full-time and 297 part-time). The majority of undergraduate students at NDU (90 percent) across all campuses are Lebanese citizens and the rest (many of whom hold dual citizenship) are from 7 world regions, including the USA and Canada (2.93 percent), Europe (2.53 percent), Middle East and North Africa-MENA (2.32 percent), Latin America, Africa, Australia, and Asia. In fall 2017, the gender ratio (male to female) at the undergraduate level stood at 1.62:1 and at the graduate level stood at 0.43:1. Based on the total number of enrolled students, 35.81 percent are first-year sophomores, 18.15 percent are second-year juniors, 22.14 percent are third-year seniors, 7.68 percent are fourth-year seniors, 6.01 percent are fifth-year super seniors, 4.16 percent are unclassified or freshman students and 6.05 percent are graduate students (*Data First Forms*).

Admissions

The University Office of Admissions recruits students based on individual merit and regardless of race, color, sex, or religion (as stipulated in the University mission) who are willing to undertake a rigorous academic curriculum, engage in campus life, and contribute to the NDU community. The scope of this office’s work is to maintain year-round communication with more than 550 local and 160 international schools and build relationships with them by organizing and participating in direct orientations, school forums, regional forums that address regional disparity, one-on-one meetings, and shadowing activities (held for the first time in spring 2016). The University student recruitment strategy includes inviting prospective students to spend a few hours in the Faculty of their choice to attend some courses and gain hands-on experience of university life, organizing academic-related activities across Faculties for secondary cycle school students (*Exhibit 5.1*), “Parent Orientation Day” (as of 2015), “Open Doors,” and a “Schools Facts and Figures” event held for the first time in fall 2014, where top school administrators were invited to attend a 3-hour event at NDU, detailing their students’ performance and progress toward degree completion. During that event, University administrators, deans, and chairs interact with attendees and enhance ties with the schools (*Exhibit 5.2*).

In fall 2017, the three campuses combined received 1,564 undergraduate applications from first-time students of which 94.1 percent were accepted. Among those accepted, 71.4percent enrolled, as shown in below table:

| Campus | Main | NLC | SC | All Campuses |
|--------------------------|-------|-------|-------|--------------|
| Completed Application | 1,278 | 132 | 154 | 1,564 |
| Applications Accepted | 1,204 | 127 | 141 | 1,472 |
| Applicants Enrolled | 845 | 95 | 111 | 1,051 |
| (%) Accepted of Applied | 94.2% | 96.2% | 91.6% | 94.1% |
| (%) Enrolled of Accepted | 70.2% | 74.8% | 78.7% | 71.4% |

At the graduate level, 110 students applied of which 92.7 percent were accepted, and of those accepted, 89.2percent enrolled (*Data First Forms*).

| Campus | Main | NLC | SC | All Campuses |
|--------------------------|-------|-----|------|--------------|
| Completed Application | 99 | 8 | 3 | 110 |
| Applications Accepted | 93 | 6 | 3 | 102 |
| Applicants Enrolled | 85 | 3 | 3 | 91 |
| (%) Accepted of Applied | 93.9% | 75% | 100% | 92.7% |
| (%) Enrolled of Accepted | 91.4% | 50% | 100% | 89.2% |

The Office of Admissions developed in 2014 its *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* that was submitted to the President through the Office of the VPAA (*Exhibit 5.3*). In 2015, a new procedure for admissions and follow-up of students with special needs was set up with the help of the Office of Student Affairs (SAO), (*Exhibit 5.4*). Concurrently, in 2015, the University Admissions Committee reviewed the admissions policies and procedures as well as evaluated the effectiveness of the composite score and the administered entrance exams.

Student admission to the University is based on a composite score system calculated as a weighted average of 55 percent of a student’s secondary school Grade Point Average (GPA) and 45 percent of the NDU Math/Aptitude Entrance Exam (or its equivalent, SAT I). This composite score system is then used to admit or reject students, and to place those in the different remedial levels required for each Faculty and/or major (*Exhibit 5.5*). On the other hand, all applicants must fulfill an acceptable level of English-language proficiency requirement to be admitted; some remedial courses are allocated to students with academic deficiencies (*Exhibit 5.6*).

Student services and co-curricular experiences

NDU provides academic advising services to ensure that students complete their graduation requirements within their program’s residency. Furthermore, prior to the registration period, the Assistant Vice-President for Academic Support (AVPAS), in collaboration with the SAO, designated a special advising period for students with poor academic performance. The registrar, moreover, holds annually advisors workshop for freshman and undergraduate advisors (*Exhibit 5.7*).

In spring 2016, the Office of Admissions, in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar, started administering one orientation session in fall and the other in spring to target enrolled freshman students and help them improve their knowledge of the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE) requirements for Lebanese Baccalaureate II (LB II) equivalence and the procedures to declare their major (*Exhibit 5.8*). Henceforth, this function will be the responsibility of the newly-established Department of Advising.

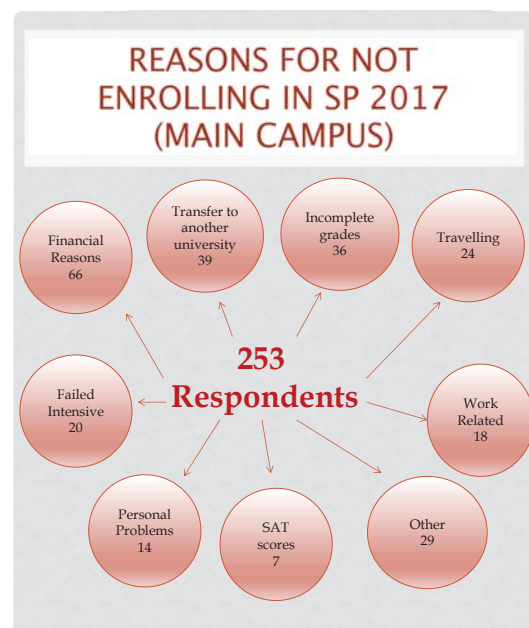
The Office of the Registrar supervises the implementation of University rules and regulations, and manages the following: registration process, final exam schedule, processing of final grades, issuance of student transcript of records, completion of graduation requirements, and issuance of diplomas. All University rules and regulations are posted online on the Office of the Registrar webpage, and are published in the University *Student Handbook* (*Exhibit 5.9*) as well as in the University *Catalog* (*Exhibit 5.10*).

The SAO organizes orientation sessions for new students at the beginning of each semester, before registration, to better acquaint them with the different services, programs, and offices/departments in addition to giving them a campus tour and facilitating an orientation with the department chairperson to which they belong. The SAO, the Office of the Registrar, the Business Office, the Library, and the Campus Ministry (CM) all participate in the New Student Orientation (*Exhibit 5.11*).

Student records are electronically archived and updated regularly. The Office of the Registrar is currently implementing a new policy to preserve student records in addition to all office documents. All records and documents are kept in well-equipped facilities, and all computerized/digitized information is saved securely.

The University retention and graduation rates have been calculated since fall in the academic year 2011-2012 for the purpose of decision making and benchmarking. A comparative study is currently being prepared with results to be featured in the upcoming University *Factbook* ([Exhibit 5.12](#)). More on retention and retention rates findings are described in Standard Eight.

In spring 2017, The Office of the AVPAS undertook a telephone-based survey to measure attrition and to determine its causes ([Exhibit 5.13](#)). Below figure depicts the reasons with the financial reason ranking highest.



The Department of Community Service and Awareness (CSA) provides students with the opportunity to engage in volunteering and service activities and to enforce awareness through a variety of campaigns ([Exhibit 5.14](#)). Along the same lines, the CM is another source of guidance for students. In addition, the Department of Health and Counseling offers medical services and mental health counseling that handle all cases professionally, respectfully, and confidentiality. For that purpose a physician, a nurse, and a counselor are contracted by NDU to care for students, faculty, and staff.

NDU provides Student Housing resources that offer a safe, well-maintained, and reasonably-priced accommodation for up to 430 students on campus divided into two wings by gender. Off-campus dorms are also available without curfew limitations. ([Exhibit 5.15](#)).

The establishment of the Office of Academic Advising has been approved and the position has been filled rendering the office operational, starting fall 2017 ([Exhibits 5.16 and 5.17](#)). A complementary tutoring program is available to support students with academic difficulties. The latter are referred to the SAO by their instructors, by the Department of Advising, or are contacted by the Department of Student Life due to repetitive attempts to earn a passing grade on some courses. Furthermore, faculty members allocate office hours to support students when need be; an Automatic Tracking System has been put in place (starting spring 2017) to monitor student performance and to place an automatic hold on registration, according to pre-defined criteria to encourage students to meet with advisors before selecting their courses for the next semester ([Exhibits 5.18 and 5.19](#)). The Council of Deans (COD) has a standing agenda item "Registration Issues" to deal with registration matters and respond to students' needs.

NDU provides undergraduate students with merit-based or need-based financial aid based. Financial aid programs are defined by clear rules, conditions, and procedures, and all related information is cited annually in the University *Catalog* and posted on the website. The average percentage of students receiving financial aid during the academic year 2016-2017 is 29 percent in the main campus, 43.5 percent in NLC, and 36.5 percent in the SC. The Financial Aid Committee reviewed and evaluated the financial aid programs and prepared proposals for Undergraduate Athletics Scholarship and for Financial Aid and Scholarships Upon Admissions. The latter were approved in fall 2016 and Scholarship Upon Admission has been implemented starting spring 2017, whereas Financial Aid Upon Admission became effective in Fall 2017 ([Exhibit 5.20](#)).

The Student Union is an elected student-representing body that speaks on their behalf and defends their rights in the framework of the University rules and regulations and in compliance with the Student Union by-laws. A new Student Union electoral law was implemented in fall 2016 ([Exhibit 5.21](#)) on a trial basis and amendments were made to it, following successful implementation. The University Student Affairs Committee and the COD approved in spring 2017 the final modifications. The modified law was implemented successfully in fall 2017 and should be vetted next by the University Council (UC) and by the Board of Trustees (BOT).

The Department of Student Activities encourages the creation of various clubs and societies, and supports their activities through the provision of needed resources. Clubs must abide by the by-laws of Student Clubs ([Exhibit 5.22](#)).

During fall 2016, 213 students at NDU were part of one sports team or the other. They all competed in at least one national inter-university championship. Four teams comprising 30 students participated in an International Championship (Euro Madrid in November 2016). NDU offers a Sports Grant to varsity players provided they maintain good academic standing. In fall 2016, 162 athletes at NDU received Sports Grants based on the recommendations of the Department of Athletics ([Exhibit 5.23](#)).

The University *Code of Ethics*, approved in 2014, details ethical standards that must be respected ([Exhibit 5.24](#)). Furthermore, the COD approved in fall 2016 the *Student Code of Conduct* ([Exhibit 5.25](#)). This code details types of violations and ways to deal with them in addition to processes used to report violations, investigate them, and make recommendations for sanctions. The *Faculty Handbook* also details ethical standards and explains the *Confidentiality Policy*, its purpose, and the importance of preserving student information ([Exhibit 5.26](#)).

During spring and summer 2016 (from May 6, 2016 to July 22, 2016), the Student Satisfaction Survey (SSS) was conducted for the third time to evaluate the services offered by the SAO. This survey examines student satisfaction with services provided by the following departments: the Department of Student Activities, the CSA, the Department of Student Life, Student Housing, the Department of Health Services and Counseling, the Department of Financial Aid, the Department of Social Security, and the Department of Athletics, among others ([Exhibit 5.27](#)).

The Department of Career and Placement was relocated from the Public Affairs and Communications unit to the SAO at the beginning of the academic year 2016-2017 and was not evaluated by students in the previously administered SSS.

APPRAISAL

Admissions

Prospective students, their parents, and high schools have increasingly recognized NDU's reputation as one of the top-ranked universities in Lebanon, especially since it has proven to the community at large for three decades its ability to live up to its mission by encouraging diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good. More so, by focusing on producing a full-fledged human being in accordance with its mission, NDU alumni have demonstrated a strong ability to succeed and emerge as future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love, and freedom. NDU's high-standing becomes even more evident when viewed in light of the strong ties it maintains with more than 700 schools.

Overall, undergraduate (first-time) application and enrollment rates in recent years have fallen (applications: from 2,052 in fall 2014 to 1,564 in fall 2017; enrollment: from 1,477 in fall 2014 to 1,051 in fall 2017.) Although the dire economic condition in Lebanon has created financial challenges for families, the University, true to its mission, has committed itself to providing prospective students with access to quality education and new opportunities. Focused initiatives and resources (special protocol programs with main feeder schools, financial aid, and scholarship upon admission, shadowing program, academic activities, and parent orientation days) were created to break through some barriers to boost admissions. The current challenge faced by the University is to maintain the student population and ensure that it is financially accessible to students with limited resources.

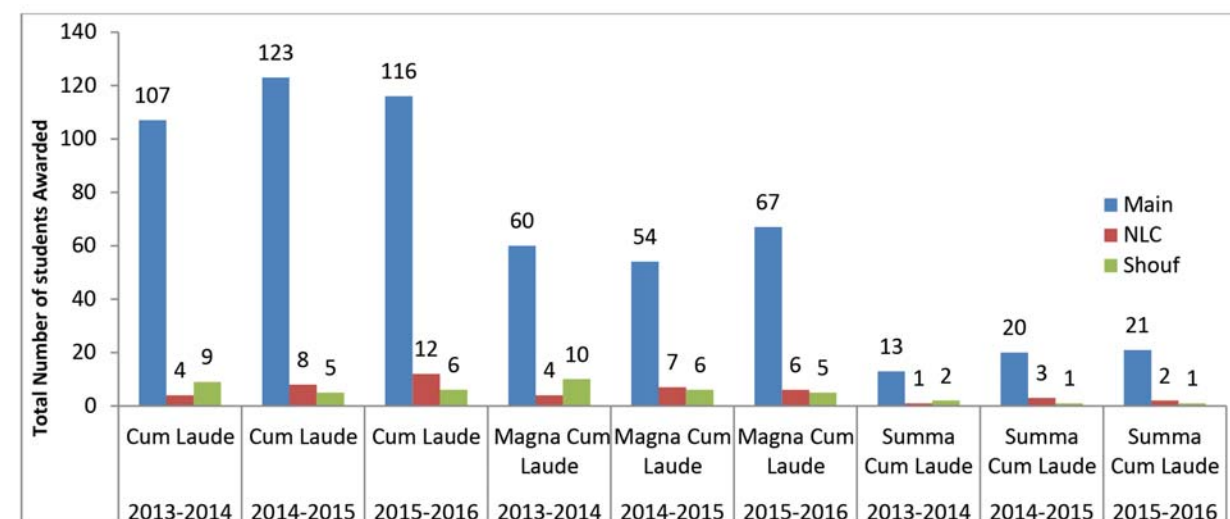
The graduate admission process applied by Faculties has been successful concerning overall student quality. The University is currently engaged in reviewing the admissions practices and policies for graduate studies. In accordance with one of the recommendations made during the annual University academic retreat in fall 2016, the Department of English and Translation (DET) at the Faculty of Humanities (FH) has devised a method to assist admitted students who are required to take the Intensive English Program, which allows them to take concurrent courses that do not require a high level of English proficiency. The work of the DET is benchmarked with best practices in U.S. colleges and universities. The new Intensive English Program took effect in summer 2017, a feature that did not exist before since this program was only offered in fall and spring semesters.

While the Office of Admissions has established a solid testing service and placement for the past five years, it has recently changed the Math Placement Test, with the assistance of the Department of Mathematics, to reflect proper math course placement. The office plans to continue to follow suit with the English Placement Test.

Student services and co-curricular experiences

The Office of the Registrar publishes systematically across the three campuses student success data, the percentage of students graduated with Cum Laude, Magna Cum Laude, and Summa Cum Laude (*Exhibit 5.28*). At the main campus, the percentage of students graduated with Cum Laude varied from 10 to 11 percent (between the years 2013-2014 and 2015-2016), and reached 20 percent in the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS) in 2015-2016. The percentage of students graduated with Magna Cum Laude varied from 5 to 6 percent (between the years 2013-2014 and 2015-2016), and reached 11 percent at the Faculty of Engineering (FE) in 2015-2016. The percentage of students graduated with Summa Cum Laude varied from 1 to 2 percent (between the years 2013-2014 and 2015-2016), while it reached 3 percent in the FE and Nursing and Health Sciences, 6 percent in the Faculty Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS), and 9 percent in the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) in 2015-2016.

Table 5.1 Total number of students awarded Academic Distinction (by campus, year, and type of award).



Retention and graduation rates have been calculated since fall 2011, and published in the University *Factbook* and on the website. Standard Eight presents an extensive overview and analysis on retention and graduation rates.

The Office of the Registrar, the SAO, the Office of Finance, and Office of the VPAA, have all been working collaboratively since fall 2015 to determine the underlying reasons behind the drop in enrollment and devise alternative solutions, in particular with regard to financial matters. Since 26 percent of non-returnees listed financial reasons as the obstacle to enrollment, the Department of Financial Aid embarked on a study to evaluate existing plans and to propose new ones. Further, 15 percent of non-returnees transferred to other universities for undeclared reasons.

Financial Aid staff members strive to meet applicants' financial needs by guiding them and helping them through their years of education. In fact, 61.39 percent of the students who filled the SSS held in 2016 asserted that their financial aid application was reviewed fairly and 79.32 percent said that the Financial Aid staff was helpful when they needed assistance or had questions.

During the past three academic years, the number of students benefitting from financial aid has been increasing whilst the number of students enrolled has decreased, especially at the main campus (*refer to below charts*). Consequently, NDU recently announced a renewed effort to attract applications from talented students. The Financial Aid and Scholarship Upon Admission will hopefully stimulate the admission of students with financial difficulties and will attract new students coming from solid academic backgrounds.

Below breakdown shows the number of students receiving financial aid:

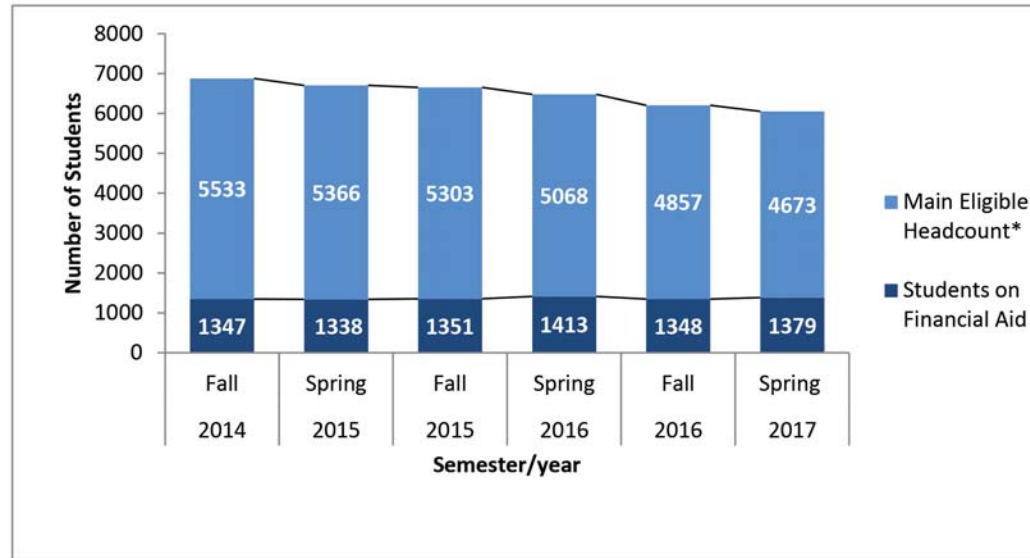


Figure 5.1 Number of students on financial aid compared to eligible enrolled students (Main Campus).

*Excluding freshman, graduate, teaching diploma, intensive, and special,

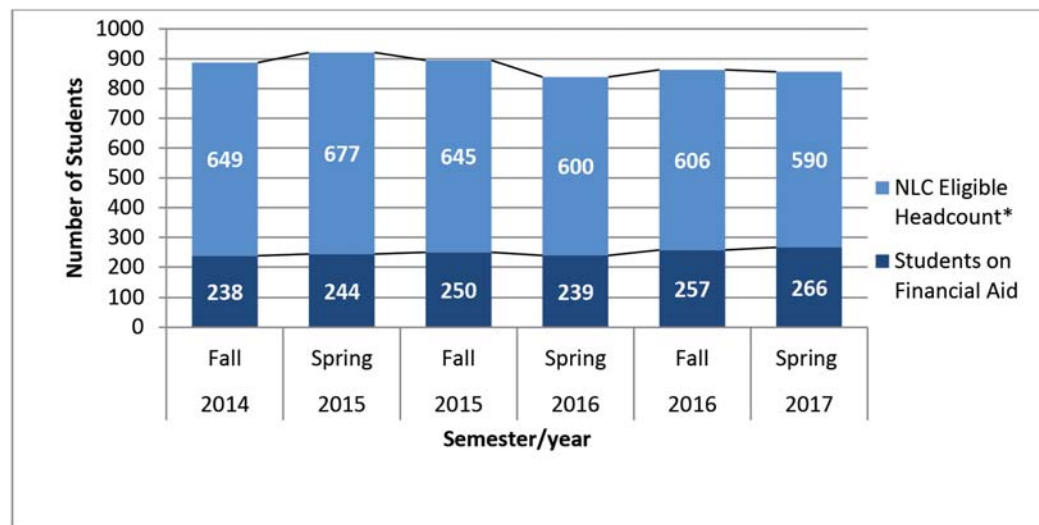


Figure 5.2 Number of students on financial aid compared to eligible enrolled students (North Lebanon Campus (NLC)).

*Excluding freshman, graduate, teaching diploma, intensive, and special,

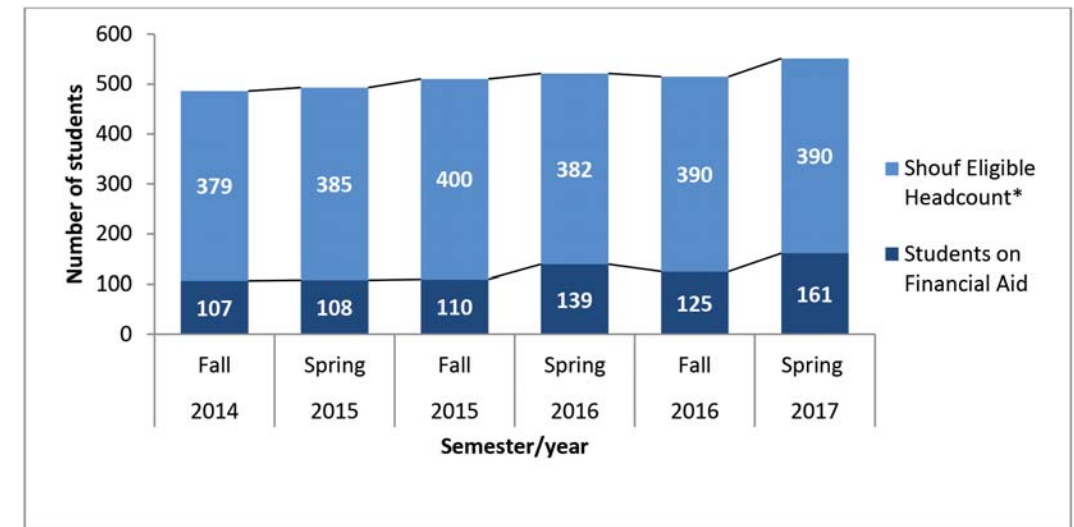


Figure 5.3 Number of students on financial aid compared to eligible enrolled students (Shouf Campus)

*Excluding freshman, graduate, teaching diploma, intensive, and special

The Orientation sessions administered by the SAO aim at providing new students with information pertaining to registration, rules and regulations, and University facilities; however, not all accepted students attend the orientation session and some end up making mistakes that could hinder normal academic progression.

The SSS undertaken in 2016 revealed improvements in many areas pertaining to student services and shed light on several areas with weaker evaluations (*Exhibit 5.29*). For instance, 75 percent of respondents reported an improvement in cleanliness at the Student Housing and a satisfactory level of security; however, they noted that dorm staff members were not as efficient as they once were. This complaint led to the recruitment of new staff for Student Housing as well as the implementation of staff evaluation similar to what is implemented across the University (*see Standard Seven*). Residents also complained about low privacy levels mainly, because Student Housing staff reserve the right to periodically check rooms for cleanliness in the presence of the residents in question and following their written consent. Finally, some students complained about internet availability with a reduction of 5.51 percent in the percentage of students, stating the internet is suitable. The Office of Information Technology (OIT) asserted that connectivity is suitable at Student Housing and explained that once students exceed the allocated quota, they are then placed on a slower connection till the end of the cycle.

At the Department of Health and Counseling, most survey results showed improvement from 2014 to 2016 with regard to respect for privacy and staff competence. Concerning the scheduling of appointments with medical staff or counseling, it was noted that perhaps an improvement would be required, especially during the registration period for new students. A solution to this concern has already been devised and implemented with reallocation of the scheduling task to a qualified staff member.

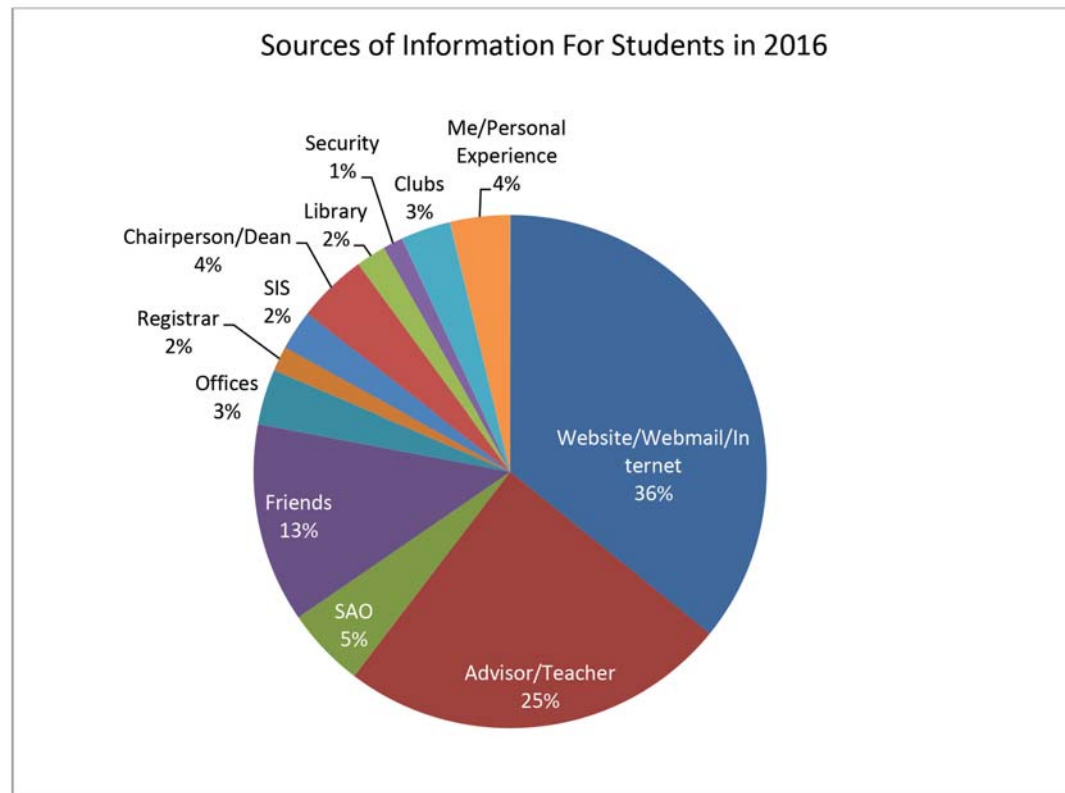
The Department of National Social Security that deals with all issues related to the Lebanese National Social Security Fund (NSSF) showed improvements in identifying problems, knowledge, and staff competency as well as understanding problems and providing solutions while handling all issues with courtesy and professionalism. It is worth noting that a rush period occurs during the first two weeks of every semester but does not warrant the hiring of additional staff, since the remainder of the academic year is less busy at the department. Several student assistants are appointed to provide support during the rush period.

Results for the Department of Student Life also improved in 2016 when compared with 2014. More than 73 percent of respondents stated that service received was good in terms of communication, referrals, and staff competence. Kindly be advised that student knowledge, regarding availability of complementary tutoring service was relatively low (61 percent).

In terms of the Departments of Student Activities and the Department of Athletics, there were improvements in evaluations regarding several aspects; however; gym opening, the availability (or lack thereof) of gym equipment, and the quality of professional assistance were rated by about 60 percent of respondents as suitable.

When asked how they learned about activities at NDU, 46 percent of respondents listed e-mail communication (up 6 percent from 2014) and 22 percent named on-campus communication (down 5 percent from 2014). The SAO works closely with the Office of Communication (OC) to enhance communication and to secure their support, including establishing proper means of communication before events and acquiring suitable coverage during and after such events take place.

Finally, a look at student sources of information shows that the majority rely on the University website and e-mails as well as information they receive from advisors and instructors.



PROJECTIONS

Admissions

- The Office of Admissions will draft a proposal to increase University visibility in schools and will by the end of fall 2017 share this proposal with the VPAA. Moreover, the office will champion an enrollment plan, in collaboration with all Faculty deans, as noted and mentioned in the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*. The enrollment plan should be submitted by fall 2018.

Student services and co-curricular experiences

- Based on feedback received through the SSS, the SAO will review the operations of the Department of Athletics to increase patronage of its facilities. This review would include evaluation of resources, current services, and ability to provide suitable service. A report will be submitted to the VPAA by the end of the academic year 2017-2018; also, based on the SSS, and since online resources are a major source of information for students, the webpages of the SAO, the Office of the Registrar, and the Office of Admissions will be revamped to facilitate provision of information. The above offices will explore new touch points to ensure accessibility to students and dissemination of important information, such as availability of the Department of Advising and complementary tutoring services. Reporting on this development will be due by the end of spring 2018;
- In view of the importance of satisfying student needs, continuous effort will be made to seek student feedback, regarding satisfaction level with services provided by the SAO. The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) will design, administer, and compile survey findings by the end of the academic year 2017-2018. The surveys will be specific to office/department and will be administered concurrently with service provision to ensure that students using the service are the ones evaluating it;
- The SAO will explore innovative ways to deliver the orientation sessions for new students; thereby, increasing their participation. Such will be accomplished in collaboration with the OC for the digital delivery of content with reporting due by the end of fall 2017. Furthermore, the SAO and the Office of the Registrar will explore the possibility of offering same-day registration for those students who attend the orientation. A recommendation will be submitted to the VPAA by the end of fall 2017;
- Given the current dire economic condition in Lebanon, and taking into account the financial burdens on families, the Department of Financial Aid will review its offerings with regard to the proposed Sports Scholarship and the Work Study Grants (WSGs) and report its recommendations to the VPAA through the dean of students by the end of spring 2018;
- The impact of Financial Aid and Scholarships Upon Admission will be evaluated, with the support of the OIRA, within the next year to measure their effectiveness and reporting will be done by the end of the academic year 2017-2018;
- The Office of the Registrar will continue to provide trainings to academic advisors on a biannual basis since they are a major source of information for students, as shown in the SSS results; The OIRA will conduct analyses to evaluate the relationship between basis of new student admission, their high school performance, and their performance at the University level, and report the findings to the VPAA by fall 2018; and
- Although the Department of Career and Placement was not evaluated prior to fall 2016, its modus operandi was reviewed in the fall 2016 retreat and major restructuring took place to ensure suitable placement for NDU students. A report reflecting the impact of restructuring will be devised by the SAO, in collaboration with OIRA, and submitted to the VPAA by the end of the academic year 2017-2018.



Standard 6: Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship

DESCRIPTION

Faculty and academic staff

NDU is proud of its pool of talented and dedicated faculty and academic staff, who are resolute in their commitment to assure high-standard and effective instruction, and to support student learning at all levels. Institutionally, the mechanisms for supporting teaching and learning have grown exponentially over the past few years. In the current structure, there are 7 ranks for full-time faculty members (lab instructor, senior lab instructor, lecturer, senior lecturer, assistant professor, associate professor, and professor), which are clearly described in the *Faculty Handbook (Exhibit 6.1)*. Faculty status, reappointment, and promotion, are also clearly defined. Differentiation between the 7 ranks is made mainly on teaching hours required for each rank, ranging over two semesters from 15 credits annually for a full professor to 24 credits annually for lecturers (*Table 6.1*). An additional category, adjunct faculty was approved in February 2015. Its purpose is to provide students with instruction from well qualified professionals in the fields of studies NDU offers. Clinicians are employed at NDU, mainly at the Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS), as full-time faculty and under the title of the aforementioned ranks.

Table 6.1 Faculty members' work load.

| Rank | Credits/Year |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Lecturer | 24 |
| Senior Lecturer | 24 |
| Assistant Professor | 21 |
| Associate Professor | 18 |
| Professor | 15 |

Aligning to the University mission, NDU expects all faculty to be effective instructors and productive scholars, and considers the two qualities as inseparable; faculty members are engaged in scholarship, creative work and research, and service-related activities. Adjunct faculty members are being invited to attend full-time faculty meetings to facilitate integration. Scholarship and research are an integral part of the University academic process. In that regard, all professorial ranks are granted a fixed amount for travel support (*Exhibits 6.2 and 6.3*) to enable them to participate in conferences and present research papers. Also, all professorial-ranked faculty members are eligible for course release to engage in research related to their respective areas of specialization. In collaboration with other offices, the Office of the Assistant Vice-President for Research and Graduate Studies (AVPRGS) provides guidance and assistance to faculty in finding appropriate grants, undertaking research, and publishing in appropriate journals. NDU offers a Graduate Student Assistantship to a student who is assigned as Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or as Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) by the respective department. Scholarship and research procedures have been communicated publicly in the past two years through emails and minutes of meetings. Full-time faculty are encouraged to verify the quality of the journal in which they wish to publish by referring to Scimago database, Eingenfactor.org, or Google Scholar Metrics, etc.

On March 18, 2016, the President announced the appointment of the Institutional Research Board (IRB) whose role is defined in the *Ethics and Research Policy (Exhibit 6.4)*. The Board of Trustees (BOT) approved on May 9, 2016, this policy in addition to the *University Research and Grants Policy (Exhibits 6.4 and 6.5)*. The University IRB ensures that all research abides by a set of policies and standards. The procedure on institutional overhead for research funding was implemented in October 2016; the funds collected is

reinvested in research ([Exhibits 6.6 and 6.7](#)). To encourage a research culture, faculty seminars are open to the entire NDU community that are held regularly, beginning in spring 2017 and lasting until fall 2018.

The full-time faculty recruitment process takes place, according to a procedure approved on February 22, 2016, by the President ([Exhibit 6.8](#)). All vacancies are posted on the University website and some are posted in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* and/or on AcademicKeys.com. An applicant submits all required documentation that appropriate committees and Faculty dean screen, and a shortlist is then forwarded to the VPAA for consideration. The President gives final approval. The Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) notifies candidates of the final decision. Since fall 2013, 69 new full-time faculty members have been hired. As of fall 2015, all newly-hired faculty participate in a New Faculty Orientation Program (NFOP) held at the beginning of each academic year. The purpose of this program is to introduce new faculty to University resources, programs, and services ([Exhibit 6.9](#)).

According to the *Faculty Handbook*, NDU expects all executive officers, faculty, staff, student employees, and other members of the community, when acting on behalf of the University, to maintain the highest standards of ethical conduct. A University *Code of Ethics*, and other policies, such as *Confidentiality, and Conflict of Interest and Harassment* are included in the *Handbook*. Freedom is considered a core value at NDU; it is explicitly stated in the mission and in the spiritual affiliation sections of the Constitution ([Exhibit 6.10](#)). Freedom of expression is included in the *Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Draft Policy*. Academic freedom is mentioned in the University By-Laws, as one of the reasons to appeal decisions.

Since fall 2011, NDU has established the *Teaching/Research/Service (TRS)*, ([Exhibit 6.11](#)) evaluation process for full-time faculty. Teaching evaluation forms (*T1, T2, T3, T4*), research evaluation forms (*R1, R2*), services evaluation forms (*S1, S2, S3*), and overall reporting (*TRS*) are being used routinely for all types of faculty evaluations. A merit increase system and procedure ([Exhibit 6.12](#)) approved on January 18, 2017, by the COD was implemented at the end of the academic year 2016-2017. It consists of attributing an annual salary increase for faculty demonstrating performance and commitment beyond expectations during a given academic year. The Department Personnel Committee (DPC) and the Faculty Personnel Committee (FPC) recommend this increase following a performance evaluation and sends it to the dean concerned, VPAA, and President for final approval. Such an evaluation is based on a reduced set of the TRS forms ([Exhibit 6.13](#)). The current promotion criteria at NDU have been in effect since 2007 ([Exhibit 6.14](#)). Presently, a revisited version of the promotion criteria is being discussed at the UFPC and COD level. Research at the faculty professorial rank plays an important role in the promotion evaluation of faculty. If a member fails to be promoted, an annual evaluation is implemented, according to the new contractual scheme ([Exhibit 6.15](#)).

Several departments employ GTAs and/or GRAs. Their role and duties are clearly defined in the University *Catalog* ([Exhibit 6.16](#)). Their teaching evaluation is carried out in a similar way to that of faculty i.e. based on the teaching evaluation forms (*T1, T2, T3, T4*), ([Exhibit 6.11](#)). Assistantship eligibility, duration, conditional renewal, duties, and compensation are clearly described in the University *Catalog* ([Exhibit 6.16](#)).

A new contractual system was implemented in 2015 ([Exhibit 6.15](#)) stipulates a two-year renewable contract for assistant professors and a three-year rolling contract for associate and full professors. In October 2016, a new salary scale ([Exhibits 6.17 and 6.18](#)), an optional pension plan and salary adjustments, according to new scales, were introduced ([Exhibit 6.17](#)). The purpose of the new salary/benefits scale was to keep faculty salaries and benefits benchmarked against other distinguished Lebanese universities and to continue attracting qualified faculty.

According to the *Data First Forms*, the total number of faculty in fall 2017, including part-timers, is 652 (270 full-time and 382 part-time), with a headcount ratio of 1:1.4, i.e. the ratio of full-time to part-time. The ratio of credits taught by a full-timer to a part-timer is 1.24:1.

All full-time faculty are eligible to serve on committees at the University, faculty, and department level. They may partake in course and curricular development through the Department Curriculum Committee (DCC), Faculty Curriculum Committee (FCC), and University Curriculum Committee (UCC), and participate in policymaking and

governance through University level committees, such as the University Council (UC) and the UFPC. In March 13, 2017, the UC voted to implement the new Faculty and department by-laws ([Exhibit 6.19](#)). These new by-laws describe the duties and responsibilities of all Faculty and department officers as well as the role of committees at the Faculty levels. Standard Three explains in details the shared governance system applied at NDU.

Turning to qualifications, among full-time faculty (during fall 2017), 67.78 percent are Ph.D. holders, 30 percent are master's degree holders, and 2.22 percent are bachelor's degrees holders. When part-time faculty is included in this assessment, the figures become 26.18 percent for PhDs, 60.99 percent for masters, and 10.47 percent for bachelors, 1.83 percent for professional license and 0.52 for Vocational Training respectively. In the case of academic staff, 24.50 percent are master's degree holders, 41.50 percent are bachelor's degree holders, and 21.50 percent are professional license holders and 12.5 percent do not have a professional license. All of data can be deduced from *Data First Forms* (data source: 6.2-Data First Forms).

The term "academic staff" refers to University staff working under the Office of Academic Affairs or having constant or intermittent contact with students. As of fall 2017, 68.50 percent of academic staff members are female and 31.50 percent are male. Whenever a Faculty or a specific office needs to recruit additional academic staff, the office director or Faculty dean concerned fills in a *Personnel Requisition Form (PRF)* and submits it to the Office of Human Resources (OHR) whose duty it is to initiate the recruitment process. The recruitment is done through a standard hiring process ([Exhibit 6.20](#)).

As of the academic year 2016-2017, evaluation of academic staff is performed through a performance management process, including annual appraisal meetings ([Exhibits 6.20 and 6.21](#)). Performance managers appraise staff performance, using a performance management process, engage staff in performance appraisal, and communicate findings to the HR. Academic staff promotion is among the outputs of the performance appraisal. Different types of promotions are described in detail in the exhibit section. NDU recognizes the essential role of training and development, and is committed to making relevant opportunities available to all staff. Technical and/or behavioral training will begin to be offered to academic staff, as of academic year 2017-2018. NDU also offers "development activities" that include individual coaching and counseling, mentoring, apprenticeship, university education, certification, accreditation, and leadership development. The University Competency model ([Exhibit 6.22](#)) provides staff with a comprehensive roadmap for developing the capabilities needed by staff advance their careers and to improve their effectiveness in the workplace.

Teaching and learning

Improving teaching and learning techniques is a continuous University objective. The majority of the undergraduate and graduate programs have established contemporary program objectives and PLOs. Faculties have begun to use assessment tools, other than GPA, to measure learning outcomes (e.g., senior projects, theses, and exit surveys). All Faculties have formed an Outcome Assessment Committee (OAC) at the departmental level; most Faculties also have Faculty-level outcome assessment committees. Assessment for the effectiveness of instruction in the classroom is done through the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) on a semester basis for each section of every course. Programmatic Accreditation efforts have either materialized or are in the process (ABET, AACASB, NAAB, etc.). Standard Two, and more specifically Standard Eight, offer details on programmatic accreditation status. Program and curricula reviews have been implemented in most Faculties (*see Standards Two and Four and Eight*). The GERs section of the student curriculum was subject to a complete revision in 2015. The new LAC for new students was put into effect in fall 2016. The system was standardized for all NDU students; one innovation is the Ethics course, which, though offered in each Faculty to ensure major-specific content, does also include 15 hours of general ethics common to all Faculties. Standard Four offer details on the new LAC.

Different teaching techniques/tools are established, depending on the course and on the learning outcomes description. Innovative IT tools, such as active board-based courses, Blackboard online exams, the newly implemented OERs, and digital badges contribute to meeting the learning goals of academic programs and objectives of individual courses. On June 8, 2016, the COD approved the new course offering report ([Exhibits 6.23 and 6.24](#)). The aim of this report was to reexamine course sizes across all types and levels,

set rules for spreading courses across days and weeks, and set standards for offering multi-section courses.

Most classrooms are equipped with computers and projectors. Active boards have been installed and are being used in the majority of classrooms. The University introduced the Promethean Interactive Board, which makes available state-of-the-art technology and provides the potential for virtual classrooms and webinars. Support to faculty in their self-evaluation tools have been carried out through workshops organized by the CARE. The CARE sponsored in the past two years a series of 7 workshops on teaching and learning and in fall 2017 a series of workshops on innovative learning and teaching. The FH, in collaboration with the OIT, holds an annual Blackboard Awareness and Training that emphasize assignments, rubrics, grading, and assessment, among other practical subjects ([Exhibit 6.25](#)). The FH faculty using OERs were also trained on this innovative teaching tool introduced in fall 2016 at the Faculty. The GEEC held in spring 2017 a round-table discussion on teaching and learning ethics for all interested faculty and discussed means of making the LAC course accessible to all. The FAAD previously organized, and continues to organize across all three campuses, workshops related to PLOs, course portfolio development, teaching portfolio development, and rubric’s development.

Students are generally taught by a variety of instructors in their program of study. In most of the multi-section courses, coordinators are appointed to secure consistency among the various sections. In these courses, common syllabi are used, allowing for common course content and exams but for various teaching methodology and tools (Blackboard exams, clickers, PowerPoint, etc.). Teaching labs are constantly being upgraded in all branch campuses. The University Writing Center, established in 2008, offers students one-on-one tutoring and workshops on a variety of topics.

Students enrolled at NDU have academic advisors who guide them through their studies. Through regular meetings, advisors ensure that students are fully aware of their expectations in terms of registered courses and program objectives. The advising role of full-time faculty is clearly stated in the University *Handbook*, as part of their duties. Advisors are usually chosen from a pool of faculty with ample teaching experience and interaction with students. They are evaluated on a semester or academic year basis through the S3 form and the Exit Assessment for Graduating Students. The Office of the Registrar organizes workshops at the beginning of each academic year to emphasize the roles and responsibilities of both program and freshman advisors as well as to update their skills. New technical tools are being studied to make the advisor’s role more effective (locks, withdraws, drop, etc.). Moreover, an Advising Task Force was formed and completed its mandate in July 2016 ([Exhibit 6.26 and 6.27](#)). This task force evaluated the quality of advising and the current practices and charted directions for improvement in supporting student achievement through advising. Its recommendations included actions to define the roles and responsibilities of academic advisors, recommend revisions to existing advising approaches, evaluate effective advising activities, recognize effective advising, and invigorate advising at branch campuses. In spring 2017, with the help of the OIT, an Advising Tracking System went into effect.

APPRAISAL

Faculty and academic staff

NDU has made great strides since its Candidacy Self-Study 2013. In a matter of just a few years, faculty diversity has been enhanced, salaries have adequately kept pace with those of peer institutions, the gender ratio for academic staff is favorable to women, the quality of education has improved to such an extent that globally recognized institutions have readily accredited many University programs and other programs are currently pending accreditation.

In terms of faculty, although several publicly available documents describe their definition, role, rights, and duties, a new Faculty Rights and Responsibility policy ([Exhibit 6.28](#)) was drafted and is being studied at the UFPC and the COD level. This new policy is of high importance as it aims at defining all matters related to full-time and part-time faculty (rights, duties, appointment, rank, workload, reappointment, promotion procedure, tenure, leaves, salaries, benefits, and retirement).

All Faculties are in the process of increasing the hiring rate of qualified full-time faculty, aiming at improving the ratio of full-time to part-time faculty ([Exhibit 6.29](#)). NDU has been able to attract highly qualified new faculty over the course of the past four years. The number of full-timers has increased from 250 in fall 2014 to 270 in fall 2017. This positive trend led to a decrease in the number of part-timers: from 456 in fall 2014 to 382 in fall 2017 (Data First Forms). Figure 6.1 shows the increase in the number of full-timers and the decrease in the number of part-timers over the aforementioned period. Accordingly, the ratio of the number of credits taught by full-timers to part-timers has been increasing promisingly, as shown in Figure 6.2, reaching 1.24:1 during fall 2017. Kindly be advised that tenure is yet to be implemented at NDU.

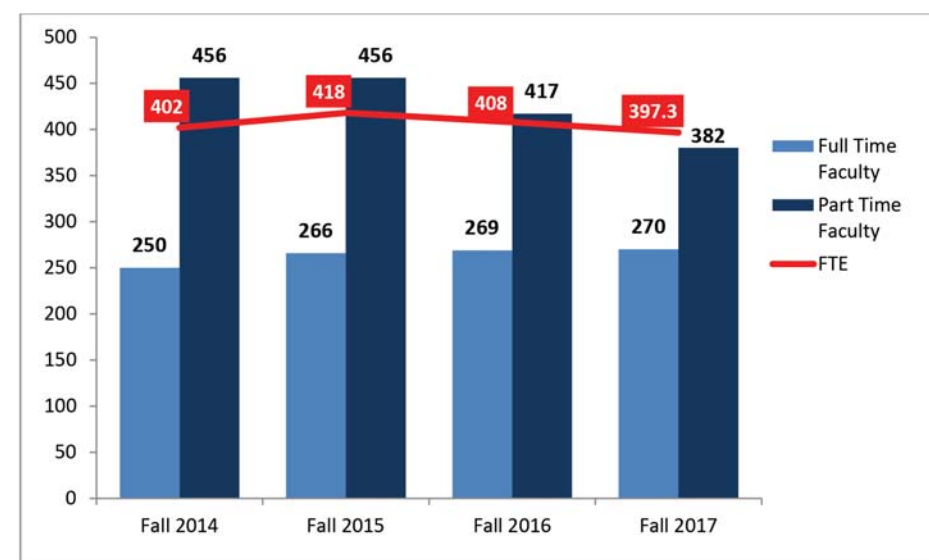


Figure 6.1 Number of full-time and part-time faculty over the past four academic years.

From fall 2014 till fall 2017, the number of Ph.D. holders has increased by 8.93 percent, whereas the number of master’s and bachelor’s holders has decreased by 5.19 percent and 20 percent respectively. These positive trends show the commitment of NDU to increase its number of terminal degree holders. NDU hired two adjunct professors in fall 2017. The presence of adjunct faculty at NDU benefits students both on the academic and professional levels.

Research culture at NDU is becoming more significant among faculty. The University has decided to emphasize the importance of research in keeping faculty abreast of their respective disciplines. As a result of this effort, the University has recently signed agreements with the National Council for Scientific Research – Lebanon (CNRS-L), ([Exhibit 6.30](#)), which puts NDU on a par with the four other research-oriented universities in Lebanon. In fall 2017, the CNRS-L awarded 12 faculty members research funds, following a thorough evaluation of their proposals by peers. The number of faculty presenting their work at conferences has steadily been increasing over the past three years, as has the number of refereed and conference publications ([Exhibit 6.31](#)). Course release applications have recently witnessed a slight but worthy of mention increase, demonstrating a more active involvement of NDU faculty in research projects ([Exhibit 6.32](#)).

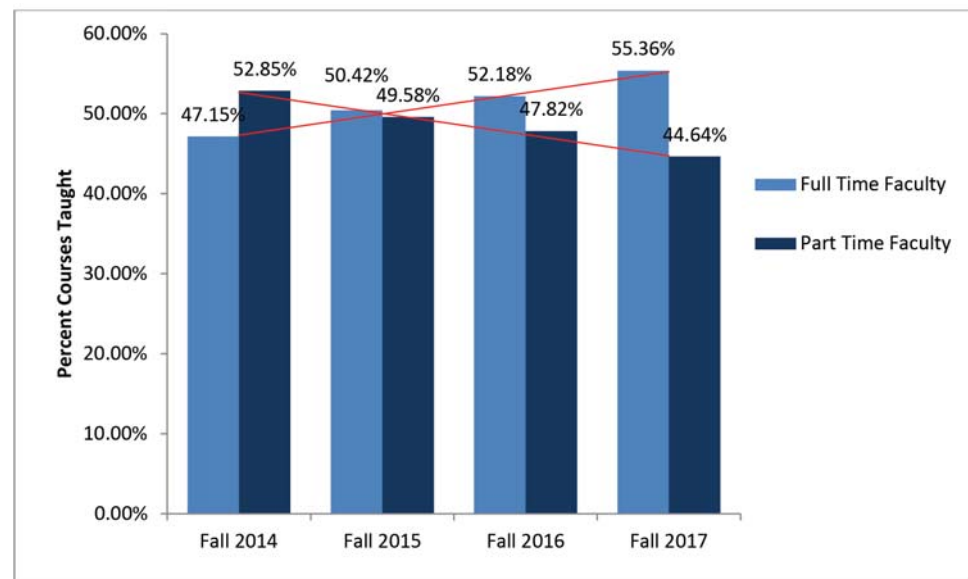


Figure 6.2 Percentage of credits taught by full-time and part-time faculty over the past four academic years.

NDU is committed to offering its students quality and affordable education with the most widespread exposure to diversity. In line with the institution’s mission, equal opportunity is provided for all faculty and staff. NDU, therefore makes every effort to attract the marginalized to fields where they are underrepresented. Today, 45.24 percent of faculty are now women. According to the latest statistics 55 percent of non-Lebanese full- and part-time faculty are from Anglo-Saxon countries. This high level of diversity at the University constitutes a strength. No discrimination exists whatsoever in terms of gender or religious belonging. Equal opportunities are applied throughout the recruitment system and the full-time faculty hiring process that was approved by the President on February 22, 2016 ([Exhibit 6.8](#)) attests this fact. The New Faculty Orientation Program is a positive step in orienting faculty to both NDU and to its culture. As far as faculty are concerned, ethical behavior has been observed to date, although they are not yet fully informed of harassment guidelines. Moreover, faculty enjoy freedom of speech as well as academic freedom.

The newly-implemented merit system based on the contribution of faculty in teaching, research, and service was successfully implemented in 2016-2017. The promotion criteria, however, is in dire need of amendment. Several committees have worked diligently on proposing a “new” document to this effect. The proposed documents, nonetheless, have not been adopted ([Exhibit 6.33](#)). There appears to be several reasons: some view them as too strict, others view them as too lenient and too research-intensive at a University where opportunity for research is a continuing goal. Upon the recommendation of the COD and the approval of the President, a committee was appointed in March 2017 ([Exhibit 6.34](#)) to work on the promotion criteria. Its role is extremely important, as it will ensure that new criteria are commensurate with that of a reputable institution that considers scholarship as complementary to teaching and essential to the advancement of knowledge.

The new rolling contract system introduced in 2015 has proven its effectiveness by attracting new faculty members from the USA, including a new Dean for the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE). It can be stated that active academic/research-oriented faculty welcomed the stability this system has introduced, regarding their career path. The new salaries and benefits packages are currently in the process of meeting or surpassing those of other top universities in Lebanon.

The institution has understood the importance of hiring and retaining highly qualified academic staff. Their evaluation through the performance management process is a considerable step toward development. As of fall 2017, out of 310 staff members, 200 (64.52 percent) are academic staff distributed mainly among 26 offices. The continuous increase in the number of academic staff over the last three years (increase of 6.95 percent since fall 2014) and the efforts made in the academic year 2016-2017 to adjust their salary scale with respect to the market ([Exhibit 6.35](#)) show that the University is devoted to fulfilling the in-class and out-of-class responsibilities toward

its students. In terms of development, the increase of the number of workshops and information literacy sessions was 29 in 2014-2015 and 50 in 2016-2017 shows that NDU is using all available resources to help academic faculty and staff in their needs.

Teaching and learning

University faculty has enough time to prepare effective lectures and teaching aids, to advise and evaluate students, and to evaluate and assess the programs - a clear University strength. The new course offering optimization report ([Exhibits 6.23 and 6.24](#)) aims at improving the allocation of resources and, as a result, augmenting the overall institutional performance. Faculty members are formidably well-informed about their teaching responsibilities and understand what is expected of them. The instruction effectiveness of faculty members is partly measured by an equitable evaluation system, where by both their peers and their students assess them ([Exhibit 6.11](#)). These evaluation forms are relevant documents in the file of any faculty applying for promotion or seeking contract renewal. Kindly be advised that for part-time faculty members, the T forms are only considered for evaluation. In some cases, the T1 form could be filled in a subjective manner and may mislead the evaluator, because this form simultaneously evaluates the course (content and outcome) and the instructor (methodology and attitude). In that regard, students who do not like the content of a skilled faculty’s course, or students who like the content of a less experienced faculty’s course, could assign, on average, the same grade. The TRS forms are a positive element in quantifying faculty evaluation, as they tackle all aspects of faculty responsibilities. In the same vein, the presence of GTAs is beneficial for encouraging quality learning at NDU, as much as it gives graduate students hands-on experience. The GTAs are full-time students, dedicated and committed to quality learning and are mainly lab instructors and teach lower level and freshman courses. In some departments, they also serve in tutoring centers, helping full-timers during their office hours, correcting exams and projects in large classroom courses, helping senior projects students in their research, and providing more time for faculty to prepare quality teaching and perform quality research.

The CARE has become more active in 2016-2017. It held a series of seminars on learning outcomes and faculty pedagogical aptitude. The most recent events were the four-day workshop titled, “*Service Learning as Pedagogy of Engagement*,” which was held in early May 2017 and the “*Innovative Teaching and Learning*” held in November 2017, as called for by University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* ([Exhibit 6.29](#)). The CARE does not aim to replace any teaching and learning center that offers workshops tailored to particular faculty needs, however.

The use of technology in teaching and learning has steadily increased over the past few years. Most classes are now equipped with active boards, which provide a richer teaching environment for instructors. The Department of English and Translation started in spring 2016 to implement Open Education Resources (OERs) as part of *Goal I, Objective 6* of the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* ([Exhibit 6.29](#)). In fact, OER projects are being piloted within the ENL 213 and ENL 223 courses, and promising results were obtained ([Exhibits 6.36, 6.37, and 6.38](#)). A year following their implementation, however, OER tools are not yet spread across Faculties.

Student advising is a major faculty duty, and it is emphasized by the registrar’s advisor workshops; the last ones were held in March 2017 ([Exhibit 6.39](#)). These workshops help in keeping advisors abreast of the tools they need to perform their task. The FE is organizing career advising days to help engineering students make informed choices about their careers; the last one was held on June 1, 2016 ([Exhibit 6.40](#)). This concept should be spread across all Faculties. Continuous efforts are being made to increase the efficiency of the advising procedure and to help students in the registration process. The Advising Tracking System and the early registration procedure (implementation started in fall 2017), ([Exhibit 6.41](#)) are first steps toward a controlled and ordered registration system. The effectiveness of the academic advisors duties is controlled throughout the S3 forms ([Exhibit 6.11](#)) and the newly-established Department of Academic Advising, as detailed in Standard Five.

PROJECTIONS

Despite the University's strengthening record, it still recognizes continuous gaps in certain areas and recognizes the need to pay concerted attention to the professional development of faculty and academic staff and the continuous need to seek new talents in emerging fields.

Faculty and academic staff

- The COD and the Office of the VPAA will deliver before spring 2019a formal system to attract and integrate an increased number of adjunct faculty at NDU;
- By fall 2018, the UFPC and the COD will work on finalizing the *Faculty Rights and Responsibility Policy*, which describes faculty contractual schemes. This revision will also weigh in on the possibility of granting tenure;
- The UFPC, through the *Faculty Rights and Responsibility Policy*, will propose in the academic year 2019-2020, a clinical track for faculty that choose to emphasize teaching and professional/creative work, rather than research;
- The Office of the VPAA will assign, starting 2018-2019 and through the New Faculty Orientation Program (NFOP), a mentor for each newly-hired faculty member. The mentor will advise the new faculty on the mode of teaching in an American liberal arts model university as well as help them integrate into the University culture;
- The quality of research will continue to be monitored and encouraged by the chairperson and dean concerned through the merit system and by the COD and the Office of the VPAA through the revised promotion criteria that should be vetted by fall 2018;
- NDU will continue applying the new merit system to motivate faculty to deliver quality research and teaching, and to be more involved in service-related committees. This new merit system will be evaluated after two cycles, starting fall 2018; and
- To enhance the graduate programs and foster research, NDU will continue to offer the GTA and GRA, whereby graduate students are incorporated in teaching freshman/sophomore level courses and assist faculty in larger classes.

Teaching and learning

- The UFPC, in collaboration with OIRA, will draft by fall 2019, a new *T1* form to distinguish between the evaluation of faculty performance and material taught. The UFPC will also draw means to ensure a larger number of student responses to the *T1* forms;
- The VPAA will champion the establishment of a Center for Teaching and Learning by fall 2019. A professional in the field will direct it, and it will have a budget sufficient to run workshops in teaching methodology, assessment, and evaluation as well as other faculty development-related issues. The objective of the center would be to keep all faculty abreast of the latest and most effective methods of teaching and learning. The OERs- and IT-related methodology and tools would be presented in association with Faculties and departments;
- Research centers will be revisited to clearly identify their mission and vision. The VPAA tasked the AVPRGS to draft guidelines for this review, and during the academic year 2018-2019, a committee will be charged to carry out the review of these centers;
- The OIT will continue to offer training sessions to promote OERs and enhance the use of Blackboard in all Faculties; and
- Finally, the DET formed an ad-hoc committee to evaluate the work of the Writing Center, including two committee members who have had previous experience working at a Writing Center in another NEASC-accredited peer institution of higher education that follows the American model of education. The task is to develop a mission, vision statement for the center, and make recommendations for improvement based on assessment results. The expected date to finalize the assessment is end of spring 2018.

(cont'd.)

Standard 7: Institutional Resources

The ever-looming cloud of resource constraints is probably the biggest challenge faced by any tuition-dependent institution of higher education worldwide—a condition to which NDU is not immune. To add to this permanent burden, NDU still has to contend with a stinging host of external and oftentimes uncommon factors that undesirably affect its institutional resources. Some of these factors include the: (a) prevailing economic gloom and political instability engulfing Lebanon, which has spurred a decline in enrollment; (b) adverse consequences of the long-drawn-out war in neighboring Syria, resulting in the influx of around 1.2 million Syrian refugees into this small country and imposing an unprecedented liability; (c) tumultuous political climate in the Middle East; (d) volatility of global markets; and (e) drop in philanthropic giving. Despite those overwhelming odds, however, NDU has consistently found ways to continue providing first-rate and relevant education to continue developing, as below evaluation demonstrates.

HUMAN RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

The Office of Human Resources (OHR) at NDU utilizes evaluation tools, including competency-based interviews, selection tests, realistic job previews, and onboarding. As of October 2017, the total number of staff employed across the three campuses is 310. Seventeen HR policies currently exist at NDU, covering the areas of employment, compensation and benefits, and employee relations ([Exhibit 7.1](#)). Those policies have been communicated to staff members through official memoranda, as and when needed. The OHR reviews the policies annually to ensure legal compliance and alignment with the University mission.

Regarding compensation, the OHR has developed tools to attract and retain qualified staff, and to institutionalize operations in line with the University mission. These tools include: (a) compensation and benefits guide, (b) compensation and benefits policies and procedures, (c) the job evaluation guide, (d) the grading matrix, and (e) the pay structure ([Exhibits 7.2 and 7.3](#)). In terms of personnel evaluation, the current performance management system at NDU presents the main elements of performance management and appraisal. It takes place once a year; however, continuous feedback is observed and recorded by performance manager throughout the year. Opportunities for professional and career development, succession planning, and training are adopted for staff development ([Exhibit 7.4](#)).

APPRAISAL

A strength identified in the Self-Study lies in the promulgation of a set of HR policies that outline strategic priorities for staff members. As of October 2017, NDU has 17 HR policies: out of 6 employment policies 4 are currently applied, all the 10 compensation and benefits policies are currently applied, and 1 employee relations policy is currently applied ([Exhibit 7.1](#)). The policies are reviewed annually, reflecting an institutional momentum to reflect and improve policies and their implementation.

As for compensation, the OHR completed in June 2017 the new plan for assessing, designing, and implementing a new compensation structure. The office conducted job evaluation by identifying compensable factors and establishing pay grades, then, relied on Hay Compensation Salary Survey as a systematic way to collect the information to classify positions, adjust pay range structure, and present salary information. The HR effectively established relative internal job values and analyzed survey data, the pay structure, and ranges for NDU. In June 2017, salary adjustments were implemented in the main and North Lebanon Campus (NLC).

The performance management cycle for 2016-2017 took place during the months of July and August 2017. Strength lies in familiarizing the University performance managers and staff members about the performance management system and engaging them in hands-on applications. The utility of the performance management system in meeting its stated objectives has not yet been measured to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

PROJECTIONS

The OHR intends to perform the following:

- In terms of employment, the OHR will start implementing two new tools: the Realistic Job Preview (RJP) and the Onboarding, effective January 2018;
- As for compensation, the OHR is planning to apply salary reviews and adjustments in the Shouf Campus (SC), no later than fall 2018;
- The performance management system will start applying on the NLC and SC, effective in academic year 2018-2019; and
- For the main campus, the OHR will define employee mobility activities, training needs, and rewards as outcomes of the performance management cycle, no later than November 2017.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

Since its establishment in 1987, and despite the politico-economic uncertainties in Lebanon, NDU has witnessed continuous expansion reflected in the growth of its financial capabilities, as demonstrated by increases in Net Assets (*data source:7.5 -Data First Forms*) and operating revenues (*data source:7.3 -Data First Forms*) through prudent management of financial resources. Figure 7.1 shows that Net Assets grew by 10.2 percent from approximately US\$107.843 million in academic year 2014-2015 to US\$118.888 million in 2016-2017 (*data source:7.5 -Data First Forms*). This growth is mainly due to the rise in investments in property, plant, and equipment. In particular, the NLC witnessed the construction of new facilities, buildings, offices, laboratories, library, and classrooms in an effort to enhance education quality and student-oriented services. Moreover, in 2015, the engineering laboratories on the main campus were expanded to house state-of-the-art facilities for the newly-established Petroleum and Chemical Engineering majors.

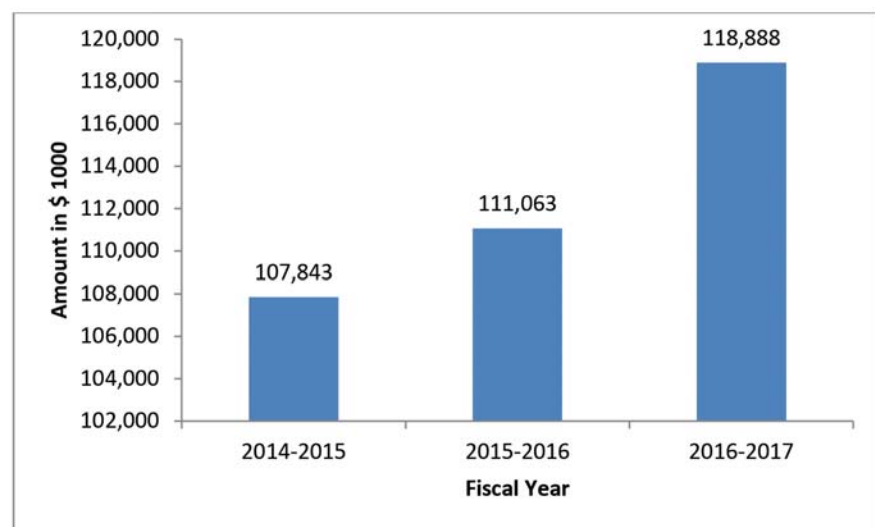


Figure 7.1 Net assets in USD (1,000).

Between fall 2014 and fall 2017, the total number of students enrolled declined from 7,520 to 6,256 (*data source: 4.3 and 4.4- Data First Forms*). Despite the decline in enrollment, the University operating revenues continued their uninterrupted growth. This growth allowed the University to continue improving education quality by expanding its student-oriented physical and educational facilities, as noted above, and by hiring new full-time faculty members and relying less on part-timers. From fall 2014 to fall 2017, the number of full-time faculty members increased from 250 to 270 while the number of part-timers decreased from 456 to 382 (*data source:6.1- Data First Forms*)

Figure 7.2 shows the total operating revenues (net of scholarships and fellowships) have increased from around US\$65 million in 2014-2015 to US\$68 million in 2016-2017. This increase is mainly due to the rise in tuition credit rates and subsequently tuition revenues, which cover 89 percent of total operating revenues (*data source:7.3 -Data First Forms*). Despite the rise in tuition credit rates, University tuition rates are still much lower than other comparable universities (*Exhibit 7.5*).

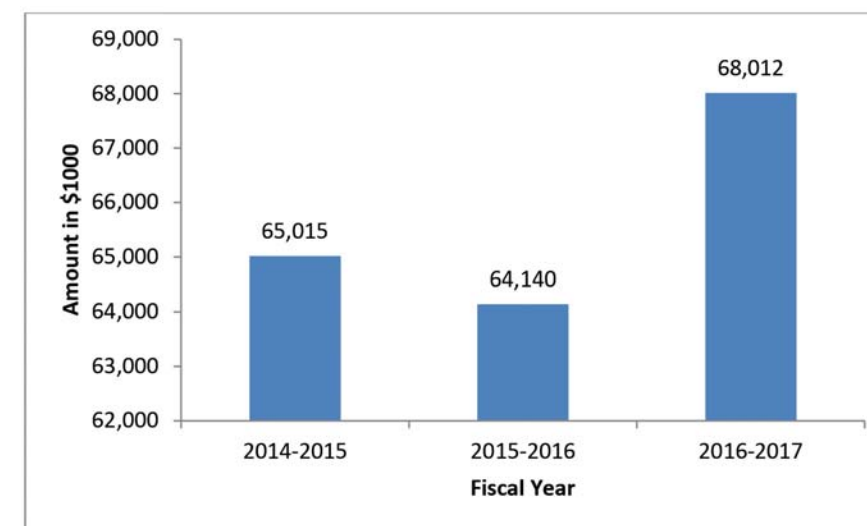


Figure 7.2 Total operating values in USD (1,000)

Fundraising is transparent and adheres to the written policy on gift acceptance (*Exhibit 7.6*). All fundraising revenues are used in accordance with donors' intentions and expectations, and are credited directly toward the intended fund. The purpose of fundraising is twofold: first to grant scholarships to financially disadvantaged students and second to enhance NDU's educational and physical facilities. Fundraising efforts yielded a pledge for US\$4 million in contributions to rename the Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Design (FAAD) into the Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts and Design. By July 2017, The University received a total of US\$2 million. An additional US\$1 million will be received in 2018 and a final US\$1 million in 2019 (*Exhibit 7.7*). Table 7.1 shows the fundraising revenues collected between 2014-2015 and 2016-2017:

Table 7.1 Fundraising (in USD).

| | AY 2014/2015 | AY 2015/2016 | AY 2016/2017 |
|--------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Fund Raising (USD) | 743,743 | 1,413,810 | 5,610,993 |

University revenues are devoted to the support of its academic programs and purposes. Compared with 2014-2015, Operating Expenditures in academic year 2016-2017 grew from US\$57.905 million to US\$60.305 million (*data source:7.3 -Data First Forms*). Faculty and personnel compensations represent approximately 57.8 percent of total operating expenditures. In order to retain and attract qualified faculty members, an independent consultant was hired in 2015 to benchmark NDU's full-time faculty salaries, scale, and fringe benefits package against those of competing universities. The University administration followed the consultant's recommendations by increasing

the salaries of all full-time faculty members over a two-year period. Faculty members received half the salary increase in 2016-2017 and the other half in 2017-2018. Full-time faculty members at the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) received the highest salary increase, i.e. 20 percent (10 percent in each of the afore-mentioned years); followed by the Faculty of Engineering (FE), i.e. 10 percent; and full-time faculty members of all other Faculties received 7 percent. In addition, a new faculty pension plan came into existence, whereby all eligible professorial-rank faculty members contribute 5 percent of their annual basic salary that is matched by another 5 percent from NDU ([Exhibit 7.8](#)).

The Board of Trustees (BOT) plays an important role in the University Financial Aid Policy ([Exhibit 7.9](#)), which seeks to reward academic excellence through scholarships and to help financially disadvantaged students. Student financial aid consists of i) Academic Scholarships; ii) Sports Scholarships; iii) Work-Study Grants (WSGs); iv) Sibling Aid; and v) President's List. The University, moreover, gives to high school students that enroll at NDU an amount of scholarships secured through annually-held competitions. In the academic year 2016-2017, a total of 3,529 students received financial aid compared with 3,516 students in 2015-2016 and 3,507 students in 2014-2015 ([Exhibit 7.10](#)).

The Business Office consists of a director and nine assistants, all holders of either a bachelor's degree or an MBA. The Vice-President for Finance (VPF) provides oversight for all the Business Office's financial operations. An independent external auditor and Certified Public Accountant (CPA), ([Exhibit 7.11](#)), audit financial statements annually. In July 2016, the President promised in a letter addressed to the NEASC that NDU would contract an external auditing firm to audit its Financial Statements, according to Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) standards and to provide training workshops to the Business Office staff ([Exhibit 7.12](#)). Accordingly, the University approached Price Water House and Ernst and Young (EY) for the purpose of auditing its Financial Statements, according to GAAP for institutions of higher education. The two auditing firms submitted their respective tenders to the President who discussed them with the BOT. The EY was commissioned the task by virtue of its experience with other Lebanese institutions of higher education (e.g., Lebanese American University-LAU).

Since the beginning of the academic year 2016-2017, the Business Office has been sending EY the Monthly Financial Position ([Exhibit 7.13](#)) to familiarize them with the accounting and reporting practices applied at NDU. In addition, on January 14, 2017, EY trained all Business Office staff on GAAP standards and Financial Statements presentation. Topics covered were:

1. U.S. GAAP vs. International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS), both significantly diverging accounting standard, affecting the University accounting system.
2. Summary of Significant Accounting Policies.
3. Treatment and presentation of the endowment.
4. Financial Statements presentation.

EY completed its assigned task in January 2018, and their reports are included in the package sent with this self-study.

In academic year 2013-2014, the University developed and approved budgeting process guidelines with detailed procedures on preparation, approval, and implementation. The budgeting process involves all academic and administrative units. It starts on March 1 of each year, following the President's "Budget Call" memo addressed to all University officers and administrators concerned. The Budget Office, headed by the budget officer, sends all the required forms and documents to Faculty deans, department chairpersons, and office heads ([Exhibit 7.14](#)). In turn, all offices submit their preliminary budget proposal to the Budget Office. After compiling the proposed budgets of all units, the Budget Office submits the Faculty budgets to the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) and office budgets to the Vice-President for Administration (VPA) who discuss budget contents with the respective Faculty deans and office heads. The VPAA and VPA then send the budget proposals, sans adjustments and modifications, to the Budget Office that prepares the consolidated budget and sends it to the VPF. The VPF meets with the chair of the BOT finance committee to discuss the budget details. After the discussion, the Budget Office

produces a draft version of the budget and sends it to the President who discusses the budget with the BOT Executive Committee for possible adjustments. The President then sends the budget back to the Budget Office to finalize it before returning it to the President. The President finally forwards the budget to the BOT members awaiting the BOT General Assembly. Once approved by the BOT, the President informs the University community of the voted budget declaring the start of the cycle.

An internal control mechanism is evident in the BOT's oversight over University financial activities to make sure they conform to the University mission. All financial transactions currently require the approvals of the Director of the Business Office, the VPF, and the President. Furthermore, a position of Internal Auditor has been created and the University is currently in the recruitment process.

NDU's financial investments are not material and are invested in low-risk instruments, such as prime banks preferred shares. The President holds a monthly meeting with the VPF, Director of Business Office, and the auditor to assess financial risk. Property and human risks are managed through purchasing insurance policies.

The University has developed a 5-year financial plan that aligns with academic planning and with the University ([Exhibit 7.15](#)). The plan, which the Office of Finance developed and the President's cabinet approved, is based on conservative assumptions. The assumptions include between a 3and 5 percent projected annual credit rate increase in each of the next four years, no change in the total number of credits enrolled, between 1 and 2 percent annual increase in salaries and fringe benefits, and around 2 percent annual increase in personnel expenses. According to the plan, the University is expected to run a cumulative surplus of around US\$ 20 million by the year 2021-2022. This projected surplus will allow the University to continue its path of improving its academic services without interruption.

Table 7.2 Expected Surplus/Deficit (in USD)

| AY 2016-2017 (realized) | AY 2017-2018 | AY 2018-2019 | AY 2019-2020 | AY 2020-2021 | AY 2021-2022 | Cumulative Surplus |
|----------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|-----------------------|
| 7,896,036 | (190,435) | 993,771 | 2,757,948 | 3,838,394 | 5,176,949 | 20,472,663 |

NDU has developed financial policies that pertain to the financial management of the University. The *Budget Policy*, banking authorization, wire transfer limits, check signatory requirements, and gift acceptance policies were approved in May 2016 by the BOT ([Exhibits 7.16 and 7.6](#)). The University Budgeting and Planning Committee is currently studying an *Endowment Fund Policy*.

APPRAISAL

NDU made important progress toward adopting the GAAP standards in its financial reporting. The hiring of EY to perform the financial audit and to provide training workshops to Business Office staff clearly demonstrates NDU's unequivocal and professional commitment to accomplish the institutional mission in a transparent fashion.

The Business Office, with its new organizational structure ([Exhibit 7.17](#)) and detailed job description assigned to each position, has become more productive and efficient in fulfilling its duties. The appointment of four new staff members between 2014 and 2017 allowed for improved division of labor that augmented student service, cooperation across the three campuses, and the overall functioning of the office. The new organizational structure provisions for a dedicated staff member responsible for issues related to student financial aid and another dedicated to all issues related to payroll. Also, staff numbers manning the counter station have been increased to better serve students and the community at large.

With the exception of 2017-2018, the multi-year financial plan ([Exhibit 7.15](#)) prepared by the University administration projects a yearly budget surplus. The decrease from a realized operating surplus of around US\$ 8 million in academic year 2016-2017 to an expected deficit of US\$ 0.2 million in 2017-2018 is attributed mainly to the drop in non-academic activities from US\$ 13 million to US\$ 7.8 million. This US\$5.2 million drop is primarily due to the slump in fundraising revenues; however, the University may turn the deficit into a surplus by expanding its fundraising activities. In all cases, the expected annual surpluses for subsequent years allow the University to continue its path of expanding its student-oriented services. In the past few years, NDU has been able to expand its physical facilities in the main campus and NLC; thus, providing all students with equal educational opportunities.

Financial stability to date depends on a narrow revenue base, namely tuitions and other student-related activities, making the University finances vulnerable to the rate of student enrollment. Any unforeseen drop in enrollment might subject the University to serious challenges, so intensifying fundraising activities is a priority that NDU marginalized in the past years. As a safeguard against any possible drop in tuition revenues, NDU should spend effort and allocate resources to promote fundraising. Thus far, fundraising represents a minor revenue source and depends solely on the administration’s direct contact with selected donors. There is also a lack of alumni financial contribution. Given the scarcity of and low return of risk-free investment opportunities, fundraising is an essential pathway that NDU has not fully utilized.

Still on the topic of financial stability, the University prepared and started to implement plans to counter any drop in its major revenue source, i.e. tuition, and planned new methods to diversify its financial sources. During the University retreat in 2016 ([Exhibit 7.18](#)), plans were devised to improve enrollment figures. The plan included introducing Scholarship Upon Admission and Financial Aid Upon Admission. The former policy used to grant eligible students financial aid after their first semester while the new policy is expected to encourage students hesitant to join NDU. Scholarships are now awarded to newly- admitted students in the first academic semester based on academic excellence (school grades, SAT scores, entrance exam, BACC II) and may cover up to 75 percent of the tuition fees. Similarly, financial aid is awarded to financially disadvantaged students in their first semester and may cover up to 40 percent of their tuition fees.

As for expenditures, the University could slow down new appointments, postpone the replacement of retiring faculty members, and slow down new investment projects given that the need for such investments is no longer pressing due to the substantial investments that were executed in the recent few years (i.e. NLC, engineering labs, FAAD). In sum, exploring new opportunities for additional revenue sources and slowing down expenditures would serve to improve the currently healthy financial position.

Between 2015 and 2016, NDU made the required progress toward adopting a written *Financial Policy* related to budgeting, investments, risk management, and gift acceptance. All policies are published on the University website. These policies pave the way for better planning and more transparency. Budgeting, for example, is not planned on an ad-hoc basis, rather on a clear and transparent process that involves Faculties, departments, and offices. Different units are directly involved in the development of their budgets, according to their need and financial ability.

The University uses its financial resources to promote educational excellence through hiring new faculty members and through the construction of new academic and other student-related facilities. The expansion in terms of University physical plants to date has not prevented NDU from starting to build a savings account (at a monthly rate of US\$ 150,000) to limit its vulnerability to any sudden drop in revenues. *Table 7.3* shows the growth in cash and banks in academic year 2016-2017 to be in excess of US\$3 million:

Table 7.3 Growth in cash and banks in academic year 2016-2017.

| Date | 31-08-16 | 31-08-17 | Variance |
|----------------|------------|------------|-----------|
| | USD | USD | USD |
| Cash and banks | 35,159,161 | 38,208,539 | 3,049,378 |

NDU is committed to providing financially disadvantaged and gifted students with opportunities to pursue their higher education through generous financial aid allocations. The University administration abides by a transparent written *Financial Aid Policy* ([Exhibit 7.9](#)) that reflects NDU’s commitment to promoting affordable education. While tuition fees might increase, financial aid alleviates the tuition burden on disadvantaged students.

PROJECTIONS

- Operating revenues will continue to depend primarily on student tuitions and fees. NDU, however, is in the process of developing plans to diversify its revenue base. In particular, fundraising activities will be intensified to reduce University dependency on tuitions and fees. In that regard, NDU will establish the Office of Advancement in fall 2017. This office will develop relationships with constituents and possible donors to build mutually beneficial partnerships. Furthermore, it will coordinate communication, fundraising, and alumni relationships, and build a long-term relationship with the alumni and stakeholders worldwide to advance the University mission;
- NDU will enhance its internal control system in 2016-2017 by establishing the Office of Internal Audit, according to international standards for institutions of higher education. The audit team will work in partnership with the administration and will expend all efforts to maintain the integrity of operations;
- In order to promote and enhance financial planning, the University will search for and appoint in 2016-2017 a director of finance, an internal auditor, and a full-time legal counsel. The director will contribute to NDU’s success by assisting in the management of all University financial tasks. He or she will assist in budget preparation, financial accounting and reporting, financial and risk management, and office administration; and
- To ensure full compliance with GAAP standards and to show complete transparency regarding NDU’s financial affairs, the University will task annually one of the Big 4 auditing to audit its financial statements. The process that started in fall 2017 by appointing EY is a trend that will continue in the coming years.

INFORMATION, PHYSICAL, AND TECHNOLOGICAL RESOURCES

DESCRIPTION

Information Resources

The Libraries consist of the Mariam and Youssef (Main) Library at the Zouk Mosbeh Campus, the NLC Library, and the SC Library. The Libraries at all three campuses provide circulation, research, and instruction services, and manage the receipt and binding of their print serials collections. Interlibrary Loan Services ([Exhibit 7.19](#)), Special Collections ([Exhibit 7.20](#)) and the majority of the technical services are centralized at the Mariam and Youssef Library. The Libraries also provide technical support (acquisitions, cataloging, and collection management) for the special libraries associated with the Benedict XVI Chair, Center for Applied Research in Education (CARE), Center for Research on Sustainable Development (CROSD), Division of Continuing Education (DCE), Institute for Lebanese Thought (ILT), Lebanese Emigration Research Center (LERC), Mariam Studies Center (MSC), and the Ramez Chagoury FAAD Room for Inspiration—Information—Ideas. The Libraries have 33 full-time employees ([Exhibits 7.21 and 7.22](#)), with support provided by student assistants (financial aid recipients), during the fall and spring semesters.

As of October 2017, Library resources, which are discoverable via the Libraries webpage ([Exhibit 7.23](#)) include 116 databases ([Exhibit 7.24](#)); more than 100,000 print book titles; nearly 400,000 e-Book titles; 247 print periodical (journals, magazines, and newspapers) subscriptions; 45 electronic periodical subscriptions; nearly 3,000 multimedia resources (CDs, DVDs, maps, etc.); and rare and unique research collections housed in the Department of Special Collections.

Physical Resources

In line with the University planning efforts, a Master Plan Committee (MPC) was formed in May 2015, comprising of Faculty representatives, branch campuses directors, the VPA, and the VPF to discuss and communicate projects linked to the implementation of the *University Master Plan*. ([Exhibit 7.25](#)). Based on the *Master Plan*, NDU has witnessed since 2013 a significant increase in built floor space on the main campus as well as the total built area at the NLC; however, no changes have been reported with respect to the SC. On a further note, the supplementary construction project at the NLC has been completed, and the official opening ceremony took place on May 31, 2017 ([Exhibit 7.26](#) and data source:7.8 -Data First Forms).

With regard to the main campus, the constructions of the Physical Plant offices and Cafeteria building have been completed with fully functional services. Also at the main campus, the Faculty of Engineering (FE) Chemical Petroleum Facility (CPF) has been completed and has been fully functional since the academic year 2016-2017. In line with their academic needs, FE faculty members are fully utilizing the additional offices, conference room, computer rooms, and engineering laboratories. Furthermore, and as part of the accreditation criteria stipulated by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) has added a Computer Lab (S111) for Computer Science courses in addition to a Cisco Lab (E10.18) and CAD Lab (E20.88) in the FE.

As for the Faculty of Humanities (FH), a newsroom and a projection room have been added to better serve the Audio/Visual Arts programs. In addition, in 2015, the Interpretation Lab at the FH underwent renovation and new interpretation booths were installed. In 2017, in collaboration with "*Tempus Project/Program*," the Interpretation Lab was refurbished and new equipment (PC, active board, fittings, etc.) was installed. A Psychology Lab was also added in spring 2017.

There are concerns, however, regarding the sports facilities at the main campus. The current facilities require upgrading and are incapable of fully supporting, in some areas, the physical education courses and programs offered to students, faculty, and staff. Some of the sports courses/activities are conducted off campus, whereby NDU rents playing courts and other facilities to accommodate student needs.

With respect to access for mobility challenged individuals, as per the Apave study, additional ramps have been installed in the courtyard and at the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) and the FH buildings. Also, the FBAE building has benefited from the addition of accessible restrooms. Other Apave recommendations, such as the need for an elevator in the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) and the FE building, are in the implementation process.

The Apave-Liban audit conducted in 2011 to assess the fire safety requirements at the main campus has since been implemented under the title "*Risk Assessment Project*." This project was executed in 2015, covering buildings and facilities that require fire detection systems, exit and emergency lighting, fire extinguishers, and electrical hazard signage. ([Exhibit 7.27](#)). The DCE witnessed the implementation of fire safety systems during the academic year 2016-17.

Installations of Internet protocol-Closed-Circuit Television (IP-CCTV) systems took place in 2016 throughout Faculty buildings and these systems are all linked to a security control room ([Exhibit 7.28](#)).

NDU is in the process of upgrading its power generation facilities and related infrastructure.

An Acting Director for Physical Plant was appointed in January 2015 to help improve the services while overseeing daily operations of the maintenance, landscaping, security, grounds inspection officer, and janitorial services. The acting director works in close coordination with the University Engineer, Maintenance Electrical-Mechanical Engineer, Associate Director for Landscaping, and Grounds Safety Officer. The Department of Maintenance hired in 2015 two additional qualified staff, Warehouse staff, and Call Center/e-Helpdesk operator to handle all incoming service requests; however, the required staff quota has not been reached, as per the Apave recommendations.

A new Landscaping Engineer was appointed, effective March 1, 2017, in the Department of Landscaping, Office of Physical Plant, and also a new Director for Physical Plant was appointed, effective June 1, 2017 ([Exhibits 7.29](#) and [7.30](#)).

A comprehensive study for a Way Finding project across the main campus has been prepared since the beginning of 2017 with Sign Module System (SMS), ([Exhibit 7.31](#)). The recent Course Implementation Committee findings report sent to the VPAA shows the physical classroom/labs resource management, as per recommendations. ([Exhibit 7.32](#))

Technological Resources

The Office of Information Technology (OIT) provides technical support to the entire University administrative and academic community. This support encompasses the provision of myriad services as follows:

Smart classrooms

NDU has made a significant investment in technology for classrooms. All classrooms are Smart classrooms equipped with Interactive White boards, LCD projectors, and computers connected to the internet, which enable students and faculty to use technology in the teaching and learning process.

The Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) – Blackboard

Since 2001, NDU has utilized Blackboard as its course management system. Around 70 percent of all the University classes use Blackboard to facilitate teaching and learning in a blended learning format.

Faculty development and training

In light of recent trends in open education, coupled with the need to enhance teaching and learning through technology-assisted pedagogies, the University has been engaged since 2014 in promoting in the curriculum Open Educational Resources (OERs) and open textbooks released under Creative Commons Licenses. The OIT throughout the academic year systematically conducts training workshops to help students, faculty, and librarians facilitate the adoption of OERs in teaching and learning.

Software applications

The OIT continues to furnish the University administrative functions with updated applications, including online registration, e-Payment, e-Admissions, and online classroom reservation. In addition, the office deploys business intelligence software for statistical and academic reporting purposes.

Smart Card System

The Smart Card System (SCMS) available at NDU consolidates access and control of many campus activities into a single smart card. The SCMS is used for IDs, parking entry, student housing rooms, and photocopy machines available at the Library, dorms, and Computer Center.

Campus network

The campus network, a key component of the University technology infrastructure, is used to support teaching, learning, research, and administration. It serves to connect the NDU community and extends support for administrative computing applications to the NLC and SC. University-wide wire and wireless internet access is made readily available to students, faculty, and staff.

APPRAISAL

Information Resources

With the support of the University administration, the NDU Libraries continue to take concrete steps to address threats and weaknesses, including areas of concern identified during previous NEASC visits, while capitalizing upon our strengths and available opportunities as it seeks to develop a culture of continuous quality improvement.

Recognizing the importance of well-planned and welcoming Library facilities that support a variety of user needs, during academic year 2016-2017, the Main Library underwent some minor renovations to install a donor tree in the main lobby facing the help desk and moved a wall to create more space in the periodicals reading area; thus, greatly enhancing the room's functionality. More importantly, the new building at the NLC, inaugurated in May 2017, includes a new library, which was designed in collaboration with the University Librarian, the Senior Specialist-Head of the NLC Library, and the members of the ad-hoc Library Building Committee. Key aspects of the new facility include space for the Writing Center, multimedia instruction rooms, open stacks, and a variety of comfortable individual and group seating options for relaxing, reading, and studying.

Financial support to develop the Libraries collections remains steady (*data source: 7.3 – Data First Forms*). Materials budget for all Library locations are consolidated at the Main Library under the supervision of the University Librarian, allowing for more effective management of the acquisition and distribution of core print resources among the campus libraries, and, as and when applicable, the University Libraries support the special libraries. To ensure that the Libraries collections remain updated and relevant, weeding of the collections at all campus libraries to remove materials that are in poor condition, outdated, or irrelevant is ongoing. In addition, large-scale projects to identify and remove unneeded materials (based upon the previous 5-plus years of usage statistics) were undertaken at the SC Library in summer 2015 and the NLC Library in spring 2017 with the materials transferred to the Main Library for review and final disposition.

The Main Library houses the bulk of the print collections (including seldom used but important retrospective materials) since it serves a significantly larger user population and is a bigger facility, with core collections housed at both regional campus libraries. Library materials may be requested and borrowed from any campus library, regardless of where they are housed, and upon request non-circulating materials housed at another campus library (other than the special collections) may be brought to the user's campus library for consultation within the library only.

Collection development activities to ensure that sufficient information resources are available to support the research and teaching needs of the institution are ongoing, with reports provided upon demand in support of both internal and external assessment activities. In line with international trends, development of the Libraries collections is primarily focused on providing access to materials in electronic format (e-Books, e-Journals, e-Reference works, etc.) through both perpetual access and subscription-based models. Print materials continue to be acquired, however, through purchases and an active gifts and exchange program with the same selection criteria applied to all materials irrespective of format or source.

Recognizing the importance of having adequate numbers of qualified staff to provide quality library services, during academic year 2016-2017, the University Librarian worked closely with the University administration and the OHR to address the vacancies in the Main Library resulting from promotions, resignations, and retirement. Consequently, four library staff members were promoted and/or transferred and three new staff members were hired. Currently the Libraries are collaborating with the HR to identify candidates to fill the long-vacant

position of Librarian-Head of Research and Instruction in the Main Library. Unfortunately, while the University has implemented a new salary scale for staff members and adjusted the salaries of staff who were below the scale, the current salary/benefits package for staff who are professional librarians, especially those with degrees from American Library Association (ALA) accredited programs, are still significantly below local market rates, which will likely make recruitment and/or retention of librarians difficult.

Physical Resources

The shortage of offices in most Faculties has been overcome with the additional construction and remodeling works that have taken place over the recent years. The administration is aware that the FH is the only Faculty operating at full capacity in terms of office space availability. Measures have been taken to resolve this issue by utilizing existing floor space for the creation of additional offices in the coming academic year (2017-18). Some units have been relocated to the DCE with the purpose of using the vacant office space. There are also plans for the construction of additional offices in the Computer Center, but these plans are still awaiting final approval by the concerned offices before implementation.

The Apave Risk Assessment project that was implemented in the majority of buildings and facilities at the main campus is still lacking in some buildings. There is a need for such safety measures to be fully implemented at the same standard in the regional campuses.

In line with the University *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, and as planned, additional CCTV cameras have been installed across Faculty buildings during 2016-2017, but some critical areas remain to be covered, in particular the older student parking facility. The new facilities recently completed at the NLC include CCTV, fire detection, emergency exit lighting, and state-of-the-art Building Management System (BMS). Kindly be advised that the main campus is yet to implement a BMS.

NDU is continuously upgrading and maintaining its facilities. There are plans in place to upgrade the older power generation facilities, including the upgrading of power grid components, equipment, and the purchase of three new back-up generators.

Although numerous measures have been taken across the three campuses to accommodate the needs of physically challenged persons, especially in the new construction projects, the Apave accessibility study is yet to be fully implemented in relation to older buildings.

The Way Finding project is in the final stages of preparation for implementation.

Technological Resources

A strength revealed in the *Self-Study* lies in the attention given by NDU for the deployment of technology to facilitate the administrative workflow as well as the creation of a secure technological infrastructure for teaching and learning. An example of this investment is the deployment of sophisticated hardware and software to ensure the security and privacy of user data on campus. As far as teaching and learning are concerned, all classrooms are Smart classrooms equipped with Interactive White boards, LCD projectors, and computers connected to the internet, the purpose of which is to facilitate and support learning through the use of technology.

Even though NDU has upgraded its wireless network, phase two of the implementation process still needs more access points that would secure 100 percent wireless coverage on campus, especially that Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) concept has become an imperative one in higher education. A weakness that was identified in the *Self-Study* is the limited licensing to a maximum of two devices per student that can be connected to the wireless network at a time when students request wireless connectivity to more than two devices.

Moreover, while the University has been using the VLE – Blackboard since the year 2001, another module, Outcome and Assessment Module, is needed for integration into the existing Blackboard Learn Module in order to aid faculty members into measuring Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and extract direct evidence of student learning for analysis and curriculum development.

Although NDU capitalizes on recent developments pertaining to open education for enhancing teaching and learning through technology-assisted pedagogies, there is need to incentivize faculty members to widen access to open resources that are openly and freely available. The OERs and open textbooks are worth adopting for enhancing teaching as well as for cost containment that would alleviate the financial burdens incurred on students' buying copyrighted textbooks at this difficult period of economic degeneration in Lebanon. In addition, evaluation of systematic OER training workshops targeting students, faculty, and librarians is needed to identify strengths and weaknesses for improving such training workshops in the future.

While the OIT continues to furnish the University administrative functions with updated applications, more work needs to be done to transfer NDU into a paperless University by computerizing all the manual workflow currently employed, such as student petitions, purchasing requests, events scheduling, and HR transactions.

A strength identified in the *Self-Study* is the SCMS that consolidates access and control of campus activities into a single smart card. The SCMS will be complete when a student attendance module is added in order to secure a more efficient monitoring of student attendance linked to the existing SIS and the grade center.

Currently, the campus network is used for data as well as for voice transmission (VOIP) replacing the old PBX telephone system. The University today has one network for data and voice transmission connecting all three campuses, resulting in a more efficient data and voice communication system with cost reduction.

PROJECTIONS

Information Resources

- Within a sound fiscal policy framework, efforts to strategically develop the Libraries resources, services and facilities to meet the current and future needs of the NDU community will continue to be supported;
- By the end of academic year 2017-2018, a Head of the Department of Research and Instruction will be hired and tasked with developing and beginning implementation of a comprehensive plan to provide needed services, particularly in the areas of information literacy and student and faculty research support;
- The President will launch in 2017-2018 a fundraising campaign to help raise funds for the new Cultural Center, which is estimated to cost around US\$14 million. Pending the success of this campaign construction is planned to start during 2019-2020; and
- Finally, the emphasis on expanding access to high-quality information resources, particularly in electronic format, will remain an ongoing commitment.

Physical Resources

- The VPA in coordination with the VPF will oversee, by the end of fall 2017, all remaining fire safety measures identified in the Apave risk assessment report;
- The VPA along with the Director of Physical Plant will continue to ensure the implementation of the Apave accessibility study and its recommendations across all campuses;
- The VPA along with the Director of Physical Plant will ensure the installation of an additional public-use elevator in the FNAS and FE building (expected completion date: end of 2017);
- The execution of modifications to existing lavatories in line with the Apave study are to be implemented in the FNAS, FE, Office of Student Affairs (SAO), and Admissions buildings by the beginning of Spring 2018. The

VPA along with the Director of Physical Plant are tasked with this implementation process;

- Plans also exist to construct additional offices in the Computer Center;
- The VPA and VPF are working closely with the Director for Physical Plant, in coordination with the University electrical/mechanical consultant of Kamal Sioufi Offices, to implement within a short period (2017-2018) a *Maintenance Plan*, covering the upgrade of all electrical power plants and relevant infrastructure; and
- The VPA will supervise the execution of the Way Finding project by the end of 2017.

Technological Resources

The OIT will perform the following:

- Deploy additional wireless access points to secure 100 percent wireless coverage on campus, starting spring 2018;
- Upgrade the existing wireless license for students to connect to more than the two currently permitted devices, starting spring 2018;
- Purchase the license for the Blackboard Outcome and Assessment Module by fall 2018 to aid faculty in measuring measure CLOs and in extracting direct evidence of student learning for analysis and curriculum development;
- Provide incentives to faculty members to encourage them widen access to OERs by fall 2018;
- Conduct periodic evaluation of OER training workshops, targeting students, faculty, and librarians to identify strengths and weaknesses for improving such training workshops in the future. Conduct the first evaluation toward the end of spring 2018; and
- Transform NDU into a paperless university by computerizing all manual workflow currently employed, such as student petitions, purchasing requests, events scheduling, and HR transactions, starting summer 2018.

(cont'd.)

Standard 8: Educational Effectiveness

DESCRIPTION

NDU has come a long way as an institution in continuously assessing and developing its educational effectiveness by ensuring a satisfactory level of learning experience and student achievement through outcomes assessment measures on a mission-appropriate individual course level, program level, and institutional level. Faculties, over the past five years undertook a comprehensive assessment planning process to better evaluate and measure program and institutional Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). Every program in each Faculty today has its own mission statement, SLOs, and PLOs, which are posted on the NDU website (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/academics>) and published in the annually updated University *Catalog*. To accurately measure SLOs achievement, Faculties monitor all courses each semester through an indirect measuring tool, the *T1 Survey* (*Exhibit 8.1*), which students complete online via their Student Information System (SIS).

At the institutional level, the Council of Deans (COD) approved in June 2014 an academic program review guidelines and procedures that includes an objective outsider's perspective (*Exhibit 8.2*). All degree programs offered by NDU shall be reviewed at least once every 6 years, i.e. non-accredited programs or programs not elected to pursue accreditation. Such reviews will assess how well programs meet stated objectives and how well they respond to market needs and to identified national educational policies and institutional objectives. The Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA) appoints a Program Evaluation Committee (PEC), including one external reviewer, charged with reviewing and evaluating the content of each self-study report presented by the department concerned.

Furthermore, a General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) committee was formed in fall 2013 to revisit the General Education Requirements (GERs) courses (recently renamed Liberal Arts Courses - LAC), which represents the common curriculum permeating all majors offered at NDU. The General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) has proposed in spring 2016 a new set of LAC courses (*Exhibit 8.3*). The work of the GEEC and the new LAC is fully described in Standard Four.

The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) was established in October 2011, following the appointment of a director. Since fall 2013, the OIRA has defined and calculated retention and graduation rates. The OIRA started publishing and disseminating annually the retention and graduation rates in the University *Factbook*, readily available on the NDU website (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/ndu-at-a-glance>).

Sustainable assessment processes to develop measurable learning goals have been generally established in most Faculties but some are more fully developed than others. This assessment system per Faculty, supported by evidence-based documents, is described below. The fact-finding method consisted of collecting qualitative data through interviews with the respective deans and Outcome Assessment Committee (OAC) chairs in addition to the material presented in the E-series. The interviews were administered in the form of a specific questionnaire (*Exhibit 8.4*).

The Ramez Chagoury Faculty of Architecture, Arts & Design (FAAD) has witnessed a significant expansion in assessment activities. Every undergraduate program has an assessment system in place; each program has developed its Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) and mapped them to the PLOs. Direct and indirect assessments of student learning in terms of undergraduate programs are becoming a systematic process. Each department OAC in the FAAD emphasizes the development of their assessment process. To this end, faculty members are continuously being invited to attend several workshops.

Departments are actively collecting data on CLOs at the end of every semester; thereby, making learning assessment more functional. Effectively, the first assessment cycle started in fall 2015 and a final report was issued at the end of fall 2016 (*Exhibit 8.5*).

This Faculty has also created a Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) composed of prominent professionals in the fields of architecture, design, and music to help provide input on programs in those disciplines so that the curricula can better respond to current market needs. Its first meeting was held in February 2017.

Additionally, the FAAD reviewed four of its programs during the past two academic years: Graphic Design ([Exhibit 8.6](#)), Music, Architecture, and Interior Design. This review provided an assessment of the quality and effectiveness of those programs. The documents of the Architecture program are currently being prepared for National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) accreditation, but the process cannot begin until NDU gets institutional accreditation. Nonetheless, the Faculty is using NAAB standards of learning assessment and is adapting them and applying them to its different programs.

Kindly note that the B.A. in Fashion Design is currently being prepared.

The Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) submitted to the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB International) its *Eligibility Application*, which was accepted in September 2016; thus, allowing the Faculty to embark on the business accreditation process. During the academic year 2016-2017, the FBAE started the process of building the AACSB initial *Self Evaluation Report (iSER)*, which will be submitted in spring 2018. Since 2014, the FBAE started the reviewing process of all the SLOs by writing the learning outcomes of each course, using the Bloom's Taxonomy action verbs to better reflect student cognitive skill levels. Those outcomes are clearly stated in every syllabus ([Exhibit 8.7](#)) and measured through a quantitative spreadsheet tool.

Discipline coordinators gather the CLOs assessment and submit them to the chairpersons. Each chairperson links the CLOs to the PLOs through a matrix, and an overall quantitative assessment of PLOs is directly done through this matrix ([Exhibit 8.8](#)). In fall 2016, and based on the assessment results of the Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) program, the Department of Accounting and Finance and the Department of Management and Marketing both recommended that a change be made to the structure of the Common Core Requirement (CCR) courses. The FBAE, the University Curriculum Committee, and the Council of Deans approved this recommendation in spring 2017 and the recommendation will be implemented in spring 2018 ([Exhibit 8.9](#)).

The FBAE appointed in March 2017 a new Assurance of Learning Committee (ALC). Its role consists of drawing systematic processes for determining and revising degree program learning goals; designing, delivering, and improving degree program curricula to achieve learning goals; and demonstrating that degree program learning goals have been met. In April 2017, the committee redefined and finalized all the PLOs of the BBA, the BHTM, B.S. Economics, M.S., and MBA programs ([Exhibit 8.10](#)) to align with the new FBAE mission, values, and culture.

The Faculty of Humanities (FH) in the past year has focused heavily on mapping learning outcomes in terms of academic programs versus courses. Each department OAC had drafted and reviewed all PLOs and CLOs to ensure they are measurable. The Faculty has developed an assessment template in every syllabus to report the CLOs and assessment strategies ([Exhibit 8.11](#)).

The FOAC made two major strides during fall 2016: First, Faculty-wide conversation about learning outcomes due to the collaborative development of a common assessment, providing consistency among multi-section courses. Second, an assessment guide was drafted that sets embedded course assessments, rubrics, portfolios, surveys, among others are being considered as central tools of assessment ([Exhibit 8.12](#)). Two workshops were conducted to assist faculty members in their endeavors toward student learning assessment (Mapping between CLOs and PLOs and assessment techniques; workshop on using Blackboard for learning outcomes assessment.)

To demonstrate the effectiveness of its academic program, the FH conducted program reviews for the majors in Bachelor of Arts in Translation and Interpretation, B.A. in Basic Education, and B.A. in Journalism. The program review reports observed recommendations that are being implemented ([Exhibit 8.13](#)). Kindly note that the B.A. in Psychology is currently being reviewed.

The Faculty has created in spring 2017 a Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) composed of renowned professionals in the offered fields of study ([Exhibit 8.14](#)). This board is charged with assisting the Faculty to set and achieve strategic objectives by providing insight, advice, and support relative to programs.

The Faculty of Engineering (FE) has passed a major milestone by receiving in August 2016 Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) accreditation for all its programs, following a visit in November 2015 of a team of ABET evaluators. In light of the fact that the assessment of the CLOs is a major capstone in the accreditation process, the FE has developed a comprehensive student learning assessment system, which went through a trial and subsequent fine-tuning in 2010. Upon validation, the system was used to generate the data for the self-study reports of all engineering programs.

This assessment process is a Faculty-wide operation involving all members who must prepare a course file at the end of each semester for every course offered. The course file includes a *Self-Assessment Form* ([Exhibit 8.15](#)) where the level of achievement of each CLO is evaluated and recommendations are proposed. The level of achievement of the CLOs is assessed through direct measures (locally developed exams, rubrics ([Exhibit 8.16](#)), projects, reports, etc.) and indirect measures (surveys). Many surveys were developed and administered by the FE (*Students Course Learning Outcome Survey, Exit Survey for Graduating Students, Alumni Survey* ([Exhibit 8.17](#)), *Employer Survey*). The complete course file is then checked by the course coordinator and forwarded to the Department Outcome Assessment Committee (DOAC). All course learning outcomes are correlated with the PLOs that link to the Program Educational Objectives (PEOs), ([Exhibit 8.18](#)).

All the different assessment tools used are continuously reviewed and refined through each cycle. A complete assessment and continuous improvement cycle spans between 3 and 4 years, depending on each program ([Exhibit 8.19](#)). Every department has formed an advisory committee that meets annually; it is composed of leaders and professional volunteers, representing a large spectrum of industrial organizations in the different fields of engineering. The basic objective of the Advisory Committee is to contribute to the department's strategic development ([Exhibit 8.20](#)). Every semester, a one-day faculty retreat is held to evaluate all changes in curricula, to get the advisory committee's feedback, to review indirect measures results, and to approve any update and/or program improvement. All course and program improvements are documented in course change logs and retreat minutes, and they are uploaded to a local server and made available to all faculty members.

The Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) comprises two departments: Law and Government and International Relations. It is worthy of note that the Bachelor in Law program has to meet specific conditions mandated by Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE), which affects the course description of ten separate courses; a report was submitted to the NEASC-CIHE staff, justifying this discrepancy and the explanation was accepted in spring 2016 ([Exhibit 8.21](#)). The first B.S. in Law promotion graduated at the end of spring 2017. Course files, for each course, are prepared and submitted to the chairperson's office. A Faculty Advisory Board (FAB) is currently being formed and will be composed of established external advisors in the professional arena.

In the case of the Department of Government and International Relations, CLOs are clearly stated on each syllabus ([Exhibit 8.22](#)) and levels of student achievement are being evaluated based on lowest, average, and, highest achievements. Instructors forward these evaluations to the department OAC for analysis and recommend actions. Kindly note that the B.A. in International Affairs and Diplomacy is currently under review.

All the programs taught at the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) started in 2014-2015 applying the SLOs assessment process with the exception of the Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, which is undergoing the ABET accreditation. This process is facilitated by the departmental OACs and involves the systematic selection of two capstone courses from each of the programs (one sophomore and one junior or senior) and assessing their CLOs.

Faculty members teaching the selected courses are trained by the department on how to assess the CLOs and are requested to submit to the department OAC their assessment reports at the end of every semester (*Exhibit 8.23*). The DOAC in turn submits the written recommendations to the department chair concerned who consults with the other department committees (e.g., curriculum committee) to induce change when necessary (*Exhibit 8.24*). Exit surveys measure the level of achievement of SLOs for all FNAS programs.

The Department of Computer Science (DCS) submitted in October 2016 an initial self-study for its Bachelor of Science in Computer Science program for ABET Accreditation Readiness. The report was approved in January 2017 and a team representing the ABET Computing Accreditation Commission visited the department between November 4 and 7, 2017.

All DCS faculty members are involved in the accreditation process by assessing the CLOs of all the courses they teach and by taking responsibility for one or two of the different expected Student Outcomes (SOs). Assessment involves using direct and indirect measuring tools to evaluate and assess the different SOs (*Exhibit 8.25*). To ensure the SOs level of achievement, the department relies on senior projects, locally developed exam questions, feedback from internship surveys, alumni surveys, exit surveys, and the department advisory board.

The Department of Science completed two separate self-studies, during the academic year 2015-2016 and 2016-2017, as part of the COD-stipulated program review: Biology (*Exhibit 8.26*), (closed the loop) and Environmental Sciences programs, pending the visit of the external reviewer. Moreover, the Department of Physics and Astronomy is currently preparing the review of the B.S. in Physics.

The Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS) started in fall 2016 applying for all of its programs a student learning review assessment process. All full-time faculty members are involved in the assessment process, as part of the DOAC, and all part-time faculty members are also involved. An OAC exists for every program offered and its main responsibility is to explain the learning outcomes assessment, create templates, follow up with instructors, improve, and take proper actions should the need arise. The Nutrition OAC developed the assessment tools based on samples derived from the Accreditation Council for Education in Nutrition and Dietetics (ACEND). Faculty members were invited to attend training sessions to become better acquainted with the use of these tools, and they were provided with summary documents and tables to simplify implementation of the OAC members' assessment and follow-ups.

Direct measures, such as examination questions, quizzes, and class activities, including assignments, projects, presentations, practical exams, etc., and indirect measures, such as *T1*, *Exit Survey*, and colloquium exams, are used to evaluate the SLOs level of achievement. The DOAC examines at least once per year the assessment data along with the *Exit and Alumni Survey results*.

Using the learning outcomes assessment template, if the level of achievement is not reached, an action plan would be suggested in the evaluation tool (*Exhibit 8.27*). The instructor is expected to implement the action plan and the course coordinator will follow it up. A log summarizing all the curricular changes is to be generated annually. A 3-year SLO assessment plan is set for MLT and Nutrition. For the nutrition program, a first loop of assessment is due in spring 2018.

The Faculty uses every opportunity to seek feedback from healthcare providers in hospitals that intern FNHS students (nutrition, MLT, nursing, etc.). Feedback is usually provided through a survey (*Exhibit 8.28*) that assesses the overall skills of the interns. An external reviewer visited in spring 2016 to assist in the assessment process of the Nutrition program (*Exhibit 8.29*). The department has also sought insights from noted industry experts by collaborating with local NGOs to identify the latest skill sets students need to improve employment opportunities.

APPRAISAL

NDU is firmly committed to assessing the achievement of curricular and co-curricular learning, and the University has taken significant steps to develop an effective culturally-inclusive assessment of student learning across all Faculties, following the previous observation made by the NEASC visiting team (*Exhibit 8.30*). In addition, the infrastructure to effectively support assessment of student learning has been expanded at the course, program, and institutional levels. All Faculties have started a cyclical program review stipulated by the COD, and they successfully initiated the process and accordingly improved the assessment of the SLOs at the course and program levels.

The University has commendably updated its LAC courses based on the GEEC recommendations to implement a new set of LAC courses, starting fall 2016. The LAC course assessment is in a pilot phase where Ethics courses given in the summer 2017 were chosen to better assess their outcomes through the evaluation of the *Student Assessment Form (T1)* and the use of especially developed rubrics (*Exhibit 8.31*). There are no specific mission-derived SLOs for the LAC.

Over and above, the NDU commitment to student achievement has become firmly integrated into the institution's core. Most notably, the Office of the VPAA has endorsed many initiatives (such as the Advising Tracking System) created by its various constituents in an effort to identify academically at-risk students and to track and monitor retention rates. This office continuously develops strategies to address the above-mentioned concerns. It is commendable that NDU sought to establish a shared vision of student achievement by soliciting the decades-old expertise of the former head of the Office of the Registrar and appointing her in fall 2017 as the founding officer of the Office of Academic Advising .

Most indirect measures (exit surveys, town hall meetings, and graduates' private meetings with the President) determine that the Department of Career and Placement is involved in posting job opportunities; however, there exists neither statistical evidence nor organized databases. Class of 2014, 2015, and 2016 graduates were contacted to collect data on employment rates and to update the graduate employment database. *Table 8.1 (data source: 8.3-Data First Forms)* shows the employment rate in a student's major within 6 months (graduates of the academic year 2015-2016). The low percentage observed can be explained by the grim economic situation in Lebanon as well as the difficulty in finding a job right after graduation. The FE administered an *Alumni Survey* in 2014, covering all alumni and the respondents showed an employment rate, hovering in the range of 87 percent (*Exhibit 8.32*).

Table 8.1 Employment Rate within 6 months of graduation (FNHS students are tracked within 1 year).

| Faculty | Number of Graduates | Response Rate | Percentage with Jobs in Major |
|---------|---------------------|---------------|-------------------------------|
| FAAD | 201 | 61% | 41% |
| FBAE | 394 | 46% | 34% |
| FE | 281 | 69% | 31% |
| FH | 243 | 49% | 35% |
| FLPS | 35 | 46% | 25% |
| FNAS | 117 | 44% | 38% |
| FNHS | 53 | 36% | 21% |

Licensure Passage rate is another monitored student achievement rate. The FNHS is the only Faculty at NDU that has a National Licensure Passage exam. As shown in the *Data First Forms (data source: 8.3-Data First Forms)*, the passage rate is constant at around 100 percent. The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) survey was administered in spring 2015 and results were benchmarked with similar aspirational peer institutions (*Exhibit 8.33*). The NSSE results showed that in most engagement indicators, NDU scores are comparable or exceed peer institutions.

Furthermore, the results of the survey were studied in the Faculties and action plan reports were presented to the COD and discussed in their meeting ([Exhibit 8.34](#)).

Student retention rates are comparable with other universities of the same size and classification (Lebanon and the Middle East). *Figure 8.1* shows the trend for undergraduate retention rates for the three campuses (*data source:8.1-Data First Forms*).

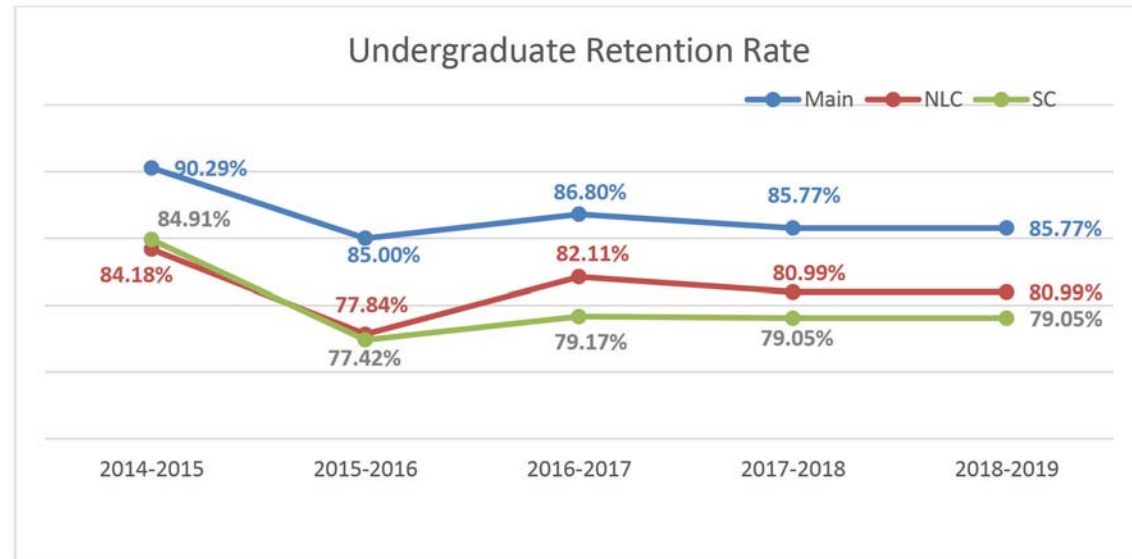


Figure 8.1 Undergraduate Retention Rates for 5 years (Main Campus, NLC, and SC),

Graduation rates trend shown in *Figure 8.2* (*data source:8.1-Data First Forms*) shows a decrease in the last three years across the three campuses. The Office of the Registrar, the Office of Student Affairs (SAO), the Office of Finance, and the Office of the VPAA began working closely together starting spring 2016 to understand reasons and resolve the dropout rate through practical measures, especially since the majority of student dropouts occur due to financial reasons.

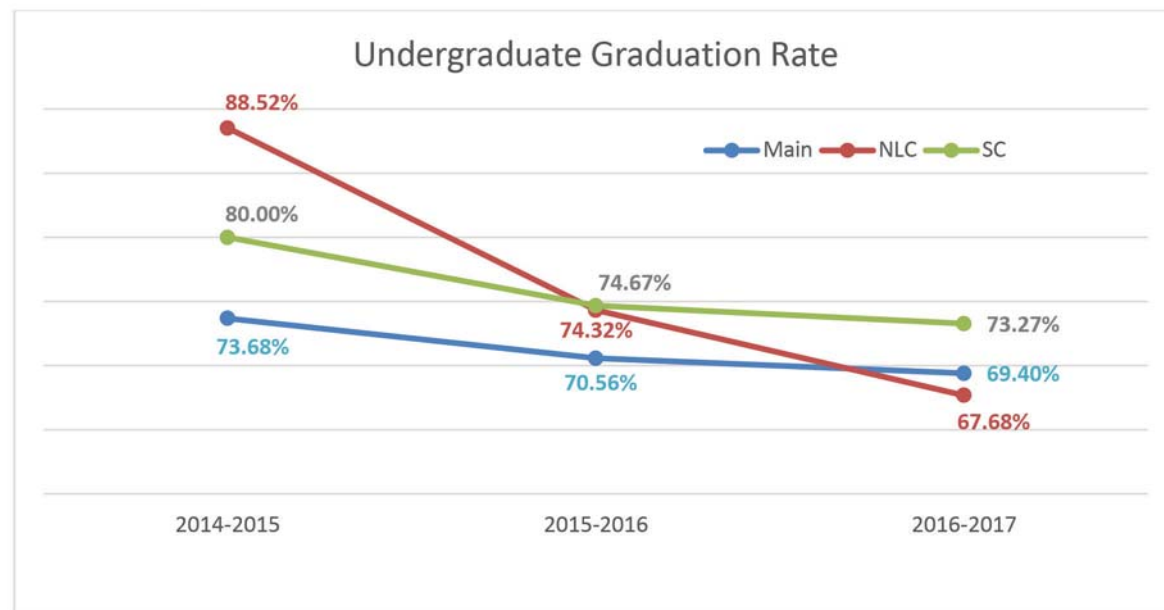


Figure 8.2 Graduation Rate trend for the past 3 years (Main Campus, NLC, SC).

Below is a breakdown analysis of learning assessment with regards to each Faculty.

FAAD

Using data from various sources, programs outcome assessment committees assessed comprehensively the objectives and aligned their compatibility with student needs and the workplace. Reviews of programs in this Faculty resulted in an action plan where resources are allocated appropriately to address the recommendations made. At the program level, all undergraduate programs at the FAAD have departmental structures of assessment; they follow a clear set of objectives, PLOs, CLOs, and SLOs (or student performance criteria, SPCs) where all courses are aligned with SLOs and all course assignments are mapped to course outcomes. The CLOs are evaluated quantitatively as well as qualitatively (*T1 Survey*). At the FAAD, primary responsibility for assessment rests within the DOAC, which is charged to oversee the assessment practices.

As for the Department of Architecture, the majority of instructors illustrates a well-engaged commitment to the assessment system and makes improvements based on these assessments. In the case of the Departments of Music and Design, the quality of assessment practices can be described as leaning toward “developed.” The challenge still lies in engaging all faculty members in the process of properly structuring a highly efficient process.

FBAE

During spring 2017, the newly-established ALC completed most of the important tasks required to build an assessment process. The educational objectives for each degree program are now stated: They clearly specify the intellectual and behavioral competencies that each program is intended to instill. All courses taught at the FBAE have been mapped with the new program goals ([Exhibit 8.35](#)). The committee identified the direct assessment tools for each program goal as well as students’ performance criteria. Those criteria are to be periodically measured following an assessment plan timetable extending from fall 2018 up to fall 2021. The implementation of this cycle and the assessment loop closure will identify the validity of the different tools used.

The assessment process relies solely on the course instructors through the direct evaluation of exams, presentations, term papers, etc. So far, only direct tools are used. Indirect tools are limited to Instructor Course Evaluation surveys (*T1*).

FH

The FH has made important progress in using assessment to consider how best to structure courses and curricula to foster student learning, mainly at two levels: program review process and student learning assessment. The program reviews conducted in the FH has clearly identified areas of improvement and outlined mode of actions. Changes to the curriculum have been made through the due process and based on the major findings and recommendations.

To assess student progress in relation to program goals and objectives, the FH in each degree program has developed its student learning assessment measures and the findings are concrete to the CLOs and PLOs. As a result of the assessment activities, functional changes were introduced. The CLOs were clearly mapped to the PLOs through the identification of the assessment tools ([Exhibit 8.36](#)). As the FH continues to advance its assessment activities, it is important to go beyond the interviews, document analysis, teaching portfolio, and basic descriptive statistics data collection in order to analyze direct and indirect evidence of SLOs and objectives.

While a practice of assessment is evident, based on the program reviews, some gaps still exist, as progress is uneven in all programs. For some programs, the gaps were due to low enrollment; in other programs, faculty members demonstrated a lack of familiarity with understanding how to construct and use rubrics effectively.

FE

After getting ABET accreditation, the FE is fully engaged in using a continuous assessment process to improve all its programs. The Faculty provides faculty members with continuous support through different assessment workshops and funds one faculty member per year to assist in the ABET symposium. The FE retreat (held every

semester) has proven to be an important and crucial process where all faculty members are involved in reviewing assessment data and recommending changes to the curricula. The different departments conduct regular assessment to measure the degree to which graduates achieve the PLOs.

Assessment instruments that include the *Exit Survey*, *Alumni Survey*, *Employer Survey*, and Industrial Advisory Committee minutes are discussed in every retreat. In spring 2017, a Student Advisory Committee (SAC) was formed and its first meeting was held in May 2017 ([Exhibit 8.37](#)). After more than 5 years of continuous assessment, the FE faculty members have experienced that given time this collective and iterative process can produce better metrics, methods, and rubrics.

FLPS

The learning outcomes assessment in the FLPS is in its infancy. The Department of Law course files are collected and the dean closely monitors their CLOs assessment. The basic assessment undertaken by the instructors is yet to be followed by different department committees. In short, there currently exists no defined assessment procedure.

The Department of Government and International Relations does not have a defined procedure for CLO assessment. Some isolated CLO assessment and evaluation were done by instructors and submitted to the department's chairperson. The learning outcomes are evaluated through some indirect measures (*T1*: [Exhibit 8.1](#)) but there exists no defined assessment plan and procedure. The Department is yet to close the loop on the review of the B.A. in International Affairs and Diplomacy.

FNAS

All FNAS departments made significant progress toward improving undergraduate program assessment since the academic year 2014-2015. They mapped CLOs to PLOs and featured respective CLOs and PLOs in all course syllabi.

While the dean and chairpersons monitor the program review assessment plans, full-time faculty members, in coordination with the OACs, are actively engaged in the assessment process for self-studies and program reviews of their respective undergraduate programs.

Overall, assessment has become more regularized. The CLOs are assessed at the end of every semester and the OACs submit reports and recommendations to the department chairpersons concerned. The DCS and the Department of Physics and Astronomy successfully assess all course CLOs, while the Department of Sciences assesses the CLOs of core and major courses only. The Department of Mathematics and Statistics limited its assessment to the CLOs of two courses per semester.

The DCS completed an entire ABET cycle of assessment and received approval of the *ABET Accreditation Readiness Report*. The assessment data collected over the past 3 years showed that CS students satisfy ABET Students Outcomes level of achievement.

Program reviews in the FNAS are on track with Biology review closing the loop and the Environmental Sciences and Physics programs are almost done with closing the review cycle.

FNHS

The FNHS is continuously undergoing program reviews and implementing interim changes in line with the changing needs of the students and the requirements of the accrediting bodies for each program.

All the FNHS programs have a clear set of aligned PLOs, SLOs, and CLOs. As of fall 2016, all instructors are

required to submit a course portfolio, including the assessment of CLOs ([Exhibit 8.38](#)), accordingly all instructors across all programs are involved in the assessment process. The Faculty has been supporting faculty members through workshops and one-on-one counseling to identify challenges in assessment. The FNHS funded one faculty member to attend in summer 2017 an ACEND symposium on assessment for the B.S. in Nutrition and Dietetics, which had undergone a successful and complete review. So far, the assessment of SLOs has been done through the assessment of CLOs, yet a detailed assessment procedure of PLOs should be undertaken by the FNHS.

Although the steady improvement in student outcome assessment is commendable, a closer program-by-program follow-up should be conducted by the DOAC to ensure that instructors are abiding by the recommended corrective actions. Following its first cycle of assessment of the FNHS programs, the assessment methodology and tools should be reviewed to prepare for the second cycle. Due to low enrollment in some nursing courses and in the programs offered in the branch campuses, the FNHS is facing a challenge in the assessment of the CLOs.

PROJECTIONS

Progress in this area is expected to continue improving significantly in the near future through the following measures:

- The Office of the VPAA will continue to monitor the progress of educational effectiveness and maintain assessment as the central focus of the University;
- This cyclical, formal program reviews across all Faculties and for programs, not seeking programmatic accreditation, will continue and be monitored by the COD, following the approved program review guidelines ([Exhibit 8.2](#));
- The Office of the Registrar will conduct a survey starting fall 2018 for senior students to identify barriers to graduation. The office will evaluate, during spring 2018, the use of a Program Meter visible to all students and incorporated inside SIS to ensure a visible interface regarding degree completion and credits remaining to graduation;
- The SAO will demonstrate starting fall 2018 its active engagement in developing a set of SLOs and Co-Curricular Learning Outcomes (CLOs) for its departments associated with the services and programs offered and related to the University mission. The office will work on a strategy to enhance student academic advising to monitor retention and graduation rates;
- The Department of Career and Placement, in collaboration with the Office of Alumni Affairs, will draft by fall 2018 a data collection procedure for student success (employment rate and placement, licensure passage rate, employer feedback, etc.). This information will help bring to the surface just how well the University is preparing its students for the workplace; and
- In parallel to the LAC program review projection stated under Standard Four, the GEEC will establish by spring 2019 an assessment plan for mission-derived SLOs for LAC courses; respective Faculty deans will assign champions to collect data from various LAC courses. The assessment plan will map the CLOs to the LAC mission-driven SLOs.

Given that each faculty is at a different stage of the assessment spectrum, below are specific projections with regards to each faculty.

FAAD

- SLOs are continuously monitored throughout the academic year. The Interior Design program in the Design Department will start in spring 2018, the second PLO assessment cycle based on the requirements of the Council for Interior Design Accreditation (CIDA). The complete cycle will be initiated by various data collection in order to analysis and assess the results; and
- The FAAD will continue to buttress the assessment of the SLOs. In fall 2018, the second cycle of assessment of its different programs will start and all faculty members will be included in the process led by the OAC of

each department. The office of the dean will look into different options for a simple automated system in order to store and backup all data related to SLOs.

FBAE

- The FBAE ALC will finalize the design of the direct assessment methods by fall 2018 intended to specify the intellectual and behavioral competencies for its different undergraduate programs and link the proficiency rating to direct evidence. The committee will also complete the design of indirect assessment methods and start their implementation; and
- The Office of the Dean will start by spring 2018 the implementation of a new plan related to instructors' self-assessment. This new tool ([Exhibit 8.39](#)) includes tangible feedback on the course content and its teaching modalities and respects the new thresholds set by the FBAE ALC, as required by the AACSB.

FH

- The FH will continue developing an effective regular review for all its programs. The chairpersons of departments will stipulate a schedule for the SLOs assessment, covering the collection, analysis, and evaluation of CLOs; and
- The Faculty dean will call by fall 2018 for the first meeting of the FAB to connect the programs offered by the Faculty with the challenges facing the various industries.

FE

- The FE will continue its assessment plan toward the next ABET visit in 2020. The FOAC will keep monitoring the assessment process and will by Fall 2018 produce a report to start aligning all M.S. programs with the ABET M.S. accreditation requirements.

FLPS

- The Office of the Dean and the OACs will develop by fall 2018 an assessment plan and a timeframe for all programs PLOs. During fall 2018, a pilot assessment for chosen PLOs will be implemented on different courses in all programs.

FNAS

- The Actuarial Sciences program OAC is currently preparing a self-study report to apply in fall 2018 for candidacy to the Center of Actuarial Excellence (CAE) designation granted by the Society of Actuaries; and
- The OACs in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and the Department of Sciences will set a plan by fall 2018 for the CLOs assessment together with a timeline, spanning all courses and PLOs.

FNHS

The FNHS will undertake the following tasks:

- The Faculty OAC will develop by fall 2018 a PLO detailed assessment procedure and timeframe for all its programs;
- The FAB will pursue its meetings at least once per year to contribute to the Faculty strategic plan; and
- The Faculty dean will organize the annual retreat, during which the assessment results will be discussed to see how the results can assist the FNHS in establishing recommendations and benchmarking student achievement of program outcomes.

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(cont'd.)

Standard 9: Integrity, Transparency, and Public Disclosure

INTEGRITY

DESCRIPTION

Integrity features prominently in the University constitution, mission, and values ([Exhibit 9.1](#)), and across official policy statements. This code of honor mandates, in clear and explicit language, that all interactions, i.e. among NDU community members, in academic and administrative activities, in dealing with students, in the shared governance process, and in exchanges with stakeholders, external organizations and the general public, must be carried out, according to the highest ethical standards. Official policy statements range from academic integrity to ethics in the classroom and ethics in research.

The University *Code of Ethics*, approved on March 18, 2016, by the University Council (UC) and on May 9, 2016, by the Board of Trustees (BOT), unequivocally expects that trustees, executive officers, faculty, staff, student employees, students, and others—jointly referred “university entities,” maintain academic integrity at all times. Also, the University *Research and Grants Policy*, approved by the UC on March 18, 2016, and by the BOT on May 9, 2016, accentuates research that encourages universal values founded on fundamental humanistic principles, social justice, and spiritual development. Integrity in research is promulgated by *Policy on Ethics in Research*. In tandem, the Institutional Review Board (IRB), which was established in 2015, ensures University-wide transparency and accountability. Policies are openly available to the community and can be found on the University website.

Similar expectations can be found in the University *Faculty Handbook*, which also addresses conflict of interest of faculty members and administrative officers. The outright intolerance of plagiarism is outlined in the University *Catalog*, the *Student Handbook*, and in course syllabi ([Exhibit 9.2](#)). Safe Assign is available to faculty on Blackboard to detect plagiarism. Copyright protection is stated in the *Faculty Handbook*, which requires faculty and students to use original textbooks in compliance with the *Use of Original Textbooks in the Classroom Policy*.

The University further embraces integrity by providing its community with spiritual support services through the Campus Ministry (CM). The community is made aware of the University commitment to foster integrity through the different policies on the subject, the *Annual Report*, published by the Office of the President, and important speeches that are posted on the website.

In translating its mission to promote “... diversity, respect for human dignity and rights, and concern for the common good,” the University established the Department of Community Service and Awareness (CSA) to optimize student potential by encouraging them to engage in community service projects as a means to instill in them the principles of ethics, faith, and values.

True to the University mission to “... prepare its students to be future leaders who can exercise reason upon knowledge and shape a world of truth, justice, love and freedom,” the free pursuit of knowledge appears under two titles: “academic freedom” and “freedom of expression,” and in the University Constitution. Again, such freedoms must be ethically exercised.

NDU is dedicated to equal opportunity for all students and applicants to financial aid and admission while the Lebanese Labor Code governs employee affairs ([Exhibit 9.3](#)). The Ministry of Labor sets out guidelines to regulate hiring and work conditions of all employees. Under the Lebanese Labor Code, employees who have been unfairly treated can file a complaint with the Ministry’s Work Force Department or appeal to the General Labor Confederation.

Commitment to integrity is translated into a set of policies that range from admissions to Faculty Handbook, Student Rights and Responsibilities, and faculty recruitment ([Exhibit 9.4](#)). The University Appeals Committee (UAC) is formed to ensure the fair resolution of grievances brought by faculty members. Faculty and staff have the right to appeal through the UAC, as stipulated in the Governance Framework, p.31. Grievance procedures are clearly outlined and apply to all students and employees. Students can appeal academic matters through petitions, which are studied by each Faculty and decisions are communicated to students through the University mail office. The Office of Students Affairs (SAO) deals with students’ concerns and grievances, and helps them to communicate with the appropriate University offices to address the issues. In addition, an accused student who has committed either an academic or a non-academic misconduct has the right to appeal, as promulgated in Student Code of Conduct, which the BOT approved on June 8, 2017. The Student Union represents the student body ([Exhibit 9.5](#)).

The Office of Admissions acknowledges diversity, integrity, and discipline in its recruitment efforts (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/admissions/message.htm>). The Office of Tests, Measurement, and Evaluation (OTME) prepares, administers, and corrects applicants’ entrance tests who have not taken the option of SAT using an electronically standardized scoring system. Test results are sent to the Office of Admissions to complete students’ files and assess their admission status (acceptance, conditional acceptance, or rejection) alongside Faculty deans concerned (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/admissions/note-from-the-director>). Results are posted on the University website. Information about the grading system used for evaluating students’ academic performance is stated in the Student Handbook, the Catalog, and in course syllabi ([Exhibit 9.6](#)).

The University has 28 student clubs, which undertake various activities that focus on scientific, cultural, or religious themes, and are aimed at promoting knowledge. In addition, the University encourages faculty and students to communicate, post assignments and grades on Blackboard, and interact through the University e-mail accounts. Communication involving faculty and students may take place via videoconferencing, particularly between campuses locally and internationally, and between NDU faculty and peers in institutions of higher education in Lebanon and abroad.

NDU endeavors to comply with its policies and regulations as well as with Standards for Accreditation and other requirements set by the NEASC, in terms of that integrity, candor, ethics, and honesty, which are pillars of maintaining the highest ethical standards across the board.

APPRAISAL

In order to continue to nurture a healthy and inclusive community, and to foster and underscore high ethical standards, the University Faculties and departments ensure that faculty members are kept abreast of policies and procedures related to integrity. For instance, the *Policy on Ethics in Research*—that adopts stringent *Submissions and Review Procedures* by the IRB—attests to NDU’s strict compliance with and promotion of ethical principles in research that involves human and non-human subjects. A structured survey administered to Faculty deans on July 7, 2017, ([Exhibit 9.7](#)), showed that faculty and departments stress, during periodical meetings with faculty, NDU’s integrity policies and request that they abide by them. A faculty grievant may express his or her grievance through the UAC. Procedures for dealing with faculty grievances on matters related to academic promotion are dealt with, according to procedures of the UAC ([Exhibit 9.8](#)). In addition, NDU abides by the Lebanese Labor Code that deals, among other things, with employee grievances and complaints. In addition, a Harassment Policy protects staff, and all faculty, staff, and students are expected to abide by the University policies related to integrity, such as the *Code of Ethics*.

An institutional strength revealed in this *Self-Study* is NDU’s periodic review of integrity and ethical behavior that prompts either policy change or refinements supplemented by concomitant procedures. As such, existing policies and procedures are either refined or new ones carefully crafted by faculty through the shared governance processes. For instance, the BOT approved on June 8, 2017, the latest update regarding *Procedures for*

Implementing Student Code of Conduct. Other matters, such as the rights related to the publications of individual authors set out by the NDU Press, are bolstered by inducting faculty and students into training sessions on Creative Commons (CC) copyright licenses for the free use and sharing of academic and creative digital resources (*Exhibit 9.9*). Relevant to this are systematic workshops, which are carried out by the Office of Information Technology (OIT) to capitalize on recent trends in intellectual property rights related to openness in research and teaching and as implementation of the University-wide *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* titled. “*Vision 20/20.*”

While the *Self-Study* reveals that NDU has an array of potent policies and procedures that institutionalize integrity in all aspects of its operations, a centralized system is still required. Such a system is needed to ensure that regular pronouncements on the importance of enforcing the principles of integrity and ethical behavior (through newsletters and social media platforms) alongside a system that periodically evaluates existing integrity policies, procedures, behaviors, and outcomes.

An institutional culture that supports and promotes integrity through policies and practices expands to ensure that students’ grievances are dealt with fairly. Although the SAO deals with students’ grievances, a survey conducted with Faculty deans showed that individual Faculties do adjudicate accusations of student misconduct, be they academic or behavioral, and try to resolve them with the department and advisor concerned before possible referral to the appropriate University channels. Students’ grievances, be they academic or non-academic, are dealt with according to the *Student Code of Conduct*.

Another strength demonstrated in the *Self-Study* is NDU’s staunch support of academic freedom and diversity, which are enshrined in the University mission and values, policies, and corollary procedures. Regarding diversity, NDU accommodates faculty, staff, and students, from different faiths that interact with respect and collegiality, according to the survey results yielded from Faculty deans. NDU is still challenged by difficulties related to attracting students from a variety of religious backgrounds due to Lebanon’s unique cultural and geographic characteristics, and situational factors. The latter include the preponderance of students to attend educational institutions situated near their residential areas, which in Lebanon are religiously homogeneous, particularly in semi-urban and rural areas, such as the branch campuses in the Shouf Campus (SC) and North Lebanon Campus (NLC) as well as the main campus, which is located in the Mount-Lebanon Governorate.

NDU complies with the standards, policies, and requirements of the CIHE and employs transparency and integrity in the accreditation process and in its relationship with the Commission by updating the general public through its website and the NDU community through local intranet (SHARE, SharePoint Technology).

PROJECTIONS

In its continuous effort to foster ethical conduct across the NDU community, against the backdrop of providing high quality education, NDU shall:

- Task the Office of Communications (OC) to develop a practical procedure to systematically pronounce through newsletters and social media platforms the importance of enforcing the principles of integrity and ethical behavior;
- Widen the scope of the OC’s regular posts on the University website and social media platforms to ensure that influential stories featured by the NDU community reach a wider audience;
- Improve the Faculty grievance procedure, which is currently being studied by the UAC, before it submits it to the President in spring 2018; and
- Formulate an Open Educational Resources (OERs) draft policy. While the use of OERs in teaching is gaining traction at NDU, the OER and Badges Committee will complete in the draft policy and submit it by June 2018 to the appropriate University channels for deliberation and approval.

TRANSPARENCY

DESCRIPTION

The University has made considerable efforts toward bolstering the role of the OC as the central coordinator of all official electronic and print-based publications. For example, the information published by the OC on the new website provides students and prospective students with information about their education at NDU. Kindly be advised that the University website, and its web-based tools, has become the primary source of official information about NDU. The website includes a landing page for prospective students in addition to a page for current students, providing them with information about registration, admissions, tuition fees, Faculties, degree programs, courses, financial aid programs and packages, campus life, and University facilities. The established website is synchronized with the intranet (SHARE), mobile application, social media, and a landing page for parents.

The Department of Career and Placement has a “career” page that publishes job vacancies for students and alumni. The SIS and OGS grading systems are accessible to students, faculty, and advisors on both the website and intranet. Faculty Assessment Tools are published on the University website.

In addition, the website is used to communicate with internal and external audiences, and receive information through “live chat” and “contact us” form, whereas the mobile application has a push and a pop-up notification to ensure that users read the announcement “pushed” by the University. The website, mobile application, and social media are open to the entire internal and external University communities, while the mobile application is accessible to students and faculty.

All forms of print and digital communications officially representing NDU are consistent with guidelines set by the Office of Design and Brand Guardian (ODGB), which was established in 2013 in response to the specific public disclosure projection spelled out in the *Candidacy Self-Study 2013*. NDU makes accessible on the website electronic archived editions of the University *Catalog* since the academic year 2000-2001.

Above and beyond, the website contains documentation for any statements and promises, regarding such matters as program excellence, learning outcomes, success in placement, and graduate or faculty achievements. Those documents are also accessible on the intranet (SHARE). News about the NDU community and alumni, in addition to their success stories, are also posted on social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook and YouTube) and in the monthly e-newsletter, *E-Spirit*. Events, activities and achievements are publicized through digital and social media platforms, and a virtual campus tour is made available to the general public.

The Intranet is open to administrators, faculty, and staff and is used to:

- (1) Engage with the internal community through community service and awareness activities, opinion counts feature, quick survey.
- (2) Receive updated information regarding upcoming events, announcements, news, important dates, academic calendar, pop-up notification, daily menu, Gospel, and directory.
- (3) Document purposes publications, policies, and guidelines, COD minutes and accreditation.
- (4) Use certain tools related to services, forms, templates, and quick links.

APPRAISAL

In a bid to safeguard the University image, both within the borders of its three campuses and beyond its gates, NDU appointed in 2014an OC director to manage and oversee the following departments: Digital Media, Media

Relations, and Internal Communications and Editorial Services. Apart from safeguarding the University image across the board, the OC promotes all activities and announcements on all media platforms (e.g., printing press, electronic media, digital media, website, social media, mobile application, and Intranet). A lacuna in the work of the OC lies in its lack of coordination with various University constituencies. The OC needs to strategize its coordination with the branch campuses, Faculties, and offices to ensure that a better mode of coordination with the community is in place.

The OC launched in 2015 the new University website, capitalizing on latest trends of web design and development as well as benchmarking with higher education to present a trendy, impactful yet corporate platform and to offset or delay potential outdated. The redesign of the website implied a modern scheme and structure along the way. A survey conducted by OIRA on June 16, 2016 sampling students, administrators, faculty, and staff reported that a minority of respondents found the website “user-friendly” ([Exhibit 9.10](#)). A caveat is that the response rate was relatively low, the sample skewed and non-representative of the entire community; hence, generalizations cannot be made.

A survey conducted on July 7, 2017, with Faculty deans included three questions related to the website: (1) To what extent does the website (external and internal, i.e. SHARE) display accurate content to viewers? (2) To what extent does the website capitalize on ever-changing information pertaining to the University? And (3) to what extent is navigation user-friendly?

Generally, there was consensus among respondents that the website fairly displays accurate and timely content. As for website updates, the survey yielded mixed results ([Exhibit 9.11](#)), prompting further probing into the extent to which the website capitalizes on ever-changing information related to NDU. Although the website and Intranet offer tools and means of interaction and two-way communication (live chat, discussion forum, your opinion counts, quick survey, etc.), the use of these tools is still infrequent and needs bolstering to increase engagement.

While the website is in its gestation phase of development and work for improvement is underway, updating some features of the old website and the introduction of a new one is remarkable in the University endeavor to disclose and disseminate information in a timely and accurate manner.

Besides the website, the internal community at NDU is privileged with a modern and useful intranet called SHARE. This internal portal was designed to help faculty and staff access relevant information (news, upcoming and ongoing events, announcements and outreach) besides sharing documents, reports, and granting speedy access to useful links (webmail, website, pay slip, helpdesks, library, OGS, SIS, etc.) directory, and tools (templates, forms, etc.). The use of the intranet would have been more frequent had it been set as a browser default page during the launch of the digital project.

Responding to a question about the extent to which social media provide opportunities to publicly divulge information related to Faculties and how these channels communicate relevant information rapidly and accurately, a dean suggested conducting focus group interviews to explore further possibilities. Prior to this recommendation, the OC had conducted two focus group interviews (on June 13, 2015, and on June 16, 2017, respectively) to derive qualitative data, regarding the community’s experience with the digital platforms during the period between June 2016 and May 2017. Results showed that respondents expressed their support of this new phase, i.e. the launch of the new communication strategy and the development of these platforms and recommended that periodic evaluation be conducted to ensure that such tools remain updated and efficient ([Exhibit 9.12](#)). Furthermore, using measurement tools (insights, google analytics, etc.), the Department of Digital Media issues monthly reports on social media performance at NDU. These reports are shared with relevant parties internally ([Exhibit 9.13](#)) and serve to monitor, plan, and set new strategies, assess growth, and enhance outreach and engagement.

The Department of Internal Communication and Editorial Services assessed all NDU publications, and a list of recommendations was presented on November 30, 2016, to the senior administration. Some publications are to

be revamped, combined, reconsidered, or relaunched ([Exhibit 9.14](#)). An overall strength gleaned from the Self-Study is NDU’s propensity to improve the website and the panoply of communication tools and channels through data-driven assessment.

Concerning the University financial statement, there currently exists no established process to automatically publish or share on the website its most recent audited financial statements; therefore, making such information unavailable to stakeholders and the general public.

PROJECTIONS

To further enhance institutional transparency the following steps have been slated for immediate action:

- Further to the finalization in September 2017 of the second phase of the intranet project led by the OC, which includes the development of an 8-part workflow Events Management Module to simplify, digitalize, and organize the reservation, information flow, tracking system, and approval cycle of University events, relevant stakeholders were trained to use the system in October 2017. The training ensures smooth implementation. Final testing and data entry are being rolled-out and the project kick-off is expected in January 2018;
- The OC is currently working closely with the Department of Career and Placement to enhance the functionality and display of the job opportunities on the website and mobile application by digitizing the process. Currently, two offers from external parties have been presented and the project launch is projected for May 2018;
- Launch periodic comprehensive evaluation of communication functions and tools by the OC and OIRA, in collaboration with Faculty deans and the relevant offices. The next evaluation is expected to take place in May 2018; and
- Establish a procedure, as of October 2018, to publish NDU’s most recent audited financial statements to the general public by a committee chaired by the Vice-President for Finance (VPF).

PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

DESCRIPTION

The University *Catalog* describes the institution vis-à-vis its mission and core values. In addition to *Academic Rules and Regulations* applicable to both undergraduate and graduate students, the *Catalog* publishes *Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions Requirements, Offered Programs and Degrees, Available Courses*, and provides details about the obligations and responsibilities of students and the institution. The respective Faculty missions, and Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) for each degree program offered on the website page of each respective Faculty are published in the University *Catalog* and the website. In terms of identity and educational model, NDU identifies itself as “a private, Lebanese non-profit Catholic institution of higher education, which adopts the American system of education.” This identity is published in the University *Governance Framework*, the *Catalog* (p.31), the website, *Student Handbook* (pp. 7-8), and in the *Factbook*.

The *Catalog* also publishes the following information:

Undergraduate and Graduate Admissions Requirements in addition to conditions and procedures for Transfer Students ([Exhibit 9.15](#)) are also published in the *Student Rules and Regulations*. Student tuition fees, charges, and refund policies are disclosed in the *Catalog* and on the website. The *Catalog* publishes the requirements for all undergraduate and graduate degree programs.

Names of faculty members along with their academic ranks, degree awarding institutions and dates of terminal

degree award, and departmental affiliation are published in the *Catalog* ([Exhibit 9.16](#)) and on the website. Besides, the names, titles, and positions of administrative officers are displayed on the website and in the *Catalog* ([Exhibit 9.17](#)). Names and affiliation of members of the Supreme Council and the BOT are published on the website and in the *Catalog* ([Exhibit 9.18](#)). The size and characteristics of the student body are reported in the *Factbook*.

Information on academic and support services range of co-curricular and non-academic opportunities available to students, and institutional learning and physical resources from which a student can reasonably be expected to benefit is available on website, *Catalog* ([Exhibit 9.19](#)), and in the *Student Handbook* (p.50). Moreover, recent information on passage rates for licensure examinations are published on the website, as applicable.

The institution ensures that when students, prospective students, or members of the public are interacting with an individual acting on behalf of the institution through a contractual or other written agreement, the relationship of that individual to the institution is clearly stated ([Exhibit 9.20](#)).

Candidacy for Accreditation Status, reports, and invitation for public comments are posted on the website. Files related to the *Self-Study*, including minutes of meetings and draft chapters are posted on Blackboard ([Exhibit 9.21](#)).

APPRAISAL

NDU makes accessible on the website electronic archived editions of the *Catalog* going back to academic year 2000-2001. In addition, the production of the *Catalog* starts at the Faculties and units and every effort is made that the content of the *Catalog* is as accurate as possible to reflect a true image of the University academe and services. There seem to be a sizable number of dormant courses still listed in the *Catalog*, however. Furthermore, interview data obtained from the Office of the Registrar were conducted in July 2017 to derive information about the production of the *Catalog* and identify possible strengths and weaknesses related to the process.

The Office of the Registrar sends to all Faculties, offices, and units the *Catalog* of a particular academic year for updates. The COD must approve academic changes to be included in the *Catalog*. In turn, Faculties, offices, and units submit to the Office of the Registrar the modifications and refined parts of the *Catalog*. The latter forwards the pre-final version to the OIT for implementation and to the OC for publishing on the website after being edited by the senior editor and proofread by the DBG. While the process is seemingly straightforward and clear, a main weakness identified in the *Self-Study* is the cyclical back and forth bureaucratic process entailed in the publication of the *Catalog*, causing delays in its publication.

A weakness that emerged in the *Self-Study* is that the *Student Handbook* was last published in the academic year 2014-2015 and has not been updated since then. While the institution publishes updated information about student tuition fees for each degree program at the undergraduate and graduate levels, information about the total cost of education and net price are not included. The expected amount of student debt upon graduation and loan repayment rates are not published, as NDU does not provide students with loans.

Given that NDU is seeking NEASC accreditation, information on this process is accessible and published on the website under the section titled, "accreditation," (<http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/accreditation/candidate-for-accreditation-status>) and on the intranet (SHARE) under "accreditation" (<http://share.ndu.edu.lb/Our-NDU/Accreditation/Pages/NEASC.aspx>). The information provided is clear and accurate. Particularly, the standards, policies, and requirements of the CIHE are published on the website. Candidacy for Accreditation status, reports, and invitation for public comments are posted on the website accurately and in a timely manner.

Information on academic programs, courses offered, academic policies, and the requirements for degrees, or other forms of academic recognition are easily accessible and published clearly in both the *Catalog* and on the

website. The OC is currently working on assuring full consistency between the *Catalog* and the website. A weakness, however, is that NDU does not publish the locations and programs available at branch campuses where students can enroll for a degree. A description of the programs available in each branch campus is also not published. Although the University *Catalog* and website publish a list of institutions with which NDU has signed Memorandums of Understanding (*MoUs*), details of these memoranda of cooperation/understanding and information on how to inquire about programs are not clear enough to enable students or faculty to benefit from such agreements, including details for applying and follow-up.

Information on student success, including retention and graduation rates are published in the University *Factbook*. In order to be able to centralize all University publications at the Department Internal Communications and Editorial Services under the OC, NDU needs to allocate sufficient staff and financial resources to keep up with the growth of its numerous publications and communication platforms. Currently, the total number of staff at the OC is 7. It needs two additional staff of whom one should be transferred from within the University to the OC and the other hired directly under Editorial Services to copyedit University-related documents prior to publishing in an accurate and timely manner. Further, data forms are readily available to the general public on the website spread in different locations and compiled in the *Data First Forms* communicated to each *Self-Study* chair.

Another shortcoming that has emerged in the *Self-Study* is the replication and redundant postings of some material, which are not available in a singular, central location as below shown in *Table 1-9*.

Table 1-9 Matrix of Main Publications*

| | Website | Syllabus | Catalog | University Profile | Factbook | Faculty Handbook |
|---|---------|----------|---------|--------------------|----------|------------------|
| Academic Calendar | X | X | X | | | X |
| Institutional Accreditation (NEASC) | X | | | X | X | |
| Mission Statement (University) | X | | X | X | X | |
| Mission Statement (Faculties/Departments) | X | | X | | | |
| Board of Trustees | X | | X | | X | |
| Information about Degree Programs | X | | X | X | X | |
| <i>Student Code of Conduct</i> | X | X | X | | | X |
| Governance Framework | X | | X | | X | |
| Tuition Fees/Charges/Refund Policies | X | | X | | | |
| <i>Student Rules and Regulations</i> | X | X | X | | | X |
| List of Faulty Members | X | | X | | | |
| PEOs/PLOs | X | X | X | | | |

* "X" Indicates repetition.

PROJECTIONS

- The Office of Registrar, in collaboration with the Faculties concerned, identified dormant courses not offered for more than 3 consecutive semesters. The COD decided in fall 2017 to either remove these course from the *Catalog* or flag them as “Not Currently Offered” in the next version of the *Catalog* that will come out in fall 2018;
- The OC director will evaluate the need for additional human resources in the OC, particularly in the newly-created editing unit within the office. Start date is January 2018;
- The Dean of Students is currently updating the *Student Handbook*. The new version is expected to be published by fall 2018;
- A comprehensive list of part-time faculty members, their terminal degrees, and the awarding institutions will be published on the website and updated at the beginning of each semester. Faculty deans will send the list of all part-time members to the OC for posting in January 2018;
- Post on the website a statement clarifying to all entities concerned the proper process for obtaining any needed financial reports. Charge the Office of the VPF, in collaboration with the OC, with this task starting March 2018;
- The OC will ensure that all curricular information published on the website (courses, number of credits for each degree, etc.) conform exactly to what is listed in the University *Catalog*. This work will be accomplished by fall 2018;
- Elaborate the page listing MoUs co-signed by NDU and other institutions and disclose their content on the intranet by the OIRA and the OC, starting fall 2018;
- Publish on the website the amount of Financial Aid and Scholarships for each category of financial aid assistance granted every academic year to students and calculate the expected cost for each degree program, and post them on the website. The VPF in collaboration with the Office of Financial Aid and the Department of Digital Media will start implementing this action in May 2018.

(cont'd.)

Appendix A: List of Exhibits

Standard 1

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Exhibit 1.1 | Self-Study Report 2013 |
| Exhibit 1.2 | Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) – Mission Values |
| Exhibit 1.3 | Launch of Institute of the Lebanese Thought (ILT) |
| Exhibit 1.4 | LAC Report |
| Exhibit 1.5 | Launch of the Benedict XVI Endowed Chair |
| Exhibit 1.6 | SAO Activities – Fall 2017 |
| Exhibit 1.7 | Campus Ministry Upcoming Events |
| Exhibit 1.8 | Financial Aid and Scholarship for New Students |
| Exhibit 1.9 | Establishment of: Office of Communication Strategy |
| Exhibit 1.10 | Mission Statement Survey |
| Exhibit 1.11 | Minutes of Meetings Standard 1 Sub-Committee |
| Exhibit 1.12 | LAC – Survey Questions |
| Exhibit 1.13 | Leadership – Survey Questions |
| Exhibit 1.14 | Benedict XVI Endowed Chair Annual Report 2014/15 |
| Exhibit 1.15 | Interview with SAO Dean |
| Exhibit 1.16 | Interview with Campus Ministry – University Chaplain General |
| Exhibit 1.17 | Interview with Community Services and Awareness (CSA) |
| Exhibit 1.18 | Campus Ministry Mission |
| Exhibit 1.19 | NGOs List |
| Exhibit 1.20 | Annual Report 2015/16 pp. 5-6 |
| Exhibit 1.21 | Catholic Identity – Survey Questions |
| Exhibit 1.22 | Enrollment by Nationality – Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 1.23 | Enrollment by Religion – Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 1.24 | Diversity – Survey Questions |
| Exhibit 1.25 | Financial Aid Statistics |
| Exhibit 1.26 | Annual Report 2015/16 pp. 25-26 |
| Exhibit 1.27 | Launch of Digital Media Project |

Standard 2

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| Exhibit 2.1 | Biennial Report 2015 |
| Exhibit 2.2 | BOT Minutes of Meeting – Sept. 2015 |
| Exhibit 2.3 & 2.4 | GCC Minutes of Meetings, Strategic Plan (SP) Coordinators and Objectives |
| Exhibit 2.5 | Report Template per Action |
| Exhibit 2.6 | GCC Minutes of Meetings |
| Exhibit 2.7 | COD Minutes of Meeting, May 4, 2016 |
| Exhibit 2.8 | Strategic Plan FE and FAAD |
| Exhibit 2.9 | Strategic Plan 2015-2020 |
| Exhibit 2.10 | Academic Retreats 2016 & 2017: Goals and Action Plans |
| Exhibit 2.11 | COD Minutes (Dec.16, 16 & Jan.18, 2017), Implementing Scholarship & Fin. Aid Policy upon Admissions, Spring 2017 |
| Exhibit 2.12 | Master Plan Committee Minutes of Meeting |
| Exhibit 2.13 | ABET Self-Study Report – Computer Science Program |
| Exhibit 2.14 | Financial Policy |
| Exhibit 2.15 | Budget Process and Procurement forms |
| Exhibit 2.16 | BOT Minutes of Meetings – Sept. 2016 and Nov. 2017 |
| Exhibit 2.17 | Appointment of HR Director |
| Exhibit 2.18 | Report from HR Director to VPA |

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| Exhibit 2.19 | Performance Management System, Invitation and Handouts to Training Sessions |
| Exhibit 2.20 | Early Registration Process |
| Exhibit 2.21 | University Bylaws |
| Exhibit 2.22 | Data Access Sub-Committee Recommendations 2014 |
| Exhibit 2.23 | Appointment of OIRA Director 2016 |
| Exhibit 2.24 | Mission of OIRA 2011 |
| Exhibit 2.25 | Data Warehouse |
| Exhibit 2.26 | Sample Data Request Reports from OIRA to few Faculties & Depts. |
| Exhibit 2.27 | FAAD Council of Chairs Minutes of Meetings Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 2.28 | Data Houseware |
| Exhibit 2.29 | Fact Book 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 2.30 | ABET Accreditation to Faculty of Engineering |
| Exhibit 2.31 | Architecture Program Review and Appendices |
| Exhibit 2.32 | Documents - Computer Science Program ABET Accreditation |
| Exhibit 2.33 | Program Review Guidelines and Procedures |
| Exhibit 2.34 | Sample of Dept. Outcome Assessment Com.(DOAC) Minutes of Meeting |
| Exhibit 2.35 | Reviewed Programs |
| Exhibit 2.36 | BOT Minutes of Meeting – Sept. 2015 |
| Exhibit 2.37 | Supporting Documents from Faculties to Implement SP |
| Exhibit 2.38 | Academic Retreat 2016 Action Plan |
| Exhibit 2.39 | Budget Plan 2016-2017 |

Standard 3

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| Exhibit 3.1 | NDU Governance Framework (<i>soft copy, website:</i> http://share.ndu.edu.lb/Policies/PublishingImages/Pages/NDU-Bylaws/Bylaws%202017.pdf) |
| Exhibit 3.2 | BOT Minutes of Meeting - Nov. 7, 2016 (<i>soft copy, website:</i> http://share.ndu.edu.lb/Policies/PublishingImages/Pages/NDU-Bylaws/Bylaws%202017.pdf) |
| Exhibit 3.3 | AGB Presentation and Action Plan |
| Exhibit 3.4 | BOT Committees |
| Exhibit 3.5 | Faculty and Department Bylaws (<i>soft copy, website:</i> http://share.ndu.edu.lb/Policies/PublishingImages/Faculty%20and%20Dept%20Bylaws-April%2011%20) |
| Exhibit 3.6 | Regional Campuses Guidelines |
| Exhibit 3.7 | UC Minutes of Meetings |
| Exhibit 3.8 | University Standing Committees |
| Exhibit 3.9 | COD Minutes of Meetings (<i>website:</i> http://share.ndu.edu.lb/Offices/VPAA/Pages/CODMinutes.aspx) |
| Exhibit 3.10 | General Assembly Minutes of Meetings (2013-2016) |
| Exhibit 3.11 | Governance Survey |
| Exhibit 3.12 | Human Resources - Performance Management Forms |

Standard 4

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|---------------|---|
| Exhibit 4.1.1 | Catalog 2017/18 |
| Exhibit 4.1.2 | Student Handbook 2017/18 |
| Exhibit 4.1.3 | Website: www.ndu.edu.lb |
| Exhibit 4.1.4 | Sample Syllabi |
| Exhibit 4.1.5 | Sample T1 Forms |
| Exhibit 4.1.6 | Strategic Plan 2015-2020 |
| Exhibit 4.1.7 | Sample Departmental Budget |
| Exhibit 4.1.8 | Faculty and Department By-laws |

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| Exhibit 4.1.9 | NDU Governance Framework |
| Exhibit 4.1.10 | Engineering Accreditation: http://www.ndu.edu.lb/academics/faculty-of-engineering/accreditation |
| Exhibit 4.1.11 | Information Literacy |
| Exhibit 4.1.12 | Freshman Program: http://www.ndu.edu.lb/academics/freshman-program |
| Exhibit 4.1.13 | Admissions Guide 2017/18 |
| Exhibit 4.1.14 | NDU Mission Statement http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/ndu-at-a-glance |
| Exhibit 4.1.15 | Liberal Arts Curriculum Handbook |
| Exhibit 4.1.16 | Self-Study Report 2013 |
| Exhibit 4.1.17 | Sample Contract Sheets |
| Exhibit 4.1.18 | Discrepancies |
| Exhibit 4.1.19 | NEASC Letter July 11, 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.1.20 | LAC Presentation April 7, 2017 |
| Exhibit 4.1.21 | LAC Internal Communications |
| Exhibit 4.1.22 | LAC Grid |
| Exhibit 4.2.1 | Master's Programs - Research and Practical Courses per Program |
| Exhibit 4.2.2 | Criteria to Teach at Graduate Courses |
| Exhibit 4.2.3 | Faculty Deployment - Credits Taught |
| Exhibit 4.2.4 | No. of Publications per Faculty Member - Academic Year 2015-2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.5 | Sample Syllabus |
| Exhibit 4.2.6 | Catalog 2017-18 |
| Exhibit 4.2.7 | Library Resources 2006-2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.8 | Admissions Guide 2017-18 |
| Exhibit 4.2.9 | NTR 653 Learning Outcomes |
| Exhibit 4.2.10 | EDU 610 Syllabus (OER) - Spring 2017 |
| Exhibit 4.2.11 | NTR 325 Syllabus – Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.12 | NTR 670 Syllabus – Fall 2015 |
| Exhibit 4.2.13 | CEN 662 Syllabus - Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.14 | EDU 614 Syllabus – Spring 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.15 | COA 680 Syllabus - Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.16 | COA 652 Syllabus - Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.17 | TRA 401 Syllabus - Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.18 | MoU NDU and INDEVCO |
| Exhibit 4.2.19 | MoU NDU and Industrial Research Institute |
| Exhibit 4.2.20 | FH Education Tech. Panel with Graduate Students |
| Exhibit 4.2.21 | FBAE and FNHS Faculty Members and Students Joint Publications |
| Exhibit 4.2.22 | DPEPE - Guidelines for M.A. Students |
| Exhibit 4.2.23 | FNHS Budget - Sheet of Graduate Students Projects |
| Exhibit 4.2.24 | NTR 435 Syllabus – Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 4.2.25 | Program Mission Statements, Objectives and Learning Outcomes |
| Exhibit 4.2.26 | Course Descriptions of Selected Practicum Courses in Professional Programs |
| Exhibit 4.2.27 | Research and Practical Components and Graduate Program Objective Assessment |
| Exhibit 4.2.28 | MBA Program Goals and Learning Outcomes |
| Exhibit 4.2.29 | Appraisal Survey – Sub-Standard 4.20-4.28 |
| Exhibit 4.3.1 | Merit Increase System and Procedure |
| Exhibit 4.3.2 | T1 Form - Teaching and Course Evaluation |
| Exhibit 4.3.3 | T2 Form - Peer Class Observation |
| Exhibit 4.3.4 | Information Technology (IT) Workshops |
| Exhibit 4.3.5 | Center of Applied Research in Education (CARE) Activities |
| Exhibit 4.3.6 | Award of Credits for Internship/Practicum Courses |
| Exhibit 4.3.7 | A Study on Students with Poor Academic Performance |
| Exhibit 4.3.8 | Dormant Courses Statistics |

Standard 5

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| Exhibit 5.1 | Report on Academic Activities 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 5.2 | Biennial Report 2015 |
| Exhibit 5.3 | Admissions Strategic Plan 2014 |
| Exhibit 5.4 | Admission Procedures for Students with Special Needs |
| Exhibit 5.5 | Composite Score and Math Remedial Courses per Faculty 2016-17 |
| Exhibit 5.6 | English Proficiency Requirements |
| Exhibit 5.7 | Advisors' Workshop 2014-2015 |
| Exhibit 5.8 | Freshman Program Presentation |
| Exhibit 5.9 | Student Handbook 2017/2018 |
| Exhibit 5.10 | Catalog 2017/18 |
| Exhibit 5.11 | Orientation Memo Schedule – Fall 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.12 | Fact Book 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 5.13 | Non-Returnee Students Spring 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.14 | Community Service and Awareness Flyer |
| Exhibit 5.15 | http://www.ndu.edu.lb/about-ndu/administration/offices/student-affairs-office/student-housing |
| Exhibit 5.16 | Academic Advising Task Force Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 5.17 | Job Description – Academic Advising Officer |
| Exhibit 5.18 | Advising Tracking System - Email for Students |
| Exhibit 5.19 | Advising Tracking System - Email for Advisors |
| Exhibit 5.20 | Financial Aid and Scholarship Upon Admission |
| Exhibit 5.21 | Revised Student Union Bylaws – May 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.22 | Revised Student Clubs Bylaws – May 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.23 | Athletics Statistics – Spring 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.24 | Code of Ethics |
| Exhibit 5.25 | Revised Student Code of Conduct – March 2017 |
| Exhibit 5.26 | Faculty Handbook 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 5.27 | SAO Offices Evaluation - 2016 |
| Exhibit 5.28 | Charts: Students Awarded Academic Distinction (2013-16) |
| Exhibit 5.29 | SAO Offices Evaluation - 2014 |

Standard 6

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| Exhibit 6.1 | Faculty Handbook 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 6.2 | Travelling Allowance Procedure |
| Exhibit 6.3 | Travelling Support Template |
| Exhibit 6.4 | Policy on Ethics in Research |
| Exhibit 6.5 | University Research and Grants Policy |
| Exhibit 6.6 | Overhead on Research Projects |
| Exhibit 6.7 | Consent Form for Staff Contribution to Research Projects |
| Exhibit 6.8 | Full-Time Hiring Procedure |
| Exhibit 6.9 | New Faculty Orientation Program 2016 |
| Exhibit 6.10 | NDU Governance Framework |
| Exhibit 6.11 | Faculty Assessment Tools |
| Exhibit 6.12 | Merit Increase System and Procedure |
| Exhibit 6.13 | Reduced TRS Form for Merit Evaluation |
| Exhibit 6.14 | Gazette Issue No. 7, November 2007 |
| Exhibit 6.15 | New Contractual Scheme |
| Exhibit 6.16 | Catalog 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 6.17 | Faculty Benefits and Scale/Salary Adjustment |
| Exhibit 6.18 | Addendum to the Faculty Benefits and Scale |
| Exhibit 6.19 | Faculty and Department Bylaws |

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| Exhibit 6.20 | HR: Policy and Procedure - Recruitment and Selection |
| Exhibit 6.21 | HR: Guide - Performance Management |
| Exhibit 6.22 | HR: Competency Framework |
| Exhibit 6.23 | COD Sub-Committee Report - Course Offering |
| Exhibit 6.24 | Course Categories |
| Exhibit 6.25 | Office of Information Technology Workshops – Sp. 2017 |
| Exhibit 6.26 | Academic Advising Task Force Report |
| Exhibit 6.27 | Academic Advising Task Force Action Plan |
| Exhibit 6.28 | Faculty Rights and Responsibilities |
| Exhibit 6.29 | Strategic Plan 2015-2020 |
| Exhibit 6.30 | Announcement to Faculty Members - New CNRS Agreement |
| Exhibit 6.31 | FT Participation in Conferences 2014-2017 |
| Exhibit 6.32 | No. of Course Release Cases – Sp. 2016-Sp. 2017 |
| Exhibit 6.33 | Biennial Report 2015 |
| Exhibit 6.34 | COD Sub-Committee - Promotion Criteria |
| Exhibit 6.35 | HR - Pay Scale |
| Exhibit 6.36 | OER Memo |
| Exhibit 6.37 | ENL 213 OER Student Survey |
| Exhibit 6.38 | Blue Evaluation Software - ENL 213 OER Student Survey |
| Exhibit 6.39 | Academic Advisors Training Sessions |
| Exhibit 6.40 | FE Memo: Advising Career Day and Faculty Retreat |
| Exhibit 6.41 | Early Registration Presentation |

Standard 7

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| Exhibit 7.1 | Human Resources Policies |
| Exhibit 7.2 | Compensation and Benefits Guide, Policies and Procedures |
| Exhibit 7.3 | Job Evaluation Guide, Grading Matrix and Pay Structure |
| Exhibit 7.4 | HR - Guide - Performance Management |
| Exhibit 7.5 | Tuition Fees – Facts and Figure Comparison |
| Exhibit 7.6 | The University Development Policy on the Acceptance of Gifts and Donations |
| Exhibit 7.7 | Chagoury Contract |
| Exhibit 7.8 | Faculty benefits and Scale Salary Adjustment |
| Exhibit 7.9 | Financial Aid Policy |
| Exhibit 7.10 | Financial Aid (annex) |
| Exhibit 7.11 | Audit Report |
| Exhibit 7.12 | NEASC letter dated July 11, 2016 |
| Exhibit 7.13 | Ernest & Young Brochure |
| Exhibit 7.14 | Budget Plan 2014/15 |
| Exhibit 7.15 | Multi Year Projection 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 7.16 | Financial Policy |
| Exhibit 7.17 | Business Office Organizational Chart |
| Exhibit 7.18 | Academic Retreat 2016 – Action Plan |
| Exhibit 7.19 | Interlibrary Loan Information |
| Exhibit 7.20 | Library Special Collections |
| Exhibit 7.21 | Library Organizational Chart |
| Exhibit 7.22 | Library Personnel Degrees |
| Exhibit 7.23 | Library Website |
| Exhibit 7.24 | Library Electronic Resources |
| Exhibit 7.25 | Master Plan Committee |
| Exhibit 7.26 | Master Plan Model |
| Exhibit 7.27 | Risk Assessment Project |

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| Exhibit 7.28 | IP Cameras |
| Exhibit 7.29 | Director of Physical Plant Appointment |
| Exhibit 7.30 | Landscaping Senior Officer |
| Exhibit 7.31 | Way Finding Project |
| Exhibit 7.32 | Course Offerings Implementation Committee Report |

Standard 8

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| Exhibit 8.1 | T1 Course Evaluation Survey Template |
| Exhibit 8.2 | Program Review Guidelines and Procedures |
| Exhibit 8.3 | Liberal Arts Curriculum (LAC) Faculty Guidelines |
| Exhibit 8.4 | Questionnaire to Faculty Deans – Educational Effectiveness |
| Exhibit 8.5 | FAAD First Assessment Cycle Report – Arch. Dept. |
| Exhibit 8.6 | Graphic Design Program Review |
| Exhibit 8.7 | FBAE – BAF 450 Syllabus Template |
| Exhibit 8.8 | FBAE – Dept. of Accounting & Finance PLO vs. SLO Mapping Matrix |
| Exhibit 8.9 | FBAE – FCC Minutes of Meeting – Nov. 2016 |
| Exhibit 8.10 | FBAE – Redefined Program Learning Outcomes (PLO) to all Programs |
| Exhibit 8.11 | FH – EDU 614 Syllabus Template |
| Exhibit 8.12 | FH – Learning Outcomes Assessment Guide |
| Exhibit 8.13 | FH – Executive Summary of Journalism Program Review |
| Exhibit 8.14 | FH – Advisory Board Bylaws and List of Members |
| Exhibit 8.15 | Instructor Course Assessment |
| Exhibit 8.16 | Rubric for Student Outcome (SO) |
| Exhibit 8.17 | FE – Alumni Survey |
| Exhibit 8.18 | Mapping SO and PEO |
| Exhibit 8.19 | Program Assessment Cycle |
| Exhibit 8.20 | ME Industrial Advisory Committee Bylaws |
| Exhibit 8.21 | NEASC Reply on the Substantive Changes in Law Program |
| Exhibit 8.22 | IAF 402 Syllabus Template – Fall 2016 |
| Exhibit 8.23 | CSC 323 Course Learning Outcomes |
| Exhibit 8.24 | Continuous Improvement - Computer Science |
| Exhibit 8.25 | Assessment Cycle - Computer Science |
| Exhibit 8.26 | Biology Program Review Self-Study Report 2015/16 |
| Exhibit 8.27 | FNHS – CLO Assessment Tools |
| Exhibit 8.28 | FNHS – Survey Trainee |
| Exhibit 8.29 | FNHS – Nutrition Program External Reviewer Report |
| Exhibit 8.30 | NEASC Letter on July 11, 2016 |
| Exhibit 8.31 | LAC Course Evaluation and Rubric |
| Exhibit 8.32 | FE – Alumni Survey Results – Spring 2017 |
| Exhibit 8.33 | NSSE 2015 Administration Summary |
| Exhibit 8.34 | NSSE Presentation to COD |
| Exhibit 8.35 | FBAE – PLO vs. SLO Mapping to all Programs |
| Exhibit 8.36 | FH – PSL 319 Syllabus Template |
| Exhibit 8.37 | FE – Student Advisory Committee Minutes of Meeting |
| Exhibit 8.38 | FNHS – SLO Assessment |
| Exhibit 8.39 | FBAE – Instructor Self-Assessment Template |

Standard 9

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| Exhibit 9.1 | Identity, Mission, Vision and Values |
| Exhibit 9.2 | PSL 609 Syllabus |

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| Exhibit 9.3 | Lebanese Labor Law Articles 26 & 36 |
| Exhibit 9.4 | Full Time Faculty Hiring Procedure |
| Exhibit 9.5 | Student Union Bylaws 2010 |
| Exhibit 9.6 | JOU 490 Syllabus |
| Exhibit 9.7 | Dean's Survey |
| Exhibit 9.8 | University Appeals Committee Procedure |
| Exhibit 9.9 | OER Workshop Attendance Sheet |
| Exhibit 9.10 | Survey of Communication Channels |
| Exhibit 9.11 | Template Surveys |
| Exhibit 9.12 | Focus Groups |
| Exhibit 9.13 | Social Media |
| Exhibit 9.14 | Publications Centralization Proposal |
| Exhibit 9.15 | Transfer - Admissions |
| Exhibit 9.16 | List of Full-Time Faculty Members 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 9.17 | University Staff and Administration 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 9.18 | BOT and Supreme Council 2016/17 |
| Exhibit 9.19 | Facilities |
| Exhibit 9.20 | Contract Consulting Agreement |
| Exhibit 9.21 | Files on Blackboard |

Appendix B: Affirmation of Compliance

Appendix C: E-Series Form