

ANNUAL REPORT | 2014-2015

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



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“WHEN THE CHURCH FOUNDS A UNIVERSITY, SHE IS *NOT* CHERISHING TALENT, GENIUS, OR KNOWLEDGE, *FOR THEIR OWN SAKE, BUT FOR THE SAKE OF HER CHILDREN,* WITH A VIEW TO THEIR SPIRITUAL WELFARE AND THEIR RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE AND USEFULNESS, WITH THE OBJECT OF TRAINING THEM TO FILL THEIR RESPECTIVE POSTS IN LIFE BETTER, AND OF *MAKING THEM MORE INTELLIGENT, CAPABLE, ACTIVE MEMBERS OF SOCIETY.*”

NEWMAN J.H, *THE IDEA OF A UNIVERSITY*, p. 38

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

In Pursuit of Transformative Outcomes

Looking back over the academic year 2014-2015, I can tell you that Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) has had a remarkable year full of reflection, accomplishment, and change. The achievements outlined in this *Annual Report* ensure that NDU has gained momentum in pursuing its mission as a Catholic university through developing an environment conducive to quality education and social service.

Always mindful of the daunting challenges impacting the future of Lebanon and that of the region, we, at NDU, remain optimistic and continue looking forward to a better future. Fortunately, we are no strangers to transforming challenges into opportunities. Since its inception in 1987, NDU has taken the road less traveled. Our role has always been to bring hope to students and people with whom we work. We have repeatedly asked ourselves, “What kind of future we want our students to live in? How can we work with them today to begin creating that future? What more do we do and do it better?” Those and other questions were among the main drivers that gave impetus to the University’s *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*.

The academic year 2014-2015 was a year of transformation, the outcomes of which are quite significant in areas, such as: Planning, Governance, Programs Review, and Outreach. This *Report* sheds light on those outcomes along with a few snapshots pertaining to other academic initiatives and projects underway or anticipated.

As someone committed to NDU’s ‘transformative’ role in society, I am impressed with our last year’s record of serving the public good and of enhancing dialogue, as a means to creating understanding and peace. The stories and events shared in this Report highlight the culture of love and philanthropy we have embraced to serve our community, which has suffered from economic hardships and political tensions.

These and other achievements would not have been possible without the dedication of our faculty and support staff. We will continue investing and working toward providing them with the best working environment to ensure a better future for our students and society through quality education.

On behalf of the NDU community, I invite you to celebrate last year’s accomplishments and to share in the journey, which the Order of the Holy Virgin Mary (OMM) initiated and continues to this day.

Father WALID MOUSSA
President



MISSION STATEMENT

As a Catholic institution inspired by the cultural and spiritual heritage of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary, 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.**



STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

A. The Process

The strategic planning process commenced in fall 2013, and continued, in earnest, in the year 2014-2015.

- In summer 2014, the University Strategic Plan Executive Committee (SPEC) produced a draft of the *Plan*, taking into consideration the *Self-Study* projections, the concerns spelled out in the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) report, and other needs, opportunities and challenges raised by the Deans in their 2013-2014 *Self-Study* reports.
- In fall 2014, the Executive Committee of the Board of Trustees (BOT) approved the main goals of the *Plan*. On October 29, 2015, NDU President Father Moussa commissioned the formation of the Strategic Plan Review and Implementation Committee (SPRIC) to chart a five-year plan based on the work done during the academic year 2013-2014.
- On October 30, 2014, the SPRIC charged a sub-Committee with the task of reviewing and updating the *SWOT Analysis* of July 6, 2014.
- On December 4, 2014, the President commissioned the formation of five committees, representing all Faculties, to work on further developing and/or modifying the 'approved' goals related to the draft *Strategic Plan* that was produced in 2013-2014.



- On January 29, 2015, the President communicated the 'final' *SWOT Analysis* to the University. The study provided highlights of the external and internal variables, charted under Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats.
- In March 2015, President Moussa announced the new *Strategic Plan*. He said, "We have decided to use effective strategic planning as a measure to articulate where we are heading and the actions needed to ensure strong, sustainable and balanced growth in the face of the rapidly changing technology. Accordingly, lots of efforts have been exerted to further solidify our standing. A new *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* has been formulated and adopted, taking into consideration the concerns of the contemporary society in all its facets. The new *Plan* reveals quite explicitly the strategic initiatives, which are necessary to connect NDU to industry without compromising the University's identity and integrity."
- On June 29, 2015, the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* with the sub-title, *A 20/20 Vision*, was communicated to the University Community on the intranet.
- On July 28, 2015, and following the approvals of the SPRIC, the Council of Deans (COD), and the President, the Executive Committee of the BOT approved the *Plan*, before the full Board's approval in September, 2015.

B. The Framework

The planning framework aligns with one of the NEASC's concerns, which states the need to have "a board approved strategic plan supported by a facilities plan and a multi-year financial plan." Aside from the five goals, which explain the University's position and direction with regards to student teaching and learning, research, and community engagement, the *Plan* provides an integrated system whereby physical and financial details and actions — necessary to enable the University to forge ahead — are well integrated. Also, all necessary actions are time-bound, with assigned champions and operating budgets.



C. Strategic Goals

The *Plan* is set within a framework of five institutional goals. Those goals build on some of the work from the *2007-2012 Plan*, with new themes for 2015-2020.

Goal I: NDU will continue to foster a teaching and learning environment based on a liberal arts foundation and driven by a holistic learning experience that enhances students' professional and communication competences.

Goal II: NDU will develop its position as the national and regional Catholic university of choice.

Goal III: NDU will develop and integrate research as an essential part of the learning experience of its students at all levels.



Goal IV: NDU will establish planning as a natural trait of the new shared governance of the institution.

Goal V: NDU will develop its financial resources and physical infrastructure to ensure excellent and affordable higher education.

Each goal area is broken down into a number of objectives and action steps linked to Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The University is now actively involved in accelerating and reviewing its progress toward achieving the strategic goals. This includes appointing coordinators and champions to ensure that the action steps remain relevant to the objectives and goals of the *Plan*.



PROGRESS AGAINST THE STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

Planning for the future did not prevent NDU from responding to emerging opportunities identified through the *SWOT Analysis* of July 6, 2014, and to academic issues resulting from Faculties' self-studies and practices. Evidence of progress made toward achieving the five goals of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* can easily be traced across the University.

A. Mission and Identity

Strategy planning can be both effective and meaningful only when it celebrates and promotes the distinctive dimensions and elements embedded in the mission, vision, and values of the University. As it seeks to navigate the upcoming five years, NDU continues to commit itself to enhancing its identity and mission through putting into practice the Lebanese Catholic values in the curriculum, co-curriculum, and campus operations.

Significant events during the academic year 2014-2015 included the:

- Launch of NDU's open dialogue initiative through hosting the Lebanese Observatory on Decentralization, the purpose of which is to enhance the values associated with social justice (equity) and pluralism in Lebanon. On May 8, 2015, President Moussa announced that the University would not only host the 'Observatory on Decentralization in Lebanon' but also contribute to its success through a variety of scholarly activities and initiatives;
- Appointment in July, 2014 of Dr. Edward J. Alam to the position of Chairholder of the XVI Endowed Chair of Religious, Cultural, and Philosophical Studies. The establishment of this particular Chair at the NDU Faculty of Humanities (FH) was exceedingly momentous. In the light of the rich intellectual heritage of Pope Benedict, who was a distinguished Professor at four prominent German Universities, the activities of the Chair shall engage the disciplines of Philosophy, Theology, and Religious Studies, and shall be pursued in such a way as to include serious engagement with the Social Sciences. This engagement shall encourage a concrete application of Catholic Social Teaching in a spirit of interreligious openness, especially between Christians and Muslims. The activities of this Chair shall be open, supple, and receptive to a variety of theological approaches that complement the original genius and unique Catholicity of Benedict's worldview; and
- Continued alignment of the NDU mission with civic engagement issues through the Community Service Office (CSO). The University's commitment to work with the society's poor and marginalized, in collaboration with charitable organizations and associations (NGOs), was quite significant. The CSO engaged students, faculty, and staff in many activities throughout the academic year 2014-2015. Rich and diversified were the activities planned, sponsored or driven by the CSO; they subtended many themes, such as humanitarian, social, moral, educational, academic, and they took the form of exhibitions, seminars, workshops, orientation sessions, trips, and fairs, just to name a few. The CSO teamed up with numerous NGOs to launch clothes and food donation campaigns, organize NGO social fairs, and participate in recording teaching material for the blind and deaf. Currently, the CSO has its own webpage and thrive on continuously recruiting new volunteers for a broader and more resonant outreach; it endeavors to cross the bridges between goals and accomplishment, and acts as an amenity for positive change.



B. Academic Review

During the academic year 2014-2015, the University engaged in a process of review and improvement aimed at consolidating its history of innovation and quality initiatives in curricular development, academic rules and regulations, and research. Those reviews were undertaken in response to the findings identified through the Faculties and support units' self-studies in 2013-2014. The following are highlights of the major activities, as released by the Office of the Vice-President for Academic Affairs (VPAA):

- In fall 2014, the VPAA formed a special committee to set the guidelines for reviewing curricula and determining program needs, such as qualified faculty members and support facilities;
- On April 30, 2015, the University conducted a program review workshop to provide training and explain the guidelines for academic review;
- By spring 2015, all seven Faculties had their undergraduate and graduate programs' objectives and Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) revised and finalized;
- Guided by the philosophy and standards of the American model of liberal arts education, the General Education Executive Committee (GEEC) drafted a report in April, 2015. The Committee's work was presented to the COD on May 6, 2015. Proposals presented to the COD are the result of the committee's reflection and reevaluation of the GERs in effect since 2008. It was agreed that the Liberal Arts Core Curriculum would replace the terms GERs. The committee proposed the following:
 - All Faculties will abide by a Core Curriculum, which varies between 27 and 30 credits;
 - All students will take 18 credits from the English and Arabic Communication, Religion, Citizenship, and Ethics categories;
 - The remaining credits will be taken from Life Sciences and the Humanities; and
 - A Liberal Arts Core Curriculum Course Guideline Template will be implemented to ensure that courses are taught in an effective manner, corresponding to best practices in education;
- Two important academic rules and regulations, mandated by the NEASC standards, were amended as per Title IV of the U.S. Federal Higher Education Act. These rules concern transfer of credits and definition of credit-hour. Also, regulations pertaining to Graduate Teaching Assistantship (GTA) and Graduate Research Assistantship (GRA) were reviewed and applied;
- The National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE), a well-known survey applied across institutions of higher education in the U.S., was introduced and implemented. Results were out in August, 2015. The loop based on these results has been closed;
- Registration rules and regulations were reviewed, and appropriate solutions were identified and implemented; and
- New research policies were drafted. The University Research Committee approved a new comprehensive travel support policy to further support faculty members in attending and/or presenting papers at conferences overseas. Also, a procedure for course release was established in accordance with the pertinent policy. The cost of such releases were included in the 2015-2016 operating budget of the University. Faculty members will benefit from this policy, starting spring 2016.



C. Governance

As part of the planning process, the evolution of NDU into an institution with a clear commitment to 'Shared Governance' was put on track.

The shift toward the 'Shared Governance' helped the BOT become more active. It engaged its members in different committees while continuing to hold biannual meetings. Its Executive Committee held monthly meetings to explore opportunities that would help sustain academic excellence and shape NDU's strategies over the coming years. The other Board Committees, namely the Development and Planning Committee, the Financial Committee, and the Alumni and Students Committee, met regularly with their University counterparts to conduct their specialized work and to coordinate plans and determine the most promising directions to pursue. Within the context of strategic planning, the goals of the *Strategic Plan 2015-2020* were shared and approved by the Board Executive Committee and became the basis for further review by the Steering Committee. Recommendations and suggestions from the Board, through its representative, were incorporated into the document before the Board's Executive Committee approved it on July 28, 2015. Meanwhile, the President, the Chair of the BOT, and the VPAA worked on an action plan with the Association of Governing Boards (AGB) in the U.S. to improve the work and effectiveness of the BOT. The focus of these services is a yearlong plan for the AGB to work with the Board and key administrators of NDU for Board development in support of NDU's efforts for accreditation by the NEASC. This work will continue through a combination of teleconference calls, publications, written materials and presentations, videoconferences, and training and preparation of a consultant who will support this work in Lebanon.

Also, within the shared governance framework, faculty members and students enjoyed ample opportunities to participate in the decision-making process. The new structure enabled them to voice concerns, make suggestions, and propose solutions. Students reported satisfaction with their ability to communicate more effectively with administrators at all levels. As for faculty members, the new bylaws created multiple venues for a better representation and a more active participation at different levels: University, Faculty, and Department. As a result, new policies and procedures to ensure smooth operations were derived. On July 29, 2015, the Special University Policies Committee reported the fulfillment of their committee's mission by presenting to the President the documents that complete the transition from the old bylaws to the new ones: Faculty Structure, Department Structure, and Faculty Policies.

According to the NEASC standards, the BOT must approve all 'policies,' and in that respect the first BOT-approved policy was the *Planning Policy*. Another 17 policies were renewed/updated and listed on the UC agenda in preparation for ultimate approval by the BOT.

Furthermore, issues regarding the operation of the Regional Campuses were identified and approved through the proper channels.



D. Financial Resources

1- Budget Preparation and Financial Forecast

With a student population of 7,522 in 2014-2015 (kindly refer to Table 6 on page 15 for details), NDU continued to expand its financial, physical, technological, and human resources in harmony with its distinctive mission and vision.

- In spring 2014, the University Budget and Planning Committee developed a new *Budget Planning and Procedures* document, which was approved by the President. Accordingly, a significant proportion of the Deans' work, in the course of the year 2013-2014, was the preparation of their individual budgets for the academic year 2014-2015, which were approved by the BOT in summer 2014;

- Throughout the 2014-2015 period, the Budget Office kept Deans abreast of all expenditures by providing them with regular balance reports on their approved individual budgets;

- In March and May 2015, a number of workshops were organized on budget preparation, processing, and expenditures in preparation for the 2015-2016 budget; and

- In March, 2015, the University Council (UC) recommended a general *University Financial Policy*, which was approved by the President on March 30, 2015, and by the BOT in summer 2015. Policies pertaining to budget planning, banking authorization, check signatory requirements, and auditing were included.

Concurrent with the work on the new *Strategic Plan 2015-2020*, a five-year *Financial Plan* (forecast) was drafted. This Plan was based on realistic but conservative assumptions. To ensure that financial reporting is both transparent and consistent, the University fully abided by the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and standards.



2- Revenues and Expenses

In the year 2014-2015, the surplus in the Operating Budget amounted to US\$ 3.492 million (kindly refer to Table 1 for details), with an increase of 12.83%. This surplus is judged by the President's Cabinet as an indicator of the University's overall financial stability.

As for the expenses, a significant proportion was mainly devoted toward improving academic standards in terms of hiring new faculty and staff, updating academic facilities, as well as supporting campus scholarly activities and student aid funds.

On the other hand, an issue of concern on the broader financial context was the extent to which revenues continue to balance with expenses. The five-year financial plan focuses on this issue and includes an investigation of sources other than student's tuition and fees. A strategic advancement plan is set in place to help maintain financial balance.

EXPENSES	2013-2014	2014-2015	Variances	
	In '000s USD	In '000s USD	In '000s USD	In %
Faculty Expenses	23,131.00	24,430.00	1,299.00	5.62%
Personnel Expenses	7,513.00	8,218.00	705.00	9.38%
Activities	1,630.00	1,948.00	318.00	19.51%
President Office	562.00	545.00	(17.00)	-3.02%
SAO	85.00	310.00	225.00	264.71%
Student Aid	7,916.00	9,225.00	1,309.00	16.54%
Maintenance	2,381.00	2,768.00	387.00	16.25%
Supplies, Software and Printing	2,109.00	2,556.00	447.00	21.19%
Operating Expenses	7,594.00	8,108.00	514.00	6.77%
Maintenance Boundaries	750.00	750.00	-	0.00%
Depreciation	9,471.00	9,524.00	53.00	0.56%
Provision and Contingency	3,765.00	575.00	(3,190.00)	-84.73%
Total Expenses	66,907.00	68,957.00	2,050.00	3.06%
OPERATING REVENUES	2013-2014	2014-2015	Variances	
	In '000s USD	In '000s USD	In '000s USD	In %
Tuition Fees	62,852.00	66,377.00	3,525.00	5.61%
Non Academic Revenues	7,150.00	6,072.00	(1,078.00)	-15.08%
Total Revenues	70,002.00	72,449.00	2,447.00	3.50%
Surplus	3,095.00	3,492.00	397.00	12.83%

Table 1 – Actual Statement of Activities as released by the University External Auditor.

3- Projects Involving Fundraising and Partnerships

During the academic year 2014-2015, the BOT members of the Development and Planning Committee met with their University counterparts to discuss fundraising initiatives to solidify NDU's financial aid programs planned for 2015-2020. Some mini-campaigns titled, "Dubai's Gala Dinner, Bench Plaques, and Knights of NDU," were approved and launched.

Tasked with developing partnerships between NDU and outside sponsors to support campus, academic, and/or public events, the Sponsorship Office managed to secure funds for a variety of activities that subtended many themes, such as educational, spiritual/religious, humanitarian, social, cultural, etc. Conferences, workshops, exhibitions, forums, trips, competitions, fairs, orientation sessions, and retreats were sponsored by outside sources.

E. Physical Resources

The need for new buildings, support facilities, and technology infrastructure to better accommodate the increase in student population and to respond to new programs needs, remained an urgent matter. Different projects were undertaken on the Main Campus and Regional Campuses. New constructions, renovations, and upgrades included: The completion of the Chemical Petroleum Facility (CPF), the expansion of Faculty of Business Administration and Economics (FBAE) offices with the aim of improving working conditions, the Risk Assessment project and the apave handicapped accessibility study completed and set for implementation, and the solar panels project. Furthermore, the nursing lab facilities at the Faculty of Nursing and Human Sciences (FNHS) were completed. Also, the work on a new chapel, pastoral offices and four additional offices at the Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS) started and almost completed. On the other hand, two new staff members were recruited at the Physical Plant Office, the Master Plan Committee was formed, and the Procurement Office was established.

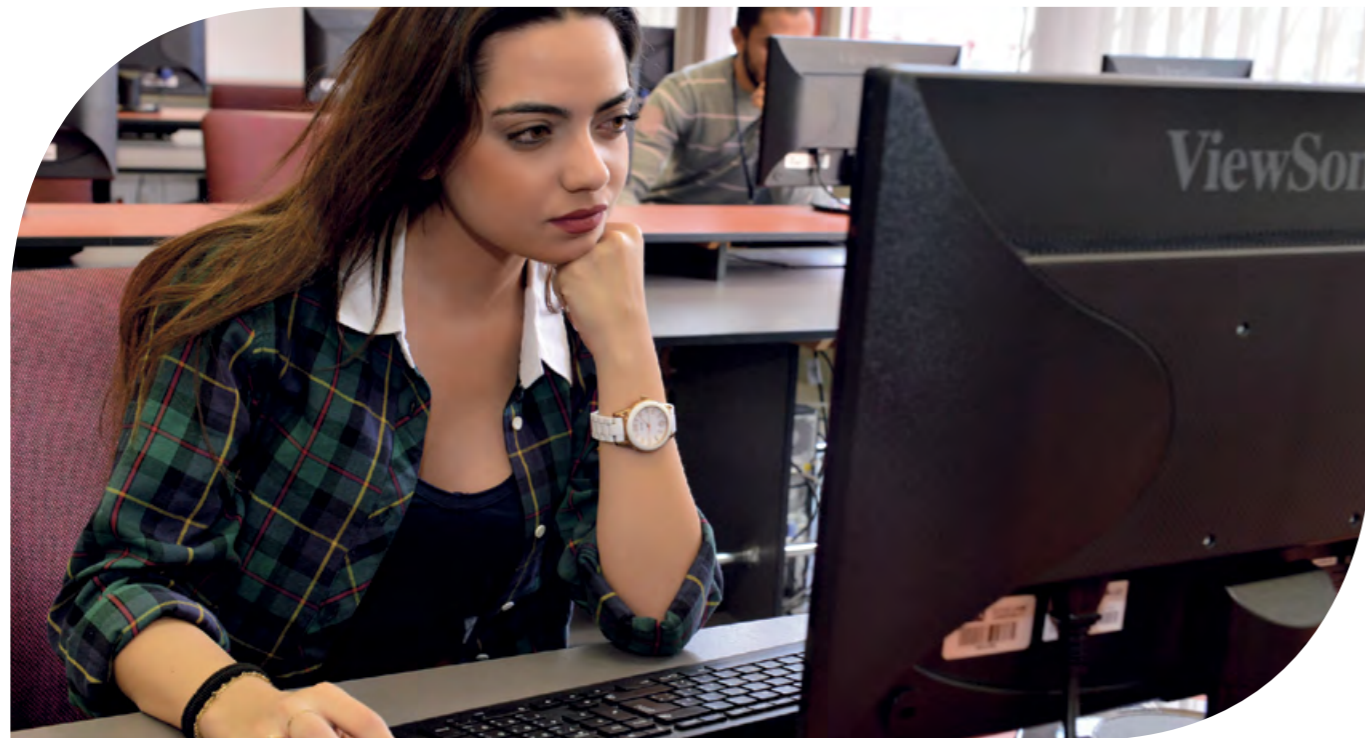
At the North Lebanon Campus (NLC), a major expansion of the physical plant started in August, 2014, laying out a perspective for a much bigger campus, which would nurture the rapid growth in terms of academic programs and student enrollment. By 2016, three primordial blocks will be elevated, comprising a high-tech academic building, an administration building, and an auditorium in addition to a church and a Campus Director Residence with a multitude of underground parking lots and an extensive range of purposed spaces.



F. Technological Resources

Building upon the number of successes in 2013-2014, the Division of Computing Services (DCS) continued the development of IT support systems for a better teaching and learning environment. This included the launch of new application to provide teachers with accessible and up to date teaching information and techniques. NDU acquired an Institution License for Blackboard (Bb) Mobile Learn. The Mobile's new Blackboard application allows students and instructors to view announcements, participate in discussion boards, receive push notifications, update blogs and journals, and check grades. By providing mobile access to Blackboard content, both students and faculty members were able to interact in new and flexible ways.

Students' feedback showed that they appreciate the Mobile Learn, which was seen as an easy, convenient, and efficient, medium of communication between faculty and students. Meanwhile, the e-Learning unit within the DCS held several workshops and offered a series of training sessions on the proper use of Blackboard, as a teaching-learning tool. The majority of faculty members attended those workshops during the year 2014-2015.



G. Library Resources

In 2014-2015, Library Resources witnessed a constant growth, as depicted in Table 2. During 2014-2015, the support for the development of the Library and information resources remained strong with consistent investment in the acquisition of new resources in print and electronic formats. The Libraries continued to utilize professional tools, such as Bowker Book Analysis System (BBAS), Resources for College Libraries (RCL), and Choice Reviews Online to assess the Libraries collections and identify appropriate materials to support the academic and research interests of the NDU community. Faculty members and students at all campuses were strongly encouraged to recommend materials for purchase that support their research, teaching, and educational interests.

Progress was made in expanding the core collection of providing access to at least 40% of the resources recommended by Resources for College Libraries for any of the relevant subject disciplines and/or the collection as a whole. New collection development tools (i.e. OCLC WorldShare Collection Evaluation and ProQuest Intota Assessment) were being investigated to further aid Library staff in identifying and meeting the information resources needs of students, faculty, researchers, and staff.

In order to allow the Libraries to more effectively manage the acquisition and distribution of core resources among the campus Libraries, as of academic year 2014-2015, the Library materials budget for all Library locations was consolidated at the main campus under the management of the University Librarian. The main and NLC Libraries regularly reviewed and removed (weed) print materials, which were outdated, in poor condition, or irrelevant; however, limited weeding was done at the Shouf Campus (SC) Library since it was first established. A systematic and comprehensive weeding project at all campus Libraries, starting summer 2015, and careful consideration of the

distribution of newly acquired core resources among the various campus Libraries based upon the needs of each campus community ensured that each campus Library had an adequate and relevant core collection of print.

Access to e-resources (both subscription-based and perpetual access) continued to expand, and as a LALC member, the Libraries' benefited from significant cost savings. In the academic year 2014-2015, due to renegotiated consortia pricing, the Libraries saved more than US\$36,000 with guaranteed caps on annual renewal increases that were much lower than previous years. Also, after a thorough review of the print serials usage statistics at all three campus Libraries, a large number of print serials subscriptions were either converted to e-only or cancelled outright. The resulting savings, combined with additional budget allocations from the University, allowed the Libraries to add several new e-resources subscriptions and upgrade a number of existing subscriptions in support of both existing and new undergraduate and graduate degree programs. It is expected that over the next few years more print journals will be converted to e-only format, so they will be easily accessible to all members of the NDU community both on- and off-campus. In addition, the Libraries are working to identify appropriate local and international vendors and develop the necessary procedures to launch demand driven acquisition of e-books.

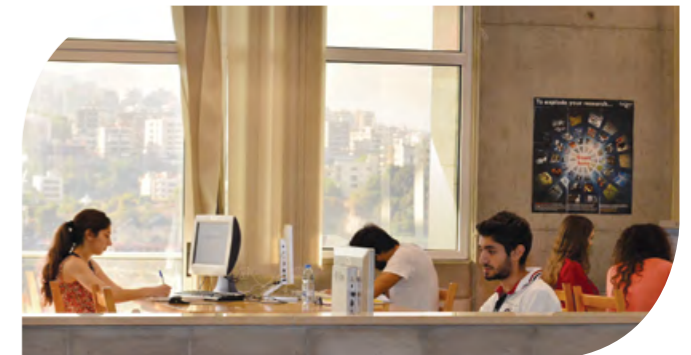
	2013-2014	2014-2015	%
Titles excluding periodicals	94,109	97,783	3.90
e-Book Titles (perpetual access)	38,055	51,146	34.40
e-Book Titles (subscription based access)	211,000	255,820	21.24
e-Books Total	249,055	306,966	23.25
Databases Subscriptions	91	95	4.40
Print Periodical Subscriptions	456	341	-25.21
e-Periodical Subscriptions (perpetual access)	56	78	39.29

Table 2 – As released by the University Librarian on October 6, 2015.

H. Research

CONFERENCE PUBLICATIONS FOR 2010-2015			
Year	# FFM	# Publications	% FFM
10-11	191	52	27.23
11-12	212	36	16.98
12-13	222	48	21.62
13-14	242	38	15.70
14-15	250	33	13.20

Table 3 – Data released by the Assistant Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.



As part of NDU's commitment to achieving high quality research outcomes, the University in 2014-2015 made of research one of its key strategies. Goal III of the Strategic Plan 2015-2020 speaks of research as integral to teaching and learning and essential to knowledge growth. In recent years, the University has invested heavily in building its research profile through financial support, external collaboration and new administrative structures. This has engaged faculty members in research projects, as evidenced by the number of publications in refereed journals and periodicals. From 2010 to 2015, the volume of journal publications has steadily increased in contrast with conference publications. Thus, in general, journal publications have kept up with the increase in the number of full-time faculty members (FFM). This may be attributed to the fact that full-time faculty members have become more mindful of publishing in a journal than in conference proceedings, simply because a journal publication (if in a refereed journal) is more significant than a conference publication (kindly refer to Tables 3 and 4 for details).

JOURNAL PUBLICATIONS FOR 2010-2015			
Year	# FFM	# Publications	% FFM
10-11	191	29	15.18
11-12	212	36	16.98
12-13	222	39	17.57
13-14	242	67	27.69
14-15	250	54	21.60

Table 4 – Data released by the Assistant Vice President for Research and Graduate Studies.



FACULTY RECRUITMENT

NDU's research and teaching mission depends heavily on the quality of Faculty members. Table 5 shows that the University welcomed new full-time faculty members across the seven Faculties. It is anticipated that this rate of growth (3.2%) will continue in the upcoming few years.

In February, 2015, the University Council (UC) unanimously approved the "adjunct faculty" category, which was established to attract accomplished practitioners or scholars of distinction and possessing significant experience in specialized areas, with the intent of benefitting students both at the academic and professional levels. An adjunct faculty member would be employed on a yearly contract basis and would carry a yearly teaching load as determined by mutual agreement between him/ her and the Department/Faculty concerned. NDU believes that adjunct faculty members would enrich the teaching body of the University across all Faculties, giving students the opportunity to take advantage of their knowledge and experience. In addition, the University, as a whole, stands to gain from high-profile adjunct faculty serving as its ambassadors and promoters. Furthermore, adjunct faculty better serve the academic process and the staffing of the course offering than purely part-time faculty. In addition to their qualifications, this improvement lies in the nature of their contract with a predefined course load similar to full-time faculty. In retrospect and in many cases, part-time faculty members are being hired/engaged on short notice, as dictated by the volatility of student enrollment in certain courses; and

On January 28, 2015 the President approved a new *Graduate Student Assistantship Rules and Regulations*. A University Graduate Student Assistantship (UGSA) is offered to a student who is assigned as Graduate Teaching Assistant (GTA) or as Graduate Research Assistant (GRA) by the respective Department. The GTA is introduced in Faculties to help instructors in their teaching duties and/or research activities. A GTA will mainly teach remedial and/or introductory courses whereas a GRA will mainly be engaged in research projects under the supervision of a full-time faculty member. The objective of a UGSA is to enhance research activities and promote NDU's graduate programs. For instance, as of the academic year 2014-2015, two graduate students at the FBAE were employed as GTA. It is also noteworthy to mention that the Department of Physics and Astronomy has been effectively engaging GTAs since 2011, averaging one to two GTAs per year. The UGSA provides graduate students with ample opportunities that help them develop their critical thinking, scientific competence, cultural maturity, and professional and administrative experiences in accordance with the mission, vision, core values, and strategic goals of NDU. Graduate students are requested to provide 20 hours of work per week (similar to a TA or RA in a typical American university) in return for a full tuition waiver and a monthly stipend.

In order to attract and retain current qualified faculty member, a new contractual scheme was established and implemented whereby Associate and Full Professors were issued a three-year rolling contract while newly hired Assistant Professors were issued two-year contracts. The scheme is meant to enhance the status of the University as an "employer of choice" until the tenure status is reestablished.

FULL-TIME FACULTY	2013-2014	2014-2015	%
Total	242	250	3.31
PART-TIME FACULTY			
Total	468	456	-2.56

Table 5 – As released by the Registrar's Office on October 27, 2015.

STUDENT ENROLLMENT

During 2014-2015, the University's total enrollment increased by 1.59 percent from 2013-2014. Table 6 shows that the majority of its growth was due to the increase in undergraduate enrollment at North Lebanon Campus (NLC) and in certain Faculties, namely, Faculty of Humanities (FH), Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS), Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences (FNHS), and Faculty of Law and Political Science (FLPS), as depicted in Table 7.

Students Enrollment (by campus)	2013-2014	2014-2015	%
Main Campus	6,292	6,342	0.79
NLC	692	755	9.10
SC	420	425	1.19
Total	7404	7522	1.59

Table 6 – As released by the Registrar's Office on October 27, 2015.

Students Enrollment (by faculty)	2013-2014	2014-2015	%
Faculty of Business Administration and Economics	2,101	2,062	-1.86
Faculty of Engineering	1,746	1,725	-1.20
Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design	1,395	1,363	-2.29
Faculty of Humanities	878	966	10.02
Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences	723	826	14.25
Faculty of Nursing and Health Sciences	206	227	10.19
Faculty of Law and Political Science	148	171	15.54
(UNDECLARED FACULTY)	203	182	-10.34

Table 7 – As released by the Registrar's Office on October 27, 2015.



PUBLIC AFFAIRS AND COMMUNICATIONS

The Office of Public Affairs and Communications witnessed a major restructuring action in 2014-2015. In addition to its previous activities related to public relations and cultural affairs, the Office added under its umbrella the Design and Brand Guardian Office (DBGO) and launched a new unit: Office of Communication Strategy. As such, in the beginning of 2014-2015, the following units started operating under the supervision of the Vice-President for Public Affairs and Communications (VPPAC): Public Relations and Cultural Affairs, Communication Strategy, Design and Brand Guardian, NDU Press, Alumni Affairs, in addition to the Internship and the Placement offices.

During 2014-2015, the VPPAC's Office launched a variety of activities, such as honoring events, book signing, musical concerts, film festivals, conferences, etc.

On another front, the Public Relations Office managed to process and license the following M.S. degrees from the Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE): Mechanical Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Civil Engineering, Food Safety and Quality Management, and Industrial Chemistry.



ACCREDITATION PROCESS

In the academic year 2014-2015, NDU embarked on a process of evaluating the progress made toward addressing the five NEASC concerns identified by the NEASC Evaluation Team and brought forward to the attention of the University through the Commission on Institution of Higher Education (CIHE) letter, dated November 25, 2013.

- In October 2014, NDU formed a Steering Committee and 13 sub-committees to work on the *Biennial Report*. The NEASC-CIHE "Procedures for the Biennial Review of Candidate Status" guided the work. Each of the 13 committees was responsible for updating the *Candidacy Report 2013*, and reporting on the progress made, guided by the respective NEASC standard. One committee tackled the NEASC Standards 1 and 3, while four separate committees tackled Standard 4, given its size. Moreover, the five NEASC concerns were assigned among the committees, according to their subject matter;

- In the course of 2014-2015, the work of the Steering Committee and sub-committees was divided into three phases. Phase 1 was dedicated to fact-finding; Phase 2 was dedicated to analyzing the gathered information, updating the projections of the *Candidacy Report 2013* and producing new ones as appropriate; and Phase 3 was dedicated to writing multiple versions of this report, including a final draft in addition to design and printing; and

- In summer 2015, the *Biennial Report* was submitted to the CIHE, along with relevant Preface, Introduction, Appendices, and supporting documents.



ANTICIPATING FUTURE CHALLENGES

NDU has continuously looked toward the future striving to develop as an institution whose vision is to bring about positive changes aimed at transforming students' lives through quality education. This would ultimately help transform the community at large.

In a message titled, "*Anticipating Future Challenges*," and published in the *NDU e-Chronicle*, NDU President Father W. Moussa said,

"We take pride in steadily pursuing our distinctive and challenging mission to provide students with quality education destined to enhance not only their vocational skills in a globalizing world but also the social, moral, spiritual, and behavioral values attributed to those skills with a liberal learning and professional education environment. As a University of the Third Millennium, we have strived to identify our goals and objectives in a world where the survival of many universities is increasingly threatened by economics and technology, which put lots of pressure on the delivery of higher education. To meet those immediate needs and challenges, we continue to expand in different directions. With regards to internationalization, our most distinctive achievements include the notable advances we have made in the accreditation process and the resounding successes of our various scholarly activities, scientific conferences, and international cooperative links."

In the future, NDU's both undergraduate and graduate students will require a broader educational perspective. Their lives and their careers will increasingly be shaped by global influences of ever greater complexity. Accordingly, the need to embrace a 'sustainable' education that nurtures and consolidates a holistic learning experience, and social responsibility and service is inevitable. Today, NDU's community looks back over the accomplishments of 2014-2015 with a sense of pride and gratitude. Administrators, faculty, students, and staff feel more determined to continue building the legacy of commitment and dedication for many years to come.



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