

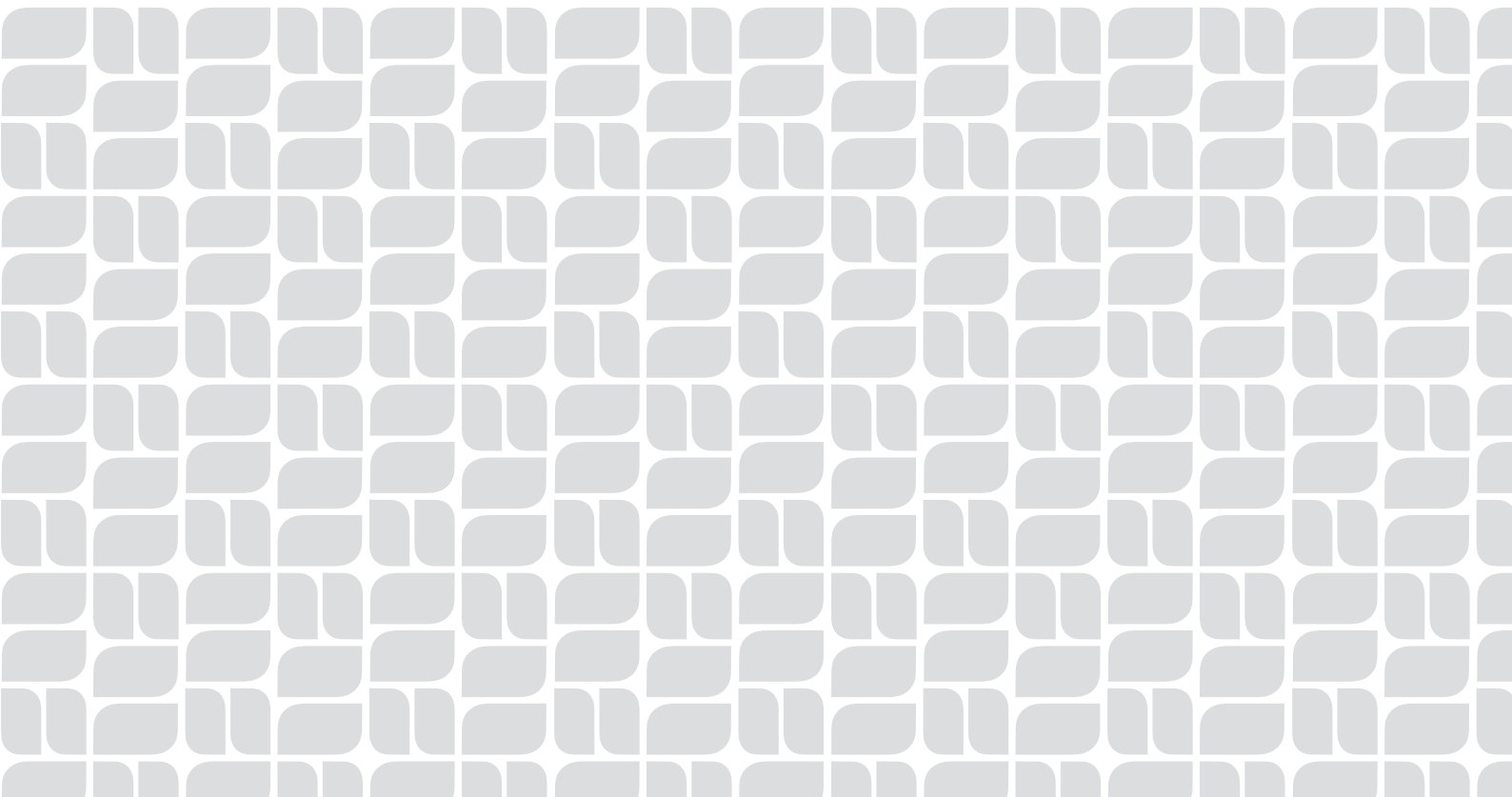
ANNUAL REPORT | 2012-2013

OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This year's Annual Report is themed "quality assurance," bifurcated into accreditation and subsequent institution-wide reforms, as guided by the University's Mission, which articulates the provision of "...comprehensive quality education that fosters excellence in scholarship." A prefatory note to this report is the decision undertaken by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) to grant Notre Dame University-Louaize (NDU) Candidacy for accreditation status, as of April 17, 2013. NDU is privileged to receive such recognition, an outcome of which is the opening of new prospects and opportunities to implement the changes spelled out in the self-study and to turn areas booked for reform into long-lasting University strengths.

In 2013, we wrote the self-study, the initial phases of which entailed data mining and the revision of a trove of evidence to substantiate our description and appraisal of NDU against the 11 Standards for Accreditation, as set by NEASC. The

outcome of the self-study has implications on our future plans geared toward instigating institution-wide reforms based on 74 evidence-based projections. From April 14-17, 2013, a team of reviewers from the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of NEASC conducted a comprehensive assessment of NDU. The three-day visit was concluded with an Exit Report, which provided us with valuable advice for continued improvement while commending the University on its significant achievements since its inception in 1987.

In keeping pace with recent international trends in quality assurance, NDU has made substantial progress in the realm of quality assurance through preparing for programmatic accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) and the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET), two accrediting agencies recognized by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) in the United States of America. The University also participated in local and regional quality assurance projects, which were redolent of the growing culture of quality on Campus.

I am proud to state that in its 27-years existence, NDU has expanded rapidly while working hard to align its degree programs and academic work with international standards of quality assurance and best practices in American higher education. All these achievements took place against a backdrop of continuing and abominable schisms, wreaking havoc in both Lebanon and across the Middle East.

As NDU continues to pursue a dynamic process of continuous improvement through self-evaluation, we aspire to achieve a well-deserved reputation for excellence in our degree programs, services, and various academic functions. In general, all our quality assurance endeavors throughout the year clearly indicate our progress and the extent to which we remain true to our Mission so that we can plan better for the future ahead.



Rev. Fr. WALID MOUSSA, S.T.D.
President

THE SELF-STUDY AND SUBSEQUENT REFORMS AT GLANCE

The self-study is the product of a continuous process that has spanned seven years of extensive preparations for accreditation accompanied by institution-wide reforms undertaken on a number of fronts. The table below shows the trajectory of accreditation from its inception in 2006 to the candidacy status granted to the University in 2013.

Important Trajectories	Dates	Actions Taken
Started in earnest with President Fr. Walid Moussa	October, 2006	President announced his decision to engage NDU in preparing for accreditation by NEASC.
President formed the first accreditation steering committee	October, 2006	Prepare for accreditation and draw a strategic plan for NDU.
First Eligibility Report	August 13, 2007	First draft submitted to NEASC.
Preliminary visit to NDU by the Director of the Commission	January 7-9, 2008	To increase communication between NDU and the Commission and to assess the University's ability to meet the requirements of affiliation.
NDU officially submitted its Eligibility Report to NEASC	January 14, 2010	The report responded to 21 Eligibility Requirements.
NEASC assessment visit	June 14 and 19, 2010	First comprehensive eligibility visit.
Feedback of the eligibility Visit	August 2010	Commission provided NDU with a detailed report and feedback, evaluating the performance and achievements of the University in its preparation for institutional accreditation.
Outcome of the visit	November 10, 2010	"...subject to a review of an audit conducted in accordance with U.S. accounting standards for non-profit institutions and a demonstration that the institution's president is appointed by the University's Board of Trustees, Notre Dame University-Louaize will be declared eligible to apply for candidacy for accreditation."
Reforms undertaken by NDU	December , 10 2012	Reforms in financial reporting, audit, and governance regarding electing the president.
Response by NEASC to the reforms undertaken by NDU	March 23, 2012	"...the information submitted by NDU is accepted and the University be approved to apply for candidacy for accreditation."
Self-study	April 2011-January, 2013	NDU wrote the self-study and produced 74 binding projects for implementation.
Submitting the self-study	February 25, 2013	NDU's official submission of the self-study.
Comprehensive assessment by NEASC	April 14-17, 2013	Serially verified the claims spelled out in the self-study through interviews, assessment of the trove of evidence provided by NDU.
Exit Report	April 17, 2013	Detailed results of the visit and outcome assessment of each standard with recommendations for NDU.
Granting NDU Candidacy, as of April 17, 2013	December 6, 2013	After deliberations with President Fr. Walid Moussa in Boston on September 19, 2013.



These developments immediately attest to the University's leadership resolve to achieve accreditation as an international recognition of meeting or exceeding quality standards in American higher education. From April 2011 to January 2013, NDU conducted a comprehensive self-evaluation and wrote a self-study report that outlined the future trajectory of the University. Save the experience of writing the Eligibility Report in 2007 through 2010, conducting a university-wide collaborative project as comprehensive as the self-study, which requires thoughtful planning, was a relatively new endeavor. As new entrants to the arena of accreditation, more experience had to be developed and sculpted for conducting a self-study that measures the performance of the University in a scientific and candid way against a set of robust standards.

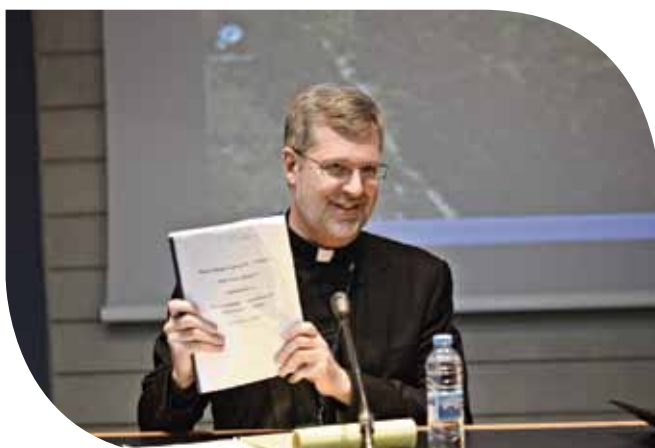
From the onset, NDU has realized that failure to regularly discuss and plan for the self-study would cast blight on the accreditation effort. As such, early preparations for the self-study were planned to capture the essence of the quality assurance culture and to involve the entire community in the self-evaluation, the initial phases of which entailed preparing the community to ensure transparency in the process and produce an evidence-based document based on data mining, analysis, and honest evaluations of the University's strengths and weaknesses. In the words of a faculty member, who said during the early preparatory phase of the self-study, "...it has to be a group effort if we are to be successful and produce a self-study that will help us assess where we are today and where we are going, and it has to be evidence-based and honest."

Before commencing on the self-study process, the NDU community was made aware that accreditation, according to the Commission, is voluntary, self-regulatory, and based on the peer review process, as opposed to European quality assurance undertaken by governmental bodies or government-initiated agencies. To promote awareness about accreditation across the University, a series of orientation sessions were delivered to students, faculty members (full-time and part-time), staff members, and senior administrators as well as to monks of the Maronite Order of the Holy Virgin Mary (MMO), who serve on Campus. These orientation sessions sought to familiarize the community with the nature of accreditation, phases, and requirements, while underscoring the importance of building an evidentiary base for addressing each of the 11 Standards for Accreditation.

During the drafting of the self-study in 2012, the Steering Committee held regular meetings where chairpersons of subcommittees shared the results of data gathering activities and reported progress made in addressing each of the 11 standards. In June 5, 2012, Dr. Barbra Brittingham, President and Executive Director of the Commission of Institutions of Higher Education (CIHE) of NEASC, paid her second visit to NDU to support the various subcommittees tasked with writing the self-study and to guide them through their work. This visit took place four years after the first visit in 2008, as a sign of the Commission's recognition of NDU's determination to meet the requirements of accreditation, which, according to Dr. Brittingham, would result in the following outcomes:

- to provide opportunity for ongoing systematic process of self-evaluation and improvement;
- to become a part of a larger educational community;
- to improve decision-making;
- to assure quality to students, faculty members, staff, and the community at large;
- to facilitate easier transfer of academic credit.

At the University level, the self-study process provided numerous opportunities to faculty members, staff, students, members from the BOT, and many others to learn from each others' experiences, subscribe to evidence as a basis for verifying claims, share information about the University, and set out evidence-based plans for institutional improvement at all levels.



Submitting the Self-Study

The self-study calendar posted on the University's website designated February, 2013, as the date for submitting the self-study to the Commission. Toward the end of November, 2012, all subcommittees submitted their full reports to the self-study coordinator who pieced together the self-study chapters into a coherent first draft document. The self-study consultant reviewed the first draft before handing it over to the Commission in December, 2012, for initial review and feedback.

Revising the Self-Study

After receiving feedback from the Commission, the Executive Accreditation Committee (EAC) held in January, 2013, a series of meetings followed by a five-day retreat outside the University premises to address the concerns submitted by the Commission and amend the self-study accordingly. Revision and editing sought to ensure consistency of data across the 11 standards and remove duplication given the existing overlapping areas across standards. The modified version of the self-study was submitted to a freelance English editor at NDU for review. The polished version of the self-study was further reviewed by the EAC. In addition, all the projections excerpted from the self-study were entered into a spreadsheet in order to re-schedule dates of implementation, remove overlapping projections, and ensure consistency during the implementation process. The EAC also developed a list of appendices for every standard and stored each in a respective folder for access by the NEASC's visiting team. The self-study document identified strengths and weaknesses, and was able to capture a number of areas booked for future reform as the institution continues to pursue its endeavor toward achieving full institutional accreditation by NEASC. In total, 74 projections were extricated from the 11 standards. In accordance with the timeline outlined in the calendar, the University submitted its self-study to NEASC on February 25, 2013, i.e. six weeks before the NEASC's comprehensive assessment of the University.

Preparing for the Comprehensive Assessment

Rev. Dennis Holtschneider, CM, and President of DePaul University in the United States of America who had been appointed as Chair of the visiting team, paid an exploratory visit to NDU in October, 2012, where he met on the Main Campus with the University President, Fr. Walid Moussa, members from administrative leadership, a trustee, the Steering Committee for the self-study, and representative groups of deans, students and Faculty. In addition, he met the Superior General of the MMO Abbot Boutros Tarabay. During his visit, an agreement was reached on all the necessary aspects of the team's visit.

The EAC started extensive logistical preparations for the visit by a group of renowned academics in American higher education, who have volunteered to guide NDU toward achieving accreditation.

The EAC set out a provisional agenda for the visiting team, which was further negotiated with the Chair of the team. The agenda arranged for meetings with individuals and groups drawn from all the constituencies at the University, the objective of which was to receive as much feedback as possible from the assessment visit. Logistical preparations for the visit entailed furnishing the accreditation workrooms at the Main Campus and at the two regional Campuses with needed evidence, in addition to equipping the Campuses with wireless internet access, computers, and wireless printing facilities. The accreditation workrooms were arranged to provide a comfortable working environment for the visiting team. To further engage the community in the visit, the EAC delivered a series of presentations across all Campuses, detailing the purpose of the assessment and discussing each of the standards addressed in the self-study. In addition, the EAC posted an animated countdown timer as a sequence of backward counting to indicate the time remaining for the comprehensive assessment.



The Visit

The visit took place from April 14-17, 2013, with an eight-person team consisting of, in addition to Rev. Holtschneider:

- Ms. Rebecca Brodigan, VP institutional Planning and Assessment, Bowdoin College, ME;
- Dr. John Burns, Associate Vice Provost Undergraduate Academic Affairs, Boston College, MA;
- Dr. David Fedo, Former Executive Director and Visiting Scholar, Wheelock College Center for International Education, leadership and Innovation, Singapore, Wheelock College, MA;
- Mr. Robert Fitzpatrick, Professor and Emerging Technologies Librarian, Plymouth State University, NH;
- Dr. Jill Reich, Professor of Psychology, Bates College, ME;
- Mr. Fouad Sayess, Vice President of Finance, American University in Cairo, Egypt;
- Dr. Elizabeth Tobin, Dean of the College, Vice President of Academic Affairs, Illinois College, IL.

The Commission specifically selected members of the visiting team — who come from a wide range of disciplinary backgrounds and are equipped with a proven track record of multilayered experiences in higher education — to share their assessment outcome with NDU and to assist the Commission in making a decision about the University's accreditation status.

NDU received the visiting team as special guests. Upon arrival, each member was given a small package, containing a schedule, Campus map, nametags, an index of documents available in the workroom, a key to the workroom, instructions for wireless internet access, a personal mobile phone, and the names and telephone numbers of individuals and units tasked with lending support to them. A respite on Saturday, April 13, 2013, was arranged to give the visiting team an opportunity to explore historical ruins and learn more about Lebanese culture. The official visit commenced on Sunday, April 14, 2013, with a welcome address delivered by the President, who acknowledged the team's courageous decision to visit Lebanon despite the unstable political and security climate at the time. The visiting team was later invited to watch a short documentary, showing snapshots and visual images of Lebanon's impressive historical ruins and picturesque natural beauty. A welcome dinner held at the Le Royal Hotels & Resorts followed the screening where the visiting team met members from the NDU community.





The Comprehensive Assessment

The comprehensive assessment of NDU took place at the Main Campus and at the two regional Campuses in the North and Shouf simultaneously. The visiting team conducted a comprehensive evaluation of the University and verified the claims spelled out in the self-study by conducting interviews with students, members from the BOT, faculty members, and members from the senior management, alumni, and staff. In addition, the team consulted the accreditation workroom and examined the trove of evidence NDU had prepared before the visit. Members of the visiting team held meetings at the workroom to share observations and write the Exit Report.

The visit was concluded on April 17, 2013, with a feedback Exit Report communicated by Fr. Dennis Holtschneider to the University Council, Accreditation Steering Committee, and the EAC in Abu Khater Auditorium. Attendees were made aware that the Exit Report was not final given that the official Exit Report is yet to be finalized.

During the Exit Report meeting, the Chair of the visiting team indicated repeatedly to the content of his team members with NDU. He further said that NDU had done a superb job in the self-study report and addressed issues transparently. As Chair of the visiting team, Fr. Holtschneider pointed out suggestions for improvement as shown in the box below.

- “Decision-making at NDU works for small universities rather than for growing universities.” He described this as a model situation of a growing university;
- “The visiting team admires greatly your ambitions to establish new Faculties and facilities” and he noted how NDU funded these developments. He suggested, however, that multi-year planning is needed to accompany the growth of the University. “You can see how that will be sustainable,” he said.
- No substantial progress has been made in recruiting American employees;
- Short-term contracts are not successfully good for recruitment;
- The University’s focus on increasing Faculty research productivity is ambitious. The NEASC accredits both research and non-research universities. Sufficient support for research is needed if NDU has chosen to become a research University;
- The BOT Constitution and By-laws must be approved;
- The BOT should operate more independently.

Fr. Holtschneider further summarized the strengths of NDU as follows:

- Faculty and staff love the University;
- NDU is well served by the President and the MMO. The self-study indicated that the MMO is going to give more voice to the BOT;
- NDU has progressed significantly in a short time;
- Policies and procedures function professionally on Campus;
- NDU has invested heavily in accreditation.

Following the Exit Report, the visiting team held meetings to gather the various sections written by individual team members and to review their response to certain standards. The visit was followed by a draft Exit Report to NDU to check for factual inconsistencies. The final official report was formally received in June, 2013, and was posted on the NDU internal website for the entire community to read. The report detailed the outcome of the visit and catalogued a list of strengths and weaknesses that the University would need to address as it continues to pursue its efforts toward accreditation. The report concluded that NDU has been remarkably

effective and stable in the midst of a complex political context, describing the University as a dynamic organization, characterized in recent years by growth of enrollment, programs, and academic quality, and professionalization of its operations, procedures, and policies. Among other things, the report identified key issues and concerns related to planning, evaluation, governance, and management gaps that NDU would need to address through multiyear strategic planning.

Based on the Commission's recommendations alongside the projections spelled out in the self-study, the clear need to instigate University-wide reforms necessitated a series of actions to strategize the University's work for achieving both short-and long-term institutional goals, and corollary objectives and action plans. To this end, the University submitted to the Commission a report on December 5, 2013, detailing progress made thus far in addressing immediate concerns raised by the Commission in governance and planning. Main highlights excerpted from the progress report are presented in the sections set forth.

Constitution and By-laws

Following the comprehensive assessment of NDU by the Commission, an important step undertaken by the University was to amend its structure of governance. The University approved the amended By-laws and took note of the amended Constitution on September 17, 2013. Consequently, the Board of Trustees (BOT) amended and approved the University Constitution and By-laws on October 21, 2013.

The Retreat

As a follow-up to the self-study, a three-day summer retreat was held between July 31 and August 2, 2013, and involved key senior management members. The purpose of the retreat was to outline a road map for strategizing the University's work for the next academic year (2013-2014) and beyond, as per:

- (i) the self-study binding projections;
- (ii) the need to revise and update the strategic plan of 2007-2012 in line with the University's emerging needs and the self-study projections.

The retreat also focused on discussing procedures for implementing the modified University By-laws after being approved by the bodies concerned, emphasizing a prioritized list of policies. The retreat addressed key issues related to budgeting, Faculties' short- and long-term plans in areas vital to meeting the accreditation standards such as program review, assessment of student learning outcomes, and faculty personnel issues (contracts, promotion, and recruitment). A notable recommendation set out during the retreat was the decision to develop a University-wide strategic plan for 2014-2019, representing a trajectory for the future reform endeavors to which NDU is committed. These reforms were buttressed by engaging the community with programmatic accreditation and subsequent curricula revisions and changes, which will be discussed, in the chapters that follow.



PROGRAMMATIC ACCREDITATION

In the context of institutional accreditation pursued by the University since 2006, NDU is committed to providing learning opportunities and corollary support services and facilities for its students to develop the knowledge, skills, competencies, and attitudes needed to prosper in the workplace and to become lifelong learners. Further, as NDU aspires to be a leading provider of education in Lebanon and the region at both the institutional and programmatic levels, it has recently expanded burgeoning accreditation efforts on Campus to encompass professional degree programs. A number of milestones were reached during the academic year 2012-2013 in preparing for programmatic accreditation, the purpose of which was to align teaching and learning with international standards of quality assurance in higher education.

The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB)

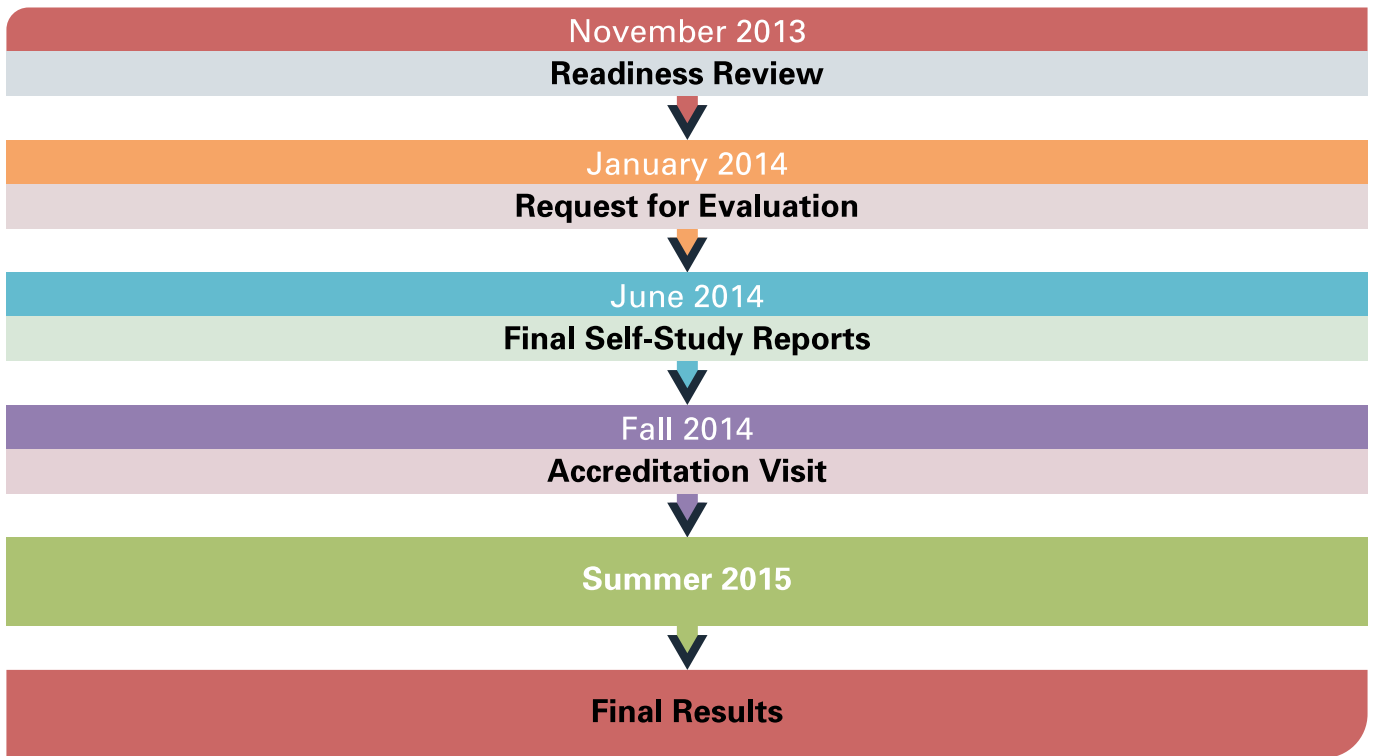
The Faculty of Business Administration, and Economics (FBAE) has already devised plans to obtain full accreditation by AACSB, whose aim is to advance quality management education worldwide by spreading awareness about best industry practices and requiring all members to abide by its standards at three different levels: Strategic planning and innovation, participants (Faculty, staff, and students), and assurance of learning. As a first step toward achieving accreditation, the FBAE submitted successfully its membership application in June, 2013, and obtained membership in July, 2013. As a result, the FBAE is now one of a handful of business schools in Lebanon to enjoy membership.

As the Faculty continues to prepare for programmatic accreditation, it has already planned to submit an Eligibility Report in 2013-2014. The FBAE has started a revision of approaches to pedagogy, program planning, and design to enhance the academic environment and align programs with the standards of AACSB in tandem. As a result, the existing MBA program was redesigned to include the U.S. Educational Testing Service (ETS) topics, as well as to meet the AACSB expectations with respect to program learning outcomes. This has resulted in a new version of learning outcomes, which have a clear identity, i.e. to provide "aspiring candidates, of various professional and educational backgrounds, with a set of theoretical knowledge and technical skills allowing them to make informed business decisions in a socially responsible manner" according to the MBA Mission. Consequently, all courses were conceived in a manner to include qualitative and quantitative elements of socially responsible decision-making, thus conforming to the program, the Faculty and the University's Mission, Vision, and Core Values.

The Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET)

Coterminous with programmatic accreditation pursued by the FBAE, extensive preparations for programmatic accreditation by the Faculty of Engineering (FE) took place in 2012-2013. ABET accreditation is synonymous of quality control and quality engineering education and is considered as one of the best accreditation systems available worldwide for engineering education. Programmatic accreditation will ease the relations with sister institutions worldwide and the main beneficiaries of students and graduates, who will be able to secure better positions in both industry and academia worldwide.

The various departments at FE have been actively working to prepare self-study reports of programs over the past two years. Preparations for the self-study reports have reached an advanced stage. In line with this, the FE applied on November 1, 2013, for the Readiness Review of ABET or the first step in the ABET process. The outcomes of the review step are expected in the second half of December. Based on the anticipated positive outcome of the assessment, as expected, the Faculty will pursue its plans as scheduled. The target date is Fall 2014 provided that the license is obtained in time from the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education (MEHE). The FE has set out a timetable for programmatic accreditation as follows:



Another notable landmark undertaken in the realm of programmatic accreditation during the year was in the decision of the Faculty of Natural and Applied Sciences (FNAS) to subject Computer Science majors to accreditation by ABET.

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Summary

Programmatic accreditation pursued in earnest by the FBAE and the FE seeks to provide a supportive learning environment for students and faculty members through focusing on the quality of programs, pedagogy, and outcomes. These are achieved through collaborative work engaging faculty members, administrators, staff, and students. The aim of which is to foster student-centered approach to teaching, and learning as measured through establishing learning outcomes that align with the University's Mission. Ultimately, the University's endeavors geared toward institutional and programmatic accreditation reflect is aspiration to become a leading University in Lebanon and the region that prides itself on being a sector leader for promoting excellence and high quality teaching, research, and service.



EXPANDING THE UNIVERSITY'S ROLE IN THE REALM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

NDU President Father Walid Moussa has incessantly professed in meetings and speeches delivered to the community the need to transform NDU into a sector leader in the realm of quality assurance in higher education. Against this backdrop, the President ceaselessly encourages the NDU community to participate in quality assurance initiatives and projects at local, regional, and international levels in which he has either overseen such as the Tempus-funded project titled, "Toward the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency (TLQAA)," or has personally participated such as the successive annual meetings of NEASC, and other conferences organized by renowned international bodies such as the International Association of Universities (IAU), to mention but a few.



Toward the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency (TLQAA)

NDU has actively participated in a two-year Tempus-funded project titled, "Toward the Lebanese Quality Assurance Agency (TLQAA)," which is based on a recent law proposed for the establishment of a quality assurance agency for higher educational institutions in Lebanon. NDU's participation in the TLQAA involved the development of the building blocks of a Lebanese quality assurance agency, the piloting, which entailed writing a self-study and participating in team visits to other universities, and the production of a book detailing the project from inception to conclusion. As part of NDU's involvement in the project, a team from NDU, comprising three faculty members and a student received training in European quality assurance agencies in 2013, the aim of which was to prepare reviewers from Lebanon to undertake future evaluation of peer higher educational institutions based on 9 standards set out by the TLQAA. NDU was selected after submitting a self-study report addressing the standard of Teaching and Learning to participate in a pilot-study alongside partnering higher educational institutions in Lebanon and participants from European quality assurance agencies as observers. The pilot-study involving self-evaluation, to which NDU is devoted, has represented a litmus test for evaluating the scope of work, policies, procedures, and standards of the soon-to-be-established quality assurance agency for Lebanon.

The pilot evaluation took place at NDU from July 2-4, 2013, i.e. about two months after the comprehensive assessment of NDU undertaken by NEASC. The self-study — which spanned 18 months of institution-wide assessment — was used in part to address the TLQAA's proposed standard on Teaching and Learning. The self-study for TLQAA sought to examine the degree to which teaching and learning effectiveness at NDU is a product of the broader institutional governance and planning frameworks, and support facilities. The self-study was furnished with corroborating multifarious evidence with the understanding that this evidence serves an internal purpose beyond accreditation.

Before the assessment visit, faculty members and the senior management were asked to participate in the pilot-study by meeting with the visiting team, which comprises evaluators from partnering institutions of higher education in Lebanon. During the visit, the team met administrators, deans, faculty members, students, and academic support unit officers to verify claims spelled out in the pilot self-study. The visit was concluded by a report, detailing the strengths of teaching and learning at the University while suggesting areas booked for reform.

Quality Measures in Higher Education

During the academic year 2012-2013, NDU participated in a comprehensive regional study concerned with addressing quality issues in higher education in the Arab countries at both programmatic (education, political sciences, engineering, and business administration) and institutional levels. The project yielded a voluminous body of work (899 pages) detailing 45 case studies of institutions and programs in the Arab region. Two faculty members from NDU wrote three chapters of which one dealt with quality measures in education programs, one on institution, and a third developed indigenized standards for measuring quality in higher education at both programmatic and institutional levels. Participating countries in the project adopted these standards to measure the quality of programs and institutions in their higher educational contexts.



Participating in the NEASC's Annual Meeting

NDU has participated in the NEASC's successive annual meetings seven years in a row in which immense opportunities for learning from the culture of American institutions of higher education are provided. A delegate chaired by the President and comprising one faculty member and four senior administrators participated in the annual meeting from December 5-7, 2013, in Boston, U.S.A. The University's participation in the meeting indicated its commitment to accreditation and contribution to the internationalization process of higher education. A remarkable highlight of the meeting was the recognition made by presidents and senior administrators in American institutions of higher education as to what one described as: "Your University's staunch commitment to accreditation and the significant progress it has made so far seeking in accreditation...we are following up your progress."

Summary

NDU has participated in a number of initiatives and projects aimed at evaluating the quality of institutions and programs. NDU's dynamic participation in quality assurance activities reflect a commitment to instilling and fostering a culture of quality in higher education, i.e. comprehensive, systematic, candid, and transparent, which guides the University in efforts to improve education and outcomes.



ALIGNING ACADEMIC INITIATIVES WITH QUALITY ASSURANCE

Strategic planning, program reviews, and articulating Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) at program and course levels are ubiquitous in accreditation standards set out by accreditation and quality assurance agencies. The two self-studies conducted by NDU during the academic year 2012-2013 meant to support ongoing institutionalized self-evaluation and improvement of teaching and learning. Moreover, preparations undertaken for programmatic accreditation and other quality assurance initiatives pursued by the University in recent years have been instrumental in informing Faculties and departments about the importance of systematic assessment as well as about revising existing courses and degree programs in tandem. The sections set forth detail Faculties' work in designing new degree programs, articulating learning outcomes, and revising existing curricula.

New Degree Programs

In recent years, there has been increased interest in MS degrees. Many programs related to business studies have been developed and launched, particularly in the area of Finance. This tendency emanates from the fact that these programs help to create and sustain a competitive edge in the market place through differentiation and growth. In order to be able to answer market needs and effectively face the growing competition in the marketplace, the FBAE decided to offer high caliber MS specializations, starting with an MS in Financial Risk Management. This structured program is closely related to the U.S. Financial Risk Manager (FRM®) professional certificate that would enable our students to sit for the FRM exam. Much emphasis is placed on learning outcomes and the expected qualities and skills of the graduates. This program was successfully launched in Fall 2013 after it had been approved by the different University's committees and the MEHE. In addition, the FNAS launched the Master Program in Financial Mathematics in Fall 2013 and received the License for the Master Program in Actuarial Sciences. The Program is expected to launch in Fall 2014.

Revising Existing Curricula

During the academic year 2012-2013 the Faculty of Architecture, Art and Design (FAAD) undertook various activities related to curriculum development and enhancement. The departments of Architecture, Art and Design assessed the different programs of the majors offered achieving the following outcomes:

The Master of Architecture in Landscape Urbanism was restructured, and the title was changed into Master of Architecture in Environmental and Urban Planning, to translate exactly as the license by the MEHE. The restructuring included the ethos of the program and accordingly the courses and courses contents. Moreover, the Bachelor of Architecture, Bachelor of Art in Interior Design, and Bachelor of Art in Fashion Design programs were also assessed and minor changes were applied while the Bachelor of Art in decorative Arts and Crafts was restructured.

Learning Outcomes

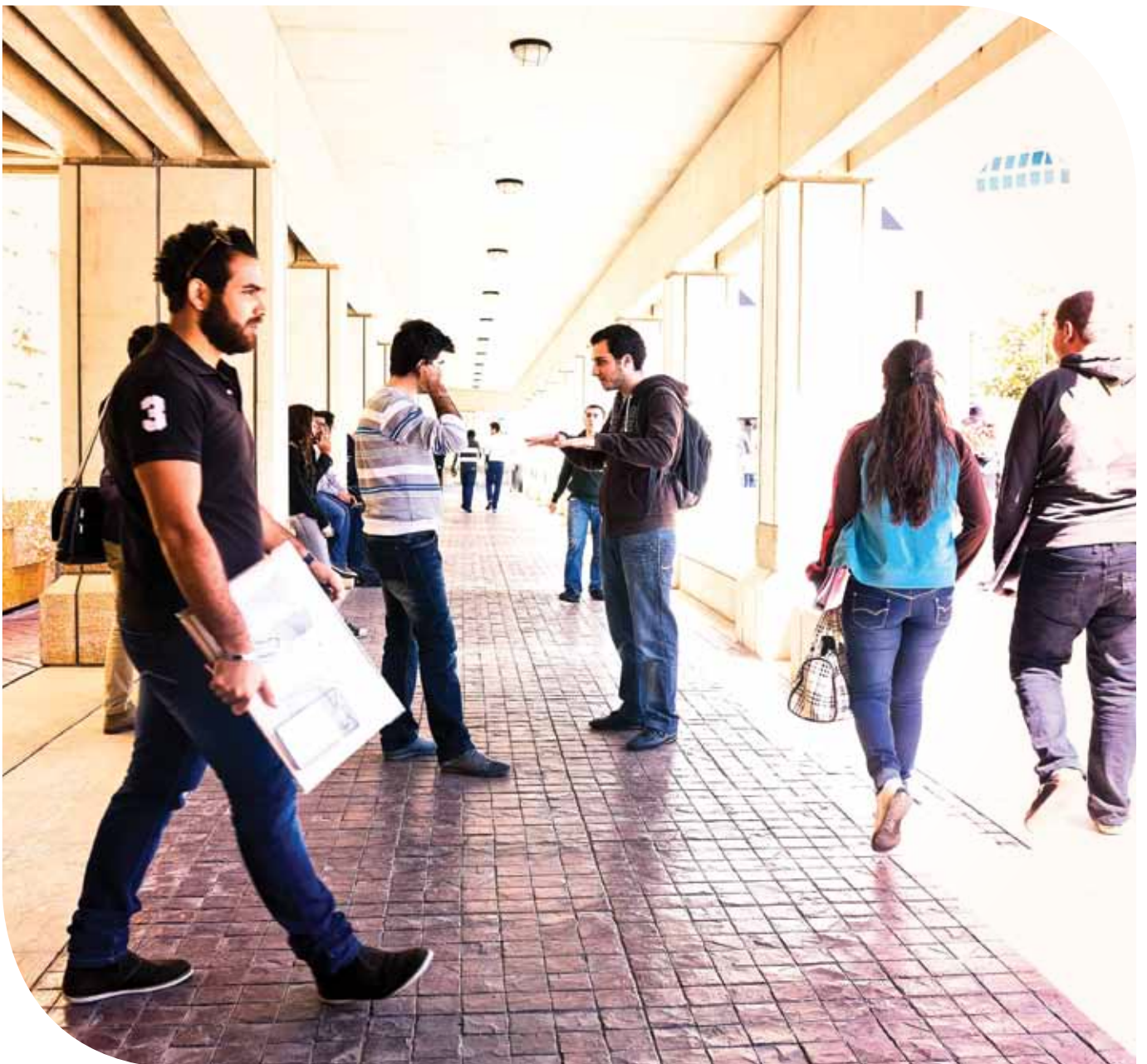
The ad-hoc committee for the coordination of the Architectural Design course sequence at the FAAD has completed developing the courses' description, the learning outcomes, content of courses and types of projects and the different coordinators started implementing the decisions. The FBAE articulated and developed intended learning outcomes (ILO) for each course in each program during the academic year 2012-2013. In addition, a Matrix system clarifying the relationship between each program learning objectives and its courses intended learning outcomes was established. An electronic Course Notebook relating the course intended learning outcomes with the program learning objectives as well as connecting the ILOs to appropriate assessment tools following Bloom's revised Taxonomy was established. This notebook also provides an electronic mechanism for measuring the achievement of ILOs and programs objectives (direct method). Indirect methods of assessment are being developed with the intention to implement them in spring 2013-2014. Also during the year, Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) were reviewed in all undergraduate and graduate programs in the Faculty of Humanities (FH). Subsequently, Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs) were modified in all the courses in the BA Education program to match the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs). In future syllabi, these CLOs will be clearly delineated and student assessment will include the measurement of specific outcomes in all courses offered. This will enable faculty members to track student learning in order to address any gaps that become evident and to ensure that the targets are met to a satisfactory level.

For the first time, graduating students were asked to complete an Exit Survey that included questions related to the PLOs. The data received is still small at this stage, but it is the start of an initiative to collect data on the PLOs so that we may begin a review cycle starting in Summer 2014. It will be another two to three years, however, before such data will be more reliable to allow for current students to complete the program.

Articulating learning outcomes at course and program levels is now part and parcel of the quality assurance culture that all Faculties and regional campuses uniformly adhere to in their efforts to provide quality education to students.

Other Activities

The University was able to register a number of important achievements in research output during the academic year 2012-2013. In addition, faculty members participated in local, regional and international conferences in their fields of specialty and contributed generously to the ongoing academic developmental work in their respective Faculties. Throughout the year faculty members across the University have carefully designed and implemented learning activities and participated in workshops and training sessions that promote student-oriented learning measured through rubrics and specified learning outcomes at the program and course levels to enhance quality in education through adhering to international quality standards in higher education. In addition, all Faculties, units, and departments on Campus and at the two regional Campuses have continued with their community service activities that bear witness to the University's distinctive role in the community it serves.



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

Against a backdrop of political and economic problems, NDU continued with the provision of generous financial aid packages to students and allocated funds for academic development, equipping laboratories and Faculties with the latest technology during the academic year 2012-2013. Figures 1 and 2 illustrate NDU's income and expenditure, during the academic year 2012-2013.

Figure 1

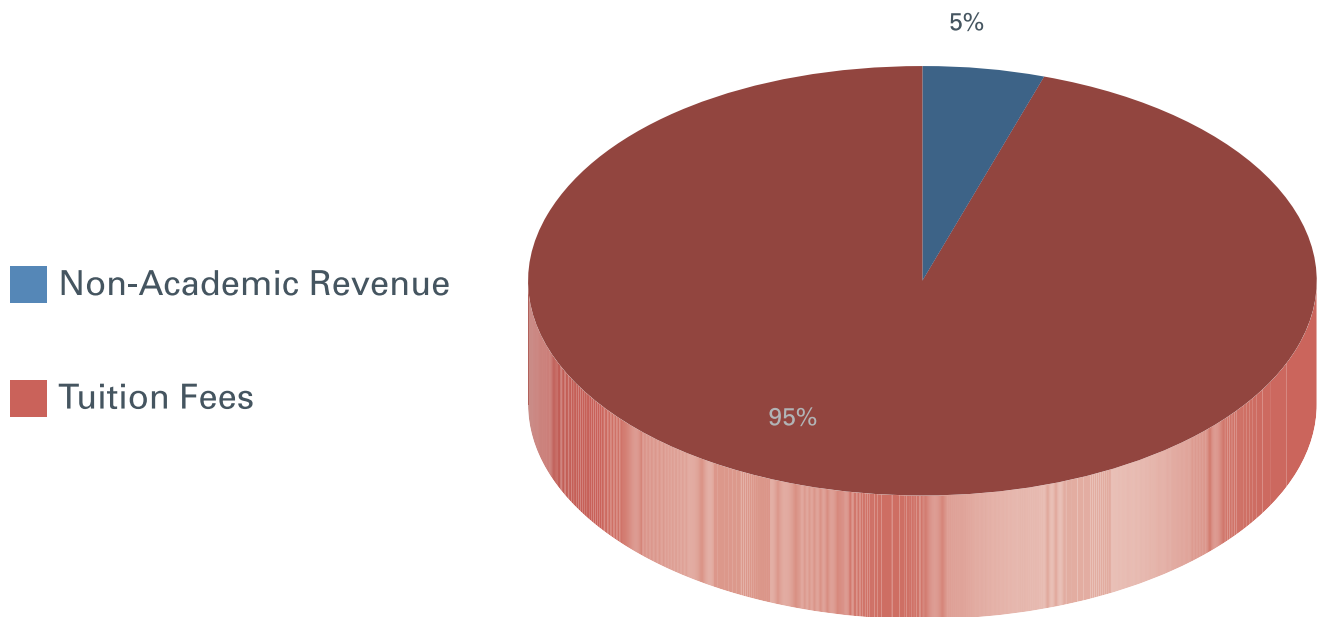
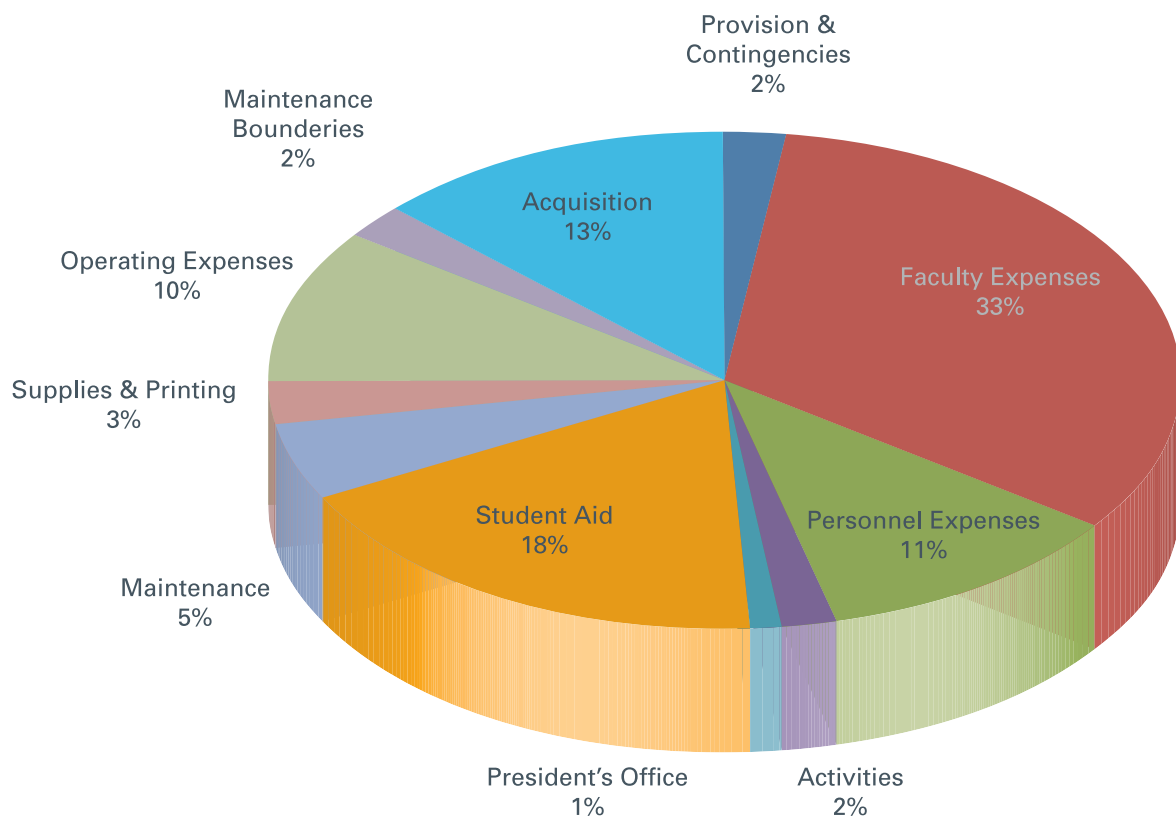
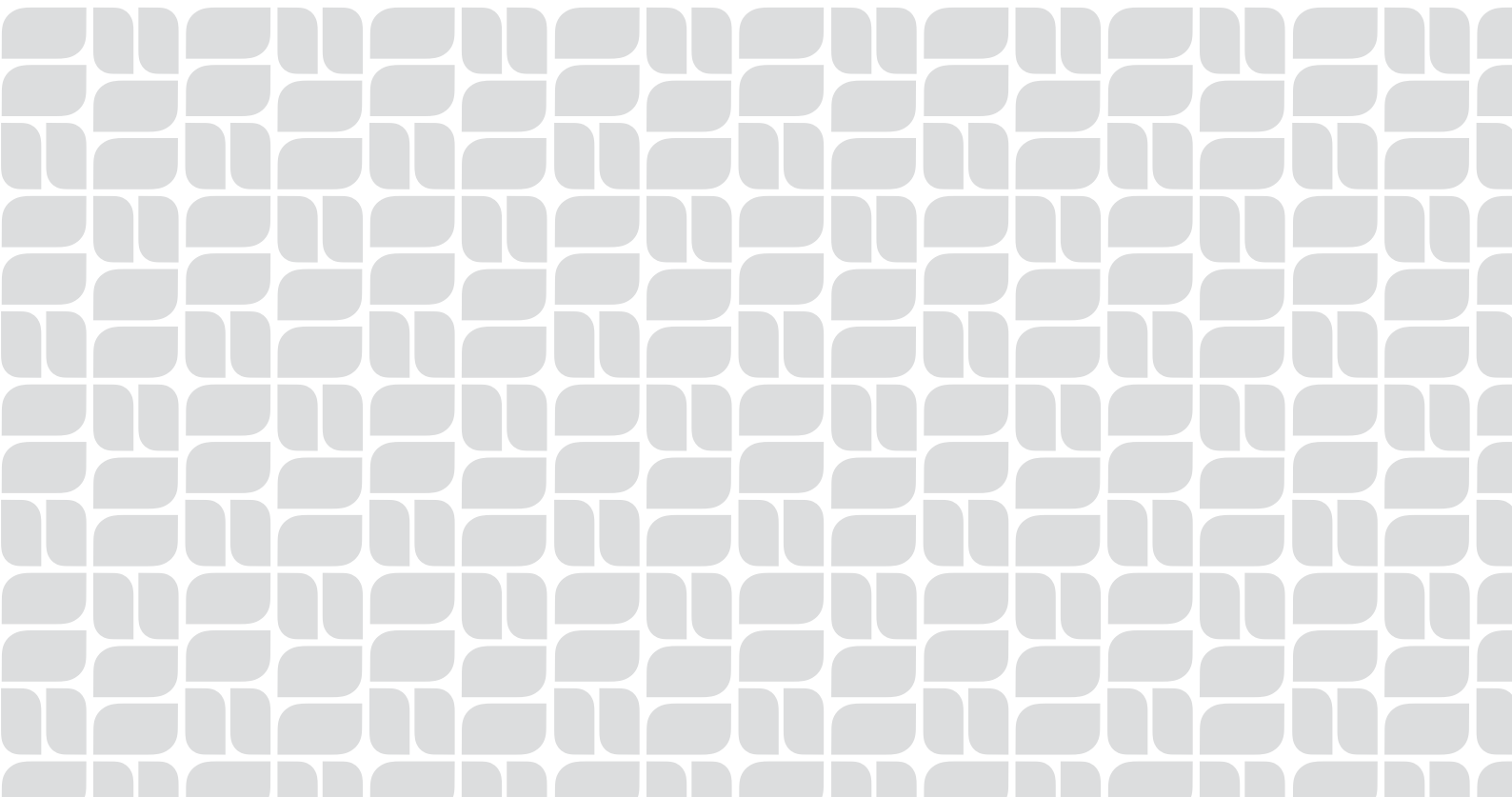


Figure 2

NDU Expenses 2012 - 2013



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