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## MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 32nd issue of the 2nd year of the President's News Digest.

I would like to start this edition by reminding colleagues once again about the importance of the forthcoming HEC institutional accreditation.



**Accreditation** is a stamp of quality and should be our top priority over the next few months. In the last 8 issues of the News Digest, we included information about the 8 areas of accreditation as described in the HEC accreditation handbook. All staff, admin and academic and students should be familiar by now with the accreditation handbook and its content. As you are aware, we have **8 areas, 33 standards and 218 key indicators**. In the first 3 areas of Governance, Strategy and Financial Management, Academic Management and Administration, and Teaching and Learning and Assessment we need to score "substantially met" or "fully met". These 3 areas demonstrate that as an institution, we are properly governed and managed including risks mitigation, and our students are getting the best learning experience. However, it is still important for the other 5 remaining areas of research, community engagement, facilities, students' progression and quality management to score as high.

As part of creating a first good impression when we are visited by the accreditation panel, it is important for our staff, students and other stakeholders to be familiar with **our strategy house, vision, mission, values, and physical and organizational charts** which are displayed on our screens across various locations in the University. In addition, our golden rules of teaching, a great teacher, and graduate attributes should be displayed on screens and banners across the University. This will demonstrate that our students are fully aware of what we are doing in the University and what's useful for them. Our student council should also be engaged in activities where their presence is important.

We are now at an advanced stage in writing the self-evaluation report and providing all the supporting materials and evidences.

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However, it is also crucially important to perform our daily tasks to the highest standards.



The accreditation panel will visit our classes and observe the **quality of teaching** and check our **course portfolios**. Their first impression about an institution will come from these class observations and quality of course portfolios and documentation. It is therefore vital to provide an exciting teaching and learning experience to our students performed to the **highest standard and quality**. A good preparation for lectures combined with the use of exciting technologies and methods supported by good interactions with the students will put us in a strong position in delivering teaching which is relevant and exciting resulting in learning which is topical and interesting. We have run many **workshops and conferences** and hired many external consultants in order to help ensure that our teaching is delivered to the highest quality. Good course portfolios also reflect the quality of teaching. All course portfolios should be produced to the highest quality including course descriptions and specifications, study plans, appropriate mapping of CILOS and PILOs, samples of lectures, samples of assessed work, clear internal and external moderation evidence, relevant and up to date recommended reading materials, and reflective description based on delivering the course. This is a simple task when it is done with rigor, extra care, and within the context of helping our students and the University as a whole. It is a matter of professionalism and clear conscience and we should all show loyalty to our students and our University by delivering teaching of the highest quality reflected in the well documented course portfolios.



**Students support** should be at the heart of all what we do. The accreditation panel will focus on the life cycle of a student experience including recruitment, admissions, support and mentoring, extra-curricular activities, training, internships, retention, success rate, career opportunities and employability, and alumni engagement. If we can handle this cycle properly, we will be in a strong position. This can only be achieved through the proper collaboration among the colleges, student affairs, and admissions and registration. **Students and alumni** are our **best ambassadors** and the accreditation panel will listen to them with interest as they are the main users and stakeholders. Let's support them and make them happy by engaging with them, listening to their concerns and improving our practices.

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



**Name:** Diana El Hageova

**Position:** Lecturer of English, Department of General Studies, College of Arts and Science

Office Manager, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development Office

**1. Tell us about yourself: (Your childhood, academic background)**

I was born in Lebanon to a Lebanese father and a Slovak mother and raised in a lovely village called Anout. I have one younger brother. I did my university studies (Bachelor and Master) in Slovakia and specialised in languages.

**2. Tell us about your job at ASU**

I joined ASU in February 2016 as Office Manager of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development, and as Lecturer of English in the Department of General Studies.

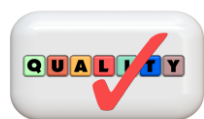
**3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University**

I feel proud to be part of the ASU family, one of the leading universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain, a university which takes care of its employees and where there is chance for professional development. I wish ASU to continue to grow stronger nationally and internationally.

Achieving accreditation is not a difficult task if everybody does his/her job to the best of his/her abilities and with a clear conscience he/she is earning the living which he/she deserves.

We need to be united in supporting our University through **professionalism, collaboration, hard work, goodwill, loyalty** and above all through adhering to **quality** systems and standards.

Every college, deanship, department, directorate, and unit will have a major role to play. **Colleges and academic departments should ensure that we are adopting a student-centered approach to teaching and learning and the quality of course portfolios is up to the highest standards.** All their committees should meet as planned with clear agendas and minutes and all actions are addressed in order to close the loops. Their operational plans should be checked on a regular basis and their KPIs measured. There should be clear reporting lines among the program coordinators, HODs, Vice Deans and Deans.



**Quality related issues** should be addressed at **program coordinator levels** before they are checked at higher levels and by the QAAC.

In my previous institutions, the program coordinators were considered as the backbone of academic quality. They are responsible for updating their programs, observing the quality of teaching in the classrooms, producing annual reports and checking the quality of grading through grade distribution. In addition, they put action plans to improve quality based on delivery, assessment and students feedback. We can transform our university when our program coordinators who are well qualified feel ownership of their programs. This is what the accreditation panel expects to see and that's why in the accreditation handbook there is a reference to program managers and how they should be empowered to support their programs.

The Deanships of admissions and registration, student affairs, and research and graduate studies should also play a major role in ensuring that our **students**



are **recruited, admitted and supported** properly and that research is feeding back into the curriculum. All surveys related to students progression and retention, satisfaction, exit, employer and alumni surveys should be conducted on regular basis and action plans developed and monitored in order to close the loops.

#### 4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

Both my roles at ASU are very challenging and I enjoy them both. It is an honour to be working closely with Dr. Assem Al-Hajj, the VP of Academic Affairs and Development; I learned a lot of things from him. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Dr. Assem.

In addition, I would like to thank Garth Johnson, my mentor, and Yvonne Johnson, my co-mentor, who have helped me in my teaching career at ASU.

#### 5. Tell us about your hobbies

I love languages. Thanks to my parents I have got 2 mother tongues – Arabic and Slovak. I also fluently speak English and French, and intermediate Spanish.

The other thing I love is travelling. There is nothing more rewarding than exploring new places in this world!

Besides, I like dancing, music, reading and watching movies.

#### 6. Tell us about your favourite food

My favourite food is my mom's cooking 😊.

#### 7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

Currently, I am reading a book called "What English Teachers Need to Know" by Denise E. Murray and Mary Ann Christison.

#### 8. Final words

I wish ASU all the best!

A good university should ensure that all its **admin and technical departments** are providing the right support to academic matters.

Our admin divisions and departments should ensure **transparency** in financial matters, robust budgeting, staff recruitment, promotion and appraisals, strong IT support, up to date website, use of Moodle reports, clear marketing and students recruitment plans, state of the art facilities and classrooms, internal auditing, and a well-equipped library. All their operational plans should be checked on a regular basis and their KPIs are measured properly.



**Accreditation** will also depend on the important role performed by the **QAAC** which should not allow any academic or admin activity or output that does not meet the quality standards required. **The QAAC** should **provide protection** of the University by ensuring that all its activities are meeting the **highest standards**. The QAAC is the backbone of the University when it comes to quality matters. Successful universities are measured by the quality of its quality and institutional effectiveness standards. The QAAC should perform regular audits of all our activities with action plans developed and monitored. I am confident that the accreditation panel will spend a substantial amount of time assessing the effectiveness of the QAAC and the robustness of our quality management systems. They will also scrutinize our operational plans in this area and how we are measuring our KPIs.

**The internal audit** unit also plays a major role in auditing administrative and when needed academic activities to ensure that our committees are functioning properly and our strategic and operational plans are fully aligned.

The University has developed its **policies in line with its bylaws** after being benchmarked with best practices in the sector. This full alignment facilitate our daily tasks and ensure that other documents like University catalogue, program handbooks, research handbook, staff and students handbooks, quality manual, admissions and registration manual, committees terms of reference, and website, are developed taking into account our bylaws and policies. This is the **responsibility of the strategic planning and governance unit**. Full alignment will ensure consistency and correctness of content in these documents, especially the website.

Accreditation should not be seen as a burden, but as **an opportunity** to demonstrate the quality of our systems, processes, governance, management, strategic plan, KPIs, bylaws, policies, risk management, international partnerships, committees, teaching and learning, research, community engagement, students' admissions and support and progression, facilities and library, website, and finally institutional effectiveness and quality systems.

We have great talents in the University and highly committed staff, let's use this to our advantage and sail through accreditation in order to create a sustainable and reputable ASU. **Accreditation** can only be achieved through **collective efforts** involving the senior management of the University, academic and admin staff, students, alumni, and external stakeholders like our partners, advisory board members, and external reviewers and consultants. The future of any university in Bahrain will depend on achieving accreditation. It is therefore crucial to make this task our top priority and remain positive that this is within our reach.

The **Accreditation and Change Management groups** are still meeting on a **weekly basis** to check progress and collect supporting documents and evidence. You are highly encouraged to contact Prof Saad, Mr Hatem, and Ms Mariam if you need any clarification about the type of evidence they need.



We are collecting all the information in electronic and physical formats in order to submit them once we received the confirmation from the HEC for our accreditation visit. If you come across any useful document or good practice please let us know; we can document it as part of the collected evidence.

As I mentioned in previous editions of the News Digest, we should **create a strong quality culture** in our University. Quality should be at the heart in everything we do and this is what will drive our reputation resulting in more financial gains. We have our bylaws, policies, committees and others to provide the right infrastructure for a quality University. What we need to do is to adhere to all of these and perform our tasks to the highest standards and to the best of our abilities. Quality will help us in achieving accreditation and in delivering academic programs that will have full confidence from the regulatory bodies. In addition, quality will help us recruit and graduate capable students through an exciting and unique learning experience.

Last week, the President and Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development visited our partners in the UK to ensure the successful launch of our new Programmes in September. Issues related to staffing and student recruitment and admissions were discussed. In addition, issues related to quality and standards were covered during the visit.

Last week, a new phase of class observations started with the great assistance of an external academic. I am confident that this activity will help us improve our current practices.

I would like to conclude this edition of the News Digest by encouraging our staff and students to read the News Digest on a weekly basis. This will help you keeping abreast of all activities and events in the University which will ultimately help our accreditation preparation. In addition, we are including in every issue as a new innovative approach a summary of an important policy in order to ensure that all our colleagues are familiar with all the University's policies.

## **BAHRAIN SMES SOCIETY RAMADAN GHABGHA**

As part of Community Engagement, Prof Saad Darwish, President's Advisor for Special Projects, attended the yearly Ramadan Ghabgha by Bahrain SME's Society which took place at Manama Old Souq - Bab Al Bahrain on 7 June 2017 as part of the society's interest in participating to the development of this long-standing market in cooperation with the relevant authorities, and in conjunction with the ministries. This market is a historic landmark and a great national heritage that deserves the efforts to revive and develop and enable the institutions operating in it, especially the small ones, to achieve its status as a key component of national economic development.



## **POLICY OF THE WEEK**

### **STUDENT'S INTERNSHIP POLICY**



#### **Purpose of the policy**

- I. An internship is intended to provide students at the university with the opportunity to apply what they are learning in their academic courses to real-world situations.
- ii. The program will also provide the students with the chance to work in an applied setting of their choice under the supervision of an academic training supervisor, who will also assist in training and evaluating them.
- iii. The university is committed to making the internship a quality educational experience that involves integrating academic learning with the performance of meaningful activities under proper academic supervision.

## **Policy statement**

- I. The university believes that practical experience in a professional setting is essential to the comprehensive development of the student's skills, knowledge, and abilities.
  - ii. Student internship programs are intended to reinforce their learning by giving the students an opportunity to gain practical experience in applying academic concepts
  - iii. All students at the university irrespective of their program will be a part of the student internship program.
  - iv. The university is committed to making the internship process a quality educational experience that involves integrating academic learning with the performance of meaningful activities under the direct supervision of faculty and industry mentors.

## **Key responsibilities**

- I. Training and internship head of unit will be responsible for:
  - a. Developing the annual internship plan for the prospective students that will be applying
  - b. Identifying organizations and opportunities for internship
  - c. Assisting in managing students concerns or complications, if any
  - d. Announcing the registration period of internship and preparing list of applicants
  - e. Scheduling, monitoring and evaluating of internship for students
  - f. Selecting the academic training supervisor with the coordination of head of departments
- ii. Academic training supervisor will be responsible for:
  - a. Visit of the student in the institution
  - b. Develop a link with the institution training supervisor
  - c. Follow-up on the student's activities during the internship
  - d. Participate in the student evaluation and discussion of the final report
  - e. Supervising between 20 -30 students during the internship period, which will be considered equal to 1 academic course load
- iii. Students will be responsible for
  - a. Regular attendance at the external organization
  - b. Punctuality and strong work ethic
  - c. Following the rules and regulations of the university and the organization
  - d. Taking care of property and equipment
  - e. Confidentiality of the information that is shared with them
  - f. Recording daily work task in daily report logs for all the work that they have done

## **Eligibility requirements**

The eligibility requirements for participating in the internship program are:

- I. Completing 90 credit hours
- ii. All core courses for their specialization must be completed. The training and internship head of unit for the college should verify with the student academic advisor that the student has covered required core courses.
- iii. Students at risk will need to get an approval from their academic advisor before starting their internship.

## **Internship period**

- i. The internship period will be for 60 days (or 120 hours).

### **Start of internship**

- a. Students should report for internship on the assigned start date according to the letter sent from the internship unit.
- b. If the student does not report for internship for the first three consecutive working days the following actions can be taken:
  - i. If the student does not have a legitimate reason for the absence then they will have to withdraw from the program and will be given a failing mark which will be registered in their academic record
  - ii. The student's internship will not be refunded
  - iii. If there is a legitimate reason for the absence and the student wishes to withdraw from the internship then their fees will be carried forward
  - iv. If there is a legitimate reason for the absence and the student wishes to continue then the days of absence will be counted as present for grading purposes
  - v. For students who withdraw from the program other students will be nominated in their place.

### **Attendance**

- a. Student should not be absent for more than 5 continuous days provided that any of these days are not in the first 3 days of the internship program.
- b. The student should not be absent for more than a total of 9 days or 20 % (whichever is lower) of the internship period.
- c. If the student is absent for more than 9 days or 20 % internship will be cancelled and the course will have to be repeated

### **Internship evaluation and feedback**

- a. The student must fill an evaluation form about the internship organization and submit the form to the training and internship unit.

### **Field report**

- a. Must be given to the internship unit within the stipulated time.
- b. The student should contact the internship unit for any problems or concerns.

### **Procedure for student internship program**

1. Identifying organizations and opportunities for internship
2. Assigning organizations for internship
3. Commencement of the internship program
4. Final report guidelines
  - i. The report should follow the correct format which will be discussed in the course outline at the beginning of the internship program.
  - ii. The report should be well written and should be presentable to external parties.
  - iii. It should cover the major topics of the internship and build links between theory and application of academic concepts.
  - iv. Should be written completely by the students and any references or external sources of information should be properly documented in a separate section.
  - v. It should be printed on a4 page format with a font size of 14, in preferred language either English or Arabic.
  - vi. Any supplements should be put in the end of the report included at the end as appendix, with proper titles and documentation for charts and tables.
  - vii. Paper will be put through a plagiarism test and the maximum tolerance limit for the test is 20 %. VIII. Report should not exceed 30 pages and should not be shorter than 15 pages (excluding the appendix).
  - ix. A soft copy of the report should be given on a cd to the training and internship unit.

- x. The hard copy of the report should be in the following format:
- a. The report should be in a black hard cover
  - b. The spine of the report should carry the name of the report and the year of publication
  - c. The front of the cover should carry
  - d. The university logo
  - e. Title of the report
  - f. Name of the student, program of study
  - g. Date of publishing

### **Evaluation of the internship program**

- i. The internship program will be evaluated for 3 credits
- ii. The internship is compulsory for all students and it is a prerequisite for graduation
- iii. The internship program is graded and the passing mark is 50 %
- iv. Students will prepare a report by the end of the internship that will be the basis of the evaluation
- v. The internship is evaluated by
  - a. The organization providing the internship (maximum 50% percentage of total )
  - b. Academic training supervisor (maximum 25% percentage of total )
  - c. Training and internship head of unit (maximum 25% percentage of total )
  - d. Attendance will be a factor in the overall grade
- vi. The institution training supervisor will fill a form for the evaluation which includes
  - a. The activity report of the student (daily activity for each week)
  - b. The attendance report (per day for all the 60 days)
- vii. At the end of the internship the student will be evaluated with the inputs of :
  - a. Institution training supervisor evaluation form filled and signed-off
  - b. Student activity report filled and signed-off
  - c. Student attendance report filled and signed-off
  - d. Final report
  - e. Presentation: the student will have to provide a presentation of his report to the committee made up of the head of the unit and the training supervisor.

## **REMINDER OF THE WEEK**

### **ASU STRATEGIC PLAN**

#### **2. Research:**

We develop a research culture and deliver high quality research outputs.

#### **Strategic Priority number 1: Strategic Investments**

Invest in increasing the number of active research staff through appropriate recruitment and staff development

Our financial planning for strategic investment aims to improve Research Outcomes.

#### **Our strategic objectives are:**

- Maintain existing posts within priority areas.
- Fund new posts in areas of strategic priority.
- Infrastructure support for the above.





## **Strategic Priority number 2: Establish Priority Growth Areas**

Identify and support niche areas for inter-disciplinary research drawing on the collective subject expertise in its constituent Colleges.

### **Our Strategic Objectives are:**

- Identify and establish priority areas for growth while consolidating our strengths.
- Explore and identify opportunities for productive cross-disciplinary collaboration in and out-side the College and Departments boundaries.
- Explore and identify collaboration outside the university, build upon and strengthen already existing links.

## **Strategic Priority number 3: Increase Research Activity/Culture**

Increase the overall quality and quantity of published outputs.

### **Our Strategic Objectives are:**

- Increase the number of research outputs and research active staff and ensure that majority of newly recruited faculty members must be research active in priority areas.
- Increase inputs by research active staff in teaching research led or research based elements on both undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.
- Encourage research activity through seminars, workshops and participation in postgraduate supervisory panels.

## **Strategic Priority number 4: External Profile Enhancement**

Increase exposure of staff to national and international research communities through involvement in relevant conferences and meetings and building research networks.

### **Our Strategic Objectives are:**

- Increase our participation and involvement on the Editorial Boards of international and reputable journals.
- Develop Annual Distinguish Seminar series and establish the Annual Master Class, in which one or more distinguished researchers can be invited to work on a specific research theme.
- Increase presence of staff as members of Programme Committees of major national/international Conferences/Workshops.

## **QUOTE OF THE WEEK**

*“A dream doesn't become reality through magic; it takes sweat, determination and hard work.”*

**Colin Powell**

*Happy Reading*

