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ASU
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY



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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 23rd issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

This week, we are 11 weeks away from the HEC Institutional Accreditation Inspection Visit, which will take place 24 to 27 June 2018.



My Message in this issue continues the current weekly focus on the content of the Self Evaluation Report (SER) which is part of our Accreditation documentation, in order to keep our staff and students informed.

Having already covered Area 1, Area 2 and Area 3, this week's SER summaries cover Area 4: Research, Scholarship and Innovation. Area 4 is divided into 2 standards covering 12 key indicators and our SER addresses each of them in turn, to show how we meet the requirements.

AREA 3: RESEARCH, SCHOLARSHIP AND INNOVATION

Standard 12: The institution must demonstrate a commitment to research and provide adequate and appropriate facilities to promote research

12.1. The promotion and facilitation of research must be a central feature of the institution's overall strategic aims.

- Our response confirms that the ASU vision places research at its centre and that research is one of the three core Pillars of our Strategic Plan 2015-2020, expressed as a strategic objective to “Develop a research culture and deliver high quality research outputs”, in support of Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and HEC's National Research Strategy 2014-2024. It adds that to promote research we have a Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies responsible for implementing our research strategy, encouraging research activities (including research centres and groups) and overseeing the research budget. It also notes our various activities to promote research:
 - Annual Distinguished Seminar (ADS) Series, presented by leading scholars who are defining the research agenda in their field
 - ASU Research Publications: The Journal of Applied Science University, ASU-RAIN (Applied Science University Research & Innovation Newsletter) and our collaboration with Arab European Leadership Network in Higher Education (ARELEN), Cardiff Metropolitan

University (UK) and the Association of Arab Universities (AAU)

- International Conference on Sustainable Futures (ICSF 2017) organised in November 2017 in collaboration with London South Bank University (UK), involving over 100 participants from 20 countries, following which the 62 papers presented were collated in a peer-reviewed Conference Proceedings
- Funding for research in line with HEC regulations and a recent key research-led expenditure project to support research in the new College of Engineering

12.2. The interaction between research, scholarly activity and education must be reflected in the curriculum, inform current teaching, and encourage and prepare students for engagement in research, scholarship and innovative development.

- Our response notes that our Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy requires teaching to be informed by research, so academic staff are encouraged to integrate their own research into teaching and ensure that students are aware of up-to-date developments in the field to support their learning and understand how research is relevant to their studies. It also notes that 83% of ASU academic staff are PhD holders and active in research, helping expose ASU students to a research culture. It further notes that all students take Research Methods as a compulsory course helping them to plan and execute research successfully and that we encourage academic staff supervising master theses and final year projects to publish jointly with students so that they develop their research and scholarly skills. It concludes by noting that we will soon hold our first Student Research Conference, which will be an annual event to encourage research culture amongst undergraduate and postgraduate students through allowing them to present their research findings to the scholarly community

12.3. There must be policies which identify the priorities, facilities and development in research and commercialization.

- Our response confirms that our Research Bylaw identifies our research priorities and, in line with these, our Strategic Plan states our overall strategic objective for research, together with a number of key priorities: strategic investments; priority areas for growth; increased research activity/culture; external profile enhancement. It notes that implementation of our research strategy and key priorities is led by the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies working with an Operational Plan including KPIs and resource requirements, with guidance from the Research, Innovation and Research Ethics Committee.

INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



Name: Dagmara Pluta

Position: English Lecturer

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

I was born and grew up in Krotoszyn, Poland where I started teaching English when I was 17 years old. By the age of 25, I was directing a summer English programme in my hometown working alongside teachers and students from the U.S, organizing courses for students of all ages and student exchange programmers between Poland and the U.S.

In 2007, I graduated from Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznan, Poland with a Master's degree in English Language and Linguistics. I specialized in Teaching English as a Foreign Language and I have taught at various private language schools, colleges and universities. I was also the director of studies at summer programmes in the U.K. In 2015, I received an offer to teach at a new vocational college in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. After three months, I became the first curriculum manager of the foundation year. I was responsible for the creation of the English curriculum, assessment and the professional development of English teachers.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I had the pleasure of joining the Foundation Programme at ASU in January 2018 and I have been teaching Academic and General English to Cardiff and London South Bank students. I have been a part of the team creating the curriculum along with resources and the assessment scheme.

- It also notes that our research priorities are outlined in our Research Handbook, with related guidelines and procedures (for example, how to apply for research project funding). It concludes by noting that ASU is at an early stage in commercialisation of research and expects that this will develop with our entrepreneurship activities and as our new College of Engineering becomes established, enabling us to support Bahrain’s plans for a knowledge economy as set out in the Economic Vision 2030 and the HEC Strategy for Research which emphasise STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics) subjects

12.4. Incentives must be provided for the academic staff and the departments to conduct research.

- Our response notes that we demonstrate the strategic importance of research by promoting a culture of “research to satisfy intellectual curiosity” and by setting a structure (in the Research Bylaw) for staff to be rewarded for conducting research in the following categories: authorship of books; publication of research in refereed journals; funding to attend scientific research conferences; book translation

Standard 13: The institution must encourage and support its staff to undertake research and scholarly activities and to engage in other professional activities

13.1. The institution must have well-defined policies and procedures for the undertaking of academic research and these are communicated effectively to all relevant stakeholders.

- Our response notes that our general regulations on research are contained in the Research Bylaw and that more specific research policies and procedures, including principles and structures, are stated in the Research Handbook given to every member of academic staff and available on the website to staff, students and the wider community. It also notes that the Research Handbook includes important sections on vision and guiding principles, research strategic plan, research organisation and structure, research funding and initiatives, and ethics code of practice

13.2. The research strategy of the institution must be in line with national priorities.

- Our response confirms that ASU took great care to align our Research Strategy with national priorities identified in HEC’s National Research Strategy 2014-2024 and the Bahrain Economic Vision 2030, particularly to support the economic development of Bahrain, the deployment of future IT strategies and issues around sustainability. It also notes that an important strand of our approach to research (also described in the Research Handbook) is identifying inter-disciplinary research themes (Sustainable Development;

3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University

Developing one of the best foundation year programmes in the region as well as establishing an outstanding language center for students who desire and are required to improve their language skills. The center would include a library with a variety of English books & graded readers that would help to instill in students the love of reading for pleasure and education.

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I really enjoy teaching itself; being in the classroom with students and facilitating their learning of English language. Along with that, I enjoy helping the students develop effective language learning skills.

5. Tell us about your hobbies

Apart from being an English lecturer, I am also learning to become a life coach. I love reading and learning about personal development, creating change and facilitating people to choose more and greater in their lives. I find those skills very useful in the classroom as well. Apart from that, I very much enjoy walking, swimming, yoga and being out in the nature.

6. Tell us about your favourite food

My Mom’s dish: rice and chicken soaked smothered in Béchamel sauce served with steamed vegetables.

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

“Being You Changing the World” by Dr. Dain Heer. It gives you practical tools on how to create your life, be you, be happy and be a contribution to others and the world.

8. Final words

What contribution can we truly be to all our students so that they become happy and active creators of sustainable future of the Kingdom of Bahrain and the world?

Future IT; Teaching and Learning; Coexistence, Tolerance and Peace; Women Leadership; Economic Growth) which will establish groups to bring together academics to work collectively on research and publications. It further notes that two groups are already active; that, as the sustainable development theme is a priority for 2017/18, we will establish research groups including renewable energies and future of sustainable engineering; and that our first significant SD theme activity was the International Conference on Sustainable Futures in association with London South Bank University and CIOB in November 2017

- 13.3. Teachers must be encouraged and supported to undertake research in relevant fields and to publish their findings.
- Our response re-states that academic staff are encouraged and supported to undertake research and to publish their findings and there are incentives for scholarly works, including publication of research in refereed journals. It notes (and shows in a year-by-year graph) that output of research papers and books has been steadily growing in recent years and adds that research spending has also been increasing
- 13.4. The institution must maintain a catalogue of up-to-date staff publications which are published on the website.
- Our response confirms that ASU maintains a catalogue of up-to-date publications available on our website (<http://www.asu.edu.bh/research/publication/publications/>) which includes papers, articles and books by academic staff and graduate students' theses
- 13.5. Academic staff contracts must require academic staff to engage in research and scholarly activities relevant to their teaching and other duties.
- Our response notes that ASU requires all academic staff to conduct appropriate research (stating this in the Bylaws for Academic Staff and in each employment contract), setting aside 10% of their weekly hours to be devoted to research. It adds that as research activity is a requirement it therefore forms part of the annual appraisal, where staff have the opportunity to discuss research objectives and identify training or development needs required to meet these objectives
- 13.6. Appointment and promotion criteria and faculty performance evaluations must reflect the institution's expectations for faculty research and scholarly activity.
- Our response re-states that, in line with the our Vision, Research Strategy and aspiration to build a strong research culture, our appointment, promotion and appraisal processes for academic staff take into account research performance (ie published work and scholarly activity). It notes that selection processes clearly specify in job descriptions and person specifications the requirement for prior research activity appropriate to the level of the post. It further notes that the Academic Promotion Bylaw clearly specifies the criteria for promotion through academic ranks. It concludes by noting that the appraisal process includes assessment of whether academic staff are achieving their research objectives by measuring the quality and quantity of publications
- 13.7. There must be a fair and transparent procedure for staff to seek financial support for their research and other professional development activities.
- Our response confirms that ASU provides a fair and transparent procedure for academic staff to apply for financial and other support for research and professional development activities, which involves completion of the Proposal Form for Scientific Project (by the individual or research group), its submission to the Deanship of Research and Graduate Studies (after endorsement by head of department and college dean) and its evaluation according to a set of criteria outlined on the Form. It adds that an allocation of 2% of ASU's gross annual income supports other professional development activities, such as proposals to pursue PhD studies and other qualifications.
- 13.8. The institution must provide time for staff to meet regularly to share and discuss current research activities and, if appropriate, invite external speakers.

- Our response confirms that we have a tradition of inviting external speakers and are committed to extending our network of international research contacts and that, in line with our strategy to prioritise research as a core activity, we provide time for academic staff to meet and discuss research in a variety of ways:
 - During the 10% of academic staff time that is contractually designated for research and scholarly activities
 - At meetings of research groups held for sharing research ideas and discussing interests
 - In the Research Seminar Series that encourage researchers to meet and present findings
 - In the Annual Distinguished Seminar that provides a forum where researchers can engage with each other international invited keynote speakers
 - On occasional other opportunities, including the 2-day Workshop on Creating Capacity in Research and the 2-day International Conference on Sustainable Futures

SEMINAR TITLED “HUMAN RESOURCES PERFORMANCE MEASUREMENT APPROACHES”

Aligning with the research Seminar Series, the College of Administrative Sciences organized the second seminar titled “Human Resources Performance Measurement Approaches” on Thursday, March 29, 2018 at Abdulla Nass Hall. The seminar was presented by Dr. Saeed Aldulaimi and Dr. Mohammad Obeidat which aimed to identify the required factors that can be considered necessary in conceptualizing the features of human resource (HR) performance measurement system appropriate in the modern organizational setting.



The presenters raised the following question: What is the reality of current research in measuring HR performance in Applied Science University (ASU) compared to the measures used in literature of HR studies? The outcomes were to update existing literature on HR measures in two ways: Identification of gaps in terms of practical usefulness and academic research, suggestions of solutions in the form of a conceptual framework to improve measurement and HR performance measurement using the correct variables, and recommendation of a direction for future research with regard to using the right variables based on research theory and purpose. The audience showed interest in the topic which handled a real problem in measuring HR performance and helped the master students at ASU. In addition, the academic members of the College shared their ideas about their experience and proposed some ideas for future research and open a door for research cooperation and sharing knowledge.



HONOURING CEREMONY TO ALL PARTICIPANTS IN H.H. SHEIKH NASSER SPORTS TOURNAMENT

The Ministry of Youth and Sports organized on Wednesday 28 March 2018, an honouring ceremony to all participating Universities in H.H. Sheikh Nasser Sports Tournament.

H.H. Sheikh Nasser Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, the King’s Representative for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, Supreme Council for Youth and Sports Chairman and Bahrain Olympic Committee President honoured all the universities representatives including ASU for their achievements.



ASU WON SILVER MEDALS AT BAHRAIN GUINNESS WORLD RECORD

The first-of-its-kind event, initiated by Bahrain Olympic Committee, got underway at Bahrain Sports Federation for People with Disabilities Hall at Isa Sports City and was scheduled to conclude within 24 hours starting from 7pm on Friday 30th March till 7pm next day. ASU was the only selected University in the Kingdom of Bahrain to participate in the longest Futsal Tournament that was held under the Patronage of HH Shaikh Nasser bin Hamad Al Khalifa, Representative of His Majesty for Charity Works and Youth Affairs, Chairman of Supreme Council for Youth and Sports and president of Bahrain Olympic Committee. The opening ceremony was inaugurated by Shaikh Khalid bin Hamad Al Khalifa, first deputy chairman of Supreme Council of Youth and Sports and President of Bahrain Athletics Association.



70 students from ASU participated in the event as organizers and supervised by Mr Mohammed Najjar, Students Service Office Manager and Mr Thaer Ramini, an Administrator in the Student Services Office, including two of our teams that participated in the Futsal tournament that was led by Mr Ali Mohamed, the Assistant Director of the Directorate of Marketing & Public Relations.



The tournament went continuously for 24 hours with a group of 18 teams and 226 players from all over the Kingdom of Bahrain.



Moreover, the extraordinary effort qualified our team to reach the final and win the second place. This achievement made ASU part of being certified officially from Guinness and mentioned in the Guinness World Records Book.

Furthermore, the First Deputy President of the Supreme Council for Youth and Sports, H.H. Shaikh Khalid Bin Hamad Al Khalifa, honoured our students both organizers and players for their great contribution in this global event that made this tournament successful and gain the privilege of entering the Guinness World Records.



BRITISH AMBASSADOR REWARDS ASU FACULTY-PROF SAAD DARWISH

British Council Bahrain and the Bahrain UK Alumni Network Board Members organised an inspirational and entertaining evening, featuring distinguished key speakers, networking opportunities, games and live music by Majaz Bahrain. The event was to strengthen ties between UK alumni in Bahrain for both seasoned and fresh UK graduates, as well as share future plans of the Bahrain UK Alumni Network, including professional development events and further networking opportunities. Applied Science University was present with Prof Ghassan Aouad, President, Dr Assem Al Hajj, VP Academic Affairs and Development, Dr Ashraf Hendy, Dean of the College of Engineering, Dr Faiza Zitouni, Dean of Students Affairs, Prof Saad Darwish, President's Advisor and Diana El Hageova, VP Office Director.





Proud to say that the British Ambassador, Mr. Simon Martin CMG, honoured Prof Saad Darwish for his continuous support to the Alumni and his great effort and contribution as a member in the Bahrain UK Alumni from 2016-2017. Prof. Saad was presented with a certificate of appreciation.

ASU AT THE FOUNDATION PROGRAMS GATEWAY TO SUCCESS CONFERENCE ORGANIZED BY UOB

On March 31st and April 1st, Dr. Assem Al-Hajj, Dr. Ashraf Hendy, Mr. Noel Lavin, Ms. Diana El Hageova and Ms. Dagmara Pluta attended the First International Conference organized by the English Language Center at UOB for the faculty of Foundation Programs in Higher Education across the region. Some of the keynote speakers included renowned experts from the U.K., local and regional universities. Dr. Rachel Wicaksono, from York St John University, talked about the necessity of embedding the teaching of subject-specific language into specialist content teaching along some ideas on how to put it into practice.



Workshops on the meaningful use of technology and creating SMART objectives were also full of great and practical ideas. One of the workshops that we all enjoyed was on introducing obligatory extensive reading programs into English classes in the foundation year. The program is supported by a simple platform that helps students organize their reading and tracks their progress. Students are given a chance to develop a greater joy of reading, automaticity of their decoding and acquire a great sense of achievement, all of which will pay off greatly in the following years of their education. It is interesting to note that in one particular university in the UAE, students are required to read 50,000 words in the first semester of foundation year.

Finally, Dr. Charles Hall from Alfaisal University pointed out how a small shift in focus and wording can create a huge change in the approach to teaching and learning; what if we did not follow the 'deficit model' i.e. what our students are lacking, but the 'inclusion model' i.e. what can we add to their repertoire? The panels created space for the discussion of strengths and areas for development of some of the existing foundation programs and gave us all a chance to learn from each other. The whole conference was a great success and a huge inspiration for the development of our Foundation Program at ASU.

THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE ACTIVITIES

ASU Supported "امي نبضة حياتي" Festival

The Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University supported the festival "امي نبضة حياتي" that was organised by Life Pulse Bahrain Voluntary Team in Ramli Mall on the occasion of Mother's Day.



The festival included medical tests such as temperature, oxygen, heart rate, blood pressure, basic sugar, health education for physicians section, physical therapy, mental health, and dental health section. A number of activities also took place such as songs, poems, gymnastics show, entertainment contests, healthy cooking contest, games, gifts, faces painting and coloring for children.

A number of public figures attended the festival such as the artist Shafiq Yousif, artist Ahmad Isa, and former national team player Ahmad Hubail.



participating in the festival.

At the end of the celebration, the Community Engagement Office on behalf of the University represented by Mr. Thaer Mustafa Alramini was awarded for supporting and

ASU and Ofoq Toastmasters Club Organized a Training Course

At the morning of 31 March 2018, the Community Engagement (CE) Office at Applied Science University in cooperation with Ofoq Toastmasters Club (first Arabic toastmasters club in Kingdom of Bahrain) organized a training course about tasks and goals of toastmasters.



The training course that was held in the Dome Hall was attended by audience from the local community, academic and administrative staff, and students.

The event included lectures about the best practices of toastmasters, the art of public speaking, leadership, how to be brave and face audience, in addition to workshops, competitions, songs, and gifts. The event sections were provided by Ofoq Toastmasters Club members, and ASU staff and students.

At the end of the training course, the president of Ofoq Toastmasters Club thanked ASU for supporting the community in different fields, and likewise, ASU represented by the CE office expressed their thanks to the club for their cooperation in organizing the event.



CE Office Received Bahrain Unites Us Voluntary Team

On 31 March 2018 The Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University represented by Dr. Mohammad Alaa Al-Hamami, the Manager of the CE Office and Mr. Thaer Mustafa AlRamini a member of the office and Student Care, received the president and members of “Bahrain Unites Us” voluntary team. During the meeting, they discussed ways of cooperation between the parties during the coming period.



ASU and RCO Organized “How to Protect My Self from Cyber Crimes” Lecture



On the evening of 3 March 2018, the Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University in cooperation with the Royal Charity Organization organized a lecture titled “How to Protect My Self from Cyber Crimes” that was delivered by First Lieutenant Fauz Mohamed Ali from Cyber Crime Directorate at General Directorate of Anti-Corruption and Economic and Electronic Security.

He explained the concept of cyber crime, kinds of cyber crimes, law of cyber crimes in the Kingdom of Bahrain, general advices, and methods of reporting.

“ASSESSMENT AND FEEDBACK” – BY HAMZAH RAMADAN

I noticed from my experiences as a lecturer that it is important to assess and give feedback to my students. When I assess them, this will indicate how much they learn, and they will be up to the standard. When I give them feedback, I focus on helping the students achieve more from the course by benefiting out of my feedback. In order to achieve my target, I decided to take some steps related to assessing and feedback that are formative and summative.

In my first session with my students, I try to assess how much are they interested in learning English. My assessment is based on a formative discussion by which I can hear their opinions about languages in general and English in particular. I feel very disappointed when the majority of them tell me that the only reason for which they are learning the English language is that it is a university requirement. I distribute passages with questions related to the importance of learning English and then I review the questions in order to assess how much the students are convinced of the importance of the language. Based on my assessment related to their answers, I give them the right feedback. My focus while doing the feedback is mostly based on their answers, my teaching plan and motivating them to learn the language.

One of the methods I use with my students is to hold separate meetings with those whom I notice that they are not up to the standard compared to the rest of the students when it comes to comprehension. During the first meeting with the selected students, I ask them if there are certain things that they want me to explain to them. I do this in a professional way respecting their abilities. After clarifying what they inquire about, I assess their general knowledge according to a separate plan that I had prepared based on their weaknesses (the things that I had noticed about them in the class). My assessment in this case is formative and based on raising questions related to the material that I have explained (Olmos, 2009). If they answer the questions that I raise, that means they understood what have been explained, if they do not that mean certain changes must be done and I have to give more explanation and better feedback to the learners. In this case, my feedback will be orally and from both sides (student and teacher).

The other method that I use in assessing and feedback is checking the written work for summative assessment (Looney, 2011). This will help me to know how much my students learn from the methods of writing I teach. In order to help them improve their writing skills, I make presentations during the lectures in which I explain to them how to write good paragraphs and then I show them some of the samples of well-written paragraphs. I ask them to write a paragraph and then I underline the mistakes and return it back to them. They must try to correct it and return it back to me. The last stage is to correct the papers and give them feedback about their mistakes. In certain circumstances, I need to give some of the students certain extra assignments in order to improve their skills in writing, but in other cases, I have to encourage certain students who are talented in writing to be enrolled in courses that are more intensive while they are still in my course to achieve more progress (Lili, 2015).

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REMINDER OF THE WEEK

Institutional Accreditation Inspection Visit: 24 to 27 June 2018 (11 weeks from now)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"If I were to be born again, I would like to be born again as Abdulla Nass, and also start from scratch, there is no shortcuts for success."

**Founder of Nass Group of Companies
Late Mr Abdulla Ahmed Nass**

