

PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

15 APRIL 2018 – VOLUME 3 - ISSUE 24



ASU
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 24th issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

This week, we are 10 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 in these past few weeks covered Area 1, Area 2, Area 3 and Area 4, this week's SER summaries cover Area 5: Economy and Society Impact. Area 5 is divided into 3 standards and 14 key indicators and our SER addresses each of these key indicators in turn, to show how we meet the requirements.

AREA 5: ECONOMY AND SOCIETY IMPACT

Standard 14: The institution's strategy must recognize the importance of promoting entrepreneurship and provide appropriate academic, physical and financial resources to support this

14.1. The institution's strategic plan must demonstrate a commitment to promoting entrepreneurship and enterprise across the institution.

- Our response confirms that ASU's Strategic Plan includes a key priority to "encourage students in a culture of engagement, entrepreneurship and innovation and prepare them to become leaders in their chosen profession" and this aspiration will be achieved through our dedicated Entrepreneurship Strategy which has four key objectives:
 - # 1: Enhance Student Skills (taught provision and extra-curricular objectives)
 - # 2: Enhance Student Opportunities (infrastructure, funding opportunities)
 - # 3: Create meaningful partnerships and opportunities (MOUs)
 - # 4: Make entrepreneurship a key element of the ASU brand
- It adds that (in line with international good practice, notably set out in the UK Quality Assurance Agency's publication Enterprise and entrepreneurship education:

guidance for UK higher education providers) the focus of our Entrepreneurship Strategy is on students (1) 'learning about' entrepreneurship through course content and (2) 'learning for' entrepreneurship by developing an entrepreneurial 'mindset' (ie awareness of and ability to recognise opportunities) through critical thinking and problem solving. Particular ways in which we do this are: encouraging creativity and innovative thinking; embedding professional skills; using projects for students to apply theories; hosting invited speakers; organising events where students showcase their work.

- 14.2. The institution must have or be developing policies and mechanisms which will facilitate funding for graduate and staff enterprise and provide appropriate facilities such as incubator support.
- Our response notes that our Entrepreneurship Strategy will be achieved through mechanisms facilitating funds for staff/students to realise innovative ideas and provide physical, mentoring and other resources where ideas can be developed and exploited. It also notes that ASU is taking a staged approach to developments in this area, paying particular attention to legal and ethical aspects; that we are currently moving forward in partnership with bodies such as Tamkeen, SME organisations or microfinance banks, currently in a "bridging" role; and that we will explore with them how we can facilitate mentoring, networking and service provider links of an "incubator" kind. Our response includes a chart showing how our Entrepreneurship Strategy has three phases: existing provision; enhanced support (1-3yrs); full implementation (3-5yrs); and it also gives details of the various activities planned for the three phases
- 14.3. The strategy must demonstrate an awareness of and commitment to the Kingdom's employability agenda in that it encourages links with industry, encourages entrepreneurship and focuses on the knowledge economy.
- Our response confirms that ASU is committed to Bahrain's employability agenda and that graduate employability is central to our mission. It notes that we have an Employability Strategy to achieve this aspiration through partnerships with higher education institutions, government, industry and professional bodies. It further notes the workshops we have organised during the past year involving industry, government and professional societies; and refers to our various mechanisms to scope the labour market and identify employer needs including publications on employment trends and labour market requirements (eg HEC's Report on Industry and Employer Graduate Skills Requirements and Tamkeen reports) and subscriptions to major databases (eg Zawya Bahrain and bayt.com).

INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



Name: Mohamed Sobhi

Position: Accountant

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

I was born in July 1981 in a beautiful rural town in Egypt with many monuments. I then moved to live in Port Said, a beautiful coastal city on the Mediterranean Sea from the north and Suez Canal from the south. I am among 3 brothers and 3 sisters; I got great attention from my family. After finishing my high school, I obtained my bachelor degree in accounting from Cairo University. After graduation, I earned a Diploma of Real Estate Appraisal from Ain Shams University.

I am married with three children, (two sons and a daughter) and live a happy life.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I have started my work at Applied Science University in the Finance Department in 2012. I enjoy working at the University with my colleagues and friends.

3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University

We are always looking forward to being on top of all universities in Bahrain and gulf region in learning and development. The University recently obtained an ISO certificate and looking forward to academic accreditation in the near future.

It adds that for our current programmes we have undertaken additional labour market studies and that we gather inputs from Programme Advisory Boards, employer surveys and from employers who host our internship students. Finally, it notes that ASU is committed to the knowledge economy concept and that we have focussed our Strategy on producing graduates who are ready to engage with knowledge-based industry and enterprises, especially through our emphasis on applied sciences, enterprise and innovation

- 14.4. The institution must ensure coverage in its curricula of the skills and competencies required by employers so as to prepare students for entry into the world of work. Views of employers must inform the review process.
- Our response confirms the care we have taken to ensure that our programmes cover the skills/competencies required by employers in the modern working environment. It notes that the 21st Century Skills featured in the HEC Strategy (problem solving, critical thinking, communication, teamwork and interpersonal skills) are represented in programme transferrable skills and also in ASU’s graduate attributes. It also notes that we seek employer opinions to inform programme reviews, especially through the Programme Advisory Boards; through reports on employability issues; and through events we host (eg Bahrain SME Society session on Impact of Technology on the Labour Market in Nov 2016 and our workshop on Millennials (Young Graduates) and the Job Market: The Role of Higher Education Institutions in Meeting Market Needs in Feb 2018) involving representatives from private and public sectors with the aim of seeking views and suggestions on skills and disciplines required in future recruits. Finally, our response adds that ASU’s Foundation Studies and English Language and learning skills provision also support student employability, by helping students succeed in their academic studies and by providing key transferable skills relevant to the world of work

Standard 15: The institution must proactively engage with the local & regional business community

- 15.1. Employers must be encouraged to forge links with the institution so as to provide opportunities for internships and on-the-job training.
- Our response notes our proactive efforts to engage and maintain contact with employers and the professions, especially through the Programme Advisory Boards which have employers and important industry figures as members. It also notes that we regularly host workshops with industry partners seeking views about market demands and opportunities for student internships and on-the-job training.

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy when students and employees of the university are satisfied with the quality of work provided.

5. Tell us about your hobbies

I enjoy sports such as tennis, football, and swimming and sea walking, in addition to travelling.

6. Tell us about your favourite food

My favourite food is Seafood. I also like vegetables, and I enjoy barbeque and cooking.

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

“Book of the Inheritance” for Professor Ibrahim Habib. That’s needed in our life.

8. Final words

Thank you for the interview, and thanks to our University President for his great, and continuous efforts in the developing our beloved University.

It adds that all ASU programmes include an internship course, with oversight by a designated Head of Training and Internship Unit in every college who monitors student internships and maintains strong links with hosting companies in collaboration with the Deanship of Student Affairs. It concludes by noting the close links we have with employers and our continuing work to broaden the number and range of internships, including the recent signing of several more MOUs 13.2. The research strategy of the institution must be in line with national priorities.

- 15.2. Students must be made aware of the current job market and provided with opportunities to engage with prospective employers. 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
- Our response notes that we aim to bridge the gap between formal education and the industry by establishing a Career Development & Alumni Affairs Office in the Deanship of Student Affairs in line with our Career Services Policy, to assist students by
 - providing guidance and counselling to students on career issues
 - raising student awareness of the current job market (including specific vacancies and information about and external job fairs, and arranging employer visits to ASU)
 - organising student trips and workplace site visits
 - assisting employers in recruiting ASU students and building relationships with local industries and businesses
 - representing ASU in external job fairs
 - organising ASU's annual "Job Fair" to bring companies on-campus to present their job openings and collect CVs and cover letters
- 15.3. The institution must engage with the wider community, such as employers and its alumni, in a formal and systematic manner in order to obtain feedback on the relevance of its curriculum and to identify areas for development and improvement.
- Our response notes that we have established Programme Advisory Boards to help us engage with the wider community and their membership includes industrial experts as well as potential employers who can provide insight into current and future skills requirements in commercial and professional sectors. It adds that PABs normally have 6 to 10 members (at least 50% external from industry/professions that would be potential employers of ASU graduates) and a role to:
 - Provide professional and industry-based perspectives to link academic programmes with industry trends and developments
 - Help colleges to identify, monitor and contribute to the development of skills needed in industry and relevant professions
 - Assist colleges in the ongoing review of their curricula, to ensure their relevance to industry and the profession
 - Provide advice in the development of new academic programmes to ensure alignment with the requirements of the industry
 - It concludes by noting that as part of our engagement with industry, we conduct regular surveys of alumni and employers, which allow us to obtain feedback on the relevance of curricula and to identify areas for improvement (the Alumni Survey asks graduates their views on the extent to which their programme prepared them for their current work and the Employers' Survey assesses how confident they are that our alumni have the right skills and preparation for work)
- 15.4. The institution must collect data on the destination of its graduates to inform and improve its relationships with the world of work and its engagement with the Kingdom's employability agenda.

- Our response notes that we systematically collect and analyse statistics on graduate employment, because this is one of our ASU Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). We conduct regular alumni surveys to gain feedback on how programmes are preparing students to meet workplace requirements and empowering them with the 21st Century Skills (problem solving, critical thinking, communication and teamwork) with the Kingdom’s employability agenda (National Higher Education Strategy 2014-2024)

15.5. Where appropriate, students must be given the opportunity to attain relevant workplace experience.

- Our response notes the ASU view that practical experience in a professional setting is essential to the development of students’ skills, knowledge, and attitudes and that, in light of this, we have developed our Student Internship Policy. It also notes that our compulsory internship course is intended to be a quality educational experience, which reinforces learning by giving students an opportunity to gain practical experience by applying their knowledge and skills in the workplace. It describes the role of the designated Head of Internship Unit in each college to plan, schedule, monitor and evaluate student internships and adds that there is an Academic Internship Supervisor for each college responsible for visiting the student-trainee in their internship workplace, developing links with Industry Internship Supervisors, supervising the student during the internship and regularly following up on their activities, and participating in the evaluation of their final report. It concludes by noting that ASU has recently signed several MOUs to provide more internship opportunities for students

Standard 16: The institution must demonstrate its commitment to community service & engagement

16.1. Institutional strategy must take into account the Kingdom’s national indicators and demonstrate a commitment to community and social outreach and lifelong learning.

- Our response notes that in line with Bahrain’s National Higher Education Strategy, ASU demonstrates a strong commitment to community and social outreach, through placing Community Engagement (CE) as one of the seven pillars of our Strategic Plan 2015-2020 which commits us to “creating an impact on society through all activities, recognising its duty to ensure that students, alumni and staff understand their obligations as citizens to engage with and support the community” through four key priorities focused on: Consultancy & Knowledge Sharing; Community Support; Open Campus; and Public Outreach. Our response also notes that this enables us to produce graduates who meet Bahrain’s Higher Education Strategy goal of being “able to contribute to the labour market, civil society and community development within Bahrain”. It further notes (as per our Graduate Attributes) that ASU “strives to prepare its graduates to be leaders in their discipline by being committed to life-long learning through participating and seeking continuous development” through providing a wealth of online resources to develop student skills and knowledge and by organising events aimed at promoting lifelong learning to keep students’ knowledge and skills up-to-date

16.2. The institution must demonstrate that it engages in community outreach and the provision of mutually beneficial services.

- Our response confirms that ASU’s Community Engagement Policy highlights the promotion of a culture of service amongst students and staff, noting that CE activities are overseen by the Community Engagement Committee (chaired by Vice President for Administration, Finance and Community Engagement) which monitors activities through regular reports and an annual report. It further notes that ASU hosts a wide range of initiatives involving local communities, employers, schools, charities, Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), professional societies and public and private organisations; including use of ASU’s premises by local community groups free of charge; involvement of ASU students and staff in cultural and social activities; and lectures delivered by ASU staff as requested by local community groups. It further notes that CE activities are publicised on ASU’s website, social media channels and in the President’s News Digest.

16.3. The institution must encourage its staff and students to engage with the local community around it through cultural, social and community service activities.

- Our response notes again that Community Engagement is a pillar of the Strategic Plan, with a University-level committee to oversee activities and encourage active participation by staff and students. It also notes that contributions to the community take various forms: involvement in projects for cultural, social and community service activities; encouraging students to volunteer for NGOs etc; committee participation to promote social/cultural awareness; producing graduates who have skills and knowledge allied to a sense of civic duty and social responsibility. It further notes that ASU student clubs (including volunteering, media, cultural, women, talent and sports) are actively engaged in CE activities including art exhibitions, sport competitions, support and visits to orphans, the elderly and people with special needs, and other activities and initiatives. Finally it notes that as well as including CE activity as part of discussions with line managers (informally and at formal appraisal), ASU has KPIs for CE activity and gathers statistical data on participation in CE events

16.4. There must be a dedicated team which has responsibility for the institution's work in community service.

- Our response confirms that ASU has a dedicated Community Engagement Office, reporting to the Vice President for Administration, Finance & Community Engagement, who also chairs the ASU Community Engagement Committee. It notes that the CE Office is responsible for:
 - Providing volunteering and social engagement opportunities to students and staff
 - Providing studies, consultations and services to NGOs, public and private entities
 - Organising training workshops, seminars and conferences related to CE activities
 - Reporting on and publicising CE activities and preparing an annual report

16.5. The institution must produce an annual report detailing the community services it has been engaged in.

- Our response confirms that ASU's Community Engagement Office prepares a comprehensive annual report covering all ASU's CE activities and that the report is submitted to the Vice President for Administration, Finance and Community Engagement for review/approval and made available on the website. It also notes that we monitor the impact of CE activities through feedback from participants and beneficiaries, review of media coverage and through discussion at the CE Committee.

PARTICIPATION OF ASU LIBRARY IN THE 18TH BAHRAIN INTERNATIONAL BOOK FAIR

ASU library has participated in the 18th Bahrain International Book Fair, which started on 28 March till April 2018. ASU's publications have been displayed in the book fair and were available for immediate purchase. The objectives of this participation were to introduce the ASU publications to the academic Bahraini community and market the library as a contributing factor of the ASU research community.



WORK SESSION ON COMMITTEES' BEST PRACTICES

On Thursday 12 April 2018, Ms. Eman Alsadeq, Head of Governance and Strategic Planning Unit, delivered a presentation to the chairs of the various University and College level committees at ASU.

The presentation focused on the standing orders for committees as mentioned in the committees' Terms of Reference with an emphasis on issues related to the Delegation of Powers, Authority of Chair, Quorum, Postponement or Cancellation of Meetings, Conduct of business and proceedings, Attendance and Confidentiality.



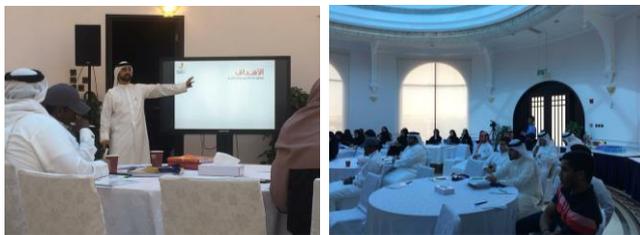
The session was a good opportunity to remind the staff members who take part in some of the University's committees of the best practices associated with conducting committee meetings.

After the presentation delivered by Ms. Eman and the ensuing interesting discussions that took place, Mr. Hatem, Head of Internal Audit Unit and Coordinator of the ISO Certification Project, presented to the audience the coded templates to be used for Meeting Agendas and Minutes of Meetings.

At the end, Professor Ghassan emphasized the importance of conducting all the committees' meetings as per the schedule planned at the beginning of the year, minuting them properly and ensuring that there is solid and evidenced communication between the committees connected with a reporting line as specified in the Committees' TOR.

“HOW TO MARKET YOURSELF” WORKSHOP

On Wednesday 4 April 2018, the Career Development and Alumni Affairs office at the Deanship of Student Affairs organized an important workshop called “How to Market Yourself” which was delivered by Mr. Mohammed Ali from Tamkeen. This career development workshop aimed to prepare our graduating students and Alumni job seekers to the world of work.



The main topics delivered at the workshop were: (a) the recruitment process (b) How to search for jobs? (c) How to be prepared at interviews? (d) How to write your CV? (e) The skills needed to get and keep the right job. A large number of graduating students and alumni attended this very useful and beneficial workshop.

“ONTOLOGY FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE IN HIGHER EDUCATION”

In line with the research seminar series, the College of Administrative Sciences held its third seminar on Thursday 12 April, 2018, from 10:30 to 11:30 am at Abdullah Nass Hall. The title of the seminar was “Ontology For Quality Assurance In Higher Education” presented by Mr. Siddiq Babikir and attended by the President of the University, the deans and many colleagues.



The purpose of this seminar was to confirm the changing landscape of higher education influenced by trend such as globalization and internationalization, involved many kinds of stakeholders with diverse perspectives on the quality of higher education, and issues of students and staff mobility raised concerns about reciprocal recognition of study programmes and qualifications offered by Higher Education Providers (HEPs). In addition, developments that have taken place over the years in response to the ongoing demands for quality reforms in higher education are either national, sub national, or regional, with only few of global relevance.

State-of-the-art innovative solutions are required to maintain the quality of such diversified higher education. Efforts to integrate developed mechanisms into a more consolidated and unified approach under one comprehensive and integrated framework are needed. This study demonstrates the applicability and usefulness of domain models with the phenomenon of quality in higher education domain to support shared understanding, communication, domain learning and problem solving by introducing a more universal approach to the domain of quality assurance. Therefore, this research rooted in design science research, utilized the systemic approach, concepts and activities of domain engineering, ontology engineering, conceptual modeling and domain ontologies to create a unified view of quality academic programmes in the form of ontology-based conceptual model for quality assurance of academic programmes in higher education as a reusable artefact.

This work contributes to the quality in higher education in general and the domain of quality assurance of academic programmes in particular by proposing reference ontology that can be used for facilitating the processes of design, development, monitoring and review of academic programmes to assure their quality.

The audience showed interest in the topic and shared and proposed constructive ideas for future research.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER RECEIVED HALA YAQOOB YUSEF (ASU STUDENT) IN HIS OFFICE

Deputy Prime Minister Shaikh Ali bin Khalifa Al Khalifa received at Gudaibiya Palace, his office employee Hala Yaqoob Yusef (ASU student) who presented him with a copy of her Masters dissertation in Human Resource Management (MHRM) program which she obtained with honours from ASU and was supervised by Dr Khairi Omar.



Hala was an excellent student, repeatedly demonstrated her high motivation, dedication, discipline, and strength of character to be a good model to for her collogues. She has strong interpersonal skills and continually exemplified admirable leadership qualities.

This fantastic achievement of our student reflects the excellent performance in our university in the quality of our student's outputs.

ASU DELEGATION VISITED THE BRITISH UNIVERSITY IN EGYPT

On 11/12 April, an ASU delegation visited the British University in Egypt (BUE) in Cairo. The purpose of the visit was to explore potential future collaboration between ASU and BUE and to discuss administration of programmes that ASU and BUE each offer in partnership with London South Bank University (LSBU). The ASU delegation consisted of Dr Assem Al Hajj (Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development), Ms Catherine Hogan (Head of International Partnerships and President's Projects Coordinator) and Dr Marwan Abdeldayem (Programme Coordinator for Management and Business Studies).



The ASU delegation was received by Professor Ahmed Hamad, BUE President, together with Professor Leslie Croxford (Senior Vice President, Teaching and Learning), Professor Yehia Bahei-El-Din (Vice President, Research and Enterprise), Mr Assem El Syad (Head of Quality and Validation) and Mr Kevin Millam (BUE Teaching and Learning Coordinator).



BUE was established in 2005 as a joint initiative of the Egyptian and UK governments. It offers dual degree programmes, most in partnership with LSBU and two with Queen Margaret University Edinburgh UK (QMU). The BUE/LSBU partnership covers undergraduate and graduate programmes in business, economics, engineering, mass communication and political science for nearly 4,000 students and is the largest UK TNE provision in the MENA region.

Six meeting sessions were held during ASU's two-day visit to BUE, covering BUE programmes (including content, structure, entry/ English requirements); BUE's partnership with LSBU (including validation, student record system and joint student activities); research and enterprise; quality assurance and enhancement; demonstration of BUE's English placement test; and potential areas of collaboration. At the end of the visit, the ASU delegation was also given a tour of the BUE campus, including the Library.



The visit established several areas for mutually-beneficial future collaboration, including student/staff exchanges and summer schools; benchmarking; staff development (including HEA); and data collation and analysis tools (dashboard and DSS).

Overall the visit was highly successful and the BUE President expressed gratitude to ASU for taking the initiative in suggesting the visit. Next steps will include preparation of a formal Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between ASU and BUE.



THE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT OFFICE ACTIVITIES

Dr. Al-Hamami Awarded For Supporting the Community

On 4 April 2018, Dr. Mohammad Alaa Hussain Al-Hamami, Manager of the Community Engagement Office was awarded for his contribution in raising awareness about social media and his efforts in supporting the community.

Dr. Al-Hamami had the honor to present the awards to the participants in the community capacity building program, which was organized by Tafawuq Consulting Center for Development and the Social Media Club in Bahrain in a strategic partnership with Tamkeen Labor Fund and in cooperation with the United Nations Development Program (UNDP).



ASU Supported a Visit to Batelco House for the Care of Anonymous Children

The Community Engagement Office at Applied Science University supported an entertainment visit to Batelco House for the Care of Anonymous Children organized by Al-Hooraa and Al-Gudaibya Social Center on Saturday 31 March 2018 from 10 am to 1 pm.



ASU student Shikha AlZaied, who played a major role in organizing the visit thanked the University for supporting the event. The event included a lot of activities for the children such as competitions, coloring and drawing, distributing gifts, hena, face painting, color sand war, and jerba show.

REMINDER OF THE WEEK

Institutional Accreditation Inspection Visit: 24 to 27 June 2018 (10 weeks from now)

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"Teaching is the art of leading students into a situation in which they can only escape by thinking."

C T Bassoppo-Moyo

Happy Reading!