PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

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ASU
جامعة العلوم التطبيقية
APPLIED SCIENCE UNIVERSITY

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 19th issue of the 3rd year of the President's News Digest.

Over the next few weeks, I will be addressing topics related to the Self Evaluation Report, which is part of the Institutional Accreditation by the HEC, in order to keep our staff and students informed about the content of the report. In this issue of the News Digest, I will be covering Area 1, which is related to Governance, Strategy, and Financial Management. In this area, it is important for all of us to understand the organisational chart of the University, the separation of governance and management, the importance of how we support academic decisions through finance, and we should all be aware of the strategic plan and the University/s vision, mission and values. The following are extracts from the Self Evaluation Report (SER).

Area 1: Governance, Strategy And Financial Management

**Standard 1: The institution must be effectively and responsibly governed**

Key indicators

1.1. The organizational structure, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, directors or Board of Trustees, must be clearly defined, documented and understood by stakeholders including students.

1.2. The President, Vice-President, directors, board members and other relevant persons must be suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and be effective in carrying them out.

1.3. Policies, procedures and systems linking governance and management must be well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.

1.4. The institution must engage in appropriate risk management planning, which is administered and monitored by named individuals and conduct regular risk assessment exercises.

1.5. Any partnership or cross-border collaboration must contain a risk-management strategy to protect students should there be any dispute.

1.6. There must be a clear separation of ownership and responsibility for financial matters from academic decision making.

1.7. All relationships with other educational institutions and organizations must be defined formally and be fully transparent, with institutions compliant with partner or parent institutions' requirements, where applicable.

1.8. The institution must have a clear vision, mission and values which must underpin the institution's strategy and be in line with national and global educational objectives.

1.1 The organizational structure, including the role and extent of authority of any owners, directors or Board of Trustees, must be clearly defined, documented and understood by stakeholders including students.

The structure of Applied Science University is organised in a clear and coherent fashion, with appropriate arrangements for governance and management, as evidenced in its Organisational Chart. In this key indicator, the focus is on the Board of Directors, the Board of Trustees and the University Council. All these bodies have a clear and delimited remit and terms of reference, dealing with separate responsibilities in relation to the University. The roles and responsibilities of each body are clearly set out in ASU Basic Bylaw to ensure a clear delineation between these bodies in terms of both role and extent of authority, as outlined below.

The key responsibilities of each governance body are summarised below:
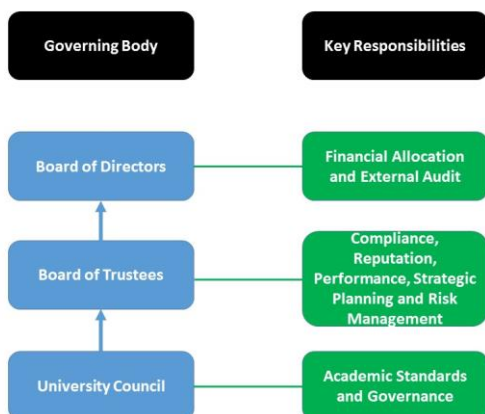
Fig.1.1 Key Responsibilities of Governing Bodies

1.2   The President, Vice-President, directors, board members and other relevant persons must be suitably qualified and experienced, understand their specific responsibilities and be effective in carrying them out.

The governance structure of the University is clearly defined and roles within it are clearly detailed. The qualifications and experience of the role holders are secured through a rigorous selection process whereby the Board of Trustees members are selected according to the BOT policy and approved by the Higher Education Council and the President and Vice Presidents are appointed by the Board of Trustees and approved by the Higher Education Council as well. In addition, the University has developed a rigorous recruitment policy. These roles are fully described in the job description handbook and the effectiveness of the role holders is regularly evaluated.

INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:

Name: Dr. Mohammed Yousif

Position: VP for Admin, Finance and Community Engagement

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

I grew up in Kuwait and moved to Bahrain, I always had a vision of becoming a managerial professional and that vision led me to where I am now.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I currently hold the position of VP for Admin, Finance and Community Engagement. I Work and coordinate with the University President and members of the University Council to ensure that the University will function in line with its vision, mission, values and strategic plan.

3.   Tell us about your aspirations for the University

My aspirations for the University is to achieve the accreditation, in addition, I would aspire for the university to become international

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

I enjoy meeting staff and achieving objectives.

5. Tell us about your hobbies

I like swimming, reading and watching movies.

1.3   Policies, procedures and systems linking governance and management must be well documented and effectively disseminated across the institution.

The ASU University Bylaws are the bedrock of all its regulations and they are therefore detailed and comprehensive. To assist communication of the Bylaws and expand on the rationale for and implementation of particular Bylaws, the University has created a comprehensive set of administrative and academic policies. The aspects of the Bylaws relating to systems linking governance and management are documented in Board of Trustees Policy.

1.4   The institution must engage in appropriate risk management planning, which is administered and monitored by named individuals and conduct regular risk assessment exercises

ASU has a "Risk Management Policy" which codifies its approach to risk management and is based on the adoption of "good practices in the identification, evaluation and cost-effective control of risks". This Policy also identifies the bodies, which have a part to play in the management of risk, and defines their respective responsibilities.

1.5   Any partnership or cross-border collaboration must contain a risk-management strategy to protect students should there be any dispute.

ASU is clear that risk factors relating to its partnerships and collaborations must be managed appropriately. All proposals for collaborative activity are therefore initially subject to scrutiny by both the Board of Trustees and the University Council.

1.6   There must be a clear separation of ownership and responsibility for financial matters from academic decision making.

The University Bylaws, particularly Article 1 in the Basic Bylaw, discuss the duties and responsibilities of the Board of Directors, which constitutes the owners of the University. The Board of Directors is the funding body of the University and its role is restricted to dealing with financial matters. The Board of Directors does not participate in decisions which impact on the academic work of the University. The Board makes decisions to support the optimum realization of the University's mission by ensuring that it is adequately funded. The University Council has the authority and responsibility to deal with all issues

6. Tell us about your favourite food

I love Seafood.

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

Currently I read the book "L'Etranger", by André Gide.

8. Final words

Teamwork is the essence of achievement; we are all dedicated in raising our beloved University to become the best university in the region.

related to the quality of teaching, learning, research and community engagement. Academic decision-making is clearly and solely the preserve of University Council as prescribed in Article 16 of the Basic Bylaw.

1.7   All relationships with other educational institutions and organizations must be defined formally and be fully transparent, with institutions compliant with partner or parent institutions' requirements, where applicable.

ASU makes sure that relationships with external bodies, including educational institutions and organisations, are defined and transparent through the use of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) and Memoranda of Agreement (MoA).

1.8   The institution must have a clear vision, mission and values which must underpin the institution's strategy and be in line with national and global educational objectives.

As an institution of higher learning, ASU operates with a Vision to become "one of the leading private universities supporting practical learning and scientific research in Bahrain and the Gulf". Its Mission states that "ASU is committed to offering an education that is accessible to academically competent students of Bahrain, the Gulf and beyond, and to deliver academic programmes of quality that graduate students equipped with knowledge and skills relevant locally and regionally. ASU is further dedicated to the promotion of a culture of learning and scientific research for its students, staff and faculty regionally and globally to engage meaningfully with the community at large". The achievement of the Mission and Vision is underpinned by values that are stated based on international and national educational values and principles drawn from those articulated in the UNESCO 2030 Framework for Education, Higher Education Academy (HEA) UK, Bahrain's Economic Vision 2030 and HEC strategies for higher education and for research.

Standard 2: The institution must have a clear and achievable strategy
Key indicators
3.1. The institution must have a clear strategy for the development of its higher education provision which must be supported by appropriate financial management and be in line with the HEC National Strategy for Higher Education in the Kingdom and the 2030 vision of a knowledge economy.
3.2. There must be provision for stakeholder, including students and employers, input to inform the strategic direction of the institution.
3.3. The strategy must be well communicated to all stakeholders including students, within and outside the institution.
3.4. Accurate data must be collected and collated systematically in order to provide a reliable measure of success against key performance indicators.
3.5. The governing body and senior management must conduct regular and systematic reviews of their own and the institution's overall performance and measure this performance against strategic targets.

2.1. The institution must have a clear strategy for the development of its higher education provision which must be supported by appropriate financial management and be in line with the HEC National Strategy for Higher Education in the Kingdom and the 2030 vision of a knowledge economy.

The University recognises the importance of strategic planning to identify, direct and monitor its achievements and ensure that it consistently remains focused on its mission and is making progress towards achieving its vision. The University is committed to maintaining and further enhancing the University's position as a community-facing, community-engaged university, retaining a focus on excellence and the provision of the highest possible quality teaching and learning. This is underpinned by relevant research and knowledge transfer that is strongly aligned with preparing students for the workplace.

2.2 There must be provision for stakeholder, including students and employers, input to inform the strategic direction of the institution.

The University drafted its Strategic Plan 2015-2020 in light of the broad principles and precepts highlighted in indicator 2.1 to ensure alignment with published national priorities for higher education and research in the Kingdom of Bahrain. The development process used at the time of devising the original strategic plan and when this was revised was inclusive and interactive and great care was taken each time to ensure that it was consultative. ASU sought input from a wide range of internal and external stakeholders (senior management, academics, support staff, students and alumni, programme advisory boards as well as employers). Techniques used included current state assessment, consultative workshops, SWOT analysis and risk assessment.

2.3 The strategy must be well communicated to all stakeholders including students, within and outside the institution.

The process of developing the University's Strategic Plan was inclusive and, in the same way, the University ensured that the Plan was disseminated to all stakeholders, including students. All staff and students are made aware of the Strategic Plan at their respective inductions. In all engagement with employers, the University takes the opportunity to raise awareness of the strategic plan and gain confirmation that its strategic direction continues to meet their needs. The University also makes effective use of its display screens and its in-house publication – the President's News Digest – to maintain an awareness of the broad principles of the University's strategic ambitions. Evidence of the manner in which its strategic planning is embedded in its activities is provided in orientation and induction materials for both staff and students, the University website (http://www.asu.edu.bh/about-asu/strategy/) and a range of publicity materials that are distributed at events and to visitors to the University.

2.4 Accurate data must be collected and collated systematically in order to provide a reliable measure of success against key performance indicators.

Within the Strategic Plan, the Seven Pillars form our strategic objectives, and for each of these key priorities have been identified, supported by a series of key performance indicators (KPIs) covering critical areas of development activity. For this reason, the University is fully aware of the importance of systematically collecting reliable data to allow it to measure the extent to which it is meeting targets set in its KPIs. In order to monitor progress towards achieving KPIs, the data collected from various sources is then collated by use of the ASU's Institutional KPIs dashboard so that the senior management can form an overall view of performance against strategic priorities of the University.

2.5 The governing body and senior management must conduct regular and systematic reviews of their own and the institution's overall performance and measure this performance against strategic targets.

The Board of Trustees, the University Council and the senior management have adopted a comprehensive system to review performance regularly and systematically against the University's strategic targets, including:

- Annual Operational Plans devised at the beginning of the academic year by each academic and administrative section.
- Operational Plans Updates issued at the end of each semester by the academic and administrative sections of the University.
- Continuous assessment by the Board of Trustees, the University Council and the senior management using two types of reports (based on the Operational Plans Updates and prepared by the Governance and Strategic Planning Unit):

- Interim Strategy Implementation Report issued at the end of the first semester
- A comprehensive Strategy Implementation Report at the end of the academic year
- The ASU Dashboard for institutional KPIs to measure overall performance.
- Occasional internal audits.

Standard 3: Financial management must be open, honest and effective
Key indicators 3.1. The institution must conduct its financial matters transparently and with appropriate probity. 3.2. The institution's finances must be subject to regular independent external audit. 3.3. The institution must have robust and comprehensive budgetary procedures, which ensure that its resources are sufficient and which demonstrate it is capable of utilizing its financial resources efficiently and responsibly. 3.4. The institution must have a clear line of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation that takes into account the specific needs of each department. 3.5. Academic program managers must be given sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately to achieve 3.6. The program objectives and to maintain high standards.

3.1 The institution must conduct its financial matters transparently and with appropriate probity.

Applied Science University ensures that it complies with all relevant legislation and codes of practice relating to fiscal management. It adopts standard financial accounting principles based on International Finance Reporting Standards (IFRS) and appropriate financial measures and reporting mechanisms to demonstrate that it fulfils its responsibility to transparently demonstrate the provision of effective financial controls over the use of its funds. The University works towards achieving its strategic plan and its business objectives with respect to financial viability, achieving value for money, and safeguarding the assets of the institution. ASU's approach to fiscal management is set out in the University's Finance Policy. The University ensures that it operates its financial matters transparently through conducting a variety of meetings with the Deans/Heads/Directors throughout the academic year. In addition, all the aforementioned receive a monthly budget report from the Finance Department. Further details can be found in the University's "Finance Policy". The transparency and probity of the manner in which financial matters are conducted have been confirmed by external or internal auditors.

3.2 The institution's finances must be subject to regular independent external audit.

The Board of Directors has the ultimate authority and responsibility under the Bylaws for the University's fiscal management and retains full responsibility for external financial audit. The Board of Directors is responsible for determining the appointment and fees for external auditors and liaising with them when setting the nature and scope of the external audit before it begins. It also acts as the main link to discuss with the external auditors any problems or reservations arising from the interim and final audits and any other matters which the external auditors may wish to discuss. External auditors have the right to obtain any information they consider necessary and the Board of Directors will either directly facilitate access to such information or to specific personnel or delegate the task to the Board of Trustees or University President. The Board of Directors is also responsible for identifying and approving appropriate performance measures for external audit and for monitoring the conduct of the audit. The financial statements for each fiscal year are reviewed by the external auditors prior to approval by the Board of Directors.

3.3   The institution must have robust and comprehensive budgetary procedures which ensure that its resources are sufficient and which demonstrate it is capable of utilizing its financial resources efficiently and responsibly.

ASU has robust and comprehensive budgeting procedures. Budgets for all colleges/centres/departments are prepared annually through collaboration between the Finance Department and the relevant college/centre/department with a clear delineation of responsibility to ensure that budgets are adequate and allocated and used to support the operational plans of the University. The system for allocating budgets is communicated comprehensively to all staff involved and appropriate training is provided making use of customised training material.

Prior to the beginning of the academic year the Finance Department liaises with the primary budget holder (normally the dean of college/head of administrative department) and establishes estimated costs for academic and administrative staff. In addition, required expenditure on physical resources is collected (specific teaching materials or equipment which is required to meet the needs of an individual college/centre/department). The centre/department must also take into consideration any costs for proposed new developments or projected enhancements to existing programmes. Detailed justification is required for all estimated costs and any assumptions on which they are based.

Once budgets for colleges/departments have been operationalised the Finance Department provides regular (monthly) reports, which alert the college/centre/department of budget variances, and works with them to resolve the variance. In making any revisions to the budget because of subsequently identified variances, while in revision, the budget allocated for the programmes will remain untouched.

3.4   The institution must have a clear line of responsibility and authority for budgeting and resource allocation that takes into account the specific needs of each department.

The Vice President for Administration, Finance and Community Engagement is responsible for preparation of the budget and resource allocation, which is then endorsed by the President and the University Council before approval by the BOT and the BOD. In exercising this responsibility, the Vice President for Administration, Finance and Community Engagement and the Director of Administration and Finance meets the deans, heads of department/unit, and consider their requirements which are mainly specified in their operational plans. It is the responsibility of the Vice President for Academic Affairs and Development and deans/heads to clearly identify all resources required for the efficient operation of its Departments and programmes and to be able to justify these during the process for allocating the budget.

3.5   Academic program managers must be given sufficient autonomy to allocate resources appropriately to achieve the program objectives and to maintain high standards.

Academic programme leaders at ASU are given sufficient autonomy to support their programmes. It is important to stress that as part of the budgeting planning process the college deans must ensure that department heads and programme leaders are closely consulted and involved. When considering the required budget for delivery of programmes, the programme leaders must account for any costs required for the implementation of enhancements, which have been identified by internal or external reviews, or through student feedback in order for the Dean of the college to ensure that resources are appropriately allocated.

CONGRATULATIONS

The University President, Professor Ghassan Fouad Aouad, along with all ASU members, congratulates the Chairman of the Board of Directors Mr. Sameer Nass & the Chairman of the Board of Trustees Professor Waheeb AlKhaja on the occasion of their success in Bahrain Chamber of Commerce & Industry (BCCI) Elections.

Many congratulations to Dr Mohammed Alhamami for his promotion to Associate Professor in the Department of Management Information Systems

7TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON MATHEMATICS AND INFORMATION SCIENCES

Professor Mahmoud Abdel-Aty participated in the 7th International Conference on Mathematics, and Information Sciences, which was held in Sohag University in Egypt, from 15 to 17 February 2018 as a Chairman of the Conference and Keynote Speaker.

Prof Abdel-Aty spoke about the entanglement and its relation to the quantum communication. The analytical mathematical model has been presented with an application to the superconducting materials interacting with Nano-resonators.

The main aim of the conference was to promote, encourage, and bring together researchers in the field of pure and applied mathematics. This international conference was open to all researchers in pure applied mathematics. Young researchers and PhD students have participated and presented some papers and posters. 120 members from 16 different countries participated in the Conference.

The conference is a part of a series of conferences dedicated to bringing top scientists and technologists to Egypt thereby helping to raise science and technology to the highest international standard, raise awareness of governments and industry to the importance and excitement of new research and development in technologies, and engender collaborations and research exchanges. The previous conferences of this Series were:

- 1st International Conference on Mathematics & Information Security, Sohag, Egypt, 13-15 Nov. 2009
- 2nd International Conference on Mathematics & Information Sciences, Sohag, Egypt, 9-12 Sep. 2011
- 3rd International Conference on Mathematics & Information Science, Luxor, Egypt, 28-30 Dec. 2013
- 4th International Conference on Mathematics & Information Science, Zewail City, 5-7 Feb. 2015
- 5th International Conference on Mathematics and Information Sciences, Zewail City, 11-13 Reb. 2016
- 6th International Conference on Mathematics and Information Sciences, Zewail City, 11-13 Reb. 2016

KNOWLEDGE SHARING SESSION ON INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION

On 8 March 2018 a delegation from ASU attended a Knowledge Sharing Session on Institutional Accreditation, organised by the Higher Education Council (HEC). The ASU delegation consisted of Dr Assem Al Hajj (Vice President, Academic Affairs and Development), Professor Hilal Al-Bayatti (Director of the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre), Ms Catherine Hogan (Head of International Partnerships)

and Ms Eman Alsadeq (Head of Governance and Strategic Planning). The Session was also attended by delegates from two other universities.

The purpose of the Knowledge Sharing Session was to provide information on the HEC accreditation process for the three universities who are in the first batch to submit applications and who will be visited this semester by Inspection Panels.

There were two presenters at the Knowledge Sharing Session. First, Dr Muna Al-Qouz (HEC's Director of Accreditation and Licensing) spoke about the general principles of accreditation and the benefits of the process. Then Dr Reem Al-Buainain (Bahrain Polytechnic's Director of Quality, Measurement, Analysis and Planning) spoke about the experience of going through the accreditation process as part of the HEC pilot. Her talk included general activities during the process and a section on "lessons learned".

Questions addressed to HEC about the accreditation process included

- Why was the accreditation/reaccreditation cycle four years and not five or seven years?
- Why was the follow-up visit scheduled after only one year?
- Why did the process include classroom observations?
- Why were there no local or regional representatives on inspection panels?

Dr Muna promised to take the questions back for discussion at the Secretariat.

Overall the Knowledge Sharing Session provided a very useful opportunity for participants to gain knowledge of the process and to consider aspects that would be useful in their own preparations.

The ASU delegates were pleased to note that, as a result of our thorough preparations led by the Accreditation Group, most of the useful suggestions mentioned by Dr Reem in her presentation had already been considered. ASU is therefore well on track for a successful accreditation later this year.

A VISIT BY UNITEN

On Wednesday 7 March 2018, ASU was visited by Dato Prof Ir Dr Kamal Nasharuddin Bin Mustapha, Vice Chancellor, from Universiti Tenaga Nasional (UNITEN), Malaysia to discuss opportunities for collaboration. UNITEN is one of the leading universities in Malaysia, and ASU is proud to have 6 academic staff who graduated from it. A meeting was held with the presence of ASU's Chairman of the BOTs, the President, senior management staff and ASU's UNITEN alumni where both parties shared ideas on how to benefit from one another's expertise. The main focus included research collaboration for both students and academic staff, joint supervision, a research methodology programme, exchange visits, research projects in energy and sustainability, etc. Prof. Bin Mustapha was very pleased to see his alumni holding important roles at ASU. The meeting ended with Prof. Bin Mustapha showing a video about the university, followed by a lunch and a group photograph.

ASU TO OBTAIN THE ISO 9001:2015 CERTIFICATION

On Thursday 8 March 2018, ASU successfully underwent Stage 2 Audit for the ISO 9001:2015 Certification to become one of the very few universities in the Kingdom of Bahrain to achieve this remarkable feat.

This achievement demonstrates once again the University's strong commitment towards continuous improvement and students' satisfaction as these are the staples of any quality management system.

The Stage 2 Audit came on the heels of Stage 1 Audit where the external auditor checked with Mr. Hatem Dammak, coordinator of the ISO Project, all the documentation related to the establishment of a Quality Management System for the University's administrative provision as per the ISO 9001:2015 standard. Stage 2 Audit, however, consists of site visits and interviews with the key departments, units and deanships within the scope of the certification.

It all started with the "Opening Meeting" where the external auditor presented the purpose, scope and schedule of his visit. Attended by the University's President and the senior management of the University, this meeting gave the auditor assurance that ASU's top management is strongly and effectively committed to the principles and guidelines of the ISO 9001:2015 standard, especially after hearing from Prof. Ghassan Aouad and Dr. Mohammed Yousif about the investments and resources allocated by the University to the ISO project.

After the Opening Meeting, the auditor moved to conducting site visits and interviews as per scheduled, accompanied by Mr. Hatem, internal auditor of the University. The start was with the QAAC, represented by Ms. Mariam Ali, where the auditor focused on verifying compliance with the clauses related to the "Context of the Organization", "Quality Management System and its Processes, "Documented Information", "Quality Objectives and Planning to achieve them", "Actions to Address Risks & Opportunities" and "Continual Improvement".

They then moved to the Department of Procurement and Logistics Services, represented by Mr. Majed Mohammad, where the focus was on the "Control of externally provided processes", "preservation" and procurement best practices in general. They were also joined by Mr. Abdulla Al-Khaja, Director of Administration and Finance, whose presence was instrumental to better explain to the external auditor the way ASU conducts its purchases and how it

ties with the Financial Affairs Department and other departments. Mr. Abdulla accompanied the auditors for the rest of the day and contributed significantly to portraying the University's Quality Management System at each department in a clear and cohesive way.

The next stop was the HR Department, represented by Ms. Maryam Almerbati and Mr. Yasser Abuseneh, where the auditor focused on clauses related to "Organizational Roles, Competence and Training".

He then moved to the Deanship of Admissions and Registration, represented by Mr. Furat Haddad and Mr. Siddiq Babaker, after having a quick tour of the premises, including the Library and Classrooms. The focus at the Deanship of Admissions and Registration was on "Identification and Traceability", "Release of Products and Services" and "Control of nonconforming outputs". They then moved to the Deanship of Student Affairs, represented by Dr. Faiza Zitouni and Ms. Hadeel Bucheerei, where the focus was on "post-delivery activities", "control of changes", "Property belonging to customers" and "Handling of Customer Complaints process".

The visits were conducted by visiting the Directorate of Marketing & Public Relations, represented by Mr. Abdulhameed Baqi, and then the Directorate of ICT & KM, represented by Mr. Rifat Hussain, where the focus was on issues related to "Communication", "Resources" and "Awareness".

At the end of the day, the external auditor held the "Closing Meeting" to announce the result of his audit and share his thoughts and impressions, where he was joined by Prof. Waheeb Al-Khaja, Chairman of the Board of Trustees, ASU senior management including Prof. Ghassan Aouad the University's President, and the staff members who have been part of the ISO certification project. The auditor went on to explain that he was really impressed by the level of adherence of the University's to the quality principles and practices mentioned in the international standard and that he was given absolute assurance that the quality management system at the University is being properly implemented as per the ISO 9001:2015 standard, thus he recommended the University to obtain the Certification. The attendees cheered in joy as this achievement crowns months of hard work and gives the University an additional boost in its preparation for institutional accreditation.

The University shall officially receive the ISO Certification in about three weeks from RICI (Resource Inspections Canada Incorporated), the certifying body headquartered in Canada.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN DAY

On 8 March 2018, Applied Science University celebrated the International Women Day. This special day is to honour the role of women and their great achievements around the word. Professor Ghassan Aouad, the President of ASU, presented his great wishes to all women at ASU with an inspiring speech of encouragement and highlighted the important role of women on those accomplishments that made an extraordinary positive impact in our world.

SCHOOLS AND EXHIBITIONS CAMPAIGN

As part of the Directorate of Marketing and Public Affairs strategic plan implementation of school visits and educational exhibitions for this second semester, 15 Government Schools and 2 Private Schools have been visited in February 2018, by the Directorate team; Mr Abdulhameed Baqi, Acting Office Manager of Marketing & Student Recruitment and Mr Baha Karaimeh, Public Relation Office Manager. During the visits, more than 5048 students inquired about both existing and hosted programmes at ASU.

The Government Schools Visits

Mr. Abdulhameed & Mr. Baha have met with more than 1901 students from 6 Government Girls Secondary Schools (Sitra School, Hidd School, Al Noor Girls School, Al Isteqlal, Saar School & Khawla School) to promote the University's overall programmes. In fact, the main focus of the students was the University's international programmes, primarily London South Bank University (LSBU), where they expressed their interest mainly in the Architectural Design Engineering. Other students inquired about the College of Law programmes, while a minority inquired about the other majors such as Interior Design, Graphic Design & Computer Science from the College of

Arts and Science, followed by the Management Information Systems, Political Science from the College of Administrative Sciences.

Other queries included career paths, admission procedures, fees and payment, scholarships for students with 90+ GPA, and facilities and services at ASU. Special requests were raised with regards to Medicine, Biochemical Engineering & Media and Communication Programmes.

On the other hand, the visits also addressed 7 Government Schools, Technical Institutions for Boys and received more than 2344 inquiries from different fields: Science, Electronic, Mechanical, Commerce and Literature. Their questions firstly focused on the College of Law, the length of study and teaching language and then the College of Engineering, mainly the Civil & Construction Engineering. A minority asked about the other programmes like Business Administration, Accounting, and Political Science. Some other students showed interests in the Graphic, Interior Design and Computer Science. In general, queries focused on the programmes study plans, career's path, scholarships and special discount offered to outstanding students, admission procedures along with the available financial aids. Special enquiries were addressed about Electromagnetic studies and Aviation Engineering.

Private Schools Exhibitions

Further to the above visits, around 803 students from 2 private schools (The Gulf Pearl International School and the Pakistani Urdu School) have visited ASU desk during their career exhibition and inquired about the University's British Programmes.

Students from different high school programmes like IB, IGCSE & the CBSE showed their interest & inquired about both London South Bank University and Cardiff Metropolitan University programmes and study plans, future career's path in Bahrain market, scholarship, special rates for outstanding students in addition to admission procedures and available financial arrangement.

Schools Visits to ASU

On the last week of February 2018, Around 22 students and their Academic Advisor Mr. Mohamed Ishaq from Al Iman Islamic Private School have visited and toured the campus, where the Acting Head of Marketing and Student Recruiting Office, Mr Abdulhameed Baqi briefed them about ASU and visited all the facilities.

20 more upcoming schools are to be visited by the directorate team during March and April 2018, in addition to other private schools, institutions and social organizations, and career exhibitions within the Kingdom of Bahrain and Saudi Arabia as part of the campaign to raise the profile the University and enhance the employability rate.

STATEMENT OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY – PROF SAAD DARWISH

My philosophy of teaching has been developed from my many years of teaching experience. As I reflect on my beliefs regarding teaching and learning, I find that my mission as a teacher is threefold: to encourage positive learning; to trigger learner enthusiasm for learning; and to offer a strong foundation for lifelong learning.

To accomplish these aspects of my teaching mission, I enjoy applying a wide variety of strategies based on essential educational principles encompassing cognitive functioning, learning theory, diversity issues, instructional planning and assessment. I believe all students can learn and interact and that they all have the ability to succeed in challenging tasks. Asking students for their opinions via open-ended questions, developing analytical skills, encouraging evaluation and connecting to prior knowledge and experience – all of these activities widen students' range of knowledge and skill. My students are expected to complete their essays and assignments and manage their own time effectively.

These ideas are what I keep in mind as I seek suitable methods of teaching – methods which will support student learning in order to achieve the required ILOs. Over the years I have taught many courses, which have required my hands-on involvement in terms of helping the students to be equipped, competent and knowledgeable. This is why I use blended methods: individual tutorials, interactive seminars, group projects, online case studies for analysis and guest speakers. I have found that using a variety of approaches makes my students engaged and responsive.

I have also learned to take extra care to help students organize and balance their time between college lectures and their independent work outside the classroom, so that they become more successful. The varied approaches I use are related to the nature of the subjects that I teach.

To prepare a student to become an entrepreneur and innovator requires special care. The course leader must be capable of providing all the required teaching and learning material to mould the student into an entrepreneurial and innovative personality. The special nature of teaching for entrepreneurship calls for the students to be presented with real life situations. For this reason, I design interactive class activities to contextualize information so that students can engage with the topic and have the opportunity to connect critical issues and real life knowledge with practice.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF TEACHING PHILOSOPHY AND EDUCATIONAL THEORIES – PROF ROBERT NEWTON

It is important, when reflecting on educational practice in the classroom, to consider how learning is supported and to do this it is useful to examine educational theories that have been developed in relation to student learning. In itself this is a very extensive area of investigation so the main objective is to discuss broadly the historical development of 3 major influences on teaching theory – behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism.

Behaviourism

Behaviourist theories which influenced teaching stressed the importance of feedback and reinforcement actions. Associationist philosophers (such as Aristotle, Hobbes and Hume) provided the philosophical basis for the theory of behaviourism. Hume's work on associations and antecedents, the work of Brown and Ebbinghaus on 'recency' and vividness of association and Bain's links between association and sensory stimuli were all influential in developing this into a theoretical model for a behaviourist approach in educational psychology. (Black, 1995).

The main points on which the behaviourist school of educational thought was based were founded on a view that learning revolves around pairing stimuli and responses. Educational theorists implicitly believed education was essentially a form of 'operant conditioning'. This led to the adoption of a very simple view that education was basically a consequence of applying the correct stimuli to elicit an appropriate response. Educational interventions were cantered around 're-enforcement' – positive re-enforcement when the 'correct' response was provided by the learner and negative re-enforcement being the consequence of a 'wrong' response. It was argued that these reinforcers encouraged learners to respond appropriately. Ultimately, therefore, learning was something which could be seen as external to the learner and for learning to take place the behaviour (or response of the learner) simply has to be modified or shaped by the educational experience. Thus Thorndike' 'laws' for instructional design were based on very simple principles i.e.

1. Setting behaviour goals

2. Determining re-enforcers

3. Select procedures to change behaviour

4. Implementing procedures

5. Evaluate progress and revise as necessary

However, as Newton (2001) observed:

'The exposes the fundamental weakness of the behaviourist approach in that it is based almost solely in achieving a 'transfer of learning' to the student and the sole manner in which this transfer is assessed or evaluated is that the student should be able to reproduce accurately the material with which he/she has been presented. This model of learning emphasises the systematic presentation of information and at its most extreme denies any individual differences in the learner. It is restricted to external observable behaviour and does not attempt to take into account any factors which might explain why a particular pattern of behaviour occurs. (Newton, 2001)

The theory of operant conditioning is often directly linked to the development of programmed instruction. Again, this approach saw the focus of instruction as the outcome behaviour of the learner and to an extent separate from process concerns and teacher behaviour and promoted a belief that the single most important factor which was central to 'learning' was the development of carefully constructed course materials.

In the 1970's and 1980's the work of Gagne and Briggs introduced a significant change in emphasis and focused attention on the internal characteristics of the learner. Whilst Gagné's work was initially very much based on achieving certain observable outputs from the learning process (which was typically a feature of behavioural theory) later developments of his theory attempted to explain the learning process in terms of how the mind constructs and assimilates knowledge. Gagné's theories, in particular, provide an interesting bridge between behaviourism and cognitive information processing (Davidson, 1998) but fundamentally they can still be seen to be quite firmly biased towards the former particularly with respect to the emphasis which they give to the design of instructional material.

Gagne's instructional theory has three major elements:

1. a classification of learning outcomes

2. internal and external conditions which are necessary for achieving these outcomes, and

3. events of instruction'

Gagné proposed nine steps (or instructional events) as the conditions under which learning should ideally take place. These steps are quite clearly based on a behaviourist model for instruction and constitute – gaining attention, relating objectives, stimulating recall of prior learning, presenting the stimulus, providing learning guidance, eliciting performance and providing feedback.

Although Gagne's writings clearly show an interest in individual processing of information the manner in which this is translated into instructional design is still clearly based around a behaviorist model.

Cognitive Approaches to Learning

Although it is often presented as historically 'more recent' than behaviourist theory the cognitive approach to learning has an equally long history. One of the earliest examples of a cognitive approach being recognised in educational psychology is to be found in the work of John Dewey. Dewey was interested in the application of science to educational practice. However, Dewey saw learning as an activity driven, not by reinforcement, but by the learner's sense of disequilibrium when presented with new experiences and ideas. For Dewey, if real growth was to occur the student must want to learn and be active in the learning process. He argued that the traditional reinforcement of information - given by the teacher, memorized and given back by the child - led only to superficial learning. The job of the teacher was to create an environment in which learners can and should be presented with problematic situations which they would be motivated to resolve by learning. The idea that in order to provide "deep" or meaningful learning it is necessary to adopt a constructivist approach to the learning process can be traced back directly to Dewey and was clearly a very important influence on works by Piaget.

In particular it is demonstrated in Piaget's writings on development of schema ore schemata and the processes of assimilation and accommodation of learning which recognised the important process of the learning changing existing cognitive structures to make sense of the environment. This was also the standpoint taken by Ausubel who suggested that cognitive structures represent the basis for all learning experiences and Ausubel was concerned to determine how learners could be encouraged to recognize and manipulate new information and integrate this with existing cognitive structures.

The cognitivist approach is characterised by the fact that the learner is central to the learning process and constructs new knowledge on the basis of prior experience and learning. This philosophy of learning emphasises the importance of involving the student actively in developing his or her own view of the subject and in questioning information which is supplied by examining the logic and reasoning behind the ideas being presented and relating them to previous experience or knowledge.

This is pursued to a logical conclusion by those who argue that in fact all knowledge is essentially constructed by the user and the goal of education is to assist students to construct their own knowledge rather than directing them towards a 'correct' belief or 'established' knowledge.

Constructivism

The concerns of Piaget, Bruner and Ausubel, and others can be seen to have had powerful influences in the development of the theory of 'constructivism' as put forward by Jonassen and others (Duffy and Jonassen, 1992). Constructivists believe it is important to encourage reflexivity, the process whereby a student becomes aware of how their own thinking processes work. Helping students to think about how they are arriving at conclusions, or how they go about solving problems, may help to form more meaningful links between knowledge and develop more elaborate schemas. In a seminal work on social constructivism Vygotsky proposed that learners construct knowledge based on the results of active learning (a key claim put forward for business simulations) and the teacher must create a learning environment which allows students to construct their knowledge by experiencing and interacting with the environment.

Pedagogic scenarios based on this constructivist approach are central to arguments which see the basis of all meaningful learning experiences is that knowledge must be bound to the situation in which it is learned. In order to learn students must act in environments which replicate the real world as closely as possible. From this a wealth of educational approaches were advocated e.g. problem-based learning, collaborative learning, experiential learning, case-based instruction, learner cantered education, and discovery-based learning. These are all approaches which follow the logical consequences of adopting an approach to teaching and learning which emphasizes the role of the learner. Although the emphasis of the different approaches may vary they can all be seen to be consistent with the main principles of constructivism and in particular the principles which Cunningham et al. note as important in designing constructivist learning environment which are: to:

1   Provide experience of the knowledge construction process

2   Provide experience in and appreciation of multiple perspectives

3   Embed learning in realistic and relevant contexts

4   Encourage ownership and voice in the learning process

5   Embed learning in social experience

6   Encourage multiple modes of representation

7   Encourage self-awareness of the knowledge construction process

In a constructivist learning environment the task of the teacher is not to be a 'purveyor of knowledge' but to create a learning environment enabling the student to construct her/his own knowledge by experiencing and interacting with the environment.

Constructivist approaches emphasize the idea of an active student who is placed in a situation where knowledge is not always directly transmitted by an instructor to the student (though it may be accessible using various tools at the student's disposal). The process needs to be very carefully guided by tutors and some would argue requires much more effort and involvement on the part of the teachers. Knowledge is therefore constructed through individual or group activity and guided by the instructor.

The development and application of educational theories can thus be seen to be very much a history of recognising the primary importance of the learner in the process and an emphasis of the role of the teacher as facilitator.

REMINDER OF THE WEEK

- Arts and Science Programs Review Visit 12-13 March 2018
- Students' Research Conference 22 March 2018

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

"What changes people is when their shoulds become musts."

Tony Robbins

Happy Reading!