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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 30th issue of the 2nd year of the President's News Digest.



I would like to start this edition of the News Digest by reporting on the successful Good Teaching Conference that was held on Monday and Tuesday 22 and 23 May. In total, around 90 presentations were made by colleagues from all 3 colleges. I personally attended a good number of presentations and I was impressed by the majority of these presentations. The 2 parallel sessions used during the conference were buzzing with colleagues who appreciated this initiative. We can learn a lot from each other and I am confident that the accreditation panel will see this as a good practice which will ultimately enhance our teaching methods and the students' learning experience. In my long experience in academia, I have seen many failing academics because they assume they know it all. The most successful ones have adopted an approach embracing the fact that we can learn and develop every day. We did this conference to support you and not to find scapegoats. The purpose of the conference was to: a) identify staff development needs, b) share good practices between our teaching staff, c) have immediate feedback from the audience, d) convey the learning outcome of the presentation to the audience at undergraduate or postgraduate levels.

Some personal observations are listed below:

Interaction with the students: start by greeting the students, "good morning", "welcome to this lecture", in this lecture you will learn about a particular subject of the course, and most importantly motivate them to take part.

First slide or statement: learning outcomes to be achieved from the lecture.

Clarity of delivery: to the point, with good examples, use video clips if possible.

Use of technology: Power Point has an advantage over other methods. Other technologies could include Prezi, live demos, etc.

Respect time and make sure that you are breaching good time management. This is an extra curricular activity that the students can learn.

Conclude your presentation with what has been achieved in the lecture and what you are going to cover in the next one and perhaps remind them of assessment methods.

Mention e-learning, Moodle, and any additional links, materials and references if you have them.

Be in control, it is your subject and you have the opportunity to show your students an excellent performance.

Develop the students' critical thinking skills and encourage them to ask questions.

Please ensure that you are engaging the students at the very beginning of the lecture, they will become more interested.

Make teaching really exciting, remember that you are seen as a performer on stage.

Avoid to use a monotonous voice.

In some of PPT presentations, the font size was small and some slides were really congested. The art of doing this is to make the slide readable, with enough information and the science is to convey the message.

In sessions, where multiple teaching methods were used, it was more engaging, methods could include use of roles acting, case studies, group work, video clips, etc

Be confident, show the students that you know what you are talking about, but let the students ask questions and learn more by building up their confidence.

The conference has helped our colleagues to learn from each other which will result in improved teaching methods and approaches. Soon, external academics will be contracted to attend classes and observe the quality of teaching. This conference was timely in preparing our colleagues before they are observed by external people.

I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude to all those who attended, presented, and chaired sessions and to those who helped in organizing the Good Teaching Conference. Special thanks should go to Drs Assem, Faiza and Adel. This is one of the most beneficial events that I have attended since I joined the University. Our colleagues have appreciated this conference and asked us to repeat it at least once a year.



On 21 May, the President received Ms Emilia Mateva from the British Embassy in order to brief her about progress with British Universities.



On 23 May, the President of the University received the President of the Bahrain Society of Excellence and Academic Research, Sheikha Dr Ishaa Al Khalifa, and the Vice President, Dr Bassam Alhamad, and board members in order to explore opportunities for collaboration. If you would like to join this Society, please let me know.

On the evening of 23 May, the President and Dean of Students Affairs attended a reception hosted by HE the British Ambassador in Bahrain. The event was organized to promote the new Chelsea Waterfront residential development.

On 24 May, the Board of Trustees chaired by Prof Waheeb AlKhaja held its third meeting this academic year. The excellent chairing of Prof Waheeb has enabled the Board to cover a very beefy agenda. The Board has approved our budget and operational plans for next academic year. The President briefed the Board about preparation for accreditation and the progress of our collaboration with British Universities. Mr Hatem covered operational planning and KPIs.

Some members of the senior management team joined the BOTs for lunch and the Chairman recognized the contributions of Dr Khaldoun and Dr Ziad for their services to the University before they return in August to their Universities in Jordan.

On 24 May, VP Dr Assem, attended a meeting on behalf of the President chaired by the Secretary General of the HEC with all presidents of private universities. The discussion centered around accreditation, approval from the HEC before employing any FT or PT staff, and approval by the HEC for any external events, workshops, or external lectures hosted by the University. On the afternoon of the same day, VP Dr Assem had a meeting with the student Council to discuss issues that are affecting our students and preparation for the summer semester.

Prof Robert Newton concluded a 2 weeks visit where he has been helping us on various quality related issues.

I would like to conclude this edition of the News Digest by reminding colleagues that the deadline for submitting abstracts to our conference is approaching very fast. You are left with few days to submit your abstracts.

CHINA HI-TECH TRANSFER CENTRE

On 25 May 2017, Prof Saad Darwish President's Advisor for Special Projects attended this event where three deals were signed between Bahrain Economic Development Board (EDB) and the China Hi-Tech Transfer Centre; Shenzhen Belt and Road Economy and Technology Cooperation Association; and Shenzhen Cross-Border E-Commerce Association, on the sidelines of a high-level Chinese business delegation's visit to Bahrain. The deals aim to promote stronger economic ties between the two countries.



VISIT TO THE SUPREME COUNCIL FOR WOMEN

On 23 May 2017, the women's club in the Deanship of Student Affairs organized a visit to the Supreme Council for Women to comprehend more about the council's role in supporting women and the society in the Kingdom of Bahrain. On arrival, a talk was given by Ms. Huda Salman, an expert on promotional and awareness programs who explained in details the importance of the Supreme Council for Women from its establishment to its latest achievements, followed by site tour around the council that showed them the services that support women, the library publications and how our students can use these facilities them on-site and online. Students and women club members were very pleased with the visit and found the whole experience very interesting and beneficial.



ALUMNI CLUB BOARD OF DIRECTORS INTRODUCTORY MEETING WITH PROFESSOR GHASSAN AOUD, THE UNIVERSITY PRESIDENT



On 14 May 2017, the Alumni Club Board of Directors with coordination of the Career Development and Alumni Affairs Office organized the first meeting with the Deanship of Student Affairs chaired by Dr. Faiza Zitouni followed by an introductory meeting with the University President Professor Ghassan Aouad, VP of Academic Affairs and Development, Dr. Assem Hajj and the Deanship of Student Affairs staff.

The board of directors presented their plan for this academic year 2017-2018 and their latest achievements. Professor Ghassan Aouad mentioned the significant role of the alumni club members in the University strategic planning and future development and highlighted that continuous communication is pivotal for the success of the University strategic objectives.



UNIVERSITIES BASKETBALL TOURNAMENT

Bahrain Polytechnic organized universities basketball tournament on Saturday 20 May 2017 in their campus, where six universities participated. ASU team played a good game and won the third place in the tournament. ASU is very proud of their students' great achievement and the support Mr Mohamed Najjar is providing to our students.



MIDDLE EAST CHAMPIONSHIP KARTING RACE FOR UNIVERSITIES

On Saturday 20 May 2017, ASU participated in the Universities Middle East Championship Karting Race that was held in Bahrain International Circuit where 8 universities participated. ASU participated using 2 cars with 6 students and each car was used by 3 students. Our students representing ASU including; AbdulHadi Al Qahtani, Yousif Ghunaim, Abdulrahman Almalki, Duaaj Alshomali, Ahmed Alamer and Houd Sadiq competed against 16 cars from different universities. The students had a lot of fun in the competition where they experienced a different type of challenge.





The first car gained the 7th place and the second car gained the 11th place amongst 16 cars from 8 different universities. The student council members played an important role in the race, as they were the main motivational supporters. We are all very proud of our students for such a remarkable game and achievement. This would not have been done without the great support of Mr. Thaer Ramini and Mr. Mohamed Najjar.

A GATHERING LUNCH ORGANIZED BY THE STUDENT COUNCIL MEMBERS



On 17 May 2017, the Student Council Members at the Deanship of Student Affairs celebrated the end of semester two of the academic year 2016-2017 by organizing a lunch at ASU cafeteria. The Chairman of the board of trustees, Professor Waheeb AlKhaja, the President of the University, Professor



Ghassan Aouad, the Vice presidents, Dr. Assem Hajj and Dr Mohammed Yousef, the Deanship of Student Affairs and the Deanship of Admissions and Registration participated in the celebration. A meeting followed the celebration was organized between the members of the Student Council and the Deanship of Student Affairs to highlight the challenges faced by the students in the

last semester and to discuss the preparation for summer term that falls within the Holy month of Ramadhan.



INTERVIEW OF THE WEEK

We would like to feature the interview this week with:



Name: Dr Abdul Jabbar Musaafer

Position: Head of the General Studies Department

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

I was born and raised in a remote village in Basra, Iraq. It was a happy childhood till when I was 12 when my father passed away. It was the final year of my primary school. I don't remember the details of the next long 6 years or so but I find myself a university student majoring English language & Literature. I enjoyed every moment of the study. I earned the BA with a high GPA and got appointed as a Teaching Assistant at the Dept. of English then I got a study leave to pursue my postgraduate studies for the Masters & PhD from the University of Leeds, England. I was 31 years old when I got the Doctorate. After short weeks of hesitation, I returned to Basra University to be appointed as the Head of the English Dept. I fled Iraq in 1996 for Jordan where I worked for about one year to move again with my family to the Netherlands in 1997. I needed to see my way through the first year of the so-called integration. I felt lost...then I got a chance to get a training for a selected group of highly qualified immigrants in Western European countries. It was in a Swedish university called Vaxjo. After about two weeks there, I noticed a gap in the study programme of the School of Humanities.

A LECTURE BY MR DARWEESH AL-MANNAI



Prof Saad Darwish, President's Advisor for Special Projects attended a lecture given by Mr Darweesh Al-Mannai/ Shura Council Member at the headquarters of the National Unity Assembly in Al-Basayteen. The lecture was about a proposal to the Shura Council to issue a "Law for investment in Bahrain". Dr Murad Al Janabi chaired the session.



He stressed that Bahrain has a valuable legacy and an ancient civilization that can be better utilized. Many other countries have issued such regulations, countries gave incentives and economic benefits to the investors. The existence of comprehensive investment law, is the case in many countries in the world that seek to attract investors. Bahrain is in need for such development to create a better future for our economy.

POLICY OF THE WEEK



POLICY FOR DEVELOPMENT & REVIEW OF POLICIES & PROCEDURES

---A SUMMARY---

Contents.The policy includes the following sections, among others:

- purpose of the policy
- standards for policy and procedure documents
- procedure for developing policy documents
- key stages involved in policy development

Purpose of the policy. The purpose of this policy is to:

- establish a consistent and enforceable system for the development, approval, implementation and review of policy documents at the Applied Science University
- provide a mechanism to ensure that policy documents are compliant with the strategic direction of the University

Principles for Policy Formulation. All University policies & procedures shall:

- Support and be consistent and in line with the University goals, vision, mission and values
- Identify and assign responsibility and accountability of key procedures
- Adhere to the standards set forth in the document

I met the dean and managed to convince her of my credentials. She asked me to do a presentation in a seminar and got the chance to be appointed for a limited period. Personal circumstances prevented me from staying and I was back again to the Netherlands to find a job in the Ministry of Justice as a Language Analyst. There was nothing challenging in my job. I felt I needed to go back to university teaching. I went back to Jordan where I taught for about two months when I realized I was needed by my family. Back in the Netherlands I did freelance works in translation and brand names evaluation. Again I decided to go back to Jordan to work at the University of Philadelphia. This time I stayed for two years. I liked the academic atmosphere there. Then in 2008 I got an offer from a Bahraini university to work as the Dean of Arts.

2. Tell us about your job at ASU

I joined ASU in September 2013 as the Head of the General Studies Dept. The Dept. is responsible for all the University requirement courses. It means dealing with almost all of the University students.

3. Tell us about your aspirations for the University

My aspirations for the University are the same as stated in the University vision and mission; to be one of the leading private universities in the Gulf and the region and to offer a high quality teaching and learning and to serve its community in the best possible way. I firmly believe that the University can accomplish that with its present senior management and its staff.

- Be relevant and transparent in their intention and meaning
- Be developed in consultation with all relevant stakeholders of the University
- Be binding and applicable across the University

Key Stages involved in Policy Development. The University policy documents shall be developed/ reviewed either by internal faculty/ staff or by external consultants who are experts in this field and have been appointed through prior consent and approval from the Senior Management. The development of policies and procedures at the University shall follow a staged approach as defined below:

- Step 1 – Need Identification
- Step 2 – Research
- Step 3 – Drafting the Policy
- Step 4 – Approval
- Step 5 – Communication and Implementation
- Step 6 – Maintenance and Review

REMINDER OF THE WEEK

THE INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION STANDARDS

AREA 8: Quality Management, Assurance and Enhancement (3 Standards)



31. The institution must have effective systems to review its own standards and assess its own performance (11 KIs)

31.1. The institution must have dedicated accreditation and quality assurance teams which comprises staff with relevant qualifications, knowledge and experience.

31.2. The accreditation and quality assurance team must continuously monitor its own performance, referring to external quality assurance systems and international benchmarks.

31.3. The institution must ensure that it takes into account the views of all its stakeholders, to include employers, students and the wider community, when collecting data for accreditation and quality assurance purposes.

31.4. The institution must undertake regular and systematic monitoring of its operations and conduct periodic reviews of all aspects of its performance against clearly specified and appropriate indicators.

31.5. The nominated leader for each course must produce an end-of-session (semester or year) report which includes measures of student satisfaction, completion rates and achievement levels.

31.6. The nominated program leader, drawing upon reports from its constituent courses, must produce an annual program report which includes analysis of year-on-year results on student satisfaction, achievement levels, completion rates and progression to further study or employment.

4. What do you enjoy most about your job?

What I enjoy most in my job as the Head of the Dept. is dealing with dozens of students daily. The first couple of weeks of my appointment, I thought “Oh My God, it’s like an every body’s business!” Now, I feel sleepy when I don’t see students coming to my office!

5. Tell us about your hobbies

At present, I read light material; novels, short stories etc. I do cook for myself.

6. Tell us about your favourite food

Had you asked me this question a year ago, I’d have answered “I’m not picky”. Because of health problems, I’m very careful these days. Being a Basrawi, I like fish of all kinds!

7. Tell us about the book you are reading now

At present, I’m about to finish my second reading of the English translation of AlTayeb Salih’s “Season of Migration to the North”. 35 years ago, when I was in my second year in England, I was introduced to the translator, late Denys Johnson Davis who, kindly, gave me a copy of the novel. I was impressed by the protagonist Sa’id’s character (don’t ask why!). In my second reading, however, I realized I was silly!

8. Final words

I’d like to say to my colleagues at ASU, academic life is never a routine, it is dynamic. When you feel that your University life is monotonous, you’re killing yourself. Please don’t reject an assignment quickly!

31.7. Reports which present the results of the institution's reviews, evaluate its performance and incorporate action plans, must be compiled at least annually. These must be considered by senior management and the board of trustees and, where appropriate, shared with all stakeholders including students.

31.8. All programs must be subject to annual review and to full revalidation every four years.

31.9. Annual review and revalidation of programs must involve external assessors.

31.10. All quality management policies and procedures must be clearly documented and brought to the attention of staff and, where appropriate, students and other stakeholders.

31.11. Particular attention must be paid to the quality of the student learning experience and to ensuring there is fair treatment of all students.

32. The institution must regularly obtain and record and analyze feedback from students and other stakeholders and take appropriate action where necessary (6 KIs)

32.1. Views of all stakeholders, including teachers and students, partner institutions and employers, must be canvassed and recorded regularly through various means including face-to-face meetings, feedback questionnaires and, where appropriate, formal student representation.

32.2. There must be well-defined policies for obtaining feedback from students on academic staff performance.

32.3. The views of stakeholders including students must be considered objectively, evaluated thoroughly and, where necessary, appropriate action taken.

32.4. There must be effective means of responding to stakeholder opinion and keeping them informed of any actions taken, through formal feedback mechanisms.

32.5. Key performance indicators must include analysis of student outcomes in terms of the current year and year-on-year performance and any significant variations in student achievement between different program components.

32.6. The institution must pro-actively engage with its alumni and encourage interaction with current students to provide support, mentoring and career advice.

33. The institution must have a strong commitment to, and procedures that facilitate, continuing enhancement of its provision (7 KIs)

33.1. All stakeholders including students must be invited and encouraged to make suggestions for enhancement.

33.2. In their annual appraisal, all staff must be required to identify where they have facilitated enhancement and to identify further areas requiring enhancement.

33.3. Staff professional development needs must be identified through appraisal and other means and measures taken to support staff to address these.

33.4. End-of-session course and annual program reports must include enhancements made and identify further areas requiring enhancement.

33.5. Action plans must be implemented and reviewed regularly within the institution's committee structure.

33.6. The institution must keep research resources and facilities under review so as to find ways of enhancing its research capabilities.

33.7. The institution must have formal mechanisms in place to monitor the information gathered internally and externally, to make any enhancements deemed necessary and measure their impact.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

“Education is the key to success in life, and teachers make a lasting impact in the lives of their students”.

Solomon Ortiz

Happy Reading

