

AUI 2015-2020 Strategic Plan Fifth Year Executive Summary of Progress

Introduction

This year marks the end of the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan. Priority 2 reached its 100% target goal, namely program and institutional accreditation, in 2017 and this goal has been maintained for the past 3 years. Great progress has also been achieved with Strategic Priority 1 (student learning, development and success) and Strategic Priority 3 (internationalization), with most of their target goals met. The 2019-2020 goals sought to improve areas of deficient progress: Strategic Priority 4 (growth and sustainability), Strategic Priority 5 (research), and Strategic Priority 6 (communication). Specifically, AUI aimed to improve communication, increase collaboration; better plan risk management; improve monitoring of strategic plan goals related to meeting deadlines and reevaluate achievable goals for the 2020-2025 period.

AUI is prepared to move on to its next phase with the introduction of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan, set to be published within the following academic year. The new plan will continue to maintain and improve areas of strength while better developing areas of weakness. Drafting of the plan is based on the experiences and progress seen in the past 5 years, recommendations of NECHE, AUI's mission and values, and feedback from the AUI community.

Priority 1: Student Learning, Development, and Success

Preparing AUI students for success through the Liberal Arts model and a student-centered approach to education. AUI aims to help faculty and staff focus on students' development needs to ensure their success as students, as future scholars or professionals, and as global citizens.

- AUI increased the number of services and programs, increased percentage of student retention and student success. AUI recognizes a need for improved student engagement in the future.
- The First Year Experience unit reported an increase in the number of students on President and Deans' lists, general academic results and overall student satisfaction among first year students. Additionally, there was a decrease in the number of students on probation.
- The Community Involvement Program (CIP) reported a combined 20,493 hours of volunteer work completed, averaging 68 hours per student. A total of 274 NGOs have benefited from this volunteer work. Volunteer community service with student clubs has to be added to this total.
- Considering AUI alumni experience, the majority (70%) of alumni in 2019-2020 reported finding employment in companies in Morocco or abroad. Additionally, 12% continued postgraduate studies, 10% finding placement in internships or short term employment and 8% are self-employed.
- Employers identified that the top soft-skills they appreciated AUI alumni to possess were communication skills, enthusiasm, adaptability, initiative and team spirit.

Priority 2: Quality Assurance and Enhancement

AUI continuously pursues quality assurance opportunities for its administrative units through recognized endorsement or certification. To ensure reliable assessment of the impact of its initiatives, the University will produce timely and regular reports covering performance indicators measuring its achievements.

- AUI achieved 100% completion of its performance goals concerning Priority 2 in 2017. Through 2019-2020, AUI continued to maintain 100% quality assurance through the Office of Audit and Office of Research and Effectives and improved quality governance where feasible.
- The University was ranked as number one in Morocco by QS ranking agency.
- The University achieved all international accreditations as planned.

Priority 3: Internationalization

This priority aims to foster an international campus at AUI, including students, faculty, and staff. AUI's programs promote diversity and openness that encourage an international outlook for all members of the University community. Through its curriculum, partnerships with educational institutions around the world, and a significant body of international students and faculty, the University prepares its graduates to enter the global and the Moroccan job markets.

- Percentage of graduating class with international experience (through exchange or study abroad) reached 76%
- In the 2019-2020 academic year, the university saw:
 - 55 International students (from 25 different countries)
 - 41 Incoming exchange students (from 25 institutions between 6 countries)
 - 110 Outgoing exchange students (from 55 institutions between 15 countries)
- The Leadership Development Institute collaborated on a project with a class of 20 students from the University of Washington.
- The Leadership Development Institute collaborated with the GLAA (Global Liberal Arts Alliance)

Priority 4: Advancement for Growth and Sustainability

AUI will consolidate its growth and its standing through quantitative and qualitative growth of its student population, physical infrastructure extension, targeted program offerings and professional development initiatives for all members of its community.

- Overall, AUI saw slight improvement in student recruitment, reaching a total of 2022 students in Fall 2019.
- This objective had to be revised down in 2019.
- The next strategic plan will have to make this one of its top priorities

Priority 5: Research, Innovation, and Discovery

AUI set an objective of increasing its efforts to promote research, innovation and the production of knowledge within its campus. High-quality and varied research will establish AUI as a high-ranking institution of higher learning, while retaining good faculty and enhancing the quality of graduate studies. The University made efforts to promote research and give it an important share in faculty evaluation and through actions like offering seed money through the Presidential Innovation Fund. The figures of publications and research are at an acceptable level, but remain below the University's ambitions.

- AUI faculty members continue to publish books, articles in peer-reviewed journals, and present and participate extensively in international conferences. This year's scholarly publications included 4 books, 4 book chapters, 24 journal papers, 25 presentations at conferences, participation at 8 international workshops and participation at 15 international conferences. AUI recognizes room to grow this body of work and aims to better encourage and facilitate faculty research in the future.
- Funding for sponsored research and partnership programs reached 27 million MAD.

Priority 6: More Effective Communication

AUI's public image relies on faculty accomplishments, perception of program quality, enhancement of local communities, and the success of its graduates. The institution's accomplishments are best understood when supported by communication protocols upheld by leadership at all levels. The University set the objective to have units convey all messages clearly and effectively.

- The Department of Development & Communication adopted an aggressive PR strategy, presenting key facts and figures, highlighting actions and events worthy of media interest.
- A new website was developed and launched with a user-friendly interface, adaptable to mobile devices
- The Share of Voice on social media was highest among competitors (38% for AUI and 34% for its nearest competitor).
- Internal communication and inter-unit collaboration remain to be improved.

Conclusion

The way forward requires more active responsiveness to align with societal needs and more aggressive student recruitment strategies, particularly outside Morocco, to the greater African area, now that accredited degrees at the international level are transferable.

Three prominent challenges remain:

1. Incorporating an American education system in a Moroccan context;
2. Fulfilling the mission outlined by the University's founding fathers with the means of today;
3. Continuing to motivate human resources after 20 to 25 years of activity.

In terms of strategic priorities of the 2015-2020 plan, growth, development of research, and better communication, both internal and institutional remain areas of improvement.

We remain confident that the university is prepared and capable of overcoming these challenges with new momentum and introduction of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan.