جامعة الأخويـن

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AL AKHAWAYN
U N I V E R S I T Y

STRATEGIC PLAN 2015-2020

The 2020 Vision

Rising to New Challenges

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THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

It gives me great pleasure to present the 2015-2020 Strategic Plan for Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI).

This strategic plan maps the course that AUI will follow in 2015-2020. It reflects over two years of hard work and a process that included input from numerous individuals across the entire organization including The Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. The result is a strategic plan that reflects our values as well as our aspirations and one that will direct and guide us over the next five years.

The Plan also portrays the ideals and intentions of an institution that has undergone significant change over the last five years. Our last plan 2010-2014 identified seven priorities: 1) Reinforcement of the North American Educational Model; 2) Quality Assurance and Accreditation; 3) Growth and Development; 4) Internationalization of the University; 5) Financial Sustainability; 6) Educational Leadership and Innovation; and 7) Human Capital Development. I am proud to say that the University successfully realized much of this Plan, with a completion rate of approximately 86%, evidenced by the ongoing pursuit of institutional accreditation, accreditation of programs and units by international organizations recognized worldwide, enhancements to infrastructure, and improvements to institutional efficiency using international indicators.

Whilst the new 2015-2020 Strategic Plan recognizes the priorities laid out in the previous plan, it also aims to build on our achievements and move AUI to the next level of distinction within the ranks of pre-eminent universities in Africa. The current plan reviews the present position of the University, noting strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and the emergence of a challenging and competitive environment. The Plan's six priorities affirm and advance the University's mission, which is grounded in the Liberal Arts tradition patterned after the American system and is designed to produce graduates ready to play leading roles in an increasingly globalized Moroccan and world economy. The Plan emphasizes student success and internationalization, along with the need to continuously improve the quality of the University's programs, students, faculty, infrastructure, communication and governance. The Plan also supports the University's aspirations to position itself as a leading institution on the African

continent through increased research and innovation, international accreditation and excellence. Although not detailed here, each Priority and accompanying Goal of the current Plan has a specific person in charge and has been adequately resourced.

Al Akhawayn's success is due to the hard work and creativity of dedicated faculty, staff, students and trustees. The 2015-2020 Strategic Plan reflects the high expectations and momentum to seek new opportunities that drive an expanded vision of excellence. The new plan reflects both internal and external realities and is intended to function as a living document open to fresh ideas and unforeseen possibilities. This strategic plan will channel and accelerate the enormous potential that is AUI.

Driss Ouaouicha

President

THE UNIVERSITY TODAY

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane (AUI) was founded in 1995 by His Majesty the late King Hassan II of Morocco, and partially endowed by the late King Fahd bin Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia. The University is situated in the scenic resort town of Ifrane, high atop the Middle Atlas mountain range. In accordance with the University motto of "Excellence and Identity", Al Akhawayn students acquire a passion for life, learning, and discovery, and a strong sense of Morocco's rich cultural heritage. Such traits serve the University's mission, formally reviewed and adopted in 2010 by the Board of Trustees (see mission statement below).

The University is fortunate to possess a sizable main campus of 76 hectares, and a second site of 36 hectares, which includes its new Conference Center, faculty housing, a chapel, an American-style K-12 school, and extensive land reserved for future developments. The main campus is integrated and consists of 39 buildings, including academic facilities (classrooms, laboratories, faculty offices, and lecture halls), the Mohammed VI Library, a sports complex, cafés and restaurants, a student activity center, 21 residential buildings, a medical center, and a mosque. The University also has a presence in Casablanca through its Center for Executive Education and in Azrou through its Center for Community Development.

Strategic Planning has been integral to the University's growth and development, and the University has made significant progress in recent years through the implementation of a large number of educational and research programs, infrastructure improvements, and accreditation achievements.

Al Akhawayn University emulates the North American model of education, which embraces the liberal arts, and emphasizes co-curricular activities and study abroad programs that serve to give all undergraduate students a well-rounded global education. AUI students go on to thrive in the complex and multifaceted professional environment of the 21st century job market, and compete successfully for the many opportunities in the global economy in Morocco and abroad.

The University has grown to better serve its community. Starting in 1995, with 289 students supervised by 33 faculty members as of Fall 2015 AUI has 2166 students and 161 faculty (131 of whom are full-time). Its faculty body is 40% international, 30% Moroccan

dual-national, and 30% Moroccan. Seventy-eight percent of faculty members hold a doctorate and have been trained in English-speaking countries.

The University offers 7 Bachelor and 14 Master degree programs through its three schools and its Executive Education Center, in addition to the programs offered by the Language Center:

- The School of Business Administration (SBA) offers a Bachelor in Business Administration (EPAS Accredited) with concentrations in Management, Finance, Marketing, International Business, and Logistics and Supply Chain Management, as well as a Master in Business Administration (MBA), a part-time MBA, an Executive MBA and a Master of Science in International Trade.

- The School of Science and Engineering (SSE) offers Bachelor of Science degrees in General Engineering, Computer Science (ABET accredited program), and Engineering and Management. It also offers Master degree programs in Computer Science, Computer Networks, Software Engineering, Information Systems Security, Biotechnology, and Sustainable Energy Management.

- The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS) offers undergraduate degrees in Communication Studies, Human Resource Development, and International Studies. It also offers four Master programs: Human Resource Development, International Studies and Diplomacy, Islamic Religious Studies, and North African and Middle Eastern Studies.

- The Executive Education Center (Ifrane and Casablanca) offers short courses and training programs to professionals and executives from public and private institutions.

- The Language Center prepares students to study in AUI as an English language medium university, and it offers courses in French, Spanish, and Berber.

Al Akhawayn students and faculty conduct innovative research in many fields, such as sustainable development and economics, social responsibility, ethics, cloud adoption, renewable energies, urban planning, information technology in education, e-governance, IT security and cryptology, management of water resources and biotechnology. Applied research is supported by the University's modern laboratories and state-of-the-art IT and library resources, and it is funded by leading international and Moroccan corporations and organizations. The University encourages research by providing support through AUI's University Research Grant program, the Presidential Innovation Fund, and financial assistance for conference participation. Thus, Al Akhawayn's faculty and students are increasingly active producers of academic publications and contributors to national and international conferences.

Based on the results of a study by an independent company in Casablanca, undertaken in May-June 2015, the majority (91.5%) of AUI's 3,625 alumni are employed. A number have chosen to work abroad or pursue graduate studies at prestigious international universities that include Harvard, MIT, and Oxford. AUI graduates are highly competitive in the job market and in academic institutions, both at the national and international levels. Among their most prominent skills and characteristics are communication, collaboration, open-mindedness, proactivity, and professional curiosity, in addition to trilingual and tri-cultural proficiency.

In addition to the review of the major achievements of the University during its 20 years of existence, this document presents the major challenges AUI faces today and the major projects to achieve on the way to 2020. It describes the positioning of the University within the Moroccan higher education landscape, provides a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, and restates the new vision for the University, the "2020 vision", and the proposed priorities for the years 2015-2020.

THE UNIVERSITY POSITIONING

Twenty years after its inauguration, the University aims to make a qualitative leap to position itself as a leading institution on the African continent through a new strategic vision for 2020. The number of high school graduates in Morocco has increased significantly in recent years (from 137,000 in 2010 to 229,782 in 2015). However, the average share of graduates who opt for fee paid education remains low although it is on the rise.

Morocco is home to an increasing number of higher education institutions, including universities. Some of these have partnerships and joint degree programs with international institutions, mainly in France, Canada, and USA. In addition, Morocco is starting to attract some foreign institutions that are seeking to establish branch campuses. Yet, none of these institutions has all the hallmarks of Al Akhawayn University, such as the participatory system of governance, an active Board of Trustees, the liberal arts approach to education, community involvement and social outreach, international accreditation, internationalization, an integrated residential campus, and a not-for-profit structure.

With an average annual tuition of 57,000 MAD (significantly lower than some private institutions charging up to 70,000 MAD per year), AUI attracts families of middle and high income, but it also attracts students who cannot afford the tuition, through financial aid means such as grants, bursaries, and student loans.

However, AUI must still compete for its best students, as other public schools of engineering, business, and medicine do not require any tuition fees. Therefore, to attract potential students the University will work to enhance its communication and the promotion of its public not-for-profit status, its autonomy, its accreditation record, its links with the US higher education system and its financial aid programs. This will be done through public information and outreach campaigns. The University also needs to work on international opportunities in Africa, the Middle East, and Europe.

SWOT ANALYSIS

In preparation for the 2020 Vision plan, there was a need to review the inner strengths and weaknesses of the institution, and to evaluate external threats and opportunities. AUI is operating in an evolving context characterized by an expanding privatization of the education sector, growing competition among fee paying institutions, greater internationalization and a growing pool of high school graduates. To ensure continuity and consistency, a SWOT analysis was undertaken internally, using the 2010 SWOT analysis as a basis. The resulting document was reviewed by external experts, and subsequently shared, discussed, and edited by various university stakeholders, including the AUI Board of Trustees culminating in the following analysis:

Strengths

- High employment rate of students following graduation.

- Institutional autonomy and shared governance.

- Physical infrastructure and potential for future growth.

- Morocco's first American-style university.

- High quality of graduates.

- Liberal arts education with emphasis on student development (class size, availability and proximity of faculty).

- Experience in quality assurance, strategic planning and international accreditation.

- International educational environment.

Weaknesses

- Weak University wide reporting system and outcome focus.

- Little if any fund raising to sustain AUI's status as a leading institution in the region.

- Challenge to attract and retain outstanding faculty needed to develop the University's reputation nationally and in the region.

- Limited scientific production.

- Ineffective communication and alumni relation strategy.

Opportunities

- Availability of large projects for national, social and economic development.

- Demand for national and regional innovative education, research and development, executive and continuing education, and consultancy services.

- Ongoing decentralization process in Morocco.

- Attractiveness of the American-style education.

- Large spectrum of academic and socio-economic partners.

- Access to international accreditation agencies.

Threats

- Increased competition for fee paying quality students.

- Geographical location hindering the retention of outstanding faculty and staff as well as involvement of active professionals.

- Increased regional competition for faculty and staff.

- Depressed international economic environment.

- Perception of the University as lacking vibrancy in terms of scientific and technical programs and production.

MISSION

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane is an independent, public, not-for-profit, coeducational Moroccan University committed to educating future citizen-leaders of Morocco and the world through a globally oriented, English-language, Liberal Arts curriculum based on the American system. The University enhances Morocco and engages the world through leading-edge educational and research programs, including continuing and executive education, upholds the highest academic and ethical standards, and promotes equity and social responsibility.

VISION

Al Akhawayn University is a leading liberal arts institution, among the preeminent universities in Africa, renowned for its excellent academic and executive programs, its innovative research, and its competent and socially responsible graduates.

INSTITUTIONAL VALUES

Al Akhawayn University's core values include:

Excellence

The promotion of personal, professional, and academic excellence, with a commitment to achieving the highest standards through on-going assessment, evaluation, and quality improvement.

Identity

The traditional openness and respect for diversity of Morocco's rich cultural heritage.

Intellectual Inquiry and Freedom

The promotion of responsible freedom of expression and intellectual inquiry which support creativity, scholarship, and learning.

Integrity

The highest level of personal, intellectual, academic, financial, and operational integrity.

Human Dignity and Respect

Acceptance and respect of other peoples, cultures, religions, and ideas in all programs, activities, and services, an appreciation of human diversity, and the fostering of an atmosphere of mutual respect and support.

Internationality

An international outlook throughout the curriculum, constructing collaborative partnerships with educational institutions around the world, and building a significant body of international students and faculty, developing a global outlook in the institution and enhancing the intercultural competencies of the University's graduates.

Community Engagement and Service

Engaging local and regional communities in mutually beneficial relationships to serve the public good while providing increased learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.

Leadership and Communication

A visionary leadership which creates and supports an environment that fosters open communication and innovative approaches to change.

Learning-Centered Approach

A holistic environment which ensures that learning is the central focus for students, with a range of social, cultural and recreational opportunities that facilitate the full realization of students' potential for academic and personal growth.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Based on the University mission, as outlined in the Dahir, the current SWOT analysis including consideration of the national and international environments, and the contribution of such stakeholders as the Board of Trustees, faculty, staff, students and alumni, six priorities have been identified for 2020. These are:

1. Student Learning, Development, and Success.

2. Quality Assurance and Enhancement.

3. Internationalization.

4. Advancement for Growth and Sustainability.

5. Research, Innovation and Discovery.

6. More Effective Communication.

1. STUDENT LEARNING, DEVELOPMENT and SUCCESS

To build the success of its students, AUI opted for the Liberal Arts and a student-centered focus as a general 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. Thus, four metrics will monitor and measure AUI's commitment to student learning, development and success:

1.1. AUI will increase its graduation rate through:

1.1.1. Higher selectivity.

1.1.2. Better advising and tutoring.

1.1.3. Better retention measures.

1.2. AUI will increase its graduate placement rate (employability and further education insertion) by:

1.2.1. Periodic program review for better employability.

1.2.2. Upgrading the Career Services Office to make it more visible to our students, employers and other institutions.

1.3. AUI will increase its student satisfaction with teaching and services by:

1.3.1. Enhancing students' involvement in University governance.

1.3.2. Enhancing staff development opportunities in student-centered campus services.

1.3.3. Increasing faculty development opportunities in learner-centered pedagogy.

1.3.4. Simplifying procedures and increasing automation of basic operations.

1.4. AUI will increase the average number of hours that graduating students contribute to the local and global communities by:

1.4.1. Enhancing community involvement of students.

1.4.2. Promoting global citizenry through campus activities.

2. QUALITY ASSURANCE AND ENHANCEMENT

The University has so far achieved Candidacy status with the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC), completed its biennial review, and is currently preparing for its final review in early 2017. At the academic unit level, the accreditation of the Language Center programs has been renewed by the CEA for ten years. The School of Business Administration was recently granted re-accredita-

tion by EPAS and the School is preparing its self-study for submission to AACSB. In addition to the accreditation of its computer science program by ABET, the School of Science and Engineering is working on the accreditation of its two other bachelor degree programs by the same organization. The School of Humanities and Social Sciences has or is completing a review and validation of all of its degree programs by experienced external peers.

Having gained experience in international peer review and external validation of its academic programs and practices, the University will continue to work on academic and institutional accreditation. At the same time, the University will pursue quality assurance opportunities for its administrative units through a recognized endorsement or certification.

To ensure a continuous and reliable assessment of the impact of its initiatives, the University will ensure that timely and regular reporting is made according to indicators linking intentions to achievements. Thus, five metrics will monitor and measure AUI's progress in quality assurance and enhancement.

2.1. AUI will gain external institutional accreditation as a whole by:

2.1.1. Achieving the main goals of institutional accreditation.

2.2. AUI will increase its number of Units accredited or externally assessed by:

2.2.1. Gaining a recognized endorsement or quality certification for administrative units as a whole.

2.2.2. Accrediting the General Engineering and Engineering and Management Science program at the School of Science and Engineering.

2.2.3. Externally assessing the three programs at the School of Humanities and Social Sciences.

2.3. AUI will establish entities for internal auditing, quality assurance, and institutional research by:

2.3.1. Establishing an Office of Institutional Research and Effectiveness.

2.3.2. Establishing an Internal Auditing Unit.

2.4. AUI will increase satisfaction with reporting through a university wide system by:

2.4.1. Ensuring that reporting is made by units on a regular basis.

2.5. AUI will increase its number of academic and administrative units with effective dashboards by:

2.5.1. Establishing a clear set of institutional indicators.

2.5.2. Addressing lagging indicators at the levels of units and the institution as a whole.

2.5.3. Adopting the generally accepted accounting principles (GAAP) in University Accounting.

3. INTERNATIONALIZATION

AUI has a commitment to a truly international campus in terms of students, faculty, and staff. Its programs promoting diversity and openness aim to foster 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. Thus, four metrics will monitor and measure AUI's commitment to internationalization.

3.1. AUI will increase the number of international students, faculty and staff by:

3.1.1. Pursuing international student growth so as to enrich diversity.

3.1.2. Pursuing growth in international faculty and professional staff.

3.2. AUI will increase south-south collaborative actions with African institutions.

3.3. AUI will use networks and partnerships to expose students to international experiences by:

3.3.1. Increasing the undergraduate study abroad rate.

3.3.2. Increasing international interaction in classrooms through ICT.

3.4. AUI will use networks and partnerships to expose frontline staff to international experience in order to enhance professional performance and communication by:

    3.4.1. Implementing "internationalization at home" training for frontline staff.

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 expansions, targeted program offerings and professional development initiatives for the members of its community. The finances of the University will also be strengthened through expansion of its teaching, research and executive education and diversification of the investment of its endowment portfolio. Thus, seven metrics will monitor and measure AUI's commitment to advancement for growth and sustainability.

4.1. AUI will increase the number and quality of enrolled students by:

    4.1.1. Maintaining an average annual 8% growth per year for the AUI student population to reach 2700 to 3000 by 2020.

    4.1.2. Enhancing and tightening admission procedures.

4.2. AUI will increase the revenue from Continuing and Executive Education by:

    4.2.1. Gradually increasing the Continuing and Executive Education sales revenues from 12M MAD to 100M MAD by 2020 with a minimum 30% net segment margin.

4.3. AUI will diversify its academic programs.

4.4. AUI will improve infrastructure and position the University in a competitive national market by:

    4.4.1. Upgrading the instructional technology infrastructure.

    4.4.2. Providing modern maintenance to campus facilities.

    4.4.3. Developing AUI as a Green Campus.

4.5. AUI will expand and diversify revenue sources for more sustainability by:

    4.5.1. Setting up and implementing an annual targeted fund raising plan.

    4.5.2. Reviewing and updating AUI's endowment investment policy statement.

4.6. AUI will reduce campus costs by:

    4.6.1. Reducing energy costs by 30%.

    4.6.2. Reducing maintenance costs by 15% while improving quality.

    4.6.3. Outsourcing the equivalent of 30% of the cost of services.

4.7. AUI will provide more opportunities for human resource development by:

    4.7.1. Providing professional development activities for faculty and staff in order to achieve AUI's growth and efficiency objectives.

    4.7.2. Reviewing evaluation and career advancement of staff based on internationally recognized methods.

    4.7.3. Ensuring that faculty and staff profiles, numbers, knowledge, skills and aptitudes are consistent with short-term and medium-term institutional objectives.

5. RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND DISCOVERY

Because of the importance of research in establishing international rankings of institutions of higher learning, retaining good faculty and enhancing the quality of graduate studies, AUI will increase its efforts to promote research, innovation and the production of knowledge. Thus, six metrics will monitor and measure AUI's commitment to research, innovation and discovery.

5.1. AUI will increase the emphasis on research in its faculty recruitment to accompany growth and research priorities by:

    5.1.1. Ensuring 75% of faculty new hires reflect strong or promising research profiles.

5.1.2. Attracting at least three research visiting faculty per year in accordance with the research priorities of academic units.

5.2. AUI will align existing assets with national priorities and international opportunities and consolidate research in education including e-learning by:

5.2.1. Doubling the current number of research grants obtained from national and international-funding agencies.

5.2.2. Ensuring at least 5% of produced research publications is in the area of education.

5.2.3. Doubling the number of patents submitted to OMPIC.

5.2.4. Doubling the cumulative impact factor at the University level.

5.3. AUI will increase graduate enrollment to boost quality research at AUI by:

5.3.1. Developing current Master programs.

5.3.2. Launching new Master programs.

5.3.3. Exploring the feasibility of developing PhD programs in collaboration with partners.

5.3.4. Encouraging co-supervision of PhD candidates.

5.4. AUI will provide the necessary conditions (infrastructure) to ensure faculty and student's success in research and development by:

5.4.1. Developing a research structure and prioritizing research through centers and research groups.

5.4.2. Establishing an Office of Sponsored Research.

5.5. AUI will become nationally recognized as a center of expertise in e-learning methodology by:

5.5.1. Offering online courses for executive education.

5.5.2. Designing and offering continuing and open access online education.

5.6. AUI will increase the revenues from consulting services by 10% annually through:

5.6.1. Increasing yearly revenue from research by 10%.

5.6.2. Establishing research and consulting policy and procedures.

5.6.3. Establishing an Industry Advisory Council.

6. MORE EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Innovation is critical in the ways and means by which the University recruits high quality students, faculty, and staff both from Morocco and abroad. 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. University units will commit to conveying all messages clearly and effectively. Thus, two metrics will monitor and measure AUI's commitment to more effective communication.

6.1. AUI will improve internal communication by:

6.1.1. Developing an internal communication protocol.

6.2. AUI will improve external communication by:

6.2.1. Developing an external communication strategy.

CONCLUSION

The University's main focus continues to be the success of its students measured during their studies and after they leave the University. This requires a continuous monitoring of the job market needs and the strategic needs of the nation, as well as the development of relevant academic programs and more innovative methods and environments for learning and teaching. Job markets and needs being more global, it is important to function according to recognized and reputable standards of quality at all levels of University operation. Thus, the pursuit of accreditation and other quality audits for academic and administrative units of the University is to become a routine operation. And the internationalization aspect of the University mission becomes even more urgent.

In light of its ambitions, the University is set to grow, if not in size, at least in scope and reach. Additional program offerings are being considered and the Liberal Arts dimension is to be enhanced and reinforced in various ways. Solid growth will need financing, but it will ultimately develop its own resources as long as it serves the strategic needs of the nation. Executive and continuing education programs play a central role in the growth, and they are called upon to provide useful resources for the process. So does research. The University is expected to produce innovative knowledge and methods that help enhance its role as a development engine in society, but research is also an excellent way to ensure the currency of teaching and learning.

In the years that followed its inauguration, Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane was top of mind throughout the nation. The waning novelty of the institution, in spite of the continuing prestige that it enjoys, calls for renewed efforts to promote the institution and make its special status and its mission known to the public and in particular to the population of young people who may not know much about it.

This "2020 Vision" strategic plan comes at a point when, having completed twenty years of service successfully, Al Akhawayn University is facing a third decade which promises to be a decade of significant growth and development. With forthcoming international accreditation, an enhanced sense of organization, stronger and more realistic ambitions, and solid participatory governance, the university is set to rise to the challenges. It will do so with greater confidence and a more active faith in its mission.

CONTRIBUTORS

The Al Akhawayn Strategic Plan was developed over a period of almost two years with input (and many hours of hard work) from individuals across the organization. Other than the President, they are acknowledged here in alphabetical order by last name.

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