

COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION
New England Association of Schools and College
Preface Page

Date form completed: June 18, 2007

Name of Institution: Lebanese American University

1. History Year chartered or authorized: 1950 Year first degrees awarded: 1926

2. Type of control: State City Other; specify:

_____ Private, not-for-profit Religious Group; specify:

_____ Proprietary Other; specify:

3. Degree level:

Associate Baccalaureate Masters Professional Doctorate

4. Enrollment in Degree Programs (Use figures from fall semester of most recent year):

	Full-time	Part-time	FTE	Retention ^a	Graduation ^b	# Degrees ^c
Associate	255	133	324	-	-	38
Baccalaureate	4018	1003	4593	93%	71.6%	954
Graduate	226	593	550	-	-	277

(a) full-time 1st to 2nd year (b) 3 or 6 year graduation rate (c) no. of degrees awarded most recent year

5. Number of current faculty: Full time: 188 Part-time: 288 FTE: 280

6. Current fund data for most recently completed fiscal year: (Specify year: 2005-06)

(Double click in any cell to enter spreadsheet. Enter dollars in millions; e.g., \$1,456,200 = \$1.456)

Revenues

Tuition	63,214
Gov't Appropriations	---
Gifts/Grants/Endowment	3,694
Auxiliary Enterprises	841
Other	3,928
Total	71,677

Expenditures

Instruction	16,476
Research	1,529
General	24,463
Auxiliary Enterprises	471
Other	15,971
Total	58,910

7. Number of off-campus locations:

In-state _____ Other U.S. _____ International _____ Total: 0

8. Number of degrees and certificates offered electronically:

Programs offered entirely on-line: 0 Programs offered 50-99% on-line: 0

9. Is instruction offered through a contractual relationship?

No Yes; specify program(s):

10. Accreditation history:

Candidacy: --- Initial accreditation: ---___ Last comprehensive evaluation: Spring 2007
Last Commission action: The University be approved to apply for candidacy for accreditation
Date: April 20, 2006

11. Other characteristics:

**Report to the
Faculty, Administration, Trustees, Students
Of
Lebanese American University
By
An Evaluation Team representing the
Commission on Institutions of Higher Education
of the
New England Association of Schools and Colleges**

**Prepared after study of the institution's
Self-evaluation report and a visit to
The campus April 15-18, 2007**

The Members of the Team:

**Chairperson: Dr. Richard M. Freeland, President-Emeritus,
Northeastern University**

Dr. John J. Burns, Associate Academic Vice President, Boston College

**Mr. Robert A. Foose, Special Assistant to the President,
Vermont Law School**

**Dr. Gerald P. Francis, Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering,
University of Vermont**

Dr. Bruce L. Mallory, Provost, University of New Hampshire

INTRODUCTION

Background

Lebanese American University (LAU), located in Beirut, Lebanon with a second campus in Byblos, Lebanon has applied for candidacy for accreditation by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. LAU is pursuing accreditation because it seeks recognition that the American-style education it offers meets American standards for institutions of its type and because accreditation will increase the value of an LAU degree, especially for graduates seeking admission to advanced degree programs in the United States.

Following preliminary discussions between LAU and NEASC, a three-person NEASC delegation, headed by Dr. Richard Pattenau, then-president of the University of Southern Maine, made an exploratory visit to LAU in April 2006. The delegation's report concluded that LAU did indeed meet NEASC's requirements for affiliation and should be invited to proceed with a formal application for candidacy, including a self study and a full visit by a NEASC-appointed visiting committee.

The chair of the visiting committee, Dr. Richard Freeland, president-emeritus of Northeastern University, conducted a preliminary visit to LAU on January 19, 2007. During that visit he met with LAU's administrative leadership, a group of trustees, the Steering Committee for the Self Study, and representative groups of students and faculty. During this preliminary visit agreement was reached on all necessary aspects of the committee's visit.

The visit itself took place from April 15 to 18, 2007, with a four-person team consisting (in addition to Dr. Freeland) of Dr. Bruce Mallory, Provost of the University of New Hampshire, Mr. Robert Foote, Special Assistant to the President of Vermont Law School, and Dr. John Burns, Associate Academic Vice President at Boston College. The team also benefited from the assistance of Dr. Gerald Francis, Professor Emeritus of Mechanical Engineering at the University of Vermont, a team member who, in the end, could not participate in the visit but who read LAU's materials and provided written comments on them. The visit included focused sessions with institutional representatives on each of the eleven NEASC standards, special additional sessions on governance and assessment, and open meetings for both faculty and students, as well as individual meetings arranged during the

course of our visit. While the bulk of our time was spent on the Beirut campus, one member of our team spent a morning at Byblos and our final meeting with campus representatives also took place on the Byblos campus.

Acknowledgements

The team wishes to thank Vice President Abdallah Sfeir, Assistant Vice President Elie Badr, the members of the Steering Committee, as well as the chairs and members of the nine committees on the NEASC standards who labored diligently and competently over many months to prepare for our visit. Every aspect of their work was well done. The Self Study constitutes a comprehensive, thoughtful and remarkably candid characterization of LAU in relation to the NEASC standards. The backup documentation assembled in the work room was complete, well organized, and impressive testimony to the seriousness with which LAU is working to assure and enhance institutional quality. All arrangements related to our visit, from IT support to hotel accommodations to transport to social occasions, were made with intelligence and care.

We also thank the members of the LAU community--faculty, staff and students--who attended one or more of the many sessions we held during our visit, as well as individual members of the staff and faculty who made themselves available on short notice to answer our questions. We appreciated the opportunity to get to know the students who were assigned to accompany us as we moved about the campus; it was helpful as well as enjoyable to learn about LAU through their eyes. All of our interactions were characterized by thoughtfulness, candor, and civility.

Finally, we wish to thank and acknowledge President Joseph Jabbra who has provided the impetus and overall leadership for LAU's drive for accreditation. Dr. Jabbra has been unfailingly attentive to every stage of the candidacy process and has inspired the impressive efforts by his campus community. We commend Dr. Jabbra for leadership which is so obviously appreciated by all parts of LAU campus community, and we congratulate him and his colleagues for their fine university and for their efforts to make it even better.

Nature of Candidacy

It is worth emphasizing the central question that our visit was intended to answer, which was not whether or not LAU currently meets NEASC's standards for accreditation but whether the University has positioned itself to

meet those standards within the reasonably near future. This was the prism through which we viewed every aspect of the University we encountered.

Summary Impressions

LAU is in the midst of dramatic and far reaching institutional change. As the team got to know LAU, it became increasingly clear that Dr. Jabbara, building on the work of his predecessor and with strong support from the University's Trustees, has launched LAU on a developmental process that is touching every aspect of life for faculty, staff and students. The breadth and depth of that change is captured most comprehensively in LAU's Strategic Plan, which contains a new statement of institutional mission, as well as the values that inform LAU's work and the vision that frames its purposes.

The members of the visiting team were deeply impressed by the extensiveness of the work undertaken by the LAU community through the strategic planning process. The student experience is being enhanced around the values of academic excellence in the classroom and student centeredness in the work of the entire institution. The intellectual environment is being intensified by heightening the emphasis on faculty scholarship and research. The administrative culture is being recast in the direction of greater openness, inclusiveness, and equity. These changes are all appropriate and fully consistent with LAU's overall goal of recognition as an accredited, American-style university.

The visiting team was also impressed by the enthusiasm and energy with which the LAU community has embraced the challenge of turning general directions of change initiated by its leadership into new policies, practices and programs. The amount of work required to implement the Strategic Plan is immense, and it is being done and done well with good cheer and seriousness of purpose by many members of the campus community. Our open meetings with faculty, staff and students confirmed the impressions we formed in meetings with those closest to the strategic planning process: that the changes are being welcomed with enthusiasm. The level of energy at LAU is high. The spirit of positive engagement is evident.

Finally, it is important to note the extraordinary conditions under which the LAU community has been attempting to build a first class university. The fifteen year Lebanese war that ended in 1990 rendered sustained attention to institutional development extraordinarily difficult. Under the circumstances LAU proved to be remarkably resilient and was able, in the early 1990s, to

add new programs in Engineering, Architecture and Pharmacy together with an entirely new campus in Byblos. Since that time, LAU has faced persistent uncertainty in its surrounding environment. Yet this campus community has continued to move forward, now more dramatically than ever, and has achieved notable success in the face of challenges much greater than those experienced by most American universities. The visiting team salutes our colleagues at LAU for their resiliency and dedication, as well as for the work they are doing with students to prepare a generation of leaders for the country and region who possess the kind of global vision that will be needed to move Lebanese society in the direction of sustained peace and social stability.

THE NEASC STANDARDS

Standard One: Mission and Purpose

Summary

The visiting team believes LAU has met the NEASC standard for Mission and Purpose. The new mission statement, together with the statements of values and of vision that accompany it, provide a valuable and appropriate framework for making institutional decisions and influencing institutional culture. Moreover, the team saw clear evidence, particularly in the context of strategic planning, that these statements are influencing institutional behavior. The only concern we identified with respect to the mission statement was the one pointed out by the Self Study itself: that many members of the LAU community may not sufficiently understand the statement and its importance. We are aware that the administration is taking steps to address this situation, and we would encourage these steps to continue.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

LAU has recently rewritten its mission statement. The new statement, approved by the Board of Trustees in September 2005, emphasizes academic excellence, student centeredness and dedication to educating young people to play significant roles in a highly diverse world. The new mission statement is linked to statements of institutional values and vision. While the new mission statement is not, in and of itself, a dramatic departure from previous versions, the work of developing it initiated a process of significant institutional change. Indeed, it is not too much to say that the new mission

statement was the first step in a fundamental reconstruction of LAU's institutional culture. The significance of the change is implied by the following statement in the Strategic Plan:

“For whatever historical reasons and leadership prerogatives, LAU's heart is currently not its academic core. Indeed, LAU is a business that delivers academic programs and grants degrees. For some time, business processes have driven much of the University's day-to-day management decisions. Academic plans and priorities that should inform the business operations have been virtually non-existent in the last several decades. The priorities of the University need to be reassessed and the Strategic Plan must clearly articulate the academic core as LAU's primary reason for being. Simply stated, the academic core of the University shall drive all priorities, strategic and operational, especially finance, administration and capital functions.”

Against this background, the basic directions of change represented by the new mission statement are highly appropriate for an institution of higher education. The most important of these directions include a shift of emphasis toward academic values and away from business values; toward professionalization and standardization of institutional processes and away from ad hoc, informal modes of doing business; toward inclusiveness of the campus community in institutional decision making and away from autocracy; and towards becoming a learning organization devoted to planning and assessment and away from short term thinking and opportunistic patterns of institutional development.

There is clear evidence that the new mission statement is having an impact on institutional life. First and foremost, the development of the statement marked the beginning of a strategic planning process based on a set of goals derived from the statement, strategic initiatives derived from the goals, and action steps intended to accomplish each of the strategic initiatives. On the basis of this framework, LAU is:

- Placing a heightened emphasis on the liberal arts and sciences through new General University Requirements (GUR) for undergraduate degrees;
- Increasing expectations in the area of faculty scholarship through new standards for hiring while continuing a previously established pattern of upgrading promotion criteria;
- Redesigning its governance arrangements including the creation for the first time of a faculty senate;

- Creating formal, written policies and procedures in the areas of personnel and budgeting;
- Initiating planning processes within its various subunits to align the entire university behind the goals of the Strategic Plan;
- Stimulating the review and redesign of programs and courses to better reflect both the substance and the spirit of the new mission statement.

In many ways, in the context of the new mission statement and the Strategic Plan that flows from it, LAU is putting in place for the first time a whole series of organizational arrangements designed to bring it into alignment with best practices at major American universities. These steps are necessary precursors to the development of more substantive statements of institutional purpose and the design of measures of educational and scholarly accomplishment that more directly reflect its underlying purposes.

Concerns

The institutional self study, which is a remarkably candid document in many ways, expresses a concern that the new mission statement and its significance is not sufficiently understood and appreciated by members of the LAU campus community. This may well be true, although we would also note that our open meeting with the faculty was well attended and those present seemed quite well informed about the pattern of change associated with the mission statement and the Strategic Plan. We were informed that the institution has recently taken steps to increase general awareness of the changes under way, and we saw evidence of this effort in posters and other announcements visibly displayed across the campus. We would encourage these efforts to continue.

Standard 2: Planning and Evaluation

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU has accomplished a tremendous amount with respect to this standard but that additional progress is needed before the University will be ready for full accreditation.

LAU's work with respect to the planning dimension of this standard is particularly impressive. The Strategic Plan is a thoughtful, rigorous and comprehensive document that is guiding a wide-ranging and important process of institutional change. The follow-up work being carried out by the

Oversight Committee and the Initiative Managers is unusually rigorous and well documented. The organization and administration of the entire process meets a high professional standard.

There are, however, aspects of the plan that need attention. In particular, the vitally important strategic enrollment management plan needs to be completed as promptly as possible. Also, planning for the Medical and Nursing Schools needs to be fully integrated into the strategic planning process, including the financial aspects of the plan.

LAU has made less progress with respect to evaluation than planning. While the university has established evaluative processes for several important aspects of its work, including personnel reviews and course evaluations, and is participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement, the university has not yet identified the substantive measures of success that will ultimately determine the value of the many actions called for by the Strategic Plan. Aspirational terms like “world class university,” “academic excellence,” “educating the whole person” and “employer of choice in Lebanon” need to be defined in terms of actual and--to the maximum extent possible--measurable outcomes. Moreover, LAU has not yet created the organizational capability to collect data and conduct analyses related to institutional effectiveness; we urge the university to move ahead promptly with the creation of an office of institutional research. Finally, LAU needs to make operational the commitment to measure learning outcomes in particular courses and programs called for by the Self Study.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

LAU’s Strategic Plan for 2005-2008 is an impressive piece of academic planning that is being implemented with exceptional care and seriousness by a dedicated and energized group of faculty and staff leaders. This plan is clearly the driving force behind a process of institutional change that seeks to transform LAU from an academically mediocre, administratively autocratic, business oriented culture into a modern university on the American model with high academic ambitions, decentralized administration, and a high degree of faculty participation in governance.

Within the framework established by the Strategic Plan LAU is undertaking the following tasks:

- Reversing a long standing pattern of excessive reliance on part-time and non-tenure track faculty;

- Enhancing the academic qualifications of both full-time and part-time faculty;
- Building a new infrastructure of formal policies covering faculty recruitment, retention, promotion and compensation;
- Creating an enrollment management plan to govern the allocation of faculty positions to programs and control the shape of the University by focusing student recruitment—particularly on the core disciplines of the arts and sciences;
- Fostering strategic planning at the school level within the framework of the University plan;
- Creating a new system of cyclical program reviews to assure the academic quality of LAU's offerings;
- Creating a new program of general education;
- Promoting an entirely new culture of shared decision making through the creation of a new Faculty Senate and new mechanisms for student involvement in decision making as well;
- Creating formal processes for budgeting and resource allocation, including three-year operating budgets and five year capital budgets;
- Modernizing the physical plant, including the outfitting of smart classrooms.

This is a remarkably ambitious set of undertakings, which are being received with great enthusiasm and readiness to contribute on the part of the campus community, especially the faculty.

Not all goals set forth in the Strategic Plan are proceeding at the same rate. LAU faces real challenges, most beyond its control, in recruiting full-time faculty in large numbers at a time when Lebanon faces an uncertain future. The enrollment management plan is not moving forward as rapidly as would be desirable. The new Faculty Senate is still wrestling with a number of issues regarding its proper role in university governance.

One of the most significant aspects of LAU's plans involves the creation of a Medical School. This is a very high priority of the Board of Trustees and the President. In the current year, the first pre-medical enrollments have matriculated at both the Beirut and Byblos campuses, paving the way for this cohort to enter the Medical School in three years. We were also informed that a feasibility study for a School of Nursing is currently being conducted creating the possibility of an additional unit opening simultaneously with the Medical School. Yet up to the time of our visit, both the Medical and

Nursing Schools were being developed on entirely separate tracks from the broader strategic planning process. This needs to change: the continuing development of the Medical School needs to be connected to the strategic planning process right away and further consideration of a Nursing School should also occur within this framework. There is concern among some faculty that the focus of the LAU administration as well as decisions about resource allocation associated with these projects may adversely affect existing academic programs and campus priorities. Such concerns are not unreasonable. These new units represent major undertakings with large implications for campus resources; they have the potential to affect many other aspects of LAU's work and cannot be considered apart from everything else the University is attempting to accomplish.

Having noted these concerns—most of which are identified by the University itself in the Strategic Planning Status Report of March 15, 2007-- it is important to emphasize that the amount LAU has achieved through the strategic planning process is impressive as is the positive spirit and great energy with which the campus community has engaged this entire effort.

One issue that needs to be addressed as strategic planning moves forward and matures into a fully institutionalized process is the fact that the plan tends to substitute tasks for goals. The goal of achieving “academic excellence” is transformed into the task of recruiting full-time faculty. The goal of making LAU the “employer of choice” in Lebanon, is being implemented by building a set of formal personnel policies. These concrete steps are essential in moving LAU in the direction it wishes to go, but, as noted previously, the school will soon need to decide more clearly than it has what phrases like “world class university” and “academic excellence” and “employer of choice” actually mean in terms of substantive outcomes that can be articulated and measured. The leadership of the Strategic Planning Oversight Committee is aware of this matter and has begun to focus the work of this committee on it.

As the previous paragraphs imply, while LAU is strong with respect to planning, it is underdeveloped in evaluation. It has yet to identify substantive outcomes in the areas of education, research and institutional culture that will ultimately provide the true measures of success of the strategic planning process. Moreover, LAU has little capacity to collect information about itself so that it can benchmark its performance in various areas to other institutions. Its most highly developed evaluation processes

involve routine administrative matters—student course evaluations, annual evaluations of individual faculty and administrators, periodic evaluations of senior administrators, and the new program review guidelines as well as the use of the NSSE testing program for undergraduates—but it has not yet built systems to measure institutional effectiveness in terms of its most important goals. There is active discussion of creating an institutional research capability. This would be an important step in the right direction in terms of the evaluation component of Standard Two.

Concerns

As noted above, LAU needed to address the issues raised in the March 15, 2007 Strategic Planning Status Report, including more rapid progress on the strategic enrollment management plan and the integration of planning for the Medical and Nursing Schools into the strategic planning process. With respect to evaluation, the university has work to do in identifying the substantive outcomes it hopes to achieve in the areas of education, scholarship, and institutional culture as it implements the Strategic Plan, and it needs to move ahead quickly with the creation of a properly staffed office of institutional research. Finally, LAU needs to make operational the commitments to measure learning outcomes in particular courses and programs called for by the Self Study.

Standard 3: Organization and Governance

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU has accomplished remarkable progress in this area but that additional work is needed before the University will be ready for a full NEASC review.

Both the organization of LAU and its governance processes are in a significant state of progressive and planned change. Efforts to restructure virtually all governance mechanisms; to significantly increase faculty, staff, and student voices in management; to replace informal, ad hoc, and frequently politicized decision making processes with formal, written procedures; to replace a culture of short-term and opportunistic decision making with formal planning processes at multiple institutional levels; to consolidate the culture and some operations of the two campuses; and to develop new schools of medicine and nursing on the Byblos campus, all of

which are occurring simultaneously, are important steps forward but are also placing significant demands on the human and financial resources of LAU.

We view all of these changes as consistent with LAU's goal of full accreditation. At the same time, it will be important for the University to manage the processes and pace of change carefully. The heavy investment of time in writing the Self Study and Strategic Plan and the continuing time dedicated to writing new by-laws, personnel procedures, and unit level strategic plans are likely to affect time devoted to the core teaching, research, and service missions of LAU. Moreover, several aspects of change with respect to this standard remain very much works in progress. The most important of these involve the role of the new Faculty Senate, whose place in the University's decision making structure still needs to be worked out. In addition, the new governance structures for both students and staff need to be made fully operational and incorporated into LAU's processes for consultation and decision making.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

Since the late 1990's, Lebanese American University has been experiencing significant change in its governance procedures and structures. While the organization has remained relatively constant (with exceptions noted below), a number of simultaneous governance initiatives have been launched by the Board of Trustees, the central administration, the faculty, the staff, and the students. Noteworthy organizational changes include the closing of the Sidon campus in 2003 and the associated consolidation of the Sidon academic programs at the Beirut and Byblos campuses, the latter having been established in 1995. In addition, the projected opening of the new Medical School is creating additional complexities for organization and governance, complexities that will be compounded if a Nursing School is also added.

The most important organizational change that has taken place in recent years is the change in senior leadership with the appointment of a new Vice President for Academic Affairs in 2003 and a new President in 2004. Perhaps more than any other factor, the appointment of these two individuals has led to significant changes in campus culture, particularly with respect to governance structures and processes. The overall effect of the leadership changes, combined with an interest in the Board of Trustees in creating more participatory (American style) governance, has been to increase faculty

involvement in program and policy development and to establish a Faculty Senate for the first time in the institution's history.

Faculty and senior staff at LAU credit the current VPAA and President, as well as the Board of Trustees, with fostering a new culture of high aspirations, shared governance, improved communication, and a clearer sense of mission and purpose for the institution. The Board of Trustees' selection of the new President seems to have been a conscious effort to shift the campus culture from a relatively ad hoc, highly centralized management system to a more rationalized, decentralized, and collegial culture similar to that found in most American universities.

At the present time, the organization and governance of LAU is very much a work in progress. Changes under way include the restructuring of campus and University councils, the establishment of the first Faculty Senate, the renewal of the Student Council (dormant since before the Lebanese War in 1975), and the creation of a Staff Advisory Council, all of which are occurring simultaneously, demanding significant time and attention. It appears that each of these processes is highly participatory and engenders considerable enthusiasm among community members. The centrality of these changes and their significance is affirmed in the Strategic Plan, in which one of the eight strategic initiatives is to "Establish shared governance among faculty, students, and staff." As noted in the Report of Eligibility by the NEASC team that conducted the preliminary visit in April 2006, implementation of these changes, particularly the new Faculty Senate, "will not be without difficulty." The anticipated changes are generally meeting the time schedules anticipated in the Self Study, in spite of extreme conditions encountered during the summer of 2006.

The organizational and governance changes currently in process are expected to result in clear descriptions of the authority, responsibilities, and relationships among the governing board, administration, faculty, and staff once they are finalized and implemented, which is projected to occur by the beginning of the next academic year. As a result, there should be greater clarity in decision-making processes, and it is expected that the new governance mechanisms and processes will support alignment between LAU's mission and its governance activities.

The commitment to creating "one university" is commendable. We saw evidence of efforts to coordinate the Beirut and Byblos campuses through

more unified council structures, greater use of IT to support communication and collaboration, and efforts to standardize courses and curricula.

Concerns

Achievement of this standard will depend heavily on the completion of the organizational and governance processes that are currently underway. The relationships among the various governance groups will require particular attention, so that decision-making pathways are clear and logical. For example, the relationship of the Faculty Senate to other University councils such as the Council of Deans and the University Executive Council must be clarified. One person commented in our meetings that this matter constitutes “the last link in the chain” of the new culture of shared governance. Integration of the new Medical School, and possibly the new Nursing School, into the evolving governance structures will require careful attention. Faculty and staff concerns about the impact of these initiatives will only be addressed if there are transparent planning and resource allocation discussions within the Faculty Senate, Staff Advisory Council, and other relevant University councils (e.g. the Graduate Council, University Budget Committee, Facilities Committee, etc.).

Consistent with concerns raised in other sections of this report, there is presently no systematic way to assess the effectiveness of LAU’s organizational structure and system of governance. Putting such a system in place will be critical both to attaining accreditation and to institutionalizing progress on the Strategic Plan; without a systematic approach to assessing institutional effectiveness, the multiple change initiatives currently underway will have neither a baseline nor benchmarks for measuring progress. Absent clear metrics of achievement, there is the potential that the many change efforts will drift from their current cohesiveness and sense of purpose. Sustained energy and open communication regarding the changes will be necessary to militate against this potential.

Standard 4: Academic Program

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU is well on its way to meeting the NEASC standard in this area.

In general, we find the University's various programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to be well organized and operating in a manner consistent with standards for an American university. While we have a number of thoughts about how some programs can be strengthened, we have identified only two areas where we think progress is essential before LAU will be ready for a NEASC accreditation review.

First, several programs remain far too dependent on part-time faculty; we know that the University is well aware of this situation and is taking steps to correct it, but so far, two years into the Strategic Plan and despite much new hiring, LAU has made little progress in changing the relative mix of courses taught by full-time and part-time faculty.

Second, vital quality control and assessment mechanisms, such as the new program review guidelines, assessments of student learning outcomes, and analysis of post graduate experiences, still need to be implemented; in the absence of the kind of data such assessments will provide, it is impossible to fully determine the quality of LAU's academic programs. We know that LAU is moving deliberately in these areas, and we anticipate that appropriate systems will be in place and yielding results prior to a full accreditation review.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards: Undergraduate Programs

LAU offers Bachelors degrees (BA/BS/BE) in 28 fields in Arts, Sciences, Humanities, Social Sciences, Education, Business, Engineering, Architecture and Pharmacy. It also offers Associate degrees in seven areas. Each program has a prescribed sequence of courses specific to the discipline usually including a limited choice of electives. Many departments, particularly in the professional schools, have public senior project presentations, sometimes with outside juries, as evaluated capstone experiences outside the basic course sequences. Some of the majors have small enrollments. Business, which accounts for by far the largest number of students, enrolls 37% of LAU's undergraduates.

All undergraduates are required to complete the General Undergraduate Requirement which includes 23 courses in the Humanities, Sciences and Social Sciences. Students with a Lebanese Baccalaureate degree from high school (a majority of LAU undergraduates) are deemed to have satisfied nine of these course requirements and therefore enter as second year

students. All must take English, Math and Social Science in the second year as well as a three semester core sequence titled “Cultural Studies”.

For students who enter in the second year, the BA/BS degree can be finished with a minimum of 92 credits in three years. Engineering degrees require four years including summers and Architecture and Pharmacy require five including summers.

Separate but parallel schools and departments are maintained at the Beirut and Byblos campuses in the Arts and Sciences and Business. The programs and courses offered at the two sites are identical. We saw no evidence that this situation is causing significant problems for either faculty or students, but in light of the strategic effort to create a “one university” culture and in the interest of maximum articulation of programs between the two sites as well as concerns about administrative efficiency, it may be worth considering some form of consolidation of these various programs.

In association with the strategic planning process, LAU has moved to reinvigorate the liberal arts by revising the General Undergraduate Requirement. The Cultural Studies sequence is being replaced with a choice of approved courses in Philosophy, History, Religion and Literature. This change is intended to clarify and strengthen the academic focus of these specific disciplinary perspectives which may have been lost in the interdisciplinary offerings. New majors in Philosophy and History are also being established. In addition, LAU plans to add full-time faculty in fields dominated by part-timers, has revamped the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) that reviews course and program proposals, has moved to standardize the meaning of a minor, and maintains its traditional commitment to undergraduate professional programs. The Strategic Plan seeks to strengthen faculty and students in all these fields.

All LAU course syllabi are now expected to have “learning objectives” clearly articulated for students. They are also expected to contain a statement of the importance of academic integrity in the educational process consistent with the University’s goal of teaching ethical behavior; penalties for violations are also to be specified. LAU has made a major university-wide commitment to TurnItIn.com, an online plagiarism checker, to reinforce this message. Some centralized assessment of the numbers of cases reported might help document the impact of these efforts.

Standardized student course evaluations are done for every course every semester and response rates appear to be excellent. These are reviewed annually with the instructor by the department chair and the dean, and are formal elements of both the annual salary increment process and tenure and promotion decisions. This process seems to reinforce good teaching and may at some point be made web based and more specific to LAU goals.

The language of instruction at LAU is English even though it is unlikely to be the first language of most students. Minimum English test scores are required for admission and students scoring lower than 575 on the TOEFEL are required to take remedial English in the first year. Outside of class the dominant language is Arabic, however, and limited English skills are noted as an educational problem in the pre-Strategic Plan SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) analysis by both faculty and students. In an informal survey of faculty nearly 20% indicated that they had to restrict assignments in class because of the variation in English skills among students. Despite a well-defined remedial/basic English sequence and help through peer tutoring the problem seems to persist, and if academic demands and faculty expectations are to be ratcheted up with the implementation of the Strategic Plan, the University will have to continue seeking creative ways to improve the English levels of some students. One faculty member suggested the possibility of assessing English skills at the end or in the middle of students' programs with the same TOEFL or EEE instrument to give students a goal to continue to work toward. Another suggested clubs or extra-curricular programs where English was required. A third suggested installing a requirement that English is the language of all communication on campus—in and out of class. These specific examples may or may not be practical, but if language is perceived to be impacting the quality of education, particularly in Humanities and Social Sciences, LAU should commit itself to continually trying corrective approaches.

LAU has one of the most prominent undergraduate Business programs in Lebanon, and it is by far the largest undergraduate major. This demand plus the relatively small number of full-time faculty makes Business the program most heavily dependent on part-time faculty and leads to extremely high student/faculty ratios. This is the most extreme example of reliance on part-timers, but many departments suffer from the same problem. This is something that the University clearly recognizes and intends to address.

Two new Humanities majors, History and Philosophy, have been proposed to strengthen the Humanities profile on campus consistent with LAU's heightened emphasis on the liberal arts. Given the current pre-professional orientation of the student body these majors may be of limited appeal unless the enrollment management plan specifically targets students interested in the Humanities. At the same time, faculty in these areas will continue to teach the lower level GUR courses in these fields, so the University will want to carefully monitor these programs to be certain that enough upper level major courses are available each year.

In general the LAU faculty appears to have been active through the strategic planning process in examining the programs they offer and the plan proposes a systematic review every several years. The guidelines for supervising credited internships and for substituting courses (and on rare occasions independent studies) for required courses that are not available have come under greater scrutiny. From a strategic point of view LAU may want to consider the value of combining the same departments on the two campuses formally to both reinforce the "one university" concept and increase the strength and profile of the departments in an increasingly competitive environment, but LAU seems well structured to consider such changes as the Strategic Plan is implemented and revised.

Concerns: Undergraduate Programs

As noted elsewhere in this report, LAU's excessive reliance on part-time faculty in a number of disciplines is the largest single concern with respect to the quality of its programs. This issue must be addressed aggressively as the University pursues full accreditation.

Overall the LAU Strategic Plan seeks to add the kinds of structures (especially external program evaluation) that will protect the integrity and permit continual monitoring and demonstrable strengthening of the various undergraduate programs. Clearly the faculty has responded to these efforts, but there are two issues to which the University may want to pay particularly close attention as the Strategic Plan is implemented.

The reduction in faculty teaching load from 4/4 to 3/3 may place greater pressure on the number of major offerings in different fields and works against the effort to reduce reliance on part-timers. The planned external review process for all University programs will want to continually evaluate

the depth and quality of major offerings especially those with elective choices for students.

LAU intends to seek the kind of specialized accreditation for other professional programs that Pharmacy now enjoys. This goal needs to be balanced with the Strategic Plan's strong emphasis on the liberal arts, educating the whole person and strengthening character. The new GUR and liberal arts offerings are designed to further those goals, but as the Self Study admits, there has been no way of measuring the degree to which the new programs are having the desired outcomes. This is not a problem unique to LAU, but to maintain the liberal arts focus of undergraduate education it will have to continue to think creatively about how to assess, quantitatively or qualitatively, the impact the GUR and LAU's liberal arts curriculum is having.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards: Graduate Programs

LAU offers eight graduate programs (seven master's degrees and the PharmD) at its Beirut and Byblos campuses. The curricula, faculty, and instructional resources associated with these programs are appropriate to the institution's mission and aspirations. Program design and delivery appear to be coherent and aligned with the disciplinary standards of each area. Advanced study, including the completion of master's theses or projects, is expected in most programs, and faculty qualifications are generally sufficient to support graduate studies in research and professional fields. Excessive reliance on part-time faculty in some areas is a concern. The absence of systematic program review of graduate programs as well as assessment of student learning outcomes and post-graduate experiences make it impossible to determine the quality of the current programs. The anticipated creation of a new MD program may have consequences for other graduate programs, and so the planning and implementation processes for this program will need to be transparent and closely integrated with the faculty, staff, and University governance councils that will be in place by the fall of 2007.

The various courses of graduate study are logically conceptualized and represent more complex levels of study than their counterparts at the undergraduate level. The current search for a Dean of Graduate Studies and Research reflects the desire to better link graduate education with research activities, a model that is used in many (but by no means all) American research universities. It will be important to fill this position to assure strong

advocacy for graduate studies in the context of LAU's tradition of undergraduate education and to oversee the planned recruitment and hiring of new faculty with academic credentials appropriate to the supervision of graduate theses and projects.

As with undergraduate studies, the articulation of learning objectives and student learning outcomes has just begun for graduate courses. Full implementation of this effort will help assure that there is adequate alignment as well as differentiation between undergraduate and graduate programs of study, including expectations for more advanced and demanding study at the graduate level. Similarly, formal periodic review of graduate programs has yet to begin, although plans and processes are now in place to do so. This will need to entail post-graduate surveys to determine the degree to which students are applying their skills and knowledge in careers related to their graduate studies.

In general, faculty assigned to graduate programs hold the appropriate terminal degrees and are active scholars in their respective disciplines. This is especially true for faculty hired in the past few years. The continuing implementation of higher standards for promotion and tenure, as defined in the Faculty Manual, will increase the likelihood that research-active faculty will be engaged in graduate teaching and supervision. In some cases, such as the MBA, there is an over-reliance on part-time faculty, including many who do not hold the terminal degree. Faculty workloads are adjusted appropriately for the supervision of master's theses and projects, such that each thesis chaired is counted as a one credit load and each project chaired is counted as a half-credit load. The recent implementation of a teaching load reduction will also help to assure closer attention to graduate studies.

Most programs require the completion of a credit-bearing master's thesis as the culminating demonstration of the ability to communicate specialized knowledge effectively. Some programs allow students to complete a credit-based project and/or a specified set of additional courses rather than a thesis. The MBA does not require such a culminating experience, nor does it have a required internship that might serve a similar purpose with respect to demonstrating the ability to apply professional knowledge. It appears that most MBA students are engaged in voluntary internships, but these lack formal faculty supervision to assure their academic substance.

In addition to its graduate programs, LAU also maintains a number of specialized scholarly institutes, including the Institute for Women's Studies in the Arab World and the Institute for Islamic Arts, Architecture, and Design. These institutes may present opportunities for expanded undergraduate and graduate programs, especially in the form of interdisciplinary minors or areas of emphasis. This would enrich the LAU curriculum and give it special appeal to students from both within and outside of Lebanon.

Concerns: Graduate Programs

The primary concern relative to LAU's graduate programs is the absence of systematic processes to measure student learning and the overall quality of the academic program. Implementation of learning objectives and student learning assessments as well as academic program review can address this concern. The implementation of the MD degree in the School of Medicine scheduled to open in 2009 will require careful review by the relevant councils, particularly the University Graduate Council. The resources necessary to operate a high quality MD program must be assured. Continual monitoring of the ratio of part-time to full-time faculty and of the research qualifications of faculty participating in graduate programs will be critical.

Standard 5. Faculty

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU currently meets several important aspects of this standard but has additional work to do before being ready for a full NEASC review.

We were impressed by the full-time faculty we met and by the vitae of faculty we reviewed. Given the changes currently occurring as a result of the Strategic Plan, we gave particular attention to the qualifications of the faculty hired during the past two years. Based on their backgrounds and achievements to date, we believe that these faculty are appropriately prepared to contribute to LAU at the level of expectation University leaders are currently articulating.

LAU has done impressive work in establishing a set of academic personnel policies and practices governing the recruitment, promotion and retention of faculty that are similar to those in place at major American universities.

These policies are included in a recently updated and expanded version of the Faculty Manual that is more comprehensive than earlier versions. The only significant caveat we would mention with respect to current personnel policies is the practice of retaining as lecturers some assistant professors who fail to meet standards for promotion; this is a highly unusual practice that could have unfortunate consequences if continued.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

LAU's full-time faculty are drawn heavily from the community of Lebanese professionals who have spent time abroad at American or European universities as either students or faculty or both. This is especially true for faculty who have been recruited in the past few years. In addition, both the President and Provost have spent time in the United States and are thoroughly familiar with current thinking about academic matters in this country. For these reasons the atmosphere and academic culture of LAU is quite familiar to a team of academic visitors from the United States. This situation is likely to be reinforced in future years, as both President and Provost have made clear their intention to continue focusing faculty recruitment on the expatriate Lebanese community while also pursuing an open recruitment process.

Consistent with LAU's goals as articulated in the Strategic Plan, faculty currently being recruited are typically terminally qualified in their fields and professionally active as scholars or practitioners as appropriate to their disciplines. Moreover, the new standards for retention and promotion, as well as the mechanisms through which these standards are applied, are consistent with LAU's academic ambitions as articulated in the Strategic Plan and are similar to those in place at many American universities.

One unusual feature of LAU's academic personnel policies is the absence of a formal tenure policy. As an alternative, LAU promotes faculty to a "limited tenure" status after a maximum of seven years. This status guarantees faculty three years of employment on a rolling basis renewed annually. As a practical matter, limited tenure appears to provide a very high level of job security, and we heard no complaints about this system from the faculty. On the other hand, this arrangement may prove to be a barrier to the recruitment of faculty of the caliber LAU currently seeks, so this is a matter that the University needs to monitor carefully. A second unusual feature of LAU's tenure policy is that rather than following a conventional "up or out" practice LAU currently has an "up or down"

option, which allows faculty who are not promoted to limited tenure status to revert to the lecturer rank. The Faculty Senate has recommended the abolition of this policy. The visiting team concurs.

Despite recent progress with respect to faculty hiring and qualifications, LAU's goal of achieving faculty standards appropriate for an accredited American university remains a work in progress. According to the Self Study, only 58% of current full-time faculty are qualified at the doctoral level. This is a low percentage for a university that aspires to academic and scholarly excellence. While NEASC has no specific standard with respect to this metric, LAU would be wise to benchmark itself against American institutions that it believes are reflective of its academic aspirations, and then to work aggressively toward achieving the benchmark proportion as part of its drive towards full accreditation.

In addition, as noted repeatedly in this report, LAU continues to rely far too heavily on part-time faculty to be confident in the quality of instruction throughout the curriculum. This is a general problem across the University and a very large issue in a subset of programs, most notably Business. The university is committed to correcting this situation and, in fact, has recruited impressive numbers of full-time faculty in the past few years. But the simultaneous reduction of teaching loads for full-time faculty appears to have offset any progress the new full-timers might have allowed with respect to reliance on part-timers. The Strategic Plan reports no significant progress in reducing the proportion of courses taught by part-time faculty. The visiting team was not able to form an overall impression of the academic qualifications of LAU's part-time faculty.

Compensation levels for full-time faculty are benchmarked against AAUP standards and appear generally consistent with American practice. Faculty at LAU appear to be generally satisfied with respect to salary and benefits. In addition, there appears to be adequate support for professional development activities, including travel to professional conferences, sabbaticals, and paid summer research leaves. There also appear to be sufficient faculty development opportunities in areas such as classroom use of information technology, although we did not see evidence of an active program of workshops devoted to classroom pedagogies. To the extent that our interactions can be viewed as indicative, the LAU faculty is generally satisfied with their relationship to the University. Many, we know from

direct observation, are enthusiastically engaged in current efforts to strengthen the University academically.

Concerns

LAU's largest challenge with respect to the faculty is to reduce its reliance on part-timers by hiring additional full-time faculty with qualifications appropriate to its current ambitions. It needs to significantly increase the percentage of courses taught by full-time faculty and to increase the percentage of full-time faculty who are terminally qualified. LAU's leaders are well aware of these challenges and are working actively on both of them.

As noted above, the visiting team believes LAU should abandon the practice of allowing junior faculty who are not promoted to limited tenure status to revert to the lecturer rank. We are not aware that this practice would constitute a barrier to full accreditation, but we do not think it is sound personnel policy. It creates pressure on departments to retain on the instructional staff individuals who do not meet LAU's current standards for faculty, and it also tends to build a tier of second class faculty members who may not have an entirely positive attitude toward the institution and its current ambitions.

Standard 6. Students

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU currently meets NEASC standards with respect to its students. Undergraduates are largely recruited through traditional networks, many from top secondary schools offering programs similar to the French baccalaureate, which qualifies them to enter LAU as sophomores. Students are tested at admission for English skills and placement in other courses. Despite these controls, a significant percentage of the faculty we encountered felt the level of instruction at LAU suffers as a result of limited language proficiency on the part of a substantial number of students.

We were impressed by LAU's student support services and its robust program of extracurricular activities. The student voice is heard through standing committees and the newly revitalized Student Council, whose initial elections were postponed this year for campus security reasons. Academic progress is reviewed each semester by professional academic

advisors, and there is a Student Code of Conduct reflective of the University mission and enforced by the Deans of Students on the two campuses. Graduation rates are between 70% and 80%. Generally students express positive feelings about the University. They feel well supported by both faculty and administration, and they appreciate the financial aid made available to them. The ones we encountered seemed proud to be at LAU.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

LAU draws its students primarily from a traditional set of private feeder schools and to a lesser extent from public schools in Lebanon and throughout the region. Numbers of applications have been slowly increasing and acceptance rates appear to be relatively high, though there is variation among specific programs. (The data we saw indicated overall acceptance rates of 85% for freshmen and 82% for sophomores, though in conversations with University leaders there was some uncertainty about how these numbers were compiled.) Of those accepted, 72% of freshmen and 73% of sophomores enrolled; those who do not enroll often cite the fact that they were not accepted into a particular program as a reason not to matriculate. Retention rates (computed this year for the first time) are strong (92-94% from year to year) and the six-year graduation rate was between 70-80% (65% in Engineering) for the class entering in 2000-2001.

The team was struck by LAU's combination of high acceptance rates and high graduation rates. In our experience of American universities, high acceptance rates are more typically associated with high attrition. One explanation for this phenomenon may be that LAU's policy of setting a minimum test score for admission may guarantee a relatively strong pool, although we were not able to get information that was readily comparable to American benchmarks on the average SAT scores of entering students. When we discussed the combination of high access/low attrition with faculty, a number told us that this phenomenon reflects a high level of dedication to student success that characterizes faculty and staff across the institution. Indeed, we were struck by the fact that even as LAU pursues higher levels of academic excellence and faculty achievement in the area of research, the faculty members with whom we spoke stressed their continuing commitment to enrolling students on a comparatively unselective basis and helping such students achieve their full potential. All of this seems quite admirable, though we would also note that, as LAU's expectations of the intellectual work of its faculty continue to rise, there is a danger of divergence between the needs of the students and the inclinations of the

professoriate. LAU needs to monitor this situation with the goal of maintaining institutional coherence, morale and effectiveness as the University pursues its Strategic Plan.

Enrolling students must meet well-defined standards for English proficiency nearly equivalent to TOEFL scores required for entry of international students into many competitive US institutions. Students with TOEFL scores between 525 and 573 are required to enroll in Remedial English during their first semester. Multi-disciplinary SAT-based Freshman Exams and sophomore exams are part of the admissions process along with high school records. Lebanese students must hold a Lebanese Baccalaureate to qualify for sophomore status.

The Self Study and Strategic Plan comment on the fact that undertaking university-level work in English is a challenge for some percentage of LAU students. When we asked about this situation in the open faculty meeting, a significant minority—perhaps 20%-- of those present indicated that the language facility of their students inhibited their ability to conduct classes at the level they would desire. Since we find LAU's standards for English language competence similar to the requirements of American universities for international students, we do not see this issue as a barrier to NEASC accreditation. We do believe, however, that LAU needs to continue working to make sure that all students truly achieve the kind of fluency in English that should be associated with a degree from an American university.

There were a wide variety of religions and nationalities represented in the student body in 2005. While English is the language of instruction, Arabic is most commonly used outside the classroom. The dominant high school languages of the students were 4% Arabic, 45% English and 49% French.

Financial aid makes up 18% of the 2006-07 budget and is reported to be the most significant institutional aid offered in the region. The process for applying for the aid is clearly defined on the web and in the catalog, but amounts available and criteria for awarding it are not entirely clear. It is divided into three components: merit and need-based scholarships, loans, and the equivalent of work study. Financial aid is used to attract some gifted students and does make attendance possible for some who otherwise could not afford it, but in the absence of published information or a transparent process a number of rumors exist about its allocation. Since LAU has the highest nominal tuition in Lebanon, available aid does make some economic

diversity in the student body possible, but clearly there is greater interest in its use on a merit rather than a need basis and as an enrollment management tool to assist underenrolled programs.

There are dormitories on both the Beirut and Byblos campuses, but the majority of students live off campus with their parents or in readily available nearby housing. New dorm space on both campuses is planned apparently as an attraction to non-Lebanese applicants with security concerns, but there is no plan to become a predominantly residential campus at either location.

At LAU there is a two day orientation program for new students with a follow-up session a month later. A professional academic advisor on each campus reviews students in academic difficulty each semester and contacts them about steps to take to avoid probation or suspension. Students are assigned faculty advisors in their fields of study, but the large numbers of students per advisor (more than 80/1 in some fields, particularly Business) make this relatively ineffective. Monitoring as a process is in place as is potential referral to Counseling or Cooperative Learning centers staffed by University-paid peer tutors; the latter service is focused on students with academic difficulties and pays comparatively little attention to the needs of more successful students.

The Student Affairs website lists 19 student clubs (service, recreational, culture, and professional). LAU supports 25 varsity sports competing locally and internationally. Other major campus activities like theater and the campus newspaper are created through academic classes in acting and journalism though major theater performances draw on student participants from across the University. There is also a mechanism through the Dean of Students' offices for students to organize ad hoc musical and other social events. All events and other campus news are announced via newly installed electronic billboards as well as in hardcopy and students make full use of email and "Facebook" type communication media. Some student-run organizations, particularly the Global Classroom Model United Nations actively involve large numbers of students and publish their own newsletters and websites.

To a very limited degree, LAU admits and supports students with physical and learning disabilities, but does not have a policy of actively recruiting handicapped applicants, in part because older parts of both campuses, particularly Beirut, are not handicapped accessible.

An extensive Student Code of Conduct was developed based on the mission, values and vision of the University and was published on the web. It is enforced by the Deans of Students and was notably invoked in the widely praised suspension of 18 students last year for participating in a politically based brawl. Seventeen of the 18 have been readmitted after the successful completion of required anger management, dispute settlement and community service activities, and students generally express great confidence in the security of the campus and their ability to get along with other students of differing backgrounds and points of view. While they differ amongst themselves on the decision to suspend elections for the first Student Council for fear of exacerbating political tensions, they are generally optimistic that the newly appointed interim Council will develop suitable by-laws and move quickly toward student elections. They look forward to this as a mechanism for expressing the student perspective on University policy.

LAU administered the National Survey of Student Engagement to first year students and to seniors last year and will repeat it this year along with a faculty version. The University is seeking ways of increasing the response rate (less than 30%), and was actively advertising the current administration of the survey during our visit. Those with whom we spoke were pleased that many of LAU's ratings matched a US-based peer group, though student-faculty interaction was distinctly lower; in response to the survey results, the administration took a number of actions, including an immediate increase in faculty office hour requirements. Students also have the opportunity to respond to library and dining service surveys. The latter reputedly led to changes in cafeteria offerings at Byblos.

Concerns

As noted above, on the academic side, the largest concern we identified involves the limited English language competence of some students. While we do not see LAU's standards in this respect as a barrier to accreditation, it does appear to be an educational issue for many faculty and may be thrown into sharper relief as new assessment mechanisms are put in place. We believe LAU needs to continue working to improve the language facility of some of its students.

More broadly, LAU has put in place the structures for creating a rich and active undergraduate campus experience, and the faculty and staff are committed to enriching both the classroom and extracurricular experience

for undergraduates while maintaining a comfortable and secure campus. Some of these structures are brand new (Student Council, the NSSE survey) and will need to be developed more fully and used effectively to actually achieve University goals. Also the criteria and purpose for awarding financial aid should be more clearly specified and linked to a more fully articulated enrollment management strategy. Finally LAU may want to develop a more elaborate and accessible academic advising program that would meet the needs of average and superior students while also monitoring those having difficulty. All of these issues are recognized by LAU staff and cited in the Self Study, and so are targeted for amelioration as the Strategic Plan moves forward.

Standard 7: Library

Summary

The visiting team believes that LAU meets the NEASC standard in the area of the library. The LAU libraries at Beirut and Byblos are among the strongest assets of the institution. The University's strategic commitments to academic excellence, the use of information technologies, and a service-centered environment that supports scholarly and creative endeavors are realized through the resources available in the libraries and the offices that support IT. Personnel and financial resources allocated to the libraries are significant. Systematic assessment of library use and the quality of resources occurs continuously.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

While there is a more explicit articulation of vision for the use and enhancement of information technology than for the libraries per se, the two functions are well integrated and complementary. Recent annual budget increases for library collections development and periodical holdings have averaged 13 percent in order to achieve a planned 7-10 percent growth rate in overall collections. This level of allocation will allow the libraries to keep pace with inflation in academic publishing. The addition of extensive on-line data bases and electronic serials has increased the libraries' utility for students and faculty.

LAU has played a leadership role in establishing both national and international library consortia to expand interlibrary loan and document delivery services. The libraries solicit course syllabi from instructors in

order to be sure that assigned readings are available in their collections, and the assignment of library liaisons to academic departments has begun, a step which will further assure that collections are current and reflect faculty instructional and research needs. Library Councils on each campus assure a close relationship between users and facilities (these two councils will be merged next year as part of the overall governance restructuring described in Standard Three). Faculty report that the libraries are consistently responsive to requests to purchase new volumes and periodicals. Students report that academic computer resources are strong, although computer science students are somewhat more critical in their assessment.

Library staff are well qualified and continuously assess user needs and satisfaction. Both faculty and students report high levels of overall satisfaction, although there is still a desire to expand book and periodical collections as well as the availability of on-line data bases.

A planned restructuring of library administration will result in the appointment of a single University Librarian to oversee both campus libraries, with assistant librarians providing local management.

Students and faculty are offered a variety of means to become oriented to the libraries' resources. Students enroll in a mandatory one-credit Learning Resources Techniques class taught by library staff, where bibliographic research methods are emphasized along with issues related to copyright and plagiarism. This is especially critical in the regional context where essentially no students who attend LAU have had prior experience with public libraries and where high school libraries are quite limited.

There are extensive IT resources available to students and faculty to support learning and research. Smart classrooms are currently being expanded, to achieve a goal of half of all classrooms equipped by 2010. Increased training for faculty in the use of smart classrooms is anticipated in the near future. A document management system is now being planned, as is a data archive for all University data bases. A new student and alumni portal is being implemented in the current year. A faculty and staff portal is planned for future development.

IT resources support scholarship, communication, and systematic planning at LAU. These resources are especially critical in Lebanon where disruptions resulting from civil strife or war may result in the inability of

faculty and students to get to campus. During the war in 2006, faculty used videoconferencing and on-line resources to continue both their research and the writing of the Self Study for accreditation.

Concerns

It will be important to expand library space at the Byblos campus in the near term, particularly to assure adequate shelf and user space when the new Medical School begins operations in 2009.

Standard 8: Physical and Technical Resources

Summary

The visiting team believes LAU is substantially meeting this standard through the continued development of its planning activities. If these activities are completed and coordinated, both the facilities development and maintenance of the information technology infrastructure should support continued growth and anticipated changes in the academic program on both campuses.

Current and Projected Alignment with NEASC Standards

The University has a robust technology organization that provides well organized and documented support for both campuses as they continue to evolve. The Self Study and Strategic Plan describe a careful series of interactions with the user community to ascertain needs and challenges.

Academic needs are met through a budget that is described as adequate to support both the replacement of older desktop machines after three or four years and the provision of new equipment for new faculty. A plan to increase the number of smart classrooms at a rate of 20 per year is in place and will be initiated in the summer of 2007. Because the cost of equipment has decreased dramatically the multi-year project is projected to cost less than \$800,000 and equip 43 classrooms on both campuses by the end of 2008.

Modern, state-of-the-art academic and administrative applications are available and utilized on both campuses which are linked through a reliable high speed connection. The information technology staff also described

substantial progress on a disaster recovery plan that includes redundant hardware, documented procedures, and a commitment of remote facilities.

The positive technology support of the library is described in Standard Seven.

Regarding physical facilities and equipment, the University is in the early stages of developing and completing a comprehensive, five-year program to address the demand for new and renovated space. The program was initiated through a “bottoms up” process in which needs were defined at the department level, collected and analyzed by central administration, and further refined during the 45 day war hiatus in the summer of 2006. The components of the plan were defined and costed out on a preliminary basis, and the plan and its approximate price tag of \$119,000,000 were discussed with the Board of Trustees in its September 2006 meeting. The administration was authorized to proceed with more detailed planning so that segments of the plan could be implemented beginning in 2007 if detailed planning and costing confirmed the preliminary estimates. It is understood that the projects will be informed and perhaps modified by work on other aspects of the Strategic Plan. For example, ongoing planning for the Medical School in Byblos has suggested that it may be prudent to add an extra floor to the new facility to support the Nursing School if that project moves forward. The Board of Trustees has asked the administration to investigate this option and prepare a proposal for the September 2007 meeting. It is intended that the facilities work on the plan will be completed by 2012 and not require the use of debt.

During the visit the team reviewed a thorough space planning study that has provided the campus with new insights into the use of teaching spaces on the Beirut campus. An updating of this analysis will inform future self studies and progress on the Strategic Plan.

The team noted that several of the laws that govern institutional behavior in the United States such as the ADA do not apply in Lebanon, and therefore some compliance requirements are more lax. The team suggests that the institution review the absence of applicable national regulations with NEASC staff to confirm that local standards prevail over American laws on such matters.

Concerns

As in some other areas noted in this report, the only concern involves the fact that important aspects of LAU's physical and technological facilities are works in progress. If the University follows through on the projects summarized in its plans, there should be no problem with meeting the requirements of this standard.

Standard 9. Financial Resources**Summary**

The visiting team believes LAU meets NEASC's standards for accreditation in this area.

The University is in a strong financial position. It has built up a substantial endowment over the years supplemented by a large plant reserve. It earns impressive operating surpluses each year, while providing good support for the work of both faculty and staff. Net assets have increased each year for the last four years despite modest philanthropic support. Clearly the University has been living within its means and generating savings to support future needs. The current budget process is transparent and well documented.

Full implementation of the Strategic Plan, together with the opening of the Medical School (and possibly a Nursing School as well), will add significant financial pressures at LAU. Because of these pressures, LAU has identified the need to produce and maintain a comprehensive financial plan. The team's review of the current edition of the plan suggests that LAU's strategic objectives are achievable but that the annual pattern of substantial operating surplus is not sustainable. This means the Board of Trustees and the administration must be ready to adjust and refine financial and programmatic plans on an ongoing basis as conditions warrant so that the University is able to maintain itself on a solid financial footing. It also means that clear communication with the campus community regarding progress on the financial model and the resulting resource allocation decisions will be vital. Finally it means that efforts to expand LAU's fundraising effectiveness is critical to LAU's long range academic ambitions.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

Lebanese American University exited the fifteen year war that ended in 1990 with an endowment of less than \$7,000,000 and a highly fragile enrollment. Under the leadership of a president who retired in 2004, the institution proceeded, in the next fourteen years, to add Engineering, Pharmacy, and Architecture programs; acquire a new campus in Byblos; and increase in its unrestricted endowment and plant reserves to more than \$300,000,000. While initiating the Strategic Plan, the new president has continued grow the financial base and by September 30, 2006, the end of fiscal year, the endowment was worth \$259,712,000 and plant reserves \$90,711,000. The institution is debt free.

LAU's substantial financial strength provides the confidence that current strategic initiatives are realistic and gives credibility to the prospects for near term progress towards achieving the University's goals.

A review of the audited financial records for the four-year period ending September 30, 2006 reveals an institution that has been increasing net assets by an average of \$45,251,000 each year through a combination of operating surpluses and enrollment growth, even in the face of modest philanthropic support. The strength of the financial performance is demonstrated by the fact that \$58,391,000 of the \$181,004,000 total has been generated by the difference between net tuition and fee revenue and all educational and general expenses. Clearly the university has been living within its means.

Because the Strategic Plan involves strengthened programs including significant additions to the faculty, a requirement to address \$119,000,000 of facilities and equipment needs, and a commitment to grow the endowment to \$400,000,000 by 2011 without incurring debt—not to mention the Medical School and possible Nursing School not currently included in the plan-- LAU has identified the need to produce and maintain a comprehensive financial plan. A review of the current edition of the plan suggests that the strategic objectives are achievable but that the annual pattern of substantial operating surpluses is not sustainable. This means that the Board of Trustees and the administration must attend to all aspects of program development and be ready to adjust and refine financial plans as conditions warrant so that future self studies continue to reflect the current, solid structure. Particular attention should be paid to completing the enrollment management plan that will identify the programs requiring new faculty and possible changes in the

strategies for the use of institutional financial aid. The enrollment management plan will also inform the continued development of facilities.

The team received reports that the current budget process is transparent and well documented. The surplus generating strategy has broad support because of its potential to produce resources that will support new initiatives. But the team also concludes that the administration will have to carefully attend to clear communication regarding progress on the financial model and the resulting resource allocation decisions.

An interview with the independent auditor, KPMG, confirmed that the auditor relationship is managed by the Board of Trustees and that the firm has high levels of confidence in the work of the current finance and accounting staff.

A review of the regular reports to the investment committee and committee minutes underscored the thorough nature of the activities of that group and its financial advisors as they continue to grow the endowment. The investment policy is currently undergoing revision and will be presented to the Board of Trustees in its next meeting.

An interactive online interview with the chief advancement officer who is housed in New York confirmed that his office is supporting the new President in an expanded development effort that is expected to produce a capital campaign in support of the strategic initiatives.

Finally the team reviewed a list of insurance policies but did not consider their details. Given the unsettled political environment in which the University operates, the details of the risk management program will be of interest to future Self Study evaluators.

Concerns

As the institution continues to pursue accreditation while implementing the various aspects of the Strategic Plan, the development of the Medical School, and the study of the nursing possibility, it needs to continuously monitor its financial health and be prepared to adjust plans and expectations if and when conditions warrant such adjustments. Ultimately, as with successful private American universities, more robust philanthropy must replace operating surpluses as a basis for expansion of net assets.

Standard 10: Public Disclosure

Summary

LAU is well on the way to meeting the standard for public disclosure with its current website and print publications, although neither web nor print materials contain some information that would normally be expected of an American university. Currently available materials, both in print and on line, are consistent, updated annually and clear about the mission, processes and policies of the University. It will be important, however, that these materials become more descriptive of the opportunities and qualities of student life as LAU begins to implement its Strategic Plan in pursuit of academic excellence.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

The catalog, alumni magazines, Faculty Gazette and brochures like “Focus on LAU: Facts and Figures” are professionally developed and offer accurate information on many aspects of LAU. The website mirrors this information. The details on processes and policies at LAU, program requirements and courses offered are clearly and accurately detailed for current and future students.

On the other hand descriptive statistics on the character of the student body, the make-up of the faculty, the criteria and outcome of admission decisions for different programs, the actual distribution of financial aid, graduation rates, and the professional successes of alumni are not included in these materials. These and other characteristics of LAU will need to become more available, particularly electronically, as LAU moves into greater competition for faculty and students, graduate and undergraduate, across the region and the world.

Some faculty and staff noted the need to develop the website as more of an international marketing tool than an on campus information source for existing students if the goals of the Strategic Plan are to be achieved. They noted, for example, that LAU has traditionally relied on its generally good reputation in familiar networks and high schools as a recruitment mechanism, but developing academic excellence across the University might require a different approach. They confirmed that the processes of coming together to develop the Strategic Plan and the Self Study promoted a broader awareness of this need and opportunity across campus. Similar observations

could be made with respect to faculty recruitment. As LAU looks to do the bulk of its hiring from the expatriate Lebanese community, the website will be a vital point of initial contact for many prospective recruits. It is vital that it present the University in an accurate, in-depth, and compelling manner.

The Strategic Plan calls for the creation of an enrollment management strategy and philosophy tied to the new aspirations of LAU; as noted previously, this plan is yet to be developed. The University also intends to establish an office of institutional research to help assess its progress towards achieving strategic goals, and in so doing provide a fuller statistical picture of the LAU student body, people and programs. Finally the Office of Publications is being reorganized into the Office of Marketing and Communications with the specific goal of using print and electronic materials to build LAU's image in new and unfamiliar markets. These are critical components to develop and integrate to more effectively communicate to new markets the excellence that the University is building on campus.

Concerns

Print and web publications at LAU are accurate and professional, but will need to provide a wider range of information on actual outcomes like graduation rates and realistic financial aid data that constitute important consumer information. Thus the University will want to move quickly to develop its enrollment management strategy, its office of institutional research, and its new Office of Marketing Communications and integrate their efforts both to provide the public with a fuller and more accurate picture of the new LAU and to more effectively advance the University's goals.

Standard 11: Integrity

Summary

The visiting team believes LAU meets the NEASC standard in the area of Integrity,

The new institutional culture to which we have referred above places a high value on transparency and openness and on ethical values in all aspects of institutional behavior. Our sense is that administration, faculty and staff take these values quite seriously. We were impressed, for example, in a

discussion of cheating by students during our open meeting with the faculty, by the commitment of those who spoke to taking corrective action and to educating students about appropriate university values.

Current and Projected Alignment with Standards

The team experienced the institution's commitment to the values of openness and transparency through the candor of the Self Study and Strategic Plan, the clarity of the interviews and meetings held during our visit, and the presence of well written procedures and minutes. Where weaknesses were cited in the Self Study, a plan for improvement inevitably followed in the strategic agenda.

Of particular note should be the institutional record of support for a diverse population of students, faculty, and staff. This is true not only for the broad range of characteristics presented by Lebanese nationals, but also those students who choose to attend from neighboring countries, Europe and other foreign points of origin. The team quickly came to understand that this support of diversity is a national characteristic.

Within the Self Study it should be noted that the institutional committee charged with reviewing Standard Eleven raised a concern regarding the lack of national laws that prohibit all forms of abuse of copyrights. Since there is no legal prohibition against it, the University believes that it cannot insist that the practice of banning the use of photocopies become a policy. Rather the faculty is asked to discourage this practice among students.

The team was impressed by the careful attention to the discouragement of cheating and plagiarism through the use of electronic media and classroom dynamics.

Concerns

None noted.

Institutional Effectiveness Summary

Standard One: LAU has recently completed a major review of its mission, has rewritten its mission statement, and is using the new mission statement to drive and frame a wide-ranging strategic planning process that has already enhanced institutional effectiveness in many ways and shows every promise of fostering additional enhancements as the Strategic Plan is implemented.

Standard Two: In association with the revision of the mission statement, LAU reviewed its planning processes, concluded that an entirely new approach to planning was required, and has put in place a new planning mechanism that is far more systematic, deliberative, and inclusive than was previously the case—and also far more focused on long term strategic issues as opposed to short term opportunities. The effectiveness of this new mechanism is evident from the excellent quality of the University’s Strategic Plan and the impressive efforts currently under way to implement that plan.

LAU has taken important steps with respect to evaluation. It has established programs of student-driven evaluations of all courses and annual reviews of faculty and administration. It has created new guidelines for program review which will be implemented during the coming academic year. It has undertaken a major evaluation of its facilities needs. It maintains an impressive system to monitor implementation of the Strategic Plan. As part of the Self Study, it is committed to building outcomes oriented assessment programs for its various curricula. It has surveyed its students with respect to satisfaction levels about their experiences and administers the National Survey of Student Engagement to benchmark student experiences against comparable American universities.

LAU has not yet put in place an institutional research capability that can collect and evaluate important data on institutional performance, such as retention and graduation rates or post-graduation student experiences. In addition, LAU has not yet defined substantive educational outcomes for its programs, substantive goals for its scholarly work, or measurable goals with respect to institutional culture and climate that would permit a systematic assessment of these fundamental aspects of institutional performance.

Standard Three: The current strategic planning process has included a major focus on the effectiveness of LAU’s systems of organization and governance and is resulting in major changes in these areas. These changes are generally in the direction of best practice in American universities and therefore seem likely to improve institutional effectiveness. At the same time, there is at present no systematic way to assess the effectiveness of the new structures and systems in terms of well articulated, substantive and measurable goals.

Standard Four: As noted above, LAU currently maintains a system of student-driven course evaluations and is putting in place a well designed system of program reviews. The Self Study calls for the creation of an assessment program for the various curricula but this program has not yet been put in place.

Standard Five: LAU annually evaluates the work of individual faculty members through both peer review and administrative review. The strategic planning process has included a significant effort to evaluate the sufficiency of and support for faculty in various aspects of their work.

Standard Six: As noted under Standard Two, LAU does not yet have in place a program of regular and systematic evaluation of its effectiveness in admitting and retaining students, though there is a plan to create an office of institutional research that will be charged with this responsibility. As part of the strategic planning process LAU has surveyed students with respect to their satisfaction with student services, but it does not yet have in place a system to study these services in terms of their contributions to the institution's fundamental educational purposes.

Standard Seven: LAU regularly and systematically assesses library use and the quality of library resources.

Standard Eight: As part of the strategic planning process, LAU has conducted a thorough evaluation of its physical and technological resources in light of its mission, current needs and plans for the future.

Standard Nine: Through internal administrative oversight, board oversight, and professional external review, LAU has in place mechanisms to evaluate its fiscal condition and financial management comparable to those in place at most American universities.

Standard Ten: LAU has in place a process for annually reviewing and updating its academic catalogue. At the same time, the self study process revealed instances of inaccurate information on the website and recognizes the need for a formal system to review all published information for accuracy and currency on a regular basis.

Standard Eleven: According to the Self Study, LAU periodically evaluates all policies and procedures with respect to institutional integrity. Such a

review has clearly occurred in association with the strategic planning process and has led to major changes in both policy and practice in the direction of greater transparency, formality, and clarity of institutional processes in key areas of decision making, including resource allocation, hiring and retention of academic and non academic personnel.

Summative Statement of Strengths and Concerns

Standard One:

The visiting team believes LAU has met the NEASC standard for Mission and Purpose. The new mission statements, together with the statements of values and of vision that accompany it, provide a valuable and appropriate framework for making institutional decisions and influencing institutional culture. Moreover, the team saw clear evidence, particularly in the context of strategic planning, that these statements are influencing institutional behavior. The only concern we identified with respect to the mission statement was the one pointed out by the Self Study itself: that many members of the LAU community may not sufficiently understand the statement and its importance. We are aware that the administration is taking steps to address this situation, and we would encourage these steps to continue.

Standard Two:

The visiting team believes that LAU has accomplished a tremendous amount with respect to this standard but that additional progress is needed before the University will be ready for full accreditation.

LAU's work with respect to the planning dimension of this standard is particularly impressive. The Strategic Plan is a thoughtful, rigorous and comprehensive document that is guiding a wide-ranging and important process of institutional change. The follow-up work being carried out by the Oversight Committee and the Initiative Managers is unusually rigorous and well documented. The organization and administration of the entire process meets a high professional standard.

There are, however, aspects of the plan that need attention. In particular, the vitally important strategic enrollment management plan needs to be completed as promptly as possible. Also, planning for the Medical and

Nursing Schools needs to be fully integrated into the strategic planning process, including the financial aspects of the plan.

LAU has made less progress with respect to evaluation than planning. While the university has established evaluative processes for several important aspects of its work, including personnel reviews and course evaluations, and is participating in the National Survey of Student Engagement, the university has not yet identified the substantive measures of success that will ultimately determine the value of the many actions called for by the Strategic Plan. Aspirational terms like “world class university,” “academic excellence,” “educating the whole person” and “employer of choice in Lebanon” need to be defined in terms of actual and--to the maximum extent possible--measurable outcomes. Moreover, LAU has not yet created the organizational capability to collect data and conduct analyses related to institutional effectiveness; we urge the university to move ahead promptly with the creation of an office of institutional research. Finally, LAU needs to make operational the commitment to measure learning outcomes in particular courses and programs called for by the Self Study.

Standard Three:

The Visiting Team believes that LAU has accomplished remarkable progress in this area but that additional work is needed before the University will be ready for a full NEASC review.

Both the organization of LAU and its governance processes are in a significant state of progressive and planned change. Efforts to restructure virtually all governance mechanisms; to significantly increase faculty, staff, and student voices in management; to replace informal, ad hoc, and frequently politicized decision making processes with formal, written procedures; to replace a culture of short-term and opportunistic decision making with formal planning processes at multiple institutional levels; to consolidate the culture and some operations of the two campuses; and to develop new schools of medicine and nursing on the Byblos campus, all of which are occurring simultaneously, are important steps forward but are also placing significant demands on the human and financial resources of LAU.

We view all of these changes as consistent with LAU’s goal of full accreditation. At the same time, it will be important for the University to manage the processes and pace of change carefully. The heavy investment of time in writing the Self Study and Strategic Plan and the continuing time

dedicated to writing new by-laws, personnel procedures, and unit level strategic plans are likely to affect time devoted to the core teaching, research, and service missions of LAU. Moreover, several aspects of change with respect to this standard remain very much works in progress. The most important of these involve the role of the new Faculty Senate, whose place in the University's decision making structure still needs to be worked out. In addition, the new governance structures for both students and staff need to be made fully operational and incorporated into LAU's processes for consultation and decision making.

Standard Four

The visiting team believes that LAU is well on its way to meeting the NEASC standard in this area.

In general, we find the University's various programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels to be well organized and operating in a manner consistent with standards for an American university. While we have a number of thoughts about how some programs can be strengthened, we have identified only two areas where we think progress is essential before LAU will be ready for a NEASC accreditation review.

First, several programs remain far too dependent on part-time faculty; we know that the University is well aware of this situation and is taking steps to correct it, but so far, two years into the Strategic Plan and despite much new hiring, LAU has made little progress in changing the relative mix of courses taught by full-time and part-time faculty.

Second, vital quality control and assessment mechanisms, such as the new program review guidelines, assessments of student learning outcomes, and analysis of post graduate experiences, still need to be implemented; in the absence of the kind of data such assessments will provide, it is impossible to fully determine the quality of LAU's academic programs. We know that LAU is moving deliberately in these areas, and we anticipate that appropriate systems will be in place and yielding results prior to a full accreditation review.

Standard Five

The visiting team believes that LAU currently meets several important aspects of this standard but has additional work to do before being ready for a full NEASC review.

We were impressed by the full-time faculty we met and by the vitae of faculty we reviewed. Given the changes currently occurring as a result of the Strategic Plan, we gave particular attention to the qualifications of the faculty hired during the past two years. Based on their backgrounds and achievements to date, we believe that these faculty are appropriately prepared to contribute to LAU at the level of expectation University leaders are currently articulating.

LAU has done impressive work in establishing a set of academic personnel policies and practices governing the recruitment, promotion and retention of faculty that are similar to those in place at major American universities. These policies are included in a recently updated and expanded version of the Faculty Manual that is more comprehensive than earlier versions. The only significant caveat we would mention with respect to current personnel policies is the practice of retaining as lecturers some assistant professors who fail to meet standards for promotion; this is a highly unusual practice that could have unfortunate consequences if continued.

Standard Six

The visiting team believes that LAU currently meets NEASC standards with respect to its students. Undergraduates are largely recruited through traditional networks, many from top secondary schools offering programs similar to the French baccalaureate, which qualifies them to enter LAU as sophomores. Students are tested at admission for English skills and placement in other courses. Despite these controls, a significant percentage of the faculty we encountered felt the level of instruction at LAU suffers as a result of limited language proficiency on the part of a substantial number of students.

We were impressed by LAU's student support services and its robust program of extracurricular activities. The student voice is heard through standing committees and the recently revitalized Student Council, whose initial elections were postponed this year for campus security reasons. Academic progress is reviewed each semester by professional academic advisors, and there is a Student Code of Conduct reflective of the University mission and enforced by the Deans of Students on the two campuses. Graduation rates are between 70% and 80%. Generally students express positive feelings about the university. They feel well supported by both

faculty and administration, and they appreciate the financial aid made available to them. The students we encountered seemed proud to be at LAU.

Standard Seven

The visiting team believes that LAU meets the NEASC standard in the area of the library. The LAU libraries at Beirut and Byblos are among the strongest assets of the institution. The University's strategic commitments to academic excellence, the use of information technologies, and a service-centered environment that supports scholarly and creative endeavors are realized through the resources available in the libraries and the offices that support IT. Personnel and financial resources allocated to the libraries are significant. Systematic assessment of library use and the quality of resources occurs continuously.

Standard Eight

The visiting team believes LAU is substantially meeting this standard through the continued development of its planning activities. If these activities are completed and coordinated, both the facilities development and maintenance of the information technology infrastructure should support the continued growth and anticipated changes in the academic program on both campuses.

Standard Nine

The visiting team believes LAU meets NEASC's standards for accreditation in this area.

The University is in a strong financial position. It has built up a substantial endowment over the years supplemented by a large plant reserve. It earns impressive operating surpluses each year, while providing good support for the work of both faculty and staff. Net assets have increased each year for the last four years despite modest philanthropic support. Clearly the University has been living within its means and generating savings to support future needs. The current budget process is transparent and well documented.

Full implementation of the Strategic Plan, together with the opening of the Medical School (and possibly a Nursing School as well), will add significant financial pressures at LAU. Because of these pressures, LAU has identified the need to produce and maintain a comprehensive financial plan. The team's review of the current edition of the plan suggests that LAU's

strategic objectives are achievable but that the annual pattern of substantial operating surplus is not sustainable. This means the Board of Trustees and the administration must be ready to adjust and refine financial and programmatic plans on an ongoing basis as conditions warrant so that the University is able to maintain itself on a solid financial footing. It also means that clear communication with the campus community regarding progress on the financial model and the resulting resource allocation decisions will be vital. Finally it means that efforts to expand LAU's fundraising effectiveness is critical to LAU's long range academic ambitions.

Standard Ten

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