

PRESIDENT'S NEWS DIGEST

30 JULY 2017 – VOLUME 2 - ISSUE 39

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Welcome to the 39th issue of the second year of the President's News Digest. I would like to start this edition of the News Digest by addressing the topic of 'Student Experience' throughout its life cycle. Providing our students with the best learning and life experiences remains our top priority.



Supporting and enhancing the 'student experience' throughout the student lifecycle (from first contact through to becoming alumni) is critical to the success in higher education today for both the student and the institution. The student experience encompasses all aspects of student life (i.e. academic, social, welfare and support) with the academic imperative at the heart of it (<http://www.improvingthestudentexperience.com>).

In one of the Higher Education Academy (HEA) reports, the student experience is covered under 4 stages:

The application experience – covering the interactions between potential students and the institution, up to the point of arrival;

The academic experience – students' interactions with the institution associated with their studies, excluding for these purposes teaching and learning processes;

The campus experience – student life not directly connected with study, which may include activities away from the actual campus (insofar as one exists);

The graduate experience – the institution's role is assisting students' transition to employment.

Today's student experience, from initial contact to admissions and graduation and beyond is greatly influenced by the use of technologies, especially social media. This generation of learners has different expectations and they are much more demanding and difficult to please. Our University is already embracing a strong students centered approach and the "student voice" is helping us to develop an exciting and modern student experience taking full advantage of technologies and innovative practices.

The life cycle of a student experience in our University covers: initial contact with the university and responding to queries (during the recruitment phase), admissions and registration, orientation, academic support including academic advising, counseling, learning experience, financial aid and welfare, sports, cultural and community engagement support and involvement through students clubs, extra

CONTACT US



Office No: (+973) 16036163

Email: ayat.nass@asu.edu.bh

curricular support (including entrepreneurial, research, analytical, critical thinking, language, presentation, and communication skills through workshops and customized events), career services support and transition to employment, and alumni support. Some good examples of providing our students with memorable experiences include the Students employability workshop organized by Dr Faiza, the annual careers fair organized by Ms Noora, the annual academic exhibition organized by Dr Rawya which expose our students to all types of cultures, civilizations and values, the sports tournaments organized by Mr Mohammed AlNajjar and Mr Thaer, the Annual Alumni Dinner organized by Ms Noora, the suggestions boxes to improve our students' experiences through feedback, and the contribution and participation of our students in events like National Day and National Actions Charter. The Students Council elected by the students of the University play an important role in organizing various events that help improving the students experience which include competitions in Quran recitations and poetry and organizing of arts exhibitions. Of course, there are plenty of other good examples, which are documented by the Deanship of Students affairs.

In order to provide our students with a journey and an experience to be remembered, the Deanship of Student Affairs in our University works closely with the Deanship of Admissions and Registration, Colleges, the Quality Assurance and Accreditation Centre QAAC (to conduct student satisfaction, progression, exit, employer and alumni surveys), Marketing and Public Affairs, and Admin Departments and Units and most importantly the Students Council.

As you are aware, our strategic plan is developed around 3 core strategic priorities namely: Teaching and Learning, Research, and Community Engagement. In addition, we have 4 enabling priorities including Students Support, Internationalization, Quality Assurance and Sustainable Growth. All these core and enabling priorities have been developed with the students in mind. The Deanship of Students Affairs is entirely dedicated to provide our students with the best experience through its units that include counseling, students' services, career services and alumni. This year we established five clubs to support our students (Media, Culture, Sports, women, and Volunteering in addition to the existing Alumni Club). These clubs were set up with the help of our Students Council to support extra curricular activities and thus enhancing the ASU student experience. In addition, the Deanship of Students Affairs working closely with the Colleges developed the University's graduate attributes and communicated them widely within the students' community. All these activities will help us in providing our students with experiences to be remembered. Our students with special needs require some extra attention. It is pleasing to see that the University has put all sorts of mechanisms in place to support their needs.

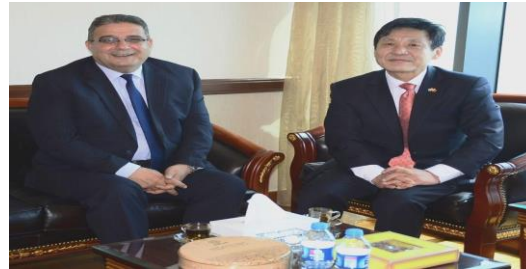
As part of students support and in order to enhance the welfare experience, the University is investing more than 100,000 BDs in financial aid to support our needy and outstanding students. In addition, scholarships are provided to existing staff to complete their undergraduate and postgraduate degrees in the University, University of Bahrain, and overseas, mainly in the UK. This has enabled many students to enjoy financial support and without it they would have been deprived of a golden opportunity to complete their studies. Last year, the University supported 28 students who are in need of financial aid (some existing) and some new students who have achieved good grades in their secondary education and they couldn't not afford to pursue their studies without this financial aid.

It is important to make every effort in order to provide a positive experience to all students under our care. The students are our sons and daughters and their support should be at the heart of all what we do. We need to treat them with respect and show them that they will graduate from the University as mature and responsible citizens. They are our best ambassadors, and if we provide them with a positive experience, they will do more for us through spreading the good word, which will help us in recruiting more students.



It is worth remembering that academics as mentors are the primary source of inspiration for students and their belonging, retention and satisfaction depend largely on the relationship with them. Program coordinators need to have a sound knowledge of the areas of students' services that cover the life of students from application and enrolment through to graduation and the issuing of awards. Research has shown that student services can positively impact the student experience and that students are less likely to drop out of university if they are counseled and supported properly.

In the next few sections, I will be reporting on some activities and events that took place in the University last week. On Sunday 23 July, the President received HE the new Korean Ambassador to Bahrain. HE was shown around campus and the opportunities to collaborate with Korean universities were explored.



On Tuesday 25 July, the Chairman of the BOT, the President, and Dean of Admissions and Registration visited the Director of Training at the Bahrain Defense Forces in order to explore opportunities for collaboration.

On the afternoon of Tuesday 25 July, the Chairman of the BOT, the President and Mr Yasser received Ms Sabah AlMoayed to explore opportunities for collaboration in the area of entrepreneurship. An MOU will be signed this Monday to solidify our collaboration in this area.

On Wednesday 26 July, the Director of Research and Enterprise at LSBU, Mr Gups, visited the University and spent the whole day with us discussing opportunities for further collaboration. The Chairman of the BOTs, the President, Mr Abdulla, Mr Yasser and Ms Sophie Martin were present throughout the day.

On Thursday 27 July, the University Council had its last meeting this academic year. The students graduating from the Summer Semester were approved and confirmed by the Council.



Congratulations to Dr. Murad Aljanabi on his Promotion to full professor in the College of Law.





I would like to conclude this edition of the News digest by informing you that during the month of August and because of the summer break, only the message from the president will be included in a shortened version of the News Digest.

POLICY OF THE WEEK

Learning, Teaching and Assessment Strategy ACAD 10

Summary of Policy

Aim of strategy: A central component of the University's quality enhancement framework to support student learning experience and promote staff teaching excellence through identifying priority enhancement areas implemented through an action plan and key performance indicators.

Goal of strategy: To educate our students in their chosen discipline to become confident, critical, creative, adaptable, articulate and aspiring graduates.

The learning experience of ASU students:

1. Enable learners to plan, manage and evaluate their own learning
2. Provide exciting, creative, innovative, research-informed learning opportunities
3. Use assessment to motivate and inform learning
4. Provide timely and constructive feedback to learners
5. Equip learners with the key skills required for employment and further study
6. Provide excellent support and guidance to learners
7. Respond to the distinctive needs of individual learners
8. Ensure that the student voice plays a significant role in enhancing the student learning experience

The 4 priority areas of the strategy:

1. Quality of programme design and development; Benchmarking of programmes against international standards; Work-based learning
2. Learner engagement, support and success; Recruitment and retention of high quality staff; Supporting teaching excellence; Feedback and Assessment
3. Research-informed teaching
4. Technology-enhanced learning; Development of information skills; Learning environment

Implementation of strategy

The strategy is implemented through an action plan and key performance indicators through:

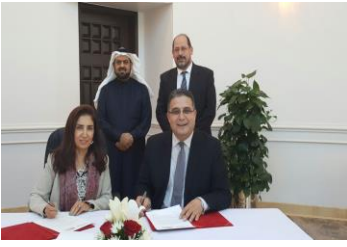
1. The University Learning and Teaching Committee
2. Working groups – each priority area shall have a working group with cross-university and student representation
3. College Councils
4. Student voice – through representation in the working groups and College Councils
5. Central support

Monitoring and evaluation of strategy

The University Learning and Teaching Committee will continue to oversee the monitoring of the Strategy and the priority working groups, undertake a formal annual review of the Strategy's implementation and produce an annual action plan to inform future activities. College Councils are closely involved in this monitoring process which contributes to the continuing development of the University and College strategies.

Highlights in pictures of some of last academic year's achievements and events, which will bring back some nice memories

2016/2017



QUOTE OF THE WEEK

Life is a series of experiences, each one of which makes us bigger, even though sometimes it is hard to realize this. For the world was built to develop character, and we must learn that the setbacks and grieves which we endure help us in our marching onward.

Henry Ford

Happy Reading

