

## Lebanese American University

Memo to : Members of the Accreditation Subcommittee STD#6  
From : Mona Nabhani  
Subject: Minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Subcommittee for Standard 6, held on Byblos campus on Monday **April 17** at 10:30.  
Present: A. Lahoud, S. Garabedian, G. Abi Fares, M. Nabhani, E. Badr, V. Papazian, M. Semaan, E. Samia, M. Othman, and L. Massara

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved, and no changes were made to the agenda, which is to work on the appraisal write up one substandard at a time.

Dr. Badr presented an example gap analysis that Dr. Habre prepared for standard 4 and reminded all that the deadline for finishing the write up is June 30. The university then has to respond to the appraisals with projections.

### **The process**

Dr. Semaan read each sentence in the first substandard and the group decided where to place each in the gap analysis table. They felt that this collective work is more objective than individual work.

Dr. Semaan explained the meaning of policies and procedures; the first is approved by the UEC and the Board, whereas procedures are what is done to apply the policies. Several members commented that in some instances, LAU has practices that are not institutionalized or published and in other instances, having procedures does not mean they are satisfactory.

Dr. Badr explained retention as the percentage of students who graduate in 4 years out of the number of students who are admitted and enrolled at a certain year. So, if the retention rate is 80%, we still need to study what happened to the remaining 20% and examine whether we did our best to keep them. In 2 weeks, LAU will have a study on retention rate starting 2001 by field of study.

### **Substandard 6.2.1**

Data and studies are needed on who decides the cut off admission scores. Is it the school Deans or the Testing Office?

Dr. Semaan explained that the grades of the Sophomore Entrance Exams are scaled according to the group who take the exam at a certain point in time.

### **Substandard 6.2.3**

LAU has no policies for students with learning needs or physical handicaps who are accepted at LAU. Identified learning needs are dealt with through ad hoc measures.

**Substandard 6.2.4**

LAU has no adequate mechanisms to deal with students' academic needs. There are remedial courses, and LAU accommodates all the students who need to take them. Dr. Semaan commented that the content of remedial courses, however, has not changed to cater for new input from newly enrolled students.

**Substandard 6.2.5**

The orientation program is good. There are also faculty advisors for all students. So, the procedure is present.

**Substandard 6.3.1**

The question was raised as to whether to include students' satisfaction with the remedial courses or not. Dr. Badr stated that LAU is conducting a study to serve this purpose: comparing the achievement of students who enroll as Freshman to those who enroll as Sophomore and are granted 24 credits for the Baccalaureate II.

**Substandard 6.4.1**

Specifically recruited students are those enrolled in the Excelsior (external) degree and those in the certificate programs: the Teaching Diploma. LAU now has documented guidelines for what courses those students should take.

**Substandard 6.4.2.2**

Advising by Guidance Office. Dr. Samia explained the process that is followed in documenting all support that is given to students. The group decided that we are performing okay but not at NEASC standard, so it was placed at number 3 pending the information from the Beirut Guidance Office.

**Substandard 6.4.2.2**

Advising by faculty. Dr. Badr read Standard 2 on advising: advising programs are mandatory for students in difficulty and there should be specific advisors in each department.

Dr. Semaan asked Dr. Badr to follow up and take to the Council of Deans the matter of advising and accessibility of faculty during advising and registration weeks, and that Chairs should not accept students' request to sign for courses without the faculty's signature.

Dr. Badr commented that there is no systematic approach and no recognition for advisors who do a good job and no accountability for those who do not although LAU is a student-centered university and advising is at the core of it.

**Substandard 6.4.2.2**

Counseling: LAU has the staff and has to wait to evaluate effectiveness. If a faculty member notices certain signs for problems, the student is referred to the Guidance Office. The Dean of Students had emailed a list of warning symptoms that require the faculty's attention. Dr. Badr commented that due to their importance, these guidelines should have been discussed in faculty meetings as well.

**Substandard 6.4.2.2**

Intensive English program ENG 003 and ENG 004: there is a system for providing this academic support for students and these English courses are accessible to them.

Remedial English ENG 009: Some members commented that students sometimes do not find suitable sections in ENG 009 due to conflicting schedule of other courses they have to take. Dr. Semaan asked Dr. Badr to take to the Council of Deans the issue of providing enough sections of ENG 009 to cater for the newly accepted students.

So, providing students with English language support is placed in column 2, but the effectiveness of the program is placed in column 3.

Under substandard 6.4, the item launching new programs and periodic review should be moved to substandard 6.18 under institutional effectiveness.

**Next meeting**

Friday April 21, 9:00- 1:00 will be the next meeting to finalize Gap Analysis of the remaining substandards. Mr. Papazian will reserve a room.

| <b>Preliminary Appraisal of Substandards #6.1→6.4                      Gap Analysis</b>              |   |  |   |   |
|--|---|--|---|---|
| LAU performs this function/expectation, and does so very well (i.e., it is a point of excellence)    | LAU performs this function not so very well, but above the reasonable expectation of the NEASC standard | LAU performs this function, but not at the level of the NEASC standard | LAU performs this function, but in an erratic or inconsistent manner (from campus to campus; department/program/office to department/program/office; from course to course; from faculty to faculty; from year to year; etc.) | LAU does not perform this function at all, nor does it have alternative methods by which it claims to accomplish the intended outcome |
| 6.1.1 enrollment<br><br>6.1.2 ethical<br><br>6.1.3 admission policy: present & available to students |   |  |   | 6.1.3 retention, no policies available  |
| 6.2.2 LAU does reasonably well<br><br>6.2.3 academic needs & remedial courses<br><br>6.2.5           | 6.2.4   |  | 6.2.1 Studies should be done on compatibility of LAU's objectives & admission criteria  |   |

|   |  |   |                                   |  |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| 6.3.1 pending study                                       |  |   |                                   |  |
| 6.3.2   |  |   |                                   |  |
| 6.4.1 Admission criteria: general and for specific majors | 6.4.2.2 Counseling<br>6.4.2.2 Intensive English providing for students | 6.4.2.1 Accessibility of programs and services<br>6.4.2.2 Guidance Office advising<br>6.4.2.2. Faculty advising | 6.4.2 Services of Learning Center |  |
|   | 6.4.3 Information and guidance for students                            | 6.4.2.2 Effectiveness of English support programs   |                                   |  |

The meeting adjourned at 3:05.