

Lebanese American University

Approved

Memo to: Members of the Accreditation Subcommittee STD#6

From: M. Nabhani

Subject: Minutes of the meeting of the Accreditation Subcommittee for Standard 6 held in Irwin Conference Room B, Beirut campus, on Friday April 21, 2006 at 9:00

Present: S. Garabedian, G. Abi Fares, M. Nabhani, M. Semaan, E. Samia, V. Papazian, M. Othman, and L. Massara

**Agenda:** to continue the gap analysis for the remaining substandards of Accreditation Standard 6.

Minutes of April 12 and April 17 were approved as amended.

M. Semaan commended M. Nabhani on taking minutes and commented that the team is doing a good job by following the collective wisdom method in the appraisal process, which has been very informative.

**Business arising from minutes:**

E. Samia will call the **Registrar's Office in Beirut** to get information on how students are served, and then, collectively, the group will compare what is done on both campuses. He will also come up with **criteria for the focus group** to ensure that we have a proportional sample from various classes, schools and GPAs.

The focus group interview will help get data on issues of advising and others.

Criteria for the focus group	Friday April 28, E. Samia
Information from Guidance Office, LAU Beirut	Friday April 28, E. Samia

**Discussion of substandards # 6.5→6.18**

**Substandard 6.5**

LAU has clear policies. V. Papazian commented that we need to look at what the registrar's offices are doing to substantiate what they are doing; perhaps later on a study or an audit can be conducted.

**Substandard 6.6.1**

LAU measures student success: GPA and number of students whose GPA are between 3 and 3.5 and so on. The information is available and can be retrieved but LAU has no system for these studies. Also, there are no retention studies so far.

A discussion of the meaning and implementation of retention followed: Is the rate being measured? What does LAU do to help retain students on probation?

G. Abi Fares stated that the Banner has a feature that, if used, can help keep track, on yearly basis, of students' completed credits and credits still needed to graduate. So, the offices need to optimize the use of the Banner to know how many students graduate in 3 or 4 or more years.

M. Semaan questioned whether the Banner can be used to stop students from taking courses outside their majors, and the response was negative.

Retention studies are needed to cover all the above.

**Substandard 6.6.3**

Merit scholarships can be placed under specialized recruitment, but since this has started recently, there are no measures yet. But students who are placed on probation and are called several times to the Guidance office do not fall under this category.

**Substandard 6.7.1**

The group debated whether LAU systematically identifies learning needs of its student population and whether this includes identifying English language needs or whether this means special needs such as dyslexia. For the latter, LAU faculty cater for these individually, but there is no system. V. Papazian argued that students are helped with study skills, use of the library, computer literacy and so on. So, LAU does this but not to NEASC standards.

**Substandard 6.7.2**

Student services are guided by a philosophy and are reviewed periodically and systematically. LAU does this according to needs but there is no system.

**Substandard 6.8.1 and 6.8.1b**

LAU provides student services appropriate to its mission and needs and goals of students. But, students should be asked about their **satisfaction with student services**. S. Garabedian has already prepared questions for this and sent them to V. Papazian.

**Substandard 6.8.2**

LAU provides academic support services, safety and information technology appropriately.

**Substandard 6.8.3**

LAU provides 2-day orientation for new students and training in software that students need in several majors. The group questioned whether the orientation period was sufficient and M. Semaan suggested repeating the orientation 2 weeks after the first session for reinforcement.

**Substandard 6.9**

LAU provides students with health services, extracurricular activities and residence halls. M. Semaan commented that the Byblos campus dormitories are very satisfactory whereas the Orme-Gray on Beirut campus is not of the same standard in physical facilities. So, more information is needed on students' satisfaction with the **Beirut dormitories**.

**Substandard 6.10.1 and Substandard 6.10.2**

LAU provides students with study tips, brochures, orientation, information on opportunities and services, and follows an open door policy in its student services offices.

**Substandard 6.11.1**

LAU's financial aid office has a well organized system

**Substandard 6.11.2**

LAU's financial aid is based on clear but not properly publicized criteria due to cultural constraints. But LAU does that to its best ability.

**Substandard 6.12.1a**

E. Samia commented that LAU students exhibit leadership and have many relevant awards. They also recently trained 600 students in Lebanese schools in various skills.

**Substandard 6.12.1b**

Student governance: a student council will be established of by October 2006.

**Substandard 6.13.1a and 6.13.1b**

S. Garabedian commented that more facilities are needed in Byblos and Beirut campuses although the Beirut campus facilities are good. Athletic scholarships are also missing, but LAU's athletics programs and athletes are of high standard both in performance and in LAU's support. Byblos campus has plans for improvement and will soon execute these. So, programs are placed at number 1 and facilities are placed at number 3 in the Gap Analysis table.

**Substandard 6.13.2 and Substandard 6.13.3**

LAU is responsible for controlling and financing these athletics programs. The programs and expectations are the same for athletes as other students. If an athlete is on probation, there is no travel permission for university tournaments. S. Garabedian commented that some athletes improved their grades due to that, and that some athletes pay their own expenses to travel with the LAU team.

**Substandard 6.14.1a and 6.14.1b**

Does LAU hire suitable people for student services and does it provide them with ongoing training?

LAU employs people with formal training and experience but there is no updating and continuous training. M. Semaan explained that every office has a budget for training and development but there are hurdles facing training such as considering training an extra rather than a necessity.

E. Samia commented that needs assessment is required for determining training, and evaluation of performance should follow; but problems lie in the meager budget and the absence of a clear system for who gets training and in what.

**Substandard 6.14.2a,b,c**

Facilities are placed at number 3, technology at number 2, and funding for facilities and training at number 3.

**Substandard 6.15.1**

Code of conduct and ethics for LAU's student services is placed at number 3.

**Substandard 6.15.2a**

Policies on students' rights and responsibilities are not clearly stated and publicized, so are placed at number 3 in the table.

**Substandard 6.15.2b**

Fairness and consistency are not at NEASC's standard so this substandard is placed at number 2.

**Substandard 6.16.1**

LAU has practices and records but has no formal or written policies for this substandard.

**Substandard 6.16.2**

There is privacy and confidentiality of students' records, and there are policies, as V. Papazian explained.

**Substandard 6.17**

LAU has no stated goals for co-curricular activities; it has practices only. There is assessment in the semester reports that all student services offices present to the VP.

**Substandard 6.18**

Is there any feedback to enlighten recruitment?

M. Semaan commented that there is no regular and systematic evaluation and G. Abi Fares added that even students' exit interviews are not used for program improvement. The group came up with one example of evaluation: a scheduled meeting to evaluate the UN Model successful event. The rest of the time, there is informal assessment without using the results.

**Next meeting:** Friday April 28 at 12:00 on Byblos campus

**Agenda for next meeting**

Take each substandard and decide how to fit its components according to the left hand column of the gap Analysis table.

**Future meetings**

Scheduled every Friday 12:00-2:00 and we alternate campuses until the appraisal is finished.

The meeting adjourned at 12:25.

**Preliminary Appraisal of Substandards #6.5→6.18**

**Gap Analysis**

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
6.5				
			6.6.1a measuring of student success  6.6.3	6.6.1b retention studies  6.6.2 no goals for retention
	6.7.2	6.7.1 identifying learning needs		
6.8.1a LAU offers services  6.8.2 6.8.4 6.8.5	6.8.1b pending study whether services meet students needs and goals  6.8.3			
6.9 services in general: pending information on student satisfaction with Orme-Gray in Beirut				
6.10.1 6.10.2				
6.11.1		6.11.2		
6.12.1a student leadership	6.12.1b student governance:			

	pending establishment of student council by October 2006			
6.13.1a athletics program 6.13.2 6.13.3		6.13.1b athletics grounds and facilities		
	6.14.1a formal training  6.14.2b technology	6.14.1b continuous training  6.14.2a facilities  6.14.2c funding		
	6.15.2b	6.15.1 6.15.2a		
6.16.2				6.16.1 no policies
		6.17		
		6.18		