

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 in ARC 302 on Friday April 28, 2006 at 12:15

Present: S. Garabedian, G. Abi Fares, M. Nabhani, E. Badr, V. Papazian, M. Semaan, E. Samia, and R. Mouawad

The agenda was to re-examine the preliminary gap analysis that the group had done in previous sessions for all the substandards of Standard #6.

Minutes of the meeting of Friday April 21 were approved.

Business arising from previous minutes

Criteria for the focus group	Friday May 12, E. Samia
Information from Guidance Office, LAU Beirut	Friday May 12, E. Samia

Procedure:

M. Semaan read each substandard and the team’s appraisal comments from previous sessions and asked the group for their final decision on where each substandard is placed.

Substandard 6.1

Criteria for admission are according to LAU’s mission and LAU has orderly and ethical standards and a system; so there is an admission policy but no retention policy.
 E. Badr explained that a retention policy would state how many students LAU would like to retain and what should be done to retain them. He presented the results of a study he conducted on students who were enrolled at LAU in a certain year and the percentage of those who stayed and graduated and the number of years they took to graduate:
 Pharmacy: 100% counting from 3rd year in the program until the 5th year,
 Engineering: 82% graduated in 5 years, that is, on time,
 Arts and Sciences: only 20% graduated in 3 years.
 However, the reasons for the low retention figure could be nonacademic as well.

M. Semaan asked whether the team should come up with suggestions for what Student Affairs offices should do concerning this issue. E. Badr suggested we wait until we know which departments will address our appraisal and where they will agree or disagree with us and their suggestions based on revision of best practices abroad. Then our team will examine these and either approve or disapprove and consequently do the projection if needed. Dr. Sfeir will review these before they are edited and sent to NEASC. This might mean adjusting the Strategic Plan accordingly.

Substandard 6.2.1

The group agreed that it is not clear who sets the criteria for LAU's entrance exams and who determines their validity and what each SEE score signifies. Suggestions were to identify committees and individuals to be in charge of these issues and to have proper guidelines for the councils concerning role and selection of members and informing them of relevant policies. V. Papazian commented that there are policies but are vague. E. Badr suggested that council members serve for several years for consistency and that admission be moved to the Schools.

E. Badr questioned whether the team will keep their recommendations for a study on the compatibility of LAU's objectives and admission criteria because such a study requires resources and reflection. Perhaps we can say that no data are available to show compatibility and then move 3.2.1 from column 4 to 5.

M. Semaan commented that there are a few studies such as the one he conducted on a group of admitted students to compare their school grades with their SEE scores and their performance at LAU. Findings showed erratic correlations. Another study was conducted by Dr. Nimah in which she presented rules for admitting Arab students in line with LAU's objectives to have diversity. E. Badr read part of LAU's latest vision: "enrolling and retaining qualified and diverse students..."

E. Badr gave an example of retention studies that an American college conducts by comparing its figures with national data of drop out and graduation rates and presenting these to their provost for recommendations.

Substandard 6.3.1

Keep this in column 1 as the team had placed it because LAU does all it takes for helping students. LAU has a system in place and the results of students' satisfaction with this issue will appear in the NSSE study.

Substandard 6.4.2.2

Closer monitoring is needed of part time and new faculty by the Chairs to ensure adhering to course descriptions. Some Chairs do this but there is no system and no clear job description for Chairs and how faculty evaluations should be used.

Next meeting:

Friday May 5, 12:00-2:00 on Beirut campus.

All members will review their work on their substandards and come up with specific questions for the focus groups. During the meeting, the group will finalize the target 10-15 questions.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00