

INSTITUTIONAL BACKBONE

A. Library

LAU's Libraries consist of four separate facilities: The Riyadh Nassar Library in Beirut, the Byblos Campus Library, the Health Sciences Library (also in Byblos) and the LAU NY Library. Currently, we are constructing a brand new facility in Byblos, known as the Gibran Khalil Gibran Library, to address the expanding needs of our community based on that campus.

Together, the libraries encompass a continually expanding print collection of more than half a million volumes and hundreds of print periodicals. These resources are being constantly supplemented by subscriptions to online databases and interlibrary loan services, providing our faculty, students and staff with access to millions of records on demand.

In 2015-2016, our libraries completed two major projects: the Library Assessment Plan and the revamping of the LAU library website (in collaboration with the Marketing and Communication Department). Moreover, the LAU Repository is now functional and populated with faculty publications.

LIBRARY USE AND HOLDINGS STATISTICS FOR 2015-2016

Area	Increase since 2014 - 2015
Books and non-book materials ordered	6%
Books and non-book materials received	14%
Books ordered by LAU NY library	57%
Books received by LAU NY library	76%
Number of books borrowed	24%
Number of attending users	6%
Number of online catalog page views	64%
Number of theses added to Dspace	225%



Library Open House

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B. Integral Research: The Department of Institutional Research and Assessment (DIRA)

In AY 2015-2016, DIRA provided international and regional ranking organizations with information used to evaluate LAU across teaching, research, international outlook, reputation and more to ensure that LAU continues to move forward in rankings, following up on its stunning success of being ranked second in the field-weighted citation criteria in the MENA region by Times Higher Education in 2014 and fourth by US NEWS and World Report.

DIRA helps LAU's decision-makers with short-term and long-term planning, policy formulation and institutional effectiveness initiatives, through yearly publications compiling statistical information about the various university entities and functions.

This past year DIRA continued to support the university's schools in their accreditation and program review efforts, while assisting non-academic units to develop and implement assessment plans. The department also worked with the schools to simplify the assessment of learning outcomes by automating the process through the use of an assessment software.

C. On the Technological Frontiers

LAU's Information Technology (IT) department spent 2015-2016 heightening internal and external IT and physical security, introducing new tools that provide early warnings about students who may be at risk of failing, preparing the e-voting system for students elections, providing superior support services to the entire university, including LAU NY, revamping the helpdesk system, merging IT and Multimedia to provide better service in the class and conference rooms, and maintaining reliable networks, smart classrooms, and a new portal for faculty, staff, and students.

Throughout the year, the department responded effectively to the growing security needs of our expanding university community by implementing an information security system, activating the Web Application Firewall, upgrading the guard tour system, and commencing work on an IP-based CCTV cameras system, among other initiatives. IT also completed a series of projects aimed at ensuring smooth university operations, including setting up a remote Disaster Recovery site in Byblos, providing both campuses with Office 365, and connecting LAU to the global education roaming platform. In the process, IT has been contributing to the university's mission of caring for our environment, undertaking a number of "green" initiatives, making sure that all instruments consume less power, and switching to the virtualization of services as much as possible.

IT has reduced reliance on traditional servers dramatically: Eight years ago our physical server infrastructure, using traditional technologies, was comprised of more than 125 servers; today, LAU functions on 27 physical servers and 317 virtual ones, saving tremendous amounts of energy.

IT contributed significantly to the university’s efforts to recruit and retain students, collaborating with Student Development and Enrollment Management (SDEM) to implement an advising and retention software that facilitates advising and provides early warnings about students at risk. The system has already been introduced to academic advisors and will be extended to faculty advisors in the fall of 2016.

IT is devoted to integrating technology in the classroom, maintaining a 100 percent smart classroom ratio by equipping all newly introduced classrooms on the three campuses with multimedia technology. A distance learning and lecture capture system was implemented in two pilot classrooms and in 12 classes through fall of 2016. In addition, IT worked with AKSOB to launch a distance learning pilot allowing instructors to extend their classes between campuses.

Campus	Smart Classrooms	Video Conference Rooms
Byblos	70	13
Beirut	77	12
New York	10	1
Total	157	26

D. Human Resources – the University’s “Human Capital”

We are constantly aware of the fact that the quality of the university depends more than anything else on the quality of our faculty and staff. As such, our Human Resources office works diligently to maintain LAU’s reputation as an employer of choice in Lebanon and the region. Throughout the 2015-2016 academic year, HR implemented vital restructuring and standardization operations across both campuses. The department launched a new appraisal system, with a new HR organizational structure in place.

In June 2016, HR successfully instituted a new performance management system, to better link employee performance to the university’s goals and provide a stronger basis for salary increases, promotions, and staff training and development. Also this past year, HR launched a training needs assessment exercise with the goal of developing a university-wide training program and to centralize and standardize staff training and development.

E. State-of-the-Art Facilities

As our university community expands, our physical facilities are constantly being improved and renovated, with the aim of providing our faculty, staff and students with a cutting-edge, stylish, and attractive 21st century environment conducive to intellectual and personal growth.

In Byblos, the renovation of the Tohme-Rizk building was completed this past summer, accommodating the space requirements of the Registrar, Admissions, Financial Aid, Testing, and the Business Office. Outdoor parking lots with room for 500 cars were completed in the summer of 2015.

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In the meantime, the Byblos infrastructure project is in full swing. When completed, it provide the Byblos campus with 9 megawatts power, a power sub-station, a chilled water air conditioning plant, a central boiler plant for heating, and a power pumping station. The new Engineering Lab building in Byblos is nearing completion, matched by significant progress in the construction of the new Library and Central Administration buildings.

In Beirut, Phase I of the infrastructure project has been completed, resulting in a new 5MW power plant, an upgraded electrical grid, and a new modern data center. Phase II was launched in July 2016, with completion anticipated by January 2017 to increase the plant's capacity to 7MW. Beautiful temporary fashion labs have been inaugurated, while plans for the renovation of the Gezairi building – which is slated to accommodate the entire School of Architecture & Design – are underway. Design processes for Irwin and Gulbenkian Theaters have been initiated.

Finally, we are proud of our most recent acquisition, a conglomeration of properties adjacent to the Byblos campus, with an area of approximately 143,000 m².

Adding immeasurable value to LAU's teaching capacities, the university hired 29 new faculty members this past academic year.

Aerial view of the Byblos campus



Inauguration of the Beirut Campus Infrastructure Plant and Main Data Center.

F. Green Initiatives

At LAU, we recognize that there is an immense strain placed on the environment, globally but especially in Lebanon. We firmly believe that the university has a moral obligation to strive for a sustainable future, and as such we are implementing a series of eco-friendly practices on both campuses.

The visionary Sustainability Initiative includes recycling schemes as well as sustainability and energy management projects, supported for example by the implementation of a multitude of initiatives to reduce water and energy consumption as well as to construct sustainable buildings certified by reputable international organizations; to this effect, we are particularly proud of our success in the green renovation of the Tohme-Rizk building, which was awarded the EDGE Certificate (Excellence in Design for Greater Efficiency) by a World Bank affiliate, the International Finance Corporation – the first office building to receive such a distinction in Lebanon. We are also eager to complete the Library and Administration buildings which are designed to receive the LEED-Gold seal by USGBC.

Similarly, the Recycling initiative prepared and managed by the Facilities Management Department is scheduled for launching on both campuses and across all LAU buildings and grounds by January 2017 in full partnership with a humanitarian NGO "Association L'écoute" which will be collecting and recycling all LAU recyclable solid wastes.