Our university has undergone several transformations over its storied history. What began as a pioneering school for girls in the Middle East evolved over time into a four-year, coeducational college and finally into a university with campuses in Beirut and Byblos. Today, we have achieved the lofty status of a fully accredited institution of undergraduate and graduate education with regional and international recognition.

Over the past decade, LAU’s successes have been greatly supported by the adoption of two consecutive five-year Strategic Plans. The blueprint for 2011-2016 gives priority to the continued development of the university’s academic component. Our focus is on ensuring a match between a liberal arts education and the needs of the job market, while promoting civic values that extend outside the campus walls.

The efficient implementation of the current plan has been made possible by the dedicated involvement of the entire LAU community.

In a historic move to build bridges between East and West, the university bought in 2012 a new building in midtown Manhattan to house the LAU Headquarters and Academic Center in New York, which it inaugurated this year. This acquisition marked the arrival of the university, as a key academic player, on the international stage.

The successful expansion of academic offerings was visibly reflected in this year’s graduation of the very first class of both our Gilbert and Rose-Marie Chagoury Medical School and Alice Ramez Chagoury School of Nursing. The recent appointment of internationally prominent neurosurgeon Dr. Youssef Comair, as the dean of the School of Medicine, further demonstrates the university’s commitment to firmly establishing LAU’s leadership position in medical education.

The Strategic Plan seeks to strengthen research capacity in order to ensure LAU’s position as a prominent beacon of graduate studies. Recently, the university appointed Dr. Pierre Zalloua, a renowned figure in the field of genetic research, as its dean of Graduate Studies and Research. With invigorated headship, we can look forward to a range of innovative graduate coursework, as well as increased research support.

The success of our curricula would be impossible without continuous self-scrutiny and transparency. The School of Arts and Sciences has, this past year, set the standard in this regard by developing new program review criteria, appraising the M.A. in Political Science and International Affairs and the M.S. in Computer Science. The school is currently in the process of reviewing the M.A. in Comparative Literature, the M.A. in Education, the M.S. in Molecular Biology and the B.A. in Social Work.

The same spirit of constant self-improvement has inspired the revamping of the university’s Continuing Education Program (CEP). In the past year, the program increased enrollment by 43 percent, in addition to expanding its certificate-based offerings and establishing new satellites across Lebanon. These efforts were rewarded in the receipt of a prestigious European Union grant.
Ever-Higher Academic Standards

In 2010, LAU achieved the New England Association of Schools and Colleges (NEASC) accreditation, symbolizing the university’s rightful place among the leading academic institutions in the world. But we do not rest on our laurels. Bolstered by the support of the entire LAU constituency, our academic leaders are currently vigorously leading the process of internal assessment necessary to achieve NEASC re-accreditation.

At the same time, the university’s constituent schools continue to pursue accreditation on the level of individual programs. The continued accreditation of the School of Pharmacy’s Doctor of Pharmacy professional degree program by the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), in 2012, reaffirmed our status as a regional pioneer in high quality pharmacy education. In 2011, the School of Engineering received prestigious accreditation from the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology (ABET) for all its undergraduate programs, as did the School of Arts and Sciences’ bachelor program in Computer Science.

LAU’s School of Business is on track to achieve accreditation by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSBS). Not to be outdone, the School of Nursing expects to receive notification of the Commission on Collegiate Nursing Education (CCNE) accreditation in the fall of 2013. The accreditation of the university’s architecture program by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) is also well underway.
This year more than ever, the recruitment of top-notch faculty has allowed us to introduce new and expanded program offerings in an ever broadening set of subjects.

The School of Architecture and Design has launched its highly anticipated B.A. in Fashion Design in collaboration with the internationally renowned Lebanese designer Elie Saab, bringing Lebanon to the cutting-edge of fashion design training. Meanwhile, the school has also developed minors in Fine Arts and Visual Arts, providing LAU students, who strive to participate in Lebanon’s ongoing artistic renaissance, with avant-garde training and cultural mentorship.

Building on its 2013 success in graduating the first cohort of medical doctors, the School of Medicine has initiated a post-graduate program. To provide its students with an even broader array of educational opportunities, the school has entered into collaborative exchange agreements with the University of Iowa and Northwestern University.

In 2013, LAU introduced new programs in Actuarial Studies, Dietetics and Bio-Informatics. Our liberal arts base has been enlarged with the launching of new bachelor degrees in Arabic Language and Literature, as well as in Translation. In the sciences, we are in the process of offering bachelor programs in Petroleum Engineering and Chemical Engineering, as well as master’s degrees in the same disciplines.

Proud of our heritage as a pioneer in women’s education in the Middle East, we have introduced a master’s degree in Gender Studies, the first in Lebanon and certainly the most international and academically liberal program of its kind in the region. The program seeks to transform students into researchers and activists, forming new leaders for the region’s women’s movement and ensuring LAU’s legacy as a forward-looking institution for decades to come.
Promoting Research and Scholarship

LAU generously supports research projects and faculty publications through the Schools Research and Development Funds and the recently established New Faculty Seed Fund.

Ever growing numbers of LAU professors across a variety of disciplines receive external funding from such national and international sponsors as the National Council for Scientific Research, the Qatar Foundation and the Fulbright Program, cementing our international competitiveness. Over this past year, external grants supported a wide range of projects, from the purchasing of engineering lab equipment to medical research and the development of artistic initiatives.

This research funding has resulted in the production of an unceasing stream of academic articles in a wide variety of scholarly journals. Numerous members of our faculty serve on the editorial boards of major publications, including but not limited to the fields of computer science, linguistics, finance, economics and business.

Ties with the regional and international scholarly community continue to strengthen, as the university hosted a series of academic conferences in 2013, bringing together hundreds of local and international scholars. These gatherings covered a broad spectrum of topics, such as quality-related issues in Arab graduate programs and recent advances in the various science fields, among many others.
LAU is home to an impressive array of centers, institutes and special programs. These offer opportunities for research, training, development and civic engagement to both students and faculty. 

The Institute for Women’s Studies in the Arab World recently transformed its flagship publication, Al-Raida, into a biannual, peer-reviewed journal and it launched a project to train Lebanon’s government personnel on human rights-based approaches to treating female detainees. The Center for Lebanese Heritage has been vigilantly collecting and documenting Lebanon’s cultural heritage, as well as organizing regular conferences dedicated to the country’s remarkable cultural, artistic and literary treasures. Our Institute for Migration Studies also continues to serve as an umbrella for Lebanon-related research projects, sponsoring research on the global role of the Lebanese diaspora.

LAU’s Institute of Family and Entrepreneurial Business actively contributes to the university’s curricula in business and related social sciences, convening this year a series of conferences, in partnership with Lebanon’s major family businesses, to deliberate the challenges facing this sector of the economy.

This year has seen the reactivation of the university’s Institute for Human Resources. The institute acts as a platform for exchange and ongoing dialogue between students, academics and business executives, so as to bring business practices and university teachings together. Here, as in all aspects of the LAU culture, the boundaries between academia and the outside world are as fluid as ever.

In May 2013, we reactivated the Early Childhood Center (ECC), a pioneering facility for early childhood education on the Beirut campus. The ECC is the only childhood center in the Arab world within the walls of an academic institution. It serves as a training site for LAU’s education majors while providing optimal learning surroundings for the children themselves.
Attracting a World-Class Student Body

While investing considerable resources into transforming the university into a leading research institution, LAU never loses sight of its greatest pride and priority: the qualified student body, from Lebanon and around the world, who come to our campuses attracted by our concentrated programs and holistic educational ethics. In addition to more than 6,400 students from Lebanon, this year we welcomed over 1,700 students from North Africa, North America, Europe, Australia and beyond.

This fall, LAU spent an unprecedented $18.8 million in student financial aid, most of it supported by donors’ grants and scholarships. With these funds, the university assisted 30 percent of the student body through Entrance, Honor and Merit Scholarships, Athletic and Talent Scholarships, work-aid, loans and other types of grants.

For the third year in a row, we have been able to rely on the U.S. Agency for International Development’s (USAID) University Scholarship Program to provide financial assistance to deserving students recruited from public schools in some of the poorest areas of Lebanon. In 2013, USAID supported LAU with a record $9.5 million, benefitting 85 new students with tuition, room and board, books and computers, as well as pocket money.

In another landmark achievement in student financial assistance, the Middle East Partnership Initiative’s Tomorrow’s Leaders Program (MEPI-TL) graduated its second cohort of LAU students. This U.S. State Department-financed program has allowed the university to recruit gifted students from the Middle East and North Africa.

LAU’s mission privileges a student-centered approach to higher education. As such, we have expanded the number of full-time academic advisors on the Byblos and Beirut campuses from three to nine. The latter partner
with students’ faculty advisors to provide students with the best possible guidance, as they shape their curriculum and move toward their chosen career.

All this investment into our students is paying off in impressive ways. In 2013, Student Honor Society ceremonies recognized the academic achievements of over 600 excellent students, who successfully maintained a 3.5 GPA after the completion of 60 or more credit hours.
Reflecting our rootedness in the Lebanese character, LAU is deeply committed to fostering cross-cultural academic exchange. More than ever, we extend opportunities for our students to take courses abroad and welcome international students on our campuses with open arms.

This year, LAU’s Outreach and Civic Engagement unit (OCE) held numerous activities to inform students of the wealth of educational exchange opportunities available to them, as well as launching a newsletter promoting the university’s exchange programs.

LAU continues to participate in European exchange programs, hosting increasing numbers of students from Europe while sending our own to the Old Continent through the Erasmus Mundus’ WELCOME, Dunia Beam and MEDASTAR projects.

We are also delighted to announce the continued expansion of our educational partnerships in North America, through the Global UGrad Program. In addition, this year some of our students spent time in intensive leadership programs at U.S. colleges, sponsored by MEPI.

At present, students in various design majors have the opportunity to take selective courses at IUAV University of Venice, ESA Paris, Domus Academy Milan and the Université de Montréal. The university, in the meantime, has developed an exchange agreement with the Ecole Polytechnique de Montréal.

Our young scholars continue to be successful in obtaining the prestigious Fulbright scholar grant. This year, out of a total of 13 Lebanese recipients, four were from the LAU family.

LAU’s renowned Summer Institute for Intense Arabic Language and Culture (SINARC) continues to draw students from around the world. In addition, SINARC is providing tutorials to an ever-increasing number of diplomats from various foreign embassies based in Beirut. The program has also established a long-term exchange agreement with St. Andrew’s University in Scotland.
At LAU we strive to match our students’ skills to the needs and expectations of the workplace. For this reason we constantly seek out partnerships with local employers, who offer students hands-on opportunities. The university’s School of Pharmacy and the Lebanese Ministry of Public Health signed an agreement allowing our students to apply their skills in government-run medical facilities. Concurrently, to accommodate its growing student body, the School of Nursing has increased its Clinical Affiliation Agreements to 13 hospitals and community health agencies throughout Lebanon.

While the School of Architecture and Design requires all students in its professional programs to undergo internships at internationally known companies, the School of Engineering requires its undergraduate majors to register for a six-credit professional experience course during the summer semester.