

# LEARNING, NURTURING AND EXPANDING: LAU'S THIRD STRATEGIC PLAN

As the Academic Year 2016-2017 drew to a close, the LAU Board of Trustees approved the university's third five-year strategic plan, known as SPIII, meant to replace the Second Strategic Plan (SPII) that had served as the institution's previous guiding blueprint.

SPII, which governed LAU's development from 2011 to 2016, prioritized strengthening LAU's academic core. It did so through fostering an intellectually challenging and diverse learning environment, recruiting the best and brightest students, encouraging faculty professional development, extending LAU's outreach to the community and abroad, nurturing university initiatives corresponding to national and regional needs, and enhancing LAU's graduate programs and overall research capacity.

Building on SPII's achievements, the new strategic plan — intended to serve as LAU's roadmap to the year 2022 — is structured around three strategic pillars aimed at cementing the university's local eminence and regional leadership and providing it with a clear global footprint. They include enhancing LAU's build-up of intellectual capital, firmly committing to an integrated program of pedagogical innovation, and transforming LAU into a university without borders.

Recognizing that innovation and the discovery of new knowledge are the essence of scholarly achievement, Pillar I — “Intellectual Capital and Knowledge Management” — seeks to transform LAU into an institution renowned for its research innovation. It envisions building on current strengths and facilitating interaction among investigators across the university's constituent schools, leading to a clustering of competencies that will foster quality research across all disciplines, promote innovative interdisciplinary work, and raise the university's competitiveness in attracting external research grants. And because competitive research activities cannot be sustained without strong graduate programs and talented graduate students, Pillar I focuses on providing attractive, high-quality masters and doctoral programs for competitive regional and local students.

Pillar II — “Pedagogical Innovation and Integrated Delivery” — prioritizes bringing teaching and learning at LAU to ever higher levels of excellence. It does so by supporting faculty development, promoting innovative teaching initiatives, strengthening academic ethics and integrity, and improving the university's existing teaching and learning assessment systems. The ultimate purpose is to strengthen LAU's status as a hub of creativity and innovation, allowing the institution to sustain a vibrant learning environment in which the entire university body comes together as a community of learners.

Last but not least, SPIII includes a pillar dedicated to “LAU without Borders,” which aims to capture and invigorate entrepreneurial forces within the university and enlarge its academic and professional footprint in Lebanon and beyond. Accomplishing this is essential in allowing LAU to successfully adapt to changing national and international dynamics in higher education, which is becoming ever more intrapreneurial and entrepreneurial. On the one hand, the pillar envisions the creation of new degree and non-degree programs to be offered outside of LAU's current campuses. On the other hand, it seeks to identify, create and sustain strategic alliances with the private and public sectors, rethinking the university's curriculum and creating on-campus entrepreneurship hubs, moving it beyond the classical university model and transforming it into a truly 21st-century beacon for higher learning.