

Philadelphia University

Faculty of Arts

Strategic Plan 2009-2012

1. Strategic Planning:

The Faculty seeks to achieve qualitative development and progress in the teaching-learning operation. This can be realized through the following measures:

- a. reviewing study plans in each academic department in light of new developments in related academic fields. New subjects can be added to each planning with the aim of upgrading the learning inputs and outputs to cope with the needs of the job market and new developments in the field.
- b. securing the right number of well-experienced and highly qualified academic staff. Further, the Faculty will increase the number of support staff: M.A. holders and B.A. holders to handle lab work and research assistance jobs.
- c. urging the academic staff to pay due attention to academic research – theoretical and applied – and providing needed financial support to promote an environment that brings about fruitful research..
- d. securing the right number of labs, show rooms, and studios.
- e. conducting entrance exams in some departments where special abilities and aptitudes are required and on basis of which students can be admitted to certain specializations.
- f. stressing extra-auricular student activities that enrich the students' experience and knowledge. Cultural and scientific days, art exhibitions, and student clubs are but some examples.

- g. maintaining the policy of sending outstanding students on scholarships to highly-reputed universities to pursue their studies in subjects the Faculty needs.
- h. emphasizing the utility and effectiveness of holding workshops pertaining to the subjects of specialization in each department. The aim is to introduce the latest developments in relevant academic fields and provide training and experience.
- i. providing full support to holding specialized international conferences and/or attending such conferences as participants.

2. International and Regional Conferences and Scientific Days:

- a. maintaining the policy of providing full support to holding specialized international conferences in view of the significance of such events in adding to the knowledge of the staff concerned and widening the scope of specialization in the department concerned.
- b. in addition to the Annual International Conference of the Faculty, there will be other international events:
 - 1. International Conference on Language, Linguistics, Literature and Translation
 - 2. International Conference on Graphic and Internal Design
 - 3. International Conference on Arabic Language and Literature.
- c. holding scientific weeks in each department and urging academic staff to participate with papers that can be further developed and published.
- d. organizing a student academic day each semester to invite outstanding students in each department to participate in papers supervised by the department staff.
- e. holding a seminar every fortnight in which a member of the Faculty staff introduces a book or an article he/she has read and discusses its content

with his/her colleagues. The aim is to promote the culture of reading and to create an atmosphere which encourages exchange of thought and caters for creativity and begets new patterns of socio-academic gatherings.

3. Curricula and Teaching Methods:

The Faculty considers the design of curricula and syllabi and upgrading the methods of teaching an on-going process which takes into account the new developments in the fields concerned. The Faculty's strategy in this regard is based on the following assumption:

- a. that curricula reflect the latest developments in research and supposed to meet the students' needs pre- and post graduation.
- b. that curricula and syllabi take into account the theoretical, the practical and the applied dimensions of each subject of study.
- c. that curricula and syllabi are down-to-earth in their objectives and at the same time reflect an outlook that embraces future needs.
- d. that curricula are designed on basis of study plans that aim at enriching students' knowledge so that they graduate equipped with specialized knowledge of their subjects of specialization and knowledge of the world.
- e. that curricula and syllabi are feasible within the time limitations of the courses offered, and that availability of specialized staff is a key factor for carrying them out.
- f. that curricula and syllabi are subject to revision and study in light of new developments in the area they deal with.
- g. that in order to apply the new curricula and design appropriate syllabi, the Faculty needs to make sure that the academic staff are well aware of the components and specificities of each curriculum. This can be realized by:
 1. holding workshops to discuss the above points.

2. holding training workshops to familiarize newly appointed staff with the methods of handling study plans, curricula, and designing teaching plans for each lecture.
3. providing the academic staff with the recent developments, publications, and theories related to their fields of interest.
4. encouraging study visits to similar departments in other universities at the national, regional, and international levels.
5. holding local seminars in each department wherein staff members exchange ideas and experience as regards, for instance, the best possible methods of teaching joint subjects.
6. offering certificates of excellence to distinguished instructors.

4. Academic environment and ways of developing it:

The Faculty will proceed with its endeavors to improve the academic teaching-learning services by means of:

- a. making available recently published books, journals and references in the fields of different specializations in each department. The aim is to rule out the possibility of relying on one textbook for a certain subject.
- b. abandoning rote learning and memorizing and stressing the analytical approach to teaching and learning, and making sure that this approach is reflected in lectures, exams and assignments.
- c. making sure that exams measure understanding, analyzing, synthesizing, and drawing conclusion from given specifications and facts.
- d. making sure that subjects of specialization are supplemented by supportive academic activities, e.g. term papers supervised and approved by the academic staff concerned.
- e. encouraging distinguished students by offering awards.

- f. encouraging students who prepare distinguished term papers to hold student-lead seminars wherein they review their work and discuss it with their classmates in the presence of the instructor concerned.
- g. establishing student clubs for subjects of overlapping content and interest, e.g. The Arabic-English languages club, the Graphic Design – Interior Design club where students discuss topics of common-ground interest and do activities relevant to their subjects of specialization.
- h. securing the necessary requirements for enriching and developing the teaching-learning operation:
 - 1. advanced language labs
 - 2. increasing the number of graphic design labs and providing the latest relevant software programs
 - 3. departmental libraries
 - 4. encouraging the students to issue their own local journals in which they publish student – written articles in the different fields of their specialization.
 - 5. promoting the culture of reading in sources other than students' subjects of specialization and offering prizes to distinguished readers who participate or are invited to participate in reading contests.
 - 6. offering remedial courses in each department for students who face difficulties in carrying on with their studies or in keeping up with their classmates.
 - 7. establishing websites for e-learning provided with supplementary material relevant to certain subjects of specialization which students can visit and have extra material and exercise and where they can get immediate feedback to their performance.
 - 8. forming a team in each department to prepare appropriate material for the website and get that team trained in the technicalities of preparing such materials.

5. Developing the Efficiency of the Staff in the Field of Measuring and Evaluating Student Progress:

The Faculty plans to continue in:

- a. holding workshops run by an experienced faculty member or by an external expert in the field of measurement and evaluation where exams are reviewed and evaluated with respect to quality and function of test items. Exams should accommodate all or most types of questions:
 - questions which measure memorizing
 - questions which measure the student's ability to analyze
 - questions which measure the student's ability to compare and contrast and come up with conclusions
 - questions which measure the student's ability to come up with conclusions and generalizations based on details and specifications.
 - questions which reveal creative and independent thinking, arguing for or against a given claim, taking stance, etc.
- b. inviting experts in the field of testing, evaluation and measurement to introduce and discuss with the academic staff the latest approaches to writing exams and measuring students' achievement and performance.
- c. holding local seminars in each department for purposes of looking into the difficulties the students encounter in their studies, as reflected in their performance in exams, and considering ways of dealing with such difficulties.
- d. holding seminars and workshops to introduce approaches that stress outcomes-based teaching methods, as outcomes should be the end target of the teaching – learning operation.
- e. encouraging the academic staff to apply self-evaluation methods and to design appropriate forms for that purpose.

- f. holding meetings at the end of each semester wherein the types of exams used are reviewed and evaluated. Samples of old exams can be downloaded on the e-learning site for students to benefit from.

6. Higher Studies Programs:

The Faculty is planning to start new Master programs that offer:

- M.A. degree in Arabic Language and Literature
- M.A. degree in Graphic Design
- M.A. degree in Development Studies

7. Abiding by the Quality Assurance Standards:

The Faculty will continue in applying the regulations and standards of quality assurance and accreditation:

- a. periodic review and updating of study plans
- b. maintaining the ratio of 1:20 (one instructor for 20 students) and that it may not exceed 1:30 in any case
- c. securing the right number of the academic staff of different academic ranks as per the regulations of accreditation and quality assurance
- d. enriching the Main Library with books, references, and journals the students of the Faculty will need in their studies
- e. increasing the number of computer labs, software programs, studios and show rooms commensurate with the increase in student population.
- f. increasing the number of seminar and conference rooms to allow for more space for teamwork and academic events.
- g. going ahead with the process of evaluating the performance of the academic staff by their students and by the Faculty administration.
- h. making sure that students can express their views, discuss their problems with the Faculty administration, suggest ways and means of improving teacher-student communication, and have the right opportunities to exercise their rights and fulfill their duties.

**Dean
of Arts
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