

**Report on Project Development
Philadelphia University AKC**

**Strengths, Weaknesses,
Opportunities, and Threats**

September 9th, 2003

Strengths

Administrative Aspects (Recruitment, Finances...)

- PU allocated funds to be contributed according to the contract signed with UNESCO.
- Director, educational and technical experts, information desk secretary, two laboratory technicians have been appointed at PU AKC.
- Database of staff to be employed in the activities of production of teaching materials are being prepared.

Technical Aspects (Premises, Materials...)

- Appropriate state of the art technical infrastructure is procured. Basically, the following are made available:
 - Adequate computer laboratories.
 - Adequate number of servers of varying specifications networked using fiber optics and UTP cabling.
 - Communication channels such as a web-site, E-mail accounts, and voice-chat.

Strengths

Commitment of the Local Institution (Involvement in Higher Education System)

- PU established a Deanship of Distance Learning, with the goal of introducing more online courses to its students.
- A pilot experimental study was conducted at the University to evaluate the comparative merits of online versus conventional learning.
- PU has signed agreements of cooperation with several institutions dealing with e-learning, i.e. Phoenix International.
- A (2+2) online learning program has been initially adopted by PU . The Avicenna program will be integrated in it.

Communication Planning (and Media Appropriate to the Project)

- Articles about virtual education were published in PU newspaper as well as the quarterly magazine published by the Arab Network for Distance Education and Open Learning.
- A conference on virtual education is scheduled at PU for the period 2nd to 4th of December, 2003.
- The Avicenna Project is advertised in flyers published by the Deanship of Distance Learning. It can also be browsed on PU web-site.
- A publicity program about Avicenna Virtual Campus will be implemented through brochures, posters, lectures, TV. Programs and newspaper articles.

Weaknesses

Administrative Aspects (Recruitment, Finances...)

Much delay in the payment of UNESCO's contribution as well as in the timing of the training sessions negatively affected the progress of the project.

Technical Aspects (Premises, Materials...)

- **Much delay in providing the AKC with the following equipment according to the contract signed with the UNESCO:**
 - **A platform**
 - **Equipment to support the production of teaching materials.**
 - **Net-meeting facilities and a video conferencing room**

Opportunities

Administrative Aspects (Recruitment, Finances...)

Production will form an excellent financial investment for the University as well as its Avicenna partners.

Technical Aspects (Premises, Materials...)

- Premises and materials will form parts of an investment that positively reflects on the cost of instruction at the University as well as at the other Avicenna knowledge centers.
- PU plans to construct a building dedicated to virtual education and AKC.

Commitment of the Local Institution

- PU AKC will form an integral part of the Distance Learning Program at the University.

Communication Planning (and Media Appropriate to the Project)

Activities of the AKC will be made public through the mass media. Learners benefiting from the program will also publicize the Avicenna Virtual Campus Project.

Threats

Administrative Aspects (Recruitment, Finances...)

More delay in funding and training of personnel will adversely affect the project.

Technical Aspects (Premises, Materials...)

- More delay in providing the AKC with the equipment required will adversely affect the project .
- PU already paid for some equipment as part of its contribution to the project. There will be a great loss for the University if the project is cancelled for some reason or another.

Commitment of the Local Institution (Involvement in Higher Education System)

Delay in the production of educational materials affects the distance learning program at PU.

Communication Planning (and Appropriate Media)

No threats can be identified so far.