STRATEGY MANAGEMENT & INSTITUTIONAL EFFECTIVENESS (SMIE)

2020 ANNUAL REPORT
INSTITUTIONAL ACCREDITATION
- Led efforts resulting in a successful Middle States Commission of Higher Education (MSCHE) reaffirmation of accreditation
- Secured MSCHE’s approval to extend AUC’s accreditation to distance education
- Led efforts resulting in a successful National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE) reaffirmation of accreditation

STRATEGY MANAGEMENT
- Organized 1st Annual Strategic Business Planning Conference
- Coordinated the Operational Excellence Initiative
- Tracked the University Strategic Plan

INSTITUTIONAL ASSESSMENT
- Developed a review process of assessment plans and reports
- Conducted chair and dean performance review surveys
- Provided academic assessment reports as part of the program review process

INSTITUTIONAL SURVEYS
- Developed AUC’s first Annual Institutional Survey Newsletter
- Provided data for Institutional Strategic KPIs through community perspective from surveys

INSTITUTIONAL RESEARCH & DATA GOVERNANCE
- Institutionalized the Data Governance Policy
- Prepared six data dictionaries with 150+ data elements
- Worked with all stakeholders to improve AUC’s ranking

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE
- Developed IT Help Desk Artificially Intelligent Chatbot: Digibot
- Developed a Big Data Contact Wifi Tracing solution to help keep AUC safe during the COVID-19 pandemic
- Dashboards uncovering hidden insights, not previously accessible to AUC decision-makers such as Online Learning; Facilities and Operations; Registration Tracking Dashboard and Nudge Reports

BUSINESS PROCESS IMPROVEMENT
- Reviewed, documented, and improved 32 processes in collaboration with 5 departments
- Established the AUC Processes Repository

MSCHE & NAQAAE
Successful Re-affirmation of Accreditation

AUC RANKED 1ST in Egypt

97% Strategic Plans Submitted

98% Academic Assessment Plans Submitted

MORE THAN 100 BI Users in 2020

39 BI Dashboards

32 Processes Documented
ABOUT SMIE

WHO WE ARE

The Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE) comprises different functions that work together to advance AUC’s mission and promote effective decision making.

MISSION

SMIE advances the mission and values of The American University in Cairo by facilitating evidence-based decisions and a culture of planning and assessment. SMIE is the University’s official source of information about itself, its peers and its educational environment.

VISION

SMIE will be recognized throughout the University community as well as in Egypt, the region and internationally for its leadership and innovation in planning, assessment, and research and for the quality of its work.
SMIE FUNCTIONS

SMIE's different functions work together to advance AUC’s mission and promote effective decision making. Across these specializations, we offer a variety of services and products to support AUC academic and administrative units, as well as outside constituencies.
Institutional Effectiveness Cycle

Closing the loop for continuous improvement

- Continuous Improvement (Business Process Improvement)
- Information & Knowledge
  - Institutional Research, Data Governance, Business Intelligence, Advanced Analytics/AI, Surveys & Benchmarks
- Strategic & Operational Planning / Management
- Institutional Accreditation & Assessment (Tracking)
- Linking Plans to Resources

Tracking
ACHIEVEMENTS

2019

STRATEGY
MANAGEMENT

AND

INSTITUTIONAL
EFFECTIVENESS

2020

ACHIEVEMENTS
SMIE organized the first Annual Strategic Business Planning Conference on September 13-14, 2019, where all University leaders (academic and non-academic) shared their preliminary FY21 annual plans. This was the first step to establish a process to solidify the link between strategic planning and resource allocation.

SMIE, in collaboration with the Management and Operations area, organized a Campus Conversation “AUC Next 100” (February 17, 2020) to introduce the consulting firm BBB (Beyer Blinder and Belle) team to the AUC community and discuss preliminary master plans. AUC partnered with BBB team to develop a master plan for Phase 2 of expanding the New Cairo Campus to fully utilize the existing land. SMIE is working with the BBB team to ensure that the master plan is aligned with AUC’s strategy.

For the first time, due to COVID-19 precautions, SMIE organized the Annual Strategic Planning Kick-Off meeting virtually via Zoom on June 28-29, 2020. During the meeting, all University leaders presented and discussed their firm annual plans for FY21 with a focus on optimizing University resources. This will be followed by the Second Annual Strategic Business Planning Conference on October 25-26, 2020, during which preliminary FY22 plans and resource allocation will be presented and discussed.

97% Plans Submitted in Fall
19 Institutional Workshops
85 Planning Workshop Attendees
The Operational Excellence is an institutional initiative started by the AUC President, in which all senior leaders, faculty, students and staff participated to ensure maintaining institutional effectiveness and optimizing resources during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is comprised of seven committees spanning different areas of the university to work on short-term and long-term plans that would take AUC through the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond, in addition to informing the upcoming strategic plan (2023-2028).

SMIE works with all units to revise and cascade their plans on unit and departmental levels, through planning workshops and one-on-one sessions to ensure that plans are reflected on the planning and assessment platform. In FY20, SMIE conducted 2 large sessions and 14 one-on-one planning sessions with a total of 85 (faculty and staff) attendees.

SMIE works annually with both the HR and Finance teams to link plans at all levels with human and financial resources to ensure a strategy-driven financial outlook.

The Strategy Management dashboard is a collaborative effort between the Strategy Management and BI team to capture all University Strategic KPIs and track the progress of AUC’s strategic plan towards its targets.

**OPERATIONAL EXCELLENCE INITIATIVE**

**CASCADEING OPERATIONAL PLANS**

**INTEGRATED PLANNING**

**TRACKING THE UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN**

86% SBU Units Consulted

Annual Strategic Business Planning Conference - Sept 2019

73 Annual Strategic Business Planning Conference Attendees
The need for Strategic Planning has never been more clear, nor frankly more exciting.

Richard Bartlett
Board of Trustees, Chair

We have the talent, the perspective and the confidence to create a better future for becoming a more powerful university that balances its commitment to the highest quality of education and cutting edge research.

We have the talent, perspective and confidence to produce a rich flow of ideas that sparks invention and innovation and improves the quality of life for our societies and communities.

We’ll continue to create knowledge and innovative ideas and focusing our attention on the importance on the arts, humanities, and social sciences that are an integral part of our great university.

Dr. Ehab Abdel-rahman
AUC Provost
To cope with this disruption, I think we’ve been very successful with our 8 committees that has brought together some students and faculty with the administration in looking at the challenges, making sure that whatever we do meets the need of our core mission – teaching and research – despite the inability to have the physical presence that we need. We deliver the quality operational excellence in this initiative is not just to cope; it’s not just to defend, it’s not just to get by, it’s an emerge from this crisis to exploit this crisis, to become stronger and to let everybody in the world know our strengths, and I think we got off to a terrific start.

Francis J. Ricciardone
AUC President

As we plan, we need to think beyond optimization, we need to think about creating options for the future. I think that’s the theme I want to leave you with: How we embed in our plan options and experiments to learn and be ready for the future.

Ayman Ismail
AUC Venture Lab, Founding Director
SMIE leads and coordinates all institutional accreditation efforts for AUC’s international accreditation with Middle States Commission on Higher Education (MSCHE) and national accreditation with National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE).

MSCHE

- SMIE led the efforts resulting in AUC reaffirming its MSCHE accreditation in Spring 2018 under the revised standards
- Three-year project (2015–2018)
- 72 members in 7 working groups developed the self-assessment report
- No requirements received; two recommendations have been addressed and are being tracked
- SMIE is also responsible for submitting a progress report to MSCHE annually, in addition to any additional reports required such as AUC’s report on its shift to online learning, which was submitted to MSCHE at the beginning of the pandemic

NAQAAE

- AUC was first University to be accredited by NAQAAE
- SMIE led the efforts resulting in AUC receiving its reaffirmation of its NAQAAE accreditation in Fall 2019
- 25 members in 6 working groups developed the self-assessment report

AUC Accredited for Distance Education by MSCHE

Spring 2020

Reports submitted to MSCHE in 2019 – 2020

NAQAAE Successful Reaffirmation

Fall 2019
Congratulations on the achievement of this recognition. It is gratifying that the accreditors commended such a range of AUC’s activities. Very well done!

Richard Bartlett
Board of Trustees, Chair

Congratulations to us all. We reached another milestone in our journey to enhance the quality of our offerings and service to our students and the community.

This success has the whole community behind it. The community worked hard to help AUC move forward and be here today.

Of course, we would not be able to be here without the great support and the dedication of Dr. Iman Megahed, Heba Fathelbab and the entire SMIE team.

Dr. Ehab Abdel-rahman
AUC Provost
SMIE has developed an institutionalized assessment process for AUC to promote continuous improvement and use of assessment results within the University for all academic and non-academic departments.

SMIE’s academic assessment process ensures that departments assess the achievement of program learning outcomes, helping AUC maintain a high quality of education. SMIE provides a report on the assessment efforts conducted by each academic program as part of the program review process managed by the Office of the Associate Provost for Assessment and Accreditation.

ePortfolios have been identified as a High Impact Practice (HIP), which help with student learning and, therefore, their achievement of learning outcomes. SMIE has been encouraging departments to utilize outcomes ePortfolios as a direct assessment of student achievement, and provides support for its implementations through its annual assessment workshops.

SMIE has provided over 25 consultations to advise on assessment and provided feedback on plans and reports through. Also, SMIE provides at least 4 annual workshops to all faculty and staff members to help them complete their plans and reports, in addition to raising awareness on the importance of assessment.

**Academic Assessment**

- Plans Submitted: 98%
- Reports reviewed: 78%
- Consultations: 25
- Institutional Workshops: 4
The AUC Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE) has an impressive and nuanced understanding of this standard that is consistent with appropriate expectations of institutions of higher education. The office clearly shows the potential to further develop assessment efforts at AUC in ways that will benefit students and faculty alike.

MSCHE EVALUATION TEAM
SMIE is responsible for building and maintaining an effective institutional survey strategy in order to promote the use of community perception as a source of data for more informed decision making.

**SURVEY STRATEGY**

Ensure the cyclic assessment of all university constituents and/or stakeholders.

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**STRATEGIC KPIS**

Community perception is an essential component of AUC’s strategic KPIs. SMIE conducts annual surveys to ensure community perception is used to inform decision making.

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**INSTITUTIONAL SURVEY NEWSLETTER**

SMIE developed Issue #3 of its survey newsletter, which includes key highlights of institutional surveys administered at AUC 2019–2020.

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**NSSE**

National Survey for Student Engagement (NSSE) to provide educators with an estimate of how undergraduates spend their time and what they gain from attending college.

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**FSSE**

Faculty Survey of Student Engagement to measure faculty perceptions and expectations regarding student learning and development.

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**ONLINE LEARNING SURVEY**

This was sent out weekly during the COVID–19 pandemic and the start of online learning to students and faculty for feedback on the online learning experience.

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**Surveys Administered**

- **36** Community Surveys
- **10** Faculty & Staff Surveys
- **11** Student Surveys
- **7** Ad-hoc Surveys
- **33** Performance Review Surveys for Deans & Chairs
- **6** Strategic KPIs Reported
As mandated by the University Senate, SMIE prepares a feasibility study for any newly proposed program, based on a standard timeline shared with all deans and department chairs.

More than 10 surveys, questionnaires and institutional profiles were submitted to MSCHE, Egyptian governmental organizations, international organizations – including College Board and Peterson’s – as well as Times Higher Education, QS and US News and World Report ranking agencies.

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Each fall semester, SMIE prepares 3 annual publications: AUC Factbook, AUC Profile and AUC at a Glance, which include facts and figures about AUC, which are used for official reporting.

As for enrollment forecasts, three studies were prepared. In April 2020, FY21 enrollment projections were revised to reflect expected changes in student numbers and demographics in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Six data dictionaries are available covering the main institutional data sources such as Banner, SAP, HR and Salesforce, including more than 150 data elements. Two new sources are currently under study to discover, document and validate the data in order to prepare the data dictionaries with standard definitions.

The Data Governance Policy was updated to reflect recent organizational changes. New data elements were added to the data ownership table to clearly identify the roles and responsibilities for each data type to ensure the handling of institutional data follows international standards.

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AUC Ranked 1st in Egypt

In February 2020, AUC was invited to participate in the 6th International Fair for Higher Education and Training (EDU GATE 2020), which is one of the most important educational events in Egypt and the Arab region. During the event, the Minister of Higher Education and Scientific Research and QS Regional Director for MENA and South Asia awarded AUC a certificate of recognition for the achievement of being ranked 1st in Egypt in the 2020 QS World University Rankings.

Ranking Workshops

AUC organized a ranking workshop as part of the 52nd round of the general conference of The Association of Arab Universities in March 2019 in Sharm El Sheikh, Egypt. AUC invited representatives from QS and Times Higher Education ranking agencies to talk about the different rankings, their methodology, criteria and ways to improve the Arab Universities’ rankings. Representatives from more than 100 Arab universities attended the workshop.

One-day Accreditation & Ranking Event

In coordination with The Egyptian Ministry of Higher Education, The Egyptian Supreme Council of Universities, The Association of Arab Universities, and The Egyptian National Authority for Quality Assurance and Accreditation of Education (NAQAAE). AUC hosted this important event in Nov 2019, and it was attended by representatives from all Egyptian universities. The objective was to raise awareness about the value of international accreditation and ranking by bringing in Egyptian and international subject matter experts to engage in discussions with higher education institutions in Egypt on how to achieve international accreditation and improve international ranking, while showcasing the benefits and costs of both.

3
Ranking Surveys

1ST
University in Egypt

3RD
University in Africa
I wanted to thank you all for executing this very difficult exercise with this degree of professionalism. As I always say SMIE is one my favorite offices, for one simple reason, the initial default attitude is always: Yes, it could be done!

Ahmed Abdel Meguid
Business School

I cannot thank you enough for your effort and hard work. Indeed, we could not have done it without your prompt support and help.

Ezzeldin Yazeed
CENG Department
AUC stands ahead of the curve with innovative solutions at times of COVID-19.

“When it comes to innovation an ounce of execution is worth more than a ton of theory”
Phil McKinney. Former CTO of HP and current President of CableLabs

**Business Intelligence**

**AUC IT HELP DESK CHAT-BOT**

In collaboration with the IT Help Desk, SMIE's BI Team built AUC's first artificially intelligent chat-bot, *Digi-bot*. It understands what the user writes in simple English and maps it to the different issues it was trained to solve. The chat-bot aims to offload the IT Help Desk team of repetitive user inquiries while providing 24/7 service to the AUC Community. The AUC Community gave DigiBot a rating of 4.2 out of 5 stars in August 2020.

**WIFI COVID-19 TRACING**

Timely notification of possible exposure to a COVID-19 positive individual is crucial to keeping AUC a safe environment. To aid in AUC's plan of safe campus reopening, SMIE launched a Big Data project that aims at supporting the manual contact tracing efforts, leveraging AUC's Wifi-infrastructure & logs at negligible costs. The team takes all measures to ensure data privacy of the AUC community.

**ONLINE LEARNING DASHBOARD: BLACKBOARD AND ZOOM**

With AUC always putting Quality of Education on its compass for success, the unexpected shift to online learning created an immediate need for analyzing online learning performance. The dashboard features a wealth of information regarding course activity and is a useful learning analytics tool developed at no additional cost and is on par with the trendiest market tools.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dashboards</th>
<th>Data Sources</th>
<th>BI Roadmap Completion</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>39</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
AUC has always valued informed decision-making.

"If you can't measure it, you cannot improve it."
Peter Drucker, Management Thinker

**Facilities and Operations Management Dashboard: Work Orders & Water Consumption**

This dashboard is the first of its kind in the non-academic area. It enables the Facilities and Operations team to monitor the health of their services and processes through industry-standard KPIs and targets.

**Registration Tracking Dashboard**

The dashboard allows AUC decision-makers to assess whether the course is in high-demand or if a schedule change needs to be applied. The added value comes from the fact that it can be used during the registration cycle to actively cater to student demand and enhance the student experience.

**Cyclical Program Assessment: Quantitative Analysis Report**

The report is embedded within the cyclical program assessment process to provide quantitative analysis as aligned with the Associate Provost of Assessment and Accreditation’s vision of a fair and consistent evidence-based assessment process.

**Data Quality Engine**

In partnership with the Data Governance Team, the tool runs daily automatic business rule checks on AUC data to capture data entry violations and notify the data owner for correction.

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2
Annual BI Workshops

10
One-on-one Orientations

140%
Increase in Active Users
Thanks so much for this very timely and useful data on AUC's direct fiscal and employment contributions to Egypt. It will prove useful in our continuing public communications about AUC's mission and impact.

Francis Ricciardone, AUC President

With the support we received from Heba we managed to perform an in-depth analysis of the enrollment and retention patterns of AUC students in different programs. The efforts of the BI team to retrieve and validate the LinkedIn profiles of AUC graduates helped us assess the roles of various academic programs in producing leaders to serve Egypt and the international community ...

Dr. Zeinab Amin, Associate Provost
"I think that it was very efficient till now. It correctly identified the courses that had problems, such as PHIL and the department is working on a solution now. Also all the SSE nudge reports were accurate.
Noha Saada,
Senior Director of Academic Advising Center"

"I would like to thank the BI team who worked on the financial assistance report project for their outstanding professionalism and sincere cooperation with our office to finalize the report. Despite the challenging nature of this project, the BI team’s efforts to add the key missing information to Banner made the reporting process much more efficient and more timely.
Ghada Niazy,
Budgeting and Scholarships Director"

"Thank you for saving us ...Thanks for a job well done on such a short notice.
Shereen Shaker
VP Facilities and Operations"

"A million thanks from me too. Couldn’t have done it without you.
Deena Boraie
VP for Student Life"

"I want to commend Heba and her team. I wanted to do this dashboard to our VP to capture all the info and KPIs and made several meetings with outside vendors. It would have cost AUC hundreds of $. Doing it in-house with this level of professionalism, is something great.
Sherif Maged, Senior Director,
Faculty Housing & Transportation Services"
The BPI function was established as part of SMIE in the beginning of 2019, focusing on streamlining and governing AUC business processes in academic and non-academic areas. The BPI function emphasizes the application of international standards and best practices to help AUC optimize its processes and improve institutional effectiveness to help achieve AUC's mission.

**AUC Repository**
The repository is a central hub that serves all AUC departments and supports maintaining and sharing approved processes with relevant stakeholders and beneficiaries. Its primary objective is to raise awareness of the processes, provide consistency in performance, and govern policies and responsibilities.

**Collaboration with AUC Departments**
SMIE's BPI function supported five departments for documenting, improving, automating the critical processes. The methodology that has been used for these processes was the Business Process Management Cycle, applying the Lean approach to identify and eliminate the "waste" in process activities, increase the value-adding activities, and decrease non-value-adding activities.
Office of Strategy Management and Institutional Effectiveness (SMIE)

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