

Campus Conversation: AUC Next 100 Report



FEBRUARY 17

Strategy Management & Institutional Effectiveness
The American University in Cairo

Introduction to Campus Conversation

EVENT OVERVIEW

The American University in Cairo is initiating a master plan for the second phase of its New Cairo campus development. The University introduced Beyer Blinder Belle (BBB) as the company that will be guiding the University through this process on February 17, 2020. BBB shared their plans for the coming year and, more importantly, listened to ideas from the AUC community about how to envision the future of AUC. This educational and interactive panel discussion was the first step in a longer process of creating a vision for growth at AUC.

EVENT KICKOFF & INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

To kick-off of the event, Dr. Magda Mostafa welcomed attendees, panel members, and the BBB team. Magda Mostafa shared with the audience the agenda of the day and then introduced the President. AUC President Francis Ricciardone welcomed the BBB team and emphasized the major role they will play in shaping the University.

Following the President's remarks, the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Richard Bartlett, noted the movement of the campus and the new environment surrounding AUC's new campus. He mentioned the unknown facing the University and the prospects for intellectual achievements and pursuits. He then referenced the Master Planning Process not as a construction project, but a deliberate plan to shape our university thoughtfully. He mentioned that the purpose of expanding campus is to serve the AUC community.

Preliminary Q & A with AUC's President and Chairman of the Board

After introducing the event, both the President and Chairman were asked to express their thoughts in a Q & A format by the moderator Dr. Magda Mostafa.

Dr. Magda Mostafa (*referring to Chairman*):

Why do you believe BBB is the right team for AUC?

Richard Bartlett (*Chairman of the Board of Trustees*):

We should all be flattered that three pre-eminent firms sought after us. Candidly BBB impressed us for several reasons: a new look at the campus --straying away from the architects who developed the last plan; additionally, their humility and clear desire to hear from us; finally, their breadth of experience is unbelievable. From the State Department to Harvard Business School, they have a large amount of planning. Additionally, one of the lead architects, Hany Hassan was excited to be in his home country of Egypt.

Dr. Magda Mostafa (*referring to the AUC President*):

Can you talk about what makes AUC unique?

President Ricciardone:

AUC is such a special place during the time of 'otherization'; it's a place that brings people together to make magic - the production of knowledge and pursuit of intellectual endeavors. AUC is uniquely American, and that there are many portals for Egyptians to discover the world - AUC being one of them. The second half of AUC's history has featured the campus as being a portal for foreigners to learn and experience the Arab and Islamic world. It's important to work

in tandem to attract Egyptians and maintain the draw of foreigners. We have to have a campus that is throbbing with intellectual stimulation. It's time to develop outward

BBB Presentation Overview

Q & A WITH BBB

After the President and Chairman opened the event, the moderator Dr. Magda Mostafa turned to the BBB representatives on the panel for a brief Q & A followed by a presentation, which included audience participation questions through an online polling tool called *Mentimeter*.

Dr. Magda Mostafa (*directed to BBB representative Neil Kittredge*):

What is your personal definition of Master Planning and how do you see it fitting in at AUC?

Neil Kittredge (Partner, Director of Planning & Urban Design, Partner-in-Charge and Planning Partner, Beyer Blinder Belle):

Kittredge first expressed his honor and gratitude to the President and Chairman for their words as well as the other constituencies the team has been lucky to meet with thus far. Neil Kittredge also discussed the exciting prospects of master planning. He concurred with the Chairman that a campus is a work in progress. He emphasized that there is no endpoint, but that the process is a continuous evolution. He posed to the audience the prospect of students coming to the team who are interested in architecture or learning about the planning process. The greater the participation the greater the Master Plan. Kittredge reiterated that the plan is a process where the community comes together to create a vision as a community.

Dr. Magda Mostafa: Thanked Neil Kittredge and turned to Hany Hassan:

"Your team has worked all over the world. How do you plan to tailor your planning to the AUC context?"

Hany Hassan (Partner, Director of DC Office, Architectural Partner, Beyer Blinder Belle):

First, Hassan thanked everyone for the warm welcome. He then emphasized that every project is unique and has its own context. He stated that every project is approached by BBB with extensive humility and for this reason, each BBB project is different. BBB wants to learn from the rich history of AUC and about what worked and what did not work. HH emphasized there is no set formula, but that at a personal level HH discussed how it has been a dream of his to do a project in Egypt. In closing, he thanked everyone for allowing him this wonderful opportunity.

Dr. Magda Mostafa: Thanked Hassan and turned to Anna Oursler asking:

"How can the people in this room and the larger community get involved in the planning process?"

Anna Oursler (Associate Project Manager/Planner, Beyer Blinder Belle):

Oursler emphasized that engagement is one of the most fun parts of the planning process and never looks the same. How the team engages varies based on contexts, but they use polling techniques and technology. BBB sees the process as a partnership, meaning it sees itself as working hand in hand with AUC. The Planning Team is not just BBB but everyone. For example,

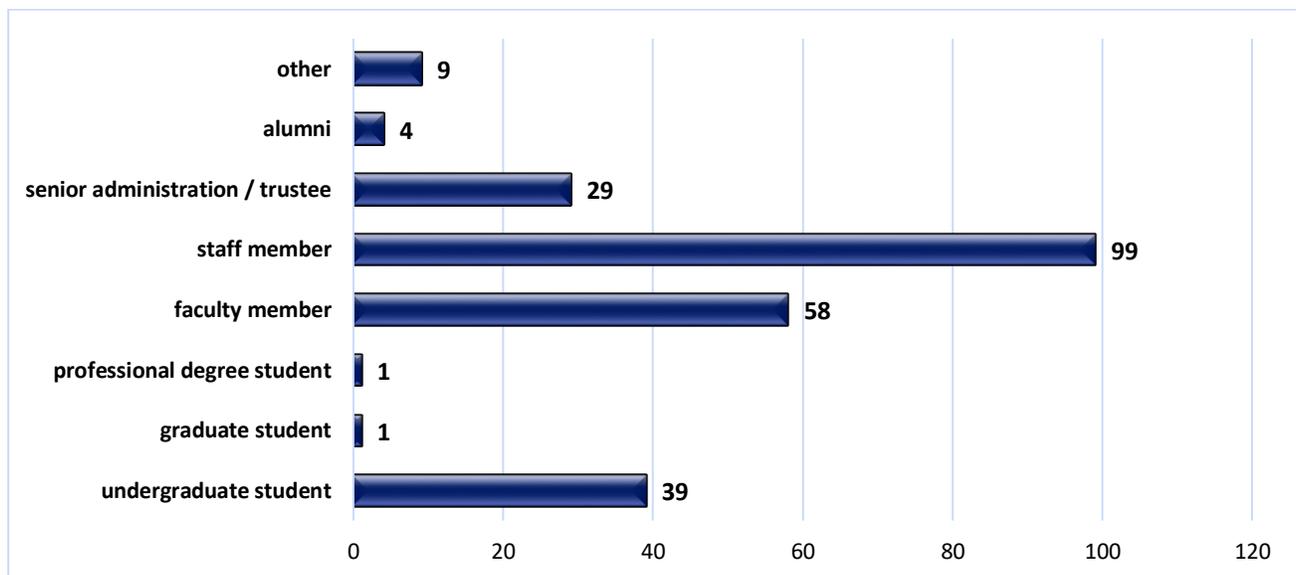
AO mentioned open houses as a tool to share preliminary ideas and get community feedback at the same time. Outreach will be conducted in other ways as well. AO emphasized that creative methods such as a pop-up storefront, an interactive screen, or focus groups will be utilized throughout 2020 to glean community feedback. AO shared the plan to engage the community throughout the planning process starting this afternoon with a digital tool. AO emphasized there will be many more engagement activities as well.

MENTIMETER QUESTIONS AND ANALYSIS

Following the Q & A portion of the conversation, BBB transitioned into their interactive presentation. They presented the following questions and solicited audience feedback on aspects of life on AUC's campus. The data was preliminary and was collected to gauge general impressions to be followed up on throughout the planning process.

Question 1: Tell us about yourself - "I am a(n) _____"

Total Respondents: 240



Question 2: When you think of the design of the AUC campus, what two descriptive words come to mind?

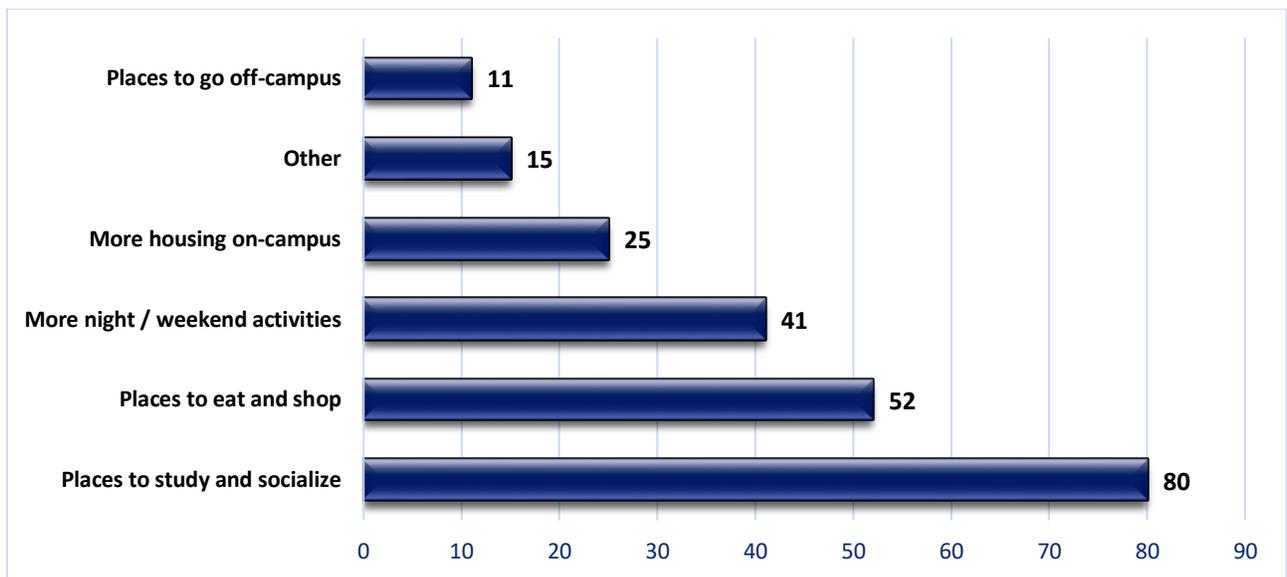
Total Respondents: 240

Highest Responses: Beautiful, Green, Spacious, Authentic, Engaging, Islamic, Sustainable, Contemporary, Home, Modern, Community

Question 4: What are your top two priorities for enhancing campus life?

Total Respondents: 224

Items	1st place	2nd place	3rd place	4th place	5th place	6th place
Places to eat and shop	52	42	36	9	4	0
Places to study and socialize	80	43	13	10	6	0
More night / weekend activities	41	33	23	15	9	3
More housing on-campus	25	28	13	13	19	1
Places to go off-campus	11	16	16	26	19	1
Other	15	11	5	3	2	12



Question 5: What do you see as the top two challenges for the campus?

Total Respondents: 227

Items	1st place	2nd place	3rd place	4th place	5th place	6th place
Academic space needs	69	34	15	7	2	0
Enhancing campus life	62	58	16	7	0	0
Safety / security	9	10	4	14	21	0
Climate change / sustainability	33	24	21	15	9	0
Connections to the surrounding neighborhood	45	48	19	8	7	1
Other	9	6	3	1	0	9

Open Conversation – Q & A with Audience

Following the audience participation facilitated by BBB’s Mentimeter tool, Dr. Magda Mostafa opened up the conversation to audience questions. Microphones were distributed amongst audience members and Dr. Mostafa directed questions to the panelists.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

If there’s anything the audience wants to share openly, please feel free to do so now.

Anonymous:

This is not only my idea, but one of the things that go along with reaching out to the neighborhood is to revitalize reaching out to the undeveloped talent and promise across Egypt. There are so many kids could benefit from AUC.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

Could we hear from the Provost about your thoughts on reaching across Egypt?

AUC Provost Ehab Abdel Rahman:

We would like to expand more and invite people from outside the beautiful campus. We are doing this through the SCE and Summer programming now.

Anonymous:

I used to live in Zamalek and for eight years I lived there and worked at AUC. I participated in arts/culture activities downtown, but when we moved to the new campus I never attended nighttime events because of the problem of the commute. This will continue to be a problem for those with long commutes, but this needs to be a consideration for how to engage.

Neil Kittredge (BBB):

One of the things we’d love to see is the campus be more lively during the evenings and off-hours. I’d like to ask the audience what would make the neighborhood around us more attractive? For the campus itself and the area around it? The team is interested in this.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

Dr. Mostafa concurred that at AUC has been in conversation with developers to make the space and the community more attractive for people to move here.

Anonymous:

Starting with the definition of community, we need to define this. Who exactly are we talking about? I would also like to integrate genuine sustainable and green technologies. Potentially thinking of creative and genuine solutions for waste, etc.

Hany Hassan:

I agree. This is one way to expand upon AUC’s reputation and make it an exemplary campus.

Anna Oursler:

Yes, we have been very impressed on the sustainability front here at AUC; there’s an opportunity to leverage from “better to best” as a model for the region and across the world. We are excited to incorporate sustainability as a guiding thread.

Anonymous:

The participatory processes that lead to outcomes...how can we structure this process to pave the way for a new way of learning at AUC?

Hany Hassan:

In the past few days, we have talked about synergy being created across disciplines through planning. It's an interesting idea that we will certainly explore.

Neil Kittredge (BBB):

To add, interdisciplinary collaboration has become a top priority across the world. For this reason, we are interested in incorporating flexibility in design that allows individuals to break out silos and work across disciplines.

President Ricciardone:

In response to comments about how this process will be engaging, BBB is looking at a meaningful consultative process that brings in a broad and varied participation. With this in mind, AUC will have a small executive group and steering committee as well as a working group that informs it during the planning process. The founding meeting of the steering committee will have the attendance of Board Members as well.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

Mostafa assured the audience that these committees are structured to be a structured and representative voice of AUC.

Neil Kittredge (BBB):

Another piece of the engagement process is through the website, which will feature details about open houses and other community-wide events. There will be many activities to come.

Anonymous:

I encourage the team to look at past data and not just modern data. Data collected during the move of the campus can and should inform the planning process. One of the keywords should be flexibility through this process. An incentivizing space working with community partners such as providing short term leases to businesses and startups.

Hany Hassan (BBB):

Thank you for sharing your experience. The more you share the more you will make this process successful.

Anna Oursler (BBB):

I'd like to thank you for this piece of advice as well as ask the students in the room to share with their friends the news about the master plan and take the opportunity to be a voice within the legacy of your school.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

The legacy repository is being put together, which is a shared history of documents since the move. If anyone is wanting to contribute, please send them to us.

Anonymous:

Thank you for the discussion. I'm graduating soon; I spend about 80 hours a week here. It's a second home for me. Two areas of growth: incorporating more elevated spaces to see the rest of the campus and also more art on campus. It can be adaptable.

Haytham Nawar (Chair of the Arts):

Many art projects are happening on the other side of the campus, near Gate 1. I would love to see more students there

Anonymous:

I just graduated from Architecture engineering. I learned experientially here; there could be more flexible learning without a focus on a fixed plan. What if we had areas for experiential activities? Here at AUC, we are taught to be leaders - we should implement this earlier on.

Provost Ehab Abdel-Rahman:

This is not the first time we've heard this comment. Looking into this issue we have started two initiatives: A Co-op program with the School of Business and the Innovation Hub

Scott Archer (Senior Associate Project Architect, Beyer Blinder Belle):

The idea of flexibility is really important; we build a plan that is not one solution. We want to plan for a campus that changes as pedagogies change.

Dr. Aziza Ellozy (Professor of Practice & Associate Provost of Transformative Learning & Teaching):

We have been integrating experiential learning aims through encouraging faculty to restructure courses; besides, integrating elements in our learning spaces is essential. Flexible and interdisciplinary spaces are needed and being developed.

Rachel Awad (Senior Director, Academic Affairs Projects):

In response to the Provost, we are expecting 2-5 companies to be on campus even before the Innovation Hub is up and running.

George Marquis (Dean of Students):

My question is coming from students wondering whether BBB is here primarily to work with the land that has not yet been developed or to make changes to pre-existing questions

Neil Kittredge:

I think we're all aware that there is undeveloped land, but that there are areas of strength and weakness on the current campus. Therefore, we are envisioning this process as a holistic process that accommodates needs in existing and new spaces.

Dr. Magda Mostafa:

The ultimate intent is for the campus to operate as one entity.

Hany Hassan (BBB):

I think this is a very important point. The success and future of the campus rests on it being a coherent entity. Every plan has room for improvement. The campus is unbelievably beautiful, but our mission is to make it complete and seamless as stated by Magda.

Chairman Richard Bartlett:

This has been a very useful session. I heard some things I wasn't expecting, but overall, they were things I was anticipating. This is good because the flaws seem to be things we agree upon. Things have grown up around us; we seem to be at an opportune moment.

Conclusion

In closing, Dr. Magda Mostafa encouraged everyone to stay engaged as AUC and BBB move forward with the planning process. Students, faculty, and staff were encouraged to follow closely the AUC-BBB campus plan website (<https://www.aucegypt.edu/about/campus-plan>) to learn how you can get involved in the planning process, helping to shape the next century of growth at AUC.