



# **STRATEGIC PLANNING**

**2015-2018**

**A TRADITION OF EXCELLENCE**

## LETTER OF THE PRESIDENT

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USEK has realized many wonderful accomplishments since its founding in 1938. However, we believe the University's greatest achievements are still in the future. For that reason, we are very pleased to share with you the launch of the USEK strategic plan that will guide the University through the year 2018. The plan offers our response to a fundamental question: How will USEK best serve our students, our community, and the broader global society over the next six years? Our innovative attitude and our culture rooted in the OLM educational mission has served us well over the past years.

New trends have raised the expectations of students enrolled in USEK. Universities must provide opportunities for more and more diverse students to succeed; they must produce talent to drive productivity and engaged citizens to sustain a thriving democracy; they must offer lifelong learning to help graduates to adapt to changing times, etc.

This strategic plan offers a roadmap for the future, a framework to help us make choices, ensuring that our students will become future leaders regionally, nationally and globally.

Fr. Hady Mahfouz

President

## USEK BACKGROUND

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USEK was founded in 1938 as an independent private Catholic institution, by the Lebanese Maronite Order (hereafter referred to as the "OLM") who serves Higher education in monasteries since the 18<sup>th</sup> century. The University was founded before the first Lebanese Law of Higher Education promulgated in 1961, and by that date, the Lebanese State recognized USEK as a private Higher Education Institution in Lebanon, according to the Law of Higher Education in Lebanon. Since 1997, the university has adopted the North American credit system, in order to facilitate students' credit transfer and recognition and to move toward an American Style institution.

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## USEK MISSION

Since its founding, USEK seeks, in accordance with the Article 92 of the *Constitutions of the OLM (ed. 2012)* and the social teaching of the Catholic Church on universities, to contribute to the development of all its students through quality educational programs and research in various fields of study. By providing a high quality American-style education to its students, USEK intends to prepare future leaders for innovation, professional growth and life-long learning, in Lebanon, within the Middle East and throughout the world. USEK is committed to a faith-based educational development of its students rooted in the Catholic tradition whereby spiritual values and ethics as well as respect for cultural and religious pluralism are promoted.

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## USEK CORE VALUES



## **EXCELLENCE IN TEACHING AND LEARNING**

USEK is committed to provide its students an excellent educational and academic experience. Therefore, we promote active learning and use of technology in order to support and enhance educational provision, build teamwork and peer observation in teaching and learning, support research and innovation in teaching, and commit ourselves to insuring continuous professional development to our faculty and staff.

## **EXCELLENCE IN QUALITY SERVICE**

We are committed to roll quality service that impacts our stakeholders, both within and outside the University Campus. We strive to offer the best quality service, acting at all times with integrity and professionalism and are devoted to serving the common good by better understanding and meeting the needs and expectations of our students, faculty, staff, and external constituents.

## **CREATIVITY AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

We assert commitment to continuously improve University stakeholders' well-being through creative ideas, innovation and positive change. We stimulate creativity and innovation by manifesting freedom of thought, autonomy, empowerment and decision making.

## **INTEGRITY AND ACCOUNTABILITY**

We commit to act with honesty and integrity, be open and fair for maintaining the highest relationship trust. We aim to communicate transparently to serve in the best interest of students, faculty, staff, and other constituents. We believe in continuous assessment of our practices and hold ourselves accountable of our own actions that influence the well-being of our students, faculty members and fellow employees.

## **COOPERATION AND DIVERSITY**

We believe in synergy of cooperation and teamwork and provide support to one another. We value diversity, talents, others' views, promoting justice, fairness, equitable treatment, and creating a positive and enjoyable workplace.

## **STEWARDSHIP AND SERVICE TO SOCIETY**

We are socially responsible for the welfare of human beings, through education, social assistance and community support. Thus, we devote ourselves to guide and support our students throughout their higher education. We are keen on cultivating ethics and moral conducts in line with our Catholic social teaching and commit to ensure the safety of our people in a healthy work environment.

# STRATEGIC PLANNING

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## INTRODUCTION

USEK strategic planning is based on several strategic orientations reflected in its institutional mission. **Evolution in continuity was the key focus of the strategic discourse in the last six years. Evolution in continuity is done through a look for the future.** We are at a point in our institutional evolution where we must make the kinds of choices that will move the University forward to an institution of distinction. We must make selective investments that will give us the biggest impact and which will do the most to improve the University's overall standing in the years to come.

## USEK STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS A - I

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**STRATEGIC DIRECTION A:** Ensure the continuance and deepening of a strong, mission-based, academically rigorous Catholic identity.

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- A.1. To review applicable course curriculum of each undergraduate program to adapt and incorporate elements of the Catholic Intellectual Tradition.
- A.2. To organize an on-campus faculty/student symposium related to Mission/Catholic Identity.
- A.3. To engage in catholic educational activities as service learning, local outreach, mission trips etc.
- A.4. To engage in research, academic and non-academic activities linked to support Syriac inheritance.
- A.5. To develop or modify existing places for worship and spiritual reflection on campus.
- A.6. To create a program of faculty incentives to support the development of periodic ethics conferences/symposia.
- A.7. To continue to expand collaboration with domestic and international mission organizations.
- A.8. To sustain the University mission and institutional effectiveness through a modern governance structure that reflects accountability, participation, transparency and effectiveness.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION B:** Realize USEK academic programs as a **distinctive model of undergraduate and graduate students'** academic achievements and career success.

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- B.1. To graduate students able to articulate English in their professional life.
- B.2. To enhance students' retention, progression and graduation rates.
- B.3. To provide excellent career advice, guidance and linkage with employers.
- B.4. To recognize and celebrate student achievements and contributions.

- B.5. To increase student satisfaction with academic and pastoral support.
- B.6. To provide student opportunities and support for developing their graduate attributes and employability.
- B.7. To enroll a greater percentage of external undergraduate transfer students.
- B.8. To explore a new proactive advising model for freshmen and students in transition.
- B.9. To ensure the prominence of a student-centered culture throughout support services that are cohesive and multifaceted.
- B.10. To maintain a high quality student-centered focus in inter-institutional delivery strategies.
- B.11. To provide equal quality of teaching and learning in USEK main campus and RUCs
- B.12. To stimulate in our students a lifelong thirst for knowledge and learning and to encourage a pioneering, innovative and independent attitude and an aspiration to achieve success within and beyond the University.
- B.13. To grow our postgraduate learning community by expanding our range of opportunities for postgraduate study, with particular emphasis on lifelong learning and professional certificates.
- B.14. To support students in managing their personal and financial problems in order to reach their educational targets.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION C: Enhance organizational excellence by sustaining a culture of continuous improvement and development.**

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**STRATEGIC GOALS**

- C.1. To emphasis on continuous quality assurance and to work as a whole community to situate our work in strategic context, to value and celebrate our endeavors, to actively seek the views of all those whose needs we serve, and to be imaginative in realizing the potential for improvement.
- C.2. To enhance the management and effectiveness of our external and internal communications.
- C.3. To ensure, effective and transparent management and data driven decision-making communicated to the community.



- C.4. To establish the highest standard of governance, characterized by accountability, responsibility and commitment to our institutional mission, prudent and ethical leadership.
- C.5. To configure university support services for efficiency and effectiveness (sustainability).
- C.6. To sustain process of continuous delivery assessment and continuous improvement at programs and courses levels, Academic Quality Assurance (AQA)

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION D:** To foster the **University local engagement** through public and social service, extending the reach of our educational programs, strategic partnership, and students' civic commitment.

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- D.1. To strengthen the bonds and celebrate our links with our alumni.
- D.2. To increase the number of active alumni engagements with the University via the Alumni Services website, social media and e-newsletters.
- D.3. To support and provide opportunities for increasing students' civic and global knowledge, experience, and perspectives.
- D.4. To sustain a strong relationship with the local community through collaboration and partnerships that contributes to the wellbeing of the society on different areas and aspects.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION E:** Achieve distinction in **globalizing** the university.

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- E.1. To broaden and deepen our commitment to working in partnership with other HEIs and external agencies through researches and global networking.
- E.2. To increase the number of international students (undergraduate, graduate and post graduate).
- E.3. To partner with various institutions for academic alliances.

- E.4. To seek compliancy with high quality standards through peer review, institutional and program accreditations.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION F:** To foster a vibrant successful and interactive **research community** that generates ideas and makes a positive contribution to the societal cultural, environmental, health and wealth development of Lebanon and global communities.

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- F.1. To create increased opportunities, through support, advice and guidance, for participation in research dissemination and publication opportunities.
- F.2. To increase research support from external sources.
- F.3. To increase opportunities to interdisciplinary research.
- F.4. To build a robust research infrastructure.
- F.5. To foster research collaborations with HEIs, employers, commercial partners, local development stakeholders and public agencies.
- F.6. To continuously enhance our library infrastructure to fully meet the diversity of needs amongst our learning community and of members of the wider community wishing to share our resources and e-resources.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION G:** To value, support, and develop the potential of our staff team building to make the university a **stimulating and successful place to work.**

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### **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- G.1. To foster a spirit of justice and commitment to the service of others amongst our university community.
- G.2. To promote and actively support employee well-being and career development for all staff.
- G.3. To promote collaborations among faculty and staff and build a community of scholars.
- G.4. To support and provide incentives for faculty and staff to engage in collaborative global scholarship.
- G.5. To enhance institutional pride among all staff and faculty.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION H: To provide a cutting edge, innovative and stimulating teaching and learning environment.**

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**STRATEGIC GOALS**

- H.1. To advocate for, demonstrate and embed exemplary practices in teaching and learning
- H.2. To increase international exposure for academic staff, peer networking, teaching and learning and research opportunities.
- H.3. To recruit leading scholars whose work is influential in their fields and on the world.
- H.4. To provide opportunities to facilitate faculty career development.
- H.5. To significantly advance and embed incorporation of blended e-learning strategies and new technologies in the teaching and learning environment and creative program design.
- H.6. To implement a process of program re-conceptualization with emphasis on: creation of collaborative intra-faculty and inter-faculty offerings.
- H.7. To provide high quality and flexible opportunities for Continuing Professional Development and Life-long learning for faculty.
- H.8. To sustain and develop the program review process that focus on AQA, leading to new or updated students learning outcomes.

**STRATEGIC DIRECTION I: To fully utilize the potential of USEK main campus and regional campuses in serving the students, faculty and staff and provide a**

campus model in information technology, energy saving and environmental sustainability.

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## **STRATEGIC GOALS**

- I.1. To implement the road map for a green campus and decrease the carbon footprint at Kaslik and be a model for the Middle East.
- I.2. To implement gradually the new campus plan (see appendix).
- I.3. Promote partnerships with governmental and non-governmental organization to achieve the road map to green campus and the new campus plan.