

American University of Armenia

Capacity and Preparatory Review
Part 1/4: Narrative

Submitted to WASC

November 16, 2011

By AUA WASC Steering Committee

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1. Faculty Handbook, <http://www.aua.am/factbook/>
2. Faculty Senate, <http://aua.am/senate/>
3. Faculty Services Office, <http://aua.am/faculty/office.html>
4. AUA Board of Trustees, <http://aua.am/about/trustees.html>
5. Catalog, <http://www.aua.am/catalog/x.html>
6. Student Handbook, <http://aua.am/students/Handbook.pdf>
7. Handbook of Administrative Policies and Procedures, <http://www.aua.am/staff/staffhandbook.html>
8. 2010 -2011 Factbook, <http://www.aua.am/factbook/>
9. AUA Library Online Databases, <http://library.aua.am/library.htm>
10. AUA Financial Assistance Programs, http://aua.am/admissions/financial_assistance.html
11. AUA Admissions Policies and Requirements, <http://aua.am/admissions/admissions.html>
12. AUA Institutional Research Office, http://aua.am/about/institutional_research.html
13. Information and Communication Technologies Service (ICTS) Help Desk, <http://www.aua.am/icts/>
14. AUA Brochure in English, Armenian, Russian
http://www.aua.am/admissions/AUA_General_Information_Brochure_Eng_2010.pdf
http://www.aua.am/admissions/AUA_General_Information_Brochure_Arm_2010.pdf
http://www.aua.am/admissions/AUA_General_Information_Brochure_Rus_2010.pdf
15. Academic Program Brochures, <http://www.aua.am/admissions/brochures.html>
16. Strategic Plan & Process Archive 2011-2017, <http://www.aua.am/accreditation/strategy2017.html>
17. Self-Studies and Student Learning Assessments, http://www.aua.am/about/institutional_research.html
18. AUA Accreditation Site, <http://www.aua.am/accreditation/index.html>

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 ALO Thomas Samuelian, Accreditation Director Sharistan Melkonian,
 IRO Anush Bezhanyan, Dean of Engineering Aram Hajian, Board Secretary Caren Meghreblian

Abbreviations

ACE – Acopian Center for the Environment
ALO – Accreditation Liaison Officer
AUA – American University of Armenia
AUAC – American University of Armenia Corporation (US entity)
AUAF – American University of Armenia Fund (Armenian entity)
CBRD – Center for Business Research and Development
CC – Curriculum Committee
CFR – Criteria for Review
CHS – College of Health Sciences
CHSR – Center for Health Services Research and Development
CIS – Computer and Information Sciences
CoE – College of Engineering
CPR – Capacity and Preparatory Review (this document - due November 16, 2011)
CRAL – Center for Research in Applied Linguistics
DEP – Department of English Programs
Digilib – Digital Library of Armenian Literature
EEP – Experimental English Program
EER – Educational Effectiveness Review (due July 13, 2013)
ERC – Engineering Research Center
FS – Faculty Senate
ICTS – Information & Communications Technology Services
IESM – Industrial Engineering and Systems Management
IP – Institutional Proposal (submitted May 10, 2010)
IRO – Institutional Research Office
LRC – Legal Resource Center
PAB – Paramaz Avedisian Building
PSIA – Political Science and International Affairs
RoA – Republic of Armenia
RSTF – Research and Scholarship Task Force
SBM – School of Business and Management
SLA – Student Learning Assessment
SLAP – Student Learning Assessment Plan
SLC – Student Learning Committee (formerly SLS)
SLO – Student Learning Outcome
TCPA – Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis
TEFL – Teaching English as a Foreign Language
TRDP – Turpanjian Rural Development Project

1. Introduction

Since the submission of the Institutional Proposal in May 2010, AUA has celebrated its 20th anniversary: two decades of advancement in Armenia. On this occasion, Armenia's Prime Minister, a champion of the knowledge-based economy, cited AUA, with its WASC accreditation, as a leader in effort to increase access to education at the "highest international standards." (<http://www.youth.am/index.php?lang=2&id=7569> (Attachment 1: AUA Plays a Very Important Role – Press Clipping).

AUA is in the midst of launching a major expansion and diversification of offerings, faculty and fundraising, soundly positioning the university for continued growth and excellence. The accreditation process itself has made AUA a stronger, more vibrant university by building institutional capacity. AUA has embraced the rigor of evidence-based decision making, student learning assessment and improved data collection. These processes are demanding for a small institution like AUA in a developing country like Armenia. They have spurred creativity and innovation, fostering efficient mechanisms for governance, quality assurance, and accreditation compliance.

Two decades ago AUA began with three master's programs designed to address Armenia's immediate needs for seismic engineers, reconstruction and development. Today, AUA has six academic programs, offering seven master's degrees and over a dozen graduate-level certificate programs. The master's degrees are in Industrial Engineering and Systems Management, Computer and Information Science, Public Health, Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Law, Business Administration, and Political Science and International Affairs. The certificates are in TEFL, Business Administration, Engineering, and Environmental Science and Conservation and Law.

Each academic program is coupled with a research center where faculty and students engage in research and scholarship beyond the classroom. In addition, AUA has several research centers addressing unique aspects of AUA's mission in Armenia: the Acopian Center for the Environment (ACE), the Turpanjian Rural Development Program (TRDP) and the Digital Library of Armenian Literature (Digilib). ACE aims to address the environmental threats to the fragile and complex ecosystem of this post-soviet republic, raising awareness through research, public awareness campaigns and courses. TRDP provides an opportunity for business students to put knowledge and skills into practice while addressing lagging economic development, one of Armenia's major challenges. Digilib has drawn on AUA's expertise in computational science to create a digital library of Armenian culture, a major resource for Armenian literary and historical studies worldwide (*CFRs 1.5, 1.6, 2.5, 2.8, 2.9, 4.6*).

The university's diverse faculty and staff comprise citizens of the Republic of Armenia (ROA) as well as international scholars with degrees from the United States, Canada, Europe and Russia (*CFR 3.2*).

AUA's commitment to diversity and equal opportunity are reflected in its student body, which is 73.1% female and hails from Armenia's capital, rural/underdeveloped areas, and 7 countries (for 2010-2011 fall quarter). The **Women's Entrepreneurship Program**, in conjunction with the Armenian International Women's Association, and the **Women's Mentorship Program**, in conjunction with the US Embassy, empower women and are emblematic of AUA's commitment to gender equality and support for its predominantly female student body (*CRFs 1.4, 2.11*).

AUA Extension aims to address the growing needs of non-traditional students in areas of economic expansion such as **tourism and entrepreneurship**. At the same time, AUA's Department of English Programs identified a community need and created a program which now serves hundreds of students aged 6 to 16 through after-school English programs and hosted the **nation-wide English Olympiad** in 2011.

AUA's commitment to student success is borne out by its high retention and graduation rates and enrollments which have increased by 60% from 252 to 406 in the past five years.

Chart: Retention and Graduation Rates

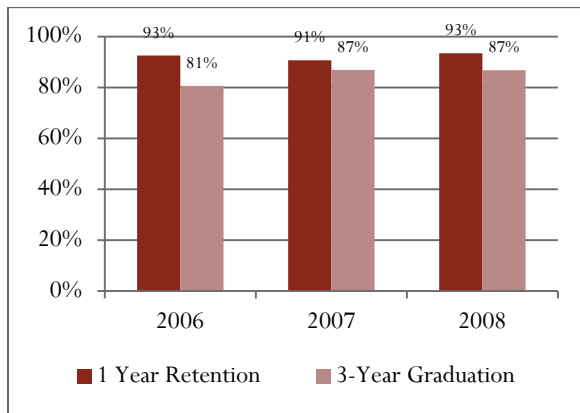
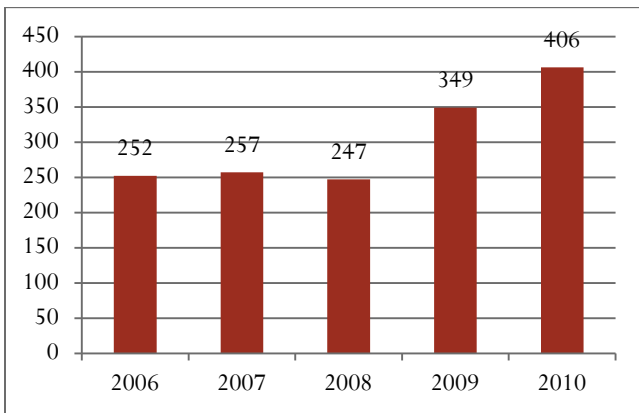


Chart: Growth in Student Population



In short, AUA has grown into a resource serving not only master's degree students but also the community at-large in Armenia and abroad (*CFR 1.5*).

1.1 Institutional Proposal Update

The Institutional Proposal (IP) set forth three major goals:

- 1) Recalibration of AUA's institutional mission and goals (*CFRs 1.1, 1.2*).
- 2) Focus on student learning across the institution and the development of more diverse and effective methods of assessment (*CFRs 2.3, 2.4, 2.6, 2.10, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6*).
- 3) Alignment of research and scholarship with teaching at a graduate institution focused on impacting the development of a nation (*CFRs 1.3, 2.1, 2.2, 2.8, 2.9*).

Several major changes have occurred since the submission of the IP.

AUA's first full-time, resident president was appointed in June 2010. After his appointment, President Bruce Boghosian initiated an inclusive university-wide strategic planning process (Attachment 2: CV – Bruce Boghosian). AUA's 2011-17 Strategic Plans calls for diversification and expansion of the university in several dimensions: academic, faculty, administration and income/donor base. It calls for the launch of an undergraduate program (pending WASC approval), administrative streamlining and restructuring to create three colleges and a more scalable organization, and conversion of the academic calendar from quarters to semesters (Attachments 3, 4: Organizational Chart, 2011-2017 Strategic Plan) (*CFRs 1.1, 3.8, 3.10, 3.11, 4.2, 4.3, 4.8*).

These changes will impact the university at every level and help build a more robust institution. In contrast to the existing structure, three colleges will create opportunities for interdepartmental interaction between faculty and students and streamline administrative resources. A semester system will better synchronize with local academic calendars, provide more opportunity for student exchange programs, increase course capacity and decrease administrative overhead. The undergraduate program launch fulfills the university's mission by expanding and diversifying offerings to make American education accessible in Armenia and the region.

There has been some turnover in upper-level administration at the university as well as restructuring for greater scalability and efficiency. The provost, two deans, and the VP of Research and Development recently moved on for personal and professional reasons. A former dean and founder of the university is currently serving as Interim Provost. A search is underway for a new Provost, Vice President of Advancement and Vice President of Operations. Interim deans have been appointed for two academic programs pending restructuring of academic programs into colleges. With the departure of the former ALO and IRO during the summer 2011, a senior faculty member and long-serving dean was appointed as ALO and a new IRO was hired. To enhance the university's capacity for accreditation and student learning assessment and expansion into undergraduate, an Accreditation Director has been appointed and a long-term resident educational consultant engaged (*CFRs 1.3, 1.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3*).

Pending new academic structure and leadership, preliminary policy research and formulation has been undertaken, but implementation outlined in the IP has been held in abeyance.

Our data and statistical reports have been updated since the IP. Preparation for the CPR brought to light certain inconsistencies and discrepancies in data, attributable primarily to the change in the academic calendar from a spring to a fall start in 2007-09 and inconsistent reporting periods. Updated data are reflected in Required Data Portfolio. As part of its Strategic Plan, the university is adopting an integrated information management system to facilitate more accurate year-on-year comparisons and trend-tracking. The Worksheet for Preliminary Self Review has been updated by the CPR Working Group to reflect tasks accomplished through November. (Attachment 5: Worksheet for Preliminary Self Review) (*CFR 4.6*).

The two themes selected for the IP—Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning and Cultivating a Community of Scholars—comprise the three goals outlined above. Over the past eighteen months, the investigation of these two themes has guided university-wide institutional research and resulted in specific recommendations to improve AUA. The process has strengthened its ability to grow, diversify and fulfill its mission, while remaining responsive to the unique demands of Armenia and the region.

1.2 CPR Structure

This Capacity and Preparatory Review provides a deep look into AUA's strengths and weaknesses and the main challenges it faces. It also presents the AUA's plans for addressing these challenges to build on the achievements of its first 20 years.

The Review revolves around reflective essays which analyze the university's capacity in relation to the two themes, present data associated with each theme and WASC standards, detail strengths and weaknesses, and make recommendations for further growth and improvement. The review was guided by several WASC documents, including *The Institutional Review Process* and *Expectations for Two Reviews: Clarifying the Focus*.

The Introduction is followed by reflective essays devoted to the two themes set forth in AUA's IP—Institutionalizing Student Learning Assessment and Cultivating a Community of Scholars. Each summarize the university's findings to date and presents an action plan through the Educational Effectiveness Review. The thematic essays are followed by a status report on progress in preparing for the EER. The conclusion underscores the main findings so far and agenda and milestones going forward.

Institutional responses to the Commission's Action Letter and Major Recommendations are addressed in a separate Appendix.

The WASC Steering Committee has taken the lead in compiling and preparing this report. However, its content reflects the work and engagement of the entire institution. Students, faculty, administration, staff, alumni and external stakeholders have all made significant contributions to this process through AUA's academic program reviews and strategic planning.

AUA believes that the WASC visiting team will recognize the university's continued growth, appreciate its challenges, and offer constructive guidance for its continued maturation.

2. Reflective Essays

2.1 Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning

(CFRs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 3.4 3.8, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

From its founding, AUA has endeavored to be a model of American education in Armenia and the region. It has focused on preparing students for fulfilling careers that address the needs of a post-Soviet country transitioning in the aftermath of the 1988 earthquake in Armenia. The faculty and institution are dedicated to helping students succeed in their chosen fields as well as the paths life may choose for them in this rapidly and unevenly evolving environment. This is reflected in our mission statement and in the policies, practices and processes the university has created and supported as it has evolved over the past two decades. As a relatively small institution in a small country, AUA faces the challenges of globalization. It has risen to the occasion of acting as a regional bridge to the US and international best practices, while adapting and implementing those practices in Armenia. Through such policies as its Student Code of Ethics, Statement on Academic Freedom, and Ethics & Grievances Procedures AUA models and disseminates the values of open, meritocratic, responsive and responsible education (Attachments 6, 7, 8, 9: Mission Statement, Student Code of Ethics, Statement on Academic Freedom, Ethics & Grievances Procedures) (CFR 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7).

The university, its students, faculty and external stakeholders understand that excellence in education cannot be left to chance or good intentions. It is a conscious choice that requires planning, resources, and follow-through. Viewing student learning assessment as an integral and on-going part of a university's activity is still a relatively new concept in this part of the world. But it already has taken root at AUA. Since accreditation in 2007, the university's Curriculum Committee, IRO and Provost have designed, implemented and documented student learning and academic program review policies, practices and processes for all academic programs (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). CC-led academic program reviews and audits are central to its student learning assessment culture.

AUA is a small university, where most of the core faculty are directly engaged in administration, governance and assessment. Many decisions are made collegially and deliberated informally before formal decisions are issued. However, for this study, as outlined in the IP, a special committee was established, the Student Learning Committee (SLC), composed of members of the Curriculum Committee (CC) and faculty drawn from each academic program (CFRs 4.1, 4.2).

The CC is composed of the resident heads (Deans or Associate/Assistant Deans) of AUA's six academic programs, with the Provost as an ex officio member. The Chair of the CC for most of the period in question was the Dean of the Law Department and currently is the Associate Dean of DEP. Although its name may suggest a narrow scope of activity, the AUA CC has oversight not only of course and degree changes, but also of the academic program review process (self-studies), and since 2010 the annual student learning assessment, as well as student probation appeals and much of AUA's academic policy making (Attachment 10: CC Charge) (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.7).

Being in the flow of academic program reviews, internal audits, student learning assessments, course, curriculum and degree requirement changes, and probation appeals for students whose GPAs have fallen below good-standing (3.0) has assured that the CC and its members have a

broad overview of the state of student learning at AUA, based on experience not only within their own programs, but also on shared knowledge and data from all academic programs university-wide.

To engage a broader range of faculty and bring new perspectives into this process, the university formed the SLC inviting faculty outside the CC in Fall 2010 to investigate AUA's policies, practices and processes for student learning assessment (Attachment 11: SLC Charge) (CFRs 4.6, 4.7). Now in its fifth year of annual student learning assessments, there are more opportunities to “close the loop” and evaluate the impact and effectiveness of earlier recommendations for improvement and reform, hence, the timeliness of the “close the loop” component of IP Theme 1.

As a first step toward institutionalizing student learning assessment, the CC and SLC established two comprehensive web-pages to make Self-Studies, Audits and Annual Student Learning Assessments easier to track, monitor and share. These web pages have facilitated information flows and promoted transparency. They are a repository of institutional memory for university decision-makers and assure institutional continuity and smooth transition as academic leadership changes. They are also a resource for new faculty orientation and training. (CFR 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7)

This essay summarizes the SLC findings and recommendations for enhancing AUA's capacity to institutionalize student learning assessment. The following are the key findings:

- 1. The Academic Program Review Process** has by and large been successful, with all academic programs having been reviewed over a slightly extended 5-year cycle. Based on the experience of the first cycle, the Self-Study Guidelines issued in 2008 are in need of updating and streamlining to reduce duplicative treatment of issues, facilitate data collection and improve the effectiveness of the self-study as a tool for academic program development. The Curriculum Committee in conjunction with the Institutional Research Office (IRO), Accreditation Director, and Provost will undertake this task (CFR 2.6, 2.7, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7).
- 2. The Student Learning Assessment Process** has been uneven. Some programs have completed all reviews and used data to close the loop, while others have been less systematic and thorough. The Student Learning Assessment Guidelines, issued in 2008, need up-dating in light of AUA's experience and best practices. Templates and reporting forms may promote uniformity and diffuse better practices. More faculty need to acquire the skills necessary to engage in assessment. The SLC, in conjunction with the IRO, Accreditation Director, and Provost, is in charge of this process.
- 3. Regular Workshops** and on-going training/consultation are needed to train more faculty in assessment methods and institutionalize student learning assessment. The SLC, the IRO, Accreditation Director, and Provost will organize these (CFR 3.4).
- 4. Data and report management needs** systematization and access improvement in order promote efficiency in conducting reviews and assessments and assure consistency across programs as AUA expands. The IRO, Information and Communication Technologies Services (ICTS), Accreditation Director, Provost, with input from the Curriculum Committee, are working to streamline and systematize reporting, archiving and access for student learning assessment, including continuous on-line archives/workspaces to facilitate documentation and data collection

for academic program reviews. The Registrar’s Office is currently installing an AUA-developed database for student records as part of AUA’s integrated data management (*CFRs 3.6, 3.7*).

Processes

1. Academic Program Reviews – As outlined in the table below, each academic program undertakes a program self-study and audit every five years in two steps: 1) a self-study review pursuant to the AUA Educational Program Review Guidelines and 2) an audit of the academic program review by a three-person audit team drawn from the faculty with involvement of at least one reviewer from outside the university who is conversant in the disciplinary area, pursuant to the 2008-2011 Educational Effectiveness Audit Reviews of AUA Academic Programs. The audit team reviews the adequacy of the self-study and determines whether its conclusions are supported by the evidence. It also conducts focus groups and interviews as necessary with faculty, students and alumni to verify and clarify the report. Finally, it makes recommendations for improvement usually drawn from the program’s own recommendations. The last stage of the process is a Wrap-Up meeting with the President and Provost, the result of which is an action plan for improvement, to be evaluated as part of the next self-study cycle. The full self-studies with attachments, together with audits and recommendations are archived with the IRO and available on the internal server (Attachments 12, 13: Self-Study Guidelines for the Review of Educational Programs; Audit Guidelines) (*CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8*).

Table: Academic Program Reviews (Self Studies) and Audits Conducted

	LAW	CHS	DEP	SBM	Extension	CoE	PSIA	Acopian Center
Self Study	2008	2008	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	2011
Audit	2009	2009	2010	2010	2011	2011	Pending: 2011	Pending: 2011

2. Annual Student Learning Assessments – In 2007, AUA initiated a three-year student learning assessment plan for 2007, 2008, and 2009, during which each academic program systematically evaluated learning outcomes (*CFR 1.2, 2.7*). These assessments were carried out under the supervision of the Provost and Institutional Research Office. When the SLC was formed, they were archived and the assessment plan was extended for one year through 2010. The 2011-12, 2012-13 plans for the graduate programs were adopted in November 2011 as an interim measure before a new multi-year plan is to be developed in anticipation of undergraduate degrees in fall 2013 (Attachments 14, 15: Student Learning Assessment Plans 2011-12, 2012-13; Sample SLA Plans, 2007-2009).

The initial Student Learning Assessment process called for each academic program to develop a set of student learning outcomes and maintain a three-year assessment plan to ensure that outcomes were being assessed. Deans then reported to the Provost on assessment results on an annual basis. Assessment results were used by the University to support curriculum, planning, hiring, and budgeting.

Steps in the process included:

1. Creation of the departmental assessment plans to
 - a. identify outcomes being tested
 - b. set timeline
 - c. choose methods of assessment
 - d. state expected results
2. Collection of evidence
3. Analysis and interpretation of the evidence
4. Report submission
5. Identification of strengths and areas for improvement
6. Implementation of changes for improvement
7. Reiteration of the assessment process

Chart: Closing the Loop on Student Learning Assessment



(Attachment 16: AUA Learning Assessment Manual (2008 update), SLC web-page).

3. Curriculum/Degree Change Reviews – Pursuant to the Policy on Course Modification (originally adopted 2004), the Curriculum Committee reviews administrative and substantive changes to courses, curricula, and degrees to assure due process and proper documentation and evidentiary support of changes. The CC shows deference to academic programs in matters relating to their disciplinary specialties and standards in their professions. Substantive changes, involving degree requirements, are subject to approval by the Faculty Senate. The CC also reviews Graduate Certificate proposals. All changes are subject to approval of the Administration/Provost. In addition, all new degree programs are subject to the approval of the Board of Trustees. The CC has handled 32 changes across all academic units since 2007 (CFRs 3.7, 4.7) (Attachment 17: Course Modification Policy).

4. Academic Policy Making – The CC has adopted and amended a number of policies affecting student learning since AUA’s 2007 accreditation. The most notable are two policies aimed at increasing access to AUA education for non-traditional students while assuring quality and effective learning: (1) The Graduate Certificate Policy, which governs certificates offered by

an AUA Academic Program, often giving the student the option to apply credits toward an AUA degree in the future, (2) Non-degree Student Policy, which permits non-degree students to take courses for credit and to apply a limited number of such credits toward an AUA degree (*CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.7*).

Pursuant to the strategic planning process, the CC reviewed academic policies requiring adjustment in anticipation of a semester calendar and undergraduate study. Two policies were amended: Credit Hour Policy and Syllabus Policy. The CC also developed and instituted a new course labeling and numbering system to provide clarity and consistency across programs. In each instance, the CC designed policies to assure effective student learning and avoid disruption/compromise to the educational process (Attachments 18, 19: Credit Hour Policy, Syllabus Policy).

5. Probation Appeals – Students must be in good academic standing to study at AUA, defined as maintaining a GPA of 3.0 or higher. Students who are not in good standing are subject to automatic dismissal unless the academic program appeals for an exception on the grounds of extenuating circumstances and the student’s potential for successfully completing the program. At the end of each quarter, the CC considers these appeals. This mechanism puts the Curriculum Committee (and hence the resident heads of all AUA programs) in an important information flow relating to the appropriateness of admissions standards, grading policies, student retention and graduation rates (Attachment 20: Grade Appeals Policy).

6. Syllabus Review by Deans – Faculty must submit their syllabi to the Dean for review to assure that each syllabus conforms with the AUA Syllabus Policy and is designed to ensure students fully understand course requirements and assessment methods. AUA syllabi must address how to reach the instructor outside of class, states grading standards and learning outcomes, and how the course fits with the rest of the curriculum (prerequisites and preparation for further courses) (*CFR 4.7*).

7. Student Course Evaluation – the Provost regularly reviews student course evaluations and periodically conducts statistical analysis, identifying typical ranges for each program on various evaluation parameters and alerted deans and affected faculty of results that were out of range to determine the cause, explanation, and where necessary, measures to address the deviation. Each instructor knows where his/her score lies in relation to the average both in the program and university-wide average. This is done for scores on two questions: overall effectiveness of the instructor and the overall value of the course (*CFR 2.10, 2.12*).

8. Faculty Evaluation – Deans carry out annual evaluations of core faculty performance, including teaching, service and research and submit these to the Provost. For adjunct faculty, a less extensive review is submitted at the end of the course. A key component of the faculty evaluation is observation of teaching and review of course evaluation. If the instructor is a non-native speaker of English, particular attention is given to the effectiveness of English-language lecturing. For balance and objectivity, faculty members are given the opportunity to respond in writing to evaluations before they are submitted to the Provost (*CFR 2.12, 3.1, 3.2, 3.11*).

Policies and Guidelines

AUA has a full panoply of guidelines and policies for student learning assessment. Most have now been tested and adjusted based on our experience and in anticipation of the introduction of the semester system and undergraduate education (5, 8). Those relating to academic reviews

(esp. 1, 2, 3) are up for revision in 2012, as our current academic program cycle is concluding. The Student Learning Assessment Manual is also under review as our four year SLA cycle concluded in 2011. Below is a list of the main policies relating to student learning assessment and their current status (CFRs 1.7, 4.7).

Self-Study Guidelines – Adopted in 2008. Due for revision and streamlining in 2012 at conclusion of current self-study cycle.

Self-Study Audit Guidelines – Adopted in 2008. Due for revision and streamlining in 2012 at conclusion of current self-study cycle.

Student Learning Assessment Manual – Adopted 2008. Due for revision and streamlining in 2012 in preparation for new Student Learning Assessment plans for 2011-12, 2012-13 emphasizing “closing the loop.”

Course Modification Policy– In force since 2004 (Attachment 17).

Syllabus Policy – In force since 2007. Revised in 2011 in anticipation of undergraduate study in response to research findings on best practices (Attachment 19).

Course Description Policy – In force since 2007 (Attachment 21).

Grade Appeal Policy – In force since 2007 (Attachment 20).

Credit Hour Policy – In force since 2007. Revised in Sept. 2011 in anticipation of transition to semester calendar (Attachment 18).

Practice

As outlined in the IP, the Student Learning Committee (SLC) was established in the Fall 2010 to investigate the university’s experience since initial accreditation, its current capacity and areas needing improvement. Specifically, the SLC was charged with:

- Developing resources and mechanisms to institutionalize assessment and evaluation of student learning across the university in cooperation with the Institutional Research Office and the Administration;
- Overseeing and coordinating Student Learning Assessments (SLA) for each program using direct and indirect evidence and monitoring the integration of the findings of the SLAs into five-year cycle of academic program self-studies;
- Assuring consistency from year to year within academic programs and across disciplines and programs;
- Sharing experience, expertise and insights across academic programs and disciplines with respect to assessment and evaluation of student learning via training, manuals, websites and archives on student learning assessment;
- Raising awareness, enhancing skills, and furthering understanding of student learning issues and concepts so that they become an integral part of the day-to-day activity and mindset of each member of the AUA faculty, including adjunct and visiting faculty;
- Monitoring and assuring that findings are implemented through timely and appropriate measures (“closing the loop”), including follow up assessment and evaluation of the educational effectiveness of measures implemented.

The SLC identified the strengths and weaknesses of the university's existing Student Learning Assessment policies and practices, formulated recommendations on improvements, and identified the resources required for implementation of the recommended improvements. In November 2010, research questions outlined in the IP were grouped into three topics and assigned for further review to subcommittees composed of representatives from various academic programs.

Topic 1: Learning Assessment Practices 2006-2010

Topic 2: Closing the Loop 2006-2010

Topic 3: IRO Report on Data Collection and Resources

The subcommittees reported their preliminary findings to the CC and academic programs for comment and review. The Preliminary Report identified strengths and weakness in current student learning policies and practices and formed the basis for an informed discussion by the full SLC of these strengths and weakness, enabling the SLC to make evidence-based recommendations on improvements in practices and policies, as well as proposals regarding the resources required for their implementation.

The following is a compilation of identified strengths and weaknesses related to Student Learning Assessment:

Strengths	Weaknesses
Relatively high level of participation	Gaps – some programs didn't fulfill student learning assessment plans, particularly after the first year
Compilation of a lot of data – both in quantity and variety, but varying quality	Uneven use of direct evidence
Pockets of Expertise in various academic programs	Variation in methodology – rubric design, data selection, collection, evaluation, validity of metrics, data interpretation
Decentralization of the process promoted optimization and tailoring to the needs of each academic programs	Gaps in reporting – who's involved, how are learning objectives selected?
Program leadership and faculty have risen to the occasion and taken the initiative to identify and apply best practices in Student Learning	Closing the loop – Information about how to close the loop is inconsistent at best, and often times not documented.
Policy and Guidelines are generally clear and helpful	Report formats are inconsistent
IRO is efficient and responsive	Monitoring mechanisms are weak – hard to find reports (some are not deposited with IRO, only submitted as appendices to Self-Studies)
Provost is knowledgeable and has provided leadership and guidance to the academic programs and faculty engaged in student learning assessments	Relatively low awareness of the process beyond those directly involved in assessment – other faculty, students, are often unaware. Questions about how to involve others.
	Faculty are overburdened due to institution size and multiple committee and other university commitments – not sufficient time for more in depth involvement

Table of direct (D) or indirect (I) evidence used by academic programs for student learning assessment.

	PSIA	LAW	SBM	DEP	CoE	CHS
2006	D	D	D, I	D	D	D, I
2007		D, I	D, I	D	D	D, I
2008	--	D, I	I	--	--	I
2009	--	D, I	--	D, I	--	I
2010	I	I	--	I	I	I

Recommendations on Student Learning Assessment:

1. Revise the Guidelines to Improve Reporting. In particular, the Annual Student Learning Assessment Reports should include sections on:
 - a. Faculty Involvement. Which faculty should be involved in the assessment?
 - b. Learning Objective Selection. How and why was the learning objective selected for assessment?
 - c. Methodology Selection: How and why was the methodology selected?
 - d. Closing the Loop on the current year's findings: What is the plan for closing the loop? How will the assessment data be used to improve student learning?
 - e. Closing the Loop on Prior Years' Recommendations: What is the disposition of prior assessment recommendations? Were changes implemented (e.g., syllabi, new courses, new teaching/testing methods)? Does the current year's assessment evaluate the effectiveness of those changes?
2. A coversheet/form for the Annual Student Learning Assessment should be developed with checkboxes to guide programs, assure that they are aware of and satisfy procedural and other standards, and facilitate monitoring and oversight.
3. Revise the Guidelines to promote inter-program sharing of Learning Outcome Definitions. This will help promote best practices, transparency and commensurability of assessment results across the university.
4. Revise the Guidelines to promote inter-program sharing of Rubrics of learning outcomes that are university-wide or cut across multiple programs -- e.g., report and letter writing in English, critical thinking, scientific literature survey.
5. Establish an on-line archive to facilitate access, promote transparency, share best practices, and streamline monitoring.
6. Organize Training Sessions.
 - a. Share in-house expertise and experience
 - i. Programs should designate one or more point person(s) for SLA to take part in training and to become a trainer for their program

- ii. Select a resource and have a member of SLC do a presentation and lead a discussion of that resource
 - iii. SLC should select examples of direct and indirect methods currently in use on campus and review them as a group – e.g., How did X program use portfolios for direct evidence? How did Y program use exit survey data for indirect evidence?
 - b. On-campus training by an outside expert
 - i. Current best practices
 - ii. Useful resources
 - iii. Model/Practice objective – for each Direct/Indirect
 - iv. Methodology and quantification – statistics
- 7. Improve university-wide indirect data collection. Review and evaluate whether the indirect evidence collected can be better calibrated to student learning outcomes.
 - a. Exit Survey for Graduates
 - b. Student Course Evaluations
 - c. Alumni Survey
 - d. Employer Survey
- 8. Formalize Student Learning Assessment as part of faculty contractual obligations and policies to stress the importance of this process and assure broad participation.
 - a. Faculty Handbook – revise policies as appropriate
 - b. Contracts
 - c. Training and orientation
- 9. Conduct one indirect-evidence and one direct-evidence student learning assessment with faculty representing each program as a “hands-on, real-life” training exercise.

The Subcommittee also identified resources necessary to further Institutionalize Student Learning Assessment.

- 1. External Expert to conduct workshop. The university should organize a hands-on workshop and follow-up consultations with each program.
- 2. Allocation of Staff Time. Provide time for staff to engage in Student Learning Assessment training.
- 3. Resources. Identify and provide access to additional resources on methodology.

Next Steps

1. 2011-2012, 2012-2013 Student Learning Assessment Plan for Graduate Programs

In anticipation of the start of undergraduate degrees in the fall of 2013, the graduate programs adopted a Student Learning Assessment Plans for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years with emphasis on closing the loop on a recommendation or shortcoming identified in earlier SLAs. Future SLA Plans will be integrated with the undergraduate SLA (Attachment 14).

For each of the next two years, Academic Programs will select one learning outcome for investigation, ideally one that was studied in the last cycle or identified as a problem area in its self-study to “close the loop” by verifying whether recommended changes have had the intended effect. To help build capacity, Academic Programs will be encouraged to employ both direct and indirect evidence methods in upcoming assessments, with in-house support from our Accreditation Director or consultants, depending upon resources and needs.

2. Annual Student Learning Assessment Training – An in-house training was conducted in the Spring 2011 on assessment using indirect evidence in connection with the 2010 SLA. A more extensive training session was conducted in the Fall 2011, for which an outside trainer/consultant was engaged both for a workshop on using portfolios as direct evidence for assessment and to provide individual consultation with faculty on their 2011 SLA.

3. Revision of Self-Study Guidelines, Self-Study Audit Guidelines – To be undertaken by the CC at the conclusion of the current self-study cycle in 2011-12.

4. Revision of Student Learning Assessment Manual – To be undertaken by the SLC in the Spring 2012.

5. Integrated Data Collection and Reporting for Academic Program Reviews and SLAs – Already underway, with the creation of the SLC and Self-Study web pages. To be expanded over the next academic year by the Provost and IRO in consultation with the Accreditation Director, SLC and CC.

2.2. Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars

(CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2b, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.10, 3.11, 4.2)

When AUA was founded 20 years ago, most faculty members were US-based visitors. This was a logical and necessary move for introducing English as the language of instruction for an American education in Armenia. In 1991, Armenia was almost entirely non-English-speaking post Soviet country with many fewer English-speaking, Western-trained scholars than today. The faculty at that time included some long-term resident faculty from abroad, many visitors and part-time faculty, including Fulbright scholars or researchers/international contractors on USAID development projects with specialized fields of academic expertise.

Two decades later AUA is quite a different place. It has a diverse albeit modest sized core faculty that includes international scholars residing in Armenia as well as some AUA alumni and Armenian citizens with doctorates from US and European institutions. Of the 82 faculty members for the most recent academic year (2010-2011), 45 have foreign doctorates and forty-eight percent of current faculty members have been with the university for at least 3 years, making an academic career at AUA. Under the RoA Labor Code (adopted Nov. 9, 2004, as amended through Mar 1, 2011), most of AUA's faculty are already deemed de jure permanent employees of the university. Although some foreign faculty are engaged pursuant to California at-will or short-term contracts by the university's Oakland, CA office, this is feature of the local legal environment results in institutional stability and career growth tantamount to tenure in the US (Attachment 22: Excerpt from RoA Labor Code) (CFR 3.2).

What constitutes a community, in turn, is being redefined through globalization and the development of technology. Collaboration can be with a colleague across the hall or half-way across the world. Networking has come to the fore. AUA has developed a database of Armenian academics worldwide as part of its global strategy. This database will be increasingly used as a resource for identifying and attracting talent to AUA and Armenia, networking, recruitment, collaborations, public relations and academic exchanges, including for junior faculty development.

AUA has a number of unique features. It is a relatively small, master's only institution, in a small, under-resourced, developing country, going through major transition in the post-soviet era. It is not coincidental that it was founded on the day Armenia became independent. It was the vision of its founders that AUA espouse a special mission as a catalyst for innovation. As a master's only university, AUA lacks doctoral and post-doctorate students who typically staff large research projects and whose early careers are tied into undergraduate teaching assistantships, nor does it currently have undergraduates to serve as lab, survey or research assistants. Due to size, core faculty does not necessarily have the full range of dedicated specialists necessary for complex research. These four features – small size, transitional environment, founding mission and master's degrees only – have set AUA's teaching, scholarship/research and service on a unique and mutually interdependent trajectory.

Over the past two decades, training of mid-level professionals to assist with the transition from a soviet state to a free-market democracy has been in especially high demand. The AUA faculty has been drawn into specialized educational work that often has a significant research component. It is one thing to teach law students about precedent, for example, and another to teach judges or regulators how to draft opinions that will have precedential value. Both the comparative, cross-cultural aspects of such training, and the adaptation to the conditions and

institutions of a transitional democracy, require research and creativity that transcend ordinary teaching and community service, but are often not reported or reportable in the form of peer-reviewed journal articles.

A larger student body, anticipated with the planned introduction of an undergraduate program in the Fall of 2013 (pending WASC approval), will facilitate the development of a more diverse resident faculty with greater research potential; however, as this study and the table below show, the master’s programs together with their research centers, do already engage a wide range of research and scholarship to form a vibrant community engaging with students, society and scholars in Armenia, the region and abroad (Attachment 23: 2010 Research Activities: Consolidated Report of Research and Development Centers).

Table: Research Centers – 2010: A quick glance

Research Center	Ongoing Projects and Activities	Conferences (seminars, lectures) hosted	Conferences (seminars, lectures) attended	Publications	Student involvement
Center for Health Services R&D	13	5	11	30	Y
Turpanjian Center for Policy Analysis	3	6	5	--	Y
Acopian Center for the Environment	9	2	5	6	Y
Engineering Research Center	10	16	7	3	Y
Legal Resource Center	5	4	2	5	Y
Center for Research in Applied Linguistics (CRAL)	12	1	7	3	Y
Center for Business R&D	8	--	1	--	Y

Resident leadership is a key component of cultivating a community of scholars (*CFRs 3.1, 3.9, 3.1, 3.2*). In its February 26, 2007, Action Letter, WASC called for the hiring a full-time resident president and multi-year faculty contracts. In September 2010 AUA appointed its first full-time, resident president, Dr. Bruce Boghosian (Former Chair, Mathematics Department, Tufts University; PhD University of California, Davis). With the adoption of a new *Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles* in the Spring 2011 and AUA’s 2011-2017 Strategic Plan calling for **periodic evaluation of the president and administration**, the WASC recommendations have been addressed (Attachment 24: Policy on Appointment, Retention, and Promotion and Faculty Titles).

In 2011 President Boghosian announced a **commitment to and a schedule for multiyear contracts**, which are currently scheduled to be implemented with the transition to our new academic year budget (2011-2012) and semester calendar (Fall 2012). Thus, these have been addressed as noted in the section below on EER preparation update. In addition, as suggested in the WASC March 3, 2006, letter, the number of resident deans has been increased and with the upcoming restructuring of academic programs into 3 colleges to house both undergraduate (pending WASC approval) and graduate programs by discipline, **all academic departments will be headed by resident chairs** (Attachment 25: Deans’ CVs) (*CFR 3.1, 3.2, 3.2*).

As part of its CPR effort, a special Research and Scholarship Task Force (RSTF) was formed in the fall 2010 to study the nature and patterns of scholarship and research at AUA, investigate

international best practice for similar universities, and propose changes to the university policy on hiring, retention and promotion. This research was designed to provide a framework for retention and promotion, which are at the core of the multi-year contract policy. Beyond the research topics already identified in the IP, the RSTF added a topic, which became the basis for our new policy: Are there other models from universities similar to AUA (non-tenure institutions with many visiting and adjunct faculty) which define research and scholarship in ways other than the traditional definition? It turned out that there are such models, including several WASC-accredited universities, e.g., Whittier College, from which the RSTF drew inspiration for AUA's new definition of scholarship and research.

The RSTF gathered evidence from several sources, including the annual reports of AUA's Research Centers and academic program reviews (self-studies), interviews with academic program faculty and research center staff, and consultation with deans and associate deans. Research Center reports and academic program self-studies are filed with and reviewed by the university administration and are available to faculty. Research Center reports are made available to the public through the AUA web-site. Both research center reports and self-studies rely largely on self-reporting of research and scholarly activities as understood by the academic programs themselves and are audited by the Curriculum Committee of the Faculty Senate to assure compliance with AUA program review guidelines.

The RSTF institutional research revealed a range of understandings and approaches as to what in fact constitutes research and scholarship at AUA taking into account several factors: (1) the range of disciplines represented by the six academic programs, (2) the professional/applied (as opposed to academic/theoretical) nature of some of the master's programs, and (3) the unique histories, personalities and demands of the Armenian environment on these programs. The definitions of research and scholarship in the *Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles* (Approved by the AUA Board of Trustees, September 2005; amended, February 2007) provide the framework for defining research and scholarship at AUA. The *old policy* had three components: (1) excellence in teaching, (2) creative scholarship (with emphasis on peer-reviewed publication) and (3) university and public service.

The RSTF found that these definitions are sufficiently broad to cover nearly all of what is reported by the academic programs as research and scholarship; however, the RSTF's own study of AUA research and scholarly activity revealed a richer and more diverse range of activity.

While AUA's research centers are largely aligned with the teaching staff of the departments, at least three major initiatives, Acopian Center for the Environment, Turpanjian Rural Development Program and the Digital Library of Armenian Literature, are multidisciplinary efforts and operate autonomously from the academic programs. Each serves different facets of AUA's unique mission in Armenia: environmental protection through public awareness, economic development through small loans and research on best practices for Armenia in microlending, and cultural heritage preservation using modern technologies making Armenia's 1600 literary tradition available for digital research throughout the world (*CFR 4.5*). ACE has a unique role at AUA, since all AUA graduate students are required to complete at least 2 credits of environmental science, tangibly expressing the high priority AUA places on environmental awareness and sensitivity in all fields.

The old 2005/2007 policy approaches teaching, research and service as distinct and separate categories of faculty activity rather than seeing them as part of a continuum of interconnected

and mutually supporting activities, the core of which is the creation and dissemination of knowledge. Not surprisingly, the actual range of activities and application of these definitions has been more flexible and responsive to the community's understanding of the role of teaching, research, scholarship, and service in the university's mission. AUA values and promotes “scholarship and creative activity, and curricular and instructional innovation, as well as their dissemination...in a manner appropriate to the institution's purposes and character” and should “recognize for faculty promotion and tenure...appropriate linkages among scholarship, teaching, student learning and service” (*CFRs* 2.8, 2.9).

As a graduate institution, research skills are central to the curriculum, and scholarship is part of the ethos of advanced study. Master's students are expected to be able to create, disseminate and evaluate new knowledge. Faculty, as teachers and mentors and as a scholarly community, are expected to nurture and transmit creative activity in the classroom, research labs and projects, individual mentoring/supervising of student research, and through engagement with larger communities outside the university. Those larger communities include not only their disciplinary colleagues at other institutions of higher learning, but also, where appropriate, the public-at-large, public policy makers, government bodies, community organizations, public education and media. With technological advances, integration into global communities has greatly increased since our accreditation in 2007 as has interaction with local universities, research institutes, and local educational regulatory bodies.

Tailoring standard curricula to Armenian realities, particularly in case-study-based professional classes, demands a high level of skill, local knowledge, research and creativity. At the master's level, students already know general, abstract ideas and basic concepts of their discipline and they demand examples drawn from their reality that demonstrate how to apply knowledge in context to achieve practical or theoretical results. When using generic examples or examples from foreign contexts, it is necessary to provide the appropriate scaffolding and to adjust lectures for relevance and effectiveness. This tailoring and modulation from the universal to the particular takes place in each class and is a hallmark of the value added by AUA faculty to the classroom experience. This tailoring activity goes beyond routine instructor preparation for class and has been identified as an area of scholarship and research in its own right. Faculty members are encouraged to publish and share their insights and findings in journal articles on pedagogical and educational methods.

In a larger institution in a more developed country, there might be more division of labor and specialization in one or another form of scholarly engagement. At AUA, core faculty are often called on to be more versatile and hence, regardless of personal predilection or preparedness, to engage in a wider range of creative activity than they might in a different environment. Moreover, many of AUA's core faculty members are part-time and approximately 25% are non-resident. Thus, the demands on the core faculty (some resident, some recurrent non-resident, some full, mostly part-time) take on quite a different profile from that of the typical faculty at a larger institution with undergraduate and graduate programs in a developed economy.

This has pros and cons. Engaging in a wider repertoire of scholarly activities can provide the reward of direct impact on policy and community and foster synergies between applied and theoretical research. However, there are opportunity costs and trade-offs: time, however well spent in TV interviews, public appearances, or government deliberations, is time that is not spent in the library or lab producing papers for publication or presentation at academic conferences.

In other environments, a scholar's work may eventually be picked up and handed off to others as it wends its way through think tanks, mass media, and government bodies. In AUA's environment, researchers/scholars may be drawn into a much more direct and varied engagements as their ideas proceed to dissemination, adaptation and perhaps adoption and implementation. The environment simply does not have the intermediating structures or human resources. That duty of engagement falls on the scholar/researcher as a member of the university and larger community.

Another parameter to be considered is that the core resident faculty focuses its time and energies on a daily basis on a number of tasks essential for the university's mission. At the center of this mission is teaching, including a large component of new curriculum and course development – which is more urgent in a context that almost always demands tailoring of materials to be relevant and useful for students in 21st century Armenia. However, no less demanding are university committee work, student mentoring, advising, recruitment, library development, and a range of more mundane, but nevertheless essential tasks for the university's smooth and proper functioning. Once again, this has pros and cons. Participation in a broader range of tasks means that many core faculty have a broader understanding of the university. Naturally, the creative and innovative ideas from research, service and teaching activities cross-pollinate and carry over into university policy-making bodies. This can be a source of organic alignment and efficiency. However, time and energy are limited, and there is the risk that for some faculty the urgent and highest priority tasks of teaching and administration often leave little time or energy for other creative work, a situation that may be eased in part through faculty expansion in connection with undergraduate education.

An additional factor is institutional support for research and grant-writing. In larger institutions in more developed environments, there are more synergies between departments, more institutional memory and expertise, and often, special units that identify potential grant and research opportunities, organize grant and contract applications, and absorb some of the administrative burden of administering and reporting on grants and securing and exploiting intellectual property. There are also a large number of doctoral students and post-docs who augment the institution's research capacity as they build their professional track-record and careers. Because of its size, at AUA, much of this falls on the shoulders of an already burdened faculty.

In short, at AUA, many core resident faculty live and work in a very different environment from the typical university professor in the US or their non-resident colleagues. While their non-resident colleagues may conduct research in their home universities or other contexts (sometimes bringing a portion of that activity with them to Armenia and engaging resident faculty and students in that work, e.g., College of Health Service (CHS), College of Engineering (CoE)), the core resident faculty at AUA often are heavily engaged in university obligations and community-based engagements (e.g., Law, Business, PSIA, DEP).

While the model that emerges may be distinct in certain respects, it is also in sync with modern trends in the US and other countries, where institutions and their faculties are increasingly called to address the needs of their immediate communities through more tangible engagement. This engagement is often at once an inspiration for research, a public service and an expression of the commitments and values of the creative community on campus. Such institutions are often in urban settings in need of redevelopment or underdeveloped regions still seeking paths to prosperity and advancement. Like AUA, they have found in practice that their teaching,

scholarship/research and service naturally flow into each other and form a continuum of creative activity that invents and disseminates knowledge for the betterment of society.

Scholars of different temperaments may have a natural inclination toward one or another zone in the continuum, or may migrate along the continuum throughout their creative lives. A university should be inclusive and supportive enough to allow these creative individuals and teams to realize their intellectual and creative potential in a manner consistent with their values and commitments to the communities that they find have the most compelling claim on their ingenuity at any given time. For some that will be the community of other academics who discourse in printed journals which they and respected colleagues jointly manage and edit. For others, it will be applied work, public engagement, and crafting solutions to societal problems that require intellectual acumen, cutting edge knowledge, problem-solving capacity, and people skills that only a scholar has. There are many combinations and permutations of these elements, but, in all instances, what counts as research and scholarship evinces the following 6 characteristics:

- The activity requires a high level of discipline expertise.
- The activity breaks new ground or is innovative.
- The activity can be replicated and elaborated.
- The work and its results can be documented.
- The work and its results can be peer reviewed.
- The activity has significance or impact (Robert M. Diamond and Bronwyn E. Adam, *Recognizing Faculty Work: Reward Systems for the Year 2000*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1993.)

Following a thorough examination of current and best practices within the university, the RSTF made the following initial recommendations:

- **AUA standards for Research and Scholarship** (CPR outcome 1 & 2 for Theme 2) should be revised and incorporated into the AUA Policy on Appointment, Promotion, Retention and Faculty Titles. This was completed in the spring of 2011.
- **Recognition of Excellence** (CPR outcome 3 for Theme 2). Several models for recognition of excellence in research and scholarship were proposed, including an annual award.
- **Support for Scholarship.** Support for scholarship, in the form of grant writing, has been raised in a number of academic program reviews as was the high rating given to the library and ICT by students, researchers and faculty for responsiveness to research needs and assuring access to books and journals through on-line databases, libraries and interlibrary loan.

One question initially raised in the Faculty Senate and focus groups was whether traditional research was being de-emphasized. The answer was no. Traditional research is still highly valued. However, it was agreed that a broader continuum best served AUA considering the wide range of creative and innovative work produced by faculty. It was also acknowledged that a broader definition for AUA would allow for academic programs to take into account disciplinary specifics where appropriate.

Making a Career at AUA: Multiple-Year Contracts (CPR outcome 4 for Theme 2)

The Administration based on the input of the RSTF has announced that it will act on the proposed new policy and begin to implement multi-year contracts with the new academic budgeting year, starting in 2012. Although these will affect only a small portion of the faculty, since most are already on semi-permanent contracts under Armenian law, the action is emblematic of the university's commitment to the core faculty. One of the obstacles to multi-year contracts over the years has been concern about long-term budgetary commitments. As outlined in AUA's 2011-2017 Strategic Plan, a new fund-raising effort will be undertaken to expand and diversify the donor base and income sources of the university, to enable the university to make longer-term commitments to faculty careers and development at AUA.

An issue that has been raised is the need for some kind of trial or probation period for new hires, to give the university and the new faculty an opportunity to decide whether this is a good fit. The annual faculty process, which has been in effect since 2006, is one mechanism for addressing this concern.

Other issues are junior faculty development and senior faculty promotion. Junior faculty members are often overwhelmed with teaching and other responsibilities at the stage in their careers when they need time to work on scholarship and research. Senior faculty often feel that they have reached a plateau as salaries top out and there are few opportunities for career advancement at a small institution. Due to resource constraints, AUA will need to find creative ways to address the needs of both these groups. A first step in that direction is the new broader definition of scholarship and research that facilitates recognition of faculty endeavors. The new definition of scholarship and research is tailored to AUA's needs and realities and its commitment to academic excellence as a model of American education:

Criteria for Appointment and Promotion

- **Excellence in teaching**, whether in the lecture hall, at a seminar, at the laboratory bench or in the field. Excellence in teaching connotes an objective, current, accurate, and balanced command of the field being taught, effectiveness in communicating its essence, and the willingness to interact and exchange views with students at the highest levels of intellectual integrity. Promotion committees may seek and evaluate
- **Creative scholarship** is the substantive contribution of new knowledge or significant new applications of knowledge: (1) scholarship of discovery, (2) scholarship of integration, (3) scholarship of application, and (4) scholarship of teaching. This definition aims to value a broad spectrum of scholarship which allows for AUA to tailor recognition of faculty activities and efforts to match the unique qualities and strengths of the university and each academic program. Scholarship of discovery means the traditional concept of scholarship vetted in peer reviewed journals and monographs. Scholarship of integration values cross-disciplinary work which produces or presents new, creative and innovative perspectives, including textbooks and reference works. Scholarship of application values the application of theory to practice in a specific or novel context which results in a new, creative and innovative understanding of universal knowledge. Scholarship of teaching values creative and innovative pedagogical approaches to curriculum, instruction and assessment including curriculum design or other activities beyond routine teaching responsibilities.
- **University and Public Service:** (1) active and effective participation in various administrative, advisory, and other responsibilities within the university and (2) excellence in discharging professional service responsibilities in the community, to professional and other organizations, and to the international community, as well as the faculty member's national and international reputation as a professional and scholar.

from *AUA Faculty Handbook, new Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles (2011)*.

Next steps

1. **Implement the new policy** on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles, to be undertaken by the Administration in the 2011-2012 academic year.
2. **Issue multi-year contracts** based on the new policy during the course of the 2012 academic year, to be undertaken by the Administration.
3. **Organize annual recognition awards for outstanding research**, including student research, as part of the effort to promote research and scholarship on campus, to be undertaken in 2012-2013 by the Faculty Senate in the coming academic year in cooperation with the Administration, perhaps considering bonuses or other financial support for outstanding research.

3. Educational Effective Review Update

The outcomes of the EER are an integral part of the outcomes AUA is setting for itself for the CPR as listed below:

Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning

(CFRs 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.2b, 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 2.7, 2.10, 2.12, 2.13, 3.4 3.8, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8)

- 1) The **Student Learning Committee will be institutionalized** and be **an integral part** of teaching, curriculum review, and academic program review.
- 2) The faculty, including visiting faculty, will **integrate the assessment of student learning** on a regular basis in teaching.
- 3) The faculty of the academic programs will **use the results of the ongoing assessment of student learning** to improve teaching, courses and the curriculum in order to meet the mission of the University.

Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars

(CFRs 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6, 1.7, 2.2b, 2.8, 2.9, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.6, 3.10, 3.11, 4.2)

- 1) There will be a **broad understanding and consensus** among faculty, students, and researchers on what constitutes research and scholarship as a community of scholars at AUA.
- 2) The **standards for research and scholarship will be applied in the evaluation** of faculty and research staff.
- 3) There will be **more faculty and student collaboration** on applied and theoretical research and scholarship.
- 4) **More core and full-time faculty** will be in place to support teaching, research and scholarship.

From AUA IP, May 14, 2010

Since the submission of the IP, there have been several important changes at AUA. The university engaged in its most comprehensive and inclusive strategic planning process, involving administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni and external stakeholders in an iterative, multichannel process over a year and a half, with professional analysis and assistance from McKinsey & Co., Brakeley Briscoe, and a professional moderator/process technician. The resulting strategic plan through 2017 calls for diversification and expansion of degrees, faculty and income sources (CFRs 1.1, 4.2, 4.3).

Undergraduate education will start in the Fall 2013, pending WASC approval of the three proposed majors. In preparation for expansion, the university engaged McKinsey & Co., and conducted its own specially designed market surveys and focus groups to determine the demand for American education in Armenia and the region and choice of undergraduate majors. The process examined the scalability of the university's structure for the proposed expansion, administrative overhead, diversifying and expanding its income streams and fund-raising/donor base to promote university financial stability. It also reviewed all policies and handbooks and identified a number that are in need of revision to accommodate expansion or in need of general

updating to address recommendations from program self-studies and changes in international and local standards and needs.

One measure that is already being implemented is streamlining of the university's academic program administration through consolidation of programs into fewer colleges/schools to reduce administrative overhead and foster synergies between academic faculties. In anticipation of these changes, as well as the appointment of a new Provost and deans, the CPR schedule for the Fall 2011 has been extended. Research for policies and student learning assessment has proceeded apace; however, final policy formulation and implementation has been postponed, pending the new academic structure and leadership.

Over the past 18 months, in preparation for reaffirmation of accreditation, AUA has inventoried, assessed and augmented its capacity to achieve its mission in an educationally effective manner focusing on its IP themes:

- Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning
- Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars

This effort began with the development of the IP and intensified since its acceptance by WASC, with the formation of six committees to supplement standing university bodies such as the Faculty Senate, Board of Deans and Curriculum Committee. These brought together administration, faculty, staff and students, and drew on alumni and external stakeholders: (1) Student Learning Committee (SLC), (2) Research and Scholarship Task Force (RSTF), (3) Undergraduate Task Force (UGTF), (4) Strategic Planning Group, (5) WASC Steering Committee, (6) CPR Working Group.

For Theme 1, the SLC was established, a new Student Learning Assessment Plan for 2011-12, 2012-13 was adopted, staff-support for SLA was reinforced with two educational specialists joining the IRO and accreditation effort, revisions of the Self-Study, Audit Guidelines and Student Learning Assessment Manual are underway, and work has begun on development of institutional objectives.

The SLC's first priority was to gather evidence and examine current student learning assessment practices across the academic programs. These resulted in a report and recommendations that were adopted by the CC and forwarded to the Board of Deans.

Concurrently, the SLC pursued training for faculty, guiding academic programs through their 2010 Student Learning Assessment, which focused on "closing the loop." Each program was encouraged to identify a recommended change from an earlier SLA and to design and conduct a new SLA to assess the effectiveness of the recommended change. This hands-on exercise facilitated sharing of in-house knowledge and expertise. To make institutional practice more accessible two faculty-assistance web-pages were established with reports and resources for the current cycle of Student Learning Assessments and the Academic Program Self-Studies. This facilitated engagement of more faculty in student learning assessment by making materials and examples of institutional best practice accessible across university programs.

As set forth in the IP, the SLC gave an update on its findings to the Board of Deans and has adopted a new SLA plan as well as a new Self-Study Cycle. The self-study cycle will start with academic programs that are not planning on undergraduate degrees for Fall 2013, after which there will be an integrated self-study cycle for graduate and undergraduate programs. Training

modules for the Fall 2011 SLA Workshops are posted on our web-site and available to faculty on and off campus. Because enough core faculty were on-campus, we held the training in person without videoconferencing. Moreover, by engaging an assessment trainer on campus throughout the academic year, sustained training, consultation and diffusion of knowledge and skills was secured for all faculty.

For Theme 2, several important steps have been taken in terms of personnel, processes and policy. The university appointed its first, full-time resident president in September 2010. Among his first initiatives was embarking on a new strategic planning process, a core feature of which was expansion and diversification of the university's academic offerings together with its faculty. With more than triple the courses on the roster and more than four times the number students by 2017, faculty will have more full-time career opportunities at AUA. Expansion and diversification of the faculty will also promote richer course offerings and research opportunities, with more specialties represented on the core faculty and less reliance on visiting and adjunct faculty.

With the change to academic year budgeting, AUA is moving toward multi-year contracts for core faculty. Based on our studies, most AUA core faculty have been with the university for more than 3 years and many, by virtue of being covered by the Armenian Labor Code, are de jure "permanent" employees. Some faculty, mostly from the US, are covered by US contracts, which are still annual contracts; however, the facts show that they too are largely permanent or recurrent employees, who, barring extraordinary circumstances, have made a career through AUA. Over the past 2 decades, the faculty pool of international Ph.D.s in Armenia or with ties to Armenia, has increased quite substantially, representing an opportunity to foster a larger core faculty at AUA.

An important aspect of cultivating a community of scholars is leadership. The university has moved toward resident deans, as noted in the IP and 2006 WASC action letter. At present, four out of six programs have resident deans while the other two with non-resident deans have resident associate deans as compared with 2006 when the university had only two resident deans. Deans have been evaluated within the context of their contracts and program self-studies. A more structured evaluation of deans is anticipated with the new college structure in 2012.

Throughout the fall and spring of 2010-2011, the Research and Scholarship Task Force, composed of faculty and research center staff, examined current research practices and patterns at AUA drawing on annual research center reports compiled by the VP of Research and Development, academic program self-studies, and focus groups with faculty, researchers and students. The RSTF also examined various models and definitions of research and scholarship and trends at similar institutions in the US and abroad, in order to formulate a definition of scholarship and research tailored to AUA's environment and mission. The new policy, based on a model developed by the Carnegie Corporation and successfully adopted and adapted by other WASC-accredited institutions, was proposed to the Faculty Senate, which approved it as a proposed amendment to the AUA Policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion, and Faculty Titles. The new policy has been presented and approved by the AUA Administration.

Taking into account the applied nature of research required in a transitional economy, the new definition better captures the real activity of our faculty and the university's impact. "Creative scholarship is the substantive contribution of new knowledge or significant new applications of

knowledge: (1) scholarship of discovery, (2) scholarship of integration, (3) scholarship of application, and (4) scholarship of teaching.” This definition is broader than the earlier definition which put most of the weight on refereed journal articles. The new definition also gives weight to university and public service, both of which are important components of AUA’s mission as a model of international best practice in Armenia.

Creative scholarship requires access to information, appropriately staffed projects, and support. Given its location in the world and the national development strategy in information technologies, AUA puts high priority on keeping up with the rapidly evolving field of information access and on-line resources. The AUA Research Centers provide infrastructure for research, the library resources, and ICT access. Evaluation of the library and information and communications are an integral part of the on-going academic program self-study process. Our studies to date show that research centers are generally well-equipped and that there is a high-level of access to on-line journals, databases, and e-brary materials, as well as interlibrary loan, through campus-wide and remotely, which provides essential support for faculty and student research. In addition, a planned library expansion (2012, by an American Schools and Hospitals Abroad grant) will increase the library’s holdings and space.

4. Conclusion

4.1 Overview

AUA is entering its third decade committed to

- improving student learning,
- fostering its community of scholars,
- building capacity, and
- increasing long-term financial stability

in order to fulfill its mission to provide “*teaching, research, and service programs that prepare students and enable faculty and researchers to address the needs of Armenia and the surrounding region for sustainable development, in a setting that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, integrity, scholarship, leadership, and service to society.*” As **one of the highest profile American activities in Armenia**, AUA is a **model for higher education** that is respected in Armenia and the region.

The university has fostered good **relations** with the **government**, other **higher learning** institutions, and the **private sector** as articulated by recent statements of the Prime Minister. **Alumni and student** exit surveys show **high satisfaction** with AUA education. Most students and alumni report that their AUA education helped them **secure jobs** and **advance their careers**. It is significant that at a time of contraction in the college-aged population, the university’s **reputation and value** for students is substantiated in the **large number of highly qualified applicants** (Attachment 26: 2011 Graduate Student Exit Survey) (*CFR 2.6*).

AUA has been **building for the future** for over two decades as it has matured into a resilient and robust organization replete with the **infrastructure, financial assets, processes, people, values, and capacity to evolve and grow**.

The university’s remarkable **physical plant** is unique in Armenia and the region. The opening of its new Paramaz Avedisian building in 2008 demonstrates the **long-term commitment of our donors**, signaling growth through a major investment in AUA’s future.

The university’s facilities include high-tech classrooms and seminar rooms, several auditoriums, video conference facility, five computer labs, six department suites accommodating 24 faculty, additional offices accommodating 80 faculty, a cafeteria, small café, student lounge, and library.

The university’s **Papazian Library, the largest English language open-stack library in the region**, has made over 40,000 volumes of books and 63,000 online journals and books available to students, faculty and researchers and is a World Bank repository (*CFR 2.13, 3.7*).

In addition, with the opening of its new building and renovation of its old facility, AUA **invested heavily in technology**. Resident faculty have computers in their offices, giving them access to internet, email, the University’s on-line library catalog, and other information resources (*CFR 2.13, 3.7*).

AUA is a **leader in Armenia in integrating technology in the classrooms**, enriching the student learning experience. Course materials and faculty research are posted to the web making it available to the public. Campus Wi-Fi, installed in the new building in 2008 and planned to be fully operational in the main building in the coming year, provides faculty, students and staff

with free internet access. Currently, the university is developing an integrated data management system to facilitate more efficient admissions, applications and students record keeping (to be launched in 2012).

One major challenge for any university is ensuring **long-term financial sustainability**. While AUA has cultivated a committed core of donors, it also recognizes the importance of securing resources during challenging economic times. One step in meeting this need is the current search for a Vice President of Advancement. Another is improving public relations and raising public awareness, especially among donors, of AUA's accomplishments through the newly establish E-Bulletin, more proactive public and government relations, and a web-site redesign. The planned **undergraduate program** will enhance the university's impact allowing AUA to take advantage of **economies of scale** and become more resilient by **diversifying its study body and offerings**. The university plans to review international recruitment, tuition and financial assistance programs and to make adjustments, as needed, in order to make AUA education accessible to more students in the region.

The appointment of the university's **first resident full-time president** has ensured constant on-site leadership. AUA's **core faculty** is one of the university's primary assets. AUA's core faculty makes it possible for the university to become more adept at its key role as a bridge between international best practices and local needs by assuring high standards while tailoring resources and materials to the needs of the 21st century classroom in Armenia and the region. Research conducted through AUA's **diverse research centers** is having an impact in Armenia and being recognized abroad. More can be done to find ways to share AUA's research and creative expertise with developing countries and to support faculty research efforts, including sabbaticals, teaching and administrative load adjustments, and financial and technical support.

The Curriculum Committee and Faculty Senate are part of the fabric of the university as consultative and decision-making bodies. The development of a **stable core of resident faculty** has ensured more in-depth involvement in program development, governance, and quality assurance. The university provides practical guidance for foreign faculty to adjust to living in Armenia and assure a smooth transition for both students and faculty.

The university's **longstanding relationship with the University of California**, the Board of Trustees and visiting scholars continues to be an asset for AUA's development. One highlight of this collaboration is a recent conference which brought over 80 researchers, scholars and educators to AUA to explore *Frontiers of Higher Education* (September 2011).

The university's recent **strategic planning process** exemplified AUA's **commitment to inclusiveness and transparency**. Inclusiveness is further demonstrated by the Faculty Senate chair's serving on the search committee for the new president; and faculty and alumni serving on other search committees including the current search for a permanent provost. In addition, the university's participatory and transparent budgeting cycle is faculty and academic program driven, even when cutbacks are inevitable. **Students have also been included in strategic planning and academic program reviews**, as have **alumni and external stakeholders**.

Academic program reviews (**self studies**) and **program audit processes** have been publicized throughout the university, and they are being discussed, referred to, and used for decision-making. **Annual student learning assessment workshops** have been inaugurated and the university is committed to training and supporting faculty to develop their knowledge and capacity in this field.

Routine **administrative policies and processes** are in place. They include a strategic planning process on a five-year cycle, annual financial audits and, with the appointment of a new President, a baseline legal audit and the retention of outside counsel. In 2011 AUA began offering **multi-year faculty contracts**. The university has adopted a policy for scheduling five year **reviews of the president and deans**. A **faculty evaluation process** has been in place since 2006 and is monitored by the deans and the provost (*CFRs 1.8, 3.1, 3.8, 3.9*).

The university's IRO acts as a repository for policies and reports, ensuring continuity even during leadership transitions. IRO data is collected from students, alumni, and current and potential employers, keeping the university in tune with market needs. To be addressed, especially as the university plans to move into undergraduate education, is **reviewing and updating data collection needs and processes** to secure adequate year-to-year comparisons (*CFR 2.10*).

As the university assesses expansion of international recruitment, foreign tuition, financial aid and the proposed undergraduate program, it has also demonstrated a commitment to continue **training and admissions support to rural areas** across Armenia, primarily through the resources of its **Turpanjian Rural Development Program**.

AUA continues to provide an **open forum for discussion of issues of public concern**. Academic programs and research centers organize conferences, seminars, and activities focusing on such issues as legal reform, health issues of smoking, and environmental conservation. Many of AUA's research centers are independently engaged in research that involves students and alumni. As the work of the centers and academic programs continue to expand and diversify, the university aims to develop closer relations with local universities and the private sector for **collaboration** and student **internships**.

AUA remains committed to **making the benefits of higher education accessible** throughout Armenia and the region. This commitment has been expressed in a number of ways: **need-blind admissions, scholarship programs for undergraduates, rural development programs, English classes for all ages, extension and certificate programs, mentorship programs for women**, many of which now serve thousands of students. While our degree programs remain the focus of our mission, **service and community responsibility** have been the driving force behind our accomplishments.

Consistent with the themes of its 2011-2017 strategic plan—diversification and expansion, AUA is a dynamic institution dedicated to excellence, service and a culture of readiness for opportunities and positive change. The 2012-2013 academic year will see a transition from quarters to semesters; 2013-2014, a restructuring of academic departments into colleges and the launch of an undergraduate program (pending WASC approval).

As the university plans for the February 2012 CPR site visit, it has also submitted a structural change proposal to add its first undergraduate degree (BS in Computational Sciences) and has submitted applications and is preparing proposals for three more Substantive Changes, two for additional undergraduate degrees and one for an off-site Masters in Economics, all to start in the Fall 2013.

The university looks forward to the upcoming site visit as an opportunity to share our strengths and discuss our challenges as we continue to develop capacity necessary to be a model of excellence for education in Armenia.

4.2 Current Status

The IP outlined the following specific outcomes for the CPR which have been completed on schedule by the Fall 2011. As shown in Attachment 27: Milestones, we have substantially met the all the milestones set out in the IP on schedule.

CPR Outcomes		Status
1.	A Student Learning Committee will be established as a subcommittee of the CC that will work in coordination with the Institutional Research and Assessment Office and the Provost.	Complete
2.	The Student Learning Committee will complete, in cooperation with the academic programs, an evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of the current processes for the assessment of student learning.	Complete
3.	Resources will be in place to strengthen the assessment of student learning. Two areas that have already been identified are faculty training and orientation to AUA's commitment to student learning and assessment for visiting faculty .	Complete
4.	Faculty and students will participate in shaping AUA standards for research and scholarship .	Complete
5.	The standards for research and scholarship for faculty will be defined and policies for hiring, retention, and promotion will be revised.	Complete
6.	Processes will be developed for the recognition of excellence in teaching and scholarship.	Recommendations complete; pending implementation
7.	Core faculty contracts will shift from one-year contracts to multiple-year status.	Planned for 2012.

4.3 Next Steps

<i>Theme 1: Institutionalizing the Assessment of Student Learning</i>	
1.	2011-2012, 2012-2013 Student Learning Assessment Plan for Graduate Programs
	In anticipation of the start of undergraduate degrees in the fall of 2013, the graduate programs adopted a Student Learning Assessment Plans for the 2011-2012 and 2012-2013 academic years with emphasis on closing the loop on a recommendation or shortcoming identified in earlier SLAs. Future SLA Plans will be integrated with the undergraduate SLA.
	For each of the next two years, Academic Programs will select one learning outcome for investigation, ideally one that was studied in the last cycle or identified as a problem area in its self-study to “close the loop” by verifying whether recommended changes have had the intended effect. To help build capacity, Academic Programs will be encouraged to employ both direct and indirect evidence methods in upcoming assessments, with in-house support from IRO and our Accreditation Director or consultants, depending upon resources and needs.
2.	Annual Student Learning Assessment Training – An in-house training was conducted in the Spring 2011 on assessment using indirect evidence in connection with the 2010 SLA. A more extensive training session was conducted in the Fall 2011, for which an outside trainer/consultant was engaged both for a workshop on using portfolios as direct evidence for assessment as well as individual consultation with faculty on their 2011 SLA.
3.	Revision of Self-Study Guidelines, Self-Study Audit Guidelines – To be undertaken by the CC at the conclusion of the current self-study cycle in 2011-12.
4.	Revision of Student Learning Assessment Manual – To be undertaken by the SLC in the Spring 2012.
5.	Integrated Data Collection and Reporting for Academic Program – Reviews and SLAs – Already underway, with the creation of the SLC and Self-Study web pages. To be expanded over the next academic year by the Provost and IRO in consultation with the Accreditation Director, SLC and CC.
6.	Revision of Student Course Evaluation Form to make it a more effective form of feedback for student learning assessment and improvement of the curriculum and teaching.
<i>Theme 2: Cultivating a Community of Scholars</i>	
1.	Implement the new policy on Appointment, Retention, Promotion and Faculty Titles – to be undertaken by the Administration in the 2011-2012 academic year.
2.	Issue multi-year contracts based on the new policy during the course of the 2012 fiscal year – to be undertaken by the Administration.
3.	Organize annual research recognition awards for outstanding research, including student research, as part of the effort to promote research and scholarship on campus, to be undertaken in 2012-2013 by the Faculty Senate in the coming academic year in cooperation with the Administration, perhaps granting bonuses other financial support for outstanding research.

5. Appendix: Institutional Response to Commission Action and Recommendations

The February 26, 2007, WASC Commission letter granting AUA initial accreditation in 2006 highlighted three institutional needs:

- hiring a full-time resident president
- performance review of the president
- multi-year faculty contracts

The first was addressed in September 2010, with the appointment of AUA's first full-time, resident president, Dr. Bruce Boghosian (Former Chair, Mathematics Department, Tufts University; PhD University of California, Davis). The second and third are currently in progress with the adoption of a new policy on appointment, retention, and promotions and a strategic plan calling for periodic evaluation of the president and administration.

The following are AUA's responses to the six major recommendations of the last visiting team were made by the EE team in 2006:

- Planning (CFRs 4.1, 4.2, 4.3). We believe that it is important for the leadership of AUA to operationalize the Strategic Plan by (1) articulating it with the other planning documents (that is, the Development Plan, the Enrollment Management Plan, the Plan for Regional Recruitment of Students, and the Strategic Fiscal Plan) to insure agreement and consistency among these documents, and (2) building timelines, assignment of responsibility, and benchmarks for determining success in each of these important templates for action. In addition, the budget implications of the AUA Assessment Plan and Guidelines should be considered in future budgetary planning.
 - ✓ *Starting in 2009 with the McKinsey Report commissioned by the Board of Trustees, AUA embarked on a thorough, comprehensive evidence-based strategic planning process that embraced internal and external stakeholders and addressed all the major aspects of the university's operations. Recurring themes of expansion and diversification are reflected in the 2011-2017 Strategic Plan which calls for the university to launch its first undergraduate degrees in the fall of 2013, significantly expand its faculty and diversify and expand and diversify its income sources and donor base.*
- Fiscal Stability (CFR 3.5). Given the fragile fiscal condition of the University, continued diligence in financial management, especially in building net tuition revenue, gifts and grants, and careful monitoring of expenses articulated with strategic objectives, will take on-going and consistent attention on the part of the Board and institutional leadership.
 - ✓ *With the appointment of its new president, AUA has undertaken a comprehensive reevaluation of its financial conditions and fundraising abilities on the basis of the Brakeley-Briscoe report calling for the appointment of a Vice President of Advancement to lead the university's fundraising, public relations, and development efforts. The search is underway. In the meantime, the 2011-2017 Strategic Plan has identified donor base, income diversification and a robust*

capital campaign for AUA's 25th anniversary (2016-2017) as essential for the university's sustainability. It has also called for an analysis of differential tuition by field of study and possible adjustment of international tuition to assure that AUA is competitive. AUA continues to enjoy the support a number of committed major donors who have helped see the university through the global financial crisis and are broadly supportive of its expansion plans. It also has a large and maturing alumni and a respected place in the market and business community in Armenia and the region, which represent potential financial support for the university, if properly cultivated.

- Enrollment Management (CFRs 4.1, 4.2). We wish to highlight the crucial importance to the institution, at all levels and among all constituencies, of implementing the most important elements of the Enrollment Management Plan. We also support the need for implementing the audit that is suggested in the Enrollment Management Plan as a first step in determining student needs and the services that will be required to meet them.
 - ✓ *In order to coincide with the opening of the university's new facility, the Paramaz Avedisian Building, AUA instituted annual recruitment planning in 2006 which has significantly increased both applicants and admitted students. Key to the recruitment effort have been monthly coordination meetings between admissions staff, faculty and administration to organize open houses and enhance recruitment presentations in Armenia's regions and abroad. AUA continues to reach out to alumni, some of whom reside abroad, for recruitment assistance. While the university-age applicant pool is contracting in Armenia, AUA continues to maintain its enrollment levels and in some fields expand its market share.*

- On-Site Leadership (CFRs 3.8, 3.10). Providing stable full-time, permanent leadership resident in Yerevan will be crucial to the continued development of the institution. This is the single item from the past review that has not been implemented. We are aware of the status of this matter but emphasize once again its importance and restate the critical importance of bringing the matter to closure.
 - ✓ *As noted above, AUA's first full-time, resident president was appointed in September 2010. Since initial accreditation, the number of resident deans has increased from two to four (out of a total of six). The remaining two academic programs have long term non-resident deans as well as experienced resident associate deans.*

- Faculty Development (CFRs 3.3, 3.4). As faculty governance has developed, and because faculty continue to fulfill multiple roles within the institution, the need to invest in faculty development has increased dramatically. In planning these investments, it is important that AUA balance support for traditional scholarship with faculty development in areas such as assessment and pedagogy, thus aligning the investment to institutional needs and supporting the core faculty in the fulfillment of its multiple roles.
 - ✓ *AUA has addressed this and the following recommendation in tandem. The university continues to invest in its faculty, particularly junior faculty, involvement*

in research and conferences. However, due to the size of the institution, governance bodies often require senior faculty to take on multiple roles, which is often less than optimal both from the faculty's and the institution's point of view. Sabbaticals reduced teaching and administrative loads and other forms of technical and financial support are being explored as options to address faculty development needs.

- Student Learning Assessment (CFRs 1.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.4). AUA now needs to define its assessment priorities so as to focus on the work that is most *useful and important* to the institution; refine its assessment processes and procedures; and develop a multi-year schedule that will make assessment work *sustainable*. The institution needs to support faculty in this effort by resourcing an institutional support structure that will provide leadership and professional development for this crucial effort.
 - ✓ *To provide support and to help make student learning assessment more relevant, manageable and efficient, special trainings and workshops have been organized for faculty. In addition, to foster the institutionalization of these processes, more guidelines, resources and manuals have been developed and are being tailored to AUA's specific needs with the help of a long-term resident education consultant. The formation of the Student Learning Committee and an online repository of SLA materials has facilitated monitoring and helped promote uniformity of practice as well as sharing of expertise and best practices. With the completion of the prior 5-year cycle of academic program reviews (self-studies), the university has built institutional capacity and gained experience in program reviews. The process was largely conducted by the Faculty Senate Curriculum Committee and involved dozens of faculty. Drawing on this experience and the new WASC guidelines, the SLC and CC plan to streamline the guidelines for self-studies and self-study audits. The Student Learning Assessment Plans for 2011-12, 2012-13, which were recently proposed by the academic programs, will help keep student learning assessment on track for the graduate programs as the undergraduate programs come on line in the fall 2013. After that the university plans to have an integrated longer term plan that will involve more faculty as the faculty expands to handle the quadrupling of the student body between 2013 and 2017. Having a larger, resident faculty will be a challenge and an opportunity to build new capacity. One key factor will be the adequacy of AUA's assessment policies, training and culture, the groundwork for which has been laid.*