

100
AU **IS**
Years of Excellence

Excellence
Relevance
Innovation

Strategic Plan

2018-2022



AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF IRAQ, SULAIMANI



Excellence

To be the best in all we do



Relevance

To be a vital part of all we care about



Innovation

To succeed in a changing environment



The Way Forward

In 2007, the American University of Iraq, Sulaimani welcomed its inaugural class of ten students. Ten years later, more than 1,500 students pursue undergraduate degrees in Business Administration, Engineering, English and Journalism, Information Technology, and International Studies. The University also serves a broader learning community by offering graduate degrees in its Master of Business Administration program, and by offering English language proficiency through its Academic Preparatory Program. The University's Professional Development Institute serves hundreds of working adults with certificate programs in a diverse array of career-specific fields. University Institutes and Centers conduct research and programs that not only help address practical challenges in Iraq, but generate strategic alternatives for the region.

Universities everywhere are both agents of continuity and agents of change. Recognition of this paradox is central to the AUIS mission. Student learning at AUIS is based on fact and reason rather than on dictate and rote. Our students learn inside and outside the classroom; our graduates display not only critical thinking skills but leadership, consensus development, team building and personal integrity that are vitally needed in a contentious world. The University seeks to build bridges among students from different communities in the region, who use the understanding of how to reconcile conflicting points of view in their professional and community life.

Building upon a decade of growth and achievement, AUIS embarks on the next chapter in its story from a position of strength. To ensure continued excellence and relevance, AUIS conducted a comprehensive planning process overseen by a Strategic Planning Committee comprised of trustees, faculty, staff, students, and alumni. With frequent and substantive input from a broad range of constituencies and stakeholders, this committee has formulated the bold strategic vision described here. While the times are uncertain, the way forward is clear.

Sulaimani, Iraq
May 2018





Vision, Mission, and Core Values

Vision

The American University of Iraq, Sulaimani is a model for excellent, relevant and innovative higher education in the Middle East. It equips students for leadership roles, connects communities, and provides visionary and strategic direction for the region.

Mission

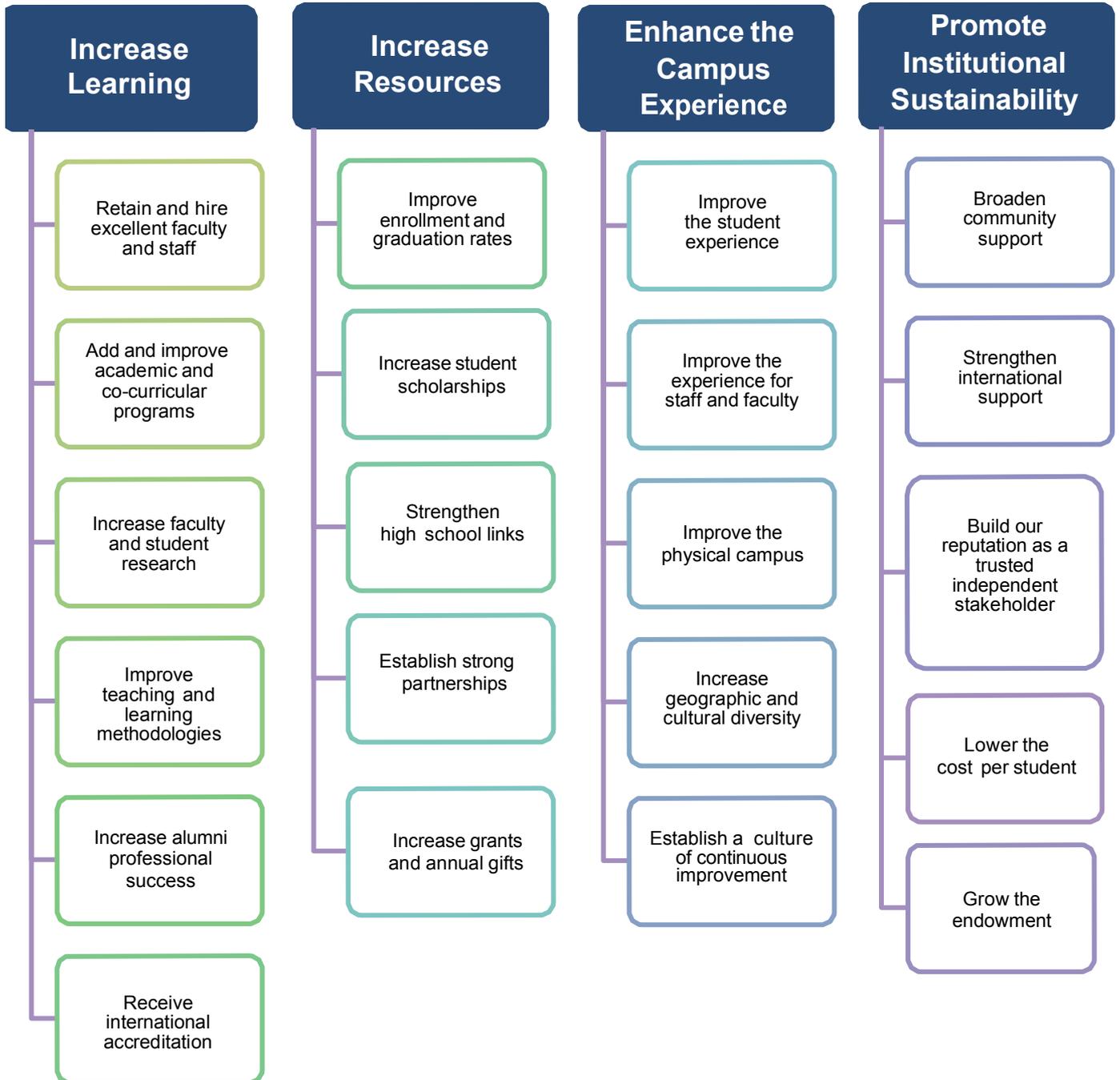
The University strives to educate men and women with the necessary knowledge and skills to serve as professional and national leaders and valued members of their communities. Rooted in the American liberal arts tradition, the University's academic and co-curricular programs prepare students for successful careers in a modern, pluralistic society and a global environment by emphasizing strength in critical thinking, the ability to communicate well, a strong work ethic, good citizenship, and personal integrity. This broad-based education, designed to develop mind, body and character, is achieved at the University through excellence in teaching, scholarship and student services.

Core Values

The core values of the University are respect for the truth, freedom of academic inquiry and expression, tolerance of conflicting beliefs, fairness and impartiality, and honorable personal and professional behavior. These values apply equally to all members of the University community including students, faculty, staff, administrators, visitors, and members of the Board of Trustees and advisory bodies. The University is, by design, an institution that is non-governmental, non-partisan, non-sectarian, independent, not-for-profit and guided by the highest ethical standards. It is committed to personal and academic integrity and the rule of law in all of its dealings with public officials and private interests. In administering its policies, the University does not discriminate on the basis of gender, age, race, ethnicity, religion, occupation, politics, or social or economic standing.



The AUIS Vision: Excellence, Relevance, and Innovation in Higher Education



AUIS will pursue its vision by undertaking twenty-one strategic tasks that address four strategic outcomes.

Strategic Outcomes and Tasks

AUIS will pursue its vision of excellence, relevance, and innovation in higher education by attaining four strategic outcomes: increased learning, increased resources, an enhanced campus experience and greater institutional sustainability.

To achieve these outcomes, the University will pursue twenty-one strategic tasks. During the term of the Strategic Plan, University committees will further define these tasks and annually monitor progress toward measurable objectives.

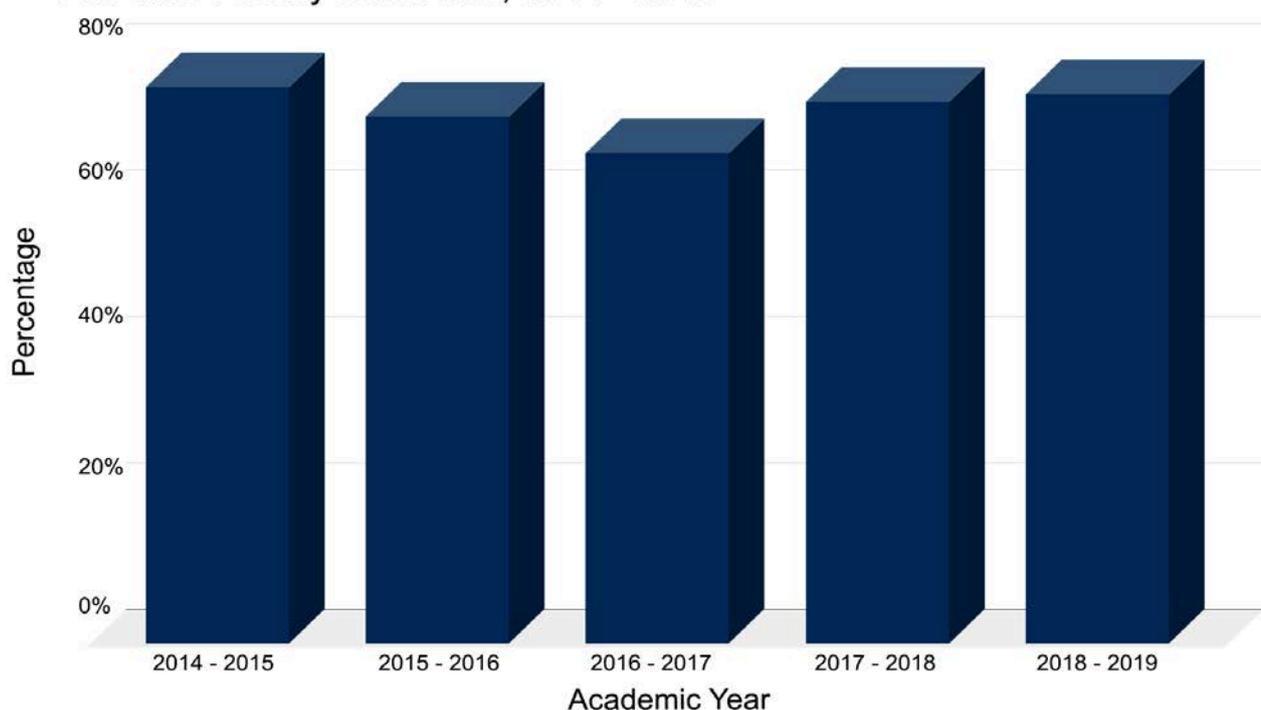
Increase Learning

First and foremost, the University is a place of learning. Six strategic tasks seek to increase learning through teaching, research, and co-curricular and experiential programs.

Retain and hire excellent faculty and staff

The University's experienced and dedicated faculty and staff form the centerpiece of its strategy to improve academic quality and learning impact. Among other teaching and research qualifications, AUIS faculty are expected to demonstrate a high degree of proficiency in written and spoken English and the ability to supervise student experiential learning in academic research or other activities. In recent years, political uncertainty, travel restrictions and the battle against ISIS (DAESH) have made it difficult for AUIS to recruit and retain faculty and staff who meet the University's high standards. Finding new ways to attract and keep the finest faculty and staff is of utmost importance.

Full-time Faculty with PhDs, 2014 - 2018



About 75% of AUIS full-time faculty have doctorate degrees.

Add and improve academic and co-curricular programs

The relatively high cost of an AUIS education must continue to be matched by a high quality educational experience. The University’s Core Curriculum is designed to provide all AUIS graduates with thinking skills and perspectives that enable them to cope with the rapidly-changing 21st century environment. Co-curricular activities help to develop leadership, organization, and team-building skills vital to careers in all disciplines. New and updated academic majors are vital to increasing student enrollment and to alumni success. New graduate programs will assist in attracting faculty and in conducting research. Links between AUIS research centers such as the Institute of Regional and International Studies (IRIS) and Center for Gender and Development Studies (CGDS) and the academic departments will be strengthened.



Increase faculty and student research

Academic research, particularly when undertaken by students, is a form of experiential learning with profound advantages to education. Expanding the opportunities to conduct academic research will assist in attracting and retaining exceptional faculty and academically talented students as well as in attracting resources from inside and outside the region.

Improve teaching and learning methodologies

Teaching and learning are the very heart of a university, yet universities everywhere spend much more time deciding what is taught and learned than on how to teach, and how to learn. As reflected in steadily rising costs, the innovations and productivity gains that have transformed other industries have too often bypassed higher education. While brilliant teachers inspire and motivate their students to learn, transmission of their techniques and insights to other classrooms and learning environments is rarely certain.

The University will undertake two key initiatives to address this challenge. First, AUIS will create new systems to identify, communicate, and implement best practices. Students and faculty will have more information on ways to improve teaching and learning. Second, the University will explore innovative approaches, some based on the use of new technologies, to improve student learning while maintaining or decreasing the cost per student.

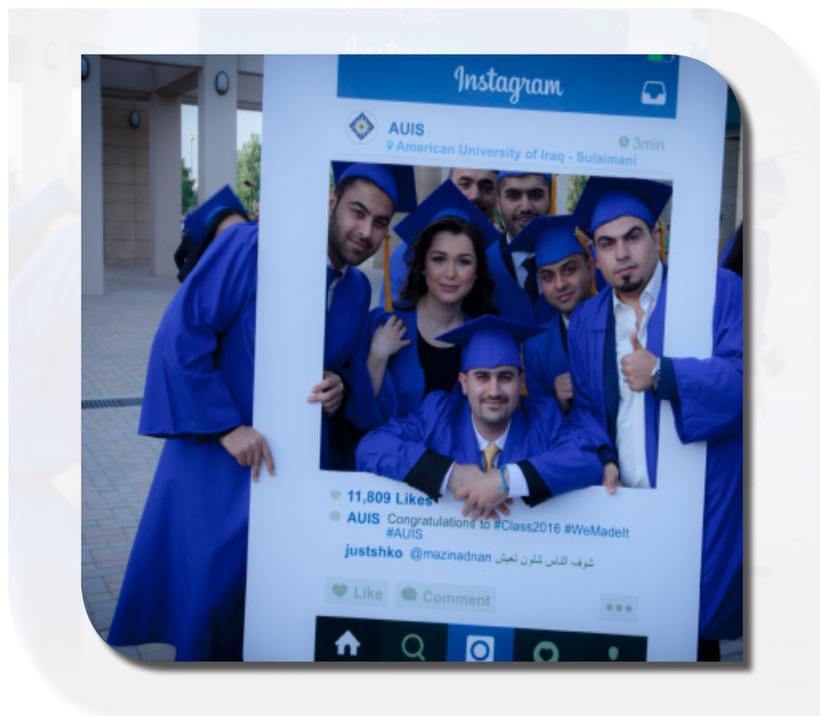


Increase alumni professional success

An important outcome of higher education is satisfaction of alumni with their subsequent careers and quality of life. Has their education prepared them for rewarding, satisfying lives of their choosing? While the answer may depend largely on social and political circumstances outside the control of the University or its alumni, the feedback that the University's graduates can provide is invaluable in the University's academic planning. Successful alumni are also excellent sources of referrals for new students, potential employers of student interns, and benefactors of University programs.

Receive international accreditation

AUIS is recognized by the Ministries of Higher Education and Scientific Research in Baghdad and Erbil. It is the only university in Iraq to receive U.S. program accreditation, from the Commission on English Language Accreditation (CEA). International accreditation, especially U.S. regional accreditation, would help to ensure that the University follows best practices in its administrative and academic procedures, and provides an external validation of the University's programs that is important to AUIS alumni pursuing graduate study or employment.



80% of AUIS alumni are employed or in graduate school.

Increase Resources

Increasing available resources is essential for AUIS to enhance its academic and co-curricular programs, maintain high academic standards and improve student learning outcomes. During the next five years the University will seek to strengthen each of the four traditional pillars of support for not-for-profit universities – tuition revenue, gifts, government research funding, and endowment income. The University will also endeavor to reduce the cost of its education by adopting innovative teaching and learning methodologies, and to leverage its resources through partnership and collaboration.



More than 95% of AUIS undergraduates receive their degree.

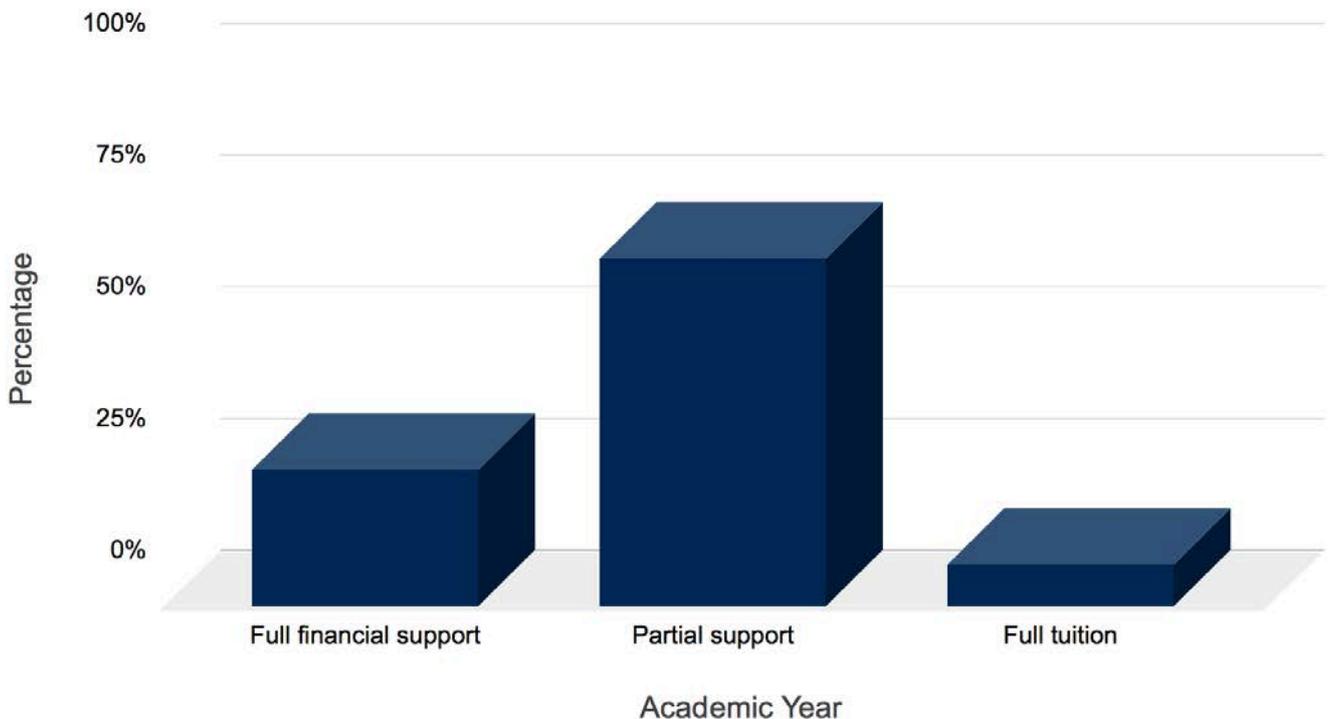
Improve enrollment and graduation rates

Student enrollment provides essential confirmation that the University's vision and mission match the needs of its stakeholders. Graduation rates indicate not only how well-prepared students are when they enter the University, but how well the University helps them to adapt to a demanding academic and social environment. High enrollment, and high graduation rates, both indicate that the University is making effective use of available tuition revenue.

Increase student scholarships

More than 90% of AUIS students receive financial assistance, either from University scholarships based on their Baccalaureate scores or from scholarships from the Kurdistan Regional Government, other governments, and private donors. Scholarships provide sponsors with the ability to target their assistance to the students they most want to help, and provide the University with an essential source of tuition funding. Increasing the range and number of student scholarships is therefore of high priority, particularly when scholarship awards can be based on an accurate determination of financial need.

Student Tuition Categories, 2017 - 2018



More than 90% of AUIS students receive financial assistance.

Strengthen high school links

Students at high schools who experience a window to education at AUIS before they graduate are more likely to enroll at AUIS upon graduation. AUIS can create such “windows” through training of high school teachers in the English language, teaching methodologies, and co-curricular supervision; and by arranging summer programs and campus visits for the students themselves. The University might also support the creation of an independent American high school on or near the AUIS campus.

Establish strong partnerships

Forming and strengthening partnerships with universities, corporations, government agencies and other institutions and individuals offers a wide range of benefits to the AUIS community. Such partnerships provide an excellent way of connecting faculty, students and staff with opportunities and resources outside the campus, and offer the potential of leveraging the University's strengths to provide rapid results. The University's informal partnership with Stanford University in law, for example, was essential in the recent creation of a law minor at AUIS.

Increase grants and gifts

Not-for-profit universities like AUIS depend on grants and gifts to supplement tuition revenues, allowing bright students to attend who otherwise would be unable to afford the costs of private higher education. Grants and gifts thus help the University to expand the reach of its programs to a broader range of talented students, and allow donors to support new research directions and other programs at the University, as well as communities of interest.





Enhance the campus experience

AUIS has a beautiful, well-maintained campus that is a source of inspiration and strength for its students, faculty, visitors and staff. As the University grows, it needs to improve current programs and facilities, and add new programs and facilities, to augment this tremendous asset.

Improve the student experience

AUIS is unique in Iraq for its focus on student-centered learning, particularly in “soft” skills such as leadership, teamwork, and communication. Both in the University’s academic curriculum, and in co-curricular activities supervised by the Student Services Department that include student clubs, community service, and intramural athletics, the priority is to create a first-rate, relevant and innovative set of experiences that prepare AUIS graduates to be effective leaders in their professions and in their communities.

Improve the experience for staff and faculty

Providing an interesting and fulfilling experience at AUIS and in Sulaimani will help to attract, retain and motivate our valued faculty and staff. Among other initiatives, the University should provide additional opportunities for professional development and advancement.

Improve the physical campus

As the University grows, it will need to add new buildings and other facilities in a way that enhances the attractiveness and utility of the physical campus.

Increase geographic and demographic diversity

Constructive interaction among people having different viewpoints and life experiences is a valuable, if not essential, element of modern liberal arts education. While gender, ethnicity and religion are integral components of such viewpoints and life experiences, the University encourages members of its community to go beyond the celebration of differences and to identify and nourish shared values and interests. By so doing AUIS seeks to create a community greater than the sum of its parts.

Establish a culture of continuous improvement

An institutional culture of continuous improvement can efficiently identify and exploit opportunities for innovation and positive change. In such a culture, which must have the strong support of the President and Board of Trustees, problem identification is seen not as criticism or blame but rather as a necessary step to finding a solution; suggestions for improvements, no matter how small or seemingly inconsequential, are invited from every member of the community; progress towards implementation of change is measured objectively and reported; and improvements are made permanent through communication and record-keeping. Such a culture helps to ensure the University's responsiveness to its constituents and stakeholders as well as the efficient use of University resources.



Promote Institutional Sustainability

Long years of war in Iraq and its Kurdistan Region have eroded many of the government, corporate, and community structures that stabilize a healthy society. AUIS seeks to move beyond a university's keystone roles of knowledge creation and generational knowledge transfer, to assist in reintegrating a society torn by bitter ethnic, sectarian, and political conflict. Expanding stakeholder relationships founded on trust and public benefit will help AUIS achieve this goal and thereby increase its sustainability as an institution of higher education.



Broaden community support

The strength of a university depends in large part on acceptance and support by the surrounding community. Such support can provide student internships, industry-generated faculty research, increased student enrollment, increased relevance of academic offerings and increased gift and grant support. Current AUIS activities include student-led and student-supported community projects; the Sulaimani Forum and IRIS policy events and research projects; the Iraq Leadership Fellows and the Leadership Academy for Development; and cultural activities offered by the Kashkul initiative and the Center for Gender and Development Studies.

Strengthen international support

Obtaining support and resources from outside the region helps to enhance the University's reputation, provide greater academic flexibility, and preserve academic independence. Examples of current international engagements include foreign participation at the Sulaimani Forum; collaboration with Stanford University on developing new legal programs at AUIS; and a student exchange program with Ca Foscari University in Italy.

Build our reputation as a trusted independent stakeholder

In its annual Sulaimani Forum, the IRIS Dialogues, and frequent seminars and workshops, AUIS routinely hosts spirited debates on topics of keen interest to the University and the broader community. Providing an impartial forum for frank discussion, the University helps regional stakeholders to explore potential solutions to major issues. AUIS does not, and must not, take sides in political, government, corporate, or social issues unrelated to its educational mission. Its success as a university depends upon its independence from government officials, political candidates, religious sects, interest groups and corporate interests.

The University's fairness and independence are therefore crucial to its success. In all aspects of its operations, from student admissions to student grading, from faculty and staff hiring to employee performance assessment, from research to program advancement, the University must display a standard of impartiality and transparency that elicits trust and support from all the communities it serves.

Lower the cost per student

AUIS is committed to providing an excellent education at the lowest possible price to our students and their families. As a not-for-profit university, with no owners and dedicated to the public benefit, our average cost per student exceeds our average tuition revenue per student, creating a subsidy that must be funded with outside gifts and grants. Because we rely on excellent faculty and staff and provide extensive extra-curricular activities and other student services, our average cost per student is high relative to other regional universities, as is our marginal cost per student (the net additional cost of educating one additional student). To assist in meeting its mission, the University seeks innovative ways to reduce costs while maintaining, and increasing, academic quality and student learning.

Grow the endowment

Income on a university's endowment supplements tuition income, annual gifts, and external research funding, helping to meet academic goals and support need-based student scholarships.

AUIS will seek to grow its current cash endowment of approximately \$4 million.



