

## **AUA Strategic Plan 2011-2017** **(with summaries of Department Strategic Plans)**

*This report is the culmination of a university-wide effort involving scores of meetings, individual submissions, and deliberations among internal and external stakeholders that started nearly two years ago with the McKinsey & Co strategic plan, commissioned by the AUA Board of Trustees. The materials from the Strategic Plan Mapping Session in July 2011 as well as individual submissions for this process and background papers are archived at the university's Office of Institutional Research. Key documents, including issue sheets, factsheets, deliberation minutes, process description and information about outside facilitation engaged for this process are available on the AUA website: <http://www.aua.am/accreditation/strategy2017.html>.*

### **Introduction**

Declaring Armenia's "intellectual capacity is our chief development resource,"<sup>1</sup> RA Prime Minister Tigran Sargsyan called on institutions of higher education to expand Armenia's capacity to create a knowledge-based society by assuring access to education at "highest international standards." He cited the American University of Armenia (AUA), with its US accreditation, as one of two universities which have led the way in this effort.

As a model for such education, AUA is uniquely positioned to provide internationally competitive educational opportunities for students from Armenia and its region. As it embarks on its third decade, the AUA plans to establish an undergraduate program, building on the solid foundation of its master's level graduate programs. Adding the undergraduate level to its established graduate programs, AUA will further its mission of providing "*teaching, research, and service programs that prepare students to address the needs of Armenia and the surrounding region for sustainable development in a setting that values and develops academic excellence, free inquiry, scholarship, leadership and service to society*" (AUA mission statement). By providing over 1200 undergraduate students with access to American-style higher education in Armenia, even as it continues its graduate program of 400 students, AUA aims to train a critical mass of young people with the knowledge and skills necessary to become globally competitive professionals and leaders in the development of Armenia and its region.

AUA was initially positioned primarily to complement, not compete, with existing educational programs in Armenia. In the past decade, other institutions started offering similar degrees, creating a more competitive milieu of convergence and competition. Almost two years ago, discussions on campus began on how to achieve financial sustainability and respond to the changing needs of higher education in Armenia and the region. This strategic plan is the culmination of those discussions.

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<sup>1</sup> Prime Minister's August 4, 2011 Address . <http://gov.am/en/news/item/5801/>; <http://gov.am/am/news/item/8962/>.

## **Vision**

The American University of Armenia aims to be a laboratory and model for the type of education that will guide and spur Armenia's development. Based on AUA deliberations and market studies over the past several years, a new vision for AUA has come into focus. This vision calls for an expansion and diversification of AUA's current 1) programming, 2) faculty and student body, and 3) financial support.

### *Expansion & Diversification of Programming*

By 2017, AUA aims to have approximately 1600 students, 1200 undergraduate and 400 graduate, enrolled in three or more undergraduate degrees and seven graduate programs. The university's current master's programs will continue to be centers of professional excellence and research aimed at (1) cultivating the technical expertise of professionals, (2) developing projects of national significance for Armenia's sustainable development, cultural, political and economic vitality, and (3) providing exemplary models of graduate education in Armenia. Building on the experience gained and infrastructure built for these master's programs, the undergraduate program will expand and diversify AUA's program and course offerings. Specifically, we intend to start with three undergraduate majors, each with two specialization tracks. These majors and tracks will be loosely aligned with our graduate programs and, hence, benefit from the accumulated experience and expertise.

### *Expansion & Diversification of Faculty and Students*

Through the creation of the undergraduate program, AUA will increase its core faculty nearly threefold. Faculty expertise will also become more diversified in order to meet the needs of various undergraduate programs as well as larger student body. To attract and maintain this larger scholarly community, the faculty's commitment to the university will need to be matched by the university's commitment to the faculty in terms of career track and benefits.

In addition to the expansion and diversification of the faculty, the student body will be transformed. Remaining true to its commitment to need-blind admissions, AUA will seek to recruit a more economically diversified student body, of which between 10% to 20% will be from abroad. Undergraduate studies will create new possibilities for junior exchange students, summer students, and more students from regions in and around Armenia, across the economic and social spectrum.

### *Expansion & Diversification of Financial Support*

By establishing the first American-style undergraduate program in Armenia, AUA will seek to tap a broader and more stable financial base by nearly doubling its endowment through attracting more donors from more countries, creating a wide range of levels of giving, and

having an active alumni giving program. AUA will also have a range of new sources of commercial income from research and university facilities. To support these efforts, the newly established Vice President of Advancement will take a leading role in promoting AUA both locally and internationally in order to attract students, scholars, and donors. Due to major construction projects completed during the past decade, the University is well prepared to accept a greater student body in terms of its physical plant and infrastructure.

This vision is the product of an unprecedented process of brainstorming, analysis, and deliberation drawing on the insights of AUA faculty, students, staff, and alumni as well as Armenian government officials, businesses, and NGOs. This report summarizes the way in which AUA will realize this vision while also building on its strengths, addressing its weaknesses, and seizing potential opportunities.

### **What sets AUA apart?**

Like most institutions, AUA was founded to add value to the relevant markets and communities it serves. Symbolic of its mission, AUA was established on September 21, 1991, the day Armenia broke from the USSR to become an independent nation. In the context in which AUA was founded, it had to be a part of the inherited Soviet higher education system, yet be apart from that system in certain essential ways. That tension emerged as a recurrent theme of AUA's strategic planning discussion. On the one hand, discussants focused on building and bolstering what sets AUA apart – namely, the added value AUA brings to Armenia by providing American-style higher education that is integrated into the global academic network. On the other, they stressed that AUA must strive for greater integration into the local educational milieu in order to achieve its mission in promoting economic and educational development in Armenia.

AUA was an early entrant into the post-Soviet region in 1991. The environment in which it operates has changed significantly since 1991:

- there are new international entrants into the higher education market in Armenia and the region (e.g., French, Slavonic, European Academy in Armenia as well as the planned Millennium University in Georgia, Moscow State University Yerevan branch);
- existing institutions have more resources and have begun adopting global standards (e.g., Bologna process in Armenian universities);
- there are more English-speaking students and faculty in Armenia;
- greater resources, better preparation, and increased access to information (scholarship programs such as Luys Fund, IREX, Muskie) have made study abroad programs more accessible to Armenian students;
- foreign degrees have become accessible and are considered by many to be more valuable than a domestic degree.

As a result, the differences in content and value are shrinking between AUA degrees and those of other universities in Armenia. In short, competition has increased, putting more pressure on AUA master's degree programs.

Nonetheless, AUA remains a good value proposition for most students: The AUA degree helps them advance their careers and contributes to Armenia's development. AUA is a zone of predictable fairness in Armenian higher education. At AUA, outcomes are based on merit. Furthermore, the public is aware of AUA's corruption-free environment. In surveys, students highly value the AUA experience for its American academic environment, transparency and fairness, from pre-admission through graduation.<sup>2</sup>

AUA has also been strongly committed to community and national development, filling gaps in Armenia's research and educational system. It has a solid track record of applied research in economic and public policy and engineering (e.g., health, law, human rights, earthquake engineering, renewable energy, cryptography, environmental and cultural heritage protection) tailored to Armenia's needs, such as the Turpanjian Rural Development Program (small loan program), Acopian Center for the Environment (Birds of Armenia, environmental conservation), and Digilib (Digital Library of Classical and Western Armenian literature).

### **Challenges to Realizing AUA's Mission**

As an institution established with a developmental mission, AUA's work is never done and its mission is forever only partially fulfilled as new goals appear on the horizon when old goals have been achieved. Starting with its first graduate programs in Engineering (Earthquake and Industrial Engineering) and Business and Management, AUA has been responsive to Armenia's evolving needs, adding degrees in Teaching of English as a Foreign Language, Political Science and International Affairs, Public Health and Law during its first decade as a graduate institution. The Computer and Information Science Program was added in 2001.

AUA has faced financial challenges in meeting the needs of an under-resourced environment. Providing international quality instruction at local tuition levels has resulted in a persistent structural budget deficit. Integration into both the local and global academic communities requires resources that have thus far been scarce. Since the last strategic plan, the 2008 financial crises resulted in cutbacks that forced the university to look inward and focus on reallocating resources. During this period, university enrollments rose nearly 50%, amplifying the structural deficit, while academic programs faced 10-15% budget cutbacks. Although the introduction of an undergraduate program is not intended to cover this deficit, it will reduce the per student subsidy substantially by spreading costs over a larger student body. A consensus has

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<sup>2</sup> Surveys, FG archived and on-line (IRO to provide specific references).

emerged that AUA's financial model must fundamentally change as the university plans through 2017.

To achieve its potential, AUA needs to communicate and collaborate more effectively with its external constituencies, potential students within and outside Armenia, other educational institutions, U.S. and Armenian governments, alumni, the Armenian diaspora, donors, employers, and civil society. This will require more faculty and financing as well as staff dedicated to these functions (particularly advancement, public relations, research, and fundraising), better use of online and e-resources, and recalibration of the Extension Program to assure that AUA's outreach arm effectively meets its needs. As a vital bridge between Armenia and the world, AUA has unrealized potential as a link to global academic and economic networks. As a meeting place for students and scholars from within and outside Armenia, AUA has the potential to become a more dynamic center of innovation and creativity that contributes more effectively to Armenia's development.

The appointment of its first full-time resident President in 2010 has spurred greater integration in the local and global milieu, as will the appointment of a Vice President for Advancement, scheduled for Fall 2011. The larger, resident faculty for the undergraduate program will also bring more global ties and capacity for local networking.

## **Background**

AUA continues to contribute directly and indirectly to Armenia's economic development and higher education system. Although a relatively small institution, AUA has had a unique impact on Armenia, preparing professionals fluent in English who are both rooted in Armenia's local reality and also attuned to global trends and standards. Each year AUA adds hundreds of graduates to Armenia's global-ready workforce. AUA's faculty and researchers foster Armenia's development through research, consultation, public service, innovation and global networking.

The opening of the Paramaz Avedissian Building (PAB) in 2009 increased AUA's physical capacity for a larger student body and more faculty, researchers, and scholars. Over the past three years, despite hardships caused by the global financial crisis, AUA's graduate enrollment has grown and leveled off at approximately 400 graduate students, roughly 150% of pre-2009 enrollment levels. Notwithstanding this substantial growth, the AUA community has come to a consensus that the university has the capacity and potential to do more and have a greater impact while also achieving financial sustainability.

Since AUA's founding, undergraduate education had been considered a potentially important aspect of AUA's mission; however, limited capacity prevented the creation of an undergraduate program. The completion of the PAB building has greatly added to AUA's capacity and spurred a broad discussion among internal and external stakeholders on how AUA can better achieve its mission. These discussions were informed by reports prepared by AUA's

Office of Institutional Research, focus groups (of potential students, parents of potential students, alumni), alumni and library patron surveys, and professional strategic planning by McKinsey & Co commissioned by the Board of Trustees, as well as extensive deliberation on campus.<sup>3</sup> These discussions resulted in a consensus that AUA should pursue an undergraduate program both to better achieve its mission and to attain financial security.

The introduction of an undergraduate program is not meant to detract or diminish the importance of the existing graduate programs, but to complement them. The graduate programs will continue to pursue their strategic plans for growth and improvement, with an emphasis on student diversity and stable enrollment as well as research and applied projects that promote Armenia's economic development and bolster the university's financial stability. The initial undergraduate programs will be in fields for which AUA already has graduate faculty. In light of the institutional loyalty that prevails in Armenia, the undergraduate program is likely to be a feeder for the graduate programs, creating a stable pool of well-prepared applicants who share AUA's values and culture. Undergraduate programs will also increase opportunities for graduate students to serve as teaching assistants and could in the future help support doctoral programs in some fields. Thus, the creation of an undergraduate program will likely lead to substantive improvements in AUA's graduate programs.

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<sup>3</sup> All these reports and data are available from the Office of Institutional Research. The McKinsey Report, prepared for the Board of Trustees in the fall of 2009 concluded that an integrated university with both undergraduate and doctoral programs was feasible and desirable based on their market research and analysis. Campus leadership (both academic and administrative) were involved in deliberations relating to this report, which was submitted in the spring of 2010, with certain conclusions placed in circulation on campus during the summer of 2010. As this period coincided with the search for a new AUA President, action was postponed until the fall of 2010. At December 2010 meeting, the Board of Deans decided to move forward with more detailed study of an undergraduate program. In the winter and spring of 2011, an Undergraduate Task Force (UGTF), with two subcommittees (financial model and curriculum) were formed and began deliberations and data collection and analysis. One of the first tasks was to corroborate and refine the McKinsey conclusions regarding market demand and pricing. An Alumni Survey was organized by the UGTF. Later in the spring, it was determined that further research was warranted, targeting high school students and their parents. Focus groups with English-speaking high school students and their parents were held in August and another survey was organized based on the AUA Library patron's list, which contains several thousand users of AUA's English language library collections, many of whom are parents or know potential undergraduate applicants.

McKinsey Report: Two Market Surveys, Nov. 2009 - Number of Respondents: 550  
AUA - Alumni Survey by UGTF - March 2011, Number of Respondents: 293  
AUA - AUA student Survey by UGTF - March 2011, Number of Respondents: 214  
AUA – Focus Group (FG) EEC, Quant School, High School Students and Parents - High School Students - August 2011, Number of Respondents: 24  
AUA - Library Patrons - Survey- August 2011 - Participants: 277

The undergraduate program will also help address some of the concerns raised by various stakeholders, such as financial sustainability, the need for a critical mass of resident faculty for both scholarly, teaching, and administrative functions, and lack of student diversity. With more students and degrees, the disproportionate costs of a administration for small institution would be spread over a larger student body, reducing per student costs and increasing faculty size. An undergraduate program would also create more opportunities to diverse students through exchange programs, which are more common at the undergraduate level.

A related but distinct goal is to transition from a quarter to a semester system. Such a transition will reduce the administrative costs associated with each cycle of registration, faculty hiring, and grade reporting. It would also bring AUA into sync with local and most foreign universities, facilitating student exchanges, particularly during the peak summer term, but also for junior year abroad programs.

Creating undergraduate programs in fields related to existing programs will also enable the university to build up its core of resident faculty and foster a community of scholars with the introduction of new policy on hiring, promotion and retention and multi-year contract, which are on the university's agenda for the fall of 2011.

A larger resident administration is also part of the preparation for expansion and includes the university's first resident President, who started during the Fall 2010, and a new Vice President for Operations, streamlining and consolidating administrative functions on campus to promote efficiency. In addition, a new Vice President for Advancement is scheduled to be hired in the US during the Fall of 2011 to direct outreach, public relations, promotion of the university, and fundraising, including a capital campaign for the AUA endowment for the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its first graduating class in 2017.

### **Milestones for Strategy2017<sup>4</sup>**

The strategic milestones for 2011-2017 include:

Oct. 2011	Substantive Change and first New Degree Proposals to WASC to inaugurate the undergraduate program
Nov. 2011	Capacity and Preparatory Review to WASC for Reaccreditation of the Graduate Programs and Substantive Change Proposal for Undergraduate
Feb 2012	WASC CPR Site Visit of the Graduate Program

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<sup>4</sup> Because the first graduating class from the proposed undergraduate class will be in 2017, this strategic plan covers 2011 through 2017.

March 2012	Proposal for additional bachelor's degrees to WASC
March 2012	Launch Capital Campaign for Endowment
July 2012	Educational Effectiveness Review to WASC for Reaccreditation
Oct. 2012	WASC EER Site Visit for Reaccreditation of the Graduate Program
Sept. 2013	First Undergraduate Class
2012-2015	Graduate Program Self-Study Cycle
May 2017	First graduation for Undergraduate Program
Sept 2017	25 <sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the First Graduating Class,

## **Some Specific Strategic Targets and Recommendations**

### **Students**

Making AUA's education accessible is paramount to both AUA's impact and mission. For this reason, increasing access to an AUA education through new programs (both undergraduate and graduate) and assuring access through need-blind admissions, scholarships, and financial aid are core goals. The proposition that "no qualified student should be denied an AUA education simply for inability to pay" has been repeatedly cited as a touchstone of the university's value system during the strategic planning process. AUA has succeeded in honoring and sustaining this ideal, introducing the first need-based financial assistance program, nearly 6 years ago.<sup>5</sup>

Because students are at the center of AUA's mission, demographic trends and university enrollment patterns are especially important for AUA's strategy from 2011 through 2017. A demographic dip is predicted for the coming years due to hardships of the post-Soviet transition, blockade, and war in the early 1990s, which will reduce the number of 18-24 year olds in Armenia for the next decade. Also Armenia's transition to a 12-year universal education system will leave a gap in the number of entering master's students in 2015. However, because of a growing pool of English-speaking high school graduates in Armenia, from which AUA draws most of its students, it is predicted that these demographic trends will have a minimal effect on AUA.

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<sup>5</sup> As noted during our strategic planning discussions, this is a high aspiration that even many far better endowed, longer established institutions have been unable to consistently attain. In many ways this puts AUA's developmental mission in the foreground, as this a principle-driven, rather than an economically optimal policy.

There was slight increase in the number of international students at AUA over the past decade, although the absolute numbers are too small for trend analysis, especially if diasporans and others already resident or tied to Armenia are excluded. A diverse, international student body that enriches the student experience, brings fresh perspectives in and out of class, and fulfills the university's educational mission of serving the region remains a goal for undergraduate and graduate programs. Although recruitment efforts increased over the past several years, international students continue to be few in number. One of AUA's goals for 2017 is to have a more robust, targeted recruitment and marketing effort, focusing on those students that are inclined to come to Armenia and AUA, in particular. Undergraduate programs, including junior year abroad and summer programs, may attract more international students because undergraduates are more disposed to foreign study as part of their degree programs than graduate students.

By 2015, AUA aims to participate more in intergovernmental exchanges such as those between Armenian universities and institutions in China, India and elsewhere. AUA also seeks greater foreign recognition of its degree programs by neighboring countries, such as Iran. Achieving both these goals will also help attract more international students.

#### Strategies to Increase Student Enrollment and Diversity:

- Design and implement better promotion of AUA's Tuition Assistance Program in time for the 2012 admissions (including multilingual web-pages and materials (English, Armenian, Russian, Farsi) to assure that the program is clearly understood by students, parents and teachers abroad;
- Streamline the admissions process, reduce barriers to admission, consolidate sources of admissions information (admissions cost rebates, subsidies for test fees, prep courses);
- Obtain international recognition for AUA degrees by foreign ministries of education (e.g., Iran);
- Evaluate the impact on international student enrollment of financial assistance for tuition, room and board
- Determine whether non-resident tuition is appropriate for the international market;
- Evaluate differential tuition for various programs (which may make some programs more accessible through tuition reduction), and implement them where justified,
- Foster Public-Private Partnerships through more engagement with the RA and US governments, private sector scholarship funds and sponsorship of courses and degrees; more internship and alumni involvement in securing scholarships/post-graduate employment.
- Develop more effective means for communication with international students, including revamping of the AUA website (ongoing) and its translation into

Russian and Armenian, and development of electronic and paper-based promotional materials.

## **Faculty**

Fostering a community of scholars is one of AUA's reaccreditation themes for WASC.<sup>6</sup> Having a critical mass of resident faculty was also identified as essential for the health of the institution during the strategic planning session and in our last accreditation review. A larger, more permanent community of scholars will be a natural outgrowth of the introduction of an undergraduate program. Care must be taken to assure synergies between undergraduate and graduate faculty selection as well as disciplinary and general education coverage in designing faculty positions for a balanced university.

Multi-year and longer-term contracts, which were called for in the 2006-7 WASC Accreditation Review, are on the agenda for Fall 2011. The University's Policy on Hiring, Promotion and Retention will need to be periodically reevaluated and modified as the university grows over the next six years.

## **Research**

As a master's degree-conferring institution, research is one of the core functions and missions of the university. Research is essential to training graduate students, developing a robust intellectual atmosphere, establishing ties with the global scholarly community, and ensuring that the university contributes to Armenia's development. However, because of the challenges of operating in a developing country and the fact that AUA does not confer doctorate degrees, research conducted in AUA has been mostly applied in nature. To address this issue and as part of the reaccreditation process, a new definition of research has been proposed that is based on the universal goals of research and scholarship but also tailored to the realities AUA faces.<sup>7</sup> The strategic planning discussions have generated a number of recommendations for

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<sup>6</sup> "Cultivating a community of scholars is a cumulative process that requires a critical mass of resident faculty and a supportive institution with long-term reciprocal commitments to each other. As the University grows into its third decade, there is a need to develop the University as a community of researchers and scholars, one that includes faculty, students, and researchers, and the need to foster more creativity throughout the University to successfully compete for students, faculty, and resources in a world of rapidly changing and continuously rising standards of educational excellence." Institutional Proposal (IP), p. 11 [http://www.aua.am/accreditation/inst\\_proposal.html](http://www.aua.am/accreditation/inst_proposal.html)

<sup>7</sup> 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

promoting research and strengthening AUA's seven research centers, all of which, except the Environmental Research Center, are associated with an academic program<sup>8</sup>:

- Incentivize research (improve mechanisms for augmenting salary through outside funding, promotion, overhead to centers);
- Establish a university-wide grants/contract office to coordinate and serve as an information clearinghouse, provide technical support, process grants (Vice Provost for Research);
- Review policies on research centers (restrict routine business consulting services and work involving liability);
- Increase core faculty to expand the institution's research potential and opportunities to engage students in research by 2015;
- Position AUA to act as or support longer-term projects with commercial potential, including incubation of products and companies, technology licensing and commercialization; develop a policy on royalties that encourages research leading to commercialization; promote partnerships with private institutions;
- Increase AUA's technical facilities for research (labs, research computing/computational capacity, software, experimental equipment);
- Develop policies to address conflicts of commitment for researchers who have projects outside the university.

### **Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach**

The need for improved relations with the public and alumni as well as improved communication within the university was a recurrent concern in strategic planning deliberations in a wide range of contexts, including financial sustainability, international student recruitment, public-private partnerships, and externally funded research. The consensus is that shortcomings in this sphere have hindered the university's development and will continue to impede the

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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. <http://md.aua.am/RSTF/> (log-in, password required); See also, Modern Language Association, 1996 Report, *Making Faculty Work Visible*. [http://www.mla.org/rep\\_facultyvis](http://www.mla.org/rep_facultyvis)

<sup>8</sup> Annual reports on Research Centers at AUA, prepared by the Vice President of Research and Development, are available from the Office of Institutional Research and on the AUA website

sustainability of AUA's current programs and plans for expansion. Hence, this cluster of interrelated functions must be treated as a high priority.

AUA's new president, Bruce Boghosian, has made communications a top priority and has commissioned a study by the Brakeley-Briscoe Fundraising & Management Consultants on university fund-raising and public relations. He has also announced the new position of Vice President of Advancement (VPA), which is to be filled by the end of 2011, for which the executive search firm of Paschal-Murray has been engaged. The VPA's function will be to restructure the university's relations with the public, donors, alumni and the RA and US governments. The Extension Program, which serves as the university's principal interface with the community, has recently undergone a self-study, and a range of recommendations tracking the strategic planning discussion have been made and await implementation; thus, it is unnecessary to repeat them here.<sup>9</sup> Key recommendations from the strategic planning discussions include:

- Appoint a Vice President of Advancement (already underway) to lead a proactive public relations effort (improving coordination of public relations and focusing more on developments in Yerevan, closer to action/news gathering, depending on media outlets and nature of audience) by 2012;
- Revamp the AUA website to make it more user-friendly and multilingual (English, Armenian, Russian, Farsi) (see also *Student* recommendations above);
- Start a periodic e-bulletin, newsletter to document and promote events and research at AUA as well as achievements of students and faculty to a large readership;
- Cultivate and reinforce alumni ties with the university, e.g., recognize alumni achievement, give AUA alumni life-time e-mail accounts; perhaps also initiate alumni guest lectures or networking events where students meet alumni
- Enhance AUA's ability to share its global knowledge in the Armenian educational system, foster more direct impact and interaction with other institutions of higher learning, e.g., professor-to-professor collaboration, joint projects;
- Develop a global network of Armenian and non-Armenian (e.g., former visiting professors) academics interested in AUA and use that network to promote academic collaborations, exchanges, faculty development and public relations;
- Assure capacity to promote AUA's competitive advantages.

## **Finances**

AUA suffers from a structural deficit that is the product of providing world-class education at local, Armenian tuition rates. AUA has been heavily reliant upon a relatively small number of large diasporan donations from the US to cover its structural deficit each year. The

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.aua.am/about/institutional\\_research.html](http://www.aua.am/about/institutional_research.html) (log-in, password required)

2008 global economic crisis has had both direct and indirect effects on AUA as well as Armenia, both of which largely depend on diasporan cash flows that were affected by the crisis.

Given inflation and currency fluctuations, the psychological threshold of AMD 1 million for annual tuition will have to be faced in the near future. Nevertheless, tuition income from resident students is not likely to close this deficit in the near future and tuition from non-resident students, which is closer to covering actual costs, is an insignificant source of revenue due to the low number of such students. A robust undergraduate exchange program, foreign recognition of the AUA degree and increased numbers of international students, and intergovernmental exchanges could boost revenue in the longer term; however, non-resident tuition is not projected to generate enough income to significantly defray the structural deficit by 2017 (first graduating undergraduate class). Although the undergraduate program will be designed to cover its incremental costs and will reduce the per-student subsidy, it cannot be expected to cover the university's overall structural deficit.

Income from endowments, donations, alumni, and research grants as well as rentals and passive income, research center income and commercialization of AUA projects remain the main sources of deficit funding. Each source of revenue must contribute more to covering the university's current structural deficit for its graduate program and overall operations.

An overarching goal and commitment is to assure access to an AUA education for all who are qualified, regardless of their ability to pay. Continued effective collections for the university's revolving student loan fund are essential to assure access for future students. Both endowed and donor directed scholarship programs are also an important resource that can help assure access to an AUA education.

*Targets:*

To design an undergraduate program that is revenue- and cost-neutral to the current operation of the university, identifying bridge funding as necessary to cover costs from the ramp up from the first admitted class in Fall 2013 to the fully enrolled undergraduate program in 2016-2017.

To increase income from the endowment, other commercial activities, and a more diversified donor base to cover the existing structural deficit by 2017.

The strategic planning effort resulted in a number of specific recommendations:

- Diversify the donor base (number of donors, size of donations, and geographic scope). Diasporan donations are currently concentrated in the US; however potential resources include wealthy individuals in Armenia, diasporan communities in places such as Russia and Europe, and significant beneficiaries of AUA's educational programs who are currently affiliated with large companies.

- Launch a capital campaign for AUA's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, with the goal of securing between \$25 and \$50 million for the endowment, which would generate enough income to cover most of the structural deficit;
- Reassess tuition levels as conditions change in Armenia;
- Study the impact of differential tuition (different tuition for different degrees based on the job prospects, competition, market for those degrees) and implement it if shown to be effective by 2013;
- Pursue foundation and government assistance, for example, U.S. Government funding for undergraduate education;
- Diversify certificate offerings, promote revenue-generating courses and instructional modules, on-site, off-site and on-line;
- Cultivate alumni giving, aiming for a relatively high participation by 2016, institutionalize alumni relations;
- Diversify and be more entrepreneurial about earned income (e.g. commercialization of IP, such as the digital library, database software developed in-house for student records and registration, other services) ;
- Select and implement recommendations from the 2011 Brakeley-Briscoe report;<sup>10</sup> *see also discussion under **Advancement** above.*

### **Institutional Capacity, Program Maintenance**

A key concern as the university contemplates a major expansion is institutional capacity. A physical capacity review was prepared by the Administration and aside from a few matters largely beyond the university's control (e.g., traffic and parking in the vicinity of the university),<sup>11</sup> classroom space and other public areas were deemed sufficient for the planned undergraduate expansion. Cafeteria capacity (currently 180 seats) will be significantly expanded by the current renovation plans with undergraduate demand in mind; however, lunch-time/course schedule coordination is still likely to be required to assure smooth function of the cafeteria.<sup>12</sup> Existing library expansion plans should be adequate for the expanded student body. Internet and communications capacity will need to be more specifically assessed and addressed, but expansion on the existing architecture was deemed feasible. Faculty workspace will need to be reallocated, with more faculty sharing offices. Administrative capacity, information management, oversight of academic programs, and quality control gave rise to a number of organizational concerns, most of which are either in the process of being addressed or are on the university's agenda as a result of the president's initiative or the regular academic program cycle.

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<sup>10</sup> Available through the Institutional Research Office.

<sup>11</sup> AUA is easily accessible by a variety of modes of public transportation and is walking distance from two metro stops.

<sup>12</sup> AUA is conveniently located near a number of restaurants and cafes, which can handle excess demand during peak hours.

The specific recommendations on institutional capacity that came out of the strategic planning process are as follows:

- Review organization chart in anticipation of expansion, assure scalability, introduce new positions: VP for Advancement, VP for Operations by 2012; Vice Provost for Research, probably a Dean of Undergraduate Studies, possibly a Student Recruitment Officer (or Dean of U-Grad Admissions) by 2013 (subject to funding); Chief Information Security Officer (explore); Consider a reorganization of academic units, possibly structured under a system of colleges, each housing departments offering graduate and undergraduate majors.
- Implement an integrated Information Management System that will bring student information, alumni, and basic faculty into a unified system by 2013 and clear the way for on-line applications, financial aid application, course registration, grade reporting, course and faculty evaluations, course management system, tuition payments.
- Enhance trust and morale via teambuilding, collaborative research and scholarly activity, and bolstering the university's consultative culture and decision-making (including students, staff); assure open communication and transparency;
- Introduce multiyear contracts (scheduled for Fall 2011) (including benefits, salary equity) to build morale, create a sense of community, and increase job satisfaction;
- Implement annual/regular performance evaluation mechanism for higher administration (including Deans and VPs) by 2012;
- Consider the pros and cons of quarter as opposed to semester systems and conversion to the semester system in the fall of 2012 (currently being considered by the Provost's Office in connection with the work of the Undergraduate Task Force); a conversion to the semester system is expected to reduce expenditures in a number of areas, including registration, course scheduling, and possibly faculty hiring and travel expenses.
- Assure that implementation of the Strategic Plan is monitored and evaluated, primarily through the self-study and audit processes of the academic programs;

### **Topics for Further Consideration, Research and Thought**

Like any constructive deliberative process, more ideas and issues for evaluation and investigation were generated than are possible to turn into specific targets at the present time. In some instances, the consensus was that more information was needed in order to make a recommendation; in others, a consensus had yet to emerge on the ripeness of the issue or the options that should be considered. The deliberation notes for the strategic discussions as well as comments and individual submissions are archived at the Institutional Research Office and

available for review. Most are also available at the AUA Strategy2017 webpage:  
<http://www.aua.am/accreditation/strategy2017.html>.

This strategy is not a fixed long-term plan. Rather, it consists of a series of guideposts and trajectories that will need adjustment over time. The strategic planning process is like a map of the university's course into the future. As the university proceeds in its journey, a better understanding of the terrain will emerge and the map as well as our path may need adjustment. In that spirit, the AUA Strategy2017 webpage, cited above, presents a range of ideas for the university community and leadership consideration.

As the institution approaches its destination, new destinations will no doubt appear on the horizon, warranting informed changes in course and crew. In short, this is a living document, not a static map, since the terrain itself is only partly knowable. What is important is to create the capacity to adapt as a group to changing circumstances and conditions. The process of which this document is but a summary is, in this sense, more important than the document itself, since it is both a demonstration of that adaptive capacity and a means of developing it. Below are some of the key points designated for further research:

- Inquire at foreign embassies (and also foreign universities and exchange programs) in Armenia and Armenian embassies abroad about means for international student recruitment;
- Develop closer collaboration with diasporan organizations and participation in diasporan-oriented events, e.g., Pan-Armenian Games; place ads in event books for diasporan youth organizations such as ACYO, AYF, AGBU-YP, ASAs, etc.);
- Conduct a professional study and investigation of the international student potential for AUA degrees, including evaluating the resources and methods necessary to do effective international student recruitment; investigate the possibility of engaging student recruitment agencies for selected countries;
- Explore hosting/participating in rotating master's programs offered by consortia of institutions in different countries, where students spend one term or more at AUA;
- Conduct further evaluation and consolidate data on needs of stakeholders (start with students (domestic and international), applicants and private sector);
- Identify desirable spheres and partners for collaboration and complementary activity, and modes of collaboration (emphasis on direct peer-to-peer collaboration) (CR), (e.g., universities, research institutes, collaboration with industrial associations and multinationals);
- Further cultivate joint academic and R&D programs with leading academic and research institutions, and the private sectors in Armenia and abroad;
- Select undergraduate majors/degrees. There is growing consensus on several clusters of disciplines: (1) business/economics/hospitality, (2) engineering/computer science/applied math/design, (3) English/communications. As this matter is part of

the Undergraduate Task Force's ongoing deliberative process, the materials from the discussions will be turned over to this process for further consideration.

- Evaluate the possibility of a five-year BA/MA degree. Following the expected launch and full assessment of an undergraduate program, determine the feasibility of a five year BA/MA degree.
- Full assessment of the undergraduate program as a feeder to the university's graduate program. In light of the tradition in Armenia of loyalty to one's undergraduate university, it will be important to collect data from the first and second graduating classes in this regard.
- Alumni and Employee/Graduate school surveys regarding the overall effectiveness of the undergraduate program in terms of programs, offered degrees, course selection and tracks.
- Mid stream assessments of the existing strategic plan as well as a new strategic planning process and timeline for three to five years beginning in 2017.
- New self study outline and timeline based on the updated WASC criteria and possibility of new division of schools.

**AUA Strategic Plan 2011-2017**  
**Summaries: Department /Unit Strategic Plans**

Below are summaries from the strategic plans of the following departments and units:

Department of English Programs  
College of Engineering  
School of Business Management  
College of Health Sciences  
Department of Law  
School of Political Science and International Affairs  
Extension  
Acopian Center for the Environment  
Library  
ICTC  
Administrative Services  
Public Relations  
Registrar  
Alumni and Career Development Office  
IRO  
Development

**Department of English Programs**

**Strengths:** DEP is one of AUA's oldest departments and a leader in English language pedagogy and proficiency assessment in Armenia. As Armenia's only institution of higher learning whose language of instruction is English, AUA has special expertise and a unique mission to promote excellence in the study of English. The DEP has been able to bring outstanding specialists to Armenia who not only taught graduate courses at AUA, but also contributed to language teaching and assessment methodology through conferences and training for colleagues at other universities and high school teachers. With core faculty including 2 PhDs and 3 experienced TEFL lecturers, DEP has a proven track record of growth and competence. The DEP's community outreach programs, providing experimental English classes for young learners now enroll more than 600 students.

**Challenges:** While retaining its reputation for excellence, the DEP faces more competition both locally and globally. At the MA TEFL and graduate certificate level, there have been some recent setbacks in recruitment attributable to a number of factors. The university's recent university-wide admissions tests have created a barrier for DEP students. High tuition continues to be a challenge. And, in preparation for an undergraduate program, there will be a need for additional faculty.

**Specific Targets:**

**Students.** Increase number of MA TEFL students to 20, provided that there is more tuition assistance or differential tuition. Attract more students from the region and outside of Armenia – reconsider international tuition level and financial assistance to international students.

**Faculty/Staff.** Diversification into literature and communications at undergraduate level, more diverse specialties for Graduate Courses. Secure more adjunct instructors and perhaps full-time faculty for the undergraduate writing courses. Larger faculty may facilitate upward expansion into doctoral programs

**Research.** EEC and other settings as a lab for applied linguistic research on Curriculum & Instruction for more effective teaching of English to Armenian learners. Provide Assistance to RA Government/Ministry of Education with more effective research on assessment.

**Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach.** Utilize excellence in training as opportunity to engage funders. Reengage large alumni base. Build on success of EEC – great example of community outreach and service. Gain recognition of program by neighboring countries (e.g., Iran)

**Finances and Resources.** Investigate possibility of differential tuition.

### **College of Engineering**

**Strengths:** As one of AUA’s founding programs, CoE has a relatively large, experienced, core faculty many of whom are engaged in research through the Engineering Research Center. It has satisfactory infrastructure and a collegial, corruption-free atmosphere that students and faculty find attractive. CoE also has a large network of visiting faculty and partners and collaborates with institutions, companies and agencies in the US. Because technology and science are high priorities for Armenia’s future, the CoE has an important role to play in both the country’s and university’s development. For these reasons, it is well-positioned to be among the first university programs to expand into undergraduate education, with a bachelor’s in Computational Science.

**Challenges:** From its inception, the CoE’s programs at the master’s level target were designed for non-traditional students, many of whom are making a transition from a different educational background and career. While the student profile has changed somewhat from the early years, teaching a diverse student body with disparate knowledge levels in the classroom remains a challenge. A perennial problem has been the uniqueness and lack of understanding of IESM in the local market, making recruitment more difficult for this degree. Limited resources for textbooks and small size do not permit gradations or more diversity in course offerings to accommodate the diversity of the student body. Because of the universality of skills and knowledge covered by its degrees, CoE has had a relatively large international student enrollment for AUA; however, most of them have been Armenian diasporans. Attracting a more diverse student body is a goal CoE aims to achieve in line with the university’s overall

recruitment effort. The introduction of an undergraduate program will present an opportunity and challenge for international recruitment. Alumni relations has also been good, but with a growing number of alumni, it is a challenge to keep them tied to the university and build a network for university support and collaboration on projects.

Although its facilities and labs are adequate for current needs, expanded research and a larger more diverse student body, as well as commercialization demands more robust facilities for incubation of business projects. The lack of a Ph.D. program is also an inherent limit on the kinds and variety of research that the CoE and ERC can support. To some extent, the expansion into undergraduate studies will address this by creating opportunities for teaching assistants and providing more opportunities for full-time employment as core faculty, which means a larger, more diverse community of scholars with more subdisciplinary specialties, enrich the graduate and undergraduate offerings and open new possibilities for fruitful multidisciplinary collaborative work.

With the introduction of undergraduate, there are opportunities to address these Challenges: Perhaps the greatest challenge is increase competition from local universities and the shrinking student pool in the coming years, which the university faces as a whole. CoE does not anticipate a problem, because job prospects are good for its graduates at the undergraduate and graduate levels and the pool of applicants with sufficient English proficiency is growing in Armenia overall. Growing numbers of qualified younger scholars and researchers have the potential to contribute to the university and become involved in university-affiliated research.

**Specific Targets:**

Students. Increase the number of international students.

Faculty. Develop an even more diverse and larger core faculty particularly.

Research. Upgrade and expand the research facilities, project incubation capacity, and collaborate work with private sector.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Reinforce alumni relations.

Finances and Resources. Armenia's and AUA's financial stability are a global concern. With some targeted external funding, CoE has come through budgetary contraction of the past couple of years relatively well. Pursue options to expand this.

**School of Business Management**

**Strengths:** The majority of MBA graduates stays in Armenia and serve as a link between Armenian companies and global markets by promoting international best practices. The AUA MBA is an excellent value for students and continues to enjoy great popularity among applicants.

**Challenges:** Although AUA's SBM is the oldest business school in Armenia, it is still a young entity with limited financial resources. In the competitive global market for business education, SBM competes for faculty members and financial resources with regional and global universities that have significantly more funds and resources. With its competitive tuition for local Armenian students and given the range and variety of comparably priced MBA programs outside of Armenia, SBM will need to position itself to attract more international students. In addition, SBM is in a period of transition as it gears up for the introduction of a BA in business. After 20 years of management by part-time deans, it is prepared to have a full-time resident dean, whose first priority will be to build a solid, core faculty of resident instructors and recurrent adjuncts.

**Specific Targets:**

**Students:** Review, develop and expand program. Reevaluate and redesign the MBA second year curriculum composed of advanced elective courses and three concentrations (Accounting, Finance and Marketing). Examine the necessity of aligning the MBA concentration in Finance with the requirements of Certified Financial Analyst (CFA) certification and the viability of a specialized Master's degree program in Finance and Banking. Evaluate and possibly introduce an Executive Education Certificate program. Introduction of BA in Business (2013), providing students with a high-quality business education based on solid liberal arts foundation. Design and possibly implement a Master's degree in Economics in partnership with the Central Bank of Armenia.

**Faculty. Enhance and Engage Faculty.** Increase the number of full time and recurring visiting faculty, building a core faculty with the quality and depth of skills necessary to meet SBM's future program expansion and diversification needs.

**Research. Reexamine and Recalibrate Research and Development Activities.** SBM will need to review and redefine CBRD's overall strategy and recalibrate CBRD's consulting undertakings. Resident SBM leadership and larger core faculty should assist in revitalizing the Center.

**Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach.** Expand and enhance student enrollment by increasing international recruitment and increasing the part time cohort. Expand alumni participation in networking and recruiting activities. Strengthen partnerships with the business community and other local and international stakeholders.

**Finances and Resources.** Reengaging the MBA alumni with SBM through lifelong learning and other initiatives. Partnering with the main employers of MBA graduates in view of establishment of chaired positions, student scholarships, and other naming opportunities. Utilizing CBRD as a platform to acquire grants and expand research.

**Institutional Capacity. Program Maintenance.** Explore establishing a two-level advisory board; a general board for oversight of SBM operations and several subordinate boards in functional areas of marketing, accounting, economics and finance.

### **College of Health Services**

**Strengths:** Over 80% of our graduates are working in Public Health in a variety of positions in government, academics, NGO's and private groups. Active engagement in health projects including tobacco control, ophthalmology, oral health, TB, Primary Health Care Reform, HIV, nutrition and women's health among others. Diverse staff. Program engages students in team and group work throughout the program. Strong research center: CHSR's studies have an ongoing influence in policymaking in the healthcare field of RA. Publications from student's theses are valued abroad. Affiliation with Johns Hopkins. Collaboration with NGOs and with government for Public Health projects

**Challenges:** Funding. Not enough focus on Armenia-oriented public health problems. Lack of management-oriented courses in the curriculum. Absence of practical obligatory internship and opportunity to take part in real projects. Low level of cooperation with government sector and MOH. Limited collaborative research with other western universities. Limited number of resident professors. Low number of international students. Inadequate salary for the jobs in the field of public health. Limited cooperation with YSMU students scheduling into the MPH program. Lack of governmental funding for projects and research. Geographical and political isolation. Strong cultural values, because of lack of diversity (Difficulty of western oriented culture implementation in Armenia in problem solving.

#### **Specific Targets:**

Students: Develop entrepreneurship and innovation in scholarship and education by increasing capacity of CHSR in developing and organizing continuing education courses for the medical community, particularly, for medical staff involved in primary healthcare and ophthalmic care; developing CHS and CHSR as a regional center for public health international continuing medical education courses; and further developing on-line courses for the regional community. Partner with schools of public health. Increase student recruitment with attention to diversity of professions and geographic origin. Expand offerings to provide elective courses/short term programs/practica. Provide students access to additional resources/enrichment opportunities.

Faculty. Enhance and support faculty. Further develop the staff of the Center for Health Services Research to provide resources, guidance and assistance to MPH students. Expand the use of CHSR staff and AUA alumni in teaching as guest lecturers, to share their experience in the field of PH with MPH students. Increase the CHSR staff and resident faculty participation in international professional conferences, training workshops, and other PH events. Continue to organize public seminars and workshops for medical professionals, PH practitioners, and NGO representatives in Armenia and regionally. Increase publication and dissemination of scientific material from CHS Faculty and CHSR staff in national and international peer-reviewed journals.

Alumni. Continue to Engage Alumni. Increase alumni participation in seminars for MPH students to share experiences of working on the master projects (e.g., developing proposals).

Research. Become a leader in the health development of Armenia and the region by creating and building upon Armenian and international network of public health specialists. Initiate local and regional PH programs; pursuing interdisciplinary and regional R&D projects. Expand regional visibility of program to market the program and to demonstrate its technical capabilities.

Finances and Resources. Develop opportunities for potential revenue stream by working toward Council on Education for Public Health (CEPH) accreditation in the United States. Recruit additional foreign students whose full tuition would offset moving to an every-year admission cycle. Expand resident faculty to facilitate every-year admission, increase elective offerings, and offer special conferences/short courses. Expand research/development projects to support increased numbers of resident faculty; identifying sources for supporting training programs/fellowships, etc.

### **Department of Law**

**Strengths:** AUA's Law Department is a unique resource for Armenia. Its American-style teaching method (Socratic method), English-language of instruction, emphasis on practitioner skills and precedent-based analysis and argumentation, make AUA attractive for students seeking career enhancement as well as those planning to continue their studies abroad. Most AUA LL.M. students are already working and make their careers in Armenia, promoting international best practices in private transactions as well as public interactions with state bodies. Because of its comparative law perspective, which takes Armenian law and practice into account, the AUA LL.M. is an excellent value for Armenian students, enhancing their career and further educational options, and continues to attract top students from Armenia's recent graduates and young professionals.

**Challenges:** Like most AUA programs, the AUA LL.M. is facing stiffer competition both within Armenia and globally. Some of the specific factors that have made these challenges greater are noted. The part-time format and Armenian-law perspective that make the AUA LL.M. practical and valuable for its current student body in tension with the kinds of offerings that would be attractive and practical for international students. The tuition is relatively high when compared to other International choices. While the two year part time program suits local students well, for international students, AUA's relatively high tuition is compounded by loss or reduction of income for 2 years. The AUA LL.M. has limited US Accreditation and due to the jurisdictional nature of law, the program focuses primarily on students from Armenia. Although U.S. accredited through WASC, AUA's LL.M. is not and cannot be American Bar Association accredited. In addition, the high cost of law professors couple with the relatively little opportunity for full-time academic career due to small size poses a unique challenge to the department. The Law Department has a top-heavy administration, with 2 international resident teaching, administrators. This has been a benefit to the university and the law department because it costs the department less than what it would cost to routinely brings in foreign law school faculty to teach. At the same time it limits options for developing cohort- and content-based tracks. Students complain about having too many courses with the same instructors, but this is the unavoidable consequence of the current model based on two resident teaching-administrators.

### **Specific Targets:**

**Students.** Our target of 25 students per year seems reasonable and attainable, although in 2015 there may be a dip in applicants, because there will be no graduates from LL.B. programs in Armenia, due to the extension of high school through 12<sup>th</sup> grade in 2011. By then, the Law Department will have a number of undergraduate courses, which should sustain it until 2016. Targeted international recruitment will be more feasible with more varied course offerings, which will permit students to concentrate on areas of law.

**Faculty/Staff.** Building on the core faculty developed during the past 5 years, the Law Department aims to have more full-time, resident faculty, who teach a mix of undergraduate and graduate courses.

**Research.** The Legal Resource Center is a public service that continues to make English-language legal materials available to students, faculty, practitioners and academics not only from AUA but also from other universities. In addition, its on-line resources, including the Citizens' Rights Guides, Arbitration Guide, and Armenian Law Review, which makes student master's papers and faculty research more widely accessible, are an asset that promotes the program and raises legal awareness in the community. However, the pressing need for applied research on how to bring Armenia's legal system, institutions, attitudes, and practices into line with international best practices is not being effectively addressed. Faculty and students, as well as alumni and external stakeholders, urge the LRC to be more proactive in the field of research and legal reform. To do so, we need to focus more time and resources research.

A first step in this direction is the appointment in the fall of 2011 of an LRC Programs Director who has the academic credentials and global academic ties in Europe and the US to build the research program and make AUA a forum for scholarly discussion and debate

**Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach.** For many donors, support for AUA is an investment in Armenia's future. Rule of law is widely recognized as essential for Armenia's development. The AUA Law Department counts three deputy ministers, a number of judges, prosecutors, NGO activists, and leading private practitioners among its alumni. The program is well-regarded and alumni often express their appreciation for the role that AUA played in their career advancement. In short, this good will and gratitude is ready to be tapped into as AUA prepares for its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2017 and the Law Program for its 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2013.

**Finances and Resources.** Law students already pay roughly double the tuition per credit as the rest of the university. Thus, there is already differential tuition at AUA. When the administration required further cuts and efficiencies, the class sizes were increased, so that in many instances net income per seat in the law department was quadruple that of other academic programs. On the other hand, these larger classes, which are still medium to small by the standards of most law school classes, was not well-received by students and some faculty, who prefer smaller, cohort-based classes and more specialty courses. By streamlining the Law Department's administration, it will be possible to address the financial restraints.

Institutional Capacity, Program Maintenance. As noted in the university's Strategy2017 report, in preparation for the next phase of the university's diversification and expansion in to undergraduate, streamlining and reorganization of academic program administration has to be on the agenda. For the Law Department, this means rethinking its top-heavy resident administrative structure, which is out of line and out of sync with the rest of the university

### **School of Political Science and International Affairs**

**Strengths:** The quality and substance of the courses offered and materials covered. The graduating students who are interested in making a difference in the development of Armenia. The name and quality of faculty who present courses in the program. Large alumni network, significant social and political research, leader in polling and public opinion research methodologies that have contributed to various international and national efforts to improve Armenian public policy. New resident faculty enabling the department to design and offer a new set of courses at the graduate and undergraduate level (general education courses) and revitalize and enhance existing courses. Historically motivated high-level student body. Well placed alumni who continue to contribute to Armenia.

**Challenges:** Insufficient core faculty to create and enhance a cohesive community of scholars and cover the full diversity of specialties and sub-disciplines in the field. Because core faculty are insufficient administrative burdens divert effort from scholarship and turnover imposes additional burdens to maintain continuity and institutional memory. Competition has increased in the Armenian market with at least one local university offering a competitive undergraduate program in political science. Two funding challenges exist: one for the program overall and one for faculty salaries.

#### **Specific Targets:**

**Students:** Aim to increase diversity of the student body through recruitment of more international students in line with university-wide goals. PSIA is well-positioned as a non-localized field with few pre-requisites for international as well as local students who wish to continue their studies abroad. Continue to enhance the opportunities for students to engage in the Turpanjian Center's research. As the university enters a new phase of undergraduate education, design and offer several new undergraduate general education courses providing a testing ground for the feasibility of an undergraduate program in political science.

**Faculty/Staff:** Increase the number of core faculty creating an engaged and cohesive community of scholars.

**Research:** As core faculty increases, engage in continued research in collaboration with domestic and international organizations. Develop a short and long term focus for the Turpanjian Center on particular development issues. As the university prepares to launch an undergraduate program, develop teaching assistant opportunities for graduates, providing additional supplemental materials for undergraduates and an opportunity to identify outstanding

undergraduates for continued study at the graduate level. With continuing European harmonization and integration, upcoming elections and democratization, and changes in Armenia's geopolitical surroundings AUA is well located for research.

**Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach:** Engage alumni to enhance the student experience and gather information about career/further education.

### **Extension Program**

**Strengths:** The Extension Program is well positioned to take advantage of the university's qualities, capabilities, synergies and linkages in providing training with major differentiators. Extension's portfolio and range of offerings. Long standing and solid experience in providing General English and TOEFL preparation courses for students seeking quality education. Customer Loyalty. Experienced Instructors; Clearly Identified Programs with dedicated and hardworking support team. Cooperation with MOE. Cisco Certified Regional Networking Academy; ETS Certified Test Administration Site; Microsoft Certified Information Technology Academy and Authorized Test Center for TOEFL iBT, LSAT, GRE, SAT, SAT Subject, with impeccable integrity in administration of tests. Established relationships with a number of key organizations in Armenia including Orange Telecom, Central Bank of Armenia, Ameriabank, VirageLogic and USAID Projects that relate to workforce capacity.

**Challenges:** One challenge has been effectively working with AUA's myriad academic and research departments to offer fulfilling courses. Lack of a core instructional staff instead depending heavily on contracted professionals which tend to be more expensive than permanent staff. Several logistical challenges include a broken telephone system which lacks voice-mail capability, the limited hours of the university's cashier office, fully coordinating use of classrooms and facilities in the Paramar Avedisian Building. Extension is also faced with growing competition in all walks of adult training, lifelong learning and continuing professional education in Armenia. In particular, English Language training competition is fierce. With lower overheads and smaller classroom sizes and competitive fees, these education centers are a real competitor. Some customer dissatisfaction due to larger class sizes, higher tuition fees, quality of our classrooms.

#### **Specific Targets:**

Students. Expand the range of topics that address English language learning. Some courses in particular that need developing and/or improving include: English for Legal Profession, English for Medical Profession, English for Banking and Finance, English for Tourism & Hospitality Industry, English on the Phone – or Telephone English, and American Ways – The Central Elements of American Culture.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Extension aims to expand existing and develop new partnerships. In particular, Extension will seek closer cooperation with the university's SBM and organizations outside the university, such as National Competitiveness

Foundation of Armenia, the Armenian Development Agency (ADA), and a number of USAID Programs, to expand offerings and address the skills development needs of Armenian businesses.

### **Acopian Center for the Environment**

**Strengths:** The ACE has positioned itself as a strong organization which utilizes western standards of methods of controlling the human impact on nature using accumulated long-term monitoring data and analysis of trends. Solid reputation. Existence within the AUA campus and availability of a modern building with necessary tools for educational work. Modest but stable financial resources. Consistency of work and reputation. Strong history of leading relevant seminars and conferences. The university's only multi disciplinary unit.

**Challenges:** Narrow range of educational product. Limited equipment. Limited managerial experience of leadership. Limited finances. New strategy toward sustainable management of natural resources.

#### **Specific Targets:**

Students. Creation of topical products. The preconditions for topicality are based on (1) analysis of global trends in environmental field; (2) analysis of local market of potential employers and students. Strengthening of the educational base by topical research. Developing a partnership with US universities (UC Davis, UC Riverside, and UC Berkeley) to offer a new impulse for the students' enrollment.

Faculty/Staff. Increase of the number of qualified faculty and scholars to cover the expansion of educational programs. Provide existing faculty with the opportunity to develop competencies within partner universities in order to replace some visiting faculty.

Research. Engage in several new projects: Ecosystem Study, Rational Use of Ecosystems, Study of Genetic Diversity of Flora and Fauna.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Develop content for and design new website with focus on potential donors, partners and applicants. Increase number of scientific articles in peer-reviewed magazines as well as popular articles in non-sectoral magazines. Research possibility of developing ecoclubs in rural schools.

Finances and Resources . Research Grants and contracts to leverage endowment.

Institutional Capacity, Program Maintenance. Optimization of existing vehicles (2013). Equipping the genetic laboratory with genetic study equipment (including sequencing and PCR machines ( 2012). Equipping two new laboratories with soil and water analysis equipment (2012). Renovation of field equipment (2012)

### **Library**

**Strengths:** The AUA library is one of the most widely visited libraries in Armenia. The library contains over 47,000 volumes of books and periodicals. In addition, a vast amount of e-resources is available on the Internet through commercial databases to which the library subscribes. The Library is the central resource in the country for the World Bank publications and project reports.

**Challenges:** Due to the current budgetary limitation the Library has become more selective in its subscriptions, book purchase, and multimedia resources; does not house an adequate number of textbooks; and library staff is unable to keep up with developments in the profession due to the lack of opportunity for library staff to participate in professional trainings.

**Specific Targets:**

Students. Maximize availability of information in all formats to our user population. (Partially funded) Develop and up to date collection department policy; provide access to the collection in all formats; collect and provide access to unique resources. Provide improved and current effective instructional support for students, in partnership with faculty, with particular attention to undergraduate needs.

Faculty/Staff. Enhance library effectiveness by recruiting and developing a highly qualified and skilled staff to provide the best possible service and leadership. (Partially funded.) Recruit and hire qualified service oriented staff providing professional development and educational opportunities.

Institutional Capacity, Program Development. Expand the library's physical space and IT infrastructure (fully funded via ASHA grant). Expand facilities to meet requirements of growing collections, expanding services and increasing number of patrons. Upgrade equipment and software. Systematically upgrade the library's automated management system. Provide improved web infrastructure to support expanded access.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Provide leadership and promote partnership in developing and sharing library resources. (Partially funded.) Continue active participation in networking and consortia governance activities.

Financial Resources. Increase the operating budget by seeking new resources including grants and new partnerships. Purchasing of electronic information products via consortia licensing.

**Information and Communication Technologies Services (ICT)**

**Strengths:** ICT employs open standards and best practices promoting an environment that provides protection from unauthorized or inadvertent access, sabotage or disasters and ensures the availability, integrity and confidentiality of information yet does not unduly hinder the university from conducting business as usual.

**Challenges:** Challenges include financial restrictions limiting the expansion of human other resources; the development of distance learning programs; limited use of online and e-resources. In addition several improvements are needed including to AUA's internal and external network capabilities and Information Security policies, standards, evaluations, and university-wide security awareness.

**Specific Targets:**

Students: Purchasing, installing, and supporting a new conference system (for 50 participants) to accommodate growing needs. Determine and provide for the increased internet and technology needs of an undergraduate program.

Faculty/Staff. Reconfiguration of the existing LAN; increase the capacity of the network up to 1GB/sec in main buildings; implementation of Universal Network Authentication capability in all buildings.

Institutional Capacity/Program Maintenance. Defining and enforce internal processes including clear delineation of responsibilities and coordination workstations and software issues for users accommodated by support of ICTS staff. Hire of an Information Security Officer to oversee security policies, standards, evaluations, and university-wide security awareness. Upgrade existing AUA PABX system with VOIP technologies and following features and major benefits. ICTS will participate in the university's library expansion project. Other internal restructuring will be necessary to accommodate growing university needs. Begin implementing Evergreen Equipment Program.

**Administrative**

**Strengths:** The major strength of the administrative departments is its dedicated long term staff, a significant part of which has worked for more than ten years. The department has almost zero staff turnover. Great teamwork and cooperation among various administrative departments has led to successful graduation ceremonies, conferences and seminars.

**Challenges:** The biggest challenge has been continuous budget cuts in recent year. However, a number of problematic areas have been addressed and the budgeting process for the next year promises to address accumulated concerns. A bigger challenge has been ensuring that the PAB systems work effectively.

**Specific Targets:**

Personnel. Enhance employee morale and performance. Apply COLA (expected fall 2011). Ensure adequate and competitive compensation system through considering merit, as well as internal and external equity adjustments. Undertake review and enhancement of the benefit and

allowance system. Develop and deliver staff training and development programs to help staff and managers to accomplish the goals of the University Strategic Plan.

Faculty Services. Enhance country and city orientation and oversee visa and residential needs of the client groups. Budget implications will follow when the number of foreign students and faculty (due to introducing undergraduate programs) is increased significantly

Facilities. Complete the construction related work at PAB (with private funds). Implement renovation projects (with USAID ASHA support) in the Main building/ Library-kitchen project, replacement of old elevators, upgrade of building systems, A/C in the Large auditorium/; in the AUA Center; and in Barsam Suites / Construction of an elevator)

Photocopying Service. Ensure a breakeven operation and outsource about 50% of the orders to prolong the economic life of copiers.

Revenue Generation from Conferences/Seminars, as well as from providing other Services. Ensure constant revenue flow by maintaining high quality service to customers and promoting the AUA conference and catering facilities. Implementing the marketing plan will require one-time investment costs.

### **Public Relations**

**Strengths:** The department's consistent coverage of the university's main events: graduation, alumni dinner, lectures, panel discussions, conferences with no additional budget requirements. Promotional materials are prepared in house. Broad interdepartmental cooperation and close relations with ROA media.

**Challenges:** Some of the challenges which face the university's PR Office are lack of a native English speaker (an editor for proof-reading annual report, booklets, brochures, website and releases), limited staff including a designer and assistant, limited budget to allow for advertising, promotional materials (t-shirts, cups, etc.), and subscription to newspapers and journals.

#### **Specific Targets:**

Students: Increase outreach regarding needs based financial aid

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach: Increase outreach in Armenia and Diaspora with a multi pronged focus including messaging about AUA's research centers as well as academic programs.

### **Office of the Registrar**

**Strengths:** The Office of the Registrar and Student Services has staff that provide institutional memory for the office with employment at AUA ranging from 2-18 years. Educated and well-

trained office staff know their jobs extremely well and form a cohesive unit that serves the university to a high level. In the same vein they all have university degrees with 4 holding masters degrees from AUA. The staff works well both as individuals and as members of a bigger team. With the opening of the newly renovated office last year procedures have become and are still becoming more streamlined and student-friendly.

**Challenges:** One of the strengths of the office is also one of its challenges in that sometimes long employment in one place becomes routine. New infusions of blood and ideas keep everyone excited and looking to the future. Also after loss of staff, individuals can feel overwhelmed and customer service can suffer due to this. Limited staff

**Specific Targets:**

Students. Complete design and use of database including online registration (by 2013).  
Financial counseling for students.

Faculty/Staff. Complete design and use of database including online grading and admissions process.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Increase number of recruitment visits and application helps days in areas outside of Yerevan. Increase the number of Open Houses. Strategically increase international recruitment/outreach to Russia and CIS, Europe, Iran, China, and India. Work to provide English language instruction throughout the country providing non Yerevan residents with the English language proficiency necessary for admission. Translate materials into Armenian, Russian, and Farsi.

Institutional Capacity/Program Maintenance. An improved method of records management both electronic and paper needs to be identified and implemented to ensure the long-term efficacy of student records. Printed materials need to be enhanced. A records retention policy for academic records must be developed and utilized. Registrar's office must continue to do annual audits of policies, processes and personnel.

**Alumni and Career Development Office**

**Strengths:** Regular outreach to alumni. Regular services and programs aimed at helping students and alumni improve their job hunting skills including career days with potential employers for students/alumni. Strong relations with a number of potential employers. Consistent updating of AUA Alumni database.

**Challenges:** One of the challenges for ACDO is the relatively low number of students utilizing available services. In addition, the limited number of internships/part time jobs available for students makes job placement challenging. Limited financial resources have made expanding outreach an additional challenge.

**Strategic Targets:**

Students. Increase students' awareness of ACDO services. Continue to provide and enhance a variety of services for students and alumni to interact with employers from private, government, education, and non-profit sectors including. On-campus recruiting, information sessions, and fairs. Help students prepare to enter the workforce. Expand the number of partnerships with industry and government to increase the pool of employers. Define employers' hiring requirements to enhance graduates to be hired.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Enhance alumni and students networking; encourage alumni participation in university life. Develop services for alumni. Determine alumni needs and more effectively support alumni in their career development. Organize diverse cultural, social and professional networking events for alumni/students.

### **Institutional Research Office**

**Strengths:** The Office of Institutional Research consistently collects, analyzes, and reports university data-- on students, faculty, curriculum, course offerings and learning outcomes. The office has a strong record of working with myriad university departments and units. The IRO has a strong background in statistics, research methods, and computer based reporting tools, as well as strong written and oral communication skills, attention to details, and knowledge about how institutions of higher education operate.

**Challenges:** The establishment of undergraduate degree programs starting from 2013 will increase student and faculty body, and challenge the work of IRO in terms of the breadth and depth of assessment and evaluation activities, as well as data collection efforts. IRO will face the challenge to address the increase in the workload and efficient management.

#### **Strategic Targets:**

Research. Determine new needs and reevaluate and update the existing surveys for maximal relevance and utilization. Distribute alumni survey and institute a process of regularly surveying alumni. Launch an employee satisfaction survey. Plan for the intensive regular assessment of the undergraduate program. Reevaluate the existing Factbook. Formulate and implement policies on data requests and data publication. Initiate online surveys wherever possible.

### **Development**

**Strengths:** Institution's reputation.

**Challenges:** The main challenges have been lack of a solid, experienced, fully staffed development department; lack of clear attainable short and long term objectives ; recent focus mainly on fundraising for the PAB (a successful project); failure to effectively use alumni profiles in outreach.

**Strategic Goals:**

Faculty/Staff. The immediate hiring of a VP for Advancement is a top priority. The hiring of additional fully qualified development staff as needed to assist the VP in the implementation of an aggressive development plan.

Advancement, Public Relations, Alumni Relations, Outreach. Enhance the newly begun monthly Ebulletin, Bi monthly during the academic year. Steadily increase the number of recipients.

Increase overall outreach / publicity. Review and update (as needed) all university materials. Review for consistency (including use of logos, etc.). Update as necessary.

Annual Fund. Substantially increase the number of individual donors and income from the Annual Fund Drive. Specific Targets to be developed by the new Vice President of Advancement based on research.

Alumni Involvement. Creation of an alumni circle. Develop a culture of involvement and giving potentially launching to coincide with the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of first graduating class.

Endowment. Launch of a capital campaign perhaps in connection with the university's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary.

Major gifts. Creation of a major gifts task force to identify and profile ten potential major donors. Developing the number of major gifts will be based primarily on the availability of AUA's President and senior administrators (Deans, Vice Presidents) to engage one on one with key individuals.

Public support. Investigate the possibility of public support through United States Congressional earmark, discretionary funding via embassies in area (especially in terms of scholarship funding).