The Impact of University Governance Benchmarking in MENA
At Al-Quds Open University

Prof. Samir Najdi
Vice President for Academic Affairs

May 13th, 2015
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Institutional mission and context</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Key Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Response to the Results</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future Plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Impact</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Institutional mission and context

- The University’s Philosophy
- QOU Establishment & History
- Planning Stage
- Preparation of Curricula Stage
- Execution and Implementation Stage
- Branches
- QOU Structure
- Faculties
- Staff
- Blended Learning
Al-Quds Open University is the first among Palestinian and Arab universities to adopt the philosophy of Open Education and Open Learning, keeping abreast of technological and cognitive advances at the global level.
QOU Establishment & History

1- Planning Stage
2- Preparation of Curricula Stage
3- Execution and implementation Stage
The idea of the establishment of the University started in 1975 based on the needs of the Palestinians under Israeli occupation. UNESCO conducted a feasibility study for the University project, in 1980, approved by UNESCO General Conference. The Palestinian National Council approved the plan in 1981, but, because of unfavorable circumstances, the execution of the project was delayed until 1985.
During the period from 1985 to 1991, committees of specialists were preparing academic programs and specializations, study plans, and the production of educational materials such as textbooks and supportive educational media, mainly audio-visual aids.
This stage started in 1991 with the headquarter in Jerusalem. The first group of graduates was in 1997. The number of students reached 50,000 in 2005, and it is now around 62,000 students.
62,000 Students

21 Study Centers
There are six faculties at the University, all leading to the B.A or B.Sc degree as follows:

- **Faculty of Technology and Applied Sciences** (3 Majors)
- **Faculty of Agriculture** (2 Majors)
- **Faculty of Social and Family Development** (2 Majors)
- **Faculty of Administrative and Economic Sciences** (6 Majors)
- **Faculty of Education** (7 Majors)
- **Faculty of New Media**
At the beginning of this academic year the university staff reached a total of 1450. Administrative staff were 1039 and 411 fulltime Academic staff (221 PhD holders, and 190 holding Masters), in addition to approximately 1500 Part-timer Academic staff who are employed on semester bases.
In addition to face to face meetings with students, e-learning is used through virtual classes and other means to enrich and to understand concepts in more depth.

Higher levels of thinking, communication skills, polishing student’s characters are also tackled through problem solving and discussions in virtual classes and academic portal.
QOU has decided to look positively at this experience, and to maximize its benefits from its participation in the UGSC workshops.
Results Forms

http://cmimarseille.org/highereducation/worldbankviz/
Results from the report

[Spider chart showing Self-Perception and Screening Card metrics]

- Self-Perception
  - Context, missions, goals
  - Participation
  - Management orientation
  - Accountability
  - Autonomy

- Screening Card
  - Context, missions, goals
  - Participation
  - Management orientation
  - Accountability
  - Autonomy
Screening Card and Self-Perception were close in three dimensions out of five:

1. Management Orientation (3.78 : 4.0; 94.5%).
2. Autonomy (4.12 : 5.0; 82.4%)
3. Accountability (3.81 : 5.0; 76.2%).
4. Mission (1.57 : 5.0; 31.4%)
5. Participation (1.28 : 5.0; 25.6%) were way off.
Responses To The Results

• A revision for the dimension of "context, mission, objectives"
• Stakeholders dialogue (students, academic and administrative staff, ..) (new ideas and share good practice)
• Strategic Planning Board conducted workshops and meetings to upgrade its vision and mission in the preparation on the next strategic plan 2016-2019.
Recent Achievements in the field of quality
Quality Assurance and Accreditation Standards Manual (QAAS-ODL)

• (The 1st of its kind in the Arab world)
• This was a result of QOU collaboration with the Association of Arab Universities (AArU). This Manual is for open and distance learning universities and programs (QAAS-ODL) was published recently.
• Work is almost finished to computerize this manual and develop it as a web-application,
• It will be used in QOU’s institutional self-evaluation.
Integration of UGov and QA

An action plan was developed for improving UGov along with QA. This was done by matching the qualitative indicators of the QAAS-ODL with the five domains of UGov.
Institutional Self Evaluation

• QOU is currently involved in its first institutional self-evaluation based on the published QAAS-ODL and the web-application being developed which is expected to reduce time and cost.

• The most important feature of this web-app is auto-scoring.

• The scores obtained in this evaluation will be compared with UGSC scores, and the question of the correlation between UGov and QA will be answered.
Leading Erasmus+ Project in UGov

Based on the experience gained from this project, QOU is leading a new project with partners from Europe, the Arab region and Palestine to improve UGov in Palestinian universities.
Business Process development

QOU has developed procedures for more than 20 academic and administrative processes that serve UGov and QA at QOU.
Improving Information on QOU (Visibility)

• QOU has a high degree of visibility in Palestine.
• Not all stakeholders in and outside Palestine know enough about QOU and the philosophy of Open Learning System.
• Misperceptions and mixing with learning by correspondence which lead to misjudgments.
• QOU signed several MoU’s and agreements with local, regional and international institutions, NGO’s, communities. The main objective is leading awareness campaigns to provide correct and clear information about QOU and its system of education.
Participation

• To improve participation internally and externally
  • Quality Board: Established at QOU in 2014 for decision-making in QA issues. It consists of the university leaders and representatives of students and local community.
  • Quality Teams: specialized teams from different departments to participate in process development. They supervise self-evaluation sub-committees
  • Strengthening Cooperation based on partnership: MoU’s were signed with two Asian open universities for cooperation in research projects which came as a result of staff-exchange program; Wawasan Open University (Malaysia) and Open Polytechnic of New Zealand. A long term and strategic partnership with Open University of Cyprus was signed through a joint project.
The Impact

• Awareness

• This experience has increased the awareness among the university staff of the basic dimensions of sound UGov. We are looking at Best Practice benchmarking model to use, hoping to reach to a culture of continuous improvement.
Strategic Plan

Moreover, the new strategic plan (for the period 2016-2019) will reflect many of the lessons Learnt from the UGSC and UGov, such as

a) Wide participation from the university staff in planning and suggesting projects, and

b) Insuring that the specific objectives of the strategic plan are directly related to the overall context, mission, and goals of the university.
Thank You

Prof. Samir Najdi

snajdi@qou.edu