

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY OF BEIRUT

EXPLORATION OF THE ALIGNMENT BETWEEN THE  
ORGANIZATIONAL SUBCULTURE OF AN ACADEMIC  
DEPARTMENT WITH THE HOME UNIVERSITY CULTURE

by  
FADI NAJIB EL KALLAB

A thesis  
submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements  
for the degree of Master of Arts  
to the Department of Education  
of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences  
at the American University of Beirut

Beirut, Lebanon  
June 2020

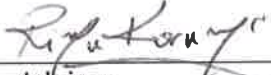
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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

*Gloriam Deo et benedicta Mater suam.* My profound gratitude goes first and foremost to God and His blessed Mother for giving me the strength, courage, and perseverance to overcome the many challenges in my journey to complete the thesis. Without their graces, this achievement would not have been possible.

I cannot also but express my deep gratitude to my mother and family for their unwavering support and continuous encouragement.

At the closing juncture of my graduate residency, I would also like to thank all the professors in the Department of Education who have and are still dedicating their professional career to pass on the torch of knowledge and contribute to the development of generations of professionals who have undoubtedly marked the educational landscape locally and abroad.

My most profound appreciation extends in particular to Dr. Rima Karami Akkary. My words here may not describe aptly the influence she has exerted on my professional development and the extent to which her mentorship as an educator and academic advisor marks daily my professional behavior. Thank you, Dr. Rima, for your support and accompaniment these past years. I would also like to express my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Saouma Boujaoude and Dr. Tamer Amin for accepting to serve as members of my thesis committee and providing me with insightful feedback during my work on the thesis.

Finally, I would also like to thank the president of the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music, Mr. Bassam Saba, for his continuous support and the leeway he gave me at work to allow me to progress in my thesis.

# AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Fadi Najib EL Kallab for Master of Arts  
Major: Educational Administration and Policy Studies

Title: Exploration of the Alignment Between the Organizational Subculture of an Academic Department with the Home University Culture

This study attempts to depict the home predominant organizational culture of the American University of Beirut (AUB) and then to examine the extent to which an academic department, as a subculture in the School of Arts and Sciences, aligns with the institutional culture by being enhancing, contrasting, or orthogonal to it. The purpose of this study is twofold. First, the delineation of the organizational culture, whether at the level of the institution or that of the academic department, provides the benefit of understanding the behaviors and motivations of institutional and departmental individuals as well as the way they process information and approach decision-making. Second, through the comparison between them, this study attempts to weigh the influence of the interplay of the various cultures in the academic department, the latter being the confluence of various cultures such as institutional, disciplinary, and student ones. Using an embedded case study design and an anthropological- symbolic lens to the cultural investigation, this cultural inquiry utilized a six-dimension cultural framework developed by Tierney (1988). The six dimensions in this framework are Environment, Mission, Socialization, Information, Strategy, and Leadership. Institutional data consisted of an in-depth survey of 155 institutional documents collected through the institution's website. Aligned with the symbolic perspective, the analysis of the institutional data used Schultz's (1994) framework that consists of identifying associated key symbolic expressions as an analytical point of entry, their symbolic representations as well as the shared meanings attributed to them by individuals. These cultural constituents paved the way for the determination of the more general cultural landscape as they constituted a cultural perimeter that allowed for the emergence of cultural worldviews representing individuals' cognitive image of their reality, and allowed to develop cultural tables that were used as guidelines for the determination of the academic department's culture and used later in the comparison process. Departmental data relied on in-depth interviews with three key departmental stakeholders. The findings revealed that in every dimension of Tierney's (1988) framework, the organizational culture of the institution and the academic department as a subculture align in some aspects but are also orthogonal in other ones. In the Environment dimension, institutional rhetoric seems to value cross-unit collaborations as a means to enhance the institution's engagement with the external environment. Partnerships are seen as an opportunity for synergies that paves the way for the growth of partners and allows them to sustain their relationships with the environment. Departmentally, individual professionalism is rather valued as a means to develop relationships externally and warrant the professional growth of departmental

stakeholders. In the Mission dimension, institutional rhetoric emphasizes research competencies that are primarily the product of collaborative and interdisciplinary structures as a means to fulfill the service component of the institution, whereas disciplinary specialism predominates the service aspect of the academic department's mission. Additionally, institutional rhetoric emphasizes civic engagement as a means to graduate leaders engaged in addressing contextual problems, whereas the development of graduates' leadership skills seems to be closely related to their acquisition of disciplinary skills warranted by the expertise of faculty members in the academic department. Institutionally, assessment is a learning opportunity meant to refine institutional performance in the accomplishment of its purpose, whereas assessment in the academic department is rather a means to satisfy institutional requirements. In the Socialization dimension, the values in both the institution and the academic department reveal that faculty members' development of a professional identity is an attribute of disciplinary expertise; however, institutional rhetoric emphasizes professional platforms as a means to refine and develop this expertise. Additionally, within socialization, the mentoring of novice faculty members is a journey underlain by mutual learning and growth, whereas departmentally, the process seems more to be a solitary journey of searching individually for cues of survival and success. In the Information dimension, information is a strategic resource needed for the institution's survival and gathered and refined through a collaborative effort that facilitates decision-making. Departmentally, information is rather a resource that warrants the individual survival of members who rely on their disciplinary expertise to make sense of it. Additionally, both formal and informal communication is institutionally valued as a means to develop shared objectives and communicate external competence, whereas formal communication seems to dominate departmental performances with sparse use of web-based social platforms to relay competence externally. In the Strategy dimension, the development of strategy in institutional rhetoric is a collaborative, multifaceted, and monitored process considered essential to face unstable environments. Curriculum that integrates knowledge from various disciplines, as well as civic engagement components, is at the heart of strategy development. Strategy development as a departmental value is faculty members' privilege and dominated by a single approach to strategy setting meant primarily to ensure the survival of the academic department. Curriculum in the academic department is also at the center of strategy-setting but is only shaped by disciplinary influences. In the Leadership dimension, inclusiveness is a value that transpires institutional rhetoric in the governance aspect as it sustains decisions and promotes trust. Institutionally, the enactment of leadership is both a position privilege and the strategic manipulation of symbols. Departmentally, governance is an exclusive system reserved for specific groups, and leadership is mainly considered as a position-related attribute. The orthogonal values between the institution and the academic department can be attributed to the disciplinary influences in the academic department. This study concludes with recommendations for further research and practice.

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## DEDICATION

*To May, Cécile, Najib, and Catherine. This work would not have been possible without sacrificing valuable time away from you. Thank you for your love, support and the many encouragement notes you left on my desk.*

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

Why study organizational culture? A question that draws legitimacy from the fact that culture is an abstract and elusive concept. However, organizational culture permeates every workplace though members within the organization embrace this workplace culture without consciously being aware of it. Kuh and Whitt (1988) emphasize the invisible character of organizational culture but argue that it does not go unobserved. Schein (2010), in his three-level framework of organizational culture, contends that organizational ceremonies, rituals, communication patterns and other symbolic artifacts are all observable elements of organizational culture, consequently demystifying this concept. He warns, however, against inferring deeper cultural assumptions by relying solely on such tangible manifestations.

Scholarly research about organizational culture started in the realm of corporate, profit-making organizations as an alternative to traditional research about structure and bureaucracy. In fact, the necessity for a novel approach to engage corporate problems stemmed from the need of leaders, particularly in times of crisis, to understand why good strategies and plans targeting structural dimensions fail to produce expected results (Tierney, 1988). Aside from a corporate distress context, researchers have equally highlighted the existence of a relationship between organizational culture and organizational excellence and effectiveness. Peters and Waterman (1982) were among the first to argue that excellent companies are undoubtedly those with financial health that is integrated with their values and distinctive culture. To them, organizational culture is not a luxury, rather an under-researched concept that merits further investigation. In a similar vein but from an empirical perspective, Štok, Markič,

Bertoncelj, and Meško (2010), in studying the impact of organizational culture on business excellence, concluded that business excellence is positively influenced by elements of organizational culture.

As in the case of other research topics, organizational culture soon found its way into the realm of higher education and scholarly work was produced to examine this concept in colleges and universities. Although the theoretical foundations of organizational culture are similar in various contexts, some researchers of higher education have underlined differences with the business domain. Sporn (1996) for example, argues that unlike the corporate world, different objectives and a disagreement of how to reach them are a normal constituent of academia. Additionally, decision-making is not the property of top management rather the academic arena emphasizes shared governance as a means of the decision-making process in universities and colleges. Nevertheless, several conceptual frameworks developed to assess and diagnose organizational culture in a business environment were equally used in a higher education context (Adkinson, 2005).

### **Statement of the Problem**

University rankings have become an essential criterion used by many stakeholders, such as students and faculty, as the basis for their decision on which university to join. Among the various University Ranking Systems (URS) that provide such rankings, three emerged as the most consulted ones due to the global approach they undertake in their rankings: QS World University Rankings (QS), Times Higher Education Rankings and Shanghai Ranking (Times Higher Education, 2012). Among these three, QS rankings are finding increasing echo regionally especially with their recent publication of university rankings in the Arab region, thus classifying universities

according to their world ranking and region ranking. QS seems equally the most referred to URS in our local context whether in the media (The Daily Star, 2016) or by universities themselves (Balamand, 2015).

QS ranks AUB 237<sup>th</sup> in the world university rankings in 2019, however, with a ranking of 364 for the institution's Social Sciences. (QS rankings, 2018). QS' ratings are produced based on the examination of six dimensions: (a) Academic reputation assessing teaching and research quality, (b) Employer reputation that examines the extent to which institutions are successful in preparing their students for the labor market, (c) Faculty/student ratio used as an indirect measure to assess teaching quality, (d) citations per faculty as another measure that examines the quality of research, (e) International faculty ratio/International student ratio in which the international potential of the university is evaluated (QS Methodology, 2018). These dimensions are undoubtedly captured by the vision, mission, strategic plans as well as policies of any academic institution and constitute symbolic expressions of its organizational culture. The difference of ranking between the Social Sciences within AUB and the institution as a whole, suggests that the culture within the Social Sciences is not aligned with that of the dominant institutional culture at AUB. Gregory (1983) as cited in Smerek (2010) argues that organizational age and size are factors that may produce a cultural misalignment between various institutional units or subcultures. In fact, he asserts that large universities with multiple units and a historical legacy of events and transformations mirror the complex societies in which they operate in and can be viewed as "multiple, cross-cutting cultural contexts changing through time, rather than as a stable, bounded, homogenous culture (p. 382).

Research about organizational culture has been influenced by three perspectives: an integration, differentiation and fragmentation perspective (Martin, 2002). The integration perspective emphasizes the monolithic aspect of culture and considers that in this context organizational values and beliefs are widely shared by members within the organization. Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) adopt the integration perspective in a higher education context when they argue that one of six types of culture characterizes the academic environment. On the other side of the coin, the fragmentation perspective underlines the concept of ambiguity and considers that organizational culture is not static thus enduring values and beliefs do not exist and members' alliances keep reforming according to changing interests. Between the two, the differentiation perspective considers that cultural differences exist within the same organization and that specific values and beliefs different from the larger and predominant organizational ones prevail and are shared by groups within the organization. In this perspective, researchers discuss the existence of subcultures.

Faculty, students, and administrators' subcultures are the most researched subcultures in academia, with faculty subcultures being more researched in relation to the various disciplines they teach (Smerek, 2010). In a business environment, the conflict between organizational subcultures and predominant organizational culture has been extensively researched. In fact, Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) identify three types of relationships that a subculture may maintain with the larger cultural context in which it exists: (a) an enhancing subculture, where the set of organizational values of a group of people adheres to the predominant organizational culture; (b) an orthogonal subculture, where the set of organizational values of a group of people may be distinct from those of the predominant organizational culture but does not conflict with it; and (c) a

counterculture, where the set of organizational values of a group of people contrast and challenge those of the larger culture. Researching subcultures in relation to dominant organizational culture has also been conducted in other settings, such as police organizations (Jermier, Slocum, Fry & Gaines, 1991). In contrast, departmental culture in a higher education setting, based on Martin's (2002) three perspectives and Hatch and Cunliffe's (2013) three types of relationships that subcultures may maintain with institutional cultures, have received little attention in the scholarly world.

The American University of Beirut (AUB) adheres to the profile of a large and old university. In fact, established in 1866, it has today a total student enrollment approximating 8900 students with more than 120 programs leading to academic degrees (AUB facts and figures, 2017) and a long history in which tremendous changes occurred, including those due to the civil war that struck the country for nearly 15 years (AbuKhalil, 2004). Aligned with Gregory's (1983) view discussed above, institutional subcultures are likely to exist and develop values that may be different to, or fragment with the dominant institutional culture, thus justifying the discrepancy between the institution's ranking and that of the Social Sciences.

### **Rationale**

Research in the social sciences in general, has been guided by fundamentally differing epistemological assumptions enacted in differing methodological approaches and methodologies as well, thus rendering the claim to have identified a research gap across research paradigms a rather pretentious one (Martin & Frost, 1999). Consequently, if a research gap is to be identified and claimed to be filled in the scholarly literature, it should take into consideration the research dimensions such ontology, epistemology, theoretical foundation of the concept under scrutiny.

Within the western scholarly literature, there is still scarce research in the higher education context that examines culture from an interpretivist paradigm and based on Martin's (2002) three perspectives of culture. In fact, Smerek (2010), in an extensive review of literature of culture applied to the higher education context concludes that most cultural research in higher education has been conducted with researchers assuming that institutional values are widely shared among various college constituents. Such an assumption may not reflect an institutional reality since the scholarly literature acknowledges that values held by administrators may diverge from those embraced by faculty for example (Smerek, 2010; Bess & Dee, 2012). Moreover, within the surveyed literature, research that operates from Martin's (2002) theoretical perspective has examined culture from a positivist-functionalist lens. In fact, Adkinson (2005), for example, uses this framework to enact a positivist perspective since the findings should adhere to pre-determined cultural typologies that are established empirically through the application of statistical models. Adkinson (2005) uses statistical analysis to conclude the existence of differentiation and fragmentation between the subcultures in her study. Martin (2002) firmly argues however that such statistical models downplay her theory since they fail to reproduce the depth represented in the different levels of analyses ascribed to each of her three cultural perspectives. The present investigation, in contrast, is guided by an interpretivist paradigm and an anthropological-symbolic perspective in which culture emerges from the meanings attributed by members to certain symbolic expressions. Schultz (1994) considers that such an approach surfaces deeper insights of the investigated culture and is found to provide the depth of analysis required in cultural studies (Smerek, 2010; Schultz, 1994).

Additionally, research on departmental subculture is lacking in the scholarly literature. In fact, Heidrich and Chandler (2015) argue that the development of the concept of the departmental subculture is still a recent undertaking dating back to the early 2000s. They argue that the interest around its examination stems from the fact that it may be viewed as a subcategory of the faculty subculture and may be affected by similar factors that led to the formation of faculty subculture in the first place. In fact, Umbach (2007) argues that the body of empirical literature that examines departmental culture as the intersection of faculty and students' culture in higher education is still thin recommending further cultural research to be conducted on department level culture.

Finally, within the Arabic scholarly literature, this thesis extends the knowledge base of organizational cultural research and also adds to it based on the two following criteria. First, it extends it by introducing research based on a different epistemological perspective, that of interpretivism, that seems to be lacking in the Arabic scholarly literature as supported by Karami's (2018) findings in her literature review of administrative and organizational studies in education in the Arab region. Second, it adds to it by introducing research based on subcultural examination that is virtually inexistent in the Arabic scholarly literature. In fact, after several attempts to identify an equivalent Arabic term in the Shamaa database and identify a relevant research, the researcher decided to email the database administrators and enquire about researches examining subcultures. The reply received (Appendix A) confirms the lack of this type of investigation and invites for an in-depth examination of this concept. Though, not yet a comprehensive database, Shamaa's extensive records of scholarly educational works published as of 2007 in the Arab countries in Arabic, French, and English, also documenting studies dealing with education in the Arab countries (Shamaa objectives,



2018) reinforces the conclusion that this is an area of research that still warrant further investigation.

### **Purpose and Research Questions**

Based on an anthropological-symbolic perspective (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984; Schultz, 1994), and guided by Tierney's (1988) framework of organizational culture, the purpose of this study is to depict the culture of an academic department in the Social Sciences at the American University of Beirut (AUB), and examine its alignment with the predominant institutional culture of AUB, as framed in key institutional elements such as the vision, mission, academic policies, accreditation reports, and strategic plans. Specifically, this study will investigate the following questions:

1. As guided by Tierney's (1988) framework, what is the predominant organizational culture at AUB as framed in key organizational elements such as the vision, mission, academic policies, accreditation reports, and strategic plan?
2. Guided by Tierney's (1988) framework what is the culture that characterizes an academic department at AUB through the perception of three key departmental stakeholders who have held administrative positions in the department?
3. To what extent and in what aspects does the departmental culture align itself with the predominant organizational culture at AUB to enhance, contrast or be orthogonal to this organizational culture?

### **Significance**

According to Schultz (1994), a symbolic perspective aims primarily at providing an understanding of the culture examined in its particular and unique context since it surfaces the meanings that members assign to their organization. In fact, the understanding generated by this study invites the members themselves to reflect on their

culture in an attempt to address its weaknesses and harness its strengths thus facilitating the development process inherent to the life cycle of academic institutions and assisting in any future change process.

This understanding can also have managerial implications. In this context, Tierney (1988) argues that it is necessary for administrators to understand the dynamics and dimensions of culture in their organizations to improve their overall performance. The researcher in the present investigation contends that this investigation aligns with that tenet, especially at the departmental level. In fact, Balderston, as cited in Bess and Dee (2012) warns against departments in universities operating too independently and focusing on departmental objectives that do not align with overall institutional ones. The results of this study should alert department and senior administrators about the possible existence of a misalignment between departmental culture and institutional one, which may translate in departmental lack of excellence. Accordingly, administrators have the evidence on which they can base necessary steps to realign departmental culture with the predominant organizational culture to maintain consistent overall organizational excellence.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### **Theoretical Foundations and Conceptualizations of Organizational Culture: Multiple Lenses and Perspectives**

As gleaned from the surveyed literature below, the theoretical boundaries of organizational culture are ambiguous as different researchers, influenced by various epistemological assumptions, conceptualize it differently. A revealing reflection of such ambiguity is rooted in Keesing's (1974) observation that "culture does not have some true and sacred and eternal meaning we are trying to discover; but that like other symbols, it means whatever we use it to mean" (p. 73).

The scholarly literature depicts, however, three primary intellectual roots of organizational culture: anthropological (Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984), sociological (Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985; Cameron and Ettington, 1988), and psychological (Ouchi and Wilkins, 1985).

The anthropological and sociological lenses seem to dominate organizational culture's rhetoric. However, some anthropological theories of culture contain pronounced psychological undertones.

#### **Anthropology as a Lens for Examining Organizational culture**

In an attempt to provide coherence to the various and often disparate approaches to studying culture in the organizational literature, Allaire and Firsirotu (1984), guided by multiple anthropological theories of culture, attempted to develop a typology of the theoretical foundations of cultural research conducted mostly in the realm of business corporations. The authors argue that any particular approach to studying culture governs

equally the choice of methodology, they content themselves with examining cultural theoretical assumptions.

Allaire and Firsirotu's (1984) review led them to conclude that corporate cultural research can be clustered around two overarching concepts of culture: (a) research that considers culture integrated into the social system thus forming what they label a sociocultural system, and (b) research that views culture as conceptually separate from the social system. In both instances, the authors conceptualize culture as an ideational system enacted in patterns of shared meanings and values, arguing however that it is the extent to which culture is meshed with or separate from the social system that justifies its categorization within one of the two broad theoretical categories.

**Sociocultural perspective.** From the sociocultural perspective, culture and the social system are in a relation of harmony and cultural properties in organizations are manifested in behavior or its products such as policies and processes. In this context, the authors distinguish four schools of thought: (a) the Functionalist school, (b) the Structural-Functionalist school, (c) the Ecological-Adaptationist school, and (d) the Historical-Diffusionist school. The first two schools are termed synchronic in the sense that they study culture in a snapshot of time whereas the other two are considered diachronic and examine the development of culture and the processes behind this development.

According to the Functionalist school of thought, organizations are considered social enactments meant to satisfy all or key actors' needs, and culture displays itself through mutually enforcing visible artifacts such as organizational strategies and goals meant to fulfill its purpose. The Structural-Functionalist view examines the fit between organizations and the greater social context. In this perspective, organizations are

considered as a subsystem of a larger social one and in which that social system's values are echoed in the organization's activities and processes. However, Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) argue that for some theorists in this perspective, organizations may develop a value system that is different from the one of the larger social system due to specific factors such as the organizational history or past leadership. In the Ecological-Adaptationist school, Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) argue that there is a reciprocal interplay between environment and culture. In fact, culture is a set of behavioral patterns that allows organizational members to adapt to the changing environment continually and in turn influences it. In this case, organizational redesign becomes legitimate and is viewed as a quest to preserve a match between the organization's purpose and processes with its environment. From the Historical-Diffusionist perspective, cultural development and change are best understood through the lens of historical factors related to organizations' genesis and other historical circumstances rather than ecological ones.

In contrast, both Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) and Cameron and Ettington (1988) adopt a narrower approach to the anthropological foundations of organizational culture. In fact, they discuss only the Functionalist and Structural-Functionalist lenses, emphasizing to a lesser extent the Functionalist and Structural-Functionalist dichotomy by arguing that both schools of thought examine the extent to which organizational cultural properties such as ceremonies and employment practices serve to maintain a social whole. Additionally, within this view, Cameron and Ettington (1988) identify a researcher operating from this perspective as someone who develops cultural properties and interprets them.

**Organizational culture as separate from the social structure.** Organizational culture as a conceptually separate ideational system from the social structure is also categorized in four schools of thought: (a) the Cognitive school, (b) the Structuralist school, (c) the Mutual-Equivalence school, and (d) the Symbolic school. Although it may reflect materialistically, culture is not concrete in essence, but it dwells beneath tangible and observable manifestations either residing in the mind of social members or in products of their minds. In this lens, Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) contend that culture and the social system do not necessarily maintain a harmonious and consonant relation. From the Cognitive perspective, culture is a cognitive framework of socially learned and organized set of values and beliefs that allow individuals to operate harmoniously with other organizational members and which eventually transforms into shared perceptions. In this context, the authors argue that research on organizational climate as conceptualized in the perceptions of organizational members reflects the cognitive aspect of culture. The Structuralist view argues that culture is a set of processes located in the human mind, stemming from unconscious, albeit universal processes of that mind, despite different surface manifestations such as organizational structures and forms. According to the authors, what justifies this view is the limited cognitive capacity of the human mind, despite its manifold structural manifestations. From the Mutual-Equivalence perspective, culture is the network of members' individual cognitions that is not driven by a concern for a shared organizational purpose, rather by a motivation for personal interest and used as a framework to explain and predict the behavior of others. Finally, the Symbolic school views culture as the product of minds of organizational members, shaped by the organization's history and past successes, or members' sensemaking through their interactions and resulting in the development of a

system of symbols and shared meanings that order their social behavior. Whereas the Cognitive and Symbolic schools view culture as an ideational system conceptually independent from the social one, their approach to studying culture is different. In fact, Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) argue that linguists had a significant influence on cognitive anthropologists who in a similar logic, considered that surfacing implicit rules of acceptable behavior is the means to develop cultural descriptions. In contrast, the Symbolic school methods are less systematic and necessitate “a great deal of artistic ability and intuition” (p. 461). From the anthropological lens, Cameron and Ettington (1988) also adopt a less detailed rhetoric as to the different schools of thought of the ideational system, grouping them under the label of semiotic tradition and arguing that the researcher here seeks the interpretations of the natives’ points of view through analyzing language and symbols. Additionally, from what it appears to be an assumption stemming from the sociocultural system, Cameron and Ettington (1988) argue that high performance and organizational excellence and effectiveness exist when culture, as an ideational system supports the social system conceptualized in the structure and strategies of organizations. In this context, an ideal organizational setting is one characterized by cultural strength and congruence.

### **Sociology as a Lens for Examining Organizational Culture**

Although the dichotomy between anthropological and sociological theories provide greater cogency to the content of this section, it is evident that they interchange common influences on the conceptualizations of organizational culture. According to Cameron and Ettington (1988), an essential difference between anthropological and sociological lenses, however, is the fact that organizations are viewed “as” cultures according to the anthropological lens, whereas they are considered as entities “with”

culture in the sociological one. Drawing from various sociological theories, Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) denote several strands of sociological influence on the development of organizational culture.

According to the authors, symbolic interactionists and ethnomethodologists were preoccupied with studying myths and rituals, a form of social symbolic representations, as a prominent element of the social structure that reflect deeper social forces. Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) argue that such representations found equal prominence in the study of organizational culture as outward cultural representations that surface more profound elements of culture. Additionally, researchers in this perspective examined how culture as an informal facet of the organization, modified the organization's formal system or provided members with the means to adapt to its pressures. Cameron and Ettington (1988) assert that symbolic interactionists' approach to the study of culture has an aspect of similarity with the semiotic tradition in the fact that researchers view culture contained in the minds of individuals and develop cultural interpretations according to them.

Another strand of research in organizational sociology emphasized the study of culture as the nonrational elements of organizations as well as the interplay between them. In fact, according to the authors, sociologists examined the tension between the rational aspects of the organization such as bureaucracy, structure, and goals and the way informal relationships such as norms and beliefs influenced them. In the cultural realm, this interplay, taken from a managerial perspective, was conceptualized in the study of organizations as characterized by consensus and shared goals mostly reflecting the values of top executives. Additionally, Cameron and Ettington (1988) argue that the sociological lens drives researchers to examine culture as part of a social whole and



develop personal interpretations of cultural properties. Within this view, the similarities with the Functionalist and Structural-Functionalist schools become evident.

The inapplicability of the rational approach that sociologists used to examine business organizations to other types of organizations such as educational establishments and hospitals paved the way to the need for a different sociological paradigm that can be used to examine organizations. In this context, institutions as “organized anarchies” came to prominence and induced a conceptual shift in the study of organizations as social phenomena infused with symbolic actions. Ouchi and Wilkins (1985) argue that “The study of organizational culture is rooted more deeply in sociology than in any other intellectual tradition.” (p. 469).

### **Psychology as a Lens for Examining Organizational Culture**

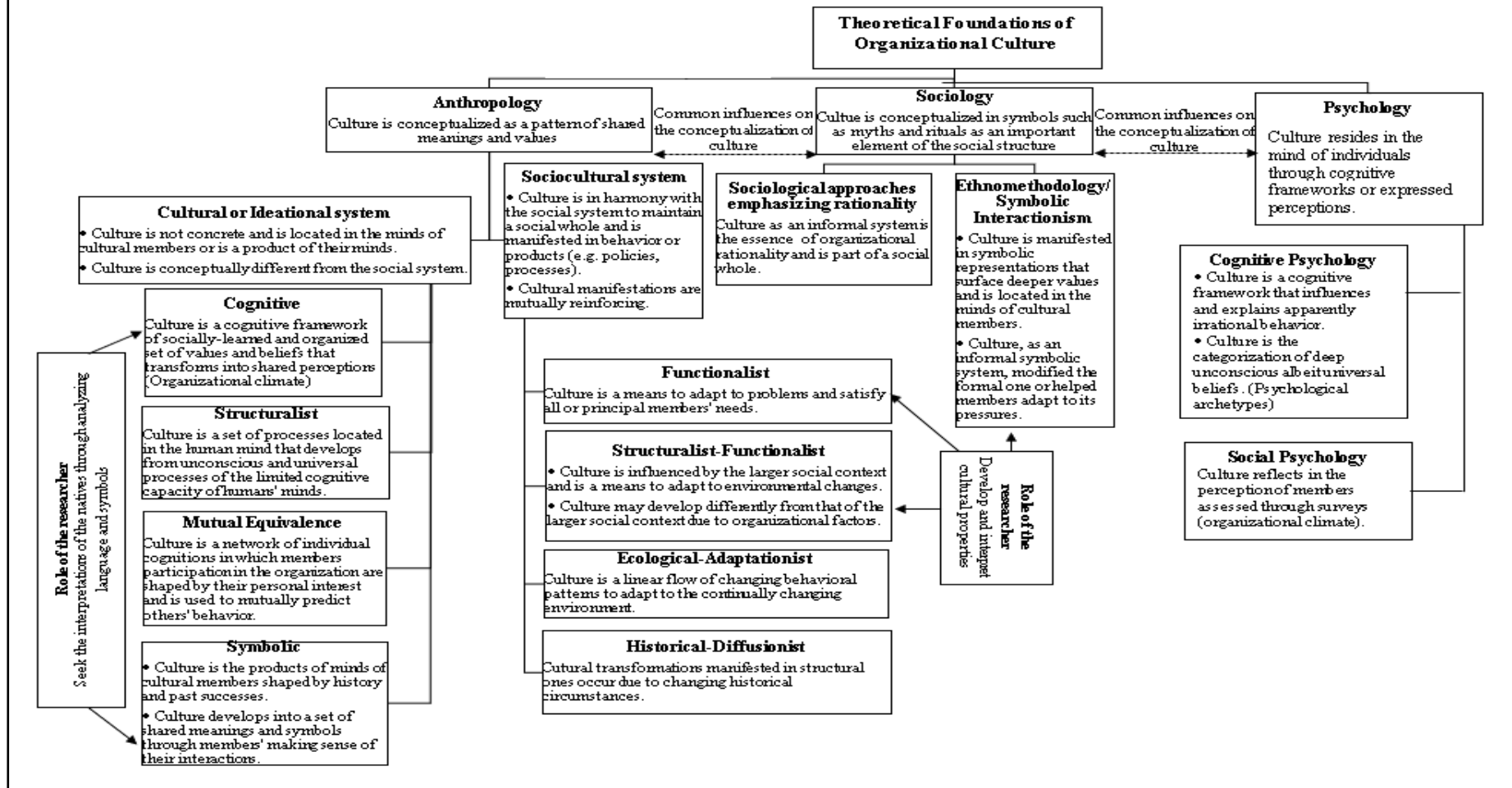
According to Ouchi and Williams (1985), the influence of cognitive psychology on the development of organizational culture as a field of study can first be traced back to the interests displayed by cognitive psychologists to study the divide between intentions and actual behavior based on cognitive dissonance and attribution theories. This view resonates strongly with the espoused and enacted values discussed in organizational cultural studies (e.g. Schein, 2010). Enacted values are the reflection of members’ cognitive frameworks formed by stories and myths and considered as more powerful determinants of behavior than organizational rules and processes. Social psychology’s impact on organizational culture can best be understood through the research on organizational climate. Whereas culture and climate are viewed as conceptually interchangeable by some researchers, organizational climate that analyzes members’ perceptions and is assessed through surveys is closely related to concepts and methodologies adopted by social psychologists.

Cameron and Ettington (1988) implicitly examine the influence of psychology on organizational culture by arguing that psychological archetypes, a theory first developed by Carl Jung, are a means to organize into categories individuals' interpretations of their assumptions and values, which in turn are manifestations of culture. With obvious anthropological structuralist undertones, the authors argue that individuals share similar deep unconscious cognitive frameworks in various contexts. Surfacing these psychological archetypes can help in developing typologies of culture that are valid across contexts and may possess a certain amount of predictive validity. The Competing Values framework developed by the authors is based on these assumptions and used by researchers to examine different types of dominant organizational culture and identify elements of cultural strength and congruency for minimal conflict and optimal effectiveness.

Figure 1 summarizes the various theoretical foundations of organizational culture and their conceptualizations.

**Figure 1**

*Theoretical Foundations of Organizational Culture and their Conceptualizations*



## **Research Paradigms and Their Impact on The Conceptualizations of Culture**

Cameron and Ettington's (1988) argument that the dichotomous view of organizations as having or being a culture has been translated mainly in two research paradigms that involve differing ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions. In fact, the authors argue that methodologically, cultural research is dominated by both quantitative modeling or qualitative ethnographic and case studies methods while recognizing the increasing use of qualitative approaches. Schultz and Hatch (1996) contend that these methodological approaches are an enactment of the two epistemological paradigms of functionalism and interpretivism, labelled modern paradigms, and resting on contrasting and incommensurable assumptions. The end of the twentieth century witnessed the emergence of new schools of thoughts, namely critical theory and postmodernism, that integrated research within the social sciences thus establishing alternative ways of examining social phenomena. The subsections below will examine the tenets of each paradigm as well as its impact on the conceptualization of organizational culture.

### **Modern Paradigms and Conceptualizing Culture: Functionalism and Interpretivism**

Schultz and Hatch (1996) argue that there are three dimensions on which functionalism and interpretivism differ when used to conduct cultural research. First, from a functionalist perspective, the researcher starts his research with a predetermined analytical framework that supposes generalizability across organizational contexts in which cultural properties are pre-defined. From an interpretivist perspective, cultural descriptions emerge from the analysis and are context specific. On a second dimension, culture from a functionalist perspective is analyzed in relation to other organizational

variables whereas the interpretive paradigm analyzes culture through the identification of meanings and their associations in organizations.

On the third dimension, the differences between these two paradigms is mostly found in their analytical processes. The functionalist perspective adopts a convergent process where sparse elements of culture are brought together for an orderly understanding of culture whereas interpretivists use a divergent process in which interpretations develop in an ongoing manner through an associative procedure.

Despite the different assumptions inherent to each paradigm, Schultz and Hatch (1996) argue that within cultural analysis, functionalism and interpretivism can also have connections on three dimensions.

On the first one, culture as a pattern of values or meanings is ultimately conceptualized in both paradigms by agreement and consensus that ties the organization together and guides the behavior of its members. Alvesson and Deetz (1996) confirm this stance by claiming that on a consensus-dissensus continuum, both normative and interpretative studies lie closer to the former dimension.

On the second dimension, culture in both paradigms lies at the depths of the organization and manifests itself through various tangible artifacts or cultural expressions. To decipher the meaning of these surface manifestations, the cultural researcher needs to uncover and understand these basic assumptions or deep meanings.

On the third dimension, Schultz and Hatch (1996) contend that instead of viewing organizations as processual entities in which meanings are changing in constant flux, both functionalist and interpretivist researchers study culture as a static concept. In fact, patterns, symbols, and metaphors constitute static representations of culture, and freezing of cultural examination that makes it possible for functionalist researchers, for

example, to compare cultural properties across different organizations and also prevents interpretivists from exploring the “ruptures, discontinuity, and fragmentation of sense making” (p. 543) within organizations.

### **Alternative Paradigms as Lenses for Conceptualizing Culture: Critical Theory and Postmodernism**

Alvesson and Deetz (1996) consider that both critical theory and postmodernism emerged in the 1980s as a philosophical reaction criticizing the dominance and offering alternative to the two modern dominant research paradigms of functionalism and interpretivism. paradigms.

Critical theory aims at identifying various forms of domination within organizations in view of eliminating them to the benefit of all organizational members. Consequently, researchers focus on underprivileged groups which taints, therefore, their work with an evident political agenda. A distinctive characteristic of critical theory research is the critique of organizational hegemony and ideologies imposed primarily by the managerial class and meant to reinforce and legitimize its view of social relations as well as its objectives. In the cultural realm, the dissemination of managerially engineered values and beliefs represent a form of a hegemonic mechanism that tends to hinder the development of employees’ critical reflection to improve their situation and consequently reduce organizational inequalities. In a similar vein, Alvesson (2002) argues that critical theory stems from researchers’ emancipatory cognitive interest and is intended as a lens to investigate various organizational class discrimination especially gender-related ones. Bess and Dee (2012) additionally contend that critical researchers’ role aims at surfacing implicit ideologies, expose them to organizational members in the context of developing acts of resistance to rectify a social imbalance.

On the other hand, postmodernism (Alvesson and Deetz, 1996) as a philosophical approach has been used with considerable variations and conceptual complications due to the idiosyncratic research agendas, however, with some common themes emerging as broad characteristics of this paradigm. Among these general defining points is the existence of multiple and fragmented identities of individuals, thus rejecting the dominant western view of coherence, and integration. In fact, in contemporary heterogenous societies in which multiple discourses as means of thinking and communicating emerge and expand, multiple and fragmented identities become inevitable. Consequently, meanings attached to objects become equally fragmented. To the authors, postmodernists resort to deconstruction as a method for surfacing suppressed terms emphasizing dissensus as an organizational dimension in relation to the dominant social discourse, and underlining the ambiguous and inconsistent nature of culture that eventually translates into multiple cultural identities.

Table 1 summarizes the characteristics of the four research paradigms in the realm of cultural studies based on the six research dimensions proposed by Schultz and Hatch (1996).

Table 1

*The characteristics of the four research paradigms in cultural studies*

Research paradigm	Functionalism	Interpretivism	Critical Theory	Postmodernism
<b>Researcher's assumptions</b>				
Analytical framework	Cultural properties are pre-defined and results generalizable.	Cultural properties emerge from analysis and are context-specific.	Politically predetermined however cultural properties emerge from analysis and are context-specific.	Underlines cultural conflicts, ambiguities, and fragmentation which emerge from textual deconstruction.
Cultural analysis	Cultural properties are examined through a network of causal relationships.	Search for cultural meanings and their associations	Underlines different meanings among organizational members displaying affinities with the disadvantaged.	Highlights the existence of tension, fragmentation, and cultural paradox.
Analytical processes	Convergent: sparse cultural properties are brought together for an orderly understanding of culture.	Essentially divergent: interpretive acts are ongoing though a spiral of associations.	Critical: dominant values are ideological in nature and exist in a social order that requires reformation and striving for more equality.	Deconstructive: dominant values are mere illusions and are meant to suppress conflicts, tension and lost voices.
Consensus/dissensus (in relation to dominant social discourse)	Consensus: stable patterns of values and order exist across the organization.	Consensus: webs of meanings tie members' experiences into a homogeneous whole.	Consensus/dissensus: consensual values and meanings exist within oppressed classes, however, they clash with those of the dominant ones.	Dissensus: Specific cultural patterns cannot be found. Values converge momentarily only to diverge again.
Level of culture	Deep: artifacts are tangible manifestations of deeper cultural forces.	Deep: cultural expressions stem from underlying webs of meanings.	Deep: artifacts or cultural expressions are manifestations of assumptions or meanings.	Surface: reality exists without underlying or hidden laws. Research celebrates the singularity of surface events.
View of culture	Static: patterns are a static representation of culture which allows also for comparisons with other cultures.	Static: Metaphors and images are static representations of culture which is essentially a dynamic process.	Static: patterns or metaphors are static representations of culture with tensions however occurring at the level of class boundaries.	Dynamic: Cultural formation is in continuous flux shaped by fragmented interests and marked with discontinuities and ruptures.



### **Concept Approach to Culture: Culture as Variable or Metaphor**

The previous epistemological differences yield two conceptualizations of culture as either being a variable or metaphor. As a variable, culture is understood as existing in a web of causal relationships. According to Alvesson (2002), the conceptualization of culture as a variable relates intimately to the functionalist paradigm and as discussed in the previous section, views culture as a subsystem in a multi-component system driven by a multitude of causal relationships. In this context, organizations are seen as having cultures that contribute to providing balance to the organization by optimizing performance. The author equally argues that cultural diagnosis and control have become an appealing theme to researchers and managers in the context of organizational change or for preserving and developing existing cultural properties if proven valuable to organizational effectiveness.

As for the view of culture as a metaphor, both Martin (2002) and Alvesson (2002) contend that it has characterized the interpretivist-symbolic research paradigm. According to Cameron and Ettington (1988), the purpose of the metaphorical approach to studying culture is primarily meant to uncover unobserved aspects of organizational life located in the minds of organizational members and relates closely to the ideational perspective discussed in the previous section. When examining the use of metaphors in social sciences research, Alvesson (2002) distinguishes between what he labels a root metaphor that represents a fundamental image of what is being examined and an organizing metaphor which examines a limited aspect of the studied reality. In this context, he considers that the conceptualizations of organizations in the literature as “pyramids” illustrates well the organizing metaphor whereas their conceptualizations as “organisms” fits better the root metaphor. Variables such as “control mechanisms” are

metaphors themselves even if they examine a limited scope of organizational life and can be consequently seen as organizing metaphors. Although warning against some conceptual constraints when using the metaphor approach in research, Alvesson (2002) notes several advantages of such an approach in research including guiding the analysis in new ways through providing further insights to the researcher and practitioner alike as well as allowing critical scrutiny when examining the conceptual assumptions of a phenomenon.

As root metaphor, conceptualizing organizations as cultures suggests that culture permeates the entire organization including its structural and technological components and ultimately manifests itself in mutually reinforcing shared meanings. This relative breadth of the cultural concept can yield vague and ambiguous conceptualizations of culture and therefore, according to Alvesson (2002), necessitates a reduction of scope in favor of greater interpretive depth. In this regard, he argues that such an endeavor requires a second level metaphor analysis, or in other words, addressing “a metaphorical level behind the metaphor.” (p. 29).

Alvesson (2002) denotes eight metaphors of culture commonly used in the scholarly literature: (a) culture as exchange-regulator is a control mechanism that organizes the relationship among members and reduces their opportunistic behavior, (b) culture as compass providing members with values and a sense of direction, (c) culture as social glue to underline consensus and harmony and exclude fragmentation, (d) culture as sacred cow to emphasize the internalization of values often shaped by founders and leaders for organizational control, (e) culture as affect-regulator to shape and control members' work-expressed emotions, (f) culture as disorder to embrace ambiguity, fragmentation and the inexistence of shared values, (g) culture as blinders

rooted in the unconscious of members that may deviate from espoused values thus leading to blind spots, and (h) culture as world-closure with discrepancies between the real negotiable and culturally-portrayed given nature of social reality thus equally leading to blind spots.

Table 2 synthesizes the possible links between some of the theoretical foundations of culture discussed in the previous section and their connections to research paradigms as well as their concept approach to culture according to the surveyed literature.

Table 2

*The links between some of the theoretical foundations of culture and their connections to research paradigms as well as their concept approach to culture*

Theoretical foundation	Anthropology				Sociology	Psychology		
	Ideational				Sociocultural	Symbolic interactionism	Cognitive	Social
Schools	Cognitive		Symbolic		Functionalist/ Structural-Functionalist			
Research paradigm	Functionalism	Interpretivism	Critical Theory	Postmodernism	Functionalism	Interpretivism	Functionalism	Functionalism
Concept of culture (variable vs. metaphor)	a- Variable (dependent/ independent)	a- Root metaphor (organization “is” culture)	a- Culture cannot be viewed as root metaphor as values and meanings are not unanimously shared.	a- Culture cannot be viewed as root metaphor as values and meanings are not unanimously shared.	a- Variable (dependent/ independent)	a- Root metaphor (organization “is” culture)	a- Variable (dependent/ independent)	a- Variable (dependent/ independent)
	b- Variable metaphor (culture as an obstacle or control mechanism)	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as compass • Culture as social glue	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as world-closure	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as blinders • Culture as disorder	b- Variable metaphor (culture as an obstacle or control mechanism)	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as compass • Culture as social glue	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as exchange regulator • Culture as compass • Culture as affect-regulator	b- Second level metaphor: • Culture as exchange regulator • Culture as compass
	c- Second level metaphor: • Culture as exchange regulator • Culture as compass				c- Second level metaphor: • Culture as exchange regulator • Culture as compass			

## **Martin's Empirical Theories of Culture and the Resulting Conceptualizations**

Based on an extensive survey of the scholarly literature, and a long career in cultural research, Martin (2002) developed a three-perspective theory of culture that is meant to categorize and integrate the various, most often disparate theoretical assumptions and frameworks that have driven the field. She also asserts that within a given research study, the provided definition of culture can sometimes diverge significantly from its operationalization. Martin (2002) contends that her theory is not based on a predetermined theoretical framework, rather it emerged inductively from a substantial survey of literature. This theory revolves around the three perspectives of integration, differentiation, and fragmentation with each stressing different conceptualizations of culture. The three perspectives vary on the three dimensions of consensus, the relation among the cultural manifestations, and ambiguity.

### **Integration**

From an integration perspective, a pervasive, not unanimous, state of wide consensus is depicted in the organization, and cultural manifestations are mutually reinforcing and display consistent interpretations among different organizational members. Within this perspective, ambiguity is excluded to the profit of clarity. As discussed in the previous section, common to the functionalist and interpretivist paradigms, an understanding of culture in this perspective requires an examination of deeply held assumptions and meanings underlying surface and concrete cultural manifestations. Martin (2002) additionally argues that within this perspective, researchers consider individuals who digress from this ideal of consensus as ones who need to be brought back on board through adequate training, enhanced supervision or motivational acts. In this context, shared values become an ideological means to control

members' behavior thus substituting rules and regulations. The two dominant critiques addressed to this perspective exist at a methodological and organizational reality level. Methodologically, Martin (2002) considers that this perspective emphasizes a managerial view and that the samples used in research studies consisted mostly of top-ranked employees at the expense of other organizational voices. At the organizational reality level, this perspective assumes the existence of a wide organizational consensus which does not reflect contemporary organizational realities characterized by pronounced conflicts and ambiguities.

### **Differentiation**

Unlike the integration perspective, researchers working from this dimension scale down the degree of consensus to a lower level of analysis, that of groups or subcultures with common defined characteristics within the organization. Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) provide further insight into subcultural formation by arguing that they emerge based on aspects of similarity such as gender, social and socioeconomic, ethnic, work status or other possible affinities, or aspects of familiarity that develops when employees interact in shared workspaces such as photocopying rooms or cafeterias. Consequently, one or many organizational subcultures coexist within the larger cultural context and display different relationships of harmony, independence or conflict with each other and with regard to the dominant culture. Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) argue that this dominant culture is but that imposed by top management thus labeling it corporate culture or more accurately as they contend, corporate subculture. An organizational subculture can maintain three relationships with the corporate one: (a) an enhancing relationship where top management values and beliefs are supported, (b) an orthogonal relationship in which a subculture develops its independent value-system without however conflicting

with the corporate one, or (c) a counterculture in which a subculture openly confronts and challenges the values of the corporate subculture. Whereas the existence of a counterculture seems at first glance paradoxical to the concept of organizational effectiveness, Martin and Siehl (1983) argue that it may be tolerated, albeit temporarily by top management, if it constitutes an added creativity value and contributes to organizational profitability. Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) warn however against subcultures becoming organizational silos if marked by a strongly shared value system since they impede organizational communication and coordination.

Martin (2002) considers that a differentiation perspective highlights inconsistencies in the interpretation of cultural manifestations or the existence of an incongruence between espoused and enacted values. Other scholars seem to disagree about when to consider if a research involving subcultures is written from a differentiation perspective or not. In fact, Hatch and Cunliffe (2013), in presenting several definitions of culture that emphasize shared values and consensus, argue that they could be valid for either entire organizations or subcultures within, thus considering the examination of a single subculture as one that observes the differentiation perspective. In contrast, Martin (2002) argues that a research investigating one subculture should be rather categorized as an example of the integration perspective, contending that a differentiation study is one that examines the relationships among different subcultures. Both approaches observe a constant however, the assumption that consensus is an identifying attribute of subcultures, or as Martin (2002) metaphorically articulates it, subcultures as “islands of clarity in a sea of ambiguity” (Martin, 2002, p. 94). Within the differentiation perspective, the relationships among cultural manifestations depend on the type of relationships

maintained by the examined subcultures. If these subcultures coexist harmoniously then, cultural manifestations may mutually reinforce each other. If the subcultures sustain an orthogonal relation to each other or are characterized by contrasting values then, the relationship among cultural manifestations will most likely be inconsistent ones.

### **Fragmentation**

Martin (2002) argues that the articulation of this perspective is conceptually delicate and carries several difficulties. Fragmentation has at its core ambiguity which by itself is challenging to conceptualize since it transcends dichotomous states materializing simultaneously in contradictory meanings of true and false, tensions, myriad interpretations of the same symbols, and occurrences that are in constant flux. At the level of the self, fragmentation draws from psychological studies of self-representation found to vary across roles and contexts thus translating into a fleeting and temporary consensus that is mainly issue-specific. Unlike the integration perspective, researchers operating from the fragmentation perspective celebrate ambiguity and paradoxes and view them as unavoidable attributes of organizational realities. According to Martin (2002), the relationships between cultural manifestations “are conceptualized in multivalent terms as partially congruent, partially incongruent, and partially related by tangential, perhaps random connections” (Martin, 2002, p. 105).

### **The Three Theoretical Perspectives and Research Paradigms**

The three perspectives emerge from different assumptions and conceptualizations of culture. The previous section underlines significant similarities between Martin’s (2002) empirical theories and the paradigmatic assumptions of organizational culture that will be highlighted in the following.



The characteristics of the integration perspective in cultural studies revolve primarily around the following three tenets. The first one considers culture as a set of shared values and beliefs that manifests itself in tangible artifacts or symbolic cultural expressions. According to the second one, the relationships among cultural manifestations are consistent throughout the organization which consolidates the view that culture is widely shared according to the first tenet. The third tenet rules out the concept of ambiguity and considers that remedies should be presented to limit and eventually eliminate its existence. Based on the previous section, all three tenets of the integration perspective can be enacted from either a functionalist or interpretivist lens. In fact, both paradigms are positioned on the consensus side of a consensus/dissensus continuum which consequently rejects ambiguity and renders the interpretation of cultural manifestations mutually consistent. Additionally, if organizational consensus is understood as a hegemonic tool used by top management to shape employees' behavior to serve specific organizational outcomes, the integration perspective becomes more closely linked to the functionalist paradigm.

According to the differentiation perspective, consensus exists only within a subculture that may be harmonious or conflicting with other ones. This fact makes the relations between cultural manifestations inconsistent and pushes ambiguity to the boundaries of different subcultures. Whereas the interpretivist paradigm was identified as a possible lens for an integration perspective, Schultz and Hatch (1996) argue that in the process of searching for meanings, inconsistent interpretations may emerge and be acknowledged by the researcher as an intrinsic component of the cultural landscape. If, however, subcultural differences are understood to reveal inequalities and unequal access to the distribution of power and organizational resources along the hierarchy of

the organization, then the differentiation perspective can be viewed through the lens of critical theory.

The fragmentation perspective conceptualizes culture as a collection of fleeting values that are issue-specific and constantly in flux. Subcultural boundaries are not fixed instead they continually reform shaped by the fragmented self of cultural members. As illustrated in the previous section, this perspective can only be enacted through a postmodern analysis of the organizational culture that centers on ambiguity and highlights the existence of cultural paradox. Table 3 below summarizes the conceptualizations of culture according to each of the three perspectives, the relations among cultural manifestations, and the relating research paradigm.

Table 3

*Characteristics of culture in relation to the three perspectives*

Perspective Characteristics	Integration	Differentiation	Fragmentation
Conceptualizations of Culture	Organizational-wide shared values/patterns, consensus and clarity	Intragroup (subcultural) consensus and shared	Ambiguity, uncertainty, paradox, flux
Relation among manifestations	Consistency among different manifestations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within group members: consistency</li> <li>• Between different group members: consistency, inconsistency, or</li> </ul>	Not clear (ambiguous): simultaneously consistent and inconsistent
Research paradigm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functionalism (particularly if cultural examination is linked to organizational outcomes)</li> <li>• Interpretivism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interpretivism</li> <li>• Critical theory (if examined from the lens of hierarchical organizational classes)</li> </ul>	Postmodernism

**Paradigm Interplay and Martin’s Meta-theoretical Perspective**

Challenging the traditional notion of paradigms’ incommensurability, Schultz and Hatch (1996) argue that a paradigm interplay lens based on the simultaneous acknowledging of tensions between paradigmatic contrasts and connections provides

researchers with a novel and fresh means to produce an inclusive picture of seemingly contradictory findings by incorporating the research data that would have countered their pre-established research assumptions. In this context, arguments are not frozen within rigid paradigmatic assumptions, rather they flow between them. Applied to Martin's (2002) three perspectives, Martin and Frost (1999) consider that researchers who adopt a single perspective run the risk of falling into theoretical and methodological tautology when they only retain research data that confirms their starting theoretical assumptions.

Martin (2002) advocates for a meta-theoretical approach to examining organizational culture through the simultaneous application of the integration, differentiation, and fragmentation perspectives. Cultural analysis will yield findings in agreement with all three perspectives. In fact, some elements of the culture will be widely shared by members and be consistent across manifestations thus underlining an integration view, some other elements of the culture may be understood differently by subgroups and have inconsistencies across manifestations in agreement with the differentiation view, and other cultural elements will possess ambiguous and paradoxical interpretations in which agreement is in constant flux thus highlighting a fragmentation view. In alignment with the paradigm interplay discussed above, Martin (2002) argues that this meta-theoretical perspective blurs the boundaries between the functionalist and interpretivist paradigms by offering researchers a comprehensive theoretical framework that accounts for the inclusion and interpretation of possible divergent results when analyzing empirical data. Additionally, it has the benefit of offering researchers a comprehensive insight of the cultural landscape under examination uncovering many blind spots that would have emerged as a result of a

single-perspective approach. The author equally contends that researchers may rely on a preferred personal perspective that she labels “home perspective”, without however ignoring the other two ones. A culture examination remains incomplete if viewed from a single perspective since inconsistencies and ambiguities are also part of the cultural portrait. Martin (2002) even goes a step further by claiming that in organizational realities, the three perspectives co-exist simultaneously albeit with one being apparent while the remaining two operating invisibly.

### **Organizational Culture in the Higher Education Context**

Although cultural studies thrived originally in the realm of corporate organizations, they soon found their way to different types of institutions including universities and colleges. To explain its expansion to the higher education context, and with significant functionalist undertones, Masland (1985) argues that universities share significant affinities with the firms diagnosed with strong cultures such as shared governance and collegiality. The author also denotes several reasons that justify studying culture in higher education. In fact, a cultural analysis provides insight into understanding various institutional processes such as decision-making styles or resistance to curricular changes, and can be used as an alternative informal behavioral control mechanism when formal ones are deficient or weak. Additionally, Kuh and Whitt (1988) assert that a cultural perspective is a suitable lens to anticipate and adapt to turbulent and uncertain external environments. Tierney (1988) equally considers that the significance of a cultural diagnosis from practitioners’ perspective is to identify conflicts within the institution and the tensions and contradictions that stem from them, as well as understand how decisions will be perceived differently by different constituents in academia to improve organizational performance ultimately.

Clark (1980) depicts four nested cultural domains within higher education: (a) the culture of academic disciplines, (b) the culture of the profession at large, (c) the culture of the institution, and (d) the culture of national educational systems. While acknowledging the possibility of developing into sub-disciplines, Clark (1980) contends that the culture of disciplines is a key component of the university culture since it is at the basis of homogeneous academic units such as departments, due to its important bonding capabilities that stem from members' appreciation of similar disciplinary values. The culture of the profession conceptualizes in ideologies shared by all faculty and pertaining to their affiliation to the academic community. Such ideologies pertain to values celebrating autonomy in issues related to research and teaching for example and rejecting all forms of control and supervision. The culture of the institution is shaped by several factors such as its size, cohesiveness, age, and history or founding circumstances. In this respect, an institutional saga, for example, will strengthen the bonds between all university members and help mold a social reality that can ultimately lead to controlling behavior. Finally, Clark (1980) considers that part of the culture of an academic institution is shaped by the larger culture of the national academic system that in turn translates into beliefs regarding the role of academics in society, as well as the purpose of academic institutions.

### **The Theoretical Foundations of Organizational Culture Applied to Higher**

The first section of this literature review delved into the intellectual foundations of culture and the way they reflected in organizational research. This subsection explores the way higher education researchers drew from some of these various theoretical foundations to guide their inquiry, findings, and analysis. Allaire and Firsirotu (1984) argue that the sociocultural view dominated the work of researchers in

earlier periods of cultural research. Kuh and Whitt (1988) complement this view in higher education by contending that this same tradition characterized the cultural approach to higher education research up until the 1980s.

**Anthropological-sociocultural lens.** What follows will discuss Functionalism and Historical-diffusionism as the two components that are characteristic of the anthropological-sociocultural lens.

**Functionalism.** Functionalism is a component of the anthropological-sociocultural lens in which culture represents a means to adapt to problems and satisfy all or principal members' needs. In a later reprint of a title originally published in 1970, and drawing from a functionalist perspective, Clark (2009) argues that distinctive colleges' cultures are essentially driven by successful missions that transform with time into organizational sagas providing behavioral cues to its members as well as developing their commitment and allegiances to the values embedded in this saga. In underlining the even religious dimension of sagas, Clark (2009) adds that "many college sagas, even modest ones, have the capacity to make strong men cry in the bright glare of the afternoon gathering as well as in the darkness of the lonely hours" (p. 235). Typologies of culture developed in the realm of higher education have also stemmed from a functionalist view. In fact, typifying cultural properties is ultimately meant to serve a specific purpose or function.

Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) for instance distinguish six types of cultural properties in institutions of higher education. According to the authors, identifying institutional properties that largely align with one of these types will provide significant guidance to academic leaders especially in the context of organizational change. Cultural typologies equally embrace another tenet of the functional perspective in the

sense that researchers predefine the conceptualizations of each typology prior to the research endeavor thus assuming that their typologies are generalizable. According to the authors, an example of a cultural type is a collegial institutional culture that values faculty autonomy, the supremacy of research-oriented tasks as knowledge disseminating processes and strives towards maintaining a horizontal approach to governance.

Cultural typologies as applied to higher education institutions equally hold some of the characteristics of an ecological-adaptationist perspective. In fact, Bergquist and Pawlak (2008) argue that an institution does not permanently adhere to a specific cultural typology for members' value may evolve with time due to environmental constraints for example. Viewed through the lens of Martin's theories of culture, this functionalist perspective resurfaces the implicit link discussed earlier between the functional paradigm and the integration perspective. In fact, a categorization of culture suggests that its properties are clear and widely shared among members and the relationships among cultural manifestations are consistent.

What preceded reveals that the overarching assumption of a functionalist cultural perspective considers culture as serving primarily one or several specific functions including, but not limited to, developing members' professional growth, their allegiance to institutional values, or the promotion of institutional effectiveness (Bergquist and Pawlak, 2008; Clark, 2009; Martin, 2002).

Another framework meant for an in-depth investigation of culture and is equally used within the integration perspective is Edgar Schein's three levels of culture. Although developed through his consultation practices of business firms (Schein, 2010), this framework became influential and its use transcended the business domain to become equally utilized in different professional settings. Within higher education,

Smerek (2010) argues that this framework has been widely applied in cultural analysis. Additionally, in their review of cultural research in higher education, Kuh and Whitt (1988), while citing the influence of Schein's framework, contend that a cultural investigation in higher education follows a three-level vertical axis in which artifacts are the visible manifestation of deeper underlying assumptions.

Edgar Schein's framework equally adheres to a functionalist perspective as Schein (2010) prescribes as it serves to solve the organizations' "problems of external adaptation and internal integration" (p. 18). To him, culture is the set of values and beliefs, which develop from past learning that has proven to be successful to overcome the difficulties of adaptation and integration. Additionally, Schein's (2010) view of culture as a pattern of shared assumptions outside which a group of individuals is reduced to a mere aggregation situates his framework within the integration perspective. The framework is tailored around the three levels of artifacts, values, and basic assumptions that uncover cultural beliefs from a surface visible, to a deep, taken-for-granted, invisible level.

***Historical-diffusionism.*** A historical-diffusionist perspective holds that culture is initially shaped by historical factors and that cultural transformations that occur through a process of acculturation and assimilation and triggered by changing historical circumstances are also echoed in structural ones. Despite such changes, Kuh and Whitt (1988) contend that strongly held values created during the founding period of an academic institution could still be depicted in its processes and structures. In this context, the authors equally view the organizational saga, a value statement that is deeply internalized by current and future members, as a characteristic of this perspective.



**Anthropological-ideational lens.** What follows will discuss Structuralism and Symbolism as the two components that are characteristic of the Anthropological-ideational lens.

**Structuralism.** According to the structuralist perspective discussed earlier, culture is a set of unconscious and universal processes located in the human mind due to its limited cognitive capacity. In what seems to be an enactment of this perspective, and with obvious psychological overtones, Cameron and Ettington (1988) argue that Carl Jung's psychological archetypes allow to organize in limited categories the values and beliefs of individuals. Jungian archetypes are universal components of the unconscious that people use as a guiding framework to give similar interpretations to the meaning of certain images and consequently organize these interpretations into a determined set of categories. The authors consequently use these archetypes to develop a four-aspect typology of cultural representation based on a predetermined description of cultural properties that they label the competing values framework. Although the competing values framework stems from an ideational-structuralist perspective, it utilizes culture as an independent variable linked to institutional effectiveness, thus yielding similarities with the functionalist tradition.

**Symbolism.** According to the symbolic view discussed earlier, culture emerges from the minds of individuals and materializes in the meanings and interpretations they give to signs and symbols within the organization through members' making sense of their interactions.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) assert that in the context of higher education, the researcher's aim when operating from a symbolic lens is threefold: to understand the interpretations given by members to events and the way these interpretations yield a

response action as well as the meaning attributed to this action. Additionally, the authors consider that the external environment does not exist as an objective reality, independently from individuals. On the contrary, individuals respond to their “enacted” environment, or as Smerek (2010) puts it: “the portions of the environment that come to the attention of members of the organization” (p. 387). The empirical enactment of the symbolic perspective will be further detailed in the methodology chapter as it represents the guiding tenet of this thesis.

The survey of literature conducted for the present research has revealed a multitude of typologies and frameworks influenced by a functionalist view of culture, with however one framework, deriving staunchly from symbolic assumptions with a research operationalization emphasizing an interpretivist view. William Tierney, a scholar of higher education expresses clearly symbolic influences when he argues that “an organization's culture is reflected in what is done, how it is done, and who is involved in doing it. It concerns decisions, actions, and communication both on an instrumental and a symbolic level” (p. 3). He later establishes the firm link between symbolic lens and interpretivist paradigm when he asserts that “organizational culture exists, then, in part through the actors’ interpretation of historical and symbolic forms” (p. 4).

***Tierney’s (1988) interpretivist cultural framework.*** Based on a foundational cultural research literature in higher education, and a cultural investigation during one academic year, William Tierney developed a six-dimension framework for diagnosing organizational culture in universities and colleges. The framework emerged from analyzing the data gathered during this yearlong research and was mainly driven by an integration perspective since the author’s assumption about the role of culture is

explicitly stated. In fact, Tierney (1988) argues that the “central goal for understanding organizational culture is to minimize the occurrence and consequences of cultural conflict and help foster the development of shared goals” (Tierney, 1988, p. 5). The six dimensions of the framework are not mutually exclusive since they are overlapping in nature and are: (a) Environment, (b) Mission, (c) Socialization, (d) Information, (e) Strategy, and (f) Leadership.

*Environment.* In this first dimension, the researcher attempts to probe members’ meaning of their enacted environment. Components of such an environment can range from the simple physical one including the socio-economic status of the surrounding neighborhood as well as the institution’s visibility and influence on more subtle components such as what it means to be part of that institution. Tierney (1987) considers that the enacted environment in a cultural investigation has research implications that revolve around three tenets. At the center of an interpretive inquiry lies the researcher’s attempt to uncover the multiple interpretations of organizational reality as provided by participants. For this to happen, researchers do not embark on their research endeavor with any preconceived analytical frameworks. Instead, they enter the field with the assumption that cultural properties will emerge from the analysis because higher education institutions, like all organizations, are socially constructed. The second tenet requires researchers to observe a longitudinal stance with regard to the research problem. In fact, Tierney (1987) argues that current actions are the result of past events and are in relation to other organizational components. Consequently, only a thick and detailed description of the organization will lead to an understanding of the research problem. According to the third tenet, researchers should involve their readers with the

interpretation of data through presenting them with a comprehensive portrait of the culture in action.

*Mission.* In this dimension, the researcher tries to understand how the institution's mission is defined, if there is consensus about its definition and if it is used as a basis for decision-making. Originally, mission statements are the realm of business organizations and in this context, they are considered as a starting step and the most visible aspect of a company's strategic planning. Mission statements seem to be the shaping or defining point of organizational culture. They usually encapsulate the unique corporate identity of a business firm and what distinguishes it from other competitors. From an integration perspective, it represents the source from which organizational members' shared values and beliefs will stem. Morphew and Hartley (2006) observe that clear mission statements play a double internal and external role: they inform members about the activities that are essential to the institution while providing them with a shared sense of purpose for inspiration and motivation and convey value messages to external stakeholders.

*Socialization.* Here, the researcher seeks to understand how new members learn their roles and what is needed to survive and be successful in the organization. Robbins and Judge (2011) present a socialization model that distinguishes three stages in the process of socialization. The prearrival stage considers that newly recruited members come with personal values, beliefs, attitudes and expectations and that these are critical in knowing how these members will align with the new culture. Based on this model, they contend that new members ought to be informed about the organization and its values during the selection process. Socialization may also be extended to include students in a higher education context. In fact, a researcher would also want to

understand how new students become socialized with the institutional values and those of their department as well. The second stage is the encounter stage. Here, new employees experience firsthand what the organization is really about. If this experience clashes significantly with the new members' expectations it may have serious results such as members' resignation or students' dropout. The final stage is the metamorphosis stage in which the newcomers adjust to the organization. At the outset of the three stages, new members become comfortable with their work and feel valued and trusted by their colleagues. Viewed from students' perspective, Tierney (1988) conceptualizes socialization by the extent to which students become indoctrinated to institutional values through periodical meetings addressed to them and as well as in any way the institution reflects concern and care for them.

*Information.* In this dimension, the researcher analyzes the form and nature of information considered valuable in the organization as well as how it is produced and disseminated. Brown and Starkey (1994) consider that information is the outcome of communication processes and that to understand how communication is managed the researcher must understand the organization's culture. From their perspective, information and communication are the tangible materializations of a complex web of values, beliefs, and attitudes, in other words, the culture of the organization. The authors here equally adopt a constructivist approach that fits the interpretive paradigm of Tierney's (1988) framework and consider that communication requires two types of actions: creating messages and interpreting them. The interrelationship of culture and communication is further underlined when they observe that "On the one hand culture is a product of social interaction mediated through communicative acts, and on the other, communication is a cultural artifact through which organizational actors come to

understand their organization and their role within it” (p. 809). Tierney (1988) argues that information is supposed to address two audiences, an internal and external one. Internally, the researcher explores the formal and informal channels through which the information is diffused as well as the quality of this diffusion whereas externally the researcher examines the extent of outreach of institutional information and the manner it benefits the institution.

*Strategy.* Under this dimension the researcher tries to understand how decisions are made within the organization and the strategies used for that purpose as well as the rewards or penalties for good and bad decisions. In that same vein, strategic plans are the visible artifact of how organizational members define strategy. In fact, if the mission is an abstract assertion of culture then strategic plans will be a tangible manifestation of an institution’s culture since they originally stem from mission statements. According to Kotler and Murphy (1981), any strategic plan stems initially from the institution’s understanding of its external environment. The authors equally argue that goal formulation is normally part of the strategic planning process and that goals are usually identified through various individual and group interviews with competing expectations from the institution. From a cultural perspective, these various groups are an obvious display of different subcultural identities within the institution and through deciphering institutional goals, the researcher will be able to identify the presence of these subcultures. Tierney (1988) considers institutional strategies as a central dimension in diagnosing the culture of an institution. In fact, understanding the nature of the decision-making process such as participative and based on open communication or centralized for example, or the way strategies are devised carry cultural significance.

*Leadership.* In this dimension, Tierney (1988) argues that effective leadership is culturally driven and uses well the institution's symbols both formally and informally to enact the institution's value-system. Robbins and Judge (2011) contend that founders are those who shape initially the organization's early culture through their vision that they impose on the members. Eventually, according to them, the culture of the organization will be impregnated with the personality of the founders. Table 4 summarizes the aspects of Tierney's (1988) framework.

Table 4

*Tierney's (1988) framework of organizational culture (p. 8)*

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Environment:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How does the organization define its environment?</li> <li>• What is the attitude toward the environment? (Hostility? Friendship?)</li> </ul>
Mission:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How is it defined?</li> <li>• How is it articulated?</li> <li>• Is it used as a basis for decisions?</li> <li>• How much agreement is there?</li> </ul>
Socialization:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How do new members become socialized?</li> <li>• How is it articulated?</li> <li>• What do we need to know to survive/excel in this organization?</li> </ul>
Information:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What constitutes information?</li> <li>• Who has it?</li> <li>• How is it disseminated?</li> </ul>
Strategy:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are decisions arrived at?</li> <li>• Which strategy is used?</li> <li>• Who makes decisions?</li> <li>• What is the penalty for bad decisions?</li> </ul>
Leadership:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What does the organization expect from its leaders?</li> <li>• Who are the leaders?</li> <li>• Are there formal and informal leaders?</li> </ul>

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**Sociological lens.** Stemming from a sociological standpoint, the study of organizational culture in higher education has drawn from several sociological theories including loose coupling theory and organized anarchies. In fact, Kuh and Whitt (1988) argue that such theories attempt to explain the nonrational aspect of organizational behavior and are deeply rooted in sociological thought.

***Loose coupling theory.*** In their discussion of the application of this theory to higher education, Bess and Dee (2012), argue that loose coupling emerges from a constructionist view and exists when different organizational units, such as students' affairs and academic affairs in a university for example maintain a fluid connection between themselves, rather than a rigid bureaucratic one. The authors note that this theory does not imply the absence of an overall structure or system, on the contrary, the links between the components of the structure are sufficiently loose to ensure organizational responsiveness and resilience. The cultural dimension in this theory emerges when Bess and Dee (2012) consider that the system's cohesiveness and connectedness are warranted through collective action. Individuals interacting together develop with time shared cognitive frames of reference based on their extensive communication and shared experiences that end up crystallizing in patterns of shared values and beliefs. Such collective frames of references can be at the heart of faculty members' shared disciplinary values or administrators' managerial ones. Acknowledging the existence of various units that develop specific shared values leads eventually to the formation of organizational subcultures. Whereas the concept of subcultures will be discussed in greater detail in the next section, a sociological lens emphasizes a differentiation perspective based on Martin's (2002) three perspectives theory.



***Organized anarchy.*** Ambiguity is probably the best conceptualization of organizations when described as anarchies. Whereas the term itself joins the two paradoxes of coherence and chaos, Bess and Dee (2012) argue that from this lens, decision-making in universities and colleges becomes a random process that spreads vertically at the level of individuals who make autonomous and unsynchronized decisions about issues relating to their tasks in the organization. Manning (2013) claims that this postmodern-driven view fits best the description of contemporary educational establishments since it accounts for the on-going multiple realities of their various constituencies. She equally considers that the three characteristics of universities as organized anarchies are: (a) problematic goals such as an unclear prioritization of teaching or research and if they are mutually exclusive tasks, (b) unclear technology such as the ambiguity of internal processes and their lack of understanding by institutional members, and (c) fluid participation that represents the changing duration of members' involvement in the organization or internal tasks related to it. From a cultural perspective, this theory adheres closely to Martin's (2002) fragmentation perspective since it highlights the presence inconsistencies and uncertainties and denotes the absence of any shared values and consensus.

Table 5 summarizes the relation between theoretical foundations of organizational culture, their use in higher education research and categorization according to Martin's (2002) perspectives.

Table 5

*Relation between theoretical foundations of organizational culture, their use in higher education research and categorization according to Martin's (2002) perspectives*

Theoretical Foundations Martin's (2002) perspectives	Anthropological influences			Sociological influences
	Sociocultural		Ideational	
	Functionalist	Structuralist	Symbolic (interpretivist)	
Integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational sagas (Clark, 2009)</li> <li>• Typologies of culture (Bergquist and Pawlak, 2008)</li> <li>• Levels of culture (Schein, 2010)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Competing Values Framework (Cameron and Ettington, 1988)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tierney's (1988) framework</li> </ul>	
Differentiation				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose Coupling Theory</li> </ul>
Fragmentation				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organizational Anarchies Theory</li> </ul>

## **Subcultures in Higher Education Establishments**

Although the cultural typologies discussed above assume mostly an integration perspective claiming that shared values and consensus can be found to a significant extent in academia, Kuh and Whitt (1988) note that a monolithic culture remains difficult to depict in large academic institutions and Smerek (2010) notes it is not empirically validated. Even more, he considers that culture loses its analytical value in academia if not examined at the lower level of analysis of subcultures. Similar to the example of business firms discussed previously, large academic establishments will rather consist of various subcultures characterized by similarly held values and forming a cohesive unit consequently. Like Hatch and Cunliffe's (2013) rhetoric, Kuh and Whitt (1988), when examining the relationships between subcultures, argue that they can be enhancing, orthogonal, or hold a divergent value system becoming consequently countercultures.

Kuh and Whitt (1988) contend that an enhancing subculture adheres to the institution's core values as materialized in its mission and may consist of senior faculty members who are impregnated with the mission's values, an orthogonal subculture, such as an administrative unit may develop a value-system of its own without however conflicting with those of the institution, and a counterculture consisting of a faculty senate or certain fraternities, for example, who defy the institution's dominant values. Kuh and Whitt (1988) argue that subcultural formations can be influenced by several factors including disciplinary bindings, special interests, physical proximities of offices, faculty's different perceptions on the relative importance of research and service, or students' learned response to coping to problems that eventually crystallizes into shared values. The authors additionally argue that within academia, further subcultural

differentiations may develop and ultimately lead to the formation of subcultures within subcultures. Kuh and Whitt (1988) equally assert that researchers have focused empirically their attention on three subcultures, those of faculty, students, and administrators.

**Faculty subculture.** Aligning with Clark's (1980) categorization of culture in academia, Kuh and Whitt (1988) contend that faculty subculture is a generic label that was further refined in the empirical literature to encompass professional and disciplinary subcultures. In fact, they argue that faculty's increased specialized needs and interests have acted as a centrifugal force in the added focus of faculty subcultural components resulting in an examination at the level of the disciplines.

Early research on culture acknowledges the profession as a level of analysis based on the assumption that all academics share common values including academic freedom, autonomy, the generation and dissemination of knowledge, and faculty's role within colleges (Clark, 1980; Kuh and Whitt, 1988; Smerek, 2010). Stemming from what seems to be an interpretivist view, Clark (1987), as cited in Smerek (2010), notes however that despite the apparent similarities of values at the profession level of analysis, these held different meanings shaped by different contexts such as research universities or community colleges. Consequently, a new lens through which faculty members could share common values was needed.

The disciplinary level of analysis stemmed from a wave of research in the 1980s concluding that the values and attitudes of academics across various institutions overlapped according to disciplines (Kuh and Whitt, 1988; Smerek, 2010). Becher (1994) argues that disciplines are at the origin of organizing institutions of higher education into homogeneous units such as academic departments. Their bonding nature

stems from the fact that their adherents hold similar epistemological beliefs and develop an interest in similar domains of inquiry. Based on this argument, and several empirical investigations, Becher and Trowler (2001) provide a framework for the categorization of disciplines with the characteristic values relating to each one. Although the authors note the existence of various typologies used to categorize the nature of academic disciplines in the scholarly literature, they argue that their empirically developed typology rests on the two dimensions of hard-soft, and pure-applied as viewed from the perspective of the nature of knowledge and knowledge-seeking assumptions. Hard-soft represents a continuum that denotes the existence or not of a consensus over theoretical assumptions whereas pure-applied is one which rests on the existence or not of a concern for finding applications to practical problems.

Smerek (2010) argues that academic disciplines can still be examined at a lower level of analysis thus accounting for subdisciplinary specializations that may cut across disciplines in maintaining shared values with other disciplines or specializations. In this context, educational psychology as a subdiscipline within education can have more in common with psychology than the teaching of languages, another educational subdiscipline. Kuh and Whitt (1988) additionally contend that socialization processes acquired by academics during their graduate studies are determining in developing values linked to disciplinary attributes as well as forge common meanings with regard to the professional nature of their work and a sense of belonging. The authors argue that this is achieved through an internalization process that warrants the development of adequate cognitive frameworks and similar behavioral patterns of all affiliated members. The authors argue that faculty affirm further these values when interacting with other faculty members working in other academic institutions internationally.

Faculty subcultures can also form based on various other factors such as ethnic, gender or even type of contract as in the case of full-time versus part-time faculty members. Kuh and Whitt (1988) consider for example that communication styles and the use of language can be at the basis of such subcultural delineations.

### **Subcultural Examination, Research Paradigm, and Martin's Three Perspectives**

Bess and Dee (2012) argue that acknowledging subcultural formations suggests that a researcher is operating from an interpretivist lens and has opted for a differentiation perspective in his inquiry. Although seemingly valid on a surface level, this assumption is however inaccurate on both of the proposed dimensions. In fact, as discussed in the previous section, Tierney's (1988) framework stems from an interpretivist understanding of culture as depicted in various places in his article. His use of culture as a root metaphor denotes from the start an interpretivist assumption in which every structural and environmental phenomenon, for example, acquires a cultural significance that guides and shapes members' understanding and interpretations. Searching for members' meanings in an interpretivist paradigm suggests indeed, a differentiation perspective since expecting similar meanings from multiple institutional stakeholders seems an unlikely occurrence. However, and in alignment with Tierney's (1988) view of culture, Alvesson (2002) argues, a cultural examination lends more itself to identifying values and beliefs that are rather shared by members to draw a meaningful cultural landscape and surface it to decision-makers and institutional members to be used as a guideline for strategical decisions and behavior. Based on this view, an interpretivist approach should rather tend towards an integrative perspective where the researcher's work would consist of highlighting only those shared values that are part of the institution's functioning and bring them to decision-makers' awareness.

## **The Frenzy of Integration as the Ultimate Role of Culture**

Despite acknowledging subcultural differences, most of the literature reviewed considers that the utility of cultural analysis resides in surfacing the values around which will rally all institutional members (Schein, 2010; Alvesson, 2002; Tierney, 1988). Even at the subcultural level of analysis, conflicting subcultures should still maintain some shared values at the risk of impeding institutional effectiveness and growth. In this context, Bess and Dee (2012) argue that when subcultural conflicts escalate, leaders should strive towards establishing a buffer zone that accounts for the arduously changeable idiosyncratic values of the conflicting subcultures and could form a manageable alternative to maintain organizational stability and growth. The authors assert that decision-makers should seek to develop *shared commitments* that conceptualize in “conscious, intentional, public statements that reveal collectively agreed upon motivations for action” (p. 384), and develop through a conscious and voluntary dialogue. A student-run health clinic may find consensus with both faculty and administrators alike because it enacts values of social justice and practice-based learning cherished by the former group and provides institutional visibility and lobbying capabilities against turbulent environmental factors treasured by the latter. Ironically, Bess and Dee (2012) seem to be arguing for a layered system of values within which the ones at the outmost limits having an integrative function through, once again, shaping zones of clarity that generate institution-wide consensus and agreement.

### **A Selection of Empirical Studies on Organizational Culture in the Western Literature**

The review of the theoretical literature has revealed various approaches to studying organizational culture shaped by dimensions ranging from epistemological and

paradigmatic assumptions to the methodological choices of the researcher. As discussed earlier, for a research article to be coherent and generate valid findings, the tenets of the various dimensions should be mutually supportive across the research endeavor.

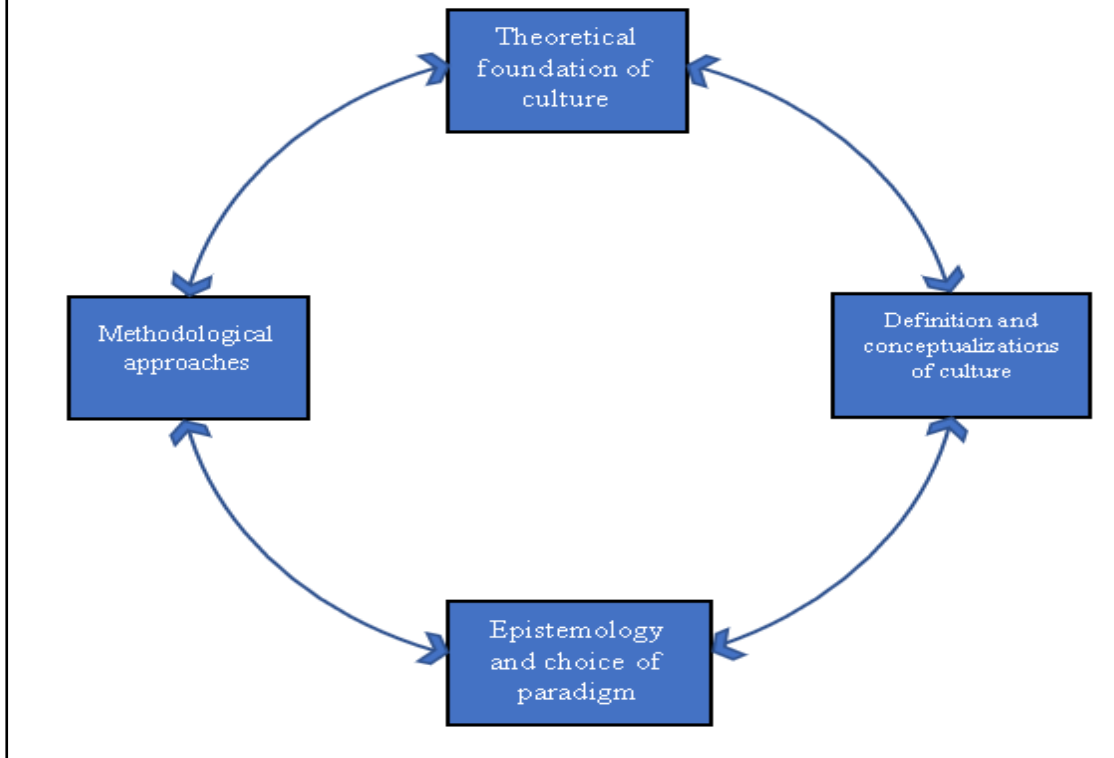
Consequently, an organizing framework is in need to be able to assess and compare the quality of the selection of empirical articles that will be retained in this section. This organizing framework will consist of all the research dimensions delineated in the previous sections, and they are: (a) the theoretical foundation of culture adopted in the particular study, (b) the ensuing definition and conceptualizations of culture, (c) the choice of paradigm used in the study, and (d) methodological approaches used to investigate culture. The present review of the empirical literature will not be an extensive one but will rather single out studies that are most relevant to the research questions formulated earlier, those that analyze the relationships between a subculture and institutional culture.

Figure 2 represents the framework containing the various research dimensions. The double-headed arrows highlight the supposedly mutually reinforcing nature of the different dimensions.



**Figure 2**

*The Organizing Framework Used to Analyze Empirical Articles*



Far from being a comprehensive one, this review is based on a set of two articles that were found through a search conducted using the AUB libraries databases and were ultimately considered by the researcher as relating closely to the research questions guiding this inquiry since they examine the relationships between a subculture and the institutional culture within the higher education context. The first search results were generated through the use of the keywords “organizational subcultures”. These keywords originally yielded a large number of results and in an attempt to focus the search results further, additional keywords such as “higher education” as well as “colleges” and “universities” were added. This attempt yielded a new wave of results, however, after skimming through a selection of abstracts one research article, Swenk (1999), was considered satisfying in terms of closeness to the research questions and

was consequently retained. Identifying a second research article required resorting to a different search strategy. Since the theoretical review of literature has revealed that the topic of organizational culture is managerial by essence (Martin, 2002; Allaire & Firsirotu, 1984; Alvesson, 2002), even when applied to the context of higher education (Tierney, 1988; Adkinson, 2005), the managerial-oriented database “ABI/INFORM Complete” was used for a new search attempt. This new search retained the same keywords used previously while utilizing Boolean connectors. Consequently, another research article, Heidrich and Chandler (2015) was considered satisfying and thus retained for the present section. The researcher made sure that both articles were published in peer-reviewed academic journals.

### **Organizational Culture in Higher Education**

The purpose of this study (Heidrich and Chandler, 2015) is to assess the way a Business university’s various subcultures perceive relationships among themselves in terms of being enhancing, orthogonal, or countercultures and the manner these subcultures impact the university’s market orientation as conceptualized in inter functional cooperation, competition, and student orientation. For this purpose, the authors used a mixed methods approach in which a quantitative analysis was used first to identify the perceived institutional culture, the dominant organizational subcultures and each subculture’s market orientation. A qualitative study followed two years later to compare the findings generated by the quantitative approach.

In the quantitative analysis of the research, Heidrich and Chandler (2015) used the Organizational Culture Assessment Instrument (OCAI) based on Cameron and Ettington’s (1988) Competing Values Framework discussed earlier, on all the university’s staff members (faculty and administrators) with however a valid response

rate of 35%. Based on their number of years of service as well as their position within the university, the authors identified five different subcultures they labeled Market mentors, Nostalgic professors, Devoted Smooth operators, Ardent bureaucrats, and Cohesive Community while identifying the hierarchy culture as the most perceived institutional one by participants. They next administer the market-orientation questionnaire developed by management researcher Jane Hemsley-Brown to each subculture. The quantitative findings reveal that subcultures mutually reinforce some values while they differentiate and fragment on other ones. The authors equally note the existence of enhancing and orthogonal subcultures in relation to the perceived institutional hierarchy culture and find that the Devoted Smooth operators and Cohesive Community subcultures score highest on the university's market orientation while differing on its internal components in that the former emphasized more students' cooperation whereas the latter inter functional cooperation. The qualitative findings were generated through semi-structured group interviews within each subculture identified in the quantitative analysis. The results largely confirm those of the quantitative findings as well as the existence of values that are commonly held by the different subcultures while unearthing a deeper understanding of each subculture's values.

**Theoretical foundation of culture.** The competing values framework and its use surface a particular approach to the examination of culture. By itself, it has structuralist connotations that stem from an anthropological-ideational lens of culture as it is based on Jungian psychological archetypes that limit and categorize individuals' perceptions of reality thus justifying the preestablished cultural descriptions in theOCAI. However, its utility spans the concept of theoretical foundations and emphasizes

to a greater extent an anthropological-sociocultural lens of culture. In fact, Cameron and Ettington (1988), the theorists who initially developed this framework do not use it to depict a cultural description per se; they rather associate it with a purpose or function, that of determining which type of culture, for example, correlates better with effectiveness. Consequently, the use of the framework becomes one with important functionalist overtones. In this study, the researchers use the competing values framework in a rather innovative manner. Whereas originally it is supposed to signal a dominant perceived culture, they use it equally to identify various subcultures within the institution yet always with a functionalist purpose in mind, that of identifying which subculture associates better with the institution's market orientation and its three conceptualizations. Reduced to a lower level of analysis, that of the subcultures, the authors' view of culture aligns better with the sociocultural lens as subcultures and market orientations become part of a social whole and maintain a relationship of harmony.

**Definition and conceptualizations of culture.** The authors do not explicitly state the definition of culture that will guide their research. However, this can be inferred from the research methodology as discussed above, they view culture as a set of values that are not necessarily shared organizationally leading to the formation of subcultures that may coexist harmoniously or heterogeneously as well as maintain a diverse relationship with the dominant culture. Using the OCAI questionnaire as a means of portraying a multicultural landscape aligns with an essential tenet of the sociocultural, that of viewing culture as an object that can be measured and the results generalizable. Additionally, it aligns with the role of the researcher within that lens as one who develops and interprets cultural properties. The OCAI questionnaire

conceptualizes culture in members' perceptions of the dominant work characteristics, leadership and management style, strategic emphasis and the criteria for success. The researchers equally argue that the quantitative analysis confirmed Martin's (2002) three-perspective theory through accounting for the simultaneous existence of an integrated, differentiated and fragmented aspect of culture in the university.

**Epistemology and choice of paradigm.** Using the OCAI as the primary instrument to assess the perceived dominant cultural type as well as the types of subcultures surfaces a positivist epistemology. In fact, culture, albeit at the levels of groups within the institution, is treated as an independent variable affecting the dependent variable market orientation. Bess and Dee (2012) argue that a typical positivist approach to studying culture usually includes a multi-step scheme that includes developing a cultural typology at first and then examining its relationship with several factors such as effectiveness for example. To a large extent, this approach can be found echoed in the present research. As for the choice of paradigm, the researchers obviously operate from a functionalist perspective for the reasons discussed above.

**Methodological approach.** Heidrich and Chandler (2015) use a mixed methods approach for the investigation of culture. Although the researchers argue that their survey of the literature recommended a qualitative approach to examining culture, they argue that the size of the institution under investigation and the higher sample size makes it difficult to embrace such an approach in which choosing a representative sample was the main challenge. Their decision reverted to adopting a quantitative approach at first using the competing values framework. Whereas the single use of the competing values framework implies a trade-off between generalizability and cultural complexity, the researchers argue that such a trade-off was overcome through using a

qualitative approach to complement the quantitative one. Martin (2002) advocates for the use of such hybrid methods arguing that it allows in some cases integrating into the design the strengths of both methods. However, two weaknesses at least merit to be signaled out in this research. First, the researchers carried out the qualitative phase two years after generating the quantitative findings. Although cultural change occurs slowly (Schein, 2010), the time span of two years in a setting that witnessed financial instability displayed in a decrease of enrolments and high faculty turnover might have distorted the results. Second, at the level of data analysis, the researchers relied on the quantitative analysis to acknowledge the existence of integrating, differentiating, and fragmenting subcultures, a view with which Martin (2002) would have probably been unsympathetic. In fact, when explaining her three-perspective theory of culture, she asserts that quantitative identifications of the three perspectives are merely “conceptual misunderstandings and oversimplifications” (p. 151). She rather argues for a matrix approach that provides greater cultural insight and in which the interpretations of various cultural manifestations are cross-compared.

The researchers have been consistent with their espoused view of culture across their research. In fact, the characteristics of the different dimensions of the organizing framework mutually reinforce themselves as discussed above.

### **Decision Cultural Clashes**

Using a case study methodology, the purpose of this research is to highlight the conflict between faculty members of the Education department at a university, and a president-appointed committee in charge of formulating a strategic plan for establishing an independent school of Education (Swenk, 1999). The researcher approaches the problem from a cultural lens arguing that it surfaces cultural discrepancies at the

decision-making level between the faculty subculture of the Education department and the administrative one represented by the president and the planning committee.

Without providing any details about sample size as well as sampling method, the researcher uses interviews and document analysis as a means of collecting data. The data analysis methods were equally not explained. Her findings reveal that the failure of implementing the recommendations formulated by the committee was mainly due to resorting to a rational-based decision-making style that does not account for faculty's voice and concerns on the matter and consequently counters their expected collegial nature of decision-making in a higher education institution. In fact, the Education faculty's differing views with administrators about the necessity of engaging in any strategic change developed feelings of frustration and anger from their part that resulted in a sense of lack of commitment thus delaying the execution of the committee's recommendations for more than a decade. Additionally, the researcher considers that administrators failed to account for the slow and deliberate faculty culture for accepting strategic changes. She concludes by formulating three recommendations meant to align administrators and faculty culture to warrant success when executing strategic plans.

**Theoretical Foundation of Culture.** In her study, Swenk (1999) has proven to be rather penurious on the different dimensions that shape her research. Although she does not provide the reader with the conceptual backbone guiding her study, a careful examination of her theoretical narrative might provide a significant clue. In fact, in her literature review, she expresses explicitly that organizational culture is conceptualized in the "manipulation of meaning and symbols" (p.5) without any attempt to providing an alternative conceptualization thus suggesting an anthropological-ideational lens of examining culture. Her reliance on interviews and documents as a means of collecting

data confirms a central tenet of this lens as they enact people's interpretations of organizational symbols.

**Definition and conceptualizations of culture.** The researcher does not explicitly formulate any definition of culture. However, the inferred ideational lens and the data analysis method used in her study suggest that culture is understood as the interpretation of deep meanings of organizational members enacted in symbolic expressions. Since she is examining conflict among two subcultures, her research becomes positioned on the differentiation axis of Martin's (2002) three cultural perspectives. In this context, the researcher's role is to relay member's interpretations, and consequently provide a description of culture, to outsiders. Additionally, two points within this dimension merit to be discussed. First, Swenk's (1999) research confirms other researchers' argument as to strategies and strategy-setting being a vehicle of the institution's values (e.g., Tierney, 1988) and that devising plans should align with these values at the risk of a total collapse. Second, she argues for the existence of a duality of values during the process of strategic planning between administrators and faculty. Whereas the former are driven by a rational decision-making view that emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness, the latter favor a more collegial approach to it. Within this duality, however, she is explicit in arguing that it is the administrators who take the high ground as they are endowed with authority, thus suggesting the extent to which administrators' culture infuses the institutional one.

**Epistemology and choice of paradigm.** Examining people's interpretations of organizational symbols signals an anti-positivist epistemology (Burrell and Morgan, 1998) The researcher here seems to have embraced this epistemology when she repeatedly provides readers with members' interpretations of the strategic plan as well



as its implementation. In fact, when justifying the exclusion of the Education department faculty from the planning process, for example, she states that one interviewee's interpretation was that "sometimes one needs a whole new set of actors in order to implement needed changes" (p. 13). Consequently, readers can identify interpretivism as the guiding choice of paradigm in this research.

**Methodological approach.** Swenk (1999) uses a case study methodology to examine the conflict between faculty and administrators' subculture. The case study seems to be a natural extension stemming from the relativistic epistemology umbrella as they can be subjectivist, qualitative and idiosyncratic (Martin, 2002; Janićijević, 2011). A major deficiency in Swenk's (1999) research is that it is short on detail especially regarding data analysis, a matter that bestows a speculative aspect to the critiques addressed herein. Whereas space constraints make it perfectly legitimate for peer-reviewed academic journals' editors to require from researchers to be concise, it remains incomprehensible how this conciseness can exist at the expense of crucial details that allow the informed reader to formulate quality judgments of his/her own.

Here again, the researcher seems to have been coherent with the dimensions' characteristics of the organizing framework throughout her research.

### **A Selection of Empirical Studies on Organizational Culture in the Arabic Literature**

In a literature review of organizational culture in educational institutions in the Arabic scholarly literature, Karami (2018) relays the functionalist stance that researchers seem to uphold when examining culture in that context. In fact, she observes that culture's importance, as identified in the surveyed literature, resides in its impact on the organization's effectiveness and productivity. This functionalist perspective is

further underlined when she equally remarks that some Arab scholars identify several factors influencing organizational culture such as leadership style, socioeconomic status, and organizational structure. In fact, this view emphasizes mostly an anthropological-sociocultural lens for examining culture as it considers the latter part of a social system that coexists harmoniously with its other components and manifests in its members' behaviors (Allaire and Firsirotu, 1984; Cameron and Ettington, 1988).

While communicating the pervasive use of quantitative methods in cultural studies, Karami (2018) notices that the surveyed literature embraces the variable view of culture while examining it in relation to other variables such as teachers' performance, morale, gender, and level of expertise. Karami's (2018) argues that in the surveyed literature, the purpose of culture was identified as one promoting commitment to the institution to achieve overall stability through supporting collaboration among various institutional constituents. This view certainly acknowledges the existence of subcultures, but sees the relationship among the various cultural manifestations as mutually supporting thus highlighting, albeit implicitly, organizational-wide consensus and integration.

Whereas this literature review surfaces the dominant theoretical foundations, as well as paradigmatic assumptions and methodological approaches to examining culture in the Arabic scholarly literature, a further search on studies emphasizing subcultural relationships to the dominant culture in the specific context of higher education will provide more focus as they align closely to the research questions proposed here.

For a survey of educational research in the Arab world, the researcher referred to the database Shamaa. This database defines its mission as one that provides specialist and free internet access to researchers interested in examining the nature and scope of

educational research in the Arab world through peer-reviewed articles, Master theses, Ph.D. dissertations as well as various books and reports on the topic (Shamaa, 2018). Using the advanced search option and the keyword *organizational culture* identified at first its corresponding Arabic counterpart. In fact, two terms in Arabic seem to equate to organizational culture: (a) الثقافة التنظيمية, and (b) الثقافة المنظمة. A further search was conducted to identify the research that examined subcultures in educational institutions as well as its Arabic counterpart with however no results generated on both search dimensions. Consequently, the two Arabic counterparts of organizational culture were used to examine the nature of research conducted on organizational culture in the context of higher education. The search results generated a limited number of research on the topic two of which were readily retrievable, and these are Bin Zarah (2016), and Altahayneh and Wezermes (2008).

### **Examining Prevailing Organizational Culture**

The purpose of this research (Bin Zarah, 2016) is to examine administrators' perceptions of the type of organizational culture at a university in Saudi Arabia based on years of work, career grade, and educational qualifications. The researcher adopts a quantitative case study methodology using a questionnaire developed by her as a means of data collection. Based on four types of culture that the researcher retains from the scholarly literature, her findings suggest that administrators' dominant perceived culture is the bureaucratic culture with however statistically significant differences of the perceived culture according to the variables career grade, years of work and educational qualifications.

This research article embraces the characteristics of the anthropological-sociocultural lens of organizational culture guided by a functionalist-integrationist

perspective as confirmed at various levels. In fact, while defining culture as a set of shared beliefs affecting members' behavior and effectiveness, she argues that the importance of culture is in developing members' commitment to the institution as well as providing them with behavioral cues in reaction to occurrences within the institution. Additionally, at the outset of the study, the researcher argues in favor of a change of the institution's structure to alter members' perceptions of culture making it a supportive and innovative one. This fact suggests that culture is considered as an element mutually supporting other elements of the social system thus confirming an essential tenet of the anthropological-sociocultural lens.

### **The Relationship between Transformational Leadership and Organizational Culture**

The researchers' purpose was to examine the relationship between deans' transformational leadership and organizational culture as perceived by faculty members and teaching assistants in all colleges of physical education in Jordan (Altahayneh and Wezermes, 2008). Using a survey methodology, and two questionnaires, one that assesses the institution's culture and another that measures different leadership styles, their findings suggest a strong correlation between all the factors of transformational leadership and most dimensions of organizational culture while recommending a qualitative investigation for greater depth to understanding the reasons behind this correlation.

Without being explicit about their research lens and paradigm, the researchers seem to adhere to the functionalist-integrationist perspective. They depart from a definition of culture that emphasizes shared values and examine its relationship with transformational leadership as conceptualized in effectiveness indicators such as achieving goals and managing change.

## **Discussion of the Reviewed Studies**

Both articles seem to confirm Karami's (2018) findings of the characteristics of educational cultural research conducted in the Arab world. In fact, as discussed above, they stem from the single anthropological-sociocultural lens while guided by a view of functionalism that is particularly rooted in a positivist epistemology. In fact, Burrell and Morgan (1998) argue that functionalism is characterized by various epistemological shades with positivism at its extreme position. They contend that the permeation of German idealism theories, infused with a subjective view of reality, into the functionalist paradigm has created a least objectivist aspect of it forming a point of juncture with the interpretivist paradigm. This positivist aspect of functionalism may justify the absence of the concept of subcultures in Arabic educational research. In this context, Bess and Dee (2012) contend that the concept of subcultures rather emerges from a constructivist view of culture, one in which members' interpretations of organizational realities are divergent. As discussed in the introductory chapter, this investigation comes to fill the lack of research driven by an interpretivist epistemology as well as the absence of subcultural studies.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

This chapter will first start by describing the researcher's theoretical position that delineate the epistemological and paradigmatic choices guiding this research. The following sections will focus on explaining the research design and describing its procedures and tools. The three research questions that will be investigated in this study are:

1. As guided by Tierney's (1988) framework, what is the predominant organizational culture at AUB as framed in key organizational elements such as the vision, mission, academic policies, accreditation reports, and strategic plan?
2. Guided by Tierney's (1988) framework what is the culture that characterizes an academic department at AUB through the perception of three key departmental stakeholders who have held administrative positions in the department??
3. To what extent and in what aspects does the departmental culture align itself with the predominant organizational culture at AUB to enhance, contrast or be orthogonal to this organizational culture?

#### **Researcher's Theoretical Position**

The preceding discussion has illustrated the complexity of culture as a concept and highlighted the multiple approaches used to investigate it. This fact is not surprising however since these dichotomous approaches to studying phenomena have characterized many disciplines within the social sciences, accompanied by heated debates among researchers ranging from ontological to methodological issues (Martin, 2002; Burrell and Morgan, 1998). Consequently, in any research endeavor, the

researcher must delineate the assumptions guiding his inquiry explicitly so that the reader discerns and accepts the choices made by him throughout.

Although theoretical assumptions derive from overarching metatheoretical influences of ontological nature and may be explicitly or implicitly stated by researchers, this section will not outline such broad influences as they remain philosophical in essence and do not relate directly to the present research. The following subsections will rather focus on epistemological and paradigmatic choices as well as the ensuing assumptions about culture that are adopted at the onset of this particular research.

### **Epistemological Assumptions, Choice of Paradigm, and Perspectives**

The epistemology that will drive this research is one founded on the belief that reality is subjective and relativistic (Creswell, 2012). Consequently, multiple realities exist and can only be understood from the perspective of the participants involved in what is being studied (Burrell and Morgan, 1998). In this regard, the knower-researcher cannot act as an independent observer; on the contrary, he adopts a constructivist stance shaped by his socio-linguistic constructs and strives to lessen the distance between himself and the phenomenon under investigation through engaging participants' frames of reference. Objective reality, if it exists, is the result of consensually negotiated agreements and is located in the intersection of overlapping socially constructed realities (Bess and Dee, 2012).

Driven by these assumptions, Creswell (2013) argues that the researcher sets out on his research endeavor with an idiosyncratic worldview or paradigm consisting in the beliefs that will guide his inquiry.

The researcher will adopt the distinction described by both Burrell and Morgan (1998), and Creswell (2013) resting on the premise that epistemological assumptions remain an abstraction if viewed from a philosophical standpoint. However, these assumptions gel into a paradigm when they inform and justify the researcher's actions. The researcher will use an interpretivist paradigm informed by an anthropological-ideational view of organizational culture. The surveyed literature has confirmed the increasing use of this paradigm within cultural research. In fact, Cameron and Ettington (1988) argue that the symbolic paradigm is receiving increased attention in the published cultural research. Calás and Smirich (1987) as cited in Martin (2002) consider that in contrast to alternative positivist approaches, the interpretivist perspective has the potential of highlighting the cultural distinctiveness and creativity of the researched context. As discussed earlier, the researcher operating from this lens does not integrate the research context with a predefined analytical framework; cultural descriptions will rather emerge from the analysis through the exploration of participants' meanings. Additionally, the researcher adopts Martin's (2002) stance which considers that interpretivism seeks contextual understandings and shuns claims of generalizability. He also adopts Schultz's (1994) consideration that within an interpretivist context, meaning creation is an ongoing process and lies at the heart of a cultural investigation. These meanings are created through the interpretive processes of participants and can be idiosyncratic to each one thus transforming the organizational context into a symbolic domain in which such meanings shape actions. The researcher will use Martin's (2002) three-perspective theory of culture within the interpretivist paradigm as it will provide a solid theoretical framework that accounts for the possible diversity of data findings at both the institutional and departmental level providing deeper insights when analyzing



data. Although culture permeates all aspects of institutional processes, the researcher will depict cultural images guided by Tierney's (1988) six-dimension framework.

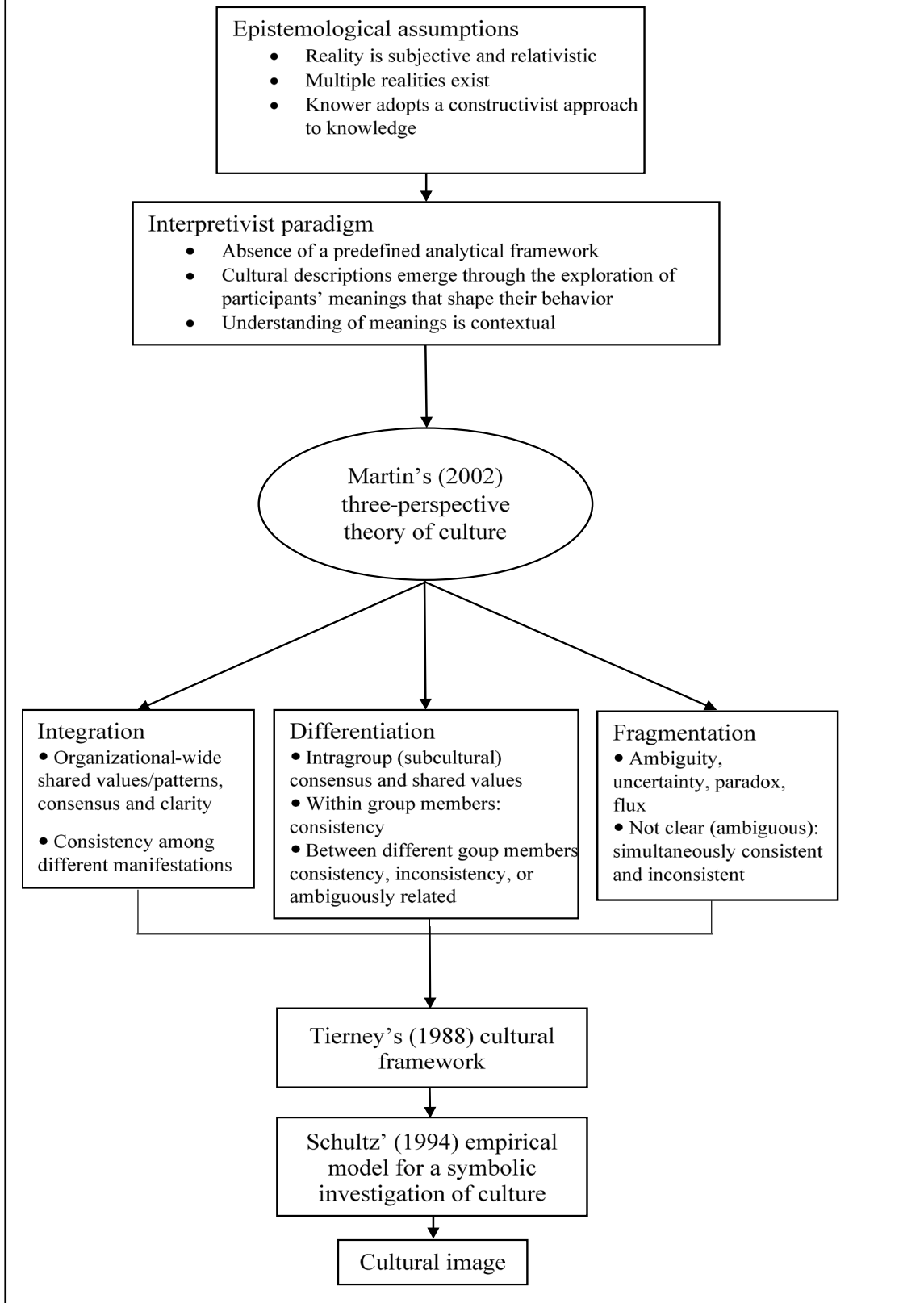
The researcher argues that understanding the cultural landscape of an institution occurs through the exploration of its cultural symbols. According to Schultz (1994), three types of symbols can be depicted in cultures: physical, behavioral, and verbal symbols. Examples of physical symbols can be architectural artifacts, documents of various nature, behavioral symbols are enacted in acts such as rituals or ceremonies, while verbal symbols can be myths, stories, and metaphors. After identifying a key symbolic expression, the researcher will detail and interpret the meaning or meanings attributed to the symbol and provide himself with a starting point to look for associated symbolic expressions. While symbols are typical avenues for understanding the culture of an organization, the researcher's task is to uncover the more general symbolic expressions represented by the relationships or patterns between the symbols. Such patterns represent the worldview or ethos of members and will ultimately allow leading to cultural understandings.

Whereas a multitude of cultural symbols exists in higher education, the researcher need not analyze all of them to describe the institution's culture. In fact, Schultz (1994) argues that within the symbolic perspective, the researcher selects few key symbols to serve as an analytical starting point in the interpretation of the culture. This restrained cultural breadth should, however, be offset by an attempt to attain in-depth meanings of cultural symbols.

Figure 3 summarizes the researcher's epistemological and paradigmatic assumptions coupled with Martin's (2002) perspective, as well as the way they will be operationalized.

**Figure 3**

*Epistemological, Paradigmatic and Three-perspective Theory Used in this Research*



Since the theoretical and empirical assumptions guiding this research have been clearly expatiated, formulating a definition of culture becomes a legitimate consequence as it advances a concise, yet cogent representation of these assumptions.

### **Defining Organizational Culture**

After delineating the theoretical assumptions that will guide this study, and based on Schultz's (1994) and Martin's (2002) definitions of culture, organizational culture here is defined as follows:

Organizational culture emerges from members constructing meanings of their organizational reality through interpretative processes while socially interacting with each other. This ideational cultural dimension materializes through various symbolic manifestations linked together by patterns of meanings that could reinforce them, be different among diverse organizational groups, and ambiguously related.

Viewed theoretically, this definition aligns with a central tenet of the anthropological-ideational lens, that of viewing organizations as cultures. In this context, culture is an ideational system that manifests in the products of minds of cultural members through their interpretation schemas. It also accounts for the diverse relationships that cultural manifestations may maintain among themselves being in harmony, partially conflicting, and ambiguously related.

### **The Choice of the Department as Subculture**

The researcher here argues that the examination of departmental subculture presents an appealing umbrella for the investigation of culture and advances an alternative for the traditionally examined subcultures in higher education; those of faculty, students, and administrators, at least for two reasons.

First, Walvoord, Carey, Smith, Soled, Way, and Zorn (2000) argue that the academic departments represent the crucial component of the core transformation processes of universities that converge faculty by disciplinary specialization (Bess and Dee, 2012) who in turn, relay these disciplinary values to students themselves. Consequently, the department acquires a status that transcends that of an academic incubator to be equally a locus of socialization where all members, faculty and students, contribute to shaping their socio-academic reality.

Second, the choice of the academic department allows for an examination of the alignment of a subcultural formation with the broader cultural context within which it exists. In fact, Becher (1987) as cited in Heidrich and Chandler (2015) considers that academic departments maintain between themselves strong boundaries that render them, similarly to marketing and engineering departments in business organizations for example, suitable for subcultural examination and the extent to which they may be culturally integrated, differentiated, or fragmented with this broader cultural context.

### **Research design**

Peterson and Spencer (1993) argue that their examination of qualitative cultural research in the realm of higher education has identified ethnographies and systematic case studies as the two commonly used research designs. The present research will use a case study design considered less cost and time-consuming (Peterson & Spencer, 1993; Creswell, 2013) and consequently more suitable for the limited scope of this MA thesis. While Peterson and Spenser (1993) advances that ethnographies require from the researcher a complete immersion and a minimum contact period of six months with the study site and its components, they assert that one advantage of case study designs is that they are short-term intensive. Martin (2002) argues that a short-term cultural

inquiry can warrant, even if moderately, a multi-faceted and deep understanding of culture that is worth striving for and can embed an ethnographic dimension when analyzing a group's culture (Merriam, 1998).

Yin (2009) contends that a case study design involves two overarching components: (a) the type of the case study itself in which the researcher specifies the unit or the multiple units of analysis thus determining his or her *case*, and (b) the design that involves the research itself as formed by its various parts that link together as a coherent whole. Conceptualized as a system delimited by boundaries (Merriam, 1998), and based on a similar study by Martin and Siehl (1983), the case in this research is the institution with the department being an embedded subunit. Consequently, and as aligned with Yin's (2009) four typologies of case study designs, the present research design becomes an *embedded case study design* characterized by two interrelated units of analysis in which within the same unit, attention is also directed towards a subunit. Yin (2009) equally argues that each level of analysis can be characterized by different data collection techniques.

As for the research design, Merriam (1998) considers that a case study design should first and foremost be guided by a theoretical framework that emerges from in-depth review of the literature and has the purpose of keeping the different parts of the report interconnected and homogeneous. The researcher here has already determined the conceptual framework that will guide this research (fig. 2) and will be used to examine the type and alignment of Tierney's (1988) cultural dimensions between the main unit of analysis, the institution itself, and the academic department as a subunit. Once the framework determined, Merriam (1998) argues that the selection of sample as well as

the gathering and analysis of data will be the remaining parts of the design. The following sections will address these parts.

### **Data Collection Procedures**

#### **Data Collection at the Institutional Level**

Prior (2003) illustrates eloquently the importance of documents in understanding culture in the higher education context. In fact, she argues that what characterizes a university in the first place is not its buildings or technologies; it is rather its charter and ensuing institutional documents that constitute its mode of operation. Additionally, the importance of documents as symbolic artifacts to the understanding of culture is further highlighted if looked at from an archeological perspective. In fact, in his discussion about analyzing “mute” artifacts, Hodder (2003) argues that without the only help of physical artifacts, it would be impossible to understand the culture of extinct civilizations.

Data was collected through identifying the key institutional documents that fit each of Tierney’s (1988) six cultural dimensions being Environment, Mission, Socialization, Information, Strategy, and Leadership as follows.

**Environment.** This dimension examines the way the university defines its environment as well as the way it reacts to environmental changes. Institutional strategic plans constitute a substantial source of information as they stem from a careful analysis of the environment based on which the institution will deploy its resources to ensure a permanent fit (Kotler and Murphy, 1981). Consequently, AUB’s strategic plan for the year 2016 downloaded from the university’s website was examined to depict the institution’s values with regard to its environment. The institution's academic strategic plan performance tracking as framed in the institutional document labeled Key

Performance Indicators was also examined in this dimension as it delineates essential indicators regarding students' learning experience, infrastructure and academic support, collaboration/engagement/outreach, scholarship/service, and enrollment plan in the process of implementing the strategic plan. Additionally, Yeager, Addam El-Ghali, and Kumar (2013) argue that vision statements are also an essential component of strategic planning as they provide a sense of direction to the institution in an attempt to meet environmental demands. Hence, the document entitled Provost Vision and Goals was equally examined within this dimension to illustrate the institution's values regarding its future vision. Kotler and Murphy (1981) additionally argue that the institution's mission statement is usually one that describes its relationship with the environment as it specifies the community it serves and its customers as well as the distinctive value that the institution proffers to potential customers as compared to similar institutions. Consequently, AUB's mission statement was equally used to extract data needed within this dimension. Eaton (2015) contends that the purpose of accreditation, as a quality review process undertaken by higher education establishments, is to ultimately serve the public interest. Although accreditation processes are recognized to be quality indicators, the fact that they facilitate the acquisition of funds from external entities and the transfer of students makes them also a key institutional document that regulates the institution's relations with the environment. Consequently, the institution's Self-Study report 2018 was also examined in this dimension since such reports serve usually to showcase compliance with accreditors' requirements. The examination of these key documents was not sufficient to develop an in-depth understanding of the institutional cultural landscape as mandated by the guiding framework explained above. Consequently, additional documents needed to be consulted to achieve the in-depth purpose of a

cultural inquiry. The process used to identify the additional documents is somewhat similar to snowball sampling, where the examination of one document identified the additional documents that were examined. Table 6 below lists in detail all the documents that were used in the Environment dimension.

**Mission.** In this dimension, the mission is examined to identify the values the institution wants to communicate to external audiences as well as the way its guides decision-making. The institution's mission statement is the obvious starting place for this examination while again the strategic plan and accreditation reports might serve to showcase how the mission guides institutional decisions. Naturally, the mission statement alone was not a sufficient source of information to surface senior administrator's cultural values that shape their perception of the institution's purpose. As explained above, a chain of documents was used for that purpose in which the examination of a document mandated the examination of another one associated with it. Table 6 below lists in detail all the documents that were used in the Mission dimension.

**Socialization.** As discussed in the literature review chapter, this dimension surfaces institutional practices meant to indoctrinate new members to survive in the institution. Tierney (1997) distinguishes between two paths for faculty socialization. An anticipatory socialization path that occurs in graduate schools and during job interviews and organizational socialization, when faculty become members of the organization, and can be assessed through various processes such as mentoring, promotion and tenure, teaching, research, and service expectations. In this dimension, four institutional documents were relevant here: (a) the guidelines for academic mentoring, (b) the faculty manual, (c) promotion procedures and guidelines, and (d) the tenure criteria. These documents were also part of a chain of documents needed for a further understanding of



the cultural landscape in this dimension. Table 6 below lists in detail all the documents that were used in the Socialization dimension.

**Information.** This dimension examines the way information is created and how it is disseminated. Tierney (1988) argues for example that a college president who holds open houses for discussing college-related issues is an example of information communicated bi-directionally. In the case of AUB, this dimension was investigated through the AUB president's perspective regularly emailed to the AUB community. Additionally, the institution's Self-Study report published in 2018 constituted a valuable source of information regarding the various ways the institution gathered and communicated information internally and externally. These key documents were also part of a chain of documents needed for a further understanding of the cultural landscape in this dimension. Table 6 below lists in detail all the documents that were used in the Information dimension.

**Strategy.** This dimension investigates primarily the decision-making process as well as the ensuing strategies devised for the implementation of decisions. Here again, the AUB's strategic plan discussed above as well as the website of the university senate provided a good basis to develop an understanding of what the institution values regarding this dimension as well as the document entitled faculty manual in its component delineating the various institutional bodies involved in the governance and decision-making process. In addition to the institution's strategic plans, the Self-Study report 2018 also constituted a valuable source of information as to how the institution develops the necessary strategies to respond to external environmental constraints. However, as in the previous dimensions, these key documents were also part of a chain

of documents needed for a further understanding of the cultural landscape in this dimension.

**Leadership.** This dimension investigates institutional leaders as well as the way they perceive and enact their leadership. Carpenter-Hubin and Snover (2013) argue that leaders’ fundamental role in higher education is the interpretation of goals and the creation of a vision to achieve them as well as the means to fulfill this vision. The authors equally argue that leadership in higher education is mainly assumed by presidents and provosts. Consequently, the AUB president’s perspective were useful in describing values relating to leadership within the institution. However, as in the previous dimensions, these key documents were also part of a chain of documents needed for a further understanding of the cultural landscape in this dimension. Table 6 below lists in detail all the documents that were used in the Leadership dimension.

Tierney (1988) acknowledges that the framework’s dimensions are overlapping in nature. Consequently, a document used as a primary source of data in one dimension can also provide valuable insights in the analysis in a different dimension.

Table 6 lists all the documents that were examined based on Tierney’s (1988) cultural dimensions.

Table 6

*The complete list of examined institutional documents relating to Tierney’s (1988) cultural dimensions*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Documents Used</b>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academic strategic plan 2014</li> <li>• Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking 2016</li> <li>• AUB Vision For 2030</li> <li>• Common Data Set 2017-18</li> <li>• Corporate Bylaws of American University of Beirut</li> <li>• Documents relating to various institutional events:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Developing the next generation of civic leaders</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

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Mission

- Graduating Students Contribute to Fingerprints Endowed Scholarship Fund
- Lobbying Policy Makers
- Institutional and programs initiatives:
  - AUB4Refugees Initiative
  - Continuing Education Center
  - Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative
  - Executive Education. Applying global knowledge locally
  - Ghata: Bringing Education to Refugees Informal Tented Settlements
  - Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center
  - Nature Conservation Center
  - Neighborhood Initiative
  - Portal for Social Impact of Scientific Research in/on the Arab World
  - TAMAM project
- Facts and Figures 2018
- Faculty Manual
- Integrated Academic Strategic Plan 216
- Mission Statement
- President's perspectives
- Provost documents:
  - In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research
  - LEAD initiative
- Self-study report 2018
- Written communications from the office of communications:
  - AUB and Energy Ministry sign MOU to promote cooperation in training and research in the oil and gas sector
  - Civic Engagement at Core of New Partnership Agreement
  - Week of celebration highlights the philanthropic nature of AUB
- Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking 2016
- Documents relating to various institutional events:
  - American University of Beirut Holds its First Collaborative Research Stimulus (CRS) Award Ceremony
  - AUB Alumni Chapter of Abu Dhabi presents AUB with generous donation
  - Effective Teaching and Learning in Higher Education
  - New York Giving Day Reception
  - Teaching Excellence Award

- Facts and Figures 2018
  - Institutional and programs initiatives:
    - Leadership, Equity, and Diversity Initiative
    - Neighborhood Initiative
    - TAMAM project
  - Integrated Academic Strategic Plan 2016
  - President’s perspectives
  - Provost documents:
    - In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research
  - Self-study report 2018
  - Bylaws of the Faculties
  - Common Data Set 2017-18
  - Department Chairs: Recruitment, Compensation, and Evaluation
  - Faculty Manual
  - Faculty resources:
    - General Information
    - Mentee FAQ's
  - Institutional documents:
    - About Orientation Program
    - Enjoying Lebanon
    - Orientation Agenda
    - Our Neighborhood
    - Suggested Areas of Mentorship and Topics of Discussion Between Mentor and Mentee
  - Manual for Department Chairs Roles and Responsibilities
  - Mentoring at AUB
  - New Faculty Information Handbook
  - Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Evaluation of Tenure Eligible Faculty Members
  - Provost documents:
    - Guidelines for Academic Mentoring at AUB
    - New Faculty Orientation
    - Schedule for “Tenure-Only” Applications
    - Schedule for Promotion Applications of Faculty Members in the “Clinical, Research and Practice Tracks
- Socialization
- About the Health 2025 initiative
  - Academic strategic plan 2014
  - Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking 2016
  - Admissions to AUB 2019-2020
  - Alumni Association: About WAAAUB
  - Alumni in the Faculty of Health Sciences
  - Annual Report of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 2014
  - Annual Report of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 2018
- Information

- Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2015
- Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2016
- Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2017
- Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2018
- Bylaws of the Faculties
- Centers and Research at a Glance
- Entering Student Survey
- Facts and Figures 2018
- Faculty Manual
- Integrated Academic Strategic Plan 2016
- Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center. K2P Center re-designation: K2P Center is re-designated as a WHO Collaborating Center for Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice for another 4-year term
- Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center. Mission, Vision & Objectives
- Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center. Special Training: From the Classroom to the Newsroom- Opinion (Op-ed) writing and effective media communication for the Faculty of Health Sciences faculty members and staff
- Knowledge to Policy (K2P) Center: Eastern Mediterranean Region to Host the Sixth Global Symposium on Health Systems Research in 2020
- Knowledge to Policy Center Media Bite
- Leadership, Equity, and Diversity Initiative
- Manual for Department Chairs Roles and Responsibilities
- Mission of the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment
- Mission statement
- Nature Conservation Center
- News and Media Relations of the Office of Communication
- President's perspectives
- Report of the Strategic Planning Unit for Enrollment Management and Student Services
- Self-Study report 2018
- Senate Bylaws
- Strategic Health Initiatives
- Systematic Review Center for Health Policy and Systems Research
- The Center for Research on Population and Health
- The Global Health Institute:
  - Director's Message
  - Towards the Establishment of a Global Health Institute in the Middle East and North Africa

## Strategy

- The Neighborhood Initiative
- Title IX Campus Climate Survey
- University Senate Annual Reports
- USFC Student Activities
- About the Global Health Institute
- Academic Strategic Plan 2014
- Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking 2016
- Annual Report of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences 2018
- AUB launches the Non-Governmental Organizations Initiative document
- AUB Policies and Title IX
- Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service: AUB engage
- Department Chairs: Recruitment, Compensation, and Evaluation
- Entering Student Survey
- Ghata: Bringing Education to Refugees Informal Tented Settlements
- Health 2025 initiative
- In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research
- Integrated Academic Strategic Plan 2016
- Leadership, Equity, and Diversity Initiative
- Manual for Department Chairs Roles and Responsibilities
- Media and Information Literacy Massive Open Online Course
- Mission statement
- President's perspectives
- President's Speeches, Messages, and Interviews
- Provost annual report 2016
- Self-Study report 2018
- Strategic Health Initiatives
- Strategic Planning Unit (SPU) for Academic Support
- Strategic Planning Unit for Enrollment Management and Student Services
- Strategic Planning Units (SPU) for Centers and Institutes
- The General Education Program
- The Global Health Institute Director's message
- Title IX documentation
- Towards a Healthier Beirut 2022
- Academic Strategic Plan 2014
- Academic Strategic Plan Performance Tracking 2016
- Announcement from the Board of Trustees: Unanimous Renewal of Dr. Fadlo R. Khuri as AUB President

## Leadership

- Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2015
  - Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2017
  - Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards 2018
  - Board of Trustees documentation
  - Bylaws of Worldwide Alumni Association of the American University of Beirut
  - Corporate Bylaws of American University of Beirut
  - History of the President's Office
  - In Pursuit of Excellence in Undergraduate Education and Research
  - Leadership, Equity, and Diversity Initiative
  - Mission statement
  - New Faculty Orientation: Message from the provost
  - Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Evaluation of Tenure Eligible Faculty Members
  - President's perspectives
  - Self-Study report 2018
  - Senate Bylaws
  - University Student Faculty Committee Bylaws
  - USFC Student Activities
- 

### **Data Collection at the Departmental Level**

Data pertaining to understanding the departmental culture was collected through semi-structured interviews of a purposeful sample of three key departmental stakeholders who have held administrative positions in the Department., One participant has an extensive serving period in the department within both an academic and administrative capacity. This historical perspective was valuable to the understanding of culture (Schein, 2010; Martin, 2002). The other two participants have also served for an extensive period in the Department within both an academic and administrative capacity.

The interviewees were approached by email to seek their consent to participate in the research study. The email provided a description of the research, explained its purpose, and specified the absence of any risks associated with the interview.

Additionally, the email ensured to the interviewees the confidentiality of the data

resulting from the interviews, their storage in a secure location, and informed them about the use of pseudonyms whenever quoting from the interviews was needed. The interviewees pseudonyms used in this research were Anthony, Samir, and Tarek. The interviews were conducted in every interviewee's office. The interview with Anthony lasted for about three hours divided into two interviews separated by one week. The interview with Tarek lasted also about three hours and was also conducted in two sittings separated by a week. The interview with Samir was about one hour and thirty minutes long and was conducted in one sitting.

The interviews started first with a brief paragraph that summarized the findings in the institution on every dimension of Tierney's (1988) framework. The interviewees were asked to comment on the institutional findings and provide their feedback on them. The interview questions were guided by Tierney's (1988) six dimensions and were meant to solicit the interviewees perceptions on the cultural values operating in the Department. These questions served to look for alignments as well as misalignments with the cultural values operating at the institutional level.

### **Data Analysis Procedures**

#### **Data Analysis at the Institutional Level**

A framework and an instrument were used to analyze the collected raw data resulting from the document analysis at the institutional level. The framework is based on Schultz' (1994) conceptualization of an empirical approach to cultural analysis and will serve to map out the path to follow to depict the cultural image on each of Tierney's (1988) six dimensions through the determination of various key symbolic expressions in every dimension. This framework provides equally a conceptual tool to associate the various key symbolic expressions together through an extensive



interpretative process until depicting the cultural image. The instrument is based on Bowen (2009) and Bengtsson's (2016) model for qualitative content analysis and will serve to identify the various symbolic expressions discussed above that will emerge from raw data. The two subsections below will discuss respectively the framework and the instrument.

**Symbolic approach as an analytical lens.** Schultz (1994) argues that a symbolic approach to cultural investigation relies principally on anthropologist Clifford Geertz's cultural views as depicted in his writings and uses his conceptual models to systematize this examination. In fact, concepts such as symbols, webs or patterns of meanings, worldviews and ethos as well as myths and metaphors have to be conceptually organized in a theoretical framework to render cultural investigation operationally possible.

**Symbols as an analytical point of entry.** At the bottom of this conceptual framework, gaining entry into understanding the culture of a group occurs through locating its cultural symbols. In this context, the researcher identifies key symbolic expressions as an analytical starting point to cultural interpretation and uncovers their symbolic representations and the shared meanings attached to them then looks for associated symbolic expressions in view of understanding the cultural landscape. According to Schultz (1994), the choice of analytical starting points for a cultural depiction "depends on general insights into which symbols are of special significance in the organization" (Schultz, 1994, p. 101). She equally contends that three types of symbols can be depicted in cultures: physical, behavioral, and verbal symbols. Examples of physical symbols can be architectural artifacts, documents of various

nature, behavioral symbols are enacted in acts such as rituals or ceremonies, while verbal symbols can be myths, stories, and metaphors.

**Worldview and ethos.** While symbols are typical avenues for understanding the culture of an organization, they only provide a starting step for this understanding. In fact, a cultural investigation that stems from a symbolic perspective assumes that the researcher's task is to uncover the more general symbolic expressions of worldviews and ethos represented by the relationships or patterns between the symbols. Worldviews are members' cognitive image of their reality depicted through metaphors whereas ethos reflects their moral and aesthetic attitude towards their world and themselves.

Delimiting members' world views requires the interpretation of several symbolic expressions. After having started with a key symbolic expression, determined its various symbolic representations and developed adequate interpretations to uncover its meaning, the researcher seeks to determine associated symbols for providing further interpretations and starting to uncover relationships between symbols for a greater depiction of culture. Depicting such associations will uncover the chains of meanings within the organization and help delimit members' worldviews thus determining the organization's cultural landscape.

The interpretation act lies at the heart of the symbolic approach to cultural investigation. Schultz (1994) invites researchers operating from this perspective to eschew a superficial empirical analysis and immerse themselves in the interpretation process through a continuous back-and-forth movement between the associations he makes and his data. The interpretation act follows a spiral-like movement in which further interpretations develop through interacting and asking new questions of the data

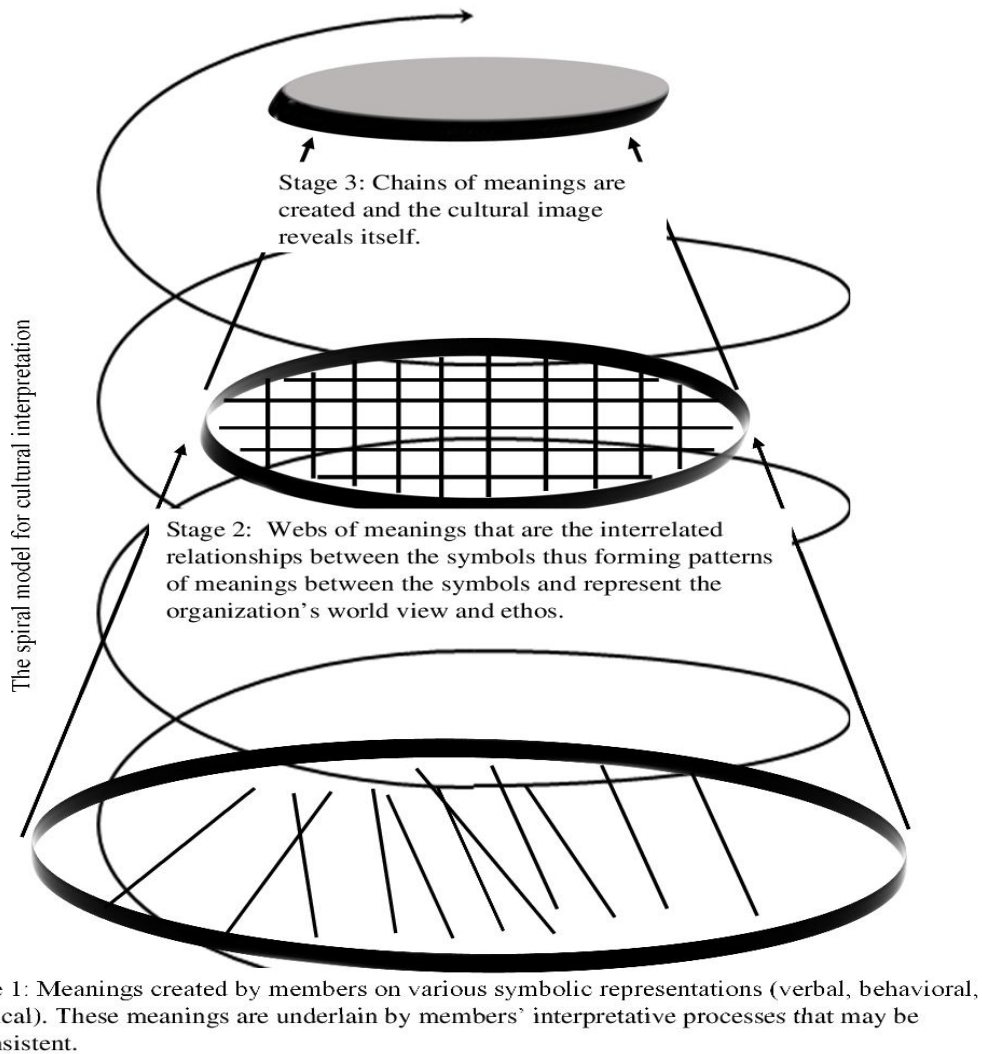
to surface additional symbolically defined concepts thus leading to further associations and rendering the cultural depiction closer to reality.

Schultz (1994) additionally argues that the prerequisite for an insightful interpretation of culture is a detailed description of symbols as aligned with Geertz' concept of thick description. Researcher bias can be avoided through a deeper dialogue with members and additional data collection. Schultz (1994) also emphasizes that an accurate depiction of the cultural landscape does not achieve the required depth without the researcher utilizing his own fantasies, and inner dialogues and images to uncover implicit meanings. While advocating for a depth stance rather than a scope one, Schultz (1994) explains the extent to which the researcher is supposed to develop the interpretation spiral. In this context, she asserts that the researcher's task is to delimit the patterns that will allow him to identify small cultural images while acknowledging that small spirals of interpretation and limited detailed accounts of certain symbolic expressions may warrant considerable insights into the culture of an organization.

Figure 4 conceptualizes the symbolic approach to cultural analysis.

**Figure 4**

*Schultz' (1994) Methodological Spiral of Interpretation*



*Note.* The methodological spiral on interpretation based on key symbolic expressions allowing for the depiction of culture.

**Process for Qualitative Content Analysis.** Whereas the key symbolic expressions are identified by the researcher based on general insights, the determination of their corresponding symbolic representations and the meanings that are attached to them requires the use of an additional instrument. This instrument embeds two phases and is based on both Bowen (2009) and Bengtsson (2016)'s approach for a qualitative content analysis.

**Phase 1.** At first, as recommended by Bowen (2009) a broad three-step iterative process with documents analysis that includes skimming, reading thoroughly, and finally interpreting was followed. The purpose of skimming is to identify in the data the relevant parts and organize it to address the research question. The result of this phase allowed for the retention of raw data considered directly relevant to the research questions.

**Phase 2.** In the second phase, the researcher adopted the model proposed by Bengtsson (2016) for a latent qualitative content analysis. In this context, Bengtsson (2016) proposes that the analysis goes through the four phases of decontextualization, recontextualization, categorization, and compilation while arguing that each phase should be performed several times to ensure the quality and trustworthiness of the analysis. What follows will explain the stages of this phase and then using an example, will delineate the manner they were applied to the data analysis in this research. The example retained here will use the Environment dimension of Tierney's (1988) framework and will be based on the symbolic expression of "Strategic Partnerships" that was identified as having a special significance to institutional administrators in that dimension. The illustration will be based on the raw data extracted from the institution's Self-Study report 2018:

"In January 2018, and for the first time in history, AUB and its sister Université Saint-Joseph, the two oldest institutions of higher education in Lebanon, signed a partnership agreement designed to allow the exploration of joint academic programs, the identification of joint funding opportunities, and student and staff exchanges... Collaborations with regional and international universities increase educational and research opportunities and enhance

knowledge-dissemination efforts... Collaborating with the business sector is also pursued. Mutually beneficial partnerships with the business sector provide training and employment opportunities for students and increase the use of best practices in industry” (AUB, 2018a, pp. 7, 15).

*Decontextualization.* Operationally, this stage supposes breaking down raw data into condensed meaning units that embed essential elements addressing somehow what the researcher is searching for. From there, occurs a first transformation in which the researcher develops codes from meaning units. Bengtsson (2016) argues that these codes can either develop inductively or deductively by being predetermined by the researcher. She equally recommends that researchers develop a coding list in which each code is explained in detail to ensure the reliability of the analysis and that the coding process be constantly repeated to increase the reliability of codes with the progress of the research. A closer examination of the raw data listed above allowed to determine several condensed meaning units and to develop primary codes in the path of determining more general categories. In fact, *increase educational and research opportunities, enhance knowledge-dissemination efforts, exploration of joint academic programs, identification of joint funding opportunities and student and staff exchanges, mutually beneficial partnerships, training and employment opportunities for students, and increase the use of best practices in industry* are all primary codes that allow for the development of a primary understanding of what senior administrators value when engaging in strategic partnerships.

*Recontextualization.* At this stage, the researcher examines raw data again to make sure that the meaning units and relating codes address and cover what is aimed for. In this process, Bengtsson (2016) argues that some parts of the original text will be

unused and consequently can be excluded from the analysis. While warning against researchers becoming attached to all the information contained in the text, she invites them to distance themselves from the text and relinquish unimportant data.

As explained above, this stage suggests re-reading the raw data in light of these primary codes to ensure that they capture the essence of the cultural values held by senior administrators in the context of strategic partnerships. In this example, the researcher decided to keep all these codes as they were all considered important for the development of a refined understanding of the cultural values that underlie strategic partnerships.

*Categorization.* Here the researcher divides the coded material into domains and starts developing categories and themes. A category provides a broader description of the code while the theme reinterprets in light of codes and categories the deep meaning embedded in texts. Bengtsson (2016) argues that both categories and themes should be “internally homogeneous and externally heterogeneous” (p. 12), that is consistent enough to allow the data to fit into a specific category or theme. A constant back and forth movement between meaning units and categories will help refine them further.

At this stage, the meaning units or primary codes resulting from the raw data were condensed in a way that allows to reduce the words without however losing the content of these codes. A closer examination of the condensed meaning units reveals that a value that underlies the approach to developing strategic partnerships is one in which this relationship with potential partners allows for both of them to grow together and enhances their capabilities thus amplifying their intervention capacity. The category that condenses best these meanings is Synergy. In fact, according to Merriam-Webster,

synergy is a “mutually advantageous conjunction or compatibility of distinct business participants or elements (such as resources or efforts)”.

Table 7 below summarizes the analytical process that allowed so far to determine the key symbolic expression as an analytical starting point to cultural interpretation, uncover its symbolic representation and the shared meaning attached to it.

Table 7

*Summary of the analytical process that allowed to determine the key symbolic expression, its symbolic representation, and the shared meaning attributed to it*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Key Symbolic Expression</b>	<b>Symbolic Representation</b>	<b>Shared Meaning</b>
Environment	Strategic Partnerships	Synergy	A mutually advantageous endeavor that produces a combined increased benefit that none of the partners can achieve individually.

The analysis of additional documents from the lens of strategic partnerships allowed for the determination of additional symbolic representations that uncover additional values related to strategic partnerships.

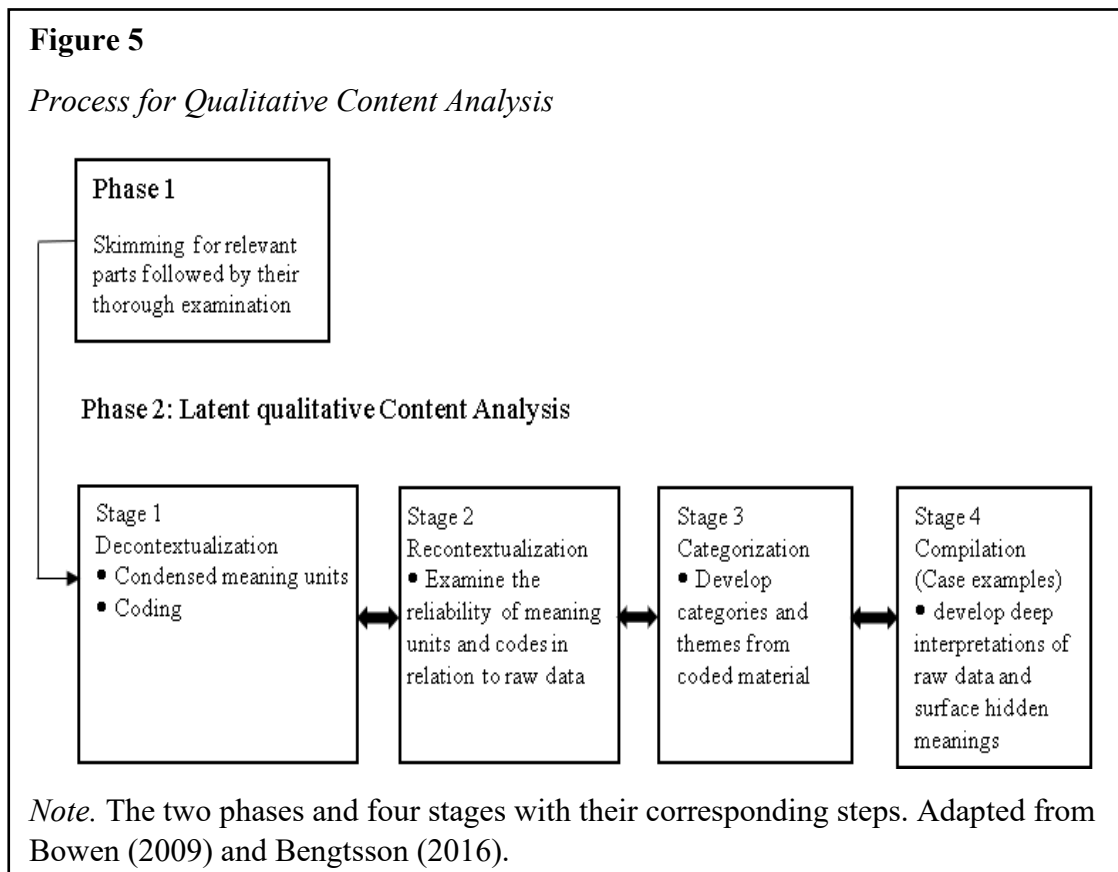
*Compilation.* Bowen (2009) labels this stage the development of case examples. Here, the researcher formulates a deep understanding of the researched problem even if through a descriptive lens. Bengtsson (2016) contends that the researcher immerses himself in the data to surface hidden meanings and can reproduce between quotations original text to illustrate his interpretation. At this stage, the researcher needs to examine his findings in the light of the corresponding literature to assess their validity.

At this stage, the researcher synthesizes the various symbolic representations of a symbolic expression and attempts to surface the more general understanding of the



cultural values that senior administrators attribute to a certain dimension. This stage in Bengtsson’s (2016) model joins the upper stages of Schultz’ (1994) spiral model for cultural interpretation represented in figure 4 above. In fact, according to Schultz (1994), the associations between the various symbolic representations will uncover the chains of meanings within the organization and help delimit members’ worldviews thus determining the organization’s cultural landscape. The compilation stage is detailed in the discussion chapter under the heading of Institutional Cultural Domains.

Figure 5 depicts the four stages and their corresponding steps as conceptualized by Bengtsson (2016).



### Data Analysis at the Departmental Level

The process explained above served to develop tables that included the symbolic expressions, representations, and their shared meanings in every dimension. To ensure

consistency in the later comparison process, these tables were next used as cultural guides in the attempt to identify the Department's culture and examine its extent of alignment with the institutional one. Interview data was organized according to these cultural guides.

### **Analytical Tool to Examine Alignment between Departmental and Institutional Culture**

The extent of alignment of the departmental culture with the predominant organizational culture at AUB to enhance, contrast or be orthogonal to this organizational culture was examined through using Hatch and Cunliffe's (2013) analytical comparative tool. As discussed earlier, Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) identify three types of relationships between a subculture and a corporate culture. In fact, a corporate culture and a subculture can have: (a) an enhancing relationship where top management values and beliefs are supported, (b) an orthogonal relationship in which a subculture develops its independent value-system without however conflicting with the corporate one, or (c) a counterculture in which a subculture openly confronts and challenges the values of the corporate subculture.

The outcome of this comparison is summarized in the chart below based on Tierney's (1988) framework in which the interpretations of each of the predominant institutional culture and the departmental one on each dimension will be cross compared.

Table 8 below represents the comparison chart.

Table 8

*Comparison chart between institutional and departmental culture based on Tierney's (1988) six cultural dimensions.*

Dimension	Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship		Institution	Department	Type of Relationship
Environment					
Mission					
Socialization					
Information					
Strategy					
Leadership					

This chart will help assess the extent to which values converge or diverge on each dimension. If the departmental culture aligns with the findings of the institutional ones on a dimension then the two cultures will be mutually enhancing. If the departmental culture adheres to the institutional values but observes a set of additional values on a dimension then the departmental culture will be considered orthogonal to the institutional one. If both cultures diverge on a dimension then they be considered countercultures.

### Quality Measures

Merriam (1998) argues that the two concepts that essentially account for the trustworthiness of qualitative research are the validity of the findings with both its internal and external aspects, and reliability. According to her, the internal validity of a research assesses the extent to which the research findings are congruent with reality whereas external validity examines the extent to which the findings can be applied to

different situations. Different terms have been coined in the scholarly literature for external validity. Creswell (2013) for example uses the term transferability in an interchangeable manner. Aligned with Creswell's (2013) stance on transferability, the in-depth analysis and detailed description that will be undertaken in this research will allow the readers to decide whether the findings can be transferred to other contexts due to shared characteristics.

According to Merriam (1998), reliability is a contested term when applied to qualitative methods since it has stemmed from quantitative ones and has adhered more closely to that perspective. She argues that qualitative researchers should instead be concerned with the consistency of the results generated from their data. From a qualitative perspective, instead of striving to ensure that the same results will be reached by other researchers when the investigation is replicated, the qualitative researcher's concern should be to question whether these results are consistent with the collected data.

This section will explain the way this research's trustworthiness is observed through implementing strategies meant to enhance its internal validity and consistency.

### **At the Institutional Level**

**Internal validity.** Document analysis as a standalone method of research may surface concerns about the validity of interpretations. In fact, researchers normally use documents as part of other artifacts with the purpose of converging evidence thus strengthening both the interpretations and conclusions. Although searching the literature for instances of research solely based on document analysis did not yield significant results, the articles that were retained as an example of such a research did not express explicitly any arguments about the validity of their interpretation. Consequently, in the

absence of other sources of evidence, the interpretations can be validated by observing two criteria.

First, in his analysis of how to confirm the interpretation of what he labels mute cultural evidence, and based on a pronounced archeological lens, Hodder (2003) argues that the validation of mute evidence rests on the two poles of coherence and correspondence. According to him, coherence occurs when interpretations reinforce themselves along the different levels of a theory and the extent to which these interpretations fit existing theories. The concept of correspondence becomes a natural outcome of the preceding statement and is enacted by a pertinence between data and theory. In what seems to be a similar logic, Bengtsson (2016) argues that one means of validating the interpretations is for researchers to correspond them to the scholarly literature and assess if they are logical or not. The close analysis of Tierney's (1988) findings when examining the culture of Family University based on his framework confirms the reasoning mentioned above. In this context, his interpretation of the two dimensions of socialization and leadership are consistent and mutually reinforce themselves. In fact, the president of the university was reported to have a particular style of communication based on frequent walks around campus checking on all staff, even those who worked in the cafeteria's kitchen while also cherishing an open-door policy when in his office. Within the socialization dimension, Tierney (1988) reports an overwhelming sense of friendliness where everyone knows and cares for each other while displaying concern for students' well-being. The interpretations on these two dimensions are complementary by nature showcasing a tight-knit community with an inclusive atmosphere. Viewed from a Geertzian perspective, the conceptualizations of the leadership dimension and that of the socialization one seem to overlap with each

other thus mapping an interrelated pattern of meanings across various symbols. By Hodder's (2003) terms, these two dimensions are both coherent and corresponding.

Second, Merriam (1998) argues that both *peer examination* and *researcher's biases* are also basic strategies meant to enhance the internal validity of the research. Consequently, in a second stage, institutional members who have an understanding of the predominant institutional values were asked to comment on the findings as a form of member's examination. Clarifying the researcher's assumptions and theoretical orientations equally contributes to enhancing the internal validity of the research. In this research, both of these tenets have been observed in detail in the section entitled *researcher's theoretical position*. Additionally, Schultz (1994) asserts that researcher's bias is controlled via a continuous dialogue between the researcher's interpretations and associations with the empirical data. In this research, as explained above in Bengsston's (2016) recontextualization stage, this dialogue was accomplished through constantly re-reading the raw data in light of the primary codes and symbolic representations that emerged to ensure that they capture the essence of the cultural values held by senior administrators in every dimension.

**Consistency.** According to Merriam (1998), *audit trail* is a strategy meant to ensure the consistency of the investigation. Here, the researcher has detailed above the way he reached his interpretations through delineating the way data was collected, symbolic expressions were retained and linked together leading eventually to the depiction of culture, as well as the way the cultural landscape was delineated in the Department and the means used to compare between institutional and departmental culture in every dimension.

### **At the Departmental Level**

**Internal validity.** According to Merriam (1998), *member check* which consists of relaying the researcher's interpretations to the individuals from whom the data originally emerged is equally a strategy used to enhance the validity of the findings. In this research, member check with a key departmental stakeholder was used to achieve such a purpose. As discussed above, researcher's bias was controlled via a continuous dialogue between the researcher's interpretations and associations with the empirical data.

**Consistency.** Audit trail as explained above will be used as a strategy to warrant the consistency of the interpretations. The various stages of the analysis process including the coding procedures were constantly monitored and reviewed by my thesis supervisor.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

This chapter will be divided into two parts. The first part will attempt to identify the cultural values of the institution on every dimension of Tierney's (1988) six-dimension framework based on an extensive review of various institutional documents. This identification is accomplished through key symbolic expressions that help surface an institutional value system on each dimension. The second part will report the cultural values at the department level that emerged from the interviews. The same symbolic expressions that emerged in the institution will be used to guide the narrative of the findings in the Department.

#### **Institutional Findings**

The narrative of the institutional findings will be based on Tierney's (1988) framework. These dimensions are: (a) Environment, (b) Mission, (c) Socialization, (d) Information, (e) Strategy, and (f) Leadership.

#### **Findings in the Environment Dimension**

This dimension examines the way the institution defines its environment. The surveyed documents have identified four components in the environment with which institutional stakeholders attempt to maintain durable relationships with. The findings below show that the interaction with these four components places the institution at the heart of an ecosystem in which all stakeholders impact and are impacted by each other. Furthermore, the institution uses symbolically its service capabilities and partnerships to increase its influence in this ecosystem relying mainly on structures that transform



theoretical knowledge into practical applications and strategic collaborations to maintain and enhance this influence.

The following will be divided to two subsections. The first subsection will present the environmental components of the institutional culture, and the second one will delineate two symbolic expressions used by institutional leadership as a means to engage and impact the external environment.

**Environmental Components of the institutional culture.** AUB institutional culture can be depicted through examination of the following components of the environment dimension as depicted in AUB's institutional documents: (a) suppliers, (b) customers, (c) competitors, and (d) special interest groups such as the institution's alumni.

**Suppliers.** The suppliers are those who provide AUB with the resources that are crucial to AUB's transformative process as depicted in its mission statement. Based on institutional reports, there are two key human resource suppliers needed for the accomplishment of this transformative process: high schools, and institutions that provide qualified faculty members. Funding institutions are identified as suppliers of financial resources.

High schools represent an instance of such suppliers, as the source of yearly incoming undergraduate students. AUB's geographical span of undergraduate recruitment seems to stretch over the local and regional context, and to a lesser extent, an international one. In fact, a total of 626 school visits and fairs destined to recruit undergraduate students were conducted locally and within the Middle East region in 2016/17 (AUB, 2018a). AUB recruitment efforts are focused on attracting bright students regardless of their economic situation. Recruitment efforts occur through

sending admission officers to visit local and regional private schools to explain admission processes or inviting schools to visit AUB campus where relevant admission information is explained (AUB, 2018a). In an attempt to be economically inclusive, recruitment efforts target also public high schools. The concern for remaining an economically inclusive institution that welcomes bright students from modest socio-economic backgrounds is abundant in the president's messages and speeches (Khuri, 2017d; Khuri, 2016g; Khuri, 2017j; Khuri, 2018d). The admission of academically qualified students from the public schools is made possible through the many scholarship offerings available at AUB (AUB, 2108a).

Industries and businesses are equally potential suppliers of AUB students. In fact, its Continuing Education Center or the Executive Education initiative the institution offers programs that are meant to develop the skills of professionals in their various fields (AUB, 2018a; AUB, n.d.-q).

At the level of the faculty, there is no explicit mention of suppliers of human resources in the surveyed documents. However, the criteria the institution uses to grant tenure reflect the institution's desired characteristics needed in recruited faculty members. In fact, the primary goals of reinstating tenure at AUB is articulated as an attempt to "enhance and enforce AUB's position as the premier liberal arts institution in the Middle East" (AUB, 2018a) and make it a "world class research institution" (AUB, n.d.-f; AUB, 2014). The desired characteristics of faculty members who will be eligible for tenure are "top faculty who can offer high-quality and high-impact research and... explore new areas of inquiry, focus on innovative scholarship, and set long-term research agendas" (AUB, 2018a). Moreover, the Tenure criteria also depicts the

university interest in ensuring a long-term commitment of qualified faculty members which is associated with institutional improvements and sustainability (AUB, 2014).

On the other hand, suppliers of funding resources constitute a major part of its environment and the relationship the university establishes with those suppliers shape its culture. In fact, AUB leadership have sought to extend further the “act of giving” beyond scholarships offered by funding institutions into developing a “culture of giving” in which giving is not occasional or bound by a timeframe but becomes a core institutional value that underpins its educational programs as well as other extracurricular activities. In one of his perspectives about fundraising efforts, the current president notes that “the best example of a significant collective gift is the Fingerprints drive, which solicits small contributions—just \$25—from final year students as a senior gift; giving something back to the University as they leave to apply the knowledge and skills they have developed at AUB” (Khuri, 2017p).

Based on the surveyed documents, scholarship offerings are either provided in-house such as the Liberal Arts Scholarship (AUB, 2018a), or through partnerships with external funding programs (AUB, 2018a). AUB’s senior leadership has conceived of a strategic design of institutional scholarships offered by four major funding programs in which scholarships go beyond the surface provision of financial aid to include a rich educational experience that contains elements of civic engagement, psychosocial support, and career guidance and education (AUB, 2018a; AUB, n.d.-h). These “transformative scholarships” (Khuri, 2016f) contribute to the fulfillment of the institution’s mission in accepting diversity through inclusiveness and to graduate civically responsible leaders (AUB, n.d.-a). Another type of scholarships is offered by funding institutions that serve as a bridge for students such as PhD candidates to access

a larger network of international funding organizations (Khuri, 2016f) providing greater institutional visibility abroad.

Additional funding opportunities are also provided from an internal collaborative effort. In fact, endowed scholarships such as the Fingerprints scholarships where students can donate before they graduate towards the education of other students through financial aid offerings is an instance of a self-sustained scholarship funding (AUB, n.d.-ca).

**Customers.** Customers include evidently students, but understood broadly, they also include the organizations that employ AUB graduates and the communities that benefit from the institution's service through outreach activities.

Despite an unstable local and regional political and economic context, the current president of AUB notes on multiples occasions the university's aim of "increasing the number and diversity of enrolled students" (Khuri, 2016f). As a result, students' enrollment has witnessed an increase averaging 3.3% in 2017/2018 in comparison to a relatively steady increase of 2.4% in the two previous academic years (AUB, n.d.-1). Whereas there may be several factors that can explain increased enrollment in challenging times, the strategic use of scholarship offerings coupled with an appealing local and regional institutional image might indeed explain this increased enrollment.

AUB pride itself of the quality of its graduates and their high employability. Institutional reports emphasize in several instances the QS graduate employability report published in 2018 that ranked AUB 41 globally as "most reputed and attractive universities among employers in the world" (Safa, 2017), from a total of 600 universities around the globe, and first in the Arab world and MENA region, among 26 universities (AUB, 2018a; Safa, 2017). The profile of students, as the customer base of

AUB, is shaped by certain characteristics that the university seek and nurture. Diversity and inclusiveness are the two characteristics that abound in institutional rhetoric and the current president's speeches when discussing students' desired profile (for example AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2018b; AUB, 2016; Khuri, 2016a). This emphasis on both characteristics aligns with the university's mission for fostering a respect for diversity (AUB, n.d.-a) but also stems from a common institutional belief that a diversified body of students, especially at the cultural level, is essential to prepare students to function successfully in their careers and are the landmark of "transformative" communities. The diversity sought by institutional administrators are not just at the nationality level, but also encompass socio-economic, gender and gender identity, political, religious, racial/ethnic, sexual orientation, and disabilities attributes (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2017g). In fact, the president of AUB notes in one of his perspectives that

“our international diversity is a factor that we have always prized at AUB and we will explore every available avenue to restore a situation that approaches the magnificent pre-war days when some half of students came from outside Lebanon. The mixture of students of assorted backgrounds is the best preparation for what you will encounter in the outside world; it makes you more resilient, more tolerant, and more capable of success, especially in the polyglot atmospheres that mark the most healthy, crosscutting, and transformative communities” (Khuri, 2017q).

Another aspect of the profile of the students as the university customers, is their level of preparedness to excel in the labor market satisfy its needs and respond to its demands or arising challenges (AUB, 2018a). This is reflected in the academic programs offered. In fact, these programs are numerous and varied at the undergraduate

level but are surpassed by an even greater number of offerings at the master's degree level (AUB, 2018a) that seems to have resulted from the institution attempt to respond to what was perceived as a surging need for graduate degree from its environment. However, the increase in the number of master's students till 2017 remains lower than that of the master's programs offered (AUB, 2018a), a fact that has necessitated the review of the relevance of the entire range of offered programs before suggesting new ones (AUB, 2018a). It also resulted of more cautious step taken with newly introduced programs. For example, when the institution has engaged in new modes of instruction that emphasize a hybrid and bended mode of learning, it restricted its online offerings to a single diploma offering due to the local legal constraints that are still imposed on online learning (AUB, 2018a).

AUB's outreach activities are many and have emerged in response to environmental demands and resulted in broadening its customers base. The examined institutional rhetoric is permeated with examples of organizations and communities that are consumers of these outreach activities. Such activities are underpinned by a social engagement goal aligned with the service component of the institution's mission and are aimed at improving the living conditions of the various communities they target through the dissemination of best practices grounded in research findings.

At the local level, there are around 70 socially-driven initiatives across AUB faculties, institutes, and centers (AUB, 2018a) that reflect decidedly the institutional leadership's will to use what the institution does "extraordinarily well" (Khuri, 2016a), its research capability edge, in favor of providing support to various communities, addressing challenges and developing appropriate strategies in response to them. Several initiatives underpinned by social engagement are either umbrellaed by AUB's

Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) or conducted in collaboration with it. CCECS serves marginalized communities by providing them with change opportunities through education for example (AUB, 2018a). This is achieved through building bridges with concerned AUB members, humanitarian agencies, and policymakers thus developing a comprehensive framework that addresses their difficulties (AUB, 2018a). Some examples of other outreach initiatives include the Neighborhood initiative which engages AUB members with the Ras Beirut community through research and outreach activities (AUB, n.d.-n), the Nature Conservation Center that researches about floral and faunal species and disseminates findings to educate concerned communities (AUB, n.d.-o), while some health-driven initiatives include the Knowledge to Policy Center which uses research findings to develop health-related policies (AUB, n.d.-p), and AUBMCares which provides healthcare services to marginalized communities (AUB, 2018a).

AUB's outreach activities have also broadened its customers base beyond the local front. Globally, the Syrian refugee crisis for instance that stemmed from the recent conflicts in Syria has yielded great social and economic challenges not just locally, but also internationally. In response to this crisis AUB increased its reach and engaged in the dissemination of new knowledge through shedding light on the regional and international community's shortcomings in addressing such crises. When celebrating AUB's Faculty of Health Sciences participation in a commission established by a prestigious international medical and health journal in response to the flawed humanitarian reactions to the Syrian crisis (AUB, 2018a), the current president of AUB notes that "the Commission can point the way towards a better future" by identifying such failures, "not just for Syria but other centers of crisis, addressing the areas of

greatest need and how to improve them for the long haul” (Khuri, 2016h). In addition, and as part of AUB response to this emerging environmental demand, the AUB4Refugees Initiative, which is a hub that brings together 60 different projects that target the refugees and their hosting communities (AUB, 2018a), deals also with the refugee crisis and their hosting communities and aims at developing appropriate practices that respond to it grounded in impactful research and achieved through partnerships and collaborations (AUB, n.d.-m; AUB, 2018a, Khuri, 2017o).

In recognition to the scale and impact of its various initiatives, AUB was designated as “most civically engaged campus in the Middle East and North Africa in a first regional annual competition held by the Ma’an Arab University Alliance” (AUB, 2018a). To senior leadership, AUB’s international recognition as materialized in various ranking reports, its faculty and students’ expertise in producing knowledge to address various challenges combined with its possession of the necessary resources to enact its service mission (Khuri, 2018b) attests to the broadened customers base of AUB. .

In the same context of outreach services, businesses and industries are equally consumers of AUB services. In fact, the surveyed documents depicts the existence of outreach initiatives that are tailored to employees from the private sector such as the Executive Education program meant to develop the business and managerial skills of businesses’ executives (AUB, n.d.-q), and the Corporate Social Responsibility Initiative that raises the awareness of business leaders as to their responsibilities, beyond their shareholders, towards their employees, communities and the larger environment (AUB, n.d.-r).

In addition, AUB customer base, includes also institutions and professionals seeking either consulting or skills development services via the office of the Regional



External Programs. Older adults who seek to further their education through the University for Seniors (UfS) initiative founded in 2010 (AUB, 2018a) constitute an example of customers who have reportedly experienced health improvement, became socially or politically more active, or even were encouraged to pursue further graduate studies (Khuri, 2017r).

On the other hand, AUB has also forged partnerships with the business sector for the purpose of providing employment opportunities for students while ensuring that best practices are constantly performed in the industry (AUB, 2018a). One practical example of linkage between organizations as customers and AUB materializes in AUB-iPark, an innovation park initiative that encourages entrepreneurship by helping students in developing innovative business ideas and transform them into profitable and scalable businesses (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2017m). To the current president, the importance of this initiative is that it forms a hub under which individual innovation-driven initiatives are pulled together for greater synergy and constitutes “an experiential educational platform, a much-needed research window, and a means of sourcing venture capital to fund entrepreneurial projects” (Khuri, 2017m). Community projects aimed at serving marginalized communities that are developed by AUB students and supervised by concerned faculty members may transform into viable NGOs as they have their various stages carefully planned by students including setting the design, evaluating the projects’ needs, and determining the required budget for their viability. In fact, to the current president of AUB, students involved in these projects will “go on running such activities after graduation” (Khuri, 2017h). For greater learning and impact, AUB’s senior leadership has sought to bring various initiatives considered “impressive but individual pockets of activity” (Khuri, 2016c) under one strategic umbrella as a means

to achieve greater synergy (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016). In fact, for that purpose, the current president of AUB when announcing the appointment of an executive director for strategic partnerships considers that her role will be “to consolidate these efforts and amplify their effect”, “identify the potential synergies with external partners among the private sector network, NGOs, government, and other universities, and... motivate those constituencies to form cross-cutting strategic partnerships” (Khuri, 2016c).

Public entities and institutions can also be perceived as customers of AUB services. For example, sharing research findings with various government bodies (AUB, 2018a) serve as a basis for the promulgation of new practices and policies relative to the researched area. Institutional documents report equally the signing of memorandum of understandings between AUB’s faculty of Engineering and Architecture with the ministry of Energy, and the faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences with the ministry of Tourism as a means to “promote economic and sustainable development” (AUB, 2014; AUB, 2018a). The institution’s impact on policy-making is also materialized through faculty members’ role across the university as consultants for national policy makers (AUB, 2014; AUB, 2018a). This impact transcends the mere advisory role to become a means to lobby against health risk habits such as smoking for example. In this context, AUB, through the members of its Tobacco Control Research Group, used various forms of interventions and pressure tactics to raise awareness among political figures inviting them to the implementation and enforcement of Law 174 (AUB, n.d.-s). Forms of intervention included addressing letters to a national security entity inviting it to use a donation offered by a local tobacco company to raise awareness among the national security members against the deadly effects of smoking and to provide treatment for its members who suffer from smoking-related diseases, or asking

members of government and parliament to sign enforcement letters in support of the enacted smoking bills and display them online as well as networking with influential individuals for that purpose (AUB, n.d.-s).

**Competitors.** These include other institutions that compete for the same customers such as students, businesses/industries, or communities. AUB's foremost challenge in terms of competition is affordability. In fact, acknowledging this fact, AUB's current president notes that "AUB fees are out of reach of many families, and represent a significant barrier to our core belief that the advantages bestowed by a top-class university education must not be confined to those already endowed with wealth, access and privilege" (AUB, 2014, 2018a, 2018b; Khuri, 2017d, 2018b).

However, the local context denotes a pervasive presence of competing institutions of higher education that are more affordable but offer, to varying degrees, a lesser quality of education, constituting a serious competition in a context coupled with a difficult economic situation that weighs heavily on parents' educational choices for their children. In the closing session of a strategic planning meeting the president discusses the concern over the quality-fee dichotomy expressing his worries "about the number of low-end, poor quality, cheap purveyors of college diplomas in this space. If people are selling diplomas for a quarter of what we cost, and a family has no resources, at the end, we still have to remain competitive" (Khuri, 2016a). This situation has presented AUB a two-sided challenge of not compromising quality while remaining competitive by attracting intellectually-capable students from modest socio-economic background, and has concomitantly raised a sustainability concern for AUB as denoted by the president's speculating about the institution's sustainability when "competition isn't better" and "students really are making decisions based on economic decisions" (Khuri, 2016a).

The use and expansion of institutional scholarships is considered a gateway to resolve this dichotomy (AUB, 2018a) by not compromising the quality of education and allowing the institution to expand its recruitment efforts targeting new students' markets abroad.

Another facet of the competition faced by AUB is reflected in the concern expressed by the current AUB's president as the institution's visibility compared to other competitors. Devising better institutional marketing strategies seem to be one solution to face that challenge. "We also have to worry about becoming invisible in the Arab world" notes the president, "as institutions enter the space that will spend a far bigger percentage of their budget on marketing" (Khuri, 2016a). Consequently, the university invested in subscribing to web-sellers serves mainly to diversify the students' body through attracting international students (AUB, 2018a) as an efficient marketing tool that ensures the institution's visibility regionally and globally.

Beyond the traditional scheme of competition that exists between similar institutions, AUB has opted for an alternative framework based on building strategic partnerships with some other universities where both involved parties are outstanding in what they offer consequently achieving a level of synergy that positively impacts their stakeholders (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2018b; AUB, 2016; Khuri, 2017j). These partnerships "provide training opportunities and cater to academic exchange and collaboration" (AUB, 2018a), and "enhance knowledge dissemination efforts" (AUB, 2018a). The current president of AUB discusses in several written addresses the importance of establishing such partnerships.

*Alumni as special interest groups.* AUB keeps a strong relationship with its alumni and involves them in external as well as internal operations relating to its

functioning and sustainability. The institution has 68,000 living alumni with 60 chapters around the world (Khuri, 2018h). Most alumni are members of government, the private sector or other nongovernmental organizations and spread globally across 115 countries (Khuri, 2018b). AUB maintains formal contact and communication with them through the Worldwide AUB Alumni Association (AUB, 2018a) and engages them in several internal as well as external processes and activities related to the institution. The strong connection with alumni is maintained through the Office of Alumni Relations and involves them in supporting the university's mission.

Internally, senior leadership engages its alumni through allowing them to participate in the institution's governance. In fact, three of the university's board of trustees' members are elected by its global alumni population (AUB, 2018a). Institutional administrators equally seek alumni input through committee memberships or surveys on various internal matters such as obtaining feedback on key position assignments, assessing their extent of awareness of AUB's mission statement among other stakeholders or their perception of their learning experience at AUB and the extent to which they were exposed to educational practices that impacted it (AUB, 2018a). Through acts of philanthropy, and fundraising campaigns, alumni also contribute to reinforcing the inclusiveness of AUB by helping students from modest socio-economic backgrounds be part of the university (Khuri, 2018e). To strengthen further its bond with alumni, institutional leadership organizes various social activities on-campus including attending concerts and other celebrations (Khuri, 2018h).

Externally, the role of its alumni community, as envisioned by the institution's senior leadership is primarily to serve as the institution's "emissaries" (AUB, 2018a, p. 88) globally promoting its mission and values (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, alumni

constitute a safety net for AUB graduates facilitating their transition to the work labor directly by providing them with job opportunities or assisting them in finding one (AUB, 2018a). In fact, in AUB's sesquicentennial celebration speech, the current president of AUB addresses the institution's alumni telling them "We're going to be counting on you more and more than ever to create opportunities for our wonderful group of, I am going to call them citizen soldiers, who are our students. They are going to go out and make a difference as you have. We need you to provide more opportunities for them" (Khuri, 2016e). Additionally, the role of alumni is further reinforced through the newly launched online alumni mentoring platform where fresh graduates can get career-related advice from older alumni.

Senior leadership's perception of the role of alumni extends that of providing graduates with work opportunities. It rather espouses a strategic dimension when viewed as a supporting ecosystem in which alumni members maintain connections among themselves to produce various forms of benefits geared towards the institution and society (AUB, 2018a). "We ask our alumni", says the current president of AUB in one of his perspectives, "to lend a helping hand, not only as internship providers and employers, but also as mentors and peers in a mutually supportive ecosystem where ideas are forged that can change our societies for the better" (Khuri, 2017d).

***Summary of the environmental components of the institutional culture.***

The findings explained above place AUB at the heart of an ecosystem that maintains among its four elements complex interactions among themselves in relation to the institution.

According to the explanations above, industries, businesses, and high schools were all considered as instances of suppliers thus impacting the survival and

sustainability of the institution. However, these same organizations that ensure AUB's survival are equally its customers by being consumers of its services. In fact, in job fair events organized at AUB, these organizations, stimulated by employability ranking reports, either employ AUB graduates or benefit from the in-house professional skills-development programs that target employers in various types of organizations (AUB, 2018a).

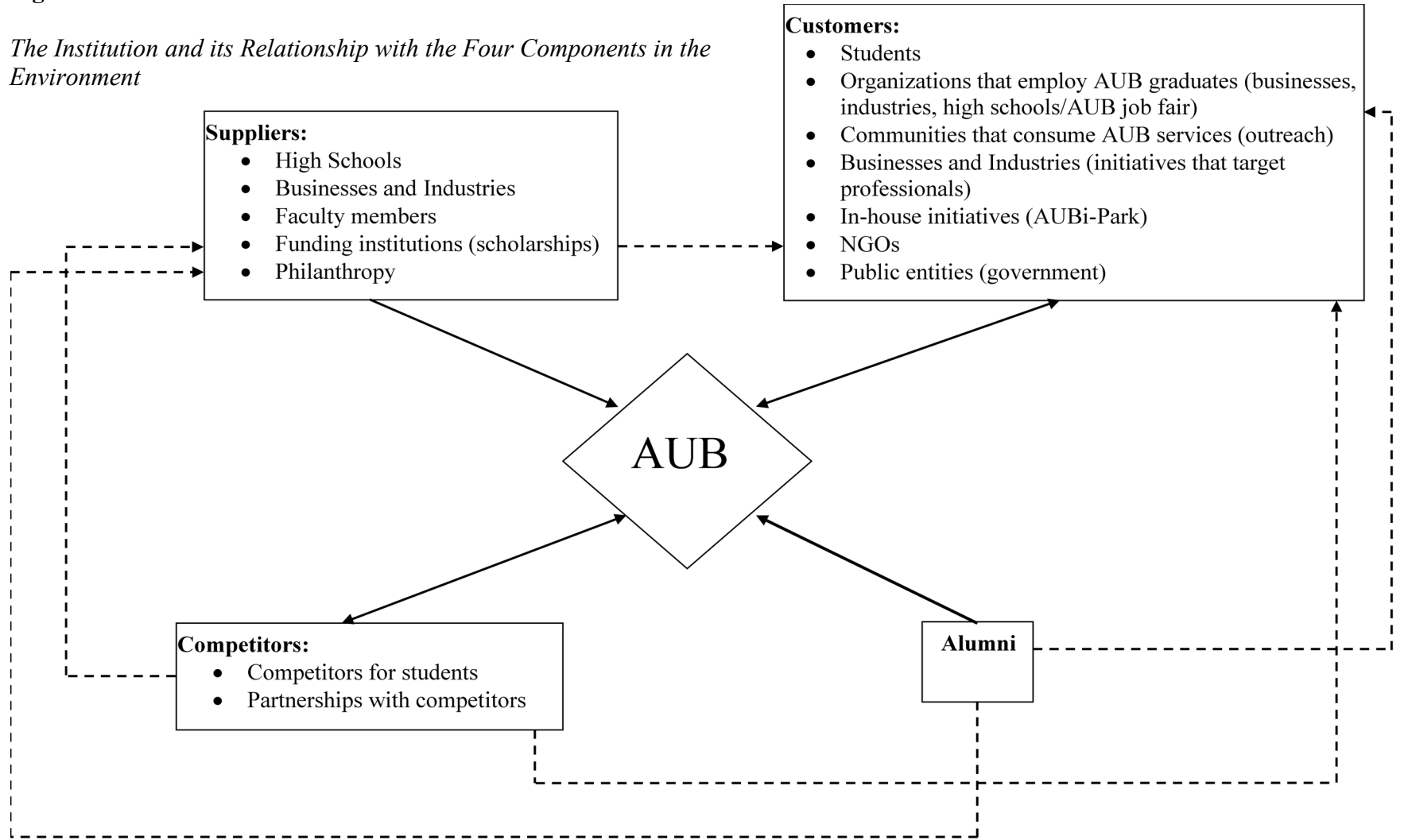
Funding entities as suppliers of financial resources that are crucial to the institution's sustainability for providing excellence in education impact AUB's service offered to various communities, its customers, as these financial aids include in most cases requirements of social engagements in favor of underserved communities (AUB, n.d.-h). The same scholarships offered by the funding institutions allow AUB to enhance its ability to recruit intellectually capable yet financially disadvantaged students vis à vis its competitors (Khuri, 2016g). Partnerships built with peer institutions help improve and develop the services that AUB offers to various communities. In fact, the partnership between AUB's Faculty of Health Sciences and the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Johns Hopkins University is perceived by institutional leadership as "a powerful partnership in policy, research, practice, and research" (Khuri, 2017j) meant to improve "the health of vulnerable populations in the Global South" (Khuri, 2017j). Through job fairs (AUB, 2018a) or encouraged by various speeches from the president (Khuri, 2016e; Khuri, 2017d), alumni who are the founders and owners of businesses become customers of AUB when they employ the institution's graduates. Funds supplied to AUB through philanthropic acts are equally undertaken by the institution's alumni (Khuri, 2017h).

Figure 6 below summarizes the relationship of AUB with the four components of the environment as well as the links that they maintain among themselves as they shape the culture of the institution.



**Figure 6**

*The Institution and its Relationship with the Four Components in the Environment*



*Note.* Relationship of AUB with the four elements of the environment as well as the links that they maintain among themselves in relation to the institution.

**Symbolic expressions of the environment dimension.** Further analysis of the four components of the environment dimension of the institutional culture and the relationships of influence among them reveals two key symbolic expressions of this dimension: Service and Strategic Partnerships. Both of the words “service” and “partnerships” appear prominently in the surveyed documents and have a high aggregated weighted percentage. However, retaining them as symbols is not simply shaped by a statistical outcome, they are rather symbolically used by institutional administrators to enhance AUB’s relationship with its environment as will be explained in each subsection. Table 9 below represents the weighted percentages of these words usage in the documents.

Table 9

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Service	392	0.46%
Partnerships	223	0.26%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

***Integral/Impactful service.*** Service is an act that is associated with almost all institutional functions internally and externally. Consequently, service acquires a symbolic value that shapes not just the unique identity of the institution in terms of the service provided but also becomes a powerful metaphor as a symbol of impact and change. However, the present subsection will examine it in relation to AUB’s external environment as depicted in figure 6 above.

Service to the environment is a core institutional undertaking. From a broad perspective, it defines one of the main purposes of AUB as found in its mission statement (AUB, n.d.-a). It is heavily noted in the senior leadership discourse as a defining quality of the institution itself. “I’ve seen time and again people stretch out

their hands”, says the current president of AUB in one of his speeches, “create new projects, go serve individuals educationally, medically, and socially in so many ways to make a difference. That’s really the basis, the DNA if you wish, of this University” (Khuri, 2016e). From the perspective of senior leadership, the service in which AUB’s constituents engage themselves in and which contribute to the uniqueness of AUB as a service-providing institution, is the fact that it provides an “impactful service” (Khuri, 2017t), an “extraordinary service” (Khuri, 2016d), or an “integral service” (Khuri, 2018b; Khuri, 2018d).

The description of the four cultural components showcases the extent to which AUB’s actions towards its environment are underlain by the concept of service. For instance, from the perspective of suppliers, the Center for Continuing Education or various other initiatives that target professionals from businesses and industries are considered as a service offered to them meant to develop their skills in diverse areas. From a customers’ perspective, the various types of outreach activities are also a service meant to improve the status of marginalized communities among others, whereas scholarships can be considered as a service addressed to allow financially underprivileged customer-students to receive an AUB education. One of the purposes of collaborations and partnerships with competitor institutions are meant to increase the impact of community-based teaching (AUB, 2018a) while the employment of fresh graduates can also be considered as a service to alumni-owned businesses as AUB has equipped them with the required knowledge and developed in them the necessary skills during their learning journey to succeed in the labor market.

Moreover, research, the core capacity of the institution, seems to underlie to a significant extent the service act of the institution. In fact, the 2018 Self-Study report

reads that the enactment of the service mission of AUB is considerably related to its research activity. This is accomplished through sharing research with public and professional entities, this “substantial research activity” (AUB, 2018a, p. 19) being directed towards fulfilling the service mission of the university while emphasizing both the practical and contextual aspect of the research activity (AUB, 2018a).

Further analysis of institutional rhetoric and senior leadership documents have surfaced six representations of service as a cultural symbol the external environment dimension. The relatively important number of codes that define each conceptualization shows an acceptable amount of agreement by key institutional stakeholders about their meanings.

Table 10 below represents these six symbolic representations and their frequent mention relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations. It is essential to observe however that these symbolic representations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and they developed based on the dominant understanding provided in the coded information.

Table 10

*The six symbolic representations of Integral/Impactful Service and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Service</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Impact	~ 35%
Caring	~ 7%
Transformation	~ 16%
Influence	~ 10%
Feedback	~ 18%
Collaboration	~ 14%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all six symbolic representations.

The following subsections will explain the different symbolic representations according to a sequence of Service meanings.

*Caring.* The strategic plan encourages the identification of and engagement in research that focuses on addressing critical contextual issues (AUB, 2016). The missionary undertones of this aspect influenced most probably by the religious background of AUB's founders, stem initially from a sense of concern, caring, for the well-being of others. AUB's leadership emphasizes the importance of engraining within its members this caring dimension. In fact, the current president of AUB notes that the institution seeks to instill in its students a sense of "concern for those less fortunate" and "compassionately considers not only the strengths, but the needs of all members of its community, including in areas of mental health, career opportunities, and family security" (Khuri, 2018b). Moreover, being evidence-based endows the service with a potential success rate. In fact, when talking about the program offered by the Health and Wellness Center to help smokers quit their habit the current president of AUB notes that its "success rate is substantially higher than the international rate for similar programs (40% compared to 32% generally)" (Khuri, 2017l). Care for the fate of marginalized and underserved people materializes through other medical initiatives such as AUBMcares for example (AUB, 2018a). From a broader health perspective, the AUB4refugees initiative that builds on research findings and translates it into community-based teaching delineating best practices to ease the suffering of displaced people (AUB, n.d.-m) reflects compassion for the misfortune of these people. In fact, in one of his perspectives in which he talks about a forum devoted to this initiative, the current president of AUB notes that "the room was genuinely buzzing with compassion and enthusiasm as our researchers and practitioners presented some of the 64 groundbreaking projects being undertaken by AUB teams with Syrian refugees and host communities in Lebanon" (Khuri, 2017o).

The Neighborhood Initiative as a service is equally driven by a concern for the livability, vitality, diversity, and health (AUB, 2018b) of AUB's proximate community, that of Ras Beirut. Consequently, the university mobilizes its various resources including multidisciplinary research for the betterment of this community (AUB, 2018b). Similarly, the TAMAM project is underlain by a care dimension and observes the starting requirement of an "extraordinary service" (Khuri, 2016d) of using research-based evidence for school improvement (TAMAM, 2019). To institutional leadership, the caring dimension has allowed for the sustainability of this service through making "durable connections with more than 40 schools across the Arab world" (AUB, 2016d).

*Transformation.* For service to be an impactful act, raw theoretical knowledge that constitutes the core competency of a college should be transformed into a practical and concrete application that can be consumed by various beneficiaries. The transformative act is intertwined with the institution's purpose as denoted in AUB's self-study report reading that "substantial research activity is geared towards fulfilling the service mission of the university in areas such as education, agriculture, medicine, public health, business studies, engineering, and environmental studies" (AUB, 2018a, p. 19). According to institutional rhetoric, these transformations gel under organized structures commonly labeled centers, initiatives, groups, and projects. In many instances, these structures are an independent entity with clear identifiers such as known leadership and staff that has defined tasks as well as a particular website. In fact, AUB's Self-study report reads that the 34 current centers or initiatives have a director and/or co-director, a steering committee or advisory board with representatives from the private sector (AUB, 2018a). The Neighborhood initiative for example has a webpage that delineates a clear mission, goals, and vision as well as documentation about the

research and outreach activities that serve its mission (AUB, n.d.-n). Similarly, the Continuing Education Center has a well-defined structure with a director and staff that facilitates the transformation of raw resources into tangible services (AUB, n.d.-x). TAMAM project is equally an instance of a structured initiative since it states a strategic vision with clear plans that aim to use research-validated knowledge for school improvement (TAMAM, 2019). The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service serves also as “a hub to link theory and practice by harnessing the expertise of AUB students, faculty, and staff to tackle the most pressing challenges facing underserved communities” (AUB, 2018a). In the context of institutional scholarships, the service-learning opportunities provided to students by the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service is considered by institutional leadership as a “transformative leadership training...that help access community-based projects” (Khuri, 2016g). The AUB4refugees initiative can even be considered an example of a meta-transformation structure since it constitutes a platform that gathers under it and coordinates more than 60 projects targeting the refugees and hosting communities (AUB, 2018a).

Institutional rhetoric affirms that the characteristic of transformation structures is their ability to allow for sustainable relationships with the environment through the services offered. In fact, the Ghata project designed by the Center for Civic Engagement and Community service has allowed for a long-term intervention in providing refugees with informal settings for their educational needs (AUB, n.d.-w). Similarly, The TAMAM initiative has sustained its relationship with the communities it serves. In both examples, the sustainability of the service resides in bringing the expertise of

institutional stakeholders outside institutional boundaries. This usually results in establishing long-term relationships with the adherents who increase with time.

*Collaboration.* is a means to achieve sustainable impact through the development of centers of research excellence underpinned by collaborative and interdisciplinary research (AUB, n.d.-i). According to AUB's strategic plan, effectiveness and efficiency in engagement and outreach services is achieved through various centers that combine the efforts of all university faculties and schools (AUB, 2018a). The Self-Study report equally stipulates that centers "initiate and enhance collaborative and interdisciplinary research that leads to sustainable impact" (AUB, 2018a).

The Neighborhood initiative for example is a collaboration between faculty members and students from various disciplines, as well as the members of the Ras Beirut community to improve, among other things, the livability in the area through proposing evidence-based plans to reduce traffic congestions for example (AUB, 2018b).

Whereas collaborative research may not necessarily imply one that is interdisciplinary, institutional rhetoric underlines the importance of the interdisciplinary aspect of collaboration. In fact, in several instances, collaboration is sought to exist across disciplines while engaging the expertise of various faculty members and expected to leave a tangible impact.

The earliest mention of interdisciplinary research found in the institutional documentation published on the AUB website can be traced to the provost report submitted to the Board of Trustees in 2009. In fact, in this document, interdisciplinary research is was introduced then as a newly added section to the department



chairpersons' manual in which chairs were expected to evaluate "interdisciplinary research and its weight in the promotion process" (AUB, 2009; p. 2) suggesting that interdisciplinary research was already conducted during that period, however being a novel approach to research that was still not integrated in the promotion process of faculty members. In that same report, in another paragraph entitled "Interdisciplinary Research Centers", the provost relays the explicit will of supporting

"interdisciplinary degrees and research programs through introduction of policies that promote collaboration among faculty and clarifies ownership of these programs between Faculties. Promotion procedures and criteria will be revised to factor in interdisciplinary research in the evaluation of faculty members' files for promotion" (AUB, 2009; p. 4).

The word "interdisciplinary research" is pervasive in the 2018 Self Study report which states that one of the pillars of the Boldly AUB capital campaign is to support "interdisciplinary innovation and entrepreneurship, solidifying community relevance, and ensuring sustainability" (AUB, 2018a; p. 5). At this point institutional rhetoric, 9 years after the mention of interdisciplinary research in the provost report to the Board of Trustees, has established clear connections between it, innovation, and especially its use in the context being relevant to the communities through outreach, and most importantly as being a means of ensuring both the sustainability of the service and the institution itself. The report states that in 2018, there are several "interdisciplinary institutes and centers, all addressing societal issues and making a significant impact" (AUB, 2018a; p. 7).

This progressive mention of interdisciplinary research and collaboration transcends the fact of it being merely a "written" institutional objective and develops an

increased awareness within stakeholders as to its impact on the aggregation of institutional capacity through developing synergies across disciplines, into becoming an institutional value that is linked with an enhanced institutional capacity and an improvement of image and identity.

The importance given to interdisciplinary research in institutional rhetoric finds also echo in the periodic perspectives of the current president. In fact, to him, interdisciplinary research is also a staple of innovation, large-scale and multi-year endeavor (Khuri, 2018f), it paves the way for greater impact such as the enactment of a new law. In fact, Collaborative interdisciplinary research between faculty members in mechanical engineering, chemistry, public health, medicine, and economics led to the promulgation of a law on tobacco control (AUB, 2014). Similarly, internal collaboration allows for the diversification of the service provided. For example, a collaboration between AUB's Issam Fares Institute, the Faculty of Health Sciences and the AUB4refugees initiative aimed at developing "a program of research and education that addresses the challenges of public service provision, community cohesion, and sustainable value creation in areas and districts of Lebanon with high numbers of refugees (Khuri, 2017j).

At its extreme, the collaboration conceptualization is seen as a potential synergy in which much greater benefits can be reaped by all collaborators. When discussing the centrality of internal collaborations among various AUB centers in the context of announcing the appointment of a director for strategic partnerships the current president notes that "everybody recognizes that AUB community members have done groundbreaking work to improve the lives of those around us through impressive but *individual* [emphasis added] pockets of activity such as the Neighborhood Initiative,

Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service, Nature Conservation Center”. It will be the directors’ role to “lead the drive to consolidate these efforts and amplify their effect” (Khuri, 2016c).

*Impact.* The transformation and collaboration symbolic representations pave the way for the service to be impactful. Impactful service appears to be at the essence of the institution’s purpose or constitutes the DNA of the university (Khuri, 2016e) especially as depicted in its founder’s famous motto “so that they may have life and have it more abundantly” (AUB, n.d.-x).

According to institutional rhetoric, impact has various meanings that adhere to a large extent to the delivered service producing a type of enduring change towards a better condition. This better condition is underpinned by improvement such as promoting the health of serviced communities for example (AUB, 2016), facilitating change in marginalized landscapes (AUB, 2018a), addressing a community need such as rural community development and learning (AUB, 2018a) or improving the proximate local environment (AUB, n.d.-n).

Although the service aims at producing change in a specific practice within a specific locus, ultimately, it is also expected to sustain and spread this change towards a broader locus and produce an aggregated effect that contributes to the improvement of the larger society. The broad impact of the service on the larger society is emphasized repeatedly in the institutional rhetoric and the president’s written addresses. In fact, in a speech in which he discusses the TAMAM project , the president emphasize that it has ultimately an even greater purpose, that of spreading “the transformation of educational practices and governance structures” (Khuri, 2016d) in all schools across the region “like the ripple effect” (Khuri, 2016d) while ultimately placing again schools’ role at

the center of their communities and allowing all community members “to become their best possible selves” (Khuri, 2016d). Similarly, he points out elsewhere that an impactful service may lead to a renewal of hope either through empowering individuals by helping them to achieve future career aspirations as in the case of refugee students for example (AUB, n.d.-w) or through a critical life-saving medical intervention (Khuri, 2017s).

Besides leading to the transformation of practices, an impactful service underpinned by research evidence targets the improvement of factors behind the practices themselves, such as policies. In fact, the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group that combines interdisciplinary research evaluates existing policies on tobacco use but also helps develop new ones regarding various aspects related to smoking such as its taxation, not just locally, but also regionally and which work has led to the formulation of new law on smoking (Khuri, 2017l). In a similar vein, impact materializes when the institution shares its research findings with various governmental and non-governmental establishments and uses them as basis for the establishment of new policies and practices (AUB, 2018a), or lobbies for the change of others (Khuri, 2017l).

Institutional rhetoric considers that institutional impact is also perpetuated by alumni themselves. In fact, senior leadership seeks to maintain close ties with its alumni community and views it as a part of a “supportive ecosystem” the contributes with the institution to the betterment of societies (Khuri, 2017d).

*Feedback.* In many instances, feedback from the environment is received in the form of recognitions to the impactful service that was provided by AUB. In fact, the CCECS services resulted in ranking AUB as the “most civically engaged campus”

in the MENA in a first regional annual competition held by the Ma'an Arab University Alliance in 2015" (AUB, 2018a) and the GHATA project "received the Honorary Award at the SXSW EDU Learn by Design competition held in Austin-Texas" (AUB, 2018a) and was also shortlisted for the World Innovative Summit for Education Award (AUB, 2018a) whereas the University for Seniors was also shortlisted for being one of the most innovative initiatives that targets senior population by the World Health Organization in middle income countries globally (Khuri, 2017r). The university's efforts through its various initiatives meant to address the refugee crisis was recognized in 2016 by MacJannet Prize for Global Citizenship award (AUB, 2018a).

The feedback on provided services also serves to enhance the institution's image with its environment. In fact, in the context of fighting smoking addictions, AUB's perceived image by external stakeholders "was fundamental in attracting media support and getting policy makers, parliamentarians, and ministers to sign up and formulate a law which was state-of-the-art in terms of encompassing the available evidence and the international conventions which Lebanon has ratified" (Khuri, 2017l). The accreditation of institutional programs and centers (AUB, 2018a) can equally be considered as a feedback on a provided service meant to enhance the image of the institution.

Feedback allows for adaptive, or self-improvement reaction by the institution. This concern for self-improvement is underlined by the current president of AUB noting in one of his perspectives that "we've started to review those areas where we feel we can improve, where we can grow, we've never lost sight of the mission which is to make a difference for those less fortunate, to make the lives of all more abundant" (Khuri, 2016e). Physically, this happens when investments in the building of new facilities or the renovating of existing ones as well as investing in new resources stem

from the need for the university's services to achieve greater impact (Khuri, 2018d). Additionally, the roles of the CCECS, the Nature Conservation Center, and the Neighborhood Initiative were expanded with time for a better alignment with their mission (AUB, 2018a). Within similar veins, institutional administrators are currently devising a plan to review the role of current centers and examine their extent of alignment with the institution's strategic priorities (AUB, 2018a).

*Influence.* Influence goes beyond the mere effect of impact. In fact, AUB's ambition through its impactful services and as expressed by its senior leadership is to shape the environment according to its own model of ideals and values. The term influence itself through delivered services is evidenced in several places in the institutional rhetoric. For example, the research directed towards the enactment of institutional service serves ultimately to "influence public and scientific policy and practice" (AUB, 2018, p.19). In this context, influence suggests relaying to the environment a value-system of evidenced-based policies and practices deemed as a trustworthy answer to address challenges. In fact, the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group that combines interdisciplinary research does not evaluate existing policies on tobacco use but also helps develop new ones regarding various aspects related to smoking such as its taxation, not just locally, but also regionally and which work has led to the formulation of new law on smoking (Khuri, 2017l). This law does not only relay externally a social institutional value, but also imposes it as a value to be endorsed by society.

When talking about the launching of a new master plan, the current president of AUB considers that the institution's purpose through its services, is ultimately to "help build Arab civil societies" (Khuri, 2016f), "model a fair and just society" (Khuri,

2018b) and striving towards a “fair and better tomorrow” (Khuri, 2018b) thus highlighting implicitly the influence that AUB intends to exercise on its environment. Similarly, the current president considers that the institution’s role is to shape the future of the region (Khuri, 2017d) thus also expressing an implicit message of influence. Another instance of implicit yet direct link between the institution’s services and influence as perceived by institutional leadership is the current president of AUB noting in one of his perspectives that

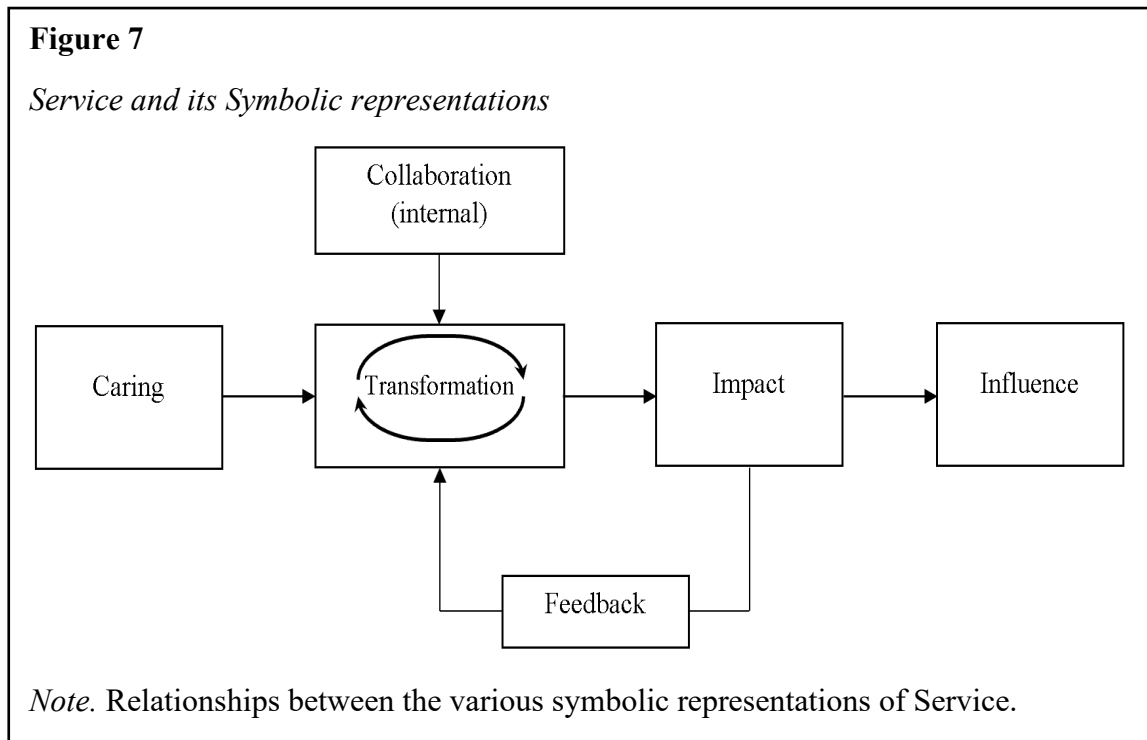
AUB embraces its purpose as a role model of a fair, just and inclusive mini-society whose values are not under assault *but are so powerful that they permeate and enrich the societies around us* [emphasis added]. This is why we put such emphasis on gender equality, on free elections, on dialogue and transparency and will continue to do so. This is why we are prioritizing our efforts to create a more sustainable built environment that enhances collaboration, fosters creativity, and allows for exchange of ideas (Khuri, 2017d).

The influence overtone does not just permeate the president’s speeches, they are also explicitly stated in the institutional rhetoric. For example, one of the benefits of being an AUB student is the ability of graduates to “lead, guide, influence, and shape the organizations and societies that they become part of” (AUB, 2018a). Furthermore, AUB students are ones who are taught to become change agents to influence their larger societies (AUB, 2018a). Institutional rhetoric links the concept of becoming agents of change to service when students are expected to engage in civic engagement opportunities (AUB, n.d.-ci).

Additionally, institutional rhetoric confirms the current president’s assertion and considers that the launch of the capital campaign, is one of the strategic goals of the

institution, will ultimately serve to “having more impact on local and regional communities” (AUB, 2018a).

Figure 7 below summarizes the relationships between the various symbolic representations of Service as explained above.



**Strategic partnerships.** Partnerships allow AUB administrators to establish long-term and sustainable relationships with the external environment in order to achieve greater local, regional and global impact. Partnerships acquire a symbolic dimension that allow the institutions to impact further the external environment when combined with the “strategic” qualifier.

Developing such partnerships is mentioned prominently in institutional documents (AUB, 2014; AUB, 2016; AUB, 2018a) and considered as a path towards achieving “synergy in areas where all partners are outstanding” (AUB, 2018a). In a recent speech addressed during an orientation session for new faculty members, the current president



emphasizes the importance of partnerships considering them as the emergent mission of any university to ensure sustainability and impact: “gone are the days when university was a place with two missions, teaching and research, a third mission has emerged to build partnerships outside to achieve societal impact” (Khuri, 2018d). The number of relationships that AUB has weaved with its external environment is noteworthy. In fact, senior administrators have developed linkages with more than 300 institutions from various sectors including peer institutions, international organizations, the private sector, and civil society organizations (AUB, 2018a).

The analysis of institutional rhetoric and senior leadership documents have surfaced four symbolic representations of strategic partnerships as a symbol used by senior administrators to act on the external environment. Table 11 below represents these four symbolic representations and their frequent mention relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations. These symbolic representations are not necessarily mutually exclusive, and they developed based on the dominant understanding provided in the coded information.

Table 11

*The four symbolic representations of strategic partnerships and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Strategic Partnerships</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Similarity	~ 11%
Synergy	~ 64%
Sustainability	~ 20%
Innovation	~ 5%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all four symbolic representations.

*Similarity.* Strategic partnerships within AUB seem to emerge from partners who have common characteristics. Such characteristics can materialize in a common interest. In fact, when signing a partnership agreement with a local peer institution, the current president notes that the agreement reflects a “shared focus on

high-quality research and world-class student experience” (Khuri, 2018i). In the context of civic service and engagement, the GHATA project is the enactment of a partnership between the CCECS and three other civic institutions driven by a shared concern for ensuring change in regions affected with major crises with a special emphasis on education (Abou Melhem, 2018). In the medical domain, the Health 2025 initiative launched by the university’s medical center aims at developing strategic partnerships with “local, regional, and global stakeholders who share the University’s commitment to public service and innovative research” (AUB, 2014).

Similarity materializes also in perceived quality or status as a common characteristic. The self-study report notes that “the university administration has recently sought to build its partnerships strategically, as a path to synergy in areas where all partners are *outstanding* [emphasis added]” (AUB, 2018a, p. 7).

Age of the institution can also be considered as an aspect of similarity that acts as a catalyst for a strategic partnership as it is associated with significant expertise and know-how. When discussing the partnership with a peer local university the self-study report mentions explicitly that this agreement joins “the two oldest institutions of higher education in Lebanon” (AUB, 2018a, pp.7-8) underlining deliberately the age of both institutions.

*Synergy.* A strategic partnership is one in which the partnership is a mutually advantageous endeavor and produces a combined increased benefit that none of the partners can achieve individually. Synergy as a conceptualization based on this interpretation is prevalent in institutional rhetoric and presidential discourse (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2014; Khuri, 2018j). Strategic partnerships with peer institutions allow for increased opportunities in developing educational practices and research through

exchange of expertise as well as better dissemination of research findings (AUB, 2018a), thus mutually benefiting both partners.

Strategic partnerships with external partners combine the advantage of the university's knowledge and expertise with the operational support of a donor. Within the civic engagement context, the GHATA project discussed above joins CCECS' technical expertise in impactful community engagement that combines under one umbrella the efforts of various AUB faculties when targeting underserved communities (AUB, n.d.-aa) with the logistic and financial help of key external partners (Abou Melhem, 2018; AUB, n.d.-w). The TAMAM project is a mutually beneficial collaboration between AUB and the Arab Thought Foundation (AUB, 2018a) that fulfills both institutions' mission of service especially in the context of achieving sustainable development (AUB, n.d.-a; Arab Thought Foundation, 2019a) through combining the research and technical expertise of the former (TAMAM, 2019) with the financial support of the latter (Arab Thought Foundation, 2019a). Similarly, partnerships with public institutions as enacted in memorandum of understanding between the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture and the Ministry of Energy signed in 2014 advantaged both signatories since it promoted "exchange of expertise, capacity building, training opportunities, and sharing of research and data in the field of gas and oil" (Office of Communications, 2014; AUB, 2014). Moreover, creating partnerships with businesses and the industry provides the mutual benefit of creating job opportunities for graduates while ensuring the use of best practices by them (AUB, 2018a).

The combined increased benefit of a synergy emerges as having a multiplier effect. In fact, when discussing strategic partnerships, institutional rhetoric and

presidential discourse always indicate maximizing the expected impact of the partnership. The outcome of the partnership between the CCECS and external partners within the GHATA project has a magnified effect providing displaced individuals with “a *holistic* [emphasis added] restorative built environment that makes high quality education accessible, increases knowledge attainment, reduces level of distress, and nurtures hope among displaced and refugee communities” (AUB, n.d.-w). Moreover, the magnified effect is often accompanied by an innovative contribution. For instance, the partnership with Oxford University’s Ashmolean Museum allows for the development of a joint initiative

to prepare the *largest and most comprehensive* [emphasis added] open access database of all coin hoards from the Roman Empire, between 30 BC and AD 400. The study of these hoards *extends far beyond a history of coin production* [emphasis added] to *shine a light* [emphasis added] on trade, diplomacy, ideology, technology, and economic conditions” (Khuri, 2018k).

The purpose of the AUB4refugees initiative is to bring together 60 projects involving partnerships with several internal and external stakeholders “to increase the impact of research, practice, and community-based teaching” (AUB, 2018a). The partnership between the Faculty of Health Sciences and the medical journal Lancet allowed for an understanding of the global health impact of the Syrian crisis and claims the mobilization of a *stronger* [emphasis added] international response to it AUB, 2018a).

*Sustainability.* AUB’s strategic partnerships assume the enduring of the expected impact. In this context, the current president of AUB notes in one of his perspectives that external institutional collaborations are aimed at creating “a more

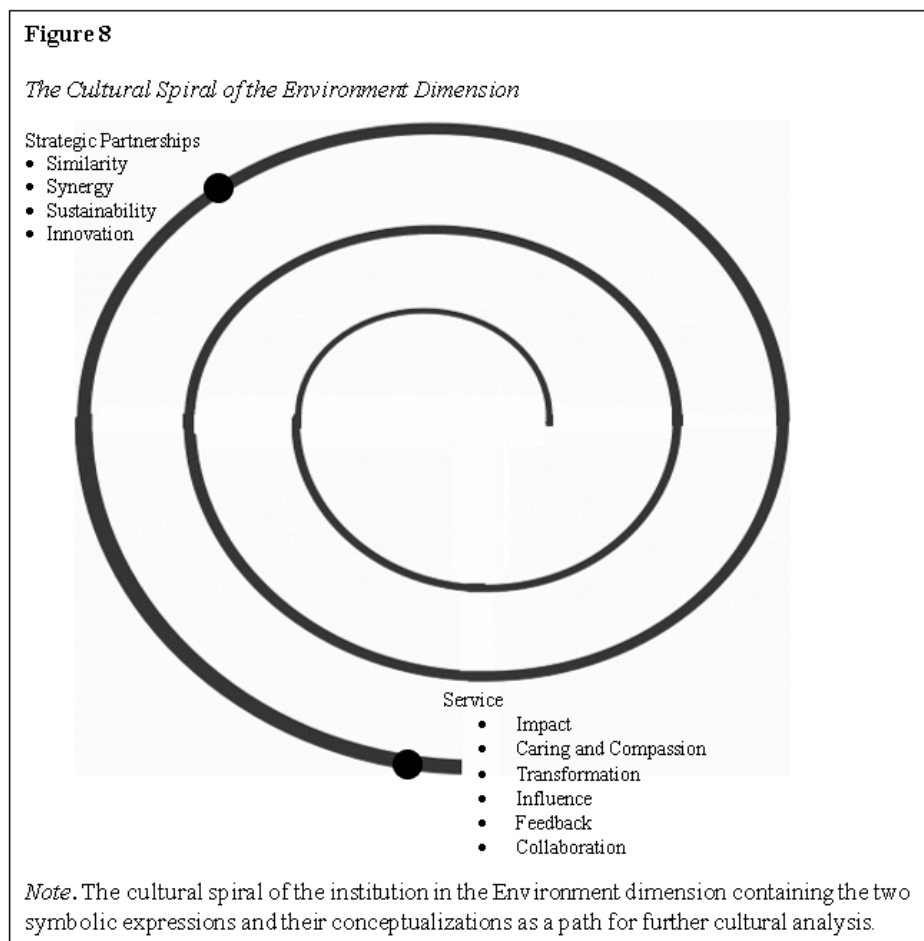
sustainable environment” (Khuri, 2017d). In fact, the Global Health Institute at AUB has created partnerships with various established international actors including the Swisscross Foundation for example to commit to developing “a sustainable future for health in the Arab world” (AUB, 2018b). Partnering with an external institution over an extended period of time ensures also the sustainability of the center or project itself. The case of the TAMAM project and its 13 years continuing support from the Arab Thought Foundation is an example of sustained external support on external grants. The Sustainability conceptualization suggests also an extended degree of commitment towards achieving the intended impact. Institutional leadership achieves this commitment by formalizing the agreement with partners through the signing of memorandums of understanding. This is only accomplished when the institution’s administrators are certain that the partnership will yield the expected impact (Khuri, 2017j).

The relationship with alumni constitutes equally a significant means of institutional sustainability. In fact, alumni, through their roles as emissaries sustain the impact by promoting the values and mission of the institution. The mentoring and job opportunities provided by alumni to fresh graduates through the Alumni Mentoring Platform constitute also a means of institutional sustainability as they help orient these graduates and increase their awareness to the skills required in the labor market (AUB, n.d.-ch). Such acts reflect in the employability rankings published by various ranking institutions (Safa, 2017). Alumni also constitute an important sustainability source through the funding they provide via various philanthropic acts (Khuri, 2018e).

*Innovation.* Although with fewer mentions, strategic partnerships are also seen to promote innovative ideas and approaches to achieve the expected impact. In the

context of health-driven partnerships, the joint participation in a commission meant to investigate the flaws in reaction to major humanitarian crises allows to develop innovative approaches to such reactions through the identification of such flaws (Khuri, 2016h).

Figure 8 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Environment dimension containing the two symbolic expressions as a path for further cultural analysis.



### **Findings in the Mission Dimension**

This dimension examines the way the institution defines and articulates its mission. The surveyed documents have identified that the institution fulfills its purpose of transforming students into critical thinkers and engaged leaders through academic

offerings meant to develop their skills as well as community engagement, while bridging these two aspects in several instances. Additionally, the institution uses its research competence to fulfill the service aspect of its mission. The institution uses symbolically this research competence and the civic engagement component of its purpose to impact and influence its environment. Both of these components are monitored through various assessment measures revealing the cultural significance of assessment as a value that warrants the constant aim of impact and influence.

This section will consist of two subsections. The first will present the mission components of the institutional culture, and the second one will delineate the three symbolic representations used by institutional leadership to enact the mission. as a means to engage and impact the external environment

**Cultural components of the mission.** AUB's Mission serves to articulate its distinctiveness and ideology and to instill among the various internal and external constituents of the institution a sense of shared purpose. This is partly accomplished through the wide dissemination of the mission in academic catalogues, the university's websites, and several other reports and publications as well as speeches from the president given in various contexts. Besides being concrete institutional actions, these dissemination efforts acquire also a symbolic dimension as they are used, mostly by the university's senior leadership, to relay to the various constituents their perceptions of the institution's purpose and to rationalize their enacted strategies. In fact, several institutional reports underline the extent to which the formulation of strategic goals is informed and shaped by the mission. Although the most recent version of the mission statement was rewritten in 2010, a change at the level of senior leadership in 2015 has

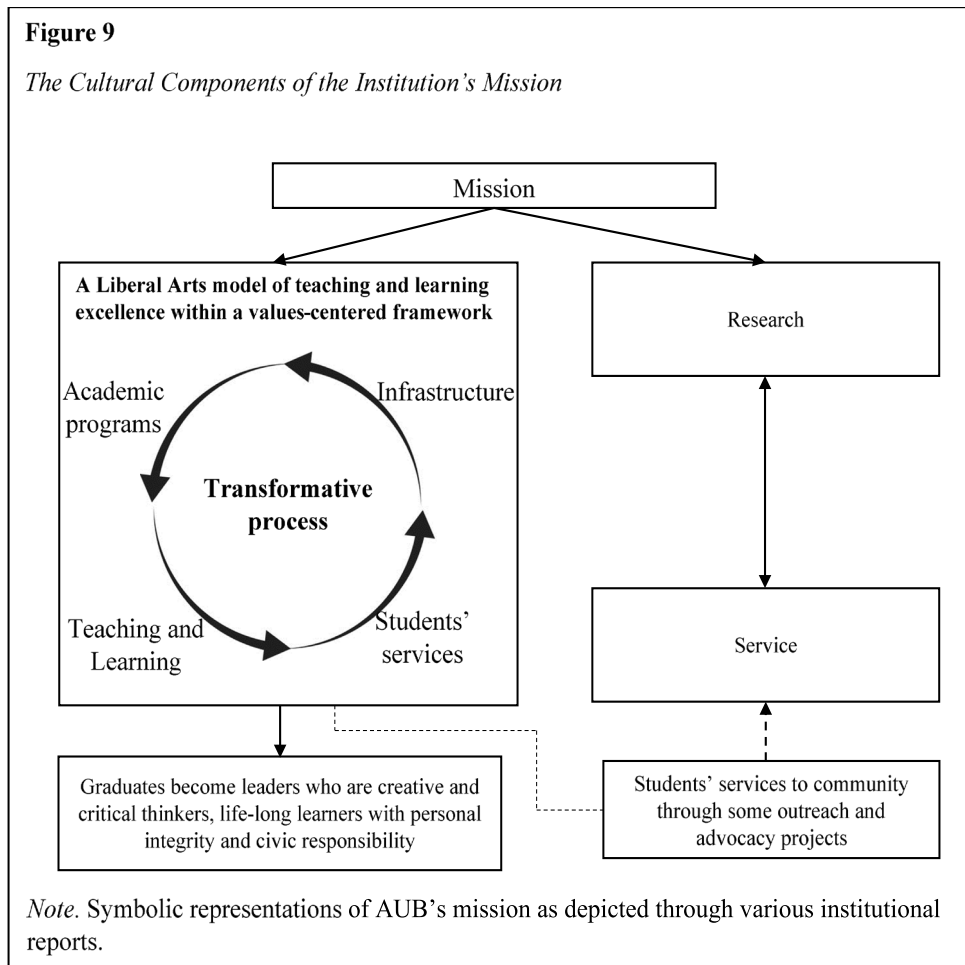
led in 2016 to the reformulation of the strategic plans meant to enact the mission (AUB, 2018a)

The current Mission statement dates from 2005. It was reviewed in 2010 with no significant changes added to it (AUB, 2018a). Although there are no systematic and clear procedures as to when the Mission statement should be reviewed and what should trigger this review (AUB, 2018a), the change in 2005 was clearly a result of feedback from an accrediting institution in response to a self-study report in 2004 (AUB, 2018a). The change process conducted consisted of drafting a new version of the Mission by the provost, his assistant, and the chairperson of the self-study committee that was sent to the AUB community for feedback and approved later by the senate and the board of trustees (AUB, 2018a).

The purpose of AUB as defined by the mission is articulated around two broad guiding dimensions: (a) academic excellence that is founded on a Liberal Arts model guided by a values-centered framework, and (b) the centrality of research and service as two core institutional values. Within the first dimension, AUB describes the transformative process in which its educational and philosophical standards enroot within students “freedom of thought and expression” and “respect for diversity and dialogue” and convert them into “individuals committed to creative and critical thinking, life-long learning, personal integrity, civic responsibility, and leadership” (AUB, n.d.-a). Although research and service are two values mentioned separately as a second broad dimension in the declared mission, the examination of various institutional reports as well as several speeches from the president highlight to a large extent their mutualistic relationship where one is perceived to impact the other only to be impacted by it again.



Figure 9 below represents these two dimensions and will serve to organize the mission narrative in what follows.



***The transformative process and its dimensions.*** The transformative process is articulated around what the institution considers its distinctive four dimensions: (a) academic programs, (b) teaching and learning experience, (c) students' services, and (d) supporting infrastructures. Additionally, one can find various symbolic enactments directed to enhance this transformative process.

*Academic programs underpinned by a liberal arts ethos.* AUB's emphasis on providing its students with a liberal arts education is justified by the institution's ethos that such an educational experience will leave life- lasting effects on learners by

providing them with a broad exposure of learning modes and the critical skills required to operate in a world that requires versatile work skills.

Therefore, the institution adopts a holistic approach to its general education (GE) curriculum design in which students are exposed to a broad range of courses beyond their specialty area, however within a values-centered framework. To operationalize the value placed on its GE program and monitor that its outcomes constantly meet its purposes, AUB has established in 2013 a GE unit in charge of examining and assessing the quality of the GE program that has undergone two assessment cycles in 2013 and 2016 (AUB, 2018a). Although AUB explicitly emphasizes the liberal arts as a guiding ethos mostly in its undergraduate education, it has encountered some challenges in relaying to various constituents the benefits of the skills acquired from certain disciplines within the liberal arts, namely the humanities and social sciences. In fact, in a strategic planning meeting, the current president notes that the institution so far has “failed to make compelling cases for the humanities and for social sciences, not as a means to an end, but as a long-term career and to enrich our lives” (Khuri, 2016a).

Another fundamental of a liberal arts education is its emphasis on the teaching of Arts as a means of developing and refining individuals’ appreciation of esthetic experiences. For that purpose, and in alignment with its mission, AUB has developed new Arts programs such as a master’s degree in Arts History and Curating, a unique offering among other local and regional competitors, as well as sponsored several in-house theater initiatives, and arts galleries thus providing students with vital learning in this aspect (AUB, 2018a) “We are building real momentum in this field,” says the current president in one of his periodic perspectives he addresses to the university community “something of critical importance in this university’s mission and its wider

vision in the global context” (Khuri, 2017c). Symbolically, AUB considers this artistic exposure as a means of socially engaging students inviting them to critically reject status quos and impact consequently the defined social structures, a marking characteristic of entrepreneurs and activists (Khuri, 2017c). This occurs when artistic events become a means of symbolic engagement meant to maintain the repeatedly mentioned myths of challenging students’ assumptions and enrooting within them critical reflection skills.

In addition to its general education program, the institution has started to develop educational programs that go beyond the traditional boundaries of the disciplines to include interdisciplinary components. According to institutional rhetoric, the rationale for developing such programs is to adopt a multifaceted approach in the resolution of complex contemporary challenges (AUB, 2014).

*Teaching.* Teaching quality is another component on which rests AUB’s transformative process. Various institutional reports and some of the current president’s periodic perspectives (AUB, 2016; AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2017d; Khuri, 2018a) highlight the nature of the teaching process as being an intrinsic scholarly act that aligns with the “excellence in education” component of the mission meant to enable students to become independent and critical thinkers and materializes this ethos mainly through the recruitment and retention of qualified faculty and AUB’s Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Besides disseminating best practices teaching methods and promulgating teaching resources to improve faculty’s teaching skills, the CTL equally offers workshops and conferences about effective teaching and learning practices in higher education (AUB, n.d.-c) and offers incentives that encourage faculty to enhance their teaching. Examples of such incentives include the Teaching Excellence Award

granted to faculty members who demonstrate excellence in their instructional procedures, engage in mentoring other faculty and students, participate in professional development activities, and engaging in innovative teaching techniques (AUB, n.d.-b). The findings of an institutional survey report however that the educational practices suggested by the center to improve teaching is difficult to implement by faculty members in view of the demands placed on their time from their other duties (AUB, 2018a). Students also reported that their course discussions and assignments, especially in their first year, lack the inclusion of diverse perspectives suggesting to some extent faculty's ambiguous understanding of the institution's purpose regarding the enhancement of respect for diversity and dialogue (AUB, 2018a).

*Students' services.* The third component in the transformative process meant to enact the mission is the quality services AUB offers to students during their learning journey as a means of advancing a holistic student experience. Although the services offered to students encompass academic and non-academic support services, the present narrative will focus on the academic services as they adhere more closely to the transformative process model represented in figure 9 above.

Through the University Preparatory Program, AUB enacts the acceptance of diversity aspect of its Mission by allowing students who “have met high school and university requirements but require additional preparation to be fully admitted into a degree program” (AUB, 2018a). In the same vein, The Accessible Education Office (AEO) consolidates equally the acceptance of diversity and inclusiveness aspect by supporting the learning experience of students with various learning disabilities. “The goals of the AEO are aligned with the university's mission to serve and support a diverse student body as well as to foster tolerance and respect for such diversity” (AUB,

2018a). In highlighting the important role of the AEO , the current president of AUB notes in one of his periodic perspectives that “our policies explicitly protect anyone from adverse actions or disadvantages based on legally protected characteristics, which include among others religion, age, ethnicity, gender/gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or if they have a disability.” (Khuri, 2017g).

The Career Services office prepares students for a successful integration of the labor market through the organization of workshops that enhance students’ skills needed in a real work setting and offered by professionals coming from various industries. Academic advising and the Counseling Center that offers confidential psychological support systems are also part of the services offered to students (AUB, 2018a).

In addition, institutional policies enact the value of respect of diversity and inclusiveness. AUB exults its title IX program that allows students to report any kind of discrimination based on “age, ethnicity, gender and gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation, or disability” (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2017a). An institutional survey conducted among students reports that these policies have contributed to their understanding of others based on their different backgrounds (AUB, 2018a).

*Supporting infrastructures.* AUB completes the tetrad of the transformative process through its institutional infrastructure that includes facilities that support the teaching and learning process and complement the enactment of educational excellence. According to the Self-Study Report (AUB, 2018a), AUB invested significantly in the academic year 2017-2018 in the improvement of labs and teaching facilities, lecture halls and auditoriums as well as communication infrastructures. One of the purposes of the major capital campaign initiated by the current leadership of the university to build “new state-of-the-art buildings, classrooms, laboratories and student

learning facilities” (AUB, 2016). “Speaking of quality”, says the current president in the closing remarks of an academic strategic planning meeting (AUB, 2016a), “quality facilities are as important for students as they are for faculty... and I don’t think our quality of facilities is good enough, with a few exceptions”.

*The research-service dyad.* Although AUB celebrates its Liberal Arts education, it also exhibits its desire to promote an identity as a leading regional research institution. The research-service dimension of the mission reflects a dual institutional identity. In fact, if the liberal arts ethos materializes in the teaching quality dimension of the institution, a shift in the focus of this identity change occurs at the graduate level in which research becomes the core institutional competency and is mainly underpinned by a reliance on a qualified academic faculty, and to a much lesser extent doctoral or graduate student (AUB, 2016; AUB, n.d.-f; Khuri, 2018b) . Although the reinstatement of the tenure system is intended to impact the quality of education in most published institutional reports, it is rather viewed as an apparatus through which AUB will become a world class research institution by attracting and retaining prominent researchers.

The university’ mission indicates that the purpose of research is to produce knowledge. However, the examination of a selection of institutional reports and the current president’s published perspectives (Khuri, 2016c; Khuri, 2016d; AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2018b; AUB, 2016) shows two broad symbolic representations of the purpose of the research process. The key conceptualization is aimed towards providing a service not as an abstract value, but one that is based on developing durable connections in which service is channeled to a well-defined party such as government, civil and professional entities, communities as well as different industries. There are also

mentions in institutional reports of students-led outreach or advocacy projects aimed at targeting specific communities such as seniors. An example of students-led service projects includes the “community for seniors” project for the Abadieh municipality in which architecture students designed spatial configurations that cater for the needs of senior citizens in supporting their independent living (Khuri, 2016d). Other instances of services provided by students include those intended for AUB’s neighborhood part of the Neighborhood Initiative. Such services comprise for example design projects meant to enhance the window display of certain shops in the vicinity of AUB (AUB, n.d.-g). Service in relation to research also materializes in a consultative aspect through research that proposes new, evidence-based policies. Service is “really the basis, the DNA if you wish, of this University”, notes the current president (Khuri, 2016e).

When articulating his perception of the mission’s intimate agency between research and service the president notes “one of our major challenges as an academic community is establishing how to capture and measure the complex interface that exists between scientific research and the societies that we serve” (Khuri, 2018c). This allows AUB to articulate the constant concern of impacting its environment through disseminating transformational research-based practices. The latest formulation of the strategic plan highlights the importance of the “applied” and local context of the research endeavor.

The university’s aspiration to become a research-based institution surfaces a second conceptualization of research that remains considerably less articulated than the previous one and is that of producing knowledge as a pure intrinsic academic endeavor that is not necessarily related to any applied context (AUB, 2018a).

### **Symbolic expressions of the mission dimension.**

The surveyed documents in the Mission dimension surface three key symbolic expressions found in the institutional rhetoric and are intimately related to the components of figure 9 detailed above. These symbols that contribute significantly to the enactment of the institution’s mission are: (a) Transformative research, (b) assessment, and (c) transformative scholarships. In fact, transformative research contributes significantly to consolidating the institution’s impact on its environment through service as found in the Environment dimension. Transformative scholarships constitute a significant component of the institution’s transformative process principally through providing students with a learning experience infused with a value-system. In addition to the academic programs that enhance students’ learning, transformative scholarships encapsulate by themselves the various aspects of the institution’s services offered to students such as academic, career, and psychosocial support as well as civic engagement. Assessment allows the institution to examine the extent to which its actions align with its mission whether in the transformative process or the research-service dyad.

Table 12 below displays the weighted percentage of each of these symbols generated by the word frequency query.

Table 12

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Transformative Research	396	0.54%
Assessment	389	0.53%
Transformative Scholarships	132	0.18%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

***Transformative research.***



If research by itself is considered an act that is primarily intended for the generation of new knowledge, it acquires a symbolic dimension when it is used metaphorically by the university leadership to achieve a greater purpose through implicitly relaying to concerned stakeholders' messages of expected transformative paths of actions as an outcome of conducting research.

Research is an intrinsic component of the institution's purpose as stated in its Mission statement and seems to occupy a prominent role in the university's academic functions. In fact, AUB's desire to strengthen its identity as a research-driven institution is pervasive and depicted through the prominent use of the word "research" compared to "teaching" in the surveyed documents. Although institutional reports underline in several occasions the importance of teaching as a component of the transformative process, the term "research" has a weighted percentage of 0.54% relative to the total words used in the documents, while the term "teaching" has only a weighted percentage of 0.16%. Research is an encouraged practice even at the undergraduate level. In fact, the university has established the Undergraduate Research Volunteer Program initiative which aims at developing the research expertise of students at the undergraduate level (AUB, n.d.-cg). Additionally, one of the primary objectives according to the recent strategic plan in AUB's path towards 2030 is "to transform AUB into one of the world's premier research universities" (AUB, 2016). In line with this desired trajectory, AUB has recently reinstated the tenure system "expected to attract, retain, and reward high-performing researchers and drive AUB forward as a world class research institution" (AUB, n.d.-f) and as a symbol of valuing scholarly output, bases the evaluation and promotion decisions of faculty members on them (AUB, 2018a). Other strategies used

to support the desired research identity of AUB include also the projection to increase the number of Master’s and Doctoral students (AUB, 2016).

In addition to its prominent place in the mission, research acquire an additional symbolic dimension through coupling it with the transformative qualifier. In his recent speech during the orientation of new faculty members, the current president of AUB notes that institutional research funding will prioritize “transformative research” (Khuri, 2018d). Consequently, research becomes more than an act, it is a symbol that condenses the shared meanings as depicted in the institutional rhetoric. The analysis of the documents retained in the Mission dimension surface several symbolic representations of research, three of which can be associated with their perception of transformative research

The three symbolic representations of research that are significantly related to a transformational aspect are Collaboration, Impact, and Sustainability.

Table 13 below represents the three symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to the term research.

Table 13

*The three symbolic representations of Transformative Research and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Transformative Research</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Collaboration	~ 41%
Impact	~ 33%
Sustainability	~ 15%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every symbolic representation relative to the total number of codes relating to the term Research.

*Collaboration.* This symbolic representation is the most frequently mentioned perception of the way research should be enacted. Institutional rhetoric reveals that collaboration may have two aspects. The first one is accomplished between

members of the same academic unit or with another university within the same discipline, or with business and industry. The other form of collaboration is an interdisciplinary one and suggests the research involvement of members from different disciplines (Khuri, 2017k; AUB, n.d.-i).

In its promotion and tenure guidelines, institutional rhetoric reveals to a certain extent the emphasis that senior administrators place on collaborative research endeavors. It is evident that faculty members are expected to develop an individual research identity however “establishing effective and relevant collaborations with colleagues and international partners, within the discipline or across multiple disciplines, is *necessary* [emphasis added] and *highly valued* [emphasis added] (AUB, 2018d, p. 2). This emphasis is highlighted again in the “Recognition/Leadership” dimension of the promotion and tenure in which the tenured-to-become researcher is expected to lead major collaborative research initiatives or collaborate effectively with peers (AUB, 2018d).

Entrepreneurial initiatives that are the outcome of a collaborative research effort are advertised as successful models to imitate. “Think of the students engaged in Light Up a Village, or the team that helped create the GHATA project”, says the president in one of his perspectives, these are models of the kind of entrepreneurship that we hope and expect to see in the future” (Khuri, 2017m).

As mentioned above, interdisciplinarity is a form of collaboration. The history of interdisciplinarity as traced in institutional documents has been detailed in the previous Environment dimension. Interestingly, a link is almost always manifested in institutional rhetoric between interdisciplinary research and innovation. For example, one of the strategic goals of 2014 strategic plan is to “Promote interdisciplinarity and

innovation” surfacing once again senior leadership’s perception of the connection between interdisciplinary research and innovation (AUB, 2018a, p. 11).

Interdisciplinarity at the level of institutional rhetoric is not just an institutional behavior enacted by researchers through the services they provide to the environment but it also is at the core of the institution’s educational process. In fact, in their attempt to redesign the institution’s General Education program, senior administrators strived towards developing a design that is in part interdisciplinary that combines the effort of 50 faculty members from the various schools and faculties (AUB, 2018a).

Collaborative research as symbol is valued because it is perceived as useful in identifying failures especially in response to major crises. Such crises having a regional or global scope necessitate a vast array of expertise from various specializations to address them. In this perspective, the Syrian crisis, with its scope, has yielded significant research-based initiatives in AUB in an attempt to respond to the suffering and problems it has generated.

Interdisciplinarity becomes the preferred strategy for addressing such a crisis by offering a comprehensive approach involving medical, economic, psychological as well as other specializations. Similarly, when discussing the Syrian crisis, the current president notes that it should “be supported by multidisciplinary groups of experts, thinkers and practitioners” (Khuri, 2016h) in order “to understand the impact of contemporary conflicts on social determinants of illness and injury... based on sound biophysical, clinical, and social science” (Khuri, 2017f).

At AUB, interdisciplinarity as a form of collaborative research seems to be equated with the kind of “authoritative research” (Khuri, 2017l) that provide AUB a leading position, and which findings are granted immediate trustworthiness and

applicability. In this context, the president notes in one of his perspectives that faculty members of the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group led “the way in multidisciplinary knowledge production and dissemination, but also crucially in advocacy for evidence-informed policy changes” (Khuri, 2017l).

Besides being trustworthy and reliable in impacting policy, collaborative research is also viewed to lead to innovative research which justifies the establishment of a special in-house funding unit to promote it. In fact, the Collaborative Research Stimulus is an initiative that promotes and funds interdisciplinary research that yields impactful and innovative findings (AUB, n.d.-j). The centrality of interdisciplinary research as a symbol is further confirmed by the current president directing funding priorities towards interdisciplinary research. In fact, he notes that “instead of funding small-scale research projects on disparate topics, funds will go toward supporting interdisciplinary teams of researchers conducting large-scale, multi-year projects tackling a singular topic” (Khuri, 2018f). Besides receiving funding priorities, an interdisciplinary research initiative is also perceived as more likely to become a center of research excellence and has a special research space allocated to it (AUB, n.d.-i).

Moreover, collaboration and interdisciplinarity as symbolic representations of transformative research are perceived as ones that involve a collective unified effort occurring between groups of people within a unit or between different units themselves who share and strive towards attaining the same objectives in a context that allows for exchange of ideas. The coexistence of these conditions endows the group with qualities of uniqueness and creativity. In fact, the Knowledge to Policy center of the Faculty of Health is a “unique model developed and protected by its faculty, staff and students in a collaborative, sustainable and integrated whole” (Khuri, 2017k), and the Center of

Research on Population and Health “scans and nurtures creative ideas, answering research questions in a holistic, comprehensive and interdisciplinary way, connecting institutions regionally and internationally” (Khuri, 2017k).

Taking Interdisciplinarity a step further, AUB’s president, when talking about the inauguration of a new institute, advocates for transdisciplinary research “that blurs the boundaries between disciplines to take a new, holistic approach in order to come up with solutions to the world’s most challenging problems”. To him, “this is the future of research” (Khuri, 2018f).

Besides being collaborative or interdisciplinary, transformative research is conceptualized as one that leaves an impact. In fact, the link between collaborative or interdisciplinary research and impact is evident in multiple instances in the institutional rhetoric. In fact, AUB’s interdisciplinary institutes and centers are all aimed at “addressing societal issues and making significant impact” (AUB, 2018a, p. 7). Similarly, one of the strategic initiatives of the 2016 institution’s strategic plan is to establish collaborative and interdisciplinary research centers that promote impact (AUB, 2016).

There are several meanings of impact that emerge from the institutional rhetoric and the president’s discourse about the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group interdisciplinary center. In fact, impact suggests generating knowledge across several fields all relating to smoking, promote networking, communication and collaborations among researchers and the civil society, disseminate evidence-based research findings in an accessible manner to the public to increase its awareness, and contribute to developing or changing policies as well as building the capacity of society members to promote tobacco control (AUB, n.d.-cb). The Knowledge Is Power interdisciplinary

project has also symbolic representations of impact that intersect with those of the projects discussed above. In fact, the project's goal is to develop linkages with various stakeholders including peer researchers, civil society members, public and private sector as well as training and building capacity, all aimed to raise awareness and develop and change policies on sexual harassment (AUB, n.d.-cd).

The link between transformative collaborative or interdisciplinary research and impact from the lens of policy change is also highlighted in AUB's Self-Study report in which the research encouraged to be undertaken is one that "influences public and scientific policy and practice" (AUB, 2018a).

*Sustainability.* The third conceptualization of transformative research is one that advances sustainable solutions. What makes the TAMAM project an example of transformative research, as perceived by the current president, is not just the fact that it is impactful but that it also advances a model that is "genuinely self-sustaining" (Khuri, 2016d) as it involves the active participation of the concerned stakeholders. The sustainability of the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group interdisciplinary center's action was materialized in the enactment of a law prohibiting smoking in public places (AUB, n.d.-cc).

Ultimately, Sustainability achieved through transformative research-based initiatives is linked to the institution's purpose itself. In fact, AUB sees this sustainable relationship with the targeted communities as a bridge that helps infuse and perpetuate institutional values perceived as an ideal towards which should strive a society, even if these values are forcefully infused.

*Assessment.* Assessment seems to permeate the institution's fabric and is a pervasive practice conducted across institutional units, academic and non-academic

including the university's senior leadership and board of trustees. "Assessment is an integral part of the university's operations, at all levels" (AUB, 2018a). Assessment's importance as a means to maintaining quality through self-review at all levels is further underlined by the current president of AUB observing in one of his perspectives that a "culture of excellence... involves a major commitment to self-evaluation, internal review, forward planning, as well as setting processes, workflows and policies that ensure the highest standards" (Khuri, 2017f). This subsection will focus on assessment as a symbol and will depict how it is conceptualized and practiced as it pertains to the institution's Mission.

Assessment practices are reflected clearly in the Self-Study report and prepared by three units that implement and coordinate assessment practices: The Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), the Academic Assessment Unit (AAU), and the Institutional Assessment Committee (IAC) (AUB, 2018a).

OIRA conducts assessment through gathering and analyzing data for various uses including improvement, planning, and decision-making. The AAU assumes a coordinating function that involves collecting and centralizing all assessment reports to identify various academic units' needs and develops and monitors institutional performance indicators. The IAC assumes a leadership role in the assessment process and supervises the implementation of AUB's assessment system to ensure AUB's effectiveness in the fulfillment of its mission (AUB, 2018a). An additional unit, the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL), provides a supportive role in the assessment process through providing training on assessment practices and assisting departments in preparing and reviewing their assessment plans and program learning outcomes (AUB, 2018a).



Assessment is closely related to and regulates all the aspects of the transformative process of the Mission. For instance, academic departments have their program learning outcomes periodically assessed to insure their relevance. The quality of teaching is mainly assessed through the Instructor Course Evaluation surveys whereas students' services and the supporting physical and technological infrastructure are equally regularly assessed with findings invested in developing improvement plans and decision-making (AUB, 2018a). Assessment also regulates the research practice in the institution. In fact, through SWOT analyses for example, interdisciplinary centers analyze the extent to which they align with their purpose and ultimately that of the institution's mission.

Besides being a pervasive practice, assessment possesses a symbolic dimension both in form and meaning. From a form perspective, assessment constitutes a ritualized event that is repetitive, necessitates proper preparation and execution, is framed by clear beginnings and endings, and involves members with well-defined roles. The ritual dimension of the assessment in organizational rhetoric is best captured, albeit implicitly through the use of the term "exercise". In fact, this report states that "Departmental faculty members lead these continuous improvement exercises in order to keep PLOs relevant and up-to-date" (AUB, 2018a p. 17). These exercises are indeed well-defined, with clear beginning and endings, have their protagonists known, and are cyclical. The assessment of program learning outcomes for example is led by a departmental assessment committee and repeated every three years (AUB, 2018a). Being a symbol in form, it carries also the shared meaning(s) attributed to it by institutional members with these meanings relating to stakeholders institutional values.

There are five symbolic representations of assessment that emerge from the surveyed documents. The relatively significant percentage of codes that form these symbolic representations showcase an acceptable amount of agreement that can translate into a shared meaning of them.

Table 14 below represents the five symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to the term research. It is important to note that these symbolic representations are not mutually exclusive, rather they were categorized as such based on the dominant understanding provided in the coded information in each conceptualization.

Table 14

*The five symbolic representations of Assessment and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Assessment</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Effectiveness	~ 37%
Control	~ 26%
Learning	~ 20%
Transparency	~ 9%
Reward	~ 8%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes relating to the term Assessment.

The following subsection will explain these symbolic representations according to the sequence (or story) of assessment meanings that unfolds from the institutional documents.

*Learning.* This conceptualization suggests developing awareness of an institutional reality or an understanding that was either missing or needs to be verified. For example, in the context of learning about faculty awareness of certain policies one institutional report states that “based on the survey in the report of the Task Force on the

Lives and Careers of Women Faculty at AUB, a majority of faculty members (80% men and 74% women) were aware of the existence of AUB policies on harassment and discrimination but much less knew about the procedures for reporting when an incident happens” (AUB, 2018a). The learning conceptualization also materializes as a stage that precedes planning, decision making or action. An institutional unit for example plans or decides for an appropriate action based on assessment findings. In fact, and with respect to both situations, an institutional document reporting on the assessment of various services offered to students such as instruction, advising, orientation, reads that assessment data may “identify areas of progress and the challenges that need to be tackled” (AUB, 2018a). In a similar vein, when discussing assessment findings that emerged from the periodic program reviews that AUB conducts in various academic programs, an institutional document reads that “The PPR process was a beneficial experience for all departments that completed this review because it helped in identifying strengths as well as areas for improvement” (AUB, 20418a). In another instance where assessment findings guide the actions of an academic unit the same document reads that “CTL schedules its activities based on a needs assessment survey administered to AUB faculty university-wide every two years” (AUB, 2018a). Learning can also examine if the institution conforms to a specific requirement as in the case where assessment findings were used to examine if AUB answered certain requirements imposed by an accrediting institution to gain accreditation (AUB, 2018a). As another aspect of learning and in the context of physical facilities, assessment data is used for the evaluation of the extent to which these facilities are supporting students’ learning (AUB, 2018a). The learning conceptualization constitutes also a mechanism through which the institution monitors if its actions align with its purpose by using specific

assessment metrics. These metrics are reflected for example in the Key Performance Indicators of the institution's Strategic Plan (AUB, n.d.-i) or other assessment forms such as the SWOT analyses conducted by various collaborative and interdisciplinary structures (AUB, 2011b).

*Effectiveness.* The learning provided from assessment data usually serves a higher purpose, that of achieving a set goal. One materialization of effectiveness within Assessment is purpose achievement, and proper actions related to it. In fact, within the context of academic programs, the assessment findings of program learning outcomes serve to examine if they are achieved by students and “are used to decide on appropriate actions for improvement” (AUB, 2018a).

Assessment data is also used for improvement and decision-making. For example, “periodic assessment of the GE PLOs aims to improve GE courses, the GE program, and the students' learning experience” (AUB, 2018a) and PLOs in general are “used by departments for improvement and decision making” (AUB, 2018a). In the context of the supporting infrastructure, assessment findings are linked to the improvement of buildings and the renovations of others (AUB, 2018a). Assessment serves also to benchmark against a standard. In this context, assessment as a component of self-studies prepared by academic departments serves to examine the quality of their educational programs (AUB, 2018a). Assessment is also used in the examination of students' services. Reports resulting from assessment data on various students' services including advising, housing for example include improvement recommendations concerning processes relating to them or the proposal of new processes or initiatives meant to address weaknesses in their delivery (AUB, 2018a). More specifically “an advising initiative addressed results obtained from various surveys by increasing the number of

advisors, providing them with clear guidelines, handouts, resources, and training” (AUB, 2018a). Besides actions to undertake, assessment results help departments in budgeting activities through the estimation of resources needed for the coming years. (AUB, 2018a).

In the context of the periodic program reviews conducted mostly at the level of academic departments “a successful review depends on the proper assessment of course and PLOs and on the use of assessment results to improve student learning” (AUB, 2018a). In the same vein, assessment results of program learning outcomes are used to recommend their revisions or propose improvement to the assessment process itself (AUB, 2018a).

Assessment allows also to monitor the effectiveness of institutional units such as collaborative and interdisciplinary structures. Again, the example of SWOT analyses and metrics developed in the strategic plan performance indicators signal the relevance of these structures as well as their processes in attaining their objectives. Additionally, as discussed in the Environment dimension, the prizes awarded to specific institutional centers or units reflect also a symbol of effectiveness and are an evidence that these centers align with their mission.

*Control.* Besides Effectiveness, learning that derives from assessment can be invested in a power game in which one party endowed with power such as formal authority for example, regulates another party’s actions, practices or behaviors to align with a specific outcome. The term “Control” can probably capture best the conceptualization of assessment in this case as retained in institutional rhetoric.

The Instructor Course Evaluation as a tool to gauge teaching effectiveness is an instance of positive control. An institutional report reads that “the Instructor Course

Evaluation (ICE) survey is administered by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) at the end of each term and for every course, to collect data about teaching effectiveness” (AUB, 2018a). In this context, the findings resulting from the course evaluations can be used to regulate a faculty member’s teaching practices to align with standards of effectiveness. Additionally, chairpersons evaluate annually faculty members and provide them with feedback on their performance for improvement (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, qualifying for tenure and promotion depends on assessment data of faculty performance as well (AUB, n.d.-f).

Besides evaluating teaching effectiveness, the control conceptualization of assessment is also used in both the research and service areas. For instance, assessment results that are a component of the faculty review process are “geared towards promoting excellence and continuous improvement in research, teaching, and service” (AUB, 2018a). If excellence is not achieved, then faculty members have to regulate their behavior to reach the expected excellence standard.

The control conceptualization can be further reinforced when assessment results can involve external stakeholders as well. In fact, the various units’ mission statements within AUB are assessed by external reviewers periodically to examine if they align with the institution’s mission (AUB, 2018a).

Control can involve institutional processes or initiatives. In this context, assessment mechanisms and findings can be used to monitor if certain initiatives are achieving their designated goals. Supporting this fact, an institutional report reads that “The university has defined a number of initiatives to achieve the stated goals and has also, in parallel, developed detailed assessment mechanisms to monitor the achievement of the goals by identifying measurable KPIs and metrics for every initiative. The

periodic assessment of KPIs allows for the evaluation of any project, program or initiative” (AUB, 2018a).

Monitoring can also assume an aspect of control within the power-regulation relationship. In fact, in the context of the periodic review of departmental programs, an institutional document reads that “PPRs at AUB stipulate that departments prepare reflective self-studies that examine educational programs and practices in addition to...monitoring their progress” (AUB, 2018a). Control also materializes in the form of channeling funds towards centers and projects that align with the senior administration’s perception for the priority of funds allocation.

*Reward.* This conceptualization suggests linking assessment findings to the previous two symbolic representations of Effectiveness, and Control by rewarding concerned stakeholders if they achieve the former or adjust according to the latter. Reward is mostly conceived under the form of the promotion, merit, or allocation of resources. Faculty members for example who align with the required quality standards in teaching, research, and service as showcased in various evaluations determine their annual merit increases or are awarded promotion or tenure (AUB, 2018a).

Allocating resources to academic programs is initially related to planning that is partly based on assessment findings. In fact, in the context of planning, academic departments have to stipulate improvement plans regarding weaknesses identified by assessment findings to justify requests for resources (AUB, 2018a). Centers and projects that adhere to the senior administrators’ perception of transformative research benefit from the internal, albeit limited grants, provided by the institution. Examples of such grants include the Collaborative Research Stimulus (AUB, 2018a).

*Transparency.* A final conceptualization of assessment depicted in institutional rhetoric is that of transparency. This materializes when assessment results are disseminated and/or are available to internal and external stakeholders. In fact, an institutional report reads that “AUB practices full disclosure of institutional-wide assessments... All relevant documents are accessible on the accreditation page of the Office of the Provost website” (AUB, 2018a). The dissemination of assessment findings is also prominent in institutional rhetoric. In fact, in the context of assessing departmental programs and their learning outcomes “all programs are assessed and evaluated regularly, and assessment results are shared with stakeholders” (AUB, 2018a) and also “assessments are communicated to various stakeholders and shared on the OIRA web page” (AUB, 2018a).

The recourse to external assessment is an act of transparency when the possibility to conduct it in-house can be a threat to it. In fact, when to determine the first batch of faculty members that will be awarded tenure after its reinstatement, the current president of AUB notes in one of his perspectives that “In the absence of our own tenured faculty to adjudicate, all applications are being assessed by an independent panel of world-class scholars, and we believe strongly that this is the fairest, most transparent way to reintroduce this durable and significant stamp of academic freedom and excellence” (Khuri, 2017d).

The relation between assessment findings and ensuring transparency figures prominently in the surveyed documents. For example, emphasizing the impact of transparent assessment practices on an improved sense of ethics and integrity is also part of an institutional ethos. In fact, “transparency should be recognized as being a key aspect of, a means to assess, and a mechanism to improve ethics and integrity” (AUB,



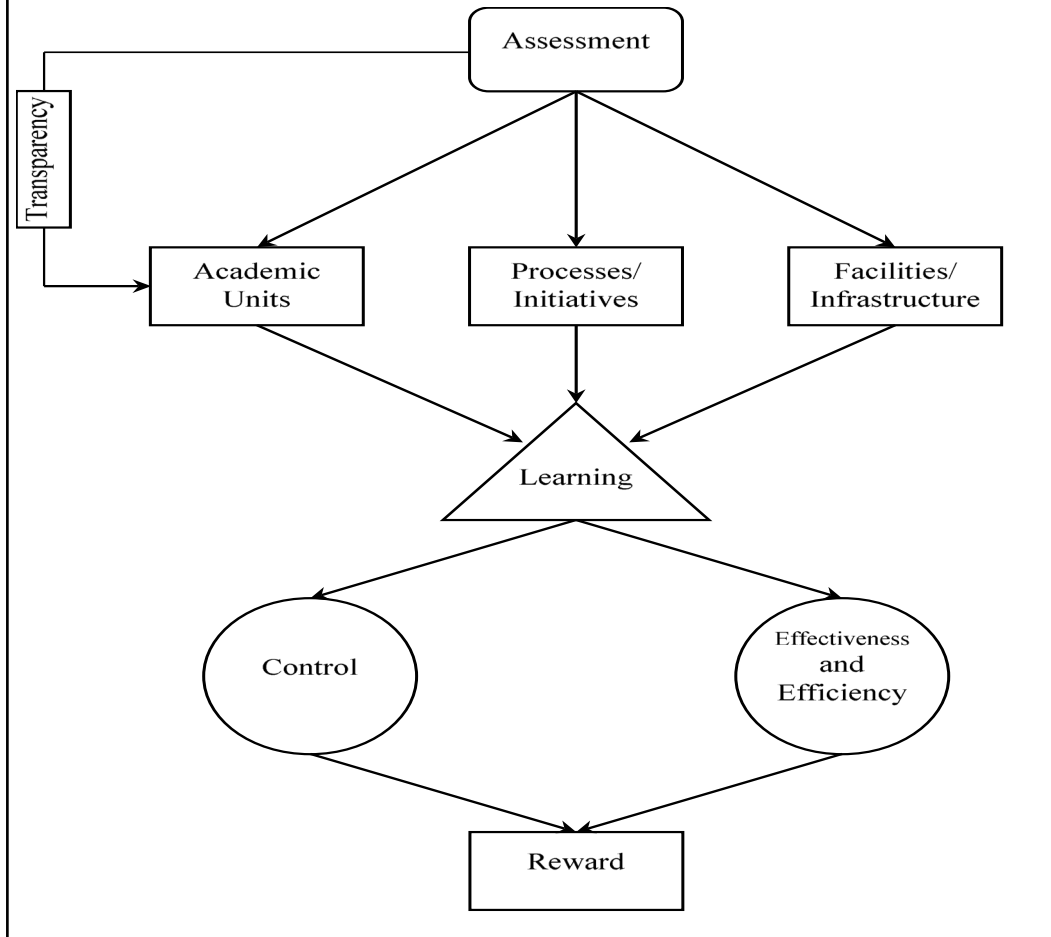
2018a). Additionally, basing the allocation of resources on assessment findings enhances institutional transparency with regard to various stakeholders and optimizes institutional effectiveness (AUB, 2018a).

The internal publication of the institution's Self Study report is equally an instance of transparency as it disseminates assessment results of all the institution's processes (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the online accessibility of the various centers' and institutes' SWOT analyses reports, strategies and various institutional information represent an instance of transparency that promotes the increase of trust with external stakeholders. In this context, the report to the Commission on Higher Education by an evaluation team representing the Middle States Commission on Higher Education reads that the transparent communication of the institution's strategic vision and assessment of strategic planning will "derive the maximum benefit of this ambitious vision" (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2019).

Figure 10 below summarizes the relation between the various symbolic representations of assessment as explained above.

**Figure 10**

*Symbolic representations of Assessment and the relationships associated with them*



***Transformative scholarships.*** Whereas the general meaning of

scholarships is an amount of money given to a student to support his/her education based mostly on academic achievement, AUB's leadership associates them with the transformative process of the Mission in which graduates ultimately become leaders. In fact, when discussing the signing of an agreement with a scholarship funding establishment, the current president of AUB notes in one of his perspectives that the outcome of this partnership serves AUB's mission "to empower the next generation of

STEM leaders areas to help the Arab world excel in these vital sectors” while qualifying such scholarships as “transformative scholarships” (Khuri, 2016f, p. 4).

The Transformative qualification of scholarships is strongly featured in the president’s perspectives which strengthens further its relation to the Mission and points to their symbolic importance institutionally. In fact, when discussing scholarships in another one of his perspectives the current president notes that “One cannot talk about these outstanding programs, without mentioning the transformative leadership training which they receive from our international award-winning Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service” (Khuri, 2016g).

Scholarships acquire a symbolic importance when examined through the lens of some endowed scholarships and more particularly through the LEAD (Leadership, Equity, and Diversity) initiative that groups under one umbrella scholarships offered by major funding partners. This initiative is attributed to the current senior leadership of the university who is credited to have envisioned it and considers it as a scholarship funding model worthy of being implemented in other institutions of higher education. “The visionary Leadership, Equity, and Diversity (LEAD) Initiative was established by AUB’s President and Provost to promote the principles of inclusion, diversity and equity in higher education; and to provide a model for other universities to follow” (AUB, n.d.-h). The initiative engages the efforts of several institutional departments to provide students with a well-rounded educational and practical experience. The strategic importance of this initiative as a means to enact the institution’s Mission is evident in the president’s verbal and written interventions through his qualifications of “transformative scholarships” (Khuri, 2016f) or “life-changing scholarship programs” (Khuri, 2016g). As in the case of the centers or initiatives praised in institutional

rhetoric, the LEAD scholarship as a model of transformative scholarship reflects the collaboration of various institutional units including academic and psychosocial ones to name a few as well as a leadership and steering committee (AUB, n.d.-h). However, what is particularly important in this well-rounded education is not just its emphasis on the academic programs or various types of supports and services, it is rather the significance attributed to community service and engagement. This fact can be evidenced at least in two ways: (a) having the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service director as member of the steering committee, and (b) the civic engagement component being prominently described in the LEAD brochure (AUB, n.d.-h). The institutional assumption here is that for graduates to be leaders, they have to be civically engaged ones who service their communities who embrace diversity and value dialogue (AUB, n.d.-a).

The analysis of the documents retained in the Mission dimension surface several symbolic representations of scholarships, as perceived by senior institutional leadership, seven of which can be associated with transformational scholarships.

Table 15 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to the term scholarships.

Table 15

*The seven symbolic representations of Transformative Scholarships and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Transformative Scholarships</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Leadership and Sustainable Community Engagement	~ 31%
Inclusiveness	~ 29%
Collaboration	~ 13%
Identification	~ 10%
Innovative processes	~ 7%

Career impact	~ 4%
Incentive	~ 3%

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*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes relating to the term Scholarships

*Leadership and sustainable community engagement.* The two terms are in several occasions coupled together in institutional reports. The most identified conceptualization of scholarships is enabling students to acquire through them leadership skills and engagement to serve their communities. This is supported by the current president in one of his periodic perspectives when he notes that “what is so striking about these programs is how they go beyond the traditional provision of financial support for the most excluded groups, by adding civic engagement and leadership elements” (Khuri, 2016g).

Scholarships enhance the transformative process of the Mission enacted through its academic programs and teaching components in figure 1. In fact, community service under the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service links theory with practice where students learn to address the problems and service marginalized communities (AUB, n.d.-h). This community work is not a transitory occurrence that stops at the level of volunteering, it materializes through an organized academic-practical configuration of viable and mature initiatives with a concern regarding the sustainability of the social engagement itself. “Community project work”, says the current president in one of his perspectives,

is a requirement for students receiving institutional scholarships and what was on display was genuinely impressive. We are not talking about initiation phases, or the first faltering steps towards realizing a project. These are fully fledged, successful implementations of pilot projects that have been created from the

bottom up by students. They choose their partners, pick the theme and area of implementation, carry out stakeholders' and needs' assessments, design and develop the proposal, set the budget and implement the project (Khuri, 2017h).

Community engagement is also enhanced through the institution's General Education program. In fact, the institution's Self-Study report reads that the General Education program should also promote the values of social responsibility and integrity in students (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, Civilization Studies and the Arts are also combined to the requirements of the General Education program (AUB, 2018a) which contributes into sensitizing students to the histories of humanity and its heritages developing consequently within them a sense of responsibility to the others and enhancing community membership.

*Inclusiveness.* Another theme that stands out significantly in the symbolic representations of scholarships is that of inclusiveness which enhances the values-centered framework of "freedom of thought and expression and seeks to foster tolerance and respect for diversity and dialogue" (AUB, n.d.-a) that guides the transformative process of the Mission.

This inclusiveness, however, bears by itself several aspects. To start with, the most prominent ones is that of socio-economic, and geographical diversity. According to the director of admissions, ensuring inclusiveness through increasing diversity is accomplished by operating simultaneously on nationalities, educational and socio-economic backgrounds while scholarships considered "as key to attracting the high-achieving students in the region and Sub-Saharan Africa" (AUB, 2018a). Inclusiveness is further tied to the purpose of the institution when the current president notes in one of his perspectives that "one of the greatest threats to AUB's future relevance is to become

a university for the economically elite, rather than the intellectually elite; that it reinforces exclusivity rather than fosters diversity. Institutional scholarships are powerful weapons in countering that threat” (Khuri, 2016g). Inclusiveness is also perceived as acceptance of the other. When explaining the expectations from students who are part of the LEAD initiative the current president notes that students “will understand that fear of the other is an obstacle and not an asset... allowing us to tackle the pernicious inequalities that affect all societies” (AUB, n.d.-h).

Another aspect of inclusiveness concerns gender representativeness. In fact, one of the purposes of the two funding establishments within the LEAD initiative is to promote gender equity and representation while a third one explicitly favors the inclusion of female students in its program since considered more disadvantaged in the MENA region (AUB, n.d.-h). the gender concern is further highlighted as a core facet of inclusiveness in various means of communication including town hall meetings (AUB, 2018a).

*Collaboration.* . Viewed from the perspective of scholarships, collaboration is reflected at three levels: cross-units partnerships that relay to internal stakeholders the value that AUB places on collaboration, collaboration with external stakeholders, and collaboration between students themselves.

Scholarships granted through the LEAD initiative represents an example of the first two levels and underlines the coherence of the institutional rhetoric about collaboration when it is applied internally. In fact, one of the marking characteristic of this initiative is that it engages the simultaneous efforts of multiple institutional units including the Office of Student Affairs, the Office of Grants and Contracts, the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, the Center for Teaching and Learning, the

Office of International Programs as well as the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service. The outcome of this collaboration is a whole greater than its parts which yields for both faculty and students valuable learning and increased expertise that contribute equally in knowing how to address greater challenges (AUB, n.d.-ce). At the level of external stakeholders, the partnerships with the scholarship funding establishments themselves represent an instance of external collaboration.

The LEAD scholarships denote also a third level of collaboration that materializes between students themselves. In fact, students that are part of this scholarship program are requested to work together on community engagements projects. In fact, one of the major objectives of this scholarship is to have beneficiary students participate in civic engagement activities through volunteering and community service implemented through teamwork projects (AUB, n.d.-ce). In highlighting the impact that this scholarship left on her, one scholarship student says, “I came and met people with different ideas and cultural backgrounds and made lifetime friends” (AUB, n.d.-ce). In underlining the life-changing effect of this scholarship on students, another scholarship student affirms “The volunteering activities which I completed every semester gave me a chance to assist certain communities in their needs and difficulties. I had also a chance to work on the implementation of a community-based project that aims to provide an educational public space for students in a rural Lebanese village...I had the opportunity to attend valuable workshops about leadership skills... [the] program has really prepared me to easily merge into the work field, and shine in managing new and different problems” (AUB, n.d.-ce).

*Identification.* One of the symbolic representations of scholarships that is prominently present in the institutional rhetoric is that they identify an initial ability



level of the beneficiaries. “Scholarships are recognized as key to attracting the high-achieving students” (AUB, 2018a), or the intellectual elite (Khuri, 2016g). In one of his perspectives, the president notes that “the Office of Student Affairs sees fit to maintain a \$1 million-plus endowment that supports up to 10 scholarships a year for our outstanding sportswomen and men” (Khuri, 2018e). The identification conceptualization also highlights a socio-economic status that is often linked to the initial ability level such as scholarship programs being granted to “high performing students in underserved communities” (Khuri, 2016f).

*Innovative processes.* Scholarships can be viewed as a symbolic tool for the enactment of the purpose of the transformative process. The concept of innovation relates to the Mission, albeit indirectly, through the emphasis on graduating creative leaders. For that purpose, the LEAD initiative is considered as an innovative model of scholarships design that ensures the fulfillment of its purpose, that of attracting students of specific ability. When addressing the AUB community through one of his periodic perspectives, the current president notes: “We are always looking for innovative and cost-efficient ways to widen the circle of the best and brightest students who are able to take their rightful place at the American University of Beirut, the Middle East and North Africa region’s top-ranked university. We do it through the institutional scholarship programs” (Khuri, 2017j).

*Career impact.* A less found conceptualization of scholarships is its role in impacting the potential career of students. In fact, the LEAD scholarship as an instance of transformative scholarships provides beneficiary students with career and internship support as part of the holistic educational experience it offers students. This directly pertains to the Mission’s dimension of graduating leaders with the skills to impact their

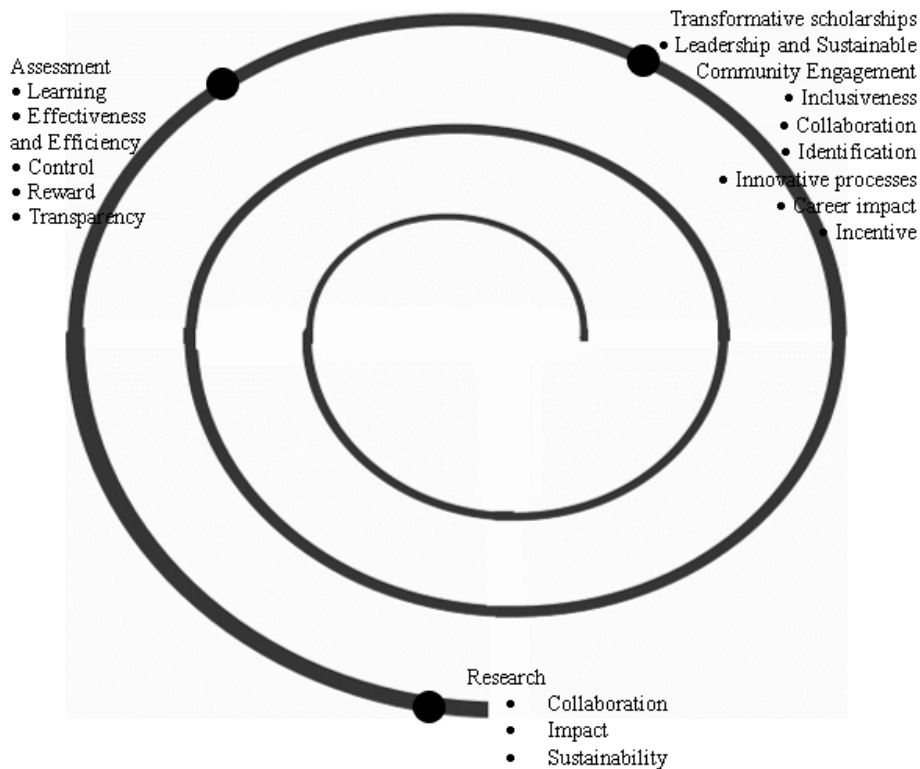
communities. In underlining the sustainable aspect of the services to community through the LEAD initiative, the current president of the university notes that “many students will doubtless go on running such activities after graduation” (Khuri, 2017h).

*Incentive.* Although with very few mentions in institutional reports, the incentive conceptualization of scholarships pertains albeit indirectly to the recruitment of potential students with an initial ability to transform into leaders at graduation. This incentive is linked to the advertising efforts conducted via various mediums that AUB stakeholders undertake to reach the desired prospective students. “We are determined” says the president in one of his perspectives “to address this challenge by announcing the initiative as far and wide as possible, so that every one of the most gifted kids in Lebanon can boldly aspire to become an AUB student and an empowered citizen-leader of tomorrow who can rise to the challenges faced by our nation and our region” (Khuri, 2017j).

Figure 11 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Mission dimension containing the various symbolic expressions detailed above as a path for further cultural.

**Figure 11**

*The Cultural Spiral of the Institution in the Mission Dimension*



*Note.* The cultural spiral of the institution in the Mission dimension containing the three key symbolic expressions and their conceptualizations as a path for further cultural analysis.

## **Findings in the Socialization Dimension**

This dimension examines the way members become socialized in the institution as well as the desired institutional cues for survival and success. The findings depict a multi-stage process of socialization starting with a rite of pre-passage that provides new recruits with institutional identity until a phase of on-going socialization. The findings also depict that tenure and socialization constitute two symbolic cultural expressions that administrators use to relay to internal stakeholders the desired institutional behaviors.

The first subsection will present the various processes and phases in the socialization processes of the institution, and the second one will delineate two

symbolic expressions of socialization used by institutional leadership to relay to various stakeholders cues of desired behavior.

**The processes of socialization and their significance.** The present subsection will delineate the findings of the socialization dimension. Organizational Socialization will be defined here as the processes through which novice members acquire institutional values, beliefs, norms, as well as cues for expected behavior in the workplace. From a role transition perspective, socialization experiences can be broadly organized around three major phases: (a) externals to novice internals, (b) promotion and tenure, and (d) ongoing socialization. Institutional leaders express explicitly the importance of providing members with the necessary professional support to prepare them to perpetuate the university's goals. In fact, in a speech delivered during a new faculty orientation session, the current provost of the university notes that AUB strives to provide its faculty "with a supportive professional environment that will enable you to focus on excellence in teaching and research" (AUB, n.d.-ab).

The narrative will be guided by the overarching concepts of survival and success. It will also examine the formal and informal structures that are available to faculty members to achieve survival and success while allowing them to transition from one organizational role to another.

The following narrative in its first part will discuss socialization from these perspectives.

***Socialization as a rite of pre-passage.*** The first step in the socialization occurs with the hiring of new faculty members. The term pre-passage confers to the new faculty members institutional identity that will serve as a point of departure for survival and later success. The new faculty orientation (NFO) program is a major enactment of

this pre-passage ritual. In fact, according to various institutional documents, the NFO is a short-term, yet intensive and periodic institutional happening in which the shared perceptions of key institutional members about the institution's values and norms are relayed to new faculty members. "The new faculty orientation program", notes the current provost of the university when addressing new faculty members "is designed to support new faculty members in becoming accustomed to AUB's institutional culture in particular and to life in Beirut and Lebanon in general" (AUB, n.d.-ab).

In addition, the university concentrates all necessary means to ensure a successful induction of new faculty members. In fact, the NFO program is supported by specific resources such as the New Faculty Information handbook and a website that provides new faculty members with key information to trigger, enhance and support the socialization process. This includes offering new faculty members with various logistical and administrative details and with important socialization symbols such as facilitating networking with senior colleagues and launching the mentoring process to be continued within the departments (AUB, n.d.-ac). The handbook communicates travel-related tips and documentation as well as other information such as those regarding schooling for new members' children (AUB, 2018c). The website includes a pre- and post-arrival checklist as well as a Frequently Asked Questions link that guide and provide preliminary answers to the questions that may arise prior to new members' arrival (AUB, n.d.-ac). The information provided deals also with non-institutional social aspects such as a list of web resources on outdoor activities and various cultural events and leisure activities (AUB, n.d.-ae). The orientation consists of two to three-day set of common of experiences such as getting introduced to each other, to the university's services and resources as well as to the various policies governing their stay at AUB and

promoting their institutional success (AUB, n.d.-ad). Moreover, AUB offers new faculty a visit to the Ras Beirut area (AUB, n.d.-af). This measure relays to new members the special relationship AUB builds with its proximate environment and ensure their socialization into valuing this defining dimension of membership in the AUB community.

The orientation session is a formal institutional intervention in which the institution targets only the new recruits with a specific set of activities meant to induct them into institutional values. In fact, the first orientation day starts with an introduction of new faculty members by their respective deans and covers a wide range of discussions and explanations including policies on tenure, research and grants, governance as well as an introduction to the various initiative within AUB. The second day discussions include among other topics an introduction to anti-harassment policies in AUB, an introduction to the university's mentoring process as well as an explanation of the key resources available to new faculty members to develop their teaching skills such as the services offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning. The last day discussions involve the explanation of other services offered to faculty such as the library services, sports facilities and services offered by the writing center among other things as well. Activities on the last day are usually concluded by a reception offered at the president's residence and attended by senior faculty members (AUB, n.d.-ag). Although intensive, the orientation program offers a sequence of identifiable steps to achieve the new organizational role of acquiring institutional membership. Aligned with the institutional concern for assessing practices as explained in previous dimensions, the NFO program is assessed by new faculty members once concluded, for feedback and potential improvements (AUB, n.d.-ac).

In addition to the activities aimed at inducting the new members and facilitating their entry through helping faculty members acquire the institutional identity and learn about the explicit and more implicit values in their work, new members are expected to expand their enactment of their organizational role through familiarizing themselves with the existing institutional policies. The Policies and Procedures Review Committee adopted the use of a policy management software to raise the stakeholders' awareness of new policies as well as ensure their wide dissemination through an online platform as well as various orientation sessions (AUB, 2018a). In fact, the policy on policy development stipulates that every policy needs to have an owner that reviews it periodically and is responsible to disseminate a new or changed policy by email to inform stakeholders about that change (AUB, 2018a). Institutional surveys that assess members' awareness of various policies report a high awareness of policies and procedures related to their work (AUB, 2018a).

***Rite of Passages to new ranks and institutional roles.*** Within higher education, promotion and tenure exemplify transitions to new institutional roles while at the same time aiming at success. According to institutional documents, the striving to accomplish this aim is an expectation of most its members. Though largely an individual endeavor, it is marked with both a formal dimension supported by policies and manuals and an informal one marked by a mentor-mentee relationship. The following will delineate both the formal and informal dimensions of the socialization process as depicted in various institutional documents.

Policies indicate a relatively fixed range of time between seven to ten cumulative years of service for a faculty member to be eligible for promotion to a higher professorial rank. The policy on promotion reveals a highly sequential process in terms

of schedule as well as stages. In fact, a detailed schedule indicates the specific dates that mark the various stages of the process starting with the submission of applications and concluding with notifying the candidate about the final decision (AUB, n.d.-ai). The promotion policy provides also a clear explanation of the various stages of the process itself. The promotion process starts with the faculty member submitting to the chairperson the promotion application with a portfolio containing all required supporting documentation. The application is next reviewed by a promotion committee that complements the existing documentation with additional ones such as teaching assessments of the faculty member and evaluation letters by graduate students-advisees and formulates a recommendation that is afterwards followed by a vote of eligible faculty members from the candidate's department and complemented by a report of the department's chairperson. The promotion application is then submitted to the dean and is examined by an Advisory Committee for discussing it and voting on it to which a recommendation of the dean is added, and the file forwarded to the provost. The provost will formulate a report after having convened the board of deans and forward the application to the president for final decision after approval of the board of trustees (AUB, n.d.-ah).

Tenure is perceived as a significant process in higher education offering better work conditions such as the procurement of stability through a lifetime contract, or allowing faculty members the opportunity of freedom of expression in their pursuit of their work. Tenure was recently reinstated after a suspension period of 30 years (AUB, 2018a). According to senior administrators, reinstating tenure was meant to attract high caliber scholars who will produce impactful research and consequently strengthen AUB's status as a premier research university (AUB, 2018a).



Acquiring tenure is equally a formal process delineated by policies and is a sequential one characterized by a clear schedule and known stages. The schedule is issued by the office of the provost and starts with the candidate submitting a tenure application and ends with being notified of a final decision (AUB, n.d.-aj). The different stages for obtaining tenure begin with the candidate preparing a portfolio containing evidence of research, teaching, and service excellence determined by specific dimensions clearly stipulated in the tenure policy and submitted to a Review committee that ends up composing an evaluation report complemented by a letter from the chairperson and then forwarded to the dean. The dean in turn writes a report based on the forwarded evidence and transfers it to the office of the provost who convenes the University Promotion and Tenure Committee to vote on granting tenure to the candidate and makes a recommendation for or against granting tenure that is transferred to the president for a final decision after the approval of the board of trustees (AUB, 2018d). Once awarded, the policy on tenure stipulates that post-tenure reviews will take place every five years to ensure a faculty member's level of research, teaching and service still aligns with institutional expectations (AUB, 2018a).

Passages can also be manifested in a transition to a new managerial role such as becoming a department's chairperson. Whereas a formal policy depicts this passage to the new role the process seems to be governed by less stages than that of being promoted to a higher professorial rank. In fact, the chairperson is appointed by the president after a recommendation from both the provost and the dean who consults with departmental faculty members first and the Faculty Advisory Committee (AUB, 2010). In addition, socialization into this new role is restricted to sharing of a Manual for Department Chairs that outlines detailed tasks such as developing curricula and

programs, departmental budgeting, facilitating faculty members' various duties as well as reviewing their performance, and managing students'-related academic functions (AUB, 2016b).

***Socialization as an ongoing process of evaluation and support.*** There are many practices within AUB that continuously provide faculty members with the socialization cues needed to constantly align with institutional expectations of survival and success. In what follows two key practices will be presented: Evaluation and mentoring.

The periodic faculty review process as regulated by the Statement of Policy with Regard to Academic Appointment and Tenure, Promotion Procedures and Guidelines constitutes an instance of ongoing formal mechanism of socialization whereas faculty members are given advice for path correction based on abiding by the university expectations. (AUB, 2018a). In addition to the periodic performance review, faculty development grants provide faculty members with the support to conduct research and stay current in their discipline, thus socializing them through this reward system into becoming dedicated and effective researchers (AUB, 2018a).

Informal cues from institutional rhetoric constitute also a means of informing various internal stakeholders about expected academic behaviors as well as rewarded ones. For example, the 2016 academic strategic plan highlights the importance of establishing research centers that emphasize collaboration and interdisciplinarity because it leads to sustainable impact (AUB, 2016a) thus providing a cue for desired research performance. This cue can further be traced in several perspectives published regularly by the president in which interdisciplinarity for example allows a multi-perspective approach to understand challenges and consequently leads to a greater impact in devising solutions to these challenges (e.g., Khuri, 2017f; Khuri, 2017i).

Mentorship constitutes also an on-going form of socialization where senior faculty members continue to provide institutional integration advice to their junior colleagues.

In reference to the continuous concern for supporting faculty development throughout their stay at AUB, the provost, during the New Faculty Orientation session, refers to the on-going nature of the socialization process as a supportive developmental process noting that “the university aims to create an academic culture which is hospitable and supportive” (AUB, n.d.-ab) to faculty members.

Mentoring constitutes a type of semi-formal process of socialization that provide a support system for novice members. According to institutional documents, this system revolves mainly around a mentoring process in which senior faculty is assigned to play a pivotal role in the advancement of their junior colleagues through relaying to them their knowledge and experiences of aspects of the institutional and departmental culture that they have become familiar with. In fact, “the primary purpose of the mentoring system is to provide new faculty members with guidance and support for the successful enrichment of academic careers with professional advancement” (AUB, n.d.-ak). The socialization process to be pursued within departments through the mentoring process starts with the NFO program where a mentor for every new faculty member is designated by the chairperson of the department (AUB, 2016c). The semi-formal nature of the mentoring process as practiced stems from the fact that it is loosely structured and as a result practiced differently by different faculties within AUB. In fact, it varies between being a formalized system that is governed by specific procedures as in the case of the Faculty of Health Sciences for example and one that is informal essentially governed by oral and behavioral cues such as in the case of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (AUB, 2018a).

Although institutional leaders acknowledge that mentoring thrives informally, developing a formal mentoring system that is governed by a minimum set of guidelines and procedures is valued to “ensure that the minimum guidance is taking place” and “to ensure that all departments/tracks embrace the necessity of the informal culture of mentoring” (AUB, n.d.-al). The chairperson plays a key role in the mentoring system.

Besides assigning the mentor, the chairperson is expected to oversee constantly the relationship between mentor and mentee and takes the necessary action when it is not yielding the expected outcome in which case both protagonists can seek the chair's counsel (AUB, n.d.-al). Additionally, one of chair's responsibilities consists of developing "effective mentoring program for their junior faculty members in coordination with the dean" (AUB, 2016b) either on a one-to-one or group basis (AUB, n.d.-al).

Procedurally, the mentoring task is relayed to designated mentors who should meet with the mentee every six months to provide advice on various professional issues and feedback on performance (AUB, n.d.-al). The first socialization cue of new mentors is provided individually by the chairperson who explains the mechanics of the academic system in terms of departmental expectations and the way they relate to institutional regulations, teaching load policies as well as deadlines and actions that govern the promotion and tenure process as well as the deadlines related to performance evaluation (AUB, n.d.-al). In addition, institutional rhetoric acknowledges the importance of rewarding the mentor for the time and efforts he/she devotes to the professional advancement of junior colleagues and the chairperson may decide for the nature of the reward which can reflect in performance evaluation of the mentor (AUB, n.d.-al). Although some surveyed documents discuss a primarily psychological reward of self-satisfaction for mentors engaging in the process (AUB, n.d.-al), other institutional rhetoric considers that acquiring the mentor status is a symbol of being recognized as a "highly performing faculty member" who serves also as a role model for others (AUB, 2018a).

The mentoring policy of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture constitutes an example of formal mentoring guidelines process that align with the senior leadership's institutional expectations of the purpose of mentoring (AUB, n.d.-am). Explained briefly, mentor and mentee start by agreeing on procedural details such as

meeting frequencies and areas of mentorship as well as existing policies and procedures that guide the mentorship process. In the context of teaching, the formalized role of mentors includes providing advice about course preparation, teaching methods and types of courses to teach according to policies on workload while keeping in view requirements for promotion and tenure (AUB, n.d.-am).

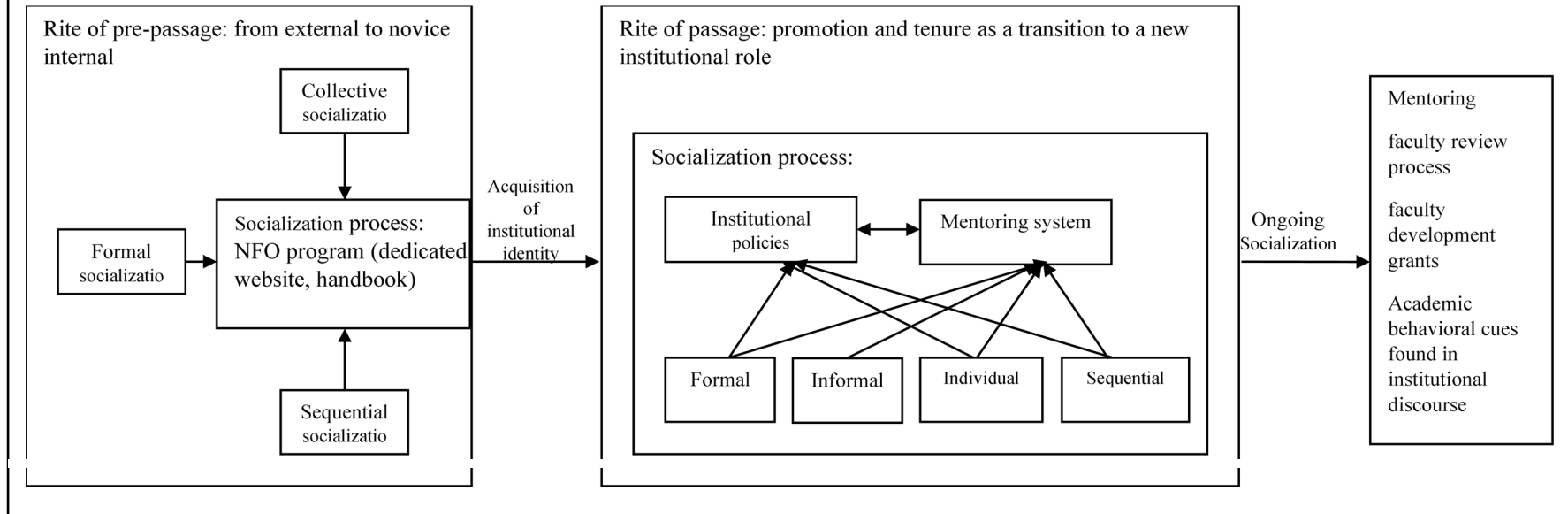
Whereas mentoring focus on individual socialization in which senior faculty members facilitate the integration of novice or junior members, some mentions in the surveyed documents refer to mentoring as a bidirectional relationship in which mentors are not just transmitters of institutional wisdom but also learners who appreciate their protégés' fresh ideas and input. Additionally, when discussing about setting meetings between mentor and mentee institutional documents promulgate that such interactions will benefit both protagonists (AUB, n.d.-ao). Consequently, considered from the perspective of bidirectionality, mentoring is a form of ongoing socialization of senior faculty members that showcases the value the institution places on continuous learning of members through a mutual growth relationship that does not impact the protagonists of the relationship themselves, but also the institution as a whole.

Noteworthy that although the current president has launched a gender-based institutional initiative that examines the lives and careers of women faculty and was transformed into a standing committee (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2018a), the institutional rhetoric does not denote any particular mentoring experiences for socializing women faculty suggesting a one-size-fits-all socialization model

Figure 12 below summarizes the socialization processes as discussed above.

**Figure 12**

*The Institutional Socialization Processes*



**Symbolic expressions of the socialization dimension.** The surveyed documents exhibit two main symbols used to enact socialization as a cultural dimension. In fact, tenure as well as mentoring are two symbolic socialization processes directed at the survival and success of faculty members within the institution. Tenure is selected as one key symbolic expression of socialization because it remains the optimal materialization of institutional success as it endows its bearer with significant privileges. Senior faculty members responsible for the socialization of their junior colleagues through mentoring. In fact, the mentor initiates the novice into the values required for becoming tenured, and once tenured, the senior faculty member relays to the novice mentees the institutional values for success.

Tenure, and mentoring are two words that prominently figure in the institutional rhetoric relating to socialization and have both a relatively good weighted percentage. However, as in the previous dimensions, the decision to retain them as symbolic expressions within the socialization dimension is not merely based on a statistical outcome but is mainly governed by a careful analysis of the documents surveyed here in which both expressions were perceived as significant symbols for the socialization dimension of the institutional culture.

Table 16 below represents the weighted percentages of both symbols in the documents.

Table 16

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Tenure	255	0.24%
Mentoring	108	0.10%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

*Tenure.* Although promotion is a periodic institutional practice, tenure has been recently applied at AUB. However, the requirements for becoming a tenured faculty member have well existed in the documents since 2007, according to the consulted documentation (AUB, 2007). The requirements for granting tenure become more refined in later institutional documents (AUB, 2014; AUB, 2014b; AUB, 2016), and that before the implementation of the tenure system itself.

Consequently, descriptions of the tenure requirements must have developed awareness among faculty members as to the prerequisites to gaining tenure, which consequently constituted a guiding thread of academic behavior for institutional survival and success.

If rituals are an essential component of socialization practices, then promotion and tenure constitute an element of socialization from both a form and meaning perspective. Formally, tenure is conceptualized as a ritualistic practice since it embeds all the elements of a ritual. Although tenure is granted once, the periodic review of the tenured-faculty member makes it also a recurrent socialization practice (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, tenure is a practice framed with a clear beginning and ending and involves a number of specific social actors. In fact, the almost year-long process starts with candidates submitting a portfolio containing all required documentation and ends with a decision notification letter sent to them while involving in the process key stakeholders such as chairperson, dean, and several identified committees (AUB, n.d.-an). What reinforces the symbolic value of tenure as a socialization-enacting process is the shared meanings that senior institutional individuals attribute to it. Whereas it is an emblem of recognition and reward (AUB, 2016b) that fosters lasting institutional loyalty (AUB, 2018a) it is also a symbol for expected behavioral cues that provide faculty members



with a map for integration to warrant their survival and achieving success. In fact, institutional rhetoric shows that tenure is generally imbued with quality descriptors. For example, the tenure process “is an important mechanism to recognize, reward and reinforce *faculty excellence* [emphasis added] – one of the University’s strategic goals” (AUB, 2016b), or in another instance stipulating that “granting tenure is a recognition by one's peers and by the university of *achieved distinction* [emphasis added] in the areas of research, teaching and service, in the advancement of the mission of the university, and ultimately in the career trajectory of faculty members” (AUB, 2018d).

In this context, institutional rhetoric surfaces six symbolic representations of tenure and the relatively significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcases an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings.

Table 17 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to Tenure. As in the previous symbolic representations, these are not mutually exclusive, and they were categorized as such based on the dominant understanding of each code within its context.

Table 17

*The six behavioral symbolic representations of tenure and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of tenure-related behavior</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Identity	~ 42%
Status	~ 11%
Consistency	~ 14%
Commitment	~ 9%
Self-assessment	~ 6%
Impact	~ 18%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Identity.* Identity in this context refers to the expected quality and profile of a potential tenured faculty member in relation to all his/her scholarly activities. The formation of such identity however needs to be supported by evidence.

Broadly, the tenured-to-become faculty member is a researcher with recognized scholarly activity, an excellent teacher, and someone who contributes to the improvement of the university and its various communities (AUB, 2016d). This broad identity is verified by senior administrators through examining if it aligns with or exceeds a benchmark.

In more specific terms, the tenured-to-be faculty member is first expected to be an accomplished expert and a catalyst for growth (AUB, 2018d).

Although the expertise materializes in significant individual contributions to the discipline (AUB, 2018d), it is coupled with recognition of the ability of the faculty member to collaborate with peers on larger research endeavors. In the context of research collaborations, “it is essential that the candidate's individual intellectual contributions be clearly identifiable and highlighted as part of the assessment process” (AUB, 2016d).

The identity of the tenured-potential faculty member also includes being an innovator who also maintains a steady stream of scholarly activity. Innovation is the outcome of imagining novel uses of existing knowledge. The ability, for example, to transform ideas into actions through “utilizing available expertise and resources to offer solutions” (AUB, 2018d) constitutes a mark of innovation. Innovation materializes also in the development of the department through the introduction of new courses in the academic program and also “the use of emerging teaching methodologies based on, for example, technology, evidence-based teaching, experiential learning and service/community-based learning” (AUB, 2018d).

The tenure candidate is also a caregiver who caters for the needs of the university, the profession through advancing it, and the larger society through a proactive

engagement to address its challenges, but also the needs of their students through to help them shape their career pathways (AUB, 2018d).

Institutional rhetoric underlines the symbiotic relationship between the individual identity of the potential tenure candidate and the institutional identity. In fact, tenure “will enhance and enforce AUB’s position as a premier research university through the ability to attract high caliber faculty members who can explore new areas of inquiry that leads to innovative scholarship (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016a).

*Status.* Whereas identity is an internal sign of behavioral expectation, status rather denotes the extent of recognition that identity formation generates from external and internal entities such as peer individuals or groups. Although both symbolic representations are interdependent, the institutional rhetoric also emphasizes external recognition.

Acquiring status as symbolic manifestation of tenure is the result of receiving the recognition of other experts. The recognition by peers stems usually from a “respected, authoritative and/or impactful” research (AUB, 2018d). Publishing in “high quality peer reviewed venues, as judged by experts in the discipline” (AUB, 2016d) or developing and leading initiatives as well as mobilizing other researchers (AUB, 2018d) is by itself a recognition stamp. Securing external referees who support the endorsement of the tenure candidate in the tenure process (AUB, n.d.-an) and receiving invitations to give talks in other universities (AUB, n.d.-am), and providing consultancy to various external entities (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2018b) are often a symbol of recognized status.

Status vis-à-vis external entities materializes also in the ability to secure funds for launching and expanding scholarly work (AUB, 2018d). Recognition of being perceived as a prominent educator materializes in “contributions to the development of

educational policy and programs at the national level, and/or establishing professional networks within the university and/or beyond that aim at improving teaching and learning” as well as students’ and peers’ acknowledgement of being a role model (AUB, 2018d).

*Consistency.* This conceptualization suggests a steady and coherent level of the scholarly activity itself usually set within a clear research agenda. In fact, tenure is granted to faculty members who “will *continue* [emphasis added] to perform at or above the standards set by the Faculty and the university” (AUB, 2016d) or who will *sustain* [emphasis added] effective teaching evidenced by students’ learning (AUB, 2018d). In fact, consistency materializes in setting extended research agendas with coherent components that evolve systematically and that target the achievement of major objectives such as leading to producing a positive difference (AUB, 2018d).

*Commitment.* This conceptualization highlights the existence of a will to pursue an activity with a purpose. Institutional rhetoric stipulates for example that tenure should be granted to faculty members who display a “potential for effective long-term performance” which is assessed based on the extent to which the “performance is expected to continue into the future” (AUB, 2018d). The purpose of commitment to service tasks is also to “address needs that are specific to Lebanon and the region” (AUB, 2018d).

The individual commitment does not just relate to the task itself, but to the institution as well. In fact, one of the goals of tenure is to foster “long-term institutional loyalty” (AUB, 2018a). Commitment can also be validated by contributing to the fulfillment of the institution’s mission through the task. In fact, “tenure should be granted to faculty members whose high standards of scholarly achievements” serve “the

university's mission" (AUB, 2018d), or whose service commitments "ultimately reflect positively on the university" (AUB, 2018d).

Institutional rhetoric highlights the reciprocity of commitment within the tenure context. Whereas faculty members display the will to pursue a task for professional and institutional fulfilment, the institution in return commits to providing them with necessary resources for undertaking that task. In fact, the "potential for effective long-term performance warrant the institution's reciprocal long-term commitment" (AUB, 2018d).

*Self-assessment.* According to institutional rhetoric, self-assessment supposes a self-imposed critical analysis of one's performance. Meeting the expectations set by the institution supposes also from the candidate to engage in self-assessment such as developing a plan to "realistically meet performance review requirements" (AUB, n.d.-am). Among the multiple tasks to undertake by the candidate, self-assessment applies to the teaching performance whether through the teaching practice itself where he/she should engage in "self-evaluation and improvement of teaching methodology and practices" (AUB, 2018d), or the teaching processes and products as in contributing to "substantial revisions of existing courses" (AUB, 2018d).

*Impact.* The granting of tenure to faculty members suggests performing at a level that leaves a tangible effect that materializes in different forms according to institutional rhetoric.

An aspect of impact supposes influencing policies and practices. In fact, the research findings of the tenure-candidate are expected to inform or respond to the needs of the public or other key individuals and "influence policy, practice, and/or society" (AUB, 2018d) or developing educational policies that help advance the teaching and

learning process (AUB, 2018d). At a more individual level, influence also suggests attending to the needs of learners through promoting their “academic development as well as the career and professional path of students” (AUB, 2018d).

Another aspect of impact includes producing knowledge that leads to inventions or the development of viable commercial product (AUB, 2018d). Innovations also include the development of practices and methodologies that contribute to the advancement of the teaching and learning process (AUB, 2018d).

***Mentoring.*** Mentoring is yet another mechanism by which senior administrators reinforce the socialization process to warrant a smooth integration of novice faculty members through facilitating the interaction between new recruits and veterans. Institutional rhetoric as enacted in the president’s messages and key documents underlines the importance of mentoring by considering it the distinctive trait “of the most exceptional scholars” (Khuri, 2016b), impactful educators (Khuri, 2018a), and a leadership determinant (AUB, 2018d).

The value of mentoring as a socialization medium is that it “is intended to result in improved productivity and commitment among the faculty, decreased attrition among faculty, increased collaboration among colleagues, increased understanding and respect among faculty, and the encouragement of a university environment that promotes collegiality” (AUB, n.d.-al). It also allows for a targeted and individual assistance leading to the development of an interpersonal relationship through communication between mentor and mentee, which in turn facilitates the socialization process itself. Consequently, mentoring acquires a symbolic dimension as it outweighs the mere idea of someone giving advice to another to succeed internally, rather, it symbolizes in the profile of the mentor the values and identity that the university aims at promoting. The

following subsection attempts to determine the various symbolic representations of mentoring as a symbol enacted in the expected role of the mentor based on the institutional rhetoric.

Five symbolic representations of the mentoring roles were determined in the surveyed documents. The significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcases an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings. Table 18 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to Tenure. As in the previous symbolic representations, these are not mutually exclusive, and they were categorized as such based on the dominant understanding of each code within its context.

Table 18

*The five symbolic representations of the mentoring relationship and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of mentoring role</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Tutor	~ 35%
Counselor	~ 20%
Supporter	~ 17%
Nurturer	~ 14%
Critic	~ 14%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Tutor.* One prominent role of the mentor is a tutoring one in which the mentor provides his mentee with instruction to thrive. In fact, “Mentors are mainly responsible for providing developmental mentoring consisting of...information” (AUB, n.d.-ap).

Instruction relates to providing the mentee with practical information such as “how the department is organized (e.g. areas, committees, etc.), how decisions are made, and the roles junior faculty members play in decision making, what support staff is available for junior faculty and how they can be of assistance, what supplies and

expenses are covered by the department and other internal resources available for research and teaching expenses” (AUB, n.d.-am), as well as other domains relating to research projects such as expected research output, resources available for research, authorship designations and order in collaborative research including the advantages and disadvantages of such collaborations in relation to promotions (AUB, n.d.-am; AUB, n.d.-ao).

In the teaching and learning context, the mentor provides information about policies relating to teaching tasks, teaching strategies and resources as well as establishing authority in class, designing the course material and syllabus, expected difficulty of exam questions and student workload, and all institutional expectations related to these tasks (AUB, n.d.-am). Within the service domain, instruction includes information about types and functions of different institutional committees, the number of committees to be involved in, as well as service requirements to the profession and the larger community, the way to document service activities, and an understanding of the service weight in promotion (AUB, n.d.-am). Information concerns also explaining the various issues relating to promotion and tenure (AUB, n.d.-al; AUB, n.d.-am).

*Counselor.* Whereas tutoring supposes communicating information that is more factual by nature, counseling supposes relaying an opinion, advice or counsel to follow for institutional success. In fact, the mentee is expected to “ask and seek guidance and assistance whenever this is needed and listen with open mind to advice given by mentor” (AUB, n.d.-al).

Counseling roles include guidance on the type of research to engage in and its impact on promotion in general as well as “defining research topics and tracks that are reasonable given the availability of resources, data” (AUB, n.d.-am). Mentors provide



also their mentees with “advice on publication venues, how much is expected, how quality is assessed in performance reviews, trade-off between quality and quantity of publications, what kinds of publications are valued (books, chapters, refereed journal articles, conference proceedings papers)” (AUB, n.d.-am). Additional advice concern time management especially between research and teaching, recruiting, mentoring, and working with graduate students, as well as giving guidance about the expected role of the mentee in institutional committees (AUB, n.d.-am). Counseling also supposes providing guidance on developing an understanding of the departmental culture for better integration, balancing and prioritizing research, teaching and service tasks, and institutional expectations and strategies to achieve promotions as well as prominence in one’s discipline (AUB, n.d.-ap).

*Supporter.* Another conceptualization of the mentor’s role that emerges from institutional rhetoric is that of providing the mentee with the necessary means and assistance as well as defends and promotes his/her interests. In fact, institutional rhetoric argues that the mentor advocates for the mentee by “arguing in support of the mentee for funds, graduate students, space” (AUB, n.d.-ap), and providing the mentee with “individual recognition and encouragement” (AUB, n.d.-al).

Broadly, the mentor assists the mentee in smoothing his/her institutional and departmental entry and fostering “positive interactions with colleagues” (AUB, n.d.-am).

The various facets of assistance revolve equally around expected institutional tasks. Within the research context, the assistance provided to the mentee involves writing grants proposals, “and assistance in preparing/reviewing/managing the budget” (AUB, n.d.-am) that relates to them as well as assistance in developing professional

networks (AUB, n.d.-am) “by introducing him/her to colleagues” (AUB, n.d.-ap). Concerning teaching tasks, the mentor assists his mentee by making “course material available to the new faculty member for existing or previously taught courses” (AUB, n.d.-am), and “providing contacts to faculty members from outside AUB who teach similar courses” (AUB, n.d.-am).

The mentor assists also his/her mentee in meeting performance reviews by devising a plan for that purpose or developing a template folder for promotion and tenure (AUB, n.d.-am). The development of a plan to meet performance reviews aimed at survival and success bases evidently itself on institutional documentation that explains success cues such as the policies for promotion and tenure. In the research context, this documentation highlights the importance and values collaboration within or across disciplines while however requesting from faculty members to showcase a distinguished contribution within this collaborative framework (AUB, 2018d).

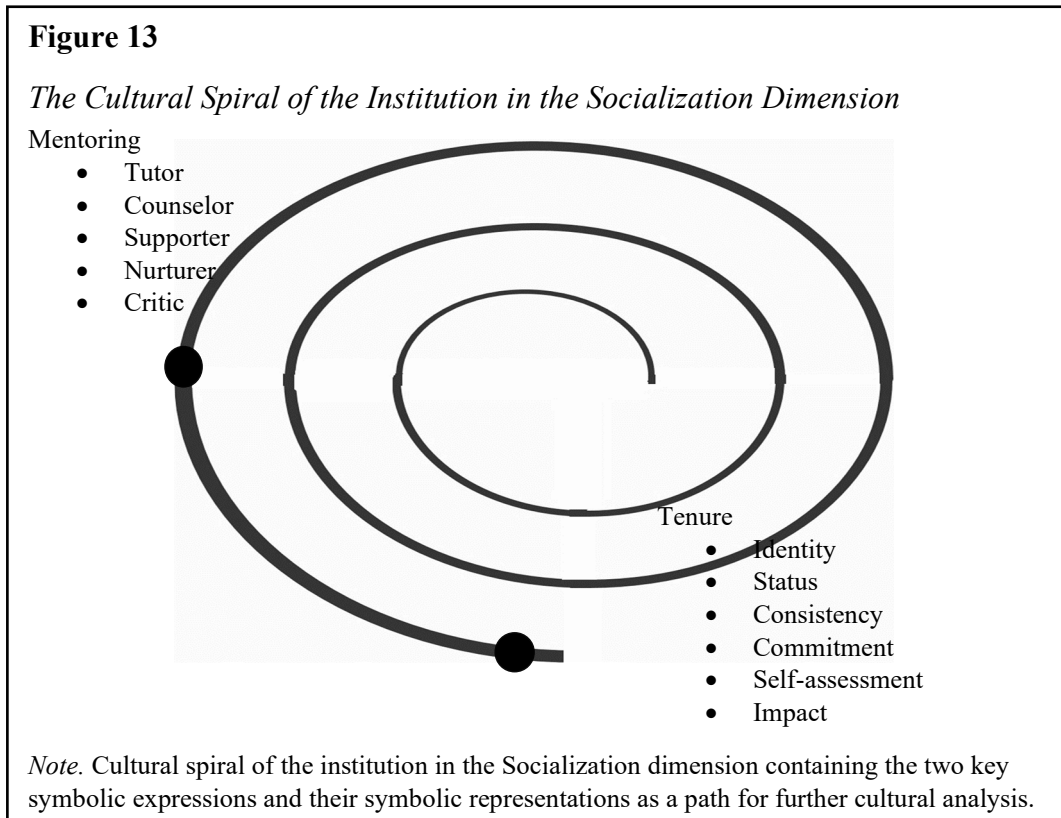
*Nurturer.* One of the role symbolic representations of the mentor suggested equally by institutional rhetoric is that of contributing to the professional growth and development of the mentee. In fact, “the primary purpose of the mentoring system is to provide new faculty members with guidance and support for the successful enrichment of academic careers with professional advancement” (AUB, n.d.-ak). The mentor helps the mentee to “thrive as a scholar” (AUB, n.d.-ao) by providing development advice (AUB, n.d.-aq), and exhibiting interest “in the growth and progress of their mentee” (AUB, 2016b) through their “willing to commit time and attention to the relationship” (AUB, n.d.-al).

*Critic.* This conceptualization suggests expressing a justified opinion or an evaluation of the mentee’s performance in various institutional tasks. This

conceptualization however does not constitute a formal evaluation but merely a constructive feedback that will enable the mentee to succeed in the new position (AUB, n.d.-ao).

Within the teaching context, “classroom visits by mentors...to the mentee’s class are helpful sources for constructive feedback and improving teaching” (AUB, n.d.-am; AUB, n.d.-ao). The mentors’ role is also instrumental in assessing “the performance of new faculty members working towards the promotion” (AUB, n.d.-al), and providing them with “honest criticism and feedback” (AUB, n.d.-al).

Figure 13 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Socialization dimension containing the two symbolic expressions as a path for further cultural analysis.



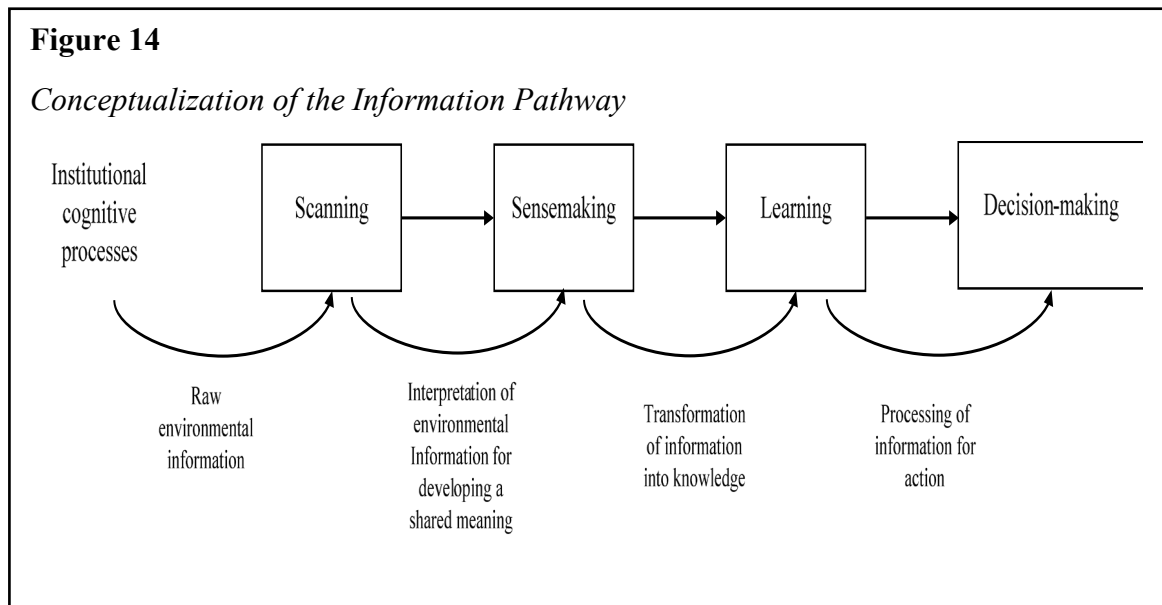
## **Findings in the Information Dimension**

In this section, the definition of information that will guide the narrative is meaningful data that serves a specific purpose while noting from the beginning that this purpose aligns always with the institution's mission. Information however cannot be separated from its transmission medium. In fact, for information to be efficiently used, it has to be relayed to concerned stakeholders for processing and decision-making. Consequently, the investigation of information needs to be connected to that of communication. Although both are acts that occur simultaneously in institutional realities, their presentation as two separate constructs serves only the purpose of clarifying the narrative.

The surveyed documents have allowed to conceptualize a path through which information moves from being raw data scanned in the environment until it is processed for decision-making. The term that will be retained here to label this linear movement is the information pathway. The first phase of the information pathway where raw data starts flowing into the institution is reflected in institutional scanning. This raw data is next subject to the interpretation of it by key institutional stakeholders or their sensemaking while attempting to develop a shared understanding of its meanings. The outcome of their sensemaking denotes a transformation of information that stimulates institutional learning where senior administrators and concerned institutional stakeholders figure out what is needed for the last phase of the information pathway: decision-making. Naturally, this linear flow of information cannot occur without communication between various stakeholders. The narrative will just retain some aspects of communication that are explicitly stated in the consulted documentation

while that communication can occur at every phase in the Information pathway model and in various directions.

Figure 14 below conceptualizes this pathway that will guide the narrative in the following subsections.



As in the previous dimensions, this section will be divided into two subsections.

The first subsection will examine several examples of the information pathway model discussed above, and the second one will delineate the two symbolic expressions related to the Information dimension.

**Information pathways and the communication process.** The narrative below will examine two types of information and communication labeled information and internal communication, and information and external communication. .

**Information and internal communication.** Information permeates all the activities undertaken within the university. To frame this elusive concept, the present subsection will focus on the meaning and flow of information within well-defined institutional units while highlighting the various directions of the communication channels it flows through.

Internal communication at AUB is a highly structured and formal process. Internal communication is defined here as the transmission of information between the various internal stakeholders.

The following narrative will start by delineating the manner in which information is first gathered internally and the path it follows to materialize finally in decision-making thus highlighting the phases of the Information pathway model discussed above. The second subsection will highlight the channels and types of communication of the information between various constituents.

*Information.* Internal environments are unstable and concerned stakeholders need to understand the significance of any changes that occur within their institution. Complaints from faculty members about the high expectations of teaching assignments or students dropping out from a program after their first semester are few examples of the internal instability that is part of the functioning of academia. Additionally, the rapid technological innovations inherent to many academic tasks such as the online delivery of courses for example and the coping of faculty members and students alike with such developments create also instability. The Information pathway often starts by the need to gather critical information about internal changes. Information are collected and reported by multiple institutional units that involve many concerned internal stakeholders including students, faculty members and other senior administrators, while equally allowing for multiple channels of communications. For instance, the University Student Faculty Committee composed of students and faculty members from different faculties, which serves as a medium between students and senior administration, gathers and relays concerns about the general welfare of students as well as their rights and opinion (AUB, n.d.-bj). Every faculty or school has equally

an information gathering mechanism such as standing committees allowing it to collect data on various issues regarding its functioning and alignment with the institution's mission. The Undergraduate Admissions Committee for example composed of a student representative as well as academic and non-academic personnel regularly gather statistics over a period of time, and recommends changes or alerts senior administrators about any trends and changes in students' admissions (AUB, 2016c). Departments are also academic units that gather information to examine the extent to which their functioning aligns with the institution's academic strategic plan through a periodic assessment and review of their programs and their learning outcomes (AUB, 2018a).

In many instances, information gathered about the need to undertake internal changes such as the development of new courses, degree programs, or hiring new faculty members is caused by external environmental stimuli. For example, the complaints of faculty members about high teaching loads expectations (AUB, 2018a) can be attributed to the increased enrollment of students during an academic year due to the expansion of recruitment efforts imposed by environmental requirements (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the high and urgent market demand for economic specialists as an external stimuli was interpreted by the Economics Department as information necessitating new strategies for increasing the number of graduate students, and the expansion of the resources of the department at both the research and teaching level by increasing more faculty members and retaining qualified ones through generous remunerations, reducing the teaching loads, and increasing research grants and conferences expenditures (AUB, 2018e). Additionally, the increasing expansion on the demand of online learning made the department develop an online learning platform in collaboration with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology that will allow students

worldwide to earn credentials and transfer them to AUB for an accelerated on-campus Masters' degree (AUB, 2018e).

The following narrative will retrace the flow of information from its initial scanning phase until its transformation into a decision while denoting simultaneously the metamorphosis of information in every phase as outlined in the Information pathway model. The example provided here is based on an external stimulus that led to the development of a new graduate program.

Scanning: This first phase of the Information pathway represents raw data generated from environmental scanning upon which institutional stakeholders will ultimately use for their decision-making. Although the details about the data gathering phase that led to the development of this graduate program are not readily available in the consulted institutional documents, they can however be inferred from president's Perspectives. In fact, in one of his Perspectives, the current president argues that the unique cultural and artistic identity of Beirut makes it well poised to develop and offer degrees in Arts History, granted mainly in the region through franchises from Western universities by colleges in the Gulf that are "not imbued intellectually with the philosophy of art" (Khuri, 2017c).

Sensemaking: The data gathering phase is followed by another one in which institutional stakeholders attempt to interpret the raw environmental stimulus and develop a shared understanding of it. This sensemaking phase comes next in the Information pathway. In fact, as highlighted in the president's statement above, Beirut as a city with a long cultural heritage that spans over centuries combined with the human capital of AUB as reflected in the expertise of its faculty members are well placed to address this challenge and transform it into an opportunity for developing a



new graduate degree that accounts for environmental requirements and the expertise of the institution's faculty members.

Learning: The outcome of the administrators' sensemaking that derived from their shared interpretation of the need to fill such a gap provided the ground for developing a new graduate degree in Art History and Curating that offers graduates research-grounded work opportunities in various fields pertaining to arts and curation making the program "the first of its kind in the Arab region" (Khuri, 2017c). However, prior to the decision-making phase, institutional stakeholders have to convert this sensemaking into knowledge regarding how to design for instance this program. The interpretation of environmental information transforms into developing the required knowledge for an effective implementation of this graduate program. This can be accomplished by the combination of the various expertise on the subject and an extensive exchange of ideas through meetings or conversations for example. In fact, the Department of Fine Arts and Art History developed first the proposal for this MA degree during the academic year 2013-2014 (AUB, 2014a). This proposal was then reviewed by members of the Board of Graduate Studies and sent back to the concerned department for further refinements (AUB, 2015). Additionally, the expertise of visiting faculty members who were integrated into the program (AUB, 2018e) also contributed into refining the new program offering. Learning was not necessarily limited to the new program, it may also concern changes that may be directly or indirectly related to it. In fact, the annual report of the Faculty of the Arts and Sciences reads that the new MA program in Art History and Curating has led faculty members to rethink the balance of the curriculum offerings at the undergraduate level (AUB, 2018e).

Decision-making: The learning generated by the conversion of the knowledge is finally processed for decision-making. This phase underlines the action steps that are necessary for the implementation of the new program. Such steps include for example the final approval of the university Senate, the Board of Trustees, and the New York State Education Department (AUB, 2017) and the recruiting of specialized faculty members (AUB, 2018e).

Certain institutional units such as the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA) provide information that is used as a confirming or corrective feedback on the information pathway and the various phases included in it. In fact, the various course evaluations administered by OIRA examine the extent to which the new graduate program discussed above for example is successful and aligns with its original purposes.

*Communication.* The importance of internal communication is highlighted through its regular practice at various levels of the hierarchy. For example, the board of trustees that governs the university communicates five times per year with the university's senior leadership through a three-day meeting every time in addition to a weekly teleconference meeting between the board of trustees' chair and the university's president (AUB, 2018a). The board of trustees in turn maintains communication through meetings with faculty members, staff and students while the president also informs the senate about the decisions and plans developed at the level of the board of trustees (AUB, 2018a). Besides academic meetings, town hall meetings are a form of engagement with the community and represent a form of information dissemination on developments and changes (AUB, 2018a).

Internal communication occurs hierarchically, as well as both at a formal and informal level. Institutional documents reveal that in most instances, hierarchical communication acquires a formal aspect and can occur both in a bottom-up as well as top-down manner. Additionally, both oral and written communication seem to prime in matters pertaining to the institution's functioning and is not hindered by distances as showcased by the use of the teleconference medium discussed above. The emphasis on written communication manifests especially in the president's perspective. In fact, this medium reflects a communication medium in which the president disseminates information on initiatives or any new developments (AUB, 2018a).

With regard to hierarchal formal communication, as in the academic example of the development of a new degree program described above, communication occurs through an upward hierarchical path dictated by the structure of the institution and materializes in proposals or policies' suggestions created through task forces and various committees' meetings and circulate until reaching the top end of the hierarchy. The proposal for a degree in Art History and Curating was first developed by a department in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences sent later to the Senate that required revisions and refinements to it to be finally approved by the board of trustees. The presidents' Perspectives discussed previously are in contrast an instance of a top-down communication channel. In fact, the current president uses these Perspectives to inform the community about "what's new and exciting at the University" (Khuri, 2016a) while highlighting their relatively formal aspect by considering them as a form of "memo" (Khuri, 2016a). Formal oral communication about internal changes and policies occurs equally through various orientation sessions whereas the use of emails constitutes the written medium about similar topics (AUB, 2018a). For instance, the agenda of the

University Admission Committee of the senate for a projected amendment regarding a policy long adopted for accepting new students was shared with committee members via email (AUB, 2017).

The prevalence of the formal communication mechanisms in the institutional rhetoric, is accompanied with mention of informal channels of communication. Brown-bag sessions represent an informal opportunity for sharing information. For example, the brown-bag forums in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies during the Fall semester of the 2017-2018 constituted an informal, yet valuable opportunity for members in the department to promote collegiality by discussing their research (AUB, 2018e). The informal dissemination of information through word-of-mouth for example helps also raise awareness about an institutional initiative or program. The University for Seniors initiative “thrives on word of mouth recommendation, as seniors and families inform not just their own small circle but broadcast far and wide about the inclusivity and empowerment of the program” (Khuri, 2017r).

Additionally, other institutional units facilitate and support the communication process. The Office of Information Technology for example develops and supports the dissemination of information reporting about various internal activities through automation (AUB, 2018a). Web-based mechanisms for example serve as a formal platform for the dissemination of information throughout the institution. , For example, different web platforms are also used for increasing internal stakeholders’ awareness and education about internal information such as bylaws, policies, and procedures or anti-discrimination practices (AUB, 2018a).

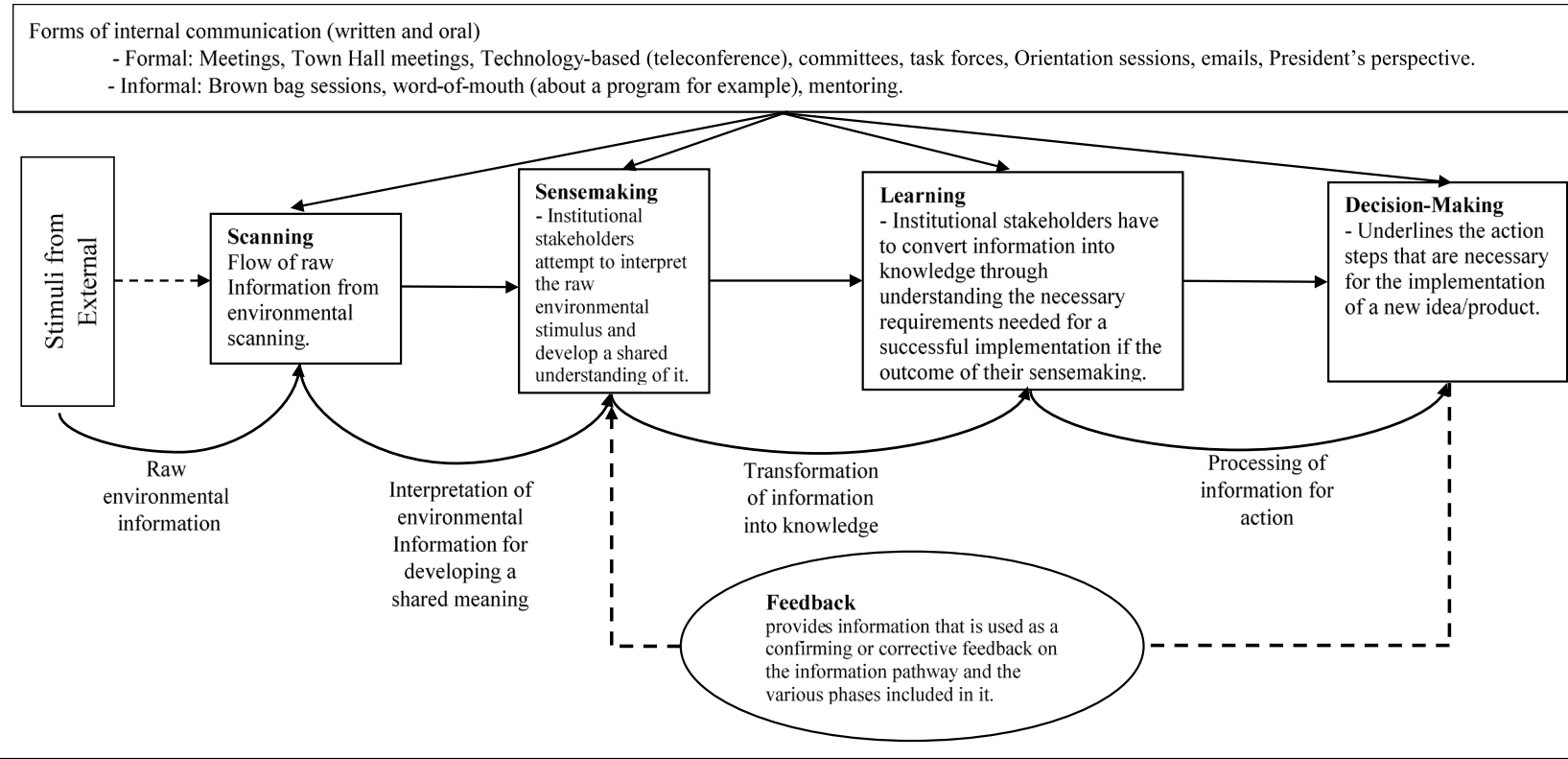
Awareness about the importance of the physical layout as to being a catalyst for communication has also some mentions in the institutional discourse. In fact, when discussing the importance of the LEAD initiative about scholarship offerings the current president notes that having all funding granting entities part of this initiative housed under the same building enhances the communication between students benefitting from these scholarships and their funders (Khuri, 2016g). Similarly, the Economics Department, due to space restrictions, reports a recommendation from external reviewers to gather all part-time faculty members together in a large room and all graduate students in another one for their study and teaching duties thus suggesting not just the need for a layout that organizes the departments' constituents, but also enhances communication between them (AUB, 2018e).

In addition to communication being an act that materializes in multiple forms, institutional administrators evaluate the impact of the channels of communication on information awareness through assessment. In this context, surveys conducted by OIRA report high scores regarding the extent to which employees are well-informed of policies relating to their work as well as an improvement in the communication of policies among staff members (AUB, 2018a).

Figure 15 below conceptualizes the information and communication pathway internally.

**Figure 15**

*The Conceptualization of the Internal Flow of Information and Communication*



***Information and communication in relation to the external environment.***

The findings on the Environment's dimension detailed previously show a web of interconnected elements that simultaneously influence and are influenced by AUB. The institution's primary challenge is attempting to understand its highly complex environment through making sense of the abundance of information available in the environment that is essential to the survival of the institution and constitutes a critical part of its decision-making process. However, to allow for decision-making to take place, information must be channeled appropriately and in a timely manner.

Consequently, in the detailing of the findings here, and as in the case of internal information and communication, information cannot be separated from its transmission medium: communication. The present subsection will relate the findings on the manner information is scanned, selected and retained, transformed into knowledge, and is communicated to various constituents ultimately leading to a path of action. For this purpose, two cases from the external environment will be examined to illustrate that process: (a) the case of students' recruitment, and (b) health-related outreach initiatives. Focusing on these cases is justified by the existence of sufficient information about them in the published documentation that consequently allows for a conceptualization of the information and communication processes. The narrative will once again be organized according to the Information pathway model. Here again, the narrative will separate information from communication channels for greater clarity.

*Information: Case 1: Students' recruitment.* Students are the principal customers of any educational institution. Guided by its mission, AUB's aim is engaged in a quest for diversity while constantly attracting academically qualified students (AUB, 2018a). In this context, information is data that is useful to administrators to achieve that purpose and consequently develop the adequate actions to accomplish it.

Scanning: In the case of students' recruitment, primary information gathering is the first stage. The first building block in the decision-making process consists of the institution's gathering information about its students markets or suppliers. The Enrollment Management and Student Services (EMSS) unit which comprises the Office of Admissions, Registrar, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), Office of International Programs, and Office of Student Affairs is the institutional arm that gathers and processes information regarding recruitment (AUB, n.d.-at). Management Information System (MIS) is broadly defined as a formal means of information gathering and processing, and communication, where the EMSS unit is a MIS to the recruitment process. This MIS is characterized by formal and efficient communication channels of information gathering as explained in what follows.

The information gathering process starts with scanning and identifying the key changes and trends occurring in the environment. In 2011, the changes identified by the Office of Admissions could be summarized in an accrued demand for higher education institutions that provide quality learning, impacted by factors such as a change of perception by Arab families regarding the importance of female access to higher learning (AUB, n.d.-at). The environmental data pointed also at the global financial crisis in 2011 that reduced funding opportunities for students at universities abroad while in counterpart many local banks were offering low interest loans to finance students' higher education (AUB, n.d.-at). Concurrently, this advantaged local and regional universities especially those newly established and adopting aggressive marketing campaigns while offering attractive scholarship packages to students (AUB, n.d.-at). The Office of Admissions scans also for environmental disturbances caused for instance by competitors. In fact, in the local educational landscape, the Office of



Admissions reported in 2011 that the difficult economic situation coupled with an increase of tuition at AUB then constituted a serious threat to the institution's students' market positioning (AUB, n.d.-at).

Sensemaking: Following the initial scanning phase, this raw information is then interpreted by specific institutional units in an attempt to derive meaning, understand relationships, and frame plausible paths of actions. Although many possible courses of action may be envisaged, administrators select what they view as the optimal solution to the environmental constraint and retain it as a suitable path to address the situation if proven to be successful over time. The information from the environment scanned by the Office of Admissions is first interpreted by administrators who then develop a shared understanding of its meaning and attempt to reach a consensus as to how AUB can deal with such an environment. Consequently, to widen the accessibility of students to AUB despite the tuition increase, especially the academically qualified ones, a consensus as to one possible path of action revolved around an increase of scholarship offerings as the term itself pervades the institutional discourse and rhetoric (Example: AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2018b; AUB, n.d.-h; Khuri, 2016g). Another undertaken course of action consisted in increasing the number of suppliers, or schools visited by the OA personnel and an increase in the number of schools visited through its annual school fair (AUB, n.d.-at). In addition, the establishments of agreements between peer institutions and feeder schools complemented with scholarship offerings especially meant to attract academically qualified students (AUB, n.d.-at).

Learning: As in the case of internal information discussed above, the outcome of the sensemaking phase such as increasing scholarship offerings requires conversion of information into new institutional learning. This learning occurs through the

combination of expertise of concerned stakeholders as well as an exchange of ideas to find the efficient framework for scholarship offerings. This new institutional learning that yielded from the outcomes of the sensemaking phase is further verified to be an adequate institutional response if proven to be efficient with time. Learning is found for example in an increased collaboration and communication with multiple concerned stakeholders. In fact, institutional rhetoric denotes an improvement of communication and coordination between the Office of Admissions, the Registrar's Office as well as the Office of International Programs that helped increase efficiently school visits (AUB, n.d.-at).

Decision-making: This phase underlines once again the action steps that are necessary for the implementation of the shared meaning developed by institutional stakeholders in the sensemaking phase of the information pathway. At this point, information is converted into action steps. For example, the Office of Admissions has reported in 2016 a significant increase in the number of Lebanese schools visited by its personnel as well as those who visit the AUB annual school fair (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, and in order to align with the diversity component of its mission, senior administrators resorted to the services of international recruitment agencies that facilitate reaching international students through targeted marketing campaigns or subscribed to specific websites that help increase the visibility of AUB internationally (AUB, 2018a). Graduate recruitment is also enhanced via specific events such as the annual graduate open house, and recruitment campaigns organized through the social media tools (AUB, 2018a).

A more recent path of action that is considered by senior administrators as a plausible strategy that can potentially impact students' recruitment is the development

of collaborations with competitors such as local, regional, and international universities (AUB, 2018a). In fact, such collaborations are considered as opportunities to increase students' recruitment as they "allow the exploration of joint academic programs" (AUB, 2018a), and "increase educational opportunities" (AUB, 2018a).

*Communication: Case 1: Students' recruitment.* The raw information gathering and knowledge creation is not the effort of an individual unit, rather the synchronized efforts of various units that communicate between themselves to facilitate decision-making. In addition to the interunit communication, every unit has a formal communication channel with concerned stakeholders. For instance, the Office of Admissions provides the necessary admission information to applicants through clear and updated information on its website (AUB, 2018a). The Communication of the Office of Admissions with the Office of International Programs, Registrar, advisors facilitated for example the admission experience of international students by responding to applications in a timely manner and updating candidates on their application status as well as additional required documents needed to compete their application (AUB, n.d.-at). Additionally, The Office of Admissions communicates with the university's alumni as a mean to improve its recruitment efforts (AUB, n.d.-at). Alumni play an important role in the students' recruitment process. In fact, having as a core purpose the support and advancement of the university (AUB, n.d.-au), alumni serve as recruitment emissaries of the university which materializes particularly when enrolling their own children at AUB as this act strengthens the ties that the institution seeks to maintain with its alumni (AUB, n.d.-av).

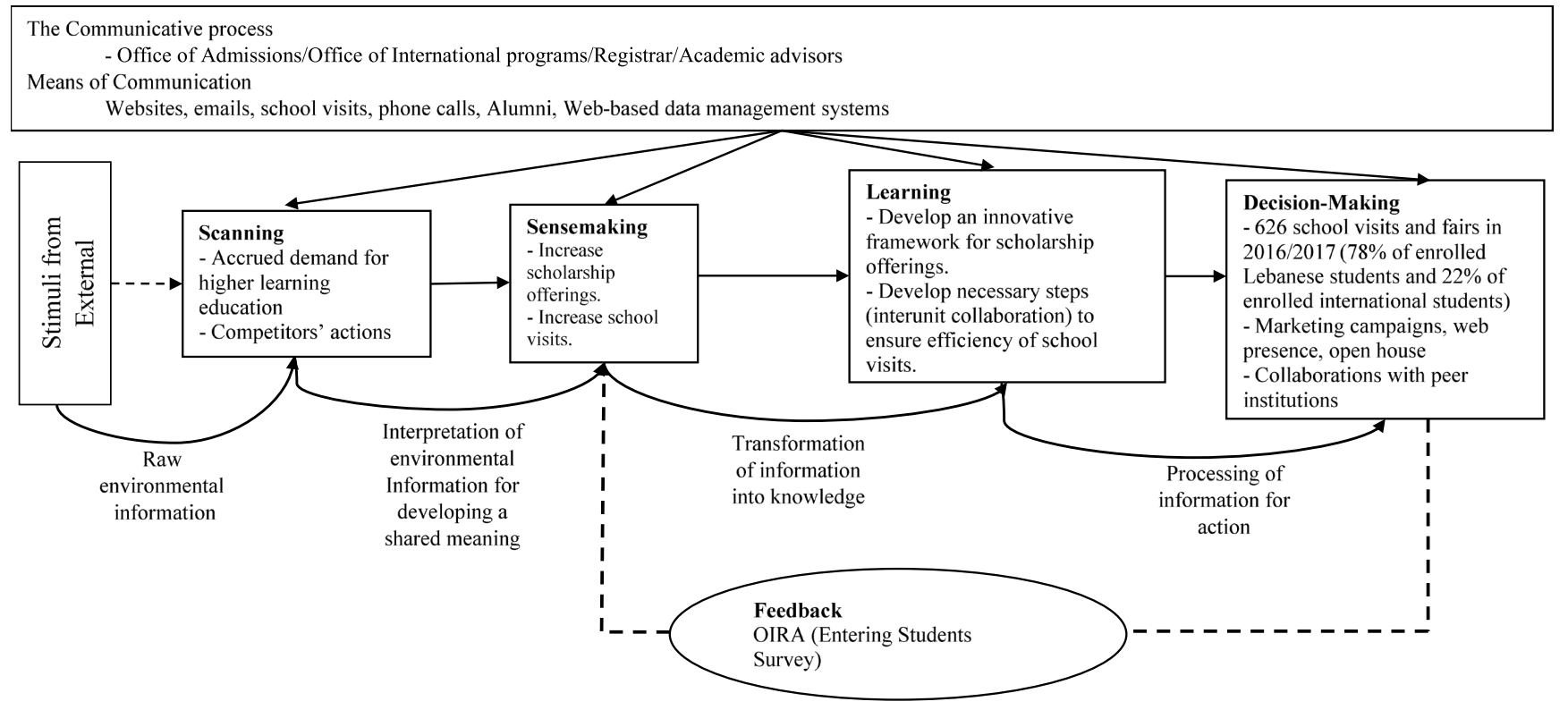
On the other hand, admission officers increase the communication efficiency with potential students through school visits and fairs and through replying to potential

students' inquiries by email or phone calls (AUB, 2018a). The Registrar's office has also developed a formal communication means with students candidates regarding their admission and clearing process at graduation by developing and using technical scripts to improve the registration process and (AUB, n.d.-at) or developing a web-based students' data management system to facilitate various students' related processes including course registrations and withdrawal, transcripts keeping, and ultimately facilitating the graduation process thus minimizing to a great extent human intervention in all operations (AUB, 2018a).

Figure 16 below conceptualizes the flow of information and communication pathway externally based on the Students' recruitment case

**Figure 16**

*Conceptualization of the Information Pathway and Communication based on the Students' Recruitment Case*



*Information: Case 2: Health-related Outreach initiatives.* Broadly defined, outreach is the consumption of AUB services, that derive from its expertise, by its various communities. While service is one of the three pillars that define the institution's purpose (AUB, n.d.-a), it constitutes equally a medium for communicating the institution's expertise to achieve external institutional impact. The case of outreach services acquires a significant importance that equally justifies its use as it represents an institutional aspiration, that of impact and influence. Whether for greater impact or influence, information here again, is data useful to administrators to achieve those particular purposes.

The narrative reveals also a similar pathway to the movement of information conceptualized in the information pathway model.

Scanning: The outreach initiatives abound and encompass several areas of intervention since they are an important part of the institution's academic strategic priorities (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016). Although the consulted documents do not refer to a specific institutional entity that gathers information about outreach health-related services, the information found suggest that a scanning of the external environment for health-related information was conducted. In fact, an institutional document states that one of the major challenges in modern times are health issues that occur from conflicts, inequalities, and environmental degradations around the world. Such issues however additional significance regionally with the repeated armed conflicts and social inequalities constantly located in multiple regions in the Arabic world and African continent causing human suffering (AUB, 2018a).

Sensemaking: The information on health issues from the external environment is interpreted by senior internal constituents to derive meaning and form a shared

understanding of it thus paving the way to select and retain an adequate institutional response, especially if proven to be efficient in time. This stage once again denotes the phase in which raw environmental information is interpreted by senior administrators. Consequently, a strategic health initiative “Health 2025” was developed in response to these challenges and encompasses a multi-dimensional and integrated approach to improving human health involving nutrition, nursing, public health, science and clinical medicine (AUB, n.d.-ax). Whereas multiple paths of actions could have been available to address the health challenges the selected institutional response was to design a strategic initiative that fosters internal and external collaborations and partnerships (AUB, n.d.-ax).

Learning: The interpretation of the information accomplished in the previous phase generates at this point the necessity for new institutional learning thus denoting the conversion of information into knowledge. Whereas the broad outlines of the strategic health initiative as imagined by senior institutional stakeholders are known, the necessary knowledge has still to be developed as to what is required to implement it efficiently. This new learning has to address for example the necessity or not to establish specific units, ensuring their funding, establishing partnerships with specific national and international entities. In fact, the “Health 2025” strategic initiative has necessitated the establishment of new centers such as AUB’s Global Health Institute which significance stems from the disproportionate involvement of institutions from the global south and the increasing health challenges in the same region coupled with the absence of local leaders who have the ability to contextualize their knowledge in the health domain as a means for developing effective responses to these challenges (AUB, n.d.-aw), as well as several others health initiatives housed under the Faculty of Health

Sciences in which both faculty and students are engaged in research through other institutional centers and have contributed to policy changes (AUB, n.d.-az). The establishment of partnerships was also part of the information conversion for institutional learning.

Learning also addresses the issue of funding the newly established centers. The initial success of the strategic health initiative has since developed further through forging additional strategic partnerships on health issues such as Bloomberg School of Public Health at Hopkins, and Médecins Sans Frontières (AUB, 2018a).

Decision-making: In this phase the necessary components for the success of the Health 2025 initiative are executed including the developing of specific centers such as Global Health Center discussed above, and the establishment of specific partnerships with specific entities.

As in the case of students' recruitment, senior administrators have sought to increase impact in health-related issues through forging collaborations with competitors such as peer institutions (AUB, 2014). In fact, such partnerships and collaborations provide an opportunity for AUB's expertise in this domain to influence health-related policy and practices regionally (AUB, 2014). The collaboration with the Bloomberg School of Public Health at Hopkins discussed above fits within this larger collaborations and partnerships umbrella.

Whereas feedback on the outcomes of the sensemaking process may not be monitored by an institutional unit such as the case with students' recruitment, recognition or awards granted for services constitute an indication of impact. In this context, AUB, through its Knowledge to Policy Center in collaboration with the Mohammed bin Rashid School of Government in Dubai were chosen to host the Sixth



Global Symposium on Health Systems Research, an international membership organization, in 2020. Additionally, the same center has been re-designated for another 4 years by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a WHO collaborating Center for Evidence-Informed Policy and Practice in recognition to the center's efforts and leadership in impacting health issues and developing contextualized policies to mitigate them (AUB, n.d.-bg).

*Communication: case 2: Health-related Outreach initiatives.* Health 2025 entails a collaboration through communication and linkages between various internal units and ultimately aims at supporting interdisciplinary health initiatives involving academic, policy, and service dimensions (AUB, n.d.-ay). Evidence of inter-institutional communication in this strategic initiative can be found through the members of its steering committee. In fact, these members are from the Faculty of Medicine, the Global Health Institute, the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences, the Hariri School of Nursing, the Office for Regional and External Programs, the Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs, and the Center for Strategic Partnerships Initiatives (AUB, n.d.-bb).

External communication strategies adopted by health-driven centers are varied and formalized relying mostly on media relations for externalizing their research, as well as the use of digital and social media for disseminating information and reinforcing their involvement with stakeholders. Communication with various media acquires a strategic importance for these various centers in order to reach a wide audience and increase their impact. For that purpose, the Knowledge to Policy health Center organized a training workshop for the faculty and staff members in the Faculty of Health Sciences on effective media communication as well as the way to write

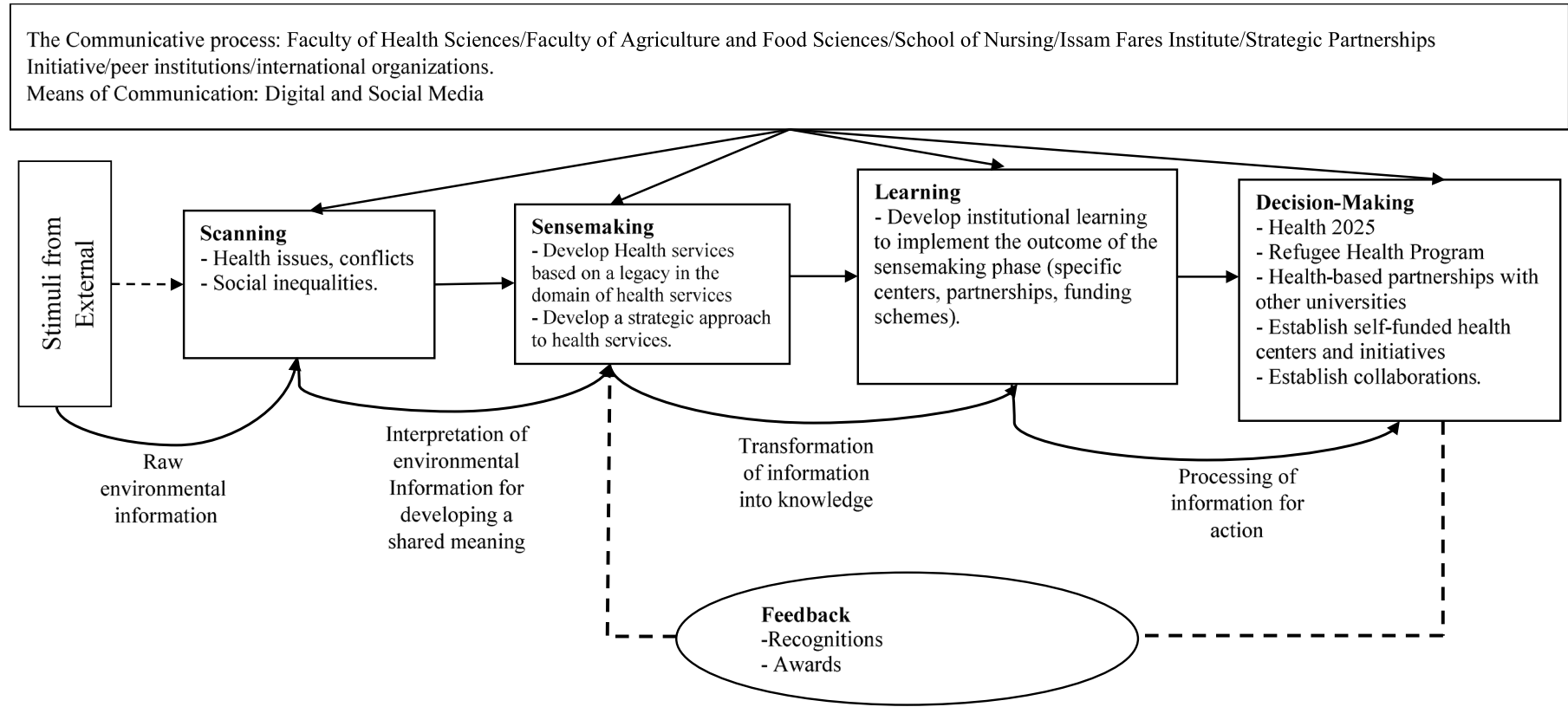
effectively opening editorials. The workshops focused on the importance of creating synergetic and sustainable relationships with researchers and journalists for a better and accurate communication of their research findings and their implications as well as training on oral communication on how to retain the audience's attention attracted on what is being said ranging from 30 seconds sound clips to an 800-word opening editorial (AUB, n.d.-be). Additionally, the Knowledge to Policy Center established a digital platform, K2P Media Bite, meant to communicate the center's evidence-based findings on health-related policies or necessary policy changes on health issues (AUB, n.d.-bd).

Awareness of the importance of social media in the coverage of events organized by various centers exists both at all levels of the academic ranks such as the president and faculty members. In fact, during a forum organized by the AUB4Refugees initiative which also studies health impacts on refugees, the current president of the university noted that the simultaneous coverage of this forum on social media helped attract massive attention to it and constituted an instance that highlights the “value of smart utilization of these powerful communication channels” (Khuri, 2017o) in reaching wide audiences and leaving an impact.

Figure 17 below conceptualizes the flow of information and communication pathway externally based on the health-related outreach case.

**Figure 17**

*Conceptualization of the Information Pathway and Communication based on the Health Outreach Case*



**Symbolic expressions of the information dimension.** Further analysis of the emerging cultural components and of the documents surveyed here reveal that both information and communication are themselves key symbolic expressions in the information dimension. Information and communication are both two words that figure prominently in the institutional rhetoric and possess both a relatively high weighted percentage. Table 19 below represents the weighted percentage of both symbols in the surveyed documents.

Table 19

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from the surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Information	338	0.13%
Communication	291	0.10%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

**Information.** From an information perspective, the pervasive gathering and use of information for facilitating the decision-making process, whether externally or internally, elevates information to the status of a ritual that is necessary to ensure that appropriate decisions are being made. As stated earlier, information is a ritualistic practice in both its form and meaning. Formally, the information-gathering act is a periodic one and necessitates proper preparation and execution while framed with clear beginnings and endings and involving members or institutional units with well-defined roles. For example, information about new students' demographics and characteristics are regularly gathered at the beginning of the academic year through various surveys conducted by OIRA and yield developments and changes in the institution's recruitment efforts (AUB, 2018a). Being a symbol in form, information also carries symbolic shared

meanings attributed to it by institutional members with these meaning relating to stakeholders institutional values.

Four symbolic representations of Information were determined in the surveyed documents. The significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcases an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings.

Table 20 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to Information. As in the previous symbolic representations, these are not mutually exclusive, and they were categorized as such based on the dominant understanding of each code within its context.

Table 20

*The four symbolic representations of information and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of information</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Awareness	~ 40%
Competence	~ 31%
Survival	~ 21%
Persuasion	~ 8%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Awareness.* In the surveyed documents, information makes stakeholders cognizant of certain events that will eventually impact their behavior to improve a current situation. Institutional rhetoric is permeated with such a conceptualization of information. For example, the need to develop a new graduate degree program stemmed originally from an increased awareness of the lack of the existence of a similar degree program in relation to the geographical context. Similarly, the ability to recruit a broader students audience was the outcome of an awareness of the environmental trends and changes as well as an understanding of the strategy of competitors in that regard.

Additionally, the awareness of conflicts and environmental degradations necessitated the reflection of senior administrators about the adequate response to undertake.

Evidently, the development of awareness in all situations has ignited a behavioral adjustment such as the establishment of the graduate program itself, innovative scholarships, or a new health initiative and center.

Among several other initiatives meant to raise awareness for respect of diversity and inclusion, the Title IX non-discrimination and anti-harassment initiative helps raise the awareness of many institutional constituents. For students and faculty members, this initiative diffuses information about institutional policies against discrimination or any other forms of harassment and invites students to act against it by reporting any such incidents. The confidentiality and ease of the reporting processes supported by an online and mobile platform incites such behavior (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2017a). For senior administrators, climate surveys conducted at AUB provides information about stakeholders' understanding of discrimination and harassment and allows for the programming of activities and institutional responses to such incidents (AUB, n.d.-bk).

Information is also disseminated to raise awareness about various academic procedures. For instance, chairpersons inform faculty members in their respective departments that a new policy requesting all courses' syllabi to be posted online was approved, or that the motion for the necessity of recording both a letter and numerical grade for students is still under consideration (AUB, 2017). Similar procedures include also disseminating the information that a certain assessment percentage is expected to be provided to students about their class performance before the final course withdrawal deadline (AUB, 2017).

Concerning students, such academic procedures undertaken by the University Student Faculty Committee for example communicates various types of information to students while recommending solutions their problems university wide (AUB, 2016d). Information helps also prospective students to understand the administrative processes related to their registration. Such information includes the required criteria for admission, funding opportunities, policies related to students' conduct as well as various areas that may be of interest to students (AUB, 2018a), or current students about applicable institutional policies in their course registration process as well as other policies relating to their studies (AUB, 2018e).

The President's Perspective bi-monthly letter diffuses also various information about developments that may affect all institutional stakeholders (AUB, 2018a). Other senior administrators such as the deans or chairpersons equally relegate information that affect their respective units such as grants available for research (AUB, 2016c). Other information helps faculty members understand their roles and responsibilities during their residency at the institution (AUB, 2016d).

*Competence.* Information is a symbol through which the institution relays to both internal and external stakeholders a highly specialized level of skills related to various tasks.

For example, in the context of the new graduate degree program, the development of the corresponding curricular material, learning outcomes and the consequent redesigning of the undergraduate curriculum reflects a level of competency in the curricular domain. The recruitment of specialized faculty members for the new graduate programs sends also internally and externally messages of institutional competence. Similarly, the development of an innovative scholarship framework to attract

intellectually capable students as well as the institutional ability to expand its school visits showcase a level of competence in administrative design that has civic engagement connotations as well as logistical organization. The ability of the institution to develop an interdisciplinary health initiative reflects an institutional competence enacted in its qualified faculty members, ensuing collaborations and partnerships that developed from this initiative.

The various outreach programs and initiatives that disseminate information to their respective communities about best practices based on research evidence communicate also a level of institutional competence. This competence is used in several instances for improving a current situation. For example, the Center for Research on Population and Health promotes research related to health issues and disseminates their findings to influential individuals such as policymakers to develop and improve policies and intervention in health-related matters (AUB, n.d.-bl). All other outreach initiatives are based on the same rationale, that of relaying to different communities various information about best practices emerging from the institution's research competence (AUB, n.d.-az; AUB, n.d.-g; AUB, n.d.-o; AUB, n.d.-p).

Information, as a symbol of competence, is also disseminated internally in relation to tasks essential to the functioning of the institution or units within. For example, members of the Senate Steering Committee that is charged with preparing the agenda for the senate meetings and ensuring the implementation of its decisions (AUB, 2016f) looks at best practices on sharing senate minutes and implements them internally (AUB, 2017).

The office of Information Technology plays a significant role in supporting and disseminating competence-information. This includes redesigning courses to be



delivered via online platforms and the faculty training programs on the delivery of blended/hybrid courses (AUB, 2018a), or the development of an online grant submission interface based on the recent technological innovations and that is meant to organize faculty members' grants' submission process (AUB, 2018a) as well as developing a wide range of projects that ultimately enhance institutional efficiency essential to academic and administrative tasks (AUB, 2018a).

*Survival.* Information is crucial for effective operation and decision-making of any institution. It does not condition only its development, but a lack of information may threaten its existence. In this context, information acquires a strategic value and becomes a symbol of survival. This symbolic representation can be traced in several instances in the institutional rhetoric.

The development of the new degree program for example contributes in the survival of the institution since it helps identify a market niche that will generate additional resources through the enrollment of students. Similarly, the increase of students' enrollment due to the institutional ability to reach more schools generates additional resources and ensures institutional sustainability. The forging of collaborations and partnerships especially with funding institutions ensures the survival of center that emerged under the Health 2025 initiative.

In a similar vein, AUB addresses the emergent regional challenges and community needs by offering tailored programmatic offerings such as developing a graduate degree in Nursing or Agribusiness (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the assessment information gathered from specific internal units allow for a periodic review of program offerings and recommend necessary improvements (AUB, 2018a).

These same technological innovations in the environment impose a change in the course-delivery methods in an area where online learning has increased competitiveness among higher education institutions. The change of course delivery that emphasizes blended/hybrid learning supported by the Office of Information Technology and discussed above (AUB, 2018a) is a necessary institutional adaptation to these changing environments to ensure the university's survival.

Information as a symbol of survival materializes considerably in the students' recruitment process. As described above, specific AUB units scan and gather information in a context of instability to develop appropriate institutional strategies that allow to target the widest audience of potential students (AUB, 2018a). The gathered external information is complemented also with an internal information gathering through specific surveys (AUB, n.d.-as) and creates the knowledge needed to tailor adequate responses for increasing recruitment such as campaigning on social media platforms about the characteristic features of receiving an AUB education and emphasizing the institution's ranking provided by ranking websites such as QS World University Ranking (AUB, 2018a).

*Persuasion.* Information is symbolically used to influence others' beliefs and increase their acceptance and involvement. In the context of the new graduate program, the recruitment of qualified faculty members helps persuade potential students to enroll in the program. In its recruitment efforts, the use of web-sellers who disseminate information about institutional achievements and the organization of recruitment open-houses helps persuade a wider audience of students to enroll in the institution. The awards and recognitions received by institutional initiatives increase the

belief of various stakeholders about the efficiency of such initiatives and promote further collaborations and partnerships.

Additionally, information about the various initiatives developed by the university such as those that target discrimination and harassment relays to students, from an institutional perspective, the values that modern societies should aspire towards (AUB, 2018a). Alumni participate actively in relaying information to and about the institution especially in the recruitment process relaying to potential students the benefits and advantages of either receiving and AUB education (AUB, n.d.-at), or developing their professional skills through enrolling in any outreach initiative (Khuri, 2017r).

***Communication.*** Put simply, communication can be regarded as the means through which individuals exchange information among themselves. As discussed above, the means of institutional communication are essentially emails, different kinds of meetings that occur at various levels either formally or informally. More broadly, institutional units also serve as a means of communication between various internal stakeholders such as the university senate being a forum allowing communication between faculty members, and the administration (AUB, 2018a). However, a closer examination of institutional rhetoric reveals that beyond the medium itself, communication facilitates building shared and maintained meanings that reinforce institutional cohesion and ultimately promote institutional effectiveness. In fact, the following subsection will show that to the institution's members, communication is a social glue that coalesces the organization to maintain and develop it while providing it with a code of moral cues.

Four symbolic representations of communication have equally emerged from the institutional rhetoric. The significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcases

an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings. Table 21 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to information. symbolic representations

Table 21

*The four symbolic representations of communication and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of communication</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Effectiveness	~ 42%
Transparency	~ 30%
Visibility	~ 17%
Language	~ 11%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Effectiveness.* Communication is a symbol that helps achieve a desired internal or external outcome. The importance of internal communication is particularly captured by being considered a strategic priority that connects “the university internally by integrating and enhancing synergy (areas of excellence)” (AUB, n.d.-i). Three key performance indicators allow for measuring the extent to which this objective is attained: (a) the number of internal email communications between administrators and other stakeholders, (b) the number of town hall meetings held between different constituents as well, and (c) the number of multidisciplinary programs developed (AUB, n.d.-i).

Internally, the effectiveness of the communication process is enacted by its pervasive practice along the institutional hierarchy both formally and informally and in an oral and written form as denoted in the previous section. Examples of various forms of internal communication abound in the surveyed documents. For instance, effectiveness is achieved through extensive communication to various stakeholders of:

specific reports; the assessment results of Program Learning Outcomes; information needed for strategic planning between the various internal units to ensure that their individual strategic plans align with that of the institution increases overall institutional efficiency (AUB, 2018a). At the top level of the administration, communication effectiveness is manifested by an on-going process occurring on a regular basis between the board of trustees, its chairperson, and the university's president. These interchanges help address emergent issues and provide the president with the necessary autonomy needed to manage effectively the institution's operations (AUB, 2018a). Along the same lines, the presence of senators in a board of trustees' committee, albeit as non-voting members, constitutes an enhancement to the communication between faculty members and the trustees and fosters greater involvement in the academic governance of the institution (AUB, 2018a). In fact, evidence of effectiveness was evident in the constant stream of communication and feedback between the Tenure Design Committee and different faculties and schools (AUB, 2018a). Improving the communication between members within the same unit equally leads to increased effectiveness. In fact, one of the recommendations formulated by external reviewers to the Department of Economics recommended better communication with part-time faculty members (AUB, 2018e).

Another form of the effectiveness of communication that helps achieve a desired outcome is enacted through its informal aspect. Brown-bag sessions represent for example an informal opportunity for sharing information. The brown-bag forums in the Department of Sociology, Anthropology and Media Studies during the Fall semester of the 2017-2018 constituted an informal, is perceived to be valuable opportunity for members in the department to promote collegiality by discussing their research (AUB, 2018e).

Externally, the communication with schools and alumni in the students' recruitment process allowed to reach a wider audience of prospective students (AUB, n.d.-at) and was complemented with the implementation of an electronic communication system that allowed to answer in a timely manner all email inquiries of potential students (AUB, n.d.-at).

The effectiveness of communication is also reflected through its upward and downward motion. In fact, in the graduate degree example discussed above, the communication about that degree starts from the committees in the concerned department until it is approved by senior institutional authorities and communicated back to the community through the president's perspective. Feedback units such as OIRA represent equally an enactment of the effectiveness of communication since this communication allows concerned stakeholders to assess the extent to which institutional processes align with their intended outcomes.

*Transparency.* Communication functions as a symbol that allows various institutional operations to be open to scrutiny. The outcome is greater credibility of stakeholders in institutional actions and decisions and shapes to some extent the receivers' behaviors.

In the preceding section, the actions of OIRA such as communicating to various stakeholders institutional information and analysis promotes greater transparency and increases institutional credibility. From a broad perspective, the intimate relationship between effective communication and greater transparency is explicitly referred in the overall recommendations that emerged from the institution's Self-Study report (AUB, 2018a).

Similarly, transparency through communication occurs at various institutional levels. In the curricular domains, the learning outcomes of a program as well as the details regarding its curriculum and its mission are constantly communicated to students and other external constituents through the programs' respective website (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the assessment results of programs and those of faculty members are communicated to concerned stakeholders and used as a basis for decisions regarding improvements, planning, areas of progress or suggestions for new initiatives and activities (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the recruitment process of the senior academic staff that is part of the new president's executive team and its outcomes were communicated promptly to the university community with the details regarding the qualifications of the recruited individuals (AUB, 2018a). Chairpersons are expected to communicate openly with their departments' constituents through for instance, the distribution in advance of meeting agendas thus fostering the development of a collective vision and a participation in the decision-making process within the department (AUB, 2018a).

*Visibility.* Communication, especially with external constituencies, is manifested in gained visibility. In the examples discussed previously, the communication of the research of the health strategic initiative through various media formats increases institutional visibility and paves the way for additional collaborations and partnerships. In the same context, awards and recognitions communicate the efficiency of this initiative's actions. Similarly, service through outreach is a means to communicate externally the institution's expertise which enhances impact and influence. Additionally, the visibility of the institution is further enhanced through the use of various web formats including social platforms. This has been evidenced

previously through reverting to web-sellers to increase students' reach and recruitment, as well as social media to promote academic/social events.

Communicating to external such as governments, civil society, professional bodies, and industry research findings through publications or conferences increases institutional visibility.

Key institutional administrators work on communicating to internal and external constituents the achievements of their faculties or departments (AUB, 2018e). Along the same lines, through communication with departmental stakeholders and external entities, chairpersons strive to enhance their department's image internally and externally through marketing the achievements of the department's faculty members and students, and participate in local and international gatherings (AUB, 2016b).

Communication with Alumni through the Worldwide AUB Alumni Association promotes the university's mission externally and increases its visibility (AUB, 2018a).

*Language.* Particularly interesting about communication is the symbolic use of language in relaying senior leadership's values and beliefs to various constituents. This is particularly salient in the presidents' periodic perspectives. Although the analysis of the president's discourse is not the focus here it will be interesting to highlight broadly two instances of language use to communicate these values.

**Storytelling:** Storytelling is the first aspect of such symbolic use in which the president narrates actions that are presented to others as worth imitating and repeating as they lead towards the achievement of desired outcomes. In fact, in the context of visiting several alumni chapters abroad, the current president of the university notes that he has



spent substantial time since my last communication on the move, working to increase awareness of our strategic vision among engaged alumni and friends in North America. As well as events in Houston and Los Angeles, I was proud to attend... a reception at the home of the Consul General for Lebanon in New York... Such events present, under the banner of anniversary celebrations, a unique opportunity to highlight our students' needs and AUB's mission and vision for the next 10 to 15 years (Khuri, 2016g).

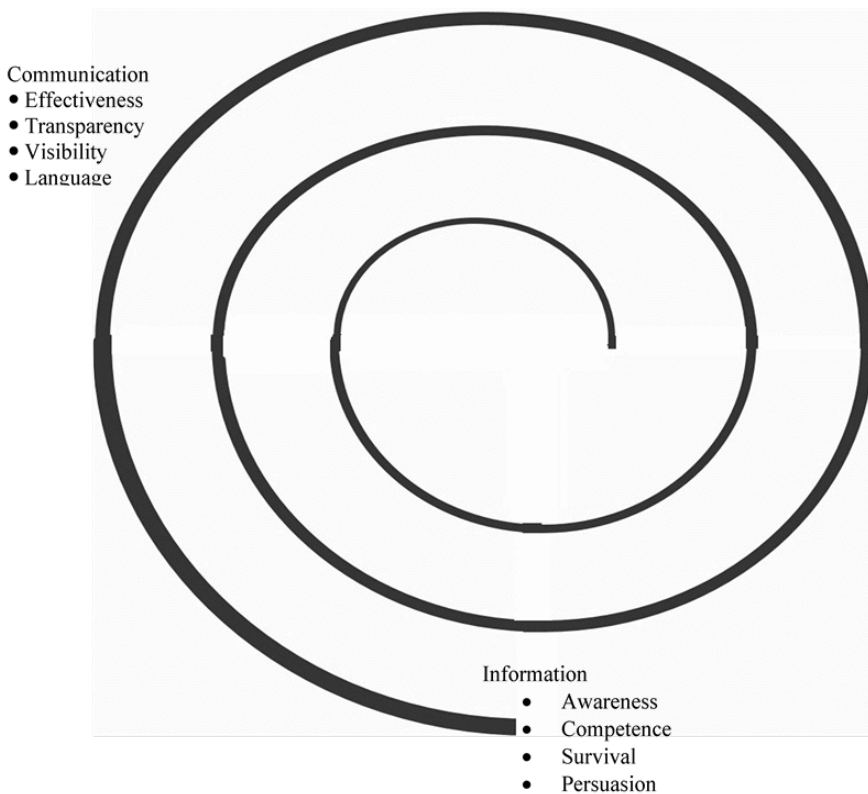
Passion: Passion refers to the emotional dimension such as excitement through the emphasized descriptions of organizational actions. Originally, the announcement of the president's perspectives' newsletters by the current president himself embed this element of passion. He notes

I have long been keen to create a space to share my thoughts on progress towards AUB's major goals and to discuss issues of the moment with you. I think it is important the whole community gets regular updates on my administration's activities and is also given the opportunity to feed back about the developments that are taking place. I am therefore starting to publish this "AUB President's Perspective" message approximately twice a month" (Khuri, 2016c).

Figure 18 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Information dimension containing the two symbolic expressions as a path for further cultural analysis.

**Figure 18**

*The Cultural Spiral of the Institution in the Information Dimension*



*Note.* Cultural spiral of the institution in the Information dimension containing the two key symbolic expressions and their symbolic representations as a path for further cultural analysis.

### **Findings in the Strategy Dimension**

This dimension examines the approach to strategy setting used by institutional administrators. The findings reveal that this approach is multifaceted and relies on three models which consequently equips the institution with the necessary resilience to deal with unstable environments. The findings also reveal that strategic planning and curriculum are culturally two symbolic expressions that lie at the heart of institutional strategy setting.

As in the previous dimensions, this section will be divided into two subsections. The first subsection will examine the several approaches to strategy-setting depicted in institutional rhetoric, and the second one will delineate the two symbolic expressions related to the Strategy dimension.

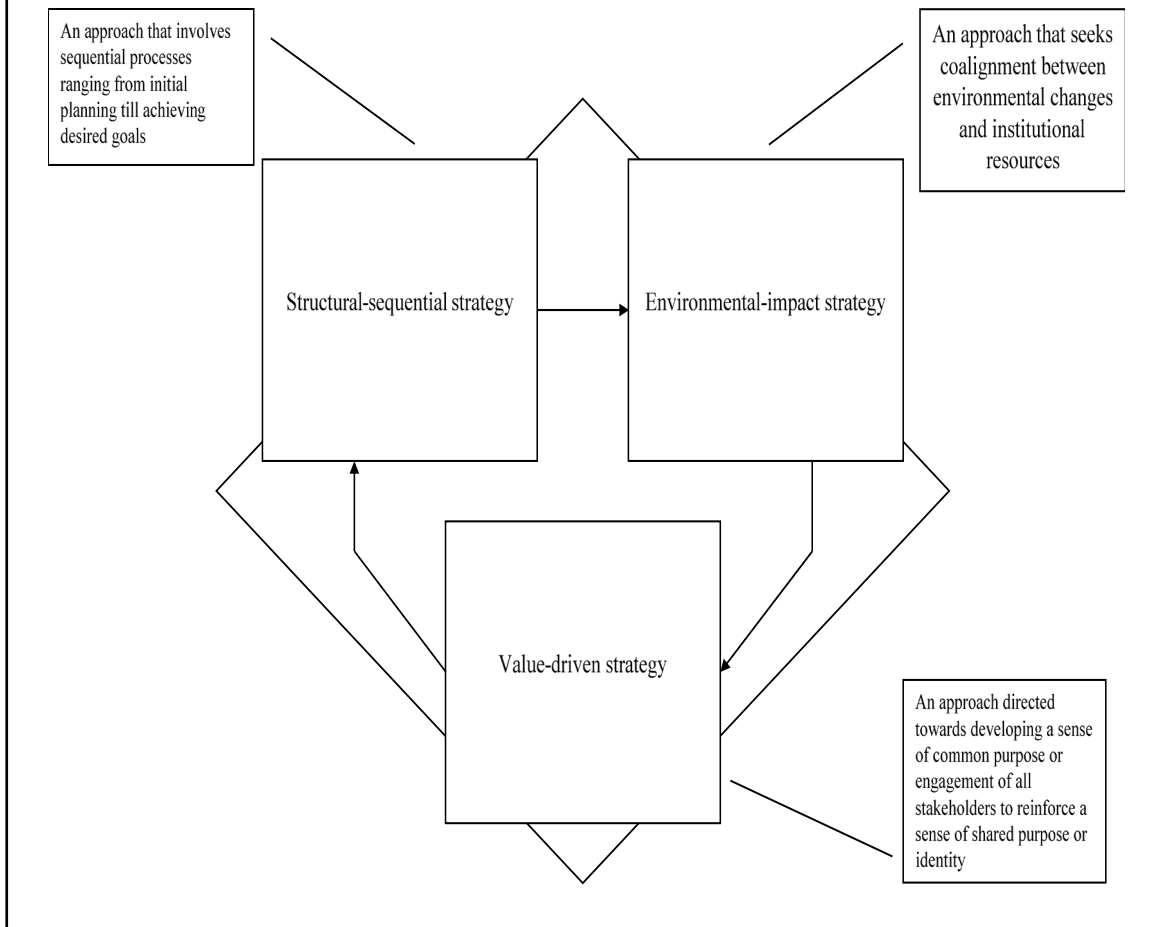
### **Approaches to strategy-setting as depicted in institutional rhetoric.** As

in the case of business firms, the concept of strategy acquires a significant importance for Higher Education institutions. Broadly defined, strategy-setting consists of an efficient allocation of resources to attain institutional objectives. Within this loose framework, strategy development at AUB, through the survey of institutional documents, seems to be driven by three approaches in which various actors play a significant role to different extents in the process. These approaches are: (a) the structural sequential approach, (b) the environmental-impact approach, and (c) the value driven approach respectively. For the first approach, strategy setting seems to be driven in some cases by a traditional internal structural approach that involves sequential processes ranging from initial planning till achieving the desired goals. For the second, as discussed in the previous Information dimension, strategy-setting is approached as not just an inward action that occurs independently from changes in the external environment but rather one that manages environmental impact and adjusts to constantly changing external conditions. Finally, the third strategy setting is approached more as a symbolic value driven action in which the efforts, namely those of senior administrators, are directed towards developing a sense of common purpose or engagement of all stakeholders to reinforce a sense of institutional shared purpose or identity. Institutional rhetoric reveals also that the three approaches to strategy setting are not necessarily mutually exclusive. In fact, strategy in some instances can be shaped by an interrelationship of all three approaches.

Figure 19 below reflects these three types of strategies, their interrelationships, and the following subsections' narrative will be organized accordingly.

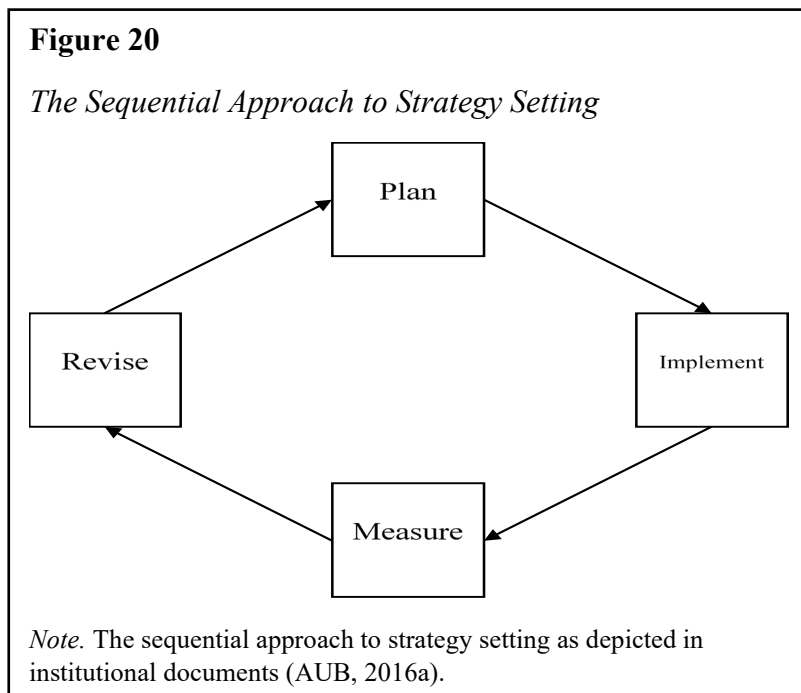
**Figure 19**

*The Three Types of Approaches to Strategy-setting and their Interrelationships*



***A structural-sequential approach to strategy setting.*** This systematic approach to strategy is characterized by a set of sequential steps that range from initial planning to goal achievement and are driven by medium to long-term institutional priorities while also taking measures to monitoring the progress towards achieving them. In this context, the institution’s resources and internal structures are aligned towards the achievement of these priorities. For instance, the 2016 academic strategic plan of the AUB that is meant to shape an impactful and research-driven identity of the institution in 2030 integrates five strategic themes tailored around students’ learning experience, infrastructure, students’ enrolment plan, students’ services, and outreach and engagement (AUB, 2016a). Every theme in turn develops into concrete initiatives

that facilitate its achievement while faculties' and schools' administrators develop performance indicators to measure the progress towards achieving the strategic theme as well as set the required criteria for its implementation on both a short- and long-term level (AUB, 2016a). Broadly, the most evident illustration of this model of strategy as depicted in institutional documents is the figure 20 represented below and showcasing a sequential approach to strategy setting.



Based on this approach, senior administrators in the various schools and faculties start with the development of their own strategic plans that outline priorities, objectives, and needs and eventually form the basis of an integrated and coherent institutional strategic plan (AUB, 2018a). The means to achieve this process involve workshops, meetings and retreats (AUB, 2018a). The Faculty of Engineering and Architecture for example has a strategic plan tailored around four strategic themes under which further initiatives are developed and the progress towards achieving these themes is monitored (AUB, 2016a).

Within this strategic model, various types of strategic objectives are set. They can include the development of a new institutional “product” or the diversification of markets for the recruitment of new students. As an example of the first instance, the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture, as part of its “Entrepreneur and Innovator” strategic initiative has developed an innovation-driven product, “AUB-iPark”, that converts innovative students and faculty ideas into profitable start-ups while simultaneously being a platform for experiential learning and research (Khuri, 2017m).

Another example of this approach to strategic planning is the 2016 strategic plan priorities within the outreach and engagement strategic theme is the Health 2025 initiative (AUB, 2018a). This seems to be founded on a strategic direction that is characterized by an integrated, and interdisciplinary approach to health services in the region, and was first envisioned by the current president of the university and announced in his inaugural speech (AUB, n.d.-ax). The long-term goal of this strategic theme is to cater to the health needs of individuals locally, in the region, and the global south (AUB, n.d.-ax). From a structural alignment perspective, the president asks to align all stakeholders’ efforts and consolidate institutional strengths to achieve the set goals (Khuri, 2017f). Consequently, as characterized by this strategy-setting approach, structural adjustments often emerge to allow its full realization. In fact, the Health 2025 initiative necessitated a twofold structural adjustment: (a) the creation of the Office of Strategic Health Initiatives as a structural platform that supports this priority (AUB, n.d.-bn) and ensures internal functional linkages among various institutional units (AUB, n.d.-ay), and (b) the establishment of the Global Health Institute that addresses health challenges through research and dissemination of health-related policies, as well

as participating in the capacity building of health-concerned stakeholders (AUB, n.d.-aw).

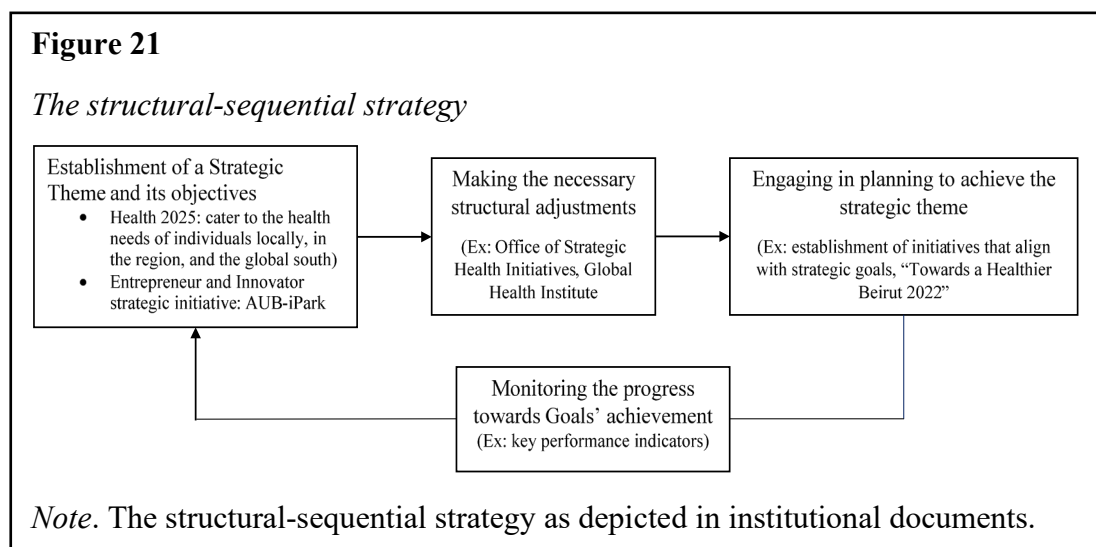
The planning phase deals with identifying the necessary activities and resources to achieve this goal. as part of this phase, the Global Health Institute establishes specific initiatives that pave the way to achieve its purpose such as creating a health center that conducts research to identify the social, physical, and psychological outcomes of conflicts on individuals and propose means to address them (AUB, n.d.-bu). Additional planning activities are developed under this main Health 2025 strategy such as “Towards a Healthier Beirut 2022” initiative that aims at improving the capital’s health quality of its inhabitants. The implementation of this objective is planned to be divided into seven strategies including the reduction of air pollution, providing health services, developing sustainable solutions to the waste problems, monitoring food safety issues, supporting activities to increase activity-friendly spaces, engaging the capital’s youth as change agents for ill-driven health practices, and develop more initiatives for people with disabilities (AUB, n.d.-bo).

Although the dynamics of this model of strategy ranging from planning to implementation suggest the involvement of stakeholders at multiple levels of the institution, the broad strategic lines remain the domain of senior leadership. In fact, institutional rhetoric relates that Health 2025 is a strategic theme that was first envisioned by the current AUB president in his inaugural speech (AUB, n.d.-ay).

However, despite the latitude given to the current leadership in strategy-setting, the current president appears to adopt a more participative approach to strategy formulation. In fact, the formulation of the 2016 strategic plan was the result of a multitude of participants’ efforts that gathered, according to the current president as

noted in one of his perspectives, “one hundred of our most dynamic faculty, students and staff together under the banner of academic strategic planning for a sustainable future for AUB” (Khuri, 2016c). In this case, strategy is the aggregate effort of combined institutional thinking “generated by faculty, students and staff to develop and refine academic and infrastructure strategies, transparently, deliberately and inclusively” (Khuri, 2016c).

Figure 21 below summarizes the characteristic aspects of the structural-sequential strategy as depicted in institutional documents.



***Environmental-impact strategy.*** Another approach to strategy development that surfaces from the examination of institutional documents is one that is shaped by the external environment. This strategy suggests that the institution is constantly scanning its environment and readapting its strategies according to its changes while the ultimate goal is a constant alignment with environmental imperatives. In this case, analyzing environmental changes and recalibrating institutional action is a simultaneous act rather than a sequential one.

In the previous Information dimension of Tierney’s framework, this approach to strategy was particularly noticeable in the environmental scanning that institutional



units at AUB undertake when tailoring appropriate strategic responses to other peer institutions' recruitment strategies as well as the socioeconomic trends in the environment that influence recruitment strategies. In fact, in an attempt to address an aggressive recruitment strategy by peer competitors that partly consisted in scholarship offerings to attract students (AUB, n.d.-at), senior administrators adapted their response by developing a comprehensive strategy that consisted not only in increasing the scholarship offerings by signing new agreements with funding institutions (AUB, 2018a; Khuri, 2016f), but also increasing school visits (AUB, n.d.-at), and developing a targeted marketing campaign to increase AUB's visibility internationally (AUB, 2018a). Periodic assessment reports such as the Entering Student Survey (AUB, n.d.-as) is an evidence of information gathering regarding demographics, reasons for pursuing a higher education degree as well as attending AUB and information about it, will allow for constant strategic re-adaptation to emerging environmental trends.

Another example of this type of strategy-setting that will be detailed here is based on the report of the Strategic Planning Unit for Academic Support (AUB, 2011a). The unit regroups several internal other units and aims at developing a strategic plan that will fulfill the institution's academic mission in the areas of academic support for students and faculty through enhancing excellence in teaching, learning, and research (AUB, 2011a). As a typical act in an Environment-impact strategy, the unit starts by scanning the external environment to understand influences and trends. According to the documents examined, the general environmental analysis revealed that the influence of the environment on the role of academic support units is impacted by four factors: (a) the change in higher education's perceptions of meaningful learning for students, (b) the increasing integration of technology in the teaching and learning process and the

recourse to blended learning and consideration of online degree offerings, (c) the awareness of the emergent skills needed in the job market that places great value on critical thinking, and (d) the unstable political surroundings of AUB (AUB, 2011a).

Another evidence that the environmental-impact approach is used at AUB, is that in a later stage, and as typified by this approach, the Strategic Planning Unit conducts a SWOT analysis. This type of analysis is intended to identify opportunities and threats in the environment and tries to match them with an internal analysis of strengths and weaknesses. It is significant to note that conducting SWOT analyses seems to be a pervasive institutional practice. In fact, another report that depicts strategic planning conducted by various centers and institutes at AUB shows that every center or institute performs a SWOT analysis as part of their respective strategy formulation process (AUB, 2011b).

In the Strategic Planning Unit for Academic Support, the SWOT analysis, for example, identifies several strength, opportunities, weaknesses and threats matches. For example, the external opportunity of a trend to establish collaborations between local and regional universities is matched with the institution's reputation as a credible one counterbalanced however with a lack of the necessary human and financial resources coupled with an unstable political situation that would undermine the willingness of other institutions to work with AUB (2011a). Following the SWOT exercise, the Strategic Planning Unit for Academic Support tailored strategic objectives to align the institution with environmental conditions. For example, as a response to the widespread use of technological innovation mentioned above, one of the strategic objectives consisted in increasing access to technological resources in the educational process (AUB, 2011b). One initiative to fulfill this objective is the development of blended

learning platforms for example (AUB, 2011b). In fact, initiatives to encourage blended and hybrid learning started first in 2009 only to significantly develop later on with 80 re-designed courses being delivered in a blended format while 40 courses are in the process of being delivered that way (AUB, 2018a).

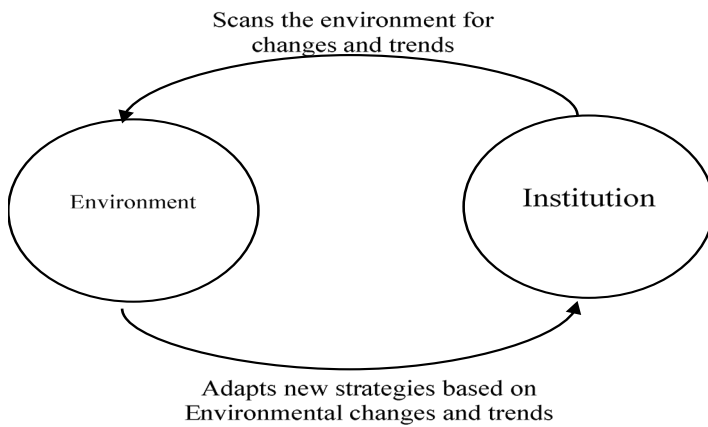
However, a reevaluation of environmental trends led also to a strategy re-adaptation under the same strategic theme of technological innovation in the teaching and learning process.

In addition to the Strategic Planning Unit for Academic Support example, many instances of the interrelationship between environment and strategy-setting can be depicted in the institutional growth. For example, several graduate degrees such as a Masters' degree in Nursing and another one in Agribusiness were developed "to address regional challenges and community needs" (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, in response to emergent required skills in the work environment, the senior administration engaged in an extensive revision of the institutions' general education program, which constitutes its core curriculum program (AUB, 2018a) focusing on providing students with "critical thinking, problem solving, and social and communication skills" (AUB, n.d.-bp). Senior leadership believes that the newly designed general education program is a unique model regionally and will allow students to have a more coherent and integrated learning experience (AUB, 2018a).

Figure 22 below represents the characteristic aspects of the Environmental-impact strategy as depicted in institutional documents.

**Figure 22**

*The Environmental-impact strategy*



*Note.* The Environmental-impact strategy as depicted in institutional documents.

**Value-driven strategy.** Institutional rhetoric reveals also an approach to strategy-setting that is shaped by institutional values and relayed to stakeholders through symbolic acts. In this context, such action is perceived by institutional stakeholders as one that yields desired institutional results. In this approach to strategy, institutional leaders play a significant role in relaying the institutional values internally and externally through an extensive communication process. Within this communication perspective, it is significant to note the active communicative role of the current president with internal or external constituents whether through his periodic perspectives, speeches, meetings, and travels. In fact, whereas AUB website archives a cumulative number of nearly 100 written communications by the last two presidents of the institution, the written communications of the current president in contrast, and as documented on the president's webpage, have exceeded 350 while still in his first term of presidency (AUB, n.d.-bq). The two following paragraphs will detail two examples in which AUB strategy-setting reflects a value-based foundation and which steps to execute them are also infused with meanings.

*Ethics as a strategic priority: the case of anti-discriminatory behavior.*

Whereas the concept of ethical behavior permeates the strategic rhetoric such as mission and strategic planning documents (AUB, n.d.-a; AUB, 2014; AUB, 2016a; AUB; 2018a), anti-discriminatory acts, as an aspect of ethical behavior, does not have a mention in the surveyed documents before the becoming of the current president. In fact, various forms of the word “discrimination” have had 13 mentions in his periodic perspectives. Additionally, when discussing the importance of AUB having a diversified body of students in one of his perspectives, the current president considers that diversity “is the best preparation for what [students] will encounter in the outside world; it makes [them] more resilient, more *tolerant* [emphasis added], and more capable of success” (Khuri, 2017q). While tolerance denotes the accepting of others’ opinions and behaviors, it constitutes a direct connotation to the concept of discrimination. Naturally, it is not just the mentions themselves nor the statements that showcase the value attributed by the current president to anti-discriminatory behavior, it is also the concrete institutional initiatives that are associated with the reporting process of such behavior.

The Equity & Title IX program is a platform that allows any AUB member to report any form of discriminatory act based on gender, ethnicity, religion, race, among other attributes (AUB, n.d.-bs). The program is headed by a coordinator who directly reports to the president (AUB, n.d.-br). Whereas this program and its corresponding policies and reporting procedures were “virtually unknown on campus” (AUB, 2018a) in 2015, it is currently a widespread initiative (AUB, 2018a). Institutional rhetoric attributes strong leadership by the current president in the implementation of anti-discriminatory policies through the Equity & Title IX program (AUB, 2018a).

*Diversity and inclusion as strategic priorities: The LEAD scholarship.*

As in the case of the anti-discrimination policies, the strategic themes of inclusion and diversity equally permeate institutional initiatives like the LEAD program.

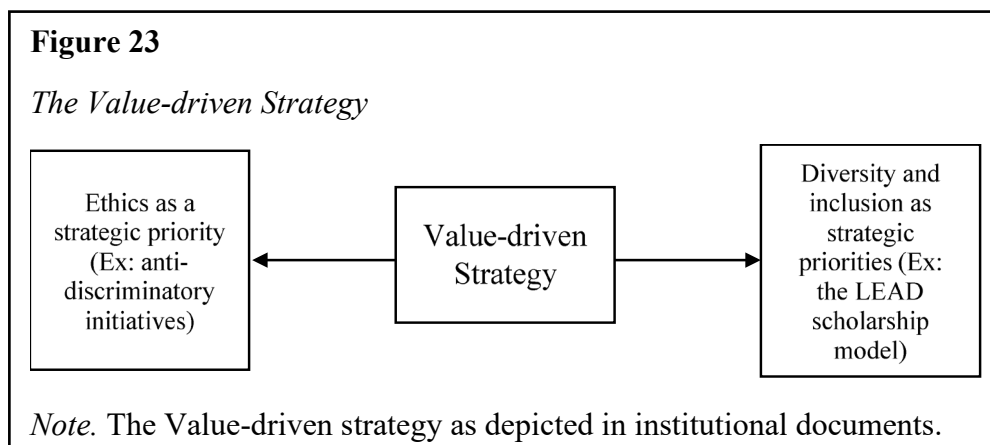
One strategic objective of the institution's enrollment plan that is in line with these values and the institution's mission is to improve the socioeconomic and geographical diversity of the pool of accepted students. Besides being a significant theme mentioned in the mission statement (AUB, n.d.-a), it is also explicitly stated in both the 2014 and 2016 strategic plans (AUB, 2014; AUB; 2016a). As such, under the current president, this strategic priority developed into an innovative and creative use of scholarships as a strategy not just to fulfill the diversity priority, but also to align with the other themes stipulated in the institution's mission. An example of such type of scholarships is the LEAD initiative.

Affordability, as an aspect of the socioeconomic dimension, is a crucial issue to the current president who has constantly advocated for AUB being an institution for intellectually capable students rather than just the financially capable ones (Khuri, 2016f; Khuri, 2016g; Khuri, 2017d). The concern for affordability is portrayed by the president as a belief that universities' roles is to "engage in rectifying economic imbalance, empowering the disempowered and the underrepresented, and acting as an engine for positive change in society" (Khuri, 2017d). For that purpose, he envisions, with the university provost, a model of scholarship "for other universities to follow" (AUB, n.d.-h).

The LEAD initiative established in 2016 is a scholarship model that enacts the values of diversity, inclusion, and equity (AUB, n.d.-h). It groups under one umbrella major funding partners and engages several institutional departments. However, the

uniqueness of the program resides in the fact that it provides enrolled students a whole educational experience that involves elements of civic engagement focusing on instilling within them a culture of service, and psychosocial and career support to graduate the leaders of tomorrow (AUB, n.d.-h). The LEAD initiative that embeds the diversity and inclusion values of senior leadership has transformed into a significant theme that found place in the 2016 strategic plan. In fact, one of the key strategic initiatives of the enrollment management plan is to “promote LEAD initiative (a new structure for scholarship programs) for improving socio-economic and geographic diversity of the student population” (AUB, 2016a). Consequently, this scholarship model has acquired a symbolic value that shapes stakeholders’ perception of the meaning of diversity and inclusion and provides them with a frame of reference as to effective practices that ensure a diversified body of students.

Figure 23 below represents the characteristic aspects of the Value-driven strategy as depicted in institutional documents.



**Symbolic expressions of the strategy dimension.** Institutional rhetoric surfaces two symbols used to enact the formulation of strategies. In addition to the fact that strategic planning and curriculum are emphasized in the surveyed documents in relation to academic strategic initiatives and have a relatively acceptable weighted

percentage of mentions there. Table 22 below represents the weighted percentage of both symbolic expressions as mentioned in institutional documents.

Table 22

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from the surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Strategic planning	288	0.13%
Curriculum	168	0.06%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

***Strategic planning.*** The surveyed documents reveal that strategic planning events are accompanied with specific settings that reflects rituals as behavioral symbols. As rituals, strategic planning events are carefully prepared occurrences that materialize in well-defined social events in which individuals are participants with clearly defined roles. In fact, engaging in strategic planning involves going in retreats that distance participants from everyday practices communicating that strategic thinking prepares the individuals and the institution to change. This removal-from-everyday context takes the form of retreats, meetings or workshops (AUB, 2018a) that occur on a periodic basis at least once annually (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, such contexts are characterized by special access to specific individuals where their behavior is prescribed through the presence of a ritual specialist who highlights the legitimacy of the ritual. In fact, strategic planning cycles involve key administrative stakeholders such as academic deans and are managed by the university’s senior leadership such as the president (AUB, n.d.-bw). Particularly significant in this context is the role played by the president in strategic planning as documented in the Academic Strategic Plan Meeting in the closing remarks (Khuri, 2016a). In fact, although the strategic themes discussed in the meeting were distributed among different groups, it was the president’s closing



remarks that provided a structure for influencing behavior and providing a broad sense of direction. In fact, statements such as “let's get the data and let's make a smart, reasoned and data-driven series of decisions on timing and on investment” or “while I agree to go back to the first point that we should put people first, we definitely need some investment in our facilities, and if we don't invest soon ...we're going to regret it” encapsulate both a role of dominance as well as that of direction-setting.

Five representations of the symbolic value of strategic planning emerged from the surveyed documents and the significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcase an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings. Table 23 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to information.

Table 23

*The five symbolic representations of strategic planning and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of strategic planning</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Collaboration	~ 28%
Integration	~ 17%
Alignment	~ 31%
Impact	~ 17%
Improvement	~ 7%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Collaboration.* Strategic planning is essentially a symbol of collaboration through which multiple stakeholders work with each other to achieve a common purpose. For example, the development of strategic goals that included a strategic plan was the outcome of a constant interaction between key administrative and academic leaders, students, faculty, and staff (AUB, 2018a). This conceptualization permeates the institutional discourse and enacts a strong institutional value, especially as envisioned by the current leadership. For example, when discussing academic strategic planning in 2016 the current president of the university notes that the process gathered the

collaborative efforts of about one hundred faculty, students, and staff to ensure the institution's sustainability (Khuri, 2016c). In that same occasion, the president considers that strategic planning as a means of moving forward in the realization of long-term strategies should be the outcome of group thinking being itself the mark of "conscious planning" (Khuri, 2016c). Collaboration under this meaning is also characteristic of the various examples of strategy setting described in the previous subsection. In fact, strategic planning developed in workshops, meetings, and retreats as well as strategic initiatives such as Health 2025 that involves an integrated and interdisciplinary approach to health services enact various instances of collaboration between different stakeholders to achieve a common purpose. Similarly, the Strategic Unit for Academic Support engages the collaboration of various internal units to enhance the academic support of students and faculty members. Similarly, various outreach centers such as the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service plans joint actions with various NGOs to implement community services.

Strategic planning as a symbol of collaboration is also best captured by the term "community-wide strategic...conversation" (Khuri, 2016f) through which senior leadership emphasizes the idea that the process of strategic planning yields common attitudes and interests of the various internal stakeholders in perpetuating the institution's existence and purpose. As mentioned in the previous subsection, current senior leadership attributes a great importance to students' contribution in the strategic planning efforts. In fact, in one of his town hall meetings with students, the current president of AUB considers that engaging AUB students in the development of strategic plans to allow the realization of institutional strategies is a personal mark of respect for them and a recognition of being the "best and brightest of their generation" (Khuri,

2017u). Additionally, students' input was sought in the efforts to develop the campus master plan, as an aspect of the institution's strategic plan, through interviews, online surveys to understand their needs and ultimately improve the spatial configurations of the university's physical layout (AUB, 2018a).

Strategic planning is equally a symbol of interunit collaboration such as the Admissions, Registrar's, Student Affairs, Office of Institutional Research and Assessment, Office of Information Technology, Office of Advancement, Office of International Programs, and Financial Planning offices to coordinate the strategic planning of enrollment management (AUB, n.d.-at). It is also a symbol of interfaculty collaboration that helps to connect and align the various faculties with institutional expectations regarding teaching and research to increase their effectiveness and efficiency (AUB, 2018a). For example, the various centers part of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences as well as key administrators of other internal units were invited to attend a strategic planning meeting to increase collaboration of various units within the faculty itself and with other institutional units to develop a shared view and promote impactful research across disciplines (AUB, 2018e). At the departmental level, chairpersons collaborate with faculty members and their respective deans to align their department's mission and vision with the broader institutional strategic plan (AUB, 2016b).

*Integration.* Close to the concept of collaboration and probably an outcome of it, strategic planning is also a symbol of integration where it represents the compilation of separate elements by diverse constituents into a harmonious whole. Several examples of this integration can be found in the institutional rhetoric. For example, one dimension of the academic strategic plan is the transforming of students' learning experiences (AUB, 2016a). However, to fulfill this dimension several strategic

initiatives conducted by diverse units had to be integrated together. As an example, optimizing the students' learning experience required an extensive revision of the General Education program (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016a) through a newly appointed program director (AUB, 2018a), the establishment of a students' wellness center (AUB, 2016a) through the Office of Students Affairs (AUB, 2018a), the establishment of new graduate programs by academic departments that respond to emergent local and regional work requirements (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016a), and the improvement of students' services such as career services offered by the Office of Career Services, as well as library services (AUB, 2018a).

In the Structural-Sequential approach to strategy setting discussed in the previous subsection, the crystallization of separate elements into a coherent whole materialized in the manner the institutional strategic plan developed. In fact, schools and faculties start first by developing their individual strategic plans that eventually form the basis of an integrated and coherent institutional one. Even at the level of individual faculties, the strategic plan is the outcome of the integration of various strategic themes that eventually serve to fulfill the mission of every faculty. The integration symbolic representation consists also in including the assessment of activities results in the development phase of the strategic plan. An instance of such act at the institutional level involves for example the development of Key Performance Indicators to measure the extent to which the institution was able to implement its strategic initiatives. Besides the integration of several strategic initiatives into the strategic planning process, assessment data resulting from surveys and interviews and feedback from multiple stakeholders constitute input to the strategic planning and help update and refine it (AUB, 2018a).

*Alignment.* Institutional rhetoric equally surfaces the value of strategic planning as a symbol of alignment. In this context, the use of institutional resources is aligned with strategic objectives. For example, and from a broad perspective, the new strategic plan envisioned by the current president attempts to align all the institution's strengths and resources to ensure its development and sustainability (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, in the enrollment management plan strategic initiative, one of the components of strategic planning is increasing scholarship offerings through the LEAD initiative for greater inclusion through accounting for students' socioeconomic and geographical diversity (AUB, 2016a). Fulfilling this component necessitated a physical layout reconfiguration through which all funding agencies were relocated in the same building. This change reinforces the contact and communication between students who share the same responsibilities being part of this initiative such as civic and community engagement (Khuri, 2016g). Additionally, it also necessitated a refinement of the functions of all institutional units involved in the students' recruitment process to attain the strategic goals set by the enrollment plan (AUB, 2011a). The Alignment conceptualization within this meaning can also be identified in several instances discussed in the previous subsection. In fact, the Health 2025 strategic initiative necessitated an alignment that materialized through structural adjustments such as the creation of the Office of Strategic Health and ensuring internal linkages among various institutional units. In the context of the Environmental-impact approach to strategy setting, the Alignment conceptualization materializes in the adjustments that the institution undertakes in response to its scanning of a constantly changing environment. An example of this case is the readjustment of the students' recruitment strategy based

on competitors' behaviors or the diversification of a center's services based on emergent environmental requirements.

The alignment of resources equally suggests the readjustment of course offerings either by addition or deletion to align with strategic objectives. For example, within the student learning experience initiative of the 2016 strategic plan, the strategic plan component requiring to infuse values of citizenship and social responsibility within students (AUB, 2016a) requests undergraduate students to complete one service-learning course and two community service projects prior to graduation (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, in response to emergent required skills, senior administrators revised the General Education program for a learning experience that is more coherent and integrated.

Within the alignment symbolic representation, strategic planning allows for the identification of gaps that prevent the realization of a strategic initiative. The creation of new initiatives and centers as part of strategic planning or refining the purpose of existing ones represents a resource-alignment initiative with strategic goals. For example, the student learning experience strategic initiative suggests an increase of graduate program offerings based on regional relevance (AUB, 2016a). Consequently, this also means that current program offerings that are not relevant anymore will be reviewed and potentially terminated (AUB, 2016a). Both the offerings of new graduate programs or the termination of others reflect a strategy of environmental adaptation from the perspective explained in the previous subsection. The Global Health Institute for example enacts the institutional emphasis on the establishment of outreach programs and centers as part of the Collaboration, Engagement, and Outreach strategic initiative (AUB, 2016a). Similarly, the SWOT analyses conducted by various institutional entities

to identify opportunities and threats in the environment will allow to identify and address the gaps in their functioning.

Along the same lines, strategic planning helps justify the creation of outreach centers or reshape the current functions and governance structures of various existing internal centers to align them with the strategic goals of the institution (AUB, 2018a). The Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service for example is an instance of alignment of the institution to environmental requirements. In addition to the resources discussed above, the allocation of different types of grants or the recruitment of new faculty members are also instances of institutional-alignment resources that are also conditioned by the strategic planning process (AUB, 2016b).

Going beyond securing an alignment between resources and goals, the institution's strategic plan ultimately aligns AUB's mission and vision with its identity, institutional values, and strategic goals (AUB, 2018a) while being considered also a symbol of alignment between these same components at the smaller departmental level (AUB, 2016b).

*Impact.* Institutional rhetoric reveals also that strategic planning is a symbol of the importance of impact. It is a tool that yields developments producing change that leaves a concrete effect. The case of the Global Health Institute for example materializes the description above. In fact, as discussed above, the Global Health Institute is the outcome of the establishment of the outreach programs and centers of the academic strategic plan (AUB, 2016a) meant however to “become a global player in health with global relevance and impact” (Khuri, 2016c). This identity is however moderated by the center's integrated and interdisciplinary approach to health services in the region.

Ultimately, the strategic plan as an action plan that helps to achieve strategic institutional objectives is viewed as an effective tool to achieve impact, namely: transform the university into a highly impactful institution through innovative research and transformative education (AUB, 2018a) that influences societies both at the local and regional level (AUB, 2016a).

*Improvement.* Strategic planning is also a symbol for committing to improvements at various institutional levels. For example, excellence in research and education as a component of the strategic plan contributes to the improvement of the Student Learning Experience strategic initiative (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the alignment of departmental strategic plans with their respective faculty's one help improve the departments and their program offerings (AUB, 2010). In the context of a strategic planning retreat, key administrators of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences reviewed in detail graduate programs for the purpose of enhancing their quality and ensuring their alignment with the institution's mission (AUB, 2018e). Similarly, strategic planning that enacts the Enrollment Management Plan strategic initiative is meant to improve recruitment efforts through the establishment of collaborations between various institutional units (AUB, n.d.-at).

*Curriculum.* In addition to being a plan for a course of study with specific instructional and assessment strategies, curriculum holds a symbolic dimension because it relays to concerned stakeholders messages about institutional values and beliefs. In fact, if reviewing institutional programs can be justified by the need to align with environmental changes, it also sends messages about status, desired perceived internal identity or external image. For example, in one of his perspectives, the current president of the university considers that revamping the university's curriculum enhances



academic excellence, makes the campus a vibrant and open space, and increases institutional impact through community outreach (Khuri, 2016f).

Four symbolic representations of the symbolic value of curriculum emerged from the surveyed documents and the significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcase once again an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings. Table 24 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to information.

Table 24

*The three symbolic representations of curriculum and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of curriculum</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Transformation	~ 35%
Engagement	~ 34%
Participatory undertaking	~ 31%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Transformation.* Institutional discourse reveals that curriculum is a means of change and improvement. Transformation is observed at two levels in institutional rhetoric. A first level is one in which graduates, are transformed through providing them with the necessary skills to become leaders, independent thinkers and civically involved individuals (Khuri, 2016f). To the current president, the curriculum as taught in the various faculties serves to “develop and mentor the next generation of citizen leaders” (Khuri, 2016f). The Impact Curriculum in the medical program for example enacts the transformation conceptualization as it develops the skills, attitudes, and behaviors a physician is expected to have in his practice (AUB, 2018a).

At a second level, transformation is a characteristic of the refinements and changes in the curriculum. Such mentions concern particularly the General Education curriculum and the improvements added to it. For example, including civic engagement requirements as part of the General Education program is a transformative initiative that

does not just address environmental exigencies (AUB, 2016a) but also introduces students to the abundant resources available in the institution such as its museums, archives, special collections, and botanic garden (Khuri, 2018k). Additionally, transformations in the curriculum take place through the establishment of initiatives and their integration into students' academic experience as a requirement of a liberal arts' education. These initiatives support the institution's mission of graduating the leaders of tomorrow and include for example the Women and Gender Studies Initiative, the Performing Arts and Theater Initiative, and the Heritage Preservation and Religious Tolerance Initiative (AUB, 2018e).

*Engagement.* Engagement is a symbolic manifestation of the curriculum, mainly because curriculum carries an ethical purpose. In fact, the transformation that graduates receive through their learning journey is intended to prepare them to engage life not just as work professionals operating in a global context, but also as ones infused with “the values of citizenship, social responsibility, sustainability” (AUB, 2016a). The redesigned curriculum of the General Education program requires from undergraduate students to complete a service-learning course and community service projects prior to their graduation (AUB, 2018a).

As in the case of transformation, the engagement conceptualization is enhanced through in-house initiatives that integrate students' non-academic activities within the academic curriculum. For example, the AUB4Refugees initiative that studies the various impacts of the Syrian refugee crisis is not just a research window that will generate new learning as to how to address the challenges that emerge from similar crises but constitutes also a community-based teaching opportunity (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the Ghata project, part of the Center for Civic Engagement and Community

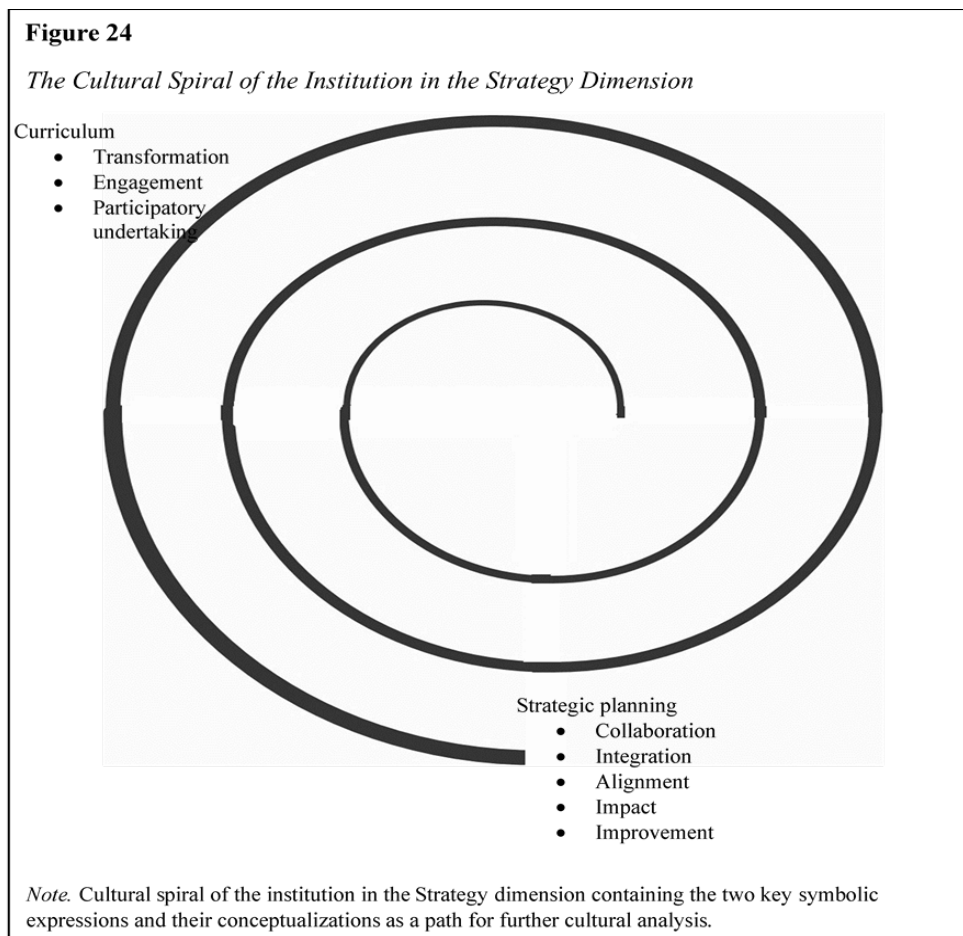
Service, provides education to Syrian refugees in informal settlements and constitutes a civic engagement initiative for AUB students that is integrated in their academic curriculum. AUB students' engagement help bring education to students-refugees as well as build their capacity to further their education when they return to their country (AUB, n.d.-w). The Neighborhood initiative, the Nature Conservation Center are also initiatives that do not only constitute research opportunities to address relevant challenges but also a window of civically oriented activities for AUB students that integrate their learning experience and help nurture in them social responsibilities' values (AUB, 2018a).

*Participatory undertaking.* Designing Curriculum constitutes a participatory platform that combines the knowledge of various disciplines. This conceptualization emerges in various instances in institutional rhetoric. An explicit statement of this perception of curriculum is found in the institution's self-study report that reads that the revamping of the General Education program is a "university-wide project uses a participatory approach to curriculum development" (AUB, 2018a). For that purpose, several task forces that include more than 50 faculty members from the various schools and faculties were formed to design this program (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, one of the academic strategic initiatives of the institution in its attempt to review and refine existing programs is to solicit the feedback and input if various internal constituents and encourage collaborations among the different faculties (AUB, 2016a).

Several addresses of the current president echo this perception of curriculum. For example, in one of his perspectives, the current president of the university explains that preparing students to tackle the challenges of a complex environment and leave an

impact through their actions necessitates a holistic, multi-perspective approach to students' learning experience (Khuri, 2018k). In another perspective, he considers that a core curriculum that aligns with contemporary environmental requirements must gel from the knowledge and expertise of the various faculties (Khuri, 2016a).

Figure 24 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Strategy dimension containing the two symbolic expressions as a path for further cultural analysis.



### Findings in the Leadership Dimension

Leadership is a complex concept with abundant symbolic representations in the academic literature. The purpose of this thesis is to investigate leadership in the specific context of AUB.

As in the previous dimensions, this section will be divided into two subsections. The first subsection will examine the cultural components of leadership as depicted in institutional rhetoric, and the second one will delineate the two symbolic expressions related to the Leadership dimension.

### **The components of leadership based on institutional discourse.**

Institutional rhetoric reveals that leadership in many instances is a collaborative and socially constructed process that generates from the interaction of multiple stakeholders and materializes in groups or teams. Particularly significant in this governance model is also the particular role of key individuals such as the university president. In this context, the focus will also be directed towards some of the actions of the current president and the way they could embed symbolic meanings which can consequently impact how other institutional stakeholders perceive their role in the organization and shape their understanding of the institution's purpose.

Hence, the findings in the Leadership dimension will be divided into two parts. In the first, an overview of the shared governance model as a broad structure composed of several constituents at AUB whereas the second part will underline the symbolic actions of the current president while extracting some of the corresponding representations of these symbols.

*A brief overview of Shared Governance in institutional rhetoric.* The first mention of the significance attributed to shared governance by senior leadership in the consulted documentation is found in the 2014 Strategic Plan. In fact, shared governance is considered there as one of the “critical enablers” of the implementation of the plan partially through the development of faculty bylaws that endorse the values of shared governance (AUB, 2014). Additional institutional bylaws such as the corporate, senate,

faculties, and other committees' bylaws denote different levels of implementation of shared governance in the overall governance structure (AUB, 2018a). Procedurally, shared governance is for instance also supported by the development of a policy software that allows appropriate stakeholders, based on document type, to edit and approve various institutional documents (AUB, 2018a). In fact, information and bylaws relating to shared governance are published online (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the clarity and consistency of governance-related policies are ensured through the policy on policies, a framework that guides and aligns the implementation of policies and procedures (AUB, 2018a). In the same context, the Policies and Procedures Review Committee advises the president on best practices in policy governance to support the institution's mission (AUB, 2018a). The active involvement of faculty members in shared governance acquires a prominent significance as it is considered to be part of the service requirements for granting faculty members promotion and tenure (AUB, 2018d).

***Shared Governance as a collaborative form of leadership.*** Although shared governance implies a model in which internal stakeholders should have a say in decision-making, institutional rhetoric shows a structural model that tends to be more hierarchical in nature rather than flat, placing the Board of Trustees and president as key components in steering the decision making in the institution. However, there is an apparent role granted to the other constituents in the shared governance process as can be depicted in institutional documents. The following subsections will highlight these findings.

From an administrative perspective, the university governance is structured around the Board of Trustees and key academic officers that are headed by the president such as the provost, a number of vice presidents, deans, and a line of middle academic

managers such as department heads and the directors of various centers (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, faculty, students, and alumni participate in the university's governance through various groups such as the faculty senate, and the University Student Faculty Committee, and other task forces and standing committees (AUB, 2018a). What follows will discuss key components in the governance model.

**Board of Trustees:** The Board of Trustees (BOT) is the highest governing entity of the institution. The role of the BOT is to promote the institution's mission. Through supervision and guidance, the BOT provides a sense of direction to the university while overseeing and implementing institutional strategies pertaining to various academic and financial issues (AUB, 2018a). The role of the BOT includes decisions for implementing new programs, confirming the tenure of faculty members as well as supervising the quality of the teaching and learning process, and selection of the university president (AUB, 2018a). Although academic institutions are different in many instances from business organizations, the role of the BOT, similarly to top management in businesses, focuses on the managerial functions that concerns itself with the financial efficiency of the institution by either making themselves donations or searching for funding sources to ensure the institution's sustainability (AUB, 2018a). The fact that 60% of the Board members are in various ways related to the financial business sphere (AUB, n.d.-bx) enhances the financial-outcome efficiency concern of the Trustees. In addition to the president, the Board of Trustees appoints other key academic officers such as the provost and the deans and specifies their roles and responsibilities (AUB, 2018a). The BOT communicates on regular basis with the university president especially to discuss emerging operational issues (AUB, 2018a).

The concept of shared governance is further highlighted when the institution's alumni are given the opportunity, albeit indirectly, to have an influence in the BOT which represents the highest governance body of the institution. In fact, three of the trustees are elected by the worldwide alumni population (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, an elected member of the faculty senate sits as a non-voting member in the Academic Committee of the BOT (AUB, 2018a). This practice began in 2017 (Khuri, 2017b) and was intended to enhance the communication of faculty members' concerns to the institution's highest governance body.

Senior leadership: The second component of the structural model of governance is the senior academic leadership of the institution. These include the president, vice presidents, provost, and deans all in charge of managing the academic functions of the university. On top of the academic senior leadership is the university president. One type of leadership the president exercises according to institutional rhetoric is managerial leadership. In fact, the Board of Trustees delegates to the president the necessary authority and provides him with the necessary autonomy to manage the various aspects of institutional operations (AUB, 2018a). Consequently, from a role perspective, the president is not just the "voice" of the Board of Trustees. Instead, he is given a certain scope of freedom in his actions to manage the institution. Although the Board of Trustees provides the strategic direction to the institution especially as indicated in the mission, the president's actions serve to implement this direction through the development of specific initiatives.

As shaped by the university policies, shared governance at the president level is manifested in the requirements for involving several institutional constituents in the decision-making process. For instance, the search process for the university's provost



required that the president form a consultation committee that included trustees, administrators, students, alumni, and faculty members (AUB, 2018a). The president links all the components of the governance structure through his membership in committees contained in the other components of the model (AUB, 2018a). The president involves alumni in shared governance through the Worldwide Alumni Association which is under his authority and supervision (AUB, 2019).

The president is part of and attends the meetings of the several components of the governance structural model. In fact, the president is by virtue of his position, member of the Board of Trustees and all of its committees (AUB, 2016g), and periodically communicates with its president and members (AUB, 2018a). He is also the officer and an ex-officio member of the senate who calls for and attends its regular meetings (AUB, 2016f). The president also presides over the University Student Faculty Committee and attends also its meetings (AUB, 2016h). He equally presides over the Worldwide Alumni Association of the institution to whom its members are also accountable (AUB, 2019). The president's mobility enacted through attending the meetings of these components serves as a communication link between the entities of the governance structure carrying their voices and concerns and attempting to find solutions to them and relaying to all constituents that their voices are important in all institutional aspects. This fact reflects a genuine commitment through behavior to the principles of shared governance.

Faculty: Faculty members equally partake in the shared governance model. Faculty involvement in governance materializes through their role as members or chairs of various standing committees that examine issues relating to students or faculty members. An instance of such committees is the Task Force on Faculty Compensation

that examines faculty salaries according to school, academic rank, and gender (AUB, 2018a). Faculty participation in key institutional committees develops a perception of shared governance that seems to align with that of senior administrators. In fact, in the minutes of the senate committee on Faculty Affairs, committee members welcome the engagement of faculty members in the budget process and consider it as an act “in the spirit of shared governance” (AUB, 2017). Furthermore, as part of the shared governance model, faculty members are also involved in essential institutional affairs. In fact, in addition to being members of the presidential search committee discussed above, some faculty served on a search committee for the dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (AUB, 2018a). The role of faculty members in the shared governance model is probably best illustrated through the faculty senate.

The Faculty Senate is equally an essential component of the shared governance model and represents the entity that crystallizes and echoes faculty members’ needs and concerns to top administrators (AUB, 2018a). The senate consists of 29 elected faculty members and 10 standing committees that examine various institution-related matters such students and faculty affairs (AUB, 2018a). The role it plays in the shared governance model materializes through open communication with senior leadership. In fact, top administrators, in their role as ex-officio members of the senate, attend the periodic meeting of the senate. Additionally, the Faculty Senate can submit recommendations concerning academic amendments to the Board of Trustees through the president (AUB, 2018a). Structurally, the senate by itself is a model of collaboration that involves faculty members from different various committees within faculties and schools to attend to different academic matters (AUB, 2018a).

Whereas the Board of Trustees, the highest governance authority of the institution, focuses on increasing the university effectiveness and efficiency as explained above, senate members' concern seems to be more about process. In fact, even though some senators have noted an improvement in impacting institutional decision-making, they signaled the necessity of devising ways, through communication with senior administrators, in having a binding say on key academic matters (AUB, 2018a).

An evidence that reflects the senior leadership's will to faculty involvement in governance is the reinstatement of the tenure system as a response to faculty demands after a suspension of 30 years (AUB, 2018a). In fact, tenure was viewed as a mean to enhance academic freedom and provides faculty members with a context that supports freedom of expression in all issues pertaining to the administrative as well as intellectual matters of the institution (AUB, 2018a).

Students: Students also participate in the shared governance of the institution. The example of students being members of key committees such as the one established to search for a provost discussed above is an evidence to this claim. As in the case of faculty members, students' participation in governance materializes in specific groups such as the University Student Faculty Committee and the Student Representative Committee (AUB, 2018a). The University Student Faculty Committee consists of elected students and faculty members from various faculties and schools and serves first as a communication platform between students and faculty members on matters regarding students' rights and privileges for example (AUB, n.d.-bj), and second as a liaison between the students' population and the administration (AUB, 2018a). Although there is not any direct evidence of the extent of influence that this committee

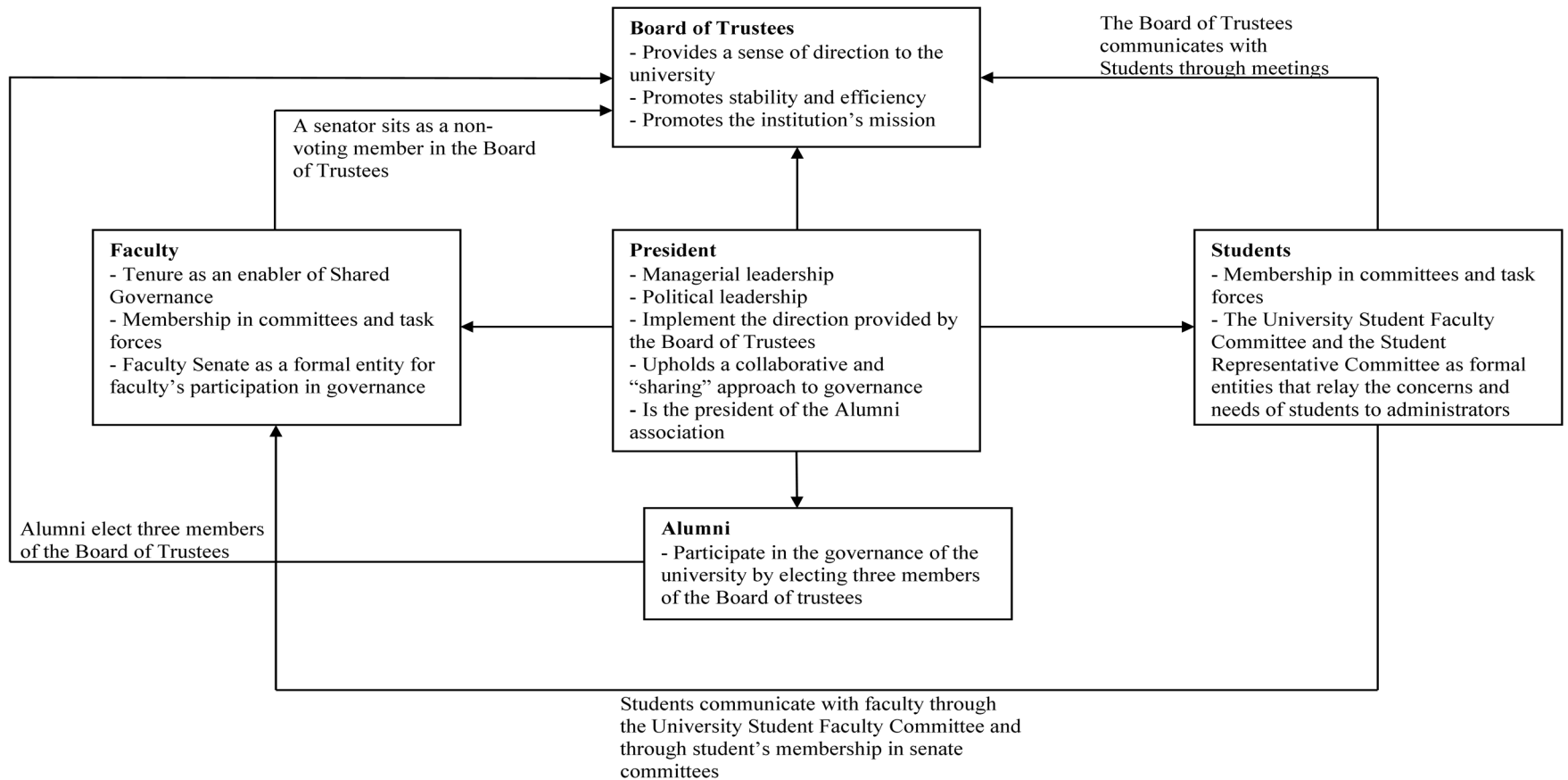
exercises in institutional decision-making, the fact that it can be chaired by the president of the university represents, albeit implicitly, a means of influence since it provides students with the opportunity to relay directly their concerns and opinions to senior administrators (AUB, 2018a). A more direct but partial impact that students are given in the decision-making process reflects in the fact that some student members of the University Student Faculty Committee are also members of other key institutional committees such as the university's Financial Planning Committee thus giving students a role in the financial planning of the institution as well as other senate committees such as the Admissions Committee or Academic development Committee (AUB, 2018a). Conversely, an evidence of a full involvement of students in university governance is one that concerns students themselves. In fact, the current students' electoral law at AUB was developed by the institution's students themselves (AUB, 2018a).

Institutional rhetoric reveals that the presence of communication channels among different entities maintain among themselves, especially with the Board of Trustees as the highest governance body, reinforces the fact that AUB adopt a model of shared governance (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the participation of various internal stakeholders such as senior administrators, faculty members, students, and non-academic staff in the development of the institution's strategic plan equally highlight the significance of shared governance as practiced in the institution (AUB, 2018a).

Figure 25 below summarizes the structural model of shared governance as depicted in institutional documents and represents some interaction venues related to governance between its various constituents.

**Figure 25**

*The Structural Model of Shared Governance*



*Note.* The structural model of shared governance and some interaction venues between its constituents.

**Symbolic expressions of the leadership dimension.** Both the model of Shared Governance in the institutional rhetoric and through the leadership lens of the current president are emphasized in the surveyed documents and have a relatively acceptable weighted percentage of mentions there. Table 25 below represents the weighted percentage of both symbolic expressions as mentioned in institutional documents.

Table 25

*Count and Weighted percentage of each symbol from the surveyed documents*

<b>Word</b>	<b>Count<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Weighted percentage<sup>2</sup></b>
Shared Governance	132	0.05%
Leadership (in relation to Shared Governance)	216	0.08%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>The number of times that the word occurs within the documents searched. <sup>2</sup>The frequency of the word relative to the total words counted.

***Shared Governance.*** Besides being a model that outlines a structural relationship between various constituents in the decision-making process, shared governance is also enacted through a symbolic dimension. First, the organizational structure delineated above reflects institutional values such as participation of various stakeholders and openness to their influence on decision-making. In fact, the narrative above demonstrate a relatively prominent role in the institution’s governance to various institutional constituents.

Additionally, shared governance is shaped by a sociocultural context that reflects what institutional individuals, mostly at the senior level, believe to be important. This sociocultural context is dynamic and shaped by the new meanings that new individuals bring with them when integrating any component of the governance structural model discussed above. A close examination of the reports of the faculty senate committees in different academic years reveal measures to enhance shared governance. For example,

the principal recommendation of the senate Committee on Students Affairs during the academic year 2014-2015 consisted in developing an online platform that allows the University Student Faculty Committee and the Student Representative Committee to communicate their suggestions and concerns to the senate committee, and ultimately senior administrators (AUB, 2015). With new members of the same committee during the academic year 2017-2018, there was a push to promote communication of students' concerns with additional constituents such as departments, and alumni (AUB, 2018f). Interestingly, the breadth of the issues tackled by the same committee in 2017-2018 has also increased to include improving students' counselling and wellness centers, career services as well as providing more resources for students with disabilities (AUB, 2018f). Although these additional topics reflect undoubtedly the values of the new committee members in 2017-2018, they are also embraced by a senior administrator, the current president, who seems to be also participating actively in shaping these new meanings and values. In fact, the new topics examined by the senate committee in 2017-2018 can all be traced in the current president's perspectives: counselling and wellness centers (Khuri, 2017a; Khuri, 2017e; Khuri, 2017l; Khuri, 2018e; Khuri, 2018n) or improved career services for students (Khuri, 2018h; Khuri, 2018i).

Six symbolic representations of the symbolic value of shared governance emerged from the surveyed documents and the significant percentage of codes attributed to them showcase an acceptable amount of agreement that translates into shared meanings. The symbolic representations delineated below will account for the concept of governance as depicted in institutional documents leaving out the current president's understanding of shared governance for another subsection.

Table 26 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to Shared Governance. As in the previous symbolic representations, these are not mutually exclusive, and they were categorized as such based on the dominant understanding of each code within its context.

Table 26

*The six symbolic representations of shared governance and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Shared Governance</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Enabling Structure	~ 13%
Empowerment	~ 30%
Dynamic Process	~ 20%
Effectiveness	~ 15%
Transparency	~ 13%
Reward	~ 9%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

*Enabling Structure.* According to institutional rhetoric, an effective model of shared governance is one that has a structure with defined boundaries between its components and a set of rules and regulations that warrant the participation of all components and facilitates the decision-making process through communication. For example, as discussed in the model above, the governance structure that guides decision-making at AUB is composed of various well-defined entities including the Board of Trustees, an Executive team composed of senior administrators, and faculty and students represented in various committees such as respectively the Faculty Senate and the University Student Faculty Committee, or the alumni through the Worldwide AUB Alumni Association (AUB, 2018a). Every component in the structural model is guided by a clear set of bylaws that delineate responsibilities and job descriptions and



specifies the modes of communication with other components. For instance, institutional governance is guided by the university's corporate, senate, and faculties bylaws among others (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, several formal channels of communication exist between the different constituents of the structure. In fact, the communication between the Board of Trustees and the president is periodic and either accomplished through live meetings or teleconferencing (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, The Faculty Senate represents the formal communication channel between the faculty and senior administrators through the president's membership in senate committees or the presence of a senate member in the Board of Trustees (AUB, 2018a).

*Empowerment.* Based on institutional documents, shared governance is a means of giving its various components a sense of empowerment through the inclusiveness of participation in the decision-making process. The sense of empowerment through participation is twofold: first it recognizes the status of the participant in these decisions and second facilitates its influence in the decision-making process. For example, institutional rhetoric notes an improvement "in the senate's level and mode of engagement with the administration, in addition to a greater impact on policies, procedures, and key affairs related to academics and faculty benefits" (AUB, 2018a). Besides well-defined entities such as the Faculty Senate, the sense of empowerment with its twofold meanings is found in different places in institutional rhetoric and concerns faculty members and students. For example, faculty and students' opinions on various academic matters are often solicited through town hall meetings thus recognizing the importance of voicing their concerns and impacting decision-making (AUB, 2018a). For example, the Tenure Design Committee in charge of developing and implementing a tenure system after a 30-year suspension was composed

of faculty members, administrators, and trustees held several town hall meetings to collect the input of faculty members on the matter (AUB, 2018a).

Similarly, the participation of various internal constituents in the elaboration of key academic reports supports also the two aspects of empowerment. For example, the steering committee of the 2018 self-study report consisted of representatives from the various faculties and schools some of whom were invited by the president through a formal invitation letter to participate in the different working groups of the report and students were nominated by the respective deans. A total of 150 individuals participated in the development of this critical report that helped renew the accreditation of the institution (AUB, 2018a). Faculty also impact decision making through their membership in various committees and task forces such as the Task Force on Faculty Compensation which addressed the salary anomalies of faculty members based on specialization and/or gender, and committees in search for candidates to fill key academic positions such as deans or provost (AUB, 2018a).

There are also multiple mentions of the importance and role of students in the decision-making process of the institution, either through defined groups or on various bases such as their membership in committees or task forces. Students' empowerment is evident in the important role they play in the shared governance model through their participation in various committees and task forces including some senate committees and the Financial Planning Committee that reviews the institution's operating and capital budgets, thus giving a say to students in crucial financial issues (AUB, 2018a). In fact, as part of their role in shared governance, students developed a new electoral law based on proportional law that determines their representants in the University Student Faculty Committee or the Student Representative Committee and relays

students' concerns and opinions to senior administrators on various institutional issues (AUB, 2018a).

*Dynamic Process.* The processes that regulate the shared governance structure are dynamic ones where a constant review of all policies related to governance is done regularly to ensure alignment with the desired outcomes of the university. For example, the Policy on Policies is a policy mechanism that reviews regulations and bylaws including those pertaining to governance to ensure that such policies are clear and consistent with their aim (AUB, 2018a). The Policies and Procedures Review Committee, an advisory group on best practices in policy governance, accomplishes equally the purpose discussed above (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the institution has adopted a policy software, PolicyTech, as a policy management software to help in policy revisions and changes as well as provide education and increase policy awareness of internal stakeholders (AUB, 2018a). Several governance bylaws were amended to ensure better governance as an evidence of the dynamic nature of the governance processes. For example, the corporate bylaws related to governance were amended in 2016 to ensure better governance structures (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the bylaws of the University Student Faculty Committee were also changed to allow for the development of a new electoral system thus reflecting greater adherence of senior leadership to the precepts of governance (AUB, 2018a). Similarly, the Internal Audit Office evaluates and improves governance processes (AUB, 2018a).

*Effectiveness.* The shared governance model is viewed to contribute to the overall effectiveness of the institution. For example, in the 2014 strategic plan, shared governance is considered as one of the critical enablers of the four strategic goals of the institution (AUB, 2014). Additionally, several key performance indicators meant to

measure the realization of the strategic goals in the institution's strategic plan include aspects related to governance. In fact, measuring the extent to which the institution is infusing values of citizenship and social responsibility among its students community is measured through their positive participation in students election and governance (AUB, n.d.-i).

Shared Governance has also important implications on enhancing the quality of services that the university offers and warranting the financial stability of the institution. In the context of teaching, the faculty senate plays a significant role in reviewing and approving new academic programs ensuring the voices of the experts among faculty members are incorporated in necessary curricular changes (AUB, 2018a). In the context of financial stability, the university Financial and Planning Committee includes faculty and students members as well as other administrative representatives in the budgeting process. In fact, one of the key performance indicators that measures the extent to which the financial and intellectual sustainability of the institution is improved is through the effectiveness of governance structures (AUB, n.d.-i).

*Transparency.* Institutional rhetoric in many instances emphasizes the importance of the shared governance model being a clear, known to all constituents, and transparent one. This transparency increases awareness of processes through the participation of various stakeholders in several institutional committees which consequently allows them a share in decision-making. Additionally, based on the documents examined, all policies and procedures pertaining to governance are readily accessible online to all institutional stakeholders (AUB, 2018a).

Transparency is a viewed as necessary mechanism for the effectiveness of the model itself. For instance, the 2018 self-study report reads that transparency is “one of

the pillars of effective shared governance” (AUB, 2018a). Transparency is achieved through a constant communication with the various constituents of the governance components for example via town hall meetings or various online platforms (AUB, 2018a).

*Reward.* Fewer mentions in institutional documents describe the participation in shared governance as being a rewarding process. In fact, faculty participation in governance is part of their service requirements to achieve promotion and tenure (AUB, 2018a). Besides being mentioned explicitly in institutional documents, this claim is further evidenced in the provost message addressed to new faculty in Spring 2019. In fact, the provost notes that faculty members are given all the resources and *incentives* [emphasis added] to carry out their responsibilities, including those related to shared governance (AUB, n.d.-by).

***Symbolic leadership within Shared Governance.*** The examination of the Leadership dimension cannot be complete without an analysis of the role of the leader. In fact, if shared governance is, a socially constructed process then it is significant to highlight the symbolic role of the current president in the construction of this social reality and by virtue of his position and his ability to create frames of references that institutional stakeholders use to develop shared meanings about what is valued institutionally.

The current president of the university assumed his position in 2015 for an initial five-year term. In March 2019, the AUB community received an email from the chairperson of the Board of trustees announcing the “unanimous” trustees’ approval of the renewal of the current president’s term for another five years as of September 2020 (Porter, 2019). If the current president completes his second mandate, he would be the

second president since 1948 who would have remained in office for ten consecutive years (AUB, n.d.-bz). The reasons explained in the email for renewing the mandate are quite significant. In fact, the Trustees, after receiving feedback from faculty members, administrators, and students, approved “enthusiastically” the renewal in a meeting while “citing the determined, fast-paced, and positive changes that have been effected across the university” with the current president (Porter, 2019). The following will conceptualize some symbolic actions of the current president that underline his perceptions of leadership within the shared governance model and provide to the institution’s community with a cognitive model that shapes their perception of governance as well.

Three symbolic representations of the symbolic leadership emerged from the surveyed documents. Table 27 below represents these symbolic representations and their frequent use relative to the total number of codes relating to information.

Table 27

*The three symbolic representations of Symbolic Leadership and their frequency*

<b>Symbolic representations of Symbolic Leadership</b>	<b>Frequency<sup>1</sup></b>
Cross-boundaries Communication	~ 26%
Inclusiveness	~ 62%
Responsibility	~ 12%

*Note.* <sup>1</sup>Percentage based on number of codes attributed to every conceptualization relative to the total number of codes used in all symbolic representations.

The symbolic leadership as enacted by the current president can be in several instances divided into two categories: (a) actions, and (b) beliefs. Whereas beliefs reflect assumptions, actions are acts that highlight the president’s enactment of shared governance through behavior. The first two symbolic representations will either fit within the action or belief category while reminding the reader that the two

categorizations in the case of a single individual are complementary by nature. The symbolic representations that will follow are based on the mentions of the current president's actions and behaviors in the surveyed documents relating to shared governance.

*Cross-boundaries communication.* In this conceptualization, communication with various internal stakeholders should be open, inclusive, and should transcend internal structural boundaries.

On one hand, when asked of his opinion on the dialogue happening in the faculty-only forum, the current president of the university notes that this is not “leading to anything that resembles a discussion...we need a discussion that cuts across the entire community” (Khuri, 2016a). In another of his Perspectives, the president considers that one of the hallmarks of great leadership is the “tendency to share decision making as inclusively and consensually as possible” (Khuri, 2017q). Additionally, in one of his Perspectives about the inclusion of students in the decision-making process, the current president notes that his “administration is sincere about this participation” (Khuri, 2017j). These statements undoubtedly capture the president's perception of shared governance as an act that should include “all” constituents.

The president's belief about the significance of open communication enacted principally through his membership in various institutional entities has a purpose that is greater than the concept of governance. In fact, the president considers that communication that enhances shared governance is ultimately an agent of positive change which avoids adversities. “So I think”, notes the current president in the closing remarks of an academic strategic planning meeting,

we're ready for positive disruption, but it has to be smart and consensual positive disruption. We can't always avoid bad dramatic surprises, which happen, but we can lessen any blows through communicating, through engaging alumni, students, and the community" (Khuri, 2016a).

In that same occasion, he asserts that all constituents working in group in the decision-making process helps clarify the grounds of the decisions taken as well as the way they pertain the achievement of the strategic goals of the university (Khuri, 2016a).

On the other hand, several occurrences that facilitate the communication between the components of the shared governance model and emphasize its significance to the current president were implemented during the current president's first mandate. His role in facilitating these occurrences are obvious and reflect once again an intent towards enhancing shared governance. For instance, approving the amendments of the composition of the University Student Faculty Committee to enhance the communication between faculty members and students (AUB, 2016h). In fact, the president plays an important role in any amendment of the University Student Faculty Committee bylaws since they ultimately have to be approved by him (AUB, 2016h).

*Inclusiveness.* This conceptualization of the president's perception of shared governance supposes involving multiple constituents in the decision-making process.

From the president's viewpoint, this involvement is crucial for the sustainability of the institution. The president's beliefs in the importance of inclusiveness in the decision-making process is probably best captured by him noting in one of his perspectives: "I always try to keep in mind inclusiveness, but I see too many clusters of

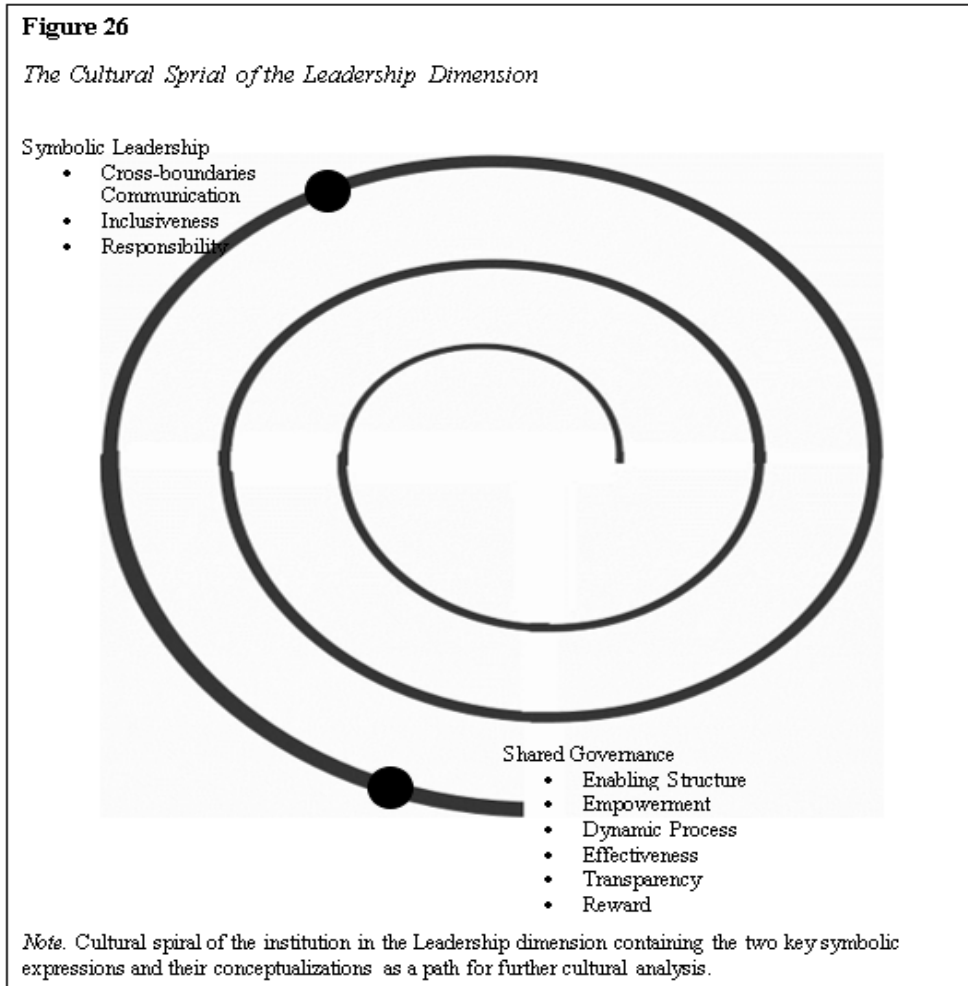


“sames” together on campus... we would all do better if we kept our eyes on these issues of inclusiveness...or [we are] going to screw up” (Khuri, 2016a).

In relation to the president actions, the development of the strategic planning as well as the search for candidates for key academic positions involved constituents from multiple levels in the institution. In fact, these occurrences, facilitated by the president who plays a central role according to various bylaws in the development of both strategic planning and academic appointments, involved one hundred of students, faculty, and staff (Khuri, 2016c). Actions of inclusiveness may also be gender related. The nominations for key academic positions such as deans who in turn are central to the governance of the university and who are proposed by the president to the Board of Trustees were females. In fact, the university accounts today for three female deans and several chairpersons (Khuri, 2017a). Additionally, the president’s participation in various Town Hall meetings with staff, faculty members, and students to involve them in the decision-making process (AUB, 2018a) equally highlights the value of inclusiveness in the president’s actions under the banner of shared governance.

*Responsibility.* The president considers that the inclusiveness of all constituents in shared governance involves also a sense of responsibility and accountability for the constituents’ actions. In fact, to him, great leadership serves to empower others however to make them also take responsibility for their actions (Khuri, 2017q). To him, the involvement of students is crucial to the decision-making process however they should view this as a challenge so that “they express their voice in a constructive manner” (Khuri, 2017j).

Figure 26 below summarizes the spiral of the institution in the Leadership dimension containing the two symbolic expressions as a path for further cultural analysis.



### Departmental Findings

This part will delineate the cultural values that characterize currently the functioning of the Department. Departmental data concerning the departmental subculture was obtained through in-depth interviews of a purposeful sample of three participants, Tarek, Samir, and Anthony. Each participant is a key departmental stakeholder either through a role that was played in the past or is still being played

currently. The interview data was collected by means of unstructured, open-ended individual interviews based on Tierney's (1998) six dimensions. To ensure the consistency with the preceding section, the narrative of the findings in the Department will be based on the same symbolic expression, their representations as well as the shared meaning attributed to them that emerged in the institutional findings.

### **Findings in the Environment Dimension**

The attempt to depict a departmental cultural picture will be based on the two symbolic expressions that emerged in the institutional findings, that is Service, and Strategic Partnerships. The following narrative will examine each from a departmental perspective.

**Service.** Service constitutes a major undertaking of the Department in relation to both its internal and external environment. In fact, Samir affirms that “this is one of the major things that we do.” As in the case of the institution, Service, based on interview data, has several conceptualizations.

Besides being a core departmental undertaking, service is first driven by a sense of caring and concern towards multiple audiences. This emotion is first channeled towards the Department's graduates. In fact, Anthony considers that the Department, under the umbrella of professional responsibility, is bound to provide its graduates with continuous in-service training either in on-site settings or through the workshops scheduled periodically by the Department. Externally, this sense of caring materializes with regard to vulnerable and underserved communities in an attempt to ease their suffering, and this under the umbrella of the Department's social and civic responsibilities. “We need to produce and train”, affirms Anthony referring to the development of manuals while equipping trainers with the necessary know-how to deal

with traumas that emerge in various communities. The sense of caring materializes also in providing the in-service events participants with the opportunity to develop themselves professionally by bringing to the table the difficulties that weigh on their practice and discuss them with their peers. In fact, Samir states that in one of the in-service workshops, it is the participants themselves “who do proposals and then share it with others, so it is to help them develop professionally, it is a professional type of service”.

Collaborations are a means that allow the Department to enhance its service. For example, Tarek notes that the Department collaborated with other departments in AUB on an important consultancy project. Without this collaboration, it would not have been possible for the Department alone to fulfill the outcomes of this project. Internally, such collaborations take place with other institutional entities such as other academic departments or centers within AUB.

Collaborations, as a department, with other departments occur on three fronts. First, such collaboration materializes through occasionally inviting faculty members in other departments to be part of some Department’s committees to help check the produced material content that does not relate directly to the area of specialty of the faculty members of the Department. Second, interdepartmental collaborations occur equally in the context of occasional large-scale reform projects where every department offers its faculty members’ expertise needed for the accomplishment of such projects. Third, collaboration with other departments take place through the establishment of a joint diploma program or the intention of developing an online one soon. Although collaboration with other departments exist, it remains occasional and not structured. In fact, Tarek confirms this by asserting that the Department is “a little bit isolated from

other departments...there is a little bit less cooperation than there might be” while confirming in this perspective that departmental stakeholders “don’t have formal agreements with other departments”. In the context of cross-departmental cooperations, these sporadic and unformalized collaborations leave probably little departmental impact in an area where collaborative research endeavors could have enhanced such impact. In contrast, collaborations with other departments are more prominent on an individual basis through research collaborations of some departmental faculty members with peers in other departments. Such research collaborations that are not part of a departmental initiative would enhance the research profile of individual faculty members rather than increase the Department’s impact. Collaborations with other institutional units in the context of service also exist. In this vein, Tarek affirms that the Department collaborated with the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service (CCECS) to help serve underprivileged communities. The particular collaboration with the CCECS creates an opportunity to externalize the department’s expertise in areas of research and training and sustains this relationship. Anthony considers that collaborations with various NGOs or other professional settings through the CCECS allow for the development of a form of social communication that promotes social synergy with all collaborators and helps maintain the professional network among them.

There are two departmental research-transforming entities that materialize the department service by converting research into practical applications, these are respectively a Center, and a Project.

The Center’s mission is to conduct research in the area of expertise of its faculty members and develop practical applications of the research findings to help enhance the practice of the concerned professional community. The Center itself is very active in

terms of the services it offers. It has its own resources and is an instance of collaborative research between faculty members in the department with some aspect of interdisciplinary work that is characterized however by occasional and informal collaborations with other faculty members from other departments or other universities. When reacting to the idea that the center's collaborative work with other departments or universities is not structured or formalized, Tarek states that "there isn't a kind of institutional agreement in place at all" underlining however that collaboration through the Center is somewhat enacted when the Center invites representatives from other universities to be part of a conference committee organized by it. The fact that the faculty members in charge of the Center are only ones from the Department limits its interdisciplinary trait. The concept of interdisciplinarity deemed to have a sustainable impact according to institutional rhetoric is partly hampered by lack of funds. In this context, Samir states that "there are funds for interdisciplinary research but you'll have to find funding to find people who will work with you".

On the other hand, the Project is an initiative housed within the department but not a departmental one. The Project is not an interdisciplinary one but has the resources to potentially become one. In fact, the Project has external funding due to a large external grant. As in the case of the Center, the Project aims at combining research with development by attempting to create context-specific sustainable improvements of particular professional settings through research. The Project has triggered many collaborations with different faculty members in other universities and developed sustainable linkages with a considerable number of professional settings, consequently making it a successful model that has deserved the praise of AUB's president in one of

his periodic perspectives. Tarek captures the success of the project when stating that it “has been very influential”.

The impact of the Department through the services it provides, can be traced in four levels while one of them being achieved on an individual basis and not reflecting the Department as an entity.

The first impact is the one achieved by the Department’s faculty members albeit on an individual basis through their research expertise. Samir summarizes this fact when stating: “we’re relatively a small department even though academically we’re very influential...As individuals, the research we conduct is internationally known... it’s only here at AUB that we publish such research.” To Samir, collaborations are exemplified through individual research endeavors that occur with peers in other universities: “there maybe someone over there we do research with them, or sometimes we are invited to give a lecture there and we invite somebody to give a lecture here, we invite them to the conferences, but structurally, there is nothing.” In response to the idea of development of departmental partnerships in reaction to environmental constraints Samir asserts that “there has not been anything of the sort”. Tarek confirms Samir’s perception of a lack of a collaborative departmental initiative in response to environmental constraints by stating “we individually respond...So individually we are aware of what's happening, our research and our development is responding to our awareness to the needs that we recognize. But I wouldn't say that there's a Department level strategy” while acknowledging that “a departmental level strategy would be good” to add next that “our professional development approach as a Department could be enhanced and we're trying to do that and I think that it could turn into a more Departmental strategic initiative, but at the moment it's just an idea in the making.” Faculty members engaging personally in

collaborations with peers, rather than such collaborations being a departmental initiative, is sometimes promoted by a surge of external funding in response to environmental challenges. In fact, Tarek states “because the refugee crisis is global and regional, there's a lot of money available to European researchers and the UK and in other parts of Europe and so many European researchers now, because they are the area most targeted, are challenged by a refugee movement... so, there have been various grants in which some of us have been involved in where we collaborate with European colleagues to conduct various research and development projects... an individual would be contacted because their expertise fits within a particular project and then they would become a collaborator on that.”

The second impact occurs through the in-service professional development activities of the Department. This is achieved through the workshops’ series or summer training that the department offers. It is also achieved through formal and informal relationships with professional settings by providing their staff with professional development opportunities based on a needs’ assessment survey. The significance of the impact is rather a matter of breadth than one of sustainability in relation to specific professional settings. In this context, Anthony argues that this is being done “right now, and as we’ve done also in the past here in Lebanon and in the Gulf and other Arab Middle Eastern countries”. Samir confirms that these collaborations with the professional institutions are occasional.

Third, the center allows also the Department to exert a certain level of environmental impact. This is achieved through the various conferences, workshop series, and fairs that are organized by the center and attended by many local, regional, and international professionals. Doubts about the extent of impact that the center’s



conferences and workshops might have on participants is confirmed by departmental stakeholders themselves. In fact, “it’s very local”, says Tarek, “it’s not really best practice to have a workshop for one day or two Saturdays and consider that professional development”. Additionally, when asked about if the center’s impact on participants and their practices has been assessed, Tarek states that “we haven’t done that... but the sustained relationship that we have with many people means that we expose them every year... Now what exactly the impact that has...is very hard [to assess] and we haven’t assessed it”.

Fourth, it is the project that seems to have a significant environmental impact. In fact, based on the institutional rhetoric, the project has the characteristics needed for impact. The project was established through a memorandum of understanding between the university and an NGO that spans for 14 years. Senior leadership discourse explains that such agreements are only envisaged when they can have an impact (Khuri, 2017j) while concurrently ensuring the sustainability of the impact through this long-term agreement. The project has forged a professional network that spans 8 Arab countries, more than 50 professional institutions and 400 practitioners as well as researchers from several universities, coaches and policymakers working together to advance professional development solutions. This complex network of people collaborating together does not only warrant environmental impact, but actually take that impact a step further and transform it into influence. The influence here is warranted by the sustainability of the action mainly due to the length and breadth of the academic intervention. The project has proven to be a successful endeavor to the extent that departmental stakeholders are examining the way to invest the learning that it produced internally. In fact, when talking about the project, Tarek affirms that “we’re trying now

internally to make use of the know-how [of the project] within our professional development initiatives. So, this is something that we're working on".

The influence that the department itself has on its environment is not clear as it can be attributed to a lack of expected collaboration. In fact, when asked if collaboration might enhance the department's influence Tarek answers "I expect it would be good. I mean collaboration will bring more people onto the table around the particular issue so the chances are higher that there would be an influence. So just in terms of magnitude you know if more of you are thinking along the same lines and you are all interacting with our immediate communities and beyond, then the chances of that idea getting out or more, so that makes sense". Samir on the other hand states that the department does not have influence from the perspective of having a lobbying power. Anthony considers that the new professional MA program to be started next year can be partly considered as a form of influence through lobbying. In fact, he attributes the origin of this professional degree to a departmental belief that graduates should have still an additional formation before they practice. According to him, this idea was developed in parallel with the concerned ministry and its implementation will lobby in favor of the enactment of a decree that will enforce its application.

**Strategic Partnerships.** A symbolic value of a strategic partnership as it emerges from institutional rhetoric is one in which partners have similar characteristics that can materialize in common interests, goals as well as competencies. The Department does not seem to have a deliberate plan, at least currently, to engage in strategic partnerships on a departmental level to enhance its service. The reason that emerges from these findings is that locally, departmental stakeholders do not consider that the work of peer departments in other universities is on equal footing with the work

the Department especially from a research lens. When asked about if the Department has engaged in a partnership that answers the similarity value of strategic partnerships Tarek affirms: “there’s only one or two departments that I can think of right now where I think that a partnership would be very beneficial to us. I think it could be very beneficial to them but not necessarily to us... So, in many of those cases it would be a case where we would be in effect functioning as mentors”. Despite this fact, Anthony considers that a partnership with a peer department in a local university has developed recently and consists of organizing periodically a graduate research forum that aims at improving the profession-related theories and practices and allowing students from both departments to learn about the research conducted in every department. Although this partnership has not yet acquired a strategic dimension, it is a growing one as more Lebanese universities are taking part in it. In fact, Anthony states “we have now researchers from all over the universities in Lebanon, including the graduates and postgraduates, they’re meeting with each other, they’re knowing about their own work, and they’re benefitting also from the research methods and the analysis that we’re doing as AUB, LAU or others, and this is really very good culture actually for them, research culture, it’s a hub for researchers”.

In addition, the Department has been part of an initiative established by a peer department in an American university that consists of offering online professional development courses through which students from three Arabic countries have benefitted, including those from the Department. Although the departmental stakeholders translated these online courses into Arabic to help non-English speaking practitioners benefit from this initiative, which consequently allowed the Department to establish some linkages with other investors according to Anthony. The outcomes of

such collaboration have led to the professional growth of the Department's students. In fact, Anthony affirms that "many of our students who attended the courses they translated and adapted the materials into Arabic, and they gave training workshops in our annual in-service training workshops every year. So, you can notice that they translated and transformed what they learned from [the American university] to here to Lebanon". This same initiative has also led to an exchange of expertise between both the Department and its American counterpart. In fact, although the initiative was developed by the peer department, Anthony serves as an advisor to the courses of this initiative especially in their translation and adaptation procedure. This process has naturally led to the growth of both partners providing the department peer a window of penetration into certain Arabic countries, and the Department through the added learning it yielded on both faculty members and students.

Although not a departmental initiative, the Project has developed a strategic partnership through signing a memorandum of understanding with a regional university to conduct research on areas of common interest.

Another partnership that is in the making currently and about to materialize through the signing of a memorandum of understanding is with a peer Faculty at a European university. In fact, the partnership was initiated by the European peer and consists of an exchange of students for a period of time. Samir considers that what ignited the partnership is the will of the European counterpart to give its students an experience in a developing country. Although such partnerships provide a platform for the development of a strategic partnership, the interviewed departmental stakeholders have not expressed any plans for the development of this partnership whether from a research collaboration that may pave the way for the establishment of new centers or

teaching perspective. According to Tarek, another partnership that is still in the making too is one with a university in the Gulf and the department's Center.

Unlike institutional rhetoric that emphasizes a strong partnership with the university's alumni through a variety of means, the Department has relatively neglected this aspect of relationship with its alumni as a component of its external environment. Tarek acknowledges this fact when stating

I think that that's an area that we haven't tapped at all and it's a very important one... I mean alumni have typically been featured highly in the university as sources of funds and to the extent that one gets funding for things then you're more likely to have an impact because the scope of your project can increase

In addition to being a source of funds too, the relationship with the Department's alumni acquires a significant missed opportunity as they somehow represent an extension of the department's reach to the professional field. Within these lines Tarek affirms that "what's very important is that we begin to do better in keeping in touch with our graduates so that we know where they're going after all they graduated... So to be in touch with them in some kind of organized way would likely establish connections with domains, with institutions that we may not be in touch with".

### **Findings in the Mission Dimension**

As in the case of the Environment dimension, the depiction of the cultural image in the Department here will be based on Transformative Research, Transformative Scholarships, and Assessment as three symbolic expressions that surfaced from the institutional findings. The narrative that follows will be organized according to every symbol.

#### **Transformative Research.**

Research is a major departmental enterprise. In fact, as discussed in the previous departmental findings in the Environment dimension, the research of faculty members in the Department is impactful locally and regionally. In this context, Samir states that the research conducted in the Department is “internationally known.” Anthony confirms Samir’s statement and considers that “the level of research in our Department is very good.” Additionally, research is viewed as not just an act undertaken by faculty members, it constitutes also a significant component of students’ education. In this context, Anthony says that one of the meaningful activities of the department is coaching a new generation of researchers who will conduct meaningful research to the country and region as well. He also adds that the teaching activity in the Department is also directed towards developing the research skills of students.

The research endeavors at the level of the department are to a greater extent based on individual initiatives rather than a planned and intentional departmental strategy that has collaboration at its core. The absence of such a strategy as signaled by the interviewees can be attributed to two main factors. First, Tarek considers that for collaborative research across the Department to exist it has to be facilitated by an organizing platform such as a departmental entity in the absence of which faculty members’ research endeavors will remain based on individual contributions rather than departmental ones. Second, for a departmental entity that facilitates and organizes collaborative research to exist it has to have resources allocated to it in the absence of which collaborative endeavors become governed by the willingness of faculty members. In the context of discussing the role of centers in developing collaborative research strategies to engage various communities Tarek affirms

when you have a center like that it means that you have some money coming from somewhere to set up the center either there's an endowment that pays salaries for a director and administrative assistant which then frees up time and provides a human resource to do the emailing, the scheduling, the document preparation the all of the things that happen when you have some kind of collective effort to engage with the community. As long as you don't have that then all you have is people and their willingness to put time from that competes with other things towards these things.”

Ensuring in-house resources to establish such centers does not seem to be an easy feat. In fact, according to Tarek, in-house funding through the Collaborative Research Stimulus is rather directed towards small-scale short-term projects whereas establishing an entity such as a center would rather require the support of an external donor through an endowed chair for example.

The interdisciplinary dimension of Transformative Research as depicted in the Department through the interviewees seems to be more reserved compared to the institutional rhetoric. In fact, interviewed stakeholders advance several constraints that hinder the development of interdisciplinary research endeavors. The first constraint is linked to faculty members' attempt to develop an independent research identity and associated with pursuing specific research interests. In this context, when discussing interdisciplinary endeavors in comparison to disciplinary ones, Tarek affirms that interdisciplinarity may risk undermining individual research trajectories and interests while concurrently acknowledging that it is beneficial and its benefit lies in consolidating researchers' efforts around specific goals however within a unified and coherent research program. Samir confirms Tarek's statement by arguing that

integrative research acts in an interdisciplinary context may lead to making a researcher lose his/her research focus and adds that this may impact the researcher's promotion and tenure. Samir considers also that the nature of the departmental discipline is by itself interdisciplinary since it consists of faculty members specializing in various subdisciplines. To him, collaboration occurs and is mostly possible between faculty members in the same subdiscipline. The size of the Department is equally a factor that impacts interdisciplinary research. In fact, Tarek argues that the Department being a small one does not help in setting the ground for interdisciplinary work. In this context, he argues that the bigger a department is, the more there will be researchers with many areas of specializations and consequently there will be higher chances to work with researchers having close enough interests.

Interestingly, Anthony's views are more attuned to institutional rhetoric with regard to interdisciplinary research. In fact, he argues that interdisciplinary work contributes first to promoting the image of the Department and the research that is being conducted by its faculty members. Second, Anthony's view of the significance of interdisciplinary work stems from the conviction that such work does not only allow the exploration of new research areas but also develop the research skills of researchers. "Let's take the example of working with the historian," says Anthony, "and the historian will be working on some kind of narratives, and historical narrative is something you're not familiar with, you definitely will benefit from this narrative method and you will add it to your methods, not only to be stuck to your own kind of research methods".

As discussed in the Environment dimension, the impact of the research output of departmental faculty members materializes in the quality research of faculty members as well as disseminate its findings to various audiences through publishing or relaying



them to professionals mainly through workshops provided by the Department's Center for example. "If [a colleague] has published a research", affirms Samir, "then she will be able to give workshops on the topic that is evidence-based". Additionally, Tarek states that departmental impact can materialize also in the consultation work of faculty members outside of the university on individual basis. In this context, Anthony states that the Department played a role in starting a critical review of a law about specific types of individuals which led key stakeholders to question the validity of the current law and the need to develop it. These various forms of impact are likely to allow for developing short-term linkages with external stakeholders. An exception to this fact is the actions of the Project as discussed in the previous Environment dimension. Accounting for the various forms of impact discussed above, the Department's intervention warranted by its research can engage various audiences may not necessarily be sustainable due to its short-term duration. Once again, an exception to this may lie at the level of the Project discussed previously.

**Transformative Scholarships.** The concept of transformative scholarships surpasses the idea of a mere financial assistance to students who are unable to pursue an AUB education. They rather enact the transformation of graduates into leaders by providing them with the necessary skills to fulfill this objective. One important type of such skills is infusing within the students the value of community engagement. Civic engagement in the Department is less warranted through course offerings rather than voluntary undertakings by students in collaboration with other institutional units. Departmentally, Samir affirms that the values of civic-engagement and inclusiveness are an intrinsic component of courses' syllabi in the Department suggesting that if they are mentioned there, they should be applied in practice. On the

other hand, when asked about the inclusion of the values of civic-engagement and inclusiveness in the course offerings Tarek states that “we don’t have these things...through courses”. Tarek adds however that the value of civic engagement in the Department is enacted through an agreement that was recently developed with a funding institution. The terms of the agreement stipulate that students enrolling for a diploma will get full funding of their tuition if they commit to practice after graduation in underprivileged communities. This agreement-setting constitutes one of the opportunities through which students apply their theoretical learning to a practical context to service underserved communities as well as one in which their interaction with these communities develops within them a sense of acceptance through working and responding to the needs of such communities. In the same context, Anthony affirms that the Self-Study that the Department undertook some years ago found “that civic engagement courses are not that much and we need to improve it”. He adds that some courses in his subdiscipline about promoting inclusiveness in particular settings are currently offered but other courses need also to be integrated into the Department’s curricula such as a course that teaches about religions for example.

The agreement with the funding institution discussed above represents an instance of collaboration with an external stakeholder to infuse within students the value of civic engagement and inclusiveness. However, the interviewees confirm that developing the value of collaboration between students through course offerings lacks in the Department. In this context, Tarek notes that based on a personal initiative, he is enhancing the value of collaboration between his students through the projects they are working on. In fact, he notes

I am trying to create a kind of a lab environment so people are working on similar projects that fit with my own research interests. But people are working on different things, different parts of a larger puzzle and they're seeing what everybody else is doing. There's some overlap in what they're doing but each one is working on a different project and which creates a kind of community.

The agreement with the funding institution has also career repercussions for students who are part of this project which could reflect in added impact and the sustainability of their professional career later. In fact, Tarek notes that upon completing the terms of the agreement, the Department will have to follow up with the students who would have graduated from the fellowship program and organize professional development sessions around them especially in their professional career settings where they are expected to have a leadership role.

**Assessment.** Samir notes that assessment relies mainly on the program reviews that the Department undertakes every six years as well as the Self-Study conducted in 2014. In this context, both graduate and undergraduate programs are reviewed to ensure that they are consistent with the Department's and institution's mission while also contributing in identifying new programmatic offerings. The Department's Program Review and Self-Study conducted in 2014 led to the development of a report that included the Department's Action Plan for improvements on various levels such as the offered programs, the academic and administrative department governance, plans for increasing enrollment as well as improve existing facilities and space. Tarek notes however that there is no evaluation of the Department at the level of research and the service aspects of the Department's mission. In the same

context, he affirms also that the Department does not assess the impact of its various interventions such as the impact of workshops and conferences on participants.

Anthony considers that the assessment of the extent to which faculty members' performance is aligned with the Department's mission is also an individualized process in which faculty members themselves determine whether they are fulfilling the Department's mission or not. In fact, he notes that the mission provides the three axes of research, teaching, and service against which faculty members can benchmark their performance while promotion and tenure constituting the indicators of success. Beyond this, Anthony notes that the assessment of the extent to which performance is aligned with the mission should be driven by a feeling of self-actualization. "It comes", says Anthony, "from your insight, from you, if you feel that you've done and you're doing something you want, based on what you believe in, in this Department and based on its mission. So, you feel that you fulfilled this mission then you will get that kind of satisfaction". To Anthony, this feeling of self-actualization enhances the performance of faculty members making them agents of change whose research has repercussions both at the professional and public level.

Both the program review and the Self-Study conducted in 2014 are published internally and not readily available for external stakeholders.

### **Findings in the Socialization Dimension**

Both Tenure and Mentoring as symbols of socialization are recent to departmental practice. Tenure at the level of the institution, for instance, was reintroduced in June 2018 (AUB, 2018a) despite the various references relating to it since 2007 as found in the surveyed institutional documentation. Mentoring is also new to the Department. In fact, despite having a new faculty member recently hired in the Fall 2019 semester,

Anthony notes that the mentoring process as explicated in recent institutional guidelines one that is still at an experimental stage. Within the same context, Tarek states that he is currently engaged in his first mentoring experience due to the newly hired faculty member, and has set some guiding priorities for his new mentee.

As in the case of the previous dimensions, the depiction of the cultural image in the Department here will be based on the two symbolic expressions of Tenure and Mentorship that surfaced from the institutional findings. The narrative that follows will also be organized according to every symbol.

**Tenure.** The performance of faculty members in the Department reveals an effort axed on establishing an identity of scholarship and external service. For example, Samir highlights the faculty members' achievement in having regular publications and recognition at the regional and international front. Similarly, the Center's and Project's activities, supervised by faculty in the Department, and which target multiple audiences that increase with time reflects also a high level of expertise that impacts the growth of participating audiences through their gained added learning. Similarly, the development of training manuals and policies for specific professional settings, as denoted by Anthony, showcases an advanced level of scholarly competence that equally contributes to promoting the growth of the targeted communities through improving their professional practices, for example. Linking scholarship with service to community is an important undertaking according to the interviewees. In fact, Anthony considers that research that does not have practical implications is "meaningless." To him, a researcher has to find practical implications for his scholarly activity. Similarly, Tarek acknowledges that he attempts to link his service and scholarly activity by focusing his service on areas that are interesting to him from a research perspective.

The identity conceptualization of tenure as a socialization symbol is also found in the recent development of the improved BA program that the Department will launch in Fall 2020 as well as other diplomas. In fact, Anthony notes that almost all of the Department's academic offerings have been revamped across various disciplines, thus suggesting an effort that engages various departmental stakeholders.

Within the identity conceptualization of Tenure, institutional rhetoric had highlighted the value placed on collaboration through research while having the scholar maintain a distinct identity of being the primary instigator in the process. Taken a step further, collaboration in the form of interdisciplinary research is equally celebrated by senior administrators. Departmentally, stakeholders adopt a mixed attitude concerning collaboration and interdisciplinarity. In fact, according to Samir, collaborative research, especially if undertaken with a senior faculty member, can negatively impact the promotion of the tenure-track faculty member.

In contrast, Anthony advances a praising view of collaboration and interdisciplinarity while relating its success to the source, which is the type of background of the hired faculty members in the Department. "I think", notes Anthony, we have to start with hiring people with a broad academic background.

Specialization is really important, but at the same time, people with multi-backgrounds of specializations would be really important for us. We should take it as added value. You have two different approaches: sometimes we like this faculty members' background because it is really very focused and specialized, which makes sense sometimes and it's a good point for some people to raise it.

But at the same time, another would say, I need to have some broader background so, we can benefit from this faculty member for multiple reasons, for multi-

courses or programs. I'm more with the second approach and I think we need to work more on that one.”

The rationale that Anthony advances for his view of engaging in collaboration and interdisciplinarity is that the latter contributes to the growth of the scholar through allowing him/her to address the examined problems from varied perspectives as well as methodologies. He argues, however, that the predisposition to accepting the researcher's engagement in interdisciplinary work is related to the nature of some specialty areas in the Department as well as the background of some faculty members.

These various views materialize a differing understanding of identity within the Department, which in turn impacts the weight that faculty members attribute to disciplinary or interdisciplinary collaborations in their scholarly endeavors. Whereas all three interviewed stakeholders acknowledge the importance of research in academia as repeatedly mentioned previously, thus maintaining a constant stream of knowledge production, the extent to which their research is necessarily linked to innovation remains dubious. This, however, has its justification. In fact, Tarek considers that socialization and innovation are two inherently different processes that are governed by the context in which they take place. “Socialization”, affirms Tarek,

is inherently a conservative process: let me tell you about, let me initiate you into what we do or what we as a community have been doing... Innovation might more likely happen in areas where the nature of the socialization is much looser and it has to do more with the kind of features of the environment, what is valued, how evaluation happens, how risk is valued. We hear a lot of discourse about risks and the president's lectures. Well, that is beautiful, right, to say so, but if somebody spends the first six years of their academic career focusing on one project, which

is novel and new, you end up with one publication, there is not an evaluation process that can value that.”

The identity of faculty members in the Department reflects on both the institutional and the Departmental level. In fact, as indicated previously, Samir notes that the research conducted in the Department is internationally known and that when such research in the Arabic world is discussed by professionals or peers, it is immediately attributed to the university and the Department as well which in turn casts back positively on both and advances the identity of the Department through the recognition of its expertise by external stakeholders.

This fact also reflects the status conceptualization related to Tenure. In fact, the regional acknowledgment of the quality of research conducted in the Department is also a recognition by external peers of high-quality authoritative and impactful research within the scholarly field. This status is also demonstrated by the consultancy work that some faculty members are invited to engage in and further confirmed by both the actions of the Center and the Project in the Department. In fact, as mentioned previously, both entities are based on initiatives developed by departmental faculty members and are acknowledged by practitioners and peers as being impactful to the profession as evidenced by the significant number of participants that attend the Center’s conferences for example or the increasing number of professional settings that adhere to the Project to benefit from its services due to the accumulated expertise of faculty members supervising its activities. The recognition of the Project’s status and impact is also evidenced by the capability of the faculty members supervising its activity to secure a long-term grant, thus, signaling the recognition of this funding agency of its status and impact.



The faculty member' status in the Department has been also enacted in their attempts to impact educational policies. In fact, Anthony underlines the role of the Department in preparing and trying to lobby for the development of a new policy that aligns with some European requirements in which aspiring professionals will have to complete a professional MA degree to be able to practice. Although this policy has not been implemented yet, it demonstrates however a certain extent of lobbying capability of the Department at the level of improving and developing national regulations.

To be granted tenure, the aspiring faculty member has to produce a consistent output of scholarly work that is underlain by a developmental trajectory through which the faculty member builds on and develops knowledge in his field. This seems to resonate partly with the views articulated by Tarek who advocates that in any research journey, the scholar should always remain alert and differentiate between programmatic research and opportunistic one. According to him, the former is one in which a novice faculty member starts carving a path from his/her graduate research and builds on that research by interacting with the appropriate research communities that will enable him/her to choose a research niche and position him/herself accordingly while developing a consistent output of scholarly work in the process. In contrast, he considers opportunistic research as one in which the faculty member's engagement in scholarly work has publishing as its sole purpose regardless of the impact of this publication in the advancement of new knowledge. This view reflects an awareness of the conceptualization of tenure at the level of producing a steady stream of coherent research. At the same time, this view warrants a long-term and consistent scholarly performance, which typically will serve to address the needs of various professional communities.

According to institutional rhetoric, combining the previous conceptualizations of establishing an identity and status through a commitment to a consistent research agenda would ultimately lead to impact. At the departmental level, elements of a relatively similar path to that witnessed at the institutional level. In fact, according to Anthony, departmental stakeholders' lobbied policymakers for the development of a policy that requires from students the completion of a professional graduate degree to be able to practice professionally. Naturally, succeeding in their lobbying efforts would not have been possible without faculty members' established identity and status as researchers. In this context, Anthony notes that to successfully engage and convince policymakers, the challenge that the researcher has to overcome is to have the research be presented in an approachable language that contributes to its adoption by policymakers.

**Mentoring.** The mentoring of novice faculty members starts by explaining the technicalities that pertain to their work in the Department. According to Samir, these technicalities can include information about institutional and departmental rules and regulations. Such information also includes introducing the new faculty members to the academic catalog of courses taught in the Department, the type of assignments to give to students, how to teach practicum courses, or develop research proposals. Anthony considers that advice on such technical matters is usually part of a continuum that starts with the practical dimension of the faculty member's functioning in the Department and extends towards an aspect of socialization that indoctrinates the member to the cultural requirements of his/her discipline. Tarek notes that this latter stage of disciplinary socialization is part of an informal indoctrination process in which personal

relationships enhance that process and can pave the way for lasting faculty collaborations.

Besides the technical aspect, the information communicated to novice recruits also involves advice about the areas in which the new member should invest time and energy. This point emphasizes the counseling aspect of mentoring. In fact, with a new recruit in the Department, Tarek wants to focus his mentoring advice around encouraging the new member to engage in programmatic research and develop relationships with the professional communities that are close to the member's research area. Within the research perspective, Tarek also notes that the guidance he intends to provide to the new member goes beyond the formal written guidelines and tackles issues that will train the recruit how to manage the "regional-international balance" of the scholarly act that is expected institutionally from faculty members for survival and success. This act consists of learning how to produce regionally- relevant research that has, however, international significance and implications.

Tarek also underlines the importance of using the appropriate mentoring style with regards to the mentee's personality traits. In fact, Tarek affirms that one has to be cautious about how to interpret the mentoring role to guide the mentee into the scholarly profession "because people have their own interests, their own values that vary." This is why Tarek considers that the mentor's role should remain generic and should consist of guiding mentees into understanding the general functioning of institutional processes while allowing them to find their own niche and identity.

The outcome of this technical-scholar guidance surfaces the support aspect of mentoring. This aspect materializes in the existence of a planned effort by a senior

faculty member to guide the novice recruit into the path of survival and success as exemplified by promotion and tenure.

The mentor-mentee relationship in the Department is characterized by disciplinary collaboration at its beginnings. In fact, a senior faculty member mentoring a novice one collaborate first together on research projects. However, Samir considers that this collaboration is an initiation to a phase where the researcher eventually manages to develop an independent research identity through specializing in a research niche, for example, and starts producing research of his own. This phase of independent scholarly identity must be sustained, and collaborations, if they occur in this phase, should not compromise the image of the recruit as someone who can engage in independent research, or else the opposite situation may undermine the promotion and tenure of the new member. Tarek confirms Samir's statement by noting that his role as a mentor will also consist in helping the novice faculty member develop an independent research identity. Samir notes that the faculty member's choices of the nature and contexts of research to engage in, become more varied after tenure. In this context, positive interactions with colleagues are primarily developed during the initiation phase between mentor and mentee as well as with other faculty members within the same disciplinary field in the context of informal socialization.

Collaborations with the mentee or other faculty members within the same disciplinary boundaries can be considered as a form of developing professional networks with colleagues. Interestingly, Anthony's views which are more predisposed to interdisciplinarity provide a larger lens of collaborations within the mentoring relationship. In fact, his belief that the choice of any recruit should also be conditioned by his broad scholarly background suggests a more probable susceptibility to

developing a larger network of professional collaborations that involves members from different disciplines. Anthony notes however, that his views are not popular among colleagues across the Department attributing this fact either the nature of some specialty areas or the academic backgrounds of some faculty members.

The various dimensions of the relationships between mentor and mentee at the level of both technical and scholarly advice reflects a concern of the mentor to the development and advancement of his protégé. Additionally, Tarek considers that mentoring is by nature a feedback process on the new recruit's performance in research, teaching, and service that ultimately serves to advance simultaneously the mentee as well as the mission of the Department.

Despite the views and practices regarding mentoring, departmental stakeholders seem not to be satisfied with the level of departmental socialization practices blaming the limitations on the departmental workload expectations. In this context, when discussing the level of engagement in socialization practices, Anthony notes "we do our best, we're so overwhelmed with our responsibilities and loads, but I think we're doing up to our maximum as a Department to be honest."

### **Findings in the Information Dimension**

As in the case of the previous dimensions, the depiction of the cultural image in the Department here will be seen through the lens of Information, and Communication as two symbolic expressions that surfaced from the analysis of institutional findings as part of the information cultural dimension. The narrative that follows will be organized according to every symbol.

**Information.** Departmental stakeholders gather information that helps increase their awareness of environmental happenings from various sources. Externally,

and from a research perspective, Samir considers that information about the recent research findings published in scholarly journals, books, and other media is necessary information as it connects departmental stakeholders with developments in the scholarly field. Additionally, information that equally relates to keeping departmental stakeholders up to date with research findings is gathered from the Department's organization of research conferences as well as departmental members' participation in other research conferences where they can share information about their research with peers.

Samir also notes that information about emerging trends in the profession is gathered from the feedback that departmental stakeholders receive from the participants of the conferences organized by the Department. Additionally, communication is manifested when faculty members in the Department inform the conference participants about the recent research findings relating to the particular aspect of their profession. Similarly, Anthony notes that information crucial to the department is gathered from teaching, the connections with professional settings through, for example, students' observations of these settings, from NGOs, and other governmental bodies.

Departmental stakeholders noted that information about over-enrolled courses shapes the decision to reduce or freeze students' acceptance in the courses or programs due to the limited Department's capacity to handle large number of students in that regard. In the same context, Tarek considers that low enrollment usually impacts the strategic decision of deciding to hire or not part-time faculty members. Tarek also notes that one way of dealing with low enrollment in a course when it occurs is to advertise that course to increase enrollment. The decision-making process based on such

technical information in the Department seems to be fluent and works without any obstacles.

The Decision-making process on more strategical issues, however, does not seem to be devoid of difficulties. In fact, one critical point in the information gathering and analysis process that occurred in the Department was in 2014 when departmental stakeholders conducted a Self-Study report. This report consisted of an extensive review and assessment of all departmental activities, since the establishment of the Department, including research and teaching. Anthony states that this report has highlighted strengths and weaknesses across departmental activities as well as an action map for recommendations and improvements. Sources of information stemmed from surveys and focus group discussions with faculty members and students as well. Although Anthony claims that some recommendations in the Self-Study report were implemented, Tarek notes that “the information gathering and synthesis, and decision-making based on this information is not happening very efficiently in the Department.” In fact, he notes that being also a major instance of information synthesis, the recommendations of the Program Review conducted in the Department and reviewed by external reviewers were not acted on. Tarek states that these recommendations were approached cautiously by some faculty members in the Department and that a major resolution concerning these recommendations was not arrived at, which hinders the decision-making process according to him on strategic issues relating to the development of the Department. Anthony also notes that in an in-depth overview conducted by himself regarding the increase and decrease of enrollment in some programs and in which recommendations about the necessity to revisit the curriculum, assignments, as well as teaching methods in some courses were formulated, these recommendations, according to him, only raised

the alarm about the importance of improving practices without triggering concrete actions to be implemented at that level.

In the context of information about the necessity of developing new degree programs, the Department is expected to launch revised BA degree offerings in the coming Fall semester as well as a new professional Master's degree soon. Information that led to the development of these programs came from students' feedback, stakeholders from various professional settings as well as alumni through surveys and focus group discussions. The information about the new BA program to be implemented next Fall, if communicated to concerned stakeholders, will also reflect an instance of Departmental competence as it is the outcome of information analysis emerging from the needs of the environment.

The information that departmental stakeholders gather about the recent research findings in their discipline about theory and practice, and that they communicate to various professionals through the conferences organized in the Department relay, evidently, a sense of departmental competence to various stakeholders in the form of transmitting to them a specialized level of skills related to the profession. Samir underlines that the large number of participants in the conferences organized by the Department as well as the high citation index of faculty members' research transmits externally an image of competence. He also notes that some departmental alumni who have occupied high ranks in other universities relay also a sense of departmental competence about the Department graduating successful individuals. The instances in which the Department's competence through its actions is highlighted reflects equally its ability to shape external stakeholders' beliefs about departmental capabilities and consequently increase their persuasion in these capabilities.



Departmental findings reveal that in some instances, occurrences in the Department reflect positively on its survival. In fact, the periodic conferences organized in the Department and that are characterized by the participation of many professionals perpetuate the survival and influence of the Department professionally through the competence it relays externally. Similarly, the research conferences organized by the Department shape also a perception of departmental competence and consequently impact the survival of the Department. The development of the new BA degree as well as the professional MA degree impact equally the survival of the Department as they constitute responses to environmental demands. The survival of the Department is also tied to the technical functioning of the Department and seems to be warranted by the actions of its stakeholders. In fact, decisions about an effective plan for the management of resources, in the context of dealing with low enrollment for example, are enacted through the consolidation of the courses taught or the decision or not to hire new part-timers. Survival as enacted in responding to environmental demands through the establishment of new centers is not an envisaged action in the Department due to the actual existence of such entities. In this context, Tarek notes that the Project, not a departmental initiative but rather housed in the Department, is a response to environmental demands. He also adds that the Center constitutes a response to a demand especially materialized in the conferences it organizes. However, Anthony thinks, based on environmental data, that a center that deals with a specific area related to the profession may still be needed due to a lack of the existence of similar centers that can provide a quality service in this context. Nevertheless, to provide an impactful and quality service, Anthony argues that the center has probably to develop strategic collaborations with other academic units as well as professional establishments. To

Anthony, collaboration should underlie the activity of any center. In fact, he notes that the Center in the Department had at some point in time an interdisciplinary advisory board that ceased to exist. Currently, the Center's stakeholders maintain communication with faculty members' in other disciplines however this fact should be improved further, Anthony thinks.

**Communication.** Communication in the Department has various manifestations. Formally, departmental findings emphasize emails as well as departmental meetings. Tarek notes that reports about course enrollment, for example, especially at the beginning of an academic year are shared with departmental stakeholders via emails since this is mainly for internal use. Besides being shared through email, Anthony affirms that students' enrollment in the Department is also discussed in a meeting that occurs at the beginning of every academic year. He also affirms that the Self-Study report was also shared with departmental stakeholders via email. Other informal occasions for communication are Christmas parties and Teachers' Day gatherings as well as other social occasions.

Departmental findings have surfaced some instances in which communication is effective and has led to achieving desired outcomes. For example, Tarek notes that communication with the dean about the necessity to hire a new faculty member for an over-enrolled departmental track has produced that desired outcome. Additionally, Anthony notes that the committee meetings in the Department have often contributed to overcoming certain obstacles.

The extent to which communication in the Department serves to develop shared goals among departmental members is more ambiguous. Whereas as discussed above, Anthony notes that meetings that occur between various committee members have

helped in some instances stakeholders in the Department to solve problems and consequently reach common goals, Tarek, when replying about the extent to which communication develops shared goals replies, “there isn’t really much of that.” In fact, he says that “the way which we communicate information generally, and the approach we take to strategic thinking when that communication is shared is not serious in a strategic sense, it’s local.” Anthony also signals the lack of the ability of communication to develop shared objectives. In fact, in the study he conducted about weaknesses and strengths in the Department that recommended revisiting the curriculum as well as teaching practices in some courses, he notes that these recommendations were not acted on. The challenges did not seem to have rallied the efforts of all departmental stakeholders to overcome them. However, he also adds that he believes the Department has energetic members that can work together towards improving the Department and its programs.

Tarek attributes this local approach to the dominant patterns of communication and information gathering, synthesis, and decision-making to a sense of stagnation in the Department that focuses on what the Department does rather than where it should head. “There’s a lot of information flow” says Tarek, “but in a format that people are not really buying into. So, therefore the image, is one of stagnation. I mean there isn’t an image of: this is where we were this is where we’re going, but this is what we do. That’s the most powerful image internally to the department.” To Tarek, this stagnation can be explained by the institutionally imposed manner of information gathering and analysis that departmental stakeholders may not necessarily buy into. Tarek says that the particular format of information gathering imposed by the institution such as the programs’ learning outcomes for example may not necessarily be the optimal

framework for every Department which in turn develops a sense of disinterest within departmental stakeholders who would have opted for a different approach for coming up with plans to develop the Department.

Departmental findings have not revealed any aspect of use of informal communication for the development of shared goals. However, a possible intervention intended by Tarek to rally the faculty members around the recommendations of the program review conducted earlier in the Department and consequently apply them, is one that espouses an efficient use of the informal aspect of communication. In fact, when asked about how he intended to reactivate the recommendations of the program reviews that were not acted upon, Tarek notes: “I have to be individually strategic because I am aware that collectively there's not a great appetite based on those discussions that happened that weren't sort of fully resolved at the time... so, my approach has been to gradually change some facts on the ground, have individual conversations with people to see if their view of this is gradually changing, whether there is some compromise version of this that we can work towards. So, that is something that I am thinking about and sort of acting on gently.”

Enhancing internal communication based on interdisciplinarity with the possibility of creating new departmental centers does not align with institutional rhetoric. In fact, the establishment of any new interdisciplinary center is not planned for the near future. Anthony attributes this fact to the need of a critical mass in terms of number of faculty members while acknowledging however that the Department is considered a medium one according to university standards thus having the required mass to establish additional centers.

The interview findings revealed that the departmental collaborations through communication to address various challenges is reactionary rather than proactively oriented. It can be evidenced in the reaction to tackle low enrollment when it occurs as well as address some departmental issues through committee meetings in which common efforts are rallied to address these emerging issues.

One means of increasing impact and shaping a particular image institutionally is through an increased visibility. At the departmental level, the attempts to improve the Department's visibility externally can be evidenced in several instances in the findings. In fact, the conferences organized by the Center in the Department promote an increased visibility. Similarly, Samir considers that the high citation index of the research produced by faculty members in the Department represents also a means of increasing the visibility of the Department and consequently promote the shaping of a specific departmental image. He adds that the Department's alumni who managed to become successful professionals increase the visibility of the Department. Samir also notes that a departmental committee has been recently established that is tasked with promoting a certain departmental image externally based on the three pillars of research, teaching, and service embedded in the Department's mission. He argues that this committee is increasingly succeeding in improving the Department's image and consequently its visibility.

In contrast, Anthony considers that the Department still needs to improve its communicative capabilities to enhance its visibility, especially externally using various web-based and social platforms. "I think the Department needs much more", notes Anthony. "Although we've done a lot," he says, "compared to some other departments I think we need to do more I would say, in terms of communication and marketing." As

for the external communication of achievements such as faculty members' and students' awards, Anthony also thinks that this still needs to be improved.

In the context of information and communication, alumni have only been considered as a source of data for internal developments such as developing new programs in the Department. This is the case for example when departmental stakeholders survey alumni to make sense of trends and emerging imperatives related to the profession. However, departmental data does not reveal that communication with alumni has been used to increase the visibility of the Department like it was found at the institutional level. Tarek notes that the internal sense of stagnation of the information gathering and decision-making processes resulted also in a predominant image of stagnation externally, despite the various novel departmental initiatives that are impacting positively the Department's image externally.

The current external image of the Department seems unsatisfactory to departmental stakeholders, at least from two perspectives. First, according to Tarek, the lack of departmental consensus as to the implementation of some of the recommendations of the Self-Study report does not only deprive the Department from the opportunity of developing, it also prevents it from formulating vision, or strategic direction, that relays to internal as well as external stakeholders a lack of a sense of long-term purpose. Second, while Anthony argues that the image the Department should strive to relay externally is one that highlights quality whether through research, teaching, and service, he notes that there should be more emphasis on empowering the graduate programs in the Department to relay an image that underscores graduate education as a competitive departmental edge.

### **Findings in the Strategy Dimension**

As in the case of the previous dimensions, the depiction of the cultural image in the Department here will be based on Strategic Planning, and Curriculum as two symbolic expressions that surfaced from the institutional findings. The narrative that follows will be organized according to every symbol.

**Strategic Planning.** As confirmed by Anthony, the Self-Study report conducted by the Department several years ago constituted the base on which strategic planning mainly rested. In this context, both the development of the report itself and the strategic plan were the outcome of a collaborative effort. According to Tarek, this fact is mainly attributed to institutional mechanisms that impose on departmental stakeholders a collaborative and consensual approach to the strategic development of the Department. In fact, Tarek notes that “a chair cannot sit in his office or her office and come up with a strategic initiative and say let’s go ahead with it. That’s just not the way the governance structure works.”

As noted in the previous findings, collaborative efforts to attempt to develop a strategic direction for the Department seems mostly confined within departmental boundaries. In fact, in the Self-Study report, informants were faculty members, students, and alumni. In some instances, students who are not in the Department are also surveyed. For instance, in the process of developing the new BA program intended to be launched soon, the opinion of students who are not in the Department but in the Faculty that the Department is part of was also sought. The format in which information for strategic purposes is gathered espouses multiple forms. In the context of the Self-Study report, such formats included surveys and focus group discussions. Samir notes that sources of information for the Self-Study report included also professional settings and employers.

Additionally, strategic thinking and strategy formulation are sometimes associated with retreats. In fact, when answering the question about how strategies are developed in the Department, Tarek affirms that “we do periodically retreats... Every one or two years we do a retreat for a couple of days where we focus on some strategic matters, usually bringing up a number of big issues that have been accumulating, that need a little bit more reflection and so we meet and discuss. So, you know when there was the need for thinking about whether we want to do a new BA program, there was a retreat associated with that decision”.

As noted in the previous findings, the problem to departmental stakeholders, however, is that the action steps that ensue from the strategic thinking and are crucial to developing the Department’s action plans do not seem to find consensus among departmental members. In this context, Tarek notes that

there isn't great coherence and consistency among the individuals. So, that in my eyes, prevents the Department from having an image of one that is moving in a strategic direction because we do the various institutionally required strategic thinking, but collectively we're not all buying into a vision that is particularly clear. So, you can't look at our Department from the outside and say: ah, this is where this Department is going.”

Anthony considers that collaboration internally materializes for example through the in-service programs offered by the Department by engaging the efforts of multiple internal stakeholders. He also notes that the concept of collaboration is important not just within departmental boundaries but also with other external stakeholders. The importance that he attributes to collaboration acquires a strategic dimension when he considers that it should be enacted through interdisciplinary research or responding to



emerging needs by the creation of new centers. Despite the collaborations already taking place in the Department, Anthony expresses his discontent about the degree of collaboration arguing that “I still believe that we need to have some more collaborations”.

Departmental findings have revealed the existence of some instances in which departmental stakeholders align or realign their resources to fulfill a strategic objective. For example, as mentioned in previous findings, Tarek notes that to deal with low enrollment, departmental stakeholders consolidate courses or decide to hire or not an additional part-timer. In the same context, Samir notes that the information gathered from various stakeholders before drafting the Self-Study report were used to highlight required improvements in the Department’s courses or programs. The alignment efforts of the Department however have not yielded so far, any structural changes such as the emergence of new initiatives or centers for example

As highlighted repeatedly in the previous findings, the Department’s actions have had impact on several dimensions such as the research output of faculty members as well as the in-service programs and the conferences conducted by the Department. However, being aware of the limitations of these transitory impacts, departmental stakeholders have started to consider clustering the learning relayed in conferences, for example, into the development of certificate programs. In this context, Tarek affirms

are we happy with the nature of the workshops that we're offering? From our own individual experience, we know that those are relatively not very effective in the long term so we are now, as a result of those reflections in that context, considering a new model of those workshops, and so right now we're working on creating a certificate program, a professional development certificate program.

This reflection constitutes a strategic move towards consolidating and increasing the impact of the Department, and will also be a means to perpetuate its sustainability. Anthony considers, however, that the reason the Department in some cases seems to have limited impact is not the lack of strategic decisions, rather institutional bureaucratic processes that delay the realization of these decisions. According to him, these processes reflect an institutional caution to rationalize the allocation of resources through investing in worthwhile endeavors.

**Curriculum.** Findings have revealed several instances in which curriculum is at the center of strategy setting in the Department. In fact, departmental stakeholders have engaged in the development of many programs and certificates in response to environmental needs. “We have revamped our programs”, says Anthony, the new BA program is going to be implemented effective next September. We developed a professional Master’s and it’s going to be implemented if not next year, the one after, and we are in the process of developing a PhD program. So, all of that is a response to the demands that came based on a Self-Study. We’ve done questionnaires, and focus group discussions, and interviews with students, with faculty members, with alumni, with [professional settings], and we came with the conclusion, and recommendations and action plan, that has been approved in 2014 and we’re working according to this plan.

The engagement dimension of curriculum as enacted in civic engagement as well as other values such as diversity and inclusiveness seem not to be reflected in the current programs. Although Samir notes that statements about inclusiveness should be mentioned in courses’ syllabi, Tarek affirms “we don’t have these things through courses”. Anthony endorses Tarek’s view when noting that one of the outcomes of the

Self-Study report identified that courses that promote civic engagement and other values are lacking in the Department. He further adds that the new BA program is supposed to address this weakness.

In fact, Anthony notes that there should be more emphasis on empowering the graduate programs in the Department to relay an image that underscores graduate education as a competitive departmental edge. He notes that “if you want to reimage the Department, and this what I think we started to do, [you have to] empower these graduate programs, not necessarily to discontinue the undergraduate, but the emphasis would be more on the graduate programming. You have noticed that with the absence of the PhD, we're treating the MA as if it's a PhD.” He adds that the emphasis of the graduate programs in the Department aligns to a great extent the Department with the vision of the university to transform into a premier-research institution.

### **Findings in the Leadership Dimension**

Structurally, the Department has four committees that include on average four faculty members. Three of these committees are academic ones and the fourth is an ad hoc committee that is tasked with promoting the Department externally. The members in every committee are appointed by the Chairperson of the Department. Additionally, the chairperson appoints the chairs of three of these committees and chairs in person one of them while being a member in all of them. Departmental members meet at least once a month and discuss issues pertaining to academic programs, setting up academic departmental requirements, and maintaining professional standards and decide on them through voting. In addition to several responsibilities such as ensuring the proper teaching of courses, the central duties of the Chairperson include the administration and academic development of the Department as well as prepare the budget proposal with

faculty members in the Department and approve its expenditures. In addition to the faculty members' committees, the Department has also a Student Society led by undergraduate students, as noted by Anthony. The role of this society is primarily social and includes also supporting some academic activities that are organized by the Department.

As in the case of the previous dimensions, the depiction of the cultural image in the Department will be based on Shared Governance, and Symbolic Leadership as two symbolic expressions that surfaced from the institutional findings. The narrative that follows will be presented according to every symbol.

**Shared Governance.** As noted by Samir, governance in the Department is primarily warranted by its bylaws. However, these seem to attribute a decisive governing role to faculty members. In fact, as explained above, academic matters, professional standards, and budgeting are all decided for in the departmental meetings whereas other issues are also settled in the respective academic committees. Generally speaking, the Department's stakeholders can be grouped into three categories: (a) faculty members, (b) students, and (c) alumni. From the perspective of governance, the Department's faculty members are the ones who decide solely on issues pertaining to the development of the Department. Consequently, if empowerment from an institutional perspective emerges from giving the ability of all concerned stakeholders to have a share in the decision-making process through governance, students and the Department's alumni lack this sense of empowerment as their voices are not accounted for in issues pertaining to the development of the Department. In fact, students' engagement in the Department materializes through the Education Student Society, an undergraduate group of students, where the activities are social by nature. In the context

of governance, Tarek confirms that students have no leadership role in the Department while asserting that this idea may be interesting. Although Anthony notes that graduate programs constitute the edge of the Department and should be “empowered”, departmental findings reveal that the existing structures do not allow any role for graduate students in the governance of the Department. In fact, Anthony considers that the graduate students have an important presence in the implementation of many activities in the Department, however, in terms of governance, he notes that the Department needs to engage them more.

Similarly, alumni are considered as mediums who promote the image of the Department externally. In fact, Samir notes that alumni promote the Department essentially on an individual basis through the senior positions they occupy in other educational institutions or professional setting, or through their recommendation of the Department’s teaching and curricula to others. The lack of systematic and coordinated liaison of alumni with the Department signals the absence of an organizing framework that harnesses the increased impact that they can provide the Department with and consequently deprives them of any say in departmental strategy, especially externally.

Consequently, regardless if the current structures, as enacted by the current bylaws, constitute the optimal solution to governance in the Department, the effectiveness of the Department seems mitigated by the absence of the inclusion of students and alumni as interest groups in its governance, which in turn renders the existing governance structures less enabling.

**Symbolic Leadership.** Departmental findings have revealed the existence of two types of leadership: (a) leadership at an individual level, and (b) one at the collective level.

Individually, the interviewees agree that leadership is enacted by the chairperson of the Department. However, from a decision-making authority angle, Tarek affirms that the chairperson has limited leeway when exercising leadership in the Department due to existing bylaws. In fact, he notes that strategic decision-making as well as agreeing on a vision is a collective endeavor. When explaining his perception of chairperson's role Tarek notes that

the Department chair is a coordinator, [he] is somebody who oversees a process of reflection, of discussion, can bring issues because one is connected a bit more to other parts of the university during the time in which one is chair.

Additionally, when explaining the tasks that faculty members in the Department expect from the chairperson, Tarek considers that a chairperson runs the administrative day-to-day issues of the Department as well as overseeing the admission process, course scheduling, and hiring. He is the "custodian of the correct functioning of the processes". Historically, Tarek also notes that previous chairpersons have all accomplished tasks that align with his perception of the roles of chairpersons. Samir adds that faculty members in the Department expect from their chairperson to show them respect and fairness. Although in terms of authority, a chairperson cannot be compared to a president or dean, Anthony equally considers that the chairperson is usually regraded as a leader in the Department because he is someone "who has got a certain level of power."

Collectively, the sharing of leadership can be enacted when strategic directions are decided by faculty members in departmental meetings and voted on. Additionally, Tarek considers that one materialization of shared leadership can be depicted in the departmental committee chairs who have a sub-leadership role in the recommendations

they make to the Department's chairperson concerning the responsibilities of their respective committees. Within this same context of distributing leadership among faculty members, Anthony notes that the position of associate chair that was recently created in the Department is also an enactment of shared leadership. According to him, the need for establishing this new position was particularly significant during the revamping of the undergraduate programs as well as the design of the projected professional graduate degree. In this context, it is worth noting that the Department's website does not show currently the faculty member who is designated associate chair which may signal the transience of the position when created previously.

According to Anthony, one of the most important symbolic acts in the context of shared leadership is the delegation of responsibilities. In fact, he considers that the delegation of tasks has three implications of the working environment. Firstly, task delegation makes faculty members feel as if the Department is their home which promotes their engagement and values their contributions. Secondly, task delegation promotes teamwork which allows an exchange of ideas and expertise between senior and young faculty members. Thirdly, task delegation develops trust between departmental members and fosters good communication among them. Additionally, the informal communication process that is meant to develop a shared vision among departmental stakeholders as discussed by Tarek constitutes also a symbolic act of leadership in the Department.

Besides formal leadership, Tarek argues that some elements of informal leadership exists in the Department. He considers for instance that longevity in the Department is a factor that makes senior members informal leaders since they are individuals who are respected and looked at to offer guidance for younger members.

The interviewees seem to agree that leadership in the Department, as enacted in the role and responsibilities of the chairperson is a task that requires efforts that exceed what is written in the Manual for Department Chairs. In this context, Anthony affirms that a chairperson should not commit to the job description because it would mean doing too little. He thinks that the chairperson should do “what is between the lines in the job description” if he/she wants to be viewed as a leader by others. Similarly, Tarek notes that a chairperson always invests more time than what is usually required from him/her in the job description. However, this additional time may not amount to accomplishing strategic tasks such as thinking about and coordinating a vision with faculty members as well as engaging in other strategic-driven endeavors mainly due to a lack of institutional valuing of such an involvement as enacted in performance evaluations such as performance and tenure. “The major orientation that the Department chair has in an academic institution”, says Tarek,

is how to limit the amount of time that one spends being chair, so that you can do all the other things that you're expected to do primarily research. So when you sit here and you ask me what is your vision, what is your strategy, what is your role as a leader, I'm saying to myself I wish I had the luxury of doing that, and the luxury based on the time I have available and the *value* [emphasis added] that will be given to what I do.



## CHAPTER 5

### DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

This chapter will consist of five parts. The first part will address the first research question by depicting the cultural domains of the institution based on the various symbolic expressions, their representations as well as their shared meanings that emerged in the institutional findings.

The second part will address the second research question by presenting the cultural characteristics of the department. To facilitate the comparison between the two cultural depictions that will be detailed in the third part of this chapter, the cultural values in the Department will be presented and discussed in light of the symbolic expressions that emerged in the institutional findings.

The third part in this chapter will answer the third research question through comparing institutional values with departmental ones on the symbolic expressions that emerged in the institutional findings to examine the extent to which the departmental culture aligns itself with the predominant organizational culture at AUB to enhance, contrast or be orthogonal to this culture. This part will be followed by a section that discusses the limitations of this study.

Based on the values and beliefs that emerged in the Department, the fourth part will conclude this chapter and delineate some for future research and for practice.

#### **Discussion of The Institution's Organizational Culture Domains**

The findings of the six dimensions in the institution has allowed so far to identify several key symbolic expressions associated with each dimension as well as relating symbolic representations, and shared meanings. As discussed in the Methodology chapter, the cultural domains that materialize in an institutional value system will be

determined through the worldviews that emerge from the associations between the various symbolic expressions using Schultz' (1994) methodological spiral of interpretation. These associations will allow to delimit the institution's worldviews and determine the organization's cultural landscape.

The discussion of the Institution's organizational cultural domains will be divided into two sections. The first section will attempt to highlight the various associations between the key symbolic expressions in every dimension, to depict an institutional worldview on that dimension. The second section will consist of a synthesis across dimensions that will help tie Tierney's (1988) six-dimension framework and surface an institutional cultural landscape across dimensions.

**The Worldviews as Depicted in Every Dimension of Tierney's (1988) Framework**

**The institutional culture through the environment dimension.** Within the Environment dimension, two key symbolic expressions emerged in the findings: (a) Integral/Impactful Service, and (b) Strategic partnerships.

Table 28 below summarizes the various symbolic expressions, symbolic representations, and their shared meanings in the Environment dimension that emerged previously in the institutional findings.

Table 28

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Environment Dimension*

	<b>Service</b>	<b>Strategic Partnerships</b>
<b>Symbolic representation1</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Similarity</b>
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produce an enduring change towards a better condition (improvement)</li> <li>- Sustain and spread this change towards a broader locus</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Common characteristics</li> <li>- Common interest</li> <li>- Yields powerful partnerships</li> <li>- Shared concern</li> </ul>

- Produce an aggregated effect that contributes to improvement
- Renewal of hope
- Empowering individuals
- Helping to achieve future career aspirations
- Leads to transformation of practices
- Leads to change of policies

- Similar perceived quality or status
- Age as a reflector of expertise and know-how

**Symbolic representation 2**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

**Caring**

- Stem from a sense of concern for the well-being of others (Care)
- Sustains the service and its impact
- Provides service with a potential success rate
- Engages the exceptional knowledge or know-how

**Synergy**

- Mutually advantageous endeavor
- Produces a combined increased benefit that none of the partners can achieve individually
- Combines the advantage of the university's knowledge and expertise with the operational support of a donor
- Has a multiplier effect
- Indicates a greater outcome
- Maximizing the expected impact
- Produces a magnified effect
- Produces a new finding
- Increases the impact of research, practice, and community-teaching
- Facilitates an effective direct engagement

**Symbolic representation 3**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

**Transformation**

- Transform knowledge into a practical application (service)
- Specialized structures to ensure the transformation (centers, initiatives, groups, projects)
- Has clear identifiers
- Coordinates action to provide the service

**Sustainability**

- Enduring of the expected impact
- Ensures the sustainability of the center or project itself
- Extends degree of commitment towards achieving the intended impact

**Symbolic representation 4**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

**Influence**

- Shape the environment according to its own model of ideals and values

**Innovation**

- Promote innovative ideas and approaches to achieve the expected impact

<b>Symbolic representation 5</b>	<b>Feedback</b>	----
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Correspond service with initial intention</li> <li>- How well received by the environment</li> <li>- Allows for an adaptive, or self-improvement reaction</li> <li>- Enhance image</li> </ul>	
<b>Symbolic representation 6</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	----
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engages the simultaneous effort of various internal stakeholders</li> <li>- Uses interdisciplinary research</li> <li>- Allows for the diversification of the service provided</li> <li>- Synergy (internal)</li> </ul>	

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In the Environment dimension, the findings depict the institution as part of a large ecosystem composed of the institution itself, serviced communities, and partners. Institutional rhetoric reveals that both service and strategic partnerships are used to consolidate the institution's position within this ecosystem. The level of interdependencies between this ecosystem's components is high. In fact, serviced communities and entities depend on the services offered to them by the institution to thrive, and partners in this ecosystem depend on each other by maintaining strong relationships to perpetuate the environmental impact and ensure greater influence.

Service transpires as an institutional value as essentially umbrellaed by the research competencies of institutional stakeholders. Additionally, the institution diversifies its services to multiple audiences in the environment such as various communities, schools, industries, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other peer institutions at an international, regional and local level.

Partnerships are valued as “strategic” characterized by being synergetic because they allow both partners to grow, increase the capacity of the service, and help both partners achieve impact and ultimately influence. Service is viewed as a critical driver of building relationships with the environment, and forging strategic partnership is considered a means to achieve and enhance this service. These two worldviews will be explained below.

***Service is a critical driver that shapes the relationship of the institution with its environment.***

The findings reveal a shared understanding of service as a prominent component of the environment and as a process that the institution uses to channel its internal capabilities externally to consolidate its position in the environment. In fact, research capabilities that are channeled externally through service allow the institution to strengthen and consolidate its place in the ecosystem. The transformation of research-based theory into practice takes mostly the shape of specific structures labeled centers or initiatives which allow to sustain the service externally. This usually results in establishing long-term relationships which in turn ensures greater impact. Service acquires various forms including for example professional development or health related services that can be driven by a sense of caring for the development or well-being of the less fortunate, as well as to disseminate research-evidenced practices through various outreach centers or initiatives. Service is also performed through coordinated action accomplished through collaborations that build on strengths across the university. This could be a collaboration between faculty members themselves, faculty members and students as well as one that gels within centers or initiatives. A particular powerful aspect of such a collaboration is the interdisciplinary one.

Institutional rhetoric reveals a mention of interdisciplinary action that spans from ten years ago till present. Interdisciplinary centers are deemed to produce a more sustainable impact and even influence. The value attributed to structural entities that provide service underlain by interdisciplinary collaborations stems from the fact that they allow for institutional synergies that will enable in turn institutional growth and environmental impact. The impact of service is valued as a venue for the institution to influence the communities it serves by modeling and communicating an institutional value-system considered as societal enrichment and is meant to reshape the values in the external environment accordingly. An example of such influence underlain by an interdisciplinary endeavor is the enactment of law 174 prohibiting smoking in public places. This outcome relays a value of social responsibility that the institution has imposed on the local environment in the form of a law.

Finally, the service channeled externally is refined and improved through a feedback process. In fact, awards, for example, constitute an instance of feedback to institutional stakeholders about the extent to which they have achieved that desired impact. Additionally, this feedback process occurs through a review of internal processes such as those that govern the functioning of centers to make sure that they remain aligned with the intended purpose or require an action of re-adaptation and improvement.

***Strategic partnerships are a means to enhance service.*** The institutional rhetoric reveals that strategic partnerships are used to achieve and enhance service. Partnerships are not an incidental occurrence. On the contrary, they are a planned and conscious endeavor that is explicitly stated in the strategic plan of the university and evidenced by the large number of institutional partnerships (AUB, 2018a).

Besides offering a forum for collaboration, strategic partnerships contribute to a significant extent to the realization of the purposes of service through the amplification of institutional capacity. This amplification is due to a synergetic relationship among partners. In fact, strategic partnerships with industries allow for developing the required work skills needed by students to succeed professionally while in return giving these professional settings the benefit of recruiting potential leaders. Partnerships with NGOs enhance the civic engagement skills of students, extends the research capabilities of the institution and allow NGOs in return to achieve their purpose and increase their expertise. Similarly, strategic partnerships with peers allow for an exchange of information and expertise.

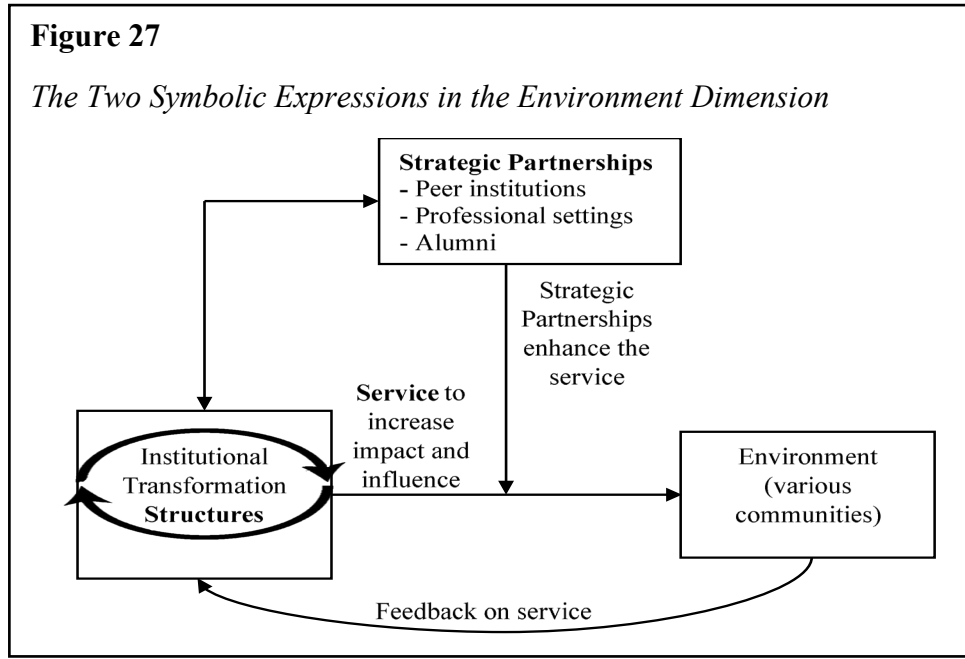
The synergy among partners does not only amplify institutional capacity, it also perpetuates the desired impact by sustaining the service as discussed in the previous worldview, and the institutional entity. This is achieved for example when partnerships facilitate the acquisition of funds allowing ultimately to sustain the impact.

Partners have to have an aspect of similarity such as being outstanding in their capacity in the case of partnerships with peers or share a similar concern in the partnerships with funding entities or other NGOs. The relationship with the institution's alumni can also be considered a form of strategic partnership. In fact, alumni disseminate institutional values externally and contribute to the sustainability of the institution itself through donations and acts of philanthropy.

Moreover, partnerships open new niches by increasing opportunities. For instance, partnerships with peer institutions allow for a better dissemination of research findings which in turn may ultimately impact practices or policies. Strategic partnerships

promote the development of innovative ideas. Institutional rhetoric attributes such an outcome to linkages with the industry while noting its effect on economic growth.

Figure 27 below displays the associations from which the two worldviews emerged.



**The institutional culture through the mission dimension.** The findings reveal that the institutional mission rests on three symbolic expressions: (a) Transformative Research, (b) Transformative Scholarship, and (c) Assessment.

Table 29 below will summarize the various symbolic expressions, representations and their shared meanings that emerged previously in the findings.



Table 29

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Mission Dimension*

	<b>Transformative Research</b>	<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Transformative Scholarships</b>
<b>Symbolic representation 1</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>	<b>Learning</b>	<b>Leadership and Sustainable Community Engagement</b>
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Identify failures in response to major crises due to an array of expertise</li> <li>- Offers a comprehensive approach to problems</li> <li>- Gives a leading position to the institution</li> <li>- Has reliable and trustworthy findings</li> <li>- Produces innovative and creative findings</li> <li>- Focuses the efforts of individuals around common objectives</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop awareness of a reality or an understanding that is missing or needs to be verified</li> <li>- Precedes planning, decision making or action</li> <li>- Guides the actions of a unit</li> <li>- Allows to examine if conforms to a specific requirement</li> <li>- Monitor if actions align with purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Facilitates sustainable community engagement and the acquisition of leadership skills for service</li> <li>- Links theory with practice where students learn expertise to service communities</li> <li>- An education that enhances students' sense of responsibility and community membership</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 2</b>	<b>Impact</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>	<b>Inclusiveness</b>
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Has a large-scale dimension involving multiple beneficiaries</li> <li>- Establishes firm connections with various stakeholders</li> <li>- Advances alternative approaches to problems</li> <li>- Leads to transformation of practices and policies</li> <li>- Disseminates research findings to various audiences to increase awareness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Achieve a set-goal such as improvement</li> <li>- Allow decision-making</li> <li>- Decide for the actions to achieve the goal</li> <li>- Benchmark against a standard</li> <li>- Monitor the performance of units</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhances the acceptance of others with different socio-economic, geographical, and gender backgrounds</li> <li>- Inclusiveness is tied to the purpose of the institution which seeks diversity</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 3</b>	<b>Sustainability</b>	<b>Control</b>	<b>Collaboration</b>
Meanings that emerged from the documents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Advances sustainable solutions such as enacting laws</li> <li>- Can engage the active participation of concerned stakeholders</li> <li>- Constitutes a bridge that helps infuse and</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- One party with power regulates the behavior of another party to align with an outcome through evaluations, performance feedback, KPI...)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Enhances collaborations across institutional units and with external stakeholders</li> <li>- The collaborations yield valuable expertise and enhance the learning that is generated from them</li> <li>- Collaboration between students develops leadership</li> </ul>

perpetuate institutional values

- Make units or projects align with a goal through the channeling of resources for example

skills through teamwork and community engagement

### **Reward**

### **Identification**

- Given to stakeholders who achieve effectiveness or align with desired outcomes  
- Reward takes the form of merit, promotion, resource allocation...  
- Is linked to planning for improvements

- Identify key abilities of potential students  
- Allows the institution to fulfill its purpose of graduating potential leaders

### **Transparency**

### **Innovative processes**

- Dissemination of assessment results and reports to internal and external stakeholders  
- Can be enhanced through the recourse to external assessment  
- Improves institutional ethics, integrity, and credibility

- Reflects an instance of innovative institutional design

### **Career impact**

- Impacts the potential career of students  
- Sustains the potential career-oriented projects of students

### **Incentive**

- Encourages the recruitment of potential students with an initial ability

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Institutional rhetoric reveals an implicit educational purpose, that of achieving impact and influence as determined in the previous Environment dimension. For that purpose, the institution uses the three resources of Transformative Research,

Transformative Scholarships, and Assessment to achieve its implicit aim.

Institutionally, these three resources allow the metamorphosis of the mission into impact and influence.

Transformative Research is viewed as one that connects the institution with its environment with institutional rhetoric valuing the collaborative and interdisciplinary aspect of it.

Transformative Scholarships participate in the development of impactful leaders by instilling within students' values of civic engagement through service to their communities as well as the values of diversity and inclusion. Consequently, students become agents of societal change.

Assessment is a learning mechanism through which the institution monitors if its actions align with this purpose by using specific assessment metrics, consequently warranting institutional effectiveness.

Two worldviews, that condense these associations have emerged and will be explained below.

***The Mission aims implicitly at achieving impact and influence.***

Transformative research and scholarships are two drivers that underlie respectively the research-service, and transformative process components of the mission. These drivers are used concurrently by senior administrators to achieve the implicit institutional aim of impact and influence.

Research is an explicit component of the institution's mission. As in the case of service in relation to the external environment discussed in the previous synthesis, research is considered as a means to promote the advancement of knowledge (AUB, n.d.-a).

However, institutional rhetoric reflects the belief that research is not just a knowledge-development act, nor is it a just means to achieve promotion or tenure. In fact, in addition to it representing a core institutional competence, research is part of the institutional dynamic that stimulates progress, growth, and allows the institution to achieve a greater purpose, that of impact and influence. To fulfill that purpose, research has to have specific characteristics. These characteristics make research become transformative, a qualifier that is prominent in institutional rhetoric and discourse.

The relationship between Transformative Research and impact and influence can be evidenced in many instances in the surveyed documents.

First, Transformative Research is one that connects the institution with its environment and serves to promote the well-being of various communities. In fact, several institutional documents emphasize the role of research in being directed towards serving a practical purpose rather than simply being a mere intellectual endeavor destined for the “contemplation of truth” (AUB, 2018a; AUB, 2016a).

Second, the institutional value attributed to collaborative and interdisciplinary research stems from the fact that it has the ability to address large-scale challenges since it adopts a multi-layered perspective in its attempt to resolve them which consequently results in the development of innovative and creative solutions to such challenges. In fact, the Global Health Institute that addresses global health challenges founded on interdisciplinary research aims at “defining and addressing the global health agenda” (AUB, n.d.-aw). The role of the Global Health Institute reflects a cause and effect relationship between interdisciplinarity and impact. Similarly, the AUB Tobacco Control Research Group as an interdisciplinary structure drawing from fields such as medicine, chemistry, environmental policy, and economics (AUB, n.d.-cb) has led to

the promulgation of Law 174 in September 2011 which prohibited smoking in closed spaces, banned the advertising of tobacco products while striving to support policies that would raise the taxation of tobacco products in Lebanon (AUB, n.d.-cc; Khuri, 2017l).

As stated earlier, whereas impact aims at producing a concrete effect such as defining and shaping agendas or the promulgation of certain policies, influence serves to relay to the environment an institutional value-system considered as one to be observed and followed. For example, the Knowledge Is Power project is an interdisciplinary and collaborative endeavor that involves civil society members, students, the public and private sector and aims at increasing awareness about gender and sexuality in Lebanon (AUB, n.d.-cd). While this increase of awareness that transforms into the drafting of gender-related policies may signal the desired institutional impact, it also serves to influence common societal views by relaying to various stakeholders an institutional value-system of a more inclusive society in which women are provided with equal opportunities in educational attainment as well as economic and political participation (Khuri, 2018g).

Transformative scholarships contribute significantly to the transformation of graduates into civically engaged leaders. In fact, in addition to the academic programs offered to students that are periodically reviewed and refined, these scholarships achieve the transformation of graduates by infusing in graduates a sense of community membership. This membership is warranted through the community engagement projects in which graduates learn, with the contribution of faculty members, how to apply theoretically learned knowledge in a practical context. In addition to this applied dimension of knowledge, these scholarships constitute a social glue in which students

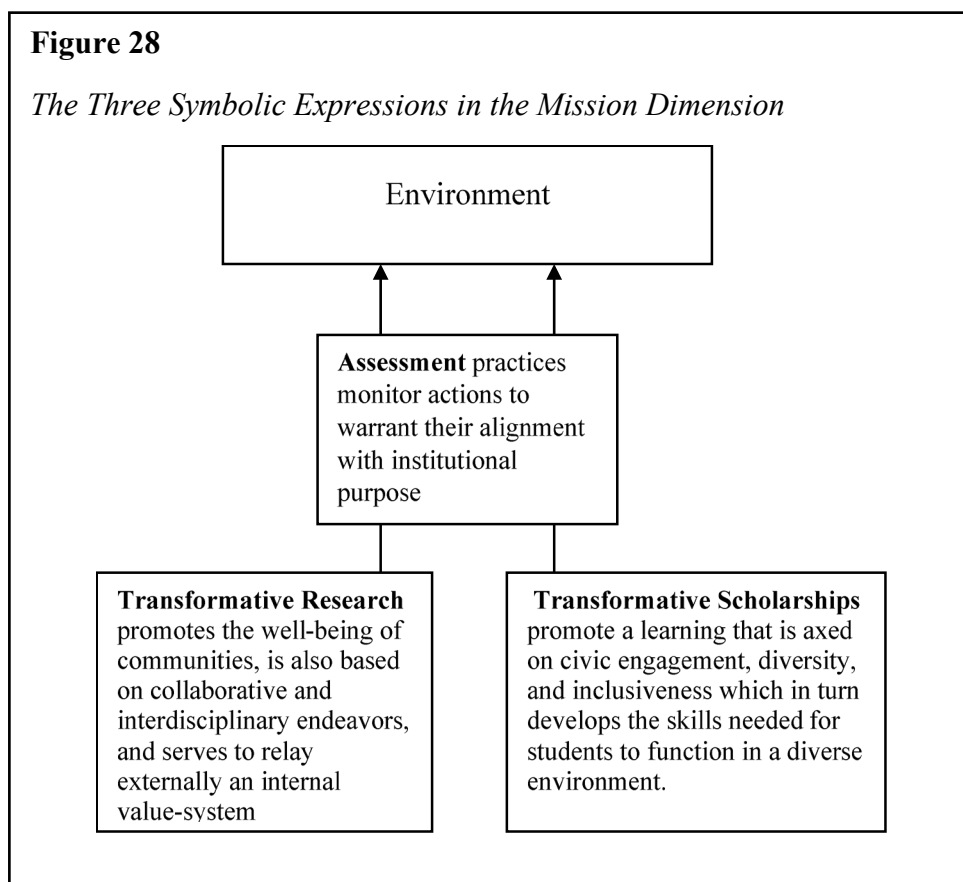
from various backgrounds such as geographic, socio-economic, and gender learn to cooperate and collaborate in the various community projects. The benefit of these scholarships is not only geared towards students, they also promote a concept that is cherished by institutional discourse, that of interunit collaboration. This collaboration promotes internal synergies, enhances the scholarship framework itself through improving the institutional learning that emerges from these collaborations. This scholarship model also enacts a concept that is emphasized in different occasions in the institutional rhetoric, that of innovation. In fact, the model is praised by senior leadership as being an innovative scholarship design worth of being emulated by peer institutions. These types of scholarships incentivize intellectually able students to have a world-class education in a world-class institution and warrant them the potential of a successful career due to the components embedded in them.

*Assessment regulates the two drivers of transformative research and scholarship to warrant continuous impact and influence.* The significance of assessment stems from the

fact that it allows constantly to monitor and align actions with institutional purpose. In fact, through the various surveys and reports, administrators develop first the learning needed for the diagnosis and refinement process. For example, in the case of collaborative and interdisciplinary centers, this learning is ensured by the SWOT analyses and other forms of reviews that such centers conduct on the extent to which they realize their mission and that of their mission alignment with that of the institution. This diagnosis enhances the unit's effectiveness. In the case of academic programs, this is warranted by the program reviews that are conducted periodically. Assessment allows to regulate the transformative research and scholarships through a process of control to align with desired senior leadership's expectations ensured by a reward system in the

form of merit or resource allocation. Assessment is also a means to relay to external stakeholders an image of transparency which ultimately improves institutional ethics, integrity, and credibility. In the case of transformative scholarships, the assessment of the LEAD scholarship for example is warranted through its Research, Evaluation, and Learning component and allows to refine the processes related to this scholarship.

Figure 28 below displays the associations from which the three worldviews emerge.



**The institutional culture through the socialization dimension.** The findings surfaced two key symbolic expressions within this dimension: (a) Tenure, and (b) Mentoring. Table 30 below will summarize the various symbolic representations that emerged previously in the institutional findings.

Table 30

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Socialization Dimension*

	<b>Tenure</b>	<b>Mentoring</b>
<b>Symbolic representation 1</b>	<b>Identity</b>	<b>Tutor</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Contributes to the improvement of the university and communities</li> <li>- Is an accomplished expert and catalyst for growth</li> <li>- Revises and develop existing programs</li> <li>- Serves as a role model for students</li> <li>- Collaborates with peers on large research endeavors</li> <li>- Is an innovator who maintains a steady stream of scholarly activity and the development of academic programs</li> <li>- A caregiver who caters for the needs of the university and the profession through advancing both</li> <li>- Advances the institution's identity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides factual information or instruction regarding research, teaching, and service</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 2</b>	<b>Status</b>	<b>Counselor</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Comes from authoritative and impactful research</li> <li>- Is someone who develops initiatives and mobilizes other researchers</li> <li>- Develops educational policies and programs at the national level</li> <li>- Publishes in high quality peer-reviewed venues</li> <li>- Provides consultancy to external entities</li> <li>- Secures funds for expanding scholarly work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Relays an opinion, advice or counsel on developing strategies to achieve promotion and prominence</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 3</b>	<b>Consistency</b>	<b>Supporter</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Produces a steady and coherent level of scholarly activity and has a clear research agenda that produces a positive difference</li> <li>- Sustains effective teaching</li> <li>- Subscribes to a definite developmental trajectory that</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Devises a plan to meet performance reviews for promotion and tenure</li> <li>- Defends and promotes the mentee's interests</li> <li>- Provides the mentee with recognition and encouragement</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Fosters positive interactions with colleagues</li> <li>- Develops professional networks</li> <li>- Provides contact with members from outside AUB who teach similar courses</li> <li>- Provides the necessary means and assistance in various performance-related tasks</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 4</b>	<b>Commitment</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Engages in long-term performance to address the needs specific to Lebanon and the region</li> <li>- Develops a long-term institutional loyalty</li> <li>- Reflects positively on the institution</li> <li>- Contributes to the fulfillment of the institution's mission through the task</li> </ul>
	<b>Nurturer</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provides the mentee with advice for professional growth and advancement to thrive as a scholar</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 5</b>	<b>Self-assessment</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Self-imposes a critical analysis of the performance</li> </ul>
	<b>Critic</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Expresses a justified opinion or an evaluation of the mentee's performance</li> </ul>
<b>Symbolic representation 6</b>	<b>Impact</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Affects policies and practices</li> <li>- Responds to the needs of the public</li> <li>- Develops viable and commercial products</li> <li>- Promotes the academic development of learners</li> </ul>
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The socialization process, as depicted in the institutional rhetoric, seems to be a process based on developmental scaffolding in which novice recruits learn to decipher institutional symbols for survival and success, internalize them for professional growth, and become, in turn, providers of socialization cues for other novices. This deciphering act is both the outcome of an individual effort based on faculty-related bylaws and an understanding of praised behavioral cues relayed through communication such as the

president's perspectives, tenure policy that outlines criteria for being granted tenure, for example. Concurrently, this internalization of cues of success is facilitated by a mentoring process.

The relationship between mentoring and tenure can be evidenced by the fact that they both necessitate establishing a collaborative relationship. Within the Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Evaluation document it is evident that collaboration is institutionally valued in the context of “establishing effective and relevant collaborations with colleagues and international partners, within the discipline or across multiple disciplines” (AUB, 2018d). Additionally, the same document notes that the leadership dimension of the scholarly activity can be enacted in the researcher's ability to launch and lead initiatives, mobilize research teams, and collaborate effectively with local, regional, and international partners (AUB, 2018d). Similarly, the areas of mentoring stipulated in the written formal mentoring guidelines in the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture require the mentor to discuss with his/her mentee the dimensions of authorship and research collaborations that are both underlain by collaborative endeavors.

Two worldviews that condense the associations between the symbolic expressions within the socialization dimension have emerged from the institutional findings and will be narrated below.

***Tenure is a socialization process that fulfills the implicit institution's mission of impact and influence through emphasizing desired behavioral cues.***

With research highlighted as a cornerstone of the university mission, socialization becomes axed towards developing and improving the research academic skills of institutional members to maintain environmental impact. According to institutional

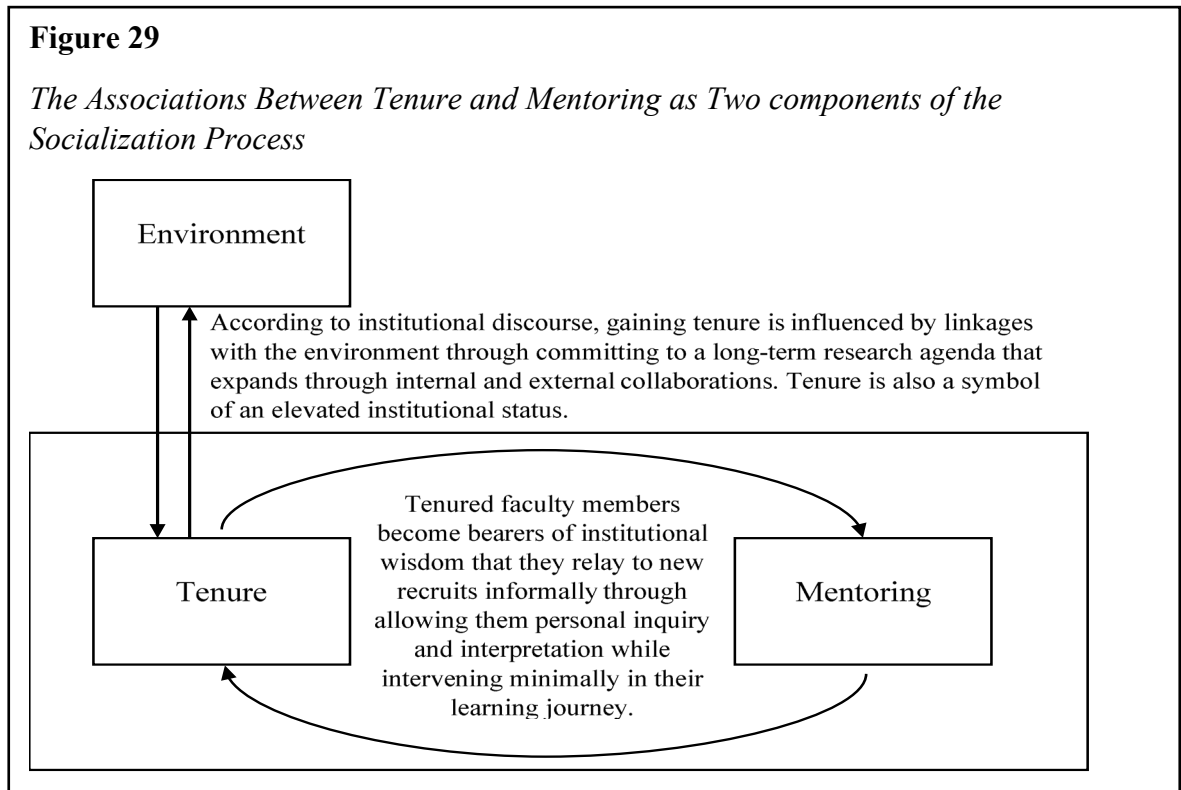
rhetoric, this shared understanding of socialization, through tenure, is multifaceted. The tenured-to-become member is someone who has to develop an identity. To a certain extent, this identity seems to be defined through the linkages this member makes with the environment. Additionally, this desired identity is also enhanced through collaborations in which the concerned member must have a significant role in. The development of an identity grants the institutional member an academic status. This status allows him/her to engage in larger collaborations through leading and mobilizing other researchers and gives also the concerned members the ability to secure funds for expanding scholarship. The development of individual identities to achieve academic status reflects on the institution's identity as well and allows it further impact and influence. In fact, the purpose of the tenure system as depicted in institutional rhetoric is to sustain and improve the status and the impact of the university (AUB, 2014). Both identity and status are moderated by consistency and commitment. In fact, to achieve the institutionally promoted academic status, the tenured-to-be faculty member has to commit to a long-term research agenda that subscribes to a developmental trajectory meant to achieve major goals. The ability of advancing this developmental trajectory is achieved through feeding the different expertise enacted by collaborations into it. This process leads to innovation and also enhances institutional impact. Ultimately, institutional rhetoric depicts acquiring tenure as a symbol of gaining an elevated status in the institutional hierarchy as they become bearers of institutional wisdom especially one that is related to survival and success.

***The various aspects of mentoring enhance the socialization process by directing novice recruits towards the path of institutional survival and success.***

Mentoring is a significant socialization act based on the institutional rhetoric. Its significance stems from the fact that there is an extensive documentation about it and

some faculties provide detailed descriptions about the formal and informal aspects of mentoring. Mentoring helps new recruits gain an understanding of the social knowledge of their roles. The process itself is an example of collaboration deprived of any power play between a senior and a junior member and can be consequently seen as a training and preparation phase to future collaborations that involve learning how to successfully work with peers or develop professional networks. Novice recruits embarked in the socialization journey learn to decipher institutional values formally and informally. Formally, the learning process is facilitated by a mentor. The formal aspect of the mentor-mentee relationship is enacted for example in the regulations that specify the frequency of the meetings between them and the role expectations of the mentor as described in related documentation. Informal mentoring seems to dominate institutional practice as institutional rhetoric recognizes that mentoring is a process that thrives informally. Whereas the mentor's role as tutor and supporter are a means of providing his/her mentee with technical knowledge, the role of the mentor as counselor relaying advice to the mentee and assisting him/her "whenever this is needed" (AUB, n.d.-al), while committing "time and attention to the relationship" whenever this happens (AUB, n.d.-al). This process aligns with the deliberate institutional emphasis on informal socialization and the few formal manifestations, such as the meeting between mentor and mentee that occurs every six months, are marked with intensity through giving the mentee the necessary time and attention. Ultimately, the acquisition of desired professional skills through mentoring is a symbol of growth that transforms the status of academics from being learners to becoming sources of transmission of the culture to new members.

Figure 29 below displays the associations from which the two worldviews emerged.



**The institutional culture through the information dimension.** The findings in this dimension depicted both information and communication themselves as being key symbolic expressions. Table 31 below will summarize the various symbolic representations that emerged previously in the institutional findings.

Table 31

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Information Dimension*

	<b>Information</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>Symbolic representation1</b>	<b>Awareness</b>	<b>Effectiveness</b>
Meanings that emerged from the documents	- Be cognizant of certain events that will eventually impact their behavior to improve a current situation	- Helps achieve a desired internal or external outcome through internal emails, Town Hall meetings, and multidisciplinary programs

- Raise the awareness of internal and external stakeholders about new degree offerings.
- Raise awareness about various academic and administrative procedures (registration process...) as well as various developments.

- Upward and downward communication (pervasive) increases effectiveness through ensuring the widespread of information
- Informal communication increases effectiveness and promotes the achievement of desired outcomes
- Cross-representativeness increases effective communication as it allows the widespread of information

### **Symbolic representation 2**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

### **Competence**

- Relays to both internal and external stakeholders a highly specialized level of skills related to various tasks.
- Information used to improve a current situation through rationalizing decision-making

### **Transparency**

- Communication is a symbol that allows institutional operations to be open to scrutiny for greater credibility
- Transparency through communication fosters a sense of collegiality

### **Symbolic representation 3**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

### **Survival**

- Information that is crucial for effective operation and decision-making of any institution that leads to institutional development and survival
- Scan the professional environment to develop new degree programs imposed by environmental changes.
- Develop course-delivery methods.
- Forge strategic relationships with peer entities or other organizations to ensure institutional relevance and survival through continuous impact.

### **Visibility**

- Communication, especially with external constituencies, is a symbol of visibility that ultimately increases impact
- Communication through various web formats including social media increases institutional visibility
- Communication of institutional happenings (research findings, achievements) increases visibility
- Communication with alumni increases institutional visibility

### **Symbolic representation 4**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

### **Persuasion**

- Influence others' beliefs and increase their acceptance and involvement
- Promotes the belief in the importance of social engagement
- Promotes the belief in the importance of receiving an education in the institution

### **Language**

- Symbolic use of language in relaying senior leadership's values and beliefs to various constituents.
- Storytelling narrates actions that are presented to others as worth imitating and repeating as they lead towards the achievement of desired outcomes.
- Passion refers to the emotional dimension such as excitement through the emphasized descriptions of organizational actions.

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Information and communication are institutional tools that are symbolically used by the institution. Institutional rhetoric reveals that information is a strategic

institutional resource. Its strategic value stems from the fact that it affects the survival and sustainability of the institution for decision-making as well as helps in achieving the desired impact and influence. This is why the scanning of the environment for information is a continuous task as external environments are unstable. Strategic information is consequently one that helps senior administrators to become aware of any environmental changes and develop appropriate internal or external responses to them.

Information gathering and analysis is usually the outcome of a collaborative effort. In fact, strategic information engages the efforts of several institutional units which helps develop in turn the capabilities of every unit. There is an extensive use of various formal and informal communication means to relay information that include emails, various forms of meetings, memos. This exchange of information connects the institution internally through various communication channels. It also constitutes an example of transparency and promotes synergies. Particularly noticeable in the communication process is how information is conveyed by the president and the emotional language he uses in his communications. In addition, the institution uses information and its communication to increase its visibility and develop a desired image internally and externally. Two worldviews discussed below condense the associations within the Information dimension.

***Information is a strategic resource that flows internally and externally, captured and relayed through a collaborative effort.***

The strategic characterization of information stems from the fact of it being necessary for the survival, sustainability, and ultimately the impact and influence the institution can have. This is why the capturing and treatment of information stimuli from the

external environment is a continuous process to which institutional administrators devote an extensive amount of resources and efforts. Institutional rhetoric refers to two kinds of strategic information: (a) an operational-strategic, and (b) a research-based strategic one. Both types of strategic information are stimulated by the external environment.

Operational-strategic information is one that allows the institution to be aware of environmental changes that require administrative/programmatic responses to them. This task is facilitated by the cognitive process of the information pathway discussed in the findings. For example, the findings showed that changes or developments in the external environment reflected in the necessity to engage in internal changes such as curricular modifications or developments, changes in teaching methods that involve a blended or hybrid approach (AUB, 2018a). Additionally, through an analysis of political and economic contexts, the institution increases its understanding of environmental trends and responds by developing the appropriate recruitment strategies to recruit intellectually capable students.

Research-strategic information is one that requires the adaptation of the research capabilities of the institution to respond to information stimuli about emerging challenges in the environment. Institutional rhetoric shows that such information is revealed through the internal linkages that the institution makes. Institutional rhetoric refers repeatedly to interdisciplinary centers as an instance of these internal linkages that scan collaboratively for information and are themselves instances of structural adaptations to environmental constraints.

The cognitive institutional processes related to both operation-strategic information and research-strategic one are crucial to the survival and impact of the



institution. This cognitive process is not the outcome of an individual effort but a collaborative one facilitated by an extensive communication process, whether internally or externally. In the context of operation-strategic information, such collaborative cognitive processing of information was depicted for example between the office of the registrar, alumni, and Office of International Programs for example to increase the recruitment of international and serve them better (AUB, n.d.-at) broadening the reach of the institution and increasing its impact. Similarly, the cognitive collaborative processing of information between the Global Health Institute and external partners such as peer entities or NGOs have led to diversify the research trajectories of the institute based on environmental information.

Greater than impact, these collaborations warrant in certain cases the ability of producing institutional influence externally. In fact, the collaborations between the Global Health Institute and other partners have enhanced its capacity as an outreach center and its impact in “defining and addressing the global health agenda” (AUB, n.d.-aw).

Once the information has travelled through the internal communication channels the institution or internal entity relays to the external environment the outcome of the information processing demonstrating skillful act and a symbol of institutional competence. This can be traced in the development of new program offerings or the ability to play a significant role in the enactment of new policies or laws, both of which cases have been illustrated in the findings chapter. The outcome of this image of competence reinforces the linkages with the environment through increasing the involvement of external stakeholders with the institution. For example, information communicated externally about enhanced research skills of centers may pave the way

for potential collaborations and partnerships that can ultimately enhance institutional impact and influence.

*The diversified communication process supports the incoming and outgoing flow of information and relays to various stakeholders institutional values and expertise.*

Both types of strategic information tied to the institution's survival are relayed internally and externally by a diversified communication system that helps achieve institutional impact and influence.

The flow of information depicted in the external environment is channeled internally by an extensive interunit collaborative effort. The aspects of such a communication process are internal emails, formal and informal meetings including Town Hall meetings, Brown Bag sessions, and interdisciplinary programs that connect institutional knowledge across departments and contributes to developing a comprehensive response to emerging challenges (AUB, n.d.-i). The extensive communication process that occurs between various internal units helps in the institutional sensemaking and learning phase of the incoming flow of information as the collaborating units share information and develop the adequate responses to deal with the incoming information flow. The collaborations between the Office of the Registrar, the Office of Admissions, and alumni exemplify this communication process in the students' recruitment example discussed in the findings. Similarly, in the context of the graduate program degree discussed also previously in the findings, the communication between a departmental committee and the faculty senate helped refine the proposed degree program. This widespread communication between concerned stakeholders reflect the extensiveness of the communication process as it aims at reaching a desired

outcome such as addressing various environmental constraints. Additionally, this extensive internal communication process that can be traced through the publications of reports on the various concerned units' activities allows for scrutiny by internal as well as external stakeholders thus promoting transparency and enhancing institutional credibility.

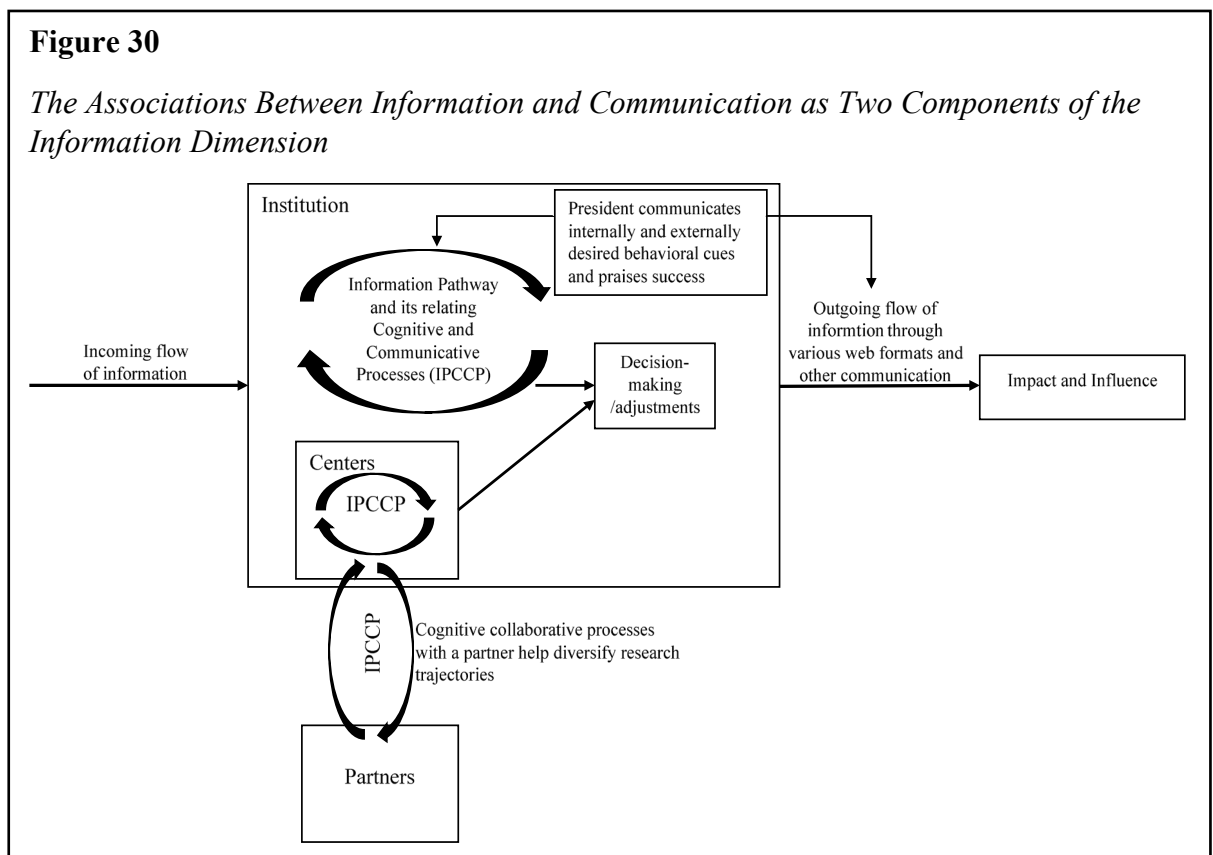
The institutional communication process also supports relaying to the external environment the outcomes of the decision-making process. The communication process to external audiences of institutional changes are mainly supported by various web-formats including an extensive use of social media or linkages with other communication mediums such as newspapers. For example, the announcements of an open house for graduate studies on various social platforms ensures a wider reach and greater potential of students' recruitment. The use of such communication channels increases the visibility of the institution.

Externally, established partnerships with external entities are by themselves a form of communication as they communicate institutional values and expertise to the partners. The Global Health Institute's case discussed in the findings communicates the Center's research expertise and values to various collaborating NGOs. In addition, these collaborations and partnerships communicate the research expertise and values to the partners' audiences increasing the visibility of the institution and paving the way for additional partnerships and collaborations.

In addition to the various instances of communication discussed above, the communications of the current president through his periodic perspectives acts as a catalyst of the dissemination of information and helps relay to internal and external audiences institutional values and expertise. In fact, through the various shades of the

emotional language used, the president relays cues of praised behaviors that form the guidelines around which institutional stakeholders are expected to rally. These guidelines develop in turn a sense of shared perceptions of desired actions. The various themes including for example the one concerning collaboration and interdisciplinarity become a central component of the institution's image both internally and externally.

Figure 30 below displays the associations from which the two worldviews emerged.



**The institutional culture through the strategy dimension.** The findings in this dimension depicted both Strategic Planning and Curriculum as being key symbolic expressions. Table 32 below will summarize the various symbolic representations that emerged previously in the institutional findings.

Table 32

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Strategy Dimension*

<p><b>Symbolic representation 1</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Strategic planning Collaboration</b> - A collaboration through which multiple stakeholders work with each other to achieve a common purpose. - Great importance to students' contribution in the strategic planning efforts.</p>	<p><b>Symbolic representation 1</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Curriculum Transformation</b> - Curriculum is a means of change and improvement</p>
<p><b>Symbolic representation 2</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Integration</b> - Strategic planning represents the crystallization of separate elements by diverse constituents into a harmonious whole. - Assessment data resulting from surveys and interviews with multiple stakeholders constitute input to the strategic planning and help update and refine it.</p>	<p><b>Symbolic representation 2</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Engagement</b> - Curriculum is also a symbol of involvement mainly for an ethical purpose.</p>
<p><b>Symbolic representation 3</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Alignment</b> - The use of institutional resources is aligned with strategic objectives. - The readjustment of course offerings either by addition or deletion to align with strategic objectives. - Strategic planning allows for the identification of gaps that prevent the realization of a strategic initiative. - The creation of new centers as part of strategic planning or refining the purpose of existing ones.</p>	<p><b>Symbolic representation 3</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p><b>Participatory undertaking</b> - Curriculum is a participatory platform that crystallizes the knowledge of various disciplines.</p>
<p><b>Symbolic representation 4</b></p>	<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p><b>Symbolic representation 4</b></p>	<p><b>Image</b></p>

Meanings that emerged from the documents

- Strategic planning is a tool that yields developments producing change that leaves a concrete effect.  
- Strategic planning supports the development of new initiatives that promote the achievement of strategic goals so to achieve various forms of impacts.

Meanings that emerged from the documents

- Curriculum has a symbolic importance in shaping the perceptions of the institution's image to both internal and external constituents.

**Symbolic representation 5**

Meanings that emerged from the documents

**Improvement**

- Strategic planning is a means for achieving improvements at various institutional levels.

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Institutionally, the development of strategies is characterized by a multifaceted approach that combines setting medium to long-term objectives controlled through quantifiable measurement metrics, procedures that are based on constant monitoring and adaptation, and ones based on highlighting institutional values. Collaboration is a value that transpires from these various approaches to strategy settings as it is based on the integration of the perspectives of various concerned stakeholders.

Strategy setting is intimately related to curricular refinements. In addition to academic offerings, curriculum in the institution advances the transformation of students into civically engaged leaders. This necessitate a cross-unit collaboration and ultimately leads to developing a certain institutional image.

***The approach to strategy setting is resilient and underlain by collaboration as a means to achieve impact.***

The institution seems to use an approach that rests on various strategic themes and transpire specific institutional values. The multifaceted approach provides the institution with the necessary resilience to address complex challenges that arise in the

environment. The Structural-sequential approach to strategy provides the institution with the required rationality materialized by the systematic gathering of various types of relevant data, the formulation of medium to long-term goals, the sequential path to follow to achieve those goals as well as the development of measures to monitor their achievement. This approach requires the existence of an efficient data gathering mechanism that involves internal as well as external stakeholders. The Environmental-impact strategy focuses the institution's attention on the environment in the determination of the institution's actions through a constant monitoring and responding to the environment. The Value-driven strategy consists in relaying institutional values by senior administrators to various stakeholders through behavioral cues that acquire a symbolic significance. It is significant to note, as determined in the findings previously, that some outreach centers are venues in which the three strategies are interrelated with each other. In fact, the Global Health Institute for example, adopts the linear approach to strategy setting as enacted in the Structural-sequential one when it plans actions with some NGOs to achieve specific goals. Additionally, its short-term response to environmental changes through offering new services reflects the Environmental-impact strategy. Finally, the center, through its activities, enacts senior administrators' vision of achieving a better social justice, thus denoting a value-driven approach that underlies the approaches to strategy-setting.

Whether considered separately or through their interrelationship, collaboration is a theme that dominates the development of institutional strategies. In fact, the institutional rhetoric denotes that strategies are developed in retreats or workshops involving a diverse audience of institutional stakeholders that include students, and in many instances the cooperation of multiple institutional units (AUB, 2018a). The emphasis

given to collaboration that emerged in the other dimensions is evident here again and feeds within the larger theme of creating synergies. For example, the strategic initiative of the Enrollment Management Plan involved an interunit collaboration between the Office of Admissions, the Registrar's Office, the Office of International Programs, the Office of Students' Affairs as well as the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (AUB, n.d.-at).

Collaboration, as equally depicted in the president's discourse, emerges as a purposeful strategy that is intended to reach a shared vision and understanding among internal stakeholders through the integration of the perspectives of diverse audiences. This integrative act rallies their support, develops a sense of ownership of the shared objectives, and yields impact externally. Ultimately, collaboration is not just a necessary component of strategic formulation it becomes also an expectations of strategy development. In fact, institutional stakeholders' perceptions of strategy setting become shaped by an image of expected collaboration that materializes for instance through attendance of workshops, seminars, and retreats whenever there is a need for strategic planning (AUB, 2018a). As characteristic of the rationality of the Structural-sequential approach to strategy, institutional stakeholders integrate equally the feedback from various performance measurements in the development of strategy.

As an entrenched value, collaboration in the context of strategy development becomes associated with paving the way for achieving impact. One aspect of impact in strategy development as materialized in the Collaboration/Engagement/Outreach strategic initiative is in collaborations materializing in specific structures such as centers or interdisciplinary initiatives that are recognized as being impactful by being rewarded funding from the institution. The Global Health Institute and the Nature Conservation



Centers constitute an example of institutional impact within this strategic domain, as well as influence as discussed in the previous cultural domains.

***Curriculum is a transformative tool that guides strategy and contributes in shaping a desired institutional image.***

The relationship between curriculum and strategy is not difficult to establish. In fact, curriculum is at the center of strategy in the institution since it constitutes a guiding framework for its core operation. For example, the five strategic initiatives of the 2016 Strategic Plan are either directly or indirectly shaped by curricular changes strategies. In fact, the Students' Learning Experience strategic initiative suggests in part curricular readjustments to satisfy environmental demands. The Infrastructure and Academic Support strategic initiative is also conditioned by institutional curricular offerings. The Collaboration/Engagement/Outreach strategic initiative connects the university internally and externally through the establishment of interdisciplinary outreach centers that integrate the knowledge from various curricular offerings thus leading to the development of an interdisciplinary curriculum. The scholarship and Service strategic initiative that consists in the creation of new knowledge that ultimately feeds back into the curriculum.

As depicted in institutional rhetoric, curriculum is essentially a means of transformation. This transformation aligns with the institution's mission of graduating leaders who are critical thinkers and is enacted partly through the revamping of the institution's general education program or the inclusion of civic engagement requirements. In fact, there are two requisites for the transformation to occur: (a) engagement, and (b) collaboration. Students' transformation occurs when they actively engage themselves to address societal challenges. For this to happen, they have to

experience those challenges first-hand through civic engagement courses for example in curricular offerings and civic activities offered by institutional centers and initiatives (AUB, 2018a).

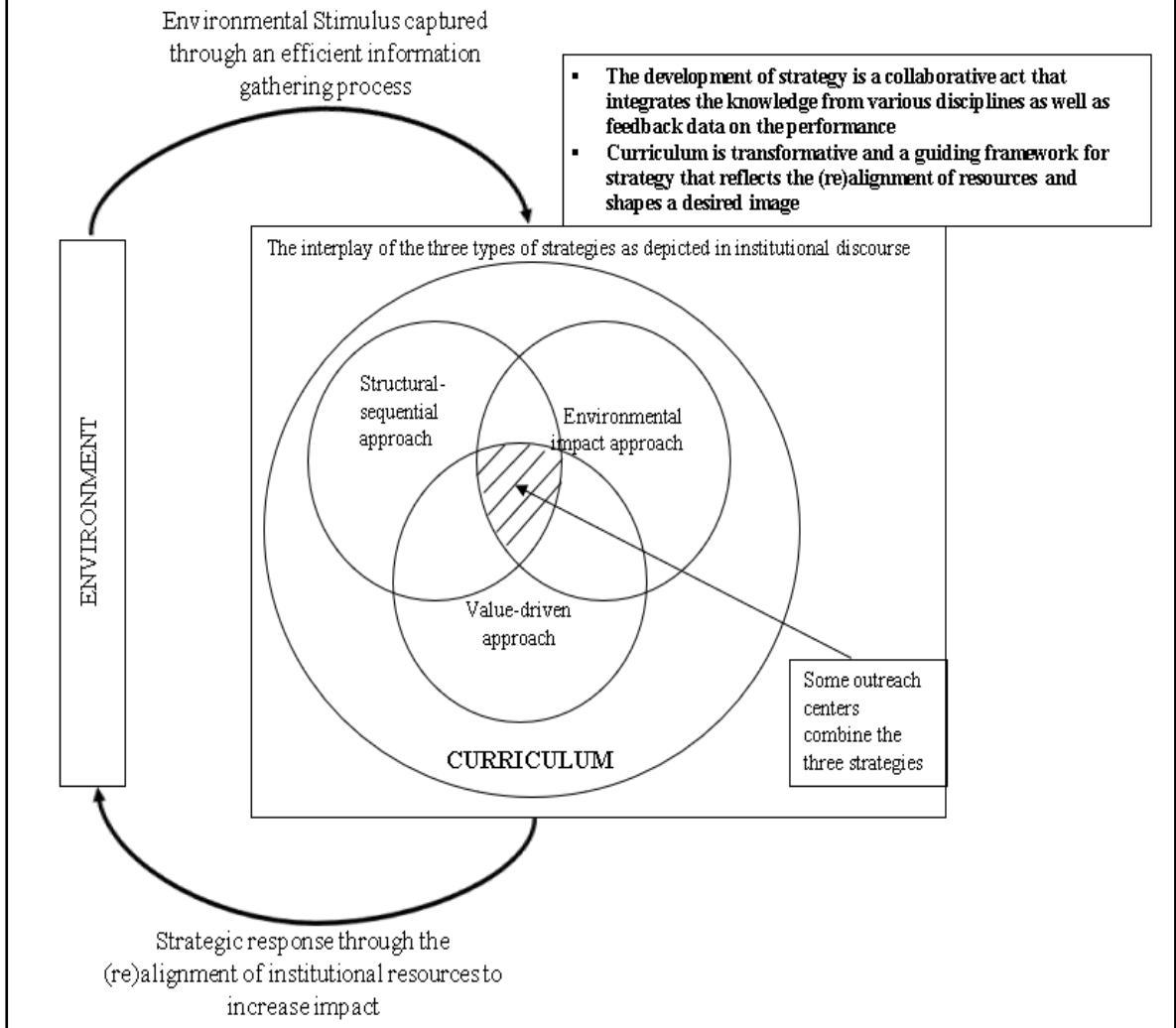
Collaboration plays equally a prominent role in the transformation process. In fact, as mentioned above, interdisciplinary centers offer learning that integrates knowledge from various disciplines, and consequently require the collaboration of various academic entities.

Ultimately, transformation as depicted in institutional rhetoric is contributing to shaping new images of the institution. In fact, its civic engagement through the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service has resulted in developing an image of being the most civically engaged university campus in the Middle East and North Africa region (AUB, n.d.-v).

Figure 31 below displays the approach to strategy based on the associations between the key symbolic expressions and their symbolic meanings.

**Figure 31**

*The Approach to Strategy Based on the Associations Between the Key Symbolic Expressions and their Symbolic Meanings*



**The Institutional Culture through the Leadership Dimension.** The

findings in this dimension depicted both Shared Governance and Symbolic Leadership as being key symbolic expressions. Table 33 below will summarize the various symbolic representations that emerged previously in the institutional findings.

Table 33

*Symbolic Expressions, Representations, and the Meanings in the Leadership Dimension*

<b>Shared Governance</b>		<b>Symbolic Leadership</b>	
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Symbolic representation 1</b></p> <p>Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Enabling Structure</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A structure with defined boundaries between its components and a set of rules and regulations that warrant the participation of all components and facilitates the decision-making process through communication.</li> <li>- Several formal channels of communication exist between the different constituents of the structure</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Symbolic representation 1</b></p> <p>Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Cross-boundaries Communication</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Communication with various internal stakeholders should be open, inclusive, and should transcend internal structural boundaries:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The president's beliefs about shared governance are captured through various statements of inclusiveness and sharing decision making.</li> <li>- The president is part of and attends the meetings of the several components of the governance structural model (Enactment of beliefs facilitated by his roles expectations).</li> <li>- Occurrences (initiatives) that facilitate the communication between the components of the shared governance model where the president's role is obvious (Action).</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Symbolic representation 2</b></p> <p>Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Empowerment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Shared governance is a means of giving various stakeholders a sense of empowerment through the inclusiveness of their participation in the decision-making process.</li> <li>- The sense of empowerment through participation is twofold: first it recognizes the status of the those participating and second highlights the influence</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Symbolic representation 2</b></p> <p>Meanings that emerged from the documents</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inclusiveness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The president's perception of shared governance supposes involving or engaging multiple constituents in the decision-making process for institutional sustainability such as the development of the strategic planning as well as the search for candidates for key academic positions (Actions/beliefs).</li> </ul>

	of this participation in the decision-making process.		- The president's participation in Town Hall meetings with students, faculty, and staff (Actions).
<b>Symbolic representation 3</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents	<b>Dynamic Process</b>  - The processes that regulate the shared governance structure are dynamic ones. This supposes the constant review of all policies or actions related to governance to ensure alignment with the desired outcomes of governance and improvement of the governance model.	<b>Symbolic representation 3</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents	<b>Responsibility</b>  - Inclusiveness involves in counterpart a sense of responsibility and accountability for the constituents' actions.
<b>Symbolic representation 4</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents	<b>Effectiveness</b>  - The shared governance model contributes to the overall effectiveness and sustainability of the institution through allowing various stakeholders to have a say in key institutional issues including academic programs and financial planning.		
<b>Symbolic representation 5</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents	<b>Transparency</b>  - Transparency increases the awareness of processes through the participation of various stakeholders in several institutional committees which consequently allows them a share in decision-making. - Transparency enhances trust between internal stakeholders.		
<b>Symbolic representation 6</b> Meanings that emerged from the documents	<b>Reward</b>  - Faculty participation in governance is part of their service requirements to achieve promotion and tenure.		

The value of inclusiveness for decision-making transpires from institutional rhetoric as not merely a defining aspect of leadership, but also a means to warrant the sustainability of the decisions themselves. Although this sustainability is ensured by various institutional mechanisms, these mechanisms have also symbolic connotations as they relay to various internal and external stakeholders a value system that is based on the democratization of decision-making warranted through a dynamic shared governance model. This value system cannot thrive without being supported by top institutional administrators. The role of the current president is quite illustrative in this respect.

One institutional worldview discussed below explicate the associations within the Leadership dimension.

***Leadership is a collaborative act catalyzed by the current president and facilitated by cross-communication.***

Shared Governance is an institutional practice that has several symbolic representations and meanings as depicted in the institutional findings. The structural model of Shared Governance as developed by senior administrators promotes connections between various stakeholders which in turn allows for their participation in the decision-making process. In fact, the Board of Trustees connects with the faculty through having a senate member sit in one of its committees. The board also connects with students through meetings and alumni by having some of them as members in the Board and granting them the possibility of electing three of the Board's members. Students and faculty members connect together through committee memberships to relay matters of concern to senior administrators that may yield new policies and regulations. These processes and internal structures that promote cross-representations enabled by various means of

communication channels make the shared governance model in the institution an enabling structure that fosters collaboration among various stakeholders to facilitate the decision-making process as it integrates their concerns and views. It also blurs to some extent the boundaries between internal entities thus equally promoting a participative approach to decision-making.

This integration and collaboration in setting the strategic direction of the institution acknowledges the role of these internal structures and provide their members with a sense of empowerment that has been enacted in several instances. For example, faculty members were represented in the Tenure Design Committee. Similarly, a student of the University Student Faculty Committee is a member in the Financial Planning Committee that oversees the development of budget and allocation of resources.

The Shared Governance model is not a static one. In fact, institutional findings reveal that institutional policies pertaining to governance are constantly reviewed to ensure that they remain consistent with their aim. An evidence of this claim is the amendments of the corporate bylaws on governance as well as those pertaining to the University Student Faculty Committee. This is facilitated by the development of a policy management software to help revise policies and align them with the governance precepts of the institution. Additionally, the sustainability of the model is warranted by a reward system that encourages institutional members to participate in it. In fact, institutional service is part of the faculty members' requirements for promotion and tenure.

Shared governance as an enabling structure that promotes collaboration between various stakeholders, through their participation in various committees and taskforces, promotes transparency through increasing stakeholders' awareness of various

institutional processes which ultimately builds a relationship of trust, especially between various stakeholders and senior administrators.

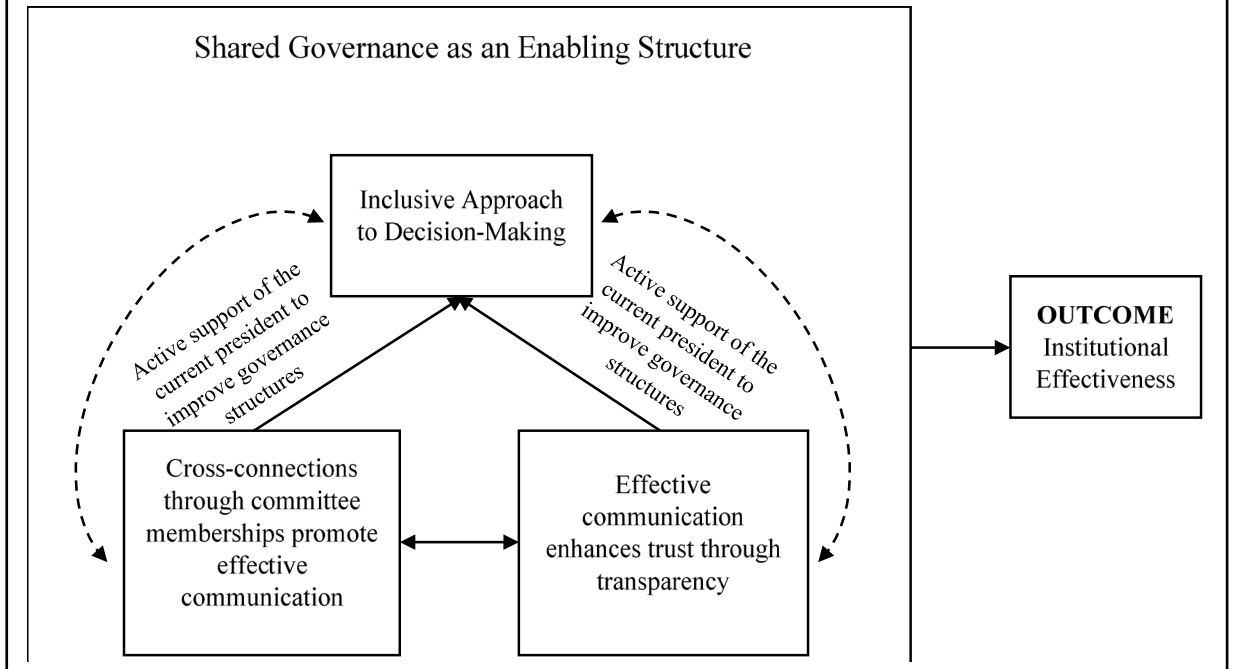
The structural model of shared governance is supported by the active role of the current president. It is noteworthy to mention again that based on institutional findings, several policies' and bylaws' amendments, that ensure better governance structures, were accomplished during his term. In fact, his beliefs about the importance of collaborations across the institution on various issues regarding its development depicted in his periodic perspectives seem to be echoed in his actions. For example, whereas the 2014 strategic plan highlights a "follow-the-bylaws" approach to governance, the 2018 Self-Study report reflects the changed value of enacting governance in practice supported by an active role of the president. Additionally, by virtue of his position, his membership in many institutional committees makes him a central connector or a boundary spanner who links internal structures together by listening to stakeholders across the institution while attempting an inclusive strategy, through communication, in the decision-making.

Figure 32 below displays the shared governance model based on the associations between the key symbolic expressions and their symbolic meanings.



**Figure 32**

*The Shared Governance Model Based on the Associations Between the Key Symbolic Expressions and their Symbolic Meanings*



### **The Institutional Culture: A Synthesis Across Dimensions**

The following narrative integrates the individual dimensions revealing a meta institutional synthesis that makes visible significant aspects of the institution's cultural fabric, yet does not claim to have completely surfaced this culture. The methodology used has its limitations and calls for further cultural investigations that are part of a larger research agenda. In this context, it is important to remind the reader that Schultz (1994) argues that a symbolic cultural inquiry based on the associations of various institutional symbols depicts small cultural images that necessitate further cultural investigations.

The following narrative will describe the elements of the institution's culture based on the worldviews that emerged from every dimension showing also how these dimensions connect and overlap with each other.

The institution's cultural norms, based on the surveyed documents, promote an implicit belief in the purpose of the institution as one that creates impact and influence. For this purpose to be achieved, internal institutional resources have to be structured and aligned in a manner that helps achieve the impact and influence purpose. In fact, the development of cross-collaborative committees or research centers such as interdisciplinary structures are an example of structural alignments that facilitate the achievement of the purpose. Internally, collaboration seems to be the dominant value that drives institutional action. In fact, governance and internal actions are shaped by collaborative approaches that include, according to the nature of the tasks, all stakeholders such as academics, administrative staff, students, and alumni. This value of collaboration or interdisciplinarity in an academic context is catalyzed by the leadership of the current president of the university. Data analysis depict a central role of the president in facilitating collaborative and interdisciplinary endeavors through an extensive information and communication process. The current president seems to be the catalyst of institutional processes enacting a symbolic leadership role whereby he communicates through various means a value-system that seems to align well with the values upon which the institution was originally founded plan (AUB, 2018a).

The significance of internal communication is obvious in the institutional rhetoric. In fact, communication modeled and facilitated by the president throughout the processes of the development or refinement of new bylaws for example serve a twofold purpose: (a) it shapes internal stakeholders' understandings of institutional actions and consequently develop a shared meaning of the institution's mission and signal desired behavioral cues, (b) it connects the institution internally and creates a sense of common responsibility in institutional actions.

Both purposes lead to institutional synergies. Synergy is also a value that emerges from the analysis of institutional rhetoric and is founded on collaboration or interdisciplinarity. Synergy as an instance of combining institutional effort that leads to the growth of all participants and achieves the desired impact is obvious in institutional rhetoric. In fact, the students' recruitment strategies, the LEAD initiative, and the development of a general education program that crystallizes knowledge from various disciplines discussed in the findings section validate this claim.

Synergy from an academic perspective relates to interdisciplinarity. In fact, interdisciplinary structures are viewed as contributing significantly to the enhancement of institutional impact. The Global Health Institute, the Nature Conservation Center, and the AUB4refugees initiative are instances of such structures to name a few.

Institutional rhetoric reveals that community outreach through centers represent a significant institutional value since they enact the service component of AUB's mission statement and encapsulate to a large extent the theme of synergy. Without its outreach activities, institutional capacity and impact would probably be less efficient. This claim is evidenced by at least two reasons. First, an analysis of the various strategic initiatives of the institution's 2016 strategic plan shows that they are mostly connected through outreach activities. In fact, in addition to it being a strategic initiative itself under the label of Collaboration/Engagement/Outreach (AUB, 2016a), the other initiatives seem to draw their legitimacy from it. In fact, the strategic initiative "Student Learning Experience" in the strategic plan is meant to provide students with a holistic education by infusing in them the values of "citizenship and social responsibility" (AUB, 2016a) achieved mainly through their involvement in outreach activities (AUB, 2016a; AUB, 2018a). Additionally, the "Scholarship and Service" strategic initiative that aims at

promoting collaborative and interdisciplinary research (AUB, 2016a) can essentially be fulfilled through outreach initiatives since they necessitate a broad perspective founded on interdisciplinarity and collaboration to address the complex challenges of contemporary societies (Khuri, 2018f).

Second, the number of institutional outreach initiatives is impressive. In fact, based on institutional rhetoric there are 70 projects, initiatives, or centers across the university that draw on an interdisciplinary approach to address societal problems and make a significant impact (AUB, 2018a). Consequently, outreach seems to connect and synergize the internal institutional capabilities and resources and channel them externally to produce impact.

Third, outreach enacts the service dimension of the university's mission. This dimension seems to be a prominent one in the mission according to senior leadership. In fact, in one of his speeches, the current president considers that the university was originally founded to uphold the ideals of societal betterment through service (Khuri, 2016c) and it is quite significant to note that various forms of the word service are present 108 times in the periodic president's perspectives from their beginning in 2016 until October 2018, and 132 times in the institution's Self-Study report (AUB, 2018a).

Outreach is found to lead to impact through transformation. In fact, outreach initiatives transform practices because they provide a broad perspective that integrates the efforts of various disciplines to address complex societal problems. Concurrently, outreach initiatives transform individuals because it provides them with the ability to understand through experience the various components of contemporary societal problems. Additionally, outreach promotes engagement. In fact, to tackle the challenges and leave an impact, strategies must warrant institutional engagement either through

curricular designs that are founded on a participatory approach and promotes such engagement or through providing students, the civic leaders of tomorrow, with the opportunity to sharpen their civic skills through servicing various communities. This scheme of relationships is apparent at both an internal and external level. Internally, it allows for institutional growth through improvements. In fact, the establishment of new outreach initiatives reflects institutional improvements that allows for a re-alignment of institutional capabilities with changing environmental imperatives. Externally, this fact allows for the institution to continuously impact its environment through outreach activities but it also enhances the image of the institution. In fact, the added institutional learning deriving from outreach activities that reflects for example into curricular offerings shapes an image of educational excellence. Outreach also develops external synergies. In fact, partnerships with external entities are those that ensure the mutual growth of both partners through for example an exchange of information and expertise, and increase the potentiality of the impact.

Institutional rhetoric reveals the value attributed to synergy based on collaboration and interdisciplinarity through a closer look at the institution's socialization cues. In fact, one of the institutional cues for survival and success is through a mentoring relationship in which the mentor initiates his mentee to the behavior requirements of success. Such behavior has at its core the collaboration with internal or external peers on large research endeavors while retaining a distinctive role in the process, and developing innovative solutions to the complex problems of society while that institutional rhetoric links innovation with interdisciplinary endeavors.

Interdisciplinary structures such as outreach centers do not just ensure environmental impact but transcends it into influence. Although complementary,

institutional rhetoric distinguishes between impact and influence. In fact, impact suggests mostly an improvement of a state through the transformation of policies or practices for example. Influence on the other hand, capitalizes on this impact through which the institution enhances an image of excellence and allows the institution to use it to vehicle institutional ideals such as the respect for diversity, inclusiveness, and dialogue. Impact and influence enhance the external institutional image and shape its identity.

### **Discussion of the Department's Organizational Culture Domains**

The analysis of the findings has revealed that within every dimension, departmental stakeholders have developed enhancing values with those depicted in the institutional rhetoric, but developed also in various instances particular values and beliefs with regard to the functioning of the Department that are orthogonal to those upheld institutionally. As will be discussed later, this orthogonality may be attributed to several reasons including the nature of the discipline itself.

### **Departmental Culture through the Environment Dimension**

Although the activity in the Department rests essentially on providing services to various external audiences, these services do not seem to produce sustainable linkages with the external environment due partly to the absence of structured and systematic internal and external collaborations as well as the existence of departmental structures that promote collaborations externally. Additionally, the current partnerships in the Department may have not acquired a strategic dimension, at least as depicted in institutional discourse and rhetoric. In fact, collaborations with peer entities or professional settings are transitory in nature which does not allow to sustain the services

offered by the Department, thus limiting its impact and influence externally. The narrative below will discuss these statements based on departmental evidence.

**Service.** The interview findings have revealed that service in relation to the external environment has different aspects. These aspects materialize in the form of periodic in-service training, the development of specific manuals, and workshops and conferences organized on a periodic basis. It seems however that these various types of services do not develop sustainable relationships with the various communities that are being serviced thus reducing the impact of the Department on its external environment. The absence of the sustainability factor is primarily due to a varying audience that usually participates in the workshops and conferences, or the short-term duration of the intervention in the case of in-service training that targets a specific professional setting. Compared to the values highlighted in institutional rhetoric, the lack of sustainable relationships can be at least attributed to two factors.

The first factor is the lack of structured internal collaboration schemes among departmental stakeholders which may limit the impact of the department service. In fact, unlike the institutional rhetoric, departmental findings revealed that collaborations do not seem to be part of a planned, conscious, and intentional effort that is supposed to enhance the Department's impact internally and externally, rather when they occur, they are project-based occasional ones or occur on individual basis where a faculty members for the Department collaborates with peers from the institution or others . Something that compromises the department effectiveness and influence. In fact, structured internal collaborations such as peer collaborations and cross-departmental ones which combine the expertise of various faculty members and students do not only enhance institutional effectiveness but also allow institutions and their collaborating units to sustain

environmental action by adapting to changing challenges (Kezar, 2006). The theme that emerged in the findings about the Department being itself “interdisciplinary by nature” seem to promote the idea that there is no need to engage in systematic internal collaborations among the perceived subdisciplines in the Department or with other departments. Another barrier to collaboration that emerged from the findings as well is the lack of engaging in intentional structured collaborative endeavors due to the perceived absence of institutional incentives to do so. Despite these two barriers, an individual stance considers that collaborations develop intrinsic rewards through the mutual learning it generates especially at the interdisciplinary level. Regardless of the various obstacles, Kezar (2006) highlights that structured collaborations seem to be a certain path to enhance and sustain external action and that for internal collaborations to be viable, they have to develop among collaborators shared rules and norms which usually thrive within fixed collaboration structures.

The second factor is the absence of such a collaborative structure in the Department. Although the Center is a departmental structure that engages the efforts of a limited number of stakeholders within the Department, it lacks the requirements that makes it an “integrating structure” (Kezar, 2006). In fact, according to Kezar (2006), an integrating structure is a cross-institutional one that clusters the efforts of various faculty members in other academic departments around shared goals that are made explicit in its mission statement which should promote collaboration. The findings reveal that the Center occasionally collaborates with faculty members in other academic departments because these collaborations are necessary to refine certain departmental products. These fleeting collaborations represent modest seeds that may facilitate the establishment of lasting collaborations which could reflect in gradually transforming the



Center from a constrained interdisciplinary entity into an interdisciplinary one ultimately enhancing its status institutionally, attracting more faculty members across the institution, and allowing for the development of new services that in turn warrant sustainable linkages with the environment. The expansion of the current Center will require funding support from the institution's Collaborative Research Stimulus program, but will also self-generate funding due to the development of comprehensive and innovative academic products. In fact, Stahler and Tash (1994) found that centers associated with the social sciences, for example, received external funding that approximated ten million dollars annually and added to the institution's prestige. Additionally, there are several competitions that the Center, once expanding its academic products, can participate in to generate funds, and most significantly, raise its reputation through awards.

In alignment with institutional rhetoric, the establishment of a disciplinary civic outreach center in the Department could also enhance and sustain the service with the external environment through stable linkages with various NGOs for example. Although the institution has already the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service that specializes in offering engagement services to various communities, the Department's disciplinary trait provides it with an independence and a greater edge as to offering such outreach services externally. Although the current state of civic engagement courses in the current curricular offerings of the Department will be discussed in the Mission dimension that follows, there could be at least two benefits from establishing such as center. In fact, while Ramaley (2001) argues that a relationship with various communities based on civic engagement is mutually beneficial, she also highlights that the sustainability potential of such a relationship

resides in the fact that it requires the creation of a shared agenda for advancement in which power, responsibility, risk and rewards are shared between the stakeholders. As discussed above, the center can generate funds through its activity, and establish a reputation due to received awards.

The discussion above highlights the relatively limited impact and influence of the Department externally. In fact, individual endeavors and accomplishments as impactful as they may be, do not necessarily reflect on the Department, rather, they add to the reputation of individual faculty members. In contrast, systematic collaborations are considered to increase both the impact and the influence of entities through their ability to advance innovative solutions to various challenges.

**Strategic Partnerships.** Departmental findings reveal the absence of a will to engage in strategic partnerships at the level of the Department that combines the efforts of partners that have similar interests, concerns, and goals. With few exceptions, departmental stakeholders consider that partnerships with local peer departments will bring little return to the Department, whereas externally, the expected partnership with a peer faculty in a European university seems so far to be established for the sole purpose of a students' exchange program without any intention, at least currently, to transform it into one from which may develop collaborative research endeavors or one that sustains the relationship with the external environment and develops new ones too through the creation of new collaborative centers for example. In other words, the existing partnerships so far, lack the strategic dimension in comparison to the perception of senior administrators of the term strategic as depicted in institutional rhetoric.

With the availability of potential local and international peers with whom the Department can engage in sustainable partnerships due a similar level of competence,

the Department seems to be missing the opportunity to increase its existing impact internally and externally. In fact, Chou (2012) found that such partnerships, especially with international peers, represent an opportunity for sharing resources such as research expertise, and programs and curricular offerings which will enhance the Department's reputation and develop potential additional linkages externally. According to the author, the ability of strengthening existing connections externally and developing new ones stems from the fact that these partnerships generally respond to various communities by developing programs grounded in their need thus adding to their reputation. This statement highlights once again the connection between the impact and reputation enhancement of strategic partnerships on service to the external environment as depicted in institutional rhetoric that is missing in the discourse of the Department.

Findings have also shown that the Department's connections with various professional settings is a transitory one based on workshops or conferences. Additionally, one can consider that a loose form of collaboration with professional settings currently exist in the Department in the context of inviting some representatives from these settings to attend the meetings of a departmental committee, however, such collaborations may not allow for sustained relationships with these settings. Brady (2002) argues that there are several potential venues in which academic entities such as the Department and relating professional settings can develop synergetic sustained relationships since the outcomes can enhance the professional development of departmental stakeholders and the staff of those settings. According to the author, the first venue for sustained partnerships could be underlain by a shared research initiative in which the staff in the professional settings were taught how to conduct research that developed them professionally by allowing them to find solutions to problems of

practice. The relationship with the Project housed in the Department with the professional communities it services is based on this dimension, a fact that explains the reason behind which it managed to sustain and develop its relationships with these settings. Brady (2002) also found that sustained partnerships with professional settings can take the form of faculty members in academic entities constantly refining the processes and products of these settings by injecting in them emerging evidence-based research findings, thus helping them gain accreditation. In the context of partnerships with professional settings, Baker (2011) argues that an ideal instance of a sustainable partnership between academic entities and professional settings is enacted in a complex configuration in which in addition to the expertise of faculty members, experts from outside the academic entity are involved in the partnership through a series of specialized trainings within an extended timeframe.

The discussion above supports again the institutional rhetoric about the significance of collaborations, through strategic partnerships, to enhance the services provided externally. Although faculty members in the Department have the required expertise and relationships with various professional settings through the conferences and workshops they periodically organize, the actions in the Department do not seem to align with the senior administrator's perception of strategic partnerships as depicted in the institutional rhetoric.

The Department's relationship with its alumni does not align at all with that depicted in institutional rhetoric. In fact, the findings have revealed that the current relationship with alumni is one that stops at the level of maintaining contact with them through various social platforms. Konana (2015) as cited in Mukhopadhyay (2016) identifies several types of alumni involvement in the functioning of academic entities

that can constitute a significant resource at the departmental level if they can be utilized in an organized and systematic manner. One means of developing systematic linkages with alumni can be through establishing permanent structures within the Department such as an Alumni Society for example. A sustained partnership with alumni could add to the competitive edge of the Department. In fact, alumni being part of professional settings can impart a great deal of knowledge of the evolving skills requirements in the labor market to translate these requirements into curricular offerings. Additionally, alumni can fund various departmental projects that may be needed to attain strategic goals such as research projects that address practical concerns. The weak linkage with the department alumni evidently reduces the impact and influence of the Department externally.

Since innovation according to institutional rhetoric is closely related to collaborative or interdisciplinary endeavors, the development of innovative solutions or interventions in the resolution of environmental challenges was absent in the activity of the Department.

### **The Departmental Culture through the Mission Dimension**

The findings highlight the existence of common understanding between departmental stakeholders about what research endeavors should cater to. However, it does not reflect a clear consensus as to the way they perceive the conceptualizations of this research-service value and the way it should be enacted. In fact, the interviewees agree that research endeavors should eventually service various communities however two perceptions of how research should translate to service exist in the Department. From one side, the conferences and workshops organized by the Department and the Center reveal a transient and short-term perception of the relationship between research

and service in which departmental stakeholders relay to participants in a short-time frame evidence-based best practices in the profession. In contrast, the Project enacts a representation of the relationship between research and service that is more sustainable as evidenced by the on-going nature of the Project's activity and the increasing number of professional settings that adhere to it.

Additionally, departmental evidence seems also to offer disparate views as to how to best carry out research to service communities. Whereas one view seems to highlight specialism in research and short-term collaborations, another view emphasizes the importance of interdisciplinarity for greater impact in the service of various communities. This instance may denote the absence of a shared value-system between departmental stakeholders in terms of community engagement through research. The outcome of the absence of such a shared value-system may partially restrain the growth of the Department and its impact externally. In addition to the sparse activities of developing students' sense of inclusiveness through civic engagement projects, there is no evidence in the Department of practices that promote inclusiveness through the teaching and learning process. The assessment of the alignment between departmental actions and purpose seem to be limited to contexts that are either imposed institutionally or are ignited periodically in the Department due to self-reviews. Consequently, the learning that derives from assessment is not on-going and may not allow for a simultaneous adjustment of research or teaching performances for a constant alignment with departmental purpose. The narrative below will discuss these statements based on departmental evidence.

**Transformative Research.** The findings have highlighted that research is a significant component of the Department's faculty members' activity. The interviewed

stakeholders have unanimously confirmed this fact either by pointing to the acknowledged quality of their research or the fact that teaching at the graduate level is meant to indoctrinate students into the values of research. Whereas institutional rhetoric tends to highlight the collaborative and interdisciplinary aspect of transformative research as one that possesses a transformative impact while combining the innovative qualifier with it, research at the level of the department seems to uphold partially the values of collaboration and interdisciplinarity. It is not to say that these values are absent from the activity of faculty members but to point that they are not part of a planned and intentional departmental strategy. According to one of the interviewed departmental stakeholders, what hinders this fact is the absence of supporting structures that encourage and enable such planned actions. This statement aligns with Evans (2015) who notes that the department as a structure fractures knowledge within disciplinary boundaries in the knowledge production process of its faculty members and that in response to this segmentation several universities have undergone major structural changes creating programs and centers that are interdisciplinary by nature. The impact of collaboration and interdisciplinarity on the faculty reward system through promotion or tenure was also highlighted in the departmental findings. Evans (2015) equally indicates that there is still a general lack of institutional incentives from senior administrators for research work that is not confined within disciplinary boundaries. Additionally, interdisciplinary work at the level of an academic department has been largely discussed in the scholarly literature. In a literature review of the functioning of academic departments and the importance of reinventing themselves to address the complex and changing environmental requirements, Walvoord et al. (2000) adopt a positive stance with regard to interdisciplinarity at the level of departments considering

it as an avenue for change through the development of new subdisciplines and a means to provide students with a greater integrative educational experience. As discussed above, the interdisciplinary scheme that seems to be predominantly adopted at the level of the Department, based on the categorizations of Ikenberry and Friedman (1972), is one that involves researchers collaborating together from a single discipline however with the possibility of involving various subdisciplines.

The Department adheres partially to the impact symbolic expression of transformative research. In fact, the Department aligns with the shared meaning of disseminating to various audiences research findings to increase awareness of best practices in the field as evidenced, for example, in the number of individuals who partake in the Center's in-service training activities and conferences or the Project's interventions meant to improve profession-related policies and practices. However, as in the case of the conceptualization of research in the Department, the value of impact is rather orthogonal to that existing in institutional rhetoric due mainly to a smaller span of the impact as evidenced by the limited settings that benefit from the expertise of the Department or short-term nature of its interventions. Despite this, the Department, through both the Center and the Project, has managed to establish connections with external stakeholders as evidenced by the returning conference or in-service activities' participants or the increasing number of professional settings related to the Project while disseminating evidence-based information about new practices and policies rendering this value of impact attached with research one that enhances that value in institutional rhetoric. As for the transformation of practices and policies, the Department strives to increase awareness about certain laws that need to be developed based on



research findings as evidenced by the work done in that regard concerning specific types of individuals.

**Transformative Scholarships.** Although courses in the Department should include in their syllabi explicit statements of civic sensitization one key stakeholder noted that departmental course offerings do not generally observe this value. Civic engagement at the departmental level could be enacted indirectly through the agreement signed with the funding institution discussed in the previous findings section for example or through calls for students to participate in voluntary work responding to the request of another institutional unit.

Departmental findings reveal that occasions for inclusiveness are warranted either through the volunteering of students in the activities organized by specific institutional units or students who will benefit from the fellowship program offered by a funding institution. Inclusiveness has significant connections with civic engagement. In fact, Ainscow and Sandill (2010) argue that the value of inclusiveness is developed within students through a process of social learning that influences their behavior and the thinking that informs this behavior. Consequently, the development of the value of inclusiveness is influenced by a context that fosters interactions with various communities, something that seems to be limited at the department.

On the other hand, the departmental findings reveal that the interunit and external dimensions of collaboration are partly upheld in the functioning of the Department. This fact has been previously discussed in the Environment dimension and was considered to be orthogonal to the value of collaboration based on institutional rhetoric since such collaboration is not part of a planned and deliberate effort but rather arises occasionally and is project-based. Similarly, students' collaborations through course offerings are

also orthogonal with institutional rhetoric. Studies from the scholarly literature have demonstrated a positive relationship between collaborative learning in which students engage in group activities and students' achievement. However, this impact seems once again to be mediated by social interaction. In fact, Linton et al. (2014) as cited in Scager, Boonstra, Peeters, Vulperhorst, and Wiegant (2016) argue that the deep learning caused by collaborations between students working on projects is impacted by their social interactions in which students explain to and question each other critically. Departmental findings have revealed that course offerings do not account for collaborative learning especially at the graduate level. The orthogonal relation stems from the fact that the lack of collaboration at the level of learning is not a deliberate act but is probably impacted by the development of individual research skills needed by graduate students to enable them to develop an individual identity of future scholars required to survive in academia.

The agreement discussed above with the funding institution in which students are expected to undertake community engagement work upon completion of the program is intended to have an impact on the career of these graduates. In fact, once completed, graduates are expected to use this acquired expertise of civic engagement to become the nucleus of professional development about those values and ultimately become leaders in their professional settings. This fact adheres with institutional rhetoric however on a partial basis. In fact, were it not due to this agreement, community work as a form of experiential learning that is deemed to impact the career of students would have been missing.

### **Assessment.**

The assessment of practices in the Department seem occasional since they are either ignited by institutional requirements such as the periodic program reviews or by self-study reports. In this context, they do not seem part of a departmental strategy for constant monitoring and adjustment of performance. This task seems to be relegated to institutional units rather than be departmental one. In contrast, the scholarly literature on outcomes assessment invites academic departments to be more proactive in assessing if the outcomes of their activities align with their mission and program goals. In this context, Derlin, Solis, Aragon-Campos and Montoya, N. (1996) propose a four-dimension outcomes assessment framework for academic departments based on reputation, resources, outcomes, and value-added. The outcomes dimension for example supposes the measuring of quality of satisfaction from graduates and employers. Similarly, the value-added dimension supposes the comparison of students' knowledge and skills at admission with those at the time of graduation.

The assessment of operations exercises that the Department stakeholders have undertaken are the Self-Study report and the departmental program reviews conducted every six years. The Self-Study report tackled several aspects of the Department's functioning including administrative, governance, academic programs, and equipment and facilities dimensions thus developing the awareness of departmental stakeholders of the areas of strengths and weaknesses in the Department. Walvoord et al. (2000) argue that in an era of increased accountability, academic departments are required more than ever to prove that they are accomplishing what they are expected to accomplish, and not just try hard to accomplish it. Acquiring such knowledge develops also an awareness about if departmental resources such as curriculum, teaching, allocation of various resources, are optimally used to accomplish the department's mission. The authors also

note that departments are engaging in certain assessment practices, such as program learning outcomes at the request of accrediting agencies rather than a will to engage in reform and change.

The department self-study has indeed raised awareness that paved the road for planning and decision-making as well as guiding departmental stakeholders into identifying the steps needed in the Department. In fact, the Self-Study report draws a road map of the necessary actions to undertake to address the weaknesses in the Department's activities and processes which enhances the relationship with the institutional rhetoric on that conceptualization.

Cragg, Henderson, Fitzgerald, and Griffith (2013) that one of the successful components of institutional assessment is to have the goals linked to quantifiable metrics or any other forms of evidence of the completion of these goals such as the standard achievement comparable to that of the national student populace. Despite the fact that one of the interviewees stated that examining the extent to which departmental actions align with its mission is primarily an individual endeavor, there is no formal mechanism that analyzes the extent to which departmental actions are aligned with the Department's purpose, nor a scheduled timeframe for such a mechanism to be started. In this context, the absence of metrics such as Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for example at the level of the Department is an evidence to that. This may be attributed to the fact that such indicators constitute more of a managerial function that departmental stakeholders' various professional commitments and schedule may not allow to observe.

Whether at the level of the Department's program reviews or the Self-Study, they both allow to develop departmental goals and objectives as well as determine the actions to fulfill them. Although the goals are conditioned by contextual factors such as

geography, location, and others, the participation of external reviewers in the Self-Study process signal that the developed goals are benchmarked against standards adopted by peer departments which also enhances the relationship with institutional rhetoric on this conceptualization.

The Department practices self-assessment whether through periodic program reviews or the Self-Study report, its accessibility remains internal to departmental faculty members and institutional stakeholders thus not aligning with the transparency conceptualization of assessment present in institutional rhetoric. According it, assessment reports are often disclosed to various internal and external stakeholders. The dissemination of assessment results is an act of transparency that are often required by accrediting agencies since they reflect an increased sense of institutional integrity and ethics. In fact, in alignment with the Public Disclosure Policies required by accrediting agencies, academic institutions are required to disclose consumer information to the public in a manner that is honest and truthful to safeguard for example the rights of existing and potential consumers to know and decide whether to enroll or not in a specific institution (Middle States Commission on Higher Education, 2019).

### **The Department Culture through the Socialization Dimension**

Institutional expectations for gaining tenure seem to be fairly known and upheld by departmental stakeholders. In fact, they agree that as individuals they have managed to develop a scholarly identity through their scholarly output. It is however the extent to which their scholarly identity promotes the Department's one that seems less evident in a context where the emphasis seems to be directed towards sub-disciplinary specialism in the absence of collaboration-facilitating structures.

These beliefs also resonate with the mentoring practices as perceived by senior members. In fact, socialization of new faculty members to collaborative endeavors does not seem to be priority to most interviewed members. Additionally, there does not seem to be a tradition of active mentoring processes in the Department. In fact, the interviewees seem to have developed their own way and understanding of how to socialize to institutional success without being guided to attain this success. Although this informal process to socialization aligns with institutional rhetoric, it needs to be based on a guiding framework to promote a sustainable socialization experience for new faculty members. The narrative below will discuss these statements based on departmental evidence.

**Tenure.** Despite the fact that tenure is a recent reinstatement in the institution, departmental stakeholders' views appear to align considerably with the institutional expectations for granting tenure. Departmental data reveals that establishing a scholarly identity is a primary concern within the Department which aligns significantly with the new identity that the institution is trying to promote for the coming decade, that of being a premier research university. In fact, there is ample evidence that departmental stakeholders are experts in their scholarly domains as evidenced by the fact that their research output is well-known regionally and internationally. In turn, this significant scholarly activity has reflected in an increased status. In fact, external stakeholders recognize faculty members as scholars in their discipline, as evidenced by the increasing participation of professionals in the conferences and workshops organized by the Department, or the increasing professional settings that benefit from the services offered by the Project.

Whereas these individual identities and status in the Department are predominantly warranted by individual scholarly endeavors, departmental identity as enacted in the way in which departmental members strive collectively for success is less evident. Based on departmental findings, this is probably due to a dominant socialization view that promotes sub-disciplinary specialism and the development of individual research niches. This fact confirms Becher and Trowler's (2001) hard-soft categorization of academic disciplines based on the nature of knowledge and knowledge-seeking assumptions. This hard-soft categorization represents a continuum denoting the existence or not of a consensus over theoretical assumptions. Consequently, within this categorization, the discipline in the Department being a soft discipline does not promote the development of shared goals of scholarship which may hinder the development of a collective perception of departmental identity and status due to a lack of consensus about the means to achieve aims. The absence of collaboration-facilitating structures does not allow the clustering of faculty members' expertise in the Department, as efficient as their individual interventions may be externally.

With regard to the conceptualizations of consistency and commitment to a scholarly trajectory that emerged in institutional findings as tenure-desired behavior, departmental members' performance seems to partially align with them. In fact, Tarek's views about the expected scholarly trajectory starting with the PhD dissertation and developing into the researcher choosing and specializing in a niche reflects the commitment to a consistent path that warrants the advancement and professional growth of the researcher who ultimately invests this accumulated expertise in serving various professional communities. What may be less evident however, is the extent to which

this scholarly advancement subscribes to a long-term “growth” trajectory. The development of an independent research identity is undoubtedly a significant endeavor in every researcher’s career. However, this growth trajectory may not reach its full potential if conducted individually. In the context of tenure, institutional rhetoric requires the commitment to long-term research agendas.

A long-term research agenda seems difficult to accomplish without ensuring a long-term funding, which in turn, may be difficult to obtain without consistent research collaborations. This fact explains the institutional rhetoric’s emphasis on research “centers of excellence” underlain by disciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaborations which are recognized as leading to innovative approaches to the resolution of contemporary challenges. In fact, within the context of growth-oriented research trajectories, Conn (2004) argues that team development, especially those that are conducted in multidisciplinary settings, should be an early priority since such systematic collaborations contribute to the breadth and depth of knowledge and experience. The lack of systematic disciplinary and cross-disciplinary collaborations in the Department has been discussed in the previous dimensions, they resurface here as not allowing the full realization of growth research trajectories the way they are depicted in the institutional rhetoric. This reluctance to socializing to interdisciplinary collaborations in the Department aligns with Evans’ (2015) argument about interdisciplinarity not being institutionally rewarded. In fact, two of the interviewees agree that interdisciplinarity can yield innovation however at the expense of taking risks such as pursuing for a significant period of time one project which is an act not accounted for in the institutional reward system. Additionally, the lack of systematic collaborations in the context of tenure reduces the disillusionment of mid-career faculty



members. In fact, Boice (1992) argues that collaborations including plans for collegiality, teaching, and scholarship provided stakeholders with a sense of renewal and decreased their feeling of disillusionment.

To what extent does the socialization of departmental faculty members in their tenure journey lead to individual and departmental impact? The answer to this question may have three layers. Individually, the high research output of faculty members has established their identity as scholars and provided them with external recognition as evidenced in their consultancy work. This identity was established through a commitment to a research trajectory as described by Tarek's narration of his perception of the typical research journey of a PhD student and probably achieves the impact desired at this individual level. At a second layer, collaborations when they occur in the department are project-based. In this context, departmental impact that clusters the expertise of various faculty members in one project is undoubtedly greater but transitory. Finally, the absence of departmental structures that sustain interfaculty collaborations will not allow the full realization of departmental impact and its sustainability.

**Mentoring.** Since departmental stakeholders are engaged in their first mentoring experience after a hiatus of approximately ten years, what follows will discuss mentoring based on senior faculty members views of mentoring intentions rather than actual practices.

Departmental findings enhance the Tutor and Counselor conceptualizations of Mentoring as depicted in institutional rhetoric. This can be evidenced in the interviewees consensus about mentoring as a means to introduce the mentee to the technical performance expectations such as teaching and course-related matters as well

as advice concerning scholarly performance. Evidently, both the tutor and counselor conceptualizations are in line with the supporter one. In fact, elucidating technical as well as scholarly performance expectations are meant to introduce novice recruits into promotion and tenure requirements. In this context, Samir notes that senior faculty members know how the decisions are taken for promotion and tenure and consequently can guide novice recruits into adopting them. Additionally, the interviewees consider that the nurturer conceptualization of mentoring is warranted by helping the mentee understand the various performance requirements for success.

The benefits of collaboration have been discussed extensively in the scholarly literature. For example, Austin and Baldwin (1991) argue that theorists are becoming increasingly convinced that scholarship, as an act of knowledge construction is a social act in which new knowledge is discovered through continuous conversation and negotiation. The authors further argue that such social connectedness has been associated with increased research publications and that collaboration promotes the effectiveness of scholars in an era in which a team approach to solving complex problems is essential. The projected departmental mentoring practices, as evidenced in the findings, seem to lack this dimension. Collaborations whether in teaching or research and as depicted in the scholarly literature discussed above seems more to be an avenue for growth in which new recruits learn to construct a broader perspective in their attempts to address their professional challenges.

Departmental findings do not seem to show evidence of a tradition of active mentoring practices in the Department in the past. It rather seems that current senior faculty members have “learned the ropes” on their own, probably through trial and error performance cues, relationships with peers, and through internalizing the various

sources of institutional rhetoric. In fact, none of the interviewees referred to their socialization into departmental life by a mentor during the interviews while some of them stated that they occasionally read the periodic perspectives released by the current president to get to know informally the various developments happening in the institution. Additionally, the absence of active mentoring practices can also be due to the relatively extended period of suspension of full-time faculty recruitment. During this period, mentoring practices according to departmental data were tailored around part-time faculty members and tackled what part-timers are normally expected to focus on, that is teaching.

### **The Departmental Culture through the Information Dimension**

The process of information gathering and analysis for decision-making as a collaborative undertaking seems to vary in various contexts. Whereas this process is more likely to be found implemented in the activity of the Center, it is more the outcome of the individual efforts of in other contexts. This fact has been identified for example in the context of both operational and research-strategic information. Consequently, this fact casts some doubts as to the extent to which departmental stakeholders consider information as a strategic resource for enhancing the development and impact of the Department. Internally, communication seems to promote a formal dimension enacted in meetings and emails for example. Informal communication seems a less taped resource that can have, if implemented, important effect on developing a sense of shared direction among departmental stakeholders. The narrative below will detail all these statements.

**Information.** Departmental findings show that the scanning of environmental information is not a systematic and continuous activity that departmental stakeholders

undertake in order to understand and adapt to environmental changes. As in the case of the previous dimensions, the scanning of information seems mostly to be the outcome of faculty members' efforts in the Department who attempt to react to various types of environmental stimuli individually. This fact naturally questions the extent to which information is considered to be strategic by departmental stakeholders and to impact the survival and sustainability of the Department.

From the perspective of research-strategic information, knowledge about the latest research trends related to the discipline in the Department is gathered individually by faculty members through journals, books, and participation in conferences. Unlike the scanning phase in the context of research-based information at the institutional level that involves a collaborative effort of information gathering, the scanning of research-based information in the Department meant to increase the awareness of departmental members seems to be the outcome of an individual effort in which every faculty member follows the latest developments of the niche that he/she has specialized in. This individual effort, as much as it may be useful, limits the aggregated research capacity of the Department to be impactful when not part of a departmental research strategy. In fact, Hazelkorn and Herlitschka (2010) argue that the development of research capacity in institutions is more the outcome of a collaborative effort such as project-based research rather than a mere individual activity. The authors equally consider that in order to be impactful, this collaborative effort should be part of a strategic approach in which faculty members start by agreeing and identifying research priorities then cluster their research capacity through the formation of research teams, and form strategic alliances with peers and other professional partners. The exception to such individual efforts can be identified in the activity of the Center for example. In fact, according to

the interviewees, the workshops and conferences organized by the Center have usually their themes determined by the Center's members from a collaborative scanning and understanding of the emerging trends related to the profession. Although this collaborative scanning is a periodic act that is repeated annually, the extent to which it enhances the impact of the Department strategically seems to be less evident. In fact, the varying audiences attending every year these conferences coupled with the lack of sustainable partnerships would reduce such an impact.

Additionally, and from the same perspective of research-strategic information, the extent to which environmental information stimuli have reflected in structural adaptations inside the Department necessitating the emergence of new centers for example questions also the extent to which the gathering and treatment of information is strategic in the Department. In fact, the existing Center is the only structure that currently exists in the Department, and that has the ability to combine the expertise of faculty members in the Center and develop sustainable linkages externally. However, the Center itself emerged in 1970s and if departmental stakeholders acknowledge that external environments are turbulent and unstable, it seems surprising that another structure in the Department did not emerge. This vision aligns with Anthony's concern noting that based on environmental data, there is still need in the Department for a center that deals with a specific aspect of the Department's discipline, and that such a center must develop strategic collaborations with other academic and professional entities to thrive.

The scanning and sensemaking of information with regard to operational aspects in the Department do not always align with institutional rhetoric. In fact, in the example of enrollment, the departmental stakeholders' approach to low enrollment seems to be

more reactionist rather than a proactive one. In fact, low enrollment in the Department is responded to with the consolidation of courses or deciding to hire or not hire a part-time faculty member. This reactionist stance can be attributed to the absence of a departmental entity or individual that scans and analyzes information about enrollment trends in peer departments for example. Additionally, the absence of communication with other institutional entities within AUB responsible for gathering and processing environmental information concerning recruitment for example, contributes in blocking significant information that can impact enrollment in departmental programs or courses. In this context, Walvoord et al. (2000) consider that a learning department is one in which departmental stakeholders scan various external stimuli and analyze how such information is integrated, discussed and acted on in the Department to succeed in serving a rapidly changing world. The authors equally argue that communication with the institution's office of public relations or institutional assessment is crucial to allowing the Department to understand challenges and tailor specific responses to them. Here too, the relationship of the occurrences in the Department with the institutional rhetoric on scanning and making sense of environmental data in a collaborative context that involves multiple stakeholders is orthogonal.

Information gathering concerning the development of new degree programs seems to align better with that depicted in institutional rhetoric. In fact, the self-study report for example shows that departmental stakeholders have assessed environmental requirements through collecting information from multiple stakeholders to develop the necessary awareness trends in the discipline and what is required by employers. This scanning and sensemaking of environmental information which involves communication and collaboration between various committees in the Department and

with other professional settings establishes the necessary departmental learning needed for refining the new programs and leads to executing the required actions needed for their implementation. The model aligns with Choo's (1996) three-stage conceptualization of the knowing organization in which information leads to efficient decision-making. In fact, during the first stage, in the process of making sense of environmental data, stakeholders tend to limit their attention to significant information to develop from it a shared interpretation. In this context, although there may be a wide range of programs related to the discipline that can be taught in the Department, departmental members' interpretation of incoming data focuses information around crucial environmental requirements conditioned by the surveys and discussions conducted with multiple stakeholders including students and members of professional settings. In the second stage, the departmental members convert this sensemaking process into new learning in which members, through communication involving the various committees in the Department start developing the outlines of the new programs through the sharing of knowledge that occurs during communication. In the third stage, departmental members become primed for action and determine the executional steps needed for the new programs to be established. In the context of developing new programs, the relationship between departmental action and institutional rhetoric on that same regard is enhancing.

What seems to be more concerning, however, in the Department is the impeding of the decision-making process as enacted in the considerable time span between the formulation of the self-study's recommendations and the decision to implement these recommendations next fall. In fact, this report scrutinized and analyzed the actions of the Department in a comprehensive manner and involved also the presence of external

reviewers in the process thus constituting a crucial resource for the development and improvement of the Department. Although members in academia can be driven by competing interests (Walvoord et al., 2000; Logue and Shrank, 2015), the inability to translate the ensuing recommendations into actions can be due to the absence of a sense of shared understanding of departmental priorities, due probably also to the competing interests of faculty members. A possible approach to resolving this problem can be tailored around the informal communication that Tarek has initiated and intends to pursue, it can also consist in the development of shared goals among departmental members. Alternatively, Lucas (2000) argue that shared goals are the outcome of developing a culture of teamwork in which all team members develop and share the same departmental vision and are motivated to implement it. Lucas (2000) notes, however, that this task is not devoid of difficulties especially that working in teams is time consuming in a context in which time is a precious commodity in academia. However, this task of creating a culture of teamwork known to be able to realize more than working individually can, despite its challenges, seems to be a necessary undertaking in the absence of which decision-making will remain impeded and consequently endanger the ongoing sustainability and survival of the Department.

**Communication.** The communication performance in the Department is naturally intertwined with the information scanning and sensemaking that leads ultimately to decisions. Communication is one possible reason that can explain the situational inefficiency of the information pathway as discussed above.

Formal communication seems to be the dominant means of communication in the Department. In fact, apart from the informal meetings during celebrative circumstances,



committee meetings as well as emails seem to prime as means of communication in the Department.

Formal communication has proven its effectiveness in instances in which it contributed to the achievement of a desired purpose. For example, meetings have allowed departmental stakeholders to tackle the low enrollment challenge by consolidating courses or deciding to hire or not a new faculty member. Although not a means of communication in the traditional sense, surveys and focus group discussions used in the development of the new undergraduate programs constitute also a means of communicating to departmental stakeholders valuable information about environmental trends.

Whereas communication has been effective in certain instances, it seems to remain confined within the boundaries of the Department. This has been discussed in the Information subsection above in the instances of enrollment where communication with the institution's office of public relations or institutional assessment for example has been determined to be crucial to decision-making (Walvoord et al., 2000). Additionally, whereas institutional rhetoric promotes interdisciplinary programs as a strategic means to connect and aggregate the university's capacity internally, this communication aspect remains untapped and needs to be further promoted as a Departmental undertaking as it has been repeatedly signaled in the discussion of the previous dimensions.

Formal communication, however, has not proven to be an effective means of communication in the decision-making regarding the implementation of the Self-Study recommendations for developments and improvements in the Department. This fact has been a source of concern as determined in the Departmental findings previously.

Informal communication is still a resource that departmental stakeholders seem not to have yet fully tapped. As discussed above in the Information subsection, it is true that the development of a sense of shared goals resulting from establishing teams bonded by a common vision and motivated to materialize it depends to a certain extent on establishing formal communication channels such as meetings. However, as Tarek is contemplating to be an alternative path of action to rally departmental stakeholders around the implementation of these improvements, informal communication can also constitute a valuable means for facilitating the decision-making in many aspects. In fact, informal communication through individual conversations can serve as an opinion and sentiment indicator that key departmental stakeholders can use to understand the reasons behind the resistance regarding the implementation of the recommendations as well as also trial balloons for sensing reactions to intended paths of action (Hoy, Miskel, & Tarter, 2013). Individual conversations can also be complemented with town hall meetings at the level of the Department involving also students and probably non-academic staff. In fact, town hall meetings as a strategic form of informal communication can build a wider internal consensus around specific objectives (Argenti, Howell, & Beck, 2005) and consequently facilitate the implementation of the Self-Study recommendations as well as foster an atmosphere of transparency through inclusion of all departmental stakeholders in the decision-making process. These multiple forms of communication increase the effectiveness of the communication process and facilitate persuasion necessary for decision-making (Hoy, Miskel, & Tarter, 2013) in a context where collegiality and consensus seem to prime.

The communication of departmental competence is also contextual in the sense that the Department managed to increase its visibility by relaying to external

stakeholders an image of expertise through the professional events organized in it or the high citation index of the research of its faculty members. However, the communication performance with regard to external constituencies is still fairly limited.

Alumni are merely used as a source of information, such as in the case of gathering environmental data to develop the undergraduate programs and the new professional graduate degree. Departmental findings reveal, however, that the relationship with alumni is restricted to departmental members displaying feelings of pride regarding the accomplishments of some alumni without however this relationship yielding benefits to the Department. In fact, alumni are not used as “emissaries” (AUB, 2018a) who promote meaningful connections with the environment by advocating for the Department and its mission. Alumni engagement has surpassed that of organizing merely homecoming reunions and activities to associate them with fundraising campaigns (Coolman, 2011) as well as mentoring programs found to have significant benefits for students as well as alumni themselves, thus increasing their engagement (Dollinger, Arkoudis, and Marangell, 2019). However, for such activities to exist and bring benefits to the Department, the relationship with alumni has to be structured in the form of establishing a departmental alumni association for example. Besides the ability to ensure funds as well as mentoring advice to departmental graduates, a departmental alumni association will serve by itself as a means of communicating externally a specific departmental image as well as increasing the Department’s visibility in the various professional settings in which these alumni are part of.

In addition to the development of structured ties with alumni to ensure departmental sustainability and increase departmental visibility, the use of various forms of social media as a means of communication is also under-tapped by

departmental stakeholders. In fact, despite having a relatively active Facebook and departmental webpage, interview findings reveal that members in the Department still believe that there is still much more that can be done in terms of communication and marketing via various social platforms. The improvements in the use of social media as a means of external communication is still contrived to posting information about various departmental activities. In this context, Kaur (2013) considers that social media in the context of business organizations has been mostly used to promote products and services, leaving out crucial uses such as employer branding and the capacity to attract potential clients as well as applicants. In the academic context, social media can be used as part of a strategy to communicate a departmental image of excellence incorporating the promotion of research successes of departmental members as well as various recognitions and awards given to faculty members which helps develop strategic external linkages as well as attract students and attract potential faculty members who have the skills that align with this image.

Hoy et al. (2013) argue that redundancy in media enhances the richness of the information and increases the accuracy of the message transmission. Whereas means of communication can be written and oral, the authors argue that effective communication performances are those that combine both forms. Instances of formal communication can have both oral and written forms such as meetings and emails respectively. One written form that does not seem to be used in the Department is the newsletter, especially the one similar to the president's perspective at the institutional level. In a context where building a team spirit in which team members are gathered around a common vision and are motivated, the use of a form of newsletter in which a key departmental stakeholder such as the Department's chairperson communicates to all

departmental constituents important information through the use of various shades of emotional language, fosters social cohesion which leads to building a strong community, increases awareness about the Department's activities and consequently interest in it (Bruce, Ellis, & Delury, 2006).

### **The Departmental Culture through the Strategy Dimension**

Strategy setting in the Department is prominently based on the Structural-sequential approach to strategy setting. This dependence on a single type of strategy does not enhance the resilience and the response of the Department in its relationship with the environment as well as in shaping a common strategic vision among departmental stakeholders. Curriculum occupies a central place in the strategy development in the Department. However, the refinement of the current programs and curricula could still enhance the Department's image externally and add to its competitiveness. The narrative below will discuss these statements based on departmental evidence.

**Strategic Planning.** In their effort to develop a strategic plan, departmental members use predominantly many components of the Structural-sequential approach to strategy setting. This strategy that Chaffee (1985) terms the linear strategy, rests on a systematic approach to strategy setting that involves a stepwise action starting with an internal and external effort of information gathering which then leads to the development of long-term goals and the alignment that follows to achieve those goals. In the context of the Department, this stepwise action started essentially with the data collection effort that preceded the Self-Study report in which faculty members, students, alumni, as well as other key members from professional settings were involved. This gathering of information was followed by the development of an Action Plan that included revamping the existing undergraduate program as well

as starting soon a professional graduate degree. The action steps that delineate the measures to undertake to implement the action plan include the necessary alignment acts needed to implement the departmental goals. These include establishing new committees as well as asking existing committees to engage in specific actions.

Although the generic characteristics of this approach to strategy setting seem to be observed in the Department, there still are some components to it that are lacking while these components being part of the rhetoric at the institutional level.

Within the Linear model, Allison and Kaye (2005) argue that strategy setting usually embeds a seven-phase process. Within this process, the second phase involves articulating the entity's Mission, Vision, and Values. Whereas the Department announces explicitly its Mission on its website, Vision and Values are not mentioned there. The absence of a Vision can be attributed for example to the absence of consensus among faculty members about the implementation of the recommendations of the Self-Study report, as mentioned by Tarek and discussed in the previous Information dimension. The approach to resolving this issue, as proposed previously, consisted in intensifying the informal communication between key departmental stakeholders and other faculty members as well as developing a culture of teamwork.

However, from a strategy perspective, this lack of consensus can also stem from a lack of shared values that encourage and direct the behavior of departmental stakeholders to achieve departmental goals. This fact could be attributed to the sub-disciplinary attractions that result in the development of different values within the same discipline. In fact, Becher and Trowler (2001) argue that specialism within a given discipline, often fragments the internal structure of disciplines illustrating their argument with evidence suggesting that an economist working with non-market

decisions may find it much easier to collaborate with a political scientist rather than with a growth-model macro-economist with whom he may share little common ground. This fragmentation of values was mostly evidenced in Samir and Anthony's stances towards interdisciplinary research.

Despite the different values due to sub-disciplinary variations, Allison and Kaye (2005) consider that the development of a shared understanding of the purpose of any entity depends on the interrelationship between Mission that delineates the purpose of the entity, Vision that underlines future aspirations, and the Values statement that constitutes the guiding principles of the entity's actions. Although the authors argue that the values can be embedded in the Mission statement, they claim, however, that the more the values are made explicit, the more they are likely to be implemented and ultimately facilitate decision-making. Consequently, in order to develop a shared understanding of the Department's direction that were hindered by a lack of consensus according to Tarek, departmental stakeholders, including students, must think together of outlining the Department's values.

According to Chaffee (1985), the purpose of a Linear approach to strategy for achieving the goals is essentially to improve the organization's connections with the environment through a change of products or markets. It is evident however that, if a change of product is envisaged, it is to provide the organization with a competitive advantage in relation to its competitors. While departmental findings are not sufficiently enlightening in this regard, it is worthy to mention, however, that those findings reveal that the professional graduate degree has been also planned by other peers. Consequently, the extent to which this new "product" will provide the Department a competitive edge may be questionable. Additionally, the findings in the Department do

not reveal that the action plan that stemmed from the self-study report considers targeting new markets of students' population. As discussed in the previous Information dimension, this fact can be attributed to a lack of collaboration and communication with other internal units regarding students' recruitment which consequently raises doubts as to the competitiveness of the Department among peers.

Whereas departmental strategy setting aligns mostly with the components of the Structural-sequential strategy, it does much less with the Environmental-impact one. In fact, this strategy that supposes a constant monitoring of the environment and a continuous alignment of internal resources as a consequence (Chaffee, 1985) is lacking according to departmental findings based on evidence from the interviews. Such a strategy also supposes that the organization is constantly making changes based on new environmental information rather than waiting to initiate again a new cycle of planning to realign its resources (Bess and Dee, 2012). The primary document on which rested strategic planning and thinking is the self-study report initially drafted in 2013 during which year one of the recommendations of the action plan was to restructure the undergraduate program and establish a professional Master's degree. However, the new BA program is expected to start this Fall which creates a considerable time lag between the recommendations and their execution. Whereas this fact aligns with Tarek's view of a lack of a shared vision or sense of direction among departmental members, it also signals the absence of an adaptive strategy at the level of the Department. Two facts in the findings confirm this statement.

First, a SWOT analysis is typically an important component of the strategic planning process (Bess and Dee, 2012). However, it is the frequency of this analysis that identifies an institution's strategic planning approach. In this context, departmental



stakeholders did indeed conduct a SWOT analysis of their various programs during the preparation of the Self-Study report in 2013. However, this considerable span of time between recommendations and their implementation assumes that departmental stakeholders consider that their environment is predictable and stable which aligns better with the precepts of the Structural-sequential approach to strategy development and consequently does not allow departmental stakeholders to be informed of changes and adapt to them to keep a competitive edge. Regarding SWOT analyses, some institutions of higher learning are asking their internal units to update them as many as once or twice a year to account for the internal and external conditions that are constantly in flux (e.g., Fordham University, n.d.). Consequently, the SWOT analyses conducted seven years ago and mentioned in the Self-Study report may not reflect anymore the current external circumstances thus undermining any competitiveness that the Department could have gained were the recommendations implemented earlier. Additionally, Anthony's observation about the need to establish a center that accomplishes specific tasks reveals also a lack of a prompt response to environmental changes.

Second, departmental findings reveal that the recommended Action Plan lacks any quantitative measures that inform departmental stakeholders if they are accomplishing their desired goals. Such quantitative measures are usually designated as Key Performance Indicators. Dolence and Norris (1994) argue that, in relation to strategic planning, Key Performance Indicators allow, for example, providing concerned stakeholders with indications about if a strategy is functional while helping to identify potential solutions if it is not. This fact helps to constantly align the resources of an organization to position it for success. The absence of Key Performance Indicators from

the Self-Study report does not help inform departmental stakeholders if the implementation aligns with the recommendations in the Action Plan due to the absence of such quantitative measures. Similarly, if the Department is seeking to be competitive, the absence of such monitoring mechanisms can undermine the desired competitiveness.

A Value-driven strategy seems to be completely absent from the Department's approach to strategy setting. Departmental findings reveal no evidence of rallying departmental stakeholders around common values through the use of an extensive communication process based on orienting frames of reference (Chaffee, 1985; Bess and Dee, 2012). This was evidenced in departmental findings by the lack of guiding frameworks due to the absence of consensus among members on some issues as discussed previously. The informal communication process that is envisaged by Tarek might be a probable approach to address this challenge, in the absence of which, departmental competitiveness would remain conditioned by developing a sense of shared purpose.

The strategy developed from the Self-Study report is one that aligns almost exclusively with several precepts of the Structural-sequential approach to strategy and will probably lead to departmental improvements. Although the recommendations of the self-study report project the creation of an impact whether through the restructuring of the undergraduate degree or the new professional Master's program. However, the impact will essentially be undermined by the challenges discussed above, such as the significant time lag between the recommendations and their implementation as well as the absence of a shared strategic vision by departmental stakeholders.

**Curriculum.** Curriculum in the Department is a strategic tool that underlies strategy setting and constitutes a response to its Mission. In fact, the statement of

purpose of the Department emphasizes practical professionalism at the undergraduate level and research at the graduate as curriculum considerations. Naturally, initiating graduates to working in professional settings or becoming successful researchers is by itself an obvious component of transformation. Additionally, the projected restructuring of the undergraduate program as well as the proposed professional master, despite the challenges associated with them amply discussed above, are also elements of students' transformation.

However, what the Department offers in terms of transformation may probably not be the distinguishing offering that gives it its edge compared to competitors. In fact, a quick glance at some websites shows to a high extent similar program offering whether at the undergraduate or the graduate level. The competitive edge of the Department resides in the expertise of its faculty members. In fact, departmental findings have repeatedly shown that their research output produced within sub-disciplinary boundaries is highly impactful as evidenced in the high citation index mentioned by Samir. The competitive edge will probably emerge through the linking of this individual sub-disciplinary expertise into developing an innovative curriculum. Stéphan, Joaquin, Soumyajit, Gwénaél (2019) define disciplinary innovation as not just one that is product-driven and materializes through the offering of a new service, but one that is business-process driven through the combining of innovative processes in the delivery of this service. According to the authors, innovation is significantly impacted by these processes that integrate novel approaches to learning, novel approaches to learning how graduates, once professionals, collaborate with their peers in professional settings, how they professionally develop, and how they build new ways of communicating within professional settings. Stéphan et al. (2019) argue that it is not the

fragmented learning of these aspects, but rather the integrated one that leads to what can be considered as innovative practices in the discipline of the Department. So far, departmental findings have revealed that the current undergraduate program and especially the graduate programs are fragmented according to sub-disciplinary tendencies which in turn limits probably the competitive potential of the Department enacted in the developed expertise of its faculty members.

The engagement dimension of the curriculum especially through civic engagement seems to lack in the Department's curricular offerings. This fact is confirmed by both Tarek and Anthony in the findings. The scholarly literature is infused with research that depicts the importance of civic engagement and its impact on students' success. Such success is enacted for example in improving students' critical thinking, and the fact that civic engagement is a venue that transforms theoretical learning into practical action thus transforming students from receivers of knowledge into creators of ideas (Cress, 2012). Besides having an impact on students' success, the importance of integration of civic engagement in the curriculum resides also in it being a strategy for developing mutual sustainable collaborations and partnerships with external stakeholders. In fact, in addition to the opportunities of constituting a source of potential students, Franklin (2009) argues that linkages with communities enhances an institution's political capital by gaining the support and endorsement of political figures such as legislators which in turn can translate into securing fresh funds that supports the institution's scholarly endeavors in relation to various communities. In the Context of the Department, the addition of civic engagement to curricular offerings will align departmental acts with the institution's mission, develop leaders who are engaged in their communities, increase the visibility of the Department which in turn may attract

potential students, establish political visibility which enhances the Department's position in the development of any discipline-related policies, and secure funds to promote research related to this engagement.

What is the image that program and curricular offerings in the Department are relaying externally? The findings have revealed that departmental stakeholders relay predominantly an image of subdisciplinary specialism. However, the interviewees consider that whether at the level of strategic vision, or the promotion of the graduate programs in the Department, there are still improvements that can be accomplished. The discussion above showcases that in the context of curriculum, a sub-disciplinary integration of knowledge that results in a synergetic curriculum that cuts across subdisciplines, combined with interdisciplinary collaboration, and civic engagement offerings will considerably add to the image of the Department and enhance its competitiveness among peers.

### **The Departmental Culture through the Leadership Dimension**

Shared Governance in the Department leans considerably towards full time faculty members. In fact, the departmental structures responsible for influencing decision-making in the Department are ones in which membership is exclusively reserved to full time faculty members. This fact does not necessarily make the governance structure an enabling one as systematic communication with other important stakeholders such as students and alumni through defined structures are not in place to warrant the integration of their views in decision-making. Consequently, this may not promote the transparency of the decision-making mechanisms and will hinder optimizing the Department's effectiveness. Some leadership behaviors in the Department embed a symbolic dimension however the additional use of other symbols

can still enhance further a sense of shared purpose. The narrative below will discuss these statements based on departmental evidence.

**Shared Governance.** Governance in the Department rests primarily on its full-time faculty members. In fact, according to departmental bylaws, voting rights are conferred to full-time academic personnel, a fact that grants them a decisive role in steering and developing the Department. Compared to institutional rhetoric, this reality does not align with the precepts of institutional shared governance as it excludes significant departmental stakeholders from having a role in steering the Department for development, namely part-timers, students and alumni. The discussions in the previous dimensions have revealed the absence of a shared vision on key issues that may impact the development of the Department. This lack of a shared vision is likely to impede the process of shared decision-making. In this context, adoption of shared governance may constitute a remedy to this predicament. In fact, Clark (2004) as cited in West (n.d.) considers that inclusive governance structures lead to developing a balance between opposing commitments and interests and foster consequently a sense of trust in the process.

Departmental findings have revealed that students' role in the governance of the Department is mainly restricted to them being informants, or sources of information when the Department is planning for significant changes such as the restructuring of the undergraduate programs or the design of a graduate professional degree. This limited role for students' participation in curricular changes risks the development of a program of study in which students' needs may be partly accounted for in a context in which learners should be the central focus in this process. Joughin (1968) argues that an academic institution's success is tightly related to having all its concerned stakeholders

fulfill their responsibilities. In this context, students accomplish this through allowing them certain rights and freedom. The author contends that such rights should aim at facilitating students' involvement in certain decision-making responsibilities on specific areas such as academic matters that concern them. What seems to be true at an institutional level is also valid at the departmental level as well. In fact, in a report written about governance in departments, Duke University (1970) notes that involving students in departmental governance mitigates their discontent with the departmental decisions made by faculty members, raises their interest in the learning process, and increases mutual trust and respect with their faculty members. The report notes the significance of students' participation in governance especially through their membership in curriculum committees as the topics discussed in them are particularly important to students. Additionally, the report recommends that students be involved in various ways in the departmental decision-making process through their membership for example in advisory committees who participate in the nomination of chairpersons, and new faculty members to be recruited. Furthermore, if a change in departmental policies that concern students is envisaged, the report recommends that students be notified about the projected change as well as have their suggestions on such proposals discussed with the chairperson. In this context, it is significant to note that several departments in various universities have reserved in their bylaws a place for students' participation in governance (e.g., Brockport University, 2020; University of Pittsburgh, 2013). Based on these facts, the role of the Student Society in the Department as conceived in the department allows for a limited role for its members in departmental governance. There are no student representatives elected by students in departmental

committees. Something, that if reversed will align the department better with the stated valuing at the institutional level of shared governance.

On the other hand, Konana (2015) as cited in Mukhopadhyay (2016) identifies five types of alumni involvement domains that academic institutions can use strategically to ensure their sustainability and increase their impact. In fact, alumni can (a) be an important source for fundraising, (b) be a source of information for quality improvement in educational offerings either as individuals or as members in professional settings, (c) provide assistance in start-up programs, (d) help students in professional placements, and (e) provide various professional skill development opportunities. These various engagement domains can be a tremendous resource at the departmental level if they can be utilized in an organized and systematic manner. One means of developing systematic linkages with alumni can be through establishing permanent structures within the Department and involving them in its governance at the image of what is being done institutionally. Such a structure can be an Alumni Society for example. Since the five alumni engagement domains listed above touch on all aspects of departmental functioning as enacted in the various existing academic committees, including alumni members in them could add to the competitive edge of the Department. In fact, alumni being part of professional settings can impart a great deal of knowledge of the evolving skills requirements in the labor market to translate these requirements into curricular offerings. Additionally, alumni can fund various departmental projects that may be needed to attain strategic goals such as research projects that address practical concerns.

Consequently, the extent to which the current governance structure is an enabling one is not evident based on the findings. In fact, this structure restricts the privilege of



determining the Department's development path to full-time faculty members through majority voting while excluding students and alumni. The absence of other essential stakeholders such as students and alumni from influencing the decision-making process through governance deprives students from a sense of ownership of their professional development and alumni from the opportunity of giving back to the Department through contributing to adapting curricular offerings to evolving work demands and funding essential projects crucial to the development of the Department, which would ultimately increase transparency by promoting trust between these various stakeholders and ensuring departmental effectiveness.

**Symbolic Leadership.** Although departmental findings have revealed two levels of leadership, one at the collective and the other at the individual level, the following will focus on individual leadership and the use of symbolic actions to relay meanings and desired behavior.

The presence of the chairperson across departmental structures is warranted by departmental bylaws either through his membership in departmental committees or interactions with students. As discussed above, the absence of structures that include students and alumni in governance may restrict the liaison role that the chairperson within the circle of faculty members whereas communication with students and alumni, which rather occurs on an individual basis, would remain without a strategic outcome.

Despite the collegial setting that characterizes the decision-making process in the Department and probably supported by the existing bylaws, the chairperson still maintains a status of a leader by virtue of his position. In fact, according to departmental bylaws, the chairperson is tasked with overseeing the administration and academic development of the Department. Although the generic nature of this duty may be diluted

by bylaws that are also based on majority voting in decision-making, it leaves some discretion to the chairperson for developing and implementing strategic actions through various symbolic behaviors. In fact, Reitzug and Reeves (1992) argue that symbolic messages that aim at promoting desired behaviors or achieve desired outcomes are often carried through language, actions, and artifacts. In this regard, it is significant to note that departmental findings revealed two examples of symbolic leadership behaviors meant to develop a sense of shared vision within departmental stakeholders. The informal communication strategy discussed by Tarek as a symbol of negotiation that promotes trust between stakeholders through mitigating their concerns helps realize a sense of shared vision among departmental stakeholders. In fact, Robbins and Judge (2011) argue that this means of communication taps into individuals' anxieties and promotes a sense of closeness. Consequently, an emphasis on such a symbolic behavior can lift individual boundaries that may be due to conflicting interests, and enhance communication between departmental faculty members to expand the common zone of interests between them. The patronization of this process by the chairperson increases the potential of its success due to its position status in the Department. Additionally, as discussed by Anthony, the delegation of responsibilities is another symbol of participatory democracy that models to others what is important and valued while having this act promote transparency and also increase trust between various departmental stakeholders.

Despite these manifestations of symbolic actions, there does not seem to be great emphasis on the use of other symbols in the Department to rally stakeholders around shared objectives. In addition to the importance of emotional language as a symbolic means to foster social cohesion through the use of newsletters, for example, as

mentioned in the discussion of the Information dimension, the use of artifacts such as academic visual identities also constitutes a significant components of symbolic leadership. In fact, Masiki (2011) argues that academic visual identities that symbolically identify academic institutions such as logos and websites help distinguish institutions from competitors, foster staff identification, and communicate identity and reputation externally. These visual identities can be symbolically used by the chairperson to rally various stakeholders around a particular vision, which in turn can contribute to mitigating the divergent interests of faculty members due to sub-disciplinary specialism. Such visual symbols can also be used to relay praised behaviors and promote the competitiveness of the Department. In this regard, the use of the Department's website seems to lack this strategic dimension of showcasing distinction among local peer competitors. In fact, despite the promotional video posted, a glance at the Department's website shows for example that the competitive edge of faculty members such as research achievements and awards are not promoted there which does not help position the Department with regard to peers. Additionally, the establishing of a departmental magazine that publishes select faculty members' articles as well as select students' class projects and researches are also a symbolic means of reflecting departmental values especially that it will align with the desired will of senior administration to transform the institution's identity into a research-driven one.

### **Comparison of the Institutional and Departmental Cultural Domains**

After having detailed the institutional values depicted in the rhetoric and detailed in the previous part entitled "Organizational Cultural Domains", and the departmental one that emerged from the interview data and detailed in the part entitled "Departmental Cultural Domains", the following part will delineate the extent to which departmental

culture is enhancing, orthogonal, or a counterculture to that of the institution based on a comparison of both cultural domains. The comparison will be performed in every dimension of Tierney's (1988) framework.

### **Comparison within the Environment Dimension**

Both the institution and the Department view service as a significant act to weave relationships with the environment. They both equally share the driving reason behind providing the service that is enacted through a sense of caring for the well-being or professional development of various stakeholders. Additionally, service in both entities is umbrellaed by the research competencies of faculty members. In fact, as discussed previously, the research activity of the institution is significantly geared towards fulfilling the service mission of the institution, and the research of the Department's faculty members adheres to the same precepts as reflected in the periodic conferences and workshops organized in the Department that stems from a concern for the continuous professional development of graduates and other stakeholders.

Whereas these generic values reflect a similar belief system, the mechanisms that underlie the service act seem to differ between the institution and the department in various aspects.

Institutionally, a service is a means to establish sustainable relationships with the environment. This sustainability is achieved primarily through structured collaborations that usually gel in the form of institutional structures labeled centers or initiatives, for example. These structures often constitute a cross-collaborative platform that promotes, to a significant extent, cross-disciplinary endeavors. The sustainability of the service, as provided by these structures, resides in the fact that they develop sustained collaborations with external stakeholders, and they bring their expertise outside

institutional boundaries instead of bringing external audiences to the institution to benefit from the provided services. This fact consequently emphasizes the outreach dimension of institutional activity that is cherished in the institution's rhetoric. This mode of functioning highlights three institutional values. First, it highlights the value of collaborations as a necessary requisite for success. Second, it reflects the value that institutional stakeholders attribute to the process of renewal and sustainability. In fact, institutional rhetoric, as enacted in the activity reports of research centers, for example, notes the engagement in new endeavors while attempting to maintain the relationships with previous ones. Third, the institutional way of functioning promotes also the value of engagement wherein the institution goes outside its boundaries to reach various audiences.

Departmentally, the relationship with the three values expressed above is rather an orthogonal one. Service in the Department is usually based on establishing transitory relationships with the environment. In fact, the external services offered by the Department are primarily workshops, conferences, and in-service training addressed to varying audiences in general. Additionally, there are two transformation structures in the Department. The first one is the Center that practices a constrained form of interdisciplinarity with transitory cross-disciplinary collaborations, and the second one is the Project, which is not a departmental initiative but is an independent structure housed in the Department. Departmental members, in general, and the Center's stakeholders seem to value fleeting collaborations internally or with faculty members in other departments.

Additionally, the findings in the Department instead show that the services offered by the Center occur rather within departmental boundaries. The values that emerge here

seem to promote individual professional specialism instead of collaborations. Furthermore, the varying audiences who benefit from the services and the new topics discussed in them seem also to highlight a value that promotes renewal rather than renewal and sustainability as a process. Finally, the services in the Department that are offered inside departmental boundaries promote a centered and inward approach to service offerings that do not align with the engagement value institutionally.

Institutionally, a closer look at partnerships reveals them to be intentional and conscious endeavors since they amplify institutional capacity, they strengthen the offered services, and constitute an opportunity for synergetic relation. This worldview promotes senior administrators' perceptions of the value of synergy resulting from partnerships. In fact, partnerships are platforms that refine mutual learning and growth. Within the same context, structured partnerships with alumni are a window for institutional growth through resources.

The Department also seems to embrace an orthogonal relationship with the concept of partnerships. In fact, despite the existence of similar internal and external peers with whom potential partnerships are possible, departmental actions reflect a lack of the will to engage in strategic partnerships for enhancing the offered services or increasing departmental capacity. This attitude towards partnerships transpires again a view of growth that is rather axed on individualism rather than the belief in aggregating capacities as a means for growth.

Table 34 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally.

Table 34

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Environment Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Values</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
Environment	- Service is a significant act that develops relationships with the environment.	- Workshops and conferences are examples of services that allow the Department to maintain relationships with various communities.	- Enhancing
	- Service is driven by a sense of caring for the development and the well-being of communities.	- The various training opportunities such as workshops and conferences organized in the Department stem from a concern for the continuous professional development of participants.	- Enhancing
	- The research activity of the institution is significantly geared towards fulfilling the service mission of the institution.	- The various professional development opportunities organized in the Department relay research-based practices to various professionals.	- Enhancing
	- Service is a means to establish sustainable relationships with the environment through structured cross-disciplinary collaborations that gel in structures, thus highlighting the value of collaborations.	- Although transformation structures exist, service is usually based on fleeting collaborations either among departmental faculty members or with faculty members in other departments, thus highlighting the value of individual professional specialism.	- Orthogonal
	- The transformation structures sustain the service by developing sustainable collaborations with external stakeholders and bringing the institutional expertise outside its boundaries, thus highlighting both a value of renewal and sustainability process as well as that of engagement.	- Collaborations with external stakeholders are short-term characterized by new topics and varying audiences, and the members of professional settings benefit from the Center's services within the boundaries of the Department through conferences and workshops. This fact emphasizes more the value of renewal and an inward centered approach to service.	- Orthogonal

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- Collaborations with similar external partners are strategic and intentional acts sought to enhance the offered service, increase institutional capacity, and promote the growth of partners, thus highlighting the value of synergy prominently found in the rhetoric.

- Although stakeholders acknowledge the existence of similar peers with whom partnerships are possible, collaborations with external partners are not intentionally sought acts, which may limit the capacity of the services, thus promoting a value of professional individualism as a means for growth.

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- Orthogonal



### **Comparison within the Mission Dimension**

At the level of the mission, both institutional rhetoric and departmental findings identify research as a prominent professional act meant to stimulate development and growth, and ultimately achieve impact through the production of new knowledge. This value, however, seems to be governed by different perceptions at both levels once analyzed more closely.

Institutionally, transformative research was shown to be connected with centers that are driven by collaborative and interdisciplinary action deemed to have the potential of addressing large-scale challenges. These centers promote sustainable linkages with the external environment and pave the way for impact and influence. Several reasons behind which such centers are deemed to create sustainable linkages with the environment were detailed in the previous dimension. This fact promotes senior administrators' belief that interdisciplinarity is a collaborative academic platform necessary to confront the increasingly complex challenges that emerge in the environment, and as such should integrate curricular offerings.

Research at the level of the Department is mostly orthogonal to the research values depicted in institutional documents as the department value system, governed mostly by disciplinary constraints does not conflict with the prominence of research in the institutional rhetoric, it merely has different dimensions. In fact, the research undertaken by the Department's Center for example that rallies the effort of researchers from the same discipline around common objectives responds to the needs of the profession and contributes to offering solutions to them. The professional development opportunities, such as workshops and conferences attended by a broad audience of professionals discussed above, are evidence to that. The increasing interventions of the

Project housed under the Department are also evidence of responding to the needs of the profession. This statement is not to say that interdisciplinary values are not reflected in the activity of faculty members, but to point that they are confined within disciplinary boundaries when structured, and are not part of a planned and intentional departmental strategy. This fact highlights a prevailing value system based on the significance of disciplinary specialism as a means to address challenges, and that collaborations, when they occur, are meant to enhance this professional specialism rather than open new paths of inquiry.

The sustainability of the Department initiatives was amply discussed in the previous environment finding. The limited impact of short-term workshops conducted by the Center constrains the impact of the Department thus placing the sustainability value of the research at an orthogonal dimension with that desired by institutional rhetoric. Additionally, the research conducted contributes to the advancement of solutions to problems of practice, however, being conducted within disciplinary boundaries, it does not provide the possibility to advance solutions from varied perspectives making this conceptualization of impact also orthogonal to that existing in the institutional rhetoric. Finally, the departmental lobbying capability for collective goals perpetuates the Department's values and is orthogonal to institutional rhetoric since the departmental stakeholders' attention is not intentionally directed towards achieving such an outcome but rather is aimed towards individual impact based on professional expertise, and individual research endeavors or short-term collaborative ones.

One of the institution's purpose is to graduate civically involved leaders. Whereas the institutional rhetoric seems to consider that academic offerings contribute to

providing students with the required skills to thrive professionally, the civic dimension of student formation seems to be limited at the department level. One of the characteristics of community engagement promoted at the level of the institution is the fact that it aims to develop a sense of inclusiveness among individuals by enhancing social bonds between students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds who undertake this engagement, as well as involving them with the local community issues. This process surfaces civic engagement as a defining attribute of graduates' leadership and also as a means to create sustainable connections externally.

Departmentally, civic engagement seems to be absent from course offerings and any departmental outreach activity. It was, however, depicted only as a limited requirement from an agreement with a funding institution. This fact places the Department at an orthogonal relationship with the value of civic engagement, as depicted in institutional rhetoric. This is evidenced by the fact that the interviewees acknowledge that an effort should be made at the level of improving civic engagement activities in the Department. The absence of the civic engagement component from the Department was acknowledged to deprive students from developing a sense of inclusiveness, to collaborate with other individuals successfully, and to understand closely local challenges.

Assessment is a pervasive and willful practice at the institutional level. In fact, the previous findings chapter has identified it to be a periodic ritual demarcated with clear beginnings and endings and meant to monitor and align actions with purpose. The development, for example, of specific performance metrics, renders the monitoring of action for effectiveness a feasible task. Consequently, assessment rituals constitute a

learning opportunity that allows for enhancing the effectiveness of the institution at various levels.

Departmentally, the assessment of departmental programs and activities is mostly limited to the periodic program reviews required institutionally, and the Self-Study report that departmental stakeholders conducted several years ago. Additionally, departmental findings showed no evidence of assessment regarding the Center's activity to examine if its activities align with its original intent. This fact renders the relationship between the institution and the Department on the assessment value an orthogonal one since assessment practices in the Department seem to stem from the need to satisfy institutional requirements than engage in reform and change. Consequently, with the existence of sparse assessment practices in the Department that are not linked to performance metrics, there seem to be few opportunities that allow examining the effectiveness of departmental programs and activities, which in turn, reduces equally the impact capability of the Department internally and externally. This fact also stands orthogonally to how assessment is depicted in institutional rhetoric.

Table 35 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally.

Table 35

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Mission Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Values</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
Mission	- Research is an essential component of the institution’s mission and an essential means to achieve development and growth.	- Research is a significant endeavor in the activity of departmental stakeholders and is a means to achieve growth and impact for them.	- Enhancing
	- Transformative research is one that is collaborative and interdisciplinary and allows to create sustainable linkages with the environment in the process of fulfilling the institution’s mission. Consequently, interdisciplinary is considered as the means to confront ever-increasing challenges.	- Research is mostly conducted within disciplinary boundaries and does not allow for sustainable linkages with the environment due partially to the short-term nature of the Department’s interventions. Disciplinary specialism is the best means to address challenges and collaborations serve to enhance this specialism.	- Orthogonal
	- Transformative research that is based on collaboration and interdisciplinarity and ensures robust linkages with the environment warrants institutional impact and influence.	- The limited, short-term interventions of the Department coupled with a mostly disciplinary-confined aspect of the research that is aimed at promoting the individual impact of departmental members ensures a partial impact externally.	- Orthogonal
	- Civic and community engagement is an attribute of graduates’ leadership and is provided to students through specific centers, program, or scholarship offerings.	- Civic and community engagement is absent from departmental activity at both the level of program offerings or outreach surfacing the belief that graduates’ leadership is essentially shaped by the disciplinary skills taught in the Department.	- Orthogonal
	- Civic engagement activities develop a sense of inclusiveness among individuals by enhancing social bonds between students from different ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds and involve them with the local community issues to	- The absence of civic engagement hinders students’ formation into becoming leaders by not allowing them to develop a sense of inclusiveness and deprives them of developing their collaboration skills and understanding local challenges.	- Orthogonal

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enhance their collaboration skills and bring them closer to challenges in their communities.

- Assessment is an intentional periodic act meant to monitor and align actions with institutional purpose continually.

- Assessment is a learning opportunity that increases institutional effectiveness by monitoring performance through specific metrics.

- Assessment is an obligation reserved for certain junctures rather than stem from a will to engage in reform and change.

- The sparse assessment practices surface the assumption that assessment is not a learning opportunity but an institutional requirement.

- Orthogonal

- Orthogonal

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### **Comparison within the Socialization Dimension**

Socialization is a means to shape institutional stakeholders' behavior to align with the professional behaviors desired by senior administrators. Tenure and mentoring were both identified as symbols of socialization and were shown to maintain among themselves a cyclical relationship. In fact, once faculty members internalize the behavior required to acquire tenure, according to institutional rhetoric, they become bearers of institutional wisdom who, in turn, are expected to relay to new recruits this wisdom in their role as mentors. Departmentally, this cyclical relationship seems to exist as well, even if it cannot be evidenced by actual practices since mentoring in the Department was undertaken only recently. In fact, the intended mentoring behaviors align with the interviewees' perception of the requirements for success, as reflected in acquiring tenure, for example. Although this generic cyclical association shows an enhancing relationship between institutional rhetoric and departmental practices, the perceptions of departmental members of tenure-expected behaviors, as well as the means to relay them to new faculty members, seem to diverge in various aspects.

According to the institutional rhetoric, the development of a professional identity, based mainly on research competences, is a principal requirement for acquiring tenure. However, this identity seems to be underlain by the scholarly and professional connections that faculty members make externally. The more collaborative these connections are, the more impact they create externally as they pave the way for innovative solutions to various challenges. This fact surfaces the belief that development is a multi-sided relationship in which learning is not only shaped by increased disciplinary expertise but also by refining this expertise through testing it in professional platforms.

Departmental findings seem to place the Department in an orthogonal relationship with this rhetoric. Although research competences are the cornerstone of faculty members' activities, which have consequently allowed them to establish significant professional identities and establish connections externally through the various training offered, these identities remain the outcome of individual scholarly endeavors or fleeting collaborative ones. Departmentally, the development of a professional identity seems to be shaped by the belief that increased disciplinary expertise is the only factor needed for enhancing learning and development.

Institutionally, the establishment of a professional identity reflects on an increased status of the tenure-track faculty member. So far, the same statement is enacted departmentally since the scholarly endeavors of faculty members have promoted their status externally, as evidenced by the awards they receive, for example. Institutionally, however, status increases when the tenure-track faculty member engages in more significant collaborations in which he/she leads or mobilizes a group of peers, which consequently allows for securing funds to expand these scholarly endeavors and develop innovative solutions to various challenges. This performance ultimately impacts the institution's identity and advances it. Departmentally, the establishing of status is one that stops at the level of individual scholarly achievements, which consequently promotes the faculty member's individual identity over the departmental one and leads probably to limiting the impact of the Department externally. These two institutional and departmental perceptions of status are in an orthogonal relationship with each other.

With regard to the commitment to a growth trajectory, a tenure-track faculty member is one who commits to enacted in a long-term research agenda. As depicted in



the institutional rhetoric, this long-term research agenda grows through the diverse expertise that feeds into it due to expanding collaborations and ultimately leads to innovative findings. The institutional rhetoric mentions interdisciplinary “centers of excellence” as a means to achieve this outcome. Departmental performance seems to be orthogonal to this institutional rhetoric. In fact, departmental findings have mostly revealed growth performance trajectories underlain by individual scholarly acts or transitory collaborative ones. This fact makes securing funds to advance and develop long-term research agendas a difficult feat and surfaces again the value that departmental stakeholders place on disciplinary specialism. The absence of interdisciplinary structures in the Department also hinders the growth potential of the faculty members and the Department equally.

Institutionally, mentoring is a significant act for indoctrinating new faculty members to desired behavioral cues. As mentioned before, there is an extensive documentation that is devoted to its processes, whether institutionally or at the level of various faculties. Institutionally, this fact surfaces the belief that the professional development of novice faculty members is a journey that is underlain by mutual learning and growth between mentor and mentee. This fact may not be fully endorsed departmentally. In fact, mentoring in the Department does not seem to be a significant practice due probably to the fact that current senior departmental stakeholders learned the cues for success individually and that there were no new faculty members recruited in the Department since several years ago. Additionally, there is no formal manual for newly recruited members in the Department about cues for success in their professional performance. Consequently, mentoring in the Department is rather based on the belief

that the path for success is a solitary learning journey in which the mentee has to learn to search for cues of success individually.

Table 36 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally.

Table 36

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Socialization Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Values</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
Socialization	- There is a cyclical relationship between the learning of institutional members for acquiring tenure and transmitting these same cultural values to novice faculty members through mentoring processes.	- The cyclical relationship between the learning for tenure and mentoring these values to new faculty members also exist in the Department.	- Enhancing
	- A professional and scholarly identity is one that develops through a two-sided relationship in which learning is shaped and refined in professional platforms.	- A professional and scholarly identity is achieved through learning shaped by increased disciplinary expertise.	- Orthogonal
	- Within the tenure dimension, a significant scholarly and professional status is one that suggests the involvement of faculty members in collaborative research endeavors in which they lead a group of peers, expand their activity through securing more funds and result in innovative findings to challenges.	- Status is warranted through individual achievements, which ultimately promotes individual identities at the expense of collective departmental ones, thus limiting the Department's impact externally.	- Orthogonal
	- A tenure-track faculty member commits to a growth trajectory enacted through long-term research agendas that develop through collaborations and lead to innovative findings. This outcome can be achieved through interdisciplinarity.	- Growth performance trajectories are underlain by individual scholarly acts that hinder the ability to subscribe to long-term research agendas in the absence of interdisciplinary structures as collaborative frameworks.	- Orthogonal
	- Mentoring is a significant act in the institution, as evidenced by the extensive documentation about it institutionally and at the level of various faculties and is a mutual learning and growth journey between mentor and mentee.	- Mentoring is not a significant practice, probably due to the fact that current senior faculty members probably socialized themselves individually to cues of success. This surfaces the belief that the path for success is a solitary journey in which the	- Orthogonal

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mentee has to learn to search for cues of success  
individually.

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## **Comparison within Information Dimension**

The approach to information gathering and processing according to institutional rhetoric is one that acquires a strategic dimension. The findings in the institution show that information as a resource is a systematic activity that adheres to an information pathway model in which institutional stakeholders follow a linear cognitive process for decision-making. Additionally, this process is a continuous endeavor to which institutional stakeholders devote significant time and effort. Institutionally, this fact elevates the status of information to a resource that is needed for collective survival. Information in the Department seems to be less considered as a strategic asset compared to institutional rhetoric. In fact, except for specific occasions discussed previously, information scanning as a departmental endeavor is limited to significant moments such as initiating a departmental self-study, for example, thus rendering the information gathering and analyzing tasks a less systematic activity. Departmentally, information is a resource that is gathered for individual survival and development. This approach to information does not align with that depicted in the institutional rhetoric, placing the Department in an orthogonal relationship with institutional rhetoric.

Examined closely, this orthogonality was depicted on several facets related to information. First, whether from the perspective of operational-strategic information or research-strategic one, institutional rhetoric refers to the information process as being the outcome of a cross-collaborative task engaging the efforts of multiple stakeholders. Institutionally, this fact transpires the belief that raw information needs to be refined collaboratively to become a resource that can be used for decision-making. The activity of the Department is orthogonal to this statement. In fact, except for the case of the Center's activity, information gathering and analyzing is mostly an individual endeavor

that is accomplished by individual faculty members for research-strategic information or the Department alone in the context of students' enrollment, for example. This fact again surfaces the belief that information is rather necessary for individual survival and that the individual's disciplinary expertise is sufficient to make sense of it.

Institutionally, information gathering and analysis sometimes reflect in structural modifications such as the establishment of new centers in response to environmental changes. Additionally, the information process can be refined through collaborations with external partners who may be a source of information themselves that help in redirecting the research competencies of these centers to satisfy environmental needs. This process ultimately enhances the desired institutional impact. In contrast, the Center is the only departmental structure that dates from the 1970s and does not warrant a strategic departmental impact due to the lack of sustainable partnerships. This fact makes the relationship with the institutional rhetoric on responding to changes through the establishment of new centers or the significance of partnerships in the information process an orthogonal one.

Institutionally, decision-making that is the outcome of the information process is next relayed externally, in the form of information that symbolizes institutional competence. Departmentally, competence is the mark of the individual endeavors of faculty members that does not require any information relaying effort as it is intrinsic to the professional contributions of faculty members, making the relationship with the institution on this dimension an orthogonal one.

The institution diversifies its communication means combining formal and informal communication mediums such as meetings, emails, or town hall meetings and newsletters. This extensive use of communication processes underlain by the

collaborative schemes discussed above helps refine the responses to information from the environment. Departmentally, formal communication is the dominant means of communication and is mostly confined within departmental boundaries. Informal communication is much less tapped in the Department in a context in which its use may have helped rally departmental stakeholders around a shared vision and accelerate the decision-making process. This fact renders the relationship on the breadth and nature of communication with institutional rhetoric an orthogonal one.

Institutionally, information relayed externally uses efficiently various web formats and an extensive use of social media. Additionally, the particular communications of the current president relay internally and externally institutional values and success stories. Departmentally, the use of web formats and social media is not an efficient one, especially in terms of relaying an image of departmental competence externally. This fact surfaces again the value that the communication of competence externally is intrinsically related to the expertise and reputation of faculty members, as reflected in citations index of publications, for example. Additionally, the absence of a newsletter that may rally stakeholders around shared objectives and communicate departmental success stories externally is another evidence of these differences with institutional practices.

Table 37 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally.

Table 37

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Information Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Values</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
Information	- Information is a strategic asset that subscribes to a structured determined pathway and involves the thinking of institutional stakeholders for decision-making. The institutional value that transpires is that information is a resource for collective survival.	- Information is considered less to be a strategic asset as it is not continuously gathered and processed to face unstable environments collectively. Information is a resource that is gathered for individual survival and development.	- Orthogonal
	- The information process is the outcome of a cross-collaborative task surfacing the value that raw information needs to be refined collaboratively to become a resource that can be used for decision-making.	- Except for the case of the Center, information gathering and analyzing is either an individual endeavor or one that is accomplished within departmental boundaries, thus surfacing the belief that only disciplinary expertise is needed to make sense of it.	- Orthogonal
	- The information process reflects in structural modifications such as establishing new centers and is also refined through external partnerships, which help redirect the research competencies of centers to satisfy emerging needs, thus enhancing the impact.	- The Center is the only structure in the Department dating from the 1970s. This fact, coupled with the lack of sustainable partnerships, hinders the information scanning and analyzing capability emphasizing once again the value of the disciplinary expertise significance again in the sensemaking process.	- Orthogonal
	- Decision-making is relayed externally in the form of information that signals institutional competence.	- Competence is the intrinsic mark of the individual endeavors of faculty and does not need to be relayed externally.	- Orthogonal
	- The diversification of communication processes combining collaborative formal and informal mediums helps refine the responses to information from the environment.	- Communication is mainly achieved through formal processes in a context where informal ones could help enhance decision-making in some instances. Communication is mostly confined within departmental boundaries.	- Orthogonal



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- Information relayed to the external environment uses efficiently various web formats, and an extensive use of social media combined with communications from the president that relay internally and externally desired behaviors and success stories.

- The use of web formats and social media is not an efficient one surfacing the value that the communication of competence externally is intrinsically related to the expertise and reputation of faculty members.

- Orthogonal

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## **Comparison within the Strategy Dimension**

In its attempt to develop various strategies, the institution uses a multifaceted procedure that consists of a combination of three strategy-setting approaches allowing the institution greater resilience in response to environmental challenges and a more significant external impact. On this dimension, the Department instead promotes the use of the linear approach to strategy that reflects departmental stakeholders' assumption that the environment is predictable and stable, consequently making the Department less likely to develop resilience to external changes and, in turn, reducing its impact. This fact makes the relationship with institutional rhetoric an orthogonal one.

The Structural-Sequential approach to the strategy used institutionally is a comprehensive one that delineates mission, vision, core values, the formulation of medium and long-term goals as well as measurements and metrics that serve to monitor the implementation of these goals. The Department adheres partially to the precepts of this approach since the delineation of the vision and core values are not explicitly mentioned in departmental documentation, showing a lack of direction and shared purpose. The strategic plan lacks the delineation of metrics to monitor the realization of strategic goals, thus showcasing lesser importance to the assessment of performance. The value that surfaces in the Department is one that considers strategy-setting is merely a means to ensure the functioning of the Department. These two approaches render the relationship between the institution and the Department on the components of this strategy-setting an orthogonal one.

The institution approach to strategy-setting is underlain by collaborations between various institutional stakeholders as well as institutional units, thus surfacing the value of collaboration again. This fact has been depicted, for example, in the participation of

students in strategy retreats or the cooperation of various units to implement a strategic initiative. Collaboration as a value that characterizes strategy setting in the Department is less evident. Although various stakeholders' input is considered in the formulation of strategies, specific stakeholders such as students do not participate actively in the strategic formulation process through being parts of retreats, for example, making the relationship with institutional rhetoric an orthogonal one too.

Institutionally, the Environmental-impact strategy reflects the stakeholders' assumption that environments are unstable and that constant monitoring and alignment of resources is a means to capitalize on external change. The Department seems equally to uphold an orthogonal relationship with that view. In fact, despite the conducting of SWOT analyses, the time span between the resulting recommendations and their implementation is significant, thus surfacing the stakeholders' assumption that environments are predictable and that reacting swiftly to a constantly changing external environment is not a priority.

Institutionally, the curriculum is a means for transformation into becoming a leader. In addition to distinctive academic curricular offerings marked with interdisciplinary components that respond to environmental imperatives, institutional stakeholders acknowledge that civic engagement is a trait of leaders. The Department shows an orthogonal relationship with the institutional rhetoric on distinctive curricular offerings and the importance of the inclusion of civic engagement as a requirement in academic programs. In fact, the current curricular offerings marked with sub-disciplinary fragmentations, combined with the absence of civic engagement elements, may not promote the competitiveness and reflects less a concern for mitigating social inequalities.

Institutionally, strategy setting and curriculum are means to reflect a desired external image of competitiveness, resilience, and engagement. Departmentally, the image relayed externally is orthogonal to institutional rhetoric since it is instead one about subdisciplinary specialism.

Table 38 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally.

Table 38

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Strategy Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Value</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The institution promotes the use of a multifaceted approach to strategy setting that provides it greater resilience to respond to environmental changes and more impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Department uses dominantly the linear approach to strategy-setting, which surfaces the stakeholders' assumption that environments are predictable and stable, thus lessening the Department's resilience and impact.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orthogonal</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The institution adopts all the precepts of the Structural-Sequential approach to strategy setting, including the delineation of mission, vision, core values as well as metrics to monitor the performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The partial adherence to the precepts of the Structural-Sequential approach to strategy through the absence of vision, core values, and monitoring metrics showcase that a sense of direction and shared purpose may be lacking the Department as well as a lack of importance given to the assessment of performance.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orthogonal</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaborations between various stakeholders or units characterize the approach to strategy setting at the level of strategic retreats or the development of other strategic initiatives.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Collaboration is a less visible component in the strategy formulation process, as evidenced in an indirect consideration of the perspectives of specific stakeholders such as students or the lack of cross-unit collaboration.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orthogonal</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The Environmental-impact strategy acknowledges that external instabilities require constant alignment to capitalize better on external change.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The partial adoption of the precepts of the Environmental-impact strategy reveals the assumption that the environment is stable and that reacting to change is not a priority.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orthogonal</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The curriculum is a means for transformation through distinctive academic curricular offerings marked with interdisciplinary offerings and the inclusion of civic engagement components in academic programs. This fact surfaces both a value</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The current curricular offerings marked with subdisciplinary fragmentations, combined with the absence of civic engagement elements, may not promote the competitiveness of the Department and reflects less an effort to mitigate social inequalities.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Orthogonal</li> </ul>

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of competitiveness and concern for the disadvantaged.

- Strategy setting and curriculum reflect an image of competitiveness, resilience, and engagement.

- Strategy setting and curriculum emphasize an image of interdisciplinary specialism.

- Orthogonal

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### **Comparison within the Leadership Dimension**

Within the context of leadership, institutional rhetoric and departmental reality seem to hold an orthogonal relationship on several dimensions. In fact, the shared governance model in the institution is based on structures and mechanisms that promote including the perspectives of various stakeholders in various levels in the decision-making process. This fact surfaces the value of governance as an inclusive system that warrants the democratization of decision-making as it provides the double advantage of sustaining the decisions and promoting trust between various stakeholders. The Department, however, restricts its decision-making processes to its full-time faculty members, excluding other relevant stakeholders such as students and alumni. Governance in this context seems to be an exclusive system reserved for specific individuals. This fact does not necessarily reflect a specific value of departmental stakeholders as it may be regulated by the existing departmental bylaws.

Institutionally, shared governance was determined to promote both a sense of stakeholders' empowerment and increase the transparency of decision-making processes. This model reveals the belief that this inclusive model warrants institutional effectiveness and warrants the impact and influence that the institution seeks to achieve. Departmentally, the lack of inclusiveness in the existing structures may negatively impact departmental effectiveness. Although the lack of participation does not necessarily stem from a particular belief of faculty members as mentioned above, the fact that the concept of inclusiveness through shared governance does not become more comprehensive in the revisions of departmental bylaws can surface the belief that departmental effectiveness can only be achieved through the expertise and achievements of faculty members.

In the exercising of leadership, institutional administrators such as the current president resort to symbolic behaviors that help promote the senior administrators' value system and simultaneously relay to internal and external stakeholders cues of desired performance. This fact surfaces the belief that a comprehensive approach to leadership combines actual practices warranted by the position but also more implicit ones that consist of manipulating symbols to consolidate a sense of purpose and meaning. Departmentally, the significant use of symbolic leadership seems to be absent in the Department, which instead promotes the belief that leadership resides mainly in the position itself.

Table 39 below summarizes the comparison of the prevailing actions and values institutionally and departmentally. Table 40 summarizes the comparison of values in all dimensions.



Table 39

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Actions and Values Institutionally and Departmentally within the Leadership Dimension*

<b>Unit of Analysis and Type of Relationship</b>	<b>Institutional Actions and Values</b>	<b>Departmental Actions and Values</b>	<b>Type of Relationship</b>
	- Shared governance is based on structures and mechanisms that warrant the inclusiveness of various stakeholders in decision-making, thus promoting the value of the democratization of decision-making.	Governance is not shared as it is reserved for faculty members, thus excluding the views of other relevant stakeholders in decision-making such as students and alumni. This fact does not necessarily reflect different values as it is warranted by the bylaws.	- Orthogonal
Leadership	- Shared governance as an inclusive model warrants institutional effectiveness.	- Departmental effectiveness is not necessarily achieved through participation, but rather the expertise and achievements of faculty members.	- Orthogonal
	- A comprehensive approach to leadership necessitates the combination of practice warranted by the institutional position and the manipulation of symbols to consolidate a sense of purpose and meaning.	- Leadership is mainly warranted in the position rather than be part of a multi-dimension framework.	- Orthogonal

Table 40

*A Summary of the Comparison of the Prevailing Values Institutionally and Departmentally Across all Dimensions*

<b>Dimension</b>	<b>Institutional Values</b>	<b>Departmental Values</b>
Environment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collaborations are a necessary requisite for success.</li> <li>• Renewal and sustainability are a guiding value in external relationships.</li> <li>• Engagement is a means to go outside institutional boundaries to reach various audiences.</li> <li>• Partnership are an opportunity for synergies in which partners offer their distinguishing expertise and grow together.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual professional specialism rather than collaborations necessary for success.</li> <li>• The guiding value is one that promotes renewal rather than renewal and sustainability.</li> <li>• A centered and inward approach to service offerings rather than an outward engagement.</li> <li>• The view of growth that is rather axed on professional individualism.</li> </ul>
Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interdisciplinarity is a collaborative academic platform necessary to confront complex challenges and should integrate curricular offerings.</li> <li>• Collaborative and interdisciplinary structures sustain environmental linkages and warrant impact and influence.</li> <li>• Civic engagement is a defining attribute of graduates' leadership and a means to create sustainable external connections.</li> <li>• Assessment is a learning opportunity that refines various institutional processes and enhances effectiveness.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Disciplinary specialism is the means to address challenges and professional collaborations enhance this professional specialism rather than open new paths of inquiry.</li> <li>• Impact is individual and based on professional expertise.</li> <li>• Graduates' leadership is solely related to the acquisition of disciplinary skills developed through the expertise of faculty members.</li> <li>• Assessment satisfies institutional requirements than constitute an opportunity to engage in reform and change.</li> </ul>
Socialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional identity is a multi-sided relationship in which learning is shaped by increased disciplinary expertise and refined by testing it in professional platforms.</li> <li>• Professional development of novice faculty members is a journey that is underlain by mutual learning and growth between mentor and mentee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Professional identity is shaped only by increased disciplinary expertise.</li> <li>• Mentoring for success is a solitary learning journey in which the mentee has to learn to search for cues of success individually.</li> </ul>
Information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information is mainly a resource that is needed for collective survival.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information limited to significant junctures is a resource that is gathered for individual survival and development.</li> </ul>

- Raw information needs to be refined collaboratively to become a resource that can be used for decision-making.
- An institutional effort is needed to relay externally information about institutional competence.
- Formal and informal communication means rally internal stakeholders around shared objectives and communicate externally competence.

### Strategy

- The environment is unstable and necessitates a multifaceted approach to strategy setting.
- Mission, vision and core values are significant components in strategic setting to rally stakeholders around a shared purpose and metrics are necessary measurements to monitor the performance.
- Collaborations between various stakeholders is necessary to develop comprehensive strategic plans.
- The transformation of graduates into leaders is based on a curriculum that integrates knowledge form various disciplines and combines civic engagement components as a means to mitigate social inequalities.

### Leadership

- Shared governance is an inclusive system meant for the democratization of decision-making as it provides the double advantage of sustaining the decisions and promoting trust between various stakeholders.
- Shared governance as an inclusive model warrants institutional effectiveness.
- Leadership is a multi-dimension framework that includes position privileges and the strategic manipulation of symbols.

- Information is necessary for individual survival and the individual's disciplinary expertise is sufficient to make sense of it.
- Competence does not require an information effort to relay it externally as it is intrinsic to the professional contributions of faculty members.
- Formal communication is the dominant means of communication with scarce use of various web-based social platforms to relay competence externally.

- The environment is stable, requires a single approach to strategy setting shaped by the development of long-term goals.
- Strategy-setting is merely a means to ensure the functioning of the Department thus lacking the delineation of a vision and core values.
- The development of Strategic plans is the domain of faculty members.
- The transformation of graduates into leaders is based on a disciplinary curriculum.

- Governance is an exclusive system reserved for specific individuals.
- Departmental effectiveness is warranted through the leadership of its faculty members as professional experts.
- Leadership is mainly a position attribute.

### **Limitation of the Study**

Being a requirement to complete a Master's degree, this research has some limitations imposed by time and resources constraints that need to be acknowledged here. First, the cultural depiction at the institutional level relied solely on documents. In this context, the values determined in institutional documentation may not be the ones that are actually practiced thus highlighting the dichotomy between the espoused and enacted values that accompany the process of cultural analysis (Schein, 2010).

Second, even if espoused and enacted values are aligned in the institution, it is important to remind the reader that a symbolic approach used for cultural depiction stems from an anthropological theoretical perspective. This perspective normally requires the immersion of the researcher in the study context, a fact warranted mainly through interviews and non-participant observations. This lack of immersion both institutionally and departmentally may have not allowed for an accurate depiction of the cultural values of the study context.

The third limitation concerns the methodology itself. In fact, the methodology used has its limitations and calls for further cultural investigations that can be part of a larger research agenda. In this context, Schultz (1994) argues that a symbolic cultural inquiry based on the associations of various institutional symbols depicts small cultural images that necessitate further cultural investigations that involve additional symbolic expressions for a more refined determination of the cultural landscape.

In light of the above, the exclusive reliance on institutional rhetoric through its published documentation as a source of data to answer the first research question, even if it accounted for the president's written perspectives as a form of discourse, can be restrictive in terms of the variety of data sources needed in qualitative research. A more

comprehensive approach to data collection would have still enriched the study if it observed the precepts of an ethnographic perspective that relies on a variety of data sources including interviews and participant and non-participant observations.

At the departmental level, the limitation was twofold. First, the depiction of the culture at the level of the Department used the same symbolic expressions that emerged in the institution. This fact surfaces the assumption that the institution and the Department should maintain a similar value system. Although Balderston as cited in Bess and Dee (2012) warns against departments in universities operating too independently and focusing on departmental objectives that do not align with overall institutional ones, factors such as the nature of the discipline, size, or resources available to the Department may develop specific cultural values that would necessitate the search for additional and departmental-specific symbolic expressions for a more refined depiction of the culture in the Department. Second, the limitation with regard to the sources of data was greater in the Department since data was restricted to interviewing three departmental stakeholders, which in turn may not have allowed to answer accurately the second research question. More sources of data could have included a more comprehensive audience such as faculty members and students as well as various types of departmental rhetoric such as departmental documents and the various speeches of chairpersons. These discrepancies as described above may have led to missing some subtle nuances when addressing the cultural comparison in the third research question. Consequently, the implementation of the recommendations for value alignment that are proposed in the next section will be left to the discretion of departmental stakeholders who are positioned to assess their applicability in the Department based on their knowledge of the specific departmental characteristics.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

This section concludes this study by reflecting on the determined departmental values while attempting to provide an interpretation for their reason, and consequently, present recommendations for future research and practice. Using Tierney's (1988) six-dimension cultural framework, this study examined the cultural alignment between the home predominant culture of the American University in Beirut and an academic Department in the Social Sciences as an academic subculture. Tierney's (1988) six dimensions for cultural analysis are: (a) Environment, (b) Mission, (c) Socialization, (d) Information, (e) Strategy, and (d) Leadership. For that purpose, the study used Schultz's (1994) symbolic perspective as an analytical lens for this cultural inquiry that consists of identifying associated key symbolic expressions as an analytical point of entry, their symbolic representations as well as the shared meanings attributed to them by individuals.

The two symbolic expressions that served as a starting point for cultural analysis in the Environment dimension were Service and Strategic Partnerships. Those that emerged in the Mission dimension were Transformative Research, Transformative Scholarships, and Assessment. Tenure and Mentoring were the symbolic expressions that emerged in the Socialization dimension. The two symbolic expressions that emerged in the Information dimension were Information and Communication. Strategic Planning and Curriculum were depicted to be the symbolic expressions in the Strategy dimension and Shared Governance and Symbolic Leadership in the Leadership dimension.

These cultural constituents pave the way for the determination of the more general cultural landscape as they constitute a cultural perimeter that allows for the emerging of

cultural worldviews representing individuals' cognitive image of their reality. At the institutional level, this task was accomplished through the survey of an extensive amount of institutional documentation that well exceeded the review of 1000 pages.

To ensure consistency in the comparison process, these symbolic expressions, representations, and their meanings were next used as cultural guides in the attempt to identify the Department's culture and examine its extent of alignment with the institutional one using Hatch and Cunliffe's (2013) analytical comparative tool. Hatch and Cunliffe (2013) identify three types of relationships between a subculture and a corporate culture. In fact, a corporate culture and a subculture can have: (a) an enhancing relationship where top management values and beliefs are supported, (b) an orthogonal relationship in which a subculture develops its independent value-system without however conflicting with the corporate one, or (c) a counterculture in which a subculture openly confronts and challenges the values of the corporate subculture. Data at the level of the Department was collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews with three key departmental stakeholders.

The findings in the Department identified one significant theme that determined departmental stakeholders' behavior and actions, and consequently surfaced a related value. This behavior-shaping theme is attributed to some institutional policies in vigor, especially those related to promotion and tenure. In fact, one of the reasons that hinder the alignment with desired institutional performance cues is the departmental members' knowledge that such behavior will not be a rewarded one. This fact confirms Kezar's (2006) argument that one significant catalyst to promote desired behavior from faculty members such as engaging in research collaborations, for example, consisted of integrating this behavior into the institutional reward system rather than just celebrating

the nominal intrinsic rewards that arise from such collaborations. Although this is not the purpose of the thesis, this institutional dichotomy confirms the difference between espoused and enacted values that usually accompany cultural investigations conducted from a functionalist perspective (Schein, 2010). Institutionally, rewarded practices as depicted in promotion and tenure policies direct towards the research performance of faculty members with little to no evidence showing any incentives that reward the managerial performances of key departmental stakeholders such as chairpersons, for example. This fact compromises these individuals' full involvement in any attempt to engage in departmental managerial functions that are, in contrast, celebrated in the institutional rhetoric. This fact invites senior administrators to review some institutional policies to warrant greater coherence between preachings and actions. Although this factor is significant in directing the performance of faculty members, it may not fully explain the beliefs and value scheme that determines the performance of academics, thus suggesting the need to search for a deeper rationale about embracing specific professional values and beliefs in academia.

A careful examination of the various departmental values that emerged from this study seems to be umbrellaed by a dominant theme, namely disciplinary and sub-disciplinary specialism. Becher (1994) argues that disciplines are governed by particular values such as epistemological beliefs and the approach to knowledge production. Additionally, Becher and Trowler (2001) developed a framework for the categorization of disciplines axed on a matrix delimited by the four categories of hard, soft, pure, and applied. The authors consider disciplines within the social sciences and humanities as being soft disciplines since less developed paradigms govern them for the creation and ordering of knowledge combined with a lack of consensus about theory, methods, and



techniques for the knowledge production process. The scholarly literature about research collaborations, especially interdisciplinary ones, has based itself on this categorization to examine the extent to which such collaborations can be viable. Gardner (2013) argues that hard and soft disciplines are those characterized by particular paradigmatic orientations and that collaborations can occur when researchers operate from the same paradigmatic assumptions. Hence, the author argues that research collaborations often do not cross the paradigmatic boundaries of hard or soft disciplines considering that it is much easier for collaborations to emerge between researchers within the hard disciplines categorization rather than ones that involve collaborations between researchers from hard and soft disciplines. Moreover, if collaborations are more probable to occur between hard discipline researchers, they seem more difficult to arise between soft discipline ones. In fact, Biglan (1973b) as cited in Gardner (2013) considers that scholars in nonparadigmatic soft disciplines must first develop a common framework concerning purpose and process across the stages of their research collaborations. This argument implies that the loose paradigmatic assumptions of soft disciplines limit their ability to adapt to the paradigmatic assumptions of other disciplines in the hard or soft sciences and consequently might hinder research collaborations. Consequently, it seems that it is much harder for researchers in nonparadigmatic disciplines to collaborate with each other or with researchers adhering to the hard categorization since disciplines in the soft categorization have particular paradigmatic frameworks making collaborations decisions eclectic by nature and possible only when collaborators share a significant area of epistemological assumptions, or purposefully engage in developing together a common epistemological grounding for their collaboration to succeed.

These arguments seem also to hold true at a lower level of analysis, that of the subdisciplines. In fact Buchanan (1966) as cited in Becher and Trowler (2001) considered that “it is easier for an economist working with non-market decisions to communicate with a positive political scientist, game theorist or organizational theory psychologist than it is for him to communicate with a growth-model macro-economist with whom he scarcely finds any common ground” (p. 64).

The fact that the discipline in the Department falls within the soft categorization explains the reason why professional individualistic traits seem to characterize the activity of faculty members in the Department.

The next subsection will incorporate these assumptions and other ones to be part of recommendations for future research that can build on the findings of this study.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

As stated in the first chapter of this thesis, the rationale that initially justified this research was to examine the extent of alignment between a dominant institutional culture and an embedded subculture from an interpretivist-symbolic perspective. The gap that this endeavor was expected to fill was to investigate a departmental subculture, a subculture that is relatively underexamined in the western organizational culture scholarly literature (Heidrich and Chandler, 2015) and virtually inexistent in the Arabic one (Karami, 2018). The purpose of this research had two dimensions. First, to depict the culture of an academic institution and an embedded academic department since such depiction provides the benefit of understanding the behaviors and motivations of institutional and departmental individuals as well as the way they process information and approach decision-making. Second, through the comparison between them, to weigh the influence of the interplay of the various cultures in a department since the

latter is the confluence of various cultures such as institutional, disciplinary, and student ones, for example (Heidrich and Chandler, 2015). In both of these dimensions, the findings here invite for the development of a broader research agenda.

In the first dimension, the depiction of the culture based on an interpretivist symbolic perspective, whether at the institutional or departmental level, was based on the determination of few symbolic expressions resulting from document analysis as paths of entry to understand these cultures. Further research can incorporate additional symbolic expressions for a more refined determination of the cultural landscape, whether institutionally or departmentally. Furthermore, an interpretivist-symbolic investigation cannot be complete without the immersion of the researcher in the study context. For this to happen, future research should be consistent with the precepts of an ethnographic approach to analyzing culture which includes spending an extended time in the research site and collecting data via observations and interviews with a more inclusive audience such as administrators and students at the institutional level, and a wider pool of faculty members and students at the departmental one. This future research presents the double advantage of developing a more accurate depiction of the culture institutionally and departmentally, and examining the extent to which the published rhetoric that has been extensively analyzed in this research is consistent with the prevailing practices.

Concerning the second dimension, using Tierney's (1988) framework, the findings in this research have shown, for example, that the collaboration schemes, communication patterns, and socialization processes of faculty members in the Department are mostly governed by individual endeavors. This individualism can be attributed to disciplinary influences, which in the case of the Department, seems to

enhance specialism over collaborative performances showcasing a more substantial impact of the discipline on perceptions of behaviors than that of the institution. The scholarly literature has corroborated that disciplinary attributes have influences over research performances, teaching (e.g., Neumann, 2001) and even influence over students' learning behavior (e.g., Lam et al., 2014). In light of the above, the findings here can also pave the way for future research that examines the disciplinary influence on all aspects of departmental functioning, including perceptions of collaborations, communication, and those relating to managerial performances once a faculty member, for example, assumes a leadership position in a Department. Such research can also have policy implications. In fact, the implications here on policy would probably invite senior administrators in academia to avoid tailoring one-size-fits-all policies and regulations but accounting instead for disciplinary differences in such policies, especially those relating to the reward system such as promotion and tenure ones.

### **Recommendations for Value-alignment Actions between Department and Institution**

This section will recommend some possible actions that can allow further alignment between the Department and the institution across all Tierney's (1988) dimensions. The recommended actions will not be formulated by dimension as one action may constitute a value alignment mechanism in several dimensions simultaneously. Although some of these recommendations were mentioned in the previous discussion parts, their recapitulation here allows for further coherence as in what follows, they become part of a comprehensive map of recommended actions.

**Recommendation for action 1: create centers that promote interdisciplinarity.**

The Center in the Department is a transformation structure that is based, however, on a constraint form of interdisciplinarity. Since the discipline in the Department is by nature susceptible to develop linkages with a large variety of other disciplines, a possible plan of action to align departmental values with institutional ones would be to include faculty members from other disciplines in the steering committee of the Center. This act will allow for sustained cross-disciplinary collaborations, thus opening the path for a broader form of interdisciplinarity to occur in the Center's activity. In this context, Ikenberry and Friedman (1972) empirically identified three models of interdisciplinary collaborations. The first one is one in which researchers from different disciplines work in an integrated manner together as a team from the research design phase to the final drafting of the research report. The second one involves equally researchers from various disciplines who tend to work autonomously on different parts of the research project. The third model involves researchers that are predominantly from a single discipline and in which researchers from outside this discipline participate on a supporting basis. The authors consider that the first model is the one suitable for solving problems of practice that cannot be addressed within the boundaries of single disciplines. The interdisciplinarity, with its comprehensive approach to addressing problems of practice, allows for multi-dimensional interventions with professional settings that enable sustainable relationships with them. In fact, as mentioned previously, Brady (2002) argues that cross-disciplinary expertise allows for various forms of sustainable interventions with professional settings, such as developing shared research initiative in which the staff in the professional settings learn to find solutions to

problems of practice or continually refine the processes and products of these settings by injecting in them emerging evidence-based research findings, thus helping them gain accreditation.

**Recommendation for action 2: create a departmental civic outreach center.**

In alignment with institutional rhetoric, the establishment of a civic outreach center in the Department could also enhance and sustain the service with the external environment through stable linkages with various NGOs, for example. Although the institution has already the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service that specializes in offering engagement services to various communities, the Department's disciplinary nature provides it with an independence and a more significant edge as to offering such outreach services externally. There are at least two benefits that emerge from such a center. In fact, while Ramaley (2001) argues that a relationship with various communities based on civic engagement is mutually beneficial, she also highlights that the sustainability potential of such a relationship resides in the fact that it requires the creation of a shared agenda for advancement in which power, responsibility, risk and rewards are shared between the stakeholders. Such a center can generate funds through its activity and establish a reputation due to received awards.

**Recommendation for action 3: develop a mentoring framework.** The individual learning of socialization in the Department has developed within senior faculty members personalized understandings of the essential advice to provide new recruits with, as enacted, for example, in the differing views of interviewed members regarding socialization to interdisciplinarity. The absence of a guiding framework is probably at the core of the inexistence of an active mentoring process in the Department. This is not to say that individual interpretations of socialization processes

by new recruits as a form of informal mentoring are not efficient processes; on the contrary, mentoring thrives informally as repeatedly mentioned in institutional rhetoric. However, a guiding framework may allow new recruits to form a deeper understanding of the value system in the Department and consequently accelerate their integration process. What are the elements of such a guiding framework? Institutional rhetoric combines written policies and explanations by senior faculty members as an example of a guiding framework at the institutional level. The same can be replicated in the Department for new faculty members: a set of written guidelines and explanations from senior departmental stakeholders. Although one can argue that the mentoring assumed by the department chair during the first semester as well as the evaluation processes related to it by bylaws do represent the second component noted in the institutional rhetoric, the departmental workload that chairs have to manage as depicted in the departmental findings casts some doubts about the potential effectiveness of such mentoring.

Mentoring, as depicted in both institutional and departmental findings, suggests a teaching-learning relationship between a mentor and a mentee. At the level of the Department, findings have shown the recurrent complaint about excessive workloads that include scholarly and teaching occupations as well as other professional engagements. Although mentoring is an institutional requirement from senior faculty members, the extensive engagements may not warrant an effective mentoring process due to a lack of time. Consequently, for the guiding framework to be useful, it should rely on minimal mentor intervention and an extensive implication of the mentee in interpreting the cues for success. In other words, this guiding framework should be umbrellaed by the concept of self-mentoring. This process aligns with institutional

rhetoric about the significance of informal mentoring in the learning journey of the mentee in which he/she is left to embark on a learning journey of personal inquiry while searching for implicit behavioral cues for integration and success. In this context, Carr, Pastor, and Levesque (2015) consider that self-mentoring practices contributed considerably to the personal success of new recruits in their socialization journey. According to the authors, self-mentoring practices include reading, researching, and observing people, among other strategies. Additionally, self-mentoring transforms the mentee from a passive receiver of information into a proactive seeker of information to reduce uncertainties and sustain the socialization process. This self-mentoring process can rely on a written component and an oral one.

The existence of written guidelines for the integration and success of new members at the level of the Department may constitute a good start in the socialization journey of novice recruits. These guidelines could include departmental-related information about performance expectations for departmental success. However, particularly important in these written guidelines is the inclusion of a section about the history of the Department. In fact, in a study about mentoring practices in an academic department, Bogler and Kremer-Hayon (1999) found that new members knowing of the private and public history of a department facilitated their departmental integration.

The oral component of the guiding framework is one that should be driven by a psychological and motivational process underlain by the concept of needs fulfillment. In fact, Lacaze and Bauer (2014) argue that needs fulfillment is a source of psychological energy and motivation that encourages newcomers to become proactive in their socialization journey. In this context, the few periodic meetings between mentor and mentee regulated by institutional bylaws should probably not solely revolve around a



set of “dos and don’ts” but also promote the rewards of the job to develop the mentee’s motivation for an engaged personal and proactive inquiry in the socialization journey as this will lead to a sense of self-fulfillment and satisfaction. This engagement process will sustain the socialization process well beyond what is mandated by institutional bylaws and make it an on-going one. This sense of expected self-fulfillment will push the mentee to listen and clarify, read and research, and observe people (Carr, Pastor, and Levesque, 2015). This act will enhance collegial working relationships and foster on-going discussions with peers either through professional collaborations or service committees. Although Tarek noted that service is not encouraged at the beginning of a scholarly journey, such engagement may provide an accrued understanding, from multiple sources, of institutional and departmental success expectations. In fact, Bogler and Kremer-Hayon (1999) found that the participation of new faculty members in institutional committees fostered the development of their sense of professional identity.

**Recommendation for action 4: develop innovative curricular offerings.** The discussion of the organizational cultural domains in the Department showed that the current curricular offerings might not reflect a competitive edge among peers. Although several alternatives can be envisaged to increase the Department’s competitiveness through curricular offerings, one solution that may align with the institutional value is the development of interdisciplinary academic programs that do not just reflect new academic programs but also innovative pedagogical processes in their delivery. In fact, as discussed previously, Stéphan et al. (2019) argue that a comprehensive academic offering is one in which graduates in professional settings combine skills from various disciplines such as marketing and the ability to harness external relations techniques. Additionally, academic innovation in the curriculum is one that is both product-driven

and business-process driven that combines innovative processes in the delivery of this service.

**Recommendation for action 5: make governance shared.** Shared governance assumes an efficient participation of concerned stakeholders in the decision-making process and the development of a strategic direction of where the Department might head in the future. The discussion revealed that students and alumni are missing from the governance model, a fact which was determined in the discussion as a cause for depriving the Department of valuable input and expertise on several dimensions. A possible course of action to address this issue would be twofold. First, develop the role and representation of the existing student society to encompass both graduate and undergraduate students and include elected members from it in departmental committees. Second, create an alumni relation committee in the Department whose role will primarily consist of consolidating the ties with all departmental alumni. In this context, it will be beneficial to the Department to transform its Admissions Committee into one labeled Recruitment and Admissions Committee that includes alumni representatives. In fact, alumni can be enthusiastic departmental emissaries who can have a wealth of trustworthy knowledge to share potential students during school recruitment visits.

**Recommendation for action 6: enhance the communication competencies.** The discussion previously identified formal communication as the pervasive means of communication in the Department. This fact highlights the necessity to promote informal communication processes, especially by key departmental stakeholders. Such processes, including town hall meetings, can build a broader internal consensus around specific objectives (Argenti et al., 2005) and consequently increase the effectiveness of

the communication process and facilitate the persuasion necessary for decision-making. Additionally, using web-driven communication means will also help promote the Department externally. In fact, as discussed previously, such communication, including the use of social media, enhance employer branding and the capacity to attract potential clients (Kaur, 2013). In the case of the Department, social media can be used as part of a strategy to communicate a departmental image of excellence incorporating the promotion of research successes of departmental members as well as various recognitions and awards given to faculty members. This fact will help attract potential students and potential faculty members who have the skills that align with this image.

APPENDIX A

SHAMAA'S REPLY AS THE NON-EXISTENCE OF

SUBCULTURAL RESEARCH IN THE ARABIC SCHOLARLY

LITERATURE

**From:** Hanady Geagea <[h.geagea@shamaa.org](mailto:h.geagea@shamaa.org)>  
**Sent:** Thursday, February 22, 2018 2:38 PM  
**To:** Fadi El Kallab (Student)  
**Cc:** 'Rita Maalouf'; Mireille Bou Antoun  
**Subject:** FW: User Request - Fadi El Kallab

Mr. Fadi El Kallab,

Greetings.

Thank you for your appreciation and for using Shamaa database.

We confirm that there's no studies about organizational subcultures in education in general and higher education in particular in Shamaa database. We must point out that the lack of studies in your subject may mean that it deserves to be examined in depth.

We also confirm that there's no Arabic match of "subculture" in Shamaa Thesaurus.

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Best regards,

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# APPENDIX B

## MEMBER CHECK AND EXAMINATION OF THE INSTITUTIONAL SUBCULTURE OF THE DEPARTMENT

### **Environment**

The findings depict the institution as part of a large ecosystem composed of the institution itself, serviced communities, and partners. Institutional rhetoric reveals that both service and strategic partnerships are used to consolidate the institution's position within this ecosystem. Both have a symbolic value because they transcend their usual definition. One important symbolic institutional value that transpires from institutional discourse is that the institution diversifies its relationships with the environment by forging multiple partnerships with various entities such as communities, schools, industries, businesses, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as other peer institutions at a regional and local level.

The level of interdependencies between this ecosystem's components is high. In fact, serviced communities and entities depend on the services offered to them by the institution to thrive, and partners in this ecosystem depend on each other by maintaining strong relationships through memorandum of understandings for example to perpetuate the environmental impact and ensure greater influence. The main resource that is used institutionally to provide service is research competencies and partnerships. Partnerships exceed the idea of two entities coming together for a common purpose. Institutional discourse considers them to be "strategic" in the fact that they are synergetic because they allow both partners to grow, increase the capacity of the service, and help both partners achieve impact and ultimately influence. Service is viewed as a critical driver of building relationships with the environment, and forging strategic partnership is considered a means to achieve and enhance this service.

### **Questions**

1- How does the department define its environment? (Internal environment such as relation with the school of Arts and Sciences and other departments. External environment such as similar departments in other universities, consultancy work with external bodies, schools, various communities...).

1a- To what extent does "service" constitute a means of developing linkages with the environment? And in what ways is this achieved?

2- If resources are defined as the assets that help increase the linkages with the external environment, what are the internal resources that the department depends on to ensure that breadth of environmental action?

2a. Internal (qualified faculty members, departmental centers driven by interdisciplinarity and collaboration either with departmental faculty members or with other departments).

2.b External (partnerships with peer departments, educational institutions...). Are such partnerships shaped by the “service” act?

3- What are the departmental strategies developed to respond to environmental demands and deal with environmental constraints?

3a- What kind of partnerships/collaborations (internally or externally) are established to overcome the environmental constraints and responds to its demands?

4- If influence is defined here as the ability to relay/impose on the environment the department’s beliefs, what is the nature of the influence on the environment that the department is capable of? (example: lobbying for the new educational policies and procedures in schools, imposing educational practices that are considered by departmental stakeholders as the only means to address educational challenges and difficulties).

4a- How does forging partnerships (with peer institutions, educational establishments, industries...) help in enacting and enhancing this influence process?

### **Mission**

The explicit institutional purpose as stated in its Mission is to advance knowledge, serve people and graduate civically involved leaders. Institutional rhetoric reveals a more implicit educational purpose, that of achieving impact and influence. For that purpose, the institution uses the three assets of Transformative Research, Transformative Scholarships, and Assessment to achieve its implicit aim. Institutionally, these three assets have a symbolic value that transcends their usual denotation. Transformative Research is one that connects the institution with its environment and is collaborative and interdisciplinary because it allows to develop innovative solutions to challenges. This type of research allows for sustaining the relationships with the serviced communities as well as advancing sustainable solutions allowing consequently for impact and influence.

Transformative Scholarships participate in the development of impactful leaders through instilling within students’ values of civic engagement through service to their communities as well as the values of diversity and inclusion. Students become agents of societal change. Both assets contribute in developing a specific institutional identity. Assessment is a learning mechanism through which the institution monitors if its actions align with this purpose by using specific assessment metrics, consequently warranting institutional effectiveness and efficiency.

## Questions

1- What is the mission of the department? How does it align with the university mission?

1a. To what extent and in what ways service is reflected in the departmental mission?

1b. To what extent in what ways research as a venue for service is reflected in the mission?

2- How are the university and department's mission used in departmental decisions and how is this manifested in the academic programs' offerings?

2a- Do departmental course offerings account for the development of civic-engagement skills needed for service by graduates? If yes, how is this achieved?

3- What kind of impact and influence does the department mission highlight and in what ways does it align with the university mission focus on service and research as a means towards impacting the external environment?

3a. How is service considered a means to achieve external impact?

3b. How is research and especially interdisciplinary research considered a means to achieve external impact?

## Socialization

The socialization process as depicted in institutional discourse seems to be a process based on developmental scaffolding in which novice recruits learn to decipher institutional symbols for survival and success, internalize them for professional growth, and become in turn a provider of socialization cues for other novices. This deciphering act is both the outcome of an individual effort that is based on faculty-related bylaws with cues of success facilitated by a mentoring relationship, and an understanding of praised behavioral cues relayed through broad communication such as the president's perspectives for example. .

Both Tenure and Mentoring are institutional tools used in the socialization process. Their symbolic value stems from the fact that institutional rhetoric describes them in a manner that goes beyond their usual meaning.

The requirements for becoming a tenured faculty member reflect the identity of the successful faculty member that represents the university values and have the capability of carrying on with its mission. With research highlighted as a corner stone of the university mission, the identity of the successful faculty member includes being an accomplished expert in conducting and publishing impactful research in one's field. The tenure criteria direct the socialization process of faculty members towards achieving status through explicit recognition by peers in the discipline, demonstrating consistency

and growth through a steady and coherent output of scholarly activities aimed at serving communities, and showcasing commitment to fulfilling the institution's mission.

Acquiring tenure as a goal of socialization is facilitated through the practice of mentoring. Mentoring is considered a means of socialization because the mentor, through accompanying the mentees for an extensive period of interactions, shapes learning by relaying internalized institutional values to novice institutional members engaged on trial and error learning experiences. Whereas the mentoring act itself depicts the dynamics of a relationship between two individuals within institutional boundaries it has also broader repercussions since it socializes novice faculty members to learning how to collaborate with their mentors first, and with peer researchers by fostering positive professional relationships with them.

Culturally, socialization as a norm promotes a belief in mutual growth: that of the internal stakeholders and the institution. The mentee's growth is enacted in his/her learning how to collaborate successfully with peers through interdisciplinary endeavors while committing him/herself to long term research agendas. Such commitment reflects on the institution's growth by adding to the institution's status. Finally, the mentor's growth is enacted in the fresh input and ideas of their novice proteges as well as the elevated status due to the role they are playing within the institutional as bearer of the institution's cultural legacy.

### **Questions**

1- What are the department socialization practices followed to develop the commitment of faculty members to the fulfillment of the department's mission and its advancement? What are the formalized processes? What are the informal norms followed?

1a. In what ways does mentoring in the department pave the way for novice faculty members to become socialized into collaboration with peers and interdisciplinary research?

2- Institutional discourse promotes socialization practices that emphasize the development of novice faculty members' research skills while emphasizing the practical aspect of research and the ability of faculty members to work on large research endeavors through interdisciplinary and collaborative platforms.

2a. To what extent do departmental socialization practices align with university wide practices?

3- According to institutional discourse, socialization practices aim at promoting the growth of both internal stakeholders and the institution through collaborations that help develop for example long-term research agendas that in turn ensure institutional growth through their impact. To what extent do socialization practices in the department align with this fact?



## **Information**

Information and communication are institutional tools that are symbolically used by the institution within this dimension. Their symbolic value resides in the fact that they transcend usual denotation.

Institutional rhetoric reveals that information is a strategic institutional resource. Its strategic value stems from the fact that it affects the survival and sustainability of the institution for decision-making as well as helps in achieving the desired impact and influence. Information is captured by administrative and academic institutional units. Two types of strategic information transpire from institutional discourse: (a) strategic information related to the institution's operations, and (b) strategic information related to its research. Operationally, strategic information is one that makes the institution aware of environmental changes and consequently allows it to develop appropriate internal or external responses to them. Strategic information stemming from its research production acts is transferred through various means such as institutional portals in the form of publications, videos, infographics, books, or manuals to various communities and stakeholders in view of achieving impact and influence.

However, both types of information are the outcome of a collaborative effort. In fact, strategic information related to institutional operations is gathered as a result of the efforts of several institutional units. Research-based information reflects a twofold collaboration. First, collaboration between an institutional center and an external partner leading also to mutual growth through an exchange of expertise. Second, collaboration exists also between academics from various disciplines who are members of interdisciplinary centers.

Institutional rhetoric refers to an extensive use of various formal and informal communication means to relay information that include emails, various forms of meetings, memos. This exchange of communication connects the institution internally, constitutes an example of transparency, and promotes synergies. Particularly noticeable in the process is the communication of the president and the various emotional language he uses in them.

The institution uses information and its communication to increase its visibility and develop a desired image internally and externally.

### **Questions**

- 1- What constitutes important information in the department and what is its purpose?
- 2- In what ways is this important information disseminated and how does it impact achieving departmental goals, departments decisions, practices and departmental growth?

2a- How is the communication of information in the department tied to improvements and the development of shared departmental goals among various departmental stakeholders?

2b- How does the communication strategies followed impact the image of the department internally and externally?

3-According to institutional rhetoric and from an external perspective, information allows the institution to tailor appropriate responses needed to address environmental demands and constraints. Such responses materialize in curricular adjustments and the establishment of interdisciplinary research centers that are founded on internal and external collaborations (the Global Health Institute or Nature Conservation Center for example). To what extent does information usage in the case of the department align with this fact? How is this evidenced?

### **Strategy**

Institutional rhetoric reveals both Strategic Planning and Curriculum development as institutional tools that underlie the process of strategy formulation. Their symbolic value stems from the fact that institutional rhetoric uses them in a manner that transcends their denotation.

Strategy formulation either through strategic planning or curriculum development is a collaborative act that engages multiple entities or academics. The collaborative dimension of strategy formulation is a purposeful act. It is echoed in the several institutional documents especially through the behavior and written perspectives of the current president. In fact, within this participatory undertaking of strategic formulation one outcome is the integration of the perspectives of diverse internal audiences and aligning them around shared institutional objectives. Concomitantly, it helps align or realign strategy formulation with emerging environmental constraints. Collaboration becomes a symbol that develops within internal stakeholders their expectations for the strategy formulation process.

Whether through strategic planning or curriculum, collaboration paves the way for impact and influence. Outreach centers as interdisciplinary and collaborative endeavors warrant both institutional impact and influence. Similarly, the students' learning experience instilled with elements of civic engagement is also a means to transform them into impactful leaders in their communities.

Strategy formulation through both strategic planning or curriculum development is itself a transformative act. Embedding elements of civic engagement in the curriculum transforms graduates into civically engaged leaders. Similarly, through the collaboration of diverse institutional units, the long-term strategic objectives of the institution denote an attempt to transform its image into the "world's premier research university", or the "most civically engaged university campus in the Middle East".

## Questions

1- How are departmental strategies developed and who are the stakeholders that are engaged in the process? How is their input taken into consideration in the strategy formulation process?

1a- Is there a departmental value that reflects through the way departmental strategies are developed?

1b- Institutional rhetoric identifies collaboration as a value that embeds the development of institutional strategies as it allows for internal growth as well as rallying various stakeholders around common objectives and increases environmental impact. What is its importance of collaboration internally and externally?

2- What are the key strategies that are considered important and are used for the survival/development of the department?

3- What is the role of departmental strategies in launching initiatives for departmental impact?

3a- Institutional rhetoric denotes the development of strategies that help achieve impact through interdisciplinary research platforms. In this context, are departmental strategies aligned with these strategies to achieve impact?

4- How does the process of departmental strategy development contribute in shaping a specific departmental image?

## Leadership

Shared Governance transpires as an institutional value within the leadership dimension. This inclusive and collaborative effort for decision-making through for example service within the institution is a rewarded practice as it is accounted for in the tenure and promotion of faculty members. Shared governance is further enabled by the representativeness and inclusiveness of various stakeholders in various institutional entities. This cross-representation of various individuals including students blurs the boundaries between entities and enhances the communication between them which exemplifies Shared Governance.

This institutional value of collaboration in the context of Shared Governance emerges particularly in the beliefs and actions of the current president who presents himself as a catalyst for institutional inclusiveness and collaboration. Inclusive participation in Shared Governance develops within various stakeholders a sense of empowerment and leads to institutional effectiveness through equally the development of institutional synergies. The transparency that stems from this inclusiveness is valued as giving greater credibility to the decision-making process.

## Questions

1- What constitutes leadership in the department? What do members expect from their leaders?

1a. Who is considered to be playing a leadership role in the department? What are the formal leadership roles played? Informal?

1b. What do departmental stakeholders expect from their leader?

1c. Can you share stories about exceptional/successful leaders in the department?

2- What specific value emerges from the enactment of leadership in the department? Is collaborative leadership valued? if yes in what ways do departmental structures allow for the enactment of such a value? Please give specific examples.

3- How does the enactment of leadership at the departmental level promote departmental impact externally? What is the nature of that impact?

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