



Studying the American Way

An Assessment of American-Style Higher Education in Arab Countries

Shafeeq Ghabra with Margreet Arnold

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Front cover: Two Lebanese students chat at the American University of Beirut, October 1, 2001. Copyright AP Wide World Photos/Mahmoud Tawil.

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Table of Contents

Acknowledgments	v
Executive Summary	vii
Introduction	1
American-Style Higher Education in the Arab World	2
Universities in the Arab World: Findings by Country	4
Challenges to American-Style Higher Education in the Arab World.	14
Recommendations.	17
Appendix A. Universities and Colleges by Country and Category	22
Appendix B. Survey Questions	24

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Executive Summary

ACROSS THE MIDDLE EAST, the popularity of American-style higher education is at an all-time high. Despite poll findings that highlight considerable opposition among Arab public opinion toward U.S. foreign policy, Arab parents and students are more eager than ever to seek out American-style university education, which is widely believed to open doors to a successful, productive, and prosperous future.

American-style universities and colleges in the Arab world exhibit many of the characteristics of U.S. institutions of higher learning. They implement an American curriculum; instruct courses in English; hire English-speaking faculty educated in the United States; use American textbooks; and affiliate themselves with American, British, Australian, and Canadian universities. A few of them have even earned formal accreditation from independent U.S. accreditation bodies, a noteworthy accomplishment often taking seven to ten years of work. They tend to borrow admission requirements, credit hours, majors, policies, and procedures from the university with which they are affiliated.

The varying degree to which universities in the Arab world successfully implement these standards locally is largely attributable to specific differences discussed in this report. Universities in the region often fall short in areas of governance, student life, and teaching standards. Especially in for-profit private institutions, a lack of focus exists on the student, empowerment of faculty, and quality control of educational programs. More important, what is not always recognized is the fact that students in the Arab world are traditionally not taught to develop their knowledge through critical thought, hands-on experience, and the use of their senses in the way that Americans have been taught to do from childhood. American-style universities in the Arab world need to exert twice the effort as their Western counterparts to make a significant difference.

For the region to establish high-quality institutions of American-style higher education that meet the standards of universities and colleges in the United States, the following concepts must become part of the regional attitude toward higher education:

- Universities must be understood and accepted as agents of change.
- Quality control must be instituted for institutions claiming to offer American-style education.
- American-style higher education must be integrated with the local culture, traditions, and laws.
- The focus of education must shift to the student and modern education trends.
- Institutional integrity and standards must be promoted.
- A strong liberal arts foundation should be included in all degree programs.
- High-quality faculty must be employed and retained.
- Faculty and institutional governance must be improved.
- Clear policies and procedures should be established.
- Research should be promoted.
- Cooperation with American universities should increase.
- Global integration should be sought.

Introduction

DESPITE PUBLIC OPINION poll data that show Arab popular support for U.S. foreign policy at an all-time low, the popularity of American-style higher education in Arab society is at an all-time high. American-style education is widely accepted as being the best form of higher education possible for young men and women in the Arab world. Arab families have always placed great value on acquiring the best available higher education in an attempt to raise their social status, and they are prepared to pay high tuition fees, even going into debt to do so.¹ What is keeping students in the region rather than traveling to the United States for education is sharper competition from new, local American-style universities.

Many students in the Arab world are seeking American-style higher education closer to home, and the establishment of new private universities in the region continues to increase. No longer is the American University of Beirut, once dubbed the “Harvard of the Middle East,” the only institution offering students an education grounded in an American curriculum. American universities exist in Cairo, Dubai, Abu Dhabi, Beirut, Kuwait, Sharjah, and Jordan. Dubai’s Knowledge Village and Academic City, along with Qatar’s Education City, all include branches of top U.S. schools. In other countries, some public and private universities and colleges have implemented new curricula based on the American educational system.

Even though American-style universities and colleges are seen as the gold standard of higher education in the world, Australian, British, and Canadian univer-

sities and colleges are establishing their presence in the Middle East² and must not be underestimated. While American, Australian, British, and Canadian higher education may differ in content (an American bachelor’s degree has two years of general education and two concentrated years, whereas a British bachelor’s degree has four concentrated years), they distinguish themselves from Arabic higher education in their student focus, their use of English textbooks, their English-speaking faculty trained in the West, and their instruction emphasizing critical thinking and analysis. Therefore, in this study, Australian, British, and Canadian in addition to American institutions of higher education are included in the terms “American-style” or “American higher education.”

When referring to these new private universities the following questions arise: Do these universities adhere to the standards of the universities in the United States? Do they truly implement the American model of liberal higher education? And is that what is needed in the Arab world?

The name of a university does not necessarily match the standard of the education given and may even be misleading. Although no explicit requirements exist for calling a university “American,” a loosely defined affiliation with an American higher-education institution is often present. This study attempts to answer the preceding questions and to make recommendations for further development of American-style higher education in the region.

1. Institute of International Education (IIE) Open Doors data tables for 2002, 2003, 2004, and 2005. Available online (<http://opendoors.iienetwork.org/>).
2. Clifford Chanin, ed., “Independent Universities in the Muslim World: A New Approach” (report of a conference organized by the Hollings Center in Istanbul, Turkey, December 9–11, 2005), p. 7.

American-Style Higher Education in the Arab World

THE HISTORY OF Arab higher education starts with the Islamic renaissance in Baghdad some eleven centuries ago. This renaissance started with the Abbasid caliphs, who established libraries and conservatories.¹ For the next 500 years, Arabic was the language of science, and cutting-edge research was conducted in cities such as Cairo, Damascus, and Tunis.²

Later, in the nineteenth century, this intellectual heritage was replaced by imported European science and technology. Leaders imitated what the West had to offer.³ Although Western science and technology was welcomed, implementing the high standards of Western education faced challenges throughout the 20th century. For example, the struggle for normal operation of the American University of Beirut (AUB) during the civil war in Lebanon of the 1970s and 1980s and the disruptions associated with the American University in Cairo (AUC) with the advent of Nasserism in the 1950s and 1960s are reflections of the relation between instability and quality of education. As a result of the civil war in Lebanon, AUB ended up losing all of its American faculty and international student body; consequently, it was forced to rely solely on its Lebanese faculty. One president, David S. Dodge, was kidnapped in 1982, and another president, Malcolm Kerr, was assassinated in 1984. Since the 1990s, AUB has been able to resurrect and expand itself. The American University in Cairo had to deal with the constant threat of being forced to become a nationalized, government-controlled institution. In the 1960s, its president, Thomas Bartlett, was required to obtain an annual exemption from the Nasser government. Today, AUC is obliged to hire 70 percent Egyptian and 30 percent international faculty.

Before September 11, 2001, families who sought American higher education sent their children to the United States, Europe, or Canada. Since then, stricter

student visa regulations, anti-Americanism, and difficulties that Arabs are encountering in living overseas⁴ have caused Arab students to look for regional institutions of American-style higher education. Under new U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services regulations, weeks to months are required to issue a U.S. student visa to a student from the Middle East. Students with common Arabic names, such as Muhammad, Osama, or Abdullah, must have their names cleared by the Department of Homeland Security in the United States. This process can take several months, with no guarantees that students will be approved, and often causes them to miss their admission deadlines. In response to this situation, the number of new private universities in the Arab world has increased dramatically in the last decade.

In the last five years, a number of American universities have set up satellite campuses in the Middle East. Well-known examples are the Texas A&M University, Georgetown University, and Carnegie Mellon University campuses in Qatar and George Mason University in the United Arab Emirates (UAE). These universities implement the American-style education of their counterpart institutions, carry out their policies and admission requirements, and benefit from their experience and name. Although these universities seem to implement American-style higher education faithfully, they face challenges in complying with local cultures, regulations, and laws.

What distinguishes American-style higher education from other types of higher education is its liberal nature. Whereas state-owned Arab universities (using Arabic-language instruction) are based on a system of lectures and examinations where students learn to memorize facts, American-style higher education uses a method and model of learning based on thinking critically and articulating opinions, honing oral and written commu-

1. United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2003), p. 43.
2. Daniel Del Castillo, "The Arab World's Scientific Desert," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2005, p. 1.
3. *Arab Human Development Report 2003*, p. 44.
4. American Civil Liberties Union, "Racial Profiling: Old and New." Available online (www.aclu.org/racialjustice/racialprofiling/index.html).

nication skills, emphasizing lifelong learning, and using a variety of tools and resources. American education emphasizes discussion, classroom interaction, teamwork, and projects that require library and internet-based research as well as work at research centers.⁵ Its goal is to seek, in all ways, to transform individuals into more fully developed, thinking, and engaged citizens. Many Arab state-owned universities have been reforming their methods of instruction, but this reform has been slow because of the size of the bureaucracy.

According to one American educator, liberal education should cultivate “an open, inquiring and disciplined mind, well informed through broad exposure to basic areas of knowledge; an enthusiasm for life-long learning; self-confidence and self-knowledge; a respect for differing opinions and for free discussion of these opinions; and an ability to use information logically and to evaluate alternative points of view.”⁶ Four essential and interrelated attributes of liberal American education can be distinguished:

1. An American curriculum means an “open” curriculum with contributions from all cultures.

2. The purpose of higher education is not merely to prepare students for a job after college but also to prepare them for a life of learning and to develop talent and character through interaction inside and outside the classroom.

3. The student is the first priority and is a partner in the educational experience.

4. The role of the faculty is one of professionals requiring time and institutional support for intellectual growth and professional development.⁷

Liberal education produces a class of educated people with a common ground, who can apply what they have learned and contribute to society by spreading liberal thinking and acceptance of other ways of life. It should be an engine of trainability, tolerance, readiness for the private sector, diversity, and willingness to talk to those with different backgrounds and experiences. To that extent, American-style universities in the Arab world are teachers of liberal education.

5. Shafeeq Ghabra, “Higher Education: New Engine of Development” *Arab Times* (Kuwait), October 25, 2005.

6. Daniel F. Sullivan, president, St. Lawrence University, “What Is Liberal Education?” 2005. Available online (www.collegenews.org/x4803.xml).

7. Sullivan, “What Is Liberal Education?”; Richard A. Detweiler, “Lessons from Middle East ‘de Toquevilles,’” *Inside Higher Ed*, October 30, 2006, p. 2 (available online at <http://insidhighered.com/layout/set/print/views/2006/10/30/detweiler>).

Universities in the Arab World: Findings by Country

TO ASSESS THE STATE of American-style higher education in the Arab world and to make recommendations about its future, this study analyzed selected universities in the Arab world.

Scope of the Study

What constitutes the Arab world? Technically anywhere from Morocco to Yemen, the region is composed of nations of varying wealth, disparate geographies, and differing ethnic and religious characters.¹ The study selected the following countries in the region:

- Algeria
- Bahrain
- Egypt
- Jordan
- Kuwait
- Lebanon
- Morocco
- Oman
- Palestinian territories
- Qatar
- Saudi Arabia
- Syria
- United Arab Emirates

Arab countries such as Iraq, Libya, Tunisia, and Yemen were not included because they do not currently have any American-style institutions of higher education. (Iran was excluded for this reason as well.)

The universities included in this analysis were divided into four categories:

1. American-style institutions of higher education
2. Branches of Western institutions: an international institution with a local connection
3. Local institutions with an international connection: a local institution with a Western name or an affiliation with an American-style university
4. Local institutions where the language of instruction is English

Standards of American-Style Higher Education

American-style education has a number of characteristics. For purposes of comparison, this study used the following list of standards:

- American-style curriculum: instruction in English, use of English-language textbooks, English-speaking faculty with one or more degrees from a Western university, bachelor's degree program of four years and master's degree programs of an additional two years, and a four-point grading scale
- Academic education of the faculty (PhD requirement, occasionally MA)
- Low faculty to student ratio—15:1 or maximum 20:1

1. James Coffman, "Current Issues in Higher Education in the Arab World," *International Higher Education*, vol. 4 (April 1996). Available online (www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/News04/textcy5.html).

- Availability of support services for students (student affairs, activities, advising, student counseling, computer labs, buildings, space)
- Method of instruction: research, papers, presentations, group projects
- Student focus
- Availability of student loans
- Availability of scholarships
- Availability of study-abroad programs
- Faculty workload of 2:2 or 2:1 (teaching: preparation)
- Tenure track for faculty
- Availability of policies and procedures
- Involvement in the community

Other characteristics included in the study are the number of students, student profile, and type of degree programs.

Research Method

For the purpose of this study, we surveyed a total of fifty-six universities in thirteen Arab countries. We also gathered our research material from available documentation, an online survey among 100 faculty members of the universities and colleges included in the study (see appendix B for the survey questions), and interviews with five scholars.

Through our analysis of the state of American-style higher education in the Middle East and North Africa, we tried to answer the following questions:

General

- How many American-style universities exist in the Middle East?
- How many are externally accredited and by whom?

- How many are for profit and nonprofit?
- Does this status affect the quality of education?
- How many universities offer liberal arts education?
- Do these universities adhere to the standards of American-style higher education?
- Is the main priority of the university the student?

Teaching

- What is the workload for faculty in the Middle East?
- What is the student-to-faculty ratio?
- Are faculty members given time to conduct research and support for professional development?
- To what extent are the programs “stripped” as a result of cultural differences or censorship?

Administration

- Do the universities offer tenure to their faculty?
- Are faculty members expected to work outside their teaching load?
- Do the universities play a role in the community?
- Is there university cogovernance with faculty?

Recommendations

- Does a need for a certain type of university exist in the region?
- Could some countries use further development in this area?
- How does American-style higher education fit into the future Arab world?
- How well is the liberal education model implemented in the region?

Using the answers to these questions, the study presents a set of recommendations and ideas for further development of American-style higher education in the region.

Findings by Country

An extensive list of the universities and colleges by country with their category, number of students, and public or private status can be found in appendix A.

Algeria. Algeria has ten universities, seven university centers (*centres universitaires*), and several technical colleges. The primary language of school instruction is Arabic, but Berber-language instruction has been permitted since 2003. Education is free and officially compulsory for Algerians six to fifteen years of age, but actual enrollment falls far short of 100 percent. Enrollment drops off sharply from primary to secondary school.²

Falling under the fourth category, the National Institute of Electricity and Electronics, formerly INELEC (International Institute for Electricity and Electronics), was founded in 1976 by a consortium of twelve American universities and is the only school in Algeria that fully uses American methodology, practices, and English-language instruction. It is now part of the public University of Boumerdes.

Among others, the founding consortium included the Stevens Institute of Technology, the University of Houston, Case Western Reserve University, South Massachusetts University, and the Wentworth Institute of Technology. INELEC was supported by World Bank funding, and its activities (1976–1980) were coordinated by the Educational Development Center, located in Massachusetts. INELEC's initial faculty consisted mostly of Americans drawn from the consortium's members. By 1982, the foreign faculty gave way to Algerians who had earned graduate degrees in the consortium universities.

Following graduation, many of INELEC's students subsequently go to the United States and Canada for advanced education and to find work.

Bahrain. Schooling and related costs are entirely paid for by the government of Bahrain, and, although not compulsory, primary and secondary attendance rates are high. Bahrain also encourages institutions of higher learning, drawing on expatriate talent and the increasing pool of Bahrainis returning from abroad with advanced degrees.³

Several local institutions have an international connection. The first private university was Ahlia University in 2001, followed by the Royal University for Women (RUW) in 2004. Gulf University, Ahlia University, and RUW all have affiliations with universities in the United Kingdom. Gulf University and Ahlia University offer both undergraduate and graduate programs.

Egypt. Egypt is home to one of the top universities in the region, but political instability in the 1960s and 1970s and the country's current economic crisis have stalled the establishment of other American-style colleges and universities. Some private colleges have started in the last five years.

The American University in Cairo was founded in 1919 by American Methodist Episcopal missionaries, but it quickly moved away from its missionary endeavors in favor of becoming a more secular, educational nonprofit institution. Its board of trustees and some administrative offices are maintained in New York City, and the university responds to both American and Egyptian regulatory bodies. Although 90 percent of its 5,000 students are Egyptian nationals, the language of instruction is English. Today, AUC is the only American-style institution of higher education in the country.

The Modern Sciences and Arts University, the British University of Egypt, and al-Ahram Canadian University are all local institutions with an international connection. These universities offer undergraduate degrees only, and the last two just began operating in 2005. The only humanities degree they offer is in mass communications. Other degrees are mainly technical:

2. "Education in Algeria," in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Algeria).

3. "Bahrain," in *Wikipedia*. Available online (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bahrain#Education>).

engineering, business, information technology, pharmacy, and dentistry.

Jordan. The Jordanian government has given exemplary attention to education, and its educational system meets, if not exceeds, international standards. Despite considerable government support of education, Jordan is classified by the World Bank as a “lower-middle-income nation” and faces challenges from a steady stream of Iraqi refugees. Thus, colleges and universities such as the New York Institute of Technology (NYIT) are cost-prohibitive for many Jordanians.

NYIT in Jordan is a branch organization of the institution in New York. The majority of its programs are in fields of technology and science, and no degree programs are offered in the arts and humanities. The Middle States Association for Colleges and Schools has accredited the programs. NYIT also has branches in Abu Dhabi and Bahrain.

Al-Zaytoonah University is a private university with an Arab curriculum and Arab-language instruction, but its nursing degree is affiliated with the University of Nebraska College of Nursing. Outside this affiliation, its curricula have not mirrored the American model but instead emphasize “the Islamic faith and its spiritual and moral values.”

Al-Ahliyya University in Amman is a private Arab institution with English-language instruction.

Kuwait. Kuwait is witnessing a rapid growth of American-style institutions of higher education. During the last five years and in the next five years, Kuwait will have approximately ten private American-style institutions of higher education for a population of less than 3 million. The new universities reflect a commitment to education in the context of global and regional educational trends. Because all the universities are new, they face start-up challenges similar to those encountered by many new universities in the region.

One of the challenges facing the new universities in Kuwait, and possibly the whole region, is censorship of

teaching material. Universities offering courses in fine arts, English literature, and humanities are required to adjust the content of these courses because of legal requirements, university administration policy, or student complaints. Examples of censored material include topics in religion, sexual development, mating and marriage, biological development and puberty, and sexual content in Western art theory and literature.

Kuwait has laws on segregation of education in all colleges and universities, both public and private. The Kuwaiti parliament passed a segregation law in 1996 that forbids co-ed classes; existing co-ed universities were given a five-year grace period to comply with the new law. Interestingly enough, most new universities did not comply with the law of segregation of education until recently. The American University of Kuwait (AUK) started in 2004 with 50 percent co-ed and 50 percent segregated classes but faced scrutiny from the local government authority in charge of regulating private higher education in Kuwait (Private University Council). Recently, the Kuwaiti parliament has urged private institutions to abide by the segregation law or face legal penalties that could include withholding “academic approvals.”⁴ AUK and others compromised by placing semitransparent, three-foot-high partitions in classrooms while allowing students to mix on campus, in cafeterias and libraries. Both students and faculty see this law as oppressive and difficult to observe.

Box Hill College Kuwait is a branch of Box Hill College in Melbourne, Australia. It is scheduled to open its doors in September 2007. Box Hill College in Kuwait faces the problem of adapting the requirements and regulations of the Australia institution to Kuwait’s laws while making sure its deliverables are acceptable to the Australian Box Hill College and the Australian government’s technical and further education college system.

Currently operating Kuwaiti institutions with an international connection include AUK, Gulf University of Science and Technology, and the Australian College of Kuwait, established in 2004, 2002, and 2000, respectively. Most Kuwaitis are bilingual in Arabic and

4. “Kuwait Parliament Urges Segregation in Private Colleges,” Kuwait News Agency, May 9, 2007. Available online (www.wunrn.com/news/2007/05_07/05_07_07/051407_kuwait.htm).

English, and English-language instruction is very common. For now, the universities offer undergraduate degrees only. The only private postgraduate institution in the country with an international connection is the Kuwait Maastricht Business School, the counterpart of the Maastricht School of Business in the Netherlands.

The head office of the Arab Open University is located in Kuwait and has branches all over the region. Education is supposed to be in English, but at least part of its program is conducted in Arabic. The university focuses on distance learning through correspondence courses and local lectures. Although this institution is the fastest-growing of its kind in the region, and despite some serious attempts by its new administration to improve quality, limited control is exercised over the quality of its education.

Lebanon. Despite the civil wars and the instability in the region, most of the established American-style institutions of higher education are found in Lebanon. It has more than forty American-style universities. The establishment of the American University in Beirut and the Lebanese American University (LAU) in the nineteenth century gave the country a head start over other countries in the region. AUB and LAU are considered to be the premier institutions in Lebanon and in the region. They are both externally accredited by U.S.-based accrediting bodies.

Lebanon has historically welcomed American-style education, and critical thinking and whole-student development are regarded as essential elements of high-quality education. A low level of government interference has allowed these institutions to acquire institutional autonomy, develop an extensive variety of programs, and gain American accreditation.

AUB and LAU have been around for quite a few years. LAU was founded in 1835 and AUB in 1866. Each has an average of 5,000 students with about as many male as female students. AUB is considered the flagship of American-style higher education in the region, but political instability in the region

during the last two years has adversely affected the university.

The University of Balamand was founded in 1988. Although not externally accredited, the university has the potential to become an established university in the same category as AUC, AUB, and LAU. The American University of Technology and the American Academy of Technology offer undergraduate and graduate degrees in science and technology. Neither is accredited, but they do have some agreements with American universities.

Morocco. Al-Akawayn University is the only American-style institution of higher education in the country. The Moroccan education system still has a long way to go, with high illiteracy rates among men (30 percent) and especially women (60 percent).⁵

Although al-Akawayn University falls in the category of institutions where the language of instruction is English, the university's reputation is close to that of AUB and AUC. Founded in 1995, the university is based on the American system, and U.S. staff is widely employed. Exchange students make up 25 percent to 30 percent of its student body. High tuition fees make the university accessible only to Morocco's elite, although some scholarships and work-study programs are available.

Oman. The Omani higher-education system is relatively young. The first public university of Oman, the Sultan Qaboos University, was founded in 1986. Universities and colleges are run by the government or private institutions. At the moment, colleges teach only in the undergraduate area, and no research activities exist so far.⁶

The leadership and curriculum of Oman Medical College are provided by West Virginia University School of Medicine. The university offers a medical degree and a bachelor's degree in pharmacy. This type of college seems to lend itself well to this kind of affiliation, profiting from the experience and expertise of the established American college.

5. B. Mayhew and J. Dodd, *Lonely Planet Morocco* (Victoria, Australia: Lonely Planet Publications, 2003), p. 30.

6. "Education in Oman," in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Oman).

The Caledonian College of Engineering in Oman has been accredited by Glasgow Caledonian University. The university was established in 1996 and has an enrollment of 1,200 students. Education is co-ed and in English.

The focus in both colleges is on “quality” education, but neither defines what that is.

Palestinian territories. The Palestinian-Israeli conflict since the collapse of the peace process in 2000 has created an economic situation and ongoing challenges for Palestinian political representatives that are affecting higher education negatively. Education in the Palestinian territories is provided by the government, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, and private sources.⁷ Because of the Palestinians’ disputes with Israel and their resulting isolation, universities have suffered from temporary closings and the absence of PhD programs and research opportunities. Cooperation programs with institutions in other countries through the European Union; the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization; and the United Nations Development Programme are on their way.

Community service is an important part of the requirements for graduation at universities in the Palestinian territories. Students attending the Arab American University must complete 100 hours of community service, and students from Birzeit College must complete 120 hours.

The Arab American University was founded in 1996 with a mission “[t]o build the character of each student in creative ways by nurturing his/her ability to do research, analyze, think critically, and to encourage the spirit of innovation and leadership.” Although not accredited, it has affiliations with California State University and Utah State University.

Birzeit College was established as a higher-education institution in 1975. Although Arabic is the official language of instruction, many courses are taught in English. The university has a well-developed website in

Arabic and English and focuses on community involvement.

Qatar. The nonprofit, state-supported Qatar Foundation, with its Education City, has been especially successful in attracting branches of large universities that are well known in the United States. The Qatar Foundation is an umbrella organization that takes responsibility for attracting funding for the university branches in Education City. So far, it seems to be a successful model for higher education in the region.

The Qatar Foundation was able to attract several branches of U.S.-based universities. Carnegie Mellon University, Georgetown University, Virginia Commonwealth University, Weill Medical College of Cornell University, and Texas A&M University have all successfully launched campuses in the last five years. Because they are such new institutions, more research and time are needed to determine their sustainability in the region. So far, this seems to be a promising model.

Saudi Arabia. Education in Saudi Arabia has never fully separated from its Islamic roots. All curricula must conform to *sharia* (Islamic laws) and the *Quran*, and traditional gender roles continue to shape educational opportunities available to females. Whereas men are allowed to travel to foreign countries to pursue their education, women are encouraged to do so but generally must be accompanied by a spouse or male relative.

Government spending on education continues to grow in Saudi Arabia. In 2004 the government increased education spending by 28 percent over the previous year. Additionally, special emphasis is being placed on technical training to fill the labor gap that has long been met with foreign expertise.⁸

All higher-education institutions are divided by gender because they must comply with the Islamic standards and traditions of the country. Dar al-Hekma mentions in its mission statement: “The College fosters creativity and emphasizes the important role in

7. “Palestinian territories,” in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Palestinian_territories).

8. “Education in Saudi Arabia,” in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Saudi_Arabia).

society of women as the first builders of the family and the first educators of the nation. Its graduates will be capable of bringing about positive change for the betterment of self, family, society and humanity with the aim of serving and pleasing the Creator.” Male professors, for instance, teach female students through video.

Saudi Arabia has various private and government colleges with English-language instruction, including the public King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals for men, and the private Effat College and Dar al-Hekma College for women. Although the language of instruction is English, implementation of the American model is limited to the system of semesters and four-point grading system. King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals is a government university that was founded with the help of American universities. Effat College’s electrical and computer engineering programs were developed through a partnership with Duke University and Pratt School of Engineering in Durham, South Carolina, and Georgetown University’s McDonough School of Business. Dar al-Hekma College works with the nonprofit Texas International Education Consortium.

Syria. Following Syria’s economic reforms, private universities are taking hold in the country. Most post-secondary education is state provided, but legislation passed in 2001 allows the establishment of some private universities. Classes are large and facilities poor at all levels. Domestic policies emphasize engineering and medicine in Syria’s universities, with less emphasis on the arts, law, and business. In September 2002, the president founded the country’s first virtual university, through which students can obtain degrees from international institutions.⁹

The Arab American University for Technology (AAUT) aims to “provide the community with high standard American education system equal to the well-known American universities.” AAUT was established in 2005 and is the country’s first private American-style university. It focuses on technical degrees.

The International University for Sciences and Technology in Deraa and al-Andalous University for Medical Sciences in Tartous are two private universities that offer American-style higher education with Arabic-language instruction. American-style means here the “American system of education whereby the study plan is divided into a number of semesters and is composed of a pre-assigned number of credit hours in accordance with the field of specialization.”

The International University for Sciences and Technology in Deraa has cooperation agreements with the University of Sunderland in the United Kingdom, the University of Utah, and Philadelphia University in Jordan.

The Syrian Virtual University is a Syrian higher-educational institution that provides virtual education (using the internet) to students who cannot afford to attend a regular university. It was established in 2002 as the first virtual education institution of its kind in the region, and, as of 2006, remains the only one. The university offers local programs in Arabic and cooperative programs taught by partner universities, often provided in English. Programs award degrees that range from the associate degree to the PhD. Students complain that some of the books they are offered are not suitable as study materials, because of their short length, the fact that they often read like a summary rather than an exposition of ideas, and the presence of numerous errors and omissions.¹⁰

United Arab Emirates. The UAE consists of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi, Dubai, Sharjah, al-Ain, Ras al-Khaiman, Ajman, and Fujairah. A large number of American-style institutions of higher education are located in the UAE. English is widely spoken in the UAE, and English-language instruction is very common at universities and colleges. While Dubai has liberal social policies, Sharjah is more conservative and “moral police” patrol university campuses there. Overall, the education models that are developing in the UAE represent a major addition to the state of higher

9. “Education in Syria,” in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Syria).

10. “Syrian Virtual University,” in *Wikipedia*. Available online (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Syrian_Virtual_University).

education in the region. Not all universities are of the same quality; few are of the high caliber exemplified by the American University of Sharjah (AUS).

The American University in Dubai (AUD), the AUS, the British University in Dubai, the University of Wollongong in Dubai, and the recently started American College of the Emirates in Dubai have all been founded in the last fifteen years. AUD and AUS are the only universities that are accredited by American accreditation organizations. AUS is one of the better universities in the region (it received American accreditation by Middle States) and has the potential to become an established American-style institution. The university is fully supported by the state of Sharjah.

Like Qatar, the UAE has a special umbrella organization for universities that in 2002 started Dubai Knowledge Village. In Knowledge Village are the branch campuses of British Middlesex University and Heriot-Watt University. George Mason University is another recently opened branch institution in the UAE. It is located in Ras al-Khaima and currently has 100 students and 10 faculty members.

Knowledge Village is scheduled to be used for businesses in the future, and the colleges and universities will be transferred to the newly created Academic City, which will also have space for faculty housing. Dubai Knowledge Village is still in a development phase, and as for Qatar, time and research are needed to determine its success. Although universities in Knowledge Village do not need accreditation from Abu Dhabi, students from universities that do not have this accreditation will experience difficulty in finding government jobs.

The University of Sharjah is not guided by an American philosophy. Rather, the university “aims to meet the Emirate of Sharjah’s educational and cultural needs within its Islamic values and tradition.” The university is segregated, while the neighboring AUS is not. Nevertheless, in both institutions the language of instruction is English.

Al-Zayed University in Abu Dhabi is the only government school that has successfully implemented the American model of higher education and is accredited without being incorporated in the United States.

Interestingly enough, the university has a control system for students, prohibiting them from leaving the university during operating hours. Parents demand this system to make sure their children are at the university and not elsewhere without supervision.

Conclusions

American-style universities and colleges in the Arab world are American in many ways. They implement an American curriculum, provide instruction in English, employ English-speaking faculty educated in the United States, use American textbooks, and are affiliated with American, British, Australian, or Canadian universities. Some are even accredited by American accreditation bodies. Their admission requirements, credit hours, majors, policies, and procedures tend to be borrowed from the university with which they are affiliated. The varying degree to which universities in the Arab world are successful in implementing these standards locally is largely attributable to specific differences discussed in this report. Universities and colleges in the Arab world often fail in the areas of governance, student life, and teaching standards. Especially in for-profit private institutions, they lack a focus on the student, empowerment of faculty, and quality control of educational programs.

American-style institutions of higher education.

The findings show that only three universities can truly be considered examples of American-style universities: the American University in Beirut, the Lebanese American University, and the American University in Cairo. The American University of Sharjah, which is a relative newcomer, is seen as slowly joining this group of institutions in its quality and recent accreditation.

Although the universities in this category provide the best American-style higher education in the Arab world, they do not fully implement the American model as it is found in the United States, for the following reasons:

- They lack cogovernance with a role for collective faculty: the decisionmaking power resides solely with the administration.

- Local governments have imposed policies requiring increased local hiring.
- Faculty workload is high, which leaves little time for research and proper course preparation.
- No tenure tracks exist for faculty.
- The institutional philosophy is not student centered.
- Faculty members lack American-style education.
- Limited availability of study trips or study-abroad programs prevents students from broadening their experience.
- Political instability in the region adversely affects educational institutions.

Branches of Western universities and colleges. In the last five years, a number of Western universities have started satellite campuses in the Middle East. Well-known examples are the Georgetown and Carnegie Mellon university campuses in Qatar. They are often semistate institutions: they receive funding from the local government, but they are still a branch of their Western mother institutions.

These universities do not face the start-up problems most new private universities and colleges in the Arab world do. They carry the policies and procedures and admission requirements of the mother institution and benefit from its reputation. They provide an excellent opportunity for students to receive high-quality American-style education locally, without the cost and difficulties of studying abroad.

The problem these institutions face is how to integrate into local culture and laws without losing academic integrity. The extent of their institutional autonomy depends on meeting requirements of the local government and gaining acceptance by the local community while making sure the standards of the mother institution are not compromised.

Local institutions with an international connection. This category varies widely from externally accredited

universities and colleges that award joint degrees with an American counterpart to universities and colleges without accreditation that have a loose affiliation with an American counterpart. They all support the qualities of American-style education in their mission statements, advocating tolerance, acceptance of diversity, and open-mindedness as well as lifelong learning. In reality, however, the practical implementation of these goals depends on the depth of the affiliation with the Western counterpart and the extent of government interference. Examples of such institutions include the American University of Kuwait, Gulf University of Science and Technology in Kuwait, al-Akhawayn in Morocco, the Arab American University in the Palestinian territories, and the American University of Sharjah.

The universities in this category are relatively young, having started in the last ten to fifteen years, and are still in the process of establishing their degree programs and affiliations with other universities. Arts and sciences and humanities degrees are usually limited to programs in education, English, Arabic, and graphic and interior design. Few universities and colleges offer degrees in art, history, sociology, psychology, or anthropology. American University of Kuwait has been experiencing difficulty approving new degrees in subjects such as history, anthropology, and sociology due to the government's lack of belief in the need to graduate new degree holders in such fields. There is an anti-humanities and social sciences culture that stems from the old thinking of strict employability within fields of study. This bias in favor of technical education has limited the growth of liberal arts education in the Arab world.

Local institutions where the language of instruction is English. At these institutions, the language of instruction is English, but implementation of other American elements of higher education varies widely. Institutions in this category range from a university where classes are taught in English but "the Islamic faith and its spiritual and moral values" are emphasized (al-Zaytoonah University in Jordan, Dar al-Hekma College for Women in Saudi Arabia) to al-Akhawayn in Morocco, whose reputation is close to that of AUC

and AUB and which has many U.S. faculty members and 25 to 30 percent exchange students. This variation can often be attributed to country and cultural differences. A university such as al-Akhawayn is as yet

unheard of in Saudi Arabia. However, these universities have a lot of potential for growth and may seek affiliations with American universities to implement the American model more fully.

Challenges to American-Style Higher Education in the Arab World

OUR RESEARCH INDICATES that American-style higher education in the Arab world faces a number of challenges that have prevented full implementation of the liberal education model. These problems are discussed briefly in the following sections.

Liberal Education in the Region Still Developing

Although AUB and AUC have been around for, respectively, 121 and 88 years, most of the American-style institutions of higher education are no more than fifteen years old. In the United States, undergraduate institutions can take thirty years or so to transform into graduate institutions where research is done.¹

Many American-style universities in the region are still going through growing pains that invariably affect the quality of education and the presence of an established faculty. They all experience sudden changes in administration, problems in faculty morale, and shifts in mission and have difficulty attracting high-quality faculty and students. For poor countries, such as Yemen, the problem is a lack of money and resources. For wealthier ones, such as Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, UAE, and Bahrain, with only few exceptions, weak administration, poor recruiting strategies and practices, instability of faculty, corporate-style management of the university, a focus on profit, weak faculty representation, and a relatively new and underdeveloped university system have hampered progress.

What is needed in this development phase is a stable and capable faculty that can focus on developing curriculum and establishing teaching standards. Part of the faculty is usually American. Instability in the region makes international recruitment more difficult and affects tolerance and diversity among students and staff.²

Most degrees are technical or science-related, or business; arts and humanities degrees are limited to mass communications, education, and languages. Very few universities offer degrees in fine arts, history, and the social sciences, which are subjects that teach students to think about important existential and philosophical questions, such as: Who am I? What is my responsibility to society? How does my life connect with a larger history of culture?

Few of the universities and colleges have study-abroad programs, even the more established ones. Study abroad is an important part of American-style higher education. Studying in a foreign country means acquiring new skills, more independence, and self-confidence as well as seeing the world from a different perspective.

No Equal Access to Education

Access to private colleges and universities is limited to those with a higher economic status. Profit-based universities have limited scholarship opportunities and no student loans unless provided by the state, as in some rich countries like Kuwait, Bahrain, and the UAE. Only the rich will be able to study at these institutions, creating a social class in itself. Leaving knowledge acquisition entirely to the for-profit sector in less-developed countries thereby risks reducing the supply of knowledge and depriving weaker social groups of its benefits.³

Limited Academic Freedom

Even though the Arab world consists of nations with diverse wealth and cultures, throughout the region higher education is highly centralized, with the government maintaining tight control over curriculum, admissions, and recruitment.⁴ This control includes

1. Daniel Del Castillo, "The Arab World's Scientific Desert," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 5, 2005, p. 2.
2. Shafeeq Ghabra, "Higher Education: New Engine of Development" *Arab Times* (Kuwait), October 25, 2005.
3. United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2003), p. 39.
4. James Coffman, "Current Issues in Higher Education in the Arab World," *International Higher Education*, vol. 4 (April 1996), p. 1. Available online (www.bc.edu/bc_org/avp/soe/cihe/newsletter/News04/textcy5.html).

American-style private colleges and universities, where academic freedom is not the same at their Western counterparts. Curtailment of academic freedom goes anywhere from banning classroom and library materials and internet sites to limiting student interaction and activities. Material is banned from the classroom because of government laws, university administration policies, and student or faculty complaints. Some faculty members elect not to include certain materials because they are afraid of offending someone.

Faculty members often do not have the means or motivation to defend their right to academic freedom. Without academic freedom, knowledge is an early casualty, and those who seek it apply it sparingly or learn to live without it.⁵

The importance of freedom of thought and action cannot be overemphasized here, because universities in the region have been centers of activity for Islamist movements, and academic freedom gives space for a multitude of different opinions and beliefs to balance that.⁶

Students Not Taught to Think for Themselves

Universities have no orchestrated policy to draw students into critical thinking and to express their views. Students in American-style higher education in the Arab world face the challenge of thinking for themselves and not waiting for the opinion of the professor before expressing their thoughts. The students who come from public Arab schools tend to be accustomed to learning through lectures and memorization and an authoritarian style of education. They feel that their opinion can be held against them and prefer professors who communicate their ideas in lectures.

Faculty of American-style institutions of higher education need to make twice the effort as their counterparts in Western schools to draw these students into thinking for themselves in a way that can help

them liberate their minds. When such institutions fail to take into account the enormous amount of work needed to make that change, they end up falling into the same trap of rote learning and lecturing as other Arab schools. Students in the Arab world need to be made aware that decisionmaking skills and opinions as well as a critical mind are valuable assets that one cannot do without. Too many Arab universities teach their students what to think, not how to think.⁷

Yet the new American-style institutions of higher education are able to create pockets of skills and critical thinking for their students. Nevertheless, they still have a long way to go in laying the groundwork for a real liberal arts experience.

In addition to a lack of liberal arts qualities in students, a lack of education policies, along with problematic faculty working conditions, curricula, and education methodologies, all contribute to the state of higher education in the Arab world. Research seems to indicate that the curricula taught in traditional Arab universities encourage memorization at the expense of critical thinking and inquiry.⁸ Students have an intrinsic belief that by spelling out what their professors and textbooks say, they will have mastered the material and the course. In class discussions they will not give their opinion before the teacher does, and the professor will not allow them to do so. Faculty biases based on tribal issues, fears, incompetence, and gender are imposed on the students as well as a lack of well-trained, knowledgeable teachers. The challenge for the new American-style universities will be advancing and setting the stage for true American-style higher education and breaking through the current transitional stage in which the Arab world finds itself.

High Faculty Workload and Low Morale

What is important is a faculty's ability to engage students; to help them think for themselves, use resources, formulate and defend opinions, and be open to

5. *Arab Human Development Report 2003*, p. 47.

6. Coffman, p. 2.

7. Raja Kamal, "Oil Won't Last; Invest in Arab Education," *Daily Star* (Egypt), January 8, 2007, p. 1.

8. *Arab Human Development Report 2003*, p. 52.

thoughts that are different. To do that, teachers need time to educate themselves, do research, and interact with students.

Our survey among faculty of American-style universities in the Arab world shows that they often have to amend the content of their courses because of government, university, student, or fellow faculty members' complaints. They often have contractual obligations to do administrative work on top of their teaching load, and most universities do not tenure faculty. Faculty are given contracts where they can be made to teach as many courses as possible and are asked to sit on committees and do administrative work. Many new for-profit universities in the Arab world overburden their faculty. Even when classes are fifteen to twenty students, faculty workload prevents faculty from assigning students research and extracurricular activities outside lectures and exams. Students have a lighter workload, but faculty members suffer burnout and low morale. The teaching load in U.S. colleges is less than that in the Arab world, with two courses and two preparations compared with three courses and three preparations or four courses and two preparations.

Money is not the issue here. Private universities receive a lot of funds from tuition. The problem is that the American model of education is not applied by the university or college administration. Administration is not transparent and is noninclusive. Policies and procedures usually do not exist, and if they do, they are not followed or tend to be arbitrary. Branch universities, because they are a direct franchise from the mother institution, seem to avoid this problem, although the extent to which they can keep their independence from the encroachment of local customs is yet to be seen.

Limited Contact with the Community

A virtual wall seems to exist between the universities and the real world with the result that graduates are not adequately prepared for the realities of the global

marketplace, whereas in reality, universities should serve the national economy and produce future leaders who will move the region in the right direction.

Most American-style universities in the Arab world neglect to play a role in their communities; they do no outreach in the form of research or serving the poor or areas that need support and development. A fortress mentality seems to exist, especially in the richer Gulf States, which limits community service to the occasional student initiative.

Exceptions are universities in Lebanon and the Palestinian territories, which organize community outreach programs to help rebuild their country. In the Palestinian territories, university students are required to complete 100–120 hours of community service before graduating. The programs consist of doing special jobs in public institutions, paving roads in refugee camps and isolated villages, helping farmers during the harvest season, working on forestation projects, and participating in teaching and literacy projects.

Limited Global Presence

The presence of universities and colleges on the internet varies widely, from websites that offer a wealth of information on course offerings, policies, admission, faculty, e-learning, and grading systems to websites where the bulk of the pages are “under construction” or in Arabic.

A university website must not be seen as “nice to have”; rather it is a public relations tool, providing outreach to the community, other universities, and prospective students and faculty. Universities in the United States must compete to get the best students and sponsorship; they use marketing and public relations to get their name out into the world. Not just the quality of their education makes their name known, but also the high priority they give to marketing and public relations. And, even more important for private universities, a website establishes a university's corporate image.

Recommendations

FOR THE REGION to establish high-quality American-style institutions of higher education that can meet the standards of universities in the United States, the following concepts must be accepted:

- An understanding and accepted vision of universities as agents of change
- Quality control of institutions claiming to offer American-style education
- Integration with the local culture, traditions, and laws
- Focus on the student and modern education trends
- Promotion of institutional integrity and standards
- Inclusion of a strong liberal arts foundation in all degree programs
- Employment and retention of high-quality faculty
- Improvement of faculty and institutional governance
- Clear and established policies and procedures
- Promotion of research
- Increased cooperation with American universities
- Global integration

Seeing Universities as Agents of Change

More expensive universities with more amenities are not going to improve the quality of higher education in the Middle East. As Edward Said put it:

It isn't knowledge as a product or commodity that we need, nor is it a matter of remedying the situation by having bigger libraries, a greater number of terminals, computers and so forth, but a qualitatively different knowledge based on understanding rather than on authority, uncritical repetition, mechanical reproduction.... These are some of the critical issues we face, which can be summed up in the phrase/question, how to think?¹

Universities need to make a difference and be agents of change toward the future. The Arab world is in a state of confusion between seeking militant solutions and developing through investments in minds and growth. Universities can be at the heart of new ways of thinking and learning. They should be the catalyst of a new enlightenment, driven by students and faculty and projected on the community and its future.

Instituting Quality Control

A need exists for an Arab or regional accreditation body that can monitor and ensure the quality of institutions that claim to be based on the American model. Such a body can be a result of efforts by all U.S. accreditation bodies in coordination with all U.S. accredited regional universities. The name "American" must carry a certain value and should not be used as a marketing term to add student numbers to local universities. Parents need to be educated about the distinctions and qualitative differences between universities. Not every four-year school that has the word American in its title is the same thing.² Such a regulatory body could also facilitate credit transfers between universities.

At the very least, a ranking authority should provide an annual ranking report of all universities and colleges in the Arab world that claim to be American. As a first step, this study recommends that an independent, reputable institution in the Arab world undertake the task

1. United Nations Development Programme, Regional Bureau for Arab States, *Arab Human Development Report 2003: Building a Knowledge Society* (New York: United Nations Development Programme, 2003), p. 35.
2. Gordon R. Robison, "Education: An American Growth Industry in the Arab World," USC Center on Public Diplomacy, Los Angeles, p. 3.

of producing this report and publishing it annually in a renowned regional magazine. Ranking should be done on an extended list of aspects of education, including student/teacher ratio, education of faculty, facilities, student life, research, governance, faculty stability, student retention, and accreditation. The list will provide guidance for parents, students, and faculty. If this area is not regulated, every university can call itself American.

Integrating Education with Local Culture

More work needs to be done on developing hybrid educational models.³ The focus should be on integrating the American approach into local culture and traditions, meaning that research should be focused on business models and problem-solving approaches that address local needs. Universities are obliged to keep reviewing their strategies and policies to accommodate more modern approaches and integrate new technologies to education.

Although satellite campuses offer high-quality American-style education, these institutions might not be sustainable if they are not embedded in local culture. These universities need to take into account local views and traditions without sacrificing academic standards or imposing restrictions that affect diversity and critical schools of thinking.

It is important for universities to play a role in their community. A system of knowledge can be sustained or stunted by the social soil in which it grows and by the surrounding regional and global environment.⁴ Universities and colleges cannot be fully independent from their surroundings. Interaction with the community and with the economy needs to take place if students are to become a part of society after graduation.

Focusing on Students

Student focus means that the institution dedicates its resources to the profession of teaching and the development of a whole student: intellectually, socially,

psychologically, and with global awareness. This focus may mean more faculty and student interaction and extracurricular activities. For this focus to succeed, faculty morale has to be good and faculty loads must be lighter than they are now in the region. Student life should not be just about attending classes and getting grades. Equally important in a student's development are theater, sports, arts, student clubs, and student governance.

Further examination of the pedagogic methodologies is necessary, from exam-based to interaction-based models. Classroom teaching should include presentations, research, discussion groups, and the like. Teaching should focus on students and their ability to think critically, write effectively, communicate with ease, and become lifelong learners.

Students need to be made aware of academic policies, such as those on plagiarism. In non-American-style institutions, students can often get away with "copy-pasting" a paper or buying one. This custom is something that liberal arts education should try to discourage, by applying strict anti-plagiarism procedures and by teaching students to think for themselves and not to be overly focused on exams.

Scholarships and financial aid that ameliorate the high costs of higher education should be established to promote representation of students from all social layers of society. More state funds and scholarships established through fundraising and support from companies are needed to give talented, less fortunate students an opportunity to participate in higher education. Universities need to have a fundraising strategy so that the entire spectrum of society is represented. Every university should have an office that provides student loans at low-interest rates.

Imposing Institutional Integrity and Standards

Many of the newly opened American-style universities in the Arab world face social and cultural challenges,

3. Clifford Chanin, ed., "Independent Universities in the Muslim World: A New Approach" (report of a conference organized by the Hollings Center in Istanbul, Turkey, December 9–11, 2005), p. 8.

4. *Arab Human Development Report 2003*, p. 38.

such as using personal connections to obtain special benefits or consideration, arbitrary enforcement of admission standards, bargaining for grades, and grade inflation, that end up lowering the university's standards and undermining the integrity of the institution. This situation creates many problems for dedicated faculty members, who slowly lose their ability to teach and make a difference. In some cases, university administration and board members have interfered in ways that have consistently undermined the institutions they are trying to build.

This paper strongly suggests that such behavior can be countered by supporting faculty and flatly refusing such practices as well as by enforcing high administrative standards on every level. Failure to enforce such policies and rules alienates and undermines the culture of achievement and the majority of achieving students. Moreover, in cases where students feel they have been wronged, a process for student appeal must exist.

Including Liberal Arts in All Programs

Liberal arts education has proven to be one of the most successful approaches to learning in which students are exposed to various disciplines and courses as majors or minors. The general program requirements need to have a generous dose of liberal arts subjects that allow students to nourish their thinking and knowledge outside their field of study. At the same time, liberal arts have evolved over the years to come to encourage students' critical thinking, creative writing, effective communication, self-knowledge, commitment to lifelong learning, and intercultural awareness.

Hiring High-Quality Faculty

Universities need a stable and capable faculty that can focus on curriculum development and establishing teaching standards. Attracting high-quality faculty cannot be sustained without a faculty voice, a vision of faculty as the driving engine of the university, a clear set of policies and procedures, and a set of competitive packages that reward faculty teaching and research. Tenure and a faculty evaluation process are needed to ensure quality and to make faculty feel secure and appreciated.

Hardly any of the new American-style universities or the older ones in the region have tenure, and this omission undermines faculty stability. Contractual abuse on the part of university administration is not uncommon, and faculty's rights are often abused. Faculty and the integrity of the institution should be legally protected. Instability in the region makes the hiring of international faculty more challenging; nevertheless, more efforts to attract and retain such faculty are needed.

Establishing Good Governance

The institution must develop an agreed-upon vision that can bring it into the future. The vision must have components that relate to high-quality education, students, faculty, and governance in the context of a futuristic ideal. A mission is of great importance. It lays the foundation of the institution. The mission and vision must be written and discussed through a process that involves the entire institution (faculty, staff, and board). Town hall meetings and discussion groups can contribute to the type of university the collective governing body would like to nourish.

American institutions of higher education are known for integrity, due process, faculty empowerment, fairness, and consistency in decisionmaking. These characteristics relate to the independence of the institution and support its ability to uphold its standards in the society in which it operates. In this context, due process is a must, and the ability to protect institutional decisions and standards is part of such a culture of integrity and institutional credibility.

Governance concerns both faculty and the university's administration. In American-style universities in the Arab world, a limited cogovernance with faculty often exists. Generally speaking, most of the private universities are driven by making money, and there is no separation of ownership, administration, and operation of the university.

Faculty governance. What is needed is cogovernance with a role for collective faculty. Faculty must feel secure and have immunity from abuse of authority. Grievance procedures and due process are a must. Without these elements, the university will lose some

of its best faculty and will have a hard time attracting new high-quality faculty. News about the culture of an institution travels fast through faculty networks, which makes sustaining a body of high-quality faculty almost impossible in a culture of poor governance. This is even true in the case of new PhD holders who are seeking positive institutional experiences for career growth.

Institutional governance. A conflict of interest exists between the aims of providing high-quality education and of making a profit on money invested by owners. Academic boards lack power, and owners are at the heart of the decisionmaking process of the university. This dichotomy has been detrimental to most for-profit universities in the Arab world.

The right financial model—profit or nonprofit—for a university in the Arab world is unclear. Investors should get a return on their investments, or they will never invest in education. There is no tax system in many Arab countries, and there are therefore no tax exemptions to encourage nonprofit institutions. But what about services to students, educational quality, and the money needed for the growth of a university? How can a university grow without reinvesting a major part of its revenues? What is the balance between return on investment and reinvestment in a university? A possible solution would be licensing only foundations or owners who manifest corporate social responsibility to create new universities in the Arab world. A university should have an element of altruism to earn respect from the community, develop an active alumni community, and raise funds. Without such an approach, only nonprofit institutions (such as AUB, AUC, and AUS) will be able to solicit money via fundraising, while the other universities will be heavily dependent on high tuition. With the commercialization of education (some universities are even listed on the stock market), universities will end up lowering their standards to attract students and providing easy education for elites.

This discussion applies only to for-profit universities, which may never be able to catch up with their nonprofit counterparts. One way to bridge that divide is to encourage state-supported, nonprofit American-

style higher education, such as AUS, the Qatar Foundation, AUB, and AUC. Another way is to impose stronger restrictions on existing for-profit universities regarding the amount of return and the amount of reinvestment, governance, role of the board, and all the conflicting interests between owners and governance. Without such awareness, for-profit universities will add to the decline of education in the region.

Establishing Policies and Procedures

University policies and procedures that have been approved by all parties involved should be publicly published and available in English and Arabic. Faculty policies and procedures must be supported by faculty and cannot be imposed after hiring.

What universities in the Arab world need are consistent policies and procedures on a state or regional level. A minimum accepted standard should be delineated. These practices will significantly improve faculty retention and attract good-quality faculty who can teach without having to compromise their career.

Encouraging Research

Universities should encourage research relevant to the region by its faculty, including research about teaching and methods of instruction. For instance, applied research to enhance teaching and methods of teaching of different subjects is essential. Faculty must be given the budget, time, and resources to conduct research. Without the opportunity and budget for research, faculty members lose their competitive edge.

How can for-profit universities encourage research? They need to put a budget aside for faculty development, for attending conferences, and for conducting research. This investment is essential for the retention of high-quality faculty and the attraction of promising new faculty.

Cooperating with American Universities

The implementation of the American model in some countries and universities may be limited to the adoption of semesters and the four-point grading system. These universities, however, are open to interaction

with American universities and can exchange information and learn from them. Universities can use affiliations to further develop their curricula and gain recognition in and outside the region.

Twofold collaboration between universities should be promoted:

- Collaboration in the region between new universities and the existing accredited American-style institutions
- Further collaboration between existing regional universities and established universities in the United States

Online distance education of certain courses offered by U.S.-based universities through local American-style universities based in the region would be helpful. Already, many U.S. universities are positioning themselves through distance education, most notably with China.

Integrating Globally

To compete with other universities in the region, American-style universities and colleges in the Arab world have to make themselves known. They can do so not only by setting up a dynamic website and running it with accurate and continuously updated information, but also by attracting high-quality faculty and organizing seminars showcasing experts and well-known speakers. American-style universities in the Arab world need to have added value over other universities to attract high-quality students, faculty, and sponsorship.

Equally important is creating a dialogue between Arab and U.S. students through student exchange, student travel abroad, joint online courses with U.S. universities, and video conferencing. Further integration can take place on the faculty, program, library, research, and administrative levels as well as through agreements about access to resources and through memberships in associations and international bodies.

Appendix A. Universities and Colleges by Country and Category

NAME (DATE ESTABLISHED)	CATEGORY	PRIVATE/ PUBLIC	NUMBER OF STUDENTS/FACULTY
ALGERIA			
INELEC (1976)	4	Public	Unknown
BAHRAIN			
Ahlia University (2001)	3	Private	Unknown
Gulf University (2001)	3	Public	Unknown
Royal University for Women (2004)	3	Private	Unknown
EGYPT			
American University in Cairo (1919)	1	Private	5,000/±500
British University of Egypt (2005)	3	Private	Unknown
Al-Ahram Canadian University (2005)	3	Private	Unknown
October University for Modern Sciences and Arts (1996)	3	Private	Unknown
JORDAN			
Al-Zaytoonah University (1993)	4	—	—
Al-Ahliyya University in Amman (1990)	4	Private	Unknown/6
New York Institute of Technology, Jordan (1955 NY)	2	Unknown	Unknown
KUWAIT			
American University of Kuwait (2004)	3	Private	1,500/80
Gulf University of Science and Technology (2002)	3	Private	Unknown
Australian College of Kuwait (2000)	3	Private	Unknown
Kuwait Maastricht Business School	3	Private	Unknown
Arab Open University (2002)	4	Private	Unknown
Box Hill College Kuwait (2007)	2	Private	Starts Sept. 2007
LEBANON			
American University of Beirut (1866)	1	Private	5,778/586
Lebanese American University (1835)	1	Private	6,000/Unknown
University of Balamand (1988)	1	Private	3,000/Unknown
American University of Technology (2004)	3	Unknown	Unknown
American Academy of Technology (1998)	3	Unknown	Unknown

Explanation of categories:

1. American-style institutions of higher education
2. Branches of Western institutions
3. Local institutions with Western name/affiliation
4. Local institutions where the language of instruction is English

NAME (DATE ESTABLISHED)	CATEGORY	PRIVATE/ PUBLIC	NUMBER OF STUDENTS/FACULTY
MOROCCO			
Al-Akawayn University (1995)	4	Public	25–30% exchange students/Unknown
OMAN			
Oman Medical College (2000)	3	Private	Unknown
Caledonian College of Engineering (1996)	3	Private	Unknown
PALESTINIAN TERRITORIES			
Arab American University (1996)	3	Private	Unknown
Birzeit College (1924)	4	Private	6,900/725
QATAR			
Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar (2003)	2	Private	120/Unknown
Georgetown University	2	Private	100/Unknown
Virginia Commonwealth University (2006)	2	Private	Unknown
Weill Medical College of Cornell University	2	Private	135/34
Texas A&M University	2	Public	200/48
SAUDI ARABIA			
King Fahd University of Petroleum and Minerals (1963)	4	Public	10,000+/800+
Effat College (1955)	4	Private	Unknown
Dar al-Hekma College (1999)	4	Private	1,500/Unknown
SYRIA			
Arab-American University for Technology in Aleppo (2005)	3	Private	Unknown
International University for Sciences and Technology in Deraa (2005)	4	Private	Unknown
Al-Andalous University for Medical Sciences in Tartous (2005)	4	Private	Unknown
Syrian Virtual University (2002)	4	Public	Unknown
UAE			
American University in Dubai (1995)	3	Private	1,800/Unknown
American University of Sharjah (1997)	3	Private	4,500/278
British University in Dubai (2004)	3	Private	Unknown
University of Wollongong in Dubai (1993)	3	Unknown	2,500/Unknown
American College of the Emirates (2007)	3	Private	Unknown
University of Sharjah (1997)	4	Public	Unknown
Al-Zayed University	4	Public	3,000/Unknown
Middlesex University, Dubai Campus	2	Unknown	Unknown
Heriot-Watt University, Dubai Campus	2	Unknown	Unknown
George Mason University (2009)	2	Public	100/10

Appendix B. Survey Questions

Survey: Liberal Arts Higher Education in the Middle East

We would greatly appreciate your assistance in a study of the state of higher education in the Middle East, by answering a few questions. Please feel free to add any comments or suggestions at the end of this survey.

It will take you about 15–20 minutes to answer all the questions.

Thank you!

Jusoor Arabiya – Leadership & Consultancy Center

General Information

Name:

University:

Country:

Subject(s) you teach:

How many years have you been teaching in the Middle East?

About Your Classes

1. Average number of students per class:

2. Method of instruction (mark all that apply with an X):

Lecture

Lab work

Presentations

Papers

Research

Other (please elaborate):

3. Material used in class (mark all that apply with an X):

Books

Internet resources

Slides/PowerPoint

Other (please elaborate):

4. Please rate your students' ability—1 being not at all able and 10 being very able—to:

Read and understand English

Give presentations

Write papers and essays

Apply theory

Think logically

Give an opinion

5. Have you ever had to adjust your teaching material? (mark one with an X)

Yes

No (go to question 8)

6. What was the offending material?

7. Why did you have to adjust the material? (mark all that apply with an X)

Government laws

University administration

Student complaint

Other (please elaborate):

About Your University

8. What are the admission requirements for the university?

9. Do you feel that the focus at your university is on the student?

10. What student facilities and services are there? (mark all that apply with an X)

Library

Computer labs

Internet

Sports teams

Sports facilities

Student government body

Student counseling

Student clubs (debate team, photography, etc.)

Scholarships

Study-abroad opportunities

Student loans

Other (please elaborate):

11. Do you feel liberal arts education at your university is equivalent to liberal arts education in the United States? (mark one with an X)

Yes

No

12. Why or why not?

13. What community outreach programs are there at your university?

14. Does your university tenure faculty?

Yes

No

15. What is the faculty workload? (e.g., 2:2, 4:2, 3:3)

16. Do you have any other comments on your experience teaching in the Middle East?

Thank you for your time.

Please e-mail the completed form to info@margreetarnold.com or fax to Jusoor Arabiya (+965) 251-7387

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