

Case Study Higher Education

College /
Academic Coverage



Academic Coverage of a Design College in the Sultanate of Oman

BACKGROUND

The Sultanate of Oman's Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE) mandated that each new college in the Sultanate have an academic-coverage engagement with an internationally renowned university. A newly established design college and LAU Consult signed an engagement agreement in 2004, and for the past 13 years LAU Consult and the college partnered in developing the latter into a premier design institution in the Sultanate.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Client Challenges

- LAU's School of Architecture & Design (SARd) was entrusted with providing academic advisory and coverage services to a new design college in Oman covering several undergraduate programs, from Fine Arts, Graphic Design, Interior Design to, more recently, Architecture, Photography, Fashion Design and Animation
- The coverage also benefitted from the expertise of the English department in the School of Arts & Sciences, which worked in parallel on the enhancement of the English language proficiency of students. The low English proficiency of entering students hindered their overall learning progress, and was adequately addressed
- MOHE required the college to improve and advance its academic status, and to be accredited by the Omani Academic Accreditation Authority (OAAA).

Our Solution

LAU Consult:

- Seconded a dean to the college for three years, from 2006 until 2008, which helped solidify the LAU educational platform on the ground
- Provided support on the ground with consultants from LAU along with an assessment visit at the end of each academic year by senior LAU academic administrators
- Facilitated faculty-development workshops, all while instilling teaching methodologies, syllabus-design techniques and program development for the college
- Advised the college's academic-support team on functions related to student admissions, registrar, academic structure, quality and accreditation, faculty support, library and facilities.

Our Intervention's Impact

- Instilled quality learning and teaching processes
- Monitored the development of design programs up to regional standards
- Provided support workshops to different design majors
- Improved students' levels in English proficiency
- Helped the college get accredited by the OAAA
- Helped the college grow to include seven design programs, a thriving English language program, over 1,500 alumni, and over 1,500 enrolled students.

This collaboration has flourished, with seven design programs currently supported, more than 1,500 graduates, and more than 1,500 enrolled students...

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IN FOCUS

Key Client Challenge

The college needed to enhance its curricular delivery, improve its students' English proficiency, sustain its admission goals, supply the Omani educational market with design programs in high demand, institutionalize a culture of self-assessment, and meet higher student learning outcomes.

Our Solution

LAU Consult integrated a:

- Common framework for teaching the English language and creating a learning culture across the design disciplines
- Common framework and guidelines for English-language teaching among faculty in the English Department

In terms of faculty development:

- Planned for continuous teacher development
- Facilitated faculty-development workshops
- Improved teaching methodologies
- Reviewed methodologies for testing and evaluation
- Integrated assessment throughout the teaching cycle
- Evaluated faculty-teaching loads and extra-curricular activities, and recommended periodic adjustments to such loads in alignment with the college's promotion criteria.

In terms of curricula:

- Per curriculum, redesigned course syllabi based on needs
- Instilled faculty syllabi ownership.

In terms of assessment:

- Performed annual assessments of both the English and design programs, and their related course sequences
- Structured and monitored the assessment cycle over a two-year period, per program
- Provided requested support with OAAA process, per program
- Provided guidance across all academic-support functions, including library, admissions, registrar, college facilities and administrative functions.

Continuous monitoring support:

- Set up a yearly support visit to assist in a comprehensive-assessment process for the college
- Interacted with faculty and staff and helped enable structural adjustments, improvements in program delivery, and build-up of the self-assessment culture in the institution
- Delivered annually, at the end of each academic year, a series of recommendations, coupled with a set of orientation meetings to ensure preparedness for changes in higher education.

School of Architecture and Design
School of Arts & Sciences
Team of Consultants