

جامعة الشارقة  
UNIVERSITY OF SHARJAH

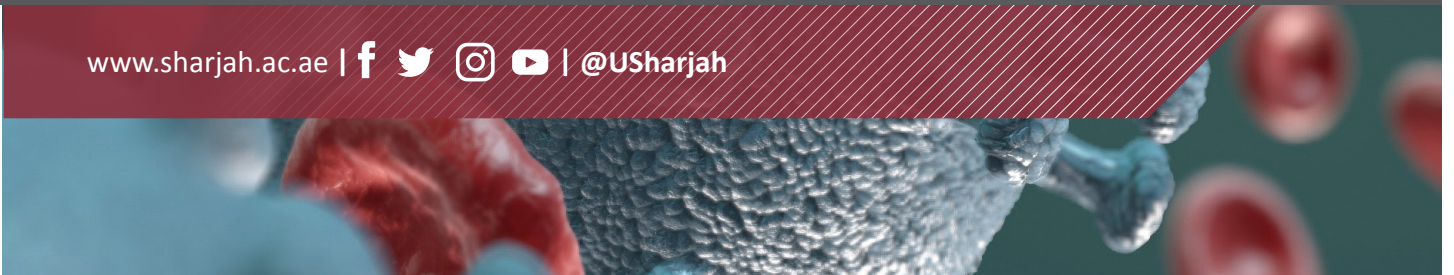
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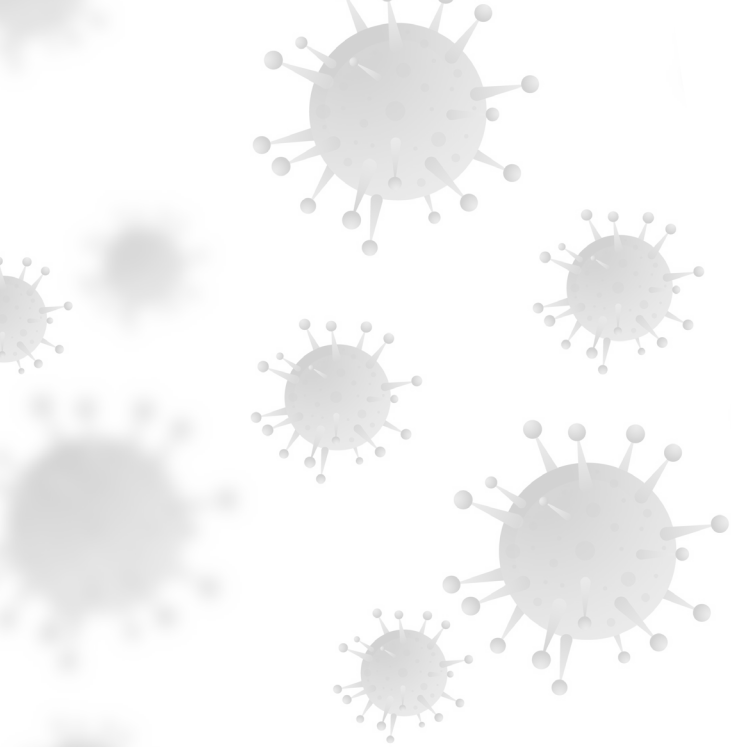
# MAINTAINING OUR SPIRIT IN THE COVID-19 ERA

Prioritization Strategy for 2020/21

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OUR PRIORITIES:  
**OUR STUDENT WELFARE,**  
INNOVATIVE WORLD CLASS **DISTANCE**  
**TEACHING, LEARNING & RESEARCH.**





# CHANCELLOR'S FOREWORD

**Professor Hamid M. K. Al Naimiy,  
Chancellor of the  
University of Sharjah**

## **Towards sustainable opportunities for better and more efficient Teaching & Learning**

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, educators, students, and their families have been suddenly thrust into a new educational reality, as over 1.5 billion students (90% of learners around the world) are required to learn remotely from home. Most universities have switched to online instruction and have suspended on-campus teaching. This is a crisis influencing a traditionally stable and trusted education sector. The COVID-19 pandemic presents the most significant challenge to international student mobility on a global scale since the Second World War. This strategic response shall support continued student success and academic continuity during this crisis and beyond.

Our interim strategy responds to these new challenges by building upon the strategic initiatives developed within the University of Sharjah 2019- 2024 SPIRIT Strategy. This interim strategy focuses on prioritizing academic continuity, financial sustainability, and preparing the University for a Post COVID-19 environment, in addition to promising a strong future.

The application of blended programs and learning on demand were well established at the University of Sharjah prior to the COVID-19 pandemic since

faculty had been utilizing digital technologies and learning management systems for a number of years, providing the experience required for a smooth transition to distance learning. This utilization shall be strengthened by deploying more advanced educational software to foster smart and innovative course delivery, providing enjoyable experiences for our students in both synchronous and asynchronous modes.

Indeed, the transition from face-to-face teaching to distance education has been largely impacted by suppliers' and connectivity issues (for both local and international students) with little difficulty concerning the availability of digital-ready materials or IT administrative systems. Students with a home environment conducive to distance learning and reliable internet access have had an easier time adjusting to the new norms more effectively. However, additional challenges related to students undertaking lab-based research and coursework or requiring special equipment are to be addressed.

The strategic plan remains within the context of future educational models in higher education, emergent challenges, responsible stewardship of resources, commitment to the development of the community, and dedication to expanding the excellence of our University. Academic institutes must collaborate and develop partnerships to deliver new, open and flexible educational models for higher education, which are relevant and can match the evolving challenges of today.

With the support of His Highness, Sheikh Dr. Sultan Bin Mohammed Al Qassimi, Member of the Supreme Council of UAE, Ruler of Sharjah and the President of the University, we will continue to invest in modern infrastructure and social computing software to promote technology-enhanced learning at the University. It is our responsibility, as educators, to continue to recognize and accept the obligation to change ourselves in order to address these new challenges and support future development. Guided by the vision, wisdom and support of His Highness, the University's mission, and the shared commitment of our faculty, staff, and students, a new level of excellence will be reached.

**Professor Hamid M. K. Al Naimiy**

# STUDENTS

**Make: The University of Sharjah more ‘remotely’ accessible, welcoming, and supportive for all, with a focus on student safety and wellbeing.**



## **Planning Strategic Options for Students**

It is difficult to predict what will happen during this dynamic environment, and how the current situation will impact the fall semester. Educational institutions are planning a range of options. The specific direction of the University will be ultimately determined by the UAE Government, in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Furthermore, such a strategy will not be operated in a silo but in line with our current dynamic 5-year strategy.

### **A. The University of Sharjah Normal Operations**

This strategic operation for the fall semester, requires the least amount of specific planning, with high impact, but most unlikely to occur. Students return to University joining classes within colleges as in previous fall semesters. Teaching and Learning continue as normal, with greater experience gained from distance learning and educational technology. Remote working will cease for all employees and business continuity will be prioritized to ensure lessons learned are recorded and future plans developed.



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## **B. Fully Remote Learning Model**

This strategic plan has been developed through a situational analysis which highlighted the opportunities and the challenges as a result of distance learning and online remote exams taken during the previous semester. In doing so, the University identified any technology gap with learners and evaluated faculty readiness. The plan is to be agile, flexible, and realistic in our delivery. If the current situation remains, the fall semester will continue to run as distance learning and remote working operations. Teaching and learning will be delivered using digital technology with faculty and support staff working remotely.

Our successes and challenges from the spring semester 2020 will be adapted and improved to ensure that the highest levels of teaching and learning continue. Student clubs and groups will operate on extra-curricular activities remotely, as will peer-to-peer support and academic advising through question and answer sessions. This is an opportunity to further develop the student e-portfolio which represents the digital record of their journey throughout their studentship at the University.

## **C. Hybrid or Blended Learning Model**

College hybrid or blended learning models will allow courses to be delivered both face-to-face and through a blended distance learning model. This would also be augmented by asynchronous learning content for those students who are not attending face-to-face sessions. This is an opportunity in which we have to be more agile, flexible and ambitious to meet external challenges and be able to deliver our core business, which every college needs to contribute to.

Intensive training for both Faculty and Students will be delivered to overcome any challenges identified during the Spring 2019/20 experience of distance learning and online remote examinations.

## **Dormitory Community**

In particular, international students remaining on campus may be faced with uncertainties related to difficulty securing alternative accommodations due to financial circumstances, and the inability to continue education, in addition to being unable to return home. Visa restrictions and travel constraints may also be challenging for our students. This strategy must consider the implications of our students' accommodations within campus dormitories. Psychological counseling and support is essential to the dormitory community, not only by the professional Counselors, but also by the dormitory supervisors and support staff. A survey to analyze the psychological, financial, academic and social impacts on dormitory students will be developed. The results will provide additional knowledge which allow operational planning and prioritization.

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### **Financial Aid Program**

We will explore the development of a fund from our colleges, partners and local organizations, to establish a financial aid program for students to purchase equipment or services that enable them to study at home. Students will continue to need a computer, peripherals and internet connection. The University of Sharjah will provide additional support through a small grants scheme. The University will develop a financial aid fund for students to receive grants to purchase study-at-home items such as internet access, computer peripherals, or a study desk and chair.

### **Online Counseling Services**

The emotional, physical, and social impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic are detrimental to our students, support staff and faculty's wellbeing. Students may be experiencing financial hardship or carrying responsibilities rendering their studies even more challenging. Access to support services through a newly developed hotline is therefore crucial during this time. Our students, who are parents may have increased caring responsibilities, as school closures will impact family life. Students with families might require additional support and flexibility on deadlines. Some students may also require additional support due to emotional distress, financial difficulties, and possibly problems with home life. The University shall maintain and facilitate access to such support services through online information and communication tools. Students' records will be reviewed to identify, students living outside UAE, students who are living alone, students with no parents, students on academic probation, and students with reported medical problems, as priority to receive support.

This could also provide a new opportunity for peer support from fellow students groups and societies who may also offer an additional layer of support or counseling.

## Research Facilities, Art and Media Studios and Specialized Workshops, Clinical Practice and Practical Training

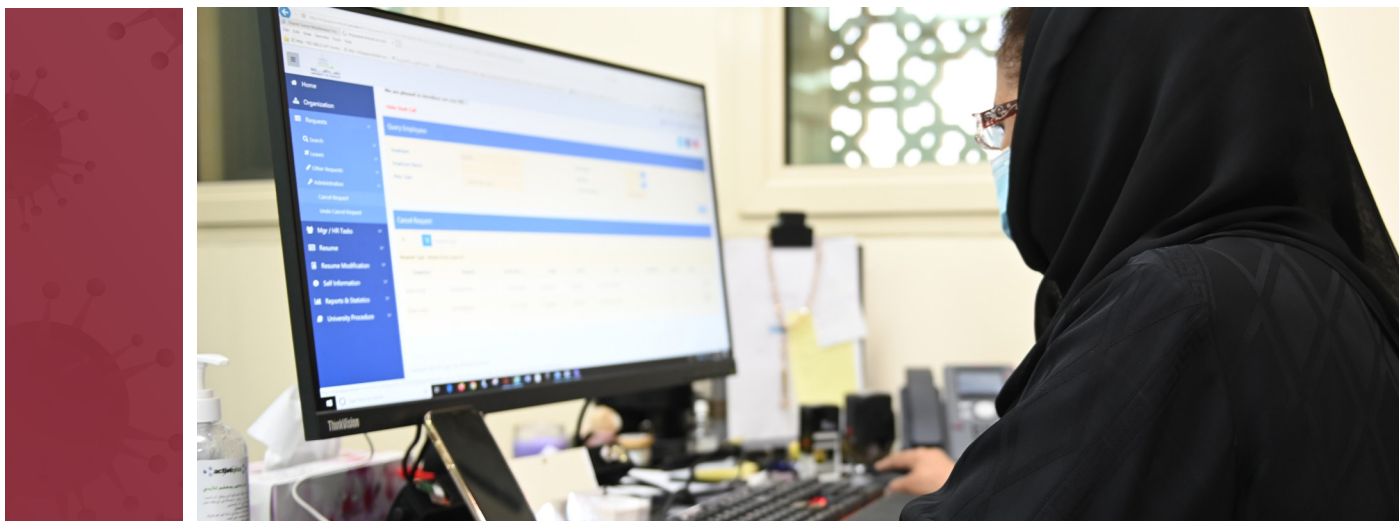
The University of Sharjah has invested heavily in its research and teaching facilities. Researchers, faculty and students requiring access to research laboratories, art and media studios, and specialized workshops are struggling without access to facilities and possibly changed home circumstances (e.g. children out of school, loss of job). The University of Sharjah has implemented an Access-to-Research Equipment Policy, which implements controlled social distancing to ensure continuity of lab-based experiments. We will continue to support our researchers and students' needs, in addition to the research and projects they are conducting, through a review and restructuring of the laboratory, studio and workshop systems. There is a need to identify different courses which can provide remote lab-based research activities and may, in the future, require access to online simulated laboratory environments. Similarly, practice-based courses that are heavily dependent on hands-on work shall be identified and reconfigured to adapt to restricted access. In addition, risk assessments will be conducted to evaluate approved procedures to allow limited and restricted access to resources with a focus on the safety and welfare of our faculty, academic-support staff and students. This is a small number of classes where in-person instruction is essential and must be justified — such as clinical practice courses, labs, workshops or studios — sufficient resources and protocols will be in place to ensure the health and safety of students and faculty. This will include the distance between participants increased; the need for personal protective equipment appropriate to the circumstance prevalent; and the need to sanitize and disinfect spaces and equipment between users will be essential.



Clinical Practice components may represent a substantial risk to students, within this dynamic environment as such further coordination with key stakeholders is required to ascertain reasonable measures, again based on risk assessment.

In research fields, which may or may not be compatible with the COVID-19 strategy of distance learning, faculty and staff will remain flexible to accommodate the new and changing roles of individuals involved in the research process. An evolution of research methods will continue to develop to support less of a dependence on laboratory research. The University will prioritize research and wider collaboration around COVID-19, exchanging research and collaborating with faculty in other universities within the region and globally. In addition, undergraduate projects themed around COVID-19 research will be undertaken by colleges to support society's needs.





### **Branch Operations**

The branch campus model, as a community outreach mechanism, will be reviewed with consideration for the possibility of developing dedicated socially distant workspaces for remote, rural students to bridge the technology gap, by providing access to the internet and/or access to mobile devices, during fully remote learning operations.

### **Student Success Service**

Defining the challenges of the current environment, with an aim to solve many of the issues either by policy or provision of services will require the restructuring of support staff positions. As such an essential student support service for all students will be required. The 'Student Success Service' will provide professional academic, technical and general support to all students. The Student Success Service will help students define and achieve their individual academic and personal goals, contributing to achieving maximum success. To accomplish this, the Service will provide student advisory, counseling, assistance with the transition to online courses, online support, connection to peer-to-peer assistance, and access to financial support.

Given the benefits of full engagement in the learning community, the Service will work as an academic and remote social hub where students can meet online and engage in activities designed to guide and develop students through this challenging time, providing social connection to campus even when a virtual environment is necessary.

This initiative requires the development of the new Student Success Service to deliver and provide access to student personalized support, which will include:

- Technical support with technology
- Admission and registration technical support
- Coordination of peer-to-peer support
- Coordination of subject matter support
- First point of contact for all complaints, comments and enquiries from students
- Liaison between student and University operations
- Coordination of specialist support, including counseling and disability resource unit services.

The aim is to establish an efficient mentoring, monitoring and support system to ensure that students enjoy their journey throughout their time at the University; and are able to identify their passion, in doing, they are on track for graduation on time which is the University's highest priority.



### College Distance Learning Committees

In addition, colleges will establish a distance learning committee to coordinate distance learning support and delivery. Committee members will include Faculty with deep understanding of educational technology (e-teacher) and will coordinate directly with IT and other University departments to ensure the highest levels of distance learning and academic continuity.

Suitable displaced support staff shall be trained to support hybrid and full online solutions through academic application specialist positions that will support faculty and students with distance learning tools and solutions.



### Career Success Service

The online Career Advising and Student Training Offices will provide comprehensive student support for career development. The University of Sharjah strives to ensure the maximum employability of all students by providing them the opportunity to pursue meaningful experiential learning and transition to employment opportunities. With an emphasis on partnerships and industry collaboration, the Career Success Service will provide online remote prospects for collaboration with corporations, faculty, students, and alumni to develop outreach strategies to cultivate relationships and contribute to the national agenda of Emiratization. The Career Service will schedule career-related online workshops, webinars and online drop-in sessions on an ongoing basis, targeting the various levels of students and alumni. There will be a refocus and realignment of goals and tasks toward meeting student and employer needs in a new world with new job opportunities in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. The Service will continue to include four main functions: remote internship, on-campus employment, career advising, and international internship exchange. It shall focus on:

- Soft Skills to increase Employability of our Graduates.
- Career planning through career services.
- Creation of a graduate talent hub in partnership with industry and government to train and empower our graduates with advanced skills required by the employer.

In addition, the Service will update the database of graduates through the Alumni department, in addition to coordinating with various stakeholders to ensure graduate employability is evaluated and future academic direction based on industry needs.

# PEOPLE



## Redesign

The University will review its workforce planning given the current environment, examining opportunities for redeployment, retention, and roles at risk, while prioritizing and protecting jobs. Although some services may be on hold during the crisis, particularly those related to infrastructure management, other services are in high demand, such as Information Technology Services, which will need greater support. Administrative functions should be streamlined due to the cost efficiency imperative, and employees are asked to manage greater flexibility, responsibility, and possibly more complexity, to multi-task, and be prepared to be agile. As such, robust policies, procedures and training for continued remote working, for employees will be needed, in order to increase productivity levels and utilization, as a result of displacement due to the current circumstances. In addition, the University must ensure a safe working environment for employees whose presence is required within campus during the pandemic, this will include social distancing, availability of personal protective equipment, hand sanitization, and all other possible ergonomic adaptations to work life. The University will be creative and smart in space utilization, to ensure social distancing, while providing an attractive mobile working environment through the allocation of mobile technology.

## Emirati graduate program

The University of Sharjah will continue to focus on the identification and recruitment of Emirati graduates and developing their skills within the work environment. This will be achieved through a graduate program, in which new Emirati staff will be able to work on rotation through administrative units, enhancing their skills through practical and challenging work opportunities. This Program will enable the University to attract and recruit Emiratis for future management positions. This shall be achieved by focusing on career path development by providing them with the necessary skills and knowledge to succeed as active leaders through the Emirati Leadership Program. This Program is delivered by the Institute of Leadership in Higher Education (ILHE), which has created a program that will foster such talents and act as an incubator to meet the regional and national leadership skill requirements.

# INNOVATION

## **The Journey towards a Digital Campus**

It is crucial to implement new and upgrade existing technologies along with clearly defined and effective processes to enable the University of Sharjah to leverage efficiency and savings in the new remote working model. This will provide improved technology to students, staff and faculty, offering a range of smart and remote University services for student recruitment, administration, physical access, security and payment processes. This in turn ensures that our people have the best possible technological environment in which to operate with an emphasis on remote, distance access.

### **Accelerated implementation of the following initiatives:**

- Wireless upgrade project.
- Online Student Advising System to provide support to all students.
- Attendance System to record accurate student attendance (online and face-to-face).
- Enhancing Digital Self-Services to allow our employees to facilitate services access.
- Cloud Services to support remote working.
- Privileged Security and Access Management to further protect our data.
- Bring Your Own Device Policy for Students to support students with personal computers.
- Institutional Licenses for applications to allow students to access licensed software.
- An E-Safety Policy to ensure respectful, ethical, digital learning and working spaces for all.

### **The Banner Realization Project introduces new features to support faculty, staff and students.**

Faculty will benefit from this project by having a 360 degree profile which provides full access to required academic services including grading, registration and attendance tracking. Students as well should be able to have a 360 degree profile with access to all required information and services in a one-stop point. Student, faculty and staff will have a new communication channel under one umbrella.

The Enterprise Content Management System will provide document management functions, archiving, correspondence and general workflow to eliminate the flow of physical paper and possible COVID-19 transmission points. SharePoint will be utilized as an interim solution. In addition, the new admission component, to be released in 2020/21, will increase flexibility for students and administration staff.

### **Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub**

Once we have exited from this challenging time, we must ensure that the development of a fabrication Laboratory is available and equipped with a range of high-tech devices and facilities. The goal of the facility will be to offer a platform for faculty members and students to transform ideas into reality. The hub will utilize advanced digital manufacturing technology, supporting the creation of new designs, prototypes, through investment in augmented reality, virtual reality, mixed reality to develop virtual and physical prototypes. The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Hub must be ready to create idea opportunities to foster entrepreneurial activities for this new educational era, effectively meeting the expectations of faculty and students.





# RESOURCES

**Investing in the future while working towards a financially sustainable institution with diverse sources of income.**

The University of Sharjah will seek to improve its financial sustainability while recognizing that many students may be forced to drop out for financial, health or family reasons. In some instances, students may not have access to the internet or tools in their home countries. The University will explore flexible financial terms, and relaxing policies for students needing a study break. Currently the University of Sharjah offers some of the lowest fees within the region and within its global ranking classification. Increasing fees will not be considered during the current environment. However, through the identification of dedicated resources the University will continue to explore the following mechanisms to diversify and grow revenue streams, while building endowment opportunities and working towards a financially sustainable Institution with diverse sources of income, revenue streams and endowment opportunities to prioritize investment for the future.

- Commercial – through industry partnerships and expert consulting activities.
- Philanthropy – through developing fund-raising capabilities.
- External Research Grants - from international and national research funding sources.

**Efficient Resource Management: Establish a sustainable financial base and examine the distribution of resources across programs, revising uneconomical academic programs.**

Through revisions to the operational framework as a result of the current environment within the context of the global crisis, the University of Sharjah will increase the transparency and understanding of its revenue and cost base. This will allow the University to apply targeted operating margin controls at college and business unit levels, which will enable the generation of additional efficiencies. This will, in turn, provide the analytical capacity to develop innovative, strong and sustainable revenue sources, partnered with targeted optimization and efficiency programs, to ensure the University's overall financial sustainability. Partnership with the private sector related to innovative research and major academic activity around the COVID-19 pandemic will provide much needed community and global support as well as possibly generate revenue to the University.

### **Optimize: Academic Program Offering**

Improve University of Sharjah financial sustainability throughout the crisis and redeploy resources on activities more closely aligned with new strategic priorities, through:

- Powering up high contribution programs.
- Delivering courses to multiple genders to enable efficient delivery.
- Rationalizing / merging / powering down low contribution programs, unless deemed strategic for the University overall.
- Optimizing curriculum and modernizing teaching delivery methods, to deliver modern high quality, efficient teaching pedagogy in the new distance learning environment and beyond.

### **Implement: Cost-Efficient Initiatives**

Through implementation of the University of Sharjah Management Model, which will adapt our core business and operational models for new ways of working, all operating units will be reviewed and benchmarked to ensure they are operating at best practice standards. This is anticipated to release resources that will be used to fund strategic initiatives, particularly new initiatives to serve the learning community during the current crisis. Administrative functions are significantly re-engineered in the adjusted strategy, leading to lower OPEX and CAPEX spending, and eventually a lower operating model. In addition, the University will work more closely with the community – relying on fewer, more local suppliers to reduce dependencies and supply chain risk.

### **Investing for the Future**

Harnessing digital technologies is a necessity within the current crisis and will enable the University to continue offering a world-class learning experience for students in the online environment. Technology to immediately co-create ideas, as well as to facilitate progress by addressing questions and concerns is required. In addition to the system of learning which reinforces the careful review and repetition or extension of course objectives according to the individual learner's pace and achievement level must be carefully reviewed. Future delivery models must encourage a blend of these approaches.

Time apart can be spent reading and watching carefully curated digital materials that our expert faculty continue to provide through the learning management system. As such educational technology investment for the future is at the core of this strategy.

# **IMPROVEMENT**

## **Knowing the Market**

### **Knowing the Market**

One of the primary strategic focuses is to increase and ensure academic continuity, while ensuring financial sustainability of the University of Sharjah, particularly in response to the current crisis. The University will implement initiatives to increase student enrolment and build revenue-generating programs using remote access and distance learning models.

Student enrolment will focus on developing an ambitious, innovative and integrated strategy to improve student recruitment and retention during our current environment. Our marketing during this crisis will move away from the on-campus experience to introduce ways to differentiate and create a uniquely new student experience.

The University will explore alternative approaches to market programs and recruit new students. These strategies will mainly be propelled with the use of modern technologies. For instance, online student recruitment open days and webinars for prospective students and their parents to ask questions about the University will be organized. Reaching out to the alumni and organizations across the country will also be considered using advanced communication technology.

### **Promote the New Environment to Prospective and Current Students (locally and internationally)**

The rationale of this approach is to promote the new environment to future students as a life-changing experience within their educational journey. For example, recruiters can highlight the lifelong benefits of learning in a multicultural community and the wide-ranging applications for the transferable technical skills afforded by this new environment. This, together with a stable, secure and effective digital delivery platform with remote student services, will be a distinguishing point to support an increase in admission of international students at both the undergraduate and graduate levels and to support a higher rate of retention.



Our in-house developed customer relationship management system was developed to study specializations and international markets. As such, social media campaigns for undergraduate and graduate programs shall be explored and targeted. Campaigns will target age groups, countries, and job sectors. With the challenge of social distancing recruiters will utilize virtual open day events and webinars to enable students to explore study options from home. In addition, databases are being developed covering all alumni in different undergraduate specializations to consider for future marketing of graduate programs. Our databases also include all of the public sector stakeholders in the UAE, which will be used for the graduate programs campaigns.



# TEACHING AND LEARNING

## Learning Environment Initiative

Excellence in teaching and learning is the core business of the University. Digital technologies are a critical component of effective teaching and learning during these uncertain times. Balancing between online resources and on-campus resources is a priority for the University. The establishment of and investment in resources for transforming the University of Sharjah's learning resources into modern technological and advanced environments is a critical priority.

Firstly, consideration for the procurement of suitably specified laptops, high-quality streaming web-cameras, effective portable lighting, digitizer tablets and suitable audio equipment for all faculty is a priority to support the establishment of engaging and effective digital learning experiences for our students. In addition, the utilization of more advanced software for online and blended learning environments to promote interactive and critical engagement shall be sought. For example, lecture capture, automated transcription of lectures, and artificial intelligence, which will provide 'bookmarks' within audio-visual materials, create questions based on lectures and automatically grade responses.

Through increased prioritization of hardware and software for teaching and learning, the University will create and sustain world-class learning experiences in fully remote or blended learning modes of delivery. This will include both asynchronous live sessions grounded in constructivist teaching philosophy and asynchronous sessions using social computing software such as forums, wikis, and blogs embedded in our learning management systems.

**Based on the data collected and lessons learned from Spring 2020 semester; we will implement and endorse:**

- Laptops, high-quality streaming web-cameras, effective portable lighting, digitizer tablets and suitable audio equipment for all faculty to enhance and more effectively utilize the management of courses, course content and to engage students.
- Tools to assess and support students' progress and achievements.
- The integration of the student portfolio, student outcomes and course interactions.
- Improved learning management reporting tools.
- Technological solutions to allow integration of students with disabilities.
- Advanced education, exam technology solutions (AI).
- Establishing state-of-the art online interactive labs and simulations.

While physical classrooms are empty, this will be an ideal opportunity to create interactive learning spaces that improve student engagement, participation and enhance their conceptual understanding, allowing students to efficiently achieve deeper learning. Enhancing lab facilities, with a special focus on the internet of things, virtual labs for visualization, and simulation labs for experiential learning

is a priority. Providing an ideal opportunity for experiential learning culture for all disciplines, while engaging students in research early in their academic journey through continued interdisciplinary opportunities.

### **Deploy Innovative Methodologies in Teaching and Strengthen Faculty's Pedagogical Knowledge and Skills**

To strengthen the strategic goals of the University, efforts to support faculty and staff professional development activities were already being intensified. With the situation surrounding COVID-19 pandemic, faculty need to be supported to ensure they are comfortable in carrying out their functions completely remotely, which for many will require additional training and support. Thus, the Institute of Leadership in Higher Education (ILHE) will organize a range of ongoing online professional development workshops and consultation sessions to support faculty through this transition. Meanwhile, ILHE will continue to meet the prior objectives of supporting the personal endeavors of faculty, staff, and graduate students.



### **A range of professional development sessions will be available including:**

**Digital Transformation:** Transformation beyond static, paper-based content and reliance on face-to-face working will enable University employees to leverage digital tools for teaching, learning, research and administrative duties.

**Transitioning from Paper to Digital Examinations:** Using different technological tools, such as SafeAssign and Respondus Lockdown Browser, the University will continue to promote academic excellence and integrity. Technology approaches to protect cultural traditions and privacy during proctoring of exams.

**Managing Large Online Groups/Courses:** Faculty will be supported to deploy innovative teaching methodologies, such as online break-out rooms, gamification and problem-based learning to ensure students in large groups have opportunities to actively and critically engage in their learning.

**Managing 24/7 Interactions with Students:** Faculty will be supported to design exemplary online course areas which enable students to interact 24/7 with teaching and learning materials, or peers while managing their expectations around faculty availability.

**Preparing New Faculty for the New Digital Environment Orientation:** A program of diverse workshops and facilitated opportunities for developmental conversations with colleagues will continue to support new faculty to teach, assess and research in the new digital environment.

**Assessment/Exam Approach:** As our environment changes, we will explore the possibility of conducting assessments following best practices to assess students' learning in both the formative and summative ways.

### **Student Training and Orientation:**

For our students to continue to excel in their exams, the University will develop live and pre-recorded webinars, which will support students with the following:

- Ways to organise their online learning throughout the year to feed into their exam revision
- Welfare in the pre-exam period
- Immediate preparation for the online exams
- Strategies for sitting the online exams
- Trouble-shooting FAQ about online exam technology

Through online professional development training, faculty, staff and graduate students will develop current expert knowledge and skills for effective remote teaching, learning and assessment. Expert knowledge and skills of faculty and staff, particularly in relation to online, remote, distance learning in the current situation, will be sharpened through participation in these professional development activities.

### **Review, Develop and Accredite Academic Programs to Meet the 21st Century Job Market and the New Post-COVID-19 Environment**



#### **New Program Development and Accreditation**

The University will review and develop new programs in consideration for the new post COVID-19 environment, to strengthen the University of Sharjah academic programs and to meet the new needs of the 21st century job market . In doing so working towards ensuring employment opportunities for all our graduating students.

Accreditation sources are also adapting to the current crisis and allowing for faster accreditation without drop-in standards by delegating greater autonomy to institutions. These changes to regulations, models, and KPIs, are designed to monitor metrics in the sector successfully as a means of assessing efficiency and student learning. For our ongoing program accreditation process to be effective, collaboration among different units at the University will be encouraged and strengthened, as well as collaboration with external partners. In addition, international accreditation for all academic programs will continue to be a high priority.





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