



Bethlehem University News

Strategic Planning Development Process 1997-2003



STRATEGIC PLANNING



TEACHING



RESEARCH



COMMUNITY SERVICE

From Vision To Implementation

Summer - Fall 2003

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT-VICE CHANCELLOR

Dear Friends,

In this issue of *Bethlehem University News* we are proud to highlight some of the accomplishments of Strategic Planning. As noteworthy as are these results, what we have learned during these past six years is, we believe, equally valuable. Throughout the challenging adventure of Strategic Planning we have come to realize that if an institution and its people are to be dynamic and relevant, it must be a reflective community, always in process of discerning its strengths and weaknesses, of dreaming about and envisaging what it wishes to become.



The painful, gripping story of Muna Matar on the back cover of this issue is, in a very real sense, the story of Strategic Planning at Bethlehem University. Muna was absolutely heroic in her response to a situation over which she had no control: the unexpected death of her mother and the repeated obstacles, delays, frustrations at every turn in her efforts to return to Belgium. But she persevered and succeeded.

Like Muna, we also have persevered. Our university community, despite repeated interruptions, obstacles and frustrations, has continued Strategic Planning and the challenges such a process demands even in the best of times. Through hard work, commitment and determination, we have brought to completion many of the initiatives identified in the Implementation Phase of the Process, some of which are featured in this issue of the BUN. We are addressing many others this Spring, especially those in the strategic areas of review of academic programs and quality assurance in all areas of the University. And we fully plan to continue this process of reflective renewal as an indispensable part of the modus operandi of our institution.

As we at Bethlehem University approach our 30th Anniversary, we do so with a sense of greater realism of our strengths and weaknesses, and of deeper appreciation for the privileged educational service we offer our country. We also commit ourselves to try to do even better. We are grateful to Strategic Planning for teaching us many lessons, most importantly that real education does not lie in amassing information but rather in increasing knowledge and in changing attitudes and behavior.

Brother Vincent.

Calendar of Events/Presentations of Brother Vincent

April 23	Serra Club, St. Louis, MO
April 24	Benefit Concert, Memphis, TN
April 25-27	Equestrian Order Investiture Miami, FL
June 16-18	Euro-Arab Universities Cooperation Conf. Beirut, Lebanon
June 25-28	ROACO, Regents Meetings Rome, Italy
Aug. 3-6	Midwest District Congress Romeoville, IL
Aug. 7-10	Bethlehem Association Convention San Diego, CA

STRATEGIC PLANNING & ACADEMIC LIFE

Strategic Planning

The Strategic Planning Process which began in 1997 will come to a conclusion in 2003. The many workshops and discussions held to meet the challenges identified throughout the Process have brought about a new way of seeing and thinking about problems, and have led to many beneficial changes within the University. The past six years have seen notable changes in physical facilities, ways of mobilizing resources (both human and physical), approaches to teaching and learning, and above all Quality Control. Among these, review of existing programs, new academic programs, expansion of community out-reach, and the introduction of distance learning will enable Bethlehem University to continue its important role in serving the Palestinian community.

In January, the Vice Chancellor, noting that the process is dynamic and the challenge ongoing, presented the initiatives that will be priorities for the near future. These were listed under six main headings - Enhancement of Undergraduate Education, Enhancement of University Experience for Students, Professional Development and Enhancement of Staff Life, Community Out-Reach and Partnership, Physical Enhancement of the Campus and Resources to Realize the Plan. The activities undertaken and initiatives proposed throughout the Process will be reported in a forthcoming document.

Distance Learning

Due to the many interruptions and closures, teachers prepared detailed course outlines and provided students with reading materials early in the Fall 2002 semester. The BU Intranet played a significant role in disseminating information and assignments to students. This has resulted in an increase of e-mail between teachers and students.

As part of the Strategic Planning Process, plans are now underway to upgrade computer and other technological devices to allow for more web-based learning. Workshops will be organized to train faculty in their use and to help them design their own web sites. Muna Matar, Ph.D., is currently developing an e-learning project at the University of Ghent for implementation during the next academic year.



New Major in Computer and Information Technology

As part of the Strategic Plan's enhancement of undergraduate education, the University is planning to inaugurate a baccalaureate degree major in Computer and Information Technology. Maher Qumsieh, Ph.D., Chair of the Math Department, stated that the new major "will graduate students who are professionally and technically capable of integrating into all types of jobs in this field. This includes information systems, business oriented information, communication technologies and the very fast growing computer applications." Brother Henry Chaya, Ph.D., from Manhattan College, NYC, and Muna Matar, Ph.D., from the University of Ghent, will join the department. Nicola Khalilieh is shown with students in the Computer Laboratory.



ACADEMIC LIFE

Department of Religious Studies

Fr. Peter Du Brul, S.J., Chair, attended a Conference on Interreligious Dialog and the Truth, held in Marseille, France, September 11-15, 2002, organized by the International Federation of Catholic Universities (IFCU) and the Catholic Institute of the Mediterranean. He also attended a Conference on Globalization and Catholic Higher Education, held in Rome, December 2-6, 2002, organized by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education and IFCU. In January 2003, his book, *Ignatius: Sharing the Pilgrim Story*, was published by Gracewing in Leominster, England.

Fr. Jamal Khader published his doctoral thesis, "Vers la Pleine Communion: Catholiques et Orthodoxes en Dialogue", which he defended at the Faculty of Theology of the Pontifical Gregorian University in Rome. On March 12, 2003, Mr. Charles Abu Sa'da presented his doctoral thesis at the Pontifical Oriental Institute in Rome. His thesis was on "The Canonical State of the Clergy and the Sacrament of Priestly Orders in the Melkite Synods from 1790 to 1849." It received "summa cum laude" and is soon to be published.



Out-Reach Program of The Education Development Center

One of the main goals of the Faculty of Education's community out-reach programs is to increase community awareness about the rights of the child and to help those children who have been directly affected by the extended curfews in the Bethlehem region. A plan was devised to work with children who witnessed a variety of violent acts by the occupation forces. Three manuals (Educational Packages) with various activities were produced by the team of the Abdul Rahman Zuroub Education Resource Center (AZ-ERC) to guide both BU students and parents in the implementation of these activities. The production

of such innovative educational material offers a new experience to the students. They also gain experience in working with children under these special circumstances and working with children with special needs.

Students with Special Needs

Bethlehem University has long recognized the importance of education for people with special needs and has



addressed this in the Strategic Planning Process. A Committee for Students with Special Needs has been established to address the academic and social needs of these students. The overall goal is to integrate the students into the mainstream of university life. The University is attempting to obtain funds for specialized equipment such as talking computers for the visually impaired and adapted keyboards and input devices for students with coordination problems. The Committee is also studying ways to organize tests and exams so that the students' individual needs are taken into account. Seed money for the program has recently been received from the Brother James Miller Social Justice Fund.

ACADEMIC LIFE

Research At Bethlehem University

A significant amount of research is being done at Bethlehem University in the Faculties of Education and Science. In the Hereditary Research Lab, in particular, a study was funded by the National Institute for Health on families with hearing impairment. Another study is funded by the Middle East Regional Cooperation Program. The lab acquired a sequential machine, the first of its kind in Palestine, that will allow researchers to address genetic abnormalities. Significant assistance is provided by the World Human Genome Project (HGP). Pictured at the right is Moein Kannan, Ph.D, and his assistant in the Research Lab.



Finland Sponsors Digital Media Education

Digital media production at Bethlehem University will take a major step forward in the Fall of 2003. A project, sponsored by the government of Finland and implemented by the Turku Christian Institute to train students in this field, began in March. The \$320,000 project, extending over three years, has begun with the remodeling of a room in the lower level of the Bethlehem University Library into a media center. The new facility will be used for producing and editing the many types of digital instruction that will enable the University to produce educational materials for use when students cannot easily reach the University. Faculty and students will also be trained in the techniques necessary for making such productions and the use of modern digital media equipment. Brother Neil meets with Tapio Kujala (right), Head of the Training Unit Diaconia Polytecnic, and University Engineer, Nagib Nasser.



Simultaneous Translation Coming to BU

Visitors from many countries will find Bethlehem University a little more “user friendly”. With the addition of new simultaneous translation equipment in Cardinal Furno Lecture and Presentation Hall, expatriates will be able to understand lectures given in Arabic.

Two translation booths have already been installed in the 130-seat auditorium. The electronic devices necessary to complete the facility will soon be installed. The construction and furnishing of Cardinal Furno Lecture and Presentation Hall were completed with funds provided by members of the Equestrian Order of the Holy Sepulchre of Jerusalem. Dr. Costandi Shomali instructs students in his translation class.



INSTITUTE FOR COMMUNITY SERVICE

The ICP is a Community Service Institute of Bethlehem established in order to strengthen the ties between the community and the academic institutions.

The ICP consists of a number of specialized units and provides consultancy, short courses, and organizes local and international projects.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Institute aims at providing the Palestinian community members with life-long personal and professional skills. These skills could be utilized to develop the Palestinian society regionally, nationally, and internationally.

TRAINERS

Highly qualified and experienced trainers are hired in order to maintain the high standards expected from such an academic Institute.



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP

University and is located close to the campus. The Institute
between the University and the Palestinian community.

a core unit which coordinates the work. The Institute offers
and international conferences as well as trade shows.



TARGETED GROUPS

Entrepreneurs, business people, accountants, educators, professionals, housewives, private, public employees, and youth groups are among those served.

FUNDER

Special thanks to Konrad Adenaur Stiftung for their generous financial support of the ICP. They have been supporting it since 1989 when it was known as the BDC or the Business Development Center.



FEAST OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST DE LA SALLE-MAY 15, 2003

Staff Recognition Day



Jubilarians celebrate years of service.



The Christian Brothers renew their vows at Mass.

5 Years

Ms. Francoise Daoud
 Ms. Vivian Freij
 Ms. Maro Karkar
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 Mr. Ibrahim Kawwa'
 Ms. Jamileh Maghalseh
 Ms. Vida Nassar
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 Mr. Rene Zambile

10 Years

Ms. Nariman Abu Abbara
 Ms. Amani Atrash
 Prof. Henri Jaqaman
 Mr. Mousa Kan'an
 Mr. Wadie Razzouk

15 Years

Mr. Karim Abdul Nour
 Mr. Imad Abu Dayyeh
 Ms. Rima Dabdoub
 Ms. Samia Kuncar Srour

20 Years

Ms. Ferial Bannoura
 Mr. Habib Kurt
 Mr. Ibrahim Nuaimi
 Ms. Mary Sabella
 Mr. Khader Zoughbi

Retiree

Mr. Ibrahim Al-Butmeh



Brother Neil Kieffe, FSC, Steps Down as Vice President for Academics

Brother Neil Kieffe, FSC, has been a vital part of the University since 1991. He began as Director of Teaching Development and teacher of intensive English. After a semester he moved into the key position of Academic Vice President where he directed the academic life of the University. Brother has held that difficult post for eleven years, longer than any previous Academic Vice President. Besides his work on academics, he chaired innumerable committees, and was the key person working with American Schools and Hospitals Abroad in planning Millennium Hall and preparing all financial reports. Brother Neil will be leaving the Vice Presidency but, gratefully, he will remain at the University as Director of Instructional Technology. He will be replaced by Brother Fergus McArdle from Dublin.

Brother Jerome Sullivan, FSC, and Sister Aida Velasco, SPC, Leave the University



Brother Jerome Sullivan, FSC, accepted the post of Vice President for Development at Bethlehem University in 1997. During these last six years he has worked with great enthusiasm and skill, substantially increasing the contributions from our international donors and initiating new programs that have made possible not just the survival but also the healthy development of this institution. He will return to the States in July and will take up development work for the Christian Brothers' New York Province. He will be replaced by Brother Jack Curran from New York.



Sister Aida Velasco, SPC, has served at BU since 1992. She taught management courses in the Faculty of Business Administration and did work in the Library. In 1995, with her MBA degree, she moved to the Finance Office as Payroll Administrator. She has excelled in each assignment. This coming summer, Sister Aida will return to the Philippines to take up a new mission. She will be replaced by Sister Cecilia Nioko, SPC, from the Philippines.

VISITORS TO THE UNIVERSITY



Monsignor Robert Fuglister visits the Computer Center named in his honor.



Dr. Moh'd Tawil addresses the Emergency Nursing class during his visit to the University.



Spanish Consul-General Jose Maria Ferré with Arts students Nivine Lama (right) and Odette Kamar.



Ibrahim Khelif, Business Major, meets with members of the Sabeel Group.



Yousef Zaknoun, Ph.D, talks to members of the Italian Conference of Bishops.



Caritas International Delegation meets with BU Administrators.

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“GO BACK TO BETHLEHEM ..”

I am Muna Matar, graduate of Bethlehem University, born in Beit Jala, a town adjacent to Bethlehem. In February 2003, while working at the University of Ghent in Belgium, where I earned my Ph.D. two years ago, I received a call from my brother in Seattle, Washington. He alerted me of the disturbing news of my mother's sudden passing away. I flew from Belgium to Seattle to be with them and to help make arrangements to have my mother buried in her birth town of Beit Jala. Meanwhile, members of my family in Beit Jala worked to get permission from the Israeli authorities for me to accompany the body to Palestine via Ben Gurion airport. The Israeli authorities denied this request. Due to the urgency of the situation, I flew to Amman, Jordan and crossed the official border between Jordan and Israel, the Allenby Bridge, to get to Palestine, adding expense and two extra days to the journey. We laid my dear mother to rest in her hometown of Beit Jala.

A week after the burial I was prepared to resume my work at the University of Ghent in Belgium. In keeping with the Israeli “rules” for Palestinians who want to leave the country, I applied for permission to fly from Ben Gurion. My application was rejected, no reason given. I then asked local people with some influence to help me, but their intervention was of no avail. In spite of being rebuffed without explanation, I turned to Bethlehem University for assistance. With a complete file of all my documents, copies of my passport, residence card in Belgium, airline ticket, my mother's death certificate, a letter from the University of Ghent requesting me to resume my work and an explanation of the reasons for my return to Palestine to bury my mother, after waiting a few more days, despite the best efforts of BU, again I was denied a travel permit. I began to wonder if an institution like BU could not help me, who could? Friends suggested the Belgian Consulate in Jerusalem. The Consulate expressed their regrets when they were told by the Israeli authorities that my request was flatly refused. The University of Ghent was getting worried about the projects in which I was involved. With increased stress and frustration, again I decided to apply for permission for a fifth time with the help of a well known priest and other influential people. Days passed with my hopes buoyed up by promises like “tomorrow you will get it” or “call us this afternoon and we will decide” or “change your plane reservation so we will have enough time to think about it.” My travel agent was very patient and cooperative in adjusting my hoped-for airline reservations. This tedious situation and psychological stress went on for almost two weeks. The war on Iraq broke out and it became almost impossible for anyone to leave the country due to what the Israelis called “security reasons.”

My last resort was to leave via Amman, Jordan. The war in Iraq made this not only stressful and difficult but also dangerous. Nevertheless, with the help of Jordanian friends, the necessary papers were completed and dispatched to the bridge authorities on the Jordanian side. Permission granted! To get to the bridge meant leaving Beit Jala at 5:00 AM via taxi on back roads since the normal roads are closed to Palestinians. Within fifteen minutes we were stopped at an Israeli military checkpoint and two twenty-year old Israeli soldiers stopped us. Explaining that I had a flight to catch that same night and even showing them my flight ticket, they were very provocative, knocking down my suitcase and telling me to “go back to Bethlehem, go back to Hamas and Jihad.” Feeling angry and frustrated, I had no choice then but to try to go around that checkpoint on foot. With the kind assistance of the taxi driver who, under the watchful eyes of the soldiers and their guns, carried my suitcase over dirt mounds and also called another taxi driver on the other side of the checkpoint to drive me to the bridge. My journey continued with a few more or less vexatious checkpoints to cross. Finally I made it to the Allenby Bridge, the crossing itself took very long due to the many security checks on both the Israeli and the Jordanian sides. My friends in Amman met me at the bridge and I spent the rest of the day with them. At last, I caught my plane to Brussels at 2:30 the next morning.

The four-hour plane trip cost me four weeks of agony and suffering.