



Strategic Plan 2010-2014

A Commitment to Excellence

October 2010

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1. The President's Message

I am pleased to present the 2010-2014 Strategic Plan for Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane.

This document is the culmination of two years of hard work and numerous meetings and discussions among representatives of all University departments in a process graciously led and moderated by specialists from the Polytechnic University of Catalonia. The plan was fine-tuned according to the findings of the positioning study commissioned by the Board of Trustees and following comments and input from colleagues from partner institutions, including the University of Texas at Austin, The George Washington University, and Kalamazoo College.

The plan's seven priorities aim to reinforce the American educational system, grounded in the liberal arts, and to produce graduates ready to play leading roles in an increasingly globalized Moroccan and world economy. It emphasizes human capital development and internationalization and the need to continuously improve the quality of the University's program, students, faculty, governance, and more. The plan also readies Al Akhawayn University to gain international accreditation, validating its programs and processes in a transparent fashion to recognize and reward excellence, and produce graduates able to enhance Morocco and engage the world.

This document reviews the present position of the University in the context of Morocco's economic growth and its changing educational system, outlining the key distinguishing features of the University as well as the principal challenges facing it. It presents the seven priorities of the 2010-2014 strategic plan, and affirms the view that the University's original mission and orientation remain valid.

Having been approved by the Board of Trustees to guide the University into its 20th anniversary, this strategic plan will be reviewed every year to assess its effectiveness and make any necessary adjustments needed to achieve the major goals of sustainability, development, internationalization, and accreditation.

Al Akhawayn University occupies a unique and exciting niche in Morocco. The positioning study, the strategic plan, and the supporting business model have paved the road ahead for Al Akhawayn University. Between now and 2015, all members of the University community—faculty, staff, students, alumni, parents, donors, friends, and supporters alike—will be continuously engaged in ensuring that the University remains on the path laid out, focused on strategic goals, and ever mindful of its guiding mission and philosophy.

Driss Ouaouicha
President

2. The University Today

As Al Akhawayn University opens the 2010-2011 academic year, marking its 15th anniversary, it is reflecting on its many achievements, acknowledging and confronting the challenges ahead, and simultaneously charting a course for the next five years and beyond. This process of self-analysis, evaluation, and strategic planning occurs in the context of rapid multifaceted national development, renewed competitive challenges in Morocco, regionally, and internationally, and a renewed appreciation worldwide for the importance of higher education in an increasingly technology-driven global age.

The *Strategic Plan 2010-2014* addresses three fundamental questions for Al Akhawayn University:

- a) *where does the University stand today?*
- b) *where does the University want to be by 2015?*
- c) *what needs to be done to get there?*

In doing so, it presents the seven pillars of the University's 2010-2014 strategic plan, with their constituent action items, along with analysis of the current positioning and the actions envisioned to achieve the plan's goals.

The answers to these three questions intersect with the University's fundamental identity, mission, and vision, elaborated in line with the *Dahir*, the University's founding Royal charter, published in the official gazette in 1993. The University's mission reads as follows:

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane is an independent, public, not-for-profit, coeducational university committed to educating future citizen-leaders of Morocco and the world through a globally oriented, English-language, liberal-arts curriculum based on the American system. The University enhances

Morocco and engages the world through leading-edge educational and research programs, including continuing and executive education, upholds the highest academic and ethical standards, and promotes equity and social responsibility.

This mission is supported by the University's core philosophy:

Deeply rooted in Moroccan and North African history and civilization, the University actively promotes the values of global understanding and cooperation, and advances international higher education through its people, programs, partnerships, and civic engagement and with a continuous commitment to excellence.

3. Institutional Values

Al Akhawayan University's mission and philosophy are built on values that define and defend its intellectual, ethical, and natural environment. These values include:

Excellence

The promotion of personal, professional, and academic excellence is a foundation for institutional quality. The University is committed to achieving the highest standards through ongoing assessment, evaluation, and continuous quality improvement.

Identity

The traditional openness and diversity of Morocco's cultural heritage form the basis of the academic and institutional life of the University.

Internationalism

Building a significant body of international students and faculty, fostering an international outlook throughout the

curriculum, and constructing collaborative partnerships with educational institutions around the world will develop a global outlook in the University's graduates to help them live and work in international society both in Morocco and abroad.

Integrity

Integrity is critical to the University's continued success and institutional effectiveness. The University expects and supports the highest level of personal, intellectual, academic, financial, and operational integrity.

Human Dignity and Respect

Acceptance and respect of other peoples, cultures, religions, and ideas are characteristics the University strives to promote throughout its community. The University seeks to demonstrate and instill, through all programs, activities, and services, an appreciation of human diversity and foster an atmosphere of mutual respect and support for individual differences based on tolerance.

Intellectual Inquiry and Freedom

Intellectual and creative freedom supports scholarship and advances the learning process. The University promotes and encourages responsible personal and academic freedom, and through intellectual and cultural exchange seeks to provide an environment that fosters knowledge for development.

Community Engagement and Service

The University strives to engage local and regional communities in mutually beneficial relationships to serve the public good. The University aspires to develop regional, national, and international partnerships that allow it to serve its mission more effectively, while providing increased learning opportunities for students, faculty, and staff.

Leadership and Communication

Effective organizations are characterized by visionary leadership which creates and supports an environment that fosters open communication and innovative approaches to change.

Learning-Centered Approach

The University aims to create a holistic environment which ensures that learning is the central focus for students, and to establish and develop a range of learning social, cultural and recreational opportunities that will facilitate the full realization of students' potential for academic and personal growth.

4. Assessing the Present; Charting the Future

Al Akhawayn University's nearly 2,500 alumni are young, dynamic leaders dedicated to enhancing Morocco and engaging the world. With an average of 250 new graduates each year, and envisioning a total annual student population of 2,000 by 2015, the total alumni body is expected to reach 4,000 by the time the members of the Class of 2015 receive their diplomas.

The success of the University's alumni will continue to frame the University's progress, and guide its planning, well into the future. The value of an Al Akhawayn degree will grow in accordance with the strength of the University's reputation, its students, faculty, and programs, its intellectual and research output, human capital, alumni achievements, financial resources, public and peer opinion, and other measures.

Al Akhawayn's commitment to playing a major role in Morocco's development, to contribute to international discourse about globalization, lead in educational innovation, and to

advance international development and cultural co-existence, will also guide the University's growth over the course of this strategic plan.

To plan for this critical phase of University development, the 2010-2014 strategic plan was developed with the active participation of all constituents, supported with international expertise, and guided by the vision of the founders and its underlying mission.

The plan defines the University's seven key priorities during the period 2010-2014, and outlines operational objectives and key actions needed to support those priorities. A strong business model emphasizing fiscal prudence and strong management supports this plan.

4.1 Goals and Targets

Al Akhawayn University has a bold vision for itself by the end of the 2010-2014 plan, i.e. by the beginning of 2015, its 20th anniversary year. By then, the plan calls for Al Akhawayn to have:

- substantially enhanced its Ifrane campus and strengthened its American-modeled educational system, with English as the language of administration and instruction;
- strengthened its world-class academic and governance practices to enable the delivery of high-quality education to Moroccan and international students;
- expanded its facilities and other resources to maintain a total annual student population of 2,000 by 2015, to deliver high-quality continuing and executive

education programs in Ifrane and Casablanca, and to contribute effectively through research and programs to national development;

- enhanced its international profile by attracting and retaining more international faculty, staff, and students, and increasing its international student population to 20 percent of the total body;
- reinforced its capacity to conduct fundamental and applied research, focusing on national priorities including socioeconomic development;
- grown while maintaining balanced budgets, developing fund-raising capabilities and new sources of financing, and ensuring financial sustainability;
- strengthened its communications and marketing to elevate the University's international profile and ranking, and to support its other strategic goals;
- raised additional funds to support growth, enhanced its ability to raise funds over the long term, and established international donor support;
- gained recognition from a major U.S. accreditation agency, be recognized for quality, and ranked highly nationally and internationally.

4.2 Current Position

Al Akhawayn's strategic plan is based on a clear assessment of where the University stands in 2010, and builds on the current position to turn goals into reality through a set of achievable actions by the end of 2014.

To develop the strategic plan, the University conducted a strengths-weaknesses-opportunities-threats (SWOT) analysis. The Board of Trustees subsequently asked for a positioning study that would assess and review Al Akhawayn University's identity and mission, elucidate its current position, and, *inter alia*, demonstrate how the University ought best to enhance its resources, determine its optimal location, and develop its programs so as to maintain a differentiated and sustainable advantage in the future.

The overall objectives of the study were to:

- a) survey higher education in Morocco, and the position of Al Akhawayn University*
- b) assess the status of Al Akhawayn graduates*
- c) define a clear position for the University in 2015.*

The study drew on a combination of in-house expertise, especially the Institute for Economic Analysis and Prospective Studies, external consultants from the University of Texas, The George Washington University, senior university administrators from members of the Great Lakes Colleges Association, among others, and various private sector and educational leaders in Morocco. It assessed the state of higher education in Morocco, population and student growth trends, new universities and educational institutions, and the status of Al Akhawayn alumni through surveys and employer focus groups.

Higher Education and Economic Development in Morocco

In recent years, Morocco has embarked on major political and social reforms in response to local and global challenges, such as economic opening and the lowering of trade barriers, market liberalization, the establishment of free trade agreements, political and social reform, and the promotion of human development. The results so far have contributed to a rise in national output and a strengthening of national capacity.

Morocco's wide-ranging program of economic, social, and infrastructure investments, including some massive projects and programs (e.g., the National Initiative for Human Development, Tangier Med, Tangier-Casablanca high-speed rail, among many others), are stimulating demand for young leaders with the multi-faceted global skills needed to play an active role in national development. Morocco has also engaged in major, structural educational reform to accompany its on-going process of economic, political, and social transformation and modernization.

This national resurgence is resulting in an explosive growth in the demand for highly capable university-educated people with the communications, management, and technical abilities to lead Morocco into the future. Higher education has been strongly re-affirmed as essential for the nation's economic, social, cultural, and industrial development.

The demands by public and private enterprises alike, however, are not close to being met by the national universities, which, despite the reforms begun in 2000, cannot yet reform fast enough to produce the number of qualified graduates a rapidly growing Morocco needs.

It is clear that as incomes grow along with economic prosperity, more and more families are seeking excellence in higher

education and are willing to pay for their children's education, specifically for degrees that will hold their value in the future. An Al Akhawayn degree is increasingly being seen as just such an investment.

Admissions and Population Trends

Economists estimate a population growth rate for Morocco of approximately two percent annually, accompanied by 4-5 percent annual GDP growth. The number of students in secondary schools, where currently more than 100,000 students graduate each year, is expected to increase by at least 7 percent each year. With immigration and global migration, that university-bound population will also become more diverse, giving Moroccan universities new opportunities to increase enrollment and diversify their programs for prospective students with changing needs and interests. New, private, tuition-charging universities and educational institutions are emerging to try to meet demand for higher education.

Al Akhawayn University distinguishes itself from other institutions by offering a liberal arts program and emphasizing English as the language of instruction. In addition, its location in Ifrane with a unique residential campus allows it to provide a distinctive student life experience and introduce its students to a host of life skills. This sets it apart from most of the new institutions which are located in or near the big cities of Casablanca and Rabat.

At the same time, Al Akhawayn University's planning must account for the fact that:

a) national development projects and economic growth are driving demand for graduates with the skills needed to succeed in the Moroccan and global economy,

b) the very presence and proliferation of new universities confirms that the pool of prospective students continues to grow and is stimulating competition in education.

To continue its success in the future, Al Akhawayn University will appreciate, maintain, and develop the key factors differentiating it from other universities. Key among these are its:

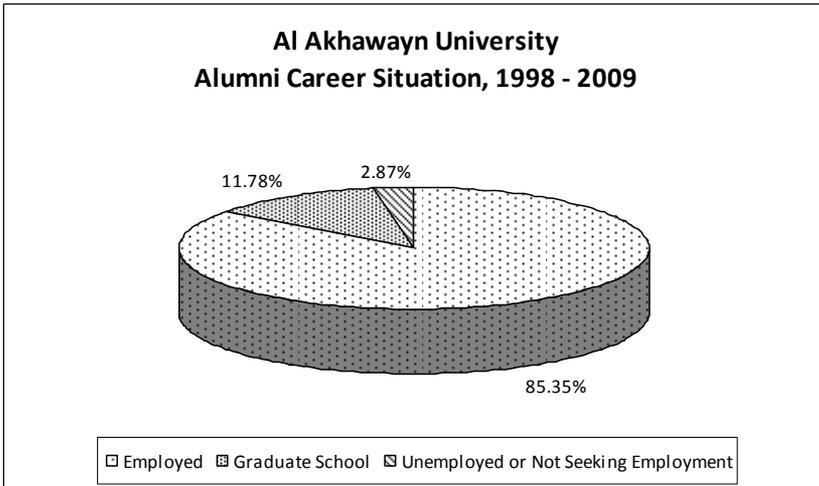
- status as a public, tuition-charging, Moroccan university offering nationally accredited degrees
- student-focused academic culture with close advising and faculty mentoring
- residential campus offering an English-language university experience based on the American model
- wide range of co-curricular student activities, and leadership development and cross-cultural programs
- research in innovative fields, involving faculty and students alike
- focus on global education, with a growing number of international students and faculty, furthering intercultural understanding, especially East-West dialogue, and study abroad programs through a network of over 80 partner institutions around the world
- high-quality continuing and executive education at its Executive Education Center, in Ifrane and in Casablanca

- commitment to social responsibility through local development initiatives (e.g., the Azrou Center, Hand-in-Hand student association), and student engagement with community service
- financial and administrative autonomy, enabling it to shape programs and curricula according to the University's mission and the needs and opportunities of the national and global economy

Alumni Status

An assessment of alumni activity and the perceptions of business and industry leaders confirmed that Al Akhawayn's *liberal arts model at a residential campus in Ifrane* is a key comparative advantage the University holds over any existing competition.

The demand for Al Akhawayn graduates in the job market is strong today. The most recent alumni surveys conducted by the University Department of Development and Communication show that for the total alumni population of 2,209 (2009), over 97 percent are either employed or in graduate school within six months of graduation, with less than 3 percent unemployed at any given moment. Overall, alumni are engaged productively in all sectors of the economy and are highly sought-after by employers, both in Morocco and around the world. Hundreds of Al Akhawayn graduates hold professional positions in the Gulf, and others are successful in the United States, Canada, Europe, and Asia.



Evidence of the premium Moroccan companies place on Al Akhawayn graduates can be found in success of the annual Alumni Association Job Fair, in which each year companies travel to Ifrane specifically to speak with and recruit Al Akhawayn students and alumni.

At a focus group session held in spring of 2010, Human Resources Directors at several major international and Moroccan companies provided insight into the traits most valued about Al Akhawayn graduates.

The strong consensus was that the communication skills, critical thinking, English-language ability, flexibility, and open-mindedness of Al Akhawayn students make them stand out. Their specific courses of study (e.g., finance, engineering, international relations) are important, but so are their overall abilities to write, research, work in teams, and think creatively about solutions to challenges. The “transversality” and “inter-disciplinarity” of the graduates was repeatedly cited as a key strength of Al Akhawayn graduates.

Implicit in the observations of many employers is the fact that the residential experience, and the life skills gained therein, is a major contributing factor to the kind of world-ready graduates the University is producing. One company representative said,

“I don’t hire an Al Akhawayn graduate only because she’s studied business or engineering—I hire her also because she can write and think and communicate effectively, and she’s very adaptable to various kinds of work situations.”

Employers emphasized that the education Al Akhawayn provides does not, and need not, exactly match the perceived needs of the job market—there are plenty of other business or engineering schools—but rather that much of the University’s value is in providing the comprehensive and inter-locking academic, personal, and professional skills needed to succeed in the global marketplace.

This assessment supports the conclusion that the core curriculum and residential life elements of the Al Akhawayn experience should be continuously enhanced as they appear to constitute principal driving factors behind the success of the University’s alumni.

Having considered the state of higher education and economic development in Morocco, admissions trends, and alumni status, the positioning study validated the University’s fundamental identity and mission. As a globally oriented, English-language, liberal-arts university based on the American system, at a residential campus in Ifrane, Al Akhawayn’s position is clear and strong as it marks its 15th anniversary and prepares for the next phase of growth.

5. Key Challenges

In order to achieve its strategic goals laid out in the strategic plan, the University will recognize and manage its challenges so as to convert them into opportunities.

The positioning study assessed the University's strengths and weaknesses vis-à-vis the national economic and educational landscape, and also revealed some areas in which the University needs to improve so as to be able to implement its strategic goals and maintain its competitive position. Among them are the following:

- The University will continuously enhance the quality of its students and graduates, and make efforts to improve their basic educational program and communication abilities.
- The University will communicate its strengths more effectively, and improve understanding nationally and internationally of what Al Akhawayn University is, where it is and why being in Ifrane is an asset, and fundamentally why Morocco's university-bound students should consider it the premier institution of higher education in the country. Communications, marketing, public relations, and outreach will all be upgraded and more effectively employed.
- The University's infrastructure will be strengthened to support a growing student body and to continue to provide the high-quality campus experience that is promised. Information technology, housing, academic, and athletic facilities are in particular need of improvement and expansion.

- The University’s financial resources will be increased in order to become less tuition-dependent and to be able to finance investments in basic infrastructure and services.
- The University will become more international, in terms of students, faculty, and staff, and the numbers of Al Akhawayn students who study abroad. More international faculty of world-class caliber will be recruited and retained in order to meet student demand and remain at the forefront of global higher education in Morocco.

6. Priorities of the Strategic Plan

The 2010-2014 strategic plan rests on seven priorities, which along with their associated action items build on the positioning study and envision an achievable roadmap for the future.

1. Reinforce the American University Model at Al Akhawayn

Al Akhawayn University in Ifrane was originally modeled on the American system of education. The University thus enriched the higher education landscape in Morocco by offering high school graduates a previously nonexistent choice, one based on one of the most successful higher education systems in the world. Its key characteristics—a student-centered approach to teaching, a modular organization of courses, the use of English as the language of instruction and administration, international faculty with native or near-native command of English, and a residential campus—have guided Al Akhawayn’s educational approach since its founding and remain its key distinctive features. All need to be strengthened in order to remain competitive and to excel globally. The following objectives and actions will enable the University to achieve this goal:

Enhance key success factors of the American educational model

- Promote student-centered pedagogy and administration
- Organize more workshops on best practices
- Improve student advising and offer training on advising
- Reinforce the award system recognizing student, faculty, and staff excellence
- Minimize administrative procedures related to students

Foster best practices in governance

- Involve the University community further in decision-making
- Implement more efficient administrative procedures and operations

Confirm the U.S. model option at the Al Akhawayn School of Ifrane (ASI)

- Hire an administrator to lead the U.S. model at ASI
- Promote ASI programs in the region to attract more students

Reinforce the use of English on campus

- Generalize internal communication in English
- Mandate English courses for staff
- Support more faculty and staff participation in English-development programs
- Mandate the use of English in daily administrative operations

Attract more native English-speaking faculty, staff, and students

- Attend and hire from specialized international job fairs and conferences
- Enhance the University's Internet presence and online visibility
- Advertise job openings in specialized platforms
- Develop more Credit by Exam (CBE) options for students

2. Gain Accreditation and Pursue Quality

Peer review and external validation of the University's programs and practices, with the aim of constant improvement, are an important characteristic of the educational model that Al Akhawayn has adopted. Gaining accreditation, and undergoing the rigorous evaluation process required, will strengthen the University's operational capacity and expose it to best practices

internationally. All units of the University, academic and administrative, will continue to work on enhancing their effectiveness by improving planning and procedures, promoting evaluation at all levels, seeking and acting on peer feedback, validation, and recognition, and by developing more effective communication channels and procedures. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Enhance the culture of effectiveness

- Improve planning
- Establish a University-level office of planning and assessment
- Implement strategic planning at all levels based on the institutional strategic plan
- Use management control systems

Promote evaluation

- Define and implement procedures of regular evaluation and program reviews
- Reorganize processes on the basis of quality assessment reviews

Seek external validation

- Pursue appropriate accreditation for the University, schools, programs, and other units
- Seek University accreditation with a U.S. regional accrediting body
- Encourage other units to pursue appropriate accreditation
- Undertake quality certification for non-academic administrative units
- Use appropriate international standard tests for benchmarking

Foster communication for institutional effectiveness

- Promote a University-wide policy for internal communication
- Determine the processes, expectations, duties, and responsibilities of all parties involved for fluid internal communication
- Update and publish University manuals of all policies and procedures and distribute to all parties concerned
- Communicate results of evaluations as appropriate

3. Develop and Grow

The ability of the University to develop and grow relies on establishing high-quality systems and processes. While good universities must have good teaching and good research, in an international context with globalization as a perspective, growth and development are critical for maintaining institutional strength. Al Akhawayn's goal is to expand in numbers and quality of students, faculty, and staff, in order to reach a critical mass by 2015. Existing and new programs will be strengthened, as appropriate, including developing significant research capacity. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Increase the number of programs meeting national needs

- Diversify offerings in Ifrane and Casablanca
- Conduct studies to identify new program offerings
- Launch English and selected academic programs in Casablanca
- Introduce new customer-tailored certificate programs in Ifrane and Casablanca
- Implement new degree programs

Reach a critical mass of students and faculty

- Increase the number of students in Ifrane and Casablanca
- Develop a plan to improve current outreach activities to attract more students
- Optimize the number of faculty and staff to accompany growth
- Expand academic facilities in Ifrane and Casablanca
- Provide adequate facilities for University development in Ifrane and Casablanca
- Expand residential facilities in Ifrane
- Upgrade technology and equipment infrastructure
- Increase the capacity of sports and recreational facilities

Strengthen research

- Consolidate research in strategic areas
- Establish research centers
- Establish a unit to administer and promote research
- Create working paper and publication series in each school

- Organize research-oriented conferences
- Increase the amount of funded research
- Secure funding from organizations and companies to fund applied research projects
- Train faculty on writing proposals
- Increase number of undergraduate and graduate students involved in funded research
- Reinforce the role of existing centers to attract funded research
- Review each center's mission and establish action plans to raise funds for applied research
- Start doctoral programs, identify promising disciplines/fields, and define program(s) structure

4. Accelerate the University's Internationalization

The development of the University involves relating to national, regional, and international players. Growth in a global environment builds on validated quality as well as a clear appreciation for and engagement with issues rooted in the international environment, while building on and developing the strengths and opportunities of local and national roots. The University sees internationalization as a key driver of the content and implementation of programs, faculty/staff interactions, and enhanced student experiences, and will strengthen internationalization university-wide over the course of the strategic plan. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Internationalize academic programs

- Develop collaborative partnerships with international universities
- Offer a variety of collaborative degree paths with partner institutions
- Explore joint/double degree programs
- Enhance student participation in study abroad programs
- Expand co-curricular international experiences (internships, conferences)
- Launch more international summer programs at Al Akhawayn and with others

- Review the role and mission of the Office of International Programs
- Expand the use of ICT
- Participate more in international networks
- Increase the number of international faculty and staff
- Improve compensation and benefits to attract international faculty and staff

Increase Al Akhawayn's visibility internationally

- Attract, recruit, and retain more international students
- Provide sponsored scholarships to international students
- Use international recruiters and international/regional agencies to recruit students
- Seek sponsorship for scholarships from Moroccan corporations working at the international level (Africa and other regions)
- Seek official recognition from ministries of higher education and development cooperation in the MENA region and other countries
- Increase interaction and communication at the international level
- Participate in more international conferences, seminars, forums, workshops
- Host more international conferences, seminars, workshops
- Establish Friends of Al Akhawayn groups in Morocco and abroad
- Enhance international dissemination of research activities
- Redesign website for better communication and to enhance fund-raising and development efforts

Promote international mobility

- Increase international mobility for faculty
- Review the system of sabbatical leave for faculty
- Develop sub-course teaching modules to be taught by international visiting faculty
- Organize visits by scholars for research and other purposes
- Increase international mobility for staff
- Promote professional development visits for staff and officers

5. Maintain Financial Sustainability

The goals of the strategic plan require significant investment in infrastructure, human capital, and program capacity alike. Long-term financial stability also relies on the high quality of

the University's teaching, research, continuing and executive education programs, and consulting to provide the revenue needed to maintain that quality and to grow. Building a solid financial base will also require new focus on creative fund-raising both for projects and for endowment, along with enhanced cost-control and investment approaches and procedures. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Diversify and increase the University's financial resources

- Increase the endowment and optimize its investment for risk/return
- Set up and implement an effective fund-raising action plan
- Conduct a market study to identify investment opportunities and implement its recommendations
- Explore permanent name recognition of campus facilities
- Diversify institutional grants and individual donations for specific initiatives
- Set up scholarship funds named after donors
- Secure competitive research funds both nationally and internationally
- Explore state-funded scholarship programs
- Increase operating revenues
- Identify new income-generating services to be offered on campus
- Review tuition, fees, and housing costs on a regular basis
- Develop consultancy services for all schools and centers
- Maintain and develop customized continuing education programs
- Develop and promote online continuing education programs

Increase operating management efficiency

- Optimize the University's operating expenditures
- Adopt a management control system to better plan, monitor, and control activities
- Reduce average energy and water consumption per person
- Start implementing the paperless approach
- Optimize use of technology in all University operations

6. Lead in Educational Innovation

Al Akhawayn's structure and mission as an integrated University, using English and the American educational model, puts it in an excellent position to play a leading role in educational leadership and innovation. To continue to be a leader in education in Morocco and to play an ever-more dynamic role internationally, Al Akhawayn must draw on world-class educational practices, thoughtful experimentation, and the creative use of the University's considerable human and physical resources, the library and ICT for example, to allow the University to develop its educational offerings and gain further external validation of its programs. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Graduate students with leadership abilities

- Develop a University-wide student leadership program
- Offer leadership co-curricular (certificate program) training
- Encourage social responsibility among students
- Introduce service learning and reflective practice in the classroom
- Involve faculty in the social internship program
- Seek additional community partners

Innovate in educational practices

- Promote ICT in education
- Develop a feasibility study/plan for distance learning
- Widen the use of ICT in courses
- Promote and benchmark research on education
- Develop a faculty training program for research in education
- Reward excellence in research on education
- Promote the library as a center for academic excellence
- Encourage and strengthen faculty and student use of the library for research and study

Become recognized as a leading institution in educational leadership and innovation

- Contribute to educational reform in education
- Contribute more to education leadership efforts
- Promote Al Akhawayn's image as an active educational leader
- Enhance partnerships with national educational institutions

7. Develop the University's Human Capital

The people who make up Al Akhawayn University are at the core of all its strategic goals. Continuously developing and investing in the quality of the University's faculty and staff, and making renewed efforts to attract and retain highly skilled and committed faculty and staff, is a key priority over the course of the plan. Human resources procedures and communications will be further developed, information and procedures updated and streamlined, and support systems strengthened. The following objectives and actions will be undertaken to achieve this goal:

Continue attracting highly-skilled faculty and staff

- Clarify job responsibilities
- Finalize job analysis and communicate faculty job descriptions and specifications
- Maintain and update job descriptions and job specifications for staff
- Improve the HR planning processes
- Design and implement additional processes to manage HR needs
- Enhance recruitment and selection processes
- Design and implement effective selection processes to accompany growth
- Update faculty and staff handbooks

Reinforce support and assessment systems to retain quality faculty and staff

- Maintain high-quality support to faculty and staff
- Set up a faculty tenure system
- Upgrade faculty and staff benefits packages
- Enhance faculty and staff development programs
- Reinforce evaluation and performance appraisal system and compensation
- Improve faculty and staff assessment systems
- Implement compensation and reward systems for faculty

7. The Way Forward

Acknowledging the challenges, and understanding the national and international context for Al Akhawayn's future growth and development, this strategic plan lays down a clear path forward for the University. The strategic goals outlined above are achievable, will elevate the University's role and position in national development and educational innovation, and re-affirm a commitment to providing an excellent, distinctive student experience while embracing the University's original and still-valid mission.

The plan sets out many specific actions, each with implications for action, planning, and governance going forward:

- Focus on growth and development in Ifrane as the central campus of the University, recognizing that this location is an important asset distinguishing Al Akhawayn from any other university in Morocco, and re-commit to contributing to the development of Ifrane as a "university town."
- Focus on enhancing the Ifrane campus and connections with its immediate environment so as to support the strategic goals of internationalizing the University by recruiting and admitting international students and through international faculty and staff retention and recruitment. At the same time, the University will reinforce its commitment to national development through first-class executive education and English-language programs at a satellite facility in Casablanca.
- Embrace existing comparative advantages (location in Ifrane, core curriculum and program offerings, the American model, English language, the residential

student experience), and communicate, market, and promote these core advantages and strengths effectively.

- English-language ability is a powerful vector for development, providing access to a global marketplace of information, which must be reinforced and promoted throughout Al Akhawayn's operations. Remain distinctive in Morocco's educational landscape by remaining true to the University's founding mission.
- Respond to growing demand for an Al Akhawayn education by increasing enrollment to approximately 2,000 students by 2015, while remaining committed to quality in student selection, and increasing the on-campus capacity for this growth in population (students, faculty, and staff facilities and resources alike). To achieve this, target admissions and outreach effectively to enhance international reach, diversify a larger student body, and attract outstanding students.
- Remain at the forefront of educational innovation in curricula and extension activities and with new, carefully planned programs that connect to national trends and market demands. Examples are the new graduate programs in Information Systems Security, Sustainable Energy Management, and Logistics and Supply-Chain Management.
- Enhance inter-disciplinary and cross-cutting courses and programs in all departments, encourage research at all levels, including by undergraduates, and explore novel ways to engage the University community with the development of Ifrane as a university town.

- Engage alumni creatively and leverage alumni relationships effectively, activate long-term alumni support for University development, and keep alumni connected and involved in the strategic plan goals, including as participants in the Ifrane development activities.
- Build sustained long-term fundraising efforts to increase the endowment, to fund strategically important priorities, such as campus infrastructure and facilities, endowed professorships, and financial aid, and pursue new income-maximization strategies; for example, outsourcing, consultancy, and grants.

Financial strength and sustainability must accompany the University's pursuit of its strategic goals. Al Akhawayn University is confident in its ability to finance this undertaking, which will be possible through a virtuous blend of tuition revenue driven by growth, endowment returns, research and consulting, new fundraising, and responsible budget management. The business plan developed to support the strategic plan is conservative and shows that the strategic goals are viable and financially prudent.

Al Akhawayn University is growing in size, stature, and strength, and doing so in a responsible and sustainable manner that will assure its stability and its marketability well into the future. It has set out ambitious yet attainable goals for the coming years, and is poised to celebrate its 20th anniversary in 2015 in a strong position both regionally and globally, by giving constant attention to quality so as to sustain an ever-rising international influence, presence, and reputation.

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