



GENDER EQUALITY STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN – FREE PROJECT

2020-2025

OVERVIEW

The American University of Beirut (AUB) has always been a leader in the region and acknowledges that this would not have been possible without their staff. The University has been able to reach this level by making the best of the diverse power of their workforce.

The importance and benefits of diversity have been well documented in several studies, from improved productivity, innovation, and creativity, which have a positive effects on organizations. As such, The University recognizes that embracing diversity leads to improved student outcomes and greater innovations in learning, teaching, and research.

Although a substantial portion of faculty at AUB are women, more efforts need to be put to achieve true gender equity. For instance, the University recognizes the root causes of the gender gap – child rearing responsibilities and societal pressure – which are perpetuated by work frameworks that are not aligned with gender equity. There is a significant gender pay equity gap, although it has been reduced by almost half between 2006 and 2016. As of 2016, 28% of our faculty were women, while the proportion of women in leadership has increased from 7% to 20% in 16 years. AUB wants to build further upon this advancement. If we are to be leaders in excellence in teaching, innovation, and research, it is critical that we utilize the skills and capacities of all our staff.

To attract and retain a high-quality workforce that reflects the diversity of the region, the University will promote and embed an organizational culture in which staff of all genders of a diverse range of cultural backgrounds and heritages participate equally at all levels. To achieve this we will challenge the beliefs, attitudes, and unconscious biases that undermine our progress towards gender equality for all staff regardless of background.

PAST EFFORTS AND CURRENT SITUATION

On December 2, 2015, President Fadlo Khuri appointed a taskforce to examine the lives and careers of women faculty at the American University of Beirut and to submit its recommendations by the end of the 2016, the year marking AUB's 150th anniversary. President Khuri issued a charge calling attention to the gender gap at AUB, which persists despite improvements. The charge reflects an awareness of the difficulties faced disproportionately by women faculty members in balancing family and work responsibilities.

The taskforce produced a report of the on the “Lives and Careers of Women Faculty at AUB” reflecting the following numbers:

WOMEN FACULTY AT A GLANCE

Women currently represent 28% of faculty in the professorial rank at AUB.

28%

WOMEN



REPRESENTATION

In 2015-2016, women faculty members at **AUB** represent 32% of Assistant Professors, 32% of Associate Professors, and 21% of Professors.

32%

WOMEN

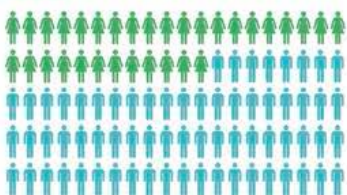
ASSISTANT
PROFESSORS



32%

WOMEN

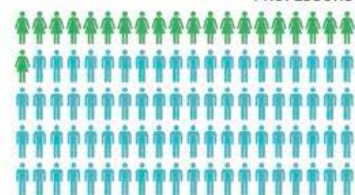
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSORS



21%

WOMEN

PROFESSORS



In FAS, women represent 31% of Assistant Professors, 33% of Associate Professors and 17% of Professors. For **FAS Sciences**, women faculty members represent 15% of Assistant Professors, 9% of Associate Professors and 17% of Professors.

15%

WOMEN

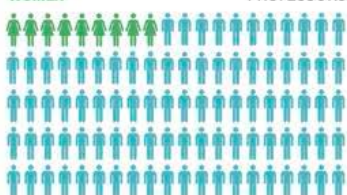
ASSISTANT
PROFESSORS



9%

WOMEN

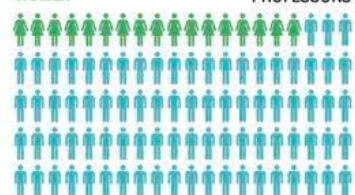
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSORS



17%

WOMEN

PROFESSORS

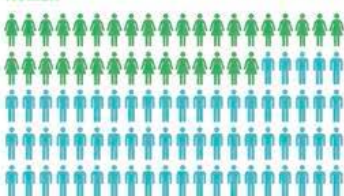


In FEA, women represent 29% of Assistant Professors, 20% of Associate Professors and 14% of Professors. For **FEA Engineering**, women faculty members comprise 26% of Assistant Professors, 5% of Associate and 6% of Professors.

26%

WOMEN

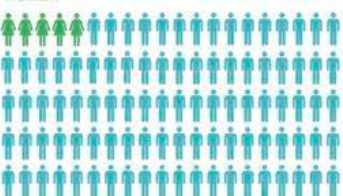
ASSISTANT
PROFESSORS



5%

WOMEN

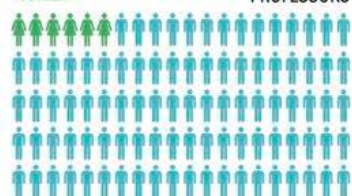
ASSOCIATE
PROFESSORS



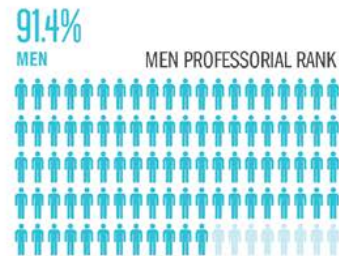
6%

WOMEN

PROFESSORS

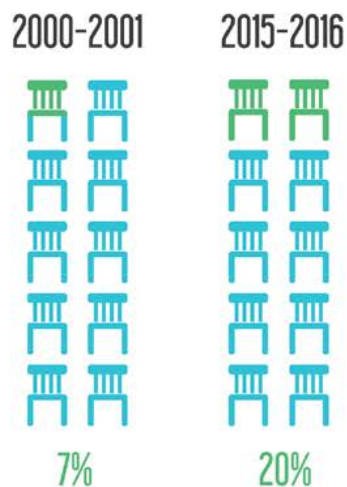


64.5% of women faculty, during the past 10 years, hold **professional ranks** compared to 91.4% of men faculty.

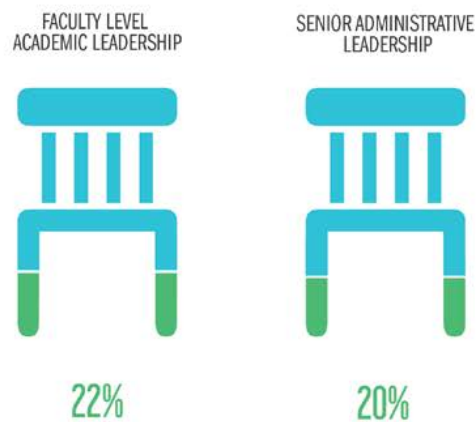


LEADERSHIP

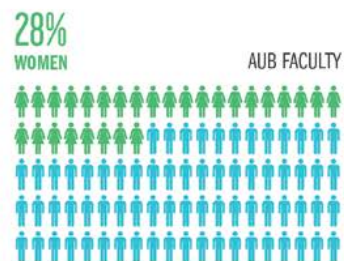
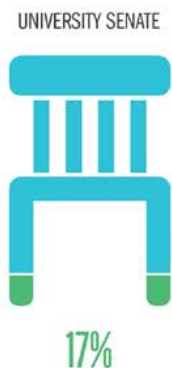
At the **senior administrative leadership level**, women today hold 20% of positions, compared to 7% in 2000-2001.



Women at AUB constitute 19% of faculty level **academic leadership**, and 20% of senior administrative leadership.



Women constitute 17% of elected members of the **University Senate**, while holding 28% of fulltime professorial rank positions.



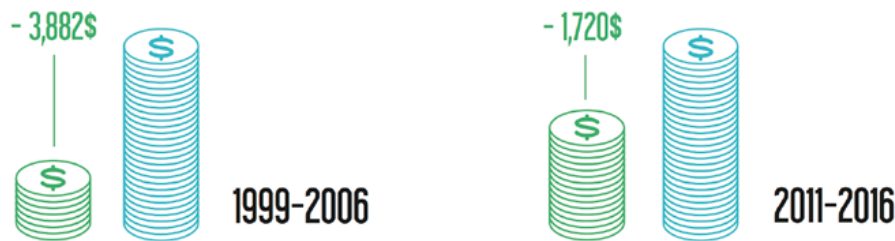
PROMOTION

Promotion success rates for women are similar to men at AUB. Years in rank are longer however, especially at the Assistant Professor level (6.1 years for women faculty compared to 5.5 for men).



SALARY

Women earned 3,882\$ less than men annually during the 1999-2006 period. In the 2011-2016 period, women earned 1,720\$ less than men annually.



WORK ENVIRONMENT

40% of women faculty reported they "strongly agree" that women have equal opportunity to express their voice in important committees compared to 68% of men.

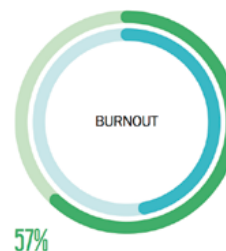


PSYCHOLOGICAL WELLBEING

53% of women faculty reported "often" feeling nervous and stressed as compared to 38% of men.

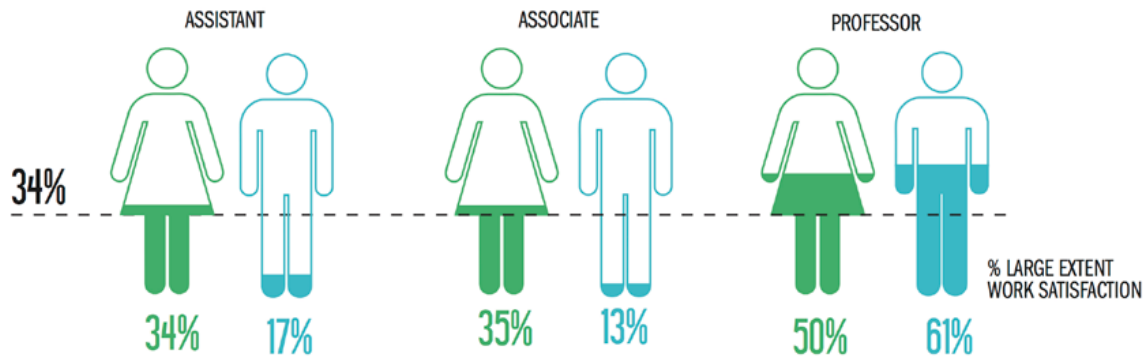


57% of women faculty reported "often" feeling burnout as compared to 46% of men.



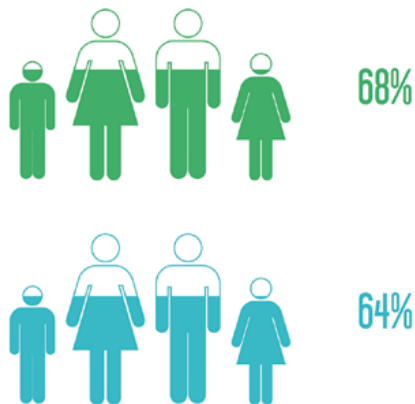
WORK SATISFACTION

On average, a third of faculty reported large extent satisfaction with work with differences by gender and rank.

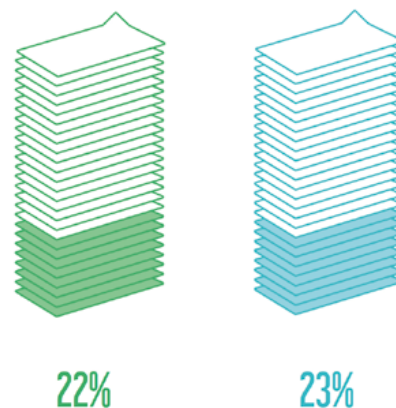


WORK/FAMILY LIFE BALANCE

68% of women faculty reported "often" missing family responsibilities due to work obligations in the past month as compared to 64% of men.



22% of women reported "often to sometimes" missing work obligations due to family responsibilities in the past month as compared to 23% of men.



CHILD CARING RESPONSIBILITIES

46% of women faculty have primary or co-primary responsibilities for caring for children aged 0 to 18 years compared to 32% of men faculty.



In addition, in September 02, 2019, a group of 60 women faculty came together and launched the Women Faculty Alliance an independent, faculty-led initiative that aims to support and enhance the experience of women faculty at AUB. The AUB Women Faculty Alliance is a community of women faculty coming together to collaborate with, support, empower, and learn from one another. The Alliance aims to build on the work of existing task forces, committees, and initiatives pertaining to the careers and lives of women faculty. It aims to develop its agenda on issues that contribute to the advancement of AUB women faculty. Those include career-track mentorship, workload management, promotion coaching, policy recommendations, salary equity, and other issues related to gender discrimination on campus.

AUB prides itself for its adherence to Title IX of the US Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits sex discrimination in education and interprets sex discrimination as including sexual harassment and sexual violence, AUB maintains an Equity/Title IX Coordinator in the Office of the Vice President of Administration. The office is also supported by a network of faculty and staff members including an Advisory Council, Title IX Deputies, and qualified Panel Members for formal investigations. Members of the network are certified by the Association of Title IX Administrators (ATIXA). All faculty, staff, and students need to complete the full training module and earn a certificate in order to keep their status at AUB.

AUB also started a program to improve the understanding of gender equality amongst students. To this end

“The AUB Tomorrow’s Leaders Gender Scholars Program (TLS) is an opportunity made possible with support from the United States Department of State’s Middle East Partnership Initiative (MEPI). MEPI-TLS awards participating students with a scholarship that allows them to join an energetic community of gender scholars across campus. Participating students enroll in one gender studies course, while attending professionalization workshops, writing papers, and participating in leadership events. Through this program, students have the opportunity to work closely with distinguished professors, experts, and activists. The scholarship fully covers their tuition for the semesters in which they are enrolled in the program.

Students selected for MEPI-TLS program will be at the heart of a growing and vibrant culture of gender studies at AUB. We envision our Gender Scholars as tomorrow’s leaders who will carry the lessons of social justice and gender equality beyond the walls of the AUB campus and into their future careers.”¹

AUB also started acting on previous recommendations from the status report provided by the task force. For example, the task force recommended to AUB to:

¹ [The AUB Tomorrow’s Leaders Gender Scholars Program \(TLS\)](#)

Establish a daycare center on campus for children of faculty members less than 3 years old, taking into account the necessity of copayment, safety requirements and liability concerns

After many deliberations, AUB recognized that opening a daycare needs a lot of expertise and conditions it may not have. Therefore, AUB made many deals with the best surrounding daycares to provide discount to its staff and faculty members.

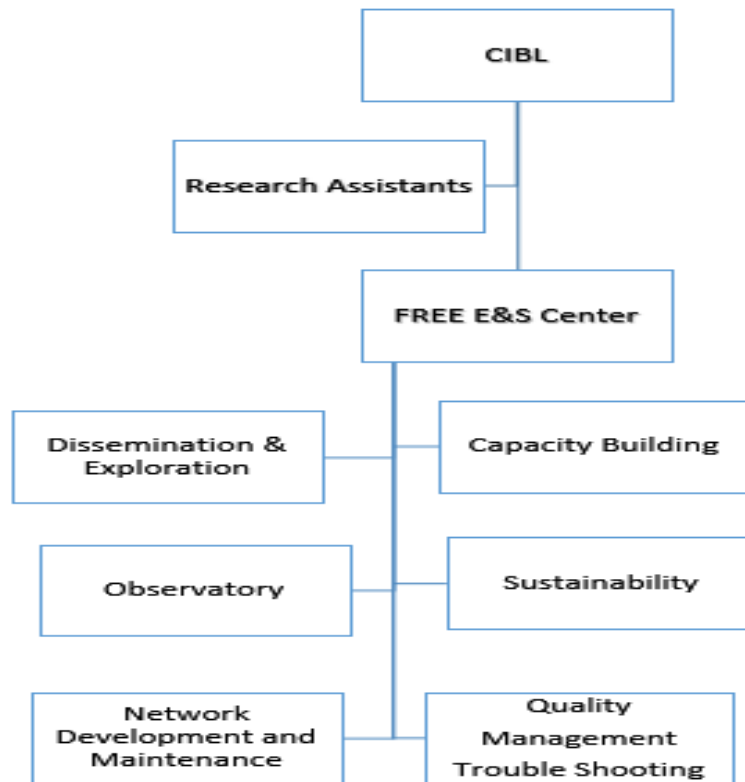
Another example,

End discriminatory policies and practices that have an unfair impact on women within HIP immediately, including the requirement that a husband of a woman faculty member be enrolled on the HIP policy in order for the faculty member to enroll her child or children

This is no more the case. What is needed is a proof that the spouse (whether husband or wife) do not have a coverage for the children or dependents from outside AUB.

Within the FREE project, 148 AUB staff, faculty and students (125 females, 23 males) registered to take FREE courses online. We had good participation percentage given the August 4 Beirut Blast. The statistics reported show a significant success of the courses as the participants average self-reported understanding of the topic went from 3.5 to above 4 on a scale from 1 no knowledge to 5 complete knowledge).

The FREE center will be hosted within The Center for Inclusive Business and Leadership (CIBL) for Women. CIBL-W is a multidisciplinary and multisector team of researchers and practitioners dedicated to inclusive workplace practices and policies for women's economic participation across the Arab Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The structure for the FREE center will be as follows and will share multiple functions and supporting administrative activities with CIBL-W:



LOOKING AHEAD

Despite all the fruitful efforts AUB had made to date, the university still has a road to pave to reach gender equality status. To guide this process, FREE project researchers are suggesting to AUB to implement the *Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan 2020-2025*. This strategy and action is based in a big part on the study and recommendations by the taskforce appointed to examine the lives and careers of women faculty and discussions in multiple forums with staff, students and faculty members. This Strategy seeks to support the University's efforts in recruiting, retaining, and helping female staff to advance. Furthermore, the Strategy also seeks to develop and achieve a deeper understanding and commitment to gender equity across the entire organization. This demonstrates our commitment to a dynamic and innovative culture. Fostering a culture of inclusion and diversity is crucial to achieving this goal, and in today's competitive global environment, the most successful universities will be those that fully utilize the talents and capabilities of all staff. However, at the time of presenting this strategy and action plan, the country is undergoing major economic, social, and political issues that are impacting the lives of all Lebanese citizens irrespective of their gender. The university is currently trying to solve major issues related to the survival of its faculty and staff members as well as the wellbeing of its students.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Gender Equality Committee need to be established to oversee the implementation of the Gender Equality Strategy and Action Plan. This Committee will monitor and report on the progress of implementation to the Executive Committee and provide an annual report to all University staff.

STRATEGY FRAMEWORK

The Gender Equality Strategy Action Plan 2020-2025 provides a framework to assist the University in developing and implementing effective strategies around workplace culture, leadership, and employment practices to improve gender equality across the whole organization. This Strategy and Action Plan acknowledges the diverse people who constitute the AUB community and recognizes the different lived experiences and challenges faced by individuals from a variety of cultural backgrounds, faiths, and traditions, and the richness this brings.

OBJECTIVE

AUB aims to have a dynamic and innovative culture that secures success by:

- Being innovative, agile and flexible
- Being a leading gender equality organization
- Being a role model for educating the next generation
- Attracting and retaining the best talent possible
- Harnessing the skills and talents of all staff, academics and researchers

STRATEGIC GOALS

In alignment with the University's objective, this strategy aims to position the University to secure success in the below areas:

1. Representation and Leadership
2. Recruitment and Professional Advancement
3. Wage and Benefits
4. Work-life Balance and Psychological Wellbeing

1. Representation and Leadership

- Increase the overall representation of women at the University and Faculty levels according to relevant benchmarks
- Identify and appoint women to leadership roles and increase women's presence in decision-making bodies, including the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deans, the Senate and Advisory Committees

- Go beyond committee membership to ensure that women's presence on these committees is supported and that their voices are heard. This can be achieved by raising faculty awareness and by establishing clear mandates to chairs of committees.
- Ensure all staff are aware of the gender equality and related equity policies
- Implement unconscious bias training for staff to equip them with the skills to recognise and understand their own biases and to take steps to overcome them

Measures of Success

- ⇒ Establishing and monitoring a target of representation of women in leadership roles by 2025
- ⇒ Setting and meeting a target of representation of women on University Committees
- ⇒ Completion of leadership training in unconscious bias

2. Recruitment and Professional Advancement

- Exert greater effort to recruit women faculty members, particularly in faculties with lower female to male ratios
- Increase representation of women on search committees. Search committees must also demonstrate accountability for conducting broad and inclusive searches before appointments are made.
- Administer workshops on best practices, including avoiding unconscious biases in the recruitment of diverse faculty
- Conduct further studies be conducted on women's drop out before promotion
- Implement exit surveys for departing faculty members
- Assess the potential impact of AUB's proposed tenure system on promotion prospects of women versus men faculty members
- Ensure a better representation of women faculty in tenure- related committees

Measures of Success

- ⇒ Setting a target of representation of women on internal recruitment shortlists and external recruitments shortlists
- ⇒ Inclusion of gender equality objectives included in recruitment processes
- ⇒ Undertaking an in depth review of promotions processes and related policies at the University
- ⇒ Establishing targets for the representation of women in non- traditional domains
- ⇒ Developing retention strategies in response to issues identified from monitoring of terminations data and exit interviews

3. Wage and Benefits

- Monitor salaries at all ranks on an annual basis and rectify any unfairness in salary based on gender, starting from the entry point to AUB

- Develop a unified template that deans are requested to fill annually to map the gender salary distribution across disciplines, ranks, years in rank, years in service, and leading positions
- Clarify ambiguous policies relating to maternity leave and take steps towards consistent implementation
- Introduce a paid parental leave of short duration for male faculty members

Measures of Success

- ⇒ Analysis of factors that contribute to the gender pay gap, with consequent consideration for policy and procedures
- ⇒ Remuneration policy supports gender equality
- ⇒ Pay Equity reports are submitted to the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees annually

4. Work-life Balance and Psychological Wellbeing

- Encourage values of work-life balance and by recognizing that the double burden of family caring responsibilities falls primarily on women faculty members
- Reevaluate and expand AUB's support systems to help faculty members achieve better work-life balance and to ensure that women faculty benefit from this support
- Take active steps to alleviate the high level of poor psychological wellbeing among faculty members, particularly women
- Encourage faculty members to undertake regular physical activity and open opportunities for creative hobbies
- Recognize community engagement as part of faculty members' responsibilities and to the university

Measures of Success

- ⇒ Policies and guidelines relevant to work-life balance are regularly reviewed and staff are informed of these policies and key entitlements and responsibilities
- ⇒ Processes are put in place to regularly monitor psychological wellbeing.

ENABLERS AND BARRIERS

Enablers:

1. AUB's administration from the president down to the most junior levels of management are working hard towards achieving gender equality.
2. Higher administration now is almost equally formed with no discrimination towards one or the other gender.
3. Most faculty members are involved in some committee or alliance related to gender equality.

Barriers:

While the enablers are mostly internal, the barriers are mostly external. These barriers include the following:

1. The current social, economic, political, technological, and safety situation in the country is deteriorating at an accelerated rate since October 17, 2019. This deterioration pushes the issues related to gender equality to the back burner of the university's priorities as more survival needs take priority.
2. The political and social parties in Lebanon including the parliament and the ministries are dealing with issues of survival regarding the Lebanese people. They are putting all other issues on the back burners.

That said, AUB has always been and will always be the leader of the region in pioneering efforts regarding gender equality issues.