

# 5. DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

WHERE UNIVERSITY COMES TO LIFE

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# STUDENT AFFAIRS

## WHERE UNIVERSITY COMES TO LIFE

The Division of Student Affairs believes that involvement is an important component of a well-rounded college experience, and that students are more apt to be successful if they lead a balanced academic and social collegiate life. The departments within the division are devoted to providing the student with an environment that enhances their academic life and encourages social growth and maturity.

## MISSION

The Division of Student Affairs strives to provide a comprehensive array of effective programs and services designed to support students from matriculation to degree completion and beyond, facilitating personal and academic development and promoting lifelong learning which sustains a mutually beneficial relationship with the University.

## OBJECTIVES

- Maintain services and programs which facilitate students' mental and physical wellbeing, thus enabling them to succeed academically and socially.
- Enhance effective course selection and advancement toward their degree by developing academic planning and decision-making skills.
- Improve study skills by developing critical thinking and literacy skills towards better understanding of course content.
- Facilitate opportunities for students which are designed to promote social integration, global awareness, personal growth, collegiality, and fairness.
- Foster relationships with both internal and external communities through programs and services designed to create and sustain a lasting commitment with the American University of Kuwait.
- Provide opportunity to enrich lives beyond the traditional classroom setting through lifelong learning initiatives.

## OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS (VPSA)

The Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs oversees all student affairs departments, ensuring the offerings of programs and services that support the AUK student from matriculation to degree completion and beyond. The Office works with other administrative and academic units to provide the AUK student with all the tools necessary for their continued success and wellness.

## HOLISTIC STUDENT EXPERIENCE

The Office works on providing the AUK student with a holistic student experience that connects them with all the tools available for them at AUK while educating them on the concepts of a liberal arts education. In collaboration with the Library and the First-Year Experience Program, the Office ensures that all student affairs departments prepare opportunities to engage the student body in campus life, while providing them with the support needed to enhance their education.

## CO-CURRICULAR TRANSCRIPT

The co-curricular transcript is a record of a student's involvement in educational experiences taking place outside of the classroom. It is a verifiable University document that reflects active participation in learning experiences and provides an opportunity to highlight leadership, decision-making, team-building, problem-solving, communication, goal-setting, and networking skills.

The co-curricular transcript serves to accentuate the student's personal journey and provides a holistic view of a student's skills and abilities. It highlights student involvement in the following categories:

- Clubs & Organizations
- Athletics
- Student Employment
- Community Service & Civic Engagement
- Honors & Awards
- Workshops & Seminars

## INTERNATIONAL PROGRAMS

International Programs provide students with transformative experiences and unique opportunities for growth, with the support of professional guidance and resources. In collaboration with partner universities, AUK offers its students opportunities to study or intern abroad, while opening its doors for incoming undergraduate and graduate students to study and intern on campus. Students can also study or intern at non-partner universities of their choice by liaising with the International Programs coordinator at AUK and the chosen university.

AUK has agreements with the following institutions:

- Dartmouth College
- George Washington University
- The American University in Cairo
- Sciences Po

## ACADEMIC ADVISING CENTER (AAC)

The Academic Advising Center is dedicated to the academic success of AUK students. AAC advisors empower students to take an active role in their own education by guiding them to a deeper understanding of the liberal arts curriculum. The AAC provides academic advising, educational planning, course selection, retention initiatives, and registration to all currently undeclared students. Academic advising is a shared responsibility and planning process in which an advisor serves as a mentor/teacher aiming to enhance the student's self-awareness, personal responsibility, and ability to define, develop, and reach academic and educational goals that are consistent with the student's personal interests. Students meet with AAC advisors to discuss their educational plans and progress, and identify the academic requirements to achieve their career goals. The AAC consistently provides accurate information, in-depth and holistic advising support, and appropriate referrals to all other University resources.

## ACADEMIC ADVISING

All first-year and new transfer undergraduate students are assigned to the AAC for advising. The AAC also advises declared major students on academic probation. Students enrolled in semester 2 of the Intensive English Program should seek advising assistance from the AAC to facilitate a smooth transition to the undergraduate program. Scholarship students are required to seek advising from AAC based on their scholarship-defined major.

When a student completes 60 credits of undergraduate work, s/he is required to declare a major. However, students may declare a major prior to reaching 60 earned credits. The major declaration form must be signed by the Academic Advising Center, the appropriate department chair, and the faculty advisor, then sent to the Office of the Registrar to update the student's record. When students declare a major, they are assigned a faculty advisor by the appropriate department chair. The assigned faculty advisor is responsible for working with the student on such issues as course selection and academic challenges. Students are ultimately responsible for reviewing and understanding the requirements of the degree program in which they are declared.

To facilitate the advising process, students are encouraged to become familiar with AUK's online advising program—Degree Works, and the University's academic catalog and requirements for degree completion. Students are responsible for contacting their advisors before each registration period or when help is needed. The academic advisor assists the student in the identification and selection of courses that meet general education and degree requirements after which the student is provided with a RAC (Registration Access Control) number for online registration.

## RETENTION INITIATIVES

The AAC Academic Retention Advisors are responsible for encouraging the academic success of at-risk students by providing individual academic counseling, identifying student needs and trends, and implementing programs designed to promote student persistence. The retention advisors develop and maintain appropriate files and records and work with the faculty to benefit at-risk students. Students in academic jeopardy are required to participate in the programs defined by the retention advisors.

## STUDENT ADVISING RECORDS

Student advising records with the AAC are part of the college record. Advising information is released when necessary for purposes of registration and follow-up. It is the AAC's professional and ethical responsibility to respect and consider all information confidential, including academic records and status, family information, health (mental and physical), and all other issues pertaining to the student.

## ALUMNI AFFAIRS AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT (AACD)

The Office of Alumni Affairs and Career Development (AACD) seeks to reach, serve, and engage with AUK students and alumni to provide continuous support and recognition for their achievements and professional excellence. The AACD office directs students and alumni towards programs, services, and workshops that help in employment-seeking endeavors. By providing alumni and graduating students with events, such as the career fair, senior launch, alumni reunion, workshops, and sports activities, the Office encourages alumni engagement at AUK, allowing for an exchange of experiences.

## ALUMNI SERVICES

As members of the AUK community, AUK graduates are entitled to an alumni email account and alumni ID that provides them with access to the AUK library and database privileges, in addition to access to AUK facilities. Alumni get access to the online alumni portal which is an all-in-one community management system that allows graduates to network, share recruitment/internship opportunities, and update contact information at their convenience. The portal provides an array of possibilities to the community members to exchange information, business opportunities, invitations, and contacts. AUK alumni also receive discounted rates at the Center for Continuing Education and career fair, and the opportunity to showcase and promote their businesses on campus free of charge through the Alumni Business Booth Program. Our alumni also get a chance to get featured in the annual Alumni Magazine which aims to highlight our alumni's achievements whether in their fields, educational journeys, start-up companies or personal growth.

## CAREER DEVELOPMENT

In addition to an annual career fair that features around 25 businesses, the AACD helps students and alumni develop their career plans by providing one-on-one career development sessions and seminars. These services include assistance with graduate school applications and career advancement opportunities, inclusive of assistance with resume-writing, job interviews, job applications, online job hunting and etiquette, and internships.

The AACD also coordinates with other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties to offer students and alumni access to workshops, courses, training programs, and innovation programs such as the agreement with the Manpower & Government Restructuring Program (MGRP), the Center for Continuing Education (CCE), Kuwait Investment Authority, and Warba Bank Rowad Program.

## STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The AUK on-campus Student Employment Program is designed to financially support a student's educational experience and develop the student's career skills while providing a necessary service to the University community. AUK students have the opportunity to work in various departments within the University; employment depends on the individual departmental needs and financial resources, as well as the skillset an applicant brings to the required position.

## INTERNSHIPS

AUK offers graduate internship opportunities for students every summer. The internship program is designed to provide graduate students and recent graduates the opportunity to gain essential experiences within professional areas of student affairs/student services, a deeper understanding of higher education administration, and to acquire specific skill sets that will help prepare them for a career in the profession.

The AACD also collaborates with the College of Business and Economics to provide students registered for CBE internships with resume/interview skill workshops, either conducted by AACD Staff or prospective employers. AUK students have had opportunities to intern in organizations such as NBK, Ernst and Young, Al-Ghanim Industries, Kuwait Petroleum Corporation, Al Ahli United Bank, Eminds Project Management, Deloitte, Baker Tilly, Grant Thornton, RSM Al Bazie, Gulf Bank, and many more.

## NETWORKING OPPORTUNITIES

Networking opportunities are available through the alumni portal, and multiple events such as the annual alumni reunion, senior launch, and the alumni guest speaker series. The Office also publishes an annual magazine that celebrates alumni achievements within the University and the community at large.

## COUNSELING CENTER

The Counseling Center works at ensuring the student's wellness as they navigate their AUK experience. The Center offers services that include personal counseling and disability accommodations to support students as they overcome what inhibits their success and prepare them for lifelong learning and development. The Center ensures the University is equipped with adequate resources that ensure the AUK student's physical and mental health by providing counseling, disability accommodations, coaching, therapy sessions and opportunities, and adequate clinical support for minor illnesses and injuries.

### PERSONAL COUNSELING

Personal counseling is provided to students to assist them with concerns including anxiety, depression, interpersonal relationships, academic and online learning concerns, family and social issues, and personal problems. Counseling approaches are personalized to fit each student's needs and the sessions are confidential. Information is not released without a student's written consent.

The Center also offers workshops/trainings on various topics, facilitates training, workshops, events, and guest-speaking in the field of personal counseling and psychology. In addition, the Center develops and assesses programs and initiatives designed to promote student wellness thus enhancing persistence and retention students and preparation for life after graduation.

### DISABILITY SERVICES

Disability services include identifying strategies to accommodate the learning requirements of students with disabilities. Requests for accommodation and access to university programs are addressed on a case-by-case basis. Prospective students with disabilities who are requesting accommodations must declare this in the relevant section of their admission application packet and provide specific verifiable documentation.

Students seeking accommodations who have not disclosed a disability at the time of admission or who after matriculation have discovered an impairment impeding their academic progress and success must follow the same disclosure and verification procedures as described for prospective students. The Center communicates with professors and assist them in providing the approved accommodations, refers students to other services on campus if needed, provides workshops on topics related to students with disabilities, and liaisons with various departments to maintain current and accurate information regarding students with disabilities. The Center provides short-term, solution-focused counseling services, crisis intervention and emergency support, and identifies, implements, and evaluates initiatives and accommodations designed to assist students with disabilities.

### ART AND MUSIC THERAPY

Art and music therapy is provided to engage and encourage students towards creative self-expression through art and music to promote student wellness. Two rooms are equipped to allow students to have a place to relieve anxiety and stress and to communicate issues that they may be struggling with in creative and therapeutic ways.

Art therapy focuses on arts such as sketching, painting, sculpting, soap carving, drawing, and other activities, and the room is equipped with a variety of art mediums and tools such as canvas, paint, brushes, and clay. Music therapy focuses on musical expression and the room is equipped with a variety of musical instruments such as keyboard, guitars, and drums.

The Counseling Center hosts monthly events and workshops in the Art and Music Therapy rooms, aimed at encouraging creative processes and raising awareness on topics of mental and physical health.

## STUDENT RECORDS

Student records with the Counseling Center fall under the University's confidentiality policy and consistent with American Counseling Association Standards. Records are maintained within the Counseling Center, and not part of any academic, educational, or job placement file. Records may be released without an individual's consent when there is imminent (immediate) danger to oneself or others; if it is learned that a child, disabled adult, or elderly adult has been abused or neglected; or when ordered to release information to a court of law.

## OFFICE OF STUDENT LIFE

The Office of Student Life plays an integral role in AUK's mission of building a society of diverse, critical thinkers and competent leaders who will continue to engage in the pursuit of lifelong learning. The Office provides programs, services, opportunities and environments for students to become involved in purposeful activities outside the classroom. The programs are designed to build responsible communities of learners and support their educational and personal development, and to help students accomplish their educational goals, high ethical standards and intellectual development, and respect for diversity through student engagement activities.

## STUDENT ACTIVITIES

A variety of activities and events are organized for students throughout the year. Events have included movie nights, guest speakers, various competitions, and many educational and entertaining activities. In addition, a variety of annual events take place, including Welcome Back Week, Awards Night, Talent Show, International Week, Ghabga, and Graish. In addition to posting the weekly activities schedule on Moodle and Instagram, students receive weekly activity schedules via email.

## STUDENT CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS

Students can join existing clubs or start a new club, from academic and literary to social and cultural. Currently, there are over twenty clubs open to students who wish to participate in and/or join. An Involvement Fair is held twice a year (once every semester) to promote clubs and encourage membership.

The Student Council (SC) provides an opportunity for students to hone their leadership skills and practice participatory government. The University encourages the active participation of the SC in university life. The SC, including student representatives from various campus constituencies through the student delegation is the principle medium of the student voice in university affairs. The SC gives members valuable learning experiences in the creation, organization, and functioning of many student activities, and members also serve on University committees where student representation is required.

*Voice* is a student-run magazine that seeks to foster active communication among the entire campus community and keep it abreast of diverse and relevant issues by providing high-quality news and information. It also strives to heighten awareness of the rights and responsibilities of membership in the AUK community and promotes an environment of academic freedom and freedom of expression. Students who work on the magazine are provided with reporting, editorial, and management experience, and are expected to observe the established standards of professional journalism.

All student clubs and organizations, including Student Council and *Voice*, are advised and guided by a member of faculty or staff.

## **SPORTS AND RECREATIONAL PROGRAMS**

The University offers intercollegiate athletics, which allow student-athletes to compete locally and regionally against universities in the following sports: soccer, basketball, volleyball, tennis, table tennis, futsal, squash, and swimming. AUK annually participates in the University Athletics Association of Kuwait (UAAK), and the Higher Education and Institutions Tournament for private and public institutions. Recreational programs allow members of the AUK community (students, alumni, faculty, and staff) to participate in fitness classes, learn a new sport, or compete in intramural sports. AUK offers a variety of fitness classes, from yoga to zumba. Throughout the year, intramural tournaments are organized for some athletic activities such as soccer, badminton, table tennis, basketball, and volleyball. This variety of individual and team activities gives members of the AUK community the chance to discover extracurricular activities that cater to their interests.

There is a men's gym, a women's gym, an indoor and a rooftop court located in the Student Center, in addition to an outdoor soccer field.

## **STUDENT LOUNGE**

Students have the opportunity to relax and be entertained in the student lounge. They can spend their free time playing board games, Foosball, PlayStation, pool, or watching television. Additionally, the lounge coordinates larger scale activities for students throughout the year such as PS4 tournaments, and billiard tournaments.

## **JUDICIAL AFFAIRS**

Judicial Affairs encompasses the services that oversee infractions of institutional policy. All AUK students must comply with the academic and behavioral regulations of the American University of Kuwait, as well as observe national laws. The Division of Student Affairs is responsible for adjudicating student violations of the University Code of Conduct. Student violations related to academic integrity are adjudicated by academic affairs.

Violations may include, but are not limited to, disregard of campus safety regulations and/or institutional operating procedures, misuse of campus facilities, and/or actions which impede the educational process. Institutional policies, inclusive of policy and procedural components that govern student behavior, are addressed in the Student Code of Conduct. Violations can be submitted via self-service to the Office of StudentLife.

## **WRITING AND TUTORING CENTER (WTC)**

The Writing and Tutoring Center (WTC) focuses on empowering students to become independent and successful learners by developing their literacy skills, enhancing their understanding, and helping them improve their academic and study skills. WTC offers tutoring and writing consultations to all AUK students, and collaborates with academic departments to continuously develop more effective learning support and classroom workshops. WTC also works with faculty and other support units on campus to recognize and respect the rights and equality of all who seek assistance.

Students can schedule appointments through the TutorTrac online appointment system, or they can drop in for assistance. The center also uses various digital platforms to conduct online operations.



## WRITING CONSULTATION

WTC provides students with multilingual writing consultations (English, Arabic, French, and Spanish) through individual or small-group sessions in which participants explore ideas through the written word. Student employees are trained in learning support's best practices. They provide a non-evaluative, reader's response to students' writing and help at any stage of the composing process: identifying and understanding audience, developing and expanding ideas, organizing ideas into a coherent whole, researching and evaluating external sources, incorporating external sources, understanding the conventions of academic writing, and communicating ideas clearly. The Center's overarching goal is to inspire a love of reading and writing within the AUK community.

## TUTORING

WTC provides students with tutoring in various subjects through individual, small-group, or supplemental instruction sessions coordinated with faculty. Student employees are trained as peer tutors in order to help students improve their problem-solving and study skills, increase their understanding of course content, enhance their academic performance, and develop a positive attitude towards learning. The center's peer tutor training program is certified by the College Reading & Learning Association's International Tutor Training Program Certification (CRLA ITTPC). In addition to setting an internationally accepted standard of skills and training for tutors, the certification allows the center to certify individual tutors after completing the training requirements, providing recognition for their successful work from an international organization.

## AUK CLINIC

The Clinic is designed to provide basic medical care for the AUK community. Emergencies and serious health cases are immediately referred to nearby facilities. The Clinic provides preventative services that include blood pressure checks, blood sugar monitoring, and treatment for elective cases.

The Clinic organizes a series of informative sessions and workshops to raise awareness for health issues and concerns as they arise in the region and provides first aid assistance during athletic games.