

Remarks

By

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at

Launching Activities & Processes

Of

Effat University Strategic & Action Plans of 2017-2022

Sunday September 25th, 2016

Effat Library and Cultural Museum

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

In the Name of Allāh, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful

In the Name of God, Most Gracious, Most Merciful and Peace with blessings be upon our Prophet Muhammad "salla allah alahi wa salam" and his followers and companions,

Our Distinguished Guests, Rick and Carol,

Respected Faculty, Staff and Students,

Good morning, and welcome to the 2016–2017 academic year.

I know that many of you spent some of the summer working on finalizing SWOT and writing board reports, but I hope you also found time to relax and enjoy some non–work related activities.

I stand here today and I can't believe that 17 years have passed since the establishment of Effat University (College at that time). Indeed, every academic

year I see new students and new faculty enjoying the spirit and environment of Effat family that we established together, I get amazed. Why amazed?! To me it seems as if 1999 was not that long ago. So, I say to myself reflectively, "Why does it only seem like yesterday? I guess it is the perception that makes me feel I am young again which boost an enormous energy in my body and soul. **Watch out☺ and say Masha Allah**

The past sixteen years had taught me that we have made excellent choices and achieved excellent accomplishments with three major strategic plans. The first one was homemade done only by myself for running an institution with only 37 students. As I said it to Princess Lolowah at that time, I wanted to build the system and foundation that will help us excel in the future. Thus, programs, bylaws, budgetary and technological systems were the major accomplishments of this first strategic plan. The second strategic plan was called (Paving the Way) and it helped us "pave the way to success" by overcoming the social, cultural, legal

and academic obstacles. During this period, we established the engineering program for Saudi female for the first time in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. We also achieved the status of University with 800 students and formed partnerships with major international institutions nationally, regionally and internationally. With the third strategic plan, ongoing, we have witnessed the growth of students, faculty and administrators and achieved national institutional and most of our programs accreditation. Not only that but we have received three stars rating from QS.

I take this opportunity and on behalf of the board of trustees, to thank all of you for the success of all previous strategic plans as well as your commitment, hard work and dedication to the mission of Effat University, to the quality of teaching and learning, to the continuous support and service of our students, to the outstanding research output and activities and last but not least your services to the kingdom and Jeddah's community. The trust expressed by the Board of

Trustees in me and all of you is sincerely appreciated. I feel that God blessed me Alhamdulillah with both (Great Supervisors and wonderful Colleagues) and as long as I am alive I will do the best of my ability and power to live up to the Legacy of Queen Effat (God rest her soul in peace) and all the responsibilities it requires. My commitment to serve Effat University stems from my firm belief in the greatness of the legacy of Queen Effat. Being myself a graduate of the first school for women established by Queen Effat, Dar AlHanan School, my faith in the Saudi community, as well as my genuine desire to see Effat University excel is deeply rooted. We have exceptional students, faculty, staff, programs, and opportunities. We also have an alumni base and members of honorary advisory board that truly care.

This year is the year to expand our horizons, it is the year to focus on the positive, embrace innovation, and think outside of the box. It is that year that will mark another milestone in the history of Effat University. It is the year that we finalize

our third strategic five-year-plan and prepare to embark on a new strategic plan, which will be Effat fourth strategic plan (from 2017 to 2022.) It is the year that the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques, King Salman, launches his vision 2030 to make Saudi Arabia the heart of the Arab and Islamic worlds, the investment powerhouse, and the hub connecting three continents. The 2030 vision is to be realized through the Saudi Arabia's National Transformation Plan 2020 that will start to implement the key initiatives planned to shift the kingdom's economy away from its dependence on oil. This vision revolves around three themes: A vibrant society, a thriving economy and an ambitious nation and it should be the major guide in the assessment for our external environment. Education and higher education are an integral part of all three pillars. I can share here a piece of this alignment in the words of the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques when his Majesty said:

"Among our commitments... An education that contributes to economic growth. We will close the gap between the outputs of higher education and the requirements of the job market. We will also help our students make careful career decisions, while at the same time training them and facilitating their transition between different educational pathways. In the year 2030, we aim to have at least five Saudi universities among the top 200 universities in international rankings. We shall help our students achieve results above international averages in global education indicators. we will prepare a modern curriculum focused on rigorous standards in literacy, numeracy, skills and character development. We will track progress and publish a sophisticated range of education outcomes, showing year-on-year improvements. We will work closely with the private sector to ensure higher education outcomes are in line with the requirements of the job market. We will invest in strategic

partnerships with apprenticeship providers, new skills councils from industry, and large private companies."

Embarking on a new strategic planning effort at Effat University requires attention to internal and external environment, to the history and the future. It should call us to devote time and energy to make a candid assessment of our strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities and that it understands how these will inform positioning our institution for a future full of new opportunities and challenges. It should take account of who we are as a major university with a distinctive legacy. It should lead us to dialogue, analysis and reflection, especially in the context of our culture and tradition, based on the conviction that people committed to strengthening our institution can develop plans that are aspirational and inspirational to achieve.

Launching a strategic planning effort at this point in time allows for new voices and perspectives to emerge and help prepare the University for the future.

Ideally, a successful strategic planning effort will set the stage for the development of the next phase of the teaching and learning, research and community services and ultimately serve as the foundation for the University's next horizontal and vertical expansion and internationalization efforts.

As you know, Effat University's short and productive history has been marked by regular processes of strategic planning, and we all have benefited from this thoughtful approach to building the future of the University. I look forward to working with colleagues from across campus as we grapple with the many challenges facing higher education in the kingdom and abroad, while we imagine how to build Effat University as a research university.

In preparation to construct the strategic plan, Effat University has done the following:

1. Specified our Time-line for developing the strategic plan from July 2016 to May 2017

2. Established a Strategic Planning Steering Committee - The Steering Committee that will conduct internal analyses, gather recommendations and ideas from the University community and identify priority areas of focus before creating a strategic plan draft document for review by the Board of Trustees.
3. The Steering Committee has already kicked off the assessment process in June, with self-study teams at each of the four colleges and all administrative units, to evaluate progress made during the past 5 years, identify strengths, weaknesses, threats that may affect Effat University, and explore strategic opportunities under the leadership of Dr. Ahmed Attia.
4. We have approached all the University's stakeholders and divided them into seven focus groups and invited representatives from each group to

come to workshop this week to express their thoughts, ideas and opinions to assist us collect enough data to enhance our new plan.

5. We commissioned PARC (Pan Arab Research Center) strategic international team to study Saudi higher educational market and its political, economic, social and technological trends, pressures and challenges taking into consideration the new Saudi Arabia's National Transformation Plan to support our strategic planning efforts.
6. We have also requested Effat friends, Dr. Rick Detweiler, the President of the Great Lakes Colleges Association and Dr. Carol Detweiler, a Public Opinion Researcher, to oversee and provide an international perspective to the drafting of the new plan. They will work with the Strategic Planning Steering Committee and its Secretary General to assess progress made on the previous eleven strategic directions, and identify new strategic priorities.

Therefore, let me take this opportunity to recognize all members of the team who made useful contributions to the organization of the preparations for this strategic planning cycle and present my sincere appreciation to their active involvement and well-organized efforts (Dr. Mervat, Dr. Eman, Dr. Ahmad and Ms. Maram Albalbisi.) My thanks also go to all people involved in the SWOT analysis over the last two months and unit heads who wrote the summary of these analyses. I also thank all of you for taking time from your busy schedules to come and contribute to this workshop. I know it is the beginning of the academic year and your students need you more than I do!!! Last but certainly not least, I thank Rick and Carol for their willingness and acceptance to be part of this milestone project.

I trust that all of you, like me, are ready for the fresh challenges and opportunities that this year will bring. With your help we will debate and

exchange ideas, advance our initiatives and discover new ones, and continue the work that makes Effat University one of the nation's leading universities.

And now, as we begin to tackle that task in earnest, it is my pleasure to introduce our consultant and facilitator for this project ... a man whose insights and perspective cannot help but stimulate our thinking about the links among education, citizenship, social values and internationalization. Dr. Richard Detweiler is the President of the Great Lakes Colleges Association (GLCA), an alliance of thirteen selective, independent, colleges and universities that works to strengthen learning in the tradition of the liberal arts: creating analytic thinkers and engaged citizens. Rick is a social psychologist specializing in intercultural relations with advanced degrees from Princeton University (M.A., 1972 and Ph.D. 1973). Professionally, he has been an active researcher, consultant, and author in higher education, institutional planning and research, intercultural relations, international education, and psychology. He is also the

founder of global liberal arts alliances in 2009 and presently became 29 institutions representing 17 nations in the Alliance membership.

Dr. Carol Detweiler is a graduate of San Diego State University she is a philanthropist and well known for her love for education. This is evidenced in her early efforts to secure college scholarships for Kosovar refugees which branched out to raising awareness of breast cancer detection in the Balkan country. Her energy and enthusiasm for philanthropy encouraged the World Health Organization to ask her to participate and speak at a rally and awareness event in Pristina in Kosovo in 2008.

I know that both of them will help prompt our best thinking as we examine these important issues later this week and the whole year.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming Rick and Carol Detweiler to Effat family.

With these remarks, I declare launching the activities and process of the fourth strategic plan (2017-2022) and wish you all fruitful deliberations, in yet another inspirational and productive year.

Thank you for your kind attention, God bless you all and Assalamu'alaikum warahmatullahi wabarakatuh وَالسَّلَامُ عَلَيْكُمْ وَرَحْمَةُ اللَّهِ وَبَرَكَاتُهُ May the peace, mercy, and blessings of Allah be with you.