



THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF THE MEDITERRANEAN

SELF-STUDY

THE NEW ENGLAND COMMISSION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

NECHE VISITING TEAM CANDIDACY VISIT

APRIL 18–21, 2021

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Institutional Characteristics Form Revised September 2009

This form is to be completed and placed at the beginning of the self-study report:

Date March 8, 2021

1. Corporate name of institution: The American College of the Mediterranean _____
2. Date institution was chartered or authorized: December 2016 _____
3. Date institution enrolled first students in degree programs: 2015 (as IAU) _____
4. Date institution awarded first degrees: 2017 _____

5. Type of control:

Public

State

City

Other

(Specify) _____

Private

Independent, not-for-profit

Religious Group

(Name of Church) _____

Proprietary

Other: (Specify) _____

6. By what agency is the institution legally authorized to provide a program of education beyond high school, and what degrees is it authorized to grant?

ACM holds a degree-program license issued by the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education. It is authorized to issue undergraduate and graduate degrees.

7. Level of postsecondary offering (check all that apply)

Less than one year of work

At least one but less than two years

Diploma or certificate programs of at least two but less than four years

Associate degree granting program of at least two years

Four- or five-year baccalaureate

First professional degree

Master's and/or work beyond the first professional degree

Work beyond the master's level but not at the doctoral level (e.g., Specialist in Education)

A doctor of philosophy or equivalent degree

Other doctoral programs _____
 Other (Specify) _____

8. Type of undergraduate programs (check all that apply)

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the crafts/clerical level (certificate or diploma) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Liberal arts and general |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Occupational training at the technical or semi-professional level (degree) | <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher preparatory |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Two-year programs designed for full transfer to a baccalaureate degree | <input type="checkbox"/> Professional |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

9. The calendar system at the institution is:

- Semester Quarter Trimester Other _____

10. What constitutes the credit hour load for a full-time equivalent (FTE) student each semester?

- a) Undergraduate __12-15__ credit hours
 b) Graduate __12-16__ credit hours
 c) Professional ____N/A__ credit hours

11. Student population:

a) Degree-seeking students:

	Undergraduate	Graduate	Total
Full-time student headcount	6	11	17
Part-time student headcount			
FTE	6		17

b) Number of students (headcount) in non-credit, short-term courses: 29 in Aix, 21 in Barcelona

12. List all programs accredited by a nationally recognized, specialized accrediting agency.

Program	Agency	Accredited since	Last Reviewed	Next Review
N/A				

13. Off-campus Locations. List all instructional locations other than the main campus. For each site, indicate whether the location offers full-degree programs or 50% or more of one or more degree programs. Record the full-time equivalent enrollment (FTE) for the most recent year. Add more rows as needed.

	Full degree	50%-99%	FTE
A. In-state Locations			
N/A			
B. Out-of-state Locations			
N/A			

14. International Locations: For each overseas instructional location, indicate the name of the program, the location, and the headcount of students enrolled for the most recent year. An overseas instructional location is defined as “any overseas location of an institution, other than the main campus, at which the institution matriculates students to whom it offers any portion of a degree program or offers on-site instruction or instructional support for students enrolled in a predominantly or totally on-line program.” **Do not include study abroad locations.**

Name of program(s)	Location	Headcount
N/A		

15. Degrees and certificates offered 50% or more electronically: For each degree or Title IV-eligible certificate, indicate the level (certificate, associate’s, baccalaureate, master’s, professional, doctoral), the percentage of credits that may be completed on-line, and the FTE of matriculated students for the most recent year. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of program	Degree level	% on-line	FTE
N/A			

16. Instruction offered through contractual relationships: For each contractual relationship through which instruction is offered for a Title IV-eligible degree or certificate, indicate the name of the contractor, the location of instruction, the program name, and degree or certificate, and the number of credits that may be completed through the contractual relationship. Enter more rows as needed.

Name of contractor	Location	Name of program	Degree or certificate	# of credits
N/A				

17. List by name and title the chief administrative officers of the institution. (Use the table on the following page.)

18. Supply a table of organization for the institution. While the organization of any institution will depend on its purpose, size and scope of operation, institutional organization usually includes four areas. Although every institution may not have a major administrative division for these areas, the following outline may be helpful in charting and describing the overall administrative organization:

- a) Organization of academic affairs, showing a line of responsibility to president for each department, school division, library, admissions office, and other units assigned to this area;
- b) Organization of student affairs, including health services, student government, intercollegiate activities, and other units assigned to this area;
- c) Organization of finances and business management, including plant operations and maintenance, non-academic personnel administration, IT, auxiliary enterprises, and other units assigned to this area;
- d) Organization of institutional advancement, including fund development, public relations, alumni office and other units assigned to this area.

19. Record briefly the central elements in the history of the institution:

1957 – Institute for American Universities (IAU) founded in Aix en Provence, France by Herbert Maza.

1962 – IAU purchases and renovates the White Penitents Chapel, the first permanent IAU building. It houses classrooms, a lecture hall, library and student lounge.

1966 – IAU is enrolling approximately 500 study abroad students a year.

1983 – Amos Booth becomes second President of IAU.

1984 – IAU incorporates the Marchutz School of Fine Arts into the Institute.

1995 – David E. Wilsford becomes third President of IAU.

2006 – Andrea Leskes becomes fourth President of IAU.

2011 – Dr. Carl Jubran becomes fifth President of IAU.

2012 – IAU inaugurates Manning Hall which includes offices, student lounge, library and classrooms

2013 – IAU starts summer study abroad program in Barcelona, Spain

2014 - IAU begins Resident Fellows program, Faculty-led Custom Study Abroad Programs and January Term courses

2015 – IAU launches first degree program – Master of Fine Arts at the Marchutz School.

2016 – ACM founded and affiliated with IAU.

2016 – ACM enrolls first Bachelors of Arts students, first Masters of International Relations (MAIR) students and first Masters of French Studies (MAFS) students.

2017 – ACM graduates first MFA, MAIR and MAFS candidates. IAU starts semester study abroad program in Barcelona.

2018 – ACM enrolls first Master of Art History (MAAH) students and graduates first BA candidate.

2019 – ACM enrolls first Global MBA candidate and graduates first MAAH candidates. IAU and ACM Boards approve merger and begin meeting as a joint board.

2020 – ACM graduates first GMBA candidate. IAU opens new study abroad center in Barcelona, Spain.

2021 – IAU merges with ACM to become one unified institution - ACM

CHIEF INSTITUTIONAL OFFICERS

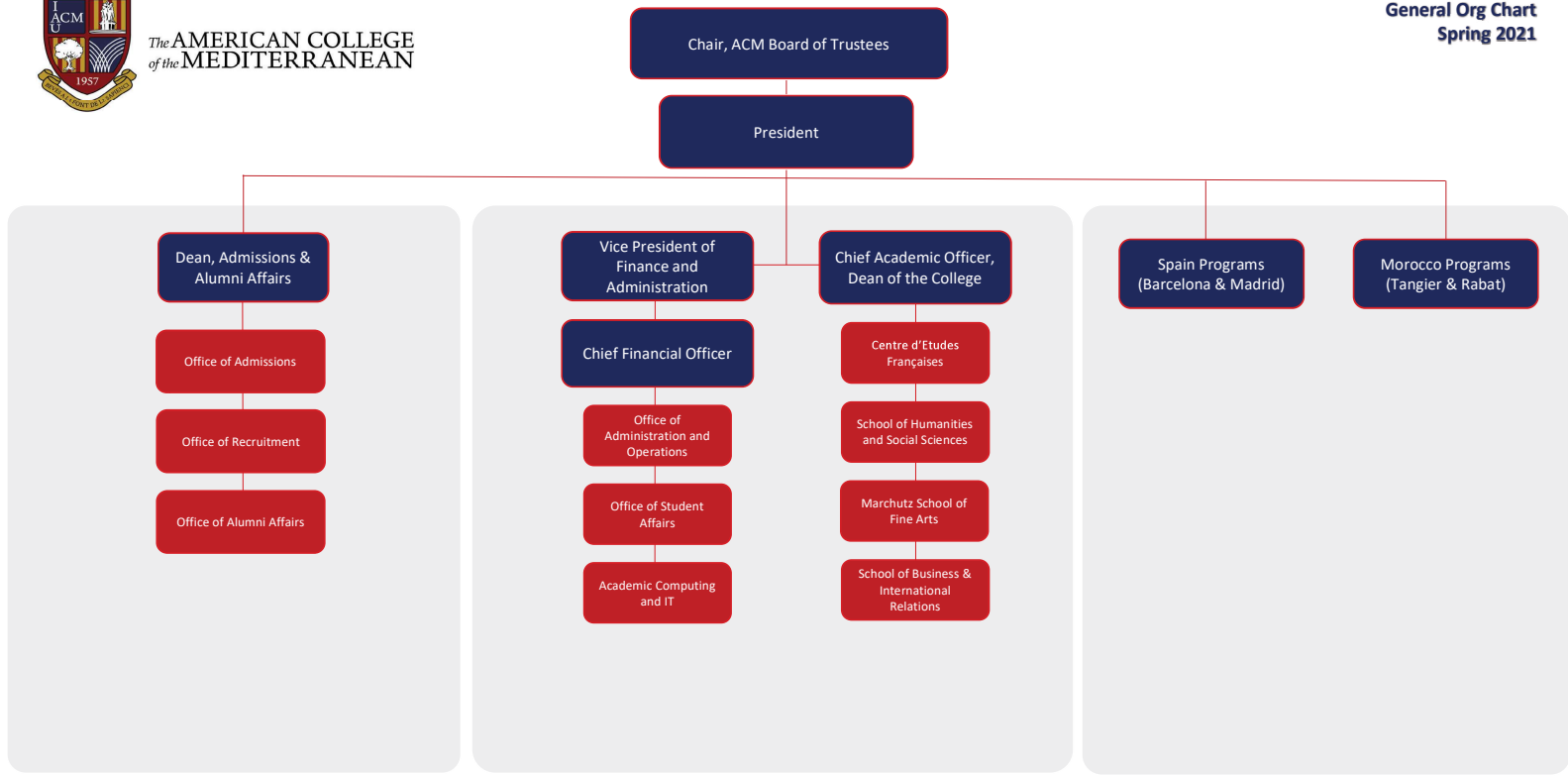
Function or Office	Name	Exact Title	Year of Appointment
Chair Board of Trustees	Marianne Keler	Chair, Board of Directors	2018
President/CEO	Dr. Carl Jubran	President	2011
Executive Vice President	Philip Breeden	Vice President of Administration	2018
Chief Academic Officer	Dr. Leigh Smith	Dean of the College	2013
Deans of Schools and Colleges (insert rows as needed)	Dr. Leigh Smith	Dean of the School of Social Sciences and Humanities	2013
	Aboubakr Jamai	Dean of the School of Business and International Relations	2014
	Dr. Muriel Cros	Assistant Dean, Director of Center for French Studies	2012
	Dr. Guillaume Durand	Assistant Dean, School of Social Sciences and Humanities	2015
	Dr. Yumna Masarwa	Director, ACM School of Art	2020
Chief Financial Officer	Kristin Ouerfelli	Chief Financial Officer	2020
Chief Student Services Officer	Dr. Leigh Smith	Dean of the College	2013
Planning	Kurt Schick	Dean of Admissions and Alumni Affairs	2001
Institutional Research	Philip Breeden	Vice President of Administration	2018
Assessment	Dr. Leigh Smith	Dean of the College	2013
Development	Rose Guth	Assistant Director of Admissions & Alumni Affairs	2015
Library	Dr. Yumna Masarwa	Director, ACM School of Art; Coordinator, Academic Resources	2016
Chief Information Officer	Xavier Henry	Systems Manager	2016

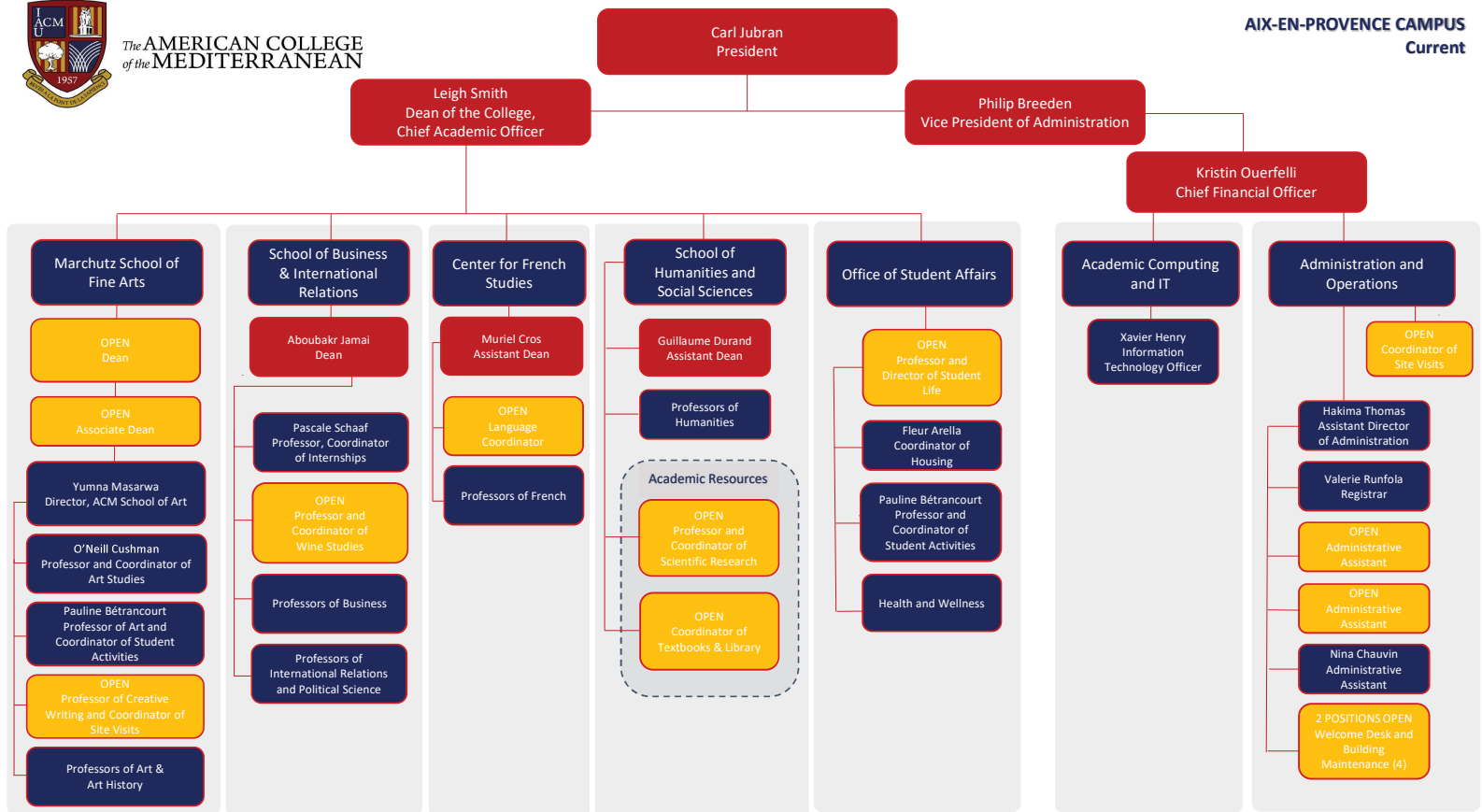
Admissions	Kurt Schick	Dean of Admissions and Alumni Affairs	2001
Registrar	Valerie Runfola	Registrar	2015
Financial Aid	Dr. Jessica Calhoun	Assistant Dean of Admissions and Alumni Affairs	2019
Public Relations	Philip Breeden	Vice President of Administration	2017



The AMERICAN COLLEGE
of the MEDITERRANEAN

**General Org Chart
Spring 2021**







The AMERICAN COLLEGE
of the MEDITERRANEAN

U.S. OFFICE
Current

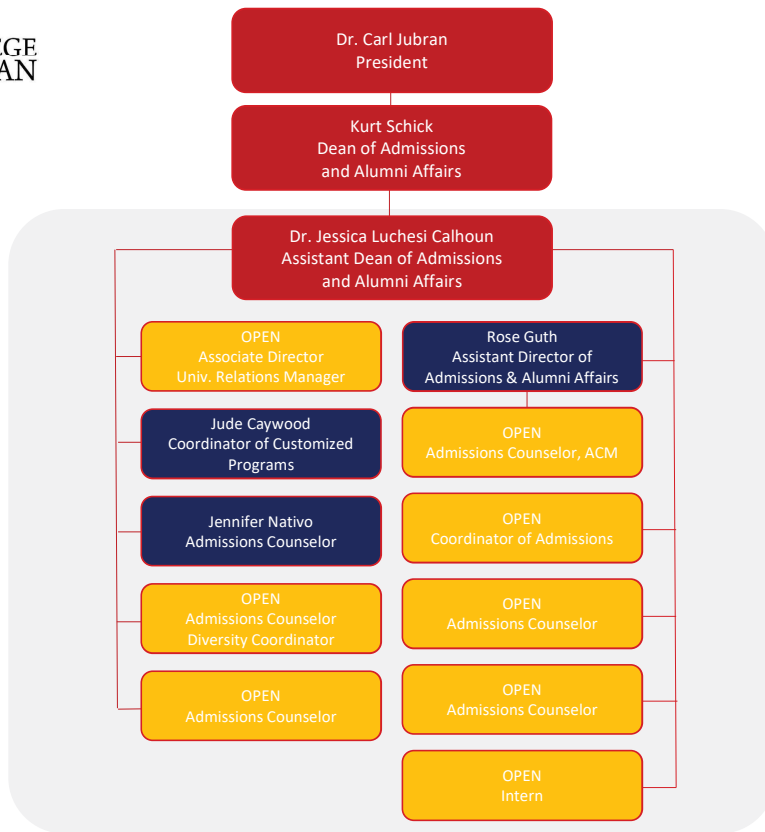


Table of NECHE Actions, Items of Special Attention, or Concerns

In ACM’s October 8, 2019 Eligibility Letter the Commission identified four items of special attention, which we address in this self-study. They are summarized in the following table.

Items of Special Attention	NECHE Standard Cited for Each Item	Self-Study Page Number Where Addressed
“Assessing the effectiveness of its governance structures with an emphasis on Board development, including establishing a process by which to evaluate board effectiveness.”	3.8, 3.17, 3.19	pp. 13-15, 19-20
“Developing sustainable planning processes, with attention to developing a comprehensive strategic institutional plan, including multi-year plans related to staffing, finances, and facilities.”	2.1, 2.3, 2.4, 3.14, 7.6, 7.11, 7.21	Std. 2 pp. 7-10 Std. 3 p 15 Std. 7 pp 72, 74-75, 77-78
“Developing and implementing processes to evaluate institutional effectiveness and student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institutional levels and using results to inform decision-making, planning, resource allocation, and continuous improvement.”	2.6, 2.7, 2.8, 4.7, 8.3, 8.8, 8.10	Std. 2 pp 7-8, 10 Std. 4 pp 25-27 Std. 8 93-96
“Establishing a baccalaureate culture.”	5.6, 5.8, 5.9	Pp 42-44, 46-48

Introduction

The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM) began the process of accreditation with NECHE in 2018. ACM hosted NECHE Vice President Carol Anderson for a familiarization and guidance visit September 12-17, 2018. We submitted our Eligibility Report in April 2019. Following an Eligibility Team assessment visit June 4-7, 2019, we achieved eligibility in October 2019.

Following attainment of eligibility, we began organizing our first-ever Self Study. Our goals for this Self-Study were:

- Identify areas for improvement in order for our young institution to attain accreditation;
- Use the Self-Study to strengthen information gathering and sharing within ACM;
- Use the results of the Self-Study as the starting point for a new Strategic Plan.

President Jubran designated the Vice President of Administration Philip Breeden to lead this effort. At the beginning of 2020, the Vice President designated Standard Leaders drawn from throughout the institution (list below) who were responsible for gathering information for the dataforms and suggesting themes for the standard narratives. We set up a dedicated SharePoint site with sections for each standard. We created worksheets for each standard allowing Standard Leaders to provide ideas, information, and suggested language for each subsection of a standard. The Vice President used the materials produced by this process to produce drafts of each standard chapter, beginning in July 2020. He circulated each chapter to relevant staff, faculty, and Board Committees, incorporating feedback into the next chapter. He placed these drafts on the SharePoint site, allowing interested colleagues to review them. We also shared drafts with Vice President Carol Anderson of NECHE who provided precious guidance throughout this process.

The Vice President gave updates on the self-study process and solicited feedback at the all-faculty meetings at the beginning of each semester, and regularly updated the community during staff meetings and in the Deans Council. A full draft of the Self-Study narrative chapters was circulated to all faculty and staff of ACM February 24, 2020 and discussed in an open forum hosted by President Jubran on March 5, 2021. Feedback from these sessions was incorporated into the final narrative.

The Vice President gave regular updates to the Board throughout this process, briefing them at the 2020 Board meetings in February, June, and October. A full draft of the standard narratives was reviewed by the Board at the February 15, 2021 Board meeting and the Academic Affairs Committee reviewed final drafts of the narratives for Standards Four, Six, and Eight on March 4, 2021.

NECHE guidance throughout this process has been essential to a productive Self-Study. President Jubran and Vice President Breeden attended the NECHE Self-Study Workshop in October 2018. VP Breeden and Assistant Director of Admissions & Alumni Affairs Rose Guth attended the October 2019 workshop. Dean of Admissions Kurt Schick attended the (virtual) workshop in October 2020. NECHE Vice President Carol Anderson provided constant advice and comfort whenever needed. Throughout the process, ACM also consulted

Dr. Bruce Hitchner (Tufts University), for his insights and guidance based on his deep knowledge of ACM and his previous experience as a NECHE Commissioner.

ACM posted public notice of our Self-Study process and the candidacy evaluation visit on our website in February 2021. At the same time, we informed important constituencies, such as IAU and ACM alumni, the Association of American International Colleges and Universities ([AAICU](#)), and the ACM Council of Academic Advisors.

Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Self Study

The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in spring 2020 disrupted our preparation of the Self-Study. Beginning in March 2020 ACM had to focus all our institutional energies on managing the crisis evacuation of almost all our IAU visiting students back to the United States. We then had to pivot to remote delivery of courses for the balance of the semester. ACM is very proud to have successfully completed the switchover in two weeks, allowing all students (19 ACM and 270 IAU visiting students in Aix en Provence and Barcelona) to complete the semester. Managing the crisis did however reduce the amount of time faculty and staff could devote to the Self-Study process.

Due to the disruptions to international travel from the COVID-19 pandemic, ACM experienced a substantial drop in revenue from visiting IAU student enrollments in the summer of 2020. This required ACM management to devote significant amounts of time to making important budget cutbacks, including reductions in personnel in France and the U.S. This was an emotionally trying process for a small organization as we released approximately one-third of French-based personnel and one-half of U.S. based personnel. It also required the Vice President to adjust the roster of Standard Leaders.

Although we returned to in-class teaching in the fall of 2020, adapting to the COVID-19 pandemic continues to require much of our attention as health and travel measures evolve. Nonetheless, we were able to return fully to the Self Study process in the fall of 2020.

Institutional Overview

The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM) is a private, non-profit U.S.-style liberal arts college with an urban campus located in the historic center of Aix-en-Provence, France, and off-site study abroad programs throughout the Mediterranean region, principally in Spain and Morocco. In addition to the Aix-en-Provence campus ACM has admissions and marketing staff based in the U.S.

ACM was formally incorporated as a not-for-profit corporation in the State of Arizona in December 2016 and holds a degree-program license from the Arizona State Board for Private Postsecondary Education, first issued in February 2018. Today, the American College of the Mediterranean offers a Bachelor of Arts (BA) program comprised of 11 majors, one two-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program, four one-year Master of Arts (MA) programs in International Relations (MAIR), French Studies (MAFS), Art History (MAAH), and Media Studies (MAMS) and a one-year Global Master of Business Administration program (GMBA). A one-year Master of Arts in International Education Administration (MAIE) is under development and will be the subject of a substantive change filing upon achieving candidacy.

The mission of the American College of the Mediterranean is to provide excellence in international education, inspire intercultural awareness, and prepare students for success in a global community through the study of European and Mediterranean history, languages, cultures, and contemporary issues. ACM's mission is a distillation of its history and reflects the commitment of its founders to international higher education as an engine of self-transformation, global understanding, and societal progress in the United States and abroad. ACM creates an academic community of full-time degree-seeking and visiting students in an international environment that develops intellectual tolerance, freedom and integrity.

ACM grew out of the Institute for American Universities (IAU), a non-profit institution [chartered](#) by the New York State Board of Regents in 1957 and authorized by the University of Aix-Marseille to provide foreign study programs to American college and university students in Aix-en-Provence, France. IAU quickly established itself as an innovative European center for undergraduate study abroad in the arts, humanities, and social sciences, serving over 700 colleges and universities, and more than 25,000 undergraduates.

History of IAU

The founders of IAU included American academics and distinguished former diplomats, including Dr. Herbert Maza (its first President), Dr. Evron Kirkpatrick, Ambassador Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and Dr. Max Kampelman, all of whom viewed study abroad as an important opportunity, not only for language majors, but also for students interested in studying foreign relations in preparation for careers in the Foreign Service and the State Department.

Initially IAU offered a study abroad program for American university students willing to live and study in France for an entire academic year. As one of the first institutions to make study abroad available to non-language majors, IAU established itself as a European center for

undergraduate study in the arts, humanities, and social sciences for students from more than 500 U.S. colleges and universities.

IAU is one of the oldest and largest study abroad programs of its kind in Europe and has remained an innovator in the field. By 1966 IAU was enrolling approximately 500 “study abroad” students a year. In 1984 it acquired The Marchutz School of Fine Arts (founded by the artist Leo Marchutz). In 2012, IAU began identifying itself as a study abroad college to reflect the fact that its program offerings, curriculum, and support services mirrored those found at U.S. institutions of higher education. Additionally, in 2012 IAU created a Resident Fellows program that supports university faculty on sabbatical in order to bolster the intellectual environment on campus. In 2013, IAU expanded its offerings and opened a summer program option in Barcelona, Spain. In the same year, it initiated multi-country January term/intersession seminars in Europe and North Africa as a way of leveraging more effectively its location within the Mediterranean region as an educational asset. Shortly thereafter, IAU began welcoming U.S. faculty-led programs to support U.S. professors seeking a customized study abroad experience for their students.

IAU is a founding member of the Association of American International Colleges and Universities ([AAICU](#)), a network of prestigious American institutions of higher learning located throughout Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia, dedicated to promoting American-style education abroad. Thanks to these connections, IAU, and by extension ACM, share resources and expertise with premiere U.S.-accredited academic institutions such as American University of Beirut, American University of Cairo, American University of Paris, and Central European University.

History of ACM

In 2011, coincident with the appointment of IAU’s fifth President, Carl Jubran, IAU began a strategic planning process designed to better utilize the unique educational resources at IAU’s disposal as well as IAU’s financial, administrative, and human resource capacity. This planning process led to the IAU board’s decision in 2014 to establish degree programs, which culminated with the establishment of ACM in 2016.

ACM was established under State of Arizona law to benefit from Arizona’s modern and streamlined approach in allowing education institutions to propose more than one degree program at a time, which was not possible in the state of New York where IAU was established. ACM was initially structured as an affiliate of IAU, but to better achieve the management of a unified, independent non-profit entity, the two boards decided to merge IAU into ACM in 2019 and began operating jointly. ACM completed the merger in on March 4, 2021, consolidating all degree program and study abroad program operations in ACM as the successor to IAU, operating under Arizona law.

Current Context

During the first four years of ACM’s existence, we created six graduate programs and launched our BA program. ACM has to date graduated four BA graduates and 40 MA/MFA graduates.

ACM Graduates by Program (2017-2020)

	MFA	MAFS	MAIR	MAAH	GMBA	BA	TOTAL
# of graduates	14	8	14	3	1	4	44

In this initial period, ACM planned for and succeeded in generating steady incremental growth in our new degree programs while also growing our IAU visiting student programs. In this start-up period, we use surpluses generated by the visiting student programs to support the degree programs. Our ultimate goal is for the degree programs to grow to surpass in size the IAU visiting student programs, which will continue in parallel with the degree programs.

ACM decided to pursue accreditation early in the life of the institution because it will nourish the momentum of our growth, guide us in reorienting our operations towards the degree programs, and help us achieve our overall goal of excellence in international education. Our goals for the self-study were straight-forward:

- Identify areas for improvement in order for our young institution to attain accreditation.
- Use the Self-Study to strengthen information gathering and sharing within ACM.
- Use the results of the Self-Study as the starting point for a new Strategic Plan.

However, the uncertainties and challenges to international travel and education from the COVID-19 pandemic introduced a complicating element, requiring us to confront a crisis that scrambled the assumptions underpinning international education. We were forced to make difficult decisions about budget cuts and personnel reductions while at the same time reflecting on our priorities for a future that was suddenly obscure. Although the pandemic slowed us down, it did not change our determination to move forward with the goal of becoming a distinguished American-style institution, which integrates the best practices and values of an international institution of Higher Education with those of a degree-granting American-style university.

Summary of Principal Findings

The Self-Study, tied up as it was with confronting the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic, confirmed us in our analysis that founding ACM and building degree programs is essential to the long-term health of our institution. Our study enabled us to consider the four areas of special attention noted by NECHE in our [October 2019 Eligibility Letter](#):

- Board Governance.
- Sustainable Planning.
- Developing Assessment Processes.
- Developing a Baccalaureate Culture.

In all of these areas, the self-study has led to productive dialogue on how we can [begin to address these areas](#) going forward. Specifically, we conclude:

- The foundations of our academic program are strong, directed by qualified, committed and talented individuals, who welcome the challenge of building a baccalaureate culture.

- Our budget and personnel cutbacks of 2020, coupled with the use of French and U.S. government support programs and access to the contingency fund, have stabilized our operations in the face of the immediate COVID-19 revenue shortfalls, enabling us to resume growth and establish more long-term budgeting processes when enrollments recover.
- We have started developing documented procedures and policies in many academic and administrative areas but have identified many areas where we must do more.
- Similarly, improving and systematizing our collection and use of data in all areas demands our sustained attention so we can deepen our planning processes.
- The merger of the IAU and ACM Boards is an important step in deepening processes for assessing Board effectiveness.

The Self-Study prompted a continuing discussion on academic governance that is and will continue to be beneficial to the intellectual life of the institution.

Standard One MISSION AND PURPOSES

The institution's mission and purposes are appropriate to higher education, consistent with its charter or other operating authority, and implemented in a manner that complies with the Standards of the New England Commission of Higher Education. The institution's mission gives direction to its activities and provides a basis for the assessment and enhancement of the institution's effectiveness.

DESCRIPTION

The mission of The American College of the Mediterranean (ACM) is to provide excellence in international education, inspire intercultural awareness and prepare students for success in a global community through the study of European and Mediterranean history, languages, cultures, and contemporary international issues.

- *ACM advances this mission through a unique combination of interdisciplinary programming, internships, and curricula for both full-time degree-seeking and visiting students.*
- *ACM's mission is a distillation of its history and reflects the commitment of its founders to international higher education as an engine of self-transformation, global understanding, and societal progress in the United States and abroad.*
- *ACM creates an academic community of full-time degree-seeking and visiting students in an international environment that develops intellectual tolerance, freedom and integrity.*

Approved by the Board of Trustees, May 2017

Our mission demonstrates our commitment to international education, which builds on that of our founding institution, the Institute for American Universities (IAU), founded in 1957 by U.S. academics and diplomats to train global citizens.

For over six decades IAU provided innovative undergraduate study abroad experiences in partnership with over 700 U.S. universities. The founding of ACM in 2016 was the next step in this tradition. It reflects changes in the study abroad environment, the desire of IAU students to continue their studies abroad beyond a semester or academic year, and our interest in leveraging a strong faculty base to create degree-granting programs that could take advantage academically and experientially of ACM's location in Aix-en-Provence. ACM continues IAU's academic investment in the historically and culturally rich Mediterranean basin, an area alive to all the economic, social, cultural and environmental challenges of the 21st century.

The undergraduate and graduate degree programs are structured to produce graduates prepared to meet the challenges and opportunities of a globalized world. This includes courses with an experiential learning component, field studies, internships and service learning opportunities.

The undergraduate core curriculum also calls for a Global Diversity course (3 credits) requirement to further support the mission goal of creating thoughtful and aware global citizens.

Courses in this category explore and analyze typically underrepresented groups of people on the global stage and incorporate international and cross-cultural studies, bringing to life important principles of equity and inclusion. Woven throughout all degree programs is the “Social Issues Across the Curriculum” initiative in which students and faculty address topics related to societal equity as well as the problems of colonialization and underprivileged societies into everyday discussion both inside and outside the classroom.

ACM graduate degree programs likewise reflect the mission through an emphasis on interdisciplinarity, which ACM sees as the capacity to create a dialogue between the methods and definitions of different disciplines, comparing and contrasting their conclusions. ACM accomplishes this in a number of ways, such as allowing MA in French Studies students to follow an International Relations track that plugs into the MA in International Relations program. Similarly, the MA in Art History is integrated into the studio art program of the MFA. Field studies routinely involve professors from complimentary disciplines working together.

Interdisciplinarity is further promoted in [January Term programs \(J-Term\)](#) in which all students pursue course work as part of off-campus study-tours in the Mediterranean and Europe led by ACM faculty. Finally, all ACM [academic conferences and lecture series](#) are interdisciplinary. For example, a [March 2018 conference on international conflict resolution](#) included [diplomatic, political and artistic views](#) drawing from all ACM programs.

[Internships](#) are required in almost all the graduate programs and highly encouraged for undergraduates, serving as a platform for accomplishing the ACM mission of developing global citizens. The student activities office seeks out service opportunities for ACM students, which also contributes to this mission.

Another targeted action designed to meet our mission is the continuation of the IAU tradition of housing students with families. Homestays anchor ACM’s interdisciplinary and experiential approach to learning in the community. They aid in language acquisition and building intercultural competency. Homestay families, many of which have worked with ACM and IAU for decades, understand and actively participate in ACM’s mission (see Standard Five).

The strong instructional component of our mission is reflected in the fact that administrators and faculty alike are committed to teaching in our degree programs, and that faculty share a critical role in the administration of ACM. For example, the Vice President of Administration is a former diplomat who teaches international relations and the Dean of the College is also a comparative literature professor. A professor of French language manages our internship program and a Fine Arts professor coordinates student life programs and activities. This integrated approach to teaching and administration assures ACM students profit from engaged mentorship and guidance from both faculty and administration. It allows ACM to benefit from our community’s full range of talents in pursuit of our mission of producing thoughtful global citizens with the tools to prosper in multicultural environments.

Our mission’s commitment to experiential learning in the Euro-Mediterranean is supported by incorporating field-studies in the majority of our courses. The Assistant Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences supervises field studies, providing logistical and pedagogical

support to professors, as well as orchestrating joint field studies that support interdisciplinarity. ACM organizes all-school regional excursions that complement course-specific outings and augment students' integration into Mediterranean culture. The site-specificity of ACM allows students to engage in classroom discussions on European, French, Mediterranean, and North African topics facilitated by accomplished and well-traveled faculty.

The mission is prominently displayed on our [website](#), in the [academic catalog](#), and in other institutional publications. It guides the overall structure of governance and administration of ACM governing documents, forming the basis for all strategic planning, including the Strengths/Weaknesses/Opportunities/Threats (SWOT) analysis instituted by the Board of Trustees in 2018. It will be reviewed as part of the process, beginning in 2022, to produce a new five-year strategic plan (see Standards Two and Three).

APPRAISAL

The ACM mission is well integrated into the deliberations of the Administration, senior academic planning and Board discussions. The mission is referenced in key documents such as employee and faculty manuals. The Board reviews the mission statement at the beginning of each annual board meeting devoted to strategy. All employees, including teaching personnel, are asked to review the mission and connect it to their work as part of their annual review process. In general, the mission is an important touchstone as this young institution steadily creates new procedures and practices.

The undergraduate core curriculum and the graduate program requirements serve the goals of ACM as shown in recent graduate and undergraduate student responses to [exit surveys](#). We must build on this by developing other mission-wide learning assessment tools to ensure the curriculum remains focused on the mission. Extracurricular activities, course-related field studies, and the student homestay program support ACM's global, interdisciplinary approach. Service opportunities exist, adapted to the language capabilities of students.

Although IAU visiting student enrollment in Aix-en-Provence and Barcelona dropped considerably due to the COVID-19 pandemic, going from 270 in the Spring of 2020 to 50 in the Spring of 2021, ACM enrollment remained steady, going from 19 in Academic Year 2019-2020 to 17 in Academic Year 2020-2021. This confirmed our belief that the ACM mission meets student goals in a globalized world. However, the temporary drop in income from visiting students has delayed resource commitments such as the purchase of an integrated student information system, which will allow ACM to improve data collection to aid in assessment efforts (see Standards Two and Five). We will review this and other initiatives during the new strategic planning process in 2022.

PROJECTIONS

- In 2022 the President will lead development of a new five-year strategic plan which will include a formal review of the ACM mission.

Standard Two PLANNING AND EVALUATION

The institution undertakes planning and evaluation to accomplish and improve the achievement of its mission and purposes. It identifies its planning and evaluation priorities and pursues them effectively. The institution demonstrates its success in strategic, academic, financial, and other resource planning and the evaluation of its educational effectiveness.

DESCRIPTION

Sustainable planning is a nascent priority for ACM and was flagged in the NECHE eligibility letter as an item of special concern. ACM is laying the groundwork for effective planning that serves our mission. This will be the subject of sustained attention in the years to come.

ACM was founded in 2016 as a result of a planning process launched in 2011, responding to changes in the study abroad environment, the desire of IAU students to continue their studies abroad, and our interest in leveraging a strong faculty for longer-term academic programs that provide a financially sustainable educational model given the global uncertainties regularly affecting the study abroad educational environment. As noted in our discussion of the ACM mission in Standard One, another motivation was to increase our ability to offer academic experiences anchored in the realities of Europe and the Mediterranean basin.

The focus in this process was on how to leverage the existing expertise and assets of IAU in short-term study abroad programs to create longer-term degree-granting programs as ACM. As part of this process, we created the [Alumni Fellows program](#), allowing IAU alumni to return as mentors and academic support personnel while also pursuing coursework. We also created the [Resident Fellows Program](#) to connect our faculty with colleagues from IAU partner institutions and tap into their experience of creating inclusive, diverse, and equitable international education programs. Resident Fellows also increased the pool of faculty interacting with our students. Our experiences with these programs fed back into our planning discussions for the creation of ACM. The board also devoted increased attention to strategic planning (see below). A [draft outline](#) for a new strategic plan was discussed at the February 2020 Board meeting but further development was set aside when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. We consider our self-study the first step in a new cycle of planning that will begin with the development in 2022 of a new five-year strategic plan.

This period will be a time of growth and innovation throughout the institution. The strategic plan we will develop in 2022 will include careful market analysis, the results of which will inform plans to expand or modify ACM's undergraduate degree, graduate degree, and non-matriculating educational opportunities. The strategic plan will analyze how to grow the ACM faculty, enhance the student experience, increase student and faculty access to knowledge resources, and build ACM's administration, finances, and infrastructure to support its transformative educational mission.

Institutional research is currently informal and periodic at ACM. As a small institution, we have not been able to finance extensive data collection and research efforts, relying on the deep experience of staff and faculty to inform planning processes. Data collection is hampered by our use of two different student information databases, one in the United States and one in France, that cannot easily exchange information. We began to address this issue in our FY2020 budget by allocating funds to purchase a comprehensive student information system to replace our legacy systems. Unfortunately, we had to delay this purchase due to COVID-19-related cost-cutting measures. The decision to purchase the system will be revisited in FY 2022 when we expect more clarity on the potential rebound of enrollments.

ACM has a robust but relatively short-term financial planning process, developed by ACM's originating institution IAU, to handle the realities of an operation with short-term, fluctuating revenues in U.S. dollars from study abroad programs and longer-term costs in Euros. We are now pivoting towards longer timelines for financial planning but the COVID-19 pandemic hampered this transition as it upended many assumptions about international education. Fortunately, meeting the unforeseen demands of this period have been greatly aided by the board's decision in 2014 to create a quasi-endowment contingency fund for strategic investments and emergency response.

ACM's planning abilities at the board level have grown in recent years from an annual ad hoc strategic planning committee meeting into a full board meeting devoted entirely to strategic discussions. When ACM was launched in 2016 the board began using a [SWOT analysis](#) (strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to develop ACM mission-related strategic goals and track management progress in meeting them (see also Standards Three and 7.17). This built on an earlier use of the SWOT for IAU strategic planning. One early result was the decision to create the position of Vice President of Administration in 2018.

This planning process has begun to pay dividends in diverse areas, such as informing the creation of the first [ACM student recruitment plan in 2017](#) and surfacing the need to begin searching for student dormitory residence options in Aix-en-Provence. This process also supported our response to the departure of our CFO in 2019 for personal reasons. President Jubran and the board finance committee used the SWOT to evaluate, train and confirm the Director of Budget and Administration as the new CFO in January 2021.

ACM has a nimble and close-knit management team that maintains effective plans for responding to contingencies, as seen in our response to the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. When the crisis hit in March 2020, ACM's administration developed an emergency cost-cutting plan that was approved by the board Finance Committee in May 2020, followed by full-board approval in June. By August 2020 ACM's administration completed the plan, including difficult personnel reductions in both France and the U.S. As part of our emergency response, the aforementioned contingency fund is being used to partially support operations in FY 2021 which allows us to maintain quality programs and avoid further personnel cutbacks.

ACM's faculty and senior leadership has shown admirable flexibility and creativity in establishing a suite of MA programs and a small BA program (four graduates to date) focused on our core mission of educating global citizens. We are now starting to blend this responsive and

open approach with a more data-driven, long-range planning process. The original plan to establish ACM was successful, and our ability to pivot has proven vital to our successful response to the unforeseen challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to reap the benefits of long-range planning while preserving our ability to creatively maneuver in a radically evolving international education environment.

ACM is creating systematic practices to evaluate our academic program, beginning with the academic leadership's ongoing discussions to establish institution-wide learning outcomes (see Standards Four and Six) that will then promote the creation of learning outcomes and assessment mechanisms at the program, degree, and course level. Course-level learning outcomes are firmly anchored in our procedures but have not yet been harnessed to broader goals. The aforementioned SWOT has been helpful in this regard, identifying priority areas such as media studies and international education management for program development.

As part of our recovery from COVID personnel cutbacks, ACM recognizes the need to build up the core permanent faculty. Some needs had already been identified via the SWOT process, identifying priority areas such as French, Media Studies and International Education Management for program development. The COVID cutbacks created other gaps. Divisional deans have been asked to present 'build back' plans that identify areas for growth when the budget environment recovers.

ACM's approach to evaluation is resolutely focused on academic quality. It is informed by IAU's long experience of demonstrating academic rigor in study abroad partnerships with hundreds of U.S. universities including Boston College, Bryant University, Fairfield University, Harvard University, Tufts University, and Yale University. Course syllabi are reviewed by divisional deans. New professors, including all temporary professors, are provided syllabi templates and mentoring on how to create their own syllabi. Similarly, [student course evaluations](#) are a foundational element of reviews of academic effectiveness. In addition, all ACM students are surveyed at the end of their program to evaluate student experience.

Outside evaluation of ACM's academic programs is important and we have used our [Resident Fellows Program](#) and ACM's [Council of Academic Advisors \(CAA\)](#), which is made up of faculty/administrators from partner institutions representing a wide range of academic interests, as resources to provide program feedback. For example, a CU – Boulder member of the CAA [evaluated](#) the French language teaching program and other aspects of our operations in 2018.

Admissions staff in the U.S. have used program evaluation surveys to improve the admissions process. For example, moving the online application to a portal format, embedding the financial aid application into the application for admission, and lowering the application fee were all done in response to student feedback. In Aix-en-Provence, the surveys have informed improvements in ACM student activities, such as increasing the number of ACM-only student events to reflect the specific concerns of ACM students and build ACM student identity, connections, and a sense of community. At the academic level, student feedback showed an interest in at least one core curriculum course that all undergraduates would take. Since 2020 we require all first-year students to take composition course, and faculty are discussing a possible multi-disciplinary course focused on a broad view of Mediterranean culture. In addition, in 2020 we began

requiring all first-year students to participate in our [Early Start Program](#), a week-long pre-orientation program to build cross-cultural resilience that also helps ACM students begin creating their cohort.

APPRAISAL

ACM has robust short-term financial planning processes in place, which have kept us financially solid in the face of an unprecedented public health crisis that upended the world of international education. The successful [COVID response plan](#) ACM developed involved unprecedented, difficult decisions such as staff reductions that tested our decision-making processes. It involved tapping into the quasi endowment contingency fund for the first time. The cutbacks preserved our ability to operate when many American educational institutions halted operations abroad. Despite our success in meeting this crisis, we understand the need to augment our long-range financial management over the next five years. In February 2021 the Director of Administration and Budget was confirmed by the Board, upon the recommendation of the President and Finance Committee, as CFO to begin this process as part of the new five-year strategic planning process ACM will launch in 2022 (see also Standard Seven).

The COVID-19 pandemic forced us into an emergency posture that delayed our effort to increase comprehensive long-range planning. For example, at the annual board meeting devoted to strategy in February 2020, the Vice President of Administration presented the results of discussions with the academic leadership of ACM designed to kick off a [new long-term strategic planning process](#). The COVID-19 pandemic broke immediately afterward, requiring a complete focus on our emergency response. The beginning, and then pause, of a search for a dormitory student residence option for ACM students is another example of this dynamic. We fully understand that, moving forward, our strategic plans need to better inform operational plans and once the enrollment horizon clears we will resume our work in this area.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, our growth projections predicted ACM year-long degree student enrollment to almost quadruple from 19 in the academic year of 2019-2020 to 75 in academic year 2023-2024. We were gratified that despite the pandemic, our ACM enrollment remained stable at 17 for academic year 2020-2021. There are signs that ACM enrollment will rebound in academic year 2021-22, which, if confirmed, will allow us to resume reasonable growth projections. On the IAU side of the ledger, the pandemic transformed the steady growth we were experiencing in visiting student enrollments in France and Spain into a precipitous drop. However, once the external factor of the pandemic is removed, we anticipate an equally strong recovery in visiting student enrollment. We base this on how visiting enrollments responded to earlier external shocks, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks, the 2008 financial crisis or the 2015 Paris terrorist attacks. Nonetheless, we are realistic that fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic will complicate long-range planning until a vaccine and other mitigation measures take root.

Marketing is another area where ACM had to pivot. Our original [marketing](#) plan initially focused on leveraging our study abroad recruiting infrastructure to promote ACM with partner institutions. The COVID-19 pandemic halted most study abroad recruitment activities. It shuttered many study abroad offices in U.S. universities, and required cutbacks in our

recruitment staff. Our [new marketing plan](#) moved to promoting ACM via [social media](#). This has yielded encouraging results and illustrates ACM's tactical flexibility.

Evaluation at the course level is strong and informs program and degree development. ACM academic personnel have used course evaluations and long experience working with IAU U.S. partner institutions to inform academic evaluation at the course, program, and degree level. For example, in December 2020 the Director of ACM Art School launched a consultation with ACM professors to evaluate the MA in Art History degree following the graduation of the first cohort. External perspectives are regularly solicited, such as when discussion with a visiting Duke University professor the MA in French Studies (MAFS) yielded the idea to develop an 'International' French-language course to create a bridge between the MA in International Relations and the MAFS. That said, ACM recognizes the need to augment and formalize evaluation at the degree, program and institutional level, beginning with establishing common institutional learning outcomes, which will allow us to develop institutional assessment tools.

As our early programs were one- and two-year MA/MFA degrees, initial evaluation efforts centered on end-of-program surveys. With growth and the rise of multiple-year BA programs, we will expand the frequency of student experience data collection to encompass inputs throughout the academic program to give us a fuller picture of the student experience. This will allow us to ensure we are meeting learning outcomes and succeeding in our mission of creating successful global citizens. As part of this, we need to improve sharing the results of evaluation endeavors with our academic leadership and teaching personnel. The need to connect evaluation data to operational activities is doubly important for us given that ACM staff are located in the U.S. and France.

In sum, we fully understand that, moving forward, our strategic planning process must grow to better inform and strengthen ACM's operations.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Develop a hiring recovery plan focused on rebuilding academic and administrative capacity following the COVID-19 personnel cuts of 2020. (Action: VP Administration, Dean of Admissions, CFO)
- Develop plan for increasing capacity to conduct institutional research, planning and evaluation. (Action: VP for Administration)

In 2022

- Complete new five-year strategic plan. (Action: VP Administration)
- Create new three-year budget plan using the new ACM five-year strategic plan. (Action: CFO)

In 2023

- Develop a new facilities plan that addresses deferred maintenance for our historic buildings, and maps out future requirements for classroom, laboratory, and studio art space. This will include identifying a dormitory housing option for ACM students keyed to when annual ACM enrollment reaches an FTE of 100 students, so that ACM will continue to have adequate housing for all students. (Action: VP Administration)

Standard Three ORGANIZATION AND GOVERNANCE

The institution has a system of governance that facilitates the accomplishment of its mission and purposes and supports institutional effectiveness and integrity. Through its organizational design and governance structure, the institution creates and sustains an environment that encourages teaching, learning, service, scholarship, and where appropriate, research and creative activity. It demonstrates administrative capacity by assuring provision of support adequate for the appropriate functioning of each organizational component. The institution has sufficient autonomy and control of its programs and operations consistent with its mission to be held directly accountable for meeting the Commission's *Standards for Accreditation*.

ACM's system of governance and organization is fully documented in the [ACM Board Bylaws](#). The administrative structure of the institution is well documented and understood by the Board, administration, and faculty. The ACM Board fully endorses ACM's distinctive mission and ensures that the organization's programs, policies and initiatives further its mission and purpose. As discussed in the institutional overview, ACM's corporate structure evolved in recent years to make it fully supportive of institutional effectiveness. As a young institution we are focused on developing governance that includes all constituencies as we grow.

DESCRIPTION

Governing Board

ACM was established under State of Arizona law to benefit from Arizona's modern and streamlined approach in allowing education institutions to propose more than one degree program at a time, which was not possible in the state of New York where IAU was established. As detailed in the institutional overview, ACM was initially structured as an affiliate of IAU with a separate Board sharing governance responsibilities with IAU. The two Boards agreed in 2019 to merge into a unified and independent non-profit entity. From that point on all Board meetings were held jointly. The merger was completed on March 4, 2021, resulting in a strengthened, unified, fully independent educational institution, licensed to issue degrees, and governed by a single self-perpetuating Board of Trustees with ultimate responsibility for the quality and integrity of ACM.

Trustees represent a broad range of interests and serve without compensation. None hold a financial interest in ACM and all annually review and sign a detailed Conflict of Interest Policy, last updated in 2016. All Trustees make annual charitable donations to ACM and are active in encouraging contributions from alumni of ACM and IAU. The Board actively fulfills its fiduciary responsibilities, through ongoing monitoring of application, enrollment and financial measures, as well as a range of initiatives and efforts, intended to continually assess and improve student outcomes, as well as faculty and staff engagement. This includes regular meetings of the Finance Committee, full Board approval of finance reports provided by the CFO to each Board meeting, and annual approval of the ACM budget and tuition fees. The Finance Committee also receives and reviews an annual external audit by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) of ACM

finances which ensures compliance with U.S. GAAP and standard European business practices (see also Standard 7.17).

As a young institution, ACM is in a period of new program consolidation. Coincident with the founding, the President successfully brought to the Board several initial program proposals developed in tandem with the faculty and academic leadership to create the core of ACM's current academic offer: A Bachelor of Arts (BA) program with 11 majors, one two-year Master of Fine Arts (MFA) program, four one-year Masters of Arts (MA) programs in International Relations (MAIR), French Studies (MAFS), Art History (MAAH), and Media Studies (MAMS) and a one-year Global Master of Business Administration program (GMBA). A one-year Master of Arts in International Education (MAIE) is under development and will be the subject of a substantive change notice to the Commission when ready.

The President, an academic himself, is a regular participant in academic program development. This is an iterative process, with Board committees, principally the Academic Affairs Committee, offering insight into draft programs. The full Board reviews and approves the creation of new degree-granting programs and other strategic initiatives, including reviews of marketing plans and long-range enrollment and financial forecasts. The February Board meeting is entirely devoted to strategic discussions to ensure ACM's growth remains focused on our mission. The Board also used this process to approve ACM's founding strategy, and the subsequent Board merger plan.

As indicated in our discussion of Standard Two, the Board uses SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) to regularly review ACM institutional progress in advancing strategic goals. The prior use of SWOT with IAU led to improved fundraising and branding, better financial controls and contingency planning, new student life initiatives, and surfaced the Mediterranean focus of our programs as a unique part of our identity (see also Standard 7.17).

The Board of Trustees has a chair elected every two years, and one elected vice-chair. The Board Chair communicates regularly (often weekly) with the President and as appropriate with committee chairs and members. The Board currently has 19 members, serving four-year terms. The Board uses term limits to allow for the regular replenishment and expansion of Board competencies. Trustees who have taken a one-year hiatus from Board service are eligible for reelection. All Board members can nominate Board candidates, which the Governance, Legal Affairs and Security Committee interview and evaluate to ensure they meet needed competencies. Upon a recommendation from the Governance Committee, the full Board approves new Board members by a majority vote. The Board uses a regularly updated matrix of desired competencies to identify and evaluate Board candidates.

In 2019 the Board reinforced "on-boarding" procedures for new members. Each new member receives a [packet of materials](#) detailing the history, mission, current priorities and recent statistics concerning ACM. Each new member is also assigned a mentor. Board members also receive an [annual booklet](#) that includes enrollment and other key statistics about ACM, staff names and contact information and biographical information on all Board members. [Bios here](#).

The Board of Trustees meet at least three times a year – in the Spring in Aix-en-Provence, in February in Washington, D.C. (focused on strategy), and once in October (virtually). The meeting in Aix-en-Provence provides the Board an important opportunity to maintain productive channels of communication with a number of constituencies, including students, faculty, staff, and, when coincident with graduation exercises, families. Although all meetings can include formal presentations to the Board by a variety of Deans, Directors and other ACM staff, the Spring meeting in Aix-en-Provence is especially useful in this regard. The full Board annually reviews the performance of key administrators in executive session.

The Vice President of Administration serves as the Board Secretary. Trustees are provided access to a password protected shared drive containing all Board and committee materials, financial statements, external audits and other governance documents. Recent [Board books](#) and Board meeting [minutes](#) are in the Support Documents.

The Board has the following standing committees, each supported by a designated ACM staff member, which the Board updates each year at the spring meeting in Aix-en-Provence:

Board Committees, including their mandates

Executive Committee: Chaired by Board Chair Marianne Keler, a seasoned attorney and corporate executive with past experience as Board Chair of the American University in Bulgaria. This committee annually reviews the President’s job performance and establishes competitive, fair and reasonable compensation for the President. It reviews senior staff performance and compensation with the President and approves Human Resource benefit programs and policies. This committee also acts in an emergency capacity when immediate Board action is needed.
Staff: President Dr. Carl Jubran

Academic & Student Affairs Committee: Co-Chaired by Dr. Sanford Ungar, former President at Goucher College, and Dr. William Granara, Director of the Center for Middle East Studies, Harvard University, this committee works with the President and Board Chair on academic and curricular policies and issues that relate to the fundamental educational mission of ACM. It reviews all proposed academic and faculty policies, admissions and financial aid policies, student life issues, and the homestay program. It monitors both IAU and ACM program enrollments and partner school relationships. A major focus over the next few years will be to advise the President regarding ACM’s application for accreditation as a degree-granting institution.
Staff: Dean of the College Dr. Leigh Smith

Governance, Legal, and Security Committee: Chaired by Joe Herlihy, General Counsel at Boston College, this committee shapes IAU's policies on corporate governance. This includes Board and committee structure, trustee qualifications, nominations and elections, advice on general governance policies such as the employee code of conduct, review and re-nomination of current Board members, and nomination (and vetting) of trustee candidates for approval by the full Board. The committee also works with the administration regarding legal matters, regulatory compliance, campus and travel safety and insurance coverage.
Staff: Vice President for Administration Philip Breeden

Finance and Facilities Committee: Chaired by Olivier Breillot, former managing partner for international risk administration at Ernst and Young, this committee oversees ACM's finances and facilities needs. The committee recommends the approval of the annual budget and in concert with the CFO is responsible for oversight of the independent annual financial statement audit. The committee oversees the investment of endowment and quasi-endowment funds and ensures that an appropriate amount is held in liquid investments for contingency purposes. The committee also monitors currency hedging activities as well as appropriate implementation of internal controls. In addition, it reviews proposals for major building improvements and repairs. Staff: CFO Kristin Ouerfelli

Marketing, Development, and Alumni Relations Committee: Chaired by Donna Manning, an alumna of IAU, corporate lawyer, and advisor on gender equality on corporate and non-profit Boards, this committee provides guidance on the branding and marketing of ACM and IAU programs, student recruitment, solicitation of donations, and cultivating community and alumni relationships. Special emphasis is given to increasing alumni financial support and involvement with IAU and ACM's programs and students. Staff: Dean of Admissions Kurt Schick

The Board appoints the Chief Executive, currently Dr. Carl Jubran, to a five-year term. The Board reviews the CEO's performance in executive session annually at the spring Board meeting. The Board delegates to the President the requisite authorities to manage ACM, with the relevant committees ensuring senior administrators practice proper fiduciary responsibility and risk avoidance.

Internal Governance

Dr. Carl Jubran is the founding President and CEO of ACM. From 2011 until the completion of the merger in March 2021, he served simultaneously as President of both IAU and ACM. He reports directly to the Board of Trustees and oversees the operations of ACM on a full-time basis, providing leadership to faculty, staff, and students.

The President maintains a presence in both France and the U.S., working through the Vice President of Administration and the Dean of the College in Aix, and the Dean of Admissions in the U.S. to manage ACM. In addition, the President mentors and participates in supervising divisional deans as well as faculty and staff in France, Spain and Morocco along with a team of recruitment, program and enrollment managers in the U.S. The President oversees the budget and finances of ACM with the assistance of the CFO and the Vice President of Administration. All bookkeeping and accounting are supported by an independent French service organization Sud Est Gestion, used as chartered accountant. ACM is audited annually in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) through their branch office in Marseille. The President is responsible for implementing all decisions adopted by the ACM Board, which delegates to the President the responsibility to manage ACM and adopt administrative policies and procedures designed to carry out Board decisions.

United States

ACM has admissions, enrollment, and marketing staff located in the United States, while the campus is in Aix-en-Provence. U.S.-based staff include the Dean of Admissions, Assistant Dean of Admissions, and Assistant Director of Admissions. Their team oversees ACM and IAU student recruitment, application processing, and financial aid (see Standard Five). This team, in coordination with the divisional deans, also oversees course advising and registration. It also handles logistical matters such as visa advising and support and pre-departure preparations. Working closely with the academic team in Aix-en-Provence, the U.S. team maintains the ACM undergraduate and graduate catalogue, website, and other marketing and information materials.

The U.S. team also manages January Term (J-Term) and Custom (faculty-led) program development, administration, and enrollment. J-Term programs are integrated into the ACM curriculum, and are also open to IAU visiting students via partnerships with U.S. universities. January term and custom program partnerships often lead to proposals for the development of new courses and learning opportunities for both IAU visiting students and ACM students, such as the American Diplomacy J-Term, designed with ACM MA in International Relations students in mind, but also informed by feedback from study abroad partner institutions. Program development is done in consultation with Aix-based divisional deans to ensure such efforts support the ACM mission and provide opportunities for all students.

The Assistant Dean of Admissions oversees student affairs and logistics for the Barcelona study abroad center.

Aix-en-Provence

The Vice President of Administration is resident in Aix-en-Provence. The position was created in 2018 to help steer ACM's growth. The VP chairs the Deans Council, which includes the Dean of the College, who serves as the chief academic officer, the divisional deans, the CFO and the Dean and Associate Dean of Admissions. The council meets weekly and oversees the day-to-day running of ACM through a coordinated blend of academic and administrative oversight. The Vice President also chairs a weekly meeting of all staff in Aix-en-Provence, and the Assistant Dean of Admissions holds weekly staff meetings with U.S.-based personnel.

Another form of internal administrative governance is the Social and Economic Council. Per French labor law, ACM permanent employees in France elect every four years a Social and Economic Council of four (two members and two alternates) who meet monthly or on request with senior administrators to discuss any workplace issues brought forward by employees. All permanent staff are eligible to vote for and be members of the council. The next scheduled election is in March 2023.

ACM's academic structure is organized into three schools, with the Dean of the College, Dr. Leigh Smith, serving as the chief academic officer:

- The School of Humanities and Social Sciences (SHSS), which houses the Centre d'Etudes Françaises (Center for French Studies). SHSS is led by Dr. Dean Smith, with the support of Assistant Dean Dr. Guillaume Durand. The Center for French Studies is directed by Assistant Dean Dr. Muriel Cros.
- The School of Business and International Relations, led by Aboubakr Jamaï;
- The School of Art, which houses the Marchutz School of Fine Arts, led by Dr. Yumna Masarwa.

As part of the build-back process following the COVID-19 cutbacks of 2020, the President and academic leadership are discussing the possibility of making the Center for French Studies a school to reflect the anticipated growth in that program as part of the recovery, and to clarify and simplify the identity and management of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences (see also Standard Four).

The Dean of the College, who serves as the chief academic officer, works closely with the President, the Vice President of Administration and the divisional deans to support teaching, assessment and the integration of student life and academics (see Standard 4.5).

ACM uses the concept of coordinator positions – jobs that feature both teaching and formal service obligations – to better meld academic priorities with administrative realities. For example, coordinators oversee student activities, academic information resources, and internships.

In ACM's startup phase, the President led discussions with faculty to determine the initial degrees ACM would offer, serving as a bridge to the US staff to ensure all relevant perspectives were incorporated into degree proposals before taking them to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board for review and recommendation to the full Board. Once approved by the Board, the divisional deans oversee final curriculum development and quality assurance, in consultation with the Dean of the College. As a young, relatively small institution, academic governance at ACM is currently an informal continuous dialogue, with ongoing discussions about how this might evolve into a more formal process.

ACM academic quality discussions are informed by a [Resident Fellows](#) program that welcomes U.S. academics and administrators from a wide range of disciplines to campus for research and consultation. Resident Fellows are often asked to perform academic program reviews to aid ACM in the evaluation and improvement of our programs. For example, as part of this program, Sue Wasiolek, the former Associate Vice President for Student Affairs and Senior Advisor from Duke University, [reviewed](#) ACM's Student Life Office in 2018 providing valuable advice on Title IX developments which we adapted to our policies. (see also Standards Four, Six, and Eight).

An additional external perspective on academic quality is provided by ACM's [Council of Academic Advisors \(CAA\)](#), which is made up of faculty/administrators from partner institutions representing a wide range of academic disciplines. CAA members share with ACM a devotion to

international education and volunteer their time. The CAA is regularly solicited to review assessment, student learning outcome procedures, and the overall academic student experience, both during an annual meeting on campus and throughout the year. CAA members are a resource when ACM launches new programs, providing feedback on program proposals and insights about academic and administrative best practices at U.S. colleges and universities. Most CAA members hold a PhD in their respective disciplines varying from modern languages, art history, literature and culture, anthropology, psychology and more. The plurality of voices among the CAA members also contributes to the diversity of academic offerings at ACM. As noted elsewhere we recognize the CAA does not provide a fully external perspective on ACM and we will need to include such perspectives going forward (see also Standards Four, Six and Eight).

The inclusion of student perspectives is important to the mission of ACM. The highly personalized recruitment and advising process offers students the opportunity to customize their program with extensive interaction with senior academic leadership. In addition, the Fall 2020 class of ACM students elected, for the first time, a Student Representative which meets regularly with the Vice President of Administration and the Dean of the College. The first meeting was in November 2020.

ACM inherits from IAU extensive experience with partnership agreements. IAU has dozens of agreements with U.S. academic institutions to provide them with IAU credit-bearing courses that are accepted by the U.S. partner and incorporated in their transcripts. During this interim period prior to accreditation, ACM has School of Record agreements in place with Northern Illinois University and Fairfield University for ACM students who desire a transcript from a U.S.-accredited institution. ACM does not yet have any signed consortia or contractual agreements for the delivery of ACM credit-bearing courses. It has ongoing discussions with the Aix-Marseille Graduate School of Management (IAE-AIX) towards an agreement in support of the ACM Global MBA (GMBA) program that would allow ACM GMBA students to take certain IAE-AIX courses. Similarly, the Vice President of Administration has had preliminary discussions with the Institute of Political Studies in Aix-en-Provence (SciencesPo-AIX) concerning a reciprocity agreement that would allow SciencesPo-AIX and ACM students to take credit-bearing courses at both institutions. During the Fall 2020 semester one of ACM's undergraduates took classes, at her request, at the Institut Catholique de Paris (Catholic Institute of Paris). The Dean of the College determined ACM equivalencies for each class so that the student continued to satisfy requirements toward graduation in her major in International Relations.

APPRAISAL

Governing Board

The ACM Board benefits from over 60 years of oversight experience inherited from the IAU Board. Board members are devoted to the mission of ACM, and regularly make charitable contributions in support of the mission. In FY 20 following COVID-19 revenue losses, Board members, led by the Chair of the Marketing, Development, and Alumni Relations Committee, made strong fundraising efforts that yielded over \$250,000 in donations, double the level of the previous year.

The Board effectively implements its fiduciary responsibilities. Several Board members have strong professional financial backgrounds which permits the Board to exercise informed oversight over ACM finances. This has permitted ACM to maintain a no-debt policy while making annual set-asides of our operating surplus, which feeds a liquid quasi-endowment contingency fund. This posture helped ACM when the COVID-19 pandemic prompted IAU program cancellations for the Summer and Fall semesters of 2020 causing a significant drop in revenues (see also Standard Seven). The Board was able to responsibly respond to the institution's financial challenges, approving a management plan that implemented difficult cost-cutting measures, including reductions in temporary and permanent personnel, and provided access to liquidity to cover operating costs.

There is clear and robust communication between the Board and the administration. This regular communication resulted in the IAU/ACM Board merger plan which created a rechartered, unified organization based in Arizona. The Board is in regular contact with the President and other ACM staff and meets regularly, including one meeting a year at the main ACM campus (Due to the pandemic, the June 2020 and the February 2021 joint IAU/ACM Board meetings were successfully held remotely, and we are planning for a remote meeting in May 2021). Each Board committee is supported by an ACM staff member, and minutes for [Board and Committee](#) meetings are posted to the aforementioned Board shared drive.

The Board use of SWOT analysis has been useful to senior administration in identifying areas for improvement and opportunity. This process yielded the recommendation to create a Vice President of Administration position in Aix-en-Provence to increase administrative capacity and the alignment of resources with strategy. The analysis also informed the ongoing review of arts programs by the Director of the School of Art. It also sensitized the Board to ongoing faculty discussions about academic governance and academic assessment. Finally, it helped clarify administration thinking on topics such as currency risk management and whether to denominate tuition pricing in U.S. dollars or Euros.

The SWOT also led to changes in Board self-assessment and development efforts. It aided in maintaining the Board recruitment matrix, identifying new competencies needed for ACM, such as additional experience in international academic leadership. This led to the recruitment of former board member Dr. Lisa Anderson, the former President of the American University of Cairo and more recently of Dr. Peter Dorman, the former President of the American University of Beirut. The Board used the recruitment matrix to identify and recruit Elizabeth Woodworth to address a need for expertise in global digital marketing and to recruit former World Bank executive Bernard Pasquier to address a need for global business experience anchored in France and the Mediterranean region.

The SWOT analysis led the Board to conduct an anonymous [self-assessment review](#) in 2018-2019. The [review](#) showed that ACM has a collegial, engaged set of Trustees with solid financial, legal, governance and diplomatic expertise, including, at the time of the review, six attorneys, one leading audit firm partner, and two retired Ambassadors. 82% considered the Board to have a solid understanding of ACM's mission, which it uses to inform its oversight role. The review also identified a need to reenforce new member "onboarding" practices, and to revitalize the Academic Affairs Committee and the Development and Alumni Relations Committee. As a

result, the Board chair recruited new Committee Chairs and both meet more regularly. A New Member section was added to the Board shared drive, and now that the merger is complete, we will develop an updated Trustees Handbook. In addition, the Alumni and Development Committee was given a broader remit to provide guidance of ACM marketing efforts. As a result of the increased dialogue promoted by these changes, a Board member was able to arrange a very successful donor, alumni, and marketing event hosted by the Ambassador of France to the U.S. in Washington, D.C. in February 2020. We see this as the beginning of an effort to harmonize our hitherto distinct marketing and branding of IAU and ACM to create a unified perception of ACM, a degree-granting institution, which has a vibrant study abroad program (IAU).

The Board appropriately reviews senior administration handling of regulatory compliance and risk assessment. The Governance, Legal, and Security Committee annually reviews ACM policies, insurance, and other administration efforts to identify and mitigate risks. The Vice President of Administration presents an [annual review of ACM insurance](#) at the spring Board meeting. In 2018 this review led administration to augment our cyber coverage as well as emergency health coverage for employees traveling abroad.

Internal Governance

ACM is a small organization where many of the personnel share teaching and administrative responsibilities. This hybrid administrative model ensures that ACM's educational mission permeates the institution, and the focus is on student success. The relatively small size of ACM staff and faculty, along with many employees sharing academic and administrative responsibilities, means that informal governance processes predominate and need to be systematized.

We have begun this process via discussions about a formal academic governance body, the election of a student representative, and the institution of regular staff meetings in Aix-en-Provence and the U.S. As these formal mechanisms develop, ACM will be mindful to protect our legacy of direct and unfettered dialogue between academic leadership and administration. As ACM grows, we will continue whenever possible to incorporate teaching requirements with administrative positions, while acknowledging that with growth there will likely be areas, such as information resources, student life, or equality, diversity and inclusion issues, where we need to adjust our coordinator model.

Similarly, administrative policy creation is ongoing. Coincident with the creation of ACM, we began creating administrative policies. These were reviewed in 2018. The self-study process revealed areas where policies still need to be formalized, and we will focus on this going forward. The goal for all of these efforts is to preserve a flexible start-up mentality for new initiatives while providing greater structure to ongoing academic program administration and quality assessment.

The COVID-19 pandemic hampered recent discussions on this issue beginning in early 2020 as all resources of the institution were focused on repatriating visiting students, switching to remote delivery of courses for IAU and ACM, complying with sanitary requirements and instituting new

remote partnerships for our study abroad programs. Discussions on academic governance ideas resumed in the Fall of 2020. In October 2020 the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board reviewed a proposed set of bylaws for an academic governance body and provided extensive feedback to ACM faculty. It is premature to describe what form this will take, but the goal is again to preserve ACM's nimble approach to programming in the current fluid environment for international education, while increasing the involvement of faculty in quality assurance and curriculum development.

The President will remain closely involved with the Dean of the College, academic leadership, and administration in the oversight of current and developing educational programs. This process is currently underway to develop a potential new MA in International Education. As the institution grows, the Dean of the College's responsibilities in areas such as student life may need to be redistributed to allow for greater focus on academic administration. Another area under discussion is whether to make the Center for French Studies into a [separate School of French Studies](#), simplifying and clarifying the organization within the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and allowing for future growth in the academic offerings of the Center for French Studies and the School for Humanities and Social Sciences.

While ACM has leveraged the Resident Fellow Program and the Council of Academic Advisors as a resource for our faculty and staff, such as for assessing academic programs, developing courses and designing student services, we recognize the need to develop in-house capabilities in this area over the next five years.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Evaluate the Board committee structure in light of the completed merger, with reference to the ACM mission and revised growth projections informed by the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. All committees will review their charter and operations to increase focus on degree program issues where needed. (Action: Board)

In 2022

- Review and revise by-laws, create new Trustees Handbook and other governance guidelines that align with the growth and expansion of ACM as a degree-granting institution, addressing all aspects of Board governance, including effectiveness. (Action: Board, President)
- Conduct an annual formal review of ACM's outward-facing policies as listed on the website in consultation with the relevant sub-committees of the Board. (Action: Dean of Admission, Assistant Dean of Admission)
- Complete discussion of potential transition of Center for French Studies to a School with recommendation to President. (Action: Dean of College, Divisional Deans)

Standard Four THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

The institution's academic programs are consistent with and serve to fulfill its mission and purposes. The institution works systematically and effectively to plan, provide, oversee, evaluate, improve, and assure the academic quality and integrity of its academic programs and the credits and degrees awarded. The institution sets a standard of student achievement appropriate to the degree or certificate awarded and develops the systematic means to understand how and what students are learning and to use the evidence obtained to improve the academic program.

DESCRIPTION

The American College of the Mediterranean currently offers a Bachelor of Arts ([BA](#)) program comprised of 11 majors, one two-year Master of Fine Arts ([MFA](#)) program, four one-year Master of Arts (MA) programs in International Relations ([MAIR](#)), French Studies ([MAFS](#)), Art History ([MAAH](#)), and Media Studies ([MAMS](#)) and a one-year Global Master of Business Administration program ([GMBA](#)).

The development of a baccalaureate culture is an area of special interest noted by NECHE in our eligibility letter. It therefore bears noting that ACM believes that the structure of our BA academic program lays a foundation for the growth of a baccalaureate culture, through such mechanisms as a Core Curriculum for the BA, which includes a requirement for all BA students to take French-language courses. In addition, all ACM degree programs reflect the ACM commitment to a liberal arts education in an international environment through interdisciplinarity and experiential learning in the Mediterranean. All programs feature multidisciplinary approaches in their requirements and learning goals, which are stated on the [website and in the catalog](#). All programs incorporate elements focused on ACM's mission of preparing students to be successful global citizens through an American-style international education.

All degree programs are offered at the ACM campus in Aix-en-Provence. They were created in the two years following ACM's founding, with the first being the MFA and the latest the GMBA. ACM drew on decades of IAU experience in creating American-style credit bearing courses when designing ACM's initial undergraduate and graduate degrees. Programs are designed to take full advantage of the existing talents and resources of the IAU study abroad college out of which ACM grew, thus ensuring consistent quality and a sustainable resource base across all programs. All courses are taught in English, except for French-language and other foreign language courses, and courses exclusively focused on French Literature and Culture. The thesis requirement for the graduate programs and extensive writing and oral expression elements in the graduate and undergraduate programs ensure students demonstrate collegiate-level skills in the English language.

We are developing an MA of Arts in International Education Administration (MAIE), which we briefly outline in this chapter. Once fully developed, it will be the subject of a substantive change notice after we attain candidacy. ACM does not offer any online degree or certificate programs.

Assuring Academic Quality

During this initial phase of ACM's existence, we assure the quality of the academic program through a shared governance model led by the President in which the faculty, directors and deans develop and administer ACM programs. At present this is an iterative process centered on the Deans Council. As detailed elsewhere (Standards Three and Six) the academic leadership and faculty are in ongoing discussions on the evolution of faculty governance as ACM grows.

The initial suite of degree programs grew out of faculty and staff discussions with divisional deans who bring them before the Deans Council for discussion. They are then validated by the Dean of the College, serving as the chief academic officer, and the President. In this early period, the Board is closely involved, with each new program submitted for vetting by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board followed by the approval of the full Board.

The objectives and requirements for each program are published on the website and in the academic catalog. Each degree-granting program at ACM has established well-defined and appropriate educational objectives and clearly defined courses of study. A unified set of [published](#) general academic policies on admission, retention, academic integrity, and completion create a coherent structure for all degree programs.

Each MA program has a program director, and the Dean of the College oversees the undergraduate program. The Dean of the College is responsible for ensuring the divisional deans maintain the quality and coherence of course creation, sequencing, and learning outcomes for each academic program. As noted in Standard Three, discussions are underway that could lead to the transition of the Center for French Studies out of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences and into a separate School of French Studies. This will allow the School of Humanities and Social Sciences to fully focus on building the necessary elements for the ACM four-year BA program and enable the French Studies program to completely engage with all of ACM's academic units.

Course design is conducted by faculty, overseen by Deans and validated by the Dean of the College in accordance with overall program objectives and learning outcomes for the course. Class design must conform to standards set by the Deans Council which are reflected in the Professor's Handbook. The standards, which conform to U.S. practice, describe 1) the clarity and pertinence of learning outcomes and course objectives in alignment with institutional objectives; and 2) student work requirements sufficient to satisfactorily assess students' attainment of the objectives.

Professors, divisional deans, and the Dean of the College review student course evaluations at the end of each semester. The Deans address recurrent problems or issues, often with the guidance and participation of the Dean of the College. During the semester, the Dean of the College is available to all students from all programs to discuss classroom dynamics and any issues they wish to raise (see also Standard Five).

The divisional deans and the Dean of the College use classroom visits to assess professors' interaction with students and teaching methods. These visits occur on a sliding scale ranging

from every semester for new hires to every two years for senior teaching personnel. The classroom visits consist of 1) reviewing professors’ recent student evaluations and course syllabi; 2) sitting in on one class session 3) sharing notes taken during the classroom observation with the professor, who provides a written response; and 4) meeting to review the observer’s notes and solicit the professor’s views. A sample course visit form [can be found here](#).

To date, the MFA, MAIR, MAFS, MAAH, GMBA, and the BA in International Business, International Relations, and Visual Arts have all graduated between one and four classes for a total of 44 graduates.

ACM Graduates by Program (2017-2020)

	MFA	MAFS	MAIR	MAAH	GMBA	BA	TOTAL
# of graduates	14	8	14	3	1	4	44

Cyclical review of programs is therefore in its earliest stage. For example, having graduated its first cohort in 2019, the Director of the ACM Art School is leading an initial faculty review of the MA in Art History. The Director of the Center for French Studies reviewed the MA in French Studies with the faculty after it graduated its first cohort in 2017. The Dean of the College, who serves as our chief academic officer, reviewed the BA program after the first year and strengthened the Core Curriculum by adding a mandatory Composition course for all first-year students. As discussions of academic governance among the faculty advance, curriculum and program review are emerging as desirable areas of interest for additional faculty input.

Given ACM’s brief existence, we have not yet felt the need to eliminate programs or make large-scale changes in program requirements. As detailed below, in 2020 personnel changes led ACM to suspend recruitment for the MA in Media Studies, a program which has not yet enrolled students. Our policy is that the program for each student cohort remains unchanged for the duration of their enrollment. Changes may be made for incoming new cohorts provided those changes do not conflict with stated policies and conditions under which the new cohort decided to apply. The reductions in student enrollment and personnel cutbacks generated by the COVID-19 pandemic required us to temporarily cancel some courses, which tested our ability to adapt and to ensure that educational objectives for each program continued to be met. We are pleased that despite the disruptions which began in March 2020, students were able to complete their courses on time. Looking ahead, we have initiated discussions on “teach out” agreements with Fairfield University and Northern Illinois University. These institutions have in the past provided School of Record transcript services for our IAU study abroad programs and certain ACM degree programs. We plan to build on their institutional knowledge of our programs to develop “teach out” agreements that are consistent with Commission standards.

ACM directly controls the vast majority of the facilities essential to offer the academic programs. Within our four-building campus we own three and rent the majority of the fourth through a conventional long-term lease. In addition, we use the services of a small pottery studio for pottery classes. For our IAU study abroad programs in Barcelona we rent classroom facilities. In addition, in 2020 ACM signed an agreement with the University of New England granting ACM students access to their study abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco, but ACM does not depend on

it to deliver our degree programs. To date, the COVID-19 pandemic has precluded ACM students from participating in UNE's Tangier program.

In keeping with ACM's mission, learning outcomes in all ACM courses address students' synthesis of experiential and academic learning which enhance critical thinking skills, independent analysis, and information literacy. In the undergraduate program, the required first year student composition course focuses on writing critically and on intellectual rigor. All graduate programs include seminar work that develops research methodologies. Throughout the various curricula, students have access to workshops on writing and research resources. Each semester faculty meetings address the question of students' quality of perception and critical thinking.

Undergraduate Degree Programs/General Education

Under the direction of the Dean of the College, the ACM BA program is a four-year, 124-credit degree which includes a 56-credit Core Curriculum divided into four 'Foundations' – Language, Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Math and Sciences - which encompass ACM's most valued areas of intellectual development. American-style courses in these foundational areas provide an integrated common curriculum for all undergraduates to enable them to think critically through a variety of lenses and viewpoints, to express their views clearly, to make connections across disciplines, and to become informed and thoughtful global citizens.

The Core Curriculum includes a required English Composition class for all first-year students. All Core courses are encouraged to include a field-study element and most do. The Core also requires that at least one three-credit course have a Global Diversity distinction, for courses that incorporate international and cross-cultural studies to explore and analyze typically underrepresented populations. Similarly, a "Social Issues Across the Curriculum" initiative encourages the discussion of issues of societal equity throughout the Core Curriculum.

Undergraduates select one of 11 majors, including a self-design option that takes advantage of ACM's course offerings, site specificity, and customizability. They can also select one of 18 minors, each of which require 6 upper-division courses (18 credits). The Dean of the College advises all undergraduates prior to their [choice of major/minor](#). In practice, the choice of major reflects ACM's focus on customizing the ACM academic experience to student needs. Given the relatively small size of ACM's initial BA cohorts, faculty occasionally provide Oxford-style tutorials to deliver major and minor courses, further increasing our ability to be responsive to student needs.

ACM empowers students to play an important role in designing their academic program, including their choice of major. The Dean of the College works closely with each undergraduate in making this decision.

Graduate Degree Programs

ACM offers six graduate programs that are outlined below for ease of reference. Full descriptions of each program are in the [course catalog](#) and on the [website](#).

ACM graduate programs have an appropriate rationale and expectations of students in line with NECHE standards and common practice in U.S. institutions. All include thesis and final project/internship requirements that reflect the higher level of complexity and specialization needed in graduate programs.

Applicants for ACM graduate programs must provide evidence of an ability to sustain advanced study in an international environment, as evidenced for example by language and culture studies, previous study abroad or area studies. Professor recommendations and university transcripts are required of all candidates, along with a personal statement and CV. Deans routinely interview candidates prior to advising on acceptance. Some programs have additional, varying requirements for admission. For example, the MA in French Studies requires a letter of intent written in French by the applicant and the MFA requires a portfolio of the applicant's artistic work consisting of 20 images of painting and drawing.

ACM graduate programs include activities and requirements that take the student beyond the accomplishments of an undergraduate program. All require a substantial final research thesis and/or body of work. All graduate students make oral presentations of their thesis to a jury, which provides a written evaluation to the student. Some thesis presentations are open to the public. MFA students exhibit their work at a public exposition. All graduate programs include a professional internship component with most requiring an internship.

There is interdependence between our undergraduate and graduate program, with many professors teaching both undergraduate and graduate courses. As part of our interdisciplinary approach, we cross-list many classes within the differing fields, and sometimes mix undergraduates with graduates in elective courses. Graduate program directors ensure that professors create specific, more intellectually demanding requirements for graduate students, which are reflected in course syllabi. This can take the form of additional sessions with the instructor, additional readings, and/or more complex writing requirements.

As a teaching institution with professional and practice-oriented graduate degrees our faculty includes both scholars and professionally experienced instructors (see Standard Six). For example, faculty for the MAIR include a former U.S. diplomat and a former journalist/human rights activist, both still active in their fields. Our scholars attend academic conferences in their fields and publish in peer-reviewed journals. ACM shares these achievements with the [public](#) and the ACM community (see this [President's Message Archive](#) for sample messaging) Our programs provide an understanding of research appropriate to the programs offered, with several [initial graduates](#) going on to pursue PhDs in Europe and the U.S. Similarly, the final theses/projects, coupled with the internship projects, allow program directors to determine if students have successfully acquired the skills and knowledge identified in the program. The oral thesis defense all candidates present is a central part of this process, as they provide multiple perspectives (mentors, thesis directors, program directors), and written feedback to the candidates.

Brief Graduate Program Descriptions

ACM growth as an institution began with graduate programs and to date the bulk of our students have been in these MA programs. To illustrate their central role in the formation of ACM, we consider it important to provide capsule program descriptions in the body of the Self-Study.

Master of Fine Arts (MFA) in Painting

Offered by the ACM School of Art in the Marchutz School of Fine Arts, the MFA is a two-year, 60-credit program designed to link contemporary artistic concerns to a study of the visible world and to provide students a cross-cultural viewpoint through extended study in the museums and galleries of Europe and the Mediterranean Basin. The program features daily studio work, seminars, museum studies, field studies throughout Europe, professional internship opportunities, and a low-residency option.

First-year students work on campus in Aix-en-Provence, maintaining a daily open studio practice in their chosen discipline, while concurrently developing independent critical, aesthetic, and art historical research with core faculty advisors. Students complete the second year in Aix-en-Provence or, with an approved plan, can use the low-residency option during the third semester to work off-campus (to date this has not been used). Students are required to take at least six credits of French language, literature, and culture courses from the Center for French Studies. The degree culminates in a thesis project which includes a paper and a public presentation of an original body of artwork.

Students can conduct thesis work in specific partner locations such as Paris, Giverny, New York, Barcelona, and Morocco, or, with approved artist teachers, students may work from their home region through the low-residency format. Throughout the program, MFA candidates' work is evaluated in peer and faculty critiques as well as by visiting artists. The MFA Faculty Committee conducts the final evaluation and approval of the thesis.

Graduates will be prepared to work in museums, art galleries, or as teachers and independent artists.

Master of Arts in Art History (MAAH)

Offered by the ACM School of Art, the Master of Arts in Art History (MAAH) is a one-year 36-credit MA program leveraging ACM's location in Provence, made famous by Paul Cézanne and Vincent Van Gogh. Its defining characteristic resides in the educational principle that any art-related study should combine in a holistic manner the disciplines of art history, studio practice and critical studies. Having graduated one cohort, the program is currently under review with the aim of creating two tracks (Art History and Museum Studies). At present it consists of four Art History courses chosen in review with a Faculty Advisor, two Critical Studies courses, one studio art course in painting and drawing, one January traveling seminar, at least six credits of French language, literature and culture courses from the Center of French Studies, and an optional internship that can be replaced with an additional art history or studio art course. The

program concludes with a final thesis paper chosen and written with the guidance of a thesis advisor.

Master of Arts in French Studies (MAFS)

Offered by the Center for French Studies, the Master of Arts in French Studies (MAFS) is a one-year, 36-credit MA program that unites mainland French with Mediterranean Cultures (such as, among others, the Francophone Countries of North Africa), exposing students to the rich diversity of the French language and culture. Students specialize in one of the following tracks:

- French and International Studies: French language for use in international contexts in both the public and private sectors.
- The Francophone World: Study concentrated on the French language as it is used in other French-speaking countries (North Africa, Central Africa, the Caribbean).
- Contemporary French Literature and Translation: Traditional curriculum with a focus on more avant-garde literature.
- Teaching French as a Foreign Language: practicum and analysis.

In keeping with ACM's commitment to interdisciplinarity, each of these tracks allow students access to courses in related disciplines such as Art, International Relations, Political Science, History, or Sociology. All students, regardless of their track, are required to take the MA Seminar, a January term Traveling Seminar, the Research Methodology for Thesis Preparation course, and participate in an internship.

The MAFS prepares students for various careers in both the public and private sectors in an international environment: careers in business, diplomacy or translation; it allows a bridge with other specializations such as Global Health in French-speaking African countries or with highly specialized training in French-speaking countries (for example sustainable development and ecology, or other social sciences). It also provides the students with necessary skills to teach French in American schools or private institutions in France and French-speaking countries. Finally, it can prepare them to pursue higher education at the doctoral level.

Master of Arts in International Relations (MAIR)

Offered by the School of Business and International Relations, the Master of Arts in International Relations (MAIR) is a one-year, 36-credit MA degree leveraging ACM's strategic location in Southern France and nourished by IAU's academic tradition as one of the first American institutions abroad to prepare students for careers as diplomats in the Foreign Service or in international business. The program consists of three required core courses (nine credits), several different electives according to students' chosen tracks (nine credits), two language and culture courses (six credits), a January term seminar (four credits), an internship during the summer term (four credits), and a thesis (four credits) submitted at the completion of the program. An academic advisor works with the student from submission of a proposal through to completion of the thesis. ACM's synthesis of academic and experiential learning allows students to benefit from a large network of diplomats, scholars, politicians and intellectuals via field studies, classroom discussions and visits to international organizations such as the European

Commission, the European Parliament, the World Trade Organization, NATO, and various consulates and embassies in North Africa and Turkey.

Candidates for the MAIR specialize in one of the following tracks:

- Mediterranean Studies
- European Studies
- Environmental Policy
- Conflict Analysis and Resolution
- Diplomacy
- Cultural Heritage

All students must have at minimum an upper-intermediate level of French and are required to take at least six credits of French language, literature, and culture courses from the Center for French Studies.

Global Master of Business Administration (GMBA)

Offered by the School of Business and International Relations, the Global Master of Business Administration (GMBA) is a 46-credit, one-year MBA degree leveraging ACM's strategic location in Southern Europe, nourished by IAU's academic tradition as one of the first American institutions abroad to prepare students for careers as diplomats in the Foreign Service or in international business. The program prepares students for the many challenges of the global economy with an emphasis on Europe, North Africa, and the Mediterranean.

Students will specialize in one of the following four tracks:

- Global Wine Studies
- Mediterranean Business Studies
- Global Management
- Global Marketing

The Global MBA's 46 credits are composed of the following:

- Core courses (27 credits)
- Two language and culture courses from the Center for French Studies (six credits)
- One elective according to the student's chosen track (three credits)
- January Term Seminar (four credits)
- Summer consultancy/internship project (six credits)

Master of Arts in Media Studies (MAMS)

In addition to our five active graduate degree programs, ACM has one additional approved graduate program - the Master of Arts in Media Studies (MAMS). The MAMS is a 36-credit one year program which to date has not enrolled students. In 2020 faculty retirements and COVID-19 personnel cutbacks led the Deans Council to recommend this program be suspended. Although we are accepting inquiries for academic year 2022 we are not currently enrolling students in the program.

The MAMS consists of required three-credit core courses (15 credits), several different electives according to students' chosen tracks (nine credits), a January term seminar (four credits), an internship during the second semester (four credits), and finally a thesis (four credits) submitted at the completion of the program. A thesis prospective is submitted in the second semester for approval. The MAMS provides students with a broad and interdisciplinary formation beginning with core training in communication theory and media research methods. The program leverages the site-specificity of its European campus with close ties to Spain and North Africa and combines theory and practice to prepare students for success in fields such as public relations, brand management, public affairs, nonprofit management, education, and research. The program emphasizes ethical, culturally sensitive, and socially responsible communication.

Graduate Degree Programs Under Development

As noted in the institutional overview, ACM is currently developing a new [MA in International Education Administration](#), which is envisioned to be a one-year, practitioner-based program strategically designed to prepare students for leadership positions in the field of study abroad as well as the broader industry of higher education. It would be the first ACM degree to include in the program design study abroad experiences in Spain and Morocco. Once fully developed we will submit this as a substantive change to the Commission. At the present time, we are market-testing the idea via social media and with partner institutions and alumni.

Integrity in the Award of Credit

ACM follows common American practice in the naming, content, length, and level of our degree programs. Our minimum credit requirements for each degree meet or exceed NECHE standards. ACM transcript practices grow out of extensive IAU experience since 1957 of providing transcripts for our study abroad programs that follow common American practice. ACM transcripts are updated every semester, using the commonly accepted four-point grade scale, indicating the credits awarded for each class.

ACM's published catalog provides complete listings of all courses along with simulations of different pathways students can use to complete degree requirements within the published program length. The Dean of the College and Registrar ensure all requirements are met for each program, based on the advice of the program directors. At present, ACM does not have any joint, dual or concurrent degree programs with other institutions and has full control over all courses for which we award credit.

ACM courses are structured using the well-known three-credit system in which one three-credit course meets three hours a week during a 14-week semester, yielding 45 contact hours. ACM courses generally follow this model, and may include additional hours of field study, usually no more than six. Studio Art contact hours for one three-credit course are six hours per week over a 14-week semester. Three-credit internship courses usually require 8-10 hours of work per week over an eight-week period. Interns are required to submit regular reports as well as a final written analysis of their work and the organization for which they worked. Independent study courses consisting of substantial research projects require ten contact hours during a semester.

ACM has a publicly available [transfer credit policy](#) in place overseen by the Dean of the College which corresponds to commonly accepted practice. To date it has only been used once in a limited way for a graduate program, but several undergraduate students have been transfer candidates. The policy allows some margin for applying credit for practical work within the framework of core curriculum classes. To date this has been used once, when a candidate who was a professional photographer was given credit for the core fine arts requirement. All transfer students take at least 25% of the core curriculum credits and at least 50% of major credits at ACM. Students who request transfer credit for coursework from non-U.S. institutions may be asked to submit a course-by-course transcript evaluation report from World Education Services (WES).

ACM benefits from IAU's extensive experience with partnership agreements. ACM has three articulation and pathway [agreements](#) with St. John's College, the University of Mary Washington, and Fairfield University. They are recent, all developed during 2020 and early 2021, and arising out of discussions between the faculty and administration at ACM and these institutions. ACM's most recent agreement with Fairfield University, a long-time NECHE-accredited IAU partner, created graduate pathway programs both for ACM undergraduates to continue on to Fairfield in their graduate programs and for Fairfield undergraduates to continue their graduate studies with ACM.

ACM's catalogue clearly lists the requirements for graduation. Social participation in graduation ceremonies is permitted, but no diplomas are released until the program director, Dean of the College, and Registrar certify all requirements have been completed and fees paid. ACM has a published policy on withdrawal/leave of absence/readmission. Students who avail themselves of this policy are advised by faculty and program directors on how and when to reintegrate into the program, and program directors have some leeway in granting extensions. Recent setbacks due to COVID have been an example of extensions granted with good reason.

ACM has [published](#) academic integrity policies which incoming students must sign, recognizing their commitment to upholding ACM's academic standards. These policies include descriptions of how violations are handled, including sanctions up to and including dismissal.

ACM does not offer correspondence or distance education programs.

APPRAISAL

ACM's initial focus as a new entity has been on getting new degree-granting programs up and running. As we move out of this "startup" phase, our focus now turns to instituting procedures for maintaining the quality of these programs. The foundation of our program is strong. ACM's academic program is coherent and clear, drawing on six decades of IAU experience in creating American-style credit bearing courses, with structure, content and goals clearly mapped out for students. We recognize the need to increase the role of faculty governance in reviewing results and proposing improvements to the process. The upcoming review of courses provides an opportunity in this regard.

ACM recognizes the importance of building up permanent faculty as we consolidate existing degree programs and consider future growth. As noted in the Standards Two and Six discussion, we need to lessen our dependence on temporary/adjunct faculty for instruction in several areas, such as Media, Business, Art, and French. COVID-19 driven budget cutbacks and personnel reductions in 2020 heightened the needs in this area while delaying our ability to address them. As discussed in Standard Six, we understand that as we broaden our academic program and enrollments grow, we will likely need to adapt the use of coordinator positions that blend teaching and administrative roles, eventually devolving those responsibilities onto designated roles consistent with conventional academic administration.

Learning outcomes at the course level and program level are well developed and published in syllabi and program presentations but ACM has not yet concretized institution-wide learning outcomes or assessment measures. In this start-up phase, continual ad hoc review and revision has been the norm, but we are now adopting a more rationalized approach to broader institutional and program academic quality and design, beginning with the establishment of global, institution-wide learning outcomes. The Dean of the College is at present overseeing the development with the divisional deans and faculty of institution-wide learning outcomes. This process included a review of the proposal by the Deans Council followed by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board.

Once these institution-wide learning outcomes are published (a draft is in Standard Eight), the divisional deans will ensure each degree program has explicit goals that contribute to the achievement of the ACM goals. Some programs already have robust program-wide learning outcomes and assessment structures (MFA and MAFS) whereas others are less detailed. Assessment will be discussed in more detail in Standard Eight, but in general our approach will be to create associated assessment measures as learning outcomes are determined. The Dean of the College will work with the divisional deans to ensure these are harmonized with existing learning outcomes at the program and course level. Eventually, they will judge how well goals and outcomes are being met.

We are confident that ACM's initial programs meet and/or exceed quality standards in their respective fields. Our internal judgement has been reinforced in the past five years by regular informal external academic reviews by visiting [Resident Fellows](#) and our [Council of Academic Advisors \(CAA\)](#), which is made up of faculty/administrators from partner institutions representing a wide range of academic interests. The CAA meets yearly in Aix-en-Provence as well as serving as an on-call resource. As we develop our internal procedures, the CAA will continue to be solicited for their assessment of internal reviews. At the same time, we recognize that the CAA does not provide a completely external review of our programs. We also understand the need to evolve the membership and focus of the CAA to increase its ability to advise on degree programs.

The Dean of the College, serving as the chief academic officer, is responsible for the overall academic quality of ACM's program. He is involved in reviewing course design, hiring and reviewing faculty, and responding to student perspectives. With growth, we plan to strengthen peer review of academic quality, through faculty-led curriculum reviews, or peer classroom visits to exchange ideas about improving teaching methods and reinforcing academic rigor.

Undergraduate Degree Programs/General Education

The undergraduate program core curriculum includes many courses requiring students to demonstrate the capacity for critical analysis and logical thinking, often through research papers and other writings that require focused rigorous research and attention to both statistical and historical data and background. Our program is strong in the arts and humanities and requires further development of the Math and Sciences Foundation. Our initial focus in this area has been on science courses that explore the Mediterranean environment. We plan to strengthen our capacity by procuring field science kits for Core Curriculum courses on ecology and environmental studies followed by development of a more permanent laboratory for environmental studies. This was a planned capital expenditure for FY2020 before the COVID-19 pandemic required us to postpone such purchases. Our [recent agreement](#) with the University of New England provides access to science labs at their Tangier's facility, which could support this plan.

ACM believes that common elements in the undergraduate curriculum will support the growth of a baccalaureate culture. Some elements are already in place, such as [the Core Curriculum](#), the required composition course and the *Social Issues Across the Curriculum* initiative. Building on this, faculty and divisional deans have begun discussing development of a common Mediterranean-focused reading list that would inform course and curricular development, promote interdisciplinarity, and strengthen our baccalaureate culture.

ACM undergraduate majors are coherent and aligned with our resources. A review by the Deans Council in Fall 2019 consolidated the number of majors to better align with capacity. Having established an initial suite of majors upon ACM's founding, we recognize the need to review and make more explicit the learning objectives for each one. This will be part of a larger effort led by the Dean of the College to create a faculty committee charged with reviewing course descriptions, titles, learning outcomes, and assessment mechanisms and making recommendations for improvements, including identifying possibilities for the creation of interdisciplinary majors.

Graduate Programs

Our focus is on reviewing programs which have produced their first graduates, such as the MAAH. We are also aware of the need to further review the MA in Media Studies to decide on whether or not to continue this program. Finally, once the MA in International Education is fully developed and approved, we will need to submit a substantive change to NECHE.

Integrity in the Award of Credit

Consistent with NECHE standards, ACM maintains proper practice in the design and use of American-style credit-bearing courses. This is unsurprising as it benefits from the six decades of IAU experience in this area. As we establish institution-wide learning outcomes, using them to review program and course outcomes, this will provide an opportunity in the coming years to

review the consistency and integrity of our credit award practices. One area for advancement is in developing a more detailed transfer credit policy.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Establish formal institution-wide learning outcomes, which will in turn inform the development of program and course learning outcomes. (Action: Dean of College, Faculty)
- Complete program review and make recommendations on overall organization of ACM arts programs. (Action: Director of ACM School of Art)
- Complete degree review of MAAH (Action: Director of ACM School of Art, Faculty)
- Review course descriptions and naming practices and make recommendations on how to better align them with learning objectives, increase interdisciplinarity and improve their alignment with the mission. (Action: Dean of the College, Assistant Dean of School of Humanities and Social Sciences)

In 2022

- Create or revise existing learning outcomes for all degree programs consistent with the institution-wide learning outcomes adopted in 2021. (Action: Divisional Deans)
- Establish a program review schedule for all degree programs, incorporating an external perspective. (Action: Divisional Deans)
- Develop a Mediterranean-focused common reading list that will increase connections within the undergraduate curriculum. (Action: Dean of the College, Divisional Deans, Faculty)
- Develop a more detailed transfer credit policy aligned with our curriculum. (Action: Assistant Director of Admissions/Dean of the College)
- Review membership and mandate of Council of Academic Advisors to increase focus on degree program issues. (Action: President, Dean of Admissions, Dean of College)

In 2023

- Evaluate course curricula in light of new program learning outcomes to ensure they respond to institutional objectives. (Action: Dean of the College, Divisional Deans, Faculty)
- Increase our ability to offer math and science courses. (Action: Dean of College, VP of Administration)

Standard Five STUDENTS

Consistent with its mission, the institution sets and achieves realistic goals to enroll students who are broadly representative of the population the institution wishes to serve. The institution addresses its own goals for the achievement of diversity, equity, and inclusion among its students and provides a safe environment that fosters the intellectual and personal development of its students. It endeavors to ensure the success of its students, offering the resources and services that provide them the opportunity to achieve the goals of their educational program as specified in institutional publications. The institution's interactions with students and prospective students are characterized by integrity and equity.

DESCRIPTION

Admissions

ACM seeks to build a student body that shares its commitment to international education as intercultural, interdisciplinary, and experiential. ACM recruitment strategies are a by-product of the study abroad opportunities, principally for students from the United States, provided by IAU. ACM values motivated, independent, mature and open-minded students ready for an American-style international experience embedded in the communities of the Euro-Mediterranean region. The best candidates are those prepared for cultural immersion and high-impact experiential learning.

Since ACM's founding in 2016 we have graduated a total of 40 MA students (14 MFA, 16 MAIR, eight MAFS, three MAAH, and one GMBA) and four BA students (two with majors in International Relations, one in Visual Arts, and one in International Business). We have another 11 students on track to graduate in May 2021 (two BA, three MFA, two MAIR, and four MAFS) for an anticipated total of six BA and 49 MA/MFA graduates. Taken together, 14 have been male and 41 female. 41 have identified as White/Caucasian, six as Black, four as Hispanic/Latino, three as Asian/Pacific Islander, and one as Other. Thirty-six graduates were previously visiting students through IAU's study abroad programs, while 19 were directly recruited. Upon graduation (including pending 2021 graduates), eight are 22 or younger, 37 between the ages of 23-30 and seven over 30. [Chart here.](#)

Our admissions process initially focused exclusively on recruiting IAU (ACM's founding institution) study abroad alumni in the United States to our MA and MFA degree programs, followed by our BA program. We pursue a personalized admissions process that showcases our many customizable program options to fit students' academic and career goals. Most of our MA programs include "tracks" allowing students to focus and tailor their degree program. For example, MAFS students can choose the Teaching French as a Foreign Language track, and then choose to participate in an internship in an elementary school to further the experiential aspect of this concentration. If the student is more interested in the pedagogical side of the TFFL track, they can focus more on theoretical coursework and research. The admissions team advises

students on the various options to ensure a customizable, individualized curriculum that is the right fit for the student.

As part of our commitment to greater diversity and inclusion in international education, we are beginning to expand our focus to a broader range of students, such as those coming from community colleges, a traditionally underserved area for international education. We are aware of the self-selecting nature of U.S. study abroad students and have implemented measures to encourage more diversity in our student body, such as targeted financial aid and increasing recruitment efforts at large U.S. public universities. While our current focus is on recruitment in the U.S., progress on accreditation will make us more attractive to international students from other regions, such as North Africa, and our recruitment planning will incorporate outreach to such specifically recruited populations as needed.

ACM welcomes two principal groups of students: students seeking an ACM degree and IAU visiting students participating in study abroad programs in France, Spain, and Morocco. Our admissions process is under the responsibility of the ACM Dean of Admissions based in the U.S. The Dean is assisted by the Assistant Director of Admissions and Alumni Affairs. Admission to the IAU study abroad component is the responsibility of a specialized study abroad admissions counselor. The two procedures are distinct since ACM applicants apply directly to ACM, whereas IAU study abroad students are for the most part recruited via partnerships with their home universities.

IAU visiting students are typically in the sophomore or junior year of their undergraduate program at their U.S.-based institution, and are seeking a short-term (summer, semester, January term, or academic year) immersive study abroad experience which they can easily integrate into their home university program. ACM's BA students, on the other hand, come with the expectation and goal of a more deeply immersive academic and cultural experience anchored in the Mediterranean.

While most BA students to date have been more mature transfer students with previous college experience, in the past year we have begun to see new BA applications from students who would enroll directly from their U.S. or American-style high school abroad. Given their younger age and associated maturity levels, these applicants go through a moderate level of additional scrutiny as part of the admissions process, to ensure they are fully prepared for such an experience. This may include a video or phone interview with the applicant and additional weight given to letters of recommendation when making the admissions decision. With some exceptions, a majority of the MA students are those in their mid-to-upper 20's who are using such a program to elevate them in their current job or to open up new international career possibilities in the professional art world, the foreign service, international business, diplomacy, and other fields related to their experience in ACM's MA programs.

ACM recruitment for entering cohorts in academic years 2016-2017 and 2017-2018 focused heavily on alumni of IAU who via exit surveys and organic conversations had expressed an interest in returning to Aix-en-Provence for further study. In 2018 we began advertising ACM on specialized websites devoted to graduate studies such as GradSchoolMatch.com, MastersStudies.com, BachelorsStudies.com, MBASudies.com, GoOverseas.com,

GradSchools.com, and more. In 2019 we began promoting ACM on U.S. university campuses at graduate school recruitment fairs. As many of our early BA applicants were transfer students who had participated in IAU study abroad programs, in 2020 we created a recruitment guide tailored to prospective transfer students outlining the benefits they would experience in transferring to ACM including low program fees, ease of application and credit transfer process, and a clear path towards their BA degree.

In 2020 in-person recruitment efforts were temporarily blocked by the COVID-19 pandemic and ACM pivoted to its first social media recruitment campaign in Fall 2020. This has produced an immediate increase in total applications to both the MA and BA programs. Whereas in previous years only a small portion (one or two per year) of applications listed *Social Media* or *Instagram* as their inquiry source, since launching the [social media advertising campaign on Instagram](#) in September 2020, we have seen 15 applications citing *Instagram* or *Social Media* as their [inquiry source](#). This is directly linked to ACM’s goal of increasing applications from non-IAU alumni. The ACM class of 2020-21, BA and MA combined, is the first to include a majority of students who are not IAU study abroad alumni with 13 out of 17 students non-IAU alumni. Demographically, four are male and 13 are female. 13 identify as White/Caucasian, one as Asian/Pacific Islander, one as Black, one as Hispanic/Latino, and one as Other. We are also beginning to see a broader range of citizenship in this cohort – 10 have U.S. citizenship, two are dual nationals (U.S./Cyprus and U.S./France), and five are from other countries (Venezuela, Australia, Canada, Ghana, and Morocco).

The international education environment is in flux due to the COVID-19 pandemic, but our best analysis at this time yields the following projected ACM enrollments for the next two academic years. Our most likely scenario shows a return to the steady growth we were experiencing prior to the pandemic.

ACM Projected Enrollment Scenarios: 2021-2022			
	Worst Case	Likely	Best Case
BA	4	9	12
MA	13	26	38
TOTAL	17	35	50

ACM Projected Enrollment Scenarios: 2022-2023			
	Worst Case	Likely	Best Case
BA	5	10	14
MA	16	30	46
TOTAL	21	40	60

As context the following tables provide a snapshot of actual and projected ACM enrollments as of February 25, 2021. The ACM tables below indicate that actual and possible enrollments are higher compared with 2020 at this time and are likely to produce our largest ACM cohort yet.

ACM Fall 2021 Enrollment by Program				
	Fall 2021 Active Applications* <i>Feb. 25, 2021</i>	Fall 2021 Projected Enrollments**	Fall 2020 Active Applications* <i>Feb. 25, 2020</i>	Fall 2020 Final Enrollments
BA	17	9	8	4
MAIR	10	7	5	3
MAFS	11	6	5	5
MAAH	5	3	1	0
MFA	12	8	8	5
GMBA	3	2	2	0
TOTALS	58	35	29	17

**Active applications include students who are returning, deposited, accepted, under review, and/or are currently working on their applications.*

***We arrive at projected enrollments for fall 2021 by combining our historical attrition rate with anecdotal applicant information*

ACM Fall 2021 Enrollment by Application Status		
	Fall 2021 <i>Feb. 25, 2021</i>	Fall 2020 <i>Feb. 25, 2020</i>
Open Active Applications	32	19
Accepted or Under Review	16	3
Deposited or Returning	10	7
Total Active Applications	58	29

As part of our commitment to experiential international learning, we encourage all entering ACM students to reside in homestays as a way to deepen language acquisition and increase cross-cultural knowledge and understanding. All entering undergraduates are required to reside in a home-stay during their first year. All MA students in International Relations and French Studies are required to reside in a homestay during their first semester. Although homestays remain at the center of our approach, we realize that growth in our student body and the needs of certain students will require us to develop an independent living option for ACM students. In 2019 we began market research in Aix-en-Provence to identify potential student residence halls for purchase. (see also Standard Seven)

The implementation of Board-approved admissions policies and procedures, combined with staff training and professional development ensures that ACM’s admissions processes are fair, ethical, non-discriminatory, and orderly. Our requirements for admission are clearly stated on our [website](#) and in print publications. Adjustments made in response to the COVID-19 pandemic are listed. For example, for Fall 2021 applicants we [waived](#) the requirement ACT/SAT scores from merit scholarship applicants. We also [waived](#) the requirement for Global MBA applicants to submit a GRE/GMAT score.

These COVID-related actions are part of our commitment to an inclusive admissions process. Our non-discrimination policy is on the [website](#) and in recruitment publications and presentations. ACM developed its admissions process and policies based on experience with the existing application process for IAU visiting students, peer comparison research with the admissions process of fellow American universities abroad, and the experience of ACM's Dean of Admissions, who previously served as Director of Admissions at a small private undergraduate institution outside of Chicago.

One of ACM's specificities is that we are a "high-impact" institution that provides a customized experience for each student. This begins with the admissions process. The Assistant Director of Admissions and Alumni Affairs provides individual feedback to all applicants beginning early in the admissions process. As soon as a student registers for an account on the ACM website, they receive a personalized email from the Assistant Director welcoming them to the ACM process and giving them links to more information about the program and admissions process. The deans of the relevant schools regularly interview the prospective student early in the process to ensure expectations are clear and ACM programs fully presented. Discussions on how to tailor the ACM experience often begin at this point. All completed applications are first reviewed by the Assistant Director of Admissions and Alumni Affairs and then by the dean of the relevant school and the Dean of Admissions. The application review process is collaborative and often involves discussion between the U.S.-based admissions office and the divisional deans in Aix-en-Provence.

Each program requires specific qualifications for admission. For example, the MFA in Painting program requires that each student submit a portfolio of 20 images of developed painting and drawing work, which the art faculty review in conjunction with the personal essay, transcripts, and letters of recommendation to determine the suitability of the student to the program and of the program to the student. For the MA in French Studies, a high (B2) level of French is required for entry into the program, as demonstrated in the personal essay, which is written in French, letters of recommendation from French faculty (not required but recommended) and grades received specifically in French courses. For BA students, the admissions team looks for a strong academic record, favorable letters of recommendation, and involvement in extracurricular activities. Emphasis is also placed on evidence of the students' independence and resilience in new situations, two qualities that contribute to the success of students studying abroad.

One of the main things that the ACM admissions team looks for in student applications is a clear, strong motivation to attend ACM. Ensuring students have a clear idea of ACM is an important prerequisite to building a baccalaureate culture for our young institution. We appreciate when students acknowledge why ACM specifically appeals to them, what they hope to gain from their study at a unique institution like ACM, and how they plan to use their degree in the future. If a student makes no mention of the particular reasons that ACM is appealing to them, the Admissions committee will often schedule a follow-up interview to make sure the student is familiar with our institution and may in some cases ask for additional application materials (writing sample, additional letters of recommendation) before making a final admissions decision.

Once admitted, all incoming students fill out a [wellness and accommodations form](#) which gives them the opportunity to self-disclose health conditions (chronic conditions, mental health conditions) and academic accommodation needs. Prior to arrival on-site, the ACM administration reviews the information disclosed and works closely with students to set up appropriate support structures to help them succeed while on campus. For example, for those who disclose chronic or mental health conditions, ACM identifies health care providers to meet treatment needs prior to arrival. Those who request academic accommodations meet with the Dean of the College prior to arrival to evaluate such requests (i.e. extended time on exams, note-takers, etc.) so that ACM can make arrangements to support their learning.

Student Services and Co-Curricular Experience

The Dean of the College directs the ACM Student Life office, which leads ACM student services. The Student Life office, located on the ground floor of Manning Hall, is easily accessible to students, and includes a Wellness Center with its own access and private space for consultations. The Student Life office runs a variety of programs designed to provide students tools for fully experiencing and appreciating their new culture while succeeding in their studies. These efforts grow out of ACM's commitment to international experiential learning and are informed by our experience with IAU study abroad programs, which has shown that connecting with a new foreign environment is a predictor of academic success. At the same time, they understand that the ACM student body has different expectations and needs.

A primary goal of the ACM Student Life Office is therefore to build connections between ACM students, the region, France and Euro-Mediterranean communities. Student Life organizes trips for all students to important natural and cultural sites in the region and advises on cultural happenings in the region via our various media platforms. Every semester Student Life staff organizes an "association fair" to introduce students to various community sports, faith, cultural, travel, and other groups. Student Life also organizes encounters between French student associations and ACM students to help create cultural bridges and enrich the ACM student experience by giving them access to the many activities offered by these associations. ACM works with the Erasmus Student Network as well as French student associations from institutions such as Aix-Marseille University, the Institute for Political Science, and the Aix School of Fine Arts.

A central concern of our Student Life programs is the physical, emotional, social, and mental well-being of all students. ACM offers a Wellness Center directed by a bilingual, qualified clinical psychologist who offers scheduled "drop in" office hours, as well as by appointment and remote consultations. The Wellness Center offers programs on stress management, navigating cross-cultural communications, healthy eating, good exercise habits, alcohol abuse and so on. For needs beyond the competency of the Wellness Center, the Center maintains a list of Anglophone doctors, counselors, hospitals, and clinics for the use of students and aids in making student appointments. ACM does not have gym facilities but maintains partnerships with several local private gyms, which offer discounted rates to ACM students. It also helps ACM students access sporting activities via local student sports clubs and associations.

A unique aspect of our Student Life services is the [Alumni Fellows](#) program. It began as a way for alumni of IAU programs to return for a longer experience by working in the Student Life office. In the Spring 2021 we welcomed our first ACM alumni fellow. This program facilitates good communications with ACM students by providing them with approachable, experienced peers attuned to their reality. Alumni Fellows guide students to resources, provide academic support, help students find appropriate activities and keep Student Life staff apprised of emerging issues.

ACM engages in high-level interaction with students inside and outside of class. All ACM divisional deans have regular meetings with degree students in their schools. For example, the Assistant Dean of the Centre d'Etudes Françaises (Center for French Studies) meets with MA of French Studies students, and the Dean of the College meets with BA students. Since Fall 2020 the Vice President of Administration meets every two weeks with the elected ACM student representative. The Student Life and Wellness Center staff have office hours and are always reachable by phone and email.

The ACM Student Life office leads a robust orientation program [focused on providing tools](#) for navigating the experience of studying in another culture. As part of this, all first-year ACM students participate in our [Early Start Program](#), a one-week linguistic and cultural immersion. Every semester begins with a one-day orientation for all students on the nature and extent of student services. It includes presentations by our Wellness Center and our Center for French Studies. The ACM Housing Coordinator provides guidance on home-stays, including having each student and host family sign a “charter” which clearly lays out expectations for the student, the family, and ACM. Students are briefed on safety and security procedures as well as best practices for safe travel while abroad. Staff and faculty give students tours of all our buildings and the surrounding historic city center of Aix-en-Provence. Throughout the term the [Student Portal platform](#) is used to provide current practical information by and for students.

To meet ACM’s goal of increasing the number of first-generation college students, students of color, and students from historically marginalized populations we have created targeted financial aid tools, such as a [diversity scholarship](#), to support this goal. ACM staff have received special training to improve our success working with diverse students in an international environment. We provide training and guidance on diversity in the United States to our host families so they are better able to work with U.S. students they host. In Spring 2020 Student Life staff facilitated an Alumni Fellow/student initiative known as [ACM/IAU Ensemble](#) which brought students together for meaningful discussions about inclusion, intersectionality and diversity at ACM. As noted in Standard Four, our academic program promotes consideration of social issues surrounding diversity and inclusion. The undergraduate program requires that at least one course from the core curriculum fulfill a Global Diversity requirement.

ACM academic and student policies are consistent with Title IX anti-discrimination standards. In the context of operating outside of the United States we strive to respect the standards of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and our principal building is ADA-compliant.

ACM is committed to increasing access to study abroad for all. As a non-profit institution we maintain low program costs when compared with our peer institutions. According to [US News &](#)

World Report, in 2020-21 average tuition and fees (not including housing) in the United States was \$35,087 for private colleges and \$21,184 for public universities (out-of-state tuition). In contrast ACM's 2020-21 undergraduate tuition and fees (not including housing) for 2020-2021 averaged \$16,370, 53% lower than private U.S. colleges and 22.7% less expensive than public U.S. universities.

Looking more closely at ACM's close peers in U.S.-style international colleges and universities, the American University of Paris's 2021-22 undergraduate tuition and fees total €33,772 (\$40,800), about 60% higher than ACM's price. John Cabot University, in Rome, Italy, lists 2020-21 tuition and fees as \$26,270, about 38% higher than ACM's price.

We also provide substantial financial aid to the majority of our degree-seeking students. The [process of awarding specific scholarships, grants, and need-based assistance](#) to ACM applicants is managed by the Dean of Admissions, the Assistant Dean of Admissions, and the Assistant Director of Admissions and Alumni Affairs. The Dean of Admission oversees a team that advises potential ACM students, processes and reviews financial aid applications, and awards financial aid packages for incoming undergraduate and graduate students with the aid of a Financial Aid Committee that [reviews](#) merit-based scholarship applications. As ACM is not yet a Title IV eligible institution we do not have access to the FAFSA and use a holistic approach to evaluating need, based on all documentation and information provided by the applicant when applying to aid, including income tax returns, personal statements, student debt levels, transcripts, and letters of recommendations. On-site development grants are an important part of our financial aid mix. They also provide further opportunities for staff/faculty/student interaction and student leadership.

In Fall 2020 the incoming ACM class, graduates and undergraduates combined, elected their first student representative who meets every two weeks with the Vice President of Administration to raise any issues brought to their attention. ACM students are given leadership opportunities by granting them access to student activity funds on a rolling, project-oriented basis. For example, in Fall 2019 two ACM graduate students proposed improvements to the student-run café. The Student Life Office granted them a budget and they developed a business plan, purchased equipment, set up staffing and scheduled a relaunch for the Spring of 2020. Unfortunately, the COVID-19 pandemic required us to temporarily close the café and place the project on hold.

ACM does not offer athletic programs. As previously noted, the Student Life office facilitates student membership in local health clubs, and helps students connect with local student sports clubs and associations.

ACM has a Student Life staff with the key competencies needed. The Wellness Center is directed by a fully qualified clinical psychologist. The Housing Coordinator has long experience working with host families and study abroad students. We provide necessary training for our Student Life staff, such as effective mediation and communications training for our Housing Coordinator, and the previously mentioned diversity training.

ACM has a full suite of policies on student rights and responsibilities, including [student conduct](#) and [grievance procedures](#). They are posted on our website and in the course catalog. A student

manual designed to further publicize these policies is currently under revision, with the assistance of an ACM BA alumna.

ACM follows standard practice with regard to the information included in the permanent academic record of ACM students. This includes a published document retention policy that respects individual privacy and the confidentiality of records. As our students live and study within a European Union member-state, in 2018 we ensured our digital record-keeping was compliant with the new European Union General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR). We were aided in this effort by consulting with similar institutions via professional associations such as the Association of American University Programs in France ([APUAF](#)) and the Association of American International Colleges and Institutions ([AAICU](#)). The primary change in our practice was to reinforce how we informed students of their digital privacy rights. This is now done every [semester](#) as part of orientation.

ACM benefits from six decades of IAU study abroad cooperation with U.S. universities on creating and evaluating student services for U.S. students. A key part of this process is our regular consultation with our [Council of Academic Advisors \(CAA\)](#), which is made up of faculty/administrators from partner institutions representing a wide range of academic interests. In addition to academic matters, we sometimes solicit CAA views on student affairs. In 2019 the entire CAA meeting was devoted to examining how to improve the international education experience for students with diverse backgrounds. The proceedings were condensed into a [report](#), which ACM Student Life staff used to improve orientation materials, and fed into the IAU/ACM Ensemble initiative.

APPRAISAL

Creating a baccalaureate environment was flagged by NECHE as an area of special interest in our eligibility letter. We have many elements in place for building a baccalaureate culture – A Wellness Center, a Student Life Office, and a [core curriculum](#) that provides curricular connectedness for undergraduates. However, we recognize this is a growth area for ACM.

We have begun to address this in a number of ways. In 2020 we instituted videoconferences with all incoming ACM students and senior ACM administrators in Aix-en-Provence to continue the high-impact, personalized approach of the admissions team. We also began requiring first year students (both undergraduate and undergraduate) to take our Early Start Program, which brings students to campus a week before the formal start of the semester for cultural and linguistic immersion. During the orientation process that follows, there are ACM-specific meetings and activities, to continue the process of building an ACM community. As noted in Standard Four, all incoming first year students take a required composition course which serves as a gateway to the rest of the Core Curriculum. Given our emphasis on experiential learning, one area we need to develop is field studies and January term programs adapted to the needs of ACM students, such as reinforcing our semester-based cycle of excursions designed for visiting students with ACM-focused multi-year cycles of excursions, to avoid repetition and increase the cumulative impact of field-studies.

Another area of growth is ACM-specific student activities. As one can imagine, organizing student activities in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020-21 has been highly frustrating due to the many restrictions and the closure of cultural outlets. Several initiatives, such as ACM-only cultural excursions organized by the Student Life office, have been on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions. Other activities such as group sports have also been suspended. We anticipate that in Fall 2021 all or most of such restrictions will be lifted. This, along with an increase in ACM enrollments, will allow us to renew experimentation and growth in developing ACM student activities.

ACM enrollment practices are consistent with our mission. Focusing on IAU alumni in our early recruitment efforts allowed us to reach students who shared our commitment to experiential learning abroad and who were already familiar with ACM's location, facilities, programs, and personnel. Including divisional deans early in the enrollment process allows us to efficiently customize our program for students while making clear our unique mission. Our initial focus on IAU alumni helped ensure that ACM student qualifications and expectations were compatible with our mission. As our applicant pool broadens, we will need to ensure we continue to select students who can succeed in our program. To date, our overall graduate program retention rate of 86% shows we have succeeded in selecting graduate students capable of completing our programs. Our overall undergraduate retention rate of 64% includes a majority of transfer students. As the number of non-transfer BA applicants grows, we will need to monitor our assessment techniques to ensure we are selecting applicants capable of completing our program.

As we broaden our recruitment efforts, we will need to increase our focus on identifying the kind of student we would like to serve. The COVID-19 pandemic slowed the growth in enrollment, but as it recovers, we will need to increase staff time devoted to recruitment and admissions.

We maintain low program costs and provide extensive student financial aid to help promote inclusive and diverse access to our programs. One goal of accreditation is to aid us in putting into place the necessary procedures for becoming a Title IV school whose students can access federal financial aid to further increase access to our programs.

Our Student Life office is very accessible to students and focuses a lot of attention on integrating students into their new environment by organizing activities and connecting ACM students with French student organizations. The Wellness Center is attuned to the particular psychological landscape faced by students studying in another country, and provides advice and services tailored to the realities of study abroad. The Housing Coordinator is skilled at navigating the homestay environment, serving as a cross-cultural advisor to students and families. Providing bridges into the surrounding student environment will remain important for ACM given our mission focus on international education. We acknowledge, as well, that building a baccalaureate environment requires us to increase our efforts to support ACM student activities within the institution. This will include more developed student governance and student organizations, building on the initial election of an ACM student representative in 2020. We have tentatively identified office space that can be devoted to this activity. In addition, we recognize that our ACM students have perspectives that differ from our IAU study abroad students. As noted above, this will require us to reshape our approach to field-studies. In coordination with ACM students themselves, we will steadily increase ACM-specific activities, such as a student-run

blog/publication recently proposed by an ACM undergraduate. The blog/publication will run on the current student-developed [Student Portal platform](#), a website created by Alumni Fellows with the support of the Student Life office, used for sharing practical information for daily student life. Expanding enrollments will open up new opportunities in this area and we are prepared to seize them.

ACM is using financial aid and recruiting efforts to meet its commitment to broader diversity in our student body. As a part of this effort, in anticipation of accreditation we are actively exploring two plus two agreements with community colleges interested in international education such as the Maricopa County (AZ) consortium of community colleges, which has set out to develop more two plus two agreements with international partners.

In addition, we need to reinforce our capabilities for serving students from diverse backgrounds. In 2019 we provided training on diversity in study abroad programs for our Student Life staff and will build on that in the coming years. As already noted we devoted the entire 2019 meeting of our Council of Academic Advisors to diversity in international education. We recognize the need to increase specialized training for our community in this area. Our Student Life Director position is currently vacant. We will use the opportunity provided in recruiting a new Student Life Director to increase our competencies in creating a diverse, inclusive and welcoming academic and student life environment.

We also recognize the need to follow U.S. regulatory evolution in areas such as Title IX and the Clery Act and will work with the Governance Committee of the ACM Board to identify priority areas for improvement. Although ACM is not held to Title IX, we are committed to supporting the goals outlined in these regulations. ACM promptly responds to and investigates unequal treatment on the basis of sex and implements measures to protect the health and safety of all parties involved should a threat be reported. ACM also provides immediate services to victims (medical, counseling, and other resources).

As a small university where many employees share teaching and administrative responsibilities, and the student/teacher ratio is low (12:1), ACM facilitates extensive interaction between staff, faculty, and students, which provides multiple opportunities for feedback from students. What we lack is procedures for gathering actionable data that can be easily shared throughout the organization. This is a challenge for many areas of our operation, including student services.

In 2019, recognizing the need for more data on our students to inform the academic program, student services, admissions, and other ACM activities, we created an internal taskforce and hired an outside consultant to evaluate and select a new Student Information Service (SIS) software package. Our current set up of two bespoke SIS systems, one in France and one the U.S., which cannot easily share data, is not capable of handling our anticipated increase in enrollments nor can it easily produce data in a useful format for designing student services and academic programs. A high-quality SIS is a [substantial financial investment](#) and our COVID-19 related budget reductions in 2020 required us to delay this project by at two years. It does not change our recognition that a new SIS will contribute to ACM's goal of using data more efficiently to design and assess student services and program results.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Institute additional student surveys (post-arrival, mid-year, etc...) to complement the existing end of program surveys. (Action: Dean of Admissions)
- Institute twice-a-year training days for academic personnel to provide the results of student surveys and provide a forum for discussing possible responses. (Action: Assistant Dean of Admissions)
- Increase polling of incoming students on diversity and inclusivity needs. (Action: Dean of Admissions, Student Life Office)

In 2022

- Relaunch search process for a new SIS, budget recovery permitting. (Action: Dean of Admissions, VP of Administration)
- Expand ACM student activities and institute at least one ACM-only field study excursion a semester as part of building a baccalaureate culture. (Action: Student Life Office)
- Hire new Student Life Director with ability to work with faculty and staff to identify new avenues of dialogue with students on how identity and diversity are taught and lived in the ACM community. New Student Life Director will also be responsible for handling Title IX responsibilities. (Action: VP of Administration, Dean of College)
- Continue to explore and develop 2+2 degree concepts with targeted community colleges that increase student diversity and inclusion. (Action: Dean of Admissions)

In 2023

- Establish an elected ACM student council to support growth of a baccalaureate culture. (Action: Students, Student Life Office).
- Establish an Access, Inclusion, Diversity, and Equity Committee, with an external perspective and student involvement, to set respective enrollment and retention goals and develop a five-year plan on how to accomplish these goals. Areas of review will include policies and procedures, training, resources, communications, and programming. (Action: Dean of Admissions, Student Life Office)

Standard Six TEACHING, LEARNING AND SCHOLARSHIP

The institution supports teaching and learning through a well-qualified faculty and academic staff, who, in structures and processes appropriate to the institution, collectively ensure the quality of instruction and support for student learning. Scholarship, research, and creative activities receive support appropriate to the institution's mission. The institution's faculty has primary responsibility for advancing the institution's academic purposes through teaching, learning, and scholarship.

DESCRIPTION

Faculty and Academic Staff

As stated in our [mission](#), the American College of the Mediterranean is a teaching institution dedicated to excellence in international education. A diverse, devoted, and qualified faculty deliver on this mission by focusing on experiential learning (see below under *Teaching and Learning*) with high levels of student/faculty interaction.

In FY2019, ACM employed 50 faculty of which 16 were full time and 34 were adjunct faculty. Academic Staff in FY 2019 included one library assistant, six French-language tutors, and two Alumni Fellows. 50% of ACM faculty held a PhD, 42% held a Masters (MA/MBA/MFA), and 8% a BA. In FY 2019 ACM's diverse faculty included 29 women and 21 men, 16 U.S. citizens, 27 French citizens, four British citizens, and three other nationalities.

Fiscal challenges arising out of the pandemic coupled with a reduction in the number of visiting IAU students in Academic year 2020-2021 necessitated a temporary reduction in the number of temporary and permanent teaching personnel by ACM (see Standard Seven). Thus, in the spring of 2021 ACM employs 21 faculty of which 10 are full-time and 11 are adjunct. The degree breakdown remains steady with 48% holding PhDs, 47% a MA/MBA/MFA, and 5% a BA. Our intent is to rebuild the faculty to pre-COVID levels in concert with the recovery in student enrollments.

Since 2017, the percentage of courses taught by permanent faculty has grown from 44% to over 60% in spring 2021. All faculty teach undergraduates, with around half also teaching graduates in any given term. All deans maintain important teaching loads, and many faculty perform administrative tasks as part of their service responsibilities (see below discussion of coordinators). ACM maintains an average faculty/student ratio of 12:1, reflecting the strong emphasis on close interaction and support for students.

All faculty have reporting relationships to one or more of the divisional deans of the three ACM schools (School of Art, School of Business and International Relations, and School of Humanities and Social Sciences), with the Dean of the College, who serves as chief academic officer, providing general oversight. The overall size and composition of the faculty is reviewed as part of the annual budget process (see also Standards Three and Four).

Hiring of temporary teaching personnel is led by the divisional deans with administrative and contract support from the CFO. The large and variable visiting IAU student population requires adjustments in temporary teaching personnel each semester. Typically, deans solicit applications throughout the year. After a paper review of an applicant, a dean will interview a potential hire, and then present the results to the Dean of the College for a second review. Terminal degrees, professional experience, and teaching experience with American students are all important factors. Faculty sometimes assist by reviewing resumes and making recommendations. Potential hires are often invited to give a guest lecture and meet with a cross-section of faculty.

After the creation of ACM, initial hiring in large part consisted of moving existing teaching personnel from temporary to permanent status. Going forward, the hiring of new permanent teaching personnel will be led by the Dean of the College, with final approval by the President of ACM. As part of our COVID-19 response, ACM imposed a hiring freeze in 2020. When it is lifted, existing permanent positions will be announced internally then in local, international and professional media with written applications reviewed by the relevant divisional Dean.

All job postings include minimum and preferred qualifications. Interviews of final candidates are conducted by the relevant dean, the Dean of the College, and an ad hoc faculty committee created for this purpose. A final recommendation is approved by the President. Contracts include a detailed listing of job responsibilities, including the number of courses the position will deliver. Compensation is in line with local standards.

New permanent teaching posts are proposed by deans based on consultation with faculty, reviewed by the Vice President of Administration and the Dean of the College, and approved by the President. A call for proposed new hires is part of the annual budget process led by the Vice President of Administration. Once a new position is approved, the hiring process follows the same pattern as for existing permanent positions.

In hiring new faculty, ACM seeks candidates devoted to ACM's mission who are student-focused and value experiential learning. ACM also values experience teaching American students and American-style courses. All current faculty have such experience. Onboarding for new faculty includes guidance on best practices for successful American-style courses, including cross-cultural teaching guidance.

Maximum course loads for permanent faculty are set in their contracts and vary in practice depending on enrollments. Full-time permanent faculty teach between one and four courses for the Fall and Spring terms, depending on their administrative duties. In addition, many will teach a January term (J-Term) course and one summer course. The average course load for permanent faculty is six courses per academic year. Adjunct professors are on temporary contracts that specify the number of courses they will teach, ranging from one to four a term.

All permanent teaching personnel have service responsibilities, often denoted by the term *coordinator* in their job title. For example, coordinators oversee the organization of field-studies by teaching personnel, internships for students, and digital information resources. ACM provides additional academic support to students via a library assistant (this position is currently vacant) who manages the physical library and textbooks, and through our [Alumni Fellows](#) program.

Alumni Fellows are recent participants in IAU and ACM programs who spend up to a year in the Student Life office. One of their functions is to serve as in-house writing tutors for students (see also Standard Five). All permanent teaching personnel are required to have office hours and to serve as student advisors. Adjunct personnel are likewise expected to remain in academic contact via ACM institutional email.

A [faculty handbook](#) provides practical and policy information for new faculty in French and English, including descriptions of academic resources, institutional technology platforms such as Microsoft Teams, security procedures, and administrative support services. It is updated each semester and provided online and via email to all faculty.

The Dean of the College leads an all-faculty meeting at the beginning of each term to review administrative and policy changes, welcome new colleagues, and present data on the incoming students. The weekly meeting of the Deans Council (see Standard Three) provides a forum for discussion between divisional deans, the Dean of the College, and the administration about day-to-day academic issues.

In 2019 ACM began ongoing discussions about what additional forms of shared academic governance would be appropriate for our institution. As noted in Standard Three, in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic slowed discussions on this issue as all resources of the institution focused on managing the crisis. Discussions resumed in the Fall of 2020. The final form of such a body is not yet settled as discussions continue amongst faculty and with the administration. In October 2020 the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board reviewed a proposed set of bylaws for an academic governance body and provided extensive feedback to ACM faculty, who then produced a [revised version in late January 2021](#). Discussion currently centers around bringing all teaching personnel into a new consultative body that can discuss and make proposals about ACM's academic purposes and practices and increase the involvement of faculty in quality assurance and curriculum development. Any bylaws for such a body will include an explicit and strong commitment to academic freedom for all ACM faculty. (see Standard Three)

Instructional quality is assured in several ways. Faculty and Academic staff are reviewed annually by their supervisors, usually a dean for faculty. At the conclusion of each semester the Dean of the College provides each faculty member their student course evaluations. The Dean of the College, along with the deans of each school, reviews evaluations and provides feedback to faculty. Classroom observations of faculty also contributes to assuring educational quality. After reviewing the relevant syllabus, divisional deans visit a class, write up their observations, and then meet with the professor to discuss. All new faculty receive visits in their first semesters, and all other faculty are visited at least once every two years.

Instructional quality benefits from the ACM [Resident Fellows](#) program that welcomes U.S. academics to campus for research and consultation. Resident Fellows routinely lecture in ACM classes, and are often asked to review academic programs, courses, or majors and make suggestions for improvements. For example, in recent years Resident Fellows have reviewed our French studies program, Mediterranean studies classes, sculpture program, and media studies program (see also Standards Four and Eight). Similarly, visiting professors are enlisted to provide their insights. In FY2020 ACM hosted four Resident Fellows and 14 visiting professors.

ACM teaching personnel also benefit from the insights of ACM's [Council of Academic Advisors \(CAA\)](#), which is made up of faculty/administrators from partner institutions representing a wide range of academic interests. The CAA is regularly solicited to review assessment, student learning outcome procedures, and the overall academic student experience, both during an annual meeting on campus and throughout the year. For example, CAA members have consulted on our French studies program, and provided insights in developing assessment procedures and learning outcomes (see also Standards Three, Four and Eight).

Teaching and Learning

High quality courses are the bedrock of ACM. Building on the long relationships built over six decades by IAU with U.S. partner universities, ACM has developed courses that meet U.S. standards. Historically, with minimal exceptions, IAU courses have been accepted for credit by our partner universities, providing a foundation of models and experience used by ACM. ACM uses syllabus templates and maintains a syllabus archive ([sample here](#)) to ensure completeness and consistency across disciplines. Divisional deans and experienced faculty guide all new faculty on how to use these tools to ensure they meet the proper standard.

ACM is devoted to experiential learning; by which we mean giving students direct contact with the subject matter in the real world. Field studies, a primary form of experiential learning encompassing a wide variety of activities such as city tours, business, religious, cultural, and ecological site visits, give students the ability to make real-world connections, to immerse themselves in the French and surrounding Mediterranean Basin cultures, and to learn outside the classroom. All faculty are strongly encouraged to include field studies and other experiential activities in their courses. The Assistant Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences provides pedagogic and logistics support to faculty as they develop field studies, aiding them in developing field studies that support course objectives and identifying synergies between courses for shared field study activities. The Assistant Dean maintains a [master calendar](#) to minimize scheduling conflicts and provides logistical support such as booking transportation, guided visits, and lodging. In Fall 2019, the last semester before field studies were disrupted by the COVID-19 pandemic, there were [27 field studies](#) (four overnight trips, 10 day-trips, and 13 half-day trips). In addition, January term (J-Term) programs are built around extensive field study activity. Examples of semester and J-Term field studies include:

- Visits by International Relations classes to international organizations in Geneva.
- Visits by History and Literature classes to Marseille, Paris, Rome, London, Amsterdam, Prague, Granada and Seville.
- Visits by Business classes to Airbus (aerospace), l'Occitane (cosmetics), and telecommunications companies in Morocco.
- Visits by Archeology and Art students to ancient sites across the Mediterranean.
- Visits by Religious Studies students to Muslim, Christian and Jewish communities in Marseille.
- Visits by Art students to Venice, Paris, and Giverny.
- Visits by French language and culture students to local museums, associations and theaters

Consistent with the importance of experiential learning for ACM, an academic coordinator in the School of Business and International Relations has the principal task of developing [internship and consultancy opportunities](#) for ACM and IAU students across a wide-range of sectors. Housed in the School of Business and International Relations, this program is open to all ACM students. The program averages 35 internships a year, and in 2020 had 60 (48 internships and 12 consulting projects). One consequence of the turn toward remote platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic was to add *virtual* internships to our portfolio, opening up several new possibilities. 60 students pursued virtual internships and consultancies in Aix-en-Provence and Barcelona during the Summer of 2020. The coordinator interviews each student prior to placement and has weekly follow-up meetings with them [to ensure the academic quality](#) of the program. Each student writes two reports and makes a final presentation as part of the program.

Interdisciplinarity is an important aspect of ACM's approach to teaching and learning. All BA students, regardless of major or program of study, must complete the requirements outlined in the [General Education Core Curriculum](#). The objective of this approach is to encourage students to explore diverse subject matter, to think critically through a variety of lenses and viewpoints, to make connections across disciplines, and to become informed and thoughtful global citizens. Faculty regularly seek interdisciplinary connections between courses and disciplines to enhance the effectiveness of the Core Curriculum. Professors team-teach courses and share field-studies, such as a course on French colonialism team-taught by an archaeologist and a political scientist. Since French language courses are a requirement for all ACM students, these courses are regular vectors for interdisciplinary learning. Art students study French artists in their original language. French-language instructors emphasize the use of visual materials in all courses, examining the same elements of literature and film which students are examining in other classes. For example the course *Women and the Mediterranean* uses many European classical paintings as a bridge towards French Literature and as a tie-in to ACM art courses. We also encourage creative activities in advanced level courses in French as a way to deepen the comprehension and the real appropriation of Language and Culture.

Interdisciplinarity is further promoted in the [January term program \(J-Term\)](#) in which all students pursue course work as part of off-campus study-tours in the Mediterranean and Europe led by ACM faculty. Finally, all [ACM academic conferences](#) and lecture series are resolutely interdisciplinary. For example, a March 2018 conference on international conflict resolution included diplomatic, political, and artistic views drawing from all ACM schools.

As previously noted, the [Resident Fellow program](#), which annually brings a variety of visiting faculty to ACM for research and consultation, is a rich source of instructional ideas for faculty. Resident Fellows perform academic program audits, serve as advisors, give guest lectures, provide faculty with updates on developments in U.S. higher education, and serve as a sounding board for the creation of majors and courses.

ACM has a strong advising culture, consistent with the focus on close faculty/student interaction. Deans assure the advising for their respective MA programs. Thesis advisors are assigned to each MA student with two mentors assigned to MFA students. The Dean of Students personally advises each BA student on their advancement through the program, focusing on the completion of the [Core Curriculum](#). Once they declare a major, BA students are assigned a major advisor.

Resident Fellows are often asked to advise students, both while on campus and after the Fellows return to their home universities.

Faculty are the main actors for assessing the effectiveness of courses and programs, through the assessment of student learning outcomes, examination of course completion and program enrollment (see Standard Four). As a new institution, we are just beginning to use retention and graduation data to assess effectiveness. Similarly, we are in the initial stages of building an assessment of student learning outcomes process (see Standard Eight).

Given ACM's primary mission as a teaching institution, ACM faculty are not required to engage in research or creative activities, although many do. ACM supports faculty research via research leave, information resources, and funding for conference travel by permanent and adjunct faculty, particularly when it is linked to student research or the improvement of teaching techniques. Requests for research leave must be approved by the President. Requests for travel funding are submitted via the divisional Deans to the Vice President of Administration for approval. Recent examples of research support include:

- Conference travel by a wine studies professor to present research conducted with visiting student which was accepted for publication.
- Attendance by the ACM digital resource coordinator (who is also a professor of art history) at the AMICAL Library consortium conference for the past two years.
- Workshop attendance by French language instructors to study best practices for teaching French as a foreign language in an international context.
- Travel for two Marchutz School of Fine Arts professors for presentations at Princeton University.
- Art History professor attendance at a workshop on Modernism and the French Riviera.
- Research leave and travel support for Art History professor to do archival research at Princeton University.

Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on Teaching: The Spring 2020 COVID-19 pandemic required all teaching personnel to switch to remote delivery mid-semester. ACM is very proud that the switchover was successfully completed in two weeks allowing all students (19 ACM and 270 IAU visiting students in Aix-en-Provence and Barcelona) to complete the semester. Several training sessions led by the Dean of the College helped faculty prepare. A former Resident Fellow with extensive online teaching experience also led a faculty workshop on best practices. The principal technological platforms used were Microsoft Teams (ACM's existing collaboration platform) and Zoom. This change was a challenge for a teaching culture devoted to experiential learning. Remote delivery to students across several time zones required a lot of flexibility and revealed the need for greater academic support for student writing skills. Continuing health and travel barriers prevented ACM from offering in-person courses during the summer 2020 term. Academic staff and faculty created [Virtual Experiences](#) which included courses, internships and consultancies. This required further honing of remote course delivery skills. These experiences informed organization of the Fall 2020 semester, when virtual internships and consulting projects were offered again for visiting students, even while IAU/ACM courses in Aix-en-Provence returned to in-person delivery.

APPRAISAL

ACM teaching personnel are committed and well-qualified as evidenced by the number of advanced degrees they hold and their creative and academic research activities (see examples in the [President Message Archive](#)). Permanent faculty perform a variety of academic support functions that further reinforce the teaching mission of ACM. ACM's high-impact approach is illustrated by the importance ACM faculty afford to advising students before, during and after their time at ACM. As evidenced by the [participants in the Resident Fellow](#) and J-Term programs, ACM has a strong record of bringing high-quality visiting faculty to contribute to our academic environment.

Many adjunct faculty are similarly devoted to teaching excellence, with some having years-long working relationships with ACM. Adjunct professors regularly serve as thesis advisors and one constant thread in the ongoing discussions of shared academic governance is the desire to craft a structure that integrates adjunct professors. At the same time, we need stronger on-boarding practices to integrate new adjunct, such as a renewed and expanded faculty handbook.

To build on these strengths, ACM understands it needs to do more to clarify the expectations for faculty. At present ACM does not have a tenure system, nor do we use formal definitions for academic titles. Our evaluation procedures do not adequately differentiate between academic and administrative performance reviews. While this arrangement gives us a lot of flexibility to respond to opportunities and fluidity in the international education environment, we recognize these are challenges we must address as ACM grows.

The COVID-19 pandemic-related reductions in staff and faculty provide an opportunity. As detailed elsewhere, we anticipate a return to enrollment growth in Fall 2021, allowing us to begin to build back. As ACM recovers from this external shock, we will have an opportunity to create new procedures permitting us to address these issues.

Part of this task is ensuring that our faculty and academic staff have adequate time and resources to deliver our academic programs. ACM values our tradition of coordinator positions as they help ensure that a broad range of student services are provided by dedicated, qualified academic professionals. This is also how we built a well-developed system to support and encourage experiential learning/field-studies across the curriculum. But growth means we must constantly seek the proper balance between service requirements and teaching responsibilities.

Similarly, we must ensure that adequate time and resources are devoted to supporting the academic development of our faculty through such measures as research leave, attendance at conferences, and creative production.

ACM's devotion to high levels of faculty/student interaction is evidenced in our small class sizes and our emphasis on student advising. We can improve in this area by increasing information sharing and coordination between programs to improve student academic support. This will become more important as we grow, and the informal mechanisms we now have become inadequate. We will remain a high-impact institution with an individualized approach but will increase our use of data in support of our activities.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Update the Faculty Handbook to include academic policies. (Action: Assistant Dean School of Humanities and Social Sciences)
- Conclude ongoing discussions on shared academic governance, with regular updates to Academic Affairs Committee, leading to a proposal to the Board on a new academic governance body. (Action: Faculty, Dean of the College, Board)

In 2022

- Review effectiveness of student course evaluations. Complete the shift of course evaluations to an online format to facilitate information sharing with faculty and across disciplines. (Action: Dean of College)
- Design a uniform set of pedagogic techniques to aid new and existing faculty teaching in a cross-cultural setting. (Action: Divisional Deans, Faculty)

In 2023

- Propose, in consultation with faculty, revised hiring and evaluation procedures for teaching personnel. (Action: VP of Administration, Dean of the College)

Standard Seven
INSTITUTIONAL RESOURCES

The institution has sufficient human, financial, information, physical, and technological resources and capacity to support its mission. Through periodic evaluation, the institution demonstrates that its resources are sufficient to sustain the quality of its educational program and to support institutional improvement now and in the foreseeable future. The institution demonstrates, through verifiable internal and external evidence, its financial capacity to graduate its entering class. The institution administers its resources in an ethical manner and assures effective systems of enterprise risk management, regulatory compliance, internal controls, and contingency management.

DESCRIPTION

ACM has sufficient human, financial, and other resources to support our mission. Our long experience managing IAU study abroad programs ensure we maintain financial stability while supporting our academic programs. This tradition of prudent resource management enabled ACM to weather recent challenges to international education from the COVID-19 pandemic while maintaining our programs. While drops in enrollment (a decrease of 26% in FY20) necessitated budget cutbacks and personnel reductions in France and the U.S., our contingency reserves and significant donor support have enabled us to maintain operations in 2021 at a time when many study abroad programs have shuttered. This places us in an advantageous position as the pandemic recedes and international education recovers.

For the fiscal years ended July 31, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and on a consolidated basis, IAU (now ACM) had revenues of \$8.1M, \$9M and \$7.4M, respectively and net asset increases of \$138,278; \$612,008 and \$196,232 respectively. For the same periods, ACM degree programs generated revenues of \$198,565; \$367,157 and \$323,512. While ACM enrollments and revenues during its start-up phase have been modest, the incremental costs associated with the launch of the degree programs have also been modest as ACM uses existing facilities, staff, faculty and programs.

Our ability to face a financial emergency was tested during the 2020 COVID-19 pandemic. Like many of its peers, ACM's IAU visiting students program underwent significant financial strains resulting from a drastic drop in visiting student enrollments (1036 in FY19 compared to 769 in FY20), which produced an 18% (\$1.7M) drop in total revenues. We face a similar situation in FY21 with an estimated drop in visiting student enrollments (769 in FY20 to 456 in FY21) which would produce a drop in visiting student revenue of 66% and a drop in overall FY21 revenues of 59%. To meet these revenue drops ACM implemented operating budget, staff and faculty reductions that decreased costs 15% (actual) in FY20, and an estimated 49% (actual) in FY21. We have taken advantage of government relief programs in France and the U.S. which will provide an estimated \$544,046 of financial support to current operations. In addition, to meet FY21 budgeted expenses, the Board has authorized the administration to utilize up to \$1M of the contingency portion of our quasi-endowment (described below). It should be noted that ACM degree program enrollments have remained stable during this period and are expected to contribute \$307,042 in FY 2021 revenues. Also of note is that in response to the crisis, ACM

increased [donor support](#) from \$128,825 in FY19 to \$269,377 in FY20. Taken together, our cost reductions, increase in donor support, and use of the contingency fund allowed ACM to maintain operations pending a recovery in enrollments.

Human Resources

ACM has a devoted cadre of qualified personnel in the U.S. and France. As of January 2021, ACM has 18 permanent employees in France (10 of whom have teaching responsibilities) and five in the United States. For the Spring 2021 semester ACM employed an additional 13 temporary professors and student services staff for a total of 36 employees. These numbers reflect the personnel cutbacks we made in 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Spring 2020, prior to the pandemic cutbacks, we had 58 employees in France and the U.S. consisting of 27 permanent employees in France (15 of whom had teaching responsibilities), 12 in the U.S. and 19 temporary professors and student support staff. The average tenure for our employees is 8.6 years. In addition, many of our temporary employees have worked for many years with ACM. [Bios here.](#)

Hiring processes differ in the two countries but for both locations hiring practices, job descriptions and evaluation processes are clear and readily available. All employees undergo annual performance reviews that include written and oral evaluations. We use non-discriminatory hiring practices. We currently employ 21 women and 15 men.

We maintain two employee manuals, reflecting the need to follow labor regulations in both [France](#) and the [U.S.](#) The French employee manual is undergoing review with completion anticipated in Spring 2021. The manuals are accessible in SharePoint and new employees receive copies for which they acknowledge receipt.

As noted in Standard Three, per French labor law, ACM permanent employees in France elect every four years a Social and Economic Council (CSE) of 4 (2 members and 2 alternates) who meet monthly or on request with senior administrators to discuss any workplace issues brought forward by employees. All permanent staff are eligible to vote for and be members of the council. The next scheduled election is in March 2023.

Financial Resources

Led by our CFO ACM financial administration supports our mission and preserves financial stability in the face of sometimes volatile change. We are primarily a tuition-funded institution with significant support from over 25,000 loyal (principally IAU) alumni. Our financial planning and risk management was honed by over 60 years of managing a growing number of IAU study abroad programs. Our prudent approach means that at present we are free of debt, own our principal buildings (with a market value of \$6.25M (5.6M€) as of April 2019), and have in recent years created a quasi-endowment fund valued at \$4.2 M on July 31, 2020, a portion of which is earmarked each year as our contingency fund and invested in liquid instruments. It is worth noting that our real estate holdings are highly attractive urban assets that can easily provide collateral if needed. The Board regularly directs that operating surpluses be placed in this quasi-

endowment. We use Commonfund and Merrill Lynch in the U.S. and Rothschild Martin Maurel in France as investment advisers.

This approach enables us to use surplus revenues from IAU visiting student programs to provide stable financing of high-quality ACM degree programs during the early years of ACM’s growth. As the number of students in ACM’s degree programs grow, this will introduce further revenue stability for the organization as a whole, as multiple-year degree programs are less subject to enrollment volatility than short-term visiting student programs. Although we are not yet able to predict when, we anticipate a time when ACM first becomes financially self-sustaining, and then eventually surpasses IAU revenues.

With ACM enrollments stable this academic year (17 for 2020-2021 compared with 19 in 2019-2020), we anticipate a return to growth in academic year 2021-22 once the external factor of the pandemic fades. We have already accepted 16 ACM students for Fall 2021 as opposed to three acceptances at the same time in 2020. We are therefore on track to enroll the largest ACM class ever in the Fall of 2021. A snapshot as of February 25, 2021 is below.

ACM Fall 2021 Enrollment by Program				
	Fall 2021 Active Applications* <i>Feb. 25, 2021</i>	Fall 2021 Projected Enrollments**	Fall 2020 Active Applications* <i>Feb. 25, 2020</i>	Fall 2020 Final Enrollments
BA	17	9	8	4
MAIR	10	7	5	3
MAFS	11	6	5	5
MAAH	5	3	1	0
MFA	12	8	8	5
GMBA	3	2	2	0
TOTALS	58	35	29	17

**Active applications include students who are returning, deposited, accepted, under review, and/or are currently working on their applications.*

***We arrive at projected enrollments for fall 2021 by combining our historical attrition rate with anecdotal applicant information*

ACM Fall 2021 Enrollment by Application Status		
	Fall 2021 <i>Feb. 25, 2021</i>	Fall 2020 <i>Feb. 25, 2020</i>
Open Active Applications	32	19
Accepted or Under Review	16	3
Deposited or Returning	10	7
Total Active Applications	58	29

Similarly, we anticipate a swift recovery in IAU visiting student enrollments. We base these assumptions on how visiting enrollments responded to earlier external shocks, such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the 2008 financial crisis. Nonetheless, we are realistic that fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic will complicate financial planning until a vaccine and other mitigation measures take root and have contingency plans in place if the recovery is further delayed. As the following tables illustrate, IAU actual and projected enrollments as of February 25, 2021 are trending favorably.

IAU Summer 2021 Enrollments by Program		
	Current Applications <i>25-Feb-2021</i>	Projected Enrollments
Aix-en-Provence	22	98
Barcelona	5	22
Custom (Aix & multi-country)	0	40
Custom (Barcelona)	0	10
Virtual (direct enroll)	3	88
Virtual (custom)	18	24
TOTAL	48	282

IAU Fall 2021 Enrollments by Program		
	Current Applications <i>25-Feb-2021</i>	Projected Enrollments
Aix-en-Provence	21	147
Barcelona	5	34
Madrid	0	15
Virtual	0	23
TOTAL	26	219

ACM revenues are entirely in U.S. dollars and expenses are primarily in Euros. Another way we maintain financial stability is by using four to six month advance currency hedging contracts that we augment with spot transfers when market conditions are favorable. In the past we have engaged currency exchange advisors, but now have enough internal expertise for our CFO to manage this activity.

ACM financial planning is on a three-year cycle. Enrollment estimates flow from historic data and inform revenue estimates. Using our existing academic, financial and physical resources and the initial suite of ACM degree programs as our base, we produce annual budgets incorporating

incremental, sustainable growth linked to enrollment projections. ACM's fiscal year begins August 1st and the Finance and Facilities Committee typically reviews proposed budgets in July before recommending them to the Board for final approval in October. ACM is a non-profit organization with an independent, autonomous Board. All ACM resources are devoted to our international education mission.

ACM's mission includes increasing diversity, equity and inclusion in international education and the provision of financial aid to students is in keeping with this goal. The ACM Board has given periodic guidance that the average financial aid discount rate for a cohort should not exceed 35% while acknowledging that until ACM achieves Title IV status, financial aid packages may need to be more robust to achieve the equity and inclusion goals ACM seeks for its baccalaureate culture. (See Standard Five)

The CFO reports to the Vice President of Administration and is in regular contact with the Chair of the Finance and Facilities Committee. We have qualified staff managing bookkeeping in the U.S. and France and use the French service organization Sud Est Gestion as a chartered accountant to ensure accounting accuracy. PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) performs an annual audit ([latest here](#)) to US GAAP standards covering all aspects of our financial reporting and internal control procedures. As a non-profit organization, ACM outsources the preparation and submission of our annual IRS 990 Form to a U.S.-based Certified Public Accountant. The Finance and Facilities Committee Chair is a former managing partner for international risk management at Ernst and Young and the committee members have extensive finance experience.

ACM establishes its budget using the following calendar. ACM's fiscal year runs from August 1 to July 31. The Vice President of Administration solicits input on expenditures from the divisional deans, information resources staff, and administrative staff in April. The CFO uses this, along with the revenue estimates, to prepare a proposed budget (including a capital expenses budget) for the President's review in May. As noted above, the Finance and Facilities Committee reviews this proposed budget in July and presents it for final approval by the Board in October. After the close of the fiscal year, preparations for the annual audit begin with the Finance and Facilities Committee and the Board reviewing the previous year's actuals in October. The Finance and Facilities Committee meets with PwC's audit team to review their opinion and recommendations in December and the Board accepts the audited financial statements in February. [Budget Archive here](#).

ACM has financial procedures in place to ensure accurate accounting and internal controls. Our French external chartered accountant Sud Est Gestion reviews all accounts on a bi-monthly basis and reconciles all bank accounts. The CFO and the financial team enter all account payables and receivables into the ACM accounting program Quadratus.

ACM reviews its financial condition on a regular basis, with the CFO presenting an analysis to the President and the Finance and Facilities Committee at least three times a year. This enables us to respond quickly to changing conditions, and to take advantage of opportunities. For the past several years, we have placed any surplus in the quasi-endowment fund, which incorporates a contingency fund, and, as previously noted, is a key tool in our response to the COVID-19 pandemic. The contingency fund is conservatively invested to preserve principal.

ACM’s [principal revenues](#) come primarily from the IAU visiting student program and secondarily from the ACM program in Aix-en-Provence. As noted at the outset, for the fiscal years ended July 31, 2018, 2019 and 2020 and on a consolidated basis, IAU (now ACM) had revenues of \$8.1M, \$9M and \$7.4M, respectively and net asset increases of \$138,278, \$612,008 and \$196,232 respectively. For the same periods, ACM degree programs generated revenues of \$198,565, \$367,157 and \$323,512.

When ACM opened a new IAU visiting student semester program in Barcelona in 2017 it created an additional revenue stream, yielding, for example, \$1.1M in FY20.

Market research shows Spain is a highly sought after study abroad destination and growing the IAU program there is a strategic initiative that will support ACM degree programs in their early growth stage. We were poised to open a Madrid program in 2020 and will do so as soon as the COVID-19 pandemic ends. As the Barcelona program continues to prosper, it could eventually serve as a platform for ACM degree programs and support increased visiting student enrollments. For example, the MA in International Education currently under development envisions integrating the Barcelona center in its program for practicums devoted to study abroad management.

More recently, ACM explored entirely new revenue sources when faced with the drop in IAU visiting student enrollments due to the COVID-19 pandemic. One area is English-language teaching and testing, which we refer to as the English Teaching Academy idea. As a first step, we qualified February 2021 as a TOEFL testing center and will test our first applicants in March 2021. To this, we will add other English-language teaching activities consistent with our mission. The below table gives an idea of potential revenues in this area.

New Program Fall 2021 Enrollment & Income Projections		
	Projected Enrollments	Projected Income
English Language Academy	6	\$5,400
TOEFL Testing	60	\$2,100
TOTAL	66	\$6,500

Another new source of revenue is virtual internships and virtual consultancy projects, which brought in \$77,800 in the summer of 2020 and an additional \$16,550 in the Fall 2020. Both of these initiatives have the added advantage of increasing ACM ties with the community and increasing intercultural awareness for our students.

ACM has ethical oversight policies to ensure proper management of our resources. All Board members sign annual conflict of interest declarations. Our policies include ethical measures such as a policy on related party hiring, expense reimbursement policies, an investment policy and a whistle-blower policy. [Summary here.](#)

ACM financial statements meet U.S. accounting standards. Our [annual audit](#) performed by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC) meets the standards adopted by the American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. We have had unqualified audits since FY 2009 when IAU instituted this practice. Preparations for the annual audit begin in September with the Finance and Facilities Committee and the Board reviewing the previous year's actuals in October. The Finance and Facilities Committee reviews the audit results in December and the Board accepts the audited financial statements in February. During the audit process, the CFO, accounting team, and Sud Est Gestion provide PwC all requested documents such as backup contracts, invoices, and bank reconciliations. Sud Est Gestion works directly with auditors to provide reports and copies of files. PwC performs spot checks (an average sample of 25-30%) to check on such things as payments, invoices, bank statement reconciliation, student scholarships, discounts, authorized person payment via bank, and fee schedules.

ACM benefits from IAU's long experience with alumni fundraising in support of our educational mission. The Dean of Admissions and Alumni Affairs oversees ACM fundraising efforts which are concentrated in the U.S. ACM alumni are donors but given the small number of ACM alumni to date most of our fundraising efforts have focused on IAU alumni. This was of great assistance during the COVID-19 crisis, as donors responded with an outpouring of support that increased donations from \$128,825 in FY19 to \$269,377 in FY20.

ACM Staff, with the guidance of the Marketing, Development, and Alumni Relations Committee, [solicit donations](#) through various means including mass electronic marketing, individual outreach, and alumni-specific events including receptions and institution anniversary events. Donors can select from a wide variety of options to which they can direct their donations including general operations (unrestricted), naming opportunities, building/facilities support, student memorial scholarships, student prizes (awarded at the end of each semester), program-specific grants, and a wide variety of merit, diversity, and need-based student scholarships.

ACM provides guidance to the prospective donor(s) regarding the options available and seeks a match between their interests/requirements and the funds available. Donors are kept apprised of the students who benefitted from their support, and when applicable, students are encouraged to write a letter of gratitude to the donor. Given that costs are the biggest barrier to student enrollment, ACM encourages donors to support student scholarships.

ACM has financial control procedures in place. The Board Finance Committee has [policies](#) (audit policy, endowment policy, investment policy, policy on currency contracts) in place. In addition, we have [incorporated 29 key internal controls](#) from the PwC audit process to ensure a robust financial control process.

Information, Physical and Technological Resources

ACM is based around an urban campus in the historic heart of Aix-en-Provence in which we own 3 buildings and have a long-term lease on the majority of a fourth building. These are historic buildings which we have extensively renovated and restored to provide a welcoming academic environment for ACM students.

The centerpiece of our campus is [Manning Hall](#), inaugurated in 2013, which houses modern classrooms, a library, the Wellness Center, student study areas, a café, and student service offices such as the registrar, housing, student life, faculty work room, and administrative offices. Another building, [a former chapel](#), houses the Center for French Studies, classrooms, a meeting hall, a library, and a student lounge. The third building has classrooms, a multi-media lab, a faculty workroom, offices and housing for visiting professors and students. Finally, just outside the city center lies the [Marchutz School of Fine Arts](#), featuring a painting and drawing atelier, a sculpture pavilion, and a pottery pavilion on a 1.3 acre lot nestled in a rustic Provencal landscape.

Our classrooms all feature computers, white boards and modern projectors. Some classrooms have smart white boards. The multi-media lab has 11 Apple iMacs equipped with multi-media software. In keeping with our focus on the visual arts in the ACM School of Art, we have several state-of-the-art laser projectors used for art and art history courses.

All buildings are equipped with high-speed [Wi-Fi](#). ACM has a full-time information network manager who maintains the computer network, which services the classrooms, supports the student study areas and libraries, connects the U.S. and France-based staff, and houses our student information systems. Our principal software package is Microsoft 365 Education, through which we use Microsoft Teams as our main teaching and collaboration platform.

The COVID-19 pandemic required ACM to pivot towards remote delivery of our programs and most classrooms now have video cameras allowing for hybrid or remote delivery of courses.

ACM provides students and faculty access to information resources. We have two libraries incorporating a collection of 6,000 items. Manning Hall houses the Pearson Library devoted to art and art history. The Center for French Studies houses the original IAU library. Each library has six computer workstations for students. Our focus since ACM's founding has been on building up our digital information collections. Dr. Yumna Masarwa has directed the steady acquisition of digital resources aligned with our academic programs. Every term she solicits input from the divisional deans and the Dean of the College and determines new digital acquisitions based on their input. We currently subscribe to 23 JSTOR collections and ArtStor, a digital image repository. In addition, we maintain access to a number of open access collections and participate in [AMICAL](#) a consortium of American international liberal arts institutions, working together on common goals for libraries, technology and learning. All of these are available remotely to our students and faculty.

ACM provides students textbooks as needed via a small fee. Professors provide their needs to the divisional deans who validate them before requesting their purchase. The Assistant Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences ensures proper coordination across disciplines. The rise in use of digital information resources has slowed the pace of physical textbook purchases.

All ACM buildings meet the legal requirements for access, safety and security of higher education institutions in France. We strive for ADA compliance, which is more ambitious than French regulations in this area. Manning Hall is fully ADA-compliant, which means all student services are fully accessible. The historic nature of our buildings, most of which are centuries

old, means that some areas of our other buildings are not fully ADA-compliant. ACM has two full-time employees devoted to the cleaning, security, and routine maintenance of our buildings. All ACM buildings and related infrastructure are inspected annually by [several outside organizations](#).

ACM commissioned an [outside security audit](#) in 2017 and implemented the majority of the recommendations from it. All buildings except for the Marchutz atelier are controlled-access via Digi codes updated on an annual basis. Marchutz access is controlled by an on-site resident. All buildings (except Marchutz) have external video surveillance and most have internal alarm systems. We hold bi-annual fire drills and post security information in all classrooms and offices.

ACM's facilities provide ample space for students and faculty to work, study and research. In addition to our two library/study areas, there are student lounges in both Manning Hall and the Center for French Studies. The Marchutz site has outdoor study and studio work areas for art students. There is Wi-Fi access throughout our buildings and computer workstations for students in both libraries, the multi-media lab, and in the common area between the Beauvoir and Zola classrooms in Manning Hall. Students have access, free of charge, to printing and copying facilities in all four buildings. The faculty room in Manning Hall has a large, high-speed color printer/copier for faculty and staff use. Second year MFA students are given access to individual studio space.

ACM has published data protection policies and informs students of their digital privacy rights every term, as required by the EU General Data Protection Requirement (GDPR), with which ACM is compliant. Our information technology manager maintains strong security procedures and robust back up procedures in our information technology system. As part of the annual PwC audit, they [review IT procedures](#) related to our financial systems and make recommendations for improvement, including verifying that we have implemented previous recommendations.

ACM has adequate information technology systems in place to support our current operations. As noted in Standard Five and elsewhere, growth requires we modernize our student information systems to enable us to plan, administer and evaluate our programs as they grow.

APPRAISAL

ACM human, financial, technological and information resources adequately support our educational mission. ACM was founded to fully leverage the resources IAU had developed over six decades and provides a strong foundation for modest and steady growth within our resource base.

Human Resources

ACM personnel and our human resource procedures were tested in 2020 as we made difficult cutbacks in personnel in the U.S. and France due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Cuts were made in all areas, primarily in administration, enabling us to maintain all active ACM degree programs. This was an emotionally trying process for a small organization as we released approximately one-third of French-based personnel and one-half of U.S. based personnel, reducing personnel

costs by 27%. We used outside counsel in both locations to ensure we followed all relevant procedures, working in France with the aforementioned Social and Economic Council (CSE) as appropriate. In 2020 we also instituted a hiring freeze for new permanent employees as well as a salary and bonus freeze.

After the personnel cutbacks of 2020, we are aware that the recovery will require a step-by-step rebuilding plan focused on our ability to deliver our existing academic program. As a first step, the VP of Administration asked the divisional deans to provide their vision on how to [build back](#), so ACM financial planning can begin to incorporate these ideas. Similarly, in the U.S. the President and Dean of Admissions are exploring how to rebuild admissions and marketing staffing consistent with our goals for ACM. The Board reviewed our progress in this area at the February 2021 Board meeting.

Another result of the COVID pandemic is that telework has become a more important part of our institutional life, particularly in the U.S. We recognize the need to update our U.S. employee manual to reflect this new reality, along with the many locations of our U.S. employees. In general, ACM's founding saw a burst of policy and procedure creation. Now, with the guidance of the Board, we need to review this initial tranche of policies to identify lacunae and needed revisions. We are also in need of greater organization of our policies to ensure all employees have easy access to them and incorporate them into their activities. This is particularly important given we have offices in the U.S. and France, with several teleworking employees.

Financial Resources

Our CFO is a veteran of international education administration and works closely with a highly qualified Finance and Facilities Board committee to support the ACM mission. We have mechanisms in place to handle unique challenges such as fluctuating visiting student enrollments and exposure to currency exchange rates. The far-sighted choice to create a quasi-endowment contingency fund in 2012 provided the cushion we needed to cover our revenue shortfalls during the COVID-19 pandemic, in addition to making important cutbacks in expenses.

As outlined at the outset the COVID-19 pandemic produced revenue shortfalls which ACM handled through cost reductions, including reductions in personnel, along with access to U.S. and French government support programs, significant donor support, and access to the contingency reserve. As outlined in the below [3-Year Projected Budget](#) chart from January 2021, our FY19 revenues, the last full Fiscal Year before the pandemic hit, were just over \$9M, reflecting steady growth in both ACM and IAU enrollments. We estimate revenues in FY21 will dip to just over \$3M before rebounding in FY 22 to almost \$7M and to \$8.5M in FY 23. This will allow us to begin to rebuild, with our estimated expenses in FY23 about \$500,000 less than they were in FY19 before the crisis hit. We believe our ability to swiftly reduce costs, our lack of debt, and our donor pool are what enabled us to traverse this crisis when other programs closed. When the external shock of the pandemic is removed, we will be ready to swiftly build back to where we were and then move forward.

ACM - IAU					
PROJECTED BUDGET 3 YEARS : STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES- as of February 25, 2021					
			estimated exchange rate 1€/ \$1.19		
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES					
REVENUES	FY19	FY20	FY21- actual	FY22	FY23
ACM DEGREE PROGRAMS ENR	60	45	40	78	108
ACM NET STUDENT TUITION & FEES	\$ 350 687	\$ 302 105	\$ 307 042	\$ 665 567	\$ 914 467
IAU STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS ENR	1036	769	456	880	1040
IAU NET STUDENT TUITION & FEES	\$ 8 314 070	\$ 6 667 164	\$ 2 289 239	\$ 5 838 570	\$ 7 248 952
DONATIONS	\$ 128 825	\$ 269 377	\$ 215 000	\$ 215 000	\$ 215 000
Gains on investments, FX, & other revenue	\$ 276 042	\$ 168 939	\$ 200 000	\$ 200 000	\$ 200 000
TOTAL OTHER REVENUES	\$ 404 867	\$ 438 316	\$ 415 000	\$ 415 000	\$ 415 000
TOTAL STUDENT ENROLLMENTS	1096	814	496	958	1148
TOTAL REVENUES ALL PROGRAMS	\$ 9 069 624	\$ 7 407 585	\$ 3 011 281	\$ 6 919 137	\$ 8 578 419
EXPENSES					
ACM DEGREE PROGRAM EXPENSES	\$ 507 457	\$ 495 253	\$ 401 696	\$ 525 625	\$ 780 225
BARCELONA SEMESTER COSTS	\$ 626 167	\$ 1 188 570	\$ 608 129	\$ 1 159 875	\$ 1 533 109
AIX STUDY ABROAD	\$ 7 323 992	\$ 5 527 530	\$ 2 656 361	\$ 4 892 774	\$ 5 586 774
IAU STUDY ABROAD PROGRAMS EXPENSES	\$ 7 950 159	\$ 6 716 100	\$ 3 264 490	\$ 6 052 649	\$ 7 119 883
TOTAL EXPENSES ALL SCHOOLS	\$ 8 457 616	\$ 7 211 353	\$ 3 666 186	\$ 6 578 274	\$ 7 900 108
NET OPERATING RESULT	\$ 612 008	\$ 196 232	\$ -654 905	\$ 340 863	\$ 678 311
NET OPERATING %	6,75%	2,65%	-21,75%	4,93%	7,91%

A continuing area of reflection for ACM is how to improve the balance in our budget process between needs and revenues. Our current process is revenue driven, making it more of a top-down exercise than we would like. In order to evolve toward a more balanced approach, we need to create ways to give more budget clarity to divisional deans and program directors as we grow. In our start-up period, our small size means we often make budget decisions based on an overarching appreciation of our institutional needs. Divisional deans contribute to this process, but this high-level approach reduces their ability to include financial trade-offs in their programmatic decision-making. ACM recognizes that growth will require decentralizing some budget decisions that are currently centered at the level of the Vice President for Administration and the CFO. We will benefit from the views of the NECHE evaluation team on how to take this process forward.

Another area of current focus is putting into place the legal and fiscal structure in Spain that will allow us to eventually transform the Barcelona site into a fully-fledged ‘branch campus’ of ACM. We will keep NECHE informed of our progress in this area in future submissions.

As previously noted, ACM benefits from the large IAU donor community. This was crucial when revenues dropped during the COVID-19 pandemic. In response to this crisis, Board

members and other donors, including ACM alumni, donated over \$250,000 in calendar year 2020, double the previous year. This would not have been possible if ACM depended solely on the very small ACM alumni pool. In the coming period we will build on this unique asset to increase donations, while at the same time begin to explore grant opportunities.

Information, Physical and Technological Resources

ACM's urban campus in the historic center of Aix-en-Provence is central to our mission. Our buildings, some of which are centuries old and considered culturally significant, directly contribute to our ability to use experiential learning in all our programs. That said, as noted in Standard Two, this does require us to be deliberate and adopt a long-term approach to expansion and new facilities. As a result, although we have no current need for additional classroom or studio art space, we are already focused on identifying possible space, as in almost all instances, renovation work would be necessary for most spaces we find. As noted in Standard Five, although host-families remain at the heart of our immersive, cross-cultural approach to housing, we have also begun searching for a residence hall, anticipating a need to diversify our housing options in the coming years.

The buildings on the art school site can handle a small amount of student growth, but long-term growth will require an expansion of these facilities or the acquisition of additional studio art spaces. The Atelier Marchutz has cultural value. It was designed by renowned French architect Fernand Pouillon for Leo Marchutz, an artist and pioneer in IAU's art education efforts. The site is subject to multiple zoning restrictions. Undeterred, in 2018 ACM commissioned a study for an expansion of the Marchutz atelier that responds to the cultural importance of the site, allowing us to begin to navigate the extended planning approval exceptions we would need for any expansion. Funding such an expansion would be the subject of an alumni fundraising campaign. In the interim, we recognize we will need to make arrangements for additional studio space, particularly for second year students.

COVID-19 related budget cutbacks meant we had to reduce or freeze further digital and traditional information resource purchases in FY2021. We successfully negotiated an agreement with JSTOR allowing us to reduce costs without losing the digital journal collections we already have. We were obliged to drop the Evidence-Based Acquisition (EBA) digital book collection we had added in 2019. We plan on resuming our steady build-up in this area in the next fiscal year, focusing on digital resources. Our historic library also needs to be fully catalogued, but this is a lesser priority given the growing importance of digital resources for faculty and students. We recognize that within the next five years we will need a full-time information resource specialist to handle this area.

Although ACM's computer network is secure and we are GDPR compliant, one area of improvement we have identified is the ACM Wi-Fi system. At present all Wi-Fi users use a single password, which is regularly changed. With growth we recognize there is a regulatory and security need to move to a unique single-user logon system to increase the security both of our information network and the data of those who use it. Scheduled for installment in early 2022, this will also afford greater ease of access to digital information resources.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Complete external review of employee manual for U.S.-based staff to ensure it is compliant with the regulatory requirements of a small institution with personnel located in several U.S. states. (Action: Assistant Dean of Admissions)
- Enhance the financial stability of ACM by increasing visiting student and alternative revenue streams. ACM's first priority will be to establish a formal administrative, legal and fiscal structure in Spain to handle growth in the IAU visiting student program in Barcelona and Madrid. (President, CFO)

In 2022

- Increase balance between needs-based and revenue-based budgeting in order to give greater budget clarity to divisional deans. (Action: VP of Administration, CFO)
- Review staff employee evaluation system and propose improvements. (Action: VP of Administration)
- Institute single-user student log on to ACM Wi-Fi system. (Action: IT Manager)

In 2023

- Hire a full-time, qualified information science specialist. Develop an on-line library catalog and develop a library acquisition plan for digital and traditional purchases that supports ACM degree programs. (Action: VP of Administration)

In 2024

- Rebuild the quasi-endowment to its pre-pandemic level (\$4.2M). By year-end FY 2025, grow the quasi-endowment to the \$5M level. (Action: President, Board)

Standard Eight EDUCATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

The institution demonstrates its effectiveness by ensuring satisfactory levels of student achievement on mission-appropriate student outcomes. Based on verifiable information, the institution understands what its students have gained as a result of their education and has useful evidence about the success of its recent graduates. This information is used for planning and improvement, resource allocation, and to inform the public about the institution. Student achievement is at a level appropriate for the degree awarded.

DESCRIPTION

ACM's evaluation of educational effectiveness has to date focused on evaluating course outcomes and we have begun the process of constructing verifiable and coherent student outcomes at the institution and program level. ACM tracks measures of student success and uses it to assess our programs, keeping in mind the preliminary nature of our data, given our small number of alumni to date. As a small institution, the feedback loop between student performance and program evaluation is rapid, informal, intense, and productive. As a teaching institution, we expect the focus on student success to endure even while we expand.

At the course level, ACM has decades of experience in creating verifiable course learning outcomes based on over six decades of collaboration between IAU (now ACM) study abroad programs and U.S. partner universities to create classes that meet U.S. standards and are comprehensible by students. Syllabi requirements have been standardized since 2012. The faculty manual provides guidance to new teaching personnel to ensure they incorporate learning outcomes into their syllabi and adopt some common measures, such as a common grading scale, that aid in assessing success throughout the institution. Divisional deans discuss these requirements with faculty every term in faculty meetings.

ACM is in the final stages of articulating institution-wide learning outcomes through a dialogical process between the faculty and divisional deans. These outcomes will inform the revision and development of all program, degree and course learning outcomes. Our goal is for the faculty to debate and to integrate these outcomes in the Spring of 2021. As currently formulated they are:

Knowledge

1. Students will demonstrate written, oral, and critical thinking skills which exhibit their ability to identify, investigate, analyze, and synthesize historical, linguistic, scientific and cultural phenomena of the European and Mediterranean community as well as situate their findings within a global framework.

Skills

2. Students will be able to articulate a critical platform upon which to integrate their world view within the contemporary global issues that affect differing international cultures and societies.

Attitudes

3. Students will be able to adjust personal perspectives, recognize and respect differences, value diversity and sustainability, and show tolerance and integrity in their intellectual, personal, social, and work environments.

Once integrated, they will be published on the ACM website and incorporated into important policy documents and manuals. Currently we provide general descriptions of expected program and degree outcomes in the [ACM Viewbook](#).

Learning assessment at the program level is at varying levels of development. One example can be seen in such practices as the MA in French Studies [outcome progression calendar](#) - Each year MAFS students and professors receive a calendar showing how student work should progress and when they should achieve certain competencies. Furthermore, all MA and MFA students produce final projects synthesizing what they have learned in their areas of concentration. MFA students produce a portfolio of artwork along with written commentary that shows both their development as artists as well as articulating their understanding of their artistic growth. This body of work is assessed by a jury. MA students, overseen by their advisor, plan, research and write a thesis based on their area of focus. The thesis serves as the culmination of their program and is an essential tool for assessing student progress and their satisfaction of program objectives. All MA students make an oral presentation of their thesis to a jury which provides written feedback.

BA students are required from the very beginning to develop their writing and critical skills throughout all of their classes. Upon completion of the program, BA students' work will have been assessed on their ability to adapt to a variety of subjects and following a course of study requiring extensive written and critical analysis.

ACM's leadership and the Board recognize the importance of building a comprehensive assessment system. The draft institution-wide learning outcomes were reviewed in February 2021 by the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board.

ACM has a well-developed system for evaluating the experiences and learning outcomes of students at the course level. ACM conducts written course evaluations by students for every course taught. For new courses we conduct mid-semester student evaluations. These are reviewed each term by professors, divisional deans and the Dean of the College, with feedback incorporated into the course design. Another source of evaluation is regular classroom visits by deans and the Dean of the College (see Standard Six). This kind of feedback has led to an increase in oral and on-site assignments in French-language classes; updating certain readings and even translations with more topical material; educational activities that students deemed ineffective eliminated in favor of more engaging methods, etc. In a class on contemporary French society, student feedback led to the incorporation of more diverse perspectives in the syllabus. Class visits have enabled the Dean of the College and others to help teachers improve their use of whiteboards, guide them in managing computer use in class, or adjust the number of quizzes used in class. Student and faculty feedback led some classroom seating to be reorganized and for more clocks to be installed. A perennial and important discussion during class visit

consultations is how to manage student participation and avoid having a few students dominate classroom discussion.

ACM's exit survey, required of all graduating students, also allows the institution to collect data about students' perception of their overall learning outcomes. Outside perspectives are regularly solicited through mechanisms such as the MFA Mentors Program, which assigns two mentors to every MFA student, often using faculty from outside the program to provide an external perspective on student progress. Resident Fellows and the members of the Council of Academic Advisors are regularly invited to provide peer comparisons that inform course and program design.

ACM considers our host-family program an important co-curricular activity for our students. At mid-semester, we assess via a questionnaire [see [here](#) and [here](#)] how students are handling cultural and linguistic adaptation in host families. The Center for French Studies includes cross-cultural communications as learning outcomes in French language and culture courses, which supports students as they engage in co-curricular activities.

ACM has to date graduated four BA graduates and 40 MA/MFA graduates. To date our BA retention rate is 64.29% and our overall graduate program retention rate is 86%. We recognize that these rates are based on small numbers, particularly for the BA program. As our initial goal for the BA program was to attract and retain transfer BA students, we include them in our statistics. Our current retention rates by program are as follows:

Program	Enrolled	Graduates/Expected to Graduate in 2021	Withdraw/Leave of Absence	Retention Rate
MFA	21	19	2	90.48%
MAIR	18	16	2	88.89%
MAFS	16	12	4	75.00%
MAAH	3	3	0	100.00%
GMBA	1	1	0	100.00%
BA	14	9	5	64.29%
TOTAL	73	60	13	82.19%

Given the low overall number of graduates, percentages can be misleading. In the following, we offer an illustration of student success to date using actual numbers. Of the four BA graduates, two have gone on to further education and two are working. At the MA/MFA level, five have gone on to further education and 34 are working and/or engaged in creative activities in a field related to their studies. The Alumni Office is in regular contact with all graduates via the graduate exit survey, email and solicitations for the quarterly [alumni newsletter](#). One benefit of our high-level of student/professor interaction and our young degree programs is that faculty and divisional deans are in regular contact with almost all graduates of their programs. ACM collects data on rates of progression, retention, transfer, and graduation, but we have not yet adopted benchmark goals in those areas. We track further education and employment after graduation with special attention to employment or study in an international context due to our commitment

to preparing students for success in the global community. Based on our information roughly half of ACM graduates who are employed are working in an international environment.

Despite the relative newness of ACM degree programs, we have a few examples of using measures of student success to feed back into efforts to improve our achievement of learning opportunities. In one case the MA in French Studies (MAFS) added a translation course, updating the MAFS *Contemporary French Literature* track to the *Contemporary French Literature and Translation* track when graduate feedback showed this would bolster their professional opportunities. Similarly, student input is being used to bolster offerings for the *International Relations* track of the MAFS. The MA in Art History, having graduated one class, is currently using student experience and feedback on their onward activities as part of evaluating the program.

ACM's understanding of student success is available to the public via the [ACM Viewbook](#), which includes student testimonials and examples of success such as onward employment and further education. ACM MA programs use social media to share student work and success stories during their program. We maintain a thesis collection for each program. These elements are routinely used to illustrate our programs when we solicit assessments from visiting Resident Fellows, visiting faculty, or the members of the Council of Academic Advisors.

APPRAISAL

ACM has a strong culture of setting learning outcomes with appropriate assessment at the course level. We now need to close the loop, formally linking course, program and institutional learning outcomes with appropriate assessment measures. ACM realizes that to fully meet NECHE standards we need to build on our strong foundation with more formalized program and institutional level outcomes matched with mutually reinforcing assessment mechanisms.

We decided to begin with adopting institutional level outcomes developed by the faculty with the divisional Deans, informed by our mission and using insights from six decades of teaching U.S. students abroad. This will provide a structure the divisional deans can use to revise or develop program learning outcomes. The Dean of the College, serving as the chief academic officer, is responsible for aiding the divisional deans and faculty in developing tools to measure student achievement consistent with the institution learning outcomes. There are centers of expertise on the faculty that we will harness to ensure all programs benefit, through faculty retreats and other collegial consultation measures. We have set a goal of having a uniform process in place within three years.

The Dean of the College will help structure this process by working with faculty and divisional deans to establish a set of rubrics used to assess student attainment of learning outcomes. This will allow us to maintain coherent records and synthesize results as needed. This will also facilitate outside appraisal of the programs using our network of former Resident Fellows, visiting professors and CAA members.

ACM has been assiduous [in tracking](#) the success of our graduates. Given the small number of graduates, we have to date been able to do this informally via our alumni network. In a testament

to our close ties with students, the odds are that any divisional dean can tell you what each graduate from a program is doing today. We recognize the need to start producing more granular analysis of student success at the program and degree level. This is especially important for the BA program, as we start to enroll more first year students and fewer transfer students. This will be built out as each program revises or sets program goals in line with our institutional goals. This process will be facilitated by the acquisition of a new Student Information System software package, a project delayed by COVID-19 budget cutbacks as detailed elsewhere (see Standards Five and Seven).

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Create and adopt assessment rubrics to assess achievement of the institution-wide learning outcomes adopted in 2021. (Action: Dean of College, Divisional Deans, Faculty)

In 2022

- Develop, in light of the program-level learning outcomes adopted in 2022, a comprehensive assessment plan to measure the achievement of student learning outcomes at the course, program, and institution level for both undergraduate and graduate programs. (Action: Dean of the College, Divisional Deans)
- Develop a Student Success Program to assess student needs prior to arrival and support student success throughout the program in order to promote student retention. Support services examined will include academic advising, tutoring services, and peer coaching. (Action: Dean of College, Assistant Dean of Admissions)
- Begin using the NACE First Destination Survey. (Action: Assistant Dean of Admissions)

In 2023

- Implement and evaluate the effectiveness of the assessment plan for all degree programs to assess achievement of program learning outcomes adopted in 2022. (Action: Dean of the College, Divisional Deans, Faculty)
- Set benchmark goals for post-graduate student success measures in consultation with faculty and divisional deans. Begin publishing an annual report, available on the website, detailing student success statistics and our success in meeting benchmark goals. This will include formalizing the tracking of student success by program and major. (Action: Dean of the College, Dean of Admissions)

In 2024

- Complete review of assessment techniques at the course/curricula level to ensure consistency with program and institution assessment packages. (Action: Dean of the College, Divisional Deans, Faculty)

In 2025

- Establish a regular cycle for reviewing the assessment of student learning outcomes, using the results to inform continuous improvement. (Action: Dean of the College)

Standard Nine

INTEGRITY, TRANSPARENCY AND PUBLIC DISCLOSURE

DESCRIPTION

ACM is committed to maintaining high ethical standards across all our operations. ACM provides extensive information on standards of integrity to faculty, staff and students via the website, the ACM SharePoint system and print publications. Policies and procedures are specified on the website as well as in staff, faculty and student manuals, including procedures for resolving conflicts and handling grievances.

ACM's approach to integrity and transparency is informed by IAU's work over several decades with hundreds of U.S. universities. IAU expertise in developing a wide range of study abroad service agreements with U.S. institutions gave ACM the institutional competencies needed to provide clear and accurate information on policies and procedures to all our constituencies.

ACM's educational policies are clearly stated on the [website](#). ACM's mission includes a commitment to intellectual freedom. We believe in the teacher scholar model where research informs teaching. We do not have a formal research requirement for faculty although many engage in research and all are free to do so without constraint. ACM provides resources and time in support of research (see Standard Six).

ACM is an educational institution in good standing, [incorporated](#) in the State of Arizona (see Institutional Overview and Standard Three). As our principal activities are in France, we are also [recognized by](#) and registered with the Rectorate of Aix-Marseille University as an independent educational institution in France with the requirement to periodically submit updated academic credentials of teaching staff. ACM's Board always includes members with legal expertise in France and the United States to ensure ACM maintains all needed authorities to operate as an American-style academic institution abroad. Complete and accessible information on these arrangements is available on our [website](#).

Befitting our status as an academic institution devoted to international education, ACM has a diverse, multicultural and multinational faculty and staff. ACM has formal [non-discrimination policies](#) in place and strives in word and deed to promote inclusion and diversity in our community. Diversity in our student body is a priority. In the U.S. minorities and marginalized groups are historically underrepresented in student populations studying abroad. Through recruitment tools such as the [Trustee Diversity Scholarships](#), ACM strives to create a more inclusive and diverse student body. Student Life staff attended training on diversity abroad in 2020 to improve our expertise in this area. As noted in Standard Five, when we fill the vacant Student Life Director position, we will seek someone with experience in diversity and inclusion.

ACM prides itself on honest and clear interactions with students and prospective students. Faculty administrative staff are readily available to students and we regularly communicate with the community on operations and programs. When the COVID pandemic hit in early 2020 we received praise from many of our students for our transparency in managing the crisis and our efforts to provide guidance during a stressful and chaotic period.

ACM has institutional policies in place regarding grievance procedures for faculty, staff and students. They are listed on the [website](#) and internal SharePoint site as appropriate. For staff and faculty in France, ACM fulfills its obligations under French labor law, which includes certain mandated grievance procedures. Notably, every three years ACM staff and faculty elect representatives to an Economic and Social Council, amongst whose duties is to aid in the fair resolution of personnel grievances.

Since ACM's establishment in 2016, it has focused on establishing policies and procedures that ensure integrity and honesty in our dealings with all components of our community. In doing so, it has drawn on over sixty years of IAU experience in crafting and assessing academic policies. Going forward, ACM faculty and staff will focus on assessing the policies in place, aided in this by Board Governance Committee.

ACM has from the beginning scrupulously demonstrated honesty and integrity in its relationship with NECHE. We explicitly and accurately state on the [website](#) and in all print materials the status of our accreditation process and this information is shared with applicants. As part of our transparency on this issue, all applicants are informed that ACM has established a School of Record agreement with Northern Illinois University covering four of our MA degree programs (MAIR, MFA, MAFS, MAAH), which provides students who request this service a transcript validated by an accredited institution. We also have a School of Record agreement for our BA program with Fairfield University, a NECHE-accredited institution. Information about the service, including cost, is described on the website, and the agreement is available on request. This service will be discontinued when ACM achieves full accreditation.

Transparency

The ACM website includes extensive information that allows students, prospective students and others to make informed decisions about our institution. As our visiting student activities under IAU predate the creation of ACM, the IAU website is separate but adheres to the same standards for providing clear and accessible information. We are developing plans to better coordinate management of the two sites to create a more seamless and clear user experience. A first step will be to create a simple splash page used by both sites to quickly direct students towards IAU visiting student programs or ACM degree programs. The planning process will include an outside audit of both websites and establishing page review schedules for keeping the sites current.

ACM's audited financial statements are available on request. We do not post them to our website.

ACM's [catalog](#) is the principal source of information on our programs. It is revised each year by a team from the Admissions Office, Registrar, and the Dean of the College as part of our license renewal in the State of Arizona. The ACM Viewbook and related materials draw from this annual process to ensure they are up to date. All statements regarding our programs, such as alumni statements in the Viewbook, are supported by documentation, overseen by the Dean of Admissions. Working closely with the academic team in Aix-en-Provence, the U.S. team

maintains the ACM undergraduate and graduate catalogue, website, and other marketing and information materials.

Public Disclosure

The ACM website includes extensive information on ACM admissions procedures, French visa requirements, academic policies and procedures, degree requirements, transfer credit policy, student conduct and grievance policies, fee schedules and refund policies. ACM provides complete information on our status as an independent not-for-profit educational institution.

ACM has three articulation and pathway agreements with St. John's College, the University of Mary Washington, and Fairfield University. They were all developed during 2020 and early 2021, arising out of discussions between the faculty and administration at ACM and these institutions. ACM's most recent agreement with Fairfield University, a long-time NECHE-accredited IAU partner, created graduate pathway programs both for ACM undergraduates to continue on to Fairfield in their graduate programs and for Fairfield undergraduates to continue their graduate studies with ACM.

The ACM website maintains [a list of faculty](#) which includes degree and affiliation information. We include on the website a full list of [senior management](#) and [board membership](#). We also include a [complete list](#) of past and present Resident Fellows and the [membership of the Council of Academic Advisors](#). COVID-19 related financial cutbacks included a temporary reduction in faculty and staff in 2020, which may not be reflected on the website, in part as some teaching personnel have since returned. We anticipate that process will continue as enrollments recover in 2021.

As part of the annual review of the ACM catalog, we remove courses that are no longer available or indicate when courses are temporarily unavailable. The Dean of the College and divisional Deans advise the Admissions Office of changes in teaching personnel each term so that the listings on the website can be updated.

In recognition that the ACM student body is largely made up of students coming to France from the United States and other countries, we understand the importance of providing extensive information on the website about the campus, student life, extracurricular activities, and life in Aix-en-Provence. During the admissions process, counselors give individual guidance and mentorship on life in France to prospective students. ACM [publishes](#) basic information about the size and characteristics of the student body. Admissions counselors provide this kind of information to prospective students.

As a young institution, ACM collects student success data, but our data set is small as our total number of graduates, all programs combined, is 44, with an additional 11 scheduled to graduate in 2021. That said, the [ACM Viewbook](#) includes documented information on the success of graduates in finding onward employment and graduate study opportunities. Our initial focus has been on ensuring we have data on rates of retention and measures of success such as employment in a student's chosen field post-graduation.

ACM [publishes extensive information](#) about the cost of our programs and the availability of financial aid, including the ability to apply for private student loans using our School of Record agreements. Our relatively small number of graduates means we do not yet have enough data to offer useful information about student debt repayment and default rates, particularly since our students do not have access to Federal student aid or loans.

ACM does not currently use contractual agents for recruitment or marketing. We are examining this possibility and will ensure, if we proceed, that their relationship with ACM is made clear to their interlocutors.

APPRAISAL

ACM is committed to integrity and transparency throughout our institution which is made clear in our manuals and policies. Our long experience working with U.S. institutions through IAU informs and supports ACM's culture of transparency and integrity in dealing with many constituencies. ACM has a robust website and a suite of publications that provide extensive and accurate information to prospective students. [Exit interviews](#) show that students are increasingly confident each year that they receive the information they need when they need it. Our experience in this area helped us maintain robust communications with our students during the chaotic initial phase of the COVID-19 pandemic, when we were praised by IAU and ACM students and IAU partner institutions for our transparent communication strategy.

Since ACM's founding in 2016 we have steadily put into place policies and procedures, particularly as they relate to students and academics. We have used expertise from our Resident Fellow program and the Council of Academic Advisors to guide us in that process. For example, the Duke University Dean of Students [reviewed](#) our student conduct policies while a Resident Fellow in 2018 yielding improvements in our procedures on behavior policy infractions. Now that the initial buildup phase is complete, we need to establish review schedules for making sure our published policies are up to date and adequate. In some instances, we still need to establish initial policies, such as an intellectual property rights policy, and a more robust non-discrimination and diversity policy. Review schedules will also help us maintain current faculty, board and staff information on the website.

Another area needing attention is published information on the nature and make up of our student body, as well as information on learning outcomes and assessment. We have begun to gather information on our student body, but this was delayed when COVID-19 budget restrictions required us to postpone plans to acquire a new Student Information System. Publication of assessment and learning outcome information must await further development of this area by our faculty (see Standards Six and Eight).

Our financial aid and recruitment procedures promote diversity in our student body, but we are committed to improving our results in this area. In 2020 we invested in training on diversity abroad for student affairs staff to strengthen our capacity, but we require better information from students on their needs in this area.

PROJECTIONS

In 2021

- Increase consistency and connectedness between the ACM and IAU websites, print and digital publications. (Action: Dean of Admissions)
- Establish webpage review schedule to ensure current information on websites (Action: Dean of Admissions)

In 2022

- Complete external review of website, print, and digital publications to further increase internal consistency and coherent user experience. (Action: Dean of Admissions)
- Increase student generated material and Student Life material on ACM website, including fully incorporating the original IAU Student Hub into the ACM website. (Action: Student Life Office)
- Create a central SharePoint site housing all internal policies, along with a similar public facing policy repository on the ACM website. (Action: VP of Administration, IT Manager, Assistant Director of Admissions and Alumni Affairs)
- Conduct an annual formal review of ACM's website to ensure information is up-to-date and accurate. (Action: Dean of Admissions)

In 2024

- Merge the ACM and IAU website into one cohesive outward-facing educational entity. (Action: Dean of Admissions)