PRME Sharing Information on Progress (SIP) Report

2017-2019
LETTER OF COMMITMENT TO THE PRME

The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) has the pleasure to reconfirm its commitment since 2011, to the Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME). The Holy Spirit University of Kaslik (USEK) in general, and the Business School in particular, have succeeded in promoting the PRME principles, and in reinforcing the alignment of the academic, research, and events activities in this direction. On November 13, 2018, the AACSB Initial Accreditation Committee accepted the initial Self-Evaluation Report (iSER) submitted by USEK Business School. Upon the acceptance of iSER, USEK Business School officially became a candidate for AACSB accreditation.

Fr. Prof. Georges Hobeika
President
Contents

1. Commitment to the PRME.................................................................4
2. Mission of USEK Business School..................................................4
3. Commitment Towards the Six Principles of PRME.............................4
4. Upcoming Activities........................................................................9
1. Commitment to the PRME

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2. Mission of USEK Business School

We offer quality programs in business in a student-centered environment and help our students in achieving their goals. Through enriching multidisciplinary programs, we nurture an entrepreneurial spirit and graduate civically minded and ethically responsible professionals for the sustainable development of Lebanon and the region.

3. Commitment Towards the Six Principles of PRME

USEK Business School is committed to the six principles of PRME, as per the below:

Principle 1 – Purpose:

Participation and organization of international seminars. USEK Business School organized and hosted on February 27 and 28, 2019 the BE Mena Beirut 2019 conference entitled “Accreditation for Reshaping Business Education in the MENA Region” in collaboration with AACSB International. The participation of Professor Dima Jamali, who is the UN Global Compact National Representative in Lebanon, as keynote speaker shows that the topic of sustainable Impact, Innovation and engagement regarding business schools was pivotal to the conference. During different panels, participants shared and discussed best practices in education that promote sustainable social and economic development in the wider community and country.
An important part of sustainability is gender equality. In order to create awareness for the topic, USEK Business School organized in March 2018 and 2019 respectively, the 2\textsuperscript{nd} and 3\textsuperscript{rd} editions of the “Executive Woman” in order to point to the achievements of women leaders in all fields and the difficulties of Lebanese women in a challenging and highly gendered patriarchal environment.

The USEK Green Committee that was created in 2016 and its initiative center around three fundamental perspectives: respects for the human condition, respect for the conservation of natural resources, and economic viability. One of the most recent achievements includes the launch of the USEK-Talaya Waterfall Initiative in October 2018. It aims to provide safe drinking water through a network of 5 fountains on campus. The initiative also promotes the reuse of plastic bottle and aims to cut down on the use of plastic bottles sent to landfills.

USEK Business Schools endeavors reflect the overarching role of sustainability on the level of university, which was acknowledged when the university was ranked First Sustainable and Green University in Lebanon and the 8\textsuperscript{th} most sustainable and green University in the Arab World according to the results of the UI GreenMetric World University Rankings 2018, released in December 2018, under the main themes “Universities, Impacts, and sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)”. USEK has also advanced 59 places internationally, to occupy the 180\textsuperscript{th} position in the world. The aim of GreenMetric Ranking is to provide the result of the assessment of the current conditions and policies related to Green Campus and Sustainability in the Universities all over the world. The ranking criteria and indicators include the Campus Setting and Infrastructure, Energy and Climate Change, Waste, Water, Transportation, and Education.
Principle 2 - Values:

On November 8, 2019 USEK’s Asher Center for Innovation and Entrepreneurship organized the Social Entrepreneurship Challenge (SEC) in Zahle’s regional university center (RUC). The SEC target students from across the university including business students to develop innovative ideas that tackle social and environmental challenges in order to find economically sustainable solutions for them. SEC aims to empower potential student social entrepreneurs by also providing support in form of mentoring, exposure and small cash prizes. Moreover, the winning team will gain international exposure and participate in an incubation boot camp and a startup competition at the university of Cleveland/Ohio. Altogether 11 teams participated from all USEK campuses and 1/3 of individual participants were from the USEK Business School.

The engagement of the business school with regards to the integration of social responsibility into the curriculum is also reflected in the creation of an Entrepreneurship Minor, which will be managed by the Business School, but will be offered to students across all Faculties/Schools. In this context, the Business School will be very shortly introducing a new social entrepreneurship course, which is a core course in the minor and an elective course in undergraduate management specialization. The Business School sees an important role in social entrepreneurship in order to support most social and environmentally disadvantaged communities in Lebanon. The School believes that higher education has an important role to play in equipping students with skills and a problem solvers’ mindset and provide them with lifelong capabilities to proactively address such problems and to help reduce inequality. Moreover, the Business School updated its existing Corporate Governance course to Corporate Governance and Business Ethics. Social responsibility is an essential part of the course, and it is as well widely integrated and discussed in courses, such as ‘Principles of Management’, ‘Strategic Management’ and ‘Foundations of Entrepreneurship’.

Principle 3 - Method:
USEK Business School has acknowledged that there is a greater need in higher education for ‘hand on’ and “learning by doing” as well as “learning through practice” approaches. In this context, many courses integrate case-based learning for students to deal with complex and interdisciplinary issues, that have an ethics or sustainability component. Through case-based learning, students can evaluate and decide on competing solutions. Moreover, especially in classes with entrepreneurship content, students learn through real life project, which give them a sense of responsibility and ownership in their university learning. USEK Business School faculty participated in specific trainings to enable them to integrate the ‘hands-on’ learning approaches in their teaching practice. In April and June 2019, two entrepreneurship workshops for faculty members will be offered.

**Principle 4 – Research:**

The Business School emphasizes research that is practice oriented and consistent with its emphasis on community and regional development. Faculty members have engaged in producing applied research in collaboration with other faculties across Lebanon and the Middle East with a particular emphasis on entrepreneurship. Here the role of gendered environments for entrepreneurship activities of women was addressed, but also the role of culture and social entrepreneurship.

To carry out its mission, the CIRAME Research Center has organized its activities along three research axes:

- Corporate Governance, Management and Entrepreneurship,
- Finance and Financial Economics,
- Marketing.

For example, the USEK Business School contributed to a 2018 publication in the TEMA Journal of Land Use, Mobility and Environment. They organized focus groups in collaboration with the International Association of Public Transport to understand public transport use by women and their expectations for a safer and more secure access to public transport.

**Principle 5 – Partnership:**
USEK interacts with a wide network of institutions, business corporations and practitioners in order to exchange knowledge and human resources. Through strong networks USEK Business Schools increases its capacities to deal with the manifold social and environmental challenges and to jointly detect and explore solutions.

The Business School is member of:

- AACSB (Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business),
- EFMD (European Foundation for Management Development),
- Scientific Committee of Eduniversal (SMBG),
- AUF (Agence Universitaire de la Francophonie).

Furthermore, the Business School is headquartering the General Secretariat for the Arab Society of Faculties of Business, Economic and Political Sciences (BEPS).

In addition to already existing partnerships with numerous universities and higher education institutions such as HEC Montréal-Canada, ESSCA School of Management-France, The Georges Washington University-USA, among many others. USEK is affiliated since December 2018 to the Babson Collaborative, an institutional membership organization for colleges and universities seeking to increase capabilities and capacities for developing entrepreneurship education.

USEK Business School has several interactions with corporations through its Corporate Relations Unit and the University Careers Office. These collaborations are especially interesting with regards to students who gain access to professional institutions and increase their opportunities for work engagement and internships.
Principle 6 – Dialogue:

USEK continuously supports an ‘open-minded’ dialog among educators, students, business, government, consumers, media, civil society organizations and other interested groups along with stakeholders on the diverse critical issues related to global social responsibility and sustainability.

In 2018, USEK Business School has created a Business Observatory Committee, which aims to bring external and professional insights into the School in order to ensure the delivery of quality programs that contribute to the sustainable development of the local and regional market. The Business Observatory Committee has the following concrete objectives:

- Bring important insights and expertise to review the programs’ learning goals and learning objectives,
- Propose topics for projects/thesis in the latest field advancements which outcomes could be beneficial to all parties,
- Widen the internships’ opportunities for USEK students,
- Evaluate the graduates’ level of achievement in respect of the educational requirements necessary to enter the profession,
- Provide constructive advice on issues critical to the success of the programs and based on current and future needs of the industry,
- Be part of any internal/external evaluation exercise.

4- Upcoming Activities

In line with its mission statement, the USEK Business School will be investing a large part of its resources on the impact, engagement, and innovation activities that will be undertaken in curricula, research, and events. The upcoming event BE Mena Beirut 2021 will take place on March 5 and 6. Upon the initiative of the Business School and Engineering faculty members, all Schools (including USEK Business School) will be organizing a university wide
entrepreneurship and innovation competition in collaboration with the UN. Interdisciplinary student teams will address issues as defined in the UN SDGs, and over the course of several months, there will be startup competitions as well as expositions and information events around the related topics.