Aliah University

STRATEGIC FUTURE PLANS

Aliah University, a state university in West Bengal, is the only University under the Department of Minority Affairs and Madrasah Education, Government of West Bengal. The University traces its genesis to a rich legacy dating back to 1780, when the British Governor General Warren Hastings set up the Calcutta Mohomedan College or Calcutta Madrasah. The University came into existence through the Aliah University Act (Act XXVII of 2007) passed by the West Bengal Legislative Assembly, effective from 5th April 2008, as a minority educational institution with autonomy.

"Advancement of Education and Culture" – the motto of the University echoes its vision to become a Centre of Excellence by imparting both traditional and modern knowledge through teaching and research. The University with 23 Departments has a mix of the traditional (Islamic Theology and Islamic Studies), modern (Engineering, MBA, Nursing) and the ever-green science and social science subjects like Mathematics, Statistics, Physics, Chemistry, History, Education, Geography, etc. and languages like Arabic, English, Urdu and Bengali. Right from the inception, the University has focused on development of the socially and educationally backward community including the minorities. Students belonging to different race, creed, caste and class are also equally welcome. First generation learners from different districts of rural Bengal consider Aliah University as the destination of their future in terms of higher studies and professional career. The uniqueness of the University lies in its offer of multidisciplinary programmes in 3 distinct campuses in Kolkata – the New Town campus offering science and professional courses, the Park Circus campus offering social science and languages and the Taltala campus (heritage campus) offering the traditional programmes. In addition the only-for-girls' Nursing programme ensures the empowerment of women. Keeping in tune with the requirements of time, Aliah University has followed the Choice-based Credit System (CBCS) and has now adopted the new Curriculum and Credit Framework, in line with NEP-2020.

In order to achieve the Mission of the University, ie., to nurture and produce forward-looking students with a focus on their intellectual, moral, and social development enabling them to excel in their chosen field of work in society, industry, business and academia, the Aliah University Act, 2007 has spelt out the following Objectives:
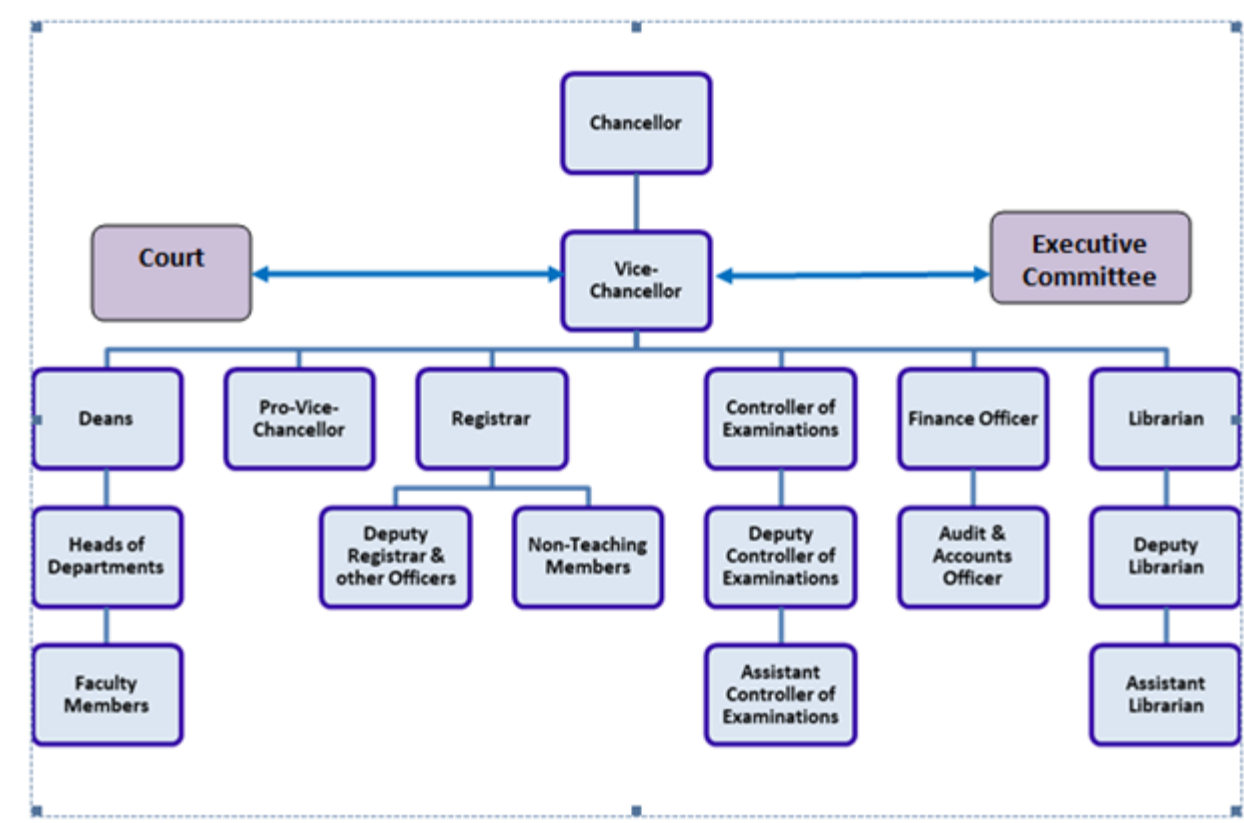
i.   to create educational opportunities for higher education and studies;

ii.   to encourage study of modern technological and professional courses along with classical languages, oriental studies, religious studies and Islamic culture;

iii.   to promote higher education amongst the Minorities in the State;

iv.   to disseminate and advance knowledge by providing instructional, educational, research and extension facilities in such branches of learning as it may deem fit;

v.   to provide students and teachers, the conducive atmosphere and necessary facilities for the promotion of –

    a.   innovations in education leading to restructuring of courses, new methods of teaching and learning and integral development of personality,

    b.   studies in various disciplines,

    c.   inter-disciplinary studies;

vi.   to develop centres of excellence for higher studies and research in theology, Islamic jurisprudence and Islamic culture, comparative religion, science and technology, professional and management education in the State by joint initiative i. e. State-Private partnership, if required;

vii.   national integration, secularism, international understanding, non-violence and humanism;

viii.   to avail better scope and opportunities to serve the societies and the Nation.

Based on the target of achieving the vision, mission and objectives laid down, the University has developed a perspective/strategic plan to promote excellence in all aspects.

Strategic Plan

1. Leadership & Governance

Aliah University, like any other UGC-approved Universities, is led by the hon'ble Vice Chancellor, who is in liaise with the Chancellor, as and when required. The Governor of West Bengal is the Chancellor of the University.

The Vice-Chancellor as the principal executive and academic officer of the University provides leadership in governance and management of all its initiatives and activities. He takes and approves decisions based on opinions, ideas, suggestions and recommendations of other individual officers like Registrar, Finance Officer, etc. and committees consisting of teachers, staff and occasionally students too, where the committee constitution so demands. He is also guided by various bodies of the University like the Court, the Executive Council, the Academic Council and so on.

The Court - the supreme Governing Body of the University - is inclusive in its diversified structure. It consists of not only stakeholders from within the University such as the Officers, Deans of Faculties, Librarian and HoDs, representatives of all categories of university teachers and non-teaching staff, students and research scholars, but also members from different walks of society and polity. It includes representatives of the State Government, members of the State Legislature, members of both Houses of the Parliament from the State, Higher Secondary school teachers, and representatives from learned professions, industry, banking, commerce, agriculture and scientific and technical societies. The structure of the Executive Council, the principal executive body of the University, is equally diversified, incorporating members from different sections of society, apart from academicians. The experience and expertise of such a broad-based community is certainly meant to enrich the management of the University affairs. The Academic Committee comprising Academic Deans, Head of the Departments, external experts discusses issues related to academics and takes decisions based on deliberations and majority consensus.

Be it the Court or the Executive Committee or the Finance Committee or Academic Committee, none of them impose their dictates on the running of the University affairs. These bodies generally endorse or ratify the decisions and resolutions adopted by the Departmental Committees or other committees constituted and notified by the executive functionaries of the University. However, they may – and do – modify, revise, suggest new ideas and practices. Individual and collective opinions are always welcomed, appreciated, and valued. In this way the process of decision-making really becomes decentralized and participatory. The Departments are independently run by the Head of the Departments in association with the faculty members and non-teaching staff members. All of them are actively involved in the institution's decision making process. Deans (Academic) assist the Departments in all academic administration.

Thus the institutional practices in policy formulation and implementation of decisions encourage and involve a decentralized, democratic, pluralist and participatory approach, effectively led by the Vice-Chancellor. In order to ensure effective leadership and governance, the following initiatives may be adopted.

Strategic Initiatives
- Transparency at all levels
- Implementation of all decisions taken at the highest level
- Project future expansion plans for new programmes, manpower, infrastructure, financial approval from the Government
- Empowerment of students by having their representation in decision making bodies as per Statute
- Effective Grievance redressal machinery

Targets
- Liaise with the concerned Ministry and Government bodies for smooth functioning through representatives in highest level committees and boards
- Meeting of all statutory bodies to be conducted at regular intervals
- Minutes of the meetings to be recorded and circulated on time for clear understanding of one and all
- Monitoring of implementation of all policies with scope for corrective measures
- Speedy grievance redressal
- Update of student representatives in different committees so that they do not become vacant once the representative pass out

2. Academic Fineness

To produce graduates, post graduates and research scholars of distinctive merit in an environment which will be academically and intellectually stimulating.

Students are the brand ambassadors of any University and they can make a mark in the society and industry through their academic brilliance and practical implementation of knowledge gathered. In order to ensure holistic development of the students – academic (covering science, social science, languages), physical sports, ethics, environmental education, etc., – the University shall take the following initiatives to achieve excellence in academics.

Strategic Initiatives
- Empower students with practical, innovative, technology-driven and outcome-based programmes.
- Introduce courses that will increase employability like value added and skill-based courses.
- Make students multi-lingual
- Introduce pedagogy that will focus on experiential learning, conceptual understanding, such that critical thinking and decision making skills are honed.
- Encourage students to be flexible while selecting their choice of subjects so that the breadth of their knowledge increases.
- Make students of all programmes computer-savvy, so that they can make use of e-contents and enroll in different online courses and become multi-skilled.
- Strengthen placement not only of professional courses but also general courses.
- Provide facilities like computer labs, required softwares, smart classrooms, playground for holistic development of the students.

Targets
- Introduce short term diploma/certificate courses on languages and other employability-driven courses that are skill-based.
- Provide soft skill training in communication skill, personality development, ethics, etc.
- Provide foreign language training.
- Create an academic environment that students would feel encouraged to create study hubs throughout the year not only in the library and class rooms but also in the canteen and open air.
- Based on inputs from the industry and student feedback, the curricula needs to be reviewed and updated periodically.
- Provide wider bouquet of subjects from which the students can choose their Major and Minor papers, value added courses and multi-disciplinary courses.
- For professional courses, factory visits will encourage the students and give them exposure to a real work environment.

3. Inclusive & Holistic Development
Marcos Tristao had said, "Cultivate love and kindness in a child to sow the seeds of compassion. And only then will you build a great civilization, a great nation…". The focus of today's academia has shifted from instilling only academic excellence in students to ensuring their holistic development in an inclusive environment where all the students are considered equal, irrespective of their caste, creed, language and domicile. In order to achieve inclusive and holistic development, the strategic measures

taken are as follows:

Strategic Initiatives
- Enhance employability through soft skill training and holistic development.
- Encourage participation in different inter-college competitions to develop social skills.
- Provide Self-Management courses with focus on discipline, attendance and time management.
- Invite experts from the industry to interact with the students and appreciate the soft skill requirements in addition to domain knowledge in professional courses.
- Gender sensitivity among students, faculty members and other staff members.
- Include the differently abled in all aspects of University life.
- Encourage students to actively participate in sports, NSS activities and NCC.
- Develop values that will be humanistic, ethical, constitutional and universal.
- Sensitize about environment – climate changes, sustainable development, etc.

Targets
- Continue with training programme on developing soft skills with more intensity which will help generate employment
- Groom students such that they are able to communicate effectively in English.
- Make giving presentations compulsory for all students in professional courses.
- Listening to English news, movies, songs, etc. to sharpen the hearing ability.
- Students must go through self-management exercises and self-evaluate.
- Adopt gender-neutral approach and have empathy for the differently abled.
- Participate in sports activities at inter- and intra-level, state-level and national level competitions.
- Encourage meditation and yoga.
- Provide value-based education to inculcate ethics, truth, righteous conduct, non-violence, love, peace, etc.
- Make Environmental Studies/ Environmental Science education mandatory in all programmes.

4. Excellence in Research & Innovation

University faculty members are considered as intellectual resource base and are expected to engage themselves in research as well as impart teaching. Research is an important parameter in deciding their career advancement and to bring laurels to the institution in terms of global ranking. The initiatives taken to excel in research and innovation are as follows:

Strategic Initiatives
- A dedicated Research cell is in place to encourage research by taking in research scholars in almost all programmes.
- Faculty members are encouraged to participate in seminars/conferences/workshops to share their research output and create network for academic collaborations.
- Along with research scholars, graduate and post-graduate students are encouraged to write academic papers for presenting in formal academic platforms.
- Departments are provided with financial assistance to organize seminars and conferences.
- Encourage faculty members to have Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs).
- Permissions and lien are granted for post-doctoral fellowship.
- Consultancy activities by the faculty members to increase research temperament.

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- Incubation Centre to nurture and develop innovative ideas of students.

Targets
- Increase Industry-academia collaboration to enhance creation of knowledge and find solution to problems through intensive research.
- Collaborate with Chambers of Commerce, membership of professional bodies to encourage interaction between the two so that practical research questions may evolve.
- Permit faculty members to participate in different forums as resource person to establish the brand as a research-oriented institution.
- Encourage publication in indexed journals, like Scopus, Web of Science, etc. by all faculty members and research scholars.
- Have all PhD thesis uploaded in Shodhganga repository.
- Have software to check similarity index.
- Provide proper infrastructural facilities and maintain conducive research environment for all research scholars.
- Have e-journals and databases for research available in the library.
- Create awareness of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) through seminars
- Create awareness about National Innovation and Start-up Policy (NISP)
- Encourage students to develop start up ideas under the guidance of Institution Innovation Council (IIC), set up in line with the recommendations of Ministry of Education, Govt. of India.
- Empower students to be entrepreneurs and provide employment to others

5. Community Engagement

Focus on ethical, moral and spiritual development of students so that there is fellow feeling and empathy for the needy.

Strategic Initiatives
- Participate in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) activities
- Engage students in Community Development programmes

Targets
- Organize CSR activities like Blood Donation camp, tree plantation, etc.
- Adopt villages for development
- Community Development programmes to be organized by NSS wings
- Participate in community development programmes which will be considered equivalent to summer internship programme in UG level.
- Sign MoUs with NGOs to participate in outreach activities
- Showcase all community engagement and outreach activities conducted by Nursing Dept., NSS units, etc.

6. Infrastructural facilities including Technology-enabled teaching-learning

The requirement of infrastructural facilities like proper class rooms, ventilation, smart class rooms,, laboratory with adequate equipment and consumables, computer labs, library facilities, canteen, etc, make a university more acceptable to students. Keeping in mind the need to turn all educational institutions to world class institutions and future expansion plans, the strategic initiatives and targets are

as given below:

Strategic Initiatives
- Assess scope for future expansion of academic buildings and hostel facilities
- Implement accommodation facility of faculty members and staff.
- Provide technology and technological support in classrooms, computer laboratories, etc.
- Customized inter-linked ERP system in admission, administration, examination and accounts
- Create Central Instrumentation Facility for engineering departments
- Digital library facilities to enable access to e-resources from remote locations
- Clean and hygienic canteen facilities
- Parking slots for cars, bikes and bi-cycles
- Campus beautification

Targets
- Approval of expansion plans and required investment from internal committees and Government of West Bengal
- Procure world class servers and make internet and intranet facilities available free of cost
- Class rooms to be equipped with projectors for audio-visual presentations, internet and microphone system for clear hearing.
- Proper cleanliness and maintenance of available facilities including lawns and gardens
- EMC with appropriate agencies for maintenance of ERP, computers, elevators, drinking water facilities, etc.
- Hygienic check of canteen facilities at regular intervals
- Maintain drainage system to prevent water logging
- Sign MoUs with appropriate agencies for waste disposal
- Maintain and create more facilities for the differently abled or Divyangans

7. Placement

The Training & Placement Cell plays pivotal role in providing employment and preparing the students to be employable through proper structured training and grooming. In order to improve its functions more, the strategic initiatives and targets set are as follows:

Strategic Initiatives
- Increase the inventory of companies interested to visit the campus for placement
- More impetus on training of technical aspects, soft skill including grooming
- Participate in Job Fairs and Book Fairs

Targets
- Organize HR Conclave where HR Managers of different companies shall visit the campus and participate in the Conclave
- Invite more and more corporate representatives in different programmes
- Increase placement of other non-professional courses like Science & Humanities.
- Sign MoUS with different training providers
- Encourage students to participate in various value added programmes offered free of cost by many corporate sectors specially from IT sector.

8. Quality Assurance, Enhancement and Global Mindset

The University shall try to assure and enhance Quality of all its academic programmes and administration. In order to do so the strategic initiatives and targets set are as follows:

Strategic Initiatives
- Be accredited by registered bodies
- Collaboration with foreign Universities for exchange of both student and faculty members.
- Building intellectual capital with a global mindset
- Stress on faculty development, interaction with industry, research, and publications.

Targets
- To participate in accreditation and rating by independent bodies for better brand presence.
- Create Centres of Excellence
- Develop human resources with commitment to excellence in personal and professional life
- Sign MoUs with different institutions of repute for exchange programmes
- Keep faculty members updated through participation in faculty development programmes
- Represent the University in various academic forums to enhance brand building
- Collaborate with national & international Institutes and industry-academia interface to assure and enhance quality.
- Engagement of alumni

The strategic initiatives once implemented will lead to academic excellence and integrity, outstanding teaching and service, scholarly research in emerging and interdisciplinary fields, ensuring inclusivity, diversity, equity with strong commitment towards community engagement and outreach activities and make India proud of her future responsible citizens.