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INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to introduce to you University of Calgary — Qatar’s (UCQ’s) Strategic Plan. Qatar is undergoing a tremendous change in the healthcare sector and part of that change is the new focus on nurses and the potential of the nursing profession in this evolving healthcare system. Qatar needs thousands of nurses, which presents an unlimited opportunity for University of Calgary — Qatar faculty, staff and students to positively impact patient care, nursing education and health research. Given the scope of the 2030 vision for Qatar, the opportunities for nurse graduates from UCQ are endless.

In developing this Strategic Plan, both before my arrival and since, UCQ has looked to the Qatar National Vision, the National Health Strategy and the newly launched Nursing Strategy, as well as the Eyes High Strategy developed by the University of Calgary. Our priorities, laid out in detail within the document, are focused around growth, our commitment to students and to employees, improving the image of the nursing profession in Qatar, and developing strong partnerships. Under development is a research strategic plan, focusing directly on our growth and development in those areas that are so closely tied to nursing education.

For nursing education, patient care will always be the core focus. Students studying at UCQ will have significant opportunities to be involved in health research that informs their practice. This establishment of a strong research program is one way of influencing change in nursing practice here in Qatar. Much of the research conducted at UCQ is interprofessional in nature and remains a strength and priority of our university. Her Highness Sheikha Moza bint Nasser has initiated the formation of an Academic Health System (AHS) in Qatar, a collaboration of health and health education agencies. UCQ is proud to be an active partner in the AHS and encourages interdisciplinary patient care as well as interdisciplinary education for healthcare professionals.

We are confident University of Calgary — Qatar has created a Strategic Plan that will steer our direction and continue to create opportunities for engagement, collaboration and partnership with key stakeholders and health partner agencies. Creating such a culture of community provides opportunities for UCQ students, alumni, faculty and staff to connect with community partners, share knowledge and experience and create innovations that promote nursing excellence. I want to say thank you to our stakeholders who helped to develop and who are implementing our strategic plan. UCQ is proud to be a partner in Qatar’s ongoing development in healthcare and education.

Sincerely,

Kim A. Critchley, R.N. PhD
Dean and CEO
The University of Calgary — Qatar (UCQ) vision, mission, values and core commitments reflect both its origins in Calgary and its unique status in Qatar.
VISION, MISSION, VALUES & CORE COMMITMENTS

The University of Calgary – Qatar is at the forefront of health promotion and disease prevention in Qatar. While educating the future nurses of Qatar, we will engage individuals, families and communities in activities designed to enhance family capacity to attain and improve health. Our nursing students and graduates will practice in the community, in primary health centres, in clinics and schools, and in acute care hospitals.

Our program exemplifies a vision of modern nursing that develops graduates who deliver evidence-based healthcare and are strong critical thinkers and change agents, whose focus is the entire family.

The University of Calgary – Qatar vision, mission, values and core commitments reflect both our origins in Calgary and our unique status in Qatar.

VISION

To enrich health and wellness in Qatar and the Gulf region through world-class education of nursing leaders and practitioners.

MISSION

To excel in:

1. Educating nurses who will become renowned for excellence in practice.
2. Preparing nurse leaders who will contribute to development of emerging healthcare systems.
3. Research and educational initiatives that will contribute to health and wellness.

VALUES

In addition to the stated University of Calgary values of INTEGRITY and RESPECT, Nursing, as a professional discipline, has a social contract with the public. There is an expectation of ACCOUNTABILITY for the quality and competency of our graduates. University of Calgary – Qatar expects that nurses will exert ADVOCACY and LEADERSHIP on matters of health and wellness, social justice, and cultural diversity for the betterment of the community.
OUR FACULTY
UCQ currently employees 56 faculty members including Nursing, English as a Second Language and Foundation Program Instructors. All faculty members are Canadians with support staff representing more than 12 nationalities.

OUR GRADUATES
Since 2010, UCQ has graduated 39 students, including 17 Qatari nationals. Our graduate nurses have unique opportunities to contribute to their community and work at the forefront of Qatar’s world class health care system.

OUR PROGRAMS
• BACHELOR OF NURSING DEGREE
UCQ currently offers two degree programs, the Post-Diploma Bachelor of Nursing degree for working nurses who have already earned a recognized nursing diploma, and the Regular Track Bachelor of Nursing degree for high school graduates.

• DIPLOMA PROGRAM
In partnership with HMC, UCQ now offers a diploma program. Graduates will be able to work in hospitals or choose to continue with their studies towards the Bachelor of Nursing degree program.

• FOUNDATION PROGRAM
The Foundation Program offers English language and academic skill development to UCQ students. Flexible and supportive, the program allows students to take courses that apply to their nursing degree while upgrading their skills in biology, math, chemistry, university level reading and writing and computer fundamentals.

• MASTERS OF NURSING
UCQ now offers a Master of Nursing Degree in Oncology in partnership with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). The first class of 8 students started in January 2013.

HANDS-ON LEARNING
UCQ’s high-tech Clinical Simulation Centre is among the first of its kind in Qatar. Hi-Fidelity simulation in nursing education uses life-like, computer-based manikins in a realistic setting to recreate diverse patient scenarios, allowing students to gain confidence and competence as they practice nursing skills. The use of standardized patients and virtual reality platforms is also integrated within the curriculum. In addition to learning in the Clinical Simulation Centre, students are placed in clinical settings in the community to work with patients of all ages and learn clinical competencies in such areas as acute care, community health and homecare. UCQ faculty and staff have forged collaborative training partnerships with many organizations in Qatar, including the Red Crescent, Hamad Medical Corporation, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, the Diabetes Association, Sidra and the Ministries of Health and Education.

RESEARCH SUCCESS
UCQ faculty and students have been awarded several research grants through the Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP) and the National Priorities Research Program (NPRP) administered by the Qatar National Research Fund.
CORE COMMITMENTS

• To create a learning centred environment that
  a. responds to learner needs, aspirations, and previous experiences;
  b. values and respects students and faculty as collaborative partners in teaching and active learning;
  c. inspires and energizes through faculty orientation to action;
  d. involves students in all aspects of faculty scholarship.

• To situate learning in a research-centred ethos that
  a. prepares students at all program levels to skillfully interpret and apply research findings;
  b. incorporates and values diverse modes of generating, validating and disseminating knowledge;
  c. educates and mentors future nurse researchers to address significant health issues.

• To promote interprofessional learning and practice by
  a. mentoring students in the professional culture, ethics and responsibilities of nursing;
  b. fostering learning that enables nurses to recognize, articulate, and value the unique contributions of the nursing profession;
  c. assisting nurses to develop values and skills that foster collaboration in practice with other professions;
  d. creating and supporting partnerships within and external to the university.

• To demonstrate a tangible “return to community” by
  a. providing nursing professionals prepared to practice in diverse health care settings;
  b. engaging in nursing scholarship informed by current issues that influence health, wellness, and health care systems;
  c. responding to the needs of the profession and the communities we are committed to serve by participating in the transfer of new knowledge, skills, and technologies;
  d. preparing leaders in the development and delivery of primary healthcare services that contribute to health care system renewal and sustainability;
  e. achieving prominence through advancement of health and wellness.

• To honour the achievements of Islamic and Arabic civilizations by
  a. contextualizing course content to include Qatar culture and health care systems;
  b. modifying learning experiences to reflect Arabic and Islamic values.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 1: GROW STRATEGICALLY

Since 2007, the student population has increased 550%. With a recruitment and enrollment strategy, the coming years will ensure a healthy and sustainable increase in student, faculty and staff population. Thus, the plan for growing strategically focuses on the following goals.

1.1. Continue to increase student numbers – A commitment has been made to recruit, support and retain students in all areas: foundation, diploma, undergraduate and graduate programs. Continued and sustainable growth is essential. Partnerships for articulation agreements are under development.

1.2. Launch appropriate new programs in Nursing – New programs complementary to existing offerings and to meet specific market demands, for example, thesis stream for Master’s Program.

1.3. Build research and graduate studies intensiveness – Supporting a research culture is essential to developing graduate programs. UCQ’s graduate studies program will build on the availability of nursing PhDs and their research.

1.4. Continue the mentoring of students – The provision of solid mentoring and support for students in their studies is essential to the effective retention of students.

1.5. Continue recruitment of faculty members and staff – In parallel with increasing student numbers and new programs, UCQ’s faculty and staff complement will need to keep pace in an increasingly competitive market. Opportunities for adjunct appointments with other healthcare agencies have begun.

1.6. Continue to enhance the student life experience – The engagement of our students in extracurricular activities is a goal shared by all of UCQ and is a key component to a successful student experience.

1.7. Develop new and innovative sources of financial support for students to provide scholarships and bursaries – While sponsorships have been increasing for UCQ students, some students who do not qualify for sponsorship must meet the admission requirements into the program but do not have the means to pay full tuition. Additional ways of funding for these students needs to be determined. These include both public and private sector support.

1.8. Plan for long-term space requirements – As UCQ continues to grow, the need for new space to accommodate new programs will need to be considered.

1.9. Engage alumni – Alumni are an essential part of the university’s success. They provide feedback on their experience and are also advocates for UCQ. Establishing an active Alumni Society will assist in future advocacy for UCQ.
STRATEGIC PRIORITY 2: STRENGTHEN IDENTITY AND PARTNERSHIPS AND INCREASE THE PROFILE OF NURSING

UCQ has made considerable inroads at connecting with the Qatar healthcare community since its inception in 2007. In addition, UCQ’s media efforts have begun to positively change the image of the nurse in Qatar. To strengthen its identity, UCQ must continue to strategically expand its horizons at local education institutions, healthcare, business, industry, government, and research. Thus, our strategy for strengthening our identity and partnership focuses on the following strategic goals.

2.1. Continue to nurture and expand strong relationships with stakeholders in Qatar – It is imperative that UCQ maintains and builds strong relationships and partnerships to support and build educational programs and research relevant to Qatar.

2.2. Continue to build strong relationships with the University of Calgary – The University of Calgary is UCQ’s Canadian academic support. It is essential that ongoing relationships with all relevant departments and faculties are cultivated and maintained to ensure ongoing support and compliance.

2.3. Increase UCQ’s visibility in Qatar – UCQ must be proactive in its overall media and recruitment strategies.

2.4. Improve attitudes and beliefs about nursing in Qatar – While we have begun to change the image of nursing in Qatar, a great deal needs to be done to promote the image of the modern nurse.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 3: DELIVER A QUALITY LEARNING EXPERIENCE

UCQ is dedicated to providing the highest quality of nursing education based on Canadian standards. The provision of a Foundation Program and English for Academic Purposes provides the building blocks to pursue the professional nursing program. In order to deliver the highest quality of education we focus on the following strategic goals.

3.1. Continue to support and improve teaching and learning – The teaching skills and pedagogies required to provide a quality learning experience for our students need to be consistent with the context in which they are used and appropriate for the program in which they are applied. The Centre for Teaching and Learning will continue to provide faculty with mentorship and support through the use of appropriate pedagogical techniques and skills to teach our students in the most effective ways possible.

3.2. Continue to improve student support for learning – Learning the skills necessary to become effective nurses, especially in a second-language environment, is difficult and requires ongoing and appropriate support. UCQ will continue to foster new and innovative ways to learn and to be successful as nursing students and as lifelong learners. Appropriate support will continue to improve and grow to meet the needs of our students.

3.3. Continuously improve curricula – For a program to remain current and maintain its excellence, constant evaluation and feedback must be sought from students, faculty, alumni, and our healthcare partners.

3.4. Continue to enhance student learning through effective learning support – All students will have access to support services and resources that enhance their learning experience both inside and outside the classroom. This addresses the learning needs of students on an individual or group basis.

STRATEGIC PRIORITY 4: CONTINUE TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPABILITY

UCQ has been in operation since 2007 and is a fully developed campus with reporting relationships to the State of Qatar and the University of Calgary, and to its Joint Oversight Board. It is time to review and adjust administrative practices to provide for an effective and efficient organization. Having motivated, committed and competent faculty and staff at all levels remains critical to UCQ’s success. Our strategy for continuing to improve organizational capability focuses on the following three goals.

4.1. Improve organizational performance – We are committed to focusing on the following: 1) understanding and stabilizing our processes; 2) clarifying roles and responsibilities; and 3) improving communication and understanding amongst ourselves.

4.2. Ensure our values are alive and well – They are already well entrenched but these values need to be continuously flowing to students and employees. We will develop reliable processes to ensure that on a daily basis we conduct ourselves according to these values.

4.3. Assess institution risks and implement appropriate mitigation strategies – As UCQ grows, it will become increasingly important to continue to identify and mitigate risks (both internal and external) associated with UCQ’s operations.
It is our privilege to be contributing to the growth and development of Qatar’s healthcare and education systems. Together we are focused on the future of Qatar and the profession of Nursing. This strategic plan will direct our path, and will be reviewed regularly and adjusted accordingly as we move forward.

Thank you to everyone who contributed to the development of the strategic plan and to those who are participating in its daily implementation.