AKSOB Year in Review

Strategic Progress and Institutional Advances

Academic Year 2025–2026

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> ***In a nutshell:*** AY 2025-2026 was a year of strategic renewal for AKSOB, marked by new institutional direction, sharpened strategic priorities, expanded academic offerings, stronger support systems, collective academic effort and the launch of platforms that reinforce the school's long-term impact and visibility.

Executive Summary

The Academic Year 2025–2026 marked a **transformational period for AKSOB**, characterized by a comprehensive strategic renewal, institutional restructuring, and accelerated innovation across teaching, research, and external engagement.

Following the appointment of Dean Prof. Dima Jamali, the School:

- Launched a **new Strategic Plan (2025–2032)**
- Introduced a **renewed mission and vision aligned with AACSB standards**
- Activated **four strategic pillars and cross-cutting priorities (AI, ESG, Entrepreneurship, and Family Business)**
- Expanded its **academic portfolio and program pipeline**
- Strengthened **research productivity and global visibility**
- Initiated work for **major school platforms (Impact Center, Venture Lab, AI Lab)**
- Automated major processes and added several useful Dashboards to facilitate operations

This report highlights the **most significant institutional advances** introduced during the year, emphasizing **structural, strategic, and long-term transformations.**

Strategic Area	Key Developments
Strategic renewal and governance	A new Dean's Office was formed, the School undertook a strategic review, and a renewed mission, vision, and strategic framework were advanced.
Academic portfolio and curriculum	AKSOB launched the MS in Business Data Analytics, advanced the MS in Finance and Accounting and DBA proposals, revised MBA and EMBA content and directions, developed AI-related and digital offerings, and introduced new forward-looking and market-responsive offerings across several programs.
Student support and recruitment	The school expanded experiential learning, career-readiness initiatives, summer camp pipelines, open classes for prospective students, and international exchange pathways, while planning an early alert student-retention system.
Faculty development and research support	Faculty development expanded through CIL training, an AI-focused professional development series, a university AI literacy course, and research-support mechanisms including teaching innovation and research grants.

Operational excellence and digital transformation	AKSOB introduced a live data dashboard, strengthened research visibility systems, expanded alumni digital infrastructure, and intensified preparations for the AACSB Peer Review Visit in 2027.
Institutional platforms and innovation ecosystem	The school launched four strategic committees in Artificial Intelligence, ESG/Sustainability, Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Family Business, advanced the Venture Lab platform, activated four existing institutes, and strengthened interdisciplinary academic initiatives and applied innovation pathways.
Strategic engagement and public dialogue	AKSOB relaunched the School Advisory Board, launched the Alumni Advisory Board, established institute-level advisory structures, expanded partnerships and MoUs, and strengthened visibility through engagement platforms such as the AKSOB Circle, public dialogue events, and policy briefs.
Institutional culture and recognition	The relaunch of Awards Day and the Wall of Fame initiative strengthened community recognition and institutional identity while celebrating faculty, student, and alumni achievements.

Together, these developments represent worthwhile and significant milestones in AKSOB's strategic transformation, strengthening the School's capacity to deliver high-quality business education while deepening its contribution to industry, policy, and society.

1. Strategic Renewal, Governance, and Institutional Direction

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB reinforced its institutional direction through a renewed mission, a structured strategic framework (DRIVE 2025–2032), and strengthened governance via the Advisory Board, positioning the school for its next phase of strategic growth and AACSB alignment.

During the year, AKSOB strengthened its strategic foundations by revisiting key elements of its institutional direction and governance architecture. The school revised its Vision and Mission to align with AACSB expectations and its upcoming accreditation cycle, placing greater emphasis on responsible leadership, entrepreneurial thinking, and data-driven innovation. In parallel, the school introduced the DRIVE strategic framework for 2025–2032 to organize future efforts around five pillars: Dynamic Scholarship, Reimagined Learning, Innovation Flow, Versatile Globalization, and Enabled Agility. The establishment of a new School Advisory Board also strengthened AKSOB's external interface and created a more structured platform for industry guidance and strategic engagement.

2. Academic Portfolio Development and Program Innovation

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB significantly advanced its academic portfolio by launching new programs, developing future-oriented minors and certificates, and revisiting flagship offerings to ensure relevance and competitiveness.

AKSOB made important progress in modernizing and expanding its academic portfolio. A major milestone was the launch of the MS in Business Data Analytics in Fall 2025, reflecting the school's commitment to future-oriented and market-responsive graduate education. The school also prepared for the launch of the MS in Finance & Accounting for Fall 2026 and advanced the Doctorate in Business Administration proposal through internal review channels. In addition, AKSOB introduced new minors in Digital Marketing and Fashion Marketing and developed stackable graduate certificates in areas such as Pharmaceutical Management & Market Access, Consultancy for Sustainable Development, and Accounting Foundations with Integrated AI.

Further strengthening this direction, the school designed proposals for a Minor in AI in Business, a Minor in Entrepreneurship, and a Graduate Certificate in AI in Business, in addition to new courses related to Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability and ESG, and Entrepreneurship, to be incorporated into the curriculum following Spring 2026. These developments reflect AKSOB's continued commitment to equipping students with interdisciplinary knowledge and future-ready competencies increasingly required in evolving business environments.

The school also undertook a substantial review of its MBA and EMBA offerings to enhance rigor, strengthen positioning, and ensure continued relevance in a rapidly changing business environment. Looking ahead, AKSOB is also expanding its global footprint through the planned launch of the Bachelor of International Business at the LAU New York campus.

3. Student Success and Experiential Learning Ecosystem

> ***In a nutshell:*** The School enhanced student support by combining academic intervention, co-curricular engagement, career development, and recruitment outreach into a more intentional student success ecosystem.

A key area of focus during the year was strengthening the student experience through more proactive and structured support mechanisms. AKSOB piloted an At-Risk Intervention Plan (ARIP) to identify and support students facing academic difficulty through targeted advising and Academic Improvement Plans. The school also introduced a zero-credit co-curricular graduation requirement to encourage broader student engagement in workshops, competitions, internships, and other developmental activities. In parallel, career readiness was elevated through the introduction of the Career Literacy Bootcamp and the Career Passport Program, helping position student development as a more intentional and progressive journey rather than a set of isolated interventions. AKSOB also expanded its recruitment and outreach efforts through initiatives such as the Future Business Leaders Summer Camp and the Open Class Initiative, which offer prospective students early exposure to the school's progressive learning environment and pedagogical approach.

4. Research Support and Faculty Empowerment

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB expanded faculty support through structured professional development, targeted funding, and mission-aligned platforms that encourage research productivity, teaching innovation, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

AKSOB benefited from a more systematic faculty development environment through the Center for Innovative Learning. Faculty training during the year addressed active learning, assessment, learning management systems, gradebook analytics, and instructional effectiveness. This helped move professional development from occasional workshops toward a more structured capability-building approach. The school invested in creating stronger conditions for faculty development, research productivity, and teaching innovation. New discretionary funding mechanisms were introduced to support both research and pedagogical advancement, including Research Support Grants and Teaching Innovation Grants, each up to $2,000. AKSOB also strengthened faculty-led thematic platforms by activating strategic committees and revitalizing related institutes across Artificial Intelligence, Sustainability and ESG, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Family Business. These efforts signal a deliberate move toward creating more organized, and mission-aligned spaces for interdisciplinary collaboration, thought leadership, and external engagement.

5. Operational Excellence and Digital Transformation

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB advanced data-driven management, strengthened digital infrastructure, and enhanced institutional readiness for AACSB accreditation through improved systems, analytics, and visibility tools.

To support more effective, evidence-based management, AKSOB continued to modernize its operational infrastructure. A key milestone was the deployment of a live AKSOB dashboard that provides real-time visibility into student counts, research metrics, and MOUs, thereby supporting data-informed decision-making. At the same time, the school intensified preparations for the AACSB Peer Review Visit scheduled for March 2027 by standardizing faculty CVs and enhancing faculty research visibility through Scopus and Google Scholar profiles. AKSOB also advanced its digital visibility and alumni engagement infrastructure, including the ongoing development of a centralized Digital Alumni Hub, alongside a stronger emphasis on social media presence and communications coherence.

6. Strategic Engagement, Visibility, and Signature Events

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB elevated its external engagement and visibility through high-impact events, policy dialogue platforms, and strategic interactions with stakeholders, reinforcing its role as a hub for public discourse and thought leadership.

AKSOB used its event portfolio strategically to strengthen visibility, deepen external engagement, and position the school as an active contributor to public, academic, and professional dialogue. Across the year, the school convened a range of high-impact engagements, including fireside chats, panel discussions, seminars, and dialogue-based events featuring ministers, policymakers, renowned figures from the corporate, policy, and professional spheres, and academic experts. Through the AKSOB Circle, the School's flagship platform for high-level dialogue, AKSOB hosted high-level conversations on issues such as AI governance, FinTech, and public sector HR reform, reinforcing the school's role as a platform for dialogue on pressing national and global issues. The Beirut Economics Seminar series continued to provide an important venue for scholarly exchange and international academic engagement. Complementing these conversations, AKSOB launched a series of Policy Briefs that translate academic insights and research into concise recommendations to inform public debate and decision-making. Together, these initiatives reinforce AKSOB's role not only as an academic institution but also as an active and responsible contributor to national policy discussions and public discourse.

The school also worked to deepen ties with its Advisory Board through targeted interactions that connect students more directly with leaders from practice, while reinforcing curriculum relevance and career awareness. In this context, the AKSOB Meet & Greet / Student Showcase, originally planned as an in-person event, was redesigned into an online format in response to the crisis. The event will bring together AKSOB and AKSOB Alumni Advisory Board members with students in breakout-room discussions organized around seven timely themes: ESG, Artificial Intelligence, Entrepreneurship, Family Business, Career Readiness, Leadership and the Future of Work, and Business Resilience in Times of Uncertainty. This format reflects the school's commitment to preserving meaningful engagement, mentoring, and dialogue despite challenging circumstances.

In addition, AKSOB is organizing a Showcase and Competition Day that will spotlight outstanding student projects from across various courses, with particular emphasis on projects embedding artificial intelligence and innovative business applications. Selected students will present their work to the broader School community and to Advisory Board members, offering a visible platform for recognizing excellence in applied learning, creativity, and interdisciplinary problem-solving. The event will also include awards and prizes for winning projects, further reinforcing a culture of innovation, recognition, and student achievement.

7. Four Institutional Verticals and Strategic Initiatives

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB translated its strategic priorities into action by activating key strategic platforms across AI, ESG, Innovation and Entrepreneurship, and Family Business, strengthening its innovation ecosystem and building integrated bridges between academia, industry, and societal impact.

During the year, AKSOB advanced several institutional platforms designed to translate strategic priorities into sustained academic and industry engagement. A central development was the activation of four strategic committees in Artificial Intelligence, ESG/Sustainability, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Family Business, alongside renewed momentum across four thematic institutes. Together, these platforms are designed to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration, support applied innovation, and position the school as an active contributor to business practice and public dialogue.

A major milestone this year was the operationalization of four faculty-led strategic committees focused on Artificial Intelligence, ESG, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Family Business. Together, these committees represent an important step toward moving AKSOB from fragmented initiatives to more coordinated institutional priorities that support curriculum innovation, research collaboration, and industry engagement. In the field of Artificial Intelligence, AKSOB advanced a comprehensive framework for integrating AI across its academic and operational activities. The initiative promotes responsible AI practices in teaching and research while laying the groundwork for new academic offerings, including interdisciplinary AI in Business Minor, faculty development initiatives, and the establishment of an AI Innovation Lab to support experimentation and collaboration with industry partners.

In ESG and sustainability, the school deepened its commitment to responsible management education. AKSOB joined the United Nations Principles for Responsible Management Education (PRME) and became a member of the MENA Business Schools Alliance for Sustainability (MEBAS), thereby strengthening its alignment with global sustainability initiatives. At the academic level, sustainability and ESG concepts began to be integrated across programs, with courses and modules embedded within different majors to ensure that students across disciplines develop a strong understanding of responsible business practices. These academic developments are complemented by initiatives such as the Tech4Impact sustainability forum and the Green Skills for a Green Economy training program, which bring together students, professionals, and industry partners to explore solutions for sustainable development.

At the same time, the Family Business Strategic Committee began developing a comprehensive strategy to strengthen AKSOB's leadership in family business education and engagement. Recognizing the central role of family enterprises in the Lebanese economy, the committee proposed an integrated framework that combines education, research, and industry partnerships. Among the key initiatives are the development of a Family Business Lab and a Family Business Arbitration & Advisory Unit, designed to support family-owned enterprises through consulting, governance advisory, and conflict mediation.

In parallel with these efforts, the Entrepreneurship & Innovation Strategic Committee continued to develop a university-wide framework to strengthen entrepreneurship education and applied innovation pathways. Through benchmarking international programs and mapping entrepreneurship-related courses across LAU, the committee is working to align initiatives across schools while expanding opportunities for experiential learning and collaboration with the innovation ecosystem.

Building on this momentum, AKSOB also advanced the AKSOB Venture Lab, a platform designed to help students and alumni transform innovative ideas into viable ventures. Through initiatives such as the Venture Lab Ignition Program powered by SYMZ Capital, participants receive mentorship, venture-building training, and exposure to investors. By connecting academic projects with venture development opportunities, the Venture Lab strengthens experiential learning while bridging the gap between academic innovation and real-world startup creation.

Alongside these initiatives, several of AKSOB's thematic institutes experienced renewed momentum. The Institute for Banking & Finance, relaunched in Fall 2025, began implementing a new strategy to strengthen connections with the financial sector through practitioner events, student competitions, and industry partnerships. Early initiatives included a flagship panel discussion addressing Lebanon's financial crisis and collaborations with regional banking institutions on digital banking and financial innovation.

Similarly, the Institute of Human Resources Management expanded its engagement with public and private organizations while preparing new initiatives such as the LAU HRM Summit. The institute also launched activities addressing workforce transformation, including programs focused on the future of skills and HR reform in the public sector.

The Institute for Hospitality & Tourism also entered a new phase of development following its relaunch. The institute strengthened engagement with the hospitality and tourism sector through industry partnerships, applied research, and experiential learning initiatives. Early activities included industry events, consulting projects with private sector partners, and interdisciplinary collaborations giving students hands-on exposure to hospitality innovation and service excellence.

Finally, the Institute for Family and Entrepreneurial Business (IFEB) continued to serve as a foundational platform connecting academic expertise with family-owned enterprises across Lebanon and the wider region. Established in 2000 as one of the first academic centers in the Middle East dedicated to family business management and corporate governance, IFEB continues to promote research, executive education, and dialogue around family enterprise leadership and governance.

Together, these initiatives illustrate AKSOB's continued progress in building institutional platforms that connect academic knowledge, industry practice, and societal impact.

8. Recognizing Community and Institutional Culture

> ***In a nutshell:*** The school reinforced community spirit and institutional identity by creating more visible and structured ways to celebrate excellence, service, and collective achievement.

AKSOB also gave attention to recognition, morale, and institutional culture. The relaunch of AKSOB Awards Day created a structured opportunity to recognize excellence across faculty, students, and alumni, supported by a new online nomination process. In addition, the initiation of the Wall of Fame project reflected an effort to honor long-serving faculty members and preserve institutional memory while reinforcing a sense of shared identity and continuity within the school.

Looking Ahead

> ***In a nutshell:*** AKSOB enters the next phase from a position of strength, with the priority now shifting from launching initiatives to consolidating implementation, sustaining momentum, and sharpening long-term differentiation.

The 2025–2026 academic year was characterized by meaningful progress and important milestones across multiple dimensions of the school's work. AKSOB advanced its academic portfolio, strengthened support systems for students and faculty, enhanced operational readiness, and expanded its external engagement. More importantly, these initiatives were not pursued in isolation; they have been gradually institutionalized and collectively reflect a broader effort to position AKSOB as an agile, forward-looking, and impact-driven business school.

As the school moves into the next academic year, the focus will be on deepening implementation, consolidating gains, and sustaining momentum in areas that support academic quality, institutional visibility, and long-term strategic differentiation.

In summary: AY 2025-2026 was a year of strategic renewal for AKSOB, marked by new institutional direction, sharpened strategic priorities, expanded academic offerings, stronger support systems, and the launch of platforms that reinforce the school's long-term impact and visibility. These achievements provide a strong foundation for the next phase of AKSOB's growth, innovation, and impact, while opening a wide range of new opportunities for the years ahead.

Appendix: Consolidated Change Log for AY 2025-2026

The table below groups the main changes by status to distinguish between what was launched, what was formalized, and what was materially advanced during the year.

Status	Change	Why it matters
Launched	MS in Business Data Analytics	New graduate program launched in Fall 2025.
Launched	4 strategic committees	AI, ESG/Sustainability, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and Family Business.
Launched	AI pedagogy PD series	Faculty development on Blackboard Ultra AI and genAI.
Launched	Alumni Advisory Board	Formal alumni governance platform.
Formalized	Teaching load framework	Research-linked course release policy.
Formalized	School Advisory Board relaunch	Structured external guidance and industry input.
Formalized	Institute advisory boards	Boards for IHT, IFEB, IBF, and IHRM.
Formalized	Mission and vision renewal	Updated strategic direction aligned with AACSB.
Advanced	MS in Finance and Accounting	Approved by MEHE; targeted for Fall 2026 launch.
Advanced	DBA proposal	Finalized and submitted to UGRC in Jan. 2026.
Advanced	MBA and EMBA revision	Comprehensive market and accreditation revamping and alignment.
Advanced	New minors	AI in Business, Entrepreneurship & Innovation, and ESG.
Advanced	Venture Lab concept	Innovation pathway and entrepreneurship support.
Advanced	Early Alert System	Planned academic-risk identification and intervention.
Advanced	Awards Day and Wall of Fame	Recognition platforms under development.