ATLANTIC UNION COLLEGE

**Swot**

**Analysis Internal**

Strengths

1. Until its temporary closure in the summer of 2011, the AUC had one of the best nursing schools in New England.
2. The AUC has excellent facilities or physical structures.
3. His historical legacy. It was established in 1882.
4. Its geographical location Atlantic Union College is located in a strategic geographic area, as it can be a very attractive location for Adventist students from across the East Coast and much of the center of the country.

Weaknesses

1. Lack of academic credibility, internally and externally of the church, which translates into little capacity to recruit new students
2. Immersed in a deep economic crisis.
3. Lack of Strategic Planning (including Strategic Planning Guidelines) in the short, medium and long term.
4. High level of insastifacion with the administrative-managerial capacity of the current president of the AUC.
5. Outside of church activities, the AUC offers few extracurricular activities
6. Loss of accreditation from the state of Massachusetts. Which translates into two major problems to:

a. Inability for students to complete their degree in the AUC

b. Inability of students to apply for Students Loan or state or federal financial aid.

7. Withdrawal of financial support from the conferences of the Atlantic Union Conference.

8. Very limited academic offer, with almost total lack of technological and scientific laboratories.

9. Total lack of sports programs.

**Analysis External**

Opportunities

1. The support that can be received from a church that is relatively strong throughout New England, and the East Coast of the United States.
2. The lack of a higher education center with conservative philosophy throughout the region, which can be a great attraction for both parents and students who are looking for higher education provided by and in a conservative Christian institution.
3. The studies says that 73.2% of students in Massachusetts go on to attend some level of college.

Threats

1. The State of Massachusetts is an extremely liberal state in its nature.
2. The New England area has very high standards of education.
3. The AUC is surrounded by 112 excellent colleges and universities, many of which are ranked among the best in the United States and the world, which offer a wide and extraordinary quality.

**Benchmarking for AUC**

Several authors advocated that benchmarking is more suitable in higher education than business sector, due to its collegial environment, which encourages easily to collaborate and cooperate (Bender and Schuh, 2000; Alstete, 1995; Schofield, 1998). As Schofield (1998) says despite increasing market pressures, higher education remains an essentially collaborative activity with institutions having a strong tradition of mutual support. Alstete (1995) says, due to its reliance on hard data and research methodology benchmarking is especially suited for institutions of higher education in which these types of studies are very familiar to faculty and administrators.

For most institutions of higher education the desire to learn from each other and to share aspects of good practice is almost as old as the university itself.

The process oriented benchmarking within higher education seeks to answer some of the following questions:

1. How well is the university or college doing compared to others?
2. How good, and in what areas, does the university we want to be?
3. Across the university as a whole which part of it is doing best, and how do they do it?
4. How can universities introduce into their own practice what is done well in others?
5. How does an institution improve its performance while retaining its unique features?
6. How an institution might become better than the best in the context of its own mission?

So far as types of benchmarking are concerned, Alstete (1996) identifies four categories based upon the voluntary and proactive participation of institutions, to -which a fifth (the so-called ‘implicit benchmarking’) might be added.

1. Internal benchmarking in which comparisons are made of the performance of different departments, campuses or sites within a university in order to identify best practice in the institution, without necessarily having an external standard against which to compare the results.

2. External competitive benchmarking where a comparison of performance in key areas is based upon information from institutions which are seen as competitors.

3. External collaborative benchmarking usually involves comparisons with a larger group of institutions who are not immediate competitors.

4. External trans-industry (best-in-class) benchmarking seeks to look across multiple industries in search of new and innovative practices, no matter what their source. Amongst some practitioners this is perceived to be the most desirable form of benchmarking because it can lead to major improvements in performance, and has been described by NACUBO (North American Colleges and Universities Business Officers) as “the ultimate goal of the benchmarking process”. In practice, it may be extremely difficult to operationalise the results of such cross-industry comparisons, and may also require a very high level of institutional commitment to cope with the inevitable ambiguities that will result.

5. ‘Implicit benchmarking’ has already been referred to above, and is likely to increase in future years as governments and central fUnding agencies seek to apply benchmarking approaches to universities.

The benchmarking it is thus defined that benchmarking as a continuous, systematic process of evaluating companies recognized as industry leaders, to determine business and work processes that represent ‘best practices’ and establish rational performance goals.

**The Atlantic Union College.**

The Atlantic Union College is in the category of the so-called Liberal Arts College. A liberal arts college has several qualities that distinguish it from a university or community college. In general, a liberal arts college is characterized by the following:

1. Undergraduate focus: The number of graduate students at a liberal arts college is low or zero. This means professors are dedicated exclusively to undergraduates.
2. Baccalaureate degrees: Most degrees awarded from a liberal arts college are four-year bachelor's degrees such as a B.A. (bachelor of arts) or B.S. (bachelor of science).
3. Small size: Nearly all liberal arts colleges have fewer than 5,000 students, and most are in the 1,000 to 2,500 student range. This means you'll get to know your professors and peers well.
4. Liberal arts curriculum: Liberal arts colleges focus on broad skills in critical thinking and writing, not narrow preprofessional skills. Along with a focused major, liberal arts students will take a breadth of courses in fields such as religion, philosophy, literature, math, science, psychology, and sociology.
5. Faculty focus on teaching: At a large university, professors are often evaluated for their research and publishing first, and teaching second. At most liberal arts colleges, teaching has the top priority. The "publish or perish" model for faculty tenure may still be true at liberal arts colleges, but the equation for tenure will place much greater emphasis on teaching.
6. Focus on community: Because of their small size, liberal arts colleges often highly value the interaction of faculty and students. The overall educational environment tends to be more intimate and personal than at larger universities. If you don't like the idea of 500-person lecture halls and professors who don't know your name, a liberal arts college might be a good choice.
7. Residential - The majority of students at liberal arts colleges live at college and attend full time.
8. There is a close relationships between students and their professors.

Even though there are many liberal arts colleges throughout the country, the greatest concentration is in New England and the Middle Atlantic states. The [Williams College](https://www.thoughtco.com/williams-college-admissions-787269) and [Amherst College](https://www.thoughtco.com/amherst-college-admissions-787141) in Massachusetts often top the national rankings. While liberal arts colleges share some common features, they also vary significantly in personality and mission.

There are 15 features that are used to determine the quality of a college and its ranking in comparison with other college.

1. High Graduation Rate
2. Low Student / Faculty Ratio
3. Good Financial Aid
4. Internships and Research Opportunities
5. Travel Opportunities for Students
6. Engaging Curriculum
7. Clubs and Activities to Match Your Interests
8. Good Health and Wellness Facilities
9. Campus Safety
10. Good Academic Support Services
11. Strong Career Services
12. Good Computing Infrastructure
13. Leadership Opportunities
14. Strong Alumni Network
15. Do credits earned abroad transfer easily?

Taking these elements as a reference, and because of its location the Atlantic Union College has the challenge of facing very strong competitors. It is easy to reach the conclusion that, unfortunately, outside the spiritual area, the Atlantic Union College is not able to compete or even be compared with the colleges or universities of the New Englang area. This is a region of the United States with some of the highest standards of education in the United States and the world, including the programs offered at the Community Colleges. The above mentioned leads us to an obvious conclusion, and it is, that it becomes unfeasible or impossible to make an analysis of Best-in-class benchmarking - comparing your performance or capabilities against 'best-in-class' performance.

**Cultural Web**

Given the current condition of the AUC, it is impossible to do an analysis of The cultural web of Atlantic Union College.