Appointments
Shortly after arriving on campus in July, I concluded two searches that resulted in two key appointments that will enhance the quality of academic services at AUB:

1) Dr. Lokman Meho was appointed as the University Librarian. Dr. Meho joined AUB from Indiana University where he has been the Director of the Master of Library Science Program and Associate Professor in the School of Library and Information Science. Dr. Meho envisions developing AUB Libraries to differentiate them from peer institutions, and to establish AUB Libraries as one of the top destinations for research in select fields such as Middle Eastern studies. He will work on several initiatives for establishing within the library Centers for Research Assessment (CRA), Scholarly Communications (CSC), and Digital Initiatives (CDI). He will be involved in fundraising and grant writing to increase library resources and services.

2) Professor Saouma Boujaoude was appointed as the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning (CTL). Professor Boujaoude has been the Chair of the Department of Education in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at AUB for the past six years and is the current Chair of the University Learning Outcomes Coordinating Committee. Professor Boujaoude will expand the services of the CTL and will be the driver for completing the last phase of the learning outcomes project for training departments on assessment and assessment plans of program and course learning outcomes.

In the last two months I have been familiarizing myself with the Faculties and with the various programs and units that report to the Provost. With the help of the small but superbly effective team in the Provost’s Office (including Associate Provost Nesreen Ghaddar, Mrs. Eleanor Johnson, Ms. Debra Callaghan, and Mrs. Maral Dadourian) I have also been working on identifying and prioritizing several academic development initiatives that address manifest needs of our academic programs and services. The strategic objective of many of the individual initiatives revolves around revitalizing the departments. I believe that our ability to achieve many of the University’s strategic goals depends on the proper functioning of departments, the building blocks of any academic institution. Towards this end, we are working on several projects:

Projects
Chairperson Manual
Academic chairpersons are the major keepers of the academic quality of AUB’s educational and research programs. The Middle States Commission on Higher Education has stressed the importance of the empowerment of department chairs. The Office of the Provost has completed a first revision of the chair’s manual documenting expectations, responsibilities and processes that would guide the chair in carrying out these responsibilities to the faculty, students, and the University. Several sections have been newly added and are being reviewed by the BOD to address the following issues:

- The process of the recruitment of new faculty members including planning and implementation to best serve the interest of the academic quality of the university and its strategic planning goals.
- The various review and evaluation reports that are prepared by the chair.
- A calendar for chairpersons, noting important dates and deadlines.
- The evaluation of interdisciplinary research and its weight in the promotion process.
- The process of selection and appointment of chairpersons.
- The budget preparation and management processes.

The manual will be a working document in progress that will be communicated to chairs for feedback in the second half of October. The chairs will benefit from the manual as they provide feedback on it. The manual is expected to be finalized during the current academic year.

In connection to the operation of departments, the Provost’s Office is currently surveying the existing practices across Faculties for recruiting, compensating, and evaluating chairs.

**Office of International Programs (OIP)**

A proposal has been developed and communicated to the BOD to establish a new Office of International Programs (OIP) that will report to the Provost’s Office. The Office of International Programs addresses AUB’s need to attract and recruit excellent faculty, graduate students from other universities, and visiting scholars by providing a central office to coordinate and facilitate collaborative research and exchange activities with universities abroad. The OIP will play the role of a central clearinghouse for university issues of international educational concern, and will provide centralized administrative oversight to ensure the consistency of university policies regarding agreements with other universities. The proposed OIP will provide special services and support for students coming to AUB from outside Lebanon. It will facilitate the admission and placement of those international students who attend AUB for a year or a semester. It will serve to create new opportunities for collaborations with international universities, and will help to coordinate faculty and administrative projects with regional and international institutions.

Note that the BOD has already developed and approved new policies and procedures for Undergraduate and Graduate Study Abroad.

**Integrated Grievances and Harassment Policy**

The Provost has established a Sexual Harassment and Grievance Committee that is charged with revising and clarifying policies and procedures for grievances, sexual harassment, and discrimination. The committee has representatives from faculty, staff from both the Campus and AUBMC, and students. It began meeting in August 2009 and is continuing to meet every other week. The committee has already developed its road map for three parallel tasks that include the revision of the policy, the conduct of focus groups to refine the policy with community understanding, and to adopt educational training methods to raise awareness on these issues. The committee has one year (2009-10) to complete this task.

The Provost is chairing this committee and the work may lead to the consideration of appointing an ombudsman that operates as an independent, informal, neutral, and confidential resource to assist faculty, staff, and students in exploring alternative dispute resolution options in cases of harassment and discrimination.

**Re-Accreditation and Periodic Review Cycle of Academic Degree Programs and the University General Education Program**
Undergraduate Programs Periodic Review (Reaccreditation)

- The objective of the academic program review is to promote and maintain high quality undergraduate and graduate programs that are effective and consistent with the mission and resources of the department and the University.
- The Provost’s Office in coordination with the Director of the Center for Teaching and Learning has prepared a proposal for the periodic review of graduate and undergraduate programs. The proposed review process is designed to provide a uniform method for collecting data, a process for integrating and reporting the data, and a template for presenting results in an efficient and effective way. The final result of each review would be a self-study that provides descriptive and evaluative information about the program, the faculty, and the students, and a report that suggests areas and plans for improvement. The dean of each Faculty shall assume responsibility for data gathering and for the timely completion of the self-studies of programs under review. At the University level, the responsibility will lie with the Provost to ensure the integrity of the process, facilitate internal and external reviews, and follow up on recommendations for budgeting and implementation when applicable.
- The proposal for periodic review of programs will be discussed in the BOD to finalize and make sure that the University’s governance and the resources needed for implementation of the process are integrated in the institutional structure and budget.

General Education Program Implementation (Reaccreditation)

- The General Education Committee (GEC) developed a draft of Learning Outcomes of the General Education Program.
- The GEC will be charged with developing the criteria for approving GE courses and their designation as humanities, social sciences, quantitative thought, natural sciences, and writing intensive.
- The Provost’s Office has revised the Mellon proposal on “Writing across the Curriculum” to solicit funding towards expanding the role of the Writing Center and for training faculty in various disciplines to develop writing intensive courses to meet the GE requirements. The President submitted the revised proposal on August 31, 2009 requesting a budget of $400,000 over a three-year period.
- The Provost’s Office has committed to hiring a visiting professor and writing expert in the English Department, in the spring semester of 2009-10, to train AUB faculty on developing writing intensive courses. The English Department has already located the expert. In addition, Professor Linda Bergman, Director of the Purdue University Writing Lab will visit AUB during the fall 2009-10 for one week to offer specialized training on writing across the curriculum.
- Department chairs have been asked to submit lists of those courses in their undergraduate programs which fulfill the new requirements for general education.

Graduate Education and Research

Effective Governance and Process for Reviewing, Enhancing, and Supporting Graduate Programs at AUB

AUB has more than 55 graduate degree programs at the master’s and PhD levels. Based on issues encountered during the past few weeks regarding graduate programs policies, it has
become clear there is a need to revamp the processes by which graduate academic issues are acted upon, and to increase support for these programs which would consolidate resources, clarify policies, and provide timely feedback on issues. The following issues need to be addressed:

- Conformity of general Faculty requirements and specific departmental requirements.
- Admissions process.
- English requirements for graduate students.
- Comprehensive exams for master’s degrees with the thesis option.
- Advising across interdisciplinary programs.
- Assessment and review of graduate program over a multi-year cycle.
- Guidelines on joint authorship with RAs and students.
- Credentials of external examiners.
- FTE GA lines vs. load distribution.
- Interdisciplinary degree programs (joint ownership, support, home Faculty).
- Interdisciplinary research.
- Enrollment management on numbers of PhD students.
- Funding of graduate students.

The Provost is weighing alternatives to be presented to the BOD and later to the BOT that either:

1. Retain the current structure while making the Board of Graduate Studies work more effectively, with increased support from the Provost by appointing an Associate Provost for Graduate Education and Research
2. Establish a Graduate School that will coordinate all aspects of graduate education including interdisciplinary graduate and research programs at AUB, policy development, enrollment, graduate assistantship administration, graduate fellowships, graduate catalogue oversight, and promotion of graduate programs.

The above initiative will require the allocation of space and will be addressed by the space committee established by the President.

**Interdisciplinary Research Centers**
The Provost intends to support interdisciplinary degrees and research programs through introduction of policies that promote collaboration among faculty and clarifies ownership of these programs between Faculties. Promotion procedures and criteria will be revised to factor in interdisciplinary research in the evaluation of faculty members’ files for promotion.

**Promotion and Re-appointment Policies**
After consultation with the President and BOD, and based on the new promotion guidelines initiated by President Dorman on September 26, 2009, the Provost announced a new policy to freeze involuntary demotions from the rank of Assistant or Associate Professor to the rank of Lecturer or Senior Lecturer. The provost will continue to work with President Dorman and the deans to revise the promotion and reappointment policies for Associate and Full Professors.
AUB Website
In close coordination with the Provost’s Office, an AUB Web Oversight Committee has been reinstated, chaired by the Director of Communications with representation of various Faculties, and CNS and ACC directors. The AUB website will be revamped and content will be updated.

Data Management and Student Services at AUB [OPIC Report]
The provost is considering appointing an Associate Provost for Enrollment Management as a way of consolidating and enhancing student academic services. The new Associate Provost for Enrollment Management would oversee the services of the Office of Admissions and Financial Aid, the Registrar, Office of Student Affairs, and OIRA.

VPIT Search Committee
The provost is chairing the search committee for a Vice President for Information Technology (VPIT). The search is conducted in conjunction with an IT headhunting firm, JB Homer. After extensive consultations, the job was announced and the firm started receiving and vetting applications.

Ahmad Dallal
Provost