This spring the Office of the Provost has continued to engage in collaborative work across the institution regarding the integration of budgeting and planning as well as governance, policies, and institutional integrity. This spring has also been a busy time for the review of promotion files as well as recruitment and appointments. The Task Force for Faculty Compensation will submit its recommendations to the president this month and the rigorous assessment of the proposal for the reinstatement of tenure at AUB should be concluded by the fall. A total of 24 grants were awarded during this period from external sponsors for Research and Development for over $3.2 million. The PRO-GREEN Online Diploma was launched successfully this spring and three new/revised programs are being recommended to the BOT in May (BE Petroleum Engineering, MS Food Security, and a non-thesis option for the MS Energy Studies). A high-level cross-unit working group has been launched to systematically improve AUB’s financial aid/financial assistance cross-unit processes. At the same time new grants have been awarded by two full-scholarship programs funded by the US government – bringing 70 new high-achieving, financially disadvantaged scholars to AUB from across Lebanon and the region. The Task Force for Students with Special Needs is developing recommendations for policies and procedures to ensure inclusiveness of the AUB educational environment for students with special needs.

The Office of the Provost has also conducted a review of key achievements and areas for further effort in critical areas of focus related to the teaching and research mission of the University over the past six years. A brief summary of this assessment is included below.

**ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE**

**Key Achievements**
- Rebuilding of a top quality faculty (furthering work initiated by President Waterbury).
- Promotion standards and processes are now systematic and rigorous.
- Implementation of mechanisms for assessment and improvement at the departmental level, including annual Program Learning Assessments, and extensive Periodic Program Reviews every six years that include external review by international scholars.
- Institutional reaccreditation in 2009 and 2015 from the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. Numerous program and faculty level re-accreditations.
- Creation of 36 new forward-looking academic programs to meet changing economic, social, and environmental needs of the region since 2009 (17 masters, 12 undergraduate, 5 certificates/diplomas, and 2 doctoral programs).
- Increased socio-economic diversity of the student body through increased financial aid funding and major external scholarship grant programs. AUB has secured almost $47 million in major grant-funding for scholarships during the period 2011-2019.
- Establishment of Enrollment Management Unit and Graduate Council to strategically improve student enrollment and services.
- Increased research production, citations, and external funding.
- AUB faculty research production and the impact of their published research (citations) have more than doubled in the last ten years, outpacing all other universities serving both undergraduate and graduate students in the Arab world.
- Increasing status in international rankings. AUB’s QS international ranking improved from over 700 to 249 out of 3,000, placing AUB in the top 10% of world universities.

Areas for Further Effort
- Continued recruitment and retention of high caliber faculty.
- Resolving the issue of the reinstatement of tenure.
- Alignment of faculty reward mechanisms that support the mission of the university as it relates to teaching, research, and service. Ensuring equitable and appropriate teaching loads and that time provided to faculty for research and service is used for those purposes.
- Further deepening the quality of promotion assessment across all academic departments.
- Monitoring report due to institutional accreditor in April 2016 regarding integrated financial planning and budgeting and a well-defined system of collegial governance.
- Self-study process for ten-year institutional reaccreditation begins in spring 2016 for an evaluation team visit and application for reaccreditation in 2018-19.

Governance, Institutional Integrity, and Compliance

Key Achievements
- The University has strengthened its foundation of policies for governance and accountability with more than 35 policies developed or refined since 2008 to support academic excellence, improve students’ educational experience, facilitate academic governance and administration, and promote institutional integrity.
- The Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC), chaired by the Associate Provost, initiated work in late 2014 charged by the president with the development, review and harmonization of key policies and procedures.
- The Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals was developed by the PPRC and approved by the BOT in March 2015.
- Implementation of policies and procedures (introduced in 2012) to address discrimination and harassment including gender-based discrimination prohibited by Title IX civil rights legislation applicable to all University educational and healthcare programs and activities.
- Entrusted a staff member from the Provost’s Office with Title IX responsibilities (not yet fully dedicated to these issues). Introduced “Ombuds” and “Institutional Integrity Officer” to further address these issues (to date unfilled due to budget constraints).

Areas for Further Effort
- Resources are needed for staffing, professional development, and campus-wide training related to equity and diversity, compliance, and policy development and management.
- Improved mechanisms for shared governance and faculty/administration relations.
- Implementation of the “policy on policies” approved by the BOT in March 2015.
• Development and implementation of policies on Conflict of Interest and Commitment, and Supplemental Pay in Excess of Base Salary for Professional Service/Overload.
• Revised institutional integrity policies related to discrimination to comply with recent regulatory guidance, and based on experience gained in utilizing the policies and procedures to address complaints.
• Address compliance issues that are expanding exponentially on many different levels.
• Respond to alarming trend toward litigation both in Lebanon and the U.S.
• Develop systematic monitoring and enforcement mechanisms to nurture a culture of compliance and prevent abuse.

INTEGRATED BUDGETING AND PLANNING

Key Achievements
• Development of the Academic Strategic Plan: AUB for a Global Era and corresponding Key Performance Indicators through an inclusive process.
• Development of an online platform and ‘dashboards' that provide meaningful statistical and visual presentations of real-time, comprehensive data from all units for planning and monitoring purposes.
• Conclusion of the work of the Task Force on Faculty Compensation.
• Establishment of the Budget Committee and Subcommittees to involve the deans and heads of major administrative units. Sub-Committees also involve faculty members
• Supported the development of a balanced budget for AUB Campus based on an inclusive and collaborative process
• Detailed picture of the campus operating budget and trends based on the analysis of meaningful statistical and financial information (historical analysis, internal comparisons, and external benchmarking) has been developed and shared with senior leadership for the first time.
• Increased capacity to connect budgeting to strategic priorities utilizing detailed justifications which include internal and external benchmarking.
• Systematic review of revenues and expenses resulting in strategic cost-savings.

Areas for Further Effort
• Progress towards implementation of a systematic and integrated budgeting and planning process to ensure:
  o Financial viability (risk reflected in the opinion of our institutional accreditor and the management letters from our external auditors);
  o Quality of education (at risk if process reverts to incremental budgeting based on blanket enrollment and tuition increases coupled with across the board cuts); and
• Continuation, extension, and automation of the budget process initiated for FY 15/16.
• Financial planning and management systems and procedures commensurate with the size of the budget and emerging needs of the University.
• Mechanisms are needed for annual operational planning, assessment, and budgeting at the unit-level for both academic and non-academic units.
• Greater transparency and collaboration of all faculties/units in the budgeting process.
• Sustainable and equitable formula for allocations for shared services and utilization of AUB property between AUB Campus and AUBMC.
• Ensure timely access to accurate and consistent data from multiple sources in the University for planning, reporting, monitoring, and quality assurance (need for standards, definitions, and automation – including Chart of Accounts).
• Implementation of recommendations of the Task Force on Faculty Compensation.
• Address staffing inefficiencies and performance management issues.
• Develop a comprehensive and rational budget model that:
  o is aligned with the University’s mission;
  o encourages efficiency and rewards productivity; and
  o identifies alternative revenue to reduce tuition-dependency.

SPACE AND FACILITIES

Key Achievements
• Completion of the Irani Oxy Engineering Complex including more than 8,000 square meters of space for labs, classrooms, and offices.
• Completion of the new Issam Fares Institute for Public Policy and International Affairs (IFI) building to house IFI in addition to providing lab space for the Media Studies program and the new masters program in Public Policy and International Affairs.
• Conversion of Building 37 (formerly the home of the dean of FAS) into a home for six centers/units.
• Space maximization efforts across campus resulting in the creation of tens of new faculty offices through division of existing spaces.

Areas for Further Effort
• Addressing the heavy demand on and competition for space given growth in the numbers of programs, faculty members, supporting staff, and students.
• Update and assess shared services and space/property utilization in light of organizational changes and expanded facilities.
• Prioritizing space utilization for core academic programs and support functions.

PROVOST REPORT ON THE INTERIM PERIOD (JAN – MAY 2015)

BUDGET PROCESS

May brings the conclusion of this year’s FY15-16 operating budget development process. The Office of the Provost has provided support in this process as the University works to develop more transparent and inclusive budget processes that result in evidence-based decision-making aligned with the University’s mission and strategic goals.
At the beginning of the budget process a large deficit was projected based on the collective budget requests of all units in addition to the deficit carried over from 2013-14 and the mandated provisions and reserve funds. With an increase in student enrollment of approximately 150 students and an increase in tuition accompanied by two rounds of deep cuts to budget requests which were made necessary by current financial constraints, a balanced budget proposal has been developed. These restrictions proposed for both academic and non-academic units will be challenging for all affected units. At the same time, the restrictions on additional spending were guided by historical financial analysis, relevant metrics such as enrollment and staffing, and benchmarking in order to minimize negative effects. These restrictions include controlling the financial aid budget; freezing $3M in requests for non-academic hiring ($1M has been reserved for the president to allocate for executive hires and cases of extraordinary need); and decreases in the following spending categories: travel; supplies, minor equipment and furniture; administrative expenses (e.g. consultation and catering); and repair, maintenance, and deferred maintenance. Current options being considered that will affect the academic core of the university include decreasing financial assistance for PhD and masters students and cutting half of the previously approved new faculty hiring. The proposed budget includes very modest merit increases for faculty and staff.

The revised budget process has revealed the need to increase AUB’s capacity for both financial analysis and reporting. The Office of the Provost has provided support to OFP and the Comptroller’s Office in both of these areas. Metrics and analysis were prepared to inform the budget process. Analysis of historical data, internal cross-unit comparison, and external benchmarking, enabled better identification and understanding of variances and trends across units or revenue/expense categories. This analysis served as the baseline for our recommendations for achieving a balanced budget that protects the core functions of the University as much as possible given the current financial constraints. We also coordinated with the comptroller’s office to improve and standardize the financial categories used in annual public reporting in “Facts and Figures” and to AUB’s institutional accreditor. This coordination has resulted in a taxonomy for categorizing revenues and expenses which largely conforms to definitions provided by The National Association of College and University Business Officers (NACUBO) and utilized by most US Universities in required annual public reporting to the federal government through the Integrated Postsecondary Education Data System (IPEDS).

**Policies and Procedures Review Committee**

The Associate Provost is guiding the critical efforts of the Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC). Most recently, the committee has drafted a policy on Supplemental Pay in Excess of Base Salary for Professional Service/Overload; and is developing a policy on Conflict of Interest and Conflict of Commitment. Each of these policies is essential for institutional integrity and the latter two also have positive budgetary implications for the sustainability of the University.
**INSTITUTIONAL INTEGRITY AND TITLE IX**

A significant achievement for the AUB community is progress related to implementation of policies and procedures that prohibit discrimination and harassment including gender-based discrimination prohibited under Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, which prohibits gender-based discrimination (including sexual harassment and sexual violence) in the University’s educational and healthcare programs and activities. (AUB is subject to Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 as a participant in U.S. federal funding programs).

The Title IX Coordinator coordinates the University’s response to issues of discrimination on the basis of gender and other protected characteristics, and to serve as a resource to the AUB community. AUB is responding effectively to complaints, whether reported anonymously or informally, or through a formal complaint process that involves a special committee for each case. Informal complaints are systematically addressed even in the absence of a formal complaint, although the ability to effectively respond and evaluate a specific case may be limited accordingly. In the case of both formal and informal complaints, disciplinary and/or other actions are taken in line with AUB policies and procedures and within the applicable legal and regulatory frameworks. The policies and procedures have been designed to encourage resolution of less serious issues such as workplace friction at the department or unit level. An online resource page, “Non-Discrimination, Harassment, & Title IX“, was published on the Provost’s website to raise awareness of these issues and as a reference for the entire AUB community. The Title IX Coordinator has also expanded awareness through presentations for new student and faculty orientations, and for specialty medical departments in the Faculty of Medicine (FM) during ‘grand rounds’.

**PROMOTIONS AND APPOINTMENTS**

Forty-four cases for promotion were thoroughly assessed by the promotion committees at the departmental levels, the Faculty Advisory Committees, the Expanded Board of Deans, the provost, and president. Recommendations for promotion have been submitted to the BOT Academic Affairs Committee. Active searches have yielded positive results with a new cohort of highly qualified Assistant Professors across the faculties and schools for the coming academic year. We are also anticipating the addition of a number of Associate and Full Professors.

At the same time we are still facing some challenges with recruitment and retention, some of which seems to be related to the issue of tenure. Five FAS assistant professors who have made important administrative and research contributions have chosen to leave AUB for tenure-track positions in the US and UK. In one case, the assistant professor has negotiated with her new employer to stay at AUB for 2015-16 in order to not jeopardize the small academic program in which she is currently appointed and reported that she was torn by the decision because she has never had such good students and is challenged at AUB in ways that she never was in the U.S. With searches, it is not always clear why people decline offers for positions, but at least in some cases it is known that the person has chosen another position which is tenure-track.
**Task Force on Faculty Compensation (TFFC)**

The Task Force on Faculty Compensation (TFFC) was formed by the president in March 2014 to propose a sustainable plan for salary adjustments for the next 3-5 years, and develop recommendations for a long-term faculty compensation policy that would competitively position the University in the region. Chaired by the provost, the Task Force includes faculty representation from each faculty or school, two deans, the CFO, and the Interim Director of Human Resources (HR). The Task Force has assessed AUB faculty salaries within and across faculties (except FM), relative to historical cost of living statistics, in comparison to data for local and regional competitors, and to that of U.S. based institutions as provided by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and the College and University Professional Association for Human Resources (CUPA). Preliminary recommendations have been developed that include: 1) assessment and remediation of gender inequities, if any, by faculty; 2) a proposed salary scale based on a percentage of CUPA median salaries by discipline and rank; and 3) a cost of living review every five years. The Task Force report will be finalized by mid-May 2015 and submitted to the President with a final version to be made available to the AUB community.

**Second Task Force on Tenure**

In response to specific questions raised in January 2015 by Dr. Huda Zoghbi, Chair of the Academic Affairs Committee of the BOT, the provost provided a detailed response for consideration by the members of the Academic Affairs Committee. In addition, a comparative assessment of research productivity and impact was conducted; the comparison was measured by Scopus, the largest bibliographic database containing abstracts and citations from over 22,000 academic journals and other sources. This response and analysis were discussed during the Academic Affairs Committee conference call on March 9, 2015 and it was requested that the next steps be consultation with legal counsel and the finance committee regarding legal and financial implications. The provost is working with the legal counsel on a legal assessment of the tenure proposal. Following this, the proposal will be sent to the Finance Committee for review. In order for the University to complete its monitoring report to its institutional accreditor, MSCHE, regarding University governance and tenure, the issue of tenure will need to be resolved in fall 2015.

**Research and Sponsored Projects**

A total of 24 grants were awarded from external sponsors for Research and Development funding that amounted $3,214,333. Many of these grants support work that leverages AUB’s research and teaching to address regional social, environmental, and health challenges. Reach Out To Asia (a member of the Qatar Foundation) awarded over $2M to the Center for Civic Engagement and Community Service in partnership with the Lebanese NGO KAYANY Foundation for expanding the University’s engaged scholarship and service-learning efforts
related to education in informal refugee settlements (PI: Rabih Shibli, Acting Director CCECS). Oxfam is funding a research project for research on Women’s Participation and Leadership in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq for nearly $100,000 (PI: Dina Kiwan, FAS). Other grants received include:

- “Body Cooling Methods for Improving Endurance in Hot Environments at Minimal Energy” from Qatar University, $180,000 (PI: Dr. Nesreen Ghaddar, FEA)
- “Third Cycle of the Faculty Development Program at KAIMRC: Towards Capacity Building in Research Methodology” from King Abdullah International Medical Research Center, $165,000 (Iman Nuwayhid, FHS)
- “Knowledge in Access in Rural Interconnected Areas Network” from International Development Research Centre, $163,000 (PI: Shadi Hamadeh, FAFS)
- “Labour Companionship Model for Integration in Public Hospitals in Three Arab Middle-Income Countries” World Health Organization, $160,000 (PI: Tamar Kabakian, FHS)

NEW ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

The PRO-GREEN Online Diploma was launched successfully this spring with 24 students; 64 applications have been received for the summer term. PRO-GREEN is a joint/dual online diploma for professionals interested in green technologies. This program is a partnership with American University in Cairo (AUC) and the Lebanese American University (LAU) that was developed with support from an EU Tempus grant of €670,000. AUB’s first online and joint program has provided insight into the processes required for successful collaboration and online education. Some of the key factors for success have been the involvement of AUB faculty who are responsible for course offerings and program quality; training and ongoing support provided for faculty on online instruction; and the provision and coordination of the necessary technical and administrative resources. The Associate Provost has played a leadership role in developing and coordinating this innovative program.

Recommended by the Senate for BOT Approval

- **BE Petroleum Engineering, FEA**
  This program is being introduced due to the urgent need for petroleum engineers in the region and as a result of potential oil and gas discoveries in the Mediterranean Sea and technological advances. The PE program aims placing well-trained graduates in entry level industry positions or graduate programs. There are relatively few Petroleum Engineering programs in the region. Therefore, AUB can position itself to serve the growing demand of the region and the world oil industry for petroleum engineers.

- **MS Energy Studies non-thesis option, DUIP**
  The MS in Energy Studies was launched in fall 2014 and currently has 17 students. DUIP has received various requests from students to initiate a non-thesis option. The non-thesis master’s degree will be attractive to students who are interested in taking advanced-level courses to enhance understanding and skills relevant to their career advancement in a critical sector. Students enrolled in the program would not be eligible for tuition support.
• **MS in Food Security, FAFS**
  The MS in Food Security is an interdisciplinary program drawing on the fields of agriculture, nutrition, health, and development economics. The program, with thesis and non-thesis options, will cover 1) how availability, accessibility, appropriate utilization and stability of food supplies are achieved; 2) related policy issues; 3) human subjects research methods; and 4) effective research tools. The program will prepare students for careers in government, international organizations, NGOs and industry.

Pending approval from the New York State Department of Education (NYSED)

• **PhD and ME in Biomedical Engineering**

**FINANCIAL AID TASK FORCE**

The Office of the Provost has convened a cross-unit group tasked with systematically improving AUB’s financial aid/financial assistance processes. Staff members from relevant units will collaborate on priority projects such as implementation of the new donor-funded scholarship policy, standardizing monitoring and reporting; enhancing the financial aid budgeting projection model; and automation.

**THE UNIVERSITY SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM AND MEPI LEADERS OF TOMORROW**

For the period covering 2011-2019, AUB has received eight grants for totaling nearly $38 million to provide full scholarships including all living expenses and support services under the auspices of the University Scholarship Program and MEPI Leaders of Tomorrow. With the award of the fourth grant from USAID, 50 additional high-achieving economically-disadvantaged students from the 26 districts of Lebanon will join over 150 continuing students, divided across three cohorts in the University Scholarship Program. In 2014-15, AUB’s MEPI cohorts included 49 meritorious and financially disadvantaged scholarship recipients from a range of MENA region countries (Algeria, Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, Morocco, Syria, Tunisia, and Yemen). In fall 2015, a fourth grant from the US Department of State will support a new cohort of 21 MEPI scholars, with two additional countries of origin: Libya, and the West Bank and Gaza. USP and MEPI scholars have set high standards in academics and community work.

**TASK FORCE FOR STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS**

The Task Force for Students with Special Needs is developing recommendations for policies and procedures that ensure that students with special needs have equal access and equal opportunity to academic programs and degrees as well as university life at AUB. It also addresses the need for the establishment of an Office for Students with Special Needs and discusses the necessary infrastructure changes to make AUB an inclusive campus.

*Ahmad Dallal*