Chapter Ten

Faculty

PURPOSE

“Faculty are central to each institution’s teaching and learning activities.... The faculty and other qualified professionals are responsible for devising and developing an institution’s academic, professional, research, and service programs within the framework of its educational mission and goals.”

*Designs for Excellence, Eighth Edition*

The purpose of Task Team X on Faculty was to examine the effectiveness and the extent to which the AUB faculty fulfill their primary responsibilities of teaching, research and service, as well as their related roles in student advising, curriculum development, academic policy making, and governance. In addition, the task team addressed issues related to the University's support of faculty roles, including faculty performance assessment, promotion, recruitment, and retention. The role of the faculty in rebuilding and sustaining AUB's academic environment was also examined.

MEMBERSHIP

The constituencies represented in Task Team X were diverse: a university trustee and a faculty dean as co-chairs, 10 faculty members, one undergraduate and one graduate student, and one staff (Appendix A).

METHODOLOGY

The information presented in this chapter was derived from the following sources: AUB documents, an internet search of peer institutions, statistics from administration and faculties, an institutional survey for accreditation of faculty and students conducted by the Office of Institutional Research and Assessment (OIRA), team member interviews with deans, and the provost’s written responses to submitted questions.

Unless otherwise indicated, statistics pertain to the fall 2002 semester when the data collection was under way, or to AY 2001-2002 when the data sought pertained to a complete academic year. In some instances, statistics were computed excluding the medical program (definition of instructional faculty used by IPEDs and common data sets) in order to facilitate benchmarking. For each group of self-study questions (Appendix C), a sub-team was assigned to determine the information needed and identify the sources of that information. The Task Team members then regrouped by source to collect the relevant data. In this regard, individual team members selected specific questions from those listed in the *AUB Institutional Self-Study Design* and analyzed the information collected. The whole team then reviewed the analysis of individual questions for inclusion in the final report. Two co-editors prepared a draft report, which was reviewed, commented on, and approved by all the Task Team members.

The analysis and findings of that report are presented here in the following sections:

A. Faculty Profile
B. Faculty Responsibilities and Effectiveness
C. University Responsibilities and Support
D. Promotion, Evaluation, and Salary Increases
E. Recruitment and Retention
F. Academic Environment
G. Summary of Recent Accomplishments
H. Recommendations
A. FACULTY PROFILE

1. Full-time faculty

AUB’s educational programs are implemented primarily by highly qualified full-time faculty, with assistance from part-time faculty. As Table 10.1 below indicates, the majority (75 percent) of the 426 full-time equivalent faculty (FTE) in fall 2002 was in the professorial (62 percent) or lecturer (14 percent) ranks, excluding the medical program. The title of lecturer is normally given to part-time faculty members who hold a PhD or an MD. Some full-time lecturers are faculty members who had previously held professorial rank but were not promoted on schedule and now serve in temporary teaching positions. All AUB instructors hold at least a Master’s degree and perform a supportive teaching role. There are six fully endowed chairs at the University, two of which are currently active.

The American University of Beirut, as an independent, non-sectarian university and as an affirmative action, equal opportunity employer, embraces diversity among its faculty. During AY 2001–02, more than half (53 percent) of the faculty were of Lebanese nationality. The remainder were principally (32 percent) from North America (many of whom are of Lebanese origin), as well as from Europe and Australia (9 percent) and other countries (7 percent). A majority of professorial/lecturer rank faculty (77 percent) received their PhDs from a North American university. Women have traditionally been underrepresented in the faculty, particularly at the senior (professor and associate professor) levels. At present, 10 percent of professors, 22 percent of associate professors, and 42 percent of assistant professors are female. Altogether, women constitute one quarter (25 percent) of the full-time professoriate and 34 percent of the full-time faculty, including lecturers and instructors. AUB Personnel Department statistics show that of the 100 full-time faculty in professorial ranks recruited during the three-year period, from AY 2000-01 to 2002-03, 28 were women.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculty Category</th>
<th>Number of Faculty</th>
<th>Percentage of Total</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Full-time</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professorial Ranks</td>
<td>262</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professors</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Associate Professors</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>31</td>
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<tr>
<td>Assistant Professors</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers/Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors/Asst. Instructors</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total FT</strong></td>
<td>361</td>
<td>85</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Part-time (FTE)</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professorial Ranks</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers/Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors/Asst. Instructors</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total PT</strong></td>
<td>65</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>426</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Professorial Ranks</td>
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<td>62</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lecturers/Senior Lecturers</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors/Asst. Instructors</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Faculty to Student Ratio 1:13.4 (5711 student FTEs)

*Statistics exclude the medical program and include 19 visiting faculty (approximately 4 percent of total faculty).

**A full-time equivalent (FTE) is a unit of the rate of work equivalent to that performed by a full-time faculty member who holds a regular appointment. Each part-time faculty member was counted as .3 FTE.
Personnel Department statistics also show that the current faculty have substantial average years of academic service at AUB: 16 years for professors, 10 years for associate professors, and 4 years for assistant professors. Faculty to student ratios at AUB is similarly conducive to excellence in education. The AUB faculty-to-student ratio, excluding the medical program is 1:13. The ratio varies across AUB faculties, and some faculties are making intense effort to improve their faculty-to-student ratios through faculty recruitment.

2. Part-time, visiting and adjunct faculty

In Fall 2002, part-time faculty members represented 15 percent of the total faculty FTEs, as shown in Table 10.1. Part-time faculty represent between 6 percent and 37 percent of the various faculties, excluding FM. Part-time faculty members in the FM are principally devoted to patient care but make some contribution to teaching. The distribution of part-time faculty varies, as deans of AUB faculties have explicit differences in their policies concerning reliance on part-time faculty members and also because success in recruiting full-time faculty members varies among faculties. The programs that are more professional in nature have tended to use part-timers more than other faculties, as students are able to interact with and learn from practicing professionals. For example, the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FEA) and the School of Business have 23 percent and 37 percent part-time faculties respectively. However, the School of Business is actively working to increase its proportion of full-timers, as are most other faculties.

In contrast to full-time faculty, part-time faculty members have no voting rights and generally do not participate in committees. AUB offers limited opportunities in terms of sponsored professional development for part-time faculty through certain teaching workshops and grants for professional development. Efforts are made to orient part-time faculty, in particular to the University’s policies and procedures related to teaching.

Visiting faculty, who have temporary, one-year or two-year appointments, constitute 4 percent of the total faculty. Visiting faculty occasionally join the University as regular faculty members following their visiting appointment, but only after participating in a new international search process. For example, in FEA, of the 11 visiting professors recruited since AY 1999-2000, 5 have converted to a regular appointment. Overall, of the visiting faculty recruited between 1998 and 2001, 60 percent are still working at the University. One of the AUB-endowed chairs is intended for a visiting faculty member. At present, there are no adjunct faculty members.

B. FACULTY RESPONSIBILITIES AND EFFECTIVENESS

1. Overview

The faculties at AUB are charged with several important responsibilities and roles, including research, teaching, student advising, service, university governance, and academic policy making. As a teaching-centered research university, AUB systematically emphasizes to its faculty the core responsibilities of excellence in teaching and research—through, for example, the University Mission Statement, faculty recruitment literature, the orientation process, documents produced by several task forces, and the University’s academic planning documents. In general, it appears that the deans of the faculties and/or chairs of academic departments verbally communicate expectations during the faculty recruitment process and in the evaluation and promotion process.

In the OIRA institutional survey, in response to the query concerning the distribution of their time devoted to various activities, the faculty reported teaching as the activity that occupied the largest portion (median = 50 percent) of available time (Table 10.2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Median response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teaching</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Service</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TABLE 10.2. SELF-REPORTED FACULTY DISTRIBUTION OF WORK HOURS (Percentage)
2. Research

In recognition of the importance of research productivity for promotion and salary advancement, the University has increased its support for research in recent years. In interviews, deans expressed their expectations for faculty time devoted to research as well as for research productivity. The deans expect that between 30-65 percent of the time of faculty in the professorial ranks will be devoted to research. Expectations for the number of annual publications increase with the rank of the faculty member. Expectations are for 1.0 to 2.0 publications per year for assistant professors, and for more than two per year in the higher ranks.

While the faculty expressed need to place greater emphasis on teaching and service in evaluations of faculty, the faculty support the University’s strong emphasis on research. In a survey conducted by the AUB Task Force on Promotion Criteria and Procedures (the Faculty Survey on Promotion) the faculties were asked to indicate the weight that should be given to each criterion in the promotion process. Participating faculty members gave a median response of 38.7 percent for research, followed by 30.7 percent for teaching. AUB recognizes the need to provide more support for faculty research, as outlined in the University's planning documents. In particular, faculty expressed need for greater institutional support for research, including more protected time.

Faculty effectiveness in research has been notable in recent years. The number of faculty publications listed in the AUB research report increased 51 percent between the period 1993-1995 (21st Research Report) and 1999-2001 (24th Research Report). In addition to publications, research effectiveness may also be measured by the faculty's increasing success in attracting external funding for research. Funds from external sources rose from $1.1 million in AY 1999-2000 to $3.7 million in AY 2001-2002.

3. Teaching

In recent years, AUB has made substantial efforts to promote and reward excellence in teaching. As reported in interviews, deans expect that faculty will devote a significant percentage of their time (ranging from 25 to 50 percent) to teaching. There was variation in the deans' expectations of teaching credit hours per full-time faculty member, ranging from 5.0 to 10.5 credit hours per semester. As part of their teaching responsibilities, faculty members are expected to provide thesis advising for Master's degree students. While research output currently tends to be stronger in faculty evaluations compared to the emphasis on teaching excellence, efforts are under way within the University to measure and recognize teaching excellence more clearly in promotion.

During 1999, the AUB Task Force on Undergraduate Teaching Excellence was formed to assess current levels of teaching excellence. At present, faculty teaching is largely assessed through university-wide student course evaluations at the end of each semester. The system has been computerized and allows comparisons within and across faculties. This system needs to be regularly evaluated. In addition, new methods for assessing teaching effectiveness—such as teaching portfolios, peer evaluations, and the use of learning outcome measures—are being introduced in some faculties.

Student course evaluations for the fall 2002 semester (Figure 10. I) indicate that the AUB faculty demonstrate high levels of teaching effectiveness, with a mean composite score of 4.0 on the section on teaching effectiveness and 3.9 on the question related to overall teaching effectiveness, out of a possible 5.00 score. The evaluations of part-time as well as full-time faculty were statistically equivalent.
At the end of AY 2000–01 and AY 2001–02, the Task Force on Undergraduate Teaching Excellence sponsored surveys of undergraduate students to assess their satisfaction with academic programs and learning objectives. Results from the most recent survey showed a high percentage of undergraduates who expressed satisfaction with the instructional phase of their education at AUB. An overwhelming majority (80 percent) of graduating seniors stated that the overall quality of instruction was good.

Faculty members appear to perceive course evaluations as a constructive opportunity to utilize feedback from students and colleagues and report that the evaluation process improves their teaching methods. Each faculty member individually reviews his/her student course evaluations, and the evaluations are also reviewed by the department chairpersons and/or deans.

The OIRA survey showed an inconsistency between faculty and student criteria for excellence in teaching. It is significant to note that in the OIRA accreditation surveys, 30 percent of the students disagreed with the statement that their instructors continue to adopt new teaching methods, whereas 94 percent of the faculty reported that they continue to adopt new teaching skills and/or tools. It appears that more objective and systematic criteria for teaching excellence need to be developed across the University.

4. Student advising

AUB has a system of academic advising in place that involves student orientation and assistance to students in the course selection and registration processes. The use of advising by students varies. Faculty members report that they devote an average of 7 percent of their time to academic advising, mainly to help students with course selection and registration concerns. Other types of advising performed by the faculty include career-advising, orientation to ethical issues and academic integrity, and mentoring. Interview data suggest that the majority of faculty perform those other types of advising less frequently. The majority of surveyed faculty view mentoring as part of the role of advisor, as do the majority of students. However, only 23 percent
of the students agreed that their advisor actually plays that role. One third of the students had no opinion about the advising system, possibly indicating a low level of awareness regarding the subject.

At present, expectations for student advising seem to be insufficiently defined. Faculty effectiveness in advising is typically not assessed on a formal basis. Faculty participation in university-sponsored advising seminars is voluntary, and 32 percent of faculty reported receiving no training as an advisor. The University has identified improvement of the advising system as an area requiring further development, and deans have recently begun actively encouraging participation in advising training programs.

5. Service

Expectations for time devoted to service vary considerably, from 10 to 30 percent of time (as expressed by the deans), including service on committees and through administrative tasks, as well as by professional practice. Professional schools and programs generally have higher expectations for pursuing professional practice that enriches teaching and research. Overall, the methods for measuring service are not well defined and need to be better developed.

6. University governance and academic policy-making

The AUB bylaws, policies, and procedures clearly prescribe the roles and rights of full-time faculty in governance, planning, curriculum review, and academic policy making through committee structures. The deans also report that they actively encourage faculty participation. While mechanisms are in place for faculty participation, such as through the Senate and committee structures, those mechanisms do not appear to be functioning in an optimal way. The OIRA survey indicates that 60 percent of all faculty members do not believe that they play an effective role in governance. There is also some sentiment that faculty participate only on a reporting level and have no decision-making power in the budgeting process. Faculty members appear to perceive administrative feedback as more consistent at the level of the senior administration as compared to the faculty and departmental levels. As a result, faculty members seem to lack knowledge and certainty as to whether the existing system of faculty representation is appropriate. While governance structures are in place, they may not be functioning at a satisfactory level, particularly with regard to the University Senate and faculty grievance procedures.

C. UNIVERSITY RESPONSIBILITIES AND SUPPORT

1. Overall trend

The University has recently made significant strides in increasing the percentage of funds devoted to academic programs versus non-academic activities. Between AY 1997–98 and AY 2001–02, expenditures for academic support services increased nearly 11 percent per annum, while expenditures for non-academic services rose by only 3 percent per annum.

2. Support for research

Considerable gains have been made concerning research support at AUB. The University Research Board (URB), a committee of the University Senate, fosters and improves the research environment at AUB through faculty development grants, research grants to individual faculty members, and a Visiting Scholar Program that facilitates research consultation by one or two recognized scholars annually per faculty. On average, close to 100 short-term and 20 long-term faculty development grants are awarded annually. Short-term faculty development grants support faculty attendance at conferences, courses, and workshops, whereas long-term grants (two to eight weeks) are used for extended research visits, mostly during summer months, to recognized institutions in order to conduct research or to learn new investigative techniques. The Faculty of Medicine has its own internally-generated funds that provide a significant level of additional support for research.

Table 10.3 presents information on recent funding for faculty research. The data shows the upward trend in internally and externally funded research across the University. AUB contributions to faculty research rose 39 percent between AY 1999–2000 and AY 2001–02.
TABLE 10.3 FUNDING OF RESEARCH PROJECTS AT AUB  
(In US dollars)

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>URB research funding</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>408,366</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>549,084</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>568,879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty of Medicine research funding</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>170,000</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>192,000</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>260,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External funding</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1,097,207</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>3,660,022</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3,690,189</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An Office of Grants and Contracts was established at AUB in 2001 to assist faculty in obtaining independent sponsored funding for research. This resource also provides some administrative support for research and has increased the ability of new faculty members to compete for research support from outside sources. In terms of actual procurement of research grants, faculty members at AUB have been successful at increasing the amount of external funding for research over recent years. However, there is clearly much room for improvement in the domain of sponsored research.

The University's introduction of nine-month contracts in professional schools (except in the Faculty of Medicine), beginning in October 2000, is part of a general strategy for supporting research. In the FM, all faculty members continue to maintain 11-month contracts due to the service they provide in the hospital. In some faculties, teaching loads may be reduced if outside research funds are procured, even if the grant does not fund the investigator's salary. Also, during their third or fourth year, assistant professors can compete to receive a paid research leave of one semester, which is currently covered by a grant to AUB from the Hewlett Foundation. The sabbatical was converted to a paid research leave, allowing faculty members to take one semester of paid research leave after three years of service, which could be extended to a year if other funding is made available to augment the faculty member's salary during the second semester. Faculty interviews nonetheless suggest that the professoriate would generally benefit from more protected time for research. The University's effort to initiate PhD programs in areas of regional and international competitive advantage would certainly contribute to invigorating the research environment at AUB.

3. Support for teaching

As noted above, (Figure I, p. 127) a number of initiatives have been undertaken by the University in recent years to promote teaching excellence. The Task Force on Undergraduate Teaching Excellence has made several recommendations that have been implemented across the University. They include the introduction of teaching excellence awards, offering frequent teaching seminars and workshops to faculty, classroom improvements, establishing a teaching and learning center, and regularly inviting international scholars to serve as faculty mentors. In addition, the University is sponsoring workshops and support for computing and web-based learning.

4. Libraries and technical support for teaching and research

Faculty members receive support for the introduction of new technology in the teaching process, as well as training in the use of new technologies through the Academic Computing Center. Such training, which is optional, varies by individual faculty member, and no system is currently in place to monitor the effectiveness of that training. At the faculty level, deans encourage the use of novel teaching methods and generally support technical enhancements for their faculties. However, only half the surveyed faculty reported that the level of technology and equipment used in teaching is at present satisfactory. While the faculty as a whole expressed substantial satisfaction with library databases and computer support, assistant professors were more likely to respond that there were insufficient library and other resources to support their research.
The faculty expressed a lower level of satisfaction with laboratories and equipment. Procedurally, faculty members are asked to make their requests and suggestions for equipment at the department level. Those requests are prioritized by the department chairs or the deans and submitted as final budget requests. Faculty may submit proposals to the USAID-funded American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program to purchase new equipment not covered in the capital budget.

D. PROMOTION, EVALUATION, AND SALARY INCREASES

1. Criteria

Criteria for periodic evaluation and promotion are based on research output, teaching effectiveness, and university and professional service, and are usually communicated through department chairpersons and faculty deans and in line with the University’s promotion policy. Promotion criteria also serve as a vehicle for communicating role expectations. The main issue of concern to faculty members is that the promotion process is not transparent. In the survey conducted by the Inter-Faculty Task Force on Promotion Criteria and Procedures appointed by the president in 2001-02, the majority (66 percent) of surveyed faculty expressed dissatisfaction with the current methods of evaluation. Thus, there is a need for greater clarity of evaluative criteria with regard to promotion and salary increases. The Promotion Task Force recommends the use of benchmarking to provide the faculty with objective criteria and greater clarity in what is expected of them. The University is currently developing a uniform system that takes into account the differences in individual faculty responsibilities and provides a system of balancing activities, i.e., if research responsibilities increase, teaching or service expectations correspondingly decrease.

As reported by the Promotion Task Force, faculty members of all ranks stressed the pre-eminence of research as part of the evaluation criteria for promotion. Indeed, the Institutional Self-Study Survey reveals that faculty members are likely to feel more adequately acknowledged for their contributions to research compared to their contributions in teaching and service. Specifically, 56 percent agreed that their commitment to research is adequately acknowledged in the promotion process, whereas adequate acknowledgment of teaching and service was endorsed by only 27 percent and 23 percent respectively. Faculty members would also like to see contributions to regionally-based research more adequately acknowledged in the promotion process, with 85 percent agreeing that unique and creative work on local issues should be recognized in promotion applications (particularly with regard to recognition of publications in regional journals).

2. Results of promotion focus groups

According to the responses elicited from the Promotion Task Force focus groups, participants highlighted the importance of implementing ongoing faculty evaluation processes, especially an annual review. The faculty also expressed some dissatisfaction with the related issue of merit pay increases. Some faculty said that long-term contracts are necessary for job stability and suggested that a seven-year contract should be automatically given to those who are promoted to full professor. Numerous comments were also made in support of reinstating tenure, with a few dissenting comments against tenure. Some faculty stated that the associate professorship should be a terminal rank for faculty members who are not successfully promoted to the rank of full professor. The Promotion Task Force’s report is under study by both the Faculty Senate and the Board of Deans for recommending improvements in the current promotion system.

E. RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

1. Overview

AUB has an open and transparent recruitment policy and is an equal opportunity employer. All positions are advertised on the AUB web site as well as in such international journals as the Chronicle for Higher Education. When interviewed, faculty agreed that AUB shows sensitivity to equity and diversity in the recruitment process.
With respect to faculty recruitment and retention, however, it should be noted that regional political tensions continue to have a significant adverse impact on the University’s ability to attract and retain qualified faculty from outside Lebanon and the Middle East region. Nevertheless, AUB has been generally successful in academic recruiting and retention. The University has recruited 165 faculty members in the professorial ranks during the past five years, 144 of which were full-time regular faculty, excluding visiting faculty. In general, AUB is able to retain newly hired faculty; over the past five years, the University has retained 83% percent of the 144 regular faculty members recruited. In order to better measure retention of faculty after completion of their initial contract, the retention of faculty recruited between 1998 and 2001 was also considered. Of the 48 regular faculty members who were recruited by the University during that period, 32 are still employed at AUB. No distinction was made here, between regretted versus non-regretted non-renewal of contracts. The Deans have reported that the majority of non-renewal departures from Lebanon have been for personal reasons. Overall, the full-time faculty in professorial ranks has grown by 13% over a two-year period, from 325 members in fall 2000 to 368 members in the fall of 2002. When excluding the Faculty of Medicine, full-time professorial ranks grew by 16% over the same period.

Policies and procedures for the recruitment and evaluation of visiting faculty are the same as those for full-time faculty. However, recruitment of part-time faculty is typically more ad hoc. Furthermore, policies for the recruitment of part-time faculty are not clearly articulated or communicated and differ from those concerning full-time regular faculty.

2. Salary and benefits packages

AUB faculty salaries are lower than the average salaries at peer institutions in the United States. However, when U.S. taxes are taken into account, AUB compensation levels are competitive overall with those institutions. AUB also offers an attractive benefits package, which often includes partially subsidized housing and fully subsidized school tuition for dependent children of faculty. Faculty are given annual salary increases based on achievement (an average of 2 percent for AY 2001-02), and salary adjustments are periodically made on an individual basis when the salary is found to be significantly out of line with that of peer faculty. Information regarding salary ranges is posted on the AUB web site. The salary and compensation information for specific positions is communicated personally to potential candidates during the recruitment process, although salary ranges are not generally posted in the position-available notices.

3. Obstacles to recruitment

Despite successful recruitment efforts overall, faculty in selected academic specialties have been difficult to recruit, with some positions remaining vacant for several years. According to the deans, principal obstacles to recruitment include low availability of applicants in selected fields, perceptions on the part of potential candidates regarding the security situation in Lebanon, effective international competition, slightly lower faculty salaries compared with similar U.S institutions, and unfavorable perceptions of the research environment, i.e., no active PhD programs. Several strategies developed thus far to address those obstacles include encouraging AUB graduates to return after completing their PhDs abroad, developing broader advertising channels, increasing invitations to potential visiting scholars, increasing personalized recruitment, and more networking by faculty at conferences.

F. ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

1. Overview

The University has made considerable strides in enriching the academic environment in recent years through the visiting scholars program of the University Research Board, as well as through faculty-based workshops and seminars. AUB has also established multiple collaborative activities through its research centers, such as the Center for the Advanced Mathematical Sciences, the Center for Arab and Middle Eastern Studies, the Center for English Language Research and Teaching, the Center for Behavioral Research, the Center for Research on Population and Health, and the Science and Mathematics Education Center. Through those
centers, research groups have been formed, which link investigators within as well as outside the University in order to facilitate the optimal pursuit of mutual research interests.

2. Challenges

Faculty members nonetheless generally believe there is still room for improving the academic environment, intellectual freedom, and integrity at AUB. Some faculty members express a feeling of intellectual isolation in Lebanon, which is thought to be in part due to insufficient encouragement of regional research initiatives and difficulties in sustaining international relations as a result of the persistent political instability in the Middle East.

The AUB academic manual clearly states that the faculties are responsible for upholding academic integrity among students. In addition, deans encourage faculty members to address violations of the student code of conduct, and individual faculties have prescribed methods for faculty members to deal with breaches in integrity. Clear policies and procedures regarding academic integrity among students exist, as expressed in the recently adopted AUB Student Code of Conduct, which is published on the AUB web site and in the AUB Student Handbook. Moreover, numerous meetings have been held through the student governance structure to inform students of integrity policies and to offer them a forum for discussion of integrity issues. The AUB Student Code of Conduct focuses particularly on the prevention of and disciplinary measures for cheating.

Nonetheless, it should be noted that 18 percent of surveyed students reported that they were unaware of the existence of integrity policies, and 33 percent said they were unclear as to their meaning. In the survey of graduating seniors by the Task Force on Teaching Excellence, many respondents stated that they had observed an AUB student hand in someone else’s work as his or her own. This is a problem that continues to be addressed by the faculty and at all levels of the University’s academic administration.

G. SUMMARY OF RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

This section focused on six substantive themes related to faculty effectiveness. Recent notable accomplishments include:

1. The faculty has demonstrated a renewed vitality as evidenced in a reinvigorated academic environment and enhanced productivity, particularly with respect to teaching and research.

2. Successful recruitment efforts, leading to a substantial number of faculties in the professorial ranks.

3. Intensive efforts to increase research support mechanisms, including the implementation of nine-month contracts in the professional schools (other than the Faculty of Medicine) beginning October 2000, the establishment of the Office of Grants and Contracts in 2001, and the granting of protected time to faculty in selected faculties beginning in 2002.

4. Initiation of a review of the evaluation process through the formation of the Task Force on Promotion in AY 2001-2002, which was charged with recommending realistic and reliable promotion criteria and processes that fulfill the mission of the University and maintain high academic standards (the team completed its report in June 2002).

5. Reaffirmation of the University’s commitment to academic integrity through the adoption of the Student Code of Conduct.

6. Actively supporting teaching excellence by the establishment of the Task Force on Teaching Excellence (1999), which resulted in the launching of ongoing workshops and seminars and the creation of the Office of Academic Computing.
H. RECOMMENDATIONS

Despite the numerous accomplishments that have been realized within the faculty in recent years, the surveys of faculty and interviews with the deans and the provost, as well as discussions within the task team revealed that several problematic issues still need to be addressed. The following recommendations emerged from the information collected and analyzed by the Task Team and correspond with the key areas for improvement as identified by the Team. Each recommendation is considered equally important and the order of presentation is not to be construed as indicative of priority.

1. Governance

Clarify the role and strengthen the effectiveness of the University Senate as the principal legislative body for academic affairs and faculty self-governance and develop strategies for enhancing broader participation of faculty in the governance structures and decision-making processes of the institution. In addition, the channels for faculty grievance should be reviewed and communications at the departmental and faculty levels should be improved.

Proposed steps for implementation:

(a) Faculty: The faculty should take more seriously the election of members to the Senate and its committees and boards

(b) Chairpersons and deans: Chairpersons and deans would work towards better communication and transparency at departmental and faculty levels and with the central administration.

(c) Senators: Faculty members who are elected to the Senate would take their participation in the affairs of the Senate seriously, particularly when appointed by the president to serve as chairpersons for Senate committees or boards. Chairs would develop a work plan for their committees at the beginning of each term.

(d) Provost: The provost would regularly share academic issues of relevance with the Senate and seek input from the Senate on such issues.

(e) President: The president would communicate expectations to the chairs of Senate committees and boards upon appointment.

2. Advising

Assess how the system of student advising can be further improved, so that faculty can play an expanded role in advising (including mentoring) and in the introduction of AUB expectations for student integrity. This may entail increasing resources and incentives to faculty in a systematic way across the University if that is found to make them more effective in fulfillment of their advising role, including prescribed training as well as the inclusion of advising in the merit and promotion criteria.

Proposed steps for implementation:

(a) Provost and deans: The provost would form a University Task Force on Advising (or the provost would ask the deans to set up a task force on advising in each faculty), which would include students and faculty to assess the system of advising by reviewing existing strategies and to make recommendations to the provost and to the deans to:

(i) Develop the system to better meet student needs in academic advising.

(ii) Create a positive “culture” of advising in which the faculty play an expanded role (including mentoring), the students receive valued attention, and AUB’s expectations for student integrity are clear.

(iii) Suggest measures for including advising in the merit and promotion criteria.
President and provost: The senior administration, in consultation with the University Task Force on Advising (or the faculty task forces), would assess how to better support faculty in the effective fulfillment of their advising role. Consideration should be given to providing appropriate resources, incentives, and prescribed training to improve the quality of advising.

3. Promotion criteria and evaluation

Develop explicit, systematic, and uniform evaluative criteria, giving due attention to areas that currently are not appropriately recognized, particularly regional research, teaching, and service. Implement a more comprehensive year-by-year evaluation system, including annual performance reviews, which would provide regular feedback to junior faculty concerning their progress towards promotion and would continuously monitor faculty activity.

Proposed steps for implementation:

(a) Deans and chairpersons: The deans and respective chairpersons would provide regular feedback to junior faculty concerning their progress towards promotion through annual performance reviews. Full professors would also receive ongoing feedback regarding their performance during annual reviews.

(b) Deans: The deans, with their faculties, would develop the weights to be assigned to each criterion as appropriate to the discipline. Increased recognition would be given to teaching, with research and publications continuing to receive appropriate weight. Proper recognition would also be given to service, including service to AUB, professional practice, and service to the community.

(c) Deans: The deans would ensure that merit increases are systematically linked to the annual evaluation process.

(d) Provost: The provost would ensure that the process initiated by the Task Force on Promotion continues until clear promotion criteria and their measures are developed, including areas not currently appropriately measured, such as regional research, teaching, and service.

4. Research environment

Strengthen institutional support for research by further implementing recommendations in AUB's strategic planning documents to protect faculty time for research, to expand the level of research funds available to faculty, and to enhance support services and equipment for research. Improve the efficiency of administrative support. Selectively reintroduce PhD programs and increase the number of key hires in areas of comparative advantage.

Proposed steps for implementation:

(a) Faculty: The faculty would seek external funding more aggressively, including covering the cost of their time for research. In addition, the faculty would need to work proactively to secure funding for new equipment.

(b) Chairpersons: The departments would continue to study the feasibility of selectively reactivating doctoral programs in their disciplines.

(c) Provost and deans: A system would be developed to measure faculty workloads. Where indicated by the workload analysis, further steps would be taken to secure protected time and reduced teaching load for faculty.

(d) President and provost: The administration's role in providing essential infrastructure in various areas would be sustained and enhanced:

(i) The Office of Grants and Contracts could play an expanded role by initiating more efforts to secure funding and by assisting in the administration of grants.
(ii) The efficiency of support services provided by such offices as the Comptroller’s Office and the Purchasing Department could be improved.

(iii) Special emphasis could be given to procuring equipment to support research.

(d) President and provost: The administration would selectively approve current proposals to reactivate doctoral programs at AUB and increase the number of key hires in areas of comparative advantage. The administration would monitor the gradual implementation and evaluate the success of such introduced programs, and proceed accordingly.

5. **Teaching environment**

Provide increased resources for the acquisition of assets to support teaching, including classroom and laboratory equipment. Implement a systematic set of criteria and frequent evaluation of teaching. Continue to provide workshops that improve teaching.

Proposed steps for implementation:

(a) Faculty: Faculty members would continue and increase their use of training opportunities provided by the University. They would also be proactive in acquiring new teaching skills by holding discussion forums on how to improve teaching and how to solve practical problems in teaching within their faculties. They would continue to read more about teaching methods and about new developments in teaching in books, newsletters, and on the internet (e.g., tomorrow-professor@lists.Stanford.EDU). Faculty members would ensure that their newly developed skills become embedded effectively in teaching practices.

(b) Faculty and Senate: The faculty and senate would examine and expand the system for evaluating teaching.

(c) President and provost: The administration would provide increased resources for the acquisition of assets, including laboratory equipment to support teaching. The administration would also continue to provide workshops and seminars to improve teaching (including training on the WebCT system) and monitor the use and effectiveness of such training.

6. **Academic integrity**

Reinforce the newly introduced Student Code of Conduct by employing new communication strategies and by developing policies and procedures to address accountability. Consider the development of a faculty code of conduct.

Proposed Steps for Implementation:

(a) Faculty: Faculty members would jointly develop a climate of academic integrity with students by frequently discussing issues in classes and initiating forums to discuss academic integrity. Faculty members would take responsibility to strictly enforce the Student Code of Conduct.

(b) Provost and deans: The provost and deans would ensure that information regarding the Student Code of Conduct is broadly and prominently publicized through the University catalogue, web site, student handbook, and brochures.