

American University of Beirut
Office of the President



May 14, 2014

Dear AUB Faculty and Staff,

A number of you have raised continuing concerns with me via open letter or in conversation about email and phone privacy at AUB. First, I wish to acknowledge that the absence of a transparent Privacy Policy and related procedures and protocols contributed significantly to the general uncertainty about this issue, as well as the contentious atmosphere during the past year among certain Internal Audit staff, IT staff, various administrators and faculty constituencies.

Let me state unequivocally that the University does not monitor phone or e-mail content or patterns and has no intention of doing so outside the specific and limited bounds of the University Privacy Policy on Electronic Communication and Files. The Privacy Policy's express purpose is to affirm and protect the privacy of electronic communications and data files and to describe the exceptional circumstances under which the normal privacy expectations of users of AUB's IT systems, including e-mail, telephone, data and network resources, may be subsumed to other values critical to ensuring the strong health and essential operations of the University.

Any review of e-mail and/or telephone data other than for normal IT maintenance and emergencies must be authorized by the President or the Audit Committee of the Board of Trustees. I have every confidence in our IT staff not exceeding the boundaries of their responsibilities in maintaining our IT systems. I am also confident that the staff of the office of Internal Audit have never accessed e-mail or telephone data without appropriate authorization under AUB's policies. To be more specific, logs of emails have never been regularly sent to the office of IA, nor have logs of incoming phone calls ever been regularly given to the office of IA. To be sure, we continue to work on enhancing our IT capabilities to provide better protection of data and to reduce the risk of hacking or other unauthorized access.

Moreover, I am optimistic that the dialogue over privacy and electronic communications in which we have recently engaged has advantageously positioned the University to address future scenarios in a way that better reflects the institutional values we acknowledge as a community of learners and professionals.

Peter Dorman
President