

University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021 Meeting 2

Date: Thursday November 26, 2020

Time: 12:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Absent
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Ms. Hiba Hamade	Coordinator of Student Activities	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Present
Dr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Present
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Present
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Present
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Present
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Present
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Present
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Present
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Present
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Present
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present

Agenda:

1. Electing committee representatives
2. Feedback on the Pass/ No Pass option
3. Other business

Meeting called to order at 12:00 p.m.

1. Cabinet Elections:

Dean Nezameddin called for nominations for each of the following committees respectively. The voting took place by anonymous polls.

External committees:

Voters were allowed to vote for one of the candidates.

- Disciplinary committee:
Dimitri Haddad won against Elie el Hajj

- Admission committee:
Karim Abi Said won against Oussama Obeid

- Library committee:
Christian Sadaka won by acclamation

- Student affairs committee:
Nader Zalaquett won against Khaled Hariri

- Academic Development committee:
Jude Qalawi won against Kamal Chatila

Internal committees:

Voters were allowed to vote for two of the candidates.

- Bylaws committee:
Voting was done in two rounds, the USFC voted for one candidate at a time and the candidate with the most votes gets elected.
Mahdi Fakhoury and Nour Darwiche won against Khaled Hariri.

- Finance committee:
Voters could vote for two candidates at a time.
Ahlam Tarchichi and Oussama Obeid won against Elie el Hajj and Talal Kaddoura.
A second round of voting took place since Ahlam Tarchichi won and there was a tie between Talal Kaddoura and Oussama Obeid.

- PR committee:
Aya Kassem and Kamal Chatila won against Khaled El Hariri.

2. Feedback on the Pass/ No Pass grading system:

- Dean Niezameddin allowed Jad Hani, the Vice President of the USFC to introduce the topic
 - The application of the Pass/ No Pass grading option is an initiative started by the student body before the elections. Oussama, Jad and Mounzer had a meeting with the provost to discuss this option around a month ago. The provost was against this option before the elections.
 - After the elections, faculty deans were approached by their respective faculty student representatives to discuss this option and set fair conditions to avoid any abuse of the system. One suggestion was to restrict this option to a limited number of courses (7 credits being the equivalent to 2 courses and a lab)The board of deans did not approve of this suggestion, Jad suggested that the USFC should get explanations for the rejection of the conditional p/np option.
 - Jad shared the concern that no dialogue allowed the USFC to properly discuss the conditions, since no official proposal was submitted before any decision was made.
 - The USFC designed a survey, collected and filtered the data to support and provide evidence for the arguments. The USFC wishes to reach a compromise between the students and the administration regarding the grading system.
- Dean Nezameddin states that the board of deans analyzed more credible data provided by the Registrar and that the associate provost had a presentation to elaborate on this idea during the meeting. The outcome was that reaching a solution outside of the P/nP grading system would help the student elevate the pressure, and that the USFC and the administration should consider bigger issues in the meantime.
 - It was suggested in the meeting that the P/nP option does not solve the problem that the students are facing:
The data that was presented included all the grades and they noticed that a huge majority of the students who opted for the P/nP option in the spring semester were achieving students who wanted to keep a high GPA, while many of the students who were below the probation line did not select this grading option. The students' GPA has also increased when the P/nP option was implemented.

- The goal of the administration is to help the students having difficulties by solving the issue of the type of the assessment which has been problematic since internet and technical issues are not always taken into consideration during online tests. The P/nP option is just a partial solution to the students who may regret opting for it when applying to medical school or graduate programs.
- The USFC refuted Dean Nezameddin’s arguments.
 - A general agreed consensus between the USFC that the P/nP option is not a solution for the problem but a temporary safety net for students since we have very little time to address bigger issues to improve the quality of assessment for this semester.
 - By choosing to opt for the P/nP option, the students are to be held responsible for their actions and should take into consideration job/ graduate school applications before making this decision.
 - This semester is much harder than the spring semester, students do not have the same studying opportunities, studying environments, and are all facing electricity issues, which is why we believe that we are being assessed in an unfair manner. Having a conditional P/nP grading option would help the students face mental health issues that have gotten worse than they were during the spring semester.
 - Many professors are disregarding the fact that we have to work for other courses by overwhelming students with assignments. Many students complain that their grades have really deteriorated during this semester.
- Dean Nezameddin argues that the spring semester was harder than the current one because students had to deal with and adapt to a changing environment and learning system. He also states that no tangible evidence suggests that the P/nP option will solve the current problem but rather help the wrong people. Also, by setting the condition of limiting the option to 7 credits, students opt for the P/nP in a selective manner.
- Kamal emphasizes on the idea that the current semester is more exceptional than the spring semester. He says that being the SRC president of OSB has allowed him to deal with the students since last spring and that more people are “losing it mentally” while the situation is getting worse. It is clear that the students are much more stressed than they were during the spring semester, especially that many professors are testing their students in different, harder ways, and are giving a lot of assignments.

- Mounzer elaborates on further arguments.
 - The discussions that took place in meetings between USFCs and their respective faculty deans about the pros and cons of this grading system.
 - He acknowledges that students want this option to boost their GPA, and it is very hard, however, to have concrete proposals for finding better solutions in the little remaining time until the semester ends, even though Mounzer and others were working on communicating problems since the spring semester and no solution was reached.
 - He argues that having a linear raise for a course grade is much more harmful than having the P/nP option and allowing students to manage their time more effectively. Moreover, having a raise does not solve the problem of the students suffering from mental health issues.
 - The current situation is affecting everyone and having a P/nP option can help students who find it hard to maintain or increase their GPA given the harsh circumstances. The small number of students who exploit the option can be dealt with exceptionally.
 - Even though this partial solution might look bad on the transcript, most international institutions are implementing this option due to the global pandemic.
 - The increase in GPA during the spring semester is due to cheating in exams, and not due to the P/nP option.
- Talal emphasizes the fact that the USFC is trying to solve the problem for all students and find effective solutions like better testing methods and having more flexible deadlines.

The filtered data of the survey was presented.

- Dean Nezameddin refuses to take this data into consideration and claims that it is unprofessional and not credible. He suggests alternatives different than the P/nP option such as solving the issue of the exams being sequential and having a very large grade weight for one specific test.
- The USFC explains that the reason this survey was made was because they did not have access to the actual data from AUB, even though it was requested.

- Dr. Rima Majed agrees that this semester is more difficult because of the consequences of the explosion.
 - Her experience in teaching allows her to know that some of her students are struggling with the situation while others are exploiting it and paying someone else to do their exams. This clear division makes it very hard for professors to fairly grade their students. She believes that the quality of the education should be maintained while also taking into account the difficulties and the mental health issues. The P/nP option, in her opinion, would only be acceptable if it is implemented for all students of a certain class to avoid the problem of having different ways of assessment and inconsistency in grading.
 - Jude argues, in response to this, that grading each student and giving them the option to choose whether or not they want to opt for a P/nP system is a fair assessment. Its objective is to provide a safety net in terms of solution because students are struggling in different ways and it is a global problem.
 - Dr. Rima Majed says that admissions committees all around the world know that this year has been hard, and one could state it in the letter of purpose while applying, thus providing a certain explanation for having relatively lower grades.

- Oussama disagrees with Dean Nezameddin's statement on the credibility and professionalism of the survey/data. He explains that the survey was created due to constant pressure from the student body that started months ago. The survey contained various questions, had around 4500 respondents and the USFC spent 3 days filtering the data to narrow it down to around 3,300 responses and gain its credibility. He mentioned that the data that was collected does not coincide with that of the registrar and in fact shows the opposite. Oussama then urged the administration to look at both sides of the argument and not the Registrar's alone before making any decision regarding the matter.

Dr. Rima Majed and Dr. Rami Mhanna agree that the data studied by the administration should be shared with the USFC.

- Dean Nezameddin stressed on the point that the administration wants to help the students who are facing mental health issues and technical difficulties rather than giving them a temporary solution.

- Ahlam states that students need to feel supported and feel that AUB really wants the best for them, and even though having a P/nP option may not be a professional solution, it's the best one. We need to provide a solution that shows students that the administration is not disregarding what is happening.
- Dean Nezameddin agrees that the administration should be supporting students and suggests the organization of a team who can target the problem areas and find other, realistic solutions beyond P/nP and that can be implemented. He reminds everyone that faculty members also have to be comfortable with the decisions that are being made. He also suggests looking at different options in next week's meeting to proceed and give feedback to the board of deans.
- Aya comments that the next meeting is on December 3 while the withdrawal period ends on December 2, so when a decision is reached, students can regret (not) withdrawing a course. She also mentions that many students do not want to approach the administration because they have not been helpful. Also, it doesn't seem fair to further delay the decision, especially that the majority of the course assessments have already been graded. She also says that having a P/nP option is helpful for those who are actually working hard during these hard times.
- Jude says that the objective of this option is also to help the students who are extremely struggling financially by not having to pay for a course again nor overload their courses when they do not have the mental ability to do so.
- Kamal reminds the dean that this option is going to be exceptional. He mentions that when he, Christine and Talal met with the dean of OSB, Dr. Yusuf Sidani, they agreed to have a meeting at the end of the semester to find a common ground and reach better solutions for the spring semester. Talal agrees that we need a consistent solution.
- Dr. Rima Majed suggests that faculty members' opinion is important, and they don't want to repeat what happened in spring.
- Everyone agreed to form a subcommittee to find solutions for this issue, the P/nP option still being one of the options. The problem may be put on the next senate meeting agenda and a concrete proposal may be presented by Jad. Other options are to be looked at and discussed with faculty members.

3. Other business:

- It was discussed that final exams held on campus are not mandatory, and whomever cannot attend has to be accommodated.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021 Meeting 3

Date: Thursday December 3, 2020

Time: 5:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Present
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Present
Dr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Absent
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Present
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Present
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Present
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Present
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Present
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Late (excused)
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Present
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Present
Khaled El Hariri	MSFEA student representative	Present
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present
Caline P.	AUB Outlook	Present
Mr. Drew Wickens	Chief Financial Officer	Present
Dr. Zaher Dawy	Provost	Present

Agenda:

1. Approval of Minutes
2. Pass/No Pass
3. Tuition Increase
4. Previous Exam Proposal
5. Minutes Proposal
6. Other business

Meeting called to order at 5:00 p.m.

Dr. Nizameddin expressed concern about the behavior of several USFC members and called this unscrupulous coming from elected representatives. He proceeded to talk about the protest that happened the day before and the massive cyberbullying campaign the institution faced on social media. He stated that these movements are driven by outside agendas which the USFC should not accept.

Jad Hani responded saying that the USFC did not organize this protest but some USFCs were there to prevent any clashes. Karim Saadeh added that it is the student's right to voice their demands through protesting and the USFC cannot stop them from doing that.

Dr. Nizameddin explained that many students expressed disapproval of such actions and said if the USFC was serious, they need to release a statement condemning these actions and the cyberbullying targeted at the institution, to which President Khoury agreed. For transparency purposes, outlook will be present in all official USFC meetings (including this one) to report what is happening.

1. Approval of Minutes:

Meeting minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Pass/No Pass:

Provost Dr. Dawy started the discussion regarding the email that was sent by the provost to the student body concerning the rejection of the P/NP system and the accommodations. He stated that P/NP does not provide a long-term solution which is what the administration wants to find.

Dr. Dawy opened the floor for questions regarding the email sent.

Discussion:

- Nader asked about the subcommittee and if there are other accommodations will be implemented. Dr. Dawy answered that the subcommittee will include student representatives from the USFC and that any other accommodations that are reasonable which the USFC's see fit can be communicated through the Dean of Student Affairs

- Nour inquired about the reasons which will be considered valid when petitioning for incomplete grading. Dr. Dawy said it is difficult to define this. They would have to petition and explain the personal reason and the committee will look favorably at this and need to rely on their judgement.
- President Khoury asked the students to be more understanding as the faculties are also under stress and we understand the stress and we want to try to make everything easier which is why we sent out the names of the associate deans in the email.
- Talal asked about sequential exams and raised concerns regarding issues with Respondus and the lack of time, to which Dr. Dawy replied that these measures are to limit cheating and faculty members were urged to be flexible and more considerate of the time. This also depends on the approach of teaching.
- Mounzer asked for a more specific and more detailed email about the accommodation and the options about the information shared with the professors to be sent because in some cases, professors are not cooperative.
- Dr. Dawy believes that the email was clear enough and President Khoury noted that it's better not to add too many details as to not restrict the faculty or the students, to which Mounzer agreed.

Karim mentions that what Dr. Nizameddin talked about in the beginning of the meeting needs to be discussed further. Nader mentioned that for the sake of transparency and because Outlook is reporting the meeting, this should be addressed better, and the student representatives' side should be clarified. Dr. Nizameddin said that the issue can be talked about at a later time.

3. Tuition Increase:

President Khoury explained to the USFC that the decision to increase the exchange rate when calculating tuition was made due to three main reasons.

- Mainly, it was due to the deterioration of the LBP and so the salaries of the staff have been devalued; over the last 8 months we've lost 140 faculty members.
- The second reason was parents who are working in Lebanon were severely hit while parents who are outside experienced a softer hit, so a lot of money will be given in Financial Aid.
- The third reason is that this institution is not just for one generation, but it is for multiple generations to come, and they need to make the institution sustainable.

The provost Dr. Dawy and the Chief Financial Officer each gave presentations regarding the student financial aid, the proposed action plan, and the financial situation of AUB. The floor was then opened to questions and comments.

President Khoury wishes that the USFC arrange a general meeting with the student body so these presentations can be presented and the reasons behind the increase can be explained.

Discussion:

- Jude asked about the revenue enhancements and how they plan on going about that issue. Mr. Wickens responded that they are trying to attract foreign currencies because everything is being paid in LBP. Online foreign payments are being promoted.
- Talal thanked Mr. Wickens and Dr. Dawy for their transparency and for trusting us with this information. He suggested considering raising the wage per hour for the work study program.
- President Khoury responded by saying that Dr. Nezameddin is working on improving the Work Study program regarding wages and has already submitted a proposal to the Office of Financial aid.
- Elie mentioned that in the presentation, it was stated that the Financial aid of many students will be doubled and inquired whether it was the amount or the percentage that was going to be doubled because those two are different. Mr. Wickens responded that the percentage will be doubled.
- Christian questioned the feasibility of being able to secure that much aid to help the students having worked in the Financial Aid Office himself. He mentioned that him and Ali conducted a survey on Medical Students which clearly showed that many students' financial situation is already deteriorating and so they would not be able to pay at the new exchange rate. He asked how the administration plans on securing that much money for the financial aid.
- Dr. Dawy said that the system for financial aid is completely different from what Christian has mentioned and that the aid comes from the university directly. He assured everyone that they will try their best with the advancement office to help the students.
- Talal also suggested taking a portion of the technological fees to offer data bundles to students as a solution to many internet issues that students are facing with online learning. Dr. Nezameddin liked the idea and said that this could work out.
- Ali stated that the main issue here is that the students do not trust the administration with this issue as it has disregarded the students' concerns when it comes to it ever since the tuition was dollarized. He said students protesting were called alarmists and driven by foreign campaigns, but the students' concerns turned out to be true. He referred to the hospital staff that were not only fired, but the ISF were brought in to prevent any retaliation. If the administration failed to protect the staff who are considered vulnerable,

how can students trust that the administration will protect the student body, another vulnerable group in this university? The students do not believe that they will be protected if the exchange rate is increased to 3900LL for the dollar. The students see this as an attempt to make them and other vulnerable groups completely bear the losses of the crises.

- Dr. Nizameddin stated that what Ali said are cliches and that they are here to discuss technical issues relating to the numbers presented in the presentation.
- Dr. Dawy said that it was hard to let all the staff go, which he considered to have been essential. He asked that if Ali has any specific questions then he can go ahead. Ali asks how the administration plans to bear part of the losses.
- President Khoury stated that everyone is bearing part of the losses and that Ali should not be throwing around insults and accusations and wasting the USFC's time and asked to move on to the next speaker.
- Nader asks what guarantees that the students will be protected if the exchange rate is set at 3900LL. President Khoury responds that there are no guarantees in this country, but they will do their best to help the student body in this tough situation.

The remaining topics on the agenda were rescheduled for the next meeting.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 7:07 p.m.

University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021
Meeting 4 – Special USFC Meeting

Date: Monday January 4, 2021

Time: 6:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Present
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Dr. Zaher Dawi	Past Interim Provost	Present
Dr. Lina Choueiry	Interim Provost	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Absent
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Present
Dr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Absent
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Absent
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Absent
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Absent
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Present
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Absent
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Present
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Absent
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Absent
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Absent
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Absent
Khaled El Hariri	MSFEA student representative	Present
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present

Voting members present: 15

Quorum achieved.

Agenda:

1. Review of recent violent events
2. Update on spring semester
3. Other business

Meeting called to order at 6:00 p.m.

1. Review of recent violent events:

- Dr. Lina Choueiry mentions that the purpose of this meeting is to talk about the student code of conduct and ethical conduct regarding academic freedom and freedom of speech. She also reminds the present members of President Khuri's email in which he talks about the violent acts that took place during the last student protest.

Some protestors have crossed the line of freedom and violated the code of conduct. Pictures and videos taken during the protest on December 29 show graffiti on the main gate and the medical gate, how rocks were hurled in campus, attempts of breaking the gates, personal attacks, and language with an intention of provoking violence, etc. The damages were intensified as the day went on and violent attempts were aimed at the security.

This behavior is not in accordance with the principles of code of ethical conduct and part of the USFC's responsibilities are to ensure truthful communication and to avoid leaking of mistrustful information that could weaken the AUB community and the university.

The circulation of misinformation regarding the financial aid and the dollar rate issue is fueling the students' fears while the administration is trying to reassure students that there are solutions that could help students complete their degrees.

- Dr. Dawy shows a PowerPoint slide presented in the previous USFC meeting and in the town hall meeting, in which statistics show how much the financial aid budget has increased to assist and alleviate financial burden. The administration has made a commitment to increasing financial aid and making adjustments.
- Discussion
 - Talal Kaddoura said that he finds the violent events unacceptable and disgraceful, from both the protestors and the ISF. He expressed his point of view that this could be prevented if the protest was organized inside the AUB campus. This would have helped avoid outside interferences participating in the misleading campaigns and the personal attacks because this issue concerns the AUB community only. He said that he understands the reason behind the tuition increase but also supports students who wish to

peacefully express their concerns. This could be done through negotiations and not violence to avoid losing the quality of education that is offered by AUB.

- Elie El Hajj says that he is completely against the violent events and asks Dr. Nezameddin and President Khuri why they didn't anticipate them. He commented on how the president has mentioned in his email that AUB did not ask the ISF to take action in the protests while a picture was shared on social media showing the ISF on campus. He states that a plan of action should be put to take into consideration the students who would still not be able to pay their tuition fees even with the financial aid increase. Organizing peaceful protests within the university will help fight the media propaganda. He also says that they were selective in the photos and videos that they showed us to prove the violence and only showed the ones revealing violence against AUB.
- Dr. Nezameddin mentions that students could raise this concern in ways that do not involve violence and that some acts have surprised them. He emphasizes on the fact that many protestors were not AUB students. Misinformation is being circulated by a political party that does not believe in AUB nor the Lebanon that we inspire to, and by students that don't even believe in the USFC.
- Dr. Khuri answered the question about the presence of the ISF before the protest by saying that the intelligent services have predicted the violence. AUB is an American institution overseen by the board of trustees, and if any troops were to be sent, they would be very disciplined. AUB does not control the military, the internal part was controlled and there was violence kept outside, as well as attempts of causing body and property damage. He also mentions the insincerity of some USFC members and how this meeting is not a violation of the bylaws because the dean has been trying to contact the VP of the USFC to set a convenient timing for future meetings and did not receive any answer.
- Dr. Choueiry says that according to Robert's Rules of order, the agenda of a special meeting is not discussed and agreed upon. She also responds to Elie by saying that they were not selective on what is shown but selected things that are not being circulated, and to show and complete the story and pictures about campus security are very misleading. She highlights the fact that security is always present on campus regardless of the protest.
- Dr. Dawy remarks that the financial aid office is still in the middle of the process and has records of students that have already submitted the appeals and applications.
- Nader Zalaquett says that all the USFC who are present condemn violence and are with peaceful protesting without putting AUB's reputation at risk. A bad ranking of the university would hurt students more than the administration. The movement is not independent from ideologies, is circulating misleading information, and calls for protesting is supported from outside inferences. The administration's duty is to allow

peaceful protesting on campus of AUB students only. The USFC should work with them because we're closer to the students. He suggested a meeting to discuss the tuition problems.

- President Khuri said that they wanted to discuss the tuition, but two USFC students kept throwing accusations. This problem was discussed for months and discussions should be done through a respectful dialogue.
- Nader Zalaquett believes that we should work on eliminating the wrong claims that many pages are raising on social media. We can't win the social media battle but opposing these claims would help us deal with the big agenda and the outside interference. Dean Nezameddin suggested coordinating with the cabinet and the VP.
- Dr. Choueiry raises a point that one meeting where the students air their concerns will not instantly solve the tuition issue and what they wanted to do today is to agree on the complexity of this agreement to be able to move forward starting this meeting.
- Nader suggested that we voice alternatives to reach a common ground and that we could work on initiatives as USFC to collect a budget to invest in financial aid.
- Nour Darwiche pointed out that we were spoken to and we agreed on a meeting date. Also, some of the USFC participated in the protests and watched out for the intention of the protest and no one was leading it. She also asks if anyone asked for a peaceful sit in.
- Dr. Nezameddin says that nobody contacted him and that they found out on social media. He points out that many people present in the meeting held in a theater decided on the protests, and most of them were not AUB students.
- Nour Darwiche asks if it would be possible that some people who were given financial aid maybe do not need it or do not need it as much as someone else.
- Dr. Choueiry responds by saying that they are aware of the issues and the process involves applications and interviews to make sure of the reliability of the information. The spread of misinformation about corruption in the financial aid office should not be accepted because the staff is completely new.
- Nour said that the reason behind the question was to respond to the misinformation. Mounzer Tabbarah clarifies that she was talking about considering the reassessment of previous financial aid.
- Dr. Choueiry says that private information provided to the financial aid office is protected by the law and cannot be shared, they cannot be asked to prove that somebody who got financial aid needs it. There is a commitment of supporting the students and there could

not be any reevaluation, but those who do not need additional financial aid would not receive an increase.

- Mounzer Tabbarah noted that the violence during the protests was not from AUB students and that he does not see where the USFC's role is regarding this.
- Dr. Choueiry says that idea is that there is a lot of misinformation that undermines the community, and we need to internally work on strengthening it.
- Mounzer says that this point should be made clear to all students. He also agrees with Dr. Nezameddin that the way this meeting was held was not a breach of the bylaws, but it was not clear that this was a special meeting.
He clarified his question to ask how the USFC should react to these events after Dr. Nezameddin said that he was being contradictory.
- The Dean highlights the fact that the USFC is held responsible because this issue was circulated for being an issue of AUB students. Violence is not the answer because we want to solve the issue without outside interference dictating what we should do.
- Mounzer states that some non-AUB students were participating because AUB is for many generations.
- Dean Nezameddin emphasizes on the fact that AUB is not a public university.
- Christine Akiki says that she agrees that violence is unacceptable and comments on the fact that some representatives are talking on behalf of the whole USFC and are putting the university's reputation and quality of education at risk.
- Oussama Obeid says that it is clear that most of us are with the protest but do not support how it is being marketed. We need to deal with the social media battle and the grouping of the USFC. What the VP is saying on behalf of us is being taken for granted.
- Kamal Chatila agreed with Oussama and thinks that the first step should be that we work on accommodations. He suggested that students pay for 12 credits. He also asks if the university would allow protests to take place during the pandemic.
- The President responds by saying that the first step is to deal with violence is to recommend having a dialogue and having a meeting. He also answers the question by saying that protests would be allowed and encouraged only if it is safe peaceful civilized protests, and many were previously allowed.

2. Update on spring semester

- Khaled El Hariri asked Dr. Dawy why some students already applied, and they did not receive answers. Dr. Dawy answered that the responses were sent to those who already have financial aid and not new applicants. Applications are assessed in batches. The majority of the applicants will receive answers at the end of January.
- Elie El Hajj asks about the new grading policy to help students deal with online learning.
- Dean Nezameddin emphasized on the fact that we are in a time of severe lockdown and the semester will begin online. He also says that the P/nP option will not solve any problem.
- President Khuri says that we need to tackle the narrative that the administration does not include students in decision making.
He will also try to see what vaccines can be obtained in AUBMC to make available to the community and the AUB students. If we get vaccinated in March, learning will be hybrid during April, and hopefully an open graduation will be held.
- Dr. Choueiry wanted to counter a narrative that when students came to talk about the P/nP option, there was an assumption that the students and the administration were on opposing sides, rather than the agreement on the common goal to help the students. There is a need for a grading policy task force that will be working and presenting a grading policy for the spring semester. We are here to help the students and not appease them and P/nP is negative in the long run.
- Kamal suggested allowing students to get extra credit online. Dr. Choueiry responded that this cannot be imposed on faculty members but can be discussed with the professors. She suggested having a representative of the grading taskforce and that we avoid building expectations and make promises that can't be kept.
- Dr. Nezameddin says that there are a lot of things that should be discussed when it comes to grading, especially when a class average is very low.

3. Other business

- Nader Zalaquett asked if the USFC budget could be used to help students like the support fund. He also asked at what dollar rate the budget will be and whether the USFC can hold funding events to add to this budget to invest - with full transparency - in financial aid.
- Dean Nezameddin supported the idea and says that he would connect with the advancement office. The budget depends on the number of students and will be in LBP.

- Khaled El Hariri asked about the proposals by mentioning that we haven't discussed any of them. Dr. Nezameddin suggested that we send the proposals to him and the VP and decide on prioritizing them.
- President Khuri made a point that AUB should give a sense of agency, which comes with responsibility and dialogue, and that we should push to have regular meetings.
- Mahdi Fakhoury asked for comments on the tuition strike organized by the secular club.
- President Khuri thinks that the strike is pointless because encouraging students not to pay their tuition fees is a very bad advice. AUB is a private institution and the government cannot tell them what to do because it is not owned by the government. If this law passes, the university will lose many connections and would close.
- Nader asked if there is a possibility to consider other alternatives like fixing the rate and apply this decision next semester.
- President Khuri says that he does not make the decisions and that board did. It is helpful to reestablish balance and allow people who have money to help those who don't. Our only goal is to get the students to graduate.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 8:10 p.m.

**University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021
Meeting 5**

Date: Tuesday January 12, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Present
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Drew Wickens	Chief Financial Officer	Present
Dr. Zaher Dawi	Past Interim Provost	Present
Dr. Lina Choueiry	Interim Provost	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Present
Dr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Present
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Present
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Present
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Present
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Present
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Present
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Present
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Present
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Present
Khaled El Hariri	MSFEA student representative	Present
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present

Voting members present: 25

Quorum achieved.

Agenda:

1. Approval of December 3 meeting minutes.
2. Tuition fee discussion, including Q/A section.
3. Updates on spring semester's accommodations
4. Minutes proposal
5. Response and prevention of sexual harassment proposal
6. Graduate representation proposal
7. HSON representation proposal (voting on amendment)
8. Student representation on BoT
9. Data bundle proposal (Duplicated)
10. Access to textbooks proposal (Duplicated)
11. Failed courses proposal
12. Other business

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of December 3 meeting minutes.

Minutes were approved unanimously.

2. Tuition fee discussion, including Q/A section.

- Mounzer Tabbarah asked for more information on the financial aid budget (25 million \$) and whether the total amount will be in fresh dollars or in LBP.
 - Mr. Wickens said that he can provide us with this information in the next meeting. He also stated that this budget (25 million \$) was not only for financial aid, but also for repairing the damages of the August 4 explosion.
 - Dr. Dawy clarified that this budget (20 million \$) is the operating budget, which is different from the donor aids and the money that the university gets in terms of scholarships from external sources. In addition to that budget, there were multiple fundraising campaigns to get more scholarship money and financial support for students. Also, this money comes in 2 ways. One part comes in endowments, the total amount of money cannot be directly used and the returns from this money are used to support students. Another subsidy comes as direct scholarships that can be used to support students directly.
 - Dean Nezameddin explained that any institution is not sustainable if it directly spends money it gets without investing it. The perpetuity returns will allow the institution to support itself.

- Karim Saadeh asked under what circumstances is endowment used and if it can be used to repair some of the damages of the financial crisis. He also asked why give such a high budget to the financial aid rather than subsidizing this budget from the whole expected tuition money, and keep the tuitions at a lower price. He clarified that he was not talking about the exchange rate but about considering lowering the whole tuition.
 - Dr. Drew clarified that endowments are gifts from donors to invest for a specific purpose that was specified for that endowment. The university will then apply a spending policy to give predictability on how much they can spend from that endowment. He also said that we cannot use the endowment to help AUB during the crisis because it can only be used to invest in the specified purpose. The amount that could be spent comes out of the spending policy.

- Karim Saadeh asked if Mr. Wickens can explain why the financial aid budget was increased so much rather than subsidizing it from the whole tuition fees.
 - Mr. Wickens answered that they are trying to maintain the percentage wisely and the reason behind the financial aid is to maintain a diverse student body and a rich pool of students.
 - Dr. Dawy added that the situation is very complex because we cannot mix together different currencies. The calculations also consider the 20 million increase in financial aid support.

- Khaled El Hariri asked Dr. Dawy if students should apply again if they haven't received any answers already? He also asked if people who are granted scholarships (MEPI) that covers the whole tuition for a semester and when they also receive financial aid, what happens to the remaining amount of money?
 - Dr. Dawy responded that the financial aid office has already reached out to many applicants. Anybody who did not receive an email yet should appeal for reconsideration or submit a new application. Those who applied in the last 2-3 weeks should wait. Regarding the scholarships, the support is coming from different sources, the third source being the grand space support under which the MEPI scholarship falls under. The money is distributed among students depending on their needs.
 - Dr. Choueiry added that these types of grants (MEPI) are not endowments but are very specific in their requirements for eligibility. When someone is benefiting from these grants, the financial aid they were receiving gets redistributed. This does not prevent students from benefiting again from financial aid when they stop benefiting from the scholarship.

- Mahdi asked what's going to happen with the increase in the financial aid percentage after the spring semester for continuing students.
 - Dr. Dawy responded that the situation will be assessed by the end of the spring semester depending on many factors, but the plan is to maintain the support to the deserving students.

- Dr. Mehanna proposed to spend whatever income in fresh dollars in dollars and the income that come in LBP to be spent in LBP because we don't know how the exchange rate will evolve (match the currencies).

- Mr. Wickens answered that this makes a lot of sense, but he doesn't know if we could actually do that. It would be too much to ask of the students to actually pay the tuition fees in fresh dollars because they're not available in the market. The president and the leadership team are working hard to identify new revenue streams that will generate fresh dollars. The currency matching will be implemented in the future but not anytime soon.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested follow up questions for the future to be put down in writing.
- Karin Saadeh suggested the creation of an Ad Hoc to solve these issues to create a ground of communications to answer students' concerns and deal with these issues and at least set one or two meetings to answer additional questions.
 - Dean Nezameddin said that they can look at certain university wide mechanisms to answer the specific questions.
- Ali believes that it is better to have one on one discussions with the financial team.
 - Dean Nezameddin answered that we should start to look at the technical question and from that basis, we can look at the mechanism to move forward.
- Karim Saadeh suggested the formation of an Ad Hoc committee to find solutions for the tuition
 - Dean Nezameddin suggested that we form a channel to answer the questions of all students regarding the tuition fees.

Mr. Wickens was excused at 7:39 p.m.

- Karim Saadeh asked based on what exchange rates are the numbers reported calculated.
 - Dr. Khuri said that this question would be more appropriate to the CFO who had just left.

3. Updates on spring semester's accommodations (task force)

Nour Darwiche gave updates on the grading policy, which is different from the grading system (letter or numeric). The goal of the task force is not to add a new grading system, but to find suitable accommodations for the spring semester. They will analyze grading policies implemented in universities worldwide.

4. Minutes proposal by Nour Darwiche and Khaled El Hariri

- Background
 - As USFC, we are urged to ensure transparency among ourselves and with the student body.
- Proposal
 - To have any motion made to be mentioned with the name of the member who made it.

- In case of a discussion, the first matter should be given as well as the name of the person giving it. To mention any other similar argument given with the name of the person giving it.
 - To allow any USFC member to request that their name or any specific opinion to be mentioned in the minutes.
 - For the minutes to be sent by email to the student body to facilitate access.
- Dr. Nezameddin said that the minutes are meant to be specific documents, a record for history and institutional memory including the items in brief terms and the outcome. For the USFC to be a professional body, the minutes should not be a narrative.
 - Dr. Khuri said that the senators decided that it was best to only attribute the administrators. The USFC should be given the opportunity to speak their mind freely without fear of recrimination.

Dr. Dawi Dr. Choueiry were excused at 7:53 p.m.

- Student representatives agreed that minutes should be shared in a professional way and that we should inform the student body on what proposals they worked on. It is also necessary to inform students that the approved minutes are available on the USFC website.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested sharing this information on social media and informing the student body on the presence of the approved minutes on the website.
- It was suggested to make an amendment to remove the section about the detailed descriptions but to keep the part in which it proposes to mention who voted with, or against, or abstained.
- Dean Nezameddin responded that meetings have a very strict protocol where votes are usually open, but everybody has the right to ask for a secret vote for people to vote freely. He also suggested that the PR committee should work on ways to share the minutes.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested the amendment of this proposal and for Nour and Khaled to work with the PR committee on ways to facilitate access to the minutes.

5. Response and prevention of sexual harassment proposal by Aya Kassem

- Background
 - Title IX focuses on punishment rather than dealing with victims of sexual harassment.
 - The process of recovery is very important for students.
 - Title IX forms are very complex, and students are discouraged to fill a complaint.
 - Many students do not even know what falls under sexual harassment.
 - Students are increasingly victims of cyberbullying and online harassment.
- Proposal

- To improve the safety of students on center.
 - Deal with awareness campaigns and work with NGOs to help students understand the meaning of consent and what falls under the term harassment.
 - Train AUB professors on how to deal with harassment.
 - Expanding the counseling center and have someone who is specialized in these issues.
 - Improve the 24/7 hotline.
 - Improve emotional support.
 - Have an online training for students similar to title IX because it is hard to adapt it to our country.
- Dr. Khuri corrected that they are compliant with both the American and Lebanese laws because the university is an American institution. He supported the idea and suggested talking with the Title IX office.

Dr. Khuri was excused at 8:11 p.m.

- Dean Nezameddin said that the counseling center actively works with this issue. There are many misconceptions in AUB, and it would be great for AUB to have that care and support and training proposed because the institution is not ready to respond to these issues.
- Aya clarifies the distinction between Title IX and the prevention center that is mentioned in the proposal. She emphasizes on the importance of working on the process of awareness and staff training.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested forming a subcommittee chaired by Aya to work on this proposal.

6. Graduate representation proposal by Ahlam Tarchici

- Proposal
 - To establish a graduate student committee at AUB that compromises elected graduate SRCs from all faculties with elected graduate USFCs as representatives of the graduate student body.
 - To effectively deliver any concern that graduate students have.
 - To create an Ad Hoc committee in the USFC that includes the graduate SRC to keep both groups updated on all demands and to share ideas and suggestions that would benefit the student body.
- Dean Nezameddin said that there already is a graduate council. He said that the provost and the associate provost who is the head of the graduate council are the people who can actually help in this proposal. He suggested having a meeting to discuss with them the current mechanisms and see how this proposal can fill the gaps.
- Dean Nezameddin also said that the graduate members of the USFC can collect the concerns of the graduate student body and share them with Jad, who is the VP, so that we can take these issues to the USFC in general.

- Ahlam also asked if we can have a representative of this committee that can join the graduate representative Ali Zeineddine in the task force committee that was created.
- Dean Nezameddin responded that Ali, the provost, and the associate provost can report to the USFC. He suggested not to create too much bureaucracy.

7. HSON representation proposal by *Ali Slim*

- Background
 - The School of Nursing was officially separated from the Faculty of Medicine in 2018 and approved to be the 7th faculty in AUB.
 - The School of Nursing and the Faculty of Medicine are still joined in the bylaws and during the elections, USFC candidates in the Faculty of Medicine have advantage in their pools of votes. Nursing students are not properly represented in the USFC especially that both faculty have distinct problems.
- Proposal
 - To have adequate representation of Nursing students in the USFC.
 - Update the bylaws to recognize the School of Nursing as a separate faculty.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested the activation of the bylaws committee who could maybe think of a new mechanism of representation.

Motion to vote on Ali's proposal

The Motion has passed unanimously.

8. Student representation on BoT by *Ali Slim*

- Background
 - Students are among stakeholders in the university
 - A lot of universities have processes in order to select student representatives in the board of trustees.
- Proposal
 - After the USFC elections, students who are interested in running for representatives on the board of trustees would fill out applications, send their CVs and motivation letters to the USFC, and prepare presentations.
 - Based on that, the USFC would discuss and choose the most fit candidate for the position.
 - The representative would attend meetings concerning the student body directly and would have voting rights on the board of trustees.

- Dean Nezameddin pointed out that the trustees would have to agree on this proposal. He suggested to think of a mechanism similar to that of the Senate (who has somebody who represents the faculty).
- Ali said that he will try to see what the mechanism of representation could be and see if he can maybe talk to the board of trustees to see their input on the idea. Dean Nezameddin suggested discussing the idea with the senate for their advice.
- A student representative asked if it is possible to let Ali present this proposal to the board of trustees, maybe through Dr. Khuri who could present it to the trustees.
- Dean Nezameddin agreed that we need to have the president's input and that we need to have the senate's input.

9. Data bundle proposal (Duplicated)

By Nour Darwiche and Oussama Obeid

- Background
 - One of the biggest obstacles students had during e-learning was the ability to access good internet connection at their home.
 - Students have been using the excuse of not having a good internet connection, so they don't join zoom or webex meetings during the exams.
- Proposal
 - To credit money \$77 into the students' account at the rate of 3,900 LBP, which is the equivalent of \$190 at the rate of 1,515 for it to be used to get data bundles.

By Talal Kaddoura

- Background
 - A slow WIFI connection affects students' productivity during class who sometimes find themselves unable to join a class.
 - The IT department is usually overwhelmed with complaints.
 - Many students experience anxiety when they face connectivity issues.
- Proposal
 - To allocate a portion of the technology fees to accommodate online learning and allocation of tuition fees.
- Dean Nezameddin said that it would be a good idea to coordinate with IT and maybe the CIO Dr. Yusuf Asfour who is responsible for this area.
- Dr. Nezameddin added that technically, it would be very hard to credit a certain amount from the tuition fees since the budget allocation is separate. The board of deans had to discuss this,

and it was found that the issue will not really solve the problem because this will not help them have the proper bandwidth for example.

- A student representative asked if the technology fee that we pay is this allocated to Moodle. Dean Nezameddin answered by saying that this fee is allocated to Moodle, the library technology services, the hardware...
- Dean Nezameddin suggested to talk with the CIO and maybe have a meeting with him to come back with something practical.

10. Access to textbooks proposal (Duplicated)

By Dimitri Haddad and Karim Abi Said

- Proposal
 - To allow students to have digital copies of the course textbooks as PDF.
 - If the whole book is not needed, the professor could provide students with the book exercises as PDF.
 - Consider having the option of renting books (especially that many books are bought to allow students to access a course by using a code).

By Nader Zalaquett

- Proposal
 - To allow students to access textbooks for free by uploading PDFs on Moodle. To deal with the issue of copyright, professors could contact publishers. If they give consent for uploading the books on Moodle, the professors could then provide the students with a digital copy of the textbook.
 - To send a unified email in which we explain the current situation in Lebanon to alleviate the students of the burden of buying the books.
- Dean Nezameddin said that there is a unit for which Miss Katia Zakher is responsible who are looking into options.
- Nader added that we could move forward with this proposal by writing a unified email and sending it to the dean of each faculty, who would then send it to the chairs of each department, who would in turn, send it to the professors. This process won't take time because the email will be prepared beforehand, and the professors would just have to copy and paste it to send it to the respective publishers.
- Nader also suggested that if any publisher refuses to give consent, the AUB libraries could try to work on offers for students to help them afford the books.
- A student representative raised the concern that we are unsure if professors are willing to send the email, and this should be taken into consideration.

- A student representative added that renting books would create a more sustainable community in the university since we would be cycling the books. This would also allow students to take more roles in the library by tracking the for condition of the books example.
- Christian Sadaka, a member of the library committee, reminded everyone of the email that was sent to the students about the book exchange, but many students are already using PDFs and not many students are willing to give their books. The library is also using a system that allows the students to know what books are available for them to pick up.
- A faculty representative suggested moving this proposal to the board of deans. If it is approved, we proceed by writing a template email. Dean Nezameddin said that we could send it to the deans specifically and not the whole board of deans.
- Karim clarified that many courses require a code, which comes with the book, that would allow students to access the course. Renting the books would then mean allowing students to have temporary access to the course (renting access to the course).
- Dimitri added that a possible next step could be to directly talk to publishers to get a better price for students for digital access to books.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested that the first step should be to draft a message to send to the deans so they can send it to the department chairs. Contacting the publishers, which is the second step, has to be organized and the best way to do this is to discuss the matter with the business services of the university. The librarian could also help with the publishers.
- A faculty representative said that some professors are always in contact with publishers and they are always flexible.

11. Failed courses proposal by *Oussama Obeid and Mounzer Tabbarah*

- Proposal
 - If a student fails a course with online learning or during the shift in exchange rates, the course can be then offered for free in the next semester.
 - The initial idea was to offer the course at the dollar rate of 1,515 LBP by Dr. Chehadeh pointed out that this would be a huge accounting obstacle.
 - Limits could be set ahead of time (once per student for example)
- Mounzer added the objective of passing a course is about getting the necessary learning outcomes out of the course and not about paying for it.
- Dean Nezameddin said that if a student fails a course, appeals, and has legitimate reasons, they are finding ways to facilitate retaking the course that would be subsidized by additional financial aid for that course.

He added that students must at least put effort to pass the course. This option should not be made automatic because there is a risk that students might not take courses seriously.

- Oussama said that they should have a filtering process to check if students put efforts to work on the course. Mounzer added a good way to do that could be to go through a petition system.
- Mounzer said that this proposal could be kept in also applied later on (not only with online learning) with the same limitations.
- A faculty representative added that this proposal could also be approached as a way to tackle the rising and stress and anxiety among students.
- Dean Nezameddin emphasized that there has to be a monitoring process, so it is not abused. He said that this would also need the vote of the board of deans if the USFC approves of this proposal.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested to include in the proposal that they thought of a subsidy option, but they understood that this would be more complicated.

Motion to amend to make the process monitored

Motion has passed unanimously

12. Other business

No other business was discussed.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 9:21 p.m.

University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021 Meeting 6

Date: Tuesday January 26, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Present
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Dr. Imad Baalbaki	Vice President for Advancement	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Absent (Excused)
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Present
Mr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Present
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Present
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Present
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Present
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Present
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Present
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Present
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Present
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Present
Khaled El Hariri	MSFEA student representative	Present
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present

Voting members present: 24

Quorum achieved.

Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Tuition fees discussion
3. Denominated Charges Proposal
4. Sign language course proposal
5. HIP coverage proposal
6. WSP proposal (Duplicated)
7. Reducing the Number of Paid Credits
8. Deferred Payment Proposal
9. Allocating Endowments Proposal
10. AUBsis Notification System
11. Complaint form proposal
12. Other businesses

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes

Minutes were approved unanimously, with a note that President Khuri's name always ends with an "T".

2. Tuition fees discussion

- Dr. Baalbaki introduced the Boldly Campaign and emphasized on its objectives. 623 million dollars out of the 650-million-dollar target include donations and pledges, academic priorities, capital and infrastructure priorities, outreach and community impact projects, health care priorities. They also ensure student diversity and life on campus by including financial aid, scholarships, and endowed scholarships. This money comes from the Board of Trustees, donors, and alumni (60% of donation), and many non-alumni that have been supporting AUB, donations from foundations. This shows the trust that people have in the institution.
- He continued by talking about financial aid. Most of the donations received are targeted for specific designations that match the interest of both the donors and the institution. Financial Aid is very important to the institution.
- Dr. Baalbaki showed a 10-year comparison of the donations received for financial aid per fiscal year. The total raise for current end and endowed financial aid is about 130 million dollars. This is broken down approximately equally between current funds and endowed funds. The current funds can be used during the fiscal year in which the donation was given while endowed funds are invested, and part of its proceeds are spent in support of the designation (for financial aid in this case) and the remainder goes back to the fund so that the scholarship fund continues. Last year (fiscal year 20) was the best year in raising endowed funds for financial aid (about 10.8 million dollars) and that was mostly because of the need of financial aid and also various initiatives and the appeals and the approach

to donors by the institution. Endowments are important because they give the university sustainability over time.

- He concluded by mentioning that the university's next major appeal will be in February and it will be solely for financial aid to raise money for current and endowed scholarships in order to support the students.

Discussion

- A student representative asked if the money that was received was in fresh dollars or LBP.
 - Dr. Baalbaki answered that it was a combination of both. Some of it was in fresh dollars that was directly deposited in the bank in North America and other was from donations from inside Lebanon (either in dollars, in LBP, or in local dollars - Lollars).
- A faculty representative asked if the university was receiving money why was the decision to raise tuition rather than subsidize from the financial aid that was received.
 - Dr. Baalbaki said that the donations that come for financial aid go into various funds (either generic or donor funds). The office of advancements is responsible for receiving the donations while the financial aid committee decides on the students who receive it after studying the applications. The financial aid budget is made up of the budget that the university puts aside plus the return on the endowment plus the current donations that are received in the year. When the decision was made in order to adjust the exchange rate, it was made sure that those who are able to pay do pay at the level that they can, and the financial aid budget is increasing to help any student or any family that cannot support at this level and who are really in need.
 - Dr. Khuri reminded that Dr. Dawy has already answered that question when he showed what percentage is coming from donations towards the total budget. He agreed with Dr. Baalbaki that the need for financial aid went up dramatically and the amount is not close to the need. Last year, when the need was significant but not as this year, some reserves were used to cover that need and some were allocated to the faculty fund. Dr. Dawy can elaborate more on this.
- A student representative asked if the other initiative that will happen in February is a long-term or short-term initiative; if it is their main initiative for financial aid (the only one) and if it will be global.
 - Dr. Baalbaki stated that the appeal is global and goes out to the entire alumni body, donor base, and prospect base. This is structured through email social media. As the need for financial aid continues to grow, the university wants to make sure to support students and this is why they always try to have a balance between current scholarships and endowed scholarships. The endowed scholarships make sure that there is sustainability in the ability to help students until they graduate. This is why there is an agreement that the donor commits to supporting a student until they graduate (moral commitment and not legal). The students are funded from other donors in case the donor stops funding. The initiative is immediate but also a long-term initiative and thus the importance of endowed scholarships.

- A student representative asked if the university tends to change the percentage of the returns of investments that come from the endowments.
 - Dr. Dawy responded that the percentage does change, but not every year, and this is to help the institution plan its financial need and budget. As Dr. Drew has already mentioned, this endowment is invested and the return goes to support the designation of the particular endowment, and the remainder goes back to the fund so that it maintains the value of money (the return will be higher). The percentage of the spendable portion (4%) is decided by the board.

- A student representative asked if we have a breakdown of how much of these donations are in actual fresh dollars. This could make a difference in paying the expenses that are actually in dollars.
 - Dr. Baalbaki answered that they do have a very detailed follow up now and they had to work with the IT team to be able to code the donations as they come in. This information is available, but Dr. Baalbaki did not have the figure during the meeting. He assured that all the university endowments, including the fingerprints endowment, is outside Lebanon which is the safety net of AUB since the returns are in fresh dollars. Fingerprints is the endowed financial aid donated by students, which proceeds helps other students.

- A student representative asked if it would be possible to alternatively have a gradual increase of the tuition fees, as in for new students more than for continuing students.
 - Dr. Baalbaki said that he would leave that answer for the chief financial officer, but he gave his point of view that the university will do whatever it takes to support the students.

- A student representative asked if the appeals for donations had gone to other areas, would that have changed the decision of the increase in tuition in any way?
 - Dr. Baalbaki said that about 130 million dollars of the target of the campaign went for financial aid, and the remainder is for other priorities (patients, academic site, healthcare center...). Financial aid has always been a component for the appeals but needs are urgent and prioritized (treating patients and fixing the facilities that have been damaged during the August 4 blast for example).

- A student representative asked based on what was the money raised from the campaign received and allocated differently within those different areas.
 - Dr. Baalbaki responded that this is what was set in the priorities of the campaign, with specific initiatives that the campaign would support and also with specific financial targets for each. The donors also have their own priorities and interests and they try to match their priorities with that of the university. Donations have specific designations that are worked on by both the donor and the university, and unrestricted giving comes in very small amounts. The responsibility of the university is to spend the donations in the areas that are agreed upon.

- A student representative asked that in case there was a surplus of money raised in one area, can it be allocated for other areas that have a lack of funds?
 - Dr. Baalbaki answered that unless the donor approves, it can. And donors were approached and were asked if they would consider moving a donation from one area to another.
 - Dr. Khuri said that Dr. Wickens had tackled this during the last meeting when he mentioned the New York State law which applies to this. When a donor has designated a cause for their gift, they cannot change the purpose of that gift.
- A student representative asked how the procedure would go for people who had loans when the rate was still at 1515 LBP.
 - Dr. Baalbaki says that he does not have a specific answer to his question because loans are the probative of the office of financial aid and the office of the controller. He recalled that when the financial situation started to get worse in 2019, the banks collectively stopped the loans that they used to give to the students. The university then immediately tried to reach out to some of their donors in order to help and replace as much as possible the loan components that the students used to get from banks, particularly the graduating students because the decision was sudden.
- Jad Hani proposed to schedule a special meeting to discuss some more things and finalize the tuition issue.
- Dean Nezameddin said that this needs preparation from both the people invited and the USFC to prepare a set of specific questions ahead of time. These questions could be shared with him so he can then share them to the CFO and the head of financial aid so they can get the data and information.
- Dr. Khuri agrees with Dr. Nezameddin, and said that it would be much more constructive if the students prepare a set of written questions so they can be sent to everyone whose presence is necessary to answer these questions. It is necessary to ask for the meeting ahead of time.
- It was agreed that a special meeting was necessary. Dr. Khuri said that we should address all the questions the best we can, and there might be some areas of disagreement. He reminded that he has been saying that we need a special meeting for a while now, but time is short. He also said that it would be better to give an advanced warning so that they can address the questions the best they can.

3. Allocating Endowments Proposal by *Khaled El Hariri*

The proposal was pushed forward to get the feedback of Dr. Baalbaki.

- Proposal
 - This initiative is suggested to be applied for a limited time as an emergency solution until the situation stabilizes financially.
 - To ask donors to increase the percentage allocated from the donor's endowments to financial aid.

- Dr. Baalbaki commented that the board has to approve the change in the spendable portion of the endowments for financial aid.
- Dr. Khuri agrees and says that it is a proposal we can make, but it has to be clear and straightforward because there are restrictions. For example, we can most likely increase 1% of returns for something designated for students, but we cannot spend the returns of the endowments allocated for physical space. We can ask for an increase on the percentage of the endowments that are allocated to student support.
- Dr. Baalbaki added that the proposal should be specific that the request is to ask the board of trustees to approve an increase in the spendable allocation from endowments on financial aid for a certain academic year (2020-2021).

Motion to vote on Khaled's proposal

The motion has passed unanimously

- Dr. Khuri said that we need a written specificity of rationale, so we don't ask for something that varies from what is being asked. Dean Nezameddin suggested that Khaled coordinates with Christine to have the proposal fully there and forward it to Dr. Baalbaki.

Dr Baalbaki was excused at 8:08

4. Denominated Charges Proposal by Elie El Hajj

- Background
 - With the new dollar rate that is set by AUB, some basic and daily services have drastically increased in price.
 - The current price of club registration is \$10, which is the equivalent of 40,000 LBP.
- Proposal
 - The revision of the price of transcripts, enrollment certificates, degree authentication.
 - The revision of the price of club registration. This allows more students to enjoy the clubs present in AUB.
 - Elie also suggested some new prices.
- Dean Nezameddin said that regarding the cost of services, the request could be studied to see what's viable and what's not. He mentioned that they did reconsider the registration fees of clubs, but the money goes back to the students for spending. Many clubs have registration fees outside of the university or have expenses for services that they need. Diminishing the amount that they have would weaken the club's ability to have activities.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested that the proposal should be to request from the relevant units to look at the possibility of revising the dollar cost if it is viable so that the lira amount becomes more reasonably accessible. We can also look at new options. He

suggested making the proposal to send it to the registrar mainly, the CFO and the controller's office can also look at it.

- President Khuri suggested uncoupling the two ideas. One is a question of how to make the student activities and clubs more affordable which would be a proposal to dean Nezameddin. The second is a narrower question that tackles the cost of services at the registrar's office. Asking very specific questions and making suggestions would help getting specific answers.
- Elie says that he would remove the club fees issue from the proposal, and then send it to Dr. Nezameddin who would communicate it to the registrar. Dr. Khuri said that it should also include some written rationale.

Motion to vote on Elie's proposal

The motion passed unanimously.

5. Sign language course proposal by Ali Slim

- Background
 - LeMSIC is having a huge campaign at the level of all universities towards the importance of sign language and including it in the curriculum as an elective course.
 - The social model of disability: a person's disability itself is not actually attributed to the difference that this person has, but to social barriers that prevent this person from being integrated into the society.
- Proposal
 - Introduce a course that teaches sign language. Students would be equipped with what would allow them to include the integration of individuals with hearing impairment into the society and be able to communicate with them.
 - This would also allow AUB to be the leading example in the social change that we like to see in the country.
 - This raises more awareness about the presence of these individuals who we usually cannot communicate with.
- Dean Nezameddin mentioned that the office of accessible education helps many students with various disabilities each semester, and that this is a very critical issue.
- Dr. Khuri and Dr. Nezameddin agreed that since what is offered is educational and not accommodations, Ali needs to work with the provost office and the proposal has to pass by the senate. He suggested that Ali and LeMSIC work in parallel.
- Ali explained that the course he is proposing is an elective course at the university and not at the level of the medical school after Dr. Khuri asked him for clarifications. President Khuri told Ali to send the proposal to the Provost office to go to the senate.

- Dean Nezameddin asked Ali if he did a feasibility study of the number of students who would be interested in taking the course. Ali responded that he wished to gain input about the process first.
- A student representative asked if he had spoken to any professor that would be willing to give the course. Ali clarified that through the campaign, LeMSIC is getting in touch with many professionals that would be able to give these courses and have been teaching it for a while.

Motion to vote on Ali's proposal

The motion passed unanimously

Dr. Khuri was excused at 8:30

6. HIP coverage proposal by Karim Saadeh and Jude Al Qalawi

- Background
 - The university provides the students with great health insurance.
 - COVID testing is quite expensive for financially dependent students. If the university is also able to cover that (either partial or full), they would also help minimizing the cases in general because the chances of students going to get tested will become higher.
 - There is a lot of stigma around STI testing so a lot of students do not find it very accessible, mostly because getting tested is expensive.
- Proposal
 - To provide students with PCR testing and STI testing under the HIP insurance plan.
 - Partial coverage of PCR testing for asymptomatic students and full coverage for symptomatic students.
 - Full coverage for students who have a referral for STI testing.
- A faculty representative suggested separating the PCR from the STI proposal and work on youth friendly services for AUB students to expand this proposal, because there are many services that young people need. Jude agreed with the suggestion.
- Dean Nezameddin said that the request is to follow up on this idea and discuss it with the relevant unit to see what is feasible as well as the possible outcome.
- A student representative proposed to add HIP coverage for vaccines (COVID 19) to the proposal if this is feasible. Jude said that the vaccine should be covered from the authorities.

Motion to vote on Jude's and Karim's proposal

The motion passed unanimously

7. WSP proposal (Duplicated)

By Khaled El Hariri, Kamal Chatila and Nour Darwiche

By Nader Zalaquett

- Background
 - The Work Study Program's aim has always been to support students financially. Given the recent increase in tuition, students are now looking for more ways to contribute to their expenses.
 - At the old 1515-dollar rate, the student used to earn 6000 LBP, which translated to \$4. After increasing the dollar rate to 3900 LBP, the student still earns 6000 LBP. However, at this rate, \$4 would amount to approximately 15600 LBP.
 - This money is often used as pocket money, all the services and products are currently on the extremely high black-market rate.
 - There are very rare job opportunities for students that wish to help their parents financially.
- Proposal
 - To adopt the payments at the newly adopted 3900-dollar rate to assist the students enrolled in this program and alleviate the financial burden. Having one rate across all endeavors and advancements also facilitates the logistics within the university. The Work Study Program would still pay the same percentage of the tuition if both were at the same rate.
 - Implying an assessment system which runs on a per-semester basis, to assess the performance of the students enrolled in the WSP. Students may get a small increase in the hourly wage they get in the following semester, if their performance is satisfactory.
- Dean Nezameddin said that the provost office and the board of deans looked at this idea and found some issues. The WSP is not taxable, so the payments are not considered as a normal salary, which is why it stayed at the lira rate. Doing this would also impact the amount they paid to research assistants and graduate students (from other categories), which would be problematic.
- Dean Nezameddin mentioned that many students are offered the opportunity to work for the equivalent of financial aid which is deducted from the tuition. However, some of these students do not do the work they are required to do. The board of deans voted on the amount after taking many things into consideration.
- Nader suggested that the proposal should be amended because it is not reasonable to raise the tuition dollar rate by 160% and only raise the hourly wage by 10-20%. He added that we could find a solution to deal with the students who do not do the required work.
- Dr. Nezameddin responded that this is a big issue and that they have been trying to find solutions. The provost office had some strong reasons for the decision on the impact it has on other areas. He would however be willing to take it back.

- Dean Nezameddin suggested for the student who proposed the idea to discuss it. The next step would be to vote for this proposal to be taken to the group proposing this to inquire about the feasibility of reconsidering the rate of the WSP and meet with Dr. Dawy.
- A student representative commented that he finds a problem in tying the salaries of the WSP to the tuition itself which is still a subject of discussion. Basing the proposal on the argument of the increase of the tuition dollar rate is different than basing it on the impact of the economic crisis on students. Passing the proposal based on the argument that the tuition dollar rate has increased has a given would defies the whole purpose of the discussions that are taken at the level of the USFC with the administration. He suggested moving the discussion of this proposal until the discussions around the tuition increase is over to act based on that.
- Dean Nezameddin said that the amount is already modified and that he does not think the adopted rate is going to change.
- Nader commented that linking it to the newly adopted rate of the tuition fees strengthens the argument to which the proposal is based on. We are discussing this decision, but we have to work with what we have.
- Nour said that things like this usually take time and the proposal has to pass through a whole hierarchy. We should be finding ways to accommodate based on the decision.
- A student representative suggested stabilizing the rewarded payment to a dollar value (\$4), the university would then transfer the payments to the students at the adopted rate. This would be also helpful in the long run. Nour said that this is the proposal itself.
- A student representative said that when we say that we want to go for the 3900-dollar rate for the WSP, the discussions around reversing the dollarization would not make sense because this was implemented in one of the proposals. This is problematic in a contradictory stance.
- Nader suggested an amendment to change the proposal to suggest that we dollarize the WSP payments.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested that the issue be reconsidered and to propose to increase the salaries in heart of the economic hardships without specifying any rate or the dollar.
- A faculty representative suggested adopting the same rate and currency for both payments and salaries. A student representative reminded that dean Nezameddin said that dollarizing all salaries would be problematic.
- Dean Nezameddin said that the income of most of the employees is in LBP. This will be an obstacle when suggesting that the WSP wage is dollarized. The arguments should be based on the legal consistency of the rate.

- Dean Nezameddin suggested to amend the proposal and based the proposal on the economic crisis rather than the newly adopted dollar rate and for the group to discuss the feasibility of the proposal.

Motion to vote on the amendment suggested by Dr. Nezameddin

The motion has passed unanimously

- Khaled asked how he and the team should proceed with the proposal. Dean Nezameddin suggested to send him an email and copy Dr. Dawy and said that we voted to discuss the WSP rate. They could then set up a meeting and take it from there.

The next items of the agenda were pushed to the next meeting in which some items can be discussed with the CFO.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 9:17 p.m.

University Student Faculty Committee 2020-2021 Meeting 7

Date: Wednesday February 10, 2021

Time: 7:00 p.m.

Location: Webex.

Attendance:

Name	Position	Attendance
President Fadlo Khuri	President, Chairperson	Present
Dean Talal Nezameddin	Dean of Student Affairs	Present
Dr. Imad Baalbaki	Vice President for Advancement	Present
Dr. Drew Wickens	Chief Financial Officer	Present
Dr. Zaher Dawi	Associate Provost	Present
Dr. Lina Choueiri	Interim Provost	Present
Dr. Samer Kharroubi	FAFS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rima Majed	FAS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Joumana Kalot	FHS faculty representative	Present
Dr. Jana Al Hashash	FM faculty representative	Present
Dr. Rami Mhanna	MSFEA faculty representative	Late (excused)
Mr. Hagop Panossian	OSB faculty representative	Present
Ahlam Tarchichi	FAFS student representative	Present
Aya Kassem	FAFS student representative	Present
Elie El Hajj	FAS student representative	Present
Jad Hani	FAS student representative	Present
Jude Al Qalawi	FAS student representative	Present
Nader Zalaquett	FAS student representative	Late (excused)
Nour Darwiche	FAS student representative	Present
Karim Saadeh	FHS student representative	Present
Mahdi Fakhoury	FHS student representative	Present
Ali Slim	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Christian Sadaka	FM/HSON student representative	Present
Dimitri Haddad	MSFEA student representative	Present
Karim Abi Said	MSFEA student representative	Present
Khaled El Hariri	MSFEA student representative	Late (excused)
Mounzer Tabbarah	MSFEA student representative	Present
Oussama Obeid	MSFEA student representative	Present
Christine Akiki	OSB student representative	Present
Kamal Chatila	OSB student representative	Present
Talal Kaddoura	OSB student representative	Present

Voting members present: 25

Quorum achieved.

Agenda:

1. Approval of minutes
2. Tuition fees discussion
3. Reducing the Number of Paid Credits
4. Deferred Payment Proposal
5. AUBsis Notification System
6. Complaint form proposal
7. Financial aid proposal
8. Loan proposal
9. Cheating proposal
10. Plasma Drive proposal
11. Follow up on previous proposals
12. Other business

Meeting called to order at 7:00 p.m.

1. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the special meeting held on January 26 and the minutes of the special meeting held on January 4 were approved unanimously.

2. Tuition fees discussion

- Dean Nezameddin commented that this item cannot be present in each agenda, Dr. Drew Wickens took the time to prepare a presentation to answer all of the questions about finances that were sent by the USFC. The answers were included in a PDF document that will be also sent to the USFC.
- Dr. Wickens tackled the questions around budgeting, income, and expenses. The main points were the following:
 - He clarified how the tuition income is distributed with regard to the different currencies. A large majority was in LBP, with only a very small amount in fresh dollars.
 - He mentioned how much money is saved in AUB's bank account in the US and insisted on the fact that this money comes from endowments and cannot be considered as savings. Only 4% of this money can be used for the respective intended usage.

- Regarding the funds that were previously mentioned, he clarified how they were divided into current donations and endowments, and how much of these funds were in LBP, fresh dollars, and local dollars.
- Both the university and hospital expenses are combined unless it's stated otherwise. He also mentioned how much of these expenses are in USD, RSD, and LBP, as well as how they are distributed.
- Since AUB's expenses are in Lira, they will report these numbers in dollars based on the official exchange rate as per the IRS website because they report to the IRS. (Last year it was 1508).
- It would not be feasible to implement this increase in the exchange rate incrementally throughout the semesters because a considerable loss is already predicted after implementing the newly adopted rate.
- The reason why some employees at AUB are paid in fresh dollars while others are paid in LBP, depends on the circumstances of the hired person. No faculty agreements in USD have been agreed on unless it relates to a specific endowment.
- Dr. Dawy answered the questions regarding financial aid and scholarships. The main points were the following:
 - He stated the portion of students who applied for financial aid, as well as the number who have received it. The current number is not finalized yet, because the applications are still ongoing.
 - The average financial aid percentage in the upcoming semester (close to 50%) is expected to rise notably as compared to that of the fall semester, which was 32%.
 - The university adopted a financial aid model of 20 million USD for the spring semester, and the final data showing the total number financial aid support provided (current Funds used + interests from endowed funds) when all applications are evaluated. Last fall, 6 out of 15 million USD of the financial support were from donor aids.
 - The financial aid and the tuition are both budgeted in dollar value as per the statement of fees, and there is no difference in the dollar value.
 - There is no excess income in USD (from scholarship programs and students paying in USD). The university does not exchange currencies and the money is being used in the currency in which it is received. The tuition is spent in its actual dollar value to cover a portion of the university's financial obligations abroad.
- Dr. Wickens answered the questions concerning future plans. The main points were the following:

- The university cannot guarantee anything in the current situation that the country is facing. However, it is committed to supporting enrolled students who cannot pay at the new chosen rate to the fullest extent possible to ensure the continuation of their education.
- Financial aid alone is not guaranteed to prevent students from dropping out of the university. A student might decide not to enroll due to various reasons, including financial reasons relating to AUB and many broader others such as political, family circumstances, security, etc.
- This issue of the sustainability of the increased amount of financial aid depends largely on how quickly and effectively the Lebanese government can put a reform plan together with external assistance to start to put the country on track. The more the situation delays, the harder it is to confirm the concept of sustainability.
- The best way to maintain students is by continuing to attract and retain talented faculty members from around the world. Upon approval from the BoT, the financial support package for our faculty members will be thus maintained for another two years. The deans are also working with their faculty members on research tracks, to apply for additional grant funding to further support those in the professorial ranks which is expected to grow over the course of the coming 5 years.
- AUB is an American organization, and it only shares similarities with LAU in terms of US requirements that are considered when putting their plan together. Each organization will have its own financial plan and process representing its unique separate set of circumstances.
- Dean Nezameddin highlighted the fact that the members of the USFC are entrusted with the presentation slides. He also commented that since the members are engaged in financial conversation, they also should be guiding the student body.

Questions and discussions around the presentation:

- A student representative asked why the funds of financial aid are being received in fresh dollars, but their full value is not being used to support more students (applied in fresh dollars and not at the 3900 LBP dollar rate).
 - Dr. Khuri answered that if a grant or donation was meant for one student, it has to be used for this student and the agreements are very specific. What it's used for in terms of expenses is different.
 - Dr. Dawi clarified that the financial aid budget is not in dollars, but in statement of fees dollars. It's how much less students are supposed to pay.

- A student representative said that the numbers presented show most students in AUB pay tuition in LBP. The question was if there is a mid-ground way to help the students because the dollarization and the rate increase is affecting most students negatively.
 - Dr. Wickens answered that the were that of the Fall semester, and this semester's numbers are not finalized. This number is high because after the crisis, the people who used to pay in USD switched to paying in LBP because the amount decreases. The adopted rate is the closest thing to a middle ground (between 1500 and the black-market rate), with the understanding that financial aid will be increased substantially.
 - The student representative continued that this would lead to more students dropping out of AUB because they will not be able to cover for their expenses,
 - Dr. Dawi emphasized that the financial aid increase is significant enough to be able to support students who pay at the adopted exchange rate. There is also a notable percentage of AUB students who will be able to pay the full dollar value. So, putting the rate at the 3900 value is fair to support students in need and the institution. Decreasing the adopted rate will reduce the university's ability to support students who need financial aid.
 - Dr. Khuri said that as per Dr. Baalbaki's presentation, AUB has significant obligations and some faculty and staff members are paid from endowments as per the agreements, but the vast majority are paid from the operating funds, generated from the tuition on the campus part and patient and hospital fees from the medical center. The revenues are being used to pay for financial aid and also to maximize retention and quality.
 - He added a number of the students' parents can pay the full dollar rate, and that information is based on the information the university has. It is unfair that these students pay at the 1500 rate while others might not even be able to pay at that rate.
- A student representative said that he does not feel that the plan that AUB has set, and the weight on the financial aid office is sustainable for the future. He said that we should have spent more time to try to solve the issue in numerous ways (budget cuts to high-ranking employees, dollarization, a percent cut from the whole tuition, which is not fully being used, etc.). He added that a lot of students will be raising lawsuits against AUB, and we could find some other solutions for this issue.
 - Dr. Khuri said that USFC is not the forum to discuss the university's legal action, but to discuss solutions.
 - The student representative continued that we could find more safety nets like cutting some of the expenses mentioned on the tuition fees.
 - Dr. Khuri answered that the USFC should work on proposals to solve this issue.

- A student asked how we can guarantee sustainability (that the tuition will not continue to increase) for students in the future if the economy continues to deteriorate (to explain, in less financial details, why we can protect students in the long run) said that they still see such decision as a concern because they are scary for students. Such decisions do not guarantee liability in a deteriorating economy.
 - Dr. Nezameddin said that many presentations have shown that the number of students who applied, as well as that of students who have financial aid asking for a higher percentage have changed, and that gap is being filled. There is no guarantee of what will happen in the future, but AUB is a very solid institution, and there is a plan to deal with upcoming problems.
 - Dr. Dawi insisted that we cannot have a guaranteed sustainable plan for the future because of the uncertainty in the country. The guarantee is financial aid depending on the situation.
 - Dr. Khuri added that it is very difficult to guarantee anything, and the university does its best to help every student graduate and help patients. There is however much effort put to alleviate anxiety rather than guarantee anything.
- A student representative said that the reason why the legal aspect was brought up is because the reason behind the implementation of the newly adopted exchange rate was that it is the only legal rate that can be used. Would it be possible to use a different rate if the adopted rate is not official?
 - Dean Nezameddin answered that the university has commitments, and it is suffering immensely even with the 3900 rate. AUB has financial obligations, and tuition plays a large role in the university budget and revenues. The objective is to help every student get through university with minimal disruptions while those who can pay keep the university sustainable.
 - Dr. Wickens emphasized on the fact that they're trying to maintain the quality of education by still making it somewhat accessible by cutting expenses on the organization. Going for less than 3900 will drive the university away from sustainability.
 - Dr. Baalbaki said that the 1515 and 3900 rates are both “official rates” because dollars from the bank are being withdrawn at the 3900 rate which is applied by the central bank and agreed upon by the banks, the government, and the people.
- A student representative asked if AUB has the number of students who did not enroll for the spring semester after the tuition increase.
 - Dr. Choueiry said that it is very hard to know that now. There are however no decreases in registration that was outside of what is expected. There is a normal reduction in the number of registered students because some graduate in the Fall.

There is also a higher number of graduate students who registered because of the application systems accepting applications in the spring.

3. Loan proposal by *Christian Sadaka*

The proposal was pushed forward to get the input of the CFO and the provost office.

- Background:
 - Due to the economic crisis and the fact that the banks are not giving student loans anymore, some students might have difficulties in paying their tuition fees.
 - Students do not get their degrees unless they fully pay their tuition fees.
- Proposal:
 - To have an agreement with AUB to have the remaining amount due of the students' tuition fees that a student is not able to pay, be considered as a loan over a certain period of time.
 - Students get their degrees and cover this amount later on with a certain interest amount.
- Dr. Choueiry said that there are legal implications to this kind of proposal, and legal advice is needed. What is suggested is something similar to an emergency fund that is specific for people who are graduating, but AUB cannot loan money to students in general.
- Christian pointed out that LAU is giving out a loan of 10% of the tuition fees.
- Dr. Choueiry suggested what the loan given by LAU is and whether it is the university or someone else that is providing this loan to students.
- Dr. Khuri approved that we need a legal opinion if the proposal passes through the USFC, because loans are usually government loans and universities don't give loans. Maybe LAU has a fund that is kept outside of the university, that is being loaned.
- Dean Nezameddin said that we should first legal aspects and implications, and then bring it back to the USFC for voting.

4. Reducing the Number of Paid Credits by *Khaled El Hariri*

- Proposal:
 - To go back to the old system suggesting that students pay their tuition fees as the equivalent of 12 registered credits without having any additional charge for additional registered credits. The current maximum number of paid credits is 15 credits.
 - Discuss the feasibility of reducing the number of paid credits to 12 credits, and if not, reduce the number to anything below 15 credits.

- Dr. Wickens pointed out that the proposal is not financially feasible nor sustainable.
- Dr. Dawi added that they want to support students who are not able to pay their tuition fees and giving this 20% discount to everybody is not the best way to serve the university nor the students who are in need for financial aid. Some students are able to afford paying their tuition fees and help in maintaining the quality of education as well as supporting the students who need financial aid.
- Khaled suggested applying this discount for a small portion of students who did not get an increase in financial aid after submitting an appeal for reconsideration.
- Dr. Dawi answered that it is necessary to be consistent. The suggestion would make more sense in the financial model if it were to ask the Financial Aid office to be more considerate of students who had their appeals rejected and address financial aid allocations which indirectly addresses this proposal.

5. Deferred Payment Proposal by *Khaled El Hariri*

- Background:
 - Students who apply for a deferred payment currently pay a \$33 fee additional to 1% of the tuition fees.
- Proposal
 - To stop charging for the application.
 - Have the deferred payment as a payment method option rather than an application.
 - To set several installments for payments with sub-deadlines.
- Dr. Wickens said that this proposal could be taken into consideration and discussed with the board of dean.

Motion to vote on Khaled's proposal (to be considered by the administration for implementation)

The motion has passed unanimously

- Dr. Khuri added that practical considerations should be taken: the government is only allowing 20% of the financial staff to be present at any time.

6. Financial aid proposal by *Mounzer Tabbarah*

- Goal:
 - To protect most vulnerable students, who will not be able to pay for their tuition even after the increase of financial aid.
- Proposal:

- To form a subcommittee within the USFC who will oversee the process and fix the plan in a more practical way.
 - To send an email to all students in order for those who are not able to pay their tuition fees to reach out through a form or a portal. The data will be checked with the registrar and the financial aid office.
 - After filtering the data, check if the financial aid office has the means to support these students. If not, to allocate USFC budget to help the student in covering their financial aid. The USFC can also help in searching for donors.
- Dr. Nezameddin pointed out that the USFC cannot disburse financial and cannot get a student's confidential information nor decide if they get financial aid. He added that there is already a process for doing this. Also, we have to see what the USFC budget is going to be spent on even though the expenditure will be minimal. The USFC cannot use its budget as a financial aid entity.
 - Mounzer suggested finding a way to search for the students who might have to drop out because they are not able to pay for their tuition so we can help them because not everyone knows that they can reach out for help. He added that we could form an initiative to form an extra method of reaching out for help and come up with a different plan.
 - Dean Nezameddin said that this was done last year with the former USFC and it was successful. The USFC can help identify the students in need and we can fill gaps to help students pay for their tuition through the remaining USFC funds and the Fingerprints and others.
 - Dean Nezameddin suggested to act in a similar way to last year and coordinate with the financial aid office with whom he will be the main connection to protect confidentiality. Those who are really in need will get the help they deserve.
 - Dr. Baalbaki added that a few years back, the USFC established a hardship fund and there is a specific process that was finalized and approved by the USFC and the university administration. The USFC will need to get details from the comptroller office, and the process specifically caters to students who still need additional financial aid.
 - A student representative asked if it would be possible for the finance committee to include this recommendation for the future years. Dean Nezameddin answered that this is not possible, but the finance committee could propose it, but the USFC is only responsible for managing the funds of the current year.
 - Dr. Khuri added that financial information cannot be shared with anyone and any student, and students need to confirm their needs. He suggested for Mounzer to work with Dr. Baalbaki to establish the fund to have an emergency additional fund from this budget.

7. AUBsis Notification System by *Khaled El Hariri*

- Proposal:
 - Implement a notification system on AUBsis, similar to Moodle, to notify the students (through an automatically generated email) when final grades are posted on AUBsis.
- The motion is to discuss and coordinate with IT to see if this feature can be added to the system.
- A student representative suggested an amendment to the proposal to include notifications for more than final grades (when the web statement of fees is ready for example).
- Dean Nezameddin said that we could keep the notification system general.

Motion to vote on Khaled's proposal

The motion has passed unanimously

8. Complaint form proposal by *Ahlam Tarchichi*

- Proposal:
 - To create an online suggestion and complaint box available for all AUB staff and students. It can be in the form of a link added to the AUB website under the name “Share we Care”.
 - The person accessing it would have to enter their AUB credentials before filling the form and can choose to stay anonymous.
 - The USFC can access the comments section, and each USFC can access comments related to their respective faculty. The complaints and suggestions are to be shared with the dean of each faculty.
 - The concerns classified under the university level are to be checked on a weekly basis by all members of the USFC and are to be evaluated and discussed with the administration.
- Dean Nezameddin said that suggestions should be distinguished from complaints, and he mentioned that there is already a complaint portal on the AUB website. There is also a committee, which was suggested by the accreditors, whose job is to deal with the complaints.
- Regarding sharing suggestions, the suggestions might not reflect what the student body actually wants because one certain group might want to highlight a certain issue. The USFC members should work within the faculty, based on what was proposed, to get input about specific issues and categorize what the complaints are about.

- Ahlam clarified she proposed this solution because the semester is virtual, and the USFC members are having trouble to actually know what students suggest and complain about. Dean Nezameddin said that we could have an online platform for students to share their concerns with the USFC because the committee usually has office hours.
- A student representative highlighted that the SRC is already working on something similar, so the USFC can discuss this with the SRC.
- Dean Nezameddin suggested for this proposal to be amended to discuss with the SRC members how we could best channel input and how the USFC can help, and work on coordinating a platform.
- A student representative suggested to include a space where students could say who the form is submitted to facilitate the process. Dean Nezameddin said that we should vote on Ahlam working on a platform and come back to the USFC when it's done to look at how it's feasible if the layout is agreed on.

Motion to vote on Ahlam's proposal

The motion has passed unanimously

9. Plasma Drive proposal

- Background:
 - Due to the COVID pandemic, many people are sharing on social media platforms the need of plasma from people who had recently recovered from coronavirus.
- Proposal:
 - To launch a USFC plasma drive.
 - To have an online platform for people to share some details after they recover from corona. Then, form a database based on this information to be shared with the AUBMC, and if it is big enough, with other hospitals.
- Dean Nezameddin said that this idea should be discussed with the Faculty of Medicine, the representatives from FM can help, and he could ask for the input of Dean Zaatari (of FM).

10. Follow up on previous proposals

- Aya Kassem gave updates about the accommodation proposal. The provost suggested to work on guidelines and suggestions that would be sent to faculty members throughout the deans of each faculty.

The remaining items of the agenda were pushed to the next meeting.

Minutes recorded by Secretary Christine Akiki.

Meeting adjourned at 9:15 p.m.