

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, February 12, 2016

Present: M. Abiad, F. Abu Salem, F. Afiouni, G. Araj, V. Araman, J. Chaaban, M. Chaaya (on invitation), A. Chalak, M. Clinton, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, H. Diab, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, S. Hmaidan, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, S. Kanj, A. Kayssi, S. Khalaf, F. Khuri (Chair), P. McGreevy, H. Muller, W. Nasr, L. Nasreddine (representing N. Hwalla), T. Nizameddin, I Nuwayhid, R. Sedehi, I. Saoud, S. Saleh, M. Sayegh, E. Shammass, C. Smith, M. Suidan, A. Taher

Absent: M. Al-Ghoul, T. Amin*, B. Bashour*, D. Jamali*, G. Kanazi*, R. Karami*, F. Maalouf*, T. Mehmood Ali*, H. El-Rassy*, M. Salameh*, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

Interim Provost Harajli chaired the meeting until 2:30 since President Khuri was delayed. Items 3 and 4 on the agenda were addressed first (becoming items 2, 3 below). Dean McGreevy introduced three recently elected FAS senators - C. Smith, S. Khalaf and F. Abu Salem.

1) Approval of the minutes of January 29, 2016

The minutes were approved with minor amendments.

2) Election of FAS Rep on SCFA

C. Smith was elected by acclamation to the SCFA.

3) URB Change in Composition and Functions

Z. Dawy presented proposed changes to the composition and functions of the URB. A further change had been made to the text sent as attachment at the request of the IRB. He made a motion **to approve the suggested changes to the by-laws**. He noted that these reflect the current practice, and that the website has not been updated and does not reflect the URB's actual functions. The URB had discussed and approved these changes. On discussion, further revisions were made at the Senate meeting concerning the Arbitration of Authorship Disputes Policy, as it was noted the URB contributes to arbitration and recommends action but is not fully responsible for this. Furthermore, the statement "breach of policies governing" was deleted to keep the statement general and avoid any conflict in roles and responsibilities between the URB and the IRB, especially for research that involves human subjects. The final approved functions are as follows:

- Promote quality research in the University through URB research funding programs.
- Consider and recommend to the senate policies for the allocation of URB research funds.
- Advise the provost on the implementation of policies pertaining to research funding.
- Act on matters related to scientific research referred to it by the senate or the provost.
- Develop and revise University-wide guidelines for the submission and review process of URB-funded research grants.

- Recommend to the provost the allocation of URB research funds in accordance with URB funding guidelines.
- Contribute to arbitration and recommendation of action to the provost on any disputes or differences on intellectual property and authorship issues related to proposals, deliverables, publications, or other research products.
- Advise the provost on matters related to ethical research conduct.
- Prepare, edit and publish the annual research report of the University.

Vote 2016-16: The motion was approved 25/2/4.

Z. Dawy then presented the proposed changes to the composition of the URB. He noted that HSON requested representation and a more active role on the URB, which was approved by the URB as well as the principle of accepting proposals from HSON (both in consultation with the Dean FM). Further it was proposed to have the director of OGC as a non-voting ex-officio member of the URB and that the director of the Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) be appointed as a non-voting ex officio member. **Z. Dawy made a motion to add an elected faculty member from HSON, OGC director as ex-officio non-voting member, and HRPP director as ex-officio non-voting member. Vote 2016-17: The vote was unanimous in support of the motion.**

4) Finances, Budget Presentation, Endowment

CFO D. Wickens gave a powerpoint presentation on the process being followed to agree on the budget and the objectives of the budgeting process. On April 1, a report is due to be submitted to the Middle States accreditation body to reply to their recommendation that academic plans and the academic mission be linked to budgeting. The main deliverables for the Board of Trustees March 2016 meeting are the AUB capital budget and the AUB 3 year rolling budget/operating plan. In October 2015, a retreat was held of senior management where their major strategic plans were presented. An academic assessment exercise informed the development of the AUB strategic plan. There is a goal of generating \$16.3 million in savings for 2016-17 via various assigned sub-committees (through planned cost reductions or revenue increases). By February 22, it will become clear whether this ambitious target can be reached. Concerning the endowment, President Khuri noted that it had out-performed its peers for the last decade. The endowment of AUB is now approximately \$551 million; the operating budget of AUB is approximately \$400 million. In discussion senators asked what the assumptions were on the budget, such as for example concerning tuition. President Khuri noted that some parameters are beyond the control of management – such as the endowment draw rate which is decided by the Board of Trustees. There is a desire to slow down the rate of increase of tuition, and to give priority to increasing the endowment. Several senators stated that in order to plan for the future it is important to understand the past, and in particular it was stated that both the numbers of students enrolled and tuition increased yet it is unclear where the net new income was spent. There was also a question about ‘lost costs’ or major leakages of the budget in relation to, for example, building costs. The President stressed that it is important to base the budget on priorities and that a strategy is needed, not a reactive approach. A senator asked if the perspective of stakeholders is being requested to define priorities and emphasized the need for transparency. Another senator stated that there is a need for further Senate meetings to discuss the budget and asked what data informed high-level decisions; he also noted that the Senate had earlier moved that there should be no increases in tuition without efficiency improvements and asked about any cross-subsidies such as between the hospital and campus. Another senator stated that all are concerned about the financial sustainability of AUB’s mission and that it

would be useful to see costs in relation to benchmarks and more cost/efficiency process metrics in order to comment constructively on the budget process.

5) Presentation of the PhD Proposal in Epidemiology

M. Chaaya (FHS) presented the proposal for the PhD, noting that it is the first PhD proposal at FHS and that is based on a thorough benchmarking of similar programs elsewhere and that is highly needed in the region. One new faculty recruit on an existing line is proposed. A motion was made **to approve the PhD program in Epidemiology**. In discussion, Senators asked about faculty resources for the program. M. Chaaya explained that 7 faculty members at FHS are involved in the program and who currently teach on 5 programs; each would contribute 2-3 credits to the program and this would be made possible by some redistribution of their teaching. Moreover, new courses would be offered in alternate years and doctoral candidates would also be involved in undergraduate teaching. FM faculty would be asked to supervise some of the research projects in public health related to their own research areas. A senator raised concern about doctoral students teaching undergraduates. Another senator raised concern about 0.5 of a faculty line being devoted to coordination. M. Chaaya stated that as in the proposal this is dependent on student numbers. Another senator stated, based on previous experience, that having scholarship and self-paying students may undermine esprit de corps among students. It was recommended to refer to the scholarship students as “sponsored students.” M. Chaaya confirmed in response to a question that the doctoral courses offered would be open to all students at AUB. She also clarified in response to a question that the committee assured that there was no overlap with existing courses. Another senator asked if a one-credit course is sufficient in terms of research ethics. M. Chaaya responded that ethics is integrated in all course but also the plan is to increase that course to 2 credits. Questions were also asked about the career possibilities for graduates and whether FHS was aiming to address the regional market only. M. Chaaya responded that there are discussions underway with Emory University for students to spend time outside Lebanon which would enhance their career possibilities. A senator recommended that the Budget Task Force look at budgeting for graduate education, because it is difficult to budget new programs and in this case there may be overestimation of the cost to the university. Dean Nuwayhid concurred, saying that AUB needs to make a decision as to whether it is ready to invest in PhDs, particularly as the university becomes more research-intensive. In the case of FHS, the track record is strong in raising graduate scholarships. President Khuri confirmed that to become a research-intensive university AUB needs accredited and high quality doctoral programs, and that there is demand for a PhD in Epidemiology in the region. H. Diab suggested vetting the proposal with the Directorate of Higher Education. **Vote 2016-18: A motion was made to close discussion that carried and the motion to approve the PhD program in Epidemiology was approved unanimously.**

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

(Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate)