

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, December 16, 2016

Present: H. Abu Khuzam, B. Bashour, J. Chaaban, N. El Cheikh, S. El Fakhani, I. Elhadj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, D. Jamali, M. Jurdi, G. Kanazi, R. Karami, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (chairing), F. Maalouf, S. Mejcher-Atassi, H. Muhtasib (by invitation), H. Muller, W. Nasr, I. Nuwayhid, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, R. Sedehi, E. Shammass, A. Shihadeh

Absent: M. Abiad, M. Al-Ghoul, G. Araj*, I. Baalbaki, A. Chalak, M. Clinton*, H. Diab, S. Kanj-Shararah*, T. Mehmood Ali*, T. Nizameddin, A. Taher, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting came to order at 2:04 p.m.

1) Approval of minutes of November 25, 2016

The minutes of the meeting of November 25 were approved as circulated.

2) Voting on the degree of an FEA 2016 graduate

A motion was made to approve the following degree:

Abbas Abu Dayya (201404057) Bachelor of Engineering – Major: Electrical and Computer Engineering.

Vote 2017-08. The motion was passed unanimously.

3) Revised Policy on the Development and Revision of Bylaws, Policies, Procedures, and Manuals

H. Muhtasib gave a presentation following up on the presentation she gave during the October 21, 2016 Senate meeting. Today's presentation outlined the results of recent work by H. Muhtasib, the President, the Provost and SCFA on this issue. That group went through the 87 categories of policies to determine which require being sent to the faculties, or the Senate, or both in order to have revisions approved (see Appendix A). **A motion was made to endorse the policy revision proposal.** In the course of the discussion of the proposal, several Senators raised concerns about the top line of Appendix I of the proposal. Appendix I is AUB Policy Approval Hierarchy and the top line is the policy category Academics and Research. Given that the Board of Deans (BoD) is placed at Level I of the hierarchy, the question arose as to whether this means that the BoD could effectively veto a proposed policy before it would be possible for the Senate to deliberate and make a recommendation on the issue. If this were the case, then it would undercut the Senate's authority as the university's highest legislative body on academic affairs, as stated in AUB's Bylaws. Several Senators familiar with the software used to manage the approval process said that, yes, as things currently stand, if a decision of "does not approve" is entered into the system at Level I on behalf of the BoD, then the proposed policy would effectively be blocked and no bodies further up the hierarchy would have a chance to consider the proposal; including the Senate at Level III. A substitute motion was made to endorse the policy revision proposal with the addition of a footnote to the heading "**Level I**" stipulating that the BoD's role is to "**review and either recommend or not recommend**" that the proposal under consideration be adopted. It is hereby minuted in the official record of the Senate that it is understood that *approval is not required* at Level I for a proposal to move onto Level II and then Level III. I. Elhadj offered to adjust the software in order to accommodate this understanding of policy governing the approval hierarchy. **Vote 2017-09. The substitute motion passed by a vote of 26-1-2.**

4) Parity of benefits within the context of tenure

E. Shammass, the chair of SCFA, explained that his committee had worked together with Senators from the Faculty of Medicine on the following **motion: The Senate affirms that, in the context of the reinstatement of tenure, parity and equality in all benefits between tenure and non-tenure track full-time professorial rank faculty shall be maintained.**

There was a fair amount of discussion. One Senator asked the President if he thought including this motion in the TDC Report would negatively affect the way the Board of Trustees (BoT) viewed that report. The President said that, yes, he thought it would have a negative impact and he went on to say that, in his opinion, it would be a mistake to tie benefits to tenure. The President hastened to add that he was willing to go on record as stating that benefits for both tenured and non-tenured faculty should be maintained as we go forward, but that this is an issue that should be reflected in faculty *contracts* not in the proposal to reinstate tenure. One Senator expressed concern that, although she felt confident about the current president's verbal reassurance about maintaining parity of benefits, that this matter needs to be put in writing because future administrators might look at things differently. The Dean of FM and EVP seconded the President's claim that this is a matter for faculty contracts and should be kept separate from documents pertaining to tenure. A Senator from the Faculty of Medicine raised two points: one addressed primarily to her fellow Senators and one addressed primarily to the administration. First, she encouraged the Senate to remember that the scope of this issue is not limited to *non-tenure eligible* faculty (e.g., physician educators). This is a matter that is also relevant to (i) any AUB faculty member whose future application for tenure is unsuccessful, (ii) any Assistant Professor during the time before she is eligible to apply for tenure, and (iii) anyone currently in the rank of full Professor who decides to take the option of not applying for tenure. Second, she said that the FM senator who worked with SCFA on this motion did not intend to tie the motion to tenure in the sense of having it included in the TDC Report. The President suggested that faculty would be in a much stronger position if they tied issues about benefits to wording in contracts and the faculty manual. **A substitute motion was made that the Senate affirms the parity of benefits between tenured and non-tenured professorial faculty shall be maintained as stipulated (the benefits) in the faculty manual and contracts. Vote 2017-10. The substitute motion was passed by a vote of 28-1-0**

5) Approval of the Tenure Design Committee Report

A motion was made to approve the report of the Tenure Design Committee. There was no formal presentation as the current version of the report is a revision of the draft that was presented at the special Senate meeting of Wednesday, October 26, 2016. The revisions were made in light of feedback from the Senate who sought input from their constituents in several and various public forums. Many Senators praised the members of the Tenure Design Committee (TDC) for their diligent and effective work. Several Senators asked questions about specific points in the text of the report. The Interim Dean of FEA asked whether the reference to the "...quantity of scholarly research output..." on page 15 was intentional because it reminded him of the promotion system that was in place before President Dorman ushered in a system based on thorough and careful assessment of the *quality* of the promotion applicant's research. He noted that the old system led to counter-productive incentives such as breaking potentially impactful long articles up into the smallest publishable units and avoiding the most prominent journals because they tend to have relatively long editorial turn-around time, etc., and worried that the presence of the word "quantity" in the report, if interpreted in the wrong way, could lead AUB back toward the old, inferior standard. The President agreed with the general point and recommended changing the wording from "quality and quantity" to "quality and consistency" as a provisional amendment until we have something better. Another Senator expressed concern about approving the report in its current form because it is an imperfect and incomplete document. This Senator said that he does not see a clear time-line in the report for the transition to a new set of promotion standards and criteria and emphasized that

developing those is a major job and one that is not fully addressed in the report. A second Senator offered a concrete example of this type: AUB has still not made significant progress toward agreeing on a reliable means of assessing teaching excellence. This contrasts with research, for which we do have at least some rules of thumb. This Senator added that this asymmetry between our abilities to assess research, on the one hand, and teaching, on the other hand is responsible, at least in part, for the current *de facto* message that we send to faculty: i.e., the quality of your teaching does not matter to this institution or to your prospects for flourishing in it. And that, this Senator urged, is simply scandalous. The President acknowledged that this is indeed a significant problem and noted that, for instance, the current heavy reliance on student evaluations is ill-advised. The challenge, the President said, is coming up with an appropriate matrix, but we should be mindful that this is a challenge faced by all universities and the best we can do for the time being is to try to take a holistic approach drawing on all the information we have. But, he added, this is very much a case where we do not want the perfect to be the enemy of the good and it would be a big mistake to hold up approval of this report over this matter which, again, challenges all universities.

Another Senator expressed concern that the report appears to allow for the development of guidelines in simultaneous, but separate, processes in the various faculties without a sufficient mechanism to assure parity across faculties. Several Senators expressed the view that it is natural and proper to have different guidelines in different faculties because of varying standards in such practices such as number of co-authors, editorial turn-around time at journals, and standards for originality as a condition of publication. No consensus was reached on this issue.

The Dean of FHS noted his approval of the change in point seven on page six in which the phrase “maternity leave” was changed to “primary caregiver following the birth or adoption of a child” because this is consistent with best practices and benchmarking with US institutions with regard to gender equity, but he went on to note that this needs to be reflected in other documents stating university policies. The Dean of FAS objected to changing “maternity leave” to gender-neutral language because the policy change it reflects does not adequately accommodate the fact that after a woman gives birth she needs time for physical, psychological, and emotional recovery that is asymmetrical with what is needed by a primary caregiver who has not given birth. Several Senators expressed disagreement. No consensus was reached on this issue. The Dean of FHS said that a line about in-post Research-Practitioners should be added to the section about in-post Associate Professors and in-post full Professors on page eighteen. The Dean of FHS also noted that in the sections on Phase I and Phase II of the tenure application process on pages twenty-two and twenty-three, there is no mention of a way for the Deans to give their input to the process. The co-chair of the TDC said that this was intentional; during Phase I only full professors can apply, the UPTC will be composed of all external members, and evaluations will start at the UPTC layer which will take over the role formerly played by the Board of Deans in promotion cases. In Phase II, the UPTC will include tenured full professors, all ranks can apply for promotion and tenure, and Deans will be required to write letters for all candidates. The Director of HSON suggested that the appropriate way for the Deans to give input would be for them to develop a short written brief about research expectations at AUB to be distributed to external members of the UPTC during Phase I. The Provost said that this is a procedural matter and not an issue for the TDC report.

A Senator said that he was in support of the proposal but that he had three concerns. First, the fact that the UPTC will be composed of all external members shows a lack of trust in AUB’s own faculty. Second, he thought too many letters from referees are required in the process for the first batch of applications for tenure by in-rank full Professors. In a third point that he characterized as “sentimental,” he said he was concerned about the treatment of senior full Professors in this process and wished that we had collectively pushed for a title or states along the lines of an “honorable” or “honorary” tenure for such faculty members. A second Senator concurred with the first point about the composition of the UPTC and said that showing confidence in AUB faculty’s ability to create our own standards for promotion to tenure would go a long way toward building trust. This same Senator added that there are two issues that are not fully addressed in the report: retirement and

grievance procedures. One Senator said he thought it was hard to vote on this report because phrases such as “outstanding scholarly achievement” (page fourteen) left it vague as to what the precise guidelines for granting tenure will end up being. He emphasized that many senior faculty have fulfilled vital functions in the university such as building programs from scratch and serving lengthy terms as departmental chairs that may have had a negative impact on the scale of their overall research output. This comment was met with a variety of responses from senior administrators. The Dean of FM and EVP reminded the Senate that this sort of concern is what scuttled the attempt to reinstate tenure that was made under the Waterbury administration and that a decade’s worth of work on the tenure issue included a substantial amount of effort to address these matters.

The President emphasized that this issue has in fact been addressed in a number of ways, including the accommodation of allowing in-rank full Professors to decide whether or not to apply for tenure and, importantly, to be able to keep their current rank should they opt not to apply. One Senator posed a hypothetical future scenario in which eighty percent of AUB’s full Professors are untenured and being asked to teach more courses than some of their peers. He said that many of these senior faculty members made sacrifices to keep the university going during the war and that it would be unkind to ask them to carry the lion’s share of the teaching load. The President made two points in response to this. First, he said it was unhelpful and in fact disrespectful to portray teaching courses as punishment and, second, he emphasized that what the TDC’s report actually says is that the result of some reviews of faculty members’ research, teaching, and service may be that they enter a discussion with their department chairs or program directors about how to balance their contributions in those three areas in a way that is as equitable as possible with other members of their unit. A second Senator reframed the issue by asking the President how he sees tenure reshaping the population of AUB as we move forward. The President said that AUB has an extraordinary faculty and that we want everybody to contribute. He emphasized that tenure is about synergy: some faculty are world-class researchers, some give excellent care to medical patients, some choose to focus on education, etc. The President said we want to make it possible for all to contribute and the goal is to play to people’s strengths. If we treat everybody who contributes well – tenured and non-tenured alike – then all will know they are valued and this will help make it possible for them to continue to contribute. He added that this is not just an issue for administrators: we all need to work together to avoid the perception of a two-class system. The Dean of FM and EVP sought to sum up the Senate’s deliberations by noting that this was a historic day, thanking the President for his hard work in bringing this momentous occasion about, asking the Senate to conceive of tenure as an incentive to improve, and to please approve the TDC’s report. The Provost expressed his appreciation to the TDC for their extraordinarily hard and long work. A Senator said that, while he was also appreciative of the TDC’s work he counseled that it would be a mistake to think that the report is a perfect document and, accordingly, we should also be thankful to those Senators who demanded improvements to the draft that was presented on October 26. **A substitute motion was made to approve the TDC report with the above noted amendment to page fifteen. Vote 2017-11. The substitute motion was passed unanimously, 29-0.**

6) Grievance Committee

A Senator noted that there is currently no formal procedure for handling faculty grievances at AUB and, as a result, recent grievances have been handled on a case-by-case basis, sometimes involving a presidential appointment of an *ad hoc* committee. This Senator said that it would be better if there was a standing committee to consider all such cases. There was some discussion and a consensus was reached. **A motion was made to call for the President to meet with the Deans to form a committee to draft a proposal for a standing grievance committee that will be brought to the Senate for a vote next time. Vote 2017-12. The motion was passed unanimously.**

7) Proposal for a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science

Dr. Huda Huijer, Director of HSON, presented a proposal for a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science. In the course of the discussion several questions were raised such as why an M.S. was required as a necessary condition for admission, whether courses on Bio-Medical Ethics would be required in the curriculum, and whether students in the program would be required to take courses or do field work at peer institutions in the U.S. H. Huijer's answers to those questions were that previous experience has convinced the faculty that students with M.S. degrees are better prepared for PhD level work than those whose highest degree is a Bachelors, students in the program will be required to take one course in Health Care Ethics and may take courses in Bio-Medical Ethics as electives, and that while students will be encouraged to take coursework and do research at peer institutions abroad, financial issues and the logistics of obtaining student visas are such that making that a requirement would impose an undue burden on students.

A motion was made to approve the proposal for a Doctor of Philosophy in Nursing Science. Vote 2017-13. The motion was passed unanimously.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

(Minutes recorded by H. Muller, Secretary of the Senate)