

**American University of Beirut**  
**Final Minutes of the University Senate**  
**Meeting of Wednesday, December 19, 2018**

**Present:** M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, F. Afiouni (replacing S. Harvey), E. Al-Chaer, J. Chaaban, A. Chalak, L. Daouk, , N. Dumit, S. El Fakhani , H. El Rassy, N. El-Cheikh, W. El-Hajj, M. Farah, C. Fugate, N. Ghanem, M. Harajli, A. Harutyunyan, H. Huijer, S. Isber, M. Jurdi, K. Kabalan, S. Kanj-Sharara, F. Khuri, N. Melhem, R. Mohtar, H. Muller, J. Norton, I. Nuwayhid, G. Saad, S. Sadek, M. Sayegh, R. Sharara, A. Shihadeh, F. Talih, C. Tarraf (replacing T. Nizameddin)

**Absent:** A. Abu-Alfa\*, I. Baalbaki, T. Bazi, H. Diab, S. Harvey\* (replaced by F. Afiouni), E. Hitti, T. Nizameddin (replaced by C. Tarraf), N. Saliba, E. Shammass\*  
(\*= regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

**1) Approval of Senate minutes of November 28, 2018**

The minutes of November 28, 2018 were approved unanimously after minor amendments.

**2) Reports from Senate formed ad-hoc Committee on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness**

The provost reminded the senate that an ad-hoc committee on the evaluation of teaching effectiveness was formed a year ago based on the recommendation of the senate. The committee, headed by Dr. Saouma BouJaoude, finished its report and presented it in two town hall meetings. Feedback was taken and will be incorporated in the final version of the report. Dr. BouJaoude gave a presentation summarizing the report's main points. The main objective of the report was to elaborate a credible system that can be used to evaluate teaching for promotion and tenure purposes. The ad-hoc committee identified and summarized the teaching evaluation systems at 21 universities which included peer institutions and prestigious universities. The committee also:

- agreed on a definition of teaching,
- agreed on the domains of excellence in coordination with the University Tenure Criteria Task Force
- explicated the domains of excellence
- identified the components of the teaching portfolio
- developed rubrics aligned with the components of the portfolio
- developed a process for evaluating teaching

Dr. BouJaoude added that while writing a teaching statement, every claim should be supported by a tangible evidence, similar to writing a research paper. Sample material that constitute the teaching portfolio includes: CV, teaching philosophy, courses taught and enrollment numbers, samples of course syllabi, and copies of all course evaluation forms (ICE forms). Dr. BouJaoude presented next an evaluation rubric. He concluded by highlighting the importance of training faculty members on writing the portfolio and on evaluating it.

The provost noted that this report is needed for the evaluation of teaching in future tenure applications. He added that next year's tenure applicants (faculty members applying in summer 2019) will submit a teaching portfolio but the presented rubric will not be used for evaluation. The year after though, the rubric will be used for evaluation, since by then faculty members will be trained enough and familiar enough with the process of preparing teaching portfolios. The final report will be brought back to the senate for approval by the end of academic year 2019-20. Some senators asked about the reasoning behind submitting a teaching portfolio next year and not having it evaluated rigorously. The president and Dr. BouJaoude replied by indicating that the data gathered during next year will be used

to enhance the rubric, and two years from now will give enough time for faculty members to be proficient in writing and evaluating teaching portfolios. Other senators replied by indicating that writing a portfolio makes you a better teacher and gives you a chance to self-critique your teaching. Some senators indicated that the teaching portfolio used to be part of the promotion process in the past, but was stopped since there were no systematic ways of evaluating portfolios, and since teaching was not taken seriously when evaluating promotion files. A senator asked about the weight that teaching takes when evaluating promotion and tenure. The provost answered that there is no weight system, but there are qualifying guidelines (very good, excellent, etc.) which the evaluation committee will judge on.

On a separate note, a senator suggested that the ICE reports should be administered right after the withdrawal period and not before that. The administration acknowledged this suggestion and will check its feasibility.

### **3) Performance of Retirement Plan B (non-US citizens or Green Card Holders)**

Mrs. Hala Bekhazi gave a summary of the UBP visit which lasted three days. On the first day UBP representatives met with the Employee Benefit Committee (EBC) and gave an overview about the performance of Plan B, explained the conditions that led to the declining performance, and gave an outlook and strategy for the upcoming year. On the second and third days (Nov. 29 and 30), they held three town hall meetings. A set of recommendation were formulated as an outcome of the visit:

- Introduce a very conservative portfolio to take into account those retiring soon and who might prefer to have a conservative plan. This portfolio will have 80 to 85% low to moderate risk classes, few high-risk classes, and bonds that allow the participants to benefit from increasing interest rates.
- Introduce pure US equity funds into the profiles.

EBC met on December 17 and passed a resolution to approve these recommendations. A senator asked whether everyone could be on Plan A as it provides more flexibility. The president noted that AUB matches 12.5% for Plan B, while it matches 10% for Plan A. So in effect, Plan B gives more monetary benefit to its participants. A question was then raised on whether the institution contributes to the social security of Plan A participants. Mrs. Bekhazi will confirm and revert back. She added that, some funds in Plan A are not available offshore preventing Plan B participants from benefiting from them. The president added that if there are funds in Plan A that performed well, UBP will be asked to add them to Plan B if legal. Mrs. Bekhazi noted that both plans performed badly this year and this is following the global trend; other senators confirmed this fact. A senator mentioned that EBC proposed to have the funds in Plan A the same as those in Plan B except for those funds that are not legally allowed in Plan B. This way participants of both Plans will feel equity. A senator suggested to increase the faculty representatives on EBC and have them elected. The president noted that the total consumption of benefits should be taken into account when making these decisions and hence a balance should be kept between staff and everyone else. The president will look into this request though. A senator asked whether there is a way for AUB to offer investment consultations. Mrs. Bekhazi noted that AUB cannot offer individual advice as this carries legal responsibilities. Alternatively, participants can get a financial advisor to give them long term advice on Plan A/B and other personal investments if any. She added that UBP are very helpful and will visit AUB twice a year to advise participants accordingly. A senator mentioned that back in 2012, the university was managing the 12.5%, so why not have the university manage them again. Mrs. Bekhazi replied that they wanted Plan A and B participants to be on equal footing, and hence all US retirement plans are managed by individuals since it is their money and AUB moved in the same direction. The president added that few Universities who manage faculty funds manage them in a very conservative way, which does not give a good return at all, and very few universities, if any, are managing faculty funds. The provost asked the Chair of SCFA on the post retirement financial report. The Chair of SCFA replied that

the university had generously hired a consultant to look into options regarding post retirement financial plans. The consultant recently submitted a very good report but it lacked local options. The consultant is revising it to include local options and the report should be ready in January.

#### **4) Voting of Ph.D. degree for Mohammad Barakat**

**Dr. Salah Sadek raised a motion on behalf of the MSFEA faculty members to grant Mohamad Barakat a Ph.D. degree in Civil Engineering.** He added that this request is being brought as an exception since Mohamad had to do his thesis defense a bit late due to the absence of one of his Ph.D. committee members. Motion was seconded. A senator cautioned against setting precedence for exceptions on voting of degrees. The provost acknowledged and supported the senator's comment. **Vote 2018-17. The motion was approved unanimously.**

#### **5) University audited financial reports**

The president started by indicating that he is speaking in confidence. He noted that the decision not to publish online the university audited financial reports was taken two years before he took office in 2015. The previous administration took this decision, and this administration does not see any benefit in publishing the audited reports. A senator noted that these reports should be published publically so the community understands AUB's financial status and if the administration does not publish them, it will be going against shared governance, transparency, and governmental laws. The president confirmed that AUB does not violate any laws. AUB has internal auditors and external auditors to ensure that AUB is in compliance with both the Lebanese and US laws. This past November, the BoT approved the best compliance report from external auditors in years.

EVP Sayegh mentioned that there is an expanded budget committee that includes students, senators, and faculty members. This committee looks at every detail of the budget and hence transparency as well as shared governance are achieved, and publishing the financial report is a different issue that should not be mixed with transparency and shared governance. Add to that Drew Wickens, AUB's Chief Financial Officer (CFO), comes to the senate and goes over the budget of the coming year, shows how the budget closed the year before, and discusses the operation budget. This information is available to the senate and consequently to faculty members. A senator commented that this item was put on the senate Agenda and the administration had enough time to come back with answers on why the audited financial reports are not being published online. A SCFA member indicated that SCFA's request was only to check whether this administration can resume publishing the reports without going into further details. The SCFA member added that AUB is a private university and private universities have no obligations to publish their financial reports; publishing these reports remain at the discretion of the university administration and does not impact transparency or shared governance.

The president noted that his administration took many steps to enhance transparency and shared governance and this is evident by having the USFC treasurer and the SCFA Chair as members of the budget committee. AUB Legal counsels advised the administration not to publish the reports on the web and this is what will happen. However, and agreeing with the provost's request, the president added that Drew Wickens will be invited to the senate to explain the reason for stopping the publishing of these reports online.

#### **6) Salary Adjustment**

The president started by mentioning that AUB decided in summer of 2015 to not increase tuition more than 3% every year for the coming four years. The total increase in professorial faculty adjustments including promotions is on average 3.11% in total, and if you add benefits this becomes 5.2% (HIP, housing, education, retirement plan, etc.). The administration looked across the seven faculties, and much of the change was done to hit benchmarks based on the last faculty compensation report. All

adjustment requests from all deans of faculties are being studied. Some adjustments were granted already and others are planned. The president added that the gaps that existed are almost closed, and the exercise will be repeated soon as per the recommendation of the previous faculty compensation task force.

The provost noted that over the last four years, 125 faculty members were promoted and received their agreed upon 8% salary increase, and all faculty members got on average 2% merit increase i.e. 8% over four years. Every year the administration is increasing the money pool for salary adjustments. He added that reviving the faculty compensation task force would help advise the administration on salary related issues.

EVP Sayegh mentioned that the compensation task force for the clinical faculty has completed its report and was presented to the BoT. An implementation plan was put in place to execute the recommendations. There is another compensation task force looking at the salaries of the basic sciences faculty members, specifically the younger ones.

A senator asked whether the raise is being divided into: inflation and merit. The president answered that as of now no, and even if this was implemented, it does not mean that the raise will be more. The president added that this year specifically, attention was given to staff raises for those who are considerably underpaid. The new task force can always review the current situation and give its recommendations. The president added that we are meeting the inflation rate (supposedly around 4%) when counting the increase in take home money and benefits. We are not meeting the inflation rate compared to take home money alone but we are doing better than other institutions and to the best of our ability. A senator noted that there exists inequities between faculties and within the same faculty. The president noted that the Deans are responsible for addressing inequities in their faculties and submitting their adjustment requests; the requests will be honored by the provost if possible. Another senator noted that some faculty members are facing hardship and added that not all recommendations of the previous faculty compensation task force were addressed, for instance, setting clear guidelines to salary increases within faculties, separating merit increase from cost of living increase, and reviewing the scale every 5 years. Dean Shihadeh answered by saying that the recommendations are being honored when granting increases but there is no size fits all solution. We need to work together to see how we can get more money in and these additions will be used to increase faculty salaries. A senator noted that it seems that faculty adjustments are in the hands of Deans who compete for a certain pool of money and no clear guidelines are being followed. The president and provost disagreed with the senator and mentioned that Deans formulate their requests based on disparities within their faculties and when compared to benchmarks, and always in line with the report's recommendations. Other Deans agreed and confirmed the positive impact of the report on the salary ranges. The president closed the discussion by strongly disagreeing with the implication that the Deans apply any favoritism in their salary adjustment recommendations. The provost reiterated that he will revitalize the faculty compensation task force to create a new report based on the current facts and parameters, such as the constant increase of 3% on tuitions, the increase in financial aid, the adjustments that were done already, etc.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

(Minutes recorded by W. El-Hajj, Secretary of the Senate)