

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Wednesday, April 20, 2016**

Present: M. Abiad, A. Abu-Alfa (on invitation), F. Abu Salem, F. Afiouni, G. Araj, I. Baalbaki, A. Chalak, M. Clinton, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, S. Hmaidan, H. Huijer, N. Hwalla, G. Kanazi, S Kanj, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (Chair), F. Maalouf, P. McGreevy, W. Nasr, I Nuwayhid, H. El-Rassy, R. Sedehi, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, E. Shammas, C. Smith, F. Ziyadeh (on invitation).

Absent: T. Amin*, V. Araman, M. Al-Ghoul*, B. Bashour*, J. Chaaban, H. Diab, D. Jamali*, R. Karami*, S. Khalaf, T. Mehmood*, H. Muller*, T. Nizameddin, M. Salameh*, M. Suidan, A. Taher*, S. Zeineldine

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

1) Approval of minutes of April 8 2016

The minutes were approved with amendments.

2) Nomination of Senate Representative to Board of Trustee May 2016 Meeting

President Khuri stated that the Senate needed to elect a person to read a statement to the Board of Trustees at their May 2016 meeting in Beirut. A. Kayssi clarified that in the past the Board of Trustees met with some members of the Senate – usually the SSC and SCFA -- or in some cases the President designated some members. Two senators were nominated – I. El-Hajj and S. Saleh – but S. Saleh withdrew to leave the place to I. El-Hajj. The latter asked for senators to send any issues of importance to the faculty-at-large. W Nasr, as last year’s elected Senate representative to the Board of Trustees, commented that many issues raised over the last 10 years are the same, and that there is a need for some mechanism to follow up on their implementation.

A senator asked for clarification from the President about the situation of the search for the director of the Center for American Studies and Research (CASAR). The President stated that the Provost’s office is currently collating material on the case, and the internal auditor is looking into it, but that several faculty members had brought to the administration’s attention that there were major violations in procedure in the conduct of the search. He was told that a visiting faculty member was running the search along with junior faculty, both major deviations from the bylaws, and that individuals were discouraged from applying and that there was a pattern of intimidation. On the basis of this, he asked that the search be stopped. Subsequently the issue was being portrayed as interfering in academic freedom, threats were emailed to the President and Provost and the issue was leaked to the media. Dean McGreevy stated that he was not at liberty to give the details of the case which are confidential (and under investigation) but that the issue was complex and he differed with the account given in certain respects. President Khuri stated that the administration will share the results of the investigation and that the names of faculty members who shared concerns about the search process would be kept confidential. EVP Sayegh stated that one has to distinguish between the facts of the case and the

exploitation of the incident by the media. Provost Harajli stated that a visiting professor cannot chair a search committee nor can assistant professors vote on a recruitment of a faculty member of higher rank; he noted that when a new search committee is formed the candidate in question can apply again. Several senators commented that this is an administrative issue that should be dealt with by the administration and not at the Senate, and that other search committee processes had suffered from procedural irregularities, and recommended that since the investigation is ongoing a brief report should be presented to the Senate when it is concluded. President Khuri responded that these were not procedural irregularities, and stated that it was troubling that the CASAR International Advisory Board message was sent to Al-Akhbar at the same time he, Board Chair Philip Khoury, Provost Harajli, and Dean McGreevy received it. This limited the possibilities concerning who shared it with Al Akhbar. He promised that the administration would discuss internally, as agreed with the Senate, that the ongoing investigation would not be compromised, and that a summary of the investigation would be shared with the Senate once complete.

[There was a reversal in the sequence of agenda items]

3) Institutional Review Board (A. Abu-Alfa)

President Khuri introduced the speaker, as director of the human research protection program (HRPP), and stressed the importance of ethical human subject research. A. Abu-Alfa gave a presentation about the history of the HRPP at AUB and described the process of ethical review of research by faculty and students. Ethical review is currently divided between a Social and Behavioral Board and a Biomedical Board. Recently a lawyer has been added to both boards because of Lebanese government requirements. Proposals are considered in three categories – exempt, expedited and full board. For the SBS IRB about half are deemed exempt, and for the biomedical IRB, about 80% are expedited. Figures on the time taken from submission to approval for research proposals were presented. For the period January – April 2016, the average turnaround time in working days was 14 for exempt, 42 for expedited and 21 for full board proposals. President Khuri commented that random audits, as are done in other human research subject protection programs, will need to be implemented and there will be a need for faculty volunteers with expertise across diverse fields. A senator commended the IRB for the progress it had made in raising standards in a short period of time, but noted that at her department research projects have experienced considerable delays and suggested to focus discussion on potential barriers that could be overcome. A. Abu-Alfa stated that the HRPP is committed to reducing the turnaround times, and that review of studies has been considerably shortened, and especially those for review of medical records. Particular types of projects are inherently difficult because of existing laws, and, additionally, the hospital has its own rules and regulations. In his presentation, A. Abu-Alfa stressed that ethical conduct of research is the shared responsibility of the institution, the IRB, and investigators in protecting human research subjects and outlined in details the particular responsibilities of investigators in this regard. President Khuri asked if there was a need for a ‘master agreement’ with sponsors to shorten overall approval time for projects. M. Clinton responded that it is possible to obtain approval for a program of research that is used repeatedly on different groups and then each review merely requires an amendment. Another senator, representing a group of social scientists concerned about the need to improve IRB responsiveness, asked if faculty and administration could assist with some of the problems and asked where faculty or students can turn if they have grievances with the IRB – is there an appeal

mechanism? It was clarified that the IRB does not review proposals methodologically, but only analyzes methods in their relationship to risk to human subjects. M. Clinton stated that there are two components to letters sent to investigators – ‘regulatory’ that need to be addressed, and ‘advisory’ that are based on methodological comments made by the reviewer but that the investigator does not need to address. In relation to the question about what the HRPP needs, A. Abu-Alfa and M. Clinton stated that they need more volunteer reviewers, more staff and a part-time office space on campus to facilitate interaction with students and faculty. A senator on the IRB confirmed the need for more reviewers, as reviewing proposals is time-consuming, and for IRB staff to have doctoral training and research experience so that they can provide advice on ethical research approaches. Another senator recommended for investigators to hold meetings with the IRB prior to submission as this saves time, and Dr. Abu-Alfa stated that this is actually encouraged. The same senator also commented that he had recently collaborated with Harvard University and was pleased that the IRB templates were considered international standard. A senator from FEA stated that the process is not suitable for engineering. Z. Dawy, representing the URB, stated that the IRB needs to be more pro-active in reaching out and communicating with faculties such as during town hall meetings, and suggested having IRB mentors in each faculty.

4) EVP Sayegh presentation on the AUBMC 2020 Vision: Progress and Challenges

EVP Sayegh gave a presentation on the AUBMC 2020 vision and in the interest of time, offered to meet separately with any interested senators who might have questions. In 1867, when the medical school was established at AUB it was the only one other than Harvard that had a four-year program. In 1984, it had an annual enrolment of 80 new students but this has risen to 105. It has become highly selective, at a level similar to top US institutions. It has 4,000 medical alumni in the US alone. AUBMC has 3,000 employees. The 2020 vision was the first time a vision was approved by the Board of Trustees. EVP Sayegh traced the growth and achievements over the last 5 years, including the restructuring of medical education with a new curriculum, IMMIMPACT and new PhD programs. There had been 152 new recruits, 65% from North America (an important ‘reverse brain drain’) and only 51% with a medical degree from AUB. He stressed the importance of JCI accreditation, and that AUB graduates can get jobs elsewhere because of the accreditation. He commented that successful academic medical centers have both an academic and sound business plan, and that at times these can be conflicting. While EVP Sayegh inherited an institution in deficit the budget was balanced within three years of his assuming responsibility and since then has been in surplus. He contrasted HIP with other insurance systems and noted that while the premiums are similar when the primary beneficiary is young, at age 55 and over they remain much lower than competitors. In 2012, there was a decision to switch to a new health information system based on electronic medical records requiring an extensive process of implementation; an RFP was issued and EPIC selected. The Medical Practice Plan (MPP) was modified in 2011-2012. Lebanese law stipulates separation of professional fees from hospital revenues. Recently, a faculty compensation task force for FM has been appointed and will review MPP again. MPP funds have been used to support research at an average amount of \$1 million a year. FM has also recently received an award of over \$6 million to support a center on precision medicine, the theme of this year’s MEMA meeting. FM has a joint academic program with every faculty at AUB and is interested to enhance collaboration. AUBMC has also established three centers outside Beirut where the medical personnel are considered AUB faculty; these pose no financial risk but do not generate revenue because of the

non-profit status. In addition, AUBMC provides urgent care and mobile clinics for Syrian refugees in the Beka'a. There is a major fund for community service and almost \$10 million is allocated for financially needy patients to access care at AUBMC. The medical center's contributions were noted and praised by the Senators. Questions were raised about why the substantial increase in net revenues had not resulted in a commensurate increase in net margin. Dean/EVP Sayegh referenced the downturn in full pay Gulf visitors, and the need to hire additional medical and support personnel to adequately staff the increased volume in patients. He acknowledged that work is ongoing to improve service and efficiency, but stated that the progress in the medical center was well aligned with the global health sciences mission that was part of the President's inauguration speech and vision.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:50 pm.

(Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate until 4:30 pm)