

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, April 21, 2017

Present: M. Abiad, H. Abu Khuzam, I. Baalbaki, B. Bashour, M. Clinton, N. El Cheikh, S. El Fakhani, I. Elhajj, M. Harajli, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, H. Huijer, M. Jurdi, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (chairing), F. Maalouf, T. Mehmood Ali, S. Mejcher-Atassi, H. Muller, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, S. Sadek, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, R. Sedehi, E. Shammas, A. Shihadeh, I. Toufeili (for N. Hwalla), D. Wickens (by invitation)

Absent: M. Al-Ghoul, G. Araj*, J. Chaaban*, A. Chalak*, H. Diab, C. Harb*, D. Jamali, G. Kanazi, S. Kanj-Shararah*, R. Karami, W. Nasr*, M. Salameh, A. Taher, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting came to order at 1:13 p.m.

1) Budget presentation and discussion

COO Sedehi, CFO Wickens, President Khuri, Provost Harajli, and EVP Sayegh gave a presentation to the Senate about the budget for the current fiscal year, the planned budget for fiscal year 2018, and highlighted some issues relevant to longer-term financial planning for AUB. Like all universities, AUB faces the challenge of ever-rising costs. The team making the presentation emphasized that the two revenue streams of tuition and patient fees cannot and should not be relied upon to meet those rising costs. This means that alternative sources of revenue must be sought out. The development of a healthy endowment is one step in that direction, but the university as a whole needs to come together to develop original ideas to help meet this challenge. The President emphasized the unique position in which AUB finds itself. We offer a high caliber undergraduate educational experience combined with an ambitious research program, all in the context of a Middle Eastern nation that offers almost no governmental financial support. This means that it is nearly impossible to identify peer institutions to use for benchmarking. So we need to be both original and creative. Besides those very general considerations, the presentation also included many detailed items. While discussing capital projects, plans for ameliorating the office space crunch in FAS and for creating a walk-in low acuity health clinic for students, faculty and staff were highlighted. Several Senators emphasized the importance of increasing accessibility to offices and classrooms for students with mobility issues. Also in the context of discussing details, several Senators asked for clarification over what such phrases as “increasing efficiency” and “eliminating inefficiencies” will mean in practical terms. The team making the presentation emphasized that every effort will be made to keep the focus on cost containment (as opposed to cost-cutting) and that this policy contrasts favorably with how things are being done at many other universities. During the course of the discussion, a consensus emerged that it would be prudent to do a study of how the pattern of increasing enrollment has impacted the budget. The President suggested that such a study should cover the past twenty years, to cover the period since President Waterbury arrived with the mandate of increasing the research-oriented aspects of AUB’s mission. As was the case in previous meetings, the management of HIP and the fees associated with that program came up. The President asked Senators to hold off on that discussion until the report on HIP from the Committee reviewing coverage and premiums which reports to the COO with subsequent reporting to the Employee Benefits Committee comes to the Senate.

The meeting was adjourned at 2:35 pm.

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