

**American University of Beirut**  
**Final Minutes of the University Senate**  
**Meeting of Friday, February 22, 2019**

**Present:** M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, E. Al-Chaer, I. Baalbaki, T. Bazi, J. Chaaban, L. Choueiri (by invitation), L. Daouk, Z. Dawy (by invitation), H. Diab, N. Dumit, S. El Fakhani, N. El-Cheikh, W. El-Hajj, M. Farah, C. Fugate, N. Ghanem, M. Harajli, C. Harb, A. Harutyunyan, S. Harvey, H. Huijer, S. Isber, M. Jurdi, N. Melhem, R. Mohtar, H. Muller, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, G. Saad , S. Sadek, N. Saliba, M. Sayegh, E. Shammas, R. Sharara , F. Talih, F. Ziyadeh (by invitation)

**Absent:** A. Abu-Alfa, A. Chalak, H. El Rassy\*, E. Hitti, K. Kabalan, S. Kanj-Sharara\*, F. Khuri\*, A. Shihadeh\*

(\* = regrets notified before meeting)

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

**1) Approval of Senate minutes of January 25, 2019**

The minutes were approved unanimously.

**2) Voting of degrees for Fall 2018 Graduates**

Acting Registrar H. Abou Araj presented the list of degree candidates and statistics on their distribution. Dean El Cheikh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAS. Vote 2018-18. The motion was approved unanimously.** EVP Sayegh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Medicine (FM). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FM. Vote 2018-19. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean-elect Huijer recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing (HSON). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in HSON. Vote 2018-20. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dr. S. Sadek, on behalf of Dean Shihadeh, recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in MSFEA. Vote 2018-21. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Mohtar recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAFS. Vote 2018-22. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Nuwayhid recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FHS. Vote 2018-23. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Harvey recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Olayan School of Business (OSB). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in OSB. Vote 2018-24. The motion was approved unanimously.**

**3) Updates on the Core Curriculum / revamping the General education program**

Dr. Nader El-Bizri updated the senate on the efforts of revamping the General education program. Dr. El-Bizri indicated that the work started in Fall 2017 for the aim of establishing a new multidisciplinary and interfaculty core curriculum in the liberal arts and sciences as a holistic common shared experience for all undergraduate students. After discussing and interacting closely with the provost's office and deans, 60 faculty members were elected in Spring 2018 from all the faculties and schools at AUB to serve as active representatives within task-forces that are designing the new curriculum. Several town halls grouped the task-forces, in addition to their own teamwork meetings that have been taking place since late Spring 2018.

Although the final report is not finalized yet, the recommendations that are currently being worked on are:

- 1- Designing 4 strands of interdisciplinary thematic core curriculum courses in the liberal arts and sciences categorized under headings such as (a) Habitat/Dwelling/Ecology, (b) Body-Mind/Health-Wellness, (c) Science/Technology/Art, and (d) Society/Justice.
- 2- Including ethics as a requirement in all undergraduate majors, and to introducing students to theoretical ethical frameworks that assist in grasping and dealing with real-life problems.
- 3- Updating the existing Quantitative Thought requirements in terms of designing new offerings, while seeking clarity over the principles of Quantitative Thought across disciplines.
- 4- Instilling a commitment in the students to become more aware and ready to address real-life challenges in Lebanon, through experiential learning and civic engagement
- 5- Introducing during the students' first semester for a period of around 6 weeks, 0-credit activities/sessions (Forum), that aim to help students generate an initial sense of a community of learners, through acquaintance with the history and values of AUB, its current resources (museums, archives, centers, clubs) as well as practical institutional structure.

A senator asked whether the objectives that were set for the core curriculum have been met, and also posed a concern regarding the burden that the core curriculum might present to professional programs that apply for accreditation. Another senator noted that some of the suggested strands such as experiential engagement does not apply to all disciplines, and caution should be made when making the final recommendations. Dr. El-Bizri indicated that these items are being discussed in details in the various task forces and are being taken into account in the core curriculum design. A senator noted that the number of GE courses at AUB is very high, a lot more than the norm in the US. Dr. El-Bizri answered by saying that the number of core curriculum credits will be reduced to give leeway to professional schools to increase the number of the professional courses they offer. Dean Cheikh followed up by saying that some professional schools at AUB do not want less GE credits, they actually want more, and consequently all faculties should be very clear on the number of GE credits they need before making the final recommendations.

#### **4) Update on the timeline for different tenure related policies: Tenure Letter of Appointment, Faculty Workload, Post-Tenure Review, and Faculty Retirement Incentive Plan**

The provost indicated that the following tenure related policies have been completed and are considered final:

- Tenure Procedure for 2017-18
- Academic Appointment, Reappointment, Tenure and Promotion Policy
- Promotion and Tenure Guidelines during Transition Phase (added as appendix to policy)
- Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Evaluation of Tenure-Eligible Faculty Members

He added that the Policy and Procedures for Termination of Tenure Appointment has been approved by the BoT in June 2018. However, it is undergoing some amendments and was handed to SCFA in November 2018 to discuss and recommend updates.

The policies that are still in progress are:

- Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Appeals (presented to the senate already for discussion)
- Letter of Appointment for Tenured Faculty (to be sent to the senate in March-April 2019)
- Faculty Workload Policy
- Pre-Tenure and Post-Tenure Review Policy

- Faculty Retirement Incentive Plan

Several senators noted that there are delays in many policies related to tenure, specifically the Letter of Appointment for Tenured Faculty (tenure contract) which should have been presented to the senate in December 2018. They added that it will be very hard to discuss and approve this policy if it came to the senate in April 2019; one month will not be nearly enough to discuss such a delicate policy. Also the delay in this policy causes issues for new recruits and for existing tenured faculty members. The provost agreed that the tenure contracts should be discussed earlier; he added that he will consult with the president to try and bring it as early as possible to the senate.

A senator noted that during 2017-18 policies used to be sent to SCFA and sometimes SSC for discussions, comments, and feedback before getting finalized and presented to the senate, for instance the tenure termination policy. However, this practice changed during 2018-19 where the promotion and tenure appeal policy did not come to SCFA and the tenure contract was given to SCFA for feedback then retracted. The senator added that SCFA is fully capable of drafting policies and contracts. A senator stressed that SCFA is an advisory committee that reports to the senate and is not in the position to speak on behalf of the senate. Hence, let the senate speak for itself. The provost closed the discussion by noting that SCFA's mandate is concerned with faculty benefits, and not policies. SCFA can propose changes to its mandate and recommend it to the senate.

### **5) Promotion and Tenure Appeal Policy**

Dr. Z. Dawi presented the Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Appeals. The provost then noted that the comments received by SCFA were mostly accepted with the exception of two major points which are open for discussion: (1) whether the Tenure and Promotion Appeals Committee (TPAC) can have access to the whole promotion/tenure file immediately once an appeal is submitted, and (2) the composition of TPAC.

Regarding the first point, many senators requested that TPAC gets access to the whole promotion/tenure file immediately after the appeal is submitted. When the appeal letter is written, the appellant would have minimal knowledge about the evaluation process, so another entity (in this case TPAC), should have access to the whole file in order to fairly decide whether there is likelihood of grounds or not. Otherwise, many rightful appeals will not go for full review. Although EVP Sayegh supported the request, he voiced a concern of turning TPAC into another UPTC. He added that we do not want TPAC to conduct another review of the whole promotion/tenure file, but limit its job to investigating the appeal grounds, namely procedural irregularity, arbitrary and capricious decisions, and discrimination.

A senator suggested that an appellant appoints an already tenured full-professor as his/her advocate, who is granted by TPAC access to the whole appellant file. The advocate reviews the whole file including referees' letters and all reports at all levels of the promotion/tenure committees as well as the DPM reports. Should the advocate find grounds for appealing, the advocate prepares a statement of why there is ground to appeal, and makes a formal presentation to TPAC, then rests his/her case and leaves. TPAC then makes its final decision and recommends it to the president. Several other senators supported this suggestion.

The provost said that he will come back to the senate with some suggestions to address this point. Possible direction includes preparing a checklist for TPAC to look at, at the time of deciding whether to grant full review or not.

Regarding the composition of TPAC, many senators requested that more TPAC members be elected. The main reason behind this request is to make as much separation as possible between the entities involved in the promotion/tenure decision and the entities deciding on the appeal. Some suggestions included: (1) instead of having 7 members nominated by the deans, make them elected by the corresponding faculties, (2) have 7 members elected by the corresponding faculties, 4 elected by the senate, and 4 appointed by president. A senator noted that it is common practice for TPAC members to be elected not appointed and suggested that, instead of having 7 members nominated by the deans, have two faculty members elected by each faculty then have the dean selects one of them to be placed on TPAC after consultation with the provost and president.

EVP Sayegh and the provost suggested to form a small committee to discuss all these options and come back to the senate with suggestions. The committee included the following senators: E. Al-Chaer (SSC Chair), J. Chaaban (SCFA Chair), and N. Dumit (senate at large).

A senator requested that the denial letter includes some information about the denial reason. Another senator noted that the updated policy should have been approved by the board of deans before being brought to the senate. A senator requested to remove “so” from the sentence “The decision to deny promotion and/or tenure is so inconsistent...”, and to extend the period for submitting the appeal from 45 days to 60 days. The policy was not put for a vote and will be presented again in the upcoming senate meeting.

#### **6) Updates on the Ombuds post**

The provost mentioned that the job description for an Ombuds has been drafted and the advertisement will go out very soon. A senator suggested to have an ombuds office and be allocated budget, and also to have senate representation on the ombuds search committee.

The senate congratulated Dr. Najat Aoun Saliba for being selected as the 2019 Laureate for Africa and the Arab States, as part of the L'OREAL-UNESCO For Women in Science International Awards.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

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