

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, May 23, 2014

Present: A. Al-Hroub, J. Chaaban, S. Chahine, N. Dajani, A. Dallal, H. Diab, S. Diab-Rouhana (by invitation), P. Dorman (chairing), I. Elhadj, N. Farajalla, J. Ghafari, S. Hout, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbour-Khoury, D. Jamali, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, H. Khoury, P. McGreevy, L. Nasreddine, S. Nouredine, S. Ramia (representing I. Nuwayhid), S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, E. Shammass, M. Suidan, T. Nizameddin, J. Usta, A. Zenger

Absent: T. Amin, S. Arnaout*, E. Baydoun, Z. Dawy*, J. DeJong*, A. Al-Kutoubi, H. Huijer*, G. Matar*, P. May, I. Nuwayhid*, M. Salameh*, J. Ulsta*, S. Zeineldine*, R. Brow, C. Tarraf, D. Wrisley*

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2:05 pm.

1. Approval of minutes

The minutes of April 25 were approved as submitted. Additionally, it was noted that a previously approved revision has yet to be implemented in the minutes of March 28; in the final minutes, section 7b should be more concise and report the discussion on a higher level.

2. Chair's report

- a. Senate meeting with the Board of Trustees. President Dorman discussed a plan for structuring the meeting between the BOT and Senate members. To encourage a productive conversation, the Trustees proposed to meet with a group of seven members elected for the occasion by their fellow senators (rather than with the 38 members of the full Senate). D. Jamali will circulate a message to Senate members to announce that she will be receiving nominations for senators to meet with the BOT.
- b. Senate report to the BOT. Trustees will deliver a response to the Senate report verbally during their meeting with Senators. Senators requested that a response to the Senate report by the BOT also be presented to the community at large in writing.
- c. Tenure. Provost Dallal reported on the work of the President's task force on tenure, which has completed a full draft of a proposal for adopting tenure at AUB. The draft is under discussion by the Board of Deans. Based on their input, the task force will finalize their report. During 2014-15, discussions about the proposal will be conducted in parallel among the members of the faculty and among the trustees. The Provost stressed that it is important for the success of the proposal to be cognizant of concerns about tenure that exist among faculty members and trustees alike. Issues will be discussed until there is agreement. A procedure for implementing tenure will be particularly important to articulate. Responding to questions about why the faculty will not review the proposal before it goes to the BOT, it was stated that the task force had canvassed faculty members for their views as they were preparing the report, and the

task force itself is made up of faculty members. Furthermore, discussions would be conducted in parallel with the trustees and faculty. Some senators reiterated that establishing tenure will be key for strengthening recruitment and retention, academic freedom, and governance.

- d. Data privacy. Senators expressed concern about the treatment of data that was extracted by the Internal Auditor in a past investigation. Assurances were sought that all data had been destroyed. At the time of the investigation, clear policies and procedures did not exist for extracting data, handling it, or informing people involved. New guidelines define a strict authorization process and rules for extracting data and documenting access. The auditor has given assurances that the data has been destroyed, as evidenced in photographs of disks with holes drilled in them. Senators expressed a continued lack of confidence in relation to this issue. The President stated that he will explain to the Chair of the Audit Committee that issue of data privacy remains unresolved: Steps need to be taken to offer evidence and a clear statement to assure faculty members that all data collected has been destroyed completely.
- e. Employee Benefits Committee proposal. Interim COO Diab responded to the proposal submitted in the previous meeting of the Senate. An established EBC committee already includes three faculty members. Housing has been added to the charge of the committee. A committee for HIP exists but has not been active. It should be reactivated with faculty representation added from both AUBMC and Campus. The Interim COO has asked all committees reporting to him to report on their meetings. A senator pointed out that the role of the EBC should be clarified and consolidated in terms of its composition and jurisdiction. A senator said that faculty members should be elected, not appointed. How to do this will be a matter to be discussed in the near future. Suggestions included diversifying the faculty members—beyond the senate—and taking a round robin approach to faculty appointments from one faculty at a time for two year terms. COO Diab said that the EBC will study this issue and come back with a proposal for restructuring the Committee and redefining its role.

3. Proposal to extend maternity leave of Instructors

I. Elhadj presented a proposal to change the current policy towards maternity leave for full-time non-professorial faculty members—specifically, Instructors. After one year of service professorial rank faculty are eligible to take a maternity leave that relieves them of teaching for one full semester, while they are expected to continue with other activities, such as research or thesis advising. Instructors, on the other hand, are eligible to take a paid leave of 49 days. Because Instructors and Lecturers are primarily responsible for teaching classes and it is not feasible to find a teaching substitute for a period of only 49 days, maternity leaves for these ranks become in effect unpaid leaves for the remainder of the semester. Lebanese law has recently changed to allow for 70 days of maternity leave. In the past nine years, only 15 maternity leaves have been requested by Instructors. Based on these statistics, it has been estimated that extending maternity leaves for this population would mean a financial commitment of about \$15,000 per year by the university. Arguments in favor presented extension of the leave as a matter of equity. In discussion, senators considered who should be eligible for this benefit: which ranks and how many years of service to qualify. **Motion:**

Instructors, Lecturers, and Senior lecturers who have been continuously employed by the university for two years shall be eligible to take maternity leave for one semester. Vote 2014-43: The motion was approved unanimously.

4. Work permits for non-Lebanese

Faculty members employing students and non-students as research assistants and other positions have encountered the fact that some non-Lebanese are refused work permits by the Minister of Labor, and thus cannot be paid, even after they have been hired. This has also been the case with pre-approval for the employment of faculty members. According to Lebanese law, requests for work permits for non-Lebanese persons must argue that they are necessary for the positions they are filling (and that the positions cannot be filled by Lebanese citizens). In the perceptions of some senators, restrictions apply in particular to Syrians and Palestinians. Some senators objected to internal rejection of applications within AUB, and argued that the Senate should issue a statement from the university, formally objecting to work permit practices. H. Diab suggested that individual cases would be dealt with most effectively by working calmly with the Minister of Labor. The university is bound to abide with Lebanese law. If a general trend against issuing permits to foreigners is identified, a position statement may be considered at some point.

The meeting adjourned at 4:00 pm.

Minutes recorded by A. Zenger

Addendum to minutes: Circular vote following Senate meeting

The Senate approved the motion to rescind the decision granting Mr. Bilal Bitar a BA degree in Economics so that Mr. Bitar can complete a double major in Political Studies this coming fall semester. As of 9:30am on June 10, 2014, there were 27 votes in favor of the motion out of 38 voting members.