

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Wednesday, April 24, 2019

Present: M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, E. Al-Chaer, T. Bazi, 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, Z. Ghazzal (replacing M. Sayegh), M. Harajli, C. Harb, A. Harutyunyan, S. Harvey, H. Huijjer, S. Isber, K. Kabalan, F. Khuri, R. Mohtar, H. Muller, I. Nuwayhid, G. Saad, S. Sadek, N. Saliba, E. Shammas, R. Sharara, G. Zaatari (by invitation)

Absent: A. Abu-Alfa, I. Baalbaki, H. Diab, E. Hitti*, M. Jurdi, S. Kanj-Sharara*, N. Melhem*, T. Nizameddin, M. Sayegh (replaced by Z. Ghazzal), A. Shihadeh*, F. Talih*

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

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

1) Approval of Senate minutes of March 27, 2019

Minutes approved unanimously

Two senators requested that the following items be added to the senate Agenda under Other Business:

- Dissemination of senate minutes via email
- Upgrading the AUBMC incinerator

Per the request of AUBMC senators, and the approval of the president and the SSC Chair, item 6 on the Agenda (Revision of Sexual Harassment Policy & Non-Discrimination and Anti-Discrimination Harassment Policy) was moved to the May 3rd senate meeting.

2) The case of Ibrahim Murtada

The president raised the following motion, then briefed the senate about the case of Mr. Ibrahim Murtada:

Consistent with precedent and with its role as the academic legislative body of the University, the Senate affirms the administrative decision to deny the graduation of and the awarding of the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD) to Mr. Ibrahim Murtada

In his fourth year in the Medical School, Mr. Murtada was investigated by the University Disciplinary Committee (UDC) for altering his grades and the grades of some of his peers. The UDC reviewed the case and voted to expel Mr. Murtada without granting him the degree of Doctor of Medicine (MD).

Mr. Murtada appealed to the President and admitted to have fraudulently accessed the portal and altered his grades and those of his peers to his advantage. He invoked his difficult situation at home and showed a great deal of remorse. The Executive Leadership Team, after meeting with Mr. Murtada, offered him a first rehabilitation plan pursuant to which Mr. Murtada had to work on research about cheating with Dr. Arawi for a year. The plan clearly indicated that the University might **reconsider** readmitting him.

Mr. Murtada reapplied to the medical school after one year.

After completing his rehabilitation plan, his case was submitted to a second UDC to vote on his readmission and the second UDC voted unanimously to stand by its original decision to expel him without granting him the MD degree.

Mr. Murtada filed a lawsuit before the Fast Track (FT) court (Oumoor Mustaaajala); the FT court ruled in his favor and demanded that AUB awards Mr. Murtada the degree of MD.

AUB appealed the decision of the Fast Track court. The Court of Appeals vacated the FT ruling and referred the matter of awarding of degree to the AUB Senate for decision.

After the briefing by the President, a thorough deliberation ensued and covered the facts and university procedures related to this case. One senator noted that the major irregularity in the case was the second-guessing and the overriding of the UDC decision by the Executive Leadership Team (ELT), when the UDC decision is final and cannot be revisited, according to the bylaws, except by the UDC. The president clarified that the upper administration did not override the UDC decision; they rather gave Mr. Murtada the right to appeal and reapply. A senator added that the UDC was not informed about the one-year grace period given to Mr. Murtada by the ELT. Dean Nuwayhid who was the UDC chair at the time confirmed that the UDC informally knew about the one-year period. He added that, after the one-year period, the president formally sent an email to the UDC to reassess the expulsion decision of Mr. Ibrahim Murtada, but the UDC unanimously voted to abide by its original decision to expel. Dean Harvey who was the chair of UDC when the case was reassessed also confirmed the UDC's knowledge of all the case details including the one-year grace period.

A senator noted that the senate is not supposed to decide on denying the degree of a student without having a recommendation from the concerned faculty. Another senator replied by noting that according to the senate bylaws there is nothing that prevents the senate from taking any academic matter. The senator added that the student was expelled and we cannot second-guess the UDC's decision, and accordingly we need to reaffirm the earlier decision to deny him graduation and degree.

A substitute motion was proposed as follows: *The senate dismisses voting on this matter, because there was a binding decision by the UDC to expel the student and any other decision made afterwards is not valid per the university bylaws.*

Another substitute motion was then introduced and was worded as follows: *The Senate affirms that the UDC decisions and all resulting consequences are final and binding. **Vote 2018-28. The motion passed by a vote of (30, 0, 1).***

3) Proposal to convert the Nursing Administration and Management Track into a Blended Program

Dr. Lina Younan presented the proposal noting that the objective is to convert only the delivery method of courses from classroom into blended format. The curriculum and learning outcomes will not be changed. The courses are planned with at least 60% of face-to-face component and 40% of online instruction, which is inline with the AUB guidelines, Ministry of Education, and the NY State Education Board Requirements. Hence, all faculty who teach in the program are trained on converting their courses to blended. The new blended program will attract more students as confirmed by the market study and the survey.

A senator asked about the way the 40% online material is delivered. Dr. Younan answered that many methods can be used to prepare the online material including converting the regular slides into a story line and making all assignments, questions, and material interactive. She added that as of now, the lectures will be asynchronous but in the future they can be synchronous. Another senator asked about the way practical courses will be offered. Drs. L. Younan, N. Dumit, and H. Huijer indicated that the

program is administrative in nature and not clinical. However and in the case of any clinical component, partnering universities can be utilized. A senator asked whether the program attracts underprivileged students living abroad, and the answer was yes especially in the areas where partnering universities and medical centers exist. In addition, there is a rigorous review process to where students do residency including regular reviews from receptors and close supervision from a faculty supervisor. **Vote 2018-29. Proposal was approved by a vote of (30, 0, 1).**

4) Proposal for a new Graduate Online Diploma in Buildings Energy Systems

Dr. Nesreene Ghaddar presented the Graduate Diploma in Buildings Energy Systems (GDBES) where students have to successfully complete 12 credits of online course work after taking a proctored comprehensive final exam for each course. Students who earn the GDEBS can then apply to the regular resident master programs at MSFEA including but not limited to the Master of Mechanical Engineering in Applied Energy (MMEAE) or the Master of Science in Energy Studies. If admitted as a regular student to the Master's program, up to 12 credits of the online courses can be counted towards the Master's program, and in accordance with AUB academic policies. Six mandatory credits (MECH 673E and MECH 674E) will be required from all registered students and the other six are elective credits to be chosen from a list of existing and newly developed courses. To claim the diploma, students must get at least 70% in the face-to-face comprehensive exam conducted in each course, pass all four courses with at least 70% overall grade, and attain an overall average of at least 80%. All online courses will be designed in coordination with the instructional designers following best practices adopted by AUB's IT Academic Services unit. The cost per credit will tentatively be \$300 and the diplomas is expected to enhance AUB's outreach and cater for the professionals seeking to advance their career without the need to spend two years to complete a Master's degree.

A senator asked about the difference between the online and the onsite courses and how useful can the online course be. Dr. Ghaddar responded that students take the online course like any other course, but the online course has a lot of checkpoints and the face-to-face final exam guarantees that the students took the course themselves. She added that to enroll in the diploma a student does not necessarily need a degree and it is less strict than being admitted to regular academic programs. Another senator asked whether non-engineering students can apply to the diploma and the answer was yes. A senator asked about the overlap with the online green energy program and whether the newly developed courses will be part of the regular MSFEA Mater programs, or just tailored for the diploma. Dr. Ghaddar noted that there is some overlap between the proposed diploma and the green energy program, but each program will evolve differently as time passes. She added that the new courses will be tailored to the diploma but they should be approved by MSFEA to facilitate the transfer of credits. A senator highlighted that the transfer of credits requires the approval of the department the student will be applying to, after finishing the diploma. **Vote 2018-30. Proposal was approved by a vote of (30, 0, 1).**

A senator asked whether AUB is moving towards blended and online learning and whether there exists guidelines to ensure quality. The provost stated that AUB is seriously starting to move into and test online learning. Dean Harvey added that there are accreditation programs for online degrees, and they will be and should be sought to ensure quality.

5) Proposal for a Ph.D. in Business

Dr. Yusuf Sidani presented a proposal for a new Ph.D. program in Business Administration at AUB. The Ph.D. Program aims at providing excellent preparation for solid and innovative research that advances business scholarship and business thinking around core issues and challenges of high relevance to Lebanon, the Middle East, and beyond. Dr. Sidani stated that OSB has an opportunity to be the first university in Lebanon and among the top five in the region to deliver an accredited doctoral program.

In a survey that targeted AUB alumni, OSB graduate alumni, and business and NGO executives, out of 356 respondents, 298 indicated that they could consider joining the Ph.D. program in Business Administration. Add to that, the market and the academic sectors in the MENA region are in high shortage for Ph.D. holders in Business Administration and the Ph.D. enrollment trend in the region is steadily increasing. The proposed program was designed to follow the guidelines of the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB), where the program includes learning experiences that address both, general skill areas and specific business and management skill areas. Dr. Sidani added that 46 OSB faculty members are available to mentor and advise Ph.D. students. The OSB Ph.D. will be in Business Administration, rather than in any one sub-discipline, but students have to choose a specific track out of the three tracks available (Management, Finance, and Business Analytics). For holders of a Master degree, the Ph.D. in Business Administration requires a minimum of 48 credit hours in 6 Ph.D. and Master Level courses (18 credits), 2 methodology courses (6 credits) and a thesis equivalent to 24 credits. For bachelor degree holders, the Ph.D. requires the completion of a minimum of 78 credit hours beyond those required for the bachelor's degree of which a minimum of 36 credit hours must be in graduate level course work and a minimum of 30 credit hours of thesis work. A student can claim the Ph.D. degree once s/he has satisfied the following requirements: attained a minimum cumulative course average of 85, passed the Doctoral Qualifying Exam Parts I and II, met program-specific requirements for publication of thesis work by the time of Graduation, successfully defended a thesis of original scholarly work, and met the residence requirements and all pertinent AUB regulations.

The provost asked about the means of financially supporting the Ph.D. students. Dean Harvey stated that the students would be supported by AUB similar to the way current Ph.D. students are being supported. Add to that the Executive MBA program is a profitable program and its revenues could be used to cover some of the expenses. A senator asked whether a study was made to ensure the employability of the graduates. Dr. Sidani answered that there is a big need for Ph.D. holders in the region especially in academic institutions. In the Middle East alone, there exists one thousand universities, a good number of which are looking for competent Ph.D. holders. A senator asked if OSB could maintain offering a large number of Ph.D. courses. Dr. Sidani noted that not all courses would be offered at the same time. Add to that, students can take courses in other universities as exchange students. A senator asked about the reason for not having the admissions go through departments and about the role of the graduate committee. Dr. Sidani responded that OSB does not have departments, it rather has tracks and the whole school operates as one department. He added that admission decisions still go to the graduate committee. A senator asked about the overlap between the courses offered in the Business Analytics track and courses offered in other departments such as Computer Science. Dr. Sidani stated that no duplication of courses will happen and the Ph.D. students will be allowed to take courses from departments across AUB. **Vote 2018-31. Proposal was approved unanimously (27, 0, 0).**

6) Report of the Committee on the Lives and Careers of Women at AUB

Dr. Lama Moussawi presented the current findings and recommendations of the Committee on the Lives and Careers of Women at AUB. The committee's mandate is to follow-up on the implementation of recommendations proposed by the earlier Task Force, which submitted its report on December 2016; study the lives of women staff, and develop an action plan to improve the lives and careers of women faculty, students and staff in general at AUB. Some of the major findings include:

- Between 2000 and 2016 the size of the fulltime professorial rank faculty more than doubled from 321 to 644; however, men were appointed at a rate of more than 2 to 1 compared to women (220 positions compared to 103).
- A substantial proportion of female faculty members (29%, or 81 of 279) is at the instructor level, compared to 5% (25 of 509) of male faculty at the same level.

- At the senior administrative leadership level (including Faculty/School Deans), women now hold 20% (4 of 20) of positions, compared to 7% (1 of 14) in 2000-2001
- In terms of academic leadership for all faculties/schools combined (Deans, Associate Deans, Assistant Deans, Departmental Chairs, and Division Chiefs for Faculty of Medicine), 5 women hold 22% (19 of 88) of positions, compared to 5% (1 of 20) in 2000-2001.
- In terms of recruitment (between 2000 and 2016), the net faculty increase of men is higher as compared to women in MSFEA, FM, and OSB. The case is the other way around in MSFEA Architecture & Design, FHS, and FAFS. As for FAS, the percentages differ depending on the discipline (humanities vs social sciences vs sciences).
- In the period from 2006 to 2016, female faculty members in the professorial rank showed similar success rates in promotion as compared to male faculty members. However, years in rank are longer.
- Multivariate analysis undertaken for all faculties combined, with the exception of FM, reveal that the annual gender salary gap appears to be closing at AUB since 1999. However, a significant difference remains. In the 1999-2006 period, men earned \$3,882 more than women, while in the 2011-2016 period, men earned \$1,720 more than women annually.
- Health Insurance Plan (HIP) at AUB has undertaken reforms to support all faculty members. However, some policies remain inequitable for women. The HIP policy assumes marriage as a prerequisite for maternity coverage, thereby excluding single mothers from acquiring this benefit.

Some of the important recommendations include:

- Given the low representation of women in leadership positions, the committee recommends that AUB continue to identify and appoint women to leadership roles, and to increase women's presence in decision-making bodies, including the Board of Trustees, the Board of Deans, the Senate and Advisory Committees.
- Given the lower rates of recruitment and hiring of women faculty at the professorial rank compared to men in some Faculties, the committee recommends that greater effort be made to recruit women faculty members, particularly in those Faculties.
- Given the history of gender-based salary discrepancy that continues to the present day despite improvement, the committee recommends that AUB monitor salaries at all ranks on an annual basis, and rectify any unfairness in salary based on gender, starting from the entry point to AUB.
- The committee recommends that AUB clarifies ambiguous policies relating to maternity leave and take steps towards consistent implementation.
- The committee recommends including gender equity assessments in the periodic evaluations of Departments and Faculties.

A senator recommended that salary figures be reevaluated to remove outliers, which makes the statistics more accurate. A senator, which is also a committee member, expressed the committee's dissatisfaction with the Human Resources (HR) department that is delaying the process of collecting data for both faculty and staff. The senator requested from the administration to instruct HR to be more responsive to the committee's requests. A senator noted that in Lebanon the term "underrepresented minority" does not exist and should be defined. Another senator recommended that the study be extended to students and consequently the need for one body at AUB to handle the issue of gender equity. Dr. Moussawi stated that the committee recommends to appoint a senior person to overlook gender equity issues without specifying the title of that person. A senator recommended to get from the Dean's office of every faculty, the number of women faculty applicants vs. men and incorporate the results in the statistics. Dean Harvey recommended that targets should be formulated based on the recommendations and it is the job of every Dean to make sure that the targets are met. Dr. Moussawi and the president encouraged everyone to read the whole report,

which has a lot more details. The senate applauded the work of the committee. The president thanked Dr. Moussawi and all the committee members for the hard work and promised to bring back the topic to the senate for a more elaborate discussion.

7) Renaming the department of chemical engineering

Dr. Salah Sadek presented the request to update the bylaws of the faculty to change the name of the department of Chemical and Petroleum Engineering to Bahaa and Walid Basatni department of Chemical Engineering and Advanced Energy. The faculty approved of the name change which appears only once in the bylaws. A senator asked whether the “advanced energy” term is common in peer institutions and whether it conflicts with existing programs. Dr. Sadek clarified that currently the department does have a Petroleum Studies program and the “advanced energy” term compliments what exists and includes everything related to renewable energy, energy studies, and other related fields. A senator asked whether the curriculum reflects the new name and Dr. Sadek stated that the curriculum is better reflected with the new name and meets the department’s plans. He added that more than two-thirds of the faculty members voted in favor of the name change. The provost opposed the name change indicating that the new name is uncommon and donations should not affect academic matters such as the one being discussed. **Vote 2018-32. The name change was approved by a vote of (18, 4, 2).**

8) Update on tenure related policies

After discussing the Policy and Procedures for Tenure and Promotion Appeals with members from the BoT, the provost updated the senate on two items that have been changed in the policy:

- All the TPAC members will be at the rank of Professor (no associate professors on TPAC). The president added that the board is very clear and convinced that only tenured full professors should rule on the tenure cases of other faculty members.
- The panel that will be reviewing the appeal requests will be composed of three members instead of five, and will be assigned less files to review. The president added that a panel of three is what is common in other universities and what has been the custom in AUB.

The provost noted that on the senate meeting of May 8, 2019 the senate will elect its two representatives on TPAC. Faculties should elect the TPAC members before the end of May 2019, after which the president will appoint the remaining four TPAC members. TPAC members should not be members serving on UPTC.

9) Other business

- **Dissemination of senate minutes via email**

A senator requested that the approved senate minutes be shared with the faculty members via email. The senator added that although the minutes are available on the senate website, this action would enhance communication and trigger faculty engagement. Some senators supported the request, while others stated that faculty members should check the senate minutes, which are already publically available. The president approved of the request and noted that the email should come from the secretary of the senate. A motion was then made as follows:

*The president grants the mandate to the secretary of the senate to communicate the approved minutes to the faculty at large. **Vote 2018-33. Motion passed by a vote off (21, 0, 2)***

- **Upgrading the AUBMC incinerator**

A senator commented on a video that features the AUBMC incinerator producing black fumes contributing to the pollution of the surrounding environment. The senator requested that this

issue be given highest priority and be addressed in timely manner. Dr. Ziyad Ghazzal, Interim Medical Center Director and Chief Medical Officer, briefed the senate about the incinerator issue. He noted that the incinerator is mainly used for treating cytotoxic waste, which can only be disposed through incineration at extremely high temperatures in accordance with international standards. This waste cannot be treated as regular garbage given its hazardous nature. The process of getting a new incinerator started more than a year ago. The space available for the incinerator posed a challenge for the bidding companies. One company was selected to deliver the incinerator, and they are following up with it, but sometimes the communication is taking longer than expected. In the meantime and until the new incinerator gets installed, they installed cameras to monitor the incinerator's emissions and they will make sure not to overload the incinerator. Some senators strongly urged AUBMC administrators to come up with more assuring and quick solutions, and to reassess the space on campus in case it solves the problem. They added that AUB does not want to contribute to any pollution in the area; instead AUB is leading the efforts of combatting pollution and all its sources. The president suggested to bring back this item to the senate as a regular item.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:30 pm.

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