

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Special Meeting of Wednesday, October 26, 2016

Present: M. Abiad, H. Abu Khuzam, M. Al-Ghoul, G. Araj, B. Bashour, A. Chalak, M. Clinton, Z. Dawy (by invitation), H. Diab, A. Dietrich (by invitation), N. El Cheikh, S. El Fakhani, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, N. Hwalla, M. Jurdi, D. Jamali, R. Karami, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (chairing), F. Maalouf, T. Mehmood Ali, S. Mejcher-Atassi, H. Muller, W. Nasr, I. Nuwayhid, S. Sadek, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, R. Sedehi, E. Shammass, A. Shihadeh, C. Tarraf (for T. Nizameddin), F. Ziyadeh (by invitation)

Absent: I. Baalbaki, J. Chaaban*, M. Harb, H. Huijer*, G. Kanazi, S. Kanj-Shararah, M. Salameh*, A. Taher, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting came to order at 2:06 p.m.

The President made an announcement about the Collaborative Research Stimulus (CRS) grants; a total of 48 proposals have been received with 134 faculty members as principle investigators (PIs) or Co-PIs.

The President then reminded the Senate that the sole item on this meeting's agenda was discussion of the Report of the Tenure Design Committee (TDC) and the various input that had been received from meetings held by senators with their constituents across the faculties. A senator asked whether any votes would be taken today and the President said, "No, this will be a non-voting meeting."

The Provost initiated the discussion by asking Zaher Dawy, co-chair of the TDC, to give a presentation focused on the challenges and concerns that had been identified in the various meetings referred to above. (See index 1 for the PPT slides of that presentation.) The nine main areas of concern were these:

- I. Privileges of non tenured faculty members
- II. Voting rights of professorial faculty members
- III. University Tenure and Promotion Committee (UTPC) composition
- IV. Clock extension for associate professors
- V. In-post full professors
- VI. Tenure promotion and criteria
- VII. Transition and implementations timeline
- VIII. Why evolve the workload policy?
- IX. Workload guidelines: Policies and procedures

At the end of the TDC co-chair's presentation, the Provost opened the floor for discussion with a request that senators please try to be constructive in their comments and to remember that the attempt to reinstate tenure is something that is being in the interest of the faculty, and it should by no means be viewed as something that is being imposed by the administration.

One senator raised the concern that the timeline for the transition implementation (slide seven) was too ambitious and it asked the UTPC to do too much work in too little time. The Provost said that the workload in the first years will not be as large as in some years both because only full professors are eligible to apply and only those who are very confident of their chances of securing tenure are likely to apply. The President added that he thought the timeline was realistic, in part because he expects only about twenty-five people to apply in the first year, and that those are people who would be stars at any academic institution.

One senator commented that it was not clear from the current version of the TDC report or from the sixth slide of the presentation we had just seen whether the research that would be assessed for tenure is cumulative or if it would be just what was produced in the applicant's current rank. The TDC co-chair replied that it would be cumulative and that the TDC's report will be updated to make that clearer.

Another senator said that, although this was not mentioned in today's presentation, she was aware of significant concerns among her constituents about shortcomings in the mentorship of junior faculty in the way things are currently being done. This senator asked whether implementing a better mentorship regime will be part of the transition to the tenure system. The President replied that he intends for AUB to develop a culture of mentorship and that, eventually, department and program chairs will be evaluated, in part, on whether faculty in their units achieve promotion and tenure during their terms as chair. He added that he conceives of this as a reward-based program: i.e., it will count as a positive factor in a chair's evaluation if those under him or her achieve promotion and tenure. The President concluded this line of thought with the assertion that the bar for mentorship will rise faster than the bar for tenure.

Referring to the sixth slide again, the Dean of FAS raised the concern that there are potential conflicts of interest in asking in-rank, non-tenured faculty to be involved in developing new criteria for promotion and tenure. The President agreed that this was a concern, but pointed out that we have to rely on our own faculty because although we have access to external standards for promotion criteria at institutions where tenure is in place, there is almost no precedent for the reinstating of tenure at a major research university. A member of the TDC urged that it was appropriate to trust faculty to maintain a sense of quality control, because it is their institution. The Dean of OSB expressed agreement with the concern raised by the Dean of FAS and added that there is likely to be cross-faculty disagreement about what constitutes appropriate criteria. The President said that external consultants can and will be made available to assist the relevant committees with developing the criteria for promotion and tenure.

Another senator related a concern raised by a constituent who, under the old promotion system, was due to go up for promotion from Assistant to Associate Professor in 2017. This senator suggested that current Assistant Professors be allowed to apply for promotion in 2017 under the old criteria. The President replied that the transition to a system of tenure cannot be done as a series of half-measures. There are two choices for how to handle this aspect of the transition: we either raise the bar and give more time for applicants to adjust to the new criteria, or we simply raise the bar without giving more time. A second senator concurred with the suggestion of the first senator. The President said trying to implement that suggestion would disrupt the transition and would very likely lead the BoT to reject the whole proposal to reinstate tenure because it would create the appearance of trying to get tenure without being willing to accept any additional expectations. A third senator made the observation that if we implemented this suggestion for those up for promotion in 2017, then those up for promotion in 2018 will claim the same disadvantage and we'll be at risk of never getting started with the transition. A member of the TDC said that the committee

spent a good deal of time discussing the category of faculty who had been due to apply for promotion in 2017. First, this member of the TDC concurred with the third senator (above) and argued that there would be a risk of a slippery slope because the same argument could be made in each successive year. Second, he pointed out that, in order to avoid the appearance of conflict of interest, members of the TDC had to agree to give up their eligibility to apply for tenure until after their work on the committee is completed. They did not complain about this because they saw it as an acceptable cost of facilitating the transition to the reinstatement of tenure.

A senator from FAS raised a number of issues about the workload policy. First, he said that it is good to allow for flexibility to make it possible for faculty to contribute to the university in the ways that are best suited to their abilities and interests. Second, he thanked the administration and the TDC for changing course on the previously favored plan to introduce an officially designated distinction between a research-oriented track and a teaching-intensive track. Third, and most importantly, he said that this “flexibility” should not be used as a kind of Trojan Horse to continue to have unfair distribution of teaching workload across faculties: in particular, this flexibility should be used to remove, and not to maintain, the currently extant discrimination against faculty in FAS. The Provost questioned the claim of discrimination and noted faculty in FEA all supervise final year projects which means that they also teach more than a 2-2 load. The President said that things work best when deans and departments are empowered to come up with solutions together and that the worst-case scenario is when the Provost and the President just step in and impose a “solution” on the faculties. The co-chair of the TDC said that the committee discussed this a great deal, and that there was a consensus that the fact that FAS is the lone faculty with a 3-2 as the standard is indeed a problem that needs to be addressed; but they considered this to be outside the purview of the TDC.

A senator from FM raised another issue of potential discrimination. Physician-Educators are faculty members who educate, do clinical work, and do research; but they are not eligible for tenure. This senator noted that in her experience at other universities, the perception of inequality was strongest in those situations in which non-tenure track faculty lines were set up for financial reasons *and* those non-tenure track lines existed in one faculty only. This senator said AUB could go a long way toward mitigating the perception of inequality by avoiding that sort of arrangement. Finally, this senator stated that parity of tenured and non-tenured full-time professorial ranked faculty on benefits as well as eligibility to university governance were of paramount importance for FM faculty and their support of the TDC proposal. The President replied that no one is proposing changing benefits for full-time non-tenure track faculty. But he also noted that almost no US universities have tenure as an option for Physician-Educators. He continued by saying that proposals for non-tenure track faculty to be allowed to vote on tenure promotion cases are non-starters but that the administration will work very hard to preserve all other privileges of shared governance. A second senator concurred with the first senator’s comments. A third senator said that the point about equal benefits should be put into writing. Both VP Sayegh and President Khuri affirmed their commitment to parity on benefits but felt that this issue did not belong in the TDC. VP Sayegh suggested adding wording along the following lines to the faculty manual: “full-time tenure track and non-tenure track faculty will get the same benefits.” President Khuri suggested amending the TDC slide to read “non-tenured faculty.....are eligible and expected to continue to participate actively at all levels of university governance and are eligible to retain all current privileges, except for serving on UPTC and voting on tenure decisions.” The interim Dean of FEA asked why Physician-Educators are not eligible to apply for tenure. VP Sayegh responded that tenure decisions are based on research and so, given the breadth of the job description of Physician-Educators, it would be unfair to judge them on such research-centric criteria. The senator from FM who first raised this topic noted that one of the primary purposes of tenure is to provide professional protection and job security for faculty engaged in research that is likely to meet with controversy. This senator gave the example of research focused on end-of-life care. Given the religious context in Lebanon, and the way that this context is

