

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, September 26, 2014

Present: H. Abu Khuzam, M. Al-Ghoul, T. Amin, V. Araman, B. Bashour, F. Chaaban (by invitation), S. Chahine, A. Chalak, M. Clinton, A. Dallal (Chairing), Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, H. Diab, A. Dietrich, I. El Hajj, N. Farajallah, S. Harb, E. Hitti, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbour-Khoury, A. Jaffa (representing VP Sayegh), D. Jamali, H. Huijjer, S. Kanj, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, F. Maalouf, L. Meho (by invitation), J. Meloy (representing Dean McGreevy), H. Muller, W. Nasr, L. Nasreddine, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, E. Shammass, M. Suidan, A. Taher, S. Zeineldine

Absent: P. Dorman*, G. Araj, I. Nuwayhid

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

1) Approval of the minutes of May 28, 2014

It was agreed the minutes would be further elaborated on in relation to the discussion on faculty contract and submitted at the next meeting for approval. A minor correction was made by email prior to the meeting.

2) Welcoming new Senate members

The Provost welcomed new Senate members listed in the attachment.

3) Elections to Senate Steering Committee (SSC) and vacancies on the Faculty Affairs Committee (SCFA)

The following senators were elected to the SSC: M. Ghoul (FAS), S. Zeineldine (FM), A. Kayssi (FEA), L. Nasreddine (FAFS), J. DeJong (FHS), D. Jamali (OSB).

The following senators were elected to the SCFA: S. Kanj (FM), S. Saleh (FHS), V. Araman (OSB). After a vote was held for the Senate-at-Large members but neither candidate (E. Hitti of FM and A. Chalak of FAFS) received more than half of the votes, a first run-off election was held in which both candidates tied. Ali Chalak (FAFS) was elected as Senate-at-Large Member in the second run-off election.

4) Annual Reports of Senate Committees and Boards, 2013-14

F. Chaaban presented the report of the University Admissions Committee. The Board of Graduate Studies was represented by the Provost in the absence of A. Safieddine. A senator noted that the names of the members should be included in its report. The University Disciplinary Committee was represented by J. Meloy. The Library, UPC and URB were represented by the Provost. Several senators stated that the scale used to show the funds for the URB was misleading in that it looked like there had been a substantial increase when there had not been (although both tuition and the number of faculty members had increased). It was noted that more support is needed for research. Dean Hwalla also remarked that it includes only those granted funds, but should also include those who applied. Concerning the report of the UCSA, one senator commended the committee for increasing its functions but noted that these should come to the Senate since they imply a change in its by-laws. The Provost

noted this as an action item and that the committee needs to develop a proposal to be presented to the Senate. The ADC and SSC reports were presented.

I. El-Hajj represented the SCFA. Several questions were raised concerning that report, including the issue of taxation and what had been accomplished on this issue. Discussion ensued about whether there is a maximum proportion of income that can be taxed in a given month. This was noted as an action item for the SCFA to pursue with HR [see addendum]. Another comment was raised concerning the wording on the maternity coverage and it was noted that a problem is that female faculty members' records are in their husbands' names. A senator from FM reported that this had been changed the previous week. Another senator stressed that the fact that a benefit had been passed by the Employee Benefits Committee did not mean it is necessarily in effect; only if an email is sent from HR is it definitely policy. An update was requested on two pending issues – long term disability and faculty contracts. On long-term disability, the previous HR director had sought cost estimates, but there was no feedback and the SCFA did not have time to follow up. This was suggested as an action item for the SCFA. Dean Hwalla made a correction to item 6 of the SCFA report that it should be for full-time members. The former SCFA members provided feedback about the status of the negotiations on the faculty contract. The remaining point of contention is whether all benefits should be listed or whether the contract should refer to a separate document. Currently only a subset of benefits is specified and others are not listed that are in the faculty manual (but that manual is not 'locked' at a certain time). Dean Suidan stated that in his previous university these were listed separately and the document was valid for 3 years. Another senator noted that it is the right of individuals to have their benefits guaranteed for the duration of their contract. The Provost, noting that this is not an agenda item, said the administration had proposed substitute language but it had not been accepted by faculty. A question was raised as to whether the lawyers for the administration provide advice in writing and gave their rationale. The Provost responded that the lawyers always give a rationale but provide advice in a variety of ways. The SCFA members noted that they provide the legal advice they receive to the administration. A senator asked how the SCFA can negotiate if they do not have the rationale of the lawyers. The Provost stated that the Senate did not vote on the contract. With senators pressing for resolving the issue, it was agreed this would be on the next senate agenda.

A senator asked for clarification on the motion at the end of the SCFA report. The Provost mentioned that the PPRC committee has not yet met but will soon.

5) Report on the May 2014 and September 2014 meetings of the Board of Trustees

The Provost reported on these two meetings. A new BoT member (Mr. Fadlo Khuri) representing alumni was appointed. At the May 2014 meeting, the BoT approved promotions, appointments, new programs, the merging of departments at FAFS, new academic titles, revision to the advisory committee at FAS and Faculty by-laws on election processes, and endorsed the academic strategic plan. At its September 2014 meeting there were more informal meetings and several committees met, including the Executive Committee. A town hall meeting was held concerning the presidential search. The Academic Affairs Committee had a long session. The Provost presented the very positive reviewers' report that had been received from the Middle States Commission. He noted that AUB had been accredited in 2009, and submitted 600 pages of material as its mid-term Program Review Report in June 2014 (no site visit is made for this stage). He stated that AUB's academic programs received high praise for which all should be proud. The response of AUB to the Syrian refugee crisis was also singled out for praise. AUB expects the verdict from the Commission by November 2014 at which point the AUB report and the reviewers'

report will be placed on the Accreditation website. The reviewers' report flagged several issues, however, that will require a response by March 2016 showing that AUB is making progress on these. The first concerns the need to develop a budgeting process that connects planning and budgeting; the Provost noted that progress was made in this regard during the summer and that a list of Key Performance Indicators and a monitoring frame were already developed. Also a detailed proposal for a budgeting process was circulated in the summer to the Deans and management, and the President has established a campus budget committee to monitor this year's budget and develop the 2015-16 budget. The second issue relates to tenure. Although the Middle States Commission does not make recommendations on a particular position on tenure, its report argues for resolving the issue with all stakeholders. The Provost suggested that this be an issue for a future Senate meeting. The tenure issue will now be referred back to the faculties for discussion.

The Provost presented the Strategic Plan at the BoT meeting. The process of developing it had started in 2010 in faculties, a first draft was presented to the BoT in fall 2012 and again in March 2013 and a full-day was spent on it at the March 2014 BoT meeting. In May 2014 the BoT endorsed the general strategic plan. The Provost summarized the plan. One senator stated that OSB had not been involved in the process and stakeholders know very little about it. The Provost replied that deans had been involved, but in the case of the OSB there had been turnover of deans. A senator asked about the assessment of the reviewers about the strategic planning process and the Provost responded it was very positive. Questions were raised as to whether it could be changed and whether it is tied to the budget. The Provost noted that there is always room to change it. Several senators noted that it took so long to develop, the details had been forgotten and so much had changed in the region.

Another issue discussed at the BoT meeting was the ranking of AUB in international systems. AUB's QS ranking had improved from 250 to 249 globally. Many regional universities slipped in their rankings. The Provost noted that strategic management requires analysis of strengths and weaknesses and therefore the ranking can be useful in this regard.

Questions were raised about a faculty representative on the presidential search committee, and whether there was any follow up concerning faculty representation on the BoT Academic Affairs committee which had been suggested as a possibility at a meeting between members of the BoT and SCFA/SSC in June 2014. The Provost stated that these two issues were not discussed at the BoT meetings.

6) Potential issues to discuss during the Senate during 2014-15

Several senators suggested that the numerical representation of different faculties on the Senate needs to be revisited. Senators raised the following issues that need to be addressed: a) data privacy (particularly the need for assurance that all data copied has been destroyed); b) faculty contracts; c) a presentation on finances of the university; d) tenure and budgeting (two issues raised by the Middle States report); e) retirement plans; f) long-term disability and g) how faculty are being taxed.

7) Other business

A point was made that the acoustics are poor in the renovated Senate room making it difficult to follow the discussion.

The meeting was adjourned at 4 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate

ADDENDUM

An email from Imad Elhadj was sent to all senate members as a follow-up to the point raised under (4) above.

From: owner-aub-senate@aub.edu.lb **On Behalf Of** Imad Elhadj

Sent: Monday, September 29, 2014 11:46 AM

To: aub-senate@aub.edu.lb

Subject: [aub-senate] Follow up to last senate meeting

Dear Senate members,

During the last senate meeting the outgoing SCFA committee was asked to inquire about the exact tax limit deducted (this is in relation to the months where educational benefits show up on the system). The comptroller would divide taxes deducted over several months so that the monthly tax deduction does not exceed 20% of gross earning. Which means they limit the tax on educational benefits applied in any one month to 20% of your salary after income tax is deducted.

Hope this helps,

Imad H. Elhadj

Associate Professor