

**American University of Beirut**  
**Final Minutes of the University Senate**  
**Meeting of Friday, May 27, 2022**

**Present:** A. Abu-Alfa, H. Abu-Khuzam, F. Afiouni, I. Baalbaki, R-M. Boustany, S. Boujaoude, P. BouKhalil, G. Burris, M. Chayaya (for A. Sibai), L. Choueiri, A. Daou, Z. Dawy, J. Doummar, N. Dumit, L. Farhoud, T. Ghaddar, M. Jaber, S. Kharroubi, M. Khraiche, F. Khuri, N. Melhem, L. Musfi, A. Olabi, H. Puzantian, Y. Shaib, A. Shihadeh, Y. Sidani, R. Sultan, B. Tucker, F. Ziyadeh (for R. Sawaya)

**Regrets:** T. Amin, S. Abdulrahim, H. Jaafar, M. Nasrallah

**Absent:** A. Al-Hroub, R. Chedid, A. Ghauch, S. Guler Altug, N. Hwalla, S. Mallat

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 pm.

**1) Approval of Senate minutes of April 29, 2022**

Motion was made to approve the minutes of the senate meeting of April 29, 2022; this was seconded and the motion passed: **Vote 2021-43: 24 (in favor) – 0 (against) – 1 (abstentions).**

**2) Update on Graduation ceremonies**

President Khuri updated the Senate on the graduation ceremonies that will take place between June 9 and 11, 2022 where 3 commencement exercises will be held. He pointed out the following: the total number of graduating students; 4 honorary doctorate degrees will be granted during the ceremony for graduate degrees on June 9 and an additional honorary doctorate will be granted in the US. The last Senate meeting, during which approval of degrees will take place, will be on June 7 at 11 am via Zoom. The President estimated the number of trustees and trustee emerita who will be attending the graduation ceremonies to be between 15 and 20 in addition to the deans, the registrar and provost.

**3) Update on tuition fees**

President Khuri presented an update on the recent email concerning the students' tuition fees for the coming 2022-23 academic year. He pointed out that any student's family who makes 100k USD or less (or equivalent in Lebanese Pounds) will pay 60% in fresh USD in case they apply for financial aid; otherwise, students will pay 100% in fresh USD. This decision was arrived at after discussions with the financial planning committee and student representatives. Registrar Tucker added that the decision letters on financial aid are being sent out to students today, and as it appears from the raw data most of them will get the aid but not all. A senator asked if the 40% financial aid is

automatically given to students. B. Tucker responded that the student has to apply for financial aid and/or financial grant to be eligible for any tuition aid. President Khuri pointed out that all students who receive this tuition aid have to sign a letter asserting that they are presenting accurate information in their financial aid applications. Provost Dawy added that the 100k USD is only a guiding number that was used internally and not to be shared publicly for various reasons.

#### **4) Update on housing**

Ms. Hala Bikhazi and VP Jaber started by thanking SCFA for their help and discussion of the new housing plan. The main points that were presented are as follows:

- a- New house purchase plan: no change from last year's, where a faculty member will receive the aid in local dollars; discussions of any changes are still underway.
- b- Off campus housing: After discussions with various landlords, they agreed to accept rents in local dollars till end of December 2022 only. Negotiations of changes after this date are still underway. In 2 to 3 years' time, it is planned to move most faculty members from scattered buildings across Beirut to ones owned (or to be owned) by AUB while maintaining some flexibility. AUB is still looking for buildings in the vicinity and it is not final yet.
- c- On campus housing: Currently the payment is 100% in Lebanese Pounds, however, the plan is to have one rate for on and off-campus housing with a certain percentage in USD that won't exceed 40% of the rent for the time being, while this percentage will include the electricity charges.

A senator asked if the electricity bill would be factored in the rent. Ms. Bikhazi responded that this will be negotiated with the landlords. Another senator asked whether AUB is offering on-campus housing for singles, especially for women. It was answered that on-campus apartments for singles are very limited, however, these are offered preferentially to single female faculty members. Another senator expressed some concern with the new plan, while liking some of its aspects. The main concern was on the timeline of the accommodation of the faculty members on the old policy, and whether a faculty member will not have the choice of where to live. VP Jaber answered that the accommodation of the old policy is only for the next 2 to 3 years, and the housing subsidy is optional to a faculty member who will decide whether to benefit from it or not. President Khuri suggested that we will need to wait and see how things go and that AUB will be flexible with faculty members. VP Jaber pointed out that some faculty members have received an extra year for their on- and off-campus housing plan beyond the seventh year when they asked for it, especially if there were empty apartments in these buildings. President Khuri added that it would not be wise now to approach the BoT and ask for more benefits such as increasing housing subsidy years.

#### **5) Approval of amendments to the Faculties Bylaws: Introducing eligibility of voting for instructors and establishment of the Department of Dentofacial Medicine**

**A- Introducing eligibility of voting for instructors:**

Associate Dean of FM, F. Ziyadeh presented the current situation of instructors at FM. Instructors at FM constitute 15% of the FM faculty and are holders of an MD or a PhD, and are eligible for promotion to the professorial ranks. Currently they are not eligible to vote nor serve on standing committees, while in other faculties they are voting members and serve on such committees. The proposed amendments are:

- 1- in **Article II, section 2, item 5** of the Bylaws to change the voting rights by adding “and instructors”
- 2- in **Article II, section 2, item 7** of the Bylaws to amend it to include “and FM”

It was moved to approve the proposed amendments; the motion was seconded. Provost Dawy asked if instructors would vote on new appointments. The answer was yes, they would be voting members for appointments of equal rank similar to any other professorial rank. Both amendments were approved unanimously. **Vote 2021-44: 25 (in favor) – 0 (against) – 0 (abstentions).**

**B- Establishing of the Department of Dentofacial Medicine:**

F. Ziyadeh presented the proposed department of Dentofacial Medicine, which would house 10 faculty members, 20 clinical associates, 2 research fellows and 6 non-academic staff members. The proposed department would be housed in AUBMC in the Phase I building on the 6<sup>th</sup> floor, and 1 million USD pledge has been secured for its establishment. The proposed amendment of the bylaws (**Article IV, Section 1, Item F**) was to add Dentofacial to the present list of departments. It was moved to approve the amendment; the motion was seconded. Two senators thanked F. Ziyadeh for the presentation and testified to the outstanding work of Dr. Ghafary for this proposal. The motion passed unanimously. **Vote 2021-45: 25 (in favor) – 0 (against) – 0 (abstentions).**

**6) Approval of proposal to cancel the project option in MA in Islamic Studies**

S. Hanafi presented a proposal to cancel the project option in the MA in Islamic Studies. A steering committee was created to reconsider the program and create a diploma. Because of the existence of a diploma which is not research focused, a strong masters with research focus should be considered. Research in Islamic Studies is about text and context needing research skills and hence a research thesis. A motion was made to approve to cancel the project option in MA in Islamic Studies; the motion was seconded. Associate Provost Afiouni asked about the context of the current program. It was explained that both programs are available, but all students currently opt for the thesis. A senator asked why the project option created in the first place. It was explained that it was done to adapt to the complexity of Islamic Studies, doing field work. Provost Dawy clarified that during the transitional phase current students will have both options and

the changes will apply to the new students. **Vote 2021-46: 25 (in favor) - 0 (against) - 0 (abstentions)**

### **7) Approval of proposal to add a project track to MA in Anthropology**

K. Scheid proposed to add a project track to the MA in Anthropology. Currently 4 MA students will graduate supported by full tuition waiver and stipend while only 1 had background in anthropology. The theses are very varied and target different stakeholders in the community. The work of MA students is presented in conferences, but they also produce films. There is growing need for projects especially for those who come from non-anthropology backgrounds and would like to opt for a project instead of thesis. It would allow for diversifying output in line with diverse backgrounds of students. The thesis and project-based programs in that 7 courses and thesis would be required for the former and 9 courses and project would be required for the latter; the time it would take and the scope of work would be different. The project option would be for students who are pursuing a life outside academia, juggling with jobs, looking for applied anthropology work, with NGOs for example. This addition should increase admission numbers and attract self-paying students and increase course enrollment. A motion was made to approve adding a project track to MA in Anthropology; the motion was seconded. A senator asked if there would be a change in number of credits. It was explained that the total number of credits would stay the same. Another senator asked about the number of students enrolled and how many choose to continue for a PhD. It was explained that between 1 and 5 students graduate yearly and it was argued that this proposed project-based program is for potential students who do not want to pursue a PhD. A senator asked about the additional courses that would need to be taken. It was explained that the two additional courses would be electives. Another senator asked about the number of credits for the project, and it was explained that the project would be 3 credits. **Vote 2021-47: 25 (in favor) - 0 (against) - 0 (abstentions)**

### **8) Approval of proposal for reforming the Master of Urban Design (MUD) into Master of Landscape and Urban Design**

M. Fawaz explained the background that urban design is now integrated with landscape and environmental aspects, and it would be important to reflect this in the program to strengthen it. The changes are minor as it is strengthening the landscape and environmental dimensions. There are no changes in total credit hours. Current students will have to take a course in ecology and it is expected that the number of students will remain similar and no more space nor budget is needed. A motion was made for reforming the Master of Urban Design (MUD) into a Master of Landscape and Urban Design; the motion was seconded. A senator asked to discuss the demand and number of students enrollment. M. Fawaz directed the senator to the committee working on this issue. **Vote 2021-48: all in favor (in favor) 0 (against) 0 (abstentions)**

### **9) Addition of a project-track to MUD and MUPP (Master of Urban Planning and Policy)**

M. Fawaz provided background about the programs in MUD and Master of Urban Planning and Policy (MUPP). She explained that about half of these programs graduate would go to the private sector and a third would go to the UN and NGOs. She presented a proposal for a project track in which 6 credits would be shifted into additional studio credits for those who want it; while keeping the thesis option. The non-thesis option would be for those who want to work as designers; indeed, some students drop out because of the thesis, while they perform well in the marketplace. This applies to both students specializing in urban planning and urban design. A motion was made to add a project-track to MUD and MUPP; the motion was seconded. A senator supported and acknowledged the quality of the work. **Vote 2021-49: 25 (in favor) - 0 (against) - 0 (abstentions)**

### **10) Approval of proposal to add a project track to the MA in Political studies and MA in Public Administration**

O. Geukjian proposed the project track to the MA in PS/PA and explained that this is a long-standing demand. He explained that they have increased the number of students and attracted students from abroad despite the situation in Lebanon. In terms of market benefit, O. Geukjian explained that many students faced challenges in writing an academic thesis and following other models in the US they modelled a project track for those MA students who are successful but are not interested in research. The total number of credits will stay the same. A motion was made to add the project rack to the MA in Political Science studies and MA in Public Administration; the motion seconded. A senator requested clarification about the quality of the graduates who would go into the project option. O. Geukjian clarified that they are of equal quality. Another senator requested clarification about offering GAs in the non-thesis track. It was clarified that since all students take research methods it would still be relevant for the project track and hence could get a GAship. **Vote 2021-50: 25 (in favor) - 0 (against) - 0 (abstentions)**

### **11) Other business**

Acting Dean of FM recommended two students for graduation. A motion was made to grant the students their degrees; the motion was seconded. **Vote 2021-51: 25 (in favor) - 0 (against) - 0 (abstentions)**

A senator asked if the Board Designated Professorships and the Heroes application are mutually exclusive. President Khuri explained that a faculty member can apply to both but would only be awarded support from one source of funding.

Dean Shihadeh presented a case for the current state of the graduate studies and the difference between thesis and non-thesis. President Khuri explained the importance of

being regionally oriented and responding to the needs. Associate provost Afiouni explained the importance of being career oriented and helping student excel at their jobs.

Meeting ended at 16:30

Minutes taken by A. Daou and T. Ghaddar