

**American University of Beirut**  
**Minutes of the University Senate**  
**Meeting of Friday, March 28, 2014**

**Present:** M. Abboud (on invitation), A. Al-Hroub, A. Al-Kutoubi, T. Amin, I. Baalbaki (representing R. Brow), J. Chaaban, S. Chahine, N. Dajani, A. Dallal, H. Diab, Z. Dawy, G. DeBin, J. DeJong, P. Dorman (chairing), I. Elhajj, N. Farajalla, J. Ghafari, S. Hout, H. Huijer, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbour-Khoury, D. Jamali, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, H. Khoury, G. Matar, P. McGreevy, L. Nasreddine, S. Nouredine, I. Nuwayhid, A. Safieddine (on invitation), M. Salameh, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, M. Sayegh, E. Shammas, M. Suidan, R. Talhouk (on invitation), C. Tarraf (representing T. Nizameddin).

**Absent:** S. Arnaout\*, E. Baydoun\*, R. Brow, P. May, T. Nizameddin\*, J. Usta, D. Wrisley\*, S. Zeineldine\*, A. Zenger\* (\*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

**Observer** (on request): M. Saab (Nursing)

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm.

**1. Approval of minutes**

Minutes of the meeting of February 28, 2014 were approved unanimously.

**2. Observing a minute of silence to honor former colleague. Dr. Moustapha Ghandour**

M. Abboud read a memorial for Dr. Moustapha Ghandour, professor in the Department of Pediatrics, Faculty of Medicine, and a moment of silence was observed.

**3. Report on the March Board of Trustee Meeting**

The President reported on the two-day meeting, noting that the first day was devoted to campaign priorities and the Provost presented the academic plan. The campaign is now in the silent phase, and the BoT will decide when to announce it. The first day also consisted of discussion on increasing the profile of AUB in North America and in the region, especially in the Gulf; AREC; and shared governance in academic institutions. During the second day the BoT addressed data privacy, the faculty contract issue, the university budget, tuition and institutional sustainability. The capital budget was presented and passed, and an ad hoc committee of the BoT on IT was formed. As a follow-up, Trustees Farouk Jabre and Abdel Salam Haykal will be meeting with small groups of faculty and Senate members to understand their concerns. Several senators raised concern about the way in which AREC is perceived by the administration, and stressed that it is a separate campus for teaching purposes. D. Hwalla clarified that there was discussion on how to engage international organizations more in AREC. Another senator posed the question as to the response of the BoT to specific recommendations presented on behalf of the Senate on shared governance. The President responded that there will be a specific response after the May meeting of the BoT. H. Diab emphasized that he plans, as interim COO, to involve faculty to help him make better decisions. In response to questions about rumors that had circulated, the Provost said he will continue to serve as provost; in response to further questions on whether this is a temporary extension, the President stated that he had offered the Provost a regular continuation of his contract for a second

term. Another senator asked about tenure, and the Provost replied that it was not specifically on the agenda, but it is currently being discussed by the Board of Deans, and will be a key item for discussion on all levels beginning next fall.

#### **4. Proposal on rolling admission from the Board of Graduate Studies**

A. Safieddine (BGS) presented the BGS proposal to create a third window, extended to August 4, for PhD program applicants noting that the proposal had originated in FEA out of concern about losing good candidates. This would allow for applications to be considered 11 months in the year. R. Talhouk (Graduate Council) clarified that the first window would be for early admissions (the date of which is synchronized with universities abroad), the second for regular admissions and the last would be the deadline. Deadlines will be made clear to students and that applications after these dates would be treated as lower priority. Several senators commented that there is no need for deadlines for doctoral applicants. T. Amin noted that in FAS, because PhD windows are linked to those of the master's, departments end up delaying admissions. M. Suidan noted that the FEA proposal was different from that presented, and that there is a need for rolling admissions not to lose the few good candidates who apply. The Provost stated that many universities do have deadlines, and that the proposed policy leaves the door open for other students to apply subject to availability of spaces. Several senators noted that there is no need for competition between students because doctoral students tend to work with a specific professor on a specific topic. M. Sayegh proposed a motion (that was seconded) **to adopt a third window of admission for PhD program applicants but giving faculties leeway to have rolling applications and admissions as needed.** Vote 2014-37: **The motion passed with 26 in favor, none opposed and 4 abstentions.**

#### **5. Mechanism to follow up on approved Senate motions**

J. Ghafari proposed having a fixed item on the Senate agenda called the "Chair's report" which would be an update on the follow-up on implementation from motions passed in the Senate. The sense of the meeting was in favor of this proposal. President Dorman noted that J. Muller keeps a running list of motions, and that he had recently reviewed all motions for the last 3 years in the Senate and all had been followed up on. One senator noted that the follow-up is not always clear, since some motions require BoT approval and that these are recommendations to the President. One senator reported that it had come to the attention of the Senate Steering Committee (SSC) that a motion passed in the Senate in March 2009 concerning changing the wording of maternity coverage so that it no longer required that both partners have HIP coverage (only the woman) was never implemented. **The President agreed to pursue this with Human Resources.**

One senator raised a concern about an email the President sent that mentioned the no-confidence vote in the Senate on February 28, 2014 and asked why it was stated that the motion tarnished the reputation of AUB. The concern was echoed by several other senators and it was emphasized that going ahead with the single-source CISCO order – which was very close to being approved - would have been very serious for AUB. One senator stated that it would have been better to send the email to the Senate members, not the AUB community. President Dorman stated that while faculty senates have been known to make non-confidence motions, he was concerned that there had been little time for discussion. VP Sayegh stated that his regret was that the no-confidence motion was reported in the media the next day. He stated that it was important to be clear that no money was spent and no contract for the IT work was ever issued. It was noted that the contract was not signed

after concerns of both faculty and IT were presented. COO DeBin stated that while the discussion on doctoral admissions at the current Senate meeting had taken 42 minutes, the no-confidence motion discussion took only 4.5 minutes, and that due process requires presenting all the relevant facts. One senator commented that the case illustrates that there is a need for institutional implementation frameworks for shared governance at the university. The President stated that while the BoT has fiduciary responsibility, he is committed to opening opportunities to faculty as much as possible.

## **6. Long-term disability coverage**

A. Kayssi read a Senate motion from the January 4, 2008 meeting recommending revising the benefits package to include short-term disability, long-term disability and life-insurance, but noted that long-term disability coverage had never been implemented. VP Sayegh noted that long-term disability is typically expensive and usually is subsidized. **The President stated that a further vote was not required but that he would pursue the matter with HR and report to the next Senate meeting.**

## **7. Follow up budget discussion in the Senate, including:**

### **a) Forming a Senate Budget Committee**

J. Ghafari thanked COO DeBin for suggesting this idea initially, and presented the attachment recommending the formation of such a committee and giving its potential terms of reference. The President noted that this would require a change in by-laws and therefore 2/3 approval in the Senate and approval by the BoT. He asked how the committee would interact with Deans and the Provost who are ultimately responsible for academic budgets. Senators raised questions as to whether an additional committee should be created or one should recommend faculty representation on the existing budget committee. **A motion was made to defer the discussion to a future meeting and to give time to the SSC to develop it further. The sense of the meeting was in favor of deferral.**

### **b) Report of the special commission on tuition fees**

S. Chahine (as chair of this commission) reported on its work. He thanked D. Wickens and Z. Ghazzal for their cooperation and assistance. He noted that by mandate this exercise excluded the AUBMC but that VP Sayegh had offered access to AUBMC figures. The commission identified measures that could cut \$5.5 million dollars from the budget for the AUB campus and an additional \$1.5 million from AUBMC. These are related to phasing non-academic positions, reducing executive positions and related expenses, allowing faculty to apply for administrative openings, eliminating business class travel except in special cases, discontinuing external IT contracts that could be done internally, delaying equipment purchases, freezing external consultants and reviewing bidding processes. President Dorman thanked the commission for its work and noted that it recommended reorganizing the Allocations Committee and re-activating the cost containment committee. In response to a question whether the report would be released, President Dorman noted that some parts are confidential but an executive summary could be shared. The administration is taking all the recommendations seriously.

## **10. Electing a Senate representative to the BoT meeting (sequence changed)**

Four senators were nominated but three of them withdrew and therefore Ayman Kayssi was selected to represent the Senate to the Board of Trustees.

Items 7, 8 and 9 on the agenda were not addressed due to lack of time.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate