

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, November 29, 2013**

Present: M. Alameddine, A. Al-Kutoubi, I. Bashour, J. Chaaban, N. Dajani, A. Dallal, Z. Dawy, G. DeBin, J. DeJong, A. Dietrich, P. Dorman (chairing), I. Elhajj, N. Farajalla, J. Ghafari, S. Harb, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbour-Khoury, A. Jaffa (representing M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, H. Khoury, G. Matar, P. May, P. McGreevy, S. Nouredine, I. Nuwayhid, M. Salameh, E. Shammass, M. Suidan, C. Tarraf (representing T. Nizameddin), J. Usta, S. Zeineldine, A. Zenger

Absent: T. Amin, S. Arnaut, E. Baydoun, R. Brow, S. Chahine*, P. May, T. Nizameddin*, M. Sayegh,* I. Saoud*
(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm.

1. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the October 25, 2013 meeting were approved without any amendments.

2. Report on the November 2013 meeting of the Board of Trustees

President Dorman reported on the BoT meeting noting that three new trustees had been elected for a three year term: Nabil Habayeb, Philippe Jabre, and Maher Mikati. Mr. Alex Ercklentz is now in charge of the Development Committee and Mr. Talal Shair was appointed head of the Campaign Steering Committee. The Academic Affairs Committee members discussed and were pleased with the draft tenure report and commended the effort involved, but raised a number of questions. One related to how the report's recommendations are aligned with US law and the expectations of the accrediting body. The report will be discussed at the Board of Deans and information will be provided to the BoT in response to the queries. President Dorman noted that it was important for all faculty members to understand the issues at stake in relation to tenure. Both the President and Provost stated that the topic needs broad discussion within the university. In response to a query from a senator, the President explained the role of the tenure task force to consider the strategic purpose of tenure at AUB and the different ways it can be implemented.

3. Proposed university calendar

M. Salameh presented the university calendar for 2014-5. A concern was raised concerning the gap of 2.5 weeks between the end of exams and commencement and whether this could be shortened. There was some discussion including concerning whether making commencement earlier would fit with the calendar of the Faculty of Medicine. A concern was also expressed to have the final exams begin two days after Eid al Fitr in the interests of faculty and students. N. Dajani made a **motion: to move Commencement to May 29th** that was seconded. After discussion, a **substitute motion** was made and seconded: **to postpone resolution of this issue to the second meeting.**

Vote 2014-09: Substitute motion approved (unanimous)

4. Recommendations to the BOT from the Senate

D. Jamali presented the revised document noting that the SSC/SCFA combined committee had exerted a great deal of effort and had followed due process through the appropriate channels. After a joint meeting of the two committees following the last Senate meeting, it was decided to revise and circulate the document to the respective faculties and they had received positive feedback. She proposed a **motion** that was seconded: **to vote on the document in the Senate and to ask the President to forward the document to the Board of Trustees.**

Vote 2014-10: Motion approved

President Dorman noted that he would forward it to the BoT and attach his own comments.

5. Update on faculty contract revisions

COO DeBin reported that he had met with the SCFA and that the administration will forward the revised contract to the SCFA after it has been reviewed by legal counsel. The draft should be available by the following week. The President noted that the SCFA should review it and it can then be circulated for discussion in the Senate.

6. Update on travel policy revision

President Dorman reported that the policy had been discussed at the Board of Deans. COO DeBin pointed out that there were differences in the nature of travel. In response to a question about whether per diems would be revised, COO DeBin noted that AUB uses USAID rates which are published in January. A question was asked whether receipts for amounts at \$10 and above would still be requested. COO DeBin replied that having looked at other universities' policies, this recommendation would remain. One senator noted that grant policies are typically less stringent concerning the submission of receipts; he noted the importance of how faculty will perceive this regulation. President Dorman stated that it is a matter of accountability but at the same time collecting receipts poses an administrative burden. After some discussion, and questions concerning the source of the \$10 figure, he agreed to revert to the previous travel policy until the December Senate meeting when the revised travel policy would be presented.

7. Revised thesis release form, from the library committee

G. Matar presented on behalf of the University Library Committee the new thesis release form noting that it had been developed after extensive discussion and benchmarking with other universities. He stressed the importance of having all relevant documents ready at the thesis defense. It was clarified that hard copies will be available in the library in any case, but the library will not disseminate them in the case the second option on the form is taken. G. Matar made a **motion: to accept the revised thesis release form.**

Vote 2014-11: Motion approved

8. Policy on transfer of credits, from the Academic Development Committee

Z. Dawy presented this policy on behalf of the Academic Development Committee. He described the policy and noted that approval will be by the undergraduate committee of the concerned faculty; faculties need to keep the Registrar updated about changes to courses that their students are taking elsewhere. The only new item is the third whereby the Registrar's office will keep track of such transfers to relieve the burden on undergraduate committees. Some discussion followed on the issue of what grades students needed to obtain at the outside university, and discrepancies were noted across faculties. Z. Dawy stated that according to the policy, faculties can define what is equivalent to AUB's grade of 70. The Provost noted that scrutiny of the proposed course should be made before the student is sent on a pre-approved course, not when they return; he also reported that his office will be doing a study on grading at AUB that will be brought to the Senate. **Motion: to approve the revised policy.**

Vote 2014-12: Motion approved.

9. Plans to address issues of student plagiarism and cheating

P. McGreevy reported on discussions within the University Disciplinary Committee and subsequent discussions of a smaller group concerning plagiarism. He noted that the university's approach of escalating punishment for plagiarism does not seem to be effective and that there is a need to re-frame the issue and to separate deliberate deception on the one hand from not having the skills to cite and to use sources effectively on the other. This needs to be in the context of a greater focus on writing and obtaining information in more of an educational, rather than punitive, approach. The group addressing this issue aims to work on better defining terms, identifying some of the structural determinants of plagiarism and to develop an approach sensitive to context (including among others the Lebanese educational system) and to the digital age. A public forum is needed to discuss these issues. In discussion that followed the merits of a punitive vs. educational approach were aired, as was the need to find innovative modes of pedagogy and evaluation that test whether knowledge is internalized. Several senators voiced appreciation of this effort. President Dorman asked Dean McGreevy to define the next steps and involve other faculties.

10. Teaching assessment at AUB

President Dorman invited senators to think creatively about different ways of assessing teaching quality fairly without relying solely on ICEs. It will be brought back to the Senate as an agenda item.

11. Other business

a) Senate office space and administrative support

One senator noted that at many universities the Senate has space for people to meet and for Senate-related research to be conducted. President Dorman responded that given space constraints and that Senate use would be part-time, academic purposes should be given priority. He noted that many offices are at the disposal of the Senate, including HR and IT.

b) Proposal to allow observers at Senate meetings

J. DeJong as Secretary reported she had received a request from a faculty member to allow observers to attend the Senate upon request on a limited basis and on a 'first to notify, first to attend' basis. The SSC members had considered it positively but decided it needed Senate discussion. President Dorman stated that two observers (limited to faculty members) could be allowed each time and that this required no change in the by-laws. The general sense of the meeting was positive and that this should be allowed.

A question was raised as to whether the draft privacy policy would be brought back to the Senate and whether it could be circulated to all faculty members. It was agreed it would be on the next Senate agenda. A question was raised about the report of the Faculty Working Group on Data privacy and President Dorman noted that he would be meeting with them with final suggested revisions.

A concern was expressed by one senator that students are being required to vacate the dorms during the January period. The Provost reported that the university will try to find a way to accommodate those who cannot leave during this period.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate