

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, September 29, 2017

Present: M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, F. Abu Salem, E. Al-Chaer, Y. Asfour (by invitation), I. Baalbaki, M. Bariche, B. Bashour, J. Chaaban, A. Chalak, A. Chehab, Z. Dawy (by invitation), L. Daouk-Oyry, N. Dumit, N. El-Cheikh, S. El Fakhani, I. Elhadj (by invitation), W. El-Hajj, D. Gubara, M. Harajli, C. Harb, A. Harutyunyan, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, H. Huijer, I. Jamali (by invitation), M. Jurdi, G. Kanazi, S. Kanj-Shararah, R. Karami, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (chairing), P. McGreevy, N. Melhem, H. Muller, W. Nasr, I. Nuwayhid, A. Olabi, S. Sadek, M. Sayegh, K. Shaaban (by invitation), E. Shammas, A. Shihadeh, C. Tarraf (for T. Nizameddin), T. Tell (by invitation)

Absent: A. Abu-Alfa*, H. Diab, R. Sharara-Chami*, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting came to order at 2:05 p.m.

1) Approval of the minutes of May 31, 2017

The minutes were approved as circulated.

2) Welcoming new Senate members

The President welcomed fourteen new Senators: Professor Elie Al-Chaer, Professor Ali Abu-Alfa, Associate Professor Fatima Abu Salem, Professor Ali Chehab, Assistant Professor Lina Daouk-Oyry, Associate Professor Nuhad Dumit, Associate Professor Wassim El Hajj, Assistant Professor Dahlia Gubara, Associate Professor Anzhela Harutyunyan, Professor Patrick McGreevy, Associate Professor Nada Melhem, Associate Professor Rana Sharara-Chami, and well as Acting Dean Ammar Olabi and Interim Registrar Hala Abou Araj.

3) Annual reports of Senate committees and boards

Following a new procedure introduced to make the meeting more efficient, the written reports of the Senate committees and boards were distributed to all Senators for their review prior to the meeting and the chairs were invited to attend this meeting to answer any questions Senators might have. Those committees and boards are: Senate Admissions Committee, Board of Graduate Studies, University Disciplinary Committee, Library Committee, University Publications Committee, University Research Board, University Committee on Student Affairs, Academic Development Committee, Senate Steering Committee, and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs. The Library Committee did not submit a report because that committee did not meet during the 2016-2017 academic year. Senators had no questions for the chairs, but two of the chairs had points they wanted to raise. The chair of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA) asked the administration for updates on two actions recommended by SCFA last year: a request for clarification on which medical procedures and equipment are covered by HIP and which are not, and a recommendation to hire a consultant to look into various options for the disbursement of retirement funds for faculty members in Plan B. The President said he and other relevant administrators will be meeting very soon with officials from HIP to discuss this very matter, and the Provost announced that an actuary firm has been hired to look into the possibility of disbursing Plan B retirement funds as an annuity over time instead of the current method of a single lump-sum payment. The outgoing chair of the Senate Steering

Committee (SSC) made a recommendation to all new Senators. He encouraged them to take the time to read the SSC annual report carefully, as this is a good way to familiarize oneself with the workings of the Senate.

4) Voting of degrees for summer 2017 graduates

Interim Registrar H. Abou Araj presented the list of degree candidates and statistics on their distribution (circulated list of expected graduates of summer 2017). Dean El Cheikh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAS. Vote 2018-01. The motion was approved unanimously.** EVP Sayegh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Medicine (FM). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FM. Vote 2018-02. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Shihadeh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (SFEA). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in SFEA. Vote 2018-03. The motion was approved unanimously.** Acting Dean Olabi recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAFS. Vote 2018-04. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Nuwayhid happily announced that henceforth students who complete BS degrees in Medical Audiology and Medical Imaging Sciences will have their diplomas signed by both the Dean of the Faculty of Health Science (FHS) and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine (FM). There is one student in that category in the current list of expected graduates. Dean Nuwayhid recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in FHS (including the one student just mentioned). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FHS. Vote 2018-05. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Harvey recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Olayan School of Business (OSB). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in OSB. Vote 2018-06. The motion was approved unanimously.**

5) Report on the BoT meetings of June and September 2017

The President began his report by noting the difference between the formats of these two meetings. While the events held May 31st through June 2nd constitute a meeting of the full Board of Trustees (BoT), the gatherings of September 4th and 5th consist of meetings of some of the BoT's committees. In the full BoT meeting, the board voted to award the University Medal posthumously to Trustee Maroun Semaan. The board also voted to approve the PhD program in Chemistry. In the Academic Affairs Committee, the board voted to approve all of the promotions recommend to them by the relevant bodies at AUB, approved two new appointments at the level of Associate Professor and two at the level of Professor, and approved the appointment of Dr. Huda Zurayk as Professor Emerita in FHS. The President told the Senate about several forward-looking decisions made by the board's Finance Committee. The board voted to authorize management to execute a non-binding Letter of Intent with the Arab States Research and Education Network (ASREN) in order to conduct due diligence and consider whether to join ASREN. During the events held on September 4th and 5th, trustees met with constituents in several informal settings such as lunch with faculty in the faculty lounge, breakfast with staff in the IFI reading room, lunch with students in the faculty lounge, and dinner with Senators and administrators at the Provost's residence. There were a host of committee meetings including one on focused risk management at AUBMC.

6) Update on pending items from 2016-2017

The Provost began his update by stating that his office formed three ad-hoc committees at the request of the Senate. The Electronic Voting Committee, chaired by Dr. Ghazi Zaatari and Dr. Rima Habib, has finalized its report and it will be brought to the Senate for discussion in its October meeting. The Grievance Committee (GC), chaired by Dr. Nuhad Dumit and Dr. Syrine Hout, finalized its report in August. However, it was decided to discuss the committee's recommendations with the Tenure Design Committee (TDC) to make sure the recommendations of the GC are consistent with the grievance procedures outlined in the TDC report. Once that process is complete, the report of the GC will be brought to the Senate for discussion and approval. The Teaching Effectiveness Committee, chaired by Dr. Saouma Boujaoude, has prepared a draft report and is expected to submit a finalized version in December of this year, at which point it will be brought to the Senate for discussion and approval.

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

The SSC has six elected members, one from each of AUB's six faculties. These six members serve one-year terms, so elections need to be held annually. The other two voting members of the SSC are the Secretary of the Senate and an at-large member, traditionally appointed by the President. The Provost serves on the SSC as an ex-officio member. The results of the elections are these: Professor Charles Harb will represent FAS, Professor Kanj-Sharara will represent FM, Professor Salah Sadek will represent SFEA, Associate Professor Mohamad Abiad will represent FAFS, Associate Professor Nada Melhem will represent FHS, and Assistant Professor Lina Daouk-Oyry will represent OSB. The President appointed Associate Professor Nuhad Dumit of HSON as the at-large member of the SSC. The SCFA also has one elected member from each of AUB's six faculties, but members of SCFA serve three-year terms. The two positions that were open this time around are those representing FM and OSB. The at-large position was open as well. The results of the elections are these: Professor Elie Al-Chaer will represent FM and Professor Said El Fakhani will represent OSB. The President asked for nominations from the floor to fill the at-large position after which Associate Professor Jad Chaaban was elected by acclamation.

8) Election of two faculty representatives to the Policies and Procedures Review Committee (PPRC)

Although the Senate is the body that votes to send faculty representatives to the PPRC, the representatives need not be Senators themselves. Associate Professor Houssam El Rassy (FAS, Chemistry) and Professor Elie Al-Chaer (FM, Physiology) were elected to represent the faculty.

9) Discussion and voting on university-wide IT policies

The Chief Information Officer (CIO), Dr. Yousif Asfour, presented the current draft of the statement of these policies. This is an item that is coming back to the Senate after having been discussed in the meeting of 31 May 2017. The CIO made revisions to the policy document in light of comments and concerns raised by Senators in May. Even with those changes some Senators again expressed reservations, with the section on IT replacement being of particular focus in the discussion. One question was whether AUB's policy on the timing of replacing desktop and laptop computers was applicable when a grant specifically allocated money for the purchase of a computer. The CIO agreed that in such cases, an email notifying his office of this arrangement with the granting agency would suffice for letting such a purchase go through the I-Procurement process. **A motion was made to approve the revised document on university-wide IT policies. Vote 2018-07. The motion passed by a vote of 33-0-1.**

10) Discussion and voting on curricular changes to the program in Public Policy and International Affairs (PPIA)

Dr. Tariq Tell gave a presentation on the proposed curricular changes to the PPIA program, the most substantial of which is a reduction from 42 to 30 required credit hours. There was a consensus that this change is appropriate as it brings the PPIA program more in line with other Masters programs in the social sciences and the university more generally, but in the course of the discussion a question arose about what mechanism exists to ensure that proposed curricular changes are in line with the rules and policies enforced by both the Lebanese Ministry of Education and Higher Education and the Middle States Commission on Higher Education. The answer is that, for graduate programs, the level at which this is verified is the Board of Graduate Studies and it is for this purpose that the Registrar attends the meetings of that board. **A motion was made to approve the proposed curricular changes to the PPIA program. Vote 2018-08. The motion was approved by a vote of 31-0-3.**

11) Potential issues to discuss during 2017-2018

After noting the importance of the work being done by committees set up to work on faculty-wide tenure criteria, a Senator requested that those committees be asked to report to the Senate. Another Senator reiterated two issues that arose during 2016-2017, but that have not yet been addressed: considering the Senate's role in assessing the viability of the increasing number of Masters programs at AUB and reviewing the current policies on appointing and/or hiring department chairs. The Senator noted that FM does external searches for department chairs, while in most other faculties the custom is to make internal appointments. At the close of this discussion, Senators were encouraged to canvass their constituents for further potential items for Senate consideration and to bring such suggestions to their representatives in the Senate Steering Committee, since that is the body that sets the agenda for each Senate meeting.

12) Other business

A Senator raised the question of whether or not the Faculty of Medicine's (FM) practice of conducting votes for positions on the Senate by email was in accord with the relevant by-laws and he asked, in particular, whether or not the requirement that Senators be elected by at least 51% of the vote is followed in such cases. FM EVP Sayegh said that, yes, the simple majority rule was followed and he expressed surprise that this issue was coming up in the Senate again since FM did not change their by-laws, they just changed the voting procedure. Another Senator asked the Provost about the task force on e-voting that the Senate requested in its 27 January 2017 meeting when the issue was raised of FM using email-based votes when considering proposed changes to their by-laws. The Provost replied that, as he said earlier in this meeting (see item #6), that ad-hoc committee has completed its report and he wanted to bring it to this meeting, but the agenda was already too long. This was confirmed by various members of the Senate Steering Committee.

Another Senator asked for an update on the status of the student newspaper Outlook, in light of the fact that they did not publish last week. There was a significant amount of discussion of this matter. The President said he genuinely does not know why they did not publish, as the administration did not tell them not to publish and, in fact, met with them to discuss their concerns and encouraged them to publish. In the course of the lengthy discussion it emerged that, unlike other student associations at AUB, Outlook does not have a faculty advisor and that, on a related note, Lebanese law requires that AUB maintain an entity called a "responsible official" who is charged with making sure Outlook does not violate the law. The President explained that Outlook's license to publish explicitly states that they are not allowed to publish "as a political entity." A Senator asked for an example of how that restriction might function in practice. The President referred to a detailed historical example, the upshot of which was that Outlook can quote someone calling for a particular political or legal action, but the paper cannot explicitly endorse such an action. The Senate reached

a consensus that a return to the previous policy of having a faculty advisor to assist, and advocate for, the Outlook staff is the appropriate next step.

A Senator raised the issue of the recent cessation of cash stipends to Graduate Assistants (GA); i.e. the part of their compensation that went beyond the tuition remission they receive. She asked three questions: Who made the decision? Was it discussed in the Senate? In light of all the recent talk about AUB moving to a research-centered model, was the impact of this grant reduction on research taken into consideration? The Provost stated that the decision was made at the level of his office and that it was discussed at the level of the Board of Deans, but that it was not explicitly discussed in the Senate. He went on to say that the issue was raised in the Senate in the following way: the Senate meeting of 21 April 2017 was devoted exclusively to a presentation by the administration on the budget and in that presentation it was made clear that the Office of the Provost was being tasked with finding significant savings by increasing efficiency and eliminating inefficiencies in the academic budget. The Provost said the elimination of these stipends was a good idea because each stipend is so small that it hardly adds anything to the purchasing power of any individual student, but when you add them all up you can save \$600,000 in the university's budget. Several Senators question the assertion that the impact on individual student's budgets is negligible and gave anecdotal evidence of graduate students not being able to pay for service taxis to campus to come to class. Senators also noted that foreign graduate students almost always have visas that make it illegal for them to work for anybody but AUB. The chair of the Board of Graduate Studies (BGS), Dr. Zaher Dawy, said that the BGS is aware of the reaction of the students and is looking for ways to help the particularly acute cases, such as foreign graduate students. Dr. Dawy also noted that the BGS is engaged in an ongoing attempt to assess which sections of the university are giving substantial workloads to their GA students and is considering ways to compensate such students appropriately. The discussion ended with a Senator suggesting that this sounded like a proposal to move to a system where we will have two classes of GA.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 pm.

(Minutes recorded by H. Muller, Secretary of the Senate)