

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, January 30, 2015

Present: H. Abu Khuzam, T. Amin, G. Araj , V. Araman, R. Brow (for item 6), J. Chaaban, S. Chahine, M. Clinton, A. Dallal, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, A. Dietrich, P. Dorman (chairing), I. El Hajj, C. Harb, S. Harb, E. Hitti, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, A. Jaffa (representing M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, S. Kanj, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, F. Maalouf, P. McGreevy, L. Meho (on invitation), W. Nasr, L. Nasreddine, T. Nizameddin, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, E. Shammas, Y . Sidani (on invitation)

Absent: A. Chalak, M. Al-Ghoul, H. Diab, N. Farajalla*, H. Huijer*, H. Muller*, S. Jabbour-Khoury*, I. Nuwayhid*, M. Suidan, A. Taher, S. Zeineldine*

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

1) Approval of the minutes of December 19, 2014 The minutes of December 19 were approved with amendments.

2) Observing a moment of silence to honor former colleagues

A. Jaffa read a statement concerning Dr. Ibrahim Dagher, Professor Emeritus of Surgery and Senate members observed a moment of silence to honor him. Y. Sidani of OSB read a statement about Dr. Jon Thornberry, Lecturer, Olayan School of Business and Senate members observed a moment of silence.

3) Chair's report

President Dorman reported that concerning the a) faculty contract, AUB had received legal advice from the Lebanese lawyers but not yet from the American lawyers. Once both are received, he would be in touch with the SCFA about the proposed paragraph. Concerning b) work permits, President Dorman visited the Minister of Labor concerning pending or refused work permits for 13 faculty members, 5 of whom are Syrian. Since his visit, 9 were approved. One senator asked if there was a clear policy or the issue had become a personal issue of an individual minister. Another senator argued that a piecemeal approach may not be effective and for the need for a long-term strategy bearing in mind the weight of AUB in Lebanon. Another senator asked about a contingency plan if there were rejections. The President stated that a case-by-case approach was being taken and also noted that some faculty members have been accepted as 'scholars at risk.' Concerning c) maternity benefits for lecturers/instructors, the President reported that he had asked HR to inform them they are entitled to these benefits. A senator asked if there was an update on the investigation into leaks to the press. The President stated that the team is still analyzing material and there are no updates at this time; it will remain confidential until the results are released. He noted that he is not a member of the committee investigating the leaks.

4) Revised Thesis Release form, proposal from the University Library Committee

L. Meho presented the revisions to the form that had two purposes: (i) to allow the library to deposit theses in an international database of theses, UMI, produced by ProQuest, which would make them more accessible and retrievable; and (ii) to add a statement to protect AUB from liability for plagiarism. A motion **to approve the revised thesis release form was made.** In discussion, a senator suggested to remove the name of ProQuest since it is a commercial company. Another senator asked why theses do not need to be purchased as they are in the US. L. Meho responded that requests are typically low, numbering 5 to 10 a year. However, a senator noted that with new doctoral programs there may be more demand. Concern was expressed by several senators about the statement to protect the university from plagiarism, and particularly about how students are protected and whether they are fully informed as to what they are signing on (e.g. reference to libel in the text). A senator asked if it had been vetted by the OGC. Another senator raised a concern that if students sign the form, they may not be able to submit the data to journals. L. Meho said that rights to publish in journals are not affected. Also figures are often cited in theses from books that are out-of-print, but this language assumes permission has been obtained which it may not have been. L. Meho stated that the statement to protect the university from plagiarism had been recommended by the legal affairs office. The President asked if it had been benchmarked, and advised the committee to look at benchmarks. **The motion was tabled** and an *action point was made to return it to the committee for further consideration.*

5) Proposal from the SSC for electing faculty representatives to the PPRC (Policies and Procedures Committee)

A. Kayssi presented a **SSC-approved motion that starting 2015-2016, two faculty representatives to the PPRC will be elected by the Senate. Nominations can come from the faculty at large (i.e., they do not have to be Senate members), after a call for nominations is sent by the Chairman of the Senate to all faculty members at the start of the academic year.** For this academic year (2014-2015), the Senate confirms the membership of the two faculty members currently serving on the PPRC, namely Dr. Eveline Hitti and Dr. Abdel-Fattah Abdel-Rahman. In the discussion that followed, it was stated that the faculty representatives are elected for one year. **A motion was made to approve this recommendation.**

Vote 2015-19: the motion was approved.

The President said he would forward the action of the Senate to the next president for his/her consideration, and noted the *action point that it would be useful if N. Ghaddar gave a presentation about the PPRC to the Senate.*

6) Electing a Senate representative to the AUB 150th Steering Committee

R. Brow briefed the Senate about planning for the 150th noting that three committees were already working – the overall/executive committee; planning committee and honorary committee consisting of distinguished individuals. There was a need for Senate members to be represented on the executive committee and there will also be faculty represented on other committees. The executive committee, which will meet once a month up to January 2016, is responsible for setting objectives, approving the work of the planning committee and making strategic decisions as well as budgeting. Nominations were made and elections held in which Elie Shamma was elected. The President suggested as an *action*

point that in future it would be useful for R. Brow to present to the Senate plans for the 150th as well as campaign contributions to date.

7) Benefits presentation as part of the University budget discussion

S. Diab gave a powerpoint presentation on benefits. She stated that all active full-time employees are covered by life insurance at no cost to the employee, and there is the option to upgrade at cost if it is placed within 30 days from inception or renewal. Long-term disability due to illness is not available now, but will be included in the RFP that will cover all AUB insurance. A question was raised whether illness included psychiatric disorders, and S. Diab noted she would check on this. M. Ghazal then gave a powerpoint presentation on benefits including HIP, educational benefits and the pension plans. A question was asked on what basis AUBMC billed HIP for costs. M. Ghazal responded that it uses public rates but gets a volume discount. Senators commented that there are other options that could be cheaper for AUB, and that it is very important to look at the basis upon which costs are calculated since there are alternative methodologies for accounting costs. Merely looking at the aggregate figures presented could be misleading. Questions were raised as to whether it was possible to have the same service quality at lower cost. It was also noted that it is important that the system allow for cross-subsidies of students to faculty and younger to older faculty on the basis of equity. M. Ghazal agreed to obtain cost estimates for faculty alone, since the figures presented were for all AUB employees. *Action point: Given the discussion the presentation stimulated, the Provost suggested having a special presentation on HIP.*

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate