

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

Present: M. Abiad, M. Al-Ghoul, G. Araj, J. Chaaban, A. Chalak, S. Chahine, M. Clinton, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, H. El-Rassy, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, D. Jamali, G. Kanazi, S. Kanj, R. Karami, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (Chair), P. McGreevy, T. Mehmood Ali, W. Nasr, I. Nuwayhid, I. Saoud, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, M. Sayegh, E. Shamma, C. Smith, R. Smith, M. Suidan, C. Tarraf (for T. Nizameddin)

Absent: V. Araman, B. Bashour*, R. Brow, H. Diab, E. Hitti, F. Maalouf, T. Nizameddin, A. Taher,* S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

1) Observing a moment of silence to honor former colleagues
Dr. Mona Amyuni
Professor Jean-Marie Cook

T. Mehmood Ali read a statement on behalf of the English department in memory of Professor Jean-Marie Cook. R. Smith read a statement on behalf of the Civilization Studies program in memory of Dr. Mona Amyuni. Moments of silence were observed for both former colleagues.
Action point: to send transcript of statements to the families

[sequence of agenda items was changed with item 2 before item 1]

M. Abiad made a motion **to add the issue of student elections to the Senate meeting agenda**. F. Khuri initially denied the motion, but it was pointed out that Senate by-laws allow the addition of items for discussion. M. Abiad revised the motion **to add the issue of student elections to the item "Other business."** Discussion ensued about the rationale for this agenda item and why the issue had not been raised to the SSC, and whether it should be included as a separate agenda item or discussed under "Other business." D. Jamali stated a substitute motion **to put the same item under 'Other business'**. J. Chaaban made another substitute motion **to add an agenda item on "Concerns about student elections."** I. Elhajj commented on the need for the President to know the history of earlier discussions in the Senate so as to avoid the situation of last-minute ultimatums, and noted that any changes in the USFC by-laws need to be presented to the USFC two weeks before its members vote on the by-laws, and that these need to be approved by a non-circular motion of the Senate. Therefore this requires at least a month before student elections can be held. **Vote 2016-04: the substitute motion passed**, and the issue was added to the agenda as item 7.

2) Approval of the minutes of October 2, 2015

The minutes were approved with amendments.

3) **Voting of degrees for October 2015 graduates**

M. Salameh presented the graduates, including 182 bachelor's degrees, 119 master's degrees, and 2 PhD degrees with the names listed in the document circulated at the meeting. P. McGreevy, H. Huijjer, M. Sayegh, M. Suidan, N. Hwalla, I. Nuwayhid and S. Chahine recommended the awarding of degrees to graduates in their respective Schools. I. Nuwayhid noted that one graduate was the first from a joint FM/FHS M.S. program SHARP. **A motion was made to approve the graduation of all recommended candidates. Vote 2016-05: the motion was passed unanimously.**

4) **Election of two faculty representatives to the Policies and Procedures Review Committee**

The President announced the following chairs of Senate committees: I. Bashour (University Admissions Committee), S. Boujaoude (Board of Graduate Studies), D. Patra (Library Committee), I. Nuwayhid (University Disciplinary Committee), M. Harb (University Publications Committee), Z Dawy (URB), K. Badr (University Committee on Student Affairs), W. Sabra (ADC), A. Kayssi (elected chair of SSC), E. Shammass (elected chair of SCFA). Elections for the PPRC followed via clickers and the following nominated faculty members were elected: S. Saleh and M. Abou Zeid.

5) **Audio recording proposal**

A. Kayssi made a motion, based on the work of a sub-committee agreed on during the last Senate meeting, as follows: **'The senate continues to have written minutes based on notes taken by the secretary of the senate during the senate meeting. The secretary prepares the draft minutes for approval by the senate during its next meeting. The only official record is the set of approved minutes of meeting. Thus, no changes are introduced to the process that is currently followed. Audio recordings serve as an unofficial supplement to capture all senate deliberations, and are made available online, on the website <http://www.aub.edu.lb/senate/> within 24 hours of the meeting end time. This website already publishes the PDF files of the official "approved minutes of meetings", and these files are now available to the public inside and outside AUB. It is also recommended that the website provides access to the agenda of senate meetings, and to any reports or documents that are distributed with the call for meeting. The audio recordings are not considered an official record, or a reference for the secretary of the senate to use when preparing the draft minutes of meeting. During the senate meeting, audio recording may be deactivated temporarily or retroactively by decision of the chair of the senate, or by a majority vote of the senate.** A senator pointed to the need to discuss the potentially serious implications, and while he was agreed in principle, there is much to be worked out particularly in relation to the archiving and cataloguing of the material. S. Saleh made a substitute motion **to have audio-recordings not for public use but only for addressing any challenges to the accuracy of the Senate minutes.** Senators presented contrasting views for and against the substitute motion, with one senator arguing that recordings could be destroyed after the meeting, and another arguing they should be fully in the public domain. Concerns about potential leaks and recordings being taken out of context were raised. J. DeJong clarified the importance of the Senate secretary being a faculty member and the process of the minute-writing - the President makes any suggested edits of record in track changes, and these are sent back to the Senate secretary for a final check for accuracy before they are circulated. A. Kayssi clarified that the purpose of the motion was not in relation to the minutes, but to increase transparency and accountability. R. Smith and Z. Dawy (from the subcommittee) argued that the two processes should be independent and R. Smith stated that having an audio-recording as record is very complicated. D.

Jamali made an alternative motion **to table the motion until further notice to give more time for consideration. Vote 2016-06: The motion passed.**

6) Faculty contract

President Khuri stated that he had re-engaged with the SCFA concerning the faculty contract. He underscored his recognition of the importance of protection of faculty benefits but also for faculty to understand the fiduciary role of the BoT. In the event of economic calamity or severe financial challenges, the university should have the right to amend the faculty contracts. He stated that he would inform the Senate in due course about the outcome of the discussions. E. Shammass noted that while the discussions are currently between the President and SCFA, there would be future Senate and faculty involvement. In response to a question concerning versions of contracts that faculty members currently in effect, President Khuri stated that all new faculty members are signing the contract dated last year. M. Sayegh stated that HR does not have multiple contracts, although there may be special conditions. A senator pointed out that the use of the term “reappointment” and not “renewal” allows the university to renegotiate the contract. A senator recommended that the Senate address the legal status of the university professor in Lebanon. President Khuri recommended seeking the opinions of a diverse group of lawyers on this issue.

7) Concern about student elections

J. Chaaban (after the departure of M. Abiad) read the guidelines from the student handbook, stating that student elections at AUB are a national event and a role model for the country and region, and that elections are normally held in November. He raised the concern that the USFC has delayed for three years over resolution of the election law and that postponing elections would have negative repercussions at AUB and nationally. He asked for a clear commitment from the university that elections would be held this year before the end of November. President Khuri stated that as of two days earlier, the students had three separate proposals concerning proportional representation and that they had promised one written proposal. He had told the students that if there is a two-thirds majority of the USFC on the new election rules it has to come to the Senate for a vote, which can be circular. He stressed to them that even in the worst times at AUB, students participated in elections and that delays are not possible. C. Tarraf stated that work is ongoing on the USFC by-laws and at the last meeting, students were supposed to propose the final by-laws. A senator drew similarities to the national political situation, reiterated that the USFC by-laws require two weeks’ notice before voting on them, and stated that for two consecutive years the Senate has agreed to “one-time only” arrangements under the ultimatum that elections might not take place. It was pointed out that once student elections are concluded, the incumbents have no interest in working on the by-laws and that it was important for Student Affairs to prioritize this issue. President Khuri stated that he has informed the USFC that he will address the student body and will emphasize the need for the new incumbents to agree to work on drafting and approving a new and representative electoral law as soon as they are elected. He insisted that student elections would take place. On the argument that the Senate should be insisting on models of good governance, C. Harb made a motion **to hold student elections subject to the last non-exceptional Senate approved USFC by-laws. Vote 2016-07: the motion passed.**

The meeting was closed at 4 pm. (Minutes taken by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate).