

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, January 31, 2014**

Present: M. Alameddine, A. Al-Kutoubi, T. Amin, S. Arnaout, S. Chahine, N. Dajani, A. Dallal (chairing), Z. Dawy, G. DeBin, J. DeJong, I. Elhadj, N. Farajalla, J. Ghafari, K. Ghali (on invitation), H. Huijer, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbar-Khoury, A. Jaffa (representing M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, G. Matar, P. May, P. McGreevy, L. Meho (on invitation), T. Nizameddin, S. Noureddine, I. Nuwayhid, M. Salameh, I. Saoud, E. Shammas, M. Suidan, S. Talhouk (representing Dean Hwalla), Dr. Wrisley

Absent: I. Bashour, E. Baydoun, R. Brow, J. Chaaban*, A. Dietrich*, P. Dorman*, S. Harb, N. Hwalla*, M. Sayegh*, J. Usta*, S. Zeineldine*, A. Zenger

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm.

1. Approval of minutes

Minutes of the December 20, 2013 meeting were approved as amended.

2. Observing a minute of silence to honor former colleague, Dr. Yusuf Khoury, AUB University Librarian

L. Meho read an obituary for Dr. Khoury and a moment of silence was observed.

3. Proposals from the Academic Development Committee:

a) Revised policy on minors

Z. Dawy (as a representative from the Academic Development Committee) presented the proposed modifications to the existing policy, namely that no more than 9 credit hours taken in a major field of study may be used to satisfy a requirement for another minor and that students must attain an average of 70 or more in courses for the minor (not in individual courses). Some senators raised questions as to why the latter change had been made. It was noted that departments could be stricter regarding the grade requirements in their courses, but this would need to be approved. **A motion was made: to approve the revised policy on minors.**

Vote 2014 - 15: Motion approved (with 2 abstentions).

b) Recommendation to add a “capstone course” to all undergraduate programs

Z. Dawy reported that many programs at AUB already have “capstone courses” (which encourage lifelong and independent learning) but that some do not have. He noted that this need not necessarily be a new course, but departments could designate existing courses to fulfill its objectives. It could also be an internship, project or lab. He proposed **a motion: to add a “capstone course” to all**

undergraduate programs. Concerns were expressed by senators that, although a constructive suggestion, it could be resource-intensive and not feasible within limited resources and should not be enforced without further discussion within faculties. Another senator commented that a clearer pedagogical justification is needed. Provost Dallal noted that a “capstone course” might become an accreditation requirement. In view of the concerns raised, he **proposed a substitute motion: to have the ADC reconsider the proposal.**

Vote 2014 - 16: Substitute motion approved (unanimous).

4. Proposals from the Board of Graduate Studies:

a) Non-thesis option for M.E. in Mechanical Engineering, major applied energy

b) Non-thesis option for M.E. in Mechanical Engineering, major mechanical engineering

Dean Nuwayhid asked for a clarification before the proposals were discussed concerning the different number of credits of the proposed graduate programs and of theses for masters programs across the proposals. He had understood that there is an AUB norm of 30 credits for MS programs (24 for courses and 6 for thesis). A. Safieddine noted that the majority of MS programs are 30 credits but AUB allows flexibility. Another senator also underlined the observed discrepancy between 6 and 9 credit requirements for theses and that there had not been discussion on the Senate as to whether such flexibility is allowed or not. A. Safieddine noted that some of the variation was inherited and when opportunities arise, these discrepancies are being analyzed. Provost Dallal stated that there had been a review of graduate requirements and all new programs are within this general policy, and this Senate approved policy does allow for variation if the deviation from the norm is justified. K. Ghali then presented the two proposals from Engineering for non-thesis options. A. Safieddine presented **a motion: to accept the non-thesis option for the ME in Mechanical Engineering, major applied energy.** Some questions were raised as to whether more students would be attracted to the non-thesis option. Dean Suidan clarified that the non-thesis option was more for students interested in practice rather than research. Dean Nuwayhid suggested that it would be desirable for such students to have a project to engage them more in practice, which is currently optional.

Vote 2014 - 17: Motion approved (with 2 abstentions)

A second motion was proposed: to accept the non-thesis option for ME in Mechanical Engineering, major mechanical engineering.

Vote 2014 - 18: Motion approved.

A third motion was proposed: to increase the number of credits for the thesis for the ME in Mechanical Engineering, major applied energy, from 6 to 9 credits.

Vote 2014 - 19: Motion approved.

c) Proposal for a Masters Degree in Public Policy and International Affairs, DUIP

A. Safieddine introduced the proposal for the Masters in Public Policy and International Affairs and made **a motion: to approve the program.** K. Makdisi presented the proposed program, noting that

there is increasing demand globally and in the region for professionals and researchers in this field. The comparative advantage of the program over those elsewhere, particularly in the US, would be that it would be based on original case-studies from the region and would focus on policy-making in the region. In addition to general admission requirements, students would need to demonstrate Arabic proficiency. The program would be 42 credits, including 18 credits of core courses, electives and a 6 credit thesis (that would need to be interdisciplinary) as well as a guided internship. Questions from senators concerned the communication content of the course and the potential financial constraints for students for a costly 42 credit program. Concern was also expressed whether there was sufficient time for the thesis given the high load of coursework and whether the program would be sufficiently research-intensive. K. Makdisi noted that the program is not time-limited.

Vote 2014 - 20: Motion approved (unanimous).

5. Proposal to establish a task force on faculty salaries and cost-of-living adjustments

D. Jamali reported that this item had been carried over from the previous Senate meeting. The mandate of such a task force would be: to review cost-of-living indices and recommend adjustment of faculty salaries accordingly; to conduct benchmarking with other institutions, and address issues of equity between faculty members' and administrators' salaries. She stated that the only question was whether the task force should be comprised solely of faculty or of faculty and administrators; she recommended the latter. She proposed a **motion: to form the task force on faculty salaries.**

Provost Dallal reported that the President is discussing the formation of a related task-force and is currently formulating its charge. Among its mandates would be development of a 3-5 year plan for a clear policy on faculty compensation in view of revenue streams and taking into account benchmarking of faculty salaries within the region and internationally. The formation of the task-force has been discussed in two meetings of the Board of Deans and would consist of Senators, Deans, faculty members and administrators. Several senators noted that it was important to move quickly and to recognize the urgency of the concerns. A question was asked about the outcomes of former VP Radulski's study on faculty compensation. COO DeBin reported that he had asked Mary Jaber at HR but there was no document on the study. He also stated that in universities where he had worked, the Senate has a Senate Budget Committee and he recommended the formation of such a committee at AUB to coordinate with the SCFA. It was noted, however, that this would require changes in the by-laws. Arguments were made that the formation of such a task-force on faculty salaries as a Senate committee would provide long-term stability and institutional memory. Another senator noted that it was important to include administrators since they have the requisite information. COO DeBin suggested that administrators could attend as ex officio members, providing support and information. While there was general agreement at the meeting to form such a task-force, debate ensued concerning its mandate and its composition. On the latter, there was debate as to whether it should be representative (e.g. across faculties) or be composed based on specific expertise. One alternative suggestion was that the Senate task force could 'shadow' that of the President's Task-force, and bring in faculty voice. Another suggestion was that the task-force could be a sub-committee of the SCFA. It was finally agreed to vote on the general **motion: to form a task-force on faculty salaries and cost-of-living adjustments.**

Vote 2014 - 21: Motion approved (with one abstention).

6. Proposal to remove all reference to unilateral amendments of terms and conditions of employment

I. Elhadj presented this suggestion as a no-cost initiative and referred to the attachment which details contracts in which there were references to unilateral amendments of terms and conditions of employment (including HIP, retirement etc.). He proposed a **motion: to request the University to remove from all documents pertaining to faculty employment and benefits all language which allows the University to unilaterally amend the terms and conditions of employment and benefits during the contract period. Amendments should come after consultation with faculty representative bodies, mainly the Senate.** Provost Dallal asked whether such changes should wait until the revisions to the faculty contract have been finalized. COO DeBin reported that by the end of the following week there would be a response from the administration on the faculty contract.

Vote 2014 - 22: Motion approved (unanimous).

7. Proposal to establish and elect Senate representation on committees linked to faculty benefits and relevant services

A. Kayssi reported on this agenda item. Provost Dallal made a distinction between committees which determine policy and those which pertain to implementation. For policy, he stated that this should be the domain of the SCFA. Two areas could be singled out where faculty representation is critical – HIP and retirement. A senator proposed a **motion: to request effective faculty representation on all committees linked to benefits.**

Vote 2014 - 23: Motion approved (unanimous).

Items 8 – 10 were not discussed due to lack of time and loss of quorum.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate