

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

Present: R. Afifi (representing Dean Nuwayhid), M. Al-Ghoul, G. Araj , V. Araman, B. Bashour, S. Chahine, A. Chalak, M. Clinton, A. Dallal, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, P. Dorman (chairing), I. El Haggi, N. Farajallah, S. Harb, E. Hitti, N. Hwalla, D. Jaalouk, S. Jabbour-Khoury, A. Jaffa (representing VP Sayegh), D. Jamali, H. Huijjer, S. Kanj, A. Kayssi, V. Khamis, F. Maalouf, P. McGreevy, H. Muller, W. Nasr, L. Nasreddine, T. Nizameddin, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, Y. Sandakli (on invitation), E. Shammass, M. Suidan, S. Zeineldine

Absent: H. Abu Khuzam, T. Amin, H. Diab, A. Dietrich*, I. Nuwayhid,* A. Taher*

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

1) Approval of the minutes of May 28 and September 26, 2014

The revised minutes of May 28 were approved, and the draft minutes of September 26 were approved. J. DeJong reported that there was a decision at the last SSC meeting to record action items. The format of the minutes has been to attribute comments by members of the administration (including deans) but not all senators for reasons of feasibility. After discussion it was agreed to try a system whereby senators could be individually quoted on their request.

2) USFC By-laws extension

Dean Nizameddin addressed the issue and introduced the student representative of the USFC, Youssef Sandakli. The Dean explained that last year the Senate had approved the USFC by-laws for one year only pending resolution on the distribution of seats. The decision was that elections could proceed based on a mutually agreed distribution provided that the USFC decide on the final distribution in the spring of 2014. This did not happen mainly because many of the student leaders became involved in the tuition-related protests. Since elections are due to take place November 18, he therefore asked for permission from the Senate to proceed for this year only in faith that the students can carry out the elections successfully. Y. Sandakli noted that the student body had shown its maturity and asked for the right to choose their own election rules under supervision of the Dean. He emphasized the importance of holding elections this year in view of events at other universities. The Dean of Student Affairs proposed **a motion: "To repeat the decision of the Senate last year that for one year only the Dean of Student Affairs will be allowed to organize the election rules."** In discussion several senators made comparisons to the situation in Lebanon and asked why students had not made more progress, and if the motion passes, what the likelihood was that the students would agree. The Dean explained that there had been intensive discussions and he had taken two proposals to the USFC which failed but that the USFC agreed that the Dean would work with students to draft the electoral law. He also explained that many of those elected to the USFC had graduated and therefore he had created a consultative body consisting of USFC reps and reps of large clubs to get a variety of perspectives. He expressed the view that the by-laws are flawed and need substantial discussion, although the students have tried hard to address loopholes. One senator asked why last year's rules would not be used, and the Dean agreed

this would be an easy option. Another senator stated that ceding power to one person in this process is against all principles of democratic governance, and civic responsibility is in the AUB mission. There exists due process to change the by-laws, and this would send a message that if students cannot resolve their problems, they just need to return to their leader to solve them. Last year there had been an understanding that there was an agreement with students. Another senator noted that the by-laws were approved at a meeting in October, 2013 and therefore, since more than one year had elapsed, are no longer valid. The Provost recalled that all the by-laws were approved except for the article on composition. The Dean of Student Affairs stated that he takes the blame for the by-laws not being ready in time, but he stressed the dedication of students in many activities, and that they should not be penalized for this. He mentioned that there is a draft proposal that is close to agreement. He pledged that he would report back to the Senate after the elections and on a periodic basis. A senator proposed **a substitute motion “To give the students till November 7 2014 to come up with a USFC-approved change of by-laws (requiring a 2/3 vote) -- otherwise the by-laws posted on the policies and procedures website would apply as of that date.”** The Dean replied that it would take time to have nominations and campaigns and this motion is tantamount to not being able to hold selections. A senator asked what the participation rate was in last year’s elections, and the Dean responded that it was 80 to 90% in smaller faculties but overall about 65%. Another senator suggested having a sub-committee of faculty members who could define the election rules, not just the Dean, but this was rejected by the student rep. He supported the Dean’s proposal and stated that the majority of students do, but his proposal did not pass because of political lobbying.

Vote 2015-01: The substitute motion was defeated (13 in favor, 15 opposed, and 5 abstentions).

Vote 2015-02: The original motion was approved (19 in favor, 8 opposed, and 4 abstentions).

3) **Voting of degrees, summer 2014 graduates**

The registrar stated that there were in total 253 graduates, including 135 undergraduates, 115 graduates and 3 PhDs. Of this total 192 were Lebanese, 28 Arab, and 33 non-Arab.

Dean McGreevy, Dr. Huijer, Prof. A. Jaffa (representing Dean Sayegh), Dean Suidan, Dean Hwalla, Prof. R. Afifi (representing Dean Nuwayhid), and Prof. Chahine presented motions recommending the awarding of degrees to graduates in their respective Schools: (Attached list of expected graduates summer 2014)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FAS graduates and graduates with distinction

Vote 2015-03: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FM NURSING graduates

Vote 2015-04: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FM graduates

Vote 2015-05: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FEA graduates and graduates with distinction

Vote 2015-06: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FAFS graduates and graduates with distinction

Vote 2015-07: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FHS graduates

Vote 2015-08: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to OSB graduates and graduates with distinction

Vote 2015-09: Motion approved (unanimous)

4) Proposal from the Academic Development Committee: Faculty Workload Policy

Z. Dawy stated, on behalf of the ADC, that its members had reviewed the policy as general guidelines and had introduced a paragraph that exceptions to the policy need to be documented and should be studied if they recur. He made a **motion “To approve the Faculty Workload Policy.”** One senator criticized the policy because its title is not representative of all that faculty members do, and is an attempt to micromanage. The Provost stated that the full nature of faculty members’ responsibilities is stated in the first paragraph, and that the policy was benchmarked with over 30 universities. Extensive discussion ensued about overload teaching. One senator conveyed comments from Engineering such as why there are so many mentions of approval by deans and whether there was any policy on summer teaching. Another senator affirmed that the wording is too general, leaving a lot to interpretation, and giving too much power to deans. The Provost stated that exceptions need to be negotiated through proper hierarchies, not individual deals, and that the policy allows flexibility of different disciplines without allowing for abuse. Another senator expressed the need for faculty-specific workload policies. Z. Dawy stated that in the ADC there had been an understanding that deans would submit a report to the Provost, and that **on p. 2 it should be amended to read: “Annual evaluation of workload policy exceptions shall be conducted by the Dean and the Provost to minimize the need for such exceptions.”** Returning to the issue of the title, one senator stated that it would be more appropriate to call it a “faculty teaching workload policy”. The Provost stated, in reference to an email by J. Chaaban, that faculty workloads are typically defined in hours per week but in fact the only function that can be regulated is teaching. **A motion was made: “To change the title of the policy to faculty teaching workload policy.”**

Vote 2015-10: The motion to change the title was approved (9 in favor, 7 opposed, and 7 abstentions).

Vote 2015-11: The motion on the policy was also approved, with the addition of the above suggested revision on p. 2 (9 in favor, 8 opposed).

5) Vote on faculty contract

The President reported that agreement was close in March 2014 on the revised faculty contract and he had alerted the BoT, but in the end agreement was not reached. The same happened in May 2014. Discussions were close, however, and differences small. He reiterated the importance of finalizing it and hoped it could be resolved at the November BoT meetings and voted on at the next Senate. It was clarified that the BoT do not vote on the contract.

6) **Travel Expense Policy**

A senator stated that since the travel policy is not finalized, a task force should be formed to discuss the various views of stakeholders. He made a **motion “to form a task force to review the current travel expense policy as it applies to faculty members, and recommend changes that reflect best practices. The task force includes faculty members, the Chief Financial Officer, and the Director of the Office of Grants and Contracts.”** It was agreed that Ayman Kayssi (author of the motion), Imad El Hajj, Nadim Farajalla and Dima Jamali would serve on this task-force. The President said there was no need for a vote, but that the task-force should be considered formed.

7) **Senate role in the presidential search**

[The President recused himself and the Provost took over chairing].

Ayman Kayssi presented a SSC-approved **motion that: “In confirming its role as the representative body of the faculty, the Senate expects to be an involved and active participant in the decision of selecting a new president. Accordingly, the Senate requests to meet with, and provide formal feedback on all short-listed candidates for the position.”** N. Hwalla noted that the Senate is not an executive body and therefore the wording should be changed. A. Kayssi clarified that it was a request to meet candidates, not to decide on them. Questions were raised about operationalizing the motion, such as whether it should be individual or collective feedback and mechanisms. One suggestion was that senators could send their views to a committee. One senator asked if the names of candidates were public record, and if not, the candidates would not want to meet with the Senate. Another senator questioned whether it was possible to have consensus and that this may further divide the constituency. Another senator expressed surprise that candidates might not want to meet the constituency. A/Dean S. Chahine suggested adding to the motion “if a candidate accepts” and stressed the need to have agreement in this forum, and to worry about operationalization at a later date. Another suggestion was that two senators could sign a non-disclosure agreement to safeguard confidentiality and meet with the candidates, but there was a feeling confidentiality would not be maintained. Another senator stated that requests need to be reasonable and the senate cannot “step on the toes” of trustees. A friendly amendment to the motion was suggested that the “Senate requests to meet with all short-listed candidates.” A. Kayssi withdrew the motion.

The meeting adjourned at 4:35 pm.

Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate