

**American University of Beirut  
Minutes of the University Senate  
Meeting of Friday, April 8, 2016**

**Present:** M. Abiad, G. Abu-Sittah (on invitation), T. Amin, G. Araj, I. Baalbaki, M. Clinton, Z. Dawy, J. DeJong, H. Diab, I. El Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, S. Hmaidan, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (Chair), F. Maalouf, P. McGreevy, H. Muller, W. Nasr, T. Nizameddin, I Nuwayhid, H. El-Rassy, R. Sedehi, S. Saleh, M. Sayegh, E. Shammass, C. Smith, M. Suidan, S. Zeineldine

**Absent:** F. Abu Salem, F. Afiouni\*, V. Araman, M. Al-Ghoul\*, B. Bashour\*, J. Chaaban, A. Chalak, D. Jamali\*, G. Kanazi\*, S. Kanj\*, R. Karami\*, S. Khalaf, T. Mehmood\*, M. Salameh\*, I. Saoud, A. Taher\*

(\* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting came to order at 2pm.

**1) Obituary for Professor Haig Khatchadourian**

H. Muller read an obituary for Prof. Khatchadourian, former professor in the Philosophy Department.

**2) Approval of the minutes of March 4, 2016**

The minutes were approved with a minor amendment.

**3) Proposal for a Master of Science in Food Safety**

M. Abiad presented the proposal for a new 31-credit program noting that there have been many outbreaks in Lebanon due to food-borne illness and there is a high demand for graduates in this field according to a market study FAFS conducted among students and the food industry. Two other universities in Lebanon have started similar programs. The proposed program was benchmarked with programs in the US, Germany, the UK and Australia. M. Abiad noted that there will be a 9 credit thesis and a non-thesis track, and all students will be required to take a one-credit internship, hence explaining the 31 credits. President Khuri expressed concern about non-thesis options, noting that all master's students need to learn to write well and this is an area where AUB graduates are differentiated from others. In discussion, senators noted that problems of finding supervisors at FAFS, the fact that some students are deemed not to be capable of writing a thesis and the fact that other universities are offering non-thesis tracks are some of the factors involved. Several senators stated that to instill critical thinking a thesis should be required, but this has implications both for admission standards and class size. It was suggested that supervisors could also be drawn from other Faculties. M. Abiad stated that FAFS would recommend electives with intensive writing. It was also noted that the internship could be pass-fail and 0 credit but still required. **Vote 2016-23: The motion to approve the proposal passed.**

**4) Proposal for a Master of Science in Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery**

G. Abu-Sittah presented a proposal for this program -- that would be unique in the region, explaining that the rationale for the program is that it is difficult to raise the caliber of trainees and that academia faces challenges in attracting trainees from the private sector. With conflict in Syria, Iraq and the region, the

need for expertise in this field is massive, and at the same time there has been a huge loss of medical manpower, and therefore a generation of trainers. The new program will also provide opportunities for multidisciplinary research. Those applying to the program would be surgeons holding an MD degree, but graduation from the MS would not provide them with a license to practice. The courses on cosmetic surgery are intentionally minimal so as not to attract cosmetic surgeons. The tuition charged would correspond to 30 credits and there would be a thesis and non-thesis option (with a capstone including a literature review). The program would take two years to complete full-time. No new faculty appointments are required, and offering the courses on a rolling basis would minimize the load on existing faculty. When asked about the advantage to graduates of this program, G. Abu-Sittah stated that residency programs in this area are highly competitive, and this program would enhance their chances while at the same time make graduates more attractive to both hospitals and patients. Dean Nuwayhid noted that the course code for the Epidemiology code offered by FHS should be an FHS code. **Vote 2016-24: The motion to approve the proposal carried unanimously.**

[The sequence of the following two items was reversed]

#### **5) Discussion of Plan B**

President Khuri informed the Senate that AUB had been notified in March by the Bank of Butterfield -- the trustee of Plan B based in the Bahamas -- that the latter wished to end the relationship with AUB within 90 days. AUB appealed the decision, and a response had been received 2 days earlier. In the meantime, AUB has actively sought alternatives internationally. A meeting was held of the Employee Benefit Committee (EBC) to discuss options, and it voted unanimously to move with the stated options while exploring the appeal. An email was sent out to the AUB community. President Khuri stated that AUB needs a responsive partner and that there was in the meantime a decision to replace the custodian (UBS) as well, since USB had shown itself to be highly unresponsive to date. E. Chammas, as faculty representative on the EBC, concurred saying that AUB needs a better custodian. A senator commented that a few years before the custodian had pulled out suddenly and there was therefore a need for a sustainable solution. R. Sedehi is currently exploring the options and will visit the top potential candidates for both the trustee and the custodian.

#### **6) Chair's report on BoT meetings and budget**

President Khuri briefed the Senate on decisions taken by the BoT at its recent meeting in New York. Incumbent trustees had been re-elected, and Board officers and committee assignments were approved. The REP charter was approved. Modifications to existing loans had been approved, since the administration negotiated more favorable loan agreements. The concept of acquiring the hospital information system (HIS) was approved. Three new academic programs -- the MA in Art History and Curating, the PhD in Epidemiology and the MS in Business Analytics were approved. The BoT also approved new by-laws concerning faculty voting rights in their terminal year and to bring forward the two-year extension of contracts of full professors while tenure is being implemented. Senators had a number of questions and expressed concerns about the last item. It was clarified by the administration that at issue is a two-year extension, not a renewal. EVP Sayegh stated that full professors whose contract finishes in 2018, when tenure implementation is expected to have started, would be given a two-year extension. President Khuri stated that the intent is for those in this category to seek counsel and to consider whether to apply for tenure. A senator stated that contract renewal and preparation for tenure

should be kept separate, and a contract is a two-way agreement. EVP Sayegh stated that it is a system not individual contract, and that a 7 year contract is not an automatic right – some faculty members are granted 3 year contract, others 7 year contracts and exceptionally some 10 year contracts. There was a suggestion to table the idea for further consideration and that the SCFA should give feedback on the issue. President Khuri clarified that for assistant and associate professors, there are no changes, and that the 2-year extension was only proposed for professors and is considered withdrawn at this stage.

COO R. Sedehi then presented the status of budget planning, stressing that the approach to principles of budgeting and financial management had been changed and that the budgeting is for the university as a whole. The aim is to achieve balanced budgets despite a number of challenges. Key assumptions in the 2016-17 budget include an increase in tuition of 3%, a 2% merit increase and a 5% net increase in patient revenues at AUBMC. The aim is to put \$4.5 million in contingency funds to protect against potential volatility. A request was also made to the BoT to increase the draw rate from endowment funds from 4.2% to 5% and the BoT asked for a three-year plan. There will also be disciplined control of positions – not a freeze - based on need and quality. President Khuri reported that, while in the US, he had met with Congress, NIH and Fogarty and explored funding possibilities with the Ford Foundation. EVP Sayegh had similarly met with the Gates Foundation. There is a need for targeted philanthropy to provide budget relief. COO Sedehi also presented the multi-year capital plan and noted that long-term building needs are being incorporated in the capital plan. These will be in addition to donations. Questions were raised concerning whether solar energy was being explored, and how REP revenue is projected and a Senator noted that there is need for classroom improvement and expansion of office space.

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm.

(Minutes recorded by J. DeJong, Secretary of the Senate)