

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, September 25, 2020

Present: M. Abiad, A. Abu-Alfa, F. Afiouni, E. Al-Chaer, A. Al-Hroub, T. Amin, H. Auji, I. Baalbaki, T. Bazi, G. Burris, A. Chalak, R. Chedid, A. Daou, H. Darwish, Z. Dawy, N. Dumit, N. El-Cheikh, H. El Rassy, M. Farah, L. Farhoud, A. Harutyunyan, S. Isber, K. kabalan, F. Khuri, S. Mallat, N. Melhem, R. Mohtar, L. Musfi, M. Nachar, R. Nakkash, M. Nasrallah, T. Nezameddin, G. Saad, N. Saliba, A. Shihadeh, A. Sibai, Y. Sidani, R. Sultan, F. Talih, B. Tucker, G. Zaatari, S. Zen-el-dine

Absent: H. Jaafar*

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held virtually using “Zoom”.

1) Approval of Senate minutes of June 26, 2020

The minutes of June 26, 2020 were approved by a vote. **Vote 2020-01 (20-0-10)**

2) Voting of Degrees for Summer 2020 Graduates

Dean El Cheikh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAS. Vote 2020-02. The motion was approved unanimously.** Interim Dean G. Zaatari recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Medicine (FM). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FM. Vote 2020-03. The motion was approved unanimously.** Interim Dean Farhoud recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing. **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in HSON. Vote 2020-04. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Shihadeh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in MSFEA. Vote 2020-05. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Mohtar recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAFS. Vote 2020-06. The motion was approved unanimously.** Interim Dean Sibai recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FHS. Vote 2020-07. The motion was approved unanimously.** Interim Dean Sidani recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Olayan School of Business (OSB). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in OSB. Vote 2020-08. The motion was approved unanimously.**

3) Welcoming new Senate members

President Khuri welcomed eleven new Senators: Interim Dean Abla Sibai, Interim Dean Yusuf Sidani, Assoc. Professor Anies Al-Hroub, Asst. Professor Hala Auji, Professor Rabih Sultan, Assoc. Professor Mona Nasrallah, Assoc. Professor Salah Zen-el-dine, Professor Samir Mallat, Professor Leila Musfi, Asst. Professor Alain Daou, and Assoc. Professor Fida Afiouni.

4) Annual reports of Senate Committees and Boards, 2019-2020

The written reports of the Senate committees and boards were distributed to all Senators for their review prior to the meeting and the chairs were invited to attend this meeting to answer any questions Senators might have. Those committees and boards are: Senate Admissions Committee, Board of Graduate Studies, University Disciplinary Committee, Library Committee, University Publications

Committee, University Research Board, University Committee on Student Affairs, Academic Development Committee, Senate Steering Committee, and the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs. Every committee chair presented briefly an overview of the committee's work during the previous year.

5) Elections by the Senate

Interim Provost Dawy ran the elections. He gave a short presentation explaining the election process using the "Polling" function in Zoom.

- **Senate Steering Committee (SSC)**

The SSC has seven elected members, one from each of AUB's seven faculties. These seven members serve one-year terms, so elections need to be held annually. The other two voting members of the SSC are the Secretary of the Senate and an at-large member, traditionally appointed by the president. The provost serves on the SSC as an ex-officio member. There were no elections, as only one candidate stood for each position. The representatives chosen are: Professor Rabih Sultan to represent FAS, Professor Elie Al-Chaer to represent FM, Assoc. Professor Nuhad Dumit to represent HSON, Professor Leila Musfi to represent MSFEA, Assoc. Professor Nada Melhem to represent FHS, Assoc. Professor Hadi Jaafar to represent FAFS, and Asst. Professor Alain Daou to represent OSB. The president appointed Professor Ali Abu-Alfa of FM as the at-large member of the SSC. The Senate Secretary is Associate Professor George Saad from MSFEA.

- **Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs (SCFA)**

The SCFA has one elected member from each of AUB's seven faculties, but members of SCFA serve three-year terms. Three positions became vacant due to end-of-term: the FAS, the FM and the OSB positions. These positions were filled by Assoc. Professor Greg Burris from FAS, Assoc. Professor Farid Talih from FM, and Assoc. Professor Fida Afiouni from OSB. No elections were contested. Continuing members are: Professor Riad Chedid representing MSFEA, Assoc. Professor Mohamad Abiad representing FAFS, Assoc. Professor Rima Nakkash representing FHS, and Assoc. Professor Hala Darwish representing HSON.

- **University Promotion and Tenure Committee (UPTC)**

Regardless of the faculty affiliation, two tenured full Professors are to be elected by the Senate to serve on UPTC. Nominations were solicited prior to the meeting, and 17 full Professors from the different AUB faculties were nominated. The nominees were: Nahla Hwalla, Raymond Brassier, Syrine Hout, Rima Habib, Ahmad Beydoun, Ali Bazarbachi, Anwar Nassar, Ayad Jaffa, Elie Akl, Ghassan Matar, Jamal Hoballah, Miguel Abboud, Rami Mahfouz, Ziad Bashshur, Louay Bazzi, Ibrahim Osman and Marwan Sabban.

The voting rules were as follows: each senator selects one of the candidates. If one candidate receives more than 50% of the votes, the candidate wins. Otherwise, the top two candidates receiving the largest number of votes in that first ballot will face each other in a runoff election. Professors Raymond Brassier and Rima Habib were elected to serve on UPTC.

- **Tenure Termination Committee (TTC)**

Regardless of the faculty affiliation, eight tenured Full or Associate Professors are to be elected by the Senate to serve on TTC. Nominations were solicited prior to the meeting, and 17 full Professors from the different AUB faculties were nominated. The nominees were: Anzhela Harutyunyan, Imad Saoud, Mazen Ghoul, Michel Bariche, Rima Karami Akkari, Robert Myers, Sabine El Houry, Rima Habib, Ahmad Beydoun, Assaad Eid, Ghassan Matar, Jamal Hoballah, Miguel Abboud, Rami Mahfouz, Ziad Bashshur, Rose-mary Boustany, and Wassim Masri. The same voting rules that were used for the UPTC applied.

A motion was made to table the elections of the TTC members until the proposed amendments to the "Policy and Procedures for Termination of Tenure Appointment" (TTP) are discussed and approved by the Senate, and the tenure appointment letter is finalized.

Senator Chalak explained that the TTP was not formally approved by the Senate. In the Senate meeting of May 24, 2018 a substitute motion recommending that the president present the TTP document, including the changes highlighted in yellow, to the BoT and request that the BoT consider the suggested changes highlighted in blue and green. Amendments to the Policy were re-discussed in the Senate in the November 2018 meeting, but the discussion was tabled and the item was forwarded to SCFA for further discussion and never came back to the Senate for approval.

Interim Provost Dawy shared a short presentation highlighting the development history of the TTP. In his presentation, he emphasized that the Senate only recommends or doesn't recommend policies for approval by the BoT. He then stated that the policy was approved by the BoT in the June 2018 meeting with the changes highlighted in yellow and published on the policytech. Interim Provost Dawy confirmed that amendments to the TTP policy were discussed in the November Senate meeting, and that the SCFA chair was emailed the TTP policy with suggested amendments on December 12, 2018. SCFA did not bring back the policy to the Senate for discussion. Therefore, the policy is currently undergoing amendments and was handed to SCFA to discuss and recommend updates. A senator mentioned that SCFA communicated feedback on the policy to the administration but things did not move forward.

President Khuri stated that work on the tenure letter will continue. The administration will work with SCFA to agree on the language for a short tenure appointment letter referencing appropriate university policies to be presented to the BoT for approval. The president also stated that he will hold off on activating the TTC until the tenure letter is finalized.

The motion did not pass. Vote 2020-09 (15-16-4).

The elections of the TTC members continued and the following professors were elected: Anzhela Harutyunyan, Imad Saoud, Wasim Masri, Rima Habib, Rima Karami Akkari, Rosemary Boustany, Rami Mahfouz, and Assaad Eid.

6) Senate representative to BoT

Professor Ali Chehab presented a proposal for regulating the process of electing a Senate representative to the BoT and defining the responsibilities of the elected representative. The proposal stated that the elected representative shall:

1. Be knowledgeable of the nature, needs, and concerns of the various faculties/schools, and of AUB's bylaws, policies and procedures.
2. Be familiar with the nature and process of decision making within the University.
3. Be elected for a duration of three years as a non-voting member of the Academic Affairs Committee of the BoT.
4. Attend the meetings of the BoT's Academic Affairs Committee to advocate in the best interest of the faculty in service to their respective students, community and AUB as a whole.
5. Periodically report to the Senate on her/his activities as part of the Academic Affairs Committee of the BoT.

A senator suggested that the elected representative shall attend all meetings that the BoT welcomes him/her to attend and not only restrict attendance to the Academic Affairs committee.

A motion was made to approve the proposal as presented. Vote 2020-10. The motion was approved unanimously.

7) Reports on the BOT meetings of July and September 2020

The president reported on the BoT meetings of July and September 2020. President Khuri stated that the BoT discussed the implications of the current political state in Lebanon, the economic situation, and the COVID 19 pandemic on the operation of the University. He stressed that AUB/AUBMC are witnessing a significant decline in the number of students/patients. The president also stated that the damage to AUB/AUBMC properties post the August 4 explosion is estimated to be around \$7.5M.

The BoT also discussed restructuring their board committee meetings to have 4 annual BoT meetings instead of 3 per year.

8) Revocation of Student Handbook as a University Policy

The Dean of Student affairs explained that the student handbook includes introductory information to new students. Many sections of the handbook are now included as independent policies on policytech. In order to avoid duplication, **a motion was made to revoke the Student Handbook as a standalone university policy. Vote 2020-11. The motion was approved unanimously.**

9) Amendments to the Email Policy

CIO Asfour presented amendments to the existing email policy. He explained that the presented amendments were made at the request of the Senate, and can be summarized as follows:

- Staff email accounts are typically deactivated 15 days after they leave employment at AUB. This period can be extended at the discretion of the department head if the departing employee engages in a continuing business relationship with the University that requires some type of account.
- Full-time faculty email accounts are typically deactivated 1 month after they leave employment at AUB. This period can be extended at the discretion of the Dean if the departing faculty member engages in a continuing business relationship with the University that requires some type of account.
- Email accounts for faculty and staff will be associated with one email alias (firstname.lastname@aub.edu.lb)

Senators inquired about email privileges for retiring faculty members. CIO Asfour explained that retired faculty members keep their email active for a 5 year period renewable at the discretion of their respective Dean.

Other Senators inquired about why part-time faculty members get to keep their email access for 8 months after their contract terminates. It was explained that this is done for practical purposes as part-timers might not teach every semester. Therefore their emails are maintained to guarantee continuity over different academic years

A motion was made to approve the amendments to the email policy as presented. Vote 2020-12. The motion was approved unanimously.

10) Approval of Online Graduate Diploma in Food Security

Ms. Rachel Bahn presented the online graduate diploma in food security. She stated that the online diploma builds on an existing face to face diploma. The diploma will be offered at a slightly lower tuition rate than its face-to-face counterpart. The courses completed in the online diploma can be later transferred to the graduate program in food security.

A senator highlighted some inconsistencies in the proposal document pertaining to the prerequisite requirements for admission. The senator also inquired about residency requirements and governance structure of the proposed diploma. Another senator questioned why the exams are required to be face to face while everything else is online. This might prohibit international students from signing up for such program. A senator highlighted that the tuition fees for the program should be coordinated at the University level to avoid discrepancies. Moreover, AUB should be careful when it comes to pricing online degrees/diplomas as most current regular courses are shifting to an online delivery mode due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

A motion was made to approve the Graduate Diploma in Food Security with minor modifications. Vote 2020-13. The motion passed by a vote (27-0-1).

11) Other Business

President Khuri gave an update on the state of the employee financial support program:

- The faculty financial support plan is ongoing, and eligible full time professorial track faculty members should receive their first payment by end of September 2020.
- The administration signed an agreement with the syndicate to allocate full time staff members (Grades 1 – 14) LBP supplements to their salaries.
- Many ideas are being discussed on how to augment salaries of part-time lecturers and staff members of grade 15 and above. No conclusions have been reached yet, but the intention is to finalize these plans before the end of October 2020.

The president added that AUB and AUBMC are witnessing dramatic reductions in the number of continuing students and paying patients respectively. The exact drop in the number of students will be realized mid-October once the deadline for payment of tuition fees passes. The president added that most of the departing students are paying non-scholarship students. Furthermore, most remaining students are paying at the 1508 LBP/\$. In the 2019-20 academic year, 25% of the paying students made their payment in USD. This number dropped to 3% only this academic year. Although more scholarships were received this year (693 fully funded students), AUB will face significant challenges with revenues this year.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:45 pm.

(Minutes recorded by G. Saad, Secretary of the Senate)