

**American University of Beirut  
Minutes of the University Senate  
Meeting of Friday, May 26, 2023**

**Present:** A. Abu-Alfa, I. Abou Faycal, H. Abu-Khuzam, F. Afiouni, N. Al-Akl, A. Al-Hakim, I. Baalbaki, S. Boujaoude (for F. Dahdah), P. Bou Khalil, A. Daou, Z. Dawy, N. Dumit, T. Ghaddar, A. Ghauch, G. Honein, N. Hwalla, M. Jaber, M. Jurdi (for A. Sibai), S. Karaki, M. Khraiche, S. Kharroubi, F. Khuri, M. Massoud, N. Melhem, L. Musfi, M. Nasrallah, S. Nouredine, A. Olabi, A. Sabra, R. Sawaya, K. Scheid, Y. Shaib, S. Sadek (for A. Shihadeh), Y. Sidani, R. Sultan, B. Tucker, R. Zurayk.

**Absent:** A. Al-Hroub, R. Boustany, \* J. Doumar, S. Zein-el-dine, S. Altug, A. Sibai, \* S. Mallat\*  
(\*= regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

### **1- Approval of Senate meeting minutes of March 31, 2023**

A motion was made and seconded to approve the April 28, 2023, Senate meeting minutes. The motion carried **(22 with: 0 against: 1 abstain)**.

President Khuri congratulated five Senate members for their recent promotion to the rank of Professor (K. Scheid, M. Nasrallah, N. Melhem, M. Massoud and S. Kharroubi).

### **2- Revision of Policy on Outside Activities for Faculty Members**

Dr. Abu-Alfa, Chair of SCFA, presented the revision of policy on the faculty outside activities. He started with the reasons behind the revision, which were mainly due to two specific concerns raised by faculty members, i.e.; the need for a longer leave period (two weeks instead of the current five days) and clarity on what activities are allowed. Dr. Abu-Alfa highlighted some major changes in the policy, such as the addition of "clinical care" and the introduction of terms such as "conflict of commitment." He added that the revised policy states that faculty members are expected to report any conflict of interest and should seek prior approval from the direct authority before engaging in any outside activities. Dr. Abu-Alfa stressed the importance of obtaining prior approval and disclosing the activity to the appropriate authority (chair or head of division). Dr. Abu-Alfa highlighted the main changes in the policy as follows:

- 16 days per regular semester, 4 days between the fall and spring semester and 7 days for the summer term (in case a faculty member has summer teaching) are available for outside activities.
- Outside activities performed within the office are counted as 1/4 to a full day.
- All faculty members are required to report and disclose their outside activities.
- Annual vacation days can be used for additional days, and participation in extension programs can also grant extra days.
- The number of consecutive days allowed for outside activities has increased from 5 to 14 calendar days.
- Approval is required for all outside activities, and details such as location, coverage, and purpose must be provided.
- The request goes through the department chair and, if necessary, the division head, and finally the Dean.
- The Dean's office keeps track of submitted requests.

- Disclosure of any conflict of interest is necessary, and reporting has been simplified to lessen the burden on faculty members.
- Violations of the terms may result in the withdrawal of approval.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the revision of the Policy on Outside Activities for Faculty Members.

A Senate member inquired about the need to disclose the compensation amount. President Khuri explained that the Sunshine Act mandates such disclosure for healthcare providers (physicians, nurses, clinical extenders) (amount and source) in order to protect the faculty member and the institution, in addition to enhancing transparency and reducing any potential conflicts of interest. He added that the approval won't be granted for clinical care providers if this disclosure is not present in the form. Provost Dawy added that this is not stated in the revised policy but can be added to the approval form. Another Senate member inquired if the disclosure is mandatory if no compensation is paid. President Khuri replied that it is mandatory to report it even if it is not a paid activity. A Senate member inquired about activities during the summer. Provost Dawy replied that reporting is not mandatory except in the case if a faculty member is involved in teaching at another institution. Another Senate member commented that this policy is generous in allowing more outside activity days than before, and wondered on how reporting would be supervised. Provost Dawy answered that it is the responsibility of all faculty members to follow all applicable policies and procedures, especially that reporting is explicitly mentioned in the current revised version. President Khuri and Provost Dawy reiterated the importance of reporting for proper vetting to take place, and added that such vetting is important to protect the faculty member and the institution. A Senate member asked about how outside activity days would be counted (days vs. shifts) for medical faculty members, and whether there is some flexibility with this. Dr. Abu-Alfa replied that the count would be as days, however, if more days are needed then these can be used from the annual vacation ones. Dean Sawaya commended Dr. Abu-Alfa's work on this policy and added that the old policy limits faculty members to five days of absence and the proposed policy aims to address this issue in order to improve retention within the faculty of medicine. He added that the policy requires faculty members to report their absence, activities, and duration, however it lacks the firmness when it comes to failure in reporting. A Senate member expressed concerns regarding the impact of the policy on junior faculty members who are involved in practical areas such as agriculture, environment, and NGOs focused on region-specific problems, where they might worry that if these activities need to be reported to the university, it may create a sense of oversight and hinder the advantages of working in the region. She added that faculty members may feel restricted in taking risks or collaborating with potentially controversial groups, as these activities could later be used against them in promotion evaluations and reviews. President Khuri replied that he does not share this concern, and explained that outside activities can be beneficial as long as they contribute to scholarship, teaching, and service. He added that his worry lies in situations where faculty members work for companies or entities that have a history of fraud or predatory practices and emphasized the importance of disclosure in order to develop institutional memory that allows later for distinguishing between ethical and unethical organizations.

**Vote 2022-26:** The motion carried (27 with: 0 against: 1 abstain).

### **3. Approval of Amendments of the Bylaws of the Faculty of Health Sciences & Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences**

Interim Dean Olabi presented to the Senate a minor amendment to the FAFS bylaws to include the LEAF facility under FAFS. Prof. T. Kabakian presented the amendments of the bylaws of the faculty of health sciences. The main changes presented were in Article II (section 2, items 5 and 10), Article IV (sections 1 and 3) and Article V (sections 1 to 7) to include faculty of research and public health

practice (PHP) in different faculty committees and changes in the faculty committees' compositions, in addition to a statement on conflict of interest.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the amendments of the bylaws of the Faculty of Health Sciences & Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences.

Provost Dawy suggested to delete a redundant phrase in Article II (section 2), the statement on appointment voting faculty members to the advisory committee, and the statement on conflict of interest in Article V. He added that the latter require additional discussions and clarity before deciding on possible implementation across the university. A Senate member stated that the notion of "coordinator" is not consistent with the university practice of using directors and chairpersons instead. Dr. Kabakian explained that this notion has been present before in the bylaws and was not changed in the presented amended one, and added that only program coordinators who have responsibilities that are equivalent to that of a convener or chair can be members of the administrative committee. The same Senate member suggested to harmonize the use of "professor of practice" across the university. Provost Dawy informed the Senate that a task force led by Associate Provost DeJong has been working with representatives from various faculties and schools on this issue.

Upon agreeing to omit the three phrases from the amended bylaws of FHS as suggested by Provost Dawy, the Senate voted unanimously to approve the amendments to the bylaws of FAFS and FHS.

**Vote 2022-27:** The motion carried **(28 with: 0 against: 0 abstain).**

#### **4- Approval of Amendments to the Financial Planning Policy**

Mrs. M. Mansour presented the amendments to the financial planning policy. She informed the Senate that the policy applies to all AUB's financial planning, and its purpose is to ensure the optimal use of financial resources in support of the university's mission. She added that the amended policy now contains defined terminologies such as fiscal year, balance carry forward, campus master plan, capital budget, and operating budget, in addition to undergoing of the capital budget to a review process before approval of the President and the BOT, after which it is valid for two years. Mrs. Mansour added that the operating budget includes staffing plans for both academic and non-academic positions, with a three-year vision of spending, where the strategic and financial planning steering committee and the finance committee review and discuss budget drafts before submission to the BOT. She finally informed the Senate that the financial monitoring would be conducted through quarterly forecasts, while the financial reporting would on an annual basis.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the amendments of the Financial Planning Policy.

A Senate member inquired about the non-mentioning of the different processes' timelines in the amended policy. Mrs. Mansour replied that this was done on purpose in order to give some flexibility in the planning of meetings especially during these unprecedented financial times. President Khuri commended the policy and reiterated the reply of Mrs. Mansour concerning the flexibility in arranging meetings. Provost Dawy commented that some details are not included in the policy since they are implementation processes and should be part of implementation procedures. Dean Shihadeh expressed support for the policy, and stated that it reflects the current practices and addresses the ongoing crisis, however, it should not be taken as an aspirational document but rather as a practical approach to financial management. He added that on the long run, the financial management process should hold all unit directors/deans accountable for meeting specific budget targets while taking into account the unique needs of each school or department. A Senate member inquired on how does the faculty get involved in the process. President Khuri replied that the committee includes two members from the Senate and representation from various constituencies such as students, faculty, and staff,

however, the budget is communicated only by the AUB administration. He added that the various deans play a major role in the budget planning and they do it in consultation with all stakeholders.

**Vote 2022-28:** The motion carried **(28 with: 0 against: 0 abstain)**.

### **5- New policy of Breastfeeding on Campus**

Mrs. M. Tauk, the diversity, equity and inclusion officer and Title IX coordinator, presented the new policy "Breastfeeding on Campus". Mrs. Tauk informed the Senate that her office has taken the initiative to develop a strategic plan that specifically addresses diversity, equity, and inclusion within the university, particularly, the new policy on-hand is in line with creating a more inclusive and equitable environment for all members of the university community. She informed the Senate that during the development of the policy, benchmarking was conducted against universities in the US and the EU, where it involved studying 20 universities in each region, taking into account factors such as rankings, size, and public and/or private status. She added that the benchmarking results revealed that 100% of the US universities surveyed provide breastfeeding protections and accommodations for their employees and students, while most of the EU universities offer similar practices. Mrs. Tauk added that the policy aims to create a supportive environment for breastfeeding by offering reasonable break times and designated lactation points on campus, where mobile lactation pods will be provided at three different locations on campus. She added that the policy outlines responsibilities to ensure effective implementation, where employees and students are responsible for initiating discussions with their supervisors or the Dean's office to request accommodations for breastfeeding. She added that accommodation requests would be submitted online, and approval would be granted by the Dean or the respective unit head, and any violations of the policy would be addressed following the Title IX procedures.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the new policy of Breastfeeding on Campus.

A Senate member inquired on the reason behind selecting the approved duration of breastfeeding for one year. Mrs. Tauk replied that this duration was common among most of the universities that were benchmarked. President Khuri commented that there is also a capacity issue that might arise if the duration is longer, and added that most scientific studies have been done with the one year cutoff. A Senate member mentioned that AUBMC's data shows that 1 year is usually a common breastfeeding span in Lebanon. A Senate member inquired if there would be specific and private fridges for storing the milk. Mrs. Tauk replied that mothers can use the current fridges present in the buildings. Another Senate member asked if it is possible to extend the duration beyond 1 year. Mrs. Tauk replied that this would be studied on case-by-case basis.

**Vote 2022-29:** The motion carried **(27 with: 0 against: 1 abstain)**.

### **6. New Policy on Global Engagement Secondment**

Provost Dawy presented a new policy, "Global Engagement Secondment", to the Senate that focuses on faculty mobility between the Beirut and Pafos campuses. Provost Dawy informed the Senate that the new policy is part of a global vision that emphasizes student and faculty exchange and mobility, where the latter is seen as an integral part of the design. He explained the reason behind selecting the term "secondment" instead of "leave" since the Beirut and Pafos campuses are part of one AUB. The Provost went over some important aspects of the policy as listed below:

- The duration of the secondment is typically four years, divided into two equal terms.
- Extensions beyond the four years may be granted in exceptional cases with the President's approval.
- The policy requires an agreement between the home university and the host institution.

- Approval for the secondment requires recommendations from the appropriate deans and provosts.
- The selection process is coordinated by the relevant dean, with a call for eligible faculty members.
- Faculty members' promotion and tenure clocks would continue to run in Beirut, and evaluation and engagement processes are shared between both campuses.
- Faculty members will maintain an affiliation and level of engagement with their home department.
- Financial aspects, such as salary and benefits, would be covered by the budget of the host campus, and the faculty members' health insurance would be maintained during the secondment.
- Faculty members' service during the secondment will be treated as continuous for life insurance purposes.

The Provost informed the Senate that options for maintaining pension plans are being explored, either by creating a plan in Cyprus or by prepaying premiums in Beirut.

A motion was made and seconded to approve the new policy on Global Engagement Secondment.

A Senate member inquired about the housing benefits during the secondment of a faculty member. Provost Dawy replied that this would be covered by the host institution. Another Senate member inquired about the teaching load of a faculty member at the Pafos campus. The Provost replied that this would be the same as the faculty member's teaching load at the Beirut campus. He added that any faculty member who is on secondment could maintain supervision of graduate students at the home institution. A Senate member inquired about the pension plan benefit. Provost Dawy replied that these plans are still being explored and haven't been finalized yet. The same Senate member commented about not freezing the promotion clock during secondment even though a faculty member might be overwhelmed by the service to the university. Provost Dawy replied that the promotion and tenure clock will not be frozen, but faculty members with major administrative responsibilities could make a case for an extension due to excessive service, and would be assessed on a case-by-case basis. A Senate member inquired about the eligibility of a seconded faculty member to apply for the Teaching Excellence Award, and whether the teaching clock stops during the secondment period. Provost Dawy replied that the eligibility for the award can depend on the duration of the secondment, where faculty members who spend a long period of time in the secondment may not be able to apply to the award.

**Vote 2022-30: The motion carried (28 with: 0 against: 0 abstain).**

## **7. Update on AUB-Mediterraneo**

Dr. Wassim El-Hajj, Rector of AUB – Mediterraneo, updated the Senate on the current status of applications and construction progress at the Pafos campus. Dr. El-Hajj informed the Senate that the onboarding process has been successful, and new hires have started recently. He added that the admissions team has been working closely with the Communication Office in the Beirut campus and with some media companies to promote AUB-Mediterraneo. He added that teaching needs are being identified, and assumptions are being made about the number of new students and staff required. Dr. El-Hajj informed the Senate that concerning the undergraduate and graduate programs, a good number of applications have been received, particularly from Lebanon and Nigeria, and the acceptance procedure is underway. Dr. El-Hajj presented to the Senate a student dormitory with a sports facility that has been rented. He also showed some construction progress pictures that are nearly complete. Finally, Dr. El-Hajj informed the Senate that preparations are underway for a

foundation stone ceremony on June 7, 2023 that will be attended by many university presidents from the region.

A Senate member commended the work of Dr. El-Hajj and described the work progress as a marathon. Another Senate member inquired about the lessons learned during the admission process since previous discussions at the Senate have focused on targeting a broader market that includes European countries rather than relying on students from Lebanon. President Khuri commented that it is too early to reflect on this while not forgetting that recruitment is a 3-years' time starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> grade at high school. Registrar Tucker expressed optimism regarding improvements in student enrollment numbers and commented that many parents realize the importance of sending their children to a university relatively late in the process. He added that lately there has been an increase in inquiries from parents seeking admission to AUB, and the admissions office is informing them about the Pafos campus opportunity. A Senate member inquired about the origin of the scholarships for the admitted international students. President Khuri replied that these are not coming from AUB sources but rather from international ones. A Senate member inquired about the number of students that applied to Cyprus and would have been at the Beirut campus. President Khuri replied that applications to the Pafos campus started after admissions to the Beirut campus have been finalized.

## **7. Other Business**

President Khuri and Provost Dawy updated the Senate on the approved budget plan by the BOT during their May 22, 2023 meeting that was convened earlier than planned this year. Provost Dawy presented slides that show the salary scales after increasing the fresh dollar component starting July 2023 to an average of 70% of the basic salary for all faculty and an average close to 70% for all staff. President Khuri reminded the Senate that this percentage does not include the additional components such as the pension plan amount all of which the university has maintained at 2019 rates. Provost Dawy informed the Senate that individual emails will be sent in the near future to all full-time faculty and staff to provide them with their specific salary information. He added that the AUB administration had to do some budget cuts and optimization in various areas, such as research and travel budgets in order to arrive at the 70% average for faculty members. He acknowledged the flexibility of the Deans to facilitate the needed budget cuts. He added that there will be follow-up details shared concerning PhD students, work study program students, research assistants, and teaching assistants. President Khuri and Provost Dawy concluded with the need to continue with fundraising in order to maintain financial aid support to students and enhancements to student facilities and university infrastructure, while keeping the high standards in the students' admission process.

Some Senate members commended the hard work of the AUB administration to improve the salaries of the faculty and staff.

*There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 4:55 pm.*

(Minutes recorded by T. Ghaddar, Secretary of the Senate)