

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday 29 April 2011

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, M.A. Al Alaoui, J. Andresen, S. Arnaout, F. Chaaban (for F. Moukalled), L. Choueiri, A. Dallal (chairing), I. Daya (for S. Kenney), J. DeJong, H. Diab, M. El-Sabban, L. Farhood, J. Ghafari, I. Hamati-Ataya, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, S. Isber, A. Jaffa (for M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, M. Jurdi, A. Jurjus, A. Kayssi, R. Khauli, I. Lakkis, P. McGreevy, J. Meloy (by invitation), I. Nuwayhid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, D. Wickens (by invitation).

Absent: G. Araj*, R. Brow, P. Dorman*, Z. Kassaify, R. Khayat-Toubia, S. Maamari*, P. May, G. Najjar*, W. Nasr*, T. Nizameddin, B. Shayya, M. Tabbal*, S. Talhouk, D. Wrisley.

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of the regular meeting of the senate on 25 March 2011 were approved unanimously as read.

2. *Update on financial issues:*

a) *Budgeting Process Task Force.* Provost Dallal circulated a four-page statement giving the charter of the Budgeting Process Task Force updated to December 2010. He said that the work of the task force is discussed regularly in the Board of Deans, and that there were three subcommittees concerned with (i) Budget Formulation Process, (ii) Cost Allocations Process, and (iii) Cost Leadership and Contingencies, chaired respectively by Dean McGreevy, Associate Dean Ghazzal, and Dean Nuwayhid. Dean McGreevy added that a new feature of budgeting was that certain categories would carry over from the end of the present financial year to 2011-12, although it had not yet been decided whether to take this process down to the level of individual departments or to leave it at the level of faculties. Dean Nuwayhid for his part said that the purpose of the third subcommittee was to contain costs within the framework of strategic planning, as he had explained at the previous meeting of the senate, and that the second and third subcommittees were coordinating closely. S. Sadek questioned the wisdom of allowing subcommittee meetings to be attended by designees of VPs if budgeting processes were to be consistent. Provost Dallal said that academic deans were involved in budgeting for the first time, that there was a process of learning how to address the various issues, and that it might be necessary to reconfigure the subcommittees in the future; he didn't see that designation was a problem. S. Seikaly said that for consistency the power to designate should be allowed either to every member of subcommittees or to none. In answer to a question from M. El-Sabban whether any faculty members other than deans were involved in subcommittees, Dean McGreevy said that some discussion with chairs of departments was occurring. In answer to a further question from M. El-Sabban Dean Nuwayhid said that certainly the involvement of deans which never happened before was a step in the right direction. Provost Dallal said that the provisional Chair's Manual did envisage a role in the budgeting process for departments. F. Sleiman asked if subcommittees proceeded by quorum, to which Dean Nuwayhid said that they were not structured like formal committees. VP Radulski said that the involvement of academic deans in the budgeting process followed a recommendation by the Middle States Accreditation Board to involve academics more in university governance.

b) *Revenue from new tuition policy.* D. Wickens, Director of Financial Planning and Auxiliary Services, presented three slides giving projected figures to 2014 for (i) Revenue from new tuition policy, (ii) AUBMC, and (iii) Increased investment in academic spending. Of a projected additional \$6.6m coming from increased tuition, \$4.1m would go to total financial assistance while the remaining \$2.5m (roughly 40%) would be used to cover increased expenditure on fuel and electricity – approximately \$1m he later added –, on hiring new

faculty, on advancement (the new capital campaign), and on IT. Regarding AUBMC he hoped that, with a gradually decreasing annual deficit, the budget would break even in 2013-14. Regarding academic spending he pointed out that the academic allocation would rise from 70.5% in 2008-09 to 73.4% by 2014, expenditure going towards educational needs, student aid and academic support generally. He drew attention to the fact that figures for the present fiscal year of 9 months were not comparable with those of adjoining years of 12 months. In answer to a question from S. Sadek regarding possible reduction in the fuel bill through alternative sources of energy he said that the cost containment committee, or rather the Cost Leadership and Contingencies committee mentioned above, would be looking into this but that he was not aware of any particular initiative. Both F. Chaaban and I. Osman regretted the lack of follow-up on past initiatives concerning energy. F. Sleiman said that the senate should recommend to the administration the use of alternative sources of energy from wind and sun, since it was not feasible to go on meeting increased fuel costs from tuition increases. In answer to a further question from S. Sadek regarding allocation of funds, Provost Dallal said that increased costs from a number of initiatives together added up to a considerable sum: he mentioned the reduction of teaching loads in FAS; subsidies for off-campus housing; increased research funds in each faculty; the past year's successful recruitment of new faculty, carried out within a general policy of reducing the proportion of adjunct teachers; and last year's salary adjustments, first to adjust outliers to the minimum and then to give a general raise to professorial ranks to bring most salaries close to the average. In answer to a question from I. Hamati-Ataya, D. Wickens said that it was difficult to assess whether students would continue to take fifteen credits a semester, once they had to pay for them, or would take only twelve. VP Radulski agreed with a comment made by I. Osman that the huge infrastructure of the university was under-utilized between the hours of five and eight p.m.

3. *Cost/benefit of new VP offices.* Provost Dallal said that the value of the new VP offices had to be assessed in relation to immediate costs. In the case of legal affairs, AUB used to hire a legal advisor in New York who was paid at consultancy rates. Not only is there a substantial saving by having a new VP for legal affairs on campus, but consultation with Lebanese lawyers is that much easier for the increasingly complex legal issues in university administration. In the case of IT similarly, he said that VP Khayat was working hard to reduce duplication and to improve the university's bandwidth. Giving figures for the last five years VP Radulski said that the number of vice-presidential offices at AUB compared favourably with similar colleges in the USA. S. Sadek said that while he recognized the contribution of new VPs he questioned the necessity of hiring at the level of VP, since each new office not only was expensive in itself but entailed increased and more expensive bureaucratic support: could not new initiatives be made at a lower administrative level more in touch with academic needs? VP Radulski said in reply that all vice-presidential offices have to be approved by the Board of Trustees and that there was oversight of performance. R. Smith said that it was all very well to add to higher levels of university administration but there seemed to have been no initiative to improve the quality of lower levels of departmental administration, which still operated on out-of-date job descriptions when the burden of electronic communication fell more and more heavily on department chairs. VP Radulski admitted in reply that the 24% increase in the number of administrative positions over the last five years did not match the 34% increase in the number of students, but he claimed that something was being done to address the issue. Provost Dallal added that any improvements had to be framed within the constraints of Lebanese law, but agreed that we should do more in terms of professional development and a performance reward system.

4. *Proposal on voting of degrees in the Senate by a single motion for each faculty.* The chairperson of the Senate Steering Committee, A. Abdel-Rahman, said that President Dorman had raised the issue at the last meeting of the senate. Valuable discussion time in the senate was lost by the present practice of each dean specifying the number of students under every category on the registrar's list to be granted a degree. He proposed a motion which was seconded, that **Each academic dean or her/his designate may make a single motion to approve the granting of the various degrees, including students graduating with distinction or high distinction, as given in the list provided by the registrar and approved by the faculty.** There was some

discussion of the feasibility of circulating the registrar's list before a meeting so that senators could peruse it for contentious cases, but it was pointed out that preliminary lists would have already been approved by the faculties concerned and last-minute cases did occur.

Vote 2011-17: the motion was approved unanimously.

5. *Proposal for a non-thesis option in the MA program in Middle Eastern Studies.* J. Meloy, director of CAMES, summarized the proposal which had been circulated beforehand. In answer to a question from F. Sleiman how the change would affect enrolment, J. Meloy pointed out that CAMES had no full-time faculty and depended on other departments in FAS to teach courses and supervise theses; the proposal would be an improvement in so far as a 3-credit project required the supervision of one person whereas a 9-credit thesis required two additional readers. In answer to a question from S. Sadek concerning uniformity of credit-requirements for a graduate degree, Provost Dallal said that according to the recently approved unified graduate policies, the proposal satisfied the minimum requirements for a graduate degree. I. Osman said that in his view he considered it unethical to grant the same degree to a terminal degree and to one that was preliminary to a doctoral degree. I. Hamati-Ataya said that as chairperson of the PSPA department which was called upon most by CAMES to supervise its students, she was in favour of the proposal since it would reduce the burden on PSPA faculty. A motion was proposed and seconded **to approve the proposal for a non-thesis option in the MA program in Middle Eastern Studies.** Further discussion concerned particular courses in the graduate program.

Vote 2011-18: the motion was approved unanimously.

6. *Other business.* There was none.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:50 p.m.

R. Smith, secretary