

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Wednesday, 20 June 2012**

Present: M.A. Al-Alaoui, A. Abdel-Rahman, S. Arnaout, N. Dajani, A. Dallal, P. Dorman (Chair), I. El-Hajj, H. Huijer, N. Hwalla, D. Jamali, Z. Kassaify, P. McGreevy, J. Melki, G. Najjar, T. Nizameddin, S. Nouredine, I. Nuwayhid, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, A. Jaffa (for M. Sayegh), F. Sleiman, M. Suidan, M. Tabbal, J. Usta, A. Zenger.

Absent: A. Abdelnoor*, A. Al-Kutoubi, B. Barhoumi, R. Brow, S. Chahine, M. El-Sabban, G. Farag, R. Foster, R. Habib, S. Harb*, J. Ghafari*, S. Isber, S. Kenney, R. Khayat-Toubia, I. Lakkis, G. Matar*, P. May, W. Nasr, S. Neaime, J. Radulski, S. Saleh, I. Saoud*, S. Talhouk.
(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 pm.

1. Approval of the minutes of June 1, 2012

On the minutes of June 1, 2012, page 2 under item #5 line 10, one amendment was made: to replace “---- more than the cost of a scholarship for a graduate student”, by “----- more than the cost of four scholarships for undergraduate students”.

Minutes of June 1, 2012 were unanimously approved as amended. (25-0-0)

2. Voting of degrees, June 2012 graduates.

Dean McGreevy, Dean Suidan, Dr. A. Jaffa (representing Dean Sayegh), Dr. H. Huijer, Dean Hwalla, Dean Nuwayhid, and Dean Najjar presented motions recommending the awarding of degrees (in their respective Faculties/Schools) to candidates whose names appear in the attached list of expected graduates of June 2012, including those graduating with Distinction (D) and High Distinction (HD).

**Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FAS graduates
Vote 2012-38: Motion approved (unanimous)**

**Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FEA graduates
Vote 2012-39: Motion approved (unanimous)**

**Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FM graduates
Vote 2012-40: Motion approved (unanimous)**

**Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FM NURSING graduates
Vote 2012-41: Motion approved (unanimous)**

**Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FAFS graduates
Vote 2012-42: Motion approved (unanimous)**

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to FHS graduates
Vote 2012-43: Motion approved (unanimous)

Motion: Recommend to senate and president awarding degrees to OSB graduates
Vote 2012-44: Motion approved (unanimous)

3. Other Business.

President Dorman moved agenda item #4 (other business) ahead of item #3 (on statement of the senate representative); no objection was raised. President Dorman thanked both V.P. Radulski and V.P. Kenney for their service as senate members and for their dedication to AUB in their role as vice presidents. He mentioned that we will have the opportunity to gather together to pay a fitting tribute before their departure. President Dorman also thanked Dr. Dajani for his efforts in his role as the new president of the AUB Worldwide Alumni Association.

A number of questions were raised by several senators on the issue of AUB's selection of awardees for this year's honorary doctorates. These questions included: "Who served on this committee, and who chaired the committee?", "What happened to transparency and why the senate had no opportunity to discuss and debate the issues beforehand?", "Why the senate has no say in awarding the honorary degrees although all other degrees must be voted by the senate?", "As this is a sensitive issue, why AUB awards the degree to someone who had visited Israel?", "Was this piece of information known to the committee or not?", "Was this the right time to award the degree to Dr. Donna Shalala?", and "Why AUB is not abiding by the laws of Lebanon when dealing with persons that visited Israel?".

In answering these questions, President Dorman started by stressing that according to the policy, the Provost chairs this committee which includes two trustees, faculty members, and a student from the USFC representing the student body. On the issue of transparency, he said we struggle between transparency and confidentiality. Regarding senate involvement, President Dorman indicated that AUB has benchmarked against other universities who offer honorary degrees, that we respect people's independence of thought, and that we do not expect to get 100% agreement on any honorary degree candidate. On Dr. Shalala's visit to Israel, President Dorman said that Jimmy Carter visited Israel and that we do not check if candidates had degrees from Israel, otherwise Israel would be controlling our decisions, but as an institution we cannot affiliate with individuals in Israel. President Dorman emphasized that AUB is indeed abiding by the laws of Lebanon. He stressed that we should consider the deeper meaning and determine what we are after: a greater understanding, ways to communicate with other people, compromising or not, and the value of both. Further, he asked if public discourse should be polarized and how to get people away from being polarized. On the question of whether things regarding honorary doctorates will be different a year from now, President Dorman responded that it is hard to answer this question, but the challenge is to select competent individuals worthy of the AUB honorary doctorates, but being in the meantime non-controversial. President Dorman stated that the BOT will be discussing the wider issue of honorary degrees in their meetings to be held here on the campus within the next few days.

At this point, President Dorman wished all senators a great summer, indicated that he and Provost Dallal are excusing themselves, and gave the floor to Dr. Al-Alaoui to present his statement to the senate. Both the President and the Provost left the meeting.

4. Statement of the senate representative to the Board of Trustees' June meeting.

Dr. Al-Alaoui distributed a hard copy of his statement, then proceeded by reading it in its entirety. A lengthy discussion followed, during which a large number of senators made comments on the statement presented.

Some of the comments made by the various senators included; the statement includes many allegations and is full of accusations, this statement is clearly not reflective of most faculty members opinions or perceptions, most of the issues mentioned in this statement were not discussed in the senate and were not on the agenda for senate meetings held this year, such a statement can be perceived as if the administration and faculty are on a collision course yet this is not the case and if Dr. Alaoui feels so then he should have proposed a solution such as forming a faculty/administrators committee to look for ways to solve disagreements, we need to start with both administration and faculty (not the BOT) to solve any disagreements, the statement is not balanced as it is full of criticism and accusations with no proposals for solutions, by not being focused, not balanced, not showing the way forward indicating what faculty aspire for we are losing the trustees' interest, and that we should move towards dialogue and the approach should be constructive.

Some senators thanked Dr. Alaoui for his efforts, but argued that, instead of criticizing the administration without giving suggestions for a solution, some suggestions such as a good retirement package for faculty members would be much more useful.

Dr. Al-Alaoui indicated that before writing his statement he sent a message to all AUB faculty members asking them for the issues they would like to be brought to the attention of the trustees, and he got some responses from a few colleagues, and that in his statement he tried to highlight and focus on certain issues. He added, Faculty members represent a key group and they should be respected. Dr. Al-Alaoui emphasized that, in the spirit of the Arab Spring, we should speak out about such issues and should not be afraid, otherwise we will not be able to move forward or solve some of these issues.

Other senate members commented that this is an illusive statement, disagree with most of the statement as it is unfair, on housing a committee was formed and recommendations were made and on education AUB cannot force schools to accept certain students, point #4 of the statement sounds like gossip, this statement is full of accusations, this is not the senate statement but it is your (Dr. Alaoui's) statement, and the sentence "...turning the senate into a rubber stamp" is incorrect, inappropriate, and is humiliating to all members of senate. Regarding voting on the statement, most senators indicated that voting is not necessary, and no motion was made in relation to this statement. Thus, no voting took place.

A motion to adjourn was made and seconded.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:40pm.

A. Abdel-Rahman, Secretary Pro Tem.