

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday 25 March 2011**

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, M.A. Al Alaoui, J. Andresen, G. Araj, L. Choueiri, J. DeJong, H. Diab, P. Dorman (chairing), M. El-Sabban, L. Farhood, I. Hamati-Ataya, N. Hwalla, S. Isber, A. Jaffa (for M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, A. Jurjus, Z. Kassaify, A. Kayssi, R. Khauli, P. McGreevy, F. Moukalled, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, M. Tabbal, S. Talhouk.

Absent: S. Arnaout, A. Dallal*, R. Brow, J. Ghafari*, H. Huijer*, M. Jurdi*, S. Kenney*, R. Khayat-Toubia, I. Lakkis*, S. Maamari*, P. May*, G. Najjar*, W. Nasr*, B. Shayya, D. Wickens, D. Wrisley*. (* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

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

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

President Dorman expressed his sorrow at the passing away of Provost Dallal's mother the previous day.

2. *Voting of degrees, February 2011 graduates.* The Senate voted unanimously to grant degrees to the February 2011 graduates as listed by the Registrar's Office and presented serially by the respective Deans or their representatives (**vote 2011-14**).

3. *Proposed amendments to the bylaws of the Senate Steering Committee.* A. Abdel-Rahman, chairperson of the SSC, introduced the following two amendments to the SSC bylaws, the first concerning its functions, the second its composition:

1. The agenda of the first meeting of the senate in an academic year will be set by the members of the outgoing Senate Steering Committee.
2. The provost is ex-officio member.

He proposed two motions, which were seconded, to approve these amendments. He added that the first amendment was necessary to clarify who sets the agenda of the first meeting of the senate, given that membership of the SSC is by election annually at the first meeting of the senate in an academic year while the term of some senators ends on the last day of an academic year. I. Osman said that other committees might benefit from similar amendments, such as the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs. After discussion the amendment was modified to read: "**The agenda of the first meeting of the senate in an academic year will be recommended to the chairperson of the senate by the members of the outgoing Senate Steering Committee**".

Vote 2011-15: the motion was approved unanimously.

Concerning the second amendment, S. Seikaly asked why the provost should attend SSC meetings as an ex-officio member rather than by invitation. F. Sleiman added that senate agendas are set by senators elected to the SSC in consultation with the chairperson of the senate who in principle is always available. A. Abdel-Rahman explained that the provost's presence at meetings is necessary in order to facilitate the SSC's work since, as senior academic in the university, informed of the work of academic and administrative committees, he is in a position to advise whether an issue can be brought before the senate in time or not. After further discussion the amendment was modified to read: "**The provost is a non-voting ex-officio member.**" On F. Sleiman's request, voting was by secret ballot.

Vote 2011-16: the motion was approved (for 23, against 5).

4. *Election of a senate representative to the meeting of the Board of Trustees in June 2011.* The names of I. Osman, S. Sadek and S. Talhouk were proposed. I. Osman and S. Talhouk withdrew. S. Sadek was elected.

5. *Sabbatical leaves.* The chairperson of the Senate Steering Committee, A. Abdel-Rahman, said that, in view of the way that research leaves had been granted to junior faculty and more senior faculty over the last few years, clarification was needed on three issues:

- a. Entitlement or right: is it a right of faculty members to paid research leave ('sabbatical leave') of one semester after three years' continuous service or of one year after six years' continuous service?
- b. Duration of leave;
- c. Resources to cover faculty members on leave.

In answer to a question from the President, A. Abdel-Rahman added that he was not proposing a motion for the senate's approval but was raising these issues for the administration to clarify before the senate the practice of granting sabbatical leaves. F. Sleiman said that sabbatical leave is a benefit of faculty members, not a right. President Dorman said that granting leave was conditional on the presentation of a research proposal, and therefore could not be considered a right of appointment. J. Andresen said that he was unclear on the reason for bringing the item before the senate since the faculty manual states clearly that faculty members are entitled to apply for paid research leave after so many years' service. J. DeJong said that nevertheless clarity was needed whether the grant of one year's research leave was exceptional, after so many years' service, or normal. The deans of FHS and FAFS said that recent practice in their faculties had been to grant a full year's sabbatical leave provided that the requisite conditions were fulfilled. Dean Hwalla added that, as stated in the faculty manual, faculty members are entitled to apply for paid research leave after a certain period and that judgment is exercised on each application; therefore sabbatical leave is not a right. Dean McGreevy said that in FAS the grant of one year's research leave had been exceptional. On the issue of resources, President Dorman said that, AUB being a research university, resources will in future be found to cover the teaching of a faculty member on sabbatical leave. He asked deans to take note of the points clarified. On a question from A. Kayssi, the president added that a faculty member could remain at AUB during sabbatical leave.

6. *Update on financial issues.* President Dorman said that a detailed update on the work of the budget process task force could not be given in the absence of VP Kenney but he would try to answer questions as best he could. S. Sadek said that an important issue concerned budget waste since students had been promised last June that not only would financial aid be increased but the process of budgeting would be reformed. President Dorman said that a committee had been formed last summer in consultation with the University Student Faculty Committee (USFC) to consider appeals on the process of granting financial aid, and that the provost had been meeting with this committee. Dean Nuwayhid said that a sub-committee on cost containment had been formed, charged with examining how things actually work on campus in the various administrative and academic units, a challenging task in view of the complexity of issues and the range of data involved. The sub-committee was still considering how best to go about its work, one recommendation being that a member of the sub-committee should be an expert on financial affairs familiar with auditing and other processes; it was also considering examining a random sample of units rather than examining every unit. I. Osman said that he was currently involved in a research project on assessing the value of an institution and he would be happy to share his findings with the committee. In answer to a question from S. Isber why it was necessary to have a separate committee on cost containment when there was a VP on financial affairs, Dean Nuwayhid said the idea had been to involve the deans with the overall financial process. In response to a suggestion from S. Talhouk that cost containment should become part of a unit's strategic plan, President Dorman said that indeed units had to prepare strategic goals and direct resources to meet those goals. S. Sadek said that the issue was not only cost containment but also the containment of financial waste and unnecessary overheads; students would be happy with reforms if efficiency improved. I. Hamati-Ataya said that students should be properly informed of the procedures of granting financial aid and of appeal. President Dorman agreed that the

process needs to become more transparent. Dean Nizameddin said that there was already a Financial Aid Oversight Committee tasked with examining the process by which aid was granted, not the amount given. He added that one of the difficulties in Lebanon was the absence of transparent tax records.

5. *Other business.*

1. President Dorman reported on the recent meeting of the Board of Trustees. Two new trustees have been appointed, Abdulsalaam Haykal and Abdullah Al-Thani. The BOT had approved granting six honorary doctorates this year; the appointment of Dr. Makram Suidan as Dean of FEA, to start in the Fall; a new Media Studies degree in FAS; and significant additions to the bylaws.
2. President Dorman reported that a new Task Force on Tenure was in process of being formed, whose membership would be drawn from both old members and new. He would circulate to senators the Task Force's charge after the meeting. The Task Force would engage with faculties during the remainder of the Spring semester and would draw up draft proposals next winter.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:45 p.m.

R. Smith, secretary