

**American University of Beirut  
Minutes of the University Senate  
Meeting of Friday, 28 October 2011**

**Present:** A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel Rahman, M. A. Al-Alaoui, A. Al-Kutoubi, S. Chahine, P. Dorman (chairing), I. Elhadj, M. El Sabban, N. Ghaddar (acting Provost), S. Harb, N. Hwalla, S. Isber, D. Jamali, Z. Kassaify, G. Matar, P. McGreevy, G. Najjar, S. Neaime, T. Nizameddin, S. Nouredine, J. Radulski, M. Salameh, S. Saleh, I. Saoud, S. Sadek, R. Saumarez Smith, A. Shihadeh, F. Sleiman, M. Suidan, M. Tabbal, S. Talhouk, J. Usta, A. Zenger

**Absent:** A. Dallal\*, M. Sayegh, I. Nuwayhid\*, H. Huijer\*, R. Brow, G. Farag\*, B. Barhoumi, S. Kenney, R. Khayat-Toubia, P. May, W. Nasr, N. Dajani\*, J. Ghafari, S. Arnaout, R. Habib\*

(\* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2 pm.

**1. *Approval of minutes***

Minutes of June 22, 2011 meeting were approved as corrected.

**2. *Observing a minute of silence to honor former colleague, Professor Emeritus Kamal Salibi***

Professor Seikaly, representing FAS, read a memorial to Professor Salibi and asked that the letter be sent to Professor Salibi's family and be included in the minutes of the meeting.

President Dorman asked the Senate to stand in a moment of silence in honor and memory of Professor Salibi (Professor Salibi's memorial letter attached).

**3. *Welcoming new Senate members***

President Dorman thanked Professor Smith for his service as secretary of the Senate for the past several years, and he thanked Professor Talhouk for accepting to serve in this role. President Dorman then introduced and welcomed Dean Suidan, acting VP Farag, and newly elected senators.

**4. *Report on the June 2011 meeting of the Board of Trustees***

President Dorman gave a summary presentation about main decisions and actions taken by the Board of Trustees. He informed the Senate that the BOT elected Ms. Randa Farouk El-Sayed Haffer, Mr. Said Samih Darwazah, and Mr. Neme Sabbagh as Trustees. He indicated that the BOT approved the following: promotions and new appointments, the launch of new academic programs namely, MS in Human Resources Management, MS in Finance, and Non-thesis option in the MA Program in Middle

Eastern Studies, the establishment of new departments of Psychology in FAS and Neurology in FM, and the 2011-2012 budgets.

**5. *Elections to the Senate Steering Committee and vacancies on the Faculty Affairs Committee***

President Dorman called for nominations from the floor and the following names were nominated by senators: Profs. Habib from FHS, Arnaout and Usta from FM, Kassaifi and Sleiman from FAFS, Al-Alaoui from FEA, Isber from FAS, and Jamali from OSB.

Profs. Habib, Al-Alaoui, Isber, and Jamali won by acclamation while Profs. Usta and Sleiman won by elections.

Profs. Saleh from FHS, Kutoubi from FM, Sadek from FEA, and Chahine from OSB were nominated to serve on the Faculty Affairs Committee and won by acclamation.

Continuing members on the Faculty Affairs Committee are Profs. Tabbal and Sleiman.

Prof. Elhajj was nominated to serve as Senate at Large member of the Faculty Affairs Committee and won by acclamation.

**6. *Proposal for PhD in Biomedical Science***

Prof. Safieddine explained the process that was adopted by the Board of Graduate Studies to review the proposal. This included the formation of a task force and the consultation of external reviewers. He indicated that the proposal presented by the FM to the Senate has been revised to address all issues and comments raised by the task force and the external reviewers.

Prof. Jaffa summarized the proposal in a power point presentation in which he presented the mission of the program, the objectives and disciplines covered, academic governance, and structure of the curriculum.

The floor was open to discussion and the following clarifications were given to inquiries made by senators:

- The number of required credits (50 credits) is for holders of BSc degrees. Those who hold an MSc degree will be required to take 20 credits.
- A mechanism has been put in place to enforce the rotation of students in different laboratories.
- In the future an MD/PhD program will be developed to accommodate MD students.
- The capacity of the program is 15 students sponsored by the university however this number can be higher if students are supported by scholarships or self-financed.

- The program faculty will rely on partnerships and contacts to secure post-doctoral positions for the PhD graduates who are then expected to return to the region and fill positions in the various academic institutions of the region.
- The interfaculty program was developed in collaboration with FAFS and will seek in the future to include the Biology department which offers a PhD in Cell and Molecular Biology at FAS. There are also plans to approach FEA to discuss biomedical engineering.
- The plan is to launch the program in 2012-2013 and no delays are expected. Renovation of DTS will not affect the launch of the program which is not expected to reach full capacity in terms of student number in the first few years.
- A decanting strategy has been put in place and a temporary location for DTS faculty has been identified.

**Motion: to approve the proposal for a PhD degree in Bio-Medical Sciences**

**Vote 2012-01: Motion approved unanimously**

*President Dorman left the meeting and asked Dean Najjar to act on his behalf as chair of the Senate.*

**7. *Integrated Faculty Bylaws***

Associate Provost Ghaddar representing Provost Dallal gave a background on the review process of the Integrated Faculty Bylaws which included a faculty vote in every School. She indicated that reviews from all Faculties were incorporated except few changes that needed Senate approval. These changes are:

**Amendment 1: Page 22, UG Student Academic Affairs Committee Composition**

A proposed sentence by Richard Smith stipulating non participation of the student member was presented to read “In sensitive or confidential cases the Chair has the right...”

The floor was open to discussion and the following points were raised /discussed:

- The term sensitive needs to be defined and a mechanism deciding whether an issue is sensitive needs to be put in place.
- The current practice is that the Chair decides if an issue is sensitive when students are reluctant to discuss in detail their situation and they prefer not having other students know about it.
- The Chair should not be given blanket power; the process should be more specific and allow the student representative to question the Chair’s decision.
- The Chair should be given enough power to ensure confidentiality.

- Students should initiate the process of requesting confidentiality of his/her case; this can be incorporated in the petition form.
- Some students prefer to have a student representative in the committee.

**Motion: to modify text on page 22, UG Student Academic Affairs Committee Composition, to read as follows “ ...Upon request of petitioning student the Chair has the right to ask the student representative to withdraw from the discussion”**

**Vote 2012-02: Motion approved (23-1-0)**

**Amendment 2:** Page 25. GSC Composition B: “ appointed” is replaced by “invited” and the chairs will be non-voting. The proposed sentence reads as follows:

*“At least four chairs / conveners of departments/tracks or coordinators of graduate programs invited by the Dean as ex officio (non-voting) members. The number of chairs/conveners is determined by the faculty/school.”*

The floor was open to discussion and the following points were raised/discussed:

- GSC studies curricular issues and petitions and there is no need for chairs to be present in all meetings unless Deans invite them when there is a need.
- Chairs have the prerogative to attend so this change is not needed.
- The load of chairs is high with many committees to serve on.
- Even with only four chairs attending the committee becomes too large especially in large schools such as FAS. In contrast smaller schools may not even have four chairs.
- One can elect the chairs that will serve on the committee.
- The number of invited chairs should be deleted.
- Change to non-voting ex officio otherwise it appears as if ex officio are normally non-voting.
- There are too many chairs in FAS and the faculty changed it to non-mandatory and non-voting so that they do not outnumber elected members.

**Motion: to modify text on page 25, GSC Composition B, to read as follows “Chairs / conveners of departments/tracks or coordinators of graduate programs invited by the Dean as non-voting ex officio members. The number of chairs/conveners is determined by the faculty/school.”**

**Vote 2012-03: Motion approved (23-1-0)**

**Amendment 3.** Page 29, Research committee function f, the phrase “except in FAS” is added and the sentence has been modified to read: “it shall review all applications for paid research leaves for further recommendation to the dean and advisory committee except in FAS”.

The floor was open to discussion and the following points were raised/discussed:

- This rule should be applied to all schools including FAS because the research committee is more specialized in its evaluation and feedback than the advisory committee. The two committees are complimentary.
- Requiring the two committees to be involved will result in too many administrative layers. As long as replacement for teaching and other academic duties are sorted out at the department level there is no need for additional steps.
- Current practice is that all leave requests are dealt with in the advisory committee. The research committee is overwhelmed with proposals evaluation and mainstreaming.
- Since both advisory and research committees are advisory to the Dean why not let the latter decide how to channel the applications?
- Sometimes leaves are used to write books and not conduct research.
- Since faculty members are eligible for such leaves the decision should be primarily based on eligibility.
- It is important to ensure that academic work resulting from leave is of value.
- Departments are the best judges and their role should not be underestimated otherwise we will be creating unnecessary administrative load. A research leave is a faculty right pending departmental approval.
- Discussion is about what happens after department approval.
- Purpose should be to bypass department bias.
- The dean needs advice from other than the department.

**Motion: To add “except in FAS” on page 29, Research Committee, function f. to read as follows:**

**“It shall review all applications for paid research leaves for further recommendation to the dean and Advisory Committee except in FAS.**

**And to amend the faculty manual Chapter 3, Section H.2 on procedures of paid research leave to read as follows in the policy statement: “The dean is responsible for reviewing and recommending or not recommending to the provost all periodic paid research leave plans after considering the recommendations of the appropriate department chairperson, the recommendation of the Faculty Research Committee and/or the Faculty Advisory Committee following refereed evaluation of the project.”**

**Vote 2012-04: Motion approved unanimously**

Following approval of the three aforementioned amendments Dr. Sleiman indicated that he had several inquiries and comments related to the document. Dean Najjar suggested that Dr Sleiman presents all the points he wished to cover after which the senators will decide which of the issues presented to discuss. This was accepted by the floor. When all inquiries/comments were presented Associate Provost Ghaddar indicated that all points of editorial nature do not need a vote and will be incorporated in the document.

Based on the remarks of Dr Sleiman, the following modifications were incorporated in the document:

Changes were made consistent with current practice of having representation of elected faculty from different departments. This is stipulated in most committees and is the current practice. It is now incorporated into the UG Student Academic Affairs Committee and the Library Committee.

Page 22 UG Student Academic Affairs Committee, composition of elected faculty: FAFS (two from different departments)

Page 29 Library Committee composition: “Three elected faculty members from different departments in FAFS, FEA, FM, and OSB and four elected members in FAS:

Page 31, FAS Student Disciplinary Affairs, Functions, item a is removed. “a. The committee shall deal with any aspect of student life referred to it by the dean.” This task is not part of the functions of the disciplinary committee.

Dean Najjar asked the senators whether they would like to further discuss any of the points raised. The senators proposed to discuss the issue of whether chairs should or should not be entitled to serve on advisory committees. The floor was open to discussion and the following points were raised /discussed:

- We should avoid, whenever possible, electing chairs on advisory committees because they already serve on administrative committee.
- The promotion process limits the contribution of the chair to one venue.
- It was noted though that one cannot prevent chairs from wanting to serve on advisory committees nor can one prevent faculty members to vote for chairs.

**Motion: To amend statement on advisory committee to read: “whenever possible chairs should not be allowed to serve on advisory committees”**

**Vote 2012-05: Motion defeated (8-14-0)**

**Motion: to approve unified bylaws including editorial corrections presented during the meeting and amendments approved by the Senate.**

**Vote 2012-06: Motion approved (20-2-0)**

#### **8. Presentation of annual reports:**

Committee chairs and/or representatives of chairs presented the annual reports of their respective committees (annual reports attached)

Meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm

Salma Talhouk, secretary