

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, April 29, 2022

Present: S. Abdulrahim, A. Abu-Alfa, H. Abu-Khuzam, F. Afiouni, A. Al-Hroub, T. Amin, I. Baalbaki, B. Bashour, S. BouJaoude, R-M. Boustany, G. Burris, R. Chedid, L. Choueiri, A. Daou, Z. Dawy, J. Doummar, N. Dumit, S. Elbassuoni, L. Farhoud, T. Ghaddar, A. Ghauch, S. Guler Altug, H. Jaafar, M. Jaber, K. Kassak, S. Kharroubi, M. Khraiche, F. Khuri, L. Musfi, M. Nasrallah, S. Nouredine, A. Olabi, H. Puzantian, Y. Shaib, A. Shihadeh, A. Sibai, Y. Sidani, R. Sultan, B. Tucker, D. Wickens, F. Ziyadeh (on behalf of R. Sawaya).

Regrets: N. Melhem

Absent: M. Aouad-Maroun, M. Darwish, N. Hwalla, S. Mallat.

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 pm.

1. Approval of April 1, 2022 Senate meeting minutes

A motion was made to approve the minutes of the senate meeting of April 1, 2022 and seconded. The motion passed and the minutes were approved as circulated. **Vote 2021-37: 33 (in favor) 0 (against) 0 (abstentions)**

2. Election of Senate Representative to deliver a statement at the June 2022 BoT meeting

M. Khraiche accepted the nomination to serve as senate representative to deliver a statement at the June 2022 meeting of the Board of Trustees. There being no other candidates, M. Khraiche was elected by acclamation.

3. Update on University financial planning

President Khuri introduced this item. He pointed out that the administration has been working with the Board of Trustees, students, faculty and staff to craft a proposal for a schedule of adjustments to the currency in which tuition will be received in the coming years. He noted that the proposal has been improved based on these discussion with various stakeholders. He commented that while other institutions have already begun requiring that 100% of tuition be paid in fresh dollars, we feel we need to balance the needs of students, staff, faculty and the institution as a whole: we need to continue to be affordable as much as possible but we also need to remain sustainable; we don't want to discriminate between current and new students; and we need to retain faculty and staff. Thus, the proposal is to adopt an incremental approach, increasing the fresh dollar component of the tuition over the next three years: starting with 60% in the coming academic year, then moving to 80% and then 100% over the subsequent two years. But those who earn locally and whose net family income is less than \$100,000 will be given up to 40% in tuition support.

CFO D. Wickens then briefly presented an update on the financial planning for the coming three years. The full presentation was not considered necessary since most senators had attended recent town hall meetings at which the full presentation was delivered. He shared the guiding principles of the financial plan: to attend to and accommodate the financial needs of students; to ensure a dignified income for faculty and staff; and to achieve a balanced operating budget. He pointed out that scholarships have been steadily progressing over the last 10 years. He reiterated the plan to incrementally adjust the fresh dollar component of tuition fees from 60% to 80% to 100% over the next three academic years. He clarified that the financial plan is based on a conservative enrolment projection for the next two years and then a less conservative projection for 2024 and 2025 enrolment. Financial aid will be gradually increased from M\$ 30.3 (the current figure) to M\$ 93 by 2025.

President Khuri emphasized that this gradual dollarization was necessary for AUB's sustainability and affirmed the administration's commitment to implement this transition fairly. He then opened the floor to senators for questions and comments.

A senator wanted to check that this was the same presentation seen earlier in the USFC. Another senator commented that some colleagues at FAS were concerned that the fresh dollar component of their salary would not increase if it is calculated purely as a percentage rather than based on a floor of \$20,000. Another senator asked for more clarity with regard to the calculation of the fresh dollar component in the coming years. A senator was concerned that while there was an alarming number of applications for leaves, while AUB was expanding abroad and expressed confusion about the university's priorities and requested clarification. Another senator asked for an update on how the town halls went and expressed particular interest in the one conducted with the students. This senator expressed concern that this dollarization would disproportionately hurt those students with modest financial means. A senator thanked President Khuri for the town hall meetings, but was surprised that attendance at these meetings was not higher. This senator also requested that faculty be informed as soon as possible about the details of faculty and staff salaries for the coming period.

In response to these questions and comments, Provost Dawy pointed out that the administration was still working on some specifics, but clarified that the approach to the adjustment of the dollar component of salary is to adjust the brackets such that all thresholds would rise. He clarified that the details will be announced in June. President Khuri added that we are making these adjustments carefully so that they are made fairly across the board for all faculty and staff. Provost Dawy acknowledged that we are continuing to receive leave requests with the highest number of these in FAS and MSFEA. Other faculties were more stable. He pointed out that many of these (about half) are leave renewals. He added that AUB is also recruiting and that there were a number of searches underway and that faculty lines were being opened strategically. President Khuri commented that AUB had to protect its mission and emphasized that very few cases of requests for second year leaves were approved, arguing that this was in the interest of the university. He also pointed out that some faculties have voted to block leaves entirely asking faculty to make the choice to stay or resign. Turning to the issue of AUB's global expansion, President Khuri clarified that the AUB-Mediterraneo (AUB-M) project

was not embarked on to address financial challenges, but he pointed out that the project is being financed from savings in capital budgets already designated for capital projects and that the AUB-M project would be in the black by year six. It also opens opportunities to apply for European grants. Moreover, it is an opportunity to attract students and faculty who want to be at AUB but nervous about the situation in the country. He emphasized that this project doesn't hurt AUB's operating budget. MSFEA Dean A. Shihadeh added that it was clear that the AUB-M campus was not a significant drain on the budget, adding that these expansions are a good investment and the idea that we are the first Arab university going to Europe is a very powerful message for potential funders. Commenting on the effect of dollarization of the socioeconomic profile of the student population, President Khuri responded that AUB is not abandoning diversity. He said that the town halls with faculties, staff and students went very well in his opinion; students had a chance to air their concerns and ask their questions and he was able to clarify that students will be able to apply for financial aid if they do not have their own resources. He accepted that if he was in their shoes he would be nervous, but pointed out more details are forthcoming and would hopefully be reassuring. Commenting on the meeting with students, Vice Provost and Registrar B. Tucker added that in his experience the atmosphere of the meeting was positive in comparison to similar situations in other universities abroad when students have voiced concerns. President Khuri clarified that students will be informed of details in tuition adjustments soon and faculty and staff will be informed about salaries by June, soon after the June 3rd, 2022 meeting of the Board of Trustees. He concluded that in all cases, those with acute concerns and personal challenges should talk to the administration and can be supported through the Heroes Funds.

4. Approval of proposed amendments to the USFC Bylaws

Deputy Provost Choueiri presented amendments to the USFC Bylaws for the Senate's consideration and approval. She clarified that a request was received from USFC to increase representation of HSON (both in terms of faculty and student representation). These proposed changes were voted on and approved unanimously by USFC in its meeting of March 9th 2022. Articles in the attached USFC bylaws (circulated to the senate before the meeting) were revised accordingly.

A motion was made to approve changes to the USFC Bylaws and the motion was seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Vote 2021-38: 33 (in favor) 0 (against) 0 (abstentions)**

5. Proposal for an Online Professional Graduate Diploma in Foundations and Applications of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science between FAS and MSFEA

It was determined that the proposal for an Online Professional Graduate Diploma in Foundations and Applications of Artificial Intelligence and Data Science between FAS and MSFEA did not need approval by the senate but instead needed to go to the Board of Deans for approval.

6. Proposal for an Online Executive Masters in Health Care Leadership (EMHCL)

K. Kassak presented an overview of the proposal for an Online Executive Masters in Health Care Leadership. He provided an overview of the history of this program (which included 3 cohorts so far starting in 2017). He clarified that the situation in Lebanon forced the program to move online. The idea is to transform this into a blended program and then fully online. He clarified that there is great interest in the program, which would continue to train participants in the knowledge and the skills targeted despite the transition online; the program uses the same competencies of the face-to-face program and will recruit students from the region where we have already seen great interest. The program lasts for 18 months and involves 45 credits. The same human resources (both “in-house” faculty and affiliates) that we have been depending on already will be used. K. Kassak outlined the approach to assessment, presented an estimated budget and projected revenue. The floor was opened for discussion.

One senator asked what the rationale was for offering some courses as synchronous sessions given that this might not be convenient for some. K. Kassak clarified that “synchronous” is used here to refer to lectures and discussions done online. He clarified that indeed there will be no courses that will be offered fully asynchronously. He pointed out that this is needed to meet the outcomes of the course. Provost Dawy agreed that the synchronous elements decrease the cohort size and commented the size of the program is a concern. K. Kassak added that MEHE will not allow us to go fully asynchronous at this point and commented that the perception of the program around the region is also a concern; synchronous delivery ensures the good reputation of the program and adherence to MEHE regulations. He added that the size of the program (45 credits) was needed for accreditation. Associate Provost Afiouni asked whether the synchronous components were all online, sharing that a hybrid model with on campus residency has been very successful in the past with some programs at OSB. K. Kassak responded that this was prohibitive for international students (e.g. those from Kuwait, UAE, and KSA) given travel restrictions.

A motion was made to approve the proposal for an Online Executive Masters in Health Care Leadership and was seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Vote 2021-39: 33 (in favor) 0 (against) 0 (abstentions)**

7. Proposal for a New General Education Program

B. Bashour presented an overview of the proposal for a New General Education Program at AUB. She went over the approach taken to preparing the proposal and the many stakeholders consulted. She presented the new GE mission statement (highlighting differences with the current GE mission), new requirements and how this will affect current GE courses. The floor was then opened for discussion.

One senator asked what the implications of this proposal were for the planned twin campuses for Pafos and Dubai. B. Bashour clarified that this new program was used as the basis for the GE proposed for AUB-M with minor adjustments as appropriate (e.g. the Arabic and Greek studies

requirements). Associate Provost Afiouni thanked B. Bashour for the exciting proposal and asked if there was a plan for communicating these changes to the various stakeholders. B. Bashour responded that the plan was to launch in 2023 and that planning for communication about the new program is now underway and we will be ready when the new GE is launched. She pointed out that a film is being prepared about the new GE. Another senator commented that communicating effectively about the Arabic language requirement is very important. Another senator commended B. Bashour for this interesting program and agreed with the importance of Arabic component, adding that the ethics component was also very important. President Khuri concluded the discussion, commenting that he is looking forward to the launch of this excellent new GE program.

A motion was made to approve the proposed new General Education program. This was seconded. The motion passed unanimously. **Vote 2021-40: 33 (in favor) 0 (against) 0 (abstentions)**

8. Policy on maximum compensated for Overload Teaching, Administrative Service and Research

Provost Dawy introduced this item by pointing out that various questions have been received from faculty regarding the 3/9 limit for supplementary compensation beyond basic salary. Currently, compensation from overload teaching, grants, and administrative stipends are included in this calculation of maximum supplementary compensation. The question has been: why do we include the administrative stipend in this? Provost Dawy indicated that this issue was looked into and a formal policy change was initiated to exclude the administrative duties. Another minor change to the text of the policy was to change “research” to “funded projects.” What was on the table here was to approve the revised policy on maximum compensation for Overload Teaching, Administrative Service and Research. The floor was opened for discussion.

One senator commented that the current situation seems to be different in current NIH guidelines. Provost Dawy explained that this was not the case because those guidelines allow payment through 4.5/9 model of payment in lieu of salary. President Khuri agreed that there is no contradiction between these new policies and the ability to pay on NIH grants. Another senator asked how it is possible to have an administrative position and a grant that might seem to imply more than 100% of budgeted work. Provost Dawy clarified that the spirit of this change is that the compensation for administrative work is not for time but for the quality of the work. Deputy Provost Choueiri added that the PPRC had also raised this question, but it was clarified that colleagues with administrative duties get a course release for the time they are spending on administration; the payment is understood to be more about recognition than compensation for the workload. Another senator commented that this was a welcome change.

A motion was made to approve the proposed changes to the policy on maximum compensation for Overload Teaching, Administrative Service and Research and seconded. The motion passed. **Vote 2021-41: 32 (in favor) 0 (against) 1 (abstention)**

9. Other business

A senator asked when the new salary scheme was to begin. President Khuri explained that it would begin by no later than September 1, 2022. The Provost added that details will be shared in June.

Another senator asked whether there were any updates about the conditions at the banks, because this senator was told that a transfer from AUB was rejected. President Khuri directed the senator speak to Imad Dayya or Drew Wickens.

Another senator said that we had an agreement with a bank in Cyprus but has discovered that it wasn't possible to transfer US dollars from there to banks in Lebanon. The senator inquired about who to contact to figure this out. President Khuri suggested that the senator send the concern to Wassim El-Hajj; he might be able to offer some guidance.

Dean Shihadeh asked whether it is possible to confirm that we should each be able to access LL5,000,000 since AUB sends this amount per individual. Provost Dawy confirmed that yes, this was correct.

Another senator asked if home leave were still on hold. President Khuri responded that this will remain frozen this year until we reach some financial equilibrium.