

**American University of Beirut**  
**Final Minutes of the University Senate**  
**Meeting of Friday, October 30, 2020**

**Present:** M. Abiad, A. Abu-Alfa, F. Afiouni, E. Al-Chaer, A. Al-Hroub, T. Amin, H. Auji, I. Baalbaki, T. Bazi, G. Burris, A. Chalak, R. Chedid, A. Daou, H. Darwish, Z. Dawy, N. Dumit, N. El-Cheikh, H. El Rassy, M. Farah, L. Farhoud, A. Harutyunyan, S. Isber, H. Jaafar, K. Kabalan, F. Khuri, S. Mallat, N. Melhem, R. Mohtar, L. Musfy, M. Nachar, R. Nakkash, M. Nasrallah, T. Nezameddin, G. Saad, N. Saliba, A. Shihadeh, A. Sibai, Y. Sidani, R. Sultan, F. Talih, B. Tucker, G. Zaatari

**Absent:** S. Zein-el-dine\*

(\* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m. The meeting was held virtually using "Zoom".

**1) Approval of September 25, 2020 Senate meeting minutes**

The minutes of September 25, 2020 were approved by a vote. **Vote 2020-14 (30-0-1).**

**2) Current enrollment and university financials**

Vice Provost and Registrar B. Tucker gave an update on the student enrollment numbers for the current academic year. In his presentation, Tucker stated that:

- The number of students who paid their tuition fees for the Fall 2020 semester by October 27, 2020 is 8,613. This number is 826 students less than those that were registered in academic year 2019-20.
- 193 students were deregistered from the system for no payment. About 32 students of these 193 are making arrangements to pay their tuition fees and re-register for the Fall term.
- The breakdown of the student numbers shows a slight increase in the number of Masters students this year as compared to the 2019-20 academic year. The number of MD and PhD students remained almost the same. The biggest loss is in the number of undergraduate students; mainly in the number of newcomers in addition to attrition of returning students.
- The majority of the departures (approximately 500), particularly the overwhelming majority of the continuing students occurred post August 4<sup>th</sup>, and were a direct result of the explosion.
- The yield (number of students who registered over the number of acceptances sent) underwent a significant drop from previous years.

CFO D. Wickens presented an overview of the University financials:

Challenges on Campus

- The layoffs and staff/faculty attrition resulted in around \$6M in annual savings
- The drop in number of students leads to a drop of around \$16M in net tuition revenue
- No dormitory/ auxiliary service revenues due to the COVID-19 pandemic
- Collection of fees are almost completely in LBP. The current exchange rate for all collected invoices is 1515 LBP/\$. It is intended to adopt the 3900 LBP/\$ rate for the Spring semester coupled with a substantial increase in financial aid, but this is not finalized yet.
- It is expected that local dollars in AUB accounts will be consumed by January 2021, and the fresh dollars currently available in accounts abroad will not last more than 12 months beyond that unless there is significant augmentation/diversification of AUB's revenue streams.

Campus Initiatives

- Online education to attract foreign students paying fresh dollars. The online MBA at OSB kicked off early on this semester. The Masters of Engineering Management at MSFEA will go online in November 2020. The Masters in Nursing Administration at HSON and the Masters of Computing in Education at FAS will be commissioned in the first quarter of 2021. Moreover,

many online diploma and certificate programs are ongoing and will continue to generate revenue over the coming years.

- Extramural research grants to cover part of faculty salaries (the target is 50% of research-intensive faculty salaries will be covered by endowments and grants by 2025) and the entire salary of research personnel.
- More cost saving initiatives will be implemented including consolidating academic departments, limited replacement of faculty/staff departures, reduction of employee benefits, right sizing the New York office, minimizing overtime ...

#### AUBMC Main Issues

- Major need for fresh dollars to cover operations, maintenance, and capital equipment costs
- Collection and cash flow issues especially that insurance companies do not typically deal with cash transactions. AUBMC is trying to negotiate better terms with insurance companies.
- As of October 1, 2020 new AUBMC prices at the 3900LBP/\$ exchange rate were adopted.
- AUBMC is incentivizing patients to pay in either local or fresh USD. They are closely coordinating with other major university hospitals in the country. AUBMC is also negotiating with suppliers to reduce the need for fresh USD.

#### AUBMC Initiatives

- Revenue generating initiatives such as Tele-Health and clinical exchange programs
- Margin on revenue generating surgery: heart, mind and cancer
- Finalize one day surgery suite in ACC
- Exploit EPIC know how to become regional partners
- Expand external consulting
- Convert non-productive space to revenue generating space
- Reduce overtime significantly
- Outsource activities that are not AUBMC's core competencies
- Lower ratio of managers to non-academic staff
- Merge functions with campus
- Reduce employee benefits

Interim Provost Dawy presented updates on the status of grants at AUB and that of the financial support packages:

- The extramural grant awards during the first three month of the current academic year are at a record high. The amount of approved external grants between July 1 and Sept 20, 2020 is around \$21M. In comparison, the total amount of approved external grants during the 2019-20 academic year was approximately \$31M.
- The internal funding awards will remain the same: MRP will provide \$1M over the next two years for FM, and the URB will provide \$2M per year for all schools/faculties.
- Eligible full time professorial rank faculty members received the first installment of the 20K fresh dollars supplement.
- Faculty members who are awarded extramural grants in foreign currency are allowed to use their award money to pay up half their annual salary in addition to their summer salary in fresh USD.
- Staff members of grades 1 to 14 will receive an additional 450K LBP/month
- A financial package for full time lecturers, instructors and staff members of grades 15 and above is under consideration
- The package for part-timers is being considered by the Deans of their respective faculties.

President Khuri concluded that moving forward all academic and clinical programs must be reviewed and prioritized. Program consolidations and closures will be considered. AUB must closely monitor the economic situation in the country and implement pricing changes to adjust to the evolving reality. Moreover, employee benefits revisions will be considered. However, all employee benefits revisions will be well communicated to and discussed with faculty members in advance.

Several senators commented on the presentation content. They inquired about the reasons behind the drop in the number of enrolled students. Tucker assured that the drop is not solely due to the economic situation; many students were eager to pay especially that AUB is still charging tuition at an exchange rate of 1515 LBP/\$. He indicated that many students along with their families left the country post the August 4 explosion. Tucker also stated that the University made every effort possible to find every qualified applicant a place at AUB.

A senator suggested re-evaluating PhD programs as they are a cost center for the University. President Khuri assured that this is an ongoing process, and the Deans of the respective schools are actively working on this.

A senator asked about the approximate number of faculty members that left AUB this year. President Khuri stated that the number of faculty members dropped by around 120 people. This includes early retirement, faculty attrition and leaves without pay. The President added that the number includes a significant number of physicians who took a 1 year leave without pay. Most of them might not come back, and this will reflect in a drop of the AUBMC generated revenues.

### **3) Update on promotion and tenure**

Interim Provost Dawy presented an update on promotion and tenure. He started with discussing tenure applicant statistics over the past years:

- 73 full professors were awarded tenure in 2018
- 41 faculty members (full and associate) were awarded tenure in 2019
- 33 faculty members (full and associate) were awarded tenure in 2020

The tenure success rates of applicant at different ranks are:

- 77% for assistant professors applying to promotion to the rank of associate professor with tenure
- 81% for associate professors applying to tenure in rank
- 63% for associate professors applying to promotion to the rank of full professor with tenure
- 74% for full professors applying to tenure in rank

Dawy then discussed the schedule for this cycle's promotion with tenure applications. 30 applications were submitted this year.

He briefly presented the existing policies, procedures and guidelines related to tenure and promotion. The provost's office is currently working on three policies: faculty work load policy, pre-tenure review policy, and post-tenure review policy. The priority for this year is to finalize the post tenure review policy and to approve amendments to the policy and procedures for tenure and promotion evaluation. Dawy also discussed the status of the tenure appointment letter. A working group is developing a draft tenure appointment letter. Once ready the letter will be discussed at the employee benefits committee and by SCFA before being brought to the Senate.

### **4) Student's elections**

Dean Nezameddin stated that the University intends to run student elections on November 13, 2020. The main goal is to keep student activities alive during these circumstances. The challenge is how to run the elections with no students on campus. He proposed to run online elections based on the existing e-voting system currently adopted at AUB. A few technical checks will be implemented to ensure a safe, confidential and successful election process. A multifactor authentication system using the student's pre-registered mobile number will be used. Students will be asked to update their phone numbers on AUBSIS. The system can only be accessed using the student's AUBnet credentials. After the voter validates his/her class and nominees, they will be sent a random token to their mobile device. The token will be valid for 5 minutes only and can be used solely on the device that the voter is logged on to.

The Lebanese Association for Democratic Elections (LADE) prefer to run the elections on campus to protect the secrecy of voting, prevent coercion, and reduce the risk of hacking. Many senators agreed

with this and highlighted the importance of in-person voting. However, due to the current circumstances, it is not possible to have all the students on campus and therefore the proposal to run the elections remotely. One senator suggested providing a handful of on-campus electronic polling places as “Safe Booths” to offer students, who may prefer it, added privacy protection. Students will be provided with platforms to announce their candidacy and plans. Media coverage will be allowed, and the final results will be announced in the presence of LADE.

Some senators inquired about the possibility of extending the date of the elections beyond November 13 to allow students to campaign properly. Nezameddin said that students are informally aware of the upcoming elections, and they are typically allowed one week to prepare. This time the students are given a two week notice.

**A motion was made to allow running an online student elections using the existing e-vote system at AUB for this academic year only. The motion passed by a vote. Vote 2020-15 (36-0-1).**

### **5) Approval of Senate on splitting the Procurement and Contracts Administration (PCA) Manual into multiple policy documents (with NO changes to the content)**

Mrs. H. Itani gave a presentation highlighting the reasoning behind the requested policy changes. She stated that the current PCA manual is a 90 page, not very user friendly, document. It contains many unnecessary details related to internal processes and cannot be easily updated to align with administrative changes. Once split, the PCA policies will be more visible and accessible to the community and will become easily updateable. The split was done with no changes to the content. Text edits were made to ensure clarity, and all changes were tracked using a mapping table. This effort resulted in splitting the PCA manual from a standalone policy to 9 independent PCA policies:

- Procurement and Contracts Administration Ethical Considerations
- Contracting Professional and Consultancy Services
- Purchase Orders Policy
- Requisitions Policy
- Procuring With U.S. Funds Policy
- Supplier Blacklisting and Suspension Policy
- Supplier Registration Policy
- Supplier Risk Management Policy
- Tendering Policy

**A motion was made to approve the split of the existing PCA manual from a from a standalone policy to 9 independent PCA policies. The motion passed by a vote. Vote 2020-16 (31-0-1).**

### **6) Other Business**

A senator raised concern about losing access to online library resources and the ability of ordering new books. Others indicated that they were not being able to renew software licenses or make online purchases using their extramural grants.

President Khuri attributed this to the restrictions in the amounts of fresh dollars AUB can spend. With less cash dollars to go around, everyone is bound to suffer. As for online purchases using external grants, the administration is working on facilitating this through the New York office.

A senator expressed a desire to see the membership of the search committee for the FM Dean revisited to include a basic scientist. President Khuri appreciated that and indicated that this was an oversight and the committee membership will be amended accordingly.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 pm.

(Minutes recorded by G. Saad, Secretary of the Senate)