

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
General Meeting of Friday 11 December 2009

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, A. Abdul-Malak, G. Araj, S. Arnaout, A. Dallal (chair), N. Dajani, I. Dayya (for S. Kenney), J. DeJong, H. Diab, M. El-Sabban, L. Farhood, J. Ghafari, I. Hajj, K. Hindi, H. Huijer, N. Hwalla, S. Isber, S. Jeffrey, M. Jurdi, Z. Kassaify, A. Kayssi, R. Khauli, P. McGreevy, L. Musfy, G. Najjar, A. Nasri, N. Nassif, S. Neaime, I. Nuwayhid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, M. Tabbal, D. Wrisley, G. Zaatari (for M. Sayegh) , R. Zurayk.

Absent: P. Dorman*, A. Jurjus*, M. Kisirwani, S. Maamari*.

(* = 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 30 October 2009 were approved unanimously as read.

2. *Report on the November meeting of the Board of Trustees.* Provost Dallal said that he had two issues to report, one concerning the adjustment of salaries, the second concerning promotion.

1. *Salary adjustment.* VP Radulski said that the Financial Budgetary Committee of the Board of Trustees had approved his proposal to increase to the minimum the salaries of those at present paid less than the minimum salary of their rank (so-called outliers) with effect from 1st January 2010, this being a first step in the process of determining transparent salary scales within a formal academic policy. In the Faculty of Arts & Sciences 34 people were affected by the increase, mostly at the rank of instructor and lecturer. Provost Dallal added that in general a greater proportion of university revenue would be allocated to academic affairs.

2. *Promotion policy.* Provost Dallal said that extensive discussion had occurred concerning both the promotion guidelines already circulated and proposals regarding Associate Professors and Full Professors. The general principles were approved by the Board of Trustees and a memorandum would be circulated in the coming days after it had been vetted by lawyers. The ultimate aim was to enhance transparency and to empower departments in the promotion process. Promotion files would thus be considered at different levels, from the level of promotion committees in individual departments to the level of the deans, then to that of the extended board of deans which, with the addition of a separate evaluation by the provost, would make final recommendations to the president. Departments would be empowered to evaluate colleagues. Specific changes he mentioned were as follows:

- a) Longer term contracts, for the sake of greater job security;
- b) A more rigorous process of review: both promotion and reappointment would require external review;
- c) Maternity leave would automatically stop the promotion clock, unless otherwise requested by the faculty member;
- d) The department's role in arguing a case for promotion would be central;
- e) Voting at the lower level: a person who appeared at more than one level would be required to recuse from voting at the higher level.

Regarding length of contracts, Provost Dallal said that, just as a newly appointed Assistant Professor would be given an initial contract of four-years followed by one of three, so for newly promoted or appointed Associate Professors the initial contract would be for seven years with the possibility of a three-year extension. An Associate Professor comes up for promotion in the seventh year but no later than the tenth. If not promoted to the rank of full professor after ten years, the eleventh year would be terminal. In this case, an Associate Professor might be hired subsequently on one-year contracts at the same rank without the

possibility of reapplying for promotion. For someone presently in their first three-year contract as Associate Professor, there would be the option of a seven-year contract after the first appointment review, and of applying to the rank of full professor mid-way through that seven-year contract. In answer to a question from J. DeJong, he said that an Associate Professor at present in his or her second three-year contract would have to apply for promotion by the seventh year, as with other cases, and no later than the tenth year.

Full professors, he said, would be reviewed in a promotion-type review at the end of their present contract, leading hopefully to longer-term contracts of three, seven and ten years. In answer to a question from M. El-Sabban, the provost said that contracts might also be terminated. In response to a comment from A. Abdul-Malak regarding promotion-type review for full professors – promotion to what? – he explained that by promotion-type he meant that all cases of reappointment would now involve outside review, since there was no tenure at the university. Further discussion was postponed to item 5 of the agenda.

3. *Voting of degrees, October 2009 graduates.* The Senate voted unanimously to grant degrees to the October 2009 graduates as listed by the Registrar's Office and presented serially by the respective Deans (**vote 2010-02**).

4. *University calendar, 2010-11.* The registrar presented the proposed calendar for 2010-11 pointing out that the Fall and Spring semesters had 84 teaching days each with a ten-day break between semesters while the Summer semester had 42 teaching days. N.Dajani said that it seemed to him unfair that faculty members in FAS were being asked to advise incoming sophomore students at the second phase of registration during July when this was not a contractual obligation nor were they paid to do so. He proposed a motion which was seconded, **to remove from the calendar Phase II of registration.** There was discussion on the extent to which Phase II applied to other faculties and whether Chairs, who were paid for their work during the summer, might not do the advising themselves. The registrar said that it was mostly new students who needed to be advised in July since continuing students would have been advised in May during the first phase of registration. Dean Hajj said that a few years ago there had been no separate Phase II of registration but that the former dean of FAS had asked for its introduction since sophomore admissions had increased and it was not feasible to leave the advising of incoming sophomore students until September. Dean Hwalla said she thought that the Christmas vacation of ten days compensated those who, on nine-month contracts, were now required to be present in the university from mid-September after two and a half months in the summer not three. S. Isber said that the number of new students entering the Physics department in July could be as much as sixty. Provost Dallal proposed that the question be studied before the next meeting of the senate on January 8 2010, since new students could not be left in the lurch. N. Dajani withdrew his motion.

5. *Promotion procedures/length of contracts.* I. Osman said that he regretted that more attention had not been given to last year's report of DPMs which had addressed some of the problems of promotion committees, in particular the high weight given to the opinion of external referees and the sometimes inadequate preparation on the part of members of promotion committees. Provost Dallal said that he was willing to sit with deans and promotion committees to address such issues and he emphasized the central idea of the new promotion procedures, review by peers at different levels. S. Seikaly said he was concerned lest promotion committees not listen sufficiently to the opinion of departments. The provost reiterated that the aim of the new promotion procedures was precisely to empower departments. Several senators voiced extreme unhappiness at the prospect of full professors being reviewed a further time after having already passed through two stringent reviews and having been accorded full confidence by the university. In answer to a request from L. Musfy to dedicate a meeting of the senate to the issue, Provost Dallal said that he would be happy to convene meetings at all academic levels.

6. *Update on Plan B.* VP Radulski outlined the major changes in Plan B effective 1st January 2010: new investment alternatives for the employee's 5% contribution, 24/7 website access to

change the allocation of an investment, and the option of an à la carte menu for the employee's investment portfolio; for the 5% Employee Account, the option from 1st April 2010 of 'hardship withdrawal' of up to 40% of the account to cover expenses of catastrophic illness, house purchase, or tuition fees. The 5% Lebanese tax on investment earnings would also be avoided since money from investments would now be under the trusteeship of Butterfield Trust based in Bermuda. The money from the Memo Account amounted to some \$44 million, affecting 457 faculty members, while that in employees' accounts amounted to \$12 million, managed at present by Merrill Lynch. As of 1st January 2010 the management of all investments would be with Vanguard International and Brown Brothers Harriman: that of employees would depend on their choice; that deriving from the employer's contribution of 12½% would be credited with the interest from a Memo Account Portfolio at a moderate risk with 40% invested in bonds and 60% in global stock.

I. Osman objected to the manner in which the senate was being informed about such an important matter without the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs having been informed first and without adequate time having been given for SCFA to prepare a report for discussion in the senate. He also said that he thought that the main problem was in attempting to make Plans A and B comparable. VP Radulski reminded the senate that it was an advisory body and that the Board of Trustees and the University Administration had a fiduciary responsibility to its employees which they took very seriously. In answer to a question from L. Musfy concerning employees who had moved from Plan B to Plan A he said that the employee monies in Plan B would be converted into cash and the proceeds credited to the employee's Memo Account. In answer to a question from Dean Hwalla he confirmed that whereas previously the Memo Account had not been money invested so much as a kind of I.O.U. that the university promised to pay when a member left the university and that grew at a slightly varying annual rate of interest of around 5%, now it would be invested at a moderate risk and the annual interest might occasionally be negative. He added that to hold a Memorandum Account in the old way was no longer an option for the university. He agreed with K. Hindi that the new Memo Account Portfolio no longer represented capital guaranteed. S. Seikaly expressed astonishment that members of the university who participated in Plan B had been given five days in which to agree to such a change without a written document. On being repeatedly interrupted while holding the floor, VP Radulski left the meeting saying he had to attend a meeting with FAFS to explain the changes to Plan B there. There was further discussion. S. Seikaly proposed a motion that was seconded: **The senate urges the administration to supply it with an official document explaining and justifying all alterations to Plan-B Memorandum Account for discussion in the senate on January 8 2010.**

Vote 2010-03: The motion was carried (For 22, voting members present 24).

The meeting was adjourned at 4:05 p.m.

R. Smith, secretary