

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

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, M.A. Al-Alaoui, J. Andresen, G. Araj, S. Arnaout, R. Brow, L. Choueiri, A. Dallal, J. DeJong, H. Diab, P. Dorman (chairing), M. El-Sabban, L. Farhood, J. Ghafari, H. Huijer, S. Isber, A. Jaffa (for M. Sayegh), D. Jamali, M. Jurdi, A. Jurjus, A. Kayssi, S. Kenney, R. Khauli, R. Khayat-Toubia, I. Lakkis, P. McGreevy, F. Moukalled, G. Najjar, W. Nasr, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, B. Shayya, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, M. Tabbal, S. Talhouk.

Absent: N. Hwalla*, Z. Kassaify, S. Maamari*, D. Wickens, D. Wrisley*.

(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2:08 p.m. President Dorman welcomed senators in the new Faculty Lounge saying that he hoped it would provide a venue in which faculty could relax and meet colleagues. He added that a protocol would soon be prepared for use of the space for meetings and other events.

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of the regular meeting of the senate on 7 January 2011 were approved unanimously as amended.

2. *Term limits of senate members.* The Chairperson of the Senate Steering Committee, A. Abdel-Rahman introduced the issue by saying that service on most senior committees in the university were limited and the introduction of a term limit on service in the senate would both widen the circle of faculty members with experience of serving on the legislative body of the university and lead to improvement in university governance. He proposed a motion, which was seconded, that **term limits for senate members should normally be no more than two consecutive terms, with a break of at least one term (three years) before becoming eligible to be nominated to serve again.** In opposing the motion F. Sleiman said that many universities in the U.S.A. limited a break in senators' service to only one year after two consecutive terms; a longer break might encourage a senator to resign after serving a single term of three years, then seek re-election for a further term after one year's break, leading to effective service for three out of every four years without limit. He proposed a substitute motion, which was seconded, that **an elected senator who has served a full three-year term shall be eligible to serve a consecutive three-year term, but senators shall not be eligible to serve again as members of the senate until the expiration of one year from the end of their second consecutive term.** Several senators pointed out that it was up to faculty members to take seriously the question of who represented them. S. Talhouk said that lobbying did take place and junior faculty members should be encouraged to stand for election to the senate without feeling intimidated standing against senior faculty members. On a further substitute motion being proposed, President Dorman ruled that the senate should deal with one substitute motion at a time. S. Seikaly reminded the senate that a change in the bylaws of the senate needed to be passed by a two-thirds majority and to be approved by the Board of Trustees. S. Arnaout said that service on professional bodies such as that governing physicians was limited to two consecutive terms with a break of one year. After further discussion the question was called.

Vote 2011-09: The substitute motion was defeated (For 11, Against 16).

A second substitute motion was then proposed by M.A. Al-Alaoui and seconded, that **service on the senate should be limited to one term of three years followed by a gap of at least one year.** Arguing against the motion, S. Sadek said that it took time to become an experienced senator.

Vote 2011-10: The second substitute motion was defeated (For 1).

A third substitute motion was then proposed by I. Osman and seconded, that **service on the senate should be limited to two consecutive terms of three years followed by a gap of at least two years.**

Vote 2011-11: The third substitute motion was defeated (For 8, Against 11).

The question was then called on the main motion.

Vote 2011-12: The motion was approved by a two-thirds majority (For 25, Against 2, Voting members present 35).

3. *Educational benefits.* M. Tabbal introduced the issue by pointing out that faculty members with children at school sometimes found themselves in a higher tax bracket on account of the educational benefits given by the university. Reminding the senate that the issue had been discussed many times in the past, W.Nasr suggested that AUB should coordinate on the issue with other universities in Lebanon. As a point of information, I. Osman said that educational benefits were not taxed at the Arab and the Lebanese universities, nor were employees of the Lebanese government taxed. J. DeJong said that part of the problem was that tax is deducted from payrolls in the months of April, May and June rather than being distributed over twelve months. L. Farhood said that there should be benefits for all faculty, those with children as well as those without, moreover the proportion of benefit to salary should be equalized for all ranks of faculty; she recommended the formation of a committee to look into all aspects of the question. President Dorman suggested that the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs study the issue and that it inform Mr Peter May before meeting. VP Kenney said that he would look into the question of distributing the tax burden over twelve months. It was also suggested that the issue of lobbying the government be acted upon separately from issues internal to AUB.

4. *Strategy to tackle the tenure issue.* The chairperson of the Senate Steering Committee, A. Abdel-Rahman, gave a brief review of former President Waterbury's attempt to re-introduce tenure three years ago, saying that, with the introduction of long-term contracts under the new administration, the situation was now different and the issue before the senate was how best to deal with the question anew. President Dorman said that both he and the provost were in favour of re-introducing tenure at AUB to enhance its status as a research university. He felt there was interest in the Board of Trustees although, AUB being a private university, members necessarily were also concerned with the financial implications of tenure. Any attempt to reconsider tenure would have to build on previous reports and studies, a number of which had recently been put on the senate website, and he urged senators to familiarize themselves with the data over the coming month. In reply to M. Jurdi he said he would see that the report of the senate Ad-Hoc Committee of Spring 2008 would be added to the senate website.

Dean Nuwayhid said that two sticking points in the past were now behind us, namely long-term contracts and the objection by full professors to external review. As a member of the former Task Force on tenure he said he was against forming a committee from scratch, recommending instead that two points be focussed on, firstly whether tenure should be offered at the level of associate professor or full, and secondly the implications of offering tenure without an age limit. President Dorman added that the issue of how to implement tenure in a university that no longer had it needed to be separated from the strategic goals of what tenure was intended to achieve. No financial study had yet been made of the implications either of tenure or of a retirement package. He added that tenure was not necessarily related to the question of age-limit: for example, AUB did not have tenure but did have a problem of age-limit.

Various comments were made by senators. J. DeJong suggested looking at universities in other countries where there was no age limit. J. Ghafari said universities with medical schools often had different tracks. In reply to G. Araj's suggestion that the former Task Force be re-activated, on the grounds that its members were familiar with all the relevant issues, L. Farhood said that the Senate Steering Committee had felt that members of the previous Task Force would not want to go back after having put in so much labour. J. Andresen said that nowhere was tenure not revocable, and age-limit was therefore linked to tenure. President Dorman said in reply that indeed it was necessary to clarify what tenure entailed, adding that there should be some age-

policy so that those on tenure would know where they stood. I. Osman said that it was necessary to consider how to present the case for tenure to the Board of Trustees. S. Sadek said that one of the errors of the previous Task Force had been that its members were drawn from all levels of the faculty, with the result that all sorts of issues had been raised that affected people differently. As a member of the previous Task Force, S. Talhouk said that she was not in favour of its reactivation since many issues were now different.

In closing discussion President Dorman said that his inclination was to form a new committee and that he would in due course inform the senate of the committee's make-up.

5. *Other business.* I. Osman said that with central banks giving soft loans the issue was pressing what policy on housing the university would adopt, and he added that he had written a memo on the topic. President Dorman said that he was sure the Task Force on housing would be happy to consider his memo. VP Kenney said that the administration had had discussions with banks and was looking at a variety of possible programs.

In regard to the insecure situation in the country on 25 January S. Sadek said the university administration should have been more decisive in advising students whether to come for their exams, too much being left to individual instructors. Provost Dallal said in defence that a deliberate decision had been made to disseminate advice through the deans and not to make a statement that might be interpreted as partisan. Several senators voiced their disagreement.

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

R. Smith, secretary