

**American University of Beirut  
Minutes of the University Senate  
Regular Meeting of Friday 5 March 2010**

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman , A. Abdul-Malak, , A. Dallal, , H. Diab, P. Dorman (chair), M. El-Sabban, L. Farhood, J. Ghafari, I. Hajj, H. Huijer, K. Hindi, N. Hwalla, S. Isber, A. Jaffa (for M. Sayegh), M. Jurdi, A. Jurjus, Z. Kassaify, A. Kayssi, S. Kenney, R. Khauli, M. Kisirwani, 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, , M. Tabbal, R. Zurayk.

Absent:, G. Araj\*, S. Arnaout, L. Choueiri\*, J. DeJong\*, S. Jeffrey, S. Maamari\*, R. Smith\*, D. Wrisley\*.

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

The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

President Dorman suggested moving agenda item # 2 down the list to # 5 (as this item is expected to take a much longer time for discussion compared to the other items on the agenda).

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of 29 January 2010 were approved unanimously as read.

2. *Senate voting system.* President Dorman asked K. Hindi to introduce this item. K. Hindi referred to the document he prepared (and was circulated a week ago), explaining that, On 29 April 2007, the Senate resolved to subject itself to a discipline that is frowned upon by Robert's Rules of Order, namely, voting by majority of those present. The Rules allow this, but describe it as 'generally undesirable', 'since an abstention in such cases has the same effect as a negative vote', thereby 'deny(ing) members the right to maintain a neutral position by abstaining'. In practice, imposing this discipline has somewhat diminished effectiveness of the Senate, since mostly only such 'non-controversial' motions as to command near consensus are carried. He added, under the normal voting procedure, abstentions are not votes (one 'abstains' from voting); hence they have no effect on deciding a motion at all; i.e., they are disregarded: only votes in favour and votes against are counted, and the motion concerned is carried if the majority of those who have cast a vote (for + against) are for it. Note that 'majority' is defined as 'more than half' of the votes cast. K. Hindi made the following motion that was seconded; **The Senate resolves to revert to the normal procedure of voting by majority of votes cast.**

A brief discussion followed, and one of the main concerns was, in case of a large number of abstentions, a motion would then pass by a small number of votes. The response was, as a proper procedure, the assembly could be urged not to abstain. President Dorman said that a huge number of abstentions is worrisome, as members should assume their responsibilities; he added, a secret ballot, in certain cases, could be applied, if needed. As a result of this discussion, the following amendment to the motion was made and seconded, and the mover of the earlier version accepted the amendments; **The Senate resolves to revert to the procedure of voting by majority of votes cast, with the Senate Chair having the right to call for a secret ballot in certain cases.**

**Vote 2010-08: The motion was carried (For: 28, Against: 0, voting members present 33)**

3. *Faculty ID cards, revisited.* The President asked the chair of the Senate Steering Committee, F. Sleiman, who introduced this item during the previous Senate meeting, to re-introduce it. F. Sleiman pointed out, as discussed in previous meeting, the ID's of all M.D.'s, and only very few other faculty members, contain the prefix "Dr.". He added, for the purpose of uniformity, and for reasons highlighted during the previous meeting, ID's of all faculty members who hold either Ph.D. or M.D. degrees should have the prefix "Dr.". F. Sleiman made the following motion which was seconded; **Add to the ID of faculty members who hold Ph.D or M.D degrees a prefix of Dr.** There was discussion, during which a number of points were raised by some

senators: (i) What were the cultural assumptions behind the proposal?, Is it at all needed?, (ii) Changing the ID's might cost the university some \$600, and by keeping ID's as they are, this money would be saved, (iii) Should we use other types of prefix for those holding other types of degrees including D.Sc., Dr.Eng., etc.? (iv) Faculty members in some disciplines do not have Ph.D's, as a master's degree (like the MFA) is the terminal degree in fine arts for example, (v) Would it be possible to have "position titles" as professorial ranks be printed in the ID? and (vi) Can other types of prefix, as CPA or CFA, be also printed in the ID?. It was pointed out that position titles as professorial ranks, or degrees such as CPA or CFA, are usually printed in business cards and not in university ID's. A senator suggested that perhaps the prefix "Dr." can be deleted from all ID's including those of MD's, but I. Nuwayhid argued that MD's can be asked by patients for identification, and more significantly, in case of any security problems in the country MD's use their ID's to pass through barricades and be able to reach the hospital. At this point, a number of scenarios were suggested on how best the AUB ID can be done to accommodate suggestions made. The original motion was then withdrawn, as a consensus was reached amongst most senators on the following motion which was seconded; **Add to the AUB ID the option of adding either the prefix of Dr. for faculty members who hold Ph.D or M.D. degrees, or a suffix following the name, of a single degree as Ph.D, M.D., or masters (as MS, MA, MBA, MFA), with the master as the minimum degree to be added.**

**Vote 2010-09: The motion was carried (For: 26, Against: 4, voting members present 33)**

4. *URB revised bylaws.* President Dorman asked the chair of the URB, M. Tabbal, to introduce this item. M. Tabbal said that a small task force met several times to revise the URB bylaws and to put together a new mission statement in this document that has been circulated a week ago. He explained the rationale behind the revision, and provided a summary of the changes included in the revised version. He added, the revision was essentially made so as to reflect the current practice of the URB. He provided some examples: (i) the document now has a more thorough mission statement emphasizing the crucial importance of freedom of thought and expression to research excellence, (ii) the director of the Office of Grants and Contracts (by invitation), was added to the composition of URB (iii) the functions were revised to read, consider and recommend to the Senate policies to regulate the allocation of internal funds for research. Internal funds include URB grants as well as research grants initiated through AUB endowment funds, (iv) the statement, prepare, edit and publish the biennial research report of the University, was added to the functions, and (v) the statement, advise the provost on matters concerning research ethics, integrity and conduct, was also included in the functions. He then moved to **adopt the document on the URB revised Bylaws as presented**, and the motion was seconded.

The floor was open for discussion. I. Hajj raised some concerns in connection with the statement "...regulate the allocation of internal funds...", objected to the use of the word "regulate", and explained that research grants initiated through AUB endowment funds for research (as the MASRI Institute endowment funds) is handled entirely by FEA, adding that the URB should not interfere in the selection process. Some senators also suggested that the URB should not deal with such endowed research funds. Provost Dallal responded that the URB does not propose to interfere in the allocation of such funds, nor in its selection process, but rather to "recommend to the Senate policies to regulate the allocation of internal funds for research". He reminded that the URB is a Senate committee, and can certainly recommend policies to the Senate. In response to a question on short term grants, Provost Dallal indicated that these are handled by the Office of the Provost. A. Abdel-Rahman commented that the preparation of the biennial research report of the University (the newly added URB function; point 2c in the document) should not become one of the many other responsibilities of departmental chairpersons, and that the URB can find the data needed in the annual reports prepared by chairpersons. M. Tabbal stated that the URB, particularly faculty representatives on the URB, should be responsible for the preparation of the biennial research reports for their respective faculties. Based on minor editorial modifications, M. Tabbal accepted amendments made to the motion which was seconded; **To adopt the URB revised bylaws presented, but with one**

**correction made to point 2.a (replacing “to regulate” by “for”), and another editorial correction (the use of his/her) to take care of the gender issue.**

**Vote 2010-10: The motion was carried (For: 27, Against: 0, voting members present 33)**

5. *Reappointment policy.* President Dorman indicated that the statement circulated on the reappointment process for full professors during the transitional period benefited from extensive discussions with full professors, chairs, deans, and senate members, and is responsive to concerns raised in these meetings. He added, we strongly believe that seven-year contracts should be the norm for full professors already in rank. Provost Dallal said that this also might open the door to move forward in dealing with the issue of tenure. In response to a question on the feasibility of introducing tenure, President Dorman said that a number of issues need to be discussed, a financial feasibility study need to be carried out, and we need to look into the possibility of phasing out senior faculty with dignity, and in this regard we will also look into the golden-hand shake proposal of F. Sleiman. In response to a question, President Dorman said that it is “transitional” to seven-year long term contracts as the norm, and this transitional period would be two to three years during which period all full professors currently in rank will have the opportunity to be considered for contract renewal. S. Isber referred to a document amended and approved by all full professors and chairpersons/directors of academic units in FAS, indicating that it was circulated to all Senators. He summarized some of the modifications/amendments made to the statement, crafted by President Dorman and Provost Dallal, on the reappointment process, for example, using the term renewal instead of reappointment, deleting the line “Successful candidates will be eligible for three-year contracts...” as it means other candidates could be un-successful, replacing the term “in some cases...” by “in exceptional cases...”, deleting the statement “...including the names of 4-6 references...”, and adding “In exceptional cases if the academic deans decide that they require assistance in evaluating the faculty member’s career to date, they will seek from that faculty member the names of at least two external referees...”, among other modifications. He moved to **adopt the document “Renewal Process for Full Professors during Transitional Period” as circulated**, and the motion was seconded.

Provost Dallal commented that if faculty members do not wish to include names of external referees, it is up to them (and it would not be considered “sin of omission”), but it is better they propose their referees, otherwise we will solicit such referees directly, when needed. President Dorman said that it is not a good idea to ask some faculty members in the middle of the renewal process to submit names of referees, as this would create unease and scepticism. A long discussion followed, during which senators expressed concerns. It was pointed out that it is unfair to request from full professor who have gone through a rigorous process of external review in promotion to that rank and who have maintained the prestige of the university over many years, to go through yet another process in which evaluations by external referees might be needed just to renew a contract. A number of senators agreed, considering the language used is still inappropriate and shows lack of proper appreciation and respect for those in the rank of full professor. A senator commented, full professors in rank for 20 or 30 years are now being asked to submit a statement and names of referees just for contract renewal, while such requirements have only been used (up till now) for promotions and not for renewals. Another stated that contract renewals already go through evaluation by departments, departmental chairs, advisory committees, Deans, with recommendations to the Provost and the President, and that should be enough as a process for renewal of contracts. A comment was made that departments should be encouraged to make recommendations on the length of contracts as they know the candidates best, and this would also empower the departments.

The time being now 4:02 p.m., President Dorman excused him self due to his other commitments, and asked Provost Dallal to Chair the meeting.

J. Ghafari stated that he left his tenured position at an Ivy League university in the US to join AUB a few years ago, and he asked, why now we have to go through a promotion-type process for contract renewals. He added, although he believes that the proposed process is well-

intentioned, we should stick to the existing policy on contract renewals (policies and procedures, Chapter 2, Sections 3, 4 and 5) under long-term contracts that have a well-structured process. Provost Dallal said, that policy is similar to the one proposed by the current administration, that it is in the best interest of faculty members to indicate their academic achievements in a brief statement, and that the goal is moving the bulk of faculty members to seven years long-term contracts.

It was moved and seconded to **Table the motion**, and to continue the discussion on this issue next Senate meeting, in which this item be placed first in its agenda (motion carried unanimously). It was also moved and seconded to adjourn.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

A. Abdel-Rahman, Secretary Pro-Tem