

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, November 25, 2022

Present: I. Abou Faycal, A. Abu-Alfa, H. Abu-Khuzam, F. Afiouni, N. Al-Akl, A. Al-Hroub, S. Altug, S. BouJaoude, P. Bou Khalil, R. Boustany, A. Daou, Z. Dawy, J. Doumar, S. Elbassuoni, L. Farhoud, T. Ghaddar, A. Ghauch, G. Honein, N. Hwalla, M. Jaber, S. Karaki, M. Khraiche, S. Kharroubi, F. Khuri, M. Massoud, N. Melhem, L. Musfi, A. Olabi, A. Sabra, K. Scheid, V. Araman (for Y. Sidani), A. Shihadeh, M. Chayaa (for A. Sibai), B. Tucker, F. Ziyadeh (for R. Sawaya), R. Zurayk.

Absent: R. Sultan, N. Dumit*, S. Nouredine, I. Baalbaki, S. Zein-el-dine, Y. Shaib*, Y. Sidani*, M. Nasrallah, R. Sawaya, S. Mallat*, A. Sibai*
(*= regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:04 p.m.

1- Approval of Senate meeting minutes of October 28, 2022

A motion was made and seconded to approve the October 28, 2022, Senate meeting minutes. The motion carried unanimously (30:0:1).

2- President's update: Board of Trustees meeting

President Khuri agreed with the Senate to move up item 5 of the agenda (Briefing on AUB Next Generation Leadership Academy) and have it presented after his BOT meeting update. He also announced that AUB cancer leaders will be hosted live on the show "Sar El-Waet" on LBCI on December 22 for fundraising for our needy cancer patients. A Senate member mentioned that he doesn't like the infamously of the show. The President stated that this is done for a good cause and not for any political motive, where he always is neutral on similar shows.

The President briefed the Senate about the two and a half full weeks of online committee meetings before the in-person meeting with the BOT on November 17 and 18. The meetings were focused on the well-being of AUB, faculty, staff and students. The last day was devoted to updating the BOT on the new architecture building at MSFEA and on the future steps to be taken for the AUB Mediterraneo campus. The President, Provost, VP Jaber, Mr. Wickens, Dr. Baalbaki and VP/ FM Dean Sawaya, all presented to the BOT the current state of AUB and future plans. President Khuri added that there was a good agreement with the BOT on the planned next steps. In addition to the BOT meetings, the President met with the International Advisory Committee and discussed the outcomes of the BOT meetings, where they had some additional constructive suggestions. President Khuri added that during the gala dinner organized by the team of the Senior Vice President, \$1.5 million were raised in addition to \$2.9 million prior to the dinner, and two pledges for \$10 million and \$5million were announced, where those funds raised at the dinner are largely designated for students' financial aid and for the needy patients funds at the Medical Center. The President informed

the Senate that the BOT approved all of the presented work. Provost Dawy informed the Senate that the respective stakeholders will be informed of the approvals accordingly in due course. A Senate member asked the President on the reason behind the selection of Dean Shehadeh to present at the BOT meeting. President Khuri answered that since he took office, each academic Dean is expected to present their visions to the BOT shortly after they start, and after renewal they present to the BOT their work accomplished and future directions for the faculty or school, which was the case with Dean Shihadeh. Another Senate member inquired on the process of BOT meetings with the faculty. President Khuri stated that the BOT will be meeting at different dates with all the Deans during 2023, in addition to meeting in person with students, faculty and staff once they are in Beirut. He added that the latter is something we should embrace at AUB.

3- Briefing on AUB Next Generation Leadership Academy

President Khuri introduced the subject by stating that mentorship and sustainability of leadership is a challenge we have at AUB. He added that the goal of this academy is to tap into talent that hasn't already had an opportunity to lead, where we will select and grow 20 to 25 potential future leaders from a diverse group of faculty and staff who have strong commitment to the institution, and help them learn about themselves, their triggers, their strengths, their challenges so that they could be more effective leaders in the future.

VP Jaber stated that this academy will not be targeted towards directors nor to individuals currently in leadership positions, but to individuals whom the institution sees as potential leaders in the future. She added that the first year will be an inaugural one, where nominations from the Deans, VPs, Chief Financial Officer, Chief Information Technology will be accepted for candidates in their respective areas. VP Jaber added that there will be a selection committee who will review the nominations and select 20 to 25 junior faculty and staff for a 12 month program, where this program is not similar to an MBA nor to an executive program but rather tailored for AUB.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised and were answered by VP Jaber and President Khuri:

- *Senate member: What is meant by junior faculty, and what about a faculty member who joins AUB as a full professor?* VP Jaber: We are still in the process of building the full criteria, and it hasn't been finalized yet. However, this academy will surely be geared towards junior individuals and not senior faculty or staff.
- *Senate member: The idea of this leadership institute is very nice, but would it have relations with universities in the region or internationally?* President Khuri: This is purely an internal institute, but it needs to have more outreach. I want to emphasize that it's not for the endangered or struggling leaders, but rather for relatively new individuals to the institution. The Executive MBA is open to other institutions from Lebanon, the region and the world, including other academic institutions.
- *Senate member: Will there be a quota on the discipline of the individuals joining the academy?* President Khuri: The current thoughts about this is to have them divided in similar numbers between the campus and medical center, but there is some flexibility

in this, since the number of employees at AUBMC is larger. The first round of nominations will come from the Deans and senior leaders and then we intend to open it up in the future.

- *A Senate member commented that a lot of hidden mentoring takes place that Deans, administrators or senior people are not aware of and that leadership is something which is an innate product and sometimes from a prior mentoring experience.* President Khuri acknowledged the comment and added that the idea behind the leadership institute is to help our needs, to help our directors, and to bring such people to their attention.
- *Senate member: Was there any benchmarking?* VP Jaber: Prof. Harvey did extensive benchmarking with other university leadership programs, and it was decided to create something different. President Khuri: The intention herein is to focus on self-awareness and self-discovery.
- *A Senate member commented that with everything that's going on around us, we've been reactive and for once we're being proactive and going forward to establish an important institution.* President Khuri acknowledged the comment, but disagreed, and added that investing internally and non-reactively but proactively is what we have been doing and what we need to do more of. He gave as examples the Designated Board Professorship initiative and the upcoming, and to-be announced, the “merit scholarships”.

4- Update: AUB Mediterraneo

Prof. Wassim El-Hajj, started by recapping what was discussed during the Senate meeting of May 13th 2022 concerning the Cyprus Agency for Quality Assurance and Accreditation (CYQAA) process, governance structure, Senate bylaws and Faculty bylaws. Prof. El-Hajj updated the Senate on the established facilities, website and social media, agreements and the staffing plans. He presented the master plan of the campus, and the current construction works. He added that AUB was able to rent a state-of-the-art building as a backup place, which will house for the time being the administration staff and has a multi-purpose room. He also presented the timeline and agenda of the upcoming accreditation visits which will take place in January 2023.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised.

- *A Senate member asked about staffing and legal agreements, especially in the limited time available before the opening.* Prof. El-Hajj agreed with the Senate member on the importance of getting the legal agreements signed on time, which are being worked on with the President and the Provost. He also added that both are pushing for this to happen soon, and once these agreements are finalized there will be a transparent selection process for staffing.
- *A Senate member asked about medical care for faculty and staff while in Pafos.* President Khuri replied to this comment by stating that there's adequate health care for faculty and staff, where AUB will subcontract with a couple of private hospitals in the Pafos area for non-life-threatening illness. However, for more serious medical

conditions, larger care providers in Nicosia, Limassol and Larnaca are present, and they are not that far away.

- *A Senate member asked whether AUB has a target student enrollment.* Prof. El-Hajj replied that the plan was originally to recruit 200 students by next year, but due to a few difficulties this can't be accomplished before getting the license. However, there are plans to mitigate this and it is being worked on with the help of the Admissions' team here at AUB.
- *A Senate member asked Prof. El-Hajj to elaborate more on the tenure and promotion procedures and awareness campaigns' points mentioned in the presentation.* Prof. El-Hajj pointed out that there are some answers for the promotion and tenure question, however, this needs to be institutionalized. It is currently under discussion and will be brought up to the Senate for discussion and approval in due course. As for the awareness campaign, this was performed by a private company who identified some countries in the region where students would have an interest in joining AUB Mediterraneo. These students would not cannibalize the mother campus since they have interest in going to Cyprus in the first place.
- *A Senate member asked Prof. El-Hajj about the worry of getting this going in nine months and enquired about the plan for updating the Senate during that time?* Prof. El-Hajj stated that the whole project is challenging, but we have been progressing at a fast pace without significant errors. However, students' recruitment will be the most challenging part. As for the update, this will be done right after securing the licenses.
- *A Senate member inquired about financial aid to students, faculty support and benefits, and whether there is a chance of parity between the two campuses.* Prof. El-Hajj stated that AUB Mediterraneo's budget is separate from AUB's, and financial aid is factored in it. Provost Dawy replied that all these points are currently being studied and will update the Senate soon. He added that a study has been conducted concerning salaries in Cyprus, and it turned out that they are comparable to AUB's.
- *The same Senate member added that the inquiry above was in order to convey answers to faculty members who have seen this as an abandonment of the main campus.* President Khuri objected to this comment and stressed the fact that this has been discussed and cleared repeatedly in the past. President Khuri added that when individuals start to disparage the university in a public and undermining way, there's a question about responsibility. The administration has been more than transparent, and the talk about salaries by some faculty members has been deliberately misleading. One needs to talk about total compensation, including retirement, healthcare, educational and housing subsidies. The President stressed again his objection toward the use by select faculty members of misleading phrases such as "abandonment".
- Dean Shihadeh clarified that the design intent was that the total package in Pafos would be comparable to what's currently available at AUB, and there wouldn't be a strong incentive in either direction.
- Provost Dawy added that this project is not a short term one, rather it's about building a sustainable university model that is impactful and effective. The selection process for fitting faculty members in programs and departments will be based on the notion of "the right individuals in the right place" who can serve this new campus impactfully and successfully for the coming years.

- *A Senate member inquired if there is a required minimum number of non-academic staff members for the new campus that might drain our limited number of faculty members at AUB.* Prof. El-Hajj explained that there should be a minimum of 30% Cypriots among the staff while the rest 70% can be from AUB, however, during the first one to two years the offered core courses will be the minimum needed to run the programs and this will give us enough time for recruitment.
- *A Senate member inquired about the timeline until starting to add other programs?* Prof. El-Hajj explained that plans are thought of during the previous semester before the start of their implementation, and thus these plans take a year to materialize.
- *A Senate member asked if it is possible to update the Senate again in February so chairs can plan beforehand for the coming Fall semester, and to include the possibility of research funding via Cyprus.* Prof. El-Hajj acknowledged the comment and stated that discussions with corporate companies and writing agencies are underway. These companies will also be responsible for identifying any European funding agencies that faculty members can apply to, in addition to identifying any exchange programs where AUB would be eligible to apply to via the Cyprus campus.

5- Update Senate Committees: update, plans, and challenges

a. University Committee on Student Affairs

Prof. Armstrong, chairperson of the Committee on Student Affairs, updated the Senate on the current work status of the committee and the future plans. Currently, the committee is working on what previous committees worked on in the past. The first one is revising the student Code of Conduct, which is in its final stages. The second item is finalizing a report put out on academic integrity. The latter was divided into different sections, and each section has been assigned to a sub-committee to work on. These sections involve, a new tutorial module that addresses issues of plagiarism and is being worked on in collaboration with CTL and the University libraries. A second item of the report deals with the issue of ethics, and the third is on how to help the professors in this process in collaboration with CTL. As for the future plans, Prof. Armstrong added that the committee will be focusing this academic year on the issue of student welfare, since it is related to academic integrity, where systems, structures and/or methods of teaching might indirectly advocate for academic cheating. Another point Prof. Armstrong mentioned is to work on changing the current status from a linear committee to a circular one, where upon committee recommendations, the committee would actively follow up. He added that the committee will work also on the area of students' complaints, where each faculty representative on the committee will be discussing with their respective faculty and student services sections this important issue.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised.

- *A Senate member asked about the issue of student complaints: whether against the instructor or the program.* Prof. Armstrong replied by stating it is for both issues and more. These involve student complaints about a program, how an instructor conducts

a class and how they're treated in their classes, and upon a thorough study, the committee would convey the findings to the faculty members. Prof. Armstrong added that this is not only about a complaints' platform, rather it's about a new system and infrastructure that deal mostly with issues students face.

- *A Senate member commented that we already have the ICE surveys that act as a complaint avenue.* Prof. Armstrong replied that ICEs do not address the individual student's issue in that course at a specific time, and therefore we need to find other ways of doing that, and there are some ideas that are being thought of.
- *Dean Shihadeh commented about grading: He stated that universities have a teach and learn function, but they also have to sort students from the best to the not-so-best. And when one put those two in the same room or in the same space, the sort function always overtakes anything else. Therefore, one can extrapolate from that the pressure put on students to get the grade regardless of learning. The University has acted on this notion and a policy was approved by the BOD, and currently the BOD is waiting for this to be implemented. Dean Shehadeh suggested to Prof. Armstrong that the committee consider other out-of-the-box ways to reduce the sort and increase the learner notion.* Prof. Armstrong strongly agreed with the comments and added that a part of this should be integrating peer evaluation to the process.
- *A Senate member commented that he prefers to keep things complaint free, however it is a double-edged sword. He added that faculty do care and value teaching, but he worries that such an approach becomes a personalized complaint section, and students already have one such avenue, which is ICEs reports.* Prof. Armstrong commented that the committee does not want that to happen and they will approach this in a holistic way, and try to work with the faculty across the University on mitigation steps, which eventually and indirectly lessens individual complaints by students on the long run.
- Provost Dawy asked Dr. Armstrong to add an additional dimension to the approach, which is looking back at previous initiatives that started during the previous years.
- *A Senate member commented that we might be failing the students in not teaching them what is acceptable, what is right and what is wrong. The Senate member added that we need to examine the ethics component.* Dr. Armstrong commented that previous years' committees have already addressed this, and the current committee is following up on these recommendations.

b. University Publications Committee

Prof. Honein, chairperson of the University Publications Committee, updated the Senate on the current work status of the committee and the future plans. Ms. El Hajjar from the AUB Book Press was also present at the Senate meeting. Prof. Honein stated that the responsibility of the University Publications Committee is to oversee all AUB's publications and not only AUB press as has been the case in the past years, and these include the faculty's' and students' publications. Currently, the committee is working on its functions that are more than 40 years old, where they will revise them, coordinate and recommend policies for all academic publications to ensure that such publications are internationally accepted for their standards of content production and design. Prof. Honein added that the committee will continue working closely with the University libraries and Office of Communications. The committee will work with the latter on promoting the faculty production products and

highlighting their work in the media and as podcasts. In addition, the committee will work on a digital journal that's led by the students themselves for publishing students' scholarly work, especially MS students who have a lot of work products from their MS work and were not published. As for undergraduate students, one idea that the committee has is to organize a conference for these students to present their work and the conference proceedings would be published digitally.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised.

- *A Senate member asked about the fate of the printed material and whether they can be displayed and accessible for the public.* Prof. Honein answered that a lot of these publications have been digitized and the work is still in progress. As for any printed publications, these are available for the public, and the committee welcomes any department that is interested in displaying these books in their schools.
- *A Senate member inquired about the possibility of having students edit their peers' papers, since learning is an ongoing process.* Prof. Honein answered that they do such a training to students as well as teaching them the different parts of work throughout the publication process depending on what their background is in.
- *A Senate member commented that not all MS students publish or are pushed to publish, and this depends on their respective field. Many of these students leave AUB without publishing their work, and we should work on this by pushing students to publish their research work even as press releases.*
- *A Senate member commented that we should be careful about not bombarding the public with too much press, rather publish only valuable and worthy material including that of social media.*

6- Update and progress from SCFA on Faculty Affairs items

Prof. Abu Alfa, Chair of SCFA, updated the Senate on the current work status of the committee and the items on hand, which are: 1-policy on outside activities; 2-Lebanese-pound and taxation; 3-Home loan benefits in dollars; 4- Home leave benefit; 5- Post retirement HIP coverage; 6- Continue benefit while on sick leave. While a seventh item, Gender discrimination HIP policy, has been finalized. Currently, all of the six items are being worked on during this academic year in coordination with the Provost office, and there are planned meetings with all involved stakeholders.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised.

- *A Senate member thanked SCFA for working on these many issues, and commented that the Lebanese pound taxation item is an extremely urgent matter, where in March-April 2023 this issue will negatively affect most faculty members where they will have little or no Lebanese pounds in their salary accounts after paying higher taxes on benefits, such as that of schooling.* Provost Dawy added that this is a huge challenge and would soon be compounded by the recent Lebanese government decree on taxation which makes

the issue even more urgent to be resolved by the University. The Provost added that the administration is currently working on understanding this new decree and meetings are planned soon to see how to approach this matter and minimize impact. The Senate will be updated on this matter in three weeks' time.

7. Other business

- President Khuri informed the Senate about the passing away of the previous Vice President, Prof. Georges Tohme, who served AUB for more than 40 years. An announcement will be sent to AUB's faculty shortly after the Senate meeting. The President also informed the Senate about the passing away of the senior trustee, Dr. Nicolas Khuri, and an announcement to AUB's faculty was sent some time back.
- President Khuri informed the Senate that our next meeting on December 16th will be longer than usual and asked them to reserve a 3 hours' time slot for it.
- *A Senate member inquired if it is possible to request that SCFA work on an item for changing and/or selecting Plan B beneficiaries.* President Khuri suggested to consult with AUB's attorney through the Benefits office on this matter before requesting SCFA to work on this issue.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 4:35 pm.

(Minutes recorded by T. Ghaddar, Secretary of the Senate)