

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday, October 28, 2022

Present: I. Abou Faycal, H. Abu-Khuzam, F. Afiouni, N. Al-Akl, A. Al-Hroub, S. Altug, S. BouJaoude, R. Boustany, A. Daou, Z. Dawy, J. Doumar, N. Dumit, S. Elbassuoni, T. Ghaddar, A. Ghauch, N. Hwalla, M. Jaber, M. Khraiche, S. Kharroubi, S. Mallat, M. Massoud, N. Melhem, L. Musfi, M. Nasrallah, A. Olabi, A. Sabra, A. Sabbagh, R. Sawaya, Y. Sidani, J. Costantine (for A. Shihadeh), A. Sibai, R. Sultan, R. Zurayk

Absent: F. Khuri*, L. Farhoud*, B. Tucker, S. Nouredine, I. Baalbaki, K. Scheid*, A. Abu-Alfa, P. Bou Khalil, S. Zein-el-dine, Y. Shaib*, G. Honein*, S. Karaki, A. Shihadeh

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

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

1- Approval of Senate meeting minutes of October 6, 2022

A motion was made and seconded to approve the October 6, 2022 Senate meeting minutes with minor editorial corrections and additions. The motion carried unanimously (30:0:0).

2- Announcement: Senate Steering Committee (SSC) Chair

Provost Dawy announced that Prof. N. Melhem has been elected as the Chair of the Senate Steering Committee.

3- Update on Promotion and Tenure

Provost Dawy presented the annual update to the senate on promotion and tenure. He reviewed the recent timeline for faculty promotion and tenure at AUB pointing out that there has been until now five completed promotion and tenure cycles since tenure was reinstated by the BOT in 2017. Since then, a total of 272 applicants and 215 awarded, for an overall success rate of 79%. In the current cycle during AY 2022-23, 27 applications have been submitted for tenure and promotion: assistant professor applying for associate professor with tenure (37%); associate professor applying for tenure in the rank (22%), associate professor applying for full professor with tenure (19%), tenured associate professor applying for promotion to full professor (11%); and full professor applying for tenure in the rank (11%). In addition, 12 applications for promotion in the non-tenure clinical tracks have been submitted at the Faculty of Medicine. The Provost reminded the Senate that all faculty members who receive tenure at AUB should go through a post tenure review after five years, which will take place in the sixth year. The first post-tenure cycle will take place during the end of the year 2023-2024 and will involve around 70 faculty members who received their tenure back in 2018. The Provost added that the Office of the Provost will be developing and sharing the schedule for the post-tenure review cycle in due time;

however, the involved faculty have already been notified about this. The Provost invited senators who wish to know more about promotion and tenure data to visit the Office of the Provost website.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised and were answered by the Provost:

- *What is the percentage of tenured faculty until now, and how does it compare to other institutions?* Currently, around 150 faculty members out of a total of around 500 professorial faculty members (including the clinical faculty members) are tenured (~30%), however, if one excludes the clinical faculty members, the number would be close to 40-45%.
- *Does AUB have a quota on the number of tenured faculty?* At the time when the tenure system was being reinstated, there were discussions whether we needed to have a quota for the number of tenured faculty members or not. However, the President and the BOT decided against having a quota.
- *What is the University position on faculty members who are on leave without pay and applied for promotion and tenure?* This issue is not explicit in the policy. However, the fact that the promotion clock continues to tick even if someone is on leave made us decide that faculty members are eligible to apply for tenure and promotion while on leave without pay, and that the evaluation of their files should follow the tenure and promotion policies and procedures without any special considerations because of the leave status.
- *How many have come back after promotion/tenure?* Some faculty members came back and some did not, however, we can find out the exact numbers and percentages.
- *What is the implication on the faculty contract after promotion and tenure?* A lot of work has been put in by the administration and the Senate, as well as other stakeholders, on this in years 2018 and 2019, however, this was put on hold after the crisis. Currently, we have tenure letters that are signed by the President similar to other US institutions. The tenure letter is an open-ended appointment, but some faculty contracts have ended and new ones have not been signed yet pending the new contract template. This is an area that still needs to be addressed.
- *If a faculty member receives tenure at the associate professor level and after a couple of years he/she was promoted to full professor, when would the post-tenure review be due?* Since a faculty member goes through a rigorous review when being evaluated for promotion to the full professor rank, the post-tenure review will then be five years after the last promotion. The provost added that we do have a policy for the post-tenure review.
- *How is the post-tenure review outcome evaluated?* The outcome of the review would be whether that file demonstrated sustained trajectory of achievements and accomplishments or not; if yes, then the counter restarts for another five years, if no then there will be a second review cycle that will take place after three years, where typically there would be a developmental action plan. In case the expectations were not met after the second review, this would lead to certain measures stated in the policy. The post-tenure review is a tool to acknowledge the progress of a faculty member or to encourage

further development, the the spirit of the policy is developmental rather than being punitive.

- *Can a tenured associate professor not apply for promotion to full professor?* An associate professor has two options as per the policy, either he/she applies for tenure only or apply for tenure and promotion to become tenured full professor.

4- Update on Faculty Attrition and Recruitment

Provost Dawy presented an update on faculty attrition and recruitment. Since September 2019 there has been a decline in the faculty body. Between September 2019 and August 2021, there were 106 leaves and 85 departures. Between September 2021 and August 2022, there were additional 57 leaves (37 new not on leave from the previous cycle) and 86 departures. In the Fall semester of 2022-23, there were an additional 25 leaves, and 12 leaves without pay requests have been submitted for the Spring semester of the current academic year. This amounts to approximately a 30% reduction in the faculty body; yet AUB has a very solid core faculty who still receive many prestigious awards every year. The Provost informed the Senate that over 35 faculty members have already returned after their leaves and approximately an additional 15 are planning to come back. In addition, over 75 new faculty members have been recruited to AUB between July 1, 2021 and September 1, 2022, and over 55 ongoing active searches across all faculties and schools for professorial rank faculty members are underway. The women to men distribution of the newly recruited faculty is notable and it is something AUB tracks and cares about. The Provost's Office have launched the new faculty orientation program for all new faculty, which is being led by Associate Provost F. Afioni. The orientation program is not just one event for the new recruits. Instead, it includes a series of workshops and activities throughout the academic year.

Additionally, the Provost presented the various measures taken by AUB to retain faculty, mainly in increasing the maximum allowed compensation that any faculty member can get from different sources (such as teaching overload, research funds, administrative, working on major university initiatives...), relaunching research leaves and conference travel, filling any vacant endowed chairs across the different faculties and most recently the addition of the Board Designated Professorships. He also added that the administration is working on initiatives to support faculty members' professional development including a leadership program, where more information will be shared in the near future by the Office of the President. One of the key projects in the making is to scale up OGC to become an office of research, and this entails the ability to secure external grants and especially larger scale ones. At the end of the presentation, the Provost shared with the senate the data over the past couple of years on the record high external grants and scholarships received; where this year a total of 52 million USD have been received (27.5 are scholarships and around 25 million R&D), even with the 30% less faculty members. In the last academic year 2021-2022 over 4.5 billion Lebanese Pounds went into faculty members' salaries from various external sources. The Provost reminded the Senate members about the monthly coffee hour, which is an open venue for discussing emerging issues, and the establishment of the "U-Forum" that is a series of virtual meetings to share updates on academic affairs, normally including a presentation by panelists on a given topic followed by questions.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised and were answered by the Provost:

- *What happens when an endowed chair position becomes vacant?* We have to advertise and reappoint somebody else. The process is an equal opportunity whether it is an internal search or an external one.
- *It would be helpful to know why faculty members that left are coming back, why they left, more information about their ranks, and if tenured or not?* This is something that we can do, however, currently we do not have any formal exit interview that is university wide for faculty members, and thus no such data is being compiled. The Office of the Provost will look into this further.
- *Is it possible to have a specific subset of funds to support new faculty so that they know what type of available support there is and the mechanisms involved?* Yes, this is something that we can work on to help attract more recruits.

5. Update on Student Enrollment

Provost Dawy stated that this agenda item has been requested by some Senate members in the last meeting, and the numbers that will be shared today are numbers as of October 15th and are good representation of the current student enrollment. The Director of Admissions and Financial Aid, Mr. A. Sabbagh, shared statistics on student enrollment over the period between Fall 2019 and Fall 2022. He noted the peak in overall student enrollment in Fall 2019 and the most notable drop in the student enrollment in Fall 2022. The total number of enrolled students that have paid the tuition and registered as of October 15th 2022 is 7824 students. However, the number of admitted undergraduate students (Freshman and Sophomore) has been on the rise. In Fall 2022, 1396 sophomore and 202 Freshman students have been admitted, while these numbers were less in Fall 2021 and 2020 (1358 and 191, 1259 and 144, respectively). Mr. Sabbagh added that some faculties were more affected than others. For example in FAS, the freshman program has taken a big hit in the year 2020 because of the Beirut explosion. As for the graduate admissions, the situation is similar to that of the undergraduate programs, where in some faculties, such as FAS, there has been a decline in the number of enrolled students while in MSFEA, OSB and FHS the numbers are somehow the same as (or higher than) before. As for FM, AUB put an upper cap of around 100 students this academic year while it used to be 120 students before.

Senate members were invited to ask questions and make comments. The following issues/questions were raised and were answered by Mr. Sabbagh:

- *A comment by a senate member was made:* It is good to see that the freshman student numbers are going up back to normal, which is a very good sign.
- *It would be good to know the comparison between the enrolled Lebanese students whose parents work abroad versus the Lebanese whose parents are staying in Lebanon, how do the percentages compare?* We don't have accurate data about this. Many students have addresses in Lebanon while their parents might be living abroad. AUB tried to have estimates about this but it was very challenging to collect accurate data. At the end, AUB

decided to give the 40% reduction in tuition fees to students who meet certain minimum requirement irrespective if their parents live in Lebanon or abroad, since the residence address does not truly reflect the social status of the family. As for the financial aid, AUB is committing the financial aid to students during their total stay at AUB and not per semester or year as long as they are in good academic standing.

- *Did the criteria of admission change? Did AUB decrease the SAT composite score?* AUB's regular admission is based on three inputs: the grades of the 10th and 11th years of high school, which constitute 50% of the weight for our internal composite score and 50% on SAT. This criterion has been the same and it has not changed. However, in the year 2020 and 2021, the College Board cancelled the SAT for safety and security reasons. Currently, students entering in 2023-24 are taking it right now and many of them wait until December to take it for the second time. In addition, we go by the cap on the number of admitted student as per each department's request.
- *Why few students in humanities and social science have lower financial aid assistance?* The financial aid is not based on the subject of the student's study, but rather based on the prospective needs of the student. The financial aid for new incoming students are normally awarded before he/she picks the final major after admission. We cannot discriminate based on major, and we don't know what major the student will confirm. We do have 40 scholarships available for any student who has been accepted into the humanities and it is up to 70% of the tuition for three years. However, we have not been able to consistently fill all of those 40 scholarships and they can't be given to students in other disciplines.
- *A comment by a senate member was made:* In medicine we try to encourage students from various backgrounds to apply to the medical school, therefore, there should be more awareness or a new mechanism to have more students, who may wish to continue later in medicine, actually go into the humanities, and these scholarships would be very helpful.
- *Do we know the percentage of foreign students enrolled, and what nationalities and how that compares over the years?* Yes we can find these numbers exactly. They are around 18%, but we'll be more than happy to provide the numbers in another meeting.
- *A comment by a senate member was made:* I could see really the great work done in the background, from the office of admissions, the open house, the school visits to calling up students and asking if they need help in finalizing their applications.
- *Does the shared number of enrolled students include AUB online programs and professional certifications?* Yes, the numbers shown include all online academic programs but not the non-academic certifications or online programs.
- *Graduate students, even if they get 50% GA, it is still a hefty amount to pay the remaining tuition. Is there anything that can be done about it?* In the past, if a graduate student had a GA-ship he/she could not benefit from financial aid, however, in the last two years we have been awarding graduate students financial aid on top of their GA-ships. The university has been helping all graduate students who are in need.
- *Are you exploring other markets besides the Golf for students' recruitment?* Yes, we have visited other markets such as Egypt, which is a large market since many of our alumni moved there in the past three years. There are also other markets that we are looking into right now such as Greece.

6. Discussion: Role of Senate and functions of Senate Committees and Boards

Provost Dawy started by stating that this agenda item is for discussion about the role and functions of the Senate committees and boards and on how we can mobilize these committees to do more work under the mandates of what is listed in the in the Senate bylaws. The SSC recommended adding this item due to the differences in terms of frequency of meetings, expectations and requirements in the Senate committees' reports. A suggestion would be to ask them to come and present their plans at the beginning of each academic year and in the spring semester they would update the Senate on the progress achieved. This would push them to think more about plans and make them accountable in front of the Senate. Provost Dawy opened the floor for discussion:

- A Senate member welcomed the idea made by the Provost that at the beginning of each academic year the chair of each Senate committee or board would present their plan for the coming year and present any new initiatives, and later update the Senate at the end of the spring semester or even at the beginning of the next fiscal year since they would have finalized their reports by that time.
- A Senate member commented that the Senate might not be doing enough to mandate the Senate committees and this should be a two-way communication. As an example, the Senate could mandate specific tasks to the Senate committees and discuss such specific topics all together.
- A Senate member suggested that the Senate members should familiarize themselves with each committee's bylaws and once a committee's progress is presented to the Senate, the latter can discuss while holding the committee accountable.
- A Senate member suggested that the Senate committee chairs look at the logs of the previous years and work on what has been left undone.

At the end of the discussion, the Provost suggested that there is a process for the Senate to look at the functions of the committees and revise them, in addition to engage more with the work of the different Senate committees.

7. Other business

- Dean N. Al-Akl briefed the Senate on the students' elections that took place on October 21, 2022, where there was quite a large engagement of students and the elections went smoothly. Students were informed beforehand about the voting and had eligibility checks, where on the first day 800 students applied for eligibility checks. On the election day, 1000 votes were recorded during the first 3 minutes once the voting platform was open, and 51% of the student body voted. In the coming weeks, the meetings with the SRC and USFC members will be initiated. Dean Al-Akl thanked IT, colleagues, staff and the Office of Protection who made the elections run successfully without any IT or physical incidents.

- A Senate member relayed a question by some faculty members to the Provost if it is possible to pay some of the taxes on benefits in Lebanese pounds at the Cashiers Office similar to what LAU is doing. The Provost explained that this question was raised last year in different contexts and was discussed in SCFA. Upon lots of discussions and meetings with AUB's CFO and Comptroller's Office, it was very clear for the University that anything that has to do with the taxation procedure has to be implemented on the system for audit purposes and thus can't be paid in cash at the Cashier's Office.
- A Senate member asked if the faculty salaries will be 100% in fresh dollars once the students' tuition is collected after 3 years in fresh dollars, since this was raised up by some faculty members after the Al Modon interview with President Khuri. The Provost explained the approach that the University has taken to make a notable increase in the fresh dollar component in the salaries from year to year. However, such an increment is very difficult to state beforehand since this depends on the finances of the institution and collections of tuition fees from students. For example, last year the forecasted percentage packet was set at 35% as an average dollar component; however, it ended up to be 45% after going over the budget in detail during the spring term. The Provost added that the faculty salaries are of 3 components (basic salary, benefits and taxation), and thus a 45% percentage in fresh dollar of the basic salary when added to what AUB is covering for benefits and taxation would be equivalent to 65- 80%. The Provost assured the Senate that the administration knows how important salaries are for everybody in order to retain faculty and staff, and that this will continue to be a high priority goal in the coming period.
- A Senate member asked if the administration has a contingency plan if the Lebanese government changes the 1500 LL rate to 15,000 LL. The Provost mentioned that this topic has been under discussion before and even recently, and certainly there are ideas on how AUB would mitigate the impact. The finance team is very much aware of this and it's will be a major challenge for them, and the university will certainly work on mitigation measures to minimize any negative implications to the extent possible.
- A Senate member inquired about the housing plan; If there are plans this year to pay the 10,000 USD yearly benefit in fresh dollars or in local dollars as last year. VP Jaber responded to this question by stating that the AUB will continue paying this amount in local dollars this year. She also added that the housing purchase plan was frozen in October 2019, however, AUB can always revisit this for next year but this year there will be no changes regarding this matter.
- A Senate member made a comment concerning the closure of the AUB gate near OSB that resulted in students entering from the OSB parking. This has created some safety concern and thus reopening this gate is of high importance. This issue was noted by VP Jaber.

There being no other business the meeting was adjourned at 4:15 pm.

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