

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Friday 22 February 2013**

Present: M. Adnan Al-Alaoui, Aghiad Al-Kutoubi, Samir Arnaout, Bassem Barhoumi, Elias Baydoun, Salim Chahine, Leila Dagher, Ahmad Dallal, George DeBin, Jocelyn DeJong, Arne Dietrich, Peter Dorman, Imad Elhajj, Nadim Farajalla, Robert Foster, Joseph Ghafari, Antoine Ghauch, Amal Hamadeh, Nahla Hwalla, Samar Jabbour-Khoury, Ayad Jaffa (representing Dean Mohamed Sayegh), Issam Lakkis, Ghassan Matar, Peter May, Patrick McGreevy, Jad Melki (ADC representative), Waddah Nasr, Lara Nasreddine, Talal Nizameddin, Samar Nouredine, Iman Nuwayhid, Moueen Salameh, Imad Saoud, Makram Suidan, Salma Talhouk, Julnar Usta, David Wrisley, Amy Zenger

Absent: Richard Brow, Nabil Dajani*, George Farag, Sirene Harb*, Huda Huijer, Diana Jaalouk, Dima Jamali*, Ayman Kayssi, Vivian Khamis, Rita Khayat-Toubia, Salah Sadek, Shadi Saleh, Mohamad Sayegh, Wilfried Vanhonacker, Salah Zeineldine

(*= regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

1. The meeting was called to order at 2 pm. **Approval of minutes.**

Minutes of January 18, 2013 meeting were approved as amended (unanimous)

2. **Motion to change Senate Bylaws to conform with the new academic calendar (see attachment).**

President Dorman distributed a document which specifies the modifications that need to be made to the Senate Bylaws in order to conform with the new academic calendar.

Motion: To modify the Senate Bylaws as per attached in order to conform with the new academic calendar.

Vote 2013-17: Motion approved (32-0-0)

3. **Proposal for a BA in Media and Communications (FAS) (see attachment)**

Professor Jad Melki, ADC representative, moved to approve the proposed program. He then presented a summary of the document that was circulated to the Senate. The diploma in media and communication has attracted 200 students; it is an established proof for the demand for studies in this field and a good basis for the proposed BA program. He indicated that the number of students in MCOM has doubled between 2002 and 2012. He presented results of surveys conducted to assess interest in proposed program with AUB students, with students enrolled in other Universities in Lebanon, with school students, with alumni, and with focus groups from the advertisement, the news, and the civil society sectors. He explained that the proposed 70% theory and 30% practice. He described courses offered by the program and highlighted collaborations with other departments, centers, programs, and sectors. The curriculum was developed by benchmarking against eight peer universities that have received accreditation by

the ACEJMC accrediting body. The program will need two full time faculty, a workshop/ internship coordinator, and an additional media laboratory. The expected total number of students is 75. In response to inquiries Prof. Melki explained that graduates will seek job opportunities with news agencies, PR and advertisement agencies, with politicians and policy makers as political communication experts, with NGOs, and they may engage in median research. In response to another inquiry Prof. Melki indicated that the diploma will be phased out but the possibility of eliminating it is not considered at this stage. There is a possibility for students to take a dual degree using GE requirements. Increased enrollment will be accommodated by opening additional sections. The system does not currently flag students who declare minor or diploma, once this is made possible then priority will be given to those students. A model similar to the one adopted at the biology department was proposed, students are given tickets that enable them to register for a given course. The impact of the growth of MCOM on other disciplines in the department, namely sociology and anthropology, is positive; the number of students in these disciplines has increased in the past three years both at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Furthermore there is a cap for undergraduate and graduate student enrollment in MCOM, the remaining students tend to enroll in sociology with a concentration in media studies. The number of graduate students will be limited for the coming years and then increased gradually as additional faculty is recruited.

Motion: To approve the BA in Media and Communication (FAS) (see attachment)

Vote 2013-18: Motion approved (32-0-0)

President Dorman welcomed Executive VP George DeBin and gave a brief overview of the administrative positions he held at the Universities of Kentucky and Sharja.

4. Proposal to waive up to nine course credits of the requirements in ME programs for holders of BE degrees (FEA) (see attachment)

Professor Usta, representing the Board of Graduate Studies, moved to approve the recommendation of the BGS to waive up to nine course credits with a ceiling of 12 credits enrolled in graduate studies. Responding to inquiries, Dean Suidan explained that this applies to BE holders in other universities in Lebanon.

Motion: To approve proposal to wave up to nine course credits of the requirements in ME programs for holders of BE degrees with a ceiling of 12 credits (see attachment)

Vote 2013-19: Motion approved (32-0-0)

5. Discussion of changes to faculty contracts

Professor Chahine, presented concerns raised by the Senate on Faculty Affairs by highlighting specific points (presentation attached). He explained that he met with VP May and Ms. Hamadeh (acting VP HR) to discuss these points. The meeting helped clarify the fact that the modifications were made to address irregularities in the previous text and are therefore clarifications rather than changes. VP May explained that the revision of the faculty contract

was part of an ongoing process of reviewing and clarifying the University legal documents and contractual agreements. In response to inquiries VP May indicated that regardless of faculty nationality the contract follows Lebanese law. As for benefits and allowances he explained that AUB historically has never broken a faculty contract. In addition the University has recently acquired an interruption insurance to sustain itself during forced interruptions. Financial constraints have to be major events at the level of academic programs or university financial operations. In response to an inquiry as to why not attach policies with contract he indicated that policies are posted on the web and faculty are informed about new ones. It is the University obligation to inform faculty about new policies. However considering the complexity of policies it is not possible to add these to the contract.

Senators thanked the representative of the SCFA for his conciliatory approach but indicated that the fact that modifications to the faculty contracts were made without their knowledge is not acceptable. It was also pointed out that based on legal advice received by some faculty the modifications change the terms of the contract. When asked whether similar changes were made to the contracts of administrators, VP May responded that these modifications were applied to most contracts. When asked by a senator, VP May replied that his own contract is governed by NY Law. [note: see "Addendum"] President Dorman agreed that changes should have been communicated to faculty and made clear to both parties, and that no faculty member should be required to sign a contract if they are unaware of its conditions. He also expressed his surprise upon hearing that there were differing legal opinions regarding the modifications because the University was informed by legal advisors in Lebanon and New York that these do not change contract conditions. Senators indicated that faculty feel strongly about the fact that they should not have had to prompt the administration with requests to learn about the fact that modifications were made to their contracts. President Dorman agreed that faculty should have been informed and that transparency and values are important for the institution and these constitute the core of the university wide exercise that is led by Prof. Adnan Tahir. Senators reiterated their concern that modifications to the benefits may undermine reasons why they joined AUB in the first place and that the proposed modifications may become a disincentive to foreign recruits. Faculty contracts should be clear and should encourage applicants. In addition it was pointed out that there are still pending clarifications related to recruitment and eligibility for grants. President Dorman indicated that many questions still remain to be tackled. Senators indicated that it is essential to have trust between faculty and administration and a request was made to President Dorman to follow up on this contract modification issue because it is essentially at the core of this trust. The President stated that "We cannot go on with a contract when some faculty, even a minority, are not comfortable with it."

Senators also asked why the contract was linked to instability which is chronic in the region. Acting VP Hamadeh explained that AUB survived many wars and this was not the cause to break a faculty contract. She also indicated that the condition of force majeure was present in the previous text. President Dorman was asked to stop the adoption of the new text in the contract until both parties agree. In response to this request President Dorman said that he will consult

with lawyers and administration to determine how to proceed and concurred that there should be agreement, trust, and transparency.

6. Faculty input on major architectural works on campus

Prompted by recent complaints raised by faculty members regarding the Issam Fares Institute Building, professor Dietrich explained that if faculty were involved in the process many would have objected to the proposed architecture. President Dorman asked Mr. Barhoumi, Director of FPDU, to explain to the senate the process that led to the selection of the architect and the design. Mr. Barhoumi presented the process of selecting firms that entered the competition. Out of eleven companies that applied, five were selected for the competition. He pointed out that the jury that selected the winning design included President Waterbury, four faculty members, and four international jurors, and the Deans were present as silent viewers. The winning design was publicized at the time. Mr. Barhoumi indicated that in the end design is also a matter of taste and he showed a short movie about the interior of the building. President Dorman indicated that in addition to aesthetic, functionality of building is of primary importance, and proposed a web site with full information where all members of the AUB community could register their “like” or “dislike” of this building and future ones.

Meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm

ADDENDUM:

In a subsequent communication, VP May clarified his statement as follows: The contracts of certain senior administrators with job responsibilities in the US as well as Beirut, such as the President and the VP for Legal Affairs, are governed by New York law.