

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Wednesday, June 6, 2018

Present: S. Abdulrahim (by invitation), M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, A. Abu-Alfa, B. Bashour, E. Al-Chaer, A. Chalak, A. Chehab, L. Daouk-Oyry, H. Diab, Z. Dawy (by invitation), N. Dumit, N. El-Cheikh, S. El Fakhani, W. El-Hajj, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, E. Hitti, H. Huijer, S. Kanj-Shararah, A. Kayssi, F. Khuri (chairing), R. Mohtar, H. Muller, W. Nasr, I. Nuwayhid, S. Sadek, M. Sayegh, E. Shamma, R. Sharara-Chami, A. Shihadeh, J. Touma

Absent: T. Ali*, I. Baalbaki, J. Chaaban, D. Gubara*, G. Kanazi*, M. Jurdi*, R. Karami, P. McGreevy*, N. Melhem*, T. Nizameddin, A. Olabi, S. Zeineldine

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:10 p.m.

1) Approval of the minutes of May 24, 2018

A senator said he thought the section on agenda item number four did not accurately reflect the balance of discussion and referred to remarks he said were made by two other senators that did not appear in the circulated minutes. Since the senator did not come prepared with specific suggested text to be added, the secretary of the senate agreed to meet with him in order to determine what changes were actually being requested. The president said that this would mean that approval of the minutes would either have to wait until September or be done by circular vote.

2) Voting on degrees for spring 2018 graduates

H. Abou-Araj presented the list of degree candidates and statistics on their distribution (circulated list of expected graduates of June 2018). Dean El Cheikh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Arts and Sciences (FAS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAS. Vote 2018-37. The motion was approved unanimously.** EVP/Dean Sayegh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Medicine (FM). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FM. Vote 2018-38. The motion was approved unanimously.** Director Huijer recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Hariri School of Nursing (HSON). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in HSON. Vote 2018-39. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Nuwayhid recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Health Sciences (FHS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FHS. Vote 2018-40. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dr. Nuwayhid also recommended awarding degrees to the indicted students in the two degree programs that are jointly administered by FHS and FM and whose graduates have their diplomas signed by the deans of both those faculties. **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FHS/FM. Vote 2018-41. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Shihadeh recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in MSFEA. Vote 2018-42. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Mohtar recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Faculty of Agricultural and Food Sciences (FAFS). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in FAFS. Vote 2018-43. The motion was approved unanimously.** Dean Harvey recommended awarding degrees to the indicated students in the Olayan School of Business (OSB). **A motion was made to award degrees to the candidates in OSB. Vote 2017-44. The motion was approved unanimously.**

3) New undergraduate program in Health Communication

Dr. Sawsan Abdulrahim gave a presentation on a proposed new undergraduate program in Health Communication to be administered by FHS (see appendix I). **A motion was made to approve the proposed new program.** Senators asked several questions during discussion including whether or not the program would include any measures to address deficiencies in health literacy among the general public; whether FHS had considered the alternative option of offering a BS in Public Health with a minor in Health Communication; and whether or not the specific issue of developing the capacity to communicate effectively about mental health issues would be addressed. Dr. Abdulrahim responded by saying that addressing the public's health literacy is not currently a standard topic in health communication theory but that she and her colleagues could look into incorporating it; market research reveals significant student demand for programs in communication and significantly less for programs in public health; and she would ask her colleagues to look into the possibility of setting up a directed elective in psychology to educate students about mental health issues. A senator from FM remarked that much of health professionals' work in this region is conducted in Arabic and he asked whether any coursework in Arabic and its dialects would be included in the program. Dr. Abdulrahim noted that the Media Studies program offers a course in writing in Arabic for the media, and this course could address at least part of the issue. Dean El Cheikh remarked that requiring Arabic courses is a significant decision because it would mean excluding many foreign and some non-fluent local students; but if the program does decide to go in that direction they should be aware that the Arabic department has recently revamped their communication proficiency curriculum to include courses that are analogous to ENGL 203 and 204, so that is something to look into. Dean Shihadeh said he was very happy to see the course on Advocacy and Activism for Social Change in the proposed program's curriculum and suggested publicizing that course widely as it would likely draw lots of student interest from across the university. **Vote 2018-45. The motion was passed unanimously.**

4) Graduate fellowship and assistantship policy

Associate Provost Zaher Dawy began by reminding the senate that this is not the first time this body has seen the information in this presentation. Earlier versions of it had been shared with the University Senate, the Board of Deans, and the Graduate Council and the current version incorporates input from all three of those bodies (see appendix II). **A motion was made to approve the proposed policy document.** During the discussion senators and the deans from both FAFS and FHS said that the new policy of asking for only eight hours of work a week from graduate assistants (GA) would hurt their faculties because they currently rely on those students for as much as twenty hours a week from those students. A senator from OSB said the situation in her faculty was similar. Dr. Dawy noted that under the current policy, the maximum numbers of hours worked was supposed to be fourteen. A senator stated that since the new policy is that a GA received tuition waiver only, as opposed to any kind of stipend, there is a question of whether it is legal to require them to work at all. Dr. Dawy said faculty researchers were encouraged to write graduate students into their grant proposals with an eye for procuring funds for them via that route. Several senators from FAS said that this model does not really fit the sort of research done in the arts and the humanities. Dean Shihadeh said that faculty should not be using students who had been awarded a GA as a back-door for research funding and that while he very much supports establishing the principle that if a person is doing work for AUB then that person should be paid for the work, what is needed here is clarity about the rules and more consistency across faculties. Several senators remarked on the substantial amount of progress that had been made on these issues and this document over the past year and thanked Dr. Dawy and other members team from the Office of the Provost for their hard work on this. **Vote 2018-46. The motion was passed unanimously.**

5) Graduate diplomas program policy

In light of the late hour and the amount of time spent on agenda item number four, the president invoked his privilege as chair and postponed discussion of this item until the next senate meeting.

6) Other business

The president reminded senators about tomorrow’s meeting with members of the BoT and encouraged all of those who planned to attend but who had not yet given an RSVP to email Paula Chalhoub. A senator asked about the status of the plan to move from numerical to letter grading. She noted that the senate had neither seen nor discussed the data collected in the fall of 2017 during the spring semester, even though we had planned to do so. The president said that the data collection and assessment was set up as three-year project. The provost said it would be a good idea to look at all of the data collected during the 2017-2018 academic year at the beginning of next year and that it might be possible to fully implement letter grading starting with the spring of 2019. A senator from the FM said that he was getting feedback from both faculty and staff that the online course on Title IX, while good, was too US-specific and staff in particular have asked why they need to be able to answer questions about US discrimination and harassment law in order to complete the course. The senator asked if it might be possible to make the course more specific to the Lebanese legal context. The president said that this could be looked into but that US law is relevant because of AUB’s unique status as an institution located in Lebanon but chartered in New York.

7) Senate representative statement to the BoT

As this was a session for faculty members only, upper level administrators and members of the Board of Deans left the Senate chamber. Dr. Lina Daouk-Oyry then answered questions and accepted feedback on the draft statement that she distributed to the Senate in advance of this meeting.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:30 pm.

(Minutes recorded by H. Muller, Secretary of the Senate)

Appendix I: New undergraduate program in Health Communication



Proposal for UG
program in Health C

Appendix II: Graduate fellowship and assistantship policy



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