

American University of Beirut
Final Minutes of the University Senate
Meeting of Wednesday, October 30, 2019

Present: M. Abiad, H. Abou Araj, E. Al-Chaer, T. Amin, G. Burris, A. Chalak, R. Chedid, , L. Daouk, N. Dumit, S. El Fakhani, N. El-Cheikh, W. El-Hajj, R. Mohtar, L. Farhoud, M. Harajli, C. Harb, S. Harvey, D. Jaalouk , K. Kabalan, S. Kanj-Sharara, F. Khuri, N. Melhem, R. Nakkash, T. Nizameddin, I. Nuwayhid, G. Saad , N. Saliba, A. Shihadeh, F. Talih, M. Sayegh, M. Farah, E. Hitti, R. Sharara, T. Bazi

Absent: A. Abu-Alfa, I. Baalbaki, H. Diab, A. Chehab, H. El Rassy*, A. Harutyunyan*, S. Isber, H. Jaafar*

(* = regrets notified before meeting)

The meeting was called to order at 2:00 p.m.

1) Obituary for Prof. Albert Kuran

Dr. Nassir Sabah read an obituary for Dr. Albert Kuran (**see appendix I**). A moment of silence was then observed.

2) Approval of Senate minutes of September 25, 2019

In the minutes of Sep. 25, 2019, a senator suggested modifications to sections 11 and 12. The suggested modifications were incorporated and the minutes were approved as amended.

3) Voting of Degrees

Dean Shihadeh moved to recommend awarding BE degrees to two students in the Maroun Semaan Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (MSFEA). **Vote 2019-10. The motion was approved unanimously.**

4) Amendments to the Corporate Bylaws re “Council of Associate Deans”

The amendments to the corporate bylaws to establish a Council of Associate Deans were presented by Provost Harajli. The Provost explained that the presentation to the senate is for information only and that the presented amendments do not require a senate vote. The Board of Trustees will vote on implementing the presented changes in their upcoming meeting. During the discussion of the proposed amendments, some senators inquired about the reasoning behind inviting the chair of the council of associate deans to be an ex-officio non-voting member of the senate. Other senators mentioned that the chair of the council could attend the senate meetings by invitation only whenever the need for his/her presence arises. A senator stated that the presence of the chair of the council in senate meetings even as a passive listener will give him/her exposure to the various academic discussions and consequently facilitate communications with the associate deans of the respective faculties. A senator asked about the possibility of a senate representative attending the council of associate deans meetings, but it was explained that most discussions during the council’s meetings are of pure academic nature and therefore do not warrant the presence of a senate representative. It was also noted that the council of associate deans has been informally meeting for the past six months, and the presented amendments to the corporate bylaws aim at formalizing the formation of this body.

5) Amendments to the Faculty Bylaws re “E-Voting”

Provost Harajli presented the changes to the Faculty Bylaws to incorporate the possibility of using electronic voting for electing representatives to the Senate, to the faculty/school, and to University

committees. Then Walid El Khazen from the IT department explained the newly proposed E-Voting system via an example. A senator questioned the underlying assumptions behind the proposed electoral system claiming that the way votes are transferred between candidates is not very fair for the second best candidate. Another senator noted that the E-voting system was presented by Dr. Zaatari and approved during a previous senate meeting; however a policy regarding the presented system was never circulated. Considering the situation in the country and given that the vote on the amendments of the Faculty bylaws to include E-voting is not urgent, a senator proposed tabling the discussion on the subject. **A motion to table the discussion was made. Vote 2019-11. Motion was approved by a vote (21-0-5).**

6) Amendments to the Senate Bylaws re “HSON as Independent School”

Interim Dean Leila Farhoud and Provost Harajli presented the changes to the Senate Bylaws to reflect the independence of the Rafic Hariri School of Nursing. The changes can be summarized by the following three points:

- References to the “Hariri School of Nursing” and “HSON” in the bylaws are replaced with “Rafic Hariri School of Nursing” and “RHSON” respectively.
- Reference to “Director of HSON” is replaced by “Dean of RHSON”
- 2 (instead of 1) senate representatives from RHSON

Some senators questioned whether AUB have received the RHSON naming endowment from the Hariri family but the discussion was tabled.

A motion to approve the amended Senate Bylaws as presented was made. Vote 2019-12. The motion was approved unanimously.

7) Working together to salvage academic semester

President Khuri urged the senate and faculty at large to work with all members of the AUB community and accommodate different needs once classes are set to resume October 31, 2019. The President stressed that the safety of the members of the community takes precedence over all other aspects, and urged the faculty to be flexible in scheduling exams and not to punish students who may need to skip classes or be elsewhere during this transition period. Furthermore, President Khuri entrusted the deans/chairs/ and faculty of AUB to protect the interests of the students in the long run.

Some senators expressed concern about safety issues considering ongoing road closures and escalations on the streets. There was a suggestion to delay class resumption until the situation settles down and catch up on the lost time during the winter session in January. A senator noted that some courses run during the intersession and consequently January cannot be used to schedule make-up classes. Some senators suggested extending the semester by a week or so and reducing the reading period to catch-up on the lost time. The Provost assured everyone that the Council of Associate Deans will be meeting on Thursday October 31, 2019 to come up with a new schedule for the semester. Then it will be up to the individual faculty members to manage their courses and work backwards from the new final exam schedule. There was a consensus in the meeting that faculty members should not over burden the students with course work but be creative with delivery methods and rely on online learning to catch up on some of the lost time.

Another suggestion was voiced requesting the administration send an email to the students easing them into the resumption of classes and assuring them that there will be no penalties if they miss classes during the transition period and that there will be no exams or assignments due in the week November 3, 2019. EVP Sayegh recommended that the statement be issued by the Dean of student affairs and warned against a blanket statement that might be abused in the long run. EVP Sayegh shared how the Medical school dealt with the current situation; the school didn't stop classes during the demonstrations and provided housing for students to help them accommodate the strict schedule and cope with international exams deadlines.

A senator raised concerns about possible student strikes on the morning of October 31, 2019. The President counseled against the strikes on campus, stating that such actions might be easily misinterpreted, could have terrible consequences, and could discredit what is happening on the streets. He also requested that the faculty should urge students not to fall into such mistakes. The President closed by stressing the importance of maintaining the respect that exists within the AUB community. He highlighted the value of respecting the diversity in the AUB community and the need to be accommodating while resuming classes.

8) Other Business

- A senator noted that it should not be accepted that some of our faculty have been a target of aggression on the streets and a statement condemning such aggressions should be issued by the senate. President Khuri stressed that the entire AUB community and not only the faculty should be included in any statement condemning threats and violence. It was suggested that senate members will coordinate and vote on such a statement via email.
- A senator raised concerns regarding the devaluation of the LBP and its consequences on the faculty salaries. The President assured that there is a plan to ameliorate such a situation in event that it arises but cannot comment on it at this stage.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:00 pm.

(Minutes recorded by G. Saad, Secretary of the Senate)

Appendix I

Obituary

Albert Asaad Kuran

Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering

(1933-2019)

Prof. Albert Kuran was born on August 18, 1933. He was awarded the degree of BSc in Mechanical Engineering from Virginia Polytechnic and State University in June 1954, following which he was appointed in 1956 as Instructor in the newly established Department of Mechanical Engineering at AUB. He later took a leave of absence to earn a Master of Engineering degree in Mechanical Engineering from Yale University in June 1962 and returned to the Department as Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering. He was promoted to the rank of Associate Professor of Mechanical Engineering, with Tenure, in July 1966, and retired from the University on September 1, 2017.

Prof. Kuran served AUB ably and loyally for nearly 60 years. He chaired the Department of Mechanical Engineering (1977 to 1980), was Assistant Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (1980 to 1982, and 1985 to 1991), and Associate Dean of the Faculty (1992 to 1998). He served on numerous Departmental and Faculty committees and University bodies, including the Senate, Senate Steering Committee, University Council (1991 and 1993 to 1994), President Hoelsher's Inaugural Committee (1978), the HIP Advisory Committee, and chaired at various times the Faculty Admissions Committee, the Student Affairs Committee, and the Student Aid Committee. He was one of those who held the fort for the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture during the very difficult and stressful years of the Lebanese civil war.

Prof. Kuran was a dedicated teacher, much liked and admired by his students. He cared for his students with deep sympathy and spared no effort toward their welfare and their personal, academic, and professional advancement. In grateful appreciation, two of his former students, George Makhoul and the late Maroun Semaan, took the initiative to establish in his honor in 2015, The Albert Kuran Dubai Alumni Endowed Scholarship at AUB. This is the same Maroun Semaan after whom the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture was named, in recognition of a generous donation he made in 2017 for an endowment fund at AUB.

In so many ways Prof. Kuran was a truly remarkable character, endowed with a very pleasant personality that endeared him to all who knew him. Kind, gentle, generous, and forgiving, he was averse to antagonizing anyone, spoke no ill of others, and harbored no grudges against anybody. Cheerful and gregarious, with a refreshing sense of humor, he was always ready with a friendly smile, a witty remark, a funny joke, or a fitting story. Joyous and ebullient, he was the life-of-the-party type of person.

Prof. Kuran was devoted to his family and doted on his children and grandchildren. He passed away on July 22, 2019, survived by his widow, Nuhad Lattouf, his sons, Tony and Kameel, and his grandchildren, Cynthia, Kareena, Maria, and Kareem.

Someone has said: "He has achieved success who has lived well, loved much, laughed often, and left his world better than he found it." By this measure, Albert Kuran was eminently successful. May his Soul rest in Peace.

Beirut, August 2019