

**American University of Beirut**  
**Minutes of the University Senate**  
**General Meeting of Friday 29 February 2008**

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, A. Abdul-Malak, H. Abu Khuzam, R. Afifi (by invitation), A. Al-Alaoui, A. Al-Kutoubi, G. Araj, K. Bitar, N. Cortas, J. Dargham, N. Darwiche, M. Darwish, R. Dean, H. Diab, L. Farhood, I. Hajj, P. Heath, K. Hindi, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, M. Jurdi, S. Kenney, R. Khauli, M. Khawaja, M. Kisirwani, A. Lyzzaik, L. Musfy, G. Najjar, N. Nassif, M. Nimah, O. Obeid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, B. Shayya, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, J. Waterbury (chairing), H. Zurayk.

Absent: M. El-Sabban\*, R. Haddad, S. Jeffrey, S. Maamari\*, M. Obeid, S. Sadek.

(\* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

The meeting was called to order at 2:02 p.m.

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of 1 February 2008 were approved as corrected.

2. *Revisions to the Master of Public Health program.* A motion to adopt the proposed revisions was seconded. R. Afifi went through the proposal which had been previously circulated. A senator asked whether the proposal had been accepted by the Board of Graduate Studies. Dean Zurayk said it had been the practice since its inception in 1971 for the Master's degree in Public Health to be managed entirely within the faculty of Health Sciences; moreover this was standard practice in universities in the USA. There was further discussion on the issue.

**Vote 2008-15: The motion was defeated (For 16, voting members present 34).**

3. *Revisions to the URB guidelines.* A motion to adopt the proposed revisions, highlighted in yellow in the circulated guidelines, was seconded. Dean Cortas explained that instructors in the Faculty of Medicine held either a Ph.D. or an M.D., hence their exceptional eligibility to URB funding in the proposed guidelines. There was further discussion on this issue. Provost Heath said that any proposed extension of eligibility to other professional schools should be made to the URB.

**Vote 2008-16: The motion was passed (For 27, voting members present 34).**

4. *New undergraduate program in FEA: B.Sc in Construction Engineering.* The chair of the Academic Development Committee, having confirmed that the proposal had been approved by the ADC, proposed a motion to approve the proposed program, which was seconded. Dean Hajj explained the need for the program, adding in answer to a senator's question that the new B.Sc. would not detract from the existing B.Engg. In reply to a question by the dean of FAS whether the program would lead to an increase in student admissions in the university, which could not be handled with present resources, Dean Hajj said that an increase was envisaged after two or three years. Dean Bitar proposed an addition to the motion, that it should be approved within the constraints of present student admissions. There was further discussion on this issue. The provost stated that the present cap on admissions applied to the university as a whole, not to each separate faculty.

**Vote 2008-17: The addition to the motion was carried by a clear majority.**

**Vote 2008-18: The main motion was carried by a clear majority.**

5. *New undergraduate programs in FEA: B.Sc. in Chemical Engineering; B.Engg. in Chemical Engineering; Minor in Petroleum Engineering.* The chair of the ADC confirmed that the proposal

had been approved by the ADC. A motion to approve the proposals subject to the enrolment policy of the university was seconded. Dean Hajj explained that the proposal was the result of two years of discussion and that the programs would be managed within the department of mechanical engineering, not in a separate department. A senator said that the programs should have been introduced in the 1950s and should not now be subject to constraints of enrolment. The provost said that the proposed programs had strong support from individuals in the petroleum industry and could attract funds, but that the issue of funding should be separated from that of the programs' merit. The president said that any increase in the student body had repercussions throughout the university and was not confined to the availability of classrooms. Dean Hajj said that a program had to exist to attract funds. After further discussion the question was called.

**Vote-2008-19: The motion was carried (For 23, voting members present 34).**

6. *Election to the Employee Benefits Committee of two representatives of the senate.* The president explained that at present one member of the Employee Benefits Committee was ex officio the chair of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs, while a second was elected by the senate; another elected representative was desirable. A motion to confirm the election of A. Abdul-Malak to the Employee Benefits Committee for the rest of 2007-08 was seconded.

**Vote 2008-20: The motion was carried unanimously.**

A motion to elect A. Abdelnoor to the committee for the rest of 2007-08 was seconded.

**Vote 2008-21: The motion was carried unanimously.**

7. *Election of a representative of the senate for meetings with the Board of Trustees.* The president clarified that more than one meeting with the Board of Trustees would take place during the remainder of 2007-08. A. Abdel-Rahman, A. Abdul-Malak, and R. Khauli were nominated for election. A ballot was taken in two stages resulting in the election of A. Abdel-Rahman by a majority of voting members.

8. *Statement by the Ad-Hoc Committee on Tenure.* Representing the committee S. Seikaly introduced its statement by saying that the committee had been formed at the end of the special meeting of the senate on 1st February with a view to writing a senate statement concerning tenure for presentation to the board of trustees; he added that the senate could approve the six recommendations either as a whole or serially. A senator said that the statement omitted one important issue concerning applicants to the university who already had tenure, and that, secondly, he could not see why among faculty members who had attained the rank of full professor before 1998 a distinction was made between those now below the age of 60 and those above. The chairman of the taskforce on tenure said that behind the cloak of legalese the statement hid the automatic granting of tenure to those in the rank of full professor; that the statement was based solely on expediency, not on principle; that by stigmatizing one group of professors it was divisive and would lead to problems in the future; and that in violation of the age discrimination act whereby age capping has been illegal since 1994 it would lead to litigation; in short the statement should be thrown out without further ado. In response to a senator's request to clarify whether the president intended to present the taskforce report to the board of trustees before the end of his term, the president stated that he endorsed the taskforce report but that he did not want to say to the board of trustees simply that the report's recommendations should be adopted. There was discussion whether the proposed statement should include benefits on retirement from the rank of full professor. A senator said that two central difficulties in the taskforce report on tenure concerned (1) the lack of evaluation criteria for full professors, and (2) the composition of the proposed college of external evaluators, but it was important that the senate state unambiguously in favour of tenure. He therefore proposed a motion, which was seconded, that **the senate recommends the reinstatement of tenure subject to working out the mechanism of implementation as soon as possible.** There was some discussion over the timing implied in the motion. The president said that he had no doubt of the desire of faculty for tenure to be reinstated but that finding the right mechanism was extraordinarily difficult. Problems of implementation concerned

associate and full professors already in rank. The issue of retirement incentives was separate and a major challenge now, even in the absence of tenure. He said that he had instructed the chairman of the taskforce on tenure to be concerned with the principle of tenure and its implementation, not with the issue of how much reinstatement would cost. A senator proposed the following alternative set of items to those in the statement of the ad-hoc committee as a substitute motion, which was seconded:

1. Tenure will be capped at the age of 70;
2. All those currently in the rank of full professor will be given tenure;
3. [= item 1 of the committee's statement] Tenure shall be granted upon promotion to the associate-professor level subject to the relevant provisions and criteria included in the Report of the President's Task Force on Tenure;
4. [= item 2 of the committee's statement] When the reinstatement of tenure comes into force, existing associate professors are eligible for tenure at any time but not later than the fifth year in rank. Denial of tenure will result in termination of employment in the professorial rank.

Since by this time a quorum was being lost there was no further discussion and the main motion was tabled.

9. *Other business.* The provost reported that a table of motions passed by the senate in 2006-07 had been prepared and the question of their implementation was being followed up. The motion of 27 April 2007 would be applied recommending that the deans of the various faculties hold bi-annual meetings in which faculty senate representatives account for their role in the senate and canvass their constituencies about matters to be brought to its attention.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:20 p.m.

Richard Smith, secretary