

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Regular Meeting of Friday 4 January 2008**

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdul-Malak, H. Abu Khuzam, A. Al-Kutoubi, G. Araj, N. Cortas, J. Dargham, N. Darwiche, M. Darwish, R. Dean, L. Farhood, I. Hajj, S. Hamadeh, P. Heath (chairing), R. Heath (by invitation), K. Hindi, M. Jurdi, M. Khawaja, S. Maamari, L. Musfy, G. Najjar, N. Nassif, M. Nimah, O. Obeid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, F. Sleiman, R. Smith.

Absent: A. Abdel-Rahman, K. Bitar, H. Diab, M. El-Sabban*, R. Haddad, H. Huijer, S. Jeffrey, S. Kenney, R. Khauli, M. Kisirwani, A. Lyzzaik, M. Obeid, S. Sadek, B. Shayya, J. Waterbury*, H. Zurayk.
(* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:05 p.m.

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of 30 November 2007 were approved as corrected.

2. *Review of the Annual Report of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs and its Memo dated 14 November 2007.* The chairperson of the SCFA, I. Osman, presented the committee's annual report. He went through the ten motions brought before the senate by the SCFA during 2006-07, in each case saying whether the motion had resulted in noticeable action. He expressed unhappiness at what appeared to be a 40% rate of implementation. VP Radulski in turn went through each motion pointing out what action had in fact been taken by the administration, what the difficulties of implementation were, and when a concrete result might be expected. In reply the SCFA chairperson said that, regarding HIP premiums or co-payments, there was a continuing feeling that HIP management could be improved. Provost Heath said that the report would provide a basis for continuing discussion between the SCFA and the university administration.

The chairperson of the SCFA then presented the committee's memo of 14 November with its two recommendations. He proposed the following motion which was seconded: **The Senate asks that AUB changes its benefits package to include a short-term disability program, a long-term disability program and a life insurance program for benefits-eligible faculty and staff.** There was discussion. VP Radulski said that he expected substantial improvements in the benefits package concerning life insurance and disability to be implemented during the current year.

Vote 2008-06: The motion was carried unanimously.

The following second motion was then proposed and seconded: **The Senate asks that AUB includes two additional qualified faculty members, appointed by vote of the Senate, to serve on the Employee Benefits Committee (EBC) for a 3-year fixed term. Any AUB faculty member is eligible, provided that the Senate deems him/her qualified in financial investment issues.** A long-standing current member of the EBC explained that over the years faculty representation on the EBC had sunk to two members and that additional financial expertise on the committee was desirable. There was discussion whether additional faculty representation would solve the problem of optimal investment and what criteria of eligibility might be feasible. A substitute motion was proposed and seconded: **The Senate asks that the Employee Benefits Committee include one additional consultant who is expert in financial investment issues.** VP Radulski said that he wished to dispel any impression that the administration had not been exercising due diligence to obtain the maximum benefits for employees and the best financial advice possible. He compared the performance of Plan B with Plan A over the fifteen years from 1992. After further discussion the question was called.

Vote 2008-07: The substitute motion was defeated (For 9, Against 7, voting members present 25).

Vote 2008-08: The original motion was defeated (For 5, voting members present 25).

3. *Review of the Annual Report of the Board of Graduate Studies.* The chairperson of the Board of Graduate Studies, K. Hindi, presented the board's report. The chairperson of the Senate Steering Committee, M. Jurdi, requested that the two issues highlighted in the report for further consideration be referred back to the BGS for it to make specific recommendations to the Senate. A senator suggested that future annual reports specify those items on which action was recommended.

4. *Review of the Annual Report of the University Library Committee.* The chairperson of the University Library Committee, R. Heath, presented the committee's report. She said that there were no particular action items, most of the committee's work being devoted to solving particular problems; but that the committee was always open to suggestions. A senator commented that the procedure for faculty to make suggestions to the library committee was not sufficiently clear.

5. *Review of the Annual Report of the Academic Development Committee.* The chairperson of the Academic Development Committee, N. Nassif, presented the committee's report. He said that the major issue during the year 2006-07 had been to endorse the General Education Plan detailed in the Strategic Committee Report; but he added that it had been difficult to get quorums at meetings. Provost Heath emphasized the importance of participation in meetings. A senator raised a question whether the proposed classification of courses under one label or another would allow individual instructors to change the classification. The ADC chairperson reiterated the report's recommendation that the classification of courses be done through a "participative bottom-up" process through faculty curriculum committees. The inclusion of Freshman courses within the General Education program was noted by senators as an issue for further discussion.

6. *Review of the Annual Report of the University Research Board.* The chairperson of the URB, Provost Heath, presented the board's report. He said that, as outlined in the report, questions of research priority and distribution continued to be discussed by the board. There was some discussion of the relative merit between research funding from student tuition fees and from endowments, and there was also discussion on the need to encourage junior faculty in the stages after their initial grants.

7. *Other business.* VP Radulski congratulated Dean Cortas on the recent accreditation of the University Medical Center by the Joint Commission International.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:35 p.m.

Richard Smith, secretary