

**American University of Beirut  
Minutes of the University Senate  
Meeting of Friday 24 June 2009**

Present: A. Abdel-Rahman, A. Abdul-Malak, G. Araj, K. Bitar, S. Boujaoude (by invitation), N. Cortas, N. Dajani, N. Darwiche, P. Dorman (chairing), L. Farhood, J. Ghafari, I. Hajj, G. Hamadeh (by invitation), K. Hindi, H. Huijer, M. Jurdi, A. Jurjus, A. Kayssi, J. Khayat (by invitation), M. Kisirwani, S. Maamari, L. Musfy, G. Najjar, W. Nasr, N. Nassif, I Nuwayhid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, S. Seikaly, B. Shayya, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, S. Talhouk (for N. Hwalla), R. Zurayk.

Absent: S. Arnaout, J. DeJong\*, H. Diab, R. Haddad, S. Kenney, R. Khauli, W. Masri, M. Nimah, M. Obeid, D. Wrisley\*. (\* = regrets notified before meeting or on leave)

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

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of the special meeting of 5 June 2009 were approved as corrected.

The chair thanked senators for their participation and comments during the year 2008-09.

2. *Voting of degrees.* The registrar presented a breakdown of the 1295 students graduating at the end of 2008-09 (1072 undergraduate, 150 graduate, 73 MD) in terms of nationality, gender and faculty. This number, he said, included the 70-odd students graduating from the Faculty of Medicine earlier in the month. In reply to Acting Provost Nasr's question, he said that the proportion of students graduating with distinction and high distinction was roughly the same as in the last few years. Dean Cortas pointed out that the designation of high distinction did not apply in the Faculty of Medicine.

**The Senate voted unanimously to recommend the graduation of the June 2009 Graduates** as circulated by the Registrar's Office and presented serially by the respective Deans (attached).

3. *Report of the senate representative at the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.* The senate's representative R. Zurayk said that he had attended two meetings of the Board of Trustees in New York, the first a meeting of the Academic Affairs Committee, the second the general meeting of Friday 12 June. He said that in the first meeting three major items had been dealt with, firstly approval of matters referred to it by the senate, secondly approving the promotions recommended by President Dorman, and thirdly giving President Dorman clearance for the formulation of new promotion procedures. Clarifying the way the general meeting was conducted, he said that each committee of the board had been asked to present its report in about ten minutes, from the report of the Acting Provost regarding self-accreditation to that of the development committee, the alumni committee, the academic affairs committee, and so on. After his own report, he said, there had been good discussion only on the last of four items he had presented, concerning service to the community by members of the university, which, in reply to a question by G. Araj, he admitted he personally thought important. On a question from N. Dajani concerning his perception of trustees' informal reactions to the other three issues he had raised, R. Zurayk said that regarding HIP he would leave it to VP Radulski to inform the senate; regarding tenure, he said that the question was raised whether awarding long-term contracts would not interfere with the granting of tenure, and he added that his own opinion was that the two issues were distinct; regarding governance in the university, he said that he had raised this issue with the board, as well as that of tenure, because both had been raised by senate representatives every year for at least the last six years and he wanted to impress on the board the continuing importance of the two issues as well as the need to tie them to strategic planning initiatives. I. Osman then questioned firstly whether the president of the university had the authority to introduce new policies on promotion without prior discussion in the senate, and secondly whether there was indication of any increase in funding. R. Zurayk replied that, in regard to the second issue, the US government had recently expressed its desire to increase funding to institutions in the Middle East, while, in regard to the first issue, he would defer to the president.

The president said that, in the recent speech by President Obama of the USA, five or six initiatives had been mentioned to create institutional bridges with predominantly Muslim countries. He said that he had met recently with members of President Obama's team, and by the end of this week the university would submit proposals to the US government regarding everything from scholarships and exchange programmes to water management, the development of energy resources, child care and the eradication of polio.

Regarding promotion procedures, President Dorman said that the Board of Trustees had given him authority to do whatever he thought necessary. There were some points that could be implemented immediately, he said, notably giving four year contracts to incoming assistant professors and extending the period from six to seven years by which applications for promotion to the rank of associate professorship had to be made. These would be effective June 2009. Other points would take more time such as requiring departments to take a greater role in the promotion process. The provost's office would be developing new mentoring processes during the coming semester and a new manual for departmental chairs. On a question from N. Darwiche regarding demotion of Associate Professors not promoted to the rank of full professor, he said that he was against the idea of demotion. He added that for those who had maternity leave, the promotion clock would stop for the period of their leave. On a question from R. Smith he said that no extension would be given to Associate Professors applying for promotion to full professorship since the length of their contracts was not tied to that of initial contracts in the rank of assistant professor. He added that those promoted to Associate Professor would normally be considered for seven year contracts. Acting Provost W. Nasr asked that a memo be circulated to all the faculty giving details of these changes. A. Kayssi expressed the view that the new procedures would cause confusion since they appeared to go against existing regulations. The president replied that the criteria for promotion remained as before and that no rules had been changed; he reiterated that he wanted promotion files emanating from departments to be much fuller regarding a candidate's contribution in teaching, research and service to departmental goals. After further discussion, F. Sleiman asked if the president had other matters to report to the senate following the annual meeting of the Board of Trustees.

President Dorman said that apart from routine matters and the new initiative from Washington mentioned earlier, some capital projects had been unfrozen concerning the hospital, FEA and the Olayan School of Business.

4. *Update on HIP.* VP Radulski circulated a memo dated 24 June 2009 outlining the various steps taken by the Ad Hoc Committee on HIP since its formation on 26 May. The committee had met on 12 June to discuss the two responses to his RFPs (Request For Proposals), one from a consortium including MedNet, the other from Total Care Lebanon. Each proposal included provision for full maternity coverage and removal of the post-2004 retirement HIP coverage clause. He said that if further negotiations showed neither proposal to be satisfactory, the university could go back to in-house management. He added that, compared with universities in the USA where premiums had been increased by more than 100% over the last three years, AUB's increase of 2½ % was favourable. S. Sadek commented that, no matter what the percentage increase it should be linked to an increase in salaries. F. Sleiman asked why the Ad-Hoc committee had considered outsourcing when many members of the senate had expressed their preference for in-house management in the senate meeting of 24 April. I. Osman reminded senators that there had been debate in the senate concerning HIP over the last three years in which he had repeatedly stressed that without understanding where deficiency in management lay, there could be no improvement. Outsourcing naturally incurred costs such as a company's profit, as VP Radulski himself had stated. His own analysis had shown where improvements could be made. The Ad Hoc Committee had been mandated to analyse the problem, not to repeat a formula that had been unsuccessful in the past. A. Abdel-Rahman added that the university had had more than three years' experience with MedNet, so a full analysis of its performance should be possible. A. Abdul-Malak, a member of the Ad Hoc Committee on HIP said that MedNet's past failures, and the fact that its present contract would not be extended beyond 30 September 2009, did not mean that MedNet could not put in a new proposal for the future. Following a request from F. Sleiman, President Dorman asked that the next meeting of the Ad Hoc Committee be open to senators wishing to participate. S. Seikaly repeated the statement minuted at the senate meeting of 24 April that the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs was the main body representing the faculty concerned with HIP, and he expressed surprise that a member of the SCFA had not been invited to serve on the Ad Hoc Committee. Dean Cortas said that he would like to make clear his own

view of where the difficulty lay. Firstly, NSSF had so far repaid only \$2 million of \$13 million in outpatient billing arrears; and secondly, not having a stop-loss policy, the university had to bear any loss that suddenly arose. The question then is whether it is better to transfer liability to some outside company or to keep it on ourselves: this, he said, is the HIP problem. President Dorman then called an end to discussion on the matter.

5. *Teaching effectiveness.* W. Nasr said that, in the absence of Dr. R. Afify, the chair of the defunct Ad Hoc University Committee on Teaching Effectiveness, whose report of June 2009 was attached to the agenda of today's meeting, he would like to state his opinion that the 2006-07 report of the FAS committee on teaching effectiveness, also attached and out of which the University Committee had grown, would provide a firm basis for considering how teaching effectiveness could be used in the evaluation of cases for promotion. The chair of the FAS committee, S. BouJaoude, said that its report had classified issues under four headings: 1. What is teaching? 2. Data sources for evaluating teaching; 3. Processes of evaluating teaching; and 4. Tools that can be used to conduct peer observations and evaluations. He said that although the report had concerned only FAS, its recommendations applied throughout the university and could be brought up to date. There was some discussion concerning the reasons why the Ad Hoc Committee had been unwilling to deliberate further, as stated in Dr. Afify's report. R. Zurayk said that since some of the recommendations of the FAS report had been implemented, it would be helpful if FAS were asked to report on the result of that implementation. Dean Bitar said that the FAS committee had been set up in order that ICE not be the only measure for evaluating teaching effectiveness. The committee had met over the course of a year, and some recommendations had subsequently been implemented. Teaching portfolios were thus now part of a candidate's promotion file. But other recommendations could not be implemented; regarding peer review, for instance, which required training, he said that it was extremely difficult to get teachers to agree to evaluate their colleagues. The university committee had then been set up to consider measures to evaluate teaching effectiveness throughout the university. K. Hindi said that the issue of evaluating teaching effectiveness cropped up in all universities; we professed that teaching was important but at the same time said there lacked objective criteria; the FAS report was, in his opinion, a useful starting point for further consideration of the issue. S. BouJaoude said that in order to develop the necessary criteria it was important to try out pilot schemes; for instance the philosophy department was trying out peer evaluation, while within the English department teaching portfolios were being required of instructors in English language. In reply to a question from President Dorman, he added that there were no objective measures yet to evaluate teaching portfolios. M. Jurdi proposed a motion which was seconded, **to establish an ad hoc committee on teaching effectiveness with the mission to develop teaching evaluation criteria and processes based on the 2006-07 FAS report on teaching effectiveness and other documents.** In support of the motion, Acting Provost Nasr said that workshops on improving teaching effectiveness had been run for the last few years, teaching excellence awards were now based on teaching portfolios, and experience thus did exist to make the work of the ad hoc committee worthwhile. After further discussion a vote was taken and **the motion was carried unanimously (vote 2009-31, voting members present 21).**

Dean Nuwayhid added that a subsection of the agenda item had concerned the proposed FHS guidelines on evaluation of outreach activities, which he said he would be happy to share with the ad hoc committee on teaching effectiveness.

6. *Faculty Bylaws.* This item was postponed for lack of a quorum.

The meeting was adjourned at 4:15 p.m.

Richard Smith, secretary