

**American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
General Meeting of Friday 28 March 2008**

Present: A. Abdelnoor, A. Abdel-Rahman, A. Abdul-Malak, H. Abu Khuzam, A. Al-Kutoubi, G. Araj, K. Bitar, N. Cortas, J. Dargham, N. Darwiche, M. Darwish, M. El-Sabban, I. Hajj, P. Heath (chairing), K. Hindi, N. Hwalla, M. Jurdi, S. Kenney, M. Khawaja, M. Kisirwani, S. Maamari, L. Musfy, G. Najjar, N. Nassif, O. Obeid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Seikaly, B. Shayya, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, H. Zurayk.

Absent: A. Al-Alaoui, R. Dean, H. Diab, L. Farhood, R. Haddad, H. Huijer*, S. Jeffrey, R. Khauli*, A. Lyzzaik, M. Nimah, M. Obeid, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, J. Waterbury*.

(* = 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 29 February 2008 were approved as corrected.

2. *Voting on degrees, February graduates.* On recommendations of the deans of the different faculties and professional schools, motions to approve the granting of degrees to those named in the registrar's list of 29 February 2008 were passed unanimously.

3. *Summary of Board of Trustees' decisions.* Provost Heath read out a summary of the board of trustees' decisions taken at its meeting on Friday March 21, 2008, as stated in a memorandum from the president dated March 25, 2008. He added that the Board had informally expressed its appreciation of the work of the president, the president's task force on tenure, and the senate, concerning the issue of tenure. The board had made no formal resolution in view of the fact that tenure is an issue of ongoing concern.

4. *Report on the process of implementing General Education.* The Chair of the Academic Development Committee said that the Senate Steering Committee had expressed concern at the apparent lack of progress in implementing the plan for General Education. In its meeting on 25 May 2007 the senate had approved in principle the Report on General Education of May 2007 issuing from the Provost's office, including two items listed on the meeting's agenda: that the ADC is the committee that decides on whether specific courses are in accordance with the guidelines of the GE plan; and that the final list of GE courses will be finalized through a "participative bottom-up" process. The ADC had subsequently met and had requested the Provost's office to implement the latter process. Provost Heath said that it was important that the new structure be written into the 2008-09 university catalogue; in order to help the curriculum committees of the different faculties, he proposed setting up a small task force that would report back to the ADC. Dean Bitar said that there were two difficulties in classifying courses under the GE criteria in the Faculty of Arts & Sciences. Firstly, in the granting of degrees courses were usually classified by the department in which they were offered; but at the same time individual courses in, for instance, a social science department had been classified as humanities. Secondly, there was now a fourth category of courses in "quantitative thought" in addition to humanities, natural sciences and social sciences; and this posed problems of double classification for courses in the natural sciences. Solving these problems would take the curriculum committee of FAS a long time if it was to go through each and every course. He proposed that other faculties review the classification of their courses first: for instance, FHS might want some of its courses to be classified as social science. Dean Zurayk said that the proposed task force should have an

interdisciplinary perspective in the sense of seeing the value of social science courses being taken in faculties other than FAS, for this would be good for the university.

5. *Status of 2006-07 Senate motions.* There was discussion concerning the status of the circulated list of 2006-07 motions: was it simply a log-sheet or an authoritative record of action taken on senate decisions? Issues might still be open, as far as the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs was concerned, that were said on the list to be on hold or to have been rejected by the administration. By what authority was a decision of the senate, the highest legislative body on academic affairs, rejected by the administration? The point was raised that individual Vice Presidents were portrayed as “rejecting” Senate decisions rather than the administration as a whole. Provost Heath said that the list would be revised in order to clarify the matter.

6. *Reactivation of Master of Engineering, Major: Applied Energy.* Dean Hajj explained that the EU had recently granted the FEA a Tempus grant with the condition that a master’s degree in applied energy be opened. Until 2003 a Master’s degree in Engineering had specified the major field of specialization within the title of the degree, one such major being applied energy. He wanted to inform the senate that from now on the title of M.Engg. would again specify the major in the case of applied energy. The Chair of the Board of Graduate Studies said that the board had scrutinized the proposal and, after seeking advice from the provost, had concluded that there was no need to approach the senate for its approval since it did not involve a new degree. There was discussion whether the item should have been listed on the agenda as reactivation, implying that it required the senate’s action, or as a point of information. There was further discussion over the meaning of reactivation. The Chair of the Geology Department said that he would have liked more information to have been circulated beforehand in the form of an attachment to the agenda.

7. *Other business.*

- 7.1 The Chair of the BGS reported that, following discussion at the senate meeting on 29 February 2008, the board had reviewed the issue of whether the Master’s degree in Public Health fell entirely within the management of the Faculty of Health, and had found that a motion of the senate in 1972 had specifically stated as much.
- 7.2 A senator said that some of his colleagues had asked him to bring to the attention of the Senate and of the university administration their concern at the current high rate of inflation in Lebanon and the consequent decreased purchasing power of salaries. He would like to know whether the administration was looking into the issue. VP Radulski replied that the administration had considered the matter three weeks ago and had concluded that while the cost of living had risen by 22-23% since 2001, salaries had increased by an average of 20% over the same period. A senator said that an issue of principle was involved, his understanding being that salary increases were linked to performance, not to the cost of living.
- 7.3 A senator expressed concern that problems of access and malfunctioning technology were being encountered in the newly opened Hostel Center. A senator remarked that the parking policy of the university should be reviewed and the principle should be adopted that people who were given the right to park on campus should be allowed to park close to their office independent of their rank.
- 7.4 Dean Cortas announced with sorrow the passing away of Professor Emeritus Salim Firzli. He said that Professor Firzli was the father of paediatrics in Lebanon and the father of treatment of children’s cancer since 1956. Senators stood for a minute in silence in Professor Firzli’s memory.

The meeting was adjourned at 3:30 p.m.

Richard Smith, secretary