

American University of Beirut
Minutes of the University Senate
Regular Meeting of Friday 30 November 2007

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, R. Dean, L. Farhood, I. Hajj, B. Hamad (by invitation), K. Hindi, H. Huijjer, N. Hwalla, M. Jurdi, S. Kenney, M. Khawaja, G. Najjar, N. Nassif, M. Nimah, O. Obeid, I. Osman, J. Radulski, S. Sadek, M. Salameh, B. Shayya, F. Sleiman, R. Smith, J. Waterbury (chairing), H. Zurayk.

Absent: H. Diab, M. El-Sabban*, R. Haddad, P. Heath*, S. Jeffrey, R. Khauli, M. Kisirwani, S. Maamari*, L. Musfy*, A. Lyzzaik, M. Obeid, S. Seikaly*. (* = regrets notified before meeting)

Call to order: The meeting was called to order at 2:03 p.m.

1. *Approval of minutes.* The minutes of 26 October 2007 were approved as read.

2. *Amendment to Senate Bylaws, Appendix I, Standing Committees and Boards.* The President introduced the memorandum on proposed amendments to the senate bylaws which had been distributed at the previous meeting of the senate on 26 October 2007 (item 5b of minutes). He proposed a motion, which was seconded, that the senate approve the amendments. A senator expressed reservations about the amendments, pointing out that according to the bylaws members of most committees, if not ex-officio, were elected by faculties and would not necessarily also be senators; therefore the President might not be able to appoint a chairperson who was both an elected member of the committee and a serving senator. There was discussion whether the words “when possible” might be added to the amendments and whether other solutions might be found. The President said he would like to consult further on the matter. The motion was tabled.

3. *Senate voting procedure.* The President read out the note written by the secretary and attached to the agenda according to which no amendment of the senate bylaws was necessary for the motion on voting procedure passed on 27 April 2007 to come into effect. There being no calls for the bylaws expressly to stipulate the manner in which motions were carried, the President said that motions from now on would be carried by a majority of voting members attending and not by a majority of votes cast.

4. *Voting of degrees.* The senate voted unanimously to recommend the graduation of the October 2007 graduates as circulated by the registrar’s office and presented by the respective deans (attached).

5. Report on BOT meeting of 16 November 2007. The President presented a summary of the board’s decisions as circulated with the agenda. He outlined the backgrounds of the three new alumni trustees and the four new permanent members. He said that the board had extended birthday wishes to trustee emeritus David S. Dodge on the occasion of his 85th birthday. A motion was proposed and seconded congratulating trustee emeritus David Dodge and recommending that a copy of the minutes reflecting the senate’s discussion be forwarded to him.

Vote 2008-002: The motion was carried unanimously.

6. *Academic calendar 2008-09.* The Registrar presented the proposed calendar. Minor suggestions were made. A senator proposed a motion which was seconded that classes in the Summer 2009

semester begin on 22 June 2009 instead of 29 June and end one week earlier than proposed; he said that this would give faculty more time for research before the beginning of the Fall semester 2009-10.

Vote 2008-003: The motion was carried (28 For, 1 Against)

After further discussion, the President put the question that the calendar be adopted as amended.

Vote 2008-004: The motion was carried (28 For, 1 Against)

7. Revision of the bylaws of the Olayan School of Business. The President said that the item had been withdrawn from the agenda prior to the meeting. Dean Najjar said that the proposed amendments would be reviewed in light of recently received suggestions. The chairman of the Senate Committee on Faculty Affairs regretted that when this item was dropped from the agenda other pressing business had not been put in its place, notably those recommendations of the SCFA already forwarded to the Senate Steering Committee before the agenda was set for the senate meeting of October 26 2007.

8. Report of the University Admissions Committee, 2006-07. The chairman of the committee, Professor Hamad, was invited to present the committee's report. He circulated the report and read it out. There was discussion particularly on the practice of raising composite scores for admission above that required for graduation in order to limit the transfer of students from one faculty to another, on the desirability of a hard and fast numerical criterion for admission, on the correlation between admission criteria and undergraduate performance, and on the need for scholarships. The President said that composite scores were used very carefully but that admission policy might have to change if the university wanted to increase the diversity of its student intake. The report was placed on file.

9. Recommendations of the Board of Graduate Studies regarding admission to FAS. The Chairman of the BGS presented two recommendations, as circulated with the agenda, the first regarding admission to the MA/MSc program in FAS, the second regarding the comprehensive exam in FAS. He proposed a motion which was seconded that both recommendations be adopted. Dean Bitar affirmed that both recommendations had been approved by FAS and he explained the desirability of allowing departments some flexibility in admission to graduate programs. There was further discussion about the value of the GRE and about the desirability of unifying admission criteria across the faculties. Dean Bitar called the motion to question.

Vote 2008-005: The motion was carried (For 15, Against 1, voting members present 21)

The meeting was adjourned at 3:52 p.m.

Richard Smith, secretary