

Dear Colleagues:

Today's Faculty Senate meeting coincides with the accreditation visit and we are most pleased to have amongst us members of the accreditation team. The Faculty Senate had a very fruitful and open interaction with the entire team yesterday and today will allow them to see how we routinely conduct our business.

This accreditation and this Senate meeting mark the culmination of trends that have been building steadily at AUS over the past few years. This university is a unique experiment of the American model in Middle East context. In my opinion it has been a resounding opportunity to experience the articulation of Arab and Western traditions which draw upon the strength of both within the framework of the institutionally open American model of higher education.

In our most recent SEC meeting on March 9, the SEC endorsed—with a few modifications—the thorough report of the Senate Recruitment Committee. It also examined the draft guidelines for travel policy implementation proposed by the VCFA office. Both documents are on the agenda for discussion on the Senate floor today. The SEC also unanimously recommended in reply to the proposal by Assistant VCFA Dr. Al Hasani, that the Assembly time at AUS be moved from the 11 o'clock slot to the 4 :30 time slot. Senators are invited to share their feedback on this matter. However, please bear in mind the following constraints that we will all have to deal with: (i) for the fall semester we expect to have a shortage in classrooms space, and the freeing up of the 11:00 o'clock assembly time would avail valuable classroom and instruction time (ii) architecture and design laboratory time schedule would only permit the 4 :40 time. (iii) As Senator Abdalla former chair of the calendar committee reported, the constraints from the Architecture lab schedule have always constrained the choice of assembly time. Lastly, the unanimous recommendation from the SEC is to endorse the proposal from Dr. AL Hasani on a trial basis for the fall semester to address the immediate classroom shortage, but with the understanding that the assembly time for the spring will be dealt with by the Senate with an attempt to look more closely into the SA&d schedule.

The SEC also discussed additional questions on FPCs from the Faculty, as well as the means to implement a more relaxed timelines for faculty evaluation. Finally, with regard to the many comments and suggestions from fellow senators, the SEC recommended that the issue be submitted to the residential life committee for thorough analysis in anticipation of its discussion on the Senate floor on April 20.

Two new committees have been announced—a task force on Senate Students' Fund Award, and an External Community Relations Committee. The membership of these two committees has been communicated to all faculty. The SEC has also recommended to the Chancellor nominees for the administrative committee on Faculty Awards in Research, Teaching and Service.

Last but not least, today marks the first Senate meeting that we hold since the election of the incoming SEC team for the Senate session 2004-2005. I would like to extend my

sincere congratulations to Senate President-Elect Sahraoui, Vice President-Elect Mokhtar, Secretary-elect Gilbertson and all members-elect of the new SEC—namely, senators Kostopoulos, Qadah, Assaleh, and Bothoff. We wish them every success in their important duties of cogovernance. I am sure that all faculty will join me in congratulating the new SEC.

As an announcement, the AUS Faculty Senate will commemorate on April 27 the transition from the current Senate session 2003-2004 under President Mourtada to the incoming session presided by President-Elect Sofinae Sahraoui. Would you please mark your calendars. The meeting will be held in the Senate Chambers from 11:00 to 12:30 with Senate momentos for all outgoing senators. The inaugural issue of our newsletter, the Senate Forum is now printed and in the mail to all faculty. Most importantly we are expecting to be honored in the Senate Chambers with a visit from His Highness Sheikh Sultan on Sunday April 4 from 11:00 to 12:30 to launch the Senate workshop on Parliamentary procedures. I shall keep you posted as the visit details unfold.

And now let us begin our business.