

Dear Colleagues:

I welcome you all to the Senate chambers for our first Senate session in this academic year. I am pleased to report that the growth in the University enrolment is ahead of the development plan.

I would like to take a moment to express our condolences on behalf of the Senate to our fellow Senator Daouadi who has recently experienced the loss of a close family member.

You have received the full update on the state of Senate affairs in recent communication to all faculty. My comments today will therefore be succinct. As we launch into Senate business today, I would like to welcome and recognize our new colleagues Senator Tina Driscoll recently elected from IEP to replace Senator Pelly Shaw, and Senator Dennis Russell who represents the sciences in place of Senator Bassim Boulos.

As you know, the SEC has met twice since the beginning of the academic year. Issues deliberated, many of which will be considered on the Senate floor today, included

- 1) Amending procedures for lack of a sitting VCAA this semester;
- 2) Alternatives to academic calendar for the year 2004-2005;
- 3) Combining two closely spaced holidays;
- 4) Removing restrictions on numbers of children who would qualify to avail themselves of the threshold amount for stipend on school fees;
- 5) Eligibility for serving on Schools/College Faculty Personnel Committees as well as procedures on voting for FPCs.
- 6) Mechanisms for implementing the sabbatical leave policies

All senators have already received the revised faculty handbook and were invited to bring any inconsistencies in possible revisions to the attention of the Senate President. No inconsistencies were reported.

In recognition of the primordial importance of Self-Study, and in response to Assistant to the Chancellor Dr. Sally Sheppard's invitation, an *ad hoc* Senate Committee on Self-Study was formed to "ensure a viable liaison with the University Self-Study team, and to provide a two-way flow of information between the Senate and the Self-Study." The committee consists of the following members:

- Senator Adel Tamimi (SOE)
- Senator Bruce Lonnan (SAD)
- Senator Dennis Russell (CAS)
- Senator George Kostopoulos (SBM), Chair of the Committee
- Senator Milton Gilbertson (CAS, IEP)

Secretary Ahmed Mokhtar serves *ex officio* on this committee to represent the Senate Officers.

Chancellor Thompson has reported that the Board of Trustees has opted to consider options for the fringe benefit as a whole, which would include schools fees considerations along with other personnel benefits. The SEC emphasized the need to start considering the different fringe benefits options with VCFA De Bin early in the process of formulating policies. To provide faculty input early in the process, Senate *ad hoc* committee on fringe benefits will therefore be formed with the mandate of monitoring, evaluating, and proposing different benefit plans options. The Committee has been nominated by the three elected Senate Officers to represent the various sectors of the faculty community in their different family compositions, and their various backgrounds. The following faculty have been nominated and agreed to serve:

As co-chairs Vice President Sofiane Sahrouai and Secretary Ahmed Mokhtar, and committee members Professor Akmal Abdel Fatah, Professor John Chilton, Professor Deborah Wilson, and Professor James Grant (Professor Grant's membership is still to be confirmed when he returns to campus). The Chair of the Welfare committee will serve *ex officio*. We would like to especially thank Senator Mark Pilkington, who has served in this capacity last year, for his commitment and diligence in advancing Senate business.

Out of concern for emphasizing genuine shared governance, the SEC invited Vice Chancellor De Bin to address the Senate on perceptions of decision-making solely by the administration, with regard to health care coverage. VCFA De Bin has accordingly provided an accounting of the process, which will be shared with all faculty.

AUS will be tendering for health care coverage during early 2004, and the AUS Faculty Senate will be an integral part of the decision-making process of constructing policies in which the Office of Financial Affairs seeks appropriate contracts with health providers and insurers. The feedback from VCFA De Bin clarifies this one instance and clearly indicates the cooperative spirits of setting policies affecting personnel support schemes.

It was agreed in the SEC to retain the members of the Senate Standing committees with the possibility of changing duties and responsibilities of the chairs. To give new senators the opportunity to chair some of these committees and to replace those chairs who have either left the Senate or joined the SEC, a call to express interest in chairing the various senate committees will be addressed to all senators.

I now open the floor for questions.