

Colleagues:

I am pleased to welcome you to our first faculty assembly. I would like to particularly welcome the 33 new faculty who have joined our ranks this year, as the University begins its seventh year of operation. You have received updates of our Senate business on a regular basis, so my comments today will be brief.

We have been on to a particularly fast paced start of the academic year in developing further the tasks of co-governance. Issues that have been addressed, during the first month of the academic year, in September, include:

1. Determining eligibility of faculty personnel committees
  2. Matters pertaining to the calendar and consolidating holidays
  3. Determining how the Sabbatical Leave Committee will be named and structured
  4. Reconsidering procedures to compensate for the lack of a sitting Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs
- and, 5) recently and perhaps most pressing, was the formation of a committee to enhance input and evaluate faculty fringe benefits options.

I would like to take this opportunity now to categorically say that benefits are not being reduced. Rather, to elucidate the task, Chancellor Thompson has stated that we might wish to consider more flexible options in light of the long term interest of the faculty and equity among them.

The two elected Senate officers, Vice President Sahraoui and Secretary Mokhtar have held two preliminary meetings with Vice Chancellor De Bin, and have reported to the SEC the utmost cooperation in the process. A first meeting of the Senate Committee on Fringe Benefits has been called, and faculty input into this matter of concern to all will be solicited through appropriate channels.

As we speak, the Senate is voting on a motion, in a virtual session, to determine the mode of designating a Sabbatical Leave Committee, which will be determined by tomorrow 12:00 (noon).

Finally, you should have received by this morning a communication pertaining to standards of performance for renewal and promotion. Our goal is to clarify and further elaborate equitable standards for achievement, given the demanding teaching load.

We are delighted to have among us today former Vice Chancellor Amr Abdel Hamid, who was particularly instrumental in taking the academic programs forward at AUS, and contributed to creating the continually accelerating standards that we strove to reach, year by year.

We are especially aware of his absence on campus. Indeed, the absence of a Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs is likely to impact our procedures for evaluations, and may render some provisions of the Faculty Handbook moot. In order to allow for continued due process, the Faculty Senate has voted on a motion so that:

“In case of a temporary vacancy in any of the university administrative positions and in the absence of a formal replacement, the authority and responsibility of the vacant position (as it relates to provisions of the handbook) are automatically transferred upward to the next level in the organizational hierarchy (i.e. VCAA’s transferred to

the Chancellor, Dean's transferred to the VCAA, etc.). Decisions or recommendations for decisions remain grievable up to the highest level below the Chancellor, and appealable to the Chancellor.”

I am sure that we all feel a sense of excitement as this university moves into another stage of development.