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Dear Colleagues:

Welcome back to what promises to be a stimulating spring semester. An update on Senate business was sent to you during the fall semester to inform you of various aspects of Senate business. While all faculty have a standing invitation to attend the monthly Senate meetings, and the agenda is regularly sent out to you, I believe another update and a general sense of direction would be useful as we begin the new semester. What follows are initiatives by the Senate to further develop co-governance and strengthen the University's policies as they pertain to faculty.

1. In the Fall Faculty Assembly, the faculty approved a motion to amend the Faculty Handbook so that in the case of a vacancy in any of the university administrative positions the authority and responsibility of the vacant position would automatically be transferred upward in the organizational hierarchy. As such, with the case of not having a VCAA this year, the duties of the VCAA are transferred to the Chancellor. Chancellor Thompson noted in his report to the Senate that the absence of a sitting VCAA during the first semester has allowed him to acquaint himself more closely with the inner workings of the academic dimensions of the institution.

2. In response to a query from the SEC enhancing tradition of administrative transparency, Chancellor Thompson reports the following breakdown for applications of rolling contract:

There were 33 candidates for rolling contracts this year. The following chart reflects the recommendations at each level of the review process:

Departmental Chairs:	28 Yes	2 No
3 NA		
School FPC:	27 Yes	6 No
Deans:	26 Yes	7 No
UCRCP:	24 Yes	8 No
1 tie		

From these, and subject to final resolution of ongoing grievance cases, the Chancellor will recommend to the Board of Trustees 24 four-year rolling contracts, 6 one or two year extensions, and three negative appraisals.

3. The Chancellor responded affirmatively to a Senate Executive Committee request to have an additional step added to the annual evaluation process so that faculty would be given an opportunity to respond to the evaluation recommendations directly to the Chancellor within a set period of time (at the point in the process after the UCRCP renders its recommendation to the Chancellor). Thus faculty will be able to rebut in writing their final evaluations resulting from the multi-stepped evaluation process (from School FPC, Chair, Dean, UCRCP) before the Chancellor renders a final recommendation. In the procedure, the Faculty member is officially entitled to: (i) review his/her file in the Dean's office including the four separate recommendations and, (ii) have photocopied any materials from the file that she or he wishes.

4. In order to more closely synchronize the academic calendar with the schedule in peer institutions, an ad hoc task force is working on various templates to permit for visiting/transfer students from American institutions, such as AU. The task force is comprised of Professors Jay Randle and Jamal Abdalla as well as Registrar's Officer Lynda Ataya (ex officio) and AUS students Ahmed Juboori and Khulood Al Houli.

5. On the question of the annual leave tickets, a motion was passed in the Faculty Senate to have the annual leave ticket benefit managed with advance payment to faculty at the time of purchasing the ticket and justification of expenses upon return. Faculty who teach during the Summer may also apply their ticket allocation at a later time during the same academic year. By keeping within the limit

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of the amount allocated to their home destinations, faculty could also travel to a different destination. Faculty would be entitled to purchase their airline tickets from various vendors, provided they submit the expenses justifications upon return. Further cost-analyses are being conducted by Vice President Sahraoui to address increased flexibility and possible special rates on specific airlines to certain destinations. The Board of Trustees will have final say on these matters.

6. The Senate adopted a report from the Senate Committee on Elections which recommended uniform voting methods within all four units. This proposal will ensure that each unit follows an identical process in selecting candidates, announcing deadlines and tabulating results. It will eliminate any perceptions of inconsistencies.

7. Concerns have been expressed about the Faculty Personnel Committees being elected. The Senate has therefore adopted a proposal that will randomly select members from a tiering of eight pools of AUS Faculty, until the pools are successively depleted. Possible friendly amendments to the proposal are currently under consideration. The final version of the proposal will be discussed at the Spring Faculty Assembly.

8. The Spring Faculty Assembly has been tentatively scheduled for Tuesday, February 24.

9. As approved by the Senate, the Sabbatical Leave Committee will be structured like the UCRCP (as delineated in the Faculty Handbook p. 9). However, it will consist of five members into perpetuity (rather than reverting to nine members after the initial two years of operation). In consultation with the SEC, Chancellor Thompson will announce the membership.

10. Excess storage has become a problem across the University. The Senate recommends that (i) faculty who are storing material extraneous to their university tasks be requested to remove these items; and (ii) I.T. issues cautionary letters to individual faculty to find out whether inordinately high levels of stored material is university related. If so, the individual faculty should request permission from the University for limited amounts of storage. And (iii), the Senate also recommended increasing the storage capacity per faculty and increasing the storage capacity for email communications. The extent of the increase necessary will be determined by the Senate I.T. Committee.

11. The SEC discussed the possibility that faculty apply for a two-year contract instead of a four-year contract. However, it was agreed that after the second two-year contract, a faculty member could only apply for a four-year rolling contract. It was also adopted that the Chancellor could grant a two-year contract to a faculty member who was denied a four-year contract.

12. A set of standards is being developed by the Senate Committee for Academic Affairs to evaluate the credentials of faculty who come to AUS with experience in industry. The Committee is also fine-tuning a proposal for amounts of salary increments associated with promotion. The Senate Committee on Academic Affairs is charged with reporting on workload calculations across the four units.

13. In response to a recommendation from the SEC to have student evaluations of faculty handled by an independent body, it was agreed to follow Chancellor Thompson's suggestion that the Office of Planning and Evaluation would be an appropriate and independent body for the task.

14. The same membership of Senate Committees has been reactivated from last year, although the chairs of the committees have changed. A list of both standing and ad hoc Senate committees is available at the following

link:

\\prime\staff\Senate\AYE2003-2004\Senate Committees Membership.

15. To keep faculty abreast of various aspects of the undertakings of the Senate, Senate business

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and all Senate President reports are available on the Faculty Senate website. Approved minutes of Senate and Senate Executive Committee meetings are also available to all faculty at the following link: \\prime\staff\Senate\AYE2003-2004

A Faculty Senate Newsgroup has been established upon Senate Secretary Mokhtar's initiative and is now active.

A Senate information session will be held in each of the four Schools and College to keep faculty informed of Senate business and allow colleagues to receive additional information and to provide input with the SEC.

A Senate Newsletter-the Senate Forum-will also be circulated to all faculty. Among other sections, the Senate Forum will provide a "question/answer" section with the Chancellor, who will address questions from AUS faculty.

16. Chancellor Thompson brought to the Senate's attention the absence of adequate procedures to protect faculty in case of disabilities acquired while under AUS contract. The SEC decided to entrust the Senate Welfare Committee with recommending policies for this contingency.

17. The Welfare Committee is also reporting on salary ranges within our comparison group of peer institutions. This committee will recommend appropriate policies for salary equity which are adjusted to the specific contexts of AUS. The Faculty Welfare Committee is also evaluating housing matters.

18. Chancellor Thompson invited the SEC to examine the clauses of the Faculty Handbook related to faculty contract renewal, which he deems constrained. Revisions may be introduced to relax the timeline for the evaluation process as currently stated in the Faculty Handbook, so that faculty would have one entire year to search for a job in the case of non renewal.

19. The Senate approved a recommendation that a faculty member may be reimbursed for attending more conferences, although not to exceed the \$ 2000 limit if grant funds are still available at the end of the fiscal year. This would allow faculty whose conferences cost less than \$ 2000, to attend more than one conference if funds remain available at the end of the year. Due to the staggered dispersal of funds, this policy would not take away the rights of faculty who have yet to participate in a conference.

20. Faculty in the SA&D queried the teaching load, which the SEC decided was an internal School matter outside the ambit of the Senate. However, it was also agreed that the Academic Affairs Committee would report on how overloads are calculated in the different Schools. Recommendations will be forwarded to the Chancellor.

21. Two grievance cases are currently being heard with the appropriate confidentiality accorded in due process.

22. The allocation of office and space will be addressed by the University Planning Committee (which the Chancellor will soon appoint). Chancellor Thompson will also invite the Deans of the Schools and College to report on space needs in their units, for future planning.

23. A fruitful SEC retreat was held to discuss Senate business for the Spring semester. The SEC members formed a committee of the whole, with Chancellor Thompson as ex officio, to examine the proposed alternative of the Grievance Code, which was developed under President Al Homoud in the previous Senate session. The report version will be shared with the Senate in two extraordinary Senate meetings devoted to this effect.

The SEC also discussed various approaches to enhancing interaction among faculty from various

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backgrounds, fostering greater East-West dialogue, and establishing a forum to discuss such topics as freedom of expression, and to have a closer look into AUS mission statement, and emphasize AUS's role in the UAE and the Gulf community.

It was also deemed important for the Senate to call all faculty to support of the ICC and the AUSWA efforts in the relief of the Bam earthquake. The SEC would like to refer all faculty to the email communication from AUSWA Karen Peterson in this regard, and invite active participation from all faculty in these important humanitarian efforts.

In order to ensure regular follow up of Senate Committee work, each SEC member will be in charge of providing regular update to the SEC on some specific committees' work.

24. On the social side, the Senate hosted a Senate Iftar, which was attended by Senators and ex officio members, and their spouses. Chancellor Thompson also hosted the SEC for an iftar at his home. The Senate Chambers also hosted a lecture from the Greek Ambassador on the Olympic games.

25. Because the full program of the Fall Faculty Assembly did not afford enough time to complete the question/answer session with the Chancellor, Chancellor Thompson agreed on a follow up question and answer forum with faculty, which was held on October 19.

26. The Senate adopted a proposal for faculty once tenured at other institutions comparable in caliber to AUS, to be able to qualify for an early rolling contract decision at AUS.

27. In response to a faculty query via the SEC, the Chancellor informed the SEC that a harassment policy is contained in the AUS Department of Human Resources personnel policy manual. The relevant provisions can be accessed on the AUS web page by going first to the Finance and Administration page, then to the Department of Human Resources page, then to HR Policy Manual.

28. In response to an SEC query about installing PC's at the university gates so that the guards could notify of the arrival of guests, Chancellor Thompson informed us that there is no cable access to the gates. However, the Chancellor will examine whether this is financially feasible.

29. An ad hoc committee on recruitment has been formed to encode procedures across the Schools and College. The Committee is chaired by SOE Professor Ahmad Hamad.

30. The Faculty Handbook is now in print and copies are available to all faculty through the Chancellor's Office.

31. Chancellor Thompson responded affirmatively to have percentages of merit increases announced each year.

The Senate will continue to address queries and concerns in all aspects of academic life, from faculty colleagues.

Sincerely,

Nada Mourtada-Sabbah
President, AUS Faculty Senate