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Dear Colleagues:

Congratulations are in order on a successful launch of the new academic year. AUS has a record enrolment of 3629 students. AUS's reputation continues to spread. We especially welcome the 33 new faculty, who judging by their credentials, clearly reflect the widening stature of the University. While we begin our seventh year of operation, the University has already reached or is very close to its equilibrium in numbers of students and faculty. Thus, we cross the threshold into a mature University.

Now that the normal professorial duties are fully underway, I wish to bring you up to date on the status of pending matters of concern to Faculty, that are considered by the Senate. The Senate Executive Committee (SEC) held its first meeting on September 7. The following issues were discussed, and I summarize the findings for your use.

(1) With regard to the procedurally important matter of lacking a sitting VCAA this fall semester, Chancellor Thompson invited the SEC to consider ways to bridge this gap. The Senate President entrusted Vice President Sahraoui with collecting suggestions from SEC members about a possible amendment, to deal with sections of the Faculty Handbook that may be moot. Vice President Sahraoui will submit a motion to this effect at our forthcoming SEC and Senate meetings (to be held on September 14, and 16 respectively).

(2) With regard to the three alternatives for the Academic Calendar 2004-05, the various alternatives will be assessed and voted on the Senate floor on September 17. I trust that all faculty have had a chance to consider the three options suggested by the Calendar Committee, which were emailed (August 27, 2003) to all Chairs/Directors for feedback by their faculty constituencies.

(3) The SEC has recommended and the full Senate has adopted (in a vote by virtual session) a motion to combine the two holidays of Eid Al Fitr and National Day to result in a single holiday (November 24 through December 5).

(4) It has come to the attention of the Senate that the annual leave travel policy is in the process of revision by the Finance department for airline tickets to and from a faculty's home or point of origin. Vice President Sahraoui will represent the Senate to the Finance Department to ensure that Faculty interests are represented. He will report to the Senate in due time for a discussion of the proposed guidelines.

(5) In reference to the unanimously passed motion (Senate meeting of March 4, 2003) to remove the restrictions on funding the school fees of two children per family, Chancellor Thompson informed the SEC that the motion was not favorably received by the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees. Rather, the Board of Trustees would favor considering school fees within the wider package of all fringe benefits allocated to each faculty member. Chancellor Thompson consequently urged the Senate to closely consider a mechanism for allocating the full range of fringe

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benefits, including social security, school fees, medical care, and so on. The fringe benefit package should also reflect on the percentage of a faculty member's package that the University should spend on cash remunerations. It was agreed that the Senate should assess the variables and options early in the semester. A Senate ad hoc committee co-chaired by Senate Vice President Sahraoui and Secretary Ahmed Mokhtar will work closely together with the office of VCFA George De Bin to develop and present the appropriate allocation formulae. The make up of the committee will be announced shortly. Faculty will be invited to share with their respective senators, their views on this matter of crucial concern to all, before full deliberations take place on the Senate floor.

(6) In order to proceed with the evaluation of faculty for promotion and contract renewal, the SEC considered the following queries that were brought before it:

A. Whether Assistant Professors could be eligible to serve on FPCs in Schools or College which—as in the case of SAD—currently lack a sufficient number of Associate or Full professors. The SEC determined that the FOP provides the governing authority in this regard: “Only members of the full-time faculty with the rank of Associate Professor or Professor may serve on the committees.” The SEC unanimously decided to abide by the Faculty Handbook, and encouraged faculty who had concerns over the implication of such provisions to bring their case forth through the appropriate procedure of amendment.

B. Administrators (such as chairs or directors) are eligible to serve on FPCS of other Schools/College insofar as they are not involved in other steps to evaluate the same candidate so that the same individual evaluates the candidate twice.

In this regard, the Faculty Handbook states that “no committee member of the FPCs or UCRPCs should pass judgment on the same candidate more than once.”

The Handbook also provides that “Faculty Administrators such as Chairpersons, Division Directors, and Program Coordinators retain their faculty status and are members of their departments and of the Faculty Assembly.” Therefore, Faculty members holding the rank of Associate or Full Professors that also serve as chairs or program directors may be invited and are eligible to serve on FPCs of other schools and college.

C. As to whether a Faculty whose case is being evaluated for renewal or promotion could also serve on an FPC and deliberate on all cases except his/hers, the SEC determined that in such cases the faculty could develop reciprocities that might influence the objectivity of deliberations. The SEC unanimously recommended that a faculty could not serve on an FPC or UCRPC, while in the same year being evaluated by the same bodies.

(7). The Faculty Handbook provides that “the constitution of the UCRCP (University Committee on Rolling Contracts and Promotion) will be

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handled differently in academic years 2002-03 and 2003-04 than in subsequent years. During those first years of operation, the members of the Committee will be appointed by the Chancellor in consultation with the Council of Deans and the Senate Executive Committee..."

In conformity with the Faculty Handbook, five members of the faculty who hold the rank of Associate Professor or Professor and who are on rolling contract were appointed to this committee in 2002-2003.

The Faculty Handbook further states that "Replacements, if required during those two years, will be made by the Chancellor." Two vacancies recently occurred in the UCRPC, which were filled by new appointments by Chancellor Thompson.

(8) The SEC unanimously recommended that any electronic voting for FPC positions could only take place with a software that has been evaluated and approved by the IT department, and that such an electronic voting software would have to be overseen by faculty.

Please be reminded that Senate meetings are scheduled for the third Tuesday of every month. In anticipation of the Senate meeting scheduled for Tuesday September 17, a second SEC meeting will be held on Sunday September 14.

For the upcoming SEC meeting, we plan to discuss the following items of business: (1) mechanisms of enforcing the sabbatical leave policies; (2) issues of space and office allocation at AUS; (3) lingering parking problems; (4) staffing of Senate committees; (5) travel grants in light of change in fiscal year appropriation.

I would like to remind you that according to the Faculty Organization Plan (FOP), which outlines the Senate's organizational principles, "items for senate consideration may be presented, in writing, by any member or group of members of faculty." Such requests shall be sent to the Senate President, who shall see that the items are placed on the agenda." The FOP also provides that "Faculty who are not members of the Senate may be present at Senate meetings but shall not be entitled to vote or make motions." Please submit any item of concern to the Senate President <senate_president@aus.ac.ae> by 12:00 on Sunday September 14.

The list of your respective senators for the Senate term 2003-2004 is available on the Senate Website: <http://www.ausharjah.edu/facultysenate/>
The Senate is particularly pleased to welcome two new faculty representatives,
Senators Tina Driscoll and Dennis Russell, who were recently elected in lieu of Senators Pelly Shaw and Bassim Boulos respectively.

An icon for the AUS Faculty Senate website has been added to the AUS homepage. The passwords are: "facultysenate" and then "oasis."

Please be reminded that three official email addresses have been created for the three elected officers <senate_president@aus.ac.ae>, <senate_vice_president@aus.ac.ae>, and <senate_secretary@aus.ac.ae> and colleagues are advised to please use them in their Senate-related communications.

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The Faculty Senate will continue to address queries and concerns that faculty deem appropriate to bring forth.

Sincerely,

Nada Mourtada-Sabbah
President, AUS Faculty Senate