



MEETING MINUTES

MTG No.: AY23-24/MTG 2	
Committee/Council/Other: 2nd Faculty Senate Meeting – AY 2023-2024	
Date of Meeting: November 3, 2023	Start Time: 9:00 am
Location: Virtual Microsoft Teams	End Time: 10:30 am
Chair: Dr. Fayez Moutassem	Rapporteur: Ms. Micaela Castillo
Attendees:	
Chair: Dr. Fayez Moutassem	Department Chair / Associate Professor – Civil and Infrastructure Engineering
1. Dr. Kevin Scott Konecny	Associate Provost for Student Affairs / Assistant Professor of Education
2. Dr. Anis Sendlali	Associate Professor – Interior Design
3. Dr. Saad Balhasan	Associate Professor - Petroleum Engineering
4. Prof. Mohammed Omari	Professor - Computer Science
5. Mr. Umar Adeel	Instructor - Computer Engineering
6. Dr. Beza Negash Getu	Associate Professor – Electronics and Communications Engineering
7. Dr. Mohamad Kharseh	Associate Professor - Renewable Energy (Mechanical)
8. Dr. Busher Idris	Assistant Professor of Biotechnology
9. Dr. Khaledah Al Mansoori	Assistant Professor – Linguistics / Coordinator of Academic Recovery & Community-Oriented Student Life Activities
10. Dr. Suleyman Ulusoy	Professor – Mathematics
11. Dr. Baliira Kalyebara	Associate Professor – Finance
12. Dr. Osama Sohaib	Associate Professor – Business Analytics
13. Dr. Tariq Bhatti	Associate Professor - Marketing / Graduate Program Coordinator
14. Salmah Walid El-Jammal	SGA Chief of Staff / Student
15. Mr. Mohamed Sharul	IT Manager (Guest)
16. Mr. Rajesh Prema	Interim Associate Provost for Enrollment Management / Director, Marketing & Communications (Guest)
Rapporteur: Ms. Micaela Castillo	Administrative Assistant – School of Business
Apologies:	
Prof. Stephen Wilhite	Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Success / Provost
Unexcused Absences:	
None	
Welcome remarks	
Dr. Fayez welcomed the faculty members to the 2 st Faculty Senate meeting for the 2023-2024 academic year. He also welcomed Mr. Rajesh and Mr. Sharul for accepting to attend the meeting.	
AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.1: Approving Minutes of Meeting #1	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dr. Fayez briefed the agenda items for meeting #2 and inquired about the members' feedback on the minutes of the previous meeting (Meeting #1).- All members approved the Minutes of Meeting #1.	
AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.2: Improving Marketing Strategies to enhance Student Recruitment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dr. Fayez inquired about Dr. Beza's suggestions for improving marketing strategies from the previous meeting, which Dr. Beza mentioned the following points;<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Based on his previous observations, some information sessions were unproductive, with most faculties returning with no students or fewer students for example in the Al Ain information session held in AY 2022-2023.• Suggested to explore alternative marketing strategies for student recruitment, including benchmarking with other universities' marketing strategies or activities.	

- A few years ago, AURAK used hold campus wide open day accompanied by presentations at AURAK Multipurpose Hall for schools, involving AURAK academic departments and parents/students, instead of specific open days for each school.
- Mr. Rajesh outlined the reasons for visiting different Emirates;
 - Previously, RAK had a high enrollment rate, but the number of prospective students has been decreasing in the last two years due to parents seeking more scholarships to send their children to AURAK, causing a decline in enrollment.
 - The marketing department is facing financial constraints due to limited scholarships for school programs, which may not cover tuition fees for students and parents. They proposed that RAK residents' scholarship to support students in RAK and neighboring Emirates, but the proposal was not approved.
 - AURAK is traveling to each emirate to represent the company and develop new markets. They plan to conduct information sessions and meet prospective students, such as those in Al Ain, who may not be able to visit the campus for a 3- or 4-hour visit. The goal is to meet with faculty and admissions staff, followed by a campus tour. He suggests that focusing on face-to-face activities can effectively convert students from an applicant perspective to a registered perspective, thus enhancing the overall conversion process.
 - A summer camp was held for all schools, featuring exclusive presentations of school-based programs from morning to evening. They invited school students to the campus and they presented the three different schools represented different programs, discussing career aspects and showcasing their own programs. Some faculty also participated in the event to showcase their achievements.
 - The Deans and Provost have expressed concerns about the timing of the activity due to the summer period, which many parents prefer not to bring their students from Abu Dhabi, especially emirates like Dubai or Abu Dhabi. The recommendation is to change the timing from November to early next year, with the date still being finalized.
- Dr. Tariq inquired Mr. Rajesh about their efforts in attracting students for graduate programs.
- Mr. Rajesh provided three reasons that were emphasized to the Provost and the President cabinet.
 - AURAK's graduate program faces a challenge due to the lack of scholarships, as they offer up to 25% of their tuition for working professionals but is no longer existing. However, the interested prospective students are seeking more scholarships or financial assistance from AURAK, as they have better options like AUS, which offers a combined merit scholarship and financial aid of up to 60%. This was highlighted but it was no successful, as it was decided by senior management.
 - They conducted market research to understand why students are not joining their programs, despite approaching them for certain programs. Most applicants are from other Emirates, with 60-70% coming from other countries. They are requesting cost factors for traveling or driving to RAK, which they are facing as a challenge. Despite this, they are attempting to reach their audience through digital platforms during workshops and conferences. They are also focusing on reaching out to the audience through these platforms.
 - AURAK has expanded its international student recruitment efforts, with 18% of UG level students from 8 countries enrolled. They aim to achieve a minimum 25% share from outside the country, promoting multiculturalism and diversity. However, challenges include obtaining 25-30% students from African countries, particularly Nigeria, due to immigration visa issues. The organization is also striving to dominate graduate programs for international students and overcome immigration visa issues. The goal is to attract a diverse and multicultural student body.
 - He encouraged members to raise issues on their academic council platform to the Dean and Provost, aiming for support from all angles to recruit the maximum number of students for the university's growth and recruitment.
- Dr. Tariq noted that the students from government institutions used to be part of the past network. However, he suggested that there may be a lack of effort in networking with HR or government institutions. He suggested that students could benefit from networking with top management and promoting their programs through game networking. This would help in planning and taking action on these initiatives.
- Mr. Rajesh pointed out the following;
 - Dr. Tahseen, who has taken over as business and community development, is working closely with Prof. Wilhite and Mr. Rajesh to address community outreach, involving further discussions on outreach strategies.
 - Mr. Yousef and Mr. Rajesh are collaborating with government bodies like Qassimi Foundation and TDRA to strengthen relationships and recruit more graduate students, aiming to improve the support provided to students from various government organizations.

- Dr. David plans to meet with the Al Qassimi Foundation next week to discuss the increasing number of students they are sending to the campus. They will request more students for certain graduate programs, following the discussions discussed during the meeting.
- Dr. Beza suggests increasing scholarship opportunities for expat students, while local students have access to government agencies like TDA and Etisalat, to increase the number of students in the university.
- Mr. Rajesh supports Dr. Beza and encouraged members to discuss issues with the Provost and senior management.
- Mr. Rajesh requested that he is open to discussing ideas or approaches with the members, and is willing to have one-on-one meetings or work as a team to ensure sustainable growth of all programs. He is happy to collaborate with them to find solutions.
- The Faculty Senate Chair thanked Mr. Rajesh for his attendance at the meeting and commended his efforts to the Marketing Department.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.3: Involving the Marketing Department in ongoing school related activities such as Professional Development sessions, Research clusters, etc.

- Dr. Fayeز reported that Dr. Kharseh raised an issue and requested further clarification from him on the following points;
 - The School of Engineering provides various activities like seminars, workshops, and professional development presentations. To increase visibility and exposure, it is suggested to film and share these events on the AURAK website. This would showcase the quality of the faculty's presentations and workshops, providing valuable experiences for external audiences.
- Mr. Rajesh provided Dr. Kharseh with the following points.;
 - He mentioned that while they cover most critical and core events from all three schools on social media, they cannot cover all daily events due to resource limitations. They also stressed the need for marketing and student recruitment on and off campus, as well as outside the campus.
 - He emphasized the importance of informing them in advance about the planned campus activities.
- Dr. Fayeز recommended Dr. Kharseh, the marketing representative in the SOE, to gather event summaries and share them with Mr. Rajesh for further consideration.
- During a meeting with Dr. Kharseh, Mr. Rajesh informed Dr. Kharseh that if the marketing department is unavailable, he will collaborate with the School of Arts & Science, along with Dr. Sabir and some students, to assist with projects. The meeting concluded that promoting important school events like research symposiums and student achievements will be prioritized to maximize AURAK's marketing and communication potential.
- Dr. Khaleda commented the following points;
 - She agreed that covering the internal activities should let people know that they are doing a great job at AURAK. She also observed that due to a lack of human resources, they are unable to cover all the events that occur during certain periods.
 - The suggestion is to use a high-resolution camera for meetings and co-curricular activities, and send a brief report to the marketing department for publication on the website or social media platforms.
- Mr. Rajesh advised to Dr. Khaleda that they don't require a full content stretch but can submit a bullet point and a story. They can send brief event points and high-resolution photos, and the Marketing Department will handle the rest.
- Mr. Rajesh is requesting all necessary information in advance for evaluation of planned activities, aiming for maximum coverage within limitations. However, they may be unable to cover events for a short time due to resource capacity issues. They are also capturing critical information from Deans, Faculty, and colleagues through social media. They are happy to consider requests from each school perspective and ensure they are considered for promotion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.4: Purchasing and installing Smartboard in classrooms that do not have yet Smartboard

- Dr. Beza highlighted the lack of smart boards in Building G classrooms, compared to Building H & K. He emphasized the importance of equipping these classrooms with smart boards for better teaching and learning processes.
- Mr. Sharul pointed out the followings;
 - He is uncertain about the budget for this academic year, as smartboards are typically expensive equipment that should have been included during the budgeting process, and only he can request the necessary funds.
 - This year, some interactive panels were accommodated, and the number of available in Building G will be reviewed, as requirements are typically sent to schools before the budgeting process begins.

- He suggested to request all members or highlight them to their Deans during the budgeting process for easy accommodation and completion.
- Dr. Tariq discussed the basic infrastructure in Building G, mentioning that the projector screen is often unresponsive in G207. He reported this issue to IT support, who reported that software updates take a few hours. He suggested finding a solution to run classes in Building G, particularly regarding the functioning of projectors, to ensure smooth operations.
- Mr. Sharul noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.5: Solutions to inconsistency issues between EMUS and BB such as sorting names and adding ID numbers etc.

- Prof. Omari elaborated the following points;
 - The Blackboard system may not display the ID number of students with the same first and last names, causing confusion when entering grades. It is suggested to include the ID number.
 - In EUMS, the sorting of the names is an issue. There is no other way to sort names whenever he is taking the attendance or report grades on the EUMS.
- Dr. Fayez encountered the same issue on Blackboard and EUMS, where they had to search for every name separately.
- Mr. Sharul pointed out the following points;
 - Regarding the Blackboard, he needs to review the integration of ID numbers from EUMS to the Blackboard, as they are being sent to the Blackboard for student identification. They will need to review the possibility of showing them as a line item in the grade center.
 - He will look into sorting the students' names in EUMS alphabetically.
- Dr. Fayez recommended Mr. Sharul to review and sort student names for flexibility and ID numbers on Blackboard and EUMS.
- Mr. Sharul noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.6: Issues with instability and internet coverage indoors and outdoors

- Dr. Kharseh and Prof. Omari discussed the issue of instability and internet coverage both indoors and outdoors;
 - There is not enough stable spot at AURAK where they lose internet connection.
 - The outdoor renewable energy lab lacks internet, a issue discussed with Mr. Sharul but not resolved. Dr. Kharseh ordered a monthly subscription router from DU to create internet for the spot.
- Mr. Sharul highlighted the following points;
 - The campus lacks outdoor access points, while having Wi-Fi in buildings, but not in the greenery area, car parking, or other areas.
 - They did not purchase any external access point at this stage as they plan to complete revamp for their entire W-fi system by December.
 - For example, the new laptops which they purchased comes with the latest 6E adapter and the Wi-fi system is almost 4-5 year. So, they are moving to the latest 6E access points to support the latest adapters.
- Prof. Omari reported weak signal in classroom H-201 in building H, causing him to frequently use his phone for WI-FI connection, which Mr. Sharul assured could be fixed.
- Mr. Sharul informed that vendors are scheduled to conduct a site survey for Wifi on the campus in December. They are also planning for external access points to cover the greenery area and car parking, following feedback from SGA students who requested coverage on the backside of the building.
- Mr. Sharul noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.7: Adding extension numbers to the contact details on Teams and Outlook

- Dr. Kharseh discussed the possibility of adding extension numbers to the contact details on MS Teams and MS Outlook.
- Mr. Sharul confirmed that there is currently no AURAK extension numbers visible in MS Teams and Outlook, but he can add it to the contact details for synchronization.
- The Faculty Senate Chair thanked Mr. Sharul for his attendance at the meeting.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.2.8: Other Business

- Dr. Anis expressed concern about the new class schedule for Interior Design and Architecture, expressing concern about the new timeslot.

- For example, in Spring schedule the class timings don't really fit the interior design and architectural time slot.
 - Another example is ARCH 422 - Architectural Design Studio which is from 12-5 pm every Monday & Wednesday while the other courses are from 12 – 2:55 pm.
 - They are having difficulties to fit into time slot both for students and faculty members.
 - He suggested adjusting the time slot to accommodate the student and faculty member schedules.
- Dr. Kevin commented that he can convey the question to Ms. Rania because she is supervised directly by the Provost office. He recommended Dr. Anis to follow up with Ms. Rania directly to ask the question.
 - Dr. Fayez suggested Dr. Anis follow up with Dr. Kevin or discuss with Ms. Rania from the Registrar Department, and if necessary, invite her to the next faculty senate meeting in early December.
 - The Faculty Senate Chair thanked the committee for being here and informed them that the next meeting will be in early December.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION DETAILS	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
Involving the Marketing Department in ongoing school related activities such as Professional Development sessions, Research clusters, etc	Dr. Kharseh, the marketing representative in the SOE, will be gathering event summaries and sharing them with Mr. Rajesh for further marketing considerations	Dr. Kharseh	Ongoing
Solutions to inconsistency issues between EMUS and BB such as sorting names and adding ID numbers etc.	Mr. Sharul to review and give the ability to sort student names (on blackboard and EUMS) for flexibility and also include Student ID numbers on Blackboard.	Mr. Sharul	Dec. 1, 2023
Issues with instability and internet coverage indoors and outdoors	Mr. Sharul to follow-up on enhancing the wifi connectivity signal indoors and outdoors	Mr. Sharul	Dec. 2023
Adding extension numbers to the contact details on Teams and Outlook	Since there are currently no AURAK extension numbers visible in MS Teams and Outlook, Mr. Sharul will be adding it to the contact details for synchronization.	Mr. Sharul	Dec. 2023

Date of Next Meeting:

Time: **9 am – 10:30 am**

Place: **Virtual on Teams**

Chair's Signature: *Fayez Moutassem*

Rapporteur's Signature:



Distribution List:

- President
- Senior Vice President, Academic Affairs and Student Success
- Vice President, Operational Excellence and Financial Management
- Committee Members