



MEETING MINUTES

MTG No.: AY23-24/MTG 1	
Committee/Council/Other: 1ST Faculty Senate Meeting – AY 2023-2024	
Date of Meeting: October 6, 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 / Assistant Professor – Civil and Infrastructure Engineering
1. Prof. Stephen Wilhite	Vice President, Academic Affairs & Student Success / Provost
2. Dr. Kevin Scott Konecny	Associate Provost for Student Affairs / Assistant Professor of Education
3. Dr. Anis Semlali	Associate Professor – Interior Design
4. Dr. Saad Balhasan	Associate Professor - Petroleum Engineering
5. Prof. Mohammed Omari	Professor - Computer Science
6. Mr. Umar Adeel	Instructor - Computer Engineering
7. Dr. Beza Negash Getu	Associate Professor – Electronics and Communications Engineering
8. Dr. Mohamad Kharseh	Assistant Professor - Renewable Energy (Mechanical)
9. Dr. Busher Idris	Assistant Professor of Biotechnology
10. Dr. Khaledah Al Mansoori	Assistant Professor - Linguistics, Coordinator of Academic Recovery & Community-Oriented Student Life Activities
11. Dr. Suleyman Ulusoy	Professor – Mathematics
12. Dr. Baliira Kalyebara	Associate Professor – Finance
13. Dr. Osama Sohaib	Associate Professor – Business Analytics
Rapporteur: Ms. Micaela Castillo	Administrative Assistant – School of Business
Apologies:	
None	
Unexcused Absences:	
None	
Welcome remarks	
Dr. Fayez welcomed the faculty members to the 1 st Faculty Senate meeting for the 2023-2024 academic year.	
AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.1: New executive committee nominated faculty for Vice-chair and Secretary positions	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dr. Fayez thanked Prof. Mohammed Omari and Dr. Mohamed Kharseh for stepping up to the leadership responsibilities of being the Secretary and the Vice Chair, respectively.- He also thanked Ms. Micaela for accepting the role of writing the minutes of meetings for this academic year.	
AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.2: Improving Marketing Strategies to enhance Student Recruitment	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Dr. Beza briefly discussed about how marketing is important to attract students. He mentioned the following points;<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ He shared his previous observation during the information sessions for example in Al Ain which was not satisfactorily productive either few or almost no student recruitment but most of the faculties returned with no students or with fewer students.➤ He also advised looking for other ways of marketing for student recruitment, such as benchmarking with other universities' marketing strategies or activities.➤ He pointed out that the recruitment process is not satisfactory due to the low number of students in most programs while most of the population of students belong to one program, for example, Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science.- Dr. Kharseh shared the following points;	

- He is the Chair of Marketing & Recruitment committee in the School of Engineering.
- He explained the process of preparing the action plan at the department level and shared it with the department representative to the marketing committee of the school. He then raised it to the marketing and recruitment community at the university level.
- The committee met with Mr. Rajesh to discuss the action plan and receive feedback
- Dr. Kharseh also encouraged faculty members to share their ideas within their department and school levels so that they can be raised to the marketing department.
- Dr. Beza suggested to Dr. Kharseh to benchmark marketing strategies with other peer institutions to gain insights from other universities.
- Prof. Stephen commented the following points;
 - To invite Mr. Rajesh to the next meeting to explain further points such as;
 - How they are continuously benchmarking in relation to how other universities are marketing and attempting to recruit students.
 - To explain that there are lots of resource factors that impact marketing in terms of how much budgetary allocation is provided to Marketing & Communication department, and Admissions.
 - How much allocation is given for scholarship funding and how competitive is the market for students in the UAE.
 - He highlighted that it can be disappointing and frustrating for faculty to travel and meet very few students during marketing events. However, the department of marketing, communications, and admissions is continuously looking into which events faculty would have an opportunity to interact with multiple prospective students.
 - He mentioned that he was pleased with Dr. Kharseh for describing how the school level committee is working with the school departments to solicit suggestions and ideas regarding the marketing action plan.
 - He also mentioned that they will continue to work closely with the government funders to make sure they have the kinds of resources that they need to attract more students to the university.
- Dr. Baliira pointed out 2 things;
 - There is a fleet of buses moving from RAK going to Dubai or Abu Dhabi.
 - To have a local marketing officer in the Marketing & Communications Department.
- Prof. Suleyman suggested to have an open day during the faculty professional development week where most of all faculty are available to meet the students.
- Dr. Fayez informed that in the School of Engineering, they conduct a couple of hours for advisors to meet their advisees. The Dean of Engineering also gives a presentation about their school, their expectations, introducing the Department chairs and Advisors and so on. He recommended having it for other programs would be beneficial.
- The Faculty Senate Chair suggested members send their marketing ideas via email, forwarding them to Mr. Rajesh, who will be invited to the next meeting.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.3: Basis for Selection of Committee Members for various University level committees

- Dr. Beza stated that some faculty members are involved in numerous committees, while others are involved in a few or limited committee assignments.
- Dr. Beza suggested a fair and balanced distribution of committee tasks to encourage active faculty participation, and possibly reducing to assign a particular faculty to the same committees every academic year. With regard to this, he also suggested rotations in committee assignments to provide faculty diverse experiences from participating in different committees.
- Prof. Stephen highlighted the following points;
 - The committees have been formally approved and change based on their membership, not by faculty name but on expected representatives and in some cases, the types of representatives expected to be on the committee.
 - He aimed to ensure stability in committees by ensuring some members continue to serve and to contribute a collective memory among the members.
 - He encouraged faculty members who have a strong desire to serve on one or more standing committees.
 - He added that he will keep a record of individuals with specific interests and ensure they receive equal opportunities.
- Dr. Beza mentioned the importance of fair and balanced faculty engagement and rotations to ensure diverse experiences and at the same time to enhance individual faculty service contributions to the University.

- Dr. Khaleda agreed with Dr. Beza that they should have a clear understanding of the selection process for each committee.
- All members noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.4: Excluding from GPA calculations: Courses such as MATH 093, ENGL 099, etc and Students who change their program: Grade points of courses passed in Major 1 but not relevant or offered in Major 2 should be excluded automatically from GPA

- Dr. Fayeز informed Dr. Baliira about issues, excluding GPA calculations raised by their department, which he checked with the Registrar.
1. Courses such as MATH 093 and ENGL 099;
 - As per the Registrar these courses are excluded from the GPA because they are remedial courses.
 2. Students who change their program: Grade points of courses passed in Major 1 but not relevant or offered in Major 2 should be excluded automatically from GPA;
 - As mentioned in the AURAK catalog page 64; it is mentioned that the following courses will not be removed from the calculation of the CGPA if the grade is C and above. It will be counted towards the CGPA even if the course is irrelevant to major 2.
- Dr. Fayeز pointed out that he agreed with Dr. Baliira that the courses should be excluded in the GPA of major 2 if they are not part of their new major. He will forward this suggestion to the university for further action.
 - Prof. Omari suggested that students changing their majors have the freedom to exclude courses taken in their previous major. He suggested that AURAK policy could allow students to retain previous grades to increase their CGPA or drop them from the calculation, allowing them to make decisions about their major choices.
 - Dr. Fayeز stated that as per the university catalogue, students have no choice to remove courses from the CGPA calculations.
 - Prof. Stephen stated that proposals for reexamining specific policy aspects are welcome and will be reviewed by the academic policy review committee, followed by the Provost or Academic Council if a specific change is made.
 - Dr. Beza suggested in their academic records to include information about completed and earned credits and CGPA in their major. This additional information may clearly provide about the student's achievement in his/her major.
 - The Faculty Senate Chair will send an email to the Provost regarding the agenda's suggestions and issues, which will be reviewed by the Provost Council and Academic Council.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.5: Looking into rolling contracts (tenure equivalent) as they have at AUS

- Dr. Khaleda discussed a team's suggestion that if faculty performance is good, contract renewals should be automatically renewed without requiring them to submit and apply for renewals.
- Prof. Stephen clarified that tenure is not allowed in the UAE government as per the policy. He suggested that the tenure will not be push through for now.
- All members noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.6: Inadequate rewarding of book/book chapters in promotion policy

- Dr. Khaleda addressed the faculty member's concern regarding promotion of faculty members to take into consideration about the rewarding of books and book chapters.
- Dr. Fayeز stated in the promotion policy for example a faculty promoted from assistant to associate professor must have at least of six significant scholarly activities, with five of these must be articles published in a scopus-indexed peer reviewed journals or the equivalent. The remaining one should be a conference paper, book chapter, or creative work, etc.
- Dr. Fayeز mentioned that unlike scopus-indexed journal papers, book chapters do not follow the same extensive thorough review process.
- Dr. Anis emphasized that books are more significant than articles and should be considered as multiple publications rather than one. He added that books are considered for promotion, but as an article, they should be considered the same. He believes that both publishing a book and an article are equally important.
- Prof. Omari stated the issue with books is the matter of peer reviewing so not all books come or pass through that process.
- Dr. Beza suggested the University Promotion committee to review the requirement in the number of books or book chapters that can be counted for promotion. According to Dr. Beza's view, more than one published

books and book chapters could be counted for promotion provided the quality and repetition of the Book publisher is high.

- Prof. Stephen discussed the promotion policy and its significant publications. He suggested that faculty groups who feel the current policy disadvantages specific disciplines in their department or school can propose potential revisions to the existing faculty promotion policy, allowing them to propose specific revisions.
- All members noted the above discussion.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.7: What are the short-term and long-term vision of the university based on strategic plan?

- Dr. Saad discussed the university's short-term and long-term vision for the education system, learning system, and the university.
 - During professional development week, to have an open forum for everyone to suggest ideas on education, changes for the university, or ways to make it unique.
 - School and university committees can discuss short-term strategies for student advising, teaching, and recruitment improvement.
 - The long-term partnership should not only be internationally but locally promoting in other cities of Ras Al Khaimah. For example, by opening colleges outside of the campus to create like a community in RAK.
- Dr. Busher pointed out the followings;
 - The university has been established within the community of Ras Al Khaimah especially in areas such as Al Jeer, Al Shams.
 - There have been some huge improvements in how people perceive the university.
 - There are a lot of competition outside of Ras Al Khaimah for example Abu Dhabi because mainly it is free and there is no competition. So, it is very difficult to compete with free education.
 - He suggested adopting new teaching methodologies and enhancing them with a long-term vision.
- Dr. Kharseh acknowledged Dr. Saad's observation that marketing is challenging and is working on solutions with the marketing committee. He added it will take time to see the results for both short-term and long-term. He encouraged the committee members to share any ideas or suggestions with their school representative, who will then be brought to the committee for action.
- Prof. Stephen provided a brief comment on the following points;
 - Regarding vision, strategy and mission - the President and cabinet members are developing a new strategic plan for the university community, which will be shared this Fall. The faculty will have the opportunity to provide input on the vision, mission, and strategic goals for the five-year plan.
 - Regarding innovative and engaging teaching practice - during recent faculty professional development sessions, faculty shared innovative teaching practices, highlighting the use of technology and various new strategies for engaging students and actively participating in the learning process,
 - He expressed his appreciation to faculty members for actively engaging students in the classroom and shared their efforts with other faculty members.
- The Faculty Senate Chair advised the committee to send him an email for any additional information or suggestions.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.8: How can we improve the student life (academic, activities, social, etc.) to have them as a good marketing supporter?

- Dr. Saad highlighted the following points;
 - The university's vision for the student center focuses on improving student life, increasing student numbers, having a good relationship with students.
 - The education system should gradually change for example 10% or 20% its methodology by allowing the students for more outdoor activities and exposing them to social interaction.
- Dr. Kharseh supports Dr. Saad's suggestion to enhance teaching methodologies and involve students in university activities. He added that Ms. Karla from Manager of Student life are working closely with students activities.
- Prof. Stephen stated the following point;
 - The issue of student life and activities outside the classroom on campus – Dr. Kevin can provide an update on the university's activities and efforts to expand of student life programming outside of the classroom on the campus. He added that they are focusing on a vibrant campus life to the students which is important to both of recruiting and to retaining students.

- Dr. Beza expressed concern about the poor condition of buses and vans used for previous trips with students or marketing events, particularly the poor air conditioning, which could give a negative impact to the university and students, and suggested forwarding this issue to the responsible person.
- The Faculty Senate Chair thanked the committee for their input during the meeting and advised members to send any additional information, particularly regarding marketing discussions, to the Chair.

AGENDA ITEM AY23-24.1.9: Other Business

There was no other business.

The meeting was adjourned at 10:30 am.

AGENDA ITEM	ACTION DETAILS	Person(s) Responsible	Deadline
Improving Marketing Strategies to enhance Student Recruitment	Invite Mr. Rajesh (Marketing Manager) to attend the next Faculty senate meeting to respond to queries and suggestions	Dr. Fayez	Before Nov 3, 2023
Excluding from the CGPA grade points of courses passed in Major 1 but not relevant or offered in Major 2	Prof. Wilhite to add this issue to the list of items that will be addressed in the upcoming revision of the Academic Progress Policy and the Readmission -- New Beginnings Procedure.	Prof. Wilhite	Fall 2023
Basis of selection of committee members on university standing committees.	As the committees have been formed for the year, this issue can be addressed when committees are formed next year. At that time, Prof. Wilhite plans to seek faculty self-nominations for service on committees for which there will be faculty vacancies.	Prof. Wilhite	Next Annual year

Date of Next Meeting: **Nov 3, 2023**

Time: **9 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