



Statement of The American University of Kurdistan's Board of Trustees

The American University of Kurdistan

June 1, 2025

The Board of Trustees of the American University of Kurdistan, chaired by His Excellency Masrour Barzani, convened on June 1, 2025. The Chairman welcomed the Trustees and expressed his appreciation for their continuous dedication and service to the University. He congratulated President Randall Rhodes on completing a successful five year term and thanked him for his willingness to serve another. The Chairman also extended warm wishes and prayers for the recovery of Dr. Barbara Brittingham and Dr. Lazgin Chali, acknowledging their resilience and longstanding support of AUK. In addition, he expressed gratitude to Dr. Sarwar Pedawi for his twelve years of dedicated service as Trustee and appreciated his willingness to remain in the role until a successor is appointed.

The Chairman briefed the strong support expressed by U.S. legislators and administration officials toward Kurdistan's ongoing reforms. He highlighted major political and economic challenges facing the Region, including budgetary disputes with Baghdad and Kurdistan's strategic efforts in energy, digital banking, and economic diversification. Among the key initiatives, he cited the "Rounaki" 24 hour electricity project and the "My Account" digital banking system – both examples of the Kurdistan Regional Government's commitment to modernization and institutional trust building. He emphasized that AUK plays a crucial role in preparing graduates who will contribute to these transformative reforms and help shape a stable and prosperous future for the Region.

The Board reviewed and approved the recommendations of the Academic and Student Affairs Committee. These actions included the conferral of degrees to 88 graduating students, revisions to the BA in International Studies program, and the appointment of Dr. Jervy Bernardino as Dean of Nursing. Additional approvals included the establishment of course based lab fees beginning Fall 2026 following student feedback, the creation of the AUK Trading Simulation Room, and the promotions of Dr. Razaq Ferhadi and Dr. Jiyar Aghapouri to the rank of Associate Professor. Several policies were approved: the Faculty Evaluation Policy, the English Language Proficiency Policy, and the Whistleblower Policy.

The Development Committee presented several recommendations, all of which were unanimously approved. These included the formal naming of the consolidated Advancement/Communication Committee as the Development Committee and the redesign of both the Mustafa Barzani Scholarship and the Board of Trustees Scholarship.

The Board reviewed the Facilities Committee's recommendations and approved the schematic design of Building B, the design and construction of the new Security Building, and the allocation of space for the VCG Trading Simulation Lab. The Smoking Restriction Policy was also approved. A proposal to expand the Amphitheater's capacity was discussed, with final approval pending submission of a revised schematic.

The Trusteeship Committee presented its report, and the Board approved the Development Committee Charter, the renewal of several Trustee terms, and the updated Board Meetings Calendar. The Board also approved the Policy Management Policy Review.

The General Audit and Risk Committee presented recommendations, and the Board unanimously approved the Policy of Enterprise Risk Management and the Charter of the Enterprise Risk Management Committee.

The Finance and Administration Committee presented its findings, and the Board unanimously approved the merit pay distribution and Draft 0 of the FY 2025–2026 Budget. Under Other Business, the Board reviewed the Administration's recommendation for the appointment



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of Dr. Taimur Sharif as Dean of the College of Business. Dr. Sharif, an accomplished academic and leader with extensive regional and international experience, received strong support from faculty and administrators. The Board unanimously approved his appointment.

The Board also received a report from Ambassador Peter Galbraith on the meeting held with students and faculty on May 31, 2025. Students raised concerns regarding conditions in the women's residence hall, including limitations on visitor access, inadequate kitchen and cleaning facilities, and transportation costs for commuting students. Faculty raised concerns regarding the Human Resources office's involvement in academic decisions and delays in contract renewals. The Board acknowledged the validity of several issues and directed the Administration to follow up promptly, including exploring solutions for student transportation needs.

The Board of Trustees expressed appreciation to the AUK community for its continued contributions and reaffirmed its support for the University's mission to deliver high quality, American style education that prepares future leaders for the Kurdistan Region and beyond.

Dr. Honar Issa,
Secretary of the Board of Trustees