



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

The American University of Kurdistan

May 7, 2020

The Board of Trustees of the American University of Kurdistan, chaired by His Excellency Masrour Barzani, convened virtually on May 7, 2020. The Chairman welcomed the Trustees and briefed them on the Kurdistan Regional Government's response to COVID 19, including the fiscal challenges caused by declining oil prices and the suspension of federal payroll transfers. He also commended the successful regional transition to online learning and recognized AUK's important role in supporting this effort.

The Trustees reviewed and approved a series of academic, administrative, and financial measures intended to support the University's mission and ensure continued resilience during the pandemic. In academic matters, the Board voted unanimously to confer degrees on AUK's new graduates following the Provost's presentation and confirmation that all degree requirements had been met. The Board approved the establishment of the Institutional Center for Excellence to support professional development and continuing education for students, staff, and the broader community. It also approved several academic policies aligned with Iraqi regulations, including those governing student attendance and classroom behavior, student conduct and grievances, academic integrity, library use, and student internships. In addition, the Board approved joint degree programs with Wayne State University and the University of Florida, enabling students to complete foundational studies at AUK before transferring to partner institutions to complete programs in engineering, construction management, and data science.

In matters of organization and governance, the Board approved revisions to the University's Organizational Chart. These included creating the positions of Dean of Students and Enrollment, Dean of the Institutional Center for Excellence, and Chair of the Bridge Program; renaming Admissions and Registration to Registration; and relocating Public Affairs and Communications under the Office of the President. The Board also approved the Faculty Senate Bylaws and the Policy Management framework.

In finance and audit matters, the Board approved the preliminary draft budget for the 2020–2021 fiscal year, based on an 18 percent growth projection and a minimal operational model. The Board agreed that the budget would be revisited in September 2020 and January 2021 to ensure alignment with actual enrollment and financial performance. After reviewing competitive proposals from Deloitte, Ernst & Young, Grant Thornton, Moore Stephens, and PwC, the Board voted to appoint Ernst & Young as AUK's external auditor for a three year term in compliance with New England Commission of Higher Education requirements. The Board also approved interim spending procedures to guide financial operations until comprehensive financial policies are formally adopted.

Regarding the University's COVID 19 response, the Board discussed strategies to address the financial impacts of the pandemic and directed the administration to form a Task Force to develop actionable plans. The Board agreed to reconvene in the upcoming weeks to review the Task Force recommendations.

Dr. Honar Issa,
Secretary of the Board of Trustees