



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

### **The American University of Kurdistan**

*November 30, 2023*

The Board of Trustees of the American University of Kurdistan, chaired by His Excellency Masrour Barzani, convened on November 30, 2023. The Chairman welcomed all Trustees, with special acknowledgment to Dr. Barbara Brittingham, newly appointed to the Board.

The Chairman briefed the Board on the challenges facing the Kurdistan Region amid regional instability, economic pressures, and geopolitical tensions. He emphasized the consequences of unresolved regional conflicts, including the recent events in Gaza, and noted the influence exerted on the Iraqi central government by neighboring countries. The resulting withholding of the Kurdistan Regional Government's budget allocation has contributed to economic strain. He stressed that the KRG remains committed to diplomacy and conflict prevention and highlighted the long term strategic implications for the Middle East in the post Gaza period.

The Chairman called upon AUK to continue empowering students with skills aligned to market needs and to contribute to economic diversification through academic programs and research. He expressed gratitude to the University for organizing another successful Middle East Peace and Security Forum and thanked the University of Duhok for hosting the event's facilities.

The Board unanimously approved the meeting agenda and the minutes of the previous meeting held on May 28, 2023.

The Trusteeship Committee recommendations were presented and unanimously approved. These included renewal of Governor Ali Tatar's term, appointment of Dr. Lazgin Zeebaree as Chair of the Facilities Committee, committee assignments for Dr. Brittingham, and the appointment of Dr. Ronald Margolin as a new Trustee. Board members also signed the Conflict of Interest Form.

The Academic and Student Affairs Committee reported on several actions for Board approval. The Board unanimously approved the conferral of degrees to ten Fall 2023 graduates and the promotion of Dr. Ahmed Al Masoodi to Associate Professor. The Board approved six academic and student related policies, returning the Intellectual Property Rights Policy for revision and amending the Counseling Services Policy. Additionally, the Board reviewed outcomes from the first Board Retreat and resolved to establish a task force to assess procedures for the establishment of a School of Medicine, with Erbil identified as a possible location.

The Facilities Committee reported recommendations for several capital projects. The Board unanimously approved the design contract for the Conference Center and Academic Building, as well as a design contract for the Amphitheater. The Board also approved a budget for the Library renovation. Funding for these projects will be solicited from donors as part of the capital plan.

The Advancement Committee presented several items. The Board unanimously approved a gift for the AUK Endowment from Mustafa Bayram, the Sponsorship Policy, and a gift from BC Group for student scholarships from Bakur. Board members were encouraged to participate in fundraising efforts ahead of AUK's 10th Anniversary campaign in 2024.

The Finance and Administration Committee presented multiple items for approval. The Board unanimously approved the \$3,750,000 U.S. Department of State Grant and Revision 1 of the Budget for 2023–2024. The Board also approved the Procurement Policy and the Advance Payment to Vendors Policy. The Board discussed significant banking challenges arising from central bank regulations that could impact AUK's assets due to forced currency conversion. The Board unanimously authorized the administration to take the necessary steps to protect University assets.



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The Communication Committee recommended and the Board approved the Use of University Name Policy.

The Audit Committee reported on the University's Financial Statement for Fiscal Year 2021–2022. The Board unanimously approved the financial statement prepared by Ernst & Young. The Board also approved renaming the Audit Committee as the General Audit and Risk Committee and adopted the Committee's new charter.

Under Other Business, the Chairman encouraged strengthening collaboration between AUK and the Kurdistan Innovation Institute to support youth innovation and private sector development. The President recommended incorporating themes of agriculture, food security, and education into the next Middle East Peace and Security Forum.

Dr. Honar Issa,  
Secretary of the Board of Trustees