

American University in Cairo
Provost's Advisory Committee for Review of Tenure Process

Report by Tokunbo Ogunfunmi, Cecilia Rouse, and Paula Sanders (chair)

June 29, 2018

Executive summary

The Committee's charge was to help AUC ensure that the tenure and promotion process is based on a clear, consistent, benchmarked procedure so that AUC maintains a rigorous and competitive tenure system that meets the university's strategic objectives and positions it for long-term success.

To fulfill this charge, we spent a total of approximately two days meeting with faculty and administrators (see Appendix A), including the provost and (by phone) the president and members of the board of trustees. We have also reviewed material that the provost provided to the committee in advance of our visit as well as material provided on-site in response to our requests for additional information (see Appendix A).

This is a time of change and transition for AUC. The university operates within multiple contexts, all of which must be considered when charting a future course. The realities of post-revolutionary Egypt and the challenges of operating an American institution in Egypt are non-trivial. However, quite apart from these challenges, we note a significant lack of clarity and agreement on the strategic direction of the university with respect to the balance of teaching and research. This has resulted in a corresponding lack of clarity and agreement about expectations for faculty, including tenure, promotion, and annual evaluations of performance. Developing a shared understanding among faculty, administration, and trustees about the strategic direction of the university should be the highest priority of the administration as it is critical to the future health of AUC and to successful implementation of any system of tenure and promotion (T&P). Furthermore, such a shared understanding can emerge only in the context of a system of true shared governance.

Our key observations include: (1) T&P procedures *as stated* in the Faculty Handbook are fundamentally in line with good practices in US institutions. (2) Current policies and department benchmarks are inconsistently applied and sometimes poorly understood. (3) The University already has the appropriate tools in its toolkit to address concerns about continued productivity and performance of tenured faculty, but it is not using its tools properly. (4) Mentoring of faculty at all levels seems to be wanting. This is particularly true—and has the greatest implications—for tenure-track assistant professors. (5) The relatively high rate of turnover of presidents and provosts has created a sense of uncertainty and instability that has seriously damaged trust between the faculty and administration.

We emphasize that given the limited time we had to spend with faculty and staff, we do not have enough information to weigh in on specific details of the AUC T&P process. However, we do have a few key recommendations that we believe are critical to AUC improving its system of faculty evaluation and morale, more generally. Specifically, we believe AUC needs to: (1) Develop a shared understanding of strategic objectives. (2) Ensure there are adequate resources for

tactical implementation and follow-through of whatever system is developed. (3) Raise expectations for department chairs. (4) Make use of existing tools in the system of annual reviews to ensure continued good performance of faculty at all levels and increase emphasis on continuous development of faculty.

A. Introduction

AUC operates within multiple contexts, all of which must be considered when charting a future course. The campus community has experienced, in these contexts, many disruptions. Some of those disruptions are the consequence of political changes and economic instability in Egypt. While faculty are concerned about the general political and economic climate, they expressed the greatest concern about the impact of changes at high levels within AUC. A combination of increased focus on research, the move to the New Cairo campus, and frequent changes in high administrative leadership have left the faculty feeling unmoored. Although the trustees expressed a clear commitment to the idea that AUC is primarily a teaching institution, there appears to be no clear agreement among faculty, administration, and the board about what that means for the long-term strategic direction of the university, particularly with regard to the role of research in the evaluation of faculty. The new strategic direction – to strengthen the research focus of the faculty and university – introduced by Lisa Anderson in her tenure as provost and president does not appear to have had real buy-in from either the faculty or the board, nor does there seem to have been a tactical plan to secure needed resources or to manage the inevitable turmoil that would accompany such a significant shift in direction.

As a result, we observed a dramatic (and we do not think that is too strong a word), and continuing, lack of clarity and agreement on the strategic direction of the university with respect to the balance of teaching and research. The AUC mission statement adopted in 2009 states that “the university is committed to teaching and research of the highest caliber,” but there seems to be considerable confusion about what the research component of the mission actually means (or should mean). Faculty and administrators made remarkably divergent statements about fundamental issues (e.g., commitment to tenure, tenure cap, strategic direction). Faculty expressed little confidence that policies announced now will be the policies in the near future because they do not expect senior administrators to be in place more than a year or two. There appears to be no evidence of *sustained* conversation about strategic direction or core values beyond a clear commitment to undergraduate teaching. This has resulted in a corresponding lack of clarity and agreement about expectations for faculty (particularly with regard to research), including tenure, promotion, and on-going evaluations of performance. Developing a shared understanding among faculty, administration, and trustees about strategic direction is critical to the future health of AUC. A well-documented AUC strategic direction developed from the ground up with buy-in from all constituents (trustees, administration, faculty, staff, alumni, students) would be a powerful blueprint for AUC governance and would then inform the policies that govern procedures such as the T&P process.

In addition, we emphasize that morale among the faculty with whom we met appears to be low. In our meetings, faculty raised a wide range of concerns, including concerns about frozen salaries, long commutes, and issues related to non-tenure-track (i.e. term contract) faculty. While we acknowledge the importance of these issues and encourage the administration to address the

faculty's concerns about them, they are beyond the scope of our charge, which is clearly focused on T&P processes. We have referred to, and addressed, only those issues that are directly relevant to our charge.

B. Committee responses to questions posed by provost

B.1 In general, does AUC's process of tenure and promotion review meet or fall short of best practice in the U.S.? If it falls short, how should the process be amended or adjusted.

The T&P procedures *as stated* in the Faculty Handbook are aligned with widely recognized good practices in US universities. Where AUC appears to fall short is in implementation of its stated procedures, both in the year in which candidates are reviewed for tenure and promotion and in the apparent lack of ongoing, meaningful mentoring of faculty at all levels.

The integrity of the tenure process is not limited only to the period in which the intensive tenure review takes place. It begins the moment a new faculty member is hired—when the conditions of the appointment are articulated formally in the offer letter and expectations are communicated both formally and informally—and continues throughout the entire pre-tenure probationary period of a faculty member's working life in the institution. The review which results in a definitive recommendation about tenure and promotion is simply the final phase of a 5- or 6-year cumulative process.

Our discussions with faculty and administrators revealed what appears to be an almost complete lack of mentoring of faculty at all levels. While there are no doubt chairs and deans who have been very conscientious in this regard, the overall picture for faculty mentoring is bleak. Faculty report receiving little, if any, feedback in response to their detailed annual reports. The Center for Learning and Teaching is clearly regarded as a resource, but it is not clear how its work is integrated into more comprehensive attempts at mentoring (if they exist).

While our visit was too short to be able to diagnose the reasons for the lack of feedback and mentoring definitively, we conclude that one important cause is the low expectations for department chairs—a situation that is not unique to AUC and which, indeed, is quite common in American universities. Chairing a university department is, without doubt, both the hardest *and* the most important academic administrative responsibility in a university. Department chairs bear the lion's share of responsibility for providing sustained, meaningful feedback to faculty members.

We acknowledge and appreciate the heavy burdens that department chairs bear, and we recognize the special challenges of chairing a university department. There are no other organizations, to our knowledge, in which a person assumes a supervisory role over peers for a defined period and then returns to be one among them. Such a system makes it difficult to set expectations for one's peers (who will, in turn, become each other's chair), to offer critiques of performance or, in some cases, require a faculty member to perform unpleasant tasks. Furthermore, the very qualities that make someone a successful teacher and scholar (clear and sustained focus on a specific discipline or body of work, the ability to work independently and sometimes in isolation for long periods of time) are not those that make good managers or supervisors. It is all the more important, then, for

the deans and provost to set very high expectations for department chairs, to articulate clearly the responsibilities of chairs, to provide the resources needed to do the job well, to reward good performance as a chair and, similarly, to hold chairs accountable for poor performance in their role.

We recommend that faculty and administration develop a clear set of high expectations for department chairs with supporting resources to assist them in providing academic leadership and appropriate mentoring of faculty.

We also recommend three other changes that will help address concerns we discuss below in the section on benchmarks. First, the provost's T&P committee could attempt to obtain additional (new) information about each candidate, such as additional letters from outside reviewers or additional information about teaching effectiveness. While we understand that AUC has difficulty soliciting the letters it receives now at the department-level it could perhaps either reduce the number of required letters at the department level and solicit only a few at the higher level and/or consider paying a small honorarium to compensate reviewers for their time. Additional information about teaching could be class observation by the committee or a confidential memo from the department chair or other senior member of the candidate's department.

Second, we understand that the membership of the current provost-level committee is selected by the provost and that some members have served for upwards of 15 years. We strongly recommend that this practice be reconsidered. Specifically, we recommend that committee members be selected by a faculty vote and that terms be limited.¹ Having a wider range of faculty serve would also help to socialize the norms for tenure across the institution as those faculty members "return" to their departments to mentor junior faculty and to weigh in on subsequent cases.

A final recommendation about which the committee was split—although all agree is worth consideration by the faculty and administration of AUC—is to implement a process, such as that at Santa Clara, where each faculty member at any level of T&P review writes an individual letter about the case and concludes with a vote on a scale of 0 to 5. (See Appendix B.5 for explanation of the voting scale.) Such a system has two advantages: (1) Requiring each faculty member to write an individual letter helps to ensure thoughtful consideration of the case. (2) Recording a vote on a 0-5 scale signifies to the higher level of review the strength of support (or lack thereof) better

¹ At Princeton faculty serve on the analogous committee for one year and are very rarely asked to stand for election for a second term (and even that is after several years since the last service). Faculty serve for only one year because it is an extremely time-consuming assignment that is taken extremely seriously. To ensure that committee members are adequately prepared to decide each case, they are "cold called" on to present each case. This committee is chaired by the dean of faculty (the provost at many institutions) although the president and provost also serve as ex-officio members. Similarly, at Rice, faculty are elected to the university Promotions and Tenure Committee and serve three-year terms that are staggered to ensure there are always experienced members on the committee. The Rice T&P committee is chaired by the provost. The president and provost are allowed two appointments to this committee to provide for needed balance and expertise of different kinds. At Rice, also, committee members are "cold called" on to present each case to ensure all members are adequately prepared. In spite of the exceptionally heavy workload, at both Princeton and Rice it is considered a significant honor to be elected to the committee. In a system of strong shared governance, faculty are eager to serve on such an important committee, even with its very heavy service burden. The Santa Clara system is similar to Rice's except that the president and provost do not make any appointments to the University Tenure and Promotions Committee. However, the president and provost meet with the University committee to discuss their recommendations before making a final decision about the candidate.

than a simple yes or no vote. The vote taken at the department level could still be by secret ballot, while the authors of the individual letters would be known only to higher levels of review. Implementing such a procedure would require very serious discussion among faculty and would need to be founded on a high level of trust that assessments of individual faculty members would remain confidential.

B.2 Is AUC's Faculty Handbook clear, precise and transparent in describing the expectations that faculty seeking tenure and promotion must meet and in describing each step of the tenure and promotion review process? If not, what must be clarified or changed?

Yes, we, as a committee, agree that the Faculty Handbook provides a precise and transparent description of the expectations for tenure and promotion, at least as specific as an institution would want in such a handbook. However, it is not as explicit as it could be on the specific steps of the *process* of review. We make several suggestions below that address these issues.

First, the current practice of “floating tenure” position and a cap of 60% tenure track positions university-wide within AUC as an institution muddies the transparency of the tenure process. Faculty do not actually know if there will be a position available for them, even if they are extremely productive, or not. Other institutions with which we are familiar (such as Harvard University) have moved away from this kind of model specifically because it hurt morale and institutional investment by junior faculty. Rather, the institution should require that departments prepare a departmental needs statement (such as that required in Section 5.3 of the AUC Faculty Handbook) as part of the case for the initial search/hire of a faculty member. With this amendment, once a faculty member is hired into a tenure-track position, it signifies that AUC has already determined that a “departmental needs assessment” has been made and the position will meet that need. Subsequently, when the faculty member eventually comes up for tenure and promotion a few years later, the decision can be focused on determining if the candidate has met the requirements for tenure based on the stated criteria of teaching, service, and research.

Second, the weights given to teaching, service, and research in the tenure decision should reflect the strategic vision of the institution. For example, in Princeton's rules and procedures for faculty it states “In judging and recommending Assistant Professors for advancement in rank or salary, or for further appointment, departments shall make the quality of scholarship and teaching primary considerations and service to the University community an important consideration.” This clearly signals that research and teaching are the primary components; there is also a shared understanding that research should receive a bit more weight than teaching. The current AUC Faculty Handbook also suggests that research and teaching are to be judged about equal which likely contributes to the confusion about the true value of teaching vis-a-vis research at the institution. If AUC is primarily a teaching institution, then teaching should be given more weight in tenure, promotion, and annual salary increases than research.

Third, one aspect of institutional policy that could be part of the Faculty Handbook (although it does not need to be) is a clearly articulated understanding of the responsibilities of the faculty, administration, and Board of Trustees in tenure and promotion decisions. The charter of the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board clearly includes the responsibility to “review and

recommend for approval tenure candidates.” However, the board needs to clarify its own understanding of the meaning of their review process. Is it substantive (i.e., making academic judgments—an understanding that we would not endorse) or formal? Part of the low faculty morale and distrust of the university leadership stems from a view that trustees have “interfered” with the tenure process and are “second-guessing” the expertise of faculty in the academic departments. At most (if not all) US institutions, while the board of trustees officially must approve all appointments and promotions, we have never heard of a case where the board of trustees overturned a decision made by the faculty and senior administration. Of course, a system in which the board does not second-guess the faculty hinges on there being a strong process with an important check at the provost level, but second-guessing faculty will ultimately not prove an effective long-run strategy if the goal is to develop an effective tenure and promotion system that is rooted in a strong system of faculty-shared governance.

Finally, we recommend that the handbook lay out in more detail the *process* for the tenure and promotion evaluation. There should be a comprehensive document that includes a clear timetable, university-wide specific procedures, information about how to handle conflicts of interest, specific guidance on assembling the dossier, etc. Appendix B includes a summary of the process and materials from Santa Clara University that flesh out the specific steps in the process in a way that is quite transparent.

Appendix C includes a template for a department chair’s letter to T&P higher level review committees that was developed collaboratively by the Rice University P&T committee, the Faculty Senate, and Rice department chairs.

B.3 In an academic environment like that at AUC, what can the University reasonably demand of its tenure-track faculty in the way of research?

In order to answer this question properly, the committee would have to know what “an academic environment like that of AUC” actually is—and there appears to be no broadly-shared understanding at this time. It is clear AUC continues to espouse a strong commitment to undergraduate teaching. It is not clear what AUC’s aspirations to becoming a research university mean: does it aspire to become a comprehensive research university? a primarily undergraduate institution that has a well-defined research profile in a limited number of areas? The research that the university can reasonably demand of its tenure-track faculty depends upon knowing what AUC is now, what it aspires to be in the long-run, and how it will get there over time.

AUC has one PhD program in Applied Sciences and Engineering with two tracks: applied sciences including biotechnology, nanotechnology and computer science; and engineering including construction, mechanical, electronics and environmental engineering. PhD programs are by definition research programs, and faculty in these programs should meet conventional expectations for disciplinary research in their respective fields. Without this expectation, the PhD program cannot be sustained. We are mindful, however, of the special challenges that face STEM researchers at AUC. They are generally not eligible for NSF or NIH funding; they do not have access to the small amount of Egyptian government funding available for research; and there is very little corporate or foundation funding available. This means that the major responsibility for

underwriting research is internal, and few universities have the resources to sustain STEM research operations without access to external funding sources. The university needs to continue to explore avenues for securing external funding, and faculty need to continue to apply for external funding for which they are eligible. However, given the costs of science and engineering research, AUC will need to take into consideration the availability of research funding more broadly (or lack thereof) in determining what it can reasonably demand of tenure-track faculty in the way of disciplinary research.

In disciplines and fields in which AUC wishes to develop a research profile of some kind, the faculty need to have serious and realistic discussions about what is possible, the resources that are available, and how to phase in a research operation. In addition, AUC needs to determine in what arena it will assess the impact of its research: national (Egypt), regional (Egypt and Middle East), international, etc.?

For departments and programs that remain focused exclusively on undergraduate teaching, faculty should engage in what we would loosely call research-informed teaching. This means that they are conversant with the disciplinary research in their field and able to bring that research to bear in the classroom; they know the new and emerging directions of research in their fields; they are able to direct research at an undergraduate level and assist students in understanding and using the scholarship in the field; they are able to provide the fundamentals that undergraduates in their fields need in order to be properly prepared to pursue graduate study. In addition, faculty should know and be able to implement the validated pedagogical tools and techniques that are specific to their disciplines.

We recommend that the provost, deans, and department chairs contact counterparts at private institutions that are focused primarily on undergraduate teaching but which also expect engagement with research on some level of their faculty. Some target institutions would include Swarthmore, Bryn Mawr, Williams, Wesleyan, and Davidson.

B.4 Does the University need to establish a more flexible system of appointments for example, one wherein some faculty have a lesser course load but are expected to produce a high level of research in terms of both quality and quantity, while other faculty carry a heavier teaching load with substantially reduced research expectations?

This is actually not a question of the system of appointments *per se*, but rather a question of balancing faculty workload. Note that even in research universities, the standard teaching load differs across schools. At Rice University, for example, the teaching load for research-active tenured and tenure-track faculty in Humanities is 2/2 (on a semester system); in Social Sciences, it is 2/1; in Natural Sciences and Engineering, it is typically 1/1. The load may be adjusted by the dean (or, in some cases, department chair) based on different factors: administrative responsibilities, competitively awarded teaching releases underwritten by a research center, etc. Departments must develop their own understanding of research expectations and their own criteria for making the judgment about whether a faculty member is “research active” or not. Certainly, faculty who are engaged exclusively in teaching and are non-tenure-track should have a teaching load that is appropriate for their position.

It is important to remember, also, that over the course of a career a faculty member's teaching responsibilities as part of their overall faculty workload might change. Some faculty post-tenure may wish to increase their teaching load while winding down their research programs; faculty members may wish to reduce their overall workload (along with a commensurate reduction in salary) when entering into a phased retirement agreement; other unusual circumstances may occur that can be addressed by rebalancing workload among teaching, research, and service commitments.

B.5 How can AUC most effectively evaluate the record of teaching and service submitted by a candidate for tenure or promotion?

Teaching

The most frequently used—and perhaps least reliable—method for assessing teaching has traditionally been aggregated student evaluations. Most universities, professional organizations, and higher education experts now agree that teaching should not be evaluated *solely* by relying on student evaluations. Many universities now require a combination of evaluation methods (with proper attention to the biases inherent in different methods), including review of student evaluations, classroom observation, review of syllabi, innovative teaching methods, curriculum development and perhaps a teaching portfolio.

We recommend that departments and faculty leadership work closely with the Center for Learning and Teaching to develop a set of tools that are appropriate to different disciplines. These tools should be used not only in the final year of evaluation, but as part of developmental reviews that identify both strengths and weaknesses of continuing faculty, that provide opportunities for improvement and growth, and that allow departments to understand the trajectory of a faculty member's professional development as a teacher.

Service

While evaluating teaching is challenging, evaluating service is often vexing. This is particularly true because many universities avow the importance of service while simultaneously devaluing or outright ignoring it when considering raises and advancement. Many universities are downright hypocritical on the issue of service. Unless universities—and AUC shares this problem with many American institutions—take seriously the value of service in its many modes, there will be those who manage to avoid it altogether and those who must pick up the slack for others. Neither end of this spectrum is a good thing for an organization.

Service comes in many modes: to the department, the school, the university, the profession, the larger community. They are all valuable, and some faculty prefer to emphasize some aspects more than others. Service commitments should be thoughtfully adjusted as appropriate not only in response to faculty preferences and talents, but also in consideration of varying circumstances over the course of an individual's working life. Faculty with young children, dealing with aging parents, their own or a relative's illness, for example, may need adjustments at certain times. However, no

faculty member should be able to avoid meaningful service to the university completely or continuously. Nor should any faculty member be allowed to do *only* the type of service that directly benefits his/her professional advancement. Untenured assistant professors, in particular, should be protected from unduly taxing service; senior faculty should not impose heavy, time-consuming tasks on junior faculty to avoid what is sometimes mundane or boring—but necessary—work.

We recommend that faculty and departments develop a document that discusses the range of activities that constitute service responsibilities of faculty members. Such a document should not be overly prescriptive or restrictive and should reflect a broadly shared understanding. An example of a document is included in Appendix C.

Appendix C also includes an example of a more comprehensive rubric for evaluating faculty performance overall.

B.6 What is the most effective way to establish benchmarks for promotion and tenure? How can a school-wide set of benchmarks be established that allows for appropriate differences between disciplines (for example, the publication requirements for tenure in Physics are almost necessarily going to be quite different from publication requirements in, say, History or Comparative Literature) while at the same time permitting a Provost and a Provost's promotion and tenure committee to make rational judgments among and between candidates from different disciplines?

As noted above, the committee's view is that judgments about quality and quantity of scholarship expected for tenure and promotion should be established at the departmental level with appropriate guidance from the deans and provost. This process should form the basis for the "benchmarks" or disciplinary standards upon which tenure and promotion recommendations and decisions by all the appropriate committees will be based. Further, this process would enable faculty who may or may not be experts in a particular scholarly discipline (for example the provost's T&P committee members) to make informed judgments about the scholarship of a T&P candidate.

That said, we note that deans and some faculty report that some departments have developed benchmarks but that they are not consistently applied. Our own relatively brief review of the materials does not provide sufficient evidence to determine whether benchmarks as they currently exist, and as they are applied, are helpful or consistently implemented. This would be a good exercise for a university-wide task force or other committee.

We also heard repeated concern that it is extremely difficult for school-level and provost-level committee members to adjudicate whether a candidate for tenure or promotion has met the stated "benchmarks" or disciplinary standards without being experts in the field of study. We completely understand that this is a challenge, one that is faced at all institutions of higher learning. One challenge for AUC is that there is no new information about the candidates gathered by these higher-level committees by which to judge each case. They are completely reliant on the same information upon which their colleagues in the departments or schools made their decisions. As such, it is even more awkward from the institution's perspective when the higher-level committee reaches a different decision about the case. We have made three recommendations in section B.1 above that may address these concerns.

B.7 Is the establishment of a set of benchmarks for promotion and tenure potentially counter-productive, in the sense that (for example) they could limit the flexibility of a review committee in evaluating an individual's achievements?

Many faculty and administrators believe that introducing or refining current benchmarks will introduce (perhaps guarantee) consistency and objectivity in making complex and important academic judgments. The committee is divided on the value of benchmarks as a tool in the T&P process. However, we all agree that benchmarks without shared understanding of the role of research in a teaching institution that is widely communicated throughout a faculty member's entire engagement with AUC will not solve any of the perceived problems that were communicated to us. AUC first needs to determine what kind of research is valued and desired in an institution that understands its primary mission to be undergraduate education.

B.8 What is the most effective way to structure a post-tenure review process? How frequent should this review be? What are the suitable criteria for such a review?

We were asked to weigh in on the most effective way to review faculty post tenure. The obvious concern is that once a faculty member has been awarded tenure, with a guarantee of employment as long as he or she is fulfilling his/her responsibilities, the faculty member has little incentive to work productively. While we understand and believe this to be a legitimate concern, we also believe that AUC has policies in place to address it, but that the policies have either not been implemented or been implemented inconsistently.

We can understand that a poorly implemented system of tenure can become a potential liability for an institution, particularly from the perspective of those charged with maximizing its impact and effectiveness. And, such a system truly only works to continue to motivate faculty (on all dimensions) in institutions where the faculty and senior administration share an understanding of the mission and where the advantages of tenure are clearly understood to outweigh potential costs. Typically, faculty and administration believe that the benefits of protecting freedom of academic thought (both in research and in the classroom) are critical to a flourishing institution of higher education that is attempting to produce original thought and to educating future generations of (global) citizens, often by encouraging them to challenge their own assumptions about the world. Especially in places where teaching is highly valued and often measured by student evaluation, it is critical to protect faculty from students who may criticize him/her not for the faculty member's pedagogy or thoughtfulness in the classroom, but because the students disagree philosophically or ideologically with the faculty member. In the US we are, for example once again, entering a period where such disagreements can and do erupt, and it is important for the integrity of the higher education enterprise that they be allowed to take place without consequence (that is, when the issue is truly one of philosophical or ideological disagreement and not for a reason that violates rules and policies at the institution, of course). Further, institutions that seek to promote original research, must protect faculty who may be proposing ideas or solutions with which others (perhaps strongly) disagree. Tenure also has the potential to develop a strong community of faculty who are willing to invest in the institution making those faculty much more valuable to their current

institution than to others.

While it can be difficult to dismiss underperforming faculty under a system of tenure, it is not impossible. In fact, it is common for institutions that grant tenure to review the productivity of their faculty regularly, and often annually, as does AUC, at least “on paper.” As is also stipulated in the AUC Faculty Handbook, such reviews often begin with faculty submitting summaries of their research, teaching and service over a period of time (for example, the past two or three calendar or academic years) and then the chair or dean reviews the summary. At some institutions (including AUC), these reviews are (or should be) the basis for salary increases with the largest increases going to the most effective faculty (during the period under consideration) and the smallest going to the least effective. These reviews also allow for adjustments in salary due to extraordinary research, teaching or service, inequities in pay that may have built up over time, or other idiosyncratic differences in pay that need to be addressed. Importantly, at many institutions these reviews – including the chair or dean’s salary recommendations – are then reviewed by a university-wide committee that is led by the senior administration to ensure there is some equity across campus and to serve as an additional “check” on the chairs and deans. To be sure, this is a time-intensive exercise by all parties involved, especially for the chairs (or deans). However, there is really no way to short cut this kind of evaluation, with or without a system of tenure.

Our observation is that short of hiring only faculty on non-renewable fixed-term contracts, there is no alternative system that would ultimately substitute for faculty having to provide some kind of report on their activities and the chair (and/or deans) needing to take the time to seriously review them. (And, one could argue that renewable fixed-term contracts might be even more time-intensive, as the chair and/or deans would need to have very clear, well documented, cause for not renewing a contract, particularly one that had been renewed in the past.) As such, we recommend that the president and provost must consistently – and seriously – enforce what is already required. We suspect this will need to start with better on-boarding and professional development of department chairs so they understand that a serious review of each faculty member is expected of him/her. This evaluation should follow the “benchmarks” or expectations that each department has articulated for its faculty. It would also mean that faculty who do not submit their annual summaries should face consequences, such as a lack of an annual raise, bonus, or other meaningful consequence. Importantly, it also requires that either at the level of the school or at the provost’s level (it is not clear to us that both are necessary), there needs to be a serious review of the chairs’ reports as well.

We also heard, however, that there is some “dead wood,” that some faculty spend an inordinate amount of time on outside activities (such as their own companies and consulting), or they take a job at another institution and go on “unpaid leave” from AUC. That is, there are some faculty that appear to take unabashed advantage of tenure. Our response here is also to point out that the levers to address such violations exist in the Faculty Handbook but are not being applied. For example, the Faculty Handbook has a section on instructional misconduct and it also clearly states that tenure can be terminated if a “faculty member demonstrates incompetence, that is, an inability to fulfill essential duties of his or her appointment.” Between the expectations articulated under instructional misconduct and the expectations for tenure, the university should be able to terminate those faculty who are clearly not even teaching to the minimum standards, particularly over a period of time. We believe the use of this sanction for not fulfilling one’s responsibility (as

opposed to another form of misconduct such as plagiarism or sexual harassment) should only be applied when there has been documented misconduct over a period of time (which the university would have if the annual review process were taken seriously), and it should be employed only when necessary. The Faculty Handbook also currently specifies that faculty cannot spend more than one day per week (during academic terms) on activities outside of the university and requires that faculty request permission to undertake such activities in the first place and then to report them on the Annual Faculty Report. Again, the senior administration should actually enforce this requirement of the Faculty Handbook. As for faculty taking jobs at other institutions while remaining employed by AUC, this is currently prohibited in the Faculty Handbook without the dean's approval. If faculty taking such outside employment has become a problem, then deny such requests. In the US many – if not most – institutions would prohibit a faculty member from taking a job at another institution (even if unpaid at the current one) precisely because it then locks up a faculty slot.

In addition, all institutions that follow US labor law struggle with the lack of a mandatory retirement age. Without an age beyond which an institution can require that faculty retire, some remain working well into their “golden years” which takes up a faculty line and slows the ability of a department to renew itself through new faculty hiring. We see in the Faculty Handbook that the institution is in the process of developing a retirement incentive program. We encourage this development. We also note that often faculty do not retire because they want to remain connected to the institution for which they have worked for (often) decades. As such, a system by which retired faculty can return to teach, perhaps continue to have a (small, shared) office, and more generally engage in the life (but not governance or strategic direction) of the department and university can also help faculty make the often-difficult decision to formally retire. While we understand this is sometimes the practice at AUC, making it more commonly known that retirement does not necessarily mean severing all ties with the community can help mitigate this universally-shared consequence of continuing employment.

As a final note, enforcing these policies in the Faculty Handbook not only requires a faculty and administration that have a shared understanding of the expectations of faculty but also strong department chairs and school deans. It is difficult for an assistant professor, or even associate professor, to have such authority, especially when the peers over whom they must conduct such reviews may eventually be evaluating him or her for promotion. We heard during the course of our visit younger faculty, in particular, saying that they were appointed chair or to other service assignments because the senior faculty did not *want* to take it on. We completely understand that not all talented teachers and researchers make good department chairs, but the Faculty Handbook clearly states that faculty are expected to take on more service once they receive tenure. We would amend this to suggest that the bulk of the important service should be reserved for full faculty. One of the shared expectations that must be enforced from the top should be that senior (meaning full professors) faculty are expected to be the leaders in their departments, schools, and indeed in the university, and that their performance reviews will hinge on their willingness to engage in the life of the institution. Well-run universities are collective enterprises in the sense that the faculty play a large role in governance and as such the university cannot operate without their participation. This needs to become a shared understanding or else the faculty will treat the job as “nine to five” and the result will not be a flourishing academic environment. A system of true shared governance—which the AUC faculty have strongly suggested is lacking—cannot be

instituted or sustained without the willingness of senior faculty to take on academic leadership and administrative roles.

C. Conclusion

AUC is a critical institution in an important part of the world. As such, its preservation as the preeminent institution of higher education in Egypt is a position that must not be taken for granted and should be nurtured. As noted, the institution is also going through a period of transition. Part of the change stems from an attempt to change the standards by which faculty are evaluated for promotion and tenure. While the committee supports the desire to encourage faculty to engage in more impactful research, we also observe that because the institution does not have a shared understanding of its strategic direction in terms of research vis-a-vis teaching, the process of conceiving, designing and properly implementing the required T&P procedures has fallen short. In addition, there appears to be a lack of leadership by department chairs, a problem that is shared by many universities. Setting high expectations for intellectual leadership by chairs coupled with resources to help chairs develop the skills to provide that leadership will play a critical role in ensuring the successful implementation of any strategic vision that AUC develops.

We believe that AUC's existing system of tenure, promotion and annual reviews is basically sound but that it is inconsistently followed by the faculty and the administration. Further, we hypothesize a lack of shared understanding of the university's strategic direction and what it means to achieve it is at the root of this inconsistent execution. As such, we conclude by recommending that the administration make developing a shared vision of the kind and value of research expected of faculty and developing a credible system of shared governance one of its highest priorities. Importantly, we strongly urge the president and board to devote the necessary resources and time to also ensure that these discussions and planning are conducted with broad faculty participation and understood throughout the university; that is, ensure there are adequate resources for tactical implementation of the strategic direction. This will require the president and provost to devote significant time to developing an inclusive process and then socializing the results throughout the university, including with the faculty senate and the faculty at large. If done right, this process will be time-intensive, slow, and costly in terms of administrative time, but ultimately a very worthwhile investment for AUC.