

## University Council Statement

August 29, 2016

Birzeit University remains deeply concerned about the students' forcible closure of campus, which disrupts the academic process by banning students, faculty and staff from entering the university.

These acts are considered undemocratic and taint the democratic atmosphere that the university has strived to promote among students, one reinforced in the Student Council that is comprised of all Palestinian factions.

The University Council calls upon the Student Council to end the forcible closure and join the administration in an open dialogue to end the crisis. The decision that was made to raise tuition fees will only resolve a small portion of the university's financial crisis that has accumulated for the following reasons:

- Staff salaries are tied to a minimum exchange rate of 5.6 NIS per 1 JD, which increases the costs of salaries drastically in certain years, given that the university receives its revenues in Jordanian dinars with no exchange rate compensation.
- The government's contribution to higher education has dwindled significantly over the years.
- Due to the recently signed agreement between the university, all Palestinian universities, and the Workers' Union, staff salaries will increase, causing the university to spend an extra JD1 million in the next five years.
- Some students do not pay their tuition fees.
- The university consistently encourages quality teaching in higher education.