

September 17, 2006

Paul Jankowski
Chair, Committee on Exhibitions and Expression
And Committee Members

Dear Committee Members:

I have read the report you submitted with great attention and have discussed it with President Reinharz and with Paul Jankowski. President Reinharz's letter to me regarding his views of the report, which I share, is attached for your consideration. In this letter, I shall comment on a few additional details of the report that will warrant more review and discussion among the faculty and other constituencies as we move forward.

Let me say at the outset that I am deeply grateful to each of you individually for your willingness to participate on this committee, for the sacrifices you made in undertaking this work during the summer months, and for the seriousness with which you addressed the committee's charge. You performed a great service to the University. Your individual and collective stature as esteemed academic leaders at Brandeis gave assurance to your faculty colleagues and to the administration that a constructive effort would be expended to offer advice to me regarding next steps. You have my thanks for so doing.

I appreciate the report's affirmation of the rights of free expression, and your acknowledgement that such expression must respect the rights of others and be conducted in an atmosphere of civility and mutual restraint. These principles are important in a university environment, albeit difficult to define. The Rights and Responsibilities Handbook provides a basis for such principles, but, as you suggest, warrants continual review and elaboration.

Your report tries to establish a set of guidelines regarding student exhibits and other student expression as appropriate, and crafts a proposed set of procedures for executing such exhibits. You note, however, the lack of basic information—such as the range of places where student exhibits can be mounted and the ambiguity over the governance of such places—that must be resolved.

There are many sound ideas within your proposed guidelines and procedures that will need further discussion, including the recommendation that student exhibits normally have a faculty sponsor. The role and responsibilities of the faculty remain to be determined.

President Reinharz, in his letter to me, proposes the formulation of a policy regarding student exhibits that will be sent to the University Policy Review Committee, and that will be reviewed by the faculty. I concur with his recommendation. Your report provides a useful starting point for this policy development.

I intend to release your report, this letter, and the letter to me from President Reinharz to the faculty in the near future.

I thank the Committee for its careful analysis and for helping the community move forward in protecting the right of expression at Brandeis University.

Sincerely,

Marty Wyngaarden Krauss
Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs