BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING #1 – 2018-2019

MEETING MINUTES

AGENDA

Tuesday, September 4, 2018
12:30 PM – 2:00 PM
Heller-Brown Classroom 163 (Floor 1 by elevator)

❖ Welcome to our 1st of 8 meetings for 2018-2019
(Please see 2018-2019 Senators & meeting schedule, attached)
❖ Report from Senate Council Meeting with Provost & President (topics listed on page 2)
❖ Senator’s Engagement Challenge/Survey of Faculty Priorities & Senator’s Role

Attachments:
❖ Directory of Senators by Division/School
❖ 2018-2019 Schedule of Senate, Faculty, Council & Board Meetings

Upcoming Faculty Meeting
Friday, September 14th, 2PM-3:30PM: Faculty Meeting #1 (Gerstenzang 123)
Topics include, but are not limited to:

- Process and timeline for further considering faculty governance recommendations put forward by the President’s Task Force on Faculty Governance and the Provost’s Policy Review group.
- Process and timeline for considering recommendations from the Senate’s “Dignity at Work Task Force”
- Remote participation in faculty meetings and other governance venues (we will have the opportunity to view a brief educational video prepared at our request by MTS’ Eli Jacobson)
- Provost’s appointment of Parliamentarian and agenda for 1st faculty meeting
- Senate role in the University’s reaccreditation process
- Update on the Independent Investigation of the Athletics Department
- Series of updates on matters important to the faculty:
  - Faculty composition and lists by Schools & Divisions
  - Strategy and Planning Committee, chaired by the President
  - Free Expression Principles
  - Implementation & Evaluation Plan for General Education requirements
  - Teacher Certification Program for PhD students
  - Settlement with Graduate Student Worker Union (hooray – just got news this is done! Congrats, all)
  - Review of Contract Faculty Guidelines (workloads, appointments, promotions and reviews) as part of the policy review process underway

- Annual Senate Survey of Faculty Priorities – to be conducted by the Senate this fall:
  1. What is one thing – your highest priority – that you hope the Senate can address and get done this year?
  2. What kind of information would you like shared at Faculty Meetings?
  3. What kind of influence would you like to have in University governance?

# # #
PRESENT: Susan P. Curnan, Chair, Joseph Assan, Daniel Bergstresser (via phone), Bernadette Brooten, Joel Christensen, Jennifer Cleary, Susan Holcombe, Danielle Igra, Dmitry Kleinbock, Sarah Mead, Kate Moran, Carol Osler, Rajesh Sampath, Raphael Schoenle, Liuba Shrira, Laurence Simon

ABSENT: Jane Ebert, Adrienne Krstansky, Faith Smith

❖ Welcome to our 1st of 8 meetings for 2018-2019

The Chair welcomed the Senators and relayed regrets from the Senators who could not be in attendance.

During the 2018 summer, the Chair distributed a letter to all faculty summarizing the Senate activities and accomplishments from the 2017-2018 academic year. All Senators are encouraged to review the letter posted on the Senate website.

The Chair provided hard copies of the Brandeis University Faculty Senate 2018-2019 picture directory sorted by division, which is available on the Senate website so faculty can easily identify their Senate representatives.

❖ Report from Senate Council Meeting with Provost & President (topics listed on page 2)

• Process and timeline for further considering faculty governance recommendations put forward by the President’s Task Force on Faculty Governance and the Provost’s Policy Review group.

• Process and timeline for considering recommendations from the Senate’s “Dignity at Work Task Force”

President Liebowitz will host a community forum to discuss and review plans and priorities for Faculty governance next steps.

The Chair said that the Senate Council, President and Provost discussed the involvement and sequencing of the Faculty Governance Task Force meetings, Dignity at Work Task Force meetings and collaborations between the two task forces.

The Dignity at Work Task Force will meet with the CFRR (Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities) with the Provost and with BUSAC (Brandeis University Staff Advisory Committee).

The Chair will invite the Faculty Governance Task Force to a Senate meeting to discuss the Task Force recommendations and answer questions.

The Chair invited discussion of the Faculty Governance Task Force summary of recommendations from April 17, 2018 to identify any questions or gaps. Senators described various concerns and discussion points:
One Senator emphasized the importance of framing any faculty governance changes in the context of the mission of the University with regards, in particular, to social justice and equity.

Senators discussed the distinction between the size of the Senate (number of Senators) and the representation of the Senate seats.

Senators asked several broad questions, including: What are structures in place to allow the Senate to remain as a governing body? Can Senate responsibilities be clarified, e.g., if they are assigned a committee, does the Senator need to report to or attend the committee?

One Senate Council member said that the recommendations by the Faculty Governance Task Force will likely be voted on as a block of recommendations, not by line item.

Senators talked about the importance of maintaining seats specifically for contract and part-time faculty and consider proportional representation.

The Chair responded to a question regarding the response rate in Senate elections. The voting response rate is approximately 25% among Faculty overall (as well as by division and by school).

Senators emphasized the need to address diversity in some way when considering what is proportional representation and equity in faculty governance and the need to think carefully and purposefully about how to advance diversity at Brandeis.

- Remote participation in faculty meetings and other governance venues

The Chair invited Senators to discuss Faculty Meeting remote participation. One idea in consideration is restructuring the faculty meetings and voting, allotting meeting time for discussion followed by electronic voting afterward (outside of the meeting time). Other ideas included having less frequent all-faculty meetings, letting each division meet regularly and then the President would host all-faculty meetings once or twice each semester.

Senators raised concerns about meeting less often, which would give Faculty fewer opportunities to come together, potentially reinforcing perceived silos between divisions, schools and departments.

One Senator described a perception that a subset of Faculty at the University participate in governance and others do not get involved beyond their personal teaching load and addressing their responsibilities.

Another Senator described the non-tenure or newer Faculty who have no choice but to take on multiple responsibilities which do not allow much time for participation in faculty governance bodies/meetings.
Addressing the question of the size of the Senate once again, one Senator said that adjusting the number of Senators will not address issues of representation. It would be helpful to have a better structure in place to do so.

One Senator said that until there is a block of time dedicated to Faculty Meetings (and another Senator clarified that this time block should also be for committee meetings and other faculty governance group convenings), all faculty cannot be expected to attend Faculty Meetings.

Senator Holcombe expressed the need for outreach to retired faculty about participation as there has been very little participation among the Emeritae Faculty in year since the Emerita Senate seat was established.

The Chair asked the Senate about having a separate A&S faculty meeting and then have the President host all-faculty forums to convene everyone a few times a year.

In consideration of the idea of remote participation, the Chair raised known procedural issues with requirements related to the process for approving Faculty Meeting minutes, which would directly affect timing of fully informing anyone voting after the meeting who had not attended the meeting.

One Senator suggested increasing the pool of faculty governance participants by providing a list of faculty participation opportunities (committees, task forces, etc.) at the start of the academic year to be followed by a survey of Faculty to gauge interests and willingness to participate.

Another Senator remarked on the topic of remote post-faculty meeting voting, advocating for good documentation of issues (both pros and cons and possibly identifying specific Faculty with positions “for” and “against”) for consideration ahead of remote voting.

One Senator asked the Senate to think of topics and issues that would compel Faculty to attend Faculty Meetings, such as diversity, free expression, climate change, etc, to spark meaningful participation and discourse.

Another Senator noted that the University as a whole often addresses topics with an inward focus (within the University) and it would be beneficial to look outward.

One Senator proposed identifying the overall goal of Faculty Meetings. Is the purpose to get the Faculty engaged in governance? Politics? Furthering the mission of Brandeis? The goal is not simply to get people to attend meetings.

The Chair responded that the goal is to engage the faculty and to have them in attendance.
Several Senators agreed on the importance of expanding the purpose of meetings to be both procedural and with substance, to provide an opportunity to deliberate on issues.

One Senator said that Faculty Meetings seemed to be mainly focused on A&S issues and gave examples of the professional interest faculty have in attending their own department meetings since the information presented in the meeting has direct application to their own work and life.

Another Senator remarked that the size of Brandeis University, relative to much larger schools, provides a unique opportunity to gather all faculty together in one place – though, considering the participation among faculty in meetings, perhaps the school is actually too large to convene all effectively.

One Senator suggested dual purposes of discussing faculty meetings – one is a discussion of issues and the other is a discussion of governance. The Senator proposed that perhaps the discussion on issues could be among all Faculty and the nuts and bolts of governance could be addressed electronically, through remote voting.

One Senator described attending Faculty meetings, particularly when there are Faculty who are upset about something, as joining the room mid-conversation and finding it difficult to understand the matter and to contribute in any way.

Senators suggested some ways to be more inclusive at Faculty meetings, focusing on specific topics/issues, inviting special guests and offering lunch.

From further discussion about a dedicated meeting time for Faculty meetings (i.e., no classes scheduled), Senators described the challenge faced by the University Registrar in scheduling classes if an entire block of time is off limits for courses.

• Provost’s appointment of Parliamentarian and agenda for 1st faculty meeting

The Chair said that the Provost must appoint a Parliamentarian for the fall 2018 semester and asked Senators to be in touch with any candidate suggestions.

❖ Senator’s Engagement Challenge/Survey of Faculty Priorities & Senator’s Role

The Chair offered to invite various representatives to meet with the Senate this academic year, including the three new school Deans, the Co-Chairs of the new BUSAC (Brandeis University Staff Advisory Committee) and chairs of the Faculty Governance Task Force and Dignity at Work Task Force, as well as Student Union representatives, who have expressed interest in meeting with the Senate to learn more about their role and work.
One Senator encouraged the Senate to consider roles the Senate could play to help support Mark Brimhall-Vargas and the growing Diversity, Equity & Inclusion office.

The Chair reported that Mark Brimhall-Vargas will lead the Search Committee for the new Director of the Chaplaincy. Please send any suggestions for qualified candidates to the Chair this week.

Two Senators are running for the President’s Strategy and Planning Committee. The Chair said that Faculty nominations and self-nominations are encouraged at this time.

Senator Brooten continues to work on anti-harassment and bullying policies.

The Chair reported that the independent investigation of the Athletics Department continues and the President will report back to the community soon.

Meeting adjourned at 1:55 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lanni Isenberg.

September 5, 2018