BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING #4 – 2018-2019

MEETING MINUTES

AGENDA

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

12:30 P. M.  Welcome

❖ Discussion with Provost Lisa M. Lynch: Faculty Trends, Reaccreditation
Visit & Report, and Current Events

1:15 P.M.

❖ Discussion: Faculty Governance Legislation and Proposed Amendments for
December 12th Faculty Meeting

2:00 P.M.  ADJOURN

ATTACHMENTS:

➢ Robert’s Rules of Order – Brief Overview
➢ Governance recommendations package excerpts
  • Voters’ Guide – 11.12.18
  • Side-by-Side Handbook Changes – 11.12.18

Please familiarize yourself with all the documents and pay special attention to the side-by-
side document highlighting current Handbook language and the proposed changes.

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

ABSENT: Susan P. Curnan, Adrianne Krstansky, Raphael Schoenle, Faith Smith

GUEST: Provost Lisa M. Lynch

While attendees were seated right at 12:30p to begin the meeting, the discussion did not begin until 12:40pm due to technical difficulties with the phone conference device.

Welcome

Joel Christensen called the meeting to order as Chair of the meeting while Senate Chair Susan Curnan is out of the country on business. The Chair welcomed Provost Lisa Lynch to the meeting.

Discussion with Provost Lisa M. Lynch: Faculty Trends, Reaccreditation Visit & Report, and Current Events

Provost Lynch spoke about a demonstration currently happening in front of the library in support of a new contract for librarians. The Provost said that librarians are under negotiations and she’s hoping for a favorable outcome.

Provost Lynch described faculty trends at Brandeis, noting that there are fewer “per course” hires than in years before, some faculty moving into contract or tenure track positions, and that there are changes in students declaring certain majors, with some majors increasing and some declining in participation.

The Provost also described faculty demographic changes, including the increase in the number of women in full-time faculty positions since 2015 and an increase in the number of Black faculty (with a goal to double the number of Black faculty members by 2020). While there is progress so far, the effort to recruit diverse faculty will require a concerted effort. The Provost is involved in approvals of all faculty hires.

Another trend is the large, and growing, population of retirement-age faculty. The Provost explained that compared to prior years, there is now a better pathway to retirement for full-time tenured faculty than before. She noted that there is NOT the same pathway to retirement for long-term, full-time contract faculty and suggested that there is an opportunity for the Senate to take up this topic.

Action Item: A study of extending Phased Retirement Programs to FTE faculty (currently only available to tenured faculty)

Next, Provost Lynch provided an update on the reaccreditation visit. While there is no report yet, she described the feedback as glowing and said that NECHE will, as per usual, have suggestions for improvement.
Regarding University policies, the Provost said that she and President Liebowitz are working to eliminate login requirements for accessing University policies online with the intention to be more transparent.

Then, the Provost asked if there was any feedback about the Independent Investigators’ Campus Climate Report President Liebowitz distributed on November 29th.

- One Senator asked a question about how proposed task forces will address the values of grad students. Will the structure of the task forces to be created address research and teaching?
  - The Provost said that the aim is to have “one Brandeis.” The task forces are meant to address student living and learning.
  - Teaching is not mentioned in the plan at all because the commitment to pedagogy and training is in the purview of the new Center for Teaching and Learning Director.

- A Senator expressed concern about the Top-Down approach in the strategic plan and said that some are concerned about not addressing the diversification among the staff in the administration’s top offices.
  - The Provost responded that the faculty will remain long after the administrator and that ultimately, the school’s diversity will depend a lot on how the faculty will take on the task of defining the culture and experience of Brandeis.

- The Senate discussed reactions to the investigation report and the process.

- Some Senators expressed concern about the content of the report and others expressed reassurance about the depth and rigor of the investigation process, while another Senator said that some Senators are silent, not out of approval, but because they don’t feel able to say what they want to say.

The Provost said that the university is redrafting policies and procedures on nondiscrimination and sexual harassment.

- Under the Obama administration, there were guidelines to follow.
- The current administration is issuing regulations, which are laws that the University must abide by.

**Action Item:** The Senate will review changes to Title IX made by the Trump Administration.

**Action Items:** The Senate will invite Provost Lunch talk about new policies on explicit prohibition against faculty/student relationships and the new policy on non-fraternization among staff/faculty in supervisory and intradepartmental positions.
One Senator inquired about the status of the Open Comments about the nondiscrimination and sexual harassment policies.

- The Provost said that the working group is working on providing feedback and will look further at the policies in January.

Senator Brooten returned to the topic of faculty retirement. She said that Larry Lewellen, Interim Vice President of Human Resources, is willing to offer retiring faculty more information on Medicare.

Another Senator also followed up with a question about faculty retirement. The Senator asked if faculty or the administration led the changes to the faculty retirement pathway for full-time tenured faculty. The Provost replied that the presentation by Brandeis Alumni was extremely helpful and instructive as retirement matters were considered.

One Senator mentioned that some international students at the Heller School, due to extreme delays with their visas, arrive very late in the semester and are without housing or support services for extended periods of time after arriving at Heller.

- The Provost responded with concern and alarm and said that there are enough beds to accommodate these students in housing and Deans should notify the Provost office about such needs.

- The Senator suggested that the administration consider policies/guidelines on how to track and address international students delayed by visa issues and other areas of support.

- The Provost reiterated that this is a huge issue, and she will be in touch with the Heller Dean and the Senator to follow up.

- Senator Simon provided historical perspective that there used to be a more robust student services staff at Heller, but that it’s been reduced greatly.

- Another Senator added that it would also be helpful to provide some extra support for students coming from economic backgrounds that differ from the mostly middle class community at Brandeis.

One Senator mentioned food insecurity among students that needs to be addressed.

Just before departing the meeting room, knowing the Senate would continue with discussion about the upcoming Faculty Handbook amendments proposed for the December 12th Faculty meeting, the Provost asked the Senate to consider some reasons for keeping the Intellectual Property (IP) Committee separate from the Committee for Rights & Responsibilities (CFRR).

- She said the task and roles of the IP Committee are different than CFRR and said the CRFF are concerned about the proposal to merge, too.
- One Senator pointed out that IP is a university-wide matter, not just Faculty.
Discussion: Faculty Governance Legislation and Proposed Amendments for December 12th Faculty Meeting

The Chair reviewed four Faculty Handbook amendment motion revisions proposed by the Senate Council. The Senate unanimously agreed to certain changes to the proposed motions or approved the motions presented.

They discussed the difference between certain Faculty Handbook committees with elected vs selected members.

There was some discussion about including language to require diversity in representative committees. The Chair responded about the importance of considering that concept, but also not putting an undue burden on the faculty who are People of Color. There was discussion about talking about the underrepresentation of diverse people (in many ways of diversity) among those in power positions.

Senate Council Member Moran will Chair the December 12th Faculty Meeting. She described how the amendments will be presented in upcoming Faculty meetings as 9 separate motions and how voting is set to proceed.

Senator Moran asked the Senate to sit together at the Faculty Meeting.

Senator Brooten read proposed language about the creation of a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) Committee. Senators responded to the language and asked questions about the specific charge of the committee, how it fits in the larger picture of the University as a whole, and what the Committee would review/approve.

- One Senator proposed a review of similar diversity committee efforts, i.e., the Provost Steering Committee, to gain a historical perspective on what has been successful and where there could be improvement.
- Senators agreed it’s essential to get this language into a document, but want to understand stewardship of the environment fits in as well.
- One Senator raised the importance of making sure that all related efforts, committees, and University leaders are aware of each other to ensure efforts are effective and not being duplicated.

Action Item: Senate members should send any suggestions about the Committee and language presented to Senator Brooten.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Lanni Isenberg.

December 7, 2018