BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the 2014-15 Faculty Senate

This meeting was held March 2nd, 2015 from 9:00 – 11:00 in Shapiro Campus Center Room 313.


Conference called in via Blue Jean: Sarita Bhalotra

Absent: Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, Joe Cunningham, William Flesch, Laurence Simon

Approval of Minutes

Minutes of 2.12.2015 were approved via email.

Presidential search issues, faculty involvement

As in previous presidential searches, there will be faculty on the search committee as full voting members. The last search committee had three faculty members; the exact number for this search is still to be confirmed. Senate members will speak to their constituencies about potential candidates for the committee that are respected intellectually on campus, and will work well with the board of trustees.

Liuba Shrira and Sarah Mead (with input compiled via email from the full Senate) will work on crafting an open letter to the Board of Trustees from the Senate outlining essential qualities in an ideal presidential candidate.

IBS Governance Update

In the October 7th meeting, the Senate discussed the creation of a new dean position in IBS and what, if any, the Senate’s role in this appointment should be. Since then IBS has set up a task force to discuss IBS governance issues, including with relevance to the Senate, the potential creation of a new academic position.

The new position in question is technically being created out of the duties of a previous position. The role of senior associate dean – with both administrative and academic authority – became untenable as a position, and the administrative and academic roles were split, with the creation of a senior administrative dean.
In keeping with the other newly created position, the new role being discussed could be a senior academic dean, or, in keeping with other schools’ naming standards, an associate dean. The title is still to be determined, although it is certainly relevant, as the title ultimately determines whether the Senate, by handbook standards, should be involved.

If a position is created, both the establishing and filling of the position will require Senate involvement.

This is all a current projection of what might happen, as the task force is not finished with their assessment yet.

**IBS Climate assessment**

Given the recent emphasis on Title IX compliance, IBS decided to preemptively take stock of their situation, bringing in outside consultation – Mary Childers, former Ombudsperson at Dartmouth College – to examine any existing issues.

She conducted interviews with faculty and senior staff, and then gave a presentation of her findings. Ultimately, she found no real pressing gender issues. She did, however, highlight the pace at which the school had grown, and the failure for governance structures to grow with it, thus necessitating a push now for a governance structure that matches the size of the school.

**Unionization issues, non-tenure faculty counts by school, how non-tenure faculty are used**

The Service Employees International Union (SEIU) is starting the process of organizing a union at Brandeis for all non-tenure faculty; in order to effectively do this, it is necessary to fully understand what are the bounds of this title and how the name is deployed at Brandeis, thus determining who is eligible for union membership under this category.

While this is a crucial question for the union to answer, it is also key in order for the Senate to understand the makeup of its constituencies.

One potential site for such information is through annual filings the university must make every year to the AAU and EEOC listing how many people in each kind of position the university employs. The Senate will also speak to the deans of their respective schools to determine if they have concrete numbers on what types of non-tenure positions exist and how many people are in each type.

**Committee on admissions and financial aid**

While the Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Committee existed previously, it was staffed but not meeting. After the last faculty meeting it was reactivated. The reassertion of this committee gives faculty a hand in reading applications and deciding acceptance for incoming undergraduate students.
The Senate is concerned that committees are not being held accountable for actually meeting. A letter is suggested from the Senate to the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities to ask that they ensure all committees, as outlined in the handbook, are staffed and meeting regularly.

In addition to the concern that a committee as created by the handbook is not meeting, there is concern that the omission of this committee also reflects a larger issue of disenfranchisement at the university, with faculty having little say in the creation of standards for an ideal incoming class.

**Retirement benefits recovery sub-committee report**

No update to report from the committee at this time as they are still trying to obtain requested information from Financial Affairs. An additional push will be made to obtain information as soon as possible.

**Emeritus representation on Senate**

In order to add emeritus representation to the Senate, a handbook revision would need to be voted on. In moving towards this, the voting status of any emeritus member must be determined. Within departments, typically emeritus faculty can come to department meetings but do not have voting privileges; the Senate could model emeritus membership off of this model. There is some concern that having non-voting members in the Senate would lead to difference classes of senators.

Further, any emeritus member would likely be voted on by emeritus faculty.

**Emeritus status requirements**

Before the Senate adds emeritus representation, however, there must be a decision as to who counts as emeritus. It is suggested the Task Force on Senior and Emeriti Faculty determine if a list of criteria already exists for emeritus status conferment. The task force also is encouraged to rewrite the report of September 15, 2014 to include contract faculty.

**Conferring tenure status on long-term contract faculty, Anita Hill**

The Provost would like to confer the title of ‘university professor’ onto Anita Hill, which is complicated by her position outside of the tenure structure. In order to receive the title of university professor, she would first need to be given tenure. Unfortunately, the handbook does not explain how to proceed in this situation. A memo, as posted to the provost’s webpage, details how to proceed with tenure appointments without a national search, but even this does not fully address this particular situation.

The Senate is now being asked to decide how to proceed in this particular case, and also to fix the gap in regulation that has led to the current confusion.
Relevant to this discussion is the following excerpt from the memo:

Appointments in the Tenure Structure without National Searches Guidelines, May 23, 2006

II. The guidelines in this document.

A. Purpose. The guidelines below recognize that it is sometimes in the University’s interest to make appointments in the tenure structure using procedures different from those specified in the Handbook. Consistent with the University’s affirmative action policies, it may be desirable to appoint candidates who are unusually pre-eminent, or to appoint outstanding candidates who would diversify the faculty or the curriculum in significant ways.

These guidelines do not apply to cases where a long-time (Footnote: One who has served two or more years at the time of appointment to the tenure structure) contract faculty member has been recommended for appointment in the tenure structure without a national search. Such cases are further exceptions to established procedures and are governed by separate guidelines, which have yet to be developed. We are asking the Faculty Senate to pursue this process through the working group on tenure.

Evidently, the Senate at the time did not develop guidelines for such instances. The Senate sees this as a lack of regulation; thus, in moving forward, the Senate is neither overriding something existent nor creating a precedent.

Motion called by Sarah Mead:
Recognizing that the Faculty Senate has been asked to resolve the question of how to deal with the second paragraph in the previously mentioned memo, and the fact that this hasn’t yet been done, in this case we recommend ignoring the second paragraph, and we will in due course recommend a handbook revision that is appropriate.

Susan Parish seconded.

The motion was carried, with 10 votes in favor, 0 votes opposed, and 2 abstentions.

New Business – Vice Provost of Research, Search

A search has been launched for a Vice Provost of Research. While this is a national search, an internal hire is also possible, and Senate members are encouraged to talk to colleagues who might be interested.

Meeting adjourned 11:00 AM.