BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the 2013-14 Faculty Senate

This meeting was held April 3, 2014 from 12:00-2:00 in the Shapiro Student Center


Absent: Charles Golden, Susan Parish, Carol Osler

Guests: Dean Susan Birren

Approval of the minutes of February 28, 2014

The minutes of February 28th, 2014 were approved by the Senate.

Possible Change to Reviews in Tenure and Promotion

Dean Birren visited the Senate to discuss the possibility of changes to the committee structure that we use for tenure review and promotion at Brandeis. We and Harvard stand alone in forming individual ad hoc committees, which require outside reviewers, for each case. She reported that this model has become increasingly unsustainable. Many of the top candidates asked to serve on these committees are unavailable, which causes delays in forming these committees and, potentially, compromises the quality of the panel. The resulting delays now routinely position the process in violation of the requirements of the faculty handbook.

The Dean provided a document that compared tenure and promotion processes at other peer institutions. Among those listed, the only other university besides Brandeis that utilized the outside reviewer ad hoc process was Harvard. The only university that did not have a standing committee for these reviews was Wake Forest.

Dean Birren reported that, although she began her investigation convinced of the value of our current model, she has begun to feel differently as she has weighed the pros and cons. She mentioned, in particular, that outside experts carry a lot of weight in the discussions on the ad hoc committee, making the choice of that person especially important. This is problematic when our ability to recruit outside reviewers is so constrained.

Recognizing the sensitivity of this issue, the Dean has requested that the Senate discuss this issue and bring it to the faculty for broader discussion.
The Senate discussed the next steps in the process of reviewing the ad hoc structure and the decision was made to form a faculty committee to review this issue. Tom Pochapsky will chair. William Flesch, Susan Parish and Liuba Shrira have volunteered to serve on this committee.

The question was raised as to whether or not there would be accommodation for tenure-track faculty under the current system. The committee will address this issue.

The documents related to this issue have been posted on the Senate Google page (unet and password required) under the Faculty Senate documents.

**Executive Compensation – status of forthcoming reports**

The Senate has posted the faculty recommendations made to the Board of Trustees on the Senate Google page (unet and password required) under both the Faculty Senate documents as well as an attachment to the Feb. 28th Minutes. The Senate will be sending a letter to Perry Traquina thanking him for his presentation at the last Faculty Meeting. This will be sent jointly by the Senate, University Budget Committee and the Representatives to the Board of Trustees. This letter will be sent to the Faculty as well as to the Justice as an OpEd. Furthermore, the Senate will be sending a charge to the UBC to perform an annual review and report on compensation. The Senate will also continue working on a report that analyzes compensation from 2005-11 as it related to cuts within the university, such as eliminating contributions to retirement and faculty/staff cuts.

**Reports**

- **Budget Committee review of campus-wide pay equity is underway**
  - UBC is reviewing campus wide pay equity, and there will be communication from UBC to let the community know that a report will be forthcoming in the fall.

- **Spring election process, call for nominations**
  - Process for recruiting nominations for Senate, UCC and Representatives to the Board of Trustees will begin soon.

- **Committee formed to review the academic calendar**
  - At the last University Advisory Committee meeting, Kim Godsoe reported on the committee formed to review the academic calendar. There are so many constraints in putting this together. The major push for this review is the desire to add a second study day, but there is also a discussion of increasing holidays within the calendar, such as Good Friday and Sukkot.

- **Efforts of American Studies to regain departmental status**
Ellen Schattschneider and Jeffrey Prottas met with representatives from American Studies to discuss this issue. They have asked the faculty of American Studies to draft a statement for the Senate that outline their argument for the need to return the program to departmental status. Once received this will be reviewed by the Senate.

Honorary Degree Recipient

Members of the Senate raised concern over the choice of Ayaan Hirshi Ali as an honorary degree recipient at this year's commencement. There is concern about how these recipients are chosen, but more pressing is the specific concern over the choosing of this recipient and the effect on the Brandeis Community that recognizing her might have. It was decided that experts in this area from the Senate should meet with President Lawrence to express their concerns. Ulka Anjaria, Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, Daniel Bergstresser and Ellen Schattschneider have agreed to meet with President Lawrence.

The meeting adjourned at 2:00pm.