BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the 2012-13 Faculty Senate
This meeting was held on October 24th, 2012 from 1:00-3:00 in the Shapiro Student Center Room 313.


Absent: Elif Sisli Ciamarra, Matthew Headrick, Harleen Singh

Guest: Dean Lisa Lynch

Report from the Handbook Committee
The Faculty Senate discussed the suggested changes to the Faculty Handbook presented by the Handbook Committee (Ratner, Pochapsky and Friedman.) It was explained that most of the changes are related to adjusting language that applies to The Heller School and The International Business School as an attempt to actually reflect current practices and to bring the schools up to the same standards that apply to Arts and Sciences. One change was to adjust language that referred to the “Dean of Arts and Sciences” to say “appropriate Dean.” This will give the Deans of IBS and Heller equal responsibilities in areas such as hiring and will excuse the Provost from the obligation to attend hiring meetings in these schools. There is additional language relating to allowing members of Heller and IBS to serve on ad hoc committees within the school, as long as the committee is not within their division.

Finally, there is a suggested change to the definition of faculty entitled to rights. The change in language would make it clear that faculty outside of the tenure structure must be at Brandeis a minimum of half-time for a minimum of two semesters before they are entitled to invoke the dispute resolution process.

Ratner will follow up with Michaele Whalen with a request for a written rationale of the changes to distribute to the faculty prior to the November faculty meeting. This will also include the motion that will be presented at the meeting for voting in addition to the full text of the changes.

Strategic Planning Framework
The Faculty Senate members discussed the release of the Strategic Planning Framework and the reactions from their colleagues within their departments and the University. One of the major concerns expressed centered on the timeline for creating a plan for implementation and whether or not there was truly enough time for faculty input. It was stressed that the Provost and the members of the Steering Committee are equally concerned with faculty engagement in the process.

The question was raised as to whether or not the Senate should make a statement regarding the proposed timeline, and the concerns this raises among the faculty. One issue discussed was that, with the number of faculty serving on the Steering Committee and the task forces, that the
tendency of the administration might be to assume that this would serve as signoff by the faculty at-large without allowing adequate response time. However, it was stressed that the deadline is in place because of the need to have a plan approved by the Board of Trustees in order for the President to begin the campaign.

Another concern that was voiced was that many of the ideas represented in the task force reports do not seem to be present in the Framework. Chasalow and Rosenberg confirmed that this is a concern among the members of the Steering Committee as well and that they are addressing this very issue.

The Senate members then attempted to identify concrete ways of obtaining faculty feedback on many of the ideas, particularly those expressed in the task force reports, while still working within the timeline presented by the President. One suggestion was to poll the faculty on their “top three ideas” from the task force report. This was discussed in detail but the consensus was that it might be best to ask those who have spent so much time analyzing the information as members of a task force to present their top choices to the faculty for feedback. A decision was made to ask the chairs of each task force to list their top priorities from their report. They would also be asked to suggest a process and timeline for implementing these priorities, and what this implementation would mean for their department and the university.

The Senate will propose this idea to the Provost, with the expectation that the chairs be given one week to respond. The Senate intends that these responses be shared with the entire faculty.

Discussion with Dean Lisa Lynch

Dean of the Heller School, Lisa Lynch met with the Faculty Senate, as required by the faculty Handbook, to discuss her reappointment process. Dean Lynch shared thoughts with the Senate members about her time at Heller and the accomplishments she witnessed and participated in over the last four years. Chief among those was a concentrated effort to integrate Heller with the rest of the institution and the creation of the HHSP program and the joint degree with Women’s and Gender Studies. She stressed that there are still areas where she would like to integrate further, such as real collaboration with IBS. She also felt it was important as Brandeis moves forward with the Strategic Planning process that Heller be integrated into that plan.

Dean Lynch was asked what she felt had been sacrificed, if anything, in Heller, especially as it relates to graduate study, by the integration and inclusion of more undergraduates and programs. Lynch explained that with the expansion of the Heller facilities they were actually able to double the enrollment of graduate students. Also, the addition of undergraduates into the courses and programs has allowed for more funding from the university, so that not all of the financial support for the programs needed to come from research grants and “soft” money. So instead of a sacrifice, this has become a great source of security for the faculty in the Heller school.

Cindy Thomas, a member of the Heller Faculty, stressed that before Dean Lynch joined the school there had always been a real division between research and teaching faculty, but her support has served to eliminate those divides. Barry Friedman, another Heller faculty member, also added that he felt that other deans of the school, while incredibly successful and supportive of the faculty, tended to be more successful in fundraising within their particular area of interest;
whereas Dean Lynch has developed processes that have allowed every field to flourish across the board, and each division can now stand on its own.

Chasalow asked if these processes were ones that could be translated to the rest of the university. Dean Lynch said that she has tried to make processes very transparent in the Heller school. Such as specifying the criteria by which contract faculty would be evaluated for reappointment. Another example in the hiring process for faculty was that instead of having one diversity representative on a search committee, she had all faculty and senior staff trained to meet the criteria to serve as a diversity rep on a search committee, and created a detailed process with respect to how Heller should be conducting searches.

Meeting adjourned at 3:00pm.