BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the 2012-13 Faculty Senate
This meeting was held on November 12th, 2012 from 10:00-12:00 in the Shapiro Student Center
Room 313.

Present: Eric Chasalow, Joseph Cunningham, Barry Friedman, Charles Golden, Andrew Molinsky,
Carol Osler, Esther Ratner, Liuba Shrira, Harleen Singh, Cindy Thomas, Joseph Wardwell

Absent: Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, Elif Sisli Ciamarra, Matthew Headrick, Marya Levenson, Thomas
Pocahpsky, Fernando Rosenberg, Ellen Schattschneider

Approve Minutes
The Faculty Senate approved the minutes of the October 24th Faculty Senate Meeting.

Payments Between Schools
The Senate discussed the current practice of transferring payments between schools when a
student requests to enroll in a course hosted by another school. (For example, Heller students
taking courses in IBS.) The concern raised to the Senate was that this practice seems to discourage
schools from granting permission to their students to cross-register, and further is counter to
President Lawrence’s idea of a “seamless university.” These payments are simply moved from one
school to another and do not appear to increase any net gain to the university at large. However, it
was mentioned that The Heller School does rely greatly on these transfers, as they factor into their
overall target revenue, and especially in cases such as the offerings provided by Heller in the HHSP
program. It was agreed that in extreme cases, such as a graduate program offering a course entirely
for undergraduates or largely enrolled by undergraduates, that there should be compensation for
this service, but that the issue of the occasional student cross-registering could be examined.

The Senate agreed to request that the Provost examine this policy in light of the Strategic Plan to
determine if there might be a better procedure that could lower the barriers and encourage
collaboration between schools and departments. The Council will consider updating a document
that was drafted to include specific examples from various departments to present to the Provost.

Handbook Amendment on Dispute Resolution
The handbook amendments were brought to the Faculty meeting on November 8th, but the vote on
the third item, Dispute Resolution, was postponed. CFRR and the Council have questioned the
language regarding the proposed amendment. The concern is that the proposed language would
leave some faculty without an explicitly stated grievance procedure. All faculty members currently
have full access to the dispute resolution process, which must ultimately be approved by a vote of
the Board of Trustees. A suggestion was made that this language could be amended to state that
faculty members not yet at Brandeis at least half-time and two semesters would have access to a
dispute resolution process that involves the, Provost, Dean and the Department Chair, but stops
short of being brought to the Board.

One point raised was that anyone hired by the university, regardless of status or length of
employment, has the right to take a dispute to HR. Therefore by drafting this language, would it
imply that this term length was a type of probationary period? Chasalow confirmed that there does
not seem to be any issue with the description of half time/two semesters as a guideline, rather the
concern is in involving upper administration oversight of cases. The Senate agreed that involving
the Board of Trustees in cases of short-term or one semester hires seemed unnecessary, but they were also not satisfied with the dispute process being kept within the department. It was decided that the Senate will make the recommendation that the language read that these hires may have access to the dispute resolution process to the level of the Provost, but not the full process.

**Strategic Planning**

As requested by the Senate, the chairs of the Strategic Planning Task Forces have drafted their list of “top priorities” from the reports, as have the chairs of the school councils. This information has been passed to the Steering Committee. The Committee has been broken down into writing groups and charged with drafting a plan that will serve to bring together the framework, the task force reports and the faculty input that has been received. These groups will start to draft language, with the help of the faculty, and are free to invite people in during this process to consult and assist as this part of the plan is being constructed. The Steering Committee will meet once these sections are drafted, with the goal of producing a drafted plan by December. Chasalow stressed that this process for drafting a strategic plan is very unusual due to the amount of faculty involvement and input. The Senate discussed several topics that seemed integral to the plan.

**A. Engaged, intense, personalized education**

The Strategic Plan is encouraging Brandeis to move in a direction that encourages engagement with undergraduate education in the same way that the faculty engages graduate students. The Senate stated that if this were the case, it would be important that this plan also include a measurement by which this engagement could be evaluated. Since research and publishing are easy standards of evaluation, this shift would make evaluation of faculty members more complicated unless certain criteria were established. This is important for both current faculty and for attracting and retaining new faculty. It was mentioned that teaching used to be a larger part of the promotion and tenure process, rather than simply research, publishing and professional work. This should be examined as well.

It was suggested that this is also a question of identity, a question of how Brandeis wants to talk about its programs and students to a wider community. This would require a reconfiguration of programs across the board to ensure that this promise made to undergraduate students, that they will have this experience of intense engagement in their career at Brandeis, can be fulfilled. It was stressed that this type of teaching would not happen in every class, but should be a part of every program.

This was also mentioned as a useful tool in recruitment, a blend of liberal arts education and some guidance to a career path. Also, that faculty should look at this mandate as an opportunity to provide a more challenging environment for Brandeis students. The suggestion was made that the Steering Committee should examine, if they have not already, the Wabash study that was conducted a few years ago that examined the expectations and experiences of Brandeis students.

**B. Jewish Identity**

There is discussion in the Steering Committee about how best to embrace and further the Jewish identity of Brandeis. While some were concerned that emphasizing the Jewish connection might result in a less diversified student population, others stressed that the principles Brandeis was founded on are based in Judaism and that this should be embraced and celebrated. The Senate agreed that it is the challenge of the Steering Committee to capture what is uniquely Brandeis in the plan in a way that highlights these qualities, our connection to the Jewish community, as well as our commitment to inclusion, debate and academic freedom. The suggestion was made that this
discussion should be included in the plan as a discussion of resources, schools and departments, as opposed to merely a question of identity.

C. Social Justice
There was a sense in the Senate that the Framework used this phrase without any substantive discussion of what the term means at Brandeis. Also, that there is a sense among the students that while there is much discussion of social justice at Brandeis, they have never been given a clear understanding of what this means. It was mentioned that this should be tied to the discussion of Brandeis' Jewish identity from Sachar's idea of Brandeis as a "host" that welcomes people from different faiths and disciplines. The Senate felt strongly that this needed to be more defined in the strategic plan so that we do not run the risk of taking a paternalistic or morally arrogant stance when it comes to the topic of social justice.

In addition, there was a call from the Senate to define more clearly how the social justice mission applies to the classroom. There is a feeling among the faculty that there is a push to have social justice be a part of all classes, even when it might not be exceptionally relevant. A better understanding of social justice within the classroom would assist faculty in this area.

D. Distance Learning
Brandeis is taking the next step by entering into a memorandum of understanding with the company "2U" which will then provide more information, primarily financial, about the potential partnership to allow a decision to be made as to whether or not we move forward with this project. It was stressed that this is not a money-making initiative, rather it is an opportunity to join with a cohort of excellent schools in presenting for-credit classes online. This would require two or three courses from each institution.

Brandeis is already engaged in online learning through the Rabb School, however this is still in a very intense, personalized way. This initiative could be an opportunity to provide introductory courses online, allowing for the more intense small-group work at advanced levels that the strategic plan envisions.

New Business
The Senate would like to examine the role of faculty in development and recruitment. This will be a topic for the spring semester.

Meeting adjourned at 12:00pm