BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Open Meeting of the Faculty Senate January 21, 2010

The Faculty Senate met from 3-5:00pm in the Admissions Conference Room

Present: Bishop, Dibble, Garnick, Herzfeld, Hickey, Mann, Mapps, Meyer, Morrison, Nelson, Parmentier, Troen, von Mering

Absent: Burt, Flesch, Hill, Gittell, Moody

Guests: Andrew Gully

Senate’s Response to the Vision 2020 Process
The Senate members discussed whether to issue a separate statement in response to the establishment of the “Vision 2020” Process that was put forth at the faculty meeting on January 20, 2010. However, the majority of Senators felt that the “Brandeis 2020” committee should be given a chance to come up with a proposal first, and that the Senate meeting minutes could serve as a substitute for a public statement. The concerns expressed by various Senate members were as follows:

- There was a concern that the current timetable with which these recommendations are to be made by the newly reconvened CARS committee to the Board of Trustees will not allow for a forum for faculty input or a meaningful deliberative process.
- There was a call for more precise data in terms of both the current budget gap and the charge to the CARS committee in terms of their recommendations.
- It was stressed that in these recommendations it will be necessary for all committees involved to recognize the need for coordination. The concern here was that there are various committees all charged with addressing their particular area, but not necessarily looking at the overlap between areas. Many felt that there needed to especially be some kind of coordination between these committees to ensure that the inherent and necessary quality of Brandeis remains intact in all recommendations.
- Especially in the areas that involve research, such as the sciences, the concern was expressed that if a program were closed, and then reopened at a later date, that the cost of reopening such a structure would be prohibitive. All agreed it was necessary for the committees to be aware of the nature of those expenses.
- The Senate also felt that a mechanism would need to be established that would address future expansion of programming (the creation of new majors/minors), based on the savings that will result from these recommendations.
- It was suggested to the members of the Senate who are also members of the CARS committee, that the CARS members should reach out to departments, as
they did in the last round of research gathering, to inquire as to whether there might be new information on their programs that needed to be reported since the last inquiry. It was agreed that this suggestion would be taken to the CARS committee.

- Senators expressed the need for a definitive plan that will allow the university, and the individual faculty members and departments, to look toward the future with a clear understanding of the path their respective areas will take.

Committee Updates
The Faculty Senate had agreed last year that they could no longer support the HR policy on harassment. The decision was made to form a committee whose responsibility it would be to bring the HR Harassment Policy and the Faculty Handbook policy into agreement, otherwise future cases would result in a deadlock. It was agreed that both a member of HR and university counsel should join this committee.

Discussion with Andrew Gully
The new Senior Vice President for Communications and External Affairs, Andrew Gully, joined the second half of the meeting. He began with an introduction that included what he sees as his four top priorities at Brandeis.

1) His first priority was to gain full understanding of the Communications Department at Brandeis; the way it is operating currently and the ways in which it has operated in the past.

2) He expressed the need to create a mechanism of internal communication at Brandeis so that faculty and staff are receiving information from a primary source.

3) The third priority is defining and telling the Brandeis story to the community.

4) And finally, undertaking the branding and marketing of Brandeis.

He stressed that he is currently examining how to make the production of marketing materials more convenient, to assure that the communications department is working for all areas of the university.

The question was raised whether Gully had a strategy to handle negative public reaction to potential cuts. Gully expressed that the tactic in these sensitive matters should be, primarily, to communicate more. He said it is necessary to get as much information into the public domain as possible in order to facilitate discussion. A major component of this is the speed with which information is released. It is important to release information quickly so that the university does not get defined by inaccurate information.

The suggestion was made to look at other universities going through the same type of budget constraints, resulting in cuts, to see how their communications efforts have fared. Gully referenced recent stories out of Northeastern and Dartmouth, and the examples set by how their information was released. He stressed that it is important to base the story that we tell the external community on facts, much as Northeastern has done in regards to their decision to drop their football program.
He concluded by saying that he is eager to hear suggestions from faculty, and that no one should hesitate to meet with him and to share any information that could assist him in doing his job of advocating for Brandeis.

The meeting adjourned at 5:00pm