BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Fourth Meeting

The fourth meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m., 4 November 2005, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room. Senators present: Marc Brettler, Bulbul Chakraborty, Jon Chilingerian, William Flesch, Richard Gaskins, Ira Gessel, Jane Hale, Margie Lachman, Harry Mairson, Robert Moody, Leonard Muellner, Richard Parmentier, Laura Quinney, Aida Wong. Senators absent: Steven Cecchetti, Jytte Klausen. Guest: Jehuda Reinharz.

MEETING WITH PRESIDENT REINHARZ

Senate Chair Harry Mairson welcomed President Jehuda Reinharz to the meeting. In advance of the meeting, President Reinharz received a series of questions from the Senate. Those questions are listed below. An informal discussion of many of the questions ensued.

Several Senators were interested in how President Reinharz sees the University’s profile, mission, and reputation. Among their questions were:

• Do you think that the reputation of the University is going to depend more on commitments to its core function – mainly, Arts and Sciences – or on niche programs?

• To what extent do you think Arts and Sciences is at the center of the University, defining its core mission as a liberal arts institution?

• What kind of student is Brandeis trying to attract? Are we attracting such students now? How much has Admissions consulted with faculty about these matters?

• In discussing Brandeis’s institutional goals and mission, the phrase “Service to the Jewish community” appeared in a presentation last year by the Dean of Arts and Sciences to the Board of Trustees, in a penultimate version of the Integrated Plan report to the Board, and in reaccredidation documents given to the University Advisory Council. This phrase clearly means a lot to you. Could you explain what, in principle and in practice, the Faculty and the wider community should understand by it?

Some Senators submitted the following questions in the context of recent budgetary projections and initiatives:

• As the University is poised for a major initiative in the sciences, can it also make a significant commitment towards bolstering support for the humanities, particularly in the presence of a tremendous fundraising and borrowing effort which will create unprecedented amounts of fungible money?

• As alumni classes mature and make more significant contributions to the University, how do you imagine the evolution of the themes which must be emphasized by the development office?

• Given that the capital campaign will be extended (which is good), how will the faculty (individual members, school councils, and the Senate) be involved in choosing the priorities for this extra fundraising? Many of us have a strong feeling that the library’s purchasing power has slipped in the last few years, due to level-funding and the rise of book costs, and of the euro
against the dollar. What is being done to be sure that our library remains a crucial, reasonably funded resource for us, as a research university?

- What fundraising projects are going on for endowed chairs, programs, or buildings for the departments of the humanities?

- What role can faculty members play in developing and cultivating sources of funds in their particular areas?

Budget issues are, of course, of intrinsic interest; a Senator posed the following:

- The projected budget surplus that has been discussed during public discussion of the Integrated Plan is about $20M in seven years, and the current income/expense numbers are around $300M. This projected differential is about 1% per year. Can we depend on predictions made with this accuracy, and will faculty salaries have to be held down to preserve this surplus?

Concern was also expressed about how the Administration functions, about the powers of various administrators, checks on those powers, and about their lengths of service. Much of this concern has to do with Brandeis’s views of tenure and the tenure process.

- What do you think the future of the tenure system is at major research universities like Brandeis over the next ten to twenty years?

- The Senate has been discussing the appointment and promotion process at the University, and how closely these practices follow the communally understood guidelines codified in the Faculty Handbook. Sometimes exigent circumstances compel us towards tough choices. Under such circumstances, what guidance is provided by the Handbook?

Chair Harry Mairson thanked President Reinharz for sharing his perspectives on the University with the Faculty Senate.

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:30pm.