The fourth meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m., 16 November 2006, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room. Senators present: Jon Chilingerian, Seth Fraden, Richard Gaskins, Ira Gessel, David Jacobson, Harry Mairson (Chair), Richard Parmentier, Eugene Sheppard, Govind Sreenivasan, Malcolm Watson, Aida Yuen Wong. Senators absent: Stephen Cecchetti, William Flesch, Leonard Muellner, Laura Quinney, David Rakowski.

NEASC meeting with members of the Senate
The Chair reported that a group of seven Senators (Professors Chilingerian, Fraden, Gessel, Mairson, Muellner, Watson, Wong) met with three members of the NEASC reaccreditation committee: John Sexton (President of New York University and chair of the reaccreditation committee), Nancy Armstrong (Chair, English Department, and Professor of English, Brown University), and Frank Vellacio (Provost and Professor of Chemistry, College of the Holy Cross). Also attending were Norman Dorsen (Professor of Law, New York University, and Counselor to Dr. Sexton), and Barnett Hamberger (Assistant Provost, New York University).

In preparation for this meeting, the Senate representatives met to coordinate their interaction with the reaccreditation committee. The primary message communicated by Senate representatives was that in the next decade, the University should make a significant effort to rebuilding the tenure-track and tenured faculty that atrophied amidst the cuts of the mid- to late 1990s, during a period of financial exigency. Especially in the context of an improved fiscal solvency, it is incumbent upon the University to regain the intellectual infrastructure that it lost. The institution’s commitment to interdisciplinary work, regarded by many as significant, can only rest upon secure foundations within the disciplines, as represented by the departments.

The NEASC members mentioned Dean Jaffe’s multi-year program to bring faculty salaries towards AAU medians, and queried vigorously whether the Senate supported an abrogation of this program in exchange for a larger faculty. The Senate members present responded that the exclusive choice between one or the other of the two was illusory; while it is clear that one financial resource cannot be spent in two places, the growing fiscal solvency of the institution leaves as yet undetermined what the limits of those resources are. The Senate members clearly supported the full realization of ongoing salary equity adjustments.
Senators were also asked in some detail about fair procedure in the preparation of the self-study document for the reaccreditation process. Senators responded that faculty fully and comprehensively had the opportunity to contribute and to be informed. It was emphasized, reiterating discussion that has taken place at Senate meetings over the past year and noted in its minutes, that the self-study document represents a broad set of positions; it is not a master plan or a guideline for implementation, but a departure point for further discussion.

Senate Council meeting with the Provost
The Chair reported on the Council’s meeting with the Provost on October 23. At the last Senate meeting on October 19, Senators concurred that the Council should invite the Provost to work jointly and collaboratively with the Senate, to arrange a forum for faculty discussion of issues of general academic interest, and that one such session be scheduled to follow a spring faculty meeting. In discussion with the Council, the Provost demurred from such a joint collaboration with the Senate, emphasizing that the administrative and faculty governance roles were not compatible for such mutual activity. The Provost offered that modest funding might be made available to the Senate for such a program, should it choose to pursue such a forum or event independently.

At the last Senate meeting, the Senate also concurred that the Chair write to the Provost concerning the administration’s further plans for engaging issues surrounding the removal of the “Voices of Palestine” exhibit, following the report of the Committee on Exhibitions and Public Expressions on Campus, chaired by Professor Paul Jankowski (History), which was publicly distributed on September 25. Of particular interest to the Senate was the underlining of a University goal of fostering intellectual debate, ensuring that the University is a neutral and safe haven for civil controversy, and not compliant circumspection. This letter of inquiry was sent to the Provost on October 20. In meeting with the Council, the Provost said that at present, there is no plan for further discussion of issues emanating from “Voices of Palestine”.

Discussion questions and issues for University Faculty Meetings
Following a successful and informative presentation at the September 7 Faculty Meeting on undergraduate admissions and financial aid, given by Jean Eddy, the Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment, a subsequent presentation is planned by Nancy Winship, the Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement, scheduled for the December 7 Faculty Meeting. The Chair was asked by the administration to recommend questions and issues that would be of particular interest to the Faculty in this latter presentation. In turn, the request was put to the Senators, who were asked to contribute questions, these to be edited and passed back for a
round of collegial criticism before they were forwarded. Possible questions and issues were then discussed, together with related proposals for other issues that deserve discussion at University Faculty Meetings.

A discussion ensued about how decisions are made for the allocation of library resources, a problem complicated by the balancing of traditional library function with an increase in related technology services. One Senator asserted that funds raised ostensibly for supporting the library do not necessarily go to the library, but are used for other purposes. Concern was expressed about how decisions are made regarding what journal subscriptions are ongoing, what paper journals are being archived off-campus, and what journals and books are being supplanted by electronic versions. The Chair was asked to communicate these concerns to the Provost.

Senators agreed that it would be appropriate for the University Curriculum Committee to report to the Faculty Meeting on issues it is addressing, and that the Dean be encouraged to update the Faculty on his academic planning, including retrospectives that he has provided to the Board of Trustees, and to the Senate at its last meeting.

Another issue Senators believed worthy of attention at a Faculty Meeting would be email privacy, particularly relevant during this Justice Brandeis sesquicentennial year. What are the formal policies and common practices that protect email privacy on campus? Appropriate presentations could come from the Office of the General Counsel and from the Office of Information Technology. Professor Gaskins said that the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities is doing some groundwork on this subject, adding that Perry Hanson, Chief Information Officer and Associate Provost for Educational Technology, is working to clarify some of the relevant issues.

Proposal to amend the Faculty Handbook for the inclusion of a Dean of the Graduate School
Professor Richard Gaskins, Chair of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, said that at the December 7 Faculty Meeting, there will be a proposal to amend the Handbook for inclusion of the new position of Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences. Under current Handbook rules, Professor Gregory Freeze (History) was appointed an Associate Dean; the Senate Council has concurred with Dean Jaffe’s proposal to make this position a Deanship. While Handbook language and modification may easily appear cumbersome to the uninitiated, the goal is to represent accurately our University community understandings.

The crux of the problem is the following. While this Dean will have a title like the Dean of Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Heller School, and Dean of the International
Business School, we understand that this Dean does not have the same authoritative status. The reason is that the Dean of the Graduate School reports to the Dean of Arts and Sciences, whose responsibilities range over both undergraduate and graduate functions. In contrast, the other mentioned Deans are the autonomous leaders of their respective Schools, and report to the Provost.

Professor Gaskins submitted to the Senate two proposals for amending the Faculty Handbook’s definition of this new Deanship. The first, a draft initially suggested by the administration, introduced this Deanship in parallel with that of the other Deans. The second places the definition of this new Deanship clearly beneath that of the Dean of Arts and Sciences.

After Senate discussion, it was decided to follow the latter model, with some changes to the language introduced by Professor Gaskins. A motion was made to propose the following as an amendment to the Handbook, replacing Section IV.B.4 (changes appear in italic):

The Dean of Arts and Sciences, reporting to the Provost, has authority over faculty appointment, reappointment, tenure, and promotional processes, as provided for by this Handbook.

Acting in close cooperation with, and under the guidance of the Provost, the Dean has administrative responsibility for graduate and undergraduate education and the research functions of the university in the Arts and Sciences. The Dean is responsible for implementation of academic rules and regulations, academic advising, promotion of academic integrity, graduate admissions and financial aid policies, undergraduate and graduate curricula, faculty staffing and development, research activities, management of academic resources, and oversight of academic departments, interdepartmental programs, and other academic activities in the Arts and Sciences.

a. **The Dean, acting under the authority of the Provost, will appoint a Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, in accordance with the procedures described in this Handbook. The Dean of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences is responsible for oversight of existing graduate academic programs, for graduate program development, for graduate recruitment and admissions, fellowships and financial aid, and for management of GSAS staff.**

b. The Dean, acting under the authority of the Provost, may appoint one or more Associate Deans, in accordance with the procedures described in this Handbook.

c. The Dean, acting under the authority of the Provost, may appoint one or more Assistant Deans.

The motion passed with 9 votes yes, and 1 abstention. The draft language will be brought to the attention of Dean Jaffe.

**Guidelines for promotion to Full Professor**

The Chair brought to the Senate, for general discussion, the issue of fairness and consistency in the guidelines that apply to the promotion of a tenured associate professor to full professor. No action is pending; rather, he simply reported interest
among some administrators in some streamlining of the current process. (At a chairs’s meeting, the Senate Chair reported, Dean Jaffe has made similar observations regarding promotion of contract faculty within the new ranks created for them.) The greatest logistical and time-consuming complications in the current process come from arranging ad hoc meetings with members from outside the University. The Chair contrasted the “up or out” deliberations over promotions to associate professor with tenure (and spoke firmly of support for the ad hoc jury system that is a foundation of these deliberations), with those for promotion to full professor, which are not “up or out”, and consequently have a profoundly different dynamic.

A variety of comments and suggestions were made by Senators: departments should make recommendations to the Dean with some agreed mechanism for regulating fairness (e.g., input from outside members); each school (Arts and Sciences, Heller, and IBS) might have its own promotion board (this model would obviate the small department problem); there is significant inconsistency in the current process, leading to uneven results; some committees are more lenient than others; demoralization within a department is considerable if candidates are turned down. One Senator suggested that inequities in both promotion to associate professor with tenure, and to full professor, are probably equal, but that we are left with the detritus of the latter. A suggestion was made to the Council that a group of Senators be appointed to come up with two or three models for review that would address these issues.

Discussion of staff terminations on campus, and accompanying University publicity

Finally, the Chair brought up a concern not on the distributed agenda for the meeting: the controversy and notoriety that has been a consequence of the firing of a series of longstanding Brandeis staff members. These abrupt terminations, also publicized in a series of recent articles in the *Brandeis Justice* and in the *Boston Globe*, have shaken the confidence of numerous faculty in the fairness of our institution. The concern expressed by the Chair was joined by that of Senate colleagues, with discussion of well-known cases that have provided cause.

The subject was brought up with some hesitancy, because the Senate clearly does not have a formal role with regard to staff appointment under the Faculty Handbook or any other guidelines. Neither has it been apprised of the administration’s side of any of these cases, nor does it envision itself as a likely procedural arbiter in them. Nonetheless, we do have a responsibility to be observers and guardians of the University’s well-being, and the Senate may surely “initiate discussion on any issue relevant to the education and research missions of the university...” (Faculty Handbook, VI.B.2.a) University staff support, in direct and indirect ways, clearly bears on those missions, and thus the Senate accepts its moral charge regarding these morale issues.
As amplified in comments made by members of the Senate, many have observed these unhappy and dramatically abrupt departures as symptomatic of a growing corporatization of institutional behavior at the University, one from which tenured faculty are, thankfully, exempt. Many of the people who were fired gave the greater part of their professional lives to the University and believed in its mission---one such recently departed staff member was an alumnus of the undergraduate and graduate programs, and the parent of a current undergraduate. In the course of doing their jobs, these individuals became, in profound ways, our personal friends and our professionally valued colleagues. Their visible contributions to Brandeis’s welfare are evident to us. Equally visible is the corrosive cruelty of firing people in their mid- and late-fifties, actions for which we are collectively responsible. A consequence of these examples is that staff become less invested, as is increasingly typical in corporate life, and it is not clear to many of us that this is the sort of University we want to have.

A minimal conclusion is that the expression “Brandeis community” becomes devalued. Justice always needs to be tempered with mercy, this a prerequisite for an institutional commitment to social justice. Clearly, the current practices are not contributing to a positive public image of our University. Repairing that public image cannot be simply a matter of public relations, but rather one of exercising greater care in the formal and informal practices with which we treat one another.

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The meeting was adjourned at 5:10 p.m.