BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting 11 December 2007

The sixth meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 11:00 a.m., 11 December 2007, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room. Senators present: Marc Brettler (Chair), William Flesch, Seth Fraden, Ira Gessel, Jody Gittell, David Jacobson, Harry Mairson, Catherine Mann, Robert Moody, Leonard Muellner, Richard Parmentier, David Rakowski, Govind Sreenivasan, Malcolm Watson. Senators absent: Eric Hill, Ilan Troen. Guests: Adam Jaffe, Marty Krauss.

Reappointment of the Provost and Dean of Arts and Sciences
In accordance with the consultative role mandated by the Faculty Handbook concerning the reappointment of the Provost and the Dean of Arts and Sciences, the Faculty Senate met separately today with Provost Marty Krauss and Dean of Arts and Sciences Adam Jaffe. The Provost and the Dean had been asked by the Senate to speak about their past accomplishments, challenges presented during the past four and a half years, objectives for the next phase of their administrative service, and the legacy that they hope to leave behind.

Meeting with Dean of Arts and Sciences Adam Jaffe
The Dean began by saying that he does not view what follows as personal accomplishments; they have all been, he said, the result of joint work between himself, the Provost, the President and the faculty as a whole. The Dean enumerated the following:

- Faculty salary plan, including additional 150K in current year
  - Improved morale
  - Made us more competitive for new hires (extra year on tenure clock also helped)
- $1 million added to Arts and Sciences budget by integrated plan, 200K per year.
- New faculty positions in Classical Islam, Japanese Literature and Culture, South Asian Literature and Culture, Urban Politics, Economics/WGS, Bioinformatics and Quantitative Biology
- Secured significant increase in PhD stipends and addition of 5th year of funding for humanities and social sciences.
- Converted Director of University Writing to tenured position, allowing restructuring of the writing program
- Converted “inappropriate” contract faculty lines to tenure track lines, while adding contract positions where appropriate
- Introduced leaves for contract faculty; fixed the contract faculty “titles” problem, and standardized appointment and promotion procedures for contract faculty
- Norman Fund: research support, research leaves for all tenure track faculty, and “topoff” funds
- Institutionalized Junior Faculty Mentoring
- Created Dean of Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and launched reinvigoration of GSAS
- Secured grant to launch experiential learning initiative
• Began efforts to coordinate academy and admissions/recruiting
• Established trust and credibility with other senior administrators and the Board of Trustees

The Dean then went on to discuss the challenges he has faced:
• Limited resources are the biggest challenge
• Expansive conception of mission
• Tension among multiple unmet needs
• Organizational structure poorly suited to our missions and scale
• Breadth and complexity of Arts and Sciences make it frequently difficult to be simultaneously flexible and perceived to be fair
• Apparent distrust or suspicion of administration in the minds of some faculty

His objectives for next term are:
• Work to address “chilling atmosphere” among faculty
• Replace “muddling through” with faculty deployment to each department and program that is appropriate to programmatic commitments
  o Increase faculty resources
  o Find a way to talk about pruning
• Improve budgeting process
• Find a way to compensate better those who give more (chairs, other service roles, disproportionate advising, experiential learning)
• Continue to strengthen faculty through hiring, mentorship and support for scholarly/creative activity
• Work with faculty, other administrators and students to make Brandeis a more welcoming place for minority students and faculty
• Make Graduate School of Arts and Sciences competitive and more self-sustaining
• Make the Mandel Humanities Center a dynamic hub for multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary activity
• Institutionalize faculty and staff resources for Interdepartmental Programs
• Develop structure to make pedagogical innovation systematic
• Adopt meaningful learning objectives for every major and minor, and begin process to assess how well they are achieved
• Continue to improve competitiveness of faculty salaries
• Increase opportunities for faculty to experience administrative roles
• Work with Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities to finalize guidelines for contract faculty and for Tenure Track/Tenure appointments without a search
• Build faculty trust in administrative decision making
• Refine admissions/marketing message to better exploit academic strength and tailor student body to available faculty resources
• Revise curriculum and requirements to better ensure “numeracy” among our graduates
• Have more fun

The Dean said his desired legacy is:
• A strong faculty with a shared vision of our missions and how to achieve them

The following question and answer period ensued:

Q: Given the constraints of limited resources, how do you reconcile limited resources, priorities, and shared visions?

A: This has to be a cooperative venture. There is a tension and a reluctance among the faculty to talk about these choices, and, at the same time, a reluctance to have a cabal make decisions. It’s a challenge. What I have done, since I failed at generating a big discussion, is to have small discussions. I would like to consider different structures for faculty input with the goal of creating a semi-permanent group that would help with this. Last year I proposed that the School Councils filter requests from departments and give me guidance on priorities. This was not well received. I am interested in pursuing this discussion further.

Q: Given the growth in importance of programs, there is a perceived sense among departments that they are not in control of their destiny, especially concerning hiring.

A: Every faculty member is hired for the University and not for the department. Given that we cannot satisfy all the needs that we have, we try to address the broad needs of the University as much as possible. At the end of the day, however, no one is appointed unless the department approves.

Q: There is general anxiety that the effect (if not the intent) of moving towards the interdisciplinary as a governing principle, gives more authority to the administration. Faculty are trained to judge candidate’s academic credentials.

A: This is purely about resources; interdisciplinary programs need resources. At some point there is a limit. Any appointment comes at the expense of something else. We need to make decisions about departments while trying to satisfy objectives for programs. This needs further discussion.

Q: Chairs are uncertain about when new plans like course banking come into effect.

A: Course banking has been difficult to handle. The Senate and the Dean are in favor; many department chairs are opposed. As part of the process, the Dean needed to talk to the School Councils (though the chairs constitute the Council). The Dean said he will take the issue back to the councils. Until the policy is reviewed by the School Councils, requests will be handled on an ad hoc basis.

Q: There have been complaints about the new University website.

A: I like it.

Q: What does faculty governance mean and what should it mean?
A: What it should mean is that the faculty have an important role to play in making broad policy at a relatively high level, setting priorities for the institution, especially on the academic side. I feel some frustration on some broad priority setting matters. It is difficult to engage faculty in making decisions. The faculty is willing to say what they don’t like, but less willing to engage in decisions that are difficult to make. There are also a lot of administrative decisions that should be made by the administration, for better or worse. I am full time and have a staff who work on these issues. The faculty have full time jobs and no staff. Faculty should be involved in the broad picture.

Q: How can we be more involved in deciding which appointments get made in departments and programs?

A: At a broad level, there could be a faculty group that would be engaged in how we can provide resources that we need, but other decisions must be made by the Dean. There are ways of having more structure for having faculty input into those decisions. The Dean gets requests for long term faculty positions-- three times the number that can be satisfied in one year. (We have 18 authorized searches for this year.) I keep a running list of approximately 50 requests. Some are aspirational; some are to fill gaps. We could consider the intermediate step of having a faculty group to prioritize the requests, but the decision should be made by the Dean.

Departments have their own wish lists and don’t necessarily see the big picture. Most faculty don’t have a sense of the protocol (guidelines) used in making staffing decisions. That leaves a place for paranoia to grow. I applaud the idea of some system that would include greater faculty involvement. It’s easy for some faculty to think that this is just me. There’s a need for transparency.

It’s complicated. I try to juggle how long departments wait to replace vacant positions. For example, we are doing a search this year in musicology. I made the judgment in discussion with the department that you have to cover the renaissance if you have a graduate program in musicology. The Dean has to make the judgment call. There are also idiosyncratic things that go on in setting priorities.

Q: Is there a targeted elimination of certain positions?

A: I’m a realist. I recognize from past experience that it is very difficult to eliminate positions but I feel the discussion of setting priorities is one I would like to engage the faculty in. Clearly this is a very difficult topic. I came at this question of eliminating academic areas with the perspective of trying to optimize multiple academic goals with limited resources. People did not like that approach. Well, then, how do we decide? I’m open to other ways of coming at it. What can be eliminated? If we have a discussion and agree that the criteria that I set up were not the right criteria, we’ll come to a new conclusion. If people want to propose a different set of criteria, I will listen.
Q: What is the current status of tenured appointments in programs? How do you provide programs with resources without hollowing out departments?

A: The Senate Council and I agreed that it could happen, though infrequently, and that the Committee on Rights and Responsibilities must be notified. But strengthening programs does not mean making tenured appointments. There is no current particular plan to make a tenure track appointment to any program, other than the one in Education that initiated the recent discussion.

Q: What do you see as the Committee on Rights and Responsibility’s role in the University’s current disciplinary case? And your role in the case?

A: Rights and Responsibilities sets out guidelines for the implementation of the Handbook and handles the appeals process. I’ve worked with it in reviewing guidelines in Handbook issues, two of which I’ve already mentioned. Its other big role is as an appeals process for faculty who feel that a decision has been made that they don’t like. As to my role in the current disciplinary case, the matter came to me as Dean from the Department Chair, and I consulted the Provost. I was the one handling it and made the decision that it should be handled through a formal Human Resources process. When there was a report from that process, I worked together with Marty to decide what to do about it.

Q: What types of pedagogical innovation do you envision for the future?

A: I would like to have money that I could make available for innovation in the classroom for course development and for exploring new ways of teaching. I have also asked for funds for team teaching. The argument is that the Dean should have a discretionary fund for innovation in the classroom.

Q: Is there anything you have learned during your first term?

A: I learned that putting a proposal on the table is not sufficient. One needs to have multiple consultations with faculty before putting a proposal on the table. The current disciplinary case reveals the need for the revision of our disciplinary process, but because the case is ongoing, the discussion must be deferred.

Q: There have been numerous incidents of faculty governance being ignored over the years. The Rights and Responsibilities Committee is designated to interpret the Handbook and render judgment. The Provost has said that a document like the Handbook can have different interpretations. What happens when the administration disagrees with R&R’s interpretation?

A: These conflicts are not resolved by one body. The by-laws empower the President to run the University. The President appoints the Provost and the Deans to run the University. R&R cannot tell the Provost what to do. It’s as simple as that.
Q: Do you see the Handbook as contractual?

A: It is in a sense a contract, but whether it has been violated is open to interpretation.

Q: If the Senate did not endorse your reappointment, would you still accept it?

A: If I felt the faculty as a whole did not support my reappointment, I would not accept it.

The Chair thanked the Dean for his participation.

Meeting with Provost Marty Krauss
The Provost said that as a member of the Brandeis community for thirty years (as a graduate student, assistant professor, associate professor, full professor, associate dean, and since 2003, provost) she has always enjoyed being involved with University-wide responsibilities and activities as faculty representative to the Board of Trustees and chairing search committees. She said she shares with Senators and the faculty as a whole a commitment to building and sustaining an academic environment that supports the faculty, students, and staff.

The Provost began her discussion of accomplishments by saying that when she started her tenure as Provost in February 2003, there was turmoil within the academy, low faculty morale, the threat of reductions in faculty, and a suspicious Board of Trustees. Since 2003, the academic leadership (all the Deans as well as herself) have experienced a sea change – the renewal of faculty leadership, funding added to the Arts and Sciences budget, new endowments (Norman) for faculty support, new buildings, and new programs.

As Provost, she said, recruitment for key leadership positions has been crucial. She listed the people she has recruited to key positions across the university: Adam Jaffe as Dean of Arts and Sciences, Bruce Magid as Dean of IBS, Lisa Lynch as Dean of Heller, Maria Pellegrini as Vice President for Research, Michael Rush as Director of the Rose Art Museum, Larry Steranka and then Irene Abrams for Office of Technology Licensing.

The Provost said she has strengthened support for faculty and academic programs. A major focus has been to build the necessary infrastructure so that faculty can accomplish their academic goals and curricular programs are strong.

- Significantly upgraded the staffing and funding for Office of Technology and Licensing and Office of Research Administration
- Established the Contract Faculty Committee and oversaw implementation of core recommendations
- Put teeth into Faculty Handbook Committees such as the University Advisory Committee
- Established Provost Conference Funds and other efforts to support faculty initiatives
• Helped launch the Science Complex Renewal Project and associated strategic planning activities
• Involved in all faculty retention packages
• Upgraded support of Office for the Arts
• Coordinate the work of Centers and Institutes that report to me (Ethics, Schusterman, Crown, Schuster, Institute for Informal Jewish Education, Cohen, Steinhardt, Fisher-Bernstein, Sarnat, Mandel, etc.)

The Provost said she manages University wide planning and program activities. The Provost, she said, has to lead core academic/university activities and to respond to emerging issues.

• Led the University through the NEASC (New England Association of Schools and Colleges) re-accreditation process
• Core member of Integrated Planning process
• Established and chair the Provost Diversity Steering Committee
• Established and chair the Committee for the Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
• Managed the merger of the Libraries with Information Technology into Library and Technology Services
• Managing the transformation of Brandeis University National Women’s Committee
• Established the position of Assistant Provost for Graduate Student Affairs
• Manage the Office of the Arts

All of these activities, she said, require strong communication and listening skills and a spirit of collaboration across the University.

• Have enjoyed positive working relationships with the Senate Council for most of my time as Provost
• Established positive relationships with the Board of Trustees for academic initiatives
• Established positive relationships with senior administration
• I continuously represent the University with external groups

The challenges of the last four and a half years, the Provost said, include:

• Overcoming significant morale problems within the faculty
• Advocating for academic priorities in an initially turbulent environment
• Recruitment of academic leadership
• Rebuilding the research enterprise
• Establishment of positive relationships with the Board of Trustees and senior administration
• Seizing opportunities for new initiatives (Office of the Arts, Office of Global Affairs, graduate student support, Diversity Committee, Contract Faculty Committee)
• Managing re-accreditation process
• Confronting the challenge of assessment of student learning outcomes
• Integrated Planning process
• BUNWC
• Relations with the Faculty Senate

Objectives for the next four years:
• See Office of Global Affairs be successful in strategic initiatives
• Continue to invest in faculty research opportunities
• Establish a well functioning Office of Assessment of Student Learning
• Help new Deans of IBS and Heller be successful
• Continue to focus on diversity issues in recruitment of students and faculty, handling difficult classroom discussions, and keeping a focus on the importance of diversity issues in all academic programs
• Build strong graduate programs across the academy that capitalize on our strengths and synergies
• Ensure that the research support for all academic units is strong and supportive of faculty efforts
• Continue to represent academic priorities with key internal and external constituencies (senior administrators, Board of Trustees, donors, etc.)

The Provost said the legacy she hopes for is:

• That the faculty feels optimistic about the future
• That the three Deans will each have taken their Schools to a different level
• That intellectual connections among programs across the Schools will be enhanced and enriching to students and faculty
• That the next Provost starts from a position of strength with respect to academic priorities

The following question and answer period ensued:

Q: There is tension between the core vision of the University as a whole and the proliferation of centers and institutes which promote individual interests. Additionally, the budget is not transparent, making it difficult to determine how budgets are allocated.

A: Centers arise as a result of fundraising by the President. Centers need to contribute to the University core. For example, the Tauber Center gives $20,000 annually to the library and hires students. If a University is healthy, it grows.

Q: In the midst of disagreements with the Senate and the Rights and Responsibilities Committee, there has been a chilling of the atmosphere. What have you learned?

A: I want to repair the chilled atmosphere, particularly in the area of faculty concerns.

Q: What’s the role of Rights and Responsibilities in University governance? The Dean says, “It’s just five people.”
A: The Rights and Responsibilities Committee is charged with interpreting the Handbook. This doesn’t mean the Provost has to agree with their interpretation of the Handbook. Many opinions and issues expressed involve legal issues that cannot be ignored. The Provost sometimes cannot agree with the interpretation of the Handbook and has to make an informed judgment call.

Q: Who has the authority to interpret the Handbook?

A: Sometimes there’s an honest difference of opinion. The Handbook reading has to follow the law. The Rights and Responsibilities Committee may have a view that is not consistent with state and federal laws.

Q: Who decides if your interpretation of the Handbook is legal?

A: Internal and external legal counsel. With their advice, the Provost’s responsibility is to make a judgment.

Q: There have been several impasses with R&R. The administration has contravened the Handbook. What’s the point of having a Handbook?

A: For a dispute resolution, ultimately the decision goes to the higher administration.

Q: Can you give an example of when R&R disagreed with the Provost and the Provost changed course and followed the R&R decision?

A: Early on as Provost, I made a decision to allow a tenured position for a current faculty member (OTS) without a national search, which led to a revision of the Handbook so that this could not reoccur.

Q: In the future how do you see a way of avoiding these disagreements – this chilling of the atmosphere?

A: By meeting with the Senate Council monthly. Through communication and regular contact, I will let the Senate know early on when there’s an issue.

Q: With the current harassment and discrimination case, how would you handle it differently?

A: I would have called the Senate Chair.

Q: What is your vision for the next four years? How do you view the Provost’s position: as “managing” or “visioning”? What new things do you envision?

A: I manage a lot of things; i.e., giving people permission to do what they want to do, unleashing their energy. As a legacy I like to build—e.g., Office of Global Affairs. I am
committed to the President’s concept of a connected university and how the assets of the Heller School and IBS, faculty and resources, can be brought to bear on the School of Arts and Sciences.

Q: The new website says Brandeis stands for service to the Jewish community and American Zionism. What does Jewish service mean for the faculty, the departments, and the centers?

A: I was not involved in constructing the new website, and have not looked at it in detail. Service to the Jewish community refers to many of the academic programs and historic centers of the University. The President reconnects with the Jewish community by founding centers. The service is in the centers.

Q: How do the centers connect to the faculty at large?

A: The faculty of the Cohen Center and the Steinhardt Institute teach in academic programs.

Q: Assessment of student learning: how will it work?

A: First, we have to establish the ability at the department level to know what needs to be learned and how to measure it. Secondly, we must have overarching goals at the University that can be tracked, such as writing and oral skills. I understand the trepidation of the faculty in this matter. The Provost must respond to a mandate by the NEASC in this regard, and I have convened a committee that will respond.

Q: I am concerned about the involvement of the administration in assigning grades. Grades should not be appealed to the administration.

A: I agree that grading is a faculty judgment.

Q: Faculty in IBS don’t care about Handbook issues. How can synergy between the different schools be achieved if there is such a wide cultural divide between IBS and Arts and Sciences?

A: Heller and IBS used to be separate units of the University. Over the past five years there has been more interaction with Arts and Sciences on undergraduate issues. My impression is that the University is growing and being enriched.

Q: In reference to the website (specifically, “The more one ponders this mission, the clearer becomes the match between Brandeis University and the man for whom it is named – Louis Dembitz Brandeis, the first Jewish member of the U.S. Supreme Court and an advocate of Jewish dignity, American Zionism and social justice…”), at the last Board of Trustees meeting, the Board Chair said, “We support Israel.” Does this mean that the University mission includes advocacy of Zionism?
A: No.

One Senator commented that the faculty should have a role in the content and design of
the University website.

Q: Library and Technology Services falls under the domain of the Provost. The library
is falling apart – what do you plan to do to alleviate this?

A: We have had a capital analysis which concluded that $50 million is needed to
upgrade the library, 70% of which would be necessary to bring it up to code and other
infrastructure repairs. Now that we know what is needed, we are working on raising
funds to bring it to fruition.

One Senator added that many faculty feel the Provost should be an advocate for a new
library.

The Chair thanked the Provost for her participation.

An extensive conversation of the Senate followed. As a result of this discussion, the
Senate Council was asked to write a letter informing the President of the Senate’s
recommendation to reappoint the Provost, and to write a letter informing the Provost of
its recommendation to reappoint the Dean. The Council was also asked to send copies of
the reappointment letters to the faculty at large.

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The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 p.m.