

Standard Eleven: Integrity

Overview

Brandeis is deeply committed to upholding the highest ethical standards, and the University has set forth in writing the policies and codes that guide its activities. Brandeis is diligent in updating and observing these policies, and it takes systematic steps to educate its community about the policies and institutional expectations regarding them.

Description

University Policies and Principles

All University policies of general applicability are reviewed and approved by the President and the University Policy Review Committee (UPRC). The UPRC is chaired by the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and includes the Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs, the Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment, and the General Counsel. The Vice President for Financial Affairs and University Treasurer and the Vice President for Human Resources/Employee Relations serve as staff to the UPRC. The UPRC meets eight to ten times during the academic year to review revised policies and to supervise the creation of new policies.

The Business Conduct Policy (BCP) was introduced in its current form in October 2003, and was reissued in a revised and updated version in July 2005. The BCP applies to all Brandeis community members, including faculty, staff, students, and volunteers. The BCP includes 15 policies or policy statements. Most of them predate the introduction of the BCP, and have been compiled for convenient and practical guidance. It is available on the University's website.⁹⁵

After it was introduced, the BCP was distributed to employees at each of the Open Forums hosted by the Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer. A comprehensive training program for University employees on the BCP began in the fall of 2005. Of particular significance are the following:

- The Confidential Complaint Policy is intended to allow any member of the Brandeis community to register a complaint about internal misconduct or mismanagement—through an anonymous hotline if necessary. This “whistle-blower” mechanism is designed to ensure that all Brandeis faculty, staff, students, and others feel that they may communicate their concerns to the University on a good faith basis without fear of reprisal.
- The Confidentiality Policy is in place to ensure that personal information about students, faculty, and staff—together with proprietary University information—is treated with the utmost care and sensitivity to privacy rights.

⁹⁵ http://www.brandeis.edu/evpcoo/documents/Business_Conduct_Policy_revised_2005.pdf.

- Under the Conflict of Interest Policy, Brandeis employees in influential positions must make an annual disclosure of any business relationships that they and their immediate family members have with the University. These employees include all senior officers, financial and procurement personnel, department chairs, and principal investigators on sponsored research grants. Members of the Board of Trustees must also make annual conflict of interest disclosures, as specified in the Board's newly adopted Conflict of Interest Policy for Trustees, Officers and Committee Members, and the Investment Conflict of Interest Policy.
- The Copyright Infringement Policy alerts the Brandeis community to the University's adherence to all federal and state laws concerning copyrighted materials. In addition, the Intellectual Property Policy sets forth the University's rules on the ownership of intellectual property by Brandeis inventors.
- The Employee and Contractor Employee Statement of Principles reflects the University's commitment to fair treatment of all of its employees, as well as those contractor employees working on the Brandeis campus. The Fair Vendor Relations Policy is intended to ensure that the University's suppliers and vendors are treated appropriately and equitably.
- Under the University's Misconduct in Research Policy, allegations of misconduct are handled in a manner that is respectful of the rights of the accused researcher and the integrity of the research. This policy was reviewed and approved in October 2004 by the Office of Research Integrity of the United States Department of Health and Human Services.

In addition, the University has adopted grievance procedures for its faculty, staff and students, which apply in a number of different contexts.

Faculty and Students

In 1948, founding President Abram Sachar described Brandeis's pursuit of excellence in his statement that the institution should be "one of quality, where the integrity of learning, of research, of writing, will not be compromised." Today, the University relies on various policies and handbooks for both faculty and students to ensure that this mission remains fulfilled.

The *Faculty Handbook* is drafted by the Brandeis faculty and approved by the President and the Board of Trustees. The latest version was adopted in 2001, with later amendments, and can be found in the team room and online.⁹⁶

Selected excerpts appear below:

- *"The rights of individual faculty members include, but are not necessarily limited to...academic freedom. The university affirms and protects the full freedom of scholarly and intellectual inquiry and expression of all faculty in the fulfillment of*

⁹⁶ http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/provost/HB_REV_052104.pdf.

their university responsibilities, including teaching, advising, discussion, research, publication, and creative work, as well as other scholarly activities. When a member of the faculty speaks or writes in public, other than as a representative of the university, he or she is free from institutional restraints.” (Section III.C.1.a)

- *“Faculty have the right to fair and equitable treatment in the application of University policies and decisions, including recognition that the proportions of time and energy devoted to teaching, advising, research, administration, and other responsibilities may vary from individual to individual, and for the same individual over time.” (Section III.C.1.c) Further, “faculty are expected to be fair, equitable and civil toward all members of the University community, including faculty, students, administrators, staff, and others.” (Section III.C.2.h.i)*

In accordance with the *Faculty Handbook*, the Brandeis faculty meets periodically in the Faculty Meeting to consider matters affecting the faculty, the curriculum, and the University as a whole. The *Faculty Handbook* also establishes several faculty bodies, including the Faculty Senate, which is responsible for representation of the faculty generally, and the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, which engages in interpretation of the *Faculty Handbook* and in dispute resolution procedures. These committees meet regularly and are dedicated to preserving the rights and fair treatment of all faculty members at Brandeis. Section VII of the *Faculty Handbook* contains several types of dispute resolution procedures for faculty members, from salary grievances to suspension and dismissal; Section V addresses appeals of the denial of tenure.

The Brandeis University Bulletin, distributed by the University Registrar, provides academic information and regulations that apply to faculty, students, and all programs offered and courses taught at the University. It includes notice of the University’s policy regarding students’ rights, in accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act.

Rights and Responsibilities, the University’s code of student conduct, applies to all undergraduate and graduate students, and is intended to give students general notice of community standards. It contains policies and procedures, including University policies, the Student Conduct System, and Community Standards of Behavior, the latter including expectations with respect to academic integrity.

Instructional and Enrichment Activities

Brandeis regularly holds lectures and performances on campus, along with conferences, workshops and other events. Every public event is sponsored by a department, or school, or some other formal entity within the University, and thus has the approval of the head of that unit. Events sponsored by student organizations require prior notification of the name of any outside speaker(s). In general, the University welcomes and encourages lively and diverse programming on campus, and seeks to minimize bureaucratic obstacles to this, while still maintaining responsibility for events that occur on its campus and in its name.

Transparency

Brandeis undertakes a number of activities designed to inform and update its campus and the wider Brandeis community on the status of the University. For example:

Community meetings. Every year, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer schedules several informational meetings for members of the Brandeis community. In these meetings, the EVP/COO and his staff provide updates on financial management, investment performance, budget issues, capital projects, and other matters affecting University employees. In addition, the University has sponsored a series of community meetings by selected University offices, in which senior officials describe the functions and goals of their offices to interested community members.

Newsletters and Bulletins. Twice a year, the President sends a comprehensive letter to all Brandeis alumni /ae and friends about developments and events on the campus. In addition, the Office of the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer periodically distributes newsletters that describe in detail the University's plans and programs with respect to capital projects, budgets and investments.

Charter and Authorization

Brandeis inherited its charter from a predecessor institution, the Trustees of Middlesex University, effective March 13, 1947. The University's Bylaws govern the membership and functions of the Board of Trustees. The Bylaws are regularly reviewed and updated in view of new legal guidance and best practices. They were most recently amended in the spring of 2006. The University's charter authorizes it to grant all of the degrees it awards. Brandeis is registered or otherwise authorized to operate in those state jurisdictions in which it conducts substantial activities, including Massachusetts, New York, Florida, and California.⁹⁷

Diversity and Non-Discrimination

Brandeis is committed to providing its students, faculty, and staff with an environment conducive to learning and working, in which all people are treated with respect and dignity. The Equal Employment Opportunity, Affirmative Action, Non-Discrimination and Harassment Summary Statement is included in the University's Business Conduct Policy; the University's Diversity Statement can be found online.⁹⁸

Appraisal

In recent years, the University has made great progress in designing policies, procedures and training programs to ensure that all University activities are carried out with integrity and in an ethical manner. The University Policy

⁹⁷ The Charter and Bylaws are available in the team room.

⁹⁸ See <http://www.brandeis.edu/departments/provost/diversity/>.

Review Committee was formed to provide an orderly mechanism for review and development of important policies affecting all areas of the University. The experience gained through comprehensive review and evaluation of widely disparate academic and business policies has given the senior administration greater insight into the day-to-day management of the University's affairs. The University has engaged in a number of employment and other training initiatives in the last five years and has experienced very low levels of litigation during that time. In addition, an audit conducted by the Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs in 2002 resulted in no significant findings.

Faculty responsibility for assessing the effectiveness and integrity of faculty procedures lies with the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities, working with the Faculty Senate. The Committee reviews its own adjudicatory functions each year in a confidential report to the Faculty Senate. The Committee also assesses the implementation of faculty rules regarding tenure decisions and appointments of contract faculty, by reviewing all administrative guidelines drafted by the academic administration.

Projection

The University works continuously to maintain and, where possible, to improve upon its high ethical standards in its dealings with students, faculty, and staff with a goal of surpassing those standards already established for non-profit and academic institutions. The regulatory climate—both nationally and in Massachusetts—has impelled Brandeis to review and incorporate several best practices contained in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and pending Massachusetts charitable governance legislation. In addition, Brandeis continuously evaluates its policies and procedures for their demonstrated effectiveness in promoting ethical standards and integrity. The University will continue to review and update its policies and procedures and provide ongoing training to the Brandeis community.

Institutional Effectiveness

Brandeis achieves institutional integrity by employing a diligent and experienced legal staff, by staying apprised of all relevant legal issues and reformations, by seeking advice of outside legal counsel when necessary or appropriate, and by consulting with various internal groups, including relevant faculty and administration. The University is diligent in creating, updating and following sound, comprehensive policies, procedures, and ethical standards that foster a high level of integrity. All University policies of general applicability are reviewed and approved by the President and the University Policy Review Committee (UPRC). The UPRC meets eight to ten times during the academic year to review revised policies and supervise the creation of new policies. The University also relies on various policies and handbooks for students and faculty to ensure that its mission remains fulfilled. The Brandeis faculty meets regularly to consider matters affecting the faculty, the curriculum, and the University as a whole. In addition, Brandeis undertakes a number of activities to inform its campus and the wider Brandeis community about the status of the University, including community meetings and the circulation of newsletters and bulletins describing campus developments and events.