

Standard Five:

Faculty

Teaching and Advising; Scholarship, Research, and Creative Activity

Overview

As a liberal arts research university, Brandeis attracts and maintains a faculty of distinguished scholars, scientists, and creative artists, united by a passionate commitment to higher education and to the creation of new knowledge and understanding. They are complemented, in the professional programs, by accomplished practitioners. Brandeis has worked to support its faculty through new investments in research opportunities, teaching facilities, and technological resources, and is in the midst of a systematic salary improvement plan that will bring faculty salaries to the AAU median by rank and discipline. Faculty members continue to be the architects of new, interdisciplinary undergraduate and graduate programs that capitalize on the University's intellectual strengths. The faculty exercises leadership in academic appointments, tenure and promotion decisions, in curriculum, and in academic policy, and has an important advisory role in other aspects of the University.

Description

The professorial structure at Brandeis encompasses the usual ranks of assistant, associate, and full professor. The title of University Professor is awarded to faculty of surpassing eminence whose work cuts across disciplinary boundaries. Outside the tenure structure, there are a variety of categories—research professor, professor of the practice, visiting faculty, adjunct faculty, in-residence faculty (e.g., artist-in-residence), lecturer, and professor—each with two or more ranks (except for “in-residence” faculty). An *ad hoc* Committee on Contract Faculty issued a report in the spring of 2005 on the status of faculty outside the tenure structure, and, over the course of the 2005-06 academic year, Brandeis reviewed and adopted most of the recommendations.

The full-time faculty numbers 344*, up from 317 ten years ago. Of this total, 203 are tenured, 45 on the tenure track, and the remaining 95 are contract faculty. The growth of the faculty has occurred among contract faculty. The number of tenured and tenure-track faculty dipped in the first half of the past decade and then rose over the second half of the decade to a number slightly below that of ten years ago.⁵³ Eighty-eight percent (302) of the full-time faculty is in Arts and Sciences, another eight percent (27) in the Heller School, and four percent (14) in IBS. The tenure system predominates in Arts and Sciences, with 77 percent of the full-time faculty tenured or on the tenure track. In the Heller School, the numbers are reversed, with 74 percent of the faculty serving as contract faculty. In IBS, it is more evenly divided, with 58 percent of the faculty tenured or on the tenure track. The University also employs 130 part-time faculty members (excluding the Division of Graduate Professional Studies in the Rabb School), including 95 in Arts and Sciences, 26 in the Heller School, and nine in IBS.

* There is one additional full-time faculty member at the Rabb School.

⁵³ See Appendix 5A.

Initial appointments to the full-time professorial ranks (tenured, tenure-track, and contract) are made on the basis of an open, national search. Search committees composed of faculty from the relevant department(s) or School conduct the search and make recommendations to the appropriate dean or the Provost. The Board of Trustees ultimately approves all faculty appointments. Searches are governed by fair search procedures established by the Office of Human Resources, and each search includes a diversity representative from outside the hiring department, with specific responsibility for ensuring broad outreach and fair evaluation of all candidates. Most new appointments are at the junior level—in general, Brandeis seeks to find and promote promising newly-trained scholars, building from within rather than recruiting established “stars.” Initial appointments are generally for a period of three years.

The Dean of Arts and Sciences has initiated a systematic mentoring program for junior faculty. Each new faculty member (on the tenure track) is assigned a mentor from among the senior faculty in his or her department. The mentor meets regularly with the new faculty member in the first year, with the expectation that the mentoring relationship will continue throughout the junior colleague’s years on the tenure track. The mentor is a source of information and guidance with regard to teaching, scholarship, and service, and also helps the new faculty member to make connections with other faculty, students, and administrators.⁵⁴ The department chair is responsible for selecting mentors and ensuring that the mentoring relationship is established, and is also a further source of support and advice for junior faculty.⁵⁵

Faculty within the tenure structure are appointed, promoted, and granted tenure on the basis of their teaching, scholarly or creative accomplishments, and service to the University and their profession. Some or all of these considerations also enter into the appointment, re-appointment and promotion of faculty outside the tenure system, with differing expectations set for different positions. A rigorous system of peer review for re-appointment, promotion and tenure, including external evaluations in the cases of promotion and tenure, ensures high standards of research, scholarship, and creative work. A University-wide system of course evaluations by students provides regular feedback to faculty on the quality of their teaching, as well as useful evidence for assessing teaching when evaluating faculty members’ performance. Annual salary increases for faculty are based on individual written evaluations, prepared by the appropriate department chair and reviewed by the appropriate dean and the Provost. Evaluations address the three areas of teaching, scholarly or creative accomplishments, and service.

The normal teaching load for full-time faculty is two courses per semester, with some variation among departments and individuals. Tenured faculty members are eligible for sabbatical leave after every twelve semesters of teaching. As of the 2005-06 academic year, long-term contract faculty in Arts and Sciences are also eligible for paid leave, and new tenure-track faculty members are entitled to

⁵⁴ See Appendix 5B.

⁵⁵ See Appendix 5C.

a paid research leave for one semester in their fourth or fifth year in rank. Faculty members can also apply for up to two consecutive years of unpaid leave of absence to pursue professional interests.

Over the past five years, new resources have been devoted to supporting the research and scholarship of the faculty. The Tomberg Fund, for example, provides research support to tenure-track faculty in the humanities, social sciences and creative arts. Faculty in these areas can also apply for awards from the Norman Funds: small awards, announced twice a year, to support ongoing research and creative projects; a large award, given annually, to support new directions in research and creative work; and a salary “top-off” to enable faculty to accept outside fellowships for an unpaid leave of absence. Funds are also available to pay for travel to professional conferences. Expenditures for these purposes totaled \$535,000 this past year, an increase of over 100 percent from the preceding year, as the recently established Norman Fund became fully operative.

Foundation support is aggressively sought to provide new opportunities for faculty and curriculum development, and collaborative activities. A four-year grant from Atlantic Philanthropies supported a Consilience Seminar that brought together faculty from across the departments to explore the challenge of interdisciplinary study, globalization, and the “crisis in the humanities.” Participating faculty members received course relief or a stipend. The Mellon Foundation provided generous support for two-year, post-doctoral interdisciplinary positions in the social sciences, humanities, and creative arts. This program was so successful and valued that it was permanently endowed as the Kay Fellows Program, thanks to the generosity of the Chairman of the Board of Trustees, Mr. Stephen B. Kay.

Support for teaching takes various forms. Teaching workshops are organized by the Committee for the Support of Teaching, which also sponsors a website that provides various pedagogical resources for faculty and teaching fellows. The Provost’s Steering Committee on Campus Diversity Issues provides various teaching materials that can be incorporated into existing courses. At the Heller School, a working group on teaching and inclusion has met regularly for two years to discuss issues of pedagogy and curriculum development. At IBS, the Committee on Curriculum and Learning has responsibility for monitoring the quality of instruction. IBS also supports faculty members who wish to take courses on pedagogy. Annual teaching awards in each of the schools reflect and reinforce the University’s strong commitment to teaching excellence.

In 2004-05, full-time faculty members taught 77 percent of all courses, part-time faculty 15 percent, and graduate students eight percent (concentrated in introductory calculus and expository writing).⁵⁶ Tenured faculty do not confine themselves to upper-level courses, but also teach introductory courses as well. The use of part-time faculty varies among the schools, as the graduate

⁵⁶ These figures do not include the Rabb School, whose continuing education courses are taught by experienced practitioners appointed as part-time instructors.

professional schools naturally draw upon accomplished practitioners as adjunct faculty, to supplement the full-time faculty.

Graduate students serve as teaching fellows in some undergraduate courses. An orientation session is provided each fall for new teaching fellows, and workshops are offered on pedagogy and classroom technology. International students are screened for English proficiency before being allowed to teach, though occasionally their fluency in English still falls short of what is required for effective teaching. Teaching fellows are supervised and observed in class by faculty, and are evaluated by students. Graduate students who teach independently receive special training. Advanced graduate students are also eligible to compete for the five to seven University Prize Instructorships awarded annually, providing them with the opportunity to design and teach an upper-level course in their field of research.

The Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs coordinates a multi-faceted program of academic advising that involves faculty, staff, and students. The graduate schools have advising systems appropriate to their student populations. Faculty advisors in the College of Arts and Sciences receive an orientation at the beginning of the academic year, and are provided with written resource materials. Each academic department and program has an Undergraduate Advising Head, who serves as a resident expert on academic advising, ensuring consistency and accuracy in advising students about departmental or program requirements. The Undergraduate Department Representatives, students selected by the faculty, provide further assistance in each department. Ultimately, of course, the quality of academic advising depends on the commitment and knowledge of the advisor, and the senior surveys indicate that advising in the major is not always as strong as it should be.

The principle of academic freedom is strongly enunciated in the *Faculty Handbook*, which was fully re-written by the faculty and approved by the Board of Trustees in 2001. The *Handbook* also sets out the specific rights and responsibilities of faculty, and provides for a standing Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. The Committee is charged with the task of interpreting the provisions of the *Handbook*; it also hears appeals arising out of salary grievances, disciplinary actions, and appointment, tenure, and promotion procedures. Final authority on such appeals rests with the Provost, President, or Board of Trustees.

Each year, faculty members are directed to an online version of *Rights and Responsibilities*, which sets out the standards and procedures governing student conduct. Allegations of student academic misconduct are adjudicated by panels composed of students and faculty, under the aegis of the University Board on Student Conduct, which includes students, faculty and staff. Faculty also participate in the development of University policies governing the conduct and uses of research, and serve on committees that oversee those policies, e.g., the Brandeis Committee for Protection of Human Subjects and the Intellectual Property Review Committee. The Office of Sponsored Programs issues guidelines for the administration of grants and awards, and works with the

appropriate committees to ensure that research is conducted in compliance with federal guidelines.

Appraisal

Ninety-seven percent of the full-time faculty hold the highest degree in their field; part-time faculty have comparable academic qualifications or a strong record of professional accomplishment that bears on their teaching responsibilities. The Brandeis faculty includes three MacArthur Foundation Fellows, five members of the National Academies of Science, four members of the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies of Science, eight fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, 13 fellows of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and five Howard Hughes Medical Investigators.⁵⁷ Since its last re-accreditation in 1996, Brandeis was identified as the number one rising research university, in an empirical study based on research funding and publications.⁵⁸ The University has worked to sustain that progress.

Ten years ago, the re-accreditation team pointed to lagging faculty salaries as a serious problem. To address this problem, the University had first to set its financial house in order. Additional funds are now available, and the University has made significant strides toward catching up with the competition. Between FY2005 and FY2007, \$1.1 million has been added to the budget for faculty salaries in Arts and Sciences, over and above annual increases for inflation and merit. In FY2007, Brandeis expects to have faculty salaries at the AAU median by rank and discipline, the benchmark that the University has set. At IBS, funding to ensure competitive faculty salaries has been built into its current strategic plan. At the Heller School, a multi-year plan has been initiated to make faculty salaries competitive. To maintain faculty salaries at a level that is competitive with peer universities—and to do so in a region with expensive housing and a high cost of living—will remain a challenge, but the University is better positioned to meet that challenge than at any time in its history.⁵⁹

External support for research totaled \$54 million in FY2005, a considerable amount for a faculty of 343 full-time members.⁶⁰ Of this total, 77 percent came from the federal government, ten percent from foundations, and the remainder from other sources. Sponsored research has grown significantly over the past decade, especially in the last five years. From FY1996 to FY2000, growth was slight, with one year of large growth offset by four years of decline. Since then, sponsored research has grown each year, increasing overall by 29 percent from FY2000 to FY2005.

Brandeis faculty members are regularly called upon to serve on peer review panels, on editorial boards, and as leaders in their professional associations.

⁵⁷ See Appendix 5D.

⁵⁸ Hugh Davis Graham and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities: Elites and Challengers in the Postwar Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1997).

⁵⁹ See Appendix 5E.

⁶⁰ See Appendix 5F.

They have also compiled an impressive record of awards and honors. Recent examples include: the Aldrich Award from the American Association of Pediatrics to Professor Jack Shonkoff; the Gerard Prize from the Society for Neuroscience to Professor Eve Marder; the Pfizer Award in Enzyme Chemistry from the American Chemical Society to Professor Dorothee Kern; the Benjamin Franklin Medal in Physics to Professor Robert Meyer; the Pulitzer Prize in History to Professor David Hackett Fischer; the Jewish Book of the Year Award from the Jewish Book Council to Professor Jonathan Sarna; the Elise L. Stoeger Prize from the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center to Professor David Rakowski; the Outstanding Young Scholar Award from the Industrial Relations Research Association to Professor Jody Gittel; and the Presidential Award from the Council on Social Work Education to Professor David Gil.

The quality of teaching is harder to measure, but one indication is the level of satisfaction with their majors that seniors report in the annual surveys.⁶¹ On an ascending scale of 1 to 5, departments generally receive an average rating close to or exceeding 4. Data are also regularly generated by the use of a standardized course evaluation form in every course, except in independent study courses and in tutorials, and in graduate seminars, where evaluations are at the option of the instructor. The results are provided to department chairs and the individual instructors. As Brandeis proceeds more systematically with assessment of student learning, further insight will be gained into the quality of teaching, including specific information on success and areas requiring more attention.

Brandeis's evolving curriculum presents a continual challenge for the efficient distribution of faculty among programs. In order to identify areas of over- or under-staffing, the Dean of Arts and Sciences monitors the distribution of faculty by department, based on enrollments and the curricular judgments of the faculty. Although the tenure system and contractual obligations limit the ability to shift staffing, the information gleaned from the planning process informs decisions about creating new positions and filling vacated ones. New hires for 2006-07, for example, include professors specializing in African-American and Black Atlantic literature, East Asian literature and culture, and quantitative biology, as well as a lecturer in Arabic.

Brandeis continues to strive for a diverse faculty, but with mixed results.⁶² The faculty is currently 90 percent white, non-Hispanic; six percent Asian American and Pacific Islander; two percent Hispanic; and two percent African-American. The increasing emphasis on racial diversity in higher education has heightened the competition for minority faculty members, and the University's best efforts do not always succeed. But Brandeis is revamping its system of diversity representatives, to strengthen its efforts to diversify the faculty. Each department will now designate a senior member to serve as a diversity representative for a three-year term; and diversity representatives will generally be assigned to searches in other departments within the same school—so that, for example, social scientists will serve as diversity representatives for searches in

⁶¹ See Appendix 5G.

⁶² See Appendix 5H.

other social science departments. Diversity representatives will receive special training for this work. Diversifying the curriculum should also help to diversify the faculty, and improvements in the salary scale will help with faculty recruitment generally.

The recently established mentoring program for junior faculty emerged out of a recognition that leaving this to informal and customary practices was not sufficient. Some departments were clearly more attuned than others to the needs of junior faculty, and the quality and extent of mentoring varied widely. A systematic program, strongly supported by the Dean, was the clear remedy for this situation. The Dean continues to monitor the implementation of the program. Each department chair must notify the Dean of the assignment of mentors to new faculty, and the Dean meets regularly with the tenure-track faculty to discuss, among other things, the mentoring they are receiving.

In the spring of 2004 the Provost established an *ad hoc* Committee on Contract Faculty, comprising tenured and contract faculty, to examine systematically the situation of contract faculty across the University, to compare current practices with those at other universities, and to make specific recommendations. After nearly a year of research and deliberations, the committee issued its report. Its central recommendations include: to make explicit the job descriptions and performance criteria for each contract position; to establish career ladders for contract faculty; to set general standards for appointment and promotion to the various ranks of contract faculty; to regularize the review process for reappointment and promotion, in ways that parallel the process for tenure track faculty; and to provide for paid leave for long-term contract faculty, on terms comparable to sabbatical leave. Overall, the committee sought, through its recommendations, to provide remedies for inequities of status and treatment and to promote consistent, transparent policies going forward.

In regard to tenure-track faculty, concern has arisen that the probationary period is too short and too rigid. Tenure decisions have been made in the sixth year of appointment, and extensions granted only in the cases of medical or parental leave. These concerns, expressed by senior members of the faculty, are driven in part by the increasing difficulty of securing research funding in the sciences and, in other disciplines, of finding publishers for scholarly monographs; and the concerns also reflect changing social realities, in which professional and domestic responsibilities are not neatly divided by gender. In response to these concerns, the Provost established a Task Force on the Tenure Clock, which issued a report in the fall of 2005, recommending that the tenure decision be moved to the seventh year, with the opportunity for earlier tenure review when requested by the faculty member. The Task Force also recommended that one-year extensions of the probationary period be granted for reasons of a new child in the family, personal illness, care-giving responsibilities for a family member, or other personal circumstances that impede scholarly productivity. Such extensions would not be contingent on taking a personal leave of absence. The Task Force further recommended that an extension of up to one year be granted for faculty who take professional leave to engage in professional service or to receive additional professional training.

Projection

Brandeis will continue to develop ways to invest in its faculty. Under the leadership of the recently established position of Vice President for Research, new interdisciplinary research opportunities have been identified and faculty groups have been formed to develop cross-departmental initiatives that capitalize on areas of strengths. Faculty will continue to be supported in responding both to targeted initiatives from foundations and government agencies and to more general calls for investigator-initiated research.

As noted earlier, the Committee on Contract Faculty put forward multiple recommendations to rectify inequities and to regularize the system of contract faculty, alongside the tenure system. The faculty has been reviewing the recommendations, and legislation is gradually being brought forward, to revise the relevant provisions of the *Faculty Handbook*. To date, the positions of senior lecturer and associate professor of practice have been added, and contract faculty have been made eligible for *emeritus* status. Contract faculty are also now eligible for paid leave. New administrative practices and procedures are being developed, in consultation with the faculty, to implement new policies. A systematic review and adjustment of titles of contract faculty in Arts and Sciences has also been conducted.

The mentoring program for junior faculty is being further developed. A new pair of workshops—one for new tenure-track faculty, and one for mentors—is being conducted this September, to be followed in October by peer observations of teaching. The Dean of Arts and Sciences has also directed departments to include an account of their mentoring program in the formal planning documents they submit each year, to ensure that mentoring becomes a regular element of the culture and organization of each department.

The tenure system remains strong at Brandeis, and the University has no intention to convert tenured positions to contract positions. Indeed, with the emergence of new interdisciplinary programs, some departments are already stretched thin and, as resources permit, additional tenure lines need to be added. The proportions of tenured and contract positions will continue to vary among schools, as the University seeks to strike the right balance in individual programs, while ensuring that contract faculty are fully integrated into the faculty as a whole.

The tenure clock will become longer and more flexible, under amendments to the *Faculty Handbook* approved this past year. The tenure clock was lengthened by one year, so that tenure decisions will now be made in the seventh year, unless junior faculty members elect to seek tenure earlier. Extensions of the tenure clock for family and medical reasons will also be more generous: faculty, who take a leave of seven weeks or longer, are now entitled to a two-semester extension (rather than one semester, as was previously the case). A cap of four semesters on such extensions has also been established. The faculty will continue to consider the question of flexibility in the tenure clock.

Finally, there is the constant challenge of sustaining and even enhancing an already strong faculty. This is a particular challenge at a young university, which does not yet have an adequate number of fully endowed professorships. It is further complicated by competition from peer institutions, the significant housing and living costs in the Greater Boston area, and the steep costs associated with the recruitment of outstanding faculty, especially in the sciences. So whatever else may be on the agenda, the University must also keep at it: at vigorous recruitment of new faculty, at rigorous review of candidates for tenure and promotion, at vigilance in holding onto distinguished faculty whom other institutions seek to lure away. To do this while also working to further diversify the faculty and meet changing programmatic needs makes the task that much more demanding. But there is no alternative: a university is only as good as its faculty.

Institutional Effectiveness

Regular review of faculty performance is an integral part of institutional life at Brandeis. Deans and department chairs receive an annual activity report from each member of the faculty, and also receive each semester the student evaluations of the courses in their school or department. A formal review of each member of the faculty occurs each spring, in conjunction with decisions about merit raises. Through strategic planning and annual staffing reviews, each school monitors the allocation of faculty, and administrative decisions to authorize searches are made on the basis of such information (and in light, of course, of available resources). Vigorous searches for new faculty and a rigorous process for tenure and promotion further ensure the quality of the Brandeis faculty.