

**Brandeis University
Re-accreditation Meeting
October 20, 2005**

Minutes

Meeting agenda:

- Review of timeline
- Comments on drafts
- Reflection from committees on questions
- Next steps

Provost Krauss called the meeting to order and introduced the agenda.

- Commenting on the drafts that had been submitted so far, she expressed satisfaction with what had been delivered. She also cautioned that all of the submissions would need to be put in the Description – Appraisal – Projection format desired by NEASC.
- Many of the drafts needed more work on the projection piece. It was noted that these are not promises at this point, simply options that the committees would like to be considered.
- She then asked the committees to report out on the questions that had been sent out in advance:
 - What is the overall story you want to tell NEASC?
 - As you studied your standards and collected evidence, what surprised you the most?
 - Are there standards that pose a problem for Brandeis?
 - Would adherence to any of these standards, as written, create any significant changes in Brandeis cultures of behaviors?

Marty then presented the framework and findings from the committee on assessment.

- The report of the Assessment Inventory is available to anyone who wants it.

Committee Reports

Academic Program (Undergraduate, General Education, Major) – Adam Jaffe

- General Education is easy to describe, but it is harder to demonstrate that it achieves its objectives.
- On Majors, the committee emphasized the sequencing, clear learning objectives, and achievement of mastery.
- A problem for the committee has been in the projection section, where it does not have the power to say what the university should do, and cannot commit to future directions
 - Marty will talk to John Sexton about this dilemma.
- The committee also found that there is diversity across programs, and that there is often good reason for it.
- Marty emphasized that Brandeis needs to be a “self-questioning” organization.

Academic Program (Graduate) – Sybil Smith

- The committee’s main surprise is that the graduate programs are as alike as they are, e.g., in admissions, rigor, structure.
- The problems that the committee sees in the programs (e.g., need for assessment) are solvable.

- The committee's main focus in the projection section has been having a consistent internal and external review.
- If there is a change in culture, it is likely to be in the area of faculty mentoring for new faculty, and in consistency in how syllabi are presented.
- In response to the committee report, Marty emphasized that each committee should keep an account of what the university might want to consider in the future.

Academic Program (Faculty) – Maria Pellegrini

- The committee found no major surprises.
- An issue of concern is the diversity of faculty. This is being addressed, but progress will be slow.
- Another issue is reconciling standards and procedures across A&S and the professional schools, but this is ongoing.
- There are many ongoing activities that need to be included in the report, such as revisions to the faculty handbook and the committee on the tenure clock.

Academic Program (Academic Integrity) – Tren Dolbear and Mark Hewitt

- Most of the standards have been easy to address because the processes are already in place.
- One issue that needs to be addressed is distance learning.
- The university also needs processes for reviewing courses and programs that have already been established.

Library and Other Information Resource – Michael Whelan gave an update on behalf of Tim Hickey

- LTS is doing a great job; it has a clear vision and administrative support.
- Some potential problem areas include future funding, staff size, illegal uses of technology, journal prices, and perhaps distance education.
- Finally, assessment of student learning in terms of information resources is very difficult. How do we know that students learn to use LTS resources effectively and can we quantify this?

Resources – Jim Hurley

- Storyline as presented at the March kickoff meeting: Brandeis 2005 is not Brandeis 1995 — Brandeis has made a lot of progress by almost any measure. Budgets are balanced, reserves have grown, financial ratios have improved, endowment has grown, capital nearly complete a year ahead of schedule campaign, 160,000 square feet added to physical plant, deferred maintenance expenditures have increased, faculty and staff compensation addressed, new systems, policies and procedures and information technology infrastructure improvements including equipping classrooms.
- Brandeis 2012 will not be Brandeis 2005 Integrated Plan is projected to achieve operating and capital goals. Additional funds are projected to be available for priorities in the operating budget for the Arts and Sciences Plan and Academic Facilities, Library and Technology Plan, Undergraduate Quality Initiative, Student Facilities, Staff Salary Plan. There can also be significant resources for capital projects including Science Project and Other Academic Facilities, Student Facilities, Infrastructure and Deferred Maintenance
- University will set annual benchmarks, and articulate a process of annual reassessment, annual adjustments and annual accountability through the annual budget process and ongoing peer assessments and review by outside organizations, e.g., NACUBO,

Public Disclosure – Lorna Whelan

- The standards were easy to address since most of the processes and evidence are in place.
- The major change from the earlier report will be the impact of the web and how it enables disclosure.
- The reaccreditation process has made Lorna more sensitive to Brandeis’ audiences and how promises to them are made and kept.
- Like many of the other committees, Public Disclosure “struggled” with how to deal with the assessment piece.

Marty concluded the meeting with:

- We need to be aware of two complementary processes:
 - What we need to do for re-accreditation.
 - What we are learning about ourselves and what we should do in the future
- Committees should get their templates in shape and submit them to review by the Executive Committee. Also, if committees wish to get individual responses from faculty at this time they can do so, but we intend to do some editing and consolidation of the academic standards so that faculty reviewers’ time will be better spent and appropriately contextualized.
- She outlined next steps, including the visit from John Sexton.
- The next meeting of this group will be in February.