BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the Faculty Senate, Tuesday, May 5, 2009

The Faculty Senate met from 10:00 am – 12:00 noon in the Board of Trustees Conference Room

Present: Flesch, Jacobson, Herzfeld, Mann, Watson, von Mering, Sreenivasan, Morrison, Bishop, Rakowski, Fraden, Gittell, Garnick.

Absent: Hill, Moody, Troen, Mairson.

Provost Response to CARS Proposal

The Senate discussed the expected release of the Provost's response to the Curriculum and Academic Restructuring and Steering Committee Report with additional dialogue on the possible effects of the recommendations on admissions and efforts Brandeis might make to lessen the burden on programs and departments when admitting the customary number of international students.

Building Relationships with the Administration

The Chair of the Senate talked about the benefits of a successful working relationship between the Senate and Administration this past academic year, including adminstration concessions about faculty membership on the Integrated Planning Committee and University Budget Implementation Committee. He felt there was a good sense of give and take and recommended that the Senate continue building these relationships in the fall. A recommendation was made for the Senate and Administration to work jointly with students and employees to harmonize the three legal Brandeis contracts: the Faculty Handbook with faculty, the Bulletin with students and the HR Employee Handbook with employees. Such harmonizing would give more force to the contractual provisions in each and all of them.

Committee Appointments

Currently, the Provost appoints some whole committees herself but it was discussed whether this needs to be changed to have collaborative appointments between the Senate and Administration. The Handbook states that the Provost can exclusively appoint committees.

Phased retirement offer

The Senate discussed the letter the Provost sent to the faculty offering opportunities for phased retirement, which would be budget-relieving for the University.

Administrative Review Committee

The Senate discussed the proposed Administrative Review Committee which had been suggested on the faculty listserv. The Senate sees many potential pitfalls to this committee, such as the negative effect on staff morale, and feels further steps toward such a committee should be taken very carefully. The real challenge is the composition of such a committee.

Vacant Faculty Committee Seats

The number of vacant seats and current nominees for the Faculty Senate, faculty representation to the Board of Trustees, and the Uncergraduate Curriculum Committee was reviewed. Suggestions were made on next steps if there are not enough nominees.

Unfinished Business

The chair wanted the report he would make to the faculty at the May 14 faculty meeting to reflect and flag some items that the Senate should pursue next year, and he listed some of them including those discussed earlier at the meeting:

--Faculty representation on the University Budget Implementation Committee and on the Integrated Planning Committee, probably ex officio;
--Harmonizing of the various handbooks and policies that have contractual force;
--Possibly making permanent the establishment of the Wednesday before Thanksgiving as a student holiday;
--some attention to the way that centers and institutes are established, especially with respect to Handbook mandated procedures.

The meeting adjourned at 12 noon.