

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE**

Minutes of the First Meeting

28 August 2008 (revised October 21)

The first meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 pm, 28 August 2008, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room. Senators present: Christine Bishop, William Flesch (Chair), Seth Fraden, Deborah Garnick, Judith Herzfeld, Eric Hill, David Jacobson, Catherine Mann, Robert Moody, David Rakowski, Dawn Skorczewski, Govind Sreenivasan, Sabine Von Mering, Malcolm Watson. Senators absent: Jody Gittell, Harry Mairson, Bradley Morrison, Ilan Troen.

Election of the Senate Chair and the Senate Council

Pursuant to the Faculty Handbook, the Faculty Senate met on the first day of classes of the academic year 2008-2009. Robert Moody, as the senior Senator present, called the meeting to order. Former Senator Marc Brettler, chair of the Faculty Senate last year, gave a gift on behalf of the Senate to retiring Senate administrator Joan Draper. All present signified appreciation for both. After they left the room, Moody held a secret ballot in which William Flesch was elected chair of the Senate for the academic year. Flesch chaired the rest of the meeting.

The next order of business was the election of the Senate Council. Govind Sreenivasan (History), Catherine Mann (IBS), and Eric Hill (Theater Arts) were elected to the Council.

Senate Agenda for the Coming Year

Faculty Handbook

It was agreed that important Faculty Handbook issues remained from last academic year, having to do with the right and responsibility of the Faculty Committee on Rights and Responsibilities to provide the interpretation of the Handbook that the faculty is entitled to rely on. (Other issues also remained unresolved, such as parking, and health insurance for emeriti.)

Fall Calendar

One senator asked whether it was possible to revise the fall calendar in a way that would and give the students a real (even week-long) break at Thanksgiving. It was agreed that a task force would be formed to look into this issue and to come up with possible suggestions. This task force might overlap with the committee examining ways of reforming the block system, the chair of that committee, Malcolm Watson, being a member of the Senate.

Course-Banking

The question of whether and how to implement a course-banking system came up as an important item of future discussion.

Classroom Infrastructure

One Senator expressed an interest in discussing the classroom infrastructure, which seems particularly jammed at Brandeis. The condition of the physical plant, particularly the dinginess of many buildings, is a related issue.

### Deans

Senators agreed that it would be a good idea to invite the Deans of the various schools to come to the Senate to discuss items of interest.

### Recruitment and Development

They also thought it a good idea to meet with recruitment and development officials at the University, to consider such long-term issues as the changing applicant pool.

### Marketing and Branding

Such concerns are also connected with marketing and branding at Brandeis, including the vexed issue of the website. Many senators felt that the faculty wants and should have a hand in branding, and that their views were relevant.

### Defining "Policy"

One senator brought up the central governing policy at Brandeis – the policy of policies, that is the policy that determines the form and efficacy of all other policies, and determines what is a policy and what isn't. A high level committee sets that policy. The Senate wishes faculty representation on this committee but has been rebuffed. Executive Vice-President and Chief Operating Officer Peter French agreed to meet with the Senate before going to that committee, but, in the event, such a meeting didn't take place last year. Would it be possible to have such a meeting with him this year?

### Integrated Planning Committee

Senators would also like to see faculty representation on the integrated planning committee.

### Faculty Governance

Senators agreed that the Senate had no desire to be obstructionist and confrontational with regard to the Administration, but that it has a duty to deal with issues that come up, and to defend vigorously the principles of faculty governance.

---

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 pm