

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Minutes of the Sixth Meeting

15 February 2007

The sixth meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m., 15 February 2007, in Shapiro 314. Senators present: Stephen Cecchetti, Richard Gaskins, Ira Gessel, David Jacobson, Harry Mairson (Chair), Richard Parmentier, David Rakowski, Govind Sreenivasan. Senators absent: Jon Chilingerian, William Flesch, Seth Fraden, Leonard Muellner, Laura Quinney, Eugene Sheppard, Malcolm Watson, Aida Wong. Guests: Paul Jankowski, Alison Schwartzbaum '08.

Course Banking/Accounting: There has been no further activity on this proposal. Discussion on next steps continue with Dean Jaffe.

Monograph Support: The Chair reported that he has had productive conversations with members of the administration regarding support of monograph publishing for junior faculty. The Norman Fund, he said, has provided some support, and that the adequacy of this support would be further examined.

Solicitation of Undergraduates to Acquire Brandeis "Affinity" Credit Cards: At the 21 September 2006 Senate meeting, Jean Eddy, Senior Vice President for Student and Enrollment, spoke to the Senate on questions raised about this program. She assured the Senate that undergraduates are solicited for a Brandeis credit card only once during their college careers, that it is possible to opt out of the solicitation, and that the overwhelming majority of funds provided to the University by the program comes from alumni. Further questions have arisen about this program: that there were two solicitations of all undergraduates last year, and that it is not possible for undergraduates to opt out. The Chair said that he would seek a further clarification. One Senator said that it is not responsible for the University to support a credit card program for undergraduates when the program has 25% annual interest fees. It is a different matter entirely, he said, for alumni (who are presumably schooled in the trials and tribulations of money management) to use such cards, which provide some income to the University.

Carterquestion.com: Prior to the meeting, the Carter invitation committee had asked the Senate to make the faculty cognizant of the online discussion forum set up by the committee. After email discussion and deliberation, the Senate agreed to do so. The Chair thanked the Senate for this email exchange, said that he had so informed the faculty, and that students had also been informed in email from Dean Alwina Bennett.

Senate Council and Dean's faculty advisory group

Last year, in consultation with the Council, the Dean of Arts and Sciences set up an informal faculty advisory group for academic planning. The Dean has asked the Council for initial consultation on the state of their deliberations. During the ensuing discussion, Senators endorsed consultation of the faculty by the senior administration. It was recalled by Senators that this is an informal group, in contrast to committees mandated by the Faculty Handbook. (Part of the reason for this invitation from the Dean is, in fact, to provide a connection to standing faculty

governance committees.) According to the Handbook, if a special committee is created, it must be done in consultation with the Senate Council and report to the faculty.

Senate Council and Carter Visit: Report to the Board of Trustees

The Senate Council informed the Senate that they have decided to request a meeting with the Board of Trustees at their March 22, 2007 meeting, to discuss the circumstances surrounding the visit of President Carter, both beforehand and afterwards, and its impact on the University's mission. The Board chairman, Mr. Stephen Kay, responded with an invitation. The Chair promised a fuller report to the Senate on this visit.

Advisory Committee on Campus Events

Professor Paul Jankowski (History), chair of the newly formed Advisory Committee on Campus Events, appointed by and reporting to the Provost, attended the Senate to provide background on the committee's charge and the chronology of its formation. Prof. Jankowski said that the committee was formed as a result of recommendations made to the Provost by the Committee on Exhibitions and Expression that was formed last spring to review the issues raised by the "Voices of Palestine" exhibit. The Senate Council was informed of the formation of the committee, said the Senate Chair, on January 22, the day before the Carter visit. Prof. Jankowski added that the committee was formed in mid- to late December; the Chair pointed out that this was when the parameters of a possible visit by President Carter, as reported in the Boston Globe, were being discussed.

Prof. Jankowski said that the new committee will act as an advisory body, on an entirely voluntary basis, when potentially controversial campus events are of concern. During the ensuing cordial discussion, Senators expressed deep reservations over the issue of freedom of speech, and whether such a committee might serve to obstruct controversial exhibitions and events. Prof. Jankowski was adamant that he would oppose such a use of the committee. On the other hand, Senators conceded that it may possibly facilitate issues of free speech, as long as its deliberations and advice are transparent, public, and voluntary. Prof. Jankowski was also asked how the recommendation of the committee he recently chaired on the "Voices of Palestine" exhibit, which suggested a committee on student exhibitions, became a committee on campus events. Another issue raised was that while the committee's deliberations were nonbinding, the committee's existence could be used bureaucratically to make such events more difficult--the imbroglio over the Carter visit an obvious case in point. Senators also averred that issues of academic freedom are best interpreted and dealt with by the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities. The Senate thanked Professor Jankowski and agreed to revisit some of the issues raised with him later in the year, if necessary.

Student Union's "Campaign for Peace"

Alison Schwartzbaum '08, President of the Student Senate, was also invited to the meeting to discuss the committee formed this month to provide a framework for discussion about the Middle East. There is a need, she said, for students who disagree on these volatile subjects to discuss them, and the committee's goal is to make that easier. The main purpose of the committee is to connect student leaders from different campus groups who are planning events, and to promote and facilitate respectful dialogue. It is important to have a balance of disparate events with

varying points of view, she said, and to encourage opportunities for students to reflect and to have follow-up discussions. She made clear that this committee was ready and willing to facilitate any and all speakers, including some who have been focal points of recent controversy.

Ms. Schwartzbaum listed the members of the committee, who include Jamele Adams, Assistant Dean of Student Life in Support of Diversity, Rev. Walter Cuenin, Catholic Chaplain, Prof. Shai Feldman, Director of the Crown Center, Cynthia Cohen, Director of the Coexistence Program at the International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life, Jason Brodsky '07, Union Director of Academic Affairs, Diana Chiang '07, Union Director of Intercommunity Development, Aaron Voldman '09, Democracy for America Campus Coordinator, and Anna Benhamou '09.

The Senate thanked Ms. Schwartzbaum for her visit.

The meeting was adjourned at 5:00 p.m.