

**BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY  
FACULTY SENATE**

Minutes of the Second Meeting

21 September 2006

The second meeting of the Faculty Senate was held at 3:00 p.m., 21 September 2006, in the Board of Trustees Conference Room. Senators present: Stephen Cecchetti, William Flesch, Seth Fraden, Richard Gaskins, Ira Gessel, Harry Mairson (Chair), David Rakowski, Malcolm Watson, Aida Yuen Wong. Senators absent: Jon Chilingerian, David Jacobson, Leonard Muellner, Richard Parmentier, Laura Quinney, Eugene Sheppard, Govind Sreenivasan. Guest: Jean Eddy (Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment).

The Chair brought the following matters to the attention of the Senate. The Senate Council has appointed Professor Donald Katz (PSYC), to fill a vacancy on the University Budget Committee. John Sexton, President of NYU and chair of the external committee charged with reaccreditation of the University, will meet with the Senate on 13 November, at 10:30am. Dean of Arts and Sciences Adam Jaffe has been invited to the Senate meeting on 19 October, to discuss faculty salaries and academic planning initiatives.

Proposal for Heller School Master's Program in Public Policy

The Faculty Handbook mandates that the Provost "consult with... the Council of the Faculty Senate to establish an appropriate deliberative process" when a new degree program is proposed (Section 4.F.1). At an earlier meeting, the Senate Council discussed deliberative process for this proposal (already vetted and approved by the Heller School faculty and the Professional Schools Council), and suggested that all University deans should be informed of the proposed program and have two weeks to voice any objections. While the Council made recommendations on deliberative process, it also wanted to bring the matter to the Senate for discussion. Senators focused on the curricular and financial impact the new program will have outside the Heller School. It was the sense of the Senate that the process should include an impact statement on curricular and financial issues.

Student Record-Driven Solicitation of Undergraduates to Acquire Brandeis "Affinity" Credit Cards

The Chair reported that a parent has questioned the process and propriety of the University allowing vendors to contact undergraduates, based on information provided by Brandeis. The privacy of information about individuals, including student records held by the University, is a real concern to many of us. This parent's questioning was pursued over the summer through mailings to numerous senior faculty and administrators. The expressed concern was over solicitation for a Brandeis "affinity" credit card. The credit card, which has a picture of the Brandeis Castle on it, encourages students and graduates to maintain their connection with the University. Jean Eddy, Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment, was invited to the meeting to address the concerns raised.

The important reassurances provided by Ms. Eddy are the following. The University permits no other vendors to solicit the business of undergraduates through use of student records, and she expressed a personal commitment to the zealous protection of student records. Undergraduates are solicited for a Brandeis credit card exactly once during their college careers. Roughly five students a year sign up for this credit card; as a consequence, the overwhelming majority of funds provided to the University by this program come from alumni. And there has been only one complaint about the program in ten years.

In that context, the Senate was entirely satisfied that the privacy of student records was being protected, that undergraduates were not being unduly solicited, and there were not endemic credit abuse problems among many undergraduates as a consequence of this program. Several Senators emphasized that it would surely be better if the software being used allowed students to opt out of the solicitation (just as we all check boxes saying “do not put me on your mailing list” when using commercial services on the Internet). Modifying software can require a tremendous amount of work, but there was consensus that this problem was not pressing because so few students were subscribers.

The Senate thanked Ms Eddy for her remarks and for the reassurances that she provided in what appeared, potentially, to be a matter of significant concern, but was ultimately judged not to be.

#### Handbook Changes

Professor Gaskins, Chair of the Faculty Rights and Responsibilities Committee, distributed to the Senate the policy document, “Guidelines for Appointments in the Tenure Structure without National Searches” (see attachment). He explained that last year, the Rights and Responsibilities Committee had worked with the Dean and the Provost to develop these important guidelines. The guidelines included an amendment to the Handbook, to be presented to the Faculty at the next Faculty Meeting. It was the sense of the Senate that the Handbook be amended in accord with this recommendation.

#### Discussion of the Senate Agenda

The Chair reported that the Senate Council had discussed the Senate agenda for the coming year and reached a consensus on the following subjects. He asked the Senate for its comment and criticism.

- Senators agreed that the Council should work jointly with the administration to arrange a forum for faculty to discuss issues of general academic interest. Such a forum would follow up recommendations made in the 2002 report on Faculty Morale, chaired by Professor Gary Jefferson. It was agreed that one such session be scheduled to follow a faculty meeting during the upcoming year.
- There should be some regularization of course accounting, which is currently done on an informal, ad hoc basis. The goal is to allow faculty a certain flexibility in teaching loads, where they could teach above their usual load in exchange for a lighter schedule in a later semester. This policy should be worked out with the Dean. The Chair promised to begin initial discussions.
- Professor Malcolm Watson agreed to join the Working Group on Tenure to consider contract faculty conversion and make a recommendation to the faculty.
- The Senate should explore with the administration the University’s providing additional support of monograph publishing for junior faculty. It was noted that many universities do so, that it would help morale at the University, and that it would address issues of interest nationally at many universities.
- Discussion of medical coverage for emeritus faculty should be ongoing with the Administration.
- The Chair said that he is a member of this year’s Parking Committee, and will report to the Senate on proposed changes in the parking system---an important component in the triad of support offered by the University to its community.
- The Senate agreed that the University Curriculum Committee be asked to consider the elimination of the triple major, as a possible departure point of a larger discussion of strengthening majors, and addressing issues of specialization and experimentation in the undergraduate curriculum.

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The meeting was adjourned at 4:45 p.m.