June 17, 2010
Attending: Edmiston, Dibble, Wong, Webber, Chiu, Williams, Hyland, Krstansky, McKittrick, Schoonmaker

Topics: Brandeis Theater Company

The discussion began with committee members mentioning some of their favorite Brandeis Theater Company productions. Among those mentioned were: Scenes from an Execution, Tommy, Funnyhouse of a Negro, Bacchae, Three Musketeers, As You Like It, The Suicide, Hecuba, Big Love and Tea and Flowers, Purity and Grace.

From this list certain common characteristics were discussed as components of BTC productions that are desirable and could be cultivated. Among these were:

- Undergrad and graduate student actor mix
- Community involvement
- Relevance to the 18-22 year old demographic
- Curriculum links
- Promotion of academic discussion
- Multiculturalism
- Collaboration with other departments
- Using different configurations of the Spingold space

This led to a conversation about play selection. What are the significant playwrights and a comprehensive survey of plays with which students should be familiar as part of a theatre education? The suggestion was made that the play selection be thought in terms of the span of the undergraduate/graduate experience at Brandeis -- three to four year season planning -- providing an “educational period” of productions. Questions arose about a play’s relevance to current events and our community -- why produces certain plays at Brandeis? Also, in selecting a season -- who or what will the productions primarily serve – acting students? Undergraduate education across campus? Ticket-buyers? How many and what types of productions might be offered?

The end of the meeting centered on the structure of the BTC and a perception that productions are a separate entity within the theater department. Some felt that this division might be confusing to the rest of the university, prospective students, and at times within the department itself. Can we think of the department in a more holistic way that includes student produced shows, class projects, thesis projects, etc.?

Finally, the committee discussed ideas for making the theater-going experience at Spingold feel more welcoming. Ideas such as decorating or remodeling the lobby, greeters in the lobby, marquee in front of the building, lobby displays and production photographs, and the cast greeting audiences after the performance. The committee briefly discussed ticket cost, free ticket policies, and audience development opportunities such as alumni night, pay-what-you-can nights or admission in exchange for donations to charity.