

BUSAC Open Meeting
November 13, 2025
1:30pm -3:00pm | Via Zoom

Present:

Brittani Harris Niquette (At Large – Interim Chair)
Courtney Maurer (District A – Vice Chair)
Jane Theriault (District A)
Kapik Yeung (District B)
Calla Mattox (District C)
Lanni Isenberg (District C)
Alina Hicks (District D)
Kristina Cherniahivsky (District E)
Gail Jordan (District F)
Stacey Winkler (District G)
Lisa DeNicola (District H)
Mary Hurd (District I)
Aimee Slater (District K)
Abigail Arnold (Notetaker)

Guests: Erika Chin, Liz Tierney, Robin Switzer, Suzanne Raj and Natalie Ippolito (all of HR). The meeting was also open to all staff and there were approximately 83 staff members on the Zoom.

Not present: John Pizzi (District K), *no District J representatives*

Introductions and Updates

Brittani Harris Niquette opened the meeting, welcomed everyone, and introduced herself as BUSAC chair. She shared the agenda for the day's meeting and emphasized that the meeting was intended to give everyone who wanted to a chance to speak and share their thoughts; problems would not be solved in the moment but noted for future review. This would be followed by a brief presentation from Erika Chin of HR and time for questions. The other BUSAC representatives also introduced themselves.

Brittani shared that an election for BUSAC is coming up in the spring. In the interim, a redistricting Task Force will work to figure out how BUSAC should best be organized to reflect the university's new structure. Lanni Isenberg (District C co-rep), representing the elections subcommittee, shared that BUSAC is using their current lists to make sure everyone gets communications currently, while the redistricting is going on. If anyone knows of someone in their area who is not receiving communications or has other concerns, they should feel free to reach out using the [BUSAC contact form](#). In addition to the BUSAC subcommittees, BUSAC reps are also involved in other committees and working groups at the university.

BUSAC and the Faculty Senate are currently hosting a drive to support the Brandeis Pantry with food and toiletries (through November 17). There is also winter coat and winter gear drives for students on campus. Details of drop-off locations are in the 11/12 InBrief newsletter.

Brittani shared some recent wins for staff that BUSAC has advocated for:

Staff will have a full holiday for Christmas Eve in 2025.

Google storage limits for staff were also doubled (from 25G to 50G), thanks in large part to feedback from staff. Kristina Cherniahivsky (District D representative) recommended reaching out to Chris Lowre and his team for tech support related to Google Storage or anything else, as they can set up shop in a department and provide drop-in help.

In another win, facilities responded quickly and took care of concerns about poison ivy on campus.

Open Questions from Staff

Brittani Harris Niquette opened the floor for staff members to share questions or concerns.

Lanni Isenberg shared that a senior staff member attended the most recent Brandeis faculty meeting, where a detailed presentation on finances was given. They would like to see this shared with staff as well. Brittani agreed that many staff are concerned about equity in what is shared between faculty and staff, and that this has been a BUSAC priority ongoing.

A staff member agreed with this and said they would like to see more frequent open BUSAC meetings to keep people in the loop better. Brittani encouraged those who want to get more involved to run for BUSAC and said that BUSAC is prioritizing working with the President's office on getting more staff town halls, as there should be more avenues for staff to share thoughts than just through BUSAC open meetings.

Another staff member asked if BUSAC will ask to see the finance presentation so that staff can make informed decisions about the voluntary retirement offered to staff; Another staff member said that the slides presented at the faculty meeting did not really share information that would help one make a decision about retirement and were more general. It was agreed that more information on the retirement options for staff would be helpful in them making informed decisions.

Another staff member also asked about the policy by which staff receive two extra vacation days if they don't take sick days. Brittani and Lanni shared that BUSAC has been working on the matter and discussed it with Stew Uretsky, EVP of Finance & Administration, at the October BUSAC meeting. A policy change is being considered.

BUSAC continues to work to be in strong communication with the Brandeis administration and will follow up immediately on the question of having the finance presentation.

A staff member noted in that chat that it would be good to have more time for Q&A and discussions in the staff town halls, as opposed to just presentations. Brittani acknowledged this and shared that it is on BUSAC's radar. Another staff member suggested staff round tables with the Office of the President, to which many positively reacted.

Brittani encouraged people to use the [BUSAC contact form](#) for additional concerns, as these are directly shared with Brandeis administration, and addressed by BUSAC when possible.

Pay Transparency with Guests from HR

Erika Chin, Associate Director of Compensation, Robin Switzer, Vice President Human Resources, Liz Tierney, Director, Employee Relations and Labor Relations, Suzanne Raj, Manager of Occupational Health Services, and Natalie Ippolito, Compensation Analyst, joined the meeting for the discussion about the new Massachusetts Pay Transparency laws that went into effect on October 29, 2025. The [Massachusetts Pay Transparency Law website](#) explaining the law and how it will affect Brandeis is now live.

Courtney Maurer asked if it is possible that, in the future, staff will be able to see their salary range directly in Workday, as there have been many questions and requests about this. Erika Chin responded that this feature is part of a broader initiative to be completed by Q4 of 2026. HR has met with ITS about the technical end of giving individuals information about their salary range in Workday, but it still requires redesign and testing.

To follow up, Brittani Harris Niquette asked how a staff member might reach Erika's team directly to discuss their salary range, if they have a less good relationship with their manager or simply wish not to go through their manager. Erika and Liz Tierney said that HR shares a broader context when sharing information with managers and thus they encourage the conversation to take place between employees and managers, since managers will have the picture of their whole team and managers should be aware of employee concerns. HR has provided training about compensation to many managers. However, if the conversation is uncomfortable, employees can liaise with their [HR business partners](#). Another staff member asked for a yes or no answer as to whether there is any way to request one's salary range without talking to one's manager. Erika shared that currently, there is not; one does not have to talk directly to one's manager but in that case the HR business partner would do so. HR felt it was very important for employees to talk with their managers. Staff members expressed concern about this, especially if they report to faculty. A staff member emphasized that it is difficult to talk to managers who are faculty and not necessarily as well-versed in HR. Staff are looking forward to being able to find their salary range directly in Workday.

Mary Hurd (District I representative) shared that she has now experienced two postings in which the salary range of the posting is higher than what is actually being offered. This is an experience shared by at least one other BUSAC rep as well. She asked for the reasoning behind this and if the range in the postings is the 25th to 50th percentile, which Erika shared is where Brandeis tries to hire within. She is concerned that postings like this will discourage applicants

and cause Brandeis to lose them. Erika said that usually the range is 25th to 50th percentile and that having a lower actual range than what is posted is common practice and necessary because of specific department budgets. Staff members expressed concerns about the deception of posting a range that cannot be offered and time wasted in interviewing people who will not take a job at a lower salary. Erika said that HR does talk to people about the actual salary early in the process. Staff noted that it seems that the legal language around providing a “good faith” salary range is not being upheld. Erika acknowledged this concern and relayed that it is something she will discuss with her colleagues.

Calla Mattox (District C co-representative) noted that she thought the section of information for employees on the webpage was confusingly titled and made it seem like it was for managers: “What Is My Role in Implementing the New Requirements for Staff Employees?” Erika acknowledged that due to staff feedback, the page has been edited before, so it is good to know what might be more intuitive edits for the future as well.

A staff member asked if the contact info for the HR business partners was on the pay transparency website. It’s on the [HR Business Partner](#) webpage and can be added to the pay transparency site.

Lanni Isenberg relayed a comment from a District C constituent: “It was presented by HR as “protective” for employees not to know each other's salary ranges if they are in a higher position, but a lower level or mid-level staff person may find protection in knowing salaries among their peers. Erika said that this is confidential information, so the law needs to be administered the same way regardless of level. Carol Fierke and Stew Uretsky are concerned about campus-wide equity for similar level jobs. Erika said she thinks it is a bad idea to post employee pay because it is private and has context to it.

A staff member asked if a manager can ask for others’ pay ranges in similar roles or just theirs. Erika shared that a manager should have information about the pay ranges of anyone who reports to them. For conversations about adjusting pay, HR will talk to the operations liaison and the manager. For setting appropriate pay levels, HR looks at market data, internal equity, and manager judgement.

A staff member shared that they use the HR website to check on other compensation and benefits, such as sick days and health plans, rather than asking their manager. They would like to be able to do the same with salary ranges. Staff members are looking for consistent, easy access to salary information in the same way. Erika said that this is a matter of timing and it’s not available directly yet.

A staff member asked about ensuring equity with internal hires as Brandeis restructures and moves staff into new jobs. The new range will be shared with the employee (if it’s a direct promotion) or included in the posting (if it is not). Erika shared that it is very rare that someone will take a cut in pay.

Erika emphasized that practices at Brandeis are similar to those at peer institutions. However, she will weigh input from the meeting, especially about published ranges.

Erika recapped that the main takeaway questions for HR are the pay ranges used in job postings and the need to talk to one's manager to get one's pay range. BUSAC Interim Chair Brittani Harris Niquette will share any unanswered questions from the Zoom chat directly with Erika and her team in an effort to get staff some further answers.

Erika offered to attend a future BUSAC meeting or meetings with departments and will share more information, including with smaller groups. She relayed that any manager can request she and her team visit to discuss pay transparency or other items related to compensation.

The meeting concluded at 3:03 p.m.