



Brandeis
UNIVERSITY

**Brandeis University
Staff Advisory Committee**

**Annual Report
2019-2020**



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Executive Summary

Subject: Brandeis University Staff Advisory Committee (BUSAC) 2019-2020 Annual Report
Date: July 1, 2020

From: Aimee Slater, Chair, BUSAC
Bethany Romano, Vice Chair, BUSAC

To: Ronald Liebowitz, President
Stewart Uretsky, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration
Staff at Brandeis University

The Brandeis University Staff Advisory Committee (BUSAC) continues its advocacy for staff voice in proposing and reviewing policy. The committee boasts 17 members from departments from Finance and Operations located at 60 Turner Street to the Schusterman Center for Israel Studies in the Mandel Quad. We represent approximately 1,800 benefits-eligible staff members, of which 1,600 full-time, 200 part-time. Of those, about 1,450 work in Exempt roles, 350 are in Nonexempt. Three departments have unions: Facilities, Campus Police, and Librarians. While staff experiences vary by function and department across campus, BUSAC seeks to bring us all together to highlight common themes and establish priorities in order to communicate these to University Administration to ensure that staff is appropriately represented in the decision-making process.

This was a big year for BUSAC. Even before COVID-19, we were busy strengthening partnerships with Human Resources, working with the Office of Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion (ODEI) to unpack Brandeis culture and its impact on the staff experience, and serving on various cross-campus subcommittees and task forces that strive to improve Brandeis. We are excited and proud to be part of many big and small changes for staff, but our work is far from done.

In the age of COVID-19, many of us have found ourselves with a completely new set of workplace challenges, including what we define as a "workplace." BUSAC continues to work with the offices of HR, Finance & Administration, the Provost and the President to represent staff concerns, provide crucial feedback, and amplify messaging as the landscape of what it means to be Brandeisian shifts and changes. We've set priorities and built a succession plan so that the new Chair and committee can start right away with limited to no interruption of work.



From the Outgoing Chair: A Note of Thanks

As outgoing chair, I would like to thank Larry Lewellen, former interim Vice President of Human Resources, Robin Switzer, Vice President of Human Resources, and also our colleagues in HR including Liz Tierney and Kevin Pierson, who have actively worked to increase transparency and improve policy on campus. Thank you to Stew Uretsky, Executive Vice President for Finance and Administration for his support, and to Donna Coletti, Senior Executive Assistant, who keeps all the plates spinning.

Thank you to the outgoing BUSAC members who have spent the past two years working extraordinarily hard to build this committee, an often unglamorous and invisible task: Heather Felton (Arts & Sciences), Julia Mani (Academic Services), Joe Realejo (Campus Operations), and Traci Walkup (Assistant). Thank you to Matthew Carriker (Center for Spiritual Life), and Steve Weglinski (Graduate Affairs) for spending the last year or so with us. To the next incarnation of BUSAC: we're heading back to the ranks as big fans and strong advocates for the work you will be doing, but you should expect to hear from us often.

Finally, thank you to the staff at Brandeis. You are passionate, vocal, and dedicated; your work here is valuable, but more importantly, you are valuable. Thank you for sharing your insight and for trusting us with your experiences. There's always more to do, so please continue to bring your questions and concerns to BUSAC.

Be well, stay safe, and wash your hands,

Aimee



2019-2020 Members by District

Officers:

Chair: Aimee Slater, District K

Vice-Chair: Bethany Romano, District C

All Members:

District A *Arts & Sciences including the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and Admissions*
Representatives: Heather Felton & Lauren Jordahl

District B *The International Business School*
Representative: Mark Kahn

District C *The Heller School for Social Policy and Management*
Representatives: Bethany Romano & Victoria Felson

District D *The Rabb School of Continuing Studies*
Representative: Christie Barone

District E *Centers, Institutes, and the Rose Art Museum*
Representative: Rise Singer

District F *Administration: Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Investments, Legal, Finance, Human Resources, Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity, Communications, Office of Planning & Institutional Research, and Office of Special Events*
Representatives: Matthew Carriker & Mark Jay

District G *Institutional Advancement*
Representative: Ania Morris

District H *Student Affairs: Athletics, Counseling Center, Community Living, Health Center, Student Activities, and Student Life*
Representative: Lucas Malo

District I *Academic Affairs: Academic Services, Study Abroad, International Students and Scholars Office, English Language Program, Registrar, Graduate Student Affairs*
Representative: Julia Mani

District J *Campus Operations: Public Safety, Facilities, and the Office of Conference & Event Service*
Representatives: Joseph Realejo & Eric Dunn

District K *Information Technology Services and Library Services*
Representatives: Aimee Slater & Christopher Lowre

Member-at-Large
Representative: Steven Weglinski



2019-2020 Accomplishments

Our strongest partnership is with Human Resources, and we spent this year working with HR on policies that affect staff. BUSAC elevates questions and concerns from each district to HR and HR relies on BUSAC to give input on new and revised policies.

Advisory Work:

- Participated in guided conversations with HR and the Office of DEI about the culture at Brandeis (what to keep, what to toss, what to aspire to)
- Recommended change to holiday party back to daytime format to ensure inclusion of maximum amount of staff. Volunteered alongside HR colleagues to welcome guests
- Provided feedback to HR/administration to improve “InBrief” content to increase readership
- Provided Workday implementation feedback to Workday team
- Coordinated with the President’s Office to have important staff notifications translated into Spanish. Additional language translations may be added.
- Gave feedback to help design and improve online staff directory
- Collaborated with HR to clarify tuition remission policy for part-time staff, clarify work from home expectations during campus closures in winter, provided feedback on staff survey
- Partnered with HR for improved onboarding experience
- Participated in new food vendor vetting interviews
- Co-sponsored Town Halls with HR to explain new and expanded policies - dependent care program, staff internal transfers and promotions, tuition remission, consensual relationships, telecommuting and alternative work schedule, and on-the-spot rewards
- Provided input to HR and the EVP of Finance and Administration regarding the following policies, especially in light of the COVID-19 pandemic:

Summer flex policy

Suspending vacation carryover limit

Temporary suspension of the Brandeis 403(b) matching program and overtime pay for nonexempt staff



2019-2020 Accomplishments

Committee/Task Force Work:

- BUSAC representative served on the selection committee for the new Vice President of Human Resources. The committee assisted with onboarding Robin Switzer.
- Met with search firm in charge of search for new Provost - *Ongoing*
- BUSAC representative appointed to Brandeis Sustainability Task Force - *Ongoing*
- BUSAC representative appointed to Restorative Justice Working Group - *Ongoing*
- Sponsored lawn games at Staff BBQ in August '19
- Several district reps hosted meet and greets for their colleagues
- Continued to advocate for BUSAC representation at Board of Trustees meetings
- Met with Faculty Senate Chair to discuss common concerns and issues, possible collaborations, and ways for each group to support the other
- Provided feedback to University's task forces for campus planning and improvement: physical plant, supporting research, and founding values
- BUSAC members serve on four of the Presidential Working Groups associated with the University's planning for the Fall 2020 semester regarding COVID-19. BUSAC representatives include:

Public Health and Campus Reopening: Lauren Jordahl, District A Rep (Arts & Sciences)

Finance and Human Resources: Mark Khan, District B Rep (The International Business School)

Campus Living and Operations: Rise Singer, District E Rep (Centers, Institutes, and the Rose)

Communications: Bethany Romano, District C Rep (The Heller School)



2019-2020 Accomplishments

Internal Processes

- Streamlined BUSAC elections process
- Succession planning to ensure smooth transition of function and leadership. Amended the charter to include this process.
- Transitioned from inaugural leadership to newly elected leadership as of July 1.



2020-2021 Goals

During the winter of AY 2019-2020, BUSAC undertook a priority-setting exercise to help the committee determine which issues on its docket were most pressing. The Chair and Vice Chair compiled a list of concerns that had been discussed in recent meetings and grouped them into three categories: 1) benefits, 2) improvements, and 3) policy. Each committee member was asked to rank-order the items in each category according to priority level. We then averaged the responses. The highest-priority issues, as identified by the committee, were as follows:

- **Salary Range Transparency:** There is significant support across the committee to institute public, campus-wide salary grades at Brandeis, as public universities are required to do (and many private universities opt to do).
- **Paid Leave:** This item encompasses a variety of concerns about the University's paid leave policy, including transparency around what it includes, its limitations, and its implementation.
- **Benefits Equity:** In many instances, benefits packages differ according to the employee's status as faculty, exempt staff, nonexempt staff, etc.
- **Retention/Turnover:** There is a sense that the University experiences chronic retention/turnover issues that could be rectified through thoughtful initiatives and policy adjustments.
- **Website presence** - BUSAC currently uses a Google Site for its online presence. We have received confirmation from the digital team in Brandeis Communications that they will build a new website for us in the University's web template. Our goal is to migrate the current BUSAC website into the University domain next year, giving us a consistent look and feel to the rest of the University websites. Any member of BUSAC who has completed CMS training will be able to freely edit the new website at any time.

BUSAC will continue to work with campus partners on these issues, as well as any others that arise. Please contact BUSAC, busac@brandeis.edu, with any additional comments or concerns.



2020-2021 Members by District

Officers:

Chair: Rise Singer, District E

Vice-Chair: Bethany Romano, District C

All Members:

District A *Arts & Sciences including the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and Admissions*
Representatives: Lauren Jordahl & Maryanna Aldrich**

District B *The International Business School*
Representative: Mark Kahn

District C *The Heller School for Social Policy and Management*
Representatives: Bethany Romano & Victoria Felson*

District D *The Rabb School of Continuing Studies*
Representative: Christie Barone*

District E *Centers, Institutes, and the Rose Art Museum*
Representative: Rise Singer*

District F *Administration: Office of the President, Office of the Provost, Investments, Legal, Finance, Human Resources, Office of Diversity, Inclusion, & Equity, Communications, Office of Planning & Institutional Research, and Office of Special Events*
Representatives: Mark Jay & Dora Ocanto Gomez**

District G *Institutional Advancement*
Representative: Ania Morris

District H *Student Affairs: Athletics, Counseling Center, Community Living, Health Center, Student Activities, and Student Life*
Representative: Lucas Malo

District I *Academic Affairs: Academic Services, Study Abroad, International Students and Scholars Office, English Language Program, Registrar, Graduate Student Affairs*
Representative: Haydee Vazquez**

District J *Campus Operations: Public Safety, Facilities, and the Office of Conference & Event Service*
Representatives: Eric Dunn & Judy Thorton**

District K *Information Technology Services and Library Services*
Representatives: Christopher Lowre & Walt McGough**

Member-at-Large
Representative: Mangok Bol**

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**newly elected