BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE

Meeting of the 2011-12 Faculty Senate
This meeting was held on May 2nd, 2012 from 1:00-3:00 in the Faculty Club Lounge.


Absent: Charles Golden, Richard Parmentier, Harleen Singh

Approval of Minutes
The Faculty Senate approved the minutes of the April 3, 2012 meeting.

Updates on Senate Council Activities
The Senate Council met with the Provost to discuss the possible introduction of background checks for faculty. Since there has not been a great need at Brandeis, the group was uncertain about whether this would be necessary to implement. However, it was mentioned that Wellesley College does require background checks as part of the hiring process, with the exception of credit checks. Some felt that this was a reasonable action for Brandeis to take, both to secure the protection of the students, staff and faculty, as well as a legal protection for Brandeis should an issue occur. The practicalities of this issue were also discussed. When in the faculty hiring process would a background check be performed? What would the cost of such an initiative be, both in implementation and maintenance? There was also an interest in working with other area universities to standardize this practice. The Council will meet with the Provost again to discuss these options.

This conversation led to a discussion of the procedures for hiring and firing adjunct faculty. This issue has been brought to the attention of CFRR. There is a concern that the faculty handbook does not distinguish between adjunct and contract/tenured faculty on this issue. There was also the issue discussed of adjunct faculty who are hired repeatedly to teach the same course/s, and the question of at what point should these instructors be offered a contract.

The Council has completed the work, coordinating with Trudy Crosby, to create a page that will house all of the policies of the university, in one location, on the Provost’s website. This information can be found at: http://www.brandeis.edu/provost/guidelines/index.html

Non-discrimination and Harassment Policy
The Senate reviewed the updated Non-discrimination and Harassment Policy, and voted, unanimously, to approve the changes. The Senate is now on record as being in full support of this policy.

An issue was raised in regards to Step 4 of the new policy which reads:

Step 4: Further Appeal (for faculty who have been suspended or terminated)
A decision to suspend or dismiss a faculty member may be appealed further under the applicable appeal procedure set forth in the Faculty Handbook.

The concern expressed related to a section of the faculty handbook that refers to termination based on the policies of the Drug-Free Workplace and Sexual Harassment, and whether or not these two statements are compatible. The handbook reads:

**VII. DISPUTE RESOLUTION**

Disputes involving faculty rights and responsibilities, including salary grievances, are to be resolved through action by the chair of the department or other academic administrative unit involved, the appropriate Academic Dean, or the Provost, acting in accordance with the deliberative and decision-making processes outlined below. This dispute resolution process does not apply to cases involving matters on which decision and appeal processes are guided by a separate legal procedure provided by university regulations (e.g., alleged violations of university policies on sexual harassment or the drug-free workplace). Appeals concerning the tenure and promotion process are heard by the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities in accordance with the provisions of this Handbook (see section V.A.4.b.vii, above).

The Senate recognized that the handbook language on this issue might need to be revised to be in accordance with the new Non-discrimination and Harassment Policy, and will address this in the fall semester.

**Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence on Campus**

The Faculty Senate is heading the initiative to create a committee to investigate sexual violence on campus and to provide recommendations of action to the Senate. The Senate Council will approach the Provost about the possibility of having this committee joint commissioned by the Faculty Senate and the Provost’s Office.

The proposed charge of the committee reads as follows:

The Faculty Senate asks you to study the problem of sexual harassment and sexual violence at Brandeis and other college campuses and to report back to the Faculty Senate by December 1st 2012 with recommendations for steps the Brandeis community can take to combat these unacceptable behaviors which are negatively impacting the academic experience of many of our students.

It was mentioned that the Dean of Heller School has already instituted a diversity committee that could serve as a resource to this committee. The Senate also reviewed a list of possible faculty members to serve on this committee.

**Elections**

Elections for Faculty Senate, Board of Trustees Representatives and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee will be running over finals week. Elections will close on May 10th. There will be a meeting of the new Senate after the elections are completed.

Meeting adjourned at 2:40.