BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY
FACULTY SENATE MEETING 2 – 2015-2016

MEETING MINUTES

Thursday, September 17, 2015
10:00 AM – 11:30 AM
Levine-Ross 1 & 2, Hassenfeld Conference Center

AGENDA

OUTCOMES

♦ Shared ideas and understanding of action steps for creating our “Agenda for Engagement”
♦ Confirmation of subcommittee leadership teams and topics

• Remarks from the Chair
  o Faculty Meeting and Challenge for Engagement
  o UAC – President’s Sustainability Council and Spirituality Plan
  o Senator Affiliations
  o Council-at-Work
• Council Reports
  o Unionization Update – Jeff Prottas
  o Peer Institution Research Underway – Adrianne Krstansky
  o Tenure Promotion/Handbook Update – John Wardle (in Absentia)
  o Faculty Club “No Tipping” Policy – Susan P. Curnan
• Senate Discussion: How might we engage the Faculty in deeper conversation regarding community building and governance?
• Next Steps and Organizing Ourselves for Action
• Other Business

PRESENT: Susan P. Curnan, Chair, Dan Bergstresser, Joe Cunningham, Elizabeth Ferry, William Flesch, Kathryn Graddy, Eli Hirsch, Adrianne Krstansky, Sarah Mead, Paul Miller, Susan Parish, Thomas Pochapsky, Jeffrey Prottas, Laurence Simon, Joseph Wardwell, John Wardle

ABSENT: Jens Hilscher (Ulka Anjaria on leave 2015-2016)

Remarks from Chair
The Chair opened the meeting with a review of the two outcomes as identified above. Then, the Chair provided a summary of the Senate Report presented at the September 11, 2015 Faculty Meeting and an update on issues/concerns brought forward by faculty in response
to the Chair’s “Challenge of Engagement” launched at the first faculty meeting. The Chair thanked the Council for working hard on advancing some of the Senate priorities and turned to Council members for reports/updates.

Council Reports

- Jeff Prottas provided a report about the Faculty Senate Council discussion with Brandeis General Counsel Steve Locke and Provost Irv Epstein detailing current understanding of the process steps regarding Unionization at Brandeis and at peer institutions. Jeff suggested some guidance and responsibilities for Senate consideration.
  o Senators discussed their various understanding of Union membership/participation and agreed there is an uneven understanding of the process among the full faculty.
  o Senators discussed the “agnostic” role of the Administration in unionization.
  o **ACTION** – It was decided that the Senate should initiate an educational fact sheet on unionization process and that Senators will contribute to a FAQ (or some form of educational package) for all faculty by emailing well-articulated questions to the Chair.
- Adrianne Krstansky shared her research/information about peer institutions engaged in the union movement.
- The Chair reported that a group of Senators, including the Chair, Elizabeth Ferry, Kathryn Graddy, Jeff Prottas and a Faculty member, will meet with Brandeis VP of Operations Jim Gray to discuss the posted “no tipping policy” at the Faculty Club.
  o Senators suggested related discussion points for the Faculty Senate to address: low wage workers on campus and revisiting the mailroom and bookstore staff decisions.
  o Susan Parish and Laurence Simon joined the subcommittee on this “no tipping policy” but are unable to make the meeting.
  o The Chair added that other Faculty have reached out to her to express support for addressing the issue.
- John Wardle reported from his follow-up meetings with Dean Susan Birren regarding the tenure promotion process and handbook updates. Discussion ensued.
  o Faculty Senate members asked if the proposed “standing committee” reads all submitted scholarly materials or mainly the letters of recommendation?
  o Faculty Senate members asked for a distinction about the influence of “outside” (Non-Brandeis) letter writers for candidates of promotion to tenure and “outside” reviewers who meet with the Review Committee via Skype.
  o John Wardle agreed to re-draft suggested handbook revisions to be considered by the Senate. There is not consensus on the proposal at this time. The Chair suggests the Senate take a vote at the next meeting to bring closure to the discussion and advise Dean Birren. It is not required that the Senate “approve” the proposal before going to Handbook Revisions and vote of the full faculty.
Other Business

- ACTION – Senators will email The Chair with information about how to further engage Faculty in governance, which remains at the top of the “issues” list. Examples provided: Social gatherings, small group issues discussions in Faculty Meetings.
- Other Senators would like to revisit a promise that the University will pay back Faculty for retirement funds withheld during the economic pull back two years ago. Dan Bergstresser agreed to lead the task on reparation as he was on the prior committee addressing that issue.
- A Senator reported that many Faculty members in the Humanities Department are upset with the new “block system” (course schedule) problems.
- The chair added that invitations are going out to members of the Budget Committee to present at an upcoming Senate meeting, and that there will be presentations from the Administrative Leadership on the sustainability plans to Faculty this fall.

Meeting adjourned at 11:30 a.m.

ATTACHMENTS

- Faculty Senate Report Presentation from September 11, 2015 Faculty Meeting
- Summary of Early Responses from Faculty Meeting “Challenge of Engagement”
- Senator Affiliations
- Faculty Meeting Bingo! (Chronicle of Higher Education, Sept. 11, 2015)

Respectfully submitted on September 17, 2015 by Lanni Isenberg.