Brandeis Faculty Senate Meeting  
October 16th, 2020  
Via Zoom

Brandeis Faculty Senate

2:00-2:15 - Welcome, Notes and Approval of minutes
   Motion to approve minutes
   Approved

A couple of updates, we are working to post all of our memos to our website and sending out memos to the administration. For Dignity at Work, I have a meeting with HR and other stakeholders next Thursday. We are not going to make any changes to the document but we want to push this through before Lisa steps down.

We have an additional meeting on Monday October 26th on Anti-Racism.
   Question: Is this for the training or to talk about the training?
   Response: I invited Mark to come to the meeting or to send someone to talk at the meeting. I’m thinking this is an ice breaking meeting and we will use the meeting to set some priorities and goals.

   Question: I ran into some free online anti-racism training online, should we consider this?
   Response: That is something we can bring to the meeting.

We ran a survey and we will have the survey results.
   Question: Can it be resent? Some people have reported that they didn’t receive it.
   Response: Reminders were sent

I would like some volunteers to read through the results
   Comment: I’d recommend that we have a more systematic review of the results
   Joel Cutcher Gershenfeld, Carol Osler, Davide Pettenuzzo volunteered

Does anyone have any new business for the Senate?
   Comment: I think the survey will lead us to subjects in later meetings. I get the sense of a lot of faculty and staff stress. We’ve got to figure out how to get through another semester like this.

   Comment: Something that came up at IBS, there has been some severe bullying of PhD students in public happening at IBS. It is hard to address these things especially as cultures vary across campus.
Response: When I meet with Robin I can bring this up as we talk about culture changes.

Comment: It'll be at least 9-12 months until we are in recovery rather than in pandemic but it's not too soon to start planning for that, some kind of medium to long term planning.

Response: Two upcoming numbers we will have to strategize around will be the budget and the fall enrollment.

Comment: We might want to talk to the ombuds officer about workplace behavior.

2:15-2:45 - Lauren Haynie, Director of Brandeis Athletics

I spent my first year understanding the founding ethos of Brandeis as well as our size and the multifaceted Department of Athletics. We are part of the Brandeis core so all undergraduates have to take a course with one of our coaches. As part of the University Athletic Association, we are a division three institution so we don't offer athletic scholarships. There have been three directors of athletics in three years so it's been a period of transition.

Where do I begin? I am visible on campus. I am accessible, when Joel asked how about a Senate presentation I said of course, I am transparent, I have a curious mind, and I have a team mentality. We have a lot of stakeholders that I want to keep in mind as well.

What did I learn in my first year? The divide between athletics and the rest of campus. We have a little bit of separation and we have to think about that as we try to integrate student athletes and our staff/faculty. We are some of the first things that prospective students see. Our alumni and prospective students want to hear from us. Resources matter but we have some unique opportunities with our facilities and alumni. I've been so impressed by our faculty to pivot without any notice to put our students first.

What are we doing? Last spring semester, starting in January, we kicked off a three-year plan to focus on our goals and align with the framework for the future. Our guiding principles are purpose, people, passion. The action plan for this fall includes, inclusion programming for staff and student-athletes. Our student athletes will be going through a 4-part anti-racist training. Our staff is undergoing the same training with an additional component on student athlete recruitment. Varsity and club sports are practicing not competing. Intramural sports are having activities as well. Next week is our virtual homecoming. We are preparing for Giving Tuesday. We have a Voting Initiative to get our students and staff enrolled to vote and there are no activities on November 3rd. Student Affairs, we no longer report to the Office of the Provost.

What Comes Next? We are looking to increase the number of underrepresented staff. We are planning a campus fitness challenge. Mind and Body curriculum review. Faculty engagement, we've been working with Jen Cleary on this. We don't know about competitions in the Spring semester. I cannot answer it right now but we will know soon. The institution's commitment to testing will make it possible for potentially competing.
Questions or comments?

Question: When we went into remote teaching last spring/march, one of my students who was an athlete, left campus and went into a less than ideal housing situation where he was working to put a roof over his head and food on his table. What are we doing for our students in these situations?

Response: Often our coaches are the first people to raise alarms like this. A coach would come to me and ask what we can do to help and then we reach out to other stakeholders on campus to find solutions. We had about 10-15 students last spring that could not go home and we had to work internally with the university to find solutions.

Question: I know there are faculty that are very concerned about the mid-term break and if there will be student housing?

Response: There is an application process for folks to remain on campus. From what I understand there will continue to be access to dining services but it will look differently. There should be some messaging coming in the next day or very shortly about this. There are some housing opportunities.

Question: I’ve talked to a lot of freshman groups and the students who seem the most positive seem to be the student athletes. One comment was “I found orientation useless, I didn’t have anything in common with other people, why can’t orientation be more like my softball team?” How are you taking the experience and success of athletics and bringing that to Student Affairs in terms of cohort building?

Response: I think mid-year orientation will look different and be more intentional. The student athletes are a diverse group but they do have at least the one thing in common, the athletics. We do have to be more intentional though as our students are living in singles.

Question: I wonder if we might be able to implement a similar thing to the Fall visits for athletes, which enables them to make social connections early/before they come to campus, for instrumentalists or other students?

Response: For us, we’ve been doing a lot of virtual visits which is less than ideal but it is a window into the lives of the current students. But to your point, actually having a meaningful connection before you ever get to campus is very significant.

Comment: Your inclusion training is much needed.

Response: Yes, the need was so important that we had to do it.

Question: You inherited a broken culture, I really appreciate your tone about it not being just varsity competitions and athletics being more connected to the entire community. How do you see yourself continuing to promote diversity equity and inclusion while also maintaining a competitive varsity culture?

Response: Our student athletes lead the way. They ask a lot from us and we owe them a great debt. I tell the staff that our
students need us and need us in a different way. They need us to be better and to acknowledge our mistakes in the past. We've had the opportunity to have some really honest conversations. Without competing this fall we've had the chance to really dig into this work. We do need more representation and we need to work with our colleagues across campus. In terms of being competitive, success looks different across our programs. We need to take control of our destiny and work with Institutional advancement to use our facilities to help our programs be competitive. It will be difficult for some sports to be competitive across the UAA but we can be better.

2:25-3:30 - By-laws discussion and new business

I wanted to give you a brief preview of the faculty meeting. I will give a few updates, then Jamele Adams will talk about the black action plan. He was upset that I didn't mention the Breonna Taylor situation and we spoke honestly about why I didn't do that, which was White privilege. Lisa will move from that to talk about our emerging plans here at Brandeis. After that we will finish the chaos of the voting for the governance proposals. Procedurally, a motion cannot be made unless the chair acknowledges the speaker making the motion. I'm considering not allowing chat motions. You would have to put your hand up and I will call on you. This will help keep things orderly.

Discussion of the Raise Hand Function on Zoom to help with Presenting Motions

The first proposal, the chair limit, passed in the vote. I agree with this. The second is changing the representation and number of senators. There were some discussions about splitting the two issues but I don't think they will have it. We will just have to vote with our conscience. You are right that there are two proposals.

Comment: I was not happy with the way the administration and the people who came up with the proposals were trying to ram it down our throats. They are trying to change the Senate and I don’t see why we have to accept these two things as conjoined.

Response: We can vote it down and bring our own proposal later.

Comment: That will be hard to do though.

Question: Can you want to write an amendment or a specific addition to the proposal?

Comment: I'm going to vote against the proposal but I will also commit myself to working on expanding representation.

Comment: I was upset that Wendy, in her role as an administrator, called the question to quelch the debate around the proposal.

Response: To be fair to Wendy, I don’t think that she sees herself as only an administrator. She has a faculty appointment.

Question: Can we not just amend the proposal as we discuss it?
Response: If it is a friendly amendment.
Response: Strategically do we want to split it into two proposals or just amend out the offensive parts.

Comment: Robert’s Rules is a top down, order maintaining regime. It is not collaboratively constructed.

Question: Two things I wanted to mention, don’t the two votes have to be sequential? And this is pushing the boundaries of civility and appropriate behavior on campus.
Response: Everything we had negotiated in the original proposal was changed at the last minute. That being said, we can still be civil and firm and people will either believe us or not.

Comment: The fact that there was union representation on that committee that was appointed by the president was in part due to me asking for it.
Response: I also encourage union representation.

Comment: We will need to come prepared. We didn’t finish the conversation in the last meeting. It is clear to me that this is a power grab by Ron as there will be less people he will have to deal with and there will be less communal knowledge.
Response: We will continue to have discussions on this. I will say that in my conversations with Ron, he just wants a Senate that is easier to deal with. Some on the committee just have an antagonism towards the Senate that I don’t understand. They seem to be concerned about a professional school having too much influence and I get comments about how none of the Senate Council are from A&S, even though I am from A&S as the chair.

Question: When all this started we gave the administration space and worked to collaborate with them. What I don’t understand is given that basic level of support and respect, why isn’t there that same level of support and respect coming back the other way? Why are they stopping to actually notice what the Senate is actually trying to do rather than what they think the Senate did at one time?

Comment: We’ve had a decade of the humanities under fire. When people say there is too much Heller or IBS representation, I think there is also this subtext. They do need dialogue. We have not seen anything in the Senate that there is parochial thinking along these lines but we might have to be more honest and open in addressing these concerns.

Comment: I think it is an issue of not only A&S versus the other schools but also Arts and Humanities against the Sciences. My impression is that there is so much secrecy about the money and about which divisions of the university are profit centers and which are loss centers. There is good general evidence nationally that the humanities subsidize the sciences. And this makes people suspicious especially in the arts and humanities as the university is taking our
money for the more expensive but higher profile sciences. Which contributes to the sense that the administration is grabbing power.

Comment: It’s been a broken record of great enthusiasm and great support that it has to be hard to keep up with. I don’t know what angle to take as there are so many hoops to jump through for a lot of these issues.

I would like to divide between the two themes that have come out. The lack of motivation in joining the senate and the fact that we have to serve the interests of our community not the interests of our disciplines.

Comment: The timing of this is really awful. Shrinking the senate when we might be facing furloughs and layoffs is bad.

Question: We need to have a plan for the next faculty meeting. Where are we with the proposal?
Response: As I understand it, any amendment can be made during the discussion of it. I’d recommend a brief preamble list out the reasons why we don’t think it is good. And we have two votes: a vote to amend and then a vote to pass. We should take the proposal, decide what the amendment would be and then the themes of preamble.

Comment: We are already a small group and the same number of us that are volunteering for multiple committees is concerning especially if they limit our number even more. How will we be able to be functional?

Two main themes I’m hearing, broad representation and functionality. What else should we suggest?
Suggestion: The current Faculty Senate is all against this, that is important.

Suggestion: Another one is the diversity of the members.

Suggestion: If you were to announce that the entire senate opposes this proposal that would have an effect.
Response: I can’t announce that as I have to maintain some sense of neutrality in my role as chair.

Discussion of Representativeness and Faculty Governance

Joel Cutcher Gershenfeld volunteered to make a draft for the Faculty Meeting.

We will have to push the by-laws to the next regular senate meeting. We also have other issues to talk about such as climate change and tenure.

Attendance: Grace Zimmerman, Joel Christensen, Pu Wang, Carol Osler, Joel Cutcher Gershenfeld, Gordon Fellman, Monika Mitra, Davide Pettenuzzo, Sue Lanser, Susan Dibble, William Flesch, Sabine Von Mering

Guest: Lauren Haynie, Nina Kammerer