Brandeis Faculty Senate
Via Zoom, 8/28/2020

Brandeis Faculty Senate Meeting Minutes

2:00 PM - Welcome and Introductions

Acknowledgement of all the Summer work done by the Senate this Summer.

One proposal that Lisa has given is that we will no longer take minutes during the Faculty Meetings since we have video recordings and the Provost’s Office is short staffed.

Comment: I’m worried about this unless they are transcribed. It’s harder to review the actual video than it is to review the minutes. Minutes are easier to digest.

Comment: I agree. And since we have the recordings we can have someone record the minutes later if needed.

Response: We can’t keep to Robert’s Rules without minutes.

We will let the Provost’s Office know we think it is a bad idea.

Motion to Confirm Grace on the Strategy and Planning subcommittee.
-Confirmed

Larry Simon has offered to stay on as the Senate’s library liaison, it doesn’t have to be someone in the Senate.
- Carol Osler volunteered
-Confirmed

According to the handbook we are supposed to receive reports from all handbook committees but we have not had any reports yet. My suggestion is that I send each chair of the committees a request for a written report.

We have to seat committees. We have people rotating off the CFRR. We have two tenure positions and one non-tenure position to nominate.

Question: Who is already staying on the committee?
-Overview of the current list: Rodal (leaving), Birren, Dexter, Thomas, Cutcher-Gershenfeld (leaving), Blocker, Feng, Chakraborty (leaving), Lian, Papaemmanouil

-Call for nominations

Comment: We should have someone from the Senate - do we have a senator willing to stand?

Comment: It might look better to nominate from outside the senate so it doesn't seem like a consolidation of power.

We also need a recommendation for the intellectual property committee. Do you have anyone in mind with knowledge in this area?

-Call for nominations

I want to thank Sue for the Emeriti Project, it looks wonderful and we will be linking out to it soon!

-We've had a lot of emeriti offering to teach a class.
-Proposal around helping to take care of children.

Comment: I'd like us to have a craigslist type clearing house where people can offer their services/post requests. Potentially using work-study students. My next step would be to talk to Jim La Creta to see what potential there might be/what leg work needs to be done.

Comment: One conversation I've had around this was using Slack for this rather than an independent app. It would come down to who is administering this. Wendy and Dorothy are brainstorming about this.

Comment: I'd like the option to have a course-relief for childcare over paying somebody else.

I'm hearing two different approaches to this: contract flexibility for the year and some type of platform for coordinating.

Comment: Someone suggested that this type of online connection could work through BOLLI.

Carol, Sue, Joel, I will send you an email after to keep this conversation going.

Discussion of lingering items from last year.
We still have the dignity at work proposals that we will have to move forward. With the new Title IX there are new policies and procedures so I’d like to go through what we have and where we need to be.

-Overview of the Dignity at Work Proposal Process up through this year.

Comment: One of the challenges is this will have to move fast and we will have to come to an understanding as the University has a revolving door of stakeholders.

We will have to get the stakeholders involved and have everyone come to an understanding. Anyone else would like to help, especially with the Title IX changes, I’d appreciate it. We should have the vote before the December break.

The by-laws that we posted are still provisional. I’d like to ratify them at some point this year. There are some problems with them - what is the best way to get the by-laws reviewed. **Action Item: Dedicate at least half of the next meeting to review the bylaws.**

The governance reform committee had a few main suggestions by-laws (which we wrote), the makeup of the senate (which was just rearranging some of the at-large seats), term limit the chair of the senate - this would have to be a vote but I’m fine with this, and also limiting the number of faculty meetings.

Comment: I think a memo going through their suggestions and our responses to these is a good way to address them.

Question: Should we reach out and ask the committee about where we are on these?

Response: I think the memo is good enough.

The one area I think we need more conversation is unionized faculty representation in the senate. Connected to this, we’ve received a number of anonymous statements that the faculty should be fully unionized.

Comment: I am very opposed, it would create animosity between the faculty and administration that doesn’t need to be there. The union takes out my individual power.

Comment: I’m not in favor either.

Comment: Same with me.

Comment: We should investigate other universities with faculty unions.

Comment: Unions as they've traditionally functioned are a poor match for faculty governance. If you look at the way the graduate student union has negotiated they've taken a problem-solving,
collaborative approach and it has been beneficial. Having said that, the faculty senate does a lot of what a union would do so it wouldn’t add value there.

Comment: From what I’ve seen unions change the relationship around shared governance.

Comment: I agree, I think it is complicated as we have so many different types of contracts. When the unionization idea started in the past the union people were extremely aggressive. It would be nice to have more information about where we are and faculty unions elsewhere.

Discussion of unions, our faculty governance, researching other faculty unions elsewhere, and the sentiments therein.


Comment: I think a lot of people don’t know enough about unions, but I was wondering if there are people outside the university that are in this field/know about this in detail. Can we potentially have someone outside of the university to come speak with us?

Question: Joel and Ilana, can you work together on pulling in some names for someone to talk to us?

Comment: It needs to be stated that we shouldn’t have leaks about this. We do not want people hearing that “the senate wants to unionize” when we are only trying to learn more about the subject.

Comment: It could be seen as a slap in the face to some of the administration that has been working hard.

Comment: I served on the faculty governance task force, if we now give just an impression that we want to unionize it will be seen as antagonistic and against all the work that has been done.

Comment: The sentiment around this strikes me as more reactionary to the current events than anything else. Perhaps we should send out some type of communication that highlights the care and concern that these decisions underwent.

Comment: Perhaps instead of inviting someone which might have all the negative connotations we should just do the research ourselves and present to you all.

How do we feel about giving some representation in the senate to the unionized faculty?
Comment: There are some legal implications here and there might be some stuff we have to put into the by-laws so that there isn’t conflict with union/senate membership.

Question: Can there be some kind of liaison?

Response: We suggested this last year. If you all approve I can reach out to the union to have them send someone to observe and report.

Any other new matters? One issue is our policy already has limits for recorded videos for class and contract hours when we combine synchronous and asynchronous teaching. We will have to finish the Sunset Memo that we started this summer.

Comment: The business school asked the registrar about the contact hours question and I believe that they counted the minutes you were in front of the students and the minutes from the recordings count together as contact hours.

Comment: I’ve heard others go to Elaine Wong and have been told that contact hours in the classroom are contact hours but the recordings are homework not contact hours.

I’ll email Mark for a clear answer then loop in Elaine who helps to enforce these decisions. We should go ahead with the Sunset Memo and include the synchronous and asynchronous question.

Are there any individuals or offices that you want to give presentations or come talk to the Senate?

Suggestion: Perhaps we should have Finance come talk to us.

Discussion of the Financial situation, the Endowment, and financial communications
- I’ll invite Stew to come and talk about these things.

Suggestion: I’d like to hear from Enrollment

Comment: I’ve been thinking about our leadership and anti-racism on campus. I feel like a lot of the discourse is about racism out “there” and not here on campus. I’d recommend anti-racism training for the senate so that we can be more educated.

Comment: There is a movement for an education strike on the 8th and 9th? Should we advocate for it or wait for someone else to bring it up?
- I’ll bring this up in email - our feelings about the strike and anti-racism training/education.

Additional Email Links: [https://www.coursera.org/learn/antiracism-1/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=other&utm_campaign=opencourse.st](https://www.coursera.org/learn/antiracism-1/?utm_medium=email&utm_source=other&utm_campaign=opencourse.st)

Attendance: Sabine Von Mering, Joel Christensen, Sue Lanser, Joel Cutcher Gershenfeld, William Flesch, Susan Dibble, Davide Pettenuzzo, Carol Osler, Dmitry Kleinbock, Ilana Szobel, Elanah Uretsky, Gordon Fellman, Pu Wang, Grace Zimmerman

Guest: David Katz

Absent: Rajesh Sampath, A. K. Nandakumar, Liuba Shrira, Monika Mitra, Arthur Holmberg