April 20, 2018

“Indifference, to me, is the epitome of evil.” Elie Wiesel, Nobel Laureate (1986), Holocaust Survivor

Given the nature of recent events, the Faculty Senate feels it must not hesitate any longer in issuing a statement in support of all those harmed, starting with the brave students who made the initial complaint. We condemn the actions of our former basketball coach and the institutional failings that allowed them to continue unchecked. We also applaud our administration’s commitment to swift, forceful, and transformative action. But, following the publication of a second article about our athletics department and the events of our Community Meeting on Monday, April 9th, it is clear that not only does institutional, social and cultural racism impact members of our community, but many perceive an expression of hatred toward marginalized groups which has been nourished by privilege and perpetuated by indifference.

It pains us to no end that, as in the larger society, our students along with faculty and staff of color and other marginalized groups are forced to fight for the basic right to be respected and treated with the full equality and dignity which should be afforded to every member of our community. This oppression is amplified when our institution fails them repeatedly in multiple forms and contexts.

Therefore, we must consider as a community how deeply the issues of race, racial injustice, and institutionalized racism impact members of our community. We must also acknowledge that many members of our community stand at the intersection of different identities in overlapping contexts of oppression.

Before speaking publicly or charting new courses of action, we must critically reflect upon the nature of our failings and our responsibilities to each other both as individuals and as members of this institution. It is our moral duty to take extreme care when commenting on matters of race, racism or other intersectional forms of oppression. Our pledge is to call out this social pathology in all its dimensions: we must ensure that all voices are included in our public discussions, especially those of the oppressed when discussing oppression.

We urge President Liebowitz and our entire community of faculty, researchers, staff, students, alumni and trustees to summon all of our strength, talent, and conviction to fight for Social Justice.

Signed by,

Joseph Assan, Daniel Bergstresser, Joel Christensen, Jennifer Cleary, Joseph Cunningham, Susan P. Curnan, Jane Ebert, Elizabeth Ferry, Anita Hannig, Susan Holcombe, Adrienne Krstansky, Sarah Mead, Paul Miller, Kate Moran, Carol Osler, Rajesh Sampath, Laurence Simon, Faith Smith and John Wardle

The Faculty Senate is the elected representative body of the Brandeis University Faculty
http://www.brandeis.edu/faculty-senate/

Read at Faculty Meeting April 20, 2018