

Suggestions from the Task Force on Faculty Governance¹
Brandeis University
January 19, 2018
Brief Summary

In May 2017, President Liebowitz charged this Task Force with assessing faculty governance at Brandeis and making recommendations as needed to make it more effective. We worked through the Fall, aiming to:

- Ensure that faculty be engaged in key decisions while ensuring that faculty time devoted to governance is well spent and effective.
- Maintain all the critical functions that faculty currently serve in the university.
- Increase the influence of faculty in areas central to its responsibilities.
- Ensure that every committee has an important and clear charge and that all committee work fits clearly into a broader system of authority and decision making.

In this spirit, we propose some new committees, suggest that some existing committees be retired, and suggest some committees be streamlined or consolidated. We also specify how all of these committees relate to one another, what the mandate of each is, and who has decision-making responsibility in each. As a faculty committee, we are sharing this report simultaneously with the full faculty and the senior administration.

Based on a range of data sources, including a faculty survey completed in May 2017, we identified the following eight areas as those over which faculty should have primary responsibility. We are aware that in some of these areas, such as tenure and promotion, the faculty recommends to the Deans who then recommends to the Provost who then recommends to the President, and in appropriate cases the President then recommends to the Board. These eight areas are:

1. faculty hiring, after areas are articulated
2. evaluation of faculty, including tenure and promotion
3. the curriculum
4. academic standards and policy
5. the quality of teaching and learning
6. graduate admissions
7. scholarships and awards
8. research priorities

All of these areas are obviously informed by the resources available.

We also made a second list of areas we think faculty should be consulted about *but* about which we thought other groups (mostly the senior administration) should have decision-making authority. This second list includes:

1. undergraduate admissions
2. specifying areas for faculty hiring
3. searching for and appointing senior academic leadership
4. student advising and support

¹ Members of the Task Force include Sava Berhané; Wendy Cadge (co-chair); Susan Curnan (co-chair); Jody Hoffer Gittell; Adrienne Krstansky; Anne Marando; Michael Randall; Robert Reitano; Gina Turrigiano; Pu Wang; and Bernie Yack.

5. community living
6. conflict resolution
7. budgeting, including fundraising
8. the calendar
9. faculty and staff salaries and benefits
10. the physical plant and operational issues as connected to mission.

Once again, in some areas such as the budget, the President recommends to the Board that makes the final decision. In other areas, the administration (ultimately the President) has decision-making responsibility.

Key Preliminary Recommendations:

1. We propose a new *Committee on Planning and Strategy* to be chaired by the President that includes key administrators and elected faculty members. We advocate for such a committee because it will create a mechanism through which the faculty will work alongside the President and key administrators to think about strategic priorities and how resources should be allocated to support those priorities. We suggest that portions of the current work of the University Advisory Council (UAC), the Integrated Budget and Planning Committee (IPBC), and the University Budget Committee be merged into a single new *Committee on Planning and Strategy* with one subcommittee – the *Budget and Priorities Subcommittee*.
2. We suggest that a new *University Committee on Academic Standards and Policy* be created to help Schools and Divisions more effectively communicate and collaborate. At present, these efforts largely take place in silos with less creative synergy than might be ideal. This committee will be chaired by the Provost and serve as a kind of cabinet to the Provost. We also suggest moving the work of the Council of the Graduate School of Arts & Sciences and the Council of the Graduate Professional Schools into the *University Committee on Academic Standards and Policy*.
3. We propose that for almost all committees, **faculty members be elected** rather than—as is the case now—be appointed in part by the Provost and in part by the Faculty Senate. We further propose that these elections take place within the Divisions of Arts & Sciences and Heller and IBS in order to ensure appropriate representation.
4. We propose that the **Faculty Senate be reduced from 19 to 13** members, eliminating all at-large members, except the seat for an Emeritus faculty member, both because most of us believe that a smaller group will be more effective and because eliminating the at-large members will ensure appropriate and balanced representation from the Divisions of Arts & Sciences, Heller and IBS. We also suggest that Rabb elect a non-voting member to facilitate information exchange.
5. Additionally, we suggest clearly determining which standing committees in the Faculty Handbook work on behalf of the University and which on behalf of Arts & Sciences. At the University level:
 - We suggest a new *Committee on Planning and Strategy* as described above.
 - We suggest that a new *University Committee on Academic Standards and Policy* be created to help Schools and Divisions more effectively communicate and collaborate. The *Committee on Undergraduate Academic Standing* will be a subcommittee of the above.

- Aware of the range of committees and groups working around teaching across the university, we suggest that a university-level ***Committee on Teaching, Learning and Assessment*** be created.
- We suggest the ***Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities*** continue as outlined but with all elected members and with additional responsibilities related to intellectual property as a faculty right.
- We suggest that the Rabb Council be replaced by a university-level ***Advisory Committee of the Rabb School***.

In outlining these University committees, we propose moving the work of the Intellectual Property Review Committee except for that related to faculty rights as intellectual property into the Office of the Provost.

Within Arts & Sciences:

- We suggest that the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee (UCC) be renamed the ***Arts & Sciences Curriculum Committee*** responsible for all curricular decisions in Arts & Sciences.
 - We suggest the ***Tenured Promotions Committee*** remain with a few minor changes.
 - We suggest that the ***Committee on Undergraduate Admission and Financial Aid*** become an administrative (i.e. fully appointed) committee.
6. Additionally, we became aware that at present only policies and procedures related to Arts & Sciences are in the Faculty Handbook and that the other schools have their own versions of a policy manual. We recommend that A&S create an A&S policy manual and that the other schools revise their policy manuals so that all follow a common template. In doing so, we would remove from the Faculty Handbook those policies specific only to A&S.
 7. We suggest no change to the current system of faculty representation to the Board.

We also call for a robust conversation about who counts as faculty and which faculty have voting rights, and for a new commitment to the kinds of internal communication and data sharing required for any system of faculty governance to be effective in the long term.