



FACULTY GOVERNANCE RETREAT

January 11, 2017

Co-Sponsored by the Faculty Senate and Office of the Provost
Designed and Facilitated by the Chair of the Faculty Senate



The Senate convened a meeting of the faculty on January 11, 2017 for the purpose of exploring the role of faculty governance at the University: what it is now and what we want it to be. The President and Provost accepted the Senate’s invitation to participate and serve as resources and joined thirty-two faculty members from thirteen departments within Arts & Sciences, the Heller School and the International School of Business. The agenda and pre-reading materials can be viewed on the Senate website.



The Senate Chair opened the meeting with an exercise aimed at discovering the many ways faculty now serve the University. Asking for a show of hands for those engaged with various committees and groups including: The Senate; Handbook Standing Committees; Department Chairs; Division Heads; Center and Institute Directors; Dean’s Committees; School Councils; Advisory Boards for Centers and Institutes; Provost’s Committees (Steering Committee for Re-Accreditation, University Advisory Council, Integrated Budget and Planning, Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and more); Task Forces (Gen Ed, Free Expression; Sexual Assault; Library and Technology Services; Dignity at Work; Sustainability); President’s Senior Management Council; and Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees. For each role participants were asked to place a blue dot on their name tags. It soon became apparent that faculty are integrated into much of the “governance” work. At the same time there is much confusion about the charge, accountability and impact of the groups. Expressions like this were common, “I think I am on this but it hasn’t met in a while and I am not sure what the purpose is or to whom the group reports”. All of the groups mentioned were populated by faculty present at the retreat with the exception of three: The President’s Senior Management Council; The Provost’s Integrated Budget and Management Committee; the Task Force on General Education.



WHY HERE? WHY NOW?

Drawing on Senate input, the Chair outlined three reasons for today’s session:

- A propitious moment in the history of the University with a new President, new Chair of the Board, and an activist Senate. All are looking to improve the way we work together and to do better work on behalf of the University. The BOT has reorganized and set new governing principals for itself including welcoming more



faculty engagement. Now it is our moment to think through faculty governance. This also provides the faculty with an opportunity to address the lingering matter of “broken trust” dating back to 2008 and previous administrations-this haunts every initiative and needs to be factored into plans moving forward.

- Faculty have repeatedly noted vague understanding of “how this place works.” The “plumbing” is broken-plain and simple. The organic ways the University has grown over time may have served it well in the early days but it is time to re-assess. We are not a start-up anymore and the need to define and refine our systems for greater clarity, transparency, and impact is upon us. Boundaries within and among groups are not clear, connections and overlap exist, and “tinkering around the edges” with modest procedural amendments to the Handbook will not save the day. We need a reboot of the Handbook defining roles, responsibilities and structures. And yes, even an organizational chart that connects the dots –and a decision-making framework picturing lines of responsibility and accountability

- Finally, national trends in higher education require the faculty to be vigilant about governance. The so-called “corporatization” of the university can play out in different ways. Witness last year’s letters from the Senate and Provost/Deans to NEASC drawing attention to the disappearance of the “Faculty” standard replaced by “Teaching, Learning, and Scholarship” thereby eroding the presumptive centrality of faculty and in other standards the weakening of language protecting academic freedom, and part-time and adjunct faculty.

FACULTY ROUNDTABLES

Table top discussions were facilitated by Senate Council members and Faculty Reps to the Board of Trustees. Discussion was robust and focused on what’s working, what’s not, and what we want the role of faculty governance to be going forward. Three specific questions were addressed:

1. What model of faculty governance is currently in place at Brandeis?
2. What are the most compelling issues facing our campus?
3. How might we re-create and clarify the Senate role and responsibilities and committee structure/purposes in order to strengthen effectiveness, transparency, accountability and trust?

RESULTS/Perspectives as Reported by Facilitators (verbatim or mildly interpreted from the posted “sticky wall”) to Give a Sense of Faculty Thinking

Question #1 : Current Operations

- As currently operating the most substantial discussions on the Academy take place outside the Senate-e.g., the Gen Ed Task Force , CARS and strategic management decisions.
- Need to understand how the university works and to adequately share information – a spread sheet with all committees and clear lines of communication up and down the structure is necessary.
- The Senate’s job is to protect faculty rights, uphold university values and mission, initiate ideas, see and fill gaps especially with respect to academic excellence and social justice pillars.
- Consider/evaluate if the Senate is truly representative of the faculty (who gets involved why? Why not?) Is the senate “right sized?”
- The role of the Senate has vacillated between reactive, dormant, traditional and cultural (where personality drives different changes) over the years. Want to aspire to be more influential in practice with adequate supports in place. (per literature and pre-reading)
- Consider how perspective changes overtime e.g. long term faculty have somewhat different views than recent appointments re governance and trust. Need a mix in governance positions. Also need to assure a mix of tenured, contract, full-time, part-time perspectives
- The boundaries of Senate engagement need to be clarified – is it “just faculty issues” or broader university quality of life matters e.g. dining service workers, divestment, resource allocation, etc.?
- Can the Senate offer more than “advise and consult”? What about Senate “consent”? Who makes what kind of decisions? What is the decision making/vetting path?
- Faculty governance overall is inefficient, often a waste of time, with no incentive to participate. Takes a while to determine “soft vs. hard” power through both formal and informal mechanisms.
- Current operations need an upgrade to better align Senate with central committees.

Question # 2 : Compelling Issues

- The university is fundamentally under-resourced in terms of human, capital and material capacity. Need faculty hires, (especially in light of Gen Ed changes and aging profile of faculty-including “stars” to be replaced); need to address research enterprise under immense pressure, failing infrastructure needs major attention.
- Need to address “complexity” of university. Continuing to try to “do everything” is not sustainable. Inclusive tough decision making required re new courses, course loads, course cancellation policies, salary distribution, etc., and for messaging/marketing Brandeis

strengths in 21st C.

- Sense of growing administration and shrinking faculty question if streamlining is possible at all levels.
- Climate change/campus sustainability.
- Diversity of faculty to match diversity of changing student body and society at large.
- Dignity at Work: protection of faculty vulnerable to forms of discrimination and aggression through attacks on dignity.
- Incentives for faculty entrepreneurship.
- Support for Ron's success as President.
- More transparency on BOT deliberations; host Faculty -Board retreat; consider Board-Faculty buddy system to deepen understanding of each role. "We want to be involved."
- Brandeis relationship with Israel
- How admissions works-policies, faculty engagement, decisions, criteria.
- Prioritize and coordinate time for faculty meetings and Senate meetings to ensure transparency and engagement on key university decisions.
- Learn more about all the schools ("one university"?) to understand different unit's competing incentive structures and contribute to the mission.
- Fiscal sustainability and the financial literacy of the faculty is a must.

Question #3: Challenges and Re-imaging Faculty Governance

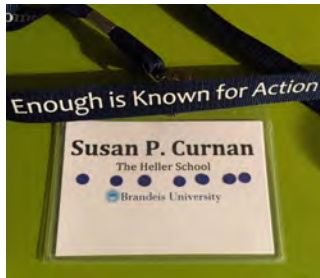
- Re-building trust and clarifying what the faculty should have jurisdiction over and then identify a set of things that are on the edge of faculty influence and matters the faculty are simply informed about.
- Make committee-Senate linkages visible and active for sharing information, influence and accountability for results.
- Develop senate leadership guidelines (job description) and likewise with faculty reps to BOT.
- Align the Senate and committees with Board committees for maximum and efficient communication.
- Determine and clearly articulate what is in central faculty domain, sr. administrative domain and trustee domain, e.g., central to faculty might include: curriculum, faculty hires and promotion; on the edges of admissions, fundraising, student wellbeing; and might be knowledgeable about but not instrumental in budget and strategy.
- Formulate a faculty bill of rights.
- Reboot the Faculty Handbook to reflect structural and definitional changes.

Closing Remarks from the Chair: Connecting the Dots

At the end of the day it became apparent that business as usual is not an option.

A dozen faculty volunteered for a governance work group to draft recommendations for changes in faculty governance over the Spring term. The will to connect the dots and improve our communication and governance overall is palpable, as a result of this meeting. Unlike other committee experiences where the outcome is vague, there is a collective promise to follow through and help guide improvement efforts. The group will examine current structures and capacities, working closely with the President and Provost as well as two representatives of the BOT. The goal is to come up with specific recommendations for improving our faculty governance practice, codifying these practices in a rebooted faculty handbook, and rebuilding trust in the process.

Draft prepared by:



Faculty Governance Retreat Participants (Jan. 11, 2017)

First	Last	School.Department
Daniel	Bergstresser	International Business School
Bernadette	Brooten	A&S, Classical Studies, WGS, Religious Studies
Wendy	Cadge	A&S, Sociology & WGS
Jacob/Jerry	Cohen	A&S, American Studies
Susan P.	Curnan	The Heller School
Tren	Dolbear	International Business School
Jane	Ebert	International Business School
Gordon	Fellman	A&S, Sociology
Elizabeth	Ferry	A&S, Anthropology
Jill	Greenlee	A&S, Politics & WGS
Liz	Hedstrom	A&S, Biology
Eli	Hirsch	A&S, Philosophy
Susan	Holcombe	The Heller School
Constance	Horgan	The Heller School
Nina	Kammerer	The Heller School and A&S, Anthropology
Marya	Levenson	A&S, Education
Sarah	Mead	A&S, Music
Paul	Miller	A&S, Biology & Computer Science
Kate	Moran	A&S, Philosophy
Carol	Osler	International Business School
Cindy	Parks Thomas	The Heller School
John	Plotz	A&S, English
Raj	Sampath	The Heller School and A&S, South Asian Studies
Larry	Simon	The Heller School and A&S, South Asian Studies
Faith	Smith	A&S, AAAS & English
John	Wardle	A&S, Physics
President Ron	Liebowitz	
Provost Lisa M.	Lynch	