

**Faculty Governance at Brandeis**  
**Executive Summary of Findings from a Survey of Brandeis Faculty**  
**September 2017**

In May 2017, the Faculty Governance Task Force surveyed Brandeis faculty about their opinions on both the components of faculty governance such as the Faculty Senate, the Standing Committees as outlined in the Faculty Handbook, and governance work in Schools, Departments and Divisions and also on shared governance, such as the Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees and faculty contributions to various institutional decisions, including the curriculum. According to current university documents, faculty governance takes place in three places – the Standing Committees of the Faculty Handbook, through the Schools and Divisions, and on the Faculty Senate. Some of these positions are appointed and others elected with the Faculty Senate the only completely elected body. The survey asked about both effectiveness and suggestions for improvements of all of these groups.

Out of two hundred thirty-seven faculty who responded, 88% either completed or partially completed the survey. More than half were tenured or on the tenure track and roughly one-quarter were multi-year contract faculty. Male and female faculty members were equally represented. The vast majority identified as white. Half were 55 or older. Most were full-time, and more than half have worked at Brandeis for 20 or more years. <sup>1</sup>

When asked to rank the most important responsibilities of faculty, they prioritized “Teaching”, “Research/Publishing”, and “Advising Students” over other faculty responsibilities, including service. When asked separately about the importance of various types of service, faculty respondents rated departmental service highest followed, about equally, by service to the profession outside of the university and service to the university.

What follows are highlights of survey findings.

**Faculty opinions about the primary purpose of the Faculty Senate and the effectiveness of faculty governance at Brandeis cover a wide range.**

Approximately half of respondents thought the Faculty Senate was moderately, very or extremely effective. Many described the primary purpose of the Faculty Senate at Brandeis in terms of its role in shared governance, e.g., advocating for faculty and representing their interests in University governance, consulting with the President and Senior Administration on institutional priorities and participating in decision- and policy-making.

	N	%
Extremely effective	5	3.4%
Very effective	21	14.5%
Moderately effective	45	31.0%
Slightly effective	24	16.6%
Not effective at all	15	10.3%
Don't know	35	24.1%
Total	145	100%

Others suggested a more expansive role for the Senate focused, for example, on improving faculty effectiveness, serving as the institutional memory and educating the faculty about their responsibilities and how things work at Brandeis.

For yet others, the Senate’s primary purpose is more lofty. They see the Senate as being the protector of the faculty and the defender of academic values, traditions and culture. A few respondents were less laudatory, suggesting that the Senate is

merely a forum in which faculty complain.

Fewer respondents felt the Faculty Representatives to the Board were moderately, very or extremely effective.

<sup>1</sup> Please see the Brandeis Faculty Governance Survey Frequencies Attachment A for more information on the number of respondents and percentages for each question.

Among the standing committees of the faculty handbook, the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Committee on Undergraduate Academic Standing, and the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities were seen as most effective.

**Faculty want more information about the purposes, aims and decision-making processes of the components of faculty governance and of shared governance as a whole.**

	N	%
Extremely effective	3	2.1%
Very effective	18	12.5%
Moderately effective	35	24.3%
Slightly effective	17	11.8%
Not effective at all	15	10.4%
Don't know	56	38.9%
Total	144	100%

Comments indicated that many faculty weren't clear about responsibilities, processes and procedures associated with components of faculty governance. Opinions about who is and should be responsible for decisions about topics ranging from budgets to curriculum to policy matters were extremely varied. Some respondents would like more clarity about the mission of the different bodies where faculty governance takes place and how they function as a part of shared governance.

	Extremely effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not effective at all	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Univ. Advisory Council N = 153	0.7%	3.9%	14.4%	7.2%	7.2%	66.7%
UG Curriculum N = 150	7.3%	18.0%	30.0%	7.3%	3.3%	34.0%
UG Acad. Standing N = 150	5.3%	20.0%	16.0%	2.7%	2.0%	54.0%
University Budget Com. N = 152	1.3%	3.9%	16.4%	10.5%	7.9%	59.9%
UG Admis. & Fin. Aid N = 150	0.0%	5.3%	11.3%	4.0%	5.3%	74.0%
Faculty Rights & Respon. N = 152	2.6%	14.5%	20.4%	7.9%	5.3%	49.3%
Intellect. Property Review N = 151	0.7%	3.3%	8.6%	2.0%	4.0%	81.5%

Faculty want to know more about how Standing Committees operate, the extent of their power, and their relationship to the Faculty Senate, as well as clarity about who makes decisions on certain topics and the role of the Faculty Representatives to the Board and about the kind of influence they have in discussions with the Board.

Faculty also want more transparency about decision-making processes, better information and more consistent communication relative to governance work in Schools and Divisions. They would like more clarity about the responsibilities and priorities of Division Heads.

Several respondents suggested that the Faculty Senate and Faculty Representatives to the Board could use their experience to educate the general faculty about how shared governance works at Brandeis. For example, the Senate could provide more information on the roles of the Senior Administration, President and Board, and the challenges they face. Faculty Representatives to the Board could clarify the Board's purpose and who it represents. One respondent suggested that the Faculty Representatives could do more to help facilitate understanding between the Board and faculty.

**Faculty want more participation in and responsibility for governance. They believe that more faculty clout would improve shared governance.**

Many comments suggest that faculty want more, not less, involvement in governance. Respondents thought that more faculty investment and involvement in faculty meetings would improve faculty governance, in general, and Senate effectiveness, in particular. Several would like more equal representation of faculty on the Senate and more faculty input into determining the issues that the Faculty Representatives bring to the Board.

In addition to retaining primary responsibility for the curriculum and graduate admissions, faculty would like more say in faculty personnel issues, namely, faculty hiring and tenure and promotion decisions. They'd like to have more say in determining faculty salaries.

Some respondents would like more involvement in decision-making at the institutional level with respect to educational policy, the institutional budget, fundraising priorities, and hiring senior academic administrators. At the School and Division level, some want to play more of a role in policy and practice, e.g., in beginning new degree programs, departments and non-degree programs, as well as ending degree and non-degree programs and closing departments.

While several respondents noted that the measure of faculty governance effectiveness depends on whether its recommendations result in actions, many thought that more influence and decision-making authority on the part of the Faculty Senate, the Faculty Representatives to the Board, and Standing Committees would improve the effectiveness of each.

Table 4: Effectiveness of Governance Work Done Through the Schools and Divisions (as outlined in the Faculty Handbook)

	Extremely effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not Effective at all	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
Soc. Science N=108	2.8%	12.0%	17.6%	3.7%	6.5%	57.4%
Science N = 108	0.9%	10.2%	13.0%	6.5%	4.6%	64.8%
Humanities N = 109	0.0%	9.2%	15.6%	10.1%	6.4%	58.7%
Creative Arts N = 100	2.0%	7.0%	12.0%	3.0%	2.0%	74.0%
Graduate Council N = 98	1.0%	10.2%	21.4%	8.2%	5.1%	54.1%
Profess. School Council N = 97	0.0%	2.1%	14.4%	3.1%	7.2%	73.2%

**Many faculty lacked enough knowledge to assess the effectiveness of specific components of faculty governance.**

While most respondents weighed in on the effectiveness of the Faculty Senate, fewer could do the same for the Faculty Representatives to the Board, as indicated by the percentage of “Don’t Know” answers.

Knowledge about Standing Committees was even more limited. Most faculty could not assess the effectiveness of most committees. The least was known about the Intellectual Property Review Committee and the Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid Committee.

While more than half did not know how effective governance work in Schools or Divisions is, there is evidence to suggest that some respondents attempted to assess the effectiveness of all Schools and Divisions, not just their own, as the survey question specified.<sup>2</sup>

Given that most respondents are tenured and are likely to be key influencers among Brandeis faculty, the gap between faculty interest in more involvement in governance and the lack of knowledge about opportunities to do so, raises important questions.

**Recent changes have improved the effectiveness of faculty’s role in shared governance.**

Respondents thought that the Faculty Senate has been more effective in recent years in its role in representing and advocating for the faculty with Senior Administration. Quite a few commented that recent

<sup>2</sup> See Table 4, effectiveness of governance work in Schools/Division, and Table 10, the percentage of survey respondents representing Schools/Divisions, in the Brandeis Faculty Survey Frequencies document.

changes account for much of the Senate's effectiveness, specifically, new Senate leadership, its proactive approach to matters of concern to the faculty, the introduction of new initiatives addressing issues of importance to the faculty, and its improved effectiveness as a partner in University governance. Others are reserving judgment, acknowledging that while the Faculty Senate has elevated the role of faculty in University governance, its effectiveness lies in its ability to effect change.

Some respondents suggested that Faculty Representatives to the Board are effective at conveying the importance of faculty involvement in shared governance to the Board and representing the concerns of the Board to faculty. Recent changes to the role of Faculty Representatives, e.g., representation on the Board Executive Committee, and involvement in the faculty compensation process, have improved their effectiveness.

A number of respondents acknowledge that recent changes to faculty governance are encouraging; however, some note that they currently don't have enough information to assess their impact on effectiveness.

Several respondents suggested that further changes are needed. Faculty Senate effectiveness would improve, for example, if it revised its policies and practices. More access to Board members and the information they use in decision-making would improve the effectiveness of the Faculty Representatives.

Improvements to faculty governance, alone, do not make for successful shared governance, several respondents observed. The role of individuals and the quality of relationships matter. A number of respondents commented that shared governance works well when the faculty, administration and Board work collectively and collaboratively to make and implement decisions. Several noted that individual personalities and priorities influence the effectiveness of faculty governance – for good or for ill.

# ATTACHMENT A

## Brandeis Faculty Governance Survey Frequencies

### Part I: Faculty Priorities at Brandeis

Given the many demands on faculty time, what do you think the faculty's *Five* most important responsibilities should be?

Percentage of those who responded who included these items in their top five important responsibilities.

Table 1	%	N
Advising students	90.7%	186
Assuming membership on consequential committees	40%	82
Fundraising	37.6%	77
Mentoring	38.6%	79
Public engagement	36.6%	75
Research/Publishing	95.6%	196
Service	53.7%	110
Teaching	99.5%	204
Other	7.8%	16
<b>Total of those ranking items: N = 205</b>		

Average Rank (mean rank of 1 – 5 if category was included in top 5) [Lower number is highest ranked]

Table 1.a	Mean
Advising students	3.08
Assuming membership on consequential committees	4.38
Fundraising	3.38
Mentoring	4.13
Public engagement	4.39
Research/ Publishing	1.92
Service	4.25
Teaching	1.59
Other	3.81

When you think about your service work, which kinds of service are the most important for you? Check all that apply.

Percentage of those who responded who ranked these items as most important.

Table 2	%	N
Departmental service	87.6%	183
Service on the Board of Trustees	10.5%	22
Service on the Faculty Senate	15.8%	33
Service to the University	71.3%	149
Service to the Profession Outside of the University	73.2%	153
Other	12.4%	26
<b>Total of those selecting most important items: N = 209</b>		

Rank of selected items. [Lower number is highest ranked]

Table 2.a	Mean
Departmental service	1.41
Service on the Board of Trustees	3.47
Service on the Faculty Senate	3.05
Service to the University	2.55
Service to the Profession Outside of the University	2.42
Other	2.53

**Part II: Effectiveness of Governance Bodies and Governance Work in Schools/Divisions at Brandeis**

Based on your experience, how effective is the work of the following standing committees stipulated in the faculty handbook?

**Table 3**

	Extremely effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not effective at all	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The University Advisory Council N = 153	0.7%	3.9%	14.4%	7.2%	7.2%	66.7%
Undergraduate Curriculum Committee N = 150	7.3%	18.0%	30.0%	7.3%	3.3%	34.0%
Committee on Undergraduate Academic Standing N = 150	5.3%	20.0%	16.0%	2.7%	2.0%	54.0%
University Budget Committee N = 152	1.3%	3.9%	16.4%	10.5%	7.9%	59.9%
Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid N = 150	0.0%	5.3%	11.3%	4.0%	5.3%	74.0%
Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities N = 152	2.6%	14.5%	20.4%	7.9%	5.3%	49.3%
Intellectual Property Review Committee N = 151	0.7%	3.3%	8.6%	2.0%	4.0%	81.5%

In your opinion, how effective is the governance work done through the Schools and Divisions as outlined in the Faculty Handbook. Please answer for the School or Division relevant to you.

**Table 4**

	Extremely effective	Very effective	Moderately effective	Slightly effective	Not Effective at All	Don't know
	%	%	%	%	%	%
The Division of Social Science N = 108	2.8%	12.0%	17.6%	3.7%	6.5%	57.4%
The Division of Science N = 108	0.9%	10.2%	13.0%	6.5%	4.6%	64.8%
The Division of Humanities N = 109	0.0%	9.2%	15.6%	10.1%	6.4%	58.7%
The Division of Creative Arts N = 100	2.0%	7.0%	12.0%	3.0%	2.0%	74.0%
The Graduate Council N = 98	1.0%	10.2%	21.4%	8.2%	5.1%	54.1%
The Professional School Council N = 97	0.0%	2.1%	14.4%	3.1%	7.2%	73.2%

**In your opinion, to what extent is the Faculty Senate effective?**

<b>Table 5</b>	N	%
Extremely effective	5	3.4%
Very effective	21	14.5%
Moderately effective	45	31.0%
Slightly effective	24	16.6%
Not effective at all	15	10.3%
Don't know	35	24.1%
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**In your opinion, to what extent are the Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees effective?**

<b>Table 6</b>	N	%
Extremely effective	3	2.1%
Very effective	18	12.5%
Moderately effective	35	24.3%
Slightly effective	17	11.8%
Not effective at all	15	10.4%
Don't know	56	38.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Part III: Practices at Brandeis**

In your view, what *is the current practice* at Brandeis in terms of who is responsible for and/or who needs to be consulted about which decisions?

**Table 7**

	Primary Responsibility of Faculty	Primary Responsibility of Senior Academic Administration	Primary Responsibility of President	Primary Responsibility of Board	Administration Consultation with Senior Academic	Administration Consultation with Faculty	Administration Consultation of Senior Academic & Faculty	Academic Administration & Faculty	Unclear Who has Responsibility or Don't Know
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	
Institutional Budget N = 166	0.0%	16.3%	11.4%	13.9%	1.2%	6.0%	35.5%	15.7%	
Curriculum e.g., subject matters, breadth of offerings N = 168	61.3%	5.4%	0.0%	0.0%	22.0%	6.0%	1.2%	4.2%	
The Calendar N = 171	2.9%	51.5%	1.2%	0.0%	3.5%	19.9%	6.4%	14.6%	
Educational Policy N = 166	15.7%	12.0%	1.8%	2.4%	24.7%	20.5%	7.8%	15.1%	
Setting Fundraising Priorities N = 166	0.6%	2.4%	42.2%	17.5%	0.0%	4.2%	24.7%	8.4%	
Benefits N = 161	0.6%	31.1%	4.3%	5.6%	3.1%	15.5%	21.7%	18.0%	
Faculty Salaries N = 168	3.0%	32.1%	1.2%	8.3%	3.6%	18.5%	21.4%	11.9%	
Faculty Hiring N = 168	24.4%	11.9%	0.6%	0.0%	39.3%	20.2%	0.6%	3.0%	
Faculty Tenure & Promotion Decisions N = 166	28.9%	7.8%	0.0%	0.0%	40.4%	12.7%	6.0%	4.2%	
Hiring Senior Academic Administrators N = 165	2.4%	17.6%	20.6%	1.2%	4.8%	22.4%	15.2%	15.8%	
Undergraduate Admissions N = 163	1.8%	50.9%	0.6%	0.0%	6.1%	19.0%	1.2%	20.2%	
Graduate Admissions N = 166	42.8%	12.7%	0.0%	0.0%	24.1%	11.4%	0.6%	8.4%	
Beginning New Degree programs N = 162	15.4%	4.9%	1.9%	0.6%	40.1%	11.7%	13.6%	11.7%	
Beginning New Departments/Programs N = 167	13.2%	9.0%	3.0%	1.8%	31.1%	14.4%	15.0%	12.6%	
Ending Degree Programs N = 164	9.1%	13.4%	1.8%	1.8%	15.9%	26.8%	15.2%	15.9%	
Closing Departments/Programs N = 163	8.0%	14.1%	1.8%	1.8%	11.7%	23.3%	22.7%	16.6%	
Attention to Physical Plant N = 166	0.6%	31.3%	13.9%	8.4%	1.2%	4.2%	18.1%	22.3%	
Staff Salaries N = 161	0.0%	40.4%	5.0%	7.5%	3.1%	8.1%	15.5%	20.5%	



**In your view, what *should be the current practice* at Brandeis in terms of who is responsible for and/or who needs to be consulted about which decisions?**

	Primary Responsibility of Faculty	Primary Responsibility of Senior Academic Administration	Primary Responsibility of President	Primary Responsibility of Board	Responsibility of Faculty with Senior Academic Administration Consultation	Responsibility of Senior Academic Administration with Faculty Consultation	Senior Academic Administration & Faculty Consultation	Unclear Who has Responsibility or Don't Know
<b>Table 8</b>	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%
Institutional Budget N = 141	1.4%	7.8%	11.3%	2.1%	2.8%	14.9%	56.0%	3.5%
Curriculum e.g., subject matters, breadth of offerings N = 139	51.8%	0.7%	0.0%	0.7%	34.5%	10.1%	1.4%	0.7%
The Calendar N = 142	2.1%	33.1%	0.7%	0.0%	6.3%	43.7%	4.2%	9.9%
Educational Policy N = 138	27.5%	3.6%	2.2%	0.7%	34.8%	18.8%	10.1%	2.2%
Setting Fundraising Priorities N = 142	1.4%	1.4%	28.2%	6.3%	2.8%	12.7%	43.7%	3.5%
Benefits N = 138	1.4%	20.3%	2.2%	2.9%	7.2%	29.7%	28.3%	8.0%
Faculty Salaries N = 141	2.8%	13.5%	1.4%	2.1%	13.5%	37.6%	26.2%	2.8%
Faculty Hiring N = 142	31.7%	2.1%	0.0%	0.0%	47.2%	14.8%	2.8%	1.4%
Faculty Tenure & Promotion Decisions N = 139	33.8%	2.2%	0.0%	0.0%	41.0%	11.5%	9.4%	2.2%
Hiring Senior Academic Administrators N = 141	5.0%	7.8%	15.6%	0.7%	14.2%	29.8%	22.0%	5.0%
Undergraduate Admissions N = 138	5.1%	30.4%	0.7%	0.0%	10.9%	37.0%	5.1%	10.9%
Graduate Admissions N = 142	45.8%	6.3%	0.0%	0.0%	28.2%	12.0%	2.8%	4.9%
Beginning New Degree programs N = 139	18.7%	2.9%	1.4%	0.0%	49.6%	12.9%	12.2%	2.2%
Beginning New Departments/Programs N = 141	15.6%	2.1%	1.4%	0.0%	47.5%	15.6%	14.9%	2.8%
Ending Degree Programs N = 140	12.1%	2.1%	1.4%	0.0%	37.9%	27.9%	15.7%	2.9%
Closing Departments/Programs N = 141	9.2%	2.1%	1.4%	0.0%	35.5%	29.8%	18.4%	3.5%
Attention to Physical Plant N = 140	2.1%	30.0%	8.6%	7.1%	1.4%	8.6%	25.7%	16.4%
Staff Salaries N = 138	1.4%	23.2%	5.8%	1.4%	7.2%	25.4%	16.7%	18.8%

**Part IV: Respondents' Position at Brandeis**

**What is your current rank?**

**Table 9**

	N	%
Professor	60	41.4%
Associate Professor	48	33.1%
Assistant Professor	13	9.0%
Instructor	3	2.1%
Lecturer	8	5.5%
Senior Scientist	3	2.1%
Senior Fellow	1	.7%
Other. Please write in	9	6.2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>145</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Which of the following describes your current status?**

**Table 11**

	N	%
Tenured	86	59.7%
Not tenured and on tenure track	10	6.9%
Multi-year contract faculty	33	22.9%
Other. Please write in	15	10.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**What is the name of your School or Division?**

**Table 10**

	N	%
Division of Creative Arts	11	7.9%
Division of Humanities	33	23.6%
Division of Science	28	20.0%
Division of Social Science	32	22.9%
Heller School of Social Policy and Management	17	12.1%
International Business School	11	7.9%
Rabb School of Continuing Studies	3	2.1%
Other. Please write in	5	3.6%
<b>Total</b>	<b>140</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**For how long have you worked at Brandeis**

**Table 12**

	N	%
Less than a year	1	.7%
1-2 years	8	5.7%
3-5 years	12	8.5%
6-10 years	30	21.3%
11-20 years	39	27.7%
21-30 years	27	19.1%
31+ years	24	17.0%
<b>Total</b>	<b>141</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Are you full-time or part-time?**

**Table 13**

	N	%
Full-time	127	88.2%
Part-time	17	11.8%
<b>Total</b>	<b>144</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

**Part V: Demographic Information**

What is your gender?

**Table 14**

	N	%
Male	68	49.6%
Female	68	49.6%
Other	1	.7%
<b>Total</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

What is your age?

**Table 16**

	N	%
Less than 35	2	1.5%
35-44	24	17.6%
45-54	37	27.2%
55-64	37	27.2%
65+	36	26.5%
<b>Total</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Are you Hispanic or Latino?

**Table 17**

	N	%
Yes	6	4.6%
No	125	95.4%
<b>Total</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>100.0%</b>

Which of the following best describes your race? Check all that apply.

Percentage of respondents answering this question who selected the following categories.

**Table 15**

	N	%
American Indian or Alaska Native	0	0.0%
Asian	7	5.7%
Black or African American	3	2.4%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0.0%
White	113	91.9%
<b>Total</b>	<b>123</b>	<b>100%</b>