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**Subject:** Task Force on Faculty Governance

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing to encourage you to join our colleagues Susan Curnan, Wendy Cadge, Provost Lisa Lynch and me in an ongoing and important conversation about the faculty's role in governance at Brandeis. This conversation began in January when the Faculty Senate hosted a retreat – open to all faculty – and attended by about forty faculty as well as the Provost and me. Organized by Susan Curnan, the faculty who gathered brainstormed about the strengths and weaknesses of current approaches to the faculty's role in governance and began to articulate ideas for better integrating faculty in decision-making across the university.

Subsequent informal conversations – including a second meeting open to all faculty last month hosted by the Faculty Senate – identified gaps and points of ambiguity in current faculty governance. To bring more members of the faculty into this conversation and be sure that we have robust structures for including faculty in institutional governance, I have asked Susan Curnan and Wendy Cadge to chair a Task Force on Faculty Governance.

This Task Force – comprised of six to eight faculty nominated by their peers – will assess the state of governance at Brandeis, focusing both on how the faculty practices governances in those areas that are its primary responsibility and in terms of the faculty's role in relationship to the administration and in some instances to the Board as they related to shared governance—a concept that will require a common understanding on the part of the Board and faculty. The Task Force will also compare Brandeis' approach to that of peer institutions, pay particular attention to best practices, and draft a set of recommendations for faculty and shared governance at Brandeis. These recommendations will turn into proposals for amending the Faculty Handbook that will be presented at Faculty meetings as outlined in the processes for amending the Handbook. The specific outcomes of this process are open – the Task Force may recommend more committees and structures than we have now or fewer depending on what they learn along the way.

The Task Force will be comprised of one faculty representative from each of the Divisions (Science, Social Science, Humanities and Creative Arts) as well as one faculty representative from IBS, one from Heller, and one from Rabb. To assure a group that is as diverse as possible along all dimensions, we are asking the Division heads (John Burt, Sarah Lamb, John Wardle, Jonathan Unglaub ) as well as representatives from Heller (Cindy Thomas and Darren Zinner), IBS (Katy Graddy) and Rabb (Karen Muncaster) to nominate two to three people that might serve. If you are interested in serving, please contact one of these individuals to be nominated by **May 5th**. We are committed to having at least one tenure-

track faculty member on the committee and at least one-contract faculty member. The committee will be selected from the nominations by Susan Curnan and Wendy Cadge in consultation with Lisa Lynch and me.

We hope to announce the members of this Task Force in early May. A short survey will also be distributed in May to gather feedback from all faculty seeking opinions on the strengths and weaknesses in the current approach to faculty governance. Susan Curnan and Wendy Cadge will work with a consultant, Susan Resneck Pierce, who is President Emerita of the University of Puget Sound and author of a recent book pertinent to our work, *Governance Reconsidered: How Boards, Presidents, Administrators and Faculty Can Help Their Colleges Thrive* (Jossey-Bass, 2014), to analyze these data and gather information about peer institutions through the summer. The committee will do the bulk of its work in the fall and will present progress reports along the way. They will share their thinking through what they hope will be regular conversation with the faculty in the form of open meetings and presentations at regular faculty meetings. The information gathered about peer institutions will be made public as will a summary of findings from the survey at Brandeis. The Task Force will also be in conversation with the Board of Trustees primarily through two members of the Academy Committee, Meyer Koplou and Dan Jick.

I appreciate your attention to this process and encourage you to nominate faculty colleagues to the Task Force. If you have questions about any of this, please don't hesitate to contact me, Lisa Lynch, Susan Curnan, or Wendy Cadge.

Best regards,

Ron