

**Brandeis Faculty Senate
Plan of Governance
Proposed by the Senate Council and Ratified by Elected Senators**

Preamble

This Plan of Governance serves as the by-laws governing the structure and operations of the Brandeis Faculty Senate. It is designed to support real-time responsive, agile, and effective governance, advancing the interest of the faculty and the university as a whole. We state this at a time when social and institutional change is needed in light of the wisdom of past precedents at critical inflection points in higher education and society more broadly. We use the term “Plan of Governance” to signal that this is a guiding plan with the intent actualize real change, knowing that things may not always go according to plan. As such, it is a living document with provisions for updates and amendments.

Purpose

The Brandeis Faculty Senate (hereafter referred to as “Senate”) is selected and empowered as defined by the Brandeis University by-laws and Brandeis Faculty Handbook. This by-laws document defines the roles, duties, and processes by which the Senate carries out the functions authorized by the University by-laws and the Faculty Handbook. The Senate, as the representative body of the whole Faculty, has the ability to establish and amend its practices as long as they do not contravene or contradict the domains outlined in the Handbook and do not result in the Senate exercising powers that are beyond its scope. This jurisdictional scope should approximate an ideal balance and separation of powers between the faculty, administration, and trustees based on an overlapping consensus of interests, norms, and values among the said parties. This is what gives us the authority to generate this Plan of Governance.

This document provides guidelines for the execution of Senate Duties and may be updated or otherwise amended by a two-thirds majority vote of serving Senators.

I. Membership

- A. Definition: “The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the Faculty as a whole” (FHB VI.B.1)
- B. Senators: Voting eligible faculty members elected in accordance with the Faculty Handbook
- C. Limitations: Senators may serve only two consecutive terms.
 - 1. Following one year off the Senate, a Faculty member may stand again
 - 2. There is no lifetime limit to terms in the Senate
- D. Responsibilities
 - 1. Attend all Faculty and Senate meetings
 - 2. Communicate with and on the concerns of their constituents
 - 3. Carry out all feasible tasks assigned by the Council of the Faculty Senate (outlined below) with reasonable expectations of agreed-upon responsibilities to execute duties
- E. Replacement Senators
 - 1. If there is a vacant senate seat, the Chair of the Senate will hold a special election to complete the remainder of the term
 - 2. Where there is cause and a two-thirds majority vote, the Senate may ask a member to resign

II. Officers

A. Chair

1. Election and Term
 - a. The election of the Chair occurs at the first Senate meeting of the year
 - b. The term of the Chair is one year. A seated Chair may be re-elected but may serve for no more than three consecutive terms followed by a three-year hiatus.
 - c. The term of a Chair who is vacating a Senate seat will extend through the summer, until the first Faculty Meeting.
 - d. If a seated Chair is running for re-election, the longest-serving member of the Senate will conduct the discussion and election
2. Responsibilities
 - a. The Chair serves the Faculty and the Faculty Senate and ensures that the Senate carries out all of its duties as outlined in the Handbook following the procedures outlined in this Plan of Governance
 - b. Unless explicitly stated otherwise, the Chair shares the responsibilities of the Faculty Council
 - c. The Chair organizes and coordinates Senate and Faculty meetings as outlined below
 - d. The Chair runs the Senate and Faculty meetings
 - e. The Chair serves *ex officio* on the Board of Trustees
 - f. The Chair may represent the Senate in discussions with President, Provost, Academic Deans, and other members of the university community (FHB VI.B.2.viid). This representation includes but is not exclusive to:
 - i. Any matter under the purview of the Senate
 - ii. Matters concerning to Senate responsibilities
 - iii. Hiring executive positions
 - g. The Chair may designate a member of the Council of the Faculty Senate to carry out any of the Chair's duties
 - h. The Chair must notify the Council of the Faculty Senate of all meetings attended and all actions taken on the Senate's behalf on a monthly basis
 - i. The Chair ensures the accuracy of Senate records
 - i. Public information (e.g. minutes) is archived on the Senate website
 - ii. Confidential information is kept in a secure place and shared with the in-coming Chair in a clear and timely fashion
 - j. The Chair selects and manages the special assistant to the Senate Chair
 - i. This part-time administrative position is funded by the office of the Provost
 - ii. The Chair negotiates compensation for the special assistant
 - iii. The Chair communicates this confidential compensation for approval to the Council of the Faculty Senate
 - iv. The assistant serves the same term as the Chair who selects them
3. Compensation
 - a. A Chair negotiates their compensation with the Provost and appropriate Dean or Division Head and communicates for the approval of the Council of the Faculty Senate
 - b. The Council of the Faculty Senate notifies the Senate of the compensation
4. Removal of a Chair through No-Confidence
 - a. A Chair may be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Senate

- b. A member of the Council of the Faculty Senate or one-fourth of the Senate Members may call for a no-confidence vote
- c. A member of the Council of the Faculty Senate will preside over this vote and the election of a new Chair

B. The Council of the Faculty Senate (hereafter, "Council")

1. Election and Term
 - a. Any sitting Senator may be elected to the Senate council
 - b. The election of Senate Council members occurs at the first meeting of the academic year
 - i. Council members serve for one-full year, including the summer after a new election when Council members who are vacated their seats serve an extended term until the first Faculty Meeting
 - c. The council consists of the Chair and three Senators elected by majority vote
 - d. No more than two Senators from the same Division may be elected to the Senate Council. IBS and Heller Faculty are considered Social Science members for this election
 - e. The Emerita/us faculty member is not eligible to be on the council
2. Removal of a Council Member
 - a. A Council member may be removed from their position for cause, by a two-thirds vote of the Senate
 - b. The Chair or other Council Member or one-fourth of the Senate Members may initiate this vote
 - c. The Chair must fill any vacant Council seat before the end of the subsequent Senate meeting by election
3. Responsibilities
 - a. The Senate Council may represent the Senate in discussions with President, Provost, Academic Deans, and other members of the university community (FHB VI.B.2.viid)
 - b. As specified in the Handbook and below the Council:
 - i. Advises the President, Provost, and Dean
 - ii. Nominates Candidates for faculty Handbook committees

III. Senate Meetings

- A. Senate meetings are held at least six times during the academic year
 1. The Chair sets the agenda of the meeting with the approval of the Senate Council
 2. Any Senator may petition to add items to the agenda
 3. The agenda must be circulated at least one week before the meeting, along with all relevant materials
 4. The Chair or one-fourth of the Senators may call for additional meetings
 5. The first meeting is held during the first month of the academic year
 6. Meeting days and times are arranged by the Council with the consultation of the Senate and shared before the beginning of the Semester with the Senate
- B. Procedure
 1. The Chair or a member of the Senate Council presides over the Senate meeting
 2. The meeting will follow a simplified form Roberts Rules of Order, where the procedures will be used to guide discussions but efforts will be made to achieve consensus. For example, Roberts Rules of Order may be suspended by a majority vote for longer discussions
 3. Senate meetings are open for observation by any Faculty member except in the case of discussions which require confidentiality (in which case they will be asked to leave for that portion of the meeting)
 4. Staff and Students may also observe Senate meetings by request to the Chair

C. Minutes

1. The Chair will ensure that minutes of the meeting are recorded and circulated for approval before the subsequent senate meeting
2. Minutes will be made public to the Faculty electronically

IV. Ad hoc Committees

- A. The Chair or Senate Council may convene an ad hoc faculty committee to address anything within the purview of Senate responsibilities (V) at any time
 1. Committees are given their term, goal, and expected outcomes by the Chair or a member of the Council
 2. Ad hoc committees may be composed of Senators and/or other faculty members
- B. All Senators may propose the formation of an ad hoc committee during Senate Meetings
 1. Committees will be approved by a simple majority vote
 2. Committees are given their term, goal, and expected outcomes by the Chair or a member of the Council

V. Responsibilities

- A. General Purview: “The Faculty Senate (or any member of the faculty by writing to the Faculty Senate) may initiate discussion on any issue relevant to the educational and research missions of the university or the provisions of this Handbook, including but not limited to academic freedom; the rights, responsibilities, work schedule, salary, and benefits of faculty members; university policies regarding faculty appointments, tenure, promotion, and dismissal; and university rules and regulations as they affect faculty” (FHB VI.B.2.a)
- B. Elections and Term
 1. Senate Elections (FHB VI.B.2.iv)
 - a. The Senate conducts elections during the Final exam period of the Spring Semester
 - i. The Chair and Council will solicit nominations for vacating seats at least one month prior to the election
 - ii. The Chair and Council will publish the slate of candidates online two weeks prior to the election
 - iii. Electronic voting will be held for at least 5 business days
 - b. In the case of Chair running for re-election, a Council member will be responsible for securing nominations and overseeing publication of any Faculty member standing for the same seat
 - c. Newly Elected Senators will meet with sitting and outgoing Senators at the final Senate meeting of the year
 - d. The Council will hold special elections in the case of vacated senate seats
 - i. Special elections require four weeks’ notice to the Senate in writing and to the Faculty either in writing or at a Faculty meeting
 - ii. The Council will solicit nominations at the beginning of the period, allow for at least one week of public notice for the candidates and five business days of voting
 - iii. The Council will announce the new Senators to the Senate at the subsequent Senate meeting and to the Faculty at the subsequent faculty meeting
 2. Board of Trustee elections (FHB VI.E.c.)
 - a. The Senate conducts elections for Representatives to the Board of Trustees during the Final exam period of the Spring Semester
 - b. The Chair will solicit nominations for vacating seats at least one month prior to the election

- c. The Council will publish the slate of candidates online two weeks prior to the election
- d. Electronic voting will be held for at least 5 business days
- e. The Chair will notify the Faculty of the vote at the subsequent Faculty meeting

C. Faculty Meetings (FHB VI.A.2-3)

- 1. The Senate arranges the agenda for the Faculty Meeting
 - a. The Senate Council proposes an agenda for each meeting to the Provost and circulates it and all relevant materials one week prior
 - b. The times and dates of Faculty meetings are arranged in consultation with the Provost and publicized before the beginning of the Fall semester
- 2. The Chair or a member of the Senate Council presides over the meeting
- 3. The Senate may call additional Faculty meetings (FHB VI.B.2.vii)
 - a. An emergency meeting is called by either a unanimous vote of the Senate Council or a majority vote of the whole Senate.

D. Legislation and Review (FHB VI.B.2.i-ii; FHB VIII a.i)

- 1. The Senate reviews and prepares proposed changes to the Handbook
 - a. Any Senator, Senate ad hoc committee, or the Senate Council may prepare and propose alterations to the Handbook
 - b. Any Faculty group or, Handbook Committee, or special Committee selected by the Provost or President may bring proposed alterations to the Handbook to the Senate
 - c. The Senate approves topics for consideration at a Faculty Meeting with a simple majority vote
 - d. It is the responsibility of the Faculty Council and Chair to notify the Provost of measures to be considered at Faculty meetings and to circulate all relevant materials to the Faculty at least one week before their introduction at a faculty meeting
- 2. The Senate reviews and advises on policy changes under consideration by administrative offices under the Provost or President
 - a. Proposed policy changes are circulated in writing at least one week before a Senate meeting
 - b. Senators may make suggestions at meetings or in writing through the Council
 - c. The Senate may take non-binding votes in favor of or against policy changes

E. Representation

- 1. Survey
 - a. The Senate must survey the faculty via electronic poll or other means on issues of Faculty concern at least once every year (FHB VI.B.2.vii.c)
 - b. The Council and Chair are responsible for analyzing and discussing the results of this survey
 - c. The Chair will address any Survey information during a Faculty meeting each year
 - d. The Council will post either a summary or an anonymized record of Faculty Surveys to the Senate website annually
- 2. Mediation
 - a. The Council may provide informal mediation in disputes involving Faculty members (FHB VI.B.2.iv)
 - b. The Council may offer informal resolutions to disputes at a Dean's discretion (FHB VII.A.2.a-b)
- 3. Statements
 - a. The Senate may issue public statements regarding any institutional issue under its general purview

- b. Statements may be prepared by any member of the Senate
 - c. Statements must be approved by a two-thirds majority and communicated as either unanimous or not
 - d. The Chair is responsible for disseminating statements made by the Senate electronically and for presenting them at Faculty meetings
4. Communication
- a. The Senate is expected to communicate with its constituents
 - b. Any Faculty member may petition the Chair to speak at a Senate meeting
 - c. Individual Senators are responsible for communicating with the Faculty they represent
 - i. Senators will report once a year to the full Senate on the concerns of their constituents and their methods of engaging with them
 - ii. Reports can be oral or submitted in writing to the Senate through the Council
 - iii. The Council will monitor comments from the Faculty website
- F. Committee Selection (FHB VI.B.2.vii.e.iii; cf. FHB VI.D.1.a)
1. The Senate selects Faculty members to serve on Standing Committees
 - a. Tenure and Promotion Committee
 - b. Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities (FHB VI.D.2.d.iii)
 - i. The Senate appoints three four members to the CFRR
 - ii. In consultation with the Provost, the Senate appoints three alternates for the CFRR
 - iii. The Chair will solicit nominations for the CFRR from the Faculty and University leadership and submit names for approval from the Senate Council
 - iv. The Council will report nominations for ratification to the Senate
 - c. Intellectual Property Review Committee
 - i. The Council appoints two members to this committee
 - ii. The Chair and Council will solicit nominations from the Faculty and University Leadership and report to the Senate the names of the appointees
 2. The Senate elects one of its own members as delegates to other committees and organizations
 - a. Committee on Strategy and Planning (FHB VI.D.2.a.iii)
 - i. The Senate elects one of its members to serve for a single year on this committee
 - ii. The Senate member reports regularly to the Senate
 - iii. The Senate member may serve multiple terms
 - b. Alumni Board
 - i. The Senate elects one of its members to serve as Faculty Representative to the Alumni Board
 - ii. The Faculty Representative will report to the Senate on the Alumni board annually
 - iii. The Faculty Representative may serve multiple terms
- G. Oversight
1. The Senate reviews the activities of standing and special committees (FHB VI.B.2.iii)
 - a. These reviews may be solicited in writing or presented in person at a Senate or Faculty Meeting
 - i. The Chair and Senate Council are responsible for soliciting and posting annual reports from Handbook Committees
 - b. The Chair and the Council are responsible for coordinating with the Chairs of the various committees on an annual basis
 2. The Senate receives reports from Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees after Board meeting

- a. These reports may be solicited in writing or presented in person at a Senate or Faculty Meeting
 - b. The Chair is responsible for coordinating with the BoT Representatives on an annual basis
3. The Senate takes responsibility to identify ways to ensure continuous improvement and innovation in the operations of standing and special committees

H. Advise and Consent

- 1. The Senate has the right and responsibility to advise on institutional policies regarding structure, hiring, and termination of Faculty and Leadership positions
 - a. All relevant materials on these decisions will be circulated to the Senate through the Council
 - b. Comments and summary assent or dissent will be communicated in writing by the Council within seven days of receipt
- 2. The Senate advises the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees on the creation or discontinuation of a deanship (FHB IV.F; cf. FHB VI.B.2.v)
- 3. The Senate works with the Provost to establish a procedure to fill vacant associate Provostships and academic deanships FHB V.2
 - a. The Provost consults with the Council on potential candidates
 - b. The Senate may request a special meeting with the Provost by a majority vote
- 4. The Senate works with the President to establish a procedure to fill a vacant Provostship
 - a. The President consults with the senate in appointing an Interim Provost
 - b. The President reports to the Council on candidates
 - c. The Council reports to the Senate and responds in writing to the President within seven days
 - d. The President consults with the Council on the reappointment of an incumbent Provost
- 5. The Senate advises the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees on the creation or discontinuation of a department, program, center, or other academic unit (FHB IV.F; cf. FHB VI.B.2.v)
- 6. The Senate advises the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees for reappointment or promotion based on institutional need (FHB A.5.IX)
- 7. The Senate advises the Provost, President, and Board of Trustees in cases of Suspension for Dismissal or Cause (Senate Council; FHB VII.C.1-2)
- 8. The Senate advises and approves of selection of new Provosts (FHB V.B.1) and Deans (FHB V.B.2)

VI. Amendment of By-laws

- A. These by-laws may be amended during any Senate meeting by a two-thirds majority vote
- B. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Senate
- C. Any alterations to these by-laws must be communicated publicly to the Faculty
 - 1. The Chair will ensure electronic by-laws are kept up-to-date
 - 2. The Chair will notify the Provost and President of by-law changes in writing
 - 3. The Chair will notify the Faculty of by-law changes the subsequent Faculty meeting

Senate Tasks according to Brandeis Faculty Handbook

Definition: FHB VI.B.1 “The Faculty Senate is the representative body of the Faculty as a whole”

FHB VI.B.2.a “The Faculty Senate (or any member of the faculty by writing to the Faculty Senate) may initiate discussion on any issue relevant to the educational and research missions of the university or the provisions of this Handbook, including but not limited to academic freedom; the rights, responsibilities, work schedule, salary, and benefits of faculty members; university policies regarding faculty appointments, tenure, promotion, and dismissal; and university rules and regulations as they affect faculty”

Legislation: reviews, formulates, and introduces (FHB VI.B.2.i-ii); approves proposals for revision to the FHB to be placed on the agenda of the faculty meeting (FHB VIII a.i)

Oversight: Reviews activities of standing and special committees (FHB VI.B.2.iii) and receive reports from Faculty Representatives to the Board of Trustees (FHB VI.E.a.); Council may represent senate in discussions with President, Provost, Academic Deans, and other members of the university community (FHB VI.B.2.viid)

Representation: Annual survey of faculty (FHB VI.B.2.vii.c); Council may provide informal mediation of disputes involving faculty members (FHB VI.B.2.vii.c.iii); informal resolutions at Dean’s discretion (FHB VII.A.2.a-b)

Elections: Holds elections for senators (FHB VI.B.2.iv) and Faculty representatives to the BoT (FHB VI.E.c.)

Faculty Meetings: Runs faculty meetings (FHB VI.A.2-3); may call special meetings of the Faculty as appropriate (FHB VI.B.2.vii)

Committee Selection: Select faculty members for Committees (FHB VI.B.2.vii.e.iii; cf. FHB VI.D.1.a): Tenured and Promotion Committee (FHB V.A.4.i.7); 1 Senator on Strategy and Planning (FHB VI.D.2.a.iii); Four members of the Committee on Faculty Rights and Responsibilities and alternates (FHB VI.D.2.d.iii); two appointed by Senate Council to Intellectual Property Review Committee (FHB VI.D.2.f.a)

Advise and Consent: Act in advisory capacity for creation of new deanships or discontinuation of a deanship (FHB IV.C) and in establishment or discontinuation of departments, programs, centers, institutes and other academic units (FHB IV.F; cf. FHB VI.B.2.v).

Advise in case of termination candidates for reappointment or promotion based on institutional need (FHB A.5.IX); advise in case of Suspension for Dismissal or Cause (Senate Council; FHB VII.C.1-2)

Advise and approve of selection of new Provosts (FHB V.B.1) and Deans (FHB V.B.2)