

**Yeshiva University Faculty Council
Minutes, Meeting of December 14, 2018
Kyron Huigens, Cardozo School of Law, Acting Secretary
Abraham Ravid and Charles Swencionis, Co-Speakers**

Meeting called to order at 11:20

Present: Rachel Mesch; Silke Aisenbrey; Lynn Levy; Gabriel Cwilich, Anna-Lisa Cohen; Maria Blekher; J.D. Bleich; Daniel Rynhold; Tamar Avnet; Moshe Krakowski; Kyron J. Huigens; Abraham Ravid; Charles Swencionis; Barry Eichler; Selma Botman

The minutes of the October 26, 2018 meeting were approved.

Wendy Williams, the new Director of Center for Innovative Teaching and Learning was introduced.

Ms. Williams described the new teaching center as well as plans for online resources for teaching, which are being created to respond to faculty demand for help in instruction. Daphne Kohavi works with her. Ms. Williams took questions and heard recommendations from the council regarding on-line resources, including Canvas.

Provost Selma Botman reported on administration developments.

The University's matching contribution to faculty retirement accounts will rise by 1%, up from 3% to 4% of salary in January. The administration recognizes that this is still below the industry standard of 7%.

Regarding the Faculty Handbook, Dr. Botman reported that she had met with the Faculty Council's executive committee, and committed to considering proposed edits to the current draft. These would be considered along with the changes proposed by other stakeholders. There is no deadline for the revision of the Faculty Handbook, but the provost expects it to be finalized soon.

Professor Ravid proposed faculty participation in the program of the Hanukkah fund raising event, in the form of brief presentations on current scholarship. The provost said this idea could be considered.

There was discussion of faculty presentations to the administration and board of trustees on current scholarship.

Professor Swencionis inquired about the existence of a small amount of money available for raises to faculty salaries, referencing an email from Julie Auster of the benefits office. The provost responded that more information would be coming from Ms. Auster.

Discussion of setting up meetings on Go To Meeting or Google.

The council decided to arrange the schedule during the meeting. The schedule for the spring semester is as follows:

2/8/19 at 11:15, hosted by Cardozo

3/29.19 at 11:15, hosted on the YU campus (possibly Wilf).

5/3/19 at 11:15, hosted at Wilf campus (tentative)

Discussion of engaging a secretary for the Faculty Council. The duties would include setting and giving notice of council meetings.

Professor Swencionis reports on the executive committee's meeting with Julie Auster of the benefits office.

The University has switched from contracting with Empire Blue Cross, Blue Shield to provide medical insurance, to the University self-insuring, contracting with Empire to administer the system. This reduces the cost to the University.

One concern of the Faculty Council expressed at its October 26 meeting of the executive committee, was the impact of catastrophic illnesses on a self-insured system.

Prof. Avri Ravid explained that the University has obtained reinsurance against this impact.

Julie Auster recognized that University health benefits were below industry standards.

Ms. Auster also reported that she had been asked by the University to reduce health benefits further and the faculty council has decided to proceed and invite her to a future meeting.

Discussion of faculty survey report.

The faculty survey report was released to the entire faculty and leaked to The Commentator. Discussion of the circulation of the survey report to the respective schools' faculties followed. The survey report has been shared with University administration, but there has been no response.

Discussion followed of a proposal to survey the faculty periodically, possibly on a yearly or quarterly basis.

The Faculty Council approved a statement to the Commentator on the subject of the faculty survey.

Discussion of proposed revisions to the Faculty Handbook.

The Provost's position is that the faculty council's recommended edits are advisory only, and that the administration will finalize the report. The Faculty Council rejects this position, and takes the position that changes to the Faculty Handbook are subject to approval of the Faculty Council, which is the faculty arm of governance. This is the council's understanding of the requirements of the Middle States Commission on Higher Education.

The council discussed important changes from the 2013 Handbook as proposed by the Provost. **The council has accepted the new version, with the exception of several changes listed below which are of concern to the faculty council. Each proposed change below was discussed and all of them were unanimously rejected.**

page 4, compare to 2013 Handbook

https://www.yu.edu/sites/default/files/legacy/uploadedfiles/Academics/Office_of_The_Provost/Office_of_The_Provost-

**Placeholder/Faculty/Faculty%20Handbook%20-%202013.pdf page 11, the list of faculty governance duties has been shortened.
The council votes to keep the original list.**

**page 5, compare to 2013 Handbook page 12, rather than 1 FC representative per 15 faculty members of any school, each school gets two FC representatives.
The council votes to keep the original mandate of 1 FC member per 15 faculty members.**

**page 24, compare to 2013 Handbook pp. 33-36 challenge of administration action can be made by the affected faculty member to the Faculty Review Committee within 30 days, but the burden of proof has been shifted from the University to the faculty member.
The council votes to keep the burden of proof on the university, as originally states in the 2012 handbook.**

**page 25, compare to 2013 Handbook page 120 removes "review by the Faculty Council" from necessary approvals for changes to the Faculty Handbook.
The faculty council votes to retain a mandatory review by the council of any changes to the handbook.
The council further adopted and proposed the following additions to the handbook:**

- 1. a proposal that representatives of the Faculty Council meet each semester with the University's Chief Financial Officer.**
- 2. a proposal to require the University to consult with the Faculty Council regarding creating new schools within the University or the creation of new degree programs spanning more than one school.**
- 3. a proposal to add to tenure rules a tolling provision regarding serious illness, in addition to the current tolling provision regarding maternity leave**
- 4. a proposal to add "participation in public affairs" to the faculty functions that are protected by the guarantee of academic freedom as stated in Article I of the Faculty Handbook**
- 5. a proposal to create a subcommittee of the Faculty Council regarding compliance with the Faculty Handbook, with one representative per school.**

Meeting adjourned.