

## Minutes of the Faculty Council meeting on 10/20/2017

In attendance: Karen Bacon (Dean, YC and SCW), J David Bleich (Cardozo), Maria Blekher (Katz), Selma Botman (provost), Gabriel Cwilich (YC), James Kahn (YC), Lynn Levy (Wurzweiler), Chaya Rapp (SCW), Avri Ravid (Syms), Paul Russo (Katz), Daniel Rynhold (Revel), Michael Strauss (Dean, Sy Syms), Charles Swencionis (Ferkauf).

President Ari Berman joined the meeting and Avri Ravid gave the floor to President Berman.

President Berman noted the positive momentum with which his tenure has started and expressed appreciation to the faculty for their participation in the investiture. He acknowledged that significant challenges, most notably balancing the university budget, lay ahead. He opened the floor to comments and questions.

President Berman was asked how he sees the role of the faculty council. He responded that he sees it as an avenue for communication with the faculty as the multi-year plan for the university is put into place, and that he is open to meeting with the council on a regular basis.

The discussion moved on to discontent among the faculty and the consequences thereof. It was noted that if faculty are not happy, they will either leave or not be as productive as they can be. It was suggested that a retroactive cost of living increase would make a strong statement that we are moving in the right direction.

Provost Botman said that there are positive improvements in that the hiring committee has been approving requests for hiring lines from Deans. One council member pointed out that if salary offers are below market rate searches will not be productive.

President Berman said that faculty morale is a high priority for the administration, and that he hoped short term wins can be achieved while we continue to gather information and build a long term plan.

It was suggested that faculty want a voice in defining who we are as a university. President Berman responded that as an over 100 year old major Jewish University in the US, we know our core identity and that the issues lie in how to move into the world of tomorrow. He noted that he intends to visit, and draw from the experiences of, other faith based institutions.

A council member commented that there is no future for teaching only institutions and that we need to position ourselves as a research based institution.

The floor was turned over the Provost Botman for the provost report.

Provost Botman began by reminding the faculty about the conference on Sunday in which President Berman, Rabbi Jonathan Saks, and many faculty members will be speaking.

The provost report:

- 1) The provost is working with Deans to create Pathway programs, i.e. bachelors to masters programs formally approved by the NYS education department.
- 2) The president has asked us to deepen our relationships with Israeli universities and we have done so with memorandums of understanding with Hebrew University, Bar Ilan, and Technion.
- 3) The Katz school has approved a masters degree in Biotechnology.

- 4) Marina Vasilyeva at the office of grant administration is working closely with faculty to match opportunities with areas of interest.
- 5) Our ranking at US News and World Report has fallen from 66 to 94. Reasons for this include: a) the new criteria for ranking doesn't align well with our university, for example institutions that grant humanities doctorates are ranked higher, b) with our separation from AECOM there has been a huge decrease in grants awarded, c) our student/faculty ratio has increased slightly d) alumni giving is down, and e) we are not well known among other universities.

A discussion ensued as to how to enhance Yeshiva's reputation. Suggestions included highlighting our activities to colleagues at other universities, encouraging faculty to present talks at conferences and other universities, bringing visitors from other universities to speak at YU, developing a comprehensive communications strategy across the university, and hiring a PR firm. It was noted that guest lectures will require improved video-conferencing to include both undergraduate campuses and that we can achieve more mileage out of such visits by posting presentations online.

The meeting moved to executive session, after which there were no decisions or votes.

Meeting adjourned at 115.

~~A council member opened with a discussion of the purpose of the faculty council. It was noted that a review of minutes from previous meetings shows that nothing has been accomplished by the council other than receiving information from the administration. Most universities have a budget and finance committee and an academic committee. It was proposed that we establish two such committees to obtain information and advise the administration proactively so that the council can actually play a role in governance. A council member expressed that if the council indeed accomplishes nothing its existence is a net negative since it is a source of faculty demoralization.~~

~~A discussion ensued as to how to make the council more effective. The following conclusions were reached:~~

- ~~1) Propose changes to the faculty handbook such that faculty can influence outcome and not simply be involved in a review of policy. A motion was made to establish a committee to propose revisions to be discussed in the council. James Kahn, Daniel Rynhold, and Charles Swencionis volunteered to be on this committee.~~
- ~~2) Drafting a resolution stating that the council supports the research mission of the university. This followed a discussion of resources that are necessary to support research activities, and thereby enhance university reputation, and the fact that these resources have become more limited.~~
- ~~3) Avri Ravid and James Kahn will meet with President Berman directly to discuss significant issues that are source of faculty discontent including issues that may be legally actionable, such as reduction in faculty pension and increases in teaching loads.~~

~~There was a motion to adjourn and the meeting concluded.~~