

## Annual Report of the Faculty Affairs Committee, AY2007 – 2008

*Kristi A. Wharton, Chair*

### **Membership roster of the FAC:**

*Elected Faculty:*

**Michael Steinberg**, History, until 6/30/08

**Kristi A. Wharton**, MCB/BioMed until 6/30/08

**Gerald S. Guralnik**, Physics, until 6/30/09

**Michael Satlow**, Judaic Studies, replacing Doane for Sem I

**Mary Ann Doane**, Modern Culture and Media, (on leave Sem I) until 6/30/09

**Brian Evenson**, English/Literary Arts, until 6/30/10

**Alex Zaslavsky**, Engineering/Physics, until 6/30/10

*Ex officio members:*

**Rajiv Vohra**; Dean of Faculty Department: Dean of the Faculty

**Brenda A. Allen**; Associate Provost & Director of Institutional Diversity

**Eli Y. Adashi**; Dean of Medicine and Biological Sciences

This report summarizes the activities of the Faculty Affairs Committee (FAC) from September 2007 – March 2008. This year the FAC 1) reviewed the charge of the FAC, 2) reviewed and made recommendations on the Faculty Travel Fund, 2) reviewed faculty benefits, 3) reviewed faculty salaries, 4) heard the child care report from Brenda Allen, 5) meet with the University Ombudsperson, and 5) reviewed the Report on a Research Faculty Leave Policy from the FEC Ad-hoc Committee.

### **FAC charge**

It was noted by the FAC in the previous academic year that some of the FAC charges appear to overlap with charges of other faculty or university committees. For example, charge c overlaps significantly with the duties of the CDH and possibly the CSW.

c. It shall assess the diversity of the Faculty by rank and department and shall advise on faculty retention, recruitment and advancement policies.

The proposed formation of a new committee (CFED – Committee on Faculty Equity and Diversity) which will replace the FAC, CDH and CSW obviates any need to rectify specific charges for the FAC.

### **Review of Faculty Travel Fund**

The Faculty Travel Fund was reviewed and several recommendations were made with regard to the administration of this award. These included a proposed increase in the maximum allotment to \$1,500, and the ability to “double-up” and receive a larger award,

representative of two years of travel funds so as to attend an international meeting. It was also suggested that the allotment check be issued all at once (rather than in two installments) so as to simplify the administration of the Faculty Travel Fund. Advances should still be allowed and eligibility rules are appropriate.

### **Review of Faculty Benefits**

As in years past, the FAC met with Drew Murphy, Director of Benefits to discuss the overall landscape of faculty benefits at Brown. The largest compensation items for both faculty and staff are salary, health insurance, retirement benefits and the tuition assistance program (TAP). Drew Murphy and his staff routinely compare Brown benefits with those at RI schools and the IVY+, a group of institutions including: Brown, Harvard, UPenn, Dartmouth, Cornell, Yale, Princeton, MIT, NYU, Stanford, Columbia, Johns Hopkins. Based on data from the annual meeting of the IVY+ schools and on data collected by members of the FAC from university websites, two areas in particular stood out where Brown benefits lag behind those at comparable institutions, health insurance coverage for faculty with families and TAP.

Health insurance: As noted last year, among the IVY+ schools, Brown ranks in the middle to upper half for expense of health insurance for individual coverage with 15% contributed by the employee, but second to the top for the expense of family coverage with most employees contributing 55%. With the exception of MIT, Brown employees contribute significantly more than their peers for family health coverage. A recent announcement by the university indicated that the level of contribution made by the employee for family health insurance has been decreased to 38%. This should have a very positive impact on many Brown employees.

Tuition assistance: The fixed rate of \$10,000 per year per child offered to Brown faculty and staff for dependent tuition assistance is not competitive when compared to peer institutions. With the exception of Harvard and Dartmouth, who do not offer tuition assistance, Brown ranks at the bottom. First, Brown's \$10,000 fixed rate is a decaying benefit. All other institutions offer the benefit as a percentage of the institution's own tuition rate, enabling the benefit to keep pace with inflation. Second, the tuition assistance offered by Brown is the least amount provided by all schools when a child attends the home institution and only above NYU and Rochester for a child attending another institution. Finally, in the case of both parents employed by Brown only one TAP benefit is provided as the benefit is defined as being given to the child. While the means by which the benefit is provided (as a fellowship, a scholarship, a benefit etc.) varies from institution to institution, there are some, such as, Columbia, that grant the benefit to the parent. Thus, if both parents are employed by the university and pay into the tuition assistance pool, they each will receive the benefit up to 100% of tuition at the chosen institution. A proposal for changes in the dependent TAP benefit is currently under consideration by the FAC.

### **Review of Faculty Salaries and External Faculty Salary Review**

As in years past Dean Vohra, Dean of Faculty, provided data on faculty salaries for the current academic year and related this to salaries over the past five years. Tenurable faculty salaries have increased 14.5 - 18% over the past 5 years depending on rank. The largest increase, 18%, was seen among the Professor rank, most likely because faculty remain in this rank longer.

The FAC reviewed a proposal for an external study of Faculty Salaries at Brown University. Overall, the FAC felt the external review would be a descriptor of the status of faculty salaries because some variable such as time in rank, and number of years at Brown will be taken into consideration. However, the committee cautions that because the proposal does not take faculty productivity into consideration it will be very important that the final report clearly state what exactly can be concluded and what the caveats of the study are. According to Faculty Rules, the FAC will oversee this external analysis. Other faculty who have experience with such analyses, such as, Mark Pitt, have been consulted.

## **Review of Report on Research Faculty Leaves**

Last year, an Enhanced Sabbatical Leave Policy for tenured faculty was proposed by the FAC and approved by the Corporation. A possibility of leaves for faculty of ranks other than tenurable ranks was being discussed and evaluated by the FEC. The FEC set up an ad hoc committee to look into the needs and equity of a leave policy for Research Faculty. The FEC asked the FAC to review the report from this ad hoc committee.

The expectations of tenurable faculty and research faculty are defined in the Faculty Handbook as follows:

**8.1 Tenurable Ranks:** The tenurable ranks at Brown are Professor, Associate Professor and Assistant Professor. Faculty at these ranks are expected to hold the highest academic degree that can be earned in their fields, and all are expected to teach classes, advise students, engage in research and other scholarly undertakings and participate in departmental and University activities - all to a high degree of excellence. Those holding untenurable ranks (listed below) are not expected to fulfill all of these conditions.

**8.2.10 Research Faculty:** Faculty appointments in the Professorial ranks with the suffix "(Research)" are provided for individuals who devote their primary efforts to research, the area of such research having been identified by the division, department or program as being an integral part of its mission. Salary for these positions is provided from external funding. Individuals holding such positions are expected to be able to initiate independent research and will have qualifications which are not distinguishable from those of faculty who hold tenurable rank. Although individuals in these positions may occasionally teach, such teaching will not be part of the continuing responsibility of the "(Research)" faculty member, and will in no case be more than 50% of the effort of the individual faculty member.

The FAC read with interest the report prepared by the ad hoc committee and discussed its findings and recommendations. In summary, the FAC felt that a more in depth analysis was required before a recommendation could be made regarding a specific leave policy. The expectations and responsibilities of tenurable faculty and research faculty are different, as is the source of salary support. Tenurable faculty salaries are supported in full or in part by internal funds while the salary of research faculty is provided by external funds. Given these differences, the sabbatical leave policy for tenurable faculty is intended to relieve faculty of duties (teaching and administrative) that are not expectations of untenurable faculty. Thus, the FAC did not find the justification for a paid leave for research faculty in general to be convincing. However, it was recognized that not all faculty in the untenurable research rank perform the same duties.

The responsibilities and pursuit of independent research for faculty in this rank varies significantly across disciplines and from department to department. The FAC also recognized the concern stated within the research faculty report that a single fringe benefit rate applies to all faculty including postdoctoral fellows at Brown. Overall, the FAC suggests that a much more in depth study be conducted across disciplines and departments with a committee made up of faculty from both tenurable and untenurable ranks and not just research faculty. Alternatively, each department or discipline should evaluate the duties and needs of their research faculty in the context of the financial structure within which that department functions. As a result it may be appropriate that a particular department or discipline, whose research faculty perform duties beyond independent research, create a special fund for research faculty to take a leave from those duties to either focus solely on research or to expand their scholarly pursuits; or that a fund be established to enable a fixed number of leaves for research faculty on a competitive basis.

Other important issues that need to be considered with regard to a uniform, university-wide policy for research faculty in general are:

How does a research faculty position further the mission of the university/department?

What is the oversight for quality of hire into this rank, across disciplines?

How are promotions within this rank assessed?

Are research faculty appointments intended to be temporary positions or long-term?

Should there be a limit on the term?

Should there be different categories within the Research Faculty rank to reflect different duties?

### **Other work**

Brenda Allen reported to the FAC the findings and recommendation of the Child Care Committee. The FAC agreed that with a small amount of support that advances could be made in helping Brown employees arrange for acceptable child care at local day centers.

Flora Keshgegian, the Faculty Ombudsperson spoke to the FAC about the role of the ombudsperson and outlined some data on the use of the office. Overall, 23 faculty of both tenurable and untenurable rank have made use of the office in 2007.