

Yeshiva University Faculty Council
Minutes, Meeting of February 8, 2019
Kyron Huigens, Cardozo School of Law

Meeting called to order at 11:25

Passed resolutions are in bold.

The minutes of the December 14, 2018 meeting are approved.

Provost Selma Botman reported on administration developments. The provost listed changes in the Career Center and new staff. She extended an invitation to the spring author's reception, which featured recent faculty publications.

The provost then answered questions concerning the Career Center.

Professor Cwilich asked Provost Botman if the university could provide an email system, which enables scholars to communicate while travelling internationally. The Provost asked for details and Professor Cwilich promised to provide her with them.

Julie Auster, the head of human resources answered questions concerning employee benefits. She acknowledged that all benefits deteriorated significantly five years ago, but reported that some improvements have been made, including a rise in the employer contribution to retirement savings from 2 to 3 percent.

Regarding the health plan, employees now have access to all Empire Blue Cross/ Blue Shield services and providers. The university is now self-insured, with reinsurance to guard against severe impacts from catastrophic illnesses. Empire administers the plan as a contractor. Self-insurance allows the university to reduce taxes paid on benefits. Since it has self-insured, the university has acquired more data on employee health and will make adjustments, such as to its wellness programs, as the data indicates.

Auster also reported on the management of retirement funds by Fidelity. She notes that Fidelity has an open platform, which permits other vendors to offer a range of investments beyond those offered by Fidelity itself. In response to a question, she noted that, while the university hopes to increase its contribution to retirement from 3% to 7%, even the latter figure is low. Columbia contributes 10%, for example.

Council co-chair Professor Ravid encourages members of the Executive Committee to attend meetings with the Provost, the next being Monday February 25, 2019. Members of the Executive Committee are: Moshe Krakowski (Azrieli); Kyron Huigens (Cardozo); Gabriel Cwilich (Yeshiva College); Daniel Rynhold (Revel); Maria Blekher (Katz); Charles Swencionis (Ferkau); and Abraham Ravid (Syms).

Revisions to the Faculty Handbook were discussed, including:

1. The number of representatives per school on the Faculty council. The relative merits or equal representation (2 per school) versus proportionate representation were discussed. The provost spoke in favor of equal representation. She noted that the

decision is up to the Board of Trustees, but that it would be discussed by the Academic Affairs Committee in March. The Council committed to sending a delegate to the Academic Affairs meeting.

2. The Provost was asked which of the revisions proposed by the Council would be acceptable. She stated that the revisions proposed by the administration stand as is. She noted that the Council's amendments can be submitted to the Trustees. (After this discussion, the Provost left the meeting because of illness.)
3. Discussion of page 25 in the Handbook, regarding faculty approval. The word "review" is in dispute. The Council's position is that "review" entails "approval" and the Council has proposed that revision.
4. There was discussion of a way to resolve disputes over the Handbook and similar issues with the administration. The Handbook has no provision for resolution. A proposal to add a dispute resolution process to the Handbook was discussed. Professor Huigens was tasked with formulating a proposal in consultation with Cardozo's Alternative Dispute Resolution Clinic.

Professor Avnet volunteered to be the Council's representative to the Academic Affairs Committee.

The Council's draft of the Handbook will be forwarded to the Academic Affairs Committee

In executive session, the Council voted unanimously to hold a vote of all full time and tenured faculty on the Council's draft of the Handbook.

The Council discussed raising the issue of the University's mission statement with the University. The existing mission statement is short and generic, and should be given more substance and direction.

