Al-Quds University/Brandeis University Partnership
Grantee: Brandeis University, Grant 1030-0957-2
Report to the Ford Foundation, December 2009
January 2008 – December 2009

The following report covers the grant phase January 2008 – December 2009. During that period, our two universities made significant progress on partnership goals. These goals, established at the very beginning of the partnership, are to:

- improve the administrative and infrastructure capacities at Al-Quds University, one of Palestine's nascent civic institutions;
- strengthen academics and offer opportunities for faculty, staff and students at both institutions;
- educate the campuses about the advantages of cooperation, goodwill and understanding.

Projects working toward these goals include the following “exchanges,” where groups of Brandeis and Al-Quds University communities work together on relevant issues through visits to each institution.

1. **Effective Teaching Exchange**, which includes faculty development, curricular consultation, assessment, mentoring, and other improvements to teaching and research infrastructure at both universities.
2. **Undergraduate Exchange**, focusing on intercultural dialogue between Brandeis and Al-Quds students around the theme “What is a Good Society?”
3. **Administrative Exchange**, addressing the first goal of administrative and infrastructure capacities at Al-Quds University.
4. **Documentation**, focusing largely on the third goal of educating the campuses.

All four areas were advanced considerably in this phase of the partnership (see Indicators of Success, below), including the first joint international conference of the partnership; a brochure documenting the first five years; two undergraduate delegations in both directions; and new and more robust faculty development initiatives.

**Activities/Issues Addressed**

**Effective Teaching Exchange**

The Effective Teaching Exchange was the primary activity of the partnership over the last two years. These projects included the establishment of the Committee for the Support of Teaching at Al-Quds University; the Committee will host workshops and a mentoring program for junior faculty. The Effective Teaching Exchange included four substantial visits to the campuses:
• May 2008 visit of a Brandeis delegation to Al-Quds University
In May, 2008, Elaine Wong (Senior Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences) and Sue Lanser (literature; women’s and gender studies), together with Professor Derek Isaacowitz (Psychology) and Professor Dan Kryder (Politics) spent a week at Al-Quds forging new connections and following up on earlier initiatives. They were joined for one day by Professor Vardit Ringvald, who heads the Hebrew and Arabic Languages Program at Brandeis.

• Summer 2008 Distinguished International Teaching Fellows Program
From June – July 2008, under the auspices of the Effective Teaching Exchange, Brandeis advanced graduate students Njelle Hamilton and Lydia Fash spent nearly six weeks at Al-Quds’ summer school as the partnership’s first “Distinguished International Teaching Fellows.” They produced a full report, set of suggestions, and curriculum resource guide (appended).

• May 2009 visit of a Brandeis delegation to Al-Quds University
In May 2009, four Brandeis University faculty members spent periods of one to two weeks at Al-Quds University, working with counterparts on issues of effective teaching. Activities over the course of the week included a workshop on faculty mentoring, lectures by the Brandeis faculty members in Al-Quds University classes, and many meetings and conversations on matters of curriculum and pedagogy. Brandeis faculty members included Anne Carter (economics), Dan Kryder (politics), Sue Lanser (English and Women’s Studies), and Derek Isaacwitz (psychology). Al-Quds University counterparts included: Mohammed Bader (economics and business), Amneh Badran (politics), Abd El-Rahman AlHaj Ibrahim (politics), Eyad Halaq (psychology), Taisir Abdullah (psychology), and Saker Darwish (academic affairs).

• May 2009 International Conference: “Women, Leadership, State, and Society” was hosted at Al-Quds University (report appended).

• November 2009 visit of an Al-Quds delegation to Al-Quds University
In November, a delegation of five Al-Quds University faculty members (Taysir Abdullah, Mohammed Bader, Eyad Halak, Asma Imam, and Rania Iriqat,), accompanied by two administrative support staff (Ola Hussein and Sand Ishkirat), traveled to Brandeis to continue this faculty exchange. Over the course of a week, faculty members met with established partners on the Brandeis faculty as well as with others in relevant departments; visited and participated in classes; met with students; planned joint research initiatives; spoke with visitors from Greater Boston higher education institutions and community organizations; and engaged in a series of conversations with Brandeis University faculty and administrators.

Please see attached individual reports for further details on these activities.
Undergraduate Exchange

The Undergraduate Exchange included a continuation of the popular Summer Institute, held in Istanbul, Turkey. Brandeis and Al-Quds students are brought together as classmates and roommates to discuss “What is a Good Society?” using literary and cultural texts as guiding forces. The 2008 Summer Institute was a great success, building off of the lessons learned in the 2007 Institute. The success of this latest version, and the relationships formed by the students, gave us the confidence to pursue delegations of student leaders visiting each other’s campuses. In May 2009, a group of four Brandeis students, led by Brandeis Assistant Provost Alwina Bennett, visited Al-Quds University to engage with their Summer Institute peers and leaders in student government in dialogues. Similarly, in November 2009, many of these same students visited Brandeis – for many, it was their first trip the United States. These students also engaged in further dialogue with their peers and leaders of Brandeis student groups.

Please see the attached report for further details on these activities.

Administrative and Finance Exchange

The core activity of the Administration and Finance Exchange remains the implementation of the strategic plan that Mr. Imad Abu Kishek, Vice President for Administrative and Financial Affairs at Al-Quds University, developed while in residence at Brandeis from 2005 – 2007. Since then, Mr. Abu Kishek has further refined his plan, and has begun implementing certain elements of the plan using strategies he learned and created at Brandeis. This is a multi-stage process, and one that looks at how the administrative infrastructure of Al-Quds University is organized.

In two visits, April 2008 and April 2009, Mr. Perry Hanson, Vice President and Vice Provost for Libraries and Technology Services at Brandeis, visited Al-Quds to follow up on the strategic planning process and consult on library services. During these visits he met with President Sari Nusseibeh, Mr. Abu-Kishek, members of the Al-Quds senior administration, members of the library staff, and the administrative and financial team. The overall goal of the visit was to review and discuss administrative systems, with the purpose of identifying strengths and weaknesses and for offering suggestions about possible paths for future development in line with the strategic plan. Another goal was to discuss issues related to the possibilities of building a new central library for Al-Quds. It was recommended that Al-Quds form a strategic planning committee to develop a ten-year plan for building a “21st-century library.” Planning for the library at Al-Quds is underway now, with possible system-wide collaboration among Palestinian Universities.

Al-Quds University has made considerable progress in integrating and upgrading its systems, but it faces challenges in developing overall infrastructure. Mr. Hanson’s visit helped solidify a roadmap for success both in the technology and library areas, including the implementation of an Oracle system and other system collaborations with Birzeit University for broad system support.
The Partnership Steering Committee also identified a new project under the rubric of administrative exchanges -- Continuing Education -- owing to significant capacity building opportunity in this area. There is already continuing education happening at Al-Quds University, in a number of different units. At Brandeis, there is a centralized Rabb School of Continuing Studies that enrolls over 3,000 college and adult students and is looking to do more joint work abroad. The project team identified a number of synergies between the two universities for helping to expand and internationalize continuing education offerings. To begin work on the project, Ms. Sybil Smith, Executive Director of Graduate Professional Studies, traveled to Al-Quds in April 2008 to conduct an initial assessment. During her visit, she met with over 25 administrators and faculty at Al-Quds, and identified needs in a number of areas including distance learning, outcomes assessment, centralization of resources, technology, and training. Some potential collaborations with the Rabb School were discussed in terms of providing resources, support, training programs, and helping to internationalize Rabb’s programs.

**Documentation Exchange/Projects**

The documentation project is not only a method of institutional memory, but is also meant to be an “exchange” in itself. Communication about the project and its goals – both to internal and external communities – is a worthwhile exercise in cross-cultural understanding.

Major projects included the completion of a Partnership Brochure (attached), which tells the “story” of the first five years. This brochure has already been handed out to many on each campus, and will be distributed widely among the higher education community and civil society groups over the next few months. We also have compiled various film/video footage of the exchanges, and are in the process of putting that material together into a presentable format. We have applied for a grant extension to complete this work. In addition, the partnership was recognized in several media outlets, including *International Educator Magazine* and in Brandeis campus publications.

**Indicators of Success**

This phase of the partnership led to significant, tangible outcomes, including:

1. **A joint international conference** hosted at Al-Quds University, entitled “Women, Leadership, State, and Society.” The conference brought together Palestinian and international academics on issues of women’s leadership in politics, higher education, and civil society. Both universities actively participated.

2. The establishment of a **Committee for the Support of Teaching at Al-Quds University**. The Committee and Brandeis co-hosted **workshops on teaching and learning**, and organizes a new **mentoring program** for junior faculty. These workshops and programs have involved at least 100 faculty at both institutions.
3. A set of **short-term faculty visits** in each direction, leading to new collaborations and relationships. Visiting faculty guest-taught in classes, participated in curriculum and research consultations, and formed plans for joint work in the future. These visits included special attention to language-teaching capacity and also included a **summer residency in ESL** at Al-Quds University by two Brandeis graduate students.

4. **Three study trip programs of the Undergraduate Exchange** under the rubric of “What is a Good Society?” that helped create a cadre of 15 partnership student leaders. These included a 10-day joint seminar in Istanbul, Turkey (the second of two such seminars), and a set of 10-day visits in each direction by student delegations. These programs built very strong relationships among student participants, who now describe themselves as life-long friends. Student governments on both campuses were active participants. Overall, we estimate that over 150 students were involved in activities on both campuses; and we are currently planning to assess the impact of the visits.

5. Implementing the **Al-Quds University Strategic Plan**, including plans for administrative and technical infrastructure, new library construction, and continuing education.

6. Producing a glossy **partnership brochure** (appended), web site, and positive recognition in both campus-based external media.

**Evaluating Progress on Long-term Goals**

As the above Activities and Indicators of Success suggest, we feel that we made significant progress in our stated goals. All of the activities have laid the groundwork for sustainability beyond the grant period – such as capacity-building efforts in administration and effective teaching.

We believe that the undergraduate exchange has particular possibilities for sustained change – both in terms of the student leadership created from the exchanges, and in terms of those students affected by discussions on both campuses. Students who participated in the exchange have called the experience “life-changing” and rate it among the most satisfying experiences of their college career. It is clear that these students might very well be future leaders in government, business, and civil society organizations.

Although we did implement a set of short-term faculty exchanges, progress continues to be slower than hoped for in advancing joint course work/research or residency/teaching exchanges by faculty at both institutions. There remains considerable excitement for such projects, but timing and logistics remain challenging. We are currently evaluating creating ways to pilot such efforts including the use of distance learning technologies.

**Organizational/Environmental Changes and Issues**

During this grant phase, the Brandeis management of the partnership was shifted to the new Brandeis Office of Global Affairs (OGA). The OGA is directed by PI Daniel
Terris, Vice President for Global Affairs. The OGA is concerned with the international dimension of Brandeis, and will forge connections both on-campus and overseas. In essence, then, the partnership will continue to benefit from OGA’s own development.

While the current economic climate does not directly affect partnership funding, it indirectly affects some ability to plan ahead and engage different departments/offices on the Brandeis campus. Brandeis faculty members have been deeply engaged in committee work dealing with the broader economic situation.

The on-going Israeli-Palestinian conflict -- and broader geopolitics of the Middle East -- continue to pose challenges in partnership planning. The early 2009 situation in Gaza was particularly challenging. Both universities had to work considerably hard just to work together and to educate their communities in the face of conflict and criticism.

Beyond the shift to OGA management of the partnership, there have been no significant managerial or organizational issues during the current grant period. We do not know of any significant changes at Al-Quds University regarding partnership management.

**Diversity**

The partnership leaders are particularly proud of the efforts made toward incorporating a gender perspective in partnership activities. This has been largely due to the leadership of Dr. Khuloud Khayyat Dajani, Al-Quds University Partnership Director; Dr. Marty Krauss, Brandeis Provost; Brandeis Prof. Susan Lanser, co-leader of the Effective Teaching Exchange, and many others involved from both universities. Women have taken a large leadership and participatory role in partnership activities, and several projects (such as the International Conference) deal with a specific gender perspective.

Additionally, we made progress in diversifying the background of exchange participants. Three of the applicants selected for the 2008 Summer Undergraduate Institute were born outside the U.S. (in Ghana, Dominican Republic, and France), two of these were from the U.S. POSSE Program serving underprivileged students, and one of the participants in the Effective Teaching Exchange was an international graduate student from Jamaica. We’ve also made efforts to diversify participants in terms of race, sexual orientation, field of expertise, years of service, and other factors.

**Final Reflections**

The partnership continues to be well-received on both campuses. In conducting interviews with Al-Quds University participants, several faculty noted that the partnership is now viewed on campus as a key factor in the growth of Al-Quds University. At Brandeis, change has been slightly harder to measure, but certainly the partnership has changed minds or deepened perspectives of faculty, students, staff, and our broader community. This type of project is one that best simmers slowly; it represents a change in the “business as usual” at both universities, and requires time to grow.

Perhaps the Undergraduate Exchange has been the most tangible outcome of the partnership. Both Brandeis and Al-Quds worked very hard to overcome logistical challenges in getting these students together for two Istanbul summer seminars and two
subsequent campus visits in each direction. The result, though, has been truly transformative change among the student participants. Many have become best friends who now “exchange” communication far beyond the formal activities of the partnership. These 15 student leaders (and 15 from the previous grant phase) are probably the best hope for carrying the message of cooperation forward.

Overall, we feel that the partnership has reached a turning point. It has met some of its initial goals, but working across so many barriers has been time-consuming and much work is to be done. In addition to the challenges of funding, most of the effort will need to come from the collective will of the two institutions to imagine and shape their global futures.

Financial Report

Per correspondence with the Ford Office in Cairo, an interim financial report is attached. A final report with any changes will be sent along under separate cover by January 15, 2010.

Final Report

Per the approval of a no-cost extension of this grant until June 2010, we will submit a final report for the grant at the end of the extension period.

Certification

Please check the box next to the following certification if it is accurate. If you are unable to check the box, please contact your Grants Administrator before submitting this report.

X By submission of this report we hereby certify that the individual submitting this report is authorized to submit it on behalf of the organization and that we are in compliance with the requirements of the grant letter and that any funds expended have been expended in accordance with the purposes of the grant.

Attachments (PDF Format)

2. Report on the Undergraduate Exchange
6. Partnership Brochure
7. Excerpt from International Educator magazine, the flagship publication of NAFSA: Association of International Educators