

**Al-Quds University/Brandeis University Partnership**  
**Grantee: Brandeis University, Grant 1030-0957**  
**Interim report to the Ford Foundation**  
**Reporting period January - December 2008**

The report below covers the period January – December 2008, during which time the partnership completed several significant exchanges and laid the groundwork for other future activities. These projects included progress on the Effective Teaching Exchange, Administration and Finance Exchange, and the Documentation Project; we also completed a second ten-day Undergraduate Summer Institute in Istanbul. A new project was also begun in Continuing Education.

### Activities/Issues Addressed

#### Administration and Finance

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 fundamentally looks at how the administrative area of Al-Quds University is organized.

In April 2008, 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 this time 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.

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. Al-Quds is currently investigating a number of strategic possibilities: using outside vendors, developing their own technology and information management systems, and/or partnering with an outside company to provide technology and services. Clearly, Al-Quds faces unique challenges, but there are also unique opportunities to build a flexible, 21<sup>st</sup>-century structure that meets multiple needs.

### Continuing Education

The Partnership Steering Committee 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.

### Undergraduate Exchange

Building upon the success of first Undergraduate Summer Institute (August 2007), a second Summer Institute was conducted in Istanbul, Turkey in August 2008. The theme of the Institute was once again "What is a good society?", and it brought together students from Al-Quds and students from Brandeis. The Institute was team-taught by Brandeis' Robin Feuer Miller, Edytha Macy Gross Professor of the Humanities, and by Basem L. Ra'ad, Professor of English at Al-Quds University. The focus of the texts, then, was on using fiction, poetry, and exposition to examine the more philosophical as well as practical aspects of a "good" society. This academic shift, as well as a number of other important alterations to the Institute, helped students bond together more easily and have, in the words of many participants, a fully "life-changing" experience. A detailed summary of the Institute is appended to this document. For both universities, the Summer Institute has been one of the true successes of the partnership, and is contributing to "buzz" on both campuses.

### Effective Teaching

The Effective Teaching Exchange moved to a central position in the partnership over the past year, and has now involved a wider range of faculty at Brandeis and Al-Quds. Following the first Effective Teaching Workshop in October 2007, a second, two-day workshop was jointly organized by Al-Quds and Brandeis in May 2008. This second workshop focused in on assessment of student learning, and was well-attended by Al-Quds senior and junior faculty. In addition, one major success of the Effective Teaching Exchange was the establishment of a Committee for the Support of Teaching and a Faculty Mentor Program at Al-Quds – both direct results of recommendations suggested by the joint Exchange team. The Committee will host and support continued workshops and training in pedagogical development and assessment. In doing so, they'll continue to build on relationships developed between Brandeis and Al-Quds. New relationships were established between Brandeis and Al-Quds professors. (See attached report on the May 2008 visit.)

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." Njelle and Lydia taught English language courses, led workshops on teaching English as a Second Language (ESL), advised on curriculum development, and furthered the overall goals of the Effective Teaching project by talking with faculty and staff. This new program allowed these two graduate students to have a significant international experience, bolstering their teaching (they fully designed and taught courses) and cross-cultural communication skills. It also served an identified need of improving the teaching and study of English at Al-Quds – a key component underlining all Effective Teaching projects. Njelle and Lydia also observed faculty in the classroom. They produced a full report, set of suggestions, and curriculum resource guide (appended), many of which have already been implemented at Al-Quds or will lead to further discussion.

Finally, our original grant proposal called for one to two major international conferences, and plans for such an undertaking are moving forward smoothly thanks to dedicated leadership among senior administration and faculty at both institutions. The conference, entitled **Women, Leadership, State, and Society**, will take place on May 3 and May 4, 2009 at Al-Quds University's Abu Dis campus in East Jerusalem. The call for papers is appended to this document.

#### Documentation Project and related Outreach

Our success in "educating our communities" about the partnership and cooperation more broadly depends on the visibility of our activities. To that end, we are producing a professional, 20-page publication that will highlight the first five years of partnership planning and activities. To begin work on this project, Bryan McAllister-Grande, Brandeis staff coordinator, visited Al-Quds University in May 2008 to conduct interviews with Al-Quds participants. Work is now being done on this publication, and is scheduled to be completed in February or March 2009.

We are also collecting previously-shot video footage for assembly into a short partnership film, as well as for distribution on the partnership web site.

In February 2009, Daniel Terris will present a session on the partnership at the annual conference of the Association of International Education Administrators (AIEA), along with Fairfield University (CT). This session will look at holistic, capacity-building partnerships that are mission-driven. In May 2009, Bryan McAllister-Grande presented a poster session on the partnership at the annual conference of NAFSA: Association of International Educators.

#### Steering Committee

A Steering Committee, comprised of Al-Quds and Brandeis personnel, continues to drive the partnership planning process and is in itself a key component of the work. The Steering Committee made some small adjustments to proposed activities, and will continue to make adjustments as needed.

## Indicators of Success

Over the past calendar year, Brandeis and Al-Quds University have achieved a number of tangible outcomes, including:

1. Establishing a Committee for the Support of Teaching at Al-Quds, that will sustain training, workshop and mentor programs going forward.
2. Organizing a two-day workshop and accompanying resource guide on assessment of student learning, well-attended by 75-80 Al-Quds senior and junior faculty.
3. Hosting a 10-day Summer Institute, that built new understanding and knowledge among young Brandeis and Palestinian students, to be shared on both campuses.
4. Widening the scope of involvement in the partnership, including the substantial leadership of more than 15 new Brandeis faculty, administrators and students, and over 15 new Al-Quds faculty, administrators, and students. In addition, numerous others were affected by attending workshops, meetings, and events.
5. Implementing the Al-Quds Strategic Plan, including plans for administrative and technical infrastructure, library, and continuing education.
6. Developing a leadership committee, call for proposals, and schedule for a major international conference to be held at Al-Quds in May 2009.
7. Creating new one-on-one relationships between Brandeis and Al-Quds faculty members in political science and psychology.
8. Developing a partnership publication plan and related documentation efforts.
9. Continuing positive recognition of the partnership through stories in *Brandeis University Magazine*, alumni meetings, faculty gatherings, and in the academic community.

## Goals

As the above indicates, the partnership team has made substantial further progress in achieving our goals. More importantly, all of the activities have laid the groundwork for sustainability beyond the grant period – such as capacity-building efforts in administration and effective teaching. Teaching and research at both institutions has been strengthened through conversation and sharing of information; while a successful second undergraduate exchange contributed further to mutual understanding.

Progress has been somewhat slower than hoped for in advancing joint course work/research or residency/teaching exchanges by faculty at both institutions. There is a considerable excitement for such projects – an informational meeting just before Brandeis graduation

attracted a wide range of faculty interest – but actual timing and logistics have been somewhat challenging. The Steering Committee is currently reviewing these projects will hope to implement pilot exchanges in 2009.

### Organizational/Environmental Changes

It was mentioned in previous reports that the Brandeis/Al-Quds Partnership now falls, on the Brandeis side, under the auspices of the University's new Office of Global Affairs (OGA). 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 benefit from OGA's own development. We have begun developing new resource streams for the University's global programs, and will help expand the reach of the partnership.

While the current economic climate does not directly affect the partnership funding, it indirectly affects some ability to plan ahead and engage different departments/offices on the Brandeis campus.

### Issues

There have been no significant managerial or organizational issues during the current grant period. As mentioned above, the economic crisis may dictate some changes in how in how we engage others in the Brandeis community, but we do not expect these changes to be significant.

We do not know of any significant changes at Al-Quds University, and there have been no major organizational issues within partnership management.

### Diversity

There have been no changes in the make-up of the leadership team or staff support. Brandeis University continues to make progress in its approach to diversity.

Additionally, we have made progress in diversifying the international background of Brandeis exchange participants. Three of the applicants selected for the 2008 Summer Institute were born outside the U.S. (in Ghana, Dominican Republic, and France), and one of the participants in the Effective Teaching Exchange is an international graduate student from Jamaica.

### Final Reflections

The partnership continues to be well-received on both campuses. In conducting interviews with Al-Quds participants, several faculty noted that the partnership is beginning to be viewed on campus as a key factor in the growth of Al-Quds University, and as a consistent effort

towards peaceful working relations with all outside institutions. At Brandeis, the Summer Institute has created a visible buzz amongst students and faculty.

We hope the international conference is a chance for deeper engagement of Brandeis faculty in the partnership, who will present papers and lead sessions; it also offers an opportunity for Al-Quds scholars to be more integrated with the world scholar community.

### Financial Information

An interim financial report is attached.

### 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)

1. Report on the 2008 Summer Institute
2. Report on the May 2008 Effective Teaching Exchange visit
3. Recommendations and report by Lydia Fash and Njelle Hamilton, Distinguished International Teaching Fellows
4. Call for Papers for the May 2009 conference “Women, Leadership, State, and Society”
5. *Brandeis University Magazine* article on the 2007 Summer Institute
6. Interim financial report