

**Al-Quds University/Brandeis University Partnership  
Grantee: Brandeis University, Grant 1030-0957-2  
Grant Extension Period January 1, 2011– June 30, 2011**

**Final Report to the Ford Foundation  
August 15, 2011**

The following report covers the no-cost grant extension period, January – June 2011. This was the final extension period of the grant, and thus we are also including some reflections on the partnership as a whole and on its future.

During the extension period, we completed several key projects that helped close this phase of the partnership. A delegation of Brandeis faculty, staff, and alumni traveled to Jerusalem in June for ten days of workshops and meetings with their Al-Quds counterparts. The Effective Teaching project was central to this trip. In addition to organizing a set of workshops and conversations, the partners created a joint Effective Teaching Manual for distribution to the entire Al-Quds faculty by the Al-Quds Academic Committee for the Support of Teaching, formed in 2007 as a result of the partnership. A visit to Brandeis by Al-Quds Political Science Professor Amneh Badran in February helped set the stage for the June visit and for a new set of proposals focusing on women's leadership in academia. In addition, two Brandeis graduates who took part in the student exchange worked with Al-Quds student counterparts to plan ways of continuing this highly effective aspect of the partnership.

**ACTIVITIES/ISSUES ADDRESSED AND INDICATORS OF SUCCESS**

*Visit of Prof. Amneh Badran to Brandeis*

In February 2011, Professor Amneh Badran, Chair of the Political Science Department at Al-Quds University and a member of the Effective Teaching project committee, visited Brandeis for almost two weeks. Prof. Badran's visit furthered three aspects of the project. First, she continued her faculty partnership with Brandeis Professor Daniel Kryder (Politics), participated in several Politics Department meetings, attended graduate and undergraduate courses, and gave guest lectures on her recent research. Second, Professor Badran consulted with Brandeis steering committee members on the future of the partnership, including plans for the Effective Teaching workshops in June 2011. Third, she attended a special meeting of Brandeis women faculty and senior administrators to discuss issues concerning women's leadership at both Brandeis and Al-Quds and helped to formulate a women and leadership concept paper for the next phase of the partnership. Professor Badran also met with past participants in the student and faculty exchanges, as recapped here: <http://blogs.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/2011/02/18/al-quds-university-guest-emphasizes-international-collaboration/>

### *Effective Teaching Project*

Effective Teaching activities were central to the Brandeis team's June 2011 visit to Abu Dis. Three long-term participants in the project -- Derek Isaacowitz, Associate Professor of Psychology, Sue Lanser, Professor of Comparative Literature, English, and Women's and Gender Studies, and Elaine Wong, Senior Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences -- participated in a series of workshops and meetings that built upon previous visits and established partnerships not only with the Committee for the Support of Teaching but also with faculty and staff with whom they had partnered in the United States or Palestine. Al-Quds faculty led a workshop on E-Learning pedagogy, and the Brandeis team led an effective teaching workshop that focused especially on course design, interactive pedagogy, and assessment of student learning; a workshop on academic management that focused especially on new department chairs; and a workshop on training faculty mentors. Together, Brandeis and Al-Quds faculty also met to discuss the evaluation of academic programs, ways of ensuring consistent quality in graduate education, and procedures for establishing mentoring programs in those Al-Quds faculties where such programs do not yet exist.

Three additional sessions, involving the Brandeis team and nearly a dozen Al-Quds faculty members from a wide range of disciplines, were devoted to the joint drafting of a manual for effective teaching that will represent one tangible product of the partnership. The manual begins with a statement of teaching philosophy and includes sections on course design, interactive teaching, assessment of learning, E-learning, and course evaluation. Revisions and amplifications of the manual continued after the Brandeis team returned to the United States. The completed draft is now in the hands of the Al-Quds partners, who will further edit, revise, and translate the document for posting in both English and Arabic on the Al-Quds website. Hard copy versions may also be printed and distributed, and a Brandeis version of the manual may be posted on the website of the Brandeis Committee for the Support of Teaching. (See attached copy of the July draft.)

The Al-Quds Committee for the Support of Teaching has truly begun to change the teaching culture of the university. In conjunction with the Brandeis partnership, the university has developed a philosophy and practice of effective teaching, institutionalized junior faculty mentoring in eleven of its fourteen faculties, advanced E-learning, instantiated orientation sessions for new faculty, and created a handbook of teaching resources. Discussions and workshops co-led by Brandeis faculty in 2007, 2008, and 2009 have been integral to these transformations. The Brandeis team has also been instrumental in proposing more systemic changes that might help ameliorate the problems of class size and teaching load at Al-Quds.

### *Student Exchange*

In June, two recent Brandeis graduates (Holly Devon and Saghi Sofinzon, both participants in the student exchange) and Brandeis Assistant Provost Alwina Bennett went to Al-Quds to assess opportunities to continue the relationships initiated during the partnership when funding has ended.

Devon and Sofinzon met with Al-Quds students over a five-day period and identified a group of student leaders who will be founding a community service organization to work with student services at Al-Quds. These alums are also contacting Brandeis student leaders to connect them with this student group.

Alwina Bennett interviewed over 50 students and a dozen student services staff and made the following recommendations to Al-Quds regarding additional staff needs and the growth of the "one-stop shopping" concept of student service delivery:

Additional staff:

--A staff person to identify and coordinate opportunities for exchanges between Al-Quds and universities in Europe, the Middle East and the United States. This person could insure that recruitment of participants was broad and equitable and could coordinate visa and travel arrangements. There appear to be multiple opportunities but dedicated staff time is necessary to identify and take advantage of them. Students who participate in exchanges value the experiences and speak eloquently of them. They are interested in diversity and communication across cultures.

--A student services person to work with student clubs and organizations outside of the political arena of student government. The students Bennett spoke with wanted opportunities to grow and get involved in Al-Quds and the wider community. They wanted to meet people from different programs and learn from them and their experiences.

--A dedicated counseling person. Students and staff are suffering from post-traumatic stress and the consequences of that stress and trauma. They need an accessible counselor who can help them connect with whatever services and accommodations are available.

The "one-stop" concept of delivering student services will focus on the new Student Center at Al-Quds University. Admissions, Financial Aid, Registration, and Student Services will share space in the building. There is also space for student organizations and meetings. Of the 50+ students Bennett interviewed, all were enthusiastic about the idea.

Students also asked for opportunities to help make the new student services concepts work -- they would like to be part of new student orientation, to help make a map of the campus for new students, to lead tours and help advise the registration process.

Overall, the student exchange has made a clear impact not only on the students involved, but the broader campuses as well. 30 undergraduates from Brandeis and Al-Quds met in Istanbul for two consecutive summers in 2007 and 2008 to share some common texts ranging from Plato, Rousseau and John Stuart Mill, to Martin Luther King, Jr., Robert Frost, Jonathan Swift and Mark Twain. Within the discussion of those texts, the sub-text was: What does it take to make a "good society?" What are the elements that have to be there? What is the responsibility of the individual to make society good?

Subsets of those students then visited Jerusalem and Palestine, and the campus of Brandeis University in Waltham. Text study continued (Thoreau), but the most engaging part of the exchange was the opportunity for students to visit each other's classes and homes. Some enduring bonds have been created -- many of the students remain in touch and some of the American students have made independent visits back to the West Bank over the past two years. In addition, when the Palestinian students visited Brandeis, they met hundreds of Brandeis students during social and educational activities.

All of the students and faculty who participated in these exchanges identified them as "transformative," "life-changing," and "inspiring." Many of the American students are continuing to study Arabic and involved in activities on campus and in the community to raise awareness of the everyday issues faced by the Israeli and Palestinian peoples during the conflict. Several students have taken internships to return to the area (Morocco, Oman, Palestine, Gaza) to teach English or work with NGOs.

A broader narrative of the entire student exchange can be found on the partnership web site, [www.brandeis.edu/aqu](http://www.brandeis.edu/aqu)

### *Women's Leadership in Academia*

Advancing women's leadership both in academia and in the larger society has been a component of the partnership for several years through several exchanges between women's studies faculty, guest lectures to students and faculty at both campuses, a workshop at Al-Quds on women and curriculum in September 2007, and a very successful all-day conference on Women and Leadership at Al-Quds University in May 2009 that featured scholars from Palestine, Brandeis, and elsewhere and drew over 120 participants (see <http://www.brandeis.edu/aqu/academic/conference/index.html>). In February 2011, Professor Amneh Badran's visit to Brandeis sparked discussions about women and leadership not only at Al-Quds and in Palestine but also at Brandeis and in the U.S., where issues of "glass ceilings" and "pipelines" also remain salient.

Al-Quds University, however, faces a number of cultural and practical challenges to full participation of women in the academic mission of the University, and women remain underrepresented as both faculty leaders and senior administrators, while Brandeis has notable strengths in the representation of women students, faculty, and staff across the leadership roles and professional achievements in fields that include the sciences as well as the arts and humanities. A collaboration between Al-Quds and Brandeis that focuses on women's leadership has thus been seen as one fruitful direction for the future of the partnership.

In order to consider specific programs through which the partnership might help to advance women's academic roles at Al-Quds, Professor Sue Lanser (English and Women's Studies) and Elaine Wong (senior associate dean of arts and sciences) met in June with a small group of Al-Quds women leaders and the university's acting president, Dr. Marwan Awartani, to explore a range of options and identify priorities that could make Al-Quds University a center of excellence for women in higher education, ensuring equality of access at all levels. One early

activity central to the initiative would be to gather data on women in higher education at Al-Quds University and in Palestine in order to create a baseline, set goals, and measure improvement. We presented the recommendations to a larger group of about twenty women faculty and administrators in the context of a lively discussion of the current status of women's leadership at Al-Quds, the challenges faced by women faculty, and the variations in experience among women of different generations, academic backgrounds, and disciplines.

Three initiatives, all of which depend on (different levels of) new funding, were identified in the following order of priority:

1. **Summer Training Program for Women's Excellence in Higher Education:** This summer institute at Al-Quds University (perhaps three weeks in length) would focus on improving the capacity of women as teachers, scholars, and academic leaders. Women faculty leaders from Al-Quds and Brandeis would jointly plan and lead this institute.
2. **Research and Project Development Partnerships:** This initiative would pair women faculty members from Al-Quds University and Brandeis University to work on research and curricular areas of mutual interest. Some of these projects, supported by semester long visits to Brandeis University and graduate students research assistants, might be related to issues of gender, but these partnerships could engage a wide range of academic interests.
3. **PhD Studies at Brandeis for Women Faculty at Al-Quds University.** A significant obstacle to both advancement and excellence for women faculty members at Al-Quds University is the limitation on opportunities to pursue doctoral studies. The project would provide Ph.D. fellowships at Brandeis University for a cohort of 3 to 5 junior faculty from Al-Quds University who wish to pursue a PhD and return to teach at Al-Quds University. The faculty members would represent a range of fields, with particular interest in the sciences.

### *Impact in the Communities*

Several additional visits helped strengthen the impact of the partnership in both university communities. In June in conjunction with a separate trip, new Brandeis president Fred Lawrence met with Al-Quds University President Sari Nusseibeh in Jerusalem. The two presidents talked about the successes of the partnership, future directions, and their transitions to new career challenges. Along with incoming Provost Steve Goldstein, Fred Lawrence then paid a visit to the Al-Quds campus for a half-day of tours and meetings. He wrote about these experiences on his presidential blog, "Brandeis First," at <http://blogs.brandeis.edu/president/2011/06/14/opening-doors/> and <http://blogs.brandeis.edu/president/2011/06/19/commitments-to-excellence/>

In March, Brandeis professor of biology and Howard Hughes Medical Institute Investigator Michael Rosbash visited Al-Quds University for his first time on a trip to the region. He met with scientists working in the Medical School and observed some of the complex conditions faced by the science faculty there. A full report can be found at <http://www.brandeis.edu/aqu/news/rosbash.html>

## **EVALUATING PROGRESS ON LONG-TERM GOALS**

Connections between Brandeis University and Al-Quds University are exceptionally strong, built on sustained professional and personal relationships nurtured over many years. There is a great deal of will at both institutions to continue work together, as the benefits to both institutions are significant.

Brandeis University has benefited in several tangible ways. The discussions and collaborations under the “effective teaching” rubric have led our faculty and academic administrators to adopt new ideas and techniques borrowed from Al-Quds University’s exceptional ability to innovate in a resource-poor environment (for example, the two institutions now both utilize versions of “moodle,” an open software course management system, which Al-Quds began using before Brandeis). Bringing strong and well-informed Palestinian faculty and student voices to the Brandeis campus has also made a significant contribution to understanding of the Middle East at Brandeis, as well as fortified confidence in the university’s extended community regarding prospects for long-term peace in the region.

Al-Quds University has benefited through a strengthened administrative infrastructure, thanks to methods borrowed and adapted from the Brandeis University model. Its systems and structures for improving teaching – both for beginning instructors and experienced faculty members – have been strengthened considerably over the period of the partnership. And its campus, too, has benefited from greater trans-Atlantic understanding.

We have also requested from the Cairo office of the Ford Foundation that we be able to spend a small balance of unexpended funds (just over \$15,000) towards an external evaluation of the partnership’s accomplishment. Brandeis University will provide some additional funding. While this amount will not be sufficient to support a full-scale evaluation of all aspects of the partnership, we hope that it will help demonstrate some of its impact in particular areas.

## **ORGANIZATIONAL/ENVIRONMENTAL CHANGES AND ISSUES**

Both universities are in periods of some transition. At Brandeis, new President Lawrence is beginning to assemble his leadership team and strategic plan for the university’s future. Al-Quds University is also preparing to undergo a presidential transition. Commitment remains strong from both institutions.

## **DIVERSITY**

As detailed in previous reports, both institutions share a commitment to diversity. This has been accomplished not through direct programming but more so by a conscious effort in all exchanges and work. The new “women’s leadership in academia” project, however, will have direct benefits for diversity of faculty and higher education leadership. It should be emphasized that the partnership as a whole is designed to create bridges between divided peoples. The

interactions between the Brandeis University community -- majority American, but with more than 100 countries represented in its student population -- and the Palestinian community at Al-Quds University, represents a significant effort to address issues of mutual respect and understanding in a broader sense than is usually captured by the term “diversity.”

## **FINAL REFLECTIONS**

The challenge before our institutions now is to find the resources to build on these many successes. While it is true that a great deal can be accomplished over the internet, there is no question that the depth of our work together has depended entirely on our ability to bring students, faculty, and administrators physically together – in the West Bank, in Massachusetts, and even in Istanbul. We are now in the process of seeking funding for specific projects and for the partnership as a whole that can continue these vital efforts.

## **FINANCIAL REPORT**

A final financial report is attached.

## **CERTIFICATION**

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**

- 1. Financial Report**
- 2. Effective Teaching Manual**