



Brandeis University

National Women's Committee (BUNWC)

Executive Summary: Strategic Plan 2008

Plan Implementation: July 1, 2008

Introduction

Supreme Court Justice Brandeis's statement about a great university is applicable to a great National Women's Committee: "The aim must be high and the vision broad; the goal seemingly attainable but beyond immediate reach." This inspirational vision of our namesake has been our guide in developing a shared strategic plan.

Background: A Framework for Creating Synergies

In November 2006, National President Dr. Dorothy (Dottie) Pierce presented to Provost Marty Krauss the goals that would guide her term of office. Her goals included the formulation of a shared strategic plan, which emerged from a meeting of Brandeis University National Women's Committee (BUNWC) officers and leaders with the provost and vice provost earlier that month. The strategic plan would operate as a five-year roadmap for a revitalized and strengthened BUNWC positioned for continued success.

From its inception, the planning process was conceived to be inclusive and capture the multiple perspectives of the University, the volunteers, and national center staff. A layered sequence of feedback and review was designed to help ensure that all interested parties to the plan were represented.

As partners in the strategic planning process, National President Dottie Pierce and Vice Provost of Academic Affairs Michael Whelan formed a steering committee to build a consensus-based strategic plan that would be presented to senior university administrators and BUNWC professional staff for feedback and review. They also established subcommittees that included national, region, and chapter leaders to develop recommendations and strategies for the major components of fundraising, governance, structure, study groups, and membership.

To begin the process, the University established guiding principles to act as a framework for determining what steps BUNWC would need to fulfill its fundraising mission and achieve a philanthropic culture. The guiding principles that follow recognize the advantages that would result by combining BUNWC's strengths with those of the University:

- BUNWC is a part of Brandeis University and must reflect the best of Brandeis in all its functions, programs, and activities.
- Further integration between BUNWC and the University is essential.
- Fundraising, the core of BUNWC's mission, should be shaped by, and benefit from, shared BUNWC, alumni, and development expertise.
- Programming, events, and activities should fulfill the BUNWC fundraising mission and connect members to the University.

The comprehensive plan that follows will be presented for approval by University President Jehuda Reinharz.

New Organizational Name: A Bridge from the Past to the Future

The new name for the organization will be ‘Brandeis National Committee (the BNC)’. This name provides continuity with our proud history and acknowledges that we have expanded our horizons by broadening our membership appeal.

New Mission Statement: Support for Brandeis University

The new mission statement reaffirms that the BNC’s primary purpose is to provide philanthropic support for Brandeis University. It shifts financial support from the library alone to the University itself in order to offer broader giving opportunities that will enable all members to support Brandeis according to their interests:

Brandeis National Committee is dedicated to providing philanthropic support to Brandeis University, a distinguished liberal arts and research university founded by the American Jewish community. Its membership is connected to the University through fundraising and through activities that reflect the values on which the University was founded: academic excellence, social justice, non-sectarianism, and service to the community.

A Model of Shared Governance with the University

A new model for national governance recognizes that (1) the University shares governance with the BNC and (2) the role of BNC’s governing body is to guide, advise, and make recommendations to the University about opportunities or challenges concerning the BNC’s mission and objectives.

The National Executive Committee (NEC) will be the organization’s national board. It will consist of 20 BNC representatives and 7 university representatives. BNC representatives will include a president, 5 vice presidents, and 14 representatives of the chapters and regions. University members will include senior and professional staff and other representatives; 1 or 2 students will serve in an ancillary capacity. Vice Presidents will chair standing committees for fundraising, budget and finance, learning opportunities, chapter advisory, and membership. To serve on the NEC, volunteer members will be required to make a minimum annual gift of \$1,000.

NEC members will serve a three-year term, with a mandatory two-year absence before regaining eligibility for re-election. NEC members may serve up to two (2) three-year terms. However, an NEC member may be nominated for the position of national president without a mandatory two-year absence and regardless of whether he/she has served two terms. Term limits will not apply to senior and professional university staff; however, they will apply to other university representatives.

The Nominating Committee will consist of 8 members: 4 BNC representatives, including the national president, and 4 university representatives, including the executive director. All Nominating Committee members, including the Chair, will be selected from among the members of the National Executive Committee. During an election year, the Nominating Committee will recommend a national president and 5 vice presidents together with 14 representatives from the chapters and regions, including up to 3 region presidents. All recommendations for officers and members of the NEC will be gathered from the membership at large and will be subject to the approval of the President of the University.

With the exception of the Nominating Committee, members of Standing Committees will be selected by the NEC. Each Standing Committee will consist of no more than 6 members, have

equal BNC and university representation, and include two NEC members. To provide diversity and expertise, standing committees may include individuals who are not members of the NEC. Selection of non-NEC members will be made on the basis of leadership, expertise, and membership in the Leadership Council. Any person selected who is not a member of the Leadership Council will be encouraged to join the Council.

The purpose of the Leadership Council will be to cultivate new leaders and strengthen connections with existing leaders. Council members will identify donors, give and solicit gifts, provide noteworthy service to the organization, bring Brandeis and BNC news to the chapters, and provide inspiration to connect people to the organization. This Council will also serve as a potential ‘next step’ for some select trainees and others who are ready for more responsibility and recognition by the University.

A minimum annual gift of \$500 will be required for membership on the Council. Members of the Leadership Council will serve five-year terms, renewable upon the review and approval of the NEC. All recommendations for members of the Leadership Council, including renewals, will be subject to the approval of the President of the University.

Fundraising: A Culture of Philanthropy

Our primary fundraising goals will be to develop a philanthropic culture throughout the organization and to instill a passion for Brandeis University. We will enhance our fundraising support for Annual Fund and Major Gifts, and will focus on building more robust planned giving initiatives. A strengthened partnership between the BNC and the University’s Development Office will help us accomplish our goals through:

- leadership training and information-sharing;
- leadership giving and donor solicitation;
- events that reflect the best of Brandeis;
- incentives for chapters.

We will continue to train leaders and members in fundraising best practices, and will monitor their progress to measure the quality and effectiveness of our training programs. Chapters will benefit from increased visits by BNC leadership and by Brandeis faculty, alumni, and students. They will receive highlights of campus activities, inspiring Brandeis stories, and other information from Chapter Information Officers, Public Relations kits, DVDs, the *imprint* national newsletter, electronic communications, and the like.

BNC leaders will be expected to demonstrate their commitment to our mission by making a quality gift as each sees fit. They will collaborate with the University’s Development Office to identify and open doors for existing and potential prospects; and they will help increase the numbers of members who give annually at the Justice Brandeis Society level of \$1,000 or more. The BNC will continue to solicit donors through major campaigns, matching gifts, direct mail, and phonathon.

Annual fundraising goals for chapters will be established on a per capita basis. Planned giving goals will also be established and may include numbers of planned giving events, donor appointments, and planned gifts realized. New awards that engender excitement and dedication will be created. The national center will work with chapters to hold one or two premier fundraising events with a minimum of 35% net contribution. All chapter events will earn an appropriate net contribution, adhere to BNC and university guidelines, and provide information about Brandeis and its critical needs.

Learning Opportunities: Brandeis Is A Foundation for Excellence

Brandeis academic materials are a key element in connecting members to the University. More Brandeis materials and more high quality learning options will enrich the membership.

Learning opportunities provide intellectual stimulation for members and may also be fundraisers. They fall into three categories:

- BNC study groups are peer-led academic discussions that may use Brandeis-generated materials. They may also consist of courses or lectures by faculty from other universities and/or professionals in the community.
- Learning events and programs usually involve a trip or activity, are open to the community, and are typically fundraisers. Examples are theatre performances, museum tours, and lectures.
- Applied learning courses include arts and crafts, cooking, meditation, and similar activities.

All learning opportunities must reflect the best of Brandeis and follow the guidelines established by the BNC and the University. All learning opportunities may be used as fundraisers.

Members in good standing may participate in all learning opportunities. Prospective members may pay the ticket price and attend BNC learning events and programs that are fundraisers and open to the community. Prospective members may also attend one session of a study group or applied learning program. In this case, each chapter will decide whether to charge a guest fee.

Minimum fees for study groups and applied learning programs will be established and phased-in over time. Learning events and programs that are fundraisers should follow the fundraising guidelines above for earning a minimum net contribution.

Membership: \$60 for Sixty Years

There is currently a financial deficit: current dues cannot support operations even with staff reductions and integration with the University. Given the promise made to Life Members, Annual Members must bear the full costs for all. Annual dues will increase to \$60 to keep pace with the increased costs of conducting business and will be reviewed annually. A platinum dues level will be offered at \$125 and a gold dues level at \$85. Platinum and gold members will enjoy special benefits, such as preferred seating at chapter events.

To help chapters recruit members, individuals who have never been members of BUNWC may join the BNC at a special introductory rate of \$60 for fifteen months. This goes into effect immediately given the marketing timetable of chapters.

Life Members will be asked to renew their commitment to the BNC and Brandeis with a donation in honor of our 60th anniversary.

Marketing strategies will be developed to help chapters attract women and men of the 'Boomer' age (1946-1964) through new programs and study groups.

Chapter and region leaders are instrumental in helping chapters fundraise and recruit and retain members. Training for leaders is essential, and an annual program held on the Brandeis campus will inspire and connect them to the University.

Organizational Structures: Traditional and Alternative

Our traditional structure of chapters and regions will continue with a national vice-president to advise 'stand-alone' chapters. Regions will train, guide, advise, and support chapter leaders, as well as communicate information from the national organization.

Chapters that are unable to fulfill the BNC mission, lack leadership, and are not meeting financial and membership goals will be mentored by national and region leaders and professional staff. If best efforts do not result in a turnaround within two years, these chapters will either be merged with or become a satellite of other chapters or closed. Members of closed chapters will receive national publications and may attend programs and study groups in other chapters. National leaders will review chapters on an annual basis to determine viability.

Chapters-in-formation will be established in areas with potential growth, preferably within driving distance of established chapters. These groups must meet the criteria within two years to become chapters.

If a group of members is unable to operate as a chapter, there are alternative ways for them to organize to fulfill the BNC mission. Alternative models include:

- Clusters: Groups in geographic proximity to each other;
- Satellites: Groups of members who are in geographic proximity to a chapter. These members may have a unique relationship to one another based on age, location, or interests. Members enjoy all benefits of membership in the parent chapter and participate in the parent chapter's fundraising activities. The satellite may establish its own committees to plan fundraisers and develop study groups and special interest programs.
- Fundraising Groups: BNC members who are unaffiliated with a chapter but wish to raise money for Brandeis may come together for fundraising purposes. They can fundraise through their own significant donations and by opening doors to identify and connect prospects with the University's development officers.