

BRANDEIS NATIONAL COMMITTEE (BNC)

**National Executive Committee Meeting
Monday-Tuesday, October 27-28, 2008
Hassenfeld Conference Center, Luria 1, 2, and 3**

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27

President Carol Kern called to order the second meeting of the 2008-2009 National Executive Committee, at 9:10 am.

WELCOME

Carol Kern welcomed the NEC and asked the members to introduce themselves. She praised the officers and professional staff for their dedication and teamwork and complimented the region presidents for doing outstanding work across the country. She welcomed Janice Fineman in her new role as Executive Director. Carol noted that the job of the NEC is to not only be leaders but also to be cheerleaders, for when leaders are enthusiastic and encouraging, the general members will be as well.

The BNC is doing remarkable work on the national level, such as: new P & L statements, new on-line membership information that can be accessed on a daily basis, new continuing education, new logos and branding, new Handbook for Chapter Presidents, and on the table is a new fundraising campaign, new membership initiative, new goals, new pilot program in learning opportunities, and advance information on the website. Most of the work has been completed, if not released as yet to the chapters, and Carol requested the NEC to share the information enthusiastically. Good communication is important, and Carol wants the communication to be appropriate and correct.

Part of the Strategic Plan was the establishment of a Leadership Council. Carol has appointed Carol Rabinovitz as Chairman and thanked her for a job well done.

A nominating committee will be formed as required in the Rules of Association, and the members of the committee will be announced once the committee has been established.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S GREETINGS

As Executive Director, Janice Fineman views her role as coordinating BNC's efforts across three different spheres – membership and volunteers, the University, and the National Center. She said that all are important segments of the whole. The BNC's strength and success depend on each area and on how each coordinates with, and supports, the others. Her updates follow.

The National Center – Currently there are two vacant staff positions- one in Development and the other in Marketing and PR. The Center is now operating with a staff of only seven. With the economic times impacting everyone in many ways, the University is planning ahead and has put into place a hiring pause. Any request to fill a position is being carefully examined. A proposal to fill the open positions has been prepared. Until the positions can be filled, the staff is working together, each taking on extra duties to accomplish all that needs to be done. Janice said she is extremely proud of their dedication and willingness to work hard, their flexibility, and most of all their commitment to helping the BNC achieve its goals. She especially commended Beth Bernstein and Barbara Katz for their efforts in getting the BNC website up and running.

The University – The National Center continues to strengthen its partnership with the University. With limited staff resources, there has been reaching out to other departments for support and assistance with the website and printed materials. Janice especially acknowledged Myles Weisenberg for his assistance in this endeavor. People in his office have developed an ad for Planned Giving, which has been used in the Phoenix and New York City Jewish press and sent to all of our chapters for use in their bulletins. The Development office is once again supporting the BNC'S direct mail program. In addition, Myles' Leadership Gifts officers continue to meet with BNC donors and

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prospects to cultivate and solicit gifts. Janice thanked Myles for being an active and valuable member of the Fundraising Team.

She commented that Michaele Whelan continues to be a steadfast advocate of the Brandeis National Committee, and acknowledged and thanked Michaele for all that she does to support the BNC, noting that Michaele’s grasp of the large picture and her vision of how BNC can be strengthened are important to its success.

Members and Volunteers - Janice acknowledged the BNC members and volunteers. She reported that she has been actively reaching out to chapter and region leaders and members over the past few months and is pledged to be available to all.

Janice commended Carol Kern and the vice presidents for their leadership and for developing strong working teams.

TEAM REPORTS:

FINANCIAL

Stephen Reiner

The revised Guidelines for Chapter Activities were included in the meeting kit. The guidelines, which will be sent to chapter leaders, pertain to chapter activities that are either recommended or permitted, as well as those that present legal risks to the University, such as raffles. The NEC thought the revision was a good idea, for the explanations were clearer.

Steve mentioned the financial challenges Brandeis is now facing with a declining endowment and projected budget deficit. The University has asked every department to decrease expenses by 3.5%. He commented that fundraising will be challenged, and it will be important to focus on scholarships, which are key during these current times.

BNC Financial Statement - This was included in each kit. He noted the new format similar to that used by Brandeis, and mentioned the year-end results would be posted online. The statement shows national expenses are lower due to staff vacancies.

There are fewer chapters now that withhold excess money in their bank accounts. The BNC wants to have a cooperative relationship with chapters, and the accounting staff is working with chapter treasurers directly and establishing relationships. It has always been recommended that chapters keep only enough funds to cover approximately two months’ expenses. Chapters are requested to record their encumbrances and the reasons why they are holding money.

Funds are available to those chapters needing money for their events, and the accounting staff reminds the chapters of this availability. Once an e-mail is received by the National Center, funds can be quickly transferred into chapter accounts.

Risk Management – Because BNC is decentralized with chapters nationwide, it is difficult for the National Center to evaluate all activities. There is less measure of control, and it is important to know what the organization can do to mitigate risks.

MEMBERSHIP

Joanie Small

A handout showing a Comparison of Annual Members from 11/1/07 to 10/24/08 was distributed. The percentage of chapter renewal ranged from a high of 88% to a low of 15%.

Joanie felt some chapters had carefully read and embraced the strategic plan, due to the positive attitude of the leadership. Leaders need to understand the strategic plan and the mission statement.

Joanie said the dissemination of information needs to trickle down from the NEC to the regions and chapters; the team members inform the region presidents, who in turn inform the chapters. The Membership Team is developing a membership kit for chapter presidents and membership chairmen to use as a tool for recruiting and renewing members. It will include a list of current Life and Annual members, an informational card to place on tables at

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events for those attending to complete, a list of Learning Opportunities, ideas for Boomer recruitment, a list of available DVDs, “points of pride” about Brandeis, and strategies to assist chapters in planning membership events.

Dues for Couples

Many chapters that have men’s groups have requested a dual membership for spouses. Joanie reported the Membership Team presented a proposal to the University to charge \$100 for dues for married or “significant other” couples living at the same address, and it was accepted. For the spouse of a Life Member, the charge would be \$60, the current rate for annual members. The new \$100 fee for couples would become effective July 1, 2009.

Carol asked for a show of hands in support of the concept for dues for couples.

- ✓ **A show of hands approved a dual membership fee of \$100 for couples living at the same address. All but one was in favor.**

UNIVERSITY CAMPAIGN

Nancy Winship

Nancy Winship, Senior Vice President for Institutional Advancement, gave an update on the University’s fundraising. She said that today’s economic environment is impacting fundraising and financial aid for students. To lower expenses, the University has reduced communications, reduced the number of events, and raised the price for reunions and other events.

The University campaign raised \$803 million by October ’08; the total raised is 66% of its \$1.22 billion goal. Other colleges are currently giving more financial aid and eliminating student loans. Brandeis does not have a large endowment, and admissions are based on a need-blind policy. 70% of the Brandeis students receive financial aid, which is the University’s highest priority.

Nancy noted the BNC’s history of dedication to Brandeis, e.g., raising \$100 million for the libraries, \$45 million in the campaign, the Librarian’s Chair, the *Science for Life* campaign, and the new campaign, “Collaboration in Excellence – for scholarships and library support.”

There was a decline last year in BNC planned gifts. However, although the University cannot count on planned gifts in its budget, they are of tremendous value.

This year the University is focusing on scholarships and fellowships to attract incoming students with the financial help they need.

FUNDRAISING

Beth Wolfson

The Fundraising Team proposed a new fundraising campaign. The initiative came about after listening to chapters and finding their interests were aligned with the needs of the University. Because some chapters felt the importance of BNC’s core mission to support the library had been diminished, the Team felt it should offer donors the choice of a gift for the library and/or a scholarship fund. Now, donors giving \$1,800 and more to any library fund will be recognized with a recognition pin. A sample of the new pin was circulated for viewing. The initiative would be a 2 ½ year campaign with an overall goal of \$3 million and would consist of two phases:

Phase I - January 2009 through FY10, June 2010. In this period the financial goal will be \$1.5 million. The quiet phase will be the first six months of the campaign.

Phase II - July 1, 2010 through June 30, 2011, with a goal to raise a minimum of \$1.5 million.

Because the concept is different from previous initiatives, the campaign will need to be marketed, with the importance of the library underscored. The Team hopes to have a plan in place by January 09. Beth requested the NEC’s input for the promotion and marketing.

- ✓ **A show of hands approved of the two-pronged campaign.**

PLANNED GIVING

Florence Simon

Florence reported on the benefits of planned giving, an investment opportunity for both donors and the University. An advertisement for a charitable gift annuity that chapters can use for publicity was distributed. Myles Weisenberg expanded on Florence's remarks and said that 1/2 to 1/3 of BNC members belong to the Sachar Legacy Society. He asked the NEC to help by working with the University's gift officers to open doors and host small group meetings. Florence said she had contacted the region presidents, and some were already working on planned gifts.

BOOK FUND

Elaine Bernstein

There are new Book Fund cards with a new look. They bear the organization's new name and visually connect the BNC with the University. LRJs and folios at higher levels will also be redesigned. Prototypes of the \$5, \$10, and \$18 cards were distributed.

CHAPTER ADVISORY

Leslie Pearlstein

The Chapter Advisory Team has been kept informed of chapter closings and will examine in depth what it can do to assist chapters. Other upcoming projects will be concerned with how and when to hold award ceremonies, how to measure the number of donors a chapter records, and how to develop more concrete planned giving programs. The Team might also develop a system of regional awards that could include community service and also the use of electronic bulletins.

FY 09 GOALS

Leslie Pearlstein
& Joanie Small

Financial Goals

The Chapter Advisory and the Membership Teams worked together on a new approach to establish financial and membership goals for FY09. Representing the Chapter Advisory Team, Leslie referred to

a P&L sheet in the kit. Each chapter's financial goal would be based its FY08 expense/income ratio. Individual donations and cash received from designated and undesignated events held during the year would be considered as income. Bequests and planned gifts would not be included in calculating the ratio. The Teams felt it was important that goals for this year be attainable and within the context of the Strategic Plan.

They recommended the financial goal for FY09 would be to reduce the chapters' expense/income ratios by 3 percentage points. Therefore, to qualify for a *Louis* award, a chapter whose ratio was 59% would have 56% as its goal.

The award structure would remain the same.

- To qualify for a *Louis*, a chapter would be required to lower its expense/income ratio by three points and also meet the Membership goal.
- To qualify for a Chapter of the Year award, a chapter would have earned a *Louis*, exhibited the greatest reduction in its expense/income ratio, shown evidence of promoting planned giving outreach/education, used Brandeis-authored study group materials, and shown evidence of a leadership development program.

Membership Goals

Representing the Membership Team, Joanie said they also felt it was important to establish attainable goals for this year. Goals were based on a total of 80% of annual members as of June 30, 2008. Goals for chapters that have merged would be calculated to be fair. Chapters will receive their goals after the NEC approves of the process.

Going forward, there will be an emphasis on watching chapters more carefully and offering assistance when needed.

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- ✓ **A show of hands indicated unanimous approval of the recommendation that the financial goal for chapters for FY09 would be a reduction of three percentage points.**

Carol Kern asked the NEC to express their feelings about Brandeis and the factors that initiated their involvement in the BNC. The responses ranged from an embrace of the mission, importance of philanthropy, and the enjoyment of camaraderie, to deriving educational benefits and pride in Brandeis' Jewish sponsorship, and there was a collective passion for the University and a deep desire to be affiliated.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 28

NEC STUDENT REPRESENTATIVES

Marti Dembowitz '10
& Jason Gray '10

Marti expressed her appreciation for being included on the NEC and was pleased to be part of the BNC in order to help the University. Jason said he was familiar with the BNC and its support of the library, because his grandmothers are BNC members. Both Marti and Jason appreciated that students can take classes with experts in their fields, and both have taken leadership positions in student activities.

Carol Kern thanked Marti and Jason for their participation.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Lydia Axelrod

The Learning Opportunities Team's goal is to disseminate Brandeis-authored learning materials and encourage their usage. The Team recommended the following:

- Asking every chapter to appoint someone to serve as a Study Group facilitator. The facilitator would be a cataloguer and chief motivator.
- The Team would create a video for chapters to view on the Web that would focus on the advantages and offerings.
- The Team would travel to chapters and regions to promote the materials.

Scholars in Residence

The Team is developing a pilot project for a cadre of about 15 scholars to travel to chapters within Florida to offer a study group using Brandeis materials. If successful, the Scholars in Residence program will be piloted in other areas of the country. The goal of the program is to introduce Brandeis materials, show the ease in presenting them as a leader, and mentor members to become peer facilitators.

Elderquest

Beth Bernstein, Director of Programming, and Sharon Sokoloff, Director of BOLLI, presented a pilot Elderquest in Florida last spring to a core group of facilitators. Beth will go to Florida in December with Professor Derek Isaacowitz of the psychology department to conduct the program for members and will open it to the community. The program, which the Florida has named "Continuing the Journey," will be an all-day event in Boca Raton. Elderquest/Continuing the Journey is a journey in later life experienced through film and literature and includes a unique framework for discussion about the course of one's life. There will be an evaluation after the event.

- ✓ **A show of hands approved of the Learning Opportunities described above.**

STUDENT AMBASSADORS

Beth Bernstein

Beth Bernstein, Director of Programming and Publications, reported that this program will include both graduate and undergraduate students who will talk to chapters about their experiences at Brandeis. Beth is trying to match students with chapters across the country.

BNC has an excellent working relationship with the Alumni Association, which identifies areas for programs. Currently there are two joint programs planned for November: a Faculty in the Field/UOW in the San Diego area, and another in Atlanta.

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Carol Kern asked the NEC to spread the word among chapters about all of the programs that will be taking place in their areas. She stressed that every chapter program should include a component about Brandeis University. When information about the University is sent to CIOs, there might be an explanation of how that particular piece of information could be distributed and used.

The NEC requested they also receive the e-mails that are sent to chapters by the C.I.O. Chairman, Gayle Wise. Gayle will add the NEC to her e-mail list.

AWARDS

The previous evening the NEC met for an informal discussion about three specific topics that had been presented for brainstorming. Leslie Pearlstein summarized their conversation:

1) How and when should the end of the year awards be presented?

- It must be after the end of the fiscal year.
- The old system does not work now; June is training, not Conference.
- Florida and Western Regions would give region awards; could give awards at region conferences
- Try different things in different regions – be flexible and see what works; any excuse to get people together is good.
- Print and circulate nationally an “Awards Journal” listing all awards; could show history of chapters, officers, etc. Awards should be published nationally. Print winners in an expanded version of *imprint*.
- In one booklet, combine the award winners with a list of the year’s major donors.
- Include awards ceremony at some major chapter event to reach the grass roots. All chapters have an Opening Event – have some dignitary (national or region officers, a University representative) present the awards.
- Who do you want to be present at awards ceremony? Chapter? National Officers? Peers? Whom is the award for, and whom will it inspire?

The Chapter Advisory Team will discuss this, along with the Vice Presidents; the National Center will advise how best to implement the award presentations.

2) How can membership be promoted? What should be included in membership packets that will be sent to Membership Chairmen and Chapter Presidents?

- Learning opportunities
- Letter from Carol Kern and Joanie Small
- Full membership roster
- Boomers brochure – how to recruit and appropriate programming
- “Look with Pride” video
- Information geared to small chapters
- Information and programming suggestions to form Men’s Groups
- Cross programming/partnering with other local organizations
- Follow-up is vital following any event – a personal note plus information about BNC and Brandeis
- Procedural how-to for membership workshops

3) Fundraising Ideas

- The name of the new campaign does not describe what the campaign is about. Suggestions: “Uniting for Libraries and Scholars” “Campaign for Libraries and Scholars”

Following the conversation, Elaine Bernstein suggested changing the name of the new campaign from “Collaboration in Education” to “Fulfilling the Promise – Libraries and Scholars.” The proposed change will be brought to the Fundraising Team for consideration.

LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Carol Kern

Carol referred to a Leadership Council report provided in the kit. She said the new Council is operating well with Carol Rabinovitz as chairman. The Council was established so that former leaders would remain active and involved. Council members will cultivate new leaders, mentor emerging leaders, strengthen connections to Brandeis, and enhance fundraising to broaden the efforts of the BNC. They will provide inspiration, identify prospective donors and assist in solicitations, help expand the donor base, and make a minimum annual gift of \$500 for as long as possible.

UPDATE ON WEBSITE

Beth Bernstein

Beth Bernstein, Director of Programming and Publications, has been working with Ken Gornstein, Director of Communications, on a redesign on the BNC website. The website is still in the development stage but should be up and running in a week. The test site was projected for viewing and comments from the NEC. A new University feature is Brandeis NOW, which can be accessed from the BNC site. NOW is an excellent source for chapters to find current Brandeis news.

Meeting adjourned at 11:35 am.