Building Strength through Closer Ties

Whether you are in Sarasota or Seattle, you will find that these are exciting times for the 42,000 members of the Brandeis University National Women's Committee. Imagine sitting in your living room watching a professionally produced videotape of Don Lee's provocative discussion on his book Yellow, which was assigned to all incoming freshmen this fall as part of the Helen and Philip Brecher New Student Forum. You will feel as though you are in the Spingold Theater Center filled with these Brandeis students.

Think of coming to the Brandeis campus for a training session led by a team of volunteer advisors and then being able to review the presentation at a later time. Brandeis University is making this possible by offering a video that captures the presentation. These are just two of the ways that BUNWC's stronger ties to the University will benefit the organization in such areas as programming, marketing and membership, fundraising, chapter support, and technology.

"The University is providing us with the resources to look out a new window onto a vista of possibilities."

—Shari Langenthal Meehan

options grow and technological advances create a virtual Brandeis campus for every chapter.

"We will be, in essence, importing the intellectual richness of Brandeis to the chapters," she said. "This will allow the chapters to strengthen their bonds to Brandeis to allow them to fully enjoy the campus experience."

Meehan believes members will feel closer to Brandeis than ever before as programming
BUNWC members have played a key role in support of cutting-edge research at Brandeis. Your fundraising efforts have made it possible for the Brandeis University National Women's Committee to provide funds for research journals that are the lifeblood of scientific research and communication. I'm excited to bring to you a brand new BUNWC project to support, one that will benefit the University and has the potential to benefit all mankind. Because I know of your passion and commitment for advancing medical research, our organization is accepting a challenge in the race to conquer the diseases of aging—Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, cancer, and vision—and memory—with a commitment to raise $2 million toward the University's ambitious new $100 million Science Initiative.

Half of the funds we raise will support a state-of-the-art laboratory devoted to research in neurodegenerative diseases that will carry the BUNWC name. The other half will establish a much-needed Endowment Medical Science Journal Fund. The research conducted in the BUNWC laboratory will be part of a broad study of aging. It will explore cellular and systems-level functioning of the brain and nervous system, as well as the individual and societal impact of aging.

The members of BUNWC have long demonstrated heartfelt zeal for advancing medical research. I know you will join me enthusiastically in meeting this fundraising goal through your individual support and by helping your chapter meet its challenge.

I am an age of streaming, blogging, and podcasting, the Brandeis Libraries are facing the challenges of a new information environment hand-in-hand with a strong new partner. Forging the ideal marriage of content and technology, the Libraries have merged with the University's Information Technology Services to form the new Library and Technology Services division (LTS). LTS employs 100 staff and 200 student assistants.

"We increasingly deliver content through technology," explains Chief University Librarian Susan V. Wawrzaszek. "With this merger, we're erasing the artificial lines drawn between the two so that we can provide students and faculty with the seamless help they need with questions that demand the very best in library services and the most advanced technology.

"Our patrons don’t care if theirs is a technology or content question,” adds Perry O. Hanson, vice provost for libraries and vice provost for libraries and information technology. "So we've drawn between the two so that we want our staff should be working with both technologists and librarians make the best in library services and the most hand-in-hand with a strong new new Instructional Technology Services to LTS staff member Chris Anderson (right) helps students with a project. LTS staff member Chris Anderson (right) helps students with a project.

New Design Provides Common Sense

In an era when students are driving learning as opposed to the old college model of professors lecturing and students listening, university libraries are starting to develop “learning commons,” open areas that promote the exchange of ideas among students.

According to Perry Hanson and Sue Wawrzaszek, the Library and Technology Services division’s “info commons” model for Brandeis might include the following:

- A concierge to direct people where to go for various services
- Reference assistance
- Instructional technology assistance
- Computer repair help
- Desktop computer help
- Multipurpose rooms
- Small video conferencing rooms
- Small classrooms
- Workstations for singles or groups
- Comfortable lounge seating
- Wired and wireless environment
- Print reference resources
- Browsing collections of films and music
Unique Middle East Class Taught by Israeli, Palestinian, and Egyptian

Students in Politics 164a, Conflict and Peacemaking in the Middle East, are learning about various perspectives on the Middle East conflict from some of the region’s leading thinkers.

During the first half of this semester, Professor Shai Feldman, director of the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis, and Dr. Abdel Monem Said Aly, director of Al-Ahram Center for Political and Strategic Studies in Cairo, will focus on the regional dimension of the Arab-Israeli conflicts and the efforts to resolve it.

The Innocence Project

Veteran newspaper reporter, Pam Cytrynbaum, 39, from Northwestern University’s famed Medill Innocence Project, nationally known for its pioneering investigative work to free wrongly convicted inmates, is spending the academic year at Brandeis. She is here through the Brandeis Institute for Investigative Journalism to study the feasibility of establishing an innocence project as part of the Institute. She is also teaching two journalism classes in the Department of American Studies.

Florence Graves, founding director of the Institute, the nation’s first pioneering investigative work to free wrongly convicted inmates, is spending the academic year at Brandeis. She is here through the Brandeis Institute for Investigative Journalism to study the feasibility of establishing an innocence project as part of the Institute. She is also teaching two journalism classes in the Department of American Studies.

Lee closed his discussion with words of advice for the students. “Sometimes things will go your way, sometimes they won’t,” he said. “Don’t be afraid to fall in love or take a road less traveled. It’s an extraordinary world; don’t be afraid to seize it.”

The New Student Forum, made possible by a generous endowment from the Helen and Philip Brecher Fund, is designed to generate an early and lasting sense of intellectual community at Brandeis by bringing together the entire first-year class with members of the faculty.

BUNWC members have the opportunity to read and discuss Yellow in chapter study groups throughout the country. Your chapter can duplicate what the first-year class at Brandeis had on campus: lively discussions on a contemporary topic, questions for discussion prepared by Brandeis faculty, a short video of author Don Lee addressing the students, and the feeling of being a part of the Brandeis experience.

For more information about Yellow, contact your chapter study group chair or the Program Department in the National Office at 781-736-4190 or bernstein@brandeis.edu.

Be a Part of the Brandeis New Student Forum

Yellow was the topic. Colorful was the talk.

Author Don Lee informed and entertained incoming Brandeis students at the 13th annual Helen and Philip Brecher New Student Forum, engaging them in a provocative discussion of his highly acclaimed collection of short stories depicting Asian-American culture.

Lee’s presentation drew a standing ovation from the capacity crowd at the Springold Theater Center’s main stage. Afterward, students lined up at microphones positioned around the theater to ask questions.

Lee told the audience that the title of his collection, which was published in 2001, is often misunderstood. “To me, the title, Yellow, is more about stories than race,” Lee said. “It’s about cowardice and paralysis, about people who were too afraid to live their lives. “We all feel alienated. We all feel like outsiders. I write about fears common to us all.”

Although his characters are Asian-American, their experiences are universal. “You could take away the ethnicity and the stories would still work,” he said.

A third-generation Korean-American, Lee said he has faced the dilemma common among members of immigrant communities: Do you assimilate or do you maintain your culture?

“It’s something we all try to grapple with,” he said. “I probably tried to deny it (his heritage), then I embraced it”
A acknowledged powerhouse of scientific research, Brandeis is taking science to a whole new level with a major initiative designed to make it the number one university for interdisciplinary research within the life, physical, and information sciences.

The National Women’s Committee has made a commitment to participate in this $100 million effort by raising $1 million in support of a state-of-the-art laboratory devoted to research in neurodegenerative diseases that will carry the BUNWC name and $1 million to an Endowed Medical Science Journal Fund.

Work in the BUNWC laboratory will be part of a broad study of aging. It will explore cellular and systems-level functioning of the brain and nervous system, as well as the individual and societal impact of aging. The study will target Alzheimer’s, Parkinson’s, Lou Gehrig’s Disease, and Retinal and Macular Degeneration, as well as the impact of aging on vision, hearing, memory, balance, personality, emotional change, and health care and other public policy issues.

“We are committed to maintaining the strength and vitality of our core scientific disciplines, but it is at the interface of disciplines that the most profound advances often occur,” Marty Krauss, provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, said of the new science initiative. “We are broadening the interdisciplinary model to include contributions from the social sciences and the humanities.”

Widely recognized by the scientific community as a leader in basic research, Brandeis is ranked second in the country in the percentage of faculty who are members of the most prestigious scientific academies (the National Academy of Sciences, the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and the National Academy of Engineering). The interdisciplinary work, which takes advantage of the relatively small size of the University to achieve an impact well beyond the sum of its parts. For example, for more than 30 years, the Rosenstiel Basic Medical Sciences Research Center has brought together biochemists, biologists, physicists, and chemists in a uniquely interdisciplinary approach to combating disease. In recent years, its scientists have pinpointed an on/off switch in diabetes that holds the promise of antibiotics that won’t induce bacterial resistance; rendered mammography machines much more effective by replacing traditional photographic film with a new digital mammography camera; and greatly expanded the scope of leukemia research by inducing a form of the disease in mice that is strikingly similar to ones seen in humans.

Researchers from seven different departments at the Volen National Center for Complex Systems have been collaborating for ten years on the study of the brain and intelligence, from molecules and neurons to memory and other complex human behaviors. The faculty there have done pioneering work in the development of the modern field of computational neuroscience, which uses mathematical modeling and computer simulations to describe the functioning of neurobiological systems.

Groundbreaking research at Volen includes studies of the plasticity and stability of neural circuits, which is a key to understanding how behavior remains constant, even though the brain may change, due to growth, on the one hand, or aging, on the other. Volen researchers have also made important strides in elucidating the relationship between sensory change and cognitive change associated with normal aging and how sensory and cognitive function interact. For example, scientists at the Center have demonstrated that mild, age-related hearing declines can have an impact on the memory of older adults.

“Brandeis is a very special place. Through our broadened study of aging and age-related neurodegenerative disease we’re going to be able to train a new generation of scientists and scholars who will have a breadth of understanding of aging second to none.”

—Arthur Wingfield
Director, Volen Center
of Arts and Sciences, and Fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

BUNWC to Raise $2 Million for Science

Advancing medical research at Brandeis is the focus of the National Women’s Committee’s new science initiative. BUNWC will raise a total of $2 million. $1 million to name a laboratory in the University’s new Center on Aging and Age-Related Neurodegenerative Disease, and $1 million to create an Endowed Medical Science Journal Fund.

Former BUNWC president Carol Kern of the Phoenix Chapter, chair of the new initiative, said of the undertaking, “We feel privileged to be part of the University’s ambitious effort to make Brandeis number one in interdisciplinary research. Members of the National Women’s Committee are so passionate about supporting the great medical research conducted at Brandeis that I know we will be successful. I am looking forward to working with our chapters and members to make this goal a reality.”

BUNWVC to Partner with Brandeis in $100 Million Science Initiative

Building on a half century of pioneering research that has led to the creation by Brandeis scientists of several new scientific fields, the initiative will include a re-imagined and re-engineered science complex, new undergraduate teaching facilities, state-of-the-art laboratory space, and a physical environment that facilitates the kind of “random intellectual collisions” that drive the pace of discovery in scientific research.
BUNWC's Newest Chapter Wellworth the Wait

What President Judy Stern has accomplished with the Wellworth Chapter is, by anyone's standard, an incredible achievement. Former member and vice president of the Trails Chapter, Judy moved into a new community in southeastern Florida, an area that is experiencing rapid growth of active adult residences. She knew almost instantly that the time was right to start a new BUNWC chapter. People were eager to make social connections while feeling the personal satisfaction of helping to support a meaningful cause: Brandeis University and its Libraries.

With her emblematic enthusiasm and leadership skills, Judy successfully translated her vision into reality. Assisted by Nancy Braksmeyer, Wellworth's VP of membership, and the mentoring of seasoned BUNWC member Ruth Jakoff and region leaders, Judy has helped Wellworth set records for the number of members who have joined the Chapter in such a short period of time. Unparalleled in BUNWC's history, Wellworth now has over 400 members, 40+ study groups, and plans for a full season of special events and fundraisers to benefit the University.

New Chapter Ready to Emerge from Conejo Valley

A group of motivated and capable people from southern California's Conejo Valley are moving ahead to create what all expect will be a new BUNWC chapter. Laura Benendon, president's councilor of Brandeis, long-time BUNWC board member, and area resident, knew that Conejo was a growing community, ready for a BUNWC chapter. Moreover, the neighboring San Fernando Valley Chapter has grown to over 1500 members. Certainly there would be others who would be interested in joining the National Women's Committee.

Collaborating with former national president, Gayle Wise, former national treasurer, Dorothy Katz, and Jenna Katz, Western Region president, Laura has helped the group appoint a slate of officers and begin planning activities for the months ahead.

A winning team for Conejo Valley's Chapter in Formation. From left to right: Laura Benendon, BUNWC board member; Dorothy Katz, former national treasurer; Carrie Mataraza, Conejo Valley Chapter president; and Gayle Wise, former national president.

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I am reminded of Spencer Johnson’s parable about change, Who Moved My Cheese? This tale focuses on the ability of individuals to change and adapt to new circumstances. The parable teaches us that change is inevitable and that we must be prepared to adapt to new situations. This is especially relevant in today’s rapidly changing business environment, where companies need to be nimble and build increasingly robust infrastructure to stay competitive. 

During Orientation, incoming first-year students met with the author and faculty for lively discussion. BUNWC members also took part in a discussion of Yellow in their own chapters, using materials provided by Brandeis faculty. Our Brandeis videographer filmed the event so that audit group members can enjoy this unique experience. The Yellow event was the first in a series of “Meet the Author” programs that will be held on campus throughout the coming year. We are arranging with the University to record additional sessions for BUNWC members.

You will notice that this edition of Imprint has a different look and feel. This new format was designed by BUNWC and the University’s Office of Communications. The addition of original and exciting stories by Brandeis news writers will connect you even more with events on campus. Look with Pride is a new video produced by BUNWC in collaboration with the University’s Office of Communications. An inspirational presentation, it explores the bond between Brandeis and BUNWC and the achievements that have resulted from our partnership. This short feature film is a wonderful prelude to a chapter meeting or event and can be obtained through the National Office.

Like Sniff and Scurry in Who Moved My Cheese, BUNWC must also keep its running shoes handy. We, too, must stay nimble, building increasingly greater strength and agility to adapt rapidly to transitions, embracing change, and discovering fresh opportunities.

And like Sniff and Scurry, our running shoes are on. Who knows what opportunities we will find as we look for the “new cheese”? Stay tuned...
Join Marilyn Teplow and hundreds of others who have established a charitable gift annuity with Brandeis University. Receive an annual income for life at an interest rate that never changes. Learn about the tax advantages that you will receive with a gift to help ensure the academic excellence of Brandeis and its Libraries. The National Women’s Committee will recognize your generosity on its Tribute Wall and the University will grant you membership in its prestigious Sachar Legacy Circle.

From the day I became a member, 30 years ago, the National Women’s Committee has been an inspiration to me and Brandeis University has been my passion. Establishing a charitable gift annuity enabled me to become a major donor and give back to an institution that has so enriched my life. At the same time, I will receive a guaranteed income at a very attractive interest rate for as long as I live.

My contribution will help maintain the excellence that is the watchword of Brandeis University,

A charitable gift annuity ... financial security for me ... a legacy for Brandeis.

To learn about planned giving opportunities or for the wording to ensure that your bequest is directed to Brandeis or its Libraries, contact Judy Diamond at 781-736-4167 or jdiamond@brandeis.edu.

Creating an Endowment for Excellence

I am interested in:

☐ Establishing a charitable gift annuity

☐ Including BUNWC in my will

Name

Address

City, State, Zip

Phone, Email

Chapter

Send form to:

Judy Diamond
Brandeis University National Women’s Committee, MS 132
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Waltham, MA 02454-9110