



The Brandeis-India Initiative: Developing the foundation

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Overview

This brief report follows an earlier summary, **Strengthening the Brandeis Impact in India** (October 2008). Building off of excitement here at Brandeis and among alumni and friends abroad, in that document we outlined a plan for increased Brandeis academic, experiential, and service engagement in India. We established a number of goals – to be developed in concert with partners in India – including:

- Raising the Brandeis profile, leadership structure and visibility in India, in order to set the groundwork for all other joint projects
- Enhancing multidisciplinary, global academic collaboration and knowledge production
- Strengthening the Brandeis South Asian Studies Program into a model for 21st century regional/area studies
- Increasing opportunities for Brandeis students to contribute meaningful study, work, and service alongside Indian partners
- Developing a recruitment strategy based on strong personal relationships
- Raising funds directly for the purpose of further scholarship, service, and joint work in India and about India

In order to develop those goals, we undertook a **second visit to India November 10 – 15, 2008**, following an initial exploratory visit in April 2008. This second visit included two days in Mumbai (Bombay), one day in Hyderabad, and three days in Delhi. During this recent trip, we were encouraged by the depth of excitement among our friends in these cities. We also explored a few initial partnership activities described below.

It should be said immediately that this trip was undertaken and the report was drafted before the tragic attacks in Mumbai beginning on November 26. Those events have deeply touched and shaken many members of the Brandeis community, in Waltham, in Mumbai, in India, and beyond.

Clearly, these events are going to have a significant short-term impact on the future of India, and on Brandeis connections there. It is likely, for example, that we will have to proceed with caution before encouraging Brandeis students to study and work in the Mumbai area, and in India more generally.

We are, however, convinced that the longer-term potential for forging stronger connections to India remains robust, and we are circulating this report in that spirit.

November 2008 trip to India by Dan Terris and Harleen Singh

Meetings with alumni and families

We met with alumni and families in Mumbai and Delhi, and enjoyed seeing many of these friends for the second time after our April trip. In addition to individual meetings, the centerpiece of our stay in Mumbai was a dinner at the home of Zia Mody, parent of Aarti Mody '10, for about 25 Brandeis alumni and families in the Mumbai area. We discussed a number of ways for alumni and families to be involved, including hosting Brandeis students for short-term internships and helping with recruitment efforts at local schools.

Brandeis in India student opportunities

In Mumbai and Delhi, many of our alumni are connected to the NGO, business, and government communities. They have expressed interest in helping set up internship placements for Brandeis students, meeting with students while they are here, or (very generously) hosting them as short-term guests in their home. In addition to regular semester study abroad programs, our goal is to have Brandeis students working in sustained partnership with a few organizations in a concentrated area, especially those organizations matching the Brandeis social justice focus. This program would take advantage of new funding at Brandeis for summer internships. During the trip, we visited internship sites managed by alumni in Mumbai and Delhi. In Hyderabad, we visited with current Brandeis students who are studying abroad through the Council for International Educational Exchange (CIEE).

Faculty engagement

We met with alumni in Delhi about the possibility of a Brandeis academic series in partnership with *Seminar*, the journal of Indian affairs. We discussed an event that would bring together Brandeis faculty with Indian intellectuals around a particular theme, such as “conflict and development.”

Potential university-to-university partnerships

In Hyderabad and Delhi, we met with Brandeis alumni involved in start-up higher education ventures. These are intended to help the current crisis in Indian higher education, where demand for high-quality education far outpaces supply both at the undergraduate and graduate level, and where there are unique opportunities for links between higher education and societal development. We are exploring the possibility of Brandeis being a key player in helping establish such institutions – not as a “branch” of Brandeis, but in academic development partnership with colleagues in India.

We also continued developing our relationship with TERI (The Energy and Resources Institute) in Delhi. We first visited TERI in April, and in summer 2008, we hosted a three-day program for Indian civil servants in TERI University’s public policy Master’s program. On this recent visit, we spent a day at TERI University’s new campus, and discussed a number of partnership possibilities including the return of the public policy students, a summer study abroad program for Brandeis students, and partnerships on specific courses and programs such as sustainable development.

We had a chance to meet Dr. R.K. Pachauri, Director General of TERI and renowned climate change expert, about our overall future relationship with TERI.

Follow-ups

After a semester of focus on India at Brandeis through cultural residencies and visiting faculty, there is excitement about the Brandeis-India Initiative on campus, including a recent editorial in the student newspaper *The Justice* strongly supporting the initiative. And, we were further convinced on this trip that Brandeis has the opportunity to develop strong, meaningful connections in India that would have a two-way impact here and abroad. Some follow-ups we are exploring for further development include:

- *A Brandeis-India Seminar*, tentatively for 2010, which would engage our faculty in conversation with Indian intellectuals, with a possible publication produced.
- *A Visiting Lecture series*, in which prominent Indian public or private leaders would make a short visit to Brandeis for campus-wide lectures, teach-ins, and discussions.
- *Partnership activities with TERI University*, including two-way exchanges, summer study programs, and joint research – taking advantage of strengths in our Heller School for Social Policy and Management and its Sustainable International Development Program.
- *Expanded study abroad program offerings* in various regions of the country, to engage additional Brandeis students in meaningful study and work.
- *A “Brandeis in Bombay” pilot program*, which would bring student interns working on independent projects together in a common support structure. With help from alumni and friends, these students would work in unique, grassroots NGOs, educational and business environments. [The recent attacks in Mumbai clearly mean that we will have to take this program off of the “fast track,” but we hope in the future to look for ways to implement it with appropriate care and caution. We also might consider other cities in addition to Mumbai.]
- *Fundraising for the general Brandeis-India Fund*, to directly support follow-ups outlined above. This fund-raising is modest to start, with a goal of \$50,000 to be raised in the 2008-09 academic year; we are already half-way towards this goal. These funds will also support the foundations of the Brandeis South Asian Studies Program, which will allow us to continue to develop our academic connections in India and beyond.
- *Methods to partner with or support student-led initiatives*: The events in Mumbai have led to admirable organization and goodwill of Brandeis students. Several student residents of Mumbai – many of them the daughters and sons of families we met on our trip -- have organized a “Revive Mumbai” initiative (<http://www.revivemumbai.blogspot.com/>). They hope to raise money for support of the Chabad House reconstruction and create a scholarship program. We hope to continue helping in advising and supporting these students.

For more information, or if you wish to discuss in more detail ways to get involved, please contact oga@brandeis.edu or ++1 781-736-5642.

The Brandeis-India Initiative

The Office of Global Affairs

<http://www.brandeis.edu/globalbrandeis/regions/india.html>