Graduate Student Club & Organization

HANDBOOK
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Introduction

Congratulations on taking the initiative to learn more about graduate student clubs and organizations on campus. There are over 200 undergraduate and graduate student clubs and organizations here at Brandeis! They each play a significant role in what makes our campus unique. Students and staff work together in order to provide a variety of social, cultural and educational opportunities both inside and outside the classroom for the university community. Your contribution through club activities and initiatives will serve towards a valuable contribution to the Brandeis Community!

This handbook is a resource for the members of the graduate student community who are involved with planning events and activities and who have leadership roles within organizations. One of the aims of the Office of Graduate Student Affairs is to provide this information and resources necessary to support graduate student clubs and organizations in all of their initiatives. The Senior Department Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs serves as liaison between graduate students and university administration, as well as advises and assists the Graduate Student Association and Graduate Student Senate. He works to provide resources and services, assisting to coordinate events and programming between the three graduate schools on campus. The Senior Department Coordinator of Graduate Student Affairs is Steven Weglinski and he can be reached at weginski@brandeis.edu or 781-736-3546.

We hope this handbook will guide you through a successful club and organization experience during your career at Brandeis. Please feel free to stop by the Graduate Student Center in Kutz Hall at any time with questions or concerns. We are open Monday - Friday, 7:00am – 10:00pm
Life of a Club

This sections of the handbook takes you through the different stages of forming and managing a club. It will explain how to formally create an organization, what resources are available to graduate student clubs and organizations, what responsibilities are placed on groups once they are established, what student leaders can do to strengthen those groups, and how organizations can sometimes, “pass on.”

Graduate Student Clubs and Organizations

Several types of student organizations exist at Brandeis University. These include the Graduate Student Association (GSA), the Graduate Student Senate (GSS), GSA Recognized Organizations, various organizations within each of the three graduate schools and within specific departments and programs, and Graduate Student Affairs affiliated programs. All of these organizations have different roles, responsibilities, and ways of doing business. The following descriptions will help you in recognizing some of the different positions and groups.

Graduate Student Association and Graduate Student Senate

Brandeis University Graduate students’ government consists of the GSA and the GSS. The GSA is comprised of all members of the graduate student body (THAT’S YOU!), which elects every year members of the GSA Executive Committee. The Executive Committee has the following positions: President, Vice President, Treasurer, Social Coordinator, Community Service Coordinator, Educational Coordinator, and Travel & Research Grants Coordinator. The GSS is comprised of students from the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS), Heller School for Social Policy and Management, and the International Business School (IBS).

The primary purposes of the GSA and GSS are:

- To provide a forum for issues of concern to graduate students
- To represent graduate student interests before Brandeis faculty and administration
- To organize, promote, and conduct activities beneficial to graduate student life
- To disseminate information of interest to graduate students
- To aid in the creation of and provide support and assistance to graduate student clubs and organizations
- To select graduate students for appointment to faculty and university committees
GSA Recognized Clubs

The GSA Executive Committee is responsible for the recognition of student clubs and organizations at Brandeis University. The Executive Committee establishes guidelines and procedures that student clubs and organizations must follow in order to become recognized by Brandeis University. Recognized clubs must complete forms on file with the office of Graduate Student Affairs on a yearly basis in order to continue their club status. Once recognized, clubs are allowed to:

- Reserve university facilities
- Use the Brandeis University name and logo
- Have access to Brandeis University web space
- Use GSA resources, including any GSA space on campus
- Request funding from GSA for club related initiatives

Resources for Clubs and Organizations

There are a number of resources available to those graduate student groups who decide to officially register as a club or organization under GSA.

Brandeis Name

Recognized clubs and organizations may use the Brandeis name and logo in their information and/or promotional literature. This can be advantageous in interactions with organizations outside of Brandies, as it provides a professional status to the club or organization.

Facilities of Campus

Recognized clubs and organizations have the right to reserve a variety of facilities on campus. These include:

- A/V equipment
- Space on campus
- Public Safety details
- Media

Web Space

Recognized clubs and organizations will be officially listed on the GSA webpage, which include a link to personalized club contact information and the club constitution.
GSA Resources

The office of Graduate Student Affairs is currently located in Kutz Hall on the first floor. This office also maintains the Graduate Student Center. As a recognized club, you may request free printing and other resources related to club activities from staff. Email Steve Weglinski at weglinski@brandeis.edu for more details.

Establishing a Club or Organization

Establishing a club at Brandeis University is a relatively simple process and we are always here to help guide you along the way! To get started, complete a Club Application form online. The GSA Vice President will then be in touch with you to let you know that the GSA Executive Committee will vote on your club or organizations’ status at our next monthly meeting. At least one representative from your club or organization may be present at the meeting in which your club voted on, and should be prepared to answer any questions that the Executive Committee may ask. If no one is able to be present, please notify the Vice President of GSA.

Each year, GSA request a club renewal form from club leaders in order to ensure that all clubs on record are still active, are able to receive important communications, have updated club leader contact information on record, and have resubmitted the MA state Law anti-hazing form. Failure to submit these forms before the date established by the GSA can lead to the removal of your club’s official “recognized” status.

Meetings

The heart of every club or organization can be found during its meetings. Meetings can range from lighthearted, informational gathering of general members to a heated decision-making session for executive board members. Good meetings are always a result of careful planning and preparation! There are different styles to running a meeting. Whether you use parliamentary procedure or a more relaxed format, it is important to know what your purpose and goals are, how you hope to accomplish your goals, and how you communicate.
**Agendas**

Preparing an agenda not only communicates to your group what the meeting is about, but also makes you think in advance about what information you would like to cover during the meeting. When creating an agenda, keep in mind who will be at the meeting, in what kind of space(4,6),(996,994) the meeting will be held, and how long you wish the meeting to run. The following is a generalized checklist that you can use when creating your agenda:

- Name of Club/Organization
- Title of Meeting
- Who is calling the meeting
- People attending
- Date
- Starting time
- Ending time
- Desired outcomes, tasks (who hangs flyers, review constitution, etc...)
- Decision-making method (voting agreements of all members)
- Sequence of items
- Person(s) responsible for each item
- Procedure for dealing with each item
- Time allotted for each item

**Running Meetings**

Here are some helpful tips to help guide you through a productive meeting.

1. Begin meetings on time, and don’t interrupt your progress to fill in stragglers on what they have missed
2. Have all resources easily available to all participants
3. Do not waste time reading through information that can be easily distributed or posted
4. Establish time limits for potentially lengthy agenda items and make all participants aware of these limits
5. Stick to your agenda
6. Accomplish purposes; re-state conclusions as needed
7. Encourage individuals to speak up and respect each other’s opinion
8. Finish on time, and on a positive note
9. Leave meeting with clear purpose of action for the next meeting
**Delegation**

Delegation, one of the keys to being an effective leader, is the process of granting the authority and responsibility for performing a task to another individual. Strategies for delegation are:

- Set overall goals for organization
- Break goals into smaller projects that can be delegated
- Determine deadlines for each portion of the project
- Assess members’ abilities and strengths
- Challenge members of the group to volunteer and help achieve larger group goals

**Transitions**

Every year, there is a time of transition when outgoing and incoming officers relieve and accept their positions. This is a critical time period for any organization! This timing can be the difference between a successful year or one in which the officers feel like they are always trying to catch up. The key to ensuring a successful transition is to make sure the new officers are aware that their participation is a fundamental obligation to holding an office or a position.

Some topics that outgoing and incoming officers might want to discuss include:

- A historical perspective of the organization, as well as a review of the formal organizational structure
- Documents, such as the constitution & by-laws, job descriptions, and policies & procedures
- The previous year’s goals, projects and activities, descriptions of the successes and failures, and necessary resources that were needed to lead the organization
- Review financial procedures and discuss the summary/projection of the budget
- Familiarity with files, use of equipment, and other organizational resources

Leadership transition is a means to maintaining organizational productivity by having experienced officers assist in the training and sharing of information with their peers who are taking leadership positions.
Budget

This section discusses how clubs and organizations can receive funding, how to generate extra funding through avenues, such as co-sponsorship, and how to estimate some of the costs that might be incurred throughout an academic year.

Graduate Student Activities Fee

Every graduate student, as part of the University Fees, pays a Graduate Student Activities Fee. This fee is collected by the University and is given to the GSA for distribution. The GSA Executive Committee works with the GSS to allocate these monies. A portion of these fees are set aside for graduate student clubs and organizations.

Requesting Funding from the GSA

Recognized graduate student clubs are able to request funding from the GSA. To submit a request, you can complete the Funding Request Form online. All submissions are reviewed by the Vice President of GSA. Typically for smaller requests of $50 or less, you will receive a decision within 72 hours of the request. For larger requests, you will receive a decision based upon the next scheduled GSA Executive Committee meeting, which occur monthly. In some circumstances, the Vice President may ask to meet you in person to for you to attend the GSA meeting to further describe your funding request.

Budgeting and Planning for Events

Here are some costs that you will need to consider when planning an event on campus:

- Audio/Visual Equipment
- Custodial and Safety Coverage
- Refreshments
- Cost to reserve space
- Overall size of attendance
- Cost of Advertisements
Programming

This section is all about helping you organize your big idea into manageable steps to plan for a successful program or event. Recognized graduate clubs and organizations are encouraged to work with Steven Weglinski (weglinski@brandeis.edu), the Grad Student Affairs Sr. Department Coordinator, in order to reserve facilities on campus, as well as to plan for your event details. Please email him to set up a time and discuss your needs for your program.

Event Planning

12 Easy Steps to a Great program

1. Brainstorm ideas for the program
2. Evaluate the needs of the audience, facility, and performers/speakers
3. Pick top three spaces, dates, and times for the event (careful with holidays, vacations & other breaks)
4. Begin thinking about the details of your event
5. Develop a budget
6. Talk with Steve Weglinski at Graduate Student Affairs to review program plans
7. Promote your event!
   a. Word of Mouth
   b. Flyers/Posters
   c. Email
   d. Social Media
   e. List Serve
   f. Add to the Grad Events Calendar
8. Confirm details prior to event with vendors
9. Day of Event... Arrive 30-60 minutes early to make sure that everything is set up correctly, get entrance ready (ticket table, money box), check equipment, meet and greet performer, meet and greet public safety, and meet and greet support staff (vendors, Conf. and Events, etc...)
10. Enjoy your program!
11. Evaluate your program. Write down attendance, problems occurring during the planning or during the program, effectiveness, etc...
12. Follow up with any needed payment, thank you notes, etc...
Promotion

Publicity and promotion for an event is one of the most important steps in ensuring the success of the program. If you plan an exciting event, but don’t take the time and effort to market the program, no one will know about it. This section focuses on some tips of the trade as well as explain some of the resources that Brandeis has in order to assist you in this endeavor.

There is no such thing as too much publicity! Go above and beyond the posters and flyers and be creative! You need to make your publicity, and your event, stand out from the rest. However, it is always important that you remain respectful of University property. Your publicity needs to catch someone’s attention, but the person also needs to know why they would be interested in the event. What benefits surround your program? Try spicing up your wording in order to intrigue your audience.

Consider your purpose, audience, and budget. Be thoughtful about your strategy to publicize. Think about questions such as: Why are we holding this event? What are the outcomes that we would like to achieve? Who do we want to attend? How does our marketing plan fit with our proposed audience? How much money do we have to spend? Lastly, what resources do we have?

Once you have figured out what you want to do based on your budget, audience, and purpose, you should develop a timeline of when you want to implement each strategy. Assign people to each task and follow up with them. Plan ahead so that you have enough time! Use your mouth: word of mouth, or talking about your event with others, is one of the best strategies to marketing your event. In everyday conversations with your friends, professors, staff and others, talk about your program. Don’t forget the “day of” publicity: Even though on the day of your event you will be busy, it is important not to forget to market your event. Having someone walk around with a sandwich board, distributing handbills, chalking sidewalks, and teasers will help build excitement for those last minute audience members.

Media Options

Official Graduate Student Events Calendar: Email your event information to weglinski@brandeis.edu to have your program listed within the Official Graduate Student Event Calendar.

Social Media: Add an announcement to the Official Graduate Student Association Facebook Page by joining the page and posting your event information! The name of the group is ‘Brandeis Graduate Student Association (Official Page)’

My.brandeis.edu: Events can be posted on the University’s calendar section of the my.brandeis.edu website. This calendar is also used to feed data to the plasma screen television in the atrium of the Shapiro Campus Center. Visit the website for more information.
**Email Announcements:** In addition to sending announcements to your own club’s mailing list, you can submit announcements to be sent to the entire graduate student body via email. For more information, contact the Office of Graduate Student Affairs.

**Student Mailboxes:** If you wish to advertise to all students through a mailbox stuffing, you must obtain permission from the Office of Graduate Student Affairs. Bring a sample of the flyer you plan to stuff to the Graduate Student Center and talk with the coordinator about your event.

**Posters:** Keep the design simple, interesting, and clean. Include the who, what, where, when, and why of the program. Make sure all spelling is correct! Use unique ideas: cut into different shapes, use colors; anything out of the ordinary. Take time and effort (it will make a difference). Post in appropriate areas that target your audience.