

Overview

Classified by Carnegie as a ‘very high-activity’ research university and member of the Association of American Universities for the past two decades, Brandeis University has used its youthful energy and small size to attract outstanding faculty and students and thereby rise in national reputation. The University enrolled its first class of 107 students in October 1948. Today, Brandeis hosts 5,000 students from over 100 countries around the world. With four schools (Arts and Sciences, the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, the International Business School, the Rabb School of Continuing Studies) and 31 research centers and institutes, Brandeis ranks second out of 3,000 colleges in the U.S. in the percentage of faculty who are members of the National Academies of Sciences, and the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and fellows of the American Association for the Advancement of Science.

A private, coeducational, nonsectarian institution officially established in 1947, Brandeis is suffused with such universal Jewish values as a commitment to the life of the mind, a passion for social justice, and a desire to make the world a better place. While these values and qualities have remained constant, Brandeis in 2005 is not the Brandeis of 1995. Over the last ten years, the University has advanced in its academic programs, including the establishment of two new schools (the International Business School and the Rabb School), the development of new interdisciplinary programs at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, the inauguration of new centers and institutes focused on area studies and social justice issues (broadly defined), and an aggressive array of initiatives (both programmatic and physical) to cement the research enterprise that spans the entire University.

This progress in the academy has been sustained and supported by significant advances in our fiscal well-being—a key issue in the last accreditation report. Of note, we have moved from revenue instability characterized by overdependence on annual gifts, excessive endowment draw, and high discount rates, to more predictable revenue characterized by a reduced reliance on gifts, an endowment draw within peer norms, and stabilized, targeted financial aid. Overall the University has progressed from insufficiently disciplined operations to structured, purposeful and effective financial and program management.

Since 1995, the University has put in place new policies and information systems for financial, physical, and human resources; an expanded analytic capacity; and a strong and well-coordinated leadership team. As a result, Brandeis has made significant progress: increasing faculty and staff salaries based on peer analyses, reducing its structural deficit, addressing the most pressing deferred maintenance needs, paying debt service when due, and growing financial reserves. Substantial progress in these areas has provided a stable foundation for attaining important University goals: increasing undergraduate applications and student quality, enriching the undergraduate experience, creating new innovative graduate programs and expanding our research capacity.

Faculty

The University has no higher priority than the recruitment and retention of an outstanding faculty whose members are committed to scholarly and creative excellence, and to undergraduate and graduate education. The faculty salary plan, which was developed in response to the 1996 reaccreditation and is designed to bring faculty salaries in Arts and Sciences to the AAU median by rank and discipline, has been well received and may well be achieved in FY2007. Attention to faculty salaries is part of the strategic plan for the International Business School; evaluation of the faculty salary profile in the Heller School for Social Policy and Management is underway, though important work remains to be done. Maintaining faculty salaries at an appropriate level will remain a challenge for Brandeis, especially given the University's location in a region with strong peer competition and high housing and cost-of-living expenses.

The ambitious goals that Brandeis has for the undergraduate curriculum, together with the analysis of faculty distribution by program and department undertaken by the Dean of Arts and Sciences, demonstrate the need for new faculty appointments in several areas. Enhanced institutional support for faculty research and scholarship, a priority identified in the *Integrated Plan*, is also being provided. In addition, a systematic program to provide mentoring to junior faculty has been established in Arts and Sciences; this new program pairs a senior departmental colleague with each junior faculty member to provide information, guidance, and support.

The University has recently completed faculty-led studies regarding the status of contract faculty and the pressures experienced by junior faculty with respect to the tenure clock. Major reforms regarding contract faculty titles, procedures for initial appointment and reappointment, and position expectations have been adopted. The faculty also approved an extension of the tenure clock (by one year) this past year. Brandeis has made a continuing strong effort to diversify the faculty, but has had thus far only mixed success. This, like the salary issue, is exacerbated by the University's close proximity to far wealthier peer institutions.

The Academic Program

As part of the self-study process, the faculty committee charged with responsibility for this standard examined all of the academic majors to determine the extent to which (1) students develop knowledge or skills through sequential coursework; (2) there are clear learning objectives; (3) students achieve mastery of knowledge, information resources, and methods and theories pertinent to the major; and (4) students develop an understanding of complex structures of knowledge germane to the field and interrelated areas.

As a result of this analysis, it is clear that the evaluation and assessment of the effectiveness of academic majors and student learning outcomes remain uneven and incomplete. Many majors need to develop greater specificity with respect to the articulation of student learning objectives; pilot assessment projects are presently underway in chemistry, history, and expository writing. More attention also needs to be given to assessing the effectiveness of the University's

program in general education and the University has begun to address this need. In particular, the faculty has taken steps to strengthen the undergraduate writing requirement and the ability of students to develop effective writing skills in their work across the curriculum.

In keeping with its tradition of maintaining a fresh and dynamic curriculum, Brandeis has made new investments in experiential learning, interdisciplinary courses and majors, and the development of a more global undergraduate curriculum. The University is also sensitive to the need to connect and integrate its international efforts, both programmatically and in terms of the support and services it provides for international students.

At the graduate level in arts and sciences, the University is committed to maintaining a focus on excellence, which will require competitive stipends at the doctoral level, maintaining critical program enrollment size, bringing an interdisciplinary dimension to doctoral education, and selectively developing professional master's programs.

All three graduate professional schools (Heller, IBS and Rabb) have experienced significant growth in their student enrollment and in their physical facilities. In many cases, these master's programs attract substantial numbers of international students. Continued growth in master's programs will require more infrastructure and support for graduate education.

Student Services

In the last six years, Brandeis has made significant progress in achieving its undergraduate enrollment goals, improving student diversity, lowering the tuition discount rate, improving student retention rates, and providing better coordination of student services and support mechanisms for student success. Further improvements are projected as the competition for recruiting and retaining the best and brightest students increases with each step. Many of these changes have taken place as a result of the establishment in 2000 of the Division of Students and Enrollment and the creation of the position of Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment to ensure strategic enrollment management and a comprehensive approach to student services.

Brandeis is very sensitive to the issue of affordability and the accompanying challenge of balancing the tuition discount rate, and the resources dedicated to financial aid against other equally important institutional priorities. It is also essential to improve organizational effectiveness. The self-study process has reinforced the importance of continuing to address staffing needs and salary levels for student service personnel.

Library and Information Resources

In the decade since Brandeis's last re-accreditation, higher education has witnessed a sea change in the generation, storage, and distribution of information. The worlds of libraries and information technology are quickly becoming one. At Brandeis, the two organizations responsible for these areas, Information Technology Services (ITS) and the University Libraries, have

worked to provide more seamless services to the community: the organizations were combined in AY2005 to form Libraries and Technologies Services (LTS), thereby permitting support for structural changes that would surpass the opportunities available through collaboration alone.

LTS now plans, manages and maintains the hardware and software resources for the University. Over the past five years, the University has standardized instructional and administrative technology services and infrastructure. Challenges remain as knowledge explodes and costs escalate. Over the next ten years, Brandeis expects to invest an additional \$38 million in books and other information resources. Of all the areas within the University, information resources and information technology are probably the most dynamic and unpredictable. While the future is unpredictable, the University has demonstrated that it has the vision, flexibility, and management skills to navigate this new world.

Physical Resources

Over the past ten years, Brandeis has acted decisively to understand and manage its physical and technological resources, and to address environmental, safety, and compliance issues. Since the last re-accreditation in 1996, annual capital expenditures for new facilities and deferred maintenance have increased significantly, from \$3 million in FY1995 to \$35 million in FY2005, and the University's physical plant has grown by nearly ten percent. Brandeis's capital priorities over the next six years include new science and residence hall projects, as well as renovations to existing academic and student facilities, with full and sustainable funding in place for all new initiatives. The most pressing deferred maintenance needs have been addressed, but deferred maintenance, as well as student and academic facility needs, remains significant.

Financial Resources

Brandeis's financial stability has been achieved through a new resource management team; strengthened financial and administrative information systems; new budgeting, accounting, and business-conduct policies and procedures; effective University-wide teamwork and transparency; a new, integrated resource model and related *Integrated Plan*; and more effective and successful fundraising.

Brandeis will continue to exploit opportunities to reallocate resources to meet academic priorities, sharing assets across schools, departments, and programs where possible. New initiatives will be evaluated against articulated objectives, and the institution will look strategically for niches that it is well positioned to occupy and in which it can grow. Discussions with the faculty concerning the realignment of academic priorities and resources are an integral part of University-wide resource planning.

Brandeis is well positioned to accomplish the goal of permanently elevating the level of philanthropic support it receives, having exceeded and successfully concluded its original \$470 million capital campaign, approved a further \$300 million campaign largely to address the need for new science facilities, and

raised a record total of \$81.3 million in cash and \$65.3 million in new pledges in FY2006. It will be very important to continue to articulate clear mission-based priorities and capital projects that will interest and motivate donors. Following the official close of the Campaign for Brandeis in 2009 and for several years thereafter, the University will need to think in terms of smaller, targeted campaigns with clear, precise, and project-related goals. The ultimate decisions regarding these or other options will be made on the basis of the integrated planning process.

Public Disclosure

Over the foreseeable future, Brandeis will continue to confront the issues of effective use of technologies and promotion of a common brand within a decentralized institution. Reorganization, collaboration, and the employment of new technologies have enabled the University to do more with less. To take the next step in telling the Brandeis story, the Office of Communications must continue to harness technology through an effective communications strategy that includes advertising and additional promotional activities.

Few people in 1996 could have foreseen the impact the Web would have on the production, dissemination, and use of information. While Brandeis has navigated the change successfully, managing the dissemination of oceans of information accurately, responsibly and nimbly will continue to be a great challenge. Close cooperation between the Office of Communications and Web Technology Services in LTS should ensure the effective use of technology to aid public disclosure.

Integrity

The University's commitment to upholding the highest ethical standards is embodied in the policies and documents that guide its activities. Regularly reviewing and updating policies, handbooks, and the *Bulletin*, the University strives for transparency. It holds community meetings, sends letters to the community, and posts online important information such as budgets, planning documents, capital projects, investment performance, committee reports, faculty and student data, and other matters affecting university employees. The regulatory climate, both nationally and in Massachusetts, has also led Brandeis to incorporate several best practices contained in the Sarbanes-Oxley Act and pending Massachusetts charitable governance legislation.

Conclusion

Whatever measure one might apply, Brandeis is in a stronger position today than at any time in its history. Of particular significance for the long-term health and well-being of the institution is the fact that, by putting its financial house in order and strengthening its infrastructure, Brandeis has moved from a style of operation often subject to crisis management to one characterized by long-term planning and the careful evaluation and ordering of institutional priorities. It is, of course, impossible to know whether all of the University's priorities, established through a careful integrated planning process, will be achieved by the end of the seven-year planning period. Accountability, plan adjustments based on progress and external conditions, and reallocation of resources will be

required to enable Brandeis to position itself most effectively to achieve its goals. However, notwithstanding factors the University cannot control, such as the state of the economy and actions by competing peer institutions, Brandeis is confident that it has the academic vision, resource base, management team, administrative tools, and the discipline needed to achieve the goals of its *Integrated Plan*. In this regard, the preparation of the self-study has proven to be a most valuable exercise, focusing the institution's attention on its academic, student, and resource priorities, and the need for clear measures to assess success.