

## Preface

The Brandeis self-study process began in January 2005 with the aim of making re-accreditation a valuable learning experience for the institution and creating a process that would be both transparent and inclusive. In terms of organizational structure, there were three levels of management: one at the executive level, the second at the level of shared governance, and the third at the operational level.

The first level, the Executive Committee, consisted of the Provost, the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and the Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment. This committee provided overall direction for the re-accreditation effort, served as the primary liaison with NEASC, and approved all communications.

The second level consisted of a steering committee, the University Advisory Council, a standing governance committee that is chaired by the Provost. Composed of faculty and the three academic deans, as well as the Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer, and Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment, the steering committee agreed upon a set of principles to guide the self-study process: draw on existing faculty committees to organize the workload; maximize faculty involvement by asking them to serve as reviewers and co-chairs, with staff preparing draft documents; maintain frequent communication about the process with the Brandeis community; and use the overall process as an opportunity to build a better Brandeis. These principles guided the process planning throughout the AY2005-2006. In addition, the steering committee provided oversight for the process and timely feedback on the drafts of the self-study.

The third operational level consisted of 14 subcommittees of faculty and staff, organized by standard and at times by substandard. These committees collected evidence, produced a series of draft documents, and put forward possible projections by area. Administrative staff then created integrated narratives, which were reviewed by the 23 chairs of the original committees, several faculty reviewers, 11 faculty committees, two student committees, and in some cases the three deans, selected trustees, the Faculty Senate, and department chairs. For more detailed specifics by standard, see the charts under Process: Committee Structure and Outreach, posted on the University's NEASC homepage at [www.brandeis.edu/neasc](http://www.brandeis.edu/neasc).

In April 2006, following an extensive process of review and commentary, a draft self-study was posted on a secure intranet available to all members of the Brandeis community. At the same time, the President announced that the Executive Committee would hold a community forum on re-accreditation and would provide a summary presentation of the self-study with a focus on academic issues, students, and resources. Attended by about 100 faculty and staff, this forum on April 7, 2006, provided an opportunity for all members of the campus community to discuss the self-study. In addition to the community forum, an online forum was created to provide an extended opportunity for

commentary and feedback. The final self-study is available for all online and at the library.

The Senior Vice President for Communications in conjunction with the Provost's Office developed an overall communications plan for this process. Bi-monthly updates were provided to trustees, senior administration, faculty, and members of the student government in person and by memo and email. Faculty meetings, Board of Trustees' meetings, and website postings all offered opportunities to present timelines, achievements, and preliminary findings. Overall, these extensive communications and processes have led to a general awareness of re-accreditation on campus, as well as lively discussion and nuanced feedback about the self-study by faculty, staff and undergraduate and graduate student governments.