

## **Standard Six: Students**

### **Overview**

The student experience of 2006 at Brandeis differs significantly from that of 1995. Admission is considerably more competitive and the academic quality of today's student body is much higher. In addition, services have been added or enhanced for a richer college experience in all phases of students' academic careers. Extensive support mechanisms promote academic success and retention. Specialized programs address the needs of special populations, such as students with disabilities, low-income, and first-generation students. 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. Communication, coordination, and the level of services provided for students from the point of initial inquiry through graduation have been improved, and the University has moved from an admissions to an enrollment management model of operations.

Over the past ten years, Brandeis has invested considerable energy and resources to enhance students' out-of-classroom experiences. Integrated planning goals build upon and consolidate these investments. The critical goals include a 35 percent acceptance rate, average SAT scores of 1380, a five-year graduation rate of 90 percent, competitive student facilities and residences, the minimum discount rate required to achieve enrollment stability, and improvements in the quality and diversity of the student body.

### ***Undergraduate Admissions and Retention***

#### **Description**

Brandeis University is committed to attracting and retaining the top students in the nation. The University seeks to enroll students of all backgrounds and beliefs, in fulfillment of a nonsectarian mission that emphasizes academic excellence, the creation and transmission of new knowledge, open and vigorous intellectual inquiry, and a broadly defined commitment to social justice and diversity. Brandeis strives to admit and retain a student body that reflects the heterogeneity of the United States and of the world community.<sup>63</sup>

Undergraduate admission to Brandeis has become significantly more selective in recent years, with a 55-point gain in the average combined SAT scores of entering first-year students (from 1312 in 1999 to 1367 in 2006).<sup>64</sup> The proportion of the entering class in the top ten percent of their high school class has increased from 61 to 74 percent during the same period.<sup>65</sup> At the same time, the academic interests of incoming classes have remained consistent with the character of the

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<sup>63</sup> This section deals with undergraduates only; graduate admissions are analyzed in Standard Four.

<sup>64</sup> Consistent admissions data across all categories are only available from 1999 onward, as a result of the new system of analysis and archiving introduced at that time.

<sup>65</sup> See Appendix 6A for Brandeis first-year profile.

institution, and the results of the CIRP Freshman Survey of 2004 reveal that the expectations of first-year students fit well with the institution, with respect to degree objective and probable major.<sup>66</sup>

Application numbers have grown 25 percent during the past seven years, from 6,103 in 1999 to an all-time high of 7,637 in 2006. Over the same period, the acceptance rate has decreased from 48 to 36 percent. This decrease is attributable to the increase in applications, stabilization of the number of first-year students, and the adoption of enrollment management principles that have increased yield rates. These trends present the institution with their own challenges. The stronger the applicant pool, the more difficult it becomes to maintain or raise the quality of entering classes. The more academically qualified the student, the greater the competition to recruit him or her, as such students generally enjoy the greatest array of institutional choices.

Since about 70 percent of all domestic applicants come from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states, the University continues to draw the largest portion of each entering class from these regions. About 20 percent of each class is drawn from outside the Northeast (over 30 percent in the Class of 2009). Between six and eight percent of each class (9.5 percent in the Class of 2009) consists of international students. Some 38 states and 36 countries are represented in each first-year class.<sup>67</sup>

The enrollment of students of color (Black, Hispanic, Asian American and Native American) has been steadily increasing. Even with these gains, however, comparative data from the CIRP Freshman Survey show that, relative to peer institutions, minorities continue to be underrepresented in the undergraduate population at Brandeis.<sup>68</sup>

Brandeis considers students for admission, not on the basis of fixed numerical quotas or rigid guidelines, but on judgments of the many factors and personal characteristics that contribute directly to a rich and meaningful academic experience for all students. Diversity in the student body, as well as in the faculty, is deemed inseparable from the University's commitment to academic excellence, vigorous intellectual debate, and the free exchange of ideas. The requirements for admission are widely available to applicants on the Brandeis website at <http://www.brandeis.edu/admissions>, and in publications such as the *Viewbook*, scholarship brochures, and application materials sent to prospective students and applicants.<sup>69</sup>

There are two key measures of student success: (1) retention and graduation rates and (2) academic standing over time. The Brandeis five-year graduation rates compare favorably to the rates for highly selective peer institutions

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<sup>66</sup> See Appendix 6B for CIRP survey. In addition, the proportion of recruited athletes in the first year class has varied from a low of 7.9% to a high of 12%.

<sup>67</sup> See Appendix 6A.

<sup>68</sup> See Appendix 6C.

<sup>69</sup> Admissions' *Viewbook* and related materials are in the team room.

reported in the ACT institutional data profile for 2005. The Brandeis five-year graduation rates average 88 percent.<sup>70</sup> Women graduate at a higher rate than men, and the five-year graduation rates for Brandeis athletes are better than those of their classes as a whole. Low-income and first-generation students graduate at slightly lower rates. Minority students also have lower five-year graduation rates. While the gap between minority and non-minority graduation rates narrows after a sixth year, minority students do not show the same success rates as other students.

### **Appraisal**

Brandeis observes five principles and practices to admit, retain and graduate top-caliber students:

1. enroll a diverse student body;
2. provide support mechanisms that promote academic success and retention;
3. attend to the needs of populations at risk;
4. provide appropriate academic intervention;
5. use assessment to improve organizational effectiveness.

Each of these objectives will now be examined in detail.

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<sup>70</sup> See Appendix 6D for Graduation Rates.

*1) Brandeis seeks to enroll a diverse student body*

The University is committed to ensuring that the high cost of an education at Brandeis does not exclude well-qualified, low-income students. The proportion of low-income students in each first-year class has remained above eight percent since the Class of 2005, and institutional financial aid policies are designed to keep Brandeis affordable to low-income students. The University also seeks to remain a viable option for first-generation college students, the proportion of which has ranged between 7.9 percent and 12.5 percent.<sup>71</sup>

Financial aid policies are critical to securing a diverse and academically talented class. The University applies a uniform institutional need formula to each applicant for aid and meets students' calculated financial need through a financial aid package that includes institutional grants or scholarships, loans and work-study. Among first-year students, the average proportion of calculated need met by grants has increased from 65.9 percent in fall 2001 to 78.8 percent in fall 2005.<sup>72</sup>

The Office of Student Financial Services offers assistance to both students and families in paying for all educational costs. Merit-based scholarships offered to entering first-year students are used strategically to enroll the very best class possible with the scholarship funds available. Brandeis is also a participant in Posse, a national merit-based scholarship program founded by Deborah Bial '87. Each year, ten students are selected on the basis of academic, leadership, and communication skills as Brandeis Posse Scholars from a pool of over 1600 candidates in New York City.

*2) Brandeis provides support mechanisms to promote academic success and retention.*

The Division of Students and Enrollment has strengthened the University's ability to help students gain the most from their Brandeis experience. Brandeis seeks to ensure student retention through a comprehensive approach to student orientation and outreach, a multi-faceted system of advising, and services for underrepresented students.<sup>73</sup>

Orientation for new students includes web-based placement exams, evaluation for a special class in writing, workshops on time management and other college-level skills, a website with information and guidance on academic success, and the assignment of upper-class peer mentors.

The University provides advising through the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs (UAA), Student Enrichment Services, the Office of the Registrar, and the Departments of Student Life. UAA administers academic advising, premedical programs, study abroad, disabilities services and support, and post-graduation scholarships and fellowships.

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<sup>71</sup> See Appendix 6A.

<sup>72</sup> See Appendix 6E.

<sup>73</sup> See Appendix 6F.

The University maintains an extensive range of services for underrepresented students. These include specialized advising, personal counseling, tutoring, peer mentoring, and cultural enrichment. The programs have yielded a six-year graduation rate comparable to that of Brandeis students in the general population. The four-year graduation rate has varied with different cohorts but generally has shown improvement.<sup>74</sup>

*3) Brandeis attends to the needs of populations at risk*

The University recognizes that it has a special responsibility to ensure the success of students at risk academically: students with disabilities, low-income and first-generation students, and athletes.

Approximately four percent of undergraduates submit documentation of a disability. Of these, 90 percent have learning disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD). Approximately six to eight percent have documented psychological disorders, and two to four percent have physical or medical disabilities.<sup>75</sup> To assist these students, the University created the full-time position of Coordinator for Disabilities Services and Support.

Since 1968, the University has provided under-prepared students the opportunity to pursue a college education through the Transitional Year Program (TYP). The longest-continuing program of its kind in the United States, TYP brings 20 students to campus each year and provides them with the financial and academic support needed in a competitive college environment. There are currently 62 TYP alumni enrolled as full-time students at the University. Brandeis is also one of a few highly selective universities with TRIO Student Support Services, a federally funded program for first-generation and low-income students.

The Department of Athletics demonstrates its commitment to the success of student-athletes by providing a tailored orientation program, advising on course selection and scheduling, monitoring academic status, and reviewing academic performance at the end of each semester. Coaches also guide student-athletes toward the appropriate support mechanisms, such as the Writing Center, the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs, or Student Enrichment Services. The Director of Athletics is a member of the Committee on Academic Standing.

*4) Brandeis provides appropriate academic intervention*

The Committee on Academic Standing (COAS) serves as the academic review board for undergraduate students in the College of Arts and Sciences. The Committee meets every four to six weeks to consider petitions for exceptions to academic policies and petitions for readmission to the University. Additionally, the Committee evaluates student records at the end of each semester to confirm academic standing, hears all cases of required withdrawal from the University, and recommends undergraduates' degrees and honors. There is a

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<sup>74</sup> See Appendix 6F.

<sup>75</sup> Physical disabilities include cerebral palsy, multiple sclerosis, or being wheelchair-bound. A medical disability may result in any accommodation required by a serious illness.

comprehensive intervention process for students experiencing academic difficulty.

Data from COAS over the past three years suggest that 90 percent of the undergraduate student body fulfills the expectations for qualitative performance and progress toward degree, as defined by the University's academic rules and regulations.<sup>76</sup> The data for women and for men are consistent with the data on graduation rates for these groups. A smaller percentage of women have academic problems than the general student population. A larger percentage of athletes encounter academic problems than the student population as a whole (18.4 percent of athletes versus 9.5 percent of all students). A still higher percentage of minority students come before the Committee on Academic Standing (26.6 percent over the past three years). However, Committee on Academic Standing action results in the withdrawal of only two percent of all minority students—a rate comparable to that of men (1.9 percent) and athletes (2.4 percent). The rate for women is one percent and the rate for the overall student population is 1.3 percent.

The low rate of withdrawal of minority students despite the large proportion of minority students who come before COAS can be attributed to the close attention paid to monitoring the academic performance of all students carried out under the direction of Student Enrichment Services and the Student Support Services program. It suggests that interventions by COAS to strengthen performance have a positive effect on minority student performance. It also shows that programs devoted to enriching the academic programs of low-income, first generation, and minority students also have a positive effect.

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<sup>76</sup> See Appendix 6G for COAS process and aggregate data.

5) *Brandeis uses assessment to improve organizational effectiveness*

The University conducted a number of surveys to determine student needs and to improve services for them.<sup>77</sup> The Admitted Student Questionnaire (ASQ), a service of the College Board, is administered every other year to all undergraduate students admitted to Brandeis, regardless of whether they choose to attend the University. The ASQ asks admitted students to evaluate Brandeis's programs, recruitment literature, financial aid packages and other matters, and compares the responses with a group of five comparable institutions. Results from the ASQ have been used to target improvements in the Office of Admissions and the Office of Student Financial Services, to gauge student opinions about Brandeis relative to its competitive set of institutions, to develop more effective marketing messages, and to assess the impact of new recruitment initiatives.

The Cooperative Institution Research Program (CIRP) Freshman Survey, which has been administered to incoming first-year classes each year since 1966, provides a rich source of information about trends and changes in three generations of student attitudes and expectations. Information from the CIRP Freshman Survey has been used extensively in Student Life and the residence halls to instruct undergraduate Community Advisors (CAs) about incoming students and to provide a base for program enhancements and policy changes.

The Senior Survey administered each April to graduating seniors helps to measure students' overall satisfaction with Brandeis. In 2003, the results of the Senior Survey were paired with information given by the same students as they entered Brandeis four years earlier. This longitudinal comparison allowed a better understanding of those students who had a positive college experience and reported that they "would attend Brandeis again." The findings showed a psychographic profile of the type of student who flourishes at Brandeis.<sup>78</sup> As a result of these findings, the Office of Admissions plans to give additional consideration to a prospective student's "fit" with Brandeis, with the expectation that enrolling students whose profiles match well with the University will create a more dynamic student body, increase retention, and result in more satisfied graduates.

In the fall of 2004, with the assistance of the Noel-Levitz firm, Brandeis administered both the Student Satisfaction Inventory to students and the Institutional Priorities Survey to faculty and staff. The Student Satisfaction Inventory measured students' satisfaction with a wide range of college experiences, from residence halls to academic services. The Institutional Priorities Survey closely paralleled the Student Satisfaction Inventory and measured how faculty, staff, and administrators believe the institution should place on the same range of student experiences. The results from the Student Satisfaction Inventory show that enrolled students placed more importance on instructional effectiveness than on any other facet of their college experience (rating a 6.42 on a 7-point scale of importance), and that Brandeis is meeting or

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<sup>77</sup> See Appendix 6H for tools and surveys.

<sup>78</sup> See Appendix 6I for the psychographic profile.

exceeding their expectations. The survey revealed other areas in which the University was deficient. In particular, Brandeis is now improving customer service throughout the Division of Students and Enrollment, allocating more space for student activities, improving the physical appearance of the campus, and providing more effective communication between administrative offices.

## *Student Services*

### **Description**

The Department of Student Affairs consists of several offices and operates under the umbrella of the Division of Students and Enrollment. Its charge is to support the academic mission of the University through the development, delivery, and evaluation of student services.

The Department of Athletics includes the three main components of varsity athletics, physical education, and recreation. The department emphasizes athletic excellence, wellness, and the development of the “total person.” Brandeis competes as a member of the NCAA Division III and the University Athletic Association.

The Office of the Chaplaincy consists of a Jewish Chaplain/Hillel Rabbinic Director, Catholic Chaplain, Protestant Chaplain, and a Muslim Student Advisor. In addition to religious counseling and program initiatives, the chaplains also offer general counseling and constitute part of the campus support and safety network for students in crisis.

The Department of Student Development and Conduct (SDC) is the primary means for monitoring and encouraging appropriate student behaviors. It annually distributes copies of the student handbook, *Rights and Responsibilities*. The Department also produces brochures regarding sexual harassment, sexual assault, and academic integrity.

In July 2004, the University created the Department of Orientation and First-Year Programs (with a full-time director) to focus on the needs of first-year students. This department provides a steady flow of information to students that begins months prior to a new student’s arrival. Once on campus, students receive regular emails with information about community activities and academic opportunities.

The Community Service Department empowers Brandeis students and the community through volunteer outreach. The department’s primary service mechanism is the Waltham Group, a student volunteer community service organization founded in 1966. The Waltham Group has 12 outreach programs, including the Big Siblings Program, Blood Drive, Companions to Elders, Habitat for Humanity, and Hunger and Homelessness.

In 2004, with the hiring of a new director for the Hiatt Career Center, the Division of Students and Enrollment undertook to revitalize a crucial resource for undergraduates by increasing student contacts with alumni and outside

employers. With a re-organized structure, new resources and a new website, the Hiatt Center offers a range of services, including fairs for careers and graduate schools, résumé help, credential files for letters of recommendation, online resources, networking, internships, and mentoring opportunities. In addition to the support provided in departments, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences also provides professional career services for its students. IBS and the Heller School have separate career services, and the Rabb School serves part-time students, who are already employed.

### **Appraisal**

All departments and programs within the Division of Students and Enrollment are committed to core values of citizenship, integrity, respect and civility, lifelong learning and diversity.<sup>79</sup> These values form the foundation of programming and training models across the Department of Student Life, which has adopted three sets of principles and practices:

1. support the academic mission;
2. promote student leadership;
3. use assessment to ensure continuous improvement.

#### *1) The department supports the academic mission*

The effective delivery of student services is fundamental to bridging the gap between learning that takes place inside and outside of the classroom. The adoption of an enrollment management model at Brandeis has resulted in increased attention to the quality of the various services provided to students. A top priority is the creation of a one-stop center to provide students with convenient, single-point access to a full range of student administrative services: the Usdan Student Center will be the site of the Office of Student Financial Services, the Office of Residence Life, the Office of the Chaplaincy, the Hiatt Career Center, the Office of the Registrar, Student Enrichment Services, and the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs. By centralizing the services that support education, Brandeis can improve communication and collaboration between departments, streamline the delivery of services, and make it easier for students to focus their time and energy on their academic pursuits.

#### *2) The department promotes student leadership*

Brandeis prides itself on developing students who become leaders in their communities and professions. Leadership is a predictor of student success and satisfaction within the University experience.<sup>80</sup> Students who had leadership experiences prior to Brandeis and who take advantage of leadership opportunities on campus, graduate with more positive feelings about their experience at the University. Brandeis offers a myriad of opportunities for students to develop and practice leadership skills:

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<sup>79</sup> See Appendix 6J for core values and [www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/corevalues](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/corevalues).

<sup>80</sup> See Appendix 6I.

- The Department of Community Service, which includes the Waltham Group and all of the campus community service programs, trains thirty volunteer student coordinators.
- The Department of Orientation and First-Year Programs selects a core committee of five or six students, who spend a year planning a new student orientation and engaging 150 or more upper level students to serve as mentors and guides. In order to continue the orientation experience throughout students' first year, the department offers non-credit courses to acculturate students to campus.
- The Department of Student Activities has several programs to help student leaders broaden their leadership skills. In collaboration with student government, the department provides support and resources for club and organization leaders. It also trains members of the student government to increase their effectiveness. Student Activities prepares a handbook for student leaders, in collaboration with student government, and runs a Student Activities Fair at the beginning of each semester to introduce students to the more than 250 clubs and organizations at Brandeis.<sup>81</sup>
- The Department of Student Development and Conduct (SDC) selects undergraduate and graduate students to serve on the University Board on Student Conduct (UBSC).<sup>82</sup>
- The Intercultural Center uses a student-directed model both for its programming board and for individual club leadership.
- Within Residence Life, approximately 70 undergraduate Community Advisors are selected in the spring semester and undergo two weeks of training prior to the opening of school, as well as an extensive in-service training program to prepare them for their positions.
- Graduate Student Services, which consists of one part-time coordinator reporting to an assistant dean, works with the Graduate Student Association to develop a more formal graduate student government, provide a welcoming graduate lounge, and coordinate orientation and services for all GSAS students.
- Student participation on important University committees (e.g., the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee, the Committee on the Support of Teaching, and the Committee on Graduate Student Issues) provides good opportunities to develop leadership skills.

3) *The department uses assessment to promote continuous improvement*

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<sup>81</sup> See [www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/activities/resources/leaders.html](http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/activities/resources/leaders.html).

<sup>82</sup> <http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/>.

Programs within the Departments of Student Affairs are regularly assessed through quantitative and qualitative evaluations such as the CIRP Freshman Survey, the Senior Survey, the Survey of Graduate Student Services, the Orientation Survey, the ACUHO-I survey, and the AHUHO-EBI survey. These assessments are used to modify or enhance programs and services:

- Emerging Leader Program
- University Board on Student Conduct
- Intercultural Center
- Orientation Core Committee and programming
- Thematic Living Communities
- First-Year Experience course
- Department of Community Service
- Graduate student services

Brandeis opened the Carl and Ruth Shapiro Campus Center in the fall of 2002. This 24/7 centralized campus building has offices for student government, the student-run radio station, the student-run television station, the independent student newspaper, *The Justice*, and provides additional shared space for numerous clubs and organizations. The building has a club resource room, a theater (reserved for undergraduate theater productions by the five theater groups that constitute the Undergraduate Theater Collective), a bookstore, a late night café, and a computer center with more than 40 terminals.

More focused assessments have also been used to make improvements in the following services:

- *The Health Center* is now open 12 months of the year, staffed by physicians, nursing staff, a licensed nutritionist, and a drug and alcohol educator. The Graduate Health Committee consisting of GSA representatives meets yearly with senior administrators to discuss changes to health insurance for graduate students.
- *The Counseling Center* provides individual, couple, and group counseling for students in need. Emergency services and consultations are available 24 hours a day. Psychological evaluations and psychiatric consultations are also offered. In FY 2007, the University added \$150,000 to the budget for an additional psychiatrist, as well as for additional hours for existing counselors to meet the needs of graduate students.
- *The Office of Student Enrichment Services* provides individual support for first-generation college students; it also provides specialized tutoring and academic skills workshops for all students.
- *The Writing Center* provides individualized assistance to help students deal with writing problems and to improve their writing skills.
- Brandeis recently hired a full-time *Disabilities Program Coordinator* to identify and access resources for students with disabilities.
- *The Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs* provides both general and specialized advising for students. This includes preparation for study abroad, pre-medical and pre-health career advising, selection of a major,

support for students with disabilities, and provision of information about scholarship and fellowship opportunities.

The Department of Athletics has responded to student surveys by extending facility hours, expanding intramural offerings, offering group fitness classes, and enhancing the atmosphere at home basketball games with the addition of cheerleaders and a “shooting for tuition” contest. Over the past decade, the Department of Athletics has increased meal money allotments to student-athletes and recruiting budgets. Athletics has also addressed staffing deficits in response to student needs by adding a full-time recreational professional to improve the quality of recreation and intramural offerings on campus.

Finally, the assessment of student needs has led to the development of new programs, such as Family Programs, Brandeis Beginnings Convocation, the Family Resource Tent, Panel Sessions and Technology Sessions, and the Graduate Symposium and Journal.

### **Projection**

Brandeis seeks to remain an attractive option not only for students seeking excellence in both academics and amenities, but also for their parents, who expect that their children receive top-quality educational experiences and opportunities for their tuition dollars.

### ***Enrollment***

The significant increase in the academic quality of entering students over the past five years has prompted new approaches to the awarding of both need- and merit-based financial aid. The strategic use of institutional funds will become more of an issue in the near future, as the number of high school graduates decreases in the Northeast and Mid-Atlantic states, a portion of the country from which Brandeis attracts 70 percent of its applicants. The University will increase its efforts to recruit students in states and areas where populations of high school students are increasing—primarily California, Florida, and the Southwest. Many of these students are first-generation or low-income students, who typically consider Brandeis to be out of their reach in terms of both cost and location. To attract the best and brightest of these students, the University will be under pressure to offer more competitive financial incentives through tuition discounting.

Attracting and enrolling students of color continue to present a challenge, as admission to Brandeis becomes more selective and the competition among institutions to recruit the most academically talented minority students becomes ever more intense. Most of Brandeis’s peer institutions face the same issues. In addition, minority students typically score lower on standardized tests, such as the SAT, and many are intimidated by the presumed cost of a private university education. Additionally, minority students and their families often tend to be less adept than their majority counterparts at navigating the complicated college admission process.

### ***Retention***

Although Brandeis boasts relatively strong retention and graduation rates compared to peer institutions, retaining and graduating all students remain central priorities. Increased attention must be given to the disparities in graduation rates between women and men, minority and majority students, and among low-income and first-generation students. Enrolling students who are a good fit for Brandeis is one way to address retention, and the use of psychographic profiles will also help. In order to enroll traditionally underrepresented students, however, Brandeis must provide appropriate services and programs to ensure that these students succeed and graduate. The Posse model which has been very successful in retaining and graduating students will expand next year through a grant allowing Brandeis to enroll a new "Science Posse," in addition to the regular Posse.

### *Student Facilities*

Students in their first and second years generally reside in residence halls configured with double-loaded corridors and shared bathrooms, reflecting the Department of Residence Life's belief that this configuration is best suited to promoting a feeling of community among newer students. Like all Brandeis residence halls, these first- and second-year residence halls provide access to the University's high-speed data and voice network. Increasingly, upper level students (and their parents as well) now desire suite and apartment-style living arrangements that offer a greater level of privacy as well as kitchen facilities. With these needs in mind, the University in 2003 built a modern, modified suite-style residence hall for juniors and seniors, known as the Village, which has been very well received. The University is in the planning stage for a new 150-bed complex in the Ridgewood area, adjacent to the Village.

The University is entering the third year of an ongoing program to renovate existing residence halls, with approximately 100 bed spaces being renovated each summer. These renovations include refurbished lounges, new furniture, carpets, ceilings, lighting, painting, and bathroom updates. In recent years, the University has consistently allocated at least \$750,000 annually for general residence hall improvements. Many additional residence halls need renovation in order to provide attractive, functional, and developmentally appropriate living spaces, and Brandeis will continue its program of improvements. Overall, the University's housing strategy involves providing for a range of residence halls that correspond to the developmental needs of students.

The traditional "meal plan" that offered three meals a day satisfied an earlier generation of students, but no longer does so. The University is challenged to offer food 24 hours a day to support the lifestyles of the current student population. Today's students expect a wide variety of food choices, and dining facilities have to provide an array of ethnic foods in addition to kosher meals and healthy alternatives, such as vegetarian and vegan meals. Extensive dining facility renovations are planned for 2007-2009.

Over the past decade, many of the University's peer institutions have built impressive new recreation and workout facilities for their students. These facilities were built, in part, to attract students and impress parents with the

amenities available on campus. A new fitness center was incorporated into the Village residence hall that opened in 2003, providing elliptical trainers, treadmills, and stationary bicycles. This new facility has been very popular, and the University hopes to provide additional such facilities in other residence locations. In 2005, the University replaced an outdated soccer field with a new, regulation-sized synthetic turf soccer field, a new eight-lane track, accommodations for field events, and outdoor lighting. The University needs to make even more improvements to its athletics facilities, since high-quality athletic facilities aid in the recruitment of talented student-athletes, and improve the experiences of athletes and recreational participants alike.

### ***Staffing and Services***

While the needs and expectations of students and their families have increased at Brandeis and in higher education more generally over the past decade, it is a challenge to provide appropriate staffing. Continued growth in graduate programs, particularly in GSAS, will require more attention to services and infrastructure. Currently, both IBS and the Heller School have their own assistant deans for student affairs as well as their own career centers. While these student life deans, as well as the GSAS staff, meet regularly to coordinate activities, programs, information, and services, different funding and staffing levels can prove challenging to joint efforts. The *Integrated Plan* identifies this area as requiring attention in the coming years.<sup>83</sup>

### **Institutional Effectiveness**

Institutional research in the Division of Students and Enrollment uses both quantitative and qualitative measures, such as feedback from advising and residential staff, to assess its measures of success. Admissions data, graduation and retention rates, and satisfaction surveys are scrutinized each year and over time by the Senior Vice President for Students and Enrollment, the faculty standing Committee on Undergraduate Admissions and Financial Aid, and senior administrators. As evidenced throughout this section, information from these assessment methods is used to revise goals and improve services.

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<sup>83</sup> The unique challenges and issues raised by serving distance learning students are addressed in Appendix 3C.