



Founded In 1885

NEW ENGLAND ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOLS & COLLEGES, INC.  
COMMISSION ON INSTITUTIONS OF HIGHER EDUCATION

JUDITH R. GORDON, Chair (2008)  
Boston College

ELSA NUNEZ, Vice Chair (2010)  
Eastern Connecticut State University

PAUL J. LeBLANC (2007)  
Southern New Hampshire University

IRVIN BELANGER (2008)  
Gouldsboro, ME

MARY L. FIFIELD (2008)  
Bunker Hill Community College

KARLA H. FOX (2008)  
University of Connecticut

MARY JO MAYDEW (2008)  
Mount Holyoke College

WILLIAM A. McINTYRE (2008)  
New Hampshire Community Technical College

JOSEPH W. McNABB (2008)  
Caritas Laboure College

JILL N. REICH (2008)  
Bates College

DORIS B. ARRINGTON (2009)  
Capital Community College

GAI CARPENTER (2009)  
Hampshire College

LAURA M. DISANO (2009)  
Warwick, RI

KIRK D. KOLENBRANDER (2009)  
Massachusetts Institute of Technology

JAMES LEHENY (2009)  
University of Massachusetts Amherst

PETER NESSEN (2009)  
Boston, MA

KATHERINE H. SLOAN (2009)  
Massachusetts College of Art

KATHRYN T. SPOEHR (2009)  
Brown University

BETTY J. STERNBERG (2009)  
Greenwich, CT

STACY L. SWEENEY (2009)  
New England Institute of Art

REV. JEFFREY P. VON ARX, S.J. (2009)  
Fairfield University

HUBERT D. MAULTSBY (2010)  
Norwich University

**Director of the Commission**  
BARBARA E. BRITTINGHAM  
E-Mail: bbrittingham@neasc.org

**Deputy Director of the Commission**  
PATRICIA M. O'BRIEN, SND  
E-Mail: pobrien@neasc.org

**Associate Director of the Commission**  
ROBERT C. FROH  
E-Mail: rfroh@neasc.org

**Associate Director of the Commission**  
LOUISE A. ZAK  
E-Mail: lzak@neasc.org

April 10, 2007

Dr. Jehuda Reinharz  
President  
Brandeis University  
415 South Street, MS 100  
Waltham, MA 02454-9110

Dear President Reinharz:

I am pleased to inform you that at its meeting on March 2, 2007, the Commission on Institutions of Higher Education took the following action with respect to Brandeis University:

that Brandeis University be continued in accreditation;

that the University submit a fifth-year interim report for consideration in Fall 2011;

that, in addition to the information included in all interim reports, the University give emphasis to its success in:

1. implementing the Integrated Plan, including progress made in securing the revenue needed to implement the plan and progress in formulating the next strategic plan for the University;
2. expanding and improving physical facilities, including reducing the deferred maintenance backlog;
3. developing and implementing a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning, including the systematic review of academic programs to maintain and improve quality;

that the next comprehensive evaluation be scheduled for Fall 2016.

The Commission gives the following reasons for its action.

Brandeis University is continued in accreditation because the Commission finds the institution to be substantially in compliance with the *Standards for Accreditation*. We commend the institution for its comprehensive self-study, which will serve the University well as a guide

for the future. We take favorable note of the significant progress made by the University in a number of areas during the last five years, including raising faculty salaries to remain competitive in recruiting and retaining highly-qualified faculty, improvements to the institution's technology infrastructure, and the introduction of distance education programs. The comprehensive, consultative strategic planning process recently completed by the University has produced an ambitious but clear set of institutional priorities. Under the leadership of a strong, collaborative senior team and supported by a committed Board of Trustees, the dedicated faculty and staff of Brandeis University seem well-positioned to achieve the goals articulated in its plan.

Commission policy requires a fifth-year interim report of all institutions on a decennial evaluation cycle. Its purpose is to provide the Commission an opportunity to appraise the institution's current status in keeping with the policy on Periodic Review. In addition to the information provided in all interim reports, the University is asked to report on three other matters related to our standards on *Planning and Evaluation*, *Physical and Technological Resources*, and *The Academic Program*.

Brandeis University has recently begun implementation of its Integrated Plan, a document that establishes priorities for the institution through 2012. The plan carefully matches new initiatives against realistic estimates of available funding and includes adequate benchmarks to assess progress. Key to the implementation of the Integrated Plan will be the institution's success in raising funds to support the proposed initiatives. In addition, we concur with the visiting team that the University will benefit from ongoing consultation with a wide range of campus constituencies as choices regarding implementation are made and as the next phase of planning begins. We look forward to learning, in Fall 2011, of the institution's success in these matters, consistent with our standard on *Planning and Evaluation*:

Planning and evaluation are systematic, comprehensive, broad-based, integrated, and appropriate to the institution. They involve the participation of individuals and groups responsible for the achievement of institutional purposes. Results of planning and evaluation are regularly communicated to appropriate institutional constituencies. The institution allocates sufficient resources for its planning and evaluation efforts (2.1).

The institution has a demonstrable record of success in implementing the results of its planning (2.3).

The Commission understands that capital projects are given high priority in the University's Integrated Plan. In addition to proposing new facilities, including a residence hall and academic buildings, the plan outlines an approach to addressing deferred maintenance, as a number of existing campus buildings have been identified as needing repair or renovation. As noted above, engaging the campus community in decisions about establishing priorities among these projects will be critical. The Fall 2011 report will provide an opportunity for the University to demonstrate that its "physical and technological resources, including classrooms, laboratories, network infrastructure, materials, equipment, and buildings and grounds ... are commensurate with institutional purposes" (8.1) and that it successfully "identifies and plans the specified resolution of deferred maintenance needs" (8.4).

The Commission notes that Brandeis University has taken some initial steps to assess student learning, including institution-wide use of the Senior Survey and pilot studies in eleven academic departments. However, we concur with the visiting team that the

institution has yet to develop “a systematic, broad-based and integrated approach” to assessment or to establish firmly a culture that values regular review of academic program effectiveness. We are gratified to learn that the provost has convened a task force on assessment comprising staff from academic affairs and student affairs. We look forward to receiving evidence, through the Fall 2011 report, that the institution has implemented a comprehensive approach to the assessment of student learning that includes a systematic review of academic programs. We remind you of our standard on *The Academic Program*:

The institution implements and supports a systematic and broad-based approach to the assessment of student learning focused on educational improvement through understanding what and students are learning through their academic program and, as appropriate, through experiences outside the classroom. This approach is based on a clear statement or statements of what students are expected to gain, achieve, demonstrate, or know by the time they complete their academic program. The approach provides useful information to help the institution understand what and how students are learning, improve the experiences provided for students, and assure that the level of student achievement is appropriate for the degree awarded. Institutional support is provided for these activities (4.44).

The institution’s approach to understanding student learning focuses on the course, program, and institutional level. Data and other evidence generated through this approach are considered at the appropriate level of focus, with the results being a demonstrable factor in improving the learning opportunities and results for students (4.45).

The institution’s approach to understanding what and how students are learning and using the results for improvement has the support of the institution’s academic institutional leadership and the systematic involvement of faculty (4.47).

The institution’s system of periodic review of academic programs includes a focus on understanding what and how students learn as a result of the program (4.48).

The scheduling of a comprehensive evaluation in Fall 2016 is consistent with Commission policy requiring each accredited institution to undergo a comprehensive visit at least once every ten years.

You will note that the Commission has specified no length or term of accreditation. Accreditation is a continuing relationship that is reconsidered when necessary. Thus, while the Commission has indicated the timing of the next comprehensive evaluation, the schedule should not be unduly emphasized because it is subject to change.

The Commission expressed appreciation for the self-study prepared by Brandeis University and for the report submitted by the visiting team. The Commission also welcomed the opportunity to meet with Dr. Marty Kraus, Provost, and Dr. John Sexton, team chair, during its deliberations.

You are encouraged to share this letter with all of the institution’s constituencies. It is Commission policy to inform the chairperson of the institution’s governing board of action on its accreditation status. In a few days we will be sending a copy of this letter to Mr. Stephen B. Kay. The institution is free to release information about the evaluation and the Commission’s action to others, in accordance with Commission policy.

Dr. Jehuda Reinharz  
April 10, 2007  
Page 4

The Commission hopes that the evaluation process has contributed to institutional improvement. It appreciates your cooperation with the effort to provide public assurance of the quality of higher education in New England.

If you have any questions about the Commission's action, please contact Barbara Brittingham, Director of the Commission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Judith R. Gordon".

Judith R. Gordon

JRG/jm  
Enclosure

cc: Mr. Stephen B. Kay  
Visiting Team