

Brandeis as a Global Institution: *An Executive Summary*

May 2006

Brandeis has a rich history as an institution deeply engaged in global affairs. The university was born in the shadow of world war, and its intellectual life in its early years continuously addressed the challenge of the role of higher education in a rapidly changing global environment. This tradition has flourished into the early years of the 21st century. In addition to the recent establishment of the International Business School and the expansion of the Heller School's program in Sustainable International Development, a plethora of undergraduate courses, majors, research projects, programs and centers involve Brandeis students and faculty in international issues. Increasingly, every corner of our campus life is constantly enriched by the steady presence of students, scholars, and visitors from around the globe.

Yet a concern has emerged among faculty and administrators in recent years: our engagement as a global institution is broad, but it is fragmented. We have many exciting initiatives, but we have many gaps, and we have missed many opportunities to capitalize on our internationally focused resources and programs. Departments and offices have not always worked together to generate the resources needed for the University to reach its full potential in this area. And we have failed to communicate to our constituencies at home and around the world just how much we have to offer in the international arena.

During the spring semester of 2006, Provost Marty Krauss assembled an ad hoc group of faculty and administrators to consider the strengths and challenges of "Brandeis as a Global Institution." This ad hoc group built on two previous efforts:

- a) A group of administrators, called the "International Connections Network," had a series of meetings from 2003-2005 with the goal of better coordination of services for international students and visitors. This group produced a report that was presented to the provost and to Senior Vice President Jean Eddy in October 2005.
- b) In November 2005, the Provost led a presentation to the Academic Affairs Committee of the Board of Trustees on "Brandeis as a Global Institution." This presentation focused on some of the University's offerings in this area, and generated support from the Board committee to explore further the process of better coordination to fulfill our potential in this area.

At the Provost's urging, the "Global Institution" group divided into five "working groups" to consider different aspects of the issue. Those five working groups were:

- a) Undergraduate Education
- b) Research and Graduate Education
- c) Student Recruitment and Scholarships

- d) Marketing, Communications and Visibility
- e) Services for International Students and Visitors

Each of these working groups met and produced a set of interim notes and preliminary conclusions, which were then discussed in a plenary session in April 2006. These groups identified strengths, problems, and missed opportunities in the area of “Brandeis as a Global Institution.” Some of the common themes that emerged through these group discussions follow.

Strengths

Members of the ad hoc group brought to the table considerable knowledge about the University’s global profile, and the discussions and informal “inventory” of activities contributed to the reiteration of the University’s strengths in this area, including:

- 1) A large number of **faculty** from all three Schools (A&S, IBS, Heller) are engaged deeply in international work and settings, and a number of important intellectual innovations are prominent in their work, including interdisciplinary perspectives, experiential education, an emphasis on social justice, and work on “multiple citizenships.”
- 2) Our two **professional schools** have strong international graduate programs at the intersection of scholarship and practice, and new research and graduate programs in arts and sciences share this emphasis.
- 3) The School of Arts and Sciences offers an increasingly strong array of **majors, programs, and courses** with an international emphasis, including strong offerings in language, culture, and the social sciences.
- 4) Global **research** partnerships are common at Brandeis, particularly in the sciences.
- 5) An array of interdisciplinary **centers and programs** conduct research and educational programs on global issues and develop strong overseas partnerships.
- 6) The number of **international students and scholars** present on the Brandeis campus has been rising steadily over the course of the last decade.
- 7) A growing percentage of our undergraduate students are **studying abroad** for at least one semester of their academic career.
- 8) The University has a strong set of **administrative offices** dedicated to supporting both international students who come to our campus and Brandeis students who study overseas.

Problems

Despite these many strengths, it became clear over the course of our meetings that there were two distinct types of problems regarding “Brandeis as a Global Institution.” One set of problems involved missed opportunities for communication and cooperation between people and offices on campus, problems that would not necessarily require

significant financial resources to address. The other set of problems involved gaps in our offerings or services, most of which could not be met without an infusion of funds.

Problems involving missed opportunities for communication and cooperation:

- 1) The lack of **integration** or connections across related programs can make for a fragmented student experience. For example, we have few well-defined courses or programs that allow students to integrate their study abroad courses and experiences into their academic program when they return to campus.
- 2) We fail to **share international resources**. When a visitor comes from overseas, we have no clear mechanism to make sure that the maximum number of students and faculty take advantage of his or her presence. Even closer to home, we do not take advantage of the insights and ideas of international students and scholars who are present for extended periods on campus. We also fail to take full advantage of overseas connections and relationships built by members of the Brandeis faculty.
- 3) There is sometimes **miscommunication or duplication of effort** when it comes to serving international students in key activities, such as orientation.
- 4) Our international engagements are often **invisible**, to our campus community, to our national and international networks, and to the broader public.

Problems involving an investment of resources:

- 1) We have significant gaps in many of our **academic offerings**, including certain regions and languages, and major global topics such as human rights.
- 2) We do not offer sufficient **support and incentives** for faculty to conduct research, develop overseas partnerships, and create experiential learning opportunities for students overseas.
- 3) Our **services** for international students have significant gaps, especially during critical periods such as arrival on campus, holiday periods and times of emergency.

Missed opportunities

Even more important than our current problems are the opportunities missed because the University has no structure to address “Brandeis as a Global Institution” from a more pro-active perspective.

- 1) There is no mechanism for identifying **funding** opportunities and nurturing ambitious funding proposals that cross school or departmental lines. As a result, the University is losing opportunities to pursue significant sources of revenue for international projects and services, including international fellowships and scholarships.

- 2) The University is not getting the **message** about its global profile in a clear and coherent way to key constituencies, including potential students, friends of the University, and donors.
- 3) Many opportunities for **collaborative activities**, including courses, research, and conferences, never materialize because there is no “incubator” for cooperation in this area on campus.

Overall, the University lacks a strategic dimension as “Brandeis as a Global Institution.” We are not well positioned currently to pursue important new opportunities, nor do we have the consultative mechanisms to make thoughtful choices about priorities.

Possible directions

Three general directions for addressing these issues have been suggested through the work of members of the ad hoc group.

1) To some extent, the problems and missed opportunities highlighted above could be addressed through more effective use of existing structures and by conscious efforts by leaders of departments, programs, and offices to work together more consistently and more effectively. Through this approach, we could likely address some of the problems, especially those that require few resources. One structure suggested along these lines is the establishment of a **campus-wide faculty/administrator committee**, along the lines proposed in the International Connections Network approach last fall. This type of effort, however, may not be able to generate significant new resources, so it may neither address the problems that require resources nor the major missed opportunities.

2) Another type of structure suggested in our discussions and documents is a **faculty center**, such as a “Center for Global Studies and Practice”, designed to create a climate of intellectual exchange and creativity to enrich the University’s global offerings and presence. Such a center could build regional research networks, serve as a clearinghouse for information about grants and contracts, promote international visitors and conferences, and provide administrative support for research and graduate/professional activities. Brown, Dartmouth, and Washington University are three of our peer institutions which support centers under various names.

3) A number of our peer institutions have established offices with administrative and faculty leadership designed to address precisely the issues raised here. One available model is a **university-wide office of international affairs**, which serves as a kind of umbrella for a variety of departments and offices. Generally, this office serves the functions of coordinating academic activities, linking academic and non-academic offices, acting as a clearinghouse of information for internal and external constituencies, and developing the university’s international profile as part of a larger strategic vision. Under various titles, this structure has been adopted in recent years by many universities, including the following from among our peer institutions:

- 1) Duke University, Office of International Affairs and Development (<http://www.international.duke.edu/academics/ovpia>)
- 2) Emory University, Office of International Affairs (<http://www.oia.emory.edu/>)
- 3) Cornell University, Office of International Relations (<http://www.international.cornell.edu/overview/welcome.asp>) and the Einaudi Center for International Studies (<http://www.einaudi.cornell.edu/about/mission.asp>)
- 4) New York University, Office of Globalization and Multicultural Affairs (<http://www.nyu.edu/provost/about-functions.html#global>)
- 5) Yale University, Office of International Affairs (<http://www.yale.edu/oia/>)

These possible directions, of course, are not mutually exclusive. What they share is an emphasis on leadership to help bring coherence to the University's rich but fragmented activities as a global institution.

More detailed notes from the five working groups and other information on Brandeis as a Global Institution can be found on the "wiki" site established by Professor Tim Hickey at http://carnap.cs-i.brandeis.edu/INTwiki/index.php?title=Main_Page.

Appendix:

Contributors to the “Brandeis as a Global Institution” Report
(Working Group Membership in parentheses)

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