A special reception and dinner was held to welcome the NEC board members and Shiyu Wang, Ph.D. candidate, spoke about the importance of neurodegenerative research and why Brandeis has one of best neuroscience programs in the country. Ms. Wang believes neuroscience research is the future and that scientists at Brandeis want to be part of that future.

**Monday, June 2**

**WELCOME BY NATIONAL PRESIDENT**

Barbara Sander

President Barbara Sander called the meeting to order at 9:10 AM and reviewed the upcoming agenda.

**GREETINGS FROM SR. VP FOR STUDENTS AND ENROLLMENT**

Andrew Flagel

Andrew talked to the board about the students’ involvement and engagement throughout the year. There was a suggestion that to make the BNC known to prospective students and families, tour guides should talk about the BNC Tribute Wall in the Goldfarb Library.

**NATIONAL PRESIDENT’S REPORT**

Barbara Sander

Barbara outlined the changes that have taken place within the last year: Janice Fineman and Barbara Katz’s retirement announcements, followed by Ellie Levingston, Debbie LaBarge and Barbara Gilman. Beth Bernstein is now Interim Executive Director, and M’Lissa Brennan became Director of Strategy and Development.

There has been an increased emphasis on working with individual chapters. Barbara Sander and Leslie Pearlstein visited Atlanta, a chapter that looked like it might close, and pulled together volunteers who are eager to save it. The West End, FL chapter is being polled to assess if its members would rather merge with Wellworth or stay as they are. Nassau North has become Long Island Chapter.

Norma Feinsod, FL Region President, has started a long-range planning team for the region and they are doing a good job planning for the future. Honey Bencomo and Sharon
Cohen planned a successful Western Region Conference, attended by several NEC board members.

**Vice President of Development**

Myles Weisenberg ‘78

Myles talked about the BNC’s relationship with the development office and the philanthropic mission of the BNC. There was a discussion about alumni and chapters and the challenge in bringing the two together for joint programming. Myles responded that Brandeis has offered alumni information about the BNC. There are only 1,500 alumni that are over seventy years old, so the process of having alumni become members will happen gradually. Barbara Sander said that the BNC’s merging with Development could be helpful for recruiting alumni; “it is on us” to reach out and make connections with alumni. We will try to make the connection when we can but it’s important that chapters move forward and look to other methods for recruitment.

**Associate Vice President for Finance and Controller**

James Walsh

BNC chapters on the east coast have started the transition to TD Bank has begun. Although TD Bank has taken the lead to help us with the transition, it is important that chapter leaders help as well. The cost savings resulting from the transferring to TD Bank are tremendous for Brandeis. There will be a transition to JP Morgan Chase that take place in the fall for the western region.

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR’S REPORT**

Beth Bernstein, MA ‘90

We have a lean, mean BNC staff. Full steam ahead! Tamar is on maternity leave and will return at the end of July. We are grateful and so pleased that Leslie Pearlstein, volunteer extraordinaire, has been coming into the office to help out with membership and rosters and anything else that needs to be done. Barbara Katz has come in and has also been a tremendous help. Words cannot describe how thankful we are to both Leslie and Barbara.

Selene Campion, who has worked in our office for the past two years, will be with us full-time until Labor Day. She is filling in Debbie’s position in addition to helping out wherever needed. Tom continues to provide stability and continuity, as well as providing excellent customer service to our members.

Besides being a fundraiser par excellence, M’Lissa has an extensive management and consulting background and brings that experience to the BNC as we continue to operate more efficiently and effectively.

And we have landed in the right place with the complete support of Myles Weisenberg. M’Lissa and I meet weekly with Myles and we talk as an integrated team about how we can best service our members as we continue to build a deeper partnership. As part of the
Development office, we continue to have their support and our development colleagues continue to be there whenever we need help – with mailings, with supplies, communications, and so much more so that we can continue to provide excellent customer service.

During our current transition, we also have had the support of the many different parts of the university – from library and technology services, to voice mail, to financial services, human resources, facilities, academic services, communications, and our faculty and students.

Brandeis University truly values the Brandeis National Committee.

**VICE PRESIDENT REPORTS**

**REGION PRESIDENTS: MARILYN BLANKMAN, VICE PRESIDENT**

The Region President’s Team (RPT) has met monthly or bi-monthly this year. The team has embarked on a “back-to-basics” approach to reconstructing chapter and region boards and leadership. Their main goal this year was to find how to expand and strengthen a region.

**Region Slates**
Each region worked hard to put together slates and each had a Nominating Committee that formed boards composed of a President and Vice Presidents of Leadership Development, Fundraising, Learning Opportunities, Membership, and Fundraising. The President and Vice Presidents are charged with passing on information from the National Teams and will communicate directly with their chapter officers. It is a new concept and part of what came out of the Structure Implementation Task Force.

**President’s Manual**
Discussion about the manual: how to find capable future leaders, nominating committees should be formed in October with task completion by March.

**Fundraising Issues**
Discussed multiple topics regarding fundraising:
1. There will be no raffles of any kind.
2. The Sustaining the Mind card was lowered from $50 to $25 to promote more use of the tool.
3. No money can be collected for any causes or agencies other than BNC.
4. Philanthropy first was reemphasized. All Region Presidents reminded that proceeds should be designated to a fund and should be listed in chapter bulletins, invitations, etc.
Membership
Discussed how to involve more people and the importance of a Region. In November M-team difficulties were discussed with regard to responses from chapters and lack of answers to emails/cards. Satellites and No-Goal chapters discussed. It was recommended that regions should meet monthly.

Learning Opportunities
Study Group ideas and topics were shared. There was a lot of confusion about the role of Study Groups. National Office gave presidents a clear explanation of the money collected.

Awards
The idea of region awards was presented. It was recommended that BNC acknowledge “Louie” Award winners. Acknowledge chapters that have won National Awards.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: MERLE CARRUS, VICE PRESIDENT

The Leadership Training in the Western Region completed the training sessions for all the regions. Questions that need to be asked among the participants: What did the people who attended these sessions take away with them? Have the people that were trained shared what they learned? Have they found their newfound knowledge useful? Before the Leadership Development team goes out into the chapters, they feel it’s necessary to reevaluate where they are; to make sure “leaders” can be secured for the following year—a training session does not guarantee a leader nor someone capable of training. The Leadership Development Team intends to create short, easy exercises that can be used to build leadership skills (not to replace leadership trainings). It is important to go into the next year with a group of people truly interested in being leaders who want to serve as trainers and share the workshops.

Barbara Sander posed the question: Are people who came to the workshop trainings taking leadership positions? Will they train others? Chapters in trouble can fundraise but they can’t find leaders. She said, “This is not your grandmother’s BNC.” Women work and the current leaders need to find people who are willing to give back. It’s difficult to gauge how successful the trainings were because many people didn’t respond to the online surveys on Survey Monkey. Sue Karp suggested that a personal phone call might be better. Some older people who aren’t on email may not reply. Barbara said that there should be a team of people to poll workshop participants and spoke of the method’s success in the past.

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES: STEVE SELTZER, VICE PRESIDENT

The Learning Opportunities team had a successful year. The goals were: Continue to monitor that chapters use Brandeis-authored learning materials, strengthen the evaluation process, and find ways to encourage study group leaders to bring Brandeis news to their group members. Some complained that the “Study with the Best” material is outdated. Beth Bernstein will try to find professors/graduate students to update or replace material
currently on the website. A recent survey showed that those chapters who replied believed that their study group offerings were a good mixture of academic and quality social time with others.

Meera Kamegei said that Osher Lifelong Learning (OLLI) is the main competitor for these study groups—there are many in Las Vegas and it’s hard to differentiate; the prices end up being comparable. Ron Levy said that it’s important to focus on the BNC’s mission: social justice and philanthropy, the OLLI groups don’t have this. It’s possible to be part of both without feeling conflicted. Barbara Sander noted that world-renowned Brandeis professors write our study group materials. Myles added that he and Beth are both pushing for new materials from professors.

**MEMBERSHIP: IRIS WIGAL, VICE PRESIDENT**

It was the consensus of the committee that more emphasis needs to be placed on Chapter programming and study groups. They are the key to attracting new members and retaining existing membership. Each Chapter needs to determine where they want to place their primary emphasis and work in tandem to reach their goal. Marketing efforts need to be enhanced on a national and local level. The friend-to-friend campaign isn’t reaching a wide enough audience. Iris suggested that a marketing committee be established to explore the possible options available to us both through publications and other media. Chapters are excited about the $500 Chapter Membership Contest. If it is to be held again the playing fields needs to become more equitable (small against small, large against large, etc.).

Tina mentioned that she is the outgoing financial president in Greater Washington and she was unaware of the contest. Iris said that the contest was listed in several chapter bulletins and that it should have been brought up in meetings. Although the contest has a few kinks, so far it has been successful and many chapters have reached their membership goal or are very close. Iris said that the $500 is exciting because it’s tangible and more than cash. Beth reminded the group that the award isn’t cash; it’s an internal debit card. Iris said that the award should be distributed to the whole chapter and not just used for small administrative things.

**GOALS AND AWARDS REPORT**

Sue Karp

There was no report because the committee had not met yet.

**BUDGET AND FINANCE REPORT**

Joel Kamer

With two months to go Net Income is just $73, 920 behind the full year budget. We expect to finish the year on track to meet the FY14 budget.
Membership dues are running even with last year and ahead of the FY14 budget by over $1,800. Chapter revenue: As of April we are $167,751 ahead of last year and $78,000 short of the full year goal. This revenue result is successful.

The full year budget has Chapter Revenues exceeding Chapter Expenses by $265,000, so we are certainly on target to achieve that goal.

Donations through April of FY14 are well ahead of last year--$728,212 to $688,019. The full FY14 budget is $950,000, so meeting the budget is certainly possible but will take effort.

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE  Ron Levy

At the October NEC meeting, the recommendations of the Structure Assessment Task Force were presented. Ron Levy chairs the Structure Implementation Task Force (SATF) formed in December 2013 with the appointment of a steering committee and 4 sub-committees listed below.

- Strengthening Regions; Linking with National Teams

  Goal: Create full Region boards, and transfer the connection between National Teams and Chapters to these boards.
  Activities: Almost 100% success in creating Region Boards where they did not exist before and filling positions. Boards have either been appointed or elected. We have also planted communication links, with the understanding that the Region officers will be intermediaries between BNC National Teams and the chapters.
  Additional Steps: Chapters should be encouraged to hold joint activities. Consider splitting California and Florida, North and South, if this will strengthen the state organizations.

- Strengthening Existing Chapters

  Goal: Evaluate chapter strength and stability. The tools developed by this team will be used on an ongoing basis for the foreseeable future, for both evaluation and interventional purposes.
  Approach: Created a profile survey, covering topics such as membership and fundraising, leadership and chapter activities. The initial analysis of each chapter is based on information from previous Chapter Assessments and reports. Five chapters have been chosen for a pilot case study – Baltimore, Boca Raton, Boston, Central Westchester, and Rancho Bernardo.
Next steps: Confirm chapters to be used in next phase of research. Conduct interviews with national teams, regional boards and chapter leaders regarding each pilot chapter. Develop an action plan to strengthen each pilot chapter.

- **Forming New and Satellite Groups**

The subcommittee created a plan to study the methodology necessary to define, select a site, and establishes a satellite group. Possible types: geographic zip code, boomer, men, giving, evening, apartment/condo community, aging out, social justice, and diversification of membership. The definition of a satellite group: under BNC chapter jurisdiction, day-to-day control of activities by facilitator on leadership core, conduct activities that meet the needs of local membership, participates in larger chapter activities such as a book and author event.

The subcommittee has gained support to establish satellite group in the Greater Boston Chapter in the Metro West area. Los Angeles is another area that may benefit.

- **Connecting At-Large Members**

Goal: To connect with annual members and donors to see whether their connections to BNC and Brandeis can be strengthened.  
**Approach:** Letters/emails sent to closed chapters. Asked snowbirds if they wanted to be connected to chapter where they winter. No donations asked. Only had a handful of responses.  
**Next Steps:** Phone-a-thon at the June meeting to connect with recent At Large donors and members of closed chapters?

**Tuesday, June 3**

**FUNDRAISING: CAROL RABINOVITZ, VICE PRESIDENT**

Campaign total $1,660,186  
Total raised BNC $2,131,638. by chapters  
Plus 1,006,629. Direct to university  

Net this year: $1,313,564  
Lydia Axelrod will chair the Sustaining the Mind campaign and there needs to be a decision about how long to run this campaign. In the year ahead, we will be working to find ways to help chapters renew their commitment to fundraising. Brandeis needs us.
Slightly Mad, who has been working with the BNC for the past few months, presented a marketing workshop to get a better idea of who we are. Both Paul Levine, President, Chief Strategic Officer and Dawn Amato, Partner, Chief Creative Officer presented the workshop.

At the end the NEC meetings, a tribute wall dedication took place in the lobby of Goldfarb Library.