

## **BNC National Board of Directors Meeting Minutes**

**Sunday, October 26, 2025  
51 Sawyer Road, Waltham, MA**

Attendees: Merle Carrus, Mindy Frankel, Madalyn Friedberg, Ron Levy, Bruce Litwer, Nancy Sacks, Ingrid Schorr, Iris Wigal

Guests: Jordan Tannenbaum (SVP of Institutional Advancement), Ben Rogers (faculty chair of Engineering Program)

Absent: Andrew Tievsky

### **Summary**

#### **Brandeis Fundraising Campaign Update**

SVP of Institutional Advancement Jordan Tannenbaum presented an update on Brandeis University's current fundraising campaign, which aims to raise \$750 million, with \$361 million already raised and a goal of \$135 million for the current fiscal year. He highlighted a recent \$25 million gift from an alumna, which will fund student activities, and noted that the university has raised \$3.4 million towards an unrestricted goal of \$9.2 million. The campaign strategy focuses on securing large donations from approximately 200 key individuals.

Fundraising by BNC is valuable because it frees up unrestricted money to fund university priorities including the new dorm, Center for Jewish Life, scholarships, fellowships, professorships. 68% of students receive merit or need-based scholarships. The endowment is currently \$1.3 billion.

Also valuable: BNC members who make bequests or other planned gifts.

#### **Brandeis Engineering Science Program**

Associate Professor Ben Rogers presented an overview of the engineering science program, highlighting its unique approach of attracting students without strong mathematical backgrounds and

its focus on practical, hands-on projects. Not an engineering school, it is an interdepartmental program with faculty appointments across science departments (Ben is an engineer based in the physics department). The group discussed the need to communicate the program's distinctiveness to potential donors and members, with Iris suggesting that the program's focus on accessibility and social impact could be compelling selling points.

- 200 undergraduate students have taken engineering science courses, even without the option to major in engineering.
- Recruitment goal: 50 students for the first cohort in fall 2026, with the aim of graduating 25 engineers after four years, while working through the ABET accreditation process.
- There are 3.5 faculty members with two searches this year, one teaching focused and one tenure track
- Ben and Ian Roy created the intro course, Design to Repair the World, to generate enthusiasm for the new program.

Ben can recruit engineering students to speak to BNC chapters or participate in the student ambassador program.

To date, BNC has raised \$200,000 for the BNC Endowed Chair in Engineering Science, with contributions coming from bequests, small gifts, and chapter events.

### **Financial Update**

National's financial status was discussed, revealing an operating budget deficit that is currently covered by Development. Staff salaries are the largest operating expense. BNC and Institutional Advancement staff are exploring ways to close the gap between revenues and expenses, including increasing membership, raising dues, and reducing financial fees.

### **Bank Fee and Refund Policies**

Ingrid explained that bank fees are being reviewed, with efforts to consolidate accounts and reduce costs, particularly by transitioning from TD Bank to Chase Bank where possible. An error in allocation of bank fees has been corrected.

The group discussed online registration challenges, including processing fees and refund policies. The board endorses a gradual approach to implementing refund policies, allowing the chapters to have the option to credit their members who cancel enrollment in a study group. Under this policy, National would not refund study group fees.

Iris suggested looking at summer camp events as a new revenue stream, going to National's operating budget instead of to the library fund.

## **Regional Responsibilities**

The board established new regional liaison assignments for board members and Ingrid will clarify expectations for travel. Mindy reported progress on developing virtual chapter programming, with plans to launch initial programs in January 2026. The board discussed strategies for increasing membership, including potential recruitment incentives and collaboration with Alumni Relations and Brandeis' Lifelong Learning Institute (BOLLI).

NEXT MEETING: 1-2:30 pm Eastern, November 24, 2025. [Link to Zoom meeting.](#)