An Invitation to Apply for the Position of
Vice Provost for Student Affairs
Brandeis University
Waltham, Massachusetts

Brandeis University is a community of scholars and students united by their commitment to the pursuit of knowledge and its transmission from generation to generation. As a research university, Brandeis is dedicated to the advancement of the humanities, arts and social, natural and physical sciences. As a liberal arts college, Brandeis affirms the importance of a broad and critical education in enriching the lives of students and preparing them for full participation in a changing society, capable of promoting their own welfare, yet remaining deeply concerned about the welfare of others. — Mission Statement

THE SEARCH

Brandeis University, a nationally recognized, distinguished research university, seeks an inspiring, experienced, and innovative leader to serve as its Vice Provost for Student Affairs (VPSA). Reporting to the provost and executive vice president of academic affairs, and serving on the president’s senior leadership team, the VPSA will be an advocate for all students, a visible campus leader, and a builder of community. The VPSA will join Brandeis at an opportune time to set a strategy for student affairs, further enhance the connection between the curricular and co-curricular experiences, and build a more inclusive campus. The VPSA will be instrumental in engaging the differing and changing needs of the diverse student body at Brandeis.

In 1948, when many top-tier colleges and universities were openly exclusionary, the American Jewish community founded Brandeis University (Brandeis) as a non-sectarian university that would welcome and support exceptional faculty and highly motivated students of all backgrounds and beliefs. Today, Brandeis is a medium-sized private research university with global reach, dedicated to first-rate undergraduate and graduate education while making groundbreaking intellectual discoveries. Their over 550 faculty members are leaders in their fields, as passionate about teaching and mentorship as they are about pushing the boundaries of knowledge. The University's 5,700 undergraduate and graduate students are talented, curious, compassionate, and open to exploring new and challenging experiences. Located in the suburbs of Boston, a global hub for innovation and higher education, Brandeis remains animated by a core set of values: a reverence for learning, critical thinking, and tikkun olam—the using of one’s intellectual and material gifts to help heal the world.

Brandeis is at an important inflection point in its history. The progress towards becoming one of the country’s leading institutions in such a short period of time is unprecedented. Now, Brandeis is seeking a dynamic professional with a deep understanding of, and commitment to, culturally-competent student development and best practices in student affairs at a complex institution.
The VPSA will be a visionary and collaborative leader deeply committed to graduate and undergraduate student life, community engagement, and inclusive excellence. With a highly personalized approach and visible presence on campus, the VPSA will serve as a critical strategic thought partner to advance the student experience at Brandeis.

Brandeis University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist with this important search. All inquiries, nominations, and resumes with cover letters may be submitted in confidence to Isaacson, Miller as indicated at the end of this document.

THE UNIVERSITY

A private, nonprofit, coeducational institution, Brandeis is the only nonsectarian, Jewish-founded college or university in the country and is a center of open inquiry and teaching. Characterized by academic excellence since its founding, Brandeis is an active member of the Association of American Universities and, of all universities, received Phi Beta Kappa recognition in the shortest number of years after its founding. Brandeis has been consistently ranked among the nation’s top universities since its inception and in addition to its US News national ranking of 34th, it has also been ranked 27th for Best Value Universities for 2018.

Brandeis combines the academic excellence and intellectual rigor of a world-class research institution with the intimacy and personal attention of a small liberal arts college. For students, that means unsurpassed access—both in and out of the classroom—to a faculty renowned for groundbreaking research, scholarship, and artistic output. Brandeis students pursue their education inside and outside the classroom, participating avidly in experiential learning and independent research. Research projects often lead not only to honors theses but to publications in the peer-reviewed scientific literature.

Brandeis supports an innovative program of learning that emphasizes an interdisciplinary approach to knowledge and the solutions for real-life problems. Undergraduates, from the very first year, enjoy leadership positions and research opportunities typically available only to upper-class and graduate students at peer institutions. As a result, Brandeis attracts highly accomplished students from around the country and the globe, with 87 countries and close to 20 different religions represented in its ranks. The combined middle range SAT score for admitted first years for 2016 was 1360-1460, and enrollments at both the undergraduate and graduate levels have risen in recent years. During this same period, Brandeis’ research enterprise has expanded, fueled by a distinguished and highly productive faculty. Research awards totaled $61 million for FY2017.

The Brandeis academic community currently comprises 5,722 students, including 3,635 undergraduate and 2,087 graduate students, and 569 faculty members. Of the 569 faculty, 364 are full-time and 208 are part-time. Eighty five percent of the full time faculty members are in the School of Arts and Sciences. Brandeis faculty currently includes two Nobel Prize winners, four Pulitzer Prize winners, two MacArthur Fellows, eleven members of the National Academy of Sciences, and 18 members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences.

Brandeis is organized into five principal academic units: the Undergraduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, the Brandeis International Business School, and the Rabb School of Continuing Studies. The Rose Art Museum and the Spingold Theater have achieved national artistic recognition and Brandeis athletic teams have recently made appearances in the Final Four.
Division III men’s and women’s soccer, as well as hosting the 2016 NCAA fencing tournament. Brandeis counts more than 40,000 alumni around the world, including Pulitzer Prize winners, Emmy Award winners, best-selling authors, and a Nobel laureate. Alumni and university supporters have steadily increased their gifts over the past decade and contributed to the growth of the University’s endowment to a market value of $1 billion.

Guided by a campus master plan developed by architect Max Abramovitz that built off an original plan by architect Eero Saarinen, the University has made many improvements in the past decade to its 235-acre campus as part of a comprehensive renewal program. In 2009, Brandeis completed the $100 million first phase of the science complex renewal project, including the 108,000 square foot Carl J. Shapiro Science Center, the largest capital initiative in Brandeis history. The science complex has been designed to further enhance Brandeis’ leadership in the natural sciences and emerging areas of interdisciplinary research.

Brandeis recently built a new residence hall to replace the student housing that was part of the Usen Castle complex. The new residence hall provides full accessibility and modern energy efficiency with geothermal heating and cooling, becoming the greenest and most sustainable building on campus. It includes more living spaces than previous housing did, thus helping to build a greater sense of community on campus. In response to student feedback about amenities needed in campus housing, the new residence hall includes dedicated study rooms and ample common spaces for gatherings and events.

LEADERSHIP

President Ronald D. Liebowitz assumed office as the ninth president of Brandeis in July 2016. Formerly, Liebowitz served as president of Middlebury College for eleven years. Since arriving at Brandeis, Liebowitz has focused significant attention on the state of the academic, cultural, and social experience of undergraduate and graduate students. His priorities include heavily investing in the University, developing a more integrated approach to academic and community life, and significantly growing the resources of the institution. Additionally, there is opportunity to streamline operations and increase accountability and transparency. To support these programmatic and administrative efforts, Liebowitz has built a well-aligned, strategic, and forward-looking senior leadership team.

A core member of the senior leadership team is provost and executive vice president of academic affairs of Brandeis, Lisa M. Lynch. Lynch is also the Maurice B. Hexter Professor of Social and Economic Policy and has previously served as interim president of Brandeis and dean of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. As provost, Lynch oversees, coordinates and promotes the University’s educational activities, student life, and research initiatives, seeking to catalyze growth while maintaining excellence. She plays a key role in institutional strategy and planning as well as advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion at Brandeis. She develops and implements strategic initiatives with the president, senior management, the Strategy and Planning Committee, deans, and faculty, and promotes the University's regional, national, and international activities.

Brandeis is in the midst of creating A Framework for Our Future, a multifaceted self-study of the University’s place in history, its present status, and pathway to the future. The Framework focuses on strengthening three priorities, each an essential pillar of Brandeis: Student Learning/Living Experience; Supporting Research, Creativity and Collaborative Innovation; and Honoring Our Founding Values. A task force made up of diverse stakeholders is studying each
priority and will present recommendations late in the spring. Final recommendations will be announced in fall 2019. More about the Framework for Our Future can be found at: https://www.brandeis.edu/framework/index.html

STUDENTS AND STUDENT LIFE

Brandeis attracts intellectually curious students from around the world who are motivated by the promise of an education guided by strong values that will prepare them to succeed. 20% percent of undergraduates and 36% of graduate students are international, and, of domestic students, a total of 72% of students are from states outside of Massachusetts. Students appreciate the accessibility of their faculty, the interdisciplinary opportunities within the curriculum, and the chance to explore educational opportunities without boundaries.

Fall 2019 will mark the introduction of the Brandeis Core, a new general education curriculum for undergraduates. It embodies the university's founding principles of academic rigor, robust debate, and justice. Of particular distinction within the curriculum are emphases on diversity, equity, and inclusion studies; engagement with the digital world; and a thorough treatment of health, wellness, and life skill learning. In fact, it is not uncommon for students to major in two subject areas plus a minor or more. From recent research, alumni at Brandeis report very high degrees of satisfaction with their academic experience, with over two-thirds of respondents giving their education experience at the University an ‘A’ or an ‘A+’.

On campus, the Executive Board of the Student Union works directly with the Community Living and Dean of Students offices to address issues related to student life and well-being. Many students happily make Brandeis their home during their years on campus and are successful in their time there. 75% of undergraduates live in university housing. Undergraduate first year to sophomore retention is 93% and the six year graduation rate is 90%. Regrettably, based on the recent survey results that highlight alumni satisfaction with their academic experience, a significant number of alumni across a span of generations offer much lower scores to their social experience at Brandeis. As a result, the work of the division of Student Affairs remains a priority.

THE DIVISION OF STUDENT AFFAIRS

The Division of Student Affairs supports students with a holistic approach, for those enrolled in undergraduate and graduate programs alike. Offices within the division support the overall health, wellness, development, and engagement of Brandeis students. In addition, Student Affairs provides information to Brandeis families, and regularly serves as a nexus for timely campus conversations and events. Student Affairs works collaboratively with academic affairs to critically and creatively help integrate curricular and co-curricular experiences into a uniquely Brandeisian culture.

The division plays an active and visible role in the life of Brandeisians. The dedicated, talented, and award-winning staff in Student Affairs work closely with each other and with students to facilitate a collaborative, innovative, and inclusive approach with each department, centered on students. Student Affairs works to provide opportunities for involvement, leadership, and success across the entire community. The principles of social justice and community are strongly held by those working in Student Affairs, and serve as a central topic of many day-to-day events and discussions at Brandeis.
A priority of the Framework for Our Future pertains to the Student Learning/Living Experience. The task force studying this priority has held over 55 listening sessions with students, staff, and faculty as well as surveyed the alumni. Student Affairs staff will be a key in pursuing any recommendations that come out of this task force and the VPSA will have significant quantitative and qualitative data to inform direction and implementation.

The VPSA division includes: the Dean of Students Office (Student Activities, Community Service, and Student Rights and Community Standards); Hiatt Career Center; Community Living (undergraduate residential housing and Undergraduate Orientation); Spiritual and Religious Life; Hillel; Family Engagement and Communication; and student health and wellness (the Counseling Center, the Health Center, and the Prevention, Advocacy & Resource Center).

LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES FOR THE VICE PROVOST FOR STUDENT AFFAIRS

The VPSA provides vision, strategic leadership, and direction to the student experience on campus. The VPSA will have experience in community building; developing a sense of belonging, inclusion, and connection amongst different constituencies of students; experience with the implementation, assessment, and oversight of student services; budget management; and crisis management. The VPSA reports to the provost and executive vice president of academic affairs and will oversee a budget of over $10 million and a team of approximately 100 full and part time staff.

It is an exciting time to join Brandeis as there is a palpable sense of energy and engagement with a relatively new president, an emerging strategic framework that prioritizes the student living experience, and a senior leadership team that is eager to partner across the institution. This is a great opportunity for the VPSA to infuse new ideas and innovation with a dedicated team committed to providing an outstanding student experience. The VPSA should have the ability to work with a diverse and active student body and have a deep passion for students.

To be successful in this dynamic environment, the VPSA will address the following opportunities and challenges:

Provide visible and engaged leadership that advances the student experience

The VPSA will be a leader who creates and facilitates a shared vision for student affairs that meaningfully engages academic affairs; that cultivates, sustains, and develops the diversity of the campus; that embraces residential and co-curricular education; and that highlights Brandeis’ commitment to student success and social justice. As a key member of the president’s leadership team, the VPSA will help ensure that these efforts are aligned with the strategic framework and that the goals of the division are supported and highlighted.

A student affairs professional with an understanding of best practices, the VPSA will assess current programs and services with a fresh perspective and bring vision to launch innovative programs that will strengthen campus life, ever mindful of the need for efficiency and collaboration. By providing a transparent sense of purpose in programs, systems, and community building across the institution, the VPSA will demonstrate a deep commitment to campus culture and will lead the University’s efforts to enrich the undergraduate and graduate student experience. In addition to programs and services, the VPSA will also need to be able to
articulate, advocate for and contribute to a vision and direction for the residence halls and student services buildings on campus.

In moments of crisis, the VPSA will communicate and engage with the leadership team and draw on expertise to offer constructive ideas and effective solutions. Above all, the VPSA will be an institutional thinker who takes a holistic view and values and amplifies the needs of students and the University. As Brandeis identifies and orders priorities, the VPSA will be a measured but unfailing advocate for personnel, programming, and facilities developments that support student development and the needs of the staff in the division.

Furthermore, the VPSA will also serve an important role as an ambassador and advocate for student life with external partners, including trustees, alumni, parents and other potential supporters of Brandeis.

Advance the interpretation and implementation of the Strategic Framework recommendations

The VPSA will work collaboratively with the president, provost, senior leadership, faculty leadership, and division staff to contribute to the University’s discussions around the student experience and the implementation of the resulting recommendations. While joining campus in the concluding stages of the strategic framework discussions, the VPSA will be encouraged to bring their experiences and expertise to bear in implementing recommendations and pursuing a new path forward.

Lead and develop a committed division that integrates across the University

The VPSA will lead and develop a dedicated and talented team of professionals to maintain high standards of performance and to support collaboration among the units in the office and with colleagues across Brandeis in the quest to reach all students at Brandeis. As an experienced manager, the VPSA will bring exemplary organizational development skills and a track record of building and managing strong, vibrant teams. The VPSA must possess the capacity to develop effective systems and processes that will streamline office functions, increase productivity, allow for consistent communication across the University, and enhance performance to better support students across the institution.

The VPSA will build a culture of enthusiasm, trust, transparency, and collaboration within student affairs and across the University. The VPSA will undertake a comprehensive review of current practices and policies, assess current programs in collaboration with staff to discover opportunities for improvement, and galvanize a commitment to and opportunities for continuous professional development and improvement among the staff. As a champion for the team members, the VPSA will promote the expertise of the staff in the appropriate venues on campus. The VPSA will unite the staff with a sense of shared mission and vision that reflects the character of the community and advances the strategic goals of Brandeis.

Be a highly visible advocate for undergraduate and graduate students

The VPSA will be a visible and engaged presence at Brandeis, interacting openly and genuinely with students, earning their trust and respect. Brandeisians are smart and highly engaged with a wide range of interests inside and outside of the classroom and are involved at all levels of campus. The VPSA will be a student advocate, champion, and advisor who finds satisfaction in facilitating student development at the undergraduate and graduate level. The VPSA should be
community-oriented and embrace a vibrant undergraduate and graduate student community, and identify opportunities to further University identity and pride.

Brandeis students expect their voices to be heard and do not hesitate to speak up and out on issues. The VPSA will advocate for the students, particularly in settings where they are not present, to ensure that their voices are represented. The VPSA will engage in meaningful conversations and encourage collaboration and discourse across campus. Through attentive listening, authentic attempts at responsiveness, and transparency about decisions and the decision-making processes, the VPSA will reinforce the students’ confidence in the administration.

**Support an increasingly diverse student body**

True to the institution’s core and founding values, Brandeis enrolls a remarkably talented and increasingly diverse student body and embraces diversity in all forms. The next VPSA will work to foster a campus culture in which all students recognize and benefit from the educational and cultural value of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, religion, worldview, and gender identity. The VPSA, in close collaboration with colleagues within and outside of student affairs, will envision new ways to encourage student social engagement that align with the University’s values and aspirations and bring people together across lines of difference.

The students at Brandeis come from backgrounds diverse both in composition and academic preparation. The VPSA will need to anticipate and respond in innovative and creative ways to the changing social and academic needs of this generation of incoming students. In particular, Brandeis is not immune to the continued concern on college campuses regarding the mental health of the students. While Brandeis strives to meet the needs of all students on campus through individual and group counseling with an active cross-campus Care Team, demand continues to outpace supply. The VPSA will lead examinations and discussions of current offerings to support students and their mental health needs and lead advances in these programs as appropriate.

Though Brandeis enjoys an increasingly international student population, these students often find themselves isolated from Brandeis student life and struggling to find the right support from the University. The VPSA will work to break down barriers between student populations, capture the opportunity afforded by the increasing internationalization of the student body, and integrate global awareness and the diversity of cultures into the student experience at Brandeis.

**Continue building robust and meaningful connections with faculty**

As Brandeis prioritizes strengthening the student experience for both undergraduates and graduate students, the VPSA will be a strategic partner with academic affairs to help students integrate their learning both inside and outside the classroom. Working closely with the provost, the VPSA will collaborate with the other campus leaders to cultivate a fully integrative and cohesive student experience, with student affairs complementing academic studies. The VPSA will promote the vision of a fully integrated student experience across campus, strengthening connections with faculty to ensure more alignment between the academic and co-curricular dimensions of student life.
Brandeis students are engaged scholars, eager participants in campus governance and activities, and actively follow and comment on the events of the world. The VPSA will nurture an environment where growth in collaboration between faculty and staff to meet the needs of the undergraduate and graduate student population is effortless.

THE SUCCESSFUL CANDIDATE

The successful candidate will bring a thorough understanding of best practices in student affairs, the enthusiasm to implement new strategy, and the creativity to meet the particular challenges facing higher education in the 21st century. The VPSA must have a positive, proactive focus, leading the division as it endeavors to promote health and safety, nurture growth of personal values, facilitate diversity and inclusion, and integrate the residential and academic aspects of students' lives.

The VPSA will be an innovative and collaborative student affairs leader with a distinctive record of achievement. The successful candidate will be someone with a clear and strong student affairs background who will be a full partner in Brandeis’ effort to offer an outstanding and integrated curricular and co-curricular program. While no single candidate will have all the ideal qualifications, candidates should possess many of the following qualifications and characteristics:

- Master’s degree from an accredited institution, a doctoral degree is preferred.
- At least seven years of progressively responsible leadership in student affairs are required.
- Demonstrated experience integrating student affairs with academic affairs.
- Demonstrated ability to manage a large and complex organization and budget.
- A record of effective and innovative leadership in strategic planning and policy development.
- Ability to work effectively in a diverse community and meet the needs of diverse student populations including first-generation college students, low-income students, students of color, students with disabilities, and international students.
- A record of developing a strong sense of community and belonging amongst a diverse student body.
- Knowledge of best practices in student affairs and a strong knowledge of student development theory.
- Experience in leading and managing change with a proven ability to create an organizational culture that is responsive to student needs.
- Experience in creating, implementing and utilizing results of co-curricular program assessments to improve student outcomes.
- Experience in providing response and assistance to students, families, faculty and staff in a crisis situation.
- Excellent communication skills, including the ability to listen to all points of view, build consensus on initiatives and issues, and inform others of policies and plans. A sense of humor is a must.
TO APPLY

All inquiries, nominations/referrals, and resumes with cover letters, should be sent electronically and in confidence to:

Natalie Leonhard, Managing Associate
Carmen Delehanty, Senior Associate
Isaacson, Miller
www.imsearch.com/7041

At Brandeis University, our mission and history are rooted in the pursuit of social justice, thus we aim to include this value in all that we do. We are seeking candidates with a variety of social identities, including those that have been underrepresented in higher education, who possess skills that spark innovation and who are committed to building, engaging with, and sustaining a pluralistic, unified, and just campus community. Brandeis University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages applications from women and minorities. Brandeis University is an Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity Employer and encourages applications from women and minorities.