Dear International Students:

On behalf of the University Writing Program, I would like to welcome you to Brandeis University. We are so pleased that you are taking your place as a new and most important member of our Brandeis community.

As Director of University Writing, I have met with many international students during my time here at Brandeis. Most of these students take as many as three writing courses while they are honing their academic writing skills. Although English is not usually their native language, these students work diligently to become some of the best writers at Brandeis. They have shown me how productive it can be to work hard over the course of a few semesters to polish their writing and establish strong voices as academic writers.

You probably know that, as one of the finest research universities in the world, Brandeis has established a reputation for graduating students who write well. Most students write hundreds of pages of English prose before they graduate. Writing assignments can include Chemistry labs and exams, anthropology research essays, case studies in economics or political science, or even a short story in a creative writing course.

Whatever the subject, like all writers, our students take writing extremely seriously, and they work hard to make each draft better than the last. Students tell us that it was extremely important for them to work hard on their writing skills in order to learn what they needed to know for any of their subjects.

You will find that writing courses invite you to work together with other students and to establish close academic relationships with your classmates. We find that students are most successful when they move out of their comfort zone to work with people who they might not have met had they not been asked to join their small group in a workshop or peer-editing group. I encourage you to embrace your opportunities to converse with other students. Who knows? The person in your small group might even end up helping you to see your work in a whole new way.

I would also encourage you to seek out opportunities to meet with your professors while you are here. Professors always enjoy talking about ideas you have in your courses, things that puzzle you, or topics you’d like to learn more about. If you visit each of your teachers at least once per term, you will find that outside-of-class conversations become some of your most enjoyable learning opportunities.

I hope that you can see how happy we are to have you on campus this summer and over the course of the next four years. Welcome to Brandeis!!
Sincerely,
Dawn Skorczewski, PhD