



Brandeis University

April 24, 2015

Dear Brandeis Community,

As we celebrate Earth Day this week, we are pleased to share with you the final report and recommendations from the Brandeis University Exploratory Committee on Fossil Fuel.

This committee was formed two years ago by President Lawrence to analyze the social and environmental impacts of fossil-fuel companies and to understand the potential effects of divestment on the Brandeis endowment. We thank the committee for the detailed analysis and thoughtful discussion presented in its report, which we will now use to engage in a wider discussion of how to responsibly move forward on such an important issue of our time.

The committee's report emphasizes the imminent dangers of climate change and the need for action consistent with Brandeis' mission. It suggests that an endowment reflective of concerns about climate change might be achievable without sacrificing performance or increasing risk.

The committee's report and recommendations will be discussed at the May 14 faculty meeting. We will also work with student leadership over the summer to organize a series of fall forums that build on knowledge about climate change that members of our faculty and other researchers on campus and the Greater Boston area bring to the table. These forums will discuss the merits of modifying our investment policies as well as the direct actions we can take to reduce our carbon consumption.

Brandeis' new full-time sustainability manager — a newly created position — will begin work here in July, charged with actively promoting, measuring and encouraging the reduction of the university's carbon footprint. We plan to conduct a detailed analysis of our campus carbon footprint to set targets for reduction through 2020.

We will also ask the Investment Committee of the Board of Trustees to evaluate strategies proposed by the report for consideration by the full Board. We anticipate that this discussion will take place over the fall semester.

This is a lengthy report, but one we urge all to read carefully. As stated so clearly in the 2009 Copenhagen Accord, climate change is "one the greatest challenges of our time." Our collective response to this challenge will impact not only our future but the future of generations to come.

Sincerely,

Frederick M. Lawrence
President

Lisa M. Lynch
Provost