Truth, Even Unto Its Innermost Parts

PROVOST AND EXECUTIVE VICE PRESIDENT FOR ACADEMIC AFFAIRS

THE SEARCH

Brandeis University seeks a distinguished scholar and experienced administrative leader to serve as its next provost and executive vice president (EVP) for academic affairs. The provost oversees, coordinates, and promotes the university's educational activities and research initiatives to catalyze growth while maintaining excellence. The provost and EVP is the university’s chief academic officer—the second-ranking member of the administration—with responsibility for and oversight of the institution’s entire academic enterprise. Brandeis seeks a tested leader—decisive, empathetic, transparent—who will provide strategic direction and operational management of the schools, research centers, and institutes of the university. This is an extraordinary opportunity for an eminent scholar and seasoned senior administrator to join one of the world’s leading liberal arts research universities during a critical moment of transformation.

A private research university (R1) and member of the Association of American Universities (AAU) with a liberal arts focus located in Waltham, Massachusetts, Brandeis was founded in 1948 by the American Jewish community at a time when Jews and other ethnic and racial minorities and women faced discrimination in higher education. Established as a nonsectarian research university, from the beginning Brandeis welcomed talented faculty and students of all backgrounds and beliefs. Brandeis is the academic home to 542 faculty members and 1,146 staff members and serves 3,639 undergraduate students and 2,161 graduate students. Nationally and internationally renowned for teaching, learning, and research, Brandeis’ investment in and commitment to the highest quality undergraduate and graduate education is demonstrated in the distinction of its four schools as well as its robust continuing education programs. The University’s core and unwavering commitment to academic excellence, to student success, and to a strong, inclusive community provide the ideal platform for the next provost, in close partnership with the president and deans, to build on and accelerate the university’s upward trajectory. Recently, the global pandemic caused by the Coronavirus has altered the immediate landscape of higher education and threatens to change the structure of universities across the country. The next provost will lead Brandeis through these unprecedented times ensuring that the university holds steadfastly to its core commitments emerging intact and stronger than before.

The provost will work closely and collaboratively with the university president and the executive vice president for administration and finance and will preside over the affairs of the university in the absence of the president. As the chief academic officer for Brandeis, the provost will be responsible for assuring that financial, capital, physical, and human resources are aligned with the mission and priorities of the university.
The provost will also work closely with the vice president for student affairs to strengthen the links between students’ academic and overall development and success, sense of shared learning, reflection, and engagement.

Brandeis University has engaged Isaacson, Miller to assist with this important search. Inquiries, nominations, and applications should be sent in strict confidence to: www.imsearch.com/7477.

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

Founded in 1948, Brandeis University was named for Louis Dembitz Brandeis (1856-1941), the first Jewish justice of the U.S. Supreme Court. Justice Brandeis made an indelible mark on modern jurisprudence by shaping free speech, the right to privacy, and the rights of citizens. He exemplified the values of the new university through his dedication to open inquiry and the pursuit of truth, insistence on critical thinking, and his commitment to helping ordinary folk.

The establishment of Brandeis University was an audacious undertaking and a remarkable achievement. The university’s raison d’être was different from that of well-established private institutions of higher education in the United States at that time — Brandeis was created not to educate the next generation of clergy or the upper class, but rather to educate those who had been denied acceptance to leading universities on account of antisemitism and bigotry. This founding principle was radical among American colleges and universities, and, over the following decades, most leading institutions of higher learning adopted many of the principles upon which Brandeis was founded. From the beginning, Brandeis focused on undergraduate education, while building a pioneering research enterprise. The university opened on the site of the former Middlesex University, with 107 students and 13 faculty members. Under the leadership of founding president Abram L. Sachar, Brandeis grew quickly in size and scholarly influence, joining the ranks of the most respected research institutions while still very young.

In 1959, Brandeis launched the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, the first school of its kind to bridge the gap between social welfare and social policy. Heller is consistently ranked by U.S. News & World Report as a “top ten” school of social policy. Thirteen years after its founding, Brandeis earned Phi Beta Kappa accreditation, a distinction fewer than 10 percent of U.S. colleges and universities earn. The same year, Brandeis established the Rose Art Museum, whose legendary first curator, Sam Hunter, built a permanent collection of works by artists who would later become 20th-century icons. The Rose quickly became a premier educational and cultural institution dedicated to modern and contemporary art. The collection includes important works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein, Helen Frankenthaler, Jack Whitten, and other giants of modern art.

Brandeis joined the Association of American Universities in 1985, an invitation-only group representing 65 of the most prominent research universities in the U.S. and Canada. In 1992, the Rabb School of Continuing Studies was launched, and in 1994 the Brandeis International Business School (IBS) was established as the Graduate School of International Economics and Finance. The school prepares exceptional individuals from around the world to become principled global professionals.

Today, Brandeis sits on 235 acres in Waltham, Massachusetts and is home to 100 academic and residential buildings. In 2020, Brandeis University was ranked No. 40 (most selective) in national rankings and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management was ranked No. 7 for Best Graduate School in Social Policy.
Brandeis’ Jewish Roots

At its core, Brandeis is guided by a set of values that are rooted in Jewish traditions. The first of these is a reverence for learning. Brandeis reflects the commitments of the Jewish community by pursuing rigorous academic work of the highest standards. Second is an emphasis on critical thinking, including self-criticism. At Brandeis, students and faculty are encouraged to question openly and accept nothing without study, debate, and reflection. Third is the Jewish ideal of making the world a better place through one’s actions and talents.

Brandeis is committed to making its community truly inclusive by seeking students, faculty, and staff of all backgrounds, cultures, religions and experiences. Indeed, Brandeis is one of the few universities in America with inclusivity as a founding principle. At the same time, Brandeis is proud of the university’s roots in Jewish values; it is a source of enduring vitality for the institution, and it is a quality that distinguishes Brandeis from other important research universities.

Leadership

Ronald D. Liebowitz became Brandeis University’s ninth president on July 1, 2016. The former president of Middlebury College, Liebowitz is a recognized administrative leader in higher education, whose academic scholarship centers on political geography, Russia, and higher education.

Under President Liebowitz’s leadership, Brandeis has reaffirmed its special role in higher education, and has ushered in a new era of transparency and accountability as it constantly seeks to focus on the quality of the undergraduate and graduate experience, the intellectual strength of its faculty, and promoting a diverse and equitable campus. In 2018, Liebowitz outlined an ambitious vision for the university that called for renewing support for research excellence from faculty; restructuring the student residential experience; and re-energizing the university’s attention to its founding Jewish values.

Liebowitz, a native New Yorker, served as president of Middlebury College from 2004 to 2015. He spent 32 years on the faculty of the liberal arts college in Vermont before joining Brandeis in 2016. Liebowitz earned a BA in economics and geography from Bucknell University, and a doctorate in geography from Columbia University. He has received a number of prestigious research grants, and in 2009 Time magazine named Liebowitz one of the 10 best U.S. college presidents.

The new provost will succeed Lisa M. Lynch, the current provost and executive vice president of academic affairs, as well as the Maurice B. Hexter Professor of social and economic policy. Previously, Lynch served as interim president of Brandeis University from July 1, 2015 to June 30, 2016, provost from October 30, 2014 to June 30, 2015, and dean of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management from July 2008 to October 2014. As provost, Lynch 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.

Academics, Faculty, and Research

Brandeis University has built a distinctive teaching and research experience around its founding values. The university mixes cutting-edge research, scholarship, and creative work on one hand, and a deep commitment to undergraduate liberal arts education on the other, fostering a unique learning
environment for students. This allows for a degree of “vertical connectivity” not found at other R1 universities or liberal arts colleges. This vertical connectivity gives Brandeis undergraduates direct and meaningful academic relationships with doctoral candidates, postdocs, staff, and the most esteemed faculty across the curriculum, creating a unique learning environment that allows students to pursue their studies alongside others at varying levels of knowledge and expertise.

The university’s collaborative ethos also extends to faculty across the curriculum, creating an unusual degree of “horizontal connectivity.” These connections allow faculty, staff, and students to transcend programmatic, departmental, and school affiliations in their academic pursuits — a kind of collaboration that creates dynamic learning and research opportunities. Such connectivity has led to the introduction of innovative cross-school majors and programs and provides an institutional nimbleness as the Brandeis curriculum evolves to meet the changing needs of students. Together, these two types of connectivity — vertical and horizontal — underline the unique appeal, impact, and potential of a Brandeis education.

Brandeis University faculty have received many honors and awards including fellowship in the American Academy of Arts and Sciences; membership in the National Academy of Sciences and the National Academy of Medicine; Pulitzer Prizes; MacArthur Foundation “genius grants”; and Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigatorships. In 2017, professors Michael Rosbash and Jeffrey Hall, received the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for their work on circadian rhythms, adding to an already outstanding catalogue of scientific awards and achievements for both scholars. Furthermore, there is a significant history of grant funded research across disciplines at the university.

The four nationally competitive schools that make up Brandeis University are the School of Arts and Sciences, the International Business School (IBS), the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, and the Heller School for Social Policy and Management. In addition, the Rabb School for Continuing Studies serves working professionals enrolled in online part-time graduate degree programs, Brandeis undergraduates, undergraduates from other schools taking courses for credit, high school students engaged in summer residential experiences, and a diverse community of mature adult learners taking non-credit enrichment courses.

- The School of Arts and Sciences is the heart of the academic experience at Brandeis. With 44 majors and 50 minors the school promotes interdisciplinary study and collaboration, and offers undergraduates opportunities to conduct original research.
- The International Business School (IBS) offers five graduate programs and two accelerated graduate programs, as well as opportunities for undergraduates. IBS is ranked among the best business schools in the world by the Princeton Review.
- The Graduate School of Arts and Sciences (GSAS) offers 17 doctoral programs and more than 50 master's and non-degree programs. GSAS is known for smaller doctoral, master's, and postbaccalaureate programs which enable scholars to build close relationships with Brandeis’ faculty and conduct interdisciplinary research across traditional academic boundaries.
- The Heller School for Social Policy and Management is consistently ranked among the top public policy graduate programs in the country. With the motto knowledge advancing social justice, Heller combines applied interdisciplinary research with active public engagement, and has a long history of responding to the changing needs of vulnerable populations.

Additionally, Brandeis’ centers and institutes, totaling over a dozen, are dedicated to addressing many of the most pressing issues affecting society today. The centers and institutes are a vital part of the intellectual life and research enterprise of the university. The next provost will have the opportunity to
grow the centers and institutes while ensuring that they remain a significant part of the intellectual life of the university.

In 2017, President Liebowitz launched a multi-year assessment of Brandeis University to better understand the many successes the university accomplished in its 72-year history as well as the areas in need of growth. In consultation with various stakeholder groups; multiple alumni surveys; information gleaned from 30 “self-reflection” documents written by faculty and administrators; and the work of three task forces, Brandeis launched the Framework for the Future, a strategic plan that will provide a scaffolding for priority-setting for the university in the coming decades. The plan outlines a set of goals and initiatives, grouped into two major objectives: Fulfilling the Brandeis Academic Value Proposition and Reengaging Brandeis’ Founding Ethos. The provost will play a critical role in interpreting, refining, and implementing the Framework.

THE ROLE

The provost and executive vice president (EVP) for academic affairs reports to the president and is the chief academic officer of the university. The provost is a key member of President Liebowitz’s cabinet, which includes the senior vice president for communications, marketing and external relations; senior vice president of institutional advancement; general counsel; chief diversity officer and vice president of diversity, equity and inclusion; chief of staff and senior advisor to the president; vice president of student affairs; and the executive vice president for finance and administration. The cabinet serves as a group of trusted advisors to the president and assists him in university-wide strategy development and implementation.

To facilitate this objective, the provost is a member of the university’s committee on strategy and planning (CSP). The provost will also co-chair the budget and priorities subcommittee with the EVP for finance and administration, to ensure that resources are allocated to fulfil the decisions stemming from CSP recommendations.

As chief academic officer, the provost is broadly responsible for teaching, learning, scholarship, and research across the university, including academic planning, budgeting, and facilities. University-wide curricular and co-curricular activities spanning undergraduate and graduate education, accreditation, diversity, internationalization, and outreach also fall under the provost’s purview. Reporting to the provost are the four academic deans, vice president of the Rabb School, vice provost for research, associate provost for administration and finance, senior associate provost for academic affairs, assistant provost for strategic initiatives, vice provost for faculty, director of institutional research, and the director of the Rose Art Museum. The provost serves as the administration’s liaison to the Academy Committee of the Board of Trustees, and in collaboration with the president plays a key role in building relationships with the Board. The provost’s role is uniquely structured to have broad oversight of the many dimensions of academic and student life. In addition, the next provost will oversee the implementation of collective bargaining agreements for part-time contract faculty, graduate students, and university librarians and be part of administrative leadership in the future collective bargaining processes with each of these groups.

In January 2020, Brandeis launched a bold strategic plan, Framework for the Future, intended to guide the university along two major axis points. The first seeks to further enhance Brandeis’ strong research profile, fulfilling the university’s potential as a top research institution. The second calls for renewed engagement with Brandeis’ founding principles. To this end, the next provost will be expected to lead
institutional priority setting as they relate to teaching and research excellence and the pursuit of diversity and equity for faculty, staff, and curricular and co-curricular programs. In addition, the provost, in cooperation with the senior vice president of institutional advancement, plays an important role in formulating the university’s philanthropic fundraising strategy, and for working with particular donors.

**OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES**

Specifically, the university’s next provost will be expected to:

**Effectively recruit and retain faculty, ensuring that Brandeis maintains a strong record of academic and teaching excellence as well as its signature commitment to social justice.**

Brandeis is experiencing a shift in faculty demographics, as a significant percentage of faculty members will retire in the next few years. Given this coming moment of transition, the provost must prioritize the recruitment and retention of top faculty in pursuit of teaching and research excellence. The provost will be responsible for developing a multi-year faculty renewal plan, taking into account anticipated retirements and incremental faculty positions across the Schools. They will also oversee the appointment, promotion, and tenure of faculty; ensure that position allocations within and across Schools align with institutional priorities; and devote the necessary time and resources to strengthen faculty retention efforts and success. The provost must also build on recent efforts to enhance the diversity of the faculty to ensure that Brandeis’ founding ethos and lived commitment to diversity and inclusivity continues as a core characteristic.

**Play a central role in implementing the university's revised budget model, strategically aligning academic and budgetary priorities, generating campus-wide support for the new approach, and safeguarding Brandeis' future.**

Brandeis University operates on a complex budget structure and requires a provost who has a sophisticated understanding of university budgets and financing and significant experience navigating complex fiscal systems. Currently, the university is moving towards a new hybrid budget model which will create more transparency regarding indirect costs incurred by schools and units, and more responsibility for reducing university subsidies, where appropriate. Working closely with the president, the executive vice president for finance and administration, and the deans, the provost will help lead the implementation and execution of the new hybrid budget model across campus.

Like all universities across the country, Brandeis is navigating unprecedented challenges and disruptions due to the Covid-19 pandemic. In this context, the next provost will need to manage budgetary constraints and develop new revenue streams that align with the university’s mission and framework. In addition to leading the implementation of the new financial model within the academic divisions, the provost will also actively participate in fundraising and alumni relations. Furthermore, the next provost must help the university navigate the ever-evolving higher education landscape, ensuring Brandeis emerges in the coming year as an even stronger institution.
Build on Brandeis’ powerful identity and campus culture and its existing commitments to transparency and regular communication to enhance trust between the administration and various university stakeholders.

Key to the provost’s success will be their desire and ability to understand the university’s unique history and culture that is rooted in Jewish values and committed to scholarship, inclusivity, and an exceptional student experience. There is great pride across the university for Brandeis’ legacy of excellence and social good, and there are well established norms and traditions prized by faculty and staff alike. The next provost should build on these strong ties across the university to invite broad community participation in important decisions, encourage more deliberate programmatic integration, and when appropriate, be comfortable advocating for new approaches. The community seeks a decisive leader with backbone, who will share the university’s values and drive towards even greater heights.

Similarly, the provost must build strong relationships with various stakeholders and communities on campus and should prize effective, honest, and regular communication between the administration and the faculty, student body, and staff. They will also need to work effectively in Brandeis’ structure of shared governance.

Additionally, Brandeis is home to a diverse student body that historically have not always interacted with one another. Therefore, the provost must also lead efforts to build community among the various student groups represented on campus.

Maintain and enhance diversity, equity and inclusion across campus.

Since its founding Brandeis University has held a deep commitment to being open-minded, supportive, and caring of all individuals in the Brandeis community. In recent years a number of new initiatives to support diversity, equity and inclusion across campus have been implemented including the recruitment of Brandeis’ first chief diversity officer (CDO) and vice president for diversity, equity and inclusion, Mark Brimhall-Vargas. The creation of the CDO role was one of many commitments to elevate and accelerate Brandeis’ vision for inclusive excellence.

The next provost will be expected to continue the trend towards a more fully inclusive Brandeis community by working collaboratively across the Schools and units to ensure that all aspects of the academic and social enterprise are guided by the principles of diversity and equity including admissions, staff hiring practices, faculty recruitment, retention, and promotion, research, student life, curriculum design, and athletics. The next provost must also be sensitive to the needs of the diverse undergraduate and graduate student population at Brandeis. In addition, the provost should be committed to serving the needs of international students as 20% of the undergraduate student body and 47% of the graduate student body is international. The commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion is fundamental to the university and the next provost will be expected to continue this tradition to make certain Brandeis remains a leader in inclusive excellence.

Work collaboratively across the university to enhance and strengthen infrastructure to support research excellence.

The provost will provide strong leadership to create a future of cutting-edge research across disciplines and fields. To this end, the provost will facilitate renewed integration of Brandeis’ numerous centers and institutes with the academic enterprise and educational mission of the university. The provost will also
lead efforts to review, promote, and support the advancement of infrastructure relevant to the research goals of the university, including information technologies, library technologies, and classroom and laboratory facilities.

In addition, the provost will lead the review of academic degree programs to ensure their contributions remain aligned to the mission; provide oversight of activities pertaining to intellectual property, technology transfer, research collaborations with industry, and trademark licensing; lead institutional research, evaluation, and assessment efforts within the academy, and promote institution-wide efforts in this area. The provost will also oversee use and reuse of campus space to support academic and administrative objectives. This includes establishing a space planning committee that will develop space utilization strategies, evaluate projects, and bring critical space allocation issues to the provost’s attention for decision making.

**Further enhance Brandeis University’s deep commitment to student learning, success, and well-being.**

Recently higher education has undergone profound changes in a short amount of time due to the Covid-19 crisis. Social distancing practices ostensibly prevent faculty and students from engaging in-person in meaningful ways. The next provost will have to work collaboratively across campus to ensure the quality of the Brandeis student experience remains top notch – both in today’s reality and well into the future. They will have to think creatively to innovate new teaching and learning practices that ensure faculty and students continue to have “horizontal connectivity,” and faculty continue to engage vertically. To this end, the next provost will provide leadership in the incorporation of effective pedagogy, assessment, and instructional technologies to improve student learning. The provost will also serve as the chair of the committee on teaching, learning and assessment; the university policy committee; and the committee on academic standards and policy.

While the next provost will have to address student learning issues created by the Covid-19 crisis they will also need to provide vision and a strong ability to execute for the years to come ensuring that the academic and research enterprise, curricular and co-curricular programing, and commitment to social justice remains the core of the Brandeis experience.

**PROFESSIONAL AND PERSONAL QUALIFICATIONS**

In its next provost, Brandeis University seeks a scholarly leader with intellectual vision, a collegial and collaborative leadership style, and the energy and integrity to inspire the diverse university community to new levels of excellence. Candidates should have a history of academic leadership; the ability to build and cultivate consensus among various stakeholder groups; accomplishment in creating and supporting a climate of understanding and mutual respect; and a deep and demonstrated commitment to diversity and inclusion. The search committee seeks candidates with the following skill sets and abilities:

- An experienced, accessible, empathetic, and entrepreneurial academic administrator with a track record of success in a complex research institution, preferably in an institution that has a strong liberal arts focus.
- Strong management, planning, and financial skills; an astute understanding of university finances and the relationships between academic priorities, budgeting, and fundraising.
- A deep track record that demonstrates a commitment to cultivating a diverse, equitable, and inclusive environment where all students, faculty, and staff can thrive including international students and faculty that hail from around the world.
- An interdisciplinary thinker committed to harnessing and facilitating the potential of collaborative activities across institutional and disciplinary boundaries.
- A record of leading the successful recruitment and retention of a superb faculty, aligned with a commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- A creative problem solver, with high emotional intelligence, and a robust intellectual curiosity to balance a dynamic research institution with its focus on liberal arts education.
- A decisive doer who can successfully manage the myriad issues and decisions that cross the provost’s desk.

**TO APPLY**

Brandeis University has retained Isaacson, Miller, a national executive search firm, to assist in this search. Confidential inquiries, nominations, referrals, and resumes with cover letters should be sent in confidence to:

Katie Rockman, Partner  
Peter Lange, Partner  
Sonia Gomez, Senior Associate

[www.imsearch.com/7477](http://www.imsearch.com/7477)

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