

Vision and Goals. In the coming decade, Brandeis will build and reinforce its network of alumni and friends to help it extend its academic missions and its impact on society. The powerful external network that we envision will be a vibrant community that is drawn together by our common Brandeis experiences. Its activities will enrich and inspire its members, Brandeis itself, and the world around us. It will help its members contribute to their professional and voluntary communities.

Many alumni and friends would love to play a larger role at Brandeis. They will become the core of what we call our "extended university." This extended family of Brandeis includes our alumni and friends (e.g. BNC and BOLLI), and potentially also the parents and family members of our students. Our alums are active in all professional fields, such as in Education (estimated at 20% of the total), Business (15%), Health Services (14%), Law (13%), Media and the Arts (10%), Social Sciences and Services (9%), and Government and Non-Profits (5%). So, many can contribute financially to Brandeis; ultimately, this is a key goal behind our proposals. In addition, our alums can be our best ambassadors, they can help our students connect to fields of practice, and they can enhance our teaching and research on campus. And the lives and work of our alumni and friends will be enriched by their involvement with Brandeis.

Our challenge is to find the best ways to engage with our alumni and friends to generate these mutual benefits. Doing so is an operational imperative that is part and parcel of being an excellent university. Every successful university depends on its alumni for intellectual capital, network capital, and financial capital. Compared to our peers, our alumni are young, and many are busy raising families, developing their careers, or just beginning to get involved in their local communities. This is an added challenge for us. But it also presents an opportunity for Brandeis to help them continue to grow and achieve.

To reach our vision, we need to do two things in the next five years: (1) reconnect and strengthen bonds with existing alumni and friends; and (2) form lasting bonds with our current students. Different operational strategies are needed to address initiatives in each area, as explained below. We urge the University to set concrete goals in each area, with milestones and benchmarks to track progress. Overall, we suggest that Brandeis aim to double the involvement of our alumni and friends in five years. Concrete ways to measure involvement need to be developed; e.g., they might include attendance at reunions, gift activity by alumni and friends, and participation in programming and career networks.

Implementation. President Lawrence's arrival is an opportunity to re-engage with alumni and friends, many of whom have been excited to meet him and hear his ideas. We propose here an ambitious and comprehensive program of initiatives to dovetail with the University's new strategic direction. Implementation will be critical. Among the issues that will need to be addressed are the following:

- Commit that serving alumni in what they need is one of the core functions of the University.
- Provide focused, visible, top leadership to alumni relations, separate from other functions.
- Improve communication to alums and friends, tuning messages to interests of each segment.
- Improve coordination among internal units and functions relevant to alumni relations.
- Overhaul online infrastructure and tools and use social media better to service alumni relations.
- Connect better all career network resources – Hiatt, B-Connect, Alumni Association, and so on.
- Invest in better data collection, management, and sharing of alumni information across units.
- Review the large number of current alumni programs and focus effort on the most promising.
- Consider the role of "alumni legacy" in student recruiting, admissions, and student programs.

Initiative 1: Reconnect and Strengthen Bonds with Existing Alumni and Friends. We recognize that there are several different pools of alumni and friends in our network. Many of our alums are deeply involved at Brandeis; we are grateful for that and aim to continue to deepen our relationship with them. Others are, unfortunately, disconnected from Brandeis or “lost;” we need to find them and give them a reason to reconnect with us. Probably the largest group consists of alumni and friends who are only tangentially connected to Brandeis; we need to spark their interest again and help them share our vision for the University.

We propose that further work be done to find best ways to target each segment of our alumni and friends population. The following are some ideas that should be considered in this work:

- Brandeis should aim to bring value to the alums of past decades in what they are doing now – in their work, their community engagement, and their family life. This may mean:
 - Expand affinity groups (e.g. law, health, business, social action, and so on).
 - Establish and support alumni and friends business-referral networks.
 - Expand learning opportunities on big issues of the day (online or in social events).
- Brandeis should also aim to reconnect alums and friends to valuable Brandeis experiences and shared values. This may mean:
 - Support and reconnect with a special professor.
 - Hearing about the life and work of fellow alums.
 - Continue involvement in extra-curricular activities that they loved on campus.
 - Involve alum and friends in major campus events (e.g., Festival of the Arts, Deis Impact).
- Brandeis should engage alums and friends in those activities that interest them the most and which best fit their skills and talents. This may mean:
 - Develop a menu of options for engagement, such as serving on committees, panels, and boards, interviewing applicants, speaking in classes, mentoring students, and so on.
 - Launch a substantial and scalable career mentoring program that engages alumni and friends by connecting them to current students. This has obvious benefits to current students too (more below).

Initiative 2: Form Lasting Bonds with Current Students. The bond our students form with Brandeis stems from their overall experience on campus. Other programs will address the academic curriculum, life on campus, and extra-curricular opportunities. We propose that these other programs specifically aim to lay the foundation for future alumni engagement, in addition to their goals in other areas. The following are some ideas that we propose be considered in these strategies:

- Instill in students pride and a sense of partnership with the University while they are on campus, in effect "training" them to grow into committed future alumni. This may mean:
 - Continue to develop campus traditions and affinity groups
 - Showcase notable alumni and friends and involve them with students
 - Hold more Reunion-type events when school is in session, so students and alums can meet
 - Involve students broadly in the administrative workings of the University
 - Try to instill in our current students the concept of giving back to the University
- Support every student in their lifelong goals while they are still on campus. This may mean:

- Strengthen career centers and resources and their coordination with university programs.
- Strengthen connections between admissions and our career networks, to help Brandeis compete for applicants with our full "extended university."
- Connect students with alumni and friends who could mentor them in their studies, provide information about professions, and possibly offer internships and full-time jobs. This may help both in reconnecting with alumni and friends (see above) and in building the bond with current students. It might even be structured to help Brandeis admissions, by offering mentors to excellent admits as an inducement to enroll.

Fit with Brandeis Values. The founders of Brandeis did not have the luxury of an established alumni base to draw on for ideas, connections, and financial support. So they set out to "adopt alumni" – to attract professionals and philanthropists who fell in love with the idea of Brandeis University. This group of friends is remains a critical and valued source of support for the University. But we now also have 40,000 alumni and should not only rely on our adopted friends or foster parents for financial support. Still, to gain increased support from our alumni, we need to recommit ourselves to them.

The mutual commitment that we offer to and seek from our alumni and friends is core to the values of Brandeis. We will seek to further their learning throughout their lives and work, as well as to help them contribute to our research, teaching, and to the opportunities we offer our students. We will seek to help them further the wellbeing of their local and global communities. By these actions, we hope to extend the work of Brandeis beyond our campus and into the world. This will honor our roots and help realize our shared vision of an open and just society.

This report is based on our discussions and has been reviewed by task force members:

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