

INTERIM REPORT

of the Brandeis University Strategic Planning Task Force on Facilities and Campus Evolution

Submitted by Ronald A. Ratner '69 (Chair), Henry Aboodi '86, Wendy Cadge, Edward Chazen, Mark Collins, Dan Feldman, Andrew Flagel, Steve Goldstein '78, Margie Lachman, Walter Leutz, Enrique Levin, Len Potter '83, Herbie Rosen '12, Peter Shields, Joe Wardwell

Newcomers to Brandeis — and even long-standing members of the community — are sometimes surprised to learn how profoundly the physical character of the campus and the architectural character of its facilities are an expression of the fundamental values of the institution. Our **long-range vision** is that the deep relationship between our campus and facilities and our values should become plainly obvious to all: from a well-organized and welcoming front entrance that, right away, begins to help visitors learn about Brandeis, to the varied and flexible teaching and learning spaces, to the supportive and enabling spaces used by faculty for their research, scholarship, and collaboration; from the residence halls designed to foster community, to the informal learning and socializing spaces — interior, exterior, and virtual — that help bind the Brandeis community together, to the evidence of social justice research, learning, and action throughout campus — all should communicate what Brandeis stands for and what Brandeis is and does. If we bring to the planning of our campus's future the same level of creativity, thoughtful open-mindedness, and community inclusiveness that have characterized our strategic planning process, and if we are determined and disciplined in our use and allocation of resources to this end, the experience of the Brandeis campus will feel in deeply obvious harmony with its lofty mission and its values.

The challenges inherent in many of the issues touched on in the recommendations that follow are complex and require concentrated study. Accordingly, **the Facilities and Campus Evolution Task Force's overarching recommendation is that Brandeis University commit to comprehensive and holistic planning that recognizes the inextricable linkage between physical planning and strategic planning, and embark in 2013 on the next iteration of the campus master plan, to be based on, and in service of, the goals articulated in the University's forthcoming strategic plan.** What follows amounts, we hope, to essential preparatory work toward that effort.

We have organized this interim report according to **five large strategic themes**, which reflect our consideration and integration of recommendations from other task forces:

- **Reflecting our Values and Commitments**
- **The Entire Campus as a Learning Landscape**
- **Building Community**
- **Efficient and Effective use of Physical Resources**
- **Sustainability**

Each of these large strategic themes comprises more than one, and in some cases many, recommendations. Some of these are intended as longer-term recommendations and some as short-term or immediate (this is indicated, where it may not be obvious). Consistent with the nature of integrated planning, most of the recommendations contribute to multiple strategic themes. The thematic boundaries blur, and in many cases it was hard to decide which theme a particular recommendation should be listed under. In the rationale and goals presented beneath each of the five strategic theme headings, we have tried to make clear the distinctions of focus that led to the groupings of recommendations as presented.

In setting forth the specific recommendations that follow, we have declined, in most cases, to elaborate at length on programmatic rationales for initiatives that we fully expect are eloquently described in the reports of other task forces. Our focused goal has been to envision how our campus and facilities might evolve to support those initiatives. The initiatives themselves are described succinctly, and we refer the SPSC to the reports of the relevant task forces. For other recommendations that respond to various task forces' work but may not be explicitly discussed in their reports, the rationales are described more fully. In this interim report, we have not indicated recommendations for prioritization, as we feel strongly that such prioritization should be done only after the task force members have reviewed the reports from other task forces and in response to the elements of the draft framework, once it has been released. With regard to challenges envisioned: for recommendations involving renovation or new construction, the primary (though by no means the only) challenges would be financial: funding for capital costs and funding for incremental annual operating, maintenance, and renewal costs.

Reflecting our Values and Commitments

This strategic theme is at the heart of all of the themes and reflects the overarching long-range vision articulated in our introductory page. Brandeis's physical facilities and campus should be clear manifestations of what it stands for, what it is, and what it does. This section partly responds to the requested third element of our report. Beyond that, our recommendations integrate Brandeis's values and commitments by supporting the other task forces' initiatives that do so.

- **The Brandeis Social Justice Connection (BSJC)** (see the Learning Communities and Student Experience Task Force's report) should have a physical home. A modestly sized space should be suitable; more important than size is location: it should be highly visible, and centrally located on campus. Groups and centers closely associated with the BSJC, such as the Intercultural Center and the Chaplaincy, should be moved from their current, relatively "hidden" locations to be closer to the BSJC. The Connection's home might be located in the ground-floor lounge at the east corner of the Shapiro Campus Center (this depends on the fourth recommendation in the section Building Community, below). As an attendant benefit, a relocated Chaplaincy (location t.b.d.) would create open spaces in Usdan that are greatly needed for other purposes (e.g., Academic Services).
- Our fundamental commitments to access and diversity should find expression in an institutional commitment to the principles of what has become known as **universal design**: ensuring that the campus and its facilities are inherently accessible to both people without and people with disabilities. More broadly speaking, the term refers to the concept of "designing ... the built environment to be aesthetic and usable to the greatest extent possible by everyone, regardless of their age, ability, or status in life."

The Entire Campus as a Learning Landscape

Brandeis is a research university with a liberal arts focus, and this should be reflected not just in its classrooms and its library. Every space and every building presents opportunities to illuminate, challenge, support and inspire curiosity and learning, and to teach the importance of listening carefully and of taking thoughtful and positive action in the world. The concept and goal of "intensity" that is central to the first recommendation of the Academic Innovations Task Force finds powerful expression in the notion that being anywhere on the Brandeis campus should be experienced as participation in the life of a research university with a liberal arts focus. If we are thoughtful in our planning and design, all aspects of the campus can and should contribute to that experience.

- The main Brandeis library (Goldfarb and Farber) should serve as a **test bed for innovation and research** in:
 - **alternative spaces to support innovative pedagogy** (e.g., active learning classrooms; space for support staff to assist faculty in taking advantage of different types of "built pedagogy" as well as "virtual [online] pedagogy");

- **informal learning spaces;**
- **spaces to support faculty collaboration and innovation in research, scholarship, and teaching.**

This innovation and research, carried out through a series of pilot projects that would begin as soon as possible, should be conducted with faculty, student, and staff input regarding their needs, and should benefit from the study of best practices elsewhere. Options for creating the sizable amounts of space required in the library for these purposes also require study; these might include consolidating portions of lesser-used print collections in an automated retrieval area that might be added to the library. Any such approach must adhere to the principle that print collections required to be physically "browsable" by faculty for their research will remain so. (Consider "virtual browsing" where this would be effective and acceptable.) When possible, **lessons learned from the pilot projects should be applied** in the creation/incorporation of such spaces through renovations within other academic and student life buildings. There is an especially urgent need for more informal learning spaces (see our second recommendation in Efficient and Effective Use of Resources).

- **Classrooms should be designed and renovated to provide a high level of flexibility** to accommodate a variety of activities and a range of pedagogical approaches. Going forward, "built pedagogy" involving inflexible classrooms that support only a traditional "active front ['sage on the stage'], passive audience" model of teaching should not be standard and should certainly not be the only model.
- **The campus itself should evolve as a series of learning spaces.** This would be manifest at a welcoming and highly functional campus main entrance (see Building Community) and would extend to outdoor installations sponsored by the Rose Art Museum, to presentations of faculty research and scholarship and student work within entrances of buildings, to informal learning spaces in buildings throughout campus, and to outdoor spaces, too, that invite and support informal (as well as formal) learning.
- **Minimum standards should be established for all academic buildings**, for both private and open offices and teaching and learning spaces. Meeting those standards — "getting the basics right," as Ron Ratner has said — will go a long way toward improving morale and providing a suitable environment for teaching, learning, research, and scholarship at Brandeis.
- Brandeis should create a cross-disciplinary **Center for Entrepreneurship**, ideally funded by alumni donors, to support students striving to be change agents in society. The Center would connect faculty and outside advisors in a "lab" setting, an "on-site incubator providing office space and infrastructure," and "fostering experiential learning in the context of class projects and student-led startups."

Building Community

The bonds with Brandeis that each member of the community forms strengthen our ability to accomplish our mission, increasing opportunities for the pursuit of knowledge, action toward social justice in the world, and opportunities for civil dialogue. Building community means, in part, doing all we can so that our students become committed alumni, engaged with the University as mentors, supporters, and lifelong Brandeisians. Building community depends on enabling and creating positive experiences for our students, so that all aspects of their time as undergraduate or graduate students here contribute to the growth they were seeking when they came to Brandeis. Creating such experiences — doing this effectively — depends on an alignment of enrollment with both physical capacity and support capacity (including the number and roles of faculty and staff members). Ensuring this alignment is a key strategic imperative if we are to build community effectively and durably.

- **Add 150 new residence hall beds**, which would be used partly to eliminate lofted triples and the use of basement rooms, and partly to enable a higher percentage of on-campus housing for undergraduates. (As needed, these additional beds could also provide swing space to support renovation of existing residence halls.) Half of the new beds might be adjacent to the North Residence Quad and would also provide common spaces and other community engagement spaces that are largely absent from that Quad. The

other half might constitute an addition to East Quad, creating a loop-road level entrance at its uppermost level, thereby integrating East Quad more fully into the campus core. An addition could also provide common spaces not sufficiently provided in existing East Quad, perhaps including a fitness/recreation center (see the third recommendation in Building Community).

- **Create a modestly sized addition in Massell Quad**, adjacent to Shapiro and DeRoy Residence Halls, providing common spaces generally not sufficiently provided for in Massell Quad. This might include a fitness/recreation center (see the following recommendation).
- Several **“satellite” fitness and recreation facilities** should be incorporated in renovated or new space (see Learning Communities and Student Experience Task Force report).
- **Campus spaces should be enhanced to support social interaction as well as to create informal learning spaces** (as described above, in The Entire Campus as a Learning Landscape). The current initiative to add benches and tables in several outdoor locations is laudable and should be extended. In general, the “curb appeal” of campus buildings should be enhanced, and building entrances and interiors should be made inviting and welcoming.
 - One key recommendation is offered in this regard (though tactically specific, this rises to the level of a strategic recommendation by addressing multiple crucially important issues): The lack of adequate informal socializing and learning spaces **in the Shapiro Campus Center**, one of the most important student life buildings on campus, is a significant problem. That lack is a direct result of the Campus Center atrium being called on to serve both as an important student events space (often during evenings) and as comfortable socializing space for small groups. From a practical, room-setup perspective, these two uses of the atrium space are in direct conflict. The space is overseen by a student team that needs to move all the furniture around to accommodate events and then needs to reset the furniture after events. The view has been that “too much furniture” in the atrium would make it nearly impossible for the student team to accomplish its task. A frequently-noted consequence is that the atrium feels largely vacant, striking for its unrealized potential as a warm and comfortable socializing space. At the same time, the bookstore in the Campus Center — not heavily used during most times of the year — occupies one of the most beautiful spaces in the building, “prime real estate” overlooking the Great Lawn. If the bookstore could be relocated (see recommendation in Building Community), that space could be turned into a superb mix of **informal socializing and learning spaces** (furniture clusters) for students and all members of the community. This could free up the existing east-corner lounge space to serve as the home of the Brandeis Social Justice Connection (see first recommendation in Reflecting our Values and Commitments, above).
- The space framed by the Goldfarb Library, Usdan Student Center, and the Social Sciences area should be reconfigured to create a **great “piazza,” a lively, outdoor social interaction hub and focal point for the Upper Campus**. This piazza would partly occupy the largely unused space adjacent to Goldfarb Library and would reach from the library to Usdan Student Center. (The latter would feature a new entrance to renovated dining areas in Usdan; see next recommendation) The piazza would incorporate outdoor café seating for dining as well as a variety of informal gathering areas. The model of plentiful, easily movable chairs and tables that have recently been placed in Harvard Yard might be considered.
- **Dining facilities** are among the most important elements on any campus for building community, and ours require significant investment. Dining is inherently a social activity, and Brandeis dining facilities (in both Usdan and Sherman) should support that with dining venues serving a wide range of cuisines, consistent with the strongly international character of our student body, in aesthetically appealing settings. Attractive dining facilities are also a key differentiator for prospective students and their parents as they go about their “college tours.”

- **The main campus entrance should be welcoming and assist visitors in orienting themselves to campus.** This can take place in a variety of ways that do not require staff to be present, including audio connection, apps for mobile devices, touch-screen kiosks (which might also provide visitor parking permits and directions to parking; see recommendation below), and others. The entrance should be reconfigured to improve traffic flow and overall functionality.
- The 2001 master plan concept of the **Southern Gateway to campus** should be embraced. This would involve, over time, development of the area around Epstein (and a renovated or replaced Epstein) to provide an attractive town-gown interface, with appealing eateries, the university bookstore (perhaps in renovated old, or new, Epstein), social interaction venues, access to stress-free parking (see recommendation later in this section), and clear maps, kiosks, and signs helping orient and welcome visitors to the Brandeis campus. To enable this, Facilities Services should be relocated to a new home to be created in the space framed by South St. and Old South St. (which should be decommissioned and removed).
- Create one or more **graduate housing communities** on campus, in Waltham, and/or along the MBTA's Fitchburg line (which stops at the Brandeis/Roberts station). Opportunities in Waltham or elsewhere along the MBTA line might involve privatized housing (not generally viable for undergraduate housing, at least in the northeast, but a possibility worth exploring for graduate housing). (F&CE TF member Ed Chazen's students at IBS developed an impressive proposal to create such a community adjacent to the Waltham Watch Factory.)
- **Increase parking capacity** by creating two parking structures, one on the Lower Campus, on the South Residence Lot, and one on the Upper Campus (location t.b.d.). This would serve several important purposes:
 - increase overall parking capacity to accommodate visitors, particularly in connection with conferences occurring during the day (Brandeis has on many occasions been unable to host such events for lack of adequate parking);
 - enable removal of parallel parking on the campus loop road. This would allow the loop road to become two-way, with each leg ending in a turn-around on either side of the north end of the central pedestrian spine (currently the area of greatest pedestrian-vehicular conflict on campus). This concept, set forth in the 2001 Campus Master Plan, would create a far more pedestrian-friendly environment on the Brandeis campus and would increase safety in a zone of heavy foot traffic.

Access to the campus and its facilities is a crucial dimension for campus planning. Accordingly, parking planning should be carried out in coordination with overall transportation planning for the University.

- Create a **convening space** that can accommodate approximately 1,000 people. Brandeis currently has no space appropriately sized for an entire class to gather together. A portion of this space might serve as the site of some or all of the "signature course" lectures envisioned by the Academic Innovations Task Force. It would be a site for conferences, and would enable global connectivity; this space could be part of the Brandeis University Conference Center (see next recommendation).
- Create the **Brandeis Conference Center, technologically equipped for global connectivity**. This space could serve a variety of functions across all strategic themes presented here. A broad planning effort would be required to ensure that the spaces in the Center would be as flexible and multi-use as possible (see next section, Efficient and Effective Use of Physical Resources, and see the Integrated Arts Task Force report).
- **A physical home for alumni returning to campus** would serve as a symbolic expression of alumni's continued participation as full members of the Brandeis community, and, on a practical level, would help make their time on campus more comfortable, convenient, and enjoyable. The Castle, which is in need of comprehensive renewal, could be renovated to create an Alumni Center on the ground level while still providing housing for students, above, through more efficient use of space.

Efficient and Effective Use of Physical Resources

Efficient use of physical resources is an essential prerequisite for Brandeis living up to our president's imperatives: "University first," and "no silos." For existing space, this means creating an environment of transparency and openness, together with supporting systems, to facilitate sharing of space where possible and productive. In planning for renovations or for new space, it means committing to holistic, truly integrated planning, in which a top priority is to create, whenever feasible and appropriate, spaces that support not just one function and not just one unit, office, or department, but multiple functions and multiple members of the community from across the university.

- **Holistic planning** should be applied to all renovation/renewal projects and all new construction projects. This means that the needs of the institution as a whole should always be considered, in addition to the needs of distinct units of the University. In general, the goal should be to create highly flexible spaces that support academic and co-curricular functions not only within one area but across the University. In all cases, facilities planning should involve faculty, staff, and students.
- "Imagine how much space we would have if we used the space we have more efficiently and extensively." **Expand allowable uses and access to many spaces on campus**, through the creation of an open, transparent room inventory and an online room reservation system that bypasses the need to know "whom to call" to reserve particular rooms.
 - Create incentives for room "sharing" (e.g., by directing additional maintenance support at rooms that are shared and most heavily used).(This recommendation links to a programmatic initiative [not described here] to create a truly comprehensive online events system that would allow all members of the community to learn more about their many opportunities for engagement and participation.)
- Establish an institutional commitment to **assessment of space quality** (what works well; what does not work well) **and assessment of space utilization**, in support of planning for strategic allocation of space, sharing, and multiple use of spaces.

Sustainability

A commitment to sustainability is a commitment to the future of Brandeis as well as to the future of the planet. An absence of financial sustainability or an absence of physical sustainability would threaten the life and future of the institution. Brandeis is institutionally committed, and is a charter signatory, to the American College and University Presidents' Climate Commitment. The University is also committed to meeting a LEED-gold equivalent standard (or better) in all new construction and major renovations. Living our values is one of the most effective means of communicating and teaching those values to our students, on whom our collective future depends. Brandeis's participation in the use of the STARS assessment tool serves as a valuable guidepost for our efforts, and we should continue to improve our institutional practices across the spectrum of perspectives addressed in STARS. Together with the elements mentioned earlier, in Reflecting our Values and Commitments, these commitments and efforts reflect our belief that the ways in which we meet the needs and desires of the current generation should not endanger the viability of future generations or endeavors.

- **Facilities at high risk of functional failure and/or failure to effectively support academic and student life programs should be prioritized for targeted renewal investments.** These investments should, in all cases, go beyond the notion of "repair," or merely addressing deferred maintenance; they should embrace holistic planning in support of the University's strategic goals. Key instances include:

- **The library**, which should be rethought as the “nerve center” of the academic enterprise. Renovation and adaptive reuse (perhaps with a modest addition) should be carefully considered, as they offer great potential for significant cost savings compared to replacement of the facility.
- **The Creative Arts:** The Facilities and Campus Evolution Task Force endorses and urges adoption of the physical recommendations being put forth by the Integrated Arts Task Force (IATF), including the creation of a Center for Creative Collaboration, a blend of new and renovated/reconceived existing space. The SPSC is referred to the section on Making Space for Creative Innovation and Collaboration, within the IATF’s report.
- **The Science Complex**, which requires renewal investments to align facilities with the strategic vision for the sciences in the coming decades. Phase 2 within the Science Complex Master Plan should be rethought in light of that developing strategic vision.
- **The Social Sciences** area, which currently occupies a central zone on the Brandeis campus inefficiently, with Pearlman, in particular, too small for the site it occupies. The space between Pearlman and Schwartz/Brown should become the site of a new hub for the Social Sciences, much as the Mandel Center for the Humanities provides a hub for the Mandel Quad buildings. Existing buildings would be incorporated in the concept for that hub, with appropriate renovations and adaptive reuse as needed. This new hub could provide a home for a Center for Health and Human Development across the Lifespan, with state-of-the-art laboratories for the behavioral and social sciences, Lemberg Children’s Center as a lab school providing experiential learning opportunities as well as evidence-based, high-quality day care, and other scholarship and translational projects focused on lifelong health. This new hub could also be an alternative location for the Brandeis Social Justice Connection (see the first recommendation in Reflecting our Values and Commitments).
- The University should begin to move forward with a plan to **renovate the older buildings in the Mandel Humanities Quad**, consistent with the sector plan concept to **add connectors between the buildings**. The connectors would allow addition of common spaces, informal learning spaces, and alternative teaching/learning spaces to serve the entire Mandel Quad and the University as a whole. Insertion of these spaces in the connectors will significantly reduce the cost of renovations by reducing the amount of adaptive reuse and wholesale reconfiguration of spaces within existing buildings. One of the connectors might also include one of the “satellite” fitness and recreation facilities referenced in Building Community.
- **Minimum standards should be established for all residence halls** and correction of identified deficiencies should be carried out within two to three years. As soon as possible, a program carried out in recent years to accomplish the renewal of residence halls should be continued. Renovations/renewals should include the insertion of common spaces and other community engagement spaces that are either absent or insufficient in many existing residence halls.
- The University should make a commitment to a **substantial renewal program for campus infrastructure**, funded from an increased allocation in the annual capital budget; the annual capital budget derived from funded depreciation should be used only for intended purposes, with no use of those funds for purposes that should properly fall within the operating budget.
- **Swing spaces** must be created to support any future substantial renovations of existing facilities (this is essential for many of the recommendations within this strategic theme). For example, the lower level of G’Zang might provide swing space for temporary office relocations to support renovation of academic buildings.
- **Funding for furniture and interior finishes renewal** should become a regular, appropriately funded line item in annual budgets. Renewal of furniture and interior finishes is too important to depend on “someone having a few bucks left” toward the end of the fiscal year.