

April, 1997

Dear Friends,

I am pleased to report that there is a wonderful spirit on campus resulting from the spate of good news about Brandeis that has characterized the past few months.

In November, the University underwent its regular, ten-year reaccreditation review. President James Freedman of Dartmouth College headed the team of outside evaluators drawn from colleges and universities across the country. Their report commended Brandeis for "the strong commitment of the faculty to teaching and scholarship, the intellectual curiosity and enthusiasm of the students, the vision and commitment of the administration and staff members, and the dedication of the Trustees." The team was struck by the extraordinary number of faculty who have national and international reputations in their fields, eleven of whom are members of the National Academy of Sciences and twenty-seven of whom are members of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. "Few universities," the report concluded, "can claim such a high level of distinction."

In addition to this glowing report, Brandeis achieved new heights in a major study by Hugh Davis Graham and Nancy Diamond, *The Rise of American Research Universities*, published in January by The Johns Hopkins University Press. One of the first studies to use empirical data adjusted for institutional size, Graham and Diamond focused on research achievements in the sciences, social sciences, arts and humanities. Brandeis emerged number 1 among the 11 rising research universities, defined as institutions not previously ranked in the three major comparative studies of 1960-1982, but now among the top universities in the country.

Brandeis's overall standing among all private research universities in the nation is outstanding. We rank third in the humanities, behind Princeton and Yale and ahead of Chicago, Brown, Harvard, and Columbia. In the social science index, Brandeis ranks 18th. In the sciences, Brandeis ranks 12th, just ahead of the University of Pennsylvania and Duke. When the three indices are combined, Brandeis ranks ninth nationally among the top 26 private research universities, tied with Johns Hopkins and ahead of Cornell (14), Brown (15), MIT (18), NYU (23), and Tufts (24). Brandeis's standing in the rankings is even more extraordinary when you consider that we are not yet 50 years old. Citing this new information, *The Boston Globe*, on March 6, featured Brandeis in a highly complimentary front-page article, and *The New York Times* published a related story on March 19.

Among the many new faculty appointments we made for next fall, I would like to mention two that have attracted special attention. Former Secretary of Labor Robert Reich will begin teaching at Brandeis this fall as the Maurice B. Hexter Professor of Social and Economic Policy in the Heller School. Professor Reich will also be University Professor, only the fifth person in Brandeis's history so named, allowing him to teach courses in a variety of disciplines at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. Professor Reich chose Brandeis from among a number of prestigious institutions, noting the University's strong commitment to social and economic justice.

Ann Richards, the former Governor of Texas, will inaugurate the newly-established Fred and Rita Richman Distinguished Visiting Professorship, team-teaching a course on American government with Professor of Politics Shep Melnick. Established to bring

accomplished practitioners of politics and economics to campus each year, the Richman Distinguished Visiting Professorship is a gift of Mr. and Mrs. Fred Richman of New York, the parents of Dr. Carol Saivetz '69, the parents-in-law of Mr. Richard Saivetz '69 and the grandparents of Michael Saivetz '97.

Throughout the winter and spring, our students have interacted with a number of distinguished visitors, several of them alumni. On February 13, noted feminist and author Gloria Steinem addressed an overflow crowd in Levin Ballroom as part of the Women's Studies celebration of raising \$1 million to endow a visiting professorship in that program. Other visitors have included actress and casting director Joanna Merlin; Bruce Springsteen's manager, Jonathan Landau '69; Theresa Rebeck '83, producer of the popular television police drama *NYPD Blue*; and Paul Silverman '64, Principal, Chief Creative Officer of Mullen Advertising. Students have also discussed art with the Chilean painter Ernesto Barredo and met the prize-winning Senegalese poet, playwright, and novelist Cheik Aliou Ndao; created their own art and worked directly with the internationally recognized painter and sculptor Jonathan Borofsky; and heard Mexican author and columnist Luis Rubio M.A. '78, Ph.D. '83, speak on "Mexico Today." They have also met Viacom International Chairman Sumner Redstone, speaking on "Managing International Business;" listened to prominent Israeli novelist A. B. Yehoshua speak on "Israeli Identity in a Time of Peace;" and discussed "The Reproduction of Mothering: Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender" with internationally-acclaimed sociologist Nancy Chodorow, Ph.D. '75. Our students have also had the opportunity to study this semester with Eileen McNamara, an adjunct member of the Brandeis faculty, who has just received a Pulitzer Prize for her work as a commentary writer at *The Boston Globe*.

As I reported to you in November, the University has taken a variety of steps to enhance student life: new lounge furniture, carpeting, and fresh paint in various residence facilities, a program of improvement that will be continued this summer; weekend trash collection service in the residence halls; new meal options in the dining halls and a dinner option in the campus restaurant, The Stein. We have also provided funds to enable students to participate in the "Take a Faculty or Staff Member to Dinner" program, expanded faculty programming in the residence halls, extended hours at the Gosman Sports and Convocation Center during finals, increased support for special events for students, and expanded intercultural programming. Thanks to strong leadership by student coordinators, this semester's programs for Black History Month, Women's Month, Asian Awareness Week, and Islamic Awareness Week were all highly successful and well received by a diverse population of our students.

The University's athletic teams have come in for their own share of success. In March, the men's baseball team won the University Athletic Association (UAA) championship, and we hosted the UAA track championship in which the Brandeis women finished first and the Brandeis men finished second. Also in March, two Brandeis students won national titles at the NCAA Division III Indoor Track and Field Championships at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh. Victoria Petrillo '99 won her third national title in the 800 meters and Geoffrey Getz '99 won his first national title in the 800 meters, setting a personal best time and breaking the Wisconsin-Oshkosh Fieldhouse record. The men's fencing team finished 16th in the NCAA all-division national championship held at the Air Force Academy, placing second among all Division III schools.

Many Brandeis students have earned special recognition for their academic accomplishments. Notable among them are Daniel J. Needleman '98, a physics major from Providence, Rhode Island, named a Goldwater Scholar in a national competition, and Lisa

Dyson '97 of Canyon Country, California, a double major in physics and mathematics, who will study plasma physics and fusion next year on a Fulbright Scholarship at Imperial College, University of London.

In March, the University was notified of a \$650,000 grant from the Mellon Foundation to fund the appointment of Andrew W. Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows. The Fellows will have two-year appointments involving interaction with undergraduate and graduate students through both teaching and research. The Mellon Postdoctoral Fellows will expand the cross-disciplinary reach of various academic departments and programs in areas of particular interest to our undergraduates, such as Environmental Studies and East Asian Studies.

April is the month for admission at colleges and universities across the country. For the fourth year in a row, Brandeis received a record number of applications for undergraduate admission, nearly 5,700 applicants for 800 places in the freshman class. Over the past five years, the size of the applicant pool at Brandeis has grown by 48 per cent. Coupled with this increase has been a steady improvement in the academic quality of the applicant pool, and greatly increased competition for admission. The heightened competition contributed to a 10 per cent increase over last year in our Early Decision admission option. We also witnessed an increase in applications from minority students, up nearly 14 per cent over last year. The graduate admission process is still under way at this time; however, I am pleased to note that the quality of the masters and doctoral applicants remains very high, and we find ourselves in competition with America's most distinguished graduate programs. We have also witnessed sharp increases in the applications to selected programs, as for example the Program in Sustainable International Development, whose applications are up by 140 per cent. In my fall letter, I look forward to reporting to you about the Brandeis Class of 2001 and our new graduate degree candidates.

As we get ready to welcome the students in the Class of 2001, preparations are under way for the University's forty-sixth commencement on May 25. This year's graduates, their friends and families will have the rare opportunity to hear keynote addresses by two Nobel Peace Prize winners, Shimon Peres, the former prime minister of Israel, and Oscar Arias, the former president of Costa Rica, who spearheaded the Central American peace initiative in the 1980s that bears his name. The University will also honor actor and comedienne Whoopi Goldberg, Professor of Chemistry and Nobel laureate Roald Hoffmann, philanthropist and Jewish communal statesman Max Fisher, and entrepreneur, community leader, and philanthropist Samuel H. Stroum.

Mr. Stroum, a graduate of Waltham High School, is known as "Seattle's Dean of Philanthropy," a community in which he and his wife are active supporters of the arts, education, and health services. At Brandeis, Mr. Stroum has provided generous support for the Waltham Scholarship Program, which enables top Waltham graduates to attend Brandeis. The Fisher-Bernstein Institute for Leadership Development in Jewish Philanthropy was created this year with an endowment from Mr. Fisher and is named for him and for Mr. Irving Bernstein, who served as executive vice chairman of the United Jewish Appeal from 1969 to 1984 and has been a visiting professor at Brandeis. The Institute provides graduate level courses in fundraising and offers continuing education for lay and professional leadership development.

Finally, the University is continuing its review of the long-range planning initiatives contained in my report, *Brandeis 2000: Building on Strength*, about which I have reported periodically in the pages of these letters. A recently-released Brandeis 2000 progress report confirms that the University is achieving, and in some cases surpassing, the goals it set for

itself. These include structural improvements in the University's finances, the introduction of various operating efficiencies, a shift of resources from selected doctoral programs to undergraduate education, improved student retention, and a slight decrease in the overall size of the faculty. Other high priority issues continue to demand attention. These include the need to improve faculty and staff salaries, to further upgrade our information technology systems, to reduce the rate of endowment utilization, to address deferred maintenance and capital improvement needs, and to continue to control the rate of tuition increase.

I am committed to keeping tuition increases at Brandeis as low as prudence permits. This year's 3.4 per cent increase in billed charges is one of the lowest in the nation. We must balance carefully the limits on tuition increases with the equally important need to maintain academic excellence. I am very sensitive to parents' concerns about the cost of their children's education. This is one of the reasons why, despite increasing economic pressures, Brandeis maintains a "need-blind" admissions policy, accepting students on the basis of academic merit, not their ability to pay.

Your comments regarding my seasonal letters are always welcome, and I look forward to hearing from you. I can be reached by mail or by e-mail at <JReinharz@Brandeis.edu>.

With all good wishes,

Sincerely,

Jehuda Reinharz

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