

November, 1997

Dear Friends:

The education of the Brandeis Class of 2001 got off to a brisk start in a marvelous session of the New Student Forum. James Carroll, author of *An American Requiem*, the assigned summer reading for the entering class, led the discussion. *An American Requiem* details Carroll's experience in the 1960s as the war-resisting son of an air force general. To judge by the students' enthusiastic reaction, Carroll's memoir raised important moral questions which the students later debated in small groups led by faculty and staff.

For the fourth consecutive year, the entering class was drawn from the largest applicant pool in the University's history. SAT scores were up again, and there was a 10 per cent increase in the number of National Merit Scholars. This year's entering class comes from 36 different states and 27 countries. The opening of the school year was exceptionally successful, thanks to the efforts of Orientation Coordinator Michele Greenwald '98, the members of her Core Committee, and the assistance of 170 student volunteers and 57 Resident Advisors. The Coordinator of Orientation '98 will be LeeMichael McLean '99 from Alton, NH.

I am particularly pleased by the increase in international and minority students, a trend that reflects positively on the University's commitment to pluralism and diversity. Our international status was underscored by the inauguration in September of our new Center for German and European Studies, which convened the conference, "German Literature, Jewish Critics." Supported by a \$1.5 million grant from the German government, the creation of the Center was facilitated by Professor Werner Weidenfeld, coordinator for German-American Cooperation in the German Foreign Office and a Brandeis Trustee. Under the direction of Professor of Politics Steven L. Burg, the Center will study European integration, the institutions and political systems of the European Union, issues of German and Jewish identity and the role of the Jewish community in Germany today, international relations between Europe and North America, and German and European history.

Also in September, we welcomed the first Distinguished Visitor of our new International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life. Dr. Sari Nusseibeh, president of Al-Quds University in Jerusalem, spent a week at Brandeis lecturing, participating in panel discussions with members of the media and scholars on issues of values and politics, and meeting with students in and out of the classroom. One of the first Palestinians to publicly endorse a peaceful solution to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, Dr. Nusseibeh is widely known for his book, *No Trumpets, No Drums: A Two-State Settlement of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict*, co-authored with Mark Heller of Tel Aviv University.

*

During September and October, students celebrated Brandeis's first-ever Hispanic Heritage Month, planned and coordinated under the leadership of Blanca Elizabeth Vega '98, president of ¡Ahora! The month's events included a talk by Milagros Cruz-Segarra, president of the Connecticut Hispanic Bar Association, concerts, a career symposium, a Latin American food fest, and a film and discussion on immigration. Other cultural and social events this semester include the Intercultural Center's Open House; the Thanksgiving Interfaith Service; "Doing Justice Weekend," featuring a variety of social and community service activities; "Midnite Madness," a celebration in Shapiro Athletic Center that occurs the night preceding the NCAA-governed start of basketball practice; "Club East," a pre-Halloween party in East Quad; "Mela,"

a South Asia cultural show; "Louis Louis Weekend," an end-of-the-semester series of social events; concerts by the groups "Counting Crows" and "Jane's Addiction;" and a performance by comedian Adam Sandler. On four Tuesday evenings this semester, Academically Incorrect, a new debate and discussion series featuring members of the Brandeis faculty, provided students with an opportunity to meet and speak with members of the faculty in an informal setting. Students have also participated this semester in the "Take a Faculty or Staff Member to Lunch or Dinner" program, inaugurated last year as a means of increasing opportunities for informal contact between students and faculty.

This semester students enjoyed readings by novelist Cristina García, memoirist Jyl Lynn Felman, poet Anne Waldman, Fannie Hurst Poet-in-Residence Jay Wright, and African feminist writer Buchi Emecheta, among many others. Students also met Hollywood film director Peter Bogdanovich, participated in a master class with OBIE and Drama Desk Award actress Joan Copeland, and attended performances and workshops with members of ACTER, five actors from the London stage in residence at Brandeis for a week in October. This fall we celebrated ArtsFest September and ArtsFest November, two three-day programs of dance, theater performances, musical recitals, arts lectures, and museum exhibits. Among the major exhibits at the Rose Art Museum was a showing of the works of Annee Spileos Scott, "Manliness is Close to Godliness," examining the role of gender in organized religion, and "Robert Farber: A Retrospective 1985-1995," the first museum survey of mixed media work by the late artist and Brandeis alumnus, Class of 1970. These are a few of the many arts activities which continue to play an important role in the education of our students. My thanks to all the donors, parents, and alumni who make the artistic life at Brandeis so vibrant.

In October, students, faculty, and staff participated in the third annual Community Service Day. Instituted at the initiative of Leo Fuchs '98, Community Service Day continues a tradition of service begun at Brandeis with the establishment of the student-run Waltham Group more than 35 years ago. A study by the Heller School's Center for Human Resources, quoted extensively by President Clinton, found that students who participated in middle and high school service-learning programs had higher grades, were more committed to service and more aware of community needs, were more socially responsible and accepting of cultural diversity, and felt better about their educational experience. The study was conducted for the Corporation for National Service, led until recently by Eli Segal '64. Brandeis students are also engaged in "Read Waltham," a local program based on President Clinton's "America Reads" initiative to ensure that all children can read independently by the end of the third grade.

On Sunday, November 2, the men's cross-country team scored a first for Brandeis by winning the University Athletic Association cross-country championship. Currently, Brandeis's cross-country team is ranked fifth in the nation among Division III schools. We will compete later this month in the NCAA Regional Championship in Gorham, ME. Milestones were also marked by two Brandeis coaches, Michael Coven and Mary Sullivan, who recorded their 300th victories at Brandeis in men's soccer and volleyball respectively.

*

On a lovely mid-September weekend, the University undertook an unusual project, an intensive "master planning" workshop conducted by Brandeis alumni architects and professional planners. Seventeen alumni from California, Virginia, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, New York, Connecticut, and New Jersey joined administrators, faculty, and students to evaluate the current campus and our future needs. The weekend project identified principles that will help guide the development of a formal master plan for the University. The initial master plan for Brandeis, created in 1950 by the great American architect Eero Saarinen, envisioned a rural campus with a central academic core surrounded by residential "villages." The University's extraordinary growth in research capacity over the past half century has

resulted in a denser campus, which still retains its scenic attractiveness. Our alumni architects and planners are helping with design ideas for our next half century in which we hope to sustain controlled growth in an aesthetically pleasing environment.

Our alumni planners and architects focused on ways of recognizing Brandeis's architectural heritage, enhancing social interaction on campus, creating places that encourage a sense of community, establishing a site process for new buildings that addresses programmatic needs, improving the flow of pedestrian traffic, and applying the University's high standards of academic excellence and sophistication to the campus's physical environment.

The workshop participants concurred that a new vision of the campus and a formal master plan should be developed as Brandeis enters its second fifty years. This conclusion and a formal report were presented to the Board of Trustees at its October meeting by Mark Simon '68, a principal with Centerbrook Architects of Essex, CT, and Pamela Delphenich '69, University Planner at Yale. Other alumni attending the workshop included Simeon Bruner '63, Mitchell Goldman '74, Michael Hauptman '73, Robert Herman '55, Marcia Hnatowich '64, Michael Kaplan '63, Ellen Light '73, Marianne Paley Nadel '85, Brian Saber '84, Richard Saivetz '69, Margie Samuels '75, Neal Schwartz '75, Michael Seltz '65, Martin Zelnick '61, and Joseph Zinger '81.

At the October meeting of the Board of Trustees we welcomed three new trustees: Ronald Lauder, Chairman and President of Lauder Investments, Inc. of New York City, Arthur Sandler, Executive Vice President of L. M. Sandler & Sons, Inc. of Virginia Beach, Virginia, and Richard Bergel '57, retired former Chairman and CEO of Montgomery Ward Direct, who will serve as an Alumni Term Trustee. Also joining the Board are faculty representative Professor Gordon Fellman of the Department of Sociology and student representative Aaron Waxler '99. Ellen J. Atlas, President of the National Women's Committee, was re-elected to the Board. Other individuals who have joined boards of overseers or advisory boards at the University include Carol Auerbach (Philadelphia, PA), Joan Belkin (Weston, MA), Rhoda Bernstein (Ft. Worth, TX), Robert Danziger (Newton, MA), Gerald Fineberg (Boston, MA), Tony Hananel (Istanbul, Turkey), Linda Heller Kamm '61 (New York, NY), Susan Kaplan (Brookline, MA), Jennifer Malkin (Chicago, IL), Felix Posen (London, England), Marlene Post (New York, NY), Carol Rabinovitz '59 (Cumberland Foreside, ME), Annie Sandler (Norfolk, VA), Carol Smokler (Ann Arbor, MI), Gwenn Snider (Wellesley, MA), Alan Solomont (Weston, MA), Susan Lewis Solomont (Weston, MA), Helen Spaulding (Manchester, MA), Roselyn C. Swig (San Francisco, CA), Diane Troderman (Longmeadow, MA), Rhonda Zinner (Cambridge, MA), and Barbra Streisand (Los Angeles, CA), who has accepted appointment as honorary chair of the new International Research Institute on Jewish Women.

*

Peter B. French joined us this summer as Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer and made his initial presentation to the fall meeting of the Board of Trustees. Peter's extensive background includes service as a senior financial officer in higher education, Principal Budget Examiner of the New York State Division of the Budget, and First Deputy Commissioner and Chief Operating Officer of the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation. Peter has moved quickly to strengthen the planning and analysis capacities of the division of finance and administration. He has improved management efficiency, upgraded financial reporting systems, and implemented improved training for staff. His next projects are to streamline bursar, registrar, and financial aid functions and to improve services for students and parents. It is very important to me that the University is not only a first-rate academic institution, but is also well managed.

Within the last few weeks, the University has completed installation of fiber optic cable throughout the campus as part of a longer-term effort to upgrade information technology

systems for students, faculty, and staff. Efforts are also underway to consolidate academic and administrative computing functions under a new information officer position. The investment in our information technology systems is being undertaken to ensure that Brandeis remains competitive in this critically important area.

In a technology survey of computer access and information services of Boston area colleges and universities conducted by Peterson's, a college guidebook company, Brandeis was ranked third out of 25 schools, behind MIT and Boston University. Factors considered included campus computer labs, on-campus and off-campus access to the Internet, and technology support services. In other surveys, Brandeis moved from 29th to 28th in the U.S. News & World Report ranking of national research universities, and we were ranked 18th in terms of fellowships and grants awarded to our faculty by the American Council of Learned Societies for the period 1962 to 1996. Adjusted for institutional size, Brandeis would be among the top five institutions on the ACLS list. This acknowledgment of the quality of the faculty is also reflected in the many honors and distinctions they receive. Among those honored are Professor of Biology Michael Rosbash, the 27th Brandeis faculty member elected as a Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, and Professor of Biology Hugh Huxley, who received the Copley Medal from the British Royal Society. First awarded in 1731, the Copley Medal is the Society's highest honor, and previous recipients include Benjamin Franklin, Louis Pasteur, and Albert Einstein.

This fall the Division of Continuing and Professional Studies in the Rabb School of Summer, Special and Continuing Studies introduced a series of evening undergraduate and graduate courses leading to an advanced certificate or a master's degree in software engineering. The programs are designed for industry professionals with on-the-job programming experience or for individuals with an undergraduate degree in a technical field. We are encouraged by the capacity enrollments in all the classes offered this fall and plan to offer additional technical and liberal arts evening programs in the near future. They play an important role in meeting the educational needs of the local community of adult learners.

*

During the last several weeks, I have made a number of trips around the country. On each occasion, I have been very warmly greeted, and I am heartened by the positive responses I receive from parents, alumni, friends, and supporters of the University. One of the messages I carry is the sense of confidence and satisfaction which I detect in the Brandeis community. Another important message concerns the strength of the student body and the importance of providing scholarship aid. The need is very great in this area, and I am pleased to report that we have recently received several major endowments to help underwrite our programs of need-based and merit scholarship aid. I am concerned about the cost of education for our students and their families, and I am committed to doing what I can to make it possible for students to benefit from a Brandeis education on the basis of merit, not ability to pay.

Each year brings its joys and challenges. This year has a special flavor as we conclude our first half century of growth and accomplishment. I hope that all of you will join with me as we prepare for our fiftieth anniversary celebration. I wish you a joyous holiday season with family and friends.

Sincerely,

Jehuda Reinharz

JR:dbm