



Brandeis University

Office of
Media Relations

Mailstop 063
P.O. Box 549110
Waltham, Massachusetts
02454-9110

781-736-4200
781-736-4209 Fax
781-736-3009 TTY/TDD
www.brandeis.edu

For release
Contact: Dennis Nealon
781-736-4205
nealon@brandeis.edu

With vote to close art museum, Brandeis renews ‘unwavering’ commitment to students, research and academic mission

WALTHAM, Mass., Jan. 26, 2009 — Brandeis University’s Board of Trustees today voted unanimously to close the Rose Art Museum as part of a campus-wide effort to preserve the university’s educational mission in the face of the historic economic recession and financial crisis. Board members stressed that the museum decision will not alter the university’s commitment to the arts and the teaching of the arts.

“These are extraordinary times,” said Brandeis President Jehuda Reinharz. “We cannot control or fix the nation’s economic problems. We can only do what we have been entrusted to do — act responsibly with the best interests of our students and their futures foremost in mind.”

Opened in 1961, the Rose Art Museum houses a large amount of modern and contemporary art. Plans call for the museum to close in late summer 2009, and transition into a fine arts teaching center with studio space and an exhibition gallery.

After necessary legal approvals and working with a top auction house, the university will publicly sell the art collection. Proceeds from the sale will be reinvested in the university to combat the far-reaching effects of the economic crisis, and fortify the university’s position for the future.

Brandeis officials said the decision to close the museum is part of an emerging new vision for the university aimed at streamlining it for the future while bolstering its focus on undergraduates, the liberal arts and research.

In recent months, the university has been reviewing expenditures and discussing new initiatives to meet the serious economic challenges. Belt tightening has already brought substantial decreases in administrative budgets.

In a special session on Jan. 22, the Brandeis faculty voted unanimously to support the president and trustees as they combat the effects of the economic recession and work to make Brandeis stronger academically and fiscally for the 21st century. Faculty members agreed that the university should maintain the strengths that have helped position Brandeis among the nation’s top liberal arts and research institutions.

Brandeis officials have estimated that the economic recession will continue to adversely affect operating expenses, performance of the endowment, financial aid and scholarships. At Brandeis and schools around the country, fundraising revenue is declining and families are looking for more financial aid to help them cope with their own unenviable economic straits.

Reinharz said the Rose Museum decision was very difficult. But he characterized it as an important step in the ongoing resource management and allocation process on the school’s campus. “I am satisfied that our commitment is unwavering; that someday we will look back and say that when the quality of education and student services was at stake, we made hard choices so that Brandeis could emerge even stronger.”