Knowledge, Action and Reflection for the Next Generation at Brandeis

Our Brandeis campus programs equip students with tools they need to become social justice change agents. Through fellowships, events, coursework and research projects, we provide experiences in “real world” settings, at the intersection of knowledge and action. We encourage intensive critical thinking and inquiry that considers a range of perspectives in a global context and emphasizes a core of respect.

The Center is strengthening and invigorating the Brandeis University social justice tradition – and innovating within it. We add greater clarity and intellectual depth to the conversation about the meaning of social justice and its place at Brandeis, encouraging debate and reflection. We build community among social justice-minded individuals on campus. This happens in our work with individual students, and this happens in our engagement with the greater community as we build Brandeis University’s annual “festival of social justice” – ‘DEIS Impact.

In conjunction with our Program in Peacebuilding and the Arts and our Programs in International Justice and Society, the Center supports students as they explore the world, encouraging a climate of balanced consideration, creative response and ethical reflection.

At Brandeis we

- support six undergraduate Sorensen Fellows each year for ethics-related summer internships in the U.S. or abroad, bookended by courses for preparation and reflection.
- organize and sponsor dozens of events showcasing a range of perspectives each year: multi-day conferences and symposia, intimate conversations, and workshops.
- host ‘DEIS Impact, an annual weeklong “festival of social justice” organized with the undergraduate Student Union.
- publish “Ethical Inquiry,” a regular online series presenting a range of opinions on vexing ethical questions, researched and written by Brandeis undergraduates, graduate students and alumni.
- established and continue to support the Advocacy for Policy Change Initiative, in which students engage in hands-on advocacy work at the Massachusetts State House, seeking to reform existing laws or advance new ones.
- provide student leadership opportunities on our events advisory committee and the Ethics Center Leadership Council (our undergraduate “street team”).
- host two University-wide awards on behalf of the Office of the President: the Gittler Prize and the Richman Distinguished Fellowship in Public Life.
2014 highlights

- The third annual ‘DEIS Impact “festival of social justice,” sponsored by the Center in partnership with the Student Union, encompasses 35 events and more than 2,500 participants from Brandeis and beyond.
- The Center hosts “Extremists and the Challenge of Public Conversation” featuring members of the Center’s international advisory board.
- The students of the Ethics Center Leadership Council produce original videos for the Center’s popular YouTube channel, introducing the work of the Center to a broader audience and sharing the ideas and opinions of fellow Brandeis students.
- Undergraduate Sorensen Fellows intern at a medical clinic in Ghana, Warsaw’s Museum of the History of Polish Jews, a social entrepreneurship organization tackling systemic social problems in India, and with organizations working on microfinance in Kenyan slums, college access in the USA, and other challenges around the world.

Selected resources

- Online “Ethical Inquiries” presenting a range of thinking on compelling ethical topics, such as “Helping or Hurting? The Ethics of Voluntourism” and “Is Ethnic Modification Surgery Ethical?”
- Summaries, photos and videos of events, including ‘DEIS Impact.
- Publications by Sorensen Fellows and “Advocacy for Policy Change” students, from “Reversal of Roles: Lessons Learned as a Teacher in Uganda” to “Support for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.”
- A YouTube channel featuring Center events, original interviews with leading thinkers and practitioners from around the globe and more.

How to connect

- Request cosponsorship of an ethics-related campus event.
- Research and write an “Ethical Inquiry.”
- Apply for the undergraduate Sorensen Fellowship.
- Apply for the undergraduate Ethics Center Leadership Council.
- “Like” the Center on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Contact

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The International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life develops effective responses to conflict and injustice by offering innovative approaches to coexistence, strengthening the work of international courts, and encouraging ethical practice in civic and professional life.

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