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, Programs in International Justice and Society, and ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation, 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 each year showcasing a range of perspectives: 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,” an online series presenting a range of opinions on vexing ethical questions, researched and written by Brandeis undergraduates, graduate students and alumni.
- provide student leadership opportunities on our events advisory committee.
- host two University-wide awards on behalf of the Office of the President: the Gittler Prize and the Richman Distinguished Fellowship in Public Life.
- support courses for undergraduates and graduate students on topics related to the Center’s mission.
“As a Sorensen Fellow I was exposed to cutting-edge theories – and could see them actualized at a center for peace and reconciliation in Northern Ireland. My relationships there and the Ethics Center’s support and mentorship inspired me to think outside the box and innovate on social change. This led to my career as a social entrepreneur – and furthered my growth as a human being, opening my mind and heart in ways that I had previously not imagined possible.”

– Andrew Slack ’02, Sorensen Fellowship alum

Founder and Executive Director of the non-profit organization the Harry Potter Alliance, “an army of fans, activists, nerdfighters, teenagers, wizards and muggles dedicated to fighting for social justice with the greatest weapon we have – love.”

2016 highlights

- The fifth annual ‘DEIS Impact “festival of social justice,” sponsored by the Center in partnership with the Student Union, encompasses 47 events and more than 4,000 participants from Brandeis and beyond.
- The Center hosts acclaimed artist and social activist Theaster Gates, the 2015-16 Richman Distinguished Fellow in Public Life, and Martha Minow, dean of Harvard Law School, the winner of the 2015-16 Joseph B. and Toby Gittler Prize.
- Undergraduate Sorensen Fellows intern with organizations focused on immigration and human rights (Boston), community-focused art (Hanoi), peace and human rights (Jerusalem), community organizing (Jerusalem), supporting novice Buddhist monks in an under-resourced region (New Delhi), and environmental conservation (New York State).

Selected resources

- A YouTube channel featuring Center events, original interviews with leading thinkers and practitioners from around the globe.
- Publications by Sorensen Fellows and “Advocacy for Policy Change” students, from “Becoming Chinese Feminists: Power, Communities and Challenges” to “Healthcare for Unaccompanied Homeless Youth.”
- Online “Ethical Inquiries” presenting a range of thinking on compelling ethical topics, such as “Helping or Hurting? The Ethics of Voluntourism” and “Exploring the Ethics of Solitary Confinement.”
- Summaries, photos and videos of events, including ‘DEIS Impact.

How to connect

- Request cosponsorship of an ethics-related campus event during ‘DEIS Impact or anytime.
- Research and write an “Ethical Inquiry.”
- Apply for the undergraduate Sorensen Fellowship.
- Take a course offered or supported by the Center.
- “Like” the Center on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

Contact

Marcia McPhee, Director of Campus Programs
mcphee@brandeis.edu
+1-781-736-7744
brandeis.edu/ethics/atbrandeis

International Center for Ethics, Justice and Public Life
Brandeis University, MS 086
Waltham, MA 02454-9110 USA

The Center’s Brandeis campus programs are supported in part by the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice, which was founded by Center board member Jules Bernstein ’57, and is funded in part by Mr. Bernstein and his wife, Linda Lipsett; and by a generous multi-year commitment from Center board member Gillian Sorensen.

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.

brandeis.edu/ethics ■ facebook.com/EthicsBrandeis
twitter.com/EthicsBrandeis ■ +1-781-736-8577