FROM THE DIRECTOR – DANIEL TERRIS

Lessons from Jerusalem

I spent 2016-17 as a Fulbright Scholar at Al-Quds University (AQU), a Palestinian institution with campuses in Jerusalem and the West Bank. I was teaching in and helping to re-build a master’s program in American Studies. While I have a long association with AQU, this was my first academic year in residence, and many have asked what I learned. Some answers follow. (For more see: blogs.brandeis.edu/danielterris.)

First, the experience re-doubled my faith in the importance of higher education. My students – young Palestinian professionals in fields like government, journalism, business and the NGO sector – hungered for new knowledge, and were keen to apply it to their professional lives and to improving their society.

AQU offered them new insights into democracy, culture, justice and injustice, and leadership. Palestinian universities are flawed (what school is not?), but I left Jerusalem confident that the future of a peaceful Middle East depends as much as anything on strengthening Palestinian higher education.

Second, I was struck by the widening gulf of ignorance that divides the Palestinian, Israeli, and American communities. When I first visited AQU 20 years ago, the barriers – physical and otherwise – were much lower. Now, a

At a Time of Political Change, a Focus on State Government

At this time of political upheaval and recalibration in the United States there has been a renewed focus on state government. Into this context steps the Ethics Center’s newest program, ENACT: The Educational Network for Active Civic Transformation. ENACT has just finished its first academic year supporting professors and undergraduates across the country as they engage with state-level politics.

ENACT Faculty Fellows at 16 colleges and universities in or near state capitals are teaching undergraduates how to work with community organizations, state legislators and legislative staff to effectively influence state government.

Louis D. Brandeis called the states “laboratories of democracy” – the places were democratic innovation and advancement begins, where citizens can directly engage with their representatives and influence legislation and policy with more immediacy than is often possible at the federal level.

That is the philosophy that grounds ENACT. The mission of the program is to be a major voice in addressing challenges to American democracy by engaging young people around the country in civic activism built on knowledge, cooperation, justice and integrity.

While many people are struggling to understand how to best make an impact on policy, ENACT is providing undergraduates with academic grounding and direct experience. “This class is changing my students’ view of government and giving them a sense of empowerment that they would not have otherwise gotten,” says Faculty Fellow Kathleen Cole of Metropolitan State University. “They are passionate and full of excitement about the possibility for democratic control for our communities.”

“ENACT offers the promise of inspiring and supporting students across the nation to become engaged citizens, even as they inform and empower their own legislators,” writes William T. Pound, executive director of the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Some highlights from the spring:

Mississippi
Faculty Fellow James Slack’s students met with Mississippi Governor Phil Bryant

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Faculty Fellows at 16 schools are teaching ENACT courses.
IN THE NEWS

Staff Highlights

In January, Cynthia Cohen was a panelist at “The Arts and Communities in Crisis,” at the pre-conference of the Association of Performing Arts Presenters in New York City. In May, she was extensively quoted in the Christian Science Monitor article “How artists can heal – and heal others – after tragedy” following the Manchester U.K. bombing. Cohen was in residence at the Baker Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies at Juniata College for a week in June, working with Acting Together colleagues Polly Walker and Kitche Magak. Marci McPhee joined the Brandeis University Library Advisory Council in November. She presented “Immigrants and Refugees: What You Need to Know (and Do)” at the Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Interfaith Service at Brandeis, and in March she was a panelist for the Brandeis event “Religious Perspectives on Immigration in the United States.” This summer Leigh Swigart launched an ethnographic study focused on the impact of languages on the work of the International Criminal Court. Daniel Terris was based in Jerusalem as a U.S. Fulbright Scholar during the 2016-17 academic year, working on the development of the master’s program in American Studies at Al-Quds University. (See page 1.) David Weinstein was a panelist for “Embracing our Legacy: Community Service, Social Justice, and Activism at Brandeis” during Admitted Students Day in April. In May, he was recognized by the University for 10 years of service.

Louis D. Brandeis 100: Then & Now

In 2016 Brandeis University commemorated the 100th anniversary of the appointment of Louis D. Brandeis to the United States Supreme Court. “Louis D. Brandeis 100: Then & Now” featured a series of discussions that kicked off with remarks by Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg. Her remarks and all of the commissioned essays by participants in the series are now in print. The volume, edited by the Ethics Center’s Dan Terris, chair of the LDB 100 Organizing Committee and David Weinstein, a member of the committee, is available by request or as a PDF at brandeis.edu/LDB-100, where video of the centennial events is also posted.

The Sorensen Fellowship

2017 Cohort in the Field:

As the spring semester drew to a close, the 2017 Sorensen Fellows headed into the field for internships in Africa and across the United States: Mrudula Gadgil ’18, Michelle Dennis ’18, Leah Susman ’18, Ece Esikara ’19, Paul Sindberg ’18 and Max Gould ’18, (l-r in this photo from their pre-internship retreat, with Leah and Max participating via Skype while studying abroad) were in Baltimore, Ghana, Chicago, Boston, South Africa and the Bronx (respectively) this summer, contributing to work in the arts, criminal justice, LGBT rights, medicine and public health, refugee resettlement and more. See photos and updates: brandeis.edu/ethics/news

2016 Cohort in Print:

Read reflections from the 2016 Sorensen Fellows on their experiences one year ago, in From the Outside Looking In: Six Stories of Difference and Discovery, now in print and online: brandeis.edu/ethics/publications/sorensen_publications.html
and House Speaker Pro Tempore Greg Snowden, their legislative liaison for the ENACT course, at the Mississippi State Capitol in January. (See photo below.) “It was ‘deadline day,’” says Dr. Slack. “All bills going from one chamber to the other had to be passed by the original chamber by 8 p.m. – but that made it incredibly real.” Prof. Slack’s students are enrolled in the Trent Lott Leadership Institute’s Department of Public Policy Leadership at the University of Mississippi.

New Hampshire
In April, Faculty Fellow Stephen Pimpare’s University of New Hampshire at Manchester ENACT students shared their work with community members and legislators as part of the university’s Undergraduate Research Conference.

Idaho
This spring Cate Floate and Joe Mendonsa won “Best of College” at Boise State University’s Service-Learning Student Exhibition, for their ENACT project on sign language interpreter licensure. The exhibition showcases exemplary service-learning projects, and selects a Best of College based on the quality of the project and poster. In Faculty Fellow Jaclyn Kettler’s ENACT course “Comparative State Politics” they researched and supported an Idaho House bill requiring sign language interpreters to get a professional license. Their poster detailed their work and reflected on the citizen’s role in the state legislative process.

Coming this fall:
More ENACT courses will be introduced in the 2017-18 academic year.

The ever-growing numbers of ENACT students and alumni are offering advice to each other, and are sharing their research and materials with students in other states working on related issues, using the online ENACT network, which is integrated into ENACT courses.

For news and updates:
brandeis.edu/ethics/ENACT/news.html

ENACT is made possible by a generous gift from Ethics Center Board member Norbert Weissberg and his wife, former Board member Judith Schneider. ENACT is also supported by the Rice Family Foundation.

University of Mississippi students with Faculty Fellow James Slack (left), Governor Phil Bryant (center) and State Representative Greg Snowden (right) at the state capitol.

University of New Hampshire students meet with Senator Lou D’Allesandro, “the Dean of the New Hampshire Senate.”

IOWA
A Student Perspective on ENACT: Taylor Weigel

Drake University student Taylor Weigel ’17 (second from left in photo) reflected on her experience in ENACT Faculty Fellow Darcie Vandegrift’s course “Introduction to Race and Ethnic Relations” in a blog post, excerpted below:

“The English Language Reaffirmation Act, more commonly known as the English Only Law, was signed into law in 2002 in Iowa. …I did not understand how such a symbolically mean, anti-immigrant law could be passed in a state that was praised for its “Midwestern nice” attitude. …Meeting locals from the community with firsthand knowledge of legislators’ personal opinions helped me understand why the bill to repeal the English Only Law was shot down in committee in 2015. … I met with individuals from the Iowa Commission on Latino Affairs, our local chapter of the Industrial Areas Foundation (AMOS: A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy), the Iowa/Nebraska NAACP lobbying team, and the ACLU (American Civil Liberties Union).… These professionals from the Des Moines community provided me with insight I could not find in research. They were blunt. They were honest. They were inquisitive. But most of all, they were supportive. …

Now, I am more determined than ever to lobby for this bill this legislative season, and to repeal the English Language Reaffirmation Act in Iowa. This would not have been possible without the class…and our community interactions with leaders and advocates from around Des Moines.”

Read more about Weigel’s experience:
brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2017/Mar.22.html
Lessons from Jerusalem

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concrete wall blocks the road from the
campus in Abu Dis to the Old City of
Jerusalem. Travel restrictions and social
pressures make it much more difficult
for Israelis and Palestinians to meet,
work together, and get to know the
circumstances in which they each live.

Yet the flow of incomplete and biased
information on the internet has unleashed
a tidal wave of uninformed opinions from
all sides. Diaspora communities in the
U.S. and elsewhere may be even more
susceptible to this; even in universities,
where judgments are supposed to be
based on careful analysis, many leap to
conclusions and condemnations without
bothering to understand the facts or the
broader context.

Third, I learned something about
the value of what I will call “unpolemical”
teaching. I generally withhold explicit
discussion of my personal beliefs in the
classroom. The 2016 U.S. election and
the start of the new administration put a
lot of stress on this stance. Yet I was glad
that I stuck to it.

Perhaps in some instances my
convictions were not hard to discern,
but my students had to wrestle for
themselves with the reasons many
Americans were drawn to Mr. Trump,
with the global dimensions of the
nationalist surge, and with the impact
of events on democratic institutions. My
students could not unthinkingly echo
my preferences, nor could they reject
my teaching because they disagreed
with some opinion that I expressed.
I recognize and respect that different
teachers bring different styles to their
classrooms, but I am comfortable with
where I landed.

I have returned to my work
in Massachusetts with a renewed
appreciation for the synergy between
rigorous thought and effective action for
social change – a hallmark of both the
Ethics Center and of Brandeis University.

Documenting the Immigrant Experience

Family, Sacrifice, Courage, Hope

“Family is the thing that I live for. Family means happiness, joy – my whole life, basically... My family kept me strong and made me who I am.”

– Matthew Basílio, 11th grade,
Waltham High School

Matthew’s testament to the power of family is part of a documentary short film called “Brazilian American: The Immigration Story of Matthew Basílio” – one of five directed by teams of Brandeis students this spring in Prof. Azlin Perdomo’s new course “Documenting the Immigrant Experience,” offered by the CAST (Creativity, the Arts and Social Transformation) Program.

Perdomo partnered with Waltham High School's family and community engagement specialist, Mary Jo Rendón, to match the Brandeis undergraduates with students in the high school's English Language Learners program interested in participating in the project. The stories they shared became the basis of the documentaries.

The films explored themes such as family, sacrifice, courage and hope. Since the subjects were all high school students, the documentaries also highlighted how despite their challenges, the students are very much like their classmates – they play sports, go to prom, and think about their dream college. But two films also show that some students may have trouble applying to college because of their citizenship status.

As they worked on their films, students in the course learned the technical skills of filmmaking and editing, and studied the ethics of documentary filmmaking and the connection between art and social change. They challenged their assumptions about communities around the world, and considered how documentaries succeed – or fall short – in ethically portraying conflict and trauma. Guest speaker Renée Contreras, a photojournalist with the organization Peace in Focus, discussed the importance of ethical foresight to respectfully telling a story that is not your own.

The course culminated in a film festival, cosponsored by the Ethics Center and the Brandeis Pluralism Alliance, to raise awareness about the narratives of immigrants in Waltham, Mass. and celebrate the shared humanity of participants, creators and audience members alike.

“The work of my students and the generosity of the people who participated as subjects created greater visibility at Brandeis and in Waltham for Waltham immigrant experiences,” says Perdomo. “But I think the greatest impact of the course was in the classroom. These students embarked on a journey to uplift the stories of high school immigrants, and along the way they learned a lot about themselves, their capacity for activism, and what social transformation can look like.”

(Contributing writer: Sarah Terrazano ’19)

Read more about the course and view “Brazilian American: The Immigration Story of Matthew Basílio” here:
brandeis.edu/ethics/news/2017/May.2.html

The students of “Documenting the Immigrant Experience” thank Amy Merrill ’69 for her generous support of the CAST minor’s inquiry into municipalities and violence prevention, which made the development and teaching of this class possible.

'DEIS Impact 2017 keynote speaker Rebecca Walker, founder of the Third Wave Fund for Social Justice, was named by Time Magazine as one of the most influential leaders of her generation. She is the bestselling author of Black White & Jewish: Autobiography of a Shifting Self and many other works, and writes and develops projects for television. “For more than two decades Rebecca has opened our eyes to injustice, and spoken to us about race and gender, arts and culture, and politics and power,” said Brandeis President Ron Liebowitz in his introduction. In her opening remarks, Madeleine Lopez, Director of the Brandeis University Intercultural Center (ICC), added “Rebecca Walker seeks to make the world a better place, one conversation at a time. Walker encourages us to find power and strength in our lived experience, to make changes in the world.” Walker’s keynote was cosponsored by the ICC as part of their 25th anniversary celebration.

The following is excerpted from Rebecca Walker’s keynote address. Full video: go.brandeis.edu/DEISimpact

What do I have to offer separate from the noise, the expectation, the demands of a world that is often irrational and inhumane? Is it now my job to ask constantly and consistently: What can I offer that is helpful and not hurtful? What can I say and do that is healing to myself and others? How can I be of service to humanity in a way that will help to end suffering?

This is the work I’ve been trying to do to varying degrees of success for my entire career. To figure out who I am and why I’m here. To determine how I can use my identity on behalf of the ending of suffering – without creating more suffering at the same time. And I believe fundamentally that it is the work that we all must at least think about doing.

Forget what your parents and teachers told you. Why are you here? Why are you here? What is the gift of your identity? How can you use it for the common good? And then how can you commit to this work? And how will you be unwavering in your commitment?

The Courage to Listen – Reverend Jeffrey L. Brown

Rev. Jeffrey L. Brown, founder of RECAP (Rebuilding Every Community Around Peace), delivered a lecture on March 22, 2017 in conjunction with his appointment as the 2016-17 Fred and Rita Richman Distinguished Fellow in Public Life at Brandeis University. Richman Fellows are selected from among individuals active in public life whose contributions have had a significant impact on improving American society, strengthening democratic institutions, advancing social justice or increasing opportunities for all citizens to realize and share in the benefits of this nation. Rev. Brown was a key community leader responsible for what The New York Times called the “Boston Miracle,” when the youth homicide rate declined from a high of 73 deaths (1990) to zero (1995–1998). The model of social responsibility Brown helped mastermind involves new roles for youth, police and courts to advance social justice and ensure the right of every young person to live in an urban community without violence. “As we reflect upon these unsettled times across a deeply divided nation and around the world, and even more on college campuses, we must all consider productive ways to move forward,” said Brandeis University President Ron Liebowitz. “We must all find the courage to listen.” The Fellowship is hosted by the Ethics Center on behalf of the Office of the President.

Video of the full lecture and an interview with Rev. Brown are online: brandeis.edu/richmanfellow/videos

We [Boston-area clergy] all had this experience understanding that it was not enough to try to bring youth within the four walls of our sanctuary, that we had to meet the youth where they were. And so we started to walk collectively in the Four Corners area of Dorchester on Friday nights, on Saturday nights, or anytime there was a crisis that had occurred.

And as we walked we decided to listen and not preach. ...First of all ... it was incredibly hard for Baptist preachers to happen listening on the street that were quickly dispelled once I started walking the streets. A lot of the myths were around the youth themselves and about the streets. My perception of the streets was colored by the 11 o’clock news and popular culture – you know, the music and the movies and all of that.

But as I started talking with the youth, and they started talking with me and building relationships with me, all of that started to melt away.
A group of judges sits around a large table, engaged in intense conversation. They come from Africa, the Americas, Asia and Europe. Men predominate in the gathering but a few women’s voices can be heard. Participants describe with candor the challenges as well as achievements of their unique work. The conversation is collegial, the atmosphere spirited, and the setting one that ensures confidentiality.

This is the Brandeis Institute for International Judges (BIIJ), created by the Ethics Center in 2002 to benefit judges of the expanding number of international courts and tribunals operating across the globe. The BIIJ is the only regular gathering of these professionals in the world.

Though these courts represent an array of geographic and subject matter jurisdictions, their judges have a powerful common purpose: they all apply international law with the aim of creating a more peaceful and just world.

“The 11 Brandeis Institutes for International Judges have provided a unique opportunity for international judges,” says Richard Goldstone, BIIJ Co-Director and former Chief Prosecutor of the International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda. “The Institutes have become a permanent and much appreciated resource. There is even at times competition among members of a bench as to who should have the opportunity of participating.”

The underlying concept of the BIIJ is simple and yet strikingly novel. The Institutes provide members of the international judiciary with a rare opportunity to meet and discuss critical issues concerning the theory and practice of international justice; share their common experiences, unique challenges, and distinct approaches to their work; and reflect on the practical challenges as well as philosophical aspects of their profession through frank and open dialogue.

As participants serve their terms, and sometimes join the benches of other international courts, the BIIJ’s network and impact expands.

“The BIIJ aim of helping international judges develop a professional identity – which results, in turn, in increased camaraderie and knowledge sharing across courts – is slowly but surely being realized,” says Leigh Swigart, the Ethics Center’s Director of Programs in International Justice and Society, and the principal BIIJ planner and organizer since the start. “It has been a privilege to design a program for the leading judges of this specialized and critical field and to learn from their pioneering and ever-evolving work.”

Funding for BIIJ 2016 was provided by the Rice Family Foundation, the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice and the Danish National Research Foundation. Past sources of funding for the BIIJ have included the David Berg Foundation, the JEHT Foundation and the MacArthur Foundation.

The next BIIJ is scheduled for 2018 in Norway, in partnership with the PluriCourts Centre for the Study of the Legitimate Roles of the Judiciary in the Global Order at the University of Oslo Faculty of Law.

brandeis.edu/ethics/internationaljustice/biij

Judges from the following courts and tribunals have participated in the BIIJ:
- African Court of Human and Peoples’ Rights
- Andean Tribunal of Justice
- Caribbean Court of Justice
- Court of Justice of the European Union
- East African Court of Justice
- European Court of Human Rights
- Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia
- International Court of Justice
- Inter-American Court of Human Rights
- International Criminal Court
- International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda
- International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia
- International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea
- Special Court for Sierra Leone
- Special Tribunal for Lebanon
- United Nations Mechanism for International Courts and Tribunals
- United Nations Mission in Kosovo – Pristina District Court
- World Trade Organization Appellate Body
The First Five Years in 10 Minutes: Faculty Reflections on ’DEIS Impact

In February the Brandeis Faculty Senate partnered with the ’DEIS Impact festival of social justice for a special retrospective event that featured two-minute video clips from each of the first five ’DEIS Impact keynote talks, and commentary by Brandeis professors.

The keynote speakers are a remarkable group: Ruth Messinger (2012), Judy and Eliza Dushku (2013), Kweku Mandela-Amuah and Ndaba Mandela (2014), Alan Khazei (2015), Germaine Ingram (2016), and Rebecca Walker (2017). Screening back-to-back excerpts from the first five of these incredible talks vividly displayed the depth and breadth of this uniquely Brandeis festival.

Professors Larry Bailis (Heller School), Madeleine Lopez (History, Intercultural Center), Azlin Perdomo (Romance Studies), Laurence Simon (Heller School) and Chad Williams (African and Afro-American Studies) also authored papers, available online, that delve even more deeply into these speakers and their work.

In her opening remarks, Faculty Senate Chair Susan Curnan applauded the Brandeis festival of social justice, noting that “it is the only one of its kind.” This retrospective event reminded the Brandeis community just how special ’DEIS Impact is.

See keynote video clips, hear audio from this event and read papers by the presenters: brandeis.edu/ethics/deisimpact/about/FirstFiveYears.html

Cultural Spaces in the Rebuilding of Communities: Examples from Colombia, Syria, and the United States

Ethics Center Board members Germaine Ingram, John Shattuck and Ángela María Pérez Mejía (l-r in photo) discussed how culture and the arts can be mobilized as communities seek to recover from violence, conflict and disorder.

The Black Lives Matter: Local Movements, Global Futures

symposium organized by the Department of African and Afro-American Studies featured student forums, teach-ins, keynote speakers and panels with prominent scholars, artists and activists.

Women as Agents of Change? Fresh Perspectives on Gender & Religion

featured PhD candidates from the Brandeis History Department. Cosponsored by the Hadassah-Brandeis Institute (HBI).

Ethics Center Board member Germaine Ingram discussed an artist’s residency at the Village of Arts & Humanities in Philadelphia in “Artists Mining/Lifting Community Identity and Capacity,” cosponsored by the CAST Program.

APRIL

The CAST Mini-Festival of Creativity, Art and Social Transformation during the Leonard Bernstein Festival of the Creative Arts featured films, food, visual art and senior capstone presentations.

Cornel West, Anupama Rao and other leading thinkers spoke at Re-imagining Religion, Caste, and Social Justice in South Asia, organized by the Center for Global Development and Sustainability at the Heller School.

MAY

The students of the Brandeis ENACT course in the Legal Studies Program discussed their work at Present and Defend.

Students in Marci McPhee’s practicum course presented The Immigrant Experience. Cosponsored by the Office of Experiential Learning and Teaching.

Interested in Ethics Center Cosponsorship? See: brandeis.edu/ethics/events/cosponsorship
UPCOMING EVENTS

Joseph B. and Toby Gittler Prize Award Presentation and Lecture
Kimberlé Crenshaw

October 25, 2017, 4:00 p.m.
Rapaporte Treasure Hall,
Goldfarb Library,
Brandeis University

Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw, professor of law at UCLA and Columbia Law School and Centennial Professor at the London School of Economics 2016-2018, is a leading authority in the area of civil rights, black feminist legal theory, and race, racism and the law. She is a groundbreaking scholar of intersectionality who pioneered the intellectual movement known as Critical Race Theory.

This event is free and open to the public. Details: brandeis.edu/gittlerprize

Get Involved with ’DEIS Impact!
A Festival of Social Justice

• February 1 – February 11, 2018
Brandeis University Campus

The Ethics Center and the Student Union present the 7th annual weeklong “festival of social justice” at Brandeis. Students, professors, clubs and academic departments are planning dozens of events throughout the week, featuring talks, art-making workshops, performances, exhibits and discussions.

• Become a ’DEIS Impacter: Apply to join the student team that helps organize the festival. Online application due Thursday, September 14.
• Create a ’DEIS Impact event: Get funding to be a part of the festival of social justice. Proposals due Thursday, October 12.

More info: go.brandeis.edu/DEISimpact

NEW PUBLICATION

The Authority of International Courts and Tribunals: Challenges and Prospects

At the 11th Brandeis Institute for International Judges (BIIJ), participants explored the nature of the authority of international courts and tribunals, the various challenges this authority may face in different types of jurisdictions, and the ways in which judicial institutions might enhance their authority, in the eyes of constituents, parties and the broader public.

BIIJ 2016 was an institutional partnership between the Ethics Center and iCourts, the Danish National Research Foundation’s Centre of Excellence for International Courts at the University of Copenhagen Faculty of Law. (See more about the BIIJ on page 6.)

The 2016 BIIJ report is now available to read online or download: brandeis.edu/ethics/pdfs/internationaljustice/biij/BIIJ2016.pdf

Event updates, photos, academic resources and more: facebook.com/EthicsBrandeis