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FELLOWSHIP YEAR OVERVIEW

About the Fellowship
Due to the generous gift of resources and trust in 2017 by the Rich Collins family (Mariah Rich Collins, James Collins, Sharon Rich and Nancy Reed), the Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship allows students to apply for mini-grants between $500-$4,000 to implement a community impact project over the course of the Spring semester, alongside a community partner within a 30-mile radius of Brandeis. The Fellowship focuses on student innovation, community impact, and cohort-based leadership development. This program is the first of its kind at Brandeis, and the 2019-2020 year was the third cohort of Fellows. The Fellows are advised by Department of Community Service (DCS) staff member, Samantha de Melim.

The seven 2019-2020 Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellows designed six unique projects across six different community partners.

- **Aishwarya Khanna** partnered with Leland Home to create Waltham Against Alzheimer’s, a program aimed to raise youth involvement with Alzheimer’s disease, build intergenerational bridges with Waltham community youth and residents at Leland Home, and increase overall awareness on Alzheimer’s disease and elderly care.

- **Gabe Trevino** partnered with Land’s Sake farm in order to increase volunteer engagement, provide a safer enclosure for their rabbits, and improve the farm’s sustainability through the creation of a volunteer service day at the farm.

- **Kim Ligon** partnered with Prospect Hill Kids Club in order to increase Prospect Hill parental involvement and engagement in their children’s education and lives in the after-school program through informative sessions on topics including; reciprocal learning and teaching, community building, conversations, and culture, collaboration with educators and capitalization of resources, and the creation of a parent advisory committee.

- **Maddie Hayman** partnered with Waltham Public High School to create a FoodShare program in order to address two documented
needs; food insecurity at Waltham Public High School and the school's environmental footprint.

- **Nicolas Greco and Han Kang** partnered with Waltham Public High School to create the Cornerstone College Advising program, in order to provide college admissions mentorship and advising services to 11th grade students on topics such as financial aid, essay writing, resume building, college choice, and scholarships.

- **Renee Korgood** partnered with WATCH CDC to create an Anti-Eviction Housing Program in order to strengthen housing instability at every point in the process; from giving clients the resources and knowledge to self advocate and avoid eviction, to providing resources and assistance before the eviction proceedings, to easing the process of going to housing court, and finally supporting clients who face eviction and need to move.

### Changes Made for 2019-2020

Upon review of the 2018-2019 Fellowship year, several slight changes were made going into the new year, after discussion with students, DCS staff, and the Rich/Collins families. These changes included updates such as:

- **Fellowship Stipend:** In an effort to ensure this fellowship is inclusive and accessible, for the first time this year we awarded all selected fellows with a modest prize stipend of $600.

- **Maximum Grant Allocation:** In order to financially accommodate the addition of fellowship stipends, we lowered the maximum grant allocation from $5,000 to $4,000. Fellows are now able to request mini-grants ranging from $500 to $4,000.

- **Rich/Collins Fellows and Community Engagement Ambassadors Mixer:** This year, the Department of Community Service brought our top student leaders together. This event provided an opportunity for the students to learn about each other's projects and roles within the department, and discover ways in which they could collaborate and support each other.
Recruitment & Selection
In the Fall semester, DCS staff marketed the Rich/Collins Fellowship through all typical departmental channels, including the following:

- 2 hour-long information sessions
- 4 DCS tabling sessions, including the Waltham Group Recruitment Night
- 1 new 5 hour resume, budget & application drop in support session.
- Targeted outreach emails, flyers, and social media posts to the whole campus, including but not limited to all service-learning faculty, service club leaders, athletics, Waltham Group, and the student body.
- Targeted outreach to Waltham community partners through email.
- Samantha did 1-on-1 outreach to students recommended by other faculty/staff.

The Rich/Collins Fellows were selected by a nine-member selection committee who selected the Fellows and amended budgets by a majority vote. The selection committee was deliberately composed of a variety of voices to best review each applicant’s proposal as holistically as possible. The selection committee met on Thursday, November 22, 2019 from 11:00 A.M.-1:30 P.M. EST in the Shapiro Campus Center, and all committee members received one vote with the exception of Sharon Rich and James Collins, who received one combined donor vote as agreed upon in the Fellowship guidelines.

Committee members included:

- James Collins, Rich Collins Family representative
- Sharon Rich, Rich Family Foundation
- Madeleine Lopez, Intercultural Center Director
Training and Leadership Development

The Fellows received 1-on-1 support check-ins with DCS staff member, Samantha de Melim, twice a month starting in January. Each 1-on-1 agenda was tailored specifically to the student’s needs and project, but certain activities such as pre-and-post leadership assessments, goal and learning outcomes measurement, and constructive feedback were done with every Fellow.

In addition, the Rich/Collins Fellows gathered on the alternate weeks in the spring semester for monthly cohort check-ins and leadership training led by a variety of guest speakers. This year’s speakers included Brandeis faculty, staff, and students.

- December: Expectations & Team Building, Samantha de Melim, DCS
- January: Waltham The More You Know & Community Asset Mapping, Colby Sim & Matt Nadler, DCS & CEAP
- January: R/C CLIF & CEAP Mixer, Samantha de Melim & Colby Sim, DCS
- February: Volunteer Recruitment & Retention, Megan Catalano, Waltham Group
- March: Service Evaluation & Assessment, Dr. Cathy Burack, Heller Faculty
- April: Reflection & End of Year Wrap-Up, Samantha de Melim, DCS

Unexpected Challenges Due to COVID-19

Due to the unique challenges COVID-19 presented, we were unable to hold a symposium this year and although they each made great strides, none of the Fellows were able to fully complete their community impact projects during the spring semester. Two underclassmen fellows, Nicholas Greco and Han Kang, sought the opportunity to adapt their project virtually and to continue their fellowship in the fall semester of 2020.
Aishwarya Khanna • Leland Home
Aishwarya thoughtfully partnered with two different organizations, including Leland Home and Jewish Family & Children’s Service. She worked alongside Candy from Leland Home to design intentional intergenerational programming for their residents and Brandeis student volunteers. After recruiting volunteers, she partnered with Beth from Jewish Family & Children’s Service to provide her volunteers with a thorough Dementia Friends Awareness training. Aishwarya and her volunteers had their first volunteer day at Leland Home on Saturday, March 14th and received glowing reviews from both the residents and the staff.

Gabe Trevino • Land’s Sake Farm
Over the course of the spring semester, Gabe attended several meetings with his community partner where they worked together to solidify the activities and agenda for the day of service at the farm that was scheduled to occur on Saturday, April 4th. Gabe had also connected with several Waltham Group organizations including Symbiosis, Habitat for Humanity, and Community Connections who had agreed to attend and promote the opportunity to their volunteers. As Gabe is a senior and unable to continue his fellowship, he established a partnership with Symbiosis, who expressed interest in running this event in the future.

Kim Ligon • Prospect Hill Community Center
Kim truly understood the importance of incorporating community voice into her program. She created a survey that was translated into three different languages, in order to gather feedback from the parents on what topics they were interested in and what days and times worked best for their schedules. After reviewing the results, she had several meetings with different community organizations including, Family ACCESS Community Connections, Healthy Waltham, RTN Good Works Foundation, and educators from Brandeis University and WPS, to find and select speakers for her sessions. Kim also solidified volunteers to provide childcare during the sessions. Her first session was scheduled for Tuesday, March 17th and unfortunately had to be cancelled.
Maddie Hayman • Waltham Public High School
Maddie worked diligently to prepare WPS to implement two Food Share carts. She hosted a training for the Trailblazers (a group of dedicated high school students) in order to educate them on food waste and train them to ultimately run the program. She attended several weeks of school lunches and established a baseline of food waste at the high school prior to implementing the carts. She also developed marketing materials to promote the program and raise awareness amongst students. Maddie was set to introduce the carts on Monday, March 16th, but unfortunately was unable to do so.

Nicholas Greco & Han Kang • Waltham Public High School
Throughout the spring semester, Nicholas and Han overcame numerous obstacles. They recruited a dedicated group of volunteers who assumed roles, such as "Task Force Head" and "Mentor", and worked with departments across campus, such as DEI and Student Financial Services to train them. They worked closely with their contacts at WPS to table at the high school and recruit students for their college advising program. They also spent countless hours developing the curriculum for each session they had scheduled on topics, including college choice, financial aid, essay/resume writing, and more. Their first session was scheduled to be held on Saturday, March 21st, following the SAT exam at the high school. Due to the fact that their programming was unable to begin last spring semester, they are virtually continuing with the fellowship in this fall.

Renee Korgood • WATCH CDC
In order to ease the process of attending housing court and provide residents with much needed support, Renee partnered with BC Legal Labs to develop a never before seen accompaniment training series for twenty Brandeis students and community members. The training was broken down into three parts; landlord & tenant law and how to legally serve as an accompaniment, a visit to the Waltham Housing Court and a discussion with the magistrate, and emotional support tactics for clients and volunteers. Renee successfully recruited volunteers and held all three trainings this semester. Unfortunately, she was unable to match volunteers with clients to begin the accompaniment programming before we had to suspend the program. However, Renee shared the training template with WATCH CDC, so they can move forward with the program when they are able.
RECOMMENDATIONS

Lighten eligibility requirements
We recommend expanding the application criteria to include first year students, allowing all Brandeis undergraduate students in good academic standing to apply. Additionally, we recommend providing greater flexibility on the minimum GPA requirement.

Expand project radius
During a typical year, eligible projects must serve the Waltham-Boston community (30-mile radius), with priority given to projects that serve the city of Waltham. However, due to the unique circumstances surrounding COVID-19, this year we recommend expanding the project radius beyond 30 miles, allowing students who do not return to campus to engage in the fellowship virtually in their home communities.

Support fellows in the fall
Due to the unique circumstances of this past year, we recommend supporting interested 2019-2020 fellows in completing their community impact projects during the fall semester.

Enhance recruitment methods
In order to increase the number and diversity of our applicants and community partners, we recommend enhancing our recruitment methods, in addition to adapting programmatic policies. Three initiatives we recommend include; partnering with a member of the donor family to increase outreach to Boston community partners, hosting a virtual community partner information session, and enhancing pre-application support services through the increased number of information sessions, application support workshops, and the addition of open office hours.

Adapt to meet new needs
In response to the current climate and to meet new community needs, we recommend encouraging applicants to design community impact projects that work to support COVID-19 relief and racial justice efforts.
THANK YOU

Thank you for taking time to invest in and read about the 2019-2020 Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship program. The Department of Community Service wants to give special thanks to Mariah Rich Collins and James Collins, Sharon Rich and Nancy Reed, and the entire Rich family, the Rich/Collins selection committee, all the numerous Brandeis faculty and staff who mentored the Fellows, and the wonderful Waltham community members who worked alongside these Fellows to create a better community together.

For more information or detailed notes about any aspect of this report, please reach out to RCCLIF@brandeis.edu.