

ENACT

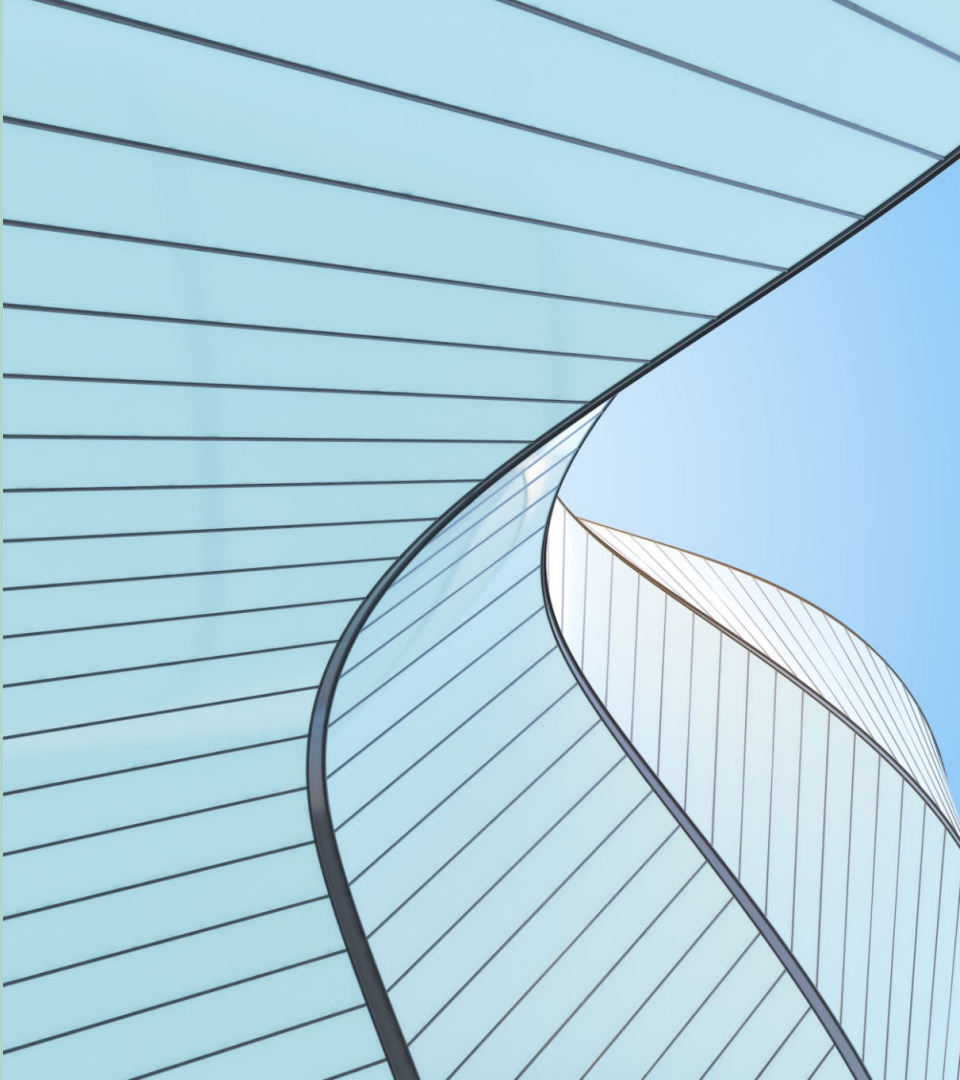
Research and Advocacy Fellows

Highlights & Lessons from the Inaugural Cohort

Brandeis

ENACT: THE ABRAHAM FEINBERG
EDUCATIONAL NETWORK FOR
ACTIVE CIVIC TRANSFORMATION

July 2025



Content *Overview*

1

**What is the ENACT
Research and Advocacy
Fellowship?**

2

**Who are the 2024-2025
Research and Advocacy
Fellows?**

3

**Fellowship Learning
Objectives**

4

**Evaluation of Fellows'
Growth**

5

**Fellowship Highlights &
Impact on Campus**

6

**Lessons Learned & Next
Steps**

What is the ENACT Research and Advocacy Fellowship?

What is the ENACT Research and Advocacy Fellowship?

Brandeis

ENACT: THE ABRAHAM FEINBERG
EDUCATIONAL NETWORK FOR
ACTIVE CIVIC TRANSFORMATION

The Research and Advocacy Fellowship affords students the opportunity to **collaborate** with a group of their peers on a **shared skill building and change making mission**. Together, the 2024-2025 Fellows explored the issue of access to basic needs, specifically menstrual products, and ultimately created events and awareness raising efforts to **enact data driven change** in the Brandeis community and beyond. Fellows learned about state level policy and ways in which they can advocate for state, local, and institutional policy change.

Who are the 2024-2025 Research and Advocacy Fellows?

Who are the 2024-2025 Research and Advocacy Fellows?



Ten Brandeis students were selected in April of 2024 to serve as the inaugural cohort for the ENACT Research and Advocacy Fellowship for the 2024-2025 academic year. Fellows included: Maria Antonio '26, Jovita Bell '25, Happy Emmanuel '27, Rachel Gao '25, Alyssa Golden '26, Aviva Gornick '25, Vickie Hsieh '25, Melora Hutcheson '25, Gerardo Enrique Rios Ramirez '27, and Lev Sewald '26.

ENACT Research and Advocacy

Learning Objectives & Growth

Learning Objectives

#1: To understand how a research study is constructed including research question(s), literature review, methods, findings, discussions, and limitations.

#2: To be able to articulate the importance of ethical guidelines in research and to understand the IRB approval process.

#3: To conduct quantitative and qualitative data collection and understand how to analyze that data.

#4: To be able to describe (both written and verbally) the findings of qualitative and quantitative data and report conclusions to stakeholders.

#5: To grow civic engagement skills and expertise with the democratic process.

Learning Objectives Growth

On a scale from 1-5...



01

100% of Fellows on the post survey reported a four or higher in response to **objective #1** regarding their **understanding of how a research study is conducted.**

02

90% of Fellows on the post survey reported a four or higher in response to **objective #2** which highlights their **understanding of the importance of ethical guidelines in research.**

03

100% of Fellows on the post survey reported a four or higher in response to **objective #3 and #4**, expressing confidence in their **ability to collect, analyze, and describe both qualitative and quantitative data.**

04

80% of Fellows on the post survey reported a four or higher in response to **objective #5** regarding the **growth of their civic engagement skills and expertise with the democratic process.**

Evaluation of Fellows' Growth

Brandeis

ENACT: THE ABRAHAM FEINBERG
EDUCATIONAL NETWORK FOR
ACTIVE CIVIC TRANSFORMATION

ENACT

Pre & Post Survey

Pre or “Baseline” - August/September 2024

Post - May 2025

The Pre & Post Survey Included Open and Closed Ended Questions Regarding:

Part One: Civic Engagement & Attitudes

Part Two: Research Questions

Evaluation of Fellows' Growth

#1

Empowering Change Makers

#2

Relationship Building

#3

Research Skills & Knowledge

Empowering Change Makers

Being an ENACT Fellow has been one of the most transformative experiences of my college journey. It gave me the opportunity not only to learn how policy is made but to actively take part in shaping it. The biggest lesson I've taken away from this program is that my voice has power. Before joining ENACT, I often felt like change was something only lawmakers or people with high-level connections could create. I didn't realize how much potential I had to be part of the process. ENACT taught me that change begins with the people who care enough to speak up.

Relationship Building

“Personal connections really matter in terms of trying to advocate for policy and should therefore be cultivated. Being friendly, informative and involved with the other stakeholders we interact with can lead to stronger inter-program connections and a bigger impact from our research.”

Research Skills & Knowledge

“The research phase of the Fellowship was a fascinating experience. We designed a survey, distributed it across campus, and analyzed the results to develop our final report. I never realized that conducting a survey could be such an effective way to understand a college community and identify ways to improve the lives of those within it.”

Research Skills & Knowledge

Average score on the research question portion
of the **pre survey: 87%**

Average score on the research question portion
of the **post survey: 93.5%**

Access full list of research questions [here](#).

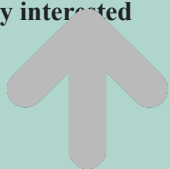


Fellows' Growth in Political Interest, Engagement & Efficacy

Given the current state of politics today, what is your interest level in participating in politics (as a voter or otherwise)?

Pre: 50% strongly interested
Post: 70% strongly interested

01



“I am politically active.”

Pre: 60% strongly agree or somewhat agree
Post: 80% strongly agree or somewhat agree

02



Do you post about politics on online social networks (e.g., Facebook, Twitter/X, Google+, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok or other social networks)?

Pre: 20% said YES
Post: 50% said YES

03



“I know enough to participate in politics.”

Pre: 90% strongly agree or somewhat agree
Post: 100% strongly agree or somewhat agree

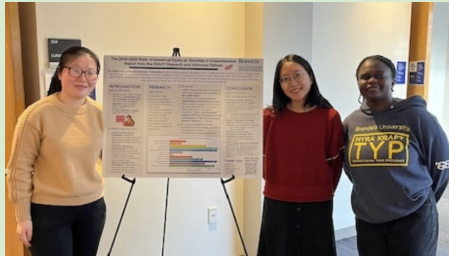
04



Key Finding: Increase in Interest in Becoming a Community Leader!

Pre: **70%** said “Becoming a community leader” was “essential” or “very important”

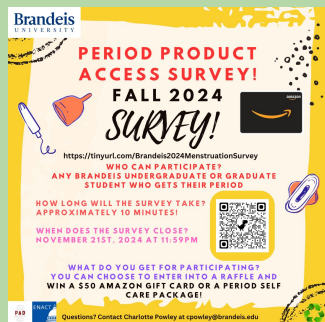
Post: **100%** said “Becoming a community leader” was “essential” or “very important”



Fellowship Highlights & Impact on Campus

Fellowship Highlights

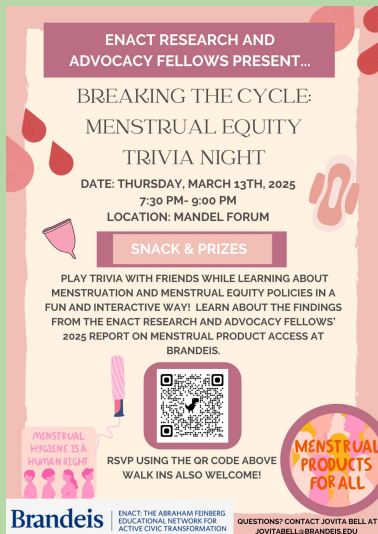
Menstrual Equity Survey and Written Report of Results



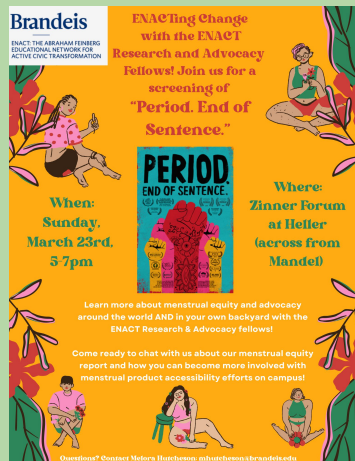
Presentation of Report Results to Key Stakeholders On and Off Campus Including:

- ❖ Department of Community Living
- ❖ Facilities
- ❖ Academic Support and Advising
- ❖ The Office of Health Promotion and Wellness Initiatives
- ❖ The Women and Gender Studies Department
- ❖ Brandeis Student Union
- ❖ Mass NOW
- ❖ [PERIOD.org](https://period.org)
- ❖ Alliance for Period Supplies
- ❖ Tufts University School of Medicine

Menstrual Equity Trivia Night & Period Product Packaging Pizza Party



Screening of the 2023 film “Periodical” & Screening of the 2018 documentary short “Period. End of Sentence”



Menstrual Equity Panel featuring industry experts and Massachusetts State Representative Natalie Blais



Fellowship Impact On Campus

**Awarded a
Women and
Gender Studies
Mini Grant:
\$1000!**

**Menstrual Education
and Product Access
Added to Orientation
Modules**

**Increase in Access
to Products on
Campus (Expanded
to Skyline &
Village)**

Lessons Learned & Next Steps

What did we learn from the inaugural cohort of Fellows?

#1

Lesson:

Greater need for demystifying state-level policy making through direct experience and engagement with legislators.

Next Steps:

Touring the state house, speaking with legislators and their aides, speaking with priority bills' sponsors, and attending hearings are key activities that Fellows can engage in to build their confidence, civic knowledge, and political efficacy.

#2

Lesson:

Fellows want more hands-on advocacy training!

Next Step:

Plan visits with coalitions, community organizers, etc. (ex: Mass NOW, City of Boston's Office of Women's Advancement, etc.).

Thank you!

For Full Report: Click [Here](#)

Questions? Please contact Charlotte Powley
cpowley@brandeis.edu