



Brandeis

Undergraduate and Graduate Student Summer Research Projects Summer 2020

Funded by the *Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice*
Brandeis University



brandeis.edu/legacyfund

The *Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice* generously supported 10 students pursuing summer research projects in collaboration with Brandeis University faculty in 2020. These projects deepened the students' knowledge and experience in their chosen fields, thus preparing them for lives and careers beyond Brandeis. Their work also supported faculty research while creating an enriching experience during the summer to build on student coursework during the academic year.

These research stipends supported undergraduate and graduate students in the School of Arts and Sciences and graduate students at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management.

Included in this package are topics of each project and thank you letters from each of the students.

First letter

Student: Ellie Kleiman, BA'21

Research Topic: *The Cultural is Political: Institutional Memory and Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Communities at Brandeis University.*

Faculty: Yuri Doolan, Assistant Professor in the Department of History and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Program (WGS), School of Arts & Sciences

Second letter

Student: Andre Kish, BA'22

Research Topic: *United States Government Prosecution of American Foreign Fighters for Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).*

Faculty: Jytte Klausen, Lawrence A. Wien Professor of International Cooperation, Department of Politics, School of Arts & Sciences

Third letter

Student: Chengrui Wu, BA'22

Research Topic: *Relations between depression symptoms and physiological reactivity to controllable and uncontrollable stressors.*

Faculty: Hannah Snyder, Assistant Professor of Psychology, School of Arts & Sciences

Fourth letter

Student: Jason Walter, BA'23

Research Topic: *Cuban Missile Crisis: A Case Study of Negotiation and Leadership.*

Faculty: Dr. Eugene B. Kogan, The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

Fifth letter

Student: Jason Frank, BA'22

Research Topic: *Fairies and Funnies: Gay Men in Standup Comedy.*

Faculty: Brian Horton, Assistant Professor of Anthropology, School of Arts & Sciences

Sixth letter

Student: Dahiana Loaiza, BA '18, MA SID '21

Research Topic: *The Relationship Between the Biological Marker of Cortisol and Self-Reported Data of Stress on Students and Non-Student's Mental Health in Higher Education Institutions*

Faculty: Maria Madison, Associate Dean for Equity, Inclusion and Diversity, the Heller School

Seventh letter

Student: Mina Cho, PhD '25

Research Topic: *Improvising on Tradition and Spirituality: Donjin Park's Yesujeon and the Emergence of a New Korean Spiritual Aesthetic*

Faculty member: Eric Chafe, Victor and Gwendolyn Beinfield Professor of Music, Graduate School of Arts & Sciences

Eighth and ninth letters

Students: Annie Averill, MPP'20 & Lily Scheindlin, MPP'21

Research Topics: Telehealth and telemedicine use in Massachusetts in a pandemic and post-pandemic era

Faculty member: Michael Doonan, Associate Professor, MPP Program Director, Executive Director, Massachusetts Health Policy Forum, the Heller School

Tenth letter

Student: Jessica Priestley, BA'13, MA'18, PhD'23

Research Topic: How direct-to-consumer genetic tests, like 23andMe and AncestryDNA, affect the millions of people who take them.

Faculty members: Elizabeth Ferry, Professor of Anthropology & Anita Hannig, Associate Professor of Anthropology; School of Arts & Sciences

Thank you letter from Ellie Kleiman, BA'21

To the Supporters of the Legacy Fund:

I am writing to sincerely thank you for your generous donation to the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice that has allowed many of my peers and I to pursue research and work that upholds the social justice values that Brandeis University was founded upon.

This summer, I pursued a research project entitled *The Cultural is Political: Institutional Memory and Asian American and Pacific Islander Communities at Brandeis University*. I took a deep dive into the history of the university itself, working closely with the recently established Asian American & Pacific Islander Studies Program and the University Library's Special Archives and Collections. This project aims to bring to light the history of Asian American and Pacific Islander persons at Brandeis University. Like the histories of all people of color at Brandeis, such a story has been largely excluded from conventional tellings of our institution's past. While conducting my research, I also asked myself the question: why does it take archival research to recover these important moments of political and social change on our campus--these moments in which AAPI, Black, and Latinx students came together in solidarity?

Possible answers to this question emerged as I learned more about these specific incidents of multi-racial solidarity scattered throughout the university's history. One such incident was that of the week-long occupation of Pearlman Hall in 1975 by Asian, Black, and Latinx students. I read through countless newspaper articles found on the online archive that spanned the course of three years (1972-1975), I interviewed two alumni from that time period, and archived these findings in an accessible and organized Google Drive. These resources revealed the unified strength of the students who organized over the course of three years to push the university's administration to do better by low-income students of color, even when this called into question the university's primary interests and comfort levels. I wrote a detailed timeline of this time period and article which included my analysis of the incident's relevance to today's administration and students of color alike. At the start of the school year, I aim to publish this article on multiple platforms, including the library website, the AAPI studies website, and the student newspaper, in order to spread awareness about the lessons learned from this incident and how these lessons can help create a safer and more welcoming environment for students of color today.

I also conducted two oral history interviews over Zoom with Asian American alumni, Ben Tai '76 and Sunny Pai '76. These interviews revealed critical information not only about the Pearlman Takeover, but about the Asian American student experience at Brandeis at that time, the activities of the Brandeis Asian American Students Association (est. 1971, of which I am a co-president of today), and the activism that Brandeis students were deeply involved with off-campus. These interviews also helped me develop my interviewing skills and think of important questions to ask future interviewees for this project.

Finally, I was able to begin drafting the timeline that will span from the university's founding to the current day of Asian American history at this institution. This will be an interactive digital timeline that I aim to be complete by the end of the Fall 2020 semester as a part of my senior thesis. My writing pieces and the new materials I uncovered this summer will be key pieces incorporated into the final timeline, which will provide a comprehensive and detailed account of the significance and history of Asian Americans at Brandeis University.

Thank you again for your continuous support to Brandeis students who pursue various paths to justice, and for your particular support of this project to bring justice to this institution's own memory of students of color in its history.

Below I have attached some screenshots of key newspaper articles from *The Justice* that will be included in my final timeline.

With Gratitude,

Eliana (Ellie) Tang Kleiman

Coalition Marches on Bernstein-Marcus



Members of Student Coalition (Rick Johnson of Afro on left and Jaime Perez of Grito on right) schedule appointment with President Bernstein.

By GARY WASSERMAN

Approximately 60 students from the Campus Student Coalition (CSC) accompanied the members of the CSC Steering Committee from the Usdan Student Center to the steps of the Bernstein-Marcus Administration building Friday morning.

The group arrived several minutes before the Steering Committee's scheduled meeting with University President Marver Bernstein. Before entering the building, Steering Committee spokesperson Kathy Dalton read a statement to the members of the press reiterating the demands and priorities that the Coalition is supporting.

Jaime Perez, Grito representative on the Steering Committee, then instructed the group to avoid obstructing access to the building in accordance with university regulations. He also told those assembled not to talk with the press "in an effort to maintain a unified front for the CSC."

Earlier, several coalition supporters including Andrew Oram '77 and Eldad Ganin '77 had expressed their dissatisfaction with the decision of the Strategy Committee and the Steering Committee to go ahead with the march.

Ganin saw the purpose of the march as "a show of force" and possibly a

move to intimidate the administration.

Oram termed the action a "coup d'etat." He said that the Steering Committee has misconstrued the "mandate of the referendum" supporting the coalition's demands and that he would call for the committee's dissolution at the next general meeting because, as he put it, "the present committee is completely irresponsible."

Perez said the purpose of the march was "not to intimidate" but to "show support for our demands."

The decision to hold the demonstration was made at an open meeting of the CSC Strategy Committee held on March 6. All members of the Steering Committee were present at the meeting. At that time Perez suggested a show of student support. The plans for the march were then worked on and executed by members of the Strategy and Communications Committees.

The meeting with Bernstein allowed the CSC to clarify their first demand which called for the rehiring or replacement of all dismissed academic personnel and hiring of additional faculty to handle next year's increased student load. To this was added a statement demanding the continuation of the TYP program.

(Continued on page 5)



Students outside of Bernstein-Marcus following Friday's march.

PHOTO BY GARY WASSERMAN

... Vice President of the Environment, overseeing all of the non-academic Senate committees. Perez is a spokesperson for the newly-organized Campus Student Coalition, and his primary interest is in "student power and student unity."

The newly-elected Senate Treasurer, Dov Hyman, received 289 votes. Hyman, co-editor of the Brandeis yearbook, hopes to at least partially alleviate the Student Senate deficit through fundraising activities.

Ellen Bob, who will be the new Senate Secretary, ran unopposed. Her major concerns are the responsible handling of student funds and two-way communication between the student body and the Senate.

Students Occupy Pearlman

March to Building at 7:55 a.m.

By NEIL PICKETT and CRAIG CHARNEY
Members of the Student Action Group (SAG), described by spokesman Ben Tai '77 as "an outgrowth of the Campus Student Coalition" (CSC), occupied Pearlman Hall yesterday.

At 7:55 a.m., a line of about 75 students marched around the corner of the Usdan Student Center to Pearlman, where the Sociology Department is located. As supporters demonstrated outside, a group of students carrying knapsacks, packages and sleeping bags, entered the building. Tai estimated the size of the group at about 40, but it appeared to a Justice reporter that only about 15-20 went inside.

The students inside, called a "well-disciplined group" by Tai, immediately began securing doors with chairs and heavy rope, lowering window blinds, covering all open windows with blankets and sheets, one of which bore the name of the group.

SAG Demands
Shortly before 9:00 a.m., Tai

occupation would force the administration for the first time to "deal seriously with these demands."

Administration Meeting
University President Marver Bernstein was informed of the takeover and the SAG's demands at his home shortly after the students entered the building. Upon his arrival on campus, Bernstein received a letter written by three student representatives for the group, Jaime Perez '76, Marty Hernandez '75 and Larry Rothbart '78. The letter confirmed the seizure and said that it was designed to "bring attention to the problems confronting students on this campus."

Shortly after receiving the letter, Bernstein and several other top administrators met to discuss the situation and alternative ways of dealing with the takeover in Bernstein-Marcus Administration Building. The meeting lasted about four hours.

Dean of the College Marguerite Robinson was designated administration spokesperson after the meeting. She said that she

the building, and telephone lines were cut by the administration before any interviews could be arranged. Later, the group inside refused to answer a list of questions submitted in writing by the press.

Two University Security officers arrived at Pearlman soon after the building was occupied and began taking pictures with both movie and instamatic cameras. According to Security Director Wendall Brooks, this is "standard procedure used for identification in case of violence."

At about 9:45 a.m., members of the Sociology Department arrived to find themselves without offices. Conferring briefly, they decided to let Chairman Gordon Fellman act as their spokesman. Fellman said that the occupation was "one response to the country's economic crisis." He added that the "most vulnerable parts of the University, students on financial aid, or unorganized workers, and junior faculty, have been hardest hit by the budget cuts." He noted that because "private property doesn't mean much to me," he doesn't



University Gives Asians Official Minority Status

By MATTHEW HOTT

The Faculty Committee on Admissions and Financial Aid, reversing its decision of last spring, voted Friday to grant Asian-American students official minority group status.

The committee also voted to give further study to the question of increasing the financial aid minority pool.

The effect of these decisions, according to committee member Prof. Richard Weckstein (Econ), will be to "change the composition of Asian students with respect to their academic character and economic status."

Dean of the College Robert Evans, the committee's chairman pro tempore, said that the recruitment of Asian-American students will now be easier. He added that the committee's decision will enable Brandeis to offer financial aid to Asian-American students earlier in the year.

BAASA Statements

In a statement issued prior to the committee's vote, the Brandeis Asian-American Students Association (BAASA) said that "in order to maintain its liberal image, Brandeis includes Asians in its minority count to be eligible for Dept. of Health, Education and Welfare (HEW) funds (although) Asians do not get the benefits from these funds."

In a memorandum given to committee members, BAASA argued that "Asian-Americans are identified as a minority under all existing social and legal definitions. Brandeis has no right to alter the definition to suit its own purposes."

BAASA noted in the memo that "another stipulation for HEW funding is that the

administration affirmatively recruit minority students. There are no Asian student recruiters officially working for the Office of Minority Admissions," the statement pointed out.

The memo also asserted that the policy towards Asian-American students must be



Photo by Harvey Wang

Ben Tai '76 BAASA representative

changed "as part of the University's commitment to justice for all people."

Minority Pool

Ben Tai '77, a representative of BAASA, said after the vote "that the real battle lies ahead" in convincing the committee to increase the financial aid minority pool to accommodate the Asian-Americans.

A spokesman for the Student Union, Mark Mishler '78, noted "the committee's vote as an important victory," but that "it could turn into a serious defeat" if the minority pool is not increased.

(Continued on page 9)

Thank you letter from Andre Kish, BA'22

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

My name is Andre Kish and I am a rising junior at Brandeis, majoring in Politics and Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. I am writing to thank you for the receipt of a research award from the Legacy Fund for Summer 2020. I used this generous support to pursue a project on the United States government's prosecution of those American citizens who fight or attempt to fight for the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. I utilized data contained in the Western Jihadism Project, a dataset based at Brandeis, and collected new data from media sources in an effort to determine those who have been repatriated and prosecuted and the manner in which they were "dealt with".

The issue of prosecution of the American citizen foreign fighters and the issue of what to do with their families in the region are questions relevant to the social justice mission of the Fund. They deal with the legal responsibility that the United States has to citizens overseas and the moral responsibility to ensure that victims of horrific crime see justice, jurisdictional issues in matters of international justice, and the humanitarian disaster of the expanding makeshift prison camps.

I am planning to continue my work on this project and paper during the coming academic year and look forward to presenting my final data and paper in the first Undergraduate Research and Creative Collaborations Office sponsored presentation in the Spring of 2021. In addition to the research being interesting and important, the support provided by the Fund was especially helpful during the turbulence created by the coronavirus. I am very grateful that it allowed me to continue my academic work uninterrupted.

Thanks again,

Andre Kish

Thank you letter from Chengrui Wu, BA'22

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

I am writing to thank you for the generous Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice Fellowship. I was extremely excited and appreciative to learn that I was selected as the recipient of your fellowship.

I am currently majoring in Psychology and Education with hopes of pursuing my interest in childhood development and disorders later in graduate school. During this summer, I have been working on my project with Dr. Snyder and other lab members in the CoPE lab. My original proposal was regarding the effect of depression on college students' perceived controllability over stressors. However, due to COVID-19, participants were not allowed to be on the campus, and I had to revise my proposal. Considering the characteristics of COVID-19 and the challenges that, not only college students, but everyone in the world is facing, I decided to change my topic to study how health anxiety (i.e., the extreme fear of being sick) could be an outcome caused by the stress that COVID-19 is presenting.

My study didn't go well at the beginning. As a novice in the field of research, I encountered the obstacles of finding literature, organizing my outlines, searching for the correct direction, deciding what to include in my research, etc. Fortunately, Dr. Snyder and my lab members provided me with lots of help. They taught me the way to search for keywords, read papers, and write articles. They brainstormed ideas with me and expanded my knowledge. After reviewing numerous articles, I found that dependent stressors (something that is caused by a person's internal outlook) are highly associated with internalizing psychopathologies, such as depression, general anxiety, and health anxiety. However, not everyone who encounters stress develops symptoms, and one of the crucial risk factors for the individual difference is perceived controllability over dependent stressors. If a person perceives that he or she has control over the dependent stressor, he or she is less likely to develop internalizing disorders. Another factor is the differences in executive function (EF). EF is in charge of people's cognitive control, leading us to make decisions and plan flexibly in response to different environments. Studies have shown that EF is also linked to internalizing psychopathology. If a person has a high EF, he or she will be more likely to perceive the situation as controllable, and therefore will be less likely to develop disorders. The reason I have focused specifically on health anxiety is that previous studies have shown that during the pandemic periods, such as with the H1N1 pandemic 2009 and with Ebola outbreak in 2014, there was an increased level of health anxiety. Therefore, I think illness-related concerns are what most people are contemplating. In sum, my study will investigate if health anxiety will be the outcome caused by dependent stress, perceived uncontrollability over dependent stressors, and poor EF under the COVID-19 circumstance. Our lab has sent out surveys to 150 Brandeis undergraduates, and I will use the data collected to finish my analysis and research. Right now, I am writing the pre-registration together with another lab member.

By awarding me the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice Fellowship, you provided me with the opportunity to concentrate on my research and gain more knowledge and experience of being a research scientist. Your generosity has inspired me to continuously pursue my interest in research in graduate school, as well as help others and give back to the community. I hope one day I will be able to help students achieve their goals just as you have helped me. Thank you again for your generosity and support.

Sincerely,
Chengrui Wu

Thank you letter from Jason Walter, BA'23

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

I am honored to be a recipient of the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice Fellowship. Your generous gift has allowed me to take part in the research that Brandeis is known for, an incredible opportunity for a freshman. It was an experience that deeply affected my thoughts on where I want to go and what I want to do after college.

This summer I worked for Dr. Eugene B. Kogan, a professor at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management, on researching the Cuban Missile Crisis. The work I did was part of a larger project creating a case study of President John F. Kennedy's leadership and emotional intelligence during that time. My research focused on fact-finding—figuring out exactly what happened, when it happened, who was involved and what the causes were.

Initially my research was centered on the Executive Committee of the National Security Council (ExComm), the group President Kennedy formed to respond to the missile crisis. Throughout his presidency Kennedy had secretly taped many of his appointments and conversations in the White House, and during the first few weeks of research I worked on tracking down the recordings of ExComm meetings and their transcripts. Following this I spent time transcribing the handwritten notes of Attorney General Robert Kennedy from these meetings, which were especially significant given his importance in the administration. This work gave valuable insight on the decision-making process of ExComm, and the president, through the thirteen days of the crisis.

In addition, I spent time researching various topics given to me by Dr. Kogan, ranging from the locations of U.S. owned nuclear weapons in Europe to the infamous assassination plots against Fidel Castro. To better understand the roles and desires of the CIA and the military I created summaries and timelines of two operations: Mongoose, the CIA-led campaign of sabotage against the Castro regime, and Northwoods, a proposed false-flag operation to justify war against Cuba. I also created a review of every aspect of Soviet and American air, naval, and nuclear forces involved to clarify the true stakes of the conflict.

More important than my substantive findings were the skills I developed this summer. My research involved searching through hundreds of pages of Congressional reports, corroborating specific government claims, and transcribing many hours of panels and interviews. These are skills I will use in my classes, in future research, and throughout my academic and professional career. Furthermore, spending time investigating the Cuban Missile Crisis has led me to decide to focus on studying international politics within my politics major. Thank you for your generous contribution that made this all possible.

Sincerely,

Jason Walter
Class of 2023

Thank you letter from Jason Frank, BA'22

To the Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

Thank you for your financial support this summer for my project “Fairies and Funnies: Gay Men in Standup Comedy.” As a student who came to Brandeis largely due to its position as a small yet highly ranked research university, getting the opportunity to work on a self-directed research project this summer was something of a dream come true. As a student who needs to work each summer, your support was the reason I could do so.

I began this project not knowing what how it would ultimately manifest, but I quickly realized that there has been a severe lack of research on the topic of gay men in comedy, which lead me to a strategy of historicization. Due in part to the lack of gay men who have become famous through standup, there have been few scholarly articles on the subject in any form. This stands in opposition to the wealth of research done on gay male representation in other fields and lesbian representation in standup comedy. I believe that this lack of famous gay male comedians is not a reason not to research, but rather a reason that research must be conducted.

My historical account begins in the late 1960s through ‘70s with an analysis of closeted gay men who appeared on game shows, such as Paul Lynde or Charles Nelson Reilly, who I argue are in many ways the first famous gay male standups. I then examine gay male standup through the ‘80s and ‘90s, with a focus on how the AIDS epidemic shifted public perception of gay comics. Then I discuss the 2000s through the present, and look ahead to see what progress is still to be made. One of my findings is that in a post-AIDS epidemic world, there tends to be an assumption of tragedy when stories of gay men are told, which creates a barrier to entry for gay men in comedy, while alternately providing fodder for gay male success in genres like film or theatre, which consider themselves more “serious.”

Thank you again for your support,

Jason Frank

Thank you letter from Dahiana Loaiza, BA'18, MA SID'21

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

My name is Dahiana Loaiza, and I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your generous financial support towards my higher education. I am honored to be granted the chance to continue pursuing my career interests with your support this summer.

My summer practicum is at The Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity at The Heller School for Social Policy and Management located in Waltham, Massachusetts. I am a Research Assistant working with Dr. Maria Madison, Associate Dean of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity. The study I am working on aims to assess background levels of COVID-19 amongst a demographically diverse population within an educational setting. Through this study we hope to advise a future sentinel surveillance strategy for routine screening, case identification, and contact tracing efforts at an institution of higher education. My tasks and responsibilities include; data analysis, manuscript writing, and program planning and evaluation.

The practicum is a chance for me to apply many of the skills I have learned from the classes I have taken at Heller. Through the summer practicum, I hope to further strengthen my data analysis skills and become more comfortable with program planning and evaluation. I also wish to connect with other professionals doing similar work and gain access to professional development opportunities.

When I complete my academic studies in May 2021, I will be looking to work for an organization that focuses on eliminating health disparities among vulnerable and marginalized communities. More specifically, I would like to focus on the undocumented Latinx population and see ways in which to support this population in obtaining quality health care services despite their legal status. Many health disparities are present in our healthcare system and I would like to be involved in work that aims at reducing this gap in quality and access.

Once again, I would like to thank you for your generosity in helping me advance my studies and focus on my career goals.

Sincerely,

Dahiana Loaiza

Thank you letter from Mina Cho, PhD'25

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

I am writing you to thank you for your generous donation through the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice, which allowed me to conduct an important research during the summer to be elaborated in my PhD dissertation. As the recipient of the Collaborative Summer Research Grant, I was honored to work with Prof. Eric Chafe, who is my doctoral advisor and a celebrated Biber, Bach, and Wagner scholar to further investigate the work of Master P'ansori (Korean traditional musical storytelling genre) singer Dongjin Park.

After trained as a classical pianist and studying theology at Yonsei University in Korea, I came to Boston in 2006 to study music at Berklee College of Music and then to pursue my further degrees at New England Conservatory (Master of Music and Doctor of Musical Arts). Currently, I am a PhD candidate in musicology at Brandeis University and working on my dissertation.

On the surface, this grant has given me an opportunity to examine new spiritual aesthetics in P'ansori through Dongjin Park's religious P'ansori work called *The Story of Jesus (Yesujeon)*. More meaningfully, especially under the COVID-19 situation, it has also given me to think about myself and my journey in the past, and how everything came along. That is the theological part. I've always wondered why God led me on this journey. Was it a waste of time for four years to study theology? Why is it that God gave me this musical desire and the opportunity to come to Boston and start a long musical journey as a jazz pianist and musicologist? With hindsight, I could understand that everything was meaningful, and there were seasons of my life.

With the help of Prof. Chafe, I have been establishing the relationship between Bach's work and Park's work, exploring their approaches to ritual and how the music treats cultural elements and theology, and how the culture manifests. I wouldn't be able to come this far without receiving the Legacy Fund. Thank you!

As described in the report, I will continue to develop this research project for my PhD dissertation and plan to visit Korea next year to acquire more primary sources and consult with various people in the field. Thank you so much again for your valuable support and investment in my future.

Sincerely,



Mina Cho
4 Sparhawk Drive
Wilmington, MA 01887
www.IGJL.org



Thank you letter from Annie Averill, MPP'20

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

My name is Annie Averill and I am a Master of Public Policy student at The Heller School at Brandeis University. I am writing to thank you for your generous gift to the Legacy Fund at Brandeis.

This summer, I had the privilege to be a Research Assistant with the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum at The Heller School. This position was funded through the Legacy Fund. As a Research Assistant, I helped research and write an issue brief on telehealth use in Massachusetts, focusing on state- and federal-level policy changes regarding telehealth reimbursement and utilization during COVID-19. I also participated in qualitative interviews on telehealth with health care stakeholders across Massachusetts to advance this research. This experience has helped me work towards a career in health care delivery reform, as I was able to participate in cutting-edge research on how to improve health care access across Massachusetts through learning about telehealth.

I am passionate about improving health care access and quality. Prior to coming to Heller, I worked at a health policy research institute in New Hampshire, where I worked on a variety of grants relating to health care delivery reform efforts across the state. My research position this summer has helped work toward my dream job of working in health care delivery reform in Massachusetts, and I hope to continue such work when I graduate from The Heller School this December.

Thank you again for your generosity and helping students like me advance policy research at The Heller School.

Regards,

Annie Averill
Master of Public Policy Candidate, 2020

Thank you letter from Lily Scheindlin, MPP'21

Dear Supporters of the Legacy Fund,

My name is Lily Scheindlin and I study Public Policy at The Heller School at Brandeis University. I am writing to thank you for your gift to the Legacy Fund.

Your generosity allowed me to work with the Massachusetts Health Policy Forum at The Heller School this summer. Along with several classmates and under Professor Doonan's guidance, I worked on an issue brief about the use of telehealth and telemedicine in a pandemic and post-pandemic era. I assisted in the conduction of interviews and subsequent data analysis. It has also been a valuable experience learning how to increase the forum's internet presence and social media expansion.

After receiving my bachelor's degree in Sociology from Clark University, I worked on several projects as a research assistant. The first collected qualitative data on women in treatment for breast cancer while working low-wage jobs and resulted in a paper about the relationship between women's health and work environment. The second, studied the mental health of elderly workers in low-income jobs. Now as I begin the second year of the MPP program, I am excited to expand my skills.

I am particularly passionate about women's health and have centered my studies accordingly. This position is especially helping me hone my researching and writing skills. I plan to work in policy and women's health organizations focused on reproductive rights, abortion access, women's healthcare, access, and education. I believe gender disparities remain within equity of healthcare access and I want to address them through research and policy work.

This has been an unusual year and certainly has reshaped my educational experience, but your generosity has made it feel more like a normal summer experience. This opportunity will contribute to my future career and has made this summer truly lovely and rewarding.

Thank you,
Lily Scheindlin
Master of Public Policy Candidate, 2021

Thank you letter from Jessica Priestley, BA'13, MA'18, PhD'23

To the Supporters of the Legacy Fund:

I am a third year PhD student in the Department of Anthropology at Brandeis University and a proud and grateful recipient of funding from the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice over the momentous summer of 2020. My research concerns the myriad ways that direct-to-consumer genetic tests, like 23andMe and AncestryDNA, affect the millions of people who take them. This summer, the funds I received from this grant went toward a smaller project within my research: I have been interviewing individuals who have had their knowledge and understanding of their family changed by an ancestry DNA test. These changes include finding long-sought-after birthparents or children relinquished through adoption, or learning of previously unknown siblings and biological parents acquired through sperm donation. Receiving the Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice grant allowed me to purchase microphones that I have been sending to my interviewees, whom I have then met with via Zoom. Receiving this grant helped me conduct intimate one-on-one videos across hundreds and thousands of miles that may have otherwise been prevented by the novel prohibitions created by COVID-19.

These interviews have been enormously fruitful and have issued rich information that directly informs my dissertation research. My next planned step for this project is to edit these interviews into discrete audio “paragraphs” which I will organize by theme (e.g. adoption, sister, joy, abandonment) in an online audio archive open to and navigable by the general public including, most importantly, the folks who chose to participate in my research. My hope is that they will find in this database an opportunity for comfort and community, that it will serve as a space for making extraordinary experiences feel a little less isolating.

I intend to finish my doctorate in 2023, at which point I hope to move into work outside of the academe that makes use of my skills in ethnography, communication, data analysis, and project management. It is my belief that this project, aided as it was by your generous contribution, will serve as an exemplary moment in my professional portfolio. I am so grateful to have received it.

Sincerely,

Jessica Priestley
PhD Student, Dept. of Anthropology
Brandeis University

Students, faculty and staff at the Heller School collaborated to send the image below as part of this thank you package.



“The most important political office is that of the private citizen.”

Justice Louis D. Brandeis

The Louis D. Brandeis Legacy Fund for Social Justice supports Brandeis students, enhances campus life and promotes the issues of social justice that the former U.S. Supreme Court justice championed throughout his life.

Since its establishment in 2006, the Legacy Fund has sponsored a series of initiatives designed to help students, enrich the university community, and address social justice concerns on and off campus.

The Legacy Fund was founded by Jules Bernstein '57, and is funded in part by Mr. Bernstein and his wife, Linda Lipsett.

Special gratitude to the Legacy Fund Advisory Committee:

Jules Bernstein '57, Committee Chair

Walter Mossberg '69

Nancy (Sherman) Shapiro '69

Shaina Gilbert '10

Sahar Massachi '11

Contact Us

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