



# Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellowship Annual Report 2019

**Department of Community Service, Brandeis University**

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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-\$5,000 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 is focused on student innovation, community impact, and cohort-based leadership development. The Fellows program is the first of its kind at Brandeis, and the 2018-2019 year was only the second ever cohort of Fellows. The Fellows are advised by Department of Community Service (DCS) staff, Will Brummett.

The seven 2018-2019 Rich/Collins Community Leadership and Impact Fellows successfully implemented seven different projects across six different community partners including projects such as:

- A series of free health clinics for Waltham citizens to offer free blood-pressure/sugar readings to enhance local public health (Ariella Levisohn, Family Van).
- A college access and preparation workshop series and college tour field trip for first-generation students of color at the Boys and Girls Club (Melissa Nicolas, Boys and Girls Club).
- A digital technology workshop to establish long-term technological skill support for people experiencing homelessness (Ryan Shaffer, Community Day Center).
- A conference focused on self-care for women, non-binary, & femme youth of color from Waltham who are going into the STEM field (Marleny Nunez, Waltham Partnership for Youth).
- A legal translation training series for Brandeis students to become trained translators who provide weekly immigration legal support for Spanish-Speaking immigrants (Alejandra Bonilla, The Right to Immigration Institute).
- An enhanced series of Brandeis-supported art, science, and cultural programming for youth as part of the "We Own Fridays" program (Lucy Wingard, Boys and Girls Club).
- The construction of the first-ever multilingual and multicultural library as well as leadership training and a free library card for local high school refugees and immigrants (Gabriel Fontes, Boston International Newcomer's Academy).

## Changes Made for 2018-2019

Upon review of the 2017-2018 Fellowship year, several slight changes were made going into the new year after discussion with students, DCS staff, and the Rich and Rich/Collins families. These changes included both minor and major things such as:

- Application and Budget Support Change:** In response to weak budget proposals from last year, we created a pre-application workshop for students to come, learn, and improve their resumes, budgets, and applications prior to the November deadline. These two workshops were well-received and attended (4-5 per time), and the quality of applications rose from last year to this year as a result.
- Training Format Change:** Based on feedback from Fellows last year, meetings this Spring were cut down to 90 minutes versus two hours, and they were moved up from 7:00 P.M. to 5:30 P.M. The meetings also changed format by asking guests to come in and spend more time to work 1-on-1 with the Fellows on topic-specific problems rather than lecturing, and the Fellows were intended to have more time to bond and give each other feedback. In turn, students were requested to do more prep before meetings to prepare for some speakers.
- Meeting Frequency Change:** In addition to the format change, the meeting frequency also was increased so that Fellows' cohort meetings were now 2x a month, and their 1-on-1s also were 2x a month during non-cohort-meeting weeks. The increased frequency allowed Fellows to feel even more supported throughout the process.
- Community Partner Accountability:** Mandatory check-boxes that listed community partner expectations were required as part of this year's community partner recommendation letter. Community partners were more aware up front of the level of communication and support they were expected to give Fellows (regular meetings, contact with DCS staff, etc.). In addition, Will made contact with each community partner at the start of the Spring semester and was in regular communication with them as needed if issues arose.
- Spring Symposium Format:** This year's Spring Symposium changed in format. Instead of presenting 3-5 minutes at this year's Celebration of Service, the Fellows had a separate mid-morning symposium on Friday, May 3rd to create a more in-depth, intimate experience. After some brief gratitude remarks by DCS staff, each Fellow presented a deeper 7-10 minute overview of their project process. Over 40 people including staff, faculty, community partners, donors, families, and friends attended. The feedback was overwhelming positive.



# A YEAR AT A GLANCE



**3x** Number of interested students compared to last year



**100%** Increase in applications from last year (14)



**20+** Hours of leadership development per Fellow



**40** Brandeis volunteers recruited



**50** New campus partnerships and supporters created



**28,000** Approximate total minutes of service done.

## Recruitment & Selection

In the Fall semester, DCS staff marketed the Rich/Collins Fellowship through all typical departmental channels, including the following:

- 4 hour-long information sessions
- 6 DCS tabling sessions including the Waltham Group & Social Impact fairs
- 2 new 90-minute resume, budget & application support sessions.
- Targeted outreach emails, flyers, and social media posts to the whole campus, including all service-learning faculty, service club leaders, athletics, Waltham Group, and the student body.
- Will did 1-on-1 outreach to students recommended by other faculty/staff



Being in its second year, the Rich/Collins program has undoubtedly already gained notoriety on campus. Compared to around 20 students last year, this year we had over 68 students who we were in active communication with about the Fellowship. We had more students in one info session (12+) this Fall than we had total combined in our info sessions last year. And in the end, we had 2x as many complete applications (14) turned in as we did last year.

The Rich/Collins Fellows were selected by a ten-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 29, 2017 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
- Professor Laura Goldin, Brandeis Faculty
- Madeleine Lopez, Intercultural Center Director
- Kaytie Dowcett, Waltham Partnership for Youth, community partner rep.
- Yvette Cho, Brandeis student and athletics representative
- Josh Lepson, Waltham Group representative and Rich/Collins alum
- Joanna Le, Brandeis student and Rich/Collins alum
- Elizabeth Rotolo, Academic Services and director of MLK Fellows
- Lucas Malo, Department of Community Service

## Training and Leadership Development

In line with the new enhanced training schedule changes mentioned above, the Fellows received 1-on-1 support check-ins with DCS staff member Will Brummett twice a month starting in mid-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 twice a month in the spring semester from 5:30-7:00 P.M. for monthly cohort check-ins and leadership trainings led by a variety of guest speakers. In response to Fellow feedback, trainings were less lecture-based and included more prep work and time for Fellows to apply the lessons learned to their projects. This year's speakers included Brandeis faculty, staff, administrators, alumni, and community partners, our most-diverse trainers to date. The typical format for a Fellows meeting included:

5:30	Personal and Project Check-Ins
5:45	Guest Speaker
6:20	Questions, Answers, and Application Time
6:50	Wrap Up Announcements

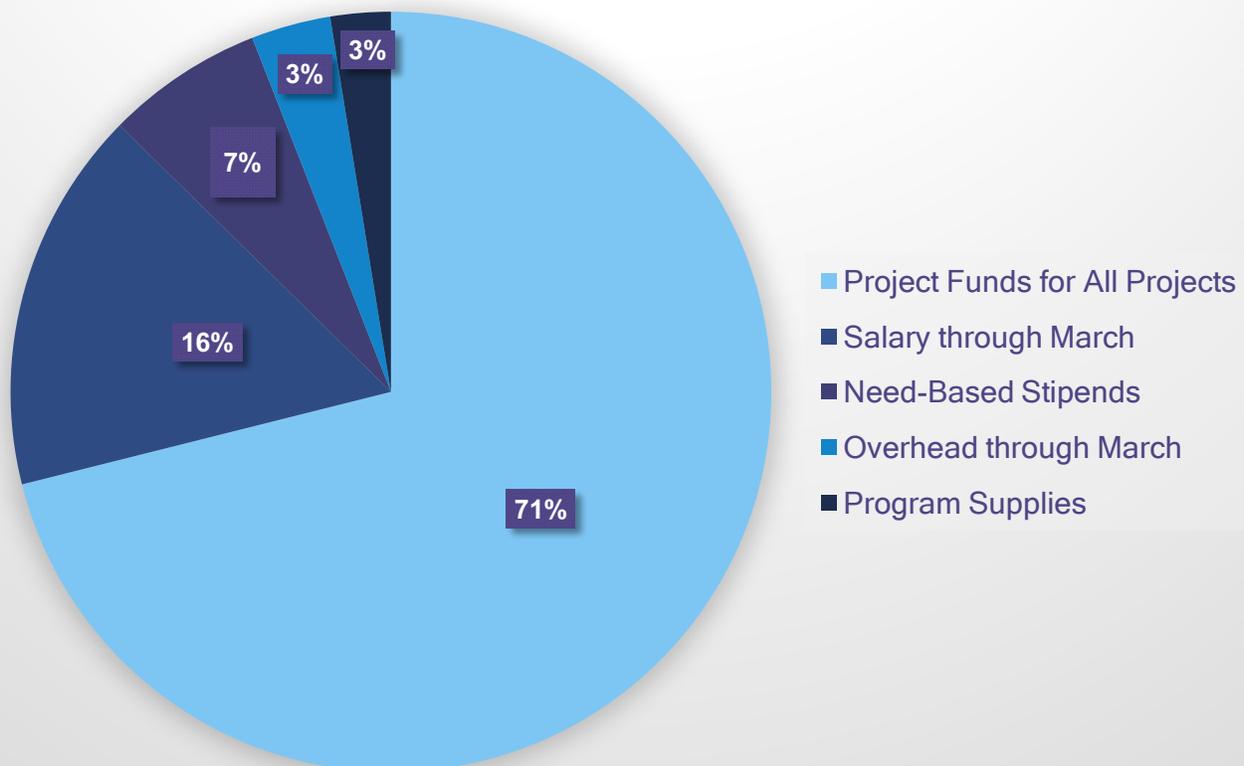
- December: Creating Outcomes & Spring Preparation, Will Brummett, DCS
- January: Work Plan Generation & Time Management, Will Brummett, DCS
- February: Budget Management & Outreach, Jordyn Seri, R/CCLIF alum
- February: \*Volunteer Recruitment & Training, Lucas Malo & Colby Sim, DCS
- March: Working in the Community, Kaytie Dowcett, community partner
- March: Evaluation & Assessment, Dr. Cathy Burack, Heller faculty
- April: Grant Writing/Reporting, Michael Dettelbach, VP in Advancement
- April: Public Speaking & End of Year Wrap-Up, Lucas Malo, DCS  
\* Cancelled due to snow

## Spring Symposium and End of Year Reports

The Fellows presented their projects and reflections on their growth at the Rich/Collins Spring Symposium on Friday, May 3<sup>rd</sup> from 11:30-1:00 P.M. in the Shapiro Campus Center. In addition, each Fellow was required to write an end-of-year report describing their Fellowship process, outcomes and evaluation, budget, and personal leadership growth. Reports are included at the end of the report.

# RICH/COLLINS BUDGET BREAKDOWN

## Fellows Budget Expenditures for 2018-2019



# FELLOW 1-PAGE OVERVIEWS

## Melissa Nicolas

- **Overview:** Melissa collaborated with the Boys and Girls Club of Waltham to create a college access and preparation workshop series for Waltham youth. The series will culminate in two free-of-charge college field trips for the youth to allow the opportunity to tour local campuses and learn more.
- **Outcomes/Successes:**
  - 8 young women of color completed all 4 workshops to qualify for the field trip;
  - In survey, all youth stated this series increased their willingness to go to college.
  - 4 Workshops were held/open to all youth: '(Finding Your) Match/Fit,' "So You Got Into College...Now What?" Panel Discussion by Brandeis/Bentley Students, Application/Financial aid/Scholarship Workshop.
  - 2 field trips (May 25 & June 8) are being taken to local universities where the students will get a personalized tour and free college memorabilia.
- **Challenges:**
  - Communication from the Club wasn't consistent from the Club's staff.
  - Scheduling around the youth's school activities became an issue, resulting in the field trip and 2 workshops being pushed back.
  - Attendance was lower than hoped partially due to confusion in advertising around if non-club youth could attend.
  - Due to poor communication, Melissa felt left out of the loop and lacking ownership of the project at times; this was corrected and improved after a mid-semester check-in with Will and then her community partner.
- **Leadership Growth:**
  - Melissa's biggest areas of growth were self-confidence in her leadership ability, learning to embrace conflict and 'manage up,' learning to ask for help, grant writing & budgeting. Will's most proud of Melissa finding the confidence and courage to take leadership of her project after facing initial communication hurdles. Her pilot program was a success and will be continued in the future.

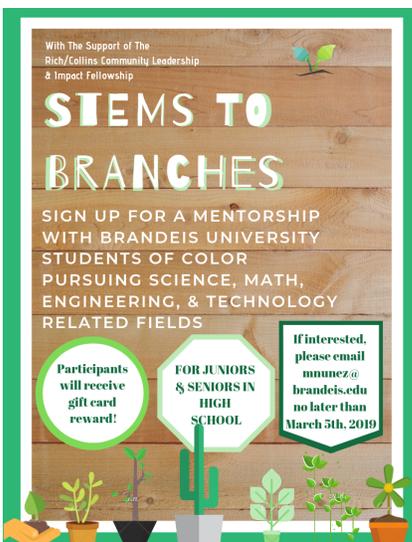


## Marleny Nunez

- **Overview:** Marleny worked with the Waltham Partnership for Youth (WPY) and created an all-day conference called, "Stems to Branches," emphasizing the importance of self-care for women, non-binary, and femme people of color in STEM fields. Unfortunately, due to its rescheduling last minute for the SATs, no youth ended up coming to the event.



- **Outcomes/Successes:**
  - Created a partnership with Boys and Girls Club to provide free transportation and advertisement support;
  - Adapted her project 3 different times due to personal/project barriers.
  - Designed workshops on the 'imposter syndrome,' goal setting, & a college panel
- **Challenges:**
  - Not having enough community advertisement to recruit youth; waiting til too late in the school year to host the conference.
  - Lack of early mentor recruitment led the mentorship project to die out.
  - Had to take two to three weeks off mid-semester for her own mental health
  - Learned patience as she had to reschedule her event due to SAT/AP testing;
  - Adjusted outreach approach and timeline to better meet youth's needs.



- **Leadership Growth:** Marleny's greatest area of growth was learning to motivate and empower herself and others through adversity and knowing where the resources are to ask for help. Marleny could've quit her project many times due to the personal and logistical hurdles she faced that caused her to miss a few weeks of the semester, but she never gave up, changed her project as needed, and modeled the type of resiliency and self-care she wanted to teach students.



## Lucy Wingard

- **Overview:** Lucy worked alongside the Boys and Girls Club of Waltham to create monthly programming for "We Own Fridays" program at the Club; Lucy collaborated with various Brandeis clubs and partners such as the German and European Studies Department, Poetic Justice, and the Maker Lab to bring essential Friday evening workshops on issues of art, science, and culture.

- **Outcomes/Successes:**

- Approximately 130 youth in attendance at first two events
- 1/4 of youth had not previously attended WOF
- Over 90% of youth in attendance said they plan on attending another WOF
- Learned about what activities youth most want to see at future WOFs
- Established 3 new Brandeis/Club partnerships and regular volunteers.
- Invested over \$2,000 in equipment used for middle and high school WOFs

- **Challenges:**

- Communication: Learning how to state goals and expectations more clearly and how to navigate hectic schedules of staff.
- Scheduling: The Junior Prom caused the March event to be pushed back and staff turnover led to the April event being pushed to May.
- Advertisement and survey distribution: Lucy didn't reach as many youth outside the Club as hoped and her efforts to survey youth at the high school to see what Friday night programming/support they want fell through.

- **Leadership Growth:** Lucy's biggest areas of growth were in her confidence in managing projects and staff conflict, evaluation and assessment, and oral and written communication. Facing similar hurdles to Melissa, Lucy learned to use her voice to advocate for herself and the youth which greatly enhanced the project long-term. She set the Club up with volunteers and supplies for long-term success.

## Ariella Levisohn

- **Overview:** Ariella worked with the Family Van and BEMCo to bring 3 free blood pressure and blood sugar screening opportunities to the local Waltham community to increase public health access and promote healthy living.
- **Outcomes/Successes**
  - 20 people received services; Consistent with Family Van averages.
  - Volunteers showed growth in comfort levels in all three areas of blood pressure measurement, blood sugar measurements, and patient interaction.
  - 82.4% of people treated learned something new about their health
  - $\frac{3}{5}$  of clients plan to make a change to their lifestyle, including talking to their doctors, eating healthier foods, getting more exercise and losing weight
  - 100% of clients had a positive experience.
- **Challenges:**
  - Difficulty finding locations to host Family Van and screenings.
  - Lack of free Waltham health resources limits scope of follow-up that people can do post-screening. Free screenings are only a start.
  - Poor weather limited the turnout on at least 1 of the 3 occasions.
- **Leadership Growth:** Ariella's biggest area of growth were in her community outreach, budget management, grant writing, and community needs approach. Will is most proud of Ariella for being persistent in her community outreach and buy-in and doing a good job of setting up the volunteers, relationships, and infrastructure so that other Brandeis students can continue this project long-term.



## Ryan Shaffer

- **Overview:** Ryan purchased technical equipment and worked with the Community Day Center to create digital literacy classes for CDC's residents. Ryan and his volunteers taught them computer skills, supported their job searches, & connected them online with friends/family.
- **Outcomes/Successes:**
  - 10 laptops were purchased for CDC tech. classes
  - Larger support network was created with regular volunteers through Waltham Group's Hunger & Homelessness.
  - Continued year 2 of Ryan's efforts to create long-term digital literacy classes and confirmed partnership with CDC to expand these classes next year.
- **Challenges:**
  - Inconsistent scheduling led to two of his three classes being cancelled by the CDC due to staff sickness or client emergency.
  - Volunteer training proved difficulty due to few volunteers being trained in both technical teaching and working with individuals who are homeless.
  - Although initial data is promising, more data is needed to prove impact of these classes.
- **Leadership Growth:** Ryan's greatest areas of growth were in his ability to do community needs assessments, volunteer recruitment, task delegation, and event planning. Ryan learned that people's technological learning needs vary widely, and people don't exist in a monolith or stereotype. People want to take an active role in getting their lives on track if they are given the support. Will is most encouraged by Ryan learning the patience, flexibility, and persistence needed for long-term partnership and planning. Ryan's project will continue to be a future success.



## Alejandra Bonilla

- **Overview:** Alejandra worked with The Right to Immigration Institute (TRII) to bring in outside training in legal translation services to train TRII members how to best communicate with and support their clients; after training, TRII hosted regular open office hours for the community to come receive support and free legal advice.
- **Outcomes/Successes:**
  - 13 new students completed over 20 hours of training to become trained to volunteer at TRII in interpreting;
  - Over 15 new multilingual volunteers recruited.
  - Interpreters have helped with 30 cases thus far with cases such as: Citizenship applications, Asylum interviews and Intakes.
  - Created a new and strong partnership with Waltham Family School who also serves local immigrants.
  - First of weekly TRII's office hours series held; had 6 families first week! Will be held regularly from this point forward.
- **Challenges:**
  - Managing everyone's needs was more challenging than thought.
  - Scheduling became difficult and time-consuming.
  - Doubting herself and her ability to lead at times was an issue.
  - An academic-heavy semester put a strain on her time for the project.
- **Leadership Growth:** Alejandra's biggest growth areas were in her confidence in her ability to lead, better delegation of tasks, creation of long-term goals, and event-planning and execution. Alejandra's greatest challenge the whole semester was her consistent self-doubt and feeling of overwhelm; Will was most proud to see her slow down and become a more confident, collaborative, and grounded young leader.





## Gabriel Fontes

- Overview:** Gabriel partnered with the Boston International Newcomer's Academy to create the first-ever multi-lingual and multi-cultural library for the school. This included working with a BINCA class to design and create the library, hosting leadership workshops on topics like consent, collaborating with various campus partners for book donations, and

offering a free field trip to the Boston Library to allow every student to get a library card.

- Outcomes/Successes:**

- 500 books donated or bought for the first-ever library.
- 32 students got Boston Public Library cards for the first time
- 5 Brandeis students volunteered at BINCA to help paint bookshelves
- 50 Brandeis community members engaged through volunteering or donating over 200 books
- \$3500 given towards the only Black owned Bookstore in Boston and \$500 was given to buy books to More Than Words, a Waltham nonprofit selling books.

- Challenges:**

- Hoped to offer the youth a grant writing training but ran out of time.
  - Still looking for future Brandeis students to continue the project.

**Leadership Growth:** Gabriel's project and growth was the biggest surprise and success of the semester. Gabriel grew the most in his community needs assessments, and he really learned a lot about what it means to have the youth lead and what creating literacy access really looks like. He also grew in his project planning abilities, leadership skills, and self-confidence. Gabriel invested his full self into the project, and it showed by his outstanding accomplishments achieved. Through his project, Gabriel now plans to become an ELL teacher and hopefully work at BINCA next year.

# OVERALL STUDENT LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

This Rich/Collins' Fellows took both a leadership skills assessment and a pre-and-post learning DCS learning outcomes evaluation. The leadership assessment had the Fellows measure themselves pre-and-post Fellowship experience on a six-point scale; the learning outcomes did the same thing but had the Fellows rate themselves on a ten-point scale based on how much they felt they had already conquered the learning outcome.

Some Fellows ranked themselves highly in most categories at the beginning, leading to less 'gains' than maybe occurred in reality. Likewise, if a Fellow gave themselves a negative post-Fellowship ranking, it most likely was due to their recognizing they are not as strong in one area as they thought.

- The largest net gains (average gain in leadership skill for all Fellows) for the leadership skills assessment were:
  - Task delegation (1.36)
  - Community needs assessment (0.93)
  - Balance and time management (0.86)
  - Budget management (0.86)
  - These were closely followed by items such as self-confidence and empowering others.
  
- The largest net gains in learning Department of Community Service specific learning outcomes (average growth per learning outcome for all Fellows) were as follows:
  - Connection & Belonging: Differentiating needs between Brandeis & Waltham (1.57)
  - Professional Development: Developing program-specific leadership skills. (1.43)
  - Professional Development: Developing effective communication skills (1.29)
  - Engaged Citizenship: Developing strategies to tackle social issues (1.29)
  - Connection and Belonging: Describing the effect of community engagement to create a sense of belonging. (1.14)

# RECOMMENDATIONS

**Recommendations based on Fellows' feedback and Will's advice.**

## **\$1,000 stipends**

The Fellows who receive stipend overwhelmingly say they made the difference in allowing them to go deeper in their projects. With the Fellowship recruiting more diverse, low-income students, increasing and extending the stipends equally to all Fellows should be explored if the funds are available.

## **Expand length of program**

Fellows kept expressing they wish the Fellowship was longer; they desire to have 2-3 months in the Fall semester to do the workshops and more intentionally develop the project with their community partner and then 1 semester to implement, evaluate, and prepare for sustainability. Long-term this may be an experiment to try.

## **Keep Symposium Structure**

The Symposium was an overall success. The smaller, packed room felt more intimate and the presentation quality was overall deeper. The time should be worked out for lunch vs. dinner depending on the donors' schedules.

## **Continue Meeting Frequency**

The schedule of Fellows having weekly meetings but alternating between 1-on-1s one week and a cohort meeting the next week is a successful model to keep.

## **Rearrange Trainings**

The Fellows' greatest feedback was wishing the volunteer training wasn't snowed out; likewise, they wish the training order was switched so it goes

- 1) Outcomes
- 2) Work plans
- 3) Community Partnerships
- 4) Evaluation/Assessment
- 5) Volunteer Recruitment/Training
- 6) Outreach/Budgeting
- 7) Grant Reporting
- 8) Public Speaking/Resumes



## THANK YOU & LINKS TO FELLOWS' FULL REPORTS

Thank you for taking time to invest in and read about the 2018-2018 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.

Finally, Will Brummett wants to extend a heartfelt thanks to everyone for the opportunity to lead this amazing program the last two years as he finishes his time at Brandeis and moves with his wife, Grace, to Washington D.C. this summer.

[Melissa Nicolas](#)

[Marleny Nunez](#)

[Lucy Wingard](#)

[Ariella Levisohn](#)

[Ryan Shaffer](#)

[Alejandra Bonilla](#)

[Gabriel Fontes](#)

[2019 Symposium PowerPoint](#)

For more information or detailed notes about any aspect of this report, please reach out to [RCCLIF@brandeis.edu](mailto:RCCLIF@brandeis.edu).