Connections, Reflections, and Perspectives: Conversations on Current Events and Today’s Society

Common Cause Community
Department of Community Living
Brandeis University
2016-2017 Academic Year
PART 1: PRE-APPLICATION

This Common Cause Community is brand new for 2016-2017. We have made some changes to the program as whole. These include:

- A brand new theme
- Both Juniors and Seniors can apply to live in the program together
- There will only be 4 four-person suites and they will be housed in Ridgewood B
- Each member of the suite will be responsible for hosting a program instead of just the suite as a whole

The theme for this community is **Connections, Reflections and Perspectives: Conversations on Current Events and Today’s Society.** Throughout the academic year, this community will be responsible for engaging in conversation on a wide array of topics that affect Brandeis students today. Through programmatic opportunities and initiatives, students living in this community will be responsible for sharing their knowledge with fellow residents and investing in conversation that will have further implications on the rest of the Brandeis community.

This community receives on-going support and programming opportunities from the Area Coordinator of Ridgewood and Community Advisor for Ridgewood B.

**STEP 1: CREATE YOUR PROGRAM**

The process begins with two decisions: what topics do you and your suite want to explore and with whom do you want to live?

**Community Size:**

- Students must apply as a suite of four (Application will be submitted individually where you will then indicate who the other members are)

**Community Member Eligibility:**

- **Connections, Reflections, & Perspectives (CRP):** This community is open to students with junior and senior housing eligibility. NOTE: Seniors who are graduating early are NOT eligible for the program.

- Applicants must have indicated their intention to participate in room selection

- Programs and other community meetings will be scheduled and each suite will be responsible for various programs throughout the semester.
STEP 2: COMPLETE THE APPLICATION

The most important part of the C3 Process is the application. In this application, each member of the suite (4 people) will be responsible for highlighting a current event that will have a particular effect on the Brandeis community over the 2016-2017 academic year.

In the application, you will discuss why this topic is important to the Brandeis community, how you plan to create a program/conversation on this topic, and what you hope the lasting impact will be once you have completed it.

In an effort to boost the effectiveness of the program, each person will take the lead on a program, but your suite is there to support you and assist in any capacity that you might need. With that, applications will be submitted individually, so that we can get a sense of each person. You will indicate who the other people you will be looking to live with in the appropriate section on the next page (Name of Applicant 2-4). Please be sure all names match on each application. If you are passionate about being a part of this program, it will be up to you to ensure that each individual is taking the application seriously and each is completed thoroughly. This will allow you to hold one another accountable, as each application in the group will need to be strong.

If selected to be a member of CRP, it is our expectation that you attend as many of the CRP programs/events as possible. If you will not be able to attend a program, you will need to complete an additional assignment on/or related to the topic missed. Please note that repeated absences may result in removal from the program.

The beauty of this year’s Common Cause program is that the topics covered will emerge as the year grows, making this community both exciting and constantly-evolving. Therefore, the topic you on speak on in your application doesn't need to ultimately be the program you end up implementing.

As you think about your application, we wanted to give you some topics to consider:

- Racial Justice
- Election 2016
- Climate Change
- Public Health
- Foreign Policy/Foreign Affairs
- Sustainable Living

There are three parts of the application:

- Community Information
- Community Exploration
- Community Program

Within each topic, you will have the opportunity to answer questions and tell us your ideas.
Community Information

- **Topic**: Briefly explain what your topic will be. Feel free to get creative and think about something interesting fellow Brandeis students would want to learn more about.

- **Area of Focus and Exploration**: The next section asks you to describe your main area of interest. This is your chance to explain your topic in greater detail and think about how this current event will have a particular effect on the Brandeis community over the 2016-2017 academic year.

- **Goals of the Community**: Finally, based on your topic, you will develop some specific goals to be successful. Your goals should focus on what you want to accomplish for your program and what you would like the lasting impact to be.

Community Exploration

- In this section, you will explain what you are going to do to learn about your topic. It might include meeting with faculty/staff sponsors, Internet searches, research that you are doing for classes, field trips, or almost any type of investigation. The point is for you to be knowledgeable on your topic, so when it comes to other parts of the application you will be ready.

- One of the most important parts of the CRP is to help other people learn on areas they might not have thought about previously. This is your opportunity to start a conversation on a topic that will be of interest to fellow Brandeis students. In this community, it our hope that all members of the program will be providing various programmatic opportunities to fellow suites, as well as other students in the residential housing areas.

Community Program

- **Program Summary**: You will have the opportunity to tell us about the program you will be planning for the fellow students. You should connect everything you have already talked about: your community identity, how you will explore your topic, and how you will educate your fellow students. Think creatively about the venue in which you will want to hold this program/conversation and how best the message might be received. The purpose of this program is create awareness on a topic of interest in current events during the 2016-2017 academic year. Additionally, each suite will be given $50. Discuss what you might be able to use that money for in your program.
Part 2: APPLICATION REVIEW

STEP 3: APPLICATION EVALUATION

Application must be completed via online form no later than March 3rd, 2016 at 5pm. Applications received after this time may not be considered.

Each application is reviewed by members of the Department of Community Living. Applications will be selected for the CRP based on excellence.

These are the criteria below:

- **Excellent** - Strong, thoughtful, and persuasive responses including a detailed plan for program implementation. Only minor possibilities for improvement; demonstrates major commitment to topic and to purpose of highlighting a current event that will have a particular effect on the Brandeis community.

- **Good** - Solid work. Many strong responses, but some areas require further exploration and organization. Application demonstrates an understanding of the topic and purpose of program.

- **Average** - Some good ideas, but responses are general and simplistic. Overall the application demonstrates only a surface commitment to topic and purpose of the program.

- **Below Average** - Less than sufficient work. Many concepts are present, but underdeveloped. More time needed to expand on topic and shows understanding of the program

- **Inadequate** - Most areas display minimal understanding; failure to develop topic past opening statements. Application shows an extreme lack of commitment to the chosen topic and the purpose of the program.

Each section of the application is evaluated using the above criteria. The overall impression of the application is also evaluated. The following are the specific criteria:

- **Community Information Section**: Demonstrated knowledge of topic

- **Community Exploration Section**: Identification and use of resources, Commitment to learning process, Community Programming Section, Creativity of programming ideas, Coherency/Connectedness of ideas, Probability of implementing programming ideas

- **General Consideration**: Thoughtful, persuasive, and complete presentation of ideas, Mechanics (organization, grammar, spelling, visual presentation)
STEP 4: ADDITIONAL CONSIDERATIONS

The CRP program is designed to balance multiple interests, which focuses not just on academics, but also on community participation. *Therefore, the Department of Community Living reserves the right to adjust this process as necessary.*

The following issues may be considered before the CRP finalists are announced:

- **Topic Balance:** As part of the overall experience, it is important to have a variety of interests and topics presented. In order to ensure that not all communities are focused on the same general topic during the final selection, the Department of Community Living will ensure that topical balance is achieved as well.

- **Conduct History:** The CRP is for junior and senior students who have excelled in many aspects of college life. Students currently suspended from housing or the University are not eligible for inclusion in the process. Additionally, a student's previous conduct history can be considered in the application selection process.

STEP 5: FINAL DETERMINATION

The Department of Community Living will determine the finalists for the program. All applicants will be notified of their status following the completion of the application review process.

Applicants that were not accepted into the program will be notified and remain part of the housing lottery system and issued a housing lottery number in time for regular room selection.
PART 3: ROOM SELECTION & CONFIRMATION

STEP 6: PAPER WORK

To continue in the CRP Process:

✓ All students must have elected to participate in room selection by deadline.
✓ Finalists will be notified by March 9, 2016 via e-mail.
✓ Each member of the community must confirm their acceptance by March 10, 2015 at 12pm via google form.
  ○ Again, failure of ALL community members to complete this acceptance will result in removal of the entire community from the selection process!

STEP 7: ROOM SELECTION

Once accepted, students will be notified of the room selection process. We will use the lottery numbers from the room selection process to decide what group chooses their housing assignment first. The person with the lowest lottery number will select for the entire group. Groups that fail to participate in room selection at their designated time can jeopardize placement in the CRP.

Withdrawals and Additions

It is possible that a student’s interest in living in the program changes before the room selection. We will allow students to try to maintain their communities with students of their choice up to a certain deadline.

To withdraw from the process, a student needs to meet with Scott Berozi, Assistant Director First Year Programs and Orientation. To add a student to a vacated space, every remaining person in the original community must agree and e-mail Scott Berozi.

Students being added to the process must have indicated interest in living on campus and have needed to complete the Housing application.

CONTACT INFORMATION

For more information about the entire process or if you have specific question please contact the Assistant Director for First Year Programs and Orientation.

Scott Berozi
781-736-5060
sberozi@brandeis.edu
IMPORTANT DATES

February 18, 2016  CRP Applications and Information Guide Available via Email

March 3, 2016 by 5pm  Applications due via online form.

March 9, 2016  Finalists announced through campus e-mail

March 10, 2016 by 12pm  CRP acceptances due via Qualtrics form

March 10, 2016  All applicants notified about their status (Room Selection numbers sent out the following day on March 11)

TBA  CRP Room Selection

TBA  CRP Welcome Reception