

Meet Our 2018 Brandeis/Heller Segal Fellows

The Eli J. & Phyllis N. Segal Citizen Leadership Program was established at Brandeis University in 2007 to honor and continue the work of Eli Segal '64, who is best known for his leadership developing AmeriCorps and Welfare-to-Work initiatives in the Clinton Administration and for his talent for inspiring and mentoring young people. The Program, housed within The Heller School's Center for Youth and Communities, honors the legacy of Eli, of his wife Phyllis Segal, and of their partnership in getting things done, with a commitment to developing new generations of citizen leaders.

The Segal Program provides emerging leaders an opportunity to join a community of other change-makers who are collaborating across sectors and issue areas, breaking down silos, and creating solutions in the pursuit of a more just and equitable world. Segal Fellows have the opportunity to foster meaningful relationships with the 106 inspiring Fellows who are already leaders in their communities, as well as a network of hundreds of multi-generational and cross-sector Founders and partners. The lifelong Fellowship starts off with a cohort-based citizen leadership curriculum in the spring semester and with a Citizen Leader Summer Internship, which is designed to provide new Brandeis/Heller Segal Fellows with an opportunity to develop their skills and competencies as citizen leaders, while working within a mission-driven organization addressing complex social issues. Segal Fellows also join the Program through our partnerships with AmeriCorps Alums, City Year, the Corporation for National and Community Service, and Service Year Alliance.

BRANDEIS UNIVERSITY

The Heller School
FOR SOCIAL POLICY AND MANAGEMENT

Edith Suárez, 2018 Heller MPP/MBA Segal Fellow



Edith Suárez is currently completing a dual Masters in Public Policy and Business Administration, with a concentration in Social Entrepreneurship and Impact Management, at The Heller School at Brandeis University. Edith is a Chicana who was born and raised in Long Beach, California, and began her academic career at Long Beach City College. She then transferred to California State University, Dominguez Hills, where she obtained her Bachelor's Degree in Human Services and a minor in Public Administration. During her time as an undergrad, Edith found a passion in the areas of

identity and culture. She then lived two years in Burkina Faso, West Africa, where she completed her Peace Corps service in Community Economic Development, working primarily with women and youth in her village. While in Burkina Faso, Edith was chosen to complete an Entrepreneurship training in Guinea called "Osez-Innover," which she then adapted to the context of Burkina Faso and helped spread to over 300 volunteers and their hosts. At Brandeis she continues her passion in the areas of identity, culture and diversity by co-founding Sin Fronteras, the first Graduate Latinx organization at Brandeis, which focuses on community activism, professional development and the celebration of Latino culture. She is currently working as an assistant for the Chief Diversity Officer at Brandeis University, in the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. Edith is interested in developing effective strategies to organize Latino and other underrepresented communities. She is interested in strategically building relationships and collaborations among underrepresented populations that will help increase the social impact and growth in communities. In her free, time she enjoys dancing, working-out, and practicing speaking French and Portuguese. ***Edith is excited to learn more about effective strategies and community organizing in Latino communities as a Segal Fellow this summer.***

Gabriel Fontes, 2018 Brandeis Undergraduate Segal Fellow



Gabriel Fontes is an educator/activist from western Massachusetts and is a junior studying English and African & Afro-American studies at Brandeis University. Gabriel is committed to equalizing educational opportunities for youth and plans to use community organizing and public advocacy to pursue these goals. Gabriel sees education reform as deeply interconnected with housing justice, racial justice, and sexual violence prevention, and his activism reflects that holistic approach. In 2015, Gabriel received the Martin Luther King Jr. Fellowship to study at Brandeis University for his leadership on sexual consent education and racial justice

initiatives at Amherst Regional High School. At Brandeis, Gabriel continued his sexual violence prevention work by facilitating bystander intervention trainings and by volunteering at Reach Beyond Domestic Violence, a local domestic violence agency. In 2017, Gabriel helped lead the 3rd annual “Justice Jam” Symposium on Urban Education under the mentorship of Professor Derron Wallace and received the Social Justice World of Work Fellowship from the Hiatt Career Center to intern at New York Communities for Change (NYCC) in Brooklyn. At NYCC, Gabriel worked on campaigns to protect tenant and workers’ rights, fight gentrification developments, and prevent the wholesale theft of public property by private investors. Throughout all this, Gabriel has continued his practice of youth development by volunteering in an 8th grade classroom in Amherst, tutoring and mentoring an 8th grade student from a Waltham middle school, and teaching a literature course to rising 9th grade students at an academic summer camp in New Orleans. In the fall of 2017, Gabriel honed his Portuguese and Spanish fluency while studying abroad at the Universidad de Habana in Cuba.

This summer, Gabriel is excited to partner with other motivated education reformers as a Segal Fellow.

John Valinch, 2018 Heller MPP/MBA Segal Fellow



John Valinch is a dedicated and passionate activist and former youth leader. As a lifelong resident of Chelsea, Massachusetts, he is guided by a principled commitment to justice, equity, and building community power and voice through intersectional community organizing and public policy. John is pursuing a dual Master of Public Policy and Master of Business Administration at the Heller School at Brandeis University, where he is the Co-President of the Master of Public Policy Student Association. He currently serves as a Private Equity Research Analyst for UNITE HERE, an International Union representing over

270,000 hotel, gaming, and food service employees. In addition, John has played a pivotal role in the creation of Hospitality Employees Advancement and Training, (HEAT) Inc., a new workforce development organization in Miami, FL designed to provide hospitality workers with the training and skills needed to earn sustainable living wages, benefits, and jobs with dignity in South Florida. Within his community, John serves on the Board of Directors for GreenRoots, an environmental justice non-profit organization. He is working with a local group of organizers to establish a Community Land Trust in Chelsea in order to develop and maintain affordable housing in perpetuity. During election seasons, John can be found behind-the-scenes and in the streets, providing support and uplifting the voices of his fellow community leaders through electoral campaigns. John graduated Summa Cum Laude from the University of Massachusetts Boston in 2014 with a B.A. in Political Science and Public Policy, receiving the Roger Feinstein Award in Public Policy. ***This summer as a Segal Fellow, John aims to explore the prospects for impact investing in marginalized communities and examine the opportunities and challenges for implementing affordable housing Community Land Trusts throughout Massachusetts.***

Justus Davis, 2018 Brandeis Undergraduate Segal Fellow



Justus Davis is a junior from Atlanta, Georgia, majoring in Digital Art & Culture at Brandeis University and studying abroad in Singapore this semester. His service work includes working with a college access program called “College AIM” that is based in Towers High School, a high school located in Decatur, Georgia. In 2016, he volunteered as an Art Teacher’s Assistant at Stanley Elementary school in Waltham, MA. Justus is interested in how an interdisciplinary arts education can be used to maximize resources in underfunded schools. As a public relations intern for Cartoon Network, Justus researched opportunities for his employer to improve its efforts in increasing STEM education interest among its younger viewers. ***Justus is excited to approach new media studies as an interdisciplinary arts curriculum as a Segal Fellow this summer.***

Leila Quinn, 2018 Heller MPP/MBA Segal Fellow



Leila Quinn is a dual Master of Public Policy and Master of Business Administration candidate at The Heller School at Brandeis University. Before coming to Heller, she worked as a Policy Director for Boston City Councilor Andrea J. Campbell, where she focused on public safety and criminal justice. Leila previously acted as Advocacy Manager for Generation Citizen, a national action-civics education non-profit, where she advised youth civics projects on a wide variety of issues. This work inspired her to jump into the field of policy analysis. Leila has significant political campaign experience and is passionate about getting good women into office. She believes government should work for the greater good so that people can choose where they want to live and not worry about access to a good education or quality food. Leila originally hails from New York City and graduated from Hastings High School. She graduated cum laude with a Bachelors' in environmental studies from Mount Holyoke College in 2012. While not at work, she can be found bicycling the streets of metro Boston.

Leila is excited to make an impact on housing policy as a Segal Fellow this summer

Madison Matthews, 2018 Brandeis Undergraduate Segal Fellow



Madison Matthews is a junior majoring in Economics at Brandeis University, with minors in African and Afro-American Studies, as well as French. At the core of everything she does is her desire to lift up marginalized voices. She enacts this in and outside of the classroom. Madison has a radio show titled "Stay Saucy," which is the first show hosted by two Black women on Brandeis' WBRS 100.1 FM radio station. Through this platform, she collaborates with a wide range of people in the Brandeis community to broadcast dialogue on topics ranging from politics, gender, race and economics, to sexuality and philosophy. She is the co-founder of the Brandeis Legal Empowerment Global Brigade, which provides access to financial and legal resources that would not normally be available to disenfranchised women and families in rural Honduras. Madison envisions herself creating revolutionary ways of using economics to

expand resources and solve issues for marginalized communities. Her academic specialization is the hybridization of economics, gender and race. She wants to use her vision of using economic theory, statistics and data-analysis to create cost-effective, just, and sustainable solutions. After writing various research papers about economic equity inside the classroom, she continued this passion through working with Prosperity Now, an organization that creates asset growth for low income communities. Last summer she was their Applied Research Intern, where she used her economic and financial prowess to write a paper that will be published on why Black and Brown people have bad or no access to credit. She also interned for the Office of the D.C. Attorney General, Karl Racine, where she used quantitative skills to research and analyze delinquency cases, which served as a catalyst to increase funding for rehabilitation programs for youth in the D.C. area. ***Madison is excited to expand the ways in which she uses her quantitative skills to make innovative economic solutions for marginalized communities as a Segal Fellow this summer.***

Olivia Nichols, 2018 Brandeis Undergraduate Segal Fellow



Olivia Nichols is a sophomore at Brandeis University majoring in Sociology and minoring in Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Studies. Raised in Apple Valley, Minnesota, Olivia now works as a staff member at the Intercultural Center on campus and has also worked as a Japanese language peer tutor at Brandeis. She engages with the Brandeis community through serving as the outreach chair for the Japanese Student Association, through activism as the vice president of the Brandeis Asian American Task Force, and through performance and creative expression, as both a musician and a poet. During her freshman year, Olivia spent her spring semester as a community engagement fellow at Organizing for Action. She also became involved with the U.S.-Japan Council through a student leadership conference that was held in Boston. ***This summer as a Segal Fellow, Olivia is excited to learn more about advocacy work that centers the intersection of LGBTQ+ and immigrant rights.***

For more information about the Segal Program, visit <https://segal.brandeis.edu>.