

## Meet Our 2021 Brandeis/Heller Segal Fellows

Congratulations and welcome to the Eli J. and Phyllis N. Segal Citizen Leadership Program's six new 2022 Brandeis/Heller Segal Fellows. These inspiring and dedicated individuals join a Network of 148 lifelong Fellows across a wide range of issue areas and sectors. Through their participation in the Program, each Fellow will be supported with resources and training to continue their development as leaders and agents for social change. Each winter, The Segal Program selects Fellows from Brandeis University, as undergraduate students or as candidates in The Heller School for Social Policy and Management's Masters in Public Policy (MPP) Program; we also welcome additional Fellows each fall through our national service partners.

# Brandeis

THE HELLER SCHOOL  
FOR SOCIAL POLICY  
AND MANAGEMENT  
Center for Youth  
and Communities

### Catherine Gooding, 2022 Heller MPP Segal Fellow



**Catherine Gooding** is a Master of Public Policy student at the Heller School with a concentration in Economic and Racial Equity. Originally from Morgantown, West Virginia, Catherine is a proud Appalachian. She believes that environmental justice is central to community wealth and wellbeing and is committed to grassroots economic development solutions which uplift rural communities. Before starting at Heller, Catherine completed two years of service as an AmeriCorps VISTA at the Honors College at West Virginia University, launching an experiential learning program and developing the Honors College's diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. Catherine is also a member of the

Morgantown chapter of the National Organization for Women and works with a statewide task force to advocate for the CROWN (Create a Respectful and Open World for Natural Hair) Act at the state and local levels around West Virginia. She graduated from Wellesley College in 2019 with a bachelor's degree in anthropology. In her free time, Catherine enjoys reading and cross stitch, and she is never happier than when she is spending time in the mountains. **As a Segal Fellow, Catherine is excited to learn more about rural community development practices this summer.**

### Gabriella Lieberman, 2022 Brandeis Segal Fellow



**Gabriella Lieberman** is a junior at Brandeis University majoring in Politics and minoring in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. Since high school, Gabriella has been dedicated to public service, interning for Senator Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Congressman Jim Himes (D-CT-04), Ed Markey for U.S. Senate, Blumenthal for CT, Kaine for VA, and Biden for President. Gabriella is passionate about women's empowerment in the political sphere. Last summer, she interned for Emerge MA, an organization dedicated to recruiting and training Democratic women to run for public office. On-campus, Gabriella has served in numerous leadership positions, including President of Brandeis Israel Public Affairs

Committee, Vice President of Brandeis Students Demand Action, Student Lead for VoteDeis, and an Associate Justice for the Undergraduate Student Union Judiciary. She also works as a Research Assistant at the Western Jihadist Project. Gabriella is originally from Stamford, CT, but her family has relocated to Madrid, Spain. Gabriella cites her Jewish upbringing as the impetus for her interest in combating racially motivated domestic extremism. During Spring 2022, Gabriella will be studying abroad in Copenhagen, Denmark, focusing on counterterrorism from a European perspective. **This summer, Gabriella is excited to learn more about the legislative process and national security apparatus.**

## Vianny Rodriguez, 2022 Heller MPP Segal Fellow



**Vianny Rodriguez** is an MPP candidate at the Heller School concentrating in Economic and Racial Equity. She is interested in finding ways to build community empowerment, as well as improving civic engagement and social capital in marginalized communities. At Heller, Vianny is a Graduate Research Assistant with the Heller Office of Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity, working with team members to create and improve EID programs and initiatives. Before coming to Heller, she served as a Learning Program Coordinator with the U.S. Peace Corps in the Philippines from 2018-2020. During this time, she volunteered at a local integrated school, co-created environmental programs, facilitated multiple leadership camps, served as warden with the Safety and Security team, and served on the EID committee. Vianny graduated with a dual degree in Marketing and Psychology from the University of Massachusetts Amherst in 2017. She was born and raised in Framingham, Massachusetts. In her free time, she enjoys reading, travelling, being outdoors, watching cooking shows, and learning something new. **Vianny is excited to better understand the tools that can be built to foster civic engagement to tackle community issues for improved life outcomes and sustainable development.**

## Jolecia Saunderson, 2022 Brandeis Segal Fellow



**Jolecia Saunderson** is an artist and advocate born and raised in Brooklyn, New York. She is a sophomore at Brandeis University who plans on double-majoring in African and African American Studies and Politics, with minors in Creativity the Arts and Social Transformation and Legal Studies. On campus, Jolecia is a student worker at Chums and the Game Room, a part of the Woman of Color Alliance, a volunteer with Roses In Concrete, and interested in creating her own club: The Multicultural Hair, Art, & Empowerment Club. Jolecia has interned at Power In Place, which emphasizes the importance of women in politics, The African American Policy Forum, where she explored black female leadership in her cohort team Melanin Minds, and Urban Word, for poetry and art as tools of liberation. As an artist and advocate, she is passionate about social policy, activism, and educational justice. In her free time, she enjoys writing poetry, spoken word, art, Marvel movies, and dance. **Jolecia is excited to explore more about the law, educational justice, art, activism, policy, and how these can be advanced and reimaged for communities in need.**

## Shania Thomas, 2022 Heller MPP Segal Fellow



**Shania Thomas** is an MPP candidate at the Heller School concentrating in Health Policy. She is from Manalapan, New Jersey, and a recent graduate from Brandeis, Class of 2021, with majors in Politics and Health: Science, Society and Policy (HSSP). Shania values true diversity of experience, identity, and background, and has a passion for uplifting the voices and perspectives of those around her. A former Roosevelt Fellow herself, Shania works as a graduate assistant for the Brandeis Roosevelt Fellow peer advising program. As a Health Career Connections intern, she completed an internship with Mathematica Policy Research on their Social Determinants of Health team, where she co-authored an internal presentation on the impacts of climate change on health and did research on the integration of birthing doulas into existing maternal medical facilities. She has also worked with the Johns Hopkins Hospital WIC clinics on program innovation and evaluation. As an advocate, Shania was an Organizing Lead for the Every Voice Coalition and has successfully advocated for sexual violence prevention legislation in the Massachusetts State House. Shania has always been one to wear many hats. She is a part-time caregiver for her grandmother, she is a full-time working student, and a mentor for high school and undergraduate students. Drawing from her studies and personal experiences, **this summer, Shania is excited to work toward creating more human-centered policies that positively affect or even ameliorate the impact of unmet health-related social needs in the aging population.**

## Hannah Wilcove, 2022 Heller MPP Segal Fellow



**Hannah Wilcove (she/they)** is a Master of Public Policy candidate at the Heller School, concentrating in Women, Gender and Sexuality. Prior to Heller, she worked as a field organizer on local, state, and federal Democratic campaigns. In 2017, Hannah was a fellow with Democracy Summer, a program run by Congressman Jamie Raskin and his staff, where she was first immersed in politics, and later helped develop the program. They also interned in the Maryland General Assembly for Delegate Ariana Kelly, primarily assisting with Del. Kelly's proposed paid family leave legislation. Originally from Rockville, Maryland, they graduated magna cum laude from University of Maryland, Baltimore County (UMBC) in

2019 as a member of the Honors College, having majored in Gender & Women's Studies and minored in Sociology. Her policy interests are wide-ranging, but she has always been passionate about "women's issues," such as reproductive justice, sexual violence prevention, and paid family and medical leave. **Hannah is excited to be an advocate for gender parity and a fairer political system this summer and as a lifelong Segal Fellow.**

*For more information about the Segal Program, visit [segal.brandeis.edu](https://segal.brandeis.edu).*