

Message from the Eli J. Segal Citizen Leadership Program at the Center for Youth and Communities at the Heller School for Social Policy and Management at Brandeis University

The Eli J. Segal Citizen Leadership Program, at the Center for Youth and Communities remains steadfast in its stance of solidarity with the concerned students and supports the goals of #FordHall2015 as defined in their letter to President Lisa Lynch on November 19, 2015.

We support the students requesting their voices be heard through engagement in dialogue to ensure their demands are addressed by University leadership. Their courage, dedication and pain is not lost on us as it is central to our mission of *making knowledge productive and supporting emerging leaders to engage in a lifetime of citizen leadership*. In fact we accept the mission of this university which states “As a liberal arts college, Brandeis affirms the importance of a broad and critical education in enriching the lives of students and preparing them for full participation in a changing society, capable of promoting their own welfare, yet remaining deeply concerned about the welfare of others.” These students are deliberately acting on the second part of this mission while imploring that the first be done better.

Their demands highlight a change to curriculum and pedagogy much needed to prepare them for the ever-changing times off this campus. We agree with their adage “Uplifting the most marginalized uplifts us all” and want to see their goals achieved. In an institution of teaching and learning we stand with our students demanding change that goes beyond a strategic plan statement of improved “diversity” to tangible actions. Moreover, we believe their demands are realistic and worthwhile for success at *any* university embedded in our current society. We hope and expect that the administration and students will continue negotiations and move into action – some initial steps are defined in the letter by President Lynch on November 23, 2015.

We believe that it is with strong partnerships and coalitions – particularly including the students in decision-making processes – that we will see change. We hope the students know we do not think all this burden should be on their shoulders and we are committed to sharing it by continuing to do this work well beyond the next few days or weeks. **So, to show our actions will speak louder than words, the Segal Program at the Center for Youth and Communities will commit to hosting each semester at least one of the “professional development workshops specifically tailored for Black students” (“List of Demands presented to Brandeis University by Concerned Students 2015” on November 19, 2015 at 1:30pm).** We will invite our expansive Segal Network to engage with the Brandeis community to bring these important learning opportunities to our black students as a way to both support our larger University and model the standards demanded by these engaged citizen leaders. We look forward to co-creating our spring 2015 workshop with the concerned students early in the New Year to ensure their voices are honored and interests met by our workshops. Additionally we will draw upon the reading list and syllabus recently generated by the students to use with our Segal Fellows to continue this conversation beyond Brandeis University.

We thank the students for their leadership and look forward to a better tomorrow for the whole community while we uplift this one.