

## Meet Our 2025 Brandeis Segal Fellows

The Segal Citizen Leadership Program welcomes and extends our congratulations to our five new 2025 Segal Fellows. These inspiring and dedicated individuals join a Network of 166 lifelong Fellows making an impact 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.



### **Maria Antonio**

Maria Antonio is a Samuels Scholar and international student majoring in International Global Studies and French, while minoring in Sociology and Economics. Born and raised in the state of Sao Paulo, Brazil, she moved to Massachusetts at 16 to attend high school. She is interested in the intersection of the world around us and its sociopolitical aspects, as well as learning languages such as Spanish and French. On campus, she has been involved as an Editor at the Brandeis Law Journal, a Treasurer at the Brazilian Students Association (BRASA), Vice President of Digital Management at the Brandeis Undergraduate Consulting Club (BUCC), and ESL Volunteer at the Language Empowering Action Project (LEAP).

In addition, she works as a Manager at the Technology Help Desk, where she supervises 20 technicians, and a Community Advisor at Massell Quad. Having interned at JVS Boston and Ernst & Young in past summers, Maria is interested in working with immigrants in the field of law. **In the future, she hopes to become an attorney to help other immigrants in the U.S. and serve as their mentor both in law and in life.**



### **Ragini Kannan**

Ragini Kannan, a junior at Brandeis University from Westford, Massachusetts, is pursuing a double major in Health: Science, Society, and Policy (HSSP) and Computer Science, along with a minor in Legal Studies. As a student-athlete on the softball team, the founding Vice President of the Brandeis Student Athletes of Color, and a Computer Science Undergraduate Department Representative, Ragini brings leadership and advocacy into every aspect of her life. She is passionate about addressing systemic inequities in healthcare and promoting justice through the integration of technology and policy. **As a Segal Fellow this**

**summer, Ragini is eager to deepen her knowledge of health administration and insurance while gaining insights into the critical policies shaping both fields.**



### **Nikhat Meman**

Nikhat Meman is a junior from Long Island, New York, majoring in Health, Science, Society, and Policy (HSSP) and Biology on the pre-medical track. She hopes to become a physician to create a career centered around combatting health inequities, both in her local community, as well as on an international level. At Brandeis, she engages in various advocacy and community engagement activities through positions such as the Halal Representative to the Dining Committee, Undergraduate Representative to the Alumni Board, mentoring high school seniors applying to college, and volunteering for Advocates for Health. In her free time she loves to explore Boston's food scene with friends, as well as

photography. **Nikhat is excited to explore and learn more about expanding access to healthcare as a Segal Fellow this summer.**



### **DieuYen "Yen" Nguyen**

DieuYen Nguyen is class of 2026 and a Brandeis University student from Houston, TX. She is studying Business with a concentration in Management and minoring in Legal Studies. On campus, Yen is actively involved in Student Production Services, TEDx, Buddhist Sangha, Vietnamese Student Association, and Boxing. She has gained diverse professional experience through interning at the Boston Adult Probation Service, Consor Engineers, and Johnson Law Group, where she

developed skills in customer service, legal research, and marketing. As a first generation student, she strives to advocate for the needs and rights of the under-resourced and promote justice. Her all time idol is Sonia Sotomayor. **Yen is excited to explore all aspects of law, especially at financial institutions and the courts, to create more equitable communities.**



### **Zaire Simmonds**

Zaire Simmonds, a proud first-generation college student from the Bronx, New York, is a trailblazer in the field of education. A Junior at Brandeis University, he is majoring in Education Studies with a focus on Teacher Education. Zaire's passion for transforming the teaching profession and fostering diversity within educational spaces is evident in his impactful work both on and off campus. Before arriving at Brandeis in 2022, Zaire spent seven years serving as a "Pre-Teacher" in New York City, gaining hands-on experience and shaping his vision for the future of education. His dedication was recognized by the NYC Department of Education, where he became the youngest employee in its history. As an Early Career Pathway Consultant, Zaire worked with high school students aspiring to enter the teaching profession

(EdRising) and supported young men of color in their journeys to becoming educators through initiatives like NYC Men Teach.

At Brandeis, Zaire has continued his mission to innovate and inspire. As a SSSP Scholar, MLK Fellow, and a leader in the Brandeis community, he founded the university's first National Education Association chapter, Aspiring Educators. In addition, he serves as the Undergraduate Representative for the Education Department, advocating for equity and excellence in teacher preparation programs. Through his work with the Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion as a Racial Justice Educator, Zaire is committed to improving the Black experience on campus and creating inclusive spaces that empower marginalized communities.

Driven by a vision to reimagine what teacher preparation programs can be, Zaire is focused on recruiting and supporting diverse, passionate individuals into the teaching profession. His ultimate goal is to become the Chancellor of New York City Public Schools, where he aims to lead transformative change, ensuring that every student has access to excellent and equitable education. Zaire's journey reflects a deep commitment to reshaping the future of education, one classroom and one community at a time. **Zaire is excited to get more involved in education policy and classroom teaching as a Segal Fellow this summer.**