

2021-
2022

A YEAR IN REVIEW



THE MARTIN RICHARD INSTITUTE FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE

OUR MISSION

The mission of the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice is to build knowledge about social justice, to develop skills for advancing social justice through individual and collective action, and to serve as a catalyst for actualizing Bridgewater State University's commitment to social justice.

Thank you to the many BSU partners and advisory board members for their dedication and contributions to our shared mission. We especially thank Vice President Brenda Molife and Vice Provost Pam Russell for their leadership and wish them all the best in their new roles.

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Jo Hoffman, *Faculty Associate*
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This work would not be possible without Bridgewater State University, Santander Bank, HarborOne Foundation, and individual donors. Thank you for your continued support!

A YEAR IN REVIEW

Greetings Friends,

Welcome to the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice's Year in Review for the 2021-2022 Academic Year!

We have been busy offering opportunities for action and education. We had a great turnout this year with more than 1,300 individuals of all ages joining us to engage and learn about social justice issues and innovative ways to spark social change.

Our justice fellows worked on exciting projects on campus and within our local communities. MRISJ's faculty partners fostered social justice education inside and outside of the classroom, while working on research and other projects on a range of social justice issues.

Within these pages is a highlight reel from this past year to give you an inside glimpse into some of the key events and signature programs in pursuit of our mission of social justice.

We look forward to seeing you at future events as we continue to promote social justice and education from our new home at 161 Summer Street, thanks to the BSU Foundation! Visit our website (bit.ly/bsumrisj) to stay in touch and learn more about our work!

Take good care,

Jill K. Beckwith
Executive Director



WHAT'S INSIDE?

- 2 Message from our Executive Director
- 3 Civic Engagement
- 4 Student Engagement
- 5 Justice Fellows
- 6 Taking the Lead
- 7 Faculty Engagement
- 8 Teaching & Learning
- 9 Event Spotlight 2022 MLK Series
- 10 Community Connections Girls Inc.
- 11 Contact Us

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

CIVIC SPEAKER SERIES

With multiple events throughout the year, the MRISJ's Civic Speaker Series highlights civic leaders from our community and across the world. This signature series inspires attendees to spark conversation, share ideas, and act for social change.

This year, our Civic Speaker events highlighted youth activism and environmental justice, civic engagement in the classroom, and innovative ways to spark change through creativity.



Dr. Sheena Manuel moderating November Civic Speaker Series

MLK SERIES

Every year, MRISJ hosts educational events and a service project in honor of MLK Day. Be sure to check out our event feature on page 9 to learn more about what we did this year!

VOTER EDUCATION

Launched in 2020, *BSU Votes* is an online resource to help voters, new and seasoned, navigate local and federal elections. Learn more about voter registration in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, voting by mail, researching current candidates and issues, and more by visiting the website (bit.ly/BSUVotes).



Left to Right: Justice Fellows Alexis G., Irina C., Jasmine W, and Carrie P. at voter registration table in University Park

CIVIC FELLOWS

In addition to *BSU Votes*, our civics-focused justice fellows work to promote civic education among BSU students. These Fellows held voter registration drives, led film viewings and discussions, and co-hosted *Constructive Talks* with faculty members, in addition to creating educational resources to encourage civic engagement within the BSU community.

Civic fellows also educated the campus community about social justice legislation. This year, we highlighted the *CROWN Act*, a bill prohibiting discrimination based on natural and protective hairstyles, which has since been signed into law in Massachusetts.



STUDENT ENGAGEMENT

SERVING THE COMMUNITY

MRISJ hosts service projects centered on volunteerism and community building on the BSU campus and throughout the region. BSU students learn about issues in their communities, contribute to local groups and come together to connect with peers.

Hundreds of BSU students participated in service day opportunities including: packing 25,000 meals for 9/11 Day of Service, planting and harvesting produce with Sharing the Harvest Community Farm both to kick off the semester last fall and celebrate Earth Day in spring and our annual MLK Day of Service project.

Our students were eager to build connections through regular service with local organizations. Volunteers filled backpacks of supplies for students experiencing homelessness with School on Wheels of MA, connected with pen pals from Bridgewater Senior Center, engaged youth to connect them with the Old Colony YMCA, made welcome home signs to greet families moving into new transitional housing and more!



MRISJ Community Programs Manager Laura Mulvey (pictured far right) with students at Sharing the Harvest Community Farm for Earth Day 2022

JUMPSTART

Jumpstart is a national early education organization working toward the day every child in America enters kindergarten prepared to succeed. Students dedicate 300 hours of their time toward teaching preschoolers in Brockton the critical language, literacy and social-emotional skills required for kindergarten success.

This year, 22 Bridgewater State University students from all major programs and concentrations made the year-long commitment to serve as Jumpstart AmeriCorps members.



JUSTICE FELLOWS

JUSTICE FELLOWS

The MRISJ's Justice Fellow program offers a unique learning opportunity to undergraduate students.

Fellows are paid by the MRISJ to work 10-hours per week with a community organization, a campus partner or within the MRISJ on a wide range of social justice, civic engagement and service initiatives.

MRISJ staff provide training and support to the fellows, community organizations and campus partners get assistance with their important work related to MRISJ focus areas, and students get to learn and develop their skills to become community leaders of change. This past year, fellows worked with:

Community Partners

- ■ ▲ Diversity, Inclusion, and Community Empowerment (DICE), *Bridgewater and Raynham*
- Girls Inc. Taunton, *Taunton*
- ▲ Raising Multicultural Kids (RMK), *Easton*

Campus Projects

- ▲ Arts of Activism - The Bigger Picture
- ● Local Service Projects
- Social Justice Choir
- ▲ Supporting Our Souls

Key: ● Community Engagement ■ Civic Engagement ▲ Racial Justice

COMMUNITY PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

Diversity and Inclusion for Community Empowerment (DICE) helps people to take action in their communities to address systemic issues, raise cultural awareness and celebrate diversity as a part of everyday life. This year, three justice fellows helped increase awareness about DICE through a new social media strategy and recruitment of DICE's youth board.

One fellow also supported collaborative research between DICE and Bridgewater Communities for Civil Rights (BCCR) to address racial, social and civil rights injustices in the Bridgewater-Raynham community. They assisted a BSU faculty member with a community outreach survey on the communities' efforts and impact on diversity, equity and inclusion, and prepared a literature review on racial injustice on social systems and community members.

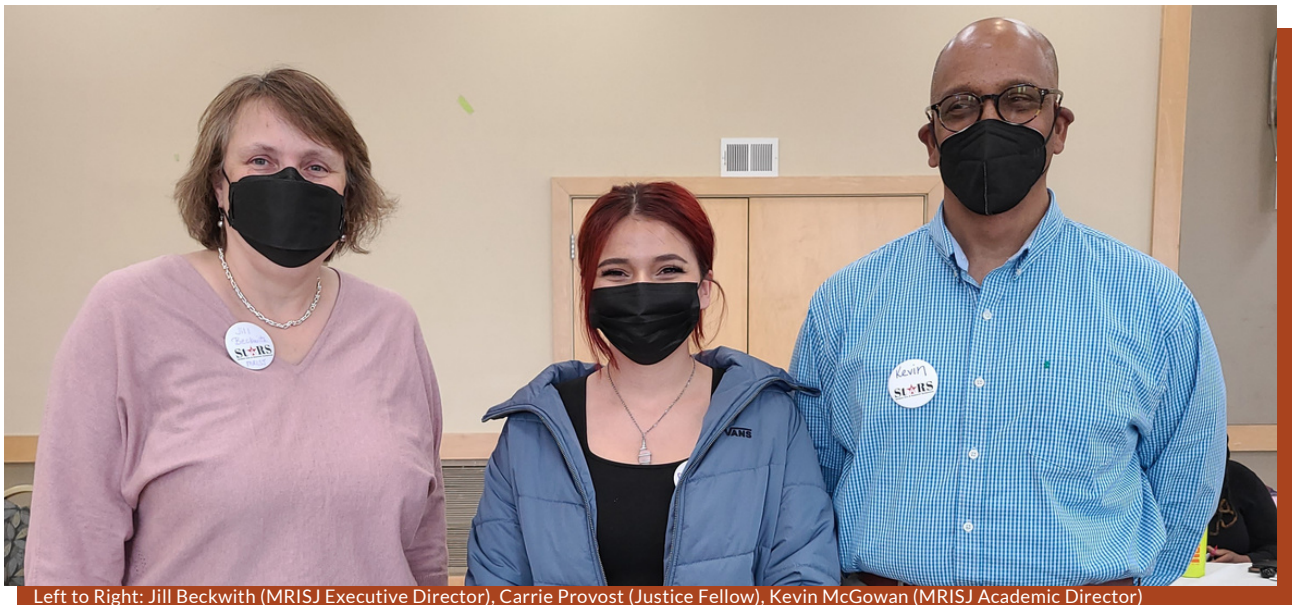


GET MOVIED: A SOCIAL MOVIEEMENT

Hosted by our civics fellows, the *Get Movied: A Social Movement* film series invited the BSU community to join us for movie screenings and discussions to bring awareness and inspire conversation about important social justice topics.

Throughout the spring semester, our fellows developed thoughtful questions and led meaningful discussions of issues addressed by the films, including racial inequity in the criminal justice system (*13th*), Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (*Wind River*), gender equality (*On the Basis of Sex*) and climate justice (*Waste Land*).

As a result of her leadership as a MRISJ Justice Fellow, junior Carrie Provost was invited to present a lightning talk at BSU's annual Student Arts & Research Symposium. This prestigious honor highlighted their work on *Get Movied*, Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (MMIW), and student leadership with the Native American Cultural Association. Carrie was nominated by President Clark to be BSU's Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellow, a national student leadership program supported by the MRISJ.



Left to Right: Jill Beckwith (MRISJ Executive Director), Carrie Provost (Justice Fellow), Kevin McGowan (MRISJ Academic Director)

CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Piloted in spring 2022, our *Constructive Talks* sessions provided MRISJ's student justice fellows the opportunity to collaborate with our Faculty Associates to plan and moderate critical conversations among students about social justice topics.

This format engaged students in critical conversations with peers in a small group setting, across differences, to learn, discuss and act on important social problems relating to social justice, racial equity and civic engagement.

The four pilot events were student-only spaces and focused on different issues (safety and justice, immigration, driverless vehicles and climate justice).

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

PARTNERING WITH FACULTY

Faculty are a part of the MRISJ in many important ways.

As MRISJ Academic Director, Dr. Kevin McGowan consults with faculty about how to include social justice concepts and approaches into their courses, scholarship and departmental work. Dr. McGowan is also leading the process of proposing a social justice minor and racial justice center at BSU.

In addition to the leadership of our academic director, the MRISJ is also connected to Academic Affairs through our Faculty Associates. They work alongside MRISJ staff to ensure that programs and partnerships benefit from faculty expertise, while fostering connections and collaborations with academic departments and programs of study. Faculty Associates serve as a primary voice for faculty and librarians as the MRISJ plans and delivers programs and events.

This year our faculty partners:

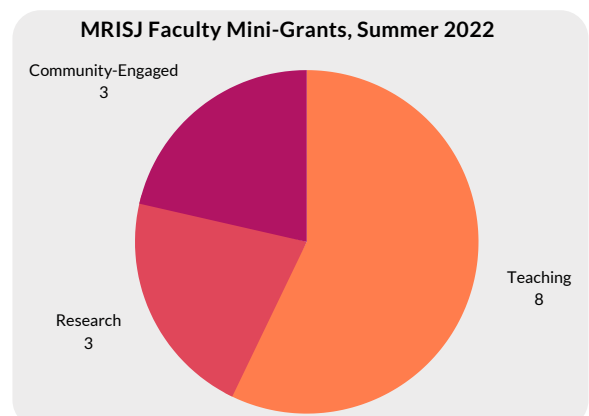
- Collaborated with MRISJ staff to plan and lead the 2022 MRISJ Summer Faculty Institute
- Reviewed the 2022 MRISJ Summer Faculty Mini-Grant applications and selected recipients
- Developed and led learning opportunities in key areas
- Partnered with justice fellows to lead the *Constructive Talks* sessions
- Cultivated community partners and collaboration opportunities

FACULTY MINI-GRANTS

The MRISJ awards small monetary grants to part-time and full-time faculty members at BSU for their original research, teaching projects such as creating a new course or updating an existing course, community-engaged projects, and purchasing resources.

All projects must be related to social justice. Those that address civic engagement and racial justice, focus on BSU's connection to Bridgewater and Gateway Cities, or are interdisciplinary and collaborative are given priority.

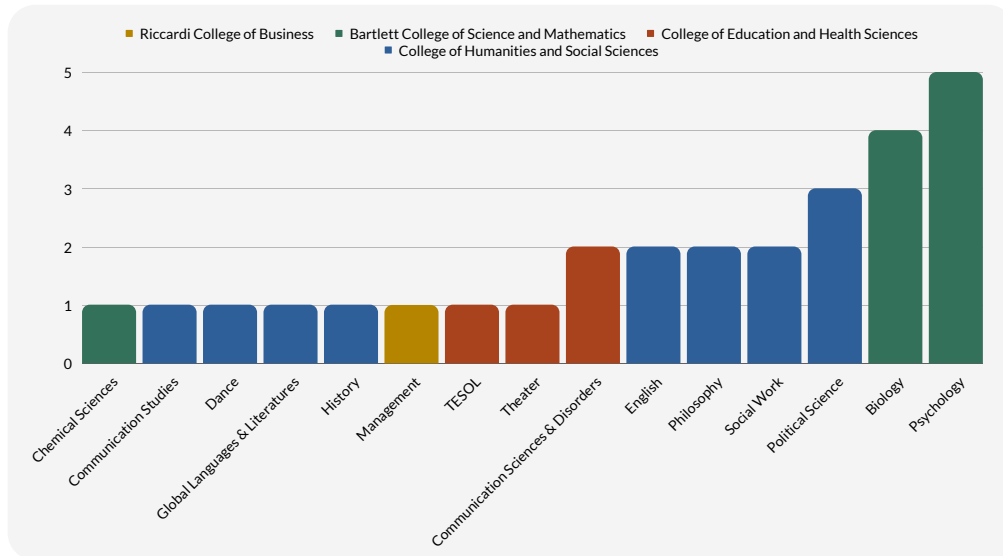
The MRISJ awarded funding to 17 BSU full- and part-time faculty members to support 14 projects during summer 2022. We supported eight teaching projects, three research projects and three community-engaged projects.



FACULTY INSTITUTE

Every year the MRISJ facilitates a Faculty Institute, providing an interdisciplinary space for faculty to examine teaching, scholarship, and service from a social justice lens where they can learn from each other and outside experts. The Summer 2022 Faculty Institute featured Dr. Terri Givens, our MLK Series Guest Speaker, and author of *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides*.

Dr. Givens led 30 BSU faculty members through an exploration of the radical empathy framework and strategies for incorporating this framework into their teaching, scholarship and service.



SOCIAL JUSTICE IN THE CLASSROOM

To highlight and promote academic courses for students interested in learning about social justice, the MRISJ compiles and widely distributes a list of courses with a social justice focus every fall and spring semester. Over the past five semesters, MRISJ has identified 1,000 sections of courses with social justice content, including 212 sections in fall 2021 and 214 sections in the spring 2022 semester.



MINI-GRANTS IN ACTION

BSU students are able to take new and revised courses from a variety of departments as a result of MRISJ Faculty Mini Grants.

This year, three new courses and four courses that were revised to include a social justice lens were offered for BSU students as the result of mini grants funded in Spring 2021.



2022 MLK Series

Attended by more than 200 members of the extended BSU community, our 2022 MLK Series inspired service and educated on social justice issues to honor the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Our series kicked off the spring semester, offering a range of events to engage community members of all ages.

A Conversation on Radical Empathy with Dr. Terri Givens

Dr. Terri Givens, author of *Radical Empathy: Finding a Path to Bridging Racial Divides*, closed out the series in a virtual discussion with Dr. Jo Hoffman and Dr. Wendy Champagnie Williams. Dr. Givens engaged with facilitators to draw on personal and professional experiences, sharing how to apply the concepts of radical empathy to enhance interactions with each other and our community.

Engaging Youth

Partnering with Jumpstart and Raising Multicultural Kids (RMK) of Easton, we hosted four children's story times reinforcing messages of inclusion and justice to our youngest participants.

Serving the Community

BSU students participated in service projects in the BSU Ballroom to support School on Wheels and Old Colony YMCA, as well as creating materials for use in Jumpstart preschool classrooms. Voter registration and education on the CROWN Act were also included at this event.

Community Connections: **Girls Inc. Taunton**

The MRISJ has been at the center of a two-year collaborative project between Bridgewater State University and Girls Inc. Taunton.

This past year, Christina Elderbee, '18, G '20, an AmeriCorps Campus Compact VISTA hired by MRISJ, supported BSU professors Dr. Maura Rosenthal and Dr. Angela Bailey in piloting a new fall course in which BSU students participated in weekly service-learning at Girls Inc. that bolstered the national curriculum focused on health and physical activity.

Along with the faculty and students involved in the course, a total of 27 BSU students, including two justice fellows, four students in BSU's Community Engagement Living Learning Community, and other student volunteers worked with 81 youths at Girls Inc.

Campus Connections

A project highlight was in July 2022, when more than 70 girls and teen staff from Girls Inc. visited BSU for three special field trips about physical activity, STEM and media literacy. Girls got to meet BSU students, faculty, and staff, and engaged in curriculum-related hands on learning opportunities.



Full STEAM Ahead

This strong partnership between Girls Inc., BSU faculty and MRISJ will continue to grow and evolve, providing more exciting teaching, learning and service opportunities!





THE MARTIN RICHARD
INSTITUTE FOR
SOCIAL JUSTICE



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