

YEAR IN REVIEW

2023-2024



BRIDGEWATER
STATE UNIVERSITY



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.

CONTRIBUTORS

Thank you our BSU partners, advisory board, sponsors and individual donors for their dedication and support of our work. We look forward to continuing this important work as members of the Division of Outreach and Engagement.

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Empower students with the social justice knowledge and skills to create positive social change with a gift to the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice Fund for Greatest Needs!

Make your gift!



SCAN HERE!



20 Years of MLK Day at BSU

Through hands-on service, participants built lasting connections with their fellow Bears as they learned about volunteerism, food insecurity, survivor support, advocacy, youth development and housing instability.

Service sites included the Coalition for Social Justice, Father Bill's and MainSpring, the Outreach Program, Gifts to Give, Old Colony YMCA, School on Wheels, Habitat for Humanity and Project PACK Inc.

On January 20th, 2024, we hosted Bridgewater State University's 20th annual MLK Day of Service. 130 members of the greater BSU community - including 63 students, 37 community members, 11 alumni and 19 BSU faculty and staff members came together to honor the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. through service.

We partnered with community organizations throughout the region to offer eight service projects on campus at BSU and in the local communities of Acushnet, Bridgewater, Brockton, New Bedford, Pembroke and Plymouth.



Thank you to everyone who joined us to celebrate this milestone. From our dedicated volunteers who showed up to serve to our community partners who provided our Bears with an opportunity to take action in their communities, you all played a role in making this event a success!





BUILDING COMMUNITY

Connecting Through Service

The MRISJ hosts multiple service opportunities throughout the year, including three annual days of service (9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance, MLK Day of Service and Earth Day) and smaller service trips each semester to local community organizations.

These hands-on events bring the BSU community together through action to build a culture of service and teach students the importance of community engagement through a social justice lens. Our small and large-scale service projects also help foster a sense of belonging on campus and in the community by getting students involved, connecting them with peers from various disciplines and encouraging friendships.

While many of these projects are geared toward students and foster peer-to-peer connection, our days of service also allow current Bears to connect with our intergenerational network of alumni who return to celebrate their BSU roots.

Through service, students learned about topics including food insecurity, sustainability, educational equity, housing instability, youth development and community organizing.

This year over 292 Bears joined us to serve a total of 1,267 hours across all of our volunteer opportunities in the local communities of Bridgewater, Brockton, New Bedford and more.



Students prepare meals at End Hunger New England for 9/11 Day of Service and Remembrance.

Learning from the Past

In March, MRISJ sponsored a special excursion to – *Auschwitz. Not long ago. Not far away.* – a limited-run Holocaust exhibit visiting Boston. This national exhibit of artifacts, photos, and video offered a unique learning experience about the horrors of Holocaust and the buildup to and generational impacts of genocide. MRISJ covered the cost of transportation, tickets and a meal voucher for lunch on campus to remove financial barriers for students and allow anyone interested to attend. A total of 26 students and 8 faculty, staff and librarians participated in the excursion, which included a critical reflection session upon their return to campus.

Tying it Together

This year we explored a new partnership by welcoming an intern from BSU's EXCEL program. Working alongside justice fellows Erin, '24, and Alexis, '24, our EXCEL intern Shannon helped plan and prepare materials for two on-campus service projects.

In fall 2023, students joined for a tie blanket-making service project in which the finished blankets were donated to Father Bill's & MainSpring. Our students also collaborated with International Student and Scholar Services at BSU to host a birthday-in-a-box donation drive and service project. Participants assembled birthday kits for youth experiencing homelessness using the donated supplies through local organization, Birthday Wishes.

During her internship, Shannon also developed a poster for our table at Student Accessibility Services's annual *Be Seen* event highlighting the important ways that accommodations support folks with cognitive disabilities.



Students create tie blankets in Rondileau Student Union.

ALTERNATIVE BREAK

MRISJ's Alternative Break program continued to expand this year, offering three social justice-focused experiences for undergraduate students. Each of the three opportunities were designed to be affordable while providing enriching, engaging experiences for students to explore their values and how they connect with their academic and career goals.

With the support of MRISJ staff and a graduate assistant, this program provides an immersive experience for BSU undergraduates from all disciplines to explore social justice themes, discover their values and build skills. This year a total of 32 student participants, six team leaders and seven faculty and staff learning partners participated in the Alternative Break program.

The 2024 Experiences

Food Justice and Housing Insecurity in Washington, DC

Seven students explored the impacts of food injustice and housing instability in our nation's capital, Washington, DC. In experiences facilitated by our community partner, The Steinbruck Center at Luther Place, participants learned about the effects of gentrification, the historical and systemic causes of inequality and the power of community organizing in achieving structural change. Supported by our BSU faculty and staff learning partners, students also engaged in hands-on service with N Street Village, Bread for the City and DC Central Kitchen to address the needs of the local community.

Advocacy, Policy and Storytelling in Southeastern MA

In partnership with local community organization Coalition for Social Justice (CSJ) Education Fund, seven students spent an immersive week on a tour of storytelling in advocacy and policy work across Southeastern Massachusetts. Participants took part in trainings on storytelling as a tool for advocacy, connecting with legislators, and canvassing. They also presented to local high school students on the importance of advocacy and civic engagement as part of the experience.

Civil Rights and Restorative Justice in Selma, AL

Our third group visited the turning point of the Civil Rights movement in Selma, Alabama with the Selma Center for Nonviolence, Truth and Reconciliation. Eight students immersed themselves in the local community through direct service alongside three BSU learning partners. Participants were trained on nonviolent conflict resolution, racial equity and restorative justice and heard powerful first-hand accounts from local guest speakers. The experience also included excursions to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum in Montgomery, Alabama.

A Team Effort

This year marked the return of out-of-state Alternative Break travel experiences for the first time since the COVID-19 pandemic. We welcomed new learning partners, faculty or staff volunteers, who provided student and logistical support on experiences. These learning partners along with the staff at organizations in the communities we visit, allow us to provide these unique, hands-on opportunities for our students to explore social justice in action. We are excited to welcome one of our learning partners back in 2025 to pilot a faculty-designed Alternative Break experience she planned using a summer 2024 faculty mini-grant.



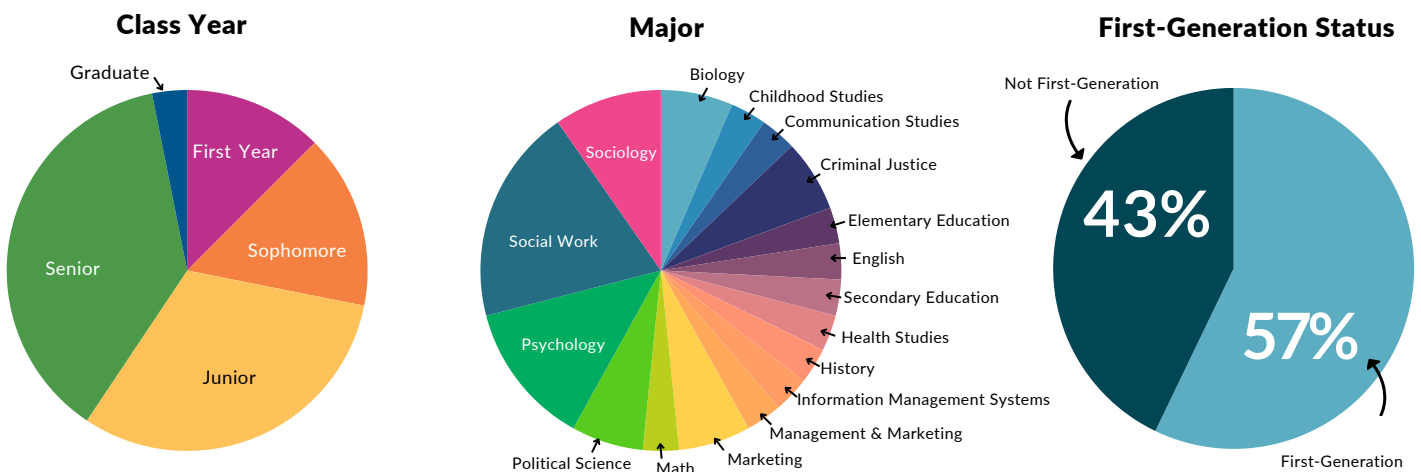
Top to Bottom: (1) Students and learning partners in front of the Capitol building, (2) the Selma team enjoys a group dinner, (3) the local team stands outside of the MA State House after a day of advocacy, (4) students put in the work at The Local Farm Collaborative in Selma.

STUDENT EMPLOYMENT

The Next Generation of Leaders

Student employees play an important role in fulfilling the MRISJ’s mission while gaining important skills and professional experience. Undergraduate students are paid to work in a variety of roles including Alternative Break team leaders, ambassadors, justice fellows, and marketing assistants. Through training and hands-on experiences, students identify the distinct ways that service, community organizing and individual and collective action contribute to creating positive social change.

Through their work with MRISJ, students learn about important social justice issues, explore their personal and professional values and discover the implicit and explicit ways that social justice connects to their disciplines and future career. Each of our student employees is compensated for their time – including trainings, meetings and mileage reimbursement (for those working in the community) – to promote equity and make these opportunities accessible to more students from various backgrounds, experience levels and disciplines. The following charts highlight some key demographics of our 28 student employees.



Alternative Break Team Leaders

Team leaders work in pairs to plan and implement our Alternative Break program with support from MRISJ staff and a graduate assistant. They work with us throughout the year, attending regular cohort meetings and trainings on topics such as communication and conflict resolution, as they develop the plan for each of their Alternative Break experiences. Team leaders support the recruitment of Alternative Break participants and prepare their teams for direct service and hands-on education during the week of spring break. Following the experience, team leaders reflect on their experiences and facilitate post-trip reflection for participants and help prepare for the next year’s program.

Ambassadors

Our ambassador program allows returning students to continue their work with MRISJ while pursuing new employment, student teaching or internship opportunities in their majors. Ambassadors represent the institute for a few hours each month and engage their peers at various events across campus to spread awareness of MRISJ programs and initiatives, encourage peers to sign up for events and support recruitment of new student employees.

Marketing Assistants

New this year, our marketing assistant role provides students with hands-on experience creating digital and print materials to spread the word about MRISJ’s many programs, events and initiatives. These students are supervised by MRISJ staff and help bring our work to life through social media and across campus by creating peer-to-peer voter education materials, flyers, videos and more.

Justice Fellows

The MRISJ's Justice Fellow program offers a unique cohort-based learning opportunity to undergraduate students, pairing them with a nonprofit organization or campus initiative. Students engage in project-based work to develop skills and knowledge of different positive social change strategies.

Justice fellows are paid by the MRISJ for up to 14 hours of work and training per week. They engage in meaningful work around topics such as educational equity, youth development, voter engagement and education, community organizing and volunteerism. This past year, fellows worked with:

Community Partners

- ■ ▲ ◆ Brockton Interfaith Community (BIC), *Brockton*
- ■ ▲ ◆ Coalition for Social Justice Education Fund, *Attleboro and Taunton*
- Girls Inc. Taunton, *Taunton*
- ◆ Old Colony YMCA, *Brockton and Plymouth*
- ▲ ◆ Raising Multicultural Kids (RMK), *Easton*

Campus Initiatives

- ■ ◆ ▲ Accessibility with Student Accessibility Services at BSU
- ■ ▲ ◆ Campus and Community Engagement
- ■ ▲ ◆ Health Equity with BSU Wellness Center

Key: ● Community Engagement ■ Civic Engagement ▲ Racial Justice ◆ Educational Equity ◆ Advocacy



Making Connections

This spring justice fellows Aleeza, 27, and Alexis, 24, represented the MRISJ at Sutton High School's Connections Conference. Supported by MRISJ staff and faculty, they presented a workshop, *Mapping Out Your Social Action Journey: Past, Present & Future*, which helped students identify and reflect on how they have been involved in their communities and set goals for the future.

Following the conference, Aleeza and Alexis put their skills into action and used their voices to advocate for others. Together they wrote a letter to the school committee in support of continuing the conference, co-signed by MRISJ leadership. Their letter highlighted the importance of having a safe space for students to come together, hear from leaders in community engagement and learn how they can develop their ideas into action and make a positive impact in their own communities.

Accomplishments and Awards

In addition to their work with MRISJ, many of our students are leaders in other areas across campus. Please join us in celebrating a few notable accomplishments from this year.

- Aleeza (Rookie of the Year), Gabby (Bridgewater's Best) and Summa (Unsung Hero) received Impact Awards through the Center for Student Engagement.
- Bailey received a Career Development award through Student Employment.
- David, Gabby, Joanne and Olivia presented their Adrian Tinsley Program research through BSU's Undergraduate Research program.
- Joanne and Kyanna received the Katerina Lamb Teaching Scholarship from Raising Multicultural Kids (RMK).
- Summa was selected as the 2024-2025 Newman Civic Fellow for BSU.
- 19 MRISJ student employees made the Dean's list at least one semester this academic year.



President Clark & Carrie Kulick-Clark pose with MRISJ student employees Gabby B., Summa S., Aleeza G. and friend of MRISJ Paul R. at the Impact Awards.

ADVOCACY IN ACTION

Creating a Culture of Advocacy

This spring MRISJ hosted our inaugural advocacy fair on campus, inviting community organizations from across the region to share more about their work and the important role advocacy plays in creating sustainable, lasting change. This event connected students with peers from BSU and local organizations to learn about advocacy efforts and the different ways they can engage on campus and in their communities. Advocacy topics included civic engagement, healthy substance use, self-image, survivor support and more!

Supported by MRISJ staff, our community engagement-focused justice fellows researched and hosted tables alongside our community partners, putting the skills they built throughout the year into action and speaking to other students about advocacy work. As we continue building a culture of advocacy at BSU, this fair created an environment that empowered students to learn how they can take action and play a role in creating sustainable change.



President Clark shares why your vote matters at a voter education table at the advocacy fair.



A student chats with BSU alumna Tamara Dzialo, '02, from Project PACK at the advocacy fair to learn more about their work.



Justice fellow Aleciana G. testifies at a hearing on rent control at the MA State House.

Breaking Barriers

Through a campus placement with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), first-year student and justice fellow Aleeza (she/they), '27, supported student-facing programs including Access Advocates workshops, Barrier Breakers trainings and their annual *Be Seen* event. In addition to hosting a justice fellow, SAS partnered with us to offer a Barrier Breakers training for MRISJ staff, faculty and students.

Aleeza's work focused on educating the campus community, advocating for the unique needs of the disability community and analyzing the disparities in the college experience of students with disabilities. This spring they also organized *Bear Chat*, a student-led open campus forum for students to discuss their experience with disability and intersectional perspectives of accessibility.



Left to Right: MRISJ graduate assistant Sarah M. is joined by marketing assistant Chris M. and Alternative Break team leader Sophia Q. at *Be Seen*.

Taking a Stand

In fall 2023, campus-based justice fellow Aleciana (she/her), '24, was placed with BSU's Wellness Center where she explored the impacts of housing instability and rent control on health equity and community health outcomes. Through her work, Aleciana joined director of community health and prevention Valerie Bassett at the Massachusetts State House where Aleciana testified at a hearing on a rent control bill. Aleciana and others shared personal stories of the financial and health implications that evictions and price gouging have on individuals and communities. This unique experience offered Aleciana first-hand experience using storytelling as a tool in advocacy and policy work and empowered her to use her voice to create change in her community.



BSU's Civic Action Plan

As a key priority for Bridgewater State University, MRISJ is proud to advance civic engagement on campus by coordinating the development and submission of BSU's Civic Action Plan. This plan is submitted through the ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, a national effort that empowers colleges and universities to achieve excellence in nonpartisan student democratic engagement.

BSU's Civic Action Plan describes our campus strategies for achieving goals for student voter registration and student voter turnout. A few of our goals include: increasing the numbers of students who are registered to vote, incorporating civic learning into more courses, developing partnerships with election officials and voter education groups in the area and increasing student voter turnout.

This summer, BSU was notified that our 2024 Civic Action Plan received a Highly Established Action Plan seal from ALL IN with an above average score based on the 440 campuses that submitted plans. View our action plan at www.bridgew.edu/civic-engagement.

Voter Registration and Education

The MRISJ promoted civic engagement across campus through a variety of events. Justice fellows hosted two voter registration drives, including a National Voter Registration Day drive. In addition to these larger-scale events, our justice fellows partnered with Residence Life and Housing to host five voter registration drives for students living in the Weygand, Woodward, Scott, Stonehouse, Shea and Durgin residence halls. Our students engaged over 160 folx across all voter education and registration events, with 95 students participating through our residence hall initiative.

Our student employees showed their peers how to check their voter registration status and register to vote, educated them on the importance of voting and shared educational resources. Among these voter education materials were two BSU Votes brochures, *Get out the Vote* and *Voting After Graduation*, designed to provide students with information about voting and connect them with reputable organizations to learn more.



Left to Right: Justice fellows Alexis G. and Tye G. help students register to vote for National Voter Registration Day.

These tools were developed through a collaboration between our justice fellows and marketing assistants with support from MRISJ staff. Over 500 copies of our BSU Votes brochures were distributed throughout the year to inform students thanks to our campus partners. In alignment with our Civic Action Plan, we are excited to roll out additional resources for student voters in fall 2024.

Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellowship

Each year BSU nominates one student to serve as a student leader on campus through the Campus Compact Newman Civic Fellowship. This program offers leadership opportunities, mentorship and connects the fellow to a network of student leaders from across the nation. BSU hosts a fellow as a member institution of Campus Compact, a higher education association dedicated to civic and community engagement in higher education.

Our 2023-2024 Newman Civic Fellow, Mitzy Duarte-Chavarin, '24, represented BSU at the Newman Civic Fellow national convening where she connected with a network of student leaders from member institutions across the country. We look forward to welcoming Summa Slater, '25, as our 2024-2025 Newman Civic Fellow this fall.



Mitzy D. (right) is joined by other Newman Civic Fellows at the national convening.

CIVIC SPEAKER SERIES

The MRISJ's Civic Speaker Series brought 239 students, staff, faculty, alumni and members of the greater Bridgewater community together to highlight civic leaders from across the world. This signature series features multiple speakers throughout the year and inspires attendees to spark conversation, share ideas, and act for social change, in line with our mission to advance social justice through individual and collective action. This year our Civic Speaker Series featured a range of speakers covering topics including improving equity and inclusion in sport, creating belonging in communities and environmental justice.



Graphic illustration by artist Felipe Alvarez de Toledo (@felipfecit) of the panel discussion and Q&A session.

The Politics of Play | November

Sportswriter and podcast host Dave Zirin spoke to the BSU community about equity and inclusion in sport. In a conversation and Q&A moderated by Dr. Maura Rosenthal (Health and Kinesiology), attendees pondered the future of sport and what teams, athletes, and fans alike can do to make sports more inclusive.

Where Everyone Belongs | February

Dr. Imari Paris Jeffries, president and CEO of Embrace Boston talked with our divisional vice president Diane Bell and executive director Jill Beckwith about the importance of creating inclusive and equitable communities to be a space where everyone belongs. His presentation underscored how re-imagining public spaces and honoring diverse histories can inspire unity and racial justice.

The Aftermath of Fast Fashion | April

Developmental psychologist Dr. Julia DeVoy, artist Mark Cooper and student collaborator Sophia Riordan joined us from Boston College for a panel discussion on the multi-media art advocacy collaboration, *Aftermath*. As co-creators of the art installation, our panelists discussed the negative social and environmental impact of clothing donations to other countries, the power of "buycotting" in a consumer-driven economy and the ways in which individuals can use art to advocate for change.



AFTERMATH @ BSU

The “Aftermath” Exhibit at BSU

This spring, MRISJ brought the *Aftermath* exhibit to campus leading up to our Civic Speaker Series event, *The Aftermath of Fast Fashion*. Available for public viewing in the Rondileau Student Union from mid-March to mid-May, this multi-media installation illustrated the global impacts of textile pollution through art and called specific attention to the unsustainable nature of the fast fashion industry and our global economy of throwaway consumption.

The exhibit incorporated secondhand clothing collected from the Boston College community, protest signs linked to facts about textile waste and a project documentary. This intentional display highlighted the ways fast fashion, environmental racism and the climate crisis are intertwined. *Aftermath* co-creators joined us on campus for a panel discussion and Q&A moderated by executive director Jill Beckwith discussing the creation of the exhibit, its call to action and their work with the Aftermath Learning Lab.



Left to Right: Sophia Riordan (student, Boston College), Mark Cooper and Julia DeVoy (*Aftermath* co-creators) join our MRISJ Civic Speaker Series event panel for *The Aftermath of Fast Fashion*.

Collaboration Across Campus

Faculty were encouraged to incorporate the exhibit into their classes and attend the panel discussion. In addition to the exhibit and Civic Speaker Series event, MRISJ collaborated with Library Services to continue the conversation on textile pollution and environmental justice through a book display in Maxwell Library during the month of April. The display featured a curated selection of books and other resources on fast fashion, textile pollution, sustainable fashion and environmental justice in connection with Earth Day and the *Aftermath* exhibit.

From Art to Action

Boston-based artist Felipe Alvarez de Toledo brought the conversation to life through graphic facilitation. Projected live on screens in the auditorium, Alvarez de Toledo’s art illustrated key concepts and takeaways for our audience to visualize the information as it came together in real time. The image was created digitally using an iPad in consideration of the environmental impact of other materials.

“Meet and Mingle” Reception

Guests were invited to gather following the panel discussion for a reception where students, faculty, staff and community members had the opportunity to view the exhibit and connect with our guests over light refreshments. This provided a unique opportunity for guests from all backgrounds to reflect on the impact of textile pollution, discuss the insights shared through the Q&A session and connect across disciplines.



The *Aftermath* exhibit on display in Rondileau Student Union.

FACULTY ENGAGEMENT

Collaborating with Faculty Associates

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. The MRISJ also has two faculty associates, Dr. Fernanda Ferreira (Global Languages and Literatures) and Dr. Seth Meyer (Political Science), who work alongside MRISJ staff to ensure that programs and partnerships benefit from faculty expertise and foster 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 served as leaders in social justice education events and initiatives by:

- Collaborating with MRISJ staff to plan and lead the 2024 MRISJ Summer Faculty Institute on civic engagement.
- Reviewing the 2024 MRISJ Summer Faculty Mini-Grant applications and selecting recipients.
- Moderating a presentation about *The Triple Bullying of U.S. Heritage Speakers and How to Counter it*, co-hosted with the Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) and Global Languages and Literatures departments.
- Offering a *Decoloniality from a Teaching Perspective* workshop with the Native American and Indigenous Studies program.
- Serving as a panelist for *The Rise & Impact of Antisemitism* event co-sponsored with the Democratic Leadership and Governance program.

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 eight semesters, MRISJ has identified 1,788 sections of courses with social justice content, including 256 sections in fall 2023 and 280 sections in the spring 2024 semester.

Faculty Institute

MRISJ offers an annual institute for faculty to support their professional development and lifelong learning to incorporate social justice in their multifaceted work at BSU.

Our 2024 faculty institute, *Democracy in Action: Civic Engagement in Teaching, Scholarship and Service* featured Dr. Nicholas Longo, author of *Practicing Democracy: A Toolkit for Educating Civic Professionals*. Dr. Longo led participants in thought-provoking exercises and conversations that explored how faculty can prepare students to become publicly engaged citizens and leaders with the capacity to engage in collaborative problem solving for the greater good.

This summer we welcomed a total of 33 participants, with 23 full-time faculty, 6 part-time faculty and 4 administrators from 14 different academic departments including psychology, music, criminal justice, mathematics, management and marketing, anthropology and more.



Screenshot from Zoom of summer faculty institute participants.

“I also enjoyed the break-out groups, where we had opportunities to think about applying some of the ideas and hearing perspectives from members of our own and other departments,” said one participant in their reflection.

Faculty Mini-Grants

The MRISJ awards small monetary grants ranging from \$500-\$1,750 to part-time and full-time faculty members at BSU. Grants are awarded to faculty for their original research, teaching projects such as creating a new course or updating an existing course, community-engaged projects, purchasing educational resources and departmental learning projects for multiple faculty members within a department.

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 ratings.

We awarded funding to 19 BSU full and part-time faculty members to support a total of 16 projects including eight teaching projects, four research projects, two community-engaged projects and two departmental learning projects during summer 2024.

Mini-Grant Highlights

- Dr. Sheena Rancher (Special Education) created and implemented a shared learning project for faculty members in BSU's College of Education and Health Sciences. Participants discussed the book *Teaching Race: How to Help Students Unmask and Challenge Racism* and learned techniques and strategies to examine how they help students unmask racism, particularly at predominantly white institutions such as BSU. The project aimed to build participant capacity for equity-minded practices through guided conversations.
- Dr. Hannah Stohry (Social Work) worked with MRISJ to develop the content and structure for a new, engaging and educational social justice Alternative Break experience focused on confronting racial injustice in Montgomery, Alabama that will take place in March 2025. The trip was planned in accordance with the MRISJ's Alternative Break program model, including program orientation, pre-trip meetings, travel week, and group reflection sessions with two undergraduate team leaders, six undergraduate student participants, and two faculty/staff learning partners.
- Dr. Jackie Boivin (Elementary and Early Education) and Dr. Sheena Rancher (Special Education) studied *Learning Abroad: Developing Students' Social Justice Orientations to Enhance Domestic Understandings*. They analyzed the changes in students' social justice orientations in the areas of awareness, empathy and efficacy before and after a travel course to Dublin and Belfast. Their findings will be shared via conference presentation.
- Dr. Melanie McNaughton (Communication Studies) created and led a summer workshop for full and part-time Communication Studies faculty members on reducing achievement gaps in *Introduction to Public Speaking* classrooms. Participants examined data on achievement gaps among minoritized groups in COMM 102, the effects of implicit bias, and brainstormed ways to reduce these gaps and provide pathways to academic success for all students. Participants also developed a set of materials with specific pedagogical strategies to reduce, and eliminate, achievement gaps.



Travel course participants attend a lecture with a partner university.



Social Justice Studies Minor

Bridgewater State University has approved a new Social Justice Studies Minor that will start accepting students during Academic Year 2024-2025.

MRISJ's academic director will serve as the minor coordinator in partnership with the Division of Academic Affairs.

The Social Justice Studies minor will prepare students to address local, national and global inequities. The curriculum emphasizes the history, theory and practice of social justice work; the distribution of power, resources and opportunities; and individual and collective action for challenging social injustice.

PARTNERSHIPS & COLLABORATIONS

The Implications of Busing Desegregation: Then and Now

In February, MRISJ partnered with the College of Education and Health Sciences and the departments of Secondary Education and Educational Leadership to examine past and current implications of desegregation efforts in Massachusetts schools. Excerpts from the PBS documentary film *The Busing Battleground* were shown to provide context at the event although attendees were encouraged to watch the full film ahead of time.

MRISJ's academic director Dr. Kevin McGowan (Elementary and Early Childhood Education) moderated a panel discussion with representatives from the Metropolitan Council for Educational Opportunities (METCO), Massachusetts Action for Justice and Bridgewater State University. Panelists, including a current BSU student who participated in the METCO program, discussed their personal experiences with desegregation in schools and responded to clips from the documentary. We were joined by 80 audience members including: BSU undergraduate and graduate students, faculty and staff, current educators from the region and local community members.

Martin Richard Fellow Scholarship

Established in 2022 by BSU alumni Bill and Denise Richard, both members of the class of '93, the Martin Richard Fellow Scholarship provides a pathway for students to earn their bachelor's degree debt-free in memory of their son Martin Richard.

Each year one student is selected and awarded \$25,000 per year for up to four years (\$100,000 total) at BSU, which includes the cost of tuition, fees, housing, a meal plan, technology and supplies. The scholarship is awarded to a graduating senior from Dorchester's Neighborhood House Charter School who plans to attend Bridgewater State University.

Scholarship awardees serve as justice fellows and are provided with an annual stipend from MRISJ for their work on campus and in the community. In Fall 2023, we welcomed Tay Simord to BSU as the second scholarship recipient.



Additional Partnerships

Community Partners

- American Red Cross
- Bridgewater Communities for Civil Rights
- Bridgewater Juneteenth Celebration Committee
- Bridgewater Senior Center Pen Pal Program
- Brockton Interfaith Community
- Coalition for Social Justice
- Girls' Inc. of Taunton
- International Cities of Peace
- Neighborhood House Charter School
- Old Colony YMCA
- Outreach Program
- Project PACK
- Raising Multicultural Kids
- School on Wheels
- Sharing the Harvest Community Farm

Campus Collaborators

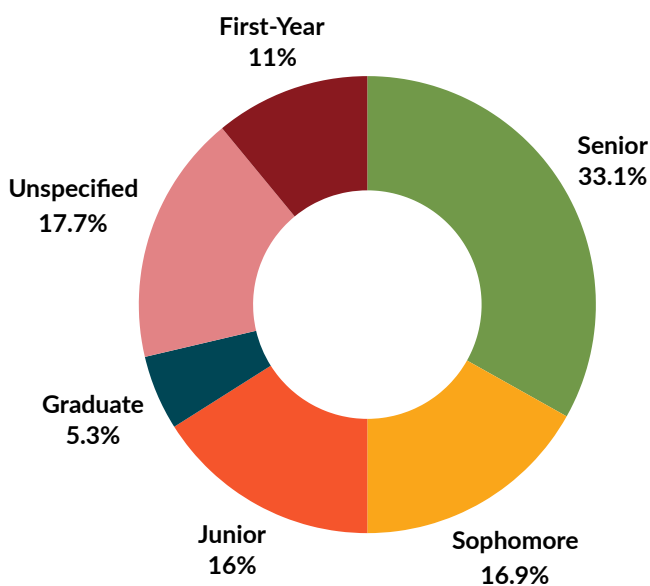
- Alumni and Development
- BSU Food Pantry
- Career Services and Internships
- Center for Student Engagement
- College of Education and Health Sciences
- EXCEL Program
- GLBTA Pride Center
- Honors Program
- International Student and Scholar Services
- Lewis and Gaines Center for Inclusion and Equity
- Library Services
- Minnock Institute for Global Engagement
- Residence Life and Housing
- Student Accessibility Services
- Wellness Center

FACTS & FIGURES

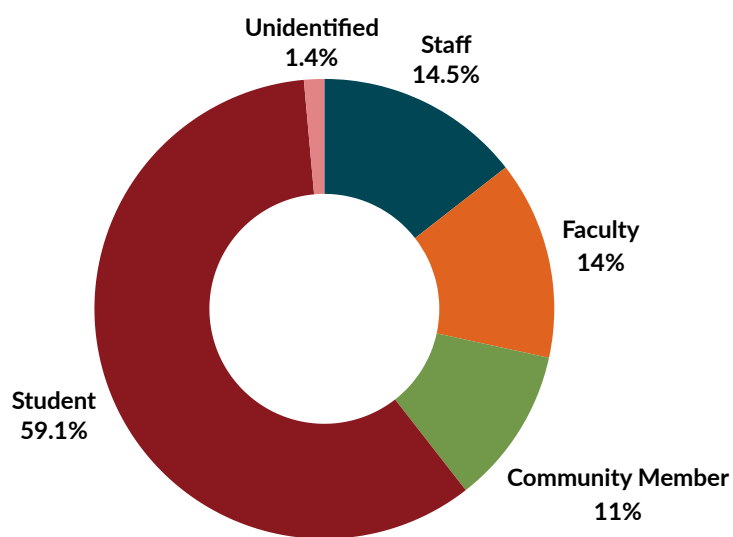
During academic year 2023-2024, the Martin Richard Institute for Social Justice welcomed 1,404 students, faculty, staff, and community members across all of our events and other engagement opportunities. Many folks joined us for multiple events throughout the year, with a total of 872 unique participants connecting with the MRISJ. We offered 64 engagement opportunities including service projects, educational events and cohort-based programs. Cohorts included our justice fellows, alternative break participants and an intergenerational pen pal program offered in collaboration with the Bridgewater Senior Center.

Faculty and students from across the university joined MRISJ highlighting the interdisciplinary interest in and commitment to social justice within the BSU community. We look forward to continuing our work to advance social justice and empower individuals to take action in their communities.

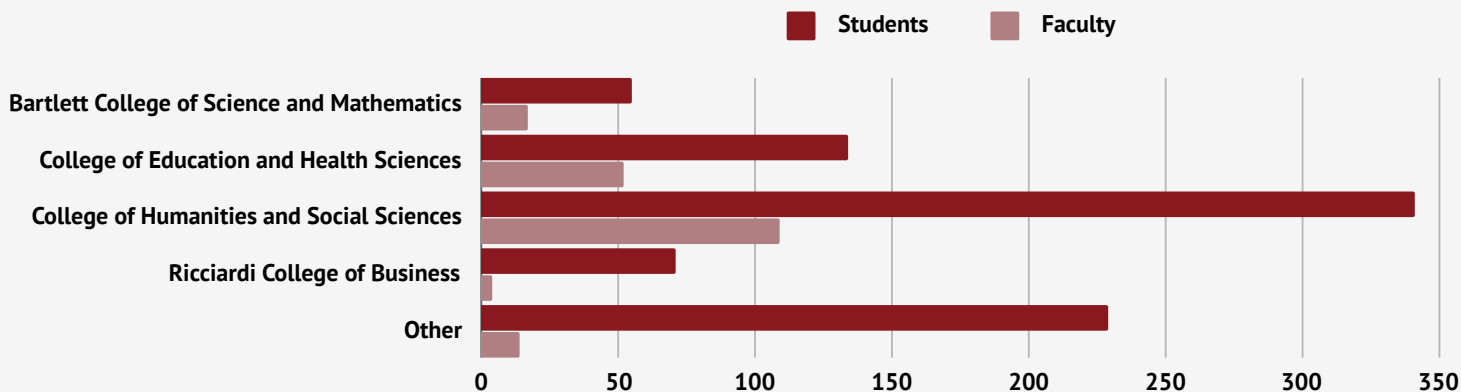
Student Participation by Class Year



Participation by Affiliation



Participation by College Affiliation



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