



Weissberg Program in Human Rights and Social Justice

Activity Report 2020-2021

We are deeply grateful to the Weissberg Foundation for continuing to support this multifaceted, high-impact program at Beloit College. It contributes to fostering student understanding and engagement so that our graduates may shape societies to be more just and equitable. The program is also integral to broader initiatives and stands alongside “Becoming Better”—our roadmap to centering anti-racism and equity at Beloit College.

The Weissberg Program dovetails with the Beloit Action Plan that helps students connect college and career. From SHE-CAN scholars taking their experiences back to their home countries, to Weissberg Fellows taking their first steps toward professional engagement, the program’s many components give students first hand, practical experience to make a positive difference in the world. In many instances lifelong vocations and passions for justice are sparked by the Weissberg Program in Human Rights and Social Justice.

Weissberg Program in Human Rights and Social Justice

Program Components

Engaging the Campus, Community and World

- Annual theme built around a critical issue of social justice and human rights that spans the local and global contexts
- Weissberg Chair, guest lecturers, campus activities
- Ousley Scholar in Residence, centering racial equity and inclusion

Equity in Higher Education and Global Learning

- Scholarships for female students from Cambodia and Rwanda coming to Beloit College through the SHE-CAN organization, supporting women's empowerment and leadership in post-conflict countries
- Scholarships to increase equitable access to study abroad for high-need students interested in social justice and human rights

Empowering Student Change Makers

- Student grants for summer internships and research around social justice and human rights
- Post-graduation fellowship to pursue first steps in career in social justice and human rights
- Spring break immersion trips focused on critical social issues
- Fostering Rights and Justice Cohort and Career Channel - student groups that connect to the program, to each other, and to the alumni network for career exploration

Program Development and Administration

- Engaging faculty, staff and students in the conception, incubation and implementation of the annual theme for programming
- Supporting part time salary for Weissberg Program Coordinator, and covering administrative costs of the program

Engaging the Campus, Community and World

Despite the global pandemic putting a pause on all visitors to campus, and operating in a hybrid mode of in-person and remote classes in Fall '20 and Spring '21, the Weissberg Program nonetheless stayed strong, was well-attended and made its mark on Beloit College students. The program hosted many virtual events with engaging speakers and lively student interaction. Below are events that spanned the full academic year.

Ousley Scholar in Residence. Sept. 19, 2020



The Ousley Scholar In Residence honors the legacy of Grace Ousley, the first black woman to graduate from Beloit College. This scholar/activist/organizer/intellectual is committed to the theory and practice of social justice. They embody the “academic hustler” who fights for “social justice” in all aspects of their work. This year Beloit was honored to have two great speakers: Beloit City Council President Regina Dunkin and Wisconsin

Lieutenant Governor Mandela Barnes. Both presenters discussed their experience with social justice work within local and state government.

Series on Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights



Joan Carling, Weissberg Chair

Joan Carling is an award-winning indigenous rights activist and environmental defender from the Philippines. She has been defending land rights from grassroots to international levels for more than 20 years. Her main concerns include protection of land rights of indigenous peoples, ensuring sustainable development of natural resources and upholding human rights of marginalized people.

Ms. Carling delivered three core lectures as part of her month-long virtual residency.

- March 24: “Environmental Justice from Indigenous Perspectives”
- April 7: “Sustainability and Justice Movements in the Post-COVID Environment”
- April 14: Feature Lecture on “Climate Change and Global Solidarity”

Additional Events

“Rohingya Refugee Crisis.” Lecture and class visit.

Prof. Jennifer Esperanza invited Imran Mohammed Fazal Hoque, a Rohingya refugee from Myanmar, to her Anthropology course titled, “Migrants, Immigrants and Refugees.” Nov. 18, 2020.

Alumni Panels on Careers in Environmental Justice and Indigenous Rights. February 3 and April 12, 2021

- Karen Bauer'16, Virtual Culture Curatorial Intern at Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture
- Joseph Klein'13, SeaCoast Center Research Fellow, PhD candidate in environmental anthropology
- Ilyssa Kosova'20, CMSAI co-founder, recent graduate, job seeker
- Kendall (Tallmadge) Tryhane'09, Senior Program Officer at First Nations Development Institute
- Amelia Diehl'17, Documenter, City Bureau, freelance writer, photographer
- Parker Gasset'11, Community Climate Resilience Coordinator - Maine Sea Grant
- Elizabeth Makarewicz'11, Membership Assistant, Land Stewardship Project
- Macy Chau Diem Tran'17, Teacher, EarthRights International

“Sovereignty and Treaty Rights.” Talk by Mic Isham, Executive Administrator of the Great Lakes Indian Fish & Wildlife Commission. March 30, 2021.

“Wisconsin Voices: Native Cultural Preservation and Activism.” Panel with regional cultural conservationists was organized by the Campus Mounds Sustainability and Awareness Initiative student group. March 21, 2021.

Film screening, “A is for Agustin.” Viewing with discussion by filmmaker Grace Simbulan. This film documents the experience of an indigenous man in a marginalized region of The Philippines. April 18, 2021.

Fiction Reading, *Milltown: Reckoning with What Remains*, with discussion by author and alum Kerri Arsenault'90. Arsenault's book deals with the environmental and social impact of industry on a small town in Maine. April 23, 2021.

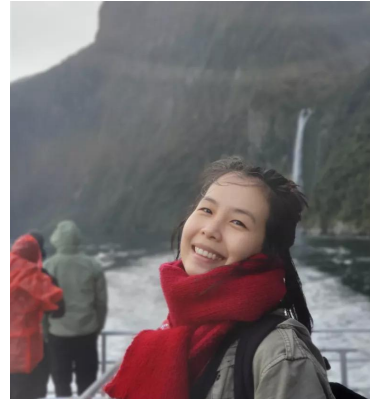
Equity in Higher Education and Global Learning

SHE-CAN Scholarship

The Weissberg Program supported seven SHE-CAN Scholars from Cambodia and Rwanda in the 2020-21 academic year. We also celebrated the graduation of our first class of SHE-CAN Scholars, Chelsea Gaju'21 and Seakguech Sok'21.



Chelsea Hilda Gaju'21 majored in environmental studies with a focus in justice and citizenship, and a minor in geology. She's particularly interested in sustainability, and learning about ways engineering can be used to fight climate change and provide social and environmental justice to vulnerable communities.



Guech Sok'21 majored in environmental biology. Guech wants to explore sustainable agriculture endeavors in Cambodia, and hopes to inspire other Cambodian women to take an interest in the field of agriculture.

SHE-CAN Scholars Solidify Their Paths Through Off Campus Experiences



Phidor Kong'23 is an environmental studies and international relations major who has seized multiple opportunities to improve her research, analysis, critical thinking, and communication skills. She was able to apply what she had learned at Beloit College to her internship at Future Forum, a Cambodian think tank, where she studied existing natural resource policy and learned to create good policy alternatives. These experiences—in the classroom and her internship site—have helped prepare her for a future career in policy making and advocacy in her home country.



Chamnan Soun'22 is a quantitative economics major with a keen interest in data analytics. While at Beloit College, she has sought out new experiences and challenges through course work and numerous internships. Chamnan would ultimately like to be able to use scientific data to inform decisions for the benefit of society. In 2020, she was able to put that desire to work through an internship with BlueHub Capital, a mission-driven national non-profit organization, where she did research for a new program that will benefit immigrants in the United States.

Current SHE-CAN Scholars Supported by the Weissberg Program

(Read about Beloit SHE-CAN Scholars in attached profiles)

- Christiane Umutoni'22
- Chamnan Suon'22
- Phidor Kong'23
- Ariane Irafasha'23
- Channtha Sum'24
- Sochea Chhay'25

Study Abroad Equity Scholarship

Only one student received the Weissberg Study Abroad Equity Scholarship due to travel restriction during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hannah Kang'22, Studio Art, Education and Youth Studies

Hannah (picture here, on the left) went to Seoul, South Korea, Ewha Women's College, where she studied art and Korean culture. Korean-American herself, Hannah sought to immerse herself in the language and culture of her parents. Hannah has produced the branding artwork for the last three Weissberg Program themes (see page 14).



Equity Emergency Funds

Fourteen students who faced difficulty meeting basic human needs such as food and housing, or travel to return home, at the onset and during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, received a total of \$22,000 with the agile responsiveness of the Weissberg Foundation to this emergent need. This spending was reported on in the 2019-2020 activity report, and, therefore, is not included in this year's financial report.

Student impact testimonial:

“The Weissberg emergency aid helped immensely during the COVID-19 pandemic. India had closed its borders at the start of the pandemic, banning all scheduled international flights on 18 March 2020. Due to this, I had no option but to stay on campus during the summer break. With the lack of jobs on campus and no access to Federal emergency funds for international students, I was uncertain how I would have paid for the significant unplanned costs of summer housing. I am very grateful for the Weissberg emergency aid as it helped me cover the summer housing costs at such an unprecedented time.” - Antariksh Sharma'23, international student from India.

Empowering Student Changemakers

Summer Project Grants

Five students were awarded grants to support summer internships doing work related to social justice and human rights. The total amount of funding shared across all students was \$13,572.

Sumin Park' 22, psychology, education and youth studies

Research assistant at Choong-Ang University Child Lab, Seoul, South Korea. While trapped in her home country of South Korea during the pandemic, Sumin worked with a team researching cross-cultural comparative analyses of child language and reasoning development. “It was a valuable, meaningful, and flourishing experience ... and I was able to look back and think about what I really want to do in the upcoming and life-long future.”



Maya Freedman'23, critical identity studies

Maya used her Summer Grant to intern with a domestic violence shelter in Manitowoc, WI called InCourage. She reports that she was able to learn a lot about how non-profits operate, how to answer crisis calls, engage with law enforcement, and become a successful advocate for individuals who have survived and who are still going through domestic violence. “My most valuable takeaway would be that I was able to really help a resident at the shelter get back on their feet after dealing with 3 years of domestic violence.”



Other Summer Grant Recipients:

- **Ariane Irafasha'23, quantitative economics, health and society**
Project: SCAN Health Plan Strategy Intern, Long Beach, California, remote from Beloit, WI
- **Kyle Thompson-Taylor'22, political science**
Project: Minimum Time Intern, JusticeCorps, Winnebago County Circuit Court, IL
- **Phidor Kong'23, political science, environmental justice and citizenship**
Project: Policy Research Intern, Future Forum, remote from Beloit, WI

Weissberg Fellowships

The post-graduation Weissberg Fellowship supports students in their first career steps after graduation. This year, seven students received funding to help them on their journey toward substantive work in social justice and human rights. This year's Fellows received a total of \$22,927 for their projects.

Fahim Ahmad'21, International Relations, Business Economics

Fahim Ahmad worked for the Atlantic Council South Asia Center where he managed an Afghanistan portfolio. He writes, "My current work gave me the opportunity to get exposed to the policy world, including but not limited to how policies are embraced, the actors involved, the implementation, analysis, and how think tanks influence and shape policies. The classes I took at Beloit College helped me prepare for this role."



Dazha Creol'21, International Relations

Dazha is studying International Human Rights at the Joseph Korbel School of International Studies at the University of Denver. She plans to use her Fellowship funding to engage in an internship in the Spring to gain hands-on experience with human rights policy. She writes, "My biggest takeaway from my grad program so far has been that addressing any of the grand challenges requires input and effort from multiple industries and actors. We need to increase interdisciplinary discussions and cooperation to address issues."



Other Fellowship Recipients

- Lucy Abrams'21, Anthropology, Dance
- Adanya Gilmore'21, Dance
- Superior Murphy'21, Political Science
- Chelsea Gaju'21, Environmental Studies, Environmental Justice and Citizenship
- Rajvi Thakkar'21, International Relations, Religious Studies

Faculty/Staff Development

Incubation Team focusing on Citizenship, Migration and Belonging

A collective of faculty, staff and students joined together over the summer and fall of 2020 to discuss a series of readings about the topics of statelessness and the experience of the undocumented in the US and in other countries. These cross-disciplinary discussions, from political science, sociology, and anthropology, led to the plan for the theme of Citizenship, Migration and Belonging, as the overarching theme of four Beloit Residencies in 2021-2022.

Equity Trainings - SpeakOut



The Weissberg Program supported the enrollment fees for a core set of Beloit College faculty and staff to take an online e-course on Race, Power, & Privilege. Members of the Beloit Black Lives Matter group, and staff in Student Affairs and Residential Life completed the course. In addition, 34 residential assistants completed the course in preparation to embed the lessons into their floor meetings with their residents. Through accessible multimedia modules, presenters guided participants through a framework of individual, collective, and institutional levels of power. The

modules discussed unpacking prejudice, discrimination, and oppression, as well as guides to assess and evaluate one's own identity and responsibility in the work of being anti-racist.

Concluding note

During the disorientation and emotional upset of a pandemic, having a familiar and cherished program such as the Weissberg Program in Human Rights and Social Justice was a reliable source of inspiration and also brought much-needed perspectives to campus discourse. Thank you for this exceptional gift to the students of Beloit College and to the faculty and staff involved in shaping and carrying the program forward through the times in which we find ourselves.

Please join us for events this year (2021-22) on the theme of [Citizenship, Migration and Belonging](#).

Thank you!

