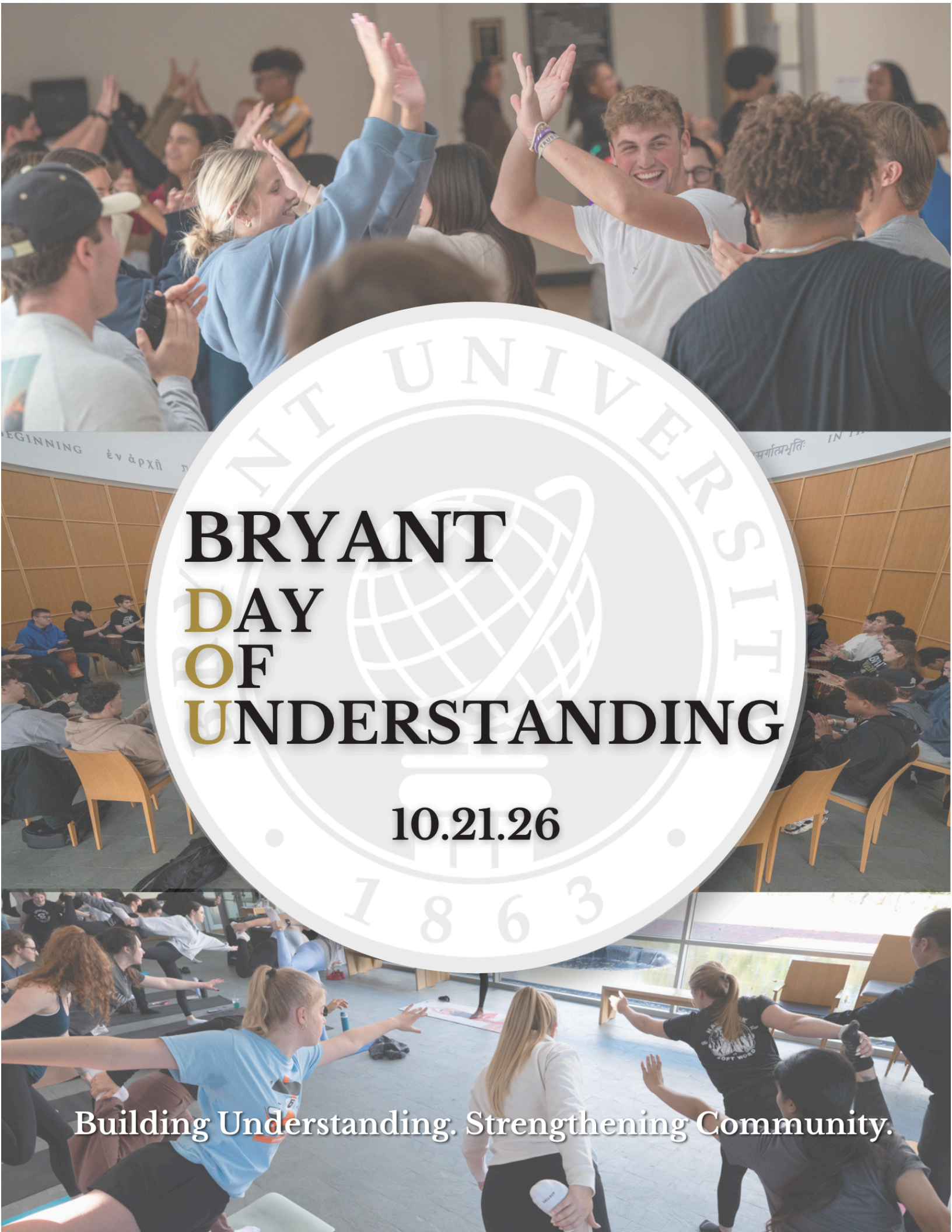


BRYANT
DAY OF UNDERSTANDING

10.21.26

Building Understanding. Strengthening Community.

Dear Bryant Community,

The Day of Understanding at Bryant is an opportunity to step outside of our routines and make space to learn from one another. We bring different experiences, perspectives, identities, and ideas to the same campus, and those differences can deepen our learning when we approach one another with curiosity, listen with intention, and remain open to perspectives beyond our own.

October includes many national observances that recognize culture, identity, history, service, access, and well-being. Day of Understanding brings many of those themes together through learning, conversation, and shared experience—and, for one day, creates a different energy across campus.

A classroom becomes a place to hear a refugee story, explore questions of race and science, or talk about identity and belonging. The Rotunda becomes a cultural exhibit. Fisher becomes a place for art, creativity, and new ideas. Outside, the lawn comes alive with student organizations, food, music, service, and conversation. Across campus, you can drum, dance, sing, create, reflect, and discover something new.

We are grateful to the many individuals who helped to bring this program to life. Special thanks to Farah Bonne Année, whose leadership shaped this year's Day of Understanding, and to our dedicated planning committee: Jocelyn Bell, Carolina Bogaert, Erin Cheschi, Kristen Falso-Capaldi, Christina Frugale, Brandi Gbemisola, Meagan Joseph, Britt King, Robert Massoud, LaTanya Monteiro, Amy Steere, and Veronica Stewart.

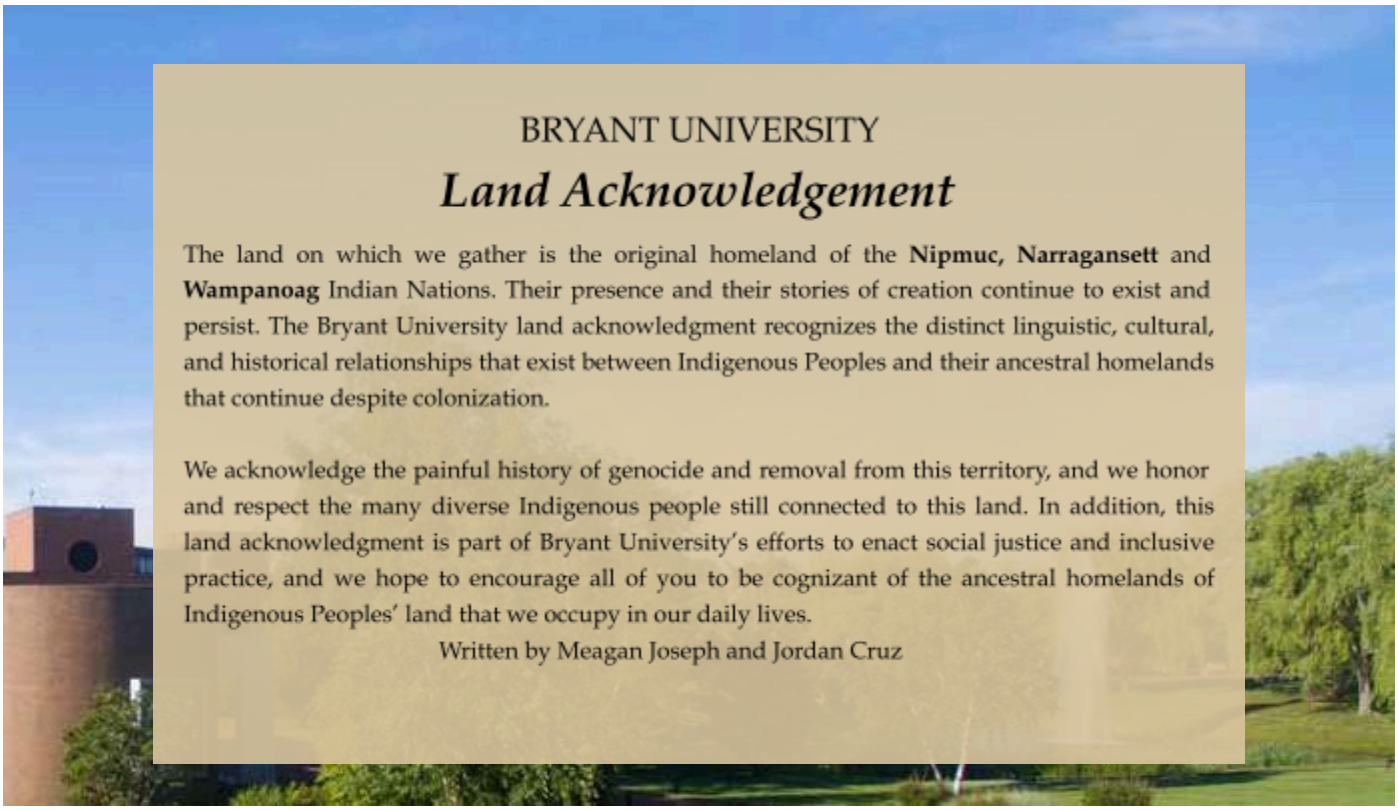
There is no perfect way to experience the day. Follow what interests you. Try something you normally would not. Sit with an idea that challenges you. Find something joyful, meaningful, or surprising.

The day is yours to explore.

Sincerely,

Inge-Lise Ameer, Ed.D.
VP, Student Affairs and Community and Belonging

Mailee Kue, Ph.D.
AVP, Community and Belonging



Updated 10/20/26. Please note that minor edits and updates may still be made.

Quick Guide to DOU

Overview of the Day

Time	Block	Description
9:00 - 10:00 AM	I	Sessions
10:00 AM - 11:00 AM	II	Sessions
11:15 - 12:15 PM	III	Sessions
12:15 - 1:15 PM	IV	Sessions
1:15 - 2:15 PM	V	Sessions
2:30 – 4:30 PM		Community in Action: Food, Music, and Community
6:00 – 8:00 PM		Floracion: Art Talk (Art Barn)

Tips for Attending Sessions

- Sessions are open seating and will close once they reach capacity. Session locations and capacities are listed next to each title.
- If your preferred session is full, check for other workshops happening at the same time or see if it's repeated.
- Arrive early to increase your chances of getting a seat.
- Some sessions are repeated to provide additional opportunities to attend.
- Dress comfortably, especially for sessions involving dance or movement.
- If you need accommodations for any session, please contact Farah Joseph-Bonne Année at fannee@bryant.edu for assistance.

Learn and Earn at DOU

🎟️ Earn Raffle Entries

- Attend a session + scan the QR code = 1 raffle entry.
- The more you participate, the more chances you have to win!

Prizes:

- 10 winners receive $20 in Bulldog Bucks each
- 1 winner receives a free annual parking pass for 2027–28 or a refund for the current academic year (must attend and complete surveys for 3+ sessions).

Winners will be notified by Bryant email on October 22.

👕 Get DOU Swag

Be among the first to arrive at a 9:00 AM session to receive a ticket for an exclusive DOU T-shirt, or attend any 12:15 PM session to receive a ticket for DOU winter gear. Redeem your ticket at the Rotunda between 10 AM and 2 PM. Limited quantities available!

📱Share Your DOU Experience

Scan QR codes at session locations and throughout campus to share your experience and help us make DOU even better.

Empower Dialogue at Bryant

The Perspectives online modules are part of Bryant's Empowering Dialogue project. These short modules help faculty, staff, and students engage respectfully across differences and build stronger connections in classrooms, workplaces, and communities.

To get started, scan the QR code below and sign up.

STUDENTS

SCAN ME

FACULTY & STAFF

SCAN ME

Schedule

9:00 – 10:00 AM Block I

Build a Valuable Personal Brand in College | Janikies Auditorium, UNI (375)
Michelle Enjoli
Build your personal brand and discover how your unique story can open doors to career opportunities. Learn Michelle's four-step framework for creating a brand that stands out and sets you up for success.

Money Moves: Making Smart Financial Decisions in College and Beyond | Forum, AIC (200)
Amanda LaRose, Navigant Credit Union
Explore practical strategies for making informed financial decisions during college and beyond. Learn to manage money, build healthy financial habits, and make choices that support your financial goals.

The Human Element in Marketing: A Panel Discussion | Grand Hall, Bello (200)
Ron Cardi, Tara Levine, Mark Manuel, and Brett Gerstenblatt, Moderated by Michael Gravier
Explore how empathy, authenticity, and understanding different perspectives can strengthen human connection in a digital world shaped by AI, analytics, and automation. Hear from industry experts about building meaningful connections and a stronger sense of belonging.

Not Just a K-Drama: Living Korea for Real | Rm. 2209 (former MR4), UNI (100)
Amy Nguyen, Tola Pikulinski, Zoey Siemmao, Jillian Shields, moderated by Kacy Kim & Sukki Yoon
What is it really like to live in another culture—not just visit it? Bryant students share personal stories about studying and living in Korea, reflecting on cultural differences, unexpected challenges, adaptation, and how their experiences changed the way they see themselves and others.

Political Representation in America | Papitto/Heritage, Fisher (200)
Ryan Bookstein
Explore how the structure of the U.S. Senate affects political representation and whose voices are heard at the federal level. Through research, discussion, and real-world examples, participants will consider how geography, population, and institutional structures shape representation.

Growing Up Digital: How Technology Shapes Cognitive Development | Rm. 2AB, Fisher (100)
Heather Lacey
Children and adolescents are growing up surrounded by smartphones, social media, video games, AI-powered tools, and constant digital connectivity. This session explores how technology may shape learning, attention, memory, critical thinking, and social development. Participants will consider both the opportunities and challenges of growing up in an increasingly digital world.

The Labor and Impact of Fast Fashion Amid Short Attention Spans and Interrupted Living | Rm. 118, AIC (50)
Paul A. Roselli and GEN 390 Capstone Class
What's in your closet? Explore fast fashion's environmental and social impact by examining where your clothing comes from, who made it, what it is made of, and how long you plan to keep it.

Tactics to Help Shed Anxiety | Rm. 130, AIC (50)
Maryanne DeChambeau
Learn practical tools for identifying and addressing the root causes of anxiety. Through a Five Why Analysis, participants will explore how external stressors affect us and gain strategies to better understand their own responses and others'.

Underrepresented Celebrations | Rm. 131, AIC (50)
Nilsa Laine & Rowan McMahon
Explore Bryant's Caribbean American Heritage Month exhibition, featuring work from 11 artists across textiles, paintings, illustrations, and mixed media. Learn how the exhibition came to life as it reflects on cultural identity, heritage, and representation.

West African Drumming | Foyer, IFC (40)
Sidy Maiga
Experience the rich traditions of Malian djembe drumming through rhythm, culture, and community. In this hands-on session, participants will learn traditional drumming techniques while exploring the history, cultural traditions, and community values behind West African music.

Moccasin Yoga: Tapping Into My Inner G | MAC, Chace (100)
Akeem Lloyd
Move through a yoga flow designed to build resilience, trust, and confidence. Participants will challenge themselves through movement and reflection as they explore how doubt, perseverance, and personal growth shape how we approach life and others' experiences.

Step Into Merengue: History, Rhythm & Movement | Eannarino Group Exercise Room, Chace (25)
Brandon Contreras
Learn merengue rhythms and movements in this interactive dance session. Explore the genre's cultural roots and evolution while getting on your feet and experiencing the music through movement.

Nature's Playground: Hiking and Community | 1B Entrance (former F Entrance), UNI
Dawn Stappleton & Becca Erickson
Step outside and connect with others through a community hike. Explore campus and the outdoors while moving, talking, and building connections in a different setting

10:00 -11:00 AM BLOCK II

A Journey Less Taken | Janikies Auditorium, UNI (375)
Mary Maker
Explore Mary Maker's journey from South Sudan to a refugee camp in Kenya and, eventually, the United States. Through powerful storytelling, discover lessons in resilience, education, leadership, and community giving. Leave inspired by the power of perseverance and the impact of creating opportunities for others.

SoleTies | Grand Hall, Bello (200)
Anthony Valentine
Explore identity, resilience, and belonging through storytelling, music, guided reflection, and small-group conversations. Listen with curiosity, share at your own comfort level, and discover the experiences that shape who we are. Leave with a deeper understanding of one another and practical ways to foster more authentic connection and belonging.

Money Moves: Making Smart Financial Decisions in College and Beyond | Forum, AIC (200)
Amanda LaRose, Navigant Credit Union
Explore practical strategies for making informed financial decisions during college and beyond. Learn to manage money, build healthy financial habits, and make choices that support your financial goals.

Same Tree, Different Branches: Science, Race, and Justice | Papitto/Heritage, Fisher (200)
David Upegui
Explore how science has been used to both justify oppression and challenge harmful assumptions about human difference. Through hands-on activities on human migration and shared ancestry, Dr. David Upegui invites participants to consider how evidence can reshape our understanding of race, identity, and human connection.

Identity and Culture in Refugee Resettlement: Beautiful Day's Response to the Refugee Crisis | Rm. 2AB, Fisher (200)
Rebecca Garland
Learn about refugee resettlement in Rhode Island and the experiences of people adapting to a new environment while maintaining connections to their heritage. Through firsthand accounts and interactive activities, participants will consider the challenges of navigating a new identity and build empathy for different experiences.

Unapologetically Well: Shedding Guilt in the Pursuit of Healing | Rm. 2209 (former MR4), UNI (100)
Michelle Crossley, Joy Garzon, and Funmibi Yusuff — Moderator by LaTanya Monteiro
Explore what it means to prioritize healing without guilt or apology. This all-women panel creates space for honest conversations about self-care, boundaries, stress, and the pressures that can make it difficult to put yourself first. Hear personal perspectives and practical insights on navigating expectations while caring for your mind, body, and spirit.

From Invisibility to Belonging: How the AAPI History Museum Came to Life | Rm. 2C, Fisher (80)
Jeannie W. Salomon
Discover how personal experience and community need inspired Rhode Island's first AAPI-focused history museum. Jeannie W. Salomon will share the museum's journey while exploring representation, identity, belonging, and how communities can turn ideas into lasting change.

Growth Through Service: Student Perspectives on Service Trips to South Dakota and Puerto Rico | Rm. 118, AIC (50)
Wesley Cabral & Joe Berardi
Hear from Bryant students who participated in service trips to South Dakota and Puerto Rico. Through a panel discussion and a display of local items, students will share what they learned about serving different communities, connecting with others, and understanding community needs.

Understanding Bryant's CARE Team | Rm. 119, AIC (50)
Kelly Boutin
Learn how Bryant's CARE Team supports students facing challenges and connects them with essential resources. Explore the team's process and the experiences students may face, while building greater awareness and understanding of how you can support members of the Bryant community.

What's on My Ballot? | Rm. 131, AIC (50)
Ilisabeth Bornstein & Laura Kohl
Explore local and state ballots and learn how to find reliable information about candidates, issues, and ballot initiatives. Participants will practice researching positions and arguments to better understand the choices presented on a ballot.

Zumba | Eannarino Group Exercise Room, Chace (25)
Alana Thompson
Get moving with a high-energy Zumba session that combines music, movement, and community. No prior experience is needed; come ready to move, have fun, and connect with others.

11:15 AM – 12:15 PM Block III

To Be Woman | Janikies Auditorium, UNI (375)
Mary Maker
Explore Mary Maker's journey growing up as a South Sudanese girl and refugee, navigating expectations placed on women in her community. Through powerful storytelling, discover how she challenged social norms, found her voice, and redefined womanhood on her own terms.

Become the CEO of Your College Career | Grand Hall, Bello (200)
Michelle Enjoli
Take charge of your college career and learn how to stop waiting for opportunities and start creating them. Discover strategies for building your personal brand, growing a strategic network, and aligning your actions with your career vision. Start building the career you want now—not after graduation.

K-pop Dance Entrepreneurship: From Social Media to the Global Classroom | Forum, AIC (200)
Chuyun Oh
Explore how K-pop has grown from music into a global cultural movement connecting creativity, education, and entrepreneurship. Discover how social media, dance communities, and fandom create opportunities for learning and business, then wrap up with a fun 10-minute K-pop dance workshop open to everyone.

Same Tree, Different Branches: Science, Race, and Justice | Papitto/Heritage, Fisher (200)
David Upegui
Explore how science has been used to both justify oppression and challenge harmful assumptions about human difference. Through hands-on activities on human migration and shared ancestry, Dr. David Upegui invites participants to consider how evidence can reshape our understanding of race, identity, and human connection.

Identity and Culture in Refugee Resettlement: Beautiful Day's Response to the Refugee Crisis | Rm. 2AB, Fisher (200)
Rebecca Garland
Learn about refugee resettlement in Rhode Island and the experiences of people adapting to a new environment while maintaining connections to their heritage. Through firsthand accounts and interactive activities, participants will consider the challenges of navigating a new identity and build empathy for different experiences.

Black and Red: A Native American Documentary | Rm. 2209 (former MR4), UNI (100)
Daryl Black Eagle Jamieson & Brittany Ruggieri
This session features a 35-minute documentary sharing a personal narrative of growing up between Native American and African American communities in New England. Through reflections on identity, belonging, and lived experience, it offers an honest look at navigating multiple cultures and how each community is perceived and treated. A Q&A will follow the screening.

From Invisibility to Belonging: How the AAPI History Museum Came to Life | Rm. 2C, Fisher (100)
Jeannie W. Salomon
Discover how personal experience and community need inspired Rhode Island's first AAPI-focused history museum. Jeannie W. Salomon will share the museum's journey while exploring representation, identity, belonging, and how communities can turn ideas into lasting change.

Immigrant Voices: Identity, Experience, and Belonging | Rm. 2207, UNI (50)
A panel featuring Bryant faculty and staff sharing their firsthand immigrant experiences, moderated by Patricia Gomez
Through their personal stories, panelists will offer insights into the challenges and successes they've experienced as immigrants. This discussion will highlight their contributions and explore practical ways the campus community can provide support and foster inclusivity. Join us to hear these powerful firsthand accounts and discover how you can help make a difference for immigrant communities on campus.

International Research Experience Abroad: Tanzania and Germany | Rm. 118, AIC (50)
Peyton Barron, Hannah Kobbs, and Thomas Morton
Hear from Bryant students who traveled to Tanzania and Germany as part of an international research project. Students will share their experiences conducting fieldwork, working with local communities, and contributing to ecological research while exploring what it means to engage in research across cultures.

Understanding Bryant's CARE Team | Rm.119, AIC (50)
Kelly Boutin
Learn how Bryant's CARE Team supports students facing challenges and connects them with essential resources. Explore the team's process and the experiences students may face, while building greater awareness and understanding of how you can support members of the Bryant community.

How AI is Shaping the Future of Healthcare Careers | Rm. 130, AIC (50)
Paola Brena Ortiz & Nafees Qamar
Explore how artificial intelligence is transforming healthcare delivery, decision-making, education, and career pathways. A panel of leaders from healthcare, technology, and policy will discuss emerging trends, challenges, and opportunities in this rapidly changing field.

Beyond Good Intentions: Recognizing and Addressing Casual Ableism |Rm. 131, AIC (50)
Autumn Grant
Explore how seemingly harmless language, assumptions, and behaviors can become forms of casual ableism. Through real-world examples and discussion, participants will examine how these experiences can affect people with disabilities and identify practical ways to create more inclusive environments.

Zumba | Eannarino Group Exercise Room, Chace (25)
Alana Thompson
Get moving with a high-energy Zumba session that combines music, movement, and community. No prior experience is needed; come ready to move, have fun, and connect with others.

EXHIBITS, ACTIVITIES & PERFORMANCES

Buddies and Brews | Patio, Fisher | 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM
Bryant Best Buddies
Best Buddies is partnering with Neuro Brews, a mobile coffee cart dedicated to brewing kindness and serving acceptance. Together, they'll offer free coffee (alongside other drinks) and a brief presentation to spark dialogue and raise awareness about inclusion and employment opportunities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD).

Leaves of Gratitude Mural | PwC Center, 2nd Floor, Fisher | 11:15 - 2:15 PM
Intercultural Center
Create a collaborative gratitude mural by writing something you're grateful for on a paper leaf and adding it to the community wall. Participants will read what others have shared and reflect on the different experiences, relationships, and sources of support that shape gratitude across our community. Enjoy fresh apple cider donuts while supplies last!

Explore. Discover. Enter to Win.

Culture Quest | Rotunda, UNI | 11:15 - 2:15 PM
Office of Community & Belonging

Explore three cultural exhibits:

- AAPI Storytelling Portrait Project: Celebrating Our Stories, Honoring Our Heritage
- *Underrepresented Celebrations*: Caribbean American Artists Exhibition
- *Somos Rhode Island* - Latino Portraits: Nuestras Historias | Nuestras Gente

Pick up a Culture Quest card, find the answers throughout the exhibits, and enter for a chance to win an art print from the Caribbean American Artists Exhibit!

Floración | Art Barn | 3:00 - 6:00 PM
Fior de la Cruz

Continue your artistic quest at the Art Barn with *Floración*, a solo exhibition by local artist Fior De La Cruz celebrating creativity, culture, and community. Visit the exhibition and sign the guest book for a chance to win an art print by Fior De La Cruz!

Print With Purpose | 1st Floor, Fisher | 11:15 - 2:15 PM
Gen Ed 390
Work with master printer *Jacques Bidon* on creating a unique letterpress work of art using inspirational quotes from famous Black women. Jacques will share his expertise and guide participants in printmaking. Community members will create and keep their printed art.

Clothes Swap! Share What You No Longer Wear | 1st Floor, Fisher |11:15 - 2:15 PM
Gen Ed 390
Participants will swap clothing and share items they no longer need. The experience creates an opportunity to connect with peers, discover different styles and perspectives, and consider how clothing, trends, and personal choices reflect individual experiences.

Food Without Brothers: Taste, Culture & Discovery | Salmo Entrance | 12:00–2:00 PM
Pulmuone, Bryant Marketing Behavioral Lab & Society for Food Marketing & Retailing (SFMR)
Explore food, culture, and consumer trends through an interactive sensory tasting experience. Sample foods such as kimchi, pickles, dumplings, and tofu while exploring taste, texture, preference, and product characteristics. Drop in anytime between 12:00 and 2:00 PM to discover new flavors and consider how food reflects culture and changing consumer tastes. Limited giveaways available while supplies last.

Performance | 1st Floor, Fisher | 1:00 PM – 2:00 PM
Eastern Medicine Singers
This performance highlights Eastern Indigenous culture through captivating singing, all performed in Algonquin, a language spoken by only a few thousand people today. The band members, proudly representing their roots, hail from Rhode Island and Massachusetts and bring their ancestors' rich heritage.

Building Empathy Through Immersive VR | Krupp Library, Main Floor, Bello | 12:00 - 3:00 PM
Krupp Library Team
Ever wondered what it would be like to see the world through someone else's eyes? Stop by the VR Lab and step into stories and experiences that offer a glimpse into lives and perspectives different from your own. You won't just hear their story; you'll experience it.

12:15 -1:15 PM BLOCK IV

SoleTies | Grand Hall, Bello (200)
Anthony Valentine
Explore identity, resilience, and belonging through guided reflection, meaningful questions, music, and conversation. Participants will create a personalized 3D keepsake representing aspects of their identity and story, then share and listen to experiences that may be different from their own.

Belonging Over Bias: Applying Psychological Research to Social Problems | Forum, AIC (200)
Melanie Maimon
Explore psychological research on belonging, identity, bias, and social change, including projects conducted with Bryant students. Participants will learn how research can help us understand social problems, consider different lived experiences, and explore opportunities to engage in psychology research.

Entrepreneurial Thinking for Community/Social Challenges | Janikies Auditorium, UNI (375)
Stefanie Engelhardt, Social Enterprise Greenhouse
How can entrepreneurial thinking help address challenges in our communities? Explore how entrepreneurs identify community needs, develop creative solutions, and turn ideas into action. Through discussion and hands-on activities, participants will apply entrepreneurial tools to a real-world community or social challenge.

Somos Rhode Island | Rm. 2AB, Fisher (100)
Marta V. Martinez
Explore Rhode Island's Latino history through stories of migration, community building, activism, and entrepreneurship. Drawing from the *Nuestras Raíces Oral History Project* and *Somos Rhode Island*, Marta V. Martínez will share stories of Latino pioneers and invite participants to share their own.

West African Drumming | Foyer, IFC (40)
Sidy Maiga
Experience the rich traditions of Malian djembe drumming through rhythm, culture, and community. In this hands-on session, participants will learn traditional drumming techniques while exploring the history, cultural traditions, and community values behind West African music.

Moccasin Yoga: Tapping Into My Inner G | MAC, Chace Center (100)
Akeem Lloyd
Move through a yoga flow designed to build resilience, trust, and confidence. Participants will challenge themselves through movement and reflection as they explore how doubt, perseverance, and personal growth shape how we approach life and others' experiences.

Salsa: Rhythm, Culture & Movement | Eannarino Group Exercise Room, Chase Center (25)
Brandon Contreras
Learn salsa rhythms and movements in this interactive dance session. Explore the genre's cultural influences and evolution while getting on your feet and experiencing the music through movement.

Campus Cleanup | Patio, Fisher
Community Standards & Community Service
Join Bryant community members for a hands-on campus cleanup focused on service and community pride. Work together to care for shared spaces, connect with others, and make a positive impact on the campus community.

1:15 -2:15 PM BLOCK V

Ask the Chaplains: Bryant Chaplains Panel | Rm. 118, AIC (50)
Bryant Chaplains Team
Rabbi Steven Jablow, Father Joseph Pescatello, Pastor Kevin White, and Chaplain Aisha Manzoor. Come meet our panel of chaplains and discover how faith can help you build resilience. This interactive session lets you ask questions, explore faith-based strategies for overcoming challenges, and gain valuable insights for navigating life's ups and downs.

LGBTQ+ Identity, Belonging & Community | Rm. 119, AIC (50)
Kelly Boutin & Gianpaolo "JP" Colasacco
Explore LGBTQ+ identity, belonging, and community through conversation and reflection. Participants will consider the experiences that shape identity, the importance of feeling seen and supported, and ways we can contribute to a more welcoming and inclusive campus community.

Better Health Together: Finding Support Through Shared Experience | Rm. 130, AIC (50)
Maryanne DeChambeau
Learn practical nutrition and lifestyle strategies for managing common health concerns, including stress, high blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. Participants can also connect with others, share experiences and strategies, and build a network of encouragement and support.

Why We Reject a Free Dollar: An Interactive Experiment in Fairness | Rm. 131, AIC (50)
Liam Rice '17
Would you turn down a free dollar if someone else received more? In this interactive experiment, participants will play the ultimatum game, explore the results together, and consider how people develop different ideas about fairness. No economics background required.

Access & Awareness: A Student Disability Dialogue | Grand Hall, Bello (200)
Autumn Grant, Jay Caliri & Ryan Sonder
Join Bryant students with disabilities for an open conversation about campus life, accessibility, and inclusion. Panelists will share personal experiences, challenges, and successes, offering insight into how awareness and understanding can help build a more inclusive Bryant community.

Power in Perspective: Reflections from the Summit | Rm. Papitto/Heritae, Fisher (200)
Darrell Jackson-Mitchell, Amira Rainer, Nadine Abdat, Jalena Martin, Corinne Gbalekuma-Hubbard, Suraily Sam, Carlos Allen, Patricia Adesanya, & Britt King
Student-athletes will reflect on their experiences from the Black Student-Athlete Summit. Through personal reflections and a short video, they will share perspectives gained and highlight how storytelling, understanding,

K-pop Dance Entrepreneurship: From Social Media to the Global Classroom | Forum, AIC (200)
Chuyun Oh
Explore how K-pop has grown from music into a global cultural movement connecting creativity, education, and entrepreneurship. Discover how social media, dance communities, and fandom create opportunities for learning and business, then wrap up with a fun 10-minute K-pop dance workshop open to everyone.

Social Impact Business Models | Janikies, UNI (375)
Stefanie Engelhardt, Social Enterprise Greenhouse
Explore business models designed to create positive community impact. Through real-world examples and case studies, participants will examine how cooperatives, for-profit businesses, and nonprofits approach social challenges and create value for their communities.

Bryant Community Choir: Blackbird | Chapel, IFC (200)
Joan Zaretti
Sing with others in this welcoming, no-experience-required community choir session. Participants will warm up their voices, learn Blackbird by The Beatles, and experience the connection that comes from listening, blending voices, and making music together.

Justice-Involved Re-Entry Simulation | Rm. 2209 (former MR4), UNI (100)
RI Department of Corrections
Step into the experience of someone returning to the community after incarceration. Through an interactive simulation, participants will navigate employment, housing, transportation, family responsibilities, and unexpected challenges while exploring the barriers that can shape successful reentry.

Somos Rhode Island | Rm. 2AB, Fisher (100)
Marta V. Martinez
Explore Rhode Island's Latino history through stories of migration, community building, activism, and entrepreneurship. Drawing from the *Nuestras Raíces Oral History Project* and *Somos Rhode Island*, Marta V. Martínez will share stories of Latino pioneers and invite participants to share their own.

Beyond the Plate: Fueling Your Body, Supporting Your Mind & Rethinking Food Rules | Rm. 2C, Fisher (80)
Cheryl Brock and Courtney McCarthy
Join us for a presentation dedicated to rethinking your relationship with food. Learn how smart, balanced fueling can combat academic burnout, stabilize your mood, and sharpen your focus. We will break down the science of the food-mind connection, share practical tips for mindful eating on campus, and show you how to listen to your body instead of strict rules.

AFTERNOON PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES

Community in Action

Connect. Celebrate. Contribute.

2:30–4:30 PM | 1st floor, Fisher
OCB, SPB, MSU, ISO, ICC, OISS and Student Life
Keep the DOU experience going with Community in Action, an afternoon of connection, creativity, culture, service, food, music, and fun!
Explore interactive experiences created by Bryant student organizations, discover causes and communities, participate in hands-on activities, and connect with others across campus.

GIVE
Support a cause through service, donations, and hands-on activities.

BRING AWARENESS
Discover causes, cultures, and communities through interactive experiences.

PERFORM & ENGAGE
Enjoy live music, dance, art, games, and student performances.

EXPLORE THROUGH FOOD
Complete your Community in Action Pass: visit tables, collect stamps, and enjoy food from featured food trucks.

GET INVOLVED
Don't just visit; participate, connect, and experience something new.

VOTE FOR YOUR FAVORITE
Help choose your favorite Community in Action experience. The winning organization will receive a $500 voucher toward a future event!

Community in Action Pass

Your pass. Your adventure. Your DOU.
Pick up your pass card and start exploring! Visit participating student organizations, participate in their activities, and collect stamps along the way. Complete the required stops to receive your food-truck ticket.

Food Trucks

2:30–4:30 PM | Patio, Fisher
Complete your Community in Action Pass Card, grab your food-truck ticket, and enjoy a bite while you explore.
Featuring:

- Frisky Fries
- IncrediBowl
- La Carreta
- Bird's Nest Italian Street Food
- Fragolas — Sweet Treats

Also, Trio Delights: Complimentary finger foods available on a first-come, first-served basis. No ticket required.

Music + Performances

The afternoon will feature live student performances from 2:30–3:30 PM, with WJMF providing music throughout the afternoon between performances and activities.
Community in Action is presented by the Office of Community & Belonging in partnership with SPB, MSU, and ISO.

Floración

6:00–8:00 PM | Art Barn
Arts & Creative Industries

Continue your Day of Understanding experience at the Art Barn with *Floración*, a solo exhibition by Fior De La Cruz celebrating creativity, culture, and community. Join us for an evening of art, reflection, and connection, including a closing ceremony celebrating the exhibition and the DOU experience.

Visit the exhibition and sign the guest book for a chance to win an art print by Fior De La Cruz!

Come explore, experience, and discover through art.

Speakers

Visiting Speakers



CHUYUN OH is a Fulbright Scholar, Professor of Dance Theory and Practice at San Diego State University, and a pioneer in K-pop dance studies. Her research explores K-pop, dance, fandom, and social media, and her work has appeared internationally in academic publications, media, and keynote presentations.



MARY MAKER is a South Sudanese refugee activist and storyteller who inspires audiences to value education and create positive change. Drawing from her own refugee journey, she uses theatrical storytelling to explore resilience, empathy, education, and the power individuals have to strengthen their communities.



DAVID UPEGUI is an Assistant Teaching Professor of Education at Brown University and a nationally recognized STEM educator. A recipient of the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, he spent more than a decade teaching biology and supporting educators in Central Falls. His work connects evolutionary biology, scientific inquiry, and social justice.



JEANNIE SALOMON is the Founder and Executive Director of the AAPI History Museum and brings more than 15 years of nonprofit leadership and teaching experience. Her work centers on uplifting underrepresented histories and creating opportunities for education, dialogue, connection, and belonging.



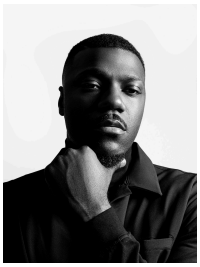
MARTA V. MARTÍNEZ is the Founder and Executive Director of Rhode Island Latino Arts (RILA) and creator of Nuestras Raíces: The Latino Oral History Project of Rhode Island. For more than three decades, she has documented and preserved the history and cultural contributions of Rhode Island's Latino communities through oral histories, exhibitions, publications, and community archives.



AMANDA LAROSE is Assistant Vice President of Financial Education at Navigant Credit Union. With 15 years of experience, she leads financial education initiatives that help students, adults, and community organizations build financial confidence and long-term financial wellness.



MICHELLE ENJOLI is a career development coach and keynote speaker who helps students take ownership of their career growth. A first-generation American and former television producer, she has worked with organizations including Univision, Telemundo, ABC, NBC, CBS, Mercedes-Benz USA, and Delta Air Lines. Her work focuses on networking, personal branding, self-esteem, and developing an entrepreneurial mindset.



ANTHONY VALENTINE is an entrepreneur, filmmaker, motivational speaker, and founder of KLTR, a purpose-driven company focused on identity, belonging, empathy, resilience, and leadership. Drawing on his experience as an EMT who served more than 6,000 patients, he uses storytelling and meaningful conversation to help people better understand themselves and one another. He also created More Than Skin Deep and SoleTies.



REBECCA GARLAND is the Associate Director of Beautiful Day. Rebecca focuses on fund development, strategic partnerships, and community education. A former adult literacy educator with more than 20 years of experience, she holds a doctorate from Harvard Graduate School of Education. As the daughter of a refugee, she brings a personal connection to displacement, resettlement, and rebuilding community.



STEFANIE ENGELHARDT is Chief Program Officer at Social Enterprise Greenhouse, where she leads programming for entrepreneurs across its Alumni, Corporate, Accelerator, Incubator, and Spanish-language programs. She has helped more than 300 entrepreneurs develop and grow ventures that create meaningful change while building sustainable business models.



AKEEM LLOYD is CEO and Founder of Akeem Speaks and Leadership Journey. Through Moccasin Yoga, he creates welcoming spaces centered on movement, connection, authenticity, and community, encouraging participants to grow while recognizing the experiences they share.

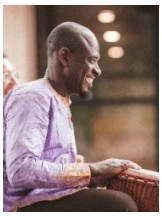
Updated 10/20/26. Please note that minor edits and updates may still be made.



JACQUES BIDON is a Haitian-born artist, writer, and master printmaker whose relationship with printing began during his teenage years. After more than three decades as a commercial printer, he shifted his focus to artistic printmaking and later established the letterpress print shop at AS220 in Providence, where he taught workshops and mentored artists.



BRANDON CONTRERAS is a Rhode Island-based dance instructor specializing in bachata and Kizomba. He teaches traditional and contemporary bachata, using dance to connect generations and build community. Brandon also hosts biweekly Bachata Jam Sessions at the Temple of Music in Roger Williams Park, where participants learn, dance, and connect through music.



SIDY MAIGA is a Djembe Master from Mali who blends traditional Malian rhythms with Latin, Blues, and Brazilian influences. His passion for sharing West African culture led him to establish Afrika Nyaga, Rhode Island's West African Dance and Drum Festival. A recipient of the MacColl-Johnson and RISCA Folk Arts Fellowships, he is also a Berklee College of Music graduate.

Visiting Panelists

The Human Element in Marketing | 9:00 AM - Grand Hall, Bello (200)



RON CARDI is co-owner and principal of Cardi's Furniture & Mattresses, the New England retailer his family founded in 1928. With decades of experience in the family business, Ron understands the importance of combining data and technology with genuine human connection. He believes data and AI provide valuable insights, but nothing replaces listening to customers and understanding their needs firsthand.



MARK MANUEL, known as The Manufacturing Ambassador, is a manufacturing marketing expert, speaker, and co-founder of Industrial Marketing. With more than 13 years of manufacturing experience, Mark has visited hundreds of companies and trade shows, helping manufacturers communicate the capabilities that set them apart. His book, *The Capability Mandate*, challenges manufacturers to make their capabilities visible and turn their expertise into a competitive advantage.



TARA LEVINE is a master branding strategist and experienced business leader who has led and grown nonprofits and businesses at Gillette, Converse, Procter & Gamble, Ocean Spray, and other leading organizations. Her career spans brand strategy, marketing, business growth, and organizational leadership. Tara brings a human-centered approach to branding, combining strategic thinking with a deep understanding of customers and changing markets.



BRETT GERSTENBLATT is a marketing strategist, advisor, and former CVS Health executive who brings a human-centered perspective to brands, customer experiences, and innovation. His Emmy Award-winning work reflects a career focused on understanding people and turning insights into meaningful action. Brett combines strategic thinking with creativity to help organizations build stronger connections with the people they serve.

Updated 10/20/26. Please note that minor edits and updates may still be made.

Unapologetically Well: Shedding Guilt in the Pursuit of Healing |10:00 AM - 11:00 AM | Rm. 2209 (former MR4), UNI (100)



MICHELLE CROSSLEY is an associate professor in the Clinical Mental Health Counseling Program at Rhode Island College. She also has a private practice where she provides individual, couple, and family counseling; her primary clinical focus is delivering gender-affirming mental health counseling. Dr. Crossley serves as President of the Rhode Island Mental Health Counselors Association (RIMHCA) and has been invited by several community agencies to provide Continuing Education on the importance of gender-affirming, informed counseling.



JOISE GARZON is a licensed Independent Clinical Social Worker in Rhode Island and Massachusetts and an Assistant Professor in the Master of Social Work program at Rhode Island College. She also serves as Co-Director of the RIC Latinx/Hispanic Center of Excellence for Social Work Practice and Program Director for the Rhode Island Wellness Foundation. Her clinical and scholarly work focuses on Latinx/Hispanic college student engagement and persistence, Latina faculty experiences, mentorship, maternal mental health, and well-being. Dr. Garzon holds a PhD in Education from Rhode Island College and the University of Rhode Island.



OLUWAFUNMIBI "FUNMIBI" YUSUFF is a Licensed Mental Health Clinician dedicated to helping clients navigate personal challenges and develop long-term solutions. As a Nigerian American, she takes a culturally responsive, identity-centered approach to mental health and specializes in trauma-informed care. She is trained in Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing (EMDR) and is committed to challenging cultural stigmas around mental health while helping clients move from survival to thriving.

Black and Red. A Native American Story | 11:15 AM - Rm. 2209, UNI



DARYL "BLACK EAGLE" JAMIESON is a member of the Pocasset Wampanoag Tribe of the Pokanoket Nation and founder of the Eastern Medicine Singers, a group dedicated to preserving Indigenous language and culture through music. His work brings together tradition, storytelling, and creativity to connect generations through the power of the drum. Daryl will present his documentary, Black & Red, followed by a performance by the Eastern Medicine Singers.



BRITTANY RUGGIERI is the co-owner of Black Eagle Productions LLC and a collaborator with Dream Team Productionz. She graduated from the New England Institute of Technology in 2023 with a Bachelor of Science in Digital Media Productions. Brittany is co-producer of The New England Indians, now available on five streaming channels, and co-director of Black & Red. She is currently working on Ancient Visitors to the New England Indians, starring Scott Wolter.

THANK YOU, Bryant Community

Thank you, Bryant speakers, panelists, and performers, for sharing your time, talent, and insights. Day of Understanding is a true campus-wide effort, made possible through the collaboration of campus offices, dozens of volunteers, and the dedication of our planning committee. Your contributions make this day of learning, connection, and growth a reality.

Special thanks to Eliza Paradis, Jaya LaPrade, and Patricia Adesanya for supporting Community in Action; SPB for leading the event and supporting the food trucks; PwC Center, OISS, ISO, and MSU for their food truck support; Nilsa Laine for helping organize Culture Quest; and DPS for providing the DOU raffle parking pass.

Committee Members

A heartfelt "Thank You" to our committee members for their invaluable support in making this day a reality.

Farah Joseph-Bonne Année, Assistant Director, Community & Belonging, and DOU Chair
Jocelyn Bell, Assistant Professor of Sociology
Carolina Bogaert, Coordinator, Community & Belonging
Erin Cheschi, Senior Career Coach
Kristen Falso-Capaldi, Lecturer, History, Lit, and Arts
Christina Frugale, Associate Director, University Events and Conferences
Brandi Gbemisola, Director, Intercultural Center
Meagan Joseph, Manager of Borrower Services & Interim Manager of Community Engagement
Britt King, Assistant Athletic Director, Student-Athlete Development and Engagement
Robert Massoud, Lecturer, Management
LaTanya Monteiro, Senior Intercultural Counselor
Amy Steere, Assistant Director, Experiential Education
Veronica Stewart, Director, Career Services