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– Felicia Salinas-Moniz

of perspectives shaped by their unique cultural backgrounds," notes Andrew Heald, center director. It does so through its lounge, orientation programs and intercultural activities, from Arabic coffee chats to international festivals featuring traditional food, music and dance.

Confronting Societal Issues

According to administrators, Brown's identity centers play an essential role amid contentious national discussions about race-conscious college admissions, immigration policies, transgender rights and more.

"At a time when anti-LGBTQ sentiment is on the rise, and more youth are publicly identifying as LGBTQ+ and reaching out for support, our work is incredibly important," says Caitlin O'Neill, director of Brown's LGBTQ Center, which engages campus members who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer through programs and advocacy services.

The center sponsors events on policy issues, such as a dinner series it co-organized last year that brought together Brown undergraduates, medical and public health students to examine the state of LGBTQ+ health care. Similarly, the Global Brown Center convened a meeting during the early days of the COVID-19 pandemic "on how to understand and support the experience of our students from China in a time of increased xenophobia," Heald says.

In Fall 2022, Brown's Sarah Doyle Center, which provides resources on the many dimensions of gender, hosted a webinar on reproductive justice after the U.S. Supreme Court struck down *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to abortion.

"In our programming, we try to respond to the current moment while situating our work within a historic context," notes Felicia Salinas-Moniz, center director and adjunct faculty member. She says the center — which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2025 — promotes learning through such activities as "Tea and Theory," where students read and discuss feminist theory over tea in the center's lounge.

Nurturing Discovery

Identity centers, open to all students, enrich the overall Brown education by hosting talks by faculty and graduate students on cutting-edge research, and bringing prominent speakers from diverse fields to campus, among other forums for exchanging ideas. The centers also foster personal growth.

The Brown Center for Students of Color crafts experiences to help students build their own sense of identity, including peer-to-peer counseling, leadership roles, and opportunities to raise awareness about racial, ethnic and other injustices they recognize on campus and beyond, Harris says.



STUDENTS ENJOY A CRAFT ACTIVITY IN THE FORMAL LOUNGE OF THE BROWN CENTER FOR STUDENTS OF COLOR DURING A 2023 EVENT HOSTED BY THE LATINX STUDENT INITIATIVE.

And the LGBTQ Center at Stonewall House supports self-discovery with a closet of clothing, makeup and other items for exploring different expressions of one's gender and sexuality.

O'Neill, also an adjunct faculty member, says she and other colleagues leading the University's identity centers "aim to create moments of joy and celebration for our students, alongside moments of deep inquiry and dedication to continual growth."

THE SARAH DOYLE CENTER'S LIBRARY ON WHEELS HELPS SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE CENTER'S LIBRARY OF OVER 4,000 TEXTS ON WOMEN'S AND GENDER STUDIES, A RESOURCE AVAILABLE TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE BROWN COMMUNITY.

Welcoming Spaces

By Debra Bradley Ruder '80

Brown's identity and community-based centers promote a sense of belonging that empowers students to achieve academic success.

Amid an ever-changing landscape of social, cultural and policy issues affecting how individuals live and learn at colleges and universities, Brown offers community-building programs to help students thrive inside and outside the classroom.

The University's identity centers provide support, mentorship and experiential learning activities that enable students with shared interests and backgrounds to cultivate a sense of belonging, address mutual concerns, build leadership skills and develop meaningful relationships across differences.

"Brown's six identity and community-based centers enhance the academic and personal success of historically underrepresented and under-resourced students," says Loc Truong, assistant vice president for campus life engagement. "Through these centers, students gain valuable experiences that empower them to emerge as leaders."

These "homes away from home" include the Brown Center for Students of Color (BCSC), Global Brown Center for International Students, LGBTQ Center, Sarah Doyle Center for Women and Gender, Office of Military-Affiliated Students, and the Undocumented, First-Generation College and Low-Income Student (U-FLI) Center. Brown also has avenues for students seeking to deepen their understanding of Latin American, Native and Indigenous, African and other cultures, and to connect around religious and spiritual life.

In a typical week, nearly 400 students visit the BCSC, formerly the Third World Center. "The center has a vibrant home-like feel, with common spaces for students to study, eat, nap, catch up with friends and, most importantly, be themselves," says Vincent Harris, associate dean and director of the center, which turns 50 in 2026.

The Global Brown Center, meanwhile, fosters community for students and scholars who represent more than 100 countries "and an array

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