

SUMMER SPOTLIGHT

June 2026

The latest news and updates from the Center for Ethics & Public Service

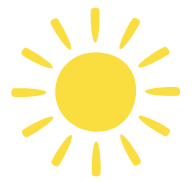


The Center for Ethics and Public Service (CEPS) celebrated its 30th anniversary throughout the 2025–2026 academic year, honoring three decades of leadership at the intersection of law, public policy, and ethics.

The celebration began in Fall 2025 with a look back at CEPS’s lasting contributions to public interest law, ethical scholarship, and meaningful dialogue on justice and leadership. Over the years, CEPS has provided students with hands-on learning opportunities while helping shape important conversations within the legal community.

By Spring 2026, the anniversary celebration turned toward the future, highlighting CEPS’s continued impact on generations of students, advocates, and practitioners dedicated to integrity and public service.

The celebration included the inaugural *H.T. Smith Symposium on Civil Rights in Florida* on February 18, 2026, which also featured the 2026 Andrew D. Fredman Friend of the Center Awards. The event underscored CEPS’s enduring commitment to justice, ethical leadership, and community impact.



Meet the Brown University Summer Interns



Benjamin Hader

Ben Hader is a rising junior from Brown University, double-concentrating in International & Public Affairs and History. Born and raised in Baton Rouge, Louisiana, Ben's academic and extracurricular interests focus on lasting impacts of imperialism across the world and at all levels of communities. On campus, Ben is a member of the nationwide Bonner Community Fellowship, vice president of the 2028 class, a staff writer for the Brown Political Review, and the business manager for his a cappella group, The Bear Necessities! Ben is so excited to contribute to CEPS's invaluable work this summer as a member of the team.

Nainika Sompallie

Nainika Sompallie was born and raised in Richmond, Virginia. She is a rising junior at Brown University, double-concentrating in Applied Math-Economics and Behavioral Decision Sciences. She is interested in the mechanisms behind our decision making and the intersection of quantitative modelling and human behavior. On campus, she is a teaching assistant for the course Making Decisions and is a staff writer for the Brown Political Review. She is very excited to work with CEPS this summer!





Freedom School Program 2026

Program Dates: June 15, 2026 – July 24, 2026

CEPS is continuing its partnership with Macedonia Missionary Baptist Church and the Coconut Grove Ministerial Alliance for the 3rd annual Freedom School program in Coconut Grove Village West. This summer, Freedom School is expanding its focus beyond academics to ensure students are not only learning content, but developing the skills, confidence, and awareness needed to navigate the real world. The 2026 program is intentionally designed to strengthen both the mind and identity of each student.

A new addition this year is the Freedom School Weekly Flyer. Each week, families will receive a snapshot of what students are learning—especially in Black history—along with basic ways to continue those conversations at home. This is a practical shift. When families know what’s being taught, they can reinforce it. That consistency is what actually makes learning stick.

Fridays will now feature the Young Mind Stimulation (YMS) LifeLab, a structured block focused on development—not just activity. The LifeLab is built around a clear goal: helping students strengthen how they think, regulate themselves, and apply learning in real-life situations. Students will build: curiosity and active thinking habits, confidence through exploration, social-emotional awareness, and real-world problem-solving skills. Each week, students will rotate through focused sessions designed to target different areas of growth:

- Yoga: To build focus, discipline, and emotional regulation
- Career Day: To expand awareness of future opportunities and personal goals
- Cooking: To reinforce math, reading, and independence through hands-on learning
- Art & Design: To encourage creativity and problem-solving through different avenues
- Townhall: To develop communication, leadership, and confidence in expressing ideas and concerns
- Field Trips (STEM & Citizenship): Connects learning to real-world systems and community awareness

Each session will include a clear objective and time for reflection, ensuring students are not just participating—but actually processing and applying what they learn.



Lunch & Learn: A Conversation with Tony Prado

On February 3, 2026, Tony Prado, Developer in Residence for the Real Property Development LL.M. Program and Executive Director of the Collective Empowerment Group of South Florida, joined CEPS fellows and interns for a wide-ranging conversation on his more than three decades of experience in real estate development, banking, and public service.

Mr. Prado opened with a look at his professional trajectory—from leading The Hamilton Group to serving on the Board of Pacific National Bank—before outlining his transition into nonprofit housing. He highlighted his current work advancing affordable housing initiatives in partnership with Miami’s Black church communities with a focus on Faith Place Village, a project that transforms underutilized church land into affordable housing for congregants.

He also connected this work to the Collective Empowerment Group’s Prosperity for All Civic Platform, a countywide strategy aimed at closing the middle-class wealth gap through community-driven development.

The discussion, guided by Community Equity Lab fellows Kyle Spohn and Juliana Gorina, explored key challenges in the field, including building trust with communities, navigating inefficiencies in the public sector, and rethinking traditional models of affordability. Mr. Prado introduced his concept of “needing less to live” as a practical approach to expanding access to housing for more families.

He concluded with reflections on his role at the University of Miami, expressing enthusiasm for teaching and confidence in the next generation of lawyers to lead innovative, equitable solutions to the housing crisis.



Lawyers in Leadership Award Presentation and Discussion

On March 3, 2026, CEPS hosted the Lawyers in Leadership Award Ceremony at the UM School of Law, honoring U.S. Magistrate Judge Detra Shaw-Wilder and U.S. Bankruptcy Court Judge Corali Lopez-Castro for their exemplary commitment to social justice, ethical leadership, and mentorship within the legal profession. Established to recognize distinguished members of the bar and bench who demonstrate outstanding ethics and civic leadership, the Lawyers in Leadership Award celebrates attorneys whose careers reflect dedication to the practice of law and the community. Both honorees are alumnae of Miami Law and have built distinguished careers that exemplify these values.

Judge Lopez-Castro, who previously served as managing partner at Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton, and Judge Shaw-Wilder, who co-founded the Kozyak Minority Mentoring Foundation, have each forged remarkable professional paths defined by leadership, mentorship, and a steadfast commitment to ethical practice. During a well-attended conversation with students, faculty, and guests, the judges reflected on their professional journeys, discussing leadership and diversity in the legal profession, their transition to the judiciary, and the important role that family and trusted colleagues played in shaping their careers.

The event brought together the judges' family members, friends, and colleagues from the bar and bench, along with current and former Miami Law students. Dean Patricia Abril opened the evening with remarks recognizing the judges' achievements and their impact on the legal profession. The program also featured a Q&A moderated by Sara Howard, Legal Profession Program (LPP) Hoeveler Fellow, and Jacqueline Goggins, LPP intern, followed by the presentation of the awards by Paris Foy, LPP Lee Fellow, and Professor Anthony V. Alfieri.



Law Firm Management Lunch & Learn

On March 31, 2026, CEPS hosted the Law Firm Management Lunch-and-Learn at the UM School of Law. The panelists included Jaret Davis, managing partner of Greenberg Traurig and a former CEPS fellow; Olga Vieira, managing partner of Quinn Emanuel; Jorge Piedra, managing partner of Kozyak Tropin & Throckmorton; and Al Dotson, managing partner of Bilzin Sumberg. The panel provided valuable insights into law firm practices across large, midsize, and boutique firms. Panelists offered students an in-depth look at hiring and retention policies and described management techniques used within their firms. Panelists also discussed firm cultures and shared strategies for maintaining morale.

While engaging with students and faculty, the attorneys reflected on their professional journeys. They addressed leadership in the legal profession, partnership tracks, and the growing importance of artificial intelligence in law. Panelists provided focused advice for students aiming to join law firms. They emphasized the value of strong communication and teamwork in a collaborative environment. They also urged students to seek mentors early, noting that guidance from experienced professionals supports their growth. Panelists additionally stressed the need to adapt and embrace technology, as innovations like artificial intelligence are reshaping legal practice and creating growth opportunities.

Panelists, faculty, and students engaged in an insightful, stand-room only discussion led by Legal Profession Program (LPP) students. Sara Howard, Hoeveler Fellow, opened the program by highlighting the panelists' accomplishments and introducing the moderators, Keilly Miranda Torres and Ellie Majhess, LPP interns. The event concluded with additional student questions. Following the program, students had the opportunity to engage directly with the panelists, promoting further discussion and networking.



Top: Michael Haggard, Tiffani Lee
Bottom: Alexander Rundlet

Honoring the Andrew D. Fredman Friend of the Center Awardees

The 2026 Andrew D. Fredman Friend of the Center awardees—Tiffani Lee, Michael Haggard, and Alexander Rundlet—were honored at the inaugural *H.T. Smith Symposium on Civil Rights in Florida* on February 18, recognizing their outstanding contributions to the field and their commitment to advancing justice. We were especially grateful to welcome them back on April 7th, when they joined us for our graduation celebration lunch. Taking the time to connect with our graduating fellows and interns, they shared thoughtful reflections and hard-earned wisdom about the legal profession—insights that will undoubtedly stay with our students as they take their next steps. Their presence added something special to the day, and it was a genuine pleasure to celebrate alongside them in the spirit of Andrew D. Fredman and the Fredman family.





Top from Left: Minah Malik, Kyle Spohn, Angela Pope
Bottom from Left: Michaela Moss, Rose Azzu, Emma Rice



Graduation Celebration



On April 7, 2026, CEPS proudly celebrated its graduating fellows and interns, recognizing a group that has not just participated in CEPS’s work, but meaningfully pushed it forward. These students—Minah Malik (Catsman Fellow, Legal Profession Program), Angela Pope (Catsman Fellow, Community Equity Lab), Kyle Spohn (Hunton Fellow, Community Equity Lab), Emma Rice (Hoeverler Fellow, Community Equity Lab), Michaela Moss (Intern, Community Equity Lab), and Rose Azzu (Intern, Community Equity Lab)—have led projects, strengthened partnerships, and contributed lasting impact across initiatives. As most of this cohort celebrated their graduation in May, we extend a special note for Rose Azzu, who will continue her academic journey abroad in Japan before completing her undergraduate degree in December. These students’ dedication, leadership, and commitment to advancing CEPS’s mission leave a strong foundation for those who follow, and a clear mark on the work ahead.





Community Equity Lab

Community Equity Lab Update

The Community Equity Lab (the “Lab”) began the Spring 2026 semester with a focused series of strategic planning meetings alongside its community partners, centering on how to organize effectively when traditional administrative or legal remedies fall short. This collaborative approach gave students an opportunity to work directly with community members. Lab fellows and interns listened to the community members’ experiences and priorities, and embarked on laying the groundwork for a community-driven advocacy campaign.

Throughout the semester, the Lab fellows and interns deepened the commitment to advancing fair housing by challenging government policies and practices that contribute to eviction, displacement, and resegregation across Miami. Lab students examined Florida specific remedies for displacement, gained a deeper understanding of various administrative processes, and continued to build the legal and factual foundation needed for long-term advocacy.

The Lab students also developed accessible materials explaining zoning fundamentals and created internal documents to strengthen institutional knowledge on the zoning in Coconut Grove Village West. Over the summer and into Fall 2026, Lab fellows and interns are preparing to synthesize the research, share findings with community partners, and continue building collaborative, community-based strategies to support residents facing housing instability.





Black Church Program: Good Government Project Update

This spring, the Black Church Program (BCP) advanced the mission and sharpened the focus of the Good Government Project (the “Project”). Originally launched in response to concerns raised by faith-based community partners, the Project examines state, federal, and local government legislative actions that shape the health and well-being of vulnerable Miami families. With a surge of voting-related state and federal legislation and the midterm elections approaching, enhancing this work became essential.

Project students diligently synthesized extensive legislative data and fact-finding materials to provide clearer, more actionable insights for community partners. In addition to this research, students met with legislative staff at multiple levels of government to deepen their understanding of the policymaking process. Project students also began to research and develop tools to automate and expand nonpartisan community education efforts aimed at strengthening voting rights and promoting accountability among elected officials. Throughout the spring, Project students monitored and conducted timely analyses of proposed state and federal legislation amending voter registration requirements, and delivered updates at several community gatherings, ensuring residents had access to accurate information on potential changes to voting registration requirements.

As fall approaches, BCP fellows and interns will place a renewed emphasis on voting rights research and education, continuing the commitment to informed civic engagement and community empowerment.

Save the date

Fall 2026 Events

**Lunch & Learn:
Voting Rights & Midterm Elections**
September 10, 2026

Hoever Award Ceremony
October 29, 2026

Black Judges Roundtable Discussion
November 3, 2026

RSVP required for each event



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Mission

Founded in 1996, the Center for Ethics and Public Service is a law school-housed ethics education, experiential skills training, and community engagement program devoted to the values of ethical judgment, professional responsibility, and public service in law and society. The Center’s mission is to educate law students to serve their communities as citizen lawyers.

Programs

CEPS operates three programs: the Black Church Program, the Community Equity Lab, and the Legal Profession Program. Program faculty, staff, and students collaborate with the Florida bar and bench; anti-poverty, civil rights, environmental, and public health organizations; civic and faith-based groups, nonprofit corporations, and neighborhood associations; and schools and colleges across the University of Miami.

Community Impact

Since 1996, CEPS faculty and staff have trained more than 1,432 graduate and undergraduate fellows and interns, and collaborated with more than 51,000 civic leaders in ethics and professionalism programs as well as anti-poverty, civil rights, environmental justice, and public health campaigns. CEPS faculty also have been widely cited in law journals and in the media.



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