

Graduate aids non-English-speaking immigrants

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Whitney Braunstein, a 2015 graduate, studied Spanish and Portuguese, international development and Latin American studies while at Tulane University. She also served as co-chief-of-staff for the Tulane Black Student Union. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Whitney Braunstein, a 2015 graduate of Tulane University, wants to improve the experience of non-English-speaking immigrants in America. As a first generation American, she knows that her family's experience was far different from those who

arrive to the country illegally or from nations where English is not the first language.

“When my mother became a citizen in 2007, I realized how we as native English speakers are privileged over other immigrants,” says Braunstein, whose mother is a native of English-speaking Trinidad and Tobago. “Working with immigrants both in New York and here in New Orleans made me realize that their issues were something that I wanted to put my energy into changing.”

During the two years following graduation, Braunstein will serve among 34 other recent law school and college graduates as a fellow of the [Immigrant Justice Corps](#), a fellowship program dedicated to meeting the need for high-quality legal assistance for immigrants seeking citizenship and fighting deportation.

“The IJS fellowship will help me get accredited by the Board of Immigration Appeals, which will make me legally and ethically capable of representing or advising someone in a court of law in immigration proceedings,” says Braunstein.

The New Jersey native, who is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese and has studied abroad in Cuba and Brazil, gained further interest in immigration issues during a summer internship with [LIFT New York](#).

“The program focused on low-income people in general, but because it was in the Bronx and I speak Spanish, my clients happened to be immigrants,” says Braunstein. “I got to see a lot of other things that impact people who are going through immigration issues and I became more interested in helping that population.”

Braunstein says her future plans will likely include attending law school.

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