



Summer 2008

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Graduation was a truly happy event. Again this year, a City College Fellow, Antonia Florio, was the valedictorian, and our graduating Fellows are headed to doctoral programs at the American Museum of Natural History Richard Gilder Graduate School, Harvard, MIT, NYU, Duke, CUNY, and Florida State University, as well as the University of Pennsylvania Law School. Despite the rising competitiveness of graduate school admissions, the Fellows continue to excel thanks to the excellent mentoring they have received from CCNY faculty, the research opportunities they have pursued, and the support and information provided by their peers and the Fellowships Program workshops. The Fellows' success brings honor to CCNY, and their promise as scholars, teachers, and citizens has never been more important than in the complex age in which we live. I congratulate them and wish them well!

Highlights from this semester included the fascinating talk by **Professor Gregory Downs** at our "Forum: On Research." Through exposing us to ways to question and interpret often overlooked archival materials left by ordinary citizens, he underlined the complexity and importance of qualitative research. I invite you to read Micah Wittmer's reflections on his talk that are included in this newsletter. I also want to thank **Professors Ellen Handy** and **Adrienne Petty** for co-teaching the Fellowships Program spring seminar, which this year was on "The Changing American Landscape." The Fellows greatly enjoyed the challenge, the camaraderie, and the interdisciplinary conversations that took place within the seminar. Not least, the Fellowships Program Research Conference showcased the sophistication of Fellows' research and their poise and professionalism. The spirit of collegiality, respect, and support was most inspiring and heartening. If you missed the conference this year, please join us next May!

We look forward to welcoming six new Mellon Mays Fellows and eleven new City College Fellows in the fall. They have extraordinary potential to enrich our community and to follow in the footsteps of previous cohorts of Fellows who are fulfilling the original mission of the Fellowships Program: to diversify the faculty at U.S. universities by attracting a diverse and talented group of undergraduates to pursue careers in academia.

I finish this year with a great sense of accomplishment and a spirit of enthusiasm for all that lies ahead. I draw inspiration from the magnificent work of the faculty mentors and from the remarkable students we teach and mentor. Please read on for details about summer projects ongoing Fellows will be pursuing, awards the Fellows have won, conference presentations they have given, and even articles they have published in professional journals.

Susan Besse

NEW FELLOWS

The new City College Fellowship Fellows are:

Shana Adise	(Psychology)
Deborah Ayenia	(Biochemistry)
Reut Gelblum	(Psychology/Biology)
Marta Grouska	(Biology)
Yamilette Hernandez	(Psychology)
Mimi Lester	(History)
John Passaro	(Math/Music)
Priya Puliyampet	(Psychology)
Erag Ramizi	(French)
Yarisbel Rodriguez	(History)
Diana Sierra	(History)

The new Mellon Mays Fellows are:

Lisa Figueroa Jahn	(Anthropology)
Kambi Gathesha	(ANTH/PS/PHIL)
Bilha Njuguna	(English)
Conor Reed	(English)
Jared Rodriguez	(History)
Natasha Walker	(Art History)

SUMMER REPORTS ARE DUE SEPTEMBER 4, 2008

Summer Projects 2008

The Fellowships Program is pleased to be sponsoring (in part or fully), the following Fellows in their summer pursuits:

Lynne Allen (PSYCH) is attending The International Critical Incident Stress Foundation Training (*ICISF*) at

Conference in Orlando, August 13-18, 2008.

Appachu Codanda (CS) is working with Mentor, Prof. Daniel D. McCracken to attempt to discover novel methods of interacting with information visualization algorithms via multi-touch displays, making use of human visual and tactile intuition in the context of a theoretical framework for game design.

Miriam Charles (HIST) is researching the relationship between uses of biblical pro-slavery ideology in the antebellum South and the Second Great Awakening, 1830-1865.

Lisa Figueroa Jahn (ANTH) is participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Kambi Gathesha (ANTH) is participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Ayelet Haran (PS) is conducting field research on the wine industry in France for her thesis on the connection between globalization and changing national identity in France.

Tylen Kelly (ENGL) is attending the 18th International Thomas Hardy Conference and Festival in Dorchester, England.

Bilha Njuguna (ENGL) is participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Angela Perez (HIST) has traveled to Colombia to conduct archival research for her thesis on the Afro-Colombian community and its place in the nation. She will also be volunteering at Movimiento Nacional Cimarrón, the oldest black NGO in Colombia.

Maya Perl-Kot (ECON/PS) has a summer internship with *Paramount Bio*, a firm that specializes in market research and venture capital in the biotechnology industry.

Conor Reed (ENGL) is attending the CCNY-Universidad De La Rioja Summer Study Abroad Program in Logroño, Spain where he will participate in a Spanish language immersion program. He will also conduct archival research in Madrid on the Spanish Civil War.

Wendell Ramsey (ENGL) is participating in the Schomburg Library's Summer Institute for Undergraduates.

Jared Rodriguez (HIST) is participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Felicity Tsikiwa (ART HIST) is writing a book drawing on research she conducted in Zimbabwe in January. It will explore the formal qualities of Zimbabwean stone sculpture, and she hopes publish it this year.

Natasha Walker (ART HIST) is participating in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Zhu (Kitty) Xu (BIO) is participating in a summer research program at the University of Rochester under the direction of Dr. Gary Paige in the Department of Neuroscience.

Kimberly Young (ENGL) is taking an intensive summer German course at the Graduate Center, CUNY in preparation for applying to doctoral programs in comparative literature.

**Congratulations to Antonia Florio
Class of 2008 Valedictorian**

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fellows' Activities and Awards

2008 GRADUATES

Je Hi An (BioMedE) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She was awarded Biomedical Engineering's Wallace H. Coulter Award for Undergraduate Research and was named a Howard Hughes Undergraduate Research Scholar by Biomedical Engineering. She will pursue her PhD in engineering at Duke University.

Marina Chernyak (PS/Math) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She was a Rosenberg-Humphrey Fellow the Social Sciences Division. Marina plans to pursue a PhD in Economics, Finance, and Public Policy.

Frank Cifarelli (MUS), an Irani Fellow, graduated Summa Cum Laude. He received the Music Department's Pro Musica Award.

Pavel Danilotchkin (MATH) graduated Cum Laude and received Mechanical Engineering's Moschner-Pella Scholar Award.

Jamila Elgizuli (PS/IS) graduated February 2008 Summa Cum Laude and will pursue a PhD in Political Science at CUNY Graduate Center.

Antonia Florio (BIO) graduated Summa Cum Laude and was the Class of 2008 Valedictorian. She is the recipient of the Biology Department's Martin Sacks/Sylvia F. Rubin Award. Antonia will attend the new Richard Gilder Graduate School of the American Museum of Natural History, where she will pursue a PhD in ecology and evolutionary biology.

Carlos Galindo (MATH/ECON) graduated Magna Cum Laude. He is the recipient of the Economic Department's Carl Dunat Scholar Award as well as the Economic Department's Ward Medal. He received Duke University's American Economic Association Minority Scholarship, Summer 2007. In fall 2008, he will pursue an MA in Economics at The City College of New York, CUNY.

Ria Julien (ENGL) graduated Summa Cum Laude and received three awards from the English Department: Edward C. and Ruth P. Mack Graduate Fellowship; David Markowitz Essay Award; and the Stark Essay Award in Literature. Ria accepted a generous fellowship to attend the new CUNY School of Journalism.

Maria Komartsova (IS) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She is currently studying Arabic in Morocco and plans to apply to graduate school in a year.

Narimasa Kumagawa (MUS) graduated Summa Cum Laude and received the Music Department's Pro Musica Award. He will pursue a PhD in Music Theory at Florida State University.

Adriana Larriera (BME) graduated Magna Cum Laude. She was named a NIH Scholar in Biomedical Engineering and received Biomedical Engineering's Outstanding Research Award for BME NIH Scholars. Adriana will pursue a PhD in Biomedical Engineering at CUNY.

Karen Levit (ENGL/Jewish Studies) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She will enter the University of Pennsylvania's Law School where she also intends to pursue a graduate degree in English Literature. The University of Pennsylvania's Law School awarded her the Wilson Scholarship that will pay \$20,000 per year towards tuition. She was awarded the Colin Powell Center's Community Engagement Fellowship and was the President of the CCNY Gulf Coast Relief Society.

Xavier Martinez (PS) graduated Cum Laude and was awarded Pre-Law's Henft Award for Urban Legal Studies. He intends to pursue graduate degrees in law and political science.

Rosa Mino (Neurogenetics) graduated Magna Cum Laude. She received Biology's Baermann Award and the William Stratford for Academic Excellence Award; she also received the Olivia McKenna Award for Research in Neuroscience. She will work at City College 2008-2009 to finish her present research and plans to begin a PhD program fall 2009.

Kenya Mitchell (ENGL) graduated Cum Laude February 2008. She is currently writing a book for adolescent readers, which draws on the research she did in Mali in fall 2007.

Christopher Negron (Physics) graduated Magna Cum Laude and received the Physics Department's Sonkin Prize. He received from the National Science Foundation an Honorable Mention. He is listed as the first author on an article recently published in the journal *Proteins: Structure, Function, and Bioinformatics*. He also participated in CCAPP poster presentation 2007, the 42nd Annual ACS Mid-Atlantic meeting, and Hunter College's *Frontiers of Biotechnology and Nanotechnology*. He will pursue his doctorate at MIT's new PhD program in computational and Systems Biology, CSBi.

Justino Rodriguez (HIST) graduated Magna Cum Laude. He received the History Department's Carl Dunat Scholar Award as well as the College's Weston Public Service Scholarship and the 2008 Mentoring Award. Justino will pursue a PhD at NYU in Latin American and Caribbean History.

John Romey (MUS) graduated Summa Cum Laude. John will be studying and teaching the bass this year in Ithaca, NY and plans to begin a PhD program in historical musicology fall 2009.

Elena Sandoval (MUS) graduated Magna Cum Laude and was named a Nettie Bzura Scholar by the City

College Scholars Program and was awarded CCNY Alumni Association's Southern Nevada Alumni Chapter Scholarship as well as the Society of Music Theory's Minority Travel Grant to attend the 2007 SMT Annual Meeting in Baltimore. Elena will pursue an MA in Music Theory at Queen's College, CUNY before going on to pursue her PhD.

Rose Sayre (PS) graduated Magna Cum Laude February 2008 and was named a Popper Scholar by the Political Science Department.

Micah Wittmer (MUS) graduated Summa Cum Laude and will pursue a PhD in Musicology at Harvard University. Micah was awarded the Barbara Russano Hanning Scholarship for outstanding work in music history.

<p>2007-2008 City College Mentoring Award Professor Susan Besse and Mr. Justin Rodriguez</p>
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CONTINUING

Lynne Allen (PSYCH) is a member of the Psi Chi National Honor Society and Vice President of the CCNY Chapter. She was awarded the New York Life Endowment from the Colin Powell Center and a Weston Public Service Scholarship from the College.

Luis Apolo (Physics) received the Physics Department's Dr. Bernard Levine Scholarship and the DAAD Scholarship to conduct research in Germany.

Tajar Paul Eisen (HIST) received the Joan Kelly Prize from the History Department.

Ayelet Haran (PS) received the Leadership Fellowship from the Colin Powell Center, which also named her a Koch Fellow. She presented her research on globalization and changing French national identity at the Illinois State Conference for Students of Political Science, where her paper won a prize.

Angela Pérez (HIST) took a Portuguese language immersion program in Brazil January 2008 and has participated in several conferences in 2007-2008, most notably as a panelist at the conference "Black, Latino, Both: AfroLatinos and the Current Immigration Debate" at the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture.

Nelson Rodriguez (BIO) published his first paper "A Comparative Study Showing Convergent Evolution in the Antennae of a Beetle and the Sting of a Scorpion, but Not in Stinging Hymenoptera," in *Naturwissenschaften*, published in Heidelberg, Germany. He presented that paper as well at the 2007-2008 Honors Presentation Conference for the Biology Department, CCNY, April 2008. Nelson was accepted into the Division of Science's MARC Program.

Mariya Shcheglovitova (BIO/MATH) received the Biology Department's Jess Hanks Award and the Dean of the Division of Science's Work Study Fellowship. She traveled to Venezuela in April to conduct fieldwork for

a project that combines computer mapping with DNA sequencing to study the evolution, biogeography, and conservation of a group of tropical mammals in South America. Mariya has a summer 2008 internship at Humboldt University's Ecology program.

Felicity Tsikiwa (ART) received the New York Life Scholarship from the Colin Powell Center and is the Vice-Chair of the "College Group" at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. She traveled to Harare, Zimbabwe in January to research the history of Zimbabwe stone sculpture.

Natasha Walker (ART HIST) received the Art Department's Connor Award in Art as well as the Rothenburg Award.

Zhe (Kitty) Xu received the Biology Department's Ephraim and Libby Banks Memorial Scholarship and the Dean of the Division of Science's Work Study Fellowship. She participated in several poster presentations: the Vision Science Society; Einsteins in the City II; CCAPP Annual Poster Presentation.

Michael Zawoiski (MATH) was awarded the Dr. Barnett and Jean Hollander Rich Mathematics Scholarship and also the Israel E. Drabkin Memorial Award for his promise as a mathematics student. Following up on his participation in the Applied Mathematical Sciences Summer 2007 REU Institute at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona and Loyola Marymount University, his research group has submitted a paper entitled "A Mathematical Model of a Crocodylian Population Using Delay-Differential Equations" to the *Journal of Mathematical Biology*. Michael also gave talks on this research at: the Mid-Hudson Mathematics Conference for Undergraduates at Bard College, NY, California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, and Loyola Marymount University. In addition, he presented posters at the MAA-AMS Joint Mathematics Meetings in San Diego, Einsteins in the City II, and the SACNAS Conference in Kansas City.

EXCERPTS FROM FELLOWS' JOURNALS

Every semester the Fellowships Program holds a "Forum: On Research." **Micah Wittmer** (Music) reflects on what she learned from **Prof. Gregory Downs's** presentation and how she has attempted to use these lessons in her own research.

At the forum on conducting research, Professor Downs of the History Department said that research is a process of openness – not brilliance. It is a process by which ideas are constantly changing and evolving, where one must approach a question with humility, not academic pride. He challenged us not to be afraid of framing a question that we might not know how to answer and further challenged us to understand that just because we don't have verifiable data doesn't mean that our questions should not be asked. I am beginning to understand

that research is a process of continual questioning, sometimes with no solid answer in sight.

This semester I edited my thesis as well as presented it at two conferences. Every time I revisited my thesis, I had to confront the fact that my research did not answer the question I posed and it disturbed me. I felt uncomfortable that my research raised more questions than it answered; yet after Professor Downs's talk, I began to understand that this is a part of the research process that I should embrace. Reminding myself that there is no need to draw definite conclusions helped me present my research at the conferences with confidence.

Professor Downs also talked about not dismissing the seemingly imaginative notions of eyewitness accounts as mistakes. He used examples of people's widely varying and sometimes outrageous accounts of Gandhi's death. As I continued my research on the African American composer, Hal Johnson, by interviewing John Motley (a friend of the late composer), there were moments where my interviewee said things that were a bit outrageous. I was tempted not to bother transcribing them. However, I am not going to dismiss these imaginative notions, but rather work them into the questions that I am asking or even allow them to pose more questions.

The most important part of the Fellowships Program is working with a faculty mentor on a research project. **Tajar Eisen** (History) explains how, as a first semester Fellow, the mentoring he received helped him define a research project that looks toward graduate school and beyond.

Attending the spring Fellowships Program seminar "The Changing American Landscape," taught by **Professors Ellen Handy and Adrienne Petty**, was important for me. The classroom became full of life through our interactions with one another. But even more importantly, the seminar helped me realize how much passion I have for the urban landscape and urban history. I must say that this feeling of knowing what I want to research is not momentary nor is it fleeting; it is significant and it is meaningful.

In writing the final paper for this seminar, I was fortunate to have advice from not just Professors Handy and Petty, but also from my mentor **Professor Downs**. First, we conversed about my ideas and my goals. Professor Downs didn't discourage me from being who or what I am; he showed me how to rein it in and do it right. Professor Downs talked me through the process of research, including how to evaluate and use abstract ideas within an empirical research project. He taught me to define pragmatic and realistic projects that will catch people's attention while proving purposeful and meaningful to the academic world. I have nowhere near perfected my craft, but I believe I

surely took my first step. My project was called, "How to Create an American Ghetto: The Life and Death of Charlotte Street." I began researching Charlotte Street in the South Bronx with the goal of discovering how a thriving, harmonious and peaceful street became an urban wasteland. My paper shows how various societal, economic and governmental elements worked together to ensure the street's complete and absolute destruction. I need to go back to this project soon. I learned that I need a lot of time and patience to gather and interpret primary sources that can help me fully

capture why these atrocities took place.

June 2008 graduate **Christopher Negron** (Physics) describes how his relationship with his mentor **Professor Ronald Koder** is evolving beyond that of professor-student to one of colleagues.

Graduate school dominated my conversations with my mentor during much of the semester. For starters, he helped reassure me that I would get into a good graduate program, especially when I was skeptical of it. In addition, what was more helpful was that

FALL 2008 SCHEDULE

Th., August 28 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Orientation for all new City College Fellows

Fri., September 5 **3:30 - 5:30 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Fellowships Dinner (3:30-5:30 Roundtable with graduated Fellows in doctoral Programs; 6 PM dinner)

Th., September 11 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Roundtable: Summer Research Experiences: Exchange of Information

Wed., September 17 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Seniors (& other Fellows wanting to participate) hand in drafts of personal statements to Renee Philippi for *Writing the Personal Statement Workshop*.

Th., September 18 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Roundtable: Race, Class and Gender in the Academy

Th., September 25 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Workshop: Writing the Personal Statement

Th., October 2 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Roundtable: Mentoring

Th., October 16 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Workshop: "On Research"

Th., October 23 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Forum: Financing your Education and Research

Th., October 30 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Workshop: Advanced Learning Techniques: Writing and Rewriting

Th., November 13 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Recruitment Workshop

Th., November 20 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Workshop: Mental Health

Mon., December 1 **DUE:**
Applications for City College Fellowships

Th., December 4 **12:30 - 2 PM** **NAC 6/316**
Meeting with instructors of the spring 2009 Fellowships Seminar

GRE PREP COURSE

If you plan to take the GRE during fall 2008 or spring 2009, you should definitely take the GRE PREP course. In Fall 2008, there will be one course taught by Prof. Pilette: October 15 to November 19, Wednesdays, 6:00 to 9:45 PM. The spring 2009 course will begin February 2009. If you are interested in taking the course, please contact Prof. Pilette directly: primeprep@onebox.com. Indicate to him that you are a Fellow in the City College Fellowships Program. The Fellowships Program will pay for the course.

CHECK PROCEDURE

Remember: all checks (stipends, reimbursement for travel, summer monies, etc.) are picked up in the Bursar's office, A103. It takes approximately three weeks to receive a check once a disbursement form has been submitted. Stipend checks are not processed until the journal has been received with the Mentor's signature. If you have any question about the procedure, please ask Renee Philippi.

after I began to receive acceptances [from MIT, Johns Hopkins, and the University of Pennsylvania], we discussed what had made his graduate school experience a memorable one. He told me that he originally attended John Hopkins to pursue a career in enzymology but found that he disliked working with his PhD mentor. As a result, he thought he might quit graduate school. Luckily, he found a new science to love, NMR, and a new mentor. The point that I got out of the story was that it is important to go to a graduate program where there is more than one great professor to work with. In addition, Ron emphasized the importance of being open-minded, because you never know what you might come across. He also noted how every institution has its own culture, and I should be attuned to see which one matches mine. Lastly, he provided an ear for me to ramble on, which helped me sort out my thoughts. So, Professor Koder was of great assistance in choosing a graduate school [MIT].

We also spoke about continuing to collaborate while I am in graduate school. Just recently, our paper was officially accepted by the journal *Proteins: Structure, Function, and Bioinformatics*, making me an official published first author undergrad. With that segment of the project out of the way, we have been working on testing our computational findings in the real world. I am being exposed to totally new experiments, and really have been enjoying myself. We hope that during the summer we may be able to experimentally verify our computational claims, and possibly use them to publish another paper. One idea I may pursue in graduate school requires conducting experiments on equipment that MIT does not have. It comforts me to know I can depend on Ron's help after I leave CCNY.

June 2008 graduates **Xavier Martinez** (Political Science) and **Elena Sandoval** (Music) reflect on how the Fellowships Program changed their lives:

Xavier Martinez: When I received this fellowship two years ago, my life changed. Previous to that point, I felt I was a good student whose potential had not yet been reached because of the pressures of being a non-wage-earning adult in a relatively poor family. A year before I received the fellowship, I decided that I was going to make school my job and see if I was capable of doing what I always thought I could. At the end of the year my gpa dramatically improved, but my family didn't realize what an improvement that was until I received the CCNY Fellowship. The CCNY fellowship was an affirmation that I was doing the right thing with my life. From the moment I joined, my academic vision expanded.

The fellowship helped introduce me to a world (academia) that I never knew existed. This was when I got the idea that I could combine my personal interest with school, and my Honduras project was born.

Writing about gangs in Honduras has taught me much about myself and about life, and I now know the kind of work I want to do. I lived most of my life knowing that I had a calling to work with urban young men, but to find that I could do this through academia was a revelation. I have decided that my place is to be the intermediary between misunderstood urban youth and society, and whether I pursue this as a criminal prosecutor, or academic researcher, or both, the end goal will be the same.

During my final year, I presented my research at the Einsteins in the City Conference [where he won a prize] and at the CCNY Fellows Research Conference. Having explored gangs in different parts of the world as part of an independent study course with **Professor Krinsky**, I began making new connections between gangs in Central America and others around the world. I found new research projects I wanted to explore. Questions I never thought of were coming to my head, and before I knew it, I started brainstorming in the middle of the night. I really would wake up at 4:00 AM and start writing down my thoughts on loose-leaf paper. I feel that I'm exactly where I need to be. The Fellowships Program has definitely changed my life.

Elena Sandoval: Before I was cocky. I cared only about my grades and tried to memorize as many facts as I could, such as dates, names, and definitions. But now I have learned to internalize concepts and enjoy every moment of learning. I still care about my grades; but most importantly, I have grown to have my own voice. I feel more confident about asking questions that scholars are not addressing and about presenting a different perspective. My writing skills have improved tremendously! Before, I dreaded having to write final papers; that was a nightmare for me. Now, I have learned to enjoy it. It is like playing an instrument or a sport: the more I do it, the more practice I get, and the better I will become. I have finally understood that I have to invest time in order to get all my thoughts down and organize them. I used to hate editing and considered it a waste of time; now I understand that editing is not mainly about looking for grammatical errors, but about strengthening one's argument.

Two years ago, my goal was to rush through graduate school fast in order to become a professor as soon as possible. Now, my mentality has changed. I want to enjoy each semester and try to learn as much as I can. Getting my PhD is like running a marathon; it is an endurance race, not a speed race.

One of the Fellowship Program's most important workshops is the one on Applying to Graduate School. **Maya Perl-Kot** (Economics) shares some of what she learned:

The Applying for Grad School Workshop was tremendously helpful in outlining the process, especially for a "beginner" like me in her sophomore year.

I feel like I learned many of the “dos and don’ts” that I would not have known about otherwise. Of course, I knew that applying would be hectic, that I would have to devote a lot of time and take the application process seriously; but I had no idea about many of the intricate, less known details such as formal and informal visits to graduate schools, how and when to contact professors at graduate schools before applying, and how to craft the personal statement. The workshop gave me many important points to think about and even a “to do list” for how to build my relationships with CCNY professors and in other schools as well.

I also learned a lot from hearing the personal stories of Fellows who will be pursuing their doctorates next fall. Aside from feeling proud and impressed by their achievements, it was useful to learn their “statistics” – the credentials that got them accepted, and the stories behind those credentials. I was reassured to find out that some of those in the hard sciences didn’t take the Subject GREs in their field and still got into highly selective programs. For me, that is a big and ominous challenge. In general, too, watching fellows go off to prestigious programs all over the country is a reassuring and encouraging experience that I would not have without the fellowship meetings.

Miriam Charles (History) found support in the spring semester’s Workshop: Balancing Career and Family.

This workshop really hit home for me. Listening to **Professors John Krinsky** and **Mary Soliday** talk candidly about the challenges they faced as parents in graduate school and the challenges they continue to face now as professors was something I really needed to hear. I have realized that being an academic and a parent at the same time is not easy. However, I think the most important thing that both Prof. Krinsky and Prof. Soliday stressed is the need for equality in a marriage. One needs to figure out how to maintain your relationship with your spouse and make time for your children while also doing your work. I think it is more difficult for women. I can’t help but think about the film, “Shattering the Silences.” In it, some minority women academics talk about remaining single because work was their “spouse” or “lover” and there was no time for a husband or relationship. As depressing as it might seem, that is the harsh reality. I know it isn’t easy to balance an academic career with family life; however, it is refreshing to hear from women—especially minority women—who have been able to make it work.

Fellows engage in many “projects” including conducting research, attending and presenting their research

SIXTH ANNUAL CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS RESEARCH CONFERENCE May 2, 2008

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| 10:30 | Michael Zawoiski, “Reptiles, Games, Computer Screens and Strings: The Way Math Nerds See These Things” | 1:30 | Micah Wittmer, “Debased or Dignified? The Minstrel Spirituals of James Bland and Sam Lucas and the Question of Authenticity” |
| 10:50 | Zhe (Kitty) Xu, “Saccade? Motor Control? Animal Behavior? Neuroscience” | 1:50 | Maria Komartsova, “The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: How National Narrative Construction Impedes the Peace Process” |
| 11:10 | Ria Julien, “Between Memory and History: Charting Nightwood’s Creatures.” | 2:10 | Christopher Negron, “Protein Design, a Field at the Interface of Science and Engineering” |
| 11:30 | Ayelet Haran, “Changing National Identity in France: A Case Study of the CAP Wine Reform” | 2:30 | Antonia Florio, “Synthesis of a Species Concept using Morphology, Phylogenetic Analysis, and Population Distribution Patterns” |
| 11:50 | Natasha Walker, “A Comparison of the Emancipation Sculptures of JQA Ward and Edmonia Lewis” | 2:50 | Je Hi An, “Does Prolonged Weak Electrical Stimulation of the Brain Induce Long-term Changes in Plasticity?” |
| 12:10 | Xavier Martinez, “La Mano Dura: Tough on Crime, Soft on Results” | 3:10 | Tyleen Kelly, “The Window, the Well, and the Wall: Gravity’s Hostile Omnipresence in <i>Jude the Obscure</i> ” |
| | | 3:30 | Lynne Allen, “The Path to Collective Madness: A Comparative Study of the Precursors to Genocide” |

professional conferences, and teaching. Many departments invite undergraduates to participate in the process of interviewing job candidates. **Tajar Eisen** (History) comments on his experience participating in the History Department's search for a faculty member in U.S. diplomatic history.

I attended the talks of two job candidates for the History Department. One was Chad Parker, who focused on the history of an American oil company's (Aramco) influence over the lives and lifestyles of Saudi Arabians. I got to interview Chad Parker who was an interesting man. We talked about: conflicts over natural resources; some of the American influences over the economic growth of the Middle East; what students at City College looked for in a professor; and what subjects many students feel most passionate about.

The most compelling part of participating in the interview process was not hearing or talking to the candidates, but the bizarre experience of seeing many of the History professors sitting around the table with their own set of specialties and personalities, interacting with each other, and questioning the content and conceptualization of the research of a soon-to-be PhD. It was obviously nerve-racking for the candidates. Trying to entertain and enthrall a group of professors with one's research and findings may be fun and exciting, but it surely is not an easy task.

The Fellows, who choose majors in all the divisions of the college, have numerous opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary conversations. This happens during the annual Fellowships Program Research Conference, within the spring semester Fellowships Program seminar, at the forum and workshops, and even beyond the formal structures of the program. **Felicity Tsikiwa** (Art) comments on her discovery of and new appreciation for interdisciplinary communication within the academic community, and **Tyleen Kelly** (English) praises the museum tour Felicity gave the Fellows.

Felicity Tsikiwa: The Fellowships Program has given me insight into the important role of community within academia. Being an Art History major, I have spent most of my on-campus time in what we art majors affectionately call "The Art Building." There I am, for the most part, surrounded by like-minded individuals. When Professor Besse suggested that I give a tour of the Metropolitan Museum of Art's *Eternal Ancestors* exhibit [that she helped to organize last summer] and invite all the Fellows, I expected that not many Fellows outside of the arts would be interested. To my surprise, numerous students from History, Music, English, Math, and Biology attended the informal tour. We all enjoyed the tour so much that after we exhausted the *Eternal Ancestor's* gallery, we explored more of the museum together. This spirit

of free sharing of ideas across disciplines helped me realize that most academics have multifaceted interests and that we can all benefit from exploring these together.

I had another opportunity to find comradeship with other Fellows of varying academic backgrounds during our City College Fellowships Program Seminar: "The Changing American Landscape." Here I was amazed to find that I enjoyed conversations and learned from students in completely different majors from my own. For instance, Christopher Negron, a brilliant physicist who was a member of our class, gave a report on the work of artist Thomas Hart Benton entitled, "Agriculture as Crisis or Continuity." The report not only opened my eyes to the way agricultural changes shape and continue to shape the everyday experiences of Americans, it also helped me to understand that I will benefit from building relationships with academic peers (and future colleagues) who are deeply involved in the sciences.

Tyleen Kelly: I was incredibly impressed with Felicity's tour of the "Eternal Ancestors" exhibit at the Met. She shared her knowledge of the topic of Central African funerary art as well as of the pieces on exhibit in a highly professional presentation that she had carefully prepared in advance. Her ease with the material, her lively comments, and her choices of focus kept us all engaged.

At this event that took place outside of the regular meeting room setting, I ended up speaking with other Fellows who I didn't even recognize. It was wonderful to be gathering in support of someone in our cohort who was working hard to grow in her field. I started to discuss planning more out-of-school events with other Fellows, and this year I hope to use our camaraderie as a support mechanism in applying to graduate school.

City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program that administers several undergraduate fellowships. See our website for information: www.cuny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram
The City College Fellowships Office is located in NAC 6/316, 212/650-8388.

R. Philippi compiles the newsletter.

