

LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I am delighted to congratulate and to welcome an outstanding new cohort of City College Fellows. Three are majoring in the humanities, three in the social sciences, and three in the sciences, keeping our interdisciplinary community well balanced. We look forward to your active participation; you will bring new energy and perspectives to our community.

Among the highlights of the past semester was Professor Myriam Sarachik's talk at our forum "On Research." Her ability to make the field of nanophysics accessible to non-specialists was a remarkable demonstration of the importance of the mastery of language across the disciplines. English major Carmel McMahon found fascinating connections between the language of physics and the language of literary criticism. (See her comments below.) Inter-disciplinary conversations are ongoing in this semester's exciting fellowship seminar taught by Professors Nicholas Pappas (Philosophy) and Harold Veese (English). Through the study of "manifestos," Fellows will explore points of intellectual sea change that have defined the modern world and their own disciplines.

Please see this semester's calendar of events, taking note of our program's fourth annual research conference, which is scheduled for May 5th, as well as recruitment meetings and due dates for applications. At the conference (which is open to the public), faculty, family members, friends, and prospective Fellows can hear about the varied and exciting research that the Fellows have been doing.

Finally, I want to thank the dedicated faculty mentors who generously give of their time and knowledge to support the Fellows in innumerable ways. I invite you to read passages from the Fellows' journals that are included below. They give a small glimpse of the Fellows' intellectual growth and academic achievements fostered by the guidance of their mentors.

Susan Besse

NEW FELLOWS

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome our new Fellows. From a most competitive pool of applications, 9 new Fellows have been selected to join the City College Fellowships Program in the spring semester, 2006. The new City College Fellows are:

Ms. Ria Julien	English/History
Ms. Adriana Larriera	BME

Winter 2006

Ms. Rosa Mino	Neurogenetics
Mr. Martin Nolan	ME
Ms. Heather Palenschat	Political Science
Ms. Katherine Ramos	Psychology
Ms. Rose Sayre	Political Science
Ms. Lydia Shestopalova	History
Mr. Guillaume Wadia	History

APRIL 18, 2006 RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

Please consult the "Guide for Mentors and Fellows" for "Funding for Research, Training, Travel: Guidelines for requesting and using research monies." Summer research proposals are due in the office on Tuesday, April 18th.

SUMMER RESEARCH REPORTS

Many Fellows take advantage of supplemental funding for summer research projects. Sociology major Bernadette Davis spent last summer in the Bahamas, where she worked as a research aide on a large government funded research project.

"The current Bahamian government has begun to lure home Bahamian intellectuals and scientists who went abroad to gain advanced education and professional opportunities. One of these people is Dr. Desiree C. T. Cox, who directs the Transformation and Research Unit of the Urban Renewal Commission. This summer I had the privilege of working as a research aide in her office. My participation in the Bahamas Behavioral and Attitudinal Studies Project gave me practical hands-on experience in conducting field research. I developed a small qualitative survey, which examined the perception of crime among residents of an urban area in New Providence. The aim of the study was to obtain qualitative information on the perceived crime rate, and thus to be able to compare wider public opinion and statistical data with how residents in the area saw the likelihood of crime. During the summer, I also had access to a wide range of primary and secondary sources located in the government archives and the College of the Bahamas Library; some of these sources were recent census data, the Bahamas Historical Society journal, and databases of Caribbean journals.

The urban areas I worked in have a substantial Haitian population, which was useful considering my long-term research

interest in the assimilation of second-generation Haitians in the Bahamas. While conducting fieldwork, I made observations, established contacts, and identified sources that I can use in my future research. Thanks to the opportunity to work with Dr. Cox and other Bahamian scholars, I have begun to develop a network of colleagues and associates who may provide an intellectual community and resources to support my future endeavors. This experience was unbelievable!"

Music major John Romey undertook a summer research project that proved to be so successful that he won the Naumberg Scholarship to return to Paris to continue his project during spring semester 2006. A double bass player, John has been trained in the innovative Rabbath technique, and is working with François Rabbath-master teacher and virtuoso double bass performer-to analyze and document his method.

"My summer was overwhelmingly fruitful. Before leaving for Paris, I slowly worked through Rabbath's first method book with the double bass, writing, preparing, and noting interview questions. I also emailed many people who have been influenced by Rabbath, study with Rabbath, or teach the Rabbath technique. A few agreed to meet with me in Paris, and I interviewed Michael Greenberg, Ernie Provencher, and Thierry Barbé. Initially, Rabbath was a little skeptical of my research, and interviewing him was a task of patience. However, after sharing tea and conversing on topics that ranged from political to philosophical, personal to universal, he opened up and became excited about my research. In addition to six interviews that I recorded on digital video, we began to spend more time together. He helped me with some new equipment, told me stories, and taught me life lessons; in exchange, I offered him attentive company and helped him with tasks such as responding to emails in English. My experience with him was uplifting, and I was able to capture much more priceless information that I ever imagined. Rabbath asked me to return to finish my analysis of the first method book and he looks forward to starting on Book II.

This was my first serious experience conducting interviews; the process taught me to be a much better researcher and I am ready and excited to tackle the next step. The greatest lesson I learned is that of patience. When interviewing, you are at the mercy of those you are interviewing, and often they will stray on tangents unrelated to the point you initially asked about. I found that the best way to deal with this is to allow them to continue on their tangent, because often they have something to say that will turn out to be of use."

THE JOURNAL

City College Fellows are paid their stipends for the activities they perform as Fellows, that is, activities beyond normal class-

room activities, including attending Fellowship workshops and the Forum and working on a project under the guidance of a Mentor. The journal is the way Fellows have of both documenting those activities and reflecting on their experiences.

In keeping with the practice of exchanging ideas and information, six journal excerpts have been chosen for inclusion in the Newsletter.

Fellows have the opportunity to work closely with faculty mentors. Marina Chernyak, a Political Science major, describes how her mentor, Professor John Krinsky, helped her turn summer research into a policy paper for a seminar taught by a different professor in the Political Science Department.

"My fellowship project this semester was based on summer research that was done during my internship with Columbia University's Earth Observatory. The broad topic was indoor air pollution from solid fuels in developing countries, which kills over 1.6 million people annually. During this internship, I collected data on the magnitude of the problem, and after some raw statistical analysis, made a poster and delivered a brief presentation. My work provided me with basic ideas about the scope of the problem as well as familiarity with relevant sources of information.

During my first meeting with my mentor, Prof. Krinsky, we decided I should develop a paper on the public policy aspect of indoor smoke (which I could use as the final paper for Public Policy Seminar I.) At the beginning, my familiarity with the scientific aspects of indoor smoke made it difficult for me to see the issue from a different angle, and I was unable to formulate a thesis. Among many other useful suggestions, Prof. Krinsky gave me a book that inspired me by its model of "policy streams" and eventually helped me to frame a thesis through a public policy prism. Although Prof. Krinsky was not familiar with the topic of indoor smoke, he was able to provide very helpful advice on identifying relevant questions and narrowing my focus. Every week, I was "forced" to write and rewrite drafts. Our weekly meetings not only helped me to better understand and frame the topic, but challenged me to demonstrate my ability to engage in one-on-one academic discourse at a more complex level than what happens in the classroom. In this relaxed but challenging setting, I gained deeper understanding of my topic and also observed how Professor Krinsky challenged me (and himself?) by asking the "right" questions. As planned, by the end of the semester I produced a twenty-page research paper."

Fellows majoring in laboratory sciences and psychology often work with doctoral students and professors on collaborative projects. Psychology major Rafael de Jesus, with his mentor Professor William Fishbein, has been researching the role of slow-wave sleep in processing emotional stimuli.

"Meetings with my mentor take place on a weekly basis. I meet with him along with the doctoral students in the lab to discuss the

CCNY Fellowships Newsletter Winter 2005

progress of our own research projects and to discuss various topics of interest related to our area of research. We usually review and discuss the latest scientific advances from published materials such as journal articles, review articles, and other related literature. The discussions and interactions that take place in the group have provided me with a good background to understand the neurophysiology of cognitive neuroscience. These lab meetings also give me the opportunity to observe the teaching component of a professor's work that takes place outside the classroom setting."

Fellows often wonder how one finds balance between personal life and the life of a professor, Bernadette Davis gained insight into a professor's life from Professor Barron.

"The workshop on funding led by Professor Beth Barron of the History Department made a distinct impression on me. Professor Barron spoke about the methods she uses to find funding for her research projects. I was impressed with the way she 'owned' the process. She aggressively seeks different funding opportunities for her work and is not intimidated by rejections. She explained that through fellowships and grants, she is not only able to pursue her academic research, but she has gained the flexibility she needs for her family commitments. Her presentation resonated with me, as a former full-time employee turned full-time student; it highlighted for me the latitude that life as an academic offers. It seems to me that I will be able to fashion my life in any way I conceive, as long as I am willing to commit myself to the process of securing funding for my work."

Fellows who aspire to become teachers as well as researchers benefit from paying close attention to the teaching methods that their professors use. Mathematics/economics major Carlos

Galindo draws on pedagogical lessons he has learned from Professor Jay Jorgenson.

"Formulating 'toy' versions of complicated problems and fibbing when necessary to give the layman an encapsulated notion of the truth is a skill that Professor Jorgenson has developed from his own ingenuity and contact with people such as Serge Lang and David Mumford. Serge Lange has written, 'Tell them the truth, tell them nothing but the truth, but for God's sake, don't tell them the whole truth.' Professor Jorgenson has developed a series of courses (which I have taken over the last three years) that accomplishes just that. In various ways, I find this paradigm fruitful."

Fellows are often inspired by our forum, "On Research," held each semester. English major Carmel McMahon found Professor Sarachik's talk on nanophysics enlightening.

"I admit to being less than excited about the Forum this semester when I heard it was being given by a Physics professor, but as usual my assumptions were proved wrong. Professor Sarachik gave a mind-blowing talk on nanophysics. I noticed she was using terminology similar to, and often the same as, that used in deconstruction: phrases like binary arithmetic, inside/outside, masking and double-wall. I was fascinated by her description of the hard plane on the inside of molecules. It is from this uncomfortable "middle" space that the digital revolution is happening, and indeed she pointed out the possibilities now being discovered from this newly available place. For my own research in literature, this "in between" is always the starting point. She gave us an equation that means: between yes and no - which is making me think that things are less contradictory than they appear. In other words, from the hard plane in the center, worlds of possibilities are stretching out beyond the familiar binary territory of the one and zero. When I grow up, I want to be like Professor Sarachik, or any-

SPRING 2006 SCHEDULE

Th Jan 26 Orientation for all new Fellows
Th Feb 16 Workshop: On Mentoring
Feb 17 & 18 MMUF Conference at Princeton University
Th Mar 2 Recruitment: Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship
Th Mar 9 Forum: Speaker: Professor Jonathan Pieslak (Music)
Wed Mar 15 DUE: MMUF Applications
Th Mar 30 Workshop: Applying to Graduate School
Th Apr 6 Recruitment meeting: City College Fellowship
Mon Apr 24 DUE: Applications for Summer Research Funding
Fri Apr 28 MMUF Conference at Brooklyn College
Mon May 1 DUE: Applications for City College Fellowships

Fri May 5 City College Fellowships Annual Research Conference
Fri May 19 MMUF Annual Dinner

Fellow-directed Luncheons
Th Feb 9 Fellow-directed Luncheon
Th Mar 2 Fellow-directed Luncheon
Th Mar 23 Fellow-directed Luncheon
Th Apr 27 Fellow-directed Luncheon

All meetings are held from 12:30-2 PM in NAC 6/316.

CCNY Fellowships Newsletter Winter 2006

one who can dismissively say: 'Everyone's making Quantum Dots these days.' I am going to seek her out next semester. I really do need to talk with her."

Fellows can receive supplemental funding to attend professional conferences. Elena Sandoval, a Music major, benefited from her experiences at the Society of Music Theory's conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

"My trip to attend the Society of Music Theory's conference in Cambridge, Massachusetts was a pivotal point in my life. I returned more motivated than ever to earn a PhD in music theory. I had the chance to hear my mentor, Prof. Jonathan Pieslak, deliver a paper to this scholarly audience, which is nothing like hearing his lectures in CCNY classrooms. I did not understand every paper I heard, but the question periods were always interesting. Sometimes someone would ask a question to stand out from the rest of the audience and try to impress the person across the room who would interview him later. Some people asked simple questions using complicated vocabulary. I was fascinated to see how well the presenters handled these questions.

I also met faculty members from other institutions, including Richard Cohn (Yale), Wayne Petty (University of Michigan) and his wife Judith (flutist and music theory doctoral candidate at Yale), José António Martins (University of Iowa), Catherine Losada (University of Cincinnati) and Mauro Bothelo (Davidson College). Being surrounded by music theorists and professors made me feel shy and intimidated at first, but as I met more people, I began to feel more confident about myself and proud to be an undergraduate student attending the conference. The majority of the people who attended the conference were old white men, but I was surprised to see more women than I had expected. The number of Hispanics seemed to be fewer than five, which further inspired me to want to be part of this field. The field is very welcoming to incoming members. Everyone I met seemed pleased to discover my interest in becoming a professor of music theory and warmly encouraged me. I can definitely see myself presenting a paper at a music theory conference one day.

In the evening, I ate dinner with my mentor, my classmate Kasaun Henry, and my mentor's undergraduate mentor, Mauro Bothelo. I got to see my mentor's social side and came to the conclusion that professors can have a life apart from researching and working all the time.

City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program that administers several undergraduate fellowships. See our website for information:

www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram

The City College Fellowships Office is located in NAC 6/316, 212/650-8388.