

Winter 2003

LETTER FROM THE  
DIRECTOR

With graduate school applications completed, we embark on a new semester and a full program. In May, the City College Fellowships Program will hold its first annual research conference at which Fellows will present their research to friends, family and the college community. Please mark your calendars! This semester's Fellowship Seminar also promises to be most exciting. Professor Nickolas Papas (with input from professor Michal Dekel who is on maternity leave) will lead Fellows in a reading of works by Kant, Nietzsche, Freud, and Foucault; and Fellows will research influences of these thinkers in the disciplines in which they are majoring. Again, with the forum and workshops, Fellows will meet informally for lunches to share experiences, learning from and supporting one another.

Please take a minute to read the excerpts from Fellows journals, which provide a glimpse of the fascinating projects they are pursuing, their intelligent interaction with professors and peers, and their initiative in seizing opportunities. As always we are indebted to the faculty mentors who have guided their research, steered them to additional funding sources, nurtured their interest in teaching, and provided valuable information about academic life and graduate programs. Thank you!

I'm delighted to welcome a new, very strong cohort of eight City College and two Irani Fellows. They will infuse new energy and perspectives into our diverse and exciting community. Recruitment for our third cohort of five Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship is under way. Applications are due March 17, and awards will be made soon thereafter in order to give the new Fellows time to design summer research projects that will be funded by the Mellon Foundation. Please encourage qualified candidates to apply.

## NEW FELLOWS

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome our new Fellows. From a most competitive pool of applicants, ten new Fellows have been selected to join the City College Fellowship program in the spring semester 2003; two are Irani Fellows (formerly Irani/Summerfield Fellowship).

The new City College Fellowship Fellows are:

Ms. Dana Julie Agmon (Political Science/Philosophy)  
Ms. Evelyn Espinal (History/Latin American Studies)  
Ms. Carrie Hildebrand (Psychology)  
Mr. Trevor Houser (Economics)  
Mr. Ali Kharazi (Mathematics)  
Ms. Tayannah McQuillan (Anthropology)  
Ms. Njeri Micheu (Political Science/International Studies)  
Ms. Zhanna Soushko (International Studies)

The two new Irani Fellows are:

Ms. Jane Lee (American Studies)  
Ms. Rachel McGregor Rawlings (English)

APRIL 15, 2003

## RESEARCH PROPOSAL DUE

If you haven't already picked up a copy of "Funding for Research, Training, Travel: Guidelines for requesting and using research monies, please stop by the office to get your copy. Proposals for summer research are due in the office April 15th.

## Summer Reports 2002

by: Gabriel Hernandez

Gabriel Hernandez is a History major and a senior. He is a Mellon Fellow who participated this past

summer in a course sponsored by the Universidad Iberoamericana del Distrito Federal de México.

This past summer, I was privileged to participate in a course called Práctica de Campo which was sponsored by the Universidad Iberoamericana del Distrito Federal de México and took place in the region of Matamoros, state of Tamaulipas, Mexico. This course is required for the Master and Doctorate degrees in Social Anthropology offered by this university. The objective of the class was to train students in the techniques of anthropological fieldwork, and to familiarize them with how an academic research project operates. What I found particularly illuminating was to witness how the class differences between the students and the local population we were studying affected the research.

For example, the residents of Matamoros quickly picked up that the student I was paired with had grown up with maids. It was also no secret to them that she was shocked by having dogs, pigs, and chickens running through the house we were living in. In contrast, because of my background there were no class boundaries between the local people and myself, and this helped me to access more intimate information. They told me about their personal lives, their thoughts about politics, their fears and their hopes. Also, they constantly joked with me. When my colleague was present their behavior changed, and they acted in a more polite manner. My background allowed for more honest and transparent communication.

Gender differences also dictated what information I had access to or not. For example, skilled men's conversation changed in the presence of a female. I went to visit a group of shark fisherpeople by myself first, and I succeeded in getting the information I was looking for. Things changed drastically when my colleague and I went together to talk to them. They acted very indifferently to me as if we had not met before. Every time she asked a question they appeared to be uncomfortable and their answers were not very elaborate. I was surprised because when I contacted them before, they had told me everything in

great detail; they even showed me the tools they used to fish for shark and very proudly narrated their experiences in the ocean.

by: Jose Vasquez

Jose Vasquez is an Anthropology major and a senior. He is a Mellon Fellow who participated this past summer in the Project Ascend/McNair Summer Program in conjunction with attending intensive Japanese language classes at Waseda University in Tokyo.

"My summer experience in Japan was unforgettable. I spent six weeks studying Japanese language at an intensive program run by Waseda University in Tokyo. I also conducted research supported by funds from Project Ascend/McNair. The combination of language training and research was challenging, but rewarding in many ways.

The Waseda summer intensive language program was a unique cultural experience. Because my interests lie in anthropology, it was important for me to gain a sense of the country I'd like to do fieldwork in during graduate school. Staying in Tokyo allowed me to meet people from all walks of life. I discussed my research interests with Waseda students in an informal setting and learned important things about Japanese culture, which I could not have back home. My conversations with Waseda students and others also supported my efforts to gain a grasp of the spoken language.

Another positive thing about Waseda was that the central library there is one of the largest in East Asia. The collections are extensive and I was able to locate valuable primary and secondary sources to enhance my research. Admittedly, it was difficult to locate these sources with my limited reading abilities. The majority of the titles I was looking for included complex Chinese characters, or kanji, that made even native speakers take a second look. Nevertheless, learning my way around the library really built up my confidence as a novice researcher. My attitude now is any adversity I encounter in U.S. libraries will pale in comparison. I'll know I've been through tougher times.

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## The Journal

City College Fellows are paid their stipends for the activities they perform as Fellows, that is, activities beyond normal classroom activities, including attending

Fellowship workshops and symposia 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, five journal excerpts have been chosen for inclusion in the Newsletter. They are excerpts from the journals of Anastassiya Andrianova, Eileen Chanza, Rodley Ferguson, Angel Guaraca, and Jose Vasquez.

by: Anastassiya Andrianova

Anastassiya Andrianova, a City College Fellow, English major and a senior, comments in her journal on the Fellowship's forum lead by Professor Johnson, in the fall 2002 semester.

"I was intrigued by Professor Johnson's anecdote about the beggar whose personal story directed him to the illegal migration archives. This anecdote proved once again that what makes a good researcher is a keen sense of surroundings and attentive observation. Also, his point about examining personal testimonies and questioning their validity was a useful insight. Some of the people he interviewed, Johnson said, had already been interviewed by other researchers and seen their accounts interpreted in print; how one deciphers between the actual testimonies told through the lens of the previous researchers is something to consider. Since I was in the midst of taking a

graduate course in Autobiography and seriously thinking of pursuing the theme of personal testimony/confession, Professor Johnson's story made me wonder about the veracity of such accounts, and of how one should read them. To what extent is the real account altered when put into print by the confessor (author)? How much does it change when another person, in his case a researcher or interviewer, uses it to make his/her argument, or even when he/she merely "retells" it? I normally judge the effectiveness of a lecture or seminar by the amount of thinking it provokes; Professor Johnson's presentation did not leave my thoughts for some time.

by: Eileen Chanza

Eileen Chanza, a Mellon Fellow and an English major, discusses in her journal a meeting with her Mentor, Professor Dulce Garcia.

"Professor Garcia gave me a great book on narrative theory, our usual one-hour meeting turned into two and a half, and we were both late for our class. One of the best things about having a mentor is that for that hour or two you have an expert at your disposal. It's almost as if one has a genie in a bottle but instead of granting you

## SPRING 2003 SCHEDULE

Th., January 30	12:30-2 PM	NAC 6/316
Orientation for New Fellows		
Tu., February 20	12:30-2 PM	NAC 6/316
Forum: On Research		
Th., March 13	12:30 - 2 PM	NAC 6/316
Workshop: Mentoring		
Mo., March 17	Applications for Mellon Fellows due	
Th., April 3	12:30 - 2 PM	NAC 6/316
Workshop: Applying Graduate School		
Th., April 10	12:30 - 2 PM	NAC 6/316
Recruitment Meeting		
Tu., April 15	Applications Summer Research due	
Th., May 1	Applications CCFELL and Irani due	
Fr., May 2	11:00-4:00 PM	NAC 6/316
Fellows Research Conference		

## Fellow-Directed Luncheons

Faculty Dining Room on the 3rd floor of the NAC building

Th., February 13	12:30 - 2PM
Th., March 6	12:30-2PM
Th., March 27	12:30-2PM

## GRE PREP COURSE

There will be additional GRE PREP courses in the early and late spring.

There are three sessions:

- 1) Fridays, February 28th-April 11
- 2) Fridays, April 25 - June 6
- 3) Saturdays, April 30th - June 7.

For more info, contact: [www.primeprep.com](http://www.primeprep.com) or 866/206-9067, x3066.

Remember: the Fellowship Office will pay the course fee.

