

# THE CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM GUIDE FOR MENTORS AND FELLOWS

## About This Brochure

This brochure describes the activities of the City College Fellowships Program and, especially, the relationship between Fellows and Mentors. Information is grouped under the following headings:

- Program Overview
- Mentoring & Mentoring "Dos" and "Don'ts" for Fellows
- The Learning Agreement
- Attendance: Workshops and Forums
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- Fellowships Program Seminar
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- Program Administration
- The Learning Agreement Form
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## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program administering three undergraduate fellowships. It brings together approximately 10 Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows (MMUF), 25 City College Fellows, and 8 Irani Fellows into a single, highly diverse and vibrant community of outstanding students. All Fellows share an interest in independent research or creative production. The City College Fellowships and Mellon Mays Fellowships encourage and support students in choosing to enter Ph.D. programs in preparation for careers in research and teaching at the college or university level. Irani Fellowships support humanities and arts students who have diverse professional goals. For more information, see: [www.ccnycuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram](http://www.ccnycuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram).

The main activities of the program are:

- A series of **workshops** on mentoring, applying for scholarships and fellowships, applying to graduate school, writing the personal statement, and GRE preparation.
- A **forum** each semester at which Fellows hear professors discuss broad issues about doing research in various disciplines.
- **Fellow-directed luncheons** at which Fellows discuss topics of common concern.
- The fellowships program **seminar**: a spring semester team-taught interdisciplinary (3 credit) course that provides an intellectually stimulating context for new Fellows to come together as a group.
- A spring semester **research conference** at which Fellows may present their research.
- More important than any other component of the program, working with and receiving guidance from a **faculty mentor**.

In return for their participation in program events and work with a faculty mentor, all Fellows are paid a stipend of \$1,000 per semester. Other financial benefits vary among the three fellowships.

City College Fellows are eligible to apply for funding for summer research projects, academic training such as intensive language study, and travel to conferences and libraries, as well as a \$10,000 scholarship to support the first year of graduate study. MMUF receive a guaranteed \$3,000 stipend for each of two summers to support research, as well as funding for academic training and travel; they are also eligible for repayment of up to \$10,000 of undergraduate loans. In recognition of the work of Mentors, City College gives professors credit for one independent study for each Irani or City College Fellow mentored through the program each semester. Mentors of Mellon Fellows receive a stipend of \$500 a year.

## **MENTORING**

The City College Fellowships Program aims to prepare City College Fellows and MMUF for careers in college and university teaching and research. (Irani Fellows may have diverse career goals and should meet with the Director to discuss how the program can best meet their needs.) In accomplishing this aim, the faculty mentor plays two important roles.

### **First: Help the Fellow Prepare for Graduate School**

The mentor's primary responsibility is to help the Fellow prepare for graduate school. Toward this end, the mentor works with the student as faculty advisor, and meets with him or her on a regular basis to discuss course selection within and outside the major field as well as overall academic progress. In general, a Fellow should not register for courses without first consulting the mentor. The mentor monitors what the Fellow is taking to ensure that he or she graduates on time and with the academic skills and subjects in the major field required for graduate school.

At the appropriate point, the mentor helps the Fellow in the selection of graduate schools to which the Fellow will apply. The mentor also advises the Fellow on the completing of applications to graduate school, and especially on the writing of the personal statement.

### **Second: Introduce the Fellow to Academic Life**

The second role the mentor plays is to introduce the Fellow to academic life, that is, to the work a professor does. In this role, the mentor acquaints the Fellow with the professor's work as a teacher, member of the academic community, and scholar. Below are examples of projects that have benefited Fellows. A Fellow need not focus equally on all three areas each semester; rather, the project(s) should be carefully designed to meet each individual student's needs at the particular stage of his or her college career. Mentors and Fellows are encouraged to follow their own leads, to improvise, to do whatever seems appropriate and beneficial.

#### **Teaching:**

- Discuss a course's purpose and syllabus with the Fellow, invite the Fellow to observe the mentor teach one or more classes, and afterwards review what worked and what didn't.
- Invite the Fellow to contribute to the planning of a new course or the revision of an established course, including its conceptualization, the assignments, and the selection and preparation of materials for distribution to students.
- With the Fellow, grade selected student papers, discussing the criteria for what makes an excellent paper.
- Invite the Fellow to tutor a few students under the direction of a mentor.
- Invite the Fellow to teach all or part of a class.
- When appropriate, assist the Fellow in securing a position as a peer tutor in your department or division or in the Writing Center.

**Service:**

- When possible and appropriate, invite the Fellow to accompany the mentor to faculty meetings of the department or college.
- Inform the Fellow about--or better, involve him or her in--other professional service work of the mentor, such as service as a reviewer, member of a prize committee, editor of a journal, organizer of a professional meeting or conference, and so on.
- Inform the Fellow about lectures, conferences, or other academic events of interest.
- Invite the Fellow to accompany his or her mentor to a professional meeting.
- Involve the Fellow in a job search for a new faculty member.
- When appropriate, encourage the Fellow to become involved in the majors' club of his or her department and to serve as a liaison between majors and the faculty, or as the student representative to the department executive committee.

**Scholarship:**

- Invite the Fellow to serve as the mentor's research or laboratory assistant.
- Assist the Fellow in becoming an expert at using library research tools, including electronic tools.
- Assist the Fellow in designing an independent study course or conceptualizing a thesis project.
- Assist the Fellow in revising and polishing a paper to append to graduate school applications.
- Inform the Fellow of departmental prizes and other awards and sources of funding, and assist him or her in submitting work or writing an application.
- Assist the Fellow in writing an application for summer research funding from the City College Fellowships Program, or for other research fellowships (such as the Starkweather Award at City College, or SR-EIP, MURAP, REU programs, etc).
- Assist the Fellow in revising a paper--or writing up research findings--for presentation at a conference or for publication. Advise the Fellow as to which conferences or publications would be appropriate places to present his or her work. Help the Fellow make the necessary contacts. Do not forget that the City College Fellowships Program hosts an annual research conference at the end of the spring semester at which all Fellows are encouraged to present their research. MMUF also have the opportunity to present their work at a MMUF New York City-wide conference in April. In addition, MMUF publishes an annual journal in which Mellon Fellows may publish.

**Remember:**

Whatever the project(s), it should help further the goal of the program to encourage students to choose a career of teaching and research. To that end, mentor and Fellow should meet regularly and plan for how the Fellow can take advantage of opportunities to expand on work begun in the classroom and gain research experience. By the end of the junior year, the Fellow should have produced work of sufficient quality to be appended to graduate school applications.

**Time on a Project:**

How much time should a Fellow devote to a project? There are no hard rules governing this matter. All that can be said is that the Fellow should work on the project on a regular basis, meet with the mentor on a regular basis, and do nothing that would compromise academic progress or standing.

## **MENTORING: “DOS” AND “DON'TS” FOR FELLOWS**

The mentoring relationship is a complex one—like most human relationships, different each time, and successful to the extent that both mentor and Fellow are committed to it and willing to work at it. It works best when there is open, honest communication and mutual trust and respect.

- **DO** seek advice of your mentor in choosing courses, selecting summer internships, applying for fellowships, and applying to graduate school.
- **DO** show receptivity to your mentor’s advice and constructive criticism.
- **DO** show up on time, and prepare for meetings with your mentor to maximize use of the time available.
- **DO** treat college as *work*—an undertaking that requires serious commitment of time and effort. Let your mentor know that you are a serious student.
- **DO** take initiative.
- **DO** seek help and advice from the Director of the Fellowships Program if the mentoring relationship is not working well for you.
  
- **DON’T** expect the mentor to tell you what to do. A mentor can help you better define and explore your interests and ideas, and can support you in your efforts to acquire the necessary skills. The interests and ideas need to come from you.
- **DON’T** expect your mentor to have all the answers; rather use the mentor’s experience as a “sounding board” to try out ideas and options. Seek advice from other professors and Fellows. You are responsible for your fate!
- **DON’T** interpret critical review of your performance/progress as a personal attack.
- **DON’T** avoid your mentor when you are having difficulties. This is the most important time to keep your mentor informed about what is going on.
- **DON’T** get involved in negative departmental politics.

## **THE LEARNING AGREEMENT**

The Learning Agreement is a document drawn up every semester by Fellows in consultation with their mentors. (See copy attached.) In it, the mentor and Fellow outline their planned activities for the semester, though in some cases they may lay out a blueprint for an entire year. The agreement serves as a way to improve and extend the interactions between mentors and Fellows. Both parties to the agreement will have a clear sense of the activities they will be engaging in, although the agreement ought not keep a professor and student from improvising as they go along. It should help them come to a mutual understanding of their goals and commitments to each other. The agreement should specify how often and when meetings between the two will take place, and describe how the Fellow and mentor will jointly explore all three areas of academic life: scholarship, service to the academic community, and teaching.

While Fellows may focus more on one area than another, all sophomores and juniors should be involved in--or be planning for--a research project (or, in the case of Irani Fellows, a creative project). During the senior year, Fellows who are applying to Ph.D. programs should consider this to be their fall semester fellowship project. During the spring semester, seniors (and others who wish to) should prepare to present their research at the annual City College research conference in late April or early May.

## ATTENDANCE: WORKSHOPS AND FORUMS

Attendance at Fellowship workshops and the forum each semester is required for all Fellows. These events are designed to provide Fellows with important information and support, encourage achievement, and bring the community together on a regular basis. Every semester Fellows are required to attend at least two Fellowship events. The first is a workshop (or two, depending on how far along you are when you enter the program). The second is the forum at which we all join together to hear a faculty member discuss some aspect of his or her research. In an ideal case where a Fellow enters the program in the fall semester of the beginning of his or her sophomore year, he/she would attend the forum each semester along with the following workshops in the following order, semester by semester.

	<u>fall semester</u>	<u>spring semester</u>
sophomore year	Orientation	Mentoring
junior year	Applying for grants	Applying for graduate school
senior year	Writing the personal statement	Present research at program's research conference

Since most Fellows do not follow this ideal schedule, orientation workshops for incoming Fellows are held each semester; and those entering later in their college career will need to double up on workshops, attending those meant for Fellows at their stage as well as those that they did not attend earlier. (Hence, for example, a Fellow entering fall semester as a beginning junior would attend the orientation workshop and the workshop on applying for grants in the fall, and the workshops on mentoring and applying for graduate school in the spring.) In the case of Irani Fellows whose goal is not to enter graduate school, substitutes may be arranged for workshops that do not seem useful or appropriate. Please discuss your case with the Director.

Fellows may want to attend workshops that are designed for those further along in their college career, and are always welcome to do so. For example, if you are intending to apply for a scholarship or a summer internship program, you will need a personal statement. Attending the fall workshop on writing the personal statement (before your senior year) may help you win the undergraduate scholarship or internship you are seeking. It will also give you practice that will serve you well when writing the personal statement for graduate school admission. Attendance at the Fellow-directed luncheons is optional for all Fellows.

In some cases, absence is excusable, for example in cases of emergency or serious illness or injury. Other legitimate excuses include travel out of town for an emergency or for academic purposes, or presentation of your own work in a class or at a department event. Excuses that are not legitimate include preferring to attend a different lecture or event, "forgetting" to come, "not knowing" about an event, or needing the time to prepare for a test (or whatever). Whenever a Fellow will be absent from a required event, she or he should notify the office beforehand explaining the circumstances, or in the case of an emergency, as soon as possible. Dates of the workshops and the forum are set long before the semester begins, sent in the mail to Fellows, and posted outside the office. It is your responsibility to know when these are and which ones you are required to attend. We expect responsible and professional behavior from Fellows; learning to meet these expectations is an important part of preparing to succeed in graduate school and professional life.

## THE JOURNAL

All Fellows are required to write journals at the end of each semester in order to receive their stipends. The stipend is paid to compensate Fellows for their participation in special activities--that is, fellowship activities beyond normal classroom ones, such as attending the program's workshops and forums and working on a project with their mentor. Journals provide Fellows the opportunity to document those activities and reflect on their experiences. Beyond that, journals provide an important means for the mentors to gain understanding of the Fellows' thoughts and for the Director and the Steering Committee to assess the value of the program.

While it is not the mentor's responsibility to formally grade or evaluate the journal, every mentor should read what the Fellow has written and:

- Sign the journal so as to indicate that s/he has received it.
- Complete the evaluation form the program office distributes toward the end of the semester (see copy attached).
- Send the journal and evaluation form to the program office in NAC 6/316.

Of course, mentors can offer comments on the journal to the Fellow if they want to.

### Journal Contents

The journal should include all of the following:

- Comments on the Fellowship workshops, the forum, and the Fellow-directed luncheons: reflections on the information and ideas discussed by the guest speaker(s) as well as the Fellows themselves.
- A report on the Fellow's contacts with his or her mentor, telling: (1) when they took place and what was discussed; as well as (2) reflections on the project(s) engaged in under the supervision of the mentor, giving a general picture of the nature of the project, how much time was spent, what was learned, and if relevant, what was written/produced.
- Any other activities engaged in as a Fellow, such as attending a conference, a special event or lecture, an exhibition, etc.
- Observations about teaching that come out of the Fellow's experience as a student and/or as a tutor or a guest lecturer in a professor's class. For example, these observations might include remarks on how best to present complex technical information to beginning students, or ways in which teaching and research can complement one another, or thoughts on a particularly successful or disastrous example of teaching. (Please note: a Fellow is under no obligation to identify a professor s/he may be describing, especially when the analysis is negative.)

### Journal Form

The journal should not be a diary, although it might well be based on one. Rather, the journal should be an organized and thoughtful reflection on a Fellow's experiences from the perspective of the end of the semester. It should be typed and should read and look like a professional's work. There is no requirement as to length. Since submissions will be read, not weighted, emphasis ought to be on content, not word count.

### Journal Deadline

Fellows should turn their journals in to their mentors toward the end of each semester. Mentors are free to establish whatever deadlines they wish, keeping in mind: (1) that the fellowship stipend cannot be paid until after the journal has been read and signed by the mentor; and (2) no stipend will be paid to Fellows who have not submitted journals by the fourth week of the following semester.

## **FUNDING FOR RESEARCH, TRAINING, AND TRAVEL**

The City College Fellowships Program is prepared to fund the work of City College Fellows and Mellon Fellows on research projects, internships, or special courses of study to the extent that the budget permits. The Program will also fund travel and expenses to attend professional conferences, especially for a Fellow who has been invited to present his or her work. Depending on the availability of funding from the Dean of Humanities and Arts, Irani Fellows may also be eligible for similar support, including support for creative projects.

### **Eligibility:**

- The research project, internship, or course of study must be one that will contribute to the intellectual growth and academic progress of the Fellow.
- Funds are not generally available for credit-bearing courses or for courses of study that are available at City College.
- All independent research projects must be done under the supervision of a faculty mentor.
- Only Fellows in good standing are eligible for research funding. No funds will be awarded to a Fellow who has not submitted a learning agreement and a journal during the semester preceding the proposed project.

### **Application (please include):**

- A description of the proposed research, internship, course of study, or conference with an explanation of the importance of the work for the Fellow's intellectual growth and academic progress.
- A statement regarding the amount of time the Fellow will devote to the project.
- A budget including all items for which funding is requested, including expenses such as tuition, travel, room and board, xeroxing or materials required, and hourly pay (when appropriate). Please include both an estimate of the total cost and the least amount the Fellow can receive in order to make the project possible.
- A letter of recommendation from the Fellow's mentor or an appropriate faculty member, or in the case that a Fellow is presenting research at a conference, a letter of invitation.

### **Conditions and Requirements:**

Fellows who receive research monies are required to submit:

- Receipts for expenses covered by the research award. (NOTE: If funds are needed in advance, Fellows must submit invoices with original bills, allowing three weeks for the college to process a check.)
- A report—signed by the mentor or faculty member supervising the research—specifying what was learned and accomplished, and reflecting on the experience. (NOTE: In general, the report need not be longer than a few pages and should be submitted promptly at the end of the time for which the grant was awarded. Fellows may not receive future stipends until and unless they have submitted this report.)
- If the project involved producing a paper or tangible product, the Fellow should provide the office with a copy upon completion. In the case that a Fellow has read a paper at a conference, he or she should provide the office with a copy of the conference program.

### **Deadlines:**

- Requests for summer funding must be submitted by April 15.
- Requests for funding for projects or travel during the academic year should be submitted at least six weeks prior to the start of the proposed project.

## **FELLOWSHIPS PROGRAM SEMINAR**

The interdisciplinary fellowship seminar (3 credits) is taught each spring semester by two professors from different departments on a broad topic. The instructors and topics vary from year to year. Fellows are required to take the seminar during the spring semester after becoming a Fellow. Depending on the Fellow's major and the topic of the seminar, a Fellow can sometimes receive credit for the seminar toward the major, or the seminar can also count as a required writing intensive course.

## **A CALENDAR FOR APPLYING TO GRADUATE SCHOOL**

Guiding Fellows through to admission to a top doctoral program is no easy job, but a calendar for action can help Fellows reach a successful conclusion to the search for a graduate school.

### **→ The upper junior semester is the time to begin taking stock.**

Before the end of the semester, arrange for a time to sit down and talk about the future. Have your protégé assess his or her plans. Is he or she sure about going on to graduate school? If there are questions, can you help answer them? Or can you refer your protégé to someone else who might be able to help? Take time to review his/her academic record and to assess what courses still need to be taken and what schools might be appropriate to consider. In addition, help your protégé plan a course of action to meet specific objectives at specific times.

### **→ Use April and May to collect information.**

Encourage your protégé to collect information about and applications for graduate schools. Help her or him to find out about fellowships that may be available from the government, foundations, and other private sources.

### **→ Are there money problems?**

Applying to graduate school can be an expensive business. You are probably in a better position than anyone else at the College to know whether your protégé can afford the cost of applying. If there are money problems, the Fellowships Program may be in a position to help. Encourage a needy Fellow to speak with the Director.

### **→ Encourage the Fellow to use the summer and early fall to begin working on application essays.**

By the end of June, your protégé should already have collected application forms from several graduate schools and fellowships. Strongly suggest that the summer would be a good time to begin working on the personal statement that is a typical part of every application. Also discuss with your protégé which piece of work would be best to append to applications as a writing sample if one is required or recommended. Help the student lay out a plan to complete final revisions if necessary.

### **→ The summer is also the time to prepare for the GRE.**

By this time, your protégé should already know that in order to apply for major national fellowships and other financial assistance, s/he must submit applications and GRE results by mid-fall. This means that an applicant should take the GRE in October at the latest. The Fellowships Program helps to sponsor GRE Prep courses and will pay the fees for Fellows.

→ **In September, review the plan of action.**

Together with your protégé, go over the major deadlines for the semester: registering for and taking the GRE, completing fellowship applications, and submitting graduate school applications. Volunteer to look at drafts of the personal statement and, later, at the finished applications. (The Fellowship Program holds a workshop on writing the personal statement early in the fall semester.)

→ **Teach the art of getting excellent recommendations.**

Do more than volunteer to write a letter. Describe how an effective recommendation deals in specifics about accomplishments and qualifications. Suggest that your protégé approach those faculty members who might be willing to write such a letter early in October, ready to ask the question: “What kind of recommendation would you be able to write for me?” The student should be prepared to present willing professors with a copy of his or her transcript, a resume summarizing his or her qualifications for graduate school, and a sample of excellent work done for them (e.g., research papers, final examinations, etc.).

→ **The rest is easy...**

All you need do now is mail your own recommendations on behalf of your protégé, make that follow-up phone call to a colleague in a target graduate school who may be able to help, and sit back and wait for the results. With any luck, the biggest problem your protégé will have to face next is deciding which offers to refuse.

## **IRANI FELLOWSHIP**

The Irani Fellows are full and equal members of the City College Fellowships Program, and as such are expected to: work with a faculty mentor on a research or creative project that will contribute to their intellectual growth; attend fellowship workshops and forums (or propose alternatives if appropriate); and enroll in the fellowship seminar. They will receive the same stipend of \$1,000 per semester and the same support in applying to graduate school (when desired). Supplemental support for activities such as research, creative projects, summer programs, and travel to conferences may be available depending on funding from the Dean of Humanities and Arts.

The career goals of some Irani Fellows, however, may differ from City College Fellows. Fellows in the creative arts, music, and theater, as well as those interested in pursuing professional degrees in fields such as law, journalism, and so on, should feel free to adjust the City College Fellowships Program guidelines for mentoring projects accordingly. What is important is that projects are tailored to the specific interests and needs of each Fellow, and that they contribute to the Fellow’s academic, artistic, and/or professional growth. Irani Fellows should meet with the Director to discuss how the program can best meet their needs.

## **PROGRAM ADMINISTRATION**

The Fellowships Program is administered by a Director in consultation with a Steering Committee. The Director chairs the Steering Committee, which consists of several college administrators, mentors, and a student representative. Policy for the City College Fellowships Program is set by the Steering Committee; the Committee also interviews applicants and names fellowship recipients. The Director and the members of the Steering Committee are appointed by the Provost of the College. The mentors are chosen by Fellows in consultation with the Program Director. Mentors are invited to communicate directly with the Director.

The current Director of the program is Professor Susan Besse; the Associate Director is Rene Philippi. The program is housed at City College in room 6/316 of NAC (North Academic Center). We may be reached by telephone (212-650-8388), or email: [ccfell@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:ccfell@ccny.cuny.edu). Further information is available on our website ([www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram](http://www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram)), including: the program's calendar of events; eligibility requirements and benefits of each fellowship; downloadable application forms; pictures, biographies, and email addresses of the Fellows; archived newsletters; this "Guide;" the Learning Agreement form; and links to useful websites for those seeking information about graduate school and fellowships.

## LEARNING AGREEMENT

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Fellow (Please type or print)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name of Mentor (Please type or print)

**Please enter brief statements about your plans for the semester or the year below.**

**This agreement covers:**

the \_\_\_\_\_ semester

the academic year \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Frequency and time of meetings:**

**2. Description of scholarly or research project:**

**3. Plans to explore a professor's work as a teacher:**

**4. Plans to explore the service component of a professor's work:**

\_\_\_\_\_  
Fellow (please sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor (please sign)

\_\_\_\_\_  
date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Mentor's email and phone extension

<b>City College Fellowships Program Guide for Mentors and Fellows</b>
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**TO: Mentors**

**FROM: Professor Susan Besse  
Director, City College Fellowships Program**

**RE: Fellow Evaluation**

Thank you for the mentoring you have provided this semester for a City College Fellow, Mellon-Mays Fellow, or Irani Fellow. It is only because of your generosity and commitment that our program can succeed.

With the approaching end of the semester, you soon should be receiving the journal of the Fellow you have been mentoring. Please read it, sign it, and send it along to the fellowships office at NAC 6/316, remembering that the Fellow cannot receive his or her stipend without your signature. If it is easier to respond by email, please feel free to do so: [ccfell@ccny.cuny.edu](mailto:ccfell@ccny.cuny.edu). I would also appreciate receiving your evaluation of the Fellow's academic performance and potential. If you are mentoring a City College Fellow or a Mellon-Mays Fellow, please indicate as well his or her interest in entering a Ph.D. program and potential for success. Of course, Irani Fellows who are pursuing diverse career paths need not be evaluated on these criteria. Thank you!

Your Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fellow's Name \_\_\_\_\_

- 1 = Exceptional
- 2 = Strong
- 3 = Middling
- 4 = Weak / Small
- 5 = Do Not Know

For all Fellows:

Overall Academic Ability	1	2	3	4	5
Communication Skills	1	2	3	4	5
Discipline and Persistence	1	2	3	4	5

For City College Fellows and Mellon-Mays Fellows:

Likelihood of Applying to a Ph.D. program	1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood of Being Admitted	1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood of Completing Graduate School	1	2	3	4	5
Likelihood of Becoming a Professor	1	2	3	4	5

Other Comments: