LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I write this final “letter from the director” with sincere gratitude for the opportunities I have had to work with—and to learn from—the extraordinary Fellows who have made the fellowship community a collegial and vibrant incubator of personal and intellectual growth as well as academic and professional success. You Fellows have touched me deeply, challenged me on many fronts, and enriched my life with friendships across generations and social boundaries. To you, I owe a great debt. Your grit, commitment, intelligence, and generosity give me hope for the future.

I am also in debt to the many faculty colleagues who have mentored Fellows, served on the program’s Steering Committee, spoken at fellowship events, enhanced our research conferences through their attendance, and supported me personally through many years. Thank you! To President Lisa Coico and Provost Mauricio Trevisan, know that your support for our program has enabled many of CCNY’s talented but often underprepared students to discover potential they did not know they had and to far exceed expectations. In changing their lives, the college helps transform our society.

Thank you in particular to faculty members who contributed to our spring 2016 workshops. Professor Fusun Wang (English) spoke about the challenges and rewards of interdisciplinary research and described the steps of scaling a project up from a conference paper to a book. In a fruitful hands-on workshop, Professor Beth Baron (History) gave Fellows insight into how and why one doctoral admission committee ranked four (anonymous) statements of purpose written by 2016 applicants. The Fellows greatly appreciated the candor of Professors Maria Binz-Scharf (Economics) and L’Heureux Lewis-McCoy (Sociology), who spoke about their experiences learning to balance the demands of academic careers and personal life. Sincere thanks also to faculty who participated in our workshop on how to build productive mentoring relationships: Professors Kate Ritchie (Philosophy), Glen Millstein (Psychology), and Ruth Stark (Chemistry). Two graduated Fellows returned to share with the current Fellows lessons learned in graduate school and beyond. Dr. James Faghmous (Assistant Professor and Founding CTO, Arnhold Global Health Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai) spoke at our beginning-of-the-semester dinner, and newly minted Princeton PhD Dr. Fidel Tavarez gave the keynote address at our annual research conference.

Congratulations and good luck to the 2016 graduates! We take great pride in the many accomplishments of all the graduates and ongoing Fellows, described below. And we applaud this year’s extraordinary salutatorian, Orubba Almansour, who is a member of our fellowship community.

Congratulations also to the seven new City College Fellows and six new Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows.

NEW FELLOWS

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome the seven new City College Fellows and six new Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows.

The new City College Fellows are:

- Ethan Bendau (Physics)
- Marisol Cortés (Biochemistry)
- Zsofia Erzsebet Torok (Biology)
- Kazi Shehab Hossain (Biology)
- Roland Maio (Computer Science)
- Marissa Scotto (Psychology)
- Sophie Ziner (English)

The new Mellon Mays Fellows are:

- Yasmine El Gheur (Art History)
- Yessica Gómez (History)
- Victoria Juste (Black Studies/Biology)
- Jasmine Kasheboon Khoury (Anthropology)
- Brandon LaTorre (Biology)
- Timothy McGhee (Black Studies/Anthropology)

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fellows’ Activities and Awards 2015 - 2016

Graduating Seniors

Eseosa Aiweriogbene (Biochemistry) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and received Student Support Services’ Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Scholar Award. He has also received the Biochemistry Department’s Frank and Rose Brescia Award and the Bernard H. Weltman Scholarship. He is a MARC (Minority Access to Research Careers) Fellow. He presented his paper, “Using Atomic Force Microscopy to Measure the Nano-Mechanical Properties of Tomato Cuticles” on four occasions, at: the
CCNY Chemistry/Biochemistry Honors Presentation (Oral); American Chemical Society’s (ACS) Undergraduate Symposium (Oral)—Lehman College; Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) Undergraduate Symposium (Poster)—Sagamore Resort, Lake George, NY; and Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS) (Poster)—Seattle, WA. He is preparing to apply to MD/PhD programs to become a physician scientist.

Babatunde Alade (Mathematics) graduated Magna Cum Laude with dual degrees, BA/MA June 2016. He received the Economic and Business Department’s Mark and Estelle Clements Scholarship and a Colin Powell School Leadership Award. From Student Support Services, he received the Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Scholar Award and the Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Mentor Award, as well as Student Support Services Program/Colin Powell School Social Science Award. He plans to apply to PhD programs in Applied Mathematics concentrating in Economics fall 2016.

Orubba Almansouri (English/History) graduated Summa Cum Laude June 2016 with English Honors and was CCNY’s class of 2016 Salutatorian. She was a Kaye Scholar and received the Helen and Sydney Jacoff Scholarship to support graduate studies in the Humanities and Arts as well as the History Department’s Arthur Teidemann Award. The SEEK Department presented Orubba with the Outstanding SEEK Graduate of the Year Award. She received the Downer Language Award in French and Arabic from the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures Department. From the Colin Powell Program, she received The Colin Powell Fellowship for Civic and Global Leadership and was named a Colin Powell Fellowship Ambassador. Her essay, “Bringing the Self,” was published in 2Bridges Review, Spring 2016. Having deferred her admission to University of Michigan’s Near Eastern Studies PhD program, she will enter New York University’s MA Program in Near Eastern and Islamic Studies fall 2016.

Keevin Brown (Black Studies) graduated February 2016 and received the Black Studies Program’s Highest Black Studies Major GPA Award.


Karim Elhaiies (History) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and was a Kaye Scholar.

Joel Engelman (Psychology) graduated Summa Cum Laude June 2016 and received the Psychology Department’s Gardner Murphy Award for Exceptional Merit in Psychology. He presented his poster, “Escape Velocity and Wellness of Ex-Orthodox Jews,” at the American Psychological Association’s Division 36 mid-year conference, March 2016. Joel will apply to doctoral programs in Clinical Psychology in the fall.

Jerry Guillaume (History) graduated Magna Cum Laude with dual degrees, BA/MA February 2016 and received the History Department’s Oscar Zeichner Prize. He plans to apply to PhD programs in the fall.

Alycia Hall (History) graduated Summa Cum Laude with dual degrees, BA/MA June 2016 and received the Helen and Sydney Jacoff Scholarship to support graduate studies in the Humanities and Arts, as well as the History Department’s Paul Aron Award. She will enter Yale University’s PhD program in History and African-American Studies fall 2016.

Zachary Hayworth (English) graduated Summa Cum Laude June 2016 with English Honors and was a member of the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY. He received the Florence Gould Language Prize in French and the Ward Medal in Italian from the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures Department. He will enter Harvard University fall 2016 with a Harvard university Presidential Scholarship to pursue a PhD in Germanic Languages and Literatures, with a minor PhD field in Classical (Greek and Latin) Philology.

Samuel Inniss (Computer Science) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016.

Ivana Lazarska (Political Science/History) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and was a Kaye Scholar. She was awarded the Critical Language Scholarship for a Turkish Language Program, summer 2016, in Azerbaijan. She will enter Central European University’s (Hungary) MA program in Comparative History in its History/Religious Studies Department fall 2016.

Wendyliz Martinez (English/Black Studies) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and received the Black Studies Program’s William Hallett Greene Award. She participated in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Hugh Ross McLaughlin Fellowship Program. She presented her paper, “Geographies of Caribbean Bodies in Queer Time: Geographies of Home and Sirena Selena,” at the 41st New York African Studies Association Conference, April 2016 and in conjunction with CUNY Pipeline. She plans to apply to PhD programs in the fall.

Conor McGlone (English) graduated Summa Cum Laude June 2016 and was a Kaye Scholar.

Sophia Monegro (English) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 with English Honors and was a Kaye Scholar. She received the English Department’s Stark Award for Essay in Literature. In June 2016, she participated in the University of Michigan’s Humanities Emerging Research Scholars Program (MICHHERS). She plans to apply to PhD programs in the fall.

Bilha Njuguna (English) graduated Cum Laude June 2016 with English Honors. She was a Kaye Scholar and participated in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program. She received two awards to support graduate studies: the Allen F. Isaacman & Barbara S. Isaacman Prize in African Studies; and the Helen and Sydney Jacoff Scholarship from the Division of Humanities and the Arts. She presented her paper, “Love and Malady in Wizard of the Crow,” at the 41st New York African Studies Association Conference, April 2016, and in conjunction with CUNY Pipeline. She will enter Columbia University’s MA program in Middle East, South Asia, and African Studies Department fall 2016, where she hopes to continue on to complete her PhD.

Edgar Olmeda (History) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016.

Joel Sati (Philosophy) graduated Summa Cum Laude February 2016. He will enter the University of California, Berkeley, Law School’s Jurisprudence and Social Policy PhD program fall 2016.

Sara Sewied (Psychology) graduated Magna Cum Laude February 2016 and received Student Support Services’ Charlotte and Arthur Zitrin Peer Scholar Award. She presented her paper, “Muslim American Women in Sports: Constraints, Challenges, and Empowerment,” at the May 2016 Colin Powell Undergraduate Research Conference and will be presenting the same paper November 2016 at the National Women Studies Association. Sara plans to apply to Anthropology and Women Studies PhD programs in the fall.

Rebecca Wellington (Philosophy) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and was a Kaye Scholar. She is considering an admission offer to the MA program at the Universität Hamburg’s (Germany) School of Economics and Social Sciences.

Asha Whale (Black Studies/History) graduated Magna Cum Laude June 2016 and received the SEEK’s Department’s Special Honorable Mention for Outstanding SEEK Graduate of the Year.
Continuing Fellows:

Yasmine [Mina] El Gheur (Art History) received the Downer Award for Study Abroad and was awarded the Arabic Language Certificate of Achievement from the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures Department. During spring 2016, Mina worked as a Research Assistant for Open Source Gallery’s all-female photography collective from the Middle East exhibition, Rawiya, as well as a curatorial assistant to Joanna Sheers Seidenstein at the Frick Collection, and assistant to photographer Stefan Hagen, researching grants for his Montello Foundation. She presented her paper, “Colonial Manifestations from Morocco to Pakistan: the Work of Lalla Essaydi and Shahzia Sikander,” at The National Council for Undergraduate Research, UNC Asheville, North Carolina, April 2016.

Aychen Halim (Spanish) is a member of the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY and received a Ward Medal in Spanish from the Classical and Modern Languages and Literatures Department, spring 2016.

Richard [Gray] Huffman (Physics) attended the Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting of the American Chemical Society June 2016 with Sarah Belh, one of the Eisele Group’s graduate students. They presented a poster on their recent research investigating the impact of counterions on our self-assembling chemical system, titled “The Impact of Counterions on the Stability of Double-Walled C8S3 Nanotubes.”

Md Kabir (Chemistry) was awarded the Division of Science’s CCNY GHC Scholarhsip Fund for College Seniors—Alumni (2016), the S. Jay Levy Fellowship for Future Leaders (2015), and the Division of Science’s Ephraim & Libby Banks Memorial Scholarship (2015). Md presented a poster at CCAPP (City College Academy for Professional Preparation), “Effects of UVB Radiation and Arsenic on Methylation of Cylin D1 Promoter Region.”

FALL 2016 SCHEDULE

* Required attendance for all Fellows.

Please see the “Guide” for other events required for Fellows at different stages. All events begin at 12:30 in 6/309, and lunch is served, unless otherwise noted.

TH Aug 25: Orientation for all new City College Fellows and Mellon Mays Fellows

TH Sep 6: DUE: Summer reports (for all who received CCFELL & MMUF summer 2016 funding)

TH Sep 8: * Round-table: Summer Research Experiences

TH Sep 15: Workshop: Your statement of purpose. Brainstorming

Fri Sep 23: DUE: Seniors applying to grad school submit drafts of statements of purpose to Renee Philippi.

TH Sep 29: Workshop: Revising the Statement of Purpose

TH Oct 13: * Workshop: Mentoring


TH Oct 27: *Round-table: Race, class and gender in the academy

TU Nov 8: Recruitment meeting for prospective Fellows

TH Nov 10: Workshop: Building Academic Skills

TH Nov 17: * Workshop: Financing your Education and Research

TH Dec 1: DUE: Applications for City College Fellowship

GRE PREP COURSE OPTIONS

Just a reminder that the City College Fellowships Program will cover the cost of GRE Prep for all Fellows (up to $650), whether you choose to enroll in any Kaplan GRE-prep course (at the CCNY discounted fee) or any GRE online tutorial (such as Magoosh). Fellows may also receive reimbursement for the purchase of any GRE prep materials, up to a total of $650 for all GRE prep course fees and materials. If you would like to take the Kaplan course, you MUST apply for the CCNY discount. To receive the CCNY half-price discount, you must:

- Enroll individually by contacting Kaplan directly (1-800-KAPTEST = 1-800-527 8378)
- Provide Kaplan with your CCNY email address and copy of CCNY ID.
- At time of enrollment, students must be prepared to pay at least 1/3 of the final cost (after the discount).

You must obtain approval from Renee (Renee_Philippi@verizon.net) before registering for any of the courses mentioned above or before purchasing GRE prep materials.

CHECK PROCEDURE

Since the implementation of the CUNY First system, CUNY mails all fellowship stipend checks directly to Fellows. (Fellows do not pick up these checks at the CCNY Bursar’s Office.) Fellows must complete and submit a “Learning Agreement” each semester before Renee submits a disbursement form; late submission of the “Learning Agreement” can delay payment of the stipend to the following semester. All other checks (reimbursement for travel or GRE prep, summer monies, etc.) should be picked up in the Bursar’s office, A103. (Note: you must complete a W9 form each year/semester in order to have expenses reimbursed.) It takes approximately four to six weeks to receive a check once Renee submits a disbursement form. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask Renee Philippi.

If you have any questions regarding your check, once Renee has processed the disbursement form, you MUST speak with Ms. Martinez and/or her staff in the General Scholarship Office, in Admissions, room 101. Renee does not have access to information regarding checks!
Brandon LaTorre (Biology) was awarded the Division of Science's Ephraim & Libby Banks Memorial Scholarship. In addition, he was chosen to be a CCAPP (City College Academy for Professional Preparation) Mentor.

Lukas Lindwasser (Physics) received the Physics Department’s Bernard-Levine Fellowship, and from the CCNY Alumni Association, he received the GHC Scholarship Fund for College Seniors majoring in the Physical Sciences.

Timothy McGhee (Black Studies/Anthropology) presented his paper, “A Harlem Sound of Music,” at the New York African Studies Association 41st Annual Conference, April 2016; his paper will be published in NYASA’s journal. At The Colin Powell School Third Annual Undergraduate Research Conference, he presented his paper, “Deconstructing the Gay and Bi Male Athlete’s Sexuality: Submitting to a Culture of Inclusivity in the Emergence of Gay Civil Rights.” Timothy was also a panelist for a NAACP roundtable, “Passing for Straight: Young Men Share Their Stories and Art,” hosted by African Voices Magazine.

Anika Nabila (Biology) received the Dr. Saul Heiligman Scholarship from the Psychology Department and was an intern at the NY Stem Cell Foundation. She is member of the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY. Anika presented her poster, “Moa-3 and moa-4 alleles play a role in the developmental pathways in Caenorhabditis elegans,” at the CCAP (City College Academy for Professional Preparation) Annual Poster Conference at City College.

Karen Navarro (Psychology). At the Third Annual Colin Powell School Undergraduate Research Conference, Karen spoke on a panel of City Tutors, “Roundtable: Undergraduate Research and Building Agency with Minimalism.”

Azmian Nisak (Physics) is a member of the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY, and the National Society for Leadership and Success. Azmian presented at the CCAPP (City College Academy for Professional Preparation) 2015 Annual Poster Presentation on energy-level structure of Pr3+: BEL.

Seyed [Ali] Noori (Philosophy) is a Kaye Scholar and participated in the CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program. He was awarded the CUNY BA Thomas W. Smith Academic Fellowship. Ali presented his paper “Plotinus on the Problem of Evil” at several conferences: CUNY Pipeline Fellowship Annual Research Conference (Oral Presentation); the National Council on Undergraduate Research (NCUR) (Oral Presentation), at UNC-Asheville, NC; Yale Bouchet Graduate Conference (Poster Presentation), New Haven, CT.

José Ramírez (History) is a recipient of the S. Jay Levy Fellowship for Future Leaders and participated in CUNY Graduate Center’s Pipeline Fellowship Program. He presented papers at the CUNY Pipeline Conference, Hunter College Undergraduate Research Conference, and the Carnegie Foundation Undergraduate Research Conference.

Elliana Schwab (Physics) was awarded a Chambliss Astronomy Student Achievement Award by the American Astronomical Society. She was named a 2016 Barry Goldwater Scholar by the Barry Goldwater Scholarship and Excellence in Education Program, and an Astromyc NYS Scholar. She is a member of the Macaulay Honors College at CCNY. From the CCNY Physics Department, she received the Kenneth Singer Scholarship and the Sidwell Millman Scholarship. She presented two talks: to the Columbia Astronomy Club, entitled “Our Ultracool Neighbors – Brown Dwarf Structure and Magnetism;” and at the CCNY Physics Department’s Student Research Symposium, entitled “Too Cool for Stellar Rules – Ultracool Dwarf Structure and Magnetism.”

Lediona Shahollari (History) received the History Department’s Arthur Tiedemann Award.

Vanessa Vélez (History) was awarded a Center for Jewish History Research Fellowship and the CCNY History Department’s Joan Kelly Award. She also received the Arab American National Museum’s Evelyn Abdallah Menconi Travel Grant, and won an IRT (Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers) Associate Fellowship.

Alexandra [Sasha] Whittaker (Art History) was awarded from the CCNY Art Department: the Connor Essay Awards, First Place, spring 2016; the Nancy and Lawrence Greengrass Scholarship, spring 2016; Connor Essay Awards, Second Place, fall 2015. The Macaulay Honors College at CCNY named Sasha a Lisa Goldberg/Revson Scholar and a Horace W. Goldsmith Scholar. Sasha also won the Art Department's Connor Study Abroad Fellowship for fall semester 2015 study at Charles University in Prague. She has an entry appearing in a new publication: “Appendix/Biographical Data,” in Generosity: The Art of Giving, eds. Adam Budak and Michaela Pejčochová (Prague: Narodni Galerie v Praze, 2016).

Timothy [Gage] Williams (Philosophy) was awarded the Ketchum Prize for Outstanding Work in the History of Philosophy from the Philosophy Department; and from the Department of Classical and Modern Languages and Literature, he was awarded the Charles B. Haberman Award for Outstanding Work in Latin.
Brandon LaTorre (Biology) will continue during June to work on his research in Dr. David Lohman’s lab, “The geographical mosaic of Wolbachia infection in Melanitis leda.” Then, he will participate in the Colby College 2016 REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates, funded by the National Science Foundation), “The Cultural, Economic and Ecological Roles of Church Forests in Ethiopia,” which seeks ways to reforest this region of Africa.

Chayanne Marciano (Anthropology) won a Smithsonian Museum research internship based at the Smithsonian Anacostia Community Museum, where she will gain first hand experience of the role community-based museums play in urban, gentrifying neighborhoods.

Timothy McGhee (Black Studies/Anthropology) will participate in John Jay College’s Cuba Study Abroad Program. He will then remain in Cuba for a month to pursue independent ethnographic research on Lucumi religious beliefs and practices. His mentor is Prof. L’Heureux Lewis-McCoy.

Anika Nabila (Biology) will intern at the NY Stem Cell Foundation, conducting research using stem cells and liver cells. Her internship is funded by the STEM Career Development Institute at CCNY.

Karen Navarro (Psychology) is participating in a New York University summer research internship in the Behavioral Perception Lab run by Prof. Michael Landy.

Seyed [Ali] Noori (Philosophy) will attend the “Course de la Civilisation Francaise” at the Sorbonne, Paris.

José Ramírez (History) will conduct archival research and oral histories in El Salvador on the memory and legacies of the assassination of Archbishop Óscar Romero. His mentor is Prof. Adrienne Petty.

Ellianna Schwab (Physics) will attend the 19th “Cambridge Workshop on Cool Stars, Stellar Systems, and the Sun” in Uppsala, Sweden. There, she will present a poster entitled “Too Cool for Stellar Rules: A Bayesian Exploration of Trends in Ultracool Magnetism.” She will also participate in a National Science Foundation-sponsored REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) at the National Radio Astronomy Observatory at University of Virginia, where she will research gravitational waves and millisecond pulsars.

---

FOURTEENTH ANNUAL CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS RESEARCH CONFERENCE
May 6, 2016

Panel I 9:15 - 10:45 Philosophical Perspectives

Ali Noori, Theory of Active Intellect in Avicenna and Averroës: a Study of Aristotle’s Evolving Authority in Early Islamic Philosophy

Zachary Hayworth, Hermeneutics as Synthetic Construction: Schleiermacher’s Transcendental Apperception of the Phaedrus

Timothy (Gage) Williams, What We Can Learn from The Real Housewives: Agency and Responsibility... by Bravo

Panel II 11:00 - 12:15 Science of the Brain to the Universe

Luthfunnahar (Dina) Dewan, The Limits of Working Memory Capacity for Naturalistic Visual Scenes

Azmain Nisak, Fluorescence Spectra and Fluorescence Lifetime of Pr3+: La2Be2O5


Panel III 11:00 - 12:15 Communities under Stress

Joel Sati, On Undocumented Immigrants, Basic Rights Protections, and Psychological Considerations

Joel Engelman, Escape Velocity and Wellness of Ex-Orthodox Jews

Panel IV 2:00 - 3:30 Gender and Nation

Dilenny Cisnero, La Ciguapa: The Creation of a Dominican National Identity

Sophia Monegro, Oligarch and Peasant: Mediating National Trauma in Julia Alvarez’s How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents and Edwidge Danticat’s The Farming of Bones

Orubba Almansouri, Narrating Through Madness: A Critique of Patriarchal Society

Mina ElGheur, Orientalism and the Postcolonial: Discussing the Global Contemporary

Panel V 3:45 - 5:15 Historical Perspectives

Alycia Hall, Loyal Subjects: Jamaican Maroons in the Post-Emancipation Era

Ofir Klein, The Neoliberal Subway

Lediona Shahollari, The Failure of Repatriation: Çam Refugees and the Cold War (1944-1949)

Alexandra (Sasha) Whittaker, The View behind the Iron Curtain: Czechoslovak Photography after WWII
Lediona Shahollari (History) will participate in the CCNY/Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program, where she will further her research on Çamlı Refuges during the Cold War.

Vannessa Vélez (History) will participate in the CCNY/Stanford Summer Exchange Research Program; while in California, she plans to travel to UC, Berkeley and UC, Los Angeles to use archival materials on the historical origins of current US-Middle East policy. Her mentor is Prof. Anne Kornhauser.

Alexandra [Sasha] Whitaker (Art History) will spend two weeks researching in the photographic collections at the Art Gallery of Ontario in Toronto under the supervision of her mentor Prof. Ellen Handy. She will also attend a month-long Czech language school at Charles University in Prague, as well as a Polish language school at Jagiellonian University in Krakow.

Timothy [Gage] Williams (Philosophy) will conduct intensive independent research focused in the areas of queer studies and the philosophy of sex. His mentor is Prof. Chad Kidd.

**EXCERPTS FROM FELLOWS’ SPRING 2016 JOURNALS**

In the passages below, Fellows at the beginning, middle, and end of their time in the fellowship reflect on important steps along their journey.

**Ellie Schwab** (Physics). As a first semester Fellow, I learned how to better myself as a researcher, how to set and achieve academic goals, and how to be a more proactive and goal-oriented mentee. I particularly appreciated English Professor Fuson Wang’s encouragement at the workshop “On Research” to build up to big research goals by taking stock of smaller accomplishments along the way. The large, eventual goal of becoming a researcher can be intimidating at times, but knowing that I have already accomplished some of the steps that naturally lead up to a career in the sciences is comforting; I am already on my way! My research mentor, Dr. Kelle Cruz, of Hunter College, taught me two skills of particular importance. First, she taught me that any project, no matter how large it seems, can be broken into small and manageable steps; and second, that if those steps are not apparent after some thought, it’s perfectly acceptable to ask for help. I love that. I think there is strength in community, and it is very empowering to know that it is okay as a scientist to not always have all the answers as long as I remain open to asking for help.

**Vannessa Vélez** (History). Because of a few weeks of illness following the fall semester, I scrambled to prepare applications for summer research opportunities. As I worked to refine my research topic, express my ideas clearly, and secure faculty recommendations during the first weeks of spring semester courses, I learned important lessons about communication, organization, and scheduling. Through tailoring my statement of purpose to different programs and experiencing the nerve-wracking challenges of Skype or phone interviews, I also came to understand why it is so important for scholars to apply for grants, fellowships, etc. The process of continually revising and rethinking my project forced me to clarify the core components of my research, why it matters, and what exactly I want to accomplish. This, in turn, allowed me to articulate my ideas in succinct, compelling, and accessible language. I received some rejections but also acceptances to many exciting programs. This, in turn, allowed me to articulate my ideas in succinct, compelling, and accessible language. I received some rejections but also acceptances to many exciting programs. I had to consume, but also as potential peers and mentors in a community of scholars who inherit the information from the past and constructively expand and re-synthesize it to build an intellectual framework for contemporary and future humans. In other words, the Fellowship told me that I could hold myself accountable for the kind of information produced in and disseminated through the universities, rather than being a passive recipient of that information. The implications of such a re-conceptualization are profound. Thank you, City College Fellowship, for helping me find the path to my own intellectual autonomy and the courage to dedicate my life’s efforts to a cause chosen by, but ultimately much bigger than, myself.

Fellows benefit from being part of a diverse, collegial, and ambitious peer group. They mentor one another both within each cohort and between cohorts, with graduated Fellows reaching back to help the current fellows.

**Anika Nabila** (Biology). One of my favorite experiences as a Fellow was attending the fellowship’s annual research conference. Listening to my peers speak about the research they had done was illuminating. Of the presentations I heard, my favorite was Ellie Schwab’s presentation on brown dwarfs. Normally, I abhor physics; even when I find a topic interesting, the technical aspects of it are off-putting. However, Ellie was phenomenal at breaking all the concepts down, and I was particularly impressed with how well she could communicate her research without getting bogged down by scientific jargon. Not only was her presentation visually appealing, but she also presented the material as though she was conversing with me, which drew me in. I also appreciated the way she demonstrated the importance of graphs to find trends and understand relationships. I aspire to be able to explain what I do in the lab as well as Ellie does!

**Sasha Whitaker** (Art History). During our spring dinner, graduated Fellow Dr. James Faghmous [Assistant Professor and Founding CTO, Arnhold Global Health Institute, Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai] spoke about the many twists and turns, failures and successes that defined his path through graduate school. His talk reminded me to be flexible and open to change, since the future rarely happens exactly as planned. Most memorable was James’ advice to stay “at the center of the wheel, and not on the outside.” By this he meant that we Fellows should focus on becoming who we want to be as scholars and as people, and not be distracted by the failures and successes that will inevitably come and go. This advice reminded me of a pair of lines from Boris Pasternak: “But you yourself should not distinguish / Your victory from your defeat” (from the poem “It Is Not Seemly To Be Famous...”). Rudyard Kipling wrote something similar: “If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster / And treat those two impostors just the same” (from the poem “If”). More important than acceptances and rejections, than successes and failures, than triumphs and defeats is one’s own sense of purpose as a scholar and a person.

---

City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program that administers the City College Fellowship and the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship. See our website for information: www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowships/
The City College Fellowships Office is located in NAC 6/316, 212/650-8388.

---

- 6 -