LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

I greet the new millennium with great optimism for the Fellowships Program. We continue to grow with the admission of seven new City College Fellows and two new Irani/Summerfield Fellows. They will enrich our community with their diverse perspectives, coming from a range of disciplines and national and ethnic backgrounds. We look forward to welcoming them all and integrating them into the group.

The Fellows have been busily engaged in a wide range of academic and professional activities. Excerpts from their journals and research reports demonstrate the benefits they have reaped from research, teaching, and study abroad. All are indebted to the advice and support of their 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 in their disciplines. As always, we are greatly indebted to and thankful for the commitment of the mentors.

During the fall semester, the Fellowships Program was honored to welcome Professor Colin Palmer to address our Fellows. Formerly of the History Department of the CUNY Graduate Center and now on the faculty of Princeton University, Professor Palmer has chaired an American Historical Association Committee on the state of graduate education. Fellows greatly benefited not only from the information he conveyed regarding trends in graduate education, but also from his genuine interest in their success and his strong encouragement. We all emerged highly energized.

This semester, 14 fellows are enrolled in the exciting interdisciplinary fellowship seminar team-taught by Professors Martin Tamney (Philosophy) and Joshua Wilner (English). The topic is: “The Origins of the Scientific Revolution and its Intellectual and Historical Context.” With five of the Fellows enrolled majoring in Engineering and the natural sciences, the seminar should involve very lively exchanges of ideas across disciplines.

NEW FELLOWS

Welcome!

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome our new Fellows. From a most competitive pool of applicants, 8 new Fellows have been selected to join the City College Fellowships Program in the spring semester, 2001; two are Irani/Summerfield Fellows. The new Fellows are:

- Ms. Rokhaya Diop (Bio Engineering)
- Ms. Nema Elsayed (International Studies)
- Ms. Nina Finch (Anthropology)
- Mr. Orlando Gonzalez (English) (Irani)
- Mr. Michael Jones (History)
- Ms. Debra Karstadt (ANTH/PSYCH)
- Mr. Alejandro Reyes (Philosophy) (Irani)
- Mr. Jose Vasques (Anthropology)

NEW FELLOWS

Welcome!

APRIL 17, 2001

Summer Research Proposals 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 17th.

Shalni Ramchandani & Summer Research

City College Fellow Shalni Ramchandani was one of several Fellows who made use of the summer research funds. The following is an excerpt from the report she wrote, discussing her research & trip to Washington, DC:

"The summer money I received from the City College Fellowships Program enabled me to travel to Washington, DC to conduct my ongoing research on Unit 731, a factory unit set up in Manchuria by the Japanese during the Second World War for human experimentation and vivisection with the aim of developing biological weapons. The research program was, and still is to a large extent, one of the great secrets of Japan during and after the war: a vast project to develop weapons and
biological weapons, including plague, anthrax, cholera and numerous other pathogens. Equally appalling is the U.S. involvement in the cover-up of the crimes. At the end of the war, the U.S. granted immunity from prosecution to the Japanese in exchange for the collected data, an act utterly ignoring international laws and human justice.

This was my second trip to the National Archives and this summer I spent most of my time in the Asian Reading Room. This is a wonderful resource for anyone doing research on Asia. I was able to thumb through numerous Chinese journals with telling photographs of the Unit 731 members and reports about their activities in Manchuria. Since part of my summer money from the Fellowship program went towards my Chinese language studies at the China Institute, archival research enabled me to stick with Chinese for most of my summer.

What I have realized from my visits to the archives is that the unlikeliness of uncovering material that has never been used. As a novice at researching and an idealist of sorts, I partly chose this subject in hopes of uncovering some great fact. I had contemplated giving up this research project in its entirety because of the disappointments I encountered at the archives; but how I am more a realist and understand that this is all part of a historian’s plight. I am not always going to find exactly what I am searching for, but I have collected an abundance of material on this subject to use in writing my thesis.”

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 Avalon Garcia, Susan Hines, Roni Ben-Nun, Renae Eidem, Fredric Villano.

by: Avalon Garcia

“Summer research funding from the Fellowships Program gave me the opportunity to work full time as a research assistant in Dr. Cosloy’s genetic microbiology lab.

Immediately I noticed a difference. The days were longer, and I moved to the next phase of the research much faster than I could have as a full time student. Dr. Cosloy and I were in constant contact about the progress of my research. I was working on two projects at the same time. The first was to mutate the wild type E.coli strain JM110 and analyze its heme biosynthetic pathway. The second was to make a library of genomic E.coli DNA and transform it into competent cells, also analyzing the heme biosynthetic pathway.

The outline was set and I knew what I had to do. At first, things didn’t go as well as I had hoped they would. Despite the planning, the summer research was filled with disappointments and frustrations. Since I was working with bacteria, I had to make sure that every piece of equipment used was sterile. Despite all the precautions I took, my strains were constantly contaminated. It took approximately six weeks for me to figure out that the problem was the original strain of E.coli: it was not what it was supposed to be. With that accomplished, I was able to continue my project and obtained promising results within two weeks.

Working in Dr. Cosloy’s lab has given me the opportunity to meet with other professors in a more social and less academic environment. Whenever someone was retiring, graduating, or even getting their citizenship, there was a party. The professors told stories of their experiences as undergraduate and graduate students, some of which were interesting and funny. There were numerous jokes about the mediocre research training that medical students received. Who knew professors had a sense of humor? If there is anyone who thinks that professors lead boring lives and that research doesn’t allow them to interact with others, then their opinion will be reversed with a visit to Dr. Cosloy’s lab.”

by: Susan Hines

As a first semester Iran/Summerfield Fellow, Susan Hines took full advantage of the Fellowship Program’s workshops and the advice of her mentor, Sylvia Netzer.

“The Fellowship Program’s Grants Workshop provided invaluable knowledge on funding available to women and minorities. I feel encouraged that it is possible to receive financial assistance through the next two and half years at CCNY, and I certainly plan to apply for fellowships and scholarships for my graduate study. I work so hard to get good grades, it is time they work for me.

One of the accomplishments I’m very proud of this semester, was my decision to apply for the Art Department’s Connor Award - funds awarded for the study of art. My mentor, Professor Netzer, brought
by: Roni Ben-Nun

“My fellowship project allowed me to experience teaching first-hand. I worked with Professor James as a class assistant and gave a presentation in class, relevant to what the students were working on. The class dealt with three-dimensional design using unorthodox media like cardboard and sheet acrylic. My presentation was to assist in preparing the students for a project that expresses movement in sculpture.

My intention was to present the students with a wide array of examples from different periods in art history and various cultural background which show movement in some way. Together, Professor James and I came up with a list of works, ranging from prehistoric to contemporary works. These included some very famous works of art, like Michelangelo’s Creation of Adam on the Sistine Chapel ceiling, and works by Jackson Pollock and Keith Haring. I then researched each work in order to obtain the background information, and analyzed them in order to determine the way in which they addressed movement. The lecture was divided into several groups: 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional works, representational (Michelangelo) and abstract (Haring), those which depicted movement (a running horse) and those which seemed to move themselves (a Van Gogh). Each group was listed chronologically, showing the transitions of style and medium. My hope was that by showing the students examples from the past, they would get inspired and be more informed when creating their own work. So much for my high hopes and plans...

Unfortunately, when I actually stepped up to do my presentation, things did not go as smoothly as I expected. First of all, I felt quite nervous and my delivery of the material seemed awkward and unpolished (to me anyway). The students did not jump out of their chairs in a frenzy of inspiration and, quite honestly, I believe I bored them! In fact, the presentation was very far from what I imagined it would be, which brought me to the revolutionary realization that teaching was not as easy as it seemed! As a somewhat over confident person, I did not expect to be so uneasy in front of a group of students. It was easier to come up with a seemingly good idea for a class and do the necessary prep work, but it was much harder to execute it in a good way. Looking back, it seems to me that the true greatness of teaching lies in the ability to deliver the material smoothly and interestingly, not in the actual mastering of it.”

by: Frederic Villano

Frederic Villano has been working on an in-depth study of William Carlos Williams’ 1923 publication Spring and All under the direction of his mentor, Professor Barry Wallenstein.

“...This leads me to one of the most significant changes I’ve experienced as a result of becoming a Fellow. My responsibility to myself as a student has become paramount in my life. Not to say that my studies weren’t important before, but being a Fellow has enabled me to gain a clearer perspective about my future within and beyond City College. Through numerous meetings, such as our seminar with Professor Colin Palmer, I was able to better define my objectives at City College and begin to see how achieving those objectives would effect my life after City College. The seminar with Professor Palmer was particularly enlightening because he...
discussed the concerns one should address if planning to attend graduate school. He clarified the importance of the classes one takes during his or her junior year as well as ways to set oneself apart when applying for grad school. His remarks forced me to look at my projected graduation date and see what I need to accomplish within that time frame.

THE CALENDAR OF EVENTS
Th., March 1 12:15-2 PM NAC 6/316
Workshop: The Mentoring Relationship

Th., March 29 12:15-2PM NAC 6/316
Workshop: Applying to Graduate School

Tu., April 17th in Office, NAC 6/316
Summer Research Proposals DUE

Th., April 19th 12:15-2PM Location TBA
Symposium: Professor Frances Fox Piven “Social Scientists and Social Policy”

Recruitment Meetings for Potential FELLOWS:
Tuesday, April 3rd & Thursday, April 5th in NAC 6/316
12:15 PM - 2:00 PM
APPLICATIONS for the City College Fellowships and the Irani/Summerfield Fellowships are DUE: Tuesday, MAY 1, 2001

SUSAN HINES RECEIVES HONOR
Susan Hines, an Irani/Summerfield Fellow, was awarded the Conor Award from the City College Department of Art. The award was for her paper, “A Retrospective of African American and Caribbean Women Artists 1960-1980.” Congratulations Susan!

Frances Fox-Piven to Speak
Frances Fox-Piven, Distinguished Professor of Political Science and Sociology, will speak at the City College Fellowships Symposium on April 19th on “Social Scientists and Social Policy”. Professor Piven was selected as co-recipient of the 2000 American Sociological Association’s Distinguished Career Award for the Practice of Sociology. Professor Piven, who received her B.A., M.A., and Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, has been a member of the doctoral faculty at the Graduate Center since 1982. She has authored and co-authored several books, including: Regulating the Poor, Poor People’s Movements, The Breaking of the American Social Compact, Why Americans Don’t Vote, and Why Americans Still Don’t Vote.

SPRING GRE COURSE
begins March 6th @ Graduate Center; ask Renee for details.

Awards at City
• Starkweather Award “provides a stipend of $1,000 to a student engaged in a significant humanistic project under the guidance of a faculty mentor.” Deadline to apply is March 15 @ 4 PM; for information, contact Humanities & Arts Office, NAC 5/225.

CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS is a program developed, by the Ford Foundation with City College, to attract and support students in choosing careers in advanced research and college teaching. With the goal of preparing promising undergraduates for careers in advanced research and college teaching, this program provides financial support and a developmental structure, from the beginning of a student’s sophomore year until admission into graduate school.

The CITY COLLEGE FELLOWSHIPS OFFICE is located in the NAC building, 6/316, 650-8388.

Newsletter compiled by: Renee Philippi