LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

It is always with mixed emotions that I bid the graduating seniors goodbye. The pleasure of seeing you embrace your success and excitement about the opportunities that lie ahead is mixed with sadness to see you leave. The ongoing Fellows have taken inspiration from the example you graduates have set and hope that you will stay in touch to share what you will learn during the next leg of your voyage. Congratulations and best of luck!

It is with great pleasure that I announce an increase in the stipends of the City College Fellows, which comes with a commitment from President Coico and Provost Moskovits to equalize the stipends paid to Mellon Mays and City College Fellows within three years. We greatly appreciate their recognition of the value of the Fellowships Program and vote of confidence in the potential of all the Fellows. A deep thank you from us all!

Thank you are also due to the many faculty mentors who invest their time in the success of the Fellows; without their generosity, the program could not achieve its goal of helping undergraduates make the big leap directly from undergraduate to doctoral studies. This semester, two of the Fellows, Joshua Clough and Zachary Mazur, along with their mentor Professor Clifford Rosenberg won the college's mentoring award. Congratulations! I also want to thank the faculty who helped support the program through participation in our workshops. Professor Vincent Boudreau gave an enlightening and engaging presentation on public speaking. Professors James Biles and Barbara Nadeo generously shared with the Fellows their experiences and lessons learned about balancing family commitments and career demands. Professor David Lohman addressed the fellows at the luncheon of our research conference, providing valuable insights about the challenges and pleasures of the road ahead to an academic career. In addition, many other mentors attended our workshop on mentoring as well as the program's annual research conference. The Fellows and I greatly appreciate your commitment and support. Thank you!

Susan Besse

NEW FELLOWS

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome our new Fellows. From most competitive pools of applicants, 7 new City College Fellows and 5 new Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows have been selected to join the City College Fellowships Program in the fall 2012 semester.

Summer 2012

The new City College Fellows are:

- Miriam Abdullah (English)
- Haldan Blecher (Political Science)
- Corey Burke (English)
- Barney Chen (Math, Physics)
- Benjamin Grans-Korsh (Art History, Architecture)
- Emmanuel Lachaud (History)
- Pablo Varnoa Borges (Philosophy)

The new Mellon Mays Fellows are:

- Nikeeyia Howell (English)
- Shanna Jean-Baptiste (French/IS)
- Mayelin Perez (English)
- Hanifah Robinson (Ethnomusicology)
- Debra Williams (English)

SUMMER PROJECTS 2012

The Fellowships Program is pleased to be sponsoring (in part or fully), the following Fellows in their summer research and academic pursuits:

- Miguel Briones (Psychology) will continue his study of mechanisms of learning and information retention in the mammalian brain, working in the neurochemistry lab of his mentor, Dr. Jon Horvitz. The title of the study is Expression of CS: elicited approach behavior after blockade of DMS D1 receptors during early training.

- Lucas Corcoran (English) will conduct research in the archives of the Henry Ransom Center at the University of Texas, Austin, using Louis Zukofsky's personal papers (letters, manuscripts, and his heavily annotated copies of the works of Shakespeare) to uncover and analyze this poet's vision of Shakespeare. Lucas will pay particularly close attention to the final two movements of Zukofsky's long-form poem “A,” A-22 & A-23. His mentor is Professor Felicia Bonaparte.

- Rene Cordero (History) will participate in the University of Chicago's MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

- Chathuranga De Silva (Math) is continuing research on dye sensitized solar cells to find ways to lower production costs of these cells. He began working on this project in January in collaboration with faculty at the University of Moratuwa, Sri Lanka. He and the members of his research team hope to finalize data collection and analysis in order to publish their findings in the near future.

- Haiming Deng (Physics) will collaborate with the research group of his mentor, Dr. Lia Krusin, working on syn
Emilie Gruchow (History) will conduct research on the evolution of interpretations of military law in the American colonies from the 17th century through the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763). She will utilize the archives of the Morris-Jumel Museum in Manhattan, where she is also curating a fall 2012 exhibit on the development of the early American military court system. Emilie’s mentor is Professor Anne Kornhauser.

Nikeeyia Howell (English) will participate in the University of Chicago’s MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Shanna Jean-Baptiste (French/IS) will participate in the University of Chicago’s MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Rakim Jenkins (Sociology/Black Studies) will work as a research assistant to his mentor, Columbia University Associate Professor of Sociology and Gender Studies Alondra Nelson, who is completing a book entitled Reconciliation Projects: Race, Politics, and the Social Life of DNA. While studying at the University of Ghana in July, Rakim will also conduct research on the impacts of Ghana’s 1957 independence from British colonial rule on other national independence movements and on the US Black Power Movements of the 1960s and 70s.

Joshua Liveris (Philosophy) has enrolled in the Rangjung Yeshe Institute at the Centre for Buddhist Studies in Kathmandu, Nepal, where he will spend a year of intensive study of Buddhist philosophy and Sanskrit.

Yan Fei Luo (Math) will work under the supervision of her mentor, Professor Brooke Feigon, investigating the average greatest common divisor on Gaussian integers.

Jessica Mendez (History) will participate in Columbia University’s Leadership Alliance program (SR-EIP), where she will develop her research on connections of the Young Lords to Latin American leftist political movements of the 1960s-1970s.

Rebecca Panko (Biology) will assist her mentor, Professor Amy Berkov, in conducting research on wood characteristics that potentially regulate wood-boring beetle distribution in neo-tropical Panamanian forests. In addition, she will tap the expertise of arborist Christopher Roddick (senior arborist at Brooklyn Botanic Garden) in helping CCNY MA student Lin Li to design research protocols to advance knowledge about plant-insect interactions in Costa Rican neo-tropical forests.

Mayelin Perez (English) will participate in the University of Chicago’s MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

Christen Pruitt (English) will participate in the University of California at Berkeley’s Leadership Alliance program (SR-EIP), where she will develop her research on the famous Haitian novel Masters of the Dew by Jacques Roumain.

Hanifah Walidah Robinson (Ethnomusicology) will continue researching Afro-diasporic women’s musical culture and identity, collecting video ethnographic interviews in Europe from Afro-pean women living in France, Holland, England, and Germany. Her mentor is Professor Barbara Hampton of Hunter College.

Debra Williams (English) will participate in the CUNY Pipeline Program at The Graduate Center, City University of New York, where she will develop her research on Octavio Butler’s short story “Bloodchild” in preparation for traveling to Berkeley, CA to conduct research in Butler’s soon-to-be-opened personal archive. Debra’s mentor is Professor Carla Cappetti.

Yexenia Vanegas (Anthropology) will participate in the University of Chicago’s MMUF Summer Research Training Program.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Fellows’ Activities and Awards

2011-2012

Graduating Seniors

Kaydian Campbell (English/Psychology) graduated Magna Cum Laude and will enter fall 2012 the “Hot Metal Bridge Program” at the Dietrich School of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, a two-semester fellowship program designed to help post-baccalaureate students strengthen their preparation for doctoral studies.

Joshua Clough (History) graduated Summa Cum Laude and will enter Duke University’s History PhD program fall 2012. The CCNY History Department awarded him the Sydney Jacoff Graduate Fellowship. He is also the recipient, along with his mentor Professor Clifford Rosenberg, of the college’s 2012 mentoring award.

Ala Fink (English) graduated Summa Cum Laude. She will enter the MA program in English literature at Queens College, CUNY starting fall 2012.

Eduardo Lerro (English) graduated Summa Cum Laude and will enter Princeton University’s Comparative Literature PhD program fall 2012. He was named one of the English Department’s Sidney Jacoff Graduate Fellows and received the English Department’s Stark Essay Award in Literature. He is also the winner of Princeton University’s Mary Cross Award for Outstanding Incoming Graduate Students.

Zachary Mazur (History) graduated Summa Cum Laude and will enter Yale University’s History PhD program fall 2012. The CCNY History Department awarded him the Sydney Jacoff Graduate Fellowship. He is also the recipient, along with his mentor Professor Clifford Rosenberg, of the college’s 2012 mentoring award.

Cheryl Mazzee (Biology) graduated Cum Laude and will enter the PhD program in Biomedical Science at Albert Einstein College of Medicine fall 2012. She is the recipient of the CCNY Biology Department’s Meyer and Gloria Fishman Scholarship.

James McGowan (English) graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Rashun Miles (Psychology) graduated January 2012. He will enter the MA program in psychology at Teachers College, Columbia University fall 2012.

Hoang Nguyen (Biochemistry) graduated Magna Cum Laude and will begin in fall 2012 the PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) program at Touro College School of Pharmacy. He was awarded the Interdepartmental Science Award for 2011-2012 and the Saul Segal Scholarship.

Eliezer Posner (Mathematics) graduated Summa
Laude and was awarded the Mathematics Department’s Bennington P. Gill Memorial Award as well as the Division of Science’s Family of Irving J. Brenner Scholarship.

Roy Song (Biology) graduated Summa Cum Laude and was awarded the Biology Department’s Professor Martin Sacks/Sylvia F. Rubin Award. He is also the recipient of MIT’s New England Complex Systems Institute Scholarship for summer 2012.

Agata Tumilowicz (French) graduated Summa Cum Laude and will enter New York University’s Comparative Literature PhD program fall 2012, where she will receive the MacCraken Fellowship. From CCNY’s Foreign Languages and Literatures Department, she received the Ward Medal in French.

Paola Volquez (Psychology) graduated Magna Cum Laude and will enter Columbia University’s School of Social Work fall 2012.

Elva Jing Hua Yang (Biology) graduated Magna Cum Laude.

Continuing

Danielle Clare (Chemistry) was awarded the Chemistry Department’s Herman, Elias and William Singer Scholarship. She was also selected to participate in the NSF-funded REU (Research Experience for Undergraduates) directed by her CCNY mentor Professor John Lombardi.

Lucas Corcoran (English) received the undergraduate editorship of City College’s literary journal, Promethean and delivered a paper along with chairing a panel at the Third

FALL 2012 SCHEDULE

All events begin at 12:30 in NAC 6/316 (unless otherwise noted) and lunch is served starting at 12:15.

(Starred* events are required for all Fellows. Consult the program “Guide” for an explanation of which other events you are required to attend.)

Th., August 30: (in NAC 6/316)
Orientation for all new City College Fellows and Mellon Mays Fellows

Fri., September 7
* Fellowships Dinner
(begins at 6:30PM in NAC 6/316)

Th., September 13
* Roundtable: Summer Research Experiences

Th., September 20
* Forum: “On Research”

Th., September 27
Roundtable: Race, Class and Gender in the Academy

Wed., October 3
Seniors (& other Fellows wanting to participate) hand in drafts of their statement of purpose to Renee Philippi for Writing the Statement of Purpose Workshop.

Th., October 11
Workshop: Writing the Statement of Purpose

Th., October 25
Workshop: Financing your Education and Research

Th., November 8
Roundtable: Mentoring

Tues., November 13
Recruitment Meeting for Prospective Fellows

Th., November 15
Workshop: Advanced Learning Techniques

Th., November 29
Workshop: Mental Health

Sat., December 1
DUE: Applications for City College Fellowships

GRE PREP COURSE

Just a reminder that the City College Fellowships Program will pay the tuition for a GRE Prep course for all Fellows, be the course a Prime Prep course, offered by Prof. Pilette, or a Kaplan course. For Prime Prep information and schedules, please contact Prof. Pilette at: prep@primeprep.com. If you would like to take the Kaplan course, you MUST apply for the CCNY discount. To receive the CCNY 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).

For information regarding Kaplan and for approval of your registration for either course, contact Renee, renee_phrilli@verizon.net). You must obtain approval before registering for either course.

CHECK PROCEDURE

Remember: all checks (stipends, reimbursement for travel, summer monies, etc.) are picked up in the Bursar’s office, A103. It takes approximately three weeks to receive a check once a disbursement form has been submitted. Stipend checks are not processed until the journal has been received with the Mentor’s signature. If you have any questions about the procedure, please ask Renee Philippi.

Ms. Anna Hutcheson in Admissions, A101, is the person to speak to if you have any questions regarding when a check will be ready for pick-up in the Bursar’s Office.
Honorable Mention. She was also named a Colin Powell Center Rebecca Panko Math Department’s Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. Merit as a finalist in the CUNY Math Challenge as well as the Yan Fei Luo 2012-2013 academic year. as a Visiting Student by the Rangjung Yeshe Institute in Nepal for Kaye Scholarship. He is a Gilman Scholar and has been accepted Joshua Liveris Union. and a Study/Travel Opportunities for CUNY students (STOCS) awarded the CCNY President’s Scholarship for Study Abroad a Colin Powell Center Partners for Change Fellow. He was also 2012 NEH Institute on the Civil War. Emily Graham (History) was awarded the History Department’s Bailey W. Diffie Award and the Certificate of Academic Achievement for Excellence in the Study of French from Foreign Languages and Literatures. She has been accepted into the Skadden Arps Legal Honors Program and joined the BA/MA program in History. Emilie Gruchow (History) was awarded the History Department’s Tremaine Prize and curated “Washington Heights: Then and Now,” a historical photography and oral history exhibition at Morris-Jumel Museum. Hyeondo (Luke) Hwang (Chemistry) was awarded the Chemistry Department’s Arthur G. Levy Award. He presented a poster at the national American Chemical Society conference in San Diego in April 2012, and gave an oral presentation of his research on bio-based surfactants at the American Chemical Society New York Chapter Conference in May. He continues to explore biomass conversion in Prof. George John’s organic materials laboratory for the summer. He is also involved in advancing immigrant education rights. Shanna Jean-Baptiste (French) was awarded the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department’s Downer Academic Award for “Excellence in the Study of French” and the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship. Rakim Jenkins (Sociology/Black Studies) was named a Colin Powell Center Partners for Change Fellow. He was also awarded the CCNY President’s Scholarship for Study Abroad and a Study/Travel Opportunities for CUNY students (STOCS) Scholarship to Ghana (Accra). He is President of the Black Student Union. Joshua Liveris (Philosophy) was awarded the Philosophy Department’s Sperling Award and the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship. He is a Gilman Scholar and has been accepted as a Visiting Student by the Rangjung Yeshe Institute in Nepal for the 2012-2013 academic year. Yan Fei Luo (Mathematics) received a Certificate of Merit as a finalist in the CUNY Math Challenge as well as the Math Department’s Outstanding Academic Achievement Award. Rebecca Panko (Biology) was awarded the Biology Department’s Professor Jess Hanks Award and an Udall Scholarship Honorable Mention. She was also named a Colin Powell Center Partners For Change Fellow. Mayelin Perez (English) was awarded the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship. Christen Pruitt (English) was awarded the English Department’s David Markowitz Essay Award and the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship. Rocio Rayo (History/Political Science) was awarded the Political Science Department’s Carl Dunant Award, the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship, and the Weston Scholarship for Public and Community Service. Hanifah Walidah Robinson (Ethnomusicology) was awarded CUNY BA’s prestigious Thomas W. Smith Fellowship. Carlos Santacruz (History) was awarded the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship and is a member of the DREAM Team at CCNY. Glenda Ullauri (Anthropology) was selected to participate in the Leadership Alliance Program (SR-EIP) at Washington University (St. Louis), where she will develop her research on the causes and social impacts of ecological change in the Andes. Deborah Williams (English) was awarded the Division of Humanities Kaye Scholarship. She was also selected to participate in the 2012 CUNY Pipeline Program.

EXCERPTS FROM FELLOWS’ JOURNALS

SPRING 2012:

Every semester, Fellows attend workshops designed to provide important information and to foster academic achievement. Below, Fellows comment on some of the spring workshops.

Glenda Ullauri (Anthropology). The Balancing Work/Career and Life Workshop motivated me to keep pursuing my goal of going to graduate school even though life can sometimes be hectic and unpredictable. Hearing personal stories of City College professors, I realized that everyone follows his/her own unique path. I especially appreciated Professor James Biles’ presentation because for a long time I felt intimidated by his intelligence and work. After hearing the story about his unconventional route to graduate school and his continuing efforts to balance an academic career and family life, I saw him as more approachable. This workshop encouraged me to look far ahead to consider various ways to build a family alongside an academic career. Most importantly, it showed me that although life can be unpredictable, the combination of keeping a steady goal and being flexible helps one get through tough times.

Rebecca Panko (Biology). Political Science Professor Vincent Boudreau offered exceptional advice [at the workshop on public speaking] in a fun, casual manner. He touched on many of the anxieties commonly felt by public speakers, and gave practical advice about how to overcome fear and remain calm and composed. I especially liked his recommendation to approach a speech like a story, with a definite beginning, middle, and end. He stated that one’s entire speech should be able to be summarized on a single index card. Following his suggestion, I took notes on an index card and realized how useful it is to be constrained to such a small space: you really have to know/understand the material. He advocated practicing a speech many times, but to avoid recitation. I appreciated
his advice on voice tonality, and how to utilize the voice to stress important points or draw the audience in. He referred to bullet points as “the most treasured part of your speech, the part that you can’t wait to get to,” which he called a speech’s “mountaintops.” I will try his storyboarding strategy when I prepare for future speeches and listen to speeches of the people I admire.

Hanifah Walidah Robinson (Ethnomusicology). The workshop on applying to graduate school demystified what, quite frankly, I anticipated would be an intimidating process. The panelists—seniors who had applied to graduate school—reflected a broad spectrum of academic concentrations, attitudes and priorities, which I found refreshing. One senior who was wait-listed [and happily later accepted at NYU] gave me a needed wake-up call; I learned that having high GRE scores and a 4.0 GPA (as she had) is not enough. It is essential to demonstrate clarity about an exciting research agenda and also to do a lot of homework to find doctoral programs that are a good “fit”—where there are faculty who will feel qualified and interested to direct your research.

I learned that knowing and connecting early with professors and institutions of interest can in some cases make the difference. I also learned about how and why you should keep time on your side; in other words, planning and foreseeing the road miles ahead prepares you for the voyage that is grad school. Along this line, the humanities panelists’ discussion about writing their grad school writing samples inspired me. They all agreed that having to write a nearly perfect 25-30 page paper gave them confidence that they were well-prepared for the challenge of grad school. Since I was taking a graduate level seminar with my mentor, I decided to challenge myself now to write a 20+ page paper; having accomplished this already as a junior helps me to know that research is something I enjoy and can carry out with ease.

Hoang Nguyen (Biochemistry). At the workshop on applying to graduate school, panelist Joshua Clough gave advice that has stuck in my mind. He said, “We’re not perfect, but we should know what our strengths are and work with these.” At first, I felt that that I normally do this; but I soon realized that I tend to focus more on overcoming my weaknesses than on building on my strengths. Interestingly, Joshua’s advice resonated with everything my tennis coach has told me: “I want you to always hit the shot you are most comfortable with because that is your weapon.” I need to take to heart this advice that my weaknesses will not help me win a tennis match or gain professional success; it is only by building on my strengths that I will overcome the odds.

Mentoring by CCNY faculty is at the heart of the fellowship program and essential for undergraduates to test their interest in and ability to pursue an academic career. Two of the new Fellows discuss what they learned and how they have benefited from this piece of the program.

Hanifah Walidah Robinson (Ethnomusicology). Thankfully, I attended the mentoring workshop before picking my Mellon Mays mentor. I learned that the mentoring relationship should be approached like one would approach a life partner: with the understanding that all doesn’t have to be perfect in order to appreciate what works and put this to use.
also appreciated the frankness of several Fellows who suggested that we build mentoring relationship with more than one mentor rather than place all of our cookies in one basket, and that we should try to learn from mentoring relationships that do not work well. The gem of information I took away from this workshop—and the most empowering—was the advice to always set a very clear agenda for a mentoring relationship. It seems almost obvious, but I can sometimes reach for too many stars and forsake the sun. Knowing that this is one of my shortcomings, I appreciate the requirement that each Fellow must sign a “Learning Agreement” with her mentor in order to clarify specific agendas and goals for the mentoring relationship each semester.

Rebecca Panko (Biology). I was fortunate to have established a professional yet friendly relationship with my mentor, Professor Amy Berkov, prior to joining the fellowship. In fact, it was she who suggested that I apply for the City College Fellowship. During spring semester, Professor Berkov identified several areas to focus on at this point in my undergraduate studies. She encouraged me to continue applying for scholarships, and helped edit my essays for the Barry Goldwater and Udall Foundation Scholarships. She emphasized the importance of building a strong curriculum vitae (CV), and suggested how to present my accomplishments on the CV. She regularly sends emails announcing lecture series, symposiums, and conferences that may interest me. She has also made valuable recommendations of doctoral programs that match my interests. She has encouraged me to think about the research I would like to do in graduate school and to begin to collect journal articles of current research in my field in order to identify possible doctoral mentors. Under her direction and with a summer research grant from the fellowships program, I will begin to conduct my own research project so that doctoral programs see that I can take a project to fruition. Finally, thanks to Professor Berkov’s introduction and recommendation, I have been invited to enroll in Professor Robert Anderson’s doctoral-level fall seminar.

Pursuing research is key to preparing for and gaining admission to doctoral programs. Looking back at her time as a City College Fellow, a graduating Fellow describes this aspect of her experience.

Elva Yang (Biology): During summer 2011, I was funded by the City College Fellowships to join my mentor Professor David Lohman and his international collaborators for a season of fieldwork in the Philippines. This field experience gave me an opportunity to learn a variety of collecting and preservation techniques while observing the behavior of the organisms in the field. I was also able to gather the data I needed to prepare and present two posters and a talk related to my research on Euploea butterflies. My third poster presentation will be at the First Joint Congress on Evolutionary Biology, in Ottawa, Canada, from July 6 to July 11, 2012. This landmark event will bring together researchers from all over the world devoted to the study of evolution. By attending the meeting, I will gain knowledge about the most recent research and have an opportunity to meet potential doctoral advisors before I apply to graduate school this fall. Additionally, it will be useful and encouraging to see what aspects of my research are interesting to others.

Every spring semester, the City College Fellowships Program sponsors a research conference at which Fellows present the results of their research to a public audience. Below, a last semester Fellow describes the many steps that went into her preparation and the benefits she reaped.

Agata Tumilowicz (Comparative Literature). I started my last undergraduate semester with the annual CCNY Fellowship Research Conference in mind. At my mentor Professor Bettina Lerner’s suggestion, I decided to come up with a brand new paper to present at the conference. Throughout the semester I focused on polishing research I had conducted during the past two years [on European street theater] and, with Prof. Lerner’s guidance, I developed a new thesis. I appreciate that she held me to the highest standards, provided feedback that allowed me to improve my skills, challenged me to think more theoretically, and recommended bibliography essential to my research. Her engagement in my work, dedication, patience, and optimism helped me believe in my project and in myself.

Prof. Lerner also took me along to a New York Historical Society symposium entitled “The Age of Revolution: A Whole History,” which provided a different sort of preparation for the research conference. I benefited from the opportunity to listen to presentations given by leading scholars of the history and culture of Haiti and the Caribbean. I was deeply impressed with the speech given by Professor Laurent Dubois. His knowledge, wit and charisma provided an excellent example of a successful presentation. I was not only interested in the content of his speech, but also in the way he delivered his argument. In addition, the lecture by Professor David Armitage on the current historiography of modern revolutions broadened my historical perspective and enriched my own analysis of street theater. Overall, the symposium proved to be a fantastic exposure to outstanding scholarship and also a valuable education in public speaking.

I cannot stress enough how much I enjoyed the Fellowship Program’s Research Conference and how enriching and inspiring it was to learn about other Fellows’ work. In response to my own presentation, I was positively surprised and delighted with the invaluable feedback I received. This conference provided us Fellows with the opportunity to discuss certain overlapping concepts, and it was excellent practice for learning to convey the content and significance of our research to a multi-disciplinary audience.

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