

**NEW FELLOWS**

It is with great pleasure that we announce and welcome our new Fellows. From a most competitive pool of applications, seven new Fellows have been selected to join the City College Fellowships Program in the spring semester 2005; two are Irani Fellows.

The new City College Fellowship Fellows are:
- Mr. Itamar Belisha (Electrical Engineering)
- Mr. Erick Leon (Psychology)
- Ms. Jasmina Nikolov (Psychology)
- Ms. Ujuka Obi-Eyiisi (Biochemistry)
- Ms. Mitza Zobenica (Civil Engineering)

The new Irani Fellows are:
- Mr. John Romey III (Music)
- Ms. Elena Sandoval (Music)

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**LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR**

Although I am by now well seasoned in my position as director, I continue to draw inspiration from the accomplishments of the Fellows, their passion, and their energy. One of the most successful events of the past semester was a Fellow-directed luncheon at which two of the Fellows led a discussion on the responsibility of intellectuals to the larger community. Their discussion reflected their commitment, their insight, and the importance of the contributions they will make as they establish themselves professionally. As this year’s seniors await responses from graduate schools, I can assure them that the cohorts of graduates now in PhD programs are thriving and making their mark on a wide range of academic disciplines and communities.

I am pleased to welcome a diverse and accomplished new cohort of five City College Fellows and two Irani Fellows from the Sciences, Social Sciences, and Humanities. Recruitment for a new cohort of Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows will begin at the start of the spring semester, with applications due on March 15. Please encourage promising candidates to apply!

This semester’s program is a full one, including our spring interdisciplinary seminar, Albert Einstein and His World, which will be taught by Professor Joshua Wilner (English) and Danian Hu (History): “Einstein’s discovery of the Special Theory of Relativity in 1905 represents a defining moment in the history of the modern world. In this course we will seek to understand Einstein’s discovery both in the context of the history of science, and in relation to contemporary developments taking place in other fields, including: art, literature, psychology and philosophy.” In addition the program will welcome back one of City College’s own, Professor Rafia Zafar, a PhD in English from Harvard and a professor of English and Director of African American Studies at Washington University, St. Louis. She will address the Fellows at our forum, “On Research.”

Please take a minute to read the excerpts from Fellows’ journals, detailing opportunities that the Fellowships Program has made available to them, and projects they have undertaken. Also, mark your calendars for May 6th, when many of the Fellows will present their research at our annual City College Fellowships Program Research Conference.

Susan Besse

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**Summer Reports 2004**

by: Pamela Mena

Pamela Mena, a Mellon Mays Fellow and Anthropology major, enrolled in an intensive K’ichee’ Maya language course offered by the Maya-owned Institute Projecto Linguistico Francisco Marroquin located in Antigua, Guatemala.

“My lessons began with Maya K’ichee’ Professor Manuel Jaminez Tamriz, who became an important influence and guide on my scholarly journey. Professor Jaminez is from the town of Nahuala in the department of Sololá, where the residents are known for their fierce defense of their heritage and hostility to outside influences. I was invited to visit Nahuala by my professor, who is not only the chief of the town...”
but also the aigij, the priest of Maya ceremony, or shaman. I left Nahaula with a sense of wonder at what this remote community has accomplished as a result of their continuing struggles to secure electricity, water, and education. From there, we visited other Maya towns in the Guatemalan highlands, where I put into practice the language skills I was acquiring, and learned about Maya culture and customs. In Panajachel, a thriving tourist industry has introduced negative effects of globalization, including child prostitution, drugs, and loss of language, customs, and traditions.

I was invited to several Maya shrines by my professor, where I witnessed ceremonies not open to the public. I did not feel slighted by the K’ichee’ in the least for not being pure Mayan, but I did learn that some of the aigij questioned my presence at the ceremonies, not because I am American but because I had not learned enough of the Maya calendar and language to understand the significance of what I was witnessing. It was an honor to be allowed into some of the sacred caves and ceremonies.

I saw first hand the deep divide between the Third World and the industrialized world and learned an immense amount about myself as an American, a Mayan, and a student. I am determined to return to Guatemala, hopefully with film experience so I can record the lives of the people I met. Their stories are incredible ones.”

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.

by: Njeri Micheu

Njeri Micheu, an International Studies major, discussed her progress writing a paper that has grown out of a sponsored summer research trip to Kenya.

“This semester, I started to work on a paper I hope to publish. After conducting research in Kenya on the role of local leaders in implementing international initiatives in public health, Dr. Fernando encouraged me to submit my findings to a UN sponsored journal, the Community Development Journal. Revising this paper over and over again was sometimes quite frustrating, but I am sure it will be worth it in the end. In the process of rewriting, I discovered that the World Health Organization was ‘thinking about’ implementing a program like the one I am proposing! This was quite depressing at first because I felt I would not be taken seriously. However, Dr. Fernando is encouraging me to publish my article before the WHO implements anything. My depression was quickly replaced by excitement when I realized that I have ideas that can be taken seriously.

Having done a lot of research this year, I realize that I enjoy it. I take pleasure in testing my hypothesis, reviewing literature, becoming familiar with theories, and coming up with new ideas. The fulfillment I get from conducting research has given me confidence about pursuing a PhD.”

by: Juan Montaña

Juan Montaña, a Philosophy and Psychology major, spent significant time and energy over the fall semester applying to PhD programs, as did most of the Fellows who are seniors. Here, he reflects on the process.

“I started researching graduate schools in the summer by talking to my professors and mentor and by searching on line for authors whose work I like. Once I had a tentative list of universities, I found students doing their PhD at these schools and met or talked on the phone with each of them. This was very interesting because it gave me an insider’s view of each school. I was surprised that most of them focused first on the relationship among the graduate students and between students and professors. This made me realize that while one might want to go to a prestigious school, the environment is very important to success as a graduate student.

It was interesting to write the personal statement because I had to think about my career so far, my goals, why I wanted to pursue a doctorate, and where. I do not know how many drafts I wrote, but at some point everything fell into place. That required a lot of reflection. I had understood more or less well the time I spent at the National University of Columbia, but had not come to terms with my time at CCNY. Professor Tartter pointed this out to me,
which helped me gain perspective and focus.

My writing sample came out of a paper I wrote for my mentor in an independent study. As part of the process of improving the paper, I decided to present it at the Cognitive Science Symposium at the Graduate Center on October 24 and also formed a writing group with some friends at the Graduate Center. The group experience was very interesting and helped me to greatly improve the paper. For the conference, I prepared a Power Point presentation that led to a lively discussion. As an unexpected benefit, I met two contacts at the universities I am applying to.

by: Kianny Antigua

Kianny Antigua, an English major and Irani Fellow, discussed the importance of the help she received from her mentor in revising work for publication.

“The greatest endowment I have received as a Fellow has been the opportunity to work with a faculty mentor. I feel fortunate to have found a mentor who cares about me as a student and about my success as a professional. Dr. Angel Estéves has walked next to me through all my projects. I meet with him twice a week and we also communicate via email. This semester, we worked on a collection of twenty of my stories. He read them, made corrections, and gave me some suggestions. He also wrote the prologue. The manuscript will be published in December 2004 by one of the most respected publishing houses in the Dominican Republic, Editorial Cole.”

The Fellowships Program encourages Fellows to reflect on pedagogical approaches used by their different professors. Deborah Wolf, an English major, considers different styles of classroom teaching.

Taking five English classes this semester, I had the opportunity to compare five very distinct teaching styles. In one course, the professors asked the class to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of any aspect of the course. One student addressed the fact that the professor spent the majority of class time

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SPRING 2005 SCHEDULE

**MMUF Annual Dinner**
**Fellow-Directed Luncheons**

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

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<td>12:30 - 2 PM</td>
<td>NAC 6/316</td>
<td>Workshop: On Mentoring</td>
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<td>Th., March 10</td>
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<td>Forum: Prof. Rafia Zafar</td>
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<td>Th., April 7</td>
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<td>NAC 6/316</td>
<td>Workshop: Applying Graduate School</td>
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<td>Th., April 14</td>
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<td>DUE: Applications Summer Research</td>
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<td>Th., April 14</td>
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<td>Recruitment Meeting City College Fellowship and Irani</td>
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<td>Fr., April 15</td>
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<td>MMUF NY City-wide Conference at Hunter College</td>
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**GRE PREP COURSE**

There will be additional GRE PREP courses in the winter and spring:

G-6 Saturdays, March 5 - March 26 (10 AM - 5 PM)
G-7 Fridays, April 1 - May 6 (4 PM - 8 PM)
G-8 Saturdays, April 2 - April 23 (10 AM - 5 PM)
G-9 Wednesdays, June 8 - July 13 (5 PM - 8 PM)

For more info, contact: www.primeprep.com or 866/206-9067, x3066.

Remember: the Fellowship Office will pay the course fee.
lecturing, and this may have caused students to feel less responsible for doing the reading. (During one session earlier in the semester, it was painfully obvious that very few students were prepared for class, and the professor chastised us briefly.) Another student argued that there is (should be) an implicit contract between professors and students and that lesson plans should not focus on motivating students to their “jobs.” This student also commented that he pays tuition to learn from a scholar, someone who has mastered a certain discipline; he doesn’t attend CCNY to discuss literature with other students. This debate prompted me to consider what proportion of lecturing and discussion I will try to create in my future classroom.”

Bernadette Davis, a Mellon Mays Fellow and Sociology major, participated in Wesleyan University’s MMUF summer seminar on the role of intellectuals of color in the academy and society. She also attended the MMUF New England Regional Conference on December 4th.

“Wesleyan has a reputation of being a very liberal and activist campus, while most of its student population come from very privileged, upper-class backgrounds. It was quite interesting to see young people, who have known nothing but privilege, being so passionate about issues that do not affect them directly: racism, poverty, and oppression. At times, it came across as though they resented their upbringing, and this was their way of righting societal wrongs.”

“For me, the most exciting event of the fall semester was the MMUF New England Regional Conference at Wesleyan. The topic was “turning stumbling blocks into stepping stones.” I enjoyed the chance to see the Fellows I had spent the summer with. And it was inspiring to meet other Mellon Mays Fellows from universities all over New England. Three young, female, minority professors spoke about their experiences in PhD programs and as junior faculty members. Hearing their stories was very encouraging, since they reminded us that everyone must overcome doubts, fears, and obstacles to reach her goals.”

Each semester the Fellowships Program invites a faculty member to talk to the Fellows in our forum: “On Research.” The fall semester’s talk by Professor John Krinsky (Political Science) inspired Sharon Fader, a Psychology major, along with many of the other Fellows.

“Prof. Krinsky’s highly engaging presentation on research left me eager to delve into my own research. He gave us two pieces of advice that were particularly helpful. First, have a passion for what you are studying. And second, ask for help, so you can proceed more competently. I was nervous about entering into a neuropsychology lab to research language disorders, since I (prematurely) assumed that I had no interest or talent in this area. Professor Krinsky’s comment made me question what I was doing. But gradually I realized that my work in the lab was not as irrelevant as I initially assumed. My priority is to become a skilled clinical psychologist with a focus on eating disorders and borderline personality disorders. To do so, I must become literate in conducting and consuming research. Reading journals, learning to observe behavior in a scientific manner, coming to understand more about the work of psychologists, professors, and graduate students was all incredibly important to me in realizing my goals. And so, I realized that my passion was not incongruous with my current research.”

“Asking for help when you need it seemed like common sense to me, at least intellectually. But, in fact, it was a concept I needed to truly internalize if I was to proceed more proficiently with my work in the lab. At times, I was frustrated with myself for my uncertainty about the work I was doing and afraid to ask questions for fear of being viewed negatively. After the forum, I felt an impetus to get back to the lab and ask those very questions I had been grappling with. Professor Krinsky’s enthusiasm for his work was contagious. And his advice was simply some of the best I have received from a teacher.”

City College Fellowships Program is an umbrella program that administers several undergraduate fellowships. See our website for information:
www.ccny.cuny.edu/fellowshipsprogram
The City College Fellowships Office is located in NAC 6/316, 212/650-8388.