Minority Fellowship Program Presents New Fellows

by Edward Murguia, Director Minority Affairs Program

Assisted by its Advisory Committee in a March meeting, the Minority Fellowship Program of the American Sociological Association has selected its twenty-seventh consecutive cohort of Fellows. This cohort includes both beginning and continuing graduate students showing promise of developing strong careers in sociology. The following biographical sketches and pictures describe this talented group

Fellow: Kristina de los Santos
Race/Ethnicity: Asian American (Filipino)  
Undergraduate Institution Attended: University of Virginia  
Graduate Institution Chosen: Ohio State University  
Kristina entered graduate work at Ohio State University in 1996 and completed her Masters degree in 1998. Her research has focused on the social and economic determinants of English-language proficiency for four Asian American immigrant groups: Filipinos, Asian Indians, Koreans, and Chinese. In addition, she has studied processes of racial identification among individuals of mixed racial heritage. She has one paper under review and one in progress.

Fellow: Iwalani Else
Race/Ethnicity: Pacific Islander (Native Hawaiian)  
Undergraduate Institution Attended: University of Hawaii at Manoa  
Graduate Institution Chosen: University of Hawaii at Manoa  
After completing a BA and MA in communication, Iwalani began her graduate work in sociology at the University of Hawaii at Manoa in 1996. She has authored and co-authored several works, including, “Where are the Native Hawaiian Physicians?” in Pacific Health Dialog, and “A Medical School-Based Program to Encourage Native Hawaiians to Choose Medical Careers” in Academic Medicine. Her current research interests include both the studies of barriers to health care services of Native Hawaiians, and of mental illness, depression, and suicide among native peoples in the Pacific Basin.

Fellow: NeKenjie Grace  
Race/Ethnicity: African American  
Undergraduate Institutions Attended: Emory University; Florida A&M University  
Graduate Institution Chosen: University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  
NeKenjie will be entering her second year in graduate school at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, having completed a BS degree at Florida A&M University in 1999. She was a Ronald E. McNair Award Recipient in 1998 and was awarded a University of Michigan Rackham Merit Fellowship in 1999. Her paper entitled, “Differential Influenza Vaccination Coverage among the Elderly in the U.S.” was presented at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1999. Currently her research interest is in impact of divorce on women’s mental health.
Fellow: Susan S. Kim  
*Race/Ethnicity:* Asian American (Korean)  
*Undergraduate Institution Attended:* University of California, Berkeley  
*Graduate Institution Chosen:* University of California, Los Angeles  

After receiving a BA in Ethnic Studies from the University of California, Berkeley, and an MA at the University of Chicago in Sociology, Susan returned to the West Coast and worked at grant writing with several non-profit agencies assisting Korean Americans in Los Angeles. She began graduate work at the University of California, Los Angeles in 1997. Her work has focused on academic achievement among Korean American youth. She hopes to continue to study issues of race, immigration, and mental health in the future.

Fellow: Robert Montenegro  
*Race/Ethnicity:* Latino (Salvadoran/Guatemalan)  
*Undergraduate Institution Attended:* Pitzer College  
*Graduate Institution Chosen:* University of California, Los Angeles  

At Pitzer College, Robert majored both in sociology and psychobiology. His senior thesis dealt with language barriers between monolingual English-speaking physicians and monolingual Spanish-speaking patients in a hospital emergency room setting. Robert received many awards at Pitzer, including an "Outstanding Community Service" award, and awards for academic merit. He will begin his graduate studies at the University of California, Los Angeles, this fall.

Fellow: Erica Ryu  
*Race/Ethnicity:* Asian American (Korean)  
*Undergraduate Institution Attended:* Dartmouth College  
*Graduate Institution Chosen:* University of Michigan, Ann Arbor  

Erica’s senior thesis at Dartmouth entitled, "The Aftermath: Korean American Collective Action in Post-Riot Los Angeles won the “Ralph P. Holben Prize” at Dartmouth, given to the student who shows greatest promise in applied sociology. She has completed her first year at Michigan, and intends to study various sources and outcomes of stress among Asian Americans, such as post-traumatic stress disorders among Koreans affected by the Los Angeles Riots of 1992.

Fellow (non-NIMH, area of specialization open): Krystal Bearnon  
*Race/Ethnicity:* African American  
*Undergraduate Institution Attended:* Oklahoma State University  
*Graduate Institution Chosen:* Oklahoma State University  

Krystal graduated summa cum laude with a BA in sociology from Oklahoma State University in the spring of 1999. In the fall of 1999, she began her graduate work in sociology also at Oklahoma State. Among her many awards and achievements, she received the "Outstanding Senior" and "Outstanding Scholar" awards of the Sociology Department at Oklahoma State in 1999. Additionally, in 1998 and 1999 she was co-captain of the Oklahoma State University track team. She is interested in studying inner city black athletes and their adjustment to college life, as well as depression among African American mothers of young children.

Fellow (non-NIMH, area of specialization open): Tomas Jimenez  
*Race/Ethnicity:* Latino (Mexican American)  
*Undergraduate Institution Attended:* Santa Clara University  
*Graduate Institution Chosen:* Harvard University  

As an undergraduate at Santa Clara University, Tomas won several awards. He was valedictorian of his class (class of 1998), received the "Matt Meier
Award” for research in ethnic studies for his paper, “Negotiating Ethnic Borderlands: The Social Reconstruction of Ethnic Identity”, the “Riorden Award” for outstanding community service, and the “Distinguished Undergraduate Student Award” given by the California Sociological Association. He began his graduate work at Harvard in the fall of 1998, and his work has focused on ethnic identity, assimilation, and poverty among Mexican Americans.