Introducing MFP Cohort 34

The American Sociological Association and the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) are pleased to introduce the 10 new Fellows who comprise MFP Cohort 34. The MFP Advisory Panel met this past spring in Washington, DC, to review the highly competitive pool of applicants. Cohort 34 consists of PhD candidates with strong research interests in the sociology of mental health and mental illness, race and ethnicity, and the discipline in general.

The new MFP Fellows will officially begin their training on August 1, 2007. As an early part of their training, the Fellows will attend the 2007 Annual Meeting in New York, where they will attend a day-long orientation with a brief history of ASA and MFP followed by research presentations by sociologists with expertise in mental health, medical sociology, and race and ethnicity. During the remainder of their time in New York, they will participate in numerous sessions and workshops, attend MFP-sponsored events, and meet sociologists with similar research interests.

The Minority Fellowship Program, established in 1974, is funded primarily through a T-32 training grant provided by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), with some recent co-funding by the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA). MFP is also supported by generous contributions from Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), the Midwest Sociological Society (MSS), the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS), the Southwestern Sociological Association (SWSA), and ASA Council, as well as contributions from many individual ASA members.

Ana Campos-Holland (NIDA Fellow)
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of California- Santa Barbara
*Graduate Institution:* University of Iowa

Ana received her BA from the University of California-Santa Barbara with four majors: anthropology, Chicana/o studies, Latin American & Iberian studies, and sociology. After being introduced to sociological research through the ASA MOST Program, under Beth Schneider’s mentorship, she selected the University of Iowa to study sociology at the graduate level. She is specializing in criminology and stratification, with a focus on substance/drug treatment, the impact parental unconventional behavior has on children’s everyday experiences, and gender and crime. She is currently developing her dissertation project, which addresses the relationship between health risk behaviors (such as drug use), gender, and crime. It was initially a product of participation in the National Hispanic Scientists Network on Drug Abuse Summer Training Institute sponsored by NIDA/NIH with specialized mentorship from Avelardo Valdés and Alice Cepeda. Ana is committed to the inquiry of substance/drug use from the sociological perspective because of the impact it has on children, families, and communities.

Tracy Chu (NIMH Fellow)
*Undergraduate Institution:* Hunter College, CUNY
*Graduate Institution:* CUNY Graduate Center

Tracy graduated with honors with a bachelor’s degree in philosophy and sociology from Hunter College, City University of New York (CUNY). At the CUNY Graduate
School and University Center, Tracy advanced to candidacy with distinction in 2005 and has completed an interdisciplinary concentration in Advanced Social Research. She holds an en-route Master’s degree in sociology from Queens College (CUNY), and is also pursuing an MA in Public Health with a concentration in Urban Health in a joint program with Hunter College. Tracy’s research interests include the social construction of illness, immigration and ethnicity, and international law and human rights. Her dissertation, “The Pathology of Victimhood: Mental Health and the Social Construction of ‘Trauma’ Among Refugee/Asylum-Seeking Survivors of Political Violence,” is based on quantitative and qualitative research with a cross-section of West and Central African, Tibetan, and Eastern European clients of the Bellevue/NYU Program for Survivors of Torture in New York City. Tracy has articles under review in the Journal of Social and Ecological Boundaries, Social Theory and Health, and International Migration. Tracy is a native New Yorker.

**Kimberly R. Huyser (NIMH Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution:* Calvin College  
*Graduate Institution:* University of Texas-Austin

Kimberly is a doctoral student in the Department of Sociology and graduate student trainee at the Population Research Center at the University of Texas-Austin. Kimberly’s research specializations are in racial and ethnic relations and the sociology and demography of Native Americans. Kimberly has also been a National Institute of Child Health and Human Development Pre-doctoral Trainee, Navajo Nation Chief Manuelito Scholar, and Calvin College Graduate Study Fellow. Kimberly grew up in Window Rock, AZ, which is the political capital of the Navajo Nation. Living on the reservation, she witnessed firsthand the economic disadvantage faced by her family, but also the systematic inequality faced by the Navajo people. Kimberly’s research focuses on understanding how American Indians recover and resist mental health problems, and on how this understanding may contribute to the persistent and cohesive American Indian ethnic group and ethnic identity. She has co-authored an article due out later this year in the Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion titled “Racially Diverse Congregations: Organizational Identity and the Accommodation of Differences.”

**Mosi Adesina Ifatunji (MSS/ABS Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Illinois at Chicago  
*Graduate Institution:* University of Illinois at Chicago

Mosi was born in Normal, IL, but spent much of his childhood and adolescence in Oakland, CA. After completing high school, he moved back to the Chicago area to attend the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) where he double majored in African American Studies and Psychology. He is now a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at UIC, with a concentration in race, ethnicity, and gender. He is also a Graduate Fellow at the Institute for Research on Race and Public Policy and at the Center for the Study of Race, Politics, and Culture at UIC. His research choices reflect his desire to understand the ways in which race, class, and gender interact at, and between, the macro, meso, and microlevels of social systems. His dissertation is designed to be a sociological intervention in the study of racial socialization. Until recently, Mosi has maintained several long-term volunteer positions with non-profit organizations that focus on minority education in urban settings. He is also the current host of Mojos’ Pen, a spoken word poetry set that is held on the UIC campus.

**Melissa Kew (NIMH Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Toronto  
*Graduate Institution:* University of Chicago

Melissa grew up surrounded by the golden veld in South Africa and then moved to
frosty Canada at age 12. She earned a BA and MA in sociology from the University of Toronto and is currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at the University(172,85),(799,236) of Chicago. Melissa has been involved with projects at the East Bay AIDS Research Institute focusing on HIV-related stigma, late presentation to care, community beliefs about HIV, and anti-retroviral drug adherence. As a doctoral student at the University of Chicago, Melissa’s primary research area is the sociology of sexuality. Her dissertation explores the sexual relationships of HIV-positive women pre- and post-diagnosis. She is particularly interested in the influence of mental health on the sexual risk-taking of HIV-positive minority women living in the eastern San Francisco Bay Area.

**Armando Lara-Millan (NIMH Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution*: University of California-Riverside  
*Graduate Institution*: Northwestern University

Armando majored in sociology at the University of California- Riverside, where he graduated with honors. During his time there he was a research assistant for the Institute of Research on World-Systems. Later, he broadened his research interests by participating in two National Science Foundation internships in demography and urban ethnography. During his undergraduate career, Armando was fortunate to have worked with professors Scott Brooks, Chris Chase-Dunn, Robert Emerson, Jack Katz, Tom Reifer, and Andrés Villarreal. Armando is currently pursuing a PhD in sociology at Northwestern University. He has begun an ethnographic investigation into the drug abuse experiences of homeless persons within the context of public-space. In his free time, Armando enjoys playing basketball and exploring cities. He has lived in San Francisco and Los Angeles, and has recently adjusted to the climate in Chicago.

**Deidre Lynn Redmond (NIMH Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution*: Adrian College  
*Graduate Institution*: Indiana University-Bloomington

Deidre grew up in Cleveland, OH. She received her BA in criminal justice and political science from Adrian College. Throughout her undergraduate career, she participated in residence life and was an elected board member of the multicultural student organization on campus. Driven by an interest in the life experiences of low-income women, she wrote her senior and later her Ronald E. McNair theses on this topic. Subsequently, Deidre began her Master’s work at Indiana University, where she received an Indiana University McNair Fellowship in 2005. Her graduate thesis is titled “Does Parenthood Offer an Emotional Benefit?” in which she examines the socio-emotional realms of parenthood, paying particular attention to mental health outcomes. Her interests encompass the areas of social psychology, mental health, stratification, and the family.

**Tiffani Saunders (NIMH Fellow)**  
*Undergraduate Institution*: Bowie State University  
*Graduate Institution*: Indiana University-Bloomington

Tiffani is a PhD student in sociology at Indiana University. She graduated summa cum laude from Bowie State University with a BS in sociology and criminal justice. Her research interests encompass the subfields of family, mental health, and race, class, and gender. She is currently working on two projects: one explores the impact of various financial resources on mental health and the other examines the role of social mobility on the mental health of the black middle class. When not conducting research, she enjoys spending time with her son, playing the violin, dancing in a local ensemble, and visiting family in other parts of the country.

**Demetrius Semien (AKD Fellow)**
Undergraduate Institution: Trinity University
Graduate Institution: University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill

Demetrius is a graduate of Yale Divinity School ('00) and is a PhD candidate at the University of North Carolina. Demetrius has worked extensively with ethnographic projects, qualitative interviews and focus group discussions. While at Yale University, Demetrius served as Race Dialogue Coordinator for the Yale University-New Haven community for the Association of American Colleges and Universities’ Racial Legacies and Learning: An American Dialogue Project and for President Clinton’s Initiative on Race. Demetrius wrote his MA thesis, “The Influence of God Talk and Religious Gateways on Adolescent Volunteerism,” on the interaction between religion and the community volunteer activities of adolescents. His dissertation involves collecting interviews to examine the motivations for and benefits of reentry efforts among prison industry workers and faith volunteers. In 2006, Demetrius was a recipient of a Tanner Award for graduate students for excellence in undergraduate teaching at the University of North Carolina. That same year, he presented a working paper on this topic at a conference at the Terry Sanford Institute of Public Policy at Duke University.

Alena Singleton (NIMH Fellow)
Undergraduate Institution: Hunter College, CUNY
Graduate Institution: Rutgers University

Alena began her academic career as a budding biologist and medical school hopeful. She wanted to practice medicine and conduct scientific research that would address unmet physical and mental health needs in underserved communities throughout the country. However, shortly after beginning college, she realized that no matter how intellectually stimulating her scientific endeavors might be, they still left her asking why certain populations were underserved in the first place, which led her to take up the study of human cultures instead of cell cultures. Alena is currently a sociology doctoral student at Rutgers University-New Brunswick, where she does work surrounding cultural changes in racialized feminine beauty ideals, pop culture portrayals of racialized female beauty, and their impact on the body image and mental health outcomes of diverse populations. She also studies the classification systems used to categorize mental disorders and the impact that these classification rubrics have on both professional and lay conceptions of mental dysfunction. Alena has strong interests in mental health, medical sociology, social cognition, race/ethnicity, and gender/sexuality studies.