ASA Announces New Minority Fellows

by Mercedes Rubio and Felicia Evans, Minority Affairs Program

ASA’s Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) is pleased to introduce its 12 new fellows. These fellows comprise the 31st cohort of ASA’s 31-year-old MFP program. The MFP Advisory Panel had selected these students as the 2004 fellows based on the applications it reviewed in April, culling the group from a highly competitive pool of 82 applicants. The 12 students began their MFP fellowship on August 1, 2004.

MFP Cohort 31 consists of PhD candidates with much promise in the sociological study of mental health and in the discipline in general. The fellows attended the ASA Annual Meeting in San Francisco, where they received a daylong orientation, attended MFP sponsored events and met many sociologists whose research interests match their own.

The MFP is funded primarily through a training grant from the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). The program is also made possible by generous member contributions and donations from Alpha Kappa Delta, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Association of Black Sociologists, the Pacific Sociological Association, the Midwest Sociological Society, and the Southwestern Sociological Association.

The New MFP Fellows are:

Michael Chavez
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of California-Riverside
*Graduate Institution:* University of California-Riverside

Both of Michael’s parents are public school teachers, so education is a big part of his upbringing. After graduating from Riverside Polytechnic High School in 1998, he enrolled at Riverside Community College (RCC). After two years at RCC he transferred to the University of California-Riverside where he was fortunate to take classes with Alfredo Mirande, Edna Bonacich, and Scott Coltrane. At Riverside, Michael is a lead interviewer on Scott Coltrane’s National Institutes of Health funded “Parents and Youth Study.” He also works with Jan Stets, at the Social Psychology Lab where he assists in the design and implementation of several studies that explore gender, moral identity, and perceived injustice.

Michael’s current research interests include the mental health of couples dealing with disease. He intends to conduct several qualitative interviews with couples this summer. He intends to earn his MA by the end of the 2005 academic year. His ultimate goal is to teach and conduct research at the university level. He hopes to educate and inspire further generations and aid in the improvement of counseling and therapy programs with findings from his research.

Andrew M. Cislo
*Undergraduate Institution:* Northeastern Illinois University
*Graduate Institution:* Florida State University
Andrew majored in philosophy at Northeastern Illinois University, where he graduated with honors. After earning his bachelor’s degree, Andy worked for several years in gerontological research institutes where he developed his interests in mental health outcomes for ethnic minority elders. Andy is currently pursuing a PhD in sociology in Florida State University’s (FSU) Health and Aging concentration. He continues to work on quality of life measures for people with dementia with former colleagues from the Mather Institute on Aging. Andy has been a research assistant at FSU for the past academic year, investigating health outcomes for immigrants. He has recently developed an interest in the association between physical disability and depression for ethnic minorities. In his leisure time, Andy enjoys traveling, playing acoustic guitar, and golf.

**Brianne Davila**

*Undergraduate Institution:* Pitzer College  
*Graduate Institution:* University of California-Santa Barbara

Brianne majored in sociology at Pitzer College with a minor in Spanish. She has been actively engaged in social change through her participation in various organizations and activities. She worked as a residential advisor, mentoring high school students enrolled in the Upward Bound Program at California State University-Fullerton.

She traveled to Costa Rica to study the health care system there and interned at the Centro de Educacion y Nutricion, a center for malnourished and economically disadvantaged children. She also studied in Ecuador where she interned at an elderly home for women and conducted an independent study on the effects of migration on Ecuadorian communities. Most recently, she has been a health care advocate at the Pomona Day Labor Center. The center provides job placement and services to day laborers, an immigrant population. Working with day laborers and other students on the health project, she has helped identify the primary health concerns of day laborers. As an entering graduate student at Santa Barbara, she hopes to study identity formation, self-esteem and emotional well-being among Spanish-speaking students in special education.

**David Flores**

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of California-Berkeley  
*Graduate Institution:* University of Michigan

David is a first-year graduate student at the University of Michigan. He earned his BA in sociology at the University of California-Berkeley. David is a former Marine and served as a U.S. Embassy Guard at the Embassy in Cairo, Egypt, and the Consulate in São Paulo, Brazil. These experiences peaked his sociological imagination. As a result, he began to think critically about diasporic communities in the United States. He saw first hand the immigration processes for admittance to the United States and how many who were denied visas would opt to enter the United States without documentation. At the University of Michigan, he hopes to examine the decision-making process of Brazilian undocumented immigrants, their subsequent migration patterns and how these relate to reconfigurations of labor markets in the United States. After completing his doctoral work, he intends to be a professor and be an advocate for underrepresented communities through research and publications that help to build grassroot organizations that serve the poor.

**Gloria Gonzalez**

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of California-Berkeley
Graduate Institution: University of California-Los Angeles

Gloria is second-year doctoral student at the University of California-Los Angeles. She earned a BA in sociology from the University of California-Berkeley and an MA from the University of California-Los Angeles in 2002. Her masters thesis is titled *Traditional and Egalitarian Latino Couples: A Study of Division of Labor, Financial Management, and Wedding Planning*. Her academic research interests are race and ethnicity, gender, education, mental health, and Latina/o populations, and she is currently working on a research project examining college preparation and attendance among African Americans and Latina/os in California. Her research interests also encompass body image of Mexican immigrant and Mexican American adolescent girls. After completing her doctorate studies, Gloria intends to become a university professor.

Brandy Harris
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Alabama
*Graduate Institution:* Florida State University

Brandy is a third-year doctoral student at Florida State University. She completed her bachelor’s in psychology and master’s in women’s studies at the University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa. Her research interests include aging/long-term care policy, and race/gender stratification, specifically the underlying mechanisms that facilitate racial differences in the mental health of women. Brandy is currently working with professor Anne Barrett on a paper examining racial differences in the psychological distress of never-married African American and white women. Brandy works with Jill Quadagno at the Pepper Institute on Aging and Public Policy on a study examining residents, caregivers, staff, and administrators in assisted living in the state of Florida. Brandy was chosen by the National Academy of Social Insurance to intern this summer at the Institute for the Future of Aging Services in Washington, DC. Her dissertation will focus on how residents in assisted living environments perceive aging and the relationship of assisted living to psychological well-being and quality of life.

Anthony Hatch
*Undergraduate Institution:* Dartmouth College
*Graduate Institution:* University of Maryland-College Park

Anthony is a third-year doctoral student at the University of Maryland-College Park. He earned an AB in philosophy at Dartmouth College. Anthony works with Leonard Pearlin on a National Institute of Aging funded grant that aims to explicate some of the life-course sources of disparities in mental and physical health among groups of different social and economic statuses. His research interests include chronic illness and well-being over the life course, mechanisms of survival and disease risk, and he has parallel interests in social justice for disadvantaged groups. An example of his interest in social justice, Anthony is committed to HIV risk reduction in correctional institutions and has co-authored a research monograph and several scholarly articles on the subject. Anthony and his wife Rebekah are from Atlanta and live in Baltimore.

Nicole E. James
*Undergraduate Institution:* Oberlin College
*Graduate Institution:* Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University

Nicole is a PhD student in the Department of Sociology at Virginia Tech, in Blacksburg, Virginia. She completed a BA in psychology and Black studies at
Oberlin College. After graduating from Oberlin, she moved to Boston to teach at Roxbury Preparatory Charter School. After two years of teaching at Roxbury, she decided to begin her graduate studies at Virginia Tech, where she earned a Master of Science degree in 2003. Her areas of concentration are race/ethnicity and mental health. She is also interested in understanding mental health through the intersection of race, class, and gender. Nicole is an active member of both the Black Graduate Student organization and Caribbean student organization. She is a member of the Southern Sociological Society and the American Sociological Association. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, exercising, doing research, and reading.

**Kevin Liao**

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Michigan  
*Graduate Institution:* University of Washington

Kevin, a native of Chicago, Illinois, completed his undergraduate work at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor. During his undergraduate years, he worked at the Institute for Social Research (ISR) as a research assistant, with David Williams and Colwick Wilson, investigating the effects of the social environment on health. As a research assist with Williams and Wilson, he gained valuable methodological skills and statistical skills, in addition to exposure to a variety of theoretical perspectives. For the past two years, he has been teaching eighth grade math and science in San Francisco Unified School District as a Teach For America Corp member. In the fall, he matriculated at the University of Washington-Seattle. One of his major research interests pertains to minority mental health, particularly in investigating and addressing the underutilization of mental health services by Asian immigrants and Asian Americans.

**Rashawn Ray**

*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Memphis  
*Graduate Institution:* Indiana University

Rashawn graduated Magna Cum Laude from the University of Memphis in spring 2003 with a BA in sociology and a minor in women’s studies. While at the University of Memphis, Rashawn’s honors included Outstanding Sociology Student of the Year, Outstanding Honors Senior of the Year, and Mr. University of Memphis. His current, wide-ranging research interests include social psychology, mental health, race and ethnicity, and education. Rashawn is particularly interested in the impact of family structure, community structure, education, and the media on mental health and perceived opportunity. He is working on several research projects. One examines the roles of males within the family to determine if any distinct role characteristics exist both among and within racial/ethnic groups (Black, white, and Mexican-American families). A second examines how athletes distinguish between being injured and being hurt and patterns related to race/ethnicity and socioeconomic status. And a third, examines racial/ethnic and gender differences and trends of U.S. doctorates, with a particular interest in Black doctorates.

**Temple Day Smith**

*Undergraduate Institution:* Michigan State University  
*Graduate Institution:* Michigan State University

Temple is a first-year graduate student at Michigan State University from Detroit, Michigan. She is a native of Detroit. She decided to major in sociology after taking a course with Cliff Broman (her graduate mentor and advisor). Working with Broman has given her a strong theoretical
foundation to identify important gaps in the mental health research literature. Her research interests include mental health as it relates to stress, stratification, decision-making, and families. Temple’s sociological interests stem in part from her observations and experiences while growing up in Detroit. She observed first hand how structural and day-to-day discriminatory experiences are closely linked to and are differentially distributed by socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity. She looks forward to earning a PhD and becoming a sociology professor.

Julius Middleton Wilder  
*Undergraduate Institution:* University of Maryland-Baltimore County  
*Graduate Institution:* Duke University

Julius (Jay) was born in Charleston, South Carolina. Since childhood he knew he wanted to be a doctor. During his sophomore year in high school he had an opportunity to work with a transplant surgeon at Howard University Hospital. He realized not only that medicine was his dream but that for some communities there are barriers—beyond disease itself—to good health. While at Howard, Julius learned the impact that various factors (e.g., social and economic) have on health.

As a Meyerhoff scholarship recipient at the University of Maryland, he majored in biology. He participated in several summer opportunities, where he gained research experience with a ligand receptor in the umbilical cord that is responsible for transfer of immunity from mother to child. Additionally, he performed cancer research under the direction of Nobel Prize laureate and current Howard Hughes Medical Institute President Tom Cech. He also gained research experience with adreno-leukodystrophy at Johns Hopkins University.

Julius attends Duke University School of Medicine. After successfully completing his clinical rotations, Julius decided that a basic science PhD would not allow him to have the kind of impact on health that he wanted, so he is the first MD/PhD student in the department of sociology. He is currently in his second year preparing for his qualifying exams and researching the role social support plays in the prevalence of hypertension in African Americans. He resides in Durham, North Carolina, with his wife Rhonda.