ASA Announces New Minority Fellows

by Mercedes Rubio and Felicia Evans, Minority Affairs Program

In November of 2004, the American Sociological Association submitted a T-32 competitive renewal grant to that National Institutes of Health (NIH), specifically the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) and the National Institute of Drug Abuse (NIDA), for five additional years of grant funds. ASA also proposed an expansion of the program to include NIDA fellows as a new initiative. The T-32 grant was peer-reviewed in February 2005 and in mid-May 2005 ASA was notified that the ASA application had received the best priority score and was given an additional three-year award. It will be decided later whether we receive the two additional years. If not, we will have to compete again. ASA’s NIMH trainee slots were reduced, but we gained a NIDA trainee.

As in years past, the MFP Cohort 32 consists of PhD candidates with promise in the sociological study of mental illness, drug abuse, and the discipline in general. The fellows attended the ASA Annual Meeting in Philadelphia, where they received a daylong orientation, attended MFP-sponsored events and met many sociologists whose research interests match their own.

We are happy to announce a few changes to the fellowship. Historically, the MFP received funding primarily through a training grant from the NIMH, this year we are proud to announce that the NIDA is a co-funder of the fellowship. Additionally, we have changed the name of the general fellowship to the Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD)/MFP fellowship. Each year AKD generously supports the fellowship, and we want to fully acknowledge their support and contributions. In addition, the AKD program is also made possible by generous member contributions and donations from, Sociologists for Women in Society, the Association of Black Sociologists, the Pacific Sociological Association, the Midwest Sociological Society, and the Southwestern Sociological Association. We thank each of the organizations and the countless individuals who make general fellowship possible.

The New MFP Fellows are:

ASA General Fellow
Amada Armenta
Undergraduate Institution: Rice University
Graduate Institution: University of California-Los Angeles

Amada grew up in El Centro, California, a town 10 miles from the U.S.-Mexico border. While an undergraduate, Amada spent a semester studying sociology at the University of Havana, Cuba; that experience convinced her that she should pursue a PhD in sociology. She graduated cum laude with a BA in Political Science from Rice University. Now at the University of California, Los Angeles, Amada’s research interests include international migration, race and ethnicity, and demography.
AKD/MFP Fellow
David Embrick

*Undergraduate and Graduate Institution:* Texas A&M University

David is a PhD student in the sociology department at Texas A&M University, in College Station, Texas. He earned both his Bachelor’s and Master’s degree while working 60 hours/wk as a truck driver and sales representative for a local baked goods company. Having access to a working-class (and masculine dominated) workplace provided a rare opportunity for research on race/class/gender from which David ultimately ended up writing his thesis, *Breaking Whitebread: The Construction of Racial and Sex Difference through Everyday Conversations in a Modern Workplace*. David’s current research is on the discrepancies between corporations’ public views and statements on diversity and their implementation of diversity as a policy. His argument is that corporate managers are using diversity as a mantra while they maintain highly racially inequitable environments.

David is an active member of several organizations, including Association of Black Sociologists, Sociologists Without Borders (where he was awarded the Beatrice and Sidney Webb Award), Sociologists for Women in Society, as well as the American Sociological Association. He has published in a number of journals including the *Journal of Intergroup Relations*, *Race and Society*, *Research in Political Sociology*, and *Sociological Forum*, and has had the pleasure of sharing his research to his students at Texas A&M University and Blinn College (where he has taught close to 30 upper and lower level courses).

NIDA Fellow
A. James McKeever

*Undergraduate Institution:* California State University Los Angeles

*Graduate Institution:* University of Southern California

James comes from a family that has been ravaged by drugs, alcohol, and violence. This “dysfunctional” family structure led to many negative outcomes for his siblings including the premature death of one of his brothers. This tragedy has fueled James’ desire to work with and as an advocate for young people. He worked for the Los Angeles County Probation Department for ten years. In his career with the Probation Department he was involved with the design and implementation of many innovative prevention and intervention programs. For the last three years he has also done consultant work for the National Committee for Community and Justice (NCCJ). They are a group that is dedicated to fighting racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia and ableism. He facilitated youth and adult groups around the aforementioned issues.

He received his bachelor degree from California State Los Angeles where he graduated Magna Cum Laude. He is a member of the Golden Key Honor Society, and a member of the Iota chapter of Alpha Kappa Delta. He is a third year Sociology Doctorial student and his interests focus on the intersectionality of gender, race, and class as well as issues that have to do with the negative outcomes for minority youth and therapeutic interventions.

NIMH Fellow
Melissa Reyes

*Undergraduate Institution:* Texas Tech University

*Graduate Institution:* Indiana University-Bloomington
Melissa Reyes is a first generation college student. She graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor's degree in Family Studies from Texas Tech University. She earned her MA in Sociology from New Mexico State University. She is currently a second year doctoral student at Indiana University, but travels frequently to New Mexico, where her husband resides. Her research interests include: social psychology related to identity and well-being issues, sociology of education, life course events, Latin American immigrant issues, and U.S./Mexico border awareness issues.