ASA Welcomes Five New MFP Fellows

ASA and the Minority Fellowship Program (MFP) are pleased to introduce the five new Fellows who comprise MFP Cohort 38. The MFP Advisory Panel met this past spring in Washington, DC, to review the highly competitive pool of applications. MFP Cohort 38 consists of PhD candidates with strong and diverse sociological research interests. The new Fellows will officially begin their participation on August 1, 2011.

They will attend the 2011 Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, where they will take part in a day-long orientation that will include a brief history of the ASA and a series of presentations by sociologists (including several former fellows) with expertise in a variety of research areas. The new Fellows will also participate in a number of required sessions and workshops and have the opportunity to network with sociologists with similar research interests from across the country and abroad. At the Annual Meeting, they will attend MFP-sponsored events including a breakfast meeting with all currently active Fellows on Saturday, August 20 and a professional workshop co-sponsored by MFP on Monday, August 22. They will also be introduced individually and as a group during the MFP Benefit Reception on Sunday, August 21.

MFP is now generously supported in full by Sociologists for Women in Society (SWS), Alpha Kappa Delta (AKD), the Midwest Sociological Society (MSS), the Association of Black Sociologists (ABS), the Southwestern Sociological Association (SSA), and ASA Council, as well as through the significant contributions made by individual ASA members and organizations through the recent MFP Leadership Campaign and other annual contributions.

Sean Arayasirikul (AKD MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of California-Los Angeles
Graduate Institution: University of California-San Francisco

Sean’s research roots lie in social justice; LGBT activism; and HIV/AIDS prevention, care, and research. His personal experiences with homelessness, discrimination, and violence shape the lens through which he analyzes health and illness. His diverse professional experiences range from providing HIV/STI testing services on the streets of Los Angeles to providing mobile case management services to newly-diagnosed HIV-positive youth of color. He recently completed a Health Policy Fellowship at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in the Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion, where he authored and championed national Healthy People 2020 objectives, emphasizing the integral role of social support in making healthy decisions. As a doctoral student, Sean will investigate the role and impact of social structures on health and illness. His work will explore the processes in which racial and sexual minority adolescents identify and enact emotion and identity work strategies, both in response to evolving network dynamics and over the course of an illness trajectory. By understanding the emotional and social sequelae of illness, Sean is interested in how social networks engage resilience, social capital, and social contagion. He hopes to translate this work into the development of community-owned, structural interventions and disruptive technologies to eliminate inequalities in health and illness.

Christy Erving (ABS/Leadership Campaign MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: Rice University
Graduate Institution: Indiana University-Bloomington

Christy was born and raised in Dallas, TX. She graduated from Rice University in 2007 with a Bachelor’s degree in Sociology and Hispanic Studies. It was during Christy’s undergraduate study abroad in the Dominican Republic, where she saw firsthand the health needs of socially disadvantaged people, that she became interested in issues of race, immigration, and health inequalities. Upon completion of her undergraduate degree, she enrolled in the Sociology doctoral program at Indiana University in fall 2007, where she is focusing on medical sociology. Her master’s thesis, a winner of the North Central Sociological Association’s outstanding graduate student paper award, examined the relative impact of socioeconomic status, social role occupation, and psychological resources in understanding gender differences in physical health among African Americans and Caribbean Blacks. Christy’s broader research interests include understanding the social epidemiology of physical and mental health, with a specific focus on racial and ethnic minorities and immigrant populations in the United States. Her current research projects include a study of the social support and physical/mental health relationship among Black Americans. Another co-authored paper uses longitudinal data to examine the association between psychological well-being and perceived discrimination, and the mediating role of acculturation, among children of immigrants. She is thankful for the support of her undergraduate and graduate faculty mentors, and previous funding provided by the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellows Program, Ford Foundation, and Indiana University’s Graduate Scholars Fellowship.

Selina Gallo-Cruz (SWS MFP # 1)

Undergraduate Institution: Wellesley College
Graduate Institution: Emory University

Selina is a doctoral candidate in sociology at Emory University. Selina conducts research on the global dimensions of political change. Her dissertation examines the role of a growing population of international nonviolent protest NGOs in supporting the development of democratic movements throughout the world. She identifies historical factors shaping the emergence and activities of these organizations and analyzes the challenges and dynamics of their interaction with local protest movements. Selina has also conducted and published forthcoming research on the topics of alternative healthcare movements in the United States, transnational efforts to protest U.S. militarization in Latin America, and on global cultural theory. She currently
assists in the collection and analysis of data on an NSF-funded study of mobilization strategies among Latinos in the Nuevo South and provides research assistance to Nonviolence International. Prior to her tenure as a Davis Scholar at Wellesley College, Selina spent several years working with national and international social justice organizations, which has inspired her academic research on globalization and social change. Outside of academia, she enjoys dancing flamenco with a steady round of castañuelas and is anxiously awaiting the next family trip to the seaside of her native Florida.

Mytoan H. Nguyen (MSS MFP)

Undergraduate Institution: University of California-Berkeley
Graduate Institution: University of Wisconsin-Madison

Mytoan is a doctoral candidate at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, with research interests in the sociology of ethnic and racial studies, diaspora and refugees, economic change and development, and urban ethnography. She is currently writing her dissertation on the experiences of ethnic return migration from developed to developing countries, focusing on refugees’ children returning to Vietnam. Her dissertation explores gender relations, social class, and global diaspora identity-making within global cities, with insights based on the experiences of Vietnamese Americans from the post-1975 wave of U.S. refugees, especially on a small subset now finding high-skilled work opportunities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Mytoan grew up in Northern California and earned her BA degree at the University of California-Berkeley and a Masters in Australian Studies at the University of Melbourne. Mytoan devotes considerable time to service-learning projects connecting UW-Madison with underrepresented high school youths; a Kauffman Community Entrepreneurship Grant has enabled her to work with other educators to teach interviewing skills and oral history writing workshops in the Madison area.

Heather M. Washington (SWS MFP # 2)

Undergraduate Institution: West Virginia University
Graduate Institution: The Ohio State University

Heather is a doctoral candidate in sociology at The Ohio State University (OSU), where her work focuses on the consequences of mass incarceration for family and child outcomes. She received her bachelor’s degree in criminology and investigations at West Virginia University (WVU). While at WVU, Heather participated in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, and she, along with her mentor Rachael Woldoff, conducted research on the effects of paternal incarceration on fathers’ engagement with their children, an experience that whet her appetite for sociological research. As a graduate student, Heather has retained her interests in crime, incarceration, and family and has explored them in a variety of ways. Her master’s thesis examined the effects of fathers’ participation in illicit work on mother-father relationship stability and quality. Her dissertation research, supported by the Criminal Justice Research Center at OSU and the Department of Sociology, examines the relationship between parental imprisonment and problem behaviors in early childhood. Specifically, she is investigating the mechanisms by which incarceration negatively affects child wellbeing and the extent to which the effect of parental imprisonment on child welfare varies across gender, race/ethnicity, and immigrant status. Additionally, Heather is exploring the simultaneous and interactive effects of parenting behavior and neighborhood characteristics on child outcomes.