More CUNY Award Winners!

22 Fulbright Scholars
16 NSF Research Fellows
4 Jack Kent Cooke Scholars
4 Math for America Fellows
2 Goldwater Scholars
1 Paul & Daisy Soros Fellow
and More…
WITH THIS SPECIAL ISSUE of Salute to Scholars magazine, The City University of New York proudly celebrates graduating seniors and recent alumni who won some of our nation’s most prestigious and competitive academic awards in 2014. These honors include a record 22 federally funded Fulbright grants awarded to CUNY students this year for research and teaching abroad, National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships, Goldwater Scholarships, Math for America awards and a Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowship for New Americans. Impressive honors all, they reflect the high caliber of CUNY students and of the academic opportunities offered by this University.

CUNY students’ interests, drive and achievements underscore the transformative value of a CUNY degree. This is public higher education at its best, delivering on the University’s historic mission to provide accessible, affordable, high-quality academic opportunities. Our graduates earn acceptance at leading graduate and professional institutions where they pursue law, medicine and the full range of arts, sciences and social sciences. They are welcomed quickly into the workforce, contributing their skills and talents to the betterment of our society.

I am proud to recognize the remarkable CUNY students profiled in this special edition, as well as all members of the Class of 2014. They enrich our city, our nation and our world.

All best wishes,

James B. Milliken
Chancellor
MELODY MILLS (Macaulay Honors College at Baruch College, B.A. in psychology and political science, 2014) sees potential in the “street girls” of Lima, Peru, despite their tenuous circumstances.

Living on the capital’s streets, the girls are exploited as child labor, and drug addiction — many sniff cheap glue called Teracol — is common.

While studying abroad in Lima in Spring 2013, Mills volunteered to tutor, mentor and teach dance to street girls who had agreed to live at Institute Mundo Libre, a private drug rehabilitation facility. Inspired by that work, and a study she conducted then, Mills has been awarded a 2014-15 U.S. Student Fulbright Study/Research Award to track the girls’ “educational trajectories” after the program.

“I want to see how girls who graduate the program compare, and what advice can be gathered to better prepare them, and give these girls more resources to continue their education,” says Mills, whose passion is “working in education of children with social disadvantages.”

Many of the 12- to 17-year-olds at Mundo Libre are runaways from Lima’s poorer neighborhoods. Mills’ Spanish fluency — her mother is from Argentina, and Mills spoke Spanish at home in Brooklyn — helped her connect with the girls, whom she mentored while she attended Pontificia Universidad Catolica del Peru (PUCP).

Last year, Mills compared the educational motivations of 16- and 17-year-old girls at Mundo Libre with girls the same age attending PUCP. The results: Both groups “were highly motivated to gain a college education,” Mills wrote in her Fulbright grant request.

Her Fulbright project, “Educational Trajectories of Street-Living Girls of Lima: Focus on Instituto Mundo Libre,” will employ an “advocacy/participatory/critical action” method that will allow the girls themselves to “design questions, collect data, analyze information, or reap rewards of the research.”

Mills credits Macaulay and Baruch with sparking her interests. Macaulay’s Opportunities Fund paid for her Peru semester and a previous semester in Ghana, where she taught in elementary schools and initiated girls’ sports.

Following her nine-month Fulbright stay in Lima, Mills plans to earn a master’s in “education policy or leadership,” she says. “The Fulbright will help me home in on what to do.”

AWARD WINNERS

William J. Alesi
Macaulay Honors College
at College of Staten Island, ’14
St. John’s University, School of Law, JD

Emily Apple
Macaulay Honors College
at Hunter College, ’14
New York City Urban Fellows Program, 2014

Lauren Blachorsky
Macaulay Honors College
at Queens College, ’15
Goldwater Scholarship, 2014

Jasmine G. Calle
Macaulay Honors College
at College of Staten Island, ’16
National Science Foundation REU, 2014

Danielle J. Datre
Macaulay Honors College
at College of Staten Island, ’14
Hunter College, Master’s in Social Work

Rebecca Elizabeth DeliCarpini
Macaulay Honors College
at Hunter College, ’13
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

CUNY 2014-15 AWARD RECIPIENTS
Meagan C. Derbyshire  
Macaulay Honors College  
at College of Staten Island, '13  
Quinnipiac University, Frank H. Netter School of Medicine, M.D./MPH

Michael H. Edelstein  
Macaulay Honors College  
at College of Staten Island, '14  
College of Staten Island  
Master of Social Work

Michael J. Erdos  
Macaulay Honors College  
at Baruch College, '14  
New York University,  
College of Dentistry, DDS

Ilana Gelb  
Macaulay Honors College  
at Baruch College, '16  
William R. Kenan Scholarship, 2014

Amy C. Gijsbers van Wijk  
Macaulay Honors College  
at CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14  
Carnegie Mellon University,  
School of Arts, MFA, Playwriting

Aparna Gokhale  
Macaulay Honors College  
at Queens College, '13  
Harvard University Law School, JD

Patrick Granata  
Macaulay Honors College  
at College of Staten Island, '14  
Adelphi University, College of Arts and Sciences, Master of Fine Arts

Hunter Gross  
Macaulay Honors College  
at Hunter College, '15  
Boren Scholarship for International Study (China)

Jolene I. Gurevich  
Macaulay Honors College  
at Baruch College, '14  
Venture for America Fellowship, 2014
WHY ARE SOME PEOPLE willing to take extreme action on behalf of a social group, either volunteering for the good of others or strapping on and detonating explosives in a crowd?

In doctoral research at the University of Texas at Austin, Leah Fredman (Lehman College, B.A. in psychology with minor in art, 2012) explores a theory that may predict extreme levels of social identification. With support from a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, she intends to study “identity fusion” in Israel, “a place of intractable conflicts” where she was raised.

“The theory of identity fusion is relatively new,” says Fredman, who was born in Riverdale, the Bronx. “People who are fused view other group members as family. I’m looking at trust, because fusion is a strong predictor of trust among in-group members. There hasn’t been a lot of work on pro-social behaviors in fusion — most has focused on self-sacrifice — but I’m looking at both aspects to understand the mechanics of the theory.”

Individuals may fuse with any group, she says, but she believes that fusion levels in the Middle East are much higher than those Americans have with America. One prominent factor is collective trauma. “We had 9/11, but places that have continuously high levels of trauma probably have higher levels of identity fusion.”

She hopes that her basic research will have practical implications for regions where group identity has become a proxy for strife rooted in financial insecurity, conflicts over sacred values and other factors that can outweigh rational behavior. “It’s obvious that we are missing something. Identity fusion might be one way in which we can get a fresh view at ways to understand conflict and maybe tailor better resolutions,” Fredman says. “The Middle East is pretty depressing.”

Fredman, who had a perfect 4.0 GPA, said Lehman’s faculty “took a personal interest in me and were there any time I had a question.” She praised campus day care, which freed her time for study while nurturing her older child, now 5. “All Noam wanted to do was get bigger to go to the next classroom,” she says. Her other son, Aidan, is 2.

She met her husband, Aron Wolinetz, in Israel. He earned a bachelor’s in real estate at Baruch College and a master’s in mathematics at Lehman. Now a Ph.D. student at the CUNY Graduate Center, he studies mathematics and computer science with Lehman Distinguished Professor Victor Pan and teaches at Lehman. “It’s a long commute,” Fredman says.
BORN AND RAISED in what she calls “the tormented years of the communist era” in Romania, Cristina Mihailescu was inspired by her mother, who died early but set an unforgettable example by raising her and her sister as a single mother while also caring for her own parents amid food shortages, electrical outages and poverty. “There was no freedom of choice. We lived in fear,” she recalls.

She began learning English — and the compulsory Russian (“which was forced, so I’m not good at it”) — in middle school, as she also began learning to search for a way out. In 1989, as a bloody revolution ousted the dictatorship, she remembers “running in the streets with other students, despite our parents’ pleading to not go out. But it started with the younger generation that couldn’t take it anymore.”

Then she finally got a passport, signed on with an American cruise line, traveled the world and, eventually, made her way to the United States. She started a family — her daughters are 7 and 10 — before enrolling at LaGuardia Community College in 2011. Despite being older than many students (she’s now 40), she threw herself into campus life, participating in the Model U.N., joining in the CUNY challenge to find ways of reducing child mortality rates and being on the student honor advisory committee.

Mihailescu is graduating in Spring 2014, having proceeded at a slow 12 credits a semester because that’s all the tuition she could afford after losing her status as a resident and having to become an international student at far higher tuition. She has been accepted by Baruch College and is waiting to hear from private universities.

However, now she won’t have to worry about the cost of her baccalaureate, thanks to a 2014 Jack Kent Cooke Transfer Scholarship. This highly competitive, privately funded scholarship provides 85 of the nation’s top community college students with as much as $30,000 a year for up to three years of baccalaureate study.

She intends to study economics “because the socioeconomic events of my childhood have had a great impression on me. It’s such a cliché, but I want to make the world a better place — finding a solution that will help all the nations reach economic prosperity while promoting social responsibility and protecting the environment for future generations. We have to gather globally to find solutions for global problems.”
ANDREW MARCUS is graduating as a valedictorian from Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College with a double major in math and physics. He’s even conducting research in the lab of Hunter professor Steve Greenbaum, using nuclear magnetic resonance instruments to evaluate materials that can improve electrical batteries.

“I enjoy math and physics, but what I care about is making the city a better place,” he says. As an undergraduate, he interned with the Mayor’s Office and the NYC Economic Development Corp., took Macaulay honors seminars about New York City, was inspired by speakers at Roosevelt House like former Lt. Gov. Richard Ravitch and traveled to China to see how six cities operate in a developing nation (“They’re 100 years behind us in regulation,” such as of environmental pollution).

With his selection as a New York City Urban Fellow, Marcus will have the opportunity to work in a government agency and perhaps affect the development and implementation of policy. “I want to stay in public service. Most people come into government studying political science. I bring a different perspective, and it’s increasingly important for cities to know about science and technology.”

For example, Mayor Bill de Blasio had just announced a request for proposals to turn 9,100 outmoded pay phones on the streets of the five boroughs into 21st-century Wi-Fi communications kiosks.

Marcus grew up talking educational policy at the dinner table with his parents, who are both teachers in the public school system. Eventually, he says, he’s likely to go to graduate school, although he’s not certain in which field. “In the long term, I could see myself in elected office. We’ll see what happens.”
IF YUETING CHEN had stayed in Fuzhou, China, beyond her first year of college, she would have remained an English major. But at Queensborough Community College she discovered biochemistry, which she is pursuing as a junior at SUNY Stony Brook.

Now she has the support of a highly competitive 2014 Jack Kent Cooke Undergraduate Transfer Scholarship. This privately funded award provides 85 of the nation's top community college students with up to $30,000 a year for up to three years of baccalaureate study.

In 2009, Chen and her older sister received long-awaited permission to leave China to join their mother, who had moved to New York more than a decade before. Her younger sister followed in 2011. Since her studies in China had not emphasized conversation, Chen started with CUNY's Language Immersion Program (CLIP).

The three sisters would all enroll in Queensborough's Accelerated Study in Associate Programs (ASAP). University-wide, ASAP has achieved national prominence for helping more than half of its participants earn associate degrees within three years, compared to 16 percent nationally. Chen graduated in January 2014. Elder sister Yueqing graduated in 2013 with a degree in business administration. Younger sister Yueli is a current student.

“I appreciate the professors and ASAP at Queensborough. They have supported me and made me become a better person,” she says.

Chen credits her switch to chemistry to Queensborough professor Paris Svoronos, who became her mentor “and made me promise to become a professor or medical doctor.” With his encouragement, she took honors courses in chemistry, biology and mathematics, maintained a 3.9 GPA and secured two internships that led to poster presentations at the American Chemical Society’s Northeast Regional Meeting at Yale University in October 2013.

One presentation discussed research done with another Queensborough student that analyzed water samples for nitrogen pollutants that could have come from New York City wastewater treatment plants; they also measured chlorophyll levels in plants which, if too high, could compromise organisms higher up the food chain.

The other presentation involved research done in Summer 2013 with Stony Brook professor J. Peter Gergen. She examined the genetic mechanism involved in heart development in Drosophila, the common fruit fly. Although a fly’s heart is much simpler than a mammal’s, both develop by using similar genetically driven regulatory proteins.
Danny Ramos experienced the insult of low expectations in high school. A counselor mistakenly warned that he wouldn’t succeed in honors physics then erred just as badly by admitting him to AP calculus only on academic probation. Thanks to a supportive teacher, he scored a 5, the highest grade.

A child of Mexican immigrants and the first in his family to graduate from college, Ramos (Hunter College, 2014) intends to keep these experiences in mind when he, himself, stands in front of the whiteboard as a New York City public high school mathematics teacher.

He is preparing for this career with the help of a rare Math for America (MfA) Fellowship. This highly competitive award pays for a three-semester master’s in secondary mathematics education at City College. It also provides a $100,000 stipend spread over five years, including the first four years of teaching, in addition to the regular teacher’s salary. This long-term payout aims to retain new teachers during the stressful first years in the classroom, when attrition is highest.

Ramos understands his counselor’s hesitation. “I could never explain myself when the teacher asked how I got an answer. I’d say, ‘I just saw it.’ I was not the best student. My studying was explaining math to my friends, and I think I’m good at explaining now.”

He credits his AP math teacher at New Utrecht High School, Dieudonne Egotanda, with having prepared him for the AP and college level math. “Before the exam, he said I could get a 5 and I said, whoa – maybe a 3 or a 4. I wasn’t used to somebody expecting so much for me. He prepared me well and gave me the confidence that I needed. He’s the kind of math teacher I want to be.”

After high school, Ramos tutored and taught math, English and science in after-school and summer programs run by the Brooklyn Chinese-American Association. “That’s where I started seeing myself as a teacher.” At Hunter, he tutored at the Mary P. Dolciani Math Learning Center and was selected for the Thomas Hunter Honors Program.

His love of math started at home. “When I was a young kid, my dad would make me memorize and recite multiplication tables randomly in both English and Spanish,” he recalls. “From the beginning, I was trying to figure out a pattern.
AFTER CATEGORY 5 HURRICANE IVAN devastated her native Jamaica in 2004, Chantal Adlam saw her grandmother use medicinal plants to treat an outbreak of waterborne diseases. “It’s a practice passed down generation to generation, but there’s not enough research being done to advise on the effectiveness of plants,” says Adlam (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, B.S. in forensic toxicology, 2014).

As she begins studies toward a Ph.D. in organic and analytical chemistry at SUNY Stony Brook, with a full tuition waiver and a $100,000-plus W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship from the university, she says her “ultimate vision is to travel to underrepresented regions of the world and train young scientists to identify medicinal plants and utilize them as a method of lowering the cost of health care there. There are a lot of parasitic diseases plaguing those areas, and they’re neglected diseases because pharmaceutical companies do not devote resources toward finding cures. So as I study, I wish to help mitigate health incongruities that fall along ethnic, socioeconomic and national lines.”

Adlam started higher education at Borough of Manhattan Community College, where she completed the forensic science program in two years and transferred to John Jay. “I met incredible people at BMCC,” she says.

At John Jay she found a mentor in Anthony Carpi, a professor of environmental toxicology and chemistry, who invited her to work on mercury in the environment. “I’ve done computational chemistry to determine how various hydrates of mercury degrade in the environment,” she says. She sought ones that are most likely to release toxic elemental mercury as they disperse in water and are degraded by sunlight. She presented her work at the 2013 Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, the largest professional conference for minority students who intend to pursue advanced training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM).

Her studies at Stony Brook will begin with rotation through various laboratories, as she looks for the mentor who can best help her learn to synthesize drugs derived from plants. “Plants are the source of a lot of drugs on the market, but I’ve found that most are synthetic. Parasites have evolved to evade treatment with these synthetic drugs, and I feel you have to revert to the natural product to combat these diseases.” One example is schistosomiasis, a sometimes deadly disease caused by a waterborne parasite that affects more than 200 million people in Africa, Asia and South America. Her contribution to the scientific community, she says, “is to understand and advance not only my community and my country, but humanity.”
BARUKH ROHDE thinks that sex may be the way to solve greening disease, which is souring and killing American citrus crops, tripling the price of orange juice and, in Florida alone, cost more than 6,600 jobs and at least $3.63 billion in lost revenue between 2006 and 2012. The killer bacterium is carried by the Asian citrus psyllid, an invasive insect three millimeters long. As Rohde (Hunter College, 2014) explained last year as lead author on the first of his five publications, the bugs beat their wings to transmit mating calls through the citrus plant in order to locate another. Rohde played recordings of these songs and found that males eagerly sought the source.

Rohde is designing a device that imitates female psyllids, with a lethal surprise waiting for the males. Could this be the better insect trap that could stop citrus greening? Rohde intends to find out with a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship.

He tentatively plans to enroll in an electrical engineering Ph.D. program at the University of Florida in Gainesville, home of the U.S. Department of Agriculture lab where he began work on his psyllid trap by buying the services of a U-Florida student for $11. That student, acknowledged as a coauthor on one publication, came to the lab, pointed him in the right direction and Rohde then taught himself needed skills via the Internet.

Now 20, Rohde is a prodigy who graduates with three majors (biology-bioinformatics, chemistry and statistics) and two minors (psychology and economics). He racked up an astounding 199 credits (the typical student graduates with 120), including 36.5 credits in his final semester (most take 12 to 15). Not to mention serving on the Hunter College Senate, helping to found an Undergraduate Student Government party, running study groups to aid other students and bicycling and hitchhiking cross-country.

He conducted basic research at Rockefeller University for a device that uses light to determine whether a lesion is cancerous melanoma. In a University of Pittsburgh molecular pharmacology lab, he worked to prevent a form of kidney transplant rejection. After his six-month stint in Florida, he founded a program at the USDA lab, which used the stipend normally allotted to pay one student to cover housing for seven undergrads who wanted research experience.

“I am an overloader,” he says. He earned his high school diploma (from the University of Missouri) online while living in Israel, taking nine high school courses in his last year to graduate a year early. His diploma is dated two days before his Hunter start date. “When you push your limits, you’ll often find that you are capable of more than you initially think.”

With his prodigious capacity for learning and eclectic interests, Rohde makes clear that while his career may be starting with sex-hungry insects, it easily could spiral into any number of as-yet unknown fields. “No matter what I do, I will definitely have fun,” he says.
BENNETT CALLAGHAN (John Jay College of Criminal Justice, 2012), a social psychology doctoral student at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, received a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to study socioeconomic status and the political process.

“Researchers have found that we all judge people on two dimensions of competence and warmth,” he says. “Warmth is: Can I trust this person? Are they looking out for my best interest? Competence is: Once you establish a person’s intentions, do you believe they will carry them out?”

“Our hypothesis is that lower-class people are more likely to take part in the political process when it’s described in terms of warmth, gravitating toward politicians they see as more trustworthy and interested in helping others. We predict that they need to trust politicians more because they feel they are more affected by what people in power decide to do.”

Callaghan has begun his research by giving subjects written passages encouraging political participation. Half emphasized warm concepts (elect people who care about you); half emphasized competence (elect leaders who can get the job done). He found, so far, that higher-status participants preferred the competence message, while those with lower status opted for the warm message.

Illinois assistant professor Michael W. Kraus and Callaghan looked at the behavior of U.S. House members in an article published in January. Republicans, they found, tend to support legislation increasing economic inequality regardless of social status, while the social status of Democrats (measured by wealth, race or gender) factors significantly in their votes.

Callaghan began research as a forensic psychology major at John Jay. With assistant professor Ian Hansen, now at York College, he examined attitudes toward torture, priming study participants with varying statements that underlined the importance of self-interest, abstract moral priorities or following rules; a publication is pending.

Working on a team led by John Jay professor Evan J. Mandery, Callaghan examined data from Northwestern University’s Center on Wrongful Convictions to gauge the effect of monetary compensation on exonerated prisoners. The 2013 study found that exonerees who received at least $500,000 are significantly less likely to commit crimes than those who received less or no compensation.
AT MADAGASCAR’S RANOMAFANA NATIONAL PARK, scientists study a dozen varieties of lemurs, part of the endearing, big-eyed, prosimian branch of the primate family. Thanks to a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, Rebecca DelliCarpini will be there as well — studying the scientists. “I’m interested in the way knowledge is produced in the context of conservation science,” says DelliCarpini (Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, 2013), who is now a doctoral student at the University of Texas at San Antonio. “Science studies look at the way people produce knowledge and follows facts as they produce them. For me, that means going into the forest with primatologists and observing them observing primates, seeing how they come up with their end product, what is published in journals and accepted as fact.”

She also will observe how scientists and local people interact, how scientific knowledge is affected by local knowledge and the impact of the interaction after the scientists complete their work.

DelliCarpini spent a semester in Madagascar, making connections with conservation scientists and park officials and getting to know the local culture. She foresees conducting pilot research in the summer of 2015 and, after finishing doctoral coursework and qualifying exams, spending all of 2017 conducting research.

She says she chose Macaulay and Hunter over Smith, Mt. Holyoke and Clark — “great schools and scholarships” — because “the academic environment was incredible, very enriching,” with Hunter's place in the history of women's education and financial considerations. “At a private college, I still would have had $100,000 in debt, and now I’ll graduate with a Ph.D. and have no debt whatsoever.” In addition, her mother, Margo, “a champion of public education,” until recently was a professor of secondary education at Lehman College and the CUNY Graduate Center.

DelliCarpini adds that the training she received from Hunter assistant anthropology professor and primate ecologist Jessica Rothman prepared her for graduate study and for writing a solid application for the NSF fellowship. “She helped me understand the context of being involved with conservation and turning an analytic eye on it,” she says.
Chloe’ Weiser  
Macaulay Honors College at Queens College, ’13  
Fulbright U.S. Student Program, 2014

Ariel Yardeni  
Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, ’16  
Fulbright-Hays Group Projects Chinese Flagship, 2013  
Abroad Program, 2014

Yasmin Zakiniaeiz  
Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, ’13  
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

Lucinda C. Zawadzki  
Macaulay Honors College at College of Staten Island, ’15  
Goldwater Honorable Mention, 2014

Jeffrey Baily  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Brian Berman  
Baruch College, ’15  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Silverio Bracaglia  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Ricky Chang  
Baruch College, ’14  
Baruch College, Master’s in Financial Engineering

Steven Coniglio  
Baruch College, ’14  
Two-Time NCAA Elite 89 Academic Award Winner, 2012-2013  
2014 CUNY Athletic Conference Male Scholar Athlete of the Year, 2014

Christopher V. Cosgriff  
Baruch College, ’13  
Jonas E. Salk Scholarship, 2014  
New York University, School of Medicine, M.D.

Marina Drenovac  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Mariam Abdelfatah Elba  
Baruch College, ’13  
New York University, Department of Journalism & Near Eastern Studies, MA

Hassan Farhana  
Baruch College, ’14  
Colin Powell Fellowship and U.S. Dept. of State Internship, 2014

Jonathan Flugel  
Baruch College, ’14  
John Mather Nobel Scholar Award, 2013

Julia K. Hayes  
Baruch College, ’15  
Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) Nu Lambda Mu Honor Society Inductee, 2014

Joelle Held  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Kyungmi Kim  
Baruch College, ’15  
New York State Legislature Internship, 2014

Enny Ledesma  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Josephine Lew  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Neckeyda Louis  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Rasheed Adam Malik  
Baruch College, ’14  
University of Michigan, Ford School of Public Policy, MPP

Youssef Mamdouh  
Baruch College, ’15  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2013

Anjelica Manticas  
Baruch College, ’15  
Baruch College Abraham J. Briloff Ethics Prize, 2013

Juan Israel Mendez  
Baruch College, ’14  
Teach for America, 2014

Jorge L. Ortiz  
Baruch College, ’15  
New York State Legislature Internship, 2014

Mayte J. Ortiz  
Baruch College, ’14  
Teach for America, 2014

Daphne K. Palasi  
Baruch College, ’15  
National Science Foundation Research Experiences for Undergraduates (NSF REU) Scholarship, 2014

Guen Soo Park  
Baruch College, ’13  
Columbia University, Law School, JD

Maria Parsheva  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Yvonne Mariette Pena  
Baruch College, ’13  
Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) Nu Lambda Mu Honor Society Inductee, 2014

Anabel L. Perez  
Baruch College, ’15  
New York State Legislature Internship, 2014

Leleah L. Robinson  
Baruch College, ’13  
Nonprofit Academic Centers Council (NACC) Nu Lambda Mu Honor Society Inductee, 2014

Yuko Tanaka  
Baruch College, ’12  
Teach for America, 2014

Eldar Urmanov  
Baruch College, ’14  
Baruch College, Master’s in Financial Engineering

Jason Warshowsky  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Peter Yim  
Baruch College, ’13  
Excelsior Service Fellowship, 2013

Rada-Mayya Kostadinova  
Borough of Manhattan Community College, ’14  
Goldwater Honorable Mention, 2014

Thathsara D. Palliyaguru  
Borough of Manhattan Community College, ’14  
All-State Community College Academic Team, 2014

Sarja Lowe  
Bronx Community College, ’14  
Department of Energy Community College Internships Program at the Brookhaven National Laboratory, 2014

Roy Nunez  
Bronx Community College, ’14  
USD A Fellow, 2014
Shoshana Adler
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Rabia Ahsin
Brooklyn College, '14
Columbia University, Master's Program in Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies

Kaitlin Cockerham
Brooklyn College, '18
Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, 2014

Christopher Cohron
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Tiffany Collings
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Daniel Friedman
Brooklyn College, '14
Fulbright U.S. Student Program, 2014

Kseniya Gratcheva
University of California at Irvine, Sociology, Doctorate

Joshua Hoffman
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

J. Brendan Horgan
Brooklyn College, '14
Fulbright-English Teaching Assistantship, Malaysia, 2014

Deukyun Hwang
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Hadasa Levilev
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Chris Martin
Brooklyn College, '14
Fulbright-English Teaching Assistantship, Indonesia 2014

Jone Naujokaityte
Brooklyn College, '14
Rosen Fellowship, 2014

Tyone Palmer
Brooklyn College, '14
Northwestern University, African American Studies, Ph.D.

Alessandra Valentin
Brooklyn College, '14
Rutgers University, Women's and Gender Studies, Ph.D.

Nichole Acevedo
The City College of New York, '14
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Oluwadami Atanda
The City College of New York, '14
Thomas R. Pickering Foreign Affairs Fellowship, 2014

Columbia University, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, M.A. Human Rights

Jesse Chaffee
The City College of New York Fulbright

Shah Nawaz Chaudhary
The City College of New York, '14
Jonas E. Salk Scholarship, 2014

New York Institute of Technology - College of Osteopathic Medicine

Dilenny Cisnero
The City College of New York, '14
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Moustafa Elshabiny
The City College of New York, '16
DAAD RISE, 2014

Elaa Hilou
The City College of New York National Science Foundation Graduate Research/Fellowship, 2014

Fariha Hussain
The City University of New York Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship

Rebecca Sydney Moore
The City College of New York, '14
Jonas Salk Award, 2014

Princeton University, Department of Biology, Ph.D.

Vanessa Ogueri
The City College of New York, '14
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Marie Guylene Riche
The City College of New York Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Mariya Shcheglovitova
The City College of New York National Science Foundation

Rachael Stocks
The City University of New York Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship

Alia Zamarayeva
The City College of New York, '14
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

Grove School of Engineering, Valedictorian, 2014

University of California, Berkeley, Materials Science and Electrical Engineering Departments, Ph.D.

Michelle J. Balon
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Cognitive Neuroscience

Berkeley, Cognitive Neuroscience, 2014

Robert Belgrad
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
School of Visual Arts, Art Therapy, Master's

Asher Hillel Burstine
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Brooklyn College, M.A., Judaic Studies

William Cheung
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Fulbright-U.S. Student Program, 2014

Amy C. Gijsbers van Wijk
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Carnegie Mellon University, School of Arts, MFA, Playwriting

Kelly Giles
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
University of Massachusetts College of Social and Behavioral Sciences, Ph.D., Sociology

Athena Huckaby
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
CUNY School of Public Health, MPH

Isabelle Jagielski
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Graduate Center

CUNY Murphy Institute at SPS, Master's in Labor Studies

Jon K. Jones
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '13
University of Southern California, School of Cinematic Arts, Master of Fine Arts in Film & Television

Kamelia Kikawa
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Columbia University, School of Journalism, MA

Savannah Knoop
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
Virginia Commonwealth University, School of the Arts, MFA in Fine Arts

Slen Korsch
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
University of California at Berkeley, College of Environmental Design, M.S., Architecture

Gabriel Lockwood
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '13
Pepperdine University, Graziadio School of Business Management, M.S. in Organizational Development

Daniel Jonathan Lurie
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
University of California at Berkeley, Cognitive Neuroscience, Ph.D.

Butovens Mede
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14
University of California at Merced, Graduate Division, Ph.D. in Cognitive and Information Science
WHEN SHE WORKED as a nanny, Reilly Bergin Wilson spent a good deal of time in playgrounds, most of which, she says, were not interesting. “When kids interact with it in a way that goes beyond what the original designer conceived, it’s called vandalism.”

But since 1943 (in Denmark, during a world war), some European cities have taken a different approach—adventure playgrounds. For example, The Big Swing in Bradford, England—themed around the primal elements of earth, wind, fire and water—comes with tools, building supplies, paint and even a fire pit, so that youngsters (with adult supervision) can construct their own playgrounds and equipment.

For the past year, Wilson has volunteered at The Big Swing to supplement archival research at Leeds University, which she has attended with the help of a 2013 Fulbright Fellowship and where she is earning an MRes (master’s of research) degree. “I’m looking historically at the social and political environment surrounding the introduction of these playgrounds,” she says.

This work sets up her forthcoming doctoral research at the CUNY Graduate Center. Wilson (Temple University, B.A. in geography and urban studies, 2013) will carry it out with a National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship that she postponed accepting last year to do the Fulbright.

Her doctoral research will focus on a very different kind of interaction with a built environment. In the 1990s Bihać, a town in northwestern Bosnia, suffered three years of siege during the multiethnic war that followed the breakup of Yugoslavia.

“Bihać was massively rebuilt in the center, but the farther away you go, the more likely you are to find bombed-out houses next door to new construction,” says Wilson, who is studying the local language. “In the post-socialist era, there has been a lot of road building, and that has significantly changed where kids can safely go and where parents feel safe letting them go. This built environment therefore affects children’s experience more than a historical memory of the war.”
Sebastian Restrepo  
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Nazmul Sultan Sagar  
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14  
University of Chicago, School of Social Sciences, Ph.D., Political Science

Maxim Semyonov  
CUNY Baccalaureate Degree, '14  
Columbia University, The Earth Institute and the School of Continuing Education, Master's in Sustainability Management

William J. Alesi  
College of Staten Island, '14  
St. John's University, School of Law, JD

Charissa Che  
College of Staten Island, '14  
University of Utah, College of Humanities, Ph.D.

Christine Taylor Fisher  
College of Staten Island, '16  
University of Virginia's Summer Medical and Dental Education Program, 2014

Joseph Perillo  
College of Staten Island, '14  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Christopher S. Williams  
College of Staten Island, '17  
Matthew Goldstein Scholarship Award, 2014

Lucinda C. Zawadzki  
College of Staten Island, '15  
Goldwater Honorable Mention, 2014

Jennifer Allen  
CUNY Graduate Center  
National Science Foundation

Danya Al-Saleh  
CUNY Graduate Center  
National Science Foundation '14

James Blair  
CUNY Graduate Center  
Fulbright, research anthropology, Falkland Islands

Megan Brown  
CUNY Graduate Center  
Fulbright, research history, France

Rayna El Zein  
CUNY Graduate Center  
Fulbright

Erin Glass  
CUNY Graduate Center  
National Endowment for Humanities Digital Humanities Grant

Jonathan Hill  
CUNY Graduate Center  
Fulbright research, Mexican history

Rachel Levy  
CUNY Graduate School of Journalism, '14  
Google Fellow, 2013

Jennifer Stoops  
CUNY Graduate Center  
National Endowment for Humanities Digital Humanities Grant

Molly Coe  
CUNY School of Law, '14  
Equal Justice Works Fellowship, 2014

Rage M. Kidvai  
CUNY School of Law, '14  
Equal Justice Works Fellowship, 2014

Somalia Samuel  
CUNY School of Law, '14  
Bertha Fellowship, 2014

Clinton Langston Jr.  
Hostos Community College, '14  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Dakota Marin  
Hostos Community College, '14  
Gates Millennium Scholar, 2014

Sandy Rosas  
Hostos Community College, '14  
NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Summer Internship, 2014

Kane Vinson  
Hostos Community College, '14  
NASA Marshall Space Flight Center, Summer Internship, 2014

Alen Agaronom  
Hunter College, '12  
Harvard University, School of Public Health

Anibekly Almanzar  
Hunter College, '14  
Summer Medical Scholars Program at Weill Cornell, 2014

Ricardo Alvarez  
Hunter College  
Fulbright-Hays Grant

Vincent Anguiano  
Hunter College, '13  
Mount Sinai, Ph.D.

Jasmine Marie Bayron  
Hunter College, '14  
Graduate Center, Earth and Environmental Sciences Ph.D.

Bridgit Boulahanis  
Hunter College, '14  
Dean's Fellow at Columbia University, 2014

Steven Cajamarca  
Hunter College, '13  
Weill Cornell/Rockefeller Sloan Kettering M.D./Ph.D.

Stephanie Cevallos  
Hunter College, '13  
National Institutes of Health (NIH) Undergraduate Scholarship, 2013

University of California Davis, Ph.D.

Ting-Ting Chan  
Hunter College, '15  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Daniel Cione  
Hunter College  
Fulbright-Hays Award

Ivan Cohen  
Hunter College, '13  
Sloan-Kettering, Ph.D.

Nicholas Crispi  
Hunter College, '15  
Goldwater Honorable Mention, 2014

Eddie Grinman  
Hunter College, '14  
Fulbright U.S. Student Research, Japan, 2014

Jazmin Gonzalez  
Hunter College, '14  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Ariela Hazan  
Hunter College, '14  
Fulbright-English Teaching Assistantship, Taiwan, 2014

Carol Hosny  
Hunter College, '14  
New York College of Osteopathic Medicine, M.D.

Nicola Kriefall  
Hunter College, '15  
Goldwater Scholarship, 2014

Peter Li  
Hunter College, '14  
Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Alyssa Marchetti  
Hunter College  
Fulbright, Taiwan

Leon Morales  
Hunter College, '11  
University of Pennsylvania, Ph.D. in Biology

Eugene Ogorodnik  
Hunter College, '12  
University of California at Davis, Ph.D.

Dailia Ordonez  
Hunter College, '12  
University of California at Davis, Ph.D.

Karina Perlaza  
Hunter College, '14  
University of California, San Francisco, Tetrad, biochemistry and molecular biology
Elena Pires
Hunter College, '15

Fannie Margolies
Undergraduate Award, 2014

Victoria Quinones
Hunter College, '13
Livingston Welch Research Award in Psychology, 2014

Danny Ramos
Hunter College, '14
Math for America Fellowship, 2014

Eric Ramos
Hunter College, '14
Presidential MAGNET Five Year Fellowship For Students Entering 2013-2018 CUNY, 2014

Girish Ramrattan
Hunter College, '15
HHMI EXROP, 2014

Barukh Rohde
Hunter College, '14
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

Gaddiel Rodriguez
Hunter College, '14
Johns Hopkins University, School of Medicine, Ph.D.

Aliona Tospes
Hunter College, '13
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

SUNY Binghamton, Ph.D. in Psychology

Madina Wahab
Hunter College, '13
Fulbright-English Teaching Assistantship, Tajikistan, 2014

Julian Weir
Hunter College, '12
Fulbright-English Teaching Assistantship, Colombia, 2014

Crystal Yeh
Hunter College, '15
Princeton Public Affairs, 2014

Chantal Adiam
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
W. Burghardt Turner Fellowship, 2014
SUNY Stony Brook - Ph.D. Program in Chemistry

Karla Alfaro
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
American University School of Public Affairs, Master of Justice, Law and Criminology

Hina Altar
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '13
Hunter College Graduate School of Social Work

Blanca Angyal
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '09
University of Kentucky, Psychology Ph.D.

Ksenia Armstrong
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
George Washington University, Criminology, Master's

Heena Arora
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
Pace University Law School
Law Student Grant, JD

Matthew John Arpino
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
Pace University, School of Law, JD

Cristina Ayala
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
Hunter College, childhood education with a bilingual extension

Jillian Bain
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
Fordham University, Clinical Social Work

Justin Balash
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
CUNY Graduate Center Clinical Psychology

Shanna Bell
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
The New York Coalition of One Hundred Black Women, Inc. scholarship, 2014

Vinicius Alves Beraldo
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '13
Seton Hall University, School of Law, JD

Lauren Brangman
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
New York Law School, JD

Allyson Brown
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
New York Law School - Undecided - many offers, New York Law School, JD

Bennett T. Callaghan
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '13
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

Joseph DeLuca
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Ph.D.

Silvia G. English
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '12
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Ryan Casey
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14

Javier Castro
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '15
State Department Internship in Warsaw, 2014

Sacha Cassandra Chadwick
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '15

John Spencer Cusick
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '13
New York Law School - Undecided - many offers, New York Law School, JD

Jeffrey Delgado
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
National Science Foundation in Chemistry

Smithsonian Museum of American History Curatorial Internship, 2014

Joseph DeLuca
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Ph.D.

Silvia G. English
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '12
National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship, 2014

University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, Graduate School, Ph.D.

Janiri Carrasco
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, '14
SUNY Albany
Master of Accounting
ARIELA HAZAN (Macaulay Honors College at Hunter College, B.S. in biology, 2014) wants to be a physician, but the long medical school road will have to wait. Hazan will take a detour to Taiwan, where she’ll teach English in the southwestern city of Kaohsiung as the recipient of a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship.

“I wanted to take a chance to try and get close to another culture before I start my medical career,” says Hazan. “I thought this would be an opportune time to do this. Once in medical school it will be hard to take a break.”

Segueing between languages and cultures is nothing new for Hazan. Daughter of an Israeli father who is a table tennis coach, Hazan is fluent in Hebrew and studied Chinese for four years in high school. “So I know some Chinese, and hopefully it will get better,” she says. Her Fulbright opportunity also offers Hazan a chance to explore her interest in Ping-Pong; “I was brought up with it,” she points out.

Hazan has some English teaching experience as a volunteer with the We Are New York program of the Mayor’s Office of Immigrant Affairs. And thanks to the Macaulay Opportunities Fund, she studied abroad for a month in China and a month in Scotland during college.

At Hunter, Hazan, biology major, also received a two-year Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI) scholarship to work in a faculty mentor’s laboratory where she researched the potentially modulating effects of neurotensin, an endogenous neuropeptide, on the toxic effects of methamphetamine use.

For now, Hazan looks forward to exploring new interests in Taiwan: “I’m going with an open mind.”
MATH ALWAYS CAME EASILY to Andre Braddy. In eighth grade, he would leap for the buzzer during his teacher’s weekly puzzle-solving math contest.

When he transferred from the University of South Carolina to Medgar Evers College, from which he graduated in 2012, he switched from engineering to math. “The professors were so welcoming. You got the personalized touch,” he says.

Now, with a nationally competitive 2014 Math for America Fellowship, Braddy is on his way to becoming a New York City public high school math teacher.

“I like to concentrate on high school because, as a teaching assistant now, I work with a lot of calculus students. That’s my specialty,” he says. “In middle school, you want students to think, but you have to teach the curriculum. In high school you deal with more real-life applications, and if you come up with a different solution than I do, we can dissect the thought process so we can come up with the same answer.”

Since graduating from Medgar Evers, he has worked with Medgar Evers’ Frank Ragland Math Masters Institute, which prepares students at Middle School 61 in Central Brooklyn to study science, technology, engineering and math in high school. “Once you set the tone, relate to them and show them that I’m not just your instructor, I’m here to talk with you, they fall right in.”

Braddy says he may enroll in a Ph.D. program somewhere down the line, but for the moment, “I like that I can get to do what I love to do, which is to teach.”

Shannon Magnuson
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
George Mason’s Provost Scholarship, 2014
George Mason University, Graduate School, Criminology, Law and Society Ph.D. Program

Stacy Morales
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’16
Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, 2014

Dominique Morgan
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’09
Yeshiva University, Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law

Tyreke Moses
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’15
Brooklyn College Academy and Haitian Women for Haitian Refugees Award, 2014

Brenda Munoz
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
Fordham University, Social Work, MSW

Dawn M. Neagle
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
Pace University, School of Law, JD

Di Hong Nguyen
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’10
The Wright Institute, Ph.D.

Desiree Ortiz
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
Western New England University School of Law, JD

Vincent Palmeri
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’17
Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship, 2014
THINK OF YOUR BRAIN as connections with information being passed around. Nothing is ever stagnant,” says Lauren Blachorsky, a Macaulay Honors College at Queens College junior who was named a 2014 Barry M. Goldwater Scholar. “When you stick a tiny glass pipette into a live neuron and record what it’s doing as it sends and receives information, that’s unbelievably fascinating.”

Congress created the highly competitive Goldwater awards to ensure a continuing source of scientists, mathematicians and engineers.

Blachorsky, a student in the Queens College Neuroscience Honors Program with a biology concentration, has conducted laboratory research since her freshman year.

Her research with Queens associate professor Carolyn Pytte and Hunter College professor Cheryl Harding investigated how mice are cognitively and behaviorally affected by exposure to mold. Blachorsky is involved in investigating the inflammatory response that results from the mold exposure, a topic with significant implications for humans because 30 to 40 percent of American buildings are estimated to be moldy.

She also has worked with Queens professor Joshua Brumberg, using the electrical physiology skills learned in a summer internship at MIT to stimulate individual neurons as part of his investigation of pyramidal neurons, which may play important roles in advanced cognitive functions.

In the summer of 2014, she expects to be at Rockefeller University working with stem cells.

“I’ve met people who wrote the textbooks and who had performed the experiments in the textbooks. I’ve realized that the research they’re presenting on now won’t be in textbooks for another 10 years, and that’s really cool,” she says.

Blachorsky looks forward to a career in neuroscience, either as a Ph.D. or as an M.D./Ph.D.

“The brain makes you you. No one’s neurons are the same, and the way they perform is different in every person. I love getting closer to understanding why people are the way they are,” she says.
It wasn’t until his last year of high school in Elizabeth, N.J., that Robert W. Fernandez, who at age 4 emigrated from Peru with his family, learned that he was an undocumented alien. Colleges wouldn’t admit him or demanded prohibitively high out-of-state tuition. At that frustrating moment, he could not have imagined that he was on his way to a B.S. degree in biotechnology from York College in 2013, to a doctoral program at Yale University and in 2014 an extraordinarily competitive $90,000 award from the Paul & Daisy Soros Fellowships for New Americans.

Fernandez did gain admittance to Union County College, a community college where he conducted independent study research on immigration, evolution and Down syndrome, was elected to the Phi Theta Kappa Honor society and graduated with a 3.9 GPA with an associate degree in business.

Then, “I was stuck until a friend, who also was undocumented, told me about the CUNY system” which welcomes students regardless of immigration status. He took off a year to work and establish New York residency to qualify for in-state tuition. “The curriculum and research at York led me there,” he says. After talking with biology professor Louis Levinger, who became a mentor, “I knew this was the school I wanted to go to.”

During his time at York College, he went on to participate in a quantitative biology workshop at MIT. He conducted research on social behavior with Drosophila, the common fruit fly. In summer research at Princeton University, he delved into the mechanism stem cells use to differentiate for individual tasks.

At Yale, he has spent his first year rotating through biophysics, biochemistry and structural biology laboratories. He studied how neural circuits control egg-laying in a tiny round worm; tested novel drug compounds that might affect membrane leakage in Alzheimer’s disease; examined how an extracellular matrix protein, laminin, plays a role in nerve stability in the cerebral cortex of mice; and worked to create a cell line that mimics aberrant gene fusion that can lead to cancer. He will decide which field to pursue for his Ph.D. this spring.

In 2013 he received permanent U.S. residency status. “My parents came here because of economic hardships in Peru,” he says. “They knew it wasn’t going to be easy, but they knew I’d have a better future. My mother worked 60 hours a week in a factory to support us, and I’m very grateful to her.”

Fernandez’s younger brother is now a sophomore at City College, planning to major in biology and intending to go to medical school. “My mom is so proud,” Fernandez says.

CUNY 2014-15 Award Recipients

Kira Tait
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’13
University of Massachusetts-Amherst, Graduate School, Ph.D. political science program

Imtashal Tariq
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
University of Cambridge, Institute of Criminology, M.Phil in Criminology

Courtney Tarrant
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
University of California, San Diego’s Latin American Studies Master’s program

Fadja Tassy
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’13
Seton Hall University, School of Law, JD

Marcus Oluf Tubin
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’13
Benjamin N. Cardozo School of Law, Cardozo Law School of Yeshiva University, JD

Sudip Ulak
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
Florida International University, Graduate School, Ph.D. program in Computer Science

Jeffery Cristopher White
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’16
internship at the Center for Crime Prevention and Control, 2014

Haemi Won
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
SUNY at Albany, Ph.D program in Criminal Justice

Radhalisa Zarzuela
John Jay College of Criminal Justice, ’14
NYU Master’s Program in Counseling for Mental Health and Wellness
If scientists could learn how to stop cancerous cells from spreading from a primary tumor site through the body (a process called metastasis), they might be closer to curtailing this disease. But how, exactly, do those cells spread? Aniqua Rahman (City College, B.E. in biomedical engineering, 2013) hopes to find the answers with the support of a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Now a Cornell University biomedical engineering doctoral student, she intends to create microscale models using collagen, a common mammalian protein called the glue that holds the body together.

Using microfabrication technology, she intends to mimic the hollow, tube-like microtracks that the first metastatic cancer cells (leader cells) create when they use enzymes to burrow out of a primary tumor through collagen. Subsequent follower cells use these microtracks as their invasion highway. Rahman intends to investigate the migration mechanisms of follower cells, hoping to identify approaches that will inhibit metastasis by way of collagen microtracks.

She hypothesizes that previous attempts to thwart migrating cells have failed because microtracks had formed before researchers tried to block the burrowing enzymes, known as matrix metalloproteinases.

Her three-year agenda starts with developing a physical model using collagen and silicon molds, which will shape channels as small as 15 microns wide (about the size of white blood cells). Since cancer cells may adhere to microtracks as they migrate, her second step is to understand and characterize this process by introducing breast cancer cells. Her third step will investigate the mechanism by which cancer cells leave the tumor to see whether leader cells leave physical cues to guide follower cells.

Rahman, who was born in Bangladesh and moved to Queens during her senior year of high school, says she always knew she wanted to do something related to medicine and engineering. At City College, she spent her junior and senior years studying how hydrogels (water-soluble polymer chains) might be used to deliver drugs and proteins with her mentor, associate professor Steven B. Nicoll. “I developed all of my basic skills there,” she says, “like cell culturing technique, which my current research requires now.”
THERE ARE FEW THINGS SCARIER than a fire in a building – especially, Jason Martinez believes, when it happens in a building that isn’t designed with sufficient knowledge of what happens when fire travels. “Most buildings are designed based on stationary fires, which stay in one room or compartment,” says Martinez (City College, B.S. in civil engineering, 2013), who received a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to support his research. “We don’t know enough about what happens in a building when fire travels horizontally or upward.”

Working with 3-D computer models, he seeks a fuller understanding of how fire moves from one part of a room to another and from one part of a building to another. “I’d like to see if current designs and guidelines are adequate to resist traveling fires.” Asked why this hasn’t been researched thoroughly before, he gives a verbal shrug. “That’s the big question I’ve been asking.”

The end result of his research could be life-saving changes geared to high-rise buildings, which have long evacuation times. “If we don’t understand how fire travels, we can’t ensure that a building will stand up long enough to evacuate people and ensure the safety of firefighters.”

Martinez found this topic last year after he began studying with assistant professor Ann Jeffers at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, where he intends to earn dual master’s degrees in civil and mechanical engineering on his way to a Ph.D.

At City College, he worked with assistant professor Huabei Liu, who focuses on geotechnical engineering, including static and dynamic soil-structure interactions, reinforced soil structures and hazard response, among related topics.

There, Martinez was involved with the characterization and testing of the interface of soil and geomembranes (synthetic barriers with very low permeability that line solid-waste landfills). He says the experience left him with a deep appreciation for research and a desire to continue his studies in civil engineering. He credits both professor Liu and City College for his early success in graduate school.
SIMONE GORDON (City College, B.S in childhood education, 2014), sees similarities between the United States and India when it comes to the educational problems — including high dropout rates — faced by low-income children. As she embarks on a nine-month Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Calcutta, Gordon hopes her teaching and research there will enable her “to make a difference” for both her Indian and American students.

A native of Jamaica who emigrated to New York at age 6, Gordon sought a Fulbright posting in India — where she will teach English literature and grammar to middle school students — because of the opportunity there to blend teaching with research. She plans to compare classroom practices, strategies and student-teacher dynamics, as well as cultural and economic factors in India and New York, to discover “what we can learn ... from how we teach.

“I am intimately aware of the effects of gender, ethnicity and financial and social status on a student's academic progress,” Gordon wrote in her Fulbright grant proposal. ... I am especially interested in making a difference in one of India’s schools while learning from its educators, whose efforts have been crucial to India’s educational reforms and achievements.”

Gordon has wanted to teach since third grade at P.S. 135 in Queens Village. “I had a really inspiring teacher,” she says. “She showed that she cared about her students,” motivating them to do better. “I want to do that for somebody else.”

At City College, where she earned a B.S. in childhood education with a social studies concentration, Gordon held student government posts, participated in the Colin Powell Fellowship Program and received public service and leadership honors. Through a CCNY study abroad program, she spent a rewarding month teaching English to 4- and 5-year-olds in Morocco.

Now, Gordon says, she looks forward to India — “the food, the history, everything, fully immersing myself in that community.”
WILLIAM CHEUNG
(CUNY Baccalaureate, history of philosophy/contemporary philosophy, 2014) is a scholar of philosophy and the German language, a champion policy debater and debate coach. His latest distinction, a Fulbright English Teaching Assistantship in Germany, dovetails with those passions. “I hope to translate what I learn from this experience into graduate school and a dissertation on German Idealism and ethics, while still keeping an eye toward my own experiences and how globalized, multicultural societies demand new ethical paradigms,” Cheung says.

A Canarsie, Brooklyn, native who was based at Brooklyn College for his CUNY Baccalaureate and took almost every philosophy course offered there, Cheung says he looks forward to interacting with German high school or college students in Bavaria “from the perspective of a multicultural New Yorker while teaching both the English language and American culture and politics. I think it might strike some German students as surprising at first to see an Asian-American in their classroom representing the United States, but I think this interacting is especially important in order to speak across people’s differences,” he says.

Cheung has been captivated by philosophy, and with the German language, since his youth when he persuaded an Austrian math teacher to tutor him in German and took classes “after giving my ‘pragmatic’ immigrant parents an insistent argument on the practical applications of German,” he wrote in his Fulbright grant application. German writers like Goethe and Rilke “have shaped my life and aided my finding a place in a multicultural world,” he says.

Cheung has also coached minority students in debating public policy issues, honing their critical thinking and research skills and involving them in the political process. A national-level collegiate policy debater and an award-winning speaker, he looks ahead to the Fulbright post as “a unique opportunity for me to work with students to develop better communicative and pedagogical models.” Cheung plans to enter graduate school in 2016, “study theory and philosophy in the interest of mostly ethics and minority students,” and ultimately become a professor.
YOU PROBABLY DON’T REALIZE IT, but when you use a battery, it undergoes mechanical changes, such as expansion caused by the electrochemical processes inside. This doesn’t make much of a difference in your flashlight, but if you’re trying to maximize battery life in a hybrid or electric car, it can make all the difference in the world.

Howie Chu (City College, B.E. in chemical engineering, 2013) is using a 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to study the interplay of electrochemical and mechanical phenomena in batteries.

Now a doctoral student in the Monroe Research Group at the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Chu says, “Manufacturers give you a small window of battery usage in order to prevent mechanical failure. I believe that by implementing a better control system, we could get more life out of batteries.” He believes that it may be possible to get as much as five times as much usable capacity out of an automotive lithium battery.

His research involves running batteries at various rates, charging and discharging them, and measuring the stress and strain when the battery is under an electrical load. Expansion and contraction of materials inside the battery can eventually degrade connections, leaving the battery useless, even if a charge remains.

Chu has been interested in batteries since he was a youngster, when he would see how long he could play video games before he lost battery power.

At City College, a professor, Dan Steingart, who is now at Princeton, asked him to help study alkaline batteries with “compliant architectures,” like flexible or stretchy batteries, rather than the traditional hard cell. “These could be useful for wearable technology and sensors,” he says. (Another 2014 NSF winner, Alla Zamarayeva, worked in this lab on sprayable batteries.)

Chu rounded out his undergraduate education with a summer research experience for undergraduates, funded by the National Science Foundation, at Penn State University and an internship at the Palo Alto Research Center Inc. (formerly Xerox Parc). Both projects also involved batteries.
FISH LIKE THE BLACK GHOST KNIFEFISH from the Amazon are not normally found on restaurant menus, but with their ability to send and receive weak electric signals, they must appear tantalizingly attractive to knifefish of the opposite gender. In the lab at Hunter College, junior Nicola Gabriele Kriefall — winner of a highly competitive 2014 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship, which Congress created to nurture future scientists — does her best to communicate with such African and Amazonian fish, sending electric signals to see how they respond. “We look at their behavior and collect testosterone and cortisol [both hormones] to see how levels correlate with their behavior,” she says.

Working with psychology professor Christopher B. Braun, she is “trying to see if they use electric signals to assert social dominance — that’s our hypothesis — which is why collecting cortisol, which is a stress hormone, and testosterone, which correlates with aggression and dominance, are so important.” She presented her research on whether jamming establishes social dominance in weakly electric fish at Hunter College’s Undergraduate Research Conference and 42nd Annual Psychology Convention this spring.

Kriefall has been working in the lab for more than a year, starting by caring for fish and helping other students until she got her own project. Then she began branching out.

With support from the Hunter/Howard Hughes Medical Institute, a fund for undergraduate biology majors, she will spend two months this summer at Woods Hole’s Marine Biological Laboratory, an international center for research, education and training in biology, biomedicine and ecology on Cape Cod.

Picking up a research project into neurodegenerative diseases that she began there last summer under the guidance of University of Illinois-Chicago assistant professor Gerardo Morfini, she will inject proteins produced by these diseases into squid neurons to see how they affect molecular mechanisms. Last summer, she used peptides that came from amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS, or Lou Gehrig’s Disease) and this summer also will work with Huntington’s disease proteins.

Kriefall anticipates a career that combines marine biology, her original passion, with her newfound interest in neuroscience, perhaps looking “at the nervous systems of marine animals and doing conservation research.”
FROM GRADES 8 THROUGH 12, Ember Kane-Lee wrestled as the first and, so far, only girl ever on the New Paltz High School team in upstate New York, earning a second-place statewide ranking for girls in her weight class. By 2013, when she graduated from Brooklyn College with a B.A. in sociology, she held a black belt in Okinawan Ishin Ryu karate and had won a competitive $5,000 Rosen Fellowship, which supports out-of-classroom personal-development experiences for Brooklyn undergraduates. She used the grant to travel to Colorado to see the U.S. women’s wrestling team train for the 2012 Summer Olympics and to Michigan to see a college women’s wrestling tournament.

At each event, she interviewed athletes about their experiences wrestling alongside, training with and competing against men before they could join all-female teams. She presented the resulting research paper at several conferences, including the Eastern Sociological Society conference in Boston and The City University of New York Pipeline Conference at the CUNY Graduate Center in Manhattan.

Now a sociology doctoral student at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst (and a novice boxer), she will use her 2014 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship to deepen the work she started in Brooklyn. “I’d like to continue scrutinizing gender inequality as more women are entering into aggressive male-dominated sports,” she says.

Kane-Lee intends to move into ethnography as she probes the gender dynamics surrounding girls joining high school wrestling teams; girls make up only 2 percent of high school wrestlers nationwide. She will look at team dynamics to see how boys’ viewpoints and sense of masculinity change as a result of training alongside girls. She also will analyze the types of circumstances in which boys change their perceptions about female athletes as a result of having female teammates.

Wrestling, she says, teaches women to be assertive and to see the value of determination and not giving up. “But there can be negatives when women join male teams, ranging from unspoken bias to verbal abuse, sexual harassment and even rape.” Sometimes it’s from teammates, her research found, “but more often it’s from opponents who don’t want to face these women in tournaments.”

To do well, wrestlers, male or female, have “to make sacrifices in their social lives. Wrestlers are the first ones in the gym in the morning and often the last ones out at night. They spend hours a day training, lifting, competing against other people on the team, practicing.” During a match — three intense two-minute periods — “every second you’re thinking what will work best, not only acting from muscle memory. It’s like a chess game.”

Daniel Olivero  
New York City College of Technology, ’14

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Eleanor Strehl  
New York City College of Technology, ’14

SUNY Downstate, Occupational Therapy, Master’s

Karmen Kane  
New York City College of Technology, ’13

Montclair State University, Mathematics Education, Ph.D.

Yi Ming Yu  
New York City College of Technology, ’13

Stony Brook University, SUNY, Applied Mathematics and Statistics, Master’s

Matthew De Andrade  
Queens College, Math for America

Rui Yan Ma  
Queens College, ’14

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Anita Tarossian  
Queens College, Jeannette K. Watson Fellowship

Yueting Chen  
Queensborough Community College, ’14

Jack Kent Cooke Graduate Scholarship, 2014

SUNY Stony Brook, 2014

Sade Smith  
Queensborough Community College, ’14

Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, 2014

Janet Hall  
York College, ’14

Brooklyn College, M.S. in Information Systems

Irene Hannah  
York College, ’14

Fordham University, Social Work

Stephane Labossiere  
York College, ’14

Columbia University, Teachers College, Community Health

Kathia Lamour  
York College, ’14

Columbia University, Social work, Social Work

Ashley McClain  
York College, ’14

Rutgers University, Social Work

Tasia McLeod  
York College, ’14

SUNY Downstate Medical College, Master’s Program in Medical Analytics

McLaney Moise  
York College, ’14

Fordham University, Social Work

LaChanda Moor  
York College, ’14

Columbia University, Social Work

Krystalbella Murnane-Victorelli  
York College, ’14

Boston College, Social Work

Peter Rybakov  
York College, ’14

Long Island University, Physical Therapy

Nadira Swinton  
York College, ’14

Suffolk University Law School

Debra Whorms  
York College, ’14

Harvard Medical School, M.D.

Felicia Williams  
York College, ’14

Adelphi University, Social Work