

Meet the 2011 Summer Interns

Last summer saw the launch of the O.U.R. Summer Research Internship. The student research interns were selected by the O.U.R. advisory board through a competitive application process and paid a \$3,000 stipend to spend the summer doing research with their faculty mentors. The interns even enjoyed a private lunch in the **President's office with both Provost Bowers and President Travis**. Originally, the O.U.R. budget could only support four interns, but due to the recovery of unused funds elsewhere in the budget, and because the advisory board was so impressed with the applicant pool, the program was expanded to six students. These are their stories.

Karla Alfaro (right) is a Criminal Justice major and the youngest intern, having just completed her Freshman year. Ms. Alfaro spent the summer working with Professor Beverly Frazier (Law and Police Science) to understand how Philadelphia faith-based organizations help re-entry of prisoners into society and how these differ with non-faith-based social services.



Sharlene Johnson (right), a gender studies major, spent her summer working with Professor Brett Stoudt (Psychology) to evaluate the functionality and effectiveness of the **John Jay Women's Center**. This project hopes to be actionable as well as scholarly and includes an in-depth needs assessment, focus groups, and interviews with various stakeholders.



Katherine Navarro (left), a Forensic Psychology major, was mentored by Professor Jill Grose-Fifer (Psychology) during her work on how positive and negative feedback affect decision-making. **Ms. Navarro's research** focused on gender and age differences and included **EEG recordings of subjects' brain activity** while they played a game of chance and placed wagers.



Jen Rai (left), another forensic psychology student, worked this summer to probe the effect of traumatic experiences on the disorganization of memories. Under the tutelage of Professor Deryn Strange (Psychology), this work focuses on the larger question of the formation of false memories in individuals with PTSD.



Robert Riggs (left) is a CUNY-BA student majoring in Urban Anthropology. For his research, Mr. Riggs is working with Professor Ric Curtis (Anthropology) to discover the scope and nature of prostitution and the commercial sexual exploitation of children in Atlantic City. This multi-year study is a collaboration with the Center for Court Innovation and has enrolled more than 125 research subjects to date.



Araif Yusuff (left), a Criminal Justice major, spent the summer working with Professor Mucahit Bilici (Sociology) on a project entitled, **The Burden of Names**. This work probes the complexities of Muslim names in the United States, the Americanization of Muslim names, and patterns of naming among Muslims since 11 September 2011.



The O.U.R. will be sponsoring the summer research internship again in 2012, with an application deadline in mid-March and winners announced in early April.

Office of Undergraduate Research
4243-North Hall
646-557-4625

www.jjay.cuny.edu/undergraduateresearch
www.facebook.com/JJCOUR

Anthropology Goes Big

Students explore the South Bronx

The South Bronx Youth Project is part of an ongoing research project that Professors Ric Curtis and Anthony Marcus (Anthropology) are doing in collaboration with the Community Connections for Youth (CCFY) Project in the South Bronx, The Vera Institute of Justice, the Center for Court Innovation, and the National Center for Juvenile Justice. Currently, 89 John Jay students are involved in some level of this project.

The CCFY project is part of a new state-wide effort funded by the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to transform the lives of youth, aged 13-15, who have already had contact with the criminal justice system. The



goal of the project at John Jay is to demonstrate “the transformative effect of local faith-based and indigenous service provider partnerships on the social development of high-risk youth.” Over a two-year period, the project will recruit 100 youth from the South Bronx and match them with local service providers who engage them in community building projects and other activities intended to prevent recidivism.

An important part of the effort to evaluate the success of the project includes collecting baseline data from the community to assess attitudes and beliefs about youth and crime. After all, if the project is intended to have an impact on youth crime in the South Bronx, its success can only be determined by comparing the neighborhood before and after the project is implemented. This semester, students are concentrating their efforts on conducting a survey of attitudes and beliefs toward youth and crime in the South Bronx.

The data collection in the South Bronx will seek to replicate a survey that was recently conducted in Brownsville, Brooklyn by the Center for Court Innovation and then compare and contrast the findings from the two neighborhoods. To accomplish this, John Jay students plan to interview at least 1,000 people on the streets of the South Bronx during the fall of 2011.

This project is one of the best examples we’ve ever seen of integrating research experiences into undergraduate coursework. Professors Curtis and Marcus, assisted by Ph.D. student Fabio Mattioli, have enlisted all the students registered for Ant/Psy/Soc-450 and URG-290 into this effort, converting these entire courses into a giant group research project. The project will ramp up even further in the spring, adding students from first-year experience and the second year honors program. A true capstone experience, these students are putting into action the skills and knowledge they’ve built during their studies.



A plea from O.U.R.

Help us reach our students

Since the O.U.R. opened its doors in September of last year, there is one difficulty that we consistently face: reaching students. For each type of opportunity, event, or deadline, we design an aggressive publicity campaign of targeted emails, flyers, faculty outreach, webpage announcements, and Facebook notifications. But the response is often underwhelming.

Case in point—the undergraduate research scholarship. This scholarship is worth \$1,500, the application is straightforward, and there are four deadlines throughout the year. For the first deadline, the O.U.R. sent out a targeted email to research students, an email to faculty mentors asking them to encourage their students to apply, a Facebook post, an announcement on our webpage, and then an email reminder as the deadline approached. In all of these, we openly stated that “most students are funded.” Yet, only one student applied.

How can we do better? Let us know if you have ideas, and in the meantime, we ask faculty mentors for your help in getting our messages to students, who are apparently drowning in a sea of emails and announcements. Please help your students see through the fog of digital and social media that surrounds them so they can seize the opportunities that are available. A suggestion from their mentors, by email or in person, can make all the difference and nudge them to act. Thanks for your help!

Grad School Workshops

This year, the O.U.R. is hosting a series of informative workshops called **Graduate School Basic Training**. Because many professions require graduate study for students to enter them, the goal is to help students think and plan ahead so that they can reach their unique career goals. For instance, students don’t always have a solid understanding of how PhD, JD, and MSW programs each open different kinds of doors and lead to different paths.

The first workshop, held on November 16th, was entitled “*What is graduate school and is it for you?*” Participants explored the factors to weigh when considering different kinds of graduate programs. Handouts are posted on the OUR website for students that missed the workshop. The next workshop, in early February, is entitled **Making Strong Graduate School Applications**. Students will hear about the various factors that make graduate school applications competitive. In March, we will host a workshop entitled, **Mastering the GRE** and will provide assistance for students facing the challenge of this newly revised exam.

Encourage your students join us and get a head start on their path to graduate school!

Celebrating OUR Students' Work

Another record-breaking student research and creativity week

Each May, the entire John Jay campus is abuzz with student research and creativity in an event called *Celebrating Student Research and Creativity Week*.



This event began in 2007 with the Science Department's PRISM symposium and student research showcase. The event spread to the college-wide community in 2008 and has enjoyed expansion each year since.

This past year, the third iteration of this week-long symposium boasted a whopping **389 students** presenting their work. These students were mentored by 79 faculty members in 19 academic departments and programs.



In 2012, the symposium will be held **April 30 through May 04** and the organizing team is looking forward to capitalizing on the beautiful meeting spaces in the new building for this event.



Faculty are encouraged to start thinking about this event now in order to reserve a space and time slot.

There are many ways that faculty can work the symposium into their spring syllabi, such as individual or group research projects with a presentation event at the symposium. Also, giving credit for symposium attendance, with some form of response, is a great way to expose students to research.

Probing How Incarceration Affects Health

Criminal Justice faculty lead a team of student researchers

If there is still anyone that thinks undergraduates cannot do cutting-edge research, you need to meet Emily Diaz, Vashtie Dyanand, Sheneeka Saul, and Sophia Vlahos. These four Forensic Psychology majors are working with faculty from the department of Criminal Justice on a groundbreaking study on the role that incarceration plays in the health and wellness of prisoners and parolees.

For the study, Emily and Sheneeka travel to Sing Sing to recruit volunteers and interview them about their health and well-being. **"Most of them are happy to participate,"** says Sheneeka. The experience has led both students to see prisoners very differently. **"On TV, they always portray prisoners as monsters and evil, but when you sit down and talk with them, you see that they're just regular people and they can be very nice."** These two students are closely mentored by Professor Violet Yu of the Department of Criminal Justice.

In another arm of the study, Vashtie and Sophia ask similar questions of recent parolees in Brooklyn with additional focus on the role of religion. **"After the first contact with the subjects, it can be hard to do follow-up because their phone might get turned off, they have to move, or some end up back in prison,"** says Vashtie. This arm of the project is directed by Professor Frank Pazella, also of the

Department of Criminal Justice. These two projects have already revealed surprising results. As Sophia puts it, **"Most people assume that someone's health would get worse in prison, but we are finding that more often, it actually improves. Inmates report feeling better physically when they are on the inside."** While the reasons for this are not fully understood, access to healthcare professionals, steady and healthy diet, and free time are at least partly responsible. **"Sometimes there just isn't anything else to do but get in shape,"** said Sophia.



Along the way, these four students are building research skills that will be invaluable going forward and have even reconsidered their career paths, with all four now strongly considering graduate school. These projects are funded by a large grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to Professors Jeff Mellow and Hung-En Sung (Criminal Justice) that was awarded, in part, because they specifically planned to involve undergraduates in the work. Their work with the students has far surpassed their expectations. Said Professor Sung, **"At first, I was nervous about how much an undergraduate could really do and I was thinking maybe we could sneak a couple masters students onto the project to help them, but now, I'm really glad that we didn't do that!"** Mellow agrees, **"All four of these students have been superstars. I'm now looking to add undergraduates to all of my projects."**

OUR Students Presenting, Publishing, etc.

Publications:

Nazia Mahmood (Forensic Sci.) co-authored a publication with Professors Yi He and Nicholas Petraco (both Sciences) entitled *Elemental fingerprints profile of beer samples constructed using fourteen elements determined by inductively coupled plasma – mass spectrometry (ICP-MS): Multivariation analysis and potential application to forensic sample comparison* in the journal *Analytical and Bioanalytical Chemistry* in 2011.

Robert Riggs (Urban Anthropology) co-authored an article with Profs. Anthony Marcus (Anthropology), Ric Curtis (Anthropology), and Amber Horning (Sociology) entitled *“Is child to adult as victim is to criminal?”* in *Sexuality Research and Social Policy* in 2011.

Chris Pedigo (Forensic Sci.) co-authored a publication with Prof. Yi He (Sciences) entitled *Bioaccessibility of arsenic in various types of rice in an in vitro gastrointestinal fluid system*, in the *Journal of Environmental Science and Health* in 2011.

Lidissy Liriano (Forensic Sci.) co-authored a publication with Prof. Richard Li (Sciences) entitled, *A bone sample cleaning method using trypsin for the isolation of DNA* in the Journal *Legal Medicine*.

Elaan Luckasiewicz (Forensic Sci.) co-authored an article with Prof. Elise Champeil (Sciences) entitled *“Identification of Gamma-Hydroxybutyric acid (GHB) and Gamma-Butyrolactone (GBL) in beverages using NMR and the PURGE solvent-suppression technique”* in *Forensic Science International* in 2011.

Anna Young, Guida Lai, Brian Hung, and Amy Yuen (all Forensic Sci.) co-authored a publication with Prof. Yi He (Sciences) entitled *Determination of trace chloroanilines in environmental water samples using hollow fiber-based liquid phase microextraction* in the Journal *Chromatographia* in 2011.

Presentations:

Juanita Bell (BA/MA, C.J.) gave an oral presentation entitled *Social Justice Sexuality Project* at the conference, *Growing Up Policed: Surveillance Racialized Sexualities* at the CUNY G.C.

Popy Begum (International C.J.) gave a presentation entitled *The Role of Women in West African Trafficking Networks* at the University of Buffalo and the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.

Krystle Kenyon (Forensic Psych.) gave a poster presentation co-authored by Prof. Maureen Allwood (Psychology) entitled *Exposure to violence and types of anxiety symptoms among male and female college students* at the New York State Psychological Association 74th Annual Convention, New York, NY.

Sandy Kong gave a poster presentation co-authored by **Elaan Luckasiewicz** (both Forensic Sci.) and Prof. Elise Champeil (Sciences) entitled, *Synthesis of DNA adducts of Mytomycin C at the exocyclic N₂ position of Guanine* at the National Conference of the American Chemical Society in 2011.

Christina Hui (Forensic Sci.) presented a poster co-authored by Prof. Anthony Carpi (Sciences) entitled *Mercury emissions from soil in response to simulated precipitation events* at the International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Anthony Ho (Forensic Sci.) gave an oral presentation co-authored by Prof. Anthony Carpi (Sciences) entitled *Mechanisms of the Reduction of Divalent Mercury* at the 10th International Conference on Mercury as a Global Pollutant, Halifax, Nova Scotia in 2011.

Nazia Mahmood (Forensic Sci.) delivered a poster presentation co-authored by Profs Yi He and Nicholas Petraco (both Sciences) entitled, *Determination of elemental fingerprints of Beer Samples by Using Inductively Coupled Plasma Mass Spectrometry (ICP-MS)* at the Eastern Analytical Symposium in 2010.

Teehavi Narayne, Ellen Siu, and Marta Ekstrom (all Forensic Sci.) co-authored a presentation given by Prof. Yi He (Sciences) entitled *Quantitative Determination of Gamma Butyrolactone in Beverages by Colorimetric Method*, at the Pittcon Conference 2010.

Susybel R. Pimentel (BA/MA, Forensic Psych.) presented a poster co-authored by Prof. Maureen Allwood (Psychology) entitled *Trauma Exposure and Academic Performance among College Students: Examining the Role of Sleep* at the Annual SAEOPP McNair/SSS Scholars Research Conference, 2011.

Patrik Saunders (Forensic Sci.) gave a poster presentation co-authored by Prof. Elise Champeil (Sciences) entitled *Use of microwave radiations for nucleophilic substitutions at the N² and O⁶ positions of guanine* at the National Conference of the American Chemical Society in 2011.

Cindi-Ann Williams (Forensic Sci.) presented a poster co-authored by Prof. Shu-Yuan Cheng (Sciences) entitled *Dendritic Cell Therapy: An investigation of IL-12p70 production and maturation in Dendritic Cells* at The Leadership Alliance National Symposium (LANS) and the American Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS).

Undergraduate Research Scholarships:

Abigail Campbell (Justice Studies), *The Possibility of Latin American Autonomy through the Creation of a Political Identity;*

Melissa Fleck (CUNY BA), *The Depressed Socio-Economic Conditions of the Bordering Cities of Dajabon, D.R. and Wanament, Haiti*

Chad Infante (Justice Studies), *Rousseau's Competitors and the Academy of Dijon*

Krystle Kenyon (Forensic Psych.), *Gender Differences in the Relationships between Violence Exposure and Anxiety Symptoms*

Nadiya Kostyuk (International C.J.), *The Holodomor and the Politics of Memory: Soviet Intervention in the Ukraine in 1932-1933*

Blaine Mulhare (Criminal Justice), *The Haitian Street Children of Dajabon, Dominican Republic*

Susybel Pimentel (Forensic Psych.), *Trauma and Academic Performance Among College Students: Examining the Role of Sleep*

Jennifer Shum (Criminal Justice), *Honor Killing: A Woman's Tragedy - The Distinctions of Muslim and Hindu Honor Killings*

Stephanie Vigoya (Forensic Psych.) *Examining the Relationship between Self-Perceived Barriers and Career Self-Efficacy among Latina College Students*