

## Celebrating Student Research & Creativity

For the past three years, the Celebrating Student Research and Creativity Symposium has always been one of the biggest events at John Jay College and last year was no different. Throughout the week, the campus was filled by the energy and enthusiasm of our young scholars! With about 200 students mentored by approximately 50 faculty, there were posters and presentations from a variety of perspectives and approaches, representing disciplines from the arts and humanities to the social and hard sciences.

Just to name a few, there were presentations covering the linkages between Tibetan art and concepts of contemporary justice, the impact of religious doctrines on LGBT rights, the characteristics of participants of peer support mental health services, and the effects of conceptual or data-driven encoding on the development of post-traumatic stress disorder. The Office of Undergraduate Research (O.U.R.) hopes that the incredible quality of the presentations and posters helps to reinforce the fact that John Jay students are clearly capable, eager and enthusiastic producers of academic-level research.

Last year, the O.U.R. reorganized the symposium, making the week resemble an academic or professional conference. While some may have been hesitant to change the structure of such a big and successful campus event, we wanted to develop a new format that would lead to greater faculty involvement in the planning, structure and content of the events. We worked with many faculty members that served as panel chairs, who diligently read research proposals, organized thematic panels and helped in the successful planning of Research Week.

Moreover, the change in structure allowed us to meet our additional goals: (1) exposing students to a more academic environment to present their research; (2) condens-



ing the schedule to decrease logistical problems of time and space; and (3) giving greater attention to and highlighting the hard work and wonderful research of our undergraduates. We believe that the Symposium will continue to be a model for the other senior colleges on how to engage the entire campus in a celebration of student scholarly work.

While there are too many people to name, the O.U.R. would like to thank all the faculty and staff who helped to plan and participated in Research Week for all their hard work! Their commitment to the growth and development of our students is unmatched and is the main reason why John Jay will continue to be a place that fosters and develops the next generation of researchers, teachers, practitioners, and academics.

### Celebrating Student Research & Creativity Symposium 2014

April 28 to May 2

Submissions Due March 7, 2014

Include title, the abstract, and—if your student wants to be considered for one of the Research Awards—an 800 word description of the project and findings.

The Office of Undergraduate Research  
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[www.jjay.cuny.edu/undergraduateresearch](http://www.jjay.cuny.edu/undergraduateresearch)  
[www.facebook.com/JJCOUR](http://www.facebook.com/JJCOUR)



# On a Roll: John Jay Students Earning High Honors

Last year, John Jay students continued to shine, earning prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and admissions to graduate programs. Of course, there are too many to name here, the O.U.R. would like to take a moment to recognize just a few of our brightest stars.

No list of undergraduate achievement would be complete without noting **Nicolas Montano** (CUNY BA), who is John Jay College's first recipient of the **British Marshall Scholarship**. Nicolas was also a former participant in the **Harvard Latino Leadership Initiative**. Last year, two John Jay students, **Melissa Manrique** (Forensic Psychology, pictured right) and **Sabrina Pestel** (Economics), have earned spots in this incredible program, which focuses on developing the skills of future leaders in the Latino community.



**Nikoleta Despodova** (Forensic Psychology) and **Robert Riggs** (CUNY BA) both earned **National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowships**. These prestigious fellowships provide tuition and stipends for three years as these students continue their academic success in graduate school. Robert is now a doctoral student in Sociology at New York University. Nikoleta was admitted into the Psychology and Law PhD program here at John Jay.

Each year, the **New York City Urban Fellowship** program accepts 25 students nation-wide. Last year, three of these students—**John Cusick** (Humanities and Justice), **Rosmarin Belliard** (Political Science, pictured right), and **Keenan Lambert** (Political Science)—are homegrown at John Jay. Program participants work in various placements in New York City government, gaining invaluable experiences and knowledge in policy, urban planning and civil service.



Many of our graduates will carry the knowledge and experiences they had here into prestigious graduate programs. For example, **Olivia Orta** (Forensic Science, Class of 2007, pictured left) is an example of the tenacity and effort indicative of our very best; she was admitted (among several, with funding) to the Epidemiology SD Program at Harvard University School of Public Health. **Antoine Jones** (Political Science, Class of 2012, pictured right) was also admitted to several graduate programs with funding and is now attending the University of Chicago to earn his PhD in Sociology. Also, **Popy Begum** (International Criminal Justice) was admitted to the Masters Program in Criminology and Criminal Justice Research Methods at Oxford



University. **Richard Piszczatowski** (Forensic Science, Class of 2011) is now attending the MD/PhD program at the Albert Einstein College of Medicine; as he completes both degrees, Richard will receive funding for tuition, a stipend, and housing, which work out to well over a half-million in funding!

While this is only a small sample of the success of our undergraduates and recent graduates, we want to note how many of these students are indicative of the potential success that comes from engaging students in research. Nikoleta Despodova, Richard Piszczatowski, and Olivia Orta researched with Professors Margaret Bull-Kovera (Psychology), Nathan Lents (Science), and Anthony Carpi (Science), respectively. John Cusick and Robert Riggs were O.U.R. Summer Research Interns. Nicolas Montano recently presented his Rubin Award winning research at this year's Celebrating Student Research and Creativity Symposium. Popy Begum also presented her work at Research Week. These students and their respective mentors are doing something right!



## Some Important Dates/Events

### October 9, 2013

Undergraduate Research Scholarship Applications Due

### November 6, 2013

Undergraduate Research Scholarship Applications Due

### March 7, 2014

Student Research Week Proposals Due

Include title, the abstract, and—if your student wants to be considered for one of the Research Awards—an 800 word description of the project and findings. Details of how to submit will be posted on the O.U.R. homepage in early spring.

### Early- or Mid-Spring 2014

Undergraduate Research Scholarship Applications Due

### April 28 to May 2, 2014

Celebrating Student Research & Creativity Symposium

## Common O.U.R. Resources

**Poster Printing.** The O.U.R. poster printer is available for free to undergraduate students working with a faculty member. This is especially important for undergraduates participating in the FYE Poster Session, Research Week or at an academic conference. Visit the O.U.R. website for specific instructions and helpful tips on how to get posters printed at the O.U.R. office.

**Laptop Loan Program.** For those students that assist in fieldwork or have additional work outside of the lab, classroom or office, the O.U.R. has laptops that can be loaned out to any student doing research with a faculty member. These laptops are already equipped with many of the standard programs used in academic research, including the Microsoft Office package and SPSS. Please visit the website for application materials and instructions.

If you have any additional needs for undergraduate research (e.g., where to find funding sources, links to additional scholarship and grant opportunities), please do not hesitate to contact and ask O.U.R. We also have some additional information posted on the O.U.R. website.

# O.U.R. Academic Year 2012—2013

Last year was an exciting year for the Office of Undergraduate Research. We continued to facilitate, promote, and support undergraduate research throughout the college. Particularly, we were most pleased with the growth in the range of disciplines engaging with and mentoring undergraduate research! We believe this was just the start and are eager to provide resources and support as John Jay College seeks to increase the number of students and faculty working together on academic-level research.

The O.U.R. hosted a faculty development workshop in late February, which was attended by more than 50 faculty members across majors and programs. These soon-to-be and current mentors of young scholars discussed the growing need for research experiences, allowing our students to gain the skills and knowledge necessary to be competitive in a global economy. Moreover, in smaller working groups, faculty members focused on strategies to successful recruitment and mentoring of John Jay's future practitioners and academics.

A second event organized by O.U.R. was the Celebrating Student Research and Creativity Symposium. About 200 students across majors were mentored by

over 50 faculty from a multitude of departments, ranging from Communications & Theatre Arts to Criminal Justice to Science. We were impressed with the high quality work produced by some of our brightest young scholars.

Throughout last year, O.U.R. noticed a concern among many faculty members, who were hesitant to work with undergraduate researchers. Mainly, the perceived costs and burdens inhibited and deterred some from engaging and mentoring students in undergraduate research. As a result, Professors Deryn Strange (Psychology) and Maxwell Mak (Political Science) led a workshop entitled "Integrating research into the curriculum: how to get students involved in research" at Faculty Development Day on August 27th. We shared with faculty successful models across disciplines and academic approaches that may help to remove the barriers and open the door for undergraduate research.

Lastly, we would like to recognize the incredible work of Director Nathan Lents (Science), who is on sabbatical this year. He worked diligently to establish this Office during his tenure as the first director of O.U.R. He will be missed this year, but we will surely keep the seat warm. We raise the proverbial glass in gratitude for all his hard work and in hopes of a speedy return!

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## The Intersectionality of Student Research & Success: *The Work of Antonio (Jay) Pastrana, Jr.*

While providing John Jay students with additional opportunities like research experience is often its own reward, **Professor Antonio (Jay) Pastrana** (Sociology) found out that it surely doesn't hurt when your students bring home the proverbial hardware! Competing with about 35 students from 15 colleges, **Maria Livanou** (Psychology) and **Webster Innocent** (Psychology) placed first and second, respectively, at an undergraduate poster session during the 2013 annual conference of the Eastern Sociological Society.

"As far as we were concerned we were winners by the time we arrived at the conference simply because it had been a long journey going from research idea to research poster and from submitting an abstract to actually being at the conference itself," Professor Pastrana said. "But when we were approached by the ESS judges and told of the win, it simply made our work even more meaningful because we knew that others were seeing, evaluating and agreeing that the posters were informative and most importantly advanced knowledge about LGBT youth of color, a population that often gets ignored or misunderstood."

Maria's presentation, entitled "LGBT Youth of Color and Mental Health: An Examination of Family and

Health Care Provider Support," investigates the impact of intersectionality on the mental health. Rather than examining demographic characteristics in isolation, Maria's research captures a more nuanced understanding of human behavior and stresses the fact that emotional well-being can be influenced by a multitude of identities.

Because of the fear of being judged or victimized due to their sexual identity, LGBT youth may isolate themselves without appropriate support networks. Entitled "Supporting Parents to Support LGBT Youth," Webster's project examines on the levels of social support (e.g., parents, friends, social networking) for LGBT youths and discusses potential strategies to prevent victimization and bullying.

Both Webster and Maria presented at Research Week. And, Maria was an O.U.R. Summer Intern! These students are building on their success and continuing to work on their projects, with peer-reviewed articles in their sights. Clearly, Professor Pastrana's mentoring continues, too!

"I mentor because I see myself in students and I believe that while the classroom is a traditional place for learning, what happens outside of the classroom in pursuit of knowledge is just as important," Professor Pastrana said. "That is where innovation, creativity, and meaningful WORK often takes place."



# Outstanding Scholar and Mentor Spotlight

For the past several years, John Jay has recognized that value of undergraduate mentoring through research and scholarly productivity. No one embodies the spirit and demonstrates the value of scholarly mentoring than last year's winner of the Outstanding Scholarly Mentoring Award, **Professor Elizabeth Jeglic** (Psychology).

For 6 years, Professor Jeglic (right) has mentored 7 students in the Ronald E. McNair Program, guiding them as they engage in academic-level research. "I love mentoring undergraduates because research is still relatively new for them and there is an unbridled enthusiasm that they bring to the table," Professor Jeglic said. "I also think it is a wonderful opportunity to work with them to develop their skills and help them on their educational journey."

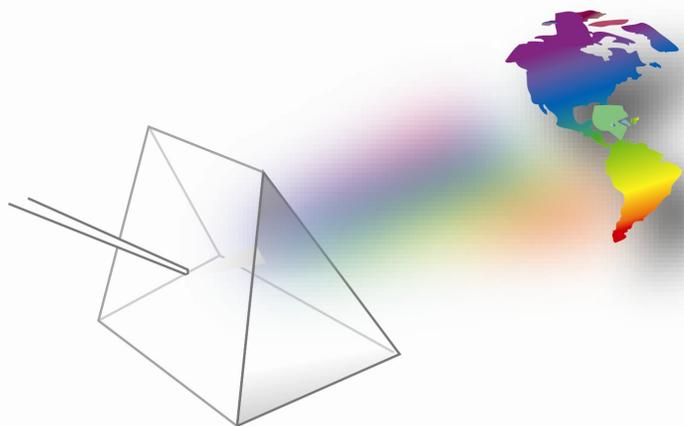
Of course, there is always a perceived cost of working with undergraduates. So, we asked Professor Jeglic for advice of how to include more undergraduates in research. "I think that the biggest misconception about working with undergraduates is that it takes a lot of work as they do not have a great deal of experience," Professor Jeglic offered. "However I find that the best way to work with undergraduates is to bring them into your lab. There they are part of a group of students at various levels of training (BA, MA and PhD). This enables them to see what they can achieve if they continue with their studies. It also enables them to observe and become involved with research projects at different stages so that they have a more holistic approach when the eventually start on their own projects."



With such wonderful support and guidance, it is not surprising that each of Professor Jeglic's McNair students presented their work at conferences and all of these mentees went onto graduate school.

"Many students become involved in research, not necessarily because it is something they are passionate about, but because someone told them that it was a good thing to do," Professor Jeglic said. "However once they become involved and especially if they take ownership of their own project then all of them have told me how much they have enjoyed the experience. I also feel so proud (like a mother hen) when my students receive accolades for their work or when they get accepted to graduate programs."

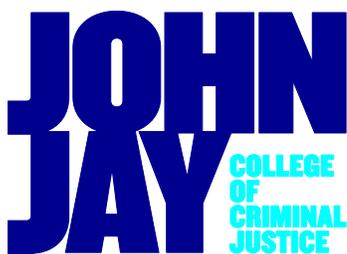
Professor Jeglic should feel proud of her accomplished record of working with undergraduates, integrating these eager young scholars into academic-level research. Kudos!



## PRISM at John Jay

The Undergraduate Research program for students in the Forensic Science and Computer Information Systems majors is called PRISM – the Program for Research Initiatives for Science Majors. PRISM has been serving STEM students since 2007 and served as the inspiration and the model for the foundation of the O.U.R. in 2010.

Last year, PRISM began expanding its opportunities even further - to students in the CUNY Justice Academy.



Science students at four of our partnering community colleges (Bronx, Hostos, Queensborough, and Borough of Manhattan) have been able to participate in outings to places like the

American Museum of Natural History, Westchester Crime Lab, and the Bronx Zoo. These outings have included special behind the scenes tours and presentations, helping to show the connections between what students are studying in the classroom and their potential careers.

PRISM has also been offering Lab Open Houses and Lab Shadows to CJA students. These sessions let our future students see what undergraduate research is truly like, and hear from both mentors and current FOS students about the rewards and challenges of research. Lab Shadows give the students first-hand experience of conducting research in the lab. This past year alone, we have seen the effects of these efforts with four new researchers joining us from our partner schools.

