Greetings Fellows,

I hope that this newsletter finds each of you in good health and overall wellness. I laud your resilience and adaptability to weather the changes that this pandemic has wrought at all levels, personally and professionally. Rest assured, MMGIP is here. We have been experimenting with virtual tools and have managed to bring fellows together in a range of activities. For those of you who have been willing to experiment with us, thanks for your confidence. We learn something new with each virtual event. We have begun using Canvas, the Learning Management System many of you may use on your campuses. Through this platform we are able to facilitate our seminars more efficiently and allow for far better communication. All of our events will use Canvas in 2021.

For those of you who haven’t yet participated we look forward to seeing you on Zoom sometime soon. What I’ve learned is that even though we are all Zoom fatigued, there is a little shiver of excitement and a sense of comfort and familiarity that comes from seeing your colleagues. I know that many of you have stayed in touch at the end of the sessions. I appreciate each of you and the way that you value the Mellon programs.

Although there seems to be some relief in sight regarding pandemic restrictions, we will remain virtual throughout the calendar year of 2021. Our first in-person event will be sometime in 2022. The 2021 Summer Conference will be June 21-25 via Zoom. As you know the Summer Conference is for graduating seniors through third year graduate students. Although we will not have paper panel sessions, the other elements of the Summer Conference will remain. The Summer Conference is going to be a bit fluid in its dates this year depending on the level of participation. We want to ensure that groups are the right size for having conversations and workshops. For now, we ask that you note the week of the conference on your calendars. The Fellows Portal is open and registration is available until April 19, 2021.

As we continue our virtual events, we hope to keep building community amongst fellows. While we can’t capture those connections that happen over a meal or between sessions that feed our soul and our working lives, we will continue to improvise. Please check the calendar and upcoming events in this newsletter for opportunities to stay connected and make progress in your work.

Now, more than ever, knowledge matters and our support of your pursuits is unwavering.

Finally, please remember, that the foundation of MMGIP is you and your connection to the Mellon community. We miss seeing you and look forward to meeting in person when we are able.

Warm wishes,

The MMGIP Staff
CONGRATULATIONS, DR. NELSON

Nelson Joining the Biden-Harris Administration as First Deputy Director for Science and Society in the White House Office of Science and Technology

President Alondra Nelson, who has led the Social Science Research Council since 2017, has been appointed to the Biden-Harris administration in the White House Office of Science and Technology Policy (OSTP). President Joe Biden named Dr. Nelson OSTP’s inaugural Deputy Director for Science and Society at an event held in Wilmington, Delaware on January 16, 2021.

Alondra Nelson is the fourteenth president of the Social Science Research Council. Widely renowned for her research at the intersection of science, politics, and social inequality, she holds the Harold F. Linder Chair in the School of Social Science at the Institute for Advanced Study, an independent research center in Princeton, New Jersey.

For more information please refer here.

WELCOME, RENEE

Prior to joining the Foundation in December 2020 as Senior Program Associate and Associate Director of MMUF, Renee Johnson-Thornton was an administrator at Wesleyan University for over two decades. At Wesleyan, she served as Dean for Diversity and Engagement, Dean for Equity and Inclusion, deans for the classes of 2018 and 2022, Assistant to the Dean of the College, Assistant Dean for Student Academic Resources, Associate Director of the McNair Program, and Associate Coordinator of Wesleyan’s MMUF program. Renee’s tenure also included service on the inaugural African American Studies program advisory board and an appointment as Research Affiliate in the African American Studies department.

The first member of her family to earn a college degree, Renee holds a BA from Binghamton University, where she was a double major in English and African & African American Studies; an MA in Liberal Studies from Wesleyan University; and a PhD in Education from the University of Rhode Island/Rhode Island College. Her dissertation, *Studying Science: Students Gaining Access to the Community of Practice of Environmental Studies*, demonstrated the beneficial outcomes of mentoring strategies, inclusive pedagogy, and the cultivation of communities of practice on the education, development, and retention of people of marginalized identities in science courses, research laboratories, and the STEM disciplines broadly. Renee believes in mentoring as a vehicle for teaching content, building confidence, and creating new knowledge, and has sought throughout her career to incorporate elements of mentoring into support for both students and colleagues.
GRADUATE STUDENT CONFERENCES: THEN & NOW

WINTER CONFERENCE REPORT

From February 18-20, SSRC-MMGIP hosted their pilot event, the Winter Conference for Advanced Graduate Students, which was held virtually. The Winter Conference provided a forum for skills exchange, cohort-building and the development of professional proficiencies for fellows, who are in their 4th through 6th year of their PhD program.

The conference kicked off with opening remarks by Dr. McKinley Melton, Professor of English at Gettysburg College, and recently named as Inaugural Paxton Endowed Teaching Chair. During his remarks, he reminded the audience how valuable and important each of their work is and urged all of them to “keep the faith, there are people who need what you have to offer, what we have to offer. There are people who are depending on us to say the things that they cannot, that they haven’t yet discovered the language that will allow them to articulate.”

On the second day, fellows participated in group workshops focused on relevant topics, as well as developed writing strategies for their dissertation. One fellow writes of their experience:

“This was one of the best organized and executed online group events I have attended during remote work over the last year. What made it different from other events was (1) buy-in from other participants (2) the tight and effective scheduling (3) the regularity with which the larger group was divided into smaller groups, which are easier for dialogue.”

On the last day, Dr. Karinn Glover gave a presentation about “Focusing on Wellness,” discussing how chronic exposure to stress can lead to detrimental health effects and the importance of mindfulness and protecting one’s wellness. One student writes:

“The combination of discussions on the practical (how to get the writing done) to the focus on the body and mind in a non-intrusive of ‘love and light’ way was well balanced and so needed.”

Fellows were then placed in Affinity Groups to have some time to speak with one another based on similar field and interest. Finally in a panel session, the participants heard from fellows who had recently finished their PhD. The panelists shared their experiences after completing their PhD; the talks also served as reminder to the participating fellows that finishing and creating an academic career for oneself is possible.

One fellow wrote of their overall experience of the conference:

When the conference ended, my body and brain felt more whole and more connected than they have felt during the entire COVID-19 pandemic. I left the Winter Conference feeling more confident than I have ever felt during graduate school, that I will survive graduate school, and do it well.

Thank you to those who participated and to those who helped make the Winter Conference possible!
CALENDAR OF EVENTS

SUMMER CONFERENCE APPLICATION OPENS
Date: March 22, 2021

SUMMER CONFERENCE APPLICATION CLOSES
Date: April 19, 2021

SUMMER CONFERENCE
Date: June 21-25, 2021
Location: Zoom

2021 GRADUATE STUDENT SUMMER CONFERENCE

The Summer Conference will be held virtually this year from June 21st – 25th in a modified format. The conference is a wonderful opportunity for early-stage graduate students to take advantage of the MMGIP resources. Fellows will learn important strategies for navigating graduate school, as well as important networking opportunities with senior scholars and the national community of MMUF fellows. It is open to graduating seniors through third-year graduate students.

Registration for the Summer Conference is open from March 22nd - April 19th on our Fellows Portal. We hope to see you there!

PRE DOCTORAL RESEARCH GRANTS

Graduate Studies Enhancement (GSE) & Pre Doctoral Research Development (PRD) grant applications will be opening May 1st. Please see the Fellows Portal for more information.

VIRTUAL BOOKSHELF

Visit our virtual bookshelf which can be accessed on the Fellows Portal to browse books published by Mellon fellows. If you have a new publication, be sure to let us know so we can add it to the bookshelf!

UPDATE US!

We want to hear from you! In order for us to contact you about the latest MMGIP news and updates, please fill out our survey and update your contact information here.

Also, log into the Fellows Portal and update your profile. While you’re logged in, scroll through the many features of the Fellows Portal. Discover fellows in your neighborhood or institution, job postings, upcoming MMGIP events, and more.

We’re also eager to share news about our fellows on social media! Email any exciting updates to mellonmays@ssrc.org.

CONTACT INFO

Web: https://www.ssrc.org
Portal: mellon-fellows.ssrc.org
LinkedIn: SSRC-Mellon Mays
Twitter: @ssrcmellonmays

We’re still here

FELLOWS HIGHLIGHTS

Do you have a new publication, job, or institution? Let us know for a chance to have your achievements featured in our next Fellows Newsletter!

BOOK RAFFLE

We will be raffling off ten $100 gift certificates to Powell's Books. In order to enter, please update all of your contact information at this link here!

Half in Shadow: The Life and Legacy of Nellie Y. McKay
By: Dr. Shanna Greene Benjamin

We’re still here