

**UNCF/MELLON MAYS UNDERGRADUATE FELLOWSHIP PROGRAM  
2015-2017 JUNIOR FELLOWS' SUMMER PROJECT SUMMARIES**

UNCF/Mellon Fellows completing the junior year are eligible to receive a summer stipend. The summer stipend can be used on a project or projects that will help to facilitate the fellow's research and/or graduate school research activities. Fellows use their stipends to assist with a variety of activities. They are encouraged to work with their mentors to determine the best use of the stipend. Fellows request these funds in the spring and are required to submit a report following their junior year summer. The following summaries provide an overview of how fellows used their stipends.

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**DA'VON BOYD**

**MOREHOUSE COLLEGE**

Da'Von participated in the Leadership Alliance Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP) at Harvard University and used his summer stipend to cover his travel and living expenses while in Massachusetts. He conducted research at Data Privacy Lab, under Professor Latanya Sweeney of the Institute for Quantitative Social Science at Harvard University, where he analyzed vulnerabilities in voter registration websites to gauge the susceptibility of these websites for being hacked. Da'Von had the opportunity to present his research at the Leadership Alliance National Symposium and at a Harvard University Summer Research Fair. He also participated in the Leadership Alliance Mellon Initiative Day at Harvard University where he and other students discussed Ta-Nehisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*. Da'Von also used a portion of his funds to purchase GRE preparatory materials and several texts related to his research.

**FREDDYA BRIGGS**

**PHILANDER SMITH COLLEGE**

Freddya visited the following graduate institutions: Texas A&M University, the University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of California, Riverside and used her funds to cover travel and living expenses while in Texas and California. She used a portion of her funds to purchase GRE preparatory materials and to schedule the exam. She also spent time during the summer fine tuning her research and has narrowed the texts that she is using for her research to *The Bluest Eye* and *Push*.

**NIA BUSH**

**SPELMAN COLLEGE**

Nia used a portion of her stipend to enroll in a VIP Plus Kaplan GRE Preparatory course that includes private tutoring, in class sessions, text book materials, online practice guides, and extra Math help. She also visited the following graduate schools: Stanford University, the University of California, Los Angeles and the University of Southern California and used her stipend to cover travel costs. She also purchased books related to her research with her remaining funds.

**JONATHAN CARLISLE**

**MOREHOUSE COLLEGE**

Jonathan participated in the University of Chicago Summer Research Training Program and used his stipend to cover his travel and living expenses while in Chicago. Participation in this program allowed him to better prepare himself for graduate study and the rigorous research that is entailed in obtaining a doctoral degree. He was also able to complete credit-bearing courses in academic writing and social theory, participate in multiple workshops, and present his research at the Chicago Research Symposium at the end of the program. He credits the program with helping to

deepen his analytic and creative capacities, develop scholarly writing and presentation skills, and explore research approaches and methodologies relevant to his area of study—Political Theory and History. He was able to visit the University of Chicago’s Library which proved to be an unlimited resource for gathering research materials for his research project. Jonathan took two classes while at the University of Chicago which he found to be particularly useful as they provided concrete theoretical backing (social theory course) and writing strategies (writing for research course) that will assist him to produce clear and exciting research for the Academy.

**CALE CARTER**

**HUSTON TILLOTSON UNIVERSITY**

Cale spent the summer in France conducting research. He spent three weeks in Montpellier at Paul Valéry University where he took an accelerated French language course. After completing the course, he traveled Aix-en Provence to visit the Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer in order to gather more information for his research. Cale also visited the Service Historique de la Défense archive in Vincennes. Visiting and working in these two French historical archives was his first time conducting research in any archive, and these visits tested his ability to comprehend the language, as well as his memory of the subject matter. Due in part to visiting these archives, he believes that he may have possibly found the father of Roger Sauvage. Cale also visited the Normandie-Niemen exhibit at the Musée de l’Air et de l’Espace at Le Bourget where he was able to find some photos of Sauvage that he had not seen before. Another highlight of his experience overseas was his trip to London. While in London, he was able to visit the Imperial War Museum, a place he dreamed of visiting and working in since the age of twelve. A final highlight of his trip was gaining a unique perspective of the cultures of England and France. He gained an insight into how the French and the English view the U.S. as well as how they view the social and political issues that occur in the U.S.

**KRISLYN DOMINGUE**

**SPELMAN COLLEGE**

Krislyn spent ten days during the summer in Jacmel, Haiti, conducting research on Haitian Vodou under the supervision of Dr. Joyce Jackson and used her stipend to cover her travel, living, translation and other research-related expenses while in Haiti. As a southern Louisiana native, she found it interesting to witness and analyze the correlations between Haiti and her home. The food, history, culture, and language were reminiscent of cultural patterns she knows all too well. Visiting Bassin Bleu, a natural pool of water was definitely the highlight of her experience in Haiti. While there, she pondered the ways that this site was potentially used as a site for sacred ceremonies. Swimming in the waters truly felt spiritual and was an experience that she will never forget. She credits her experience with being absolutely pivotal to the timeline of her research process. While she went to Haiti knowing of her interest in Vodou priestesses, she did not have a particular angle or focus. While in Haiti, however, she was able to refine and center her research interests and aims through her interactions with the informants of her research. She is currently most interested in interrogating Black female spiritual leaders in African and African-derived religious practices as they navigate the intersections of power, alternative spirituality, and resistance.

**TATYANA DONALDSON**

**CLAFLIN UNIVERSITY**

Tatyana participated in the Leadership Alliance Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP) at Brown University and used her summer stipend to cover her travel and living expenses while in Rhode Island. One of the highlights of her summer was being able to network

and engage with the Executive Director of the Leadership Alliance, Dr. Medeva Ghee. Another highlight was participating in the LAMI day at Harvard University and the Leadership Alliance Conference in Stamford, CT where she was able to interact with other Leadership Alliance participants. Tatyana enjoyed conducting research during her time at Brown University and credits this experience with pushing her to work beyond the limits she had already set for herself. During the summer, she also built her mentor's data set, from the ground up, while working on her own research, the focus of which has shifted to how hegemonic femininity is displayed on fashion magazine covers. She will focus on how magazines representing marginalized groups may display hegemonic femininity differently than mainstream (Caucasian) magazines. Her research is based on that of Erving Goffman in his book entitled *Gender Advertisements* (1974). She was able to use the many resources the John D. Rockefeller Library had to offer. She used a portion of her stipend to purchase GRE Preparatory materials and also books related to her research.

**AL-MAJID EDWARDS  
HAMPTON UNIVERSITY**

Al-Majid participated in the University of California, Davis Summer Program for Literary Analysis and Success in the Humanities (UCD-SPLASH) and used his summer stipend to cover his travel and living expenses while in California. He credits the relationship with his faculty mentor, Dr. Mark Jerng, as life-changing. He received a lot of constructive feedback throughout his experience and was often perceived as a graduate student. One highlight of his summer experience was attending the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers Recruiter's Weekend in Andover, MA where he met with graduate representatives from several different institutions. He has identified Columbia University and the University of Virginia as his top two institutions. Al-Majid also used a portion of his stipend to purchase books related to his research.

**JAUHARA FERGUSON  
SPELMAN COLLEGE**

Jauhara participated in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Writing and Research Training Program at the University of California-Los Angeles and used her stipend to cover her travel and living expenses while in California. While at UCLA, she connected with numerous faculty and staff within UCLA's undergraduate MMUF program, as well as current graduate students, who provided mentoring and support for her current research project and senior thesis. She was able to use the library resources at UCLA and connect with a specialist librarian to help find literary sources to expand her bibliography and literature review. The other MMUF Fellows in the program were also helpful in providing feedback and fostering a collegiate community of scholars. She credits her experience with allowing her to gain a better understanding of the graduate school application process and consequently was able to narrow down her field of study, school choice, potential faculty advisor, and graduate programs.

**ENDIA HAYES  
SPELMAN COLLEGE**

Endia participated as a summer intern with the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) program and used her summer stipend to cover her travel and living expenses while in Massachusetts. She credits the experience with nurturing her growing excitement to enter graduate school. She was introduced to faculty members who were invested in providing the best and most rigorous experience that best represented a graduate school experience. She engaged with text from theorists Louis Althusser, Judith Butler, Gloria Anzaldua, Stuart Hall and more and was given the opportunity to practice the type of teaching that she would want to enact within her own classroom through seminar facilitations. Endia also participated in the annual IRT Recruiter's

Weekend where she was able to speak with deans, recruiters, as well as faculty from the graduate schools of interest. Endia will use a portion of her funds to purchase GRE preparatory materials and to offset costs related to taking the exam. She has also allocated some funds for graduate school application fees. She purchased research materials with her remaining funds. She credits her summer experience with preparing her for multiple aspects of graduate study toward the Ph.D. She feels well prepared to begin the graduate school application process and to effectively dialogue with resistant texts. She has learned how to make her voice heard within a graduate level seminar as well as how to navigate spaces that she will occupy but may not necessarily be welcomed in.

**JEREMY JACKSON**  
**WILEY COLLEGE**

Jeremy visited the following institutions: Southern Methodist University, the University of Houston, and Baylor University and used his funds to cover travel and living expenses while in Texas. At Southern Methodist University, he was able to identify professors with whom he would like to work. He also appreciated the diversity and access needed to thrive as a post graduate on that campus. He was impressed with the Genetics program at the University of Houston, and found Baylor University to be the most competitive of the three. Jeremy also spent the summer furthering his research and making a few adjustments to it in order to give it a fresh new perspective. His research was mainly focused on the number of collaborations of scientific publications among HBCU/PWI and HBCU only institutions. As his research evolved, he began to focus more specifically on the top ten research producing HBCUs in the country.

**JASMIN JOHNSON**  
**OAKWOOD UNIVERSITY**

Jasmine participated in the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Writing and Research Training Program at the University of California, Los Angeles and used her stipend to cover her travel and living expenses while in California. In this program, she and her cohort were introduced to different writing techniques to engage their research. She conducted intentional research and engaged in in-class peer analysis, learned and practiced reading techniques, strategies and learning research tools. She had a great experience with her graduate mentor who guided her cohort through the process of applying to graduate schools and navigating the Academy through the lens of a minority. Her personal meetings with her mentor were helpful as she gained insight and guidance into becoming a competitive graduate school applicant. She also credits her experience with honing her networking skills

**MICHELLE JONES**  
**FISK UNIVERSITY**

Michelle used a portion of her stipend to purchase GRE Preparatory materials and to register to take the exam. She continued conducting research on "Single Mothers Within Literature and Literature's Effect on Culture" by locating additional resources in the Nashville area and accessing the University of Chicago's (UIC) Library. She will use her remaining funds to visit potential graduate institutions in the Fall.

**JANICIA MITCHELL**  
**RUST COLLEGE**

Janicia spent a portion of her summer conducting research in Holly Springs, MS, analyzing data at Rust College's Families First Resource Center (FFRC) and used her funds to offset living expenses

while in Mississippi. At the Center, she was able to access the data that the staff collected on previous students who were assigned to the center during the academic year of 2014. More specifically, she analyzed the pre- and post- intervention tests completed by the students to determine the effectiveness of the classes in which they participated. Her research experience was significantly enhanced because she was able to apply the knowledge and techniques gained from her experience at the UNCF/Mellon Summer Institute and with the assistance of her mentor, she was able to embark on a crucial part of her study- data collection. Janicia also visited the libraries of the University of Mississippi and University of Memphis to expand on literature review. She purchased several books related to her research and bought GRE preparatory materials. Janicia toured the following graduate schools- the University of Memphis, the University of Mississippi, the University of Missouri- Saint Louis, and Washington University and used her funds to cover travel and living expenses while in Mississippi, Tennessee and Missouri. Washington University stood out the most to her as she found the campus and the students to be quite inviting and welcoming.

**TERRI N. O'NEAL  
SPELMAN COLLEGE**

Terri participated in the University of Chicago Summer Research Training Program and used her stipend to cover her travel and living expenses while in Chicago. During the program, she was able to work independently on her undergraduate research project, gaining helpful feedback and advice on her project from faculty, staff, graduate students, and other undergraduate students in her cohort. She took advantage of the many resources that the University of Chicago's libraries has to offer to further develop her literature review and theoretical models. She also conducted archival research at Southern Illinois University. In addition to research, Terri participated in a writing for research intensive course, a social theory course, and a U.S. social history seminar. These courses were very helpful to her, particularly the writing for research course, which provided her with the necessary skills to craft her academic writing in a way that is compelling and interesting. The social theory class allowed her to conceptualize and struggle through dense texts and share her ideas aloud in a class full of diverse scholars. Finally, the U.S. Social History seminar allowed her to contextualize historical moments within the city of Chicago, grounding her in a community beyond the academic space.

**SAMANDA ROBINSON  
FISK UNIVERSITY**

Samanda participated in The Leadership Alliance and Princeton Summer Undergraduate Research Experience (PSURE) and used her stipend to cover travel and living expenses while in New Jersey. Before going to Princeton University, it was announced that the Firestone Library would house and make available to the student body and faculty, digitized Toni Morrison papers, manuscripts, and drafts. She was afforded the opportunity in July to go into Princeton's Special Collections and research notes, manuscripts, and drafts of Morrison's novel *Paradise*, which is one of Samanda's primary research sources. This experience was one of the biggest highlights of her time spent at Princeton University. Another highlight was being able to network with Deans of different colleges and departments through PSURE's *Coffee and Conversations* series, where each week she and her cohort sat down with Princeton faculty and had honest conversation about transitioning into the Ph.D. program and how to navigate being the only minority in a particular department. During the program, Samanda and her cohort traveled to Harvard University where they networked with not only faculty and graduate students, but other Leadership Alliance undergraduate fellows. She also presented her research at the annual Leadership Alliance conference in Stamford, Connecticut.

**RAE'JEAN SPEARS**  
**TOGUALOO COLLEGE**

Rae'Jean spent a portion of the summer in Atlanta conducting independent research. She immersed herself in Dr. Martin Luther King Jr's authentic sermons available at the King Center and analyzed both popular sermons and those never heard before to establish a pattern of rhetorical sounds and phrases. This helped further develop her research argument pertaining to the intellectual capacity that black sermons possess due to their rhetoric. She credits this time at the King Center for opening her eyes to and helping to further ground herself in sermonic knowledge. She also visited the following institutions: Vanderbilt University, Columbia University, and the University of Southern Illinois and used her stipend to cover her travel and living expenses in Tennessee, New York and Illinois. The highlight of her summer was attending the MMFPN Graduate School Boot Camp at the University of Chicago. At the boot camp, Rae'Jean and her peers engaged in very candid conversations about the academy at the Ph.D. level and participated in an intense writing workshop where they received feedback from graduate students on their prospectus. Rae'Jean found this experience of having a rising scholar in her field to review her work, to be very beneficial.