The CUNY Mellon Faculty Diversity Career Enhancement Initiative

Executive Summary
June 20, 2017
University Dean Arlene Torres, PhD
Victoria Stone-Cadena, PhD

With the generous support from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Office of Recruitment and Diversity (ORD) of the Office of Human Resources Management at the City University of New York launched an exciting initiative to support the professoriate. The CUNY Mellon Faculty Diversity Career Enhancement Initiative (CFDI) started on June 1, 2016 and will run through May 30, 2020. With additional support from the Office of Academic Affairs, Dr. Victoria Stone-Cadena serves as the Assistant Project Administrator spearheading the implementation of our collective vision for the initiative.

The Mellon grant supports eight tenure-track faculty annually on each of the four Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) campuses. The focus is on new hires and those who are pre-tenure. Under the direction of a faculty mentor, fellows participate in monthly research/writing seminars as well as professional development workshops. In 2016-2017 inaugural year, twenty-eight fellows participated. Their work is interdisciplinary, and strongly aligned with scholarship in the social sciences and humanities. The grant is intended to bolster the advancement of a diverse professoriate in these areas of scholarly inquiry.

The research/writing seminars yielded very exciting outcomes. For example,

Linda Villarosa’s article, “America’s Hidden H.I.V. Epidemic: Why do America’s black gay and bisexual men have a higher rate than any other country in the world?” was published in New York Times Magazine on June 6, 2017. (CCNY)

Terri Watson, in collaboration with Erica Friedman, was awarded $50,000 from the West Harlem Development Corporation for the G.O.O.D Project. (CCNY)

Brian Sowers was a recipient of Feliks Gross Award. The Feliks Gross award for assistant faculty is given to six recipients across CUNY campuses each year. (Brooklyn)

Katherine Lu Hsu was named to a six-month 2017 Career Enhancement Fellowship for Junior Faculty award from the Woodrow Wilson/Mellon Foundation. (Brooklyn)

The fellows will be working throughout the summer on their research and publications. They are poised to participate in reading/writing seminars in the fall and in additional professional development workshops.

Demographic Profile

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Year of CUNY Tenure-Track Appointment

Ranges are between 2012-2016, with the highest concentrations in 2014 and 2015.

2012 (2); 2013 (4); 2014(10); 2015 (10); 2016 (2)

In addition to their commitment to a research/writing seminar, the fellows participated in two workshops this past spring.
The Nuts and Bolts of the Annual Review workshop, was the first in a series of professional development workshops. Guest speakers, Dr. Sherri-Ann Butterfield, Executive Vice Chancellor of Rutgers University-Newark, and Dr. Rosamond King of Brooklyn College shared their insight and practical advice on the annual review process.

“The annual review process is challenging because it has been so unclear. Today’s workshop speakers removed the veil and I feel more prepared to engage proactively in the process.” CDFI fellow

The Book Prospectus: Peer-reviewed work and the Publishing Industry with guest speaker Ken Wissoker, Editorial Director of Duke University Press, and Director of Intellectual Publics at the Graduate Center, CUNY covered a broad range of publication strategies, asking pointed questions to prompt the fellows to think about the key objectives and arguments in their emergent scholarship.

“The workshop worked so well for me because it perfectly balanced detailed and generalized advice. I found myself inspired to think (and rethink) my own approaches.” CDFI fellow

We are pleased to report that they are supported by an outstanding cohort of faculty mentors from the four MMUF campuses at CUNY:

Dr. Liv Yarrow, Associate Professor, Classics, Brooklyn College  
Dr. Adrienne Petty, Associate Professor, History, City College of New York, Spring 2017  
Dr. Cheryl Sterling, Associate Professor, English, City College of New York, Fall 2017  
Dr. Milagros Denis-Rosario, Associate Professor, Africana and Puerto Rican/Latino Studies, Hunter College  
Dr. Richard McCoy, Distinguished Professor, English, Queens College

To further support our partnership with the campuses an Advisory Committee with broad representation and levels of administrative and faculty expertise has been appointed. Their enthusiastic participation exemplifies their strong commitment to scaffolding mentorship and the career development of CUNY students and our faculty through the professoriate.

After a highly successful launch of the program, we are gaining momentum and looking forward to a robust schedule of activities this fall. The positive feedback on the seminar, the workshops and the record of productivity by the fellows demonstrate the success of the initiative. The Mellon grant and CUNYs commitment helped this inaugural cohort of faculty to establish an academic support network. As they increased the visibility of junior scholars on their respective campuses they have advanced their careers at CUNY and in the broader academy. We look forward to our engagement with this cohort as we prepare to welcome a new cohort next year.

Follow us on Twitter: https://twitter.com/CUNY_ORD  
Website: http://www1.cuny.edu/sites/cfdi/

Advisory Committee Members

Dr. Isabel Estrada, City College of New York  
Dr. Effie Maclachlan, Office of Research, CUNY Central Office  
Dr. Paula Massood, Brooklyn College  
Dr. Martin Ruck, The Graduate Center  
Dr. Michael Wolfe, Queens College  
Dr. Victoria Stone-Cadena (ex-oficio), Office of Recruitment and Diversity, CUNY Central Office

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