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INTRODUCTION TO THE MMUF

Welcome to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship at Williams College. This handbook is designed to give you information that will help you get the most out of your MMUF experience and to answer questions you might have. The Office of Special Academic Programs (OSAP) administers the MMUF, and you should feel free to approach either the coordinator or the assistant at any time. We ask that throughout your time as a fellow you keep in touch with our office and that you participate fully in the meetings, workshops, conferences, and other events we sponsor. We look forward to working with you.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, located in New York City, was established as a nonprofit philanthropic organization in June of 1969 with a mission to “aid and promote such religious, charitable, scientific, literary, and educational purposes as may be in the furtherance of the public welfare or tend to promote the well-doing or well-being of mankind.” In 1988, under this broad charter, the Foundation made a long-term commitment to help remedy the serious shortage of faculty of color in higher education through the Mellon Minority Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) program. In 2003, the foundation reaffirmed its commitment and broadened the mission of MMUF, and the name of the program was changed to the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, to symbolically connect the mission to the stellar educational achievements of Dr. Benjamin E. Mays.

The fundamental objective of MMUF is to increase the number of minority students, and others with a demonstrated commitment to eradicating racial disparities, who will pursue PhDs in designated fields of study. The program aims to “reduce over time the serious under-representation on college and university faculties of individuals from certain minority groups, as well as to address the attendant educational consequences of these disparities.” The program serves the related goals of structuring campus environments so that they will be more conducive to improved racial and ethnic relations and of providing role models for all youth.

MMUF aims to achieve its mission by identifying and supporting students of great promise and helping them to become distinguished scholars by providing them with the opportunity to develop their own research projects, work with faculty mentors, and learn about graduate school and academic careers. The Foundation continues to support fellows through graduate school and the early stages of their careers. The Mellon-designated fields of study are:

Anthropology	Demography	Foreign Languages	Musicology
Area Studies	Earth Science	Geology	Philosophy
Art History	Ecology	History	Political Theory
Classics	English Physics	Literature	Religion
Computer Science	Ethnomusicology	Mathematics	Sociology

Presently, 17 colleges and 23 universities in the United State and South Africa receive MMUF grants from the Mellon Foundation. Additional institutions participate through a grant made to the United Negro College Fund (UNCF). Additional information about the fellowship can be found at www.mmuf.org.



Every man and woman is born into the world to do something unique and something distinctive and if he or she does not do it, it will never be done. ~ Benjamin E. Mays

DR. BENJAMIN E. MAYS

Benjamin Elijah Mays was born in 1895 in South Carolina, and graduated from Bates College in Maine in 1920. He went to the University of Chicago for his master's degree and doctorate, and while he was working on those degrees, he was ordained into the Baptist ministry. He taught at Morehouse College and at South Carolina State College. From 1934 to 1940, he served as dean of the Howard University School of Religion and then moved on to the presidency of Morehouse College, a position he distinguished for the next quarter of a century. He also served his greater community well, becoming the first black president of the Atlanta school board.

Benjamin Mays spoke early and often against segregation and for education. He received nearly thirty honorary doctorates and other honors and awards including election to the Schomburg Honor Roll of Race Relations, one of a dozen major leaders so honored. He was a mentor for one of his Morehouse students, Martin Luther King, Jr., and he served the young minister as an unofficial senior adviser. He gave the eulogy at King's funeral.

Among Mays's books were the first sociological study of African-American religion, *The Negro's Church*, published in 1933; *The Negro's God*, 1938; *Disturbed About Man*, 1969; and his autobiography, *Born to Rebel*, 1971. These books reveal a combination of sharp intellect with religious commitment and prophetic conviction. At Williams all MMUF fellows receive a copy of *Born to Rebel* after being accepted into the fellowship.

The American National Biography website has a comprehensive biography on Dr. Mays at <http://www.anb.org>.

FACULTY MENTORING

The MMUF is based on the premise that mentoring can play a huge role in academic development, and Williams fellows typically rate the mentoring relationship as one of the highlights of their undergraduate years.

The MMUF requires that fellows find and work with mentors throughout their two-year fellowship. By working closely with faculty mentors, the fellows learn about research, teaching, graduate school, and life in academia. Fellows are encouraged to seek out mentors whose teaching and research interests are a good match, who can commit to mentoring for at least one year, and who will take an interest in the fellow's academic and career development.

As in any relationship, the interaction between mentors and fellows will vary, as will the nature of the research project, depending upon the discipline, the interests of the mentor and fellow, and the stage of development of a particular project. Projects can include a wide range of academic activities: independent research and writing, lab work, research assistance, help in course development, and teaching assistance. While the program emphasizes opportunities for fellows to discover and pursue their own interests, mentors are also encouraged to involve fellows in their projects to provide an opportunity for learning about the research processes of advanced scholars. Thus, fellows should be prepared to work as assistants for their mentors at some point in the fellowship. In any case, fellows should consult with their mentors in developing research proposals for each funded term (semesters and summers), and projects should be designed with the fellow's short- and long-term goals in mind. Mentors should feel free to determine, with the fellow, what types of written assignments or products are most fitting for individual projects. If a fellow is not living up to the fellowship's expectations, the mentor and the coordinator work together with the fellow to develop a plan to get back on track.

The following guidelines should help provide both direction and flexibility in mentoring.

Guidelines for Faculty Mentors:

- Assist your fellow in formulating a research project and written proposal.
- Meet regularly with your fellow (every week during the summer; every other week during the semesters) to discuss the project. Email regularly with fellows studying abroad.
- Teach one class, if possible, during the Summer Research Colloquium.
- Assist your fellow with written work and oral presentations.
- At some point during the two years, involve the fellow in your research and/or teaching.
- Help your fellow locate relevant scholarly activities, and, if practical, take your fellow to a conference (funding is available).
- Write a brief evaluation of your work with your fellow at the end of each school year.
- Keep in touch with the director regarding any concerns or problems.

MMUF STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES

The Mellon Foundation funds fellows to conduct research for ten weeks full-time during the summers after their sophomore and junior years and for six to eight hours per week during the academic year. This section is intended to help you understand how to best structure your fellowship for the two-year period.

First Summer

At Williams, fellows are selected at the end of their sophomore year. The following summer they, along with the Williams College Undergraduate Research Fellows, participate in the Summer Research Colloquium on campus. The Colloquium lasts six weeks and provides new fellows with intensive instruction in advanced research skills. Faculty members from different divisions offer classes on research across the disciplines. Simultaneously, students conduct their own research projects under the guidance of their mentors and the reference librarians, who teach workshops and provide individual assistance. At the end of the six weeks, fellows are expected to present their research in both a paper and a formal talk to the faculty, students, and staff of the Colloquium.

During the Research Colloquium, fellows live together in campus housing. Various activities are planned to provide a broad introduction to academic life and to allow the group to develop positive working relationships while taking advantage of the many cultural and recreational activities offered by a summer in the Berkshires. Additionally, workshops are given on topics relating to the process of applying to graduate school: choosing the right graduate program, GRE preparation, writing a personal statement, etc. Because of the intensive nature of the Summer Research Colloquium, fellows are asked not to make any other commitments for those six weeks and to plan to spend weekends on campus.

After the Research Colloquium ends, fellows spend the remaining four weeks of their summer fellowship continuing work on their projects. They may conduct their research on or off campus, providing that, either way, there is contact with the mentor. Fellows remaining on campus make their own housing arrangements, and the program will cover the cost of the dorm room. Fellows wishing to earn additional income during their first Mellon summer are asked to restrict their work to outside the ten-week fellowship period. This is in accordance with the Mellon Foundation's intention that the stipend free the fellow from the distraction of summer employment and allow for full concentration on research.

Academic Year

During each semester, MMUF fellows are funded to work on their research with their faculty mentors. The fellowship is considered to be a replacement for campus employment and should take up approximately eight hours per week (including fellowship meetings, etc). Fellows who wish to study away may do so as long as a mode of frequent communication has been established with the program coordinator and with the faculty mentor. Fellows may work on

projects of their own initiative or on some component of their mentor's research. Research activities might include reading and keeping an annotated bibliography or reading journal, writing research papers, working as a research assistant or in a lab, or assistance in course development. The nature of the work should be negotiated between the fellow and the mentor with the goal of helping the fellow develop graduate level research skills. A senior Mellon fellow wishing to write an honors thesis may combine the two research projects with the expectation that the fellowship would allow for extra time to be spent on the thesis.

Throughout the year, OSAP organizes workshops, lectures, meetings, and gatherings with mentors. We hold required monthly meetings in Hardy House to announce and discuss program activities, to share research experiences, and to discuss the graduate school application process. These meetings are essential in maintaining the "research community" that begins to develop over the summer. In the fall of each year, we travel to the MMUF Northeast Regional Conference, where fellows have an opportunity to meet colleagues from other area colleges.

Second Summer

During the summer after junior year, MMUF fellows are expected to work under the guidance of a faculty mentor full time for ten weeks. This is considered to be a replacement for summer employment. While the academic year does not afford a significant amount of time for independent research, the summer is an opportune time for fellows to delve deeply into their research interests either on or off campus. Again, summer research may include a variety of activities, depending upon the mentoring relationship. Should you decide to conduct research off campus, s/he must first establish a plan that will facilitate frequent communication with both their mentor and the program coordinator. All aspects of the research plan should be worked out in consultation with the mentor. If a second-year fellow needs to earn extra income beyond the Mellon stipend, s/he may work outside of the ten weeks or up to ten additional hours per week during the ten-week fellowship. The purpose of this restriction is to minimize distractions from research and to ensure that the fellowship receives the attention it requires.

Program Reports

The Mellon Foundation has an on-line reporting system for fellows. New fellows fill out the Profile form, and continuing fellows fill out an Annual Report. In addition, the office of Special Academic Programs requires each fellow to submit a Project Proposal before each term of research and a Research Report at the end of each term to document the individual fellowship activity and progress. Research papers or any other written work is submitted along with the research report. Mentors are also asked to write up brief reports at the end of each academic year. All of these reports are used to document the progress individual fellows and of the Williams MMUF as a whole, and they may be included in the yearly report to the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. They are also saved in files that are often referred to for reference checks and letters of recommendation when fellows apply for fellowships, jobs, and graduate school.

Stipends

The Mellon Foundation provides stipends so that fellows can dedicate themselves to their research and participate fully in the MMUF program without the distraction of work study and summer jobs. The summer stipends are awarded in three installments totaling \$3500. The semester stipends are also awarded in three installments and total \$1500. In rare cases, when a fellow is not fulfilling his or her commitment to the fellowship, stipends may be delayed or withheld.

Travel Funds

Travel funds are available to encourage fellows to leave campus for research-related travel, attendance at academic conferences, and graduate school visits. Fellows anticipating travel expenses should speak with the coordinator about the availability of funds and reimbursement procedures.

Application to Graduate School

By accepting the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship, fellows have indicated a serious interest in attending academic graduate school. OSAP provides various forms of support to help fellows investigate graduate school options during their junior and senior years, including workshops on related topics: deciding when and where to go to graduate school, preparing for the Graduate Record Exam (GRE), funding, and writing statements of purpose. At different times during the year, we invite current graduate students talk with the fellows about their experiences in graduate school, and we help organize visits to graduate programs. We work with the Institute for Recruitment of Teachers (IRT) and several graduate schools that offer visitations for undergraduates to learn about graduate school options. We also work with fellows who wish to take time off between college and graduate school.

Guidelines for Fellows

- Under the guidance of a faculty mentor, design a research project with clear and specific objectives.
- Fill out a proposal form for each term's work and have the mentor sign it.
- Devote a total of approximately eight hours per week to the fellowship each semester.
- Attend the Summer Research Colloquium at Williams the summer after sophomore year and then work full time with a mentor for four additional weeks.
- During the summer after junior year, work full time for ten weeks on a research project to be designed in consultation with a mentor.

- At the end of each term, submit to OSAP and to the mentor a research report describing and including, if applicable, completed work. If the project is continuing into the next semester, a summary of the status of the project will suffice.
- Attend monthly OSAP meetings and other events.
- Take the GREs or other tests as required by field of graduate study.
- Submit all proposals and research reports each semester and summer as required by OSAP.

RESOURCES

A wide variety of resources is offered to each fellow through the MMUF and OSAP. These resources are designed to enhance research experiences and intellectual development, to facilitate applications to fellowships and graduate schools, to assist in finding ways to finance graduate school, and, above all, to help fellows get the most out of their undergraduate years.

First and foremost, we hope you will consider your mentors and the OSAP staff a resource. You will be meeting with the coordinator several times each semester for discussions about your research and plans, but you are welcome to come to us at any time with any type of concern. We are here to help you. The office is equipped with a fax machine and a typewriter, which are available for your use, and we have information about various fellowships and graduate programs across the country, which are continuously updated.

OSAP Library and Computer Room

The Library and Computer Room, located on the first floor of Hardy House, contains both Macintosh and IBM computers for student use. On the north wall of the library are three locked shelves, which contain books available to all fellows including GRE preparation materials, graduate school directories, books pertaining to life in graduate school and academia, funding resources, and other reference books. If, at any point, you would like to browse through or check out one or more books from our collection, see the program assistant for a key to the cabinets.

MMUF GRADUATE SUPPORT

When MMUF fellows become graduate students in one the Mellon-designated fields, they become graduate fellows and are eligible for new forms of support through the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) and the Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation (WWNFF). The SSRC administers summer conferences, predoctoral grants, and dissertation workshops for MMUF graduate fellows. More information can be found at <http://www.ssrc.org/programs/mellon-mays-graduate-initiatives-program>. The WWNFF administers grants to support travel and research and dissertation writing. See www.woodrow.org/fellowships/ for more information.

To be eligible for support through these organizations, graduate fellows must stay up to date with the Mellon Foundation by filling out the on-line annual report. The Office of Special Academic Programs also updates its information on each fellow every fall.

Loan Repayment Program

Fellows who enroll in a PhD program in a Mellon eligible field within 39 months of receiving an undergraduate degree are eligible for a loan repayment opportunity through the MMUF. The program will repay up to \$10,000 of undergraduate debt accrued through Perkins, Stafford, or Williams College in five installments. For each of the first four years of graduate school, a fellow can request up to \$1,250 in repayment. Upon completion of the PhD, the fellow can request the remaining \$5000. Graduate students should contact the Office of Special Academic Programs to obtain the loan repayment request form, which requires the signature of a graduate school dean. Payment is made from the Williams College MMUF directly to the lending agency. Students with undergraduate debt totaling less than \$10,000 may, upon completion of the PhD, request repayment of graduate students loans from designated educational lenders for graduate study (i.e. Sallie Mae) such that the total repayment would not equal more than \$10,000.

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