University Honors College:  
Community Based Research Fellowship

The University Honors College (UHC) believes in three core values that shape all of our programs, advising, and resources.

1. **Academic Attainment:** Students should strive to attain goals that reflect their greatest potential and their unique set of interests and abilities.

2. **Intellectual Curiosity:** Students should be motivated to deeply explore the disciplines and issues that most excite them.

3. **Development of Social Consciousness:** Students should recognize the responsibilities of citizenship and understand how their knowledge and skills can be applied to benefit their communities.

The Community Based Research Fellowship Program connects these three values by supporting students conducting community based research projects.

Fellows directly apply their discipline’s research process and academic frameworks to investigating a pertinent issue in the community. The undergraduate researchers represented in this book have worked with a community, community leader, or non-profit organization to develop a research project that seeks to explore and address an issue important to the given community. The results or outcomes of the research are intended to effect positive social change, develop students' social conscious, and contribute scholarly works to their respective academic fields. Fellows selected for this program represent the diversity of academic disciplines at the University of Pittsburgh. The University Honors College values the formation of multidisciplinary communities.

This “Blue Book” highlights participating Fellows, Community Partners, and Faculty Partners and symbolizes the importance of all individuals and organizations involved in this semester’s program. The Fall 2013 CBR Fellows hold majors in Electrical Engineering, Bioengineering, Theatre arts, French, Urban Studies, Communication, Nonfiction Writing, Spanish, Global Studies, Anthropology, Nursing, and Civil Engineering.

Each Fellow’s profile includes two parts: Part I is a biography and part II is an overview of their research project. Faculty Mentor and Community Partner profiles are written in the form of short biographies.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Faculty Mentor(s)</th>
<th>Community Partner(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Eric Bucklen</td>
<td>Dr. Daniel Budny</td>
<td>Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children &amp; The Swanson School of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don Bullock</td>
<td>Dr. Daniel Budny</td>
<td>Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children &amp; The Swanson School of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellen Connally</td>
<td>Ms. Cynthia Croot</td>
<td>The Heritage Out of School Time &amp; Jodi Kelley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bennett Garner</td>
<td>Dr. Michael Glass &amp; Dr. Tom Akiva</td>
<td>Summerbridge Pittsburgh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby Pasell</td>
<td>Dr. Shalini Puri</td>
<td>DREAMers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jeremy Teichmann</td>
<td>Dr. Daniel Budny</td>
<td>Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children &amp; The Swanson School of Engineering</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah Winston</td>
<td>Dr. Richard Garland</td>
<td>The Violence Prevention Project of Pittsburgh &amp; Khalid Raheem</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linden Wu</td>
<td>Dr. Willa Doswell &amp; Dr. Betty J. Braxter</td>
<td>Women’s Center and Shelter &amp; Dr. Rhonda Flemming</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
I'm Eric Bucklen, a sophomore, studying electrical engineering, hopefully specializing in signals and communications. Outside of the classroom I am a member of the Delta Chi Fraternity and the Christian Student Fellowship. With my fraternity I am involved with several community service activities such as Adopt-A-Block, volunteering at the local Boys and Girls Club, Pitt Clean-Up Day, as well as philanthropy events such as Pitt Dance Marathon and hosting our own golf outing benefiting The V Foundation. Community service has always been something I value and I will be Delta Chi’s Community Service Chair next semester. With the Christian Student Fellowship I also participate in multiple community events and am looking forward to our annual mission trip next year. I am also an avid sports fan. This past year I played in a co-ed softball league, pick up ice hockey at Schenly Park, and a soccer league with Delta Chi. I chose to apply for this fellowship for a couple reasons. Last semester, In Engineering Applications for Society, an honors engineering class, I worked with both Don Bullock and Jeremy Teichmann to develop a basic Bluetooth compatible iPad app for the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children (WPSBC). The main reason we applied for the fellowship was to continue our work with the WPSBC. As our last semester wound down we all realized how much more we could do for the teachers and students at the school if we only had more time in the class. This fellowship has granted us not only more time to assist the school but also funding to help our research. We believed the fellowship would not only be a great way to continue our work but it would also be a great way to continue our own education in a unique way. What is special about this fellowship is that it is interdisciplinary. This was something we were very excited for. Our apps not only have engineering aspects, but they also have arts, education, and other facets to them. By getting the chance to be in a fellowship with students focusing on studies different from ourselves, we hoped to gain a new perspective on our ideas and come up with new valuable concepts. Hopefully not only will others contribute to our research, but we will be able to offer a technical and engineering based input, crucial to other fellow’s goals.
I will be working in a group with Don Bullock and Jeremy Teichmann to conduct my research. Last semester we worked together in an honors engineering class, Engineering Applications for Society, to create a Bluetooth compatible app that allowed the students at the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children (WPSBC) to easily interact with their iPads. Through this fellowship we hope to accomplish a couple of things. First off, we want to continue our work with the WPSBC. Depending on the school's needs we will be developing additional apps or improving upon our original project. Another goal is to create a "cook book" or just an easy to use resource that incoming freshman enrolled in Engineering Applications for Society can use to build off of our work and produce their own apps to benefit other community organizations. Throughout our research we will be working closely with Dr. Dan Budny, a civil engineering professor and the director of the freshman engineering program at Pitt. I think this research project does a great job of connecting both my academic and co-curricular involvements. Our work will be closely related to many topics in electrical engineering. As I said in my bio, I am specifically interested in signals and communications so I find Bluetooth communication to be very interesting. Community service is also very important to me, so I love any time I have the opportunity to give back. Having worked with the WPSBC before, I am very excited to continue to serve the wonderful teachers and students there. As a team I believe we have set great goals for ourselves and are looking forward to seeing tangible results from our research.

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I. 

I first found my motivation to be an engineer in high school. It was during research for a class that I stumbled across an article, one about a team of Bioengineers at IBM working on a type of cancer treatment that I found interesting. The use of nano filters to destroy cancerous cells, sounded so weird to me at the time. I wanted to know more. I found out how filters are made to allow normal cells to pass but rupture malformed cells before they multiply. What absurd and amazing research was going on in the world? So there I found it. That was the kindle for the fire. I began to dig. I dug and dug and before I knew it I had before me what was a goal in life, to cure cancer. My motivation was born. I learned everything I could about this research and even based my college decision off of who could point me in the best direction to develop this technology. I knew that if I were to make my goal a reality, I would do so at the University of Pittsburgh. This is where I enrolled one year ago and where I have found myself today. And even though my personal goal has taken a backseat to the fellowship for now, it has no less contributed to where I am today, and may even be considered responsible for me becoming a part of this fellowship.

II. 

Within my freshman year I had already cemented myself in engineering and made incredible friends, two of which being my teammates in this fellowship. Jeremy Teichmann and Eric Bucklen, those were my partners. We were involved in a class known as Honors Engineering Applications for Society, in which teams are partnered with community organizations to better the organization in some way. Our community partner was the Western School for Blind Children, a facility dedicated to the education of those who have ocular, mental, and physical handicaps. The school uses iPads as a tool for teaching children, but with their handicaps the interaction between the children and the iPads was poor. Together we worked alongside the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children to
develop software to make learning in their environment easier for both the students and teachers. We made several applications which play sounds and display images, as well as teach the children about the alphabet, with much more reliable and user-friendly interaction than what they already had.

To this end we three scoured Pittsburgh both on and off campus learning from students, professors, and corporation-level programmers both on and off campus. We even met with a professional from Google who was able to help point us in the right direction and give us the reading material we sorely needed. With these resources collected from our multiple months of study, we were able to compile two programs and transfer them to the WPSBC so that they may use them in a class setting for testing. From there they shall provide us continual feedback on how we can improve our work to better suit their needs.

Which ultimately brings us to our fellowship. With the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children serving as our community partner we will further improve our applications, as well as document all of our sources so that future students will be able to accomplish what we have and take the next steps. The goal of the University Of Pittsburgh Swanson School Of Engineering is to provide such support for all facilities by writing software that will make their work easier, be it engineering an application to aid in rehabilitation or interactive aides for the handicapped in museums. There are so many branches out there and we are the first stepping stone. We will lay the foundation for many future generations of engineers at Pitt to build upon. I cannot wait to contribute to this program as much as it will contribute to me.

Don bullock
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I.

Howdy! My name is Ellen Connally, Theatre Arts and French major, rising junior, and Texas native. Pre-collegiately, I attended a Catholic grade school then an all-girls high school, where I spent many hours on visual and performing arts. I briefly considered studying psychology or biology, but ultimately my love of the arts led me to pursue the study of theatre and language. With this background, I aim to continue toward fluency in French, be conversational in Arabic and Spanish in ten years, and start my own theatre company focused on cross-cultural communication and collaboration.

Since my first semester at Pitt, I’ve been involved with three organizations: the Performance Collaborative (the PC), USITT (United States Institute for Theatre Technology), and the University of Pittsburgh Repertory Theatre (PittRep). For the past three semesters, I served as Outreach Director for the PC, working on publicity design and marketing for our organization’s shows and workshops; this upcoming school year, I will serve as Secretary. With Pitt’s USITT chapter, I acted as Marketing Director for an original, student show this past fall. My involvement with PittRep further includes acting (New Works Fest; Zanna, Don’t) and stage management (W.A.S.P.; Compleat Female Stage Beauty).

One experience particularly influential to my development as an artist and person was my six-weeks studying abroad last summer in Nantes, France. The new confidence, friendships, and culture I discovered there spurred my change from a French minor to a major, pursue an independent study on French theatre, and begin the path leading me here. As I mulled over ways to integrate Theatre and French, a faculty mentor suggested looking at the BPhil, which I quickly realized would be a perfect option. This Fellowship, then, provides me an outlet to study both in books and in action what I may incorporate into a BPhil project and beyond. My excitement about this Fellowship is two-fold: fresh perspectives on my work and ideas, and a diversified mind to share with my students.
My research deals with the effect of theatre programs on young, intercity kids, supplemented by research on Theatre for Empowerment and theatre practitioners Michael Rohd and Augusto Boal. On Tuesdays and Thursdays during the fall semester, I will lead a drama troupe at Heritage Out of School Time (HOST) in Braddock, focused on acting and ensemble, cumulating in a showcase and a Shakespearian play. Theatre and performance promote confidence and collaboration, two qualities lacking in inter-city areas such as Braddock; I want to see how experiencing a theatrical process may benefit the lives of these youths. Throughout the semester, I’ll be working with Jodi Kelley, program coordinator for HOST, and Cynthia Croot, Head of Performance in the Department of Theatre Arts.

As a liberal arts student, this Fellowship provides me an invaluable chance to branch into an area of theatre that I passionately want to explore. As the Theatre Department becomes increasingly interested in integrating community outreach into our curriculum, a relationship with HOST could potentially develop, providing Pitt students with the opportunity to experience applied theatre and the HOST kids’ with a positive influence toward higher education. While not directly related to my French major, the skills acquired from my Fellowship research will complement my studies as I continue my career path; the young, Maghreb immigrant population in France is a demographic that interests me greatly, thus researching and teaching now will provide fodder for my next steps toward doing theatre with intercity, immigrant youth on both a national and international canvas.

Ellen Connally
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I.

"Hey, I’m Bennet. I’m a big fan of guitar playing and pb&j (but not at the same time). I was born in Utah, raised in Georgia, but I claim the mountains of North Carolina as my home. I’m an urban studies and communication double major here at Pitt.

I really dig music. In terms of my daily iTunes plays, I’m a recent convert to hip-hop, but I frequently return to my acoustic, folk, and bluegrass roots. I sing in the men’s glee club, and I enjoy getting together acoustic guitars and playing a lot of 90s music with the roommates on my back porch. My other hobbies include cooking, leatherwork, and swing dancing. I’m dabbling in racquetball.

I think that kids are way cooler than adults. I especially like hanging out with middle schoolers. Dorky humor and awkwardness are traits we have in common, so I usually get along great with adolescents. I currently serve as tutoring coordinator for Summerbridge Pittsburgh, a non-profit that helps put at-risk kids in Pittsburgh on the path to college. I started working with Summerbridge last year as a summer teacher. For six weeks during the June and July, over 100 middle schoolers voluntarily attend a summer school that is entirely taught by college students. I taught writing to a group of 7th-graders, and I had a blast. I created my own lesson plans, managed my own classroom, and every morning I played reggae music while my 7th-graders practiced using transitional phrases, wrote essays with strong thesis statements, or answered my goofy writing prompts. Over the course of classroom teaching and weekly tutoring, I’ve become close with the Summerbridge staff, students, and families.

II.

One thing I’ve witnessed first-hand while working with Summerbridge is the often difficult transition from middle school to high school. Some kids handle the transition well, facing some challenges but overall adjusting socially and academically to high school. On the other hand, some students have difficulty in the new high school setting, and they struggle both academically with new concepts and socially in the new environment. My research will
analyze the differences between these two groups of Summerbridge kids. I hope to answer questions like, "What makes certain students more successful at navigating the social and academic challenges of the high school transition where others are less successful?" and "What types of services and/or counseling can Summerbridge provide to better assist these students in making this transition?" At the end of my research, I hope to produce a document that will help the SB staff better advise students on the high school transition.

Bennett Garner
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I’m Shelby Pasell, a Nonfiction Writing and Spanish major, and a BPhil candidate in International Area Studies. What I’m really interested in is migration and specifically the stories of migrants. I have been lucky enough to travel to Costa Rica and study the experiences of migrants from Nicaragua, and to intern at the Immigration Policy Center in Washington D.C. learning about the political side of immigration. I was introduced to the topic freshman year in a group called Jovenes Sin Nombres, and since then it’s really taken over my academic career.

I also work with AIDPitt, and currently we are most focused on our #NoSweat Campaign to affiliate with the Worker Rights Consortium and get ethically made apparel on campus. As a writer, I work for Pitt Political Review, and am the design editor for Three Rivers. You’re most likely to find me, however, waiting tables at Aladdin’s Eatery, which has honestly taught me a lot as well.

When it comes to long term goals, I am all over the board. But I think that public service law may be in my future, potentially working for immigrants and refugees. Unless of course I “make it” as a progressive magazine writer in the afternoon, radio host in the morning.

I applied for the fellowship because I think that when doing research like ours, it’s easy to be discouraged or overwhelmed, and it will be invaluable to have a community where we can support each other. Plus I’m always game for a healthy, motivating discussion about what our role as college students can be.

II.

Not surprisingly, my research has to do with immigration. I’m working with four undocumented college students to create a collection of testimonios, essentially a collection of their stories. I will also be using their input to analyze the themes of their histories. So far it has been an incredibly rewarding project, mostly because these students are incredible, and I find it vitally important that their perspective be represented, especially at this time in history.
I’m working with Dr. Shalini Puri from the literature department, with great support from Dr. Marco Gemignani from DU’s psychology department.

Testimonio is an important literary genre, especially in Latin America, that is known for giving a voice to the marginalized, and for making the personal political. Although the students I work with are talking only about their individual experiences, their stories have a profoundly political connotation, whether they are aware of that or not. They have the final editing say, and any explicit goal about the impact of their story comes from them, not me. For this reason, I don’t see my job as telling or even writing, but as facilitating a conversation that would not naturally occur, one between these students and the wider academic community.

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Jeremy Teichmann

I.
Throughout high school and my first year of college, I’ve been very interested in the STEM area of study. I really like math, especially calculus, and I had a lot of fun in both semesters of engineering classes that I took. During high school, I was very involved in my local church youth group. I was the president during my senior year and I went on mission trips to a variety of cities across North America. These trips provided a multitude of very different and very impacting experiences. A few stand-out memories include feeding homeless in Toronto, seeing fireworks over Mount Rushmore on a foggy day in North Dakota, and running a VBS at a Boys & Girls club in Baltimore.

I’m very excited to be a part of this fellowship. I think it’s an extremely interesting opportunity to share and receive ideas in a diverse group setting. As I continue to work with Don and Eric, I hope we can make even more of an impact on the Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children. I hope we can build on our limited success of last semester and further develop our two apps. Don, Eric, and I will be able to contribute something unique to the group of fellows: the perspective of working and doing research with a small group.

II.
Don, Eric, and I will be working with WPSBC and the Swanson School of Engineering. With WPSBC, we will enhance and improve two applications that we created last semester. The teachers will hopefully use these apps during the summer and provide us with tips and suggestions. Using this feedback, we will be able to create a more useful app. We will also be working with Dr. Budny in the engineering department to create a guidebook of sorts to aid future freshmen engineering students in the ENGR 0715 class. During the spring semester, we will possibly serve as in-class aids for students in said class to walk them through the guidebook.

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My academic background is very distinct; I am majoring in Spanish and Anthropology and getting certificates in Portuguese and Global Health. I have really enjoyed studying Medical and Cultural Anthropology at Pitt, and it’s really exciting to finally use my skills as an Anthropologist in this research. I am interesting in Public Health Epidemiology, specifically International Health. Public Health is an interesting field of study because it can involve many distinct disciplines where one can conduct research, teach, volunteer or improve health policy. Here on campus, I have been involved with the Hillel JUC of Pittsburgh, founding Challah for Hunger. A charitable organization where members bake and sell Challah bread to students, along with teaching them about hunger issues globally and locally. Challah for Hunger has been very successful, raising upwards of $4,000 since its inception. I am currently a Student Government Board (SGB) member; my job entails being the liaison to the Community Outreach Committee and the Environmental committee, as well as allocating the student activities fee to student groups and working to improve campus through board projects. Within SGB I have created the Textbook Committee, planning to expand and improve Pittsburgh Make a Difference Day (PMADD) and increase the visibility of environmental organizations by implementing plans for the Office of Sustainability. I have also been a Spanish translator at the Birmingham Clinic, this has been meaningful experience because it has given me a face to the Health Care problem in the United States, and has showed me how far we must go to improve Health Care overall. I am very excited to begin my research, and see how membership within this Fellowship group will increase my perspective on research.

My project will entail looking at homicide review, trauma hospital intervention and new data collection to uncover possible patterns of violence in different sectors of the City of
Pittsburgh, as well as Allegheny County. Based on the homicide review that has already been in place with the Violence Prevention Project, the new work with the Community Coalition for Violence Prevention and Intervention will incorporate qualitative and quantitative violence prevention research. The community partners I will be working with is the Community Coalition for Violence Prevention and Intervention (CCVPI). This coalition’s mission is to try and eradicate urban violence in the Pittsburgh area through preventative research methods. My faculty mentor is Richard Garland; he is currently working with the Violence Prevention Project (VPP) through the University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, Department of Behavioral and Community Health Sciences and the Center of Health Equity. I will also be working with Teagen O’Malley who is the project coordinator of the Violence Prevention Project. This current research involving violence is new to any of the schoolwork I have completed thus far at Pitt, but by using Anthropology I hope to shed new light on violence and how the culture in urban areas of Pittsburgh relates to its high prevalence.

Sarah Winston
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I.

My name is Linden Wu. I will be an upcoming nursing senior with a sociology minor. In the future I hope to either become a nurse practitioner or work in the public health sector. I have always been interested in health policy, and how race, class and gender in the community affect a persons’ health and their ability to find healthcare. I hope by participating in the Community Based Research Fellowship it will help me learn about the new evidence based practice research not just for nursing but for the greater community. It is important for me to work in a team setting because nursing is more than just administering medications and performing different procedures; it is being with people, talking and visiting with them, an overall holistic view. Besides academics, I have a passion for teaching in the community, whether on campus or off. I am involved with Res Life and was on the committee hosting the National Association of College and University Residence Halls (NACURH) 2013 Conference. I love being involved on campus to help spread Pitt pride/spirit, and meeting all the wonderful people on campus. I also enjoy working in the transplant department teaching patient/family about the transplant process. In my spare time, I also love to volunteer teaching an interactive Pilates and nutrition class to adolescents at the local YMCA. The best part about all these activities is seeing the smile of the people I work with, and knowing I have made a change in their lives.

II.

My dedication to start researching about TDV started with a nursing clinical experience on a neurology/ trauma unit at Children’s Hospital of Pittsburgh. Many of my pediatric patients were admitted with head traumas secondary to domestic/teen dating violence which played an important role in influencing my decision to continue research about teen dating
violence. I have worked with Dr. Doswell and Dr. Braxter as a student research inter since the summer of 2011. My role has been to enter and analyze the data from participants in a TDV program called Dangerous Choices Program developed by the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh (WC&S). The purpose of my research is to evaluate a community based Teen Dating Violence (TDV) prevention program impact on inner city high school students' knowledge about TDV. I have also been actively involved with writing abstracts and speaking at poster presentations both on campus and nationally. Sharing my research with my colleagues is important, because I believe nurses are the advocates and educators for our patients. Nurses need to explore the new advances in research to make sure our patients our getting the best optimal care possible. More importantly by being part of a research team, and the Community Based Research Fellowship, I hope to grow professionally while learning from my peers/ professors about their research projects and the impacts they are making in the greater community.

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2013 Community Partners
The DREAMers
Fellow: Shelby Passell

Due to the necessary confidentiality of a project involving people of undocumented status, I will describe my community partner not as the four individuals I worked with, but as the wider movement. The 2.1 million children and young adult immigrants of the 1.5 generation—self-named “DREAMers”—took their name from the Development, Relief, and Education for Alien Minors (DREAM) Act, a bipartisan piece of legislation introduced for the first time in 2001 by Dick Durbin and Orrin Hatch. The bill would provide conditional permanent residency to undocumented immigrants who met certain criteria, notably graduation from high school, arrival as a minor, living in the United States continuously for over five years, and enrollment in an institution of higher education or the military. Despite over ten years of discussion, the bill has not passed. This frustration has only strengthened the movement, led by young undocumented people who have come-out nationally, such as Gaby Pacheco and José Antonio Vargas.

A striking example of the power which defines this community is the video uploaded to YouTube by Erika Andiola after her mother and brother were taken by ICE, in which she emotionally recounts what happened, and then through her sobs makes a powerful call to action:

This needs to stop. We need to do something, we need to stop separating families, and this is real. This is so real. This is not just happening to me this is happening to families everywhere. We cannot let this happen anymore.

Due to her prominent role as an activist in Arizona and nationally, Erika’s video prompted a public response, and her mother and brother were released within twelve hours. Though this was a victory, Erika’s concern extends beyond her family. In a video uploaded after their
release, she and her family thank everyone for their help, and urge them to come out and share their own stories, because “we need to stop deportations overall.”

This moment exemplifies the position of the DREAM movement, situated directly on the line between the personal and the political. Whether an activist or a high school student, each DREAMer lives a life that is inherently political. Their individual stories should define the policy debates surrounding comprehensive immigration reform, though often this is not the case. DREAMers represent one population left behind in the race towards globalization through liberalization of trade and ideas: as the world powers claim to move away from state-centric ideology, the borders of “developed” nations have become more protected than ever when it comes to human migrants.

All the political rhetoric aside, you wouldn’t know a DREAMer if you saw one. It’s possible that you have a friend without a Social Security Number and just never thought to ask. DREAMers go to the same schools, play the same sports, and speak the same language(s) as their citizen counterparts. The lack of document defines their lives constantly, but often only in the background. Though I worked with four migrants born in Mexico, not all DREAMers are from there, or Latin America for that matter. Trying to define their community would be like trying to define your high school into one collective identity. Some DREAMers I know are activists, others barely understand the DREAM Act. All of them, not just the valedictorians or activists, deserve the same opportunities as their citizen peers. Each DREAMer has a right to tell their story, and to be listened to.
The Heritage Out of School Time (HOST) & Jodi Kelley

Fellow: Ellen Conally

Heritage Out of School Time, part of the education initiative of Heritage Community Initiatives, opened in August of 2011. Previously a smaller out-of-school time program, it operated under the purview of Heritage 4 Kids and was located in the basement of that program. It was not until 2011 that HOST became its own independent entity, at which point it relocated to Good Shepherd Catholic School. For these past two years of operation, Jodi Kelley has acted as Program Director of HOST.

After growing up in the North Versailles area, approximately twenty minutes from Pittsburgh, Jodi Kelley graduated from Edinboro University in 2001 with a degree in Elementary Education and a minor in Psychology. She then went to get a Masters degree from the University of Pittsburgh School of Education with a Reading Specialist certification. Leaving the Pittsburgh area for one year to teach first grade in Lancaster, Virginia, Jodi was hired by Heritage 4 Kids in December of 2003, to fill the position of Preschool Teacher. Upon receiving her Master degree, however, she was moved out of the classroom and into a role as Literacy Coach for three preschool classrooms. When the Early Reading First grant expired, she transitioned into the role of Pre-K Counts Manager, writing grants for Heritage; then in 2009, moved into the position of Associate Director of Education for Heritage, where she began overseeing all education programs. In 2011, Jodi took up her current position as Program Director of HOST.

It was Jodi who created the acronym and name for Heritage Out of School Time/HOST. The goal was to create a program that offered a safe haven for children before and after school, during holiday breaks, and throughout summertime. Heritage aimed to develop the program to offer homework assistance, tutoring service, enrichment opportunities, and physical education. The need in the Woodland Hills School District was great, and there was no more space at Heritage 4 Kids, thus the decision was made to create HOST. At the time,
Good Shepherd was still an open and operating school building; today, HOST is the sole occupant.

HOST has always served children in kindergarten through 8th grade. As it moves into its 3rd year of operation, HOST still continues to add depth to the program and grow from year to year. While originally there were thirty-five children enrolled with two classes running, HOST currently has an enrollment of fifty-six children in three active classrooms. By summer 2014, the goal is to expand enrollment by eighteen children with one more classroom, which would make HOST a four-classroom program providing a safe haven for seventy-four children in the Mon Valley region.
The Community Coalition for Violence Prevention & Intervention of Allegheny County & Khalid Raheem
Fellow: Sarah Winston

My community partner is Khalid Raheem, he is the president & CEO of the National Council for Urban Peace and Justice; through this initiative he started the Community Coalition for Violence Prevention and Intervention of Allegheny County (CCVPI). This coalition was started due to an increased number of homicides in the Pittsburgh area, as a way in which to concentrate efforts for all people involved. This work brings together individual community members, government agencies and community-based organizations together, in an effort to reduce violence, particularly in urban communities.

This coalition was created out of necessity, although it does not create services; it serves as a way to create understanding of the services already in place for those affected by violence in the community. As of late, the CCVPI has focused on the violence in Homewood, where there is currently a crisis of violent acts being committed. This crisis is multifaceted, Pittsburgh as a city is grappling with urban design issues, gentrification, unemployment, and a lack of communication between law enforcement and the local communities. Khalid hopes to use the coalition as a means through which to give community members a sense of togetherness, in a community that is increasingly isolated. This work is integral to not only the Violence Prevention Project, but it is so important for the City of Pittsburgh at large. This perspective of community violence, gives the quantitative data gathered a well-needed qualitative backdrop for the prevalence of violence in Pittsburgh.

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Summerbridge Pittsburgh celebrates its 20th anniversary this year. Each summer, hundreds of at-risk kids from around Pittsburgh take part in a 6-week academic program taught by college students. During the school year, these same students receive tutoring and counseling services from Summerbridge. Once you enroll in Summerbridge in the summer before 7th grade, you’re in the program all the way through high school graduation and college matriculation.

The Summerbridge model originally began in San Francisco in 1978. Three staff members at University High School envisioned a program that would utilize the school’s top-tier resources to serve the city’s motivated, but under-supported youth. The goal was to give under-supported students the tools they would need to succeed in college within an atmosphere that made learning fun and engaging.

Professional faculty taught classes during the first few summers of the program’s existence, and high school and college students served as teacher’s aides. The founders noticed, however, that the student-teachers had a remarkable influence on the program’s students. Over the summers, Summerbridge SF developed the students-teaching-students model that is now the core of the program. Student-teachers serve as college peer mentors, reinforcing that learning is fun and college is a worthy goal. Student-teachers also gain hands-on experience in the field of education, and many Summerbridge teachers go on to become career teachers because of the program’s influence.

The San Francisco program received a grant in 1989 to expand its model nationally, and in 1993 a Summerbridge program opened in Pittsburgh. Like University High in San Francisco, Sewickley Academy is host and underwriter of the SB program in Pittsburgh. At its inception, Summerbridge Pittsburgh (SB) served just two grades and was limited to a summer program with the same college and high-school age teachers. Over the years, SB’s vision has
expanded to include a 6-year model that monitors students all the way through high school graduation.

A student applies to be a part of Summerbridge in the second half of their 6th grade year. The application is rigorous, with student writing samples, parent reports, and grades submitted to the SB office for consideration followed by an interview with the Summerbridge Directors. Applicants are accepted into the program based on displayed need, including but not limited to low income, non-traditional family structure, residence in an underperforming school district, or self-identification of racial minority status. Many SB kids display several of these risk factors for low rates of college attendance.

A student’s first two years (7th and 8th grade) in the program are about acquiring the necessary skills for admission to a top-tier, college preparatory high school. Over the summers, students participate in full days of writing, literature, math, and science courses. SB has also expanded beyond the 6-week summer session to include school-year tutoring from Pitt volunteers, independent and parochial school entrance test preparation, and high school options counseling. SB students go on to attend high schools all over the city, and SB’s focus shifts toward college preparation.

High schoolers have access to all of SB’s summer and school-year help – including a summer high school program, tutoring, and SAT/ACT test prep. In addition, Summerbridge is developing a high school mentors program to better help students adjust to the transition to high school, succeed socially and psychologically, and make plans for college matriculation. The high school mentors program forges the final link between the middle school summer program and Summerbridge’s 20-year mission to matriculate student in top colleges.

My research with Summerbridge high schoolers collects and analyzes data that will be useful in the development of the new high school mentors program. As SB continues to expand its programming, intentional data collection about the types of problems our students face and the effects of current SB programming will help more SB students attend college.
The Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children & The Swanson School of Engineering
Fellows: Eric Bucklen, Don Bullock, & Jeremy Teichmann

The Western Pennsylvania School for Blind Children was chartered in 1887 by a group of people who believed that blind children needed better educational opportunities. Eventually, in 1894, the group was able to construct their school in the Oakland neighborhood of Pittsburgh. In the years since, technology has changed quite a great deal, and the WPSBC utilized these changes to better the learning environment for their students. Teachers from the WPSBC also attend yearly conferences that bring together teachers from similar schools from across the nation. At said conferences, teachers can pool their techniques and resources to improve their own school’s program.

In 1984, the school changed their goal and student demographic. They began to focus not only on visually impaired children, but also more specifically on blind children with additional serious disabilities. This change was the first of many for the school. In light of the continual growth of the student population, the WPSBC has initialized various programs, such as aiding students after graduation and providing help to younger students.

Today, approximately 175 students are enrolled at the school, from 242 different school districts across western Pennsylvania. Students can enroll as early age three and they can continue until their twenty-first birthday. Seventy-five percent of everyone who enrolls will successfully complete his or her education at the school. The school is also able to provide residential facilities for students who live in more distant districts. With an annual appropriation from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and additional funding from grants, individual contributions, and income from endowment funds, the school is able to offer all their programs and services without charge to the parents of the students.

As previously stated, technology has become an integral part of the classroom, and iPad's are frequently used at the school. However, most students do not have the physical ability to
tap the iPad screen. With the design of a large robust Bluetooth button, the students will be able to interact with the iPad by themselves. This helps enhance the students' learning experiences and also grants the teachers more flexibility in regards to the methods they use to educate the students.

The Swanson School of Engineering was established in 1846. It was one of the first engineering schools in the nation. Within its first 20 years, four-year degree tracks were started for various types of engineering.

In 1868, specialized degrees in civil and mechanical engineering were instituted. Mining engineering was then introduced in 1869, followed by electrical engineering in 1890. In 1909, the chemical engineering department was created. In 1910, The Swanson School founded the world's first petroleum engineering department as well as one of the nation's first undergraduate co-op programs. The Swanson School of Engineering is also the home of the nation's first industrial engineering departments, established in 1921.

In 2007 John A Swanson, founder of ANSYS, Inc., donated a total of $41.3 million to the school, which led to it being named after him.

Today, the Swanson School of Engineering boasts a $92 million endowment and a faculty of 118 professors headed by Dean Gerald D Holder. There are approximately 2,100 undergraduate students enrolled in the Swanson School of Engineering.
Rhonda Fleming is the Education Director at the Women's Center and Shelter (WCS) of Greater Pittsburgh. She has served in various prevention roles since her employment there in 1990. WCS is one of the country’s oldest shelters for women and children. It was founded in 1974 by Ellen Berliner and Anne Steytler and is one of the first six shelters in the United States for battered women.

The mission of Women's Center and Shelter is to end intimate partner violence in the lives of women and their children. To accomplish their mission, the Women's Center & Shelter 1) Provides sanctuary from domestic violence for women and their children within a supportive/confidential community 2) Informs women of available resources 3) Collaborates with all appropriate organizations/agencies to create resources for women victims of domestic violence and their children 4) Accompanies women as they proceed through the legal system 5) Works with children to help them learn alternative responses to violence 6) Educates the public about the needs of women, particularly those women who have experienced domestic violence 7) Works for systems change to alter societal attitudes, behaviors and responses. In the 2011-2012 Fiscal Year alone, Women's Center provided services to 11,283 women and children.

WCS provides prevention and intervention services on the effects of Intimate Partner Violence with an award winning curriculum, “Hands Are Not For Hurting®. As co-author and supervisor of this curriculum, Rhonda has played a major role in this curriculum being implemented throughout the state of Pennsylvania, Arkansas, Michigan and South Carolina. Most recently Rhonda trained teachers, counselors, advocates and other professionals in Moscow, Russia on teen dating violence prevention. They have now replicated parts of the Hands Are Not For Hurting® curriculum.

Additionally, Rhonda is the supervisor for the MEN/S batterer intervention program at WCS. As such she also facilitates weekly groups with men who have either been court ordered, required by Children Youth and Family Services, referred by other professionals or self-identified a need to attend the program. Rhonda also provides training to the professional community on the Identification and Intervention of Intimate Partner Violence, & Issues of Cultural Diversity.
Rhonda has made numerous television and radio appearances, including local and national programming. In 2004 she appeared on “Choose or Lose,” aired by MTV. On this program she was interviewed by popular pop star, Christina Aguilera.

Rhonda received her Bachelor of Arts in Administration of Justice at the University of Pittsburgh and a Masters of Science in Organizational Leadership at Geneva College. For leisure and relaxation, Rhonda enjoys traveling, reading and meeting new people.
2013 Faculty Mentors
Dr. Betty J. Braxter & Dr. Willa Doswell
Fellow: Linden Wu

Dr. Betty J. Braxter is a faculty member at the University of Pittsburgh, School of Nursing. She is a graduate of Louisiana State University Medical Center with a BSN degree in Nursing. Dr. Braxter completed a MS degree from Texas Women's University; and a PhD from the University of Pittsburgh. Her research and clinical focus is with childbearing age women. The research specifically targets prevention and cessation of tobacco use among women of childbearing age. Another research interest is health disparities among childbearing age women. As a graduate of the University of Mississippi Medical Center, Nurse Midwifery program, Dr. Braxter has worked as a nurse midwife in varied community and hospital settings with families experiencing labor and delivery, and post-delivery. She currently coordinates the mothers, babies, and families course for undergraduate students.

Dr. Willa Doswell’s areas of funded research include adolescent pubertal development and behavioral health risks behavior (i.e. early sexual behavior, teen dating violence), especially among African American preadolescent and adolescent girls. Additional areas of funded research are adolescent pubertal development and early sexual behavior, especially among African American girls between the ages of 9-14 years, and community-based research. She has received NIH and foundation grants to initiate community programs for adolescent girls to reduce reproductive behavioral health risks and have developed reading clubs for these girls to promote positive self-development. She have mentored over 200 high school and college female student research interns over the past 20 years. Her interest in teen dating violence grew out of this research and community work and collaboration with a city of Pittsburgh organization, Women’s Center and Shelter, who runs a teen dating violence awareness program in the Pittsburgh Public Schools. She has served on several NIH Initial Review Group grant review committees, as an inaugural member of the NICHD’s National Children’s Study Federal Advisory Committee, and as an ad hoc member of SBR, NCMHD, and NICHD scientific review committees.
Dan Budny’s professional career began when he graduated Michigan Technical University (MTU) in 1977 with a Bachelor’s Degree in Civil Engineering. He paid his way through college by pursuing his love of photography; he was the president of the photo club and ran the darkroom at MTU. He provided photos for the school newspaper as well as the yearbook. Dr. Budny was fascinated by fluid dynamics, so he stayed at MTU for a few more years to obtain a Master’s Degree in Environmental Engineering.

After graduating from MTU, Dr. Budny worked for various companies and consulting firms over the next 4 years. One of these companies was a pipe supply company for the city of Lansing, Michigan. While in Lansing, he started working as a project engineer for Michigan State University (MSU). During his time at Michigan State, Dr. Budny earned two more degrees: a Master’s in Engineering Mechanics and a Doctorate in Civil Engineering, specifically Fluid Structure Interaction. He focused on materials science and his dissertation explored the impact that water has on the pipe. Dr. Budny stayed in Lansing for a few more years, working for more consulting firms and design companies. Dr. Budny then traveled to West Lafayette, Indiana to begin his tenure at Purdue University. During his 10 years there, he taught civil engineering and created a unique freshman curriculum.

Under Dr. Budny’s program, freshmen engineering students are exposed to classes including physics, chemistry, calculus, and engineering analysis. It was at this time that Dr. Budny began to become interested in computer programming; he essentially self-taught himself the basics and started an internet company called EP Innovation. In 2001, the University of Pittsburgh hired Dr. Budny to implement a freshman program similar to the one he started at Purdue. In addition, he was also to teach several civil engineering classes.

At Pitt, Dr. Budny’s research revolves around education. He teaches various senior design classes, and he is very invested in the freshman engineering program. He is a board member of the American Society for Engineering Education (ASEE) and he created the First Year Engineering Experience (FYEE), a program that is spreading to other universities across the nation. Dr. Budny has published over 100 papers on engineering education. Despite having
only taken one computer programming class in his academic career, Dr. Budny now teaches multiple programming classes and has even published a text covering the subject.

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Ms. Cynthia Croot
Fellow: Ellen Connally

Cynthia Croot is more than just an assistant professor, the Head of Performance in the Department of Theatre Arts, and my faculty mentor. She is a theatre artist and activist, resident director of Conni’s Avant Garde Restaurant, freelance director, and recipient of many awards and accolades.

After receiving her B.A. from Washington College, Croot went on to earn an MFA in Directing from Columbia University, where she studied under Anne Bogart. From then on out, her activist work has been nonstop and unstoppable, from academia to international stages.

I approached Cindy about taking on the role as my faculty mentor for this fellowship because of her vast and varied experience applying the arts to social activism, though the extent of her work I did not fully realize until I began working more closely with her. A member of Amnesty International’s Firefly Project and a chief organizer of Theatres Against War (THAW), Croot served as a 2004-2005 delegate of Columbia’s Center for International Conflict Resolution. This select delegation brought her to Damascus University, Syria, as part of a cultural exchange, leading then to her invitation to present on the influence of art and the media on international conflict at the International Institute of Peace Educators in Rhodes, Greece.

Recent work in Pittsburgh has included Sites of Passage, and a collaboration with City of Asylum. Sites of Passage was an installation activist-art project at the Mattress Factory, created by collaborators from the US, Israel, and Palestine, investigating and delving into the concepts of borders and nations. Croot’s collaboration with City Asylum included a yearlong process of devising a piece of theatre based on interviews and research into the four writers who have sought asylum at City of Asylum, as well as their home countries. The work cumulated in a show produced by University of Pittsburgh Repertory Theatre, and involved student researchers and student performers.

Most recently, Croot directed Suzan-Lori Parks’ Venus at University of Pittsburgh Stages. This was not, however, the first time she had directed this script. Previous adaptations and
productions have found Croot in South Africa, New York, and Croatia. Her first time producing this script was in South Africa, coinciding with the return of Sarah Baartman’s body to its original home of Capetown for a proper burial; Baartman is the main figure of the script Venus, which follows and questions the ethics of the plight of the Venus Hottentot—as Baartman came to be known—in the early 1800s.

Next fall, Croot will be on research leave as part of her fourth year of assistant professorship at Pitt. She and I will continue to be in communication as she serves on my BPhil committee as an advisor while I explore Translation as Adaptation for Performance in a Cross-Cultural Context.
Dr. Richard Garland  
Fellow: Sarah Winston

Richard Garland is a visiting instructor at the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health in the Behavioral and Community Health Sciences department. Richard's work with violence started after he served more than 10 years in prison, where he later received a Bachelor's degree in communications through a Pitt program, and later earned his masters degree in social work from the University of Pittsburgh in 1996. Richard devotes most of his time to working with troubled youths, especially those involved in the gang culture. Through the Violence Prevention Project, Richard has an opportunity to let epidemiological data speak for his experiences of violence in Allegheny County. As part of this effort, he oversees training, data collection and outreach efforts aimed at reducing crime in Allegheny County, specifically the crime in the City of Pittsburgh.

Through the University of Pittsburgh School of Public Health, Richard puts together many avenues of research and disciplines in order to understand why and how violence is happening in Pittsburgh. He has a proven track record of bringing perpetrators, victims and law enforcement together in order to prevent violence before it happens. What the Violence Prevention Project has uncovered is that transient populations are most effected by violence. Peer violence is on the rise; this type of violence is most prevented by early intervention. Richard's work in Pittsburgh is integral in curbing homicides, and creating communities that thrive. The information that Richard and his team are collecting is integral in preventing and intervening before violence takes place, his past experiences and education make Richard the beginning of a scientific movement towards the end of violence.

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Dr. Michael Glass & Dr. Tom Akiva
Fellow: Bennett Garner

Dr. Michael Glass
I first met Dr. Glass in “Social Justice and the City,” a course that introduced me to geography as a factor in uneven distributions of power. In his New Zealand accent, Dr. Glass lectured on issues of homelessness, aging, rights to access public services, and uneven spaces. In “Social Justice,” Dr. Glass showed us that the space around us and our conception of it is relative, and creating just spaces is a process of imagining more equitable ways to design, manage, and interact with the built environment.

Dr. Glass’s training is in geography, and his dissertation at Penn State focused on political institutions’ desire to inscribe lines on a map that create political subdivisions of space. He argued that these political lines are continuously being rendered obsolete. Communities are in flux, and residents have their own conceptions of the space around them that emerge and change over time. His dissertation focused on Allegheny County, its 130 municipalities, and the role of borders and boundaries in shaping city identities, growth and development.

Since his dissertation, Dr. Glass has published many scholarly articles and two books on urban geography. He is currently my professor for the “Urban Skills Seminar” in addition to providing valuable feedback and guiding questions as my research mentor. He leads an urban studies fieldwork summer program in Singapore and Malaysia that takes concepts of identity in space to an international context. He is a father of two boys, and my classmates and I follow him on Twitter (@Glass_PittUrban).

Dr. Tom Akiva
When I started thinking about my research study last year, I had a goal of providing program evaluation and recommendations to the Summerbridge directors, but I had little idea how to operationalize big concepts such as self-concept, academic ability, and social adaptation in adolescent youth. My first meeting with Dr. Akiva, Assistant Professor of Applied Psychology in the School of Education, put my mind at ease. In just a few minutes, he helped me clarify my research questions and make my research more concrete.
I am not alone in finding Dr. Akiva’s advice helpful. In 2012, he received an award from the University of Michigan for his outstanding teaching there. In his first year here at Pitt, he has taught graduate courses in adolescent development and youth work. He received his PhD from the University of Michigan in a joint psychology and education program, and he is on faculty at Pitt in the School of Education Department of Psychology in Education. His research focuses on the developmental effects of after school youth programs and adolescent motivation to attend programs. Over the course of my research, his insights and knowledge in the field have been invaluable in conceptualizing my research and making it actionable.

A member of many professional and advisory youth development organizations, Dr. Akiva has published an extensive CV of reviewed research as well as nearly 15 years professional experience, including several years as a secondary teacher in his native Michigan.
Dr. Shalini Puri
Fellow: Shelby Passell

Dr. Shalini Puri is an Associate Professor and Director of Pitt’s Literature Program. It was honestly pure luck that brought me to Dr. Puri’s office hours last fall to ask for advice on a project that I wasn’t sure I could even accomplish. I had no idea how related our research was. I feel silly admitting this, but it took me almost a year to finally read her work and understand why she had taken me on in the first place.

She works in postcolonial theory and cultural studies, with particular interest in the Caribbean. The book she has been writing through our work together (she finished a complete, polished draft a few weeks before my final edits were due and encouraged me by sharing how good it felt, and how close I was to that feeling), The Grenada Revolution in the Caribbean Present: Operation Urgent Memory, brought her to Grenada to talk to individuals and witness the presence of the revolution in the country today. Dr. Puri is interested not in extracting knowledge from the community, but in letting their knowledge shape her work. She writes about the importance of solidarity to research, and about the importance of fieldwork to the humanities. In “Finding the Field: Notes on Caribbean Cultural Criticism, Area Studies, and Forms of Engagement,” she writes of the people she spoke to throughout her research, “their insights, observations, advice, and cautions transformed my research agenda.” This perspective not only makes her exemplary as an academic and a must-read for those in the humanities who want to bring their work into the community, but an incredibly understanding and motivational advisor. It has been a great honor to work with Shalini Puri.