



Edward Kamens
Acting Master of Saybrook College

SAYBROOK COLLEGE

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11 May 2011

Mr. Angelo Steve Leondis '83 and Ms. Lynn Leondis
16 The Terrace
Manhasset, NY 11030

Dear Steve and Lynn,

Once again, in my capacity as Acting Master of Saybrook College, I have the pleasure and honor of notifying you of the impressive group of Saybrook students who will receive the Stacey Leondis '08 Memorial Fellowships for 2011. I am particularly delighted to report that the new administrative process for the fellowship that was implemented this past year has yielded excellent results: in accordance with your wishes and honoring your goals for the memorial fund, my colleagues in Yale's Office of Fellowship Programs called for proposals from students whose summer projects would help them prepare for possible future careers in the medical professions and/or biomedical research. A selection committee, which consisted of Saybrook Residential College Dean Paul McKinley, Assistant Professor of Biology (and Saybrook Fellow) Thomas Near, and me, then reviewed all the eligible applications. I am very happy to say that for the summer of 2011 we have made eight awards to these outstanding students and their exceptional projects:

Shana Berwick, Saybrook Class of 2012: "Identifying Modulators of Synaptojanin 1 and other mammalian inositol 5' phosphatases in the libraries of compounds at Yale Small Molecule Discovery Center." Ms. Berwick, a major in Molecular Biophysics and Biochemistry, has been working for over a year in the laboratory of Professor Pietro De Camilli at the Yale Medical School, conducting research and coursework that will qualify her for the simultaneous award of the M.S. as well as the B.S. degrees, and her Master's thesis will be based on this research. This summer, in her own words, she will "investigate whether any detected modulators have the potential to be clinically applied to treat disorders such as Alzheimer's disease, Downs syndrome, cancer, Type II Diabetes, Lowe's syndrome and Dent's disease which all are associated with dyshomeostatis of phosphoinositides."

Regina de Luna, Saybrook Class of 2012: "ANDO: Advancing Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes." Collaborating with the directors of the Haven Free Clinic, which provides primary health care at no charge to uninsured residents in the Fair Haven section of New Haven, Ms. de Luna, a Biology major, will participate in a study aimed at determining the feasibility of introducing a weight loss program for community members, in recognition of the fact that "the leading cause of death for Hispanic males and females is heart disease and stroke where hypertension is a strong risk factor." This project, "Advancing Dietary and Nutrition Outcomes," known by the acronym ANDO, entails weekly sessions on diet, nutrition and fitness with individual patients: Ms. de Luna will track their diet and exercise behaviors and changes in weight and blood pressure. She will assist in developing the patient tracking system, interviewing and collecting patient data, and in the creation of educational materials.

Helen Jack, Saybrook Class of 2012: “Research on the Mental Health System in Ghana.” In 2009, following her freshman year, Ms. Jack received a Leondis Fellowship to work as an intern with Physicians for Human Rights in Cambridge, MA, conducting research on the “Colleagues at Risk Program” and organizing HIV/AIDS advocacy. Now a Biology major with a second major in International Studies, Ms. Jack will travel this summer to Ghana “to do research on the mental health workforce for Yale’s Global Health Leadership Institute (GHLI)” and for her senior essay in International Studies. She explains that, “Ghana may soon pass legislation that would reform its mental health system, restructuring how facilities are staffed and ensuring that best practices, grounded in human rights, are implemented.” Spurred by this impending development, she will conduct a “mixed methods triangulated study, combining quantitative data on Ghana’s mental health system collected by the World Health Organization and other international institutions, qualitative interviews with leaders in Ghanaian mental health policy, and qualitative, semi-structured interviews with staff in Ghanaian mental health facilities.” She plans to enter medical school in the fall of 2012, pursuing both the M.D. degree and a Masters or Ph.D. in public policy “to help me bring my knowledge and understanding of global medical issues to the attention of policymakers.” She spent last summer working in a Ghanaian neonatal clinic.

Nimit Jain, Saybrook Class of 2012: “Biomedical Engineering Internship at Carl Zeiss Meditec, Oberkochen, Germany.” Mr. Jain is a Biomedical Engineering major with a double major in German Studies, and has obtained this internship through the Yale UCS-CDS Summer Internship Program. Jain, who is proficient in German, will work alongside professional engineers “to characterize the performance, functionality and ergonomics of the ultrasound probe that is being used in the upcoming model of VISALIS, Zeiss Meditec’s phaco-emulsification system for performing cataract surgery.” He will be “running protocols and performing experiments to determine the differences between the new model of the probe and older versions...designing better performance diagnostics, and writing internal reports based on test results.”

Alice Kai, Saybrook Class of 2012: “Patterns of Recurrence for Gastric Cancer and Surveillance Recommendations.” Ms. Kai is a pre-medical student and Psychology major. Her objective in this research is “to analyze and examine the patterns and timing of recurrence in patients with gastric adenocarcinoma in order to generate and improve stage-specific surveillance recommendations and, consequently, the survival rate of gastric cancer patients. “Utilizing a prospectively maintained gastric cancer database at Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center,” Ms. Kai writes, she will “identify patients who have undergone gastrectomy and will analyze demographic, pathologic, and treatment related variables.” In the process, she will receive training in medical chart review. She explains: “More accurate detection of earlier stage disease, improved preoperative staging and care has improved long-term survival for resected gastric adenocarcinoma patients. Since adjuvant therapies focus on specific disease patterns, and because not all gastric cancers have the same characteristic recurrences, understanding the timing patterns and implications of recurrence is crucial for stage-specific surveillance recommendations.”

Sunny Kumar, Saybrook Class of 2013: “Investigating the Link between Undernourishment and Susceptibility to Hookworm Infection in Rural Ghana.”Mr. Kumar, an intensive Biology major, has been invited by members of the research team headed by Dr. Michael Cappello, Professor of Pediatrics in the Yale School of Medicine/Epidemiology and Public Health (also director of the Yale World Fellows Program), to work on a study gathering data on average daily nutrition consumption in the Kintampo North District of Ghana, in the continuation of a survey on the relationship between under-nutrition and risk of hookworm infection in school-age children there. He says, “The primary goal of this study will be to more closely investigate nutrition consumption with field interviews and 24 hours recalls in order to rigorously investigate the link between nutrition and susceptibility to hookworm infection.” The team will be hosted in Ghana by the Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research.

Natalie Villa, Saybrook Class of 2013: “The Genetic Investigation of Autism.” Ms. Villa, a Biomedical Engineering major, has been working for several months in the laboratory of Prof. Matthew State in the Department of Genetics at Yale School of Medicine, preparing and then analyzing samples taken from autistic patients and their families to determine the location of variants that may lead to the affected phenotype. Techniques for analysis include micro-emulsion polymerase chain reactions (PCR), DNA chip microarray analysis, and gel electrophoresis in the study of DNA samples. She says, “Such investigation is the necessary first step to a cure for autism. The lab is also involved with clinical collaborations to analyze samples for autism susceptibility that may have reproductive repercussions.” She looks forward to continuing to gain practical experience in the field of genetics and plans to pursue a medical or Ph.D. degree after graduation.

Elaine Zhou, Saybrook Class of 2012: “Increasing Patient Understanding of Post-Cataract Surgery Medication through the Use of Visual Diagrams in Rural Honduras.” Ms. Zhou, also a Biomedical Engineering major, will be a Unite for Sight Global Impact Fellow stationed in Tegucigalpa, Honduras. There, she will conduct outreach trips to rural areas to perform vision screening in conjunction with ZOE Eye Clinic, which is run by a Honduran NGO, together with Unite for Sight Vision Brigades. After screening at this clinic, patients who need cataract surgery are brought back to Tegucigalpa for the procedure. There, eligible patients will be enrolled in her independent study, investigating the effectiveness of visual aids in teaching post-cataract surgery patients how to take their eye drop medication. Ms. Zhou is the Junior Chief of the Academic Associates Program at the Yale Eye Center. She hopes to write an abstract for publication or make conference presentations based on her work in Honduras.

My fellow committee members and I were especially pleased to extend the fellowship support that you have made possible to these ambitious, visionary, and dedicated students. All of them will be engaged in front-line research that has immense potential impact for society, while also furthering them in their pursuit of experience and training in medical and scientific research. It is especially notable that so many of these fellows will be working abroad, and I take this to be a sign of the remarkable commitment shown by increasing numbers of Yale students to contribute to projects that address global health concerns. I can think of no better way to honor Stacey’s interests, her character, and her abiding legacy in the Saybrook College community than to support the summer projects of these fine young Saybrugians.

With sincerest thanks and best wishes,

A handwritten signature in purple ink that reads "Edward Kamens". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Edward Kamens

cc: Mary Ellen Miller, Dean of Yale College

Alison Coleman, Assistant Director, Yale College Development