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INTRODUCTION TO THE ADRF

Welcome to the Williams College Allison Davis Research Fellowship. This handbook is designed to give you information that will help you get the most out of your ADRF experience and to answer questions you might have. The Office of Special Academic Programs (OSAP) administers the ADRF, and you should feel free to approach either the director 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 Allison Davis Research Fellowship was established by the College in 1999 (initially as the Williams College Undergraduate Research Fellowship) to provide opportunities for students from groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education to pursue advanced research under the guidance of faculty mentors and to learn about graduate school and academic careers. The program evolved from the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, a US Department of Education program funded at Williams from 1995-99. Groups traditionally underrepresented include the following: first generation college students; African American, Latino/a, Asian American, and Native American; and non-U.S. citizens of African, Hispanic, or Asian descent. In addition to research opportunities, the program provides its participants with support in the graduate school application process, with the long-term goal of positively impacting the representation of diverse groups in higher education.

The fundamental objective of the ADRF is to increase diversity in graduate programs and on the faculties colleges and universities. The program serves the related goals of contributing to the campus intellectual environment and of helping the College become a place where all students can excel academically. The ADRF aims to achieve its mission by identifying and supporting students of great promise and helping them to become accomplished scholars by providing them with the opportunity to develop their own research projects, work with faculty mentors, present their work to the broader campus community, and learn about graduate school and academic careers. The ADRF is run alongside the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship to serve a cohort of ten new fellows each year, who will share their work with and learn from each other.
“Although we seemed trapped in an age of anger and despair, the alternatives remain the same as in all other ages – we can scuttle or we can sail the seas . . . . One must chart his course and sail.”
~ W. Allison Davis

**DR. W. ALLISON DAVIS ’24**

Allison Davis, notable social anthropologist and psychologist, graduated valedictorian from the historic Dunbar High School in Washington, D.C., in 1920 and from Williams College in 1924. He went on to earn two master’s degrees – in English and anthropology – from Harvard and a PhD in anthropology from the University of Chicago.

Davis had a long and distinguished teaching career, beginning at the Hampton Institute in Virginia and including positions at Dillard University and ultimately, at the University of Chicago, where he was the first African American to receive tenure. As a teacher, Davis worked rigorously to inspire rural black students to think and write critically. Naturally reflective and deeply concerned about his students, he acknowledged the shortcomings of standard teaching practices prevalent at the time. As a scholar, Davis published work that would alter the way that we think about race, class, and education. His co-authored book *Children of Bondage: The Personality Development of Negro Youth in the Urban South* (1940) studied black adolescents in both New Orleans and Natchez, Mississippi and highlights the role of class in education and acculturation. Another book, *Deep South: A Social Anthropological Study of Caste and Class* (1941), a cooperative effort by a team of social anthropologists to document the economic, racial, and cultural character of the Jim Crow South, was groundbreaking in its application of anthropological techniques to the American landscape and to critically analyze the roots of racism.

Allison Davis is perhaps most widely known for his social science research on the relationship between academic performance and child development, as well as for his persistent criticism of intelligence testing, which challenged the assumption that children from low-income
from the success of his research in this area. "This study has had the most practical effect of any of my work," he said. "It led to the abolition of the use of intelligence tests in New York, Chicago, Detroit, San Francisco, and other cities. This was one time I got what I wanted: a direct effect on society from social science research."

Davis earned many distinctions. In 1967, he was appointed by President Lyndon B. Johnson to serve on the Civil Rights Commission. In 1970, he became the first John Dewey Distinguished Service Professor at the University of Chicago. Two years later, in 1972, he became the first scholar of education to be inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. Likely one of the most significant distinctions of all was conferred in 1974 when, to commemorate Davis's national influence, Williams College bestowed an honorary degree upon him—nearly 50 years after the institution denied him a teaching position because of his color. Though still somewhat disillusioned by that early experience, especially at the hand of his alma mater, Davis appreciated the many progressive changes Williams had instituted over the decennia with respect to diversity of demographics and curriculum; though, as ever, there is still much work to be done.

Allison Davis was honored with a commemorative postage stamp in 1994. The announcement issued by the United States Postal Service read, in part: Davis “challenged the cultural bias of standardized intelligence tests and fought for the understanding of the human potential beyond racial class and caste. His work helped end legalized racial segregation and contributed to contemporary thought on valuing the capabilities of youth from diverse backgrounds.” Indeed, Allison Davis’s commitment to increasing access to quality education for low-income children revolutionized policy and paved the way for compensatory education programs such as Head Start and affirmative action. These programs have changed the face of educational institutions across the country, particularly at Williams College, which is currently among the most diverse institutions of higher learning in the United States.

**FACULTY MENTORING**

The ADRF 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 ADRF 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 coordinator regarding any concerns or problems.

**ADRF STRUCTURE AND ACTIVITIES**

The ADRF provides funding for 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 Mellon Mays Undergraduate 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 ADRF summer are asked to restrict their work to outside the ten-week fellowship period. This is in accordance with the College’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, ADRF 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 ADRF 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, ADRF fellows are invited to the Mellon Mays Northeast Regional Conference, where fellows have an opportunity to meet colleagues from other area colleges.
Second Summer

During the summer after junior year, ADRF 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 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 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 ADRF as a whole. 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

Williams College provides stipends so that fellows can dedicate themselves to their research and participate fully in the ADRF 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 Allison Davis Research 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 ADRF 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 director 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.

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