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SAYBROOK COLLEGE  
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Dear Steve and Lynn,

Recently, I have had the pleasure and honor of selecting the first students to receive the Stacey Leondis '07 Memorial Fellowships, which you have established in Stacey's memory. In accordance with your wishes, the committee (which consisted of Saybrook Residential College Dean Paul McKinley, Yale College Assistant Dean Jill Cutler, and me) sought out proposals from students whose summer projects would help them prepare for possible future careers in the medical professions and/or biomedical research. For the summer of 2009, we made three awards, as follows:

**Julia Blum, Saybrook Class of 2010: "Bulldogs in Ghana Medical Research Intern at Noguchi Memorial Institute for Medical Research."** Julia, an Anthropology major from New Jersey, obtained this unpaid internship through the "Bulldogs Abroad" program; she will work for nine weeks in the HIV studies lab at Noguchi "focusing on studies of the RNA sequence analysis of HIV positive patient samples, looking at the genetic profiles of HIV strains responsible for the AIDS epidemic in the northern region of Ghana....Knowledge of variation of HIV strains will provide some of the basic information necessary to begin testing for the importance of genetic variability of viral strains." In addition, Julia says that "when possible I will also devote myself to volunteering and observing at Noguchi's Health Support Centre for HIV/AIDS Counseling and Training." At the end of the summer, Julia will present her finding formally in a public seminar at the Noguchi Institute. She says, "This component of my research will be essential because it will allow me to synthesize my data and its analysis in a comprehensive, conclusive manner, and provide me with a change to start a dialogue with member of the Noguchi staff beyond my mentor, Dr. James Brandful."

**Thanh Huynh, Saybrook Class of 2011: "Isolating and Assaying Potentially Therapeuti Compounds from Endophytic Fungi."** Thanh, a Biology major from California, was part of a group of students enrolled in Prof. Scott Storbel's course, Molecular Biology and Biochemistry 230, "Rainforest Expedition and Laboratory. The entire group "traveled to many destinations in Ecuador including the Amazon rain forest, cloud forests, and Pacific dry forests...to collect plans from which we are currently isolating endophytes" (i.e. fungi). He explains: "Endophytes are a relatively under-researched area of biology; most endophytic fungi are still undescribed, meaning that there is a treasure trove of chemical compounds waiting to be analyzed and assayed for

medicinal effects.” A current Saybrook senior who participated in this project last year actually identified one fungus as the source for substances that may be of use in the treatment of women’s health, particularly menstrual cramping. With this fellowship, Thanh will work in a lab here in New Haven this summer to conduct analyses of samples found during this year’s fieldwork. He says, “The rewards of this research experience are two-fold: therapeutic compounds may potentially arise from the chemical derived from the endophytes, and [I will] experience life as a scientist, which will allow me to decide whether or not I would like to devote my career to medical research.”

**Helen Jack, Saybrook Class of 2012:** “Physicians for Human Rights Internship.” Helen is a likely Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology majors who may also complete the International Studies major while take the courses necessary to fulfill premedical requirements; she plans on a career in medicine and/or public health. This summer, she will intern at Physicians for Human Rights in Cambridge, MA, conducting research on the Colleagues at Risk program and organizing HIV/AIDS advocacy. She explains: “Colleagues at Risk protects healthcare professionals whose human rights work is threatened by repressive governments. I will be researching and designing advocacy strategies for a new Colleagues at Risk case. Additionally, I will be planning and implementing tactics to call on lawmakers to execute a global AIDS Policy based on the best medical strategies.” This project also reflects Helen’s long-time involvement with Amnesty International, in which she is a local, state- and national-level leader and officer; she is also co-coordinator of the Yale chapter.

My fellow committee members and I are thrilled and proud to be able to extend the fellowships you have made possible to these outstanding students—a rising sophomore, junior, and senior, respectively. I know that each one of them will carry out work of importance and great value, and I know that this will also be true of the future beneficiaries of the fellowship. I can think of no better way to honor Stacey’s interests, goals, and her abiding place in the Saybrook College community.

With all my best wishes and thanks,



Edward Kamens

Cc: Mary Ellen Miller, Dean of Yale College  
Joy McGrath, Director of Development for Yale College