



# QUEENS COLLEGE MARC NEWSLETTER 2006-2007

## Letter from the Editor

Dear Friends of MARC,

Welcome to the first annual Queens College MARC Newsletter. The MARC staff of Queens College have established this newsletter to keep our MARC students, alumni, and special friends posted about everything that's going on with our program, students, and alumni.

Look for our regular columns – alumni and student profiles, program updates, and student news. Feel free to suggest other features or columns for future issues and please send us your good news! Whether your news is professional (you just got awarded the Nobel Prize in Physiology) or personal (you just got married), we'd love to hear about it!

In the meantime, enjoy your first issue of the newsletter, and then head back into the lab!

Sincerely yours,  
*The MARC Editorial Staff*

## Program News

The Queens College MARC Program is going strong with the addition of new students for the third year in a row. Welcome to our new students:

- Ms. Michelle Bubnik, doing research with Dr. Jeffrey Halperin
- Mr. Harold Gomes, doing research with Dr. Joshua Brumberg
- Mr. Lester Zambrana, doing research with Dr. Zahra Zakeri

We also welcome back our juniors from last year, who are all busy working on their honors theses and trying to figure out what to do with their lives!

- \*Ruqayyah Abdullah, Mentor Dr. Z Zakeri
- \*Alejandra Castano, Mentor Dr. R Engel
- \*Kwesi Gill, Mentor Dr. C Savage-Dunn
- \*Sylvia Onyewuenyi, Mentor Dr. Z Zakeri
- \*Omotola Oyesile, Mentor Dr. S Croll
- \*Patricia Sherin, Mentor Dr. K PENCHINKINA
- \*Ms. Evelyn Teran, Mentor Dr. Joni Seeling

And since this is our very first newsletter, let's salute all of our MARC program alumni! Our very first graduates, who left us in the spring of 2005, were:

- Mr. Albert Jimenez, who worked with Dr. Susan Croll and is now conducting research at Psychogenics.
- Ms. Funto Oluwafemi, who worked with Dr. Susan Croll and is now working on her PsyD at Indiana State University
- Mr. Carlos Penaloza, who worked with Dr. Zahra Zakeri and continues to work with her as a doctoral student in biology at CUNY.

These three outstanding students were followed by three others in the Spring of 2006:

- Ms. Fatimatou Bah, who worked with Dr. Zakeri and is currently on full scholarship working on her MPH at Columbia University
- Mr. Steven Milord, who worked with Dr. Pokay Ma and plans to apply for a PhD in Biology
- Ms. Nancy Okeke, who worked with Dr. Stephane Boissinot and is currently attending Dental School at Columbia University and pursuing research opportunities during her degree

We are so proud of all our students!

## Alumni Profiles

During each issue, we will profile at least one of our Alumni. During this issue, we have selected two of our Alumni:

### *Mr. Carlos Penalzo*



While we love to see our graduates go out into the world to impress others, we also love it when we get to keep one for ourselves! Carlos Penalzo, one of our first graduates (May 2005), was accepted into the PhD program in Biology at CUNY. He used his MARC research as a foundation for his dissertation work in Dr. Zahra Zakeri's lab. His work, which has been presented at ABRCMS, Sigma Xi, the NEURON meeting, and the Queens Borough-Wide Forum, asks whether there are gender differences in cell death, and seeks to define the mechanisms of this fascinating effect. Keep an eye on the literature for what will certainly be a series of exciting papers based on Carlos' work. Not only do the MARC faculty get to "keep" Carlos, but the current MARC students often turn to him for advice and support. Within only two years, Carlos has moved from being a MARC student to being a sought-out resource and peer mentor for our MARC scholars. We sure are lucky to have him around!

### *Ms. Fatimatou Bah*



Nobody who knew Fatimatou could ever accuse her of being a quiet, reserved student. Involved in more than just the MARC program, Fatimatou made an impact in SOMS (Science Organization for Minority Students) and other groups around campus. As an advocate for her fellow students, Fatimatou was well known and respected by others. Now, she is training to be an advocate on a far grander scale.

Determined to advocate for those suffering from public health problems, Fatimatou applied to the Mailman School of Public Health (Columbia University) in Spring of 2006. They, like us, recognized her potential as a future leader in the field of public health, and not only accepted her into their program, but awarded her a full scholarship.

While at Queens, Fatimatou conducted her research with Dr. Zahra Zakeri and also with Dr. Debra Wolgemuth from Columbia University. She participated in many meetings including the Student National Medical Association 40<sup>th</sup> Annual Medical Education Conference and the "Sisters in Science" Conference at Queens College. We look forward to Fatimatou's unique contributions to solving the world's public health problems.