CONGRATULATIONS!

MIRT Program Director, Dr. Michelle Williams received the Grace Hopper Exemplary Leadership Award from the Seattle Girls School for her consistent and constant striving as a teacher, professor, and scientist. [Page 2]

On another note, we are happy to report that Dr. Williams has received new funding for a T-32 grant that trains pre-doctoral and postdoctoral trainees. The program is designed to increase the numbers of well-trained doctoral-level professionals with knowledge and skills in reproductive, perinatal and pediatric epidemiology.

Lastly, Drs. Williams, Sanchez, Perales Diaz and Cripe received an award from Puget Sound Partners for Global Health for a pilot intervention project entitled “Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) During Pregnancy: A Pilot Intervention Program in Lima, Peru” Congratulations to all!

ALUMNI UPDATE

“MIRT was instrumental in my career development. The program gave me an opportunity to do international work in a safe and structured environment. It was the first time that I had traveled abroad alone and it had a tremendously positive impact on me.” MIRT ’95 Dr. Cheryl Anderson (Page 10)

WELCOMING MIRT 2006 FELLOWS

A two day pre-travel orientation program was held on May 11 and 12 in South Campus Center to welcome the 2006 MIRT fellows. (Please see page 3)
DEAN’S CIRCLE LUNCHEON

Several times a year, Dr. Pat Wahl, Dean of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine, invites selected faculty and students to share their experiences in the Dean’s Circle Luncheon.

This year, MIRT Program Director, Dr. Michelle Williams, and MIRT 2005 fellow, Dr. Daniel Enquobahrie attended the annual Dean’s Luncheon on April 11, 2006.

During the meeting, Dr Williams presented, “Involving Undergraduate and Graduate Student in Global Public Health Capacity Building and Research: Eleven years of Experience with MIRT at UW”.

Dr. Daniel Enquobahrie shared his experience as a Doctoral Degree student in the Department of Epidemiology. He also his experience as a MIRT Program Fellow in the Republic of Georgia. He noted how students benefit from the academic as well as cultural experiences gained through participating in the MIRT Program.

Many of the School of Public Health and Community Medicine generous donors including Bill Gates Sr, attended the luncheon. Dean Wahl gave updates on the major activities in the SPHCM.

Dean Wahl emphasized the importance of generous gifts from donors and how such gifts have been crucial in executing the mission of the school in promoting health, advancing knowledge and serving communities.

Our gratitude and thanks goes to Dean Pat Wahl, Leslee Shanahan, Judith Minthon, Karen Hanson, Chele Shepard for providing us the opportunity to share our experiences, works, and future avenues of the MIRT Program.

At the beginning of this month, the Seattle Girls School honored MIRT Program Director, Dr. Michelle Williams with a Grace Hopper Exemplary Leadership Award.

The Grace Hopper Awards is a prestigious award that honors Northwest women who have achieved greatness and who have made an outstanding commitment to creating pathways in the fields of Mathematics, Science or Technology.

According to the SGS, this award was given to Dr Williams for her consistent and constant striving as a teacher, professor and scientist to build systems that assure better opportunities for students in the science, and for her exemplary leadership with the MIRT Program in the last 11 years.

Congratulations, Dr Williams!

CONGRATULATIONS AND KUDOS!

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Congratulations, Dr Williams!
WELCOMING MIRT 2006 FELLOWS

A two day pre-travel orientation program was held on May 11 and 12 in South Campus Center at the University of Washington, to welcome the 2006 MIRT fellows and prepare them for their wonderful life changing experience.

Our special thanks goes to all those who participated and helped us in making the 2006 orientation a great success.

MIRT fellows were introduced to responsible conduct and Bioethics in conducting research that involve human subjects. This in-depth session helped fellows understand the importance of human subjects protection, and gain insights in to the IRB review process. Sharon Elsayed and Rebecca Bliquez of Human Subjects Division led this session.

MIRT fellows received Cultural Competency Training from Karlotta Rosebaugh, MIRT Advisory Committee Member, Director, Health Sciences Center Minority Students Program. This part of the orientation was very helpful in providing Fellows an opportunity to critically think and reflect on their role in living and working with people from different cultures.

This year’s fellows were fortunate to have Dr. James (Jim) Litch, Professor of Epidemiology, from the Hall Health Clinic provide information on travel health, immunization, and safety tips. The fellows were pleased with Dr. Litch’s presentation and his practical recommendations.

Finally, Dr. Annette Fitzpatrick, MIRT Program Advisory Committee provided fellows with hands on training experience entitled "Even Quicker than PDQ" in Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Fellows will have ample opportunities to practice these new lessons and have them reinforced during the summer.

The Orientation helped to prepare fellows for their adventure in living and learning overseas. We hope the summer will be one of great personal and academic growth for the UW MIRT 2006 Fellows. Good Luck!
The MIRT Program accepted 12 outstanding students from 5 universities this year. Fellows are ready for their summer experiences across the globe. We are proud to introduce the MIRT 2006 Fellows. We hope you will enjoy meeting them.

My name is Alisa Byquist and I am a Neurobiology major at the University of Washington. I plan to graduate next year and I will hopefully enter medical school in the Fall of 2007.

My hometown is Wenatchee, WA, which is an agricultural community with evident cultural diversity. Growing up amongst such a rich mixture of ethnicities has helped me realize the large healthcare disparity that tends to exist in this type of community. I believe that as a physician, understanding the origin of cultural disparities is crucial to providing the best possible medical care to people of various backgrounds. When I become a physician, I would like to practice medicine within rural and underserved populations. It is my hope to give back to the rural community, enriching the lives of the people there as they have enriched my own. For this reason, I am working toward becoming fluent in the Spanish language, I have volunteered as a children’s ESL tutor, and I have shadowed doctors in rural healthcare facilities.

I believe that the MIRT program will provide me with an invaluable experience, which will help me reach both my professional goal of improving public healthcare and my personal goal of increasing my cultural understanding. MIRT will give me a chance to explore a new culture and gain a new perspective that will help me to be more insightful in the future.

My name is Chanaye Jackson and I am currently a sophomore at UW. I’m originally from the lower Yakima Valley in a place called White Swan. I have a younger sister who is a junior at Davis High School. I was really interested in becoming a MIRT Fellow after talking with an advisor about public health issues that I had learned about on the news earlier that week. I am glad that I will not only learn about another culture and language, but also what their public health issues are in comparison to here in the U.S. and how they might differ. I am very excited to be able to immerse myself in a different part of the world where I get to meet different people, get hands on research experience and really test out my Spanish!
Tess looks forward to being in Punta Arenas, Chile with the MIRT program making it possible for her to combine research with her interest in different cultures and public health issues. Her long term academic plans are to graduate from the University of Washington with a Bachelor’s degree in Neurobiology and pursue an MD/PhD degree to eventually work in a career where she can combine the fields of neuroscience, infectious diseases, and international public health.

The UW MIRT program was highly praised and recommended to me as a life changing, insightful, and learning experience. Through the MIRT program I expect to learn what the current pertinent health issues are and what actions are taken in response to population based health research analysis.

My long term goal is to work with the World Health Organization in one of their regional offices. The opportunity to work in Peru is a great stepping stone to achieving that goal. There are three main benefits that I see coming from participating in the MIRT program. The first one is the opportunity to make contacts with people who are in different stages of their public health professions. I need to focus my efforts in order to truly make an impact in public health. Working alongside students, Doctors and the community in Peru I will be exposed to different facets of public health and its real life applications. I will be able to use that to refine my goals in my own career as a public health professional.

This fellowship will allow me to further my understanding of public health in an international arena. I truly enjoy learning about other cultures and other people so this will feed my natural curiosity of travel and culture. I also look forward to the challenge of applying what I have learned and what I will be learning to a new situation and working with new group of people. This will be the beginning of my work abroad which will hopefully lead to more opportunities to work abroad.

"Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn’t do than by the ones you did do. So throw off the bowlines. Sail away from the safe harbor. Catch the trade winds in your sails. Explore. Dream. Discover." -- Mark Twain

The world is a book and those who do not travel read only one page. -- St. Augustine
Dodie Arnold, Graduate student, Meharry Medical College  
MIRT site: ETHIOPIA

Dodie’s Personal Statement

My name is Dodie Arnold. I am from Slidell, Louisiana and I am student at Meharry Medical College’s School of Graduate Studies and Research in the Master’s of Science Public Health Program in Nashville, TN. I attended Xavier University of Louisiana in New Orleans, Louisiana where I earned a B.S. in Biology with honors, B.A. in Spanish, and a minor in Chemistry with honors. After completing my MSPH at Meharry, I plan to earn a PhD and pursue a career in International Disaster Management, Relief, and Bioterrorism. By participating in MIRT I expect to gain a first hand perspective on issues related to international relief and the health issues in Eastern Africa.

Mark Philpart, Graduate student, UW
MIRT site: ETHIOPIA

Mark’s Personal Statement

The driving force behind my ambition to succeed has been my unwavering commitment to community, dedication towards effecting change and faith that positive change can indeed occur. I have always hoped that I would one-day have the opportunity to work within a community similar to the one that I grew up in and contribute to the process of change. This unyielding desire has proved extremely beneficial. This hope, coupled with hard work and determination has allowed me to survive, go on to college and now graduate school.

While I have been successful in my educational accomplishments, my ‘success’ has in many ways distanced me from communities I long to serve. Instead of my education increasing the access I have to underserved communities similar to the one I grew up in; education has, in many ways, made my re-entry more difficult. Far removed from South Central Los Angeles where I was born and raised, my community now consists of scholars and academics; instead of the people or communities similar to the ones I grew up in. More troubling, is the fact that the scholarship and work carried out in educational institutions has traditionally remained far removed from impacting the lives of people in underserved communities in any meaningful way. These issues are contradictory to my values and educational pursuits.

“I have always hoped that I would one-day have the opportunity to work within a community similar to the one that I grew up in and contribute to the process of change.”

Since the UW MIRT program focus on community based research and commitment to the underserved, I’m happy to be part of this program. Research of this nature is important to me because it is not solely extractive. Meaning, it is useful and relevant to the community it is rooted in and it is consistent with their values, concerns and issues. I participate in the MIRT program because I hope to conduct a thoughtful and rigorous community based research which directly impacts the issues of the community at large.
Ines Gardilcic is a student and social justice organizer pursuing a degree in Ethnic Studies with a minor in Sociology at Humboldt State University in Northern California. Her academic areas of interest include comparative community research; race, gender and US law.

The personal benefit that she expects to get as a MIRT participant includes an enriched understanding of research methods, pertinent hands-on experience, and the opportunity to network with other students and researchers in fields relating to the examination of disparities in health and health care.

Outside of academia Ines is an active youth mentor, prisoner rights advocate and artist.

Ines anticipates her participation in the MIRT program will aid in developing and enriching the research skills necessary to pursue her work and access further educational opportunities. After finishing her undergraduate studies next year, Ines plans to continue her education through a graduate program which will allow her to combine social research with Ethnic Studies’ critical analysis of race, class, and gender to address disparity and inequality of marginalized communities’ health and well-being.
Hi, I’m Rydhwana Hossain. I’m a junior at George Washington University majoring in Public Health. I expect to perform groundbreaking research in the field of public health in Thailand. I also look forward to learning a lot about Thai culture and exploring the country. I look forward to meeting new people and researchers in the field of public health. In my free time I enjoy reading, watching movies, traveling the world, meeting new people.

My time in Thailand with the MIRT program will no doubt challenge me academically, and lead to great personal growth. It will be an enriching training experience that will prepare me for a future in medicine and public health. I hope to immerse myself in Thailand, and further my understanding of the challenges of improving health in resource-depleted settings. I expect to learn a great deal from the faculty and students, though I know not what wonderful discoveries lay ahead.

I am Stephanie Lin. I’m a senior in Neurobiology here at the UW. My current academic plans are to pursue a Master’s degree in Public Health as well as a degree in Medicine. As I am deeply interested in international and cultural experiences in health and studying health disparities, I believe the MIRT experience would be a unique and life-changing experience. I haven’t yet had the opportunity to explore the poor countries that we often talk about in my classes, and I would like a chance to learn first-hand and see their ways of life. Talking past participants and faculty reaffirmed that the MIRT program was a good fit for my interests. I hope to understand the inner workings of the world that I intend to practice in.

My name is Barna De, and I am double majoring in biochemistry and chemistry. I hope to attend law school in the future. I was raised in India and Singapore, and I am very excited about visiting Thailand with MIRT this summer. My research interests lie in the field of maternal and child health, particularly examining the factors that may lead to postpartum depression in mothers. Through the MIRT Program, I hope to develop intercultural competence by improving my ability to cooperatively work with individuals whose lives and point of views are different from my own.
My name is Thomas McHale. I grew up in Philadelphia, but now live in Cherry Hill, New Jersey with my family. I am currently a 3rd year student at Beloit College, a small liberal arts college in Beloit, Wisconsin. I love international travel and am very interested in public health, international politics and sustainable development. This is reflected in my choice of a “Health and Society” major and an “African Studies” minor.

During my summer 2006 MIRT Fellowship in the Republic of Georgia, I hope to experience the public health reality of a developing country. I am very excited to begin to develop an understanding into how public health research and interventions are conducted with limited resources. Through summer research with this fellowship, I hope to make connections with Georgian public health officials to gain insight into the variation among approaches to health across the world. Thanks in advance for this opportunity!

On April 7-8, 2006, the LMSA Stanford Chapter hosted the 22nd Annual LMSA Regional Conference. The theme of the statewide conference was “Creating Leadership: Striving to Improve Latino Healthcare.” Over 1,000 people attended the conference over the two days. The second day of the conference, April 8th, focused on the premedical student, medical student and medical professional audiences. This portion of the conference addressed critical issues in the Latino Community such as the relationship between international medicine and the United States healthcare system, the increasing demand for health care access and the need for Latino physicians in positions of leadership in all branches of medicine. The conference sought to cultivate awareness among future physicians about: the need and opportunities for primary care physicians to practice in medical shortage areas, increasing the number of minority physicians pursuing subspecialty areas of medicine, joint degree programs in medical school, health care policy, and cutting-edge research trends in the biomedical sciences, just to name a few.

Approximately 400 medical students and healthcare professionals participated in the discussions and workshops during the second day of the conference.

Jose Flores, MIRT Alumnus 2004, participated in the student research symposium along with 15 other students.
Dr. Cheryl Anderson was one of the first MIRT fellows (’95). She went to Dakar, Senegal to conduct pilot work for future studies related to the epidemiology of cervical cancer in Senegal. After completing her graduate studies at the University of Washington, Dr. Anderson was an Instructor at the University of Pennsylvania (Penn) Center for Clinical Epidemiology and Biostatistics. Exactly 10 years after her work in Dakar, Dr. Anderson had the opportunity to mentor an undergraduate student at Penn who went to Dakar to conduct pilot work for studies related to the epidemiology of prostate cancer in Senegal. Colleagues that Dr. Anderson met in Dakar in 1995 assisted this student in completing her project. This is a tribute to the strong bridges that are built through the MIRT program. Dr. Anderson is now married and lives in Silver Spring, MD. She recently joined the faculty at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health in Baltimore. Her research focus is on diet and chronic disease prevention in minority communities.

Dr. Anderson reflects back her MIRT experience as “MIRT was instrumental in my career development. The program gave me an opportunity to do international work in a safe and structured environment. It was the first time that I had traveled abroad alone and it had a tremendously positive impact on me. I have maintained contact with many of the project staff that I met as a MIRT fellow.”

We wish you all the best in your research work and future endeavors!

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Since my experience with MIRT, I earned a Master of Science Degree in Statistics from Arizona State University. I currently am a mathematics faculty member at Estrella Mountain Community College in Avondale, Arizona. I have been with Estrella Mountain for the past 7 years.

This summer I will be collaborating with other mathematics faculty members from a sister college within the Maricopa Community College District as well as mathematics faculty from Chaing Mai University in Thailand. The collaboration will involve the exchange of ideas regarding mathematics curriculum as well as student centered learning techniques.

Since my MIRT experience, I have traveled extensively taking various courses and attending international conferences. My MIRT experience was the catalyst that has helped my quest for learning continue throughout the years. I feel that I have learned so much from everyone I crossed paths with during MIRT adventure. I have been blessed to have met incredible individuals that I will never forget.
MIRT Program faculty and staff were very pleased to host the visit of Dr. Zhu Li, Professor of Epidemiology; Chairman of the Department of Health Care Epidemiology; and Director of the National Reference Laboratory for Reproductive Health Research at Peking University Health Science Center, Beijing, China.

Peking University Health Science Center (PUHSC) one of China’s leading institutions of medical education, is also recognized as a renowned medical school and research institution internationally.

During his visit, Professor Li presented a research seminar entitled “Research in China: 25 Years of Collaboration with US-CDC”.

Professor Li is Principal Investigator of many projects including the Sino-US Collaborative Projects on: Birth Defect and Disability Prevention, Randomized Controlled Trial on Prenatal Micronutrients to prevent Perinatal Mortality; and Collaborative Project on Asthma Surveillance in China.

Professor Li shared the results of the population based study and described how the collaborative studies helped to address new public health concerns, to answer further questions.

He also described the amazing research infrastructure of the health care system that helped to understand how the health care system is coordinated from the national to the village level.

Dr Li gave an overview of a very impressive database system that is used in a population based study, Electronic Reproductive Health Surveillance System. This database helps to track every subject in the study despite of their place of residence.

Finally he gave brief updates of program initiations and the 2006 ongoing activities, including a National Pre-conception Care Program; Chinese Research Platform for Women and Children’s Health; and National MCH Surveillance System that covers over 30 millions total population.

Interested faculty, staff and students across the UW campus attended the presentation and met with Professor Li.

On another note, faculty members from MIRT partner institutions in Peru and Republic of Georgia will be coming to Seattle in June. Keep a look out for our Summer Issue!
Let US Know How You’re Doing
Do you have an update or new photo to share with us?
We would love to hear from you!
NAME:_______________________________________________________________

UPDATE:_____________________________________________________________
_______________________________________________________________________

E-mail Address:________________________________________________________

NB: We have made it easier for our alumni to send updates directly online. Please go to the MIRT Web Page: www.depts.washington.edu/mirt/ and click on the Alumni Update.

Facts and stats from:
Global Issues that Affect Everyone

♦ Today, across the world, 1.3 billion people live on less than one dollar a day; 3 billion live on under two dollars a day; 1.3 billion have no access to clean water; 3 billion have no access to sanitation; 2 billion have no access to electricity.

♦ The GDP (Gross Domestic Product) of the poorest 48 nations (i.e. a quarter of the world’s countries) is less than the wealth of the world’s three richest people combined.

♦ Nearly a billion people entered the 21st century unable to read a book or sign their names.

♦ Less than one per cent of what the world spent every year on weapons was needed to put every child into school by the year 2000 and yet it didn’t happen.

♦ According to UNICEF, 30,000 children die each day due to poverty. And they “die quietly in some of the poorest villages on earth, far removed from the scrutiny and the conscience of the world. Being meek and weak in life makes these dying multitudes even more invisible in death.” That is about 210,000 children each week, or just under 11 million children under five years of age, each year.

Response to Previous Photo Quiz

Thanks for the photo quiz participants in the Winter Issue newsletter. 1. Dr. Rosalia Mendoza 2. Miriam Castor 3. Laketa Entzminger & 4. Christine Graving all provided the correct answer (in this order).

Dr. Mendoza, MIRT ’97 won the prize by responding first.

The response for the photo Quiz:
The name of this remarkable and inspiring person is Shri Kocheril Raman Narayanan. He was the former president of India.
PHOTO QUIZ

“Her father was a shoeshine man who died when she was a child, her mother was a maid who brought her along on jobs, yet she rose from these humble beginnings to become one of the country's leading writers - a female African American pioneer in the white, male domain of science fiction.

She remains the only science fiction writer to receive one of the vaunted "genius grants" from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, a hard-earned $295,000 windfall in 1995. But it was also obvious that writing was her life.”
[Seattle PI]

Who is this gifted pioneer writer? What are the titles of her first two novels?
A special prize will be awarded to the first person providing the correct responses.
Send your responses to mirt@u.washington.edu **** Cheers!