

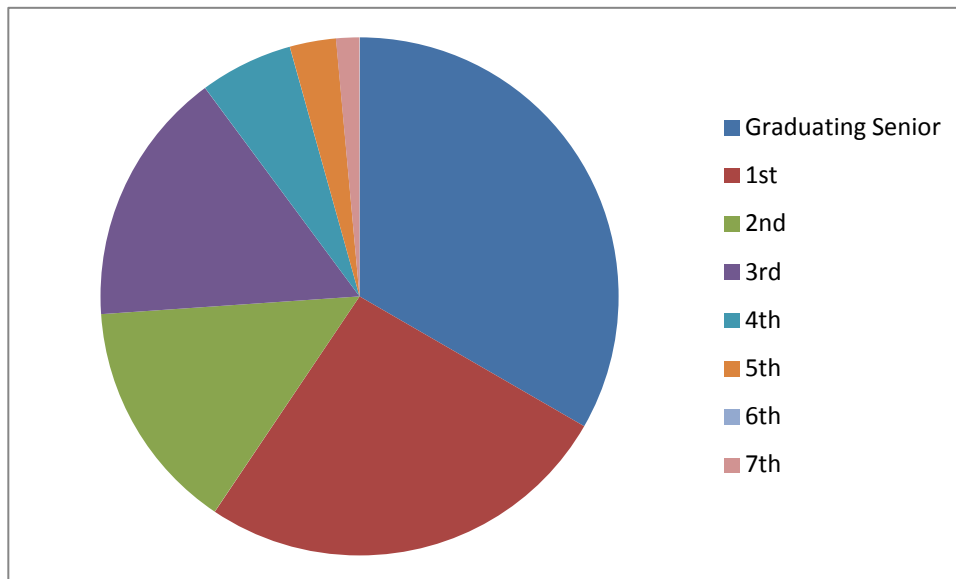


Mellon Mays Graduate Initiatives Program
2011 Summer Conference Evaluation Results
June 15-17, Princeton University

I. Demographics

- 136 total participants: 112 graduate students, 15 Mellon PhDs 5 MMUF Staff, 4 SSRC Staff
- Total number of evaluations filled out: 74*

Year in Graduate School



- Graduating Seniors=23, 1st Years=18, 2nd Years=9, 3rd Years=10, 4th Years=4, 5th years=2, 6th years=0, 7th year and beyond=1
- Pie Chart does not include PhDs who filled out the evaluation.

**This number includes Mellon PhD*

<u>Field of Study</u>	<u>#</u>
History	8
Sociology	5
Anthropology	4
English	3
Literature	3
African American and American Studies	3
African American History	2
Humanities	2
Philosophy	2
American History	1
Organizational/Industrial Psychology	1
Pathology	1
English Literature and African American Literature	1
Social Sciences	1
Afro-American and Caribbean History	1
American Studies	1
Musicology	1
Womens Studies	1
Biostatistics	1
Environmental and Water Sciences	1
Computer Science	1
Developmental Psychology	1
Political Science and Theology	1
Political Communication	1
Theater and Performance Studies	1
Geological and Environmental Sciences	1
Culture and Performance Studies	1
Geography	1
Spanish and Portuguese	1
Ethnic Studies	1
Mathematics	1
Sociology and Public Health	1
African American Studies and Anthropology	1
Clinical Science and Immunology	1
Chicano/Chicana Studies	1
Chemistry	1
Molecular Biology	1

- Of the respondents, 15% were in a math or science related discipline.
- 52% of fellows reported this was their first Conference attended.
- Past Conference attendance

One	52%
Two	24%
Three	16%
Four	3%
Four +	3%

- Of those who previously attended, 24% had attended two conferences.
- Of the total student participants, 28% presented a paper.
- Of the total student participants, 8% presented a poster.

II. Panels

Student Presentations	% Attended	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
History, Memory and Politics of Resistance	59%	0%	4%	33%	63%
Trade and Traffic	25%	0%	16%	69%	15%
Geographies of Political Praxis	41%	0%	13%	39%	48%
Political Aesthetics	15%	0%	0%	27%	73%
Appearance, Authenticity and Infrastructure	34%	0%	1%	24%	75%
Sticks and Stones	35%	0%	1%	41%	58%
Treatment and Stigmatized Identities	18%	0%	15%	31%	54%
Aural History	28%	0%	4%	57%	39%
Poster Session	68%	0%	14%	40%	46%
Sexuality, Race and Embodiment	19%	14%	0%	7%	79%

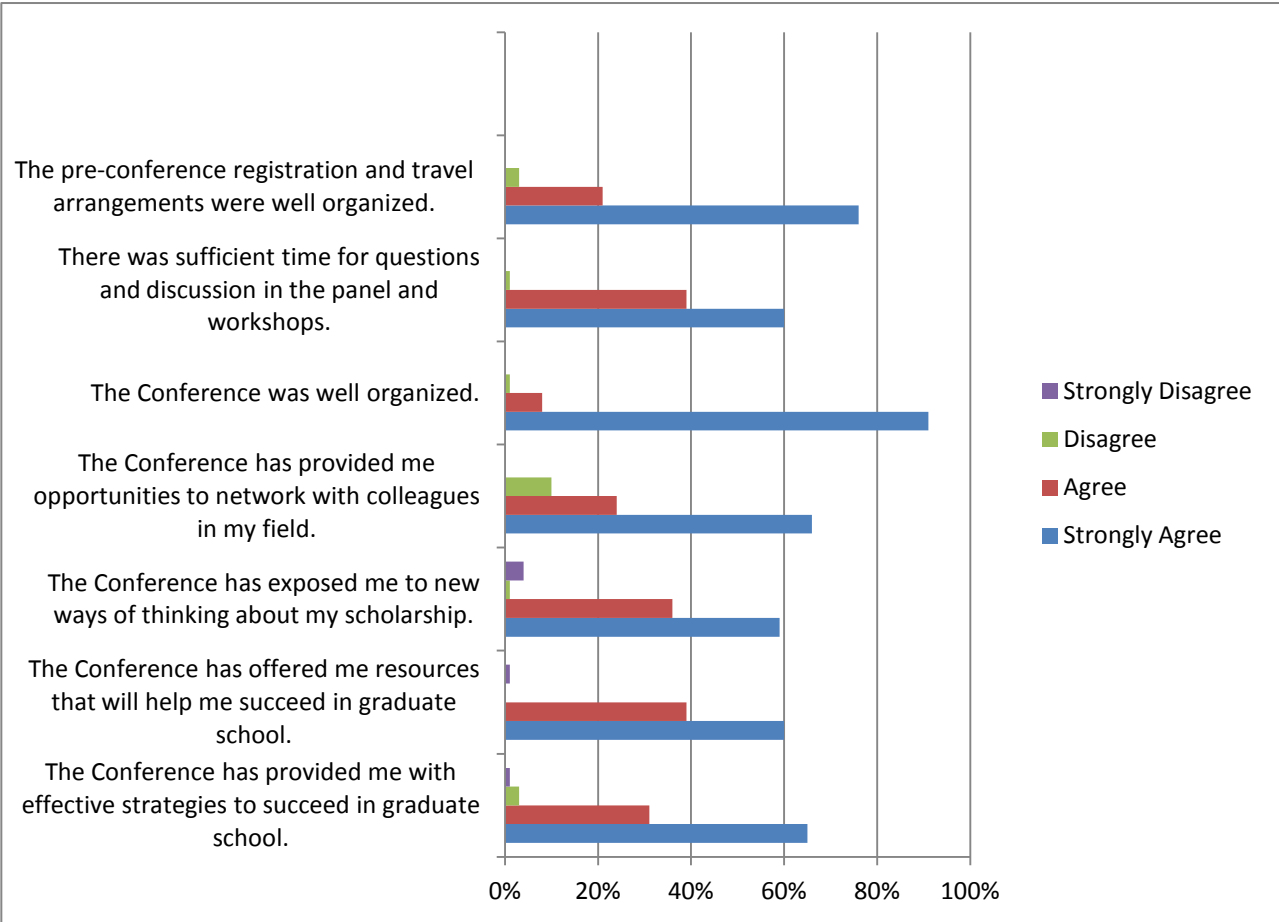
Conceptualizing Economic Reform and Progressive Politics	7%	0%	0%	40%	60%
Conflicting Intimacies	9%	0%	0%	22%	73%

PhD Panels	% Attended	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Plenary Panel: The Creative Potential of the Mellon Mays Network	77%	1%	14%	26%	58%
Recent PhD Panel	86%	1%	1%	16%	82%

III. Workshops

	% Attended	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent
Maintaining Work/Life Balance	32%	0%	13%	29%	58%
Preparing for Comprehensive Exams	20%	0%	27%	20%	53%
Refining your Research Question	22%	0%	0%	37%	63%

IV. Goals and Objectives



V. Open Ended Responses

Additional comments concerning workshops and panels:

The poster sessions would benefit from having a loud alarm or bell to make sure groups move at same time. For science and math, why not have a keynote dedicated to a scientist or mathematician and their work?
Additional time for poster sessions
I loved it all!
I wish there had been an opportunity to attend more workshops to help guide me through the process of becoming a scholar. I LOVED "Appearance, Authenticity, and Infrastructure."
For work/life balance, it would be nice to have a roundtable discussion with smaller groups of people talking about their coping mechanisms for grad school
They were quite interesting and informative and I really enjoyed the level of interest and engagement that was shown by participants.
I thought the panels were well organized. The discussants were well prepared and added much to the conversation. I liked that there were discussants and not just moderators or panel chairs.
The session on "Refining your Research Question" helped to provide more insight on my particular experience in a new program as well as making the most effective use of time in that program.
A minor note, but it would be wonderful if the panels' speakers presented in the order listed in our programs. There are so many wonderful papers and more often than not, multiple presentations that we'd like to attend – in different sessions – and if all panels were to follow the order provided on the program, it would make exits and arrivals less disruptive.
I very much liked the science posters.
Forced paper sessions were awkward. Maybe we should scatter them throughout. 1) Timing – during a long day, schedule when people are tired/dragging not a good idea. 2) We should be able to choose which sessions to go to.
There seems to be a focus on interdisciplinary research and ethnic/regional studies in the large panels. It would be great if discussions addressed broader concerns of other discipline as well.
The plenary and recent PhD panels were great resources for me. I took a lot of meaningful notes that will be valuable in immediate future. Also, I thoroughly enjoyed the "Preparing for Comprehensive Exams" the information was on point (and on time!)
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Good general breadth of topics, although I don't see how directly peoples' topic corresponded with the conference theme altogether.2) The comp exams workshop also seemed to problematically emphasize *character* and *attitude*, which sounded a lot like "personal responsibility" arguments that this community of scholars seem to

<p>generally warn against,</p> <p>3) Facilitators should have taken several questions and then a few times kicked it back to the panelists, instead of playing "idea tennis."</p> <p>4) The plenary panel should have been allotted more time to discuss the complex political issues that ultimately seemed to be short-shifted.</p>
<p>The poster sessions were a welcome opportunity to engage across academic disciplines with other Mellon fellows. I believe combining workshops with meals or placing them earlier in the day would foster further engagement from the fellows.</p>
<p>Really excellent conference. I am really thrilled with the new poster sessions. Keep it up!</p>
<p>Dr Evelyn was charismatic and Dr. Wright was glorious! I wish to be like her!</p>
<p>Poster Session – excellent, and an important opportunity to learn from a part of a cohort we don't get to hear from often. Would have even devoted a bit more time for this segment.</p> <p>Plenary Panel - this was confusing. Was it supposed to be a topical paper presentation or a discussion panel about the future of the academy? (I would have preferred a discussion/Q&A panel).</p>
<p>I was really impressed with the variety and quality of the presenters' work and questions/turn-out from the audience.</p>
<p>We need to involve more scientists. Is it possible to invite a leading scientific researcher to give a talk?</p>
<p>In the "Aural History" panel, the technical difficulties really impacted the amount of time available for questions and that was frustrating. The same thing happened in the "Sexuality, Race and Embodiment" panel.</p>
<p>The sessions were wonderful! It would have been great to have the talking points from the breakfast sessions (i.e. Refining your Research Question) – I think people who attended one could also benefit from the other sessions.</p>
<p>Thoroughly enjoyed the workshop on "Refining your Research Question," the content was good, but the way it was presented really put it out about the rest. It felt more like a discussion than a presentation on a topic.</p>
<p>I really enjoyed the poster session but I think it was difficult to stand the whole time and found myself having difficulty staying focused as I got more tired. Perhaps it would be possible to seat us? And allow a few more minutes for questions.</p>
<p>This may be for the advisors...but many of the presentations were not well presented.</p>
<p>The posters were great, but I think that the format of moving around was very difficult. It'd be nice to think of staggering the presentations OR have us all in big hall where acoustics are better and people can go back afterwards to look at posters and ask questions.</p>
<p>The titles and panels were very good. I really enjoyed the science panels and the presence of scientists in the recent PhD panel. Some panels were more popular than others and seating was an issue.</p>
<p>At the next PAC meeting, we should talk about how we help Fellows make comments and ask questions during the Q&A of panels. Also, next year we might offer tips to Fellows on how to respond to comments</p>

<p>and questions. Maybe a “Dos and Don’ts” page or statement seems patronizing, but we can encourage reflection as part of the professional development goals for the Summer Conference.</p> <p>Some specifics: 1) avoid asking more than two questions at a time, 2) consider whether you are really making a comment only OR briefly commenting before asking a question, 3) try not to seem defensive in response to a question or comment.</p>
<p>My low score for the Trade and Traffic panel stems from the preparation/presentation of the actual papers – two of which seemed to be more “talking proposals” than actual papers – I wonder if there could be a space (panel or otherwise) for people who want to talk out their thinking of their projects instead of actually presenting.</p>
<p>The poster session presenters did an excellent job, especially in working to discuss their research in a way students in humanities might better follow =></p>
<p>The workshops/panels were generally great and the level of discourse exhilarating. I liked when workshop leaders offered narratives of their own experiences. I think, though that we need more time for Q&A. It might also be useful if graduate students were asked to populate questions/concerns beforehand so presenters and students could have them in mind during the session.</p>
<p>Facilitators were very well versed and prepared; clearly thought deeply on their subjects and papers presented, highlighting the similarities, differences, and common themes. *Poster session was phenomenal. I used the time to coach and interact with fellows on a peer-peer and mentor-peer level. More comments in subsequent pages.</p>

What is your overall impression of the SSRC-Mellon Mays 2011 Summer Conference?

<p>I came to the conference out of a particularly low and difficult time in my graduate school experience. So I came to get inspired and I am happy that I am effectively learning with a renewed mission to advance and accomplish.</p>
<p>The mentorship was excellent.</p>
<p>This has been one of the most impactful experiences. This has given me a realistic look at life in the academy, but it has also put me in touch with individuals who will be able to help and mentor me through my 1st year. All graduating seniors should be REQUIRED to attend this.</p>
<p>Very low-key (wonderful). Should be longer to accommodate more panels.</p>
<p>Amazing experience!</p>
<p>While it did feel a bit shorter and more compact this year, I feel I will be walking away from the conference with new ideas, inspiration, and an enhanced network of appreciation for my fellow Mellons in all disciplines.</p>
<p>It has been amazing to say the least. I have been challenged, inspired, and had the opportunity to</p>

network, make friends, and had a lot of fun along the way. I can't wait til next year.
Fabulous opportunity to learn and meet great people.
Enjoyable and well organized. I didn't realize how much more relaxed the conference is than I thought. There is open dialogue without judgment.
I thought that the conference was fabulous. It was so great to have the opportunity to meet my fellow Mellons and learn about their graduate school experiences. I also really appreciated listening to talks by Mellon faculty members and learning about networking strategies.
It is a good platform for both networking and showcasing of different research projects that Graduate Students are involved with. It provides an excellent peer review of students' work.
This was my first SSRC-Mellon Conference and I thoroughly enjoyed my time here. I have been inspired by so many people to keep going. After my first-year of graduate school, I needed this moment of rejuvenation.
The conference was well organized, highly informative and provided a platform for networking. It was also a safe space for fellows to share and exchange ideas and showcase their work.
A good experience, very interesting and informative
Very good. I always look forward to seeing my colleagues here.
The conference was very beneficial to me as a graduate student of color. I look forward to returning next year and participating in Mellon activities in years to come.
Very well-organized. Wonderful energy and spirit throughout.
I greatly enjoyed this year's summer conference and thought it was a wonderful experience personally, professionally, and intellectually. It's not often that I'm able to combine these three areas of my life together in the same time and place so thank you for this opportunity. I would recommend Mellon fellows take every opportunity to come to these conferences and I'm sad that this was my very 1 st one!
I found this conference to be extremely valuable in terms of meeting fellows and faculty members whose work is interesting and helped me think about my own work. I was able to have conversations with these fellows and faculty members that I can't have in my own department. I also immensely enjoyed the opening address by Michelle Wright, the Keynote Panel, and the recent PhD panel.
I had a fantastic experience and look forward to returning next year.
I feel that the conference was one of the most organized of many I have been. Things were on schedule, there were a variety of talks ranging from research to work/life balance, which is a good mix for the audience. Overall, a great experience.
It was a great opportunity to meet other fellows and "recharge" my intellectual batteries. I really enjoyed talking to PhDs and hearing about the experience of other programs as well.
Well-organized, fun, and inspiring

<p>It allowed me to discuss my project and trajectory in a positive light. It also allowed for exposure to young scholars from diverse institutions. Thus the program was useful for my path throughout graduate school.</p>
<p>Lovely. Very happy to be here, listen to papers, and networking with Mellon fellows. Being able to hang and talk with fellows is perhaps the strongest/most important aspect of the conference.</p>
<p>I am grateful for having had the opportunity to attend and delighted that I was able to be here. Whatever the future of my academic career (or otherwise), it has been an experience that will forever shape my growth.</p>
<p>It was an overall great experience. I very much enjoyed most components of the conference. I would have liked to see more time for discussion among fellows.</p>
<p>So great! So many wonderful discussions, a lot of interesting programming. The days were a little too packed. Also, it seemed like we were often lost around campus and confused by the schedule.</p>
<p>Jam packed! Maybe add another day? Overall great. I wish we had more folk to talk about non-traditional paths post-graduation. Or just generally more info on things like 'what is/how to get a postdoc' (but maybe these workshops/sessions happen post conference?)</p>
<p>I think it was better when the conference was longer which gives more of a chance for networking, more panels, chances to present work, etc.</p>
<p>I thoroughly enjoyed the conference. The concurrent sessions' panels were engaging and exciting. Moreover, it was nice to reconnect and to meet new Mellons!</p>
<p>Mixed: I love the opportunity to meet and engage with fellow scholars of color and historical underrepresentation. With that said, I wonder if "Ivy League Mindsets" of personalizing what is a very social process of education has crept into the MMUF. Pedigrees seem to be flaunted instead of problematized. Those who are struggling don't seem to have the space to discuss challenging experiences (or are cut short when they do raise issues). I wish there were time for both papers and the politics of academia to be discussed. The exigency of this political movement of crisis as reflected in the CFP didn't seem to actually be encouraged for exploration in our conversations, which happened quietly on the sidelines anyway....</p>
<p>As a first-time attendee, I am highly impressed with the Summer Conference as both an academic and social resource. My only request would be to extend the conference an additional day.</p>
<p>It was a great opportunity to network with my peers, older grad students, and faculty. It definitely helped ease some of my fears going into grad school, because I know I have a supportive network available.</p>
<p>I love it! The recent PhD & plenary panels were fantastic. I just love networking with all the Mellon fellows as well!</p>
<p>I thought the conference was amazing! Getting to reconnect with other Fellows was a treat. It also really appreciated the opportunity to present my work in such a cordial environment.</p>
<p>Being my 1st SSRC conference, it was amazing! I hope to come again next year without presenting! Glad to be around intellectuals</p>

<p>Excellent time management throughout the conference. Even though we were busy and had jam packed days, I never felt rushed. My only comment would be arrival/check-in. Princeton's campus is big and difficult to navigate at times, and there are no names or signs on anything! That is out of your control, but for example, upon arrival (via Dinky), me and a group of 3 others wandered the campus for 30 minutes looking for check-in dorms.</p>
<p>This was my first time as a PhD and appreciated experiencing the conference from this end. It would be nice to be able to have PhDs/professors gather/socialize in some formalized way. As a post-doc, I would greatly appreciate the support/networking opportunities, especially in this job environment/climate.</p>
<p>The conference was well organized. I felt I learnt a lot and made new friends. I will cherish the experience forever.</p>
<p>Very well organized and excellent time keeping during the sessions. The accommodations and facilities at Princeton were good.</p>
<p>It was a really great conference, met several graduate students I plan to keep in touch with. Very organizes interesting graduate program.</p>
<p>The conference was filled with talks that were entertaining and enlightening. Of greatest benefit was hearing experiences of fellow graduate students.</p>
<p>Fantastic! This was my first conference and it was great to be in the company of so many smart people of color. Definitely looking forward to coming back next year.</p>
<p>I really enjoyed my first conference!</p>
<p>It was exactly what I needed! All the sessions were informative and the lectures were stimulating and made me feel excited about becoming an academic.</p>
<p>There was a perfect harmony between scholarly rigor and familial bonding. Always rejuvenated and encouraged to recalibrate my own thinking.</p>
<p>Thoroughly organized!</p>
<p>Short, but sweet. Not as diverse as I would have liked in terms of representing physical sciences, but the range of topics presented were still quite impressive.</p>
<p>I think the summer conference was a wonderful, engaging and supportive experience.</p>
<p>Best thing ever. Not only in terms of content of material, but magnitude and quality of participation, both in number of presenters, but also in Q&A and "off time" conversation. Also just extremely encouraging. I know this is cheesy but I just felt like the atmosphere is such that each person is someone but we are also something big and amazing together. Thanks.</p>
<p>Very packed. Somewhat brief. I am very happy to have met fellows from my home state and who attend my graduate institution. It is good to know that I have them close.</p>

I thought it was great. I really appreciated the poster session. It was the first time I'd attended a poster talk and thought it was a wonderful way to integrate scientists into the conference. I wonder if adding another slot for posters would more fully integrate posters and their presenters so that the session isn't an isolated time for science posters.
I really enjoyed it. I took something away from each of the workshops I attended. Plenary Panel was fabulous (UT-Austin is my dream institution to teach at in the future and Professor Evelyn was fantastic). Hearing from Shana Redmond was a special treat as I hope she will be the outside person on my committee in the future. Dr. Michelle Wright taught at my alma mater, Macalester...the conference was simply fabulous!
Fantastic; like a meat and potatoes dinner. I particularly appreciated the panel format, which allowed us to see how people framed our work in a larger field (with the discussant), and to then have a larger discussion amongst ourselves. I'm tired and rejuvenated at the same time.
Highly professional and incredibly nurturing with peer-to-peer challenge and influence, mentor-to-peer guidance and provision of perspective. It's like finding an ice-cube in the desert; rare, and insanely refreshing.
The conference was well organized and I was very satisfied to be in attendance this year.
The conference was amazing as always! A great mix of fellows and wonderful networking opportunities. It would have been nice to have more time with fellows who already have their PhDs. I don't feel like I get enough time with them. Also, my arrival in Princeton was a bit hectic: the driver was not at the designated location nor was he wearing proper attire, no one answered the staff number or returned my call, and I had to wait 95 minutes. In the future, please provide the direct number for shuttle service.
Excellent. Informative, insightful, and enlightening.

Do you feel that your scholarly interests were well represented in the program? Please elaborate.

I felt that the humanities were over represented, although I enjoyed the opportunity to learn about these fields. I wish that there was more representation from the sciences.
Yes. I found all sessions to be highly informative.
The mix of disciplines is great.
Yes – at times I was forced to decide between two or more presentations I really wanted to attend.
Yes, lots of history people and conversations
Yes, there was so much information on the African Diaspora from different perspectives that helped me think of my own interests from a different perspective. But also there were other topics to not make it over

saturated.
Yes – I felt that there were a lot of interesting talks about literature and I thought that the conference was pretty well rounded after all.
Yes – the conference helped me to get different ideas about my research and the possible steps that I can follow at this particular time as a first year graduate student.
It is difficult to find other students here who are working on Europe, Eastern Europe, and/or Russia but we are generally able to connect on theory and methodology.
Yes I do. The panels that engaged issues surrounding identity and themes of blackness forced me to closely examine my definitions and functions of these terms.
I felt my scholarly interests were fairly represented. This was found in the poster sessions and some of the workshops attended as well as access to other people in fields similar to mine.
Yes, I met several great historians.
Yes.
Yes. I felt that during each workshop session there was a talk that in some way related to my research interests. Since I'm in an interdisciplinary department and my work is interdisciplinary, it was very useful to hear papers in a variety of disciplines and make those connections to my research areas. The Q and A portions were incredibly interesting and useful.
Absolutely. It was wonderful to have Michelle Wright and Kalenda Eaton at the conference. I've long admired their work. I even learned a lot from the keynote panel and the discussions on Diaspora. I often felt as if the panels were targeted towards my scholarly interests, something that never happens at my home institution. I loved the discussion of ethnic studies and being around people who study African American cultural production.
Yes, there were several representatives of my scholarly interests and research areas.
Yes, because I am in an interdisciplinary field of computing that deals with societal impact, many of the talks related in some way to topics we focus on in our field. Therefore, it is nice to see what is going on in these other areas.
I was surprised to not see as much racial identity work.
Yes, to an extent. I am a scientist, and the poster session gave some voice to the sciences.
Yes, the poster session allowed me to hear and learn about scholarly research beyond my field.
Not specifically, but I did get a lot of great feedback from people in other disciplines that will help expand my topic/thinking.
Yes, though in Literature, I'm generally most interested in the work of my fellow Mellons quite simply because they are my fellow Mellons and I feel as invested in their work as I am my own; however, this aside, I think that their presentations offered a healthy balance of disciplines and inquiries. My only...hesitation? Criticism? Is in rising graduate scholars presenting. I think there is great value in "just"

attending during your first conference.
Yes, they were. It was nice and intellectually rewarding to see people from different disciplines trying to understand and engage with each other's work.
Yes. I even had a long and passionate discussion about "A Mercy" with a panelist.
I wish there were more panels more explicit to grassroots movements/organizing, however generally the panels were decent at representing my interests. Curious as to why some panels mixed social sciences with humanities...while I understand the great attempts made to represent all disciplines, it's sometimes awkward.
It would be great if there were breakout sessions according to disciplines/broader fields (social sciences, humanities, etc) so that questions that are field specific could be addressed.
Yes, the panels seem to feature my interest in literature, but many of the scholars were bold in the expansion of African American genres (e.g. media, plays, poetry, and narrative). The expansion and new ways of thinking has given me ideas on how to move forward on my current project.
For the most part, yes. However, I felt that some panelists' papers were too abstract, which I think is a luxury that the Mellon Mays can't "afford" to reproduce. What if a CFP were to consciously as for clarity in idea presentation as a mode of refuting academic dysfunction (slight play on words here)
Yes – as a scholar who bridges the humanities and social sciences that was an abundance of opportunities to engage my interests.
My methods were well represented, as there were lots of literary scholars and project available. My research interests concern Afro Asians in the Caribbean, so while there weren't presentations in that vein, I appreciated Michelle Wright's and Dr. Hu-DeHart's remarks for their mention of hybridity.
Yes – I study literature and there were excellent lit panels. But I was equally enthralled by the plethora of disciplines represented. I'm all about interdisciplinarity and this year's conference epitomizes this.
I didn't necessarily get to hear many papers from history students, but that was likely more from the panel logistics than a lack of papers. However, I did indeed hear some incredible papers from a number of fields.
Yes, though I am interested in an area (public health) often rooted at an intersection of "hard" and social sciences. It is hard (anywhere) to find a space to discuss these areas together, but Mellon did as good of a job as I've seen, and additionally the inclusion of the poster sessions was an awesome instance where this occurred.
Yes. This is a generic statement, but I believe that merely being here and associating with others help develop my scholarship.
I feel I was a bit of a loner in terms of my chemistry interests! All the same it was good to interact with different people from different departments to see how they look at similar problems.
No. The science students did not gain anything tangible from this process. While the poster sessions were an opportunity to discuss science work, it may be better to have a science professor to mentor and

describe life as an academic in science.
Yes. Although no one in philosophy presented, I was able to hear scholarship about race and gender which are vital to my research.
Yes. Although I didn't hear many scholars from my particular discipline it was helpful to hear other disciplinary/theoretical frameworks that will aid my desire to broaden my understanding of identity politics and will enhance my own work.
Yes and no. There were definitely papers relevant to my interests and <u>great</u> papers at that but the way some of the sessions were organized made it difficult to see about ½ of them and some of the sessions might have been strengthened if they were more discipline oriented (sociology vs. literature, etc)
Yes, particularly the session on sexuality and embodiment. My thesis is on sexuality, and this session showed me the multiple perspectives of dealing with sexuality. I have learnt a lot about the many different discourses of sexuality and how diverse this is, as I was formerly introduced to limited and restrictive definitions and understandings of sexuality.
Yes. The coming together of so many disciplines and methodologies was apt (as always) in this interdisciplinary world!
Yes, especially critical work or racialization.
No. The physical sciences were not well represented. However the challenge of finding common ground with scholars in fields worlds apart from mine proved to be a very fruitful one when approached with the right attitude.
Mostly. I didn't see anything on the environment which was probably the only interest we didn't talk about. I realize that is due in part to the interests of the presenters though.
Yes – I mean it depends on how you define interest. In terms of time period, not as much. There's a lot of contemporary focus. Not as much 19 th century or older work. However, conceptually, methodologically, politically and at times theoretically, it felt well represented.
As a historian in an interdisciplinary department, I felt my scholarly interests were very well represented.
Generally, yes. I'd still like to see more attention given to the teaching/liberal arts college faculty and work style.
To be honest, No. I was expecting a wider range of disciplines to be represented but I felt that the conference panels were dominated cultural studies and ethnic studies topics. Would have liked to see more talks in the history field.
Yes. I felt like I was a part of a large research consortium of folks working in different areas, but on similar core concerns: political activism, the lived experience of otherness, and intersections or "trans" of all sorts.
More and more geoscientists! Exciting. The poster session is a giant step forward toward including, promoting, and grooming scientists and mathematicians.
Not surprisingly, my interests were not completely represented. I understand though that the field of

theater in scholarship is small. My broader interests in race and gender were well-represented.
No. There was a big focus on African American studies, race, and ethnic studies.

What was the highlight of the conference for you? Why? (Please be specific)

The recent PhD panel was great! I found everyone's story inspiring. I also really enjoyed meeting so many new people who are on the same track as me – it was refreshing and inspiring to make new friends with similar goals.
The paper presentations because it activated the heart of what MMUF does and should promote – vibrant intellectual discourse and debate.
Plenary panel – talks were thought-provoking and panelists were well-chosen.
I was able to make local connections to others in my field
Meeting Hugo Benavides, making new friends and networking, being challenged.
Social conversations because we are more than academics!
The panel discussion on potential of the Mellon network. It helped discuss the ways in which the network is extremely large and unlimited.
I loved listening to Michelle Wright's talk at the Mellon dinner. It was so inspirational and I really appreciated her nuanced discussion of blackness because it is very relevant to my own research.
Keynote Panel – offered a range of perspectives and did not shy away from the compromises we may have to make. UT Austin was heavily represented, though. Mays speech was also great.
The highlights of the conference were moments outside of the sessions. During the BBQ because I was able to connect with my colleagues and have intellectual as well as open discussions about graduate life. I also enjoyed the keynote address by Dr. Wright – it was excellent.
The poster session was a highlight for me because it provided a stage for fellows in the science disciplines to share their work and it gave me a sense of being included in the activities of the programme and also receive great feedback to help better my research.
Opening dinner, interesting talk and I got to meet new people
They keynote – amazing!
The recent PhD panel and Dr. Wright's address. I also enjoyed connecting with my Mellon cohort.
I loved Michelle Wright's opening address. Her talk was the perfect start to the conference and it set the stage for the rest of the great talks, speakers, and presenters that we heard as the conference went on.

I'm torn between Michelle Wright's talk and hearing Shana Redmond speak during the recent PhD panel and as a discussant on the Political Aesthetics panel. The amazing thing about MMUF is that it connects you to truly extraordinary scholars. I was blown away by these scholars.
This conference reaffirmed my confidence in starting graduate school.
Recent PhD panel, it is interesting to hear from people who have gone through and had similar experiences and succeeded.
I liked the dinner on Wed. night because it merged scholarship, networking, and hanging out together beautifully.
The recent PhD panel, mainly because Rick from Disney was very inspiring and encouraging.
The opportunity to network will be essential to my graduate and professional goals
The BBQ after the Keynote panel because the panel was so rich/powerful and, by the time of the BBQ, people were more relaxed and open to discussion. It was a highlight with regard to speaking with other fellows and exchanging ideas.
"The Creative Potential of the Mellon Mays Network" (very specifically, Hu-DeHart's contribution), and the Recent PhD panel were in a sense, invaluable. The honesty, the process and sharing of "the self" that exist as separate from scholarship (if we can even state it as such) was a reality check of sorts and in my experience, the most powerful part of the conference.
The faculty panel. It was enlightening to see and hear about the trajectories of well-established scholars.
Michelle Wright's talk at the first fancy dinner. Incorporating physics was amazing.
Great sessions, full of smart and talented people. I also enjoy the recent PhD panel every year, shows me different ways/strategies people use to get through.
PhD Panel, Mellon Jam, seeing old friends
The highlight for me was the plenary panel and recent PhDs, because I am approaching that stage in the process where I need to think about the job market.
The highlights were hearing the work and advice of activist and scholars on various panels, Dr. Michelle Wright's excellent speech, and the jam!!!!
The informal interaction with other fellows outside of sessions and panels was most fruitful and exciting as a first-time attendee.
There wasn't a particular event that worked best – everything was great. The informal interactions were particularly encouraging.
I really enjoyed the reception and dinner on Wednesday evening. Dr. Wright's speech was great, and it was nice to socialize. I also enjoyed Thursday evening's keynote panel.
1) Meeting other Mellons, networking and hearing about their experiences and their research, 2) the positive and productive energy through-out the conference and in every individual, 3) opportunity to meet and hear from PhDs of color.

Michelle Wright's talk.
The Recent PhD Panel. It was an inspiring session, listening to people who have gone through the process. Also, a nicely balanced panel in terms of background of the panelists.
The science poster session. One talk where I could really ask questions without being out of place or intimidated by the material.
Appearance, Authenticity, and Infrastructure.
Meeting other fellows in panel sessions and at informal meals and activities.
Professor Wright's speech at dinner the first night was AMAZING. And the "Appearance, Authenticity and Infrastructure" panel was especially well-put together.
I absolutely enjoyed the lecture given by Dr. Michelle Wright during our dinner at the opening of the conference. Meeting new people and reuniting with some of the Mellons who were in my cohort. Overall the conference was great.
Dr. Wright's keynote. It appealed to ethos, pathos, and logos in a highly (and rare) productive way.
Having done my poster presentation, and explained my work, the feedback I got was amazing. So many people wanted to continue the discussion that my presentation began.
The PhD panel was an excellent experience because the panelists were well prepared in their discussion (in the sense that they answered the questions Mellon/SSRC posed to them). Their comments were a good mix of sober reality and positive advice. I liked how different they all were.
Oh that's too hard to name one. I thought it would be Michelle Wright but then it was two keynote panels – to be difficult – I'll just say it was "work/life balance" because I felt it was the first time anyone has offered a different model other than "balance."
The poster session was the highlight. In addition to the sheer knowledge and impressive potential of each presenter's poster presentation, this event symbolized our PAC's commitment to growth and inclusion of science and math fellows. In particular, Kendra and Emma did a great job facilitating the transitions among presenters and groups. I also highlight the fact that most presenters were South African fellows: their participation in this poster session segued to more dialogue and quality time throughout Thursday and Friday.
The Mellon Mays Address and the Recent PhD Panel. Both were excellent and allowed for the opportunity of reflection of the past (thinking about the process of moving from grad school to tenure track) and the future (thinking of how to bring all of this work into future projects)
Recent PhD Panel – felt it was informative and inspiring
Dr. Wright's lecture was great. I appreciated not only the content, but also her style of delivery, which is a model of style to which I aspire. The recent PhD panel was also good for me, especially since the panelists talked about dealing with failures. "failure" seems to be academia's dirty little secret, but it can be a powerful tool.
Poster session! It was truly exciting to me to see the debut of this format, seeing scientists present in this

professional element. It exposed the need to educate some of the more junior fellows on ways to lay out and strengthen research in poster format. It also demonstrated the scientific excellence of work done, and the level of support and collaboration each fellow received and participated in at their home institution. I want to see MORE of this!
The panels. It was great to learn about what other Mellons are working on. I enjoyed participating in Q&A sessions.
Meeting great people and having the chance to have extensive conversations with young faculty.
Work life balance session. It was very helpful.

Which aspects of the conference would you improve?

I think that the poster session is a great addition; but I don't think that this format should be restricted to the sciences. I appreciated the chance to share my research and it was very well received by everyone; but for many in the sciences, being assigned to a poster instead of a panel would feel like a downgrade. I know the organizers have the best intentions, but a panel format would have worked perfectly.
It would be great to have more explicit discussions of scholars' political instruments and ideological attachments. From radical Marxism to conservative liberalism.
Very difficult to navigate conference – would it be possible to put all of the events in a more confined area of campus?
One more day to spread things out a bit.
I wish it were longer – I want more sessions geared towards preparing us for the process ahead.
More social time
I liked listening to the poster sessions but I was also wondering if it would be possible to be able to choose which sessions to attend and to also have wandering time where we can actually take a closer look at the posters themselves.
Airport pickup was problematic.
The poster session was interesting and the majority of the presentations were accessible to a non-scientific audience. However, the format was a bit constricted. Previous poster sessions that I have attended consist of one room. Posters are set up and then participants talk to the presenters. This is more information conversation rather than presentation.
I would add more workshop sessions where we can build in time to actually connect what we have heard to our research. In other words, there needs to be more time to process information, which is hard when we are running from sessions to session. However I am aware that time is a constraint.
The poster session could be allocated more time to allow participants ample time to engage in discussion

<p>about the subject matter. Also, posters could be put up a little earlier to allow conference participants enough time to read and view some of the images on the various posters (It was great though).</p>
<p>I would have appreciated receiving more information regarding the itinerary before I arrived.</p>
<p>I appreciated hearing about science research in the poster sessions. However, I think it could be organized more effectively next year. Having everyone presenting at the same time in the same space got rather loud and I couldn't really hear what the presenters were saying. Maybe next time have the groups in different rooms or have people come in shifts to hear the presentations. Otherwise, I thought the posters were a great addition.</p>
<p>I could often hear the presenter or the applause of another group and I found this distracting.</p>
<p>The location of events could be less scattered.</p>
<p>I enjoyed the poster session, but at least in my area it is for people with preliminary results to give them a chance to "try-out" a talk and get feedback on early work. For more established research, with results, papers are the norm. Our format is different, no discussant, and papers are reviewed more closely than posters. May not fit in the two day timeline though. However, the session was well organized and we were well informed, so the current format could work – just a little different from what we are used to.</p>
<p>An easier way to identify people in your field would be nice. Maybe area lunches one day or something.</p>
<p>Nothing I can think of.</p>
<p>I would love more time to strategize and talk with other graduate students and recent PhDs on the challenges we face in funding, working (sp?) on applied work, etc.</p>
<p>If possible, I'd expand it by a day or two. Two days feels rushed. Also, on the graduate life/advice panels, I'd like to see less of a faculty led discussion and more of a student- driven discussion.</p>
<p>I would like to see more discussion among fellows about their different graduate experience.</p>
<p>Make scheduling/locations more clear. Work in some down-time.</p>
<p>Possibly more casual, small group talks like those done Thursday morning. Outside of the conference...more opportunity for regional/metro area Mellon gatherings, + more opportunities for networking, mentorship outside of the conferences, and for or available to students beyond the 3rd year.</p>
<p>DJ for Mellon Jam. It was great when the conference was an extra day longer.</p>
<p>I enjoyed the poster session and everyone did a fantastic job with presenting a topic that I don't normally engage in; however, it would be nice to have these sessions run as concurrent sessions similar to the Humanities. I guess this will happen as the number increases for Mellons in the field of science.</p>
<p>I would create a space for: 1) tools-building: writing abstracts/presentations/constructing syllabi/lesson plans/pedagogy, 2) activist work in academia: adjunct union work, budget cuts protesting, protecting fired profs and slashed programs, 3) more mutual space for scientists to present on research, 4) more general Mellon Mays network input/engagement on fashioning the conference and its goals, 5) discussing RETENTION of grad students of color in what can sometimes be a very alienating work/study experience.</p>

Scheduling – it's difficult to remain "on" from 8am into the afternoon. I'd prefer a longer conference with more breaks.
I felt that there was too much time between the BBQ and the Mellon Jam. Perhaps move them closer together and have some time during the day to rest or explore the campus?
Hard to say where to improve, since I found almost all to be excellent! Instead, an idea and suggestions: I would have liked to have had a more focused opportunity to meet and talk with Mellons who work specifically within my discipline (sociology), to network and talk about OUR experiences/research. A breakout sessions, or perhaps even a lunch with tables designated to specific disciplines would have been great.
The graduate student presentation should be better organized. Some presenters appeared unprepared for giving a talk.
The talks could span over 3 days rather than a crash program in one hectic session.
I would make the talks shorter about 12 minutes per person, and increase discussion time.
Wish there was more of a balance of opinions in the plenary sessions.
I understand that the schedule needs to be super packed but maybe adding a mid-afternoon break on the second day would allow people to breathe a little bit.
Can we extend the conference to 4 days?
I can't find fault in the logistics of the conference. The way that some topics were presented made it difficult for me to engage with them. I think it is taken for granted that the jargon used in the social sciences is like a foreign language to a layman.
There isn't much I would change! I wish the conference could just be a bit longer so we don't have such a long day on Thursday. Perhaps extending the Friday?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More time for the poster session, specifically to ensure more Q&A. - Workshop about teaching – time management, evaluation, teaching portfolio - Re: the pre-conference memo, fellows might need to be told explicitly to pack soap and shampoo. I know a few people assumed they wouldn't need to. - Karaoke Competition and/or Just Dance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Greater diversity of presentation styles (poster sessions, panels, talks, small Q&As or seminar style). - Programming about TA'ing and applying for national fellowships outside Mellon/SSRC. - More opportunities to meet MMUF scholars in my field – perhaps smaller mixers or ice-breaker sessions organized by field/discipline
I think I remember one conference where we were assigned to groups with a discussion leader/topic for lunch, I hesitate to add one more thing to a packed and exciting schedule, but that format seemed to work well for folks who have a more difficult time speaking up/out in other sessions. But I liked everything.
The poster session and timing. Poster session was too rigidly structured. I didn't like having to separate into three sessions. I almost felt infantilized that way. The schedule timing felt rushed. We had too many events planned back to back. Had we had another day to spread all of the events, we would have had more energy and the conference would have been more successful.

Additional Comments (general)

More workshops on grad student/post doc life
It would have been extremely useful to have an itinerary beforehand, even an uncompleted one.
I enjoyed the opportunity to network and meet with Mellon fellows from across the nation. I think lots of students, especially those in the UNCF/Mellon network, don't realize how expansive and diverse the Mellon network is as a whole.
Thank you for all your hard work organizing the conference. This might be the best academic experience I've had since I've been in graduate school. I wish I could come to the summer conference every year.
GREAT JOB!!
Big thanks to Kendra and Adam who did a great job organizing the conference!
If there isn't a space for "Mellon Intramurals," I vote that we shorten the BBQ a tad and extend the Mellon Jam =)
THANK YOU FOR THIS WONDERFUL EXPERIENCE, OPPORTUNITY, NETWORK OF PEOPLE!!!
The administrators and coordinators did a wonderful job! Thank you all so much!
Really had a good time. Thank you SSRC staff.
On the whole it was a well-organized conference with a high level of intellectual stimulation in a really beautiful location.
This is a wonderful program. I look forward to maintaining the connections and friendships I've made.
I really appreciate that we had bathrooms in our rooms. It is always difficult to find gender neutral bathrooms so I liked that we were at least staying in a dorm where that was not an issue. Thanks so much for all of the hard work you put into organizing this.
I'd like to see different styles of presentation other than reading papers aloud. Having done a poster and being forced to find ways to make work accessible to non-mathematicians, I'd like to see the same done with work in the social sciences and humanities.
I didn't like the plenary panel at all. I felt that the presents (with the exception of Dr. Thompson) talked all about the topic in tangible ways. Less so about the Mellon Mays creative potential. I understand it is challenging to talk concretely about what to do, but we need to challenge ourselves more as academics to create alternatives.