Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows

Students and faculty members at Eastern Mennonite University had read Ta-Nehisi Coates’ book *Between the World and Me* as their common reading. In Davis’s keynote address, she lauded Coates’ artful exploration of racism that brought much needed public attention to the experience of black people in America. She went on, however, to complicate students’ understanding of the text by analyzing it through her lens of restorative justice.

After her talk, a student remarked, “I appreciated the focus of Davis’s talk. I thought her analysis of Coates added to the conversation: Will we try to identify new ways to identify systemic racism? Will we find new ways to engage across ideological boundaries on campus? These are the types of questions that we need to address. If Fania Davis’s visit can be a catalyst for these efforts, then we will benefit long term from it.”

Kirsten Beachy, director of EMU’s core curriculum and coordinator for the visit, found Davis’s contributions to be “stellar.” In particular, Beachy appreciated how Davis’s activities brought the community together; both the mayor and president of a historically black neighborhood association attended the keynote. A student who grew up in Afghanistan shared that he had been studying the U.S. civil rights movement for a few years but after hearing Davis talk, history “now has a new sense of reality for him.”

During the week, Davis also met with small groups of graduate students, participated in talk-back circles on special topics, played in a drum circle, and met with faculty members in the campus coffee shop. She wrapped up her week on campus by participating in an informal closing interview with Katrina Poplett, an undergraduate student leader on the campus-wide Academic and Creative Excellence (ACE) festival.

Davis is a long-time social justice activist, restorative justice scholar, and civil rights attorney. She co-founded Restorative Justice for Oakland Youth. Coming of age in the civil rights era, her career path was influenced by the loss of two childhood friends in the 1963 Sunday School bombings in Birmingham, Alabama.

During the week-long visit, Davis served as keynote speaker for the festival. Kirsten Beachy, director of EMU’s core curriculum and coordinator for the visit, found Davis’s contributions to be “stellar.” In particular, Beachy appreciated how Davis’s activities brought the community together; both the mayor and president of a historically black neighborhood association attended the keynote. A student who grew up in Afghanistan shared that he had been studying the U.S. civil rights movement for a few years but after hearing Davis talk, history “now has a new sense of reality for him.”

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Eastern Mennonite University (EMU) in Harrisonburg, VA, is strongly committed to the integration of social justice, service to others, and peacemaking into the curriculum. Through the CIC Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows program, the University secured Fellow Fania E. Davis, named by the *Los Angeles Times* as a “New Civil Rights Leader of the 21st Century,” to participate in the inaugural campus-wide Academic and Creative Excellence (ACE) festival.

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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

At a time when there is increased focus on preparing students for practical jobs in the “real” world and when humanities and social science faculty members are stretched thinner than ever, CIC’s Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows (WWVF) program serves a real need. Not only does it provide meaningful learning opportunities where a gap may exist but it also exposes students to outstanding individuals in professional fields and the chance to discuss and contemplate the sometimes irregular paths Fellows took before achieving eminence in their chosen vocations.

The roster of Fellows includes novelists, poets, artists, military and business leaders, diplomats, journalists, human rights advocates, and others who have fashioned a successful career. Several of the Fellows enjoy leading writing workshops; some easily articulate how to take a raw idea and produce a major documentary film; others have careers that demonstrate how a career in the military can lead to related or even far-flung fields.

Examples abound. Robert Shetterly, a history major at Harvard, taught himself the art of portraiture and then blended that talent with his concern for historical honesty, to draw over 100 portraits of Americans Who Tell the Truth and convey these Americans’ biographies in an arresting manner. Robert Gusentine had a 28-year Navy career that included service on special forces, the Chief of Naval Operations Strategic Studies Group, and supporting cyber-resilience capabilities on the Joint Staff. He serves on the board of a nonprofit organization devoted to providing sustainable access to clean water, an interest he developed during his service, and is a dedicated painter.

Faculty members are keenly aware where gaps exist in the curriculum and can assist administrative decision-makers to identify Fellows who would best fill these intellectual lacunae. They also are attentive to planned student affairs programming around a particular theme and can help identify which Fellows would be well suited to bolster learning opportunities in that field. I, too, am always happy to help identify which of several Fellows has the expertise and professional focus to complement a theme.

All 135 WWVF Fellows are accomplished professionals who are eager to share their career routes and the crux of their professions, and to help students explore career options. Fellows delight in time with students and faculty members and, as post-residency assessments show, campuses are no less delighted to have hosted outstanding professionals, especially for long enough—a full week—to glean their valuable insights and even practical lessons about shaping a career.

I hope this brief newsletter will prompt campuses to host a Fellow during the 2018–2019 academic year—and beyond. Please do not hesitate to reach out with any questions you may have. My CIC colleagues and I also welcome nominations of distinguished professionals to join the roster of Fellows. We look not only for serious accomplishments, but for passion that will inspire. Please consider the distinguished alumni and dynamic professionals in your community who you believe would serve the program well and share their information with me. And, as always, I look forward to learning about your experiences hosting a Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellow.

All good wishes,

Roger W. Bowen
Director, Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellows program

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festival planning committee. The interview was part of the University’s weekly chapel meeting, and questions were interspersed between choir performances. Davis charged Poplett and the campus to continue to be the “hope for the future.”

Instead of the one-day visit typical of the college lecture circuit, the week-long residencies of the WWVF program, as the EMU example illustrates, provide time for participants to develop trust, explore complex issues, and establish ongoing relationships.

Davis is just one of 135 Fellows, many of whom bring expertise to their visits and are able to speak in a variety of campus settings. Rodney Bent has extensive international relations experience, including as senior adviser to the Iraqi Ministries of Finance and Planning, and most recently as director of the United Nations secretary-general’s office. Carroll Bogert is president of the Marshall Project, a nonprofit newsroom covering criminal justice issues, who also served as Moscow correspondent for Newsweek. Jay Labov is a senior advisor for the National Research Council and the National Academy of Sciences and has an interest in improving how evolution is taught in public schools. Michael Markovits is a leadership consultant who previously served as vice president of business and technical leadership and global organizational capacity at IBM. Wendy Weiser is director of the Democracy Program at the Brennan Center for Justice, a non-partisan think tank and public interest law center, where she founded and directed the program’s Voting Rights and Elections Project, directing litigation, research, and advocacy efforts to improve political participation and prevent voter disenfranchisement.

The program is operated by CIC as a cost-conscious way to bring meaningful programming to campus communities. Visit www.cic.edu/VisitingFellows for more information on the Fellows or program.
Meet the New Fellows

Full biographical information for all Fellows is available on the WWVF website at www.cic.edu/VisitingFellows.

Nevin M. Katz, MD, is an experienced thoracic and cardiac surgeon. He currently serves as adjunct associate professor of cardiac surgery at Johns Hopkins University, clinical professor of surgery at George Washington University Medical Center, and founder, president, and executive director of the Foundation for the Advancement of Cardiothoracic Surgical Care. Katz is an experienced student advisor; he assisted students in biomedical engineering in a project that resulted in the production of an alert device that is now in the marketplace. As a Fellow on campus, Katz can discuss careers in medical fields, medical school, critical care management, and the development of innovative technologies.

Daniella Gibbs Léger served as special assistant to President Obama and director of message events in his administration. She now serves as senior vice president for communications and strategy at the Center for American Progress, a progressive public policy research and advocacy organization. Previously, Léger was the organization’s senior vice president for American values and new communities, where her work focused on the intersection of politics, race, demographic change, religion, and values. Earlier, Léger served as deputy director of communications for the Democratic National Committee. She is a contributing columnist for Essence.com. As a Fellow, Léger can discuss domestic politics, race in America, and the development of public policy.

Michael Rhodin retired from IBM in 2017 after 33 years, including seven as a corporate officer. He served as head of the IBM Watson business units and led their Smarter Planet initiatives, including Smarter Cities, Smarter Commerce, and Smarter Analytics. Rhodin is a member of the board of TomTom, a leader in high-definition mapping technologies, consumer navigation, and sports devices. He also serves on the board of HZO, a leader in electronics waterproofing systems, and on the International Advisory Board for Santander, a leading financial services organization. As a Fellow on campus, Rhodin can discuss artificial intelligence, the information age and the changing nature of work and the economy, and careers in technology.

Fellows News and Notes

Best-selling author Linda Greenlaw published a new book in June 2018; Bimini Twist is the fourth volume in her Jane Bunker mystery series. Much of her work explores maritime themes and her experiences as a swordfishing boat captain; famously featured in the novel and film adaption of The Perfect Storm.

Sayu Bhojwani, the founder and president of New American Leaders, a national organization focused on preparing immigrant leaders to run for public office, has a book to be published in October. People Like Us: The New Wave of Candidates Knocking at Democracy’s Door tells the story of political newcomers, many of them recent immigrants, striving to create more diverse legislative bodies.

Helen Whitney served as writer, director, and producer for Into the Night: Portraits of Life and Death, a two-hour PBS feature documentary. The film takes on the challenging and complex topic of mortality. Eric Stange, also a documentarian, directed Edgar Allen Poe: Buried Alive, a PBS American Master series film.

The Marine Environmental Research Institute, founded by Susan Shaw, has been renamed the Shaw Institute, in her honor.

Jeffrey Ball’s essay “Why Carbon Pricing Isn’t Working” appeared in the July/August issue of Foreign Affairs. The article argues that carbon pricing, despite popular support as an effective policy solution, is not actually curbing carbon emissions. Another piece, “Lone Star Rising” about the oil boom in West Texas, appeared in the May issue of Fortune.

After serving as a Fellow at Wabash College in February, Eleanor Clift published “#MeToo Is Doing Well—at an All-Male College in Indiana” for Daily Beast. In June, Amber Tamblyn published Any Man, her first novel.

Request a Fellow today... here’s how:

Applications are now being accepted for campuses to host Fellows in the 2018–2019 academic year. Early applications for visits during the 2019–2020 academic year also are welcome. Interested campuses should:

- Review the online roster of more than 135 Fellows; and
- Complete the simple online Campus Request Form.

Institutions pay a set fee to CIC, and CIC covers the Fellow’s honorarium, primary travel, and other incidental expenses. The Campus Request Form and other program details, including fees, are available at www.cic.edu/VisitingFellows.
The Council of Independent Colleges (CIC) is an association of 767 nonprofit independent colleges and universities, state-based councils of independent colleges, and other higher education affiliates, that works to support college and university leadership, advance institutional excellence, and enhance public understanding of independent higher education’s contributions to society. CIC is the major national organization that focuses on services to leaders of independent colleges and universities and state-based councils. CIC offers conferences, seminars, publications, and other programs and services that help institutions improve educational quality, administrative and financial performance, student outcomes, and institutional visibility. It conducts the largest annual conferences of college and university presidents and of chief academic officers. Founded in 1956, CIC is headquartered at One Dupont Circle in Washington, DC.