The 2009 summer workshop was a tremendous success. Challenged early on with a rigorous, interdisciplinary curriculum in cultural, social and educational theory, the interns bravely wrestled with further developing their critical thinking skills and theoretical vocabulary as they discussed and facilitated seminars on issues ranging from the constructions of race, class, gender and sexuality to theories of postmodernism, deconstruction, immigration and transnationalism. Given recent national debates, the faculty also organized seminars on issues of pedagogy and the academy where we discussed both the philosophical and practical aspects of teaching so that students can begin developing their own teaching philosophy as well as exploring the different issues they must grapple with as future educators.

Our interns were welcomed and supported by our formidable faculty consisting of two fulltime professors, a fourth-year and a third-year Ph.D. candidate, and a higher education administrator. Four of the returning faculty members have now served as IRT faculty for a combined 30 years! It was truly amazing to see the transformation in these young scholars in a matter of four weeks.

Following a brief summer reprieve, the IRT staff resumed our work of counseling and supporting both our summer workshop participants and associates draft, revise and finalize their graduate school application materials. We mailed a total of 1030 graduate school applications in 8 weeks!

This cohort of 99 students will be enrolling in graduate school in the fall. Approximately 44% of them applied to schools of education to earn master's degrees in teacher education (elementary and secondary school), Urban Education, Counseling, and Special Education. Others are seeking Ph.D.s in K-12 Administration, Educational Leadership, and Social Foundations. The remaining 56% of this year's cohort are applying for master's degrees and Ph.D.s in various fields in the Humanities and Social Sciences, notably in English Literature, History, Political Science, Creative Writing, American Studies, Religion, Psychology, and Anthropology.

Spring marks the beginning of our recruitment cycle. We look forward to working with all of you in identifying, recruiting and interviewing prospective IRT applicants. As always, we greatly rely on our alumni to help us reach out to talented young people as well as write glowing letters of encourage your mentees to apply on our website to the next IRT cohort.

“I'm loving every minute of the Stanford STEP program. It's a really intense program but I'm learning a lot and my students make it all worth it. I'm teaching 12th grade Government and Economics. I just wanted to thank you for all of the support and help you gave me throughout the graduate application process!”

Irene Castillon, Masters in Teacher Education candidate, Stanford University
Do encourage your mentees to apply on our website to the next IRT cohort.

It has also been an exciting year with two notable alumni achievements. Special congratulations to Dr. Stephanie Flores-Koulish and Dr. Christopher Brummer who last fall received tenure. Dr. Flores-Koulish is an Associate Professor of Education at Loyola University in Maryland while Dr. Brummer, who received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in German Language, is now Associate Professor at Georgetown School of Law. This brings the total number of tenured IRT alumni to six including Dr. Lisa Woolfork (University of Virginia), Dr. Paula Groves Price (Washington State University), Dr. Miles Irving (Georgia State University), and Dr. Patrice Rankine (Purdue University). There are 122 more IRT Ph.D.s that are also blazing trails in their respective fields and truly transforming the academy!

In these tough economic times that we are all facing, the mission of the IRT remains critical. This is why we are seeking to endow the IRT with a fundraising goal of $3 million in a newly announced campaign. In the face of growing financial barriers to higher education coupled with the increasing need for talented and dedicated teachers trained to solve the issues of tomorrow, we remain committed to bringing bright students into American classrooms, students who represent their diverse cultures and are passionate about mentoring other students in the most meaningful ways. Therefore, we wish to appeal to you to help us strengthen the IRT with a financial gift in the coming year.

Lastly, I want to thank everyone for your warm responses to the e-newsletter. I continue to welcome your feedback and suggestions on features stories and articles as well as any volunteers as guest columnists.

As I reread this letter, I am awestruck by the hard work and dedication of the IRT staff, advisory board and summer faculty while also marveling at the accomplishments of our alumni. So to the entire IRT family, thank you for your continued support of the vital work that we do!

Wishing you a happy, healthy New Year.

Asabe Poloma
Dr. Paula Groves Price is an Associate Professor and Huie-Rogers Faculty Fellow for Diversity Education in the Department of Teaching and Learning at Washington State University where she teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in diversity, multicultural education, and social and cultural foundations of education. After participating in the IRT program in 1995, she went on to pursue her Ph.D. in Social Foundations of Education at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Who is going to claim our children?: A call to action for teachers of color

We have been hearing the news for years. The demographics of American society have been significantly shifting. In many cities and states across the nation, students of color have become the majority population in public schools. While student diversity has become the norm, and not the exception, this diversity trend, however, has not translated into teacher and administrator preparation programs. At the same time that our schools become increasingly more diverse in terms of race, ethnicity, culture, language, socioeconomic status, sexual orientations, and abilities, the teaching force continues to be dominated by a very specific demographic—white, middle class, heterosexual females.

As a teacher educator, the significance of these trends is a part of my daily reality. In the nine years that I have been a faculty member at Washington State University, (where for many years I was the only tenure-track African-American female professor on campus) I can count on my hands the number of students of color that have stepped foot in my courses, graduated with a teaching certificate, and are currently teaching in public schools. While I am certain that we have graduated more than ten students of color, the point here is to say that on average, in the semesters that I teach in our preparation programs, I can count on having perhaps one or two students of color in my course per semester.

This stark reality is significant for a number of reasons. First, a more diverse teaching force provides more opportunities for K-12 students to connect with their teachers, to hear multiple voices and points of view, and see professionals of color that are trying to make a positive influence in the community. Far too often, students of color are disengaged from school because they aren’t making meaningful connections with their teachers. More teachers of color in our public schools can significantly impact the engagement of students in schools, as they find increased cultural understanding and connections with their teachers. Any real solutions to the achievement gap, which I prefer to term the equity gap, must include a more comprehensive understanding of equity pedagogies. Transformative education for social justice requires teachers that are knowledgeable and skilled in content areas, pedagogy, and culturally responsive pedagogy. Second, a historical look at exemplary African American teachers indicates that for these educators, teaching was not merely a job or career choice, but a political investment in racial uplift. African American teachers and administrators born in the pre-civil rights era chose teaching as a matter of social responsibility—they “claimed” the children in their classes as their own, as the future of the race was dependent on their work. Research on teachers born in the post-civil rights era shows that there is a weakened sense of teaching connected to personal and civic responsibility. Experiencing less overt racism than their grandmothers and grandfathers, teachers of color today do not as readily conceptualize their careers as teachers as being connected to racial uplift. While the particular research that I am referring to here is focused on African American education, it is highly plausible that the same holds true for many communities of color. I argue that now, more than ever, it is important for teachers of color to reclaim the children of their communities, and understand that teaching is a moral and political act. I firmly believe that students excel in classrooms where teachers claim them as their own—where teachers connect their own personal livelihood and the success of society in general with the success of their students. We have the power to make positive social change happen, but we cannot be complacent.

Continued on page 10
Keith Green, Ph.D. is an Assistant Professor of English at Rutgers University, Camden. IRT Intern 1997. Doctoral studies at University of Michigan, English Department.

What was the most valuable assistance you received from IRT? Definitely how to write a Statement of Purpose. I had no idea what one looked like. Now that I have sat on many graduate admission committees, I realize that this is a very tricky part of the application. Many undergraduate students applying to Ph.D. programs do not know how to write the SOP. I now use the skills I learned from Dr. Clement White (IRT summer faculty) and the IRT staff to advise numerous undergraduates applying to graduate programs. I have an excellent acceptance rate!

What were the deciding factors in your choice of consortium graduate program? Interdisciplinarity was key to my decision. In Native Studies, it is very difficult to find faculty to work with that understands the field and all its traditions and complexity. I needed a flexible program with faculty that would allow me to do a Native studies project AND give me useful feedback...eventually I chose Modern Thought and Literature at Stanford. It is an excellent program where you take half your course work in literature and the other half in a variety of disciplines that are determined by a focus. I had a wonderful cohort, resources, and an excellent financial package.

Any words of wisdom to current IRT students? My words of wisdom are more for students to remember why they wanted to become an academic. The academy can be harsh and always critical. Make sure wherever you go that there is something there to fulfill you and as you progress, you stay grounded and remember the joys of life! It sounds simple, but after your first few years in graduate school you will see what I mean!

Mishuana Goeman, Ph.D. is currently a tenure track Assistant Professor of Women’s Studies at UCLA. IRT Intern 1994. Doctoral Studies at Stanford University’s Modern Thought and Literature program.

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What was the most valuable assistance you received from IRT? First, I found that it provided me with a wealth of opportunities for graduate school applications that I otherwise could not have afforded on my own, and next, the intensive mentoring through the process of applying for graduate school was also an immense help. It was personalized, rigorous in the best sense of the word, and amazingly encouraging. I felt as though I was a basketball player getting recruited at times having come under the IRT cover!

What were the deciding factors in your choice of consortium graduate program? I needed to attend a program that was responsive to my area of interest and at the time, was still emerging in education (media literacy education). Therefore, I needed a school that afforded me the flexibility to gain content knowledge through electives with other departments on campus. In addition, I was looking for a program that would allow me to avoid taking out any more student loans.

Briefly discuss your career path since completing your graduate studies. In addition, I was looking for a program that would allow me to avoid taking out any more student loans. I earned tenure after 7 years, multiple publications, and 2 babies.

Any words of wisdom to current IRT students? Don’t sleep on what it means to be surrounded by a group of scholars that look like you. That is to say, IRT is so much of what a graduate school program feels and acts like, with that one notable exception. As a person of color, you are more likely to be one of a handful of people who look like you when you matriculate to a graduate program.
Full Circle: Spotlight on IRT Alumni Transforming Education

Kelli Seaton, Ph.D., is Principal of Mastery Charter School-Pickett Campus in Philadelphia, PA. IRT Intern 1997. She earned her Master’s degree in School Counseling and Ph.D. in Secondary Administration and Supervision from Purdue University.

Thinking of your participation in the IRT program, what was the most valuable assistance you received? I thought my statement was first rate when I submitted it, but quickly learned the importance of asking myself very thoughtful questions to discover what I intended to do with the doctorate and Master’s degree.

Briefly discuss your career path since graduating from graduate school. After completing my doctorate, I applied to Teach for America and served as a high school English teacher in Philadelphia. After 3 years, I joined Mastery Charter Schools as the principal of a turnaround school, where I have served ever since.

What was the most valuable assistance you received from IRT? It is difficult to prioritize...during the summer, the one-on-one graduate school counseling sessions and the introduction to theoretical texts. My goals were quite scattered when I arrived at IRT and Kelly Wise and the faculty listened intently and helped narrow and focus my interests recommending two concrete fields to which I should apply. Knowing very little about graduate programs or disciplinary distinctions, it was incredibly valuable to have this type of guidance. In terms of the curriculum, I gained a process for approaching dense material. I brought the collegiality that I encountered at IRT to graduate school, which helped me develop relationships with other graduate students based on cooperation and mutual assistance rather than competition and distrust.

What were the deciding factors in your choice of consortium graduate program? The deciding factor for me was visiting the campus and seeing the department and the resources allocated to the department. Purdue was a good fit for me for the Master’s in counseling but I wish the doctoral program had a greater focus on urban education and education reform.

On the Job Market?
If you’re a recent graduate (or not so recent!) on the academic job market, please join the open group “IRT Alumni” on Facebook and click on “Job Postings” on the discussion board for information on current openings posted and continuously updated by IRT staff and alumni. Open positions include Instructors in English at Phillips Academy-Andover, postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Program Coordinator in Office of Academic Affairs CUNY, and Education Ambassador at GOOD, Inc.

Join us online for more information on open positions, funding opportunities and upcoming conferences.
**Thinking of your participation in the IRT program, what was the most valuable assistance you received?**

The most valuable assistance that I received from the IRT was the guidance on drafting and refining my Statement of Purpose for my graduate school applications.

**What were the deciding factors in your choice of consortium graduate program?**

The most prominent factor in determining my choice of consortium graduate program was funding and degree offerings. To gain admission to graduate school shows institutional interest, but for a graduate school to seek you out with funding demonstrates a true commitment. What this action says is that we want you to pursue your degree at our institution and we will provide the support you need to have a successful experience.

**Briefly discuss your career path since completing your graduate studies.**

Upon graduating from Purdue University with a M.S. in Education with a specialization in Higher Education Administration, I accepted a position at Cornell University. For three years, I was Assistant Director of Diversity Programs in Engineering. My primary responsibilities entailed supporting the recruitment, retention, and graduation of American Indian, African American/Black, and Hispanic/Latino/a students pursuing degrees in the field of Engineering. This opportunity allowed me to operationalize my graduate degree and acquire invaluable student services experience outside of the textbook. Coupled with the support and mentorship of my supervisors, my time at Cornell proved to be a great launching pad for my current position.

For the past year and a half, I have been serving as the Director of the American Indian Program at New Mexico State University. As I was born and raised in New Mexico and grew up on the Taos Pueblo Reservation, the opportunity to return to my home state was a blessing as it was always my plan to do so. My understanding of the challenges American Indians face in the pursuit of a higher education allows me to better support American Indian students as I can empathize with their experience. The need for American Indian leadership and mentorship compelled me to invest my education and work experience in supporting fellow American Indians in their pursuit of a higher education.

**Your teaching philosophy, why the IRT mission is so vital or any words of wisdom for current IRT students.**

Education is an effective form of empowerment. The IRT is an avenue for underrepresented minorities to empower themselves through the pursuit of graduate degrees. My words of wisdom for fellow American Indian IRT students are do not be afraid to pursue a graduate school opportunity in a state other than your home state. Often an offer will come from a graduate school that may be located in the far reaches of the country or in a state that may not have a strong presence of American Indians. Just because you attend such an institution does not mean you have to stay in the environment once you are finished with your degree. Such a venture can be viewed as a short-term experience. It is important to broaden your horizons, so that when you return to your home state, you bring with you an added value that will make you more competitive and knowledgeable to step into leadership roles where you can positively influence and advance your community for years to come.
In December 2008, the IRT received a generous grant from the Abbot Academy Association to design and deliver a longitudinal survey to our alumni in order to measure your collective impact on the field of education as well as assess the long term consummate effect of the IRT mission. We also anticipate that this instrument will initiate an eventual goal of improving the ways we can promote the IRT to external constituencies.

Working with the Baker Group, an educational consulting firm based in Holliston, MA, we have designed an online survey that will be disseminated to all IRT alumni in the coming weeks.

For the purpose of this initial survey, we have chosen to focus our fact-finding to the following major areas: contact and other biographical information, experience working with the IRT, educational attainment, and finally, career achievements. Please note all personal information you provide will be kept confidential.

Your response will provide valuable information that will help us quantitatively measure the outcomes of the program and pinpoint areas that we may enhance.

In advance, we thank you for your support and feedback, and we look forward to sharing the findings when it becomes available.

Alumni Survey Coming Soon!

Alumni News

Congratulations to...

David A. Colón in his second year as an Assistant Professor of English at Texas Christian University in Fort Worth, TX. David received his Ph.D. in English from Stanford University in 2004 and was a 2005-2007 Chancellor’s Postdoctoral Fellow in English at the University of California, Berkeley.

Angie Cruz whose prolific novel Let It Rain Coffee was listed as one of the “10 Hottest Reads for Summer 2009” by Latina Magazine.

Jessica Edwards for completing her Master’s degree in English Literature at Washington State University. Jessica is continuing in the Ph.D. program!

Alyssa Garcia, Ph.D. on her recent tenure-track position at Pennsylvania State University’s Women Studies department.

Mishuana Goeman, Ph.D. on her recent tenure-track position at UCLA’s Women’s Studies department.

Elizabeth Hoover for being one of nine graduate students honored with a K. Patricia Cross Future Leaders Awards by the Association of American Colleges and Universities for her commitment to academic and civic responsibility and promise as future leader in higher education.

Yadira Perez who defended her dissertation at the University of Virginia on November 4th!

Gina Francesca Rucavado for successfully completing her doctoral studies in English Literature at Brown University. Dr. Rucavado looks forward to her graduation ceremony in May 2010!

Alejandro Velasco on receiving his Ph.D. in History from Duke University. Alejandro is currently on tenure track at New York University, where he is Assistant Professor of Latin American Studies at the Gallatin School of Individualized Study.

Daniel Wasserman for passing his comprehensive exams and is now ABD! Danny is currently a Fulbright Fellow in Spain conducting research on his dissertation.

IRT Milestones!

Dr. Christopher Brummer recently received tenure as Assistant Professor of Law at Georgetown School of Law.

Dr. Stephanie Flores-Koulish recently received tenure as Associate Professor in the School of Education at Loyola University Maryland.
In Praise of Our Work

“I want to thank each and every one of you for devoting so much of your time and energy, and helping me reach my goal. But most of all, I thank you all for believing that our education system can change and be stronger.” Hana Lee, 2009 Ph.D. applicant in Asian American Studies

“His participation in the IRT during July 2009...provided (him) with the opportunity to collapse his academic interest and his passion for a teaching career. It really tipped the balance and made clear that a research/teaching career won out over law.” From a professor/mentor of a summer workshop participant.

“I've been meaning to write to let you know that I passed my comprehensive exams this spring, and I also found out that I was chosen for a Fulbright Fellowship to Spain, where I’ll be from September ‘09 to June ‘10 for my dissertation research. Kelly Wise convinced me to go to the University of Virginia. What good advice that was!” Danny Wasserman, Ph.D. candidate, University of Virginia

“I’ve just completed my first year teaching at Boston International High School. I’m grateful to IRT for helping to get me here.” Ojala A. Mwalimu, M.Ed.

“On my first day as a Ph.D. student here at UCLA, my mind and heart is full of gratitude for all the people who have helped me arrive at this point. This past year and a half was a very intense one...juggling my responsibilities in a demanding, full-time job, with GRE prep, graduate school applications, and clarifying...exactly what I wanted my future to look like. It was oftentimes overwhelming...the support of IRT was crucial in helping me stay grounded with my eyes focused on my goals. I will be forever grateful to you and the Institute in helping me grow as a person and providing me with the resources to pursue my education. This is just the beginning and I have a long road ahead of me but I am so blessed to have started off on solid ground.” Misa Dayson, Ph.D. candidate in Women’s Studies, UCLA

“Thank you...for your help and guidance early in my academic career. It is no exaggeration to say that without your support, as well as that of the entire IRT staff, I would likely not have pursued a doctorate, much less finished. I realize it’s a small expression of gratitude, but it was nevertheless something I’d long hoped to do – to return to the IRT with my completed dissertation in hand.” Alejandro Velasco, Ph.D., Professor at NYU

“As I prepare to embark upon the journey toward the Ph.D. in English, I am compelled to express my most sincere appreciation to the IRT for all that it has done for me. More specifically, thanks for helping me to secure a place in the University of Pennsylvania’s graduate program in English; I am indebted eternally! There are so many deserving students who aspire to enter academia, but they do not realize this dream for a multiplicity of reasons that are too often inherited and beyond their control. IRT, a cornerstone program, eradicates many of these barriers and provides invaluable, sincere guidance which participants may otherwise not have access to. While words cannot express fully my appreciation, I hope that they reassure you of the immense contributions that the IRT is making to transform the academy, which will in turn transform the discourse and, inevitably, the ways in which academics will conceptualize and offer effective solutions to future conundrums.” Julius Fleming, Jr. Ph.D. candidate in English, University of Pennsylvania

“Thank you all for all of your work and guidance throughout the admissions cycle. I feel very confident (and excited), and I couldn’t have done it without your help. You are all doing an amazing service and I’m extremely grateful.” Carly Kaloustian, 2009 Ph.D. applicant in Comparative Literature

“Please enjoy these cookies as a humble sign of gratitude for the tremendous effort you all have devoted to helping students like me make it to graduate school. You are so very appreciated. I will certainly be in touch as I hear back from programs. A thousand times, THANK YOU!” Arisela Hernandez, 2009 Masters degree applicant in Secondary English Education

“It is great to hear of the growth and great things going on with IRT...I was an intern in 1995. The IRT family continues to grow and the support never dies!” Associate Professor Paula Groves Price, Washington State University
And finally, in this time of economic crisis and budget cuts, I fear that if more students of color do not enter into teacher and administrator preparation programs, many of the programs that are designed to recruit and retain students of color in higher education for careers in teaching will be significantly reduced or cease to exist. We must encourage our friends, our colleagues, our nephews and nieces, that education is an avenue where we can make a significant impact in our communities. If we don’t do it, who will?

Honorary Recruiters Council

As many of you know, the mission of the IRT is no less important today than it was in 1991, when I as an Intern, sat in Pearson Hall being acclimated to a field that has become my life’s work. IRT expanded my horizons regarding various schools, academic programs, geographical areas in which to study, and fellowship options. In addition, dedicated staff members assisted me in maneuversing the often daunting graduate school application process.

The creation of the IRT Honorary Recruiters Council will ensure the organization’s continued efficacy in identifying exceptional undergraduates from across the country who, with the help of IRT, will become the next generation of educational leaders.

Specifically, the Council will assist the IRT staff in the following ways:

1) Actively identify and refer at least five prospective applicants to IRT
2) Promote IRT more extensively on your respective campuses by sharing information regarding our programs with students and other colleagues
3) Help broaden IRT’s geographic reach and exposure at institutions that have been previously underrepresented in our applicant pool

We are confident that the involvement of these key individuals will ensure a more diverse and outstanding applicant pool and considerably increase IRT’s outreach in academic settings. In advance, we thank each of you for your earnest support.

If you would like to become an Honorary Recruiter, please contact Leislie Godo-Solo, Associate Director at lgodosolo@andover.edu or 978-749-4113.

Gino says...

Things are off to an exciting start this year for us at IRT and we wish you a happy new year!