

2007-2008 MELLON-FOUNDATION  
 RESEARCH GRANT

2007-2008 STUDENT RESEARCH  
 ASSISTANT

**The Center for Undergraduate Research (CUR):** What are your research interests?

**Renata Alford (RA):** My research interests include, but are not limited to, multicultural counseling, motivation, encouragement, empowerment, self-esteem and body image, and teaching.

**CUR:** What research have you done in the past?

**RA:** I have done research on self esteem and body image as well as the influence of Hip-Hop on young African-American Consumers.

**CUR:** How did you find out about working on this research proposal?

**RA:** I asked around about different research opportunities and The Office of Graduate Placement mentioned the Center for Undergraduate Research.

**CUR:** What is your contribution to this research project?

**RA:** First, I created an annotated bibliography and a review of relevant literature by searching through various databases for sources. I then entered data to create a database of all contractors in New Orleans and created a questionnaire in English and Spanish for all participants.

**CUR:** How does this proposal fit into your social and academic schedule?

**RA:** It was challenging at times because I was applying to graduate school taking classes and working on another research project. However, I accepted the challenge and I had a great learning experience. I had extra time in between classes so that helped me fit research into my schedule.

**CUR:** What has been your favorite part about working on this project?

**RA:** My favorite part of this research experience is finding out about something currently happening in New Orleans that I hadn't studied before. It was interesting to see some of the differences between sociological research, and research in psychology. I also enjoyed getting to use my knowledge of Spanish for something other than class work.



RENATA ALFORD

CLASSIFICATION	SENIOR
AGE	22
MAJOR & MINOR	BIOLOGY PSYCHOLOGY & SPANISH (CHEMISTRY)
HOMETOWN	KANKAKEE, IL

**CUR:** Will this proposal assist you in your future academic and/or career plans?

**RA:** This proposal and working on this project have definitely prepared me for graduate level work. With the experience I have gained in creating a database, writing an IRB proposal, and some of the other tips Dr. Hite gave me, I know that it helped prepare me for my work in graduate school in pursuit of a Ph.D.

**CUR:** Do you have any recommendations for future student research assistants who will work in a similar field?

**RA:** Students should pace themselves with their work, and set reasonable deadlines for turning in work. They should allow structured flexibility throughout the work process by planning with the professor what they are going to do and completing those said goals. Students should be open-minded and have fun with the opportunity to explore different ways of thinking. It was exciting to learn more about sociology and actually use the knowledge I had gained in my Intro to Sociology class that I had the previous semester.