

## .Jessica S. Samuel

### Education

Wesleyan University, Middletown, Connecticut May 2013  
Bachelor of Arts Candidate Majors: Anthropology & African American Studies

### Fellowships

Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow March 2011

### Scholarships/Grants

*Quest Bridge Scholar* May 2009

College-matched with Wesleyan University for four-year full scholarship.

*Delta Sigma Theta Alumnae Scholarship Recipient* May 2009

Awarded academic scholarships

*Virgin Islands Community Foundation Summer Grant* May 2007

Awarded \$2,500 to attend Stanford University through the Junior Statesmen Association Civic Education and Leadership program.

### Experience

WSA Office, Wesleyan University

*Office Assistant* September 2011- December 2011

Office of Admissions, Wesleyan University

*Front Desk Office Assistant* September 2010- May 2011

Office of Residential Life, Wesleyan University

*House Manager* January 2011- May 2011

Office of Student Activities & Leadership Development, Wesleyan University

*Orientation Leader* August 2010- September 2010

US Virgin Islands Legislature

*Community Outreach Youth Liaison* June 2010- August 2010

- Worked in the Office of Senator-at-Large Craig Barshinger as Youth Liaison for the Island of St. John.

- Identified issues concerning youth and general public-government relationship.

- Proposed and executed initiatives for the promotion of youth civic participation.

- Reviewed and made suggestions to proposed legislation.

- Conducted internal reviews of existing Virgin Islands Codes.

Giffit Hill School, Development Office, St. John, USVI

*Marketing Assistant* June 2010- August 2010

- Planned and organized fundraisers for high school alma mater.

- Created measures to attract donors and programs to reconnect families with the financial and academic rewards of the institution.

St. John Tradewinds Newspaper, St. John, USVI

*Columnist* June 2010-August 2010

### Professional Affiliations

Caribbean Studies Association

*Student Member* January 2012-Present

Community Service/Student Activities Virgin Islands Youth Advocacy Coalition

*Member* June 2010-Present

National Students Bill of Rights Committee

*Member* June 2010-Present

- Working in solidarity to draft a National Student Bill of Rights for All Youth (NSBR) that will become a unifying document for youth nation-wide and a driving force for youth movement building.

West Indian Students Association (WISA), Wesleyan University

*Co-Chair* January 2010-Present

Kalalu West Indian Dance Troupe, Wesleyan University

*Co-Chair* September 2011- Present

## Wesleyan University Summer Experience Grant Application

1. Provide a brief overview of the organization for which you will intern or program/project you are developing.

The Virgin Islands Youth Advocacy Coalition is a broad-based coalition of organizations and individuals committed to increasing civic and political involvement and overall voter participation of Virgin Islanders between the ages of 14-30. It is a youth-led and dedicated to educating young voters who have not been full participants in the political processes, namely the electoral and legislative systems. VIYAC aims, through civic education, voter literacy, and leadership development training to educate youth and young adults on how to identify issues, influence public policy and how to become more effective participants in the effective governance of the U.S. Virgin Islands.

2. Briefly provide details of the internship or experience, including responsibilities and tasks.

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This summer experience is a newly formed, long-term project organized through the collaboration of the Virgin Islands Youth Advocacy Coalition and another local civic organization, **St. Croix Unified for Community, Culture, Environment and Economic Development (SUCCEED)**. This collaboration, largely youth-led, provides that interns of VIYAC are engaged in archival/recent data collection for the purposes of compiling a central dome of information on methods for political governance through sustainable means of economic development, an approach SUCCEED refers to as “smart growth”. As I conduct data retrieval fieldwork, I am also expected to work alongside other peers in teaching them methods of research (as a training anthropologist) while simultaneously refining those skills for myself. Much of the work involves hours of research in legislative libraries, local archives& museums, public and university libraries, as well as online resources. Completing this project also stipulates that I attend conferences and symposiums addressing issues of leadership and empowerment amongst third world Caribbean societies and engage with academics, legislators and various other officials while they present work discussing the ways in which respective Caribbean societies and cultures cope with the impact of a common history, and struggle for personal and national self-actualization.

3. How have you communicated with the employer and determined mutual interest?

I have been involved with the organization for approximately two years and have participated in many of its initiatives to promote civic education and participation among young Virgin Islanders. As a student in search of an opportunity to work closely on the issues VIYAC raises, the employer was able to offer me an opportunity to commit to hands-on work through this newly formulated project between VIYAC and SUCCEED.

4. How will this experience enhance or broaden your career goals?

As a Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellow, I have made a plain commitment to research and to adding to the body of developing knowledge that pertains to my academic interests as a Black Studies and Anthropology double major. More specifically, my academic experience is heavily invested in understanding how post-colonial peoples, predominantly of the black diaspora, construct national identity and assert political autonomy within or outside colonized/neo-colonized places. In addition to the development of the theoretical body of which my work is a part, I have also made a commitment to the practical enhancement of the peoples and subjects that are in direct relation to this topic of inquiry. Working with organizations that address issues of political autonomy and enfranchisement while creating mindful solutions to such issues is included in my list of objectives as an academic.

An American territory, the US Virgin Islands occupies the precarious role of semi-dependency to the U.S. mainland. While it possesses a structure for local government similar to that of states, the political, economic and social issues it confronts as a member of the Caribbean is unlike that of the American north and, therefore, in need of special methods for reconciliation and resolutions. Hence, the US Virgin Islands offers itself as an ideal site of study as national identity formation is a complicated process of figuring boundaries of

Americanness and Caribbeanness.

This summer experience for which I am planning is especially tailored to my academic and research interests as a public/political anthropologist in the making for it will add to my work by offering a model of how political efficacy and empowerment can be particularly realized for Virgin Islanders. Additionally, as someone planning on attending graduate school and obtaining a PhD and J.D., working with VIYAC will provide me with an opportunity to simultaneously conduct research on this topic and actively work on projects that are aimed at increasing civic engagement while developing approaches for actualizing political empowerment among a group of striving, third-world individuals.