

2016 MANDELBAUM FELLOWSHIP – Master's Level

CITATION FOR CHÉRINE STEVULA

The logo for OCUFA, consisting of the letters 'OCUFA' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. The letters are slightly shadowed, giving them a three-dimensional appearance.

Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

CITATION FOR CHÉRINE STEVULA

Read by Gyllie Phillips, OCUFA Vice-President

Chérine Stevula is this year's Henry Mandelbaum Graduate Fellowship Award winner for Masters' level of study. She is the second MA student to receive the Fellowship. She is currently enrolled at the University of Guelph in Latin American and Caribbean Studies.

Chérine is exploring cultural identity and ethnic minorities in Canada's multicultural context. In particular, she's interested in how high school drop-out rates for Hispanic Canadian youths are affected by the teaching approaches used in the classroom. She is exploring how Hispanic students form their identity within the current Canadian education system and to what extent those students see themselves as active participants in the system. Her work focuses on schools in Montreal and Toronto as they both have a high level of Hispanic and Spanish speaking individuals and, as she noted in her application, students in these categories are twice as likely to drop out of high school as their colleagues from other backgrounds. The Hispanic Canadian diaspora is the fastest growing ethnic minority in Canada today, making her research especially timely. It will challenge practices that are excluding some students in the classroom, with an eye to making Canadian education more inclusive and effective.

Chérine has already proven her academic potential by publishing in the American Association of Teachers of Spanish and Portuguese and presented her work at a conference in Cuba. She has a strong desire to teach others, and through this passion, she has been able to tie together her commitment to the Hispanic Community in Canada and her dedication to creating a more equitable educational experience for Hispanic youth than they currently experience. Her impressive record of leadership also extends to other areas of service to her community. A small sample of the ways Chérine gives back include:

- Chairing a committee for the francophone association in London, ON;
- Editing a newsletter for her department;
- Completing a Study Abroad program in Cuba; and
- Volunteering as a mentor for immigrant and employment services at the local YMCA.

She's motivated to make the world a better place and to teach her children about the importance of giving back to the community.

Chérine's referees indicated that she is an engaged and focused student who has proven herself to be intellectually curious and exceptionally engaged in the classroom. One referee wrote,

I am particularly struck by her passion about teaching and dedication to pursuing research that contributes to a better learning experience for minority students, in



Ontario Confederation of University Faculty Associations
Union des Associations des Professeurs des Universités de l'Ontario

particular Hispanic Canadians. Chérine has both the capacity and the drive to link teaching and practice in ways that will benefit students.

She has a propensity for language acquisition that is useful to developing more inclusive curriculum and teaching methodologies. Chérine consistently works to learn and master material beyond what's expected of her, a trait that has helped her win a variety of academic awards including the Outstanding Research Essay Prize, the Spanish Bok Prize, and the Laura Lopez Kok Memorial Scholarship at the University of Waterloo. For these reasons, and many more, OCUFA is pleased to add the Henry Mandelbaum Graduate Fellowship to her list of accomplishments.