II. BACKGROUND STATEMENT

I know the pain brought on by being picked on and harassed for being different. Through fifth grade I had a deformed jaw and buck teeth. Nine years of orthodontic work gave me a normal appearance, but the painful experience growing up as an ‘Other’ has forever changed the way I view life, making me more attuned to and wanting to make a positive difference in the lives of those treated as the Other as well as interested in research on marginalized groups.

During childhood, my treatment as the Other helped me to, at least in some small way, understand and identify with my Polish grandparents’ stories of forced, grueling manual labor for German officers while eating only moldy bread and worm infested oatmeal as well as being treated unkindly in the United States for being non-English and later, broken-English speaking immigrants. In high school my experience as Other allowed me to relate to the considerable Hispanic population that, like my grandparents, did not speak English as their first language and did not fit in.

As a high school senior, I conducted a survey which revealed high drop-out rates for ESL-Hispanic students which exceeded the national average for minority students. Upon further investigation I found that no ESL-Hispanic students participated in school organizations which might help with their social integration. I approached my high school’s administrators and suggested starting a program which would allow Hispanic students to be recognized for their language skills by having them serve as tutors for the AP Spanish class. My idea was turned down as 'impractical,' something my fellow high school students were not yet ready to accept.

I was disappointed at not being able to make a difference, but sought to learn more about what makes people treat those they view as unlike themselves unkindly and dove into books recommended by my high school mentor, Dr. William Fernekes, which were written by social critics, political activists, revolutionaries, and social and political philosophers including Erich Fromm, Hannah Arendt, Karl Marx, Pitirim Sorokin, Eric Hoffer, and Franz Neumann. The readings fueled
my desire to undertake a major research project which would examine the characteristics and origins of totalitarianism and the appeal of Nazism to the average German. Completing a 43-page paper was a major undertaking and a considerable challenge, but the research experience solidified my belief that much of what is wrong in the world takes place simply because the average person does nothing when witnessing injustice.

I graduated from high school with honors, recognized by a major New Jersey newspaper, the Trenton Times, as an ‘Outstanding Student in the Humanities’ and having completed the state’s highest honor for high school students, the NJ Governor School, an all expense paid political science honors program hosted at Monmouth University. At Elon I am one of only two students in the class of 2010 to be named both a Leadership Fellow and a Periclean Scholar.

At Elon I have continued my research on and service to those viewed as Other. In the summer of 2007 I researched, with Dr. Heidi Frontani, my Lumen Prize nominator and faculty mentor for the 2010 Periclean Scholars, the role the mass media plays in fostering or hindering the social integration of Liberian refugees in Ghana and submitted, with one other 2010 Periclean author and Dr. Frontani, a full-length manuscript to the peer-reviewed journal Africa Media Review. We are awaiting a response from the journal’s editors, but I have had the research accepted to be presented at SURF and at NCUR in Maryland in April. I also recently co-authored a book review with Dr. Frontani on nationalism in Ghana, the country of study for the 2010 Pericleans; the review is forthcoming in the peer-reviewed journal African Studies Quarterly. Additionally, my article on storm water management in North Carolina is currently under review by Elon’s Visions magazine for possible publication.

In terms of service related to those viewed as the Other, I volunteer at Crossroads Rape Crisis Center in Burlington, participated in the Bay Saint Louis service trip to post-Katrina Mississippi in the fall of 2006, and co-led a spring break service trip to Bay St. Louis and New Orleans the next
semester. I was proud to be recognized as only the second freshman at Elon to ever lead a trip through the Kernodle Center. The recognition gave me the confidence to help found and coordinate the Kernodle Center’s first ever Green Team and lead a project called “Adopt-a-Stream” which works with Elon Township and a branch of the Piedmont Triad Councils of Government, to fulfill an unfunded mandate to protect waterways from non-point source pollution and raise environmental awareness locally of the Clean Water Act and humans impact on watersheds. I served as an Orientation Leader for transfer students, and participate in the Isabella Cannon Leadership Program and my sorority, AZD. This semester I am a co-host for a 3K charity race to benefit people with HIV/AIDS in Ghana, writing a proposal to create ‘Safe zones’ on campus (safe quarters to talk about gay, lesbian, bi-sexual, and transsexual issues), and serving on the Committee on Expanding the Role of the Multicultural Center to help implement “New Century @ Elon Phase II” goals. I was recently invited to join Phi Kappa Phi.

My research and service activities at Elon, like those undertaken in high school, will serve as a strong foundation for my proposed Lumen project experiences which include continued research, publication, and presentations on Liberians refugees as well as environmental issues during and after studying abroad in Ghana in fall 2008, and campus leadership activities to enhance understanding of the Other. These research projects and leadership activities should help me become a competitive candidate for national-level scholarships as well as entry to competitive Master’s and PhD programs in Public Policy. I believe the public sector has been lacking creativity in problem solving due to a lack of diversity and willingness to incorporate marginalized individuals into political decision making. This apparent ignorance of and indifference to those viewed as the Other is something that I am passionate about changing.
III. PROPOSAL NARRATIVE

FOCUS: Understanding the “Other” in the United States and Ghana

Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel (1770-1831), a German philosopher, was among the first to introduce the concept of the “Other,” an entity in opposition to one’s identity, one’s self. Feminists and anti-imperialists later adopted the Hegelian notion of the Other. Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986), a French writer and philosopher, used Hegel’s ideas to understand the hierarchy of male-dominated culture’s treatment of women. Palestinian literary theorist Edward Said (1935-2003) applied the feminist notion of the Other to colonized people in his influential book *Orientalism*, arguing that Western society treats people it wishes to subordinate and control as the Other. The concept of the Other is more than just stigmas, stereotypes, or exclusion from society. It is about how individuals, social groups, and cultures construct their identities in relation to others. However, most studies on the concept of the Other typically focus on social distance between the privileged and the Other due to actual or perceived difference in gender or sexual orientation (works of Judith Butler, Sigmund Freud), race (Frantz Fanon’s writings), prison status or sanity (Michel Foucault’s *Discipline and Punish, Madness and Civilization*), religion (writings of Bernard Lewis), and ethnicity or nationality (Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* on Algeria).

In recent decades, political instability in West Africa has led to the displacement and migration of thousands of people—including Liberian refugees to Ghana. Their experience as the Other has had little academic study. Over the next two years, I would like to broaden and deepen my understanding of the literature on the Other through field and library-based research, as well as public presentations in two areas of study 1) Liberian “Otherness” in relation to Ghanaian “sameness” in part to help fill gaps in the literature on this refugee population and 2) Othing on university campuses, especially at Elon and the University of Ghana-Legon, where I will study in fall 2008. Relatively few major studies address the social dynamics of Otherness in African countries or
apply the concept to organizations on college campuses. Although several recent *Pendulum* articles have focused on Othering, including “Being Black Should Mean so much More” and “Telling the Story of Katrina” (both February 27th) and “History of Civil Rights must be Preserved” (February 20th) these articles generally fail to identify the basic dangers of Othering.

The Holocaust, Rwandan genocide, and other atrocities demonstrate that it is of great importance to peaceful human relations to increase compassionate understanding of those viewed as the Other. As statesman and political theorist Edmund Burke (1727-1797) is credited with having said “All that is necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men [people] do nothing”. Further academic study of the Other needs to be undertaken and disseminated on our campus; students are graduating into a globalized world and need this knowledge. As a double major in Public Administration and Political Science who cares passionately about equality and justice, I hope to understand the many scales at which Othering operates so that, ideally, I will be less likely to inadvertently support public policy which contributes to social distance and Othering and be able to knowledgeably advocate for the integration of unheard voices into the political process.

**TIME LINE AND PROPOSED EXPERIENCES**

1. *Deepen my understanding of social science research methods and research on the Other through readings, on-line classes, and meeting with my mentor this semester and summer.*

   This semester I will craft a reading list for the summer with the aim of enhancing my knowledge of Othering in both the U.S. and Ghana. Over the summer I will write interview questions in preparation for field research in the fall and submit my research proposals to Elon’s Institutional Review Board. Additionally, I will take two Elon summer classes that relate to African Studies and academic study of the Other: ENG 255 OL (African-American Musical and Literary Traditions) and GST 331 (Psychology of Exceptionality: Literature and Film). The first class focuses on how art, literature and music can be powerful forms of expression against Othering; the second examines how those Othered due to their disabilities, are represented in literature and film.
2. Follow up on my research on Liberian Refugees in Ghana while studying abroad in Ghana in fall 2008, laying the foundation for a future journal article. Document any signs of Othering on campus.

Studying abroad in Ghana in the fall of 2008 will be an amazing experience as an African/African-American Studies minor and a 2010 Periclean Scholar. I will see firsthand the country I studied in GST 272 Periclean Scholars and researched over the summer of 2007. My summer research focused on how the mass media hinders the social integration of Liberian refugees as the Other in Ghana. I am presenting this research at SURF and NCUR and have submitted a manuscript based on the research to a peer-reviewed journal, Africa Media Review (as second author to my mentor, Dr. Frontani). To complete research which would enable me to be the sole author of a published work, I plan on visiting the largest Liberian refugee camp in Ghana and interviewing Liberians who remain in Ghana to learn what else, besides negative portrayals in the mass media, they believe most hinders their social integration into Ghanaian society. Benita Briggs Nyarko, a Ghanaian Elon alumnus, lives near the University at which I will be studying and will introduce me to the Liberian community. I also plan to interview University of Ghana students about whether they believe Othering occurs on campus.

3. Complete putting together a photographic essay for publication in Visions Magazine or other suitable publication over winter term 2009. Also during WT ’09, write a short reflection essay on study abroad for potential publication in Transitions Abroad or other suitable publication.

This Christmas I received a high quality camera with the intention of taking photographs during my semester abroad in Ghana. I hope to use photographs with captions and introductory text to tell the story of environmental conditions in refugee camps in Ghana—particularly at Buduburam, the largest camp that existed in Ghana, which is only around one hour’s drive from Accra. According to a March 8, 2008 article by Semantics King Jr. on protests at Buduburam in the online publication, New Liberian, many Liberians still reside within Buduburam despite its official closure in June 2007 due to a lack of funds for repatriation. I intend to submit my photographic essay on Buduburam to
Visions, Elon’s environmental magazine by the end of winter term. Another project for winter 2009 would include writing a short reflection essay on my fall 2008 study abroad experience that could be published in Transitions Abroad. My essay would likely focus on how studying abroad was a transformative experience due to visiting the Kpoeta health clinic that I am helping to build as a Periclean and the refugee camp I studied in summer 2007 as well as studying the Other on campus.

4. Write a single-authored journal article based on my Ghana research during spring and summer 2009 and present my Liberian refugees in Ghana research at SURF, NCUR, and SURE 2009.

I will use my two credit hour spring Periclean Scholars course as a venue for beginning to write up my research on Liberians in Ghana and complete applications for NCUR, SURF, and SURE. I would use the summer to write, edit, and submit my article to a relevant journal. Selecting the best journal will take place when I have a clearer direction from information I gained in Ghana.

5. In fall 2009 I would present my Liberian refugee research at the African Studies Association annual conference and seek to establish a Common Reading for Resident Assistants, which would be supported by workshops and an essay contest and through identifying a promising student to co-author an article with me in the by then established Elon African-African/American Studies electronic journal.

Re-segregation of education in the United States has recently gained national attention as another form of Othering (Jonathan Kozol’s 2005 The Shame of the Nation; Beverly Tatum’s 2007 Can We Talk about Race?). After the Brown versus Board of Education Supreme Court ruling which determined racial segregation in schools was illegal, education became less segregated, but in recent years, due in part to the prevalence of private schooling for the rich, “redlining” and “white flight” schools have once again become segregated. This distressing social development is the subject of Elon’s Common Reading for 2008-09 (Kozol’s The Shame of the Nation). A great common reading deserves ‘follow up’ activities that can improve retention of information within the student body. Dr. Beverly Tatum’s (1997) Why are all the Black Kids Sitting together in the Cafeteria? focuses on the treatment of the Other and deserves study in classrooms and residence halls. I propose creating a
common reading for Resident Advisors (RAs), workshops on the book, and an essay contest in which students would write about their experiences Othering and as the Other (in relation to Dr. Tatum’s book). The winner of the essay contest could then work with me on writing an article for Elon’s African/African-American Studies e-journal or other appropriate publication on this topic. Niki Turley, Director of Residence Life, is excited about working with me for two years and has offered to support my project with $500 for Dr. Tatum’s visit and another $200 to buy books for RAs.

6. Winter 2010—begin work on my electronic portfolio

7. Spring 2010, support a talk at Elon by Dr. Beverly Tatum, President of Spellman College, give a presentation on my own research on the Other as relates to US campus life at an international conference, and complete my electronic portfolio.

In support of the common reading initiative for RAs, I would work with Cultural Programs/ Liberal Arts Forum (beginning in the fall of 2009) to bring Dr. Tatum to speak at Elon before the 2008-08 class graduates. Dr. Tatum’s (2007) book *Can We Talk about Race? And Other Conversations in an Era of School Re-segregation* would be an excellent subject for her talk and would strengthen students understanding of the Other as presented in the campus and RA common readings. Hosting a College Coffee table to promote her campus visit and awareness of the Lumen Prize would be one of many forms of advertising across campus. Additionally, I would use some funds to support my travel to present at the International Conference on Diversity in Organizations, Communities and Nations or other relevant conference using previously created research or writing another short essay on the culmination of my experiences as a Lumen scholar focusing on diversity, Otherness, social integration, and challenges remaining to be addressed in the future.

**PROPOSED PRODUCTS**

- A single authored peer-reviewed journal article based on my field research in Ghana.
- Spring/summer ‘09 NCUR, SURF, and SURE presentations on my Ghana research.
- A magazine or newsletter article (*Transitions Abroad* or other) in which I reflect upon how study abroad deepened my classroom-based (GST 272) learning on Ghana.
A photo essay published in Elon’s Vision’s Magazine on environmental issues in Ghana.

A co-authored article on Othering on campuses in the AAASE e-journal or a teaching and learning journal based on the Common Reading program for RAs and Dr. Tatum’s visit.

A national level conference presentation on my field research on Liberians in Ghana

International level conference presentation on my research on the Other on campuses.

An electronic portfolio featuring my writings, photography, and reflections.

FEASIBILITY STATEMENT

I should have no trouble getting the book and article resources needed to conduct my research. I also have a strong support system. Dr. Frontani’s regional expertise is Africa and much of her research focuses on the representations of and treatment of the Other, from impoverished fishermen in Tanzania, to women in Kenya, and refugees in Ghana. She has the interest and expertise to serve as my Lumen and Periclean Scholar mentor and I will have additional support from Prof. Bob Anderson my Leadership Fellows advisor who also has Ghana expertise. I have the interest and drive to complete the projects described and experience with SURF, NCUR, writing longer research papers, and submitting papers for publication. The courses required for my majors/minors will allow me to gain further expertise on the Other, especially with regard to public policy as I take more upper-level classes in my Political Science and Public Administration double major. Abroad, I have already been offered help from former Visiting Fulbright Scholar at Elon, Dr. Francis Amedahe, to drive me and other Elon students studying abroad in fall 2008 to the Kpoeta health clinic site; I have an Elon alumnus as a contact for my Liberia research in Ghana and Naa Adamafio, a Ghanaian and current Elon student who will be home by fall who also offered her support for my research. The last, and most important reason it is feasible, is because I will do everything in my power to complete what I set out to undertake. I am a natural and determined leader. I motivate myself to strive for higher than the norm—not because I want to show off or prove to others my worth—but rather to reflect Gandhi’s notion of being the change I wish to see in the world.
**BUDGET** (totals $15,000)

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<th>Amount</th>
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<tr>
<td>$5,000</td>
<td>To reduce the cost of tuition</td>
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<td>$1,375</td>
<td>Electronic and standard books: $400 for a ‘Kindle’ (electronic reading device) which will allow me to purchase, store, and readily transport to Ghana a library of relevant readings for my field research; $65 for a converter and adaptor so that I can charge the unit in Ghana; $450 for e-titles relevant to my research (average price is $10 per e-book); $460 for certain academic books currently unavailable through Kindle which I would purchase in hard copy for summer and fall 2008 research on the Other</td>
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<td>$4,032</td>
<td>Fall 2008 field research in Ghana including: $350 for specialized books purchased in Ghana; $900 for in-country travel, overnights and meals while off-campus; $170 Elon health insurance, $22 International Student (ISIC) card; $400 vaccines and medications; $80 visa; $1,700 roundtrip airfare; $200 telephoto lens for camera; $60 camera battery charger; $150 small gifts for interviewees</td>
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<td>$400</td>
<td>Photocopying and other expenses related to hosting workshops on the Other</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,000</td>
<td>$300 Essay contest prize; $650 books for RAs and College Coffee table</td>
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<td>$1,200</td>
<td>Airfare, room, board, and conference fees to present at a national level conference</td>
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<tr>
<td>$1,600</td>
<td>Airfare, room, board, conference fees for an international conference presentation</td>
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<td>$443</td>
<td>To cover anticipated increases in airfare, conference fees, etc.</td>
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A Lumen Prize would mean a great deal to me. It will deepen my longstanding interest in and understanding of the Other, build on my skills developed as a Leadership Fellow and Periclean Scholar and allow me to share my research findings through publications, presentations, and workshops. It would help make me a more competitive applicant for grants and graduate school and strengthen my family’s often fluctuating financial situation. It will help bring me peace to know that I am doing everything in my power to make a difference in a world for those who suffer. My resume, writing samples (43-page paper on authoritarianism, *Africa Media Review* co-authored manuscript, *African Studies Quarterly* co-authored book review, *Visions* magazine submission), bibliography for this essay, and additional letters of support are available upon request. Thank you for considering my application and taking the time to review it. I look forward to your response.