

# First Amanda V. Houston Traveling Fellow Readies for Trip to Egypt

**By Sandra Howe**  
**Staff Writer**

Juan Concepcion '96 will journey to Egypt next month, where he will participate in a tour of various ancient historical sites and attend a conference on Egyptian civilization as the first Amanda V. Houston Traveling Fellow.

The fellowship, which honors the late director of the Black Studies Program, provides support for AHANA students to explore other cultures. It will enable students to see different parts of the world and grow intellectually and personally, according to Sandra Sandiford, program assistant in the Black Studies Department and chairperson of the Houston Traveling Fellowship Award Committee.

The award was created at Houston's retirement in 1993. She wanted it to be a traveling fellowship because she believed exposure to other customs and traditions would allow students to gain new insights into American society, Sandiford said.

A native of the Dominican Republic who traces his ancestry to Africa's west coast, Concepcion said a better understanding of the origins of the Egyptian civilization will enable him to explore distant roots. Since some scholars have found links between African and Egyptian cultures, he said, "I'm looking forward to seeing the places where my ancestors laid the foundations for human civilization."

Concepcion will travel with over 100 graduate students, doctors, lawyers and other academics on the tour, led by two scholars from Temple University. The trip will feature visits to the Nile, the Pyramids at Giza and ancient tombs and temples, and include daily lectures on Egyptian society, culminating in an all-day conference attended by Egyptian and American scholars.

Concepcion will share his experiences with other students and provide a written report when he returns to campus in the fall to pursue a master's degree in secondary education.

Sandiford said Houston, who died shortly after Concepcion was nominated for the fellowship last year, had a long-standing affection and respect for Concepcion. "Certain students stand out and he was one of them," she said. "When they met, Mrs. Houston was impressed and pleased that her evaluation of him was so accurate."

While an undergraduate, Concepcion was the minister of information for Family In Struggle Together and was involved in the Organization of Latin American Affairs and the Jenks Leadership Program. He also was a resident assistant and a tutor at the Academic Development Center.

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