

## Dynamic Duo Builds Graduate Community

Doctoral students Jose Pinto and Stephen Crowley are working together to create an on-campus community for grad students in science and engineering. “Our goal is to stimulate give and take between engineering and the sciences by encouraging camaraderie and an exchange of ideas,” says Steve, who is in chemical engineering. “The program has two components,” explains Jose, a physicist. “We plan professional development workshops and seminars, and we organize social events.” The latter include a very successful “open mic” night where science and engineering students shared their research in an informal atmosphere. “It is a great experience for students to stand up before a group and talk about what they are doing,” says Jose. “In addition to developing public speaking skills, they find that people from other disciplines come up with tips and ideas which help their individual projects.”

Jose and Steve, who have become friends as well as colleagues, come from very different worlds.

Jose grew up in Lima, Peru in a neighborhood which he says “would make the worst of New York look like Disneyland.” The Discovery Channel introduced him to science. At 16, he took his first physics course, and he says, “I quickly fell in love.” He earned his B.S. and M.S. in physics at City, while working in a supermarket, doing construction, and teaching math at a Talmudic school in Brooklyn. Jose’s interests are in high energy physics, cosmology and gravitation. As an adjunct lecturer in

the physics department, Jose gives lectures at the CCNY planetarium and is a lab instructor for Physics I and II. Having overcome poverty to become a physicist, he is committed to opening the world of science to disadvantaged youngsters and volunteers in Harlem, teaching science and chess.

Steve graduated from College of the Holy Cross in Worcester, Massachusetts, with a B.A. in chemistry and math. As an undergraduate research assistant, he pursued his interest in analytical chemistry, developing a method for rapid determination of coating performance in capillary electrophoretic separations. That prepared him for his next step: a research associate position in analytical development at Millennium: The Takeda Oncology Company in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he received many in-house awards for exemplary performance. Steve is now applying that experience to doctoral studies in chemical engineering, “rewiring my brain and making the transition from thinking like a chemist to thinking like an engineer.” Steve is interested in perfecting drug delivery in fluids and pills. He plans to return to the pharmaceutical industry, because, he says, “I want my research to lead to a better quality of life for people suffering from serious illnesses.”

The program is growing, and Jose and Steve encourage interested students and alumni to contact them at [scientific.open.mic@gmail.com](mailto:scientific.open.mic@gmail.com).



Steven Crowley



Jose Pinto