April 2019

Introduction: McNair Scholars Program

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Recommended Citation
Available at: https://digscholarship.unco.edu/urj/vol6/iss2/1
INTRODUCTION

Ronald Erwin McNair

“Whether or not you reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. You’re eagles! Stretch your wings and fly to the sky.”
- Ronald McNair

Ronald E. McNair, the second African American to fly in space, was born on October 12, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina. While in junior high, McNair was inspired by a teacher who recognized his potential and encouraged him to pursue his dreams. In 1971, he received his bachelor’s degree magna cum laude in physics. Five years later, he earned a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT).

After graduating from MIT, McNair joined the Hughes Research Laboratories in California, where he worked on a variety of projects related to laser technology. In 1978, he was selected by NASA as an astronaut candidate and, after completing a yearlong training and evaluation program, became eligible to join future space shuttle flight crews.

On January 28, 1986, the space shuttle Challenger exploded and crashed into the ocean, tragically ending McNair’s life and the lives of six other astronauts. After his death, Congress approved funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, which supports and promotes the high standards of achievement exemplified by Ronald E. McNair.
McNair Scholars Program at UNC

The University of Northern Colorado McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded TRIO program designed to prepare high-achieving students from first-generation/low-income and/or underrepresented populations for graduate studies. The ultimate goal is to provide students the experience and support necessary to complete doctoral degrees in their chosen disciplines. Components of the program include a one-year research seminar, during which students partner with faculty mentors and complete independent research projects for presentation and publication, and a semester-long senior seminar, designed to assist students in applying to graduate programs. By linking academic excellence and social diversity, the UNC McNair Scholars Program seeks to transform personal and academic goals into a successful future.

2015-2016 Program Staff

Krista Caufman, Director
Karen Krob, Assistant Director
Keith Post, Graduate Assistant
Amber Green, Graduate Assistant

2015-2016 Scholars and Faculty Mentors

Rebecca Artzer, Human Services
   Nancy Karlin, Ph.D., Psychological Sciences & Joyce Weil, Ph.D., Human Services

Kady Barthelemy, Business & Psychology
   Eric Peterson, Ph.D., & Marilyn Welsh, Ph.D., Psychological Sciences

Peter Concepcion, Psychology
   Rena Kirkland, Ph.D., Psychological Sciences

Steven Diaz, Chemistry
   Murielle Watzky, Ph.D., Chemistry & Biochemistry

Deandra Elcock, Sport & Exercise Science
   Dan Shackelford, Ph.D., Rocky Mountain Cancer Rehabilitation Institute

Ileana Flores Delgado, Sport & Exercise Science
   Katie Kage, Ph.D., Nutrition and Dietetics

Everardo Francisco Reyes, Sociology
   Nancy Glen, Ph.D., School of Music & Josh Packard, Ph.D., Sociology

Alberto Gonzalez, Sociology
   Aldo Romero, Ph.D., Hispanic Studies

Jewel Mahoe, Elementary Education
   Philip Frye, Ph.D., Teacher Education
Charissa Samaniego, Business & Psychology  
  *Michael M. Phillips, Ph.D., Psychological Sciences*

Adriana Trujillo, Art and Design & Anthropology  
  *Michael Kimball, Ph.D. & Roger DeWitt, MA, Anthropology*

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*The UNC McNair Scholars Program is funded through a TRIO grant from the U.S. Department of Education PR/Award #P217A120106. For 2015/2016, the UNC McNair Scholars Program received $252,846 in federal funds, PR/Award Number P217A080039.*
Research Project and Competition

During their first year in the McNair program, students concentrate on completing independent research projects under the guidance of a faculty mentor. The project culminates in oral presentation at a national conference and submission for publication with the Undergraduate Research Journal (URI) at UNC. Prior to publication, a blind review panel of non-McNair faculty and staff evaluates each project for excellence in scholarship and written presentation of the research. Additionally, faculty mentors assist students with revisions and ultimately must approve the project for publication.

During this process, eligible students’ projects are also entered into the annual UNC McNair Scholars research competition. Members of the blind review panel independently rank eligible papers as they review them for publication. Writers of the top three papers are awarded scholarships from $400-$1,000. Scholarships may only be applied to undergraduate tuition costs at UNC. Therefore, only continuing students are eligible to compete; students whose graduation coincides with the completion of their projects are not eligible.

Thank you to the following faculty and staff for their generous assistance with the research competition and publication process!

2015-2016 Research Competition Reviewers and Judges

Angela Vaughan
Annie Epperson
Ather Zia
Brianne Markowski
Carld Granrud
Cassendra
Bergstrom
Catherine Heise
Corey Pierce
Francie Murry
Heather Helm
James Kole
Jay Trask
Jennifer Leffler
Jeraldine Kraver
Joseph Chaves
Kathryn Bright
Kim Black
Lacy Cleveland
Laura Stewart
Lauryn Benedict
Loree Crow
Lori Reinsvold
Melanie Moore
Nancy Karlin
Patrick Burns
Paul Klaczynski
Rachel Dineen
Robert Houser
Robyn Ziolkowski
Sandra Harmon
Steven Pulos
Susan Keenan
Todd Allen
Wendy Highby
William Cuthbertson

2015-2016 Research Competition Award Winners

First Place: Deandra Elcock
$1,000 scholarship

Second Place: Jewel Mahoe
$600 scholarship

Third Place (tie): Steven Diaz and Adriana Trujillo
$400 scholarships
The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado

The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado (URJ) is a fully open access academic journal that strives to recognize the scholarly accomplishments of undergraduates at UNC and stimulate future scholarly activity. The URJ is published electronically three times per year: spring, summer, and fall. One issue each year is designated a special publication featuring the works of UNC’s McNair Scholars. This print issue is representative of the original works available electronically. All URJ publications are available at http://journals.sfu.ca/urjnc/index.php/urjnc/index.

Undergraduate Research Journal at University of Northern Colorado
Special McNair Scholars Edition

Editor: Hunter Montoya

Table of Contents

I: Research Competition Award Winners

First Place: The Validity of the Six Minute Walk Test in Determining VO$_{2peak}$ in Cancer Survivors: A Pilot Study
   Deandra Elcock, Faculty Mentor: Dan Shackelford, Ph.D.

Second Place: Undergraduate Elementary Teacher Candidates Perceived Preparedness and Attitudes Toward Inclusion
   Jewel Mahoe, Faculty Mentor: Philip Frye, Ph.D.

Third Place (tie): Kinetic Study of Silver Nanoparticle Formation
   Steven Diaz, Faculty Mentor: Murielle Watzky, Ph.D.

Third Place (tie): Exploring Living Heritage Conservation: An Ethnography of Taos Pueblo, New Mexico
   Adriana Trujillo, Faculty Mentors: Mike Kimball, Ph.D., and Roger DeWitt

II: Continuing Scholars

Group Differences on Hot and Cool Executive Functioning Performance in College Students with and without a History of Child Maltreatment
   Kady Barthelemy, Faculty Mentors: Eric Peterson, Ph.D. & Marilyn Welsh, Ph.D.

Perceived Body Image Reasons for Exercise Among College Students
   Ileana Flores Delgado, Faculty Mentor: Katie Kage, Ph.D.
Music Deserts: How Social Inequality Affects Accessibility to Music Resources Important to Actively Participating in Music
   Everardo Francisco Reyes, Faculty Mentor: Nancy Glen, Ph.D.

Relationships Between Goal-Setting, Motivational Traits, and Job Performance
   Charissa Samaniego, Faculty Mentor: Michael Phillips, Ph.D.

III: Graduating Seniors

Self-Regulation in the Education and Relationship Success of University Students
   Rebecca Artzer, Sofía Softas-Nall, Blake Daniel Karlin, & McKenzie Ruff, Faculty Mentor: Nancy Karlin, Ph.D.

Experiences of LGBTQ Male Students of Color in a Predominantly White Environment
   Alberto Gonzalez, Faculty Mentor: Aldo Romero, Ph.D.