

McNair Scholars Program

NEWSLETTER
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY

MEET THE 2006 WVU MCNAIR SCHOLARS



Alee Robins, Ian Lutz, Nnenna Minimah, Tembele Yangandawe, Lauren Dembeck, Kelly Hale, Heather Gomez, Lenin Leon, and Sewit Araia (from L to R)

The 2006 McNair Summer Research Internship successfully ended on June 29 with the Research Symposium, where McNair Scholars presented their research proposals to an audience filled with faculty mentors, family and friends. After working diligently for six demanding weeks in class and the library along with visiting regional graduate programs, WVU McNair Scholars celebrated their internship completion at the Induction Banquet held at the Historic Hotel Morgan. Our cherished guest speaker this year was Mr. Carl McNair, President and Founder of the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program. Mr. McNair inspired us all with his words and then listened intently to the personal testimonies of McNair Mountaineers regarding their McNair Scholars experiences. Concluding the evening ceremonies, Dr. Cheryl Torsney, Associate Provost of Academic Programs and former McNair instructor, challenged the scholars to seize every opportunity that they may encounter.



Second-year Scholar Ehren Cruz sharing his McNair experience at the banquet



Carl McNair and Program Director, Anita Mayer, listened intently to the Scholars' personal testimonies

2006 Summer Events

Summer excursions commenced on May 25 as the McNair Scholars traveled to the University of Pittsburgh for a campus tour and departmental visits. The day concluded with an afternoon visit to Phipps Conservatory and dinner at Station Square.



Scholars pictured in front of the Pittsburgh skylines



Visit to Chinatown, Washington D.C.



McNair Scholars and staff at WV Senator Jay Rockefeller's Washington D.C. office

On June 7-10, the 2006 McNair Scholars, Assistant Director Dr. Mei, and McNair Alumnus/Summer Graduate Mentor Jonathan Young traveled to Washington D.C. to tour American University (AU), the University of Maryland at College Park (UMD), and Howard University. At UMD, students heard a panel discussion composed of graduate students; and at AU, Chris Williamson, a former WVU McNair Scholar and current graduate student at AU, joined us to answer students' questions about applying to AU. Chris, a former intern at Senator Rockefeller's Washington D.C. office, arranged for a tour of the Senator's office and the Capital Building.

Scholars, Mentors, and Research Titles

Sewit Araia & Dr. Suzanne Bell: *Validation of Headspace GC Method for the Analysis of GHB Analog*

Lauren Dembeck & Dr. David Ray: *An Investigation of Crocodylian Genomics: DNA Transposons and LINES*

Heather Gomez & Dr. Edward Keller: *Prevalence of Morbidity Types Associated with Cause of Death within Ethnic Groups*

Kelly Hale & Dr. Dick Riley: *Financial Planning Services in the Struggle for Equality in Divorce*

Lenin Leon & Dr. Parviz Famouri: *Biomolecular Motors Powering Protein Cargo Polymer Spheres*

Ian Lutz & Charles Yuill: *Preferences of Vegetation Levels among Young Adults*

Nnenna Minimah & Dr. Kevin Larkin: *Relations among Family History of Hypertension and Anxiety in College Students*

Alee Robins & Dr. Amy Fiske: *An Examination of the Role of Social Support and Religiousness as Agents in the Reduction of Suicidal Behavior*

Tembele Yangandawele & Dr. Jorge Flores: *Developmental Sensitivity of the Corpus Luteum to Prostaglandin F2 Alpha (PGF2 α) and Endothelin-1 (ET-1) Endothelin-2 (ET-2), and Endothelin-3 (ET-3): Are ET-2 and ET-3 also Mediators of the Luteolytic Effect of PGF2 α*

The McNair program staff would like to thank all students, summer faculty: Dr. Julie Patrick, Dr. Lisa Weihman, graduate mentors: Franz Freeman, Cyprien Lokko, and Jonathan Young as well as faculty mentors in making the 2006 Summer Research Internship a success. Although many students felt that the six-week research internship was challenging, overall impressions were very positive.



Director's Corner
Anita G. Mayer
Director, McNair Scholars Program



"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 E. McNair

In the agricultural age, postsecondary education was a pipe dream for most Americans. In the industrial age, it was the birthright of only a few. By the space age, it became common for many. Today, it is just common sense for all.

- National Commission on the High School Senior Year

West Virginia University is one of only 178 institutions of higher education offering the McNair Scholars Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. The WVU McNair Scholars Program is entering its eighth year on campus. Having served 90 first-generation and income-eligible students as well as students from underrepresented backgrounds including African Americans, Hispanic Americans, Native Americans, and Native Hawaiians/Pacific Islanders, we are proud of our accomplishments and overall participation in the campus-wide initiative aimed at matriculating more students into graduate programs and earning doctoral degrees. McNair Mountaineers are attending graduate schools throughout the nation thanks to the training they received through the program, which results from the funding provided by the Department of Education. Here are some of the comments McNair alumni shared regarding program preparation for students. *"The services provided are outstanding. It really helped me shape my career. The advantages I have gained will follow me for years."* *"The program was good about stressing and reiterating important aspects of graduate school and research. I really feel confident in my skills and expectations."*

A collective commitment by university administrators, faculty and staff is continually needed to support the program and identify students that may benefit from this prestigious opportunity. This fall will be a busy and also a crucial time for the program because of the upcoming McNair grant competition. Let us work together closely so that WVU will continue to receive funding to help deserving students in this area of Appalachia.

SUNY Buffalo McNair Research Conference July 13-16

The summer excursions concluded with attendance at the 2006 University of Buffalo McNair Research Conference in Buffalo, New York. The Mountaineer crew traveled to Buffalo on July 12 and spent three days touring the UB campus, meeting with faculty, networking with McNair Scholars from across the nation, attending and providing research presentations, riding on the Whirlpool Jet Boat, and touring the Niagara Falls scenic area.



Kristin Williams presenting her research at the SUNY Buffalo McNair Conference



Rachel Hildebrand receiving her certificate after presenting at the Conference

“[The conference] provided students the opportunity to share research findings, propose new ideas, gain knowledge from fellow students and become motivated to continue on the path for a post-graduate degree. After each keynote presentation, I felt proud of my accomplishments and wanted to push myself to keep going in my field,” commented one Scholar after attending the conference.

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Congratulations Becky!



2005 McNair Scholar, Becky Scoville, presented her McNair research entitled *The Effects of Thidiazuron, Auxin, Cytokinin and Nutrient Salt Formulation on the Axillary Shoot Production of Hibiscus rosa-sinensis in Tissue Culture* at the American Society for Horticultural Science (ASHS) Annual Conference held from July 26-31 in New Orleans, LA. Becky's poster presentation won third place among the undergraduate posters. Dr. Todd West, Becky's McNair faculty mentor and Assistant Professor of the College of Agriculture, Forestry and Consumer Sciences was present to share the joy. Becky is a double major in Horticulture and Biology and plans to pursue graduate education in Horticulture after she graduates in May 2007.