

Fall 2010

McNair Messenger- Fall 2010

McNair Staff

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Melissa Anderson Receives Kirschstein Fellowship

NEIU McNair Scholar **Melissa Anderson** received the Ruth L. Kirschstein National Research Service Award. This \$85,000 award is an Individual Predoctoral Fellowship to Promote Diversity in Health-Related Research from the Department of Health and Human Services, National Institutes of Health (NIH), National Cancer Institute.

Melissa, who studies Microbiology, Immunology & Infectious Diseases at the University of Virginia, received the award for her research that characterizes the function of a specific gamma herpes virus protein in the virus life cycle.

Between four and six of these awards are presented each year in honor of Dr. Ruth L. Kirschstein, the first woman director of an NIH institute. In 2002 Congress renamed the National Research Award for Kirschstein.



Melissa Anderson

McNair Scholars in Niagara Falls

McNair staff members and Scholars from cohorts 7, 8 and 9 attended the 2010 University at Buffalo McNair Research Conference July 15th-18th at Niagara Falls, New York. **Angela Howard**, Psychology major, presented her research *Gender Priming and Leadership Emergence in Teams: A "Dead End" in the Labyrinth of Women's Leadership*, mentored by **Dr. Amanda Dykema-Engblade**.

In addition to research and poster presentations, this event offered professional and student workshops on fund-

ing opportunities, reasons to pursue graduate education, and a graduate school fair. This three day conference included keynote speakers McNair Alumnus **Dr. Folarin Erogbogbo** and **Dr. Esther Takeuchi** of the University of Buffalo, and **Dr. Mark Anthony Neal** of Drake University.

Conference attendees enjoyed a boat tour of the falls on the "Maid of the Mist" and a trolley tour of the State Park, both of which allowed the McNair group to enjoy the natural beauty of Niagara Falls.



From Left to right: Kim Sanborn, Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza, Imani Beard, Wanda Dukes, Adelf Alvarado, Resney Gugwor, Julia Gutierrez, Scholar Ana Karen Gaytan, Angela Howard, Brandi Williams, Claudia Cortez, Latrese Monden, Pearl Martinez, Salvador Montes, and McNair Mentor Jade Stanley

Scholarships & Recognitions

Current Scholars **Latrese Monden**, **Salvador Montes** and **Victoria Neiman** received scholarship awards this semester. Latrese received the College of Education Scholarship, Vicky received the Student Leadership and Service Scholarship and Salvador received a HACU Scholarship that gave him the opportunity to attend the HACU Conference last September 18th in San Diego, California.

At the Hispanic Heritage Month Alumni Appreciation Dinner on September 24th, **Julia Gutierrez** received the Leadership and Academic Excellence Award, and **Max Marin** ('04) received the Outstanding Alumni Award.

Lakeesha Harris Named 2011 Lincoln Laureate

Lakeesha Harris received the Lincoln Student Laureate Award at the Thirty-sixth Annual Student Laureate Award Ceremony on November 6 in Springfield, Illinois. **Dr. Laurie Fuller**, Associate Professor of Women's Studies, nominated her and accompanied her to the award ceremony. Lakeesha said, "I don't know where I would be without my mentor and other women who have sustained me to attain my degree." She is the fourth NEIU McNair Scholar to be named Student Laureate. She joins past recipients **Maria Chaves**, **Gerald Chaney** and **Alvin Cardona**.



Lakeesha Harris and Dr. Fuller

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Graduate School Visits

As part of the McNair Summer Research experience, Scholars visited graduate programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Loyola University, Northwestern University and the University of Alabama.

On June 18th at UIC, Recruitment Coordinator **Francisco Piña** and Summer Research Opportunity Coordinator **Allen Bryson** presented information regarding application to UIC programs. NEIU McNair alumnus **Keith Atterberry**, Ph.D. student in Criminal Justice and **Nereida Salas**, Ph.D. student in Political Science, along with other UIC Ph.D. students, provided a panel discussion.

The Scholars visited Loyola University's Graduate School Monday, July 22 where they were greeted by **Marcela Gallegos**, the Graduate School's Events and Outreach Coordinator, Associate Dean **Dr. Patricia Mooney-Melvin**, Assistant Dean **Dr. Jessica Horowitz** and **Ann Bezbatchenko**, Director of Graduate and Professional Enrollment Management. The Scholars also met with faculty from academic departments of their interests and enjoyed lunch and closing remarks with Ms. Gallegos and Associate Dean, Student Diversity and Multicultural Affairs, **Javier Cervantes**. **Peter Kotoski**, Ph.D. student in History, was also present to offer a student perspective.

Victoria Neiman, cohort 8, was among the 150 Psychology students who were invited to visit Northwestern University last June. She met with **Dr. Richard Zinbarg** and **Dr. Susan J. Hespos**.

On September 16th, Victoria and **Resney Gugwor** were accompanied by Academic Skills Specialist **Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza** for a visit to the University of Alabama. That visitation program offered a campus tour and lunch with students from ten other universities, as well as a series of individual meetings with faculty members. In the afternoon, the Scholars attended the presentation *The Benefits of Investing in Graduate Education*, and the seminar *General Testing Strategies*. Lastly, the Scholars took a practice GRE test to conclude this graduate school visit.

Scholar **Salvador Montes** was invited to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) by the CONVERGE program, after winning an academic contest with over 300 applicants (only 27 were invited). The CONVERGE program is designed to increase the presence of under-represented groups in MIT graduate programs. The program included tours of the Boston and Cambridge areas and information on graduate student life.

Salvador had the opportunity to meet the world renowned professor Eran Ben Joseph and Professor James Wescoat.



Victoria Neiman and Resney Gugwor at the Denny Chimes bell tower University of Alabama.

Application Retreat

Cohort 8 Scholars attended the first NEIU McNair Application Retreat organized by Academic Skills Specialist **Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza**. This retreat featured a series of sessions that targeted graduate application steps such as searching for schools, letters of recommendation, and admission essays. The Scholars learned about application requirements by working on their own applications. As one of the Scholars commented on the retreat evaluation, "This retreat made me aware of the amount of hard work that has to be invested in order to be better prepared!"

The retreat was held at the Q Center in St. Charles and will be offered again next summer.

Hispanic Heritage Month Panel

The panel *Anticipating Latinos' Contribution to Knowledge in their Disciplines* was presented by Scholars **Pearl Martinez** (Bilingual Bicultural Education) and **Salvador Montes** (Geography) from cohort 8 as well as **Juan Ibarra** (History) from cohort 7. Academic Skills Specialist **Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza** organized the event which was moderated by Program Director **Kim Sanborn** as part of the Hispanic Heritage Month activities.

This panel discussed Latino students' perspectives of the issues that their academic fields face, the level of Latino scholarship in academia, and how their academic fields have benefited from Latino contributions. Dr. Sanborn said of the event, "The Scholars' insights and observations made this a fascinating discussion about issues important to all of us."

Graduate Programs for Recent Grads

McNair graduates from the past academic year began their graduate studies this fall. The Scholars and their programs are:

Norman Davis

Norman currently attends Roosevelt University in Chicago, Illinois where he is working towards his Master of Arts in Sociology. He was awarded the Diversifying Higher Education Fellowship, which covers tuition and fees plus a monthly stipend.

Jorge Ortiz

Jorge started the Ph.D. in Sociology program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. He received four years of funding through the Sociology Department in the form of assistantships.

Jose Fulgencio

Jose started a Master of Arts program at Oklahoma State University specializing in Political Science. Jose was appointed to a teaching assistantship and receives a McNair Scholarship.

Elias Pera

Elias is currently in the Master of Library and Information Science at Dominican University.

Romanetha Looper

Romanetha was accepted to the Master of Social Justice and Community Development Program at Loyola University.

Delilah McDonald

Delilah started the Master of Arts at Northeastern Illinois University in the Inner City Studies Program.

Lourdes Gomez

Lourdes attends Ohio University in the Master of Arts program in Latin American and Latino Studies.

In addition, **Christine Leone** ('05) began the Ph.D. in Social Work program at the University of Chicago. Christine received the Master of Social Work from UIC in 2008.

Annual Dinner



From left: Claudia Cortez, Brandi Williams, Wanda Dukes, Latrese Monden, Resney Gugwor, Victoria Neiman, Salvador Montes, Pearl Martinez, Sheenita Robinson, Lynda Gibson, Julia Gutierrez and Lakeesha Harris.

On May 6, 2010, Scholars, family, and friends gathered for the 7th Annual McNair Dinner. **Dr. Janet Fredericks**, Dean of the Graduate College and Director of International Programs, welcomed Scholars and guests. **Dr. Kim Sanborn**, Program Director, delivered a report on the program and **Dr. Michael Armato**, Assistant Professor of Sociology, provided Mentor's comments. The NEIU Gospel Choir performed "My Life is in Your Hands." Dr. Sanborn and **Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza**, Academic Skills Specialist, presented pins to new Scholars. Scholars from cohort 7 **Jose Fulgencio**, **Toni Scott**, **Angela Howard**, and **Jorge Ortiz** offered advice to new Scholars.

Dr. Sanborn and McNair staff members **Cornelius Williams** ('09) and **Imani Beard** ('09) presented graduating Scholars with McNair stoles. Scholar **Carl Mackey** ('04) presented his reflections and inspirational thoughts as a graduate student and Ph.D. candidate. Closing remarks were delivered by Ms. Prieto-Mendoza.

Summer Research Projects

Ten Scholars conducted research projects during the McNair Summer 2010 Research Program at NEIU. Scholars worked with faculty mentors to develop an original piece of research and were supported by a \$2800 stipend. Below is a list of the Scholars' research:

Adelf Alvarado

Title: *Method Development and Validation for the Assay of Gatifloxacin in Tequin Injectable Using Reversed-Phase Liquid Chromatography*
Mentor: Dr. John Albazi

Claudia Cortez

Title: *Sociological Factors Influencing Latina Teen Pregnancies*
Mentor: Dr. T.Y. Okosun

Wanda Dukes

Title: *Homeless Youth*
Mentor: Jade Stanley

Lynda Gibson

Title: *Correlates of Poor Family Functioning and Behavior Problems in Children*
Mentor: Dr. A. David Farmer, Jr.

Resney Gugwor

Title: *Social Cognition in Children with Autism: Drawings of Social Understanding*
Mentor: Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley

Julia Gutierrez

Title: *The Impact of Gang Violence in the Lives of Latinas in the Little Village Neighborhood of Chicago*
Mentor: Dr. Erica Meiners

Pearl Martinez

Title: *Factors Affecting Chicago Latinos' Attainment of Higher Education Post-Incarceration*
Mentor: Dr. Gabriel Cortez

Victoria Neiman

Title: *The Impact of Parental Education on Child-Activity Involvement and its Effect on Child Goal Achievement*
Mentor: Dr. Suzanne Gaskins

Sheenita Robinson

Title: *The Influence of Media on African-American Girls' Body Image, Perceptions and Self Esteem*
Mentor: Dr. Lance Williams

Ramon Viera

Title: *The Relationship between Autism Severity and Presence of Social Cognition in Children's Drawings*
Mentor: Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley

In addition, four NEIU Scholars participated in the Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP) at the University of Illinois at Chicago. SROP participants and their research:

Lakeesha Harris

Title: *Out of Faith: LGBTQ African Americans and Their Barriers to Faith-based Community Service*
UIC Mentor: Dr. Cynthia Barnes-Boyd

Latrese Monden

Title: *African-American Infant Mortality: The Relationship between Social Support and Maternal Perceptions of Stress*
UIC Mentor: Dr. Cynthia Barnes-Boyd

Salvador Montes

Title: *The Role of Neighborhoods in Immigrant's Integration: Mexican Immigrants from Los Altos de Jalisco in Chicago's Mexican Enclaves*
UIC Mentor: Dr. Lorena Garcia

Brandi Williams

Title: *Diamond in the Rough: Case Study of an all African-American Male Charter School*
UIC Mentor: Dr. Pamela Quiroz

Spring Research Presentations

Six Scholars presented their research at the University of Illinois Chicago African American & Latino Research Forum April 9, 2010. **Norman Davis** presented *Uncovering Cultural Relevance in African-American Music: Louis Armstrong and Edward (Duke) Ellington*; **Jose Fulgencio** presented *Plan Colombia: The Transformation of a Counter-narcotics Policy*; **Angela Howard** presented *Gender Construct Priming and Its Effect on Leadership Behaviors and Perception in Leaderless Teams: A 'Dead End' to Women's Leadership*; **Marcus Moore** presented *Societal Factors that Contribute to the Success of Black Men*; **Jorge Ortiz** presented *Processes of Social Alienation among Mexican-American Youth*, and; **Romanetha Looper** presented *Impact of Same Sex Instruction on Academic and Personal Success of African-American Men*.

The McNair Program was also well represented at the 18th Annual Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium held April 16th at NEIU. **Delilah McDonald** presented *Preparing Pre-Service Teachers to Teach Reading and Writing to Black Inner-City Children* and **Toni Scott** presented *Retaining Latino Students: Experiences of a First-Year Program*. Norman Davis, Jose Fulgencio, Angela Howard, Marcus Moore, and Jorge Ortiz also presented at the NEIU Symposium.



Marcus Moore at the 18th Annual NEIU Student Symposium

TRIO NEWS

Funding for 200 Upward Bound projects are in jeopardy as the end of the fiscal year 2010 comes to a close. Members of Congress are working hard to pass a temporary spending bill known as the "Continuing Resolution" to keep government running after September 30th. Many in Washington believe that the November elections will endanger future funding for TRIO programs. In the fiscal year 2011 budget, the Obama administration proposed level funding for TRIO programs; however, the funding in that proposal does not extend to 200 Upward Bound projects. Upward Bound, as part of the TRIO programs, prepares college bound students from lower income families to transition successfully to college through scholastic projects and programs. Research shows that more than 90% of upward bound graduates go on to post secondary education and are four times more likely to earn a college degrees than other students with similar backgrounds. It is critical that funding for these projects be made available to ensure the success of students from disadvantaged backgrounds. The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is calling on TRIO supporters to lobby their Senators and local Representatives in support of funding for the program. Source: <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov>

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MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM