

Spring 2013

McNair Messenger- Spring 2013

McNair Staff

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LINCOLN ACADEMY OF ILLINOIS STUDENT LAUREATE AWARD

Scholar **Ashor Jajou** was selected as this year's recipient for the Lincoln Academy Student Laureate Award. The award is presented to those who have demonstrated excellence in curricular and extracurricular activities at a four-year, degree-granting college or university in Illinois. Student Laureates receive a medallion, honorarium check, and certificate of achievement.

Ashor is a Social Work major. He is a member of the McNair Scholars mentored by **Dr. Gaytan**. He is also part of the Honors Program and the Student Government Association President. He served as an Alternative Spring Break Leader when he helped build the village at the Cherokee Nation Historical Museum. He was a part-time mentor for at-risk youth and advocates for ex-offenders to obtain jobs through Fighting to Overcome Records and Create Equality (FORCE).



Ashor Presenting at NEIU

He serves on the University Advisory Council and the University Planning and Budget Council as well as the Student Rights and Responsibilities Committee. He is on the Dean's List, has been awarded a number of scholarships, and holds a 3.97 grade point average. McNair Director **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** accompanied Ashor to receive his award in Springfield, Illinois.

PORTFOLIO OF THE YEAR AWARD



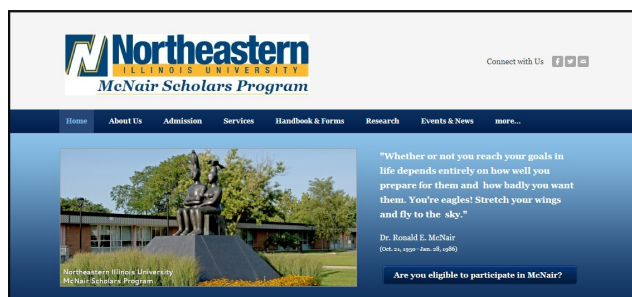
Sean and his award

Scholar **Sean Dotson** earned the prestigious Portfolio of the Year Award by Northeastern Illinois University's English Department. His portfolio, made up of poetry, short fiction, critical and literary analysis, an expository essay, graduate level critical essay, and a cover letter, was around 75 pages long and considered to be "outstanding" by the department.

"I'd like to get across what a rare, incredible experience this was" Sean commented. "I've never experienced anything like the level of support and encouragement I've received from the students and faculty of the NEIU English Department. I was also surprised that it was such an emotional experience. There were more than a few of us who found ourselves tearing up at the incredible stories that were shared that night. Many of us are older than the traditional college student--we've taken long, circuitous paths through higher education and often questioned whether we would ever achieve our goals. To share that with one another, to hear our teachers speak of us so highly, and to be exposed to the amazing work many of us are producing was a momentous, powerful experience I'll never

ON THE TECHNOLOGICAL FRONT

In July, the McNair Program launched a new website, official Facebook page, and Twitter account. These new tools serve our community of incoming and current scholars. They provide unique new forms of instantaneous communication. The website houses applications, forms, contact information, news, calendars, and much more. It was built with versatility in mind and can be used on desktops, laptops, iPads, cell phones, and most other forms of technology. It may be accessed at



The New NEIU McNair Website

The Facebook page houses a public forum for our scholars to promote, interact, and grow together. It is also accessible for those without a Facebook account. You may visit the page at <http://facebook.com/neiumcnair>. The Twitter page contains important and summated information regarding our program and scholars. It also provides a platform for both the students and program to communicate. These exciting new tools open up the program to new possibilities. Both the program and scholars are looking forward to building this new community.

FIFTH ANNUAL STUDENT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM



Yesenia Presenting at SCSE

Scholar **Yesenia Herrera** presented at the Fifth Annual Student Research Symposium organized by the Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE). **Dr. Sudha Srinivas**, (Director, Student Center for Science Engagement), **Dr. Michael Stern** (Dean of the College of Graduate Studies and Research) and McNair peers and staff also attended. Yesenia's poster entitled *Isotopic and Chemical Variability of CaCO_3 Microfacies in Early to Middle Triassic Limestones* was the culmination of her participation in the Summer Undergraduate Research in Geoscience & Engineering (SURGE) Program at Stanford University. Yesenia worked as a research assistant in the Department of Geological and Environmental Sciences under the guidance of **Dr. Jonathan L. Payne** and his research team of Ph.D. students **Adam Jost** and **Kimberly**

ILLINOIS SCIENCE EDUCATION CONFERENCE



Samuel Presenting at ISEC

Dr. Hanna Kim and scholar **Samuel Aguirre** of the Teacher Education Department at NEIU presented research at the Illinois Science Education Conference (ISEC).

The purpose of their project was to investigate student engagement and participation in Science, Engineering, and Math classes at an elementary school in a Midwestern metropolitan city. They utilized an inquiry-based approach to learning combined with the Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS).

Their lesson described the positive and negative effects of UV light on the students. More specifically, they placed a focus on its use as a source of energy.

22nd ANNUAL MCNAIR RESEARCH CONFERENCE

Scholars attended The National McNair Research Conference in November at the Grand Geneva Resort of Wisconsin. The conference, organized by the University of Wisconsin, was designed to provide undergraduate students with the opportunity to explore options of graduate study. Panel discussions, workshops, and activities all introduced McNair Scholars to the nature of graduate study and provided helpful tips and suggestions to aid in their writing of effective graduate admissions applications.



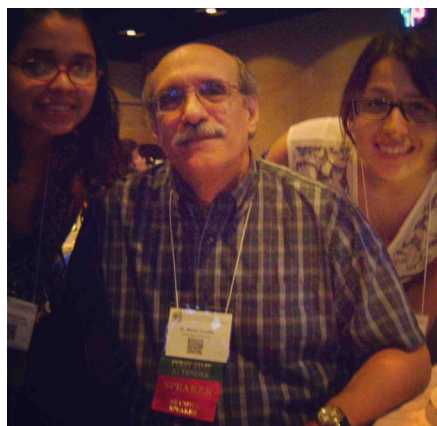
Scholars En Route to Conference

Our scholars presented on a wide variety of topics. **Sam Aguirre** presented *Bilingual Education: Student Participation in the Classroom*. **Tiketa Briscoe** presented *Best Practices in the Treatment of Sexually Abused Children*. **Sean Dotson** presented *Un-boxing Time: Building Stories and the Dialect of Graphic Fic-*

Racialized Standards of Beauty among African American Women.

The conference included presentations by McNair scholars nationwide, and it featured a Graduate/Professional School Fair which included more than 50 of the country's top graduate schools. It included networking activities, allowing Scholars to interact with school faculty and representatives in an informal, relaxed setting.

SCHOLARS PRESENT AT SACNAS



Scholars Meet Nobel Laureate Dr.

Scholars **Yesenia Herrera**, **Patricia Jaimes**, and **James Hopkins** presented their summer research projects at the Society for the Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) in October. SACNAS is one of the largest and most prominent science conferences for minority scientists. It hosts over 3,700 people. Some well-known attendees included prominent scholars such as 2008 Nobel Laureate in Chemistry, **Martin Chalfie**. Other well-known attendees included **Julian Castro**, the mayor of San Antonio Texas, as well as the president of UT San Antonio **Dr. Ricardo Romo**.

Patricia Jaimes presented her research project titled *Causes of Increased Flooding Along the North Branch of the Chicago River*. Yesenia Herrera presented her investigation on *Isotopic and Chemical Variability of Calcium Carbonate Microfacies in Early to Middle Triassic Limestones*. Both scholars were accompanied by **Dr. Vogle-songer**, chair of the Earth Science Department. Finally, James Hopkins presented *Crystallization and Preliminary X-ray Crystallographic Studies of Unusual Red-light Photoreceptors from Photosynthetic and Non-photosynthetic Bacteria*. He was accompanied by his

GRADUATE SCHOOL VISITS



Scholars on the steps of University of Michigan

This summer, McNair Scholars visited Loyola University Chicago, University of Michigan, University of Chicago, University of Illinois at Chicago, and DePaul University. The purpose of these visits was to introduce Scholars to faculty and provide insight regarding the application process at each institution as well as to demonstrate the robust program set offered by each institution.

At Loyola, the Scholars met with **Dr. Marcela Gallegos**, Assistant Director for the Loyola McNair Scholars Program and Graduate Student Life Coordinator, to learn about the Graduate School Experience. **Ann Talbot**, the Director of Graduate and Professional Enrollment Management, also walked the Scholars through the Graduate School application process. At the University of Chicago the scholars participated in a Student Panel organized by **Antonio Musto** and **Nidia Banuelos**. At the University of Michigan the Scholars met with **Gilsselle Velez-Ruiz**. At DePaul University, the Scholars had one-on-one appointments with the faculty, who led the scholars through their robust set of programs offered by the Graduate School. Schol-

GRAD SCHOOL ACCEPTANCES

Jorge Montiel ('13)

Master's degree in Latin American Literature and Culture at Northeastern Illinois University.

Robert Motley ('13)

Master's degree in Social Work at UIC in the Jane Addams College.

Peggy Valdes ('13)

Ph.D. in Higher Education and Student Affairs at the University of Iowa.

Jacqueline Meraz ('13)

Master's degree in Biology at Northeastern Illinois University.

Rodney Allen ('13)

Master's degree in School Service Administration (SSA) at University of Chicago.

Jacqueline Meraz ('13)

Master's degree in Biology at Northeastern Illinois University.

Rodney Allen ('13)

Master's degree in School Service Administration (SSA) at University of Chicago.

Larone Ellison ('13)

Master's degree in Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University.

Kelly Webb ('13)

Master's degree in Social Work at the University of Southern California.

Rosanelly Lopez ('13)

Master's degree in Social Work at Loyola University at Chicago.

Tiketa Briscoe ('13)

Master's degree in Criminal Justice at Loyola University at Chicago.

INTERESTED IN GRADUATE SCHOOL?

The McNair Scholars Program could be for you!

- 60 undergrad hours complete?
- US citizenship or residency?
- 2.8 GPA or better?
- First generation grad student?
- College student with income eligibility and/or a member of a group underrepresented in graduate education?

Contact us! Building B, Office 141. (773) 442-4253

IMPROVING THE WORLD THROUGH ART



Scholar **Jean Matelski-Boulware** was awarded Best Documentary Short in the June issue of Monitor of Psychology. The magazine called her film, *White Lotus Rising*, "powerful." The film documented the work of **Indira Frietas Johnson** as she created multiple sculptures of the Buddha and placed them throughout diverse Chicago Communities. The presence of these sculptures was found to have positive psychological results on the surrounding communities.

Jean directed the film with a team of seven, including her husband, while balancing a full life of commitments to her family, work, and school. Her drive came from a great passion to elicit social change. She will attend the University of Chicago as she prepares to receive a Master of Arts in Social Sciences. The film has recently been officially submitted to the Sundance Film Festival. Good luck, **Jean!**

TRIO NEWS

In his departing address as president of the Council of Opportunity in Education at the organization's annual conference this September, **Dr. Arnold Mitchem** mixed realism and inspirational oratory. He defined the brutal political realities confronting the federally supported TRIO college access and academic support programs for low-income students aspiring college success.

"And as I've said this before, and I'll say it one last time," **Mitchem** told hundreds of TRIO program administrators who were in Chicago for the conference, "you are the proxies for the poor. You identify with the poor. You care and have concern about the aspirations, the welfare and the tears of the poor."

With federal programs, including TRIO, having been hit hard by budget sequester cuts at the time of his speech, **Mitchem** urged his audience to not "lose faith or hope" in their efforts to seek congressional support for their programs. "We'll get through this storm. There's no question about that. TRIO is going to exist," he said. "TRIO is going to be here for a long, long, long time because it's grounded in a need and an imperative that is social, moral and economic. And I don't see anything out there on the landscape that has changed that makes TRIO less relevant today than it was when I walked onto the stage."

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TRiO

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