

Fall 2017

## McNair Messenger- Fall 2017

McNair Staff

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### Scholar Awarded Early Offer into Northwestern Doctoral

**Anthony Smith** (14) has been offered early acceptance into the Northwestern University Driskill Graduate PhD. Program in Life Sciences. This is a result of his outstanding performance during the Summer Research Opportunity Program at Northwestern University this past summer. **Dr. Voicine** is Anthony's McNair Mentor. Led by **Damon L. Williams, Jr.**, Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion (photographed here with Anthony), the graduate school at Northwestern University identifies promising young scholars during its summer internships and invites them to apply early for its Ph.D. program. This initiative allows them to recruit promising students from underrepresented status and enrich their student body with their diverse perspectives. NEIU McNair commends Anthony and Dr. Williams for their commitment and efforts towards diversifying academia.



### Scholars Travel around the World for the Sake of Research



**Alyson Cervantes** (15) pictured on the left, and **Karen Segura** (14) both were provided the opportunity to travel internationally to perform research. Under the direction of **Dr. Paul Davidson** and **Dr. Michelle Green** at UIUC, Alyson conducted research that involved designing and constructing an aquaponic system for South African farmers. Alyson is mentored by **Dr. Joel Olfelt** at NEIU. Karen, who is mentored by **Dr. Jennifer Slate** at NEIU, was provided the opportunity to conduct research under **Dr. Tomoyuki Shabata** at NIU to investigate the adverse health effects of cenote (sinkhole) water quality in the Yucatan Peninsula on public health. Both students felt their experiences abroad helped broaden their understanding of research.



Photo of a cenote (sinkhole) in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico.

### Lincoln Academy Student Laurette



Scholar **Cesar Bustos** (14) was selected as this year's recipient of the Lincoln Academy Student Laurette. The award is presented to those who have demonstrated excellence in the curricular and extracurricular activities,

which include founding an organization to promote STEM to K-12 students. A medallion, honorarium, and certificate of achievement from The Lincoln Academy of Illinois was provided on November 11, 2017. Cesar was also awarded the honor of being Commencement Speaker for the Fall 2017 NEIU graduation ceremony. Cesar's mentor is **Dr. Paulo Acioli** in the Physics Department.

### New Doctoral Degree Recipient Maria Chavez



McNair student **Maria Chaves** (5) has become the seventh scholar to receive a doctoral degree in the history of the NEIU McNair Scholars Program. Maria obtained her Ph.D. in English at Binghamton University-SUNY.

Maria graduated from NEIU with a bachelors in Women Studies.. **Dr. Lurie Fuller** mentored Maria during that time. Then she continued to get a Masters degree in Philosophy from the Interpretation and Culture Program at Binghamton University-SUNY. The NEIU McNair Program congratulates her and wishes her the best in her professional career and future endeavors!

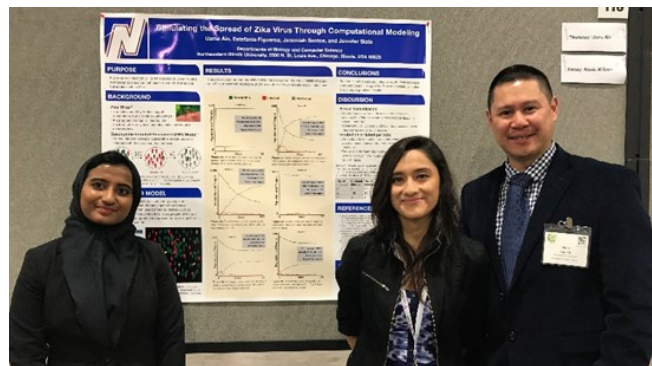




Scholars presented their work at the 26<sup>th</sup> EOA Annual McNair Research Conference in Schaumburg, Illinois this past October. Scholars and their mentors are included as follows: **Sergio Barajas** (15) presented his research produced under the guidance **Dr. Bao-Hua Song** from the Department of Biological Sciences at the University of North Carolina-Charlotte. **Ryan Borchert** (15) was supervised by **Dr. Robert Abramovitch** from Michigan State University. **DeMara Campbell** (14) worked with **Dr. Christopher Merchant**. Scholar **Alyson Cervantes** (15) presented her work accomplished under the supervision of **Dr. Paul Davidson** and **Dr. Michelle Green** from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. **Cristina Chavez's** (14) mentor was **Dr. Christopher Merchant**. **Dr. Alex Palmer** guided **Alicia Perez's** (15) research project. **Miguel Mendez** (15) worked with **Dr. Brandon Bisbey**. **Dr. Jeffrey H. Cohen** from Ohio State University supervised **Andre Santiago's** research. **Karen Segura** (14) worked with **Dr Tomoyuki Shibata** from the Northern Illinois University. **Alejandra Villegas** (14) worked with **Dr. Zhiyong Xi** at Michigan State University. Finally, **Anthony Walker** (15) presented his research done under the advice of **Dr. Wilfredo Alvarez**.

## Scholar Awarded Outstanding Research Presentation at SACNAS

McNair Scholar, **Estefania Figueroa** (15) (pictured here in the center with **Uzma Ain** on the left and **Jeremiah Santos** on the right) won an award for Outstanding Contribution and Research Presentation for their poster titled "*Simulating the Spread of Zika Virus Through Computational Modeling*" at the 2017 SACNAS conference in Salt Lake City, Utah. Estefania worked under the guidance of **Dr. Jennifer Slate**. Scholars **David Alvarado** (15), **Noemi Hernandez** (15), **Alexandra Lopez** (15) and **Shaima Pantangia** (15) also presented their research projects at the conference. SACNAS is dedicated to fostering the success of Hispanics, Chicanos and Native American scientists.



## Strong McNair Presence at the SCSE Symposium

Nine Scholars presented at the Student Center for Science Engagement Research Symposium at NEIU this past September, representing over fifteen percent of the presentations in this event. Scholars **David Alvarado** (15) and **Noemi Hernandez** (15) presented their research done in **Dr. Emily Booms'** lab. **Shaima Pantangia** (15) presented her work done under **Dr. Mungre's** laboratory and **Estefania Figueroa** (15) presented her work done in **Dr. Jennifer Slate's** lab. **Sergio Barajas** (15), **Ryan Borchert** (15), **Alyson Cervantes** (15), **Karen Segura** (14), **Anthony Smith** (14) and **Joseph Marsili** (14) presented research they produced in other universities during this past summer. The SCSE supports the academic endeavors and career development of NEIU students enrolled in science fields. McNair works closely with SCSE to enhance the services provided to scholars interested on a science graduate degree.



## Graduate School Visits



In the past months, McNair Scholars visited Marquette University, the University of Illinois Chicago and Northwestern University. During these visits scholars learned about grad school resources available to them and received invaluable insider tips on how to submit the strongest applications possible.

## Students Attend ABRCMS

**Ryan Borchert** (15) presented his research on *Mechanism of Action Studies of Novel Inhibitors of the Mycobacterium Tuberculosis DosS and DosT Sensor Kinases*. He was supervised by **Dr. Robert Abramovitch** from Michigan State University. **Karen Segura** (14) (pictured here) presented a poster *Recreational Water Illness in Cenotes of the Riviera Maya: The Potential Impact of Cenote Water Quality on Public Health* guided by **Dr Tomoyuki Shibata** from the Northern Illinois University.



Thirty-Two McNair Scholars are currently pursuing doctoral degrees in institutions across the world.

**Luis Allende (13)**  
Ecology & Evolutionary Biology at University of Colorado

**Abel Arango (2)**  
Spanish Literature at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D.

**Keith Atterberry (6)**  
Criminal Justice at University of Illinois-Chicago, Ph.D.

**Silvia Avila (6)**  
International Psychology, at Chicago School of Professional Psychology, Ph.D.

**Imani Beard (6)**  
Pan African Studies at University of Louisville, Ph.D.

**Tiketa Briscoe (12)**  
Organizational Leadership at Concordia University Chicago, Ph.D.

**Christopher Castillo (12)**  
English at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D.

**Christopher Castro (12)**  
Bioinformatics at University of Michigan, Ph.D.

**Alexis Dennis (10)**  
Sociology at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D.

**Sean Dotson (11)**  
English at University of Chicago, Ph.D.

**Jeremy Dolan (6)**  
Philosophy at New York University, Ph.D.

**Ruben Echevaria (10)**  
Learning Sciences at Northwestern University, Ph.D.

**Lynda Gibson (8)**  
Child Clinical Psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology, Ph.D.

**Julia Gutierrez (8)**  
Women Studies at University of Arizona, Ph.D.

**James Hopkins (11)**  
Medical Sciences at University of Illinois-Chicago, Pd. D.

**Bilal Hussain (9)**  
Sociology at University of Loyola-Chicago, Ph.D.

**Patricia Jaimes (11)**  
Geology at Michigan State University, Ph.D.

**Christine Leone (2)**  
Social Work at University of Chicago, Ph. D.

**Michael Magee (1)**  
Higher Education at University of South Florida, Ph.D.

**Jorge Montiel (10)**  
Philosophy at Marquette University, Ph.D.

**Robert Motley (10)**  
Social Work at Saint Louis University, Ph.D.

**Jorge Ortiz (7)**  
Sociology at University of Illinois-Chicago, Ph.D.

**Nicholas Owen (3)**  
Philosophy at University of Wisconsin-Madison, Ph.D.

**Elizabeth Rodriguez (5)**  
English at Northwestern University, Ph.D.

**Meztli Santamaria (13)**  
Linguistics at Pompeu Fabra University in Spain, Ph.D.

**John Smith (13)**  
Human Sciences at University of Nebraska-Lincoln

**Mayra Saucedo (12)**  
School Psychology at National Louis, Chicago, Ed. S.

**Yesenia Taveras Cruz (12)**  
Psychology at Northeastern University, Ph. D.

**Kemyta Terry (2)**  
Political Science at Howard University, Ph.D.

**Peggy Valdes (10)**  
Higher Education & Student Affairs at University of Iowa, Ph.D.

**Antonio Villaseñor (12)**  
Anthropology at Vanderbilt University, Ph.D.

**Brandi Williams (5)**  
Literacy in Education at University of Syracuse, New York., Ph.D.

## New Masters Degree Conferred

<b>Alexis Dennis (10)</b>	Sociology	University of WI-Madison
<b>Zitlalli Roman (12)</b>	Social Work	University of IL-Chicago
<b>Alejandro Sanchez (12)</b>	Applied Mathematics	Northeastern IL University
<b>Mayra Saucedo (12)</b>	School Psychology	National Louis University

## Scholars Recognized Both On and Off Campus

**Amber Drew (15)** received honorable mention for Outstanding Roundtable Discussion at the 2017 Illinois Summer Research Symposium. Also recognized for his outstanding academic achievements, Scholar **Andre Santiago (15)** was inducted to Sigma Delta Pi (National Collegiate Hispanic Honor Society) Spring 2017 as well as Alpha Chi (National College Honor Society) Fall 2017. **Ryan Borchert (15)** was recognized as Best Presenter during the Michigan State University SROP, for his work titled *Mechanism of action studies of novel inhibitors of the Mycobacterium tuberculosis DosS and DosT sensor kinases*.

## New Academic Specialist



Former McNair Scholar Peggy Valdés (10) is the current Academic Specialist for the NEIU McNair Program. Peggy is a doctoral candidate in the Higher Education and Student Affairs program at the University of Iowa. She earned her undergraduate degree in Sociology at NEIU and was mentored by **Dr. Brett Stockdill**.

## Five more years for NEIU McNair!!!

The United States Department of Education has awarded Northeastern Illinois University a five-year, \$1,161,325 Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program grant. This is the fourth consecutive time that NEIU gets a McNair grant. In the past NEIU has received very high scores in this competition, and this time was no exception. NEIU was awarded a perfect score in its grant application evaluation ensuring the possibility to provide support services to NEIU students for 5 more years.

The McNair Scholars Program prepares first-generation students, low-income students and students from underrepresented groups for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. The goal is to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students from underrepresented segments of society. Over the course of a year and a half, McNair provides faculty mentoring as well as structured and formal research experiences for each group of 28 selected students. In addition to providing mentoring and research experience, the grant helps NEIU assist scholars with their graduate school application process so they can enter graduate school immediately after graduation.

"The competition for graduate school and doctoral programs is fierce, and our work puts NEIU's students in a position to seize opportunities and then thrive in them," Interim President Richard Helldobler said. "This grant from Department of Education further enhances our ability to serve our students and the community."



### McNair Scholars Program Staff

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## Now accepting Scholar applications!

Visit <https://www.neiu.edu/academics/mcnair-scholars> for more information.