

Fall 2019

## McNair Messenger- Fall 2019

McNair Staff

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## Scholars Win First Place Presentation Awards

Three scholars won first place awards at research conferences. **Oscar Coronel (17)** from the Earth Science Department, presented at the 2019 Geological Society of America in Phoenix Arizona. His poster research "Understanding ecosystem biogeochemical controls on time-lagged water quality responses to land use/land cover" was awarded first place for best poster presentation in hydrogeology. Oscar's mentor is **Laura Sanders**. **Derek Epiney (17)** from the Biology Department, won the best molecular biology poster at the Illinois Louis Stokes Alliance for Minority Participation program. His research was the "WRNexo's Role in Responding to Oxidative Stress in *Drosophila melanogaster*". His mentor is **Dr. Elyse Bolterstein**. **Franklin Nwoko** a Sociology and Political Science majors won 1<sup>st</sup> Place in the Undergraduate Student Paper Competition of the 2019 Illinois Sociological Association. Franklin wrote this paper as his final assignment in Dr. Lisa Berube's class Sociology of Occupation and Professions. In this paper Franklin explored how mass incarceration and unfree labor of minorities has enriched corporations in United States. Another scholar, **Christian Palaguachi (17)** from the Psychology department, also presented at the Cognitive Development Society Conference in Louisville, KY.



## Scholar Awarded Early Acceptance at Northwestern University



**Jordan Gunneau (16)** has been offered early acceptance into the Northwestern University PhD in Civil & Environmental Engineering at Northwestern University. This is a result of his outstanding performance during the Summer Research Opportunity Program at Northwestern University this past summer. Dr. Samantha Hu. is Jordans' McNair Mentor. Led by **Damon L. Williams, Jr.**, Assistant Dean of Diversity and Inclusion 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. Last year Scholar Anthony Smith got the same opportunity and he is now in his second year of his doctoral degree program. Including Jordan eight McNair Scholars have entered and are studying their graduate programs at Northwestern. NEIU McNair commends Northwestern University for its efforts towards diversifying academia.

## Scholar Publishes Journal Article



The Experimental Gerontology Journal has published as first author McNair scholar Derek Epiney's (17) article entitled "Evidence for premature aging in a *Drosophila* model of Werner syndrome." This study presents, according to Derek, a significant contribution because it uses a well-established model organism to further the understanding of aging, DNA repair, and cancer. Derek has been working for the past three semesters under

the guidance of his mentor is Dr. Elyse Bolterstein from the Biology Department.

## Congrats to Dr. Rodriguez New McNair Ph.D. Recipient

Dr. Elizabeth Rodriguez graduated from the English Ph.D. Program at Northwestern University. She had previously obtained a masters degree from the same program. During her tenure at Northwestern she was the recipient of the Presidential Fellowship, the Woodrow Wilson Foundation Fellowship, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Summer Institute Fellowship, and the Huntington Library Fellowship. Dr. Rodriguez did her bachelors students at the English department here at NEIU, and Dr. Bradley mentored Elizabeth's McNair research project.





During the summer of 2019, McNair Scholars visited five graduate programs at different universities in the Midwest. The first visit was to Roosevelt University, followed by Northern University and the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC). The scholars then had the opportunity to visit Northwestern University, where Erica L. Knight, from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion, presented a very informative session about all the different opportunities available for students. The last visit was to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in Wisconsin. These visits are an excellent opportunity for the scholars to be introduced to faculty and provide insight into the graduate application processes. Furthermore, scholars also had the chance to talk to several graduate students from masters and doctoral levels. Every visit equipped the McNair scholars with valuable information they are using now during their graduate school applications on this fall semester.

## Scholar Wins Award at AGEP Student Success Conference

Scholar **Magdalene Thebaund** conducted and presented a winner research project under the guidance of **Dr. Jin Kim** from the Social Work department. She examined domestic violence state policies in all U.S. and their relation to women homicides in their locality. Her research had such quality that she won the first place for undergraduate research in the Alliance for Graduate Education and Professoriate (AGEP) Student Success Conference at Michigan State University in Lansing Michigan this past November.

Six other Scholars also attended the AGEP Conference. The **Suliat Akinyele** presented her research entitled "Again in Place for Grandparents: Difference in life Satisfaction and Life Adaptation. Suliat's mentor is **Dr. Hollis Sawyer** from the Psychology Department. **Elizabeth Ampong** presented her research on "What is the role of exchange rate volatility as a factor in low foreign direct investment in Africa? ." She was supervised by **Dr. Hegerty** from the Economics department. Scholar **Sebastian Morales** presented his work "????? ." **Maria Jose Nataren** presented her research entitled "Exploring the Expir-



nece of English as a Second Language Students in Two Junior Colleges in the Midwest" **Dr. Vidal-Rodriguez** Director of the McNair Program is Sebastian's and Maria Jose's mentor. **Franklin Nwoko** presented his research entitled "Security Dilemma between the West African Nations and the Unites States." **Dr. Thompson** from the Political Science Department guided his research. **Selina Williams** presented research on "Health Disparities Among the Black Community in Chicago"; her mentor is **Dr. Udoh** from the Community Health department. **Sonia Morales**, McNair Graduate Assistant attended the conference besides escorting the scholars and making sure all trip arrangements run smooth she also presented her research entitled "*Evaluation of Urban Spatial Composition as a Consequence of Rapid Urbanization of Latin-American Urban Fringe*. Guided by Ting Liu from the Geography and Environmental Studies Department .

## Northwestern's Diversity and Inclusion Office Visit NEIU

Last semester, Erica L. Knight, from the Office of Diversity and Inclusion at Northwestern University visited NEIU to strengthen the relationship among our institutions, and recruit students to Northwestern graduate school programs. The McNair Program with the support of the MARC program coordinated a visit that included meetings with faculty and staff of the Student Center for Science Engagement, Honors, MARC and McNair programs. Erika also taught a graduate school application workshops to more than 20 NEIU students from all disciplines. She also meet with current McNair Scholars to guide them about their individual graduate school applications and share her insights about Northwestern Graduate School programs .



Forty Four McNair Scholars are currently pursuing doctoral degrees in institutions across the nation

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

**David Alavarado (15):** Food Science and Human Nutrition at University of Urbana Champaign, Ph.D.

**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.

**Sergio Barajas (15):** Biomedical Science at Indiana University, Ph.D.

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

**Ryan Borchert (15):** Driskill Program in Life Sciences at Northwestern University, 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.

**Amber Drew (15):** Sociology at Vanderbilt University, Ph.D.

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

**Stephanie Finne (15):** Clinical Psychology at Chciago School of Professional Psychology, Psy.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.

**Chrystyne Hart-Alvarado (5):** English at University of Louisina at Lafayette, Ph.D.

**Dianna Hernandez (9):** Psychology Program Ph.D. at University of California Los Angeles, Ph.D.

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

**Cashell Lewis (13) :** Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago, Ph.D.

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

**Joseph Marcilli (13):** Biological Sciences, The City University of New York, Ph.D.

**Patricia Morales (14):** Feminist Studies at the Unviersity of California Santa Barbara , 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.

**Uriel Saldivar (15):** Human Resources and Labor Relations at Michigan State University, Ph.D.

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

**Anthony Smith (14):** Driskill Program in Life Sciences at Northwestern University, 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.

**Alejandra Villegas (14):** Integrated Life Sciences at University of Georgia, Ph.D.

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

## New Master's Degree Conferred

Dale	Carter	Social Work	UIC
Camille	Cleveland	Public Health	University of Minnesota
Wendy	De Leon	Gerontology	Miami University at Ohio
Charla	Earls	Cyber Security	Lewis University
Daryl	Lee	Psychology	Roosevelt
Patricia	Morales	Latino and Latin American Studies	UIC
Gabriel	Garcia	Social Enterprise	Columbia University
Ayuk	Nfoundoak	Political Science	NEIU
Franklin	Ortega	Higher Education	NEIU
Oscar	Ramirez	Education Leadership and Policy	University of Michigan
Meztli	Santamaria	Linguistics	Universidad de Barcelona
Rebecca	Stacks	Public Policy	UC Beckley

## TRIO News

In mid-December 2019, the House and Senate Appropriations Committees finalized the spending packages for FY 2020. In this funding legislation, the Federal TRIO Programs received a \$30 million (or 3%) funding increase for a total appropriation of \$1.09 billion. The legislation also included report language directing the Department of Education to (1) provide increases in the continuation awards, (2) increase the number and size of grants awarded in the FY20 TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) grant competition and (3) take action to ensure that the results of the SSS grant competition are awarded as early as possible before the next academic year.

Earn about TRIO

\*TRIO Services include individualized advising, one-to-one and group tutoring, mentoring, financial guidance, and academic, career and personal support. TRIO's high advisor-to-student ratio and customized education plans assure faculty that students accessing TRIO services receive timely academic interventions. Faculty may make referrals at any time during the semester.

*Source: Council for Opportunity in Education News 2020*

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