

THE MCNAIR SCHOLAR

VOLUME 4, ISSUE 2, FALL 2004



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"True courage comes in enduring, persevering the preparation and believing in oneself."
—Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

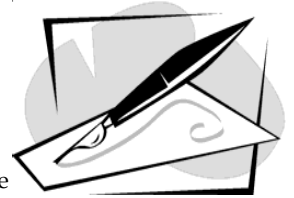
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From the Director's Desk: Starting a New Year

Dr. Gail Scukanec, Program Director



While we may all feel some remorse that the end of summer is nearing, fall is an exciting time for the McNair program. Those scholars who entered the program early in 2004 will be completing their research projects and presenting them at the Undergraduate Research Symposium this October. Many of our scholars are becoming more focused on their educational plans beyond the baccalaureate and are preparing applications and visiting institutions. The McNair staff is also in the midst of preparing to meet and select a new group of McNair scholars. Those of you who have been involved in the McNair program, as students, mentors, board members, and supporters, are our very best recruiters. We are looking, once again, for sophomores and juniors who are committed students and who intend to continue their education beyond the baccalaureate. If you know of such a student, please tell them about the McNair program. Meanwhile, welcome back!!

Scholars Attend Graduate School Boot Camp

Melissa Brittain, McNair Graduate Assistant



2004 Scholars in Indiana, June 2004

For four days in June our scholars attended the Indiana McNair Consortium Senior Summer Camp in Nashville, Indiana. Affectionately referred to as "grad school boot camp," the four-day training was sponsored by Indiana University and brought together a number of experts to help the students understand and prepare for the process of applying to graduate school. McNair scholars attended seminars on a variety of topics, from applying for external funding to developing coping skills for graduate school. Students also prepared and presented a micro-teaching session on a topic from their respective discipline to their peers. The exercise was designed to give them a glimpse of the teaching assistant experience they might have in graduate school. "After the micro-teaching session I felt more confident in my abilities to teach if that opportunity arises," reported scholar Alicia Harper.

The scholars were also treated to several seminars on preparing their personal statements and curriculum vitas by best-selling author Donald Asher. Scholar Korinne Milks especially enjoyed Asher's instruction, stating that he was "really interesting and made me feel like I could successfully complete everything I needed to for my application." The former executive director of the Educational Testing Service (ETS), Dr. Thomas Rochon was also on-hand to discuss the intricacies of the infamous Graduate Record Exam (GRE). Moreover, Dr. Orlando Taylor, who is the dean of Howard University's graduate school, was particularly inspiring for many scholars as he outlined the challenges and significance of graduate education.

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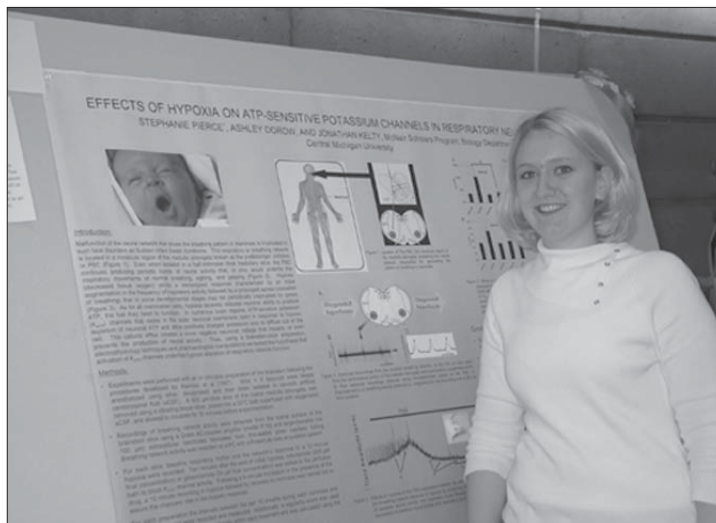
The Long Road to Graduate School

Stephanie Pierce, 2003 McNair Scholar

My quest for graduate school has been a smooth one, but the road seemed bumpy on the way. Right from the beginning I've wanted to attend University of Iowa for dozens of reasons. Most importantly I found a research mentor whose work really caught my eye. After meeting with her several times, I knew this was my direction in life. Another plus was that every accepted graduate student receives a \$21,500 stipend along with tuition and health benefits, which allows me to great education and live comfortably without having to take out any loans. I've started visiting there more frequently to meet with professors and check out the campus, and have made lots of friends. Importantly, the program aligns with my interests and I feel more at home in Iowa City than any other place. These are all important things to consider when searching for a graduate school.

As you progress with your application, make sure all other necessary components are sent to the office you wish to apply to. One of these important components, that beast I know all too well....the GRE. I strongly suggest getting it out of the way during the summer. I waited till the school year and it was pure hell. I had papers, projects, exams, meetings, and many other things on top if this annoying test so studying remained on the back burner. There was a certain score I had to obtain just to be considered and the first two times I didn't quite reach it. Upon my third try, (yes I took it three times) I received a call from University of Iowa three days before the exam and found out they decided to accept me regardless of my score. As you might guess a tremendous weight was lifted off my chest. When I did take the exam the third time I was stress free and did exceedingly better. In other words, try not to stress; it really affected my score the first two times. You may be wondering if taking the exam multiple times will affect your acceptance. Well, I talked to the director of my program for advice and he said "Honestly I'm not the whole board, but I would rather see you improve your score by taking it a third time than not accept you."

*"McNair has opened up
countless opportunities
for me."*



Stephanie Pierce presenting her research at the 2004 CMU Student Research & Creative Endeavors Exhibit.

When all the applications are in and completed, the next step is waiting to hear from the schools whether you got an interview. I consider the interviews, after having them of course, to be like a mini-vacation. They pay for your travel, your food, your entertainment, and at least at mine—your beer! These interviews are just to see how you mesh with the other prospective grads and the grad students. Many consisted of the professors going on and on about their research, barely letting me get a word in edgewise. So when the time for you to ask them questions arrives, ask them about their work and you'll have them eating out of your hand, especially if you can ask them specific questions about their research. Another tip is mingle with the grad students; they have a big part in your acceptance. If they like you, they're going to fight to get you in. Basically try to have fun and enjoy yourself, this is your time to shine and discover where you belong.

Getting accepted to graduate school was the pinnacle of my undergraduate career. I hate to admit it, but yes I did cry tears of joy. I attribute a large portion of my success to the McNair program. McNair gave me an advantage over other applicants and has opened up countless opportunities for me. The top notch speakers gave me the inside scoop as to what schools look for as well as how to find the perfect mentor. I was given the chance to visit schools I otherwise would have never seen, allowing me to confirm that I was making the right decision when choosing the University of Iowa. Without the program, I wouldn't have such an impressive research project to include in my application, which caught the eye of every admission committee I've encountered. Furthermore, my list of research presentations, six to be exact, astonished any professor that read my CV. What it comes down to is that my grades aren't anything to get excited about and my GRE score left much to be desired, but with the help of the McNair program I got accepted by my graduate school of choice. There is not a doubt in my mind that I *will* be the first CMU McNair scholar to receive my Ph.D., unless you other guys decide to be superheroes and get done in like three years or something! Good luck, don't procrastinate, have fun, and love what you do!

Applications for
2005 McNair Scholars are due
October 6th.
Get your application in
Foust 250 or online at
www.mcnair.cmich.edu!

A Mentor's Perspective on McNair

Dr. Orlando Perez, Associate Professor of Political Science



Scholar Ray Whitney III with his mentor Dr. Orlando Perez.

I have been involved with the McNair program from its inception here at Central Michigan University. The program is a wonderful opportunity for undergraduate students to acquire many of the necessary skills for advanced degrees. In fact, I wish there had been a McNair program when I was contemplating graduate school! I believe one of the most important aspects of the program is the mentoring component where students develop a research project in close consultation with a faculty member.

It was through the McNair program that I had the privilege of being a research mentor to Raymond Whitney III, a student in the political science department. He and I have worked on a project analyzing public opinion surveys in Ecuador and Paraguay, focusing on anti-democratic values. In the course of the year, Raymond and I have traveled to South Africa to attend the meeting of the International Political Science Association; an opportunity few undergraduate students get, made possible only through the McNair program. Ray and I also presented a paper at the second most important meeting of political scientists, the Midwest Political Science Association conference in Chicago.

Additionally, I was able to involve Ray in a consulting project for the United States Agency for International Development in Albania. Ray got to travel to Albania and learn first-hand how a public opinion survey is put together and has worked with me to complete the analysis of the survey. All these opportunities were made possible through the support of the McNair Scholars Program.

I believe strongly that students benefit when they work cooperatively with faculty members. Research skills, such as critical thinking, understanding the nature of a literature review, collecting and analyzing data, placing ones work within the larger discipline, are learned best through hands-on experiences. The McNair program does that. I believe that graduate school, whether at the master's or doctoral level, is about learning the skills of a profession. Students are "socialized" into the norms of a particular discipline. As such, graduate school can be a daunting experience for someone without any prior knowledge or experience with the "mysteries" of the profession. I believe an integral part of my job as a professor and research mentor is to begin a student's socialization process into the profession by teaching and, more importantly, showing students what it means to be a "political scientist." In this endeavor, I am not only helping a particular student but I am giving back to the profession by perpetuating the skills, norms and values that will keep the discipline alive for generations to come. For the student it is an invaluable opportunity to learn important life-long skills.

Indiana Boot Camp

Continued from page 1

The training camp brought together McNair scholars from over 15 universities across the country. This allowed the students to share experiences with individuals who had faced many of their same challenges. CMU scholar Janise Blackshear stated that "being able to interact with other McNair scholars was one of the best parts of the trip for me. It was so much fun being around other students from different states, schools, and who were from different disciplines." These interactions also gave the scholars a chance to realize the common bond that exists among graduate students and members of the program. "Our commonality was a passion for life, an openness to ideas that isn't seen as frequently in those that dreamt empty thoughts. We had been graced with the tools of mapping out our dreams and goals. We were graced with the confidence of knowing we are not alone in our struggles," said scholar Julie Fitzgerald of the Indiana experience.

Overall, the camp provided the scholars with skills and information to help them succeed in the graduate school application process and beyond. Furthermore, this experience inspired scholars and solidified their determination for their goal of achieving a doctorate. As scholar Alicia Harper said, "This camp gave me a confidence I didn't realize I could have. I learned that I can achieve my dreams."

A Special Thank You to Our 2003 & 2004 Faculty Mentors

Dr. Keith Clifton	Dr. Tim O'Neil
Dr. Greg Colores	Dr. Orlando Perez
Dr. Gary Dunbar	Dr. Stuart Quirk
Dr. Brad Fahlman	Dr. Ben Ramirez-Shkwegnaabi
Dr. Mark Freed	Dr. Tamara Sbraga
Dr. Shelly Hinck	Dr. Brad Swanson
Dr. Marcela Hurtado	
Dr. David Jesuit	
Dr. Jonathan Kelty	
Dr. Rodney Kirk	
Dr. Bill McDaid	
Dr. Kristen McDermott	
Dr. Scott McNaught	
Dr. Nina Nash-Robertson	



2004 McNAIR SCHOLARS:

Reflections on the Summer Research Institute

TRAVIS BERNARD

Research: Grant, Meade, and Victory: Command Unity and Disunity in the Army of the Potomac, 1864-65

Mentor: Dr. Bill McDaid



Travis conducted his research on the early experiences of General Grant with the Army of the Potomac, which focused on the problems of command style and structure and their effect on the Overland campaign of 1864.

EBONY BLACKMON-HUMPHREY

Research: Analysis of Clinical and Environmental Isolates of the Emerging Pathogen *Achromobacter* *Xylooxidans*

Mentor: Dr. Greg Colores



I really enjoyed the Summer Research Institute. The sessions helped me to understand the larger scope of the McNair Scholars Program. Most of all, I enjoyed learning different things and personality characteristics about the other scholars. This experience was extremely beneficial and meaningful.

JANISE BLACKSHEAR

Research: Politeness in the 2000 Presidential Debates

Mentor: Dr. Shelly Hinck



As a McNair scholar, this summer has been one of the most exciting, challenging, and profound summers that I have ever experienced. I was able to clearly define my educational goals and research interests through various assessments, seminars, and assignments. Not only did I gain invaluable research experience, but I also made great new friends in my cohort that have similar long-term goals as myself. I am truly grateful for having the distinguished honor of being a McNair scholar. I highly recommend this program to motivated students who are seriously considering graduate school.

JONATHAN BREGE

Research: Supercritical Fluid Facilitated Growth of Bimetallic Nanoparticles

Mentor: Dr. Brad Fahlmann



I am currently conducting inorganic chemistry research under the guidance of Dr. Bradley Fahlman. My work in the laboratory has been challenging, but rewarding and has already led to two publications. The skills and techniques I have gained in the course of my McNair research have prepared me for graduate level work. With the help of all the McNair experiences, I am confident that I will be successful in graduate school and that my research will make a lasting impact on society.

JULIE FITZGERALD

Research: Globalization, Education, and Income Inequality

Mentor: Dr. David Jesuit



As a McNair scholar, my mentor and I spent quite a while developing the project that I would be working on over the summer. Dr. Jesuit has been a great help along the way, providing new insight and helping me to understand various parts of the research process. The work load was extensive and self discipline was so important to completing the project. Most graduate students are working on research and don't have constant oversight. I am so thankful for the opportunity to have a trial first! My project has spawned lots of different research ideas that will keep me busy for as long as I like. That is the great thing about research, there is always something out there to learn!

ALICIA HARPER

Research: Interaction of Risk Factors in the Prediction of Alcohol Use and Problems in College Students

Mentor: Dr. Stuart Quirk



This summer I was fortunate to be able to conduct research with with Dr. Stuart Quirk, who guided me through the process and gave me the skills necessary to become a researcher, not just a student. After completing my project I now feel that I possess the skills and determination to tackle any research or academic venture that may come my way, and I feel much more confident of my abilities to face the challenges ahead. Working with Dr. Quirk and the McNair program has been a wonderful experience and I will always view it as a formative event in my life.

EMILY LEWIS

Research: Issues of Race: A Critical Analysis of the Race Concept and the Language of Race
Mentor: Dr. Rodney Kirk



This summer I learned so much about the ideologies of my field and much more about myself. I did not realize at the beginning of this project how significant it would become in my life. During the research process, I have learned how to communicate more effectively with professors, people my own age, as well as with those who know a lot more than me in my field. In addition, I have realized how to manage my time in a way that allows me to work and play at the same time. Sometimes I found myself upset because I did not know what to write. Overall, this experience has given me a great deal of confidence concerning my future as a graduate student and as a professor.

KORINNE MILKS

Research: Jane Austin: A Study in Literary Influences
Mentor: Dr. Kristen McDermott



My experiences with McNair this summer have been invaluable. I have learned so much about graduate school, including what I need to do to get there and to succeed there. My summer research on Jane Austen has given me experience in working with a mentor, managing original research (and time), and presenting. In short, McNair has given me the tools I need to build my career and future.

ISABEL MONTEMAYOR

Research: Variation in Chilean Spanish: The Use of Impersonal Pronouns
Mentor: Dr. L. Marcela Hurtado



Over the past summer I have had the great opportunity to be part of the McNair program. I feel like I have gained so much from this program and I know that my future will be wonderful because of every aspect I have taken from this program. I have learned to challenge and believe in myself. My experience has been interesting with all the ups and downs of a rollercoaster. I have the McNair program to thank for all that I have been able to experience and hope to experience in the future. In the spirit of Ronald E. McNair, the sky is not my limit and I have many things yet to accomplish.

ANISHA PRUITT

Research: Suppression of Sexual Thoughts
Mentor: Dr. Tamara Sbraga



This summer I had an opportunity to gain knowledge far beyond my imagination. In the beginning of this journey, I set out to discover what research really was and what it would take for me to become an authentic and accredited researcher. Thanks to an astonishing mentor who took time and great pride in guiding me through this long hard journey, I was able to create a genuine original research project. As a result of this experience, my writing, speaking, and interpersonal skills have improved. It also helped me realize that motivation and persistence can help anyone overcome weaknesses to achieve their goals.

WANDA THIBODEAUX

Research: The Woman's Voice: The Russian Influence on the Treatment of Women in Contemporary Composition and Sacred Choral Practices
Mentor: Dr. Nina Nash-Robertson



Conducting my summer 2004 research project for McNair was unlike anything I'd ever done before. The best thing about it was that I got to learn about something in which I was truly interested and do so at my own pace. It was incredible to see three months worth of work come to a productive close, and even more rewarding was the fact that I got to work with my mentor as a colleague rather than just a student. Doing the project gave me a much better idea of what doing research for graduate school would actually entail. Overall, the project experience was a good one.

SYLVIA WHITE

Research: Opera as History: Representations of Two Historical Figures in Recent American Opera
Mentor: Dr. Keith Clifton



Being a McNair scholar has changed my outlook. My ambiguous future plans are more defined, and if not definite, are certainly well informed. Being validated as a scholar was a delicate process for me. It involved recognition of my strengths and weaknesses, and a firm dedicated desire to improve. My resolve was tested, but has been solidified even more so through my success. My research was a superbly dynamic experience, as I traveled to St. Louis and Pittsburgh. Further, those invaluable things that I've learned along the way will continue to guide my future academic endeavors.

IN THE NEWS: McNair Scholars Present Research

A number of our scholars presented their research at the Student Research & Creative Endeavors Exhibit at CMU in April, 2004.

- Theresa Barber:** "Cyclopoid copepod predation on larval yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) in response to varying rotifer densities."
- Jonathan Brege:** "Low temperature growth of carbon nanotubes from the catalytic decomposition of carbon tetrachride."
- Sandrena Hall:** "Use of a substituted pyrimidine to counteract 3-nitropropionic acid-induced motor deficits in a rodent model of Huntington's disease."
- Kathleen Kae:** "Anishinaabe land loss in Michigan: The allotment process at Isabella and Bay Mills reservations."
- Stephanie Pierce:** "Effects of hypoxia on ATP-sensitive potassium channels in respiratory neurons."
- Robin Ray:** "Conservation genetics of badgers in Michigan."
- Melissa Strong:** "Function of obsession on identity in Paul Auster's postmodern fiction."
- Raymond Whitney III:** "Latin American civil military relations and the effect of military coups on the process of democratization."

McNair scholars also presented research at discipline-specific and national conferences across the country.

- Theresa Barber:** "Cyclopoid copepod predation on larval yellow perch (*Perca flavescens*) in response to varying rotifer densities" presented at the *Joint Meeting of Ichthyology & Herpetology* at the University of Oklahoma in May, 2004.
- Jonathan Brege:** "Supercritical fluid facilitated growth of copper and aluminum oxide nanoparticles" presented at the *National American Chemical Society* in March, 2004.
- Stephanie Pierce:** "ATP-sensitive potassium channels contribute to hypoxic depression of inspiratory-related bursting in the pre-Botzinger complex" presented at the *Experimental Biology Conference* in April, 2004.
- Robin Ray:** "Genetic determination of the number of badger populations in Michigan" presented at the *Meeting of the American Society of Mammalogists* at Humboldt University in June, 2004.
- Melissa Strong:** "The function of obsession in Paul Auster's fiction" presented at the *National Conference on Undergraduate Research* in April, 2004.
- Raymond Whitney III:** "Civil-military relations in Latin America: A case study of public opinion in Ecuador and Paraguay" presented at the *Midwestern Political Science Conference* in April, 2004.

McNair: One Great Opportunity

Lynn Curry, Program Coordinator



Lynn Curry with scholar Anisha Pruitt

If I had to pinpoint the best part about the McNair Program, I would have to say it's the scholars receiving the opportunity to grow and mature in their approach to learning and ultimately being able to achieve their doctorate. It's certainly a long and challenging process, but being a McNair scholar helps to clearly define that path, understand the reasoning behind pursuing such a goal and realize the skills required to achieve long-term success.

What I love about this job is being able to be an integral part in linking the scholars with the resources and information required to start down the path toward their Ph.D. I love to see the scholars excited about the possibilities for themselves, both in terms of becoming skilled researchers and gaining entrance to their top-choice graduate program. I love to see the scholars bond and support one another as they progress in the program and I love to see them push themselves to "up" their scores on the GRE or apply for a highly competitive fellowship, believing they have a strong shot at getting it due to their experience with McNair.

I must say that I also love seeing the scholars struggle through some of the more challenging aspects of the program, because it is rigorous and demands dedication, but because the best part is seeing them come through these challenging times with a greater degree of confidence in their abilities. Things might not always work out how they had hoped, but I hear over and over from scholars how happy they are to have had that hard experience because "next time" they will know how to "do it better" and "next time" they won't be as nervous about trusting themselves in the process.

You see, being a McNair scholar not only teaches you about how to get into graduate school, it gives you a "practice run" of sorts for what it's going to be like once you get there. It demands excellence and it elevates the typical undergraduate student to one who engages in serious research, takes advantage of every academic opportunity and one who develops a clear path toward achieving a higher degree. McNair is a great opportunity in my mind because it produces highly accomplished and skilled scholars in many different fields, all stemming from their collective experience as McNair scholars at Central Michigan University. It really is a great opportunity for motivated students wishing to further their education and make a real difference in their area of study.

“ Nothing splendid has ever been achieved except by those who dared believe that something inside them was superior to circumstance.

—Bruce Barton

2003 Scholar Updates

Theresa Barber

Theresa has one more year left at CMU before continuing on with graduate school, which she intends to do in the area of behavioral ecology. As a CMU Summer Scholar this past summer, Theresa gained further research experience and spent a lot of time "in search of snakes" while conducting her field work. She is currently considering several graduate programs, including the master's program in biology at CMU.

Kathy Kae

Kathy completed her degree at CMU this August and will be starting work on her Ph.D. in History with a focus on Native American studies at the University of Wisconsin – Madison, this fall. Fully funded for three years, she is very excited about this opportunity and continuing her research under the guidance of Dr. Ned Blackhawk. Kathy is also looking forward to exploring the city of Madison, even though she will greatly miss her son back in Michigan who will hopefully be able to visit often!

Sandrena Hall

Sandrena has one year remaining before finishing her undergraduate degree in neuroscience at CMU. This past summer, Sandrena had the amazing opportunity of conducting research at the University of Michigan – Ann Arbor, by being selected to participate in their summer research program. U of M is one of her top graduate school choices, making this opportunity especially significant. Sandrena is excited about presenting her research this fall at a national conference and is looking forward to continuing on at the graduate level.

Robin Ray

Robin will be finishing up her B.S. in biology this year and has enjoyed being able to continue her genetic based research working with Dr. Swanson as a CMU Summer Scholar. She is currently exploring several potential career options and graduate programs that focus on working with wildlife and their conservation. Robin may continue her education at CMU at the master's level, but is also intent on achieving her Ph.D. in the future.

Stephanie Pierce

Stephanie recently graduated and spent the majority of the summer in Iowa City – the place she will be starting work on her Ph.D. in physiology at the University of Iowa. Fully funded, Stephanie is extremely excited about being able to attend her top choice university and is eager to "get started." She has already enjoyed meeting many fellow students in the program and is looking forward to beginning her courses and figuring out which faculty mentor and dissertation topic she will ultimately decide upon.



2003 McNair Scholars at the Indiana Camp in June, 2003 (from left): Sandrena Hall, Robin Ray, Stephanie Pierce, Ray Whitney III, Theresa Barber, Melissa Strong, and Kathy Kae

Melissa Strong

Melissa finished work on her English degree at CMU this summer and has decided to take a year off to explore some professional opportunities before returning to graduate school to pursue a master of fine arts degree in creative writing, most preferably, at the University of Michigan. Melissa is looking forward to also using this time to expand and work on her portfolio of poetry and writing, something about which she is extremely passionate. She ultimately wants to teach creative writing at the college level.

Ray Whitney III

Ray has been very busy completing his undergraduate degree in political science and starting a family this past summer. After recently welcoming a new baby boy with his wife Jen, Ray is currently exploring several immediate professional opportunities before going back to pursue a graduate degree, most likely in the area of international relations. Ray already has significant overseas experience and is considering a career in government, possibly as a Foreign Service officer with the U.S. Department of State.



The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program

In 1989 the U.S. Congress funded a Department of Education TRIO program in commemoration of Dr. Ronald E. McNair, an African-American laser physicist and astronaut killed in the Challenger Space Shuttle explosion. Devoted to science, McNair grew up impoverished in South Carolina, facing social and economic barriers to higher education. McNair worked diligently to earn his B.S. in physics from North Carolina A&T University and then his Ph.D. from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. His work on laser physics led to three honorary doctorates and several awards and fellowships. The McNair Scholars Program honors his memory and his dedicated pursuit of scientific knowledge and personal excellence. Since its inception the McNair program has expanded to over 169 undergraduate institutions nationwide.

ATTENTION MCNAIR ALUMNI:

We want to know what's going on with you! Be sure to keep us updated on what you're up to & stay in contact with the office!

Please fill out the update forms & return them to Foust 250!



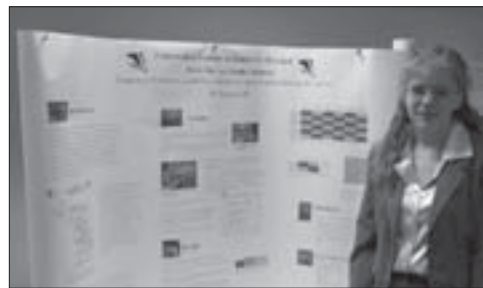
Training Future Graduate Students

Dr. Bradley Swanson, Associate Professor of Biology

The McNair program exposes undergraduate students who are interested in pursuing advanced degrees the opportunity to experience real research in a university setting. Based on this I expected any McNair students in my lab to function as a beginning graduate student. Initially, I was uncertain how this would work, but my participation in Central Michigan University's McNair program is one of the most fulfilling experiences I have had as a faculty member.

I run a molecular genetics lab focusing on answering questions related to conservation biology and ecology as well as

a wildlife forensic lab. Given the focus of my lab, it was surprising that scholar Robin Ray chose to work with me as she had yet to take genetics and was devoted to working with horses. Robin entered the lab with an open and curious mind, rapidly becoming a valued lab member, participating in all aspects of our research program. While Robin has been working with me I have seen her intellect bloom, her areas of interest expand as she learned more. My initial concerns proved to be unfounded as my McNair scholar has easily worked as hard and performed as well as any of my graduate students.



Scholar Robin Ray presenting her research at a national McNair conference in Wisconsin in 2003.

Starting Early & Getting In

Kathy Kae, 2003 McNair Scholar



Scholar Kathy Kae with her mentor Dr. Tim O'Neil.

I would like to talk about the process of getting into graduate school, a long and arduous process that includes researching schools, finding a graduate advisor, putting a curriculum vitae together, and writing personal statements. It's a lot to keep track of and the best advice is to start early. Early last fall I discovered that if I switched a few things around I could graduate much sooner than expected—which meant that in order to meet deadlines, I had about two months to put my graduate school application together. I still had not decided on which schools to apply to (I didn't have to

do that for another year, or so I thought.) And I wanted to visit a couple schools to see what I thought of them. So, every weekend for the month of November I was traveling in different states visiting two graduate schools, attending two confer-

ences—one in Miami and one in Wisconsin, writing my CV and personal statement, while simultaneously trying to keep up with current coursework. Shall we say...I was a little stressed come the end of the month!

It all paid off though. I have been accepted into the Ph.D. program in the History Department at the University of Wisconsin at Madison. I am positive that my visit there last November enhanced my chances of being accepted. I met my potential advisor and discussed my interests with him. I also met other faculty and current graduate students during this visit. It was an exciting time for me and I returned with greater enthusiasm than ever before.

I recently returned from a recruitment weekend for prospective graduate students at UW-Madison. I felt fortunate that I had already had the chance to make a prior visit which afforded me extra time to get to meet other faculty as well as get a feel for the city of Madison. I asked my advisor which part of the application process was my strongest point and he said without hesitation that it was my writing sample that got me in. He said many people can get a good GPA, do well on the GRE and get excellent letters of recommendation, but not everyone can write. The writing sample I submitted was the paper I wrote during my summer research with McNair. I am convinced I would not be going to UW in the fall if it hadn't been for my training in the McNair Scholars Program, at the very least, the program eased the process of getting in beyond description.



UPCOMING EVENTS

September 8

McNair Information Meeting

6:30 p.m. Lake Michigan Room
Bovee University Center

October 1

McNair Fall Research Symposium

9:00 a.m. Strosacker Room
Park Library

October 6

2005 Scholar Applications Due

Foust 250

October 15

**Undergraduate Research &
Creative Endeavors Symposium**

2:00 p.m. Park Library