

UC Davis McNair Scholars Program

The McNair Scholars Program is housed within Graduate Studies at the University of California Davis. We are located in Suite 2300 of the Student Community Center, and provide year-round staff support and mentorship to our distinguished scholars. Please share the news of this unique program with others in the UC Davis community. We are now accepting applications!

Program Benefits:

- Academic Counseling
- Free Tutoring
- GRE Preparation Seminars
- Assistance in Graduate School Applications
- One-on-one independent study with a faculty mentor in your field
- \$2800 Summer Research Stipend

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Program Requirements:

- UC Davis GPA of 3.0 or higher
- US citizen or legal resident status
- Apply at the end of your sophomore year
- Low-income *and* first-generation college student, *or* member of a group underrepresented in graduate study (e.g. Chicano/Latino, African American, or Native American)

Graduate Student Assistants

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Find Out More and Apply Online!

mcnair@ucdavis.edu
<http://mcnair.ucdavis.edu>

Help Our McNair Scholars Help the World

Several junior McNair Scholars are taking great steps to bring much-needed help to Haiti, and you can help! When Carolina Tavárez recognized the difficulty that poor Haitians face in finding affordable training in foreign languages (primarily English and Spanish), she decided to take an active step to make things better by forming the group Ann Prepare Lavni (Haitian Creole for “Let us prepare our future”) to bring supplies and training that would help equip Haitian teachers to provide free language instruction for the students who need it most.

They are accepting contributions of money and school supplies here on campus. Do what you can to help our McNair Scholars make a difference! For more details, visit their Facebook page at www.facebook.com/AnnPrepareLavni, or their website at annpreparelavni.webs.com.



Junior McNair Scholars and Ann Prepare Lavni executive staff interview at Univision! From left: Scholar Jennifer Vergara, Univision reporter Maribel López, and Scholars Carolina Tavárez and Monserrat Garcia.



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McNair Aggie News



What is McNair?

The McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is a federally-funded program dedicated to increasing the ranks of underrepresented groups in graduate study. The McNair Program provides a select number of promising scholars with mentoring and fellowships to improve their chances of being admitted to doctoral programs nationwide.



ON OUR CAMPUS

Visit us on the second floor of the new Student Community Center, in Suite 2300 with the Undergraduate Research Center. More information about the program and applications are available online at mcnair.ucdavis.edu. If you have any questions about the program, please drop by our office or send us an email at mcnair@ucdavis.edu!

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McNair Scholars Present

McNair Scholars at UC Davis have always attended a variety of national conferences to showcase their research, and this year's juniors are no exception. In addition to the annual McNair Research Conference held at Berkeley in August, this year's scholars will have presented at the University of Washington in May, as well as right here at the UC Davis Undergraduate Research Center's conference.

The first of these conferences, the URC conference here at UC Davis, took place on April 27 and 28, and our junior scholars impressed with their presentations. Ada Li, Rolando Tejeda, Alfonso Aranda, Rebeca Figueroa, Caprice Lee, and Jennifer Vergara presented posters that introduced their research, while Destiny García, Carolina Tavarez, Christine Knox and Julia Ruble were joined by McNair seniors Helen Trejo, Nidia Trejo, and Rosana Womack in giving oral slideshow presentations to an audience of their peers and other scholars.

Later this month, more junior scholars will be traveling to Washington State to participate

the University of Seattle McNair Conference. Araceli Dagio, Jennifer Fabian, Michael Ford, Monserrat García, Ryan Green, Greg Loh, Cindee Robles, Julia Ruble, Jared Szi, and Carolina Tavárez will be presenting.



Finally, all of our Junior Scholars will be traveling together to Berkeley in August to take part in the 20th Annual California McNair Scholars Symposium, where they will share their completed summer research projects with fellow McNair scholars from campuses across the country. These public presentations will make an exciting introduction to the world of academic conferences and travel that these scholars will experience in graduate school!

Junior McNair Scholars Ignite...

This year's McNair Junior Scholars are soaring! **Alfonso Aranda** has spoken at four conferences so far this year. He was a guest speaker at the UC Davis Students of Color Conference in November, the weekly MEChA workshop in February, the UC Davis Undergraduate Research Conference in April, and the Raza Youth Empowerment Conference in May.

Caprice Lee was awarded the Botanical Society of America's Undergraduate Research Award and their P.L.A.N.T. grant.

Greg Loh was elected president of Phi Alpha Theta, the History Honors Society.

Destiny Garcia was awarded the Steve Montoya Caless Scholarship for Latinos in engineering.

Carolina Tavárez won the UC Davis Blum Center PATA Grant and the Miguel Velez Scholarship. She made the Dean's List for Fall and Winter quarters this year, and was named a First

Year Outstanding Academic Scholar.

Steve Juarez has made Dean's Honor Roll every term of his two years at UC Davis, is in the Sociology Honors Program, and is currently a finalist competing for the John and Lyn Lofland Award for undergraduate research in sociology.

Jennifer Fabian is a 2012 Silver Recognition Recipient of the UC Davis Community Service Award for over 300 hours of volunteer work at the Yolo County Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence Center.

Montserrat Garcia has been accepted as a representative of the Inter-University Program for Latino Research at the Summer Institute for Latino Public Policy

Michael Ford received the ACS 2012 Undergraduate Award in Analytical Chemistry.

We congratulate our juniors for these awards, and for all those to come!



...and Senior Scholars Take Off!

This year's cohort of graduating McNair Scholars is setting a new standard for Davis undergraduate scholars, taking off for advanced degree programs across the state and country.

Ken Fung will be matriculating in the Mechanical Science and Engineering doctoral program at University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign.

Fausto Gonzalez will be heading to the University of California Berkeley doctoral program in Social-Personality Psychology.

Nidia Trejo will be attending Cornell University's combined Masters-doctoral program in Fiber Science.

Helen Trejo will join her in Cornell's Apparel Design Masters program. Both Helen and Nidia Trejo have received SUNY fellowships from the graduate school.

Rosana Womack will be entering UC San Diego's doctoral program in History. She has also been nominated for the UC Davis History Department's Senior Excellence Award, and presented at the Undergraduate Resource Center symposium, where she holds the title of URC Ambassador.

Gloria Toriche will be entering UC Santa Barbara's doctoral program in Chicana/o Studies, and has received a fellowship to fund her first quarter there. She also made the Dean's List for Winter Quarter and was nominated as Student of the Year for the Chicana/o Studies Department.

Treasineu McDaniel will be attending Howard University's Masters in Education program.

Sarah Palmer will be attending Mills College's Masters of Public Policy program.

Best of luck to our graduating seniors!

An Interview with a McNair Mentor, Professor Diana Davis

Diana Davis is an Associate Professor of History and faculty mentor to one of our McNair Junior Scholars. She agreed to discuss with us the benefits and surprises of the mentor-student relationship. As the granddaughter of a coal miner, Professor Davis says she was raised to work hard at just about everything and to value education above all else. She grew up wanting to be a doctor but later decided to pursue a Masters degree in geography. In the course of conducting her fieldwork, she worked with a group of nomads in Morocco suffering through a severe drought that was killing many of their livestock; in order to do something to help, she went to veterinary school so she could treat their animals while pursuing her doctorate in geography. She attended Tufts University School of Veterinary Medicine and had the opportunity to work with Afghan nomads in western Pakistan for a summer while studying ethnoveterinary medicine and gender. After graduating, she entered the doctoral program in Geography at UC Berkeley where she conducted her doctoral fieldwork with nomads in southern Morocco, on the edge of the Sahara. By listening to these nomads, and taking seriously what they said about their environment, that it was not degraded, she decided to research the history of the widely accepted notion that Morocco is overgrazed and deforested. This research, published in her first book, revealed the deep environmental history of the region, including Algeria and Tunisia and how it was primarily constructed during the French colonial period. She says, "I became an environmental historian by listening to nomads on the edge of the Sahara!"



What does it mean to be a mentor to a McNair Scholar?

To be able to help students targeted by the McNair program is an honor for me. As someone devoted to higher education, I thoroughly enjoy being able to help guide students towards graduate school and a career in teaching and/or research. I find that the kinds of students who qualify for the McNair program are often very bright students with a lot of motivation who thrive with some guidance in the research process.

Their motivation, importantly, is not limited to doing well themselves, but quite frequently these students are driven to make a positive contribution to society and the greater good which I find very heartening. The real secret, for me, is to help them to do what they are passionate about and to do it in the best way they can as they move towards graduate education.

When meeting with prospective mentees, what qualities do you look for in a student scholar?

I keep my eyes open for bright students that have a spark of passionate curiosity about the world and how it works as well as the drive to try to make a positive contribution to our society is some way. They usually ask a lot of excellent questions in class and in office hours, etc. My current mentee (Alfonso Aranda) has all of these traits and working with him is a pleasure.

How should a student prepare for his/her first meeting?

The first meeting should not be a stressful one but a meeting about exploring different options and setting expectations. It is very helpful if the student can write down a bit about what kind of graduate/professional programs they are interested in and also a short paragraph on what topic they think they might want to research over the summer to present at the conference. I do feel that the first meeting should lead to a series of regular meetings with the student to keep the research process on track.

What criteria should a student use for choosing a mentor?

Different students will need different things from their mentors but

I think it is fair to say that they should choose someone who shows a genuine interest in the student and in their work and future. It is probably a good idea to choose a professor who has already spent a good amount of time with the student and who has experience in the discipline the student is targeting for graduate school. I believe the students need mentors who are going to spend enough time with them to help in developing the research project and who can help with many aspects of the graduate school application.

How can the mentor/mentee relationship impact graduate school applications?

A good mentor/mentee relationship can have a very positive impact on graduate school applications. Usually, the professor will have years of experience in the targeted discipline and also much experience in helping students prepare for graduate school. These professors also know what it takes to be accepted into a graduate program and they can help the mentee write excellent letters of application and polish other aspects of their applications.

How does the mentoring relationship benefit your own work?

Mentoring is a stimulating experience in a number of ways. As an historian and a geographer whose research is in environmental history, I don't have a lab where my mentees can physically help with my research. However, the process of discussing my research and theirs, explaining related theoretical aspects, and discussing the relevant literatures with mentees often gives me new valuable ideas or new perspectives related to my own research. It is the interaction process, the questions and answers, the sustained dialogues that are so very valuable to me and I believe also for the mentee. As a mentor I give but I also receive!

How is working with a McNair scholar different than working with a student in a regular seminar?

Working with a mentee over a couple of years is quite different from working with a student in a regular seminar that lasts only one quarter. Whereas the quarter flies by and allows only limited interaction, the process of working over a year or two with a McNair scholar allows for a much richer and sophisticated academic relationship that ideally leads to more sustained and deeper research, greater exploration and understanding of the relevant literatures, and a more complex writing process with adequate opportunities for revision.