



McNair News



VOLUME 2 * ISSUE 2

SUMMER 2005

Congratulations to the following McNair Scholars who graduated in the Summer and Fall Semesters of 2004, and Spring 2005:

2004:

Iris Belen,
Christina Morejon,
Yolens Pierre,
Keyana Smith

2005:

Syreeta Brown,
Anita Cortez,
Johnathan Hamilton,
Aneysha James,
Melissa Lopez,
Susanne Rowe,
Heather Rozelle,
Samantha Steffen

One Down, Many More to Go! *By Melissa Lopez*

This issue marks the completion of the first year for the UCF McNair Scholars Program. During this short amount of time, the program has excelled in so many ways, showing its growth and potential for future scholars to come. The summer 2004 research experience allowed our inaugural scholars to present their individual projects at a National McNair Conference, displaying all of the hard work they put into their research. Eager to share their findings with various communities, some of our scholars continued to present their research at national conferences within their discipline.

Other scholars furthered their research by developing their own Honors in the Major thesis. This prestigious honor showed them first hand what they will be experiencing once they enter their respective graduate programs. A background in research also helped in their application process, which was highly successful for our scholars.

Some of the schools that they have been accepted to include: Columbia University, University of Chicago, Boston College, Howard University, New York University, and of course, UCF. Wherever they decide to go, our scholars continue to rave about how the title of McNair Scholar next to their name has opened doors they only dreamed would open.

Finally, UCF held its first McNair Day, where our scholars highlighted their developed projects, and the program brought in our new group of scholars. They have also had a taste of the McNair summer experience during their trip to the University of Georgia. Being one of the seniors who will go on to graduate school this fall, I leave the UCF McNair Scholars Program extremely proud of the achievements we have attained, and confident that the next group will be just as successful.

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New McNair Scholars 2004-2005



Kristin Boehringer, Sarah Mendoza, Scott Sutterby, Kimberlie Saint-Louis, Maya Alphonse, Pamela Youmans, Dahyns Diaz, Gladys Benites, Yannick Louis-Charles, and Ashley Green

Not Pictured: Enrique Ortiz and Renea Forde



McNair Scholar Heather Rozelle wins a \$1000 scholarship at the 2005 Showcase for Undergraduate Research Excellence (SURE)

"I expect McNair to be a tool for me to strengthen my academic background"
 --Scott Sutterby



Scholars visiting Niagara Falls during the University of Buffalo McNair Conference

Just One of the Guys *By Yannick Louis Charles*

Yannick Louis-Charles, McNair Scholar, interviews fellow scholar Scott Sutterby, a 21 year old Junior majoring in Psychology and Political Science.

So Scott, how did you find out about the McNair Program and why did you decide to apply?

I found out about the program through an email that extended the application deadline. This was the first I had heard of it, and decided to apply with only a week's time available. I thought it would be a good opportunity, so I went for it.

How have your experiences been in the program thus far?

They have been good so far. I have been especially pleased with how willing Dr. Green and Ms. McKoy are to work with me, respond to my concerns, and solve any problems that I may have. I am looking forward to gaining more experiences with the program.

What expectations do you have about being here, and how does this fit into your plans for the future?

I really hope to have a valuable piece of research at the end of my McNair experience, to increase my competitiveness for graduate school. I expect McNair to be a tool for me to strengthen my academic background.

How does it feel being one of only two males in this year's group of scholars?

To be honest, I hadn't even really considered this until our fellow scholars pointed it out. I don't see this as a big deal, and being surrounded by women is never a bad thing anyway. If anything, it will just mean more attention, and I'm confident that Enrique and I are competent enough to make the entire male gender proud.

Do you think that there is anything that the McNair Program can do to encourage more male applicants and do you have any advice for guys who are thinking about applying next year?

I don't think that the program is geared towards encouraging female applicants, nor do I think that guys need any special strategies to apply. McNair just needs to be more visible on campus and the male/female ratio will begin to balance itself out. Until then, these ratios aren't so bad, and we are ready for the challenge of being the "Men of McNair".

Voices of the Scholars *By Sarah Mendoza*

For me, having a mentor is the most enjoyable aspect of the McNair program, and our close relationship has undoubtedly been my greatest learning opportunity.

There is so much to know and understand about academia and the process of continuing my education at the doctoral level. The fact that my mentor has been there to guide me, invest in me as a student and a person on the path to higher learning, has been irreplaceable.

Academic research is a time consuming and challenging discipline. The guidance of a mentor is necessary, but also a delight to experience. It has been so much fun to get my hands wet in something I might want to do indefinitely.

A New Reality *By Kristin Boehringer*

Being born into a reality where life was best taken day-by-day, my instinct has been to focus on doing my best in the present. This reality is one of bills, housekeeping, work, and college. Financing my education, I have remained employed while working towards my bachelor's degree. Envious of more privileged students, I used to daydream of the luxury of attending the college of my choice and participating in clubs and activities on campus. Until now. I am a McNair Scholar.

My new reality is saturated with opportunities where I can sense myself evolving into something rich with possibility. There is no need for me to simply daydream. Now, I plan. I plan for my future as a graduate student, a doctoral student, and as a researcher. My goals inspire me and keep me driven. I share this experience with my fellow scholars as we compare our interests and research at workshops and socials. Together we are learning the meaning of one of Goethe's couplets: "Whatever you can do, or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

New McNair Scholars on a tour of the University of Georgia campus (February 2005)



McNair Day a Huge Success *By Samantha Steffen*

During our 2004 McNair Day, twelve UCF students were inducted into the program with a commencement ceremony. The day began with Senior Scholars presenting their research to new McNair scholars, faculty, and staff. This was an excellent way for the Senior Scholars to show the attendees all of their hard work and dedication, as well as demonstrate what it means to be a McNair Scholar.

The scholars' diligence paid off, because the McNair Day presentations were very insightful and informative. The Senior Scholars were very professional and relaxed while presenting.

I, on the other hand, was extremely nervous. As part of the first Senior Class, I was not expecting to present on that day. Well, as fate would have it, an opening came available the night before, so I grabbed it. At first, I felt unprepared. However, I soon remembered all the training that we received during the summer workshops. My presentation fell into place and I was able to finish without passing out. If there are any words of wisdom that I can pass along to the new scholars, it is that the more time and effort you put into your research and presentation skills, the more it will show and the rewards will be immeasurable.

If not for the McNair Scholars Program, graduate school would not be an obtainable goal for me. The lessons learned and experience gained since I have been in the program has made a tremendous impact on my goal of earning a PhD.

**If not for the McNair Scholars Program, graduate school would not be an obtainable goal for me."
-Samantha Steffen**



Scholars Samantha Steffen and Syreeta Brown

EDITORS.....Melissa Lopez

Jeremy C. Boehl

CONTRIBUTORS.....Yannick Louis-Charles

Kristin Boehringer

Samantha Steffen

ADVISOR.....Joseph M. Green, Ph.D.

For more information on the McNair Scholars Program, please visit: <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~mcnair/> or call (407) 823-1817

McNair Scholars Program
P.O. Box 162001
Orlando, FL 32816-2001



Checking In... *By Jeremy C. Boehl*

Dr. Joseph Green has been the Director of the McNair Scholars Program at UCF since its inception in 2003-04. He enjoys working with the students, introducing scholars to others in the McNair community, and exposing them to various graduate programs around the country. However, the most fulfilling aspect of his job is “being there when they get their acceptance letter to graduate school.”

Last year, the McNair program inducted 12 new scholars for 2004-05. Dr. Green thinks very highly of them. “They are extremely motivated & enthusiastic. I have very high expectations for all of them to complete the program, move on to graduate school and be successful in life” Green said. In February 2005, the new McNair scholars traveled to Atlanta and Athens, Georgia for a retreat. They had an “outstanding experience” visiting the University of Georgia, and had some great discussions with students and faculty at UGA.

McNair Scholars are undergraduate students that have aspirations of going forward and earning their Ph.D. Through undergraduate research, mentoring, workshops, and trips to McNair conferences at schools around the country, McNair Scholars get to work with not only distinguished faculty at UCF, but with like-minded students from other disciplines, who have similar goals and aspirations. Dr. Green advises them to “Persevere. Maintain focus on your long term objective, which is to earn your degree. Take it one step at a time.”

Look for big things from the McNair Program in 2005-06. The 2nd Annual McNair Research Day is this summer, and they will be holding workshops and attending conferences year round.



Dr. Green