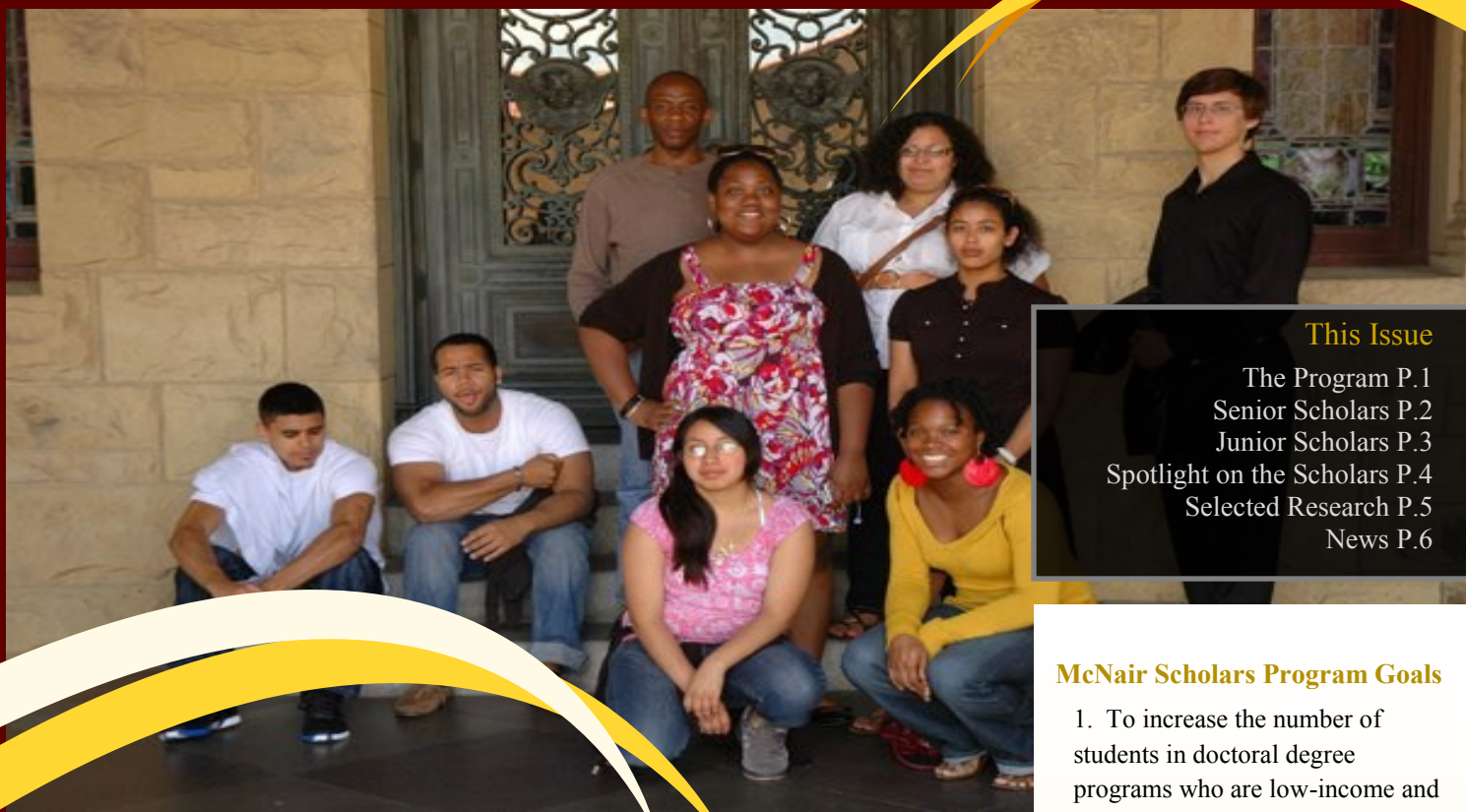


McNair Scholars Newsletter

Spring 2011



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The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program

The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program recognizes that the diversity of researchers is an integral component of scholastic excellence. It seeks to produce a new generation of scholars and researchers that will more accurately reflect the growing diversity in intellectual perspectives, life experiences, and cultures represented in academia.

The McNair Scholars Program is a federally funded program (one of the TRIO Programs funded by the Department of Education) mandated by Congress. The goal of the program is to increase the number of students in doctoral degree programs who are low-income and first-generation undergraduates or students who come from groups underrepresented in graduate education.

McNair Scholars Program Goals

1. To increase the number of students in doctoral degree programs who are low-income and first-generation undergraduates or students who come from groups underrepresented in graduate education
2. To produce a new generation of scholars and researchers that will more accurately reflect the growing diversity in intellectual perspectives, life experiences, and cultures represented in academia
3. To create a scholarly community of rigor, engagement and success
4. To serve as a model for the development of emerging socially progressive scholars
5. To foster spaces for interdisciplinary scholarship, mentorship and knowledge exchange

Meet the Scholars

Senior Scholars

Katie Alford

Soft Boiled Horace: Sanctuary and the Simple Art of Murder (2009)

Failing Better: A Reclamation of Failure in Composition (2010)

Brad Cavanagh

Glucagon-Like 1 Peptide Receptor and Novel Diabetes Therapies (2009)

Functionality and Interferon-alpha as an Adjutant to CL4 Cells in the Eradication of Solid State Malignant Mesothelioma Tumors (2010)

Allison Cook

The Relationship between Acculturation, Physical Health, and Mental among Latino University Students (2009)

Janelle Cox

The Shakespearean Treatment vs. the Historical Treatment of King Richard III (2009)

Measuring the Effects of Early Literacy Programming in Public Libraries (2010)

Rhiannon Dixon

Social Construction of Childbirth (2009)

HIV/AIDS in Uganda (2010)

Gina Jacobson

She Get it From Her Mama: Young African-American Women's Sexual Relationships and the Effects of Maternal Attitude on their Sexual Relations (2009)

Joseph Min Kim

Capitalizing the Effect of Additional Stock of Social Capital by Looking at the Winners and Finalists of the All American City Award (2009)

Lilian Lara

Todo en la Familia: Looking at the Roles Family Plays in the College Process (2009)

A Change in the Demographic: Overarching Factors in the Education/Schooling of Rural Latino/a High School Students (2010)

Julia Mulligan

One Nation Under Groove? The Effects of Country and Rap Music on their Fans' Respective Lifestyles: A Marxist Approach (2009)

Questioning Assumptions: HIV/AIDS Mass Media Intervention Campaigns (2010)

Sarah Powers

A Critical Evaluation of the Pak Mun Dam (2009)

An Investigative Study into Human Trafficking in the People's Republic of China (2010)

Jomar Salazar

Manipulating and Mutating Proteins: GP120 and B12 Antibody: A Template for and HIV vaccine/Anti-Retroviral Drug (2009)

Kevin Symanietz

Overcoming Apathy: Voter Mobilization in the Obama Campaign (2008)

Labor Market Incorporation of Somali Refugee Migrants to Central Minnesota (2010)

Ricky Thorson

Idle Hands: Youth Employment and Crime Rates (2009)

A Spatial Approach to Modeling Franking Expenditures for House Representatives (2010)

Meet the Scholars

Junior Scholars

Dominique Clayton

Teachers' Perceptions of African American Vernacular (2010)

Mentors: Dr. Jennifer Esperanza, Dr. Kathleen Greene

Amani Edwards

Influence of Nationalism on Minority Ethnic Groups in China and Russia – A Comparative Analysis (2010)

Mentors: Dr. Donna Oliver, Dr. Rachel Ellet

Zoila Guachichulca

The Driving Force Behind Latinos/as and Doctoral Degree Attainment (2010)

Mentor: Dr. Sylvia Lopez

Ken Hodges

Consumption, Afrocentrism, Eurocentrism and Black Egypt (2010)

Mentor: Dr. Shannon Fie

Andrew Lee

A Cultural Compromise: Japanese-American Developments of Self-Identity (2010)

Mentor: Dr. Beatrice McKenzie

Nicole McMillan

Teen Parents and Educational Attainment Beyond High School (2010)

Mentors: Dr. Carol Wickersham, Dr. Suzanne Cox

Lucia Peralta

Understanding the Doctor-Patient Relationship in Relation to Cultural Competency, Language Barriers and Time (2010)

Mentor: Dr. Nancy Krusko

Nico Salas

Exploring Death in America's Health Care System (2010)

Mentor: Dr. Nancy Krusko



Spotlight on the Scholars

Eighteenth Annual Ronald E. McNair California Scholars Symposium

August 5 - 8, 2010 - UC Berkeley

This August, senior scholars Joseph Min Kim, Sarah Powers, and Allison Cook joined over 350 other McNair Scholars at the Eighteenth Annual Ronald E. McNair California Scholars Symposium at UC Berkeley to present their original research. Students prepared and delivered 12-minute oral presentations summarizing the findings of their second-summer McNair research. Sarah reflects positively on her experience saying, “I really appreciated getting to present at a major conference at a famous institution and seeing the works of other scholars.” Allison agrees, saying “I am always happy to have the chance to practice my oral presentation skills and learn from my peers. UC Berkeley was an especially enjoyable place to do it.”

Between presentations, the students spent their four-day sojourn to California’s bay area touring the host institution, nearby Stanford University, and the area cities. “I definitely enjoyed visiting UC Berkeley and Stanford. Both were informative and welcoming. I also enjoyed exploring San Francisco and Berkeley neighborhoods. In addition to it being a nice break, I feel like I got a better picture of the schools and their environments by branching out while I was there,” Joseph recalls.

The students also had the opportunity to attend numerous GRE, graduate school, and research themed workshops led by authorities on graduate school and the admissions process. Allison reports benefitting from the programming, “The workshops were enjoyable and helpful; I took many notes during the graduate admissions panels to which I have often refer as I compose my graduate school applications.” Now, as each of the students anticipates graduate admissions decisions, they certainly agree that their experience at the symposium was a positive and advantageous one.



Selected Research

Labor Market Incorporation of Somali Refugee Migrants to Central Minnesota

Kevin Symanietz

In 1991, civil war erupted in the east African country of Somalia as the federal government collapsed, leaving its citizens in a state of chaos. Millions fled the violence for refugee camps in Kenya and elsewhere. Over time, some were resettled in other countries including the United States. Known for its strong economy and social welfare programs, Minnesota was one of the first states to accept refugees from Somalia. Throughout the 1990s, the Twin Cities served as the home base for Minnesota's Somali population. Starting in 2000, Somali refugees began resettling in smaller communities throughout the state. Among them is St. Cloud, the largest city in central Minnesota. Located amid farming country and meat-processing plants, St. Cloud provides access to low-skill jobs that refugees with limited English can perform.

A group of sociology professors at St. Cloud State University, including Dr. Stephen Phillion, regularly conducts research on immigrant and refugee workers in central Minnesota. Over the summer, I assisted Dr. Phillion in the initial stages of a research project. My task was to gather data through interviews with Somali refugees working or seeking work in central Minnesota. To find interview subjects and learn more about the employment process for Somalis, I volunteered at a social service organization that assists recent refugees in finding jobs.

As African Muslims living in a predominantly white, Christian community, Somali refugees faced some tension upon settling in St. Cloud. Incidents of vandalism to Somali-owned businesses and places of worship have occurred over the years. Yet, few respondents reported troubles related to their new neighbors. Some worked in factories and turkey processing plants alongside white, Vietnamese, and Hispanic workers. For most Somalis, this was the extent of their interaction with non-Somalis. Somali culture values helping each other, and many in the refugee community rely upon each other for help while also sending money back to family in Kenyan refugee camps.

Recent economic difficulties seem to have impacted Somali refugees seeking work in the St. Cloud area. As competition for jobs has increased, more refugees have sought help in finding employment through social service agencies. At the same time, the size of the Somali refugee population has increased (some estimates place it at nearly 10% of the population of St. Cloud) and so have tensions between white Americans and Somalis. News reports of vandalism and workplace discrimination were complemented by the stories shared by my interview subjects who had experienced verbal harassment and sometimes discrimination in housing. Although further research and analysis will be required before the full picture of Somalis' incorporation into the central Minnesota labor market can be drawn, I found the experience of social research enjoyable and come away with a greater appreciation for the many challenges refugees and immigrants face.



Congratulations

Sophomore Scholars!

Kidan Araya

Raul Barrera

Ricky Cotter

Elise Giammanco

Diana Gutierrez-Meza

Vanessa Orellana

Anna Osornio

Anthony Otey Hernandez

Derek Pugh

Jazmyn Russell

Ulysses Smith

Raymond Thomas

Upcoming Events

Oklahoma State University Research Scholar Conference

February 23 - 25

Presenter: Ken Hodges

Dinner with Faculty Guest, Dr. Camille Wilson Cooper

February 25, 5-8pm, Science Center 150

All Scholars

Annual Meeting for the Society for Personality Assessment

March 9 - 13

Presenter: Allison Cook

Research Contract Due

March 16

Sophomore Scholars

McNair Second Module Course - *What is Research?*

March 16 - May 4, Mondays 7-9pm, Science Center 202

Junior Scholars

McNair Scholars Induction Ceremony

March 25, 7-8pm, Wright Museum of Art

All Scholars

National Conference on Undergraduate Research (NCUR)

March 31 - April 2

Presenters: Dominique Clayton, Allison Cook, Amani Edwards,

Lilian Lara, Sarah Powers

Best Practices Session

May 23

Faculty Mentors

Summer Research Institute

May 23 - July 15

Sophomore Scholars

Summer Research Symposium

July 14

Sophomore Scholars

Produced By:

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Sarah Powers

Kristin Frey

Allison Cook

Kevin Symanietz

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