

# EMU McNair Scholars Program

## 2015 — 2016 Newsletter



### Creativity, Resilience, Success: Forging a Path to Graduate Studies

**Dr. Heather Neff, Ph.D.**, Director, **Eastern Michigan University McNair Scholars Program**  
**Kimberly Freeman, M.A., LLPC.**, McNair Program Specialist

The **Eastern Michigan University McNair Scholars Program** is funded by the federal Department of Education to assist first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students in gaining admission to, and succeeding in doctoral education.

EMU McNair's ninth year has been one of newly created programming, the development of additional research support, and superior academic outcomes. Serving **thirty-five (35)** students representing every EMU College, **one hundred percent (100%)** of our 2015-2016 seniors graduated this year, with **eighty-five percent (85%)** accepting admission to **Master's** or **Doctoral programs**. All of our seniors completed their studies with a GPA of 3.0 or above, including four *cum laude*, one *magna cum laude*, and **three summa cum laude** graduates. Seven McNair alumnae completed Master's degrees—*five at EMU*—and our **Doctoral** roster has now grown to **three**, with deepest congratulations to **Dr. Rachel Hutchins** (Barry University) and **Dr. Jasmine Lee** (Michigan State University).

This year the McNair Program focused on two critical areas: providing multiple opportunities for our students to present their research, and the addition of new fall and winter seminars designed to assist seniors in the graduate admissions process. Having evaluated the areas that have proven to be the most academically challenging for our participants, we strategically hired graduate assistants with expertise in writing, mathematics, and statistics. We met our goal of **40% STEM** enrollment, and are working toward a significant increase in our STEM admission and persistence in the months to come.

Our youngest scholars learn the basic elements of research during the fall semester "Team Challenge," which introduces students to peer-reviewed scholarship, and leads to the development of group research proposals comprising an Abstract, Literature Review/Introduction, Methodology, Research Budget and Works Cited page. These proposals are substantive enough to be presented both at national McNair conferences and at the EMU Undergraduate Symposium.

During the winter semester, our Cadets (sophomores) produce individual research proposals with a faculty mentor, while our Interns (juniors) engage in mentored research activities leading to the production of a paper to be published in the *McNair Scholars Research Journal*. This

model, developed over the past six years with a keen focus on the specific needs of our student population, resulted in McNair Scholars participating in **thirty-four 2016 Undergraduate Symposium** presentations. **Thirty** Scholars spoke at McNair conferences in Kansas and Maryland, and others presented research at discipline-specific, professional conferences in San Diego, Baton Rouge, Indianapolis and Washington D.C. With the addition of our senior fall and winter graduate admission seminars, EMU McNair offers comprehensive, intensive post-baccalaureate preparation for our participants.

In many ways, the McNair Scholars Program exemplifies the EMU mission. While success in doctoral studies is our primary goal, we are equally interested in graduating students who, in the words of our Creed, "understand cultural differences, appreciate the arts and...foster positive change on our campus, in our communities and professional lives." McNair Scholars thus participate in Study Abroad and Alternative Spring Break programs, accept positions of authority in our residence halls and student organizations, and complete the additional academic requirements of the Honors College.

Our success is largely due to the support of the University community, and in particular, the Graduate School, the Office of Research Development and the Office of Financial Aid. Special thanks to Vice President and Associate Provost Wade Tornquist, Dr. Sonia Chawla Wright, CAS Dean Thomas Venner, CAS Associate Dean Kate Mehuron, Associate Provost James Carroll and Provost Rhonda Kinney-Longworth. Additional thanks to Dr. Arnold Fleischmann, Dr. Christine Neufeld, Dr. Ellen Koch, Dr. Mary Ramsey, Claresta Davis, Donelle Goerlitz, Julis Nims and Ted Coutilish.

The McNair Program is extremely grateful for the kindness and generosity of our **faculty mentors**: Eric Acton, Ruth Ann Armitage, Steven Backues, Kimberly Barrett, Ernest Behringer, Marti Bombyk, Ramona Caponegro, Anne Casper, Yvette Colón, Marilyn Corsianos, Natalie Dove, Ana Monteiro-Ferreira, Jeffrey Guthrie, Maggie Hanes, Celeste Hawkins, Pamela Landau, Dyann Logwood, Lois Mahoney, Maria Milletti, Barbara Patrick, Dave Pawlowski, Janet Okagbue-Reaves, Carol Schlagheck, Brian Sellers, Megan Sterling, John Thomsen, Nevena Trajkov, Jose Vites and Angie Mann-Williams.

## Creativity, Resilience, Success: Forging a Path to Graduate Studies

### **Creativity: A Developmental Approach to Conceiving, Conducting and Presenting Research**

Few undergraduates arrive at EMU with an understanding of the purpose, value, and processes involved in research. Trends in graduate admissions, however, indicate that engaging in research activities throughout the undergraduate career prepares students for admission and success in graduate education. The **six-semester McNair Seminar sequence** is designed to integrate our participants' developing research abilities with their increasing academic knowledge.

Our fall semester Team Challenge creates a penalty-free environment for students who are new to research, while encouraging the development of close personal relationships between our Cadet (sophomore) and Intern (junior) cohorts. This year our teams produced short research proposals on (1) the effect of undocumented workers on the American economy; (2) factors in the spread of HIV-AIDS in African American women; (3) the role of DNA in criminal behavior; (4) how young children are affected by intimate partner violence, and (5) the complexity of play in gender-specific toys.

Having gained an understanding of the research process, during the 2015-16 academic year **eight** McNair Interns worked in EMU labs with **NIH** or **NSF** funding, and **three** students were listed as **co-authors** with their faculty mentors on papers published in peer-reviewed journals. **Six** of our Cadets and Interns have been admitted to intensive Summer Research Opportunity Programs at the University of Pennsylvania, the University of Nebraska, the Ohio State University and the University of Michigan.

By their senior year McNair Scholars have learned to take direction and work collaboratively with a faculty mentor. They are comfortable with developing a research question and designing a process to collect and evaluate data. They have learned to write scholarly papers and understand the peer-review process, and all have presented their work in poster, PowerPoint and oral formats, both at student and professional conferences. Our fall and winter **Senior Seminars** focus on composing effective personal and research statements, identifying and visiting graduate programs, and evaluating and accepting offers of graduate admission.

---

### **Resilience: Building an Effective Network with the EMU Community**

The McNair Program addresses both the academic and personal needs of first-generation, low-income and underrepresented students in Higher Education. With an understanding of the additional economic and individual challenges faced by our students, McNair seminars focus on a range of topics, from **funding** one's undergraduate and graduate education, to effective **self-advocacy** when facing problems in housing, employment, advising and mentoring. McNair offers **tutoring** in science and mathematics, writing support, and a **book club** in which students read, discuss and write about works of fiction. Participants meet with the McNair Director each semester to discuss private academic and personal concerns, and the program directs them to appropriate EMU offices for

additional support.

EMU McNair maintains strong ties with the University community through the **McNair Advisory Board**, which includes representatives from each EMU College, as well as staff from Academic Advising, Halle Library, Campus Life, the Office of Financial Aid, the Holman Success Center, Educational Opportunity Programs, the Honors College and our fellow TRiO programs, Upward Bound and Student Support Services. These institutions have been instrumental in offering McNair Scholars opportunities for employment, counseling, study abroad, leadership and participation in cultural events, which strengthen the resilience and perseverance of our students.

---

### **Success: Preparing our Scholars for the Challenges of the Future**

Over the past decade many universities have decreased funding for Master's level education, resulting in the need to prepare our students, particularly in the STEM disciplines, for immediate admission to highly competitive Doctoral programs. The McNair process of integrating research throughout the undergraduate experience, including the publishing of our students' work in the annual **McNair Scholars Research Journal** (<http://commons.emich.edu/mcnair/>), is proving to be a successful model for our target population. With down-

loads of our students' papers numbering over 140,000, EMU McNair Scholars, with the support of their faculty mentors, are sharing our University's excellence with the world. Armed with three years experience in developing and presenting research, and with an understanding of how to address their financial and emotional challenges, McNair Scholars have gained the skills necessary to attain their academic and professional goals. Because of the support of the entire EMU community, **the McNair Program works!**

## 2015 - 2016 EMU McNair Graduate Admissions Roster

- Rasheed Atwater** (Dr. Anna Ferreira, mentor): Master's of History at Eastern Michigan University
- Kayla Boyd**, *summa cum laude* (Dr. Carol Schlagheck, mentor): Masters program at the Newhouse School of Journalism at Syracuse University
- Tiffany Browne**, *summa cum laude* (Dr. Ramona Caponegro, mentor): Master's in Higher Education / Student Affairs at the University of Michigan
- Dominique Canning**, *summa cum laude* (Dr. Eric Acton, mentor): Doctoral Program in Linguistics at the University of Michigan
- Shahana Chumki**, *magna cum laude* (Dr. Anne Casper, mentor): Doctoral Program in the Biological Sciences at the University of Michigan
- Troy Deskin** (Dr. Rusty McIntyre, mentor): Doctoral Program in Experimental Psychology at Ohio University
- Diamond Jones** (Dr. Maria Milletti, mentor): Doctoral Program in Chemistry at the University of Iowa
- Rosaly Maldonado**, *magna cum laude* (Dr. Yvette Colon, mentor): Master's of Social Work Program at the University of Pittsburg
- Mikki Smith**, *cum laude* (Dr. Janet Okagbue-Reaves, mentor): Master's of Social Work Program at Wayne State University
- Gloria Tonks** (Dr. Yvette Colon, mentor): Master's of Social Work Program at Wayne State University
- William Trice** (Dr. Ernest Behringer, mentor): Master's of Science in Physics at Eastern Michigan University

### Our current Doctoral Degree candidates include:

- Carly Evich**, Purdue University, Clinical Psychology
- Julie Krupa**, University of South Florida, Criminal Justice
- Anthony Sparkling**, Michigan State University, Construction Management
- Dara Walker** (ABD), Rutgers University, African American Studies
- Folayan Zheng**, Nova Southwestern University, Computer Engineering

### ...Our Doctoral roster has grown, too!

- 2016: **Dr. Jasmine Lee, Ph.D.**, Michigan State University, Higher Adult and Lifelong Education
- 2015: **Dr. Rachel Hutchings, M.D.**, Barry University, Podiatry
- 2015: **Dr. Ashley Rowland, Ph.D.**, University of Colorado, Boulder, Molecular, Cellular and Developmental Biology; currently pursuing post-doctorate studies at the University of California, Berkeley

### Papers Published in the McNair Scholars Research Journal, Volume 8, 2015

- Examination Of Replication Dynamics In Fragile Sites Through Molecular Combing  
*Shahana Ahmed Chumki, Dr. Anne Casper, Faculty Mentor*
- Democratizing Fashion: The Effects Of The Evolution Of Fashion Journalism From Print To Online Media  
*Kayla C. Boyd, Dr. Carol Schlagheck, Faculty Mentor*
- You Can't Just Pick One Race And You Shouldn't Have To: Analyzing Biracial Protagonists In Young Adult Fiction  
*Tiffany N. Browne, Dr. Ramona Caponegro, Faculty Mentor*
- Queering Asexuality: Asexual-Inclusion In Queer Spaces  
*Dominique A. Canning, Dr. Eric Acton, Faculty Mentor*
- Computational Analysis Of The Stereoselective Synthesis Of Substituted Pyrrolidines  
*Diamond T. Jones, Dr. Maria C. Milletti, Faculty Mentor*

“Dominicana De Pura Sepa”: A Comparison Of Dominican Women Across Cultures

*Rosaly Maldonado Rosado, Dr. Yvette Colon, Faculty Mentor*

College Students Experiencing Homelessness: The Consequence Of Failed Macro Policies

*Brialle D. Ringer, Dr. Marcia Bombyk, Faculty Mentor*

A Generation At Risk: The Ties Between Zero Tolerance Policies And The School To Prison Pipeline

*Mikki L. Smith, Dr. Janet Okagbue-Reaves, Faculty Mentor*

Fractal Patterns In Chaotic Scattering

*William C. Trice, Dr. Ernest Behringer, Faculty Mentor*

### McNair Awards Ceremony

Each year, EMU McNair recognizes outstanding students achievements in scholarship and service at our annual **McNair Awards Ceremony**. The following students and mentors were honored on April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2016:

#### **Marcus K. Adams Outstanding Service Award**

**Brialle Ringer and Mikki Smith**

#### **Sarah H. Huyvaert Mentor of the Year Award**

**Dr. Anne Casper, Professor of Biology**

#### **Research of the Year**

Awarded to the Scholar who produced the highest quality research published in the *McNair Scholars Research Journal*: **Ms. Dominique Canning**

*Research Journal: Ms. Dominique Canning*

#### **Special Award**

This award honors a student who overcomes unusual challenges on the path to academic success: **Ms. Kayla Boyd**

**Scholar of the Year:** Awarded to the Scholar who best exemplified Leadership, Service and Academic Excellence: **Ms. Shahana Chumki**

### 2016 Undergraduate Symposium Presenters:

Rasheed Atwater

Brandie Bentley

Larry Borum III

Mariah Brito

Tiffany Browne

Dominique Canning

Shahana Chumki

Gwendolyn Dean

Kyana Dixie

Mikael Dunn

Victoria Fisher

Alyssia Hence

Precious Humphrey

Demarco Johnson

Diamond Jones

Ivan LeBron

Rebecca Luth

Allante Moon

Deborah Munganga

Nyambura Njee

Brialle Ringer

Kala Sherman

Jesse Smith

William Trice III

Yeliani Valdez

Iris Vincent

Sina Webster

Faith Williams

### 2016 Summer Research Opportunity Program Participants

**Brandie Bentley:** University of Nebraska-Lincoln Minority Health Disparities Summer Research Program

**Larry Borum:** The Ohio State University’s Summer Research Opportunities Program (OSU SROP), in Physics

**Allante Moon:** St. Joseph Mercy Hospital Health Administration Internship

**Jesse Smith:** Biomedical Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania

**Yeliani Valdez:** Univ. of Michigan Future Public Health Leaders Program

**Sina Webster:** Univ. of Michigan Future Public Health Leaders Program



### 2015-2016 Student Accomplishments

- Mahogany Anderson:** McNair Cadet, Honors College, Education First Scholarship, and Member of the S.E.L.F. Project
- Rasheed Atwater:** McNair Intern, Dean's List, President of Society of Africology, and Honor Graduate of A.I.T. Motor Vehicle Operations, Michigan National Guard
- Brandie Bentley:** McNair Intern, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Emerald Scholarship, Undergraduate Research Fellowship, Honors College Student Fellow, President of the Black Honors Student Organization, Alternative Spring Break at Luther Place Memorial Church: Steinbrock Center in Washington, D.C. MLK Day of Service, and Flint Water Drive, EMU Women's Association Scholarship
- Larry Borum III:** McNair Cadet, McNair Heartland Conference, Emerald Scholarship, and Resident Advisor
- Kayla Boyd:** *summa cum laude* McNair graduate, McNair Heartland Conference, Irene Little Wallace, Emerald, and TRUEMU Scholarship, Honors College, Study Abroad Scholarship, Dean's List, Florence and Rome Study Abroad, Paris and London Study Abroad, Senior Staff Writer for the Eastern Echo, Relay for Life, Walk Now for Autism Speaks, VISION Kid Konnection, and New Student Orientation Assistant, McNair Special Award
- Mariah Brito:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference, University of Maryland McNair Conference, National Scholars Program, Central Regional Meeting of the American Chemistry Society, Women in Philanthropy, Project SEED Mentor at EMU, Secular Freethinkers at EMU President, and Member of the Chemistry Club
- Tiffany Browne:** *summa cum laude* McNair graduate, EMU Presidential Scholar, Dean's List, Honors College Student of the Year, Barry A. Fish and Honors Fellowship Undergraduate Research Awards, Grade Grievance Committee (English), National Orientation Director's Association Case Study Award, Society for Collegiate Leadership and Achievement Secretary, 2015 LeaderShape, Orientation Team of EMU Advisors and Mentors, and Oxford-Brookes Study Abroad
- Shahana Chumki:** *magna cum laude* McNair graduate, EMU Presidential Scholar, Honors College, Dean's List, Don Brown and Meta Hellwig Biology Fellowship Recipient, Bert Johnson Scholarship, Honor Study Abroad Award, Vice-President for Society for Leadership & Achievement, National Society for Collegiate Scholars, and Florence and London and Dublin Study Abroad
- Dominique Canning:** *summa cum laude* McNair graduate, McNair Heartland Conference, Honors College, Emerald Scholarship, Dean's List and Linguistics Program Scholar of the Year
- Gwendolyn Dean:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference
- Kyana Dixie:** McNair Intern, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Emerald Scholarship, Dean's List, and Honors College, the McKeachie Marshall Prize
- Mikael Dunn:** McNair Intern, University of Maryland McNair Conference, S.U.R.F. Fellowship, Michigan Branch of the American Society of Microbiology, Environmental Mutagenesis and Genomics Society, the M.O.S.T. Member-at-Large, and S.O.S. Workshop volunteer
- Victoria Fisher:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Education First Scholarship, Linda Shipley Endowed Scholarship, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Steinbruck Center Internship in Washington D.C., Meals on Wheels, MLK Day of Service, and Flint Water Drive
- Alyssia Hence:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, and Emerald Scholarship.
- Precious Humphrey:** McNair Cadet and University of Maryland McNair Conference
- Demarco Johnson:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Dean's List, and Emerald Scholarship
- Diamond Jones:** McNair graduate, McNair Heartland Conference, Education First Scholarship, Dean's List, Honors College, Undergraduate Research Fellowship, American Chemical Society Petroleum Research Fund, and Hypercube Scholar Award
- Ivan LeBron:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Emerald Scholarship, and Member of Eta Sigma Gamma
- Rosaly Maldonado:** *magna cum laude* McNair graduate, Honors College, Connelly Scholarship, Emerald Scholarship, National Scholars Program, Falcon Carlos el Jefe Scholarship, 25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Undergraduate Symposium, and President of the Latino Student Association.

**Allante Moon:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Education First Scholarship, Southeast Michigan Community Scholarship, Honors College Recruiting Student Fellow, National Society of Collegiate Scholars, Steinbruck Center Intern in Washington D.C., Member of the Health Administration Student Organization, Vice-President of the Black Honors Student Organization, MLK Day of Service, and Flint Water Drive, EMU Women's Association Scholarship

**Deborah Munganga:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Dean's List, Education First Scholarship, Pi Sigma Alpha member, Alternative Spring Break in Tennessee, Vice President of the Way Campus Bible Study Fellowship, MLK Day of Service volunteer, and Intern at Public Interest for Health, Honors Study Abroad Fellowship

**Taylor Murphy:** McNair Intern, Honors College, Dean's List, Education First Scholarship, and Vice president of EMU Chemistry Club

**Nyambura Njee:** McNair Intern, McNair Heartland Conference, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Dean's List, Emerald Scholarship, Franklin Warren Scholarship, National Association of African American Studies conference, Vice president of the Society of Africology member, African Student Association member, Black Student Union member, and Student Advisory Board member

**Brialle Ringer:** McNair Senior, McNair Heartland Conference, Emerald Scholarship, Deans List, Honors College, Honors Fellowship, Alternative Spring Break: participant, Coordinator, Site Leader, Alternative International Break Coordinator, SOS Community Service, Growing Hope Volunteer, Canvassing for House of Representatives Candidate, Nonprofit Leadership Alliance Member, Evans Strand Award, EMU Scholarship, Alzheimer's Advocate for Young Professional Alzheimers Advocates of Washtenaw

**Kala Sherman:** McNair Cadet, Honors College, Dean's List, and Emerald Scholarship

**Tahsina Shimu:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Education First Scholarship, and IONA Mosque volunteer

**Jesse Smith:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Regents Scholarship, Honors College Recruiting Fellow, Maryland McNair conference, MEHA conference, University of Pennsylvania Research in Biomedical Science SRP, Black Honors Student Organization member, and Flint Water Drive volunteer

**Mikki Smith:** *cum laude* McNair graduate, Dean's List, Honors College, President of Mentor2youth, Public relations Michigan Works Youth Council, and Association of Black Social Workers

**Jasmine Stout:** McNair Cadet, Dean's List, and I.M.A.G.E member

**Gloria Tonks:** McNair Senior, Recognition of Excellence, Secretary of OLASW, and Youth Leader

**William Trice III:** McNair Senior and McNair Heartland Conference

**Yeliani Valdez:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Dean's List, Education First Scholarship, Treasurer of Latino Student Association, National Society for Collegiate Scholars member, and Crisis Text Line Service volunteer

**Amanda Wardin:** McNair Cadet, Education First Scholarship, and Jenkins Family Scholarship

**Sina Webster:** McNair Cadet, Honors College, Dean's List, Education First Scholarship, and Volunteer Tutor at 826 Michigan

**Faith Williams:** McNair Cadet, University of Maryland McNair Conference, Honors College, Emerald Scholarship, National Scholars

### **Special thanks to the 2015 – 2016 McNair Advisory Board**

Reginald Barnes	Keith Jason	Dr. Harriet Lindsay	Gregg Costanzo
Elise Buggs	Dr. Toni Stokes Jones	Professor Julia Nims, <i>Head</i>	Calvin McFarland
Caryn Charter	Dr. Sema Kalaian	Dr. Mary Zdrojowski	Malverne Winbourne
Dr. Wade Tornquist	Dr. Janet Okagbue-Reaves	Jennifer Fong	
Thomas Passwater	Salam Taraben	Sade Wilson	

**...and our Donors, Dr. Ellen Koch and Dr. Toni Stokes Jones!**

