

EMU McNair Challenger

October 2016 Edition

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Eastern Michigan University McNair Scholars Program



Happy Fall, Scholars!

What We Did on our Summer Vacation!

Article by Stacey Gullion

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Here at McNair, we encourage our students to apply for and participate in **summer research** and **internship** opportunities. Not only are these programs stimulating and often useful to students' research, but they also help a student's *curriculum vita* stand out, while also providing great financial compensation. This past summer, five McNair Scholars were accepted to **Summer Research Opportunity Programs** at prestigious universities. We asked them to share their experiences with us.

Senior **Brandie Bentley** worked with Dr. Jordan Soliz, Director of Graduate Studies for the Department of Communication Studies at the **University of Nebraska-Lincoln**. Brandie says that, "the Minority Health Disparities Summer Research Program appealed to both my Public Health interest, and my desire to work with racial minority populations." Brandie spent the first two weeks of her program learning a complex data analysis strategy, which she expects to be very beneficial in her own research.

Interns **Yeliani Valdez** and **Sina Webster** attended the **Future Public Health Leaders Program** at the **University of Michigan**. During the FPHP **Yeliani** helped develop curriculum ideas for a girls' summer program, worked directly with the Latino community in Southwest Detroit, and mentored girls, aged 12-17. **Sina Webster** worked with an initiative that enlists local pediatricians to encourage their patients to read. Sina says, "My most valuable takeaway from this program was that I'm incredibly capable. The people I worked with supported me and helped me see qualities in myself that I hadn't seen before."

Intern **Jesse Smith** spent his summer at the **University of Pennsylvania**. While his primary research interests lie in Biochemistry, he worked with Dr. Michael Marks, who does research in cell and molecular biology. "My most valuable takeaway was recognizing that, regardless of the discipline, scientific research processes are the same."

Larry Borum spent his summer at the **Ohio State University's Ohio Agriculture Research and Development Center**, where he worked with Dr. Ling on heat transfer in the soil beds of greenhouses. Their goal was to provide the user with energy-efficient measurements, and to extend the cooling and heating seasons. Larry expects that this research will assist him with his advanced Physics courses in the fall.

When asked what advice they could offer their fellow Scholars, the overwhelming answer was simply to **apply!** The program benefits are great and the experiences will change your life!

Let's Go McNair!!

Wasem's Cider Mill,
1:00 p.m., October 16

Macbeth, October 21,
7:00pm, Quirk Theatre

**African American Cultural
History Tour**, 1:00 p.m. Oct.
22

Horror Movie, Oct. 28

The Book of Mormon,
November 2, Fisher Theatre

McNair Movie: "Loving,"
Nov. 11

Elf: The Musical, November
18, Fox Theatre

Vital Signs, November 19,
Sponberg Theatre

TEAM CHALLENGE
Presentations, Noon, Dec. 9

Scholarly Experiences at the McNair Heartland Conference

Fourteen scholars attended the Ronald E. McNair Heartland Conference this September...
...and they loved it!



Tahsina Shimu

“One of the great benefits of being a McNair Scholar is the fact that you get to travel and present your research, and I had the privilege to go to the McNair Heartland Conference in Kansas City. I met boatloads of new people with very interesting research topics, and everybody who attended the conference was passionate and driven. It was so amazing to see all my McNair friends present their research. I loved that we all supported each other and were there to root each other on (this is also another one of the GREAT benefits of McNair!). Overall, I would say that it was a great weekend, and I gained more confidence in my presentation skills.”

Alyssia Hince

“I would say this trip was my favorite McNair trip by far! I presented my current research: “African American Males and the School-to-Prison Pipeline: An Exploration of Community Resources”. Initially I was nervous, but I soon learned that everyone in the room was very supportive. I had a great presentation experience, and also enjoyed learning about other people’s research. After everything was done, I left Kansas City with a feeling of greater self-confidence, more know-ledge about graduate school and what it takes to get my foot in the door, other McNair Scholars’ extraordinary work, and just how great people really can be, despite any obstacle.”

Yeliani Valdez

“Attending the Kansas City Heartland McNair Conference was one of the most beneficial conferences I've been to. The students were nice, and open to giving advice on where to take our research. Attending the presentations not only allowed me to learn more but sparked new interests in future research, and methods as well. This trip made me feel closer to our cohort, and our McNair family as a whole. We had a mini workshop with a presenter and we all created poems about our strengths and weaknesses, it was amazing to hear that all of us faced similar challenges and had the same insecurities. It's comforting to know that we're not alone.”

Alumni Spotlight

Two of our brightest stars are lighting up the sky!!



Mikki Smith

Mikki Smith graduated *magna cum laude* in 2016 with a **Bachelor's Degree in Social Work**, and is now in the **Advanced Standing Master of Social Work Program** at **Wayne State University**. She was accepted into the Wayne Together Collaborative with a funding stipend, and says she hopes to focus on child welfare with a focus on children who are aging out of the foster care system. She says she hopes to “create and implement programs that help to prepare these children for higher education, trade school, or entering the work force, as well as living on their own.” While Mikki has moved on to new endeavors, she says she misses everyone in the McNair office and “encourage[s] everyone to use the McNair Program to help them achieve their academic and professional dreams!”

Keep up the great work, Mikki!

Courtney Williams

Congratulations to McNair alumna **Courtney Williams** (pictured right), on her recent graduation from **Pepperdine University** in California!

Courtney graduated *magna cum laude* from EMU in 2011, where she studied Psychology. During this time, Williams published the 2012 article "*Shifting Perspective on Female Homosexuality*," which addressed changes in the way Lesbianism has been viewed over the past 30 years. Courtney went on to study and graduate from **Pepperdine University** in Los Angeles, California, with a **Master's degree in Psychology**. Williams is currently completing her practicum hours towards her Marriage and Family Therapist License, while working as a therapist at a dual diagnosis treatment center. There she is responsible for creating personalized treatment plans for people recovering from drug and/or alcohol addictions. Courtney is also planning to marry her partner, Christine, in March 2017.

To current McNair Scholars, Courtney says, “Study what you love and enjoy the journey.”

Well done, Courtney!



**Good luck with your classes, your research, and
BE SURE TO VOTE!!**