

EMU McNair Challenger

February 2017 Edition

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Eastern Michigan University McNair Scholars Program



COLLEGE TRANSITIONS

Staff Spotlight: An Interview with LaMarcus Howard, M.A.

Interview by Stacey Gullion



It is the Friday before mid-winter break, and LaMarcus Howard, Associate Director of the Disability Resource Center and current doctoral student, is speaking to our group of McNair scholars about how to secure and cultivate relationships with mentors, a key step in progressing through late-undergraduate and graduate studies. LaMarcus holds their attention with ease—no small feat on the last day before break—and seems pleased that all of the scholars present have already secured faculty mentors. Nodding in approval as the last scholar states their major and their mentor, he says, “That’s good, that’s good.” Turning to the group at large, he leans forward and holds up a finger: “Always work with people who are willing to tell you the truth, regardless.”

Speaking with me after winter break, LaMarcus shares his journey from undergrad student to professional staff in higher education. Originally from Flint, he graduated with a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work from Central Michigan University, and says he was initially uninterested in going to grad school. He spent a year and a half working in an advising position, but says his mentor, with whom he maintains a close relationship, pressed him to *really* assess whether or not he was challenging himself. LaMarcus says that he took the message to heart, and that while he enjoyed the work he was doing, he knew he could push himself further: “I realized that more opportunities come with more education. So I went back.”

Returning to school as a graduate student presented its own “unique” and interesting challenges. LaMarcus entered the Educational Leadership master’s program at Central Michigan, his alma mater, and says it was a balancing act to transition from undergrad to grad student, as well as from staff professional to graduate assistant, at the same university where he earned his undergraduate degree. He says he had to learn to “really dig in and grind out” the increased workload, and says he depended on multiple people, including his mentor and cohort, to stay balanced and focused.

He appears to have made the shift well—LaMarcus finished his master’s degree in a year and a half, and currently serves as both staff and a Ph.D. student here at EMU. He says, “It’s beautiful, because I learn where I work and I work where I learn.” He says that while “there are a lot of early mornings and long nights,” his passion for helping college students keeps him motivated: “Education is so important—college changed my life. I enjoy meeting students every day. I enjoy the challenges, the successes, the good and bad days of higher education. I can’t see myself doing anything else. I don’t want to do anything else.”

When asked what advice he can offer to our McNair Scholars as they work to achieve their dreams, LaMarcus says, “Surround yourself with people who will inspire and motivate you. That support will keep you going. It’s all about surrounding yourself with people who care. Knowing someone who cares enough to call you out, even if it’s embarrassing, is a good thing. I really think it’s a good thing.”

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Let’s Go McNair!!

Hedwig & the Angry Inch

March 1, 8:00 pm,
Fisher Theatre

University of Maryland National Research Conference

March 16-19, College
Park, MD

Toledo Institute of Art,

Kehinde Wiley exhibit
Marh 24, 10:00 a.m.-
3:00 p.m.

Undergraduate Symposium, March 31

The McNair Awards Ceremony, April 7,

12:00 p.m. -2:00 p.m.

From the Military to McNair

We asked two of our veteran students about their transition from military service to academic work. Both are also members of our sister TRiO-program, Veterans Student Support Services



Sam Carano

Sam Carano served in the U.S. Air Force as an F-16 Avionics Specialist from 2011 to 2015—he was an aircraft electrician—and was stationed at an air test base outside of Los Angeles. Sam came to EMU in 2015, and is a triple-majoring Math, Physics, and Electronics Engineering Technology! He enjoys STEM, and his current studies parallel the technology he was exposed to in the military. Regarding his transition from military service to academic study, Sam says, “My transition was not as difficult as it could have been. EMU is very military friendly, and I have always had the help that I required while attending EMU. As far as my personal mentality, I treat my academic work the same as I was conditioned to treat my work in the military. Resiliency is key. Group mentality is also an effective approach. Everyone is struggling with something, so it’s best to team up.” Sam says his current hobbies revolve around his academic work, including studying electronics and how they can be improved.

Thank you for your service, Sam!



Anthony Terry

Anthony served in the U.S. Navy as a Boatswain Mate. He says he was responsible for many different duties aboard ship, and has been all over the world, including China, Japan, Guam, the Philippines, and more. He began attending EMU in the fall, and is currently studying Psychology with a minor in Criminal Justice. Anthony says he took a year off after finishing his service in 2015, and helped take care of his ailing grandparents during that time. He says, “When I started school, I already felt so different because I was older than most people and had never gone to college. Sometimes I still feel a little overwhelmed with everything, but Veteran Services and the McNair Program have given me a place where I can relax.” Anthony is currently working on a research proposal that examines graduation rates of student veterans and the factors that may help or harm them on their journey to graduation. In his free time, Anthony reads as many books as possible and spends time with family.

Thank you for your service, Anthony!

From Student to Intern: Robert Green

Last summer, Robert Green served as a Sales Engineering Intern at Textron, Inc., located in Muskegon, MI. Of transitioning from student to professional intern, Robert says, “You are tested without a syllabus. Things happen very quickly, and people rely on the information you give them to be correct. Excellent communication is the key to success!” To other students who are interested in pursuing internships, he says, “Get comfortable with being uncomfortable. Get out of your comfort zone and challenge yourself!”



Yes, it's *that* time. Late February. Early March...

EMU McNair Scholars, like college seniors around the country, are checking their phones for the long-awaited emails from universities offering them admission to graduate studies. Our Scholars, who have complete three years of rigorous research training, a GRE course, and received extraordinary support from their dedicated faculty mentors, are often faced with the difficult decision of choosing between *multiple* offers of admission! We are proud to share our 2017 Graduate Admissions Ticker—to be updated in the weeks to come!

The 2017 Graduate Admissions Ticker...!!

Congrats to our senior McNair Scholars!

Brandie Bentley (Dr. Yvette Colon, EMU Faculty Mentor)

University of Michigan, Master of Social Work / Master of Public Health
Washington University in St. Louis, Master of Social Work / Master of Public Health
The University of Pittsburg, Master of Social Work / Master of Public Health
The University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Master of Social Work

Mariah Brito (Dr. Jeff Guthrie, EMU Faculty Mentor)

Eastern Michigan, Master of Chemistry

Victoria Fisher (Dr. Lois Mahoney, EMU Faculty Mentor)

University of Michigan, Owen School of Business, Master of Accounting
The Ohio State University, Master of Accounting
University of Southern California, Leventhal School of Accounting, Master's Program

Rebecca Luth (Dr. Angie Mann Williams, EMU Faculty Mentor)

University of Michigan, Master of Social Work
University of Pittsburg, Master of Social Work

Allante Moon (Dr. Janet Reaves, EMU Faculty Mentor)

University of Alabama, Master of Health Administration

Taylor Murphy (Dr. Anne Casper, EMU Faculty Mentor)

Michigan State University, Doctorate in Biomolecular Sciences

Iris Vincent (Dr. Marilyn Corsianos, EMU Faculty Mentor)

George Washington University, Master of Women's Studies

New Scholars Watch!

We've welcomed several new scholars to our McNair family - below they share a little about themselves!

Ashley Beals

Ashley Beals is studying Pre-Occupational Therapy and Public Health— both are her passions—and she is currently trying to decide between the two. She is an Honors College member, originally from Jackson, Michigan, and works part time at a clothing store. In her free time, Ashley likes to listen to music, spend time with friends and family, and do outdoor activities such as biking, hiking, and kayaking. Welcome, Ashley!



Jaylen Taylor

Jaylen Taylor is an EMU Presidential Scholar and a Biochemistry major from Grand Blanc, Michigan. Jaylen is focused on maintaining her academic excellence, and hopes to use her education to make a positive difference in the world. In her free time Jaylen likes to play piano to de-stress, listen to podcasts, and hang out with friends. Welcome, Jaylen!

Nayeli Sanchez

Nayeli Sanchez, originally from Rockwood Michigan, is majoring in Interdisciplinary Environmental Science and Society, with a concentration in Biology. Originally from Rockwood, Michigan, Nayeli nurtures a deep passion for nature, and spends as much time as she can outdoors. She hopes to pursue a Ph.D. in the environmental sciences, and either become a professor or a researcher for a government agency such as the National Park Service. Welcome, Nayeli!

