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## Introduction

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## Introduction

Dr. Heather Neff, Ph.D.

*Director, EMU McNair Scholars Program*

*Professor of English*

*Michigan Distinguished Professor*

Eastern Michigan University is often described as a university of “promise”— an institution in which students from all backgrounds and identities can discover a path to their future. Our campus is alive with opportunities to meet people from across the globe and to work with faculty who truly care about our students’ preparation for their academic and professional lives. EMU is the perfect site to host a Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program.

The McNair Scholars Program is funded by the federal Department of Education to assist students from first-generation and underrepresented homes in obtaining bachelor’s degrees, and gaining admission to master’s and doctoral programs. While it is generally known that earning a graduate degree greatly increases an individual’s potential for higher salaries, job security and lifetime financial stability, few undergraduate students have a concrete understanding of how to prepare for, or gain admission to graduate school. Indeed, it is critical that students begin to prepare for advanced degrees early in their undergraduate studies. EMU McNair provides opportunities for sophomores, juniors and seniors to work closely with faculty mentors, engage in challenging writing and research activities, receive individual tutoring and counseling, and to enjoy graduate admissions assistance and meaningful cultural activities.

Research writing is a central focus of the McNair Program. Each article published in the *Eastern Michigan University McNair Scholars Research Journal* is the result of rigorous, faculty-mentored research activities designed to familiarize our students with every aspect of the writing and editing process. These articles examine topics important to our world, such as a newly-developed test to measure water toxicity, the lack of mental health care for juvenile offenders, Corporate Social Responsibility reporting by global companies, and the practices that influenced the outcomes of the No Child Left Behind legislation. The *EMU McNair Scholars Research Journal* is widely read; to date, the seventy-one articles published in Volumes 1-8 have

been downloaded over 150,000 times (<http://commons.emich.edu/mcnair/>), most often in Britain, Canada, and Australia.

I wish to extend my deepest thanks to the administrators, faculty and staff who have contributed to the success of our program, including Dr. Wade Tornquist, Dr. Rhonda Kinney-Longworth, Dr. James Carroll, Dr. Mary Ramsey, Dr. Rebecca Sipe, Dr. Arnold Fleishmann, Dr. Ellen Koch, Thomas Venner, Dr. Kate Mehuron, Dr. Sarah Huyvaert, Julia Nims, Caryn Charter, Donelle Goerlitz, Claresta Davis and Dr. Toni Stokes-Jones. We owe a great deal to your continued kindness and generosity.

Most importantly, thank you to the faculty mentors who worked with our students to produce the articles published in this volume: Dr. Anne Casper, Dr. Yvette Colón, Dr. Marilyn Corsianos, Dr. Jeffrey Guthrie, Dyann Logwood, Dr. Angie Mann-Williams, Dr. Lois Mahoney, Dr. Barbara Patrick and Dr. Joseph Scazzero.

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is named for Dr. Ronald McNair, a physicist and astronaut. The EMU McNair Program annually serves thirty-five high-achieving sophomores, juniors and seniors from first-generation, low income or under-represented groups (African American, Native American, Hispanic or Alaskan Native / Pacific Islander). The program prepares its participants for admission to graduate programs and the successful completion of doctoral studies.

Congratulations to the nine McNair Scholars published in this journal. We are exceedingly proud of you!

Dr. Heather Neff, Ph.D.



Dr. Wade Tornquist, Ph.D.

*Interim Associate Provost and*

*Associate Vice President for Graduate Studies and Research*

I've always loved libraries. Everything is categorized and perfectly ordered. I am in awe that so many documents and so much knowledge can be packed within one building. In a library, the names of scholars, their thoughts, and their discoveries are remembered in perpetuity.

In 1985, I was heavily involved in my doctoral dissertation research. My brother-in-law, a first-year undergraduate student, gave me a campus tour of his new school. As we scoped the library, I made sure we passed the rows of journals. Feigning aimlessness, I nonchalantly entered one row, stopped at the section devoted to *The Journal of Physical Chemistry*, selected a specific issue, and opened it to a specific article. I showed the page to my brother-in-law. My name was listed as an author. His eyes widened and he grinned. Of course, the scholarly journal formatting didn't resemble any magazines he was used to seeing, but he understood that I thought *this* magazine was something important. Scientists and academic libraries all over the world had a copy just like the one that I was holding! And this particular article would be available in this particular library in perpetuity! Later I explained, "You know how cars cause air pollution? In one of our projects, we're trying to understand how to build a battery-powered car. You won't need to buy gas! Just imagine, a city of cars with no automobile exhaust!" He didn't know how to react to such fantasizing. He just cocked his head and stared, as if he were thinking, "Good luck with that!"

Well, my research group didn't create the battery-powered, exhaust-free car, but today my brother-in-law can buy one. I believe my doctoral research took us one very small step in a 30-year path toward making that happen.

And that's the way of scholarship. Scholars are dreamers. They have a vision of a better future for humanity and they endeavor to learn about systems, to discover what's possible, and to recommend the next step in bringing the world closer to living the better future.

The nine undergraduate students who contributed to this journal have performed some impressive scholarship. They and their faculty mentors are to be congratulated. I hope these student scholars feel the same excitement I did when I saw my name in a journal for the first time. They discovered something, and they're sharing it with other scholars around world. And our library will hold their article, their names, and their thoughts in perpetuity! Most important of all, their scholarship reveals their vision of a better future for humanity. These are our words of encouragement: "Good luck with that!"

Dr. Wade Tornquist, Ph.D.