

## Scholars Urged to Use Their McNair Tools to Succeed

**A**t the 2012 McNair Scholars Recognition Reception on Friday, April 20, we said our goodbyes to graduating Scholars, heard the future plans of Junior, Senior, and Master Scholars, and recognized people who make the McNair Program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln truly outstanding. Emcees for the event were Michelle Haikalis and Bridget Agnew.

A notable moment of the evening was the keynote presented by former McNair Scholar Morgan Conley who shared her own experiences: first as an undergraduate McNair Scholar, then as a successful graduate student.



Morgan Conley

Morgan is a first-generation college student raised by her grandmother who had few resources. She said her grandmother taught her at a young age the value of education and to live with a purpose. It didn't take long after entering college for Morgan to decide she

wanted to go to graduate school. She wasn't sure at that point what discipline she wanted to pursue, but she knew she wanted to receive all of the training and education she could to be the best at whatever she decided to do.

Former McNair Scholars introduced Morgan to the McNair Program. While she was initially overwhelmed by all the research she would have to do as a Scholar, with the help of mentors, Morgan received "more advice and support than she ever imagined." As a psychology major, Morgan wanted to know how she could make herself stand out from other graduate student applicants, and her mentors and McNair faculty gave her plenty of advice and opportunities. The McNair staff gave her support as well and even funded a trip for her to attend a conference for students of color aspiring to become faculty.

The dedication and hard work paid off when Morgan was accepted into the counseling psychology doctoral program at UNL. She said McNair helped her know what to expect and how to manage different responsibilities as a graduate student. Her current research interests are in the area of multicultural counseling and multicultural issues and how mental illnesses manifest in different cultural groups.

Morgan sees her graduation from the McNair program as a "badge of honor" because people nationwide recognize the significance of Ronald McNair's dream to support and help underrepresented students achieve academic excellence. As a second-year graduate student, Morgan's message to the graduating Scholars of 2012 is to "realize that you have been given the tools to succeed at whatever you've chosen to do!"

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2012 McNair Faculty and Graduate Student Mentor Appreciation Awards. Dr. David Hansen, professor of psychology and chair of the Department of Psychology, was awarded the McNair Faculty Appreciation Award for being an exceptional advisor to four McNair Scholars over the past three years. Dr. Hansen's mentees describe him as being

"approachable, responsive, and readily available to help with questions regarding the research and graduate school process." All expressed the same sentiment – they felt incredibly lucky to have the opportunity to work with Dr.

Hansen throughout the McNair Summer Research Experience and graduate school application process. Tara Cossel, now a second year doctoral student at the University of Memphis, noted, "Dr. Hansen maintains long-lasting relationships with his students and continues to be interested in my academic career."



Michelle Haikalis, Dr. David Hansen, Mollie Dittmer, and Alyssa Lundahl.



Mike Gruszczynski (right) with mentee Misam Ali.

The McNair Graduate Student Mentor Appreciation Award went to Mike Gruszczynski, a doctoral candidate in Political Science at UNL. Misam Ali described Mike as a very involved mentor who provided great feedback and listened respectfully. Another of Mike's mentees, Brian Shreck, is a doctoral student at Texas A & M University. Brian stated, "The support and encouragement I received from Mike was integral during my transition into graduate school and we remain in contact still."

Dr. Laurie Bellows, director of the McNair Scholars Program, thanked Dr. Hansen and Mike for all their hard work and dedication to the program, as well as the other mentors who devote their time preparing Scholars for later success in graduate school.

After awards were given, first year and continuing Scholars introduced themselves to the audience and shared their research plans for this summer. Graduating Scholars were recognized and described their future plans.

Graduating Scholars received a Webster's dictionary embossed with the UNL Academic N, their name, and the words "McNair Scholars Program" to serve as a reminder of where they have been and where they're headed. The graduating Scholars also received a light blue honor cord to wear during their commencement, which symbolizes the color of Dr. McNair's flight suit.

Dr. Bellows concluded the night by reminding the Scholars of the words Dr. McNair wrote on autographs after he became an astronaut, which were to "always be your best." She also thanked the former McNair Scholars, faculty and graduate student mentors, parents, friends, and families for their support and encouragement as well as helping the UNL McNair Scholar's Program celebrate its 17th year and all its accomplishments.

# Senior Scholar Shares South American Adventures

**K**arina Pedroza, a Senior McNair Scholar, has just returned from studying abroad in South America this past spring after she received a Benjamin A. Gilman International Scholarship, as well as the Jack and Mary Von Gillern Family Scholarship, John M. Duff, Jr. and Victoria Duff Scholarship, and the International Studies Abroad Scholarship awarded through International Affairs.

Karina had the opportunity to study abroad in not just one, but two countries. She attended the University of Belgrano in Buenos Aires, Argentina, and the Universidad del Pacifico in Lima, Peru. Her course load included classes such as, "Populism in Latin America," "Art and Culture of Peru," and "History of Latin America in the 19th and 20th Centuries" to help her learn more about the different people and cultures in South America.

To keep family, friends, and colleagues up to date with her adventures in South America, Karina created a blog to share her reflections on the trip. In one blog post, Karina shared some of the most important things she has learned from studying in another country. "You meet people who have similar interests, goals, and dreams, and you see what they have done and compare it to yourself," she said. "What have they done that you can do? You learn something from everything and everyone."



Karina Pedroza poses in front of the center of the Incan Empire at Cusco and Machu Picchu in Peru

Through this experience, Karina has gained a lot of self-confidence because she focuses on ways to improve whatever else is necessary to achieve her goals. She also said she now understands the meaning of these six words: confidence, hard work, determination, perseverance, passion, and happiness.

Studying abroad made her realize what her true passions are, which will help her achieve her goals. Her experience showed her the many possibilities for research projects, and will definitely have a strong influence over where she applies for graduate school. She said, "I was told that passion will get you through your hardest days in graduate school. There are days that will make you want to quit, but to get past it, you just have to remember how passionate you are about your research and why you are really there."

Karina, who aspires to earn a Ph.D. in Latin American Studies or International Studies, had already begun researching attitudes toward immigration with her McNair summer research project, "Content of Attitudes on Immigration." She plans on sharing her increased knowledge from her study abroad experience with colleagues in the fall.

She leaves her blog readers with some final advice on how to accomplish anything they set their mind to. She said, "There is no stronger motivation than passion. Find what you are most passionate about and follow it, because passion is what sets you apart from many others. Following your passion, in my opinion, will make you happy."

# Scholars Engage in Research Internships & Field School



**Reinaldo Alcalde** was accepted to the Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Summer Research Opportunities Program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He will be working with Dr. Charles Werth, Professor of Civil and Environmental Engineering.



**Nathan Lilienthal** is conducting summer research in Wyoming's Big Horn Basin through a Geology Field Course, hosted by UNL and Iowa State. After completion of the course, Nathan will remain in Wyoming to continue paleontology field work with his faculty mentor, Dr. Ross Secord, Earth and Atmospheric Sciences, and Grant Boardman, his graduate student mentor.

# Graduates Announce Postbaccalaureate Plans

Moving on to the next stage of their careers, McNair scholars share their postbaccalaureate plans:

**Misam Ali** will pursue a Juris Doctorate at the University of Colorado at Boulder Law School, specializing in international law.

**Mollie Dittmer** was accepted to the counseling master's program at Doane College.

**Melissa Garfield** will enter the anthropology Ph.D. program at Washington State University in Fall 2012.

**Zachary Garfield** will pursue a Ph.D. in anthropology at Washington State University, beginning Fall 2012.

**Michelle Haikalis** will enter the clinical psychology doctoral program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She'll be working under the mentorship of Dr. David DiLillo.

**Arienne Holland** was accepted to the industrial/organizational psychology master's program at the University of Nebraska–Omaha.

**Brittany Jones** will enter the counselor education master's program at the University of Central Florida. She has been awarded the UCF McNair Fellowship.

**Kaitlin Leslie** will be taking a year off and will apply to graduate programs next year.

**Jeff Lopez** will pursue a Ph.D. in chemical engineering at Stanford University.

**Alyssa Lundahl** has been accepted to the clinical psychology Ph.D. program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. She'll be working with Dr. Timothy Nelson, Assistant Professor of Psychology.

## Summer Research to Challenge Scholars in New Ways

The 2012 McNair Summer Research Experience (MSRE) began on May 23, for the UNL Junior Scholars. The group of Scholars, with diverse majors and interests, includes Bridget Agnew, Emmilie Baker, Ross Benes, Maggie Gossard, Eric Harmes, Kenneth Herron, Brooke Micek, Moses Pacheco, Nina Quinones, Daniel Sotelo Leon, and Joseph Tran.

The Summer Research Experience Orientation informed and advised the scholars of the expectations and necessary steps to successfully complete their summer of research. The Scholars have already completed some preparation for what's ahead of them. During the 2011–2012 school year, they selected a research mentor and research topic, completed IRB protocols, and submitted research proposals to prepare them for this summer.

Now, the Scholars are excited to finally begin conducting and analyzing the research they've been preparing for all year. **Eric Harmes**, a psychology major from Lincoln, Neb., who has a head start on collecting research data said, "I have been collecting data for over a year. It will be nice to see the results!" Eric's research focuses on sexual re-victimization, which he has been conducting under the mentorship of with Dr. David DiLillo from the Department of Psychology.

**Moses Pacheco**, a civil engineering major from Dakota City, Neb., will be working with Dr. Dean Sicking from the Department of Civil Engineering on a Midwest Roadside Safety Facility project. "I'm looking forward to learning about the research process and working with the faculty and staff at the Midwest Roadside Safety Facility," he said. "This experience will help me develop professionally as I pursue a career in engineering."

Some of the Scholars are interested in seeing how their summer research will assist in preparation for, acceptance into, and success in graduate school in the future. **Nina Quinones**, a psychology major from Katy, Texas, is working with Dr. Michael Scheel from the Department of Educational Psychology. They will research the effects of language and culture on the academic success of Latino high school students. "My research mentor, Dr. Michael Scheel, has many publications in the field in which I'm interested," she said. "I'm excited to learn from his past experiences as well as gain some insight into how I should approach getting into and staying in graduate school."

**Brooke Micek**, a biological systems engineering major from Duncan, Neb., and **Daniel Sotelo Leon**, a biochemistry major from Thornton, Colo., will both work with Dr. Melanie Simpson from the Department of Biochemistry. Brooke will be examining the enzymes that control oxidative stress in prostate cancer cells, and she is excited to see what she will learn from her research results. "I'm looking forward to the possibility of discovering something new and learning from it and seeing how something so small in the human body can cause so much harm," she explained.

Daniel will continue his research on investigating the causes and impacts of Hyaluronan overproduction by prostate tumor cells. "What I'm most looking forward to for the summer research is the ability to focus on my work without any distractions." He added, "I'm also eager to present to my peers and tell them about all the cool things I've discovered from my research."

**Maggie Gossard**, a psychology major from Lincoln, Neb., hopes to one day earn a Ph.D. in industrial-organizational psychology and have a career in academia. During MSRE 2012, she'll work with Dr. Sarah Gervais, Department of Psychology; their research focuses on stereotype threat with an emphasis on obesity stigma in the workplace. "I hope to continue studying my topic into graduate school," Maggie said. "I'm excited that I'll have a first study completed that will hopefully lay the groundwork for my future research."

Whether it's presenting research to peers, learning new and interesting topics in an area of interest, or obtaining the necessary skills for being successful in graduate school, the Scholars are excited to jump in and see where their research leads them. They will use the McNair Summer Research Experience to further develop knowledge of their fields and assist them in pursuing their future goals and aspirations.

## Published McNair Scholars

McNair Scholars authored and co-authored numerous recent publications, including:

**Misam Ali** – (2011). Debt Relief or Debt Cycle: A Secondary Analysis of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC) Initiative in African Nations. *The UNL McNair Scholars Research Journal*.

**Mollie Dittmer** – **Dittmer, M.**, Hubel, G., Hansen, D. (2011). Factors Associated with Participation and Retention in a Group Treatment for Child Sexual Abuse. *The UNL McNair Scholars Research Journal*.

**Alyssa Lundahl** – **Lundahl, A.**, West, T., Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., Vanderbeek, J., & Hansen, D. J. (2011). Relationship of obsessive-compulsive behaviors of caregivers with a history of sexual abuse and perfectionism in their sexually abused children. *McNair Scholars Research Journal*.

**Lundahl, A.**, Smith, T., West, T., & Nelson, T. (under review). Psychosocial Stressors and Health Behaviors: Examining Sleep, Sedentary Behaviors, and Physical Activity in a Low-Income Pediatric Sample. *Journal of Health Psychology*.

**Lundahl, A.**, Campbell, C., West, T., Martin, E., & Hansen, D. J. (in preparation). Initial psychometric evaluation of the Behavioral Observation of Preschoolers System (BOPS).

**Christian Padilla** – **Padilla, C.A.**, Nelson, C.A., “Motion Generation Using Combinations of Peaucellier Straight-Line Mechanisms,” American Society of Mechanical Engineers International Design Engineering Technical Conferences and Computers and Information in Engineering (ASME IDETC 2012), Chicago, IL, Aug. 12-15, 2012, ASME Paper No. DETC2012-70441.

## Alumni Publications and Awards

What are our children learning about the natural environment from picture books? This is the question that McNair alumnus Nathan Palmer answered in his research on Caldecott Award winning textbooks published between 1948-



Nathan Palmer  
UNL McNair Scholar  
2003-06

2008. The study found that modern stories were increasingly being set indoors and that wild animals were rarely depicted.

The research was featured in the print edition of USA Today and the online version of the New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and many other news outlets.

[Williams, J. A., Podeschi, C., **Palmer, N.**, Schwadel, P. and Meyler, D. (2012). The Human-

Environment Dialog in Award-winning Children's Picture Books. *Sociological Inquiry*, 82: 145–159.]

Nathan Palmer is currently a lecturer in the Department of Sociology & Anthropology at Georgia Southern University. Palmer recently received the 2012 Georgia Southern University *College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences Award of Distinction in Teaching*, given annually to only one teacher in the college. Palmer, who is in his second year of teaching at GSU, received the award because his teaching sociology blog, [www.SociologySource.com](http://www.SociologySource.com), has become an industry-leading site with nearly 100,000 page views from 50,000 unique visitors.

Few interventions have been developed for substance-abusing homeless mothers. Among those interventions, high dropout rates (up to 85%) are consistently reported. Understanding homeless mothers' experiences with service providers may be an important first step to understanding ways to increase treatment engagement. Brittany Sznajder-Murray's research is designed to gain a better understanding of homeless mothers' perceptions of service providers.

Along with her advisor, Dr. Natasha Slesnick, she studied 28 mothers currently residing at a homeless shelter in a Midwestern city, using three focus groups. The mothers held negative perceptions of service providers, specifically related to understanding, support, and fear. Based upon their findings, they developed recommendations to improve service delivery and guide future research.

Brittany Sznajder-Murray is a doctoral student at The Ohio State University, Department of Human Development and Family Science, Columbus, Ohio. Brittany was selected for the 2010 Committee on Institutional Cooperation (CIC) Summer Research Program at Ohio State and began her research with Dr. Natasha Slesnick. The excellent working relationship led Brittany to choose to attend graduate school at the Ohio State University and continue working under the guidance of Dr. Slesnick.

[**Sznajder-Murray, B.**, & Slesnick, N. (2011). “Don't Leave Me Hanging:” Homeless Mothers' Perceptions of Service Providers. *Journal of Social Service Research*. 2: 1-12.]



Brittany Sznajder-Murray  
UNL McNair Scholar  
2008-11

**McNair Alumni** – Please keep us informed about your progress in graduate school, publications, and other career milestones. You may update your information at anytime: <http://www.unl.edu/mcnair/scholarupdate.shtml>

# Scholars Complete Honors Theses

Congratulations to our Scholars who completed an original, thesis-length research project:

**Misam Ali** - *Debt Relief of Debt Cycle: A Secondary Analysis of the Heavily Indebted Poor Counties (HIPC) Initiative in African Nations.*

**Melissa Garfield**, *A Cross-Cultural Investigation of How Women Achieve Status in Traditional Societies.* Supervised by Dr. Ray Hames and Dr. Wayne Babchuk, Department of Anthropology.

**Zach Garfield**, *Status and Prosociality in Egalitarian Societies.* Supervised by Dr. Ray Hames and Dr. Wayne Babchuk, Department of Anthropology.

**Jeff Lopez**, *Fundamental Studies and Applications of Electrochemical Reactions.*

**Alyssa Lundahl**, *The Initial Psychometric Evaluation of the Behavioral Observation of Preschoolers System (BOPS).* Supervised by Dr. David J. Hansen and Dr. Calvin Garbin, Department of Psychology.

## Local, Regional, National and International Presentations

McNair Scholars reported their research at various local, regional, national, and international conferences:

**Mollie Dittmer** – (2012, April). *Understanding Barriers to Service Utilization Following Child Sexual Abuse: Predictors of Mental Health Treatment Participation of a Group Intervention Delivered at a Child Advocacy Center.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Melissa Garfield**– (2012, February). *Female Status Attainment in Traditional Societies.* The Society of Cross-Cultural Research, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Zachary Garfield**– (2012, February). *Status Attainment & Prosociality in Egalitarian Societies.* The Society of Cross-Cultural Research, Las Vegas, Nevada.

**Maggie Gossard** – Allen, J., Flairty, T., **Gossard, M.**, & Gervais, S. (2012, April). *If You've Got It, Flaunt It: Core Motives and Moderators of Women's Self-Sexualization.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Gossard, M.**, Allen, J., & Gervais, S. (2012, April). *Apples, Pears, and Hourglasses: What Body Type Can Tell Us About Self-Presentation Behaviors in Women.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Gossard, M.** (2012, March). *Mars and Venus: Self Esteem Predictors Differ Across Gender.* Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Marysville, Missouri.

**Michelle Haikalis** – (2012, April). *Behind Closed Doors: Child Maltreatment Variables that Mediate the Relationship Between Witnessing Domestic Violence and Child Behavior.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

West, T., Schreier, A., Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., **Haikalis, M.**, & Hansen, D. J. (2011, November). Brief family intervention for childhood sexual abuse: An examination of factors associated with treatment completion and outcomes. Poster presented at the 45th Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Haikalis, M.**, Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., West, T., Hasemann, L., & Hansen, D. J. (2011, November). The impact of homework completion on treatment outcomes in Teacher-Child Interaction Training. Poster presented at the 45th Annual Convention of the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies, Toronto, Canada.

**Eric Harmes** – (2012, March). *Determinants of Aggression in a College Sample.* Great Plains Students' Psychology Convention, Marysville, Missouri.

**Arienne Holland** – (2012, April). *The Objectification of Men.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Holland, A.** Dunn, A., Gervais, S., Dodd, M., (2012, April). *The nature of the objectifying gaze: Sexual objectification and stereotypicality.* Poster presented at the Nebraska Symposium on Motivation, University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

Allen, J., Gervais, S., Dodd, M., **Holland, A.** (2012, January). *The Nature and Consequences of the Objectifying Gaze.* The Society for Personality and Social Psychology, San Diego, California.

**Brittany Jones** – (2012, April). *The District Emancipation Act and Its Effects on Washington, DC during the Civil War.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Jeff Lopez** – (2012, April). *Direct Mapping of Local Redox Current Density on Multi-length Scale Electrode: Size and Dielectrophoretic Effect.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Alyssa Lundahl** – **Lundahl, A.**, West, T., Hansen, D. J. (2012, April). *Depression Symptomatology in Caregivers and their Sexually Abused Children: The Role of Parenting Efficacy and Stress.* Poster presented at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Poppert, K., Moen, A., **Lundahl, A.**, & Nelson, T. D. (2011, November). *Sleep and Daily Stressors as Predictors of Daily Asthma Symptoms in Children.* Poster presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Lundahl, A.**, West, T., Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., Vanderbeek, J., & Hansen, D. J. (2011, November). *The Relationship of Parental History of Sexual Abuse on Symptom Presentation and Treatment Outcomes for Sexually Abused Children and Their Parents.* Poster presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

**Lundahl, A.**, West, T., Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., Gassman, S., & Hansen, D. J. (2011, November). *Relationship of obsessive-compulsive behaviors of caregivers with a history of sexual abuse and perfectionism in their sexually abused children.* Poster presented at the Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Conference, Toronto, Ontario, Canada.

Moen, A., **Lundahl, A.**, & Gassman, S. (2011, October). *Juvenile Delinquents: A Cluster Analysis Examining Trait Differences.* Poster presented at the Association for Psychological and Educational Research in Kansas Conference, Fort Hays, Kansas.

# Honors, Awards, and Leadership Activities 2011-12

**M** McNair Scholars continue to make an impact on the University of Nebraska-Lincoln campus and in the community through their volunteerism and leadership roles. This is a partial listing of their campus and community involvement:

**Bridget Agnew** – Dean’s List (2008-2012); UCARE Award for 2012-13; W.E. B. Du Bois Honor Society Treasurer-elect; African Student Association Public Relations Officer; Student Support Services Mentor; and 2012 McNair Recognition Reception co-emcee.

**Reinaldo Alcalde** – SUCCESS Scholar; UCARE Award (2011-12 and 2012-13); Union Pacific Foundation Scholarship; Dean’s List; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Maud Melick Appreciation Scholarship; A. & D. DeVries Scholarship; Engineering Peer Mentor for incoming freshmen; Big Event Executive Committee and Operations Staff Head; Farm House Fraternity; and Chi Epsilon Civil Engineering Fraternity.

**Misam Ali** – University Honors Program; Dean’s List; Sigma Alpha Lambda Honor Fraternity; The National Society of Collegiate Scholars; Nebraska Bankers Association Scholarship; W.E.B. Du Bois Honor Society President; Cather Circle Member; William H. Thompson Scholars Community; Kids Against Hunger; and Teammates Mentoring Program.

**Emmilie Baker** – F. & J. Musgrave Scholarship; UCARE Award for 2012-13; and Undergraduate Psychology Organization.

**Ross Benes** – UCARE funding (2011-12 & 2012-13); EducationQuest Scholarship; Buffet Scholarship/William Thompson Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; R & C Olenberger Scholarship; Psi Chi/UPO; the Newman Center; Czech Komensky Club; and volunteered over spring break in Joplin; Missouri; helping the community recover from last May’s tornado.

**Mollie Dittmer** – Dean’s list; UCARE funding; Undergraduate Research Conference (April 2012).

**Melissa Garfield** – Shuer-Mills Scholarship; Sally W. Nixon Educational Fund Scholarship; AnthroGroup co-president; Chancellor’s Scholar Award; Dean’s list; National Society of Collegiate Scholars; Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society; and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society.

**Zach Garfield** – Sally W. Nixon Educational Fund Scholarship; AnthroGroup secretary; Anthropology Section Co-Chair for the 2012 Nebraska Academy of Sciences at Nebraska Wesleyan University; Dean’s list; National Society of Collegiate Scholars; Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society; and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society.

**Maggie Gossard** – UNL Honors Program; UCARE Award (2011-12 & 2012-13); Subtle Prejudice Lab (Dr. Sarah Gervais); Legal Decision Making Lab (Dr. Richard Weiner); Board of Regents Scholarship; UCARE funding; Psi Chi Honors Society President-elect; Tau Sigma Transfer Student Honor Society; Individuals Committed to the Achievement of Non-Traditionals (I.C.A.N.) Founder/President.

**Michelle Haikalis** – UCARE Award; Dean’s List; National Hispanic Scholar; Undergraduate Psychology Organization; Alpha Chi Omega Sorority Chapter President; and Psi Chi Secretary Elect.

**Eric Harmes** – F. & J. Musgrave Scholarship; UCARE Award for 2012-13; APA student affiliate; Individuals Committed to the Achievement of Non-Traditionals (I.C.A.N.) Founder/Vice-President; Psi Chi Honor Society; Teaching Assistant for Career Planning for Psychology Majors; and Second Place Poster in Social Psychology at the 32 Annual Great Plains Student Psychology Convention.

**Kenneth Herron** – UCARE Award for 2012-13; W.E.B. Du Bois Honor Society; Melvin Jones Learning Community Mentor; UNL’s Service and Leadership Club; OASIS Academic Honors Award; Eleanor and Marian Johnson Scholarship.

**Arianne Holland** – UCARE Award; Dean’s List; and Undergraduate Teaching Assistant Corps supplemental instruction for Psych 288.

**Brittany Jones** – Graduated With Distinction in May 2012; UCARE Award; Alan Woolworth Scholarship; and Dean’s List.

**Kaitlin Leslie** – UCARE Award and Burr Fedde Bull Fry ticket committee.

**Nathan Lilienthal** – UCARE Award (2011-12 and 2012-13).

**Jeff Lopez** – Association of Students of the University of Nebraska (ASUN) Internal Vice President; Dean’s List; University Honors Program; Tau Beta Pi Engineering Honor Society; UCARE Award; American Institute of Chemical Engineers; Nebraska Human Resources Institute; and Water Polo Club.

**Alyssa Lundahl** – Graduated With Highest Distinction in May 2012; Chancellor’s Scholar; Harry K. Wolfe Award for Most Outstanding Psychology Student; Peter Kiewit Legacy Scholarship; Regents Scholar; UCARE Award; Dean’s Scholar Society scholarship; Honors Program Scholarship; TA for Psychology 471; Psi Chi Honor Society President; Undergraduate Psychology Organization President; Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society; and Nebraska Health Department Teach a Kid to Fish Program.

**Brooke Micek** – UCARE Award for 2012-13; Success Scholarship and the Fred R. Nohavec Scholarship; Selected by Dr. Yoder and the BSEN departmental accreditation team to sit with an ABET reviewer; Member of Society of Women Engineers (SWE); Alpha Lambda Delta; and Phi Eta Sigma.

**Moses Pacheco** – UCARE Award for 2012-13; OASIS Academic Achievement Award; Dean’s List; Founding President of Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers; Chi Epsilon Honors Society; Delta Tau Delta Scholarship; Emilia Juarez Scholarship; Sigma Lambda Beta Community Service Chair; Mexican American Student Association; Sigma Lambda Beta Fraternity; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy; Partnered with Education Quest to host Latino Financial Aid Workshop; Roads; Rails; and Race Cars After School Program; Cristo Rey Church Maintenance Committee member.

**Christian Padilla** – University Honors Program; UCARE Award (2011-12 and 2012-13); Pi Tau Sigma Mechanical Engineering Honor Society; E-Week Outreach; Formula SAE (Society of Automotive Engineers); Active Member of Chassis team/part design; and American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) Chapter; “Design. Build. Fly.” Team/Part Design.

**Karina Pedroza** – Teaching Assistant for Psychology 100; volunteer English teacher at El Centro de Las Americas; Secretary Lambda Theta Nu Sorority; Latin American Student Organization; and Secretary Multicultural Greek Council.

**Nina Quinones** – UCARE Award for 2012-13; W.E.B. Du Bois Honor Society; OASIS Academic Recognition; Smith Hall Resident Assistant; Mexican-American Student Association; Sigma Lambda Gamma National Sorority Secretary/Recruitment Chair.

**Daniel Soltelo Leon** – Research Assistant for Dr. Melanie Simpson; Department of Biochemistry; UCARE Award for 2012-13.

**Joseph Tran** – UCARE Award for 2012-13; UNL Biomedical Engineering Society; Esther Freshman Memorial Scholarship; Vada & Barney Oldfield Scholarship; and EducationQuest Scholarship.

# Managing Graduate School: McNair Alumni Reflections

One of the benefits of the McNair Community is that former Scholars are always willing and happy to share their experiences with current McNair Scholars. Recently, former Scholars shared their insights on their graduate school experiences. The McNair Alumni shared their tips on visiting graduate programs, navigating through new academic departments, and maintaining a balance between academic and personal life all while completing a graduate degree.

**Tara Cossel**, a Ph.D. student in Clinical Psychology at the University of Memphis, emphasized the importance of campus visits as an opportunity to meet with future faculty advisors, collaborators, and graduate students. Tara also suggested that students make sure to ask any in-depth questions they may have about the program while visiting potential graduate schools. For instance, she suggested asking about the type of research one will be able to do as a graduate student in the program, as well as what day-to-day life in the department is like. Finally, Tara encouraged applicants to talk to as many graduate students as possible during campus visits—noting that their insights were invaluable in making her graduate school choice.

**Brian Shreck** shared some of the unexpected moments he's experienced in his first semesters as a graduate student in the Political Science Department at Texas A&M University. Brian noted that his department has encouraged him to continuously plan ahead in order to make the most of his time, a strategy that seemed overwhelming when he was asked to identify his dissertation topic during his first semester. By identifying his dissertation topic, however, Brian has been able to write papers for his courses that will later become dissertation chapters. As such, finding ways to relate coursework to research is vital for success as a graduate student. Brian also encouraged students to become actively involved in their academic departments, noting that as a graduate student, it's important to be an integral part of your department both professionally and socially. He emphasized the importance of being seen around the department and that having a reputation as a good departmental citizen. Overall, Brian admitted that he had to adjust quickly to the intensity of being immersed in the academic environment at all times, but he also noted that such immersion is what has helped him become "socialized into the profession."

**Rebecca Beals**, a doctoral student in Sociology at the University of New Mexico, described her secrets to moving swiftly and successfully through her master's program in two short years. Acknowledging how the increased workload of a graduate program can sometimes get overwhelming, Rebecca noted the usefulness of a weekly (and sometimes even daily!) breakdown to manage the workload, which keeps her motivated while tackling large projects. A list of reasonable goals that need to be met in order to accomplish bigger tasks allows Rebecca to frequently check tasks off her list. This not only gives her something to look forward to (an empty to-do list), but is an incentive to keep working hard. Rebecca encourages students to set aside some "me time" and a space for themselves in order to relax and mentally prepare for the next day. Rebecca noted that it's easy to get so wrapped up in your workload that you forget to make time for yourself, so having a place where no academic projects are allowed is important. As she prepares to take her comprehensive exams in the coming months, Rebecca stressed the importance of keeping an annotated bibliography of all of the books and articles she has read throughout her

coursework. For Rebecca, this is a document broken down by topic, each containing various books and articles with a paragraph or two synthesizing the readings and her reactions to them. She notes that this not only helped her prepare for these exams, but she feels better prepared for seminar discussions and frequently refers back to them when she is writing papers, saving her valuable time! Graduate school can be challenging in many different ways, so she works on projects of personal interest. Rebecca encourages students to remind themselves that each thing they do gets them one step closer to the degree. Focusing attention on the baby steps can help students get through the day-to-day challenges of graduate school.

**Karise Carillo**, who just completed her first year in the criminal justice doctoral program at the State University of New York at Albany, shared the adjustments she has made in the transition from an undergraduate to a graduate student. Karise noted that the amount of reading was something that came as a surprise; in her first semester she was required to read a book a week! Such a large workload required recognizing what parts of the readings were essential and what parts were unnecessary, an admittedly difficult task. Karise said a major challenge involved reconciling the diverging ideas of her undergraduate background of psychology with the new sociology-based orientation of her graduate program. Karise put a positive spin on the situation and recognized that her psychological background may provide a unique perspective in her department, especially given that her department thrives on interdisciplinary approaches to research. Karise's faculty mentor has helped her learn new analyses and ways to navigate the vast amount of criminological literature. Karise expressed excitement as she reflected on the collaborative relationship with her faculty member, and looks forward to writing her Master's Comprehensive Examination and identifying her dissertation topic.

**Justin Escamilla** recently shared an account of his first year of graduate school in the Criminology, Law, and Justice doctoral program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Justin noticed that the second semester of his first year consisted of a much heavier workload than the first. This did not come as a complete shock to Justin, however, as he recalled a professor telling him that the first semester was intended to "ease students into the graduate student workload." Justin also said that "the selection of a dissertation topic is urgent in the mind of some professors," which can be stressful during the first year of graduate school. However, Justin is working on narrowing his topic now, because by doing so he will be able to focus all upcoming class work and projects. He also notes his ability to read journal articles has "shot through the roof" and that he is more productive after a good night's sleep, some healthy food, and short breaks; good advice for all Scholars! Though Justin spends a lot of time conducting research and staying involved in other various academic activities, he also has found time to enjoy his new home of Chicago and encourages other Scholars to do the same. Justin stated that he has given up driving, walked more than ever before, watched an air show from the roof of a 22-story building, and has advocated for a juvenile with a life sentence. Taking both his academic and personal experiences into account, Justin matter-of-factly stated, "If my first year is any indication, I think I will definitely enjoy the years to come."



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