Congratulations 2015 McNair Graduates!

Jennifer (Milliman) Andersen will pursue a Ph.D. in sociology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Kassie Guenther will pursue a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Colorado–Denver.

Marco Gullickson will pursue a Ph.D. in counseling psychology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

Bryan Hermosillo will pursue a geological sciences master’s degree at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.

William Lambert has accepted an offer from the Chemistry and Biochemistry Ph.D. program at the University of Delaware. He was awarded the prestigious Richard Heck Fellowship.

David Pacheco has accepted a vehicle engineer position at Northrop Grumman in Melbourne, Florida.

Erandi Herndon will pursue a marriage and family therapy master’s degree at Colorado State University.

Elia Soto has accepted an offer from the clinical psychology Ph.D. program at Florida State University.

Alyssa Yeates will be pursuing an M.D. degree.

“True courage comes in enduring, persevering, and believing in oneself.”
Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.
Mentors Honored at McNair Recognition Reception

On Friday, April 24, the Annual McNair Recognition Reception was held at the Lied Center for Performing Arts. We gathered to recognize the graduating seniors, highlight the accomplishments of all McNair Scholars, and show our thanks to the friends and family members who support our program. In addition to honoring the Scholars, the reception provides the opportunity to thank our faculty, postdoc, and graduate student mentors who've made special contributions to the program over the past year.

Faculty Appreciation Award
Our program enjoys strong support from faculty mentors, and each year we take time to honor one of our special mentors. This year's recipient of the 2015 McNair Faculty Appreciation Award was Dr. Debra Hope, Professor of Psychology. Dr. Hope has mentored three McNair scholars who have all gone on to earn their Ph.D., including Dr. Lindsay Ham, Dr. Melissa Norberg, and Dr. Eric Henning.

Dr. Lindsay Ham, who earned her Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in 2004, is an Associate Professor in the Department of Psychological Science at the University of Arkansas and Director of the Laboratory for Anxiety and Substance Abuse Research. Ham noted that Dr. Hope has continued to mentor her as she transitioned into a successful academic career. She affirmed, “Dr. Hope's encouragement helped me to continue on a challenging path that seemed daunting to a first-generation college student. I am extremely grateful for her feedback, guidance, and support for nearly two decades!”

Dr. Melissa Norberg, who earned her Ph.D. in clinical psychology from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee in August 2006, is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Psychology at Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. Norberg noted, “Dr. Hope was pivotal in my pathway to obtaining a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. She made me feel like I had what it takes to complete a Ph.D., even when I wasn’t sure myself.”

Dr. Eric Henning earned his Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Temple University in August 2009, and is now engaged in private practice in Norfolk, Nebraska. Henning said he was fortunate to work with Dr. Hope in the Anxiety Clinic for four years as an undergrad. During that time, he observed her dedication to research, her treatment of anxiety disorders, and helping those around her reach their potential. He affirmed, “She expanded not only my knowledge of psychology, but also my approach to life in general. She continues to be a phenomenal role model.”

With our current Scholars, Dr. Hope generously offers her time and advice by serving on faculty panel presentations and sharing her perspective as a graduate chair. Dr. Hope has helped countless Scholars learn first-hand what it takes to get into graduate school and what it means to be a successful graduate student.

Graduate Student Appreciation Award
The recipient of the 2015 Graduate Student Appreciation Award was Morgan Conley, a doctoral candidate in counseling psychology at UNL. Conley has officially mentored two McNair Scholars (Brittany Jones and Marco Gullickson), and has also made an impact on countless others. She has worked as a graduate assistant for three summers during the McNair Summer Research Experience, assisting Scholars with their research projects, conducting GRE prep sessions, and working with Scholars to develop their research and poster presentations. Conley is an effective mentor, sharing her skills and expertise, as well as her enthusiasm for learning. She has recruited Scholars for McNair, participated in the New Scholar Orientation, and led sessions on the graduate application process and managing graduate school expectations.

Conley’s mentees describe her as extremely helpful, motivating, and willing to devote her time to offer feedback on personal statements.

Marco Gullickson noted, “Morgan took time on multiple occasions to sit down and give me the feedback I needed to have a successful graduate school application. She is part of the reason why I was accepted into my graduate program.”

When presenting the award, the McNair Program Director Dr. Laurie Bellows stated, “I've had the honor of knowing Morgan since 2008, when she was selected as a McNair Scholar. It has been incredibly gratifying watching her develop into a scholar and a professional. She is an excellent leader and an exemplary graduate student.” Bellows added, “Throughout Morgan’s graduate career she has continued to give back to the McNair Program. Morgan, you are fulfilling the legacy left by Dr. McNair. I’m sure he would be very proud to know that he has contributed to your many achievements.”

Dr. Bellows closed by thanking all faculty, postdoc, and graduate student mentors for their inspiration, commitment, patience, and support of our Scholars. Their contributions are essential to the success of the UNL McNair Scholars Program. Our mentors are instrumental in guiding the Scholars through the research process and selecting a graduate program. They provide support in the form of letters of recommendation, advice on personal and research statements, and prepare students for research conferences. Our mentors teach our Scholars how to be responsible researchers and ethical leaders, and demonstrate how their own work in teaching, research, and service matters. And, they show our Scholars they are capable of making a difference in the world.

Special Thanks to the faculty, postdoctoral, and graduate student mentors who contributed their time and expertise to work with McNair Scholars during the McNair Summer Research Experience and who continue to support the Scholars’ research and graduate application efforts. Your support is invaluable to the success of our program.
Scholars who completed an original, thesis-length research project include:


The UNL McNair Scholars Program publishes an online research journal to showcase researchers who might not otherwise have another outlet for publication. Comprised of nine original articles written by Scholars under the guidance of their faculty mentors, our McNair Scholars Research Journal (MSRJ) is hosted at: http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/mcnair.

Since Fall 2010 when our program began publishing the MSRJ, there have been over 5,300 full-text downloads. Between May 1, 2014 and May 31, 2015, there were 1,300 full-text downloads. The most downloaded papers of the past 12 months were:


McNair Scholars disseminated their research findings at numerous local, regional, and national conferences:


William Lambert – Lambert, W., Sittiwong, W., Dussault, P.H. (2015, April). The Bioorthogonal Click Reaction of Amphiphilic Cyclobutenes and 1,2,4,5-Tetrazines. Poster presented at the Undergraduate Student Research and Creative Activities Fair, University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Lincoln, NE.

Lambert, W., Sittiwong, W., Dussault, P.H. (2014, November). The Bioorthogonal Click Reaction of Amphiphilic Cyclobutenes and 1,2,4,5-Tetrazines. Poster presented at the Midwest Regional American Chemical Society conference, University of Missouri, Columbia, Missouri.

Lambert, W., Sittiwong, W., Dussault, P.H. (2014, August). The Bioorthogonal Click Reaction Of Amphiphilic Cyclobutenes and 1,2,4,5-Tetrazines. Poster presented at the Center for Nanohybrid Functional Materials EPSCoR conference, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.


Honors, Awards, and Leadership Activities 2014-15

McNair Scholars continue to make an impact on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln campus and in the community through their leadership roles and volunteerism. This is a partial listing of their honors, awards, and leadership activities:

Jennifer (Milliman) Andersen – Graduated with High Distinction; Dean’s List; UCARE Award (2014-15); Sally W. Nixon Educational Scholarship; Law and Policy Lab coordinator and research assistant; Research Assistant in the Pediatric Psychology Lab; Southeast Community College guest Lecturer, Introduction to Psychology; Wolfe Award Honorable Mention; Psychology 463/863 tutor; Psi Chi Undergraduate Psychology Organization; Tau Sigma Honors Society Induction Chair.

Brittney Bridger-Burton – UCARE Award 2015-16; College of Engineering Dean’s Leader; American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics national member and UNL Student Chapter Co-leader; College of Engineering Ambassadors President; American Society of Mechanical Engineers; Society of Women Engineers; National Society of Professional Engineers.

Kaylor Caldwell – Dean’s List; Law and Public Policy Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU); UCARE Award 2014-15; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA) mentor; Susan T. Buffet Scholarship; William H. Thompson Scholar; Culler Middle School Community Learning Center (CILC) academic enhancer.

Amada Dale – UCARE Award 2015-16; Dean’s List; Chancellor’s Commission on the Status of Women; Psychology of Gender Student Organization (PGSO) President; PREVENT; Men at Nebraska.

Jaquelin Garcia-Castorena – INBRE Fellowship: UCARE award 2014-15; Sunday with a Scientist Dinosaur Excavation volunteer; People’s City Mission Free Clinic volunteer.

Kassie Guenther – Graduated with Highest Distinction; Phi Beta Kappa; Dean’s List; Dean’s Scholarly Society; UCARE Award 2014-15; Harry K. Wolfe Outstanding Psychology Student Award; Schuler-Mills Scholarship; C. Oscar Johnson Scholarship; Elmer Rhoden Merit Scholarship; Susan T. Buffet Scholarship; Knights of AK-SAR-BEN Scholarship; Nemaha Valley Foundation Scholarship; All-University Honors Convocation Certificate of High Scholarship; William H. Thompson 4.0 GPA Certificate; Psi Chi, Undergraduate Psychology Organization; National Society of Collegiate Scholars; Scholars member.

Macy Groth – Graduated with Distinction; Dean’s List; UCARE Award 2014-15; Chemistry Department First Prize Undergraduate Poster; UNL Honors Scholarship; UNL Honors Program; UCARE Award (2014-15).


Jarold McWilliams – Regent’s Scholarship; Honors Textbook Scholarship; David & Freda Wolf Scholarship.

Andreas Miles-Novelo – UCARE Award 2015-16; Ruth Levington Scholarship; Men’s Club Lacrosse Team; National Society of Collegiate Scholars member.

Dina Morales – Susan T. Buffet Scholarship; Mexican American Student Association.

David Pacheco – Engineering Intern at Cleaver-Brooks, Lincoln, NE; Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Co-Founder, President, Treasurer, and Tutor; Sigma Lambda Beta International Fraternity Membership; Operations Vice-President and Treasurer; Mexican American Student Association Vice-President and Treasurer; Malone Center/El Centro de las Américas Golden Warriors Mentoring Program; People’s City Mission volunteer; Siouxland Unity in Action.

Zully Perez Sierra – Honors Program; Dean’s List; UCARE Award 2015-16; William H. Thompson Learning Community Member and Tutor; Irrigation Intern for Norfolk Partners in Pollution Prevention Program; American Institute of Chemical Engineers Volunteer Chair; Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers; Society of Women Engineers; Susan Buffet Thompson Foundation Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; John & Nancy Dunn Scholarship; American Institute of Chemical Engineers Minority Scholarship; Zoetis-LPS-Novartis Elementary Science Fair Judge; Peoples City Mission server; Lincoln Zoo at the Zoo; Tabitha Meals on Wheels.

Olivia Reinert Gehman – Dean’s List, Regents Scholarship; Honors Program; UCARE Award 2014-15; Behavior Genetics Lab research assistant; Vision/Attention/Memory/Perception Lab research assistant; UNL Children’s Center assistant teacher; Phi Sigma Pi Honors Fraternity Secretary; Vice President of Phi Chi Psychology Honors Society; Phi Sigma Pi National Honor Fraternity Secretary.

Adrienne Ricker – Honors Program; UCARE (2014-15 and 2015-16); First Generation Advisory Board: College of Arts & Sciences Student Ambassador; University of Nebraska State Museum Student Ambassador; Students of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences (SEAS) Social Media Chair; Nehartd Honors Hall Resident Assistant; National Residence Hall Honorary (NRHH); Dinosaurs & Disasters Biome Recognition volunteer.

Daniel Rico – Dean’s List; UCARE Award (2014-15 and 2015-16); Susan T. Buffet Scholarship; Buffet Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence; Donald F. Mildred Topp Othmer Engineering Scholarship; Environmental Leadership Program Historian; Engineers Without Borders; America’s Society of Agricultural and Biological Systems Engineers; Reach the World Correspondent Member; Soil & Water Resource Club; American Meteorological Society.

Alicia Michelle Rogers – UCARE Award (2014-15 and 2015-16); U.S. & Doris Harkson Scholarship, UNL Women’s Club Scholarship; TA for ENGR 100 and LIFE120; First Generation Advisory Council; First Husker Mentor.

Megan Smith – UCARE Award 2015-16; Beckman Scholar 2014-2016; American Society for Microbiology grant, 2015-16.

Elia Soto – UCARE Award 2014-15; Honors Program; UNL Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience Lab research assistant; Thanksgiving Randall Scholarship; Center for People in Need Giving Thanksgiving Food volunteer.

Alyssa Yeates – Dean’s list; UCARE Award 2014-15; Humanities in Medicine treasurer and executive committee; UNL MELDIFE; Lincoln Humane Society volunteer; George and Mary Haskell Scholarship; National Society for Collegiate Scholars; YWCA SMART Girls Club head facilitator.
Kudos to McNair Alumni

We applaud these UNL McNair alumni who were awarded major fellowships and earned advanced degrees during 2014-15:

**Doctoral degrees**

Misam Ali (McNair Scholar 2010-12) earned her Juris Doctor from the University of Colorado at Boulder Law School in May 2015.

**Master’s degrees**

Melissa Garfield (McNair Scholar 2009-2012) earned a master’s degree in anthropology from Washington State University (WSU) in May 2015. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in anthropology at WSU. Melissa is in Ethiopia for three months working with the Chabu hunter-gatherers in the forests of SW Ethiopia.

Zachary Garfield (McNair Scholar 2009-2012) earned a master’s degree in anthropology from Washington State University (WSU) in May 2015. He is pursuing a Ph.D. in anthropology at WSU. Zachary is in Ethiopia for three months working with the Chabu hunter-gatherers in the forests of SW Ethiopia.

Maggie Gossard (McNair Scholar 2011-13) earned her master’s degree in industrial/organizational psychology at the University of Nebraska–Omaha in May 2015. She is continuing in the Ph.D. program at UNO.

Eric Harmes (McNair Scholar 2011-13) earned his master’s degree in counseling psychology from Doane College. He is currently an intern with Integrated Life Choices in Lincoln, Nebraska.

**Fellowships**

Brian Shreck (McNair Scholar 2008-2010) was granted a competitive fellowship for the 2014-2015 academic year from the Texas A&M Energy Institute, sponsored by ConocoPhillips. Brian is currently a research associate for the National Wind Institute at Texas Tech University. He will defend his dissertation in August and officially earn his Ph.D. in December 2015.

McNair Celebrates 20th Anniversary at UNL

The McNair Scholars Program received its first grant from the U.S. Department of Education in September 1995. The program was originally housed in Canfield Administration Building with Multi-Cultural Affairs and the other TRIO Programs. Co-Directors for the first grant were Jimmi Smith, Multicultural Affairs, and Dr. Merlin Lawson, Dean of Graduate Studies. In 2003, the program was moved to the Office of Graduate Studies, under the guidance of Dr. Ellen Weissinger, then Dean of Graduate Studies. Dr. Laurie Bellows, Associate Dean of Graduate Studies and McNair Program Director, along with Carol Boehler, Program Coordinator, assumed responsibility for the Program in 2005.

Since 1995, the UNL McNair Scholars program has helped hundreds of undergraduates successfully navigate their way into graduate and professional programs across the country. Biochemistry, biological sciences, chemistry, psychology, sociology, civil, chemical, electrical, and mechanical engineering represent only a handful of the fields our Scholars have entered into and have positively impacted. Although many things have changed around the world and here at UNL in the past 20 years, two things have remained steadfast: UNL’s commitment to a quality undergraduate education and the McNair Scholars Program’s commitment to leveling the playing field and providing opportunities for the first generation and underrepresented students we serve.

We invite all McNair Scholars and Alumni to share a memory about the McNair Scholars Program, the impact McNair may have had on their future careers, and/or the mentoring they received from a UNL Faculty or graduate student mentor. We’d like to feature these reflections in the Fall/Winter 2015 newsletter. Send your submission to Carol Boehler, cboehler2@unl.edu by September 15, 2015.

McNair Alumni: Keep us posted about your academic and career milestones. You may update your information at anytime: http://www.unl.edu/mcnair/scholarupdate.shtml

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