



McNair
News

McNair Scholars Program

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Summer 2017



Congratulations to the 2017 McNair Graduates!



Jazmin Castillo, a fisheries and wildlife major from South Sioux City, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in May 2017. She will pursue a master's degree in Natural Resource Sciences with a specialization in applied ecology at UNL and will work with Dr. John Carroll.



Amanda Dale, a psychology and women's and gender studies major from Central City, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in May 2017. She will continue to work with the Social and Behavioral Sciences Research Consortium (SBSRC) and will apply to graduate school in the fall.



Jaquelin Garcia Castorena, a biochemistry major from Lincoln, Nebraska, is studying abroad in Spain this summer and will graduate in August 2017. Jackie has accepted a research tech position at UNL and will apply to graduate school in the fall.



José Lemus, an economics major from Lincoln, Nebraska, earned his bachelor's degree in May 2017. He is studying abroad this summer in Spain and then will be applying for graduate school in the fall.

Congratulations to the 2017 McNair Graduates!



Brianna McKay, a nutrition sciences major from Grand Island, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in May 2017. She has accepted an offer from the Nutrition & Health Sciences master's program at UNL and will work with Dr. Joel Cramer. Brianna was awarded a Chancellor's Fellowship.



Andreas Miles-Novelo, a psychology and English dual major from Des Moines, Iowa, earned his bachelor's degree in May 2017. Andreas has accepted an offer from the Department of Social Psychology Ph.D. program at Iowa State University and received the AGEP Fellowship.



Zully Perez Sierra, a chemical engineering major from Norfolk, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in May 2017. Zully plans to pursue a Ph.D. in Chemical & Biomolecular Engineering at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. She has been awarded the prestigious Sloan Fellowship.



Sara Reyes, a psychology major from Norfolk, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in psychology in May 2017. She has accepted a research coordinator position working with Dr. Ricardo Muñoz at the Institute for International Internet Interventions for Health (i4Health) at Palo Alto University.



Kimberly Ruiz, a child, youth and family studies major from Grand Island, Nebraska, earned her bachelor's degree in May 2017. Kim has accepted an offer from the UNL Marriage and Family Therapy master's program for fall 2017.



MaLeaha Semerad, a child, youth and family studies major from Dodge, Nebraska, will earn her bachelor's degree in August 2017. MaLeaha has accepted an offer from the UNL Marriage and Family Therapy master's program for fall 2017.



Megan Smith, from Frisco, Texas, earned her bachelor's degree in biochemistry and microbiology in December 2016. She has accepted an offer from the Microbiology, Immunology, and Cancer Biology Ph.D. Program at the University of Minnesota. Megan was awarded the DOVE Fellowship, the MICaB Diversity Excellence Award, a Medical School Graduate Fellowship, and a Biomedical Graduate Research, Education, and Training Career Development Award.

Scherr Followed his Passions

Tyler D. Scherr, Ph.D. (UNL McNair Scholar 2009-11) earned his Ph.D. in pathology & microbiology from UNMC in December 2016. He is currently working as a Licensing Intern at UNeMed, the technology transfer arm of UNMC and UNO. Dr. Scherr was the keynote speaker and received the McNair Alumni Appreciation Award at the Annual McNair Recognition Reception. He shares his McNair story below.

“In case you haven’t realized this yet,” Dr. Tyler Scherr pointed out, “Life seldom follows a straight path.” From taking undergraduate courses in biblical studies to earning his Ph.D. in pathology and microbiology to his present-day postdoc with UNeMed bringing technology and scientific findings to the marketplace, Scherr’s journey has been full of unforeseen twists and turns. Although Scherr’s experiences may sound tumultuous, it has been an enjoyable journey because he has allowed himself to follow his passions, wherever they might lead. In fact, Scherr encourages all McNair scholars to follow their passions, even if they change every few years like his did. “I’d encourage all of you to be confident and comfortable in choosing your own path,” Scherr advised, “Because I believe that’s ultimately what will bring you the most happiness!”

Following his passions led Scherr down an unexpected path during his undergraduate years at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Before being accepted into the McNair Scholars Program, Scherr was turned down from other scholar programs, such as the IDEA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) Program. Being rejected from the INBRE program felt like a major setback at the time, because Scherr had placed “all of his eggs into one basket.” Fortunately, Scherr found an opportunity with the McNair Scholars Program after the doors at INBRE had closed for him. Acceptance into the McNair program felt like a fresh start for Scherr, and he credits the confidence bestowed upon him by the McNair staff for helping him flourish in the program. Scherr said, “Oftentimes, it’s helpful to have someone else believe in you first, in order to believe in yourself.” This confidence allowed Scherr to thrive as a McNair scholar and seize the new opportunities that the program provided him.

Scherr credits the McNair program with preparing him for the rigors of graduate-level study and research. Scherr noted, “I honestly don’t



Tyler Scherr, Ph.D.
2017 McNair Alumni Appreciation Award

think I would’ve been as successful in graduate school without this experience.” The McNair experience consisting of full-time research, interactive meetings with fellow scholars and McNair staff, and presenting at conferences “really did an excellent job preparing [him] for life in graduate school.” Moreover, Scherr identified the “excellent” GRE preparation sessions and graduate school application support as contributing factors in his acceptance into the University of Nebraska-Omaha’s pathology and microbiology doctoral program.

In addition to the academically enriching moments of the McNair program, Scherr created many lasting memories and met new people who shared his passions for research. Scherr fondly recalled a time during his McNair Summer Research Experience when most of his cohort huddled together at a dining table in Selleck Hall and watched the FIFA World Cup while their experimental incubations were running back in the lab. These kinds of informal experiences allowed Scherr to build relationships with his peers. According to Scherr, the McNair program was an excellent opportunity to “meet really cool people” who were simultaneously engaged in exciting and innovative research themselves. Scherr cited the “exposure to different perspectives from different people doing different research” as an important takeaway from his McNair experience. From doing research in the laboratory to spending time with fellow young scientists, Scherr enhanced his research acumen and began to build his professional network during his time in the McNair program.

Looking back on his experiences, Scherr admits that his path has been more winding than he originally anticipated; however, he had been warned that this might occur. At the beginning of his McNair experience, Scherr’s cohort participated in an activity facilitated by Dr. Richard Lombardo. Scherr still remembers this activity well. Lombardo told the McNair scholars that day, “Life is like crossing a fog-covered bridge where we create what is on the other end.” Scherr admits that he thought the phrase was “sort of cheesy at the time,” but he now considers it to be the truth. For current McNair scholars gazing out into their futures, Scherr encourages you to identify your passions and use them to guide you along your path, no matter how winding the path might get.

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.

Tate Gives Back to the McNair Community

Jessica Tate (Iowa State University McNair Alum) is a doctoral candidate in the counseling psychology program at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln. Jess received the McNair Graduate Student Appreciation Award at the 2017 McNair Recognition Reception. The next step in her academic and professional career includes completing her pre-doctoral internship at North Carolina’s Butner Federal Correctional Complex to prepare for a career as a correctional and forensic psychologist. While on internship, Jess will continue working on her dissertation, which explores help-seeking intentions for mental health treatment among incarcerated Black males. Jess reflects on her McNair experience below.

by Madison Hilbert

“I tell people all the time that I would not be in the position I am today without the help and guidance of the McNair program.” Receiving help from the program at Iowa State University and later here at UNL, graduate student and McNair graduate assistant, Jess Tate, has felt honored to give back and work for the program over the last few years.

Tate appreciates everything the McNair program has given her. The program has rewarded her in more ways than one as she became a contributing member to its community. It has prepared her to “not only be a successful researcher and Ph.D. student, but also to be a well-rounded individual.”

During her first years as a graduate student, Tate spent most of her time acclimating to her program and getting to know her colleagues, faculty, and staff in the Department of Educational Psychology. She made connections by volunteering to serve on panels and assisting on campus events. She was also nominated to become the President of the Black Graduate Student Association (BGSA). In addition, she has made intentional efforts to make connections with people across the UNL community while working as the UCARE and McNair Graduate Assistant. Tate feels that it is ‘extremely rewarding.’ “I get to help undergraduate students learn the foundations of conducting research and it is really amazing to observe their progress, knowledge, and confidence expand throughout the entire research process,” Tate commented.

The decision to do her internship as a counseling psychologist with the prison population was an easy one, as Tate grew up watching her father work passionately and advocate for his clients as a parole officer. “I was aware at a young age that I wanted to work with this marginalized population in some capacity to serve as an advocate and agent for change,” recalled Tate.

It was not until her research project as a junior at Iowa State that she learned she could pursue a graduate degree in Counseling Psychology.

Reflecting on a brainstorming conversation with her McNair mentor, Dr. David Vogel, Tate said, “He encouraged me to conduct research that could eventually lead to interventions for treatment to help ex-offenders re-enter into the community successfully.”



Jess Tate, McNair Alum
2017 Graduate Student Appreciation Award

For the last five years of her doctoral program, she has dedicated her research and clinical experiences to better understand incarcerated populations and the disproportionately higher rates of incarceration for Black males in the U.S.

However, her proudest accomplishment came from the toughest point in her youth. Losing her mother to cancer at age 12 was a life-changing experience that has shaped her into the person she is today. “Because of her, I have learned different ways to find meaning, enjoy life, and live in the moment,” Tate shared, “Thus, the accomplishment I am most proud of is living the life my mom wanted me to live - being a good friend, sister, daughter, scholar, and change agent to advocate for those in need.”

Being in graduate school is all about balancing life in-between work and school. When asked how she achieves this balance, Tate cites many resources. Her methods include self-talk, setting realistic goals, making to do lists, learning to say “no,” using a calendar, planning

personal activities outside of school or work, incorporating regular exercise, having supportive friends and family members, and even relying on a dog companion. “My dog, Koda, has been a constant source of support for me throughout this 5-year journey,” Tate said, “Having a dog allowed me to ‘un-plug’ after a long day of classes to go walking outside with him.” And while these methods are effective, Tate is open to new ideas. “I’m still learning and open to new methods to manage the work-life balance,” Tate noted, “Because circumstances in life are always evolving, therefore, I must adapt how I balance my time.”

For graduating McNair scholars, Tate has a few suggestions for their transition to graduate school. “Step outside of your comfort zone!” emphasized Tate. She hopes that McNair scholars “identify how, when, and where [they] are most productive.” Tate encourages students to never be afraid to ask for help and to expand social networks beyond their specific program. Last but not least, she advised, “Focus on your motivations for applying to graduate school, and remember the overarching goal you hope to achieve by attending graduate school.”

Since the UNL McNair Scholars Program began in 1995, we’ve served **277** students. Excluding the continuing Scholars, **97.7 percent** have earned their bachelor’s degree. **Thirty-four** UNL McNair Program alumni have achieved **Ph.D.s**, **123** have earned master’s degrees, and **19** have earned professional degrees. Currently, **27** UNL McNair alumni are enrolled in Ph.D. programs, **7** are pursuing master’s, and **3** are pursuing professional degrees.

Palmer Paved his own Road

Achieving a Ph.D. isn't always a straightforward path. In fact, the path can be full of twists and turns. Nathan Palmer, a 2017 Ph.D. graduate of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln, shared his advice for navigating the path to the Ph.D. – “Trust yourself.”

Palmer began his journey to the Ph.D. by completing his master's degree in Sociology at UNL in December of 2008. As a graduate student, Palmer pursued opportunities that would translate to skills both in and out of academia. Classes in statistics and data analysis “would be prized by any career I ended up in,” Palmer stated. In addition, Palmer spent time as a graduate assistant in the Office of Graduate Studies, which allowed him the opportunity to develop, produce, and host podcasts for current and potential graduate students. In addition, he took a class in web development in the College of Education. The experiences and skills Palmer developed outside of sociology “set me apart from every other sociologist and gave me an edge.”

The edge Palmer developed while working on his master's degree led to his current position as a senior lecturer at Georgia Southern University, the Wells-Warren Professor of the Year award in 2014, and the Randolph S. Guenter Distinguished Faculty Eagles of Diversity award in 2014 and 2015, in addition to other awards along the way. Palmer noted his favorite part of being in academia is the ability to be able to work autonomously. Palmer said: “I love autonomy. With a few exceptions, I get to work how I want, when I want, and where I want. I have bosses, just like everyone else, and they tell me what I need to do, but they never tell me how I have to go about doing it. The best jobs are the ones where you get to creatively solve interesting problems and have a meaningful impact on the lives of others. I am one of the lucky few who can say I get to do just that every day I come in to work. When I was working full-time as an undergraduate I dreamt of a career like the one I have today. It is everything I had hoped it would be and more.”

Palmer credits his success in part to deciding early on in his career that he would say yes to as many opportunities that came his way as possible, regardless of whether they were in line with his personal interests or not. In 2009, he began sharing resources he developed for

teaching sociology, which led to the creation of two websites utilized by sociologists all over the globe: *Sociology in Focus* (<http://sociologyinfocus.com>) and *Sociology Source* (<http://thesocietypages.org/sociologysource>). Within a year, over 100,000 people had visited his site.



Nathan Palmer, Ph.D.
UNL McNair Alum (2004-2006)

Palmer chose to temporarily leave the sociology Ph.D. program midway through. While many told Palmer “if you leave you'll never come back,” it was his faith in himself and his previous experiences that allowed him to trust his ability to get back in the game. Completing the Ph.D. program at a later date included the added complexities of teaching at GSU, being a section editor for the ASA journal *Contexts*, running two websites, being a husband/father, and finishing coursework, comprehensive exams, and the dissertation. However, the skills Palmer gained during his self-imposed break made him a stronger student as well.

According to Palmer: “When I came back to graduate school after being a professional academic for five years I brought with me all of the skills and strategies I had developed through those experiences. I was a much stronger student when I returned and I knew that nothing could stop me from achieving my goal of earning a Ph.D. other than myself. I had grown up a lot and that made it easier in many ways.”

With the support of his mentors and his loved ones, Palmer could “put one foot in front of the other over and over again, not looking up to see how much further I had to go, and then one day recently, I had crossed the finish line. And after graduation, the looks on my loved ones' faces brought me to tears.”

Dr. Palmer's advice to McNair scholars comes in the form of a poem by Aeschylus which he stated, “always reminded me that learning/earning a PhD was supposed to be hard. My suffering wasn't a sign that things were going wrong or that I should quit. My suffering was a sign that I was headed in the right direction.”

He who learns must suffer. And even in our sleep, pain which cannot forget falls drop by drop upon the heart until, in our own despair, against our will, comes wisdom through the awful grace of God. - Aeschylus

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

Scholars Accept Summer Research Opportunities



Kyly Baxter is conducting research this summer funded by the Undergraduate Creative Activities and Research Experience (UCARE). She is working with Dr. Deb Hope, Department of Psychology, to investigate the effects of social support on peer-mentor and client relationships for internet-based cognitive behavioral therapy for rural adults with social anxiety.



Catelyn Evans is participating in the Georgia Tech 2017 SURE summer research program. She is working with Dr. Manu O. Platt in the Wallace H. Coulter Department of Biomedical Engineering, and they are observing how specific proteases (cathepsins) interact with each other.



Brandi Russell is conducting research in Zambia, Africa this summer with Dr. Mary Willis, from the UNL Department of Nutrition & Health Sciences. They are currently exploring vitamin A deficiency and its effects on children and pregnant women.

Scholars Complete Theses and Co-author Publications

McNair Scholars who co-authored recent publications or completed a senior thesis include:

Brianna McKay – McKay, B. D., Yeo, N. M., Jenkins, N. D.M., Miramonti, A. A., Cramer, J. T. (2017). Exertional rhabdomyolysis in a 21-year-old, healthy female: A case report. *The Journal of Strength & Conditioning Research*. Epub. PMID: 28146033. DOI: 10.1519/JSC.0000000000001824.

Jenkins, N. D., Housh, T. J., Miramonti, A. A., **McKay, B. D.**, Yeo, N. M., Smith, C. M., Cramer, J. T. (2016). Effects of ruminic acid rich conjugated linoleic acid supplementation on cognitive function and handgrip performance in older men and women. *Experimental Gerontology*, 84, 1-11. PMID: 27521997. DOI: 10.1016/j.exger.2016.08.004.

Jazmin Castillo – Castillo, J.A. (2017). Estimation of Distribution and Abundance of the Spotted Hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve, Botswana. *Senior Thesis*. Advisor: Dr. John Carroll, School of Natural Resources.

Amanda Dale – Dale, A. (2017). The Limited Utility of the Affirmative Consent Standard: Effects on Perceptions of Sexual Scenarios. *Honors Thesis*. Committee members: Dr. Sarah Gervais, Dr. Cal Garbin, and Michelle Haikalis, Department of Psychology.

UNL McNair Scholar Research Journal

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 7,900 full-text downloads. Between June 1, 2016 and May 31, 2017, there were over 1,200 full-text downloads. The most downloaded papers of the past 12 months were:

Cosset, T. (2010). Child Sexual Abuse Victims and their Families Receiving Services at a Child Advocacy Center: Mental Health and Support Needs. (395 downloads) <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/mcnairjournal/1/>

Lundahl, A., West, T., Martin, E. K., Campbell, C., Vanderbeek, J., & Hansen, D. J. (2011). Relationship of Obsessive-Compulsive Behaviors of Primary Caregivers with a History of Sexual Abuse and Perfectionism in their Sexually Abused Children. (222 downloads) <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/mcnairjournal/5/>

Ridling, B. (2010). Insight and Locus of Control as Related to Aggression in Individuals with Severe Mental Illness (SMI). (167 downloads) <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/mcnairjournal/2/>

Honors, Awards, and Leadership Activities 2016-17

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, scholarships, and leadership activities:

Myrianna Bakou – 2017-18 UCARE award; 2016-17 UCARE award; Arts & Sciences Ambassador; Pound Resident Assistant and Residence Association Liaison; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy (NCPA) mentor; Rosa Peterson Scholarship; Alvah H. Minton Scholarship; and New Student Enrollment Leader.

Kyly Baxter – 2017-18 UCARE award; Summer 2017 UCARE award; 2016-17 UCARE award; William H. Thompson Learning Community; National Society of Collegiate Scholars; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Oliver & Eva Reedy Scholarship; Psi Chi Member; Upward Bound Math Science EnvironMentor; and Upward Bound student worker.

Jazmin Castillo – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 Franco's List; Spring 2017 TA for Vertebrate Zoology Lab; Global Internship Award; Scarlet Guard Board of Directors; Study of the U.S. Institute on Civic Engagement Ambassador; School of Natural Resources Ambassador; and 2016 South Sioux City High School World Geography Classroom Speaker on hyena research, studying abroad, and global awareness.

Amanda Dale – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Dean's list; Chancellor's Commission on the Status of Women Outstanding Student Award; Men @ Nebraska Organization Vice President & Peer Educator; Psychology of Gender Student Organization President; The Women's Center volunteer; Prevent Peer Educator; Psi Chi member; Alpha Lambda Delta honor society; and Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society.

Cole Dempsey – 2017-18 UCARE award; 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Dean's list; Regents Scholarship; Morris H. Schneider Fund for Excellence in Mechanical Engineering Scholarship; Honors Textbook Scholarship; Husker Bass Anglers; and Phi Eta Sigma honor society.

Shimin Deng – 2016-17 UCARE award; William H. Thompson Scholar; Math Scholar; Eastman Scholar; Pi Mu Epsilon mathematics honor society; and Nebraska Math Scholar volunteer.

Catelyn Evans – 2016-17 UCARE award; OASIS Academic Success Award; Urban League Scholarship; National Society of Black Engineers (NSBE) President; elected 2016-17 Region V Vice-Chair for National Society of Black Engineers; Core Team Member of Young and Unashamed; BOSR and Multicultural Center Employee of the Month; and Malone Center tutoring volunteer.

Lizeth Fraire – 2017-18 UCARE award

Jaquelin Garcia-Castorena – IDeA Networks of Biomedical Research Excellence (INBRE) research fellowship; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers; and Education Quest Student Ambassador.

Daisy Guiza Beltran – 2017-18 UCARE award; Undergraduate research with Zhang group; Mexican American Student Association (MASA) member; Center for Civic Engagement Winter 2016 service break to California; Doris Sautter scholarship, Paul Carlberg scholarship, and Hazel V. Emley Scholarship.

Colton Harper – 2016-17 UCARE award; iGEM Team

José Lemus – Innocents Society; 2016-17 UCARE award; William H. Thompson Scholar; Nebraska Appleseed Intern; President of Omicron Delta Epsilon Economic Honor Society; W.E.B. Du Bois Honors Society; Alpha Lambda Delta Honors Society; University Programming Council member; Economics Undergraduate Advising Committee.

Grecia Macias – 2016-17 UCARE award

Sonoor Majid – 2017-18 UCARE award; 2016-17 UCARE award; Arnold H. White Memorial Scholarship; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Lincoln Rotary

Club 14 Foundation Scholarship; Health Sciences Scholar; R.H. "Rick" Davis Scholarship; William H. Thompson Learning Community Tutor for Math and General Chemistry; and Chemistry TA.

Brianna McKay – 2016-17 UCARE award; American College of Sports Medicine student member; and UNL Mental Health Task Force Committee Student Advisor.

Andreas Miles-Novelo – 2016-17 UCARE award; Ruth Levington Scholarship; Men's Club Lacrosse Team; and National Society of Collegiate Scholars member.

Amanda Miller – 2017-18 UCARE award

Zully Perez Sierra – Honors Program; 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Dean's List; William H. Thompson Learning Community Member and Math & Science Tutor; American Institute of Chemical Engineers (AIChE) 9/11 Community Service Day Volunteer; Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers Treasurer; Society of Women Engineers; AIChE Minority Scholarship; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; John & Nancy Dunn Scholarship; James Blackman Scholarship; Milton E. Mohr Research Scholarship; Peoples City Mission and Lincoln Zoo volunteer.

Sara Reyes – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Dean's list; Undergraduate Research Ambassador; Indiana University 2016 Getting You into IU Program; and 2016 University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Diversifying Clinical Psychology Weekend.

Daniel Rico – Summer 2017 UCARE award; Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers; American Meteorological Society; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Buffett Scholarship Award for Academic Excellence; Donald F. Mildred Topp Othmer Engineering Scholarship; and Reach the World Correspondent Member.

Alicia Michelle Rogers – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2015 College of Arts & Sciences Dean's list; A. & M. Waters Scholarship, 2015–2016; Biosciences Opportunities Preview Program (BOPS) at the University of Wisconsin-Madison (October 2015); Spring 2016 Teaching Assistant for Biochemistry 321; American Society for Virologists; American Association for the Advancement of Science; Society for Experimental Biology and Medicine; Lincoln Young Professionals Group; First Husker Mentor; and First Generation Advisory Council undergraduate advisor.

Kimberly Ruiz – 2016-17 UCARE award; Spring 2017 Dean's List; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy Peer Mentor; Lambda Theta Nu Fundraising Chair; and planned the Spring 2016 Latina Youth Leadership Conference for middle school girls at the UNL East Campus Union.

Brandi Russell – Honors Program; Dean's Scholars in Experiential Learning (DSEL); Phi Eta Sigma Honor Society; Alpha Lambda Delta Honor Society; YWCA Take a Break program volunteer; elementary school pen pal; Fall 2016 ABRCMS Conference Travel Award; Delta Zeta Scholarship; Ivan and Darlene Auer Scholarship; and the UNL rowing team.

Elliot Sandfort – 2017-18 UCARE award; 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 College of Engineering Dean's list; Alpha Lambda Delta and Phi Eta Sigma honor societies; UNL Aerospace Club Secretary; and Children's Museum volunteer to spread awareness of engineering at UNL.

MaLeaha Semerad – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 and Spring 2017 Dean's List; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; William H. Thompson Scholar; Ardith & Anna VonHousen Scholarship; and UNL Education Abroad Global Gateway Scholarship Summer 2017.

Megan Smith – 2016-17 UCARE award; Fall 2016 ABRCMS Conference Travel Award; and Omaha Benson VEX Robotics Middle School Competition judge.

Scholars Report Research Findings at Conferences

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

- Myrianna Bakou – Bakou, M**, Gervais, S, Riemer, A. (2017, April). *Is Sexual Assault Raced? The Effects of Race on Perceptions of Dehumanization and Rape*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Kyly Baxter – Baxter, K.**, Bautista, C., Hope, D. (2017, April). *Effects of Social Support on Peer-Mentor and Client Relationships for Internet-Based Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for Rural Adults with Social Anxiety*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Jazmin Castillo – Castillo, J.**, A. Snyman, A., Carroll, J. (2017, April). *Estimation of distribution and abundance of the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Castillo, J.**, Snyman, A., Carroll, J.P. (2017, February). *Estimation of distribution and abundance of the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve*. 77th Midwest Fish & Wildlife Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Castillo, J.**, A. Snyman, and J. Carroll. (2016, November). *Estimation of distribution and abundance of the spotted hyena (*Crocuta crocuta*) in the Northern Tuli Game Reserve*. Inaugural Red Talk, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Amanda Dale – Dale, A.**, Haikalis, M., Gervais, S. (2017, May) *The Limited Utility of the Affirmative Consent Standard: Effects on Men's Perceptions of a Sexual Assault Scenario*. American Psychological Society Annual Convention, Boston, Massachusetts.
- Dale, A.**, Haikalis, M., Gervais, S. (2017, April). *Affirmative consent: Individual differences in perceptions of sexual assault*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Cole Dempsey – Dempsey, C.**, Nelson, C. (2017, April). *Development of a Mobile-Support System for Late Stage Rehabilitation*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Simon Deng – Deng, S.**, Jin, Y. (2017, April). *The Dynamics of Predator-Prey Models in the Lake Environment*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Catelyn Evans – Evans, C.**, Lei, Y., Li, Q. (2017, April). *New Technology for Scalable Production of Cancer Stem Cells*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Grecia Macias – Macias, G.**, Goosby, B. (2017, April). *Discrimination and Negative Emotions: Results from a Daily Diary Study*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Brianna McKay – Miramonti, A.A.**, Gillen, Z.A., **McKay, B.D.**, Housh, T.J., Jenkins, N.D.M., Cochrane, K.C., Hill, E.C., Smith, C.M., Johnson, G.O., Cramer, J.T. (2016, October). *Relationships among Cognitive Function and Handgrip Strength and Endurance in Older Men and Women*. Poster presentation, College of Education and Human Sciences (CEHS) Showcase, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Sara Reyes – Torres, R.**, **Reyes, S.**, Brock, R.L. (2017, April). *Frequency and Adequacy of Partner Support During Pregnancy: Implications for Postpartum Family Health*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Andreas Miles-Novelo – Miles-Novelo, A.**, Carter, M., Liscom, N., Riemer, A. (2017, April). *She Looks Like She'd be an Animal in Bed: The Effects of Alcohol on Dehumanization of Women*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Zully Perez Sierra – Perez Sierra, Z.**, Viljoen, H. (2017, April). *Determining the Water and Sucrose Transport in Ash Trees Infested with the Emerald Ash Borer*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Kimberly Ruiz – Ruiz, K.**, Willis-Esqueda, C. (2017, April). *Biases in Culpability Assignment for Minor Infractions*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Elliot Sandfort– Sandfort, E.**, Soh, L. (2017, April). *The Effect of Diversity on Ad-Hoc Collaboration in Open Environments*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- MaLeaha Semerad – Semerad, M.A.**, Parra, G. (2017, April). *Forgiveness and Romantic Relationship Satisfaction*. Poster presented at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln 2017 Undergraduate Research Conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

The McNair Program is a focused, comprehensive program that provides much more than advice on how to prepare for entrance to a graduate program. Participating Scholars become an integral part of a learning community, receiving support from each other, McNair Program staff, UNL faculty, and other resources as they develop the research skills they need to prepare for the next stage in their educational careers.

McNair Alumni Earn Advanced Degrees

We applaud these UNL McNair alumni who earned advanced degrees during 2016-17:

Doctoral degrees

Justin Escamilla, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2009-2011) earned a master's degree in criminology, law, and justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) in May 2013 and earned a Ph.D. in criminology, law, and justice at UIC in May 2017.

Morgan (Conley) McCain, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2008-2010) earned a master's degree in counseling psychology in May 2013 from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and will earn a Ph.D. in counseling psychology in August 2017 from UNL. She has accepted a psychologist position at the University of Houston's Counseling and Psychological Services.

Nathan Palmer, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2004-2006) earned a master's degree in sociology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in December 2008 and earned a Ph.D. in sociology from UNL in May 2017. Dr. Palmer is a senior lecturer in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Georgia Southern University.

Erica Rogers, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2004-2006) earned a master's degree in English from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in August 2012 and earned her Ph.D. in the English at UNL in May 2017. Dr. Rogers is currently a visiting associate professor-lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire.

Tyler Scherr, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2009–2011) earned his Ph.D. in pathology and microbiology at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in December 2016. Dr. Scherr is currently working as a Licensing Intern at UNeMed, the technology transfer arm of UNMC and UNO.

Master's degrees

Jenn (Milliman) Andersen (McNair Scholar 2013–2015) earned her bachelor's degree in psychology in May 2015 and earned her master's degree in sociology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in May 2017. She is pursuing a Ph.D. in sociology at UNL.

Erandi Herndon (McNair Scholar 2012–2015) earned her bachelor's degree in psychology in May 2015 and earned her master's degree in marriage and family therapy from Colorado State University in May 2017. She is currently working as a family therapist at La Cocina, which provides Spanish-speaking therapy services for the Latino community, as well as services to therapy groups to help cope with stress.

Alumni Fellowships & Career Updates

Rebecca Beals, Ph.D. (McNair Scholar 2007–09) has accepted an assistant professor of sociology position at the University of Northern Colorado.

Jason Thomas (McNair Scholar 2012-2014) was awarded a U.S. Fulbright Fellowship to do plant science research in France for the 2017-18 academic year.



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM



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