



McNair
News

McNair Scholars Program

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Summer 2021

Congrats McNair Graduates!



Mahaa Albusharif, Lincoln, Nebraska, earned a B.S. in Biochemistry in May 2021 and has been accepted to the Postbaccalaureate Research Education Program (PREP) at UMass Medical School Graduate School of Biomedical Sciences.



Amyia Harris, Omaha, Nebraska, earned a B.A. in Psychology in May 2021 and will be pursuing a Ph.D. in counseling psychology at Texas A&M University beginning in Fall 2022.



Vivian Nguyen, Omaha, Nebraska, earned her B.A. in psychology in December 2020 and will be pursuing a master's degree with a concentration in clinical mental health counseling at the University of Nebraska–Omaha.



Adan Redwine, Grand Island, Nebraska, earned a B.S. in Biological Systems Engineering in May 2021 and will be pursuing a master's in agricultural and biological systems engineering at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



Juliana Rodriguez, Omaha, Nebraska, earned a B.S. in Biological Systems Engineering in May 2021 and plans to apply to controlled environment agriculture graduate programs in the fall.

Kudos to McNair Scholars

Aiah Nour was one of eight UNL undergraduate students to receive a 2021 Luminary Award during a ceremony at the Champions Club in April. Sponsored by the Office of Student Affairs, the annual awards are designed to shine a light on students who make a difference through their leadership and community engagement, while excelling in their academic pursuits. Aiah was honored for her leadership and involvement in the Black Student Union, African Student Association, ASUN Student Government, the Innocents Society, and her commitment to research through the McNair Scholars Program.



Clarice Santos participated in the Minority Health Disparities Initiative Undergraduate Research Program during Spring and Summer 2021. She worked on her project, *Mediators of Violence Exposure and Substance Use (MoVES)*, under the guidance of Dr. Trey Andrews, Department of Psychology and Latinx Mental Health and Treatment Outcomes Lab.



During the 2021 Undergraduate Sociology Awards, Clarice won the Vanetta Aaron Student Paper Competition Award for Best Paper on Race, Class, or Gender for her McNair Summer Research paper, *Unsterile Needle Acquisition Among PWIDs in Rural Puerto Rico: A Comparison Between Those in and out of Treatment*.

Stephanie Perez was selected to participate in the virtual 2021 Brown University Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP). Stephanie conducted research on the remediation and behavior of environmental contaminants groundwater and soil, with Dr. Kurt Pennell, professor in the Chemical and Environmental Engineering Department at Brown University. In July, she presented her research, *Mathematical Modeling of Per- and Polyfluoralkyl Substances (PFAS) transport in Unsaturated Soils Including Air-Water Interfacial (AWI) Adsorption* at the Leadership Alliance Virtual National Symposium 2021.



Since the UNL McNair Scholars Program began in 1995, we've served **320** students. Excluding the continuing Scholars, **97 percent** have earned their bachelor's degree, **150** UNL McNair Program alumni have earned master's degrees, **22** have earned professional degrees, and **53** UNL McNair Program alumni have achieved a **Ph.D.** Currently, **25** UNL McNair alumni are enrolled in Ph.D. programs, **15** are pursuing master's, and **3** are pursuing professional degrees.

McNair Alumni Earn Advanced Degrees

We applaud these UNL McNair alumni who earned advanced degrees during 2020-21:

Doctoral degrees

Reinaldo Alcalde, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2010-13*) earned a master's degree in environmental engineering from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign in December 2014 and earned a Ph.D. in environmental engineering from the University of Texas at Austin in December 2020. Dr. Alcalde is a postdoctoral scholar at the California Institute of Technology working in the Division of Biology and Biological Engineering.

Kassie Flewelling, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2013-15*) earned a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Colorado Denver in December 2017, and earned a Ph.D. in clinical health psychology from the University of Colorado Denver in August 2021. Dr. Flewelling has accepted a postdoctoral fellowship position at Children's Hospital & Medical Center in Omaha.

Marlene Grayer-Chisulo, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2003-05*) earned a master's degree in 2009 and earned a Ph.D. in educational studies with a specialization in teaching, curriculum and learning from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in August 2021.

Megan Smith, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2014-16*) earned a Ph.D. in microbiology from the University of Minnesota in August 2021. Dr. Smith has accepted a Regulatory Affairs Specialist II position at DePuy Synthes and will be working in their spine branch in Raynham, Massachusetts.

Master's degrees

Kendra Haag (*McNair Scholar 2012-2014*) earned a master's degree in public health focused on health service administration from the University of Arizona in May 2021.

Carolyn Herrera (*McNair Scholar 2017-18*) earned a master's degree in clinical psychology from the University of Indianapolis in August 2021.

Grecia Macias (*McNair Scholar 2016-19*) earned a master's degree in health informatics from the University of Michigan in April 2021.

Zully Perez Sierra (*McNair Scholar 2014-17*) earned a master's degree in chemical engineering from the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign in December 2020.

Daniel Rico (*McNair Scholar 2013-2017*) earned a master's degree in computer science and engineering from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln in August 2021.

Alumni Publications

Ross Benes – Benes, R. (2021, January). *Rural Rebellion: How Nebraska Became a Republican Stronghold*. Lawrence, KS: University Press of Kansas. ISBN 978-0-7006-3045-5.

Kaylor Caldwell – Berkel, L.A., Nilsson, J, Caldwell, K., Joiner, A., Stratmann, S. (2020). Integrated Health Care and Counseling Psychology: An Introduction to the Major Contribution. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 47-7, 999-1011. doi.org/10.1177/0011000019896795.

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 any time:

<http://www.unl.edu/mcnair/scholarupdate.shtml>

Honors, Awards, and Leadership Activities 2020–21

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 2020-21 honors, awards, scholarships, and leadership activities:

Mahaa Albusharif – Graduated in May 2021; Physiology Intern; Research Assistant in Dr. Amanda Ramer-Tait's lab AY 20-21; and American Society of Nutrition undergraduate member.

Miguel Avila Garcia – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2020-21; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Center for Plant Science laboratory student worker; Mexican American Student Association President; and Omega Delta Phi Fraternity Vice President.

Cleopatra Babor – UCARE award 2021-22; George Beadle Scholarship; H. Beachell Scholarship; Robinson Family Scholarship; and Plant Biology Club Treasurer & Co-Founder.

Taylor Billington – Graduated December 2020; Honors Program; Regent's Scholar; Society of Physics Students; Horticulture Club; Behlen Observatory Open House volunteer; and SAC Museum Physics demo volunteer.

Dorian Bobbett – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2021-22; Honors Program; Regents Scholarship; Women in Engineering Peer Mentor; UNL Chapter of Engineers Without Borders Secretary; UNL Engineering Ambassador; Engineering Readiness Academy Peer Coach; NUBE volunteer; and Belmont Elementary School CLC STEM Club Coordinator.

Seth Caines – UCARE award 2021-22; ENGR 100 undergraduate TA; George Beadle Scholarship; and 2021-22 ASUN Senator for the College of Engineering and Environmental Sustainability Chair; and UNL Organic Farm volunteer.

Jocelyn Covarrubias – UCARE award 2021-22.

Zoe Erickson – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2021-22; Regent's Scholar; and UNL Honors Program.

Evelyn Estrada Gonzalez – Dean's List Fall 2020; UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2021-22; Minority Health Disparities 2021-22; First Husker Peer Mentor; Career Services Peer Career Guide; and Mexican American Student Association Treasurer.

Noah Garcia – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2021-22; and UNL Honors Program.

Amyia Harris – Graduated with Distinction in May 2021; Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; Psi Chi member; Communication Studies research assistant; William H. Thompson Scholars 3.5 Achievement Award; House of Hugs volunteer; and La Petite Academy assistant teacher.

Mohammad Majid – Dean's List Spring 2021; CSCE 440 TA; LPS robotics and technology mentor; Nelnet Senior Design Team; Senior Design Platinum Award; Vesper CAS Fellowship; Initialize CS Education Fellowship mentor; and Muslim Student Association.

Logan Miller – Graduated in December 2020; Group UCARE award 2020-21; PSYC 181 tutor; and RA in the Vision, Attention, Memory, and Perception lab.

Bailey Mullins – Dean's List Spring 2021; UCARE award 2021-22; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Environmental Studies Learning Assistant; and UNL Multicultural Greek Environmental Team Founder.

Daniel Nguyen – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2021-22; Regents Scholarship; MHDI Research Assistant; UNL WEB DuBois Honor Society; UNL Honors Program; National Society of Collegiate Scholars member; and UNL PsiChi member.

Vivian Nguyen – Graduated in December 2020; Dean's List Fall 2020; Learning and Development Lab research assistant; Alcohol and Social Perception Project research assistant; Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Charles Towle Scholarship; TRIO Educational Talent Search mentor; National Society of Leadership and Success; OASIS, SSS Scholar; LADR lab assistant; and BAR lab assistant.

Aiah Nour – UCARE award 2020-21 and Summer 2021; 2021 Student Luminary Award; 2021 Women of Courage, Commitment and Character Award; Innocents Society Historian; Black Student Union Vice President of Outreach and Care Bags Initiative; African Students Association Vice President; ASUN Chief of Staff; and American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Honors Society.

Stephanie Perez – Dean's List Spring 2021; UCARE award 2020-21; Brown University 2021 Summer Research Early Identification Program (SR-EIP) Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; W.H. Thompson Scholarship; and College of Engineering Dean's Leader; and Engineers Without Borders Nebraska Team Outreach Lead.

Adan Redwine – Graduated in May 2021; UCARE award 2020-21; Choctaw Nation Higher Education Scholarship; Wayne & Virginia Thurman Scholarship; The National Society of Leadership and Success; Dance Marathon Family Representative; and FarmHouse Fraternity Technology Chairman.

Juliana Rodriguez – Graduated in May 2021; Dean's List Spring 2021; UCARE award 2020-21; NASA Nebraska Space grant; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Schulte Family Scholarship; Department of Biological Systems Engineering Scholarship; NANO Outreach position at Nebraska Center for Material and Nanoscience; Morrill Hall Sunday with a Scientist: Chemistry; Women in Science conference booth; and Nanotechnology in the body and circuit kits.

Clarice Santos – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; Honors Program; UCARE award 2020-21; 2021 Sociology Student Paper Competition Vanetta Aaron award; 2021 Sociology Opportunities Scholarship; Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Sociology Undergraduate Advisory Board; CAS Connects Peer Leader; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy Peer Leader and tutor; and Define American member.

Alyssa Simpson – UCARE award 2021-22; UNL Honors Program; Regents Scholar; George & Mary Haskell Scholarship; Nebraska CubeSat Mentor; oSTEM 2020-21 Secretary and 2021-22 Fundraising Coordinator; Aerospace Club Communications Coordinator; and Society of Physics Students 2020-21 Secretary and 2021-22 Vice President.

Josselyn Telule – Dean's List Spring 2021; UCARE award 2021-22; TA for College Major Forum EDPS 097; F. & J Musgrave Scholarship; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholar; Nebraska Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Husker Traditions Scholarship; and William H. Thompson Learning Community Peer Mentor.

Serigne Toure – UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2021-22; CSCE 310 TA; and Muslim Student Organization President.

Haley Witthuhn – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2021-22; UNL Honors Program; Education Quest Scholarship; Arts and Science Scholarship; Honors After-school Club Fall 2021; and UNL Children's Center Student Teacher.

Khalid Yusuf – Dean's List Fall/Spring 20-21; UCARE award 2021-22; SOCI 217 Sociology of Race and Ethnicity undergraduate TA; Black Achievement Award; and Diversity Ambassadors Inclusive Leadership Facilitator.



McNair Presentations and Publications

McNair Scholar Presentations:

Mahaa Albusharif – Albusharif, M., Toney, A.M., Ramer-Tait, A. (2021, April). *The Gut Microbiota Mediates Red Raspberry Polyphenol Health Benefits in Diet-induced Obesity*. Presentation for Nebraska Research Days virtual conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Toney, A.M., Xian, Y., Shao, J., Works, D., **Albusharif, M.**, Schmaltz, R., Chaidez, V., Chung, S., Ramer-Tait, A.E. (2021). *The Gut Microbiota Regulates the Metabolic Benefits Mediated by Red Raspberry Polyphenols*. Presented at The American Society for Nutrition – Nutrition 2021 Live Online Conference.

Evelyn Estrada Gonzalez – Estrada Gonzalez, E., Knoche, L. (2021, April). *Parental Well-being During Early Childhood: How does it Relate to Parental Behaviors?* Presentation for Nebraska Research Days virtual conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Amyia Harris – Harris, A. C., Akhavein, K., & Finch J.E., (2021, April). *Learning Difficulties and Parental Control During Homework Help: The Moderating Role of Socioeconomic Status*. Oral presentation at the 2021 Society for Research in Child Development Virtual Biennial Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Daniel Nguyen – Nguyen, D. M., & Willis-Esqueda, C. (2021, April). *The Impact of Race/Ethnicity and LGBTQ+ Identity on Well-Being*. Presentation for Nebraska Research Days virtual conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Nguyen, D. M., & Willis-Esqueda, C. (2021, April). *The Impact of Race/Ethnicity and LGBTQ+ Identity on Well-Being*. Midwest Psychological Association (MPA) Virtual Conference.

Vivian Nguyen – Nguyen, V. (2021, April). *Associations Between Employment Change and Parental Mental Health during the COVID-19 Pandemic*. Poster Presentation at the 2021 Society for Research in Child Development Virtual Biennial Meeting, Washington, D.C.

Aiah Nour – Pandey, E., Nour, A. S., & Harris, E. N. (2021, April). *Determining the Role of O-fucose Modifications in Stabilin-2 Receptor Expression and Function in Human Cells*. Poster presented at the 2021 Experimental Biology Virtual Conference.

Stephanie Perez – Perez, S., Liao, S, Pennell, K. (2021, August). *Mathematical Modeling of Per- and Polyfluoralkyl Substances (PFAS) transport in Unsaturated Soils Including Air-Water Interfacial (AWI) Adsorption*. Oral presentation for Leadership Alliance Virtual National Symposium 2021.

Clarice Santos – Santos, C., Habecker, P. (2021, April). *Differences in Positive and Negative Affect among Rural Persons Who Inject Drugs in Puerto Rico Who are in and out of Treatment*. Presentation for Nebraska Research Days virtual conference, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Publications & Honors Theses:

Mahaa Albusharif – Toney, A.M., Albusharif, M., Works, D., Polenz, L., Schlange, S, Ramer-Tait, A.E., And Chung, S. (2020). Differential Effects of Whole Red Raspberry Polyphenols and Their Gut Metabolite Urolithin A On Neuroinflammation In Bv-2 Microglia. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*. Submitted November 2020.

Mahboub, S. Shomo, Z.D., Register, M., **Albusharif, M.** and Roston, R, L. (2020). Three Methods to Extract Membrane Glycerolipids: Comparing Sensitivity to Lipase Degradation and Yield, Methods of Plant Lipids, *Springer Production*, In Press.

Amyia Harris – (2021, March). Learning Difficulties and Parental Control During Homework Help: The Moderating Role of Socioeconomic Status. *Senior Thesis*. Advised by: Jenna Finch, Ph.D. and Jordan Soliz, Ph.D., Department of Psychology.

Aiah Nour – Pandey, E., Nour, A. S., & Harris, E. N. (2020). Prominent Receptors of Liver Sinusoidal Endothelial Cells in Liver Homeostasis and Disease. *Frontiers in Physiology*, 11. doi:10.3389/fphys.2020.00873.



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