

McNair Scholar Delivers Commencement Speech at Fall Graduation

At the December 2017 graduation ceremony, McNair Scholar **Cesar Bustos** delivered the commencement speech. Cesar, who received his BA in Physics, shared that at the beginning he was not an ideal student. However, after a deep introspection and his decision to major in Physics, NEIU helped him to flourish until this point as the commencement speaker. He shared that even during his best times at NEIU he had to face obstacles. The physics department and his extensive research experience taught him that failure is part of the success process. Thus, regardless of setbacks you must not give up. He thanked his parents for migrating to the US, and for working hard and providing the opportunity for him to go to college. **Dr. Acioli** was Cesar's mentor during his tenure at NEIU.



McNair Scholars Pave Their Way Directly Into The Ph.D.

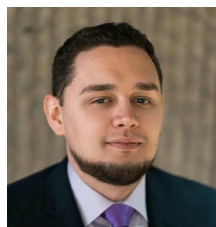
Cashell Lewis (13) graduated with an MSW from the Brown School at Washington University in December 2017 and will now pursue a Ph.D. at the University of Chicago this Fall 2018. While in his Master's program, Cashell also worked as the Project Coordinator for the Missouri Suicide Prevention Coalition. As a McNair Scholar at NEIU, Cashell conducted qualitative research focused on examining the experiences of African-American students in a diverse higher education setting identifying barriers as well as interventions to academic success. At NEIU, Cashell worked under the guidance of **Dr. Jade Stanley**.



Sergio Baragas (15) will be attending the Indiana University School of Medicine to pursue a Ph.D. in Biomedical Science. His interest in biomedical research developed due to personally witnessing two of his brothers suffer from a neurological disorder and an auto-immune disease. Seeing how little we know about the causes of specific diseases and disorders inspired his interest in conducting research. His research was conducted under the supervision of **Dr. Jorge Cantu**.



Ryan Borchert (15) is a McNair and MARC Scholar as well as a University Honors student who says research taught him about the fundamental importance of developing new knowledge. His NEIU faculty research mentor was **Dr. Jorge Cantu**. Through research he became fascinated with the molecular mechanisms of agent-derived pathogenesis and the molecular basis of human disease. Ryan has been accepted into the IBiS (Interdisciplinary Biological Sciences) Ph.D. program at Northwestern University.



Joseph Marsilli (13) was accepted to and will attend the UIC GEMS Ph.D. program. Joseph performed research at NEIU under the supervision of **Dr. Cindy Voisine**.



Stephanie Finne (15) will pursue a Psy.D degree in Clinical Psychology at the Chicago School of Professional Psychology this fall. Her McNair research, which was supervised by **Dr. Amanda Dykema-Engblade**, focused on how anxiety and locus of control impacts a college student's self-efficacy. She says her research focus developed from her interest in working with young adults/college students.



Anthony Smith (14) interests in the root causes of neuron degradation associated with ALS landed Anthony a summer research opportunity at MSU. That opportunity became a springboard for more research at Northwestern University. The latter experience resulted in being asked to apply early and being accepted into a Ph.D. program at the Driskill Program in Life Sciences. While at NEIU, Anthony conducted research under his mentor **Dr. Cindy Voisine**.



Alejandra Villegas (14) will be joining the Integrated Life Sciences umbrella program at the University of Georgia in June with the goal of making the Infectious Diseases department her eventual home. Alejandra has been interested in science since high school, but it was her father's illness that really pushed her to dive into biomedical sciences. To date, she is interested in conducting research and exploring vector-borne diseases. Alejandra worked with NEIU faculty mentor **Dr. Emily Booms**.



Amber Drew (15) has been accepted to Vanderbilt University's Ph.D. program in Sociology for Fall 2018. Amber conducted research over the summer at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Her research focused on racio-linguistic discrimination, and examined how public education institutions in the U.S. fail to meet the academic, cultural, and linguistic needs of African American students through discriminatory policies and classroom practices. While at NEIU, Amber performed research with **Dr. Kim Sanborn**.



McNair Scholars Attend the National McNair Conference



Nine McNair Scholars attended the National McNair Scholars Research Conference at the University of Maryland at College Park this March. **David Alvarado** presented his research entitled *Assessing essential Oils for Alternative Control Mechanisms against Multi Drug Resistant Pseudomonas Aeruginosa*. David's mentor is **Dr. Booms** from the Biology Department. **Ryan Borchert** presented his research on *Mechanism of Action Studies of Novel Inhibitors of The Mycobacterium Tuberculosis DosS and DosT Sensor Kinases*. He was supervised by **Dr. Robert Abramovitch** from Michigan State University. Scholar **Alyson Cervantes** presented her work *Designing and Constructing an Aquaponics System for South African Communities*. **Dr. Paul Davidson** and **Dr. Michelle Green** from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign guided Alyson's work.

Amber Drew presented *Raciolinguistics Discrimination: Approaches to African American English in U.S. Classrooms* guided by **Dr. Kim Potowski** at UIC. **Stephanie Finne** presented her research entitled *An evaluation of College Students Academic Experiences*. **Dr. Amanda Dykema-Engblade** from the Psychology Department guided her research. **Alexandra Lopez** presented *The impact of Educational Attainment on Diabetes Management Class Attendance in Latinos with Diabetes*, her mentor was **Dr. Crystal Glover** from Rush Medical Hospital. **Caroline Lopez-Martinez** presented *The effects of Propanol on Social Anxiety in Zebrafish*, her mentor was **Dr. Shannon Saszik** from the Psychology Department. **Shaima Pantagia** presented *Curcumin Reverses Methylglyoxal Induces Apoptosis in RINm1F cells and PC78 Cells in Hyperglycemic Conditions*. Shaima developed this research poster with **Dr. Shubhangee M Mungre** from the Biology Department. **Andre Santiago** presented his research titled *Myth and Reality: Micro-finance in Latin America*. **Dr. Jeffrey H. Cohen**, from the Ohio State University, supervised his research. This conference allowed the students to present their research in an academic setting as they met other scholars and explored opportunities for graduate study. An added bonus of this trip included scholars visiting historical monuments in Washington, DC.



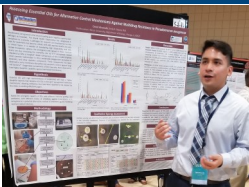
Scholars Win Brommel Awards at the 25th Annual NEIU Research Symposium

McNair Scholars **Ryan Borchert** and **Anthony Smith** won Bernard Brommel Awards for their research presentation during the 25th Annual Student Research and Creative Symposium last April. The **Bernard Brommel Award** recognizes the strongest oral and poster presentations of this event.

Ryan Borchert presented his research on *Mechanism of Action Studies of Novel Inhibitors of The Mycobacterium Tuberculosis DosS and DosT Sensor Kinases*. He was supervised by **Dr. Robert Abramovitch** from Michigan State University. **Anthony Smith** presented Modeling of Neural Oscillation using Agent-based Model: A Modification of "Virus on a Network", mentored by **Joseph Hibdon** of the Mathematics Department

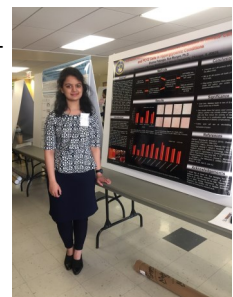
Other scholars that presented their work at the 26th Annual Student Research and Creative Symposium include: **David Alvarado**, **Stephanie Finne**, **Noemi Hernandez**, **Caroline Lopez Martinez** and **Shaima Pantagia**.

Scholars Present at National Conferences

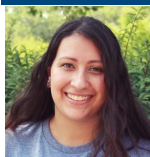


David Alvarado (15) presented at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research in Oklahoma City, OK. This conference brings together faculty, administrators, policy makers, representatives of funding agencies and other stakeholders with an interest in performing and promoting undergraduate research. It features over 100 workshops, presentations by representatives of funding agencies, social interactions, and poster presentations.

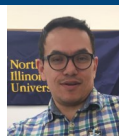
David Alvarado Presented his research entitled *Assessing essential Oils for Alternative Control Mechanisms against Multi Drug Resistant Pseudomonas Aeruginosa*. David's mentor is **Dr. Booms** from the Biology Department. **Shaima Patangia (15)** presented her research at the Experimental Biology Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA. This meeting is open to everyone with interest in the latest research impacting life sciences. Attendees represent scientists from academic institutions, government agencies, non-profit organizations and industry. The primary focus of this professional meeting includes anatomy, biochemistry and molecular biology, investigative pathology, pharmacology, and physiology. Shaima presented her research entitled *"Curcumin Reverses Methylglyoxal Induces Apoptosis in RINm5F cells and PC12 Cells in Hyperglycemic Conditions"*. Shaima developed this research poster with **Dr. Shubhangee M Mungre** from the Biology Department.



Scholars Accepted to Master's Programs with Financial Support



Alyson Cervantes (15) will pursue a Master's in Natural Resources and Environmental Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. At NEIU, she conducted research under **Dr. Joel Olfelt**.



Miguel Cortes (13) was accepted to and will pursue a Master's degree in Social Work at Loyola University At NEIU, he performed research under the guidance of **Dr. Andrew Brake**.



Victor Garcia (14) was accepted into a medieval history MA program at Northern Illinois University. He conducted research under the supervision of **Dr. Nikolas Hoel**.



Miguel Mendez (15) has been accepted to Loyola University's World Languages Master's program. Miguel conducted research on the use of language and identity under the guidance of **Dr. Brandon Brisbey**.



Sherry Williams (15) will pursue a Master's in Information and Library Sciences at the University of Illinois Urbana. At NEIU Sherry conducted research on African American Heritage Gardens with **Dr. Zada Johnson**.

Scholars Accepted to MA Programs

Scholar (Cohort)	Program
DeMara Campbell (14)	Higher Ed, NEIU
Cristina Chavez (13)	Social Work, UIC
Shaima Pantagia (15)	Neuroscience, Loyola
Alicia Perez (15)	Fashion, Parsons-New School
Glenda Sanabria (15)	I/O Psychology, Elmhurst College

GRE Workshop

The McNair Program, in partnership with the Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE), is providing a GRE preparation workshop to 40 NEIU participants. Students receive four hours of math and four hours of verbal preparation per week for one and a half months, plus the opportunity to take 6 practice exams under test conditions. The SCSE and McNair have joined forces to provide this training for five years to work together and provide opportunities for NEIU students and McNair scholars.

New Cohort Starts

Scholar	Major	Mentor
Suliat Akinyele	Social Work	Dr. Lisa Hollis-Sawyer
Cameo Chilcutt	Biology	Dr. Jennifer Slate
Malarie Edwards	Psychology	Dr. Christopher Merchant
Sergio Escobar	Chemistry	Dr. Jing Su
Jordan Gurneau	Environmental Sciences	Dr. Samatha Brown-Xu
Natalie Hernandez	Chemistry	Dr. Jing Su
Patricia Leon	Environmental Sciences	Dr. Ken Voglesonger
Michael Maura	Urban Studies	Dr. Sunni Ali
Luz Miranda	Counseling	Dr. Shedeh Tavakoli
Vivian Moreno	Community Health Sciences	Dr. Isidore Udoh
Roel Moya	Anthropology	Dr. Tracy Luedke
Adolfho Romero	World Languages	Dr. Lucia Lombardi
Uriel Saldivar	Psychology	Dr. Lisa Hollis-Sawyer
Elisa Salgado	Political Science/Sociology	Dr. Mitzi Ramos
Celeste Sancen	Social Work	Dr. Andrew Brake
Keith Taylor	Community Health Sciences	Dr. Isidore Udoh

Annual Luncheon



Cohorts 14, 15, and 16 at the annual McNair Luncheon

The McNair staff recognized both the graduating and incoming cohorts at a celebratory luncheon. Members of Cohort 14 and 15 who graduated in Fall 2017 and Spring 2018 were bestowed with silver McNair graduation stoles to highlight their hard work and commitment to pursuing graduate school. Members of the incoming Cohort 16 were bestowed with a McNair pin, a GRE Prep book, and a research journal to support their pursuit of a summer research project. Research methodology and the opportunity to participate in a research project are a cornerstone of the type of support the McNair Scholar program provides to students. Research experience strengthens their application to graduate school and makes them more competitive.

Please consider donating to the NEIU McNair Program. You can donate by sending your check payable to the Northeastern Illinois University Foundation, referencing McNair Scholars Program fund #2459 or donate online at www.neiu.edu/giving.

External Summer Research Internships

Scholar	Major	School
Cameo Chilcutt	Biology	Michigan State University
Sergio Escobar	Chemistry	Michigan State University
Jordan Gurneau	Environmental Sciences	Northwestern University
Natalie Hernandez	Chemistry	Penn State University
Patricia Leon	Environmental Sciences	University of IL-Ubana
Adolfho Romero	World Languages	Purdue University
Uriel Saldivar	Psychology	Michigan State University
Keith Taylor	Community Health	University of IL-Chicago

TRIO News You Can Use!

Late in March, Congress passed its final FY 2018 omnibus appropriations bill, which included a **\$60 million funding increase for Federal TRIO Programs** for a total appropriation of \$1.01 billion - *the high watermark in the history of TRIO!* As no grant competitions are scheduled for the 2018-2019 program year, this increase should translate into approximately a 6% increase for each individual grant award. The legislation also includes report language that directs the Secretary of Education to review applications rejected for minor technical issues in all 2017 grant competitions.

While the FY 2018 appropriations bill represents an important legislative victory and historical milestone for **TRIO**, our work is far from over. In the coming weeks and months, our community still must defeat the threat of the **PROSPER Act** as well as the Trump Administration's FY 2019 budget proposal to convert **TRIO** into a state block grant program. Therefore, as we celebrate this important moment, let us also plant seeds that we hope will bear fruit in the days ahead. To that end, please reach out to your Members of Congress. Invite them to visit your students when they are back home and see your program in action.

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