

## Maria Chaves Named 2009 Lincoln Laureate



*Chavez with John B Simon, Chancellor of the Lincoln Academy of Illinois, and Louanner Peters, Deputy Governor of the State of Illinois*

McNair Scholar **Maria Chavez** is NEIU's recipient of the 2009 Lincoln Laureate Medallion awarded by the Lincoln Academy of Illinois. Maria is the third consecutive McNair Scholar to earn this award: **Gerald Chaney** received the distinction in 2008 and **Alvin Cardona** was honored in 2007. Along with the medallion, Maria received a \$150 endowment, a certificate of recognition

and an all-expenses-paid visit to the Old State Capitol historic site in Springfield. Maria earned this honor because of her academic achievements, involvement in student leadership and community service. She is a Women's Studies major with minors in both Sociology and Philosophy.

Maria participated in the Summer Research Opportunity Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago and conducted a research project entitled *Playing the Naming Game: Miami and Chicago's Latino/a Identity Construction*. During 2007, Maria presented at the University of North Texas McNair Conference, the NEIU Research Symposium and the UIC Minority Research Forum. In 2006, Maria presented her paper *Controlling India's Population at the Annual Women's Studies Symposium*. In 2005, she presented *Founding and Development of Women's Studies at FIU: An Oral History Project* at Florida International University's Annual Women's Studies Conference. This semester Maria is co-teaching a class

here at NEIU entitled *Women's Values and Perspectives* with her McNair mentor, Professor **Laurie Fuller**.

Maria belongs to several student organizations including the student magazine, *Que Ondee Sola*, and the Feminist Majority Leadership Alliance. She also volunteers for the NEIU Women's Studies Advisory Board and as a Chicago Freedom School Mentor. Commenting on her award, Maria said "It's a great honor. I also understand this distinction as a testament to all the people who have supported me and helped me achieve all of my goals: my family, friends, mentors, Dr. Fuller, Dr. Gomez, Dr. Hoagland and the McNair staff."

## Scholar Studies a Zapatista Community

*McNair Scholar Lourdes Gomez submitted the following report about her research experience in the rebel community of Oventik in Chiapas, Mexico.*

I spent six weeks in Oventik, a Zapatista town where I had the opportunity to link Zapatismo theory to practice and to study Tzotzil, the Mayan language of the area. I traveled to other autonomous Zapatista communities as well as a refugee camp for displaced victims of paramilitary violence. I also helped work on a website for the women's cooperatives that will enable the online sale of their handcrafts.

I gathered data for my McNair research by meeting with the "good government boards" such as the health promoters in the Zapatista clinics, education promoters, the women of the co-ops and by talking to the members of the community. The data I collected shaped my research project entitled *The Meaning of Revolution in Chiapas: Achieving Autonomy through Zapatismo*. I examined the Mayan vision of autonomy, the central focus of the Zapatista rebellion, and explored the postmodern approaches they employ



*Lourdes Gomez and Oventik community members*

to achieve their objectives.

My experience in Chiapas was valuable not only for my McNair research but also for my personal development because it molded me into a more conscious citizen of the world. Living and interacting with the social actors of this movement gave me a more complete understanding of Zapatismo than studying it from a strictly academic point of view. I'm thankful to **Dr. Tom Hansen**, Mexico Solidarity Coordinator of Universidad Autonoma de Xochimilco and to **Drs. Richard Grossman** and **Patrick Miller** of the NEIU history department for this opportunity.

## Kooyumjian Award

Scholar **Gale White**, a Social Work major, was awarded the Mary Louise Kooyumjian Scholarship from the NEIU Foundation and the Office of Adult & Women Student Programs.

Gale earned this \$2000 award, that can be used towards tuition and fees, because of her academic achievement and her plans to continue on to graduate studies. The scholarships is designed to provide financial assistance for students who need to start or continue their education in order to provide for themselves and their families.

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## Summer Research

Scholar **Andrea Cottrell** participated in the Ralph Bunche Summer Institute (RBSI) at Duke University, where she conducted the research project *Public Opinion of Democracy and Government in East Asia*. RBSI is a prestigious program funded by the American Political Science Association to expand academic opportunities for talented minority undergraduates. **Dr. David Leaman**, Andrea's McNair Mentor, was instrumental in her acceptance to RBSI and continues to work with her on her research project.

Eight Scholars conducted research projects during the McNair Summer 2008 Research Program at NEIU. Scholars worked with faculty mentors to develop an original piece of research and were supported by a \$2800 stipend. Below is a list of the Scholars' research:

**Emilio Caban**

**Title:** *Alcohol in Country Music Lyrics*

**Mentor:** Ingrid Castro, Ph.D.

**Brett Coleman**

**Title:** *The Relationship between Multi-Ethnic Identity and Cross Cultural Acceptance*

**Mentor:** Saba Ayman - Nolley, Ph.D.

**Jeremy Dolan**

**Title:** *Are We Necessarily Aware of our Pains? On the Identification of Pain with Experience*

**Mentor:** John Casey, Ph.D.

**Fernando Gonzalez**

**Title:** *Romantic Breakups and Latino Men*

**Mentor:** Brett Stockdill, Ph.D.

**Lourdes Gomez**

**Title:** *Mayan Resistance: Creating Autonomy Through Zapatismo*

**Mentor:** Richard Grossman, Ph.D.

**Tamara Martin**

**Title:** *How the Perception of Nicaraguan Immigrants in Costa Rica Has Changed Since the Adoption of Neo-liberalism*

**Mentor:** Christina Bueno, Ph.D.

**Gale White**

**Title:** *Gender Responsive Programs in U.S. Prisons: Implications for Change*

**Mentor:** Jade Stanley, Ed.D.

**Cornelius Williams**

**Title:** *New Urbanism and Home Town Aurora*

**Mentor:** Dennis Grammenos, Ph.D.

Three Scholars participated in the University of Illinois Chicago (UIC) Summer Research Opportunities Program (SROP) and one participated in SROP at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign (UIUC). The ten week program provided a \$3000 stipend and included research mentoring and GRE training. In addition, participants presented their research projects at Michigan State University during a one day conference.



Allen Bryson, SROP Coordinator, Imani Beard, Keith Atterberry, Nereida Salas and Francisco Piña, UIC Graduate College Recruitment Coordinator

Scholars worked under the guidance of faculty mentors on the following projects:

**Keith Atterberry**

**Title:** *CCTV in Chicago: Police Observation Devices and the Formation of a Disciplinary Society*

**UIC Mentor:** Greg Matoesian, Ph.D.

**Imani Beard**

**Title:** *The Question: Black, Latino, or Afro-Latino?*

**UIC Mentor:** Nilda Flores-Gonzalez, Ph.D.

**Nereida Salas**

**Title:** *Religion and Honor Crimes in Turkey and Mexico*

**UIC Mentor:** Lorena Garcia, Ph.D.

**Elizabeth Rodriguez**

**Title:** *Begging for Revenge: Conceptions of Female Agency in Kyd's 'The Spanish Tragedy'*

**UIUC Mentor:** Lori Newcomb, Ph.D.

## Research Presentations

Two Scholars presented research at the University of Puerto Rico Humacao which held its Third Annual McNair Conference in May.

**Eric Lopez**

**Title:** *The Overthrow of Salvador Allende, 1973: National Crisis and U.S. Intervention*

**Mentor:** Christina Bueno, Ph.D.

**Theresa Bacchus**

**Title:** *Race and Immigration: The Impact of Immigrants on U.S. Immigration Laws*

**Mentor:** Patrick Miller, Ph.D.

Eight Scholars presented at the Sixteenth Annual NEIU Student Research and Creative Activities Symposium on April 18.

**Maria Chavez**

**Title:** *Playing the Naming Game: Miami and Chicago's Latina/o Identity Construction*

**Mentor:** Irma Olmedo, Ph.D.

**Elizabeth Rodriguez**

**Title:** *Infiltration and Containment in Shakespeare's Titus Andronicus and Hamlet*

**Mentor:** Bradley Greenburg, Ph.D.

**Krystle Pereira**

**Title:** *Impossible Ideals: The Commodification of Female Sexuality and its Effects on Perception of Beauty*

**Mentor:** Ingrid Castro, Ph.D.

**Gwen Austin**

**Title:** *Embattled but Writing Back: Eslanda Goode Robeson's Contributions to American and International Politics*

**Mentor:** Kim Sanborn, Ph.D.

**Keith Green**

**Title:** *Exploring the Relationship between Possible Selves and Sexual Risk Behavior among College-Age African Americans*

**Mentor:** Jade Stanley, Ed.D.

**Preston Fairchild**

**Title:** *Finding Meaning: An Alternative Model for Treating Huntington Disease Patients*

**Mentor:** Job Ngwe, Ph.D.

**Patricia Ortega**

**Title:** *Gentrification and TIF Funds: Rebuilding Illinois Communities Since 1987*

**Mentor:** Sangmin Bae, Ph.D.

**Fernando Gonzalez**

**Title:** *Reggeaton and Latino Youth*

**Mentor:** Brett Stockdill, Ph.D.

In addition, **Gwen Austin, Patricia Ortega** and **Preston Fairchild** presented their McNair research at the African American and Latino Research Forum hosted by UIC on April 24. Other scholars who presented for the first time at this forum are:

**Keith Atterberry**

**Title:** *Panopticism and Its Implications: The Formation of a Disciplinary Society*

**Mentor:** Kim Sanborn, Ph.D.

**Gale White**

**Title:** *Gender Responsive Programs in U. S. Prisons*

**Mentor:** Jade Stanley, Ed.D.

**Stacy Brill**

**Title:** *The Visual Communication of the Expectation of College Attendance to Chicago Public High School Students*

**Mentor:** Edie Rubinowitz, Ph.D.

## Scholar Internships

Scholars **Nereida Salas, Gale White** and **Lourdes Gomez** were chosen to participate in the Minority Internship Program (MIP), a five-university consortium that provides professional internships for minority students. Nereida is working at Mujeres en Accion, helping women fight against domestic violence. Gale is working at Deborah's Place, helping women break the cycle of homelessness, and Lourdes is helping an international institution with a fair trade initiative. MIP interns serve for four months, work at least thirty hours a week, and receive a stipend during the internship. Internships are related to students' academic fields of study, in order to encourage professional growth.

## Panel Examines Role of Academy in Democracy



Maria Chaves, Andrea Cottrell, Lourdes Gomez and Keith Atterberry

On October 2, the McNair Program sponsored the panel *Connecting Academic Disciplines to Democratic Citizenship* as part of Hispanic Heritage Month. The panel was moderated by Scholar **Andrea Cottrell** (Political Science) and featured Scholars **Lourdes Gomez** (History), **Keith Atterberry** (Justice Studies), **Emilio Caban** (Sociology) and **Maria Chaves** (Women's Studies). Panelists outlined the ways their disciplines relate to a democratic society, and discussion centered on the role of the academy in maintaining a democracy. Several ideas emerged from a lively discussion: 1) the academy has a role in promoting and safeguarding freedom of speech; 2) academics should be more involved in K-12 curriculum development; 3) participatory citizenship should be actively promoted by the academy; 4) the academy should support social justice efforts and take responsibility for an informed citizenry.

## Grad School Visits

As part of the McNair Summer Research Program, Scholars visited four universities. On June 13, Scholars traveled to the University of Michigan for *Discover the Michigan Difference*, a special one-day event at the Rackham Graduate School. Scholars learned about graduate school resources and the application process at the University of Michigan.

On June 20, Scholars previewed DePaul University. After a tour of the Lincoln Park campus, **Ann Spittle**, Director of Graduate Recruitment and Admission, provided general information about the graduate programs at DePaul. A faculty panel answered Scholars' questions about specific graduate departments.

On July 7, Loyola University hosted a campus visit for NEIU McNair Scholars. Loyola's Events and Outreach Coordinator, **Marcela Gallegos**, met with the Scholars and discussed the various master's and doctoral programs available at Loyola. Scholars then met individually with faculty members.

The last visit of the summer was to Northwestern University on August 1. **Mario Craigen**, the Graduate School Coordinator of Multicultural Affairs, informed Scholars about the graduate admissions process at Northwestern and provided a campus tour. After the official visit, McNair staff and Scholars enjoyed the exhibit *Design in the Age of Darwin: From William Morris to Frank Lloyd Wright* at the Block Museum of Art.

## WAEOPP 2008

**Keith Atterberry, Imani Beard, Emilio Caban, Brett Coleman, Andrea Cottrell, Lourdes Gomez, Marcus Moore, Nereida Salas, Toni Scott, Cornelius Williams, and Gale White** attended the Wisconsin Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel (WAEOPP) Retreat from September 26 to 28. Staff members **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** and **Dianne Madison** accompanied the group. Held at the Abbey Resort on Lake Geneva, the conference featured sessions dedicated to understanding the graduate school admission process.

**Donald Asher**, author of the book *Graduate Admission Essays*, led sessions which included various interactive and inspirational exercises.

## Master's Degrees

The McNair Program is proud to announce that four Scholars have recently earned master's degrees. **Abel Arango** finished his master's degree in Spanish at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and is now pursuing a Ph.D. in the same program. **Rhonda Cobbin** earned her master's in Inner City Studies here at NEIU. **Carl Mackey** completed his master's degree in Higher Education at the University of Pennsylvania. **Christine Leone** graduated with a master's in Social Work from UIC.

## Scholars and Grad Schools

**Gwendolyn Austin** was accepted in the master's program in Justice Studies at the Arizona State University.

**Stacy Brill** holds a graduate assistantship and the New Prospective Fellowship from the NEIU Graduate College. She is pursuing a master's degree in Communication, Media and Theater here at NEIU.

**Preston Fairchild** is pursuing a master's in Social Work at Loyola University. He received two scholarships and a graduate assistantship. **Keith Green** is pursuing a master's in Social Work at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. Keith was awarded the Advance Opportunity Program Fellowship.

**Chrystyn Hart** is enrolled in a master's degree program in English at the University of Alabama. She is

fully funded by a graduate assistantship from the English department and has additional funds from the Hudson Strode Program in Renaissance Studies.

**Maximo Marin** is enrolled at the University of Iowa's Carver College of Medicine.

**Shane Smith** has been accepted by the master's of Fine Arts program in digital cinema at DePaul University.

**Lisa Krause** holds a departmental fellowship and is pursuing a master's in Community Arts at the Maryland Institute College of Arts.

**Yalil Naives** was accepted by the History department for a master's degree at Loyola University.

## Other Recent Graduates

**Alex Delgado** is applying to graduate programs in English Literature and **Erik Lopez** will apply to the master's in History at UIC. Both earned their bachelor's degrees in May 2008.

## Annual Dinner

Scholars, family, friends, and Mentors gathered for the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual NEIU McNair Dinner on May 1. **Dr. Janet Fredericks**, Dean of the Graduate College and Director of International Programs, provided opening remarks and **Dr. Kim Sanborn**, Director of the McNair Program, addressed the state of the program. **Murrell Duster**, Dean of Academic Development, spoke about the importance of striving for excellence and service in our professional and academic lives. Scholar **Gerald Chaney** performed a vocal selection, and guitarist **Mike Spread**, Dr. Sanborn's husband, provided accompaniment. Scholar **Elizabeth Rodriguez** gave advice to new Scholars, who were presented with McNair pins, and Scholar **Keith Green** reflected on what the McNair Program has meant to him over the years. **Angela Vidal** presented graduating Scholars with plaques and stoles.

## Reauthorization of the Higher Education Act

On July 31, 2008, both chambers of Congress passed the Higher Education Opportunity Act by overwhelming majorities. Specifically, the bill passed by a vote of 380-49 in the House and a vote of 83-8 in the Senate. On August 14, President Bush signed the bill into law. For the first time in ten years, this legislation reauthorized the Higher Education Act of 1965 and included numerous provisions that enhance TRIO programs. The legislation extends all TRIO grants from four to five years; increases the minimum TRIO grant to \$200,000; allows branch campuses to apply for TRIO grants; creates an appeals process for unsuccessful TRIO grant applicants; eliminates the Upward Bound Absolute Priority, including the double-recruitment evaluation; and ensures that any future evaluation of TRIO programs protects the integrity of students and institutions.

In addition to changes that benefit TRIO, the legislation also creates a simplified, two page Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) application form; allows students to receive Pell Grants year-round; expands eligibility for the Academic Competitiveness and National SMART grant programs; and creates greater educational access for servicemen and women and their families through deferred and interest-free loans.

Source: Council for Opportunity in Education

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