McNair Scholar Lynda Gibson Delivers Commencement Address

At the May 7th 2011 graduation ceremony held at Northeastern Illinois University, McNair Scholar Lynda Gibson delivered the commencement speech to NEIU graduates, family members, faculty, staff and friends. Lynda, who that day received her B.A. in Psychology with summa cum laude honors, described how she was inspired at a young age by Robert Frost’s poem A Road Not Taken, she mapped out her own path, one that had not been taken by any of her family members before her.

This path led her to the Psychology Department at NEIU, where she met her mentor: Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley and Dr. David Farmer.

McNair Scholars Meet with State Representative

On September 27, 2011, Scholars Resney Gugwor and Latrese Monden attended a meeting with 17th District Ill. State Representative, Daniel Biss. The event began with personal introductions, and expanded into a full group discussion in which the Scholars expounded on the role of the McNair Program in helping with their future career and research aspirations.

Latrese describes the experience as, “A great opportunity to engage with a state legislator as well as our NEIU academic leadership. It was an exciting and overall personally rewarding experience that I will always cherish.”

McNair Scholars Awarded

As part of Latino Heritage Month, Noche della familia was held Thursday, October 27. During this evening event, four McNair Scholars were recognized by the Latino Heritage Committee with the Student Recognition Award for Academic Achievement and Leadership.

Diana Hernandez, Daniel Olavarria, Ana Karen Gaytan and Pearl Martinez were awarded in the student category that recognized their academic excellence in their respective majors as well as their service to the NEIU community and communities beyond NEIU. Other categories for awards of excellence were business, community leadership, education and fine arts.

Noche della familia featured dance performance and live music. This ceremony takes place every year to honor those who made significant contributions to Northeastern Illinois University and to celebrate Latino students, faculty and staff.

New Staff Members in McNair Office

Carlos Ospina is the new McNair Academic Skills Specialist. Carlos holds a BA in Communication and Journalism from Universidad de La Sabana and an MA in Marketing Management from Universidad Javeriana. Last August he received a second MA from NEIU in Latin-American Literature. Carlos has worked as a graduate assistant at El Centro-Campus and in the MSTQE program.

Delilah McDonald serves as McNair Program Graduate Assistant. Delilah holds a bachelor's of History from Northeastern Illinois University, and is pursuing a master’s degree in Inner City Studies. A graduate of the NEIU McNair Scholars Program, Delilah understands the important role that TRIO programs play in the academic success of low-income and first generation college students.

Preparing tomorrow’s leaders...http://www.neiu.edu/~mcnairp/index.htm
Graduate School Visits

During the month of July, McNair Scholars visited graduate programs at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), Loyola University, and DePaul University. The purpose of the visits was to introduce Scholars to faculty and provide insight regarding the application process at each institution. At UIC, the Scholars met with Dr. Aixa Alfonso, Associate Professor of Biological Sciences and Visiting Associate Dean of the Graduate College. Recruitment Coordinator Francisco Pina organized the visit which included conversations with Edward Potts, Director of Admissions and Financial Aid in the UIC Jane Addams School of Social Work, and NEIU McNair alumnus Keith Atterberry, Ph.D. student in Criminal Justice, along with other UIC Ph.D. students.

When the Scholars visited Loyola University’s Graduate School, they met with Marcela Gallegos, Events and Outreach Coordinator, followed by individual meetings with faculty from academic departments of the Scholars’ interests. At the conclusion of the visit, McNair Program Director Dr. Kim Sanborn provided a tour of the Ralph Arnold Art Annex, which houses sculpture, ceramics and dance studios. Dr. Sanborn, an instructor in the Loyola University Fine Arts Department, showed Scholars Loyola’s state of the art kiln room and gave a brief overview of ceramics technology.

At DePaul University, Scholars toured the campus, attended presentations about the application process, and had individual meetings with faculty and graduate students in their disciplines.

On the Ph.D. Track

Eighteen McNair Scholars are currently enrolled in Ph.D. programs in several institutions across the nation and in Canada:

- Lynda Gibson (’10) Clinical Psychology at the Illinois Institute of Technology
- Jeremy Dolan (’09) Philosophy at New York University
- Keith Atterberry (’09) Criminal Justice at the University of Illinois at Chicago
- Nereida Salas (’09) Political Science at the University of Illinois Chicago
- Brett Coleman (’09) Community Psychology at the University of Illinois Chicago
- Melissa Anderson (’07) Microbiology, Immunology and Infectious Disease at the University of Virginia
- Loren Henderson (’06) Sociology at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
- Max Marin (’04) MD/Ph.D. at the University of Iowa

Recent Master’s Degree Recipients

Four McNair scholars have recently earned their master’s degrees in a variety of disciplines. Emilio Caban finished his master’s degree in Sociology at Ball State University in May of 2011. Tracy Navarro completed dual master’s degrees in Latin American Studies and Cultural Studies in Education, both obtained from Ohio University in June of 2011. Gwendolyn Austin earned her Master’s of Science in Criminal Justice from Lewis University this year as well. Diane Madison graduated from Northeastern Illinois University with a Master’s in Communication, Media, and Theatre in December of 2010, and hopes to begin a Ph.D. program soon.

December 2010 and May 2011 Grads in Graduate Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>McNair Scholar</th>
<th>University</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adelf Alvarado</td>
<td>NEIU, Chemistry, M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela Howard</td>
<td>Elmhurst College, Psychology, M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brandi Williams</td>
<td>Syracuse University, Pan African Studies, M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crispien Van Aelst</td>
<td>NEIU, History, M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Julia Gutierrez</td>
<td>University of Wisconsin-Madison, Gender and Women’s Studies, M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lakeshia Harris</td>
<td>NEIU, Political Science, M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Lynda Gibson</td>
<td>IIT, Clinical Psychology, Ph.D.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pearl Martinez</td>
<td>NEIU, Reading, M.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ramon Viera</td>
<td>University of Chicago, MAPPS, M.A.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sheenita Robinson</td>
<td>NEIU, Inner City Studies, M.A.</td>
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Summer Research Projects

Seven McNair Scholars conducted research projects during the annual McNair Summer Research Program at NEIU. Paired with faculty mentors of their choice, these Scholars developed original research relative to their academic disciplines. In support of their diligence and commitment to excellence in research, all Scholars received a stipend of approximately twenty-eight hundred dollars. Listed below are the Scholars, the titles of their research projects and their faculty mentors:

Shawnice Reid
Title: An Assessment of Self Esteem and Self Identity among African American College Students: Implications for Academic Success
Mentor: Job Ngwe, Ph.D.

Jane Watkins
Title: The Historical and Modern Impact of Racism in News Media and How it Perpetuates Opposition against People of Color
Mentor: Olivia Perlow, Ph.D.

Eddie Barraza
Title: Voice and Facial Attractiveness in Sexual Encounters
Mentor: Maureen Erber, Ph.D.

Daniel Olavarria
Title: Mexican and Latino Immigrant College Student Survey
Mentor: Francisco Gaytan, Ph.D.

Ana Karen Gaytan
Title: Men and Masculinities: Attitudes toward Machismo Held by Latino and Caucasian Ethnicities
Mentor: Amanda Dykema-Engblad, Ph.D.

Perla Lopez
Title: Exploring the Relationship between Stress in Immigrant Latino Parents and their use of Different Parenting Strategies
Mentor: Francisco Gaytan, Ph.D.

Bilal Hussein
Title: Unveiling “The Veil”: Identification among American Muslim Women in the U.S.
Mentor: Barbara Sherry, J.D.

UIC SROP

During the past summer, four McNair Scholars were selected among hundreds of applicants to participate in the University of Illinois Chicago Summer Research Opportunity Program known as SROP. Jeremy Carter, Resney Gugwor, Eugene Slaughter, and Diana Hernandez all benefited from the guidance of UIC faculty mentors, GRE preparation and workshops, as well as the opportunity to attend research conferences in July.

Eugene Slaughter
Title: Race as a Risk Factor for Homelessness among Female Veterans
Mentor: Susan Phillips, Ph.D.

Resney Gugwor
Title: Assessing the Evaluation Capacity of a Community Based Organization
Mentor: Yolanda Suarez-Balcázar, Ph.D.

Jeremy Carter
Title: The Impact of Absentee African American Fathers on the Academic Achievement of their Children
Mentor: Susan Phillips, Ph.D.

Diana Hernandez
Title: Differences in Processing Content and Function Words in Spanish: A Focus on Adjectives
Mentors: Kara-Morgan Short, Ph.D. and Laura Bartlett, Teaching Assistant.

Northwestern SROP

Theodora Koumoutsakis participated in Northwestern University’s Summer Research Opportunity Program. The title of Theodora’s research is The Effects of Retrieval Practice on Memorizing Object-Location Associations One Week Later. She was mentored by Ken Taller, Ph.D. As part of her summer experience she also served as a research assistant on a related study. “I get to see what a good student is like, and now I feel more prepared for Graduate School.

Annual Dinner

On May 5, 2011, Scholars, family, and friends gathered for the 8th Annual McNair Dinner. Dr. Janet Fredericks, Dean of the Graduate College and Director of International Programs, welcomed Scholars and guests.

Summer Research Conferences

McNair Scholars Lynda Gibson, Ramon Viera, and Resney Gugwor all attended out-of-state research conferences this past summer. Lynda Gibson presented her research Family Functioning and Behavior Problems with her mentor, Dr. David Farmer, at the Association for Psychological Science Conference in Washington, D.C. The project identified correlations between poor family functioning and behavioral issues in children. Resney and Ramon presented their research Autistic Children’s Graphic Portrayal of Friendship with their mentor, Dr. Saba Ayman-Nolley at the annual meeting of the Jean Piaget Society held in Berkeley, California.
TRIO NEWS

Congress introduced its final agreement for the FY 2012 appropriations, which includes a $13.4 million increase for TRIO over last year's appropriation ($826.5 million), for a total funding level of $839.9 million. Congress did not fully embrace the $920.1 million (8%) increase recommended by President Obama. However, this bill will provide funding for approximately 40 Upward Bound and McNair programs that otherwise would have been lost next year. President Obama made TRIO a priority in his fiscal 2012 budget request, and recently both Republicans and Democrats recognized this fact. Their actions also suggest that federal policymakers---as a consequence of increasing numbers of low-income and first generation students enrolling in college---are beginning to appreciate the importance and necessity of “supportive services in postsecondary education. There is, for example, mounting evidence, especially from work being completed by the Pell Institute, that supportive services are essential if our colleges and universities are to improve the graduation rates of low-income students, particularly those from minority backgrounds. The Council for Opportunity in Education acknowledged the strong support of allies in the House of Representatives, who fought hard to achieve increased funding.

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