



10th Annual McNair Dinner



New and graduating scholars and their mentors at the 10th Annual McNair Dinner.

On May 2, 2013, scholars, mentors, family, and friends gathered for the 10th Annual McNair Dinner. **Dr. Kim Sanborn**, Interim Director of the McNair Program, welcomed scholars and guests.

Former scholar **Imani Beard** ('7), introduced the new cohort ('11) while **Dr. Sanborn** and McNair specialist **Carlos Ospina-Munera** inducted the

the new scholars with the program pin and hooded the graduating class with the McNair stole.

Scholar **Peggy Valdes**, who was recently accepted into the Ph.D. Program in Higher Education at the University of Iowa, offered advice to the new cohort by sharing her experience and journey of success in graduate school.

As every year, we count the attendance of the mentors, among them **Dr. Sabba Ayman-Noelly**, **Dr. Amina Stojkovic**, **Dr. Michael Armato** and **Dr. Laura Sanders**. Scholar **Jean Matelski** from the Psychology department closed the ceremony with a presentation of the film *White Lotus Rising*. This project was recently awarded Best Short Documentary of the Year by The American Psychological Association (APA).

Recent Award Winning Scholars

DFI Recipients The Diversifying Faculty in Illinois Fellowship (DFI) financially supports graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds in higher education who are interested in becoming faculty members. Three recently graduated scholars have received this selective and prestigious award: **Peggy Valdes** who was recently admitted to the Higher Education and Student Affairs Ph.D. program at the University of Iowa. **Rodney Allen** who was recently admitted to University of Chicago for a Master's in Social Work, and **Robert Motley** who was admitted to University of Illinois at Chicago also pursuing a Master's in Social Work.

Who is Who Each year, NEIU selects a group of students to accept one of the most prestigious awards the academic community can bestow —Who's Who Among Students. This honor is granted by more than 2,842 schools in all 50 states. This year, the following NEIU McNair Scholars received this academic recognition: **Rodney Allen** majoring in Interdisciplinary Studies and Social Work, **Alexis Dennis** majoring in Sociology, **Robert Motley** and **Kelly Webb** both majoring in Social Work, and **Samuel Aguirre** majoring in Bilingual/ Bicultural and elementary education.

NEIU Student Awards On April 23, 2013, faculty awarded outstanding students for their achievements at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) during the *Student Awards Program*. Many of our Scholars were featured that day for their achievements. **Antonio Villasenor** ('12) and **Patricia Jammies** ('12) were presented with the First-Year Experience Peer Mentor Program Award for their mentorship for incoming freshmen. **Tiketa Briscoe** ('12) was presented with Student Leadership and Service Award for demonstrating outstanding leadership and services on-campus, and the Justice Studies Award for demonstrating outstanding academic skills and devotion to proceeding in the field of Justice Studies.

Larone Ellison ('12) and **Ashor Jajou** ('12) were awarded for the Leadership Scholars Recognition Award, which recognizes students who serve as leadership scholars in the Office of Student Leadership Development. Furthermore, **Larone Ellison** ('12) was awarded the Renny Golden Student Activism Award for demonstrating leadership in involvement of promoting social justice for all. **Ebony Kennebrew** ('12) was awarded the Social Justice Award for modeling services in the areas of social and human justice. **Ruben Echevarria** ('12) was awarded the Math Peer Leader Award for demonstrating leadership, ability to communicate mathematics, and working with peer groups in multiple math courses. **Alexis Dennis** ('12) and **Peggy Valdes** ('12) were awarded the NEIU Sociology Praxis Award for academic excellence in social justice. Additionally, **Alexis Dennis** ('12) was awarded with the Barbara Scott Women's and gender Studies Program Award for demonstrating achievement and significant services to the Women's and Gender Studies Program.

New Program Director

Angela Vidal-Rodriguez has joined the NEIU McNair Scholars staff as Program Director.

Mrs. Vidal-Rodriguez has over 10 years of experience as an academic advisor of underrepresented and nontraditional students, serving in several programs dedicated to advance the educational opportunities of this student population. She received her M.B.A from Northeastern Illinois University and her B.A. in economics from Anahuac University, Mexico. Currently, Mrs. Vidal is a Doctoral Candidate at the Center for the Study of Higher and Post-secondary Education of the University of Michigan. As former Academic Skills Specialist of the NEIU McNair Program Angela is happy to be back at NEIU. "I'm just thrilled to have the opportunity to work again with such wonderful and inspiring students".



Angela Vidal-Rodriguez



From left: Scholars Robert Motley, Rodney Allen, Anca Barson-Cayro and Jorge Montiel.

research Conference in Texas was an invaluable academic exposure to me. It was truly beneficial to receive feedback on my research from other scholars and professors. My research evaluator's suggestion that I should consider publishing, along with additional favorable remarks and auspicious advice felt truly rewarding and motivational in taking the next steps forward. Also, gaining more knowledge on how to walk the path to graduate school successfully while mingling with fellow McNair and other academics was just an awesome way of combining learning with pleasure”, she commented.

Five NEIU McNair scholars attended the 15th Annual Texas National McNair Scholars Research Conference at the University of North Texas February 15th -17th, 2013. This conference allowed our students to present their research in a friendly, yet formal, academic setting as they meet other scholars and explore opportunities for graduate study.

The conference highlights include individual student research presentations, a graduate recruitment fair, included speakers and panel discussions, a pre-conference workshop on writing graduate admissions essays, and opportunities to interact with graduate school faculty and staff.

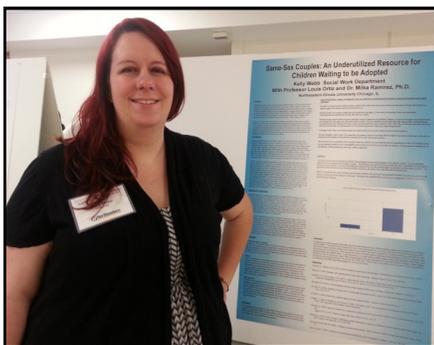
One of our scholars, Anca Barson-Cayro, successfully presented her research titled: *Happiness as an Input vs. Outcome*. “Presenting at the National Re-

“Presenting was an invaluable academic exposure to me”

NEIU 21 Annual Symposium

The Twenty First Annual NEIU Research and Creative Activities Symposium is a chance for undergraduates to present what they have learned through their research experiences to a larger audience. The Symposium also provides a forum for students, faculty, and the community to discuss cutting edge research topics and to examine the connection between research and education.

The Symposium includes poster and presentation sessions by students from all academic disciplines. This year we are proud to announce that a record of 12 McNair Scholars from Cohorts 10 and 11 participated with both posters and presentations. Their names and presentations are:

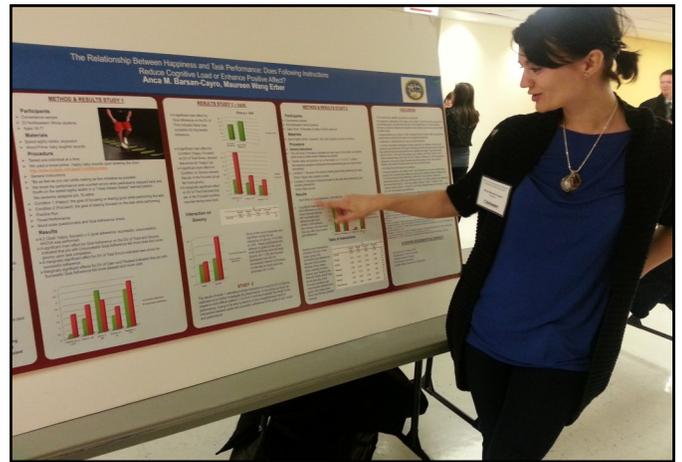


Kelly Webb, Social Work, presenting at the 21th NEIU Symposium

Mark C. Gunter “Toward a poetics of echolocation”, (English), Olivia Cronk, English. **Jean Matelski**

“White Lotus Rising: Impressions of the ten thousands ripples peace project volume 1”, Amanda Dykema-Engblade, Psychology. **Rosanelly Lopez** “The plight of today's Latino”, (Social Work), Jade Stanley, Social Work, Kim Sanborn, McNair Scholars Program. **Kelly Webb** “Same-Sex Couples: An Underutilized Resource for Children Waiting to be Adopted,” (Social Work), Milka Ramirez, Luis Ortiz, Social Work, Kim Sanborn, McNair Scholars Program.

Anca Barsan-Cayro “The relationships between happiness and task performance: Does following instruction reduce cognitive load or enhance positive affect?,” (Psychology), Maureen Erber, Psychology. **Alexis M. Dennis** “Post-racial, Post-feminist society? Black women and the negotiation of race, class and gender,” (Department of Sociology), Michael Armato, Sociology, Kim Sanborn, McNair Scholars Program. **Melissa R. Manzo** “How social media help spark a revolution?,” (Justice Studies), Nancy Matthews, Justice Studies. “5E Model of Instruction in Science Education,” **Samuel A. Aguirre**, (Teacher Education) Hyewon Kim, Teacher Education. “Ikea, Ideology and the Formation of the Postmodern Subject,” **Sean E Dot-**

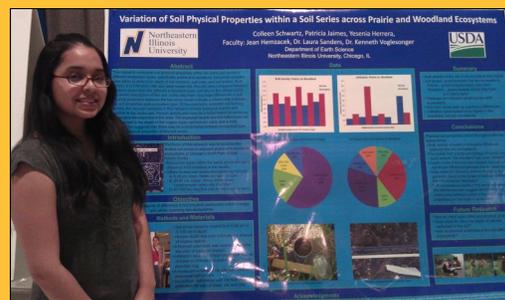


Anca Barson, Psychology, presenting at the 21th NEIU Symposium.

son (English), Tim Scherman, English. “Consumer operated drop-in center: making a difference in the lives of individuals living with mental illness”. **Robert O Motley Jr.** (Social Work), Luis Ortiz, Social Work. “The silent statistic: a study of African -America man returning to college,” **Robert O Motley Jr.** (Social Work), Job Ngwe (Social Work), Kimberly Sanborn, McNair Scholars Program.

Ruben Echevarria collaborated with the research “An Evaluation of the effectiveness of the mathematics enrichment workshop program: an analysis of participant’s performance outcomes and perceptions of the program,” presented by **Shana Kachaochana** and **Maryam Khan** (Applied Mathematics, **Nic Allen** and **Eduardo Roman** (Mathematics), and **Laura Aman** (Secondary Education/Mathematics), **Sarah Cordell**, Mathematics.

Nexus 2013 International Conference was held at Northeastern Illinois University (NEIU) campus last March. The conference -on water-related issues- showcased the work of McNair scholars, **Yesenia Herrera** and **Patricia Jaimes**. They both participated in the USDA-funded TIERRA Project, and the title for their research was called *Variation of Soil Physical Properties within a Soil Series across Prairie and Woodland Ecosystems*. The project objective was to compare the physical properties of the same soil series in prairie and woodland ecosystems. They found that there might be a relationship between some of the soil's physical properties and the type of ecosystems because of the differences in the bulk density and infiltration. Patricia said that she enjoyed learning about the soil and its properties and that science can be projected into the real world. Yesenia stated that presenting at different conferences, like Nexus helped them network within their professional field for internships and graduate school opportunities. Overall, Yesenia and Patricia felt proud and appreciative to be presenting their research so early within their careers.



Patricia Jaimes, Earth Science, presenting poster

Alumni Updates

McNair Scholar, **Maximo Marin ('04)** is attending the University of Iowa in the Carver College of Medicine, pursuing a Ph.D. in medicine. Maximo is expected to earn his Ph.D. in 2013 and has been accepted for his residency at the University of Chicago.

McNair Scholar, **Eugene Slaughter ('10)** is attending the University of Central Florida, pursuing a Master's in Social Work. Recently, Eugene was awarded the Perseverance Award which is given annually to outstanding MSW students who have overcome great odds in their lives to achieve success. Furthermore, Eugene is expected to earn his MSW degree this Fall.

McNair Scholar, **Brandi Williams ('09)** has been working diligently on her master's degree in Pan African Studies at Syracuse University in New York. Recently Brandi, who is a teacher assistant at the same university, defended and passed her thesis entitled *Disrupting Discourses of Failure Counter narratives of Black male students and academic success*. Brandi will be starting this Fall a Ph.D. program in Literacy Education.

McNair Scholar, **Salvador Montes ('09)** is on track pursuing his masters in Urban Planning for UCLA in California, and has earned a graduate research assistantship. He will be graduating in 2014. Similarly, McNair Scholar, **Sheenita Robinson ('10)** is working on her master's degree at UIC (University of Illinois at Chicago) in the Youth Development Program. She is planning on launching a spa in the Chatham neighborhood. The opening was scheduled for June 8, 2013.

McNair Scholar, **Melissa Anderson ('05)** is pursuing her Ph.D. in the department of Microbiology at University of Virginia. Melissa has been doing ongoing collaborations with post-docs in her lab, which has led her to being a contributing au-

thor on a manuscript. Also, Melissa has done a poster presentation on her research at the International Congress on Oncogenic Herpesviruses and Associated Diseases in Philadelphia, PA. Her poster title was called *Inner tegument protein ORF52 in primate gammaherpesvirus RRV is necessary for tegumentation and envelopment*. In addition to this, Melissa presented her work at the UVa Huskey Research Exhibition, this past March (she won third place) as well as at the Virginia Regional Herpesvirus Symposium in April 2013. Melissa is still holding her predoctoral fellowship awards from NRSA and NCI. Currently, she is teaching at Piedmont Virginia Community College (PVCC). Further, Melissa has been mentoring an undergraduate UV premed student in her lab on the fundamentals of bench research and helping the student with developing a project.

McNair Scholar, **Michael Magee ('04)** is finishing off his Ph.D. degree in Government and International Affairs and African Studies program at University of South Florida. Michael is currently six courses away from finishing his curriculum requirements to qualify for the exams to start his dissertation proposal.

McNair Scholar, **Abel Arango ('04)** is on track with his Ph.D. in Spanish Literature at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Abel has been a teacher assistant in the Department of Spanish and Portuguese. He has recently been asked to teach a Spanish course next semester. He has handed in his proposal and will defend it this May. His dissertation is titled *Entangled States in Central American-American*

Literature: Representation, Identity and the Latino Canon.

McNair Scholar, **Wanda Dukes ('09)**, is six credit hours away to finish her master's in Inner City Studies at Northeastern Illinois University. Wanda is expected to graduate this fall.

McNair Scholar **Linda Gibson ('09)**, is in her third year of a Ph.D. program in the Clinical Psychology at Illinois Institute of Technology. Recently, Linda was awarded the 2012-2013 DFI Fellowship award and has been working in the Urban Youth Trauma Center as a Clinical Research Coordinator. Linda is doing an intern at Thrive Counseling Center and will beginning her clinical externship at the Institute for Juvenile Research. Additionally, Linda is working on her Master's thesis with Dr. Farmer (NEIU) and Dr. Abdul-Adil (UIC). The thesis focuses on the use of a family therapy protocol for children with disruptive behavior disorders.

Are you interested on going to graduate school and do you comply with the following requirements?

- Completed at least 60 hours (junior or senior standing)
- US citizenship or residency
- Minimum 2.8 GPA
- Status as a first generation
- College student with income eligibility and/or a member of a group
- Underrepresented in graduate education

If you do, contact our office. The McNair Scholars Program can be for you!

We are located in **Building B, Office 141**.
Phone: **1 773 442 4254**

Sequestration Affecting TRIO Programs

On March 1, 2013, the across-the-board cuts known as sequestration went into effect. According to the Office of Management and Budget, the sequester amounts to a 5.2% cut to discretionary programs funded within the U.S. Dept. of Education. For TRIO, this translates into a \$43.7 million funding cut, which will impact the funding for program year 2013-2014. These cuts will be piled on top of the cuts received in years past. In 2012, \$10 million was cut from the \$46.2 million budget committed to McNair Scholars program.

The budget cuts that have affected TRIO programs throughout the past years have had a negative impact on the TRIO community and their supporters. In mid-March, Congress passed a resolution to ratify the sequester cuts. Iowa Democratic Senator Tom Harkin offered an amendment that would have increased TRIO funding by \$14 million but the Senate Republicans rejected the amendment. As a result, some TRIO programs did not receive funding and were unable to renew their grants. The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) has argued against these changes and feels that the TRIO Community must take decisive action to get Congress to reverse cuts to TRIO or the mission of TRIO programs to serve low-income, first generation and under-represented students will deteriorate.

Source: COE News



McNair Scholars Program Staff

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