



## McNair Artists Win Awards



**Michael Maura** (16) with the award winning piece at the juried exhibition.

**Luz Miranda** (16) with Dr. Angela Vidal-Rodriguez during her senior project exhibition.

**Michael Maura**(16) majoring in studio art won this year's Annual Juried Student Exhibition. This award recognizes the best art project presented for competition among art students.

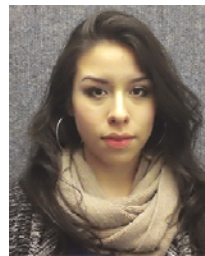
Michael participated in the production of a public mural and documented the learning experience of the students doing this project. **Dr. Ali** mentored Michael.

**Luz Miranda** (16) won the best research presentation Brommel Award during the 27<sup>th</sup> NEIU Student Symposium. **Luz's** research explored the exposure of arts to moderate trauma symptoms among children. **Dr. Tavakoli** is Luz's McNair mentor. **Luz** also produced "Womanhood Journey to Self-Love and Self-Discovery" a solo painting exhibition of expressionistic and figurative pieces.

## McNair Scholars Pave Their Way to The Ph.D.



**Uriel Saldivar** (15) has been accepted to start his *Human Resources and Labor Relations Ph.D. Program* at Michigan State University. Uriel graduated from NEIU with a Bachelors in Psychology and a minor in Human Resource Development. Uriel's McNair Mentor was **Dr. Hollis -Sawyer**.

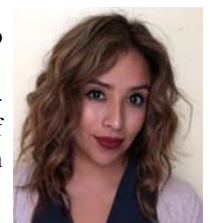


**Patricia Morales** (14) has been accepted to the *Feminist Studies Ph.D. Program* at the *University of California Santa Barbara*. Patricia graduated with an M.A. in Latino and Latin America Studies at UIC and a bachelors in Sociology from NEIU. Patricia's McNair mentor was **Dr. Johnson**

**Malerie Edwards** (15) has been accepted to the *University of Iowa Counseling Psychology Ph.D. Program*. Malerie graduated with a B.A. in Psychology. **Dr. Merchant** was Malerie's McNair mentor.



**Diana Hernandez** (9) has been accepted to the *Psychology Ph.D. program* at *UCLA*. She graduated with an M.A. in Social Service Administration at the University of Chicago and a B.A of Psychology from NEIU. Her mentor was **Dr. Church**.



**David Alvarado** (15) has been accepted to the *Food Science and Human Nutrition Ph.D. Program* at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. David graduated from NEIU with a Bachelors of Science in Biology and Chemistry, and a minor in Physics. During his participation on the program **Dr. Booms** mentored David.



**Chrystyn Hart-Albarado** (5) has been accepted in the *English Ph.D. program* at the *University of Louisiana at Lafayette*. She graduated with an M.A. in Literature at the University of Alabama and a Double B.A. in English and History From NEIU. **Dr. Greenburg** mentored her McNair research.

## Congratulations to our New McNair Ph.D. Awardees



**Jose Fulgencio** (7) earned a **Ph.D in Higher Education and Technology** from the Oklahoma State University

**Keith Green** (9) earned a **Ph.D in Social Service Administration** from the University of Chicago.



## Scholars Present at National McNair Conference



From left to right: Vivian, Natalie, Celeste, Suliati, Malerie, Elisa and Patricia

Seven McNair Scholars attended the National McNair Scholars Research Conference at the University of Maryland at College Park this March. **Suliati Akinyele** presented her research entitled “Again in Place for Grandparents: Difference in life Satisfaction and Life Adaptation. Suliati’s mentor is **Dr. Hollis Sawyer** from the Psychology Department. **Malerie Edwards** presented her research on “Self-care as a Coping Strategy for Major Depression in Socioeconomic Status Adults.” She was supervised by **Dr. Merchant** from the Psychology department. Scholar **Natalie Hernandez** presented her work “Optimizing Methods for Metabolite Profiling of Riboswitch Variants.” **Dr. Jin Su** from the Chemistry department is Natalie’s mentor.

**Patricia Leon** presented “Water Quality Analysis of Wood Leachate” guided by **Dr. Christianson** at University of Illinois at

Urbana-Champaign. **Vivian Moreno** presented her research entitled “Reproductive Health Care Access Among Latina Women.” **Dr. Udho** from the Community Health Department guided her research. **Elisa Salgado** presented research on “Chicago’s Sanctuary Policy”; her mentor is **Dr. Ramos** from UIC. **Celeste Sancen** presented “The Survivors Project”; her mentor is **Dr. Brake** from the Social Work Department. This conference allowed students to present their research in an academic setting as they met other scholars and explored opportunities for graduate study.

## A Celebration of Excellence



Last April, Honors, McNair and MARC programs had their first annual Celebration of Excellence Dinner for their graduating students. In addition, the McNair Scholars Program inducted its new cohort (17). This celebration that counted with the presence of the Vice Provost, **Marc McKernin**, the Dean of the Graduate College, **Dr. Michael Stern**, and **Lisa Domkowski**, from the Development Office and School Foundation.

### New Academic Skills Specialist



**Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza**  
Academic Skills Specialist

NEIU Alumna **M. Alejandra Prieto-Mendoza** is the new Academic Skills Specialist for the McNair Program. Alejandra is a doctoral candidate in the Hispanic Linguistics Program at UIC. She earned her Master’s Degree in Linguistics and English as a Second Language at NEIU and previously worked as the McNair Academic Skills Specialist from 2008 to 2011. Alejandra comes with a vast experience in advising students as

well as preparing them to succeed with their graduate school applications.

She will guide this new cohort as they embark on their graduate school experience. Alejandra’s research interests are Critical Discourse Analysis and Pragmatics, which is why her dissertation is the study of language manipulation and dissemination of ideological elements in the 2016 Colombian Peace Dialogues.

### External Summer Research

Scholar	Major	School
Suliati Akinyele	Social Work	Georgetown Univ.
Oscar Coronel	Earth Science	Michigan State Univ.
Derek Epiney	Biology	SCSE
Jordan Gurneau	Environ. Sciences	Northwestern Univ.
Jesus Garcia	Computer Science	Michigan State Univ.
Patricia Leon	Earth Science	The Ohio State Univ.
Christian Palaguachi	Psychology	SCSE
Julie Pineda	Psychology	Michigan State Univ.
Andrea Valenzuela	Chemistry	Harvard Med. School

### McNair and SCSE GRE Workshop

The McNair Program, in partnership with the Student Center for Science Engagement (SCSE), is providing a GRE preparation workshop to 25 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 Positive Influence of McNair Scholars



*Dr. Angela Vidal-Rodriguez*

Last January, I finally graduated from my Ph.D. program in Higher Education. I dedicated my dissertation to my family and to all McNair Scholars who had inspired me to start this endeavor, and whose example helped me to finish it. When I applied to the Ph.D. program, I had been working for McNair for four years. I saw the Scholars work-

ing hard to meet their course requirements, complete their research projects, and apply to graduate school, and I admired them. I admired their determination, their diligence, and their hope. I admired their courage to reach for their academic dreams regardless of all the fears that accompanied an unknown future.

During my program, I found out that many of my classmates have been associated with McNair Programs. **Dr. Julie Posselt**, a prominent equity writer in my field, had been the coordinator of a McNair Scholar Program before she began her Ph.D. program. Her dissertation was about graduate admission decision processes at selective universities. Another of my classmates, **Dr. Allyson Flaster**, had been an advisor in a McNair Program, and her research focuses upon financial support that affects low-income students' decisions to attend college. Going to research conferences, I hear many similar stories: former McNair staff attending Ph.D. programs specifically in higher education to keep advancing the cause of educational equity. I believe that working with the Scholars not only influences staff to continue their studies but also shapes our intellectual and professional goals. In this way, the McNair Program transforms the lives beyond just program participants—it positively changes the lives of its staff members.

Working full time and being a mom of two kids made the dissertation process difficult. However, mentoring new Scholars and learning about the achievements of former participants renewed the inspiration I had in the first place. I also enjoyed a strong sense of like-minded community that influenced me to finish the doctoral program, not to mention support from former McNair participants.

I'm very thankful for the McNair Program because its influence was so powerful that now I can call myself **Dr. Vidal-Rodriguez**.

## Scholars Accepted to Masters Programs for Fall 2019

Scholar	Program	University
Mariah Green	MA Museum and Field Studies Program	University of Colorado Boulder
Luz Miranda	MEd School Counseling	Loyola University
Caroline Lopez-Martinez	MA in Clinical Mental Health Counseling	Roosevelt University
Adolfho Romero	MA in Latin American Studies	University of Florida
Elisa Salgado	MA Public Policy	University of Maryland
Keith Taylor	MS in Kinesiology in Exercise Science	California State University at LA

## Cohort 17 Starts

Scholar	Major	Mentor
Adrienne Adams-Mcfee	Social Work	Dr. Job Ngwe
Elizabeth Ampong	Economics	Dr. Scott Hegerty
Dania Barrientos	Social Work	Dr. Job Ngwe
Candace Cook-Bey	Social Work	Dr. Andrew Brake
Oscar Coronel	Earth Science	Dr. Laura Sanders
Fabio A. Duque	Spanish	Dr. Brandon Bisbey
Derek Epiney	Biology	Dr. Elyse Bolterstein
Jesus Garcia	Computer Science	Dr. Akkady Tchaba
Josefina Guzman	Biology	Dr. Emily Booms
Sebastian Morales	Social Work	Dr. Isaura Pulido
Maria Jose Nataren	Spanish	Dr. Angela Vidal-Rodriguez
Franklin Nwoko	Political Science Sociology	Dr. Marshall Thompson
Christian Palaguachi	Psychology	Dr. Brekie Church
Julie Pineda	Psychology	Dr. Michael Bedell
Magdelene Thebaud	Social Work	Dr. Jin Kim
Andrea Valenzuela	Chemistry	Dr. Stefan Tsonchev
Selina Williams	Community Health	Dr. Isidore Udho

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](http://www.neiu.edu/giving)

### Trump Administration Slashes Funding and Proposes Consolidation of TRIO and GEAR UP in FY2020 Budget

On March , 2019, the White House released the President’s Fiscal Year 2020 budget request to Congress. This budget request reflects the Administration’s spending priorities for the 2020-2021 program year. This proposal includes a historic level of proposed funding cuts — \$2.7 trillion — largely aimed at “**non-defense discretionary**” programs such as housing, public health, low-income assistance. The U.S. Department of Education is reducing funding by \$8.5 billion (or 12%). It also revives last year’s proposal to consolidate TRIO and GEAR UP into a single, state-issued block-grant program at an overall funding level that is approximately one-third below the combined funding levels of both programs.

In addition to this proposal regarding TRIO and GEAR UP, the budget request also included a plan to consolidate six programs supporting infrastructure and academic support at Minority-Serving Institutions, to allow the Pell Grant to be used for “high-quality, short-term” academic programs, and to eliminate funding for 29 other Departmental programs, including Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG), Public Service Loan Forgiveness, and 21st Century Learning Centers.

The Congress will determine the fates of each of these programs. Therefore, it is critical that the TRIO community continue to advocate so that we may preserve the integrity of the TRIO and GEAR UP programs as well as boost their funding in the coming year.

*Source: Council for Opportunity on Education News (2019)*

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