



# The Challenger

The Newsletter of the MU McNair Scholars Program

February 2017

## McNair Scholars Attending Conferences Across the Country

Our students are encouraged to find conferences, expos, conventions, etc. within their field of research interest. These are great opportunities for students to network, see the research that scholars and faculty in their field are conducting, and present their research (if they are prepared and would like to do so). Once the scholars find a conference they would like to attend, they communicate to us their desire to attend so that we can fund their conference travel and necessities.

Here are quotes from a couple scholars who recently attended a conference in their area of interest:

“Professionals from small clinics and Ivy League schools alike were helpful and welcoming. It was an invaluable experience.” —*Da’Vonya Wilson*

“My McNair adviser and I connected more and he introduced me to a few of his colleagues. [They] took me out to eat and gave me a lot of advice and the ins and outs of applying and even grad school (all the good and bad).” —*F. Hawolti Curry*

Below is a list of our students who have attended professional conferences between last fall and the publication of this newsletter and a few others that are set to attend conferences this spring.

### Past Conferences



**Christopher Petty**, ‘16-’17 McNair Scholar, *Fisheries & Wildlife*, attended the Midwest Fish and Wildlife Conference in Lincoln, Nebraska from February 5-8, 2017.

**Monroe Gamble IV**, ‘14-’15 McNair (continuing) Scholar, *Economics*, attended the Allied Social Sciences Associations (ASSA) Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois from January 5-8, 2017.



**Faith Hawolti Curry**, ‘16-’17 McNair Scholar, *International Studies & Peace Studies*, attended the African Studies Association Annual Meeting in Washington D.C., from December 1-3, 2016.

**Delan Ellington**, ‘15-’16 McNair (continuing) Scholar, *Anthropology & History*, attended the American Anthropological Association Meeting in Minneapolis, Minnesota from November 16-20, 2016.



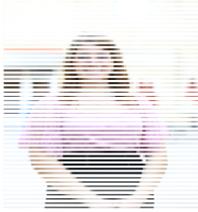
**Da’Vonya Wilson**, ‘15-’16 McNair (continuing) Scholar, *Nursing*, attended the Association for Nurses in AIDS Care Conference in Atlanta, Georgia from November 10-12, 2016.

**Whitney Kwamin**, ‘16-’17 McNair Scholar, *Health Sciences & Parks, Rec. & Tourism*, attended the North American Society for the Sociology of Sport (NASSS) Conference in Tampa, Florida from November 2-5, 2016.





## Scholars Attending Conferences (continued)



**Tiffany Hawkins**, '14-'15 *McNair (continuing) Scholar, Dietetics*, attended the Food & Nutrition Conference & Expo (FNCE) in Boston, Massachusetts from October 15-18, 2016.

**Tyler Adelstein**, '15-'16 *McNair (continuing) Scholar, Geological Sciences*, attended the Geological Society of America Annual Meeting in Denver, Colorado from September 24-48, 2016.



### Upcoming Conferences



**Alexis Pearson**, '16-'17 *McNair Scholar, International Studies & Latino Studies*, will be attending the Association for Education Finance and Policy 42nd Annual Conference in Washington D.C., from March 16-18, 2017.

**Nikita Smith**, '16-'17 *McNair Scholar, Psychology & Sociology*, will be attending the Southeastern Council on Family Relations (SECFR) Annual Conference in Charlotte, North Carolina from March 16-18, 2017.



**Chelsea Jones**, '16-'17 *McNair Scholar, Nutrition & Fitness*, will be attending the Experimental Biology 2017 Annual Meeting in Chicago, Illinois from April 22-26, 2017.

### Preparing for the Graduate School Interview

- Outline your specific goals, experiences, skills and qualifications relating to the field of study you are pursuing. Note the things that make you a good match for the program.
- Do your homework. Review information regarding the program and the research of the faculty, particularly those you would like to work with. Become familiar with any special facilities, projects or opportunities the program has to offer.
- Be sure to review your application packet and your personal statement before you arrive. The interviewer may ask you specific questions concerning your application and personal statement. Also, remember to bring a copy of all your submitted materials with you.
- Be prepared to address any "blips" in your academic record.
- Be prepared to explain your specific interest in the school you are visiting.
- Be prepared to discuss, in detail, any research or projects you have completed. Also, give some thought to a potential dissertation/thesis topic.
- Practice the interview with someone who can offer you good feedback. Be yourself. Do not exaggerate your scholastic achievements or activities.
- Dress appropriately. If you have concerns about what that is, don't be afraid to call the department and ask.
- Plan to arrive early. Nothing is worse than being late to an interview, so make sure you have your attire planned out, you know where you're going and how to get there.
- After the interview, send a letter or e-mail thanking the interviewers for the visit and interview.





## Current Scholar Spotlight



**Darius Caffey, '16-'17 McNair Scholar**  
*Psychology & Sociology*

### *Do you think McNair has been beneficial?*

**Darius:** Since I got accepted into the McNair program and began to reap its benefits, I have broadcasted about it to so many different students. I truly appreciate the McNair program and have found it very beneficial, not only towards academia, but also to myself. It has given me the opportunity to learn how to properly conduct research which I feel has given a step ahead when applying for graduate programs. It has also helped me gain contact with a mentor in my preferred field that helps me along the way in a research project that I'm passionate about. The faculty that work within the program have truly been of great help to me in any way that I need this past year. The pay is also a bonus that's nice.

### *How did you choose your research topic? What got you interested in it?*

**Darius:** It was somewhat hard at first to come up with my research topic simply because I was not sure what a good research topic was or even what I would want to do actual research on that could compare to current researchers. However, with the help of my mentor, figuring out what I wanted to go to grad school for, and what topics I was actually passionate about, it quickly developed. It took me figuring out what I had a problem with in society, how it connected to me, and how my research could make somewhat of a difference.

### *What is a hurdle you have overcome or are overcoming? How?*

**Darius:** I would say that a hurdle that I'm still currently working on would be conducting good research. Throughout my time as a McNair Scholar, I have worked on and turned in many things pertaining to my research, but I have not felt that it was "research quality". I can say that I am surely overcoming it because I am still taking the time out to learn. My mentor continuously reminds me that what I'm doing, a lot of undergrad and even grad students do not have the experience doing. So as long as I'm continuing to perfect my craft and become a student of my work, then it will all fall into place.

### *Any tips for future or other McNair Scholars?*

**Darius:** A word of advice that I would give to future scholars would be a quote that I heard during a workshop with Dr. Ty-Ron Douglas. He said, "make your research your story". That means that whatever work/research you are doing, make sure it connects to you. You will find more enjoyment, passion, and ease in doing something that you are familiar with. Whether that is your past history, personal interest, or career. It won't seem as strenuous if you love what you are doing.

### Upcoming Due Dates:

**Monday, March 1st:** Methods Section

**Friday, March 10th:** Summary, Conclusions, and Limitations

**Friday, March 17th:** Research Poster (Rough Draft)

**Tuesday, April 11th:** Research Poster (Final, if presenting at OUGR Forum)

**Thursday, April 13th:** Research Poster (Final, if not presenting at OUGR Forum)

**Thursday, April 13th:** Abstract

**Friday, April 14th:** Mock Conference (Part 1) from 4:00-5:30PM

**Tuesday, April 18th:** Mock Conference (Part 2) from 5:00-6:30PM





## MU McNair Scholar Alum at Congressional TRIO Caucus

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, past MU McNair Scholar Scott Winton was asked to provide some remarks to the TRIO Caucus in Washington D.C. There he told the gathered Senators and Representatives about his time as a first-generation college student and how McNair helped him. Below are some highlights from his remarks.

Scott led his remarks by thanking the Council for Opportunity in Education and the Co-Chairs of the Congressional TRIO Caucus for organizing the reception and welcoming the new members of Congress. Not forgetting his origins, he spoke of his upbringing in the Ozarks in a rural working class family and mentioned that he is a first-generation college student. Since neither of his parents had gone through the college application process and experience, Scott did not know what to expect and reflected by saying, “I didn’t know that obtaining an education would be so difficult.” He also mentioned feeling “like an imposter pretending to live the real college experience.” In addition to taking out financial aid loans, Scott “burned the midnight oil studying for exams, attended class in the morning, and worked in the evenings.”



Scott Winton (left) & Jon Tester, U.S. Senator

For Scott, extracurricular activities and summer breaks were a luxury and any free time was meant for income. He unfortunately did not have time for career advancing internships, but he was fortunate to participate in Mizzou’s McNair Scholars Program. In addition to a stipend for financial support, McNair provided other resources “aimed for students to achieve post-baccalaureate studies and included mentoring with a professor and bi-weekly professional development workshops.” Scott says McNair instilled self-confidence because he did not have a professional network nor did he have the resources and information on how to obtain funding for graduate school.

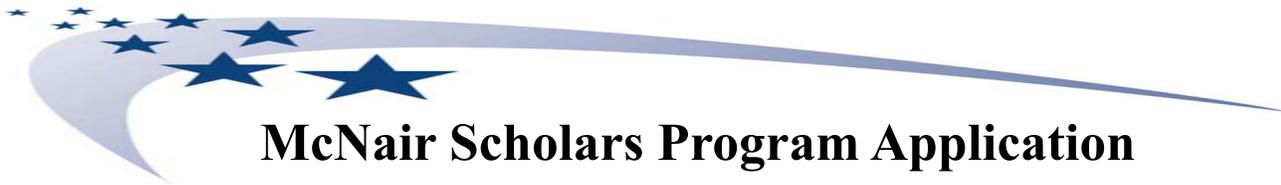
Scott graduated from Mizzou in 2005 with a dual degree in International Business. He received the Thomas R. Pickering Graduate Foreign Affairs Fellowship, which was first introduced to him by the McNair Scholars Program, to fund his graduate education. He graduated from Georgetown University in 2009 with a Master of Science in Foreign Service. Scott has been serving as a U.S. Foreign Service Officer in the Department of State for over seven years. He has served in places like Macedonia and Mexico, and is now in Washington D.C.

Scott expressed his gratitude for TRIO’s support which helped him succeed in graduate school and now in his profession. He closed by sharing, “[TRIO alum] come from different communities and cultures, but we share a similar experience and struggle to achieve college success, and we stand united today to demonstrate the value and success of TRIO programs and services.”

Thank you Scott for your service and for being a great representation of what the McNair Scholars Program hopes to assist all its scholars to do. Once a McNair Scholar, always a McNair Scholar. We are proud of you!

Visit the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) [Flickr photo album](#) of the TRIO Caucus.





# McNair Scholars Program Application

It's that time of year again where we accepting applications from eligible scholars who have a desire to pursue graduate education. Our program coordinator created a video to help applicants complete the application process. Click [here](#) to view the video.

The application can be found online and it is due Friday, February 24, 2017. Click [here](#) to be redirected to the program application.

## Follow McNair on Social Media



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## The Challenger

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