

The Challenger

The Newsletter of the MU McNair Scholars Program

June 2014

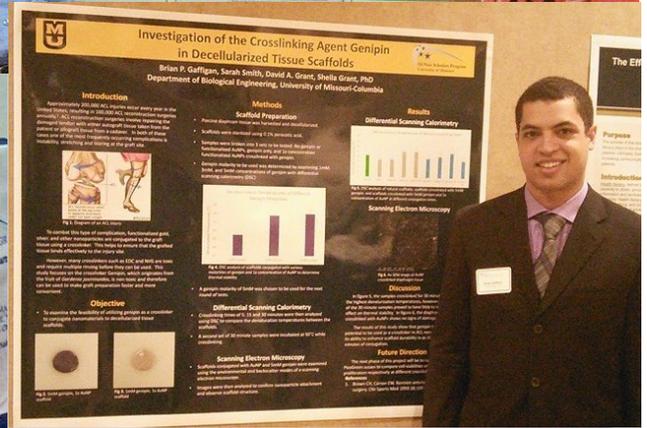
25th Annual McNair Scholars Conference

On April 19th, the culmination of over 280 hours of research resulted in oral and poster presentations by the 2013-2014 McNair Scholars. Topics ranged from femoral orientation in primates to velocity training in elite athletes. They also included biological and psychological related topics such as fish larval densities in two Missouri streams and how Alcohol disorder criteria has changed between the DSM IV and the DSM5.

In addition to the oral presentations, the scholars also presented their work in poster form. “I had never created a poster before,” McNair Scholar, Jennifer Shearin stated. “I worked hard on it and I think it came out really well.”

The conference provided an opportunity for the program and scholars to thank the faculty members for their diligent role as mentors. Not only do mentors assist in conducting academic research, they also help scholars navigate the graduate school process. Moreover mentors view this as an opportunity to introduce students to the world of the academia, often going far beyond the traditional student-teacher roles.

“My mentor, Dr. Carol Ward, really embodied the culture of academia in anthropology and has brought me into it,” said McNair Scholar, Sarah Swartz. “The McNair Program and my mentor have allowed me to develop into what I envision a scientist to be.”



Top: McNair Scholar Jennifer Shearin poses with her mentor, Dr. Kim Anderson.

Below: McNair Scholar Brian Gaffigan poses with his poster.

Left: Chancellor R. Bowen Loftin provides some opening remarks.

After submitting a final research paper to the program, five to six scholars will be selected by an editorial review board for inclusion in the twenty-third volume of the [MU McNair Scholars Journal](#).



McNair Scholars' Future Plans

The 2013-2014 McNair Scholars have already made plans for their future. Many are graduating and heading off to graduate school, while those not graduating have already lined up their summer and fall plans.

Graduating Seniors Graduate School Plans

Brandice Carpenter is attending Washington University in St. Louis in pursuit of a Master's of Social Work

Marnae Chavers is pursuing a Master's in Education from the University of St. Thomas as well as teaching in an elementary school in Houston, Texas under the Teach for America Program.

Rafael Cisneros will be a physical therapy technician in St. Louis as he applies to doctorate programs in physical therapy.

Amber Forbis will be pursuing her Master's of Health Science with an emphasis in Speech Language Pathology at MU where she has been awarded a research assistantship and a scholarship.

Calandria Frazier is looking to enter a post-baccalaureate program emphasizing substance abuse research.

Jale't Hickmon-Rosa, a new mother, is entering a doctoral program in Educational, School and Counseling Psychology here at the University of Missouri.

Tiffany Jerrod is looking to enter a post-baccalaureate program emphasizing physiology and nutrition.

Alicia Lorio was awarded a Marshall Fellowship and will stay here at MU to pursue a master's in Child Development.

Maria Oyelola is taking post-baccalaureate classes here at MU and studying for the GRE as she applies to doctorate programs in physical therapy.

Josey Ridgway is attending Tennessee Tech University will he will be studying the Asian Carp.

Gloria Sipakati is beginning a Doctorate of Occupational Therapy program at Washington University.

Sarah Swartz, received an NSF fellowship to study paleontology at Indiana University.

Sital Uprety received an NSF Fellowship to study environmental engineering at the University of Illinois.

Caitlin Vore is a lab tech in plant sciences as she prepares to apply to graduate school.

Non Graduating Scholars Summer Plans

Jeremy Clincy is conducting research in Dr. Lixing Reneker's Ophthalmology lab this summer.

Brian Gaffigan is continuing his work in Dr. Shelia Grant's lab researching the crosslinker genipin

Ariel Hagedorn is taking classes with MU's satellite program with the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha for her Clinical Laboratory Science degree.

Kayla Henderson is doing summer research in the Pratt School of Engineering at Duke University.

Katerina Rios will be a research intern for the Family Institute at Northwestern University.

Emma Rosenow is conducting hydrology research with the Geological Sciences Department here at MU.

Shawna Rowe is attending a summer research program at Michigan State University.

Jennifer Shearin is continuing her work with the iRest Integrative Restoration as a trainer.

Chanell Washington is off to Ohio State University to conduct summer research.

Zachariah Winkler is taking classes this summer here at MU.

Advice from a Scholar: Brandice Carpenter

2013-2014 McNair Scholar Brandice Carpenter gives some sage advice to our incoming McNair Scholars.

To the newest Scholars:
Congratulations! You have been hand-selected to a nationally recognized program that will prepare you well for graduate studies. McNair has been one of my most rewarding experiences and is a key reason for my admittance into graduate school. When asked to offer advice, I gladly took the opportunity to “pay it forward” with things that I have learned within the last year.

- 1) **Utilize Your Resources.** McNair is a prestigious program in academia with a network system that is untouchable. This starts with going (and taking notes) during the weekly sessions. When there are panelists, always ask questions to anything you may not understand or know. If you’re able, go to the conference with your mentor. I was able to go to a national McNair Scholars Conference and networked with other scholars along with several representatives for graduate schools I was applying to.
- 2) **Start Early.** Make a spreadsheet of potential schools and start researching faculty with your similar research interests. Don’t be afraid to reach out to faculty and students for schools you are drawn to- this will serve you well when preparing your application materials. Other materials to create a template for now, if you don’t already have them, are your personal statement and curriculum vitae.
- 3) **Study for and take the GRE early.** For those who have to take the GRE, if you haven’t already started preparing- start now! For Junior scholars, it is never too early to take the exam, and you have the flexibility to take the exam again if necessary. For Senior scholars,



2013-2014 McNair Scholar Brandice Carpenter presents her research at the 25th Annual McNair Scholars Conference.

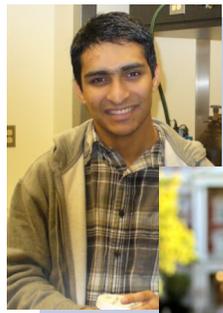
please take it from me when I say that GRE preparation on top of classes, your capstone, work, graduate applications and research is exhausting. Knock it out as soon as you can!

- 4) **Stay Encouraged.** You were chosen to participate in a program to push you to your utmost potential. There is a team of people behind you that believe in you and in your research. As a McNair Scholar you are several steps ahead of typical graduate applicants. Again, congratulations- soak in the skills and resources that have been made available to you to the best of your ability.

Brandice Carpenter completed research on Mizzou’s International Center’s American LIFE peer-partnering program. This fall she is entering a master’s of social work program at Washington University.



NSF Funding for McNair Scholars



McNair Scholars Sital Uprety (top), Sarah Swartz (middle) and Michelle Tang (bottom) were recently awarded NSF Fellowships.

Three Mizzou McNair Scholars received a fellowship from the prestigious [National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program \(NSF GRFP\)](#). Each will receive three years of support and a \$30,000 stipend plus a \$10,500 cost of education allowance to their chosen institution.

With the help of the NSF fellowship, McNair Scholar **Sital Uprety** is off to study environmental engineering at the University of Illinois where he will conduct research on improving water and soil quality of Nepal. Additionally, McNair Scholar **Sarah Swartz** will be entering a doctorate program at Indiana University under the tutelage of Dr. Jackson Njau where she will be researching East African hominid sites in Tanzania's Olduvai Gorge. Continuing her plant biology research at the University of California- Davis, 2010-2011 McNair Scholar **Michelle Tang** is continuing her doctorate program with the NSF funding. Also receiving honorable mention was 2011-2012 McNair Scholar **Carmen Harjoe**, now at Oregon State University in an ecology doctoral program.

They join 2008-2009 McNair Scholar, **Aaron Rosengren** and 2007-2008 McNair Scholar **Catera Wilder**, 2010-2011 McNair Scholar **Michael McCoy** and 2011-2012 McNair Scholar **Marc Canellas** as recent recipients and 2011-2012 Scholar **Brittani Bungart** who received an honorable mention.

For more information on all our past scholars, and the more than 100 past McNair Scholars with a doctoral degree see our "[Where are they Now?](#)" *Newsletter*, updated each summer.



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