

# The Challenger

The Newsletter of the MU McNair Scholars Program

April/May 2009

## 20th Annual McNair Scholars Conference

On April 18th, the culmination of over 275 hours of research resulted in oral and poster presentations by the 2009-2010 McNair Scholars. Topics ranged from the mating call preference in tree frogs to blast resistance of steel studs. They also included such humanity and social science related topics as African American women's role in the Clinton administration and the theory and practice of translating a poem.



Left: McNair Scholar, Carolina Ebeid, explains a part of her poster to her mentor, Dr. Michael Ugarte.

Below: McNair Scholar, Janine Ingram, prepares to present her next point in her presentation at the 20<sup>th</sup> Annual McNair Scholars Conference, April 2009.

"The variety of topics and the dedication and passion the students put into their research was very evident," said McNair Director, NaTashua Davis. "I always learn something new at this conference."



In addition to the 19 oral presentations, the scholars also presented their work in poster form. "I really liked how my poster turned out," McNair Scholar, Aaron Rosengren stated. "It presents my topic in a way that everyone can understand, even if they're not an engineer."

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

roles. "My mentor, Dr. VanPool, really showed me what some of the additional expectations and challenges of being a faculty member is," said McNair Scholar Arianna DiMucci. "She really inspired me to pursue my dream of getting a doctoral degree in anthropology."

"My mentor, Dr. Carol Anderson, was outstanding, her dedication to me as a person and scholar were second to none," added McNair Scholar, Alyssa Hollins.

After submitting a final research paper to the program, six scholars will be selected by an editorial review board for inclusion in the seventeenth volume of the *MU McNair Scholars Journal*.



## Scholar Future Plans

The 2008-2009 McNair Scholars have already made plans for their future. Many are graduating and heading off to graduate school. Many of those not graduating have already lined up their summer and fall plans.

### Graduating Seniors Graduate School Plans

David Aguayo is staying at Mizzou in the Career Counseling Psychology Program.

Valeska Araujo will be in a graduate economics program at Duke University after finishing her internship with the FDIC this summer.

Sarah Brandt will be teaching 3rd grade in Portland, Oregon while attending a one year Master's program in Elementary Education at Oregon State University.

Michelle Clark has been awarded the Ellis-Jones Scholarship and full departmental funding to Rush St. Luke Medical School in Chicago.

Phuong "Rylee" Do will pursue her Master's in Biology here at MU with a fully funded assistantship.

Carolina Ebeid will begin her work as a Fellow at the James A. Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas in Austin.

Paul Ferguson will pursue a dual Master's degree in Architecture and Construction Management at Illinois Institute of Technology.

Miriam Galenas will pursue her doctorate in Geological Sciences at the University of Maryland-College Park with a full time graduate assistantship.

Danielle Graef has been admitted with full funding to the University of Florida's Clinical Psychology Program with a concentration in pediatric psychology.

Lindsey Lanfersieck is attending Indiana University with a McNutt Fellowship to pursue her MA/PhD in English.

Tracey Latimore has been awarded the Ridgel Fellowship to pursue her doctorate in School Psychology here at MU.

ToLoan Ly will pursue her Master's in Biology here at MU with a fully funded assistantship.

Amelie Olga Mafotsing Fopoussi has been awarded partial funding at the University of Michigan for a Master's in Public Health with the concentration on Epidemiology and a certification in International Health.

Brittany Smotherson will enter a master's program in the Department of Educational Leadership and Policy Analysis (ELPA) here at Missouri.

### Non-graduating Scholars Summer Research/Internship Plans

Arianna DiMucci will be spending this summer at Notre Dame University as a Biocultural Anthropology National Science Foundation Undergraduate Fellow.

Bryant Harris will research this summer at Baylor University's College of Medicine.

Christopher Kirkendall will be a summer research intern with the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Stephanie Morriss is spending this summer working on RNA aptamers in Dr. Donald Burke-Aguero's lab here at the University of Missouri.

Aaron Rosengren's summer plans include participating in the University of California-Irvine Summer Undergraduate Research Program.

Rebecca Schneider is interning this summer with Agcareers.com in Ames, Iowa.

Shanetha Washington is interning with Chicago Council-Woman JoAnn Thompson for the summer.

Tiffany Wheeler will spend her summer as an INROADS intern with Kansas City Power & Light in the production engineering department.

Catera Wilder is spending her summer in a Research Experience for Undergraduates at Georgia Tech.

### **Where Are They Now?**

To see updates on previous scholars please see the "Where Are They Now" newsletters:  
<http://mcnair.missouri.edu/wherearethey.php>

## Scholar Spotlight: David Aguayo

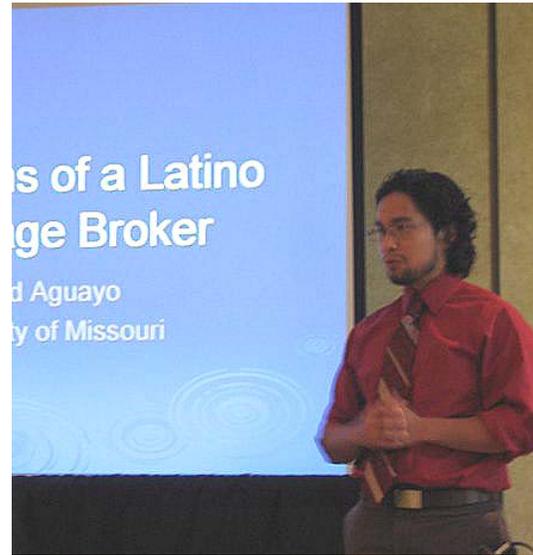
As a first generation college student, getting to college was the only thing in mind during my freshmen year. The McNair Scholars Program first drew my attention by portraying the financial figures that a graduate degree would provide. As I became more involved in the program, it became more about the interpersonal relations, role models, and the invaluable research and networking experience than the monetary figures.

After applying and being accepted to the program, the first life changing steps McNair would offer me is putting me in contact with Dr. Lisa Y. Flores. Dr. Flores took me under her wing and provided me with a once in a lifetime opportunity: doing groundbreaking research on Latina/o immigrants.

The two research projects I undertook looked at the acculturation process of Latinas/os immigrants. Each project focused on the use of the data from the Cambio (Change) Center, an outreach program directed by Dr. Corinne Valdivia designed to examine the strategies that Latina/o immigrants use to settle in rural areas of Missouri. A groundbreaking project, the Center's research emerged due to the challenges of the host community and newcomers resulting from the increase of Latina/o immigrants in rural communities. The end result of these two projects helped me identify possible reasons why Latina/o youth and their families are not excelling in the educational system. The lack of resources and/or their lack of motivation to interact and connect with the host community may have limited the students from achieving their full potential.

I am most grateful at the relationship that I was able to foment with Dr. Flores. She became more than a mentor and a guide, Dr. Flores became my role model. Her caring mentorship drove me to excel in my obligations as a researcher. Through this mentorship, I presented in two national conferences and a regional conference. In these conferences she presented me to her renowned colleagues as a colleague of her own, which meant for me that she truly valued my work and cared for me as a friend.

It is through this interaction with my mentor and the work that we have done together that has



*2007-2008 McNair Scholar, David Aguayo, presents his research at the Heartland Regional Conference, September 2008.*

motivated me and helped me apply and get accepted to graduate school. Next fall, I will be attending the University of Missouri Career Counseling Psychology graduate program. I aspire to obtain my PhD in either Counseling Psychology or Educational Policy.

My dream is to research ways for youth to obtain a better education. This dream, however, could not have been so near if it was not through the assistance of the McNair program and its staff. The emotional and professional assistance from each one of the staff has been invaluable to my success, not only as a researcher, but as a college student. It is to each one of these individuals to whom I owe part of my success. Without their belief and trust in me I would be a mediocre college student awaiting my graduation so that I could join a mediocre society. Instead, I will be attending graduate school to further my education, which will help me enhance the lives of Americans.

### **McNair Conference Special Thanks To:**

- Robin Walker and Mike Zweifel of the MU Graduate School for their assistance with printing the research posters
- Brian Booton, Norma Jackson and Sacheen Mobley for evaluating the oral presentations at the conference

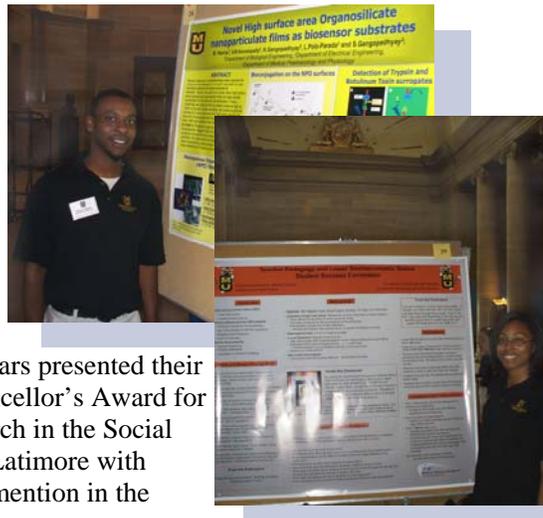


# Scholars Continue Presenting

Recently, two scholars, Bryant Harris and Brittany Smotherson, presented their posters in the rotunda of the state capitol in conjunction with “Undergraduate Research Day at the Capitol.” Three other McNair Scholars, Danielle Graef, Tracey Latimore and Sarah Brandt, also presented at the “2009 Psychology Day” poster session.



At the “2009 Undergraduate Research and Creative Achievements Forum” several scholars presented their poster. This event awarded the Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Research in the Social and Behavioral Sciences to Tracey Latimore with Janine Ingram receiving honorable mention in the same category.



Another McNair Scholar, Jenniffer Stetler, won the 2009 Missouri Life Sciences Week Research Competition for best undergraduate poster in the Physiology of Health and Disease category.



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