

The Challenger

The Newsletter of the MU McNair Scholars Program

June 2011

22nd Annual McNair Scholars Conference

On April 16th, the culmination of over 275 hours of research resulted in oral and poster presentations by the 2010-2011 McNair Scholars. Topics ranged from spending statistics on relief efforts after the Haitian earthquake to protein interactors in a plant parasite. They also included such humanity and social science related topics as the representation of Native Americans in contemporary society to the lived realities of middle-class African American college males.



Left: McNair Scholar, Anoff "Nick" Cobblah presents the motivation behind his research on a ultra-high vacuum system for heteroepitaxial film growth.

Below: McNair Scholars discuss their research during the poster presentation segment of the conference.



In addition to the 19 oral presentations, the scholars also presented their work in poster form. "I had never created a poster before," McNair Scholar, Shane Hoffman stated. "It proved to be a lot of work, but is a wonderful visual representation of the research I conducted and helped facilitate my discussion of it."

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 help the scholars navigate the graduate school process. Mentors also see 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. Seth Meyers, pushed me to think outside the box. He challenged me to come up with my own ideas or solutions before giving me his opinion,"

said McNair Scholar, See Yang. "I am so grateful to have such a wonderful mentor who truly cares about my future."

"Working with my mentor, Dr. Francisco Gomez, was very rewarding. He really treated me as a colleague rather than just an undergraduate. I look forward to working with him next year as a graduate student," added McNair Scholar, Joe Cochran.

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 twentieth volume of the *MU McNair Scholars Journal*.



McNair Scholars' Future Plans

The 2010-2011 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

Joshua Brinkley will conduct post-baccalaureate research in social psychology at the University of Kansas next fall.

Marcone Cangussu is continuing his work in the intelligence community for the Department of Defense.

William "Joe" Cochran will study under Dr. Francisco Gomez in pursuit of his master's degree in geology here at MU.

Shane Hoffman was named an alternate for the Jacob K. Javits Fellowship and will pursue his Master's in Mass Communication and Sports Media Production at Oklahoma State University.

Darrell "DJ" Jordan has an assistantship to pursue his master's in vocal performance with the MU School of Music.

Calvin Lewis is staying at Mizzou to pursue an MD and a PhD in chemistry with funding.

Brittany Long will attend Brandeis University in Boston, MA with funding to pursue a PhD in socio-cultural anthropology.

Long Pei will be a teaching assistant at the University of Iowa as he pursues his master's in actuarial science.

Shannon Schipper will attend Arizona State University where she will be a research assistant pursuing her PhD in gender studies.

Lorien Hayden will be a teaching assistant with the MU Physics Department this summer.

Bryant Harris is staying at MU to pursue a PhD in biological engineering with funding.

Sydney Pursel is off to the Pacific Northwest to conduct an art project.

Sydnea Redwine is working for ALDI as a District Manager before pursuing her PhD in business.

Ashley Shaw will pursue a master's in public health with full funding at the University of Missouri next fall.

Diliana Stoimenova will be a teaching assistant at the University of Colorado as she pursues her master's in integrative physiology.

Non-graduating Scholars Summer Research/Internship Plans

Anoff "Nick" Cobblah is continuing his research this summer with the MU College of Arts & Science Undergraduate Research Mentorship Program.

Nicole Hams' summer will be spent at Arizona State University researching microbial fuel cell applications.

Kimberly Johnson Anderson will intern this summer at Hallmark in business analytics.

Michael McCoy will intern in Rutgers University's RiSE Undergraduate Summer Research Program.

Shannon Montañez will intern with the Round Lake Illinois Area Park District.

Braydon Medlin has finished his requirements for his bachelor's degree in business and is adding an additional undergraduate degree in psychology at MU next fall.

Fiona Odu will be participating in a Howard Hughes Medical Institute summer internship at Northwestern University.

Jerry Steward is continuing his undergraduate research while taking classes this summer at MU.

Michelle Tang is interning with the Donald Danforth Plant Science Center in St. Louis.

Cameron Williams will study in Rwanda and research the history of the genocides this summer.

See Yang is interning with FCS Financial in Jefferson City this summer.

Scholar Spotlight: Ashley Shaw

In Fall 2011, McNair Scholar Ashley Shaw was selected for the cover of the 2011 MU McNair Journal. Her research and work has not ended. Below, Ashley updates us on the activities McNair has afforded her.

Last year I conducted my McNair research with Dr. Stephen Ball, Associate Professor of the Human Environmental Sciences Department, entitled “Validation of DC Skinfold Prediction Equation.” The purpose of my study was to determine if this new way of measuring body fat created by researchers in 2004 accurately predicted body fatness in men. My results indicated that this skinfold prediction equation is an accurate predictor and in fact is more accurate than the more common equation by Jackson and Pollock. An accurate skinfold equation and technique is less expensive than other types of body fat measurement and can help clinicians create an effective program for men to combat obesity.

Since the completion of my McNair internship have continued researching through the auspices of the Alcohol Research Training Summer School. With the guidance of Dr. Tim Trull, Professor of Psychology, I researched binge drinking and its association with gender, ethnicity, and age.

“I appreciate the support and opportunities that the McNair Scholars Program has given me.”

2009-2010 McNair Scholar Ashley Shaw

This past fall, I was nominated by the McNair Scholars Program to attend the Compact for Faculty Diversity, which gave me an opportunity to learn graduate experiences from PhD Scholars. Their goal is to increase the number of minority students earning doctoral degrees and to the number of minority faculty members. Both of these activities was a great opportunity for me to get involved in additional research and to learn from doctoral scholars.



2009-2010 McNair Scholar, Ashley Shaw, measures a bicep as part of her McNair research.

Last fall I also started my application process and applied to many graduate programs including the University of California-Los Angeles, University of Georgia, University of Houston, University of Missouri, University of North Carolina, and the University of Texas. I completed all of my applications during the winter break and shortly heard back from all of the institutions. I was accepted into multiple graduate programs and have opted to pursue my Master’s of Public Health here at the University of Missouri.

A large factor in my decision to stay at Mizzou is being awarded the Thurgood Marshall Academic Scholarship. This scholarship gives me \$10,000 over two years and includes matching funds from my department. Additionally, I have also applied for external fellowships and hope to hear from those organizations soon.

The McNair Scholars Program at MU has given me guidance throughout the graduate school application process and has provided me with the necessary tools to pursue my eventual doctoral degree in Public Health. I appreciate the support and opportunities that NaTashua Davis, Jeremy Bloss and the McNair Scholars Program has given me.



Additional Funding for Recent McNair Alums



At Mizzou, the McNair Scholars Program continues contact with scholars and encourages them to continue finding additional funding for their studies. 2008-2009 McNair Scholar, Aaron Rosengren and 2007-2008 McNair Scholar Catera Wilder have done just that. Each will receive three years of support and a \$30,000 stipend plus a \$10,500 cost of education allowance as awardees of the [National Science Foundation's Graduate Research Fellowship Program \(NSF GRFP\)](#). Aaron is an Aeronautical and Aerospace Engineering graduate student at the University of Colorado and Catera is a graduate student in Biomedical Engineering at Georgia Tech.



In addition, 2008-2009 MU McNair Scholar, Carolina Ebeid is a runner up for the University of Texas at Austin's [Keene Prize for Literature](#) for her vivid and vital portrayal of the American experience and will receive \$17,000. "The McNair Program helped me get in to graduate school at the University of Texas and I am ever grateful."



Recent McNair Alums Catera Wilder and Aaron Rosengren were recently awarded NSF Fellowships.

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

Carolina Ebeid received honorable mention in the Keene Prize for Literature.



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