The McNair Scholars Program prepares high-achieving USC undergraduates to engage in research and for graduate school programs. The USC Office of Undergraduate Programs provides administrative oversight for the program and makes available opportunities for all students to participate in an array of academic, co-curricular, and funding programs. Participating students, referred to as McNair Scholars, begin the program by taking a Research Methods Course in the Spring. During the Summer Research Institute (SRI), McNair Scholars are advised by USC faculty mentors, graduate students, and program staff. Throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall, the program provides services aimed at promoting academic success in the undergraduate program, graduate school preparation, career development, research competencies, and writing skills.

The McNair Scholars Program is a U.S. Department of Education Federal TRiO Program. The core components of the USC McNair Scholars Program include a Spring Research Methods Course, Summer Research Institute (SRI), Residential Life & Cultural Program, Annual Research Symposium, GRE Test Preparation, Travel Grant Awards for Conference Attendance and University Visitations, and Academic & Career Advising.

We hope you take the time to review all the scholar achievements highlighted in this newsletter. We would like to once again thank everyone that contributes to making the USC McNair Scholars Program a great resource for students. Without a doubt, the coming academic years will be filled with opportunities for all participating students, and we will see these students excel and realize major achievements.

Sincerely,

Dr. Richard Andalon
Director, USC McNair Scholars Program & Associate Dean, USC Graduate School

Dr. Aaron H. Walker
Assistant Director & Program Specialist, USC McNair Scholars Program
Recap - Scholar and Program

Achievements & Events

The USC McNair Scholars Program continues to be one of the premiere research and graduate school preparation programs for undergraduates in the country! Upon completion of the annual report, the following statistics were uncovered allowing for a clear illustration of USC McNair Scholars success:

Achievements

- There are 361 students affiliated with the USC McNair Scholars Program to date, approximately 75 program participants are currently enrolled as undergraduates.
- In 2012, 17 USC McNair Scholars were admitted to graduate programs, including 12 at the masters-level and 5 at the doctoral-level.
- In 2011, 16 USC McNair Scholars were admitted to graduate programs, including 11 at the masters-level and 5 at the doctoral-level.
- About 100 Masters level and 50 Doctoral level degrees have been awarded to USC McNair Scholar Alums. Currently 75 alums are pursuing graduate-level studies. This constitutes a program success rate of about 80% for graduate school placement! We are so proud of our McNair Scholars!
- From 2009 to 2012, nearly 60 USC McNair Scholars presented their projects at major research, national-level conferences throughout California and the U.S. In many instances, our undergraduates presented alongside graduate students and faculty mentors.
- Between 2009 and 2012, the USC McNair Scholars Program awarded nearly $400,000.00 in student aid by way of supplemental research stipends, scholarships, and grants. Students are awarded this funding in addition to their annual financial aid and scholarships for tuitions, books, housing, etc.
- Annually, 20 to 26 USC Faculty Members mentor and advise USC McNair Scholars. Since 1996, at least 200 USC Faculty Members have worked with students through the program.

Events

- The spring 2012 USC Latino Student Empowerment Conference took place on January 28th and featured participation from several students affiliated with the USC McNair Scholars Program and the Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education (EDGE) Program. Sessions included: “Labor and Health Issues in Communities”, “Youth Contributions to Immigrant Families”, and “Youth Transitions to Adulthood”. Presenters and moderators were: McNair Scholars Evelyn Larios (Sociology), Luis Maldonado (Health Promotion and Disease Prevention), Christina Wilkerson (Sociology), Nathaniel Gonzalez (Sociology), Juan Espinoza and EDGE doctoral student Emir Estrada (Sociology).

- Every spring we host a networking mixer in the USC Doheny Library Lecture Hall. Sponsors of the program include the USC Graduate School, USC Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and the USC McNair Scholars Program, Office of Undergraduate Programs. This event provides a chance for graduate students and postdocs engaged in research to mingle with their colleagues as well as with McNair Scholars who are interested in graduate school. The event consistently has nearly 100 attendees, incorporating students from across many different departments and disciplines. Food and beverages are served while students share their experiences with one another. The positive feedback and requests for more events like this was noted and this will continue to be an annual event. If you couldn't make it this year, be sure to join us next time!
Recap - Scholar and Program Achievements & Events (cont)

- Ms. Phuong (Harmony) Huynh and the USC Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) were honored to have the rare opportunity to host GMS Vice President Larry A. Griffith Jr. and Director of Operations Julie Kim at our campus. The visit consisted of discussions regarding Gates Scholars’ experiences at USC, GMS awarding matters, GMS administrative guidelines, and Gates Scholars’ thoughts and concerns. This special event was a huge success with a high turnout rate. We were even surprised with the need to extend the discussion an extra hour! The Daily Trojan was also present to record this historic event as well. A special thanks goes to the USC McNair Scholars Program for kindly facilitating this event, particularly Dr. Richard Andalon and Dr. Aaron Walker. A new GMS chapter has recently been formed at USC. Keep an eye out for an upcoming meeting.

- Fall 2012 marked the beginning of USC’s “Just Among McNairs (JAM)” meetings! These "JAM Sessions" – also open to current McNair Scholars from surrounding Universities – provide an opportunity for scholars to give practice presentations for upcoming conferences, discuss issues they are having relative to their research, suggest articles for the group to read and discuss, or just kick-around and/or debate ideas with other scholars. The workshops that have already taken place covered bioethics and the presidential debates. We are open to your suggestions for future topics! Keep an eye your inbox or the USC McNair website for announcements about future JAM Sessions!

- Members of the 2011-2012 McNair Cohort had the pleasure of attending the 9th annual UCLA McNair Research Symposium held at the UCLA Young Research Library. This gave the scholars from both campuses a chance to share their research with each other and enjoy a meal together. This was a great event for all and cross-campus activities will be promoted and continued for future McNair Scholars!

- “Real Talk with USC Grad Students of Color”: This fall, McNair Scholars had the opportunity to network with graduate students Alexandrina Agloro, Stefan Alexander Smith, Vanessa Monterosa, and Nikita Hamilton in an open forum to learn more about their graduate research experiences at USC and career goals. Scholars in attendance also gained valuable tips and strategies to help them excel in their undergraduate work and preparation for graduate school. Scholars also learned about the unique experiences, including success and challenges, of graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. This was a successful event and for those that could not attend, be sure not to miss the next one!
Introducing the USC McNair Scholar Cohort 2012-2013
Welcome to the family!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Majors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alberto Edeza</td>
<td>Biological Sciences</td>
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<td>Bashir Wyatt</td>
<td>Health and Humanity</td>
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<td>Belen Chairez</td>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
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<td>Betty Tran</td>
<td>American Studies and Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Christopher Sandino</td>
<td>Electrical Engineering</td>
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<td>Delphine Sims</td>
<td>African American Studies</td>
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<td>Elizabeth Soriano</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Eva Ortega</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<td>Frederick Brindopke</td>
<td>Global Health</td>
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<td>Kim Luong</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>LaVasjah Williams</td>
<td>Communication</td>
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<td>Luis Torres</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
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<td>Luna White</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<td>Malika Moore</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<td>Marco Lopez</td>
<td>Human Biology</td>
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<td>Mariangela Ruiz-Hernandez</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Martin Arredondo</td>
<td>Health Promotion and Disease Prevention</td>
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<td>Mellissa Linton</td>
<td>English Literature</td>
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<td>Michael Cox</td>
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<td>Nicole Marcione</td>
<td>Gerontology Lifespan Health</td>
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<td>Odette Overton</td>
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<tr>
<td>Osvaldo Rodriguez</td>
<td>Computer Science/ Business Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rachel Rosales</td>
<td>Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Studies</td>
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<td>Samantha Fousse</td>
<td>Biology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Taylor Markey</td>
<td>Neuroscience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Winona Leon</td>
<td>English (Creative Writing)</td>
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Outgoing 2011-2012 USC McNair Scholar Cohort
Good luck with your graduate school applications!

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Majors</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathon P. Adame</td>
<td>Kinesiology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anneleise V. Azua</td>
<td>Communication and Gender Studies</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yrneh G. Brown</td>
<td>Fine Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>Franklin Caldwell II</td>
<td>Astronautical Engineering</td>
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<td>Karina Casillas</td>
<td>Public Policy Management &amp; Planning and American Studies &amp; Ethnicity</td>
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<td>Kyle Tyari Doss</td>
<td>English</td>
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<td>Tandia R. Elijio</td>
<td>Anthropology</td>
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<td>Susan Guadarrama</td>
<td>Psychology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ashley Harlow</td>
<td>Social Sciences (Psychology) Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brenton Keller</td>
<td>Neuroscience &amp; Philosophy</td>
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<td>Yiqi Lin</td>
<td>Neuroscience and Health Promotion and Disease Prevention</td>
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<td>Eduardo Mollinedo-Pinon</td>
<td>History</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rikiesha Pierce</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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<tr>
<td>Richard C. Ponce Jr.</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brendan Rabideau</td>
<td>Neuroscience and Philosophy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Angela M. Ross</td>
<td>Sociology and Social Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>Debbie Rumbo</td>
<td>Political Science and Spanish</td>
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<td>Michael A. Sadler</td>
<td>International Relations</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marco A. Valadez</td>
<td>American Studies &amp; Ethnicity and Economics</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monica Valencia</td>
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<tr>
<td>Salvador Vieyera Malagón</td>
<td>Anthropology and History</td>
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<td>Baotran Ngoc Vo</td>
<td>Biomedical Engineering</td>
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<td>Shamoiya Washington</td>
<td>Political Science</td>
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<tr>
<td>Paul F. Young</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
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Scholars Going on to Graduate School

**Enjoli S. H. Alexander** admitted to a Master's program in Social Work at Case Western Reserve University

**Calvin Allen** admitted to a Master's program in Public Relations and Corporate Communications at New York University (NYU)

**Armando Barajas** admitted to a Master's Program in Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University

**Shanelle Bell** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Ethnic Studies at the University of Southern California (USC)

**Josephine Chou** admitted to a Master's program in Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California (USC)

**Denise Colome** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California

**Abel Delgado** admitted to a Master's program in Medieval History at the University of York, England and a Ph.D. Program in Medieval History at the University of Minnesota

**Apollo Emeka** admitted to a D.P.P.D (doctorate) in Policy, Planning, Development at the University of Southern California

**Reza Ghassemi** admitted to a Master's programs in Engineering at UC Berkeley & USC

**Bernadette Gholami** admitted to a Master's program in Social Work at San Jose State University

**Mariah Gill** admitted to a Master's Program in Environmental Management at Yale University

**Patricia Gomes** admitted to a Master's program in American Indian Studies at UCLA

**Nathan Gonzalez** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Political Science at the University of Chicago

**Whitney Griffin** admitted to a Ph.D. program in School Psychology at The Ohio State University

**Erika Humphries** admitted to a Master's program in Public Policy at USC and Juris Doctorate (J.D.) at USC

**Darren Knight** admitted to Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) programs at Columbia University and UC San Francisco

**Monika Langarica** admitted to a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) program at UC Berkeley and UCLA

**Daija Lewis** admitted to a Master's Program in Higher Education at Argosy University- Los Angeles

**William Lopez** admitted to a Master's program in Architecture at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Adriana Lovera** admitted to a Master's programs in International Education at Columbia University and New York University

**Vladimir Medenica** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Political Science at Princeton University, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago

**Erin O'Donnell** admitted to a Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT) program at H usson University

**Adam Perez** admitted to a Master's programs at Columbia University (Journalism), Yale University (American Studies), Stanford University (Communication), UC Berkeley (Journalism), & UCLA (Sociology)

**Michael Randolph** admitted to a Master's programs in Human Resources Management (Business) at Cornell University (Industrial & Labor Relations), the University of Minnesota, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Erica S. Silva** admitted to a Master's Program in Education at Loyola Marymount University

**Javier Sotelo** admitted to a Master's program in Global Medicine at USC

**Christina Wilkerson** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at Columbia University, University of Michigan, and University of Miami

**Christelle W. Williams** admitted to a Master's Program in Psychology at California State University, Long Beach

**Daniel Wu** admitted to Ph.D. programs in Sociology at Harvard University & the University of Chicago

**Paul F. Young** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California

**Roland (Tony) Zapata** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California
Scholars Presenting at National-Level Conferences

Claremont Graduate University McNair Conference, October 2011
La Tarrell Brown, Dating Equality Between Heterosexuals
Juan Espinoza, Spaces of Community Wealth and Collective Energy in the “Empower Law Fellows Program”
Carmina Gomez, The Effects of Farmers’ Markets on Fruit and Vegetable Intake Amongst Low Income Latino Families
Andrea Porter, Two Shades of Black: A Comparative Analysis Between the Social Experiences of Black International Students and Black Domestic Students at a White University
Javier Sotelo, Effects of Defective STAT3/Wnt pathways on Cardiac Neural Crest Cell Migration and Heart Development
Christelle Williams, The Effects of Avatar Customization and Point of View on Psychophysiological Arousal and Self-Report Responses

UC Berkeley McNair Symposium, August 2011
Abel Delgado, The Jewess and Moorress in the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X
Rahel Gabreyes, Embedded in News Coverage, Mirrored in Public Opinion: Television News and the Deterioration of Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom
Mariah Gill, Shaping Marine Protected Areas: The Media and Stakeholder Arguments in Southern California
Phuong (Harmony) Huynh, Selective Vulnerability of Neuromuscular Junctions in Spinal Muscular Atrophy
Evelyn Larios, Labor Unions: A Contextual Factor in Parents’ School Involvement
Bertrand Perdomo, Community Organization's Role in Reattaching Former Inmates to the Labor Market
Christina Wilkerson, “I'M A DREAM ER”: Undocumented Latino Youth in Los Angeles and the Federal DREAM Act
Charnan Williams, Lost in the City of Angels: A Comparative Analysis of Central Avenue and Leimert Park as Black Cultural Spaces

Out of State
La Tarrell Brown presented his research entitled, "Dating Equality Between Heterosexuals" at the McNair Scholars Conference at Oklahoma State University.
Carmina Gomez presented her research entitled “The Effects of Farmers' Markets on Fruit and Vegetable Intake Amongst Low Income Latino Families” at the American Institute for Cancer Research Conference on November 3-4, 2011 in Washington, D.C.
Luis Maldonado presented his research entitled, "HIV Among Young Latino Men who have Sex with Men (MSM): The Underlying Factors of Testing" at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in New York City.
Javier Sotelo Jr. presented his research entitled, "Effects of Defective STAT3/Wnt pathways on Cardiac Neural Crest Cell Migration and Heart Development" at the Latino Medical Student Association Conference at Harvard University.
Ashley Williams presented her research entitled “Connecting Network News to the College Aspirations of Minority High School Students” at the 8th Annual Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity in Graduate Education on March 26, 2011 at Yale University.
Scholars Presenting at National-Level Conferences (cont)

Claremont Graduate University McNair Conference, October 2012
Jonathan P. Adame, **Body Composition, BMI, and Weight Following 4 Weeks of Respiratory Muscle Training (RMT) Using the Breathslim® Device**
Franklin Caldwell II, **The Lunar Entry and Approach Platform For Research On Ground (LEAPFROG) GNC Simulation Comparison**
Karina Casillas, **Workforce prep: Student Perceptions of Subject-Centered and Multi-Disciplinary Programs**
Tandia R. Elijio, **Removable Alien: Jamaican Immigrants and U.S. Deportation Policy under the Obama Administration**
Brendan Rabideau, **Temporal effects on the binding of auditory and visual modalities in working memory**
Salvador Vieyra Malagón, **Pax Porfiriana: Porfirio Díaz in Mexican Politics and Society, 1876-1910**
Baotran Ngoc Vo, **Pitx2 Transcription Factor Inhibits Reprogramming of Human Dermal Fibroblast Cells**

UC Berkeley McNair Symposium, August 2012
Brenton Keller, **Treadmill Exercise Delays Intranuclear Protein Aggregation But Does Not Alter Motor Deficits in 140 CAG Knock-in Mouse Model of Huntington’s Disease**
Shamoiya Washington, **Embedded in News Coverage, Mirrored in Public Opinion: Television News and the Deterioration of Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom**
Richard C. Ponce Jr., **Altered NMDA Expression with Treadmill Exercise in the MPTP-Lesioned Mouse Model of Basal Ganglia Injury**
Ashley Harlow, **College Life: Difference in College Experience Between First Generation and Traditional Students**
Marco A. Valadez, **How Social Normative Behaviors in the Day Labor Population of Los Angeles Challenge Neoclassical Economic Theory**
Angela M. Ross, **Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closet**

Out of State
Rikiesha Pierce, Debbie Rumbo, and Shamoiya Washington presented their research at the American Studies Association Conference in Puerto Rico.

Angela M. Ross presented her research entitled, "**Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closet**" at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in Boston, MA.

Monica Valencia presented her research entitled, "**The Effects of Transnational Prejudice on Incorporation and Identity Formation of Oaxacans in the U.S.**" at the California Sociological Society Conference in Riverside, CA, and at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in Boston, MA.
Scholars Engaged in the Publication Process

Jonathan P. Adame
Author of “Body Composition, BMI, and Weight Following 4 Weeks of Respiratory Muscle Training (RMT) Using the Breathslim® Device”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Yrneh G. Brown

Karina Casillas
Author of “Workforce prep: Student Perceptions of Subject-Centered and Multi-Disciplinary Programs”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Brandyn Castro

Reza Ghassemi

Ashley Harlow
Author of “College Life: Difference in College Experience Between First Generation and Traditional Students ”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Yiqi Lin
Author of “The Role of Novelty Seeking, Reward Dependence, and Anhedonia in Pathological Gambling”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Rikiesha Pierce
Author of “Gangsta Feminism: Hip-Hop and the Third Wave Feminist Movement”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Jorge Rodriguez
Co-authored “Concentration Dependence of NaCl ion distributions around DPPC lipid bilayers”. To be published in an upcoming issue of Interdisciplinary Sciences: Computational Life Sciences.

Angela M. Ross
Author of “Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closer”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Debbie Rumbo
Author of “Why Cant We Get Along?: A Study on Black and Latino Ethnocentrism in Los Angeles”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Baotran Ngoc Vo
Author of “Pitx2 Transcription Factor Inhibits Reprogramming of Human Dermal Fibroblast Cells”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

Peggy Weng
Author of “Understanding Hsk1’s Multifaceted Role in Maintaining Genome Integrity in Fission Yeast through Identifying Proteins that Interact with the Hsk1-Dfp1 Complex”: McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2007 Issue. Also, along with her faculty advisor, is in process of publishing research in a peer-reviewed journal (details forthcoming).

Daniel Wu

Paul F. Young
Karina Casillas was the only USC Price School of Policy, Planning, and Development student nominated along with a Viterbi student in civil engineering for the California Transportation Foundation Workshop. USC only selected two students to attend the 2 day symposium and case study workshop.

Bernadette Gholami & Bertrand Perdomo-Ucles, Ron Mcduffie Award from the USC Norman Topping Student Aid Fund.

Bernadette Gholami recognized and published in the USC Center for Feminist Research newsletter.

John Hernandez, research supplemental funding from the USC Rossier School of Education.

David Hernandez was selected to be a White House Intern, Washington, D.C.

Phuong (Harmony) Huynh, Dornsife College’s Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR) scholarship awardee, fall 2011; Selected as USC Gates Millennium Scholar Campus Based Leader, 2011-2012 and USC Representative at the Gates Millennium Scholar Leadership Conference in Los Angeles, Nov 2011.

Brenton Keller was awarded a USC Rose Hills Fellowship.

Monika Langarica & Sylvia Green nominated as 2011 Discovery Scholars.

Monika Langarica awarded Latina of the Year from the USC Latina(o) Student Assembly and the Phi Kappa Phi Student Recognition Award.

Erin Lee selected by USC Professor Michel Baudry to continue her research during summer 2011; Office of Undergraduate Programs’ Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

Vladimir Medenica, funding for graduate studies through the American Political Science Association (APSA) Minority Fellow.

Victor Paredes-Colonia & Silvia Green, Dr. John R. H ubbard, Special Recognition Award.

Andrea Porter & Luis Rico accepted to conduct research abroad in Africa, Ghana.

Daniel Rios, Leadership Alliance-sponsored Summer Research Program selected participant (Stanford University), summer 2011.

Angela Ross was inducted into the Order of the Torch, one of the highest awards bestowed on USC Seniors.

Vanessa Sanchez received a USC Professional Academic Research Funding Award from the USC Undergraduate Student Government to attend the American Studies Association Conference in Puerto Rico.

Jasmine Torres, recognized on the USC University News website.

Jonathan Truong, Public Policy & International Affairs Fellowship Program selected participant (Ann Arbor, Michigan), summer 2011.

Mo nika Valencia, recognized in the USC Daily Trojan newspaper.

Baotran Vo, Office of Undergraduate Programs’ Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, summer 2011.

Kim Vu, TURF and NTSAF Scholarship recipient to conduct research in Genoa, Italy during summer 2011.

Peggy Weng, Rose Hills Foundation Science and Engineering Fellowship, summer 2011 and Office of Undergraduate Programs’ Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

Christina Wilkerson, recognized in the USC Daily Trojan newspaper and Office of Undergraduate Programs’ Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

Ashley Williams, National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Student Journalist of the Year.

Charnan Williams, Office of Undergraduate Programs’ Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

Daniel Wu, 2011 USC University Trustees Award, 2011 Discovery Scholar, and 2011 Fulbright Research Fellow (declined offer).
Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools, Summer Training Programs (Application deadline: March 15, 2013): For students interested in working on Hispanic health research! Though programs are geared towards graduate or recent graduate students, we encourage fourth year undergraduate students to apply as well. Please note that programs are for individuals who would like to gain research experience and are committed to improving the health of Hispanics. If you are an applicant and have further questions about our programs, please visit our FAQ page by clicking here or by emailing programs@hshps.org.

Summer Undergraduate Research in Computational Biology (Application deadline: March 4, 2013): Training and Experimentation in Computational Biology (TECBio). TECBio REU @ Pitt is a 10-week summer program hosted by the Department of Computational and Systems Biology in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. TECBio will provide a challenging and fulfilling graduate-level research experience to undergraduate students. Details can be found at the program’s website – www.tecbioreu.pitt.edu.

Proctor & Gamble – Research Your Future in Science (Application deadline: March 15, 2013): Through hands-on involvement and a variety of tours and presentations, seminar participants will learn what it is like to work as an R&D Researcher at P&G as we explore all areas of R&D within P&G. P&G Researchers have unique and challenging careers supporting a wide range of cutting-edge research. During the seminar, full-time P&G Researchers will showcase various work areas, providing exposure to analytical labs, product formulation, process design and scale-up, products research, packaging, etc., to increase your understanding of Researcher career opportunities in science at P&G. As a participant, you will also be placed in the fast-track with the opportunity to interview for a 2014 P&G Researcher Summer Internship prior to any other intern recruiting. All travel and accommodations will be paid by P&G for those selected to attend.

California Forum for Diversity in Education: Each year USC organizes travel for undergraduate students to attend the California Forum for Diversity in Education, a national graduate school preparation program and recruitment fair. The next meeting will take place on SATURDAY APRIL 27, 2013 at UC Irvine. This all-day event draws representatives from over 150 universities from across the U.S. interested in promoting graduate education and recruiting underrepresented students for various graduate programs. Annually, over 1300 students participate from throughout Southern California. The event also includes graduate student preparation workshops and special presentations by faculty and graduate students. Registration is open for students at this link: http://www.ucop.edu/diversityforum/

McNair Pre-Summer Graduate School Preparation Camp (May 18-23, 2013): The three-day camp, at Lake Barkley State Resort Park in western Kentucky, features workshops for McNair Scholars on “Preparing a Personal Statement”, “Finding a Graduate Program”, “Interview Tactics for Positive Results,” “Positive Power of Mentors in Graduate School,” “Managing and Organizing the Graduate School Application Process” “Finding Financial Support for Graduate School” and “Preparing for the Graduate School Visit and Interview.” The camp includes individualized assistance with writing a Scholar’s personal statement and participation in a mock interview. For more information contact John Mateja, McNair Director at Murray State University at jmateja@murraystate.edu or by calling 270-809-3191. Cost: All sessions, all meals and double occupancy room for the 3-day camp is $575.

Pathway to Science: Resource for Research Opportunities! Pathways to Science is a project of the Institute for Broadening Participation (IBP). Pathways to Science supports pathways to the STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. We place particular emphasis on connecting underrepresented groups with STEM programs, funding, mentoring and resources. Use this website to find programs such as undergraduate summer research opportunities, graduate fellowships, postdoctoral positions, as well as resources and materials pertaining to recruitment, retention, and mentoring.
It was during a luncheon for first-generation college students that Professors Robin D.G. Kelley and John Carlos Rowe, after hearing my life story, identified me as an “organic intellectual” and encouraged me to begin research. They suggested that I write about my experiences as a former professional dancer within the documentary film “Rize” and the political nature of the dance movement. Shortly after beginning research on the dance form, Krump (documented by “Rize”), I encountered the dance phenomenon Jerkin’ on YouTube and was immediately struck by their appearance. Adolescent African American boys dressed in skin-tight, brightly colored jeans stood in stark comparison to the typical hyper-masculine baggy jeans style in contemporary hip-hop culture. Intrigued, I contacted the leading Jerkin’ group, The Ranger$S, and asked to conduct an ethnographic field study on them. I wanted to investigate the ways in which inner-city African American youth used the dance form of Jerkin’ as a tool to contest and mobilize against the negative forces in their community and the dominant paradigms shaping their identities including (but not limited to), gangs, hip-hop style, and their respective conceptualizations of black masculinity. This is the moment and the project that sparked my passion for research.

Throughout my academic journey I have been blessed to find means to overcome(215,757),(784,831) numerous obstacles. Poor health, single-parenthood, and financial hardships have made my educational experience strenuous. Not only am I the first person in my family to achieve a college degree; I am the first of my siblings to have achieved a high school diploma. I went on to graduate with Honors in American Studies and Ethnicity (African American Studies) and the top of my class at USC’s African American Celebration as Valedictorian. During my last semester at USC I encountered two new realities: on the one hand, I was accepted into the Yale Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program, and on the other, I was pregnant. In spite of several contrary opinions, discouragement, and some uncertainty of my health due to a chronic medical condition, I went to Yale and gave one of the top presentations at the Leadership Alliance Conference, a symposium that gathers presentations of summer research participants. I presented to an audience of standing room only. I returned to Los Angeles from Yale six months pregnant and enrolled in one of the last two courses required for my degree at USC. While eight months pregnant, I presented research at the 1st Annual Claremont Graduate University McNair Scholars Symposium and received nearly perfect 10’s on my peer-panel evaluations. Dr. Richard Andalon, Director of the McNair Scholars Program, was the first to tell me that my story was one of resilience.

My successes and preparation for graduate study and conference presentations was largely due to my mentors Professors Lanita Jacobs, Shana Redmond, and Robin Kelley as well as the advising and assistance with research projects gained during McNair seminars. McNair also assisted with application materials, funding opportunities for conference travel, and a graduate school supplemental scholarship to help with the overall expenses related to the graduate school application process. Recently, I received my first acceptance letter from UC San Diego out of the dozen schools that I received fee waivers as a perk of being a McNair Scholar. I am currently awaiting decisions from Harvard, Yale, Chicago, New York University, Northwestern, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford. My ultimate goal is to be a Professor. I also aim to encourage my college students and high school mentees that social movements do not just have to be in the form of a protest. I have watched first-hand what Krump and Jerkin’ has done in the lives of inner-city kids. I feel it is my purpose to document it and inspire others.

I also continued my research and mentorship, and in the summer of 2011, completed a research paper with Dr. Robin D.G. Kelley for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (M MUF) Program. I completed the last Spanish course needed to finalize my BA degree in December 2011. Spring 2012, I am currently taking Intermediate Spanish 4 at East Los Angeles Community College to solidify my foreign language proficiency and ensure I can handle the combined pressures of my one year old with coursework. I am also working outside of the classroom as a Research Assistant with Dr. Melina Abdullah, former visiting USC Professor and now Professor of Pan African Studies at Cal State Los Angeles. In this capacity, I am assisting research for her forthcoming publication on “Womanist Mothering,” an issue now dear to my heart. She recently asked me to develop the piece into a collaborative project with her in the near future. Graduate school is what I have been prepared to do and I am enthusiastic about the challenges that it will bring to me as a person, emergent activist, and intellectual. I am grateful for the support of USC and the McNair Scholars Program and I hope to continue to make them proud in the next phase of my academic journey.
Student Highlight: Vladimir Medenica

I stumbled across the McNair Scholars program by accident. Frustrated with trying to secure a paid legal internship, I applied to be a McNair Scholar in hopes of having a summer experience that was both intellectually stimulating and financially rewarding. The McNair Scholars program did not disappoint. What began as a substitute for a summer job quickly erased my long held desire to attend law school and became the backbone of my academic career.

The program did not only teach me what research is, it allowed me the opportunity to formulate and execute my own original project from inception to completion. During my summer as a McNair Scholar, I had the privilege of being mentored by renowned USC faculty member Dr. Jane Junn on a project titled Youth and Politics: The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Youth Political Engagement. I received the support and guidance I needed with understanding the existing literature, drafting a legitimate survey, collecting data, statistically analyzing that data, and sharing my findings in a clear, coherent presentation. As a reward for my efforts, I was selected to be a presenter at the national McNair symposium hosted by UC Berkeley. That opportunity forged stronger friendships with my USC colleagues and introduced me to students and faculty members at several other universities.

The following summer I made sure to capitalize on an opportunity I learned about through the McNair Summer Research Institute; I became a Leadership Alliance Mellon Fellow at Columbia University in New York City. Once there, I was able to utilize what I learned as a McNair Scholar by aiding faculty member Dr. Robert Shapiro with his research as well as working on another original, independent study. Having the background knowledge and skills provided to me by the McNair program allowed me to excel in a high pressure, competitive environment and, as a result, I was invited to stay on the study and continue working with Dr. Shapiro and his team of researchers. I traveled to Boston, Connecticut, San Francisco, and San Jose to collect data and present preliminary findings.

Well into my last semester at USC, I am still in contact with the friends I made at Columbia. Moreover, I am once again working with Dr. Junn on my honors thesis, an analysis of minority electoral behavior across different cities in the United States—a project that was inspired by my experiences traveling and collecting data for the Columbia study. What I am most excited for, however, is getting the opportunity to present alongside Dr. Junn and other influential political scientists at “The Race and Place Workshop” hosted by UC San Diego this coming February. With the help of the McNair program staff, I polished and sent out applications to several PhD programs in Political Science last semester and am now eagerly awaiting the responses. I hope to continue refining and developing the research skills I first acquired as a McNair Scholar in graduate school next year.

Accepted to a Ph.D. Program in Political Science at Princeton University
Getting to know McNair staff member Dr. Aaron H. Walker

Dr. Aaron H. W alker currently serves as an Assistant D irector and Program Specialist with the USC Mc N air S cholars Program, Office of U ndergraduate Programs, a D vision of the USC O ffice of the Provost. H is responsibilities include graduate school advising, teaching writing and research methods, program planning, and fiscal and budget management. As an instructor, advisor, and coordinator, he has acquired extensive experiences working with high school students, undergraduates, and graduate students. He has taught and advised high school students preparing for college, undergraduates preparing for graduate school, and graduate students preparing their research for publications and conferences. T he student populations he has served over the years have been truly diverse in every aspect, including: domestic and international students; students from historically underrepresented minority backgrounds; students coming from low to high socioeconomic households; students designated as academically gifted; and students with distinct learning disabilities. W hile at USC, Dr. W alker has designed and taught classes on argumentative writing, research methods, and critical analysis. Between 2006 and 2011, he was an assistant lecturer with the USC W riting Program. In 2008, he began serving in an administrative capacity as a coordinator, where he supervised and mentored other writing instructors in course development and management. A dditionally, he was a liaison between the W riting Department and USC faculty that teach related courses, and was also responsible for attending meetings with department chairs. Dr. W alker earned his B.A. in English with Honors at the Arizona State University (ASU). H e acquired both his M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics at the University of Southern California (USC).

Getting to know McNair staff member Letisha R. Wyatt

Letisha R. Wy att currently serves as an Advisor, Instructor, and Coordinator with the USC Mc N air S cholars Program, Office of U ndergraduate Programs. M s. Wy att recently completed her Ph.D. studies in the M olecular Pharmacology & T oxicology Program at the U niversity of Southern California School of Pharmacy. In 2005 she graduated from the U niversity of California, D avis, earning a B.S. in N eurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior with a M inor in M usic. H er primary interest is in the science of addiction, and she is currently working in the Alcohol and Brain Research Laboratory on the Health Sciences Campus. T he focus of her dissertation is the study of the effects of alcohol on A TP-gated ion channels found within the central nervous system and the behavioral implications of an increased or decreased expression of these particular receptors. T he aim is that this work will aid in a more complete understanding of the molecular targets of alcohol and their contributions to alcoholism, as well as the development of novel therapeutic agents. As the Graduate Students’ Advocate for Diversity Outreach (GSA-D O), L etisha assists in the design and administration of programs that institute and enhance diversity at the University, advises and mentors students, and she facilitates academic services and professional development initiatives for both graduate and undergraduate students. L etisha’s passion for promoting academic pursuits and experience working with students from various disciplines and stages of academic, professional, and personal development gives her great enthusiasm about being a liaison and source of support for students at USC.
Program Staff

Dr. Richard Andalon, Director & Associate Dean
Dr. Aaron Walker, Assistant Director & Program Specialist

Program Instructors and Research Mentors
Letisha R. Wyatt, Ph.D. Candidate, Molecular Pharmacology and Toxicology
Stefan Alexander Smith, Ph.D. Student, History
Edson Rodriguez, Ph.D. Candidate, Sociology
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Tanya Alderete, Ph.D. Candidate, Systems Biology and Disease
Adam Kahn, Ph.D. Student, Communication
Chrisshonna G. Nieva, Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies & Ethnicity
Michelle Castellanos, Ph.D. Student, Higher Education
Jenna Sablan, Ph.D. Student, High Education