

UNTD MCNAIR SCHOLARS NEWSLETTER

GET TO KNOW ALL ABOUT THE RONALD E. MCNAIR POST-BACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

The University of North Texas Dallas McNair Scholars Program began in the 2017-2018 academic year. The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Program is a federally-funded TRIO program administered by the U.S. Department of Education and serves a diverse group of talented UNT Dallas sophomores, juniors, and seniors who are interested and invested in pursuing graduate education and earning a Ph.D. UNT Dallas' McNair Scholars Program provides enriching scholastic and holistic experiences that prepare eligible students to be successful applicants to competitive graduate programs.

Our Mission

Develop Students' Academic, Ethical, Emotional, Physical, and Social Skills for Transformational Impact in Life, School, and Leadership.

Our Objective

The goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to increase graduate degree awards for students from underrepresented segments of society.



Directors' Corner



*Kimberly Riddick, Ph.D.
Director, Ronald E. McNair Scholars*

As we find a "new normal" in our current, virtual space, it is vital to focus on a thriving mentality. Through our endeavors this summer, we learned that thriving is all about a paradigm shift from solely focusing on daily duties, to planning ways to grow, equip yourself, and excel for the future. Personal passion is key to living a thriving mindset. I encourage all to take advantage of this current time and focus on identifying your true passion and using that motivation to create your life's journey. Thriving despite circumstances and within adverse situations is a choice...Choose to thrive!

- Kimberly Riddick, PhD



*Nakia Douglas
Executive Director, TRIO & Pre-Collegiate Programs*

I hope this message finds each of you and your families in good health and spirits. While these have been extremely challenging times for us all - I am proud that each of you have continued this journey with our team towards your future goals. Thank you for your commitment to yourselves, your education, our program and campus. We want to remind you that we are here for your "Academic, Emotional, Ethical, Physical and Social Development for Transformational Impact in Life, School and Leadership." Therefore, please know that we are a phone call, email, etc. away to support you.

-Nakia Douglas

MEET OUR SCHOLARS

Spring 2020 Scholars

Ulises Aguinaga

Major: Biology
Faculty Mentor: Actively Seeking Mentor

Zayra Alvarez

Major: Early Education/
Psychology
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Jessica Cintron
Research Area: Effects of
Personality Traits on
Academic Success

Jessica Armstead

Major: Child Development
and Family Studies
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Nedra
Washington
Research Area:
Child Development and
Family Studies

Cecilia Campos

Major: Psychology
Faculty Mentor:
Prof. Elizabeth Casa de Calvo

RoSharon Collins

Major: Psychology
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Steven Arxer
Research Area:
How does masculinity impact
the emotion work of post
transplant men and their well-
being?

Ysidro Motta

Major: Psychology
Minor: Sociology
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Jessica Cintron
Research Area:
Another Prescription
Filled: Observing the Impact
of Medication on Veteran
Health

Oluwatosin Olubode

Major:
Faculty Mentor: Dr. Theodore
Larson
Research Area:
COVID-19 disruptions in
buying/shipping patterns that
can be seen in cargo manifest
data from airports, allowing
prediction of abnormal
industry trends and/or return
to normalcy

Ramon Sheets

Major: Interdisciplinary
Studies
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Aly McDowell
Research Area:
Inclusion Methods for LGBTQ+
Students and Parents in
Education
Veronica Starr
Major: Psychology

Jennifer Valverde

Major: Biology
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Aubrey Frantz
Research Area:
Invitro Effects of Sodium
Nitrate on the
Human Gut Microbiota

Renaldo Wiles

Major: Psychology
Faculty Mentor:
Dr. Syeda Jesmin
Research Area:
Effects of Isolation on
Adolescents

LaSanya Williams

Major: Communication and
Technology
Faculty Mentor:
Actively Seeking Mentor

GRADUATES

Spring 2020

Jacqueline Calderon-Soto

Major: Sociology

Faculty Mentor:

Dr. Steven Arxer

Research Area:

How Does Urban
Revitalization

Impact Symbolic
Displacement?

A Case Study of UNT

Dallas Alumni

Alexandria Pryor

Major: Criminal Justice

Faculty Mentor:

Dr. J. Eric Coleman

Research Area:

Racial Disparities in
Cocaine Sentencing

LaSherrell Hayes

Major:

Interdisciplinary
Studies

Faculty Mentor:

Prof. Yolanda
Graham



MCNAIR SPOTLIGHTS

SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT



JESSICA ARMSTEAD

Our fall Scholar Jessica Armstead has learned a lot since joining us this summer. "The most interesting thing I have learned as a McNair Scholar are the expectations of graduate school. To be honest, all I knew was go to class, pay attention, get good grades, and be involved on campus. I did not realize all the components and requirements needed for grad school or how different grad school is from undergrad school. I did not realize the different paths you can take and knowing how to look for a grad program that is best for me."

What would you say to prospective students that are curious about joining the program? I would tell anyone thinking about joining McNair Scholars to do it. It provides you opportunities that will help you along this journey we call school. It provides you with a network of scholars that become friends. McNair provides you with resources in the form of going to conferences and conventions, mentors, opportunities to earn stipends, tools that will help you not only become a better scholar, but a better person, and many more. McNair faculty wants to see you succeed, when they see your aspirations they connect you with the appropriate people and organizations that will help your aspirations become reality and obtainable.

What inspired you to "do something different" and join the McNair Scholars program? What inspired me to "do something different" and join the McNair Scholars program was my desire for a supporting network. I was a part of SSS TRiO at Mountain View and it made a difference to the degree that I added having a first-generation support program as a requirement when looking for a school to transfer to. Being a first-generation college student comes with many challenges. Being a part of an organization that understands those obstacles and assist in ways to get rid of those obstacles is why I joined the McNair Scholars program.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT



OFELIA CHAPA

Fellow alumna Ofelia Chapa was recently awarded the NBCC Minority Fellowship for Addictions Counselors. As the recipient of the award she will receive \$15,000. Ofelia is currently a master's student in the clinical mental health counseling program at Southern Methodist University. Upon graduation, Chapa intends to work with families and adolescent minorities, particularly those who have experienced a family member with a substance addiction.

How has the transition from undergrad to graduate school been? The transition from undergrad to graduate school began with great ease and flow. I was accepted into graduate school while completing my final semester as an undergrad. I began my program the fall of 2019. My first semester was an exciting time. Spring semester seemed as though it was going to be the same. However, what followed, mid-Spring of 2020 like many others I'm sure, transitioned from face-to-face courses to online. With that said, graduate school continues to be both exciting and challenging both of which I thoroughly enjoy.

How do you believe the McNair Scholars program helped you prepare for the transition? The McNair Scholars program helped me tremendously prepare for the demands and expectations of scholarly coursework, as well as a deep understanding for the application and submission process for fellowships, scholarships, and grants. By the way, due to my experience in the McNair program, I was able to apply for and receive the National Board of Certified Counselors Minority Fellowship for 2020, in the amount of \$15K dollars.

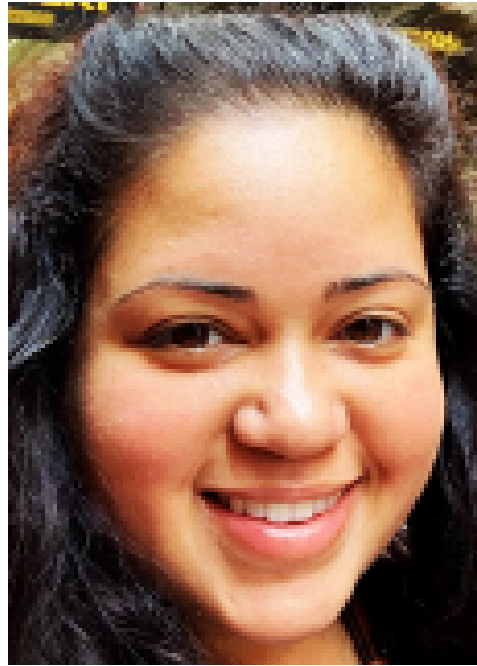
What inspired you to "do something different" and join the McNair Scholars program? I will admit, what first attracted me to attend the introduction meeting of the McNair program was the opportunity to learn how to have my graduate school program paid for. Once I attended the first meeting, I read over the requirements and told myself this seems like a great opportunity. Then, I learned about receiving stipends while enrolled in the program. I couldn't believe it. I remember thinking, "they are going to pay me to learn!". That is when I knew I was in, and would do any extra work as required as I fully understood it was to my own benefit, so I decided to go all in and give 100% of my effort and dedication.

MENTOR SPOTLIGHT

What is your field of expertise?

I have a doctorate in School Psychology, and I am a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology (LSSP) in Texas. My license allows me to work with children from Pre-K to 12th grade and their families and school personnel on how to best help the youth with their academic, behavioral, and social emotional well-being.

I am also a Visiting Lecturer in Psychology at UNT-D and teach several of the undergraduate psychology courses, including Careers and Writing in Psychology, Positive Psychology, Abnormal Psychology, Psychophysiology, Personality, Marital Adjustment, and Sexual Behaviors. I mentor students as well on research projects and guide them on personal, career, and educational goals.



Dr. Jessica Cintron

What do you enjoy most about being a mentor?

I enjoy engaging with diverse students and learning new perspectives. Through my students, I am developing better leadership and research skills.

What would you say to prospective mentors that are curious about joining the program?

Our students are so grateful for the advice and guidance that mentors give them. They are willing to do the work if they know they have someone to encourage them. As mentors, we need to consider our students' culture, backgrounds, lifestyles, and learning styles so that we know how to best guide them. Sometimes they may not know what questions to ask or how to ask for something, and we may need to take initiative and give them ideas so they can then follow and add to those ideas.

What is the best advice anyone has ever given you?

Take healthy risks and use your strengths to help you with your weaknesses.

MCNAIR SUMMER EXPERIENCE

This year our **McNair Summer Experience** transitioned to a digital setting. Despite the unexpected change, our Scholars still thrived. **The McNair 2020 Summer Experience** consisted of an eight-week series of seminars and workshops that helped our students hone the necessary skills needed to become successful graduate school candidates. Below you can learn a little more about these seminars and workshops:

Academic Resilience

During these seminars our Scholars learned about the purpose of resilience and the nature of rejection in the academic environment. They were able to self-identify strategies associated with resilience in the academic environment. They also developed an academic plan implementing their self-identified strategies of resilience and dealing with rejection in the academic environment.

Personal Presentation and Communication

Led by UNTD's own, Dr. Curtis McDowell, our Scholars had the chance to practice and perfect personal presentation. This series was especially pertinent, as there was intentional focus on virtual presentation, projecting in and energizing a virtual space, and owning your communication style. Scholars were also challenged with a variety of assignments intended to aid the Scholar in articulating his/her research area.

Critical Thinking in Research

In this series of seminars our Scholars learned about critical thinking and the experimental method. They worked on refining their research topic and developing the context of their research via published literature. Focus was applied to assessing, evaluating, and developing arguments as means of justifying the research topic and study.

From Surviving to Thriving

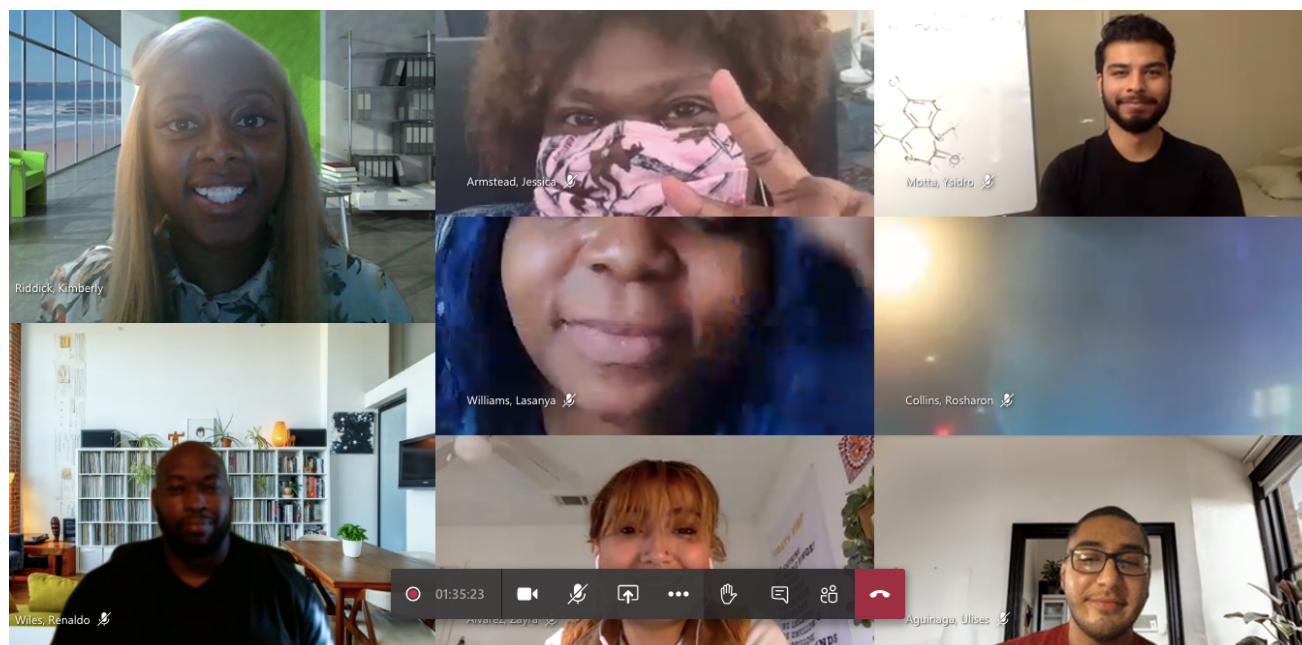
Facilitated by Ms. Jacqueline Polk, of UNTD's Career Services, this series highlighted the Scholars' passion and purpose. From Thriving to Surviving course was designed to increase students' awareness of their unique stories, their positive attributes, areas of personal and professional growth, and their confidence in their selected field of interest. This course emphasized self-reflection, goal setting, decision-making and problem solving, and communication. The series culminated in the Scholars' intentionally concise presentation of Thriving Projects.

Marketing You

Our Marketing You series did just that, it showed Scholars how to pitch themselves in the ever competitive environment that is graduate school.

Scholarly Writing Workshop

Led by our very own McNair Scholar, Nick Motta, this workshop helped students brush up on the basics of scholarly writing.



BECOME A MCNAIR SCHOLAR

SERVICES WE PROVIDE:

Academic, career, and financial aid counseling

Faculty mentorship

GRE preparation

Graduate admission requirements advising

Enriching Scholastic Experiences

Graduate fellowship / Scholarship preparation

Let us help you develop the skills you will need in order to be successful in graduate school!

We can help you work on your:

- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Confidence
- Presentation Skills
- Research Development Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Creative Problem Solving Skills

Connect with Us!

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Office:

DAL 1 Room 301NB

McNair Website

<https://aa.untdallas.edu/ronald-e-mcnair-scholars>

McNair Application

<https://unt-mcnair-pub.studentaccess.com/appform/default.aspx?guid=c075c14b-42ad-4f32-9b86-006b33b23f64>