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## **The Doctor: McNair Scholars Program newsletter, v.19 no.1**

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# “The Doctor”

## McNair Scholars Program

### Division of Campus Life and University Relations



### Notes From the Director

Congratulations and welcome to the McNair Scholars Program’s 2013 - 2014 grant year, “Opening the Door to Graduate Success.” I am excited to share this journey as you explore the graduate school process, improve your writing and test-taking skills, engage faculty to expand your knowledge base and strive for your ultimate goal of attaining a doctoral degree.

The staff and I want to encourage you to take full advantage of this opportunity as you participate in the McNair Scholars Program. It is our intention to challenge, push and guide you on this great journey. We have confidence that you are more than capable of being successful, and we are here to support you through it all.

It is important that you set goals for yourself along this journey and periodically revisit them to make sure you stay on track. The McNair Scholars Program is merely a stepping stone to help you get to where you want to be. Please let us know if there is something additional that you need along this journey to help move you closer to your destination, the doctoral degree (PhD/EdD).

It is my pleasure to serve as your director. The staff and I are here to assist you in any way that we can. I only have one request from you: put your best foot forward and do all that you can, and we will meet you where you are to assist you in getting where you want to be.

We also want to take this time to wish Ms. Shukura Bakari-Cozart the best of luck, after 10 years of service with McNair, in her new position as the director for the Veterans Upward Bound Program on the WSU campus. As a McNair Alum, we are expecting great things from her. She will be missed.

*LaWanda Holt-Fields, Director*

### 2013 - 2014 Scholars

The McNair Scholars Program is off to an excellent start for the 2013 - 2014 academic year, with students participating in activities to become familiar with the graduate school process and scholarly research. The McNair staff welcomes the following scholars:

McNair Scholars Program



\* indicates returning students

- |                    |                       |
|--------------------|-----------------------|
| Encarnacion Agosto | Wesley Alexis         |
| Kimberly Beltran*  | Brandon Brooks*       |
| Danielle Bryant    | Francesca Chavira     |
| Robriana Cole*     | Sharon Cox*           |
| Kristina Durham*   | Cree Enna*            |
| Jamie Farrelly*    | Joy Foster*           |
| Olivia Graves*     | Tuyet Ha*             |
| Lydia Ibarra       | Khoi Lam              |
| Roger Moss         | Rosa Palacio          |
| Joshua Palacios*   | Zachary Pearson*      |
| Janelle Petrisor   | Arlene Vicky Raymundo |
| Enrique Rodriguez  | Stan Siaz Jr.         |
| Joseph Shepard*    | Rachel Smith*         |
| Ann Weatherman     | Joshua Wills          |



## Grammatically Speaking Writing a Literature Review

McNair Scholars involved in the research component should know that January 31, 2014 marks the due date for the literature review. Here are some suggestions to follow when writing a literature review.

### How Can I Write a Good Literature Review?

Remember the Purpose: You are not writing a literature review just to tell your reader what other researchers have done. Your aim is to show why your research should be carried out, how you chose certain methodologies or theories to work with and how your work relates to previous research.

Read with a Purpose: You should summarize the work you read, but you must decide which ideas or information you want to add to your research (*so you can emphasize them*). Be aware of which are more important and which you'll cover briefly in your review.

Write with a Purpose: Your aim should be to evaluate and show the relationship between previous research and your current research. In order to do this effectively, you should carefully plan how you will organize your work. *Using The Notebook Method*, the hand-outs provided to you, is an excellent way to stay organized.

### Some Traps to Avoid

Trying to Read Everything: If you try to be comprehensive you will never be able to finish the reading! The purpose of the literature review is not to provide a summary of all the published work that relates to your research, but a survey of the most relevant and significant work.

Reading but not Writing: Do not put writing off until you have "finished" reading. Writing can help you understand and find relationships between the works you have read.

Not Keeping Bibliographic Information: The moment will come when you have to write your reference page. . . and then you realize you have forgotten the information you needed; you failed to put the references in your work. The only solution is to spend a lot of time in the library relocating those sources. To avoid this nightmare, always keep this information in your notes and also place the references in your writing.

Source: AIT: Asian Institute of Technology. Literature Review. <http://www.ait.ac.th/education/LanguageCenter/ait-writing-services/guide-book/using-the-literature.html>. This article is taken from *The Doctor*, Volume 18, October - November 2012.

## Planning for Graduate School

As the fall semester begins, seniors should begin to think about their plans for graduate school.

Consider the following as you start to plan:

- Names of Schools
- Geographic Locations
- Academic Programs Offered
- Size of the Programs
- Assistantships/Fellowships
- Annual Costs
- Admission Fees and Deadlines
- Housing Costs
- GRE Scores
- Application Deadlines

The Graduate School Selection Worksheet and the Admissions Timeline and Checklist located in Blackboard in the *Forms Section* and *McNair Student Handbook*, respectively, can help scholars keep the above information organized as they begin to search for graduate programs and meet with the Program staff to discuss graduate school plans.

*"Success means having the courage, the determination, and the will to become the person you believe you were meant to be."*

George Sheehan

## Advice Corner

McNair alums impart their knowledge and experiences post McNair Scholars Program participation.

*"Although the Program may seem rigorous and time consuming, the benefits in the end are far greater than you would imagine! Buckle down and complete your research and put forth a good amount of effort. The Program stays true to its mission and you will be more than prepared to enter and successfully complete graduate school! The Program significantly changed the educational and career courses of my life and [I] will be forever grateful to the Program and staff of the Ronald E. McNair Program."*

~Brandi Newry 2003 - 04  
School Psychologist

*"You get out what you put in."*

~Kia Porter-Hastings 2010 - 13  
WSU Graduate Student

## The Benefits of Undergraduate Research

As students consider participating in McNair research, they should think about the benefits they will receive educationally, professionally and personally. According to the Council of Undergraduate Research at Oregon State University, undergraduate research:

- Engages and empowers students in hands-on learning
- Enhances the student learning experience through mentoring relationships with faculty
- Increases retention in the STEM disciplines and other fields
- Provides effective career preparation and promotes interest in graduate education
- Develops critical thinking, creativity, problem solving, self confidence, and intellectual independence
- Promotes an innovation-oriented culture

### Educational benefits include:

- Working closely with a faculty mentor
- Learning about issues, methods, and leaders in students' chosen fields
- Applying concepts learned in coursework to "real life" situations
- Sharpening problem-solving skills
- Learning to read primary literature

### Professional benefits include:

- Exploring and preparing for future careers
- Developing marketable skills
- Enhancing professional communication skills
- Collaborating with others and working effectively as part of a team

### Personal benefits include:

- Growing as a critical, analytical, and independent thinker
- Meeting challenges and demonstrating the ability to complete a project
- Discovering personal interests
- Developing internal standards of excellence

Many research opportunities exist for students to become involved with, and therefore many potential benefits.

## Events to Come

- 4 **Grad Prep & Seminar** (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**LaWanda Holt-Fields**, Director  
*"Graduate School Terminology Bingo"*
- Research Assembly Meeting** (3 - 4 p.m.)  
Ablah Library, Room 217  
**Angela Paul**, Reference Librarian  
*"Library Research Database Tour"*
- 12 **McWrite** (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**Noah Trammell**, Writing Tutor  
*"Intro to Writing Styles"*
- 14 - 15 Fall Break - Enjoy!
- 25 **Grad Seminar** (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**Michael Birzer, Ph.D**, Community Affairs  
*"Social Skills and Professionalism"*
- 26 **Faculty-led Seminar** (10 a.m. - Noon)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**Mike Heppler**, Education Consultant  
*"Personal Statement Writing"*

OCTOBER

- .....
- 1 **McWrite** (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Devlin Hall, Rm. 106  
**Noah Trammell**, Writing Tutor  
*"The Literature Review Process"*
- Research Assembly Meeting** (3 - 4 p.m.),  
Ablah Library, Room 217  
**Janet Brown**, Education Librarian  
*"End Note Training"*
- 9 **Faculty-led Seminar** (10 a.m. - Noon)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**Denise Canoles**, Sociology  
*"Graduate School Application/ Admissions Process"*
- 13 McNair Cultural Feast (11 a.m. - 1 p.m.)
- 15 **Grad Seminar** (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Ablah Library Lobby  
**Janet Brown**, Education Librarian  
*"Searching for Graduate School Funding"*
- 22 Closing the Semester (2 - 3 p.m.)  
Devlin Hall, Room 106  
**LaWanda Holt-Fields**, Director
- 27 - 1 Thanksgiving Recess - Enjoy!

NOVEMBER

## Someone Like Me?



### Vicente Llamas, Ph.D. - Physics, Math/Science Education Consulting

**D**r. Vicente Llamas was born and raised in Boyle Heights, a barrio in East Los Angeles. His Mexican-born parents had very little schooling, but instilled in him and his two sisters the importance of education. Llamas attended Catholic schools throughout elementary, secondary, and university education. In high school, he did very well in the sciences and mathematics. However, he did not do well in high school physics, which was surprising to him because he loved building things and always thought he would become an electrician or some other kind of mechanical technician. Llamas' love of building started when he was a kid. He was always fixing things like radios and television sets and even built his own stereo with the help of his father.

Llamas' high school teachers recommended that he take the "college track" courses rather than taking the strictly technical courses he planned to take in order to become an electrician. He had no idea he was capable or even eligible to go to college, but was accepted to *Loyola Marymount University* in Los Angeles. Llamas was excited and scared at the same time, since his family had to come up with the high cost of college. At that time, they did not know there were federal aid and loan programs to help offset the costs of higher education, so Llamas, along with his mother and father, worked constantly for four years. By the time Llamas graduated from Loyola, his education had been completely paid for.

Llamas entered college still interested in being an electrician, so he majored in electrical engineering, not realizing that the two fields are vastly different from one another. One of the required courses in electrical engineering was engineering physics taught by a professor **Father Cooney**, who became a mentor to Llamas. Cooney was absolutely fan-tastic—he always challenged students to do better and did it in a tough yet caring way. Llamas loved the excitement of physics so much that he decided at the end of his first year to pursue it as his major. Everyone thought Llamas was crazy, given that he had not done so well in his high school physics class. Llamas was not a stellar student, but he earned a physics degree in four years and received a full scholarship to attend graduate school at the *University of Missouri*.

Llamas' experience in Missouri was a hard one. Not only did it require an adjustment to go from an urban environment like Los Angeles to a rural one, but the Midwestern culture was so different. There was virtually no ethnic diversity. Llamas had never felt like a minority before because, living in East L.A., "We were the majority!" Except for another Hispanic student with the surname Romero, all Llamas' classmates were white, and there were very few women. Llamas had good friends, but the small community of Rolla is where he had the difficulty. The townspeople did not respond to him very comfortably. Llamas thinks it had as much to do with their ignorance of who he was as with their lack of experience with people from different backgrounds. However, he decided to get involved in the community and his last two years were much easier as the townspeople appreciated his efforts.

Llamas applied to 268 colleges for a teaching position after receiving his Ph.D. He landed a job at *New Mexico Highlands University* in Northern New Mexico and was there for 24 years before retiring in 1994. In addition to his teaching responsibilities, Llamas began to get involved in developing organizations that helped increase minorities in the science fields, both academic and professional. That is how the *Society for Advancement of Chicanos and Native Americans in Science (SACNAS)* began—a group of Hispanic and Native American scientists in the early 70s who shared the similar experience of discrimination and isolation in the sciences.

It was a natural progression for Llamas to continue his minority advocacy work after he retired. Currently, he spends a great deal of time working on programs to improve mathematics and science education in southwestern Native American and rural Hispanic communities. "Although I no longer teach, I do have the satisfaction of knowing that I've come a long way from building radios to helping build future communities of minority scientists throughout the country!"

# GRAD-CONNECT

## Graduate School: What it Takes to Get the Ph.D.?

Dr. Ronald T. Azuma shared his journey to the doctorate. He came up with a few survival tips and guidelines he wished he had known before he started his graduate degree. According to Azuma, these are skills needed to successfully obtain the doctorate.

*“Being a graduate student is like becoming all of the Seven Dwarves. In the beginning you’re Dopey and Bashful. In the middle, you’re usually sick (Sneezy), tired (Sleepy), and irritable (Grumpy). But at the end, they call you Doc, and then you’re Happy.”*



### **Know Why You Want the Ph.D.**

Whatever the reason may be, make sure that you believe in it passionately. If you do not have an answer, then save yourself a lot of grief and do not get the Ph.D.

### **Academia is a Business** (*graduate student is a job title*)

Understand that academia is a peculiar kind of business and the role you play in this enterprise. If you do your job well, have good negotiation and interpersonal skills, both your needs and your professors’ needs will be met. Do not enter a GTA/RA position thinking that the computers, research equipment, staff members and other resources that you are provided with are your birthright. Do not take [anything] for granted. In turn, you must fulfill your end of the deal by doing great research with those resources. If you don’t do your job well, don’t be surprised if your professors choose not to fund you in the future. The student who has no funding, no tuition reimbursement and no access to required resources is the student who leaves the university that semester.

### **Initiative:**

The dissertation represents a focused, personal research effort where you take the lead on your own unique project. If you expect the advisor to hold your hand and tell you what to do every step of the way, you are missing the point of the dissertation. Ph.D. students must show initiative to successfully complete the dissertation. You will receive guidance at a high level but not at a micromanaging level. If you never do any tasks except those your professor tells you, then you need to work on initiative.

### **Tenacity:**

Tenacity means sticking with things even when you get depressed or when things are not going well. Part of the Ph.D. is building a “thick skin” so you are not so fragile that you give up at the first sign of difficulties.

### **Interpersonal Skills:**

Your success in graduate school and beyond depends a great deal upon your ability to build and maintain interpersonal relationships with your advisor, committee, research and support staff and fellow students—you need these people to get your research done.

### **Organizational Skills:**

As a Ph.D. student, a lot will be asked of you on top of completing your dissertation (*attend conferences and meetings, meet and greet visitors and get projects done on time.*) Time management and organization are a must. “Failing to plan is planning to fail.”

### **Balance and Perspective:**

Earning a Ph.D. is like running a marathon. You have to learn to pace yourself and take care of your body if you want to reach the finish line. Unfortunately, students often act like sprinters. They are highly productive for awhile, but then they fall by the wayside because they are not eating correctly, exercising and taking time to recharge their batteries. Take time to recharge yourself. Keeping your health and sanity intact are vital to achieving your primary goal of getting finished and graduating.

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Noah Trammell, Writing Tutor

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TRIO is a set of federally funded college-opportunity programs that motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds in their pursuit of a college degree. Low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities — from sixth grade through college graduation — are served nationally. TRIO programs provide academic tutoring, personal counseling, mentoring, financial guidance, and other supports necessary for educational access and retention. TRIO programs provide direct support services for students and relevant training for directors and staff.



**At a Glance:**

Upward Bound (1964), Talent Search (1965), Student Support Services (1968), Educational Opportunity Centers (1972), Veterans Upward Bound (1972), Training Programs (1976), McNair Scholars Program (1986) and Upward Bound Math/Science (1990)

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4. This prohibition against retaliatory conduct applies regardless of the merits of the initial complaint of illegal discrimination.

The Vice President and General Counsel and the Office of Human Resources shall have primary responsibility for publication, dissemination and implementation of this University policy.

**Ronald E. McNair** received numerous honors, including North Carolina A&T's Presidential Scholar, Ford Foundation's Fellow, National Fellowship's Fund Fellow, NATO's Fellow, Omega Psi Phi's Scholar of the Year, AAU's Karate Gold Medalist, and National Society of Black Professional Engineers Distinguished National Scientist Award.

**McNair Facts  
Did You Know?**

