

The McNair Scholars Newsletter

A Word from the Director, Kathleen Greene, Ph.D.

I am pleased to report that the K-State McNair Scholars Program has recently been awarded continued funding through September, 2012. This award increases the number of McNair Scholars served to 28 from the current 20. The McNair staff is grateful for the opportunity, for the next several years, to continue assisting academically talented K-State students to prepare for graduate education leading to doctoral degrees. We are also looking forward to the chance to continue working with the K-State administration, faculty mentors, and staff who have been invaluable to the continued success of the McNair Scholars Program.

Thanks to the support and help of many – including the McNair alumni who participated in the McNair Scholar Program Survey – I was able to complete my dissertation, "Alumni Perceptions of the McNair Scholars Program at Kansas Universities." The alumni who participated in the study were McNair scholars who graduated between 1996 and 2004 from one of the three Kansas institutions with a McNair Program: Kansas State University, the University of Kansas, and Wichita State University. The study investigated the strengths and weaknesses of the program as perceived by alumni. Overall, alumni from the three institutions recorded positive perceptions to the "McNair Scholar Program Survey". Responses to the survey provided valuable information for enhancing the effectiveness of the program. The full text of my dissertation is available at the following website: <<http://krex.ksu.edu>>.

On behalf of the McNair Scholar Program staff, I wish you all a very successful year. "A key to happiness is having dreams. The key to success is making your dreams come true" (Anonymous).

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Graduations...

Fall, 2006 – Bachelor's degrees

Brandy (Gaitan) Sutherland
Felicita Garza-Basaldu

Fall, 2006 – Master's degrees

Derek Schoenthaler (Sports Administration - Wichita State)

Spring, 2007 – Bachelor's degrees

Matt Anderson
Erica (Hutfless) Cain
Stacy (Johnson) Duis
Megan Mascorro-Jackson
Tracy Mitchell

Spring, 2007 – Master's degrees

Sarah Burdick Olson (Social Work - Kansas U.)
LaFayette Childs II (Architecture - U. of Houston)
Savannah Downey Charleston (Psychology - Missouri State)
John Jasso (Speech/Rhetoric - Kansas State)
Anthony Johnson (Higher Education and Administration - Syracuse U.)
Randy Regier (Fine Arts / Sculpture - Maine College of Art)
J.C. Rivers (Heritage Resources - N.E. Louisiana State)
Sonia Rosales (Sociology - U. of Oklahoma)

Spring, 2007 – Ph.D.

April West (Industrial and Organizational Psychology - Alliant U.)



Featured Alum ... April West, Ph.D., graduated from K-State in May of 2001 with a bachelor's degree in psychology and gerontology. As a McNair Scholar, she researched the characteristics of successful department heads, under the supervision of mentors Jerome Frieman, Ph.D. and Philip Trocchia, Ph.D. In the spring of 2007, she was awarded the Ph.D. in industrial and organizational psychology from Alliant International University in San Diego, CA. Her major professor was Dr. John Kantor.



April's doctoral dissertation explored the impact of commitment to supervisor on organizational justice, citizenship behaviors, and intentions to leave, and revealed a direct correlation between commitment to supervisor and the outcome variables. A statistically significant moderation effect was found for commitment to supervisor when looking at the relationship between organizational justice and citizenship behaviors. The more committed an employee is to their supervisor, the more citizenship behaviors they are likely to perform regardless of perceived organizational justice.

Since finishing her doctorate, Dr. West has relocated to Las Vegas, NV. She started with MGM Grand University as a Leadership Development Specialist and has since been promoted to the Assistant Training Manager for The Mirage. In her current position, she is responsible for the overall strategic training plan for all supervisors. This plan includes the development and instructional design of management development courses; managing and implementing large scale learning programs, including state, federal, and industry compliance courses; diversity education; educational assistance; annual leadership development plans and the strategic training vision used to drive organizational culture.

Advice for McNair Scholars from Dr. West

The McNair Scholars Program provided me with the skills, experiences and support I needed to believe that obtaining my Ph.D. wasn't just a pipe dream, but a goal that I was absolutely capable of and prepared to pursue AND accomplish. The program design, as well as the committed and supportive staff, helped me lay the foundation for pursuing my graduate education. One of the things I am the most grateful for is that the staff; Lora, Kathy, Jon, and Jeanne have not failed to be there for me over the last six years for whatever I needed; they have provided an amazing support system for me.

Advice for graduate school: DO YOUR RESEARCH! Talk to current students and alumni of the program, ask the questions they don't answer in the fliers...for example "what do you like best and least about being a student here?"

BE CAREFUL with student loans, I know it is EASY to get grad school loans and it feels like you HAVE to have the money, but be smart: paying those loans back is more than a little overwhelming and is one of the scariest things to get a handle on after graduation. If you are considering a professional school—like I did—consider completing your Masters at a state school first; they usually have more competitive standards for being accepted but the payoff is lower tuition with better opportunities for scholarships and teaching stipends which helps offset the accumulation of student loans. Ultimately, pick the school that is "right" for you and the career that you are striving for.

Final word of advice: always try to remember that some days, classes, semesters are harder than others and that this is a long, bumpy path to a goal that most people never achieve! It's not meant to be easy, so dig deep in the times you feel overwhelmed, call on your support system and keep on going! Your own fear is the only thing that can stop you from achieving your dream!

Conferences ...

- **Marisela Gutierrez** attended the Midwestern Psychological Association conference in Chicago, May 2-5, 2007.
- **Daniel Kirksey** presented his McNair research at the 13th Annual SAEOPP/UTK McNair National Scholars Research Conference in Knoxville, TN, June 28-July 1, 2007.
- **Katie Clowers, Elise Gaines, Ben Gurtler, and Daniel Kirksey** presented at the California McNair Symposium at UC-Berkeley, August 9 - 12, 2007. In addition to the conference they made campus visits to Stanford University and UC-Berkeley, and toured San Francisco.
- Eight K-State McNair Scholars presented their research at the 11th Annual MKN Heartland McNair Conference in Kansas City, MO, September 21-23: **Katie Clowers, Kyrie Graves, Ben Gurtler, Marisela Gutierrez, Daniel Kirksey, Clinton Medovich, Sarah Trabert, and Ashley Wheeler.** They visited with graduate school representatives and heard a number of speakers, including a panel on the first year of graduate school that included alum **Erica (Hutfless) Cain**, Ph.D. student in biology at K-State, as well as **Henry Jackson**, a Wichita State McNair alum who is a Ph.D. candidate in sociology at K-State. Before the conference, students had the opportunity to visit the new Bloch Building at the Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art in Kansas City.
- **Sarah Trabert** presented her research at the 65th Annual Meeting of the Plains Anthropological Society in Rapid City, SD, October 11-13, 2007 and was selected as winner of the undergraduate student paper competition. K-State McNair Scholars enjoy time together at the banquet.

Who's Doing What...

John Jasso has now begun the Ph.D. program in rhetoric and communications at the University of Pittsburgh after having completed his master's degree in speech and rhetoric from K-State this spring. He received a full fellowship for his doctoral studies partly funded by money earmarked for McNair Scholars entering graduate school.

Carlos Urquilla-Diaz, J.D., M.P.A., is now a Ph.D. student in educational administration at the University of Tennessee.

Stacy (Johnson) Duis is taking additional undergraduate courses at K-State in preparation for the entrance to a doctorate of pharmacology program. With the Pharm.D. degree, she plans to go on to a Ph.D. in biology.

Meredith (Martin) Schlabach is currently a Ph.D. student and graduate assistant in mechanical engineering at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas. She plans a research emphasis in thermal/fluid sciences and renewable energy. Her application for an National Science Foundation graduate fellowship received an honorable mention.

Megan Mascorro-Jackson is moving to the New York City area with her husband Nathan, an award-winning playwright who has accepted a fellowship at Juilliard. Megan will be caring for the couple's new daughter and looking for social work jobs in preparation for an MSW degree.

William (Matt) Anderson is currently in the northwest African nation of Mauritania, serving for 4 months as a mission worker with Mercy and Truth Medical Missions.

Sammy Ornelas presented his paper, "Educate Your Dreams", at the Target on Excellence Colloquium last February as part of the Developing Scholars Program, and on that basis, was chosen to attend the National Conference on Race and Ethnicity in Higher Education in San Francisco, CA, May 28 - June 2, 2007.

Elise Gaines won the Developing Scholars Program's Exemplary Scholar award for her representation of program ideals. She was also recently awarded the English department's Kenneth and Martha Chappell award for being an outstanding student of English.

Tara Hacker has completed her master's degree in public health from the University of North Carolina and accepted a job as Manager of Policy & Research Communications for the Kansas Health Policy Authority. Before moving back to Kansas she spent 6 weeks traveling in Peru. After gaining some experience in the field and working on her Spanish language skills, she is planning to start work on her Ph.D.

Beth Larrabee attended StatFest, April 27, at Eli Lilly in Indianapolis, IN. StatFest is a one-day conference aimed at encouraging students from under-represented groups to consider careers and graduate studies in the statistical sciences. The conference is an ongoing initiative of the American Statistical Association.

Sompathana Phitsanoukanh, Ph.D. student in American Studies at Washington State, presented at the Pacific Northwest American Studies Association Conference in April at Portland State University. In December of 2007, she will read her paper, "In the Age of Cultural Production: A Closer Reading of Laos through Christopher Kremmer's Bamboo Palace", at the "Moving Cultures, Shifting Identities Conference" at Flinders University in Adelaide, Australia. After the conference, she plans to meet with members of Lao communities in Australia in preparation for dissertation research.

J.C. Rivers received a Master of Arts degree in Heritage Resources from Northwestern State University of Louisiana in May of 2007. His thesis was entitled "Enhancing Visitor's Experience at Melrose Plantation: A Cultural Landscape Interpretative Model."

Ashley Wheeler participated in the REU (Research Experiences for Undergraduates) Program this summer at Penn State University and presented research at the Penn State National McNair Conference (August 3-5, 2007), where she got to meet Dr. Guion S. Bluford, Jr., an astrophysicist who was in the NASA astronaut program with Ronald McNair. She also presented at the Young Mathematicians Conference at Ohio State University. This fall she is participating in MASS (Mathematics Accelerated Seminar Semester) at Penn State.

Lancelot Watson has been accepted into the Master of Theological Studies program at Boston University. He calls it "a standard theology program with an overdose of philosophy in ethics and philosophy of mind."

Hollie Davis has begun coursework toward a master's degree in biomedical sciences, with an emphasis in pathology, through the School of Veterinary Medicine at K-State. Her education is supported by Hill's Pet Nutrition in Topeka, where she is employed.

Aaron Wech, Ph.D. student in Earth & Space Sciences at University of Washington, writes, "Things here are going extremely well. The university/department was the perfect match for me. I love the work I'm doing, and I love it out here in Seattle." This year he submitted his first article for refereed publication and has presented at a number of conferences including one in France. His research made it possible for him to spend this summer in Japan, doing similar work as part of an NSF research program.

Chris Lavergne has begun work on his Ph.D. in rural sociology from K-State. He is also now teaching in the College of Agriculture's Department of Communications. He holds a master's degree in agricultural communications from Texas A&M.

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K-State Campus Leadership ...

Kyrie Graves - Human Ecology Council Member

Ben Gurtler - President, AICHE

Marisela Gutierrez - President, Psy Chi

Daniel Kirksey - Vice-President, Philosophy Club

Clinton Medovich - IM Chair, Hall Governing Board

Ashley Wheeler - Treasurer, Physics Club

Who's Doing What... con't

Having finished his M.F.A. in sculpture from Maine College of Art in May of 2007, **Randy Regier** plans to remain in Portland, ME, while his children finish high school. The Beach Art Museum at K-State recently purchased his work "Toy Gantic" and put it on permanent display. The Beach commissioned another work of his for the opening of their new addition this October. As a panel member at the annual conference of the National Association of Scholarship Providers this month, Randy spoke about his experiences as a McNair Scholar and a Jack Kent Cooke Scholar. He is currently a finalist in competition for a grant from Creative Capital that would pay his living expenses for a year while he continues his creative work.