Whitney Morgan and Megan Williams were presented with a McNair honor cord at the December McNair Symposium in honor of fall 2010 graduation. Megan is in the process of applying to graduate school in Library Sciences and Art History Masters programs. Megan plans to intern at the Smithsonian Museum in Washington, D.C. during the Spring 2010 semester. Whitney Morgan will be attending the KU Urban Planning Master’s program in Spring 2011. Congratulations!

Heartland Conference Reflections

I recently attended the 14th MKN McNair Heartland Research Conference in Kansas City along with my fellow McNair Scholars: Dagoberto Heredia Jr., Tony Prosser, Lauren Zagorski. I am so grateful to be given the opportunity to attend the McNair Heartland Conference. It was a valuable experience that enhanced my presentation skills and gave me the opportunity to meet McNair Scholars from the region. I am also thrilled to have had the opportunity to hear remarkable speakers, including Dr. John Agusto and Dr. Tara Ruttley. In their talks, there were two pieces of advice that stuck with me: (1) Make a plan and (2) Don’t be discouraged by anything, just move forward. Although small pieces of guidance, these nuggets helped me complete my graduate school applications, and I know they will stay with me as I complete graduate school. Thanks McNair!

Are you a former KU McNair Scholar?

Please visit our website at: www.mcnair.ku.edu

Visit the “Degrees Earned by Former Scholars” page to ensure your information is correct and contact the McNair Scholars Program at mcnair@ku.edu or (785)864-3412 to update your information.
Neal Kingston, Associate Professor of Psychology and Research in Education, received a $22 million grant (the largest in KU history) to develop a new assessment system for special education. It is hoped that the new system will design tests to model good instruction which will give a learning map for teachers to determine the need of each student throughout the year. This model is a stark shift from annual assessments that push teachers to “teach to the test.” Neal oversees the McNair Research Methods course.

Omri Gillath, Assistant Professor of Clinical Social Psychology, along with former mentor Ruth Ann Atchley has been awarded a $150,000 two-year grant from the University of Notre Dame Science of Generosity initiative to explore behavioral, cognitive, and neural factors of generosity.

Gene Cody, current Scholar, received The Department of Energy/National Society of Hispanic Physicists Award for outstanding undergraduate Research Presentation, SACNAS National Conference in September, 2010.

April Adkins Ph.D., former Scholar has accepted a position as Clinical Psychologist at Prairie View Inc. in Newton, KS.

Christian Vargas (Marzette) Ph.D., former Scholar has accepted a staff Psychologist position at Southern Illinois University Counseling Center.

McNair Scholar Finalist in a National Biochemistry Competition

Current Scholar Tony Prosser was one of 10 students nationwide finalists for the UT Southwestern Department of Biochemistry annual contest for undergraduate researchers from across the country. Tony was awarded $500 and he traveled to UT Southwestern to present his research project in November, 2010. Great job, Tony!

McNair Mentor Accolades

Diana Restrepo, current Scholar, received The Department of Energy/National Society of Hispanic Physicists Award for outstanding undergraduate Research Presentation, SACNAS National Conference. Diana also received the State of Kansas Governor’s Award for Outstanding Undergraduate Poster, at the 27th Annual Water and the Future of Kansas Conference.

Omri Gillath, Assistant Professor of Clinical Social Psychology, along with former mentor Ruth Ann Atchley has been awarded a $150,000 two-year grant from the University of Notre Dame Science of Generosity initiative to explore behavioral, cognitive, and neural factors of generosity.
National McNair Conference Reflection

I recently attended the 19th annual National McNair Conference in Delavan, Wisconsin along with my fellow McNair Scholars: Ashley Cotton, Emily Madrueno, Kim Moore. McNair offers a support system in college that as first generation college students we often lack. Talking about undergraduate studies has been complicated and starting in graduate studies has left many family members completely overwhelmed and isolated. Without a support system like McNair, I myself would likely become too overwhelmed to consider putting myself through another round of schooling. Conferences like the one in Milwaukee really helped boost my desire to apply to graduate school and push through this remaining time I have left at KU. Everyone seems to go through a senior year crisis; burnt out and overwhelmed by the future. I myself have been battling a terrible case of senior year burn out, but have been able to avoid feeling overwhelmed by the future because of McNair. At the conference in Milwaukee we heard many inspirational stories from both key notes speakers and fellow scholars. These stories both tugged at my heart strings and motivated me to do the things I often feel incapable of doing. Many of the scholar stories we heard over the weekend really emphasized how privileged I have been in life and how much each and every one of us has to offer. There were sessions on the graduate application process that reaffirmed that applying for graduate school is manageable.

McNair Staff: Farewell and Welcome

The University of Kansas McNair Scholars Program bids farewell to Dr. Robert Rodriguez and Allyson Flaster and welcomes new staff Mulu Negash. Dr. Rodriguez, who served in various roles for over 12 years, has accepted a tenure track position at The University of Texas–Commerce as a Political Science professor. The McNair Scholars program is grateful for his valuable contributions over the years to the program/students and he will be missed by colleagues and Scholars. Dr. Rodriguez continues to be connected to the McNair family, by serving as a McNair faculty mentor at his current University.

Allyson Flaster who served as the Academic Services Coordinator for over 5 years, is working on her Ph.D. in Higher Education at The University of Michigan. Allyson’s calm, informative and supportive demeanor and her commitment towards student’s academic success is missed by Scholars and fellow colleagues. Allyson continues her connection to McNair Scholars program with her research initiative for access of higher education for low-income and first generation college students.

Mulu Negash, a former McNair Scholar serves as the current Academic Services Coordinator. Mulu has a background in counseling psychology in advising middle/high school students as well as mental health counseling for the uninsured in the Greater Kansas City area. As a former McNair Scholar, Mulu knows first hand some of the challenges McNair Scholars face as undergraduate and graduate student. She believes in the power of taking initiative, persistent hard work and a positive attitude to be successful in academia and in the professional world. Mulu Negash can be reached at leyesus1@ku.edu or 785-864-9626.
Joshua Anderson is currently in the process of applying for graduate schools, but it was not an easy path for him to get to this point in his life. Following his graduation in 1997 from Perry-Lecompton High School, he felt he was not ready for college. Over the years, Josh worked at everything from driving a lumber truck to carpentry. Although he took courses over the years from various institutions, he did not return to college as a more serious student until he came to KU in 2007.

Josh has always displayed an interest in writing and through his participation in two Summer Research Internships he had the opportunity to better develop his academic interests. His fascination with Arabic language poetry, especially the poetry of Mahmoud Darwish, lead to his first SRI topic and will be a major topic of research for him in graduate school. This interest also led him to develop his second SRI research topic concerning Peace and Conflict Theory and Philosophy through which he feels “reflects his growth as a scholar.”

Josh is a busy person, juggling his scholarly pursuits and his various jobs while still staying active in the lives of his two children. He is also often known for sharing his wisdom and advice with other scholars and he has played an important role in our program over the years. Josh will graduate with a degree in English in May 2011 and shared that the McNair Scholars program was “instrumental in getting to this point” and that it was “crucial” and “indispensable” to his college successes.