

## MCNAIR SCHOLAR DELIVERS COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

At the December 15th, 2013 graduation ceremony, McNair Scholar **Sean Dotson (11)** delivered the commencement speech to NEIU graduates, family members, faculty and staff. Sean, who that day received his bachelors degree in English, described his humble beginnings as a young man trapped in a myriad of dead-end jobs, forced to utilize his gifts of voice and creativity to amuse himself and pass the time by writing gas station "out of order" signs in haiku and reading Walt Whitman passages to his pizza delivery customers.

Those gifts would lead him down a path to the English Department at NEIU, where he found a community of peers he now considers "family." Sean spoke of the impact that had on him, including the staff and mentors of the McNair Scholars Program, who he described as "remarkable and invaluable."

Sean was recently accepted to the Ph.D. program in English at the University of Chicago.



*Sean delivering commencement speech last December*

## LOUIS STOKES ALLIANCE FOR MINORITY PARTICIPATION



*Patricia Jaimes and Yesenia Hererra*

On February 15th, 2014 at the LS-AMP Spring Symposium in Tinely Park, Illinois, **Yesenia Herrera (11)** and **Patricia Jaimes (11)** delivered presentations to over 300 undergraduate and graduate students on behalf of the McNair Scholars Program. Yesenia presented her research *Isotopic and Chemical Variability of CaCO<sub>3</sub> Microfacies in Early to Middle Triassic Limestones* while her fellow classmate, Patricia, presented *The Effects of Urbanization on the Geomorphology, Habitat and Hydrology in the Chicago Area*.

Funded by the National Science Foundation, LS-AMP is a support program focused on minority students who major in Biology, Chemistry, Computer Science and Math with the idea of enhances the recruitment, retention, and graduation rates of students in STEM disciplines. LS-AMP concluded that evening with a closing award ceremony honoring outstanding examples in STEM disciplines.

## MCNAIR PRESENTATIONS AT OSU

On February 19th, 2014, the OSU Research Symposium and Scholar Conference, held at Oklahoma State University, hosted scholars **Patricia Jaimes (11)**, **Antonio Villasenor (11)**, **Ricardo Rivera (11)**, **Samuel Aguirre (11)** and **Yesenia Herrera. (11)** They presented their work to other undergraduate scholars from around the nation as well as OSU undergraduates and faculty. Those presentations contributed to the annual conference in tandem with similar student research in McNair or other scholars programs. The conference featured over 900 students from over 17 states and 40 different universities, providing a platform for the students to present their work.

The scholars also had the opportunity the do a campus tour and meet with faculty to receive first-hand info regarding the graduate school programs offered by this institution.



*Scholars McNair Director Angela Vidal at the 5th OSU Research Symposium.*

## SCHOLAR AWARDED DOCTORAL DEGREE



McNair student **Lina Sweiss (2)** has become the second scholar to receive a doctoral degree in the ten year history of the program at NEIU. Lina went to University of British Columbia and studied Human Development, Learning, and Culture. The NEIU McNair Program congratulates her and wishes the best for her professional career and future endeavors.

## SCHOLARS RECEIVES FELLOSHIPS

McNair Scholar **Elizabeth Rodriguez (5)** received the prestigious Presidential Fellowship, awarded by Northwestern Illinois University. Elizabeth was chosen for her “outstanding intellectual and creative ability to play an active part in the life of the Society of Fellows.” She also received The Woodrow Wilson Dissertation Fellowship in Women’s Studies, awarded on behalf of the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, which intends to cultivate “original and significant research about women.” This fellowship has been awarded in the past to presidents, distinguished faculty members, artists and novelists. Notably, many of those have gone on to win the Pulitzer Prize, MacArthur Fellows, and Guggenheim Fellows. Elizabeth is currently finishing her Ph.D. program in English at Northwestern University.



*Elizabeth Rodriguez*

## WHO’S WHO AWARD



*Who’s Who ceremony*

Students at institutions across the nation are nominated each fall for the Who’s Who Among Students in Higher Education Award. Honorees are selected for outstanding academic achievement and service to the university and community at large. The following members of the McNair Scholars Program were selected for the award this year:

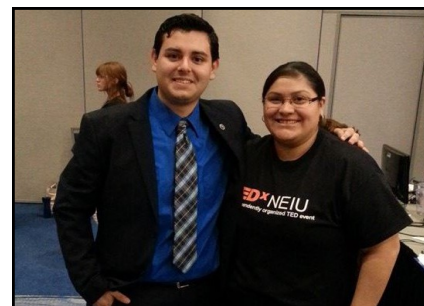
**Ebony D. Kennebrew (11)**, from Justice Studies; **Antonio Villasenor (11)**, from Anthropology; **Yesenia Herrera (11)**, from Earth Science; and **Catherine A. Anderson**, who is an invaluable member of the McNair team. Her major is Interdisciplinary Studies.

The ceremony for those students was conducted at Golden Eagles on Thursday, February 13th, 2014.

## SCHOLAR PRESENTS AT TEDx TALK

On March 7th, 2014, at Northeastern Illinois University, TEDx hosted a local conference where **Samuel Aguirre (11)** presented his research titled *Bilingualism and Multilingualism in Today’s Global Era*. “...it is time for U.S. to embrace multilingualism,” Sam said. His TEDx Talk compared the status of the U.S. to that of other nations around the world in regard to the inclusion and acceptance of linguistically diverse populations.

TED, a nonprofit devoted to spreading ideas in the form of short, powerful talks, created TEDx, in order to bring together programs which feature local, self-organized events that bring people together. These programs combine TEDTalks video and live speakers in order to spark deep discussion and connection in a group. Samuel’s talk is available online at TEDxNEIU.



*Samuel Aguirre at TEDx.*

## SCHOLAR PRESENT AT TEDx TALK



*Antonio and his mentor, Dr. Cooke.*

**Scholar Antonio Villasenor (11)** and his mentor Dr. Sibhan B. Cooke attended the 83rd annual meeting of the American Association of Physical Anthropologists this past April 8<sup>th</sup> in Calgary, Alberta Canada.

Antonio presented his research “Palate shape and diet in Homo sapiens” which hypothesized that there are differences between the palate shapes of non-agricultural human populations who subsist on coarser foods, and that hunter-gathers have palates that are wider and shallower than agricultural populations as a result of greater masticatory forces placed on the palate both during growth and development, and throughout the lifetime of the individual. Antonio has been praised by evaluators and peers for his work and hopes to further explore this topic.

## GRADUATE SCHOOL



*Scholars go to Loyola Campus*

On December 13th, 2013, Loyola University Chicago Loyola Health Sciences Division welcomed SCSE Students **Emily Rendleman, Robert Fidis, Giovanni Montetto and Kevin Gallagher** in a graduate school visit organized by scholar **James Hopkins**. After learning about biomedical sciences graduate programs from **Dr. Leanne Cribbs**, Director of Graduate Programs, NEIU students visited professors at the Neuroscience, Microbiology & Immunology and Biochemistry departments. Further, following a tour of the campus, the students had lunch with **Dr. Richard H. Kennedy**, Associate Dean of the health sciences Graduate School, and **Michael Misale** and **Andy Kilianski** both graduate students who shared their experiences at Loyola. To end the visit, the students attended the Microbiology & Immunology department "Friday Meeting" a research critique session in which students present their lab projects, and receive feedback from their peers and professors. **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** accompanied the NEIU students on this visit.

### INTERESTED IN GRADUATE SCHOOL?

#### *The McNair Scholars Program could be for you!*

- 60 undergrad hours complete?
- US citizenship or residency?
- 2.8 GPA or better?
- First generation grad student?
- College student with income eligibility and/or a member of a group underrepresented in graduate education?

**Contact Us!**  
**Building B, Office 141.**  
**(773) 442-4253**

## COHORT 12 STARTS

Last name	Name	Major	Mentor
Sanchez	Alejandro	Math	Sarah Cordell
Castillo	Christopher	Ed/English	Ryan Poll
Castro	Christopher	Math	Anuj Mubayi
Earls	Charla	Computer Science	Graciela Perera
Guillen	Jessica	Social Work	Francisco Gaytan
Gonzalez	Juan	Sociology	Alfred Frankowski
Frencha	Manuel	Inner City Studies	Robert Starcks
Roman	Natalie	Philosophy	Alfred Frankowski
Saucedo	Mayra	Psychology	Linda Rueckert
Hueramo	Luz	Social Work	Jade Stanley
Garcia	Rocio	Latino and Latin-American studies	Angela Vidal-Rodriguez
Prayther	Universal	Health and Wellness	Jennifer Banas
Taveras	Yesenia	Anthropology	Siobhan Cooke
Roman	Zitlalli*	Social Work	Angela Vidal-Rodriguez
Ortega	Franklin	Justice Studies	Angela Vidal-Rodriguez
Nfundoak	Ayuk	Political Science	Sangmin Bae

## SROP WORKSHOP OSU-NEIU

On January 13th, 2014, Ohio State University Director of Graduate School Recruiting and SROP, **Cindy Freeman** delivered a workshop on the SROP application process to the new McNair Cohort. The first part of the day-long workshop included a talk about the importance of increasing faculty from underrepresented segments of society, and how the SROPs can positively impact the future of the scholars in their doctoral program applications.



*Cindy Freeman at OSU-NEIU Work-*

In the second part, **Dr. Freeman**, along with **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** and **Carlos Ospina-Munera**, helped the students to apply online to different universities and gave them feedback on their personal statements in order to help them to succeed on their applications.

In alphabetical order, these are the scholars who will attend SROPs this summer:

Name	Last name	Major	Mentor
Alejandro	Sanchez	Math	Sarah Cordell
Christopher	Castillo	Ed/English	Ryan Poll
Christopher	Castro	Math	Anuj Mubayi
Mayra	Saucedo	Psychology	Linda Rueckert
Rocio	Garcia	Latin-American Studies	Angela Vidal-Rodriguez

## Save the Date!

Scholars, their families & mentors are invited to welcome the newest cohort of Scholars and congratulate those who will graduate in May at the Annual McNair Program Dinner

**Thursday, May 1st at 6 pm at Golden Eagles.**

## TRIO NEWS

TRIO Student Support Services, the McNair Scholars Program, the College of Graduate Studies and Research, and the Graduate Admission and Records Office will host the first Graduate School Preparation Initiative from May 12th - May 21st, 2014 at Northeastern Illinois University. This event is for undergraduate students who wish to pursue graduate school. The initiative will guide participants through the graduate school application process, highlight graduate programs at various universities, and provide an intensive GRE Test Prep curriculum. In addition to NEIU, participating schools include Northwestern University, Loyola University, and Ohio State University.

If you are interested in going to graduate school and wish to attend this event, please send an email to [c-ospina@neiu.edu](mailto:c-ospina@neiu.edu). Seats are limited to the first 30 respondents.

**This event is funded by a NEIU Student Affairs Division Collaborative Initiative**

### MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM STAFF

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