



McNair Scholar Awarded Prestigious NSF Fellowship



McNair Scholar **Patricia Jaimes** has been selected to receive a 2016 National Science Foundation (NSF) Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GRFP) Fellowship. According to the NSF, Patricia's selection was based on her "demonstrated potential to contribute to strengthening the vitality of the US science and engineering enterprise." The stipend is \$34,000 per twelve-month fellowship year, for three years. Patricia is currently attending Michigan State University (MSU) for her Ph.D. in Geology and she works in the Geocognition Research Laboratory. **Dr. Laura Sanders** is Patricia's McNair mentor. Last Spring, **Antonio Villaseñor**, also a McNair Scholar, was awarded the same Fellowship. Congratulations!



McNair Scholars Won 1st and 2nd Best Presentations at LSAMP

McNair Scholars **Cesar Bustos** and **Mariah Green** won first and second place, respectively, for their excellent presentations during the 2016 Illinois Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation (LSAMP) annual scientific conference. Cesar won first place in the Physics Oral Presentation, presenting his project entitled "Determining Reliability of Existing Gravitational Waveforms in Parameter Estimation for Binary Black Holes." This research took place at Northwestern University as part of the Center for Interdisciplinary Exploration and Research in Astrophysics (CIERA). Cesar's project focused primarily on using a model of a binary black hole to investigate the mass ratios of the orbiting black holes. Cesar's research advisors were **Dr. Vicky Kalogera**, **Dr. Ben Farr**, and **Dr. Tyson Littenberg**.



Mariah's poster presentation titled "The Effects of Oxygen on Growth and Size in Modern Benthic Foraminifera from Santa Monica Basin" was recognized as Second Place Winner for poster presentations at the conference. Her research was produced under the guidance of **Dr. Jonathan Payne** from the Department of Geological Sciences at Stanford University. According to LSAMP, Mariah's placement was based on her ability to present and knowledge of her topic. Scholar **Da In Lee** also presented at the conference. The aim of LSAMP is to increase diversity in STEM fields. Over 100 students presented their work at this conference.

Scholars Receive Awards at National Professional Conference



Cashell Lewis, **Meztli Santamaria**, and **Citlali Arroyo** won presentation awards during the National Association for African American Studies and Associates National Conference hosted in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. This recognition was presented only to the best 20% of oral presentations out of 250 talented students presenting at the conference. Citlali presented research entitled "Wayside School is Falling Down: A Call for Culturally Relevant Teachers and Pedagogy." Her research was produced under the guidance of **Dr. Cristen Jenkins** from the Sociology Department at NEIU. Cashell presented research entitled "Do We Belong in Higher Learning Institutions? Examining the Experience of African Americans in a Diverse Midwest University." **Dr. Jade Stanley** from the Social Work department at NEIU aided Cashell in his research. Meztli's research entitled "The Role of Transnationalism in Attitudes Toward Different Varieties of Spanish" was supervised by **Dr. Gabriela Alfaraz** from the Summer Research Opportunity Program at Michigan State University.

Scholar Awarded Black Heritage Committee Scholarship



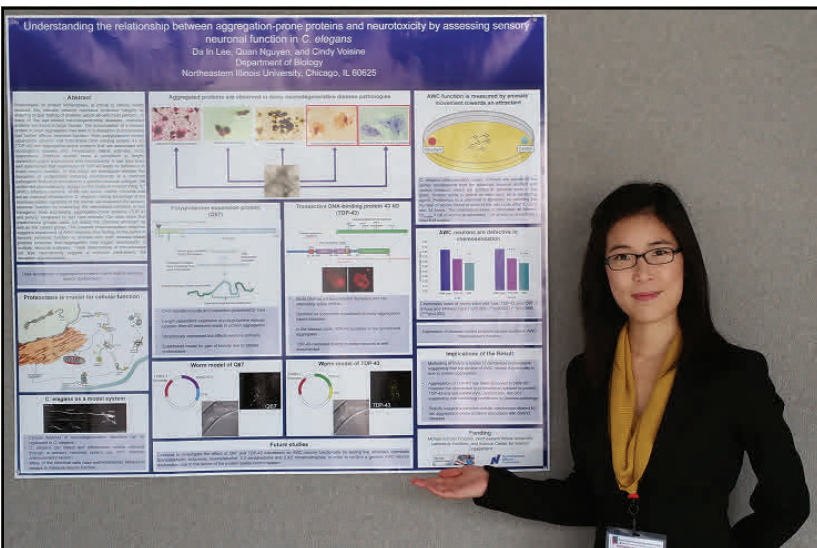
On February 19, McNair scholar **Dale Carter** was honored with the Black Heritage Committee Scholarship. This scholarship of \$900 is awarded each year to one student of African American descent who demonstrates resiliency and determination to overcome financial need and maintain good academics and community service. The award ceremony was held at NEIU's Caruthers Center for Inner City Studies. **Dr. Jin Kim** from the social work department is Dale's McNair mentor.

Scholars Present at the University of Maryland at College Park

Eleven McNair Scholars attended the National McNair Scholars Research Conference at the University of Maryland at College Park in March. **Dale Carter, Luis Allende, Johnny Jimenez, Oscar Ramirez, Juan Arango, Da In Lee, Meztli Santamaria, Daryl Lee, Wendy De Leon, Citlali Arroyo, and Mariah Green**, presented their research. An added bonus of this trip included scholars visiting historical monuments in Washington, DC. This conference allowed the students to present their research in a friendly, yet formal, academic setting as they met other scholars and explored opportunities for graduate study. The conference highlights included individual student research presentations, a graduate recruitment fair, speakers and panel discussions, a preconference workshop on financial aid for graduate school, and opportunities to interact with graduate school faculty and staff.



Students Present at other National Professional Conferences



Last November, Scholar **Wendy de Leon** presented alongside her faculty mentor **Dr. Hollis-Sawyer** at the Gerontological Society of America Annual Scientific Meeting. Their presentation, entitled "Words of Wisdom: Women Positively Aging from a Cross-Cultural Perspective," dealt with understanding the aging experience of women of diverse backgrounds and how they maintain social relationships, take care of themselves, and pursue happiness. As part of the conference, Wendy was able to meet faculty and graduate students in her field of interest for graduate study who gave her good advice for her application process. Wendy has been accepted to the Masters in Gerontology Program at the University of Miami Ohio, fully funded.

In December, **Da In Lee** (picture left) and her mentor **Dr. Cindy Voisine** presented at the American Society for Cell Biology (ASCB) Annual Meeting. They presented their research on the link between neurotoxicity and neurodegenerative disease-associated proteins such as transactive DNA-binding protein 43 kD and expanded polyglutamine proteins. Da In's research demonstrates that both proteins are involved in neurotoxicity. This is a step forward in solving the pathogenic mechanisms of neurodegenerative diseases. Recognizing the value of her research, the ASCB and the NEIU foundation awarded Da In travel funds to participate in this important conference.

Salvadoran Students and McNair Scholars Present Research at NEIU



The NEIU McNair Scholars Program, in partnership with the Office of International Programs (OIP), obtained a grant under President Obama's signature education initiative, 100,000 Strong in the Americas, which allowed 10 McNair Scholars to go to El Salvador and present their research. As part of the same grant, called InCaMPUSES, the McNair Program and the OIP office brought 10 students from El Salvador to NEIU to participate in an international research symposium to present their posters as well as to take English classes. The international participants came from four Northeastern partner universities located in El Salvador: Instituto Especializado de Nivel Superior (IENS), Instituto Tecnológica Centro Americano (ITCA), Universidad Católica de El Salvador (UNICAES), and Universidad Tecnológica de El Salvador (UTEC). The group also enjoyed various cultural and leisure activities.

December Graduates

Three scholars graduated from Northeastern this past December; **Rebecca Stack**, Social Work, mentored by **Dr. Milka Ramirez**; **Rocio Garcia**, Latin-American Studies, mentored by **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** and **Manuel Frencha**, Nontraditional degree programs, mentored by **Dr. Robert Starks**. Rebecca will attend the University of California, Berkeley for a MA in public policy. Rocio has been awarded the prestigious Lincoln Fellowship for her masters in Latin and Latino Studies at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Lastly, Manuel was awarded a graduate assistantship that allows him to pay for his MA in Inner-city Studies here at NEIU. **Congratulations to all!**

Library Mentors Program Kick Off

Every year scholars are paired with a librarian who guides them with their literature and data search for their research projects. Librarians also offer workshops to the scholars so they learn about available library resources. In February, the coordinator of the library mentors program, **Kimberly Shotick**, organized a library workshop in which the scholars met their library mentors and learned about the physical and electronic collections of the library. During March, scholars also received training on the Zotero web-based tool to help collect, organize, cite, and share research sources.

Please consider donating to the McNair Scholars Program Fund: Reference #2459 or donate online at www.neiu.edu/giving.

New Cohort Starts

Scholar	Major	Mentor
Alejandra Villegas	Biology	Dr. Emily Booms
Amna Irfan	Computer Science	Dr. Francisco Iacobelli
Anthony Smith	Biology	Dr. Cindy Voisine
Camille Cleveland	Sociology	Dr. Brett Stockdill
Cesar Bustos	Physics	Dr. Paulo Acioli
Christina Chavez	Psychology	Dr. Christopher Merchant
Demara Campbell	Psychology	Dr. Christopher Merchant
Gabriel Moses Garcia	Social Work	Dr. Francisco Gaytan
John Smith	Clinical Psychology	Dr. Amanda Dykema-Engblade
Joseph Marsili	Biology	Dr. Cindy Voisine
Karen Segura	Biology	Dr. Jennifer Slate
Karla Campos	Psychology	Dr. Linda Rueckert
Miguel Cortes	Social Work	Dr. Andrew Brake
Noah Begashaw	Social Work	Dr. Jin Kim
Patricia Morales	Sociology	Dr. Brooke Johnson
Stephon Harper	NDP	Dr. Judy Kaplan-Weinger
Victor Garcia	History	Dr. Nikolas Hoel

Scholars Accepted to Summer Research Internships around the Country

On February 2016, McNair organized a workshop for incoming scholars on how to successfully apply to summer research internships around the country. The daylong workshop was delivered by Director **Angela Vidal-Rodriguez** and Specialist **Carlos Ospina-Munera**. Scholars **Meztli Santamaria**, **Cristina Chavez** and **Johny Jimenez** also shared their experiences as former SROP participants. As a result, the following students will attend research internships outside of Northeastern this summer:

Name	Major	School
Alejandra Villegas	Biology	University of Colorado
Johnny Jimenez	Sociology	Michigan State University
Anthony Smith	Biology	Michigan State University
Da In Lee	Biology	Chicago CHEC Program
Oscar Ramirez	Sec. Edu/ History	CHCI Congressional Internship

Council for Opportunity in Education's 35th Anniversary

This year, the Council for Opportunity in Education celebrates its 35th Anniversary advocating for the educational advancement of students commonly underrepresented in education. The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) is a nonprofit organization established in 1981. COE is dedicated to furthering the expansion of college opportunities for low-income, first-generation students, veterans, and students with disabilities. Through its numerous membership services, the Council works in conjunction with colleges, universities, and agencies that host TRIO programs to specifically help low-income students enter college and graduate. Federal TRIO Programs (Talent Search, Upward Bound, Upward Bound Math/Science, Veterans' Upward Bound, Student Support Services, Educational Opportunity Centers, and the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program) help around 790,000 low-income students and students with disabilities to overcome class, social, academic, and cultural barriers to higher education. Last year, the COE celebrated victories such as a \$60 million increase in TRIO funding and the inaugural publication of *Indicators of Higher Education Equity in the U.S.*



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