It is with great pleasure that we once again highlight the accomplishments of our scholars in our annual newsletter. Our current cohort is an extraordinary group of university students doing some amazing things. But, it is not just the scholars who are contributing to the success of the program. I am privileged to work with four of the most talented people on campus. Kristina, Pam, Megan, and Gemma have unhesitatingly served our office with dedication and commitment these past few years. It has been a real pleasure to come to work everyday, in no small part to their smiles and tremendously positive attitudes. Thank you ladies.

We can report that, at least for this fiscal year, our federal funding amount returned to normal with the end of the sequester. What is more, the recently passed HR 83 increased TRiO funding by $1.5 million to $839.7 million when overall funding in the coming year for the Department of Education as a whole decreased by $166 million. Thank you Congress and President Obama.

I think this financial decision was made because our elected officials in Washington, D.C. realize something we at CWU already understand. TRiO, including the McNair Program, is enabling groups typically underrepresented in higher education to reach their academic goals, and low-income, first-generation college students to lift themselves out of poverty, and break a cycle that often plagues families for generations. And, in the end, it is their success that defines our program. Thank you scholars.

While half our cohort is just starting to identify potential graduate programs and finalize summer research plans, the other half is finishing up the requirements for their bachelor’s degrees and finalizing their graduate school plans. We require at least seven applications, but Ebony Morrow, for one, applied to 12 schools. This is possible in part because, as a McNair Scholar, application fees are waived at over 200 universities across the country. Combine this with funding for CWU transcripts and expenses related to the GRE, and students like Ebony are able to cast a very broad net to capture, not just acceptance letters to some of the best graduate programs, but often, very generous financial offers.

Currently, we are waiting in anticipation to hear back from the places where our students applied. We will also look forward to hearing from alumni who finish post-baccalaureate degrees in 2015. Another upcoming highlight will be continued collaboration with other campus programs like the Office of Undergraduate Research, the William O. Douglas Honors College, and our sister TRiO program, Student Support Services, to name just a few.

Thank you CWU.

Ian Buvit
Featured Scholar: Diane Williams, Nova Scotia Research

My summer research project was conducted on Cape Breton Island, Nova Scotia. The question addressed the roles of the Gaelic women as tradition bearers today, and how their roles in language transmission, folklore, music and other customs have changed since the 1950s. I collected data in Scottish settlements through observation of Gaelic events, visiting cultural/historical museums, researching archival holdings and conducting interviews with women of Gaelic descent. My mentor, Dr. Tracy Andrews, guided me during the process and visited Cape Breton while I was there. One old tradition that I studied was “milling.” The women take the cloth they weave, soak it in their own urine (to set the dyes and condition the fibers) and invite their neighbors to come mill it. The process of milling tightens the fibers—shrinking it so it would be softer and water proof. Depending on what the host wanted the cloth for, the milling can take longer or shorter. The women sit around a long table and with a particular sequence of movements hit the cloth on the table and pass it on—rhythmically to songs they are singing. These songs are only sung by the women at milling frolics. Today, milling frolics are for demonstration and teaching purposes only. The cloth hasn’t been woven recently and they don’t soak it in urine. It is now called a “dry milling.” But, they continue the practice to keep the songs (and the language) alive and to remember the cultural practice. Though there had been previous predictions that the Gaelic language and culture would disappear before the year 2000, my research analysis indicates that is not the case. This is due in great part to the public/active roles of women as tradition bearers in the revitalization and maintenance of the Gaelic language and culture.

23rd Annual National McNair Conference

The National McNair Conference took place Nov. 7-9 in Delevan, WI. It included a graduate/professional school fair, featuring more than 50 of the country’s top graduate schools. The conference also provided networking activities where student participants could interact with faculty and representatives in an informal, relaxed setting. Presentations were led by McNair scholars from around the country, sharing the fruits of their research projects, including our very own Estrella Cardenas and Veronica Guadarrama, presenting posters at the event and representing our McNair Scholars Program.
Estrella Cardenas: An Analysis of Reading Together from the Crib to the University.

David Davis: Investigating Lithic Technology and Function at the Sunrise Ridge Borrow Pit Site.

Veronica Guadarrama: Reasons Why College Students Turn Towards or Away from Mathematics Based Careers.

Tiffany Hansen: Bioarcheology, Barbados, Eastern Caribbean: Isotopic Analyses of Teeth and Bone from Human Remains.

Daniel Jager: Metatarsal Variation of Non-Human Primates.

Sergio Madrid-Madrid: Regarding the Capabilities of Central American Minors: Literature Review of the Philosophy of Immigration.

Mia Patterson: The Importance of Social Media In Crisis Communication: A Comparison of Hurricane Katrina and Hurricane Sandy.

Elizabeth Seelye: Making Her Own Way: Russian Women of the Nineteenth-Century and the Road to Radicalism.


Congratulations, ELIZABETH BROOKS on being selected for the joint REU program in bioengineering, scientific computing, computer science, robotics, and materials and nanoscale science and engineering this summer at HARVARD UNIVERSITY at their Institute for Applied Computational Science (IACS) as part of the Team Research in Computational and Applied Mathematics (TRiCAM) program http://iacs.seas.harvard.edu/TRiCAM-REU. We are humbled.
Congratulations Featured Alumni, Dr. Christopher Galke

Growing up in a working class family I dreamed of being a scientist. But, as a first generation university student I lacked the support system and knowledge that comes from having parents and siblings with college degrees. At the urging of my academic advisor I joined the McNair Program during my junior year at Central Washington University and through the support and encouragement I received in the program I have accomplished more than I ever imagined possible. Thanks to the Program’s help, I was able to present my research on the pathophysiology of the amphibian pathogen *Batrachochytrium dendrobatidis* at the Annual Meeting of the Society for Integrative and Comparative Biology in Massachusetts. The research supported by the program later resulted in two publications for which I was lead author. The McNair Program also funded several graduate school visits during my senior year. I can honestly say that these were some of the most beneficial trips I made as an undergraduate. After meeting with faculty in person, touring labs, and talking to graduate students, I was better able to make one of the most important decisions in my life. In the end, I enrolled at UC Davis and in the fall of 2014 I received my PhD in microbiology. Currently, I am a post-doctoral fellow researching microbiology at Oregon State University. My long-term goal is to finish my current post-doc and secure a tenure track teaching position at a research university. Thanks in large part to the confidence instilled in me by the McNair Program, I feel like anything is possible.

Dr. Christopher Gaulke
BS, ’09, Microbiology, Central Washington University
PhD, ’14, Microbiology, UC Davis
Dissertation: *Breaking the Mucosal Barrier: Investigating the Role of MicroRNA in the Disruption of the Intestinal Epithelial Barrier During SIV Infection*

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**2014-2015 McNair Advisory Board**

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Dr. Lori Sheeran, Anthropology • Dr. Karissa Terry, Anthropology
Dr. Nadine Vevea, Communication Studies

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**Dr. Nadine Vevea**, an assistant professor in the Communication Studies program, teaches courses in intercultural communication, conflict and communication, communication theory, introduction to human communication, and many others. She is a teacher and scholar with a particular interest in intercultural and interpersonal relationships as well as risk and crisis communication. During her doctoral studies, Dr. Vevea worked with the Department of Homeland Security and the USDA on creating culture-specific risk and crisis messages in regards to food safety issues. A native Minnesotan, Dr. Vevea is particularly fond of the Pacific Northwest climate and landscape.

When she is not teaching, you can find her with Rosie, her adorable Boston Terrier, roaming the great outdoors.
I joined Central’s McNair Program just over a year and a half ago and I can honestly say that it has been a wonderful experience so far.

Of course, every new job brings with it challenges and a learning curve like a mountain to be scaled, and I know I have a long way to go to become worthy of my position, but I could not think of better people to serve (the McNair scholars) and better people with whom to work (Ian Buvit and Kristina Owens).

As for highlights from this past year, I particularly enjoyed bringing two scholars, Estrella Cardenas and Veronica Guadarrama, to present their research at the 23rd National Ronald E. McNair Conference hosted by UW-Milwaukee this past fall. I also had the privilege of meeting Carl McNair, Ron McNair’s older brother and an outspoken advocate for the program, and Will Allen, CEO of Growing Power, at the conference. I learned that the “McNair family”, as its participants, staff and faculty are collectively known, is large and incredibly motivated in its mission to help scholars reach and succeed in graduate education.

As Albert Einstein once said, “Strive not to be a success, but rather to be of value.” I couldn’t agree more.
Thank You to Our Newest Mentors for Serving Our Scholars:

Dr. Heidi Bogue, Psychology • Dr. Stefanie Wickstrom, Political Science
Dr. Nathalie Kasselis, Spanish/World Languages • Dr. Michael Braunstein, Physics
Dr. Brian Carroll, History • Dr. Filip Jagodzinski, Computer Science • Dr. Alison Scoville, Biology

2013-2014 CWU McNair Program Quick Facts

• Number of students served: 27
• Federal Funding Amount: $220,000
• Average funding per participant: $8,148
• Percentage of low-income/first-generation participants served: 100
• Percentage of participants who enrolled in a grad school immediately after completing their bachelor’s degree: 70
• Percentage of participants who graduated within three years of entering the program: 100

Program Eligibility

• 3.1 major GPA; 2.9 cumulative GPA;
• Sophomore, Junior or Senior standing;
• Stated interest in pursuing a PhD;
• U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident, and;
• Low-income, first-generation college student, or a member of an ethnic group historically underrepresented in higher education (Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, Alaska Native, Pacific Islander).

cwu.edu/mcnair-scholars

Q: Why Become a McNair Scholar?

A: Benefits!

• Mentored summer research;
• Funding for graduate school visits and conference travel nationwide;
• One-on-one mentoring;
• Tutoring and a GRE (Graduate Record Examination) preparation course;
• Elective courses on writing research proposals and essays for graduate school;
• Eligibility for graduate school application fee waivers at over 200 universities nationwide;
• and much more.