

# THE MCNAIR AFFAIR

NEWSLETTER OF THE RONALD E. MCNAIR POST-BACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM • SPRING 2018



***“Before you can make  
a dream come true,  
you must first have one.”***

Dr. Ronald E. McNair, physicist, NASA  
astronaut, and crew member of the  
Space Shuttle Challenger  
1950-1986

## IN THIS ISSUE:

Alumni Highlight.....	2
Summer Research .....	3
Scholar Highlight.....	4
Welcome New Scholars .....	5
Alumni in PhD Programs .....	6
Program Facts .....	6



Central  
Washington  
University



# TRIO

RONALD E. MCNAIR  
POST BACCALAUREATE  
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

## DIRECTOR WELCOME

The most exciting news of the year is that we received notification that the CWU McNair program has been funded for another five-year cycle. It is wonderful that the CWU McNair Scholars Program and all the other McNair Programs across the Nation will continue to produce so many amazing and remarkable scholars. We thank all of our supporters here on campus, the state of Washington, Congress, and Department of Education. We are grateful for your efforts and commitment.

We have had a busy year. Last summer we travelled to our PhD conference hosted by Washington State University, which was led by the energetic and knowledgeable Don Asher. It was both inspiring and empowering and we look forward to returning this summer. Our scholars have done well this year. We have nine scholars continuing on to graduate programs next year, including three of them entering directly into PhD programs. Congratulations to all our scholars, I now know first-hand the work and the effort that went into making your goals come true.

This summer we will have thirteen scholars participating in research experiences over the summer. Three of these scholars were accepted into very competitive NSF research experiences for undergraduates (REU) programs in Mathematical Sciences Research, Machine Learning in Theory and Applications, and Big Data Security and Privacy. We wish them the best this summer.

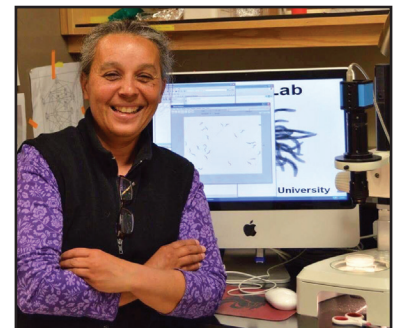
I would like to highlight and acknowledge the often unrecognized but essential centerpiece of the program, our mentors. They not only devote large amounts of time to direct the research and scholarship of our scholars; they provide advice, insight, letter writing, and invaluable moral support. I have been witness to the growth of these students to become engaged and confident scholars and future colleagues. You have my gratitude and respect.

And finally, I would like to thank our McNair Team: Kristina, our program coordinator, Marna our faculty coordinator and Logan our Graduate Assistant. Without their incredible patience and heroic efforts, I would not have made through my first year.

We also thank President Gaudino, Provost Frank, the Office of Undergraduate Research for their support of our student scholars. Special thanks to the School of Graduate Studies and Research (Dean Archer and Julie Guggino) for their unwavering guidance and support of the McNair Scholar Program.

Best wishes,

Lucinda Carnell, Director



## SCHOLAR HIGHLIGHT: CONNOR SIMONS

Summer of 2017 found McNair Scholar **Connor Simons** back in Cuba for a second time continuing a project that began as part of his Africana and Black Studies coursework and evolved into his McNair research project. Connor's project started as an analysis of Cuban literature through a Marxist framework. The next component of his project brought him to Cuba for his first visit to carry out interviews with writers and other Cubans and to experience Cuban culture first hand. Connor compared what he had learned from his interviews and travels throughout the country with the purely literary analysis done initially in order to evaluate how the two experiences aligned. Another facet of Connor's project concerned the development and writing of his own creative work in poetry. His mentor, Xavier Cavazos notes, "Cuba is a special place in terms of creative explosion and Connor was feeding off of that creativity. He was writing tremendously, several poems a day during both of his trips."

This last summer, Connor's McNair research allowed him to dive more deeply into Cuban culture and literature. In preparation, he identified several important Cuban authors and key Cuban texts to focus on. One of these authors, celebrated Cuban poet Nancy Morejon, met with Connor several times during this trip. Morejon holds a leadership

position in the Union of Artist and Writers (UNEAC) in Havana, a role reflecting her stature and influence in the Cuban literary scene. She graciously granted Connor permission to translate several early works of

hers that had not yet been published in English. In granting Connor permission to translate her work, Morejon conferred a great honor and trust upon Connor as not only does the translator of a poem need to accurately convey the ideas and theme of the original work, they must also match its poetic structure, rhythm and imagery—a challenging task for even an experienced literary translator! Connor's translations of Morejon's work have just recently been published here in the U.S.

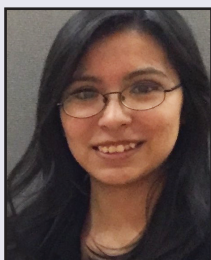
In addition to meeting and talking with Morejon, Connor and his mentor attended Havana's International Poetry Festival where they encountered poets from around the world. When asked about Connor's secret to success, Xavier Cavazos enthused, "Connor was someone who always submitted to the process, and he's gained a lot because of his humbleness. He's very courageous in where he will go... just having a student who is willing to travel to Havana, Cuba, and submerge themselves in the culture, religion, music and the people is really quite stunning. Connor did those things at full speed, and because of it, he is one of Cuba's new beloved, young American writers."

Connor and Xavier Cavazos are planning another trip to Cuba in the near future as they have both been invited to return this May to Havana's International Poetry Festival as featured readers.





# 2017 SUMMER RESEARCH FELLOWS



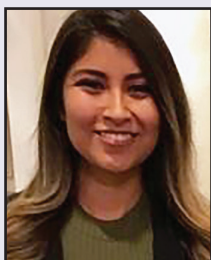
**Janie Aguilera**



**Andy Basargan**



**Jadesha Brooks**



**Seleni Bueno**



**Jessica Carder**



**Maxie Reavis**

**Janie Aguilera:** *Effects of St. John's Wort Extract on Locomotory Behavior in C. elegans.*

**Andy Basargan:** *Stereoselective Alpha-Lithiation of Cyclic Amino Lactones.*

**Jadesha Brooks:** *Progress Toward the Synthesis of Functionalized Lactams.*

**Seleni Bueno:** *Self-Efficacy Beliefs of Ten High School Hispanic Males.*

**Jessica Carder:** *Analyzing the 3-D Orientation of Microtubules in Confined Geometries.*

**Nicole Johnson:** *Addressing the Gap in Tactile Graphic Resources.*

**Maritza Lazcano:** *The social and academic challenges of students from Mixtec Languages.*

**Jasmin Moreno:** *The Impact of Teachers' Age, Teaching Experience, & Level of Education on Their Knowledge and Awareness of Self-Regulation in Preschool Children.*

**Bryan Plankenhorn:** *Restoration & Habitat Monitoring Projects & Outreach.*

**Yecenia Ramirez:** *What Barriers & Aspirations Students have Towards Graduate School.*

**Maxie Reavis:** *The Level of Threat That Can Be Assessed by Nonverbal Factors.*

**Connor Simons:** *Marxist Analysis of Poems by Nancy Morejon & Nicolas Guillen.*

**Ciara White:** *How to Implement and Create Peer-Led Outreach Campaigns to Increase CWU Students' Awareness About STIs, Prevention Strategies.*

**Feddiena Young:** *Factors Influencing the Decision for Young, African American Women to Enroll in College.*

**Alfonso Zavala:** *Jefferson Davis & his Involvement in the Reconciliation Process in Post-Civil War America.*

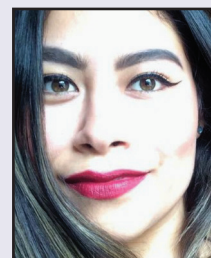
**Robert Zingleman:** *Design and Construction of a Cryogenic System for Electrical Resistivity Measurements as a Function of Temperature.*



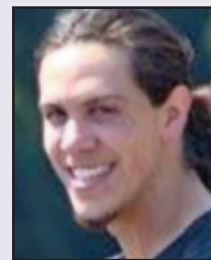
**Nicole Johnson**



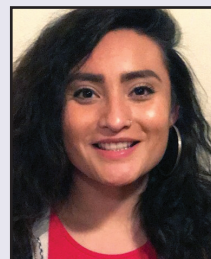
**Maritza Lazcano**



**Jasmin Moreno**



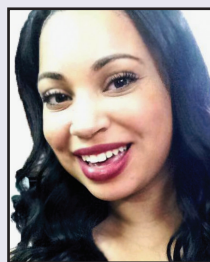
**Bryan Plankenhorn**



**Yecenia Ramirez**



**Connor Simons**



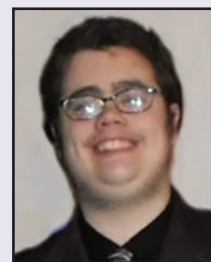
**Ciara White**



**Feddiena Young**



**Alfonso Zavala**



**Robert Zingleman**



# ALUMNI HIGHLIGHT: CAMILLE COLGAN

**Camille Colgan** graduated from NYU with her Master's Degree in Teaching Secondary Education. She noted that her graduate study received funding including a living stipend and housing! She says, "It was a wonderful program and I am happy to report that all [the] McNair training really paid off because I graduated with a 4.0 and wonderful recommendations!"

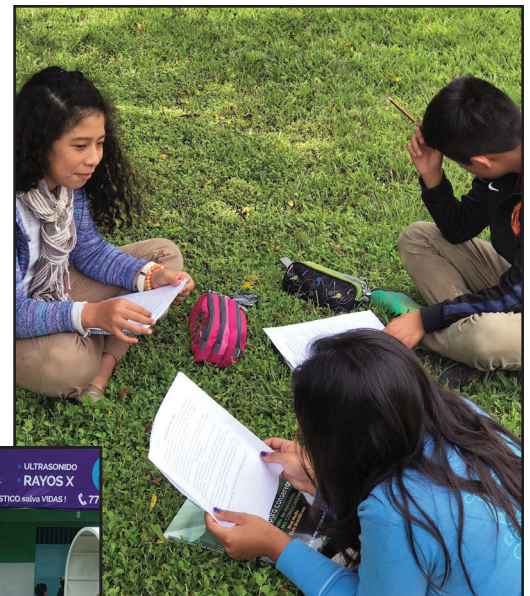
Currently, Ms. Colgan is living in Guatemala for a year and teaching at an international school. This was an opportunity she learned about from a professor at NYU; the networking really made a difference. While in Guatemala, she will also be working on her research.

In the region of Lake Atitlán, in the town of Panajachel, Colgan works as a "middle school specialist." In this role, she teaches both the science and history classes for the 7th and 8th graders. The school where Colgan works is a bilingual college prep school aimed at getting students from Panajachel to a university without a language barrier. Colgan says, "I am currently using the plethora of techniques I learned during my time at NYU for English Language Learner instruction as well as differentiation to meet all students needs in the classroom, as there are a wide range of cultural, behavioral and academic needs."

Camille has applied to the PhD program in Urban Education at CUNY and hopes to hear back from them within the next couple months. If admitted, she will receive full funding to continue her studies.



*This is me and some of the girls in my class. Most of whom speak three languages.*



*Due to how beautiful it is in Panajachel we get to work outside in the sun during group work.*



*As a school we try to empower students so when a group of them wanted to use our spot in the Independence Day parade through town as a platform to participate in the national protest of corruption in the government we let them.*



## WELCOME KAYLA ANN HEMMINGS AS THE NEW McNAIR SCHOLARS GRADUATE ASSISTANT

The McNair Scholars Program is excited to welcome Kayla Ann, a previous McNair Scholar, back to the program as the new graduate assistant! Kayla-Anne graduated from CWU June 2017, entering the graduate program here in the Fall of 2018 with the help of the McNair program. Kayla Ann brings her knowledge and experience of the program to her work as teaching assistant for the McNair courses of study, helping to assist scholars with often complex graduate school application process. She will also follow up on opportunities to continue working toward her goal of achieving her PhD in Psychology.

## THANKS TO OUR DEDICATED MENTORS:

Dr. Clay Arrango  
Dr. Timothy Beng  
Dr. Erin Craig  
Dr. Lucinda Carnell  
Dr. Pedro Xavier Cavazos  
Dr. Judy Hennessey  
Dr. Daniel Herman  
Dr. Nicole Jastremski  
Dr. Nathan Kuwada  
Arthur Manjarrez  
Dr. Heath Marrs  
Dr. Charles Reasons  
Dr. Anthony Stahelski  
Dr. Griff Tester  
Dr. Benjamin White

## WELCOME NEW SCHOLARS!

**Autumn Adams** Anthropology  
Mentor: Dr. J. Hope Amason

**Leanna Chard**  
Anthropology  
Mentor: Dr. Lene Pederson

**Sean Dawson**  
Chemistry and Biology  
Mentor: Dr. Levente Fabry

**Jadvir Gil**  
Psychology  
Mentor: Dr. James Avey

**Anna Gomez**  
Law and Justice  
Mentor: Dr. Roger Schaeffer

**Leni Halaapiapi**  
Computer Science  
Mentor: Dr. Donald Davendra

**Grace Keller**  
Biology  
Mentors: Dr. Holly Pinkhart and  
Dr. Mary Poulson

**Jesse Lopez**  
Mathematics  
Mentor: Dr. Erin Craig

**Jenny Magana**  
Biology  
Mentor: Dr. April Binder

**Juan Mendoza**  
Mathematics  
Mentor: Dr. Jean Marie Linhart

**Alejandra Lopez Rocha**  
Law and Justice/Spanish  
Mentor: Dr. Charles Reasons

**Morgan Rodriguez**  
Chemistry/Education  
Mentor: Dr. Timothy Beng

**Olivia Vasquez**  
Mathematics  
Mentor: Dr. Dominic Klyve



# CREATING THEIR PATH... MCNAIR ALUMNI IN PHD PROGRAMS:

**Candace Chappelle - Mathematics, Washington State University**

**Patience Collier - History, University of Oregon**

**Erik Contreras - Chemistry, Washington State University**

**Juan Flores - Integrated Physiology,  
University of California Davis**

**Braden Goveia - Spanish, Vanderbilt University**

**Steve Isaak - Clinical Psychology, University of South Alabama**

**Julia Jennings - Chemistry, University of California Davis**

**Theodore Jimson - Physics/Math, University of Michigan**

**Shau Yeh Lu - Immunology and Infectious Disease,  
Washington State University**

**Joseph O'Conner - Second Languages Studies,  
Indiana University**

**Edgar Zamora - Political Science, Oklahoma University**

## PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

- 3.1 major GPA; 2.9 cumulative GPA;
- Junior or Senior standing;
- Stated interest in pursuing a PhD;
- U.S. citizen or Permanent Resident, and;
- First generation college student with a family income less than 150 percent of the federal poverty level, and/or Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, American Indian or Alaska Native, Hawaiian or Pacific Islander.

## PROGRAM BENEFITS

- Participate in mentored research projects.
- Participate in an intensive PhD Preparation conference, taught by nationally recognized Donald Asher.
- Participate in a GRE bootcamp to become familiar and prepared to succeed at the GRE test.
- Attend quarterly courses taught by the faculty coordinator: Intro to the McNair Program, Completing Graduate School Applications, Undergraduate Research Methods and Finding a Graduate School.
- The program will also help fund the scholars to present their research at conferences as well as visit graduate schools they are considering.



Central  
Washington  
University



**TRIO**

RONALD E. MCNAIR  
POST BACCALAUREATE  
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM