Welcome New McNair Scholars for 2016-2017

Amber Bachner
Major: Psychology
Vanessa Barker
Major: Psychology
Jessica Barrera
Major: Business
Katrina Cantu
Major: Education

Jessa Rubi Castro
Major: Psychology
Anna Haga
Major: Nursing
Austin “Rose” Heilman
Major: Psychology
Katherine Morris
Major: Geology

Cody Porter
Major: Biology
Cynthia Soliz
Major: Biology
Kelli Walker
Major: Psychology
Megan Woods
Major: Biology

Calendar of Events

Financial Aid Literacy Workshop
1/27/2017

Writing a Great Literature Review
2/10/2017

Research Methods Workshop
2/10/2017

Research Statistics Workshop
3/10/2017

Speed Interviewing Workshop
4/14/2017

McNair Scholar Annual Research Presentations and Recognition Luncheon
April 2017
Service Event: McNair Scholars Give Back to the Boys & Girls Club

Elisa Silva, Corbin Lewis, and Jermeka Morrison, McNair Scholars, each exhibited scholarly spirit by presenting fun and educational research to children at the Coastal Bend Boys & Girls Club.

Silva, a sociology and criminal justice double major, gave a presentation titled “Bullying and Stigma: Breaking Them Down and Preventing Them,” to children six to nine years old. Her presentation focused on the sources of bullying and how it arises in society.

Lewis, a chemistry and mathematics double major, presented “Chemical Reactions and Reactivity” to 10 to 12-year-olds. Lewis demonstrated chemical reactions, such as turning pennies to the color gold and making elephant toothpaste – a demonstration that creates a volcano of foam.

Morrison, a criminal justice major, worked with 13- to 16-year-olds, delivering her presentation “Aggressive, Distracted, and Improper Driving Behaviors.” Using a PowerPoint presentation, a group charades activity and the personal experiences of the youth, Morrison described proper driving habits and behaviors to avoid.

Thank you to the following Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi faculty members who support the program by mentoring and directing research. McNair would not be a successful program without their dedication.

**College of Science and Engineering**
- Dr. Mark Besonen
- Dr. Eugene Billiot
- Dr. Feri Billiot
- Dr. Chris Bird
- Dr. Gregory Buck
- Dr. Xavier Gonzalez
- Dr. James Hogan
- Dr. Scott King
- Dr. Chuntao Liu
- Dr. Ruby Mehrubeoglu
- Dr. Paul Montagna
- Dr. Dorina Murgulet

- Dr. Christopher Patrick
- Dr. Petru Aurelian Simionescu
- Dr. Lee Smee
- Dr. Greg Stunz
- Dr. Magesh Thiagarajan
- Dr. Dugan Um
- Dr. Benjamin Walther
- Dr. Kim Withers
- Dr. Paul Zimba

**College of Education**
- Dr. Randy Bonnette
- Dr. Elsa Gonzales
- Dr. Donald Melrose
- Dr. Bethanie Pletcher
- Dr. Frank Spaniol
- Dr. Corinne Valadez

**College of Liberal Arts**
- Dr. Isabel Araiza
- Dr. Pamela Brouillard
- Dr. Charles Etheridge
- Dr. Gina Gianc
- Dr. Mark Hartlaub
- Dr. Amy Houlihan
- Dr. Melissa Jarrell
- Dr. Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer
- Dr. Pamela Meyer
- Dr. Miguel Moreno
- Dr. Catherine Quick
- Dr. Michael Ramirez
- Dr. Philip Rhoades
- Dr. Carey Rote
- Dr. Steve Seidel
- Dr. Anthony Zoccolillo
The McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi hosted McNair Day on April 19 to recognize McNair scholars that conducted research in the Spring/Summer of 2015 in honor of Dr. Ronald E. McNair. The guest keynote speaker was Carl McNair, brother of the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair.

Eight McNair scholars presented the following poster presentations:

- **Matthew Cruz**: “Phenotypic Variation in Intertidal Limpets (Cellana Sandwicensis) Along a Depth Cline in Papahanaumokuakea Marine National Monument.” Mentor: Dr. Derek Hogan
- **Lauren M. Hernandez**: “Choosing to Enjoy: The Advantage of Malleable Beliefs about Enjoyment.” Mentor: Dr. Steve Seidel.
- **Maritza Hernandez**: “Malleable Beliefs About Enjoyment Predict Exercise Attitudes and Health Outcomes.” Mentor: Dr. Steve Seidel.
- **Lynette Lambert**: “Content Analysis of the Schneider Family Book Awards Children’s Division from 2004 to 2015.” Mentor: Dr. Corinne Valadez.
- **TyEisha Lawson**: “The Relationship between Convergence, Divergence, Recognition and Tracking Skills and Batting Performance of Professional Baseball Players.” Mentor: Dr. Frank Spaniol.
- **Corbin Lewis**: “Investigation of micelle formation with molecular modeling and NMR.” Mentors: Dr. Eugene Billiot.
- **Correy Miller**: “Do Parents Pick More Than a Name? First Name Phonemes and Personality Traits Revisited.” Mentor: Dr. Amy Houlihan.
- **Sandra Morlaes**: “Belief Malleability, Self-Control, and Empathy as Predictors of Rudeness.” Mentor: Dr. Steve Seidel.
Lori “Jae” Cerda

“To Give Up or Not? Does Helplessness Effect Problem Solving Behavior?”

Faculty Mentor: Miguel A. Moreno, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Psychology
- FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, Florida International University, Miami, FL; October 2016

Leanna De Leon

“A Longitudinal Study Investigating the Relationship between Visual Skills and Batting Performance of Professional Baseball Players”

Faculty Mentor: Frank Spaniol, Ed.D. Professor; Department of Kinesiology
- FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, Florida International University, Miami, FL; October 2016

Alfonso Cohuo

“Condition as an Indicator of Resilience to Hypoxia by Atlantic Croaker in the Northern Gulf of Mexico”

Faculty Mentor: Benjamin Walther, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Life Sciences
- 146th Annual American Fisheries Society Meeting in Kansas City, MI, August 2016
- FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, Florida International University, Miami, FL; October 2016
Fall 2016 McNair Scholars Conference Presentations

Jermeka Morrison

“Examining Distracted, Aggressive, and Improper Driving Behaviors in Nueces County 2016”

Faculty Mentor: Phillip Rhoades, Ph.D. Regents Professor; Department of Criminal Justice

- Southwestern Association of Criminal Justice 2016 Annual Meeting in Oklahoma City, OK, October 2016
- FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, Florida International University, Miami, FL; October 2016

Shane Smith

“Characterizing a Supercontinuum Laser as a Light Source Using a Hyperspectral Imaging System”

Faculty Mentor: Mehrube Mehrubeoglu, Ph.D. Associate Professor; Department of Engineering

- 2016 SPIE Conference and Exhibitions in San Diego, CA, August 2016
- FIU McNair Scholars Research Conference, Florida International University, Miami, FL; October 2016
- 13th Annual Pathways Student Research Symposium, Prairie View A&M University, November 2016

Stephanie Tiet

“Hub of the Classroom or Just a Place to Store Books? – An Analysis of Elementary Classroom Libraries”

Faculty Mentor: Bethanie Pletcher, Ed.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Educational Leadership, Curriculum and Instruction

- 2016 Association of Literacy Educators and Researchers Conference in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; November 2016
2nd Annual National McNair Conference at Florida International University

Five McNair Scholar students from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi presented their research findings at the second annual National McNair Research Conference and Graduate Fair held October 19-20 at Florida International University.

The following Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi McNair scholars gave presentations:

- **Leanna De Leon**, a senior kinesiology student: “A Longitudinal Study Investigating the Relationship between Visual Skills and Batting Performance of Professional Baseball Players”

- **Alfonso Cohuo**, a senior marine biology student: “Condition Factors of Fish in Response to Hypoxia Exposure”

- **Jermeka Morrison**, a senior criminal justice student: “Examining Distracted, Aggressive, and Improper Driving Behaviors in Nueces County”

- **Lori “Jae” Cerda**, a senior psychology student: “To Give Up or Not? Does Learned Helplessness Affect Problem Solving Behaviors?”

- **Shane Smith**, a senior mechanical engineering student: “Characterizing a Supercontinuum Laser as a Light Source Using a Hyperspectral Imaging System”

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**Fall 2016 Graduates: Where are they Headed?**

We would like to congratulate the Fall 2016 graduating scholars. They have done many wonderful things during their time at TAMUCC and are representing the TAMUCC McNair Scholars Program well in their respective graduate programs.

**Andrea Zelaya**: Plans to attend Washington State University in the Fall 2017.

Lori “Jae” Cerda: Plans to attend Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in the Fall 2017.
Alumni Spotlight: Dani Aguilar

“The Island University gave me memories and opportunities that I will cherish for a lifetime. One of my fondest memories was the day I received my letter from TRIO welcoming me into the McNair Scholars Program. Little did I know the full value of the experiences I would encounter throughout my journey as a Scholar. The opportunity for publication, national conference attendance, and financial support from this program were more than I could have hoped for. The McNair Scholars Program provided me with the tools and knowledge I needed to further my education.

One of the first things the program taught us was the importance of choosing the right mentor. This presentation proved to be crucial when applying to graduate school because most programs require that you work closely with a professor, either in a research lab or while developing your thesis. My McNair mentor, Dr. Steven Seidel, became the person I went to for guidance and, even though I have since graduated from Texas A&M University – Corpus Christi and I am graduating with my masters from the University of Texas at Dallas, I still turn to him for support.

One of the biggest things I took away from the McNair Program was the significance of “time management.” This can be applied to hourly tasks, daily routines, and annual or lifetime goals. I cannot stress enough how important it is to manage your time effectively throughout graduate school but more importantly in all aspects of life.

In summary, the McNair Scholars Program provides each scholar with the opportunity for success in graduate school. More specifically for me, it presented a chance for personal growth.

In the words of Ronald E. McNair “Whether or not your reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them.” This program personifies Ronald McNair in every aspect and I could not be more proud to have been a part of his legacy.

Faculty Spotlight: Dr. Bethanie Pletcher

Dr. Pletcher shares her experience as a McNair Scholar Faculty Mentor

The main focus of the McNair Scholars Program is on preparing undergraduate students for doctoral studies through academic research opportunities under the guidance of a Faculty Mentor. The McNair Faculty Mentors are an essential component of this process. One of the many valued Faculty Mentors that has worked with the McNair Scholars Program is Dr. Bethanie Pletcher, Assistant Professor of Reading in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction.

1. What characteristics do you look for in your mentees?

“The three students I encouraged to apply to the McNair Scholars Program were enrolled in at least one my reading courses. I noticed early on what exceptional students they are. That they have almost perfect grade point averages goes without saying, as that is one of the program’s requirements; however, this is only a small part of what makes a good mentee. Their writing is strong, as they are able to produce clear, organized, and thoughtful research papers, reflections, and lesson plans. They are diligent in all work that they do for classes, and they meet with their professors regularly during office hours and make frequent contact through e-mail to find more information regarding course content and assignments. They participate fully in every class session during whole group, small group, and paired discussions. As my McNair Scholars are future teachers, they display enthusiasm for teaching children. Each of them has served as a volunteer tutor in some capacity. Just as importantly, these three scholars have delightful personalities. They are friendly and courteous to professors, fellow students, and staff members, and they enjoy interacting with new people. I recognized the potential in each of these students, knowing that these qualities would help them during their journeys as researchers while serving as McNair Scholars.”

2. What is the most rewarding part of being a Mentor?

“The most rewarding part of mentoring McNair Scholars is that I have the opportunity to empower pre-service teachers. By encouraging them to engage in research at this stage in their development as teachers, I am ensuring that they will continue to do so as they search for the most effective methods of teaching their students to be readers and writers. I have also found extreme joy in building relationships with my mentees, and I know that we will keep in touch for years to come and that I will be able to watch their careers develop. I have taken my mentees to national conferences where they have confidently and eloquently presented their research for an audience of experienced literacy educators. Those were my proudest moments as a faculty mentor.”
GIVE US AN UPDATE!

The U.S. Department of Education requires all McNair programs to provide Annual Performance Reports and keep track of alumni until the attainment of a doctoral degree. Alumni can update their information by completing the form below and mailing the information to the McNair Scholars Program or by contacting Anabel Hernandez at anabel.hernandez@tamucc.edu.

Name: ________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________________________
City & State: __________________ Zip Code: ________
TAMUCC Cohort Year: ______________________
Highest Degree Attained and when: ______________________________________
Degrees in Progress: Master’s_____ PhD_____ or Education Complete_______
Field of Study: _________________________________________________________
Expected Year of Completion ____________________________________________
School in attendance: _________________________________________________
Email Address: _______________________________________________________

Alumni News

Matthew Cruz (Marine Biology, 2016) has entered a master’s program in Fall 2016 at Texas A&M University-Kingsville.

Lauren Hernandez (Psychology, 2016) has entered a master’s program in Fall 2016 at the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Sandra Morales (Psychology, 2016) has entered a master’s program in Fall 2016 at the University of Texas at Tyler.

Irene Perales (Community and Mental Health, 2012) has obtained her master’s degree in Social Work in August 2016 from the University of Texas at Arlington.

Tabitha Perez (English, 2012) has obtained a master’s degree in English in May 2016 from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Sarah Pons (Art, 2013) has obtained her master’s degree in Art History in July 2015 from Oklahoma State University.

Kellie Ruong (Geology, 2013) has obtained her master’s degree in Geology in May 2016 from the University of Houston.

Danielle Tefft (English, 2015) has entered a master’s program in Fall 2016 at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi.

Cody Torno (Mechanical Engineering, 2014) has entered a master’s program in Fall 2016 at Texas A&M University-College Station.

Doctorate Recipient’s

Meagan Bryand (Communication, 2009) obtained her Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership in December 2015 from the University of Houston-Clear Lake.

Jerahme Martinez (Chemistry, 2009) obtained his Ph.D. in Bio-Chemistry in May 2016 from Rice University.

Amanda Whitmire (Bio-Medical Science, 2011) has obtained her Ph.D. in Cell Biology in August 2016 from the University of North Texas.