Congratulations McNair 2015 Scholar Graduates

Spring 2015
Danielle Aguilar
Marlena Bush
Amie Mackay
Megan Perkins
Dustin Smith
Samantha Valdez
Mariela Vazquez
Amarissa Vera

Summer 2015
Marisa Gonzales
Jonnie Iglesias

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Six McNair Scholars representing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi presented at the 16th Annual McNair Scholars Undergraduate National Research Conference held March 12-15 at the University of Maryland, College Park.

The following Texas A&M-Corpus Christi McNair Scholars presented their research:

- **Danielle Aguilar**, “Taking One for the Team: Malleable Beliefs as a Predictor of Willingness to Sacrifice.” Her mentor is Dr. Steve Seidel.

- **Marlena Bush**, “Project Read 3: The Effects of a Family Literacy Project on the Early Readings Skills of Three- and Four-Year Olds.” Her mentor is Dr. Corinne Valadez.

- **Amie Mackay**, “The Effect of Negative Information on the Justification of Chosen Alternatives.” Her mentor is Dr. Steve Seidel.

- **Megan Perkins**, “Individualistic Priming on Donation Choices.” Her mentor is Dr. Miguel Moreno.

- **Samantha Valdez**, “Recognizing Hidden and Imperiled Coral Reef Fish Biodiversity in the Coral Triangle.” Her mentor is Dr. Frank Pezold.

- **Amarissa Vera**, “The Representation of Latinas in America’s Most Watched Shows.” Her mentor is Dr. Isabel Araiza.
Danielle Aguilar

“Taking One for the Team: Malleable Beliefs as a Predictor of Willingness to Sacrifice”

**Faculty Mentor:** Steven D. Seidel, Ph.D. Professor; Department of Psychology

- 17th Annual Texas National McNair Scholars Research Conference, University of North Texas, February 2015
- 16th Annual Meeting of The Society for Personality and Social Psychology in Long Beach, CA February 2015
- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015

Marlena Bush

“Project Read 3: The Effects of a Family Literacy Project on the Early Readings Skills of Three-and-Four-Year Olds”

**Faculty Mentor:** Corinne Valadez, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Education; Department of College of Education

- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015
- 31st Annual Florida Literacy Conference, Orlando, FL, April 2015

Amie Mackay

“The Effect of Negative Information on the Justification of Chosen Alternatives”

**Faculty Mentor:** Steven D. Seidel, Ph.D., Professor; Department of Liberal Arts

- 16th Annual Meeting of The Society for Personality and Social Psychology in Long Beach, CA, February 2015
- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015
Megan Perkins
“Individualistic Priming on Donation Choices”

Faculty Mentor: Miguel Moreno, Ph.D., Assistant Professor; Department of College of Liberal Arts

- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015
- Southwestern Psychological Association Annual Meeting, Wichita, KS, April 2015

Cody Torno
“Design and Development of a Semi-autonomous Fixed-Wing Aircraft with Real-time Video Feed”

Faculty Mentor: Luis Garcia, Ph.D., Assistant Professor; Department of Engineering and Computing Sciences

- 2014 International Conference on Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Orlando, FL, May 2014
- 2014 Annual SACNAS National Conference, Los Angeles, CA, October 2014

Samantha Valdez
“Recognizing Hidden and Imperiled Coral Reef Fish Biodiversity in the Coral Triangle”

Faculty Mentor: Frank Pezold, Ph.D., Professor; Department of Science & Engineering

- 2014 Annual SACNAS National Conference, Los Angeles, CA, October 2014
- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015

Amarissa Vera
“The Representation of Latinas in America’s Most Watched Shows”

Faculty Mentor: Isabel Araiza, Ph.D., Associate Professor; Department of Psychology and Sociology

- 2015 McNair National Research Conference, University of Maryland, College Park, March 2015
Matthew Cruz
Major: Marine Biology
Faculty Mentor: Christopher Bird, Ph.D.
Research Project: His research focuses on the effects of shore heights, species, and island within a species on shell morphology.

Marisa Gonzales
Major: Microbiology
Faculty mentor: Xavier. F. Gonzales, Ph.D.
Research Project: Her research study focuses on the streptococcus pneumoniae's adhesion to lung cells in a host during an acute stress response.

Maritza Hernandez
Major: Psychology
Faculty mentor: Amy Houlihan, Ph.D.
Research Project: The study that she is conducting measures overall happiness, self-esteem, self-control and their beliefs on exercise.

Jonnie Iglesias
Major: Biomedical Sciences
Faculty mentor: Gregory Buck, Ph.D.
Research Project: Her research builds on the topic of algae growth using different medias. By investigating the growth curves of Chlamydomonas moewusii in waste water compared to growth media, an optimal replacement media will be selected.

Lynette Lambert
Major: Special Education
Faculty mentor: Corinne Valadez, Ph.D.
Research Project: Her research focus is the content analysis of the books that have received the Schneider Family Book Awards.

TyEisha Lawson
Major: Kinesiology
Faculty mentor: Frank Spaniol, Ph.D.
Research Project: Her research investigates the relationship between visual skills and reading achievement of dual language elementary school children (grades 3-5).
Correy Miller  
**Major:** Psychology  
**Faculty mentor:** Amy Houlihan, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** The purpose of her study is to find an association between the sounds of a person’s name and their personality traits.

Shane Smith  
**Major:** Mechanical Engineering  
**Faculty Mentor:** Ruby Mehrubeoglu, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** His research investigates galvanization of parts through the use of hyper spectral imaging.

Danielle Tefft  
**Major:** English  
**Faculty mentor:** Bethanie Pletcher, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** Her project focuses on assessments that are given to struggling readers in K-12 school grades.

Mariela Vazquez  
**Major:** Chemistry  
**Faculty mentor:** Mark A. Olson, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** Her study focus is to find the efficiency and effectiveness of a bipyridium-based surfactant if submitted to a host-guest relationship with the tryptamine derivative melatonin.

Fernando Vela  
**Major:** Mathematics  
**Faculty mentor:** Pablo Tarazaga, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** His research focuses on even doubly-stochastic matrices.

Andrea Zelaya  
**Major:** English  
**Faculty mentor:** Gina Glanc, Ph.D.  
**Research Project:** Her research is titled “The Effects of Retrieval-Induced forgetting on Cross-linguistic Homographs.”
Where they Landed:

We would like to congratulate the 2015 graduate 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.

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.

McNair Faculty Mentors

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. Christopher Bird
Dr. Gregory Buck
Dr. lea-Der Chen
Dr. Luis Garcia
Dr. Xavier Gonzales
Dr. James Hogan
Dr. Yuxia Huang
Dr. Scott King
Dr. Chuntao Liu
Dr. Ruby Mehrbeoglu
Dr. Paul Montagna
Dr. Dorina Murgulet
Dr. Mark Olson

Dr. Frank Pezold
Dr. Lee Smeek
Dr. Greg Stunz
Dr. Magesh Thiyagarajan
Dr. Dugan Um
Dr. Kim Withers
Dr. Paul Zimba

College of Education

Ms. Sayuri Hiraishi
Dr. Donald Melrose
Dr. Bethanie Pletcher
Dr. Frank Spaniol
Dr. Corinne Valadez

College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Isabel Araiza
Dr. Charles Etheridge
Dr. Gina Gianc
Dr. Mark Hartlaub
Dr. Sam Hill
Dr. Amy Houlihan
Dr. Melissa Jarrell
Dr. Michael Jin
Dr. Michelle Mares-Fuehrer
Dr. Pamela Meyer
Dr. Miguel Moreno
Dr. Catherine Quick
Dr. Michael Ramirez
Dr. Phillip Rhoades
Dr. Carey Rote
Dr. Steve Seidel
Being part of the McNair program allowed me to be more involved with the university and to step out my comfort zone. I was able to attend cultural events on campus, present research at conferences both on and off campus, and travel to new places. I asked professors complex questions about my research, and I was exposed to what graduate school requires of students very early in my graduate career. McNair has helped me overcome the challenges of graduate school, because without the McNair program, I wouldn’t know how to fully embrace the graduate student experience or know the quality of work expected of me. McNair allowed me to understand the graduate selection process by providing assistance with CV and resume preparation. McNair provided information about writing to publish articles and let each of us practice for our GRE test. The program provides students with all of the graduate school skills they need and helps take away the feeling of intimidation at graduate school. The advice I would like to give current McNair Scholars is to embrace the opportunity you currently have. Not many students are preparing for their future as you are. Being able to use all your resources you currently have before you go off to your desired graduate school is something you will only benefit from. Embrace your opportunity, and when the time comes, you will realize how McNair was a building block for your future.

Faculty Mentor Spotlight: Dr. Corinne Valadez

Dr. Corinne Valadez shares her experiences as a McNair Faculty Mentor

The main focus of the McNair Scholars Program is preparing undergraduate students for doctoral studies through academic research opportunities under the guidance of a Faculty Mentor. One of the many valued McNair Faculty Mentors, Dr. Corinne Valadez, is a professor in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction. Dr. Valadez’s research interests include teachers’ efficacy for literacy instruction, Hispanic children’s literature, and multicultural literacy, and she is currently mentoring several McNair Scholars including Marlena Bush.

1. **What characteristics do you look for in your mentees?**
   The main characteristics that I look for when selecting mentees are intellectual curiosity, a good work ethic, and a passion or enthusiasm for the research topic. Intellectual curiosity and work ethics can be mentored and developed, which is what I try to do with my mentees. However, passion or enthusiasm for the research is something that cannot be mentored. It is a characteristic that one either has or doesn’t have.

2. **What is the most rewarding part of being a Faculty Mentor?**
   The most rewarding part of being a Mentor is being part of the academic, professional, and personal growth of my mentee. In the beginning, my mentee was unsure of her ability to conduct a research project, let alone disseminate the findings at a professional conference or in a manuscript. Even more rewarding has been the change in relationship from Mentor/mentee to colleagues. I have tremendous respect for Marlena Bush and look forward to her accomplishing many wonderful things.

3. **What qualities does a Faculty Mentor need to possess in order to be effective?**
   While it goes without saying that a Faculty Mentor needs professional knowledge and expertise in their particular discipline, I believe the most important qualities include genuine interest in their mentee, enthusiasm, and valuing learning and growth. A good Mentor is invested in the success of their mentee. Enthusiasm is contagious. My mentee cannot possibly be excited about my area of research unless I am as well. A good Mentor realizes that the Mentor/mentee relationship is reciprocal in nature. I believe that I have learned just as much from my mentee as she has learned from me. Of course, a good sense of humor always helps.
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: ___________________________
Degree in Progress: Master’s _____ PhD _______ or Education Complete_______
Field of Study: _____________________________________________________
Expected Year of Completion: ___________________________
School in attendance: ______________________________________________
Email Address: ____________________________________________________

Alumni News

Amy Brown (Sociology, 2009) obtained her master’s degree in Sociology in August 2014 from Penn State University.

Chenika Fowler (Psychology, 2010) obtained her master’s degree in Psychology in March 2014 from Utah State University.

Renee Hudak (Kinesiology, 2013) entered a PhD program in Fall 2014 at the University of Texas - Health Science Center.

Maria Pillado (Psychology, 2011) obtained her master’s degree in Family Studies in May 2014 from Texas A&M - Corpus Christi.

Sarah Pons (Art, 2013) enrolled in a master’s program in Fall 2014 at Oklahoma State University.

Kellie Rulong (Geology, 2013) entered a master’s program in Spring 2015 at the University of Houston.

Yadira Uhlig (English, 2013) enrolled in a master’s program in Fall 2014 at Texas A&M-Corpus Christi.

Justin Williams (Communications, 2009) enrolled in a PhD program in Fall 2014 at the University of North Texas.

Travis Wilson (Environmental Science, 2013) entered a master’s program in Spring 2015 at East Carolina University.

Amy Brown (Sociology, 2009) obtained her master’s degree in Sociology in August 2014 from Penn State University.

Chenika Fowler (Psychology, 2010) obtained her master’s degree in Psychology in March 2014 from Utah State University.

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