Looking for a few good students

It’s that time of the year again—the McNair office is looking for a few hardworking, dedicated students to join our elite group of scholars. Applications will be available online and in the McNair office starting September 23. Since a large number of our scholars will be graduating this December or May, the McNair program is looking for new, energetic students who are interested in pursuing graduate work.

If you know anyone who meets the criteria listed below and who may be interested in applying to be a McNair scholar, please have them stop by the McNair office soon to learn more about the program. They can also find information on the McNair website at www.nmu.edu/mcnair or by visiting the NMU McNair Scholars Facebook page. Applications are due November 4 and selected individuals will be notified in early December.

McNair Scholars Qualifications

- 3.0 overall GPA
- At least a sophomore by the time they apply
- First generation/low income students OR students under-represented in graduate school education
- Have a desire to conduct scholarly research and obtain a Ph.D.

Heading West

It’s quickly becoming a tradition for the McNair program: our annual May graduate school trip! This past May, eight scholars journeyed west to visit the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the University of Minnesota. Both schools are large institutions compared to what they are used to at NMU, and our McNair students were awed by the campus life and various graduate opportunities these schools could offer them. While at each school, scholars were able to talk with faculty or graduate school advisers in their area of study and learn more about the programs that are offered and financial resources available to them.

In addition to the group graduate school trip, McNair Scholar Emily Hansen visited Tufts University and attended their Prospective Graduate Student Days in July. This experience allowed Emily to visit Tufts for two days, meet with faculty and attend sessions about applying to graduate school.
Summer Research

The second summer of McNair research has come and gone and once again many of our students stayed very busy on campus and off with a wide variety of research topics. Starting on May 16, scholars began working independently on the research topics they had mapped out with their faculty mentors during the Winter 2011 semester. Whether the projects required frequent travel, a great deal of reading or a lot of lab time, each of these students put a great deal of time into their project.

Macrea Anderson: Economic Impact of Local Food Systems in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula: A Preliminary Study

Matthew Cowling: Characterization of basigin isoform-3 localization.

Sara DeBold: Assessing Delivery and Writing Skills in the Basic Course in Public Speaking: ten 30-second exercises.

Adrienne Garlick: Prevalence of Gender Role Stereotyping in Children’s Picture Books

Helina Haile: The Use of Military Intervention as a Justified Responsive Means to End Human Rights Violation.

Matthew Keiser: Demography and Mortality of Pitcher’s Thistle Seedlings.

Karla Kopp: Comparison of Avian Species Richness in Forest Strands of Different Age

Joseph Masters: Examining the experiences of Native Americans who are transitioning from prison to communities in the Upper Peninsula.

Mike Michalek: Investigating the possible scenario of a waterway from Early Lake Minong to Lake Chippewa.

Ricki Oldenkamp: Ricki was one of 10 students selected from a pool of 400 applicants to take part in the Mechanism of Behavior Program at Duke University.

Justine Pinskey: Investigating vitamin D3 as a potential therapeutic agent for glioblastoma multiforme.

Tracy Pickering: Tracy was selected for an internship through the Washington Center this summer and worked for a non-profit in Washington, D.C.

Emily Sprengelmeyer: Affects of coarse woody debris in Aspen-dominated mesic hardwood forests.

Amanda Taisto: Pathological Assessment of Muscles and Motoneurons in Transgenic Mice with Missing or Limited Muscular BDNF.


Great job, scholars, on all of your hard work this summer!

A Special Thanks to Our 2011 Faculty Mentors

Robert Belton, Ph.D.       Patrick Brown, Ph.D.
Timothy Hilton, Ph.D.     Jeanne Lorentzen, Ph.D.
Steven Nelson, Ph.D.      Eric Ottem, Ph.D.
Robert Regis, Ph.D.       Alan Rebertus, Ph.D.
Sara Potter, M.S.         Carol Strauss, Ph.D.
Robert Winn, Ph.D.

John Anderton, Ph.D. in collaboration with Walter Loope, USGS

Thank you for all your support this year!

Last year many of the McNair students were provided with opportunities to present their research at conferences throughout the country, including at NMU’s own Celebration of Student Works.

We were excited that so many students presented their research at various conferences and encourage all of this year’s researchers to work with our office to seek out conferences that will allow them to highlight their extraordinary research as well.
Living with Lemurs

This past summer McNair scholar Ricki Oldenkamp had the experience of a lifetime! A driven scholar, Ricki started communication with the Duke University Lemur Center in January in hopes of possibly learning more about their facilities and securing a very unique research opportunity with them.

Overall, Ricki commented that her experience at Duke was very challenging and fulfilling. “I have learned that hard work and dedication is really what is important to professors and I will seek to show graduate schools my level of commitment with these two principles.”

To learn more about Ricki’s summer at the Duke Lemur Center, check out her summer research blog at http://www.thisprimatespapertrail.blogspot.com/.

Congratulations to our graduates!

This past May our first group of McNair Scholars graduated from NMU. On April 30, five McNair students accepted their diplomas and started the next chapters of their lives.

**Paula Fata** graduated with her degree in Criminal Justice and was accepted into the criminology graduate program at Portland State University.

**Hunter Harig** graduated with a biology degree and was accepted into the graduate program of public health at the University of Iowa, where he also received a full fellowship.

**Nancy Kenok** graduated with an International Studies degree and was accepted into the City Year Program and is teaching this year in inner-city Milwaukee.

**Linda Sirois** graduated with an English/writing degree and was accepted into the MFA program at Northern Michigan University, where she also received a funding package.

**Eva Statler** graduated with a psychology degree and is taking a year off, attending professional conferences and working. Eva plans to apply to graduate schools for fall 2012 entrance.
Fall Workshops

Each semester, in addition to a heavy class load, work schedule and extracurricular commitments, our students also find time to meet with fellow scholars for McNair workshops. Additionally, McNair will be teaming up with Dr. Andrew Poe from Mathematics and Computer Science once again to provide our students with GRE prep on Monday nights at 5 p.m.

Feedback was gathered during the winter semester and many of the workshops this upcoming semester are focused on what our students commented they wanted more help on as they prepare for graduate school.

Graduating senior Mike Michalek commented that the McNair program provides students with many tools to succeed, which includes the numerous workshops. “The McNair Program has given me encouragement and the tools needed to succeed in graduate studies.”

Fall 2011 Workshop Schedule

~All workshops will be held in 2806 West Science at 5 p.m.~

GRE Prep Workshops: Every Monday at 5 p.m.

Fall “To Do” Lists and McNair Match-Ups: Tuesday, September 6

Completing your Summer Research Paper and Writing for Publication: (with guest speaker Dr. Susy Ziegler) Tuesday, September 13

Show me the money! Funding at NMU and Beyond: Tuesday, September 20

Getting those applications in!: Tuesday, October 4

Speak up! Public Speaking Fun: (with guest speaker Sara Potter) Monday, October 17 at 6 p.m.

McNair Match-Ups: Tuesday, November 8

Starting the Search– Finding the Graduate School for You: Tuesday, November 29

End of Semester Get Together: Week of December 5 (Exact date TBD)

Conferences from Coast to Coast

This summer was an exceptionally busy one for many of our scholars. Between the months of June and August, six scholars independently traveled to various research conferences across the country.

Andrea Selmser joined her faculty mentor Dr. Debra Morley from her summer 2010 research project at the Federal Interagency Conference on Traumatic Brain Injury. Their research poster was selected to be displayed at this year’s national conference in Washington, D.C., and Andrea also took part in several other workshops during her time there.

Kate Abrahamsson went south to the SAEOPP McNair/SSS Scholars Research Conference in Atlanta. At this conference, Kate presented the research she worked on last summer with Dr. Erich Ottem through the McNair program and continued to work on independently this summer.

Justine Pinskey and Emily Sprengelmeyer traveled together to the 19th Annual Penn State McNair Summer Research Conference, where they both presented their research to a national audience of fellow McNair scholars.

Karla Kopp visited Indiana University-Bloomington to attend the Behavior 2011 Conference. Although not a presenter at this year’s event, Karla was able to network with many faculty in her field of interest and visited the campus of Indiana University.

Finally, Joe Masters headed west to attend the 2011 McNair Symposium at the University of California-Berkeley. Not only did Joe present his research at this conference, he was also able to tour Stanford and UC Berkeley’s campuses during his time out there.

We are very proud of the strong showing our scholars made throughout the summer at conferences across the country and look forward to them taking part in more opportunities during this upcoming semester.
This summer most of our scholars were busy with classes and conducting research, but for the majority of these students their schedules are about to get even crazier this fall! Between December 2011 and May 2012, 16 McNair Scholars will be graduating from NMU with their bachelor’s degree. For many of these students, who wish to continue their education to the master’s or Ph.D. level, the work of preparing for life after NMU really begins this semester. From deciding on which programs and schools they want to apply to, to drafting their personal statements and CV’s, to securing letters of recommendation, the scholars are going to be very busy this semester.

Many of the scholars started this time consuming process over the summer, participating in McNair workshops, visiting graduate schools of interest and contacting potential graduate faculty advisors. The workshops this fall will continue to help our graduates finalize their CV’s and personal statements.

Emily and Quentin Sprengelmeyer, who will be graduating in May 2012, began their summer with a trip to the West Coast to visit three potential graduate schools, attended the McNair graduate school visit in May, and rounded out their summer by visiting UM-Minneapolis and UM-Duluth in August. Although some trips were more productive than others, Quentin and Emily learned something from each of the experiences and have shared their graduate trip hints with other soon-to-be graduates in our program.

Although our scholars will be busy this semester, our office will continue to work individually with each student to ensure that their graduate school application materials are completed and submitted on time so that they can all see their dreams become reality in graduate school!

Michael Michalek will be graduating in May 2012 with a bachelor of science in geographic information science, with minors in physical geography and outdoor recreation.

Over the last two years in the McNair program, Mike began forming relationships with faculty in his field and over the last year began working with NMU professor John Anderton and Walter Loope from the U.S. Geological Survey on his McNair research project.

“My research was focused in Michigan’s eastern Upper Peninsula, investigating a widely unknown period in time. I spent the summer collecting data and information trying to validate a proposed channel connecting the present day Tahquamenon and Manistique Rivers. The experience was great, and I gained not only knowledge but important connections within the field of geography.”

Mike joined the McNair program in 2010 and commented that, “without this program I would not be in the position I am today. Not only has the program provided me with great research experience, but they have given me the drive and determination needed to pursue graduate study.”

Mike plans to pursue graduate work in geography emphasizing on glacial geomorphology.

To learn more about Mike, check out his full profile at www.nmu.edu/mcnair.
Celebration of Student Works

Twelve McNair Scholars participated in NMU’s 16th Annual “Celebration of Student Research, Creative Works and Academic Service Learning.” Held throughout the day on April 14 at the Learning Resources Center, the McNair students were among a group of NMU students at both the undergraduate and graduate level that took the opportunity to show off their scholarly works. Four McNair students presented their research orally and ten chose to highlight their work through a poster presentation.

Each of the students worked very hard on their posters and for the 2011 graduates, it was a great way to end their academic career at NMU.

A special congratulations to scholar Ricki Oldenkamp, who was the winner of the 2011 Best Student Presentation (undergraduate) at the Environmental Session.

For more pictures of the McNair scholars at the Celebration, visit the McNair scholars website at www.nmu.edu/mcnair.

- Quentin Sprengelmeyer’s poster on disjunct flora on the Slate Islands.
- Kate Abrahamsson’s poster on brain derived neurotrophic factor.
- Eva Statler’s poster on body mass index and weight perceptions.
- Emily Sprengelmeyer’s poster on woodland caribou distribution.
- Andrea Selmser’s oral presentation on mild traumatic brain injury in veterans.

Scholars Ricki Oldenkamp, Justine Pinskey, Emily Sprengelmeyer and Nancy Kenok.

Scholars Ricki Oldenkamp and Emily Sprengelmeyer.
Taking the Conference Plunge – By Karla Kopp

In July McNair senior Karla Kopp took the advice of graduate school faculty and attended her first professional conference. In her own words she explains what a great experience it was for her and what she took away from the week long trip.

This summer, I went to the 2011 Behavior Conference at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. It was the first ever joined conference of the Animal Behavior Society and the International Ethological Conference.

This week long conference was recommended to me by a faculty member I met with at the University of Minnesota during a McNair graduate school visit. This was the first conference I had ever looked at attending, and thanks to support from the McNair office I was able to attend. What a great first conference it was!

There were researchers, students and professors from all over the world, and they had so many different research projects. One of the greatest things that I got out of this conference was how it so much expanded my knowledge of how diverse the field is. I learned of research that I never would have imagined thinking of as something linked to the study of behavior.

I also was able to talk to many graduate students at the poster sessions and learn of many different universities across the United States that have areas in this field of study.

While in Bloomington, I was able to speak with the adviser in the graduate office about the program there. This was also a great experience and the adviser was really helpful and gave me a lot of great information on not only that university, but also about the field of behavior in general. I learned of careers I didn’t even realize were available to graduates of the behavior program.

This conference was a wonderful and eye opening experience, and I am very grateful to the McNair office to have been given the chance to attend. I would encourage anyone who has an opportunity to attend a conference to take advantage of it.
Summer Fun and Study Abroad

This summer was an active one for most of our scholars. Some stayed here to participate in their McNair research component, others traveled overseas or across the country, and some simply enjoyed some much needed time off from school. See what a few of our scholars did to keep themselves so busy this summer!

Dylan Hendrix and Ryan Haskell spent their summers preparing to head overseas for the 2011-2012 academic year to study abroad. Dylan will be studying in Germany and Ryan will be studying in Prague.

Helina Haile spent time studying in Morocco, while completing her McNair research.

In addition to conducting her research through the McNair Scholars program, Karla Kopp also worked for NMU’s Housing and Residence Life program as an on-campus apartment community advisor.

Quentin and Emily Sprengelmeyer completed internships conducting productivity surveys and banding the common loon on Isle Royale in August.

After spending all semester in Ireland studying abroad, Tracy Pickering spent all summer doing an internship set up through the Washington Center in Washington, D.C. with the non-profit organization Accordia.

Joe Masters worked as a camp counselor for the Center for Native American Studies annual STEM camp held on NMU’s campus and Camp Nesbit.

Emily Hansen spent a month studying abroad and researching with a group of NMU students in Zambia.