McNair Scholars Programs are funded by Grants from the U.S. Department of Education
Table of Contents
Contents sited for this handbook came from Marian University, the University of Nevada, Reno, and the US Department of Education. All content in this handbook is subject to change-The McNair Scholars Staff.

McNair Staff 4
TRiO Mission Statement 5
Welcome Letter from TRiO Director 6
Listing of McNair Scholars 7
History of TRiO Programs 8
Biography of Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair 9
McNair Scholars Program Services 10
McNair Resources and Facebook 11-12
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism 13
McNair Program Objectives 14
The Goal of McNair Scholars 15
McNair Scholars Guidelines 15-19
Parameters for Determining Good Matches (from the Mentor Handbook) 19-20
Role of the Faculty Mentor 21
Helpful Semester Checklists 22-23
Faculty Mentor Stipend 24-25
Volunteer Research Guidelines 26
McNair Research Paper Guidelines 27-29
McNair Annual Activities 30-31

Travel Guidelines 31-33

Termination from the McNair Scholars Program 33-34

Graduate School Preparation 34-39

Summer Research Program 39-43

McNair Forms 44-55

Cindy Loftin-University of Delaware McNair Conference and Luis Fabian Pena Orduna-Pathways A&M at Galveston

McNair Projects are funded by Grants from the U.S. Department of Education
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McNair Scholars on the Texas A&M University website: http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/studentLife/campusServices/trioPrograms/mcnairAchievementProgram/default.aspx
TRIO Mission Statement

The TRiO Program of Texas A&M University, Commerce is designed to assist low-income and first generation college students with a quality education. Our goal is to ensure that each student is provided with quality tutorial assistance, college and career counseling, financial literacy, scholarship, leadership skills, and character. We prepare students with the necessary knowledge and skills to become successful in college and in their chosen career fields.

McNair Scholars Program

The McNair Scholars Program is a federal TRIO program funded at 194 institutions across the United States and Puerto Rico by the U.S. Department of Education. It is designed to prepare undergraduate students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. McNair participants are either first-generation college students with financial need, or members of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in graduate education and have demonstrated strong academic potential. The goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to increase graduate degree awards for students from underrepresented segments of society (http://mcnairscholars.com/about/).

Texas A&M University, Commerce Mission Statement

Texas A&M University, Commerce nurtures and educates for success through access to academic, research, and service programs of high quality.
Welcome Letter from the TRiO Director

Congratulations on your acceptance into the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University, Commerce! We are looking forward to a hard-working, positive relationship with each of our Scholars. Our Program is located at Room 302 Halladay Building. My name is Veronica Reed and I am both the Program Director and the Director of TRIO Programs here at Texas A&M University-Commerce. Deirdre R. Hill is the Assistant Director (AD) of our program. You can reach each of us by telephone or email at the contact information found on page two of this handbook. This Handbook and our website will provide information for many different activities and connect you to other agencies on our campus. Feel free to contact us or schedule an appointment to meet with myself or the other McNair Staff members any time.

Texas A&M University-Commerce is proud to be one of several hundred recipients of federally funded Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement (McNair) program awards. This program was established in honor of Dr. Ronald E. McNair, the second African American to fly in space, who died tragically in the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. As one of several TRIO Programs, the McNair Scholars Program is federally funded by The Department of Education. It is specifically designed to prepare students for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. McNair participants are from disadvantaged backgrounds and have demonstrated strong academic potentials.

Texas A&M University-Commerce McNair Scholars Program is dedicated to help participants complete their undergraduate requirements, encourage entrance into graduate school, and tracking Scholars’ academic progress through to their successful completion of advanced degrees. The goal of our program is to increase the attainment of Ph.D. degrees by students in all disciplines from underrepresented segments of society, low income, and first generations groups respectively. To find out more eligibility Requirements and Application processes in the Program, visit our website: http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/studentLife/campusServices/trioPrograms/mcnairAchievementProgram/default.aspx

In the words of Dr. McNair: “Whether or not you reach your goal in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. Stretch your wings and fly to the sky.” Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.

Wishing each of you the best!
Veronica Reed, MS-Counseling
Texas A&M University-Commerce, TRiO Program Director
TRiO Programs—A Brief History

http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ope/trio/index.html

Federal TRIO Programs—The Federal TRIO Programs are educational opportunity outreach programs designed to motivate and support students from disadvantaged backgrounds. TRIO includes six outreach and support programs targeted to serve and assist low-income, first-generation college students, and students with disabilities to progress through the academic pipeline from middle school to post baccalaureate programs. TRIO also includes a training program for directors and staff of TRIO projects and a dissemination partnership program to encourage the replication or adaptation of successful practices of TRIO projects at institutions and agencies that do not have TRIO grants.

TRIO PROGRAMS

Educational Opportunity Centers—Educational Opportunity Centers (EOC) provide financial aid information, application assistance and neutral college access services to low-income, first generation adults of all ages (veterans, displaced or underemployed workers, eligible immigrants, and school stop-outs receive priority).

Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement—See information provided.

Student Support Services (SSS)—The goal of SSS is to increase the college retention and graduation rates of its participants and facilitate the process of transition from one level of higher education to the next.

Educational Talent Search—Works with junior high through high school students (6th grade thru 12th grade) to stay in school, while providing academic, social, financial, and career counseling.

Upward Bound—Prepares high school students and veterans for success in postsecondary education. Types of projects include regular, Veterans and Math and Science Centers. Regular project services include a summer instructional component; instruction in subjects including mathematics through pre-calculus, laboratory science, and foreign language, mentoring programs, counseling, and exposure to cultural events.

Upward Bound Math/Science—The goal of the program is assisting high school students to recognize and develop their potential to excel in math and science and to encourage them to pursue postsecondary degrees in math and science, and ultimately careers in the math and science profession.

Veterans Upward Bound—Must provide instruction in mathematics through pre-calculus, laboratory science, foreign language, composition and literature. Projects may also provide short-term remedial or refresher courses for veterans who are high school graduates but have delayed pursuing postsecondary education.
Ronald Erwin McNair was born October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. While in junior high school, Dr. McNair was inspired to work hard and persevere in his studies by his family and by a teacher who recognized his scientific potential and believed in him. Dr. McNair graduated as valedictorian from Carver High School in 1967. In 1971, he graduated magna cum laude and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Physics from North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro). Dr. McNair then enrolled in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1976, at the age of 26, he earned his Ph.D. in laser physics. His dissertation was titled, "Energy Absorption and Vibrational Heating in Molecules Following Intense Laser Excitation." Dr. McNair was presented an honorary doctorate of Laws from North Carolina A&T State University in 1978, an honorary doctorate of Science from Morris College in 1980, and an honorary doctorate of science from the University of South Carolina in 1984.

While working as a staff physicist with Hughes Research Laboratory, Dr. McNair soon became a recognized expert in laser physics. His many distinctions include being a Presidential Scholar (1971-74), a Ford Foundation Fellow (1971-74), a National Fellowship Fund Fellow (1974-75), and a NATO Fellow (1975). He was also a sixth degree black belt in karate and an accomplished saxophonist. Because of his many accomplishments, he was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978. His first space shuttle mission launched successfully from Kennedy Space Center on February 3, 1984. Dr. Ronald E. McNair was the second African American to fly in space. Two years later he was selected to serve as mission specialist aboard the ill-fated U.S. Challenger space shuttle. He was killed instantly when the Challenger exploded one minute, thirteen seconds after it was launched. Dr. McNair was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. After his death in the Challenger Space Shuttle accident on January 28, 1986, members of Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. Their goal was to encourage low-income and first-generation college students, and students from historically underrepresented ethnic groups to expand their educational opportunities by enrolling in a Ph.D. program and ultimately pursue an academic career. This program is dedicated to the high standards of achievement inspired by Dr. McNair's life. Biography found at: http://mcnairscholars.com/about/
McNair Scholars Program Services

The McNair Scholars Program provides services to assist our scholars reach their academic, research, and professional potential. Our program provides support services, activities, and experiences that represent an investment in your future. We are committed to seeing our scholars succeed and in return, expect a firm commitment from each of you. We look forward to working with scholars and faculty and assisting scholars achieve their academic, professional, and personal goals [http://mcnairscholars.com/](http://mcnairscholars.com/)

McNair Scholars receive encouragement to take advantage of the various services offered through the program. The McNair Scholars Staff will provide or arrange to provide the following services to our Scholars:

- Scholarship Assistance
- Career and Personal Assistance
- Assistance with applications for Graduate School, fellowships, and scholarships
- Printing and copies of materials needs for academics/conferences
- Letters of Recommendation
- Tutoring
- Financial Aid Assistance and Financial Literacy
- GRE Test Preparation
- Faculty Mentors
- Research Opportunities
- Assistance with Graduate School Admissions
- Summer Program Research/Internship Stipends
- Graduate School Fairs/Cultural Activities
- Resume Cover Letters, CVs, etc.
- Local/State/Regional/ National Conferences
- Publication of your research in the *McNair Scholars Program Research Journal, Texas A&M University, Commerce*
- Annual Publication of the *Scholars Report*, which is disseminated to the University Community

**Facebook and Online Resources:** In addition to our resources in the office, we also have our own Facebook page: [www.facebook.com/tamucmcnair.com](http://www.facebook.com/tamucmcnair.com) Please join our Facebook group to receive information about scholarships, graduate programs, internships, financial aid opportunities, study abroad, or summer research opportunities.
Career Planning, Resources, and Resume Bank

http://www.onetonline.org/
www.careermag.com
www.usajobs.opm.gov
www.jobbankusa.com
http://www.hispanic-jobs.com/
http://www.goabroad.com/teach-abroad#Teach Abroad
http://www.teachers-teachers.com/candidateinformation/#Teacher Candidates
http://www.brookhavencollege.edu/studentsvcs/career/veterans-web.aspx#Brookhaven Veteran Services
http://www.h1visajobs.com/
www.careerbuilder.com
www.indeed.com

Financial Aid

http://www.fafsa.ed.gov/
http://www.hhloans.com/
www.fastweb.com
http://www.collegefortexans.com/
http://www.hsf.net/
www.finaid.org
www.actuarialfoundation.org/programs/actuarial/scholarships.shtml#diversity
www.legacyforhealth.org/adams-scholarship.aspx
www.adelantefund.org
www.amac-org.com/
www.alliancescholars.org
http://ceae.aicpa.org/Resources/Scholarships+and+Awards/
www.americorps.gov
www.marshallscholarship.org
http://lulac.org/
http://risescholarshipfoundation.org/
http://www.uncf.org/
http://www.scholarships4school.com/scholarships-for-women.html
http://www.nwsa.org/employ/opportunities.php
http://apa.org/research/funding/index.aspx
https://financialaid.tamu.edu/
http://www.npcsc.org/Applicants/Applicants/fellowshipinfo.html
http://texas-veterans.com/education/hazlewood
http://pdsoros.org/
http://www.mellon.org/grant_programs/programs
http://www.research.att.com/evergreen/working_with_us/internships.html
https://researchfunding.duke.edu/detail.asp?OppID=5212
http://www.hertzfoundation.org/
http://www.trpi.org/
http://www.students.gov/STUGOVWebApp/Public?topicID=19&operation=topic
http://www.tsgc.utexas.edu/
http://www.gemfellowship.org/
http://sites.nationalacademies.org/PGA/FordFellowships/index.htm
http://npsc.org/index.html
http://www.ssrc.org/fellowships/

**Graduate Programs and Information**

http://www.gradschools.com/
http://www.gradview.com/collegesearch/state/texasgraduateschools.jsp?showNonFeatured=true
http://www.ets.org/gre/
https://www.aamc.org/students/applying/mcat/
http://www.princetonreview.com/
http://cgsnet.org/
www.jumbotests.com
http://www.phdproject.org/conference.html
http://www.preparing-faculty.org/
http://www.nasonline.org/site/PageServer?pagename=AWARDS_main
http://www.cdc.gov/
http://www.loc.gov/index.html
http://nih.gov/
http://sacnas.org/
http://www.tjea[s/prg/education/ugsrf/SumResLINKs.htm

**Time and Stress Management**

http://www.timethoughts.com/time-management.htm
http://www.studygs.net/timman.htm

**Additional Information**

http://mcnairscholars.com/
http://www.zoomerang.com/
www.aamc.org
http://www.nsf.gov/
http://www.opm.gov/disability/
http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/kritzer/Teaching/ps552/resprop.html
http://pcat.com/
http://refworks.com/
Academic Integrity and Plagiarism

According to the Texas A&M University, College Station Honor System Office, plagiarism is "The appropriation of another person's ideas, processes, results, or words without giving appropriate credit." Plagiarism is just one form of academic misconduct; plagiarism and cheating are perhaps the most commonly practiced.

The most prevalent form of plagiarism occurs when a writer neglects to credit the author textual sources in a term paper or writing assignment. Plagiarism applies to written or electronic text found in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, web sites, etc. However, it also pertains to visual documents such as photographs, charts, graphs, drawings, statistics and material taken from lectures, interviews or television programs. In other words, it covers all created sources.

Avoiding Plagiarism - Less experienced writers may commit plagiarism as a result of an incomplete or poor knowledge of citation and documentation standards or because they are incorporating standards from one field or culture inappropriately into another. Inexperienced writers may also be unsure of the difference between direct quotation, paraphrasing, and summary. Poor note taking habits may also lead to plagiarism.

It is your responsibility as an author, and yours alone, to acknowledge and document your sources. In other words, if you use another person’s ideas or words, you must tell the reader which words or ideas you borrowed, from whom, and where he or she might find the text you used.

Plagiarism Guidelines - Any time you use ideas or words that appear in a document written by someone else, you must formally reference that work (document), even if it is not something that has been published. Whether the ideas were written about by a recognized expert in your field, or by a person who is “unknown” (for example, another student whose paper is unpublished), you must cite any words or ideas that did not originate with you.

If you paraphrase (put into your own words) another person’s ideas, you must still provide a reference citation. Be careful that your paraphrasing is not so close to the original that it would be better to simply use a direct quotation with quotation marks. (Leaving off quotation marks is a large error, even if you have made a parenthetical reference at the end of the sentence or passage; you could face a charge of plagiarism for such an omission.)

If you are given an example or model of the work (such as a lab report) that you are going to produce, you may use the format to guide your own work, but you should not use any portion of the text or ideas in your own work (except for well-known and accepted phrases and terms used in your field), unless you cite the example in your own written report. If you plan to quote or paraphrase an example or model provided for you by your instructor, make sure that they will allow you to use the example in this way. (Typically, they will want you to write it in your own words and using your own ideas.)

Researchers should cite themselves when they are building upon previous research. This clarifies what information is new and where the previous information is published. While students need not cite their own previously written papers, standards of academic honesty would indicate that they should refrain from submitting the same paper in another course, without the permission of the instructor.

For complete information on academic dishonesty, please check the link below (Courtesy of Texas A&M University).

Program Components

1. The first component of the McNair Scholars Program is to expose each Scholar to the research experiences by paring them up with a faculty mentor in their field of study.

2. The second component of the McNair Scholars Program is to provide them with resources and information in preparation for graduate school, followed by doctoral school.

3. The third component of the McNair Scholars program is allowing Scholars to compete and work with their faculty mentor in the creation, editing, and presentation of a scholarly research proposal. Once their proposal is approved, the Scholar will work closely with their mentor to research, write, edit, and present their findings to the Program and regional/national conferences.

4. The final component of the McNair Scholars Program is the final paper of their research for publication into our McNair Scholars Publication journal, with the possibility of having their findings published nationally in their chosen field. Also, students will successfully complete their Graduate School admissions to the school of their choice, while ensuring and secure financial aid, and other resources to fund their post baccalaureate studies.

Objectives of the McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University, Commerce

I. 80% of McNair Scholars who completed a research or other scholarly activity will continue in their undergraduate program or enroll in a graduate program in the fall semester of the academic years immediately following the McNair Scholars academic year in which they completed the research or scholarly activity.

II. 50% of new McNair Scholars served in each academic year will attain a baccalaureate degree within three years.

III. 75% of all baccalaureate degree recipients will enroll in a post baccalaureate program by the fall of the term of the academic year immediately following completion of that degree.

IV. 20% of McNair Program participants will attain a doctoral degree within ten years (10) of attainment of the baccalaureate degree.
The Goal of the McNair Scholars Program—The goals and objectives of the Texas A&M University-Commerce McNair Scholars Program are to introduce sophomores, juniors, and seniors from underrepresented, first generation, and income-challenged groups to the process of research and graduate school admissions. Scholars have the opportunity to work one-on-one during their undergraduate experience with a faculty mentor, who will guide and assist them in academic research in their chosen field of study and expose them to the life as a scholar at an institution of higher education.

McNair Scholars Guidelines—The McNair Scholars Program is for high-achieving, self-motivating students who want to prepare and excel in graduate school and beyond. All McNair Scholars will take their academics seriously, work hard for all their academic achievements, and are interested in pursuing and completing faculty mentored supervised research opportunities in their chosen field of study, which will ultimately lead to their doctoral degree (PhD).

I. Time Commitment

- Scholars, please realize that faculty mentor selected for either volunteer research assistantship or summer research project are extremely busy individuals. Faculty Mentors spend a majority of their time teaching, writing grants, conducting research, and serving on other university related activities/committees. Therefore, Scholars are advised to be patience with their mentors.

- Starting spring 2012, and beyond, each McNair Scholar who is not actively working with a specific faculty mentor (both the Scholar and mentor have signed a contract) will meet twice a month with the Assistant Director (AD) and/or the Graduate Assistant (GA) (if the TRiO Director and Assistant Director are unavailable, please check with the Graduate Assistant for updates that are academic/graduate school related ONLY). During these bi-weekly meetings, each Scholar is expected to update the TRiO Director, AD, or the GA with academic progress, volunteer hours, graduate school information/application, resumes, curriculum vitae, and other graduate-related information.

- Scholars who are actively working with their mentors (research, literature review, workshops, research, etc.) must meet weekly with their mentor. Each Scholar will meet with updates to the TRiO Director, AD, and/or the Graduate Assistant twice a month to update the McNair Scholars Staff on their progress with their volunteer research or summer research. In addition, Scholars’ research proposals, each Scholar will dedicate time with their faculty mentor, providing updates on classes, grades, letters of recommendations, and applications for graduate schools.
The McNair Scholars Volunteer Research Assistantship is a full-time commitment. McNair Scholars must spend a minimum of 10 hours per week for 10 weeks assisting their potential mentor with their specific research. Scholars will meet more than twice with their potential faculty mentor during the 100 hours of volunteer research experience. Scholars will meet once a month with the McNair Staff for updates, turn in documents, etc. regarding volunteer research.

The McNair Scholars Summer Research Component is a full-time commitment. McNair Scholars must spend a minimum of 25-35 hours per week on summer research, especially working closely with faculty mentors and checking in with the McNair Scholars staff (minimum of 4 times during the summer). In most cases, faculty mentors may require Scholars to commit additional time. Scholars should not hold a full-time summer job or take more than 6 hours of summer coursework.

II. Other General Guidelines

- **Seniors** will spend the fall semester prior to their graduation focused on graduate school, the statement of purpose (essay), graduate school admissions/visitations, GRE prep (and taking the GRE), scholarships, grants, etc.

- **Juniors and sophomores** will have the option to volunteer to work with their prospective mentor (if they do not have one already) in preparation for gaining knowledge about a specific research topic, summer research, prepare themselves for college visits, workshops/conferences and graduate school admissions/financial aid.

- Attend mandatory weekly and/or monthly meetings with faculty mentor (minimum 2 times per month and/or as necessary).

- Attend mandatory monthly meetings with TRiO Director, AD or the GA (twice a month).

- Attend all mandatory seminars and workshops, and/or scheduled events (5 per semester and 3 in the summer).

- Scholars, be on time to weekly and monthly meetings with your faculty mentor.

- Scholars, be on time to your monthly meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.
- If an emergency arises, make sure to contact specific faculty mentors, McNair Scholars staff, etc. Also, Scholars must ensure to make-up your meetings/assignments the following week.

- Scholars must maintain a minimum grade point average of 2.5 and higher (most graduate schools accept students with 3.00 and higher).

- Scholars please read and follow guidelines outlined in this McNair Scholars Handbook. If you do not understand guidelines, need clarification, or have questions, ask. Scholars should be open to learn from their own experiences and the experiences of faculty mentors and the McNair Staff. Communication is paramount for Scholars to be successful in this program.

- Scholars please read and follow guidelines that your faculty mentor outlines during either volunteer research or summer research.

- Scholars defer to faculty mentor’s expertise regarding research methodology, writing style, and paper development (APA, MLA, Chicago, and Turabian).

- Realize that faculty mentors and the rest of the university faculty and staff are providing Scholars with opportunities to go beyond research. These are valuable opportunities and resources that can assist in reaching your potential short and long-term goals.

- Scholars please meet all deadlines for written work/benchmarks (volunteer or summer research).

- Scholars, check all email and the McNair Scholars Facebook page daily for announcements, scholarship opportunities, workshops, conferences, etc.

- Accept constructive criticism and resolve to act upon it in a mature and professional manner. Scholars keep an open mind to FEEDBACK and incorporate faculty mentor’s suggestions.
- Expect to receive routine assignments initially during the first couple of months of either volunteer work or summer research. There will be times when Scholars are not "doing" research. Scholars must demonstrate both abilities and growth so that they receive more volunteer or summer research responsibilities.

- Regardless of the stage of volunteer research or summer research, Scholars should always do their best.

- Have plenty of energy, enthusiasm, and stay focused in matters related to scholarly and research performance.

- All McNair Scholars and staff must maintain a level of professionalism. Scholars and staff must be respectful, honest, and kind towards one another.

- Communicate! Avoid mistakes and misunderstandings by letting your faculty mentor know what you are doing and by asking for information when you are uncertain about procedures or what to do next.

- Scholar will have an opportunity to present summer research results at conferences, workshops, or symposiums.

- Scholars must apply to a minimum of 5 (five) graduate schools and notify the McNair Scholars office of their acceptance to graduate school and must include copies of financial aid packages.

- Scholars, notify the McNair Scholars Program with change of address, phone number, email, etc.

- Scholars should complete and follow-up with exit interview and others surveys once they graduate from TAMU-Commerce.

- Scholars should maintain contact with the McNair Scholars Staff for the next 7-10 years (beyond your undergraduate degree).

- Scholars should agree to allow the McNair Scholars Staff to contact their graduate program to receive updates on graduate status.
*Attendance to all scheduled/calendar events requires your full participation. If you cannot make scheduled events, please seek approval from the TRiO Director or Assistant Director (do not wait until the night before the activity please).

**Parameters for Determining Good Matches in Research Guidelines for Students and Mentors (from the Mentor Handbook)**

Here are some steps in determining whether or not the Volunteer Research or Summer Research that benefit Scholars. Following the suggestions of a "match" from the McNair Scholars Office, the Scholar should contact the prospective Mentor by telephone or email and set up a mutually convenient time for a conversation. **Note to Scholars:** Remember proper behavior and attire are important for first impression.

During the interview, both Scholars and Mentors should do the following:

- Review the required forms together to become familiar with the components of the Volunteer Research opportunity or Summer Research project.
- Discuss expectations such as duties, hours, behaviors, and goals.
- Determine whether or not schedules are compatible and goals are realistic.
- Determine whether or not both parties will be able to "get along."
- Ask questions that will make the expectations clear such as "Do I punch a time clock", "What is the best way to contact you?" "Is there a dress code?" "Can you write and present a PowerPoint presentation? Both the Mentor and Scholar should not make assumptions regarding expectations. Discussion and clear directions will help avoid confusion and misunderstanding.
- Scholars should be prepared to discuss and/or present portfolio information such as current GPA and previous research experiences, including research, presentations, etc.
- Mentors should identify specific skills and assignments that the Scholar will tackle, keeping in mind that a mid-point assessment, daily journal and other documents necessary for stipend.
- If the Scholar and the Mentor are satisfied that a working relationship can be established, then complete the Volunteer Research Assistantship contract and return it to the McNair Scholars Program Office. Alternatively, if this is Summer Research, then correct forms must be used. A Summer Research contract will be prepared for signatures of both parties.
- Summer Research Stipends (and any additional research stipends, if funding is available each year) for Scholars and for Mentors are paid after the cumulative completion of 250 hours, provided that all documentation submitted on time for pay dates on or near the
first of the month (see Program Calendar). Otherwise, stipends will be paid out by the next payout date. No pro-rated stipends will be paid for unfulfilled benchmarks (e.g. less than the blocks of time specified above).

- The McNair Scholars Program Office reserves the right to terminate any Volunteer Research and Summer Research at any time for non-compliance with Program policies or for reasons determined by the TRiO Program Director.
**The Role of the Faculty Mentor**

McNair Scholars often give credit to their Faculty Mentors, as a vital individual to their success with either volunteer research or summer research internship and their overall progress towards graduate study. Faculty Mentors assist Scholars in developing professional work habits, research skills, and relationships conducive to future doctoral pursuits. Use the following checklist to choose your mentor.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Prospect # 1</th>
<th>Prospect # 2</th>
<th>Prospect # 3</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does the professor have the time needed to take you on as a research scholar?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is his/her demeanor (personality, body language, etc.) appealing and comfortable for your research interest?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are their ongoing research activities in the area of your research interest?</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have former undergraduate and graduate students of the professor received proper guidance, had good experiences, and completed their projects in a timely manner?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is the professor so busy with ongoing research grants/projects that he/she may not have sufficient time for adequate guidance of your research project?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the professor supervise appropriate space and laboratory equipment for you to have adequate space and equipment?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Does the professor anticipate being at the university for the entire time of your project?</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the professor guide you through the completion of the research article and another professional presentation of the research results?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does the professor exhibit the ability to communicate openly, clearly, and effectively?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Will the professor help provide access to articles, books, etc. that will aid the development of the literature review?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Among the faculty and university community, is the professor respected for his/her research, writing, and publications?</td>
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</tr>
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**Helpful Semester Checklists** - Mentoring undergraduate researchers is the most important aspect of research for the McNair Scholars. This is especially true in the data gathering and writing phases of the Scholar’s research. In order to create a successful and intellectually stimulating experience for both Scholars and Faculty Mentors, we have created four seasonal checklists.

**Winter semester checklist**

- Each faculty mentor should attend the Spring Mentor Orientation in January (prior to the spring semester) and prior to meeting with their Scholar.
- Once paired with a Scholar, faculty mentors should discuss ideas about his/her original research interests and your own ongoing research.
- Faculty Mentors, please ask your Scholar if they have taken any research courses? If *no*, Scholars can either register to take a research course in their major or they can ask their potential faculty mentor to become a *Volunteer Research Assistant*. As a Volunteer Research Assistant, Scholars will learn about the research process, assist their future faculty mentor with upcoming research, and become skilled in every aspect of the research process. If *yes*, then Scholars can develop an actual research project with their faculty mentor.
- Has the Scholar identified a possible research topic with their faculty mentor?
- As a Scholar, are you able to formulate a hypothesis?
- Has the faculty mentor guided you in a literature search for at least 5 articles from primary sources?
- Will your summer research project require you using surveys or evaluations of human subjects? Will it require approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB)? If so please read the section on the IRB below found at [http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateForms.aspx](http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/academics/graduateSchool/graduateForms.aspx)
- During the winter break, Scholars should carefully outline the research proposal with your Faculty Mentor. Define and discuss realistic goals and timeframes prior to the spring semester.
- Scholars, should always practice patience with faculty mentor and remember he/she is here to guide the scholar through this process. Work closely with faculty mentor, initially meeting early in the winter to formulate the research proposal, guide you through the literature review, determine the research methodology and discuss with your Faculty Mentor your responsibilities in data gathering.
- Faculty Mentors must demonstrate sincere interest in the intellectual development of the Scholar.
Spring semester checklist

- Submit either the Volunteer Research Program contract or the Summer Research Forms before April 20__
- The Volunteer Research Assistantship contract is due to the McNair Scholars Office by April 20__

Summer checklist—For Volunteer Research Program:

- Did you complete your time/effort sheets and have your faculty mentors sign off on them? Sign any additional Scholars’ forms?
- Did you complete and return the Faculty Mentor’s evaluation?

For Summer Research Program:

- Did your faculty mentor approve the preliminary findings: detailed outline of the paper, introduction, literature review, bibliography, and preliminary data? Is it in the format stated in the Scholars Handbook? It is due to the McNair Program office on ______. The Scholars have specific deadlines for the sections of their research. Please refer to the calendar (given to Scholars during the summer semester). Mentors and Scholars are co-authors of this research.
- Did your faculty mentor approve Draft One: introduction, literature review, methodology, discussion, conclusion, analysis and bibliography? Is the document in the correct format? These are due to the McNair Program office by August 17.
- Did your faculty mentor approve the Final paper? Did the faculty mentor read and edit Scholar’s research paper ensuring that it is in publishable form. This is due to the McNair Program office on or around September 30.
- Did your faculty mentor approve the Scholar’s poster draft for the Undergraduate research Symposium during academic year? Each Scholar should be able to show their faculty mentors an excellent version by the end of April.
- Did your faculty mentor review and provide feedback on your personal statement and write letters of recommendation for graduate school applications
- Did your faculty mentor track your work on the Time and Effort worksheet monthly and submit to the McNair Program Assistant Director. They will receive weekly email reminders about due dates, etc.

Fall semester checklist

- Will you be presenting your work at a meeting in your field? Travel budget requests must be submitted for prior approval. Monies are awarded on a need and available budget basis.
• Complete the Scholar Evaluation at the end of the research period. Please do not hesitate to contact the McNair Director 903-886-5836, AD 903-886-5466 if questions or concerns arise as you work with your Scholar(s).

Faculty Mentor Stipend—The research stipend for faculty members is based upon the number of active Scholars in the program each year (11-month contract, including pre and post research work). This stipend money is provided to defray/supplement the costs the faculty mentor may incur while supervising a Scholar’s research. Thus, the stipend can be used for conferences, seminars, workshops, travel, supplies (limited research materials), miscellaneous fees, or any other costs incurred as a result of the participation in the Summer Research Program. Mentors should contact Ms. Veronica Reed, TRiO Program Director for further information regarding the faculty mentor stipend.

1. Facilitating the Scholar’s research and other Scholarly work
   ➢ To provide direct supervision and weekly support for the McNair Scholar from the onset of an agreed research project and assigned Scholar.

   ➢ Assist the Scholar to identify realistic goals for the research proposal

   ➢ Provide students with preliminary readings from juried publications such that the student gets a —head start in the research process

   ➢ Meet the research benchmarks and deadlines as described in the Student Handbook and in the forms section of this Handbook for your convenience. Print out 1 copy for ongoing use.

   ➢ Assist the Scholar in developing hypotheses, methodologies, and means for collecting data for the research project.

   ➢ Hold the Scholar accountable for time, quality of work, and effort

   ➢ Evaluate the Scholar’s overall performance (and the program’s effectiveness)

   ➢ Report to the McNair staff any needs or concerns regarding the Scholar or the progress of the research

   ➢ Submit completed Time and Effort forms to account for hours spent with Scholars and to validate stipend payout.
➢ Directly supervise the Scholars’ research, the poster creation, presentation, and the submission of a research paper to the McNair Program office
➢ Assist the Scholar in preparing and submitting abstracts for presentation at discipline specific conference, or for journal publication in his/her chosen field

2. Promoting a professional relationship with the Scholar
➢ Discuss with the Scholar that their summer research and/or volunteer research assistantship is a team effort and establish rules and regulations outlined in the Scholar’s and Mentor’s handbooks

➢ Become acquainted with the Scholar as an individual, to facilitate effective mentoring of the student as a developing Scholar within his or her field.

➢ Provide an open learning environment, to facilitate the Scholar feeling comfortable in approaching and asking the Mentor questions.

3. Fostering the Scholar’s general intellectual development and preparation for Graduate Studies
➢ Share information on graduate programs with the Scholar and encourage him or her to pursue graduate (especially Doctoral) education.

➢ Advise and provide feedback to Scholar regarding the Statement of Purpose for graduate school applications.

➢ Write letters of recommendation for Scholars applying to graduate school or for graduate funding.

➢ Demonstrate a sincere interest in the intellectual development of the Scholar.

➢ Encourage the Scholar to think critically and respect different points of view.

➢ Introduce the Scholar to departmental activities and professional organizations.

➢ Help the Scholar submit a proposal to present at a professional meeting and/or take the Scholar to a professional conference.

4. Participating in McNair Scholars Program events
➢ Show an active interest in assisting Scholars in presenting data at and attending Research conferences, workshops, seminars, and symposium presentations.
➢ Assist the Program Office in coordinating Enrichment Activities
➢ Attend the Mentor’s Roundtables, and other events.

**Research Support**—Faculty mentors can submit a request form for funds that exceed research stipend that they are given to support their Scholars. Each request is reviewed by the TRiO Director to determine if funds can be allocated to meet the expense.

**Volunteer Research Hours (Completed during the fall, spring, and summer)**—offers Scholars an opportunity to complete research without receiving a stipend. Scholars learn how to approach research and scholarly work by shadowing a qualified mentor, while completing 100 hours of volunteer service with the mentor. Scholars are not expected to perform independent work, but rather learn skills that they will use to complete their own research (summer research or graduate level research). At the end of the Volunteer Research, Scholars will complete a 5-10 page paper to the TRiO Director, AD, or GA about their experiences (see pgs. 28-29 for paper guidelines).

**Research Stipend (Scholars)**—The Summer Research Program stipend is based upon the Scholars’ hours of active performance and documented paperwork each week/month. The Scholar and their faculty mentor will establish both benchmarks and deadlines throughout the ten weeks of the summer research project. The McNair Scholars Staff reserves the right to delay and/or withhold your summer stipend payments until faculty mentors complete time and effort reports, monthly reports, etc. The McNair Scholars Office evaluates your progress in conjunction with your faculty mentor. In the event the Scholars do not meet the program’s expectations (deadlines and benchmarks) you could be removed from the program. The Research stipend is $2330 (three separate payments).

Stipend checks will be issued on Fridays after 1pm. Checks will be held until all documents (monthly and/or bi-weekly) are submitted to the TRiO Project Director, AD, or the GA.

**NOTE:** Scholars who do not complete research benchmarks and the final paper will have to return 100% of the total amount of stipend already issued. Remember the completion of your Summer Research includes weekly time and effort reports, faculty mentor monthly reports, reaching benchmarks, and the final research project. Final research papers must be typed and edited by faculty mentor. Faculty mentor must sign off on all paper verifying the final paper. Scholars are also required to complete all benchmarks, etc. related to the stipend.
Conditions under which participants could lose their summer stipend:

- If grade point falls below 2.50.
- If attendance for individually scheduled meetings falls below acceptable levels (more or less than two times).
- If required paperwork is not completed in a timely manner.
- If Scholar fails to participate in research as agreed.
- If other disciplinary action is required by the Texas A&M University System.

Alternative Summer Research Opportunities—We encourage our Scholars to look for research opportunities, as well as internships, etc. at graduate schools that they interested in attending. These summer research opportunities are excellent vehicles for entry into graduate school. We also encourage each Scholar to consider research opportunities abroad as this will add a valuable dimension to Scholars education and will be seen as an asset by graduate admissions personnel. Most research programs at alternative institutions are paid, offering housing, and student insurance, etc.

Move Towards Scholars’ Publication—The TRiO Programs and McNair Scholars understand that preparing manuscripts for professional publication can be excruciating and exasperating. Never-the-less, thanks to diligence, the work that will emerge from the Texas A&M University-Commerce McNair Scholars Program is exciting. Publication leads to additional funding support, visibility for the university, and the appropriate recognition of scholarship. The McNair Scholars Program will cover the costs of page publications, professional posters and provide the structure and format for all professional presentations that Scholars and faculty mentors may give in conferences. Please consider publishing your scholarly work. In the next few years we will establish a McNair Journal of Academic Research to showcase our Program and the contributions of others at TAMU-C.

Program Evaluation—Program Surveys: Scholars must complete the McNair Scholars Information Survey and Evaluation. These surveys and evaluations will be distributed and collected at the end of each semester. A final program evaluation report for the program will be submitted before a Scholars graduates (fall or spring). In addition to program surveys, former Scholars will be contacted for updates on their academic progress and successes. A survey will be emailed and/or mailed to obtain information about the retention, graduation, and post-baccalaureate status of previous Scholars. This information is vital in our efforts to enhance McNair Scholars at A&M University, Commerce as well as useful with grant writing, annual performance reports, and audits.
McNair Research Paper Guidelines

Please submit your final research paper (electronically and as a paper version) to the McNair Assistant Director by the due date indicated on the mentor/mentee contract. Exceptions will only be made based on faculty mentor’s documented statement that Scholars will need an extension. NOTE: Faculty mentor must approve the final draft and sign-off on the Faculty Approval of Research Form.

The write-up should conform to Scholar’s discipline standards and be ready for publication in the Texas A&M University-Commerce McNair Scholars Research Journal. (NOTE: Your mentor may require a lengthier paper, but your paper should at least meet our minimum standards).

The paper should be:

A word document
Completed in APA, MLA, Chicago style or in the style that best fits your research
1” margins
10-20 pages in length, excluding title page, appendices, and bibliography
Times New Roman font, size: 12 point
Double spaced
You may indent or use block style
Indent after each paragraph
Tables, photos, and figures may be included within the body of the paper or grouped at the end as an appendix
Footnotes and endnotes are encouraged

Your research paper should include the following sections

Title page: Provide the title of the research project, name of student, name of faculty mentor, the department and college, and date of the report.

Abstract: Provide a summary of the research including highlights of results. Approximately 200 words. Speak with your faculty mentor for further direction in completing your abstract.

Introduction: Discuss the nature of the project, the issues, past research in this area, etc.

Objectives: Explain what you planned to accomplish.
Description of research: Describe how you reached the objectives of the project. Use subheadings as necessary, i.e. methodology. Present highlights of any data you collected, and explain analysis and interpretation of the results.

Conclusions: Summarize the important findings of your research and discuss the impact of your findings.

Acknowledgements: Give credit to those who helped you conduct the research including your faculty mentor. Include a statement that acknowledges any funding sources, such as the McNair Scholars Program.

Bibliography/ Works Cited: List the references that you used and are cited in your report.

*adapted from the Office of Undergraduate Research, University of Nevada, Reno
McNair Annual Activities

**Mandatory Scholars Orientation**—During the second week of classes (spring semester), there will be a mandatory Orientation for all Scholars. A general review of the Program guidelines and expectations presented by the McNair Scholars Staff will be provided. Scholars will also have an opportunity to address concerns regarding the McNair Scholars Program as well as meet other Scholars. Scholars will receive the necessary forms for twice-a-month meetings, calendars, and any updates on events, meetings, and conferences.

**Workshops/Twice-a-Month Meetings**—Beginning the second week of the spring component, there will be regular McNair meetings. These meetings are mandatory for each Scholar. Scholars should attend the twice-a-month meetings with information regarding academics, personal successes/challenges, research (both mentor and topic), graduate schools admissions, financial aid, scholarships, etc. We will have a 5-12 activities each semester, to include speakers and workshops/seminars that Scholars must take advantage of each semester. A doctor’s note, speaking with the TRiO Director/Assistant Director is required if you must be absent from workshops/seminars and/or meetings and need to be excused from a scheduled McNair Scholars activity.

**McNair Conferences**—Dependent on the availability of funds and scheduling, McNair Scholars are encouraged to participate in a state, regional, and/or national conference (including McNair Scholars Research Conferences). Preference will be given to Scholars who have not presented research at a conference and have attended a minimum of 5 Scholars activities (throughout the academic year). Most of the McNair Scholars Conferences will be in Texas, with the options to travel based upon funding.

**The Undergraduate Research Travel Grant**—the Texas A&M University-Commerce Undergraduate Grant Program offers support for research and creative activities. This competitive program is sponsored by the Provost for Academic Affairs and the Vice-President for Student Access and Success.

The grant competition is held once each semester (typically toward the beginning of term). Two separate competitions are held: (1) The Undergraduate Research Grant Competition and (2) The Undergraduate Travel Grant Competition.

The Undergraduate Research Grant Competition is held to assist undergraduate students who may require funding as they pursue research or creative activities. Proposed funds can be used for the purchase of equipment, software licenses, printing, postage, data searches, and data...
collection. Students may request a **maximum of $500**. These funds cannot be used to pay student wages or for travel. For more information please visit the Undergraduate Research Grant at [http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/research/CURCA/UndergradGrants/default.aspx](http://web.tamu-commerce.edu/research/CURCA/UndergradGrants/default.aspx).

**Research Budgets and Travel for Faculty Mentors/Scholars**—The McNair Program encourages the publication of meaningful research data and will support supplies purchases and travel to conferences. However, money is limited and awarded on a need basis for approved purchases. Please follow the guidelines below so that you can tap into this support function:

- On campus housing (summer only)
- Transportation
- Supplies as pertains to the research project
- Travel monies for presentation of data at a meeting related to the research
- Software
- Additional academic resources

**Supply Requests**—Consumables, participant incentives, software, paper, books and other related research needs will be considered upon submission of a proposed budget (see forms). Purchases will be made directly by the Program Office. *Non-allowed items include: gift cards, gas cards, food, flowers, cash, and furniture, books for courses or non-research activities, liquor, cigarette.*

- For participant incentives contact the Program Office for ideas that have been useful in the past
- All software must be loaded onto McNair computers *AND BECOMES THE PROPERTY OF THE PROGRAM upon completion of use by the mentor/student team*. Similarly, small equipment (e.g. tape-recorders) also becomes the property of the Program Office.
- A budget request may or may not be approved. You will not be reimbursed for expenses of non-approved budgetary outlays. It is advisable to wait for notification of approval.

**Graduate School Visits/Travel**—Most of the graduate school visits/travel will be as a group. Individual visits are reserved for those Scholars who are committed and receive graduate admissions. Requests for travel are only for travel to McNair Scholars Research conferences and conferences where you will present; sit on a panel, and graduate school visits/interviews. Those requesting travel must submit a Travel Request Form located in your handbook or through the McNair Scholars Office.

**Travel Guidelines**—Starting Spring 2012, all Scholars must complete their travel forms through the McNair Scholars Program (and the University prior to and following your travel). All Scholars must include the following information, which may include accommodations, food, airfare, bus, cab,
or transportation, etc. For those of you needing to fly to your destination, we will use the University’s Concur site to book your flight, once we have arriving and returning dates.

1. Your dates of travel (when you are arriving and when you return). Example if your conference/presentation is November 3rd and you need to be there before 8am on the 3rd, you will need to leave November 2nd (overnight).
2. The name of the hotel/resort and the cost per night for your room.
3. Your full name (no nicknames, middle names, etc.) and date of birth.
4. How you will travel to and from the hotel (carpooling with others, cab, bus, etc.).
5. Any registration fees for the conference? If so, please let us know the cost of those fees.
6. The name of the Conference/Workshop you are attending (example National Science Foundation at the University of North Texas, include city and state).

If your department/mentor has already made any of the mentioned arrangements, please let us know as soon as possible (example if your food costs are covered during your travel or the registration has been paid).

Other Travel Guidelines:

A. Travel light and take only what you need. Remember you have to pay for your luggage if it exceeds two bags (sometimes one on some airlines). The McNair Scholars Program will not cover payment of two or more bags. You will have to pay for your second bag yourself.

B. Transportation— for travel within the state, use of a private car must be arranged by the McNair Scholars Program. You may not be reimbursed for the rental car if you do not inform the McNair Scholars Program prior to your departure. You may receive reimbursement for your gas expenditures. For trips involving air, bus, or train usage, ALL receipts must be provided for full reimbursement. You must plan your trip with the McNair Scholars staff before you finalize any travel plans that involve requesting funds through the program. Please plan to coordinate ALL travel plans through the McNair Scholars Program.
C. **Accommodations** - You may be reimbursed for the cost of the room charge (single rate) plus tax. You must submit an itemized hotel bill. You will not be reimbursed for any phone calls made, movies rented, extra room guests, etc. at the hotel.

D. **Meals** - You will be reimbursed for meal at the per diem rate (**this does not include alcohol**). Remember you are responsible to leave a tip for services provided at restaurants. **If meals are included in the registration fees, you will not receive reimbursed for any meals you choose to have your own.**

E. **General Travel information:** A travel packet will be given to each Scholar attending conferences with the TRiO Director and/or the Assistant Director. This packet will contain all necessary information relating to travel, lodging, transportation, and conference information. **Always Get a Receipt, No Receipt...No Reimbursement!**

**Non-Allowable Expenses:** The following expenses are NOT approved for reimbursement:

- Long Distance telephone charges
- Room service charges (unless it is for your meal allowance)
- Movie charges
- Baby or pet sitting costs incurred in your absence
- Personal items needed for trip
- Souvenirs
- Books, audible, or magazines
- Alcoholic beverages
- Meals included in the Registration Fee

Please do not assume you will be reimbursed. Check with the McNair Staff before the expense accessed!

**Termination from the McNair Scholars Program**

The McNair Scholars Program Staff reserve the right to terminate any student or faculty mentor who violates the Program guidelines or Texas A&M University, Commerce policies. Any Scholar terminated for non-performance, negligence, or gross misconduct will be ineligible to future consideration in the McNair Scholars at Texas A&M University, Commerce. The steps that the program staff follows to document and address inappropriate behavior and possible termination form the program are:

1. Scholars will receive both a verbal and written warning when a rule is violated.
2. Missing meetings/workshops/conferences or other planned educational and/or cultural activities without prior approval from the Director or Assistant Director.

3. Violating ANY of the University's policies during on and off-campus events, meetings, conferences, etc.

4. Scholars who fail to complete their summer research in a timely manner (to include extension). Scholars must discuss the violation with the Assistant Director who will document the Scholar’s response and steps that will follow to rectify the situation.

5. If there is a second violation of the program rules by the Scholar, then the TRiO Director will meet with the Scholar to discuss and document steps to rectify the situation, with the possibility of termination from the Program.

**Mentor Grievances**

In the event that a Scholar encounters an issue or problem with their faculty mentor that they know is beyond their control, the Scholar should schedule a meeting with the TRiO Director and/or the Assistant Director so that the issue or problem can be discussed and resolved. Every effort will be made to resolve issues or problems and misunderstandings. In the event that no resolution is made, the TRiO Director will decide what actions to take in the best interests of the Scholar and faculty member.

**What McNair Scholars need to do to prepare for Graduate School?**

The McNair Scholars Program assists and prepares highly-achieving, motivating students for graduate school. Scholars take everything they do academically, professionally, and mentally seriously, working hard to ensure their post graduate future. As Scholars prepares to enter graduate school, transitioning from student to scholar-from receiving information to producing and present individual findings.

Each Scholar will join a community of scholars and professionals at the graduate and doctoral level. So applying to graduate school is very competitive and similar to applying for a job. Scholars cannot simply fill out a graduate school application and expect to get into school when they want to. Scholars must take a more proactive approach to graduate school.

If a Scholar is serious about pursuing a graduate degree, now is the time to get ready for this process. The McNair Scholars Program staff is here to assist such Scholars through this process, as well as his or her faculty mentors. NOTE: Scholars are ultimately responsible for getting their work done in a timely manner (including financial aid, scholarships, statement of
purpose, etc.). Remember Scholars, you will receive compensation for the completion of their summer research. Also remember learning and maintaining a level of professionalism is expected.

**Graduate Fee Waiver here at TAMU-Commerce**

The McNair Scholars fee waiver process is not done through a formal university process. The Graduate School usually covers the cost. If you have any McNair student who applies to one of our graduate programs, let our office know and we will work with them on the application fee. Also, we are trying to resurrect a small McNair scholarship program for McNair Scholars that we had a few years ago, so point them our direction also.

Dean of Graduate Studies & Research  
Texas A&M University-Commerce  
P O Box 3011, Commerce, TX 75429-3011  
Phone: 903/886-5159; Fax: 903/886-5165

**Graduate School Glossary A-Z**

**Advisor**-Sometimes referred to as a major professor, advisors are faculty members who mentor graduate students through the graduate school process. The advisor/advisee relationship is probably the most important relationship a student will have in graduate school.

**Cost-of-living**-The amount of money it takes to live in a particular geographic area. Cost-of-living indices look at the costs of taxes, housing, food, transportation, and other necessities.

**Dissertation**-A document that presents a doctoral student’s research. A dissertation must be judged by an examination committee to include original, independent, and significant contributions to the student’s field.

**Doctoral or PhD degree**-An advanced degree designed to provide extensive expertise in a specialized field, often leading to careers as a professor or researcher. Students are required to generate new knowledge by conducting independent research. Depending on the program and whether or not a student completes a master’s degree first, the PhD may generally take four to six years to complete.

**Faculty**-Teachers at a university, including professors, associate professors, and assistant professors.
Fellowship-Similar to scholarships, fellowships are merit-based financial awards that provide money (often called a stipend) for living and educational expenses. In general, fellowships allow students to pursue graduate study full-time. Recipients do not have to repay fellowships and often do not have to work in return for the award.

Funding-Financial support provided by academic institutions, government agencies, philanthropic foundations, and other organizations that help students pay for graduate study. Examples of funding include teaching assistantships, research assistantships, and fellowships. More than 70% of Purdue University’s full-time graduate students receive funding by or through the University.

Graduate School-A central office that oversees graduate education and provides services to its programs and students. The Purdue University Graduate School offers services to graduate students through offices such as the Fellowships and Professional Development office. This office provides tools, including the funding database, for locating fellowships and assistantships as well as various workshops for improving students’ networking, interviewing, and other skills. Other offices in the Graduate School include, but are not limited to: Admissions, Multicultural Programs, and Recruitment Services.

GRE (Graduate Record Examination)-is for students who wish to apply to graduate school what the SAT and ACT are for undergraduate school. The GRE is a standardized test that measure knowledge and skills:

- **The Verbal Reasoning section measures your ability** to analyze and draw conclusions from discourse, understand multiple levels of meaning, select important points and understand the meanings of sentences and entire texts.
- **The Quantitative Reasoning section measures your ability** to interpret and analyze quantitative information and use mathematical skills such as arithmetic, algebra, geometry, probability and statistics to solve problems.
- **The Analytical Writing section measures your ability** to sustain a well-focused, coherent discussion, articulate complex ideas clearly and effectively, support your ideas with relevant examples and examine claims and accompanying evidence.

http://www.ets.org/gre/revised_general/faq

Master’s degree-A master’s degree is designed to give students advanced knowledge of a specialized field. The program typically entails coursework and exams. Programs may require a written thesis, a final project or comprehensive exam, or an internship. Some "terminal master’s" degrees, such as the Master of Fine Arts (MFA), are considered the highest degree obtainable in that field - there is not a PhD. Most master’s students earn their degree in one to three years.
Orals—also known as Defense—A formal meeting between PhD candidate, his or her dissertation mentor, the dissertation committee, and others at which time the graduate student is examined on the contents of the dissertation. This meeting can take one to four hours. After the defense, the committee votes on whether to accept the dissertation. If it is accepted, the candidate must make a presentation to the graduate dean as the final step in earning the degree. If the dissertation is not accepted, the candidate must complete any necessary revisions, and schedule a second defense.

Professional degree—A degree designed to prepare a student for a particular profession. Students receiving a professional degree are often required to pass licensing exams in the state they want to work. Examples of professional degrees include medical degrees (MD), veterinary medical degrees (DVM), or law degrees (JD).

Research Assistant—A graduate student who usually receives health benefits, tuition remission, and a stipend (i.e., a paycheck) in exchange for working as a researcher in a professor’s research program. Often, the professor a student works for is also his/her advisor. Research assistants are usually selected by a professor or group of collaborating professors.

Stipend—A paycheck or payment, usually received in exchange for working as a teaching or research assistant. Fellowships, which may not require work in return for an award, also offer stipends.

Teaching Assistant—A graduate student who usually receives health benefits, tuition remission, and a stipend (i.e., a paycheck) in exchange for assisting a professor with a class. Sometimes teaching assistants do not "assist" a professor, but are in charge of their own class. Teaching assistants are usually selected by a student’s academic department or college.

Thesis—A document that presents a master’s or doctoral student’s research. At the doctoral level, the thesis is often referred to as a dissertation. At the master’s level, a thesis may be optional in some programs. [http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/glossary.cfm](http://www.gradschool.purdue.edu/glossary.cfm)

**Timeline for Applying to Graduate School**

[https://campusapps2.fullerton.edu/Career/students/jobSearch/Chapter2/TimelineForSchool.aspx](https://campusapps2.fullerton.edu/Career/students/jobSearch/Chapter2/TimelineForSchool.aspx)

**Fall Semester (sophomore and junior year)**
- Identify if graduate school is an option for you
- Do you need to obtain a graduate degree to further advance in your career or to obtain the job you want?
• Speak with a faculty member and a career counselor at the Career Center about graduate
school plans and alternatives
• Begin identifying graduate programs in which you are interested
• Request admissions information and financial aid applications from graduate programs
• Look carefully at their admissions requirements and pre-requisites
• Begin to select at least 5 graduate schools of interest. Choose two top-tier schools, two
mid-range schools and two “safety schools”
• Identify how you can further prepare for graduate school. “How can you make yourself
more marketable and a well-rounded candidate?”

**September, Fall Semester (senior year)**

• Scholars, seek advice from a faculty member, a career counselor, and professionals in the
field regarding graduate school admissions, etc.
• Conduct informational interviews with professionals in your field of interest about
graduate programs and graduate degrees most appropriate for the field.
• Continue writing to schools you have selected and request admissions and financial aid
applications.
• Register for required entrance examinations.
• Study for the required entrance examinations.
• Consider attending the on-campus Graduate School Fair.

**October, Fall Semester (senior year)**

• Scholars, take required examinations-GRE, GMAT, PCAT, etc.
• Scholars, contact administrators, students, faculty, and/or alumni at each institution for
helpful information.
• Scholars take on-campus tours and attend open house events to gather more information
about where you are applying to graduate school.
• Scholars, draft statement of purpose/essay get assistance from faculty mentor, other
faculty, the Career Center, advisors, or mentors.
• Scholars, send letter of recommendation requests, to provide sufficient time for
recommenders to complete letter of recommendation.
• Request copies official transcripts.

**November, Fall Semester (senior year)**

• Scholars, secure letters of recommendation from faculty mentors, professors, and staff.
• Secure copies of official transcripts.
• Finalize statement of purpose and have it reviewed one more time by a career counselor,
faculty member, advisor, or mentor before submission with graduate school application.
• Begin preparing any required financial statements for FAFSA.

**December, Fall Semester (senior year)**
• Scholars, complete all required examinations this month, especially if your first performance on any of the graduate assessments was not encouraging.
• Scholars, send off graduate school admissions applications and stay on course for deadlines (early admissions especially).
• Scholars, follow-up on transcripts and letters of recommendation to assure they were sent and received at the graduate admissions office.
• Scholars are strongly encouraged to visit those graduate schools of interests to them, if they have not already done so.

January, Spring Semester (senior year)
• Scholars should note that this is their last opportunity to take the required tests for fall admissions. (Please note that it may be too late for some schools.)
• Check with each school to verify that all materials have been received, including test scores and financial statements. If some application materials are missing, Scholars note that you may be eliminated from consideration.
• If an interview is required as part of the admissions/selection process, please check with the McNair Scholars Staff or with Career Services for assistance and sample interview questions.

February, Spring Semester (senior year)
• Scholars should wait to hear about selected as a potential candidate.
• Scholars should continue to make contact with representatives of the schools they applied to check upon the progress of their applications.
• Scholars should practice for their entrance interview.
• Scholars should finish outlining a contingency plan in the event that they are not accepted into graduate school.

*If Scholars Do Not Get Accepted into Graduate School

• Scholars, speak with an academic advisor or counselor to determine reasons for denial and to determine additional options for graduate school or employment.
• Scholars are sometimes accepted on their second or third try into graduate school.
McNair Scholars Program
Procedures to Apply for Research Project

Guidelines:

1. The mentor should agree to work with the McNair during the entire ten-week program. The mentor should also assist with the design, methods, and proposal for the research project.

2. McNair Scholars must be engaged in actual academic research. Mentors are expected to provide the Scholar with projects that allow them to learn the research process in their specific field. The goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to have student complete their research project, present their findings, attend conferences to gain experiences with presenting their findings, and publishing their findings in scholarly journals.

3. Mentors must cover every process of the research project (literature review, draft proposal, final proposal, research, etc.).

4. Mentors and McNair Scholars will meet weekly during the summer research project to discuss both the positive and challenging aspects of the project. McNair Scholars should ask questions and receive constructive feedback from their mentors about the project.

5. McNair Scholars must (a) prepare a draft of their research proposal, with bibliography and/or reference list before June 4; (b) submit their final proposal by April 15th; (c) submit a final abstract during the fifth week (July 6th) of the summer research program; (d) make a semi-formal presentation to the McNair Scholars group during one summer meeting TBA; (e) arrange to present their findings either at the Pathways Student Symposium or other conference before December 1, and (f) submit their final research paper on or by December 1st. Please allow your mentor to assist you with meeting all deadlines!

The stipend for summer research will be paid in two installments ($776.67 and $776.67). The FINAL payment of $776.66 will be distributed to the Scholar AFTER the following has been received by the McNair Scholars Staff (totaling $2330):

1. The research paper and completion of presentation to the McNair Scholars group.
2. All books returned to the library (used for research).
3. Mentor has reviewed and submitted abstracts for upcoming conferences during the academic year.
4. Mentor has reviewed final research paper.

**Final Abstract** - Scholars abstract should be a clear and concise statement of the research question, the research methodology utilized, and the conclusion. All of the information requested must be double-space typed, one inch margins. We will not accept any handwritten items (especially in pencil). McNair Scholars will be required to submit several draft copies of their abstract to their mentor and the McNair Scholars staff. Prior to the Symposium or other conference, Scholars will need to submit a final abstract for review by their mentor (typed).

**The Final Research Paper** - Since each field of study (discipline) has different styles and formats for writing research papers/report, each faculty mentor should be consulted prior to writing the research paper. Mentors should provide Scholars with guidelines regarding the proper format, form, and documentation for the research paper. This paper should be 10-20 pages in length, excluding the title page, appendices, and bibliography (Doubled-spaced, one inch margins). See example below:


http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/559/08/

Sample MLA research paper: [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0014.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch08_s1-0014.html)
Sample APA research paper: [http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch09_s1-0009.html](http://bcs.bedfordstmartins.com/resdoc5e/RES5e_ch09_s1-0009.html)
McNair Scholars Program

Procedures to Apply for an Extension to Summer Research Project

The purpose of the Summer Research Program is to introduce McNair Scholars to the rigor, academic discipline, and focus of graduate and doctoral study. The McNair Scholars are expected to complete their research projects by the deadline (August 10th). We understand that “life happens,” it’s unpredictable and sometimes challenging for a McNair Scholar to complete his or her summer research project by the deadline. For this reason, the following policy was created. McNair Scholars may utilize this recourse ONLY in extenuating circumstances. Examples of **EXTENUATING CIRCUMSTANCES** may include the following:

- Death in the family (immediate)
- Family or personal illness
- Unexpected complexity of the research project making the completion difficult and challenging
- Scholar and the faculty mentor encounter unusual circumstances in gathering/collection data
- Faculty mentor has a family or personal illness
- Faculty mentor will travel extensively during the year; especially during the summer (both mentor and Scholar must document each email, meeting, phone conversation, etc.)
- Faculty mentor was unable to provide guidance, support, and motivation consistently and regularly due to unforeseen circumstances
- Composition or editing challenges

**Extenuating Circumstances do not include:**

- Inability to prioritize
- Procrastination
- Poor time management
- Deficient study and research habits
- Unrealistic research project/subject
- Lack of follow-up and follow-through
- Lack of personal and academic motivation
- Lack of discipline
- Lack of drive and focus
Work/employment responsibilities
Taking more than 6 semester hours during the summer (we discourage students from taking summer courses to devote all their time and resources to research)

Starting Summer 2012, the McNair Scholars Program will allow one extension of summer research to each Scholar because of an extenuating circumstance(s). The extension will run from August through the end of September. There will be no second extension. No exceptions.

Guidelines for an Extension

Scholars wanting to apply for a First and only Extension are required to comply with the following requirements:

a. Eligibility: A Scholar is eligible to apply for an extension if he or she has made normal progress on research project. Normal progress is defined as having completed the proposed benchmarks up to that point.

b. Application: An application for the extension must be completed before July 27. The application will be reviewed by the McNair Staff.

c. Conference: The McNair Staff will meet with the Scholar to discuss the specifics and the merits of the application. A decision will be made immediately.

d. The First and only Extension process should be completed within three working days from the day of receiving the application.

e. If the Scholars are unable to complete his or her project at the end of the First Extension and if there are no additional extenuating circumstances, then the scholars will be evaluated and he or she will have to reimburse (100%) their summer stipend to the program that was already received.
Texas A&M University-Commerce McNair Scholars Program
Application for completing an Extension to Summer Research Project

Scholars’ Name _____________________ Date _______

Mailing Address
__________________________________________________________

CWID _________________

Email Address _________________ Cell Phone ______________

Reason for Requesting Extension
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Work Required to Complete Project
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Faculty Mentor’s Comments
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Faculty Mentor’s Signature _____________________________

☐ The McNair Scholars Staff has evaluated the merits of this petition. This petition is accepted and the Scholars have two weeks to complete his or her project. The Scholar and Mentor will provide a progress report on or before September 30th.
I hereby understand and accept to the aforementioned terms.

_________________________________________  ____________
Scholar's Signature  Date

☐ We have evaluated the merits of this application and have decided to not accept this application for the following reasons:

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________________________

_________________________  ____________
TRiO Director  Date

_________________________  ____________
Assistant Director  Date
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Faculty Mentor & McNair Scholar Research Contract
(To be completed jointly by Mentor/Scholar)

The goal of the Faculty-Mentored Summer Research Experience is to provide the McNair scholars an introduction to systematic inquiry and a practical understanding of academic scholarship. The one-on-one relationship between scholars and faculty mentors will also serve to introduce scholars to the academic community and university life.

1. The scholar agrees to complete a minimum of 250 hours of research and related activities during the summer program. The McNair Summer Program should be considered a full-time commitment. Scholars should not hold a summer job or register for summer classes during the ten-week summer program.

2. The faculty research mentor will collaborate with his/her scholar regarding the content and methodology of the research project. The student will be required to prepare a draft of his/her research proposal and an annotated bibliography or reference list by April 17th.

3. The faculty research mentor agrees to direct the scholar’s research project throughout the summer period and consult on the final write-up. Research mentors should plan to communicate with scholars weekly during the summer research program. Face-to-face meetings are encouraged.

4. The deadline for submitting a final written plan, designed by the scholar and mentor, to the McNair Scholars Program is April 17th. The plan should included the following details:
   - Sources and methods for review of the literature
   - Hypothesis or research questions
   - Description of the methodology to be used in the study
   - Timeline for completion of Human Subjects Review if required

5. The final research paper is due by September 21st. The write-up should conform to discipline standards and be ready for publication in the Texas A&M University, Commerce Ronald McNair Scholars Research Journal. The paper should be approximately 10-20 pages in length, single spaced, including the title page, appendices and bibliography. The scholar will make a formal presentation at a research symposium before the mid-spring semester.

6. The scholar will be responsible for completing all research related activities and submitting all items by stipulated deadline dates. The faculty research mentor or McNair scholar will immediately notify program personnel of any difficulties or impediments encountered during the summer research program.

Faculty Research Mentor: ______________________________ Date: ____________________

Ronald McNair Scholar: ______________________________ Date: ____________________
The goal of the Faculty-Mentored Volunteer Research Experience is to provide the McNair scholars with an introduction to the systematic inquiry and a practical understanding of academic research. The one-on-one relationship between scholars and faculty mentors will also serve to introduce scholars to the academic community and university life.

1. The scholar agrees to complete a minimum of 100 hours of research and related activities during the summer program. The McNair Summer Program should be considered a full-time commitment during the fall, spring, and summer sessions.

2. The scholar will be responsible for completing all research related activities and submitting all items by stipulated deadline dates. The faculty research mentor or McNair scholar will immediately notify program personnel of any difficulties or impediments encountered during the summer research program.

3. The deadline for submitting a final written plan detailing duties as a volunteer, designed by the scholar and mentor, to the McNair Scholars Program is April 17th. The plan should include the following details:
   - Selecting a Topic and Developing A Research Strategy
   - Developing a Research Question
   - Develop a Research Topic
   - How to cite information in MLA, APA, Turabian, etc. format
   - Organizing your research
   - Scholarly vs. popular publications
   - How to evaluate information sources
   - Expectations of you from your mentor and your expectations as a future graduate researcher

4. The reflective paper is due by September 21st. The paper should conform to discipline standards. Scholars will discuss their volunteer experiences to the McNair Staff and other Scholars during one of our monthly meetings-TBA. The paper should be approximately 5-10 pages in length, double-spaced, including the title page, appendices and bibliography.

Faculty Research Mentor: ______________________________ Date: ____________________

Ronald McNair Scholar: ______________________________ Date: ____________________
TRiO, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program
Scholars Weekly Research Time and Effort Report
Minimum Hours total for ten weeks: 250 hours (Scholars should average between 25-35 hours per week)

*McNair Scholars Program is funded by a grant by the U.S. Department of Education*

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<th>Total Hours</th>
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**Total Hours for the week:**

Signature of TAMU-C Faculty Member: _________________________________

Signature of McNair Scholar, TRiO Programs: _____________________________
Scholars’ Name __________________________

Faculty Mentor’s Name __________________________

Month _______________, 20___ Total Hours Student Worked this Month _____

Using the scale, 4=Excellent, 3=Good, 2=Average, 1=Needs Improvement, please rate the degree to which your student exhibits the following by marking the appropriate box. If a characteristic is not applicable, please mark N/A in the appropriate box. Be sure to consider each characteristic separately.

<table>
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<th>Characteristics</th>
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<td>Timely Completion of Tasks</td>
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<td>Quality of work</td>
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<td>Ability to Accept Constructive Comments</td>
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<td>Research Skills/abilities</td>
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Comments: ____________________________
Do you currently have any concerns that the McNair Program staff need to know about?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Do you have any suggestions as to how the McNair Program staff could assist you in making your mentor duties easier?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

How would you characterize your working relationship with your student?

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Mentor's Signature       Date

Please Return Monthly To: TRiO, Ronald E. McNair Program–Halladay Student Services Building 3rd Floor, Room 302 Main Office: 903-886-5833 Fax: 903-468-3220
TRiO, Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program
Scholars Weekly Research Time and Effort Report
Minimum Hours total for ten weeks: 100 hours (Scholars should average 10 hours per week)

McNair Scholars Program is funded by a grant by the U.S. Department of Education

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Total Hours for the week:

Signature of TAMU-C Faculty Member: _________________________________

Signature of McNair Scholar, TRiO Programs: _____________________________
McNair Scholars Program
Summer Progress Report:
(Completed by Mentor and Scholar)

Please complete this form and return it to the McNair Scholars Program Office (Halladay Student Services
Building, 302) for each stipend period during the summer research component. We will not issue stipend
check or any subsequent checks until receive this form. Thank you.

McNair Scholars’ Name ________________________________
Stipend Period TBA (date) _____________________

☐ I confirm that the above named McNair Scholar completed 25-35 hours per week
toward their summer research project (all hours documented on the signed summer
research time and effort log).

☐ The above named McNair Scholar did not complete 25-35 hours per week towards
their summer research project and the reason:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Give a brief summary of the summer research accomplished by the Scholar during the
week of TBA:

_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________
_________________________________________________________________

Mentor’s Signature: ______________________________

McNair Scholars’ Signature: ______________________
Please complete this form and return it to the McNair Scholars Program Office (Halladay Student Services Building, 302) for each stipend period during the summer research component. We will not issue June 22, 2012 stipend check or any subsequent checks until receive this form. Thank you.

McNair Scholars' Name ________________________________
Stipend Period TBA (date) _____________________

☐ I confirm that the above named McNair Scholar completed 25-35 hours per week toward their summer research project (all hours documented on the signed summer research time and effort log).

☐ The above named McNair Scholar did not complete 25-35 hours per week towards their summer research project and the reason:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Give a brief summary of the summer research accomplished by the Scholar during the week of TBA:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Mentor's Signature: ________________________________

McNair Scholars' Signature: ________________________________
Please complete this form and return it to the McNair Scholars Program Office (Halladay Student Services Building, 302) for each stipend period during the summer research component. We will not issue August 10, 2012 stipend check or any subsequent checks until receive this form. Thank you.

McNair Scholars' Name ________________________________
Stipend Period TBA (date) ____________________________

☐ I confirm that the above named McNair Scholar completed 25-35 hours per week toward their summer research project (all hours documented on the signed summer research time and effort log).

☐ The above named McNair Scholar did not complete 25-35 hours per week towards their summer research project and the reason:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Give a brief summary of the summer research accomplished by the Scholar during the week of TBA:

__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

Mentor's Signature: ________________________________

McNair Scholars' Signature: ________________________________
Thank you for your time and effort in continually guiding a McNair Scholar through the research process. We like to make sure the research that is reported by our scholars has been reviewed by their mentors and is approved as scholarly work for the discipline in which the scholar represents. Please sign this form to acknowledge that you have reviewed the final copy of your mentee’s scholarly research and approve for publication in the Texas A&M University-Commerce Ronald E. McNair Scholars Research Journal.

McNair Scholar Name: ____________________________________________

Undergraduate Major: ____________________________________________

Research Topic(s): ____________________________________________

Faculty Mentor(s)/Department(s): ____________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program, funded by the U. S. Department of Education, is designed to provide effective preparation for doctoral study for low-income, first generation, and underrepresented undergraduate students. Selection as a McNair Scholar is the result of a competitive process to participate in a program that prepares them for success in graduate school.

Mentor’s Name

Scholar’s Name

Mentor’s Signature and Date

Scholar’s Signature and Date