



SPRING 2020

# MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM END OF YEAR CELEBRATION

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## The McNair Scholars program is celebrating its scholars.

**“IT’S TIME FOR YOU TO MOVE, REALIZING THAT THE THING YOU ARE SEEKING IS ALSO SEEKING YOU.” – IYANLA VANZANT**

The McNair Scholars Program is celebrating its students. At first sight, this spring seems to be consumed by the devastating effects of the COVID-19 outbreak. But our scholars still have reasons to be joyful. For instance, the vast majority of our graduating scholars will go to Ph.D., master's, and M.D. programs this fall. They are one step closer to fulfilling their goals and dreams. They continue to inspire us as they work with our mentors towards building the future they have long envisioned.

Also, we are thrilled to welcome our new scholars! This is a diverse group of students representing a plurality of fields. They share the desire to continue graduate studies and to be part of the inclusive culture that will be supportive of their aspirations.

Every year, the McNair Scholars Program host a Banquet and Research exposition to highlight the accomplishments of the graduating scholars and induct the new ones. This year, we cannot be physically together to do it. This newsletter aims to carry the torch; it is one of the ways we celebrate and engage our scholars. You can contribute to this celebration as well. Send our scholars an encouraging message by leaving a message on our Facebook page, or you can tag us in a message on Instagram. Connect with us on LinkedIn and support the McNair Scholars and Alumni. Finally, if you know a student that can benefit from becoming a McNair Scholar, or if you are a faculty member who would like to mentor one, let us know!

# LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Angel Reyes Rodriguez, Ph.D

Dear Graduating Scholars,

Congratulations on earning your bachelor's degree. This is a major achievement for you and your family. Most of you are the first in your family to reach this goal. Be proud of this achievement! Only a third of our fellow Americans have reached this milestone. Take a minute and reflect on this achievement; it is a testament to your dedication, hard work, and perseverance.

Consider all the challenges you faced on your way here. It was not a stroll in the park, was it? You encountered academic challenges; you worked strenuously to overcome them. There were times when you were unlucky and random problems arose; you took charge and persevered. And you were confronted with the many barriers of systemic biases that often went unnoticed by others, and you still succeeded. Yes, you have accomplished something extraordinary here.

As you move towards your next goals, you must continue challenging yourselves. You must challenge your mind to be creative. You must strive to be excellent in your academic and professional lives. And you must aim to be successful at the most important goal of all, to be happy, healthy, and wholesome members of our community. Life and work will challenge you, but you have demonstrated that you are resourceful, hardworking, and most importantly, wonderful individuals. You will always find a way to succeed in whatever you set your mind to.

Most of you will go to graduate school this fall. I will summarize my advice to you in a word: PERSPECTIVE. Work very hard at keeping perspective of what you are doing and why you are doing it.

Graduate studies can be isolating. It is a time-consuming process; family and friends might have trouble understanding it. Remember the end goal and create boundaries to balance your need to focus on your studies, with the social interactions that enrich your life. Prioritize what is important and let go of the things that are not.

As you progress in your studies you will be surrounded almost exclusively by people who like you, are brilliant. They will either have advanced degrees or will be working towards them. Do not let it intimidate you. Remember, only 13% of Americans have advanced degrees, only 2% have a Ph.D. While being surrounded by experts may make you feel like an impostor, you are not. Remember that you are as smart as those who will surround you. You will too gain experience. You and your fellow students are different and will excel in different aspects; it will be futile to compare yourselves to others.



Finally, I ask you to cherish the additional gift you have: each other. Rely on your fellow scholars for support. You are a family. We are a family. Do not forget to stay connected to the rest of the McNair community. Embrace your alumni network. Offer advice to new and future scholars. For instance, today we celebrate your accomplishments and usher you towards the future, but we also celebrate the expansion of our family by inducting new scholars. They too have been overcoming challenges, applying themselves and working towards their goal. They will soon, like you, reach new milestones and move towards an exciting future. So, let us rejoice and celebrate!

-Angel

## LETTER FROM PREVIOUS DIRECTOR

Theresa Graham, Ph.D



Dear Scholars,

One of the great joys of my life was working as the Interim McNair Scholars Director. Like most of my other roles as an educator I got to know many wonderful students.

However, being the McNair Director allowed me to get to know students on a more personal level. I enjoyed and looked forward to our travels, cultural events, luncheons, meetings, conducting research and particularly meeting with students individually. I feel blessed to have gotten to know the class of 2020.

It does my heart good to know that you are the scholars and graduate students of our future. We need strong, capable persons involved in vital research. I think the current world condition shows that more now than ever.

You have worked hard to get to where you are and your accomplishments are many. You have shown yourselves to be resourceful and pro-active by seeking out the opportunity to be a McNair Scholars. Those skills are the ones that will carry you through your next steps. I know

that getting my advanced degrees allowed me so many more opportunities that I might have thought possible (such as being a McNair Director!). Stay the course.

You make me proud; you were the one and only cohort that I led the recruitment effort on during my tenure as McNair Director. Best wishes for your future endeavors and please do not hesitate to reach out and let me know how you are doing and of your great accomplishments to follow.

- Theresa

# 2020 MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM AWARD RECIPIENTS



## 2020 MENTOR OF THE YEAR MICHAEL HORVATH, PH.D.

Dr. Michael Horvath is an associate professor of Psychology. As a member of the Industrial-Organizational Research group at Cleveland State, Dr. Horvath researches and applies psychological principles in the work world. His primary interest is in different types of employee attitudes and motivation (such as the motivation of job applicants or trainees). In collaboration with his mentors, colleagues, and graduate students, Dr. Horvath has also applied his skills to address real-world issues for organizations such as Michelin, Torrington, Microsoft, Ford, and the City of Columbus, Ohio. Dr. Horvath is also an active member of his professional community.



### FROM HIS MENTEE, KIARA:

“ Although he has only ‘officially’ been my mentor for the past year, Dr.. Horvath willingly brought me into his lab as a first-year freshman, and taught me so much about research. With his help, I was able to co-author not one, but two posters accepted to SIOP this year. He has been so patient with me through this learning process, but he also displays a great amount of faith in my abilities to not only carry out research, but to succeed in my future endeavors. He has helped strengthen my sense of self-efficacy, and has instilled in me a new-found confidence to take on anything I put my mind to. He always makes it a point to check in with how I am doing outside of academics, and has pushed me to take opportunities that I might not have taken without his guidance. He was a tremendous source of help for me in the application process for graduate school, and the school I will be attending this fall is one of his suggestions! I am very grateful that I had the chance to have him as a mentor/advisor throughout my undergraduate career. He has taught me so much. I highly suggest any new scholar, whether he is within their discipline or not, to seek him as a mentor.”



# 2020 SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR

## Sandra Haswani



**Sandra Haswani (Sandoura)** is a Biology major in the College of Sciences and Health Professions at Cleveland State University. During her time at the university, she has received recognition for her exceptional academic performance such as the Junior Scholastic Achievement Award from Student Support Services (TRIO SSS) and being on both the Dean's list and the President's list. Sandra aspires to become a competent and compassionate physician. Her goal is to serve the community and contribute to reducing health disparities.

Sandra has demonstrated her leadership qualities through her time at the university. She is a member of the American Medical Student Association (AMSA). She is also the founder of the Cleveland State Chapter of the Golden Z-Club, an organization that advocates, volunteers, and fundraises for causes related to women's issues.

As a McNair Scholar, she worked on a research project studying the roles of histone H3 variant (H3v) in *Trypanosoma brucei*, working on the generation of an H3v single mutant library. She created 63 single mutations in the gene coding for histone H3v in *T. brucei* to be able to answer the following question: "Which amino acid residues are important for H3v function?" She worked under the hypothesis that mutating the base sequences near the N-terminus of the gene, especially the ones that code for proteins involved in crucial protein-protein interactions, would affect H3v function. This research required her to perform polymerase chain reactions, work with cell lines and plasmids, perform gel electrophoresis, extract DNA from cells, and follow other protocols in molecular biology.

Sandra learned many things while researching. "Conducting research offered me the ability to understand the in-depth focus a wide-scaled research project requires. It gave me the opportunity to witness how the classroom taught the 'scientific method', can be applied in real-world scenarios. The research experience gifted me with the ability to utilize the scientific mindset and advance in certain skills. Research has also taught me a lot of important lessons and values that I will keep utilizing throughout my academic path and life. Those include patience, hard work, persistence, and teamwork. I understood how important it was to learn from our failures and use them to succeed and keep moving forwards."

Sandra advises new McNair Scholars to make the most out of this experience and build strong relationships their mentors and cohort members. "One very important thing I am very grateful to have had gained from McNair's research experience is the relationship I built with my mentor and friends who supported me and helped me grow."

Sandra's Mentors: Hee-sook Kim, Ph.D. and Anne O'Connor, Ph.D.



# 2020 SCHOLAR OF THE YEAR

## Renato Pereira- Castillo



**Renato Pereira-Castillo (RJ)** will graduate this spring with a major in Computer Engineering from the Washkewicz College of Engineering at Cleveland State University. He was inducted into the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Eta Kappa Nu Honor Society and the Engineering Honor Society Tau Beta Pi. RJ aspires to be a professor of Electrical Engineering at a public R1 university. He is well on his way after being accepted for a Ph.D. Program starting next fall!

RJ has contributed to the campus community by volunteering to guide campus tours as part of Viking Expeditions. He contributed to the campus research by working on the cryptanalysis of secure network coding. This project explored "How much information security does network coding offer when packet transmissions are separated using independent component analysis?". He hypothesized that some packet information will be recovered by applying a version of independent component analysis over finite fields. RJ utilized multiple tools at his disposal such as MATLAB® while working on this project. This experience taught him that reading is a powerful tool to advance research. The knowledge found in published work can help to overcome the lack of access to sophisticated equipment or institutional resources.

RJ has valuable advice to share with new McNair Scholars. He believes in the importance of carefully choosing mentors. He also urges new scholars to take advantage of off-campus opportunities so they can supplement their on-campus resources. He adds:

"Preparing for and applying to graduate school is taxing. The emotional support I received from the people at McNair was essential. Thanks in large part to the McNair program, I was accepted to the University of California, Davis and will be fully financially supported to pursue a Ph.D. in electronics engineering."

RJ's Mentors: Ye Zhu Ph.D. and Jeff Karem, Ph.D.

# 2020 MCNAIR GRADUATES

## Kiara Gray



**Kiara Gray (Kii)** will graduate with a major in Psychology and a minor in Management and Labor Relations/Sociology in the College of Health Sciences. She will start a master's program in Industrial-Organizational Psychology this fall and plans to earn a Ph.D. afterward. Kiara's goal is to work in the field of Organizational Development as a consultant and to eventually start a consultant agency.

Kiara has been a very active member of the campus community during her time at CSU. She was part of several student organizations including PSI CHI, Active Minds and Viking Expeditions. As a McNair Scholar, she researched the role of future time perspective and role identity on counterproductive work behavior and organizational citizenship behavior. To conduct the research, Kiara used several tools including Survey Monkey, Mechanical Turk to collect data, and SPSS to analyze the data. Kiara's research resulted in several findings that correlated how people view their time and limitations at work with counterproductive behavior. For instance, she found a positive correlation between the focus on limitations at work and counterproductive work behavior. Her work also suggested that work identity is negatively correlated to counter-productive work behavior, but positively correlated to organizational citizenship behavior, or voluntary commitment to the organization.

Kiara has many take-aways from conducting this research. She learned about project and time management. In her words, "Learning how to effectively manage my time and be flexible during the research experience is something I can carry over to my endeavors throughout life." She learned how to adjust accordingly and keep priorities organized during the experience when dealing with different curveballs such as working to get approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) to conduct her research. She has participated in additional research projects with her McNair mentor Dr. Michael Horvath. All of this experience has made her a better researcher. It has also allowed her to gain experience in explaining her results. Kiara has presented her research findings at various research conferences. She also has two accepted posters to the Society for Industrial and Organizational Psychology Meeting, where she is a student member.

She wants future McNair Scholars to know that "You are very lucky to be in a program like this! Take everything in and utilize all of the resources that are made available to you. Everyone in the McNair program is there to help and support you in everything you do. They want to see you succeed. Also, work hard to build strong relationships with your mentors. They will give you so much useful information about navigating college, and when the time comes, they can help you tremendously in getting to the next stage of your life. The next four years fly by fast, so enjoy it!"

Kiara's mentors: Michael Horvath, Ph.D. and Prester Pickett, M.F.A

# 2020 MCNAIR GRADUATES

## Whitney Tyree

**Whitney Tyree (Whit)** will graduate this semester with a major in social work. Whitney has been accepted to start a Ph.D. Program in Social Work/Sociology this fall! Their career goals include conducting sociological research, specifically on religion.

Whitney is civically and academically minded. They have volunteered in several organizations including The Children's Defense Fund and The National Society of Leadership and Success. Academically, Whitney has been on the Dean's list and an active member of the McNair Scholars Program. As part of the program, they worked on a research project titled "An Examination of the Relationship between Humiliation and Social Participation". This project aimed to investigate whether there is a relationship between humiliating school experiences and the level of social participation as an adult. Whitney's project hypothesized that there would be a positive relationship between high amounts of self-reported humiliation in school and high self-reported levels of current social restriction as an adult as well. Their project found the highest levels of humiliation and social restriction within the participants who identify as nonbinary.

Whitney learned several skills during the process of conducting this research. They learned to use statistical software, write a research proposal, seek Internal Review Board approval, design a research poster, write a manuscript, and present findings. Whitney advises new and future McNair Scholars to choose a research topic that will keep them interested for a long time and to find mentors with similar research interests.

Whitney's favorite aspect of being a McNair Scholar was getting a lot of information about graduate school before the application process started.

They also valued feeling supported by everyone as well as being around others who shared their aspirations. Whitney shared "Everyone I have encountered through McNair like the director, GAs, my mentors, and cohort have been integral to my success as a student and graduate school applicant. Their support and guidance are something I will cherish throughout my time in grad school and beyond."

Whitney's mentors: Elaine Harper, Ph.D. and Kim Carey, Ph.D.



# 2020 MCNAIR GRADUATES

## Ashley Guilford



**Ashley Guilford** will graduate this spring with a major in Psychology and a minor in Women's and Gender Studies at Cleveland State University. She has made the Dean's List ever since the Spring of 2017 and the President's List in Spring 2018 and Fall 2019! Ashley's career goals include counseling minority women and to specialize in counseling victims of trauma, domestic violence, sexual abuse, and sex trafficking. She is also interested in treating mental health issues such as depression, anxiety, and bipolar disorder among women.

Ashley has diligently worked in scholarly activities as part of different programs such as the Student Support Services (TRIO SSS), the KeyBank Scholars Program and the National Society of Leadership and Success. As a McNair Scholar, she conducted research aimed at studying how various forms of micro-aggressions impact identity development. The study sought to learn more about marginalized individual's experiences with micro-aggressions. The goal was to understand how these experiences impacted mental health and contribute to higher levels of anxiety and depression. Ashley was also interested in understanding whether micro-aggressions impacted the participants' racial identity and body image satisfaction. She hypothesized that micro-aggressions would negatively impact mental health, body image satisfaction, and racial identity as experiencing a micro-aggression often leads to more depressive symptoms and negative effects.

The majority of participants in this study reported experiencing micro-aggressions based on different aspects of their identities. Ashley's results also suggested that receiving micro-aggressions is correlated with higher levels of reported depression and anxiety. However, this project did not suggest a correlation between micro-aggressions and body image satisfaction.

Ashley advises new and future McNair scholars to be patient while they are doing their research studies. She learned that research is a long and lengthy process and may not turn out as planned. "Be prepared to face unexpected challenges while doing research and make sure that the topic you choose is something you won't get bored with easily!"

Ashley further reflected on her time as a McNair Scholar. She values the connections she established during her time in the program. She shared: "Not only have I built long-lasting relationships with my peers, but I have also gained more professional connections as well."

Ashley's mentors: Amy Przeworski, Ph.D., and Ramune Braziunaite, Ph.D.

# 2020 MCNAIR GRADUATES

## Kayla Barillas

**Kayla Barillas** will graduate this spring with majors in Psychology and Sociology from the College of Sciences and College of Liberal Arts at Cleveland State University. Her goal is to become a Clinical Mental Health Counselor specialized in Family and Marriage Counseling. She is well on her way as she has been accepted to a master's program set to start this fall! She is interested in using her degree to service disadvantaged communities.

Kayla is an active member of the CSU community. She spent a semester serving as the College of Health Sciences Senator in the Student Government Association. She has been a tour guide, participated in the Health Profession Affinity Communities program, and has worked as a student navigator for the Office of Inclusion and Multicultural Engagement. Academically, Kayla has participated in the Urban Health Fellows Program, was the winner of the Future Leaders Dreaming Forward Essay Contest and is on the Dean's List.

Kayla worked on a research project as part of the McNair Scholars Program. She was interested in observing the effects of personality on responses to dating violence vignettes. She focused on measuring the effects of the 5 Big Personality Traits: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. Her research question was "Will personality affect responses to dating violence vignettes?". She hypothesized that personality would affect the responses on the dating violence vignettes. Kayla took advantage of the research tools at her disposal and even created a codebook and coding sheet to organize data.

From this experience, Kayla learned that research can be an enlightening process, especially alongside a supportive mentor. She learned that it is valuable and that all students who are interested in research should get the opportunity to do it. Her advice to new and future McNair Scholar is to "Value education above all else and to continue pursuing academic and career



goals. I would also suggest always keeping an open mind and to not get discouraged when things do not go according to plan. I hope they take the time to find a passionate career and find joy in lifelong learning." Her favorite aspect of being a McNair Scholar was the strong support network. She shared "I really appreciate all of the efforts that the McNair Program put into helping all of us succeed and the time my mentors gave me to support me both academically and socially. I also felt close to my cohort and wish all the best for them!"

Kayla's Mentors: Elizabeth Gony Ph.D. and Charlotte Morgan, Ph.D

# CONTINUING MCNAIR SCHOLARS

**Briana Nichols (Bree)** majors in Liberal Arts. She has earned several distinctions during her time as a student. That includes being part of the Key Bank Scholars Program, the National Society of Leadership and Success, and the Dean's list. Her career goal is to be a professor to teach and have an impact on her students. She loves helping others solve problems and giving them tools to take on their endeavors. Her passion for helping people thrive in life has led Briana to help others advance their academic life by assisting them in applying for college and contributing to advancing their education.

Briana's commitment to helping others further their education was reflected in her McNair research project. Her project, "The Role of STEM faculty in supporting African America females in their courses", was designed to identify the roles and responsibilities faculty have while working with this demographic. This is an important question given the disparities this population face in the fields of sciences, technology, engineering, and math (STEM). Briana used research studies and articles to guide her project and used a survey to collect data. Data analysis suggested that many African American women experience discrimination in the



classrooms. Moreover, she concluded an important role for the faculty in supporting them during this crucial time. Briana is looking to perform additional research during the time she has left as a McNair Scholar. Briana is looking to perform additional research during the time she has left as a McNair Scholar. She has already participated in various research conferences and looks forward to participating in more, especially as she expands her research experience.

Briana is a hard worker. This is reflected in the advice she has for new McNair scholars. "Study hard! Most importantly when things get tough, don't quit. Keep pushing your breakthrough will come!" Briana also shared that she loves the support from the students and the director of the McNair Scholars Program and that when she was at her lowest her McNair family was there for her!

Briana Mentors: Dr. Edward Magiste and Dr. Julia Phillips



**Jasline Rosario (Jas)** is a biology major at Cleveland State University. She strives to become a pediatric surgeon, though she has not decided on a specialty yet. However, Jasline has her sights in more than just surgery. She also wants to nurture her entrepreneurial spirit and aspires to become a business owner, perhaps opening a community wellness center.

Jasline is very active on campus. Besides being a McNair Scholar, she is involved with other groups and organizations on campus. She is part of the Urban Health Fellows and the American Medical Student Association, she serves as Secretary of the Minority Association for Pre-Medical Students, and she is part of the Key Bank Scholars Program. She was even the recipient of the Key Bank Student Spotlight award!

Jasline researched with Dr. Shamone Gore-Panter. Her research project, "How does knocking down specific genes cause dysregulation in metabolic pathways?", required her to use several tools in molecular biology. For instance, she used cell culture techniques. She also isolated messenger RNA via RNA extractions which

she used to reverse-transcribe into complementary DNA sequences (cDNA), to quantify changes in gene expression by quantitative polymerase chain reaction (qPCR). During this process, she learned about gene knockdowns, cell culture, and how to analyze data.

Jasline is thankful to the McNair Scholars Program for providing her resources and connecting her with mentors. The advice Jasline would give to new McNair Scholars is to "Never be afraid to open your mouth and simply ask. By asking certain questions, they can open doors you never thought could be open."

Jasline's Mentors: Shamone Gore-Panter, Ph.D. and Bridgette Wilson, Ph.D.

# CONTINUING MCNAIR SCHOLARS

**Jemima Kennedy (Joy)** is a Mechanical Bioengineering major at Cleveland State University. Her goal is to earn a Ph.D. degree in engineering. She is interested in working to enhance human mobility and function through biomechanical engineering.

Jemima is a valued member of the campus community. She has been on the Dean's list and has been a part of the Engineering Student Success Scholar Program. She also holds memberships at the Society of Women Engineers and the National Society of Black Engineers.

Jemima participated in a research project as part of the McNair Scholar's Program. Her project evaluated the variability and stability of gait in stroke survivors. More specifically, it looked at whether interventions given to stroke survivors improved the quality of gait, focusing on the variability of their pattern of gait and the stability of the stroke survivor. To conduct the research, motion analysis and a force plate were used to estimate the kinematics of the gait of participants. Jemima's project identified a correlation between measured and perceived stability of gait. Additionally, she concluded that the exercise interventions tested did not improve her perceived or measured stability of gait.



Jemima has presented the results of her research at various conferences. Her goal is to participate in additional research the remaining of the time she has before graduation in 2021. She also looks forward to participating in all other scholarly activities offered by the McNair Scholars Program. Jemima shared "My favorite thing about McNair is that it is more than a program, but also a family. I am grateful to McNair for the advice, encouragement, and opportunities provided through the program."

Jemima's Mentors: Antonie Van den Bogert, Ph.D. and Jessica Bickel, Ph.D.



**Tatiana Ally** is a Biology and Spanish double major in the College of Science and Health Professions. Her career goal is to attend Veterinary School and become a licensed veterinarian to work with small and large animals. Tatiana also dreams and plans to travel around the world to help animals in need in different countries. Tatiana's commitment to becoming a veterinarian is evidenced by her participation in the Pre-Veterinary club at CSU. She is also a member of Latinos Unidos, TRIO/SSS and Pink Gloves Boxing. When she isn't on campus, Tatiana can likely be found dancing, playing soccer, playing with her dog, reading, watching tv or making others smile and laugh.

For Tatiana's summer research, she analyzed African Clawed toads sensory systems, and the effectiveness of small and large wave stimuli on the toads ability to detect and swim to their prey. Specifically, she sought to answer the question, "to what extent does large wave stimuli vs small wave stimuli affect the swim distance of African Clawed toads?" She hypothesized that the swim distance of the toads will be longer for large wave stimuli than for small wave stimuli. A variety of instruments were used for her experiment: African clawed toads, octagonal aquarium for conducting experiments in, DVD player using Panasonic CCTV, Delphi program, and stat graphics. To Tatiana's surprise, results revealed that there was no difference in swim distance of the toads using large and small waves. Tatiana not only learned a

lot about her research topic during her SRI, but she also learned that conducting experiments takes a lot of patience, hard work, endurance, team work, and time.

As a current scholar, Tatiana's favorite thing about being a part of the program is, "It [McNair] becomes almost like a community where you feel safe, encouraged, empowered, and determined to excel in life. I feel that McNair has become like family, where you can always go to them for advice or help."

She offers some advice to offer new and future McNair Scholars. She says, "You will make lifelong friends, have the help and support from peers and staff at McNair to help you accomplish your goals and dreams after undergraduate school, and provide you with many opportunities to travel and learn about conducting research. Don't be afraid to put yourself out there and take every advantage of everything that McNair has to offer you."

Tatiana's mentors: Dr. Jeff Dean and Dr. Hebat-Allah A El Attar.

# NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS



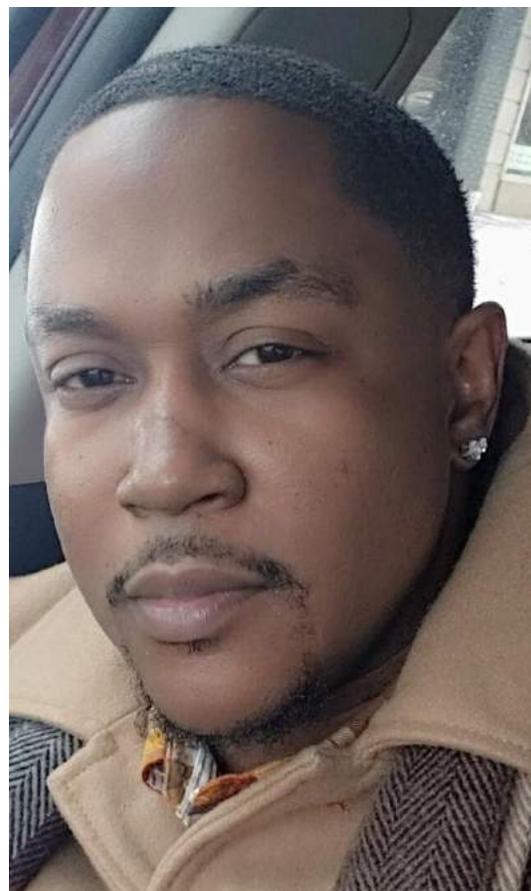
**Ola Abuhamdeh** is a sophomore student majoring in Health Sciences and minoring in Biology. She has dreams of becoming either an Optometrist or a Physician's Assistant. Ola is a busy student. She is a participant in the Pre-Physician Assistant Program and the TRIO Student Support Services and is a member of the Muslim Student Association. In her free time, you may find her shopping, as it is one of her hobbies.

In terms of research, Ola finds herself interested in the field of genetics. She has previously been a volunteer in a research Lab at the Cleveland Clinic. As a McNair Scholar, she looks forward to expanding her research experience and engaging in other scholarly activities. She hopes her experiences in our program will contribute to making her a stronger graduate student candidate.

**Lamar McCornell (Mar)** is a Health Sciences and Black studies double major. His career goal is to earn a Ph.D. in African American studies. He would like to become a professor, teaching students more about the struggles and achievements of African Americans. Lamar would also like to start a non-profit organization for underprivileged youth, arming them with the tools necessary for goal achievement. Lamar explains, "It is essential for the youth, particularly minority youth, to have a role model that has come from the same streets as them. I want to show them that they can achieve their goals and not be a product of their environment."

Lamar keeps himself pretty busy. He is a member of multiple organizations on campus: Black Student Union, Black Studies Ambassador, National Honors Fraternity, and Diversity Chairperson. In Lamar's free time, he enjoys playing basketball, reading, listening to music, watching movies, and shopping.

In terms of research, Lamar is interested in clarifying generational links between the descendants of Africa and the New World. Since becoming a McNair Scholar, Lamar has learned that the program can provide structure and direction in the pursuit of graduate school. He looks forward to being prepared for graduate study. In regard to the McNair Scholars program, Lamar notes that "I feel honored to be a part of such a prestigious program that stands behind their participants through their academic journeys." We feel honored to have such a passionate scholar in our program!



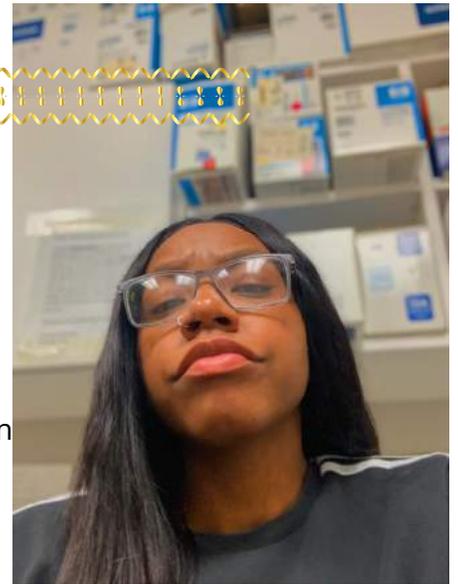
# NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS

**Andrea Arnold (Drea)** is a sophomore Psychology Major at Cleveland State University. She is also double-minoring in Sociology and Business. She is taking a multidisciplinary approach to her studies with the ultimate goal of earning a Ph.D. Along the path to her pursuit of a Ph.D., Andrea intends to earn her Marriage and Family Therapy license from a Commission on Accreditation for Marriage and Family Therapy Education (COAMFTE) accredited university.

Andrea enjoys working with adolescents – middle schoolers and high schoolers – which compliment her interests in social and developmental psychology. Fusing her populations and topics of curiosity, she is interested in researching how adolescents' interactions and connections with their family and peers shape the person they begin to self-identify with.

As a new McNair Scholar, Andrea has noted how much the McNair Scholars Program is invested in her success. "There is not one person on staff who isn't willing to help me or guide me in the best possible way. Everyone is caring and supportive. This is a family and we're all here to help each other become the best versions of ourselves." Andrea looks forward to more clearly understanding how she can successfully make her goals come true. She seeks to utilize multiple resources to accomplish her current goal of graduate school acceptance, earning a Ph.D., and maintaining a career.

Andrea notes that "I am very excited to be in this program. I plan to learn everything I can while creating new and hopefully long-lasting relationships." We think Andrea is in the perfect place, and we feel grateful to have her as a member of the McNair family.



**Mohamed Najjar (Moe)** is majoring in Health Sciences while double-minoring in Biology and Psychology. He does this intending to become an ophthalmologist and researcher. Eyes have piqued his interest, as he is a student at Lerner Research Institute at the Cleveland Clinic, and he is currently a student researcher at the Cole Eye Institute at the Cleveland Clinic. So impressive! Moe shares that even with his love of eyes, he is open to any other type of research.

Outside of research, Moe keeps busy. He is a member of the Muslim Student Association and the American Medical Student Association. He is also a participant of the TRIO Student Support Services program. Outside of school, Moe is either at work as a pharmacy technician, working out, socializing, or hanging with friends. Moe notes that as a McNair Scholar, he most looks forward to using McNair "as a steppingstone for my next steps in life, and in the bigger picture of my life and dreams."

# NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS

**Camilya Williams** is double majoring in Black Studies and Social Work. She is studying in these fields intending to work in higher education as a professor and to do research that will assist underrepresented individuals in completing their education.

On campus, when Camilya isn't in class, she may be found with Praise Dance or Phi Sigma Phi, where she serves as a Diversity and Inclusion Officer. She's also a member of the Zonta Golden Club (Golden Z-Club) and Viking Expeditions. In Camilya's free time, she enjoys writing and performing poetry.

As a McNair Scholar, Camilya most looks forward to the opportunity to do great research that will benefit others. Overall, Camilya seeks to "be hope for the hopeless, a light for those who feel they live in the dark, and a voice for those who cannot speak for themselves."



**Mikayla Gary (Mik)** is an Urban Studies, Public Management, and Policy major. She is also minoring in Black Studies. With this, one of her long-term career goals is to implement a research program for high school students of color. Mikayla stays busy at Cleveland State – in addition to being a full-time student, she also serves as a Senator in CSU Student Government, the President of Black Student Union, the Treasurer of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, and a writer for the Vindicator, CSU's Arts and Culture Magazine.

In terms of research, Mikayla seeks to fuse the topics of her major and minor to study urban development, Black arts and culture, and African American history. As a McNair scholar, Mikayla would love to research her areas of interest - Black culture and Black mental health. She feels as though these topics are not encouraged to delve into, and she would like to make an impact on them. She also wants to further develop her knowledge of these fields and become more confident in her understanding of these topics.

Since joining the McNair Scholar's program in January, Mikayla has noted how McNair offers opportunities for minorities in "all streams of different majors and interests." She also highlighted how "McNair has displayed a sense of team building and bonding with others as well as an opportunity to expand interests."

# NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS



**Michail Haswani** is a computer engineering major, who seeks to use his degree to join an engineering team who will “help provide solutions to the community, by creating useful programs.” If Michail, or Mecho as his friends know him, isn’t in the classroom, he can be found participating in Golden Z-Club at CSU, playing soccer, or other sports.

Michail dreams of doing research related to hardware – either understanding how circuits work or coding, “or maybe both combined,” he muses. He wants whichever he engages to be challenging, and a piece of our everyday lives. As an incoming McNair Scholar, Michail has learned that CSU McNair is “one family trying to help each other as much as possible to reach the goals we want.” He looks forward to building good relationships with his mentors and gaining a stronger understanding of the ins and outs of graduate school.

**Maria Habean** is double majoring in Chemistry and Biology. With this, she aspires to earn a Ph.D. in either Biochemistry or Neurosciences. Maria is highly intrigued by brain aging – as such, she wants to understand more of how it works, and why brain aging happens. Post Ph.D., Maria plans to do medical research on “some type of brain aging, maybe Alzheimer's.” Her current research interests also include Dementia, Parkinson's, and studying proteins in the brain that are linked to common neurodegenerative diseases.

When Maria isn’t in class or lab, she may be found on campus serving in her role as fundraising director for Phi Sigma Rho, or as treasurer of the Chemistry Club. Outside of CSU, Maria spends her free time reading, going on adventures, and cooking/baking. She also participates in a Romanian folk dancing group called Donia. With Donia, Maria performs traditional Romanian dances and festivals and celebrations across the United States! Maria is excited about joining McNair because she knows she has a long road ahead of her, but by joining McNair, she says, “I chose to become a part of a great group of people that will help me through it all!”



# NEW MCNAIR SCHOLARS



**Quendresa Demiri** is a sophomore majoring in Health Care Administration. She plans on earning a master's and Ph.D. to work in the administrative department of a hospital. Knowing Quendresa, we think hospitals need more people like her administering them!

Quendresa participates in scholarly activities on campus. She is a University Scholar and TRIO Student Support Services member. Off-campus, she has volunteered to help her community by mentoring elementary students in a STEM-focused summer program, and other community-based initiatives.

In terms of research, she would like to study topics related to her field, such as insurance fraud at hospitals. Since joining McNair, Quendresa has learned that teamwork is paramount to success. She looks forward to learning new "tips and tricks" with continuing education, making new memories and some new connections!

**Alexis Merk** is a sophomore Physics and Spanish double major in the College of Science of Health Professions and College of Liberal Arts and Social sciences. Her goal is to earn a PhD in Physics, so she can teach in a university and work in a research lab.

Currently, Alexis researches cilia and optical probes of matter in Dr. Resnick's lab. Her other research interests include astronomy and astrophysics. Outside of research and classwork, Alexis enjoys working, and volunteering at the Lake Humane Society. She is also a Pink Glove Women's boxing member!





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*Congratulations!*

MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM