

MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Message from the Director.....	2
Meet our Scholars.....	3
Alumni Advice Panel.....	4-5
Lessons from Dr. Vernon Ruffin.....	6-7
Congratulations to our December Graduates.....	4
Meet the GA's.....	8
Calendar of Events.....	9



ABOUT THE RONALD E. MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

The McNair Scholars Program is named after the late Dr. Ronald E. McNair, an African American physicist and NASA astronaut who perished in the explosion of the Challenger space shuttle in 1986.

Federally sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, the program prepares participants for graduate programs through involvement in research and other scholarly activities.

The participants demonstrate strong academic potential, especially in the STEM disciplines. They are first generation college students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, or hail from underrepresented groups in higher education.

TRIO

RONALD E. MCNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

DR. ÁNGEL REYES-RODRÍGUEZ



The New Year typically brings the promise of hope, the possibility of furthering our goals, and to reach out for our dreams. But in 2021, we are taking it to another level. You probably are as ready as I am to move forward and hope that this year will be better than the last one.

But we need more than hope to thrive this year. We need to take action. We must make plans and take the steps that will move us towards our goals. I invite you to join me and work towards a better 2021 for all of us.

You and I may have different goals. For instance, I will be working towards finding more and better ways to ensure our students get the support they need. I look forward to their success and plan on being there to support them along the way.

But there are goals that you and I may share. For example, I look forward to the return to a healthy campus. I do my part by wearing a mask and avoiding meeting people outside my household as much as possible. And I hope you are doing the same. I plan on taking the vaccine whenever it is available to me, and I hope you do too.

I do have high hopes for myself, our students, and our community as large. I am ready to do my part. I urge you to consider all the ways you can affect positive change in your life and your community. And then take action. We all count on you being the best you possible and hope that if enough of us do so, we will make this year a better one for all.

Ángel L. Reyes-Rodríguez

Director

McNair Scholars Program



WELCOME NEW & RETURNING SCHOLARS!

New Scholars:

ONETHA BELGRAVE
Social Work

ERICA HUGHES
Social Work

ERICKA CLIFTON
Speech & Hearing

MARISSA MCINTOSH
Speech & Hearing

JESSICA DISLA
Psychology

SADIE-MARIE WRIGHT
Psychology

DONNA ERIWN
Liberal Arts

Returning Scholars:

Ola Abuhamdeh
Tatiana Ally
Andrea Arnold
Kylie Armstead
Janell Craig

Quendresa Demiri
Mikyla Gary
Maria Habean
Michail Haswani

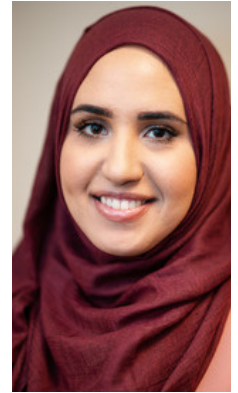
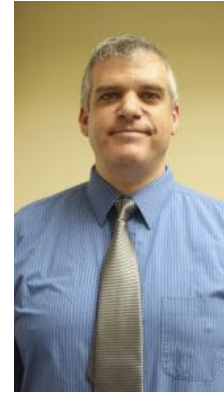
Alexis Merk
Mohamed Najjar
Briana Nichols
Jasline Rosario
Hannah Tackett



2020 MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

ALUMNI ADVICE PANEL

This year at our virtual research day, our panel of distinguished McNair scholar alumni gave us some tips on getting to, through and beyond grad school. Take a look at some of the tips that Kimberly Schveder, M.S., Dr. Paul Schrader, and Khadeja Najjar, M.A. had to share with us:



- No two PhD journeys look the same
 - Some are more research heavy. Some include moving to different places. Some include living with your family the whole time. Others include moving to a new place by yourself, or with your family, or with roommates. Different programs have different demands. Each individual has their own life experiences that they bring into their program and different responsibilities to tend to while they are in grad school. No two journeys look the same, but each journey is remarkable.
- Gap years are okay, and so is not taking any breaks
 - Paul didn't take any breaks, and went to a different college for his PhD than he did his BS and MS. Kimberly took some time off to work after obtaining her masters degree, and is preparing to apply to PhD programs this year. Khadeja earned her BA, MA and is now working on her PhD all in the same university. And it all works out.
- Keep personal values and needs in mind when applying to and deciding among programs
 - What are your other responsibilities? What specifically are you hoping to learn, and to study? Look for advisors whose interests match yours. And also be realistic about program costs, assistantships, family obligations, etc.

2020 MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

ALUMNI ADVICE PANEL

- Intrinsic motivation is important
 - There are a lot less small assignments in grad school than there are during undergrad. Professors simply expect you to keep up with your class readings. With this, its important to have an internal drive to keep up with your school work – and with your research!
- Ask for help when you need
 - Never be too shy or nervous to ask for help. Your advisors, professors, McNair family, ect are all invested in your growth and want to help in any way possible. No question is a stupid one. Especially as a budding academic, the more questions, (usually) the better.
- Seek advice from others
 - Sometimes hearing other peoples thoughts and suggestions can help you form your own. From hearing out others, you can weigh what you do and don't like, what is and is not helpful, and make your own decisions from there.
- Connections are important
 - From your advisors, to the people you meet at conferences, to peers you are interviewing next to – you never know who knows who and where that will get you.
- Social support (be it family, friends, advisors, classmates) is a necessity – no one gets through these programs alone!
 - They say that “it takes a village to raise a child.” Well, it also takes a village for one person to get to and through grad school! Your mentors, advisors, friends, family, classmates, organizations you may join, and even the local barista who remembers your coffee order are all necessary for success. No one, and I mean no one, earns their PhD alone. It's simply not possible. Embrace your supports. They want to be there for you.

2020 MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

LESSONS FROM

DR. VERNON RUFFIN

The McNair Scholars program hosted our very first virtual open house! Our key note speaker was Dr. Vernon Ruffin, who is an Assistant Professor of Biology at Virginia Union University. Check out some of the info and tips we learned about and/or from Dr. Ruffin!



- Started college with the strong intentions of becoming a rapper – it's ok to change your mind. Dr. Ruffin did.
- Connections and networking are everything - whether you're an undergrad trying to build your CV, or an assistant professor building a professional network at your university.
- Advisor's can impact your trajectory (research interests, what schools you go to).
 - For Dr. Ruffin, his undergrad advisor Dr. Archer helped him solidify his interest in Neuroscience. Dr. Archer helped connect Dr. Ruffin to a seminar by the NIH, where he learned that the NIH may pay for his degree. So, he sought to work in Dr. Robinson's lab at VCU.
 - Dr. Archer connected Ruffin to his own advisor, Dr. Haddad, because of their shared interest in neuroscience.
 - Dr. Trough was Dr. Ruffin's advisor at Howard University. Dr. Trough knew Dr. Haddad, who worked at Albert Einstein in the Bronx. Because they knew each other, Dr. Ruffin was able to go to Albert Einstein to learn some different techniques through a grant.
 - In Dr. Haddad's lab, there were guest researchers. One of those were Dr. Boron, who worked at Yale in Connecticut. Dr. Ruffin wanted to work there, so he introduced himself, and Dr. Boron let him join his lab.

2020 MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

LESSONS FROM DR. VERNON RUFFIN

- Diversity is important and enhances STEM research— different points of view allow for a question to be examined from multiple frames of reference.
 - Dr. Haddad's lab moved to California. In this lab, and lab's Dr. Ruffin was in after, the RA's came from diverse backgrounds. Dr. Ruffin appreciated this because of the different perspectives everyone provided.
- Lab is family.
- In academia, the help one is given is paid forward. (e.g, I got trained and supported, so I trained and supported others too) It's a big family.
- Find a support circle - Advisors, mentors, friends, family, etc.
- Work hard and smart. Balance personal and work lives. Develop self discipline.



Camilya Williams

**Congratulations
to our December
2020 graduates!**

We are so proud of
you both! We wish you
the best of luck and
success in grad school
and beyond!

Love, your McInair family



Lamar McCornell

MEET THE GRADUATE ASSISTANTS!



KHADEJA NAJJAR (MCNAIR GA 1)

Khadeja is a two-time graduate of CSU, with a BA in psychology and MA in Clinical Psychology. She has held multiple roles at CSU, including English tutor, success coach, research assistant, and part-time instructor. She is passionate and invested in minority development and well-being, both professionally and personally. As a former McNair Scholar, Khadeja understands the long-term, positive impact the McNair Scholars Program can have on a student's academic and career trajectory. As a counseling psychology PhD student, Khadeja is excited to complete her education at CSU (a "vike for life," if you will), and to have the opportunity to participate in the McNair program as a graduate assistant and student-mentor to undergraduate scholars.



AUTUMN BLATT (MCNAIR GA 2)

Autumn earned a BA in psychology from Ohio State in 2014 and is currently pursuing an Occupational Therapy Doctorate at Cleveland State. Autumn was a Mount Leadership Society Scholar in undergrad. This leadership-through-service-based program allowed her the opportunity to serve in multiple capacities across Columbus. Volunteering with Mount paved the way for Autumn to take on leadership roles in various student organizations focused on mental health and suicide prevention, and she went on to coordinate two fundraising walks for the National Eating Disorders Association. Autumn has spent her time since undergrad working various jobs in the fields of healthcare and social services. These employment experiences have made her passionate about social justice, mental health, and expanding healthcare access for underserved communities. As a first-generation college student herself, Autumn is excited to work with the McNair Scholars program to provide crucial opportunities, information, and a sense of community to the students that the program serves. Autumn enjoys baking cookies, learning to paint, and playing Stardew Valley in her free time.



KLARISSA ZENO (MCNAIR GA 3)

Klarissa graduated from Cleveland State University in May 2019 with a BA in Psychology. She was a McNair Scholar, a TRIO Success Coach, and involved in several student organizations. As a research assistant in the Healthy Relationships (HEART) Lab, she studied the experiences of women of who were pregnant as teenagers. Klarissa is currently working on her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling at CSU. She enjoys spending time with students and showing them the ropes of college life. Klarissa is very passionate about serving underrepresented populations and wants to continue to do so throughout her career. She plans to pursue a Ph.D. in counseling psychology after completion of her masters. When not in school, she is working full time managing Mitchell's Ice Cream in Ohio City.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

02/18 | 11:30 AM

New Scholar Orientation | Dr. Angel
Reyes-Rodriguez

02/25 | 4:00 PM

Cultural Event

03/09 | 11:30 AM

SRI Proposal | Dr. Angel Reyes-
Rodriguez

3/11 | 11:30 AM

Grad School Presentation | Dr. Angel
Reyes-Rodriguez

04/06 | 11:30 AM

Recommendation Letters | Dr. Angel
Reyes-Rodriguez

04/08 | 11:30 AM

Research Methods | Maria Rowlett

04/23 | 5:00 PM

End of the Year Banquet

CONTACT US

2121 Euclid Ave. SR155

Cleveland Ohio, 44115

216-802-3360

mcnairprogram@csuohio.edu

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



[www.facebook.com/
CSUMcNair](https://www.facebook.com/CSUMcNair)



[@CSUMcNair](https://www.instagram.com/CSUMcNair)



[https://www.linkedin.
com/groups/8228131/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8228131/)