



# Cleveland State University

## MCNAIR NEWSLETTER

Fall 2010

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### MCNAIR SPRING 2010 GRADUATES

Congratulations to TRACEY APGAR who graduated in May 2010 from Cleveland State University.



Well Done! FELITA REEVES was admitted to and enrolled in the Master's of Social Work program at The Cleveland State University.



*We're proud of our Spring graduates!*

*Best wishes on graduate studies!*

## REACHING FOR THE STARS

Greetings Everyone!!

I hope that you all are as excited as me about the 2010 academic year. The McNair Scholars Program is looking forward to another year of growth and success; we have much to be proud of. Did you know that upon graduating with a bachelor's degree, our scholar's have consistently been accepted to graduate school programs? This is not a coincidence, but evidence of the work we do. We especially want to congratulate Magdalena Wilczek who became the first scholar to be accepted into a doctorate program, since the inception of McNair at Cleveland State University when she began with us in 2008.

The working relationship between scholars and their faculty mentors have also contributed to the reputation of our program. Scholar-Mentor research has taken place for the last two summers and it has produced publications, conference presentations and even friendships.



Ronald E. McNair

From what I've heard, students do not expect to have these types of relationships with professors; McNair Scholars will tell you that, for them, it is normal. Scholars have also become more open to sharing inspiring stories about their interests and ambitions. They have learned that Ph.D's are born out of these types of stories and ambitions. Obtaining a Ph.D allows us all to pursue knowledge to become experts; one can affect public policy, introduce new ideas and eradicate things that we deem hazardous to others, our family and friends. McNair Scholars have demonstrated time and time again that making an impact in their field of study to do good for the world is important

to them. Scholars, we applaud you for this!!

CSU faculty, administrators and the overall University community also continue to embrace the CSU McNair mission to mentor and support students in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM) and STEM-related fields. They know McNair Scholars are committed to pursuing research, graduate school and obtaining PhD's.

Those are pretty high achievements for our 3-year young program. With that said, I encourage new scholars, McNair alumni and the University community to continue to carry this program and its efforts to strengthen the pipeline of scholars that go on to join the ranks, as Dr. McNair envisioned.

-Gina Huffman  
Assistant Director  
McNair Scholars Program

### Welcome to McNair

**Andrei Bialevich** - Electrical Engineering

**Katelin Funderwhite** - Health Sciences Pre-therapy

**Jermaine Clark** - Finance

**Brittany Pearcy** - English

**Regina Samuels** - Exercise/Fitness Specialist

## ALUMNI NEWS

**Manjola Meta** wrote in to say.... “I finished my first year at Ursuline college successfully. I am glad that I took Gina’s advice to apply to Ursuline College. Spring 2010 went well; and I had interesting classes, amazing instructors, and great classmates. I was surrounded by optimistic individuals at all times and I loved it. Students need hope, encouragement, and less negative energy in order to succeed in life. I finished my 1<sup>st</sup> clinical rotation in geriatrics and it was a great experience. You get to carry out the theories that have been covered in class. This fall my rotation is OB-GYN and I am so excited. I love this specialty. It is all about maternity cycle and the care of the newborn. A hospital is a place where people enter and leave this world but it is more interesting to see doctors introduce a newborn to this world. I want to thank the McNair Staff for taking their time to follow up with McNair Alumni.”



**Chaucola Pleasant** says....“This fall is my second year as a full time graduate student in the Regulatory Biology Masters’ Program here at Cleveland State University. I do RNA research, studying major and minor class spliceosomes and splicing in breast cancer cells, under the supervision of my principle investigator Dr. Girish Shukla. My TA (Teaching Assistant) gives me the opportunity to instruct Anatomy and Physiology labs for the Biology department. I greet each semester and all it entails, with excitement and enthusiasm as it brings me one step closer to my goals.”



## 2010 SUMMER RESEARCH INSTITUTE

Each year the CSU McNair Scholars Program sponsors a Summer Research Institute (SRI). For eight weeks students participate in high quality research, a Graduate Record Exam (GRE) prep course, writing workshops and campus visits, which are designed to strengthen students’ skill sets and prepare them for graduate study. This year, twelve of our scholars worked diligently with their faculty mentors and the McNair staff to complete their research projects.

Scholar Name	Research Topic	Mentor Name
Dhillon, Gurpreet	Gender Differences in Cardiovascular Response to Isometric Handgrip Protocol	Eddie Lam, HPERD and Cheryl Delgado, Nursing
Evans, Na’Tasha	Relationship between <i>Lampsilis radiate luteola</i> on different sides of Ohio’s Northern divide	Robert Krebs, Biology
Gamarra, Juan	Effectiveness of Isometric handgrip devices for evaluating blood pressure	Eddie Lam, HPERD and Cheryl Delgado, Nursing
Griffith, Kristen	Development Of Occupational Therapy Students’ Therapeutic Communication Skills During a Mental Health Service—Learning Experience	Susan Maloney, Health Sciences
James, Courtney	Selenium Deficiency and its Effect on eIF4a3	Donna Driscoll, Cleveland Clinic
Kariotakis, Alexander	The Muscle Regulatory Transcription Factor MYOD controls expression Of 4E-BP, A Key Mediator of CAP-Dependent Translation	Crystal Weyman, Biology
Lawong, Aloysus	Structural and thermodynamic characterization of Fis1 mutants known to disrupt mitochondrial fission (Research at Johns Hopkins University)	Blake Hill, Johns Hopkins Univ.
Robinson, Symone	Speech Language Pathologists' Knowledge and Understanding of Adults with Cerebral Palsy and use of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Devices in Therapy	Barbara Prakup, Health Sciences
Schrader, Paul	Algebraic Models of Free Loop Spaces	Jonathan Scott, Mathematics
Smith, Lorenzo	Using Assistive Technology in a College Transition Program for High School	Glenn Goodman, Health Sciences
Sundberg, Albert	Nitric Oxide Diffusion in the Aorta	Partha Srinivasan, Mathematics
Thai, Luyen	Exploring the Relationship between Mindfulness and Prosocial Behavior	Ernest Park, Psychology

*In the spring of 2010, several McNair Scholars attended the McNair Research Conference in Seattle, WA. This is what they had to say about the experience:*

“...I learned that research and presenting is not all terrible as I thought it would be. I learned that everyone is still learning as they conduct research, so it is not going to be perfect even when you’re presenting in front of a room filled with people. I loved the atmosphere; the campus was absolutely gorgeous...” by **Symone Robinson**



“....The conference was a culmination of different research opportunities by different scholars. ... I had originally believed that McNair Scholars Program was geared to the hard science and research field rather than humanities and behavioral sciences so it was refreshing to see an array of different disciplines” by **Leigh Okwudi**



“.... The impression from each interview along with the campus and the city itself was nothing short of benevolent. Although logic dictates that I apply to multiple institutions in consideration of my advance studies, the University of Washington’s PhD. Program in pure mathematics is now my primary choice” by **Paul Schrader**



**August 23-27, 2010**  
McNair Kick Off Week

**September 9, 2010 10:00 A.M. – 2:00 P.M.**  
Research Day

**September 21, 2010 12:30 – 2:00 P.M.**  
An evening with Dr. Neil Tyson

**September 26 - 27, 2010**  
Purdue University Big Ten & Grad Expo

**September 23,28, 2010**  
Scholarly Writing and Workshops

**September 30, October 12, 2010**  
Mentor Orientation

**October 20,21, 2010**  
Scholarly Writing and Workshops

**October 28-30, 2010**  
Vanderbilt University: STEM recruitment

**November 4 – 7, 2010**  
University of Wisconsin McNair Research Conference

**November 8 - 9,2010**  
The Ohio State University School Visit

## FALL 2010 GRADUATE SCHOOL VISITATION

**Big Ten + Graduate School Exposition,**  
**Purdue University, Indiana**  
**September 26<sup>th</sup> – September 27<sup>th</sup>**

## FALL 2010 MCNAIR CONFERENCE

**National McNair Research Conference**  
**in Delavan, Wisconsin**  
**November 5<sup>th</sup> - November 7<sup>th</sup>**

SCHOLAR	MAJOR
Benamon, Katrina	Health Sciences
Bialevich, Andrei	Electrical Engineering
Chatmon, Anecia	Biology
Clark, Jermaine	Finance
Courtney Jr. Victor	Psychology
Dhillon, Gurpreet	Nursing
Eady, William	Biology
Evans, Na'Tasha	Biology & Psychology
Funderwhite, Katelin	Health Sciences
Gamarra, Juan	Business
Griffith, Kristen	Health Sciences
Hill, Dawneisha	Psychology
James, Courtney	English
Jones, Jessica	Physical Therapy
Kariotakis, Alexander	Biology
Lawong, Aloysus	Chemistry
Lawong, Diane	Biology
Okwudi, Leigh	Health Sciences
Pearcy, Brittany	English
Robinson, Symone	Speech and Hearing
Samuels, Regina	Exercise/Fitness Specialist
Schrader, Paul	Mathematics
Smith, Lorenzo	Psychology
Sundberg, Albert	Mathematics
Thai, Luyen	Psychology

**Accepting  
Applications Now!  
Be a McNair Scholar  
[www.csuohio.edu/  
offices/mcnair](http://www.csuohio.edu/offices/mcnair)**



*The McNair Scholars Program provides students with critical academic, research, and professional experiences to enhance their competitiveness in gaining admission to graduate programs. Participants are first generation, under represented in graduate studies and have demonstrated high academic potential in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering or Mathematics) or STEM-related disciplines.*



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## PART OF THE CLUB

On March 1, 2010 I received an offer from the Johns Hopkins University (JHU) via the Leadership Alliance (LA) to participate in the 2010 Summer Internship Program (SIP) as part of the Chemistry-Biology Interface Program. I completed 10 weeks of active research in the Hill laboratory under the guidance of Dr. Blake Hill at the JHU biology department, Homewood campus. My investigation was on a mitochondrial fission protein, Fis1, with an important pathogenic role in neurodegeneration and the onset of diseases such as Alzheimer's and Parkinson's disease. I presented this research titled, "Structural and thermodynamic characterization of Fis1 mutants known to disrupt mitochondrial fission," at the LA National Symposium in



Aloysus Lawong working at Johns Hopkins University Biology lab

New Jersey and the SIP Presentation Session at the JHU School of Medicine.

A popular adage describes opportunity and challenge as two sides of the same coin, my sojourn at Hopkins was exactly so. A challenge as far as stepping-up to several "research standards," which are not all obvious to the uninitiated. It was an opportunity to be part of a leading research institution with over a century's history worth of pioneering work and arguably the American if not the world's capital of the medical avant-garde. Meeting a lifelong role model, Dr. Benjamin Carson M.D., was simply priceless. I learned much from a very passionate mentor, the graduate students at the Hill lab, and also from like-minded enthusiasts hosted with me at Wolman Hall JHU. My academic ambitions to pursue a research career starting with graduate school were greatly enhanced and I left with much experience.

**Aloysus Lawong**  
McNair Scholar  
Chemistry