



UNIVERSITY OF  
SOUTHERN  
CALIFORNIA  
MCNAIR SCHOLARS  
PROGRAM

# USC McNair Scholars Program

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Newsletter Composer & Editor

## About the Program

The McNair Scholars Program prepares high-achieving USC undergraduates to engage in research and for graduate school programs. The USC Office of Undergraduate Programs provides administrative oversight for the program and makes available opportunities for all students to participate in an array of academic, co-curricular, and funding programs. Participating students, referred to as McNair Scholars, begin the program by taking a Research Methods Course in the Spring. During the Summer Research Institute (SRI), McNair Scholars are advised by USC faculty mentors, graduate students, and program staff. Throughout the Spring, Summer, and Fall, the program provides services aimed at promoting academic success in the undergraduate program, graduate school preparation, career development, research competencies, and writing skills.

The McNair Scholars Program is a U.S. Department of Education Federal TRiO Program. The core components of the USC McNair Scholars Program include a Spring Research Methods Course, Summer Research Institute (SRI), Residential Life & Cultural Program, Annual Research Symposium, GRE Test Preparation, Travel Grant Awards for Conference Attendance and University Visitations, and Academic & Career Advising.

We hope you take the time to review all the scholar achievements highlighted in this newsletter. We would like to once again thank everyone that contributes to making the USC McNair Scholars Program a great resource for students. Without a doubt, the coming academic years will be filled with opportunities for all participating students, and we will see these students excel and realize major achievements.

Sincerely,

*Dr. Richard Andalon*  
*Director, USC McNair Scholars Program & Associate Dean, USC Graduate School*

*Dr. Aaron H. Walker*  
*Assistant Director & Program Specialist, USC McNair Scholars Program*

# Recap - Scholar and Program Achievements & Events

The USC McNair Scholars Program continues to be one of the premiere research and graduate school preparation programs for undergraduates in the Country! Upon completion of the annual report, the following statistics were uncovered allowing for a clear illustration of USC McNair Scholar success:

## Achievements

- There are **361** students affiliated with the USC McNair Scholars Program to date, approximately **75** program participants are currently enrolled as undergraduates.
- In 2012, **17** USC McNair Scholars were admitted to graduate programs, including **12** at the masters-level and 5 at the doctoral-level.
- In 2011, **16** USC McNair Scholars were admitted to graduate programs, including **11** at the masters-level and 5 at the doctoral-level.
- About **100** Masters level and **50** Doctoral level degrees have been awarded to USC McNair Scholar Alums. Currently **75** alums are pursuing graduate-level studies. This constitutes a program success rate of about **80%** for graduate school placement! We are so proud of our McNair Scholars!
- From 2009 to 2012, nearly **60** USC McNair Scholars presented their projects at major research, national-level conferences throughout California and the U.S. In many instances, our undergraduates presented alongside graduate students and faculty mentors.
- Between 2009 and 2012, the USC McNair Scholars Program awarded nearly **\$400,000.00** in student aid by way of supplemental research stipends, scholarships, and grants. Students are awarded this funding in addition to their annual financial aid and scholarships for tuitions, books, housing, etc.
- Annually, **20 to 26** USC Faculty Members mentor and advise USC McNair Scholars. Since 1996, at least **200** USC Faculty Members have worked with students through the program.

## Events

- The spring 2012 USC Latino Student Empowerment Conference took place on January 28th and featured participation from several students affiliated with the USC McNair Scholars Program and the Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education (EDGE) Program. Sessions included: “Labor and Health Issues in Communities”, “Youth Contributions to Immigrant Families”, and “Youth Transitions to Adulthood”. Presenters and moderators were: McNair Scholars Evelyn Larios (Sociology), Luis Maldonado (Health Promotion and Disease Prevention), Christina Wilkerson (Sociology), Nathaniel Gonzalez (Sociology), Juan Espinoza and EDGE doctoral student Emir Estrada (Sociology).
- Every spring we host a networking mixer in the USC Doheny Library Lecture Hall. Sponsors of the program include the USC Graduate School, USC Office of Postdoctoral Affairs, and the USC McNair Scholars Program, Office of Undergraduate Programs. This event provides a chance for graduate students and postdocs engaged in research to mingle with their colleagues as well as with McNair Scholar undergraduates who are interested in graduate school. The event consistently has nearly 100 attendees, incorporating students from across many different departments and disciplines. Food and beverages are served while students share their experiences with one another. The positive feedback and requests for more events like this was noted and this will continue to be an annual event. If you couldn't make it this year, be sure to join us next time!

## Recap - Scholar and Program Achievements & Events (cont)

- Ms. Phuong (Harmony) Huynh and the USC Gates Millennium Scholars (GMS) were honored to have the rare opportunity to host GMS Vice President Larry A. Griffith Jr. and Director of Operations Julie Kim at our campus. The visit consisted of discussions regarding Gates Scholars' experiences at USC, GMS awarding matters, GMS administrative guidelines, and Gates Scholars' thoughts and concerns. This special event was a huge success with a high turnout rate. We were even surprised with the need to extend the discussion an extra hour! The Daily Trojan was also present to record this historic event as well. A special thanks goes to the USC McNair Scholars Program for kindly facilitating this event, particularly Dr. Richard Andalon and Dr. Aaron Walker. A new GMS chapter has recently been formed at USC. Keep an eye out for an upcoming meeting.
- Fall 2012 marked the beginning of USC's "Just Among McNairs (JAM)" meetings! These "JAM Sessions" – also open to current McNair Scholars from surrounding Universities - provide an opportunity for scholars to give practice presentations for upcoming conferences, discuss issues they are having relative to their research, suggest articles for the group to read and discuss, or just kick-around and/or debate ideas with other scholars. The workshops that have already taken place covered bioethics and the presidential debates. We are open to your suggestions for future topics! Keep an eye your inbox or the USC McNair website for announcements about future JAM Sessions!
- Members of the 2011-2012 McNair Cohort had the pleasure of attending the 9th annual UCLA McNair Research Symposium held at the UCLA Young Research Library. This gave the scholars from both campuses a chance to share their research with each other and enjoy a meal together. This was a great event for all and cross-campus activities will be promoted and continued for future McNair Scholars!
- "Real Talk with USC Grad Students of Color": This fall, McNair Scholars had the opportunity to network with graduate students Alexandrina Agloro, Stefan Alexander Smith, Vanessa Monterosa, and Nikita Hamilton in an open forum to learn more about their graduate research experiences at USC and career goals. Scholars in attendance also gained valuable tips and strategies to help them excel in their undergraduate work and preparation for graduate school. Scholars also learned about the unique experiences, including success and challenges, of graduate students from historically underrepresented backgrounds. This was a successful event and for those that could not attend, be sure not to miss the next one!

# Introducing the USC McNair Scholar Cohort 2012-2013

## Welcome to the family!

<i>Name</i>	<i>Majors</i>
Alberto Edeza	Biological Sciences
Bashir Wyatt	Health and Humanity
Belen Chairez	Neuroscience
Betty Tran	American Studies and Ethnicity
Christopher Sandino	Electrical Engineering
Delphine Sims	African American Studies
Elizabeth Soriano	Communication
Eva Ortega	Psychology
Frederick Brindopke	Global Health
Kim Luong	Business Administration
LaVasjah Williams	Communication
Luis Torres	Biomedical Engineering
Luna White	Sociology
Malika Moore	Political Science
Marco Lopez	Human Biology
Mariangela Ruiz-Hernandez	Psychology
Martin Arredondo	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
Melissa Linton	English Literature
Michael Cox	Psychology
Nicole Marcione	Gerontology Lifespan Health
Odette Overton	Psychology
Oswaldo Rodriguez	Computer Science/ Business Administration
Rachel Rosales	Health Promotion and Disease Prevention Studies
Samantha Fousse	Biology
Taylor Markey	Neuroscience
Winona Leon	English (Creative Writing)



# Outgoing 2011-2012 USC McNair Scholar Cohort

## Good luck with your graduate school applications!

<i>Name</i>	<i>Majors</i>
Jonathon P. Adame	Kinesiology
Anneleise V. Azua	Communication and Gender Studies
Yrneh G. Brown	Fine Arts
Franklin Caldwell II	Astronautical Engineering
Karina Casillas	Public Policy Management & Planning and American Studies & Ethnicity
Kyle Tyari Doss	English
Tandia R. Eljio	Anthropology
Susan Guadarrama	Psychology
Ashley Harlow	Social Sciences (Psychology) Sociology
Brenton Keller	Neuroscience and Philosophy
Yiqi Lin	Neuroscience and Health Promotion and Disease Prevention
Eduardo Mollinedo-Pinon	History
Rikiesha Pierce	Sociology
Richard C. Ponce Jr.	Biomedical Engineering
Brendan Rabideau	Neuroscience and Philosophy
Angela M. Ross	Sociology and Social Sciences
Debbie Rumbo	Political Science and Spanish
Michael A. Sadler	International Relations
Marco A. Valadez	American Studies & Ethnicity and Economics
Monica Valencia	Sociology
Salvador Vieyera Malagón	Anthropology and History
Baotran Ngoc Vo	Biomedical Engineering
Shamoiya Washington	Political Science
Paul F. Young	Sociology



## Scholars Going on to Graduate School

**EnJolf S. H. Alexander** admitted to a Master's program in Social Work at Case Western Reserve University

**Calvin Allen** admitted to a Master's program in Public Relations and Corporate Communications at New York University (NYU)

**Armando Barajas** admitted to a Master's Program in Philosophy at Loyola Marymount University

**Shamell Bell** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Ethnic Studies at the University of California, San Diego

**Josephine Chou** admitted to a Master's program in Occupational Therapy at the University of Southern California (USC)

**Denise Colome** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California

**Abel Delgado** admitted to a Master's program in Medieval History at the University of York, England and a Ph.D. Program in Medieval History at the University of Minnesota

**Apollo Emeka** admitted to a D.P.P.D (doctorate) in Policy, Planning, Development at the University of Southern California

**Reza Ghassemi** admitted to Master's programs in Engineering at UC Berkeley & USC

**Bernadette Gholami** admitted to a Master's program in Social Work at San Jose State University

**Mariah Gill** admitted to a Master's Program in Environmental Management at Yale University

**Patricia Gomes** admitted to a Master's program in American Indian Studies at UCLA

**Nathan Gonzalez** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Political Science at the University of Chicago

**Whitney Griffin** admitted to a Ph.D. program in School Psychology at The Ohio State University

**Erika Humphries** admitted to a Master's program in Public Policy at USC and Juris Doctorate (J.D.) at USC

**Darren Knight** admitted to Doctor of Medicine (M.D.) programs at Columbia University and UC San Francisco

**Monika Langarica** admitted to a Juris Doctorate (J.D.) program at UC Berkeley and UCLA

**Daija Lewis** admitted to a Master's Program in Higher Education at Argosy University-Los Angeles

**William Lopez** admitted to Master's programs in Architecture at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Adriana Lovera** admitted to Master's programs in International Education at Columbia University and New York University

**Vladimir Medenica** admitted to a Ph.D. program in Political Science at Princeton University, Columbia University, and the University of Chicago

**Erin O'Donnell** admitted to a Doctorate in Physical Therapy (DPT) program at Husson University

**Adam Perez** admitted to Master's programs at Columbia University (Journalism), Yale University (American Studies), Stanford University (Communication), UC Berkeley (Journalism), & UCLA (Sociology)

**Michael Randolph** admitted to Master's programs in Human Resources Management (Business) at Cornell University (Industrial & Labor Relations), the University of Minnesota, and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

**Erica S. Silva** admitted to a Master's Program in Education at Loyola Marymount University

**Javier Sotelo** admitted to a Master's program in Global Medicine at USC

**Christina Wilkerson** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at Columbia University, University of Michigan, and University of Miami

**Christelle Williams** admitted to a Master's Program in Psychology at California State University, Long Beach

**Daniel Wu**, admitted to Ph.D. programs in Sociology at Harvard University & the University of Chicago

**Paul F. Young** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California

**Roland (Tony) Zapata** admitted to a Master's Program in Social Work at the University of Southern California

## Scholars Presenting at National-Level Conferences

### Claremont Graduate University McNair Conference, October 2011

La Tarrell Brown, *Dating Equality Between Heterosexuals*

Juan Espinoza, *Spaces of Community Wealth and Collective Energy in the "Empower Law Fellows Program"*

Carmina Gomez, *The Effects of Farmers' Markets on Fruit and Vegetable Intake Amongst Low Income Latino Families*

Andrea Porter, *Two Shades of Black: A Comparative Analysis Between the Social Experiences of Black International Students and Black Domestic Students at a White University*

Javier Sotelo, *Effects of Defective STAT3/Wnt pathways on Cardiac Neural Crest Cell Migration and Heart Development*

Christelle Williams, *The Effects of Avatar Customization and Point of View on Psychophysiological Arousal and Self-Report Responses*

### UC Berkeley McNair Symposium, August 2011

Abel Delgado, *The Jewess and Mooress in the Cantigas de Santa Maria of Alfonso X*

Rahel Gabreyes, *Embedded in News Coverage, Mirrored in Public Opinion: Television News and the Deterioration of Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom*

Mariah Gill, *Shaping Marine Protected Areas: The Media and Stakeholder Arguments in Southern California*

Phuong (Harmony) Huynh, *Selective Vulnerability of Neuromuscular Junctions in Spinal Muscular Atrophy*

Evelyn Larios, *Labor Unions: A Contextual Factor in Parents' School Involvement*

Bertrand Perdomo, *Community Organization's Role in Reattaching Former Inmates to the Labor Market*

Christina Wilkerson, *"I'M A DREAMER": Undocumented Latino Youth in Los Angeles and the Federal DREAM Act*

Charnan Williams, *Lost in the City of Angels: A Comparative Analysis of Central Avenue and Leimert Park as Black Cultural Spaces*

### Out of State

La Tarrell Brown presented his research entitled, "Dating Equality Between Heterosexuals" at the McNair Scholars Conference at Oklahoma State University.

Abel Delgado, presented "Witches on Brooms: The Medieval Influence on Early Modern Stereotypes and Ideas of Witches and Witchcraft" at the 6th Annual Moravian College Medieval and Early Modern Studies Conference on December 3, 2011 in Bethlehem, Pennsylvania.

Carmina Gomez presented her research entitled "*The Effects of Farmers' Markets on Fruit and Vegetable Intake Amongst Low Income Latino Families*" at the American Institute for Cancer Research Conference on November 3-4, 2011 in Washington, DC.

Evelyn Larios presented her research entitled "*The Underlying Power of Union Memberships in Schools*" at the 2011 Pacific Sociological Association Conference on March 11, 2011 in Seattle, Washington & "*Labor Unions: A Contextual Factor in Parents' School Involvement*" at the Eastern Sociological Conference in New York City.

Luis Maldonado presented his research entitled, "HIV Among Young Latino Men who have Sex with Men (MSM): The Underlying Factors of Testing" at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in New York City, NY.

Javier Sotelo Jr. presented his research entitled, "Effects of Defective STAT3/Wnt pathways on Cardiac Neural Crest Cell Migration and Heart Development" at the Latino Medical Student Association Conference at Harvard University.

Ashley Williams presented her research entitled "*Connecting Network News to the College Aspirations of Minority High School Students*" at the 8th Annual Yale Bouchet Conference on Diversity in Graduate Education on March 26, 2011 at Yale University.

## Scholars Presenting at National-Level Conferences (cont)

### Claremont Graduate University McNair Conference, October 2012

Jonathan P. Adame, *Body Composition, BMI, and Weight Following 4 Weeks of Respiratory Muscle Training (RMT) Using the Breathslim® Device*

Franklin Caldwell II, *The Lunar Entry and Approach Platform For Research On Ground (LEAPFROG) GNC Simulation Comparison*

Karina Casillas, *Workforce prep: Student Perceptions of Subject-Centered and Multi-Disciplinary Programs*

Tandia R. Eljio, *Removable Alien: Jamaican Immigrants and U.S. Deportation Policy under the Obama Administration*

Brendan Rabideau, *Temporal effects on the binding of auditory and visual modalities in working memory*

Salvador Veyra Malagón, *Pax Porfiriana: Porfirio Díaz in Mexican Politics and Society, 1876-1910*

Bao Tran Ngoc Vo, *Pitx2 Transcription Factor Inhibits Reprogramming of Human Dermal Fibroblast Cells*

### UC Berkeley McNair Symposium, August 2012

Brenton Keller, *Treadmill Exercise Delays Intracellular Protein Aggregation But Does Not Alter Motor Deficits in 140 CAG Knock-in Mouse Model of Huntington's Disease*

Shamoiya Washington, *Embedded in News Coverage, Mirrored in Public Opinion: Television News and the Deterioration of Support for Operation Iraqi Freedom*

Richard C. Ponce Jr., *Altered NMDA Expression with Treadmill Exercise in the MPTP-Lesioned Mouse Model of Basal Ganglia Injury*

Ashley Harlow, *College Life: Difference in College Experience Between First Generation and Traditional Students*

Marco A. Valadez, *How Social Normative Behaviors in the Day Labor Population of Los Angeles CHALLENGE Neoclassical Economic Theory*

Angela M. Ross, *Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closet*

### Out of State

Rikiesha Pierce, Debbie Rumbo, and Shamoiya Washington presented their research at the American Studies Association Conference in Puerto Rico.

Angela M. Ross presented her research entitled, "*Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closet*" at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in Boston, MA

Monica Valencia presented her research entitled, "*The Effects of Transnational Prejudice on Incorporation and Identity Formation of Oaxacans in the U.S.*" at the California Sociological Society Conference in Riverside, CA and at the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in Boston, MA.



## Scholars Engaged in the Publication Process

**Jonathan P. Adame**

Author of "Body Composition, BMI, and Weight Following 4 Weeks of Respiratory Muscle Training (RMT) Using the Breathslim® Device": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Yrneh G. Brown**

Author of "Visibly Invisible: Albinism, Myth, and the Supernatural in Tanzania": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Karina Casillas**

Author of "Workforce prep: Student Perceptions of Subject-Centered and Multi-Disciplinary Programs": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Brandyn Castro**

*Co-authored a publication with Dr. Michael Jakowec, "Molecular Differences in the Fischer 344 Rat, A Potential New Animal Model of Autism?": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2008 Issue.*

**Reza Ghassemi**

*Co-authored "Transitioning to Integrated Project Delivery: Potential barriers and lessons learned ", published in Lean Construction Journal.*

**Ashley Harlow**

Author of "College Life: Difference in College Experience Between First Generation and Traditional Students ": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Yiqi Lin**

Author of "The Role of Novelty Seeking, Reward Dependence, and Anhedonia in Pathological Gambling": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Rikiesha Pierce**

Author of "Gangsta Feminism: Hip-Hop and the Third Wave Feminist Movement": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Jorge Rodriguez**

*Co-authored "Concentration Dependence of NaCl ion distributions around DPPC lipid bilayers". To be published in an upcoming issue of Interdisciplinary Sciences: Computational Life Sciences.*

**Angela M. Ross**

Author of "Undocu-Queer: Coming Out of the Shadows and the Closet": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Debbie Rumbo**

Author of "Why Cant We Get Along?: A Study on Black and Latino Ethnocentrism in Los Angeles": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Bao tran Ngoc Vo**

Author of "Pitx2 Transcription Factor Inhibits Reprogramming of Human Dermal Fibroblast Cells": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

**Peggy Weng**

*Author of "Understanding Hsk1's Multifaceted Role in Maintaining Genome Integrity in Fission Yeast through Identifying Proteins that Interact with the Hsk1-Dfp1 Complex?": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2007 Issue. Also, along with her faculty advisor, is in process of publishing research in a peer-reviewed journal (details forthcoming).*

**Daniel Wu**

*Author of "Reimagining the Figueroa Corridor, 1960-2005" published in Race, Class Gender, Vol. 18, 2011.*

**Paul F. Young**

Author of "Black until Proven Innocent. Examining the Racial Disparities in Campus Crime Alert Messages": McNair Scholars Journal, Fall 2011 Issue.

## Scholars Receiving Scholarships, Fellowships, & Academic Honors

*Karina Casillas* was the only USC Price School of Policy, Planning, and Development student nominated along with a Viterbi student in civil engineering for the California Transportation Foundation Workshop. USC only selected two students to attend the 2 day symposium and case study workshop.

**Bernadette Gholami & Bertrand Perdomo-Ucles**, *Ron McDuffie Award from the USC Norman Topping Student Aid Fund.*

**Bernadette Gholami** recognized and published in the USC Center for Feminist Research newsletter.

**John Hernandez**, research supplemental funding from the USC Rossier School of Education.

*David Hernandez* was selected to be a White House Intern, Washington, D.C.

**Phuong (Harmony) Huynh**, *Dornsife College's Student Opportunities for Academic Research (SOAR) scholarship awardee, fall 2011; Selected as USC Gates Millennium Scholar Campus Based Leader, 2011-2012 and USC Representative at the Gates Millennium Scholar Leadership Conference in Los Angeles, Nov 2011.*

*Brenton Keller* was awarded a USC Rose Hills Fellowship.

**Monika Langarica & Syliva Green** nominated as 2011 Discovery Scholars.

**Monika Langarica** awarded Latina of the Year from the USC Latina(o) Student Assembly and the Phi Kappa Phi Student Recognition Award.

**Erin Lee** selected by USC Professor Michel Baudry to continue her research during summer 2011; Office of Undergraduate Programs' Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

**Vladimir Medenica**, funding for graduate studies through the American Political Science Association (APSA) Minority Fellowship.

**Victor Paredes-Colonia & Silvia Green**, *Dr. John R. Hubbard, Special Recognition Award.*

**Andrea Porter & Luis Rico** accepted to conduct research abroad in Africa, Ghana.

**Daniel Rios**, Leadership Alliance-sponsored Summer Research Program selected participant (Stanford University), summer 2011.

*Angela Ross* was inducted into the Order of the Torch, one of the highest awards bestowed on USC Seniors.

*Vannessa Sanchez* received a USC Professional academic Research Funding Award from the USC Undergraduate Student Government to attend the American Studies Association Conference in Puerto Rico.

**Jasmine Torres**, recognized on the USC University News [website](#).

**Jonathan Truong**, Public Policy & International Affairs Fellowship Program selected participant (Ann Arbor, Michigan), summer 2011.

**Monica Valencia**, recognized in the USC Daily Trojan newspaper.

**BaoTRAN Vo**, Office of Undergraduate Programs' Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, summer 2011.

**Kim Vu**, TURF and NTSAF scholarship recipient to conduct research in Genoa, Italy during summer 2011.

**Peggy Weng**, Rose Hills Foundation Science and Engineering Fellowship, summer 2011 and Office of Undergraduate Programs' Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

**Christina Wilkerson**, recognized in the USC Daily Trojan newspaper and Office of Undergraduate Programs' Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

**Ashley Williams**, National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ) Student Journalist of the Year.

**Charnan Williams**, Office of Undergraduate Programs' Provost Undergraduate Research Fellowship awardee, fall 2011.

**Daniel Wu**, 2011 USC University Trustees Award, 2011 Discovery Scholar, and 2011 Fulbright Research Fellow (declined offer).

## Upcoming Opportunities & Events

**Hispanic Serving Health Professions Schools, Summer Training Programs** (Application deadline: March 15, 2013): For students interested in working on Hispanic health research! Though programs are geared towards graduate or recent graduate students, we encourage fourth year undergraduate students to apply as well. Please note that programs are for individuals who would like to gain research experience and are committed to improving the health of Hispanics. If you are an applicant and have further questions about our programs, please visit our FAQ page by clicking [here](#) or by emailing [programs@hshps.org](mailto:programs@hshps.org).

Summer Undergraduate Research in Computational Biology (Application deadline: March 4, 2013): Training and Experimentation in Computational Biology (TECBio). TECBio REU @ Pitt is a 10-week summer program hosted by the Department of Computational and Systems Biology in the School of Medicine at the University of Pittsburgh. TECBio will provide a challenging and fulfilling graduate-level research experience to undergraduate students. Details can be found at the program's website – [www.tecbioreu.pitt.edu](http://www.tecbioreu.pitt.edu).

**Proctor & Gamble – Research Your Future in Science** (Application deadline: March 15, 2013):

Through hands-on involvement and a variety of tours and presentations, seminar participants will learn what it is like to work as an R&D Researcher at P&G as we explore all areas of R&D within P&G. P&G Researchers have unique and challenging careers supporting a wide range of cutting-edge research. During the seminar, full-time P&G Researchers will showcase various work areas, providing exposure to analytical labs, product formulation, process design and scale-up, products research, packaging, etc., to increase your understanding of Researcher career opportunities in science at P&G. As a participant, you will also be placed in the fast-lane with the opportunity to interview for a 2014 P&G Researcher Summer Internship prior to any other intern recruiting. All travel and accommodations will be paid by P&G for those selected to attend.

**California Forum for Diversity in Education:** Each year USC organizes travel for undergraduate students to attend the California Forum for Diversity in Education, a national graduate school preparation program and recruitment fair. The next meeting will take place on **SATURDAY APRIL 27, 2013 at UC Irvine**. This all-day event draws representatives from over 150 universities from across the U.S. interested in promoting graduate education and recruiting underrepresented students for various graduate programs. Annually, over 1300 students participate from throughout Southern California. The event also includes graduate student preparation workshops and special presentations by faculty and graduate students. Registration is open for students at this link: <http://www.ucop.edu/diversityforum/>

**McNair Pre-Summer Graduate School Preparation Camp (May 18-23, 2013):**

The three-day camp, at Lake Barkley State Resort Park in western Kentucky, features workshops for McNair Scholars on “Preparing a Personal Statement”, “Finding a Graduate Program”, “Interview Tactics for Positive Results,” “Positive Power of Mentors in Graduate School,” “Managing and Organizing the Graduate School Application Process” “Finding Financial Support for Graduate School” and “Preparing for the Graduate School Visit and Interview.” The camp includes individualized assistance with writing a Scholar's personal statement and participation in a mock interview. For more information contact John Mateja, McNair Director at Murray State University at [jmateja@murraystate.edu](mailto:jmateja@murraystate.edu) or by calling 270-809-3191. Cost: All sessions, all meals and double occupancy room for the 3-day camp is \$575.

**Pathway to Science: Resource for Research Opportunities!** Pathways to Science is a project of the Institute for Broadening Participation (IBP). Pathways to Science supports pathways to the STEM fields: science, technology, engineering, and mathematics. We place particular emphasis on connecting underrepresented groups with STEM programs, funding, mentoring and resources. Use this website to find programs such as undergraduate summer research opportunities, graduate fellowships, postdoctoral positions, as well as resources and materials pertaining to recruitment, retention, and mentoring.

## Student Highlight: Shamell Bell

Accepted to a Ph.D. Program in Ethnic Studies at UC San Diego

It was during a luncheon for first-generation college students that Professors Robin D.G. Kelley and John Carlos Rowe, after hearing my life story, identified me as an “organic intellectual” and encouraged me to begin research. They suggested that I write about my experiences as a former professional dancer within the documentary film “Rize” and the political nature of the dance movement. Shortly after beginning research on the dance form, Krump (documented by “Rize”), I encountered the dance phenomenon Jerkin’ on YouTube and was immediately struck by their appearance. Adolescent African American boys dressed in skin-tight, brightly colored jeans stood in stark comparison to the typical hyper-masculine baggy jeans style in contemporary hip-hop culture. Intrigued, I contacted the leading Jerkin’ group, The Ranger\$, and asked to conduct an ethnographic field study on them. I wanted to investigate the ways in which inner-city African American youth used the dance form of Jerkin’ as a tool to contest and mobilize against the negative forces in their community and the dominant paradigms shaping their identities including (but not limited to), gangs, hip-hop style, and their respective conceptualizations of black masculinity. This is the moment and the project that sparked my passion for research.



Throughout my academic journey I have been blessed to find means to overcome numerous obstacles. Poor health, single-parenthood, and financial hardships have made my educational experience strenuous. Not only am I the first person in my family to achieve a college degree; I am the first of my siblings to have achieved a high school diploma. I went on to graduate with Honors in American Studies and Ethnicity (African American Studies) and the top of my class at USC's African American Celebration as Valedictorian. During my last semester at USC I encountered two new realities: on the one hand, I was accepted into the Yale Summer Undergraduate Research Fellowship (SURF) program, and on the other, I was pregnant. In spite of several contrary opinions, discouragement, and some uncertainty of my health due to a chronic medical condition, I went to Yale and gave one of the top presentations at the Leadership Alliance Conference, a symposium that gathers presentations of summer research participants. I presented to an audience of standing room only. I returned to Los Angeles from Yale six months pregnant and enrolled in one of the last two courses required for my degree at USC. While eight months pregnant, I presented research at the 1st Annual Claremont Graduate University McNair Scholars Symposium and received nearly perfect 10's on my peer-panel evaluations. Dr. Richard Andalón, Director of the McNair Scholars Program, was the first to tell me that my story was one of resilience.

My successes and preparation for graduate study and conference presentations was largely due to my mentors Professors Lanita Jacobs, Shana Redmond, and Robin Kelley as well as the advising and assistance with research projects gained during McNair seminars. McNair also assisted with application materials, funding opportunities for conference travel, and a graduate school supplemental scholarship to help with the overall expenses related to the graduate school application process. Recently, I received my first acceptance letter from UC San Diego out of the dozen schools that I received fee waivers as a perk of being a McNair Scholar. I am currently awaiting decisions from Harvard, Yale, Brown, NYU, Northwestern, UMass Amherst, USC, Stanford, UC Berkeley, UCLA, and Stanford. My ultimate goal is to be a Professor. I also aim to encourage my college students and high school mentees that social movements do not just have to be in the form of a protest. I have watched first-hand what Krump and Jerkin' has done in the lives of inner-city kids. I feel it is my purpose to document it and inspire others.

I also continued my research and mentorship, and in the summer of 2011, completed a research paper with Dr. Robin D.G. Kelley for the Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship (MMUF) Program. I completed the last Spanish course needed to finalize my BA degree in Dec 2011. Spring 2012, I am currently taking Intermediate Spanish 4 at East Los Angeles Community College to solidify my foreign language proficiency and ensure I can handle the combined pressures of my one year old with coursework. I am also working outside of the classroom as a Research Assistant with Dr. Melina Abdullah, former visiting USC Professor and now Professor of Pan African Studies at Cal State Los Angeles. In this capacity, I am assisting research for her forthcoming publication on “Womanist Mothering,” an issue now dear to my heart. She recently asked me to develop the piece into a collaborative project with her in the near future. Graduate school is what I have been prepared to do and I am enthusiastic about the challenges that it will bring to me as a person, emergent activist, and intellectual. I am grateful for the support of USC and the McNair Scholars Program and I hope to continue to make them proud in the next phase of my academic journey.



## Student Highlight: Vladimir Medenica

## Accepted to a Ph.D. Program in Political Science at Princeton University

I stumbled across the McNair Scholars program by accident. Frustrated with trying to secure a paid legal internship, I applied to be a McNair Scholar in hopes of having a summer experience that was both intellectually stimulating and financially rewarding. The McNair Scholars program did not disappoint. What began as a substitute for a summer job quickly erased my long held desire to attend law school and became the backbone of my academic career.

The program did not only teach me what research is, it allowed me the opportunity to formulate and execute my own original project from inception to completion. During my summer as a McNair Scholar, I had the privilege of being mentored by renowned USC faculty member Dr. Jane Junn on a project titled Youth and Politics: The Influence of Social Networking Sites on Youth Political Engagement. I received the support and guidance I needed with understanding the existing literature, drafting a legitimate survey, collecting data, statistically analyzing that data, and sharing my findings in a clear, coherent presentation. As a reward for my efforts, I was selected to be a presenter at the national McNair symposium hosted by UC Berkeley. That opportunity forged stronger friendships with my USC colleagues and introduced me to students and faculty members at several other universities.

The following summer I made sure to capitalize on an opportunity I learned about through the McNair Summer Research Institute; I became a Leadership Alliance Mellon Fellow at Columbia University in New York City. Once there, I was able to utilize what I learned as a McNair Scholar by aiding faculty member Dr. Robert Shapiro with his research as well as working on another original, independent study. Having the background knowledge and skills provided to me by the McNair program allowed me to excel in a high pressure, competitive environment and, as a result, I was invited to stay on the study and continue working with Dr. Shapiro and his team of researchers. I traveled to Boston, Connecticut, San Francisco, and San Jose to collect data and present preliminary findings.

Well into my last semester at USC, I am still in contact with the friends I made at Columbia. Moreover, I am once again working with Dr. Junn on my honors thesis, an analysis of minority electoral behavior across different cities in the United States—a project that was inspired by my experiences traveling and collecting data for the Columbia study. What I am most excited for, however, is getting the opportunity to present alongside Dr. Junn and other influential political scientists at “The Race and Place Workshop” hosted by UC San Diego this coming February. With the help of the McNair program staff, I polished and sent out applications to several PhD programs in Political Science last semester and am now eagerly awaiting the responses. I hope to continue refining and developing the research skills I first acquired as a McNair Scholar in graduate school next year.



## Getting to know McNair staff member Dr. Aaron H. Walker

Dr. Aaron H. Walker currently serves as an Assistant Director and Program Specialist with the USC McNair Scholars Program, Office of Undergraduate Programs, a Division of the USC Office of the Provost. His responsibilities include graduate school advising, teaching writing and research methods, program planning, and fiscal and budget management. As an instructor, advisor, and coordinator, he has acquired extensive experiences working with high school students, undergraduates, and graduate students. He has taught and advised high school students preparing for college, undergraduates preparing for graduate school, and graduate students preparing their research for publications and conferences. The student populations he has served over the years have been truly diverse in every aspect, including: domestic and international students; students from historically underrepresented minority backgrounds; students coming from low to high socioeconomic households; students designated as academically gifted; and students with distinct learning disabilities. While at USC, Dr. Walker has designed and taught classes on argumentative writing, research methods, and critical analysis. Between 2006 and 2011, he was an assistant lecturer with the USC Writing Program. In 2008, he began serving in an administrative capacity as a coordinator, where he supervised and mentored other writing instructors in course development and management. Additionally, he was a liaison between the Writing Department and USC faculty that teach related courses, and was also responsible for attending meetings with department chairs. Dr. Walker earned his B.A. in English with Honors at the Arizona State University (ASU). He acquired both his M.A. and Ph.D. in Linguistics at the University of Southern California (USC).



## Getting to know McNair staff member Letisha R. Wyatt

Letisha R. Wyatt currently serves as an Advisor, Instructor, and Coordinator with the USC McNair Scholars Program, Office of Undergraduate Programs. Ms. Wyatt recently completed her Ph.D. studies in the Molecular Pharmacology & Toxicology Program at the University of Southern California School of Pharmacy. In 2005 she graduated from the University of California, Davis, earning a B.S. in Neurobiology, Physiology, and Behavior with a Minor in Music. Her primary interest is in the science of addiction, and she is currently working in the Alcohol and Brain Research Laboratory on the Health Sciences Campus. The focus of her dissertation is the study of the effects of alcohol on ATP-gated ion channels found within the central nervous system and the behavioral implications of an increased or decreased expression of these particular receptors. The aim is that this work will aid in a more complete understanding of the molecular targets of alcohol and their contributions to alcoholism, as well as the development of novel therapeutic agents.

As the Graduate Students' Advocate for Diversity Outreach (GSA-DO), Letisha assists in the design and administration of programs that institute and enhance diversity at the University, advises and mentors students, and she facilitates academic services and professional development initiatives for both graduate and undergraduate students. Letisha's passion for promoting academic pursuits and experience working with students from various disciplines and stages of academic, professional, and personal development gives her great enthusiasm about being a liaison and source of support for students at USC.



## USC McNair Scholars Program 2012-2013 Cohort



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Dr. Aaron Walker, Assistant Director & Program Specialist

### Program Instructors and Research Mentors

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Stefan Alexander Smith, Ph.D. Student, History

Edson Rodriguez, Ph.D. Candidate, Sociology

Jonathan Mathis, Ph.D. Candidate, Urban Education Policy

Tanya Alderete, Ph.D. Candidate, Systems Biology and Disease

Adam Kahn, Ph.D. Student, Communication

Chrisshonna G. Nieva, Ph.D. Candidate, American Studies & Ethnicity

Michelle Castellanos, Ph.D. Student, Higher Education

Jenna Sablan, Ph.D. Student, High Education