



2024 McNair Spring Gathering

INSPIRING THE FUTURE AND CHANGING LIVES



Thursday May 23rd, 2024 · 4:30 pm · The Spokane Club



EASTERN WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
start something **big**

Event Program

WELCOME, PROGRAM UPDATES 5:00 PM

Dr. Rebecca Clark, McNair Director

KEYNOTE SPEAKER 5:10 PM

Dr. Amy Nuñez

WELCOMING NEW SCHOLARS 5:20 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

RECOGNITION OF MCNAIR MENTORS 5:25 PM

Dr. Rebecca Clark, McNair Director

SCHOLAR REMARKS 5:30 PM

Irie Browning & Richard Murphy, McNair Scholars

RECOGNITION OF CONTINUING SCHOLARS 5:35 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

RECOGNITION OF GRADUATING SCHOLARS 5:40 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

SCHOLAR REMARKS 5:45 PM

Sylvia Kennerly, McNair Scholars

CLOSING COMMENTS 5:50 PM

Dr. Rebecca Clark, McNair Director

MCNAIR NETWORKING 6:00-6:15 PM

Thank you for joining us!



Letter from the Director

THANK YOU FOR JOINING US IN CELEBRATING OUR 27TH ANNUAL MCNAIR SPRING GATHERING!

Since the McNair program began at Eastern Washington University in 1995, we have served close to 400 first-generation, low-income, and underrepresented students to receive program support to prepare them for success at the graduate level. As a result, over 60 EWU McNair scholars have earned PhDs; more than 140 have earned master's degrees, and dozens are currently working diligently in graduate school.



Dr. Rebecca Clark, Director

It is never dull in the McNair office! I applaud ALL of you for the work you completed and the work you continue to pursue. Believe me when I say that all the McNair Scholars are genuinely inspiring.

Part of the success of McNair is the dedication of the staff, who believes in the potential and success of every student. Cori Jaeger, our intrepid Academic Advisor, tirelessly works for our scholars and will stop at no end for each student's success. Plus, our GSA's Bakima Ssebanakitta and Marcus Shoffner offer experience, wisdom, and compassion vital to each scholar.

Thank you for your continued support.

Rebecca Clark



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Keynote Speaker

AMY NUÑEZ, PHD **Education Policy**



EWU McNair Alumna, Amy Nuñez, Ph.D, received her Bachelor's in Elementary Education at Eastern in 2015 and her Ph.D. in Education Policy from Indiana University, Bloomington in 2023. Her dissertation titled, *"I Wish They Knew We Existed": The Academic Experiences of Latinx College Students in Mixed-Status Families*, won third place in the Outstanding Dissertation Competition hosted by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education in 2024. This research identified equitable strategies to better support students in mixed-status families achieve their higher education goals. Dr. Nuñez's research utilizes qualitative methods with Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Latino Critical Theory (LatCrit) to address barriers historically underrepresented students face in higher education institutions, especially students who come from Latinx, low-income, first-generation, DACA, and/or undocumented backgrounds. Her research aims to develop mitigation strategies to increase enrollment and graduation rates among underrepresented student populations. She currently works as an Assistant Professor at Heritage University in the Teacher Preparation Program. As a first-generation college student, Latina, and daughter of immigrants, Dr. Nuñez is happy to be back in her hometown learning and growing from students at Heritage. She is especially excited to support students on their journey to becoming teachers.



Our Mission

Eastern's TRIO Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program prepares low-income, first-generation, and/or racially underrepresented undergraduates for success in doctoral programs. McNair provides opportunities for scholarly activities and community engagement that empower participants to become agents of positive change in a culturally diverse world.

Recent McNair Alumni Degrees

DEVON ASMUS, PHD ANTHROPOLOGY

University of Buffalo, 2023

ALBERTO "FELIX" BELTRAN, PHD POLITICAL SCIENCE

Purdue University, 2023

GRACE COOPER, PHD ANTHROPOLOGY

Temple University, 2023

ISAURA GALLEGOS, PHD EDUCATION

Harvard University, 2023

SIMHAYKIN STENSGAR, PHD NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES

University of California, Davis, 2023



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More McNair Alumni Degrees!

MICHELLE ABUNAJA, MASTER'S IN URBAN PLANNING
University of Washington, 2021

LIZETH BAÑUELOS, MASTER'S IN COUNSELING
Arizona State University, 2023

ANGÉLICA GARCÍA-MACÍAS, MASTER'S IN POLITICAL SCIENCE
University of California, Irvine, 2023

ALEXIS GUIZAR-DIAZ, MASTER'S IN SOCIOLOGY
Portland State University, 2023

THERESA LEE, MASTER'S IN SOCIOLOGY
Bowling Green State University, 2023

**WENDOLYN MARTINEZ, MASTER'S IN INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS AND AFFAIRS**
Texas A & M University, 2023

**RACHAEL PENTICO, MASTER'S IN ECOSYSTEMS
LAND, WATER, AND AIR**
Syracuse University, 2023

YURI REYES, MASTER'S IN NATURAL MEDICINE
National University, 2022

DARLENE VERDUZCO, MASTER'S IN GEOLOGY
Portland State University, 2023

**MORI WILLIAMS, MASTER'S IN ATMOSPHERIC
AND ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE**
South Dakota School of Mines & Technology, 2023



2024 New McNair Scholars

JULIANNA AMANTE, HISTORY

Mentored by Dr. Jacki Hedlund Tyler

EVAN BROWN, PHILOSOPHY

Mentored by Dr. Mimi Marinucci

PAOLA CAMPOS, EXERCISE SCIENCE

Mentored by Dr. Fahed Mehyar

MONIQUE TORI CASTELLANO/S, BIOCHEMISTRY

Mentored by Dr. Ben Lundgren

KAYLA DICKSON, BIOLOGY

Mentored by Dr. David R. Gang (WSU)

AURA MORENO, VISUAL COMMUNICATION DESIGN

Mentored by Dr. Tracey McHenry

CHRISTOPHER NAVA, MARKETING

Mentored by Dr. Habib Islam

NICOLE NEMETH, PRE-NURSING

Mentored by Dr. Donna Bachand

VANESSA SANCHEZ, DATA ANALYTICS, DATA SCIENCE

Mentored by Dr. Kelley Cullen

RAÚL SEGURA, PSYCHOLOGY

Mentored by Dr. Sarah Johansson

ELEANOR STRATHMORE, PSYCHOLOGY

Mentored by Dr. Shanna Davis



Continuing Scholars

Our continuing Scholars have been hard at work this year applying to external summer research internships, scholarships, presenting at conferences, researching schools, leadership and volunteering with sororities, getting an early start on graduate application materials, and more!

TIAGO CORREIA, MATHEMATICS

Mentored by Dr. Brandy Wieggers (CWU), 2023-24

Mentored by Yves Nievergelt, 2024-25

MARIANNA FISCHER, MECHANICAL ENGINEERING

Mentored by Dr. Philip Appel, 2022-23

MAI PEREGRINA, PSYCHOLOGY

Mentored by Dr. Kayleen Islam-Zwart, 2023-24

MAKENNA TABINO, BIOLOGY

Mentored by Dr. Rebecca Brown, 2023-24

Mentored by Dr. Charlotte Milling, 2024-25

EWU MCNAIR PROGRAM FACTS - 2024

29 Scholars Served

14 Presented Research at Conferences or Symposiums

24 Graduate School Acceptances

44 Scholars currently in graduate school

57 PhD's & 148 Master's Degrees Attained



Graduating Scholars



Saul Bautista, mentored by Dr. Joseph Lenti, is graduating with a BA in History and minors in Spanish and Japanese. He plans to participate in two upcoming summer research opportunities and will apply to graduate school in the Fall of 2024.

Mary Belton, mentored by Dr. Christina Valeo, is graduating with a BA in English Secondary Education and a minor in Literature. Next stop: San Diego State University, for her Master's in English & Comparative Literature.



Irie Browning, mentored by Dr. Christopher Kirby, is graduating with a BA in Philosophy and minor in Literature. She will attend the University of Oregon's PhD Program in Philosophy.



Graduating Scholars



tommyboiz, mentored by Dr. Christopher Kirby and Dr. Suzie Henning, is graduating with degrees in Philosophy and Gender, Women, and Sexuality Studies. Upon graduation they plan to support community & apply to graduate programs in future years.

Terreca Defehr, mentored by Dr. Jillene Grover Seiver, is graduating with a degree in Psychology. Next stop: University of Houston for a Master's in Social Work.



Alexander Dodson, mentored by Dr. Amani El-Alayi, is graduating with a degree in Psychology and minors in Sexuality & Queer Studies and Anthropology. Afterwards he plans to work in the field for a year & apply to additional graduate school opportunities.



Graduating Scholars



Claudio Escalante, mentored by Dr. David Daberkow (EWU) and Dr. Tamara Kinzer-Ursem (Purdue), has a degree in Biology with a minor in Spanish. Claudio will further his studies at the University of Kansas in the MS/ PhD in Biomedical Engineering Program.

Sylvia Kennerly, mentored by Dr. Jason Ashley, will be graduating with a degree in Biochemistry. She will attend University of Oregon's PhD in Chemistry/Biochemistry.



Devin Mumey, mentored by Dr. Jessica Allen, is obtaining a degree in Biology with a focus on Plant Sciences and a minor in Chemistry. He plans to volunteer and mentor in his field & apply for graduate programs in future years.



Graduating Scholars



Richard Murphy, mentored by Dr. Thomas Hawley, is graduating with degrees in Philosophy, Political Science, and International Affairs. He will continue his studies at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa's Political Science PhD Program

Kelly Parke, mentored by Dr. Ryan Parrey, is obtaining a degree in Anthropology and minoring in Sexuality & Queer Studies and Disability Studies. She will attend the University of Illinois, Chicago's PhD Program in Disability Studies.



Brendan Roof, mentored by Dr. Paul Lindholdt, is graduating with a degree in English Studies. He plans to explore what life has to offer and see what research interests call to him in the coming years.

Alejandro Torres, mentored by Dr. Justin Bastow, is obtaining a degree in Biology with a minor in Environmental Science. Next year he'll be back at EWU for his Master's in Biology.



McNair Advisory Committee

The McNair Advisory Committee works to support the McNair Program year round by getting the word out about the McNair Program, recruiting scholars, and generally supporting program efforts. They also act as the McNair Selection Committee, taking the time to review all prospective McNair applicants and to advise on the selection of our next cohort of scholars.

Thank you so much for your support of McNair!



Dr. Judd Case
Biology



Dr. Martín Meráz García
Chicanx Studies



Dr. Kayleen Islam-Zwart
Dept. Chair, Psychology



Dr. Miguel Novella
Modern Languages & Literatures

Faculty Research Mentors

McNair Faculty Research Mentors are an invaluable component of McNair. Mentors provide guidance, boost confidence and belonging, and their letters of recommendation can be the biggest asset to a scholar's graduate applications. They facilitate the scholar's research from conception to completion and many do much more, providing insight and support on the path to doctoral success.

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Kelley Cullen, Quarterly Faculty for Information Systems & Business Analytics

Mentee: Vanessa Sanchez

Dr. Shanna Davis, Associate Professor of Psychology

Mentee: Eleanor Strathmore

Dr. Amani El-Alayli, Professor of Psychology

Mentee: Alexander Dodson

Dr. Jillene Grover Seiver, Senior Lecturer of Psychology

Mentee: Terrecia DeFehr

Dr. Habib Islam, Assistant Professor of Business Management

Mentee: Christopher Nava

Dr. A. Suzie Henning, Associate Professor of Education

Mentee: tommyboiZ Cyphers

Dr. Sarah Johansson, Assistant Professor of Psychology

Mentee: Raúl Segura

**Dr. Kayleen Islam-Zwart, School of Psychology Chair/
Director, EWU Psychology at BC Program Director,
Professor of Psychology**

Mentee: Mai Peregrina



COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

Dr. Jessica Allen, Associate Professor of Biology

Mentee: Devin Mumey

Dr. Philip Appel, Assistant Professor of Mechanical Engineering, Mechanical Engineering Technology

Mentee: Marianna Fischer

Dr. Jason Ashley, Associate Professor of Biology

Mentee: Sylvia Kennerly

Dr. Justin Bastow, Associate Professor of Biology

Mentee: Alejandro Torres

Dr. Rebecca Brown, Professor of Biology

Mentee: Makenna Tabino

Dr. David Daberkow, Professor of Biology

Mentee: Claudio Escalante

Dr. Ben Lundgren, Assistant Professor of Biochemistry

Mentee: Monique Tori Castellano/s

Dr. Charlotte Milling, Assistant Professor of Biology

Mentee: Makenna Tabino

Dr. Yves Nievergelt, Professor of Mathematics

Mentee: Tiago Correia

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Joseph Lenti, Professor of History

Mentee: Saul Bautista

Dr. Christopher Kirby, Professor of Philosophy

Mentees: Irie Browning, tommyboiZ Cyphers



Faculty Research Mentors

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

**Dr. Jack Hedlund Tyler, Associate Professor of History,
Director of Social Studies Education**

Mentee: Julianna Amante

Dr. Mimi Marinucci, Professor of Philosophy

Mentee: Evan Brown

Dr. Thomas Hawley, Professor of Political Science

Mentee: Richard Murphy

Dr. Chris Valeo, Professor of English

Mentee: Mary Belton

**Dr. Ryan Parrey, Lecturer of Social Work, Program Director of
Disability Studies**

Mentee: Kelly Parke

Dr. Paul Lindholdt, Professor of English

Mentee: Brendan Roof

Dr. Tracey McHenry, Professor of English

Mentee: Aura Moreno

COLLEGE OF HEALTH SCIENCE & PUBLIC HEALTH

Dr. Fahed Mehyar, PT, Associate Professor of PT

Mentee: Paola Campos

**Dr. Donna Bachand, RN, Nursing Program Administrator,
Department Chair, Professor of Nursing**

Mentee: Nicole Nemeth



McNair Staff



Dr. Rebecca Clark
Director



Cori Jaeger
Academic Advisor



Marcus Shoffner
GSA



Bakima Ssebanakitta
GSA

**Want to see more amazing work by
EWU McNair Scholars?**

**Check out our website:
inside.ewu.edu/mcnair/**

Reach us any time at mcnair@ewu.edu