



## Contents

Class of 2017  
Graduate Programs

Scholar Grants and  
Awards

Edison-McNair Schol-  
ars Program

UCSB Summer  
Research Program  
Highlights

Berkeley Symposium

Alumni Reflection

Funding by US  
Department of  
Education

Meet the New Staff

McNair Cohort of 2019

### *Note from the Assistant Director*

I am thrilled to start the 2017-18 academic year showcasing the wide range of activities and accomplishments from our McNair Scholar alumni as well as our current juniors and seniors. As we begin the tenth year of the UCSB McNair Scholars Program, I'm pleased to announce that nine UCSB scholars have completed their doctoral degrees and close to a 10 are on target to complete their degrees this coming year.

Most of our recently graduated scholars, who began their master's or doctoral programs this fall quarter, also published their research in Volume 7 of the UCSB McNair Scholars Research. This volume includes seven articles from McNair Scholars from a range of disciplines, including Feminist Studies, History, Geography, Psychology, and Sociology. We would like to thank each contributor's faculty mentor for supporting our McNair Scholars in producing their first academic publication. A full copy of this journal, and all previous volumes, can be accessed on our website.

Currently, all of our seniors are working diligently on their graduate school applications, particularly revising their statement of purpose, personal statement, and writing samples. These seniors receive support on their applications regularly in seminars and in one-on-one appointments with McNair staff. Some seniors also participated in professional conferences and graduate preparation activities off-campus this fall. For instance, Syrian Truong attended the Discover UChicago program, Sirenia Sanchez presented her research at the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students in Phoenix, AZ, and Christian Rodriguez participated in University of Michigan's Fall Preview Weekend.

This newsletter also showcases our current junior cohort scholars, all of whom completed a summer research program with us in the summer, which included writing a research paper and presenting their research in an oral and poster format. They are currently developing lists of possible programs at universities around the country to which they may apply for research experiences in summer 2018. Faculty mentors are guiding our current scholars in strengthening their research interests in topics as varied as Black and Latinx youth identity; environmental chemistry; mariachi, jazz, and Mexican boleros; and photonic integrated circuits. These students showcase the breadth of research among our scholars within humanities, social science, and STEM fields.

*Dr. Yvette Martinez-Vu*

## 2017 Summer Research Program Highlights



This year we kicked off the eight-week summer research program with a teambuilding activity that included climbing ropes, a rock wall, and zip lining. Yes, the famous ropes course made a strong come back this year, helping our scholars work as a team while showing off their athletic abilities. Once the fun was over, twenty-four of our scholars began their summer research activities at UCSB and completed innovative research projects in STEM, Humanities and the Social Sciences.

Five other UCSB scholars spent their second year with McNair traveling to universities around the country and the world to complete their summer research programs at UCLA, Notre Dame University, University of North Texas, The Max Planck Institute in Germany, and The Citizen Science Research Experience in Belize, the latter funded by the National Science Foundation. Conducting research at institutions outside of UCSB helps our scholars broaden their research skills and training.

The summer research program ends with two opportunities for our students to offer their work to campus students and faculty. All McNair Scholars concluded the intensive summer with well-crafted poster presentations at the UCSB Summer Research Poster Colloquium and with engaging oral presentations at the all-day McNair Program Summer Symposium to which friends, family, and their faculty mentors were invited.

### *Class of 2017 Graduate Programs*

Nine of the Seniors who graduated in 2017 began graduate school programs in the Fall of 2017

#### **Olubukayo Akinyemi**

MA in Global Health University of Southern California

#### **Juan Carlos Banda**

MA in Sociology at University of South Florida

#### **Imani Burris**

PhD in Social Psychology at University of Washington

#### **Katie Correia**

MA in History at Utah State University

#### **Joshua Hudson**

MA in Sociology at San Diego State University

#### **Patricia Martin**

PhD in Education at UCLA

#### **Andrea Mora**

PhD in Developmental Psychology at University of Michigan

#### **Marina Quintanilla**

MA in Public Health at UCLA

#### **Scott Susi**

PhD in Neuroscience at Brown University

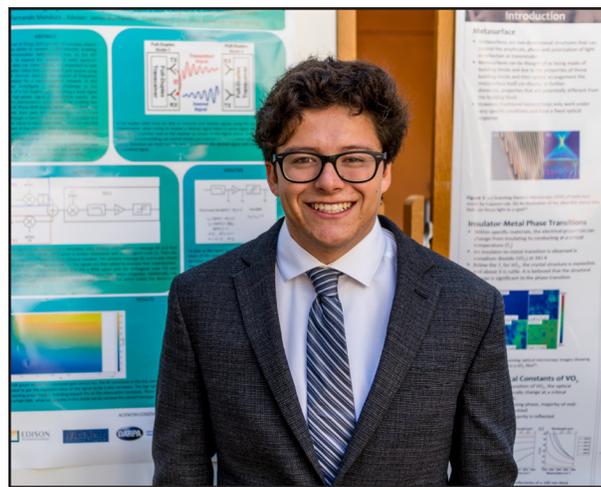
## *Alumni Reflection with Nathaniel Burke*

Nathaniel Burke graduated with Highest Honors from UCSB in March of 2011, with a major in Sociology and a minor in LGBTQ Studies. Recipient of the Academic Excellence Award from the College of Letters & Science, and the Summa Cum Laude award from the Sociology Department, Nathaniel selected the University of Southern California PhD program in Sociology on a full fellowship. He pursued graduate school in sociology because as an undergrad, he became passionate about social inequality, social change, and social justice and understood that pursuing an advanced degree that investigated structural inequality would enable him to take part in advancing equity through research and teaching. Nathaniel is on track to receive his doctorate in May 2018 after having completed his dissertation, "Inequality Regimes in Intimate Labor," an examination of the labor experiences of men of color who work in adult film. Nathaniel recently returned to UCSB as the Coordinator for Campus Climate and Inclusion Initiatives in the Dean of Students Office. His work involves assessing campus climate and developing programming and policy to advance equity for UCSB students, staff, and faculty.



Nathaniel credits the McNair Program with helping him get involved in developing original research, without which he doubts that he would have successfully navigated graduate school applications or graduate school itself. He attributes his sense of being comfortable interacting with faculty and developing productive intellectual and interpersonal conversations to having had Dr. Beth Schneider (McNair Program Director) as his faculty mentor. Nathaniel has this advice for current and future McNair Scholars: "Really approach your relationship with your faculty advisor as a mentorship. If you want to get your Ph.D. and become faculty or work in industry, then your advisor should be able to provide you with suggestions on how to get there, beyond just advising you on a research project. They should also help you to connect with other scholars (faculty and students) working in similar areas which can help you get letters of recommendation or to develop collaborative research projects." He adds some additional practical words of wisdom to scholars leaving the comforts of UCSB and McNair and heading out into the whirlwind of graduate education: "Graduate school is a really challenging experience and being able to lean on family and friends for emotional support is necessary. I recommend anyone who moves to a new area for graduate school invest time and effort in building community in and outside your department so that you have people to talk with about successes and struggles."

## *UCSB Edison-McNair Scholars Program*



Summer 2017 was an exciting time for the Edison-McNair Scholars program. This year the Edison Scholars program admitted a total of 17 scholars, making it the biggest cohort admitted so far. Thanks to the generosity of Edison International, the scholars received a \$4000 stipend to participate in the summer program. In addition to conducting cutting edge research, our Edison scholars practiced their science communication skills by creating a poster and presenting it at the 2017 UCSB Summer Research Symposium. Their research projects revolved around the fields of environmental science, chemistry, biochemistry, chemical engineering, mechanical engineering, earth science, physics, and computer engineering. Throughout the summer our Edison scholars also partook in professional development seminars such as: statement of purpose and personal statement development, CV development, creating and delivering a poster presentation, and constructing a graduate school list. Overall it was another successful summer for the Edison-McNair Scholars Program.

## *Introducing the 2019 McNair Cohort*



**Sarah-Marie Amiri**  
Major: CCS Biology  
Hometown: Ojai, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Alyson Santoro  
Mentor's Department: Geology,  
Evolution and Marine Biology  
Research Interests: Climate  
Oscillations and Anomalies, Harmful  
Algal Blooms, Phytoplankton



**Jasmin Morales**  
Major: Sociology  
Hometown: Rohnert Park, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Denise Segura  
Mentor's Department: Sociology  
Research Interests: Factors  
Influencing Retention and  
Persistence of Latina/o Students in  
STEM Majors



**Israel Chora**  
Major: Economics and Political  
Science  
Hometown: Lancaster, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Naravani Lasala-Blanco  
Mentor's Department: Political  
Science  
Research Interests: Political  
Attitudes of Latinx Students



**Zenzile Riddick**  
Major: Sociology and Black Studies  
Hometown: Oakland, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Victor Rios  
Mentor's Department: Sociology  
Research Interests: Systemic  
Punitive Control, Black and Latinx  
Youth Identity, Dignity and Culture



**Jose Delgado**  
Major: Biological Sciences  
Hometown: Denver, CO  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Javier Read De Alaniz  
Mentor's Department: Department of  
Chemistry and Biochemistry  
Research Interests: New Methods  
for the Asymmetric Aza-Piancatelli  
Rearrangement



**Ryan Rodriguez**  
Major: Chemistry  
Hometown: Hollister, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Mattanjah de Vries  
Mentor's Department: Chemistry  
Research Interests: Excited State  
Dynamics of Indigo



**Jordan Mitchell**  
Major: CCS Music  
Hometown: Stockton, CA  
Graduation Date: June 2019  
Mentor: Dr. Leslie Hogan  
Mentor's Department: Music  
Composition  
Research Interests: Mariachi, Jazz,  
Mexican Boleros

## *McNair Program Receives Funding from the U.S. Department of Education*



The UCSB McNair Scholars Program is very excited to announce that we have been awarded a 5-year grant from the U.S. Department of Education to continue our work. The \$1.1 million grant is also supported and supplemented by the Executive Vice Chancellor, the deans of Letters and Sciences and Engineering, and the Graduate Division. Our commitment going forward is to serve a minimum of 28 low-income, first-generation and/or US underrepresented students each year who wish to undertake faculty mentored research, receive professional development training, and apply to graduate schools in their senior year. Students in all majors on the campus have been and will continue to be selected as scholars. Professor Beth Schneider, Principal Investigator, will continue as Director, with Dr. Yvette Martinez-Vu serving as Assistant Director. Professor of Linguistics, North Hall Endowed Chair Professor Anne Charity Hudley, who is the new Director of Undergraduate Research, will serve as co-PI.

### *Scholar Grants and Awards 2016-2017*

#### **Victoria Melgarejo**

Linguistic Society of America CEDL Travel Grant  
Undergraduate Research and Creative Activities (URCA) Grant

#### **Sirenia Sanchez**

UCSB Yolanda Garcia Award

#### **Marina Quintanilla**

CIEE Global Access Initiative (GAIN) Grant  
UCSB Education Abroad Program Promise Award  
UCSB Dean's Honor  
UCSB Office of Student Life University Service Award

#### **Joshua Hudson**

UCSB Office of Student Life Senior Co-Curricular Excellence Award  
UCSB Office of Student Life University Service Award  
UCSB McNair Scholars Cylde Woods Award

#### **Syrian Truong**

National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees Rene Matos Scholarship  
UCSB Fall CAMP Internship Program

#### **Patricia Martin**

UCSB Office of Student Life University Service Award

#### **Andrea Mora**

UCSB Department of Psychological & Brain Sciences Philip Steven Rethis Memorial Award

#### **Rodolfo Cerda**

Office of Student life, New Transfer Co-Curricular Excellence Award  
Kroger Scholar Award  
Schol-Ridley Tree Endowment Scholarship

#### **Olubukayo Akinyemi**

UCSB Office of Student Life University Service Award

## *UCSB McNair Scholars Attend the 2017 UC Berkeley McNair Scholars Symposium*



In July 2017, six of our current McNair scholars, both juniors and seniors, presented their research at the annual Ronald E. McNair Scholars Symposium at UC Berkeley. This symposium provides an opportunity for McNair Scholars to present their research in an academic setting as well as participate in graduate school fairs, GRE workshops, plenary panels, special dinners, and tours of UC Berkeley, UC Davis, and Stanford University. Our scholars presented on topics such as: recovering histories within African textiles; binder cumulant and specific heat value based curie properties; IEP social goals for children with autism; climate oscillations in the Santa Barbara Channel; “post-racial” subjectivity in 20th Century American ethnic literature; and the role of teachers in motivating Latinx students.

After presenting their research, our students had the chance to network with McNair Scholars and recruiters across the country. One of our scholars, Fernanda Castellon, describes attending this event as a “...great experience as it not only allowed me to practice my skills as both a presenter and a researcher, but it allowed me to become inspired by seeing other students of color from all over the country doing research.” Physics student Syrian Truong mentions that his experience was “a great bonding trip with other McNair Scholars and helped me form connections with some amazing people and opportunities, even leading me to places like Chicago, IL.” Finally, Rodolfo Cerda remarks, “I really enjoyed presenting my research at the McNair symposium. Seeing other undergraduates present their work inspired me to become a better scholar. Traveling to Berkeley to present my research also helped reinforce my dream of one day completing a doctorate degree and traveling around the world to present my research.”

### *Meet the New Staff*



Gokh Amin Alshaif grew up in Arvin, California, a small farming community on the outskirts of the San Joaquin Valley. In 2014, she earned bachelor’s degrees from California State University, Bakersfield (CSUB) in Political Science and Religious Studies. During her time as a McNair scholar at CSUB, her research projects included “Liberating the Veiled Women of the Desert: Western Feminism and the Muslim Woman” as well as “Daughters of Sojourners: The Yemeni-American Female’s Experience in Education.” Gokh went on to receive her Master’s degree in Global & International Studies from UC Santa Barbara; her thesis explored the empowerment and disenfranchisement of Yemeni women during Yemen’s unification period. Her experience as a first generation Yemeni-American female has influenced not only Gokh’s research interest in gender, education, and empowerment, but also her desire to continue serving under represented communities and first generation college students. When she is not working or conducting research, Gokh enjoys hiking, reading, listening to musicals, and exploring new cuisines. A self-described ‘Harry Potter Nerd,’ Gokh also enjoys discussing Harry Potter theories and silently sorting people into Hogwarts Houses.