

# UCSB MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

Fall 2023/Winter 2024, Vol. 22



**McNAIR**



SCHOLARS PROGRAM UCSB

This program is funded by the United States Department of Education under the TRIO programs, Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program provisions, with an annual budget of \$261,887.00 (2022-2027). The UCSB Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor, Deans of the College of Letters and Sciences, and the Dean of the Graduate Division also generously support the program.

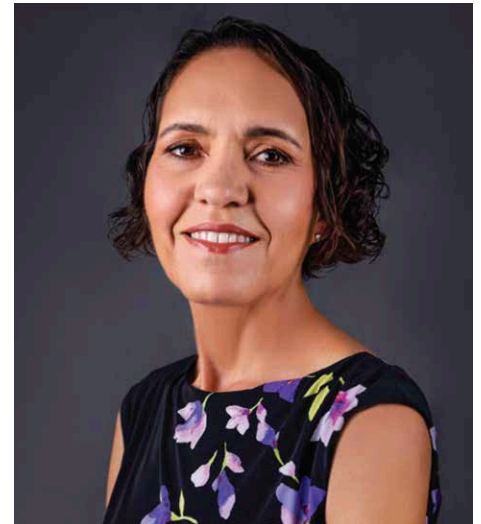
NOTE FROM THE

# Faculty Director

We have been busy at McNair and have updates to share with you—the UCSB campus community. We are happy to report that we have assembled a new Faculty Advisory Board (or FAB, as we like to call it). Current as well as former faculty mentors will serve on FAB assisting us in developing and implementing best practices as they pertain to recruitment, retention, and mentorship, the preparation of successful graduate applications and admissions, and the problems and possibilities of ‘gap years.’ FAB will join our

STEM Board to ensure we deliver on our mission to achieve equitable access to higher education and promote the success of diverse and underrepresented populations by demystifying academia’s ‘hidden curriculum.’

Along with our inaugural advisory board, we have new signage adorning our neck of the woods on campus. If you’ve walked by our building lately you might have noticed the ‘monument’ directing visitors to McNair Building 477. We hope the signage will facilitate access to McNair for students and visitors



**Faculty Director**

Miroslava Chávez-García, Ph.D.

alike and believe the year-long process was well worth the wait. Finally, we just completed our second annual ‘pre-McNair’ seminar, which was designed and led by Dr. Vanessa Woods, our fabulous co-PI, to help students prepare a successful application to an REU like McNair. Read on for more details.

As always, we continue to extend our welcome to faculty, staff, and students who want to work with us in any capacity, particularly as mentors. Our students appreciate you.

## Note from the Program Director



**Program Director**

Veronica L. Fematt, Ph.D.

The energy at McNair is positively electric as seniors eagerly await responses from graduate schools, discovering whether they’ve been admitted into their desired programs. It’s a time of anticipation and excitement as they embark on the next chapter of their academic journey.

Meanwhile, we’re thrilled to have welcomed a fresh cohort of new juniors last fall, who have officially kicked off their

journey as McNair Scholars this winter quarter. All new juniors have secured a faculty mentor and are eager to start working on research. As we gear up for spring quarter, we’re filled with enthusiasm for the opportunities and achievements that lie ahead for all our students.



Faculty Director, Miroslava Chavez-Garcia (right) and students, (left to right) Jackie Lopez and Evelyn Isais, pay homage to our new monument.

## Welcome Angelica

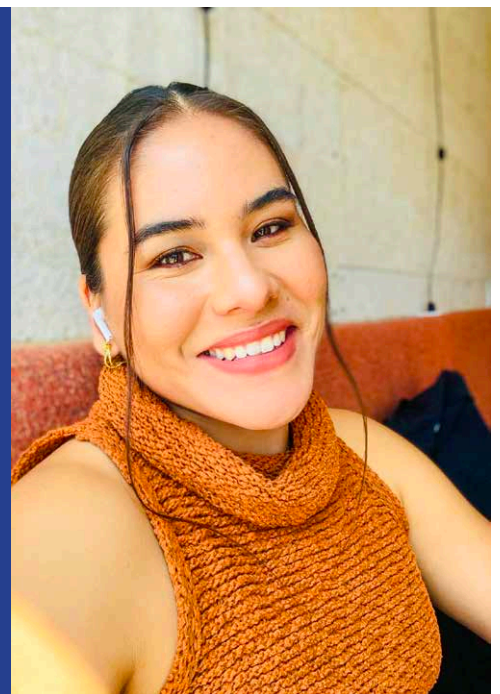
Angelica Hernandez, our new Program Coordinator, was born and raised in Santa Barbara, California. Prior to working at UCSB she worked in Santa Barbara at REACH, a non-profit experiential program for motivated high school students facing financial barriers to secondary education.

Angelica played a pivotal role in supporting low-income and first-generation college-bound students during their crucial transition from high school to college.

Through multi-year mentor-

ship programs and experiential trips, she provided invaluable guidance and resources, fostering a supportive environment for students to thrive.

Angelica's commitment to educational leadership is evident in her background as an ENLACE Fellow at Northeastern Illinois University, where she earned her Master's in Educational Leadership with a concentration in Higher Education in 2016. Prior to her graduate studies, she graduated from UC Berkeley with a B.A. in Sociology.



**Program Coordinator**  
Angelica Hernandez



# Pumpkin Carving Galore!

Halloween is a time of the year not only to consume a vast amount of candy or to dress up as your favorite fantasy character but also to display your knife skills. That's exactly what the

McNair Scholars did on Halloween eve 2023. Conceived and hosted by Writing Specialist Courtney Durdle, the scholars gathered for some fun times carving pumpkins and showing off their

creativity. In the end, Monsi Lupian's pumpkin (top, right on the cover of the newsletter) was judged to be the most excellent creation. Judge for yourself!



# Holidays, Family and Fun

Our McNair Scholars celebrated the holidays in 2023 with their families and loved ones. From what you can see, they all mark the season with their own special brand of love

and family.

Abby Welch, pictured above, in front left in white sweatshirt, was at home with all her cousins. Melissa Romero, above, in middle of two women, and her

mother rang in the New Years at a holiday park. Jada Alexander, above, in a red striped onesie, and her family cozied up in their jammies for the holidays.



# New Juniors



**Chiara Cimarusti**  
Anthropology, Applied Psychology  
Minor  
Mentor: Dr. Matthie Louis  
Research Interests: Virology,  
STEM cells, and regenerative  
medicine



**Maria Donan**  
Sociology, Education minor  
Mentor: Dr. Erika Arenas  
Research Interests: Family Struc-  
tures, Educational Inequalities,  
Immigration, and Gender



**Karen Gonzalez-Salazar**  
Sociology  
Mentor: Dr. Daina Sanchez  
Research Interests: Indigeneity,  
transnationalism, and cultural  
pluralism



**Gerard 'Gigi' Griffin**  
History of Public Policy and Law  
Mentor: Dr. Giuliana Perrone  
Research Interests: 19 century race  
and gender



**Omer Zeena**  
Anthropology and Global Studies BA  
Mentor: Dr. Nadège Clitandre  
Research Interests: Neocolonialism  
and Global Capitalism in Africa



**Angeles Jasmine Labastida**  
Film and Media Studies and Sociology  
Mentor: Dr. Laila Shereen Sakr  
Research Interests: Algorithmic Op-  
pression, Digital Humanities, Digital  
Decolonization in Latin America

# McNair Profile

## Senior Scholar



**Jacqueline Lopez**

Jacqueline Lopez is graduating in spring of 2024 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Psychological and Brain Sciences, with two minors in Spanish and Applied Psychology.

### **What are your research interests?**

My research interests are Latinx Mental Health, Implementation & Dissemination Science, Evidence-Based Practices, Bilingualism in Therapeutic Interventions, Destigmatization of Mental Health, Community-Based Research, and Integrated Care. Having grown up and witnessed firsthand the disparities in mental health care, I want to be a clinical psychologist who can help my community and implement the needed changes from the local to the federal level. Having in mind my family members, who have always struggled with the language barrier, as they are Spanish-speaking immigrants, I want to be a bridge helping to connect culturally and linguistically specific services to Hispanic or Latinx people.

### **Why did you apply to the McNair Scholars program, and how has the program helped you achieve your goals?**

I applied to McNair because I knew I wanted to attain a Ph.D. After learning about what a Ph.D. entails and what it takes to become a Clinical Psychologist, I decided to look for resources to help me achieve that. None of that would've been possible without seeing people like myself aspiring to reach those goals.

### **What are your plans for after graduation from UCSB?**

After graduation, I plan to go to graduate school at the University of Nevada, Reno,

and begin my Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology, working under Dr. Lorraine Benuto in the DICE Center, the research center for the Dissemination and Implementation of Culturally Sensitive, Evidence-Based Psychological Services.

### **What advice would you give to McNair scholars planning to apply to graduate programs?**

It is like a second job; therefore, plan accordingly and apply to programs where you see yourself thriving. Always ask questions and use the resources that McNair offers you to your advantage.

### **What is your favorite memory from your time at McNair?**

My favorite memory from my time at McNair was staying during the summer for the McNair Research Internship and getting closer to some of the most amazing people ever. The highlight of McNair has been making lifelong friends and always having people you can lean on. It is a community that will see you endure your highest highs and lowest lows. Getting closer to Evelyn, Monsi, and Naka has been my highlight and the main reason my senior year has been so amazing here at UCSB!

# McNair Profile

## Senior Scholar



**Monserrat Lupian**

Monserrat ('Monsi') Lupian is graduating in spring 2024 with a Bachelor of Arts in Linguistics, with an emphasis in Speech-Language Sciences and Disorders.

### **What are your research interests?**

I'm interested in learning more about what affects high/low name agreements, bilingual language acquisition, and dual language learning models. While my focus is no longer on pursuing research, I enjoy learning about new experiments and findings in the field of linguistics.

### **Why did you apply to the McNair Scholars program, and how has the program helped you achieve your goals?**

I applied to the McNair program during my sophomore year of college because I was interested in pursuing research and becoming a professor. However, as I've progressed within my major courses, my interests have shifted towards pursuing a masters in Speech-Language Pathology. Despite the evolution of my goals, the support and mentorship provided by McNair have been just as invaluable. Throughout the program, I've acquired skills in networking, conducting and presenting research studies, and navigating higher education.

### **What are your plans for after graduation from UCSB?**

I am currently pursuing my post-baccalaureate online with San Diego State University in Speech and Language Pathology and plan to apply to their Master's program upon completion.

### **What advice would you give younger McNair scholars about applying to graduate programs?**

I would advise younger scholars to dream big and get involved early on. The more exposure to research you can gain, the clearer you will narrow down your research interests and learn about what you want in a graduate program. Also, don't be afraid to reach out to your faculty mentor for advice, they were once in your shoes and want to see you succeed.

### **What is your favorite memory from your time at McNair?**

The highlight of my time with the McNair Scholars Program has been witnessing everyone in my cohort progress from a vague research topic to conducting and presenting our own research studies. Most recently, hearing about their acceptance to some of their top programs has been incredibly inspiring.





# Alumni Carla Suarez Soto

**Written by Abby Welch**

The UCSB McNair Scholars Program is proud to highlight the accomplishments of one of its distinguished alumna, Carla Suarez Soto, who recently graduated from UCSB in 2023 with a triple major in Linguistics, Spanish, and Italian Studies. Carla is currently a first-year Ph.D. student at the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC) under the mentorship of Dr. George Bunch. Carla says she feels extremely supported by Dr. Bunch and is grateful for his guidance. Carla's research at UCSC remains similar to the work she conducted at UCSB, fighting against language deficit ideologies when teaching Latine and other communities of color.

In thinking about her experience with the UCSB McNair Scholars Program, Carla would like to give a special shout-out to Courtney Durdle, McNair Writing Specialist, for all of her support in drafting her application materials. She says that the most useful piece of advice she got from McNair was to be sure that your working style and support needs are met by your faculty advisor. Through McNair, Carla was also able to connect with her two main faculty mentors, Dr. Mary Bucholtz and Dr. Jin Sook Lee, who introduced her to the SKILLS program. Key to her SKILLS experience was her graduate mentor, Mary Franitza, whom she thanks for being a key element in helping her conduct her undergraduate

research project and being a main resource in the classroom setting.

Carla's experience in the SKILLS program inspired the work she passionately conducts now. While she will mostly be taking classes for this school year, Carla is very excited about starting her second-year independent project, where she hopes to interview Latine junior high and high school students about their language ideologies. Since moving to Santa Cruz, Carla loves to take walks through nature, spend time with her cohort, and take trips exploring the San Jose area. We wish Carla much success along her academic journey!





# Developing REU Application Skills at McNair

We are proud to report that we had a successful second cohort of students ‘graduate’ from our pre-McNair seminar, INT188 “Promoting Research Engagement - Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) Application Development.” Designed in 2023 and led by Dr. Vanessa Woods, the McNair Scholars Program co-PI, the class explored best

practices for student engagement in undergraduate research and beyond. Step-by-step, the ten students—three sophomores and seven transfer students—prepared materials for a research program application, like that of McNair, and learned about the professional and personal benefits of research in graduate school. Our discussions were aimed at

creating a learning community for promoting undergraduate research across campus as well as identifying and articulating students’ strengths and assets. In the few short weeks we were with them, we witnessed their personal growth and increased confidence in their academic and professional selves.

McNair

# Publications and Awards

## **Genesis Hernandez:**

Forthcoming, Hernandez, G.N., Camacho-Ceballos, J. & Dowdy, E. "The Effects of Parental Perception for Behavioral Health Services on Help-Seeking Behavior in Women with ADHD within the Chicana/Latina Community." *Imagine: A Promise Scholars and McNairs Journal*. Accepted to UCLA Masters of Social Welfare and SDSU Masters of Social Work.

## **Jacqueline Lopez:**

Awarded the Hispanic Association of Colleges & Universities, Diversity in Health Care Scholarship (\$5,000) 2023, National Latinx Psychological Association Travel Grant Award (~\$450) 2023, Ford Motor Company Fund/Economic Mobility Grant (\$500) 2023, Community Financial Fund (\$200), 2024, Associated Students/ Educational Opportunity Program Grant (\$1,000) 2024, Nike HSI Scholarship Program Scholar (\$5,000) 2024. Forthcoming, Lopez, J., Pollard, A., Sharkey, J., "Clinician Experiences in Implementing Multi-Dimensional Family Therapy (MDFT) with Bilingual (Spanish/ English) and Trilingual (Spanish/English/ Mixtec) Families." August 2023. *Imagine: A Promise Scholars*

& McNair Scholars Journal. Accepted to the University of Nevada, Reno (UNR), Clinical Psychology Ph.D. Program, fall 2024, with mentor Dr. Lorraine Benuto, DICE, Research Center for the Dissemination and Implementation of Culturally Sensitive, Evidence Based Psychological Services. Upcoming conferences include, Asian Pacific Americans in Higher Education (APAHE) 2024 Conference, "Radical Hope: Leading with Love, Courage, and Action," April 4-5th, Oakland; Association for Psychological Science (APS) 2024 Conference, May 23-26, San Francisco; and, Western Psychological Association (WPA) 2024 Conference, April 25-28, San Francisco.

## **Isabel Ruacho:**

Awarded, University of Chicago Leadership Alliance SR-EIP, sponsored by NIH DENDRITES program (Dynamic Experiences in Neuroscience to Diversify Research Training Exposure for Students) under Dr. Wilma Bainbridge.

## **Marian Walker:**

Awarded \$25,000 in research, including the Wenger Scholarship for Undergraduate

Research (\$2000), UC Natural Reserve System & La Kretz Center Summer Research Stipend (\$7500), and SACNAS Career Pathways Grant. Graduating with distinction in the Environmental Studies Major and High Honors in the College of Letters and Science. Received the UCSB Environmental Studies Department Outstanding Service Award and UCSB College of Letters and Science Academic Excellence Award. Hired to take on a full-time post-baccalaureate research position at UCSB's Bren School. Presented research at the Ecological Society of America Annual Meeting, Portland, OR (2023), UCSB Center for Science & Engineering Partnership Research Symposium (2023), UCLA National McNair Scholars Conference (2023), UCSB Research Showcase (2023), and Bren Mantell Symposium for Environmental Justice and Conservation Innovation (2023).

## **Abby Welch:**

Accepted to the UCSB Teacher Education Program for fall 2024; and for AERA 2024, Paper Presentation.

Building 477, Office 124 Santa Barbara, CA 93106-2087, [mcnair@mcnair.ucsb.edu](mailto:mcnair@mcnair.ucsb.edu)

