

UCSB McNair Scholars Program Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2020



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NOTE FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

Despite facing an incredibly difficult year, we are pleased to feature highlights from the spring and summer quarters, which include a wide range of transitions and achievements among our students and staff. In the spring, we had the opportunity to celebrate our McNair seniors in a virtual End of Year Graduation Ceremony. Each of the fifteen seniors engaged in faculty-mentored research, attended graduate school preparation seminars and workshops, completed a research project, and presented their research at an academic conference. Thirteen of them have accepted graduate school offers at universities across the country [inside this issue you'll find details of their graduate school destinations], and the remaining two will be applying to graduate school this fall.

We also feature several summer highlights in this issue. All our scholars completed our eight-week summer program or at an external summer program at colleges or universities elsewhere (Rutgers, UCSB, UC San Diego, and Williams College). Our scholars presented their research at the UCLA Virtual National McNair Conference as well as our annual UCSB McNair Scholars Program Summer Symposium. Once again, we ran the Edison Summer Research Program for UCSB STEM students thanks to a yearly gift from Edison International. And for a third year in a row, the McNair Program was a key player in organizing a special graduate student panel sponsored by the Educational Opportunity Program titled, "Thriving, Not Surviving: Navigating Higher Education as a First-Generation College Student."

This newsletter also features the Class of 2022, our newest cohort of scholars. We spotlight a current scholar and an alumna: Zoey Eddy, who completed the Research Intensive Summer Experience (RISE) at Rutgers University, and Channel Lewis, who completed her dissertation in the Graduate School of Education and Information Studies at UCLA. And this September we welcomed our new Faculty Director, Dr. Miroslava Chávez-García, who is a Professor of History at UCSB with affiliated appointments in the Departments of Feminist Studies and Chicana/o Studies. We look forward to working with Dr. Chávez-García!

For more information on our program, please visit our website. As always, we welcome all students, staff, and faculty to reach out to us. We can be reached at mcnair@mcnair.ucsb.edu.

Dr. Yvette Martinez-Vu

The UCSB McNair Scholars Program is supported by the U.S. Department of Education Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program and the UCSB Office of the Executive Vice Chancellor and the deans of the College of Letters and Sciences. Additionally, our science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) scholars are partially funded by Edison International.

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Welcome our New Faculty Director



We welcome the new Faculty Director of the McNair Scholars Program. Miroslava Chávez-García is a Professor of History at UCSB who has affiliated appointments with the Departments of Feminist Studies and Chicana/o Studies. She is the author of *Negotiating Conquest: Gender and Power in California, 1770s to 1880s* (Tucson, 2004), *States of Delinquency: Race and Science in the Making of California's Juvenile Justice System* (Berkeley, 2012), and most recently, her award-winning *Migrant Longing: Letter Writing across the U.S.-Mexico Borderlands* (Chapel Hill, 2018), a history of migration, courtship, and identity as told through more than 300 personal letters exchanged across the U.S.-Mexico borderlands among family members and friends. Her current project, "The Greening of Hate: The Environmental Movement, Population Control, and the Mainstreaming of Immigration Restriction," examines and analyzes how advocates for the environment used growing fears over expanding global populations and depletion of the natural world's resources in the 1960s to popularize and institutionalize immigration exclusion in the United States. Dr. Chávez-García served from 2016 to 2019 as Faculty Director for Graduate Diversity Initiatives, overseeing the

Graduate Scholars Program, designed to retain, mentor, and matriculate first- and second-year students. She is currently a member of the UCSB Academic Senate committee on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and is the chair of a similar committee in the History Department. From 2013 to 2015, she served as interim Chair and Vice Chair for UCSB's Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies. While at UC Davis, her previous place of employment, she was a member of the Chicana/Latina Research Center steering committee and chaired the Chicana/o Studies Department.

Scholar Profile: Zoey Eddy

Zoey Eddy is a senior majoring in psychological and brain sciences and minoring in anthropology and Black studies. Her research focuses on issues surrounding multiracial identities. At UCSB she works with Dr. Brenda Majors on a project that analyzes the way people perceive other people who claim mismatched racial identities (i.e. when a person claims a racial identity that differs from the racial identities of their parents).

This summer Zoey attended the Research Intensive Summer Experience (RISE) at Rutgers. This program brings together outstanding undergraduates from diverse backgrounds. Over the course of this 6-week virtual program, Zoey participated in professional development, wellness, and research activities. She chose this program because of the opportunity to work with Dr. Diana Sanchez, whose work has influenced Zoey's research. In the Close Relationships, Identity, and Stigma Lab, Zoey developed a project on the ways parents teach multiracial children about race and their multiracial identities. Although she was not able to undertake laboratory work due to the pandemic, she produced a project proposal and a mock grant proposal, which she presented at the RISE at Rutgers Symposium. Zoey says, "The most valuable part of the experience was working with a new professor doing research in my area. I gained new perspectives and skills for doing research, and I was able to confirm that this is a professor I would like to work with in the future." Zoey is continuing to work with Dr. Sanchez to develop this project into an active study.



Zoey has the following advice for other students considering a summer research experience: "If you have a faculty member you are thinking about working with in graduate school it's worth it to look into the school and see if they offer a summer research program where you could work with that person. It's a great opportunity to see what research is like at other universities and gain a new faculty mentor. You may also experience a different mentoring style with a new professor which can help you figure out what you are looking for in a faculty mentor."

Zoey will be applying for grad school this fall, as well as continuing her research on mismatched identities and writing her honors thesis.

Summer Program Highlights

The McNair Scholars Summer Program went virtual this year, but our scholars were able to adapt to socially distanced research and online presentations. Twenty-six students participated in our summer program while another four participated in external summer programs. Zoey Eddy attended the Research Intensive Summer Experience at Rutgers, Alyssa Frick-Jenkins attended the UC-HBCU Linguistics Program at UCSB, Emily Lopez attended the SMALL Undergraduate Research Project at Williams College, and Raymond Thicklin attended the Scripps Institute of Oceanography at UC San Diego.

Students who participated in our program undertook a series of seminars and activities to advance their research and prepare for graduate school. Our seniors presented their research at the UCLA McNair Conference, where they were also able to take advantage of online seminars on graduate school admissions. Both seniors and juniors presented their research at the UCSB McNair Summer Research Symposium. Although our symposium was virtual this year, we had a large audience and many great discussions about the scholars' work. In spite of several additional difficulties this summer our scholars showed their determination and passion for their work, finding creative ways to continue pursuing their goals.

“Thriving, Not Surviving”: Panel and Discussion

For the third year in a row, the McNair Scholars Program helped organize a summer event titled, “Thriving, Not Surviving: Navigating Higher Education as a First-Generation College Student.” Held on Thursday, August 20, 2020, this year's event was a collaboration between the McNair Scholars Program, ONDAS Student Center, Transfer Student Center, and the Educational Opportunity Program (EOP). This event, which was sponsored by EOP, included a first-generation graduate student panel via Zoom followed by a graduate student-led discussion session in 12 breakout rooms. With over 120 participants, the audience was composed of students in the Summer Transfer Transitions Program (STTP) as well as UCSB undergraduates, graduate students, and community members. The goal of this event was to increase awareness of the obstacles that first-gen students experience in higher education and provide strategies for thriving in academia. Topics such as family achievement guilt, imposter syndrome, microaggressions, working with mentors, self-care strategies, and building community were discussed.

Edison Summer Highlights

The summer 2020 Edison STEM Scholars program will be one to remember. Due to the pandemic, only 5 scholars were admitted into the program, and thanks to the generosity of Edison International, each received a \$4,000 stipend for their participation. Due to the continued restrictions on in-person events and lab work, all scholars focused on research that could be done remotely or outside. Research projects covered a diverse array of topics from the conservation of the endangered Olympia Oyster to understanding the formation of black holes. In addition to gaining valuable experience in research, the scholars also participated in professorial development workshops on topics such as writing statements of purpose, developing CVs, and how to create a graduate school list.

Two of the scholars offered their comments:

“The Edison Program has given me the opportunity to embark on an independent project, which is especially critical right now as I begin applying for graduate programs this fall. My career goal is to pursue a PhD, likely on the intersection of biology and environmental health issues, and being able to secure funding independently gives me more creative freedom and autonomy over my research.” -Veronica Hsu

“The [Edison summer research] program allowed full immersion into the project, it has also given me the experience of the workload and commitment required for graduate level work. The knowledge and experience gained...will provide me with valuable assistance in returning for graduate school in the future.” -Ethan Kadiyala



Alumna Profile: Dr. Channel McLewis



Dr. Channel McLewis is an Assistant Project Scientist at the University of California, Los Angeles. In her current role, Dr. McLewis collaborates with Dr. Syliva Hurtado to examine whether STEM interventions lead to institutional change on college campuses and in the STEM field that expands college and career opportunities for marginalized students. More broadly, Dr. McLewis studies Black participation in higher education, with an emphasis on the sociology of race, gender, and inequities in postsecondary contexts. Specifically, her research investigates how Black women, as they navigate the higher education terrain, experience intersecting systems of power and how they negotiate their multifaceted identities.

Dr. McLewis received her Ph.D. in Higher Education and Organizational Change from the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA). Before continuing her education at UCLA, Channel received a Master of Arts in Sociology of Education with a concentration in policy at Teachers College, Columbia University, and her second Masters in Higher Education from

UCLA. Channel earned her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Black Studies with a minor in education at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB).

Originally from Bakersfield, California, Channel is an alumna of UCSB's Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program and the Bill and Melinda Gates Millennium Scholars Program. Her personal and educational experiences motivate her commitment to social justice and equity for diverse and minoritized groups. She has served as a femtor to advise, mentor, and prepare underrepresented undergraduate student researchers. Dr. McLewis's research, teaching, and mentorship aim to address systemic inequities and empower minoritized students and communities.

As a former UCSB McNair student and graduate femtor for UCLA's McNair Scholars Program, Dr. McLewis credits the program for providing a wealth of resources and guidance on how to navigate the academy. She shared that now that she has attended more research conferences and completed her graduate studies, McNair prepared her on the fundamentals of conducting and presenting research.



UCSB McNair Scholars Attend 2020 National McNair Conference at UCLA

The 2020 UCLA Virtual National McNair Conference kicked off on Wednesday, July 29th online with Dr. Tyrone Howard as the keynote speaker. Dr. Howard focused on "good trouble," an idea coined by the late Congressman John Lewis. He encouraged the McNair Scholars community to do research in order to develop new understandings and help bring about change. It was UCLA's first time hosting the McNair National Conference online. UCLA planned three days of speakers, presentations, workshops and networking opportunities. McNair Scholars from across the nation were able to attend and share their research in various fields. This was all done via <https://mcnair.aap.ucla.edu/>, where recorded presentations have been archived and can still be viewed.

UCLA did an incredible job organizing and executing their first Virtual National McNair Conference. The website was beautifully arranged by different categories on their main page, ranging from Keynote Speakers to Grad Prep Workshops. This served as the central hub through which attendees could connect during the conference. While this was a first for our scholars and McNair team, all participants took it in stride and fully engaged with the online platform.

Even though our McNair Scholars were not able to share their research in person this did not stop them from engaging and reaching the larger National McNair Scholars community. Their presentations and research topics fortuitously fell in line with the theme "good trouble." The presentations ranged from various interdisciplinary subjects. Research topics ranged from the experience of Black women and sisterhood in America, to the impact of academic calendars on student mental health, and the effects of gentrification in South East Los Angeles. Our scholars have taken the problems and queries they have encountered in their own lives and their surroundings and found ways to explore and connect with each other through their research. The event was a shining example of the goals of National McNair Scholars Conferences and of the late John Lewis's "good trouble."

McNair Class of 2022



Odalys Callejas

Major: Earth science

Hometown: Hidalgo, Mexico

Mentor: Dr. Roberta Rudnick

Research Interests: Geology, geochemistry



Jordan Fuggins

Major: Sociology

Hometown: Stockton, CA

Mentor: Dr. Terrance Wooten

Research Interests: Transgender youth, social justice, media representations of race and gender



Jordan Fobbs

Major: Black studies, sociology

Hometown: Union City, CA

Mentor: Dr. Terrance Wooten

Research Interests: Black masculinity, performance art



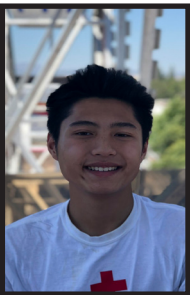
Isaias Ghezze

Major: Psychological and brain sciences

Hometown: Manteca, CA

Mentor: Dr. Hongbo Yu

Research Interests: Morality, emotions, computational social psychology



Chi Hei (William) Lao

Major: Biopsychology

Hometown: Castro Valley, CA

Mentor: Dr. Skirmantas Janusonis

Research Interests: Serotonin fiber morphology, cognitive neuroscience



Emily Lopez

Major: CCS Mathematics

Hometown: Santa Clarita, CA

Mentor: Dr. Katy Craig

Research Interests: Graph theory, applied mathematics



Faye Nguyen

Major: Microbiology

Hometown: Fullerton, CA

Mentor: Dr. Dzwokai Zach Ma

Research Interests: WDR5 function



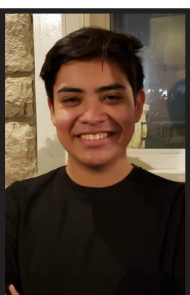
Diana Sanchez

Major: Chicana/o/x studies

Hometown: Panorama City, CA

Mentor: Dr. San Juanita Garcia

Research Interests: Latina sexuality



Abraham Soto

Major: CCS Biology

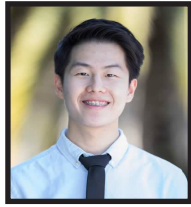
Hometown: Willowbrook, CA

Mentor: Dr. Armand Kuris

Research Interests: Epidemiology, parasite ecology, environmental health

Class of 2020 Graduate Programs

Thirteen of the seniors who graduated in 2020 began graduate school programs this fall. Each received fellowships in support of their graduate training.



Zheng Chen
Ph.D. in history
UC Los Angeles



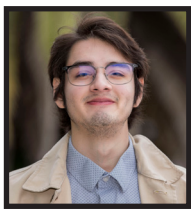
Jose Delgado
M.S. in bioengineering
UC San Diego



Brian Galaviz-Sarmiento
Ph.D. in molecular and
cellular biology
Dartmouth University



Sebastian Gonzalez
Ph.D. in computational
and quantitative biology
Princeton University



Transito Gonzalez
M.S. in physics
Cal State Long Beach



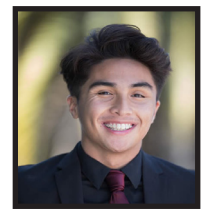
Gabrielle Grafton
Ph.D. in economics
Brown University



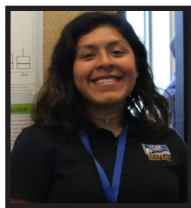
Jose Gutierrez
Ph.D. in sociology
UC Irvine



Nicole Mendoza
Ph.D. in communication,
information and media
Rutgers University



Byant Pahl
Ph.D. in earth
science
UC Irvine



Yanelyn Perez
Ph.D. in biosciences
University of Maryland



Brandon Quintana
M.S. in biology
Cal State Fullerton



Nardos Shiferaw
Ph.D. in anthropology
University of Connecticut



Veronica Torres
M.S. in biology
University of North
Carolina

Recognitions and Awards

Zheng Chen: *UCSB Library Award for Undergraduate Research in the Humanities and Fine Arts*

Isaias Ghezae: *Doris Tsao Essay Competition*

Emily Lopez: *Qualcom Scholarship; Ostrow Bruckner Scholarship*

Abraham Soto: *Hispanic Scholarship Fund*

Publications

Kam, J. A., Mendez Murillo, R., Cornejo, M., & **Mendoza, N.** (November, 2020). The importance of norms and efficacy in predicting undocumented college students' intentions to talk to an on-campus mental health professional. Paper to be presented at the National Communication Association. Top Paper Panel, Health Communication Division. Indianapolis, IN.

Sanchez, D.T., Gaither, S.E., Albuja, A. F., & **Eddy, Z. E.** (in press). How Policies Can Address Multiracial Stigma. *Policy Insights from the Behavioral and Brain Sciences.*