

# UCSB McNair Scholars Newsletter

## Spring/Summer 2019



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### NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Spring quarter and summer sessions are extraordinarily busy times at the McNair Scholars Program. Each year, we celebrate our McNair seniors who have engaged in faculty mentored research, participated in seminars and workshops which prepared them for entrance to graduate school, and completed the arduous process of applying to graduate programs. There were sixteen seniors, thirteen of whom applied to graduate school. Happily, all thirteen are entering graduate programs this fall [See details of their post-baccalaureate destinations inside this issue]. The scholarship of nine of our seniors are showcased in the 9th edition of the UCSB McNair Scholars Research Journal, which was published in June and is now available on our website (<https://mcnair.ucsb.edu/journal>). Thanks again to the faculty mentors whose efforts on behalf of our students allow them to produce a first publication in what we hope is a long and stellar academic career.

The UCSB McNair Program has had a senior cohort since 2008. We are very pleased to take note of an exciting new milestone: As of this June 2019, twenty-two of our scholars have completed Ph.D. degrees. In this past year alone, former McNair Scholars completed their degrees at institutions such as Notre Dame, Stanford, Yale, the University of Pennsylvania, and UCSB in a range of fields – American studies, Africana studies, chemical engineering, Chicana/o studies, education, and sociology. We anticipate another ten will complete their doctoral degrees in 2019-2020.

Featured in this issue are highlights of our summer research program activities. McNair Scholars presented their research at the annual university-wide summer programs Undergraduate Research Colloquium and each also offered oral presentations at the McNair Scholars Symposium. Sixteen of our scholars traveled to UCLA, a host institution this year, for a McNair National Research Conference at which they presented their work. Additionally, the McNair staff were key players in organizing a special event primarily funded by UCSB Summer Sessions and the Graduate Division, "Thriving, Not Surviving: Navigating Higher Education as a First-Generation College Student."

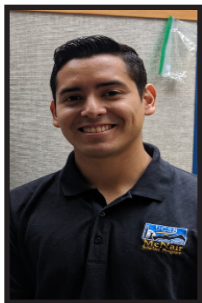
As always, we welcome all students, staff, and faculty to visit us year round at the McNair Scholars Program offices in Building 477.

*Dr. Beth Schneider*

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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## McNair Class of 2021



**Marco Colin**

**Major:** Chemical Engineering

**Hometown:** Santa Maria, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Frank Zok

**Research Interests:** Organic chemistry, chemical reactions, material properties and mechanics



**Zoey Eddy**

**Major:** Psychology and Brain Sciences

**Hometown:** Sacramento, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Brenda Major

**Research Interests:** Racial identity, biracial and multiracial experiences, stereotype formation



**Alyssa Frick-Jenkins**

**Major:** Black Studies and Linguistics

**Hometown:** La Habra, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Butch Ware

**Research Interests:** Francophonie, négritude, language, identity, and colonial practice



**Juanita Iheanacho**

**Major:** Global Studies

**Hometown:** Vacaville, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Paul Spikard

**Research Interests:** Impacts of climate change on human migration, and related government policies



**Simran Kaur**

**Major:** Economics

**Hometown:** Yuba City, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Andrew Plantiga

**Research Interests:** Natural resource economics, environmental sustainability, and climate change adaptation



**Rosalia Hernandez**

**Major:** Actuarial Science

**Hometown:** Orlando, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Michael Ludkovski

**Research Interests:** Longevity forecasting, behavioral health, computational and data science topics, InsurTech and insurance



**Fidel Lopez**

**Major:** Economics

**Hometown:** Ventura, CA

**Mentor:** Dr. Emmanuel Vespa

**Research Interests:** Experimental economics, microeconomic theory, and mathematical economics

## Summer Program Highlights

Our McNair Summer Research Program saw our scholars carry out original research projects from start to finish. Twenty-one McNair Scholars participated in the research program here at UCSB, while another six were away participating in research and internships at campuses around the world, including University of Texas, University of Washington, Michigan State University, Harvard University, and Osaka University in Japan. Activities at UCSB kicked off with a day at the Adventure Program's ever-popular ropes course, where scholars worked together to overcome mental and physical challenges. During the summer program, the scholars carried out research projects and began preparing for their upcoming graduate school applications. Sixteen of our resident scholars traveled south to present their research at the National McNair Conference hosted at UCLA. After their hard work, they got to take a break to visit the Hollywood Bowl for a performance of the Gypsy Kings. At our student panel and mixer, "Thriving, Not Surviving: Navigating Higher Education as a First-Generation College Student," scholars had the chance to network and hear about the experiences of a panel of first-generation graduate students. Our scholars' summer research culminated in posters they presented at the UCSB summer programs Undergraduate Research Colloquium and in impressive oral presentations at the McNair Symposium. We are proud of the scholars for their hard work, comradery and excellent representation of UCSB.



## 2019 National McNair Conference at UCLA

From July 31 through August 1, sixteen of our UCSB McNair Scholars, both juniors and seniors, presented their research at the annual McNair Scholars Research Conference. This event provided an opportunity for McNair Scholars from across the nation to present their research in an academic setting as well as participate in graduate school fairs, GRE workshops, plenary panels, and special dinners.

UCSB McNair Scholars presented on numerous topics. In the STEM fields, we had presentations on the declining olympia oyster population after the Thomas Fire debris flow, Dynamic Nuclear Polarization, the recurrence of high-magnitude debris flows in Santa Barbara and Montecito, the Compact Muon Solenoid experiment at CERN, and the cause behind a lethal outbreak of chytridiomycosis in amphibians population. In the social sciences, our scholars presented on decision making processes and the Ellsberg Paradox, the experience of undergraduate Latinx students at hispanic serving institutes, the effects of gender-neutral clock-stopping policies on female assistant professors' tenure attainment, the effects of immigration experience on the health and healthcare of Ethiopian and Eritrean Americans, the role of family socialization for DACA students, and the effects of structural adjustment programs on Trinidad's development. McNair humanities students shared their research on literati identity and mobility in 18th and 19th century Guangzhou and the influence of hagiography on the Franciscan Order.

After presenting their research in oral and poster presentations, our scholars had the chance to network with McNair Scholars and recruiters from campuses across the country and see what research other scholars are conducting. UCSB McNair senior Gabrielle Grafton shared that, "The UCLA McNair conference was a great opportunity to connect with other McNair Scholars from all across the country. I really enjoyed seeing what other scholars are researching, while also being able to present and receive feedback on my own research from a larger audience."



## "Thriving, Not Surviving" Panel and Mixer

On Wednesday, August 7, 2019, the McNair Scholars Program collaborated with the ONDAS Student Center and the Transfer Student Center to organize an event titled, "Thriving, Not Surviving: Navigating Higher Education as a First-Generation College Student." This event, which was co-sponsored by Summer Sessions, Graduate Division, and the Multicultural Center, included a first-generation graduate student panel, a networking mixer between first-generation undergraduate and graduate students, as well as a first-generation graduate student mixer. The goal was to increase awareness of the obstacles that first-gen students experience in higher education and provide strategies for thriving in academia. Discussion topics included family achievement guilt, imposter syndrome, microaggressions, working with mentors, self-care strategies, and building community. Undergraduate students commented that this event motivated them to pursue graduate school and eased their anxiety regarding their post-BA transition while some graduate students noted they felt validated and gained a sense of community.



## Farewell to Dr. Ellen Broidy



In May 2019, our staff and students bid their farewell to Dr. Ellen Broidy. Dr. Broidy served as the McNair Program Writing Specialist for nine years and in that time she made a tremendous difference in the success of our program through her exceptional professional writing expertise, extraordinary patience, and wonderful sense of humor. In addition to coaching students in all stages of writing, critiquing students' research papers, presenting workshops, and reviewing McNair Scholar applications, Dr. Broidy also worked with our Director, Dr. Beth Schneider, as a co-editor of the *UCSB McNair Scholars Research Journal* since its inception. Having spent 38 years in the University of California system as a graduate student, librarian, faculty member, and writing specialist, she notes that her time with McNair "has been, far and away, the most satisfying." Since her retirement from McNair, Dr. Broidy has been exceedingly busy. As the co-founder of the First Annual Gay Pride March in 1970 in New York, she spent the month of June engaged in multiple panels, discussions, and political rallies locally and nationally acknowledging the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall Rebellion and the birth of the LGBT movement. She recently organized an immigrant rights benefit concert and continues her involvement with multiple progressive political groups.

## Meet the New Writing Specialist



Chris Morales is the Writing Specialist for the McNair Scholars Program. He is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Religious Studies. Before coming to UCSB, he earned degrees in theology from Harvard and cultural analysis from the University of Amsterdam. His research specialties include existential philosophy, modern political theory, and the history of Christian thought. His dissertation explores the ethical and political significance of love in the work of Ralph Waldo Emerson and Friedrich Nietzsche. Besides his academic work, Chris has a long history of public service. He worked on an ethnographic project for the Department of Health and Human Services, researching how young adults understand and rationalize risky behaviors associated with HIV transmission. He also worked in adult education at the Santa Barbara Public Library, where he provided instruction in professional and academic writing.

## UCSB Edison Scholars Summer Program

Summer 2019 was an exciting time for the Edison Scholars Summer Program. This year we admitted a total of 16 scholars, and thanks to the generosity of Edison International, each scholar received a \$4,000 stipend to participate in the summer program. In addition to conducting cutting edge research, the Edison scholars practiced their science communication skills by creating a poster and presenting it at the summer programs Undergraduate Research Colloquium. Research projects covered a diverse array of topics from an ecological project on endophytes and decomposition to a chemical engineering project on ways to improve optic imaging in anaerobic environments. Throughout the summer the Edison scholars also participated in professional development seminars on topics such as statement of purpose and personal statement development, CV creation, and delivering a poster presentation. Overall, it was another successful summer for the Edison Scholars Summer Program.



## Class of 2019 Graduate Programs

Thirteen seniors will begin graduate programs in the fall of 2019.



Claudia Alegre  
Ph.D. in political science  
UCLA



Steven Castro  
Ph.D. in linguistics  
University of Chicago



Jordan Mitchell  
M.A. in music  
USC



Johanna Najera  
Ph.D. in anthropology  
UC Riverside



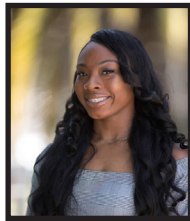
Zenzile Riddick  
Ph.D. in education  
Harvard



Eduardo Cardenas-Torres  
Ph.D. in statistics  
University of Illinois,  
Urbana-Champaign



Roberto Chavez  
Ph.D. in chemistry  
UCLA



Lexxus Coffey Edison  
Ph.D. in English  
UCSB



Zingha Foma  
Ph.D. in history  
New York University



Jasmine Morales  
Post-Baccalaureate  
Carnegie Foundation  
Stanford University



Erika Prado  
Ph.D. in human development  
University of Chicago



Resham Tessa Redmond  
Ph.D. in anthropology  
University of Chicago



Ryan Rodriguez  
M.A. in chemistry  
University of San Francisco

## Publications and Awards

Two of our graduating seniors were selected to be student speakers at their respective June graduations: **Eduardo Cardenas-Torres** at MLPS and **Zenzile Riddick** at social sciences. Zenzile, who graduated summa cum laude in sociology, was also selected as Outstanding Senior in the College of Letters and Sciences, and won the Thomas More Storke Award—the highest honor given by the university to a graduating senior for outstanding scholarship and leadership.

Two of our other graduating seniors – **Johanna Najera** and **Erika Prado** – were selected to Phi Beta Kappa. In addition, Erika won first place in the new UCSB competition, the Library Award for Undergraduate Research in Social Sciences, and was selected Distinguished Graduating Senior in the Psychology and Brain Sciences Department.

Juniors, **Brian Galaviz Sarmiento** and **Juanita Ihenacho** were selected as Gilman Scholars, going respectively to Japan and Spain. In addition, Brian received funding for research at Osaka University in Japan this summer from the Hispanic Scholarship Fund Scholar Program and UCSB's Promise Scholars.

The research of **Brandon Quintana**, along with several other students (Brenna Lizbeth Bolanos, Clarisa Areli Martinez, and Kevin Salgado), was discussed in “Spatial effect on ecology and behavior of *Lavinia symmetricus* in a riparian habitat,” *California Ecology and Conservation Newsletter*, National Reserve System, Spring 2019.