

RONALD E. MCNAIR POSTBACCALAUREATE ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM

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“Once a scholar always a scholar.”

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News on the Staff



Jacquie was featured in the February 16th edition of the *Iowa State Daily* during Black History Month. In the article titled “Working

for Equal Representation,” Jacquie talked about the goals and objectives of the McNair program and its importance to first-generation low-income students of all ethnicities both here at Iowa State as well as on a national level.

On March 20th, Jacquie passed her preliminary examination for Education

Leadership & Policy Studies. She will be spending her time outside the office working on her dissertation and plans to graduate in the next year.



On April 5th, Anthony received notice that an article titled “Culturally-Relevant Algebra Teaching: The Case of African Drumming” that he co-authored with Dr.

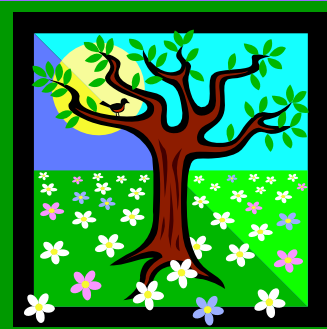
Janet Sharp of Oakland University was published in the *Journal of Mathematics and Culture*.

Zayira is working to prepare a demo and poster presentation for the Human Computer Interaction (HCI) Forum



that’s scheduled for April 25th. By semester’s end, she will have completed all of her coursework for the Ph.D. and will be spending her time this summer

working with her major professor and preparing her dissertation proposal.



Proposal Submitted

Message from the Director



As the Iowa State McNair program concludes its twelfth year, we would like to reflect on some of the challenges and opportunities of the program.

Throughout this twelve year history, the program has been funded for 35 students and has served no fewer than 35 students. The persistence and graduation rates for the population are greater than 89%. With respect to its goal of preparing scholars for graduate college entry, more than 65% have entered post-secondary education. Within this population you will find lawyers, medical doctors, educators, and students who have earned the Ph.D. degree. In addition to the aforementioned careers, some scholars have careers in entertainment and government.

With the end of this semester, we acknowledge another stellar group of scholars for their outstanding contribution to the

McNair tradition of scholarship, leadership, and community service through their pursuit of excellence! And remember that you will always be the captain of your ship and the master of your fate.

As the program ends 12 years of training, research, and service with a cohort of scholars, it is preparing to respond to a Department of Education request for proposal. This process requires all universities to submit a proposal for competitive funding. This year’s application requires that each applicant submit a proposal of no more than 50 pages, outlining how the applicant’s university will meet the goals and objectives of the program. The proposal must be supported by a budget which speaks to how the university will use such funding to achieve the goals and objectives of the program. Each proposal submitted will be read by three individual readers and given a score, the highest possible score being 100. Only a limited number of applications from a pool of more than 1000 will be funded. We are confident that ISU will be in that number of successful applicants. Wish us and our scholars well!

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McNair Staff

Dr. George A. Jackson, Director

Thelma Harding, Assistant Director

Anthony Stevens, Research Instructor

Zayira Jordan, Program Assistant

Jacqueline Pryor, Program Assistant

Josie Siefken, Secretary

2006 Fall Banquet and December Grads

Our Fall 2006 Banquet took place on December 3, 2006, in the Scheman Building. We were pleased to see a great turnout, including scholars' family members and faculty mentors.

During the banquet, we enjoyed learning about the research projects our graduating seniors carried out during their stay in the program.

Jonathon Kent spoke about China's political economy, Yolanda Evans presented her research on the relationship between depression and drinking habits, Tony Nguyen talked about fuel cell efficiency, and Keren Terry explained her investigation of forgiveness and religion.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to ask questions about aspects that sparked their particular interests in the research projects presented.

Our program's staff and the graduating seniors' peers

shared the seniors' joy in the completion of their careers as undergraduate students.

Our Fall 2006 graduating seniors were:

Yolanda Evans
Psychology

Jonathon Kent
Physics

Jean Albert Nguyen
Mechanical Engineering

Keren Terry
Psychology

We wish them well and look forward to hearing about their future plans!

May Graduates

This year's Spring graduates have dedicated their research agendas to interests as varied as indigenous peoples, matrixes, and weight among first graders. As is traditional in our program, we announce their graduation with great pride and a taste of having shared their paths through Iowa State.

Yolanda Coil
**Health and Human
Performance**

Keith Coleman
**Mechanical Engineering
and Mathematics**

Carmen García
Spanish

Dinh-Van Ha
Mathematics

Oluchi Ibekwe
Biology

Victoria Muñoz
Spanish

Lan Phung
French

Lindrea Ross
Graphic Design

Dawniece Trumbo
Marketing

Alumni on the Move

Lauren Damme (December 2005) is spending a year in Ecuador teaching English as a foreign language and plans to enter graduate school in the fall of 2008 to pursue her Master's degree. She has received admission offers from the London School of Economics (Development Management) and from Oxford University (Latin American Studies).

Willy Nzimi (May 2006) accepted a position last October with Wells Fargo Financial in Des Moines where he is a technical service specialist providing technical support to company branches in Canada. He is currently exploring options for pursuing an MBA while continuing to work full time.

Tyrone Moore (December 2004) is currently working as a process engineer for Alcoa in Texarkana, Texas. Tyrone was accepted into the distance education Master's program in Systems Engineering this spring.

Barbara Nsiah (May 2006) is completing her first year in the Ph.D. program in Mechanical Engineering at Georgia Tech in Atlanta. She was recently awarded an NSF Graduate Research Fellowship.

Lizmelia Ortíz (May 2004) has begun her second year in the Master's program in Human Development and Family Studies here at Iowa State.

Dawniece Trumbo was awarded the *Outstanding Student of the Year Award* by the Ames Chapter of the NAACP in February. She also received the *Erroll B. Davis Achievement Award* that honors and recognizes the importance of scholarship and leadership exemplified by underrepresented minority students in business administration and engineering, as well as the *ISU Alumni Association's Wallace E. Barron All-University Senior Award* that recognizes outstanding seniors who display high character, outstanding achievement in academics and university/community activities, and promise for continuing these exemplary qualities as alumni. Dawniece holds memberships in four honor societies, three of which are national honor societies.

On April 11th, five scholars participated in the First Annual Iowa State University Undergraduate Research Symposium

sponsored by the Honors Program and presented their research orally to an audience of students, administrators, faculty, and staff. The scholars who participated are: **Keith Coleman, Lan Phung, Dawniece Trumbo, Sulianet Ortiz, and Yolanda Coil**. They all made excellent presentations and received great questions afterwards!

Victoria Muñoz spent 12 weeks this spring student-teaching at Madrid High School. She taught six classes a day of Spanish I, II, III & IV. When asked about her experience, she said, "They were 12 long weeks, but I learned a lot and the students were good. I really enjoyed the experience a lot more than what I thought initially!" We know that she will be ready for her next challenge: full-time teaching!

Lindrea Ross was inducted into the *ISU Cardinal Key Honor Society* in March. At the

Office of Multicultural Affairs Celebrations activity on April 11th, she was awarded the *Director's Award* and the *MLO Student Leader Award*. Each award announcement received a standing ovation.

Our first-year scholar, **Mileka Scurlock**, was one of two ISU students to be selected to represent Iowa State's Department of Health and Human Performance at the National Olympic Academy of Malaysia's Session for Young Leaders 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The program, which is set to "spread Olympism among the youth of the world," is intended to spark an exchange of ideas, friendship, fair play, peace, and international understanding. Congratulations, Mileka!

Farewell to **Carmen Paz**, who married March 12, 2007, and is relocating to join her husband in the fall. We'll miss you!

The Importance of Research Experiences for Undergraduates*

Leslie Hogben
Professor of Mathematics, Iowa State University

The United States is facing a crisis caused by the scarcity of US citizens earning doctorates in the sciences. For example, in mathematics less than half the PhDs granted by American universities are awarded to Americans. This does not bode well for the US as a technological leader. The extremely low percentage of doctorates awarded to minorities, and in some sciences to women, is also disturbing, suggesting that we are wasting talent.

As someone who always knew she was going to do mathematical research, I initially had difficulty understanding why this problem exists. Why isn't it obvious to everyone that doing research is worthwhile, exciting and fun? Why wouldn't everyone want to be a university professor, doing research and teaching - a job I love so much I would do most of it even if I were independently wealthy?

To understand why this problem exists, I have come to realize that most people do not have the advantages I had. I was raised in a family where it was assumed from birth that I would be a scientist, where my father played with a chemistry set with me when I was three years old (even though my interest was limited to the pretty colors of precipitate we could make). I attended University of Iowa High School, with teachers who were graduate students themselves, and a math teacher who had us exploring the famous four color problem in graph theory (at that time an open problem). I attended Swarthmore College, where my physics professor took me as his assistant to do research in a lab at University of Pennsylvania.

In those days, there were no research experiences for undergraduates programs, but looking back I realize I had all the benefits of such programs, including great mentoring and the opportu-

nity to research material that was new to me. Even if what I produced was not always new to the mathematical community, I experienced the same joy of discovery and learned necessary persistence.

So why do we need programs like McNair and summer REUs? Because my experience was rare, and the fortunate few who do have experiences like mine almost all started life with lots the advantages. Programs to provide research experiences to undergraduates reach far more students, and reach students with a much broader range of backgrounds. By offering many students the opportunity to experience research, we can increase the number of students pursuing doctorates, and recruit the faculty of the future from a much broader pool of citizens.

Research experiences today come in a variety of types, including multi-year programs like McNair that match a student with a faculty mentor at the school s/he attends, and summer programs such as REUs sponsored by NSF and NSA that bring students from around the country to a particular college or university for an intense 8-10 week program of research and activities. Both types of experiences are valuable: I encourage all the ISU undergraduates with whom I work on research to consider applying for a summer research program as well, and encourage all the (summer) REU students I work with to look for long-term research experiences at their own schools.

I have also learned that it can as much fun to be a research mentor as it is to do research, watching a student discover the excitement of being the first person to know something. It has been my privilege to work with many terrific students, including my McNair Scholar Keith Coleman. I hope all of you will have the opportunity not only to do research yourselves, but to share your love of your subject with others.

* The opinions expressed are those of the author.

Program Director Awarded

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere."

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Our Program Director's continuous efforts in advancing a diverse community and supporting underrepresented minorities in their academic, professional, and civic pursuits was recognized during the Martin Luther King, Jr. Celebration that took place on January 18, 2007.

Dr. George A. Jackson was named the recipient of the Faculty/Staff *Advancing One Community Award*. According to the Planning Committee, this is a recognition of his dedication and "commitment to the principles and goals of Dr. King to create an inclusive multicultural community."

Dr. Jackson, who is also Assistant Dean of the Graduate College, President of the Ames Chapter of the NAACP, and sits on the board of the Iowa African American Hall of Fame, has raised \$2 million to support minority students.

"George believes deeply in freedom, one community and dignity," Iowa State University President Gregory Geoffroy said.

This award is given once a year as part of the Black History Month Celebration. It demonstrates a record of dedication to social justice and to the improvement of the campus climate for members of underrepresented groups.

Quotes are from the Advancing One Community Award announcement at <http://www.provost.iastate.edu/diversity/MLKJrAward.pdf> and the Iowa State Daily.

Scholars Succeed!

Our program strives to recognize our scholars' achievements along the way. We know our scholars work hard to continuously improve their education and their standing in their respective fields.

At the end of fall semester 2006, we had 10 scholars with a semester grade point average of 3.0 or above. They are:

Yolanda Coil
Courtney Cornick
Asale Hubbard
Oluchi Ibekwe
Victoria Muñoz
Ozioma Oji
Sulianet Ortíz
Lan Phung
Lindrea Ross
Dawniece Trumbo

Congratulations for a job well done! We are sure this is a mere hint of the ever-increasing success and achievement that you will have throughout your academic and professional careers.

Other News and Information

The ISU McNair program offers a unique approach to the federal McNair initiative. We are one of very few programs across the country that requires scholars to take a series of research classes. Structured classes and weekly classroom contact allow us to closely monitor our scholars so that problems can be identified early.

As we continue to make improvements in our program, we have decided to propose and seek approval for a fifth required class for scholars who are admitted to the program as sophomores and need additional work beyond the first two years of participation. This course will be offered only as needed and will be dependent upon the number of sophomores in each cohort. We hope to offer the first class in the fall of 2008.

Also on the horizon for the program is the development and implementation of a comprehensive evaluation plan. Our hope is to have such a plan ready by fall 2008.

Upcoming Program Travel

Thelma, Zayira, Anthony, and Jacquie will be traveling to Chicago in September to attend the Annual Council for Opportunity in Educa-

tion Conference where they hope to present a workshop on using ISU's McNair program as a model for other programs across the country.

Jacquie will accompany a small group of scholars to the University of Tennessee Knoxville's Annual McNair Conference in July.

Faculty Mentors

We are delighted to have Dr. Tim Derrick back with the McNair program as a faculty mentor to one of our first-year scholars, Isaac Hinton. Dr. Derrick mentored Barbara Nsiah, who graduated in May 2006 and is in her first year of graduate study at Georgia Tech.

Our first-ever Faculty Mentor Orientation will be scheduled for late summer/early fall. This will be our opportunity to inform mentors about how the program works at ISU and on a national level, what we cover in our classes, and our expectations of scholars. All feedback will be valuable, and we encourage our mentors—who are among our most valuable resources—to be generous with their feedback and recommendations for change. We can't improve without your honest input!

Travel to 2007 Maryland Conference

In the very early morning hours of Thursday, March 15th, nine scholars, along with Jacquie and Zayira, traveled to College Park, Maryland, to attend the 2007 University of Maryland National Conference for McNair Scholars and Undergraduate Research. Four graduating seniors made oral presentations. Scholars engaged in a variety of activities, ranging from attending sessions on preparing for the GRE to talking to graduate school representatives at the grad fair.

