

PSU McNair Scholars Online Journal

Volume 1
Issue 1 *Transformative Possibilities:
Transcending Interlocking Boundaries*

Article 8

2004

Front Matter Volume 1, 2004-2005

McNair Scholars Program
Portland State University

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Program, McNair Scholars (2004) "Front Matter Volume 1, 2004-2005," *PSU McNair Scholars Online Journal*: Vol. 1: Iss. 1, Article 8.

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Transformative Possibilities: Transcending Interlocking Boundaries

2004/2005 McNair Scholars Online Journal

Volume 1





The Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at Portland State University (PSU) works with motivated and talented undergraduates who want to pursue PhDs. It introduces juniors and seniors who are first-generation and low-income, and/or members of under-represented groups to academic research and to effective strategies for getting into and graduating from PhD programs.

The McNair Scholars Program has academic-year activities and a full-time summer research internship. Scholars take academic and skills-building seminars and workshops during the year, and each scholar works closely with a faculty mentor on original research in the summer. Scholars present their research findings at the McNair Summer Symposium and at other conferences, and are encouraged to publish their papers in the McNair Journal and other scholarly publications.

The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program was established in 1986 by the U.S. Department of Education and named in honor of Challenger Space Shuttle astronaut Dr. Ronald E. McNair. The program, which is in its seventh year on campus, is funded by a \$924,000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education and institutional cost-share funds.

The McNair Scholars Program's student-centered approach relies heavily on faculty and university commitment. Activities and opportunities provided by the program focus on building a positive academic community for the scholars while they are undergraduates at PSU

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Ronald E. McNair



Ronald Erwin McNair was born October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. While in junior high school, Dr. McNair was inspired to work hard and persevere in his studies by his family and by a teacher who recognized his scientific potential and believed in him. Dr. McNair graduated as valedictorian from Carver High School in 1967. In 1971, he graduated magna cum laude and received a bachelor of science degree in Physics from North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro). Dr. McNair then enrolled in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1976, at the age of 26, he earned his Ph.D. in laser physics. His dissertation was titled, "Energy Absorption and Vibrational Heating in Molecules Following Intense Laser Excitation." Dr. McNair was presented an honorary doctorate of Laws from North Carolina A&T State University in 1978, an honorary doctorate of Science from Morris College in 1980, and an honorary doctorate of science from the University of South Carolina in 1984.

While working as a staff physicist with Hughes Research Laboratory, Dr. McNair soon became a recognized expert in laser physics. His many distinctions include being a Presidential Scholar (1971-74), a Ford Foundation Fellow (1971-74), a National Fellowship Fund Fellow (1974-75), and a NATO Fellow (1975). He was also a sixth degree black belt in karate and an accomplished saxophonist. Because of his many accomplishments, he was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978. His first space shuttle mission launched successfully from Kennedy Space Center on February 3, 1984. Dr. Ronald E. McNair was the second African American to fly in space. Two years later he was selected to serve as mission specialist aboard the ill-fated U.S. Challenger space shuttle. He was killed instantly when the Challenger exploded one minute, thirteen seconds after it was launched. Dr. McNair was posthumously awarded the Congressional Space Medal of Honor. After his death in the Challenger Space Shuttle accident on January 28, 1986, members of Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. Their goal was to encourage low-income and first-generation college students, and students from historically underrepresented ethnic groups to expand their educational opportunities by enrolling in a Ph.D. program and ultimately pursue an academic career. This program is dedicated to the high standards of achievement inspired by Dr. McNair's life.

Source: mcnairscholars.com

Terrel L. Rhodes, Principal Investigator



Dr. Rhodes is the Vice Provost for Curriculum and Dean of Undergraduate Studies at Portland State University. As such, he acts as dean of general education, oversees the undergraduate curriculum process, serves as the institutional liaison for accreditation, chairs the Advisory Committee on Academic Information Technology, oversees the community college relations initiative, alignment of student learning expectations with high schools through the Oregon University System Proficiency-based Admissions Standards System, the undergraduate research program, and the faculty vitality and course redesign initiative, including the Pew Charitable Trust funded Course Redesign project in Spanish at PSU.

He is the author of three books, numerous articles, book chapters and grant proposals. He received his B.A. in Political Science, History and Spanish at Indiana University in Bloomington, and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Political Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

2004-2005 McNair Program Staff

Toeutu Faaleava

Director

Toeutu Faaleava specializes in community mobilization and capacity building. His research interests are in reclaiming indigenous voices, spaces, scholarship and resistance. He teaches in University Studies and works with Pacific Islander communities in Portland. He holds a Ph.D. in Ethnic Studies, JD, MA, and BA from the University of California, Berkeley, an MPA from Harvard University and a BS from SIU.

Jeffrey L. Smith

2004 Coordinator

I was born and raised in Dayton, Ohio. After high school, I attended the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis. While visiting a high school friend living in Portland Oregon, I became enamored with the ocean, mountains, and deserts of Oregon. I packed up my belongings and made the cross country trek to Portland. I received a BA in Applied Linguistics and TESOL Certification in 1997 and am currently finishing an MA in Conflict Resolution.

Jolina Kwong Caputo

2005 Program Coordinator

I am in the Post-Secondary Adult Education (PACE) Graduate Program in the Portland State University School of Education. My research interests include student experiences at large metropolitan universities, as well as student development and leadership. Outside of the office and the classroom, I enjoy jogging around my SE Portland neighborhood, watching TV and designing greeting cards.

Amrina Sugaipova

Graduate Student Assistant

I received my BA in Business and English from Lithuania College in Klaipeda, Lithuania. Currently, I am working on an MA in international Conflict Resolution at Portland State University. I enjoy studying languages, learning about other cultures and care a lot about human rights around the world.

Editorial Board

Toeutu Faaleava

Director, McNair Scholars Program

Grace Dillon

Assistant Professor

Antonia Levi

Assistant Professor

Alan MacCormack

Assistant Professor

The 2004 Portland State Scholars

Adam Carpinelli

Project Title: Musical Transformations of Resistance-based Cultures of the African Diaspora

Mentor: Kofi Agorsah

Amy Driscoll

Project Title: Women Writing War and Peace in the Post Vietnam Era

Mentor: Barbara Guetti

Bradley Fortier

Project Title: Film - Gay Marriage: Legitimizing the 'Alternative Family'

Mentor: Margaret Everett

Cara Kaser

Project Title: The Clerical Wife: Medieval Perceptions of Women during the 11th & 12th Century Church Reforms

Mentors: Caroline Litzenberger and John Ott

Carolyn Becker

Project Title: Unenrolled Native Americans in Metropolitan Portland, Oregon

Mentor: Thomas Biolsi

Carrie Cobb

Project Title: Networks and Employment: Mexican Restaurant Labor in Portland, Oregon

Mentor: Leopoldo Rodriguez

Chyerel Mayes

Project Title: I'm Sick and Tired of Being Sick: Racializing Black Womens' Health Issues

Mentor: Cherry Muhanji

Debora Wilson

Project Title: Forecasting Costs and Benefits of Marker Assisted Breeding

Mentor: Jeff Gerwing

Erin Horst

Project Title: Examining Differences in Student Achievement in Differential Equations

Mentor: Karen Marrongelle

Felicia Wells-Thomas

Project Title: Oral History Interviews: Invisible Barriers for the African American

Mentor: Cherry Muhanji

Gabriel Flores

Project Title: Restaurant Workers' role as Cultural Liaisons

Mentor: Randy Blazak

Gunnar Abramson

Project Title: Comparative Colonialism: Variations in Japanese Colonial Policy in Taiwan and Korea 1895-1945

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Jacob Biamonte

Project Title: Probabilistic Testing & Fault Localization

Mentor: Merek Perkowski

Jason Damron

Project Title: A Queer Visit to Red and Blue States

Mentors: Marcia Klotz and Cherry Muhanji

Jeremy Parra

Project Title: Optimization of Diffusion Tube Method for Passive Monitoring of NO₂ in Urban Ambient Air

Mentor: Linda George

Jessica Krug

Project Title: Constructs of Freedom and Identity and the Jamaican Maroon Peace Treaties of 1739

Mentor: John Ott

Jessica Tyner

Project Title: Writing for Health in Portland

Mentor: Tracy Dillon

Jonathan Strong

Project Title: Gender, Race, and the Redefinition of Whiteness: The Wilmington Race Riot of 1898

Mentor: David Johnson

Kerrie Beach
Project Title: Self Efficiency and Academic
Achievement
Mentor: Gabriela Martorell

Natasha Hartsfield
Project Title: The Identity of Black Indians of the
Five Civilized Tribes
Mentor: Pedro Ferbel-Azcarate

Osasu Atoe
Project Title: Women of Color, Community, and
Feminism
Mentor: Patti Duncan

Trieste Dobberstein
Project Title: Gene Flow in *Brachypodium*
Syluaticum
Mentor: Mitchell Cruzan

Tu Tran
Project Title: Vietnamese Automobile Industry
Development: Localization
Mentor: Charles Grant

The 2005 Portland State Scholars

Jane Anau

Project Title: Patient Demographics and Usage of Oregon School Based Health Centers

Mentor: Matthew Carlson

Joel Campos-Alvis

Project Title: The Impact of Low-Skilled Immigration on the Wages and Employment of African Americans

Mentor: Mary King

Ashley-Nicole Browning

Project Title: If You Build It ,They Will Come and Stay: Strategies for Attaining Organizational Cultural Competence Through the Recruitment and Retention of a Diverse Workforce in Health and Human Services

Mentors: Siobhan Maty and James Mason

Carrie Cobb

Project Title: Finding a Job: Strategies to find Employment in the Semi-formal Labor Market

Mentors: Mary King and Leopoldo Rodriguez

Michelle DePass

Project Title: The Role of Churches in the African-American Community in Portland, Oregon

Mentor: Richard White

Brian Durdik

Project Title: Our Storybook Democracy: Cultural Politics and Aesthetic Ideologies in USA

Mentor: Thomas Fisher

Collin Fellows

Project Title: Measuring Student Role Mastery

Mentor: Peter Collier

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Project Title: The Locus of Redemption: Sexual Violence and the Mother/Daughter Relationship in Literature

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Project Title: Relations among Somali Bantu Children at Play during the Resettlement Process

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Chyerel Mayes

Project Title: Cardiovascular Disease among African-Americans

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China Medel

Project Title: The Language of Food: Women's Culinary Subversion of the Symbolic Order in Film

Mentor: Maude Hines

Angie Mejia

Project Title: Latina Consciousness through Organization: An Ethnographic Study

Mentor: José Padin

Holly Roose

Project Title: Science and Race: The transition from biblical to religious justifications of racism in the Western Hemisphere spanning the 18th and 19th centuries

Mentor: Darrell Millner

Jaye Sablan

Project Title: Collective Experience and Cultural Competence: Asian/Pacific Islander American Women's Literature as a Window to Ethical Practices in the Mental Health Field

Mentors: Patricia Duncan and Jane Meinhold

Alana Smith

Project Title: The Day-Labor Market in Portland, Oregon

Mentor: Leopoldo Rodriguez

Khang Tran

Project Title: Cultural impacts on architectural designs and the way we live

Mentor: Grace Dillon

Jonathan Strong

Project Title: The Wilmington Race Riot

Mentor: David Johnson

Audrey Ward

Project Title: The Criminal Object: Classification and Study of the Criminal Body in the United States, 1900-1940

Mentor: Richard Beyler

Eric Webb

Project Title: Continuous Euler's Method for First-Order Differential Equations

Mentor: Bin Jiang