



2022 McNair Spring Gathering

INSPIRING THE FUTURE AND CHANGING LIVES



Friday May 27th, 2022 • 4:00 pm • The Spokane Club



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Event Program

SLIDE SHOW & ZOOM NETWORKING 4:00 PM

Bryn Tennyson, McNair GSA & Liina Koivula, McNair GSA

WELCOME 5:00 PM

Dr. Brian Donahue, Vice Provost

PROGRAM UPDATES 5:05 PM

Cynthia Dukich, Director

KEYNOTE SPEAKER 5:10 PM

Kimberly Richards

WELCOMING NEW SCHOLARS 5:20 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

SCHOLAR REMARKS 5:25 PM

Christina Hudson, McNair Scholar

RECOGNITION OF NEW MCNAIR MENTORS 5:30 PM

Cynthia Dukich, Director

SCHOLAR REMARKS 5:35 PM

Seth McCullough, McNair Scholar

RECOGNITION OF CURRENT MCNAIR MENTORS 5:40 PM

Cynthia Dukich, Director

SCHOLAR REMARKS 5:45 PM

Lucia Roussa, McNair Scholar

RECOGNITION OF ALUMNI GRADUATES 2020-21 5:50 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

RECOGNITION OF MCNAIR GRADUATING SENIORS 5:55 PM

Cori Jaeger, McNair Academic Advisor

CLOSING COMMENTS 6:00 PM

Cynthia Dukich, Director

MCNAIR NETWORKING 6:05 PM

Thank you for joining us!



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Letter from the Director

Thank you for joining our 25th McNair Spring Gathering, whether you've come in person or are here virtually, or maybe you're reading these words -- these magical lines and loops -- on our website sometime in the future. Or perhaps you'll never read these actual words, but are connected to McNair through a person, or people, thoughts and memories, or hopes for the future. Whoever you are, and however you got here, we need you! Thank you!!

We need students and staff; family and faculty; administrators and alumni; and people who care about expanding knowledge and connecting communities to make the world a better place. We need you all to help us continue to build this extended McNair network of thinkers and dreamers and doers.



Cynthia Dukich, Interim Director

As a federally-funded TRIO Program, all 187 current McNair programs nationwide are required to submit quantitative summaries of their program progress to the US Department of Education each year on an Annual Performance Report. The report tracks mandatory objectives such as number of students served, research and scholarly activities completed, enrollment and persistence in graduate school, and PhD attainment within ten years. By these measures our EWU program is one of the most successful in the nation. I encourage you to peruse our [2020-21 Annual Report](#), [Scholar Pages](#), [List of Faculty Mentors](#), and the [news](#) on our [website](#) to learn more about how and what we do.

I love numbers (those other magic loops and lines), and I am proud that the EWU McNair Program has continued to recruit and provide services to 29 new and continuing students we have been funded to serve each year, even during the pandemic lockdown and being solely virtual for over a year. Thanks to dedicated staff, mentors and students, we've continued to meet our proposed percentages for facilitating research and scholarly activities, and graduate school admission and persistence.

Since the McNair program began at EWU in 1995, we have selected and served more than 350 first-generation, low income and/or underrepresented students to receive program support to prepare them for success at the graduate level. Almost 50 EWU McNair scholars have earned PhDs; more than 125 have earned master's degrees and dozens are currently working hard in graduate school.

I'm proud of those numbers, but more important to me are the stories behind them, the connections and loneliness, joy and accomplishments, the sadness and love and loss that comes with living. I wish I could tell you it's going to be easy, this future you're building, but if I've learned anything in my journey so far, it's that there's going to be hard stuff ahead.

Also, I know you can do hard things. You've proven that already by being here.

My hope for you is that in addition to doing the hard stuff that I know you can do, that you also find ways to be soft and easy on yourself and others. Breathe deeply. Drink water. Find guidance in the natural world. Connect. And remember that **once McNair, always McNair!**



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Our Mission

Eastern's TRIO Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program prepares low-income, first-generation, and/or racially underrepresented undergraduates for success in doctoral programs.

McNair provides opportunities for scholarly activities and community engagement that empower participants to become agents of positive change in a culturally diverse world.

Most Recent McNair Alumni PhDs

Aleksandr Pikalov

PhD Physical Chemistry, University of Houston, 2019

Lateasha Lewis

PhD Educational Leadership; University of Miami, 2020

Yvonne Sherwood

PhD Sociology; University of California, Santa Cruz, 2020

Laura Zamudio

PhD Math Education; Florida International University, 2020

Andrew Pereira

PhD Counseling Psychology, University of North Texas, 2021

Samantha De Abreu

PhD Forestry & Environmental Sciences

University of Washington, 2021

Raul Garcia

PhD Anthropology, University of Washington, 2021

Keziah Tinkle-Williams

PhD Psychology, Grand Canyon University, 2021

Chris Miclat

Ph.D. Business Management with a focus in Strategic Leadership, Liberty university, 2021



Recent Master's

Jose Razo

MA Educational Psychology, Washington State University, 2019

Mario Aguilar

MA Mexican American Studies, University of Arizona, 2020

Veronica Albrecht

MS Biology, Eastern Washington University, 2020

Madelyn Brown

MA History, University of Oregon, 2022

Jasmine Burns

MS Mathematics, University of Washington, 2020

Kimberly Cook

MS Biology, Washington State University, 2020

Lisa Coyle

MA Public Health, Eastern Washington University, 2020

Ashley Ellison

EdS School Psychology, New Mexico State University, 2020

Kimberly Jones

MA Cultural Studies, University of Washington, 2021

Edith Melendez

MS Counseling & Guidance, New Mexico State University, 2020

EdS School Psychology, New Mexico State University, 2021

Christina Ramelow

MS Biology, Eastern Washington University, 2020

Acea Sands

MA Data Analytics, Utah State University, 2020

Loni Taber

MA Philosophy, University of North Texas, 2020

Lidia Velasco

MA East Asian Studies, Indiana University, 2020

Minerva Zayas

MA Women, Gender and Sexuality Studies,
Oregon State University, 2020

Monica Villegas

MA Environmental Studies, Western Washington University, 2020



Graduate Acceptances



Madelyn Brown was accepted to PhD programs at the University of Georgia, University of Toronto, University of Oregon and the University of Minnesota where she will attend this fall advised by Dr. Jean O'Brien, Madelyn was also awarded the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation Fellowship Six-Year Support Package

Kianna (Key) Baker was accepted, and will attend the Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health in the Department of Sociomedical Sciences to earn her Master of Public Health with a certificate in Child, Youth, and Family Health, she will receive funding as a Public Health Special Programs Scholar



Christina Hudson was accepted to Temple University's Africology and African American PhD program where she will attend this fall, she also has been selected to work in Student Engagement for Resident and Housing Life



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Graduate Acceptances



Seth McCullough was accepted to University of Miami's Masters of Professional Science program, and James Madison University's Master of Science program where he will attend this fall

Edith Melendez was accepted to University of Northern Arizona's Combined School/Counseling Psychology PHD program where she will begin this fall



Lucia Roussa was accepted to University of Miami's Masters of Professional Science program. She was also accepted to North Carolina State University's PhD program where she will attend this fall



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Our Greatest Gratitude to our McNair Advisory Committee!



Dr. Judd Case
Department of Biology



Dr. Margaret
O'Connell
Department of Biology



Dr. Theresa Martin
Department of
Psychology



Dr. Kayleen
Islam-Zwart
Department of
Psychology



Dr. Stehpen Tsikalas
Department of
Geology



Dr. Martín
Meráz García
Department of
Chicanx
Studies



Dr. Miguel Novella
Department of
Modern
Languages &
Literatures



Keynote Speaker:

Kimberly Richards Ph.D

K'wa?k'wísla?xw

(Santa Ana Pueblo/Mescalero Apache)

Eastern Washington University

McNair Scholar, 2003 & 2004



Dr. Richards has devoted her professional career to supporting the educational and cultural revitalization of Indigenous peoples in part by building bridges between Tribal and non-Tribal communities. She grew up in Eastern Washington and continues to work with and for Native communities in this region.

Kim's experiences have helped develop her approach to cultural restoration of the mind, heart, and spirit.

She is currently the Director of Community and Organizational Development with the Salish School of Spokane, a Native language revitalization school (Salishschoolofspokane.org).

Kim and her family are not only deeply committed to the revitalization of the five Southern Interior Salish languages, but are all fluent apprentice speakers of Nsəlxcíh (Colville-Okanagan Salish). Kim's children have attended the Salish School of Spokane since 2012; her Eldest was the school's first high school graduate.

The EWU McNair program was central in providing the knowledge and support to help Kim enter a Ph.D. program in 2005. She was a McNair scholar in 2003 and 2004 where she laid the groundwork for her current work and made lifelong friendships. She absolutely adores Cynthia because she is amazing and is definitely one of the best people on earth.

Dr. Richards received her Ph.D. from the University of Berkeley in Ethnic Studies with a focus on Education, Federal Indian law and policy and Cultural/language revitalization. She was an instructor at UC Berkeley before returning to her community to teach at Eastern Washington University. Previously she instructed in American Indian Studies, Anthropology, Ethnic Studies, Race and Culture Studies, and Salish. While Kim began working full time with the Salish School of Spokane in 2019, she continues to work with EWU as an instructor and advocate for Native Students.

Kim believes that the recuperation of our health, including physical activity, is integral to the restoration of Native communities. She is an avid powerlifter and when her coach allows, a runner. She is also a committed soccer mom, with six children in club soccer. When not at the Salish school or the gym, you will most likely find her cheering on the sidelines of any given soccer field in the tri-state area.



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We are Proud to Introduce the 2021 Cohort and their Mentors!

Saul Bautista, Education & History; Dr. Joseph Lenti
Irie Browning, Philosophy; Dr. Christopher Kirby
Ajaycia Butler, Biomedical science; Dr. Judd Case
Serena Camacho, Health Psychology; Dr. Camille Frank
Malek Chreiki, Biotechnology; Dr. Jason Ashley
tommyboiZ, Philosophy & Gender, Women's & Sexuality Studies;
Dr. Christopher Kirby
Alexander Dodson, Psychology; Dr. Amani El Alayli
Claudio Escalante, Biology; Dr. David Daberkow
Marianna Fischer, Mechanical Engineering Technology;
Dr. Phillip Appel
Katie Gower, Political Science; Dr. Matthew Anderson
Marisa Janke, Philosophy; Dr. Kevin Decker
Arcelia Madrigal, Psychology; Dr. Susan Ruby
Monica Miranda, Applied Developmental Psychology; Dr. Shanna Davis
Badradin (Dre) Mohammed, International Affairs; Dr. Kristin Edquist
& Felix Beltran Political Science Ph.D. Candidate at Purdue University
Devin Mumey, Biotechnonology; Dr. Jessica Allen
Richard Murphy, Political Science, International Affairs, Philosophy;
Dr. Thomas Hawley
Haili Poss, Psychology; Dr. Jillene Seiver
Bakima Ssebanakitta, Psychology; Dr. Jillene Seiver
Quentin Young, Applied Developmental Psychology;
Dr. Okera Nsombi



We are Proud to Acknowledge Last Year's 2021 Graduates and their Mentors!

Lizeth Bañuelos, Applied Developmental Psychology; Dr. Aryn Ziehnert

Malachi Chukwu, International Affairs and Political Science;

Dr. Majid Sharifi

Alexandria Coronado, Political Science; Dr. Lindsey Upton

Alexis Guizar-Diaz, Sociology; Dr. Edwin Elias

Darlene Gilroy, Geology; Dr. Carmen Nezat

Theresa Lee, Criminology and Psychology; Dr. Lindsey Upton

Wendolyn Martinez, Political Science and International Affairs;

Dr. Dorothy Zeisler-Vralsted

Aulane Mpouli, Chemistry; Dr. Yao Houndonougbo

Rachael Pentico, Biology; Dr. Rebecca Brown

Samantha Sanchez-Garcia, Psychology; Dr. Jillene Seiver

Hope Sands, Anthropology; Dr. Brian Buchanan

Zoë Romero Becker, Literacy Education and Math Education;

Dr. Gina Petrie and Dr. Jacqueline Coomes

Mori Starr, Chemistry; Dr. Camille McNeely

We want to acknowledge these courageous scholars who were the first EWU McNair Scholars to complete the majority of their Summer Research Internship online. These scholars persisted in developing their research during the initial pandemic lockdown and then went on to apply to multiple graduate schools (over 90 applications collectively). 11 Scholars went on to graduate school and several more plan to apply in the coming years. We know that missing your in-person graduation and spring gathering cannot be made up, but your resilience and brilliance will lead you far in your academic journey and create incredible impacts on your communities.



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We are Proud to Acknowledge 2020 Graduates and their Mentors!

Halim Acosta, Computer Science; Dr. Yun Tian
Leanne Allen, History; Dr. J. William Youngs
Erik Almaguer, Computer Science; Dr. Shamima Yasmin
Kianna Baker, Science of Public Health;
Dr. Okerá Nsombi and Dr. Sarah Mount
Madelyn Brown, History;
Dra. Christina Torrez García and PhD Candidate SimHayKin Jack
Miriam Carlson, Psychology; Dr. Aryn Ziehnert
Angélica García-Macías, Political Science; Dr. Martín Meráz García
Anna Kravtsova, Computer Science;
Dr. Krisztian Magori, Dr. Frank Lynch
Lily Ann Long, Psychology; Dr. Aryn Ziehnert
Alex Lopez, Biology; Dr. Margaret O'Connell
Abdulrazik Mohamed, International Affairs;
Dr. Dorothy Zeisler-Vralsted
Marcos Monteiro, Biology; Dr. Andrea Castillo
Rachel Silverthorn, Psychology; Dr. Kayleen Islam-Zwart

These scholars were fortunate to attend their first McNair Spring Gathering and complete their McNair Summer Research Internship in person. Unfortunately, while we were able to share their many awards and acceptances virtually, none of them were able to attend an in person graduation in 2020.

Many of these scholars are now completing their Master's degrees and continuing on to work towards their PhD. We are incredibly proud of all of your hard work and know you will contribute so much to your communities and to academia in the coming years.



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Faculty Research Mentors

2019-20 Faculty Research Mentors

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

Dr. Brian Buchanan, Assistant Professor Geology & Anthropology
Mentee, Hope Sands

Dr. Rebecca Brown, Professor of Biology & Department Chair;
Mentee, Rachael Pentico

Dr. Judd A. Case, Professor of Biology;
Mentee, Ashley Destin

Dr. Yao Houndonougbo, Professor of Chemistry & Biochemistry;
Mentee, Aulane Mpouli

Dr. Camille McNeely, Professor of Biology;
Mentee, Mori Starr

Dr. Michael Winer, Assistant Professor of Mathematics Education;
Mentee, Julianna Pruneda-Martinez

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Kevin S. Decker, Professor of Philosophy;
Mentee, Analisea Araya

Dr. Susan Ruby, Professor of Psychology; Social Emotional
Learning-Educational Equity Graduate Certificate Coordinator;
Mentee, Luis A. Martinez

Dr. Jillene Seiver, Senior Lecturer of Psychology;
Mentee, Samantha Sanchez-Garcia

Dr. Aryn Ziehnert, Lecturer of Psychology;
Mentee, Lizeth Bañuelos

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Edwin Elias, Assistant Professor of Chicana/o/x Studies;
Mentee, Alexis Lisandro Guizar-Diaz



Faculty Research Mentors

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Okera Nsombi, Associate Professor of Africana Studies

Mentee, Shawn Dufrene

Dr. Gina Petrie, Professor of English; Global Academy Program

Director. Mentee, Zoë Romero Becker

Dr. Jacqueline Coomes, Professor of Mathematics, Special Assistant to the Provost for Honors; Mentee, Zoë Romero Becker

Dr. Majid Sharifi, Director of International Affairs, Associate Professor of Political Science; Mentee, Gloria D. Bravo

Dr. Lindsey Upton, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice

Mentee, Alexandria Belen Coronado

2020-21 Faculty Research Mentors

COLLEGE OF SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING & MATHEMATICS

Dr. Judd A. Case, Professor of Biology; Mentee, Ashley Destin

Dr. Justin Bastow, Assistant Professor of Biology

Mentee, Seth McCullough

Dr. Camille McNeely, Professor of Biology

Mentee, Lucia Roussa

Dr. Andrew M. Oster, Associate Professor of Applied Mathematics

Mentee, Nyibol Thareek

COLLEGE OF PROFESSIONAL PROGRAMS

Dr. Jillene Seiver, Senior Lecturer of Psychology

Mentee, Ian Campuzano

Dr. Jillene Seiver, Senior Lecturer of Psychology

Mentee, Darlynne Khayesi

COLLEGE OF ARTS, HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES

Dr. Okera Nsombi, Associate Professor of Africana Studies

Mentee, Christina Hudson



2022 Graduating Scholar



Ashley Destin will graduate from Eastern Washington University with a major in Biology. Her passion is animal care with a focus on domestic house cats. In the past, she volunteered in a small veterinarian clinic, working closely with surgeries and animal husbandry. Dr. Judd Case mentored Ashley for both of her Summer Research Internships with EWU McNair.

Her summer 2020 research explored the relationship between skull morphology and general body size among felids (house cat, lynx, puma), mustelids (minks, weasels, badgers), and canids (foxes, coyotes, wolves); with a focus on North American felids, as it relates to prey acquisition. In

2021 Ashley and Dr. Case made a significant potential discovery while comparing wild and domestic feline blood cell shape. They found that there seems to be a strong, but untested, correlation between RBC shape and the severity of cytauxzoonosis in felids. The bowl shape in domestic cats could provide more cell volume for the parasite to proliferate, which may lead to a higher population of the parasite in the host and a more severe infection.



2022 Graduating Scholar



Christina M. Hudson is a first-generation student graduating from Eastern Washington University with a double major in English Studies and Africana Studies, and minoring in Religious Studies. She earned her associate degree at Spokane Falls Community College, before transferring to EWU in 2020. She is interested in decolonizing religious studies focusing on ancient African religious texts, with the intention of shifting the way we view the contributions of people of color to the development of civilization throughout history. She wants to bring the contributions of these ancient civilizations to the forefront of religious studies. Her 2021 research, under the mentorship of Dr. Okera Nsombi, investigated how the orientation of Western academia to Eurocentric hegemonies and Western epistemologies effects the scholar's duty to inquire, reevaluate, and reveal facts and aimed to illuminate the possible African influence on the major world religions and Greek philosophy. She completed a literature review as well as a content review of top peer-reviewed religious studies journals on how often and in what way they mentioned: Africa, African, African American, Hoodoo, and Conjure.



2022 Graduating Scholar



Darlynnne (Dasha) Khayesi will graduate from Eastern Washington University, with a major in Applied Developmental Psychology and a minor in Communications Studies as well as Gender, Women's, and Sexuality Studies. She will be the first generation in her family to complete a bachelor's degree. She hopes to go on to work in the counseling field with an emphasis on serving immigrant populations. Under the mentorship of Dr. Jillene Seiver, Darlynnne's summer 2021 research explored the mental health of college students and whether those who are immigrants experience higher levels of stress, trauma, and anxiety. For the summer of 2022 she will be an intern for Frontier Behavioral Health.



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2022 Graduating Scholar



Seth McCullough will graduate from Eastern Washington University with a double major in Environmental Science and Biology. Growing up in Tennessee, he spent a lot of time in the woods, which sparked his interest in the outdoors and in learning how ecological communities influence one another. Scuba diving further focused his interests on marine life and restoration. He worked on coral restoration in Bonaire and conducted fish surveys for REEF's volunteer fish survey project. He is interested in restoration ecology and how climate change is affecting relationships within ecologic communities. He is an assistant in Dr. Bastow's lab working on EWU's prairie restoration project. His 2021 research made comparisons between soil abiotic properties and the soil food-webs within Palouse prairie remnants and EWU's prairie restoration site, and to investigate how biochar amendments are impacting the soil food-web at EWU's restoration site. He hopes that one day his research will contribute to the fight against climate change and influence policy makers.



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2022 Graduating Scholar



Lucia Roussa will graduate from Eastern Washington University with a dual major in Environmental Science and Biology. Her research interests include Phycology, marine microbiology, and conservation science in coastal marine ecosystems. In 2020, Lucia was selected as a TLES Scholars Award recipient.

In 2021 she completed an internship at the University of Washington internship with the Cooperative Institute for Climate, Ocean, and Ecosystem Sciences (CICOES) where she studied jellyfish in the Puget Sound. For her McNair Research she received mentorship from both Dr. Camille McNeely on her project investigating the relationship between freshwater algal abundance and diversity through analyzing the eutrophication of wetlands in Turnbull National Wildlife Refuge. She then extended this with Dr. Jessica Allen to analyze the phylogeny of freshwater sponges in Eastern Washington. In the future, she would like to explore algae and the potential of phycological research to find modern solutions to environmental problems. She is well on her way to her goal of being a role model for those who feel like STEM fields are limited to those with economic privilege, or those who feel insecure entering a male-dominated field.



2022 Graduating Scholar



Nyibol Thareek is a scholar and a track and field athlete majoring in Mathematics and minoring in Biology at Eastern Washington University. Her primary research interests is in applied mathematics studying complex systems and dynamics arising in various biological phenomena. Through the EWU McNair Summer Research Internship, Nyibol worked with her mentor Associate Professor of Mathematics, Dr. Andrew Oster on generating computer code to test the excitability of mitochondria and its ability to support a traveling wave.



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2022 Graduating Scholar



Ian Campuzano will be graduating Eastern Washington University in the Fall of 2022, double majoring in Psychology and Health Psychology. Ian is an active member of the Psi Chi International Honor society. He is interested in cognitive psychology and neuropsychology. For his 2021 McNair summer research internship, under the mentorship of Dr. Jillene Seiver, he studied correlation between neuroticism traits and attitudes regarding masking and returning to campus after COVID-19. He hopes to tackle an additional research project for the summer of 2022 in the realm of cognitive psychology.



2022 Graduating Scholar



Gloria D. Bravo is a first-generation scholar graduating from Eastern Washington University with a major in International Affairs with a Global Socio-Economic Concentration, and minors in Chicano Studies and Spanish. Gloria's research is centered on the United States' hegemonic role within the Western Hemisphere, particularly how US foreign policy impacts Latin American and Caribbean nations as well as the region. Primarily utilizing a constructivist approach, she analyzes US diplomatic, economic, and military tactics used to advance the region's peace and security, or lack thereof. By her junior year, Gloria completed two research projects: *Understanding the Venezuelan Crisis within the Broader Context of US Intervention in Latin America* and *Reframing the Immigration Debate in the Era of Trump: Migrant Caravans from Central American Nations*. In Spring 2020, she began an ongoing third research project under the mentorship of Dr. Majid Sharifi and Dr. Edwin Elias: *Economic Sanctions Reproduce State Sponsored Repression, Human Rights Violations, and Violence: A Case Study of Venezuela*.



McNair Staff



Cynthia Dukich, MFA
Interim Director



Cori Jaeger, M.Ed., MFA
Academic Advisor



Bryn Tennyson, BS
McNair STEM GSA



Liina Koivula, BA
McNair GSA

