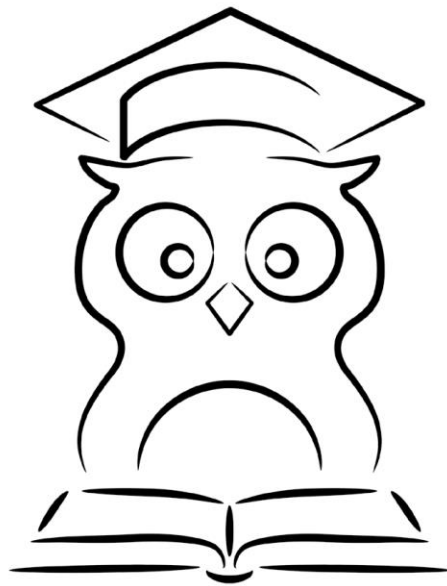


McNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM



SCHOLAR HANDBOOK

CMU
CENTRAL MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY

McNAIR OFFICE LOCATION & HOURS

The McNair office is located in 339 Park Library. McNair staff is available for individual video chat appointments and telephone contact during normal business hours Monday – Friday from 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

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A Note from the Director...

Greetings New Scholars!

I would like to formally welcome you to the program and a very exciting journey! I am excited to get to know each of you on a personal basis and feel privileged to receive the opportunity to play a significant role in your educational careers. I hope that you are ready for the upcoming challenges as you begin to prepare yourself for successful entry into graduate school. The McNair Program will elevate and enhance your undergraduate experience and will become a steady system of support for you.

I would like to point out that, like any experience, **the McNair experience ultimately will be what you make it.** The program will certainly offer you support, information, access to resources and a strong advantage over other undergraduate students; however, it is up to you to make the most out of every opportunity – this includes building meaningful relationships with each other! I sincerely encourage to you get to know one another and to lean on one another in times of challenge. You will all face similar joys, roadblocks, accomplishments and times of greater understanding. Work with one another to make the McNair experience a great one, both personally and for the group as a whole. And, don't forget that the McNair door is always open!

I will not be shy in stating that the program maintains high expectations for all of its scholars, including each of you! The program will be monitoring your efforts and progress throughout your time as a scholar and will be taking note of who is putting forward genuine effort and who might not be. For those who might not choose to take this opportunity seriously, I should point out that *there will be repercussions* that could initially affect your access to McNair resources, and unfortunately, result in your termination as a scholar. So, my point simply is that you should maintain a positive attitude, try your hardest to receive as much as you can from the program, put forward sincere effort, and help make this year the best that it can be! I know I'm really looking forward to it!

Please let me know if you have any comments, questions or ideas to share. Here's to a magnificent McNair experience with all of you – our newest group of McNair Scholars!

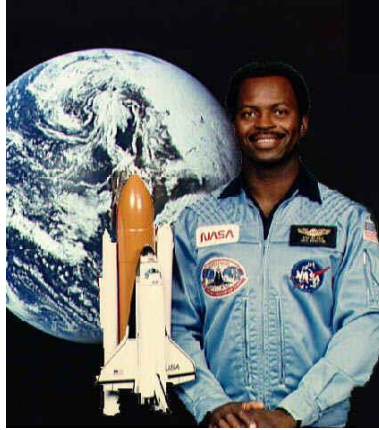
In the spirit of Dr. McNair,



Lynn Curry

Director

McNair Scholars Program



MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The McNair Scholars Program aims to successfully prepare our scholars for entrance into graduate school. The ultimate goal of the program is for our scholars to earn a Ph.D. within ten years of graduating from Central Michigan University.

The program is federally funded through the Department of Education and named after the late Ronald E. McNair who perished on the space shuttle Challenger in 1986. Dr. McNair stands as a strong inspiration to all of our scholars, being an individual who achieved great heights, both personally and professionally. Dr. McNair earned a Ph.D. from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) in Physics in 1976.

Ronald E. McNair, the second African American to fly in space, was born on October 12, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. While in junior high school, Dr. McNair was inspired by a teacher who recognized his science potential and believed in him. He graduated as valedictorian from Carver High School in 1967. In 1971, he received his bachelor's degree magna cum laude in Physics from North Carolina A&T State University. Five years later, he earned a Ph.D. from MIT.

Dr. McNair's career as a scholar and mission specialist astronaut was abruptly ended with his untimely death aboard the U.S. Challenger. His achievements, however, were not limited to academia. He was a sixth degree black belt in Karate and an accomplished saxophonist as well. Married to Cheryl Moore, Dr. McNair was a devoted husband and a loving father to their two children, Reginald Ervin and Joy Cheray.

His lifelong commitment to scholarship lives on in the McNair scholars who are selected each year to participate in the many McNair programs across the United States. The McNair Scholars Program at Central Michigan University is dedicated to preserving his legacy of personal excellence and accomplishment.

"True courage comes in enduring, persevering the preparation and believing in oneself."

—Ronald E. McNair, Ph.D.

MCNAIR PROGRAM ACTIVITIES

The McNair Program offers a wide range of workshops, seminars, trips, visitations, and presentation opportunities all designed to prepare you for applying to and becoming familiar with the rigors of graduate school.

Research Project

Completing a research project is a major component of the McNair Program. You will work with a faculty mentor in devising and carrying out a project that falls within an area of interest to you. General goals include developing your research skills and maintaining responsibility for a project from start to finish. Although you will rely on your mentor for guidance with respect to the scope and direction of the project, you alone are responsible for conducting and completing the research in a timely and efficient manner.

Once completed, your research project may be used in several ways including possible publication in scholarly journals or presentation at various academic conferences. In general, you will begin to conceptualize your project with your mentor's guidance during the spring semester, and work on the research proposal as part of the writing course. You will then conduct the research and complete the final research paper detailing the results of your project during the Summer Research Institute (SRI). Multiple presentations of your research will be made during the following academic year.

Research Writing and Communication Seminar

During the spring semester, you will participate in a weekly seminar designed to prepare you for your summer research project. The seminar will focus on teaching you about the research process and how to construct a research proposal. The speech communication component will help prepare you to effectively present your research. CMU faculty from various disciplines will be invited to present on the research experience so that multiple fields will be covered. **The class generally meets once a week for two hours and a time will be established upon examination of scholar academic schedules (we usually host it on Friday afternoons); it will begin the first week of the spring semester.**

Because you will be participating in the McNair seminar, you are **strongly encouraged to take no more than 12 credit hours during the spring semester** as you begin the program. The seminar will culminate with a formal presentation of the research proposal. You will receive a grade that will be factored into your progress in the program.

Program Seminars/Scholar Meetings

Throughout the spring, summer, fall and following spring semesters, the McNair Program will provide a series of workshops on various academic topics facilitated by CMU faculty and McNair staff. Attendance at these seminars is **mandatory**. The seminars will focus on specific topics designed to guide you in the graduate school application process including identifying graduate

programs that “fit” your needs and interests, preparing for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and developing a plan for excelling in graduate school. Seminars will also address aspects of the research process, academic presentations and career planning. You can generally expect two to three seminars each semester; seminars will be more frequent during the summer. In addition, you will be expected to attend scholar meetings intended to cover certain “items of business” including travel logistics, preparation for research symposiums, program evaluations and general group updates. These meetings are also **mandatory** and essential to your progression in the program.

Monthly Reflections

Throughout the duration of the program, scholars are required to submit monthly reflections documenting progress being made as a scholar and highlighting any particular accomplishments and/or challenges being met. These are personal in nature and you should feel free to include anecdotes or tidbits you feel are appropriate to share with the program. These reflections form what could be viewed as a journal mapping your personal growth and development as a scholar. We strongly encourage on-going goal setting in relation to your completion of the program, as well as a long-term career vision. Contemplating such goals and accomplishments are very appropriate to include in the monthly reflections.

Reflections should be at least two-pages in length, double-spaced with one-inch margins; affirmations can be any length, but should generally adhere to a paragraph or multiple sentence format. All submissions must include the scholar’s name, date and title of assignment. **Monthly reflections are due on the first Monday of every month for the duration of your participation in the McNair program and should be emailed directly to the Program Assistant at kim.whitney@cmich.edu.**

Program Funds/Travel Allowances

McNair scholars are granted access to a multitude of resources as a result of participating in the program. While it is essential that you complete all requirements in order to maintain access to such resources, scholars can generally expect to receive **\$3000** over the course of the summer and fall, which includes a \$2400 federal research stipend and \$600 supplemental living allowance provided by CMU. There is also a travel allowance (negotiable) to be used for visiting potential graduate schools and presenting research at national conferences. Each scholar may request such funds which will be distributed according to yearly budgetary opportunities (*see **Scholar Travel Policy** for further details*). Additional monetary benefits of the program include GRE training and voucher, graduate school application fee waivers and attendance at various social/cultural events.

Summer Research Institute (SRI)

During the Summer Research Institute, scholars have the opportunity to conduct a research project in collaboration with a faculty mentor. This collaboration is intended to introduce students to the nature of graduate study, scholarly activity and research careers. The SRI also

focuses on helping you investigate graduate programs of interest, prepare for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE), and assemble all materials needed to apply to schools in the fall. You will receive numerous opportunities for enhancing your writing and communication skills.

Outcomes from the summer experience include:

- 1) Final research report**
- 2) Completion of the GRE**
- 3) Grad App Tracker Board**

During the spring semester prior to the SRI, you will identify and select a faculty mentor with whom you will work to identify possible research topics and begin to devise a project. Through regular meetings with your mentor, you will begin to conceptualize your summer research project. Your mentor will assist you in assessing the feasibility of the project and guide you in writing a research proposal. A written proposal outlining your summer research project will also be a formal part of the writing and communication seminar offered in the spring. You will receive substantive guidance on the proposal writing process as a result. You will be expected to submit a final research proposal (as approved by your mentor and seminar instructor) to the McNair office by **mid-April**. A formal presentation of your proposal will be made to fellow scholars, mentors and other members of the university community during the Spring McNair Research Symposium typically held at the **end of April**.

The rest of the summer will be spent completing the planned research project under the supervision of the faculty mentor. Along with conducting research, scholars are also expected to attend McNair seminars and a GRE review course, and complete an action plan outlining their graduate school goals.

Scholar Responsibilities: The SRI is a full-time commitment and should be treated as a full-time job. Scholars are expected to spend a minimum of **twenty hours per week** working on their research. In some cases, faculty mentors may require students to commit additional time. Scholars must also spend at least **ten hours per week** studying for the GRE and at least **ten hours per week** creating their Graduate School Action Plan. In turn, you are advised not to take classes or work more than ten hours per week at an outside job during the entire summer. You will be submitting weekly time reports and reflections to help monitor and assess your progress.

Your responsibilities during the SRI include:

- Participating in all scheduled activities, workshops and trips.
- Meeting all deadlines for submission of required documents, e.g. research proposals, final research papers, weekly time reports/reflections and action plans.
- Spending at least **10 hours** per week working on an action plan that will be used in the application process and submitting a final draft by the **last week in July**.
- Performing/conducting at least **20 hours** of research per week and submitting a final paper by the **first week in August**.

- Attending the GRE review course, completing all assignments on time, studying at least **10 hours** per week for the test and taking the official GRE **prior to the fall semester**.
- Scheduling and attending monthly meetings with McNair staff for the purpose of academic counseling, graduate school advising, professional development and other assigned topics.
- Presenting research projects at the fall CMU and McNair research symposiums, SRCEE in the spring and one other external conference, preferably within your discipline.

Weekly Time Reports and Updates: Scholars are responsible for reporting to the McNair office the amount of time spent each week on research activities, graduate school research and GRE preparation, as well as documenting major tasks accomplished each week. These are submitted via the Grad App Tracker Board. **Weekly time reports/updates are due every Sunday by 12:00 a.m. midnight during the SRI.**

Graduate School Training Camp: Each summer, scholars receive the opportunity to travel out of the state to attend a graduate school training camp, more affectionately known as “bootcamp.” The camp is sponsored by various institutions hosting McNair programs and will be attended by McNair scholars from around the country. In addition to learning everything you would possibly want to know about graduate school, you will be able to network with your peers, gain valuable insight and knowledge about becoming a successful graduate student and receive ample inspiration for carrying through with your goal of achieving a doctorate. The camp generally occurs during the last week in May and lasts five days. You should plan to be away from campus for the entire week, given travel time to and from the site. This often proves to be a very intense, but rewarding opportunity for scholars as they work hard together, bond together and have a lot of fun together!

GRE Review Course: McNair scholars will attend a three-day intensive training course for the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) during the SRI. Scholars are expected to attend all review sessions and complete assigned homework. Follow up class sessions will run for eight weeks with individualized tutoring available as needed. Scholars are required to complete a series of practice tests and submit their scores.

All scholars are required to take the GRE and report their scores to the McNair office **before the fall semester begins**; official copies of the scores must also be sent after receipt. You will receive a fee waiver from the McNair Program to cover GRE test fees. Vouchers also cover the cost of the GRE subject test if needed.

Graduate School Action Plan: Your Graduate School Action Plan will consist of all necessary materials for the application process come fall. In essence, it is a compilation of all your research conducted on graduate programs of interest as well as specific application items including a curriculum vitae and personal statement. This plan will evolve over the summer as you investigate potential graduate programs and faculty mentors. An important component includes devising a plan for contacting individuals associated with programs of interest and arranging visitations. Scholars are highly recommended to begin visiting prospective graduate schools

during the summer and early fall. Some prefer to wait until early spring semester; this is dependent upon your individual plan of action. You will be updating your Grad App Tracker Trello Board throughout the SRI with the final version due the **last week in July**.

Research Papers: The goal of the SRI is to prepare McNair scholars for the rigors of conducting research at the graduate level. As such, you are required to submit a well-developed research proposal outlining the research to be completed during the SRI. The research proposal is due **mid-April**. The proposal should include a description of the general questions that will be addressed by the research, a review of the relevant literature, research methods, a projected research schedule, budget (if applicable), bibliography and a signed faculty approval form.

The final research paper outlining the results of your project is due the **first week in August** and should be of the highest possible caliber in both scholarly merit and academic rigor. A guideline for preparation of the final research paper and the components that it must include will be made available (see *Scholar Research Paper Guidelines* handout). Although not all papers will follow this exact format given the wide range of disciplines, the McNair Program is interested in achieving an appropriate level of consistency in formatting and quality among all projects. Scholars should defer to their mentor and discipline guidelines for bibliographies and general writing styles.

In an effort to monitor your progress and facilitate peer editing of your papers, you will be expected to submit drafts of your work throughout the summer. Faculty mentors will also be asked to provide assessments of your progress in the form of periodic progress reports. You will be notified of the dates these are due.

Scholar Stipends: McNair scholars are awarded a generous stipend, which includes a \$2400 federal research stipend and \$600 supplemental living allowance provided by CMU that enables them to devote full-time effort to their research and graduate school preparation during the summer. Only in rare cases are scholars allowed to take classes although many scholars do hold part-time jobs usually no more than ten hours per week. In short, you are expected to regard the summer research program as full-time employment. Note the following excerpt from the CMU McNair Participation Agreement:

“I understand the purpose and expectations of the McNair Scholars Program and intend to meet these expectations in order to further my success in graduate education. I also understand that failure to meet deadlines for submission of research and other assignments, or an unacceptable number of absences from workshops, seminars or other mandatory events will result in deductions from my stipend monies and/or dismissal from the program.”

Scholars will **accrue monies** as they progress through the program and complete all elements. The first portion of the stipend will be dispensed after the research proposal has been submitted and approved by the McNair office. In order to receive further installments of your stipend, you must demonstrate significant progress in your research, attend all required McNair events, as well as complete any assignments or exercises required by the program. Similarly, to receive your

final stipend check you must turn in your Grad App Tracker Board (GATB), final research paper and official GRE scores. Mentor approval of the final paper and draft PowerPoint/poster are required along with the finalized paper. The GATB and final paper will be reviewed by McNair staff; recommendations for further editing may cause a delay in the release of monies.

Please refer to the “scholar attendance and late policy” (in the Scholar Handbook) for further guidance on release of stipend funds.

Research Presentations

All scholars are required to present their research at McNair research symposiums held in the fall and spring. The first will be held in **April** for presentation of the research proposal and another in **September** for the final research paper. Symposiums are formal events attended by mentors as well as university faculty and administration. Both of these presentations will be in an oral and PowerPoint format. You will need to submit an electronic version of your presentation to the McNair office prior to each event. Practice sessions will also be scheduled before each symposium. Scholars are expected to dress professionally.

Scholars are also required to present their research at the CMU “Undergraduate Research and Creative Endeavors Symposium” in the **fall** and “Student Research and Creative Endeavors Exhibition” (SRCEE) in the **spring** following the SRI. In addition, scholars are encouraged to present their research at one additional external conference, either a national McNair conference or one within their respective discipline. Your mentor should provide guidance on upcoming conferences and presentation opportunities and McNair staff will assist with necessary travel arrangements.

These conferences provide opportunities to network with faculty, graduate school representatives, professionals from your field and other McNair scholars from across the country. Scholars will receive a travel allowance to help facilitate this travel although additional funding sources may need to be explored (through your department or the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs) depending upon costs associated with individual travel plans. Scholars are responsible for seeking out possible conferences with assistance from faculty and McNair staff and examining the total cost of the trip prior to being approved by the Director. In general, research abstracts must be submitted and accepted by conference organizers before travel may be arranged (*see **Scholar Travel Policy** and **Scholar Travel Form** for further details*).

Graduate School Visitations

Scholars will receive an opportunity to travel to various graduate schools throughout the country to examine institutions and departments as possible graduate school destinations. Senior scholars will be granted access to travel funds dependent upon adequate preparation for each visit and completion of program requirements to date. Travel arrangements must be approved by the Director prior to the actual visit and you must submit a **Scholar Travel Form** at least **three weeks prior** to the intended date of travel. Proper documentation of scheduled meetings and appointments with graduate faculty are also required to receive reimbursement. All receipts

should be turned into the program office upon your return. Experiential reflections on the outcome or revelations from your travel will be **due one week after your return** and should be at least two-pages in length (*see **Scholar Travel Policy** for further details*).

Social/Cultural Activities

As a part of the program, McNair staff will coordinate various social events throughout the year. Past get-togethers have included family cookouts, bowling parties and holiday gatherings. Please feel free to share your preferences or ideas with staff. In addition, scholars will receive the option of attending various cultural events throughout the year. Examples include musical/theatrical performances, ethnic cuisine, art exhibitions, etc. Attendance at these events is optional, but encouraged.

Graduation Dinner

Each **spring**, the McNair Program hosts a special dinner to honor graduating scholars and to recognize their academic achievements.

MCNAIR PROGRAM RESOURCES

Faculty Research Mentor

One of the first steps you will take as a scholar is selecting a faculty research mentor under whose guidance you will conduct an original research project. You will want to consider working with a professor who is an active researcher and whose research interests align with your own, someone who is willing and able to dedicate adequate time to guide your project and an individual with whom you seem compatible with on a personal level. It will be advantageous to you if your mentor is also willing to offer recommendations and insights related to being successful in graduate school. You are likely to find your mentor to be an indispensable resource, so investigating several options and being thorough in the selection process is critical to securing a mutually beneficial and satisfying relationship.

Faculty Social Mentor

In addition to each of you having a faculty research mentor, a team of faculty social mentors will regularly interact with and support the group. Social mentors will facilitate key seminars and attend research presentations. Each scholar will be assigned to a social mentor and meet individually on a semester basis. Most important will be development of a trusting relationship to build self-esteem and enable the scholars to find their strengths and speak in their own voices. Social mentors will guide the scholars beyond their major research field, help them become comfortable with the politics of academic life, manage time, reduce stress, and become comfortable enough to experience change and growth productively. In addition, social mentors will model the kind of life experience the professoriate can offer.

Research Writing Instructor and Speech Communication Advisor

Scholars will receive guidance and support from the McNair research writing instructor during the course of the spring semester and development of their research proposals. Moreover, scholars will continue to receive assistance from them in the summer and fall as they finalize their research papers and prepare for presentations. The McNair Program also has a faculty member from communication that serves as an advisor to scholars as they develop their communication skills and professional presentations. The speech communication advisor will work with the group during the spring, summer and fall semesters and will provide continuing support throughout the research process.

McNair Peer Mentor

The McNair Program's commitment to mentoring applies within the program as well and scholars are encouraged to serve as mentors for each other. More experienced scholars will be asked to work with newer scholars. This networking relationship is intended to provide additional social support and a venue for active exchange of information.

Resource Room and Equipment

The resource room in the McNair office has a variety of equipment available to scholars for work related to academics, research or graduate school preparation. This includes computers, a high quality color printer, laptops, fax machine and access to a phone for long distance phone calls to potential graduate institutions. Computer software includes Microsoft Excel, Word, PowerPoint, SPSS, etc. Other resources in the office include graduate school directories, financial aid resource books, books on writing papers and personal statements and internship opportunities. Scholars may check out laptop computers for limited periods of time; you should call ahead to ensure equipment is available.

McNair Scholar Shared Trello Board and Team Folder in the Cloud

All pertinent program information will be posted on the McNair Scholar Shared Trello Board and/or our Team Folder; **scholars are required to check for updates on a regular basis**. This resource can always be accessed if there are questions about meeting times, assignment guidelines, etc. McNair staff will generally alert you when new information has been posted for reference in addition to regularly communicating with the group by email.

In addition, the program utilizes a special McNair cohort calendar that will be shared with you to facilitate efficient tracking of scholar activities and assignment due dates.

Academic Tutoring

Academic tutoring is available to help each scholar successfully complete all of his or her undergraduate courses and maintain an outstanding grade point average. Scholars should contact the McNair Director if they are having trouble with a class and would like to receive outside tutoring.

Additional Research Funds

CMU's Office of Research and Sponsored Programs (ORSP) offers several grant opportunities to undergraduate students engaged in research. These include:

- 1) research grants to cover costs associated with carrying out your research (up to \$450, applications accepted during each fall/spring semester)
- 2) presentation grants to cover costs associated with presenting your research at various conferences (up to \$500, applications accepted throughout the year)
- 3) summer scholar stipends to support additional research projects in subsequent years (\$3000, applications due in spring)

Scholars should seek assistance from McNair staff when applying for these funds. Additional information and applications may be accessed at: www.orsp.cmich.edu.

Institutional Review Board and Animal Care and Use Committee

For those scholars whose research projects involve working with human subjects or live animals (i.e. psychology or biology), it may be necessary to get approval from the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The purpose of the IRB is to ensure that subjects are being treated in a humane and ethical way as well as to protect the researcher and the university from possible liability for potential harm. **You may not begin collecting data on human subjects until you have received approval from the IRB.**

The guidelines for the IRB process are located on-line through CMU's website and you should consult your mentor when completing this application. The IRB committee meets on a variable schedule during the summer months so it is important to submit your application as soon as your proposal is complete. McNair staff can also aid in completing this process. You are required to submit a copy of your IRB approval to the office upon receipt.

You should note that similar guidelines apply to research involving the use of animals as stipulated by the Institutional Animal Care & Use Committee (IACUC) at CMU. Access their website further information.

Application Fee Waivers and Fellowships

A list of graduate institutions offering graduate application fee waivers and other incentives (such as fellowships) to McNair scholars is available online through the Council for Opportunity in Education's website: www.coenet.us. The Program Assistant will prepare waivers upon request; please allow **two weeks** for processing.

National McNair Directory

The Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) and the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) publishes a national McNair directory of graduating seniors intended to help graduate schools from across the county specifically recruit McNair scholars to their programs. CMU scholars will be submitted to this directory every **summer**.

Costs Not Covered by the McNair Program

While the McNair Program strives to provide its scholars with supplies and funds necessary to facilitate successful entry into a graduate program, it should be noted that in general the program does not cover the cost of research-related supplies, transcripts, GRE scores, GRE exam (waivers will be provided by ETS for one free general and subject test) or other graduate school entrance exams (MCAT, GMAT, etc.).

SCHOLAR RESPONSIBILITIES

The McNair Program is committed to sponsoring and supporting academic enrichment activities and events intended to help prepare you to attend graduate school and to earn a doctoral degree. We will strive to adequately support your research endeavors and successfully set you on the path to becoming a highly accomplished scholar in your selected field of study.

As a McNair scholar, you are expected to...

- Maintain frequent contact with your faculty mentor and McNair staff.
- Be punctual and attend all McNair seminars, workshops and meetings.
- Submit all assignments and work on time.
- Respond to all program communication in a timely manner.
- Immediately notify the McNair office if an emergency arises which prevents you from attending a meeting or turning in work.

Participation Agreement

Upon agreeing to participate in the McNair Program, you will be asked to sign a **Scholar Participation Agreement** (see page 20 for further details) stating your intention to uphold and complete all stated program goals and requirements. These generally include attending events, completing assignments (including a research project), taking the GRE, **applying to at least six graduate schools during the fall of your senior year** and maintaining contact with the McNair office on a regular basis.

Scholar-Mentor Relationship

Mentoring is a vital aspect of the McNair Scholars Program, as it offers you an invaluable opportunity to develop a close professional relationship with a faculty member. To find the right mentor, you must first define your academic and research goals. You should talk with students who have worked with the professor in the past, academic advisors, faculty members, as well as McNair staff for help in choosing a mentor. In conjunction with the Director, you must identify and solidify a working relationship with a faculty research mentor by no later than **mid-January**.

You should use the following guidelines when interacting with your faculty mentor:

- Meet with your mentor regularly.
- Be punctual to all meetings with your mentor.
- Follow instructions carefully. If you do not understand an instruction, ask questions and be eager to learn from the experience of others.
- Expect routine assignments initially. You must first demonstrate ability and growth for each increase in responsibility. Regardless of the stage of research in which you are engaged, do your job well. This is your primary responsibility during the SRI.
- Defer to your mentor's expertise with regard to your research methodology, writing style and/or paper development.
- Communicate! Avoid misunderstandings by letting your faculty mentor know what you are doing and by asking for information when you are uncertain about procedures or what to do next.
- Accept constructive criticism and resolve to act on it. Be open to feedback and incorporate the suggestions.

Mentor Grievances

In the event that there is a problem with your faculty mentor that you are unable to resolve, you should schedule a meeting with the Director so that the issue(s) at hand can be fully discussed and explored. Every effort will be made to resolve any problems or misunderstandings. In the event that no resolution can be made, the Director will decide what actions can be taken in the best interests of both the student and faculty member.

Scholar Travel Policy

Scholars are expected to conduct themselves appropriately and professionally when traveling on behalf of the McNair Program. Student misconduct will not be tolerated and will result in termination from the program. You will receive numerous opportunities to travel while participating in the program, and in return, the program expects that you will take full advantage of these opportunities by attending all scheduled events. It is important also that you conduct yourself responsibly with regard to modes of transportation as well as with fellow scholars. Please keep track of all receipts and submit them to the McNair office immediately upon your return. The program requires a report from all McNair sponsored travel in the form of an experiential reflection at least two pages in length, **due one week after the trip**.

Be sure to investigate all costs of a potential trip prior to requesting approval from the program. This means examining costs associated with conference registration, hotel stays, airline tickets, mileage and meals. The ***Scholar Travel Form*** (due three weeks prior to departure, and earlier, if plane tickets, registrations, etc. are required) will aid in this process; McNair staff will be happy to help facilitate travel in any way they can. You will be required to have been “accepted to present” at a conference before approval for travel may be granted. Likewise, you must demonstrate ample preparation in terms of having communicated with faculty/staff and established an itinerary for visits to potential graduate schools. Copies of such correspondence

and a confirmed schedule (including meetings with at least three faculty members and at least one graduate student) are required prior to approval of travel funds.

Barring a serious family/health issue, once travel is confirmed and arrangements made, you will be required to follow through with the trip. If, for any other reason, you wish to back out prior to completing the trip, you will be responsible for personally recovering the cost of any subsequent program funds lost as a result. It should be noted that the McNair Program makes a significant investment in each of its scholars through travel opportunities; in turn, scholars are expected to be highly responsible for their actions and strive to receive the most benefit from these experiences.

Attendance and Late Policy

Attendance at all McNair events and meetings is **mandatory**. These meetings are designed to enhance the research experience, help prepare for the graduate school application process and expose scholars to professional academic life. Furthermore, scholars are expected to turn in all materials and/or assignments on their respective due dates.

In general, stipend monies and access to travel funds are contingent upon satisfactory participation and completion of program requirements. Scholars will continually “earn” these funds as they successfully progress in the program.

The program understands that “things may come up” that prevent you from attending an event or turning in an assignment on time; therefore, it is the scholar’s responsibility to communicate with the Director/Class instructor **prior to the deadline** to receive approval for an excused absence or extension. Scholars will have **one week** to turn in any late assignments before they are considered late again.

NOTE: This policy includes assignments and class periods associated with the Research Writing and Communication course and GRE prep courses. Scholars who are late for scheduled class meetings and seminars will receive an **unexcused absence** for each offense.

Each late assignment and/or unexcused absence will result in a \$25 reduction of monies from your stipend and/or travel allowance per each incident. **Serious illness (meaning a sickness that causes a student to miss more than two consecutive days of class) and family emergencies** will be handled outside of this framework and addressed on a case-by-case basis.

Excessive absences and/or late assignments (without legitimate reason) will be addressed on a case-by-case basis and the appropriate action taken which may result in a reduction of funds and/or dismissal from the program.

Request for an Extension: In the event that a scholar is unable to meet a major deadline (including the GATB, final research paper, poster and PowerPoint) they may request an extension

via the Director. The scholar will be required to document the situation and create a timeline outlining a plan for completion. McNair staff and mentor approval is required.

Scholar Communication Policy

Scholars are expected to respond to all program communication (by email or phone) in a timely manner. This means that **you should be checking your email at least every other day** for this purpose. If a scholar does not respond to a direct program request for information by the deadline posted, it will be recorded. More than **one tardy response** to program communication (per each semester and summer) will result in a \$25 reduction of monies from your stipend and/or travel allowance per each incident.

Point System

The Director will assess each scholar on a semester basis according to the following criteria (one point per each):

- Timeliness
- Attendance
- Attitude/level of engagement/responsiveness
- Effort/quality of work
- Goal orientation

Scholars will receive the opportunity to accrue five points each semester (spring, summer and fall). Scholars must **accrue at least eight points** by the end of the SRI in order to access travel funds for graduate school visits and professional conferences.

Consequences

In short, program staff will be keeping track of all absences, timely submission of assignments and your responses to all communication. If there are violations, monies will be subtracted from stipend amounts and travel allowances. In general, violations occurring in spring and summer will be deducted from the research stipend and those the following academic year from travel allowances. If a scholar does not complete the research project (in a timely fashion), graduate school action plan, or research presentations, **they will not be granted access to travel funds.**

Termination from the McNair Program

The McNair Program reserves the right to terminate any scholar who chooses not to meet program expectations or violates CMU policies. Any student terminated for non-performance, negligence or gross misconduct will be ineligible for future consideration in the McNair Program at CMU. Steps that program staff will follow to document and address inappropriate behavior and possible termination from the program are as follows:

- 1) Scholars will receive written warning when a policy has been violated. Examples include missing an unacceptable number of program events, violating university and program policies during on or off-campus events or failing to complete assignments (according to policies stated above). The violation will then be discussed with the Director who will document the student's response and steps that will be followed to rectify the situation.
- 2) If a second violation of program policy is committed, the student will receive a second written warning and must meet with the Director who will document the student's response and steps that will be followed to rectify the situation.
- 3) If a third violation of the program policy occurs, the student will meet with the Graduate Dean who will determine whether the student should be terminated from the program.

Program Evaluation

Scholars periodically are requested to provide feedback on program events and activities so that improvements can be made. McNair staff welcomes scholar input and suggestions, and consistently strives to deliver quality programming in a timely manner.

The Value of McNair

The McNair Program offers scholars access to significant resources that will help them become successful at the graduate level and ultimately achieve a Ph.D. As such, the program expects that participants take this opportunity seriously and make the most of each experience. Although it may not yet be entirely apparent for new scholars, being a part of McNair encompasses benefits ranging far beyond stipend monies received and seminars/trips attended during your undergraduate career. Being a McNair scholar carries prestige and recognition at a national level and is a great honor for you upon successful completion of all program requirements. It is a chance to build a solid reputation for yourself, bolster your credentials, and enjoy personal relationships and a support network that will hopefully last far beyond your years at CMU.

PROGRAM TIMELINE

Spring

The most significant activity during the spring semester is completing the **Research Writing and Communication seminar** in conjunction with **working with your faculty research mentor** on your research project. The seminar culminates with completion and oral presentation of a **research proposal**. Scholars attend several **graduate school seminars** intended to introduce them to key concepts and develop a proactive mindset as they begin to prepare for graduate school. Scholars work with McNair staff on an individual basis. Assignments include reading responses, vision statement, monthly reflections and various class assignments that build toward the final research proposal.

Summer

The Summer Research Institute (SRI) is the most intense time for scholars as they do the bulk of their work for their **research projects** and **preparation for graduate school**. The first week of the SRI is meant to foster relationships and enhance skills in a broad sense. Scholars attend a **graduate school training camp** in late May and then attend weekly seminars (concluding at the end of June) intended to facilitate development of their Grad App Tracker Board (GATB) – a primary outcome of the summer. **GRE training** occurs during June and July with individualized sessions as needed. Research is continuous throughout the summer. In general, **scholars are required to work at least 20 hours per week on research, 10 hours on GRE prep and 10 hours on grad prep**. Scholars work with McNair staff on an individual basis throughout the summer. Final research papers (including a poster and PowerPoint), official GRE scores and Graduate School Action Plans are due in August. Scholars begin visiting graduate institutions late summer into early fall. Assignments include a series of action steps leading up to the final GATB, GRE practice scores, weekly time reports, monthly reflections, and continuous work on the final research paper.

Fall

Applying to graduate school and **presenting research** are the primary activities during the fall semester. Scholars finalize their **PowerPoint and poster presentations** and present both. Scholars work with McNair staff on an individual basis. Scholars attend several seminars that provide follow-up to summer topics and encourage completion of the application process. Scholars attend national conferences and visit graduate institutions. Assignments include three monthly reflection/affirmations, presentation reflection and continuous work toward the graduate application process (for those applying – see ***Application Component Deadlines***).

Spring

Completing the graduate school application process, visiting graduate schools, and presenting research both on-campus and at national conferences are primary spring activities. Scholars work with McNair staff as they receive offers and make decisions about where to attend. Scholars attend several seminars focused on the successful completion of a doctoral program. Scholars are honored at the annual spring reception and friends and family are encouraged to attend. Assignments include four monthly reflection/affirmations, final vision statement and exit interview.

Continuing Scholars

Scholars who have additional time remaining before they graduate are required to keep in continuous contact with the McNair office as they finish their classes and enter the graduate school application process. Their progress continues to be monitored and they do submit monthly reflections to formally document their progress. Scholars are welcome to attend ongoing McNair activities as well as social/cultural events with the current group; they primarily will work with McNair staff on an individual basis and adhere to the ***Application Component Deadlines*** as they apply to graduate schools.

Application Component Deadlines

The McNair Program has found that most scholars benefit from a structured framework for the graduate application process. This framework is initiated during the SRI and then maintained throughout the actual application period the following fall (some scholars may be applying during the following academic year, and thus, will adhere to these deadlines at that time). Most application deadlines occur between December 1 and March 1. The McNair Program highly encourages its scholars to submit their materials well ahead of established deadlines in order to ensure offers of admission and financial support. It should be noted that many financial offers do occur before the official deadlines.

Sample Deadlines (items to be turned in to the McNair office):

Finalized school list including updated/completed matrix for each – September 1
School visitation plan solidified – September 15
Contact with faculty – September 1 through November 1 (due Oct 1/Nov 1)
Contact with graduate students – September 1 through November 1 (due Oct 1/Nov 1)
Letters of recommendation preliminary request – October 15
Finalized CV, transcript request and GRE request – October 15
Application fee waiver request – October 15
Letters of recommendation formal request – October 15
Tailored personal statements – November 15
Online applications – December 1

Welcome new scholars!
Work hard and take full advantage of the McNair opportunity!

SCHOLAR PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

I, _____, accept the offer to participate in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program at Central Michigan University. I understand that the purpose of the program is to prepare me for doctoral study and I subscribe to that purpose. Furthermore, I understand that my acceptance to participate commits me to the following:

1. Prompt response to all McNair communications
2. Genuine attempt to attend the majority of all scheduled seminars and meetings
3. Attendance at monthly meetings with McNair staff
4. Completion of a research proposal, project and final report under the guidance of a faculty mentor
5. Submission of a completed final research paper to the McNair office
6. Participation in CMU sponsored undergraduate research symposiums held each fall and spring
7. Presentation of research findings at one national conference or professional meeting
8. Pursuit of tutorial assistance in every course in which a "C" grade or lower is received
9. Genuine attempt to achieve *at least* a 3.3 cumulative GPA by the senior year
10. Completion of the Graduate Record Examination (GRE) and submission of scores to the McNair office following participation in the SRI
11. Submission of an action plan (including a personal statement/vita) for use in grad applications
12. Visitation to at least one, top choice graduate school to meet with faculty and grad students
13. Application to at least six graduate programs during the fall of the senior year
14. Application to at least two sources of external funding for graduate school
15. Agreement to maintain contact with the CMU McNair Program up to ten years after graduation in order to keep the office informed of current status in graduate school and/or employment, as well as progress made toward attaining a doctorate

I understand the purpose and expectations of the McNair Scholars Program and intend to meet these expectations in order to further my success in graduate education. I also understand that failure to meet deadlines for submission of research and other assignments, or an unacceptable number of absences from workshops, seminars or other mandatory events will result in deductions from my stipend monies and/or dismissal from the program.

I have read and agree to the terms and conditions of the program. I understand and accept this commitment to Central Michigan University's Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program.

McNair Scholar's Signature

Print Name

Date

McNair Director's Signature

Print Name

Date