"The Doctor"

McNair Scholars Program

Wichita State University

Division of Campus Life and University Relations

webs.wichita.edu/mcnair

Putting the Pieces Together with McNair

September - November, 2008

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Notes From the Director

Congratulations and welcome to the McNair Scholars Program 2008-2009 year, "Putting the Pieces Together with McNair." I am looking forward to getting to know each of you. There have been some changes made to the Program curriculum that will assist you to better prepare for graduate school. I encourage you to 1.) take personal responsibility in your own success, 2.) utilize your resources and 3.) take account of the things that you deem most important in your life. Shukura and I are here to help you, but you are the "Captain of Your Destiny." Any and everything that you want to achieve, you can. I encourage you to set goals for yourself, write them down and periodically revisit them. Outline how you will reach those goals by setting mini-goals or mile-stones along the way that will help you to reach your destiny. Yes, each of you has the goal or dream of attaining a PhD, but McNair is only a stepping-stone to what lies ahead. Go back and look at the personal statement that you wrote for acceptance into the program; are you still on that path? Take a look at the Goal Selection Worksheet that was completed during orientation; how are you doing at reaching the goals that you set in August? Maybe you need to refocus or maybe you are on the right track? Whatever the case may be, you make the decision about what the next step should be. Take charge, dream big, move forward and do great things; you are a "Doctor" in the making. Let us speak things as though they were and watch them come to pass.

It is my pleasure to serve as your director. I am here to assist you in any way that I can, but when you come, I will ask, "What are doing to help yourself?"

LaWanda Holt-Fields,
Director

McNair Welcomes the 2008 - 2009 Scholars

The McNair Scholars Program is off to an excellent start for the 2008 - 2009 academic year. This year, students will participate in activities to become familarized with the graduate school process and scholarly research. The McNair staff welcomes the following scholars: ** indicates returning students*

* Danielle Andrews
Jared Bennett
Megan Branson
Tan Bui
Joanna Duran
* Christina Eaves
* Margery Hannah
Carla Lee
Danille Lewis
Antony Ngicu
* Philip Pettis
* Shannon Ray
Jason Ware
* John Williams
LaShaun Barber
* Krystal Brack
* Diane Brown
Sheila Cubbage
Veronica Ealey Pyles
* Keshia Ezerendu
Christy James
Philip Levy
* Kristal McGhee
* Kate Page
* Gigi Phan
* Adella Rucker
* Darnell Webb

Grammatically Speaking

Writing a Literature Review

Every McNair Scholar who is involved in the research component this year should be aware that **January 31** marks the date which the *literature review* is due. For those of you still uneasy about writing a *literature review,* take comfort in the following suggestions provided by the referenced website.

How Can I Write a Good Literature Review?

Remember the Purpose: You are not writing a *literature review* just to tell your reader what other researchers have done. Your aim should be to show why your research should be carried out, how you came to choose certain methodologies or theories to work with and how your work relates to research previously conducted.

Read with a Purpose: You should summarize the work you read, but you must decide which ideas or information you want to add to your research (so you can emphasize them), which are more important and cover them briefly in your review.

Write with a Purpose: Your aim should be to evaluate and show the relationship between the research previously done and your current research. In order to do this effectively, you should carefully plan how you will organize your work. Using *The Notebook Method* is an excellent way to stay organized.

Some Traps to Avoid

Trying to Read Everything: If you try to be comprehensive you will never be able to finish the reading! The idea of the *literature review* is not to provide a summary of all the published work that relates to your research, but a survey of the most relevant and significant work.

Reading but not Writing: Writing can help you to understand and find relationships between the work you have read, so do not put writing off until you have "finished" reading--after all, you will probably continue reading throughout your research project.

Not Keeping Bibliographic Information: The moment will come when you have to write your reference page. . . and then you realize you have forgotten the information you needed; you failed to put the references in your work. The only solution is to spend a lot of time in the library locating those sources you have read. To avoid this nightmare, always keep this information in your notes as well as placing the references in your writing.

*The above suggestions are excerpts from the *Languages Center's Writing Up Research* website. For a more comprehensive analysis of a literature review visit the official website:
http://www.languages.ait.ac.th/El21LIT.HTM

Happy Birthday!

The staff would like to wish a **Happy Birthday** to those celebrating Birthdays in September, October and November.

John Williams - September 8
Veronica Ealey Pyles - September 26
Philip Levy - September 28
Danielle Andrews - October 8
Ronald E. McNair - October 21
Gigi Phan - October 21
Megan Branson - October 27
Jared Bennett - November 7
Diane Brown - November 12
Danille Lewis - November 28

Summer Internships: Something to Consider

As students begin to acquire academic experiences, they may want to consider a summer research internship. These types of internships allow students to have research experiences that usually last 8 - 10 weeks. Along with an internship, students may receive stipends that can range, on average between $2,000 - $5,000. Many summer research programs have deadlines within the first quarter of the year. It is important to begin searching for summer research internships during the preceding fall semester.

"The trouble with opportunity is that it always comes disguised as hard work."

~ Anonymous

Someone Like me?

Luz Miranda-Martinez, PhD
Physicist, University of Maryland, College Park

Dr. Luz Miranda-Martinez distinctly remembers being told by a non-Puerto Rican college professor that she should not continue with her graduate studies because she "was wasting the federal government's money." It stung her emotionally, but she had the resolve to not let this discrimination affect her. Instead, experiences like this and others that left her feeling as if she was caught between two worlds, have made Miranda-Martinez even more determined to succeed in her career as a female physicist.

Born in Bethesda, Maryland, Miranda-Martinez moved to Puerto Rico with her parents and twin brother when she was five. Her parents were both Puerto Rican and chemists, so growing up in the world of science became like second nature to her. One may think it odd to have a mother who is a chemist, but in Puerto Rico it is very common for women to pursue academics and careers in the sciences such as biology, chemistry, and engineering.

Growing up and attending high school and the University of Puerto Rico was a positive experience for Miranda-Martinez because of the similar cultural background she shared with others on the island. However, returning to the U.S. in her 20s during the early 1980s proved to be a challenge. Even though Puerto Rico is considered a commonwealth of the United States (she was born with American citizenship), discrimination still prevailed twenty years ago. Having taken the lead from her parents, Miranda-Martinez fought hard against discrimination, particularly while working on her PhD at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.).

Miranda-Martinez could not imagine an environment more different from the tropical island of Puerto Rico. Not only were there few minorities at M.I.T., but also very few women. There were 68 students in her entering class for the PhD physics program and only eight females. Out of the eight, six graduated with doctorates in physics. Although she was born an "American," as a female minority student she always had the feeling that her male professors were doubtful of her abilities, and given the stereotype that Puerto Ricans are "lazy," Miranda-Martinez felt that she had to prove herself all over again. This was terribly frustrating because she had already proven that she could do the work back home in Puerto Rico.

One of the reasons why Miranda-Martinez decided to obtain a PhD on the mainland was because the University of Puerto Rico did not offer a PhD in physics, nor offered research opportunities in her field of liquid crystals. It was also important for her to have a career position in which she could make her own decisions.

Miranda-Martinez eventually went to work as a researcher in the Department of Materials, Science, and Engineering at the University of Maryland, College Park. She teaches undergraduate and graduate level students who are working on research projects. She considers herself fortunate to be at College Park because of its high level of diversity and a better-than-usual female student representation in the areas of science and engineering. The field of physics is wide open, and she encourages students to explore the many opportunities available in industrial companies, educational institutions, medical centers, and government laboratories.

Miranda-Martinez is also involved with a program in College Park that encourages K-12 students to explore areas of science and engineering. She believes that by being a minority woman, she is a a role model for the students she has encountered, especially girls. Teenage girls have the misconception that being a female scientist will prevent them from having a social life. This isn't true! Miranda-Martinez tries to get across the importance of "balance" in one's life. For example, Miranda-Martinez spent most of my life playing the piano, and received her bachelor's degree in music while at the University of Puerto Rico. She states, "I know for me, having another interest was nice because it got her head out of just doing science-related studies. I don't believe that one's life can always be about work!"

GRAD-CONNECT
Writing a Personal Statement with a Purpose

What if you only had five minutes to convince a graduate admission's committee that you are a good pick for their school? What would you say and how would you keep their interest? According to the Peterson's Graduate Planner, students need to keep these questions in mind as they begin to write personal statements for graduate school admission. Below are a few tips to assist with writing personal statements with a purpose:

It's all about you

Schools are not interested in hearing about how your dog ran away or about the time you met a famous movie star; but they do want to know why you want to study the field you have chosen, and why you want to study it at their school. Storytelling is an effective way to convey your motivation and commitment and the experiences that drive you. A brief anecdote about some event that exposed you to your chosen field can be effective as long as you do not stray too far and you make it interesting. Do not write in clichés; instead start with something like "I knew I wanted to study ____ when …" You want your story to have a point, a reason for being told that relates to why you are applying to a particular school. Develop a nice segue from your story to a description of your goals and what you hope to achieve personally and professionally by pursuing your degree.

It's about them, too

It is important to share a great story about you, but you also need to let the school know why you have chosen them. Ideally, you should relate those reasons to the theme of your story, although it might be hard to do so. *(And don't do it if it isn't true!)* On the other hand, if you have decided to apply to a certain school because they are ranked as the number one school for meeting members of the opposite sex, do not tell them that. Avoid discussing any rankings, gushing about how prestigious the school is, or even tossing in generic praise. (We like to call this "sucking up" and admission committees see right through it).

However, if you can mention a few faculty members and make reference to some of their work, that is a bit more impressive because it shows you have taken some time to research the school a little further than the average Joe. Whatever you can do effectively to demonstrate that you know the school and can express how it is suited for you and how you are suited for them should work…as long as you avoid the "sucking up" factor.

It's all about you — again

The first thing you should do is list all of your positive attributes and accomplishments — not! Stick with concrete experiences that demonstrate your leadership capabilities and positive qualities. Details are important and will help this portion of your statement be interesting and successful in its purpose, so long as you do not get bogged down in too many details. You want to convey your motivation and some of your more intrinsic qualities that make you a highly qualified candidate, not to simply list all of your accomplishments and activities because they have already been summarized elsewhere on your application. Share your research experiences and be specific! If you worked for a year under a professor, you might emphasize one particular project and explore that in depth. It does not need to have been a major life-changing undertaking — any practical experience can be used as long as you demonstrate your enthusiasm and aptitude for the field you have chosen to study.

Pay attention!

Always read the application instructions carefully. Some schools will ask for a *statement of purpose* describing specific research interests in lieu of, or in addition to, a *personal statement* that emphasizes your character and qualities. You might write a beautiful personal statement, but if you do not follow the directions of the application, you have not done yourself any favors! Follow the instructions!

Source: Peretson's Graduate Planner. http://www.petersons.com/common/article.asp?id=1689&path=gr.gs.advice&sponsor=1

Back to Basics: *The Adverb*

Searching for ways to help students understand *verb* usage, and the various types of verbs can be challenging. For as students begin the writing stages of their research, they need a basic grammar foundation which they received in English 101.

Definition: **Adverbs** are considered *modifiers*, which provide simple ways to expand sentences that describe or limit nouns and verbs. *Modifying* words add detail.

Adverbs do all of the other descriptive jobs in a sentence (adjectives do the rest, which describes nouns).

Adverbs describe verbs. **"She thinks quickly."**

Adverbs describe other adverbs: **"She thinks very quickly."**

Adverbs also describe adjectives. **"It was a very long letter."**

Adverbs are created by adding *-ly* to an adjective:

Adjectives	*to become*	**Adverbs**
sweet		sweetly
scarce		scarcely
prompt		promptly
rapid		rapidly
careful		carefully

Other adverbs state ***how, when, where,*** or ***why***:

afterward	sometimes	so
beforehand	again	almost
generously	briefly	close
never	hard	helpfully
rather	sadly	now
satisfactorily	seldom	temporarily
soon	there	then
always	far	too
fast	rarely	very
here	since	well

Adjective vs. **Adverb**:
Students sometimes incorrectly use an adjective where they should use an adverb. For example:

Adjective:
"The manager was **real** pleased with the result." - *incorrect*
Adverb:
"The manager was **really** pleased with the result." - *correct*

Source: The Grammar Reference Guide, CareerTrack, 2nd Edition 2006.

Events to Come

OCTOBER

3 **Grad Prep & Seminar**
2 - 3 p.m., Devlin Hall, Rm. 106
"Graduate School Selection/ Application Process"

10 **Communication Fitness**
2 - 3 p.m., McNair Computer Lab

Research Assembly Meeting
2 - 4 p.m., Devlin Hall, Rm. 106
"The Notebook Method" &
"Research Database Tour"
Ablah Library

16 - 19 **Fall Break - No Classes**

24 **Grad Seminar**
2 - 3 p.m., Devlin Hall, Rm. 106
"Personal Statement Writing"

25 **Grad Prep & Seminar**
10 - Noon, RSC, Rm. 215 - 217
"Etiquette Workshop"

29 **Research Mentor Orientation**
3- 4:30 p.m., RSC, Rm. 305

NOVEMBER

7 **Grad Prep & Seminar**
2 - 3 p.m., Dev;in Hall, Rm. 106
"Me, Myself & Graduate School"

Research Assembly Meeting
3 - 4 p.m., Devlin Hall, Rm. 106
"The Literature Review/Citing References/Avoiding Plegiarism"

14 **Communication Fitness**
2 -3 p.m., McNair Computer lab

15 **Grad Prep & Seminar**
10 - Noon, Devlin Hall, Rm. 106
"Graduate School Application/ Admission Process"

19 **McNair Cultural Feast (11 - 1 p.m.)**

21 **Grad Seminar**
2 - 3 p.m., McNair Computer Lab
"Completing Graduate School Applications"

26-30 **Thanksgiving Resess - No Classes**

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Let others lead small lives, but not you.
Let others argue over small things, but not you.
Let others cry over small hurts, but not you.
Let others leave their future in someone elses hands, but not you, not you.

~ Jim Rohn ~

McNair Facts Did You Know?

In 1981, Ronald E. McNair received a bachelor's degree in physics, magna cum laude from North Carolina A & T University in Greensboro.

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2. In working to achieve and maintain a welcoming and discrimination free environment, it is necessary and appropriate that employees and students be encouraged to make complaints and concerns about perceived discriminatory behaviors known to University supervisors and officials.
3. Any University employee or student who in retaliatory conduct against a University employee or student who has filed a complaint alleging discrimination or otherwise exercised their rights and privileges against illegal discrimination will be subject to disciplinary actions pursuant to establish University procedures up to and includingtermi nation of employment or student status.
4. This prohibition against retaliatory conduct applies regardless of the merits of the initial complaint of illegal discrimination.