



Ronald E. McNair, PhD

*Suffolk University
McNair Scholars Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program*

The Sphinx Newsletter

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"Before you can make a dream come true, you must have one."

~Ronald E. McNair, PhD.

Message From the Director

Special points of interest:

- New Director joins Office of Academic Access and Opportunity
- Spotlight on McNair Scholar Deborah Searfoss, class of 2010
- McNair Scholars present at Buffalo Conference

I want to extend a warm welcome for the 2009-10 school year to both our new and returning McNair Scholars. I am honored to serve as the new Director for the Office of Academic Access and Opportunity and I look forward to getting to know each of you and watching your progress this year.

The two greatest skills you will learn in college are to think critically and ask questions. As you pursue your research projects this year you will develop and strengthen your critical inquiry skills and they will help you succeed in your academic career. However, I challenge you to extend

these skills beyond the classroom and to critically examine and learn from the world around you. Jiddu Krishnamurti, an Indian philosopher, said *"only a mind that is in a state of inquiry is capable of learning."* Don't be afraid to ask questions, but remember, it is your responsibility to actively pursue the answers. As a student, a researcher, and a life-long learner, you will not only acquire knowledge but you will also be constructing it.

Just like the philosophers, theorists, and researchers you are learning about now, *YOU are the groundbreakers and the path-makers for the next generation!*



Keren Zuniga McDowell, PhD.

Director, Office of Academic Access and Opportunity

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Suffolk University McNair Scholars

Congratulations to Sharif Butler, Luis Castillo and Elodia Johnson. They represent the 2009 graduating class of the Suffolk McNair Scholars Program. They are currently attending graduate programs and pursuing Masters in communication, education and criminal justice. We wish each one success as they strive to achieve their personal goals and the goals of the McNair Scholars Program.

Current McNair Scholars

- Wanny Baez
- Roxette Caba
- Carla Daley
- Ivan Echeverria
- Janet Gonzalez
- Sandrine Guilherme
- Daisy Guzman
- Janel Hernandez
- Karen Hernandez
- Mary Jaber
- Yanitza Medina

- Tommy Nguyen
- Socrates Perez
- Aniela Petani
- Han Pham
- Jacqueline Roumanos
- Deborah Searfoss
- Stephanie Tavaréz
- Eden Williams





Deborah Searfoss, Ronald E. McNair Scholar '10

"One thing McNair has taught me is that you can do a lot of things at once. It's not just the McNair Program; it's the Suffolk McNair Program. The key is the Suffolk family."

Spotlight on McNair Scholar Deborah Searfoss, '10

Ronald E. McNair was known as a dreamer; who, as a child used to stare up at the sky dreaming and smiling. Through his successes and accomplishments, Ronald E. McNair has inspired many other dream seekers. The McNair Scholars Program gives students the opportunity to utilize available resources to help them pursue a graduate degree. This section of the newsletter features an exceptionally talented McNair Scholar who is overcoming struggles to pursue her dreams. I had the opportunity to sit down with [Deborah Searfoss](#) to talk about the impact that the McNair Scholars program has made on her life.

WF: How did you hear about the McNair Scholars Program and why were you interested in becoming a McNair Scholar?

DS: I heard about the McNair Scholars Program through a mass email sent to Suffolk Students. There was an information session, but I couldn't go to it. And I missed the application deadline so I thought the whole thing was a missed opportunity! But the deadline got extended, so I spoke to my brother and father about applying. My brother and father said go for it, you never know and no harm can be done from it. So I applied for it. Like the old Nike saying, "just do it". I didn't know what the program was about. But what I knew was that

the program helped students receive their PhD's so that interested me. I didn't know what the program was about. But what I knew was that the program helped students receive their PhD's so that interested me.

WF: What are some of the struggles you have gone through while being in this program?

DS: At the beginning I got questioned from people. Why do you want to do this? I did lots of second guessing.....Do I really want to do 4-5 more years of school to get my Master's and PhD? Or should I consider doing an internship that has been offered to me right after graduating.

WF: What have you done to overcome these struggles?

DS: Learned discipline. How to balance summer work and research paper. Even though I am still out of school during the summer, I chose this program, so I have to see it through. What has been the most rewarding part of joining the McNair Scholars program?

[\(Scholar Spotlight continued on p.3\)](#)

Student Reflects on 15th Annual McNair Conference held this summer at University of Buffalo McNair Scholar Sandrine Guilherme attends conference and makes the connections

Although I knew I would need several research experiences before applying to graduate school, never did I see myself having the opportunity to do so. However, this all changed when I became a McNair Scholar. This summer I successfully completed my second research study as an undergraduate student at Suffolk University. The research paper I wrote this summer was entitled "Transition into College: Exploring Ethnic Identity, Gender Difference, and Depression." The paper explores the relationship between ethnic identity, gender, and depression and its effect on transitioning into college. In addition, I presented my research study at the 15th Annual McNair Conference at the University of Buffalo. Although this was my second time presenting at a conference, I was still nervous. I don't think words can describe how it feels to stand up in front of strangers and talk about something you are passionate about. Well, maybe there is, and it's Amazing! Regardless of how nervous you may be, it is a great feeling knowing that you have been given the opportunity to explain and defend your work.

I'll have to admit, this was my favorite conference. There were many interesting research topics presented by other scholars. We also got to go out on a jet boat, which I feel helped unite the scholars. Many scholars are guarded at these conferences, but once you've began connecting,

it feels like you've known each other for years. Attending conferences is an excellent opportunity to network. You never know who you will meet and who will be able to assist you with your academic or career goals in the future. This was also the first conference that I got to meet other scholars with the same research interest and career goals as mine. I met a lot of incredible and erudite students! I even met a scholar who is going to help me network in Ghana for my fall research study. Attending these conferences allows you to see the potential that exists among young motivated students. Ronald E. McNair said, "Whether or not you reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. You're eagles! Stretch your wings and fly to the sky." I think I speak for many McNair Scholars when I say that the McNair Scholars Program is preparing us to reach our goals.



Special Recognition and Acknowledgements

The *McNair Scholars Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program* wishes to thank the following **Faculty Research Mentors** who generously gave of their time and expertise during the 2009 McNair Summer Research Project:

2008-09 McNair Faculty Coordinators

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Director, Center for Teaching Excellence

Alicia Boisner, PhD.
Asst. Professor, Management Organizational Behavior/ Entrepreneurship.

2008– 09 McNair Faculty Advisors

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Gerry Manning, PhD.

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Amy Marks, PhD.

Honggang Zhang, PhD.

Marilyn Plotkins, PhD.

Teri Fair, PhD.

Sara Carroll, EdD



McNair Scholars at 2009 Summer Symposium

McNair Students Summer Research Projects

Below is a list of each McNair Student's Research Project for Summer 2009:

Han Pham, "Student Predictors of Consumer Behavior"; **Daisy Guzman**, "Goblin Market" and The Prince's Progress: A Magic Mirror of Rossetti's Beliefs"; **Sandrine Guilherme**, "Transition into College: Exploring Ethnic Identity, Gender Differences and Depression"; **Eden Edward**

Williams, "War Wounds and Beyond: Understanding the Mental Affects of Homeless Veteran's Who Have Experienced Incarceration"; **Karen Hernandez**, "The Relationship Between Brand and Consumer Perception in Regards to the Virgin Brand"; **Carla Daley**, "Managing In Difficult Times"; **Deborah Searfoss**, "The New Left and Its Effect on the Indigenous People and Their De-

mands"; **Socrates Perez**, "Accuracy of Electronic Devices used in the Medical Field: Mammogram, Sonogram and Blood Pressure"; **Janel Hernandez**, "Hip Hop Pedagogy"; **Wanny Baez**, "The College Student's Fears When Starting a Business"; **Roxette Caba**, "Incoming Freshmen Students and Factors that Might Influence Adjustment."; **Janet Gonzalez**, "Spiritual Counseling: High

School Students and Professional Perspectives"; **Tommy Nguyen**, "A Performance Analysis of Bootstrapping in Deny-by-Default Mobile Ad-hoc Networks"; **Ivan Echeverria**, "Introduction to Robotics-Micro-Controllers"; **Stephanie Tavarez**, "Cohabitation: Couples who choose to cohabitate and the factors that go into this"; **Karol Canals**, "Pathway to Permanent Residency in the United States and the Debate Over Amnesty"; **Yanitza Medina**, "MCE in Different Aspects: Focusing on Higher Education"; **Elovia Johnson**, "Prisoner Work Release Programs"; **Luis Castillo**, "Taking a Look at an Urban School in Boston: A Focus on Racial Identity and Strategies for Success"; **Sharif Butler**, "Perceptions of Gentrification in Harlem"

Scholar Spotlight, cont.

WF: What has been the most rewarding part of joining the McNair Scholars program?

DS: The fact that I know that am going to be the first in my family to push through and get my PhD! And also, I found out what I want to do in life through the research that I did for my paper.

WF: What do you think being a McNair Scholar means for your future?

DS: I think it has given me the

opportunity to do what I want in order to work towards my dream of working at the United Nations or Organizations of American States. The McNair Scholars Program is helping me get to the next level of my education. McNair is helping me reach my goal instead of me doing it solo.

WF: Any final words?

DS: . One thing McNair has taught me is that you can do a

lot of things at once. It's not just the McNair Program; it's the Suffolk McNair Program. The key is the Suffolk family. The program has taught me to balance being a T.A., Service Scholar, and a McNair Scholar. And the support from the faculty and professors helped me pull through all of the work I have to do.

WF: Anything else to add?

DS: Judy's the best!



McNair students attended Conference at University of Maryland

Suffolk University McNair Scholars Program

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Program Description

The Ronald E. McNair Program prepares undergraduates for doctoral study through involvement in research and scholarly activities. The purpose of the McNair Program is to assist in the academic and professional development of undergraduates whose goals are to teach and conduct research at the college level. In order to help students achieve those goals, the program sponsors and supports undergraduate experiences that lay the foundation for a successful graduate school experience. By fostering mentoring relationships, promoting undergraduate research, assisting with GRE/GMAT preparation, and encouraging students to attend and present at conferences, our goal is to produce highly competitive graduate school applicants who have the skills and experiences necessary to succeed in their programs.

The Sphinx Newsletter

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McNair Scholars gather for group picture with Provost Barry Brown, VP Academic Affairs Janice Griffith, Faculty Coordinators and McNair Scholars Staff at the Welcome Back Reception, September 9, 2009, at the Center for Teaching Excellence.