

July 14, 2017



Dear President Mahony, Provost Boyd, Dean Jones, McNair Advisory Board Members, and Winthrop Community,

I am writing to continue the tradition of **celebrating the excellence of Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Scholars**. Thirteen of the 33 students we are serving during the 2016-17 program year participated in the McNair summer research internship. This the smallest summer cohort served since our program was first funded eight years ago. This is because we had our largest graduating cohort this year (n=17). These 13 summer interns did outstanding work and brought several accolades to Winthrop at our national McNair conference in Atlanta. I will share that update after showing appreciation for the institutional support that helps Winthrop's McNair program thrive.

Program Context. Winthrop's program is funded to serve 30 undergraduates who meet first-generation and low-income criteria (FG&LI) or who come from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds (at least 2/3rds of students served each year must meet the FG&LI criteria). The minimum for most programs around the country is 25 students. Winthrop's and the Foundation's investments in the program; the widespread support of Winthrop's staff, faculty, and administrators; and the work of our staff and Advisory Board to follow Winthrop's lead regarding prudence in program implementation allow us to regularly and successfully serve more students than required.

2017 Grant Competition. In April, Winthrop submitted its proposal to continue to serve 30 students each year through another Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program grant. We hope to hear next month if we have been funded for another five years. Winthrop is in the unique and fortunate position of expecting funding through 2018, regardless of the results of the 2017 grant competition, because of the timing of our first grant award (four-year award in 2009).

Program Objectives. The likelihood of Winthrop's program being re-funded is bolstered by having earned prior experience points for consistently exceeding the program's annual objectives.

- 96% student completion of high quality research projects (96-100% each year; at Winthrop this includes mentoring by faculty with PhDs)
- 50% immediate enrollment in graduate programs (82% of 2016-17 graduates received graduate offers, five of these are fully-funded PhD offers; 90% of 2015-16 graduates enrolled in graduate programs in 2016-17)
- 75% continued enrollment in graduate programs (85-88% over the past three years)

PhD Attainment. If we are re-funded, the U.S. Department of Education will begin evaluating our performance on the PhD attainment objective in 2021 (Winthrop's 2017-2023 objective is that 14% of McNair graduates will earn a PhD in 10 years). In May, the program achieved a second PhD milestone. We celebrated Dr. Ronald Nelson (Chemistry, Wake Forest) and his McNair Mentor, Dr. Takita Felder Sumter, last month along with this strong cohort of summer Scholars.

2017 Summer Scholars' Excellence. In June, Winthrop administrators, faculty, staff, students, alumni, and families showed their support of McNair Scholars by attending the [on-campus McNair Summer Research Symposium](#). Audience questions and comments, survey feedback, and mentor guidance helped each Scholar further improve their presentations for the national competition that followed. Having personally witnessed almost all of the presentations and having received high praise from other professionals at the conference about Winthrop's students as a group, I can boast that Winthrop's reputation for impressive undergraduate research was reinforced by this entire group's performance. Please join me in commending the excellent work of each of the 13 Winthrop McNair Scholars listed below. Please also help me thank these dedicated and knowledgeable faculty mentors who used a significant portion of their summer to support these outstanding students.

Scholar	Mentor	Summer Research Project Title	Category
Naseem Adkinson-Jobe	Dr. Stephanie Lawson	Brand Communities and Collaborative Consumption: How Companies can Access Profit by Providing Access	Social Science
Ana (Frances) Barkley	Dr. Scot Rademaker	Shifting the Margins: Music Educators' Self-Reported Inclusion Practices for Marginalized Students in Southeastern Public High Schools	Education
Kellie Cooper	Dr. Janet Wojcik	Turn Stress into Sweat: The Effects of Physical Activity Classes on Stress in College Students	Poster
Gabby Lee	Dr. Kori Bloomquist	Is it Really the Family's Fault? Adversity and Resilience in the Social Environment	Poster
Brittany McCarver (C of C student)	Dr. Andrew Doyle	Mill Village Life in Piedmont South Carolina	Humanities
Marissa McNeace	Dr. Jeff Sinn	Moral Foundations Theory vs. Schwartz Value Theory: Which theory best explains ideological differences?	Poster
Eva Owusu	Dr. Sabrina Habib	Promoting a President: Tone in Presidential Candidate Correspondence via Twitter	Social Science
Ximena Perez-Velazco	Dr. Lauren Sastre	Combating childhood obesity: An evaluation of the incorporation of a nutrition education and counseling program at a pediatric clinic	Health
Maryssa Shanteau-Jackson	Dr. Takita Felder Sumter	Utilizing 5-fluorodeoxyuridine (FdUrd) to understand the role of HMGA1 overexpression in antineoplastic drug resistance	Life Science
Jessica Stevens	Dr. Zachary Abernathy	A Mathematical Model for Tumor Growth and Treatment Using Virotherapy	Life Science
Jalen Smith	Dr. Matthew Hayes	A Comparison of Facebook Profiles of Arrested and not Arrested Individuals	Poster
Quviah Streater	Dr. Sarah Reiland	Self-esteem mediates the relationship between insecure attachment and depression	Poster
LaRaven Temoney	Dr. Laura Ullrich	All Talk, But No Action: A Reexamination of Education in South Carolina's Corridor of Shame	Social Science

Winthrop's students shined bright. Winthrop students gave eight oral and five poster presentations at the Southeastern Association of Equal Opportunity Program Personnel (SAEOPP) McNair/SSS conference in Atlanta in June. I recognize I enjoy the privilege of being allowed to be biased about our students and especially the cohort of summer Scholars I am currently serving, but I believe this particular set of SAEOPP presentations may very well be our overall best. The feedback I received from other conference attendees only serves to reinforce my perception of this group of presentations as ranging from very good to excellent even when compared with the strong work of students from around the country (e.g., Cal State Sacramento; John Jay College of Criminal Justice; Purdue-Northwest; and the Universities of Florida, Georgia, Illinois U-C, Maryland- BC, Nevada-LV, SC, and Wisconsin Madison).

SAEOPP McNair/SSS Research Conference Results. Five of Winthrop's oral presentations placed in the top three for their categories. Two of our Scholars walked away with first place prize checks for \$500. This is our best showing at SAEOPP yet because 38% of our presenters placed.

- 3rd place - Social Science - **Eva Owusu** - Dr. Sabrina Habib Williams (Mentor)
- 2nd place - Education - **Ana Barkley** - Dr. Scot Rademaker (Mentor)
- 1st place - Health - **Ximena Perez-Velazco** - Dr. Lauren Sastre (Mentor)
- 2nd place - Life Science - **Jessica Stevens** - Dr. Zachary Abernathy (Mentor)
- 1st place - Life Science - **Maryssa Shanteau-Jackson** - Dr. Takita Felder Sumter (Mentor)

The entire Winthrop community shares bragging rights. When asked about the achievements of Winthrop's McNair participants, I brag about the broad and deep support our program enjoys. Critical support for the program is the result of individual efforts within University College, throughout Academic Affairs, by Student Life, of the offices of Advancement and University Relations, and from Business and Finance. The list of Winthrop folks to whom I owe favors I cannot repay grows each year. If you are reading this sentence, there is a good chance you are on my gratitude list. Thank you for your support of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program.

Sincerely,

Cheryl

Cheryl Fortner-Wood, Ph.D.

Proud Director of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program

Professor of Psychology

Winthrop University

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POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM