



*The Winthrop McNair
Scholars Program*

July 31, 2018

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

Each summer, I write to update the campus on the summer research outcomes of **Winthrop's Ronald E. McNair Scholars**. The tremendous support our program receives from the entire Winthrop community plays a significant role in our students' success. This includes the attendance of staff, faculty, and administrators at the *Winthrop McNair Summer Research Symposium*. Thanks to the excellent work of our students and expertise shared by our faculty Mentors and staff, I am able to continue the tradition of celebrating the accomplishments of the students who complete our McNair Summer research internship.

Eighteen of the thirty-one 2017-18 McNair program participants completed summer research at Winthrop. In addition, three Scholars completed summer research elsewhere (Penn State: Kellie Cooper, EXSC & Eva Owusu, IMCO; Illinois at Urbana-Champaign: Ximena Perez-Velazco, NUTR). The 10 Scholars who graduated this year also completed research (see <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/wmrb/> for examples).

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 we serve each year must meet the FG&LI criteria. Most programs around the country are funded to serve 25 students. Winthrop University and Winthrop Foundation 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 fiscal responsibility allow us to consistently serve more students than required. Winthrop was successful in the 2017 grant competition allowing us to support McNair Scholars at Winthrop another five years, through 2023.

Program Objectives. One of the reasons Winthrop was successful in the last grant competition is that we have earned prior experience points for consistently exceeding the first three of the following annual program objectives.

- 96% of participants complete high quality research projects
- 50% of graduates immediately enroll in graduate programs
- 75% of enrollees continue graduate study their second year
- 14% of graduates will earn a PhD within 10 years (to be measured starting 2021)

2018 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 discussion and feedback and Mentor guidance helped each Scholar further improve their presentations for the subsequent national competition at the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel McNair/SSS Scholars Research Conference in Atlanta. Our 18 students competed in five of seven categories.

Please join me in commending the excellent work of each of the 18 Winthrop McNair Scholars listed below. Please also help me thank the dedicated and knowledgeable faculty mentors who used a significant portion of their summer to support these outstanding students.

Scholar	Mentor	2018 SAEOPP Research Presentation Title	Category
Frances "Ana" Barkley	Dr. Sherrell Fuller	Invisible Barriers: Experiences of First-Generation, Low-Income Students Navigating Academia	Education
Monejah Black	Dr. Nathaniel Frederick	Shut Up and Dribble: How Twitter Users Attempt to Mute Athlete Opinion	Social Science
Caity Boudreaux	Dr. Darren Ritzer	Prevalence of academic entitlement and potential transferability to job entitlement	Social Science
Sierra Davis	Dr. Wendy Sellers	The Impact of Long-Term International Travel on the Socio-Political Consciousness of South Carolina students	Poster
Jasmine Goode	Dr. Merry Sleigh	Knowledge, Personality, and Race Predict Perceptions of Gun Control and School Shootings	Poster
Olivia Greathouse	Dr. Kristen Abernathy	A Mathematical Model of Controlling the Spread of Cholera through Disinfection, Vaccination, and Quarantine	Life Science
Ali Maclay	Dr. Courtney Guenther	The impact of generalized anxiety disorder on academic performance in undergraduate students following a brief guided meditation	Poster
Shemeika McCray	Dr. Joni Boyd	Understanding the Perceptions of Dry Needling in NCAA Division I Athletes	Health
Marlin McKnight	Dr. Jason Hurlbert	Xanthomonas Cynarae FK-506 Binding Protein	Life Science
Marissa McNeace	Dr. Donna Nelson	Predictors of Frequency and Type of Social Support Seeking in Response to Stress	Poster
Chandani Mitchell	Dr. Kathryn Kohl	Locating Mutagen-sensitivity Gene mus109 in the Drosophila melanogaster Genome Using Deficiency Mapping	Life Science
Juliana Quay	Dr. Jason Hurlbert	Expression and Purification of a Novel Calcium-Binding Protein, EfhX, Necessary for Phytopathogenesis in Xanthomonas Strains	Life Science
Ta'Niss Robinson	Dr. Darren Ritzer	A Look at Mentorship in a Structured Undergraduate Program	Social Science
Jessica Stevens	Dr. Zachary Abernathy	A Mathematical Model for Tumor Growth and Treatment Using Virotherapy	Life Science
Tim Smith	Dr. Adrienne Edwards	Familial and community influences on the sports socialization of Black boys: A case study	Poster
Destinee Waddy	Dr. Tyrone Ceaser	The relationship between nature connectedness and physical activity patterns in a sample of collegiate students and staff	Health
James White III	Dr. Joni Boyd	Effects of a Single Bout of Yoga on Self-Esteem, Self-Efficacy, and Happiness of Winthrop Students	Poster
Kalea Young- Gibson	Dr. Merry Sleigh	Entitlement, Empathy, and Dark Triad Predict Political Attitudes and Knowledge	Social Science

Winthrop's students shined bright. I am unapologetically biased in favor of our students. Each year, I am proud of every presentation Winthrop brings to the conference. This year is no exception. Every member of this cohort “brought it” to the competition. This year, so did everyone else. This year’s conference was the most competitive I have witnessed. There were significantly more attendees and presenters, and the overall caliber of other schools’ presentations was stronger than I’ve seen at this conference in my nine years. Staff from other programs approached me during the presentations and said things like “Winthrop, we’re coming after you this year!” After the conference, a new friend from UNH wrote “It is clear that you all have developed a strong McNair/research culture at Winthrop. Thank you for that influence. I am motivated to help take our program to that next level.”

SAEOPP McNair/SSS Research Conference Results. Once again, Winthrop received high praise at the conference, praise for our students’ behavior and research, individually and as a cohort. In response, I boasted about the high caliber of undergraduate research experiences Winthrop faculty and resources afford our students.

Three Winthrop oral presentations were recognized during the award ceremony July 1st and are listed below. Two Winthrop McNair Scholars walked away with first place prize checks for \$500. Fellow award winners came from USC (Columbia), Florida, UCLA, UCSB, Cal State Sacramento, Harding, Montevallo, and Alabama @ Birmingham. Only Winthrop earned three or more awards in our five categories.

- 2nd place - Social Science – **Kalea Young-Gibson - Dr. Merry Sleigh** (Mentor)
- 1st place – Social Science – **Ta’Niss Robinson – Dr. Darren Ritzer** (Mentor)
- 1st place - Life Science – **Chandani Mitchell - Dr. Kathryn Kohl** (Mentor)

It’s also worth noting that **Ximena Perez-Velazco** received the **Outstanding Poster Presentation** at the Illinois Summer Research Symposium (ISRS) July 20th. Ximena earned 1st place in Health at SAEOPP last year (Dr. Lauren Sastre, Mentor).

The entire Winthrop community shares bragging rights. When asked about the achievements of Winthrop’s McNair participants, I praise the broad and deep support our program enjoys within University College; throughout Academic Affairs; by Student Life; and from the offices of Advancement, University Relations, and Business and Finance. The list of folks to whom I owe favors I cannot repay grows each year. It starts with Dean Gloria Jones, our faculty mentors, Advisory Board Members, McNair staff, Dr. Matt Hayes (stats & methods Coach), our guest speakers, McNair alumni, Deborah Broome, Michelle Hare, Judy Basehore, Ann Barrett, Amanda Stewart, all of Printing Services, Aramark chefs and staff, Miss Annette, and many great folks in Facilities Management. If you took time to read this entire letter, you are probably on my gratitude list. Thank you for your support of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program.

I have another favor to ask: **Help us identify applicants for the 2018-19 cohort of Winthrop McNair Scholars.** Encourage strong students at Winthrop and other SC universities to explore <https://www.winthrop.edu/mcnair/> to determine if the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program might be a good fit for their post-baccalaureate interests. The call for applications will be issued around Labor Day.

Sincerely,

Cheryl

Cheryl Fortner-Wood, Ph.D.

Proud Director of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program

Professor of Psychology

