



July 10, 2019

Re: Celebrating the Winthrop McNair Summer 2019 Researchers

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

Over the past week, many Winthrop staff and faculty have asked me “How did the Scholars do at their conference?” I am writing to share that update now. It means a lot to us that our students enjoy this widespread interest and that Winthrop folks from across divisions showed their support by attending or sending regrets for the [Symposium](#) last month. The outstanding work of McNair faculty mentors and growing campus support cultivate the mounting accolades our Scholars bring home. This year’s cohort of Ronald E. McNair summer research Scholars has the strongest record yet.



Thank you, Dr. Mahony, for coming to the McNair Summer Research Symposium.

Twelve of our thirty-one 2018-19 McNair program participants completed research this summer at Winthrop. In addition, four Scholars are completing summer research elsewhere (Rochester Institute of Technology - Olivia Greathouse; Michigan State - Marlin McKnight; MIT - Juliana Quay; and U Mich - Kalea Young-Gibson). The 10 Scholars who graduated this year also completed research, some of which were presented at [SOURCE](#) and some of which will be posted at <https://digitalcommons.winthrop.edu/wmr/>.

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 Foundation investments in the program; the widespread support of staff, faculty, and administrators; Winthrop’s capability to provide high quality undergraduate research experiences; and the work of Dean Jones, our staff, and our Advisory Board to stretch our resources allow us to consistently serve more students than the minimum required. We are currently in our third funding cycle, which runs until September 30, 2023.

Program Objectives. Winthrop’s success in the last two grant competitions was partly due to our earning prior experience points for meeting the first three of our annual program objectives (below).

- 96% of participants complete high quality research projects (97% in last annual report, APR)
- 50% of graduates immediately enroll in graduate programs (50% in last APR)
- 75% of enrollees continue graduate study their second year (100% in last APR)
- 14% of graduates will earn a PhD within 10 years (to be measured starting 2021 APR; so far, we have 4 PhDs, 3 DPTs, and 1 PharmD)

2019 Summer Scholars’ Excellence. Scholars used their mentor’s guidance and audience feedback from the [June 24th symposium](#) to perfect their presentations for the national competition at the Southeastern Association of Educational Opportunity Program Personnel McNair/SSS Scholars Research Conference in Atlanta. Again, Winthrop received high praise at the conference for our students’ research and professionalism, individually and as a cohort. Please join me in commending the excellent work of each of the 12 Winthrop McNair Scholars listed below. Please also help me thank the dedicated and knowledgeable faculty mentors who gave a significant portion of their summer to support these outstanding students.

Scholar	Mentor	2019 SAEOPP Research Presentation Title	Category
Kiera S. Alexander	Dr. Nicholas Grossoehme	The Interplay Between Oxidation, Phosphorylation, and Regulation of RitR in <i>Streptococcus pneumoniae</i>	Physical Science
Mattin Avalon	Dr. Michael Sickels	Personalizing Religion: A Qualitative Analysis of New Age Spirituality Identity Online	Social Science
Monejah Black	Dr. Nathaniel Frederick & Mr. Emmanuel Nwachukwu	The Representation of Female African American College Students on Television: A Content Analysis of <i>A Different World</i> and <i>Grownish</i>	Social Science
Sierra Davis	Dr. Wendy Sellers	Sustainable Development and Environmental Justice: Connecting Students to Global Issues	Social Science
Chelsea Harris	Dr. Melissa Reeves & Dr. Matthew Hayes	The Relationship Between Future Orientation, Social Support, and GPA	Poster
Nicholle Lewis	Dr. Matthew Stern	Optimization of Smooth Muscle Cell Culture for Blood Vessel Tissue Engineering	Life Science
Makeyla McCray	Dr. Crystal Glover	Perceptions of African American Students’ Professional Relationships with Faculty at a Predominantly White Institution	Education
Gabrielle McGee	Dr. Donna Nelson	Process Goals Raise Academic Confidence and Performance of First-Generation College Students	Poster
Sauliha Mitchell	Dr. Scott Huffmon	The Impact of Political Donations on NC State Legislators	Social Science
Cayla M. Odom	Dr. Maria Gelabert	Silver Nanoparticle Biosynthesis and Calcite Biomineralization as a Precursor to Hydroxyapatite	Physical Science
Maya Whaley	Dr. Merry Sleigh	Working Professionals’ and College Students’ Attitudes Toward Juvenile Offenders	Social Science
Veronica Worthington	Dr. Matthew Hayes & Dr. Melissa Reeves	Active shooter protocols: Perceptions, preparedness, and unintended consequences	Social Science

Winthrop students are stellar. Each year, I think that summer's cohort is the strongest we have had. This year was no different. I was particularly excited to bring this group to the conference and watch them represent the University. Every member of this cohort brought positive recognition to the university. While Winthrop brought fewer students this year than ever before, this year's meeting had the largest number of competitors in its 25 years (204: 150 oral presentations, 54 posters). Furthermore, the overall quality continues to improve and, this year, our competition was the strongest I have seen. That makes the number of awards Winthrop's McNair Scholars received that much more impressive. What's more, after awards were announced, a fellow McNair Director told me that her Scholars told her they want to explore Winthrop graduate programs if this is the kind of research our undergraduates conduct.

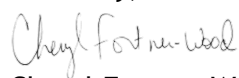
SAEOPP McNair/SSS Research Conference Results. Five Winthrop presenters earned awards and cash prizes. I believe this is more than any other institution. Our Scholars competed in posters and four oral categories with students from universities all over the country including, but not limited to, Georgia Tech, Austin Peay, Rider, and the Universities of Florida, Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, UCLA, and New Orleans.

- 3rd place - Life Science - **Nicholle Lewis - Dr. Matthew Stern** (Mentor)
- 3rd place - Social Science - **Monejah Black - Dr. Nathaniel Frederick & Mr. Emanuel Nwachukwu** (Mentors)
- 3rd place - Social Science - **Mattin Avalon - Dr. Michael Sickels** (Mentor)
- 2nd place - Education - **Makeyla McCray - Dr. Crystal Glover** (Mentor)
- 1st place - Physical Science - **Cayla Odom - Dr. Maria Gelabert** (Mentor)

The entire Winthrop community deserves bragging rights over these research accomplishments because of the broad and deep support our program enjoys within University College; throughout Academic Affairs; by Student Affairs; and from the offices of Advancement, University Relations, and Business and Finance. There are so many folks we owe thanks for helping our Scholars with their research: Dean Gloria Jones, our faculty mentors, our [Advisory Board Members](#), Dr. Matt Hayes, Dr. Jason Hurlbert, Dr. Robin Lammi, Barb Yeager, Amanda Cavin, Alecz Yeager, Kayla Tucker, Stephanie Bartlett, Jasmine Goode, and our guest speakers including the many McNair alumni that came back to help our students prepare (like Jordan Lewis who helped us thrice). Thanks also to Deborah Broome, Michelle Hare, Judy Basehore, Ann Barrett, Dawn Sayer and Res Life, Myers Floyd, TJ Hyatt, Judy Longshaw, Printing Services, Sodexo, and many other great folks across campus. We appreciate that your help has made it easier to support Winthrop's McNair Scholars. We are also grateful to the entire SAEOPP conference team that ensures our students are informed, inspired, and recognized.

Please help us recruit the next cohort of summer Scholars by encouraging strong students at Winthrop and other SC universities to learn about the program at <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 Fortner-Wood, Ph.D.
Proud Director of the Winthrop McNair Scholars Program
Professor of Psychology
Winthrop University

TRiO
RONALD E. MCNAIR
POST-BACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM