Since the inception of the program in 1999, the McNair Scholars Program at Cal Poly Pomona has served over 350 students and 55 have completed their doctorates so far, with 95 additional scholars currently in graduate school! We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate these scholars and hope that their accomplishments inspire everyone to reach for the stars and pursue their dreams.

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ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

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SAVE THE DATE!

McNair Scholars Program
20th Anniversary Celebration
is Friday, March 15, 2019

From 5:30 to 8:30 PM

Pictured: McNair Alumni with Dr. Torres, Dr. Bidlack, and Dr. Dong at our first Annual McNair Alumni lunch.
The McNair Scholars Program at Cal Poly Pomona is celebrating our 20th Anniversary! We hope you will join us either virtually, or in person, during the various activities that we are holding this year.

The 20th Anniversary Reunion!
Join us on March 15, 2019 at the Kellogg Ranch Restaurant! We will culminate our $20 for 20 campaign at the reunion event. The evening will start at 5:30pm with hors d’oeuvres and wine, followed with a two-course dinner and end with a dessert gathering at the Kellogg Hotel. We will be making hotel block reservations at surrounding hotels shortly for those who are visiting from out of town. You can learn more about the event at: https://www.cpp.edu/~mcnair/news-and-events/index.shtml.

Sharing Your Successes
Alumni, let us know how you are doing by either writing to us at mcnair@cpp.edu or posting on our Facebook page at facebook.com/mcnaircpp.scholars. We will be compiling an alumni 20th yearbook with your updates and stories. And if you can share some pictures of you, even better!

Reflect on Your Time at CPP
Alumni, mentors, staff, and supporters, anniversaries are a time to reflect. Share your favorite memories of McNair - either of Dr. Torres, Dr. Bidlack, a mentor, a scholar, your cohort, or any fond memory of the McNair Scholars Program. We would love it if you can share these memories by posting a short video to the McNair Facebook page (facebook.com/mcnaircpp.scholars). We will compile these videos and share them at the 20th Anniversary Reunion on March 15, 2019.

Donate!
As part of the 20th Anniversary, we are asking all of our supporters to consider donating $20 to the McNair Scholars Program. Your donations will fund the following: Support Dreamers’ participation in McNair activities (we are not allowed to fund Dreamers with federal grant dollars), scholarships for recent CPP McNair graduates to support them during their transition to graduate school, and care packages for McNair scholars who attend summer research experiences far away from home.

You can make a donation online: https://www.gofundme.com/cal-poly-pomona-mcnair-20-for-20

Sincerely, Dr. Winny Dong
INTRODUCING THE 2018-2019 MCNAIR SCHOLARS

Emmeline Adu-Beng  
Chemical Engineering  
Dr. Jonathan Puthoff

Bryan Arciniega  
Computer Engineering  
Dr. Adam Summerville

Jose Becerra  
Anthropology  
Dr. Claudia Garcia-Des Lauriers

Kamren Brown  
Psychology  
Dr. Viviane Seyranian

Karli Cheng  
Psychology  
Dr. Robert Blumenfeld

Monserrat Coria  
Psychology  
Dr. Alejandro Morales

Esteban Escobar  
Applied Mathematics  
Dr. Jennifer Switkes

Amalia Gonzalez  
Spanish  
Dr. Karen Russikoff

Abby Ibarra  
Urban and Regional Planning  
Dr. Gwen Urey

Meghan Jeffus  
General Biology  
Dr. Jayson Smith

Julia Lozano  
Psychology  
Dr. Sara Langford

Jenny Martinez  
Mechanical Engineering  
Dr. Giuseppe Lomiento

Ariel Munoz  
Economics  
Dr. Gregrey Hunter

Viviana Piceno  
Psychology  
Dr. Alejandro Morales

Jennette Ramirez  
Gender, Ethnic and Multicultural Studies  
Dr. Anita Jain

Zijie Zhang  
Biochemistry  
Dr. S. Chantal E. Stieber

Edwin “Art” Hernandez  
Psychology  
Dr. James Sturges  
Dr. Hannah Lucas

Beverly Cotter  
Psychology  
Dr. Anas Salah Eddin

Dr. Winny Dong  
Director

Elena Alvarez Villegas  
Assistant Director

Dr. Frank Torres  
Director Emeritus

Dr. Alejandro Morales  
Faculty Fellow

Dr. Wei Bidlack  
Program Faculty Advisor

Tiana Chanaiwa  
Assistant Program Coordinator

THE MCNAIR SCHOLARS TEAM
“The Purdue SROP Research Experience for Undergraduates (REU) gave me an idea of what it would be like to be a graduate student.”
- Shea Duarte, Cohort 19

“Being part of the Molecular Engineering Materials Center REU Program at the University of Washington gave me the opportunity to learn to use advanced equipment, such as a Raman Spectroscopy, that I wouldn’t have access to otherwise.”
- Ho Lun Chan, Cohort 19

“The RISE program at Rutgers definitely increased my interest in attending graduate school because it showed me I can learn independently and finish a project under faculty mentorship.”
- Jenny Martinez, Cohort 20

“Spending the summer at Stanford University as part of the Summer Undergraduate Research in Geoscience and Engineering (SURGE) was fun. I had an interesting project involving mineral separation, data interpretation, fieldwork near Pescadero Beach and in San Luis Obispo county in California.”
- Manuel Vejar, Cohort 19

“The University of Michigan’s Women and Gender Summer Fellowship REU taught me valuable research skills that I can apply to my current McNair research project. Spending my summer conducting research with a mentor in my field cemented my aspiration to pursue a PhD in American Culture.”
- Jennette Ramirez, Cohort 20
**Daisy Hernandez, UC Davis, Plant Pathology | Started Fall 2018**

I feel much more prepared and confident in my first year of graduate school than I would have been if I had not been a part of McNair. Having a mentor and a research project helped me experience how it would feel while attending graduate school. In McNair, I got accustomed to reading literature, setting up procedures, and making my own schedule, all of which are habits that I have needed to do before I even started my classes. Whenever I get stuck, I know to look for resources around me, talk to my lab mates, and touch base with my mentor.

**Sergio Maldonado, Purdue University, Counseling Psychology | Started Fall 2018**

My participation as a McNair Scholar was pivotal in my acceptance to graduate school. Aside from introducing me to graduate school, the program provided me with the guidance and resources (e.g., Statement of Purpose workshops) which allowed me to become a competitive applicant. Ultimately, it challenged me to think more analytically which has helped me with various research proposals during graduate school.

**Jessica Saucedo, Michigan State University, Ecological-Community Psychology | Started Fall 2018**

As a McNair scholar, I was prepared to continuously think of the bigger picture, and to set and achieve long-term goals for myself. I think this has been one of the most important things I’ve had in mind as I’ve navigated through the graduate school admission and entrance process. Being a part of the McNair Scholars Program provided me the guidance, resources, and ultimately, a support system to reassure me that I could achieve post-baccalaureate higher education.

**Jesus Preciado, University of Florida, Plant Molecular and Cellular Biology | Started Fall 2018**

McNair prepared me for graduate school by providing me the opportunity to conduct undergraduate research in a field of my interest. Being involved in the program also provided training that mirrored a similar experience to graduate school. The McNair program helped me gain a deeper level of understanding of the research literature in my field, an ability to communicate my research to broader audiences, and provided me with rigorous workshops that further prepared me for graduate studies.
MEET DR. JOAN LEONG

Dr. Leong is a professor of Biological Sciences at Cal Poly Pomona, and a dedicated McNair Faculty Mentor.

What was your education journey, from your undergraduate degree to your doctorate degree?
Bachelor’s degree in Biology, UC Berkeley; Master’s degree in Biology, San Francisco State University; Ph.D. in Ecology, UC Davis.

Were you the first person in your family to go to college? If not, were you the first person in your family to get an advanced degree?
I was not the first person in my family to go to college, but I was the first to earn a Ph.D. in my immediate family.

What motivates you as an educator?
I hope to inspire and motivate students to want to understand or learn how and why biological processes and patterns occur in the world around us. I hope to convey to students how exciting and fun it is to learn about scientific discoveries, and how interesting the process of scientific discovery can be.

Did you ever consider a different career path? If so, what was that path?
I briefly considered becoming a high school teacher, but decided it was not for me after one term in a credential program.

Did/do you have any mentors helping you through your academic career?
Yes, my undergraduate and graduate research advisors, and my graduate colleagues in my master’s and doctoral programs. Here at CPP, faculty colleagues in my department have been very helpful.

Why did you become a mentor for a McNair student?
I became a McNair mentor because I wanted to provide students access to undergraduate research opportunities so they could go beyond their required academic coursework. I became involved with the McNair Scholars program because McNair students are often from of a population of students who might not otherwise be exposed to doing hands-on research.

What was it like to be a McNair mentor?
It has been a learning experience for me too, as each individual student has their own academic strengths/weaknesses, attitudes, and interests. It is wonderful to see your McNair mentees grow and develop into student researchers, and go on to Master’s and Ph.D. programs.
ALUMNI PROFILE

Until joining the McNair Scholars Program during his sophomore year at Cal Poly Pomona, Brian had no plans of pursuing a Ph.D. and had little idea of what research entailed. The program exposed Brian to challenging and rewarding research, as well as the possibility of attending graduate school, something he says “seemed impossible for someone like me—a first-generation Mexican-American student.”

During his time as a McNair Scholar, Brian had the opportunity to meet McNair alumni who were in Ph.D. programs at the time.

“This experience provided me a source of motivation and encouragement that I too could follow in their footsteps. Most importantly, the mentors that I gained through the McNair program provided me with unwavering support during my Ph.D. and continue to play an important role in my career.”

After receiving his BS in Mechanical Engineering, Brian began his Ph.D. program at the University of California, Los Angeles where his research in Solid and Structural Mechanics opened many doors for him. Speaking of this experience, Brian says: “My research gave me the opportunity to present my work at numerous conferences across the country and co-author several papers in the field of mechanics and materials. It also enabled me to co-author a patent, and earn a National Science Foundation (NSF) grant for commercialization of my research. These experiences allowed me to travel the country, contribute new knowledge in my field, and explore the entrepreneurial side of research.”

Upon earning his Ph.D., Brian joined California Institute of Technology as a postdoctoral fellow. Once he completes this appointment, Dr. Ramirez plans to pursue a career in academia. He is excited about “the prospect of teaching and mentoring a diverse group of students and developing innovative and effective courses in the field of mechanical engineering.” As a product of the CSU and UC system, Brian hopes “to continue the legacy of outstanding teaching and groundbreaking research that [he] experienced at both institutions.”

Brian urges current McNair scholars to “seek undergraduate research opportunities outside of Cal Poly Pomona, targeting labs and schools where they would like to conduct their graduate studies. This is a great opportunity to obtain more research experience and perhaps gain a letter of recommendation. [Scholars] can use this opportunity to determine if that lab (its members and faculty advisor), department, and its surrounding community is a good fit.”
We are so proud that the CPP McNair Scholars program is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year! McNair would not be the highly successful program that it is today without the generous support of our friends. If you are able, please consider donating $20 in honor of the 20 years we have spent supporting scholars as they work to advance their academic careers.

YOUR DONATION WILL GO TOWARDS THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES:

1. Graduate School Transition Scholarships: Although McNair scholars are excited to start a graduate program, many are financially stressed by the move to a new city, finding housing, travel costs... especially since many graduate fellowships do not kick in until one or two weeks into the start of the academic year. The Graduate School Transition Scholarship will provide up to $500 for McNair Scholars who are entering a graduate program.

2. Support Dreamers’ participation in McNair activities! Federal guidelines prevent us from using grant funds to support Dreamers. But we believe Dreamers are equally important to the mission of the McNair program - to diversify the academy. McNair Scholars program is currently collaborating with the Bronco Dreamers Resource Center to fund scholarships for Dreamers to participate in McNair activities. Your donation will fund research supplies and travel to present at conferences for Dreamers in the McNair program.

3. Care packages for students spending the summer away from home for research. That first time away from home can be tough and a small care package goes a long way to helping our scholars thrive.

EVERY DOLLAR COUNTS

Donations of any amount are appreciated!

Donation link: https://www.gofundme.com/cal-poly-pomona-mcnair-20-for-20
YOU ARE INVITED TO
The 20th Year Anniversary Celebration of
The McNair Scholars Program

IT WILL TAKE PLACE ON
FRIDAY, MARCH 15TH, 2019

At The Kellogg Ranch Restaurant

5:30-6:00 PM  Appetizers & Wine
6:00-8:00 PM  Dinner
8:00-9:00 PM  After Party

PLEASE RSVP BY FEBRUARY 15TH

TO PURCHASE YOUR TICKET PLEASE GO TO THIS LINK:
Designed to assist first-generation, low-income students and those who are underrepresented at the graduate and doctoral level, the program at Cal Poly Pomona was first funded in 1999. The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program is named for Dr. Ronald E. McNair, one of those who perished aboard the space shuttle Challenger in January 1986.

The McNair Scholars Program at Cal Poly Pomona is a one-or two-year program designed to improve students’ research skills and prepare them for entering graduate schools and advanced study. This education grant provides an internship opportunity for students to learn how to do research, present their findings at a summer symposium and at national conferences, and successfully apply for and enter graduate school. Through the efforts of the students themselves, the faculty mentors, and the program staff, these students can achieve their goals.