

## UNH McNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

### *Mentor Guidelines:* *Summer McNair Research Fellowship*

***Fellowship Objectives*** – The McNair Scholars Program is a graduate school preparation program for academically qualified undergraduates (who are economically eligible/first-generation and/or those racially underrepresented in graduate school). It is funded by the U.S. Department of Education to increase the number of underrepresented individuals pursuing and obtaining doctoral degrees and entering careers in academia.

The UNH McNair program aims to promote and nurture the next generation of faculty, researchers, and scholars through academic and social support services provided as part of a fellowship in which participants engage in an integrated, intensive eight-week research experience.

***Mentoring*** – A major component of the McNair program and the graduate school preparation process is a directed research experience under the guidance of a faculty mentor. Mentors assist McNair scholars by introducing students to the nature and rigors of research, serving as role models, helping to build professional networks with other scholars in the fields, and participating in social as well as academic activities with the scholars.

Since the program's inception at UNH in 1991, more than one hundred faculty members have served as McNair mentors, as well as numerable graduate students. By joining them, you will have the opportunity to work one-on-one with an academically gifted individual and help make a real difference for the mentee.

***Mentor Responsibilities*** – During the spring semester (prior to the summer session) mentors discuss research ideas and possibilities with the mentee to sketch out the development of a project that is interesting and that can be developed into a research grant proposal. Research grant proposals are due in the McNair office not later than midnight on the last Sunday in March. For UNH students, the research project must encompass at least two consecutive semesters (e.g. summer/fall or fall/spring). The mentee will need guidance to develop a realistic timeline and strategies for completing the research project (particularly given other program and academic commitments). In order to best assist the mentee, we ask that you:

- Guide the mentee through the development of a research proposal
- Provide instruction, direction, challenge and support to the mentee during the research process
- Monitor the mentee's research activities and provide feedback
- Present the mentee with examples of professional writing within your field
- Support and challenge the mentee and assist them in writing a high-quality research article
- Attend the McNair Research Seminar, weekly (Wednesdays) during the summer- June and July.
- Offer assistance and encouragement to the mentee as they prepare to present their research findings at the Undergraduate Research Conference (URC) or other academic conference
- Offer informal guidance and direction regarding –
  - The graduate school experience
  - The rewards and challenges of the faculty role
  - Realistic and appropriate job prospects for the student once they complete the doctoral degree
  - Networking possibilities
  - Regional & national conference opportunities within your discipline (if able, McNair can provide funding)
  - Suggest appropriate and realistic graduate programs for your student to apply

- Complete an evaluation so that we may assess the student's and the program's strengths and weaknesses

**Meeting With Your Mentee** – Mentors are expected to meet with mentees a minimum of one hour per week during the spring semester, summer- June and July and other semesters where the research project is being finalized. We have found that Scholars are most comfortable (and best kept on track) if mentors meet with them in person at least once a week, but we do understand if meeting virtually works best. Obviously, depending on the nature of the research and the needs of the student, you may need to meet with the student more often.

Research Assistants may assist in supporting the scholar and may serve as a co-Faculty/Research Mentor but may not serve as the Mentor of Record. Faculty/Research Mentor must have earned a doctorate and must be experienced in research (note: dissertation experience is acceptable).

## PRE-SUMMER

**Schedule** – Each Scholar must submit a comprehensive research grant proposal. To facilitate the development of the research proposal, participants must enroll in the McNair Research Inquiry Seminar [INCO 610] during the spring semester. The seminar is a 2 credit, half semester course that is writing intensive.

**Research Proposal** – Scholars must conceptualize a project, design it, and draft the proposal, which is reviewed by the McNair Advisory Committee in early April (see Research Proposal Guidelines). The proposal, including budget and timetable, is due mid-late March. Check syllabus for due date. The proposal must be submitted via Canvas. Mentors should discuss budget issues, including all supplies, materials and/or travel. Mentors should have reviewed the proposal and given feedback regarding its content [The proposal requires faculty mentor approval (prior to submission) and a letter of support sent directly to the McNair director.] Notification regarding proposal funding will be made by April 15.

**Faculty Support Letter** – As part of the research funding application process, faculty mentors are asked to write a letter to endorse the student's proposal. Please highlight the student's commitment, work ethic and potential for completing the research project and describe how this research can benefit the student. You may also highlight the merits of the project design and areas where the research project may be weak and outline what can or will be done to strengthen those aspects of the proposal and the project. Letters should be submitted to the McNair director by the proposal due date.

**Approvals** – If the mentee will be working with human or animal subjects, it is crucial that the mentee begin the process of obtaining IRB or IACUC approval immediately. Full-board reviews can be limited during the summer and failure to obtain appropriate approvals can delay or even prevent the Scholar from conducting their research project. Also, do not assume that the mentee can work off of any prior IRB or IACUC approvals that faculty research projects receive.

## SUMMER

**Summer** – Scholars are awarded a stipend and provided allowances for room and board. These enable students to devote full-time effort to the program. (Limited funds will also be available to the Scholars to support their research projects at the execution stage.) They are expected to regard their fellowship as a full-time (a minimum of 40 hours per week) commitment.

Many McNair mentors regard the summer fellowship as an independent study. However, you should be aware of significant differences regarding the work expectations of McNair students as opposed to

students participating in other programs or projects where a research study is the sole focus. In addition to their research, McNair scholars may be devoting significant time to weekly classes and meetings (please see summer calendar for details- this calendar will be provided in the month of May).

**Schedule** – For the purpose of instructional offerings, the summer session will formally begin the first **Sunday of June and end on the first Saturday in August**. However, the specific length of the research experience shall be agreed upon by both the student and the faculty and shall be not less than eight weeks. For research projects being conducted on the campus of the University of New Hampshire, faculty will attend the Research Seminar Series sponsored by the McNair Program with the McNair participant. The Luncheon Seminar Series are weekly during the summer in the months of June and July.

During the summer, each Scholar is expected to spend a minimum of 40 hours per week on McNair Program academic activities. This time may include, weekly meetings with mentors to discuss and monitor project progress, as well as time to discuss academic and professional goals.

In addition, please note that during the summer all Scholars are required to attend the workshops, discussion group and advising sessions that have been planned as part of the McNair experience. We make every attempt to schedule these workshops and events in a manner that will maximize the time allotted for uninterrupted research. The following list represents those items in the summer schedule that are deemed either mandatory or optional for participants:

- A graduate school preparation seminar [INCO 400] – *mandatory*
- A writing workshop course- mandatory [INCO 699-02]- *mandatory*
- McNair summer research course/summer research seminar series [INCO 710]- *mandatory*
- GRE test preparation access via Magoosh – *optional*
- Attendance at McNair Summer Research Conference(s) (and/or visits to graduate programs) - *optional*

**Research Responsibilities** – McNair participants begin the research process by drafting a research proposal to investigate a topic in which to conduct further research. Scholars will design and construct a research project and draft a proposal during the spring. Scholars will execute their research in the following summer and/or academic year.

**Summer Research Project:** Participants will carry out the research project under the direction of a faculty member through enrollment in the McNair Research Execution [INCO 710] course. Scholars are expected to work fulltime (40 hrs/wk) on their research projects (and McNair Program academic activities) during the summer session. Scholars are required to submit weekly research logs demonstrating their progress toward completion of the project. The logs are submitted via Canvas and require faculty mentor approval, which is also given via Canvas. The research experience provides students the opportunity to understand that research requires a great deal of internal motivation and self-discipline. Although the research process may be mostly self-directed, your mentee may need your guidance to stay focused and to realistically assess their progress.

**Symposium** – Scholars will present their projects as works in progress at the final Research Symposium in the last or second to last week of the summer session. The mentee should be assisted in preparing a poster presentation of work completed to date that is appropriate for and similar in style to the type of presentation expected at professional meetings in their field. The mentee should be encouraged to plan and practice their presentation carefully, to help them stay calm and focused, and to help stay within the time limit. The Research Seminar Series will help the participant develop and refine their presentation skills. For costs associated with preparing visual aids (the poster), participants should contact the McNair program support assistant.

***Mentor Compensation*** – Mentors will receive \$750 (paid biweekly in the summer, in accordance with the normal university pay schedule; taxed) for their summer work as a token of appreciation and will be paid in accordance with the normal university pay schedule. (Please note that faculty are required to complete and return a *Request for Approval of Supplemental Effort and Compensation* form in order to be receive this amount. Also, please note that for compensation to be remitted the various approving authorities must consent.)

## POST-SUMMER

***Schedule*** – For the purpose of conducting the research project, participants are encouraged to enroll in an independent study with the faculty mentor during the fall, which should preferably be in the student's major area of study. In the spring semester, all Scholars are required to attend the Research Seminar Series in early April after their summer research to practice their presentations before the UNH URC in April.

***Dissemination*** – Scholars must present their research at the undergraduate research conference (URC) and may present at other academic conferences or symposia. The mentee should be assisted in preparing a presentation of the project, to include the results and conclusions, and the presentation should be in a style similar to the type of presentation expected at professional meetings in their field. The mentee should be encouraged to plan and practice their presentation carefully, to help them stay calm and focused, and to help stay within the time limit. The Research Seminar Series will help the participant develop and refine their presentation skills. Scholars are encouraged to develop visual aids for the presentation as appropriate. Many students develop PowerPoint presentations or create professional level poster presentations. As a reminder, for costs associated with preparing visual aids, participants should contact the McNair program support assistant.

***Paper/Article:*** The mentee will prepare a research article of publishable quality due March 31<sup>st</sup> for students conducting summer/fall research (or May 15<sup>th</sup> for students conducting fall/spring research). Articles should be prepared in a style appropriate to the field of study, and of a quality similar to those submitted to professional or undergraduate research journals. [The length and style of the paper will depend upon the nature of the project and the field of study but should be no less than ten pages.] Optional, but encouraged, the article can be submitted for publication to at least one research media.

***Beyond the Research*** – Scholars will strive to maintain a relationship with mentors after the research project has ended. During the senior year, most scholars begin the graduate school application process and may ask you to assist by providing advice on appropriate programs/schools and/or they may ask for a letter of recommendation.

The McNair program encourages scholars to attend professional/academic conferences during the academic year to present their research findings. The program also provides limited funding for students to attend such conferences during their junior or senior year. The mentee may seek your assistance in determining which conference is appropriate to their field of study. While we prefer that students attend conferences along with their mentors, this is not always possible. Unfortunately, our budget does not always allow us to provide travel funds to mentors attending conferences with their mentees.

If your mentee wishes to attend a conference using McNair funding, they must submit a completed Funding Request Form available on the McNair Scholars Program website ([www.unh.edu/mcnair](http://www.unh.edu/mcnair)). We will then advise the mentee of any monies that may be available.

***Graduate School Planning*** – Scholars are required to identify at least five (5) appropriate graduate programs to which they will apply (both Masters and PhD programs). In order to help the mentee in making appropriate graduate school selections consider the list below.

a) *Identifying graduate programs*: Please talk to the mentee about strategies for researching and identifying graduate programs that are appropriate to their needs and interests. You may wish to offer suggestions about the types of information the Scholar should include in their graduate application. The McNair program staff will also assist Scholars in this process through workshops and individual consultations.

b) *Uncertainties about graduate study*: Please invite the mentee to discuss any concerns they may be having about graduate study. This will help the mentee to develop realistic expectations of graduate education and ideas as to how that education will relate to their career goals.

c) *Financial support for graduate school*: At least two thirds of the Scholars in this program are low-income individuals (as defined by national poverty statistics). It is quite possible that many of them will have incurred debt in order to attend their undergraduate institutions and that they may be quite concerned about their ability to finance the lengthy road to a doctorate. Please discuss strategies with the mentee and help make them aware of any scholarships and fellowships in the field to which they may apply. The McNair Program staff will also assist Scholars in this area through workshops and individual consultations.

**Questions** – If you have questions about being a McNair mentor, please contact us by email at [mcnair.program@unh.edu](mailto:mcnair.program@unh.edu).