

McNair Scholars Program

Handbook

2024-2025



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Description of Activities

Program Description

Because the United States has asserted a commitment to providing educational opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, ethnic background, or economic circumstance, the US Congress established a series of programs to help low-income Americans enter college, graduate, and move on to participate more fully in the nation's economic and social life. These Programs are funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and are referred to as the TRIO Programs (initially just three programs). While student financial aid programs help students overcome financial barriers to higher education, TRIO programs help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education.

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is designed to encourage undergraduate students from economically challenged, first-generation, and/or students from racially underrepresented backgrounds in graduate school to consider careers in college teaching as well as to prepare for doctoral study. The program was named in honor of an astronaut, Dr. Ronald E. McNair, who died in the 1986 space-shuttle explosion. Currently, there are 187 programs, serving 4,191 students. The McNair Scholars Program at the University of New Hampshire (UNH) has been in existence since 1991 and serves 32 Scholars per year.

McNair Program Philosophy

Challenge and support are the fundamental ingredients in the McNair Scholars Program's educational philosophy. A student is most likely to grow academically and personally when they are both highly challenged and highly supported. The program structure attempts to foster high challenge and high support and thus facilitate skill development and motivation through academic research and mentoring. Because the research experience and strong relationships with faculty are critical to preparation for doctoral study, participants will have the opportunity to work with highly skilled faculty who are among the world's most distinguished scientists, researchers, poets, historians, economists, and analysts.

The mark for determining high-quality research will be:

- 1) The assessment and funding of the research proposal by a panel of reviewers on the McNair Advisory Committee.
- 2) Each participant's final research article will be evaluated and approved by the faculty mentor.
- 3) Participants will be required to present their research at a local, regional, or national conference. Together, these assessments and activities will serve as efforts to triangulate the mark of high-quality research.

Academic Standard

One of McNair's goals is to prepare students for graduate school through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. Therefore, the program is set up to follow graduate school norms. Once a student is at the graduate level, they are required to earn a B or better in all graduate coursework. Therefore, as McNair students prepare for graduate school, they will be held to the same standards as graduate students by obtaining a B or better in any McNair course taken. Thus, a student enrolled in a CR/F or graded course offered by the McNair Scholars Program will need to earn a B or better to receive credit (CR) for their work. This includes all McNair courses listed under the *Courses* section of the handbook.

Student Expectations

1) Summer Scholars Agreement

Specific Commitments –

- Attend check-in on opening day and participate in opening events
- Attend program orientation week and photo shoot.
- Engage in research activities under the direction of a faculty/mentor, completing all assignments in a timely manner (40 hours per week minimum).
- Attend all designated program workshops, classes, events, and meetings, arriving on time and prepared (see program calendar for dates and times). All assignments must be completed by the deadlines set by the instructor(s).
- Complete and turn in weekly research logs, with approval from mentor.
- Schedule & attend weekly meetings with McNair Associate Director or Director, as needed.
- Present research at a conference or symposium.
- Participate in Summer Exit Debriefing.
- Draft and submit a research article of publishable quality, March 31st after your summer research experience.

General Expectations –

- Contact the McNair office and the instructor or event coordinator immediately if unable to attend any class/seminar or function.
- Check e-mail and phone daily for McNair communication.
- Notify McNair program staff of any potential schedule conflicts, including, but not limited to, class time conflicts, other travel, or personal emergency.
- Submit all research logs and other writing assignments to the McNair office by the scheduled deadlines with appropriate signatures/approvals.
- Complete all forms, evaluations, and other necessary program materials, submitting these items on or before specified deadlines.

2) Academic Year Contract

Requirements –

- Maintain a 3.0 or better GPA each semester.
- Attend at least one cultural/social event per academic year.
- Attend monthly academic advising sessions with your McNair advisor; biweekly for seniors.

- 3) New McNair Scholars
 - Attend New Student Orientation in the fall.
 - Enroll in *the Research Inquiry Seminar (INCO 610)* during spring semester.
 - Attend, at least, one Fall Workshop and one Spring Workshop and Research Seminar.

- 4) Current McNair Research Scholars (*those who have completed their summer research*)
 - Enroll in an independent study to continue the research project during the fall (and spring semester, if necessary). – *Optional*
 - Attend and participate in all Spring Research Seminar sessions (specific dates, time and location will be posted on the McNair calendar).
 - Draft and submit a copy of the final article of the research project. Due by March 31. Article must be approved by the faculty mentor, prior to submission to McNair.

- 5) Senior Scholars
 - Complete the GRE by October 1 (if needed for graduate program applications).
 - Apply to at least five graduate programs (Master/PhD/both).
 - Submit applications to viable graduate fellowships.
 - Visit graduate schools as necessary (Inquire w/McNair for funding).

General Responsibilities for all McNair scholars–

- Keep the McNair staff informed and up to date on progress.
- Always maintain a “professional relationship” with McNair staff and faculty.
- Complete and submit all program evaluation forms/documents.
- Notify the program staff if unable to attend a scheduled appointment or event. Make every effort to do this at least 24 hours in advance.
- Notify the program staff if you withdraw from school or the McNair TRIO Program, transfer to another college or university, or graduate.
- Meet with program advisor before withdrawing from any class.
- Remain in *Good Standing* as defined by the university.

Disciplinary Action:

1) Stipend Deduction

Participants should recognize that to be awarded an academic fellowship is a distinguished honor and thus, behavior and attitudes should align themselves in acknowledgement of this fact. If it should become necessary to discipline a McNair Scholar, the actions listed below will be employed.

- If the students GPA falls below a 3.0, they will be placed on probation and thus may also forfeit the stipend. Excessive violation will continue the probationary period or result in dismissal from the program.
- Stipend reduction will also be employed to deal with “non-academic” disciplinary issues; tardiness, absences, residence hall rules violations, etc.
- Stipends will be docked \$25 dollars for the first offense and double for each

offense thereafter (\$50 for second offense, \$100 for third offense). If a problem persists after third docking of stipend the student will be required to meet with the administrative team at which time the following stipend may be forfeited and/or you may be removed from the program.

- If you are registered for a conference and fail to attend or give us adequate time to cancel your registration, you will be required to refund the McNair program for all costs associated with the conference.

2) Probation

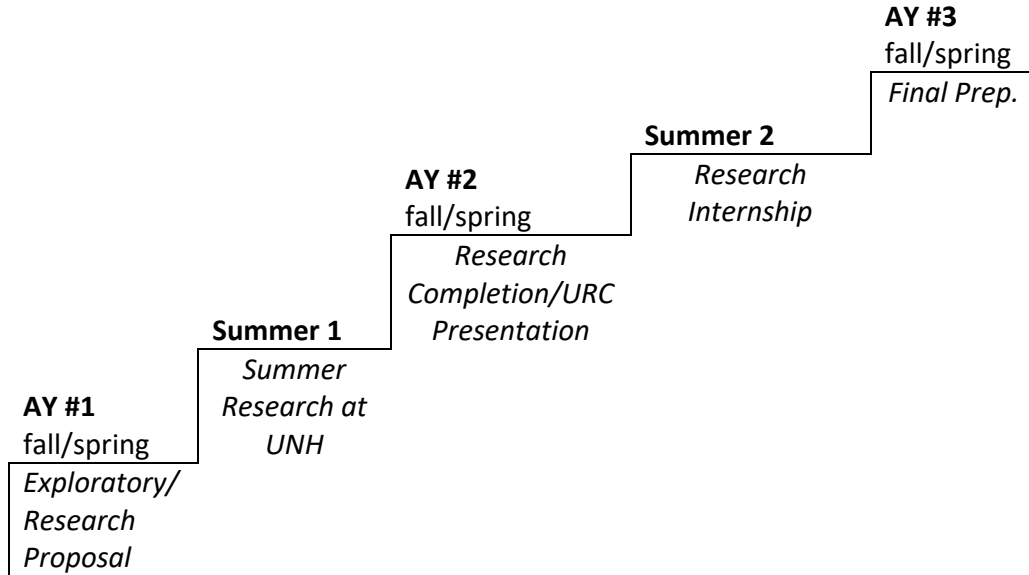
- A probationary period may be put in place to deal with academic or behavioral issues.
- Academic probationary period will consist of specified meetings with the program advisor to ensure that the student is following through on academic responsibilities.
 - Content of these meetings will be shared with the director, associate director, instructors, mentors, and peer advisors as necessary.
 - Length of probationary period will vary depending on the severity of the problem or until student's GPA is greater than 3.0.

3) Dismissal

- Expulsion from the program is warranted when there is a consistent lack of effort to improve academic or behavioral issues despite previous measures (e.g., stipend docking, probationary period).
- Expulsion from the program may also occur due to illegal substance use/possession, violent or threatening behavior, lack of academic integrity (plagiarism, etc.) and any other persistent and/or serious disciplinary issue(s).

Stages of Participation

The program employs a tiered system that, although not fixed, represents the process through which students in the UNH McNair Scholars Program are expected to progress in preparation for doctoral study. The stages in this system are as follows:



Exploratory/Research Proposal Stage (Academic Year #1) fall/spring sophomore year:

- FALL SEMESTER
 - Meet with McNair advisor for goal setting.
 - Attend at least one workshop.
 - Attend at least one cultural/social event (per academic year).
 - Attend New Student Orientation (late fall semester).
 - Begin search for a faculty mentor.
- SPRING SEMESTER
 - Enroll in INCO 610 – Research Inquiry Seminar (proposal writing).
 - Meet with McNair advisor.
 - Attend at least one workshop.
 - Attend at least one Research Seminar.
 - Attend at least one cultural/social event (per academic year).
 - Attend the Senior Celebration (to celebrate the seniors).

Summer Research at UNH Stage (summer #1):

- SUMMER (research could be done summer/fall or fall/spring semesters)
 - Participate in the 9-week summer research program.
 - Enroll in INCO 710 – Intro to McNair Research course. (2 credits)
 - Enroll in INCO 699 (01) – Writing Course

- Enroll in INCO 400 - Graduate School Preparation Seminar (this course may be held asynchronously. Students will be notified about the format of this course as the summer gets closer).
- Present research at McNair Summer Research Symposium (last or second to last week of the summer research program)

Research Completion/URC Presentation Stage (Academic Year #2) fall/spring junior year:

- FALL SEMESTER
 - Continue research with their faculty mentor.
 - Optional: students may enroll in INCO 790 (independent study course within the student's department).
 - Write a final paper/article on research project, due: March 31st
 - Attend a national McNair conference or other professional conference to present research conclusions (optional).
- SPRING SEMESTER
 - Present at one of the McNair research seminars in preparation for the URC (Undergraduate Research Conference) and attend all research seminars.
 - Register to present at UNH's URC (Undergraduate Research Conference).
 - Attend Senior Celebration (to celebrate the seniors).

Research Internship Stage (summer #2):

- SUMMER
 - Students are encouraged to participate in research or internship opportunities available through local and regional organizations (internship should be linked to student's academic discipline and interests). Scholars are encouraged to work with faculty, McNair staff, the UNH Office of National Fellowships office, and/or the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research to learn more and apply to research and internship opportunities.
 - Visit graduate schools (funding may be available through McNair- please speak to a McNair staff member about this).

Final Preparation Stage (Academic Year #3 fall/spring senior year):

- FALL SEMESTER
 - Engage in graduate school and financial aid application processes.
 - Take GREs, if required as part of your graduate school applications (by October 1st).
 - Fee waivers for graduate school applications are available (see Fee Waiver section of Handbook).
 - Attend professional conferences to present research.
 - Visit graduate schools.
- SPRING SEMESTER
 - Attend McNair Senior Celebration (typically the first or second week in May).

- Notify McNair of acceptances to graduate school and provide an electronic or paper copy of acceptance and financial aid awards.
- Visit graduate schools.

Overview of Research

1) Research Proposal

Scholars are expected to follow the research proposal guidelines indicated below, in addition to any field or discipline-specific standards. All drafts of the proposal are due in the McNair office by the dates and times specified on the calendar. The proposal must be typed written (standard 12-point Times font) and nine to twelve pages in length (excluding cover page, budget, timeline, and work cited). The mentor must submit a letter in support of the research proposal and the student's ability to carry out the rigorous project. The proposal must be submitted to the McNair program via email/Canvas. The following categories should be included in the project proposal:

- *Introduction* – what is the problem, question, theme or issue to be addressed? What definitions will apply? Also, address the significance, meaning, explain why the research is needed and what the broader implications of the study are. For example, social, practical, cultural, intellectual, etc.
- *Literature Review* – provide some history and background. What is the historical or theoretical context? What has or has not been done concerning the research topic? Conduct an extensive review of the literature. Weave the review of literature through a conceptual framework. Cite between 5-10 sources.
- *Methods/Methodology* – what approaches, procedures, theories, or lines of thinking will be used to gather the data or address the subjects? Why will the identified approaches, procedures or philosophical perspectives be used? How will the data be treated? What procedures will be applied or utilized in the analysis of the data? Why will such procedures be utilized?
- *Resources and Budget* – what will be needed to conduct this study (e.g., labs, equipment, computer services, library holdings)? Are off-campus resources required? If so, what are they? What is the plan to access them? Itemize all expenses directly related to the research project (see Research Supplies).
- *Timeline* – outline the schedule of the project with dates, identifying the expected start and completion times as well as showing time allotted to each major portion.
- *Works Cited* – list all primary and secondary sources in the appropriate field/discipline format.

2) Proposal Abstract

By the deadlines noted on the calendar, a one-page proposal abstract is due in the McNair office. In the top, right-hand corner of the abstract should be the student's name with the name of the mentor on the next line in the same position. On the following line, in the center of the page, should be the title of the paper/project. All names are to be exactly as they should appear on the program website. List the mentor's name and title exactly as they wish it to be listed. The abstract should be

limited to 300 words. It must be single-spaced, using standard 12-point font. Please visit the McNair website for examples, at www.unh.edu/mcnair. The final copy of the abstract must be approved and submitted to the McNair program via email/Canvas. The abstract, along with the student's photo, will be posted to the McNair Scholars webpage.

3) Research Article

The research article must be reviewed and approved, by the faculty mentor, prior to submitting the final paper to the McNair program. The student is expected to consult with their mentor for suggestions on where they could submit their paper for publication. This could be a professional journal in the specific field, a UNH undergraduate journal, or a national undergraduate journal.

4) Research Presentation

All McNair scholars are required to present their research at the URC (Undergraduate Research Conference) here at UNH-Durham. It is highly encouraged that students also present their research at a McNair conference or professional conference in their field of study. McNair will fund students to present at a McNair conference. Funding may also be available for students wishing to present at specific conferences in their field.

5) Research Hours/Logs

The research hours/logs are to be uploaded to Canvas weekly during the summer. Your stipend is directly tied to your research hours/logs and participation in other McNair activities. If you have failed to turn in Research hours/logs (or submit them late) or do not attend a Research Seminar and/or fail to participate in McNair activities/events, your stipend may be impacted or forfeited.

Mentoring

• Faculty Mentor

The program will take a multidimensional approach to mentoring. Students will be mentored in the professional sense by faculty researchers and in the lay sense by graduate students. The student is expected to approach a faculty member in their field to inquire about the professor's interest in working as a mentor for the student and investigating a research topic. Students may choose to create their own research project with the guidance of a faculty mentor or work alongside a faculty member on their current research. Faculty researchers serve as subject matter experts and provide direct guidance to students on their research projects.

• McNair Staff

All participants will have regular monthly advising appointments with the program advisor during the academic year (biweekly for seniors). During the summer, each participant will have regular weekly advising appointments with the program advisor or the program director, as needed. The purpose of these sessions is to check in with students regarding their Educational Action Plan (EAP) goals, provide direction toward stated long-term objectives, assist in their development of better study

habits, and aid in the exploration of graduate schools and financial aid. Students may also use these sessions for personal support.

- Graduate Student/Peer Advisor
In addition to faculty mentors, graduate student peer advisors will be employed during the summer. In conjunction with faculty, peer advisors will aid students in their understanding of issues related to research and will serve as role models for participants. Because the McNair program makes every effort to hire former McNair participants for this role, peer advisors become concrete examples of the next step participants will take in the pursuit of graduate study.

Courses

- **SPRING SEMESTER**
During the exploratory research stages, participants will attend courses and seminars designed to orient them to the idea of a comprehensive research project, generate elementary thoughts around a research project, and be introduced to concepts relative to doctoral study. Through these courses, the program aims to demystify the notions of graduate school and academic research, and to generate within participants the potential to see themselves in the role of academic researcher.

Research Inquiry Seminar (INCO 610) CR/F 2 CR: Offered spring semester. This course will introduce students to key concepts related to the conduct of research, with particular focus on research design and procedures that can be applied generally in most research settings. This course will present students with instruction on writing the components that make up a research proposal. Students will present their ideas for a research project and construct those ideas into a research proposal. Students will confront the ethical dilemmas inherent in their proposals and will have the opportunity to review and critique their work as they clarify their understanding of research and appropriate research methods.

- **SUMMER**
During the summer research experience, students are required to take 3 courses: *Graduate School Preparation Course*, *Writing Course*, and *INCO 710 Intro to McNair Research Course*. These courses are 8-9 weeks in duration.

McNair Research Experience (INCO 710) 4 CR- required: This is a required course offered during the summer for 8-9-weeks. In this course, students work one-on-one with a faculty mentor, similar to an independent study course, during the research project. In addition, class meets each Wednesday, and is taught/facilitated by a faculty member, where students will present the progress of their research projects in a friendly environment and receive feedback from peers and faculty mentors. Students will be engaged in identifying strengths and weaknesses and discerning the joys and frustrations of research. A one-hour lecture component follows the student presentations.

Graduate Preparation Course (INCO 400) CR/F 1 CR- required (this class may be held through a virtual graduate school preparation platform and have no credit, but would still be required- whether this will be an in-person, virtual, credit or no credit prep will be clarified as the summer gets closer): This seminar is offered in the summer only. The seminar explores issues related to graduate school preparation. Topics include researching graduate programs, graduate school culture, finding the right graduate school for you, graduate record exam (GRE), drafting your personal statement, curriculum vitae development, use of social media, and financing graduate school.

Writing Course (INCO 699) (non-credit)- required

This writing course will meet weekly for 1 hour, and 20 minutes over the summer research program and is specifically designed to supplement scholars' work in the INCO 710- Intro to McNair research course. It provides the space for scholars to start shifting their research proposal into a research paper by continually updating the literature review section, methodology section, results section, etc. It is strongly encouraged that scholars meet with the instructor during their office hours or by appointment.

Graduate Record Exam (GRE) Preparation- The McNair Program has funds to support students with preparing for the GRE through an online platform if any of their graduate school program applications require GRE scores to be submitted. Scholars should let McNair staff know of their desire to get support in preparing for the GRE as soon as possible.

- FALL SEMESTER

Independent Study (in students department) 2-4 CR (optional): Fall semester only. Students are encouraged to enroll in an independent study course, with their mentor as professor of record. The student and mentor are to draw up an outline/syllabus of the research steps that will be conducted during the fall semester through completion of the project, on March 31st. This course will be graded by the faculty mentor.

New Student Orientation 0 CR: Offered fall semester. This orientation will assist newly inducted scholars in understanding the program expectations. Students will learn about the namesake of the McNair Scholars Program, Dr. Ronald McNair, as well as how to proceed in setting research and graduate school goals.

Research Seminars

During the spring semester after their summer research experience, McNair scholars that are currently in the research phase will present their research progress orally to other members of the McNair community during one of the research seminars in the spring semester. This practice will allow students to sharpen their presentation skills, display their accumulated knowledge, and stimulate the curiosity that fuels the academic community. These research seminars will be attended by all McNair students. McNair

students not engaged in research, faculty, staff, and the broader campus community can attend to observe and interact with McNair scholars. These seminars are required for current research scholars! Students who are not currently engaged in a research project must attend at least one research seminar in the spring semester.

Cultural Events

To expose students to the broader constructs that frame our societal environment, as well as enhance their worldview and facilitate the acquisition of a global perspective, the McNair Program will provide access to cultural events for participants to attend. These events will include the fine arts, activities of ethnic diversity, and community/geographical events unfamiliar to McNair participants. During the academic year, participation in at least one (1) cultural event is required of all McNair students. During the summer component, all cultural events on the summer calendar are required.

Social Events

Social events will be sponsored to foster group cohesiveness and build camaraderie among participants. The McNair staff recognizes that sustained engagement in research can become an exhausting endeavor, social activities will be organized as a stress release, to promote good mental health, and facilitate strong social bonds between students. Social events are optional, unless otherwise stated.

Senior Celebration

The McNair Senior Celebration event is a time when we honor our seniors as they prepare to move on to graduate school. It is held in the MUB each May, during the first or second week of that month. A McNair alum, who has obtained their PhD, is the guest speaker and scholarships are awarded to some undergraduates. All McNair scholars are highly encouraged to attend to celebrate our seniors.

Funding Support

- **Research Conferences**

The program's goal in funding students' attendance at regional, state, and/or national conferences is to provide each participant with the opportunity for professional development. The program seeks to expose students to original scholarship and to allow them to interact with faculty in a different type of educational setting. When funds are limited, preference for conference attendance will be given to those students who will present their research. To receive funding from the McNair program for conference attendance, a *"funding request for research conferences form"*, which can be found on the McNair website under 'Scholar Resources', should be submitted by the appropriate deadlines:

Requests must be submitted at least four weeks in advance for students needing air travel and three weeks in advance for other transportation (car, bus, train).

The completed form requires the conference title, conference type (e.g., engineering, McNair, psychology), sponsoring organization, dates, location, justification for

attending, notation regarding intent to present research, and a detailed cost analysis. Presentation information should address the topic title, type of presentation (poster/oral), brief description of the information to be presented, and a list of any technical/visual aids needed. Scholars should check with the McNair office to clarify who will make the arrangements. Notifications will be made within two weeks of the deadline. Students who are funded must provide all receipts to the McNair office within seven days after the conference.

- **Graduate School Visits**

Juniors and seniors who have interviews with faculty members at prospective graduate schools may receive funding for travel and related costs through the McNair program. Priority consideration for graduate school visits will be given to seniors. Students will need to complete the “*funding request for graduate school visits form*”, which can be found on the McNair website under ‘scholar resources’ and submit the form to the McNair program Director to be considered for funding. The completed form requires the name of the school and location, the details of the appointments scheduled with faculty members, and itemized related costs (transportation, hotel, meals, etc.).

Requests must be submitted at least four weeks in advance for students needing air travel and three weeks in advance for other transportation (car, bus, train).

- **Fellowships/Scholarships**

McNair Summer Fellowship

Stipends/Research Hours/Logs

For successful completion of program expectations, scholars engaged in the research process will be provided with a stipend as a reward for research hours logged and participation in other McNair activities. The stipend will be distributed weekly (during the summer program) in equal installments.

Forfeiting of Stipends: Your stipend is directly tied to your research hours/logs and participation in other McNair activities. If you have failed to turn in logs (or submit them late) and/or fail to participate in McNair activities/events, your stipend may be impacted or forfeited.

Research Supplies

Research supplies include books, travel relevant to the project and research related equipment or tools. As part of the budget process, research expenses should be delineated and submitted with the research proposal. When itemizing expenses, list: cost per unit, number needed, total cost of each line item, and the item’s significance to your project. Each student may request up to a maximum of \$500 for research-related expenses. Shipping and handling costs should be factored into all budget requests where applicable. The research budget may include the following categories: general supplies, travel, equipment, and other expenses.

Donovan TRIO Scholarship and McDonough TRIO Scholarship

The Donovan family and those who donated funds through the McDonough TRIO Scholarship have made a generous contribution to the TRIO Programs at the University of New Hampshire. The focus is on the retention of students who, because of financial hardship, are having trouble staying in school. It is expected that such students face substantial hurdles in funding their education and maintaining their grades due to personal and family financial challenges. These scholarships are intended to provide monetary relief. Each scholarship is up to \$2,500. Applications to apply for these scholarships open in the spring semester and eligible scholars will receive an email about this during that semester.

- **Fee Waivers**

Graduate record exam (GRE) fee-reduction waivers and graduate school application fee waivers are provided through the McNair office staff. The following guidelines are to be followed:

GRE: The Educational Testing Service provides ten (10) fee reduction waivers per year to the McNair Program. Seniors have priority in obtaining a fee-reduction waiver. Contact the McNair program advisor for more information.

Graduate School Applications: On the Council for Opportunity in Education (COE) website (<https://coenet.org/for-mcnair-2/>), under popular links, there is a document titled: Fee Waiver List at a Glance, that lists the graduate schools that waive the application fees for McNair Scholars. If the institution to which you are applying is not on the list, contact the school to inquire about what you will need to do to obtain a waiver. Most schools that provide waivers need a letter to document your participation in the McNair Scholars Program. The McNair program director can provide such a letter. **Be sure to contact the director for such a waiver at least three weeks before you need it.** Please include the contact name, institution and physical address (email or fax number) to which the letter should be made. Schools vary on whether they want this letter mailed, faxed, or emailed so please gather accurate information. If the school requires an electronic request, please find out exactly how it is to be submitted (i.e., via email or via upload) and provide the director with the pertinent information.

- **Graduate School Preparation Textbooks**

All participants are provided with free Graduate School preparation textbooks that can help in preparing for the GRE and can be used during the Graduate School Preparation Seminar offered during the summer research fellowship program.

Services

- **Computer Lab**

In addition to the on-campus computer labs, students will have access to the McNair student office space. This student space is available to scholars all year long, Mondays through Thursdays, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm and Fridays, 8:30 am to 4:00 pm (except during vacations and holidays. Check with the staff regarding summer hours). The computers in the student office space can be signed onto with your UNH username and password.
- **Equipment Loan**

As a service to program participants, the McNair Program will make available to students the opportunity to borrow books, laptop computers, and other equipment and resources on a short-term basis. Borrowed items need to be returned to the McNair Office within seven days. All equipment must be signed out with an Equipment Loan Agreement form obtained from the McNair program assistant.
- **Peer Advising**

During the summer, group meetings occur weekly and are facilitated by the peer advisor(s). The purpose of the meetings is to provide a safe forum for students to express any personal concerns related to the program. The meetings offer the opportunity to support participants, give feedback and assist in problem-solving. Meetings also provide an opportunity for students to examine, process, and learn from the McNair experience. All summer participants are required to attend.
- **Counseling**

Scholars will have regular monthly advising appointments with the program advisor (seniors will meet bi-weekly) during the academic year. During the summer, each participant will have regular weekly advising appointments with the program advisor or the program director. The purpose of these sessions is to check in with students regarding their Educational Action Plan (EAP) goals, provide direction toward stated long-term objectives, assist with any concerns they may have about their research project, aid in the exploration of graduate schools, and financial aid, and provide personal support.