

# THE MCNAIR MESSENGER

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM AT UMBC

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## REM 15: NEW SCHOLARS INDUCTED

We welcome eight new scholars to the McNair family! REM 15 Scholars took the UMBC McNair oath on January 31, 2007, at a reception held on the seventh floor of the Albin O. Kuhn Library. The theme of the event was "The Dream Begins," after a quote by Dr. McNair who reminds us that "Before you can make a dream come true, you must first have one." Continuing Scholar DeLeon L. Gray shared a McNair Reflection. Director Cynthia M. Hill then led the candle-lighting ceremony, and the oath: a deeply symbolic promise that Scholars and their supporters would focus on the goal of obtaining a Ph.D., by keeping the flame of academic excellence alive inside of them. Continuing Scholar Jakana L. Thomas toasted the Scholars with words of encouragement. Thanks to everyone who made this a special night, and congratulations to the REM 15 Inductees:



REM 15 Scholars cut the cake during the toast

### REM 15

**Amina R. Bhatti**, Psychology

Dr. Charissa Cheah, Mentor

**Ebony L. Davis**, Psychology

Dr. Laura Ting, Mentor

**Tara L. George**, Africana Studies

Dr. Michelle R. Scott, Mentor

**Simonne M. Jones**, Biology/Art,

Mr. Symmes Gardner, Mentor

**Oluwaseun D. Olayiwola**, Biomedical Engineering

Dr. Mariajose Castellanos, Mentor

**Christopher M. Shelton**, Mechanical Engineering

Dr. Anthony R. Farquhar, Mentor

**Eleanor N. Thornton**, Political Science

**Jaemin Yi**, Psychology

Dr. Kenneth I. Maton, Mentor

### The McNair Scholars Program at UMBC

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DeLeon L. Gray (REM 14) delivers the McNair Reflection

## A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR...

I wish I could. I think I can. I know I can. I still know I can. I knew I could!!! These statements often are made by UMBC McNair Scholars during their journeys from being undergraduate students to earning Ph.D.s. After all, they are long and arduous journeys that require the proper combination of both internal motivation and external support to stay on course.

By the time UMBC McNair Scholars earn their baccalaureate degrees, they have received the education, training, and skills needed, and they know they can earn a Ph.D. At times while in graduate school, they have to remind themselves that they still know they can. We members of the external support teams for UMBC McNair Scholars also know they can.



Cynthia M. Hill leads new scholars in the candle lighting ceremony

Cheers to the REM 15s who, in the manner of Dr. Ronald E. McNair, have accepted the challenge and pledged to stay on course to the Ph.D., regardless of the obstacles that may show up along the way.

## MEET NEW SCHOLAR AMINA R. BHATTI

Hi, my name is Amina Bhatti. As a new McNair Scholar, my research focuses on the parenting styles and practices of Chinese immigrant parents. Under the mentorship of Dr. Charissa Cheah, I will examine how parenting styles and practices influence child social outcomes within a cultural context. In addition to the McNair Program, I recently received an Undergraduate

Research Award. For my URA project and senior honor's thesis, I will investigate the roles of psychological stress and Identity development in predicting adolescent mothers' risk behaviors. Most recently, I co-authored and presented a poster on acculturation, well-being and the parent-child relationship at the Society for Research in Child

Development biennial conference. I will also present portions of my ongoing research with Dr. Cheah at the Association for Psychological Science Conference in May, 2007. In addition to psychology research, I am also a social work major and member of the Phi Alpha Honor Society. Beginning in September, I will be completing a 9-month internship at the Office of the Public

Defender in Baltimore City. You can reach Amina at [abhatti1@umbc.edu](mailto:abhatti1@umbc.edu).



Amina R. Bhatti is a Junior, majoring in Psychology and Social Work

**MCNAIR SCHOLARS ABROAD:  
DOUGLAS E. NIVENS AND ELEANOR N. THORNTON**

For the last year, McNair Scholar Douglas E. Nivens (REM 14) has been living in Seoul, Korea, where he is studying abroad in the Division of International Education, at UIC Yonsei University. Douglas is a Political Science major, and his Mentor is Dr. Cynthia A. Hody. Here are a few words sent by Douglas from the far East:

*Back in high school, I dreamed of walking the streets of Seoul, chatting in Korean, and meeting my old friends. Now, my dream is a reality with unforeseen challenges, which has made me stronger and wiser. The highlight of every day is watching the sun rise over the thousands of buildings surrounding my campus. I met so many friends, saw my idol perform, and traveled to ancient temples. It is bittersweet to note that one day, I must leave.*

Also studying abroad this semester is Political Science major Eleanor N. Thornton (REM 15,) who is at the University of Cape Town in South Africa. Look to read about Eleanor’s experiences in an upcoming issue of the McNair Messenger.

**Study Abroad 101**

Are you interested in studying abroad but do not know how to start the process? Confused about how your credits can be used from a study abroad program? Have no idea of how to choose which program is right for you? Does the thirty-credit rule apply to study abroad? Why not come straight to the source and learn the real story about all these questions and more? Twice weekly throughout the semester the Study Abroad Office runs group advising sessions that they call “Study Abroad 101.”



**McNair Scholar Douglas E. Nivens studying abroad in Seoul, Korea**

During these informal sessions they discuss the following topics:

- Credit transfer
- Financial aid and scholarships for study abroad
- Strategies on choosing the right program for you
- Programs available to UMBC students

Study Abroad 101 sessions are held each week throughout the semester in 218 Administration Building at the following times:

**Mondays - 12:00 PM to 1:00 PM/ Thursdays - 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM**

You only need to come to one session to get all the tools you need to start your study abroad adventure. Get your basic questions answered and learn how to start planning for your semester, summer, year or January term overseas. You must come to a Study Abroad 101 session before you can make an appointment with the Study Abroad Coordinator!

**BLACK HISTORY MONTH TOUR OF THE WALTERS ART MUSEUM**



On February 17, 2007, McNair Scholars and Staff took a special tour of the African and African American Art collection at the Walters Art Museum in downtown Baltimore. The event commemorated Black History month by highlighting the achievements of Black artists from

around the world. The Walters has an extensive collection of Egyptian, Nubian, and Etrurian art. Among the most impressive pieces are two monumental 3,000 pound statues of the lion-headed goddess Sekhmet, sarcophagi, an intact mummy still in its original elabo-

rate wrappings, as well as images of kings, individuals, and intricately crafted jewelry. Also, on display are two bronze busts of the King and Queen of Darfur (Sudan), sculpted in 1848. After the museum tour, Scholars had lunch at Dukem, an Ethiopian restaurant. Keep your calendars open for upcoming cultural enrichment activities...

We are on the web!  
www.umbc.edu/mcnair

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Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, the Ronald E. McNair Post Baccalaureate Achievement Program provides experiences that prepare students for graduate education. The McNair Scholars Program is designed to prepare low-income, first-generation and minority college students for doctoral studies through involvement in research, mentoring, and other scholarly activities.

The UMBC McNair Scholars Program is funded with a \$224,227 grant from the U.S. Department of Education (60%) and with \$139,953 (40%) in contributions from non-federal sources

**McNair Program Staff**

**Ms. Cynthia M. Hill**  
Director

**Dr. April L. Householder**  
Assistant Director

**Dr. Jamaine S.C. Davis**  
Research Coordinator/  
Statistician

**Ms. Tiana L. Gardner**  
Administrative Assistant



**S C O L A R S H I P ... C O M M U N I T Y ... E M P O W E R M E N T ... L E G A C Y ... V I S I O N ... E X C E L L E N C E .**

## **MEET MCNAIR'S NEW RESEARCH COORDINATOR/ STATISTICIAN, DR. JAMAINE S.C. DAVIS**

Dear McNair Scholars and Staff:

I'm excited to be a part of the McNair Family and look forward to meeting everyone. Throughout my academic career, I realized the importance of having a diverse faculty and am thankful for a program such as the McNair Scholars. I completed my undergraduate degree in Chemical Engineering from Drexel University, and later developed a passion for conducting biomedical research. After redefining my life goals, I pursued a Ph.D. in Biochemistry &

Molecular Biophysics at the University of Pennsylvania, which I recently completed. My research focused on the biochemical characterization of an enzyme from Mycobacterium Tuberculosis. Having completed graduate school, it is my goal to help all McNair Scholars successfully gain admission into graduate school. Therefore, please contact me if I can help in any way.

- Jamaine S.C. Davis

Dr. Davis can be reached at [jamaine@umbc.edu](mailto:jamaine@umbc.edu)  
Room 010 MP/(410)455-1465



**Dr. Davis and McNair Scholars following Dr. Davis' research presentation, April 11, 2007**