



THE RESEARCH FOUNDATION
The State University of New York

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

Scholar Handbook



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THE LIFE OF DR. RONALD E. MCNAIR 1950 – 1986



Dr. Ronald Erwin McNair was born on October 21, 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina to Carl and Pearl McNair. The house in which he was born had neither running water nor electricity.

Although he grew up amidst crushing poverty, McNair always exhibited a deep thirst for scientific knowledge. After graduation from high school, he enrolled in North Carolina & State University. He graduated magna cum laude with a B.S. degree in Physics in 1971. McNair then enrolled in the prestigious Massachusetts Institute of Technology. In 1976 at the age of 26, he earned his Ph.D. in physics.

While working as a staff physicist with Hughes Research laboratory, he soon became a recognized expert in laser physics. In 1978 McNair realized his dream of becoming an astronaut; after being selected from a pool of 10,000 applicants for NASA's space shuttle program, he became the second African American to fly in space. He served as a Mission Specialist aboard the Space Shuttle Challenger.

In addition to his academic achievement, McNair received three honorary doctorate degrees and many fellowships and commendations. These included Presidential Scholar, 1967-1971; Ford Foundation Fellow, 1971-74; National Fellowship Fund Fellow, 1974-75; Omega Psi Phi Fraternity, Inc. Scholar of the Year, 1975; Distinguished National Scientist, National Society of Black Professional Engineers, 1979; and Friend of Freedom Award, 1981. McNair also held a fifth degree black belt in karate and was an accomplished jazz saxophonist.

Dr. Ronald E. McNair was killed in the Space Shuttle Challenger explosion on January 28th, 1986, which also claimed the life of the entire crew.

MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AT SUNY OSWEGO

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program at SUNY College at Oswego is designed to encourage, motivate and prepare students for doctoral study. As a two-year undergraduate research program model with an eight-week summer research component following their junior year, the scholars begin the program as either a sophomore or junior. The program addresses students' needs for research experience, faculty mentoring, information on graduate education and the application process, while improving academic skills – all in preparation for doctoral study completion.

Student eligibility includes a minimum grade point average of 2.75 or better. Two-thirds of the McNair Scholars are low income; the first generation of their family to attend college while one-third is from underrepresented groups (African American, Latino/Hispanic and Native American) in graduate school. They must be enrolled for minimal of 12 hours per semester during the academic year. Students are selected for their intellectual curiosity and vigor, interest in earning a doctoral degree and teaching at the university level. They are also selected based on their ability to pursue rigorous and substantive research.

The overall goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to prepare 26 Scholars each year to successfully pursue and apply to doctoral programs. The overall grant objectives as per the U.S. Department of Education are:

- 1. to recruit and enroll 26 Scholars and to maintain this number of participants through the life of the grant;**
- 2. to maintain or increase Scholars' grade point averages at 3.0 or better;**
- 3. to engage Scholars in high quality research and scholarly activities;**
- 4. to provide Scholars direct and indirect funding which supports their preparation for graduate school; and**
- 5. to support Scholars in their doctoral study plans with academic, financial and psychosocial through professional development seminars.**

WHAT THE MCNAIR PROGRAM EXPECTS OF ITS SCHOLARS

As a McNair Scholar, you are required to:

- Participate in bi-monthly workshops held on-campus;
- Meet with a Faculty Mentor regularly, usually twice a month;
- Finish all workshop assignments, if appropriate;
- If a Rising Senior, complete 140-hours of research by the first week of August;
- Present research findings at Summer Research Conference and QUEST;
- Produce a final project paper approved in form and content by the Faculty Mentor;
- Keep informed of current status, follow through on projects and ask for clarification when needed;
- Take advantage of the opportunities provided by your Mentor(s) such as attending and presenting at conferences.

MCNAIR SCHOLAR Expectations:

- Twice monthly workshops that provide practical instruction on how to achieve your goal of doctoral study;
- A stipend of \$400 per semester upon completion of assignments. Most Rising Seniors who participate in the summer research receive an additional \$2000;
- Graduate school visit travel monies and limited funding for supplies;
- Use of the office facilities and materials as appropriate to assist in your research and application process
- Individualized assistance such as reviewing/editing of personal statement and resume, GRE preparation course, and application assistance;
- Financial support to attend professional conferences;
- Free membership in a professional organization as seniors – based on the faculty mentor's recommendation;
- Half price waivers for the GRE and graduate school applications, where applicable.

WHAT TO EXPECT OF YOUR MENTOR

The Faculty Mentor participating in the McNair Scholars Program responsibilities consists of **ADVISEMENT, MENTORING AND RESEARCH**. All are equally important for our Scholars to achieve their goal of being accepted into and completing doctoral study.

I. **ADVISEMENT COMPONENT**

- ◆ Advise McNair Scholars on how to get into graduate school within their discipline. The Mentors inform Scholars about professional conferences they may attend and/ or present their research;
- ◆ Supports the Scholar as they set up professional networks. As a Mentor, you are attuned to the importance of establishing and maintaining networks in and across disciplines, higher education, etc.;
- ◆ Advises Scholars of professional journals, publications and organizations within their discipline;
- ◆ Sees opportunities for Scholars as well as the barriers they may face towards achieving their goals. We look forward to mentors guiding and assisting McNair Scholars to find realistic solutions.
- ◆ Help Scholars set realistic and attainable goals;
- ◆ Write supportive letters of recommendations for graduate school applications, fellowships, scholarships – as examples;
- ◆ Submits a final Mentor report with the McNair Office before the beginning of fall semester for suggestions of the upcoming semester as well as their overall evaluation and assessment of their Scholars' needs;
- Meets with the McNair Scholar regularly to monitor progress on research, the graduate school process and other possible concerns. These meetings may be an office visit, lunch/dinner, or an outing of mutual choice; and
- Including your McNair Scholar in academic symposiums, conferences and conventions are highly encouraged. Limited financial support is available. For further information, please review the Travel Policy on page.

As a suggestion, the following activities may assist you and the McNair Scholar in getting to know each other.

- 1) Exchange basic information

- a. Name, address, telephone number
 - b. Class/work/office hours schedules
- 2) Discuss expectations
- a. What each hopes to accomplish with this relationship
 - b. Pet peeves/things that annoy me
- 3. Discuss where to meet/times available
 - 4. Discuss any restrictions
 - a. How to address one another
 - b. Where I may be contacted (work/home) and appropriate times

MENTORSHIP

Some of the research focusing on mentorship states that some of the skills necessary for successful mentoring include: openness, genuineness, sincerity, knowledge of college resources, good interpersonal skills, communication skills, positive attitude, sense of humor, perceptiveness, caring attitude, dependability, accessibility, commitment, self-esteem, persistence, flexibility, sensitivity, discipline and empathy.

The primary purpose of the Faculty Mentor/ Scholar relationship is learning. One of the principle reasons that mentoring relationships fail is that the learning process is not tended to and the focus on learning goals is not maintained. Similarly to the campus, the McNair/ CSTEP Office fosters the learner-centered paradigm. In essence, the Scholar plays a more active role in their education, shares in the responsibilities, setting priorities and becomes self-directed. The Faculty Mentor's role is to nurture and develop the Scholar's capacity for self-direction from dependence, to independence and eventually to interdependence as a future college/ university professor and/ or researcher.

III. RESERCH COMPONENT

Research is an important component of a McNair Scholar's preparation for graduate study. The grant requires each Scholar to complete 140-hour (minimum) summer research project beginning in the spring semester of the junior year. The project is to be completed by the last Friday in the month of September immediately following the summer research program. The McNair Faculty Mentor can assign components of their larger projects to McNair Scholars, understanding that they will teach the PROCESS of research. The Scholar will present a report at the end of the project, which may be on the process or on the product, the completed component.

One of the goals of the McNair Scholar at SUNY Oswego is to demonstrate to a graduate admissions committee their ability to do research within their discipline. The Faculty Mentor should assist the Scholar in choosing a project that is significant and of publishable quality. In addition, the Faculty Mentor guides the Scholar's research as if they were completing a thesis. The benefits of the research projects are the following:

- Scholars learn research methodology in their discipline and come to understand expectations common to graduate study and professional life beyond it
- Research projects often distinguish applicants for admission to graduate programs
- Generally speaking, students who have direct/independent study courses as part of their work in their major are generally looked on more favorably in the application process
- Through close contact with their Faculty Mentor, Scholars should be able to receive a more detailed letter of recommendation
- The research project may be presented as a part of the end of the Summer Research Banquet, QUEST and at local, regional, and/ or national conferences.

While outcomes vary, the research steps are generally the same and your McNair Scholar should participate in most, if not all of them. These steps are: Development/ Idea Formulation, Literature Review, Research Design (Methodology), IRB (if appropriate), Data Collection and Data Analysis.

We have adapted the format used by the Department of Psychology (Dr. Becky Burch) as a template. Not all of the steps outlined will be pertinent to all disciplines. More specifically, listed below are some of the areas that will be covered with the Scholar in general McNair research sessions. We expect the Scholars to use the general information while tailoring it to their research projects under the guidance of the Faculty Mentors.

1. In Development - Idea Formation

- a. What is it that you want to investigate?
- b. What observations have you made regarding your topic that you want to study?
- c. What articles have you read that have left you with questions?
- d. Given an idea about a research topic/specific question about all the possible factors- are there biological bases? Social factors? Personality differences? Gender differences? Childhood or familial factors? List every variable you can that could possibly affect your topic. These are the variables you will have to investigate, either to show their effect on the subject matter, or to rule them out.

2. Literature Review

- a. A research project is only as good as the literature review conducted before it begins. If you do not do a thorough enough lit review, you risk conducting and completing a study that has already been done, or repeating flaws and confounding variables that have already been listed. If this occurs, there is a good chance your research, and all your work, will not be publishable.

- b. Examine all the relevant literature- including research on the factors you want to rule out.
- c. Pay close attention to any review articles that exists.
- d. Go through the reference section of the articles you have, particularly the review articles, to find other research of interest.
- e. Identify researchers whose names appear over and over in lit search and in reference sections. Conduct a literature search on those names to find more material
- f. If there is an article that is integral to your research topic, and was not written too recently, go to the library and find the article(s) in the Social Sciences Citation Index (these are usually paper editions in the reference area of the library, but may be available as computer programs), for example. Starting with the year the original paper was published, search for that author and article every year after, up to the present. This will give you a list of all the articles that cited that study. This will be vital. If any studies have replicated, failed to replicate, or extended the findings, they would have had to cite the original study, and they will be listed.
- g. If it helps, make a chart or list of all the articles, what they studied, what they found, and what flaws you found.
- h. By conducting this thorough lit review, you can determine what are the important factors to include and what variables can be ruled out in your study. There may be some contradiction in the literature concerning a particular variable. You can now study this variable in more detail, being careful not to repeat any mistakes from previous research.
- i. Once the review is done, you can write a review article yourself, but at the very least you can lay out all the relevant literature in your introduction, and clearly show why your study is improves on previous studies and is important.

3. Research Design

- a. Discuss with your Faculty Mentor the best way to study your particular research topic. There are usually several different ways to study a topic; surveys, experimental manipulation, observation. You can also study different facets of the topic in different ways. For example, if a child's resemblance to their father affects how they are treated, you can study this by using surveys- asking children or parent's questions regarding resemblance and treatment, or you can manipulate this experimentally, altering pictures of children and seeing how people react to them. You can also develop within subjects or between subject designs.

- b. There should be several different possible designs. Determine with your Faculty Mentor what is the optimal design, what is the most feasible, etc., then decide which to use.
- c. It is possible that you will not have the time, money, or space to do exactly what you want. It is important to realize that you can't necessarily conduct the best study in scientific history- especially your first time out. Do the best you can, and while paying attention to the details, do not get bogged down debating the merits of every facet of the experiment, if applicable. Pay attention to detail but step back periodically to look at the big picture.
- d. Discuss the design with people you trust to get feedback regarding confounding variables, other variables you may have overlooked, and to make sure that all questions and procedures are clear.

4. IRB Review - Proposal Submitted

- a. Pay close attention to the forms used by the institution. Be sure to understand their policies regarding research with human's subjects, and specific populations.
- b. Be sure to be as clear as possible regarding procedures in your IRB proposal. Write in layman terms whenever possible.
- c. Include any previous studies, proposals, or materials necessary to make your case clear to the IRB. This does not mean, "include your entire lit review". Briefly state your case using the relevant literature and make sure the IRB has copies of your testing materials, information regarding previous similar IRB proposals, or a copy of the study you wish to replicate.
- d. The most important thing is that the IRB should not be confused regarding any part of your study or need more information to make its decision.

5. IRB Review - Revisions Submitted

- a. If the IRB asks for changes to a protocol, reply as quickly as possible.
- b. If you disagree with a particular revision, discuss this with the IRB to determine a compromise or alternative.

6. Data Collection

- a. Before collecting any data, testing those running subjects to be sure that they can run the procedures correctly.
- b. Conduct a pilot study if procedures are complicated or if there is some question regarding procedures. Use this data to determine if procedures should be changed, if more training is needed, and to "work out the bugs" and ensure that future data collection will run smoothly.

- c. Discuss with your Faculty Mentor how this data will be organized and where it will be stored.
- d. If when dataset is being set up in SPSS (if applicable), label everything. Make sure all variable titles and labels are clear. If variables are a result of calculation (sums, averages, etc.) label them as such. This is possible on SPSS using the “Transform/compute” function.
- e. If variables have to be recoded, recode them into new variables in case you make a mistake.
- f. Make periodic checks to make sure the data is being organized properly and saved to a hard drive. ***Number all cases and label the raw data accordingly.*** Choose a case at random (for example a survey) and check this case in the dataset. It is best to have more than one person making checks. Be sure to make copies of the data to prevent loss.

7. Data Analysis

- a. Make a list of all the variables and relationships you want to investigate. You already have a list in your head, but when you start analyzing data, you may lose track and examine some relationships repeatedly while overlooking others. Be sure to list all the variables that may measure a particular behavior.
- b. Make sure all variable titles and labels are clear. If variables are a result of calculation (sums, averages, etc.) label them as such. This is possible on SPSS using the “Transform/compute” function.
- c. If variables have to be recoded, recode them into new variables in case you make a mistake.
- d. Choose a case at random (for example a survey) and check this case in the dataset. It is best to have more than one person making checks. Be sure to make copies of the data to prevent loss.
- e. Discuss with your Faculty Mentor the best statistical tests to analyze the data, if applicable. Do not be hesitant to discuss statistics with other faculty as well- they may be familiar with other models or tests.
- f. In some cases, different statistics will require reorganization of the dataset. Create a copy of the dataset and label it for the tests being used or how it is organized.
- g. If a particular pattern in the data is confusing, create a graph- this may make it easier to understand. When making graphs, be sure to have the axes either set to zero or of an appropriate range. SPSS can sometimes only show very short ranges that imply there is a greater effect than there actually is.

- h. Make a list of your important findings, the numbers and the significance levels. If you do this in a word document, you can reorganize it into a result section easily.

Scholars submit their projects as a hard copy to the McNair Office with the *Faculty Mentor Signature of Approval Form*. Scholars also submit an electronic form to the office for the Summer Research Journal. We will publish their projects in our Summer Research Journal that appears in spring semester of the Scholar's senior year.

Scholars include their projects as a writing sample for the applications for graduate school. As a courtesy, the Mentor should also receive a copy.

Given the focused nature of the research, the length of the final paper should be in the range of 20-25 pages for research in the humanities and social sciences, and possibly shorter for disciplines that are more numerically-oriented.

Those McNair Scholars whose research project is a performance or exhibition should submit evidence of completion, such as a program, portfolio or videotape, and should document the theoretical component of their research in a paper.

□

FROM HERE TO THERE

SOPHOMORE/JUNIOR

- attend all McNair meetings and turn in all assignments
- update/create resume;
- complete an Educational Plan and begin the Graduate School Matrix;
- choose mentor(s) and plan a research project;
- strengthen academic record, asking for tutoring if necessary;
- interview faculty members in field of interest for their suggestions about graduate schools, examine graduate school choices, and review requirements;
- determine entrance exam requirements;
- participate in GRE workshops and take entrance exam, if required;
- gather financial aid information and information about waivers, assistantships, and scholarships;
- draft personal statement and have it critiqued;
- visit potential graduate schools;
- attend Graduate/Professional and Career Fairs - ask questions!!!!

SENIOR

- attend all McNair meetings and turn in all assignments;
- select 8-10 institutions for applications – find out deadlines, entrance exams needed (rolling admissions policies etc.);
- request application fee waivers, if needed;
- refine personal statement/have critiqued MANY times by “experts”;
- take or (retake, if needed) entrance exam early in Senior year;
- collect financial aid documentation;
- arrange for recommendation letters; and
- Select faculty for letters of recommendation

From Here to There: Student Agenda

Sophomore Year

Apply to McNair Program

Junior Year

Prepare for Graduate School

- Research graduate schools & funding sources
- Take the GRE or other entrance exams
- Begin Graduate School Admissions Portfolio
- Attend graduate school and career fairs
- Receive individualized advising and assistance

Scholarly Activities

- Attend McNair Forums
- Attend professional or academic conferences
- Plan for Summer Research
- Enroll in courses with an eye towards grad school e.g., research methods, foreign lang.

Summer Research Project

- Conduct Research Project with Faculty Mentor
- A Stipend of \$2000
- Housing is included, if living on campus
- Graduate School and Presentation Skills Preparation
- Peer Support and Networking

Senior Year

Apply to Graduate School

- Attend graduate school and career fairs
- Prepare and Submit Grad Admission Portfolio
- Take or retake GRE or other entrance exams
- Plan campus visits/ interview faculty and graduate students
- Plan for and complete financial aid (FASFA) applications

Scholarly Activities

- Complete Summer Research Project
- Attend conferences, professional and student-centered
- Attend McNair Seminars & workshops
- Present research/ publish abstracts & papers

Complete Baccalaureate Degree

Graduate School

Travel Opportunities for McNair Scholars

As a benefit of participation in the McNair Scholars Program, you may request funds for local or distant travel to visit graduate programs, attend graduate school fairs, and to attend or present your research at professional or undergraduate research conferences/ meetings. Travel is generally restricted to the 48 contiguous states and Puerto Rico.

In order to attend an event, you must be in good standing with the McNair Program. This means you must have completed the appropriate items listed in the Terms of Agreement, which includes attending meetings and forums, working to complete current research, etc.

Student Travel Policy

All travel is approved on a case-by-case, first-come-first-served basis and if monies are currently available within the grant. Full funding for travel is not guaranteed. Costs and travel must be deemed reasonable. If you have questions, please contact Dr. Adrienne Morton at x4079 or via email at mcnair@oswego.edu.

Students will receive funding to support their graduate school visitation if any of the following criteria are met:

- The student has clearly articulated a request in writing for funding support prior to visiting the school.
- The student has a scheduled interview with a graduate dean, committee, or other departmental representative (submission of scheduled appointment).
- The student is genuinely interested in the university where their program of study is available.
- The Director deems travel costs reasonable.

Student travel money is still available in the current budget.

Students may receive funding for conference travel if they meet the following criteria:

- The student has received prior permission from the Director to represent the grant in this manner.
- The student has clearly articulated a detailed one-page request in writing for funding support (where located, purpose for this particular conference, relevance to research or field of study).
- The student is presenting research findings at the conference- in an oral or poster presentation format.

- The student is traveling with a group as part of the Summer Research Experience or a scheduled event for grant participants.
- The Director deems travel costs reasonable.

Student travel money is still available in the current budget.

Travel cost may include:

- Airfare or mileage reimbursement.
- Meals and lodging if arrangements have been made through the McNair Office prior to travel.
- Tolls and parking expenses.
- Conference registration fees

Travel Policy and Travel Tips

Selection Process

Factors taken into account when approving travel requests include: has the requestor fulfilled their Terms of Agreement to participate fully as a McNair Scholar; what is the purpose for their travel; is the request complete. All McNair Scholars in good standing with the program are eligible to apply for travel funds. However, depending on demand and available funds, priority will go to students who are presenting their research.

Submission of requests does not guarantee approval. Students will be selected upon factors such as completion of items in Terms of Agreement, thoroughness of request, and number of events already attended and if presenting research projects.

Once we have received the appropriate information, we will let you know as soon as possible whether or not your request has been approved.

Submitting Travel Requests

Travel Requests for conferences, academic meetings, campus visits, or to conduct research should include the following:

- 1) **Travel Payment Request Form (Enclosed with this packet and also available in the McNair Office)**
- 2) **Attach a written, formal request** with the Travel Payment Request form (hard copy or email). **Your formal request should include:**
 - **title and type of event**

- **sponsoring organization**
- **dates and location**

- **justification for attending** (How does this relate to your field of study; what presentations do you plan to attend, etc.)

- **completed registration form** (most conferences, professional or academic organizations have websites from which you may obtain detailed information)

- **presentation information** (for McNair or other undergraduate conferences)
 - title of your research presentation
 - type of presentation oral or poster
 - abstract Follow conference guidelines. Most conferences have a limited word-length for abstracts to be included in the conference program, e.g. 150-200 words
 - presentation aids required For example, overhead projector, PowerPoint, etc. Note: Some conference facilities have limited resources for PowerPoint.
 - faculty mentor – name and title

- **itinerary (for campus or research visits)**
 - name of institutions you plan to visit
 - names and appointment times with faculty, graduate admission personnel and/or graduate students

3) Estimate of costs for:

- conference registration fee
- accommodations/lodging
- meals (are meals included with the conference registration fee?)
- transportation (roundtrip fare: air, bus, personal, or rental car)

4) Due Date All requests must be submitted **four weeks** before the registration deadline (conference or event). This timeline is mandatory as it allows the program to obtain the best prices; make travel arrangements; and pre-pay registration, transportation, an/or accommodation fees, if appropriate.

After the Event

Upon your return from the event, you must submit a **written report** and a **Travel Payment Request** form (if you would like to be reimbursed for other travel expenses that were not prepaid). These forms are **due within 15 days of the trip**. After this time, you will not be reimbursed for travel expenses.

- **Written Report:** Submit a brief (one to two page) report for the McNair office files. Include:
 - information about the panels, key note addresses, conference sessions and workshops that you attended
 - what you may have learned or how you benefited from the experience
 - people with whom you networked: graduate school faculty or admissions staff; other McNair Scholars whose research interest is similar to yours
 - your opinion on whether or not you would recommend the conference to other McNair Scholars

- **Travel Payment Request form:** Submit a completed Travel Payment Request.

Only expenses approved in advance will be reimbursed. All other expenses will be considered luxuries and are incurred at the expense of the scholar. Also, reimbursement is generally for expenses that cannot be pre-paid by the McNair Program, such as approved ground transportation, and meals not included in the conference registration fee. The only meals covered are breakfast and dinner unless these meals are covered by the conference.

The Research Foundation will not pay for any expenses other than those of the scholar.
Include:

Research Foundation Travel Payment Request form – **Remember to sign!**

Receipts (as appropriate)

- Airline tickets
- Meals
- Subways and buses where possible
- Airport shuttle (arranged by McNair office)
- Taxi fares
- Accommodations
- Registration fees

If applicable, mileage (the mileage of your trip should be monitored, recorded, and noted on the back of the Travel Payment Request form)

Receipts for **prior approved expenses** should be taped in chronological order to a regular size piece of paper (8 ½ x 11).

Research Foundation Travel Payment Request forms are available in the main office, 106 Poucher Hall or the Research Foundation Office in the Penfield Library Basement, Room 4.

● Remember: All expenses must have prior approval to be reimbursed.

Acceptable expenses

Travel
Lodging
Meals
Registration
Ground transportation
(such as van or group shuttle service,
personal auto mileage, etc.)

Unacceptable Expenses

Any and all forms of entertainment
Excessive tipping
Alcoholic beverages of any type
Souvenirs
Gasoline for your personal auto
Transportation for personal “outings”
Personal items, such as pharmacy
Snacks, in-between meals

Ground Transportation: Taxis can be extremely expensive and should be avoided when possible. You are encouraged to take public transportation such as subways and buses. Take advantage of the free hotel shuttles, if available. If approved in advance, the program will reimburse personal auto mileage at \$.485 per mile. If personal auto transportation has been approved, please remember to clock the distance you travel.

Tipping: University policy does not allow excessive tipping on meals. When en route there may be “Red Caps,” “Curbside Check-in” or other airport baggage carriers. The use of these is not considered to be legitimate expenditures. If you must take a taxi, receipts are imperative and tipping must be minimal. Do not use or tip bellboys. You should carry personal luggage so never take more than can be carried. Do not use excessive, unnecessary housekeeping services or tip housekeeping staff.

Alcoholic Beverages: Reimbursement for alcoholic beverages is not allowed.

Telephone: Collect calls will not be accepted, and telephone calls made during the trip will not be paid for. **Telephone calls are made at your own expense.** Hotels charge for the use of the telephone, whether local or long distance; it is cheaper to use a pay phone.

Personal Items: Personal items, such as over-the-counter remedies or souvenirs, will not be reimbursed.

IMPORTANT NOTICE: If the McNair Program has made arrangements and you do not attend the event, you are responsible for refunding the McNair Program for any expenses that have been prepaid.

Graduate School Fairs

At graduate school fairs you will be able to:

- Meet with graduate school representatives from around the country
- Gather information about specific departments, obtain current applications for admission, catalogs and financial aid information
- Ask burning questions you may have after researching a program

Campus Graduate School Recruitment Fairs

The Office of Career Services at most college campuses and universities sponsor recruitment visits from representatives or alumni from different graduate schools. If you learn about graduate school fairs or open houses scheduled at other campuses, please inform McNair staff as well as your colleagues. Your peers may be interested in attending.

Many graduate schools offer application fee waivers exclusively to McNair Scholars. Check the web for the most current listing of participating institutions:

www.rochester.edu/college/mcnair_program/appincintives.html

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL FAIR EXPERIENCE

Your first visit to a graduate school fair may be an overwhelming and confusing experience. The myriad of graduate school reps, large quantities of information and the mass of students crowding around tables may be intimidating, especially if you haven't narrowed your focus of graduate study.

The following suggestions might help you organize your Graduate Fair plan of attack:

1. **DRESS** appropriately. Gentlemen: clean blue jeans are okay but add a shirt and tie. Ladies: Dress slacks or skirt and blouse are preferable. Remember, your attire makes a statement about you. However, on the flip side, the grad school rep is as interested in making as good of an impression on you as you are on him or her.
2. **WALK** around the ballroom first before approaching a table. This enables you to get an overview of what schools are where. Prioritize the schools you want to visit rather than randomly going from table to table. Usually a list of what schools will be represented is

available in advance.

3. **KNOW** what you want to pursue in graduate school before you approach any graduate school rep. Your career exploration needs to be completed before you enter graduate school. Career Services can help you do that.
4. **PREPARE** a one-minute intro of who you are, your major, school of undergraduate work, and what kind of graduate study you are interested in pursuing.
5. **ANTICIPATE** some of the questions that you might get from the grad school rep. For example: What is your area of specialty? How did you hear about us? How can we help you reach your career goals? etc...
6. **SHOW** interest and enthusiasm for the institution you are investigating. Although you are not preparing for a formal interview, you are making a first impression.

ASK questions. There are some specific questions you are going to want to ask:

Do you have a graduate program in my particular field of study?

What information can you tell me about my program?

What kind of financial assistance is available? - assistantships, fellowships, tuition waivers, stipend, etc.

What is their application process? When does the school recommend I need to apply? How long before I hear a response on my acceptance?

Ж Questions to Ask Any Graduate Program Ж

1. What do you teach here?
2. What is the largest class size for a graduate class/ Are classes restricted to graduate students? To majors?
3. What would be the advantages and disadvantages to going to graduate school immediately after completing an undergraduate degree? The advantages and disadvantages of waiting a few years? The best use of the interim time?
4. What are the criteria and process for selecting TAs, RAs, and Fellows?
5. Will I get to develop my own topics, or will I be expected to work on a professor's ongoing research?

6. What facilities are available for graduate students? Are there any restrictions on access?
7. What is the mean time to complete (a) class work, (b) research, (c) thesis or dissertation? (That is, what is the mean time to complete the master's or PhD?) Ask about the program as a whole, but perhaps more importantly, *by professor*.
8. What is your attrition rate? Of those who do not finish, what are their reasons?
9. What kind of student thrives in your program?
10. How reliable is your financial support year to year? Is the first-year offer always sustained, given attainment of academic goals?
11. What are the age range, gender balance, ratio of married/single, and geographical origins of graduate students in the program?
12. May I have some bibliographies of recent publications by faculty? Which professors have won awards and grants lately? (These presumably need graduate assistants.)
13. Can you tell me about your placement rates and types of jobs obtained by recent graduates? (*Avoid relying on testimonials and anecdotal evidence.*)
14. May I meet some currently enrolled students? (In person, or later via telephone or email; be sure to ask about their research topics and be sure to take notes on specific professors mentioned.)
15. How can I be a strong candidate for a program like this?

Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program

Travel Verification Form

In order to receive travel monies, this form must be completed and returned to
Dr. Adrienne Morton in 106 Poucher Hall.

I, _____ verify that I
(Print Your Name)

used travel monies through McNair Scholars Program on _____ to the
following location: _____.
(Name and Place of Conference/ Graduate School Program)

The reason for my travel: (choose all that apply)

- _____ Present at a Research Conference
- _____ Attend a Professional Conference
- _____ Visit a Graduate School
- _____ Interview for Graduate School
- _____ Other: (please explain)

Budget:

Conference Fee: _____

Hotel Costs: _____

Transportation: _____

Meals (if not included): _____

_____ **Total \$**

If you have received an advance: To facilitate this travel I received \$ _____ from the
grant to cover lodging, meals, or transportation costs as needed. My receipts are attached.

Your Signature

Date

QUESTIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED BY MCNAIR SCHOLARS & MENTORS

What if my mentor does not return my phone calls or misses an appointment?

Persistence is very important in the mentoring partnership. Because Both you and your Mentor have hectic schedules, it is possible that you will miss each other's call. Keep trying. If your mentor fails to return three phone calls, or misses three or more appointments, call the McNair/ CSTEP Office. We will follow up with the Mentor. By working with the McNair Staff, together we can solve the problem.

What if the match does not work?

First, try to address the issues with your Mentor. If for some reason you do not want to continue with your Mentor/ Scholar, the partnership needs to be discussed with Dr. Adrienne Morton, and if necessary, ended. The termination should be used as an opportunity for growth for both you as well as your Mentor/ Scholar.

Can I have more than one Mentor and does this person have to be a Faculty member at SUNY Oswego?

We highly encourage having more than one Mentor, as it pertains to the Scholar's research project. Gaining different perspectives throughout the process is important towards receiving information pertinent to your career and educational decisions. However, for the purposes of the grant and your research paper, you are required to work with at least one Faculty Member from your major department. A second Mentor can be from any area within the Oswego State University community.

How do I register to receive credit for the research course?

In the spring semester of the junior year, Scholars are to register for an Independent Study Course within their respective departments. Generally speaking, Scholars and Faculty Mentors have utilized the IND 490 course within the Mentor's department for the spring semester prior to the summer research. If there are two Faculty Mentors, the primary Mentor will have priority in signing the ADD/ DROP Form from the Registrars Office as well as assigning the final grade in September.

This will change once an official course has been approved for McNair Scholars Research.

How much input should my Faculty Mentor have on my research?

Faculty Mentors are to assist the Scholar in formulating a research question and/ or a hypothesis that can be conducted over the course of the spring semester (literature review and proposal) throughout the eight-week summer research program (conducts the actual research) and into the month of September (final edits and submission). This topic should be of interest to the Scholar since they will be using the finished project as a writing sample for their graduate school applications.

During the course of the Fall semester, Scholars entering the program are to begin discussing a research topic of interest to research in the immediate Spring semester. In the spring semester, the Scholar and Faculty Mentor will discuss a topic of interest, a plan of action in conducting the research with due dates, an appropriate literature review and assistance with editing the final product.

Who has the responsibility of giving me a final grade for the research project? And what if I have two Faculty Mentors?

The Faculty Mentor who the Scholar registered the independent Study Course with is responsible for assigning the final grade. There is one stipulation to this rule and it only relates to those who have more than one Faculty Mentor.

This will depend on the reasoning for having two Mentors. If both Mentors are utilized in conducting the research, then the Scholar must determine (in agreement with the Mentors) who will have the primary duty of assigning the final grade. It is assumed that both Faculty Mentors will have input on the final grade of the Scholar.

However, there have been occasions in which the Scholar has identified two Faculty Mentors for separate “duties”. For example, one Faculty Mentor who will be assisting the Scholar with their research while the other Mentor is strictly utilized for the Educational Planning for graduate school. In such instances, the Faculty Mentor working with the Scholar on the research project will provide the final grade. The secondary Faculty Mentor can sign the Scholars Bi-Monthly Contact Form when the discussions are about their Educational Planning pertaining to graduate school admissions.

What if my Faculty mentor is not available this summer but during the academic year?

We have had situations where the Faculty Mentor was not on campus during the summer months to meet with Scholars. So long as there is contact – emails, phone calls – between the Scholar and Faculty Mentors, it is possible to complete a summer research project. There are some disadvantages of not having the Faculty Mentor accessible to the Scholar during the summer months. These include minimum face-to-face contacts, editing and support in

preparation of Scholars' presentations at upcoming conferences just to name a few. This has been resolved by the Scholar identifying and collaborating with two Faculty Mentors

Can I send the Bi-Monthly Contact Sheets electronically?

It is highly recommended that Scholars and/ or Faculty Mentors submit them electronically given the deadline dates for the release of the Scholar stipends. It cuts down of paper and assists us with the tracking of Scholar/ Faculty Mentor contacts.

My Scholar has submitted their final research project and it is now their final year at SUNY Oswego. What are we to discuss now during our bi-monthly meetings?

Senior Scholars are required to attend a Capstone Course designed as a means of transiting them from undergraduate to graduate studies. Much of the information discussed within these sessions including funding opportunities, budgeting and financial aid, as well as navigating the first year of graduate school.

During the bi-monthly sessions, we ask the Scholars to begin talking more about the expectations of them as graduate students with their particular field of study. Furthermore, Scholars should also be discussing graduate school options, tapping their Faculty Mentor's networks and providing support to them through the graduate application process.

**SUNY Oswego
Ronald E. McNair Program
Mentor Meeting Report
(Twice per Month)**

McNair Scholars meet twice per month with their mentors to discuss the research project, graduate school plans (what schools to apply to, review personal statement/résumés, how to strengthen graduate school applications and receive discipline-specific information (i.e., upcoming conferences, possible grants/scholarships, etc.). Students may meet more than twice per month--adjust your comments accordingly. Use this form to record your meeting dates and discussion topics. It is the student's responsibility to turn in a copy of this completed form at the end of each month to the McNair Office.

Student Name _____ Faculty Mentor _____

Meeting 1:

Date: _____

Summary of Discussion:

Meeting 2:

Date: _____

Summary of Discussion:

Print Name:

Signature:

**Laptop Computer Loan Program Overview &
Borrower Responsibilities**

Program

CSTEP Program and MCNAIR Program, of the State University of New York at Oswego is pleased to provide laptop computers for loan to eligible students.

Purpose

The purpose of this program is to provide laptop computers for loan to students for University related use within the State University of New York at Oswego.

Eligibility

Any students currently enrolled at the State University of New York at Oswego, and sponsored by and being a member of the either, Collegiate Science and Technology Entry Program (CSTEP) and / or Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair) is eligible to borrow a laptop computer under this program. Each student will need to remain in good academic standing, an active member of CSTEP, and McNair.

General Policy

Borrowing Procedures

Laptop computers may be checked out from CSTEP/McNair. All students wishing to use the laptop are to fill out a request form for a laptop loan. All students are mandated to attend a laptop orientation prior to first use with the CSTEP/McNair Technology Specialist.

Borrower Responsibilities

- Students are mandated to attend a Laptop Orientation
- Each laptop computer user must
 - ❖ Complete equipment Agreement Form in which he/she acknowledges responsibility for a laptop computer and peripherals checked out to him/her.
 - ❖ Provide a valid SUNY Oswego School ID.
- Each Student is responsible for:
 - ❖ Full replacement cost if the laptop computer or any peripherals charged out to him or her is lost, or

- ❖ Full repair cost charged by a **CSTEP/McNair** selected repair service if the computer or any peripherals are damaged.
- Users should **never** leave the laptop computer unattended while it is checked out to them!
- All files should be stored on a floppy diskette or other medium prior to the return of the computer to the **CSTEP/McNair**. The **CSTEP/McNair** assumes no responsibility for files stored on the hard disk or the recovery of files accidentally left in the hard disk after the computer has been returned. **CSTEP/McNair** does not encourage use of the hard disk for temporary or permanent storage of files.
- Laptop computers **MUST** be used within State University of New York at Oswego property.
- If a computer and/or AC adapter and all other equipment is not returned, it will be considered a theft of University and state property, and appropriate action will be taken.
- One laptop will be checked out per person.
- **CSTEP/McNair** is not responsible for any computer viruses that may be transferred to, or from, a user's floppy disk.
- Personal software may not be loaded into the laptop.

Loan Duration

Laptops can be borrowed for a semester and are available on a first-come, first-served basis. All laptops are due back on the last day of classes of each semester.

III. Replacement/Repair Charges

There is a replacement charge plus a processing fee for damage to or the loss of the laptop or the peripherals issued up to a maximum of \$1,500.

Laptop Maintenance

If a laptop computer needs to be repaired, or re-imaged, it must be returned to the **CSTEP/McNair** with a written list of problems and what actions are being requested.

During the semester there will be three times when the laptop must be brought in for maintenance. See Semester Checkups.

If it is determined that there is a functional problem with a laptop that is determined to be the result of normal use, then no charges will be assessed to the student. If the functional problem is the result of abnormal use, then fees will be assessed for the cost, up to the limit of the **Replacement/Repair Charges** specified above.

IV. Semester Checkups

- V. During the semester the laptop will be brought in to **CSTEP/McNair** for three checkups and cleaning.

Check ups will be pre-set and cannot be changed. Student will make sure the laptop is turned in on the day or the day before the check ups are due.

- VI. At this time, if there is unreported damage or abnormal use, then laptop could be removed from the student and Replacement/Repair Charges will be assessed to the student.
- VII. Further, the student will not be allowed to check out another laptop until after a meeting with the **CSTEP/McNair** Coordinator and or Director, and the **CSTEP/McNair** Technology Specialist.

Failure to bring is laptop for check-up will result in the lost of privilege for the remainder of the semester.

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EQUIPMENT AGREEMENT FORM STUDENT LAPTOP COMPUTER

Local information and Permanent information

PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY

First Name: _____

Today's Date: _____

SUNY Oswego

Last Name : _____

Student I.D. # _____

Student SS # : _____ -- _____ -- _____

Campus Phone # _____

Home Phone # : _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip : _____

The laptop computer must be returned to MCNAIR.

ATTENTION:

MY SIGNATURE BELOW MEANS THAT I AM RESPONSIBLE FOR THE CARE AND CUSTODY OF THE LAPTOP COMPUTER I HAVE SIGNED OUT FROM **MCNAIR**. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF THE LAPTOP COMPUTER IS NOT RETURNED BY THE DUE DATE, I WILL BE ASSESSED REPLACEMENT COST IN THE AMOUNT OF \$1500.00.

Should the laptop computer or any peripherals become lost, I agree to pay the FULL replacement cost: or I will pay the FULL repair cost charged by the **MCNAIR** selected repair service if the computer or any peripherals are damaged. **Initials** _____

FAILURE TO RETURN THE LAPTOP COMPUTER WITHIN 24 HOURS OF RETURN DATE WILL BE CONSIDERED THEFT OF STATE EQUIPMENT AND APPROPRIATE ACTION WILL BE TAKEN.

I agree that I am financially responsible for damage, including that incurred due to food or drink. **Initials** _____

I have read and agree to the **Borrower Responsibilities**. **Initials** _____

Check-ups dates: _____

MCNAIR is not responsible for the content found in any file(s) left on a loaned laptop. I understand that I am responsible for deleting all the files I placed on the laptop's hard drive prior to returning the laptop to **MCNAIR**.

Signature of borrower: _____ **Date:** _____

Staff initials: _____ **Date** _____

Used by Staff ONLY

Laptop # _____
SUNY ID # _____

Used by Staff ONLY

Check Out Date: _____
Return Date: _____

| Laptop | | Power | | Bag | | Wireless Card | | Other: | |
|--------|----|-------|----|-----|----|---------------|----|--------|----|
| Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In | Out | In |
| | | | | | | | | | |

rev: MJR: 5-21-2007