

## MCNAIR GRADUATE OPPORTUNITY PROGRAM

### *Guidelines for Mentors of the McNair Research Fellowship*

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

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

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

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

**Mentor Responsibilities** – During the spring semester (prior to the summer session) Mentors will discuss research ideas and possibilities with the mentee to sketch out the development of a project that is interesting and that can be developed into a research grant proposal. Research grant proposals are due in the McNair office not later than midnight on March 15. For UNH students only, the research project must encompass at least two consecutive semesters (e.g. summer/fall or fall/spring). [For non-UNH students, the research experience shall be constrained to not less than an eight-week time period of the summer.] The mentee will need guidance to develop a realistic timeline and strategies for completing the research project (particularly given other program and academic commitments). In order to best assist the mentee, we ask that you:

- ◆Guide the mentee through the development and a research proposal
- ◆Provide instruction, direction, challenge and support to the mentee during the research execution
- ◆Monitor the mentee's research activities and provide feedback
- ◆Present the mentee with examples of professional writing within your field
- ◆Support and challenge the mentee and assist him/her in writing a high quality research article
- ◆Attend the McNair Lunch Seminar Series (weekly during the summer and monthly during the academic year)
- ◆Offer assistance and encouragement to the mentee as he/she prepares to present his/her research findings at the undergraduate research conference (URC) or a symposium, colloquium, or other academic conference
- ◆Offer informal guidance and direction regarding –
  - The graduate school experience

- The rewards and challenges of the faculty role (if pursuing professorate)
  - Realistic and appropriate job prospects for the student once s/he completes the doctoral degree
  - Networking possibilities
  - Regional & national conference opportunities within your discipline
  - Ensure that the mentee is familiar with appropriate/realistic graduate programs
  - Check in with the student's Educational Action Plan Progress
- ◆ Complete an evaluation so that we may assess the student's and the program's strengths and weaknesses

***Meeting With Your Mentee*** – Mentors are expected to meet physically with mentees weekly. We have found that Fellows are most comfortable (and best kept on track) if mentors meet with them in person at least once a week. Obviously, depending on the nature of the research and the needs of the student, you may need to meet with the student more often. Please meet with the mentee more often if you feel it necessary or if you so desire.

## **PRE-SUMMER**

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

***Research Proposal*** – Fellows must conceptualize a project, design it, and draft the proposal, which is reviewed by the McNair Advisory Committee in mid-March (see Research Proposal Guidelines). The proposal, including budget and timetable, is due March 15 at midnight. The proposal must be submitted via blackboard using the “journal” function. Mentors should discuss with the mentee budget issues, including all supplies, materials and/or travel. Mentors should have reviewed the proposal and given feedback regarding its content [The proposal requires faculty mentor approval and a letter of support sent directly to the McNair director.] Notification regarding proposal funding will be made by April 15.

***Faculty Support Letter*** – As part of the research funding application process, faculty mentors are asked to write a letter to endorse the student's proposal. In addition to highlighting the merits of the project design, faculty should be carefully to note those areas of the proposal that may be weak and outline what can or will be done to strengthen those aspects of the proposal and the project. Letters should be submitted to the McNair director by March 15.

***Approvals*** – If the mentee will be working with human or animal subjects, it is crucial that s/he begin the process of obtaining IRB approval immediately. Full-board reviews can be limited during the summer and failure to obtain appropriate approvals can delay or even prevent the Fellow from conducting his or her research project. Also, do not assume that the mentee can work off of any prior IRB approvals that faculty research projects receive. Please contact Julie Simpson, the Regulatory Compliance Manager at the Office of Sponsored Research. Her number is 603-862-2003 and her email address is [julie.simpson@unh.edu](mailto:julie.simpson@unh.edu). [Please note that this step is especially important for non-UNH participants from affiliate institutions who are strongly encouraged to begin that process as soon as possible.]

## **SUMMER**

***Summer Fellows*** – Fellows are awarded a stipend and provided allowances for room and board. These enable students to devote full-time effort to the program. (Limited funds will also be available to the Fellows to support their research projects at the execution stage.) Fellows are not allowed to take classes

(besides the McNair curriculum) or hold employment outside of the McNair Program. They are expected to regard their fellowship as a full-time (a minimum of 40 hours per week) commitment.

Many McNair mentors regard the summer fellowship as an independent study. However, you should be aware of significant differences regarding the work expectations of McNair students as opposed to students participating in other programs or projects where a research study is the sole focus. In addition to their research, McNair fellows may be devoting significant time to weekly classes and meetings (please see calendar for details).

**Schedule** – For the purpose of instructional offerings, the summer session will formally begin Sunday, June 3, 2012 and end Saturday, July 28, 2012. However, the specific length of the research experience shall be agreed upon by both the student and the faculty and shall be not less than eight weeks. For research projects being conducted on the campus of the University of New Hampshire, faculty will attend the Luncheon Seminar Series sponsored by the McNair Program with the McNair participant. The Luncheon Seminar Series are weekly during the summer and monthly during the academic year. Attached is a preliminary calendar of events.

During the summer, each Fellow is expected to spend a minimum of 40 hours per week on McNair Program academic activities. [If enrolled in a full load of McNair sponsored courses, he/she should be spending 20 hours a week on the research project. (This time may include, weekly meetings with mentors to discuss and monitor project progress, as well as time to discuss academic and professional goals.) The remaining 20 hours will be spent on classes, workshops, seminars, and self-directed activities aimed at the successful completion of the goals outlined in the Educational Action Plan (EAP).]

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

- ◆A one-credit graduate school preparation seminar [INCO 400]
- ◆A two-credit course on college teaching and cooperative learning [INCO 410]
- ◆A GRE test preparation seminar
- ◆A series of writing skills consultations
- ◆A four-day McNair Summer Research Conference (or visits to graduate programs)

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

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

**Symposium** – Fellows will present their projects as works in progress at the final Luncheon Seminar in the last week of the summer session. The mentee should be assisted in preparing a presentation of work

completed to date that is appropriate for and similar in style to the type of presentation expected at professional meetings in his or her field. The mentee should be encouraged to plan and practice her/his presentation carefully, in order to help her/him stay calm and focused, and to help stay within the time limit. The Lunch Seminar Series will help the participant develop and refine his/her presentation skills.

Fellows are encouraged to develop visual aids for the presentation as appropriate. Many students incorporate PowerPoint into their presentations, although this aid is certainly not a requirement. For costs associated with preparing visual aids, participants should contact the McNair support assistant.

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

## POST-SUMMER

**Schedule** – During the academic year, participants are required to enroll in an independent study under the supervision of the faculty mentor. In addition, all Fellows are required to attend the monthly Luncheon Seminar Series in both the fall and spring semesters. Faculty are asked to continue to attend the Luncheon Seminar Series sponsored by the McNair Program to support the McNair participant. The Luncheon Seminar Series are weekly during the summer but monthly during the academic year.

**Independent Study** – For the purpose of conducting the research project, participants must enroll in an independent study with the faculty mentor during the fall, which should preferably be in the student's major area of study. At a minimum, enrollment must be 2 credits. Fellows must spend a minimum of 3 hours per week per credit hour in the execution of the research. A syllabus outlining the research work expectations for the semester with appropriate deadlines, the meeting schedule, and the grading criteria is due to the McNair director by the end of the first week of class. (Fellows who do not participate in the summer research session must plan to enroll in an independent study during both the fall and spring semesters to complete the research project.)

**Research Execution** – During the independent study, Fellows are required to submit weekly research logs demonstrating their progress toward completion of the project. The logs are submitted via Blackboard and require faculty mentor approval, which is given via Blackboard as well. The research requires personal motivation and self-discipline and is a great opportunity for students to practice these. Although the research process is mostly self-directed, your mentee may need your guidance to stay focused and to realistically evaluate his/her progress. It is important for the Fellows to learn the entire research process, from planning stages to completion, so they are better prepared for graduate studies.

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

*Article:* The mentee will prepare a research article of publishable quality due December 20<sup>th</sup> for students conducting summer/fall research (or May 15<sup>th</sup> for students conducting fall/spring research). Articles should be prepared in a style appropriate to the field of study, and of a quality similar to those submitted to professional or undergraduate research journals. The mentor should review the article draft and grant approval prior to submission to the McNair office. [Approval submission is electronic (via Blackboard) and the faculty must insure that the approved article is uploaded with the approval message. The length and style of the paper will depend upon the nature of the project and the field of study, but should be no less than ten pages.] The article must be submitted for publication to at least one research media. The faculty must specify the journal publication in the approval message.

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

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

If your mentee wishes to attend a conference using McNair funding, s/he must submit a written request to our office that includes the date, location, and cost estimates (travel, lodging, registration, and meals). We will then advise the mentee of any monies that may be available.

***Graduate School Planning*** – Fellows are required to identify at least five (5) appropriate graduate programs to which they will apply (at least two of which must be doctoral level programs). The names of the schools, the programs of study, tuition costs, and financial aid packages offered must be included in the information submitted. In order to help the mentee in making appropriate graduate school selections consider the below listed items.

- a) *Identifying graduate programs:* Please talk to the mentee about strategies for researching and identifying graduate programs that are appropriate to his/her needs and interests. You may wish to offer suggestions about the types of information the Fellow should include in his/her graduate application. The McNair program staff will also assist Fellows in this process through workshops and individual consultations.
- b) *Uncertainties about graduate study:* Please invite the mentee to discuss any concerns s/he may be having with regard to graduate study. This will help the mentee to develop realistic expectations of graduate education and ideas as to how that education will relate to her/his career goals.
- c) *Financial support for graduate school:* At least two thirds of the Fellows in this program are low-income individuals (as defined by national poverty statistics). It is quite possible that many of them will have incurred debt in order to attend their undergraduate institutions and that they may be quite concerned about their ability to finance the lengthy road to a doctorate. Please discuss strategies with the mentee and help make him or her aware of any scholarships and fellowships in the field to which he/she may apply. The McNair Program staff will also assist Fellows in this area through workshops and individual consultations.

***Compensation*** – In addition to any academic department payments for which the faculty is entitled because of independent study supervision during the academic year, mentors will receive \$750 for their work as a token of appreciation. This appreciation token will be paid at the completion and submission of the approved article of publishable quality, and will be processed in accordance with the normal

university pay schedule. (Please note that faculty are required to complete and return a *Request for Approval of Supplemental Effort and Compensation* form in order to be receive the token stipend. Also, please note that in order for compensation to be remitted the various approving authorities must consent.)

***Questions*** – If you have questions about being a McNair mentor, please contact our office by phone Mondays through Fridays, 8:00 am to 4:30 pm, at (603) 862-0088 or via email at [micnair.program@unh.edu](mailto:micnair.program@unh.edu).