My name is Stephen Morgan and I am currently a senior civil engineering student at the University of New Hampshire. I was a 2008 McNair summer research fellow. I applied to the McNair program in my sophomore year after hearing about all the benefits it had in preparing for graduate school, which was already an interest for me.

For the first semester of my junior year we had a weekly class introducing us to the McNair program and critical thinking concepts. We also read Carl McNair’s book about his late brother Ronald McNair, who died on the challenger shuttle. This book was influential for me because I felt a strong connection between Ronald McNair’s experiences and attitudes towards academics and my own. The second semester course was based on developing a research topic, identifying a faculty member, and writing a research proposal. This was a huge hurdle for me to transition from an undergraduate student to an active researching student with connections to faculty members in my department, something I am still working on every day.

I conducted eight weeks of research this summer while staying on campus. I worked alongside my faculty advisor and tested my self-developed soil testing device. This soil testing device’s goal was to determine soil consistency limits. At the end of the spring semester I designed the new device, and it was fabricated in the machine shop when I began my summer research. Although I spent a lot of time with this device, there were a lot of set back and modifications were made. All of these trials and tribulations were progressed in our weekly luncheon seminar presentations. This was a great opportunity to present to a non-technical crowd, which is important for a civil engineer who is typically working with the public.

Another key component of the summer program was preparing for graduate school and applications. We had a course specifically for preparing for the GRE and also a course that focused on graduate school and their applications. We also visited many graduate schools which included; Northeastern University, University of Tennessee, Northwestern University, and many others in all parts of the country. This helped me grow in many ways. Most important was my increased confidence in organizing and seeking out professors at potential graduate institutions. The fact that I was able to set up a meeting, get dressed up, and meet with a potential professor and department half way across the country by myself has meant the most to me. It is a big step in my path toward becoming a graduate student and a professional.

I feel that there are many things that the McNair Program has to offer. I have gained many more experiences which have helped me grow and prepare myself for my academic career beyond the undergraduate degree.
MEET MCNAIR’S NEW ACADEMIC ADVISOR

Tammy, a native of California, moved to New Hampshire in 2007 and became part of the McNair team in July 2008. She was first in her family to attend college and earned a B.S. in anthropology from the University of Idaho, and a M.Ed. with a specialization in Counseling and Guidance from California State Polytechnic University in San Luis Obispo. She has previous experience working with one of the TRIO Programs (Student Support Services) at Cal Poly State University in California where she was their academic advisor. Tammy enjoys working with college students as demonstrated in her ten plus years working in higher education. As McNair’s academic advisor she will be working closely with students in the process of their transition from undergraduate to graduate school.

While not at work Tammy enjoys hanging out with her husband Aubrey and son, River. If they are not working on their house they can be found kayaking, hiking, skiing or relaxing on their front porch.

UNH MCNAIR REPRESENTED AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The UNH McNair Program participated in the 17th Annual National Ronald E. McNair Scholars Research Conference and Graduate School Fair held at the Lake Lawn Resort in Delevan, Wisconsin.

The conference titled “Developing Leaders Through Graduate Education” included guest speakers Dr. Isabel Molina (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign), Dr. Richard N. Pitt, Jr. (Vanderbilt University) and Mr. Carl McNair.

UNH McNair was represented by four students. Jessica Myers of Bradley University completed a poster presentation titled “Women’s Participation in Ancient Philosophy.” Hayley Haywood of Clark University orally presented her research titled “The Effects of Music on the Stress and Mood of At Risk Youth: A Qualitative and Quantitative Study.”

Stephen Morgan of UNH orally presented his research titled “Soil Consistency Testing: The Portable Limit Device.”

Grace Rivera of Westfield State College orally presented her research titled “Juvenile Delinquency: The Effects of peer and Parental Factors on Deviant Behavior by Middle and High School Adolescents.”

Students are pictured with Mr. Carl McNair, the brother of Dr. Ronald E. McNair

From left to right: Stephen Morgan, Grace Rivera, Carl McNair and Hayley Haywood
UNH MCNAIR ON FACEBOOK

Coming soon the McNair program will have a profile on Facebook. Many other organizations have been using Facebook as a way to reach out to their constituents and the staff here at the UNH McNair program felt the profile could provide information in a new format. Included in the profile will be information for the McNair staff, upcoming cultural and social events and upcoming deadlines.

The Facebook profile will not replace established methods of communication such as email, but should rather be regarded as a method for staying up-to-date with McNair information.

We hope that this foray into a new frontier (at least for this program) will only enhance our ability to reach students and keep them up-to-date. It is important to remember that much of the information that will be posted on Facebook can also be found at the McNair website (http://www.unh.edu/mcnair/) and can be confirmed by contacting McNair staff.

Please feel free to contact us with any questions or comments about this new development. We will rely on you to help us make our Facebook profile as informational as possible.

MCNAIR SCHOLAR PROFILE: SARAH GORMADY

Many college students might say that they have a busy life but few are as busy as Sarah Gormady. As a single mother and first generation college student Sarah realized early that she would need to find ways to stand out in order to accomplish her lofty goal of studying in Russia on a Fulbright grant. Sarah explains her drive to excel in academics as a quest to understand the world around her. "Identity, privilege, perceptions and power are all interrelated and play a role in people's everyday lives. I wanted to know why certain people were able to exert power over others and also why this was acceptable. I just had a lot of questions. Now I just have more." Sarah was originally referred to the McNair program by one of her Professors. "I enjoy independent research more than any of my classes... so applying to McNair seemed like a logical thing to do. I am fortunate that McNair educated me so well on the ins and outs of academia or I would still be floundering around campus ...

People should join McNair not only for their future, but their family's future. First generation college students are at such a disadvantage compared to the class of students that were raised in families that know how to manage the system. Think to the future for yourself and for your offspring. It is much easier to teach someone to navigate the trials of higher education if you yourself have been guided as well."

In the summer of 2008 Sarah went abroad on an International Research Opportunity Program (IROP) grant through the Hamel Center for Undergraduate Research. The intent of her project was to analyze the effect of Soviet socialization programs on minority women, by collecting full life biographies of Jewish women who were subject to Soviet socialization. Through consideration of the women's perceptions of nationality, ethnicity, and gender identity, as well as discrimination, the effectiveness of the Soviet programs will be assessed. Sarah will present the results of her study at the university's Undergraduate Research Conference in 2009.

"People should join McNair not only for their future, but their family's future."

Look for upcoming student profiles at www.unh.edu/mcnair/profile.html
McNair Graduate Opportunity Program

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UPCOMING EVENTS AND DEADLINES

December 20th, 2008: Research Participants - Articles DUE!


January 10th, 2009: UNH Application Deadline

January 26th, 2009: Cultural Event - Sweet Honey in the Rock

February 16th, 2009: Non-UNH Applications Due

Summer 2008-09 Research Experience Participants