A Message from the Director

Kelly Lyons became the new director of Trinity’s McNair Program in June 2016.

From former director Michael Soto:

Dr. Kelly Lyons succeeded me as director of the McNair Scholars Program effective June 1, 2016. I am excited to see the Program flourish in her capable hands.

Helping to prepare first generation, low income Trinity students for the rigors of academic research and the demands of graduate study has been a truly humbling experience. Your support has made the successes of our Scholars possible: Out of 65 graduates (and counting), over half have enrolled in graduate school, with over a dozen presently working toward a doctoral degree. Using their Trinity education as a foundation, they’ve built new intellectual homes in graduate programs from UCLA and Stanford to Cornell and Johns Hopkins.

Our Scholars’ triumphs belong to us all. I look forward to witnessing continued success, and I know that Dr. Lyons and the entire McNair team will continue to make us proud.

Please join me in welcoming Dr. Lyons to her important new role.

Montoya and Wallace Join the Program as New Tutorial Faculty

New Tutorial Faculty

1. Serving as the tutorial faculty for the 2015-16 cohort is Dr. Alfred Montoya. He is a medical anthropologist and an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology. His research concerns HIV/AIDS and global health humanitarianism. He received his B.A. in anthropology from Trinity University, and his Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley. At Trinity he has taught Introduction to Anthropology; International Issues in Health and the Environment; Global Health; Health, Illness and Society; HIV/AIDS: Nature, Power, Populations; HUMA 1600, a first year seminar called “Food, Culture and Power;” and Research Methods: Fieldwork. He leads a health and the environment course to Nicaragua, and recently returned from leading a Freeman Foundation-funded research trip to Vietnam with four students. We are very pleased to have him on board.

Dr. Harry Wallace joined us last semester as the tutorial faculty for the 2016-17 group of Scholars. He has been at Trinity since 2003 and is an associate professor of psychology. A native of Silver Spring, Maryland, Dr. Wallace received a bachelor’s (continued on next page)
degree in English at Fairfield University in Connecticut. He later returned to school to earn a master’s degree in general psychology from the University of North Florida and a Ph.D. in experimental social psychology from Case Western Reserve University in Ohio. Dr. Wallace also spent two years as a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Florida. His Trinity teaching rotation includes Social Psychology, Principles of Psychology, Statistics and Methods, and Science of Happiness seminars. His research lab is currently studying outcomes of narcissism, predictors of performance under pressure, and pitfalls of high personal autonomy. Dr. Wallace is the chair of the Trinity Institutional Review Board. He met his wife, Trish Wallace, a transportation planner for the City of San Antonio, as she was waiting tables at a Tex-Mex restaurant in Virginia (San Antonio was meant to be). If Dr. Wallace isn't responding to your e-mail, he is probably riding one of his bicycles with a smile.
Welcome, New Scholars!

2015-16 Cohort of Scholars

Cynthia Alvarez  
psychology, neuroscience  
San Antonio

Karina Bridges  
biology, sociology  
Edinburg, TX

Faith Deckard  
biology  
Nacogdoches, TX

Kathryn Funderburg  
history  
Tyler, TX

Nico "Rosie" Jozefiak  
biology, Greek  
Harrison Township, MI

Janett Muñoz  
biochemistry and molecular biology  
San Antonio

Maia Ogembo  
biology  
Arlington, TX

Maria Olalde  
anthropology, Spanish  
San Antonio

Brigitte Taylor  
psychology  
Tulsa, OK

Cristian Vargas  
biochemistry and molecular biology  
Shreveport, LA

2016-17 Cohort of Scholars

Yasmeen Alayli  
biochemistry and molecular biology  
San Antonio

Briana Azua  
English  
Sudan, TX

Michael "Cole" Callen  
Spanish, German  
Mobile, AL

Samsara Davalos-Reyes  
sociology  
Houston

Decory Edwards  
economics, math  
Houston

Sarah Fordin  
computer science, biology  
Loxahatchee, FL

Daisy Horr  
biology  
Austin

Karina Mendez-Perez  
neuropysiology  
Austin

Michelle Nguyen  
anthropology  
Humble, TX

Stephanie Munoz  
psychology  
Houston

Zabdi Salazar  
political science  
Austin

Frances Stone  
physics  
Georgetown, TX

Autumn Sutherland  
psychology  
Memphis, TN
Congratulations to Our Recent Graduates!


Our Scholars have recently been accepted to the following graduate institutions:

American University  Carnegie Mellon University  Columbia University  George Mason University  Johns Hopkins University  Rice University  Syracuse University  Temple University  Texas A&M  Texas A&M Health Science Center  Trinity University  University of Alabama at Birmingham  University of Alaska-Fairbanks/Colorado State University Collaborate DVM Program  University of Colorado Colorado Springs  University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign  University of Houston-Clear Lake  University of Illinois School of Veterinary Medicine  University of Michigan  University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill  University of North Texas Health Science Center  University of San Francisco  University of Seattle  University of Southern California  University of Texas at San Antonio  UT Health Science Center at Houston  UT Health Science Center at San Antonio  University of Tulsa  University of Utah School of Medicine  University of Wisconsin-Madison

2014 McNair alumni Terrin Blackmon, Valerie Martinez, Victor Rodriguez, and Katy Yacinich, as well as 2015 McNair alumna Anthia Liu, joined us for dinner after the 2016 SRE Orientation to share insight, experiences, and advice about research and graduate school. It was great to see all of them!
Alumni Spotlight: Where Are They Now?

Jonathan Trejo ’11

Jonathan Trejo graduated from Trinity in May 2011 with a bachelor of science in biology and minor in Spanish. He went on to pursue graduate studies at the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio (UTHSCSA), where he was a Lozano-Long Presidential Scholar awardee from 2011-2015. Jonathan was active in the chapter of Frontera de Salud at UTHSCSA, with trips to colonias in the Corpus Christi area to participate in health fairs. He also had an article on advanced primary care in San Antonio published in the Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine in 2013. He earned his master of public health degree in December 2014 and his M.D. in May 2015, and is currently a PGY-1 internal medicine resident at UTHSCSA.

Dr. Trejo has several tips to share with current Scholars: “Take advantage of the opportunities McNair and Trinity provide for your growth, whether it is intellectual/academic or not,” he says. “The experiences at Trinity not only allowed me to get into medical school, but also taught me a lot about my goals and where I wanted to go in the future.” He further advised Scholars to be proactive and persistent and to advocate for themselves. “There are times when you’ll have to step out of the ‘Trinity bubble’ and put yourself out there. More often than not, you’ll be glad you did. This goes for graduate school funding, applications, and interviews.” Finally, he recommends that Scholars practice interviewing and “definitely proofread everything.”

Aimee Vidaurri ’12

Aimee Vidaurri graduated from Trinity in May 2012 with a bachelor of arts in political science. While at Trinity she was president of Pi Sigma Alpha, Xi Omicron chapter, the political science honor society. In May 2015, Aimee graduated with honors earning her juris doctor from the University of Texas School of Law, where she obtained two judicial internships and was a Pro-Bono Scholar, completing over 250 hours of pro-bono work. Aimee currently works as a litigation attorney at Susman Godfrey in Houston.

When asked to share advice with current Scholars, Aimee had plenty of suggestions. “Trinity has amazing programs,” said Aimee. “Take advantage of them [and] maximize your McNair experience by working closely with professors that can serve as mentors. Develop a relationship with your adviser.” She feels it’s important to balance applications and your last semesters well and schedule time to study for admissions tests. Furthermore, Aimee suggests Scholars “seek out a mentor (or several). This is the most valuable tool. Don’t be afraid to reach out. People are willing to help and guide you if you ask.” She advises to make a wise decision on where you go to graduate school: “Your education is an investment.”
Jonelle Bailey ’08, ’09

Jonelle Bailey was part of the very first McNair Scholars Program cohort starting in December 2007. She graduated from Trinity with a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and religion in 2008, and then earned her Master of Arts in Teaching in 2009, also from Trinity. After graduation, Jonelle taught Spanish for 7 years at Bush High School in Houston, and in 2012 also taught 3- and 4-year-olds at a private school, incorporating Spanish in the curriculum. After years of service in secondary education, Jonelle embarked on a journey to gain teaching experience in post-secondary education.

After much researching and planning—including taking the GRE—Jonelle went back to graduate school and in May 2012 she became part of the first cohort of the Ed.D. program in Developmental Education Administration at Sam Houston State University. In fact, Jonelle was the first in this doctoral program to complete her research proposal, defend her dissertation, and then graduate in May 2016. A lot of firsts for sure!

“I give back and serve,” Jonelle shared with us previously. “My hope is to be in a position to teach at an institution of higher education and have the opportunity to work with students as part of a non-profit Christian organization that does mission work and provides health care and educational opportunities to developing countries, in particular those that are Spanish-speaking.” Jonelle is grateful for the opportunities that she has received and would like to be a part of a collaborative and reciprocal effort to help others in our local and international communities. She recently was an adjunct professor of education at San Jacinto College and is currently teaching Spanish at Kempner High School. She aspires toward continued professional growth and development to be of more help. We are very proud of Jonelle and all her accomplishments!

Notable Honors, Awards, and Achievements

Karina Bridges • Alpha Epsilon Delta, National Pre-Medical Honor Society
Amanda Cantu • Alpha Epsilon Delta, National Pre-Medical Honor Society; Daniel Lubetzky Kindness Award, 2017
Alexis Daggett • Omicron Delta Kappa, leadership and high scholastic achievement
Samsara Davalos-Reyes • Emerging Student Leader, 2017
Faith Deckard • Explorers Club Youth Activity Fund Grant; Joint Admissions Medical Program; Alpha Epsilon Delta, National Pre-Medical Honor Society
Liliana Diaz • U.S.-Mexico FoCUS Program; first place, Social Science Oral Presentations, Florida International University McNair Scholars Conference
Giovanna Espinoza • Sigma Delta Pi, National Honor Society of Spanish Language
Kathryn Funderburg • Beinecke Scholarship ($34,000 toward graduate school education in the Humanities); Francis Hendrick’s Prize, Department of History; “Abbot Suger’s St. Denis and the Cult of Relics,” Expositor Journal of Undergraduate Prose; “Nature 5, 2012,” Trinity Literary Review Magazine; “Rust, Soil, and Sky” Best in Show, Study Abroad Photography Competition, and selected as cover art for the Trinity Literary Review Magazine; Trinity Women’s Club Scholarship; University Scholar
Daniel Large • third place, Master’s student category; UTSA 3-Minute Thesis Competition
Sonny Luna • Excellence in Art, Department of Art and Art History
Yvette Muñiz • Outstanding Presentation Award, Gulf Coast Undergraduate Research Symposium, Rice University; Southwest Gem and Mineral Society Scholarship; Sigma Gamma Epsilon, Delta Xi chapter
Nancy Nguyen • Translational Science Training TL1 Scholar Award, UTHSCSA Institute for Integration of Medicine and Science; American Heart Association Predoctoral Fellowship
Anthony Sanchez • First Place Presentation, Social Science Category, and Best Overall Oral Presentation, Florida International University McNair Scholars Conference
Frances Stone • Emerging Student Leader, 2017
Nick Swanson • FASTER Grant
Janett Muñoz pipettes chemicals into an Erlenmeyer flask for her 2016 SRE project.

McNair Scholars Program

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