



TEXAS A&M  
UNIVERSITY  
CORPUS  
CHRISTI

MCNAIR  
SCHOLARS  
PROGRAM

# McNair Scholars Program Newsletter

2022-2023



▲ McNair Scholars

Top left to right: Daunte Gaiter, Brian Owens, Brandie Webb, Dat Tran, Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz, Blondine Delva  
Middle left to right: Rose Rodriguez, Omar Arizpe, Kristin Gutierrez, Marivel Escamilla, Bailey Otter, Natalia Pellum, Marysa McAllister  
Bottom left to right: Maya Manahan, Laura Button, Ayleen Chen, Ricardo Longoria, Angelina Garcia, Hilliary Herrera, Bree Garcia

## Welcome McNair Scholars 2022-2023

<b>Jason Barrera</b> Geology	<b>Blondine Delva</b> Psychology	<b>Marivel Escamilla</b> Biology	<b>Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz</b> Chemistry
<b>Angelina Garcia</b> Chemistry	<b>Bree Garcia</b> Marine Biology	<b>Romio Garcia</b> Computer Science	<b>Hilliary Herrera</b> Psychology
<b>Marysa McAllister</b> BIMS	<b>Layla Rayburn</b> Marine Biology	<b>Dat Tran</b> BIMS	<b>Austin Wilson</b> Biology
<b>Brandie Webb</b> Psychology			



Ronald E. McNair

## Congratulations McNair 2022-2023 Graduates!!

### Fall 2022

Jesus Baca  
Andres Ramos

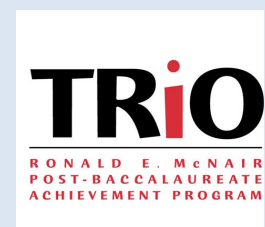
### Spring 2023

Omar Arizpe  
Laura Button  
Ricardo Longoria  
Brian Owens  
Rose Rodriguez  
Amanda Villarreal

### Summer 2023

O. Kristin Gutierrez

Page 1	New McNair Scholars 2022-2023
Page 2	McNair Fall Graduates Acknowledgements
Page 3	McNair Scholars Graduation & Induction Ceremony
Page 4	McNair Scholars Conference Presentations
Page 5	McNair Scholars Conference Presentations (Cont.)
Page 6	24th Annual University of Maryland National Conference 2023 Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities
Page 7	Scholar Graduates: Where are they Headed? Scholar Spotlight: Omar Arizpe
Page 8	Give us an Update Alumni News



## McNair Fall Graduates 2022



### Congratulations to the Fall 2022 McNair Graduates

**Jesus Baca**  
B.S., Chemistry  
Fall 2022

**Andres Ramos**  
B.S., Mechanical  
Engineering  
Fall 2022

## Acknowledgements

*We would like to thank all the individuals and groups who are an integral part of our success as program, that includes our faculty mentors, seminar presenters, and McNair supporters who go above and beyond to help our scholars' success. McNair would not be a successful program without their dedication.*

## Thank You!

### McNair Faculty Mentors 2022-2023

Dr. Kelsey Banks  
Dr. Daniel Bartholomay  
Dr. Eugene Billiot  
Dr. Feri Billiot  
Professor Alexandria  
Canchola  
Dr. Le 'Trice Donaldson  
Dr. Xavier Gonzales  
Dr. Sam Hill  
Dr. Candice Lumibao  
Dr. Michelle Maresh-  
Fuehrer  
Dr. Shawn McCracken

Dr. Ruby Mehrubeoglu  
Dr. Ricardo Mozzachioli  
Dr. Dorina Murgulet  
Dr. Sarah Salter  
Dr. Collin Scarince  
Dr. Steve Seidel  
Dr. Frank Spaniol  
Dr. Greg Stunz  
Dr. Benjamin Walther  
Dr. Yuliana Zaikman  
Dr. Lin Zhang

### Presenters 2022-2023

Librarian Lorin Flores  
Alberto Hernandez  
Dr. Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer  
Dr. Steve Seidel  
Dr. Michael Sollitto  
Dr. Barbara Szczerbinska  
Jackie Chu and Vivian Sheridan, SROP  
University of Iowa  
Dr. Carla Gadson Director of Summer  
Research Program at Medical University  
of South Carolina  
Dr. Stephanie Rollman of University of  
Cleveland  
Steven Thomas from Michigan State  
University

### McNair Supporters

Dr. Jerel Benton  
Professor Michelle Evans  
Dr. Clarendia Phillips  
Mr. D'Angelo Sands

## McNair Scholars Graduation & Induction Ceremony



The McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi hosted the Graduation and Induction Ceremony on Friday, May 12 to honor the McNair Scholars graduating in the Spring and Summer. The program also inducted the scholars that are now part of a larger McNair community. The graduating scholars received customized stoles that represents their commitment, investment, growth, and achievement during their service to the program. The scholars that were inducted were also pinned by the McNair director.

The following students received pins for their dedication thus far to the McNair Scholars Program:

Omar Arizpe  
Jason Barrera  
Laura Button  
Ayleen Chen  
Blondine Delva  
Marivel Escamilla  
Daunte Gaiter  
Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz  
Angelina Garcia

Breanna Garcia  
Romauldo Garcia  
O. Kristin Gutierrez  
Hilliary Herrera  
Ricardo Longoria  
Marysa McAllister  
Nasya Melendez  
Noah Melendez  
Bailey Otter

Brian Owens  
Natalia Pellum-Mackey  
Layla Rayburn  
Rose Rodriguez  
Dat Tran  
Perla Vela  
Amanda Villarreal  
Austin Wilson  
Brandie Webb  
Alexandra Zuniga



## McNair Scholars Conference Presentations

### Laura Button

#### “A Novel Approach to Compound-Specific Radiocarbon Analysis of Individual Amino Acids”

**Faculty Mentor:** Lin Zhang, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Physical & Environmental Sciences

- 24th Annual National Conference for McNair Scholars and Undergraduate Research, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; March 2023

### Daunte Gaiter

#### “Ecological Assessment of Colorado River Delta in Order to Preserve the Matagorda Bay System”

**Faculty Mentor:** Greg Stunz, Ph.D. Professor; Department of Life Sciences

- 24th Annual National Conference for McNair Scholars and Undergraduate Research, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; March 2023

### Kristin Gutierrez

#### “Mindsets, Sexual Identity, and Attitudes toward Alternative Relationship Style”

**Faculty Mentor:** Steven Seidel, Ph.D. Professor and Daniel Bartholomay, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Psychology and Sociology

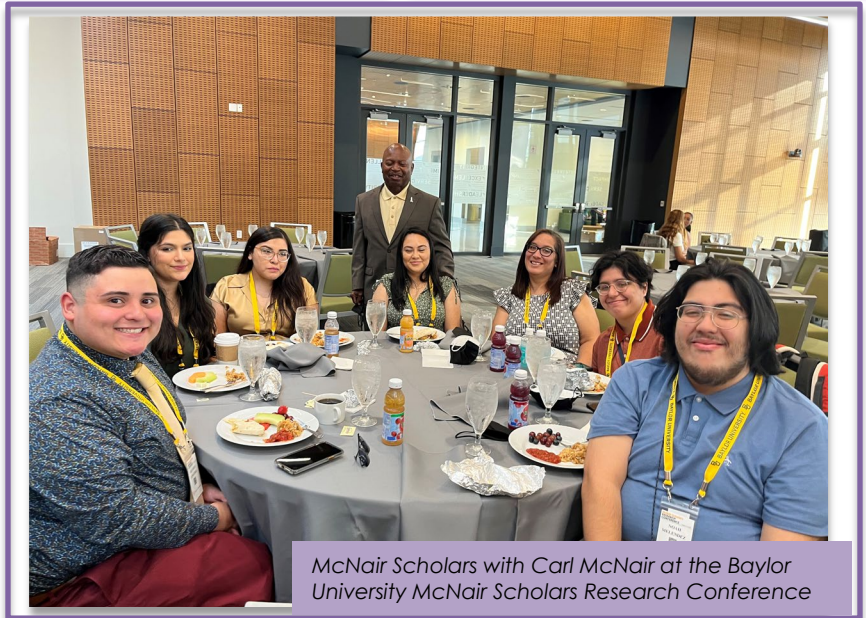
- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022
- 2023 Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA) Convention, Frisco, TX; March 2023

### Ricardo Longoria

#### “The Relationship Between People’s News Sources and Their Perceptions of the COVID-19 Pandemic”

**Faculty Mentor:** Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer, Ph.D. Professor; Department of Communications and Media

- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022



McNair Scholars with Carl McNair at the Baylor University McNair Scholars Research Conference

### Nasya Melendez

#### “Mindsets and their Relationships to Social Comparison and Job Satisfaction”

**Faculty Mentor:** Steven Seidel, Ph.D., Professor; Department of Psychology

- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022
- 2023 Southwestern Psychological Association (SWPA) Convention, Frisco, TX; March 2023

## McNair Scholars Conference Presentations (Cont.)

### Noah Melendez

“How Societal Pressures Impact Latinx Artist and Illustrators and Their Work”

**Faculty Mentor:** Alexandria Canchola, Assistant Professor of Art; Department of Art and Design

- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022

### Bailey Otter

“You will always be my little she/her”

**Faculty Mentor:** Daniel Bartholomay, Assistant Professor; Department of Sociology

- Midwest Sociological Society Annual Meeting, Minneapolis, MN; March 2023

### Rose Rodriguez

“Wait For It! The Influence of Delayed Information about Physical Appearance on Perceptions”

**Faculty Mentor:** Yuliana Zaikman, Ph.D. Assistant Professor; Department of Psychology

- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022



Noah Melendez displaying his Art during the SIRCA Symposium



Amanda Villarreal presenting her McNair Research Project at the SIRCA Symposium



Rose Rodriguez presents her research poster at the Baylor University McNair Research Conference

### Amanda Villarreal

“IoT Based Smart Home”

**Faculty Mentor:** Ruby Mehrubeoglu Ph.D. Professor; Department of Engineering

- 24th Annual National Conference for McNair Scholars and Undergraduate Research, University of Maryland, College Park, MD; March 2023

### Alexandra Zuniga

“Parent Typology: The Effects on the Prognosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder”

**Faculty Mentor:** Sam Hill, Ph.D. Instructor of Psychology; Department of Psychology

- Baylor University McNair Research Conference, Baylor University, Waco, TX; August 2022

# The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual University of Maryland National Conference for McNair Scholars and Undergraduate Research

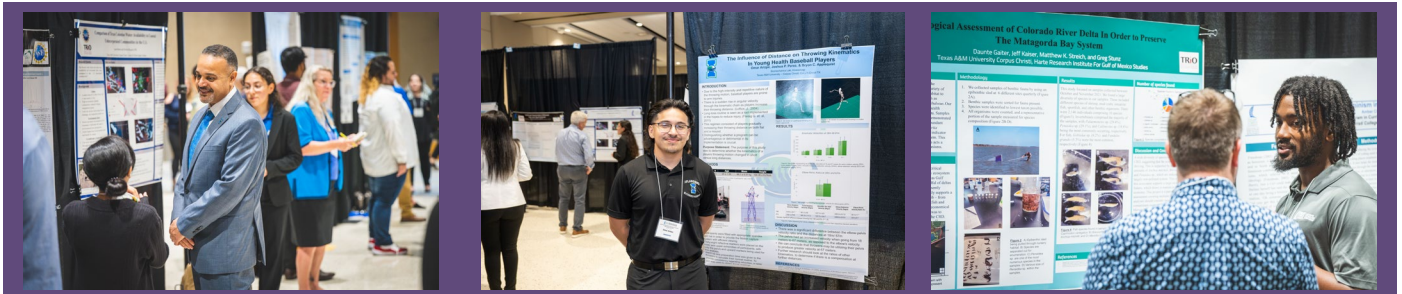
Three McNair Scholars representing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi attended and presented their research at the 24th Annual McNair Scholars Undergraduate National Research Conference held March 16-19 at the University of Maryland-College Park.

The following Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi McNair Scholars who presented their research included:

- **Laura Button**, "Comparison of Texas Colonias Water Availability to Coastal Unincorporated Communities in the U.S." Her mentor is Dr. Dorina Murgulet.
- **Daunte Gaiter**, "Ecological Assessment of Colorado River Delta in Order to Preserve the Matagorda Bay System." His mentor is Dr. Greg Stunz.
- **Amanda Villarreal**, "IoT Based Smart Home." Her mentor is Dr. Ruby Mehrubeoglu.



## Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities



Fifteen McNair Scholars and two McNair alumni participated and presented their research at the 2023 Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities (SSIRCA) that was held on Friday, April 21<sup>st</sup> at the University Center in Texas A&M University Corpus-Christi. Noah Melendez, McNair Scholar, won third place in the category of undergraduate creative activities.

The McNair Scholars who presented their research include:

Omar Arizpe  
Jason Barrera  
Laura Button  
Ayleen Chen  
Daunte Gaiter  
Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz  
Angelina Garcia  
Hilliary Herrera

Marysa McAllister  
Noah Melendez  
Bailey Otter  
Brian Owens  
Rose Rodriguez  
Dat Tran  
Amanda Villarreal

## Scholar Graduates: Where are they Headed?

We would like to congratulate the 2022-2023 cohort of graduate scholars. They have done many wonderful things during their time at TAMUCC and are representing the TAMUCC McNair Scholars Program well in their respective graduate programs.



**Omar Arizpe:** Accepted to attend the Ohio State University in the Fall 2023 seeking a Doctorate in Physical Therapy.



**Jesus Baca:** Attending Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master of Science in Chemistry starting this Spring 2023.



**Laura Button:** Accepted to attend Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Masters in Coastal & Marine Systems starting Fall 2023.



**Kristin Gutierrez:** Accepted to attend Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master's in Professional Counseling in Fall 2023.



**Amanda Villarreal:** Accepted to attend Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master of Science in Engineering in Fall 2023.

## Scholar Spotlight: Omar Arizpe

Omar Arizpe joined the McNair Scholars Program in September 2021 and completed his undergraduate studies in Kinesiology this May 2023. During his tenure as a McNair Scholar, he produced a research project under Dr. Frank Spaniol. He presented his McNair research project at the National Strength and Conditioning Association Conference in New Orleans, LA in the Summer 2022. McNair staff is proud of his accomplishments and takes great pleasure in presenting him with this year's Scholar Spotlight.



During the Fall semester of the year 2021, I had the fortunate opportunity to embark on a new path of academia by being accepted into the McNair Scholars Program. Coming into this program, I was excited for the resources that would be available for me to succeed, and they did not disappoint. The McNair Scholars Program outlined each step of what it means to do research, which allowed me to get a firm grasp on the process. This was done successfully through the weekly workshop meetings that would excel in their explanation of each component. As I began to get familiarized with the process, I was able to work under a mentor from my department. This experience allowed me to begin to understand research within my field of interest. Throughout this, the hands-on experience gained, provided me with a skill set that is now transferable to graduate school. The McNair Scholars Program allowed me the opportunity to present research at a National Strength and Conditioning Association conference. This program has set me up to be successful in applying to graduate school and being accepted. Through times of not feeling on track to be admitted to a physical therapy program, Dr. Valdes made a continued effort to ensure that I had things prepared for a well-rounded application.

## GIVE US AN UPDATE!

The U.S. Department of Education requires all McNair programs to provide Annual Performance Reports and keep track of alumni until the attainment of a doctoral degree. Alumni can update their information by completing the form below and e-mailing the information to the McNair Scholars Program at [McNair@tamucc.edu](mailto:McNair@tamucc.edu).

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City & State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code: \_\_\_\_\_

TAMUCC Cohort Year: \_\_\_\_\_

Highest Degree Attained and When: \_\_\_\_\_

Degree in Progress: Master's \_\_\_\_\_ PhD \_\_\_\_\_ or Education Complete \_\_\_\_\_

Field of Study: \_\_\_\_\_

Expected Year of Completion: \_\_\_\_\_

School in Attendance: \_\_\_\_\_

Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Alumni News

**Amber Bachner** (Psychology, 2017) obtained a Master of Science degree in Clinical Psychology from Southern New Hampshire University on May 2023.

**Marla Bantigue** (Psychology, 2019) obtained a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on May 2022.

**Valentina Campos** (Kinesiology, 2021) obtained a Master of Business Administration degree from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in December 2022.

**Lori "Jae" Cerda** (Psychology, 2016) obtained a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on May 2022.

**Alan Garduno** (Engineering, 2021) obtained a Master of Science in Electrical Engineering from Texas Tech University in May 2023.

**Tony Long** (Psychology, 2019) obtained a Master of Arts degree in Clinical Psychology from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on May 2022.

**Eduardo Luna** (Kinesiology, 2020) obtained a Master of Science in Athletic Training from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi on May 2022.

## Doctorate Recipients

**Megan E. Perkins** (Psychology, 2015) obtained her Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Neuroscience from the University of Vermont & State Agriculture College in August 2022.

**Mariela Vazquez** (Chemistry, 2015) obtained her Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.) in Chemistry from Texas A&M University-College Station in December 2022.

## McNair Scholars Program

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## Advisory Committee

### Dr. Eugene Billiot

Professor-Physical & Environmental  
Science

### Dr. Le'Trice Donaldson

Assistant Professor of History

### Ms. Shelley Dinkens

Assistant Clinical Professor

### Dr. Frank Lucido

Professor

### Dr. Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer

Professor

### Dr. Steve Seidel

Professor

