



▲ McNair Scholars

Top left to right: Joseph Garcia, Abigail Vasquez, Cindy Vaquero, Alejandra Mendez
Bottom left to right: Ivan Sotelo, Isabelle Morales, Ryce Hailes



Ronald E. McNair

Congratulations McNair 2023-2024 Graduates!!

Fall 2023

Xitlali Gallegos-Ramos
Angelina Garcia
Nasya Melendez
Noah Melendez
Alexandra Zuniga

Spring 2024

Ayleen Chen
Daunte Gaiter
Breanna Garcia
Marysa McAllister
Austin Willson
Brandie Webb

Summer 2024

Blondine Delva

Welcome McNair Scholars 2023-2024

Camila Avantes Psychology	Ted Cabanes Biology	Joseph Garza Biology	Ryce Hailes Biology
Isabelle Morales Biology	Alejandra Mendez Bio-Medical Sciences	Ivan Sotelo Psychology	Abigail Vasquez Physics
Jared Vieyra Engineering	Cindy Vaquero Marine Biology		

Page 1	New McNair Scholars 2023-2024
Page 2	McNair Fall Graduates Acknowledgements
Page 3	McNair Scholars Graduation & Induction Ceremony
Page 4	2024 Southwestern Psychological Association Convention 2024 Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities
Page 5	Scholar Graduates: Where are they Headed? Alumni Spotlight: Rose Rodriguez
Page 6	Give us an Update Alumni News



McNair Fall Graduates 2023



Congratulations to the Fall 2023 McNair Graduates

Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz
B.S., Chemistry
Fall 2023

Angelina Garcia
B.S., Chemistry
Fall 2023

Nasya Melendez
B.S., Psychology
Fall 2023

Noah Melendez
B.S., Graphic Design
Fall 2023

Alexandra Zuniga
B.S., Psychology
Fall 2023

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 2023-2024

Dr. Jose Baca
Dr. Keisha Bahr
Dr. Daniel Bartholomay
Dr. Eugene Billiot
Dr. Fereshteh Billiot
Dr. Chris Bird
Professor Alexandria Canchola
Dr. Lisa Comparini
Dr. Le'Trice Donaldson
Dr. Candice Lumibao
Dr. Shawn McCracken

Dr. Ricardo Mozzachiodi
Dr. Jennifer Pollack
Dr. David Portnoy
Dr. Collin Scarince
Dr. Steve Seidel
Dr. Jeffery Spirko
Dr. Benjamin Walther
Dr. Lin Zhang

Presenters 2023-2024

Kaitlynn Beaird, Director of Graduate Recruitment for the University of Alabama
Librarian Alexa Hight
Dr. Chris Bird
Alberto Hernandez
Dr. Steve Seidel
Dr. Michael Sollitto
Sharon Magnuson
Dr. Janet Donaldson
Cynthia Lopez
Dr. John Scarpa
Sarah Pons

McNair Supporters

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

McNair Scholars Graduation & Induction Ceremony

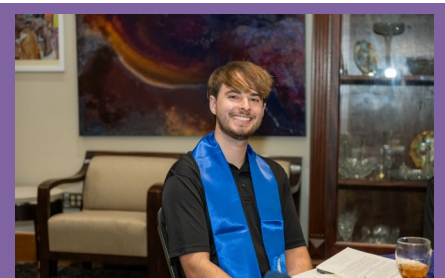


The McNair Scholars Program at Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi hosted the Graduation and Induction Ceremony on Friday, May 10 to honor the McNair Scholars graduating in the Spring and Summer. The program also inducted the scholars that are now part of a larger McNair community. The graduating scholars 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:

Camila Avantes
Ted Cabanes
Joseph Garza
Ryce Hailes
Isabelle Morales

Alejandra Mendez
Ivan Sotelo
Abigail Vasquez
Jared Vieyra
Cindy Vaquero



2024 Southwestern Psychological Association Convention

Two McNair Scholars representing Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi attended and presented their research at the 2024 Southwestern Psychological Association Convention held March 28-30 in San Antonio, TX.

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

- **Blondine Delva**, "Beyond Mars and Venus: Unraveling Gender Myths in Intimate Communication Patterns." Her mentor is Dr. Steven Seidel.
- **Hilliary Herrera**, "Investigating the Effect of Culture on Collaboration while Completing a Cognitive Task." Her mentor is Dr. Collin Scarince.



2024 Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities

Seven McNair Scholars and two McNair alumni participated and presented their research at the 2024 Symposium for Student Innovation, Research, and Creative Activities (SSIRCA) that was held on Friday, April 26th at the University Center in Texas A&M University Corpus-Christi. Joseph Garza won the award for Best Presentation for a McNair Scholar.

The McNair Scholars who presented their research include:

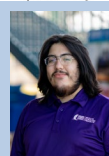
- **Breanna Garcia**, "Determine the Effects Environmental Pollution have on the Colonization of Arbuscular Mycorrhizae in a Coastal Dune Species." Her mentor is Dr. Candice Lumibao.
- **Joseph Garza**, "DNA Profiling of 40-Year-Old South Pacific Coral Skeletons." His mentor is Dr. Chris Bird.
- **Ryce Hailes**, "Acoustic Surveys for Seasonal Movement of Insectivorous Birds along an Elevational Gradient in the Pacific Forest of Ecuador." Her mentor is Dr. Shawn McCracken.
- **Isabelle Morales**, "Comparing the Density of Hawaiian Corals Subjected to Changing Carbonate Chemistries." Her mentor is Dr. Keisha Bahr.
- **Bailey Otter**, "It's Everything: The Role of the Online Communities in Nonbinary Gender Identity Formation." Her mentor is Dr. Daniel Bartholomay.
- **Natalia Pellum**, "Exploring the Impact of Roads on the Movement of Texas Tortoises in Their Habitat." Her mentor is Dr. Shawn McCracken.
- **Abigail Vasquez**, "Can Portable Muon Detectors be Used to Understand Atmospheric Dynamics?" Her mentor is Dr. Jeffery Spirko.

Scholar Graduates: Where are they Headed?

We would like to congratulate the 2023-2024 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.



Marysa McAllister: Accepted to attend Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master of Science in Biology in Fall 2024.



Noah Melendez: Accepted to attend the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley seeking a Master of Fine Arts for Fall 2024.



Angelina Garcia: Attending Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master of Science in Chemistry started in Spring 2024.



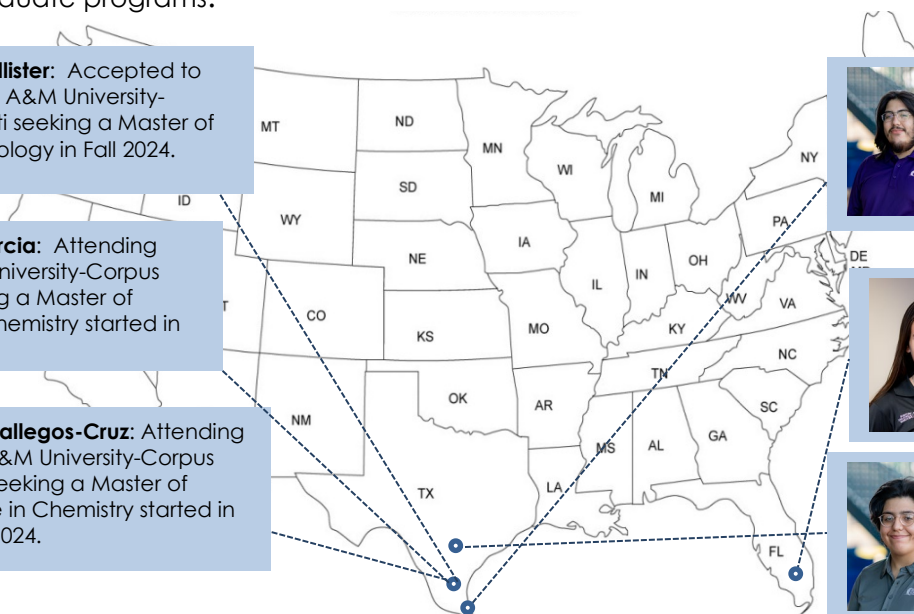
Breanna Garcia: Accepted to attend Nova Southeastern University seeking a Master of Science in Environmental Science in Fall 2024.



Xitlali Gallegos-Cruz: Attending Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi seeking a Master of Science in Chemistry started in Spring 2024.



Nasya Melendez: Accepted to attend the University of Texas in Austin seeking a Master of Education in Kinesiology in Fall 2024.



Alumni Spotlight: Rose Rodriguez

Applying to the McNair program was the best decision I ever made as an undergraduate. As first generation and underrepresented students the world of college can be difficult for us to navigate. With the help of McNair, I learned so much about the graduate application process, the research process, refined my writing skills, and most importantly further developed the independence and agency required for graduate school. Your mentor and the McNair staff will provide you with all the resources you need to succeed. However, it's up to you to move forward and complete your project. You find your own mentor; you schedule your own meetings and complete work on your own time. There are no hard deadlines or grades, only the goals you set for yourself.

This is a stark contrast from the experiences of high school and undergrad courses. There's no one to tell you exactly what you should be doing or when to do it. In my opinion this is the most valuable part of McNair. Whether or not you have a final project to proudly display is up to you and your own merit. The experience is difficult, invaluable, and replicates the experience of a graduate level thesis well. My advice to scholars new and remaining is to take initiative. When it comes to McNair you will get back what you put in. Attend the meetings for a sense of community, sign up for the symposiums to develop presentation skills, set up meetings with your mentor to establish a good relationship and refine your research skills. It's up to you to take charge and use the resources McNair provides. I promise for everything you put into the program, what you get out of it will be well worth it.



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.

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

Robert Bretzing-Tungate (Biology, 2020) obtained a Master of Science in Fisheries and Mariculture from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in December 2023.

Katrina Cantu (Interdisciplinary Studies, 2017) obtained a Master of Science in Reading from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in December 2023.

Andrew Garcia (Engineering, 2019) obtained a Master of Engineering in Machine Learning from Virginia Tech in May 2024.

Jasmin Gomez (Interdisciplinary Studies, 2021) obtained a Master of Science degree in Instructional Design from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in December 2023.

Corbin Lewis (Chemistry, 2017) obtained a Master of Science in Chemistry from the University of California-Riverside in September 2023.

Damaris Sanchez (Health Sciences, 2020) obtained a Master of Business Administration from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in December 2023.

Roslyn Swonke (Chemistry, 2022) obtained a Master of Science in Chemistry from Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi in May 2024.

Hannah M. Zapata (Biology, 2022) obtained a Master of Science in Marine Biology and Ecology from the University of Miami Rosenstiel School of Marine, Atmospheric, and Earth Science in May 2024.

McNair Scholars Program

Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi
6300 Ocean Drive, Unit 5791
Corpus Christi, Texas 78412
Email: McNair@tamucc.edu

Director

Dr. Peggy Valdes
Ph: 361-825-2128
Email: peggy.valdes@tamucc.edu

Assistant Director

Anabel Hernandez
Ph: 361-825-3835
Email:
anabel.hernandez@tamucc.edu

Business Administrator

Cynthia Lopez
Ph: 361-825-2026
Email: cynthia.lopez@tamucc.edu

Advisory Committee

Dr. Eugene Billiot

Professor-Physical & Environmental
Science

Dr. Janet Donaldson

Associate Vice President for
Research & Innovation

Dr. Le'Trice Donaldson

Assistant Professor of History

Dr. Frank Lucido

Adjunct Faculty

Dr. Michelle Maresh-Fuehrer

Professor

Dr. Ruby Mehrubeoglu

Professor

Dr. Steve Seidel

Professor

Dr. Michael Sollitto

Associate Professor