



# McNair Spotlight

Summer 2011

## WHAT ARE JUST SOME OF THE BENEFITS?

- Mentoring and research opportunities with faculty
- Summer research internship with stipend payment
- Summer room & board
- Laptop computer and software
- Technology training
- Research and laboratory supplies
- Academic and career advising
- Travel to graduate schools, seminars and conferences
- Specialty workshops
- GRE preparation
- Graduate school application assistance
- Group cultural and social activities

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## Cohort 2011 participated in summer research program



After settling into on-campus summer housing and participating in program orientation and tech training, Scholars, equipped with brand new MacBooks, began meeting with Mentors and solidifying plans for their independent projects.

One month into the summer program, they traveled to the annual Penn State McNair Scholars Conference. They were able to present research, network with colleagues from other schools, and participate in a graduate school fair.

Another highlight in July was the McNair Scholars BBQ hosted by President Emeritus Daniel Fogel. The McNair Scholars, along with students participating in other summer programs, were recognized for their undergraduate research and participation in scholarly activities during the summer months. In all, approximately 85 students, faculty mentors, and friends of the McNair Scholars Program were in attendance for the event.

The McNair Scholars Symposium, the capstone of the summer research program was held Monday, August 1<sup>st</sup>. Topics ranged from "Intermittent Preventive Treatment for Controlling Malaria in Infants and Children in Ghana" to "The Relative Contributions of Parent Attachment vs. Peer Attachment in Emerging Adulthood," and an audience of approximately fifty people was able to learn something from each Scholar's research presentation.

While the summer program has ended, many Scholars plan to continue their research into the school year. Additionally, all Scholars will take the McNair Seminar this fall in preparation for graduate school, and they will participate in McNair scholarly and cultural events for the remainder of their undergraduate careers.



**McNair Cohort 2011**

**Front row:** Bijoux Bahati, Ly Nguyen, & Kristina Lafferty

**Back row:** Julie Williams, Cherie Lum, Monica Beers, Dan Garcia, Bridget Akua Sarpong, Saveta Saini, & Kiara Anese Irick

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## Scholar Update: Kristen Wenz '09



Kristen Wenz, McNair Cohort '07 and May '09 Social Work graduate, completed her MSW at Columbia University in May 2011. Currently, she is working for USAID through the Harvard Global Health Fellows Program in Washington, DC.

Kristen was originally drawn to Columbia because of her interest in international social welfare policy and the fact that the United Nations is headquartered in New York. As a result, she was able to intern at UNICEF doing child protections policy work. Additionally, Kristen had the unique opportunity to work for Professor Jeffrey Sachs, world-renowned American economist, and the Millennium Villages Project conducting research on "abuse prevalence among orphans in a rural African setting."

"Graduate school provided me with the opportunity to truly pursue what I was passionate about academically," Kristen explains.

Even as an undergraduate, Kristen was interested in the welfare of children and completed her McNair Scholars Summer Research Project on transracial adoption in Vermont. She feels that experience helped prepare her for graduate school. Undergraduate research allowed her to "explore an area of interest," and Kristen says, "It provided me with the understanding that research could actually be fun."

Kristen advises undergraduates considering graduate study to research programs extensively and directly reach out to professors conducting research in their area of interest. She explains, "If your name is familiar to a member of the admissions committee that is a major advantage in the application process."

Her final piece of advice is particularly relevant as current McNair Scholars begin preparing for conferences. "Network, network, network," Kristen emphasizes. "Oh," she adds, "Always follow up with a thank you note or email" after an interview or graduate school visit.

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## McNair Scholars leave for graduate school, begin new careers

On Wednesday, May 18<sup>th</sup>, the McNair Scholars Program Staff celebrated the accomplishments of twelve talented seniors. Seniors were honored with a luncheon and each left with a McNair stole and embossed portfolio.

Students had the opportunity to share their plans with the entire group. A couple of students are immediately entering PhD programs, a few others will begin Masters programs this fall, and the remaining students are applying for graduate programs to begin next winter or entering the work force. Regardless, we are proud of them and wish them all the best.

Even though students are moving on to other schools or work places, the McNair Office will continue to be a resource for guidance as graduates seek further education and navigate the admissions process.

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## Congratulations, 2011 McNair Scholars Graduates!

- **Dylan Conger**, *Computer Science*
- **Amanda DeSenna**, *Psychology*
- **Chol Dhoor**, *Economics*
- **Shirley Frimpong**, *Professional Nursing*
- **Francisco Garcia-Candelario**, *Electrical Engineering & Engineering Management*
- **Hermaine Jean**, *Elementary Education*
- **Briana Martin**, *Social Work*
- **Kofi Mensah**, *Political Science*
- **Justin Parent**, *Psychology*
- **Katherine St. Denis**, *Zoology*
- **Andrew Simpson**, *Sociology*
- **Maya Thomas**, *Environmental Science*

