

UNIVERSITY OF NORTH DAKOTA



**RONALD E. McNAIR POSTBACCALAUREATE
ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM**

2022-2023 STUDENT GUIDEBOOK

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PROGRAM INFORMATION

McNair Staff Contact Information

Derek Sporbert
TRIO Project Director
313 McCannel Hall
derek.sporbert@und.edu

Kelly Kennedy
McNair Assistant Director
302 McCannel Hall
kelly.kennedy@und.edu

Jill Teters
McNair Program Coordinator
300 McCannel Hall
jill.teters@und.edu

Mailing Address: Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Program
2891 2nd Avenue North Stop 9027
Grand Forks, ND 58202

Office Phone: (701) 777-4931

Fax: (701) 777-3627

Website: <https://und.edu/student-life/trio/mcnair-program/>

Overview and Background of TRIO Programs

Our nation has asserted a commitment to providing educational opportunity for all Americans regardless of race, ethnic background, or economic circumstance.

In support of this commitment, Congress established a series of programs to help income qualifying Americans enter college, graduate, and move on to participate more fully in America's economic and social life. These Programs are funded under Title IV of the Higher Education Act of 1965 and are referred to as the TRIO Programs.

While student financial aid programs help students overcome financial barriers to higher education, TRIO programs help students overcome class, social, and cultural barriers to higher education.

TRIO Programs at University of North Dakota

The **Upward Bound** program has been active at the University of North Dakota since 1966. It works with qualifying high school students at 8 target schools in North Dakota and Western Minnesota. The purpose of Upward Bound is to help develop and enhance students' academic and motivational skills so they will graduate from high school and successfully enroll in postsecondary education. It is a year-round program in which Upward Bound staff visit students at their schools during the academic year providing counseling, tutoring, and academic and career enrichment. A six-week residential summer session brings students to the UND campus for classes in math, science, language arts, and foreign languages, as well as personal growth, recreational, and cultural activities.

Student Support Services helps students stay in college until they earn their baccalaureate degree. Participants enrolled in Student Support Services programs are not only provided with academic counseling and personal support, but also with tutoring and remedial instruction to assist them in overcoming difficulties they may experience as a result of inadequate academic preparation. Student Support Services has had an important impact on UND students since 1971.

Talent Search has been at UND since 1980. This program operates on the premise that early intervention can have a profound impact on the decision to pursue a college degree and serves disadvantaged young people in grades six through high school in target schools specifically identified in the federal grant. Counselors work with students to encourage them to consider college, provide academic and career exploration services, information about college admissions requirements, scholarships, and various student financial aid programs. This early intervention program helps young people to better understand their educational opportunities and options.

The **Educational Opportunity Center** was implemented at UND in September of 1991. It serves economically disadvantaged/first-generation students aged 11 through adult in the northern half of North Dakota and the East Grand Forks area. The EOC assists its eligible participants in entering, continuing, or resuming a secondary or post-secondary education.

The **Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program**, of which you are a part, represents the most recently funded program at UND, active since December 1, 1992. McNair encourages income qualifying, first-generation and/or underrepresented undergraduates to prepare for doctoral study. A particular focus of this program is providing research opportunities for McNair scholars as well as helping foster working relationships with faculty mentors who can facilitate attainment of the student's academic goals.

Program Origin and Purpose

In 1989, the United States Congress approved funding for the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, which is dedicated to the promotion of the ambitious standards of achievement and opportunity that McNair exemplified. Those who knew McNair characterized him as fearless, determined, and accustomed to applying all available resources to any problem he faced. In 1992, the U.S. Department of Education, which administers the program, selected the University of North Dakota as a site for one of 68 McNair programs in the nation. Since that time, more programs have been funded nationwide.

The purpose of UND's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program is to prepare 28 income qualifying, first-generation college students and students from groups underrepresented in doctoral studies for success in achieving a doctoral degree. Preferred preparation for potential students: creative, independent, third- or fourth-year undergraduates with strong writing skills and a GPA of 3.00 who possess intellectual curiosity and who are interested in conducting research under the guidance of a faculty mentor. It is the philosophy of the McNair program that participants have unique needs that must be addressed to implement their entrance, retention, and successful graduation from doctoral programs. The University of North Dakota has a long history of responding to the needs of special populations by committing ongoing support services. It is the intent of the McNair Program to utilize this solid foundation of services in achieving its goals.

Program Process and Outcome Objectives

The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program at the University of North Dakota has four process and outcome objectives which have been established by the Department of Education to fulfill the stated purpose of the McNair project: providing eligible college students with effective preparation for doctoral study. The objectives, activities, and plans for implementing them are all addressed in the Plan of Operation in the Federal Grant. The Process and Outcome Objectives are as follows:

Objective 1: 90% of McNair participants served during the project year will have completed appropriate research or scholarly activities in the McNair Program academic year.

Objective 2: 60% of bachelor's degree (or equivalent) recipients will be accepted and enrolled in a postbaccalaureate program of study by the fall term of the academic year immediately following the completion of bachelor's degree (or equivalent).

Objective 3: 90% of first year graduate students will continue to be enrolled in graduate school at the beginning of the fall term of the next academic year.

Objective 4: 10% of McNair Program participants served will attain a doctoral degree within ten years of the attainment of a bachelor's degree (or equivalent).

The Life of Ronald E. McNair (1950-1986)



Born on October 21, 1950, in Lake City, South Carolina, Ronald E. McNair was the son of Carl C. McNair, Sr., and Pearl M. McNair. He achieved early success in the segregated public schools he attended as both a student and an athlete. Valedictorian of his high school class, he attended North Carolina A&T State University where, in 1971, he received a B.S. degree in physics. He went on to study physics at MIT, where he specialized in quantum electronics and laser technology, completing his Ph.D. in 1977. As a student he performed some of the earliest work on chemical HF/DF and high-pressure CO lasers, publishing path breaking scientific papers on the subject. McNair was also a physical fitness advocate and pursued athletic training from an early age. He was a leader in track and football at his high school. He also became a black belt in karate, and while in graduate school began offering classes in karate at St. Paul's AME Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. While involved in these activities McNair met and married Cheryl B. Moore of Jamaica, New York, and they later had two children.

After completing his Ph.D., he began working as a physicist at the Optical Physics Department of Hughes Research Laboratories in Malibu, California, and conducted research on electro-optic laser modulation for satellite-to-satellite space communications. This research led McNair into close contact with the NASA space program for the first time, and when the opportunity presented itself, he applied for astronaut training. In January 1978 NASA selected him to enter the astronaut cadre, one of the first three Black Americans selected. McNair became the second Black American in space between February 3 and 11, 1984, by flying on the Challenger Shuttle mission STS-41-B. During this mission McNair operated the maneuverable arm, built by Canada, to move payloads in space. The 1986 Challenger STS-51-L mission on which he was killed was his second Shuttle flight.

In January of 1986, members of the U.S. Congress provided funding for the McNair Program to encourage students with similar backgrounds to Dr. McNair's to enroll in graduate studies. The program targets income qualifying students, first-generation college students, and students underrepresented in doctoral education.

Program Application

Applications for the McNair Program can be submitted to program staff at any time; however, the Acceptance Committee meets to review applications only when there are openings in the program. Openings usually occur following spring, summer, and December graduations.

Application packets can be obtained from the McNair Office at 300 McCannel Hall or from our website. We require the following information to process an application:

- Two recommendations from faculty members
- A transcript of grades
- A copy of your most recent tax form, if you are an independent student, otherwise a copy of your parents/guardians' most recent tax form
- A copy of your most recent Financial Aid award letter
- A Personal Statement which lists your academic goals, specific research interests, what you hope to accomplish through participation in the McNair Program, and your post-Ph.D. career goals.

Application Deadline: Ongoing

McNair Scholar's Responsibilities

As part of the McNair program, students are expected to meet certain criteria outlined in the Participant/Advisor Agreement they signed on entrance to the program.

- Students must be junior status to do research (60 credits).
- Students perform at least 4 hours a week of research or other scholarly activity during the research portion of the McNair Program.
- Students communicate weekly with their mentors.
- Students meet all deadlines for submission of required documents, e.g., Weekly Research Reports, research proposals, final research reports.
- Students must attend classes regularly and remain in good academic standing.
- Students are required to notify McNair staff of any address and/or phone number changes.
- Students will cooperate with annual follow-up and telephone surveys post-graduation. The McNair program is required to track students for a period of 10 years after leaving the program.
- Students are required to meet weekly with the Assistant Director if they are earning a research stipend.
- Attendance at monthly McNair meetings is mandatory for all students. Scholars should contact the McNair Assistant Director if an emergency prohibits attendance at any activity.

Students accepted to the McNair Program as juniors are expected to graduate within 2-3 years. Any extension of this period will be discussed with the individual involved and granted only if extenuating circumstances exist.

Scholars are often asked/expected to take part in TRIO events and serve as role models for younger students. Never underestimate your importance as a role model when you are asked to function in this capacity. You are "ambassadors" of our program, as well as the university and can have a profound impact on young and impressionable junior high or high school students. Your attitude

and demeanor should send a clear message to students of the importance of continuing their education beyond the high school level.

McNair Staff Responsibilities

With the help of the mentors and students, staff will strive to make the program and research experience successful for all. Staff duties include:

- McNair staff informs students and mentors about all workshops, events, or activities of the program.
- McNair staff is available to participants for consultation.
- McNair staff supervises all payroll, travel, and administrative requirements for students.
- McNair staff will send a representative to visit research sites at least once.
- McNair staff must ensure that all criteria set forth in the awarded grant is fulfilled to satisfy the U.S. Department of Education.

Anyone with questions or concerns should feel free to contact any member of the staff.

Mentor's Responsibilities

The mentor's responsibilities in this program are a vital link in directing the student's research endeavors. While the brunt of the administrative responsibilities fall on McNair staff and students, the mentor can ensure a smoothly running program by monitoring the student's progress. Specifically, faculty are requested to do the following:

- Mentors meet with students weekly.
- Mentors supervise research activities and assign tasks.
- Mentors provide direction and motivation.
- Mentors assist students with research proposals, conference itineraries and vouchers, papers, and oral or poster presentations as needed.
- Mentors will contact McNair staff about any problems or concerns that may hinder the scholar's research development or mentor/mentee relationship.
- Mentors are encouraged to attend program workshops and seminars.
- Mentors should evaluate the student's research proposal and paper before they are submitted to the program office.
- Mentors will be contacted twice a semester, or as needed, by McNair Assistant Director to monitor participant progress.

A research agreement will be read and signed by the McNair scholar and their faculty mentor.

Disciplinary Measures

McNair staff will administer any disciplinary action deemed necessary. If program requirements are not met, the following disciplinary actions may be implemented:

1. Individual meeting with Assistant Director and/or TRIO Director
2. Formal notice of needed corrective action
3. Scholar will be placed on probationary status and may lose their research stipend. A contract will be drawn up and signed by the student outlining performance requirements for a predetermined period
4. If the signed contract is not adhered to or improvement is not made within the allocated period, the student may risk losing their tuition waiver or being dismissed from the program

McNair disciplinary actions do not need to be implemented in order, as more severe violations may warrant immediate probation or dismissal. All disciplinary situations will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Follow-Up Plan

Upon completion of your undergraduate degree, the McNair program will utilize a follow-up plan that includes contacting former participants once a year to document your academic and career accomplishments. We will maintain this contact for a minimum of 10 years from the date of your graduation.

This is an essential part of our grant program as we must be able to provide the Department of Education with statistics that will support the continuation of our program here at UND.

Our formal contact with you will be in the form of a simple questionnaire, which we ask you to complete. On an informal basis, we invite you to stay in touch with us through whatever channels are available to you. You can help us in our efforts by keeping us informed of address/phone number changes as they occur. We encourage you to add us on social media and to join the TRIO alumni list upon graduation.

BENEFITS & GENERAL INFORMATION

Academic Counseling

The McNair Assistant Director is available for consultation regarding academic concerns. This does not lessen or eliminate your need to maintain close contact with your academic advisor on campus. Program staff can also aid in helping you choose a doctoral field, finding a program that meets your needs, and help with graduate school entrance requirements.

Personal Counseling

The stresses of school, jobs, relationships, etc., can become a real burden. Do not let circumstances overwhelm you! Sometimes it helps just to unburden on a friendly, sympathetic listener. The Assistant Director of the McNair Program is available to you in this capacity. If she determines that your problems are better dealt with on another level, she will refer you elsewhere on campus for further assistance. Please reach out when you are struggling. Often, we have the tools available to help students with problems that seem insurmountable to them.

The UND Counseling Center's clinical services connect students with appropriate mental health and substance use services that support their academic and personal goals. All the basic services (Individual Counseling, Group Counseling and Workshops, Emergency Counseling Sessions, Personal Evaluations, and Case Management) are covered under student fees.

Individual Meetings

The Assistant Director of the McNair Program meets with scholars, in the McNair office or virtually, on a weekly basis. This is your opportunity to speak frankly and openly with your McNair advisor regarding any issues, academic or personal, that are of concern to you. If you cannot keep a regularly scheduled meeting, please call or email to reschedule.

Early Registration

As a McNair scholar, you are allowed the benefit of early registration each semester.

Tuition and Fee Waivers

The University of North Dakota, in complete support of the Ronald E. McNair Program, offers tuition and fee waivers to those students who are fortunate enough to receive acceptance into the program. This benefit does not come from the McNair program, but from the university. There are many McNair programs in the nation that can not offer this benefit to its students.

NOTE: The tuition and fee waiver does not include Continuing Education courses offered on campus, or courses offered through the Grand Forks Air Force Base educational system. Historically, it has not always covered online classes. Special class fees for use of materials or equipment are not included and cannot be paid for by the McNair program.

Tutoring

Tutoring services are a necessary program requirement for any class in which a student is at a "C" level or below, as indicated on a Mid Term Grade Report completed by the instructor. Students may request tutoring services at any time.

We can advertise for tutors through the student employment office, or we can refer you to the Student Success Center.

Monthly Seminars

The McNair program holds monthly seminars focused on upcoming events, McNair policy and procedures, topics of importance for prospective graduate students, and hosting guest speakers. Scholars are expected to attend all McNair meetings. A lunch or light meal is always provided.

Orientation to the Graduate School Process

McNair scholars are **required** to take the class, "Orientation to the Graduate School Process." It is a six-week course and scholars will earn one credit.

GRE Waivers

Educational Testing Services offers a limited number of GRE Fee Reduction Certificates to McNair Scholars on a first-come, first-served basis. A Fee Reduction Certificate may be used for one GRE General Test, one GRE General Test retake, and/or one GRE Subject Test. Please note: Each scholar will be responsible for the remaining 50% of the test taking fee. The McNair staff will assist you in preparing the appropriate paperwork.

Personalized Business Cards

When preparing to attend a national conference or professional meeting, McNair staff will assist in preparing a personal business card for use by current McNair Scholars while networking with faculty, staff and students from other colleges, universities, and McNair Scholars Programs.

GRE Preparation Seminars

Scholars are encouraged to participate in the McNair GRE Prep Class, which runs six Saturdays starting in September. The class is taught by Dr. Cheryl Kingsbury-- UND TRIO Programs, and Steven Rand--UND English Department. It is a cost-free benefit for the UND McNair scholars.

Mailbox

All Scholars have a mailbox set up for them in the McNair Office to receive mail regarding graduate schools and other opportunities. Please remember to stop by periodically to check for new mail and other handouts.

Resource Materials and Equipment

Scholars have exclusive access to McCannel 301 (the room adjacent to the Assistant Director's office in the TRIO suite of offices). This is a great study space, spot to decompress, or place to have your lunch.

There are desktop computers and a printer available for scholar use. Access to a color printer and scanner is available by request. McNair staff can also print large format research posters for scholars – we ask for at least a 48-hour window for poster printing.

The McNair program maintains a small library of resource materials that are available to program participants. These materials cover a wide range of subject matter, as well as GRE study guides, and can be checked out of the office at any time.

Application Fee Waivers

Many graduate schools provide application fee waivers for McNair Scholars. When applying for graduate school admissions, please check how the respective institutions want verification of participation in the McNair Scholars Program. The current list of participating schools is on the website: https://coenet.org/files/mcnair_scholars_fee_waiver_list-At_a_Glance_052021.pdf

Scholarships, Grants, Internships, and Fellowships

McNair staff supports, advises, and strongly encourages students to apply for competitive national and international merit-based awards. These awards offer life-changing opportunities where academic excellence, leadership and active communal engagement are valued and nurtured. Applying for these awards is not just a gateway to undergraduate and graduate school funding, but an opportunity to further your mind, commit to bettering our world and actively engage in a scholarship community.

UND Graduate School Waiver

UND's College of Arts & Sciences offers 18 credits of a graduate school tuition waiver for McNair alumni. Additional UND colleges may offer a graduate school waiver in the future.

Research Participation/Stipends

Research is a vital component of a McNair Scholar's preparation for graduate study. Scholars must have reached junior status or 60 credit hours to participate in a research project.

The research component requires each student to present their research projects at the Annual McNair Forum.

McNair scholars may work 4 hours per week for \$150/month or 8 hours per week for \$300/month on a research project during the academic year. During the summer (June and July), scholars may work 4 to 16 hours per week. Any variance in the research time requirements listed above must be discussed and agreed upon with the participant, mentor, and assistant director/advisor of the McNair Program.

Summer Housing Allowance

The McNair program provides a housing allowance to participants who are conducting summer research. To receive a Summer Housing Allowance, you must submit a Summer Research Topic Proposal and an annotated bibliography (criteria will be discussed).

Impact on Financial Aid

Research stipends are considered earned income for tax and financial aid purposes.

Tuition and fee waivers and housing allowances are part of your financial aid award and will impact your loan amounts.

If you are admitted to the McNair Program after you have received your financial aid award letter, you must notify the Student Financial Aid office immediately regarding your change in status as a result of the tuition and fee waiver you will receive.

Faculty-Mentor Relationship

The McNair Program will facilitate a mentor relationship between you and a faculty member in your chosen doctoral field. If scholars do not already have a faculty mentor in mind, the Assistant Director will meet with the department chair to discuss potential mentors. Once interested faculty members are identified, the Assistant Director will meet with you to discuss alternatives available. Specific areas of research can be discussed once a mentor is chosen.

Research Topic and Objectives

Your faculty mentor can be an invaluable resource in helping you decide the scope and objectives of your research project. In addition, they will be able to provide procedural guidance throughout the project.

Research Topic

Your research topic proposal is due in the McNair Program office within a month of the date research begins. This proposal should be approved by your mentor before submission.

For McNair program purposes, we have simplified the list of common proposal elements to include only those that we feel will provide a basic understanding of your research project, and your plan for bringing it to a conclusion.

Your proposal should include the following:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Purpose
- 3) Methodology
- 4) Supporting Documents (if any)

Weekly Research Report

Throughout the duration of your research project, you are required to complete a "Weekly Research Report" form which describes your research activities and serves as a timesheet for your research stipend. Be as specific and detailed as possible when completing these reports. They must be signed by your mentor and turned in to McNair Program staff each week. Forms are available in the TRIO Offices or digitally.

The McNair Forum

The McNair Forum is held in the Spring in the Memorial Union. It provides an opportunity for scholars to present their research findings before an audience of their peers, TRIO program staff, faculty mentors, and other interested individuals.

As a career professional, you may be expected to make presentations of this nature on a regular basis. Therefore, your participation in the Forum should closely simulate a presentation on a professional level.

Scholars may present even when research has not yet been completed. Your presentation would focus on the scope and design of your project, research completed to date, research yet to be completed, and what you hope to prove at its conclusion.

Presentations should be between 10 and 15 minutes in length and be created using PowerPoint, Canva, or Google Slides. Presentations will be recorded will be made available for you.

UNDergraduate Showcase

The UNDergraduate Showcase, sponsored by the College of Arts & Sciences, is held toward the end of the fall and spring semesters. McNair Scholars who have a final project to present are eligible and encouraged to participate (in the form of a research poster). McNair Staff will provide details on how to create a research poster and work individually with scholars.

Final Poster, PowerPoint Presentation and/or Research Report

A final research poster, PowerPoint and/or reports on your McNair research projects are due in the McNair office within a month of the date research activities end.

A suggested format for your final report is:

- 1) Introduction
- 2) Procedures
- 3) Findings
- 4) Conclusions
- 5) Bibliography

Authorization to Release Research Data

McNair Program staff cannot release copies of your final research report to any entity, under any circumstances, unless you authorize us to do so. A release form is available for that purpose, which must be signed by you.

Written Reports

McNair participants are expected to type up a report at the conclusion of McNair funded travel or other activities. Reports should be as detailed as possible in relation to seminars/workshops attended, or graduate schools visited, networking, cultural events, presenting, etc. The McNair program reserves the right to use these reports in its newsletter.

Travel

Based on the availability of funds, McNair Scholars are eligible for reimbursement of travel expenses for pre-approved trips to professional conferences and university campus visits. These expenses include registration, transportation (air, ground), hotel accommodations, and meals not provided by the host institution or included in the cost of conference registration fees. **Scholars must apply for travel funding in advance.** Strict adherence to University guidelines is followed for any reimbursement claim (available at <https://und.policystat.com/policy/4418451/latest/>).

Eligibility for Travel

Only those students who are in good academic standing and are meeting all the McNair program expectations are eligible to travel. Scholars may travel to:

- Present research at a national McNair conference
- Present research at a professional conference
- Visit a prospective university for graduate studies
- Attend a McNair Program sponsored retreat

Financial Considerations

In most cases, airfare, registration, and hotel stays can be prepaid by us. Meals, mileage, checked baggage fees, etc. will be reimbursed after the travel occurs. Reimbursement may take a week or longer from the time your receipts are submitted to McNair program staff. You do not need to save meal receipts – UND Travel policies dictate per diem amounts based on travel locations. Only meals not provided by conference/host will be eligible for reimbursement.

Travel Reimbursement Procedures

Reimbursement for travel expenses cannot take place until participants turn in all travel receipts and other supporting documents.

As soon as possible after your return, you should bring these into the McNair office so we can start the reimbursement process:

- **Travel start & end times (to determine meals included in travel).**
- **Receipts for taxi fare and/or shuttle bus service (the McNair Program can only reimburse transportation to/from the airport to/from your motel/hotel).**
- **Checked baggage.**
- **Motel/hotel statement for the duration of your stay. (If sharing a room with another person (non-Scholar)), you must get a statement for ½ of the room charge. THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT.**

To obtain your travel reimbursement, we complete a Student Travel Expense Worksheet which will need to be signed by you. We submit the worksheet along with all the receipts to UND Procurement and Payment Services office for processing. Allow up to ten days to receive your reimbursement. Reimbursement for travel expenses cannot take place until participants turn in all travel receipts and other supporting documents.

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- **Travel start & end times (to determine meals included in travel).**
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To obtain your travel reimbursement, we complete a Student Travel Expense Worksheet which will need to be signed by you. We submit the worksheet along with all the receipts to UND Procurement and Payment Services office for processing. Allow up to ten days to receive your reimbursement.

Contingencies

If you encounter any difficulties during a travel experience that McNair staff can help resolve, please do not hesitate to call the program office. Other circumstances may arise that we cannot help you with, and you will have to put your good judgment and problem-solving skills to use.