



McNair
News

McNair Scholars Program

University of Nebraska–Lincoln

Spring/Summer 2022

Congrats May 2022 McNair Graduates!



Miguel Avila Garcia, Bellevue, Nebraska, earned a B.S. in Fisheries & Wildlife and Biological Sciences in May 2022. Miguel has accepted a recruitment specialist position in the Office of Admissions at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



Evelyn Estrada Gonzalez, Newman Grove, Nebraska, earned a B.A. in Psychology and Ethnic Studies in May 2022. Evelyn has accepted a position as a project manager for the HABLA lab at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



Mohammad Majid, Lincoln, Nebraska, earned a B.S. in Computer Science and Mathematics in May 2022. Mohammad will be pursuing a Ph.D. in computer science at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln.



Daniel Nguyen, Lincoln, Nebraska, graduated with highest distinction with a B.A. in Psychology and Political Science in May 2022. Daniel will be pursuing a Ph.D. in clinical psychology at the University of Illinois-Urbana Champaign.



Serigne Toure, Houston, Texas, earned a B.S. in Computer Science in May 2022. Serigne has accepted a software development engineer position at Amazon in Seattle, Washington.

Caldwell Encourages & Inspires Graduates

“McNair and Dr. Eve Brank pushed me to explore myself and to challenge myself.”

As a first-generation student, Kaylor Caldwell didn't know much about graduate school. “I knew I was interested in law, social justice movements, different types of policies, and learning more about mental health initiatives but I didn't know how my bachelor's in psychology would be get me to a job where I could explore those things.” After being accepted to the McNair Scholars Program, she started looking at different research labs to see which was the best fit.

“I decided on Dr. Eve Brank's Law and Policy lab and I'm so grateful for the opportunity of working in that lab because she set a standard for how I wanted to be treated by my advisor. Dr. Brank viewed her graduate students as her colleagues and as her family. She respected them, guided them, and at times had to get on them—kindly of course—about meeting deadlines.”

“The McNair experience, along with Dr. Eve Brank, gave me a snap shot of who I would be as a graduate student but also a snap shot of what I would want in my graduate program and my graduate experience.”

Dr. Eve Brank and the McNair program met me where I was at (they never made me feel bad of confused when my interests changed) and I knew that's what I wanted in an advisor and a graduate program. Because who you are coming into McNair might not be who comes out. That was the case for me. I knew I wanted to be in law psychology and then by the time I was applying to graduate programs I was applying to counseling psychology programs.

“But McNair and Dr. Eve Brank pushed me to explore myself and to challenge myself. I also never felt like I had to change who I was and where I came from. The McNair experience helped me stand firm in my goal of bringing Black people to the forefront of psychology. I was so used to talking about the gap in research and practice when it came to Black people in psychology that when I went through my graduate school interviews, I would bring it up confidently.”

Caldwell encouraged new scholars to get close to their cohort and shared, “McNair also made me realize how special and important it is to be close to your cohort. Those moments over the summer research experience when I knew I was not alone meant so much to me. When we would be in those study rooms late at night, I knew that I was going to be held accountable but also that I was going to laugh and smile. During our trip to Berkeley, I had so much fun with them.”

In her advice to graduating scholars, she let them know that they would be getting a lot of feedback in graduate school and to reach out to others for support. She also advised them to set boundaries for and learn how to best manage their time based on their personal needs. “remind yourself that your are not a robot and that you are human” In conclusion, she encouraged Scholars to stay true to themselves and



Kaylor Caldwell
UNL McNair Scholar (2013-15)
Counseling Psychology Ph.D. candidate
University of Missouri-Kansas City

Avila Studies Abroad in London



Miguel Avila Garcia
UNL McNair Scholar (2019-22)

For as long as he can remember, Miguel Avila Garcia wanted to study abroad. After he was accepted into the McNair Scholars Program for fall of 2019, he identified a faculty mentor Dr. Dennis Ferraro, who was doing research on understanding how accelerated climate change affects the survival of arboreal frogs in Puerto Rico and Miguel had planned to collect data there over Spring Break 2020. They had planned to analyze and compare this to previous data collected before and after Hurricane Maria. When UNL (and the world) shut down in March 2020, Miguel had to put his dreams on hold.

Finally in fall 2021, Miguel was accepted for a full-time internship in London with the Thames Estuary Partnership. He applied for the program directly through the IES Abroad website.

To finance, he received a scholarship from IES Abroad, the Kleis International Study Program scholarship from CASNR and the Career Connection scholarship from the Education Abroad Office. Miguel would recommend education abroad, which allowed him to gain relevant career experience while immersing myself in another culture and explore a new country. “Not only can you get academic credit and career experience, but you also gain a global perspective, learn how to navigate in international settings, and it will set you apart from a pool of applicants.”

Scholars Selected for National Summer Research



Jocelyn Covarrubias was selected to participate in the 2022 Graduate School Summer Research Opportunities Program at the University of Notre Dame. Jocelyn will conduct research with Dr. Gerald Haefel, Department of Psychology on a conceptual and empirical comparison of self views and world views.



Bailey Mullins was selected to participate in the 2022 SURGE Geoscience and Engineering Summer Research Program at Stanford University. Bailey will conduct research on carbon content of Colombian peatlands with Dr. Scott Winton, Department of Earth Systems Science.



Stephanie Perez was selected to participate in the 2022 Leadership Alliance Summer Research Program at the University of Chicago. Stephanie will conduct research on modeling deep ocean circulations to better understand how the changing climate is affecting circulations with Dr. Malte Jansen, Department of Geophysical Sciences.



Alyssa Simpson was selected to participate in the 2022 Rutgers University Physics and Astronomy REU. Alyssa will conduct research on improving the resolution of inverse photoemission spectroscopy equipment with Dr. Sylvie Rangan and Dr. Robert Bartynski, Department of Physics and Astronomy.



Josselyn Telule was selected to participate in the 2022 Summer Research Opportunities Program at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Josselyn will conduct research with Dr. Sarai Coba-Rodriguez and Dr. Kate Zinsserin, Department of Educational Psychology, on school improvements to ensure fewer minority children are expelled from preschool and early childhood education centers.

Since the UNL McNair Scholars Program began in 1995, we've served **335** students. Excluding the continuing Scholars, **97.8 percent** have earned their bachelor's degree, **160** UNL McNair Program alumni have earned master's degrees, **23** have earned professional degrees, and **57** UNL McNair Program alumni have achieved a **Ph.D.** Currently, **22** UNL McNair alumni are enrolled in Ph.D. programs, **10** are pursuing master's, and **2** are pursuing professional degrees.

McNair Alumni Earn Advanced Degrees

We applaud these UNL McNair alumni who earned advanced degrees during 2021-22:

Doctoral degrees

Marco Gullickson, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2013-15*) earned a master's degree in counseling psychology at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in May 2018. Dr. Gullickson earned a Ph.D. in educational psychology from UNL in August 2022 and has accepted a graduate psychologist position at the Department of Veterans Affairs Nebraska-Western Iowa Health Care System in Omaha.

Andreas Miles-Novelo, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2014-17*) earned a master's degree in social psychology and human computer interaction from Iowa State University in May 2020 and earned his Ph.D. from ISU in August 2022. Dr. Miles-Novelo has accepted a faculty position in the media psychology program at Fielding Graduate University.

Elia Soto, Ph.D. (*McNair Scholar 2012–2015*) earned a master's degree in clinical psychology from Florida State University (FSU) in December 2019 and earned a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from FSU in August 2022. Dr. Soto is a postdoctoral researcher working with the CARE lab and the ADHD Lifespan Treatment, Education, and Research (ALTER) lab at Syracuse University.

Master's degrees

Kyly Baxter (*McNair Scholar 2015-2018*) earned a master's degree in counseling psychology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in August 2022. She has accepted a therapist position at Morningstar Counseling and Consultation, P.C.

Mary Jacqueline Hernandez (*McNair Scholar 2012-2016*) earned a master's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Missouri-Kansas City in May 2022. She is the lead configuration analyst at Cerner Corporation in Kansas City, Missouri.

Nestor Hernandez (*McNair Scholar 2018-2020*) earned a master's degree in sociology from the University of Nebraska–Lincoln in May 2022. Nestor has accepted a position at the Agency for Healthcare Research Quality (AHRQ).

José Lemus (*McNair Scholar 2014-2017*) earned a master's degree in public policy from the University of Michigan in May 2022. José is a senior advisor in the area of workforce and economic development for the Mayor of Detroit.

Mark Nail (*McNair Scholar 2017 - 2020*) earned a master's degree in robotics from the University of Michigan in December 2021. Mark is enrolled in the robotics Ph.D. program at the University of Michigan.

Nancy Nguyen (*McNair Scholar 2018-2020*) earned a MPH in epidemiology from Emory University in May 2022. Nancy has accepted a research scientist/data analyst position at the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, Georgia.

Karina Pedroza (*McNair Scholar 2010–2012*) earned a master's degree in management from Briar Cliff University in December 2021. She is currently the Title III grant project manager at Western Iowa Tech Community College.

Brandi Russell (*McNair Scholar 2015–2019*) earned a MPH degree in community health sciences from Tulane University in May 2022.

Kudos to McNair Alumni: Awards & Publications

Jennifer Andersen, Ph.D. received the ASCPT 2022 Clinical and Translational Science Award for advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion while using translational science for her paper, *COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy: Race/ethnicity, trust, and fear*. The award was presented during the Opening Session of the ASCPT Annual Meeting in March 2022.

Jennifer Andersen – Willis D.E., **Andersen J.A.**, Bryant-Moore K., Selig J.P., Long C.R., Felix H.C., Curran G.M., McElfish P.A. COVID-19 vaccine hesitancy: Race/ethnicity, trust, and fear. *Clinical and translational science*. 2021 Nov;14(6):2200-7

Andreas Miles-Novelo – **Miles-Novelo, A.**, & Anderson, C. (2022). Climate Change and Human Behavior: Impacts of a Rapidly Changing Climate on Human Aggression and Violence (Elements in Applied Social Psychology). *Cambridge: Cambridge University Press*. doi:10.1017/9781108953078.

Mark Nail – Plowcha, A., Bradley, J., Hogberg, J., Ammon, T., **Nail, M.**, Duncan, B., and Detweiler, C. (2022). Autonomous, long-range, sensor emplacement using unmanned aircraft systems. *Field Robotics 2*, 437–467.

Mark Nail was awarded a 2022 National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellowship. Mark is a Robotics Ph.D. candidate at the University of Michigan.

Honors, Awards, & Leadership Activities 2021–22

McNair Scholars continue to make an impact on the University of Nebraska–Lincoln campus and in the community through their leadership roles and volunteerism. This is a partial listing of their 2021-22 honors, awards, scholarships, and leadership activities:

Samuel Aguilera Robledo – Dean's List Fall 2021; UCARE award 2021-22; TFOIE Academic Excellence award; Nebraska Achievements Scholar award; NCPA Scholarship; and NCPA Peer Leader and Peer Mentor.

Hailey Anderson – UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; and UNL Marching Band.

Miguel Avila Garcia – Graduated May 2022; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Center for Plant Science laboratory student worker; Mexican American Student Association; and Omega Delta Phi Fraternity.

Cleopatra Babor – UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; George Beadle Scholarship; H. Beachell Scholarship; Robinson Family Scholarship; and Plant Biology Club Treasurer & Co-Founder.

Emily Barajas – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UNL Honors Program; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Horatio Alger Scholarship; and Community Corrections intern Fall 2021.

Dorian Bobbett – Dean's List Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; Honors Program; Regents Scholarship; Tau Beta Pi Nebraska Alpha Chapter Member National Engineering Honor Society; Women in Engineering Peer Mentor; UNL Chapter of Engineers Without Borders Secretary; UNL Engineering Ambassadors Network Secretary; CHME 113 TA; Engineering Readiness Academy Peer Coach; NUBE volunteer; and Belmont Elementary School CLC STEM Club Coordinator.

Isis Burks – Dean's List Spring 2022; UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2022-23; Emerging Leaders Scholarship; PSYC 181 TA; College of Arts and Sciences Ambassador; Minority Pre-Health Association Volunteer and Social Media Chair; and Minority Pre-Health Association Vice President.

Seth Caines – Dean's List Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; ENGR 100 undergraduate TA; George Beadle Scholarship; Paul E. & Mary Beth Fischbach and Family Scholarship; Nebraska Water Environment Association (NWEA) Scholarship; and Fall 2021 ASUN Senator for the College of Engineering and Environmental Sustainability Chair; and Fall 2021 Civil and Environmental Engineering field sample worker.

Ma'Kiya Carter – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2022-23; and Emerging Leaders Mentor.

Adriann Cotton – UCARE award 2022-23; Deans List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; and UNL Health Science Scholar.

Jocelyn Covarrubias – UCARE award 2021-22; and the 2022 Notre Dame University Graduate School Summer Research Opportunities Program.

Betty Dessie – UCARE award 2020-21; UCARE award 2022-23; William H. Thompson Scholars Study Café Tutor; ASUN Student Government Senator and Chair of the Committee for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion; and Black Student Union Representative.

Darian Draft – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; and UCARE award 2022-23.

Zoe Erickson – Dean's List Fall 2021; UCARE award 2021-22; Regent's Scholar; and UNL Honors Program.

Evelyn Estrada Gonzalez – Graduated May 2022; Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; Minority Health Disparities 2021-22; First Husker Peer Mentor; Career Services Peer Career Guide; and Mexican American Student Association Treasurer.

Noah Garcia – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; and UNL Honors Program.

Mohammad Majid – Graduated May 2022; Dean's List Spring 2022; CSCE 440 TA; LPS robotics and technology mentor; Nelnet Senior Design Team; Senior Design Platinum Award; Vesper CAS Fellowship; Initialize CS Education Fellowship mentor; and Muslim Student Association.

Bailey Mullins – UCARE award 2021-22; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; Environmental Studies Learning Assistant; UNL Multicultural Greek Environmental Team Founder; and Stanford University 2022 Summer Undergraduate Research in Geoscience and Engineering Program (SURGE).

Daniel Nguyen – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; UNL Honors Program; Regents Scholarship; 2021 Levine Diversity Enhancement Research Award; MHDI Research Assistant; UNL WEB DuBois Honor Society; National Society of Collegiate Scholars member; and UNL PsiChi member.

Aiah Nour – Graduated December 2021; Innocents Society; Black Student Union; African Students Association; and American Society for Biochemistry and Molecular Biology Honors Society.

Clara Perez – UCARE award 2022-23; Dell Scholar; Emerging Leaders Scholarship; STEM Connect Scholars Program; Horatio Alger Scholars; Computing for All Student Organization President; and UNL Resident Assistant.

Stephanie Perez – Dean's List Spring 2022; Nebraska Achievement Scholarship; W.H. Thompson Scholarship; and College of Engineering Dean's Leader; Engineers Without Borders Nebraska Team Outreach Lead; and 2022 University of Chicago Leadership Alliance SR-EIP.

Clarice Santos – Honors Program; MHDI award 2021-22; 2022 Student Luminary Award; 2022 Beinecke Scholarship; 2021 Gilman International Scholarship; Trenchard Foundation Institute of Excellence Scholarship; Combs Honors Scholar; Sociology Undergraduate Advisory Board; CAS Connects Peer Leader; Nebraska College Preparatory Academy Peer Leader and tutor; Alpha Kappa Delta Honor Society; and Define American member.

J.J. Silva – Dean's List Spring 2022; UCARE award 2022-23; and UNL Society of Physics Students Secretary.

Alyssa Simpson – UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; UNL Honors Program; Regents Scholar; George & Mary Haskell Scholarship; Nebraska CubeSat Mentor; oSTEM 2021-22 Fundraising Coordinator; Aerospace Club Communications Coordinator; and Society of Physics Students 2021-22 Vice President; and 2022 Rutgers University Physics and Astronomy REU.

Josselyn Telule – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; TA for College Major Forum EDPS 097; PSYC 181 TA; F & J Musgrave Scholarship; Susan T. Buffett Scholarship; Nebraska Achievement Scholar; Nebraska Emerging Leaders Scholarship; Husker Traditions Scholarship; William H. Thompson Learning Community Peer Mentor; and University of Illinois–Chicago 2022 Summer Research Opportunity Program (SROP).

Serigne Toure – Graduated May 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; CSCE 310 TA; and Muslim Student Organization President.

Haley Witthuhn – Dean's List Fall 2021 and Spring 2022; UCARE award 2021-22; UCARE award 2022-23; UNL Honors Program; Education Quest Scholarship; Arts and Science Scholarship; Honors After-school Club Fall 2021; and UNL Children's Center Student Teacher.

Khalid Yusuf – Graduated December 2021; Dean's List Fall 2021; UCARE award 2021-22; SOCI 217 Sociology of Race and Ethnicity undergraduate TA; Black Achievement Award; and Diversity Ambassadors Inclusive Leadership Facilitator.



McNair Presentations & Honors Thesis

Spring Presentations

- Samuel Aguilera-Robledo – Aguilera-Robledo, S.**, Johnson, A., Adamec, J. (2022, April). *Metabolic Changes Associated with Epilepsy and Dietary Exosomes in the Liver*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Cleopatra Babor – Babor, C.**, Holding, D. (2022, April). *Breeding Colored and High Lysine Prime Eating Stage Sweetcorn*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Dorian Bobbett – Bobbett, D.**, Panther, G., Diefes-Dux, H. (2022, April). *Behavioral Adaptability of an Engineering Instructor During Pandemic Impacted Teaching*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Isis Burks – Burks, I.**, Finch, J. (2022, April). *Is Persistence Associated with Self-Regulation and Academic Skills in the Classroom?* Poster presented at the 2022 Poster presented at the Nebraska Student Research Days, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Seth Caines – Caines, S.**, Bartelt-Hunt, S. (2022, April). *Are microplastic fibers that are usually found in textiles prevalent in Nebraska Freshwater bodies?* Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Jocelyn Covarrubias – Covarrubias, J.**, Jaffe, A. (2022, April). *Gender Differences among Sexual Assault Survivors: An Examination of Alcohol Use and PTSD Symptom Clusters*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Betty Dessie – Dessie, B.**, Herman, M., Hopkins, S. (2022, April). *Investigating the age-dependent role of DAF-16-mediated immunity during *S. maltophilia* infection*. Poster presented at the 2022 School of Biological Sciences Research Symposium, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Evelyn Estrada Gonzalez – Estrada Gonzalez, E.**, Knoche, L. (2022, April). *Strategy Used During Home Visits: The Relationship of Parent and Teacher Characteristics*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Noah Garcia – Garcia, N.**, Nelson, C. (2022, April). *Designing an Ankle Orthosis Exoskeleton for Hemiparesis Patient Gait Assistance*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Bailey Mullins – Mullins, B.**, Franz, T. (2022, April). *Investigating Corporate Greenhouse Gas Reduction Methods and Goals*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Daniel Nguyen – Nguyen, D.**, Brock, R., Cipriano, A. (2022, April). *Minority Stressors and Romantic Relationships Among LGBTQ+ People in Rural and Metro Nebraska*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Stephanie Perez – Perez, S.**, Bartelt-Hunt, S., Karimifard, S. (2022, April). *Prediction of Neonicotinoid Fate Originating from Ethanol Production Wastes*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Clarice Santos – Santos, C.**, Andrews, T. (2022, April). *Trust in Institutions and Likelihood of reporting Crimes by Latinx Immigrants*. Poster. 2022 Rocky Mountain Psychological Association Annual Convention. Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Alyssa Simpson – Simpson, A.**, Wu, Q., Wang, K., Hong, X. (2022, April). *Ferroelectric domain studies of free-standing $PbZr_{0.2}Ti_{0.8}O_3$ (PZT) membranes*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.
- Josselyn Telule – Telule, J.**, Volk, S., et al. (2022, April). *Testing Affirming Adaptations of Care for Transgender and Gender Diverse Adults: Working Alliance*. Poster presented at the 2022 Nebraska Student Research Days, University of Nebraska–Lincoln, Lincoln, Nebraska.

Honors Thesis

- Daniel Nguyen – Nguyen, D. M.**, Holland, K. J., & Willis-Esqueda, C. (2022, March). *Experiences of Intersectional Identities and Community Bias: Obstacles to Identity Development, Identity Integration, and Well-being for LGBTQ+ People of Color*. Undergraduate Honors Thesis. University of Nebraska-Lincoln.



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