Who was Ronald E. McNair?

Ronald E. McNair was a scholar, physicist, jazz musician, karate black belt, family man and NASA astronaut. He was born in 1950 in Lake City, South Carolina. He attended North Carolina A&T State University where he earned a B.S. in physics in 1971. He received his Ph.D. in physics at the age of 26 from Massachusetts Institute of Technology in 1976.

While a member of the Hughes Research Laboratory, McNair gained recognition as an expert in laser physics. He was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978 and was a mission specialist aboard the 1984 flight of Challenger. Tragically, McNair was a team member of the ill-fated 1986 Challenger flight which ended his life.

In 1986 Congress passed legislation implementing the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program in memory of McNair. The program was established by the U.S. Department of Education to encourage and prepare interested and eligible undergraduates for doctoral studies through their involvement in research and scholarly activity.

Our Mission

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program (McNair Scholars Program) was established by the U.S. Department of Education to encourage and prepare interested and eligible undergraduates for doctoral studies through their involvement in research and scholarly activity.

In support of students’ efforts to become researchers and faculty professors at the university level, the Hunter College McNair Scholars Program concentrates on providing quality services to ensure that participants graduate with a bachelor’s degree, acquire the necessary skills and knowledge for admission into graduate school and the successful completion of their graduate studies.

The Program Can Help You Reach Your Academic and Career Goals

Preparation and training make a difference. Our Eight-Week Summer Institute and services year-round will help you improve your academic performance in college, graduate school and beyond. The resources provided include:

- A stipend of up to $2,800, linked to the completion of academic milestones.
- Advanced writing, library research and online research workshops
- Mentored research & academic advising
- GRE preparation
- Assistance in securing admission to and financial support for enrollment in doctoral/graduate programs
- Summer research opportunities

Who is Eligible?

- The McNair Program is for Hunter College of the City University of New York undergraduates (matriculated or enrolled students only) who are U.S. Citizens, OR Naturalized Citizens, OR Permanent Residents who have NOT earned a B.A. or B.S. degree.
- Hunter College students who are low-income and first-generation college students (your parents or legal guardian have not earned a bachelor’s degree), OR
- Hunter College students who are members of groups underrepresented in graduate education in the United States (American Indian/Alaskan Native, Hispanic, Black (non-Hispanic)), AND
- who have completed more than 60 credits with a cumulative grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 or higher.

Requirements

Acceptance into the McNair Scholars Program is competitive. All applicants must fulfill the following requirements including:

- a completed application including financial documentation
- one to two-page personal statement
- writing sample (5 to 10 pages)
- two letters of recommendation from college faculty members

Those students who are strong candidates will be invited to a paneled interview.

Financial Documentation

- Your most recent 1040 tax form, or Your parent’s 1040 if they claim you as a dependent and current Student Aid Report (SAR) if you receive financial aid, OR
- An income verification letter from Public Assistance, Social Security or another government agency and current Student Aid Report (SAR) if you receive financial aid.
McNair Scholars’ Testimonials:

“The McNair Program has boosted my academic confidence, given me exposure to the world of graduate study, and humbled me as a student. The extracurricular experiences and educational opportunities have been coupled with lasting support and friendships that I will always value.”

-Chantale Soekhoe
(Urban Studies, Anticipated Graduation June 2009)

“The McNair Scholars Program has given me the opportunity to engage in research which has completely altered my life.”

-Maria Tineo
(Psychology, June 2008)
(Graduate Student in Developmental Psychology, Purdue University)

Contact Information:
Carol Oliver, Ph.D.
Program Director
212-772-4937, carol.oliver@hunter.cuny.edu

Alyssa Lopez
Program Assistant
212-772-4824, Alyssa.lopez@hunter.cuny.edu

The Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is funded by the United States Department of Education as a part of TRIO Programs.