

SIUC McNair Newsletter

McNair Scholars Program

7/30/2019

Volume 2, Issue 1

Meet the new scholars of the McNair Scholars Program



From Left- Andres Womac, Jawaun Valentine, Luis Prado, Jacob Janicki, Kaitlin Faust, Jessica Jurak, Shalane Scott, Destanee Williams, Christian Rose, and Joshua McCray

Eight SIUC McNair Scholars from different majors were proudly welcomed on April 25, 2019, held at Guyon Auditorium in Morris Library (SIUC Campus). **Kaitlin Faust** (majoring in Animal Science), **Amanda Leppert Gomez** (Anthropology), **Jacob Janicki** (Plant Biology), **Joshua McCray** (Political Science), **Diamond Palmer** (Radio, TV & Digital Media), **Shalane Scott** (Criminology & Criminal Justice), **Margaret Schlotter** (Psychology), and **Jawaun Valentine** (History) represented the 2019 McNair Scholars.

Rhetta Seymour, the Director of the McNair program, opened the ceremony and welcomed mentors, students, and parents.

Dr. Meera Kommaraju, Provost & Vice-Chancellor for Academic Affairs had encouraging words for current and graduating McNair Scholars. She also shared her experience as a McNair mentor to three McNair Scholars.

Dr. Krystelle Jean-Michael, a former McNair scholar, was the Keynote Speaker at the ceremony. She earned her Doctorate in Counseling Psychology from Western Michigan University in 2014, where she was awarded the Thurgood Marshall Graduate Fellowship. Her dissertation topic "Exploring Help-Seeking Intentions of Black American Church-goers" focused on exploring the attitudes and intentions of Black American

Church-goers toward seeking counseling services. She has clinical experiences with military personnel, veterans, and college student population. She also has extensive training in administering evidence-based assessments and treatments for a variety of disorders including anxiety, post-traumatic stress, depression, and substance abuse. Currently, **Dr. Jean-Michael** is an Assistant Professor at the United States Air Force Academy where she teaches undergraduate and mentors students in the performance of capstone related projects. During the ceremony, Dr. Enrique talked

about the various struggles of graduate school and advice on how to succeed in graduate school. Through her experience in the McNair Scholars Program, she emphasized the importance of mentor guidance "At the time I was seeking research opportunities in an independent study, I didn't realize how instrumental having a professional mentorship experience will be in guiding my academic and professional career path."

Graduating McNair scholar, **Francis Gatimu** encapsulated his entire McNair experience by comparing it to the Rope Course activity "One is not mentally or physically prepared of what is to come. One thing you are sure of is that there are experts that have gone before you and taken every measure to ensure your safety and success, but beyond that it's all on you. You are shown the way, but you have to walk it or climb it. One thing you can assure is that at the end of every challenge, there you will find your guide waiting for you ready to usher you into the seemingly more difficult one. We all begin at the same point, but many of us took different paths that converge to a single finishing point. It didn't matter whether you finished first or finished last; all that matters is that you finished."

The ceremony also recognized 10 continuing and 13 graduating McNair scholars.

The continuing McNair scholars included **Yasmin Ibrahim, Jessica Jurak, Nathaniel Jordan, Allison McMinn, Itzel Mendoza, Areaj Mubarak, Luis Prado, Tori Rhone, Christian Rose, and Destanee Williams**. The success of the McNair program can also be measured with graduating scholars like **Hamza Ajeena, Frankie Anderson, Erin Boester, William Browning, Kennedy Byers, Aaron Caldwell, Brittan Cobb, Jamieson Deamer, Dakota Discepolo, Francis Gatimu, Alexis Lane, Madison McMinn, and Alexis Rusk**.

The program is thankful to Dr. **Karen Renzaglia** for writing the initial McNair grant and its subsequent renewals. The program would also like to thank SIUC for their matching fund contributions that is instrumental in the success of this program. We would also like to extend a special thank you to all the SIUC faculty mentors for giving the McNair scholars the opportunity of working in their lab to pursue their research interests. We would like to extend a special thank you to family and friends of all McNair scholars for their constant support and encouragement. Finally, we would like to thank **Rhetta Seymour** and undergraduate assistants **Destanee Williams** and **Tori Rhone** for organizing a fantastic ceremony. It takes a lot of work and effort to coordinate all the little details

"Remain positive and focused on your goals as every step in the direction of your goal will culminate into your big moment."

*-Encouraging words by
Dr. Krystelle Jean-Michael
(Keynote Speaker)*

that go into running such a show.

The McNair Scholars Program is an educational opportunity program funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The program is structured to prepare undergraduates for doctoral studies through involvement in research and other scholarly activities. McNair participants are either first-generation college students with financial need or members of a group that is traditionally underrepresented in graduate education and have demonstrated strong academic potential. The goal of the McNair Scholars Program is to increase graduate degree awards for students from underrepresented segments of society. The program is dedicated to **Dr. Ronald E. McNair** and the high standards of achievement inspired by his life.

To learn more about the McNair program, please visit <https://mcnair.siu.edu/> or contact Rhetta Seymour at rseymour@siu.edu

Moments of the induction ceremony



Opening remarks by Rhetta Seymour, Director of McNair Scholars Program and Dr. Meera Kommaraju, Provost & Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs



Keynote Speaker Dr. Krystelle Jean-Michael



2018 McNair Scholar and Graduating Senior Francis Gatimu



Continuing McNair Scholars (from left)- Jessica Jurak, Allison McMinn, Itzel Mendoza, Areaj Mubarak, Christian Rose, Destanee Williams, and Tori Rhone.



Graduating McNair Scholars (from left)- Francis Gatimu, Aaron Caldwell, Erin Boester, Alexis Lane, Hamza Ajeena, Jamieson Deamer and Madison McMinn.

16th Annual McNair Summer Research Symposium

Eleven Scholars showcased their research posters at the 16th Annual McNair Summer Research Symposium held on July 20 2018, at Guyon Auditorium in SIUC. The symposium was a collaboration between eleven scholars from McNair Scholars Program and a scholar from ILSAMP, both programs led by **Rhetta Seymour**.

At the symposium, scholars presented their independent research work conducted with a respective SIUC faculty mentor during the Summer Research Institute (SRI). McNair SRI scholars included **Kaitlin Faust** under the mentorship of **Erin Perry**, **Jacob Janicki** under the mentorship of **Dr. Aldwin Anterola**, **Jessica Jurak** under the mentorship of **Dr. Poopalasingam Sivakumar**, **Joshua McCray** under the mentorship of **Dr. Benjamin Bricker**, **Areaj Mubarak** under the mentorship of **Dr. Diana Sarko**, **Luis Prado** under the mentorship of **Dr. Ruopu Li**, **Christian Rose** under the mentorship of **Dr. Mondal Kanchan**, **Shalane Scott** under the mentorship of **Dr. Julie Hibdon**, **Jawaun Valentine** under the mentorship of



From left (back row)-Jacob Janicki, Luis Prado, Andres Womac, Christian Rose, and Joshua McCray; (middle row)- Jessica Jurak, and Kaitlin Faust.; (front row)- Destanee Williams, Areaj Mubarak, Jawaun Valentine and Shalane Scott.

Dr. Pamela Smoot, **Destanee Williams** under the mentorship of **Dr. Julie Hibdon**, **Amanda Leppert Gomez** under the mentorship of **Dr. Roberto Barrios** and ILSAMP scholar **Andres Womac** under the mentorship of **Dr. Peter Filip**.

The symposium lasted for two hours and was attended by SIUC faculty, administrators, undergraduates, graduates students, and family members of McNair scholars. The session was judged by **Dr. Mary Kinsel**, **Dr. Judy Davie**, **Dr. Lisabeth DiLalla**, **Jason Henry**, **Dr. Thushari Jayasekera**, **Elaine Jurkowski**, **Janine Armstrong**, and **Dr. Punit Kholi**.

At the closing ceremony, McNair scholar received outstanding research achievement certificates for completing the SRI. Faculty

Mentors were also awarded Outstanding Mentor certificates for their time and resources and providing the McNair scholars the opportunity of working in their lab. McNair scholars **Christian Rose** and **Jessica Jurak** won the first and second place for the best poster presentation in STEM discipline while McNair scholars **Jawaun Valentine** and **Joshua McCray** won the first and second place for the best poster presentation in Social Sciences and Humanities Discipline at the symposium.

The SRI is an intensive 8-week program where McNair scholars engage in mentor-based research. The SRI kick started with a week of professional development activities. The scholars attended workshops on time and stress management, nonverbal

SRI Highlights



communications, interracial relationships, public speaking and team building. The following 6 weeks, students worked closely with faculty mentors to develop an individual research project. They conducted fieldwork, compiled literature reviews, set up experiments, analyzed data, and composed original research papers. In addition to research, scholars also underwent six weeks of GRE training sessions with McNair Staff **Francis Gatimu**. These sessions were aimed at weekly practice sessions and providing tips to improve GRE composite scores.

McNair scholar **Areaj Mubarak** gave the inspirational closing remarks. She reflected her summer experience, “Within the 8 weeks of the Summer Research Institute, we have worked approximately 320 hours on our projects, studied for the GRE both at home and on campus, and participated in various enriching workshops on a weekly basis. But with the immense support through the McNair staff, our mentors, as well as our cohort, we are able to accelerate the motivation and drive to surpass that speed bump that may wean us away from achieving our goals with our projects.” She also emphasized the importance of the program in her life “Student retention is a

great challenge that is faced by colleges, universities, and the student itself-- and Self-efficacy is the biggest culprit. Being liberated from structured academia is a challenge given by McNair. Due to this, I have expanded upon my independence in ways that I have never imagined. I have also learned courage—taking on the high ropes course wasn’t easy! Once I got up there, I got right back down. But then I surprisingly went back up there and completed the course. Since then, I’ve carried this newfound courage and have applied it to many situations, such as proceeding with things I would normally be afraid of.”

The program would like to thank all the Matching Funds Contributors and all the workshop presenters. We would also like to thank **Dr. Karen**

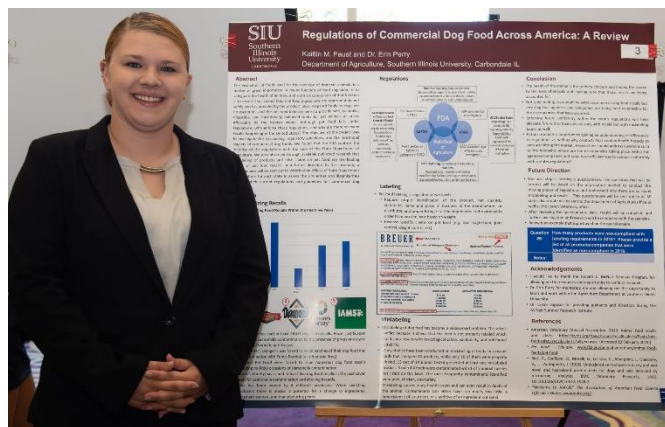
“There were many aspects that I did not expect to grow and develop upon within these past 8 weeks, such as independence and courage- but I have been grateful to have seen it happen.”

*-Areaj Mubarak
(McNair Scholar)*

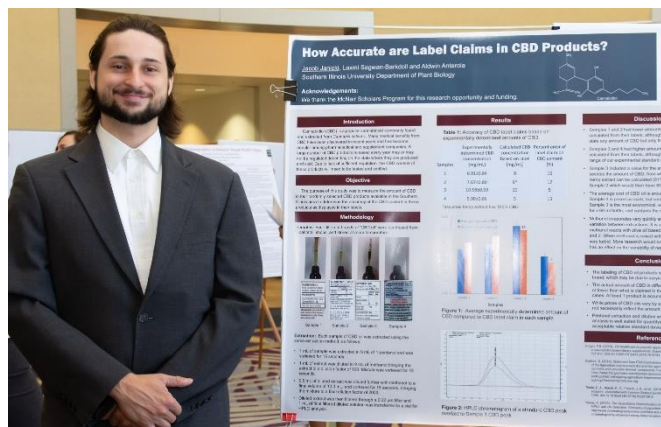
Renzaglia (PI of the McNair grant), **Rhetta Seymour** (Director of the McNair Program), and McNair Research Staff- **Jorden Thomas**, **Laxmi Sagwan-Barkdoll**, and **Francis Gatimu**.



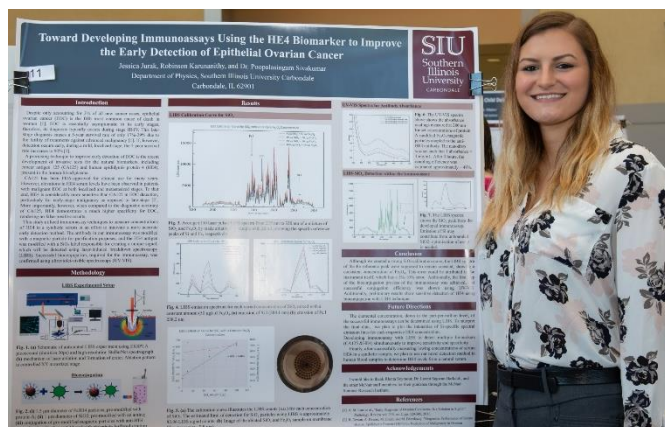
PROUD MOMENTS AT THE SYMPOSIUM



Kaitlin Faust presented her research “Regulations of Commercial Dog Food across America: A Review” under the mentorship of **Dr. Erin Perry**.



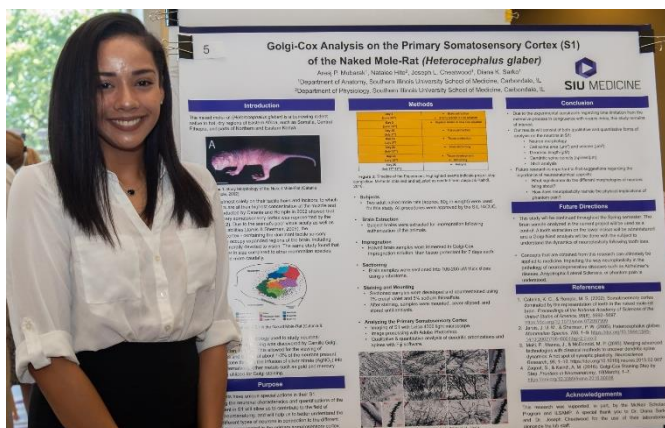
Jacob Janicki presented his research “How Accurate are Label Claims in CBD Products” under the mentorship of **Dr. Aldwin Anterola**.



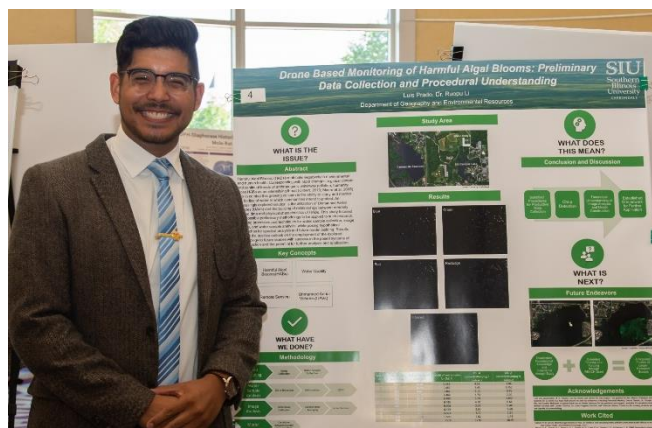
Jessica Jurak presented her research “Toward Developing Immunoassays using the HE4 Biomarker to Improve the Early Detection of Epithelial Ovarian Cancer” under the mentorship of **Dr. Poopalasingam SivaKumar**. She won the second best poster presentation in STEM discipline.



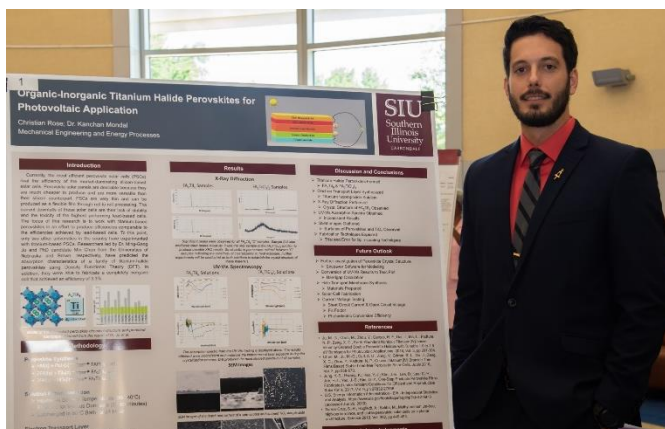
Joshua McCray presented his research “Civil Asset Forfeiture and Excessive Fees in the American Criminal Justice System; A Blatant Constitutional Violation?” under the mentorship of **Dr. Benjamin Bricker**. He won the second best poster in Social Sciences and Humanities category.



Areaj Mubarak presented her research “Golgi-Cox Analysis on the Primary Somatosensory Cortex (S1) of the Naked Mole-Rat (*Heterocephalus glaber*)” under the mentorship of **Dr. Diana Sarko**.



Luis Prado presented his research “Drone Based Monitoring of Harmful Algal Blooms: Preliminary Data Collection and Procedural Understanding” under the mentorship of **Dr. Ruopu Li**.



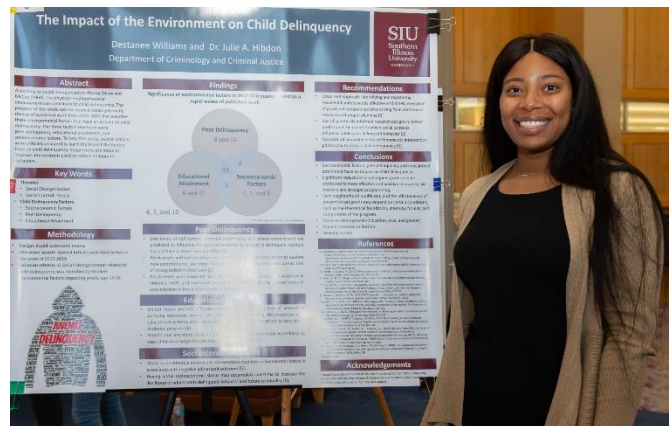
Christian Rose presented his research “Organic-Inorganic Titanium Halide Perovskites for Photovoltaic Application” under the mentorship of **Dr. Mondal Kanchan**. He won the best poster presentation in STEM discipline.



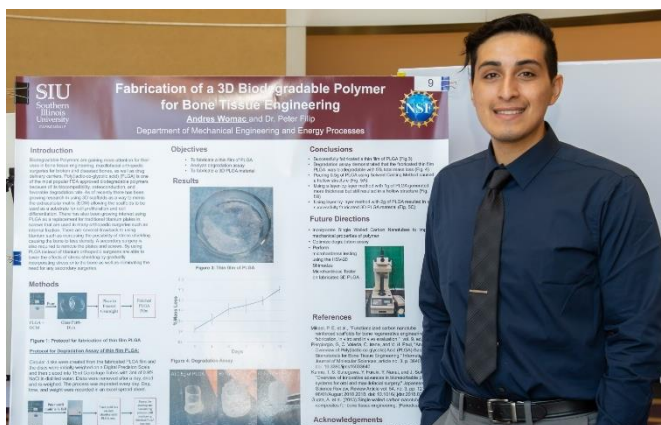
Shalane Scott presented her research “Does Location Matter? Domestic Violence from a Geographical Perspective” under the mentorship of **Dr. Julie Hibdon**.



Jawaun Valentine presented his research “The History of African Americans in Organized Medicine and Frontier Medicine, 1865-1914” under the mentorship of **Dr. Pamela Smoot**. Jawaun won the best poster presentation in Social Sciences and Humanities category.

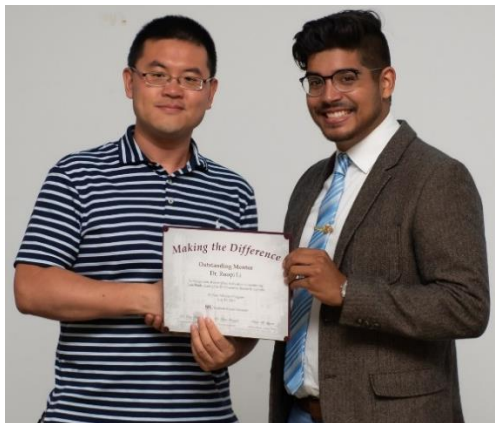


Destanee Williams presented her research “The Impact of the Environment on Child Delinquency” under the mentorship of **Dr. Julie Hibdon**.



Andres Womac presented his research “Fabrication of a 3D Biodegradable Polymer for Bone Tissue Engineering” under the mentorship of **Dr. Peter Filip**.

Moments of SRI Symposium 2018



McNair Scholar Luis Prado (right) with his mentor Dr. Ruopu Li.



From left- STEM Awards: 2nd Place Jessica Jurak, 1st Place Christian Rose, Social Science Awards: 1st Place Jawaun Valentine, 2nd Place Joshua McCray.



McNair Scholar Destanee Williams with Rhetta Seymour



McNair Support Staff (Left)- Laxmi Sagwan-Barkdoll, Francis Gatimu, and Jorden Thomas



McNair Scholar Areaj Mubarak sharing her closing remarks



First row (Left)- Kaitlin Faust, Areaj Mubarak, Shalane Scott, Destanee Williams. Second row (Left)- Luis Prado, Jacob Janicki, Christian Rose, Joshua McCray, Jessica Jurak, Jawaun Valentine, and Andres Womac.

Congratulations to recently enrolled McNair Scholars



Francis Gatimu-
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in Ph.D. in Political
Science International
Relations at University of
Southern California since Fall
2019



Madison McMinn
McNair SRI 2017 scholar
Enrolled in Ph.D. in Chemistry
at Northeastern University
since Fall 2019



Brittan Cobb
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in MS in Food Safety
and Technology at Illinois
Institute of Technology since
Fall 2018.



Alexis Lane
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in MEd in Education
Specialist at Loyola University
since Fall 2019



Dakota Discepolo
McNair SRI 2017 scholar
Enrolled in MS in Animal
Science at Southern Illinois
University Carbondale since
Fall 2019



Erin Boester - McNair SRI 2018
scholar
Enrolled in MA in Clinical
Mental Health at Southern
Illinois University Carbondale
since Fall 2019



Hamza Ajeena
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in Doctor of
Veterinary Medicine at
Midwestern University since
Fall 2019



Alexis Rusk
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in MS in Computer
Science Bioinformatics at
Southern Illinois University
Edwardsville since Fall 2019



Aaron Caldwell
McNair SRI 2018 scholar
Enrolled in MA in Ceramics
at San Jose State University
since Fall 2019

Congratulations to Recent Ph.D. and Master Graduates (2018-2019)



Dr. Calvin Zimmerman

McNair SRI 2012 scholar

Graduated from University of Pennsylvania with Ph.D. in Sociology
Dissertation Title: Before Black Boys are Criminalized? Race, Boyhood, and School Discipline in Early Childhood.

He joined the Faculty of Notre Dame's Department of Sociology in Fall 2018.



Lateesha Baquet

McNair SRI 2014 scholar

Graduated from Southern Illinois University in Rehabilitation Counseling in 2018.



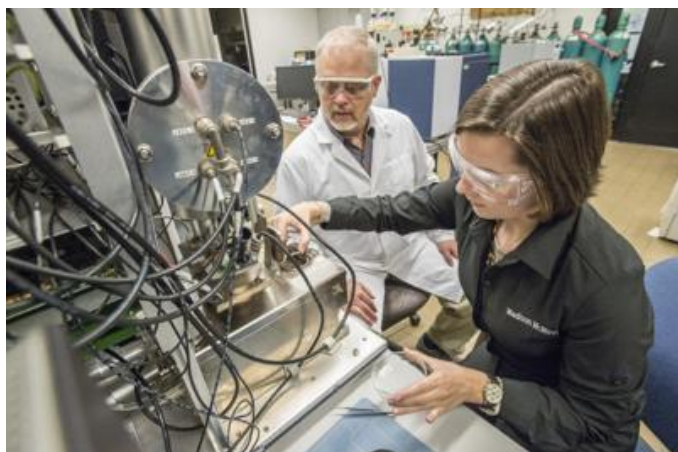
Brenda Escutia

McNair SRI 2014 scholar

Graduated from North Carolina State University in Higher Education Administration in 2018.

She is currently the Residence Director at North Carolina State University.

SCHOLAR ACCOMPLISHMENTS



McNair Scholar **Madison McMin** won a competitive NSF Graduate Research Fellowship in Chemistry. She was one of over 12,000 students to apply for this fellowship. With the support of this graduate fellowship, she will pursue her Ph.D. in Chemistry at Northeastern University



McNair Scholar **Shalane Scott's** research was showcased in This is SIU new blog. Her study exposed the myth surrounding domestic violence. The complete article can be found at <https://blog.news.siu.edu/20190722-one-siu-student-is-debunking-the-myths-related-to-domestic-violence/>



Congratulations to McNair Scholar **Aaron Caldwell** for winning the SPC Purchase Award. His ceramic piece was chosen to be displayed permanently in the SIU Student Center. He was also one of the nine Finalist to the prestigious Rickert- Ziebold Trust Award.

Upcoming Events

GRADUATE AND PROFESSIONAL FAIR



This annual event hosted by The Career Center draws recruiters from over 1,500 graduate and professional programs in health, law, science, business, engineering, arts, humanities, and more. Representatives provide information and materials regarding their specific programs and schools to students who are considering an advanced degree. This event is free and open to ALL students and the public. Also, check the below website for additional information.

<https://www.careercenter.illinois.edu/graduate-and-professional-school-fair>

Date: **October 16, 2019**

Time: 12:00 p.m. – 4:00 pm

Location: U of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign
Illini Union, Rooms ABC & Pine Lounge

BIG TEN+ GRADUATE SCHOOL EXPOSITION



The Big Ten+ Graduate School Exposition is specifically designed for those interested in graduate study in the fields of Engineering, Mathematics, Science, Technology, Pharmaceutical Sciences and related disciplines. Students from all institutions are encouraged to attend, and travel scholarships are available! Also, check the below website for complete schedule and handbook.

<https://www.purdue.edu/gradschool/gradexpo/index.html>

The Grad Expo features:

- educational workshops
- an elite graduate school fair
- networking receptions
- and more!

Date: **September 22-23, 2019**

Location: Purdue University
West Lafayette, Indiana Campus

If you are interested in attending these graduate school fairs or campus tour, please contact Rhett Seymour regarding Registration and Fees.