FACULTY SPOTLIGHT: STEPHANIE MARTINEZ
Associate Professor of Communication

Stephanie Martinez, PhD, received her BS in Advertising from Kent State University, MA in Speech Communication with a concentration in Organizational Communication from Eastern Illinois University and her PhD in Communication Studies from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale. For her dissertation, Martinez performed an ethnographic study regarding communication styles at Alexian Brothers Salus Place — a community for people affected by HIV/AIDS and addiction in St. Louis, Missouri. She is an invaluable resource to the McNair Scholars Program, and we asked her to reflect on her experiences with the scholars.

In what ways have you been involved with the Ronald E. McNair Scholars Program at St. Edward’s University?
I was a research director and mentor during the first year of McNair being implemented at St. Edward’s. Also, after Professor Molly Minus created the advisory board, I was asked to serve on that the first year as well.

Why did you choose to get involved with the McNair Scholars Program?
I was a first-generation college student. My father did not finish high school. Instead, he went off to fight in WWII like many of his friends. I wish I had had a program like McNair.

How do you think the McNair Scholars Program helps prepare students for graduate school?
McNair offers so much to our future graduate students. It gives them experience developing questions and creating a longer research project while working closely with a faculty mentor. They then go on to present this information in front of an audience at different conferences and to publish in our McNair journal. They have study prep for the GRE. They also have Molly Minus and the McNair staff who are great mentors and resources.

How long have you been at St. Edward’s, and what led you to join the Communication department?
Twelve years. The joke in my family is that I said I would never move to Texas. I don’t like heat. I had never been to Texas, let alone Austin, before I interviewed here. I fell in love with the students, my department and the school — in that order. I work with wonderful scholars in my discipline who are doing amazing things.
From the Director’s Desk

Each spring we have an annual event, our recognition reception, which coincides with the publication of our annual newsletter. We take this opportunity to recognize and celebrate the accomplishments of our scholars and our alumni over the past year. As we reviewed not only the past year, but also the last 12 years, we compiled a report of our alumni for our website, and seeing all the accomplishments of our alumni since receiving their bachelor’s degree was quite wonderful and inspiring. Our scholars and alumni have been incredibly successful in their graduate studies because of their hard work and strong commitment to achieve their goals. To date, 28 of our scholars achieved master’s degrees, three achieved a DPT and two achieved PhDs, with two more PhDs to be awarded in 2015. Our second McNair scholar to receive her PhD, Ilse Carrizales ’06, graduated from Oklahoma State University with a doctorate in Counseling Psychology in 2013. Following her graduation, she received a postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Washington Child Study and Treatment Center. She will be the keynote speaker at our annual recognition reception on May 1, 2015.

As usual, spring is a tension-filled but exhilarating time in the McNair office. We eagerly await our scholars’ notification of graduate school and conference acceptances, as well as scholarships and fellowship awards. For the sixth year in a row, we had a 100% acceptance rate for our scholars who submitted abstracts to the National Conference for Undergraduate Research, a highly competitive conference. The four scholars accepted this year are in the fields of Global Studies, Political Science, Communication and Psychology. As the April 15 deadline for graduate school acceptances is fast approaching (some decisions are still pending), we are pleased to announce that so far we have an 80% acceptance rate this spring. Since 2003, we have served 159 scholars, including the 28 scholars who are currently enrolled at St. Edward’s. Of the 129 scholars who graduated prior to this academic year, 79 have gone on to graduate or professional school. That is 61% of the total since the program began in 2003. Of the scholars who graduated in the last academic year, 77% were enrolled in graduate school this fall.

In addition to acknowledging the accomplishments of our scholars and McNair alumni, we also owe our success to the tremendous support and assistance from faculty, staff and administration across the university. We could not do this program without your support and contributions in time and ideas. Thank you for all you do.

Molly Minus, PhD
Director, McNair Scholars Program
Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs
Professor of Education

Thank you to the following St. Edward’s University faculty members who support the program by mentoring students and directing their research. The McNair Scholars Program would not be successful without their dedication.

2014–2015 MCNAIR FACULTY MENTORS

School of Behavioral and Social Sciences
Stacey Borasky, PhD
John Cotter, PhD
Michael Disch, PhD
Anna Escamilla, PhD
Russell J. Frohardt, PhD
Daniel Glenn, PhD
Mity Myhr, PhD
Rachael Neal, PhD
Rodrigo Nunes, PhD
Tomas Yufik, PhD

University Programs
Laura Hernandez-Ehrisman, PhD

School of Humanities
Shannon Butler, PhD
Mark Cherry, PhD
Mary Rist, PhD
Teri L. Varner, PhD
Jennifer Veninga, PhD

The Bill Munday School of Business
Mike Harris, PhD
Gary Fletcher, PhD
William Martello, PhD

School of Education
Kris Sloan, PhD
Terry Newton, PhD
Amy Nathan Wright, PhD

Program benefits include:
• Academic, career and personal counseling
• Research mentoring by a faculty mentor
• Preparation for GRE
• Assistance in applying to graduate school
• Professional development seminars
• Paid travel to professional and research conferences
• Training in research methodology
• Summer research internship with research stipend of up to $2,800
• Graduate school application waivers from more than 200 universities

Eligibility requirements include:
• GPA of 2.7 or better
• Undergraduate status with 45 or more credit hours
• U.S. citizen or permanent resident
• Low-income and first generation college student, or member of a group underrepresented in graduate study (i.e., Hispanic, African-American, Native American or Pacific Islander [Guamanian, Native Hawaiian or Samoan])

For more information, visit think.stedwards.edu/mcnair or call 512-428-1268.

McNair Scholars Program at St. Edward’s University

The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program is dedicated to providing research-related experiences and academic support to talented undergraduates who are interested in pursuing a PhD degree.

This federally funded TRIO program targets first-generation college students from low-income families and students from populations underrepresented in graduate education.

Eligibility requirements include:
• GPA of 2.7 or better
• Undergraduate status with 45 or more credit hours
• U.S. citizen or permanent resident
• Low-income and first generation college student, or member of a group underrepresented in graduate study (i.e., Hispanic, African-American, Native American or Pacific Islander [Guamanian, Native Hawaiian or Samoan])

For more information, visit think.stedwards.edu/mcnair or call 512-428-1268.
McNair Scholars Prepare for Summer Research Internship in Summer 2015

Every summer following their induction, McNair scholars enroll in the McNair summer research internship at St. Edward's University, each working alongside their respective faculty mentor to formally conduct a research project of their interest. Scholars will then present their findings at our annual research symposium and at national academic conferences across the U.S. the next year.

Auburney S. Jackson Joins McNair Program

We would like to welcome Auburney S. Jackson, our new project graduate assistant, to the McNair Scholars Program. Jackson is a recent honors graduate from Southwestern University (May 2014) with a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy with concentrations in Race and Ethnic Studies and Political Science. She has ample experience working on issues regarding racial and social justice, diversity and “inclusion,” gender and sexuality, and students from underrepresented and low-income backgrounds. Prior to this role, she was a senior student director in the Office of Diversity Education as well as the research assistant for the Philosophy and Religion departments at Southwestern University. She is currently pursuing a dual doctorate degree in African and African Diaspora Studies and Philosophy at the University of Texas at Austin. Her scholarly work seeks to employ the praxis of (Black) Existentialism; (Black) Political Philosophy; Afro-Pessimism and Liberation Theory; and Psychoanalysis to investigate and interrogate the notion of political alliances across inter-identity lines — with attention given to inter-racial lines.

Jackson is the only daughter of a military family, leading her to grow up in Arkansas, New York, Louisiana and Texas. She, her partner and their two fluffy dogs have made Austin their home. When she is not avidly reading to prepare for her qualifying exams, she can be found either enjoying a movie with her family or cruising a Texas back road on her motorcycle.
**McNair Scholars Research Presentations**

**KELLEE COLEMAN**  
**Major:** Sociology  
**Graduation:** May 2015  
“Infant and Maternal Mortality and Racism: Experiences of Double Jeopardy in Austin, Texas”  
- 11th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium at St. Edward’s University, July 2014  
- 22nd Annual McNair Scholars Research Conference at University of Maryland, Baltimore County, September 2014

**WILLIAM M. HAYNES III**  
**Major:** Global Studies  
**Graduation:** May 2015  
“The Impacts and Implications of Remittances from the United States to Morocco”  
- 11th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium at St. Edward’s University, July 2014  
- 18th Annual MKN McNair Heartland Research Conference, Kansas City, September 2014

**KELLY-KATE CROSSLAND**  
**Major:** Philosophy  
**Graduation:** May 2015  
“Does Liberty Mean Freedom? A Comparison of Two Philosophical Accounts”  
- 11th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium at St. Edward’s University, July 2014  
- 20th Annual McNair Research Conference at University of Buffalo, New York, July 2014

**ERIK ESCOBAR**  
**Major:** Biology  
**Graduation:** May 2015  
“Agent-based Computational Model of the Prevalence of Gonococcal Infections after the Implementation of HIV Pre-exposure Prophylaxis Guidelines”  
- Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students, San Antonio, Texas, November 2014

**JAZMINE HERNANDEZ**  
**Major:** International Business  
**Graduation:** May 2016  
“Foreign Direct Investment from Mexico into the United States: The Case of Grupo Bimbo”  
- 11th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium at St. Edward’s University, July 2014  
- 20th Annual McNair Research Conference at University of Buffalo, New York, July 2014

**DIANEY LEAL**  
**Major:** Political Science and English Writing and Rhetoric  
**Graduation:** May 2015  
“Segmented Assimilation in the Rio Grande Valley: Second-Generation Adults and Educational Attainment”  
- 11th Annual McNair Scholars Research Symposium at St. Edward’s University, July 2014  
- 20th Annual McNair Research Conference at University of Buffalo, New York, July 2014  
- University of New Mexico McNair Research Conference, Albuquerque, October 2014  
- National Conference of Undergraduate Research at Eastern Washington University, April 2015
Congratulations to Our Scholars for Another Successful Year!

You have made us proud by your continued efforts as you strive for excellence.
As a first-generation college student, I was unaware of the professional and academic opportunities that graduate school offered. With the guidance of the McNair Scholars Program, I was able to learn about the application process and financial opportunities, and develop communication and research skills that will serve as stepping stones for graduate school. In addition to practical and informative workshops on graduate school, McNair also gave me the opportunity to learn about the realms of conducting research as an undergrad — an opportunity that would not have been possible without the support of the McNair Scholars Program. From providing us with a GRE tutor to allowing us to participate in the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Internship program, the program has played an instrumental role in the continuation of my educational career. Throughout my participation, I have been blessed with continuous support from the McNair Scholars Program and cohort — their helpful suggestions, moral support and friendship have been invaluable.

What topics did you and April discuss during your time together? What advice would you give to incoming graduate students or undergraduates wanting to pursue graduate studies?

I have learned a lot from April. For example, seeing the hope and doggedness in her (especially in applying to top-tier graduate schools) awakens something in me and stirs me into the realm of achieving other possibilities. Suffice to say, there is safety in the counsel of many, so I encourage prospective mentees to be intentional in their pursuits of mentors. There are so many mentors who are looking for ways to give back and mentor others.

Would you participate in the Intellectual Entrepreneurship Program again? Would you encourage other graduate students to become involved?

Yes! I will definitely encourage other UT graduate students to get involved. I have learned a lot from April. For example, seeing the hope and doggedness in her (especially in applying to top-tier graduate schools) awakens something in me and stirs me into the realm of achieving other possibilities. Suffice to say, there is safety in the counsel of many, so I encourage prospective mentees to be intentional in their pursuits of mentors. There are so many mentors who are looking for ways to give back and mentor others.
Elvia Valle: from St. Edward’s University McNair Scholar to Fulbright Fellow and Georgetown University Graduate

The McNair Office would like to congratulate Elvia Valle on all of her hard work and success as a McNair scholar. Thank you for taking the time to be interviewed by our office for the newsletter, and for providing brilliant words of wisdom to your fellow scholars — even from across the world. We wish you continued success!

**Academic Profile:**

St. Edward’s University  
Graduation Year: December 2013  
Major at St. Edward’s:  
Global Studies  
Currently Attending:  
Diplomatic Academy of Vienna  
Graduate Program:  
Diploma Program  
Expected Graduation Year:  
June 2015

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**How did the McNair Program help you prepare for graduate school/continuing education?**

My experience in doing research while working one-on-one with an advisor was invaluable for preparing me for my graduate studies. Research is an indispensable part of graduate school; McNair helped by giving me the extra practice and many opportunities to present my research.

**Which McNair experience(s) do you find to be the most memorable, impactful and/or useful in assisting you with the completion of graduate studies?**

The most impactful experiences I had as a McNair Scholar were attending conferences and presenting my research. I am not the most comfortable presenting, but having so much practice made me more comfortable and therefore better, I daresay. Furthermore, having the experience of speaking to different admissions experts at each conference informed me about different programs and helped me narrow down my list of potential graduate schools.

Who did you work with on your McNair research and what do you most appreciate about your mentor/advisor?  
I worked with Professor Peter Austin my first summer as a McNair Scholar and Professor Mity Myhr my second. Professor Austin was extremely supportive (and patient) in helping me narrow down my big ideas, and Professor Myhr really pushed me to be more concise in my writing. These are skills that every graduate student should possess.

What advice do you have for our current McNair undergraduate and graduate students?  
I advise students to go after every opportunity that interests them. In my experience, this has helped me determine my interests and the directions in which I want to go as far as research. One can learn a lot through reading and research, but nothing substitutes experience.

What advice would you give any student contemplating seeking a PhD/graduate studies?  
Every field is different. I advise students to become familiar with the typical professional journey of someone who has the career you desire. For example, professionals in the international relations field tend to do a master’s degree first, gain some experience in the field and then go on to a PhD program.

During your time as a St. Edward’s McNair Scholar, you became the university’s first student to win a Fulbright full research grant award! What advice would you give to McNair Scholars who are interested in applying for the Fulbright?  
I advise students to just go for it — I was in danger of self-selecting myself out by not applying because I thought I did not have all the qualifications for my particular program. Because no one at St. Edward’s had done something like it before, I really had to seek out information to make myself competitive. The first, even the fifth draft of your personal statement is not going to be your final one — I went to the Writing Center twice a week for a few weeks before the deadline.

Your Fulbright research was sanctioned to take place abroad in Vienna. How are things going in Vienna? What are you studying/working on?  
Things in Vienna are great! I am currently completing the Academy’s Diploma Program, a one-year postgraduate training course in the theory and practice of international relations. The program comprises courses in political science and international relations, the structure and functioning of the European Union, economics and international economic relations, international law, and contemporary political history. In addition, I am training to acquire internationally recognized language certificates in French and German.

What are your future plans?  
I will begin my master’s degree at Georgetown’s School of the Foreign Service this coming fall. Upon completion of my degree, I hope to gain some professional practice, perhaps in policy analysis. I believe this experience will be invaluable for continuing on to a doctorate program.
Alumni Spotlight: Where Are They Now?

Many of our scholars are currently pursuing a graduate degree, and they are well on their way to earning a doctoral degree. The following is a brief list of some of our successful scholars.

SCHOLARS IN DOCTORAL PROGRAMS

Heather Bruch, PhD Mathematical Sciences Program New Mexico State University
Dellea Copeland, PhD Political Science Pennsylvania State University
GiNell Elliott, PhD Computational Biology Program Washington University
Patricia Garcia, PhD Information Studies Program University of California at Los Angeles
Daisey Izaguirre, PhD Cancer Biology Program University of Texas Biomedical
Danielle Jackson, PhD Depth Psychology Pacifica Graduate Institute
Shanae Jefferies, PhD Sociology University of North Texas
Daniel Lyles, PhD Science and Technology Studies Program Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute
Amalia Martinez, PhD Clinical and Industrial/Organization Psychology Program Alliant International University
Elba Moise, PhD Education University of Washington
Leslie Nix, PhD Biology Scripps Research Institute
Kristina Rodriguez, PhD Counseling Psychology Program University of North Texas
Victoria Rodriguez, PhD Education Stanford University
Peter Rosa, PhD Philosophy Loyola University
Rachel Banda Rothrock, PhD Education/Curriculum and Instruction Program The University of Texas at Austin
Brenda Torres, PhD Immunology Program Stanford University
Stefanie Torres, PhD English Creative Writing Program University of Kansas
Leon A. Venegas, PhD Biological Science Program University of Illinois

DOCTORATE DEGREES AWARDED IN 2014

Gustavo Alonso, DPT University of Southern California
Rosemary Galvan, DPT Texas Women’s University

GIVE US AN UPDATE!

The U.S. Department of Education requires all McNair Programs to provide Annual Performance Reports and keep track of alumni until the attainment of a doctoral degree. Alumni can update their information by contacting Sonia Briseño at sbriseno@stedwards.edu — or visit us on Facebook and like our page, St. Edward’s University McNair Scholars Program.