The University of Nevada TRiO McNair Scholars Program

http://www.unr.edu/mcnair

OVERVIEW: The University of Nevada is one of a relatively small number of standout institutions selected for competitive funding through the U.S. Department of Education TRiO programs. There are currently 151 McNair programs nationwide, down from 200 prior to the last competition due to federal budget cuts. Our current award is for $230,000 per year for five years (1.15 million) to prepare underrepresented students for graduate school.

ELIGIBLE STUDENTS: University of Nevada sophomores and juniors who are Native American, African American, Hispanic/Latino, or Pacific Islander are eligible to participate. In addition, students who qualify as both first generation and low income by federal standards are also eligible to participate regardless of ethnicity. The University strategic plan recognizes the important role that changing demographics will play in the future of our institution and our state: “First-generation students and those who are from diverse racial and cultural demographics will continue to be an increasing percentage of our community.”

PROGRAM SERVICES: The programs guides students through the process of conducting research under the direction of an academic mentor, assists students to develop competitive graduate school applications, and provides over 60 hours of instructor led GRE preparation. In addition, students are provided a substantial stipend that allows them to forgo summer employment in order to fully focus on their research projects during the 7 week summer research institute. The summer institute concludes with a trip to UC Berkley where students present their research findings at a national conference. These services are provided at no cost to students.

FIT WITH UNIVERSITY MISSION: The McNair Scholars Program compliments and supports the University’s Land Grant mission to “provide outstanding learning, discovery, and engagement programs that serve the economic, social, environmental, and cultural needs of the citizens of Nevada, the nation, and the world. The University recognizes and embraces the critical importance of diversity in preparing students for global citizenship and is committed to a culture of excellence, inclusion and accessibility.”

FIT WITH UNIVERSITY STRATEGIC PLAN: The McNair Scholars Program supports the strategic plan by assisting to “prepare graduates to compete in a global environment through teaching and learning in high-quality undergraduate, graduate, and professional degrees in the liberal arts, sciences, and selected professions in agriculture, medicine, engineering, health care, education, journalism, and business.” In addition, the program supports the goal to demonstrate that the University “respects and seeks to reflect the gender, ethnic, cultural, and ability/disability diversity of the citizens of Nevada in its academic and support programs, and in the composition of its faculty, administration, staff, and student body.”

OUTCOMES: The McNair program has produced high outcomes. Excluding the 27 current McNair participants, 108 students have been served since the program’s inception in 2004. Of those, 92% have graduated from UNR. Eighty-three percent have either earned graduate degrees or are currently enrolled in degree seeking programs: Four have earned Ph.D.’s and two have earned professional degrees; forty-three have earned master’s degrees. Twenty-seven are enrolled in Ph.D. programs; two are currently enrolled in professional degree programs; seventeen are pursuing master’s degrees. A recent report based on eligible low income students who graduate from UNR indicates that only 6% of eligible students continue on to graduate school as compared to 22% of students who would not be eligible. Over 80% of UNR McNair graduates have continued on to graduate school.
WHERE DO GRADUATES ENROLL? **Over 30% of McNair participants have enrolled in graduate school at UNR:** 23 have completed master’s degrees and 4 are completing doctoral programs. An additional 7 students are currently enrolled in UNR master’s programs. Three former University of Nevada McNair scholars are currently employed at the University of Nevada, Reno. A sample of other institutions attended include Emory, Columbia, UC Davis, Ohio State, Penn State, Purdue, University of Michigan, University of Colorado, University of Minnesota, University of Indiana, Virginia Tech, Syracuse, Vanderbilt, UT Austin, University of Wisconsin, Oregon, Texas Tech, University of South Carolina, University of Alabama, University of Washington, UT Health Sciences-Houston. **Due to their low income status, it is understandable that scholars select graduate program based largely on the type and amount of funding offered by individual programs and graduate schools.**

OPPORTUNITY FOR COLLABORATION: The McNair Scholars Program provides a rich opportunity for the UNR graduate school to recruit a well prepared, diverse population of students from right here at home. We hope to include strategies to ramp up our connection to the graduate school as part of the new grant proposal.