On April 29, 2011, the McNair Scholars convened in the Sinquefield Stateroom for the annual McNair Symposium. Seven students presented posters on research in a variety of fields, including psychology, African American studies, biology, and social work. Two scholars delivered oral presentations in the fields of political science and chemistry.

Scholar Heather Neun presents her research in Biology

Scholar Ashley Brownlee presents her research in African American Studies

Presenter Joyce Spencer explains her research to McNair mentor Dr. Sabrina Tyuse and incoming Scholars Starla Salazar and Wendy Watson

McNair Scholar Tyresha Shields presents her research in Education
Meet our new scholars

**Orlando Jones** is 22 year old new junior to SLU. His GED was attained in August of 2008, after being out of school for two years. Afterwards he enrolled in Southwestern Illinois College to obtain the 15 college level credit hours required by the Airforce to enlist. After completing his 15 hours of coursework, Londo decided to stayed in school because SWIC he was offered a full-tuition scholarship. Londo completed his Associate’s this past summer and transferred to SLU. He is now a Philosophy major, with a possible minor in Theology. Londo plans on “continuing his education up to and beyond the Post-graduate level.” Theology intrigues Londo in relation to the role that it plays in society; the focus of his research may possibly be this topic.

**Erin Whitley** was born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, and currently studying abroad in Madrid, Spain. She is an Occupational Therapy Major who hopes to achieve a minor in American Sign Language. Erin would like to attend Graduate School to research Rehabilitative Medicine and Mental Health. She is a Honors student involved in InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. Other interests include photography and dance. She also loves learning and experiencing new cultures, and hopes to return to Europe in the future.

**Brooke Miller** is currently a sophomore at Saint Louis University majoring in Chemistry. Brooke aspires to obtain her PhD in Chemistry, where she will one day teach chemistry on a collegiate level while conducting neuroscience research. She desires to bring about advancements in the areas of Parkinson’s disease and Alzheimer’s. Currently, Brooke is participating in undergraduate research on the Medical School Campus in the department of Pharmacology and Physiology with Dr. Amy Harkins.

**Darion Mayhorn** is a sophomore student currently studying abroad in Madrid, Spain. Born and raised in St. Louis, Missouri, he has chosen his studies in the fields of Civil Engineering and Applied Mathematics. He plans on going to graduate school in order to further pursue his goal of Structural Engineering. When not studying for an exam, he enjoys reading, karate, where he holds a black belt in Matsubayashi Shorin-Ryu, and music. He has been playing the violin for about nine years.

**Amber Overton** is a junior from Omaha, Nebraska. She is studying psychology with a social work minor. She would like to attend graduate school for either clinical child or social psychology. Currently, she works as an intern for Saint Louis Public Schools and the president of SLU’s chapter of Strive for College.

**Erin Whitley**, sophomore
**Kendra Tatum** spent her sophomore year at SLU studying abroad. Her first semester abroad was spent in the beautiful Gold Coast, Australia and her second semester in Madrid, Spain. While in Europe Kendra traveled to 5 cities including Venice, Italy; Tangier in Morocco; several cities in Spain; Capri Island, the Canary Islands; Amsterdam; London; and Stuttgart, Germany. After she graduates from SLU, she is interested in pursuing a Graduate degree in African American Studies and Sociology.

**Wendy Watson** is a social work student at Saint Louis University. She is interested in going on to doctoral studies in social work/public policy to reform the offender reentry process. She recently attended a conference in San Francisco to better her connections in research and scholarship.

**Jordan J. Fowlkes** attends Harris-Stowe State University (HSSU), where he is pursuing a degree in Biology with an emphasis in Pre-Medicine. Furthermore, Jordan is the 2nd President of the HSSU Pre-Law Club. He joined the HSSU Pre-Law Club to advance his knowledge of the legal system and to help lead the organization to new horizons. In addition to being President of the HSSU Pre-Law Club, he is the Treasurer of the HSSU Student Government Association. After he graduates from HSSU, Jordan plans to attend medical school, where he will pursue a MD/PhD.

**Jordan Fowlkes**

**KeErica (Key-Erica) Parker** is a junior at Harris Stowe State University (HSSU). She is a Resident Assistant in the dorms on campus. KeErica is a member of HSSU peer education group S.W.A.T. (Students Working Against Trauma). This group focus on STD/AIDS/HIV awareness and prevention, binge drinking, and safe alcohol practices among students. She is also currently a teaching assistant at HSSU’s Early Childhood Center. She is seeking to get a degree in Secondary Education with a concentration in English. Next year KeErica plans to study abroad in Spain. She plans to do her research component of the McNair Program on the mental illness bipolar from an educational lens. After completing her undergraduate studies she plans to further her education by getting a dual degree. Ideally, KeErica would like to have a JD/PhD in Psychology or Sociology.

**Alexander Wilson** is a sophomore who recently transferred to SLU to continue pursuing a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and Psychology. As a native of Saint Louis city, he’s grown this insatiable hunger for education and will redirect his fortune for the betterment of mankind; however, he is not your traditional student. Alex comes from a background where materialistic philosophies are a sign of opulence; therefore, he has faced values, struggles, and influences that differ from our societal norm. It has set the pace for Alex’s motivation to rise above and use my education to become a prominent business professional. He says, “As a first generation student, it is very difficult at times as it requires indomitable determination. It can be intimidating and discouraging but, nevertheless, glorious because of my unprecedented history.”
Spotlight on Seniors

Dami Daramola graduated December 2010 with a degree in Political Science and a minor in History and Philosophy. She will be pursuing her Masters degree in August at Loyola University Chicago in Political Science. Dami says, “I think it’s important to get my Masters because it allows me to be one step closer to attaining my PhD and becoming a professor in African Politics. The one goal on my bucket list is to visit every African country for at least a month. I think while I understand what it is to Nigerian and in part West African, I have yet to see other parts of the beautiful continent of Africa.”

Javier Trejo is graduating this month with a Bachelor’s of Arts in Political Science/Urban Affairs/International Studies in the College of Arts and Sciences. In the fall Javier will attend University of Minnesota studying public policy at the Humphrey Institute of Public Policy. His goal is to develop the skills to be able to research, write, and publish about issues affecting the marginalized in society; specifically, those within U.S. inner-cities. Something not many people know about Javier is what is on his bucket list and he was ready to share with us some of his goals in life. Javier says, “Something on my bucket list is I would like to travel to Africa one day. Specifically, Tanzania. One of my other dreams is to start my own study abroad program in Tanzania, based on my experience studying abroad in El Salvador with the Casa de la Solidaridad.”

Tiara Byrd is a senior at SLU graduating with her Bachelor of Arts in Psychology. She is an active member of the SLU and St. Louis communities, participating in Big Brothers, Big Sisters; tutoring with Raising the Bar; volunteering with Girls Who Know It; working as a student leader in the Student Educational Services Billiken Bridge to Success program; and serving as president of the Society of African American studies. She plans to move on to graduate school to pursue a PhD in psychology.
Alyssa Gurgul will be graduating with a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology and minors in Spanish and Theology. Next year she is joining the Jesuit Volunteer Corps and will be working in Sacramento, California working as a case manager at St. John’s Shelter for Women and Children. Afterwards in the fall, Alyssa will pursue a doctorate degree in developmental psychology. She intends to continue her interest in cross-cultural developmental psychology through research and by teaching in a university setting.

Achievements of our Scholars

Alyssa Gurgul: recipient of Fr. Paul Reinert, S.J. Service Award at the Leadership & Services Award ceremony, completed 3 research projects this year—one theoretical, and two completed with data collected and results analyzed; presented these projects at 4 symposiums

Dami Darmola: accepted to Loyola University Chicago to the MA program in Political Science, awarded Lifetime Phoner award for raising more than $200,000 for SLU’s Annual Giving Program in the past 2 and half years

Darion Mayhorn: studied abroad in Madrid, Spain; travelled to 12 different cities around Europe; awarded Employee of the Month at Touchpoint Autism Services in December of 2010; will intern for the Bureau of Reclamation, a federal agency under the Dept. of Interior this summer (May – August 2011)

Emma-Lorraine Bart-Plange: receiving ILEX funding, Dean’s List awardee, named BSA President-Elect

Erin Whitley: won first and third place in a photography contest at SLU Madrid, received certificate from Canterbury English for teaching English as a second language in Spain

Heather Neun: received undergraduate research grant from the College of Arts and Sciences; promoted to Morphology Lab Manager, presented at Desert Fishes Council Annual Meeting and American Society of Ichthyologist and Herpetologist

Jordan Fowlkes: awarded Des Lee Fellowship of the United Way of Greater St. Louis, interned at the St. Louis Regional Business Council, received the Tom Joyner Academic Excellence Scholarship, elected to the Thurgood Marshall Student Ambassador Student Advisory Council, and recently elected Vice-President of HSSU Student Government Association

Joyce Spencer: received Dr. Celerstine Book Award in March.

KeErica Parker: voted Vice-President of the Pre Law Club and participated in first Mock Trial competition, awarded a $1,000 scholarship to John Marshall Law School in Chicago, the Vice President Honors List for having a 3.5 or higher GPA, interned at the Rock Workout, accepted into the Teacher Education program

Kendra Tatum: current Martin Luther King Jr. Scholar, highlighted in the SLU Admission Office’s Multicultural Newsletter along with McNair mentor Dr. Karla Scott, speaker in the Challenges, Choices, and Changes College Seminar this month

Tyresha Shields: received 2 scholarships from Harris-Stowe State University, completed an Internship at St. Patrick’s Center of St. Louis with excellent standing, will study abroad in Argentina this summer with Dr. Yolanda Diaz, received an Honor’s Award for grades, selected to attend the IOBSE annual conference
The Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program works to prepare first-generation college students, and students from groups underrepresented in graduate schools for success in doctoral programs so they can become researchers and professors in American colleges and universities. The McNair Scholars Program at Saint Louis University is made possible through a grant from the U. S. Department of Education in the amount of $276,521.