

ACADEMICS

MCNAIR SCHOLARS PROGRAM

Faculty

- Vanessa Seals, Director
- Tashelle Wright, Program Coordinator

Since 2003, the Westminster College McNair Scholars Program has served low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented students on their path to graduate education under the guidance and funding of the U.S. Department of Education. The McNair project contributes to the institution's purpose to prepare students to lead lives of learning, accomplishment, and service by offering a distinctive academic program in which students pursue excellence while promoting inclusiveness and respect for differences. To achieve this end, the McNair Program: encourages low-income, first-generation, and underrepresented scholars to complete their programs of postsecondary education; celebrates and cultivates the strengths students bring as diverse scholars; supports the development of their academic talents and interests through faculty-mentored research that encourages students to critically examine alternatives and to accept responsibility for their learning; and provides access to graduate school financial and admissions assistance, as well as related support services. Regardless of learning style or background, participants are empowered to realize their goals of doctoral study in the field of their choice at the institution of their choice.

As the only McNair Program in Utah, we draw students from 3 campuses: Westminster College, Salt Lake Community College, and College of Southern Idaho. We also recruit TRIO students at the University of Utah. By encouraging and supporting qualified students through undergraduate school and the transition to graduate school, the ultimate goal is to increase faculty diversity in colleges and universities.

Of the 169 graduates who have gone through the Westminster College McNair Scholars Program, 72% (122) of students have an advanced degree or are currently in graduate school; 42% (71) have masters degrees; 5.9% (10) have professional degrees; and 12% (21) have PhDs.

Eligibility

All scholars must:

- Be a sophomore, junior, or senior who will graduate in December 2021 or later
- Have a minimum 3.0 GPA OR significant academic progress in the last 30 credit hours or in your major
- Be a U.S. Citizen or Permanent Resident
- Have a sincere desire to pursue graduate education

They must also qualify as:

- Both first-generation (neither parent has a bachelor's degree) and [low-income](#)

AND/OR

- A member of a group underrepresented in graduate education (Native American, Hispanic/Latinx, African American or Pacific Islander).

Program Benefits

- Be eligible to receive a \$2,800 stipend for the summer research project.
- Establish a relationship with a faculty mentor for ongoing academic advising and assistance developing an academic plan.
- Establish a relationship with a research mentor for guidance through the research project and an introduction to your academic discipline.
- Receive support services including academic seminars, individual surveys and assessments, tutoring services as needed, GRE preparation.
- Opportunities to visit graduate school programs.**
- Opportunities to attend local, regional, and national conferences to present research.**
- Receive financial education and counseling including individual financial counseling services, a money management seminar, and a seminar on graduate and doctoral program funding alternatives.
- Receive personal support services including individualized technology/computer/library assistance, career counseling, academic career planning, and a peer support system.
- Receive assistance applying to graduate schools.
- Receive assistance applying for financial aid.
- Application fee waivers from participating graduate schools.

- Be eligible for GRE test fee waivers.
- Free summer tuition at Westminster College.
- Eligible Westminster McNair Scholars may also receive financial aid packages totaling 100% of tuition.***

Requirement Description	Credit Hours	Prerequisites
I. Required Courses		
WRIT 301 Writing for Professional Research	2	
INTR 300A Research Methods	4	
Total Hours for the Program	6	

** Travel funds are contingent upon program participation and are granted at the discretion of the director.

*** Funds are distributed at the discretion of the Financial Aid office. The McNair Program has no control of these funds.

Visit [our website](#) to apply. Our applications are due on March 31 every year. Here's the [application checklist](#) to help you plan your application.