

McNair Scholars Program Fall 2021 Newsletter



Message from Krista Cauffman, Director for the McNair Scholars Program:

Endurance is a hallmark of the McNair Scholars Program. From completing a full independent research project in under a year to submitting high-quality applications to selective graduate programs, McNair Scholars overcome obstacles, master their stress, and triumph in the pursuit of their dreams. They do more than endure – they thrive on the challenge. During the past semester, our students have been published both solo and as part of a team; they have presented their research to local and national audiences; they have won awards; and they have built lifelong friendships.

Despite the restrictions imposed by a global pandemic, the McNair Scholars Program continues to offer a wide variety of research and scholarly activities as well as cultural experiences for our students. This year, the staff skillfully orchestrated orientation and the annual Fall Awards Banquet, both held in-person with careful attention to COVID protocols.

The pandemic has forced us to think creatively about how to best serve our students and help them achieve their goals. We have adapted coursework, attended virtual conferences, and created new opportunities for personal and professional development. We are now more versatile and resilient – just like our students.

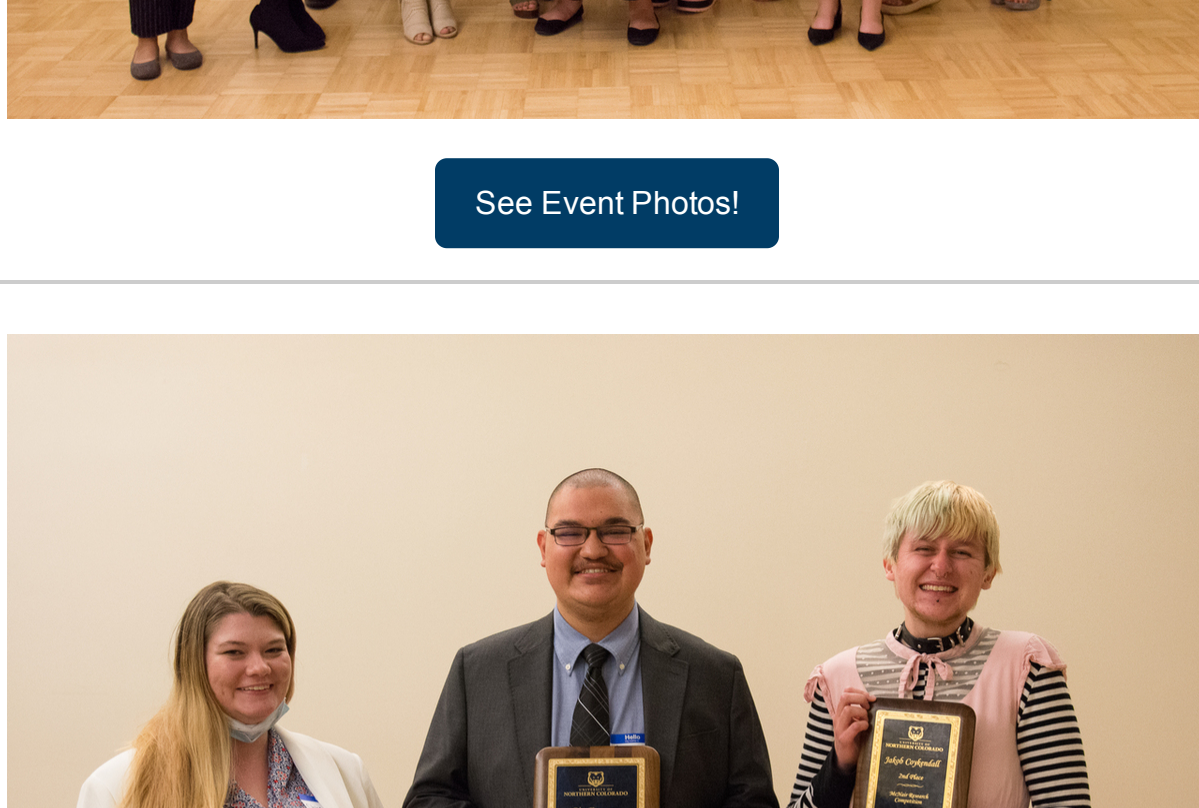
I would like to thank our mentors for advising students on their journey. We could not do what we do without them. I would also like to thank our graduate assistants – Kady Barthelemy, Hunter Montoya, and Manny Macias – who keep us afloat with their energy and optimism. And finally, I would like to thank our intertidal instructor/advisor, Pepper Mueller, for balancing compassion and accountability during a particularly difficult era.

2021 McNair Scholars Annual Awards Banquet *Dare to Dream*

This year we were fortunate enough to host the 2021 McNair Scholars Annual Awards Banquet in person and it was a great success!

McNair Scholars, family, friends, mentors, faculty and staff recently gathered to celebrate our seniors and their accomplishments, and to welcome the incoming cohort. The evening began with a reception where scholars had the opportunity to mingle and share their completed research posters. The welcome address was delivered by President Dr. Andy Feinstein and our keynote speaker was Dr. Angie Paccione. Dr. Paccione, the Executive Director of the Colorado Department of Higher Education, delivered a passionate, funny, and motivating message to our scholars and encouraged all to "say yes" and "keep moving forward."

Later in the evening the new scholars introduced themselves and their research aspirations, while the seniors spoke about their future graduate school plans. The night was capped off by presenting the Research Award Competition plaques to Gio Esparza (1st place), Jakob Coykendall (2nd Place), and Chloe Parsons (3rd Place).



[See Event Photos!](#)

2021 Research Competition Award Winners

Congratulations to Gio, Jakob, and Chloe for being this year's Research Competition Award winners! These three amazing researchers were recognized for their achievements at the 2021 McNair Scholars Annual Awards Banquet. Winners were selected through a double-blind, UNC faculty review process.

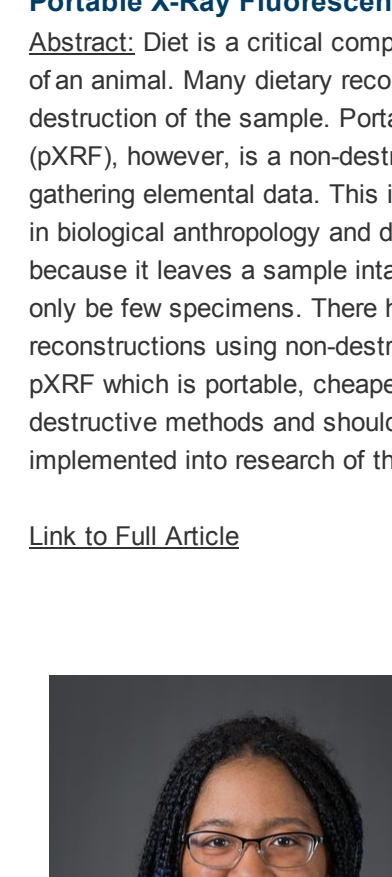
First Place: Giovanni Esparza - "Jorgensen Enjoys Being Christine: Christine Jorgensen's Public Image and How it Shaped a Movement". Faculty Mentors: Dr. Joan Clinefelter and Dr. Chris Talbot.

Second Place: Jakob Coykendall - "Exploring the Impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Intimate Communication". Faculty Mentor: Dr. Darren Ilett.

Third Place: Chloe Parsons - "Food Insecurity in an Anthropogenic Age: An Analysis Into How Consumer Demand Will Shift During Crisis Events". Faculty Mentor: Dr. Christina Kuchmaner.

Published Scholars

Three recent McNair graduates, Yessica Berumen Martinez, Theresa Schwartz, and Andrea White, published their McNair research projects in the latest edition of [Ursidae: The Undergraduate Research Journal at the University of Northern Colorado \(Volume 10, Number 1\)](#). Use the links below to learn more about their research and download the full articles:



Yessica Berumen Martinez "Assessing Latinx Colorism and Skin Tone Dating Preferences in Adults"

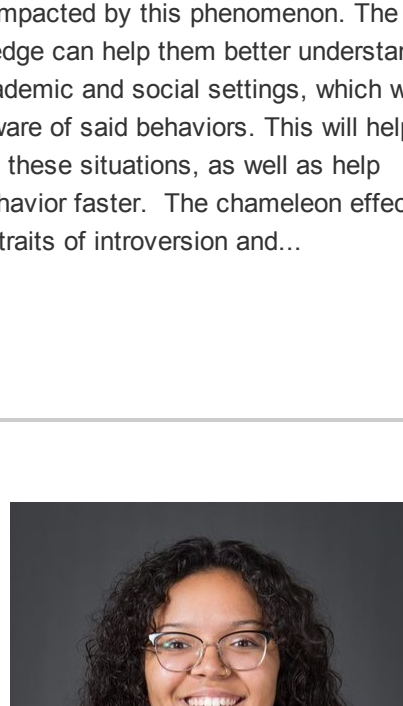
Abstract: Colorism is favoring by individuals of lighter skin over darker skin. This differs from racism because racism is discrimination directed towards racial or ethnic minorities, while colorism typically refers to within-group prejudice. The purpose of this study is to find out whether and how Latinx individuals' self-perceived skin color, family, and friends influence their dating skin color preference. 145 respondents ages 18 and over completed the In-group Colorism Scale by Harvey, Banks, and Tennill (2017) and answered additional questions on skin tone perceptions on dating, and parent and friend influences.

[Link to Full Article](#)

Theresa Schwartz "Determining Dietary Niche in Primates Using Portable X-Ray Fluorescence"

Abstract: Diet is a critical component of the ecology of an animal. Many dietary reconstructions involve destruction of the sample. Portable X-Ray fluorescence (pXRF), however, is a non-destructive method of gathering elemental data. This is important for research in biological anthropology and diet reconstructions because it leaves a sample intact of which there might only be few specimens. There has been a gap in dietary reconstructions using non-destructive methods like pXRF which is portable, cheaper, and as accurate as destructive methods and should therefore be implemented into research of this nature.

[Link to Full Article](#)

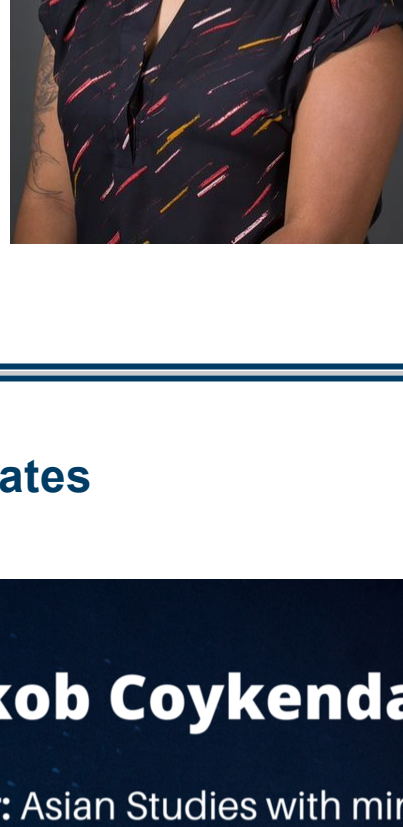


Olivia Bobbitt

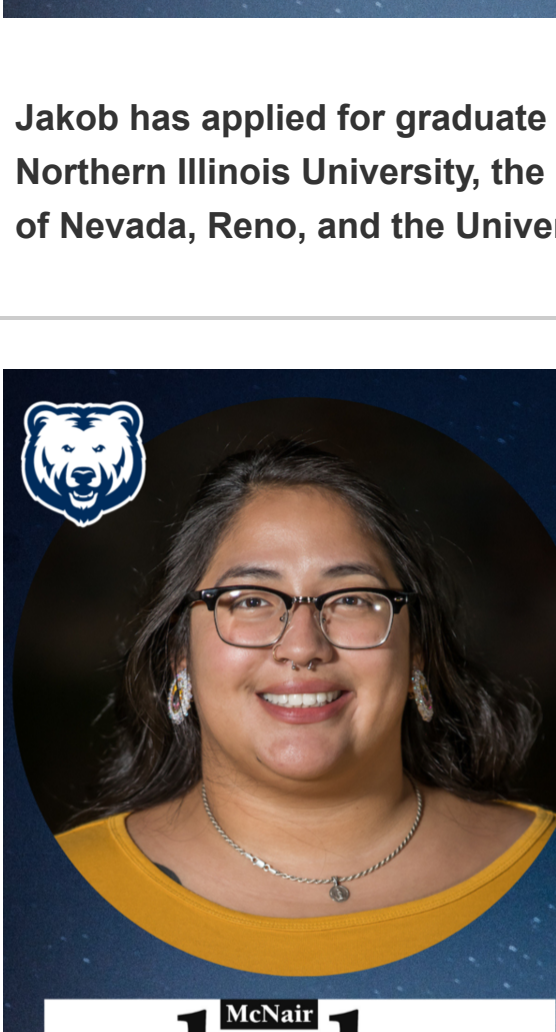
Frontiers In Education

Olivia Bobbitt, a sociology major who graduated in the Fall of 2020 and is now studying Human Development at the Erikson Institute in Chicago, was the fourth recent UNC McNair Scholars Program graduate to be published this year. Olivia and her co-researchers, [Dr. Rebecca Beal](#), Sean Jimmy, and Faith Lyons, published their work titled "Activating Social Capital: How Peer and Socio-Emotional Mentoring Facilitate Resilience and Success for Community College Students" in the journal [Frontier In Education](#) under the [STEM Education](#) section.

[Read Full Article](#)



Fall 2021 Graduates

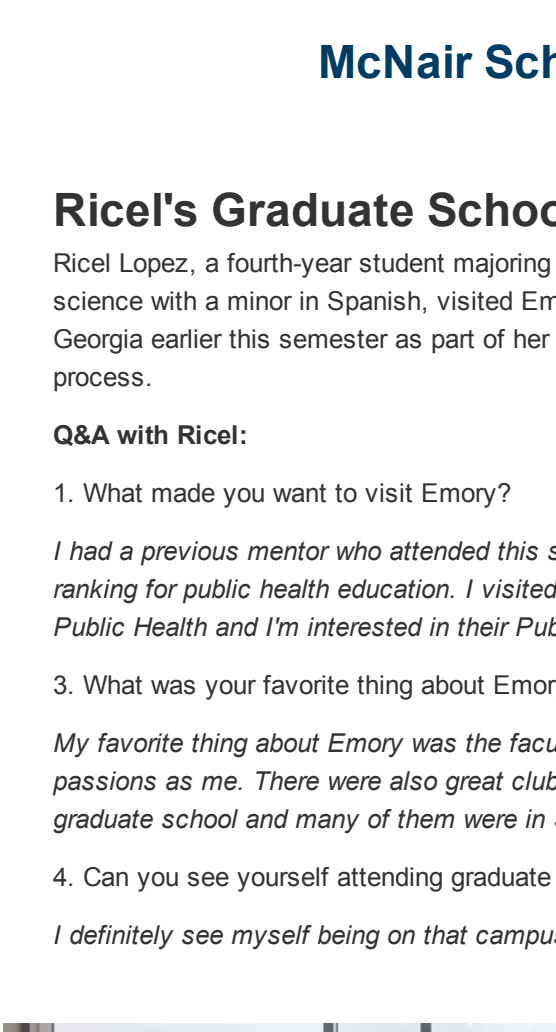


Jakob Coykendall

Major: Asian Studies with minors in Japanese, Sociology, and Communication Studies

Research: "Exploring the Impacts of COVID-19 on LGBTQ+ Intimate Communication"

Jakob has applied for graduate admission at Illinois State University, Northern Illinois University, the University of Denver, the University of Nevada, Reno, and the University of Washington.



Adeleine Santos

Major: Sociology Concentration in Institutions and Inequalities with minors in Africana Studies and Mexican American Studies

Research: "Epistemic Violence Against Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) in Education, and the Reclamation of Traditional Cultural Epistemes and Pedagogies"

Adeleine has applied for graduate admission at Arizona State University, DePaul University, Rutgers University, the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Santa Barbara, and the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

McNair Scholar Highlights

Ricel's Graduate School Visit

Ricel Lopez, a fourth-year student majoring in health and exercise science with a minor in Spanish, visited Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia earlier this semester as part of her graduate school search process.

Q&A with Ricel:

1. What made you want to visit Emory?

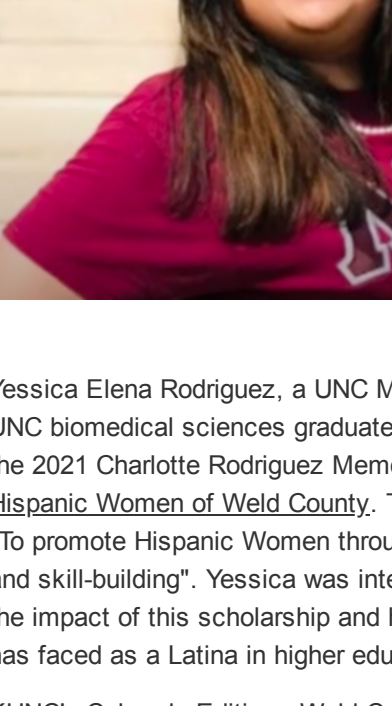
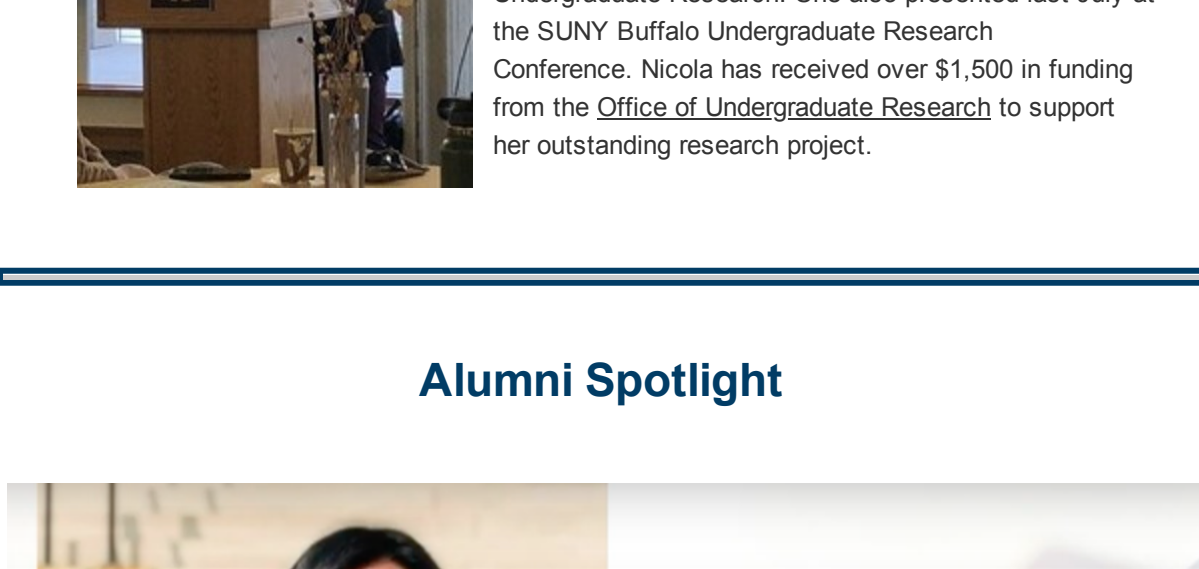
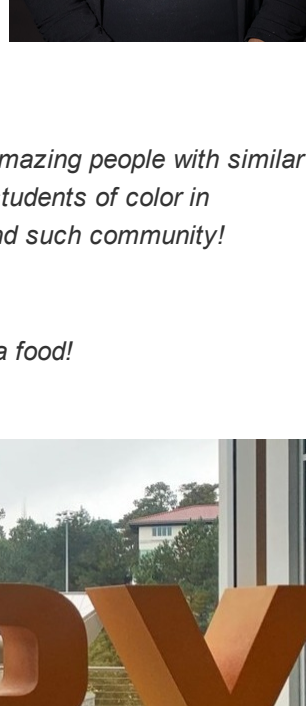
I had a previous mentor who attended this school and it has a high ranking for public health education. I visited the Rollins School of Public Health and I'm interested in their Public Policy Program

3. What was your favorite thing about Emory?

My favorite thing about Emory was the faculty and getting to meet amazing people with similar passions as me. There were also great clubs and organizations for students of color in graduate school and many of them were in STEM which is rare to find such community!

4. Can you see yourself attending graduate school there?

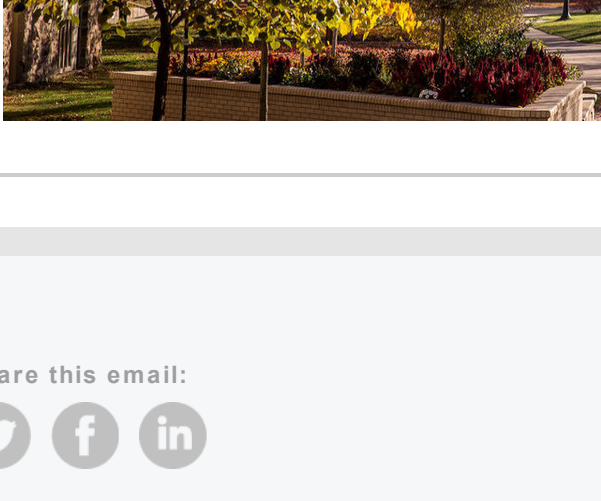
I definitely see myself being on that campus and eating great Atlanta food!



Nicola @ The Fall Undergraduate Symposium

Nicola Anglo-Raymundo presented at the Fall Undergraduate Symposium on November 11 with her research presentation titled "Culturally Relevant Literature: A Study in Usage and Limitation." She finished in the top three and will receive funding from UNC to present at the National Conference on Undergraduate Research. She also presented last July at the SUNY Buffalo Undergraduate Research Conference. Nicola has received over \$1,500 in funding from the [Office of Undergraduate Research](#) to support her outstanding research project.

Alumni Spotlight

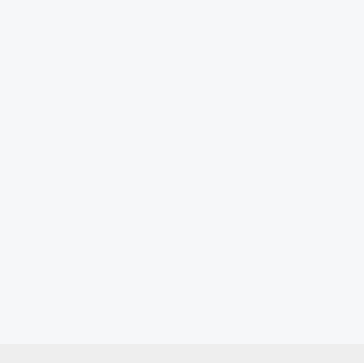


Yessica Elena Rodriguez

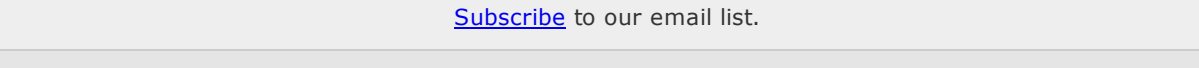
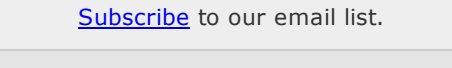
Charlotte Rodriguez Memorial Scholarship

Yessica Elena Rodriguez, a UNC McNair alumni and current UNC biomedical sciences graduate student, was awarded the 2021 Charlotte Rodriguez Memorial Scholarship by the [Hispanic Women of Weld County](#). The mission of HWWC is "To promote Hispanic Women through nurturing, networking, and skill-building". Yessica was interviewed by KUNC about the impact of this scholarship and her involvement with HWWC, as well as the challenges she has faced as a Latina in higher education. Listen to the full story by clicking the link below:

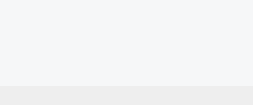
[KUNC's Colorado Edition - Weld County group provides mentorship, scholarships for Latinas in Northern Colorado colleges](#)



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