



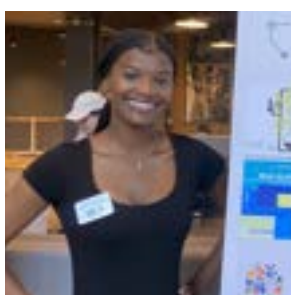
MISSION MCNAIR

A TRIO MCNAIR PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

The TRIO Ronald E. McNair Program prepares first-generation, income-eligible college juniors and seniors for the rigors of graduate school through conducting research and other scholarly activities.

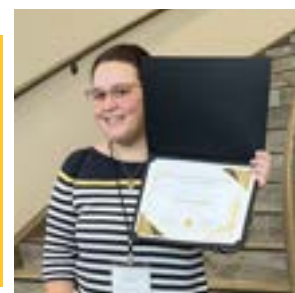
Poster Presentations

On Friday, September 26, 2025, ETSU McNair Scholars presented posters at the 7th annual McNair-Ledford Symposium at Lee University. This was ETSU's 2nd year participating in the event, which gathers student researchers from across the region to share their summer research through oral and poster presentations. The symposium also offers opportunities to connect with graduate school representatives, receive constructive feedback, and strengthen the professional skills needed for success in advanced study.



SCHOLAR SPOTLIGHT

Congratulations to McKenna Boykin and Elisabeth Denis for placing third in poster presentations. Elisabeth presented at the McNair-Ledford Symposium at Lee University, and McKenna presented at Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate (AGEP) at Michigan State University.



STUDENT SUCCESS STORIES

- Current scholars Sidney Booher and Elisabeth Denis presented their research at the 2025 Southern Conference (SoCon) Undergraduate Research Forum (SURF). Sidney tied for second in the poster competition.
- Madison Simounet, an alumna of 2023 and PhD student in the ETSU Clinical Psychology Program, published her McNair research in the latest edition of Psi Chi.
- Alumnus of 2024, Heidegger Allen, presented his McNair research on the circadian rhythm of cellar spiders (*Pholcus manueli*) at the 2025 Rhythms in the Southeastern Region (RISER) Conference at Vanderbilt University.



The McNair scholars visited Ronald E. McNair's hometown and life history museum over the summer.

2025–2026 Scholars and their Faculty Mentors

Faculty mentors play a vital role in guiding and supporting our McNair Scholars throughout the 2025–2026 academic year. Through their mentorship, scholars refine their research skills, navigate academic and professional pathways, and prepare for the rigors of graduate study. We are deeply grateful to the faculty who dedicate their time, expertise, and encouragement to ensure our scholars thrive both academically and personally. Below are the research projects our scholars are pursuing in collaboration with their mentors.



Shariah Alvarenga is working with Dr. D. Michael Jones on a project entitled *Lynchian Lolita: Twin Peaks, Lolita, and America's Feminine Fantasy*.



Jace Luttrell, in collaboration with Dr. Mark Giroux, is examining *Investigating Galactic Evolution Using Mg-II Absorption Systems*.



Jacksi Becerra, partnered with Dr. Rachel Miller-Slough, researches *Parent Emotion Socialization and Emotion Regulation: A Mediation Model of Psychological Flexibility and Self-Compassion*.



With Ms. Jacy Richardson as a faculty mentor, Jana Malone is exploring *Virtual Safe Spaces Designed for Trauma Recovery*.



Sidney Booher, who is working with Dr. Ben Lee, is studying *Competitive Release of Neighboring Trees in Response to HWA-Induced Mortality Events*.



Working with Dr. Rachel Mazzara, Lauren McEldowney is analyzing *Classical Reception in the Antebellum United States*.



Under the guidance of Dr. Eric Sellers, Elisabeth Denis is studying *Exploring the Effect of Social Media and Generative AI on Self and Social Connectedness*.



Allison Monroe, under the guidance of Dr. Stacey Williams, is researching *Quiet Hills, Restless Hearts: An Intersectional Exploration of LGBTQ+ Religious Journeys in Appalachia*.



Guided by Dr. Matthew Holtmeier and Dr. Chelsea Wessels, Caitlyn Glover's project focuses on *Representations of Teen Pregnancy in American Film*.



Alaya Shelton is working with Dr. Kelly Moore on the project *Exploring the Link Between Substance Use, Criminal History Severity, and Self-Stigma: The Moderating Role of Enacted Stigma*.



Natalie Wood is working with Dr. David Korfhagen on her project *Emos, Punks, and the Impact of Subculture in Mexico*.



Want to learn more? Connect with us today!
<https://www.etsu.edu/students/trio/mcnair/>



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