FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

*Is the McNair Program a scholarship?*

No. It is a federally funded Post baccalaureate Achievement Program that is designed to prepare undergraduate students to become scholars with Ph.D.s.

*Who is eligible for the McNair Program?*

Please refer to the application information main page.

*What are the benefits of the McNair Program?*

Please refer to program benefits page.

*How does the McNair Program prepare undergraduate students for graduate school?*

McNair Scholars are provided with tremendous help, in order to navigate a difficult and sometimes confusing road to graduate school. Scholars are paired with faculty mentors to serve as role models, offer personalized advice, recommend and also accompany scholars to conferences in their majors.

Workshops and seminars on topics such as: research methods, writing a personal statement, choosing a graduate school program, graduate school funding, graduate student success, library and Internet resources, and presentation skills building. These things combined with an eight-week faculty mentored summer research project, have a proven track record of success, in preparing McNair Scholars for the kind of work they will do in graduate school.

*Are there any financial advantages to the McNair program?*

During the summer internship Scholars receive a stipend, tuition for the academic credits earned from the internship, and assistance with room and board. Additional financial-aid is specifically for McNair Scholars that attend Westminster College. There are also long-term financial advantages--see the next question.

*Will the McNair program help me get into graduate school?*

Yes. Many graduate schools provide application fee waivers for McNair Scholars and some actively recruit McNair Scholars and offer them graduate fellowships. Graduate schools know that McNair Scholars are motivated, have an understanding of the rigors and culture of graduate study, and have research and/or scholarship experience. Faculty mentors and McNair staff offer a wealth of information and advice about graduate programs and aid sources. In addition, McNair Scholars may sign onto the National McNair Scholar listserv from which they can learn about scholarships, fellowships, assistantships, special offers from graduate schools, and insider’s tips from past Scholars who have entered doctoral programs.
**What are the advantages of attending graduate school?**

Many people consider an advanced degree as a means to higher salaries and this is certainly one of the advantages gained from graduate study. People with advanced degrees have the credentials that make them eligible for upper-level and specialized positions, which have higher salaries to match increased responsibilities. Beyond mere economics, however, graduate school provides invaluable opportunities to pursue in-depth research in a field of interest, to study with specialists, and to improve methodological and writing skills. The rigor of graduate studies also offers a greater breadth of knowledge and enhanced critical thinking abilities that enrich your overall life. Lastly, graduate school is extremely challenging, which, like all challenges, serves as an opportunity for growth and for attaining your personal best.

**What are the challenges of graduate school?**

Graduate studies require a long-term commitment. Depending on the choice of programs, field of study, and availability of funding, graduate school can take between six and ten years. Even with full financial assistance and the support of family and friends, it can seem like a long time to be living as a student. There can be times when graduate study demands all of your time and energy. It can also be insular, isolating you from outside activities, and in many institutions it can be extremely political. If you don't receive a good financial aid package, it can also be expensive. Graduate tuition and fees are higher than those for undergraduate study. However; with great challenges, come great accomplishments and a sense of pride in knowing that you are “Changing the Face of Higher Education,” which is a benefit to all in academia.