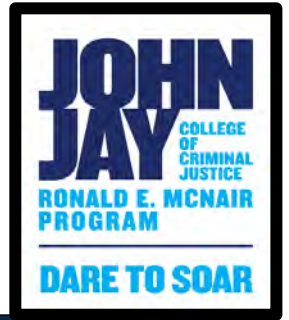


2020-2021



The 11th Annual
Ronald E. McNair Scholars'
Research Journal



John Jay College of Criminal Justice
City University of New York (CUNY)



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Message From the Directors

Academic year 2020-21 saw a full year under the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Zoom* and Blackboard Collaborate class meetings; Blackboard assignments; virtual conferences and graduate school fairs; oral presentations by *Zoom*; bonding games by *Zoom*.... We get better and better at digital and video communications – but they aren't very satisfying as the major or only form of communication.

In order to make the most of the virtual environment, we have utilized a lot of firsts and have had to be pragmatic in how we provide our services. In this vein, we welcomed 12 (at the time) new scholars to the program at our first virtual orientation. We were also able to take advantage of the virtual format to host workshops with several McNair Alumni from around the country. And of course, there was plenty of *Zoom* bonding and the thrill of playing Among Us. While we miss the in-person connections, we have all learned a lot about how to adapt, thrive in a virtual environment, and learn new skills that should continue to be useful – and are probably essential.

We are quite proud of our McNair Scholars for all they have accomplished – especially under a continuing pandemic and all the struggles surrounding it. We are very impressed with how our Scholars have been supporting each other and the group chats. The amount of late-night Google docs feedback (and tearful discussion) that they gave each other was remarkable.

Our second year Scholars (new graduates) finished their research and applied to graduate schools. Their work is featured in this journal; and readers will be impressed with the depth and breadth of topics our Scholars cover: from Political Science, Psychology, International Criminal Justice, to English. Some also participated in Summer Research Opportunities Programs at other institutions; and in addition to all the other honors, and extracurricular activities you will read about. Our graduates and alumnae have started Ph.D. and Master's programs, with a mix of in person and online experiences. Some of them were accepted to Ph.D. programs with full funding! We are very proud of all these accomplishments.

Our first years learned about the McNair program, found mentors, and solidified their research projects. They completed our research methods course and are moving into their second year of the McNair Program. They have been bonding with each other virtually. You will also meet them in these pages.

We also want to recognize our faculty mentors for their time and effort mentoring McNair Scholars. Thank you for investing in our students. McNair mentors show each student that they believe in their potential. They have changed our students' lives for the better, and for good. The confidence our mentors have in our institution and our students brings John Jay to the next level of success. We know there have been challenges to keep up with the scholars virtually and during a pandemic, but each of our mentors have stepped up and continued to engage in excellent mentoring. You will meet them in these pages.

This program does not run without our full time Associate Director and part time graduate assistant. Thanks to both for their commitment, hard work, and flexibility.

Congratulations Scholars! Please read about their research and accomplishments – and enjoy.

Jessica Gordon-Nembhard, Ph.D., Director
S. Ernest Lee, Ph.D., Associate Director

Alumni Spotlight

This year the McNair Program recognizes an alumnus who received her PhD during the 2020-2021 academic year. She is:



Dr. Jessica A. McFadzean ('16) earned her combined PhD in Counseling Psychology/School Psychology with an emphasis on multicultural psychology from the Department of Counseling, School and Educational Psychology at the University at Buffalo. She previously received a Bachelor of Arts in Forensic Psychology and Cultural Deviance studies from John Jay College of Criminal Justice. Her dissertation, entitled “They Got Me Trapped. You Can’t Keep a Black Man Down”: Examining the Link Between Criminal Justice Contact and Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptoms Among Black Men” primarily focused on criminal justice contact, and the psychological impact on black men and the possible interventions for this population. Dr. McFadzean plans to continue her work in the field of psychology as a scientist/practitioner, from a multicultural lens, with a focus on the military population. In addition to earning her PhD, Dr. McFadzean also recently completed military basic training. She is a Lieutenant in the United States Navy.



McNair Awards

Dr. Ronald E. McNair was born in Lake City, South Carolina in 1950. He picked cotton and tobacco as a child to help his family's finances. He graduated *magna cum laude* in 1971 with a B.S. in Physics. He enrolled in a Ph.D. program at Massachusetts Institute of Technology. As his dissertation was nearing completion, he lost all of his research data and re-created it within a few months. He received his Ph.D. in Physics in 1976 and was selected as a NASA astronaut candidate in 1978. The second African American in space, McNair logged a total of 191 hours in orbit before he died in the *Challenger* disaster in 1984. He was a married father of two, a fifth-degree black belt, and an accomplished jazz saxophonist.

The Spirit of McNair Award has been established to honor McNair Scholars who best exemplify the qualities of Dr. Ronald E. McNair. This year, the award is given to **Ms. Rachel Rosado**.



If I had to describe Ms. Rosado, I would say that she is consistently excellent. This in itself sets a high mark, but to be consistently excellent during a pandemic is a marvel. Ms. Rosado could always be counted on to submit her work first, and with the highest quality. For her efforts, she was also recognized by the McNair Program with the “Scholar of Distinction” Award (see below). In addition to her McNair honors, the college awarded Ms. Rosado the Jon-Christian Suggs Memorial Scholarship for excellence in English, and she had her research selected for publication in John Jay’s *Finest*. Aside from her honors and awards, Ms. Rosado has demonstrated her passion and dedication to applying to graduate school. This was displayed by her unwavering efforts despite the fact that many of her chosen

graduate programs were not accepting students due to the pandemic. Ms. Rosado’s efforts were rewarded with admission to New York University’s (NYU) Master of Arts Program in Interdisciplinary Studies XE which she started in the Fall 2021 semester.

The **One-of-A Kind McNair Awards** were established to honor the special qualities in each and every Second Year Scholar. We would also like to recognize some of our Associate and First Year Scholars who went **Above and Beyond** over the past year.

Presented at the McNair Research Roundtable Reception via Zoom– May 27th, 2021

Second Year Scholars

Angelina Benli – *The “Poised Scholar” Award*

For your self-possessed and professional comportment during your research presentations.

Melissa Ceren – *The “Relentless Scholar” Award*

In recognition of your relentless and pragmatic efforts in your research and other academic pursuits.

Ruth Folarin – *The “Hungry Scholar” Award*

For the ravenous efforts you displayed in all of your academic pursuits.

Kajal Sieuraj – *The “Collegial Scholar” Award*

In recognition of the consistent and unwavering support you provided to your fellow McNair Scholars.

Rachel Rosado – *The “Scholar of Distinction” Award*

In recognition of your consistently outstanding performance and the positive attitude that you displayed during your tenure as a McNair Scholar.

Saira Tariq – *The “Tranquil Scholar” Award*

For the calm and serene demeanor you displayed in both the research and graduate application process.

Emily Velasco – *The “Emergent Scholar” Award*

For the growth you displayed during your tenure as a scholar, both personally and academically, in completing your McNair research project.

First Year Scholars

2020-2021 First Year Cohort – *The “Diligent Scholar Attendance” Award*

In recognition of your outstanding attendance, performance, and participation during the Spring 2021 McNair Research Seminar.

The **McNair Mentor Awards** were established to honor the encouragement, dedication, and guidance given by a mentor to their McNair Scholar student.

Presented at the McNair Research Roundtable Reception via Zoom – May 27th, 2021

Dr. Olivera Jokic – *The “Kwando Kinshasa Excellence in Mentoring” Award**

For the tireless effort and commitment to excellence you displayed as a mentor in the John Jay College McNair Program.

❖ Dr. Jokic was nominated by mentee Rachel Rosado.

*The Kwando Kinshasa Excellence in Mentoring Award was established in 2014 in honor of Dr. Kwando Kinshasa, who retired as a Professor in John Jay’s Department of Africana Studies in 2014. In addition to being a faculty member, Dr. Kinshasa was a mentor with the McNair Program from its inception at the college in 1992 until his retirement. He also served as Interim McNair Director.

Dr. Mangai Natarajan – *The “Above and Beyond” Mentor Award*

For the commitment to excellence you displayed as a mentor in the John Jay College McNair Program.

❖ Dr. Natarajan was nominated by mentee Emily Velasco.

Dr. Nina Rose-Fischer – *The “Above and Beyond” Mentor Award*

For the commitment to excellence you displayed as a mentor in the John Jay College McNair Program.

❖ Dr. Rose-Fischer was nominated by The McNair Administration.



Associate McNair Scholars



The Relationship between Defense Mechanisms and Eating Disorders

Aida Murati

Major: Forensic Psychology

Mentor: **William Gottdiener, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Aida Murati was born in Albania and moved with her family to New York City at the age of ten. She is currently a senior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she is pursuing a major in Forensic Psychology, in addition to a minor in Human Services. She has been a Dean's list recipient since her first semester and is also a member of the Psi Chi International Honor Society in Psychology. Aida has worked with several professors in different disciplines and labs to understand the various methodologies and procedures that she can use in her future work as a perspective doctorate student in Clinical Psychology. Some of these experiences include working with a faculty mentor, Dr. William Gottdiener, as part of the McNair program studying the relationship between defense mechanisms, religious coping, childhood trauma, and food addiction. Aida is also a research assistant at the Couples Lab at Columbia University working with physiological measurements. She also is a research assistant in the Developmental Affective Neuroscience (DAN) Lab. Aida is a Homeland Security scholar, and this has enabled her to work on two separate funded research projects. Aida was also the operations manager for the INSPIRE lab at John Jay. Moreover, Aida has presented her research at two leading undergraduate conferences, the Leadership Alliance Symposium, and the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students. In addition, she was part of the 2020 MIT Summer Program in Biology and Neuroscience. Through this opportunity, Aida joined the Human Cooperation Lab led by Dr. David Rand at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT), in which she continues to conduct research on the amplification of false news. Her ultimate goal is to become a clinical psychologist and professor.

Project Description

Substance use disorders (SUD) are one of the world's largest public health problems, with approximately 10% of people 12 and over having a diagnosable SUD. Psychoanalytic theory argues that people develop an SUD to cope with unbearable emotional pain via the use of a variety of defense mechanisms such as, denial and rationalization. The use of alcohol and other drugs assists the defenses in reducing conscious awareness of the person's emotional pain. A growing body of research on the relationship between defense mechanisms and SUD has accrued, including the variety of defenses used and the changes in defenses that occur from effective SUD treatment. The purpose of this study is to use meta-analysis to synthesize this growing body of research and bring order and clarity to it. To date, we have identified the extant empirical research and have begun to code the studies for inclusion in the meta-analysis. We expect to finish coding the research by February and run the analyses in February and have a final report done by end of the spring 2021 semester.



Second Year McNair Scholars



One Man, No Vote: The Legacy of Felon Disenfranchisement

Angelina Benli

Major: Forensic Psychology

Mentor: **Andrew Sidman, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Angelina Benli is a senior in the Honors Program at John Jay College of Criminal Justice where she is double majoring in Criminology and Forensic Psychology with a minor in English. She is a second year McNair Scholar, researching the political implications of felon disenfranchisement in the United States over the last twenty years with Dr. Andrew Sidman. She is a teaching assistant in the Sociology Department at John Jay College, working with Dr. Liza Steele. She serves as the treasurer of the SEEK Society and as a Peer Advocate for the Urban Male Initiative. She is a 2018 America Needs You Fellow and a 2019 Futures Initiative Leadership and Democracy Fellow. She completed a legislative and communications internship with the office of New York City Council Member, Robert E. Cornegy, Jr. She has also completed additional internships with non-profit organizations such as Let's Get Ready!, Generation Citizen, and Reading Partners. She is the recipient of the CUNY Chancellor's Global Scholarship and CUNY SEEK Global Scholarship. Outside of academics, she enjoys making jam, baking scones, and obscure movie trivia.

Abstract

Over the past half century, the population of those incarcerated in the United States has increased to 2.2 million. The state laws that govern whether felons can vote are not uniform, which leads to unequal participation and a disparity in elections based on where an individual resides. Due to variant felon disenfranchising policies across the country, an estimated 6.1 million Americans are unable to cast ballots, which is 3% of the voting population. This project has two phases, the first is to use national surveys that include ex-felons, along with national and county level election returns to examine the political behavior and participation of ex-felons. This helps to answer if re-enfranchisement leads to increased county-level turnout, both in elections and other political activities. These empirical results will be followed by a second phase, involving a case study of New York City, which will focus on voter turnout after Governor Cuomo's 2018 executive order. This study can provide a greater understanding of how the political participation of ex-felons, or lack thereof, can inform future election and voter policy at the county, state, and federal levels.



The Impact of *Matter of A-B* on Asylum Claims due to Domestic and Gang Violence

Melissa Ceren

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Law

Mentor: **Rebecca Weiss, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Melissa Ceren is a first-generation Latina majoring in Forensic Psychology, with a minor in Law. Early in her academic journey at John Jay she joined and continues to be a research assistant in the Memory and Cognition Lab in which she receives intensive research and mentoring from Dr. Charles B. Stone. Through this mentorship, she was inspired and influenced to consider the psychological stressors involved in the process of immigration for immigrants, refugee, and asylum populations at the individual (internalized stigma, self-conceptions), cultural (stereotypes, microaggressions), and structural (law, education, political) levels.

In her second and third year, she worked as a Math and Science Resource Center (MSRC) Tutor/Workshop Facilitator and a Student Council Representative which allowed her to provide advocacy, mentoring and academic support for fellow students to grow academically and professionally. Through this professional and research experience, she was confident to apply to both Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program and Diverse Leadership in Education and Academic Pursuit (D-LEAP) Mentorship Program. She was accepted to both programs and conducted an original research project under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Rebecca Weiss.

In her transition from third to fourth year, she was a volunteer clinical intern at Columbia University's Department of Psychiatry and New York State Psychiatric Institute and recognized for her overall academic excellence in the Africana Studies Department, Student Council's Excellent Innovator Award, the Upper Division Scholarship, the Rising Star Fellowship, Malcolm X/ Martin Luther King Leadership Award, Dr. Patricia Sinatra Memorial Scholarship, John A. Reisenbach Foundation Judith Bronfman Memorial Scholarship, Commencement Award of Scholarship and Service, and participated in the John Jay-Vera Institute of Justice Fellowship Program. She also had the opportunity to conduct, present, and publish on the consequences of undermatching in New York City's public education system for ethnic minority families at New York University over the 2020 summer as part of NYU's Summer Research Experience Program. She also joined the Arts and Developmental Lab at Brooklyn College as a National Science Foundation (NSF) REU scholar under the mentorship of Dr. Jennifer Drake, allowed her to shift her focus to pursue a PhD in Developmental Psychology.

Project Description

Introduction/Literature Review: The Refugee Act of 1980 states that individuals who have experienced inhumanity and torture may seek asylum in another country if they can demonstrate a well-founded fear of persecution due to race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership in a particular social group. The strict criteria regarding the cause of the persecution make asylum difficult to obtain for victims of domestic or gang violence. In specific cases, victims of domestic or gang violence have been granted asylum in the United States under the criteria of membership in a social group. After a successful appeal in the Matter of A-R-C-G- (2014), a woman received asylum in the United States after repeated emotional, psychological and physical abuse from her husband in El Salvador. However, this verdict was overturned by former Attorney General Jefferson Sessions in Matter of A-B- (2018). This law review utilized Center of Gender and Refugee Studies data collection to systematically review legal asylum cases in order to determine how former U.S. Attorney General Jeff Sessions' decision in Matter of A-B affect the grant and denial rate for victims seeking asylum or other forms of relief from removal due to domestic or gang-based violence. Findings, however, show that there were no associations of domestic violence and gang violence claims between the prior and preceding year of Sessions' overturn of Matter of A-B-. Future studies among the asylum outcomes should emphasize the importance of supporting evidence of asylum claims with fair and just laws in asylum seeking proceedings.

Methods: Data was collected from 87 asylum seekers who were claiming asylum for domestic and gang violence from the Northern Triangle region, after Jefferson Session's ruling of Matter of A-B-. The study's research database was approved by the Center for Gender and Refugee Studies (CGRS) (San Francisco, CA), which consisted of asylum seekers who could have received either pro bono legal representation, litigation, and consultation between February 2018 to April 2019. The sample consists of 87 cases (55% female; 42.5% male; 2.3% nonbinary). Participants in our sample included asylum seekers from countries in the Northern Triangle of Central America: Guatemala (27.5%), El Salvador (29.8%), and Honduras (42.5%).

Results: Two chi-square tests of independence were performed to examine the association between claims dependent on only domestic violence and gang violence claims before and after Sessions' ruling of Matter of A-B- on June 11, 2018. It was hypothesized that asylum seekers who have claimed domestic and gang violence-based asylum specifically from the Northern Triangle will have a lower success rate in the year following the ruling of Matter of A-B- (2018) than the year prior to the ruling. Among domestic violence and gang violence claims (N= 87), there was no significant association between domestic and gang violence claims within a year prior (n= 27) and the preceding year (n= 60) of Sessions' 2018 overrule of the existing grounds of social group membership within domestic violence claims. The statistical model, $\chi^2(1, N=87) = 3.14, p = .07$ found non significance to suggest a relation between the claims of domestic violence and gang violence before and after Sessions' alteration of Matter of A-B-. The second chi-square was performed to determine the relationship of solely domestic violence claims between the date of grant or denial before and after the Matter of A-B- verdict. Among only domestic violence claims (N= 49), the association between these variables was

insignificant in this sample, $\chi^2(1, N = 49) = 3.27, p = .07$). No differences were observed in only domestic violence claims between grant and denial rate and the years prior and after Sessions' overrule on June 11, 2018.

Discussions and Future Implications: This case review aimed to illuminate the impact of judicial discretion on the rule of law, specifically domestic violence as to whether it is categorized as a social group membership. As a result, the lack of judicial transparency can cause immigration judges, or overall, the asylum-seeking process to misinterpret these new laws towards domestic violence claims. However, as a limitation, the data collection does not discuss or detail how the database was compiled in regard to CGRS' legal services. A multitude of factors in the database are not included as to whether CGRS' representation was pro bono, paid, or whether asylum seekers were self-represented during their case. Because of these factors, this review is a practical initiative in investigating the importance of documenting evidence of human rights abuses and its lawfulness within immigration courts. Moreover, our results also suggest that General Attorney Jeff Sessions' discretion of limiting eligibility of asylum for domestic violence survivors should emphasize supporting existing affirmation for the need of protection and justice for these asylum seekers.



An Examination of the Relationship Between Minority Communities, Mental Health, and Justice-Involved Youth

Ruth Folarin

Major: Forensic Psychology

Mentor: **Maureen Allwood, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Ruth Folarin is a senior Forensic Psychology major. She is also part of the Macaulay Honors Program. Her mentor is Dr. Maureen Allwood of the Psychology department, and her research addresses the relationship between communities of color, mental health, and justice-involved youth. Ruth is also a research assistant in Dr. Veronica Johnson's Race & Equity Lab as well as Dr. Allwood's Youth and Trauma lab. Ruth has presented her research at the 2020 UCLA McNair Conference. Her goal is to obtain a Ph.D. in Clinical Psychology with a forensic focus and work with justice-involved youth.

Abstract

Many minority communities do not have access to mental health resources. In a study of African American women, a major theme was that residents did not know how to access services that were available (Robert et.al, 2008). For youth, especially Black youth, this can lead to increased involvement with the juvenile justice system. In a study using over 50,000 juvenile cases, about 59% of cases involving Black youth had a recommendation for formal processing, which is processing youth through the juvenile justice system without considering alternatives or diversions, or mental health services. Furthermore, 47% of Black youth had a petition for their case to be taken to court (Bishop and Frazier, 1988). In the 1829 youth that were detained in Cook County, Illinois, 66% of the male population met the criteria for 1 psychiatric disorder and 73% of the female population met the criteria for 1 as well (Teplin, et.al, 2002). The proposed study will focus on two research questions. Does lack of access to mental health services increase the risk of contact with the law enforcement and the juvenile justice system? If so, does this disproportionately affect minority youth? The study will use a quantitative survey to gather information about opinions about mental health and treatment, utilization of mental health services for their children, interactions with the juvenile justice system, and barriers to mental health help seeking. The survey will be administered to parents. The expected results for this study

are that minority communities and the barriers of mental-health help seeking will directly impact the rate at which minority youth are incarcerated.



Understanding the Casual Relationships Between Climate Change, Global Warming, and Environmental Crimes: An International Criminal Justice Inquiry

Kajal Sieuraj

Major: International Criminal Justice

Mentor: **Mangai Natarajan, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Kajal Sieuraj is a first-generation Trinidadian American. She grew up in New York City and will graduate in the Spring of 2021 with a major in International Criminal Justice. Early in her college academic career, Kajal's interests within environmental justice sparked from the issues of climate change and global warming. This interdisciplinary study allowed her to discover her passion for environmental criminology, sustainability, their relationship with the creative arts (such as fashion and architecture), and thus take a closer look as to how these aspects interact with each other. Within the International Criminal Justice framework, Kajal's main interests revolves around climate crime and sustainability, as well as studying existing intersectionality between climate change, transnational environmental crime, big corporations, government corruption, armed conflicts, and capitalism. Specifically, Kajal's McNair research project focuses on various transnational environmental crimes in regard to their relationship with climate change and global warming. In a more general academic aspect, Kajal's research interests also involve social media usage in a variety of aspects, such as the spreading of misinformation or the use of algorithmic digital feeds and how it influences millennials and generation Z. Other academic interests include how the COVID-19 pandemic intersects with environmentalism. In addition to her academic pursuits, Kajal holds an immense amount of appreciation for creative expression, and likes to explore cosmetics, fashion, filmmaking, and music in her spare time. Kajal's future research interests revolve around environmental sustainability and its future with aspects such as architecture, international relations, and capitalism. She plans to apply to PhD programs involving environmental design and sustainability.

Project Description

Introduction: The Industrial Revolution, since its conception, became the number one contributor to the man-made issue of climate change and global warming. Countless studies indicate that the continuous use of

fossil fuels as the main source of energy for entire societies devastates the well-being and the survival of the Earth and its ecosystems. The issue of climate change itself does present itself as one of the most important agendas on the world stage today, with credit due to generations worth of environmentalists and scientist. On a global scale, industrialization of countries helped environmental issues such as deforestation, the endangerment and mass extinction of species, as well as pollution. Various different sectors of life as it currently exists today seep into this discussion of environmental harm in ways the average person does not even think about. The devastation caused by wildlife and plant trafficking, deforestation, and the loss of ecosystems around the world represents a time-pressing matter of literal life or death, not just for human beings, but for all which inhabits planet Earth. Green criminologists debate the causal relationships between climate change, environmental crimes, and lucrative transnational criminal activity, all while naming the magnitude of environmental crimes as a threat to the peace and well-being of society. Hence, this issue calls for an extensive understanding of state law, international law, and investigating the global impacts of transnational environmental crime and climate change, which will help in the discussion of Ecocide as the 5th core international crime for the International Criminal Court. Thus, this research proposal aims to explore the causal relationships between transnational environmental crimes and climate change, and their impact on Ecocide, as well as assess those who breach the rule of international environmental law, which causes potential International Criminal Court intervention.

Research Questions: This project has three research questions. First, do transnational environmental crimes contribute to climate change and global warming, or vice versa? If so, what are the nature and extent of the damages to humanity and human security? And last, how would the impact add to the grounds of “Ecocide”, as a fifth core crime in the Rome Statute?

Research Design: To answer the research questions, this project will embark on a qualitative case study using secondary data provided by the LexusUni database. The cases in question will derive from six different countries: Australia, Canada, Hong Kong, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The determining qualifications of cases coming from these countries revolve around the issues of climate change, pollution of any kind, wildlife harm, environmental harm, land development, and dumping of hazardous wastes. This will highlight variables such as the nature of the cases, prosecution of these courts, the decision, the appeals taken against the verdict, as well as the consequences of these cases to local, regional, and national levels in regard to economic, land, and wildlife of these six countries. Using these variables, this project will then undertake a quantitative multivariate analysis in order to answer whether there is a relationship between environmental crime, global warming, and climate change.

Anticipated Results: From our reconstructed database, we expect that transnational environmental crime contributes to climate change. Therefore, transnational environmental crime will have a higher rate of damages and pose a stronger threat to humanity when combined with its contribution to climate change.

Limitations: This study faces limitations in regard to data collection. No data exists on the LexusUni database from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, the Caribbean islands, the Pacific Islands, and South America.

Furthermore, the existing cases within the six countries used do not prosecute any forms of wildlife trafficking or poaching.

Further Research: Further research in this topic can expand with looking into how capitalism motivates large corporations and world governments to behave when regarding profit and the environment as intertwined variables of power and economic value. Transnational environmental crime exists solely because of the markets created for that which wildlife, plant and other environmental rarities hold high valuable prices. In another aspect of transnational environmental crime, deforestation, and overall destruction of natural habitats, especially in specifically rare ecosystems, such as coral reefs and tropical rain forests, are a direct result of overharvesting and overdeveloping land in different countries. For example, natural forests in Indonesia's ecosystems are destroyed for palm tree farms, where palm oil is harvested for products such as that which Lay's Chips creates. Every single one of these factors constitutes the need for legal international validation of the concept Ecocide. The socio-economic, geo-political climate of the current international world stage, including states and large corporations, play a huge role within transnational environmental crime and its motivation as a sector of organized crime driven through capitalism. This must be examined through more specific research as it relates to climate change and global warming.



Expanding American Narratives: The Novelty of *Crazy Rich Asians*

Rachel Rosado

Major: English

Minors: Criminology, Art

Mentor: **Olivera Jokic, PhD**, English Dept.

Biography

Rachel Rosado graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in English and double minor in Criminology and Art. Under the mentorship of Dr. Olivera Jokić, Rachel has conducted a study observing the cultural significance and political impact of *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018). Furthermore, she is involved in the Critical Interdisciplinary Research Group (CIRG) where she has collaborated with students from various departments to learn about the possibilities and challenges of academic research in the humanities and social sciences through qualitative methods. Rachel has presented her work from both research groups at several conferences. She has been awarded the Jon-Christian Suggs Memorial Scholarship and her research on CRA has been published in the 36th volume of John Jay's *Finest*. Ms. Rosado has been accepted to New York University's Master of Arts program in Interdisciplinary Studies XE and will be attending in Fall 2021.

Project Description

In 2018 Warner Bros. released the highly anticipated *Crazy Rich Asians*. Part of the movie's anticipation was because it features an all-Asian cast, and the film industry has a history of negatively portraying Asians and Asian-Americans using racist stereotypes. This research paper looks into how the popularity of *Crazy Rich Asians* relates to the complexity of Asian and Asian-American experience. Prior research has confirmed that negative stereotypes, such as yellow peril and the model minority stereotype, are very powerful even if they are known to be inaccurate. Mainstream movies' continued portrayal of Asians and Asian-Americans using negative stereotypes continues to feed into the idea that they are foreigners in the United States. In such narratives orchestrated to maintain a racial order, Asians have continuously been portrayed as the racialized other. While existing research recognizes that film is a major influence on popular culture, the current study would contribute to research by focusing on *Crazy Rich Asians* (2018) as the latest and most successful example of exploring the complexities of Asians and Asian-American experiences.

The methods used to better understand social and cultural history are textual interpretation and historical contextualization. Textual interpretation is a flexible method that is applicable to mass media. Text here is understood broadly, to mean not just printed text, but any kind of composition in any medium which

can be interpreted in the historical and political context. Critical textual interpretation provides an opportunity to analyze the movie beyond the surface of plot and genre and without the need to contribute to the film's profits. Historical contextualization adds richness to findings reached by textual interpretation alone. Analysis of a specific movie contributes to the argument about the influence of films that have been previously examined. There is an abundance of material for the comparison of the recently released movie to the earlier ones because the history of race portrayal in film is an extensive one. Through this research method, the project argues that the film is an exception to the representation of Asians and Asian-Americans in film.

The thesis shows how *CRA* has differed from prior movies in major ways in response to increased demands from American audiences. Audiences responded in commercially viable ways to a more inclusive cast and production. Although the climate in the United States has changed to the point that millions of people who have no personal connection to Asia were interested in *CRA*, it did not come without some type of demand. However, as successful as the movie is, it only acknowledges a handful of Asian people. Asia is a large continent that is made up of 48 countries and *CRA* only acknowledges three countries in East Asia (Singapore, China, and Hong Kong). Although it would be virtually impossible to acknowledge the entirety of Asia in a single movie, the highlighted cultures are noticeably dominant Asian cultures. So, while the film makes progress in history, it also reduces the idea of Asia to a few countries, thus limiting the representation of the culture and diversity of Asia. Although the film is being praised for featuring an all-Asian cast, the cast members reflect the lack of diversity within Asia. Furthermore, the film's popularity does not necessarily resolve racist discourse in the U.S., the Covid-19 pandemic is a reminder that the fragile idea of race unity that the U.S. projects is false. Racist stereotypes towards Asian and Asian-American people have reemerged and have been used to justify racist and xenophobic actions and violent attacks. The movie's success should therefore not be expected to produce changed or more positive attitudes towards Asian Americans as a consequence of its commercial and popular success.



Types of Deception in Everyday Life: Detection and Frequency Mapping

Saira Tariq

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Maria Hartwig, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Saira Tariq graduated with a major in Forensic Psychology and a minor in Criminology. In addition to being a McNair Scholar, Saira works at the John Jay Academic Advisement Center as a Peer Advisor. Being the first in her family to successfully obtain her bachelor's degree, she will also be attending NYU in the coming fall for her Master's degree in Psychology. Saira hopes to continue her studies and pursue a PhD in Clinical Psychology in the near future. She has presented in the annual McNair Scholars Conference at the University of Maryland; as well as CUDCP's Diversifying Clinical Psychology virtual conference. Saira is a member of the Psi Chi National Honor Society and Alpha Kappa Delta International Sociology Honor Society. During her time at John Jay, Saira was a Research Assistant for the Extremist Crime Database and has been a long-standing Dean's list recipient. She is also an advocate for mental health and has taken part in publishing a book on mental health awareness and acceptance. In her free time, she offers solicited life advice to her friends; as well as likes to read mystery novels and watch foreign shows.

Abstract

Introduction: Over the years there has been much research done on lies and deception. Some use these concepts interchangeably and refer to them as separate entities. This study will address both of these concepts and identify the differences between them (respectively). Deception research has most commonly been done in individual and group settings under experimental conditions (Ennis, Vrij, & Chance, 2008). Many previous studies establish control on either what type of deception is being done, where or what situation it involves, or even who is enacting the deception; this can refer to a confederate in the experiment used to gauge the reactions of those being deceived. However, this study proposes to ask the following questions about deception: what does deception look like in everyday life? What kinds of deception are people engaged in and encounter? What role does deception play in everyday life and how often do people deceive others? It will utilize the self-report method, similar to that of DePaulo's seminal (1996) study. The importance of the current study is to examine how participants use deception in naturalistic conditions, rather than in controlled settings.

The study also aims to measure the frequency with which individuals choose to deceive others (e.g. strangers, close friends, or co-workers), and the reasons behind their chosen deception. Instead of being given a topic that controls the deception (as demonstrated in Virj, 2001); participants will be given the freedom of choice of what they want to talk about, whether they engage in deception or not, and who they interact with. It is hypothesized that participants will choose to intentionally deceive strangers more often than close friends, acquaintances, and family. In addition, those who do choose to deceive close friends rather than strangers will have manipulative and self-serving personality types.

There are many forms of deception and reasons behind why individuals may feel the need to utilize them. The first type of motivation is identity deception (Utz, 2005). In this type of deception, one would necessarily create false beliefs about one's self, social status, profession, age, name, and other aspects that make up who we are. This type of deception can be used for con cases, dating sites, and social media. An individual may portray themselves as being entirely different than who they are in real life. However, identity deception may also be used in cases of witness protection programs – when one or more individuals are required to undertake a new name, profession, background/history in order to remain undetected.

Another type of deception that can be a motivating factor is self-oriented deception. This type of deception can be used to gain some sort of advantage, obtain information, or avoid some sort of punishment (DePaulo et al, 1996). As the term suggests, the deceiver is being motivated by selfishness and personal gain. Other-oriented deception however is motivated by the need to benefit others and their interests. This type of deception is used to give advantage to others, protect them from embarrassment or loss of status, and overall make things more accommodating for them. Research suggests that men in particular deceive self-oriented; on the other hand, women deceive more other-oriented (DePaulo et al, 1996). Therefore, a part of the focus in this study will be dedicated to research on the motivational differences in gender.

Methods: A self-administered questionnaire through Qualtrics will be administered to undergraduate students. Participants will be asked to self-report their deceptions daily in a journal. They will be describing details of the type of lie told, to whom they deceived, as well as their personal feelings after the deception occurred. Participants will be prompted to assess their relationships using the Relationship Attachment Model (RAM) (Cutlip, V. E., & Morgan, C., 2013). The RAM measures the five dynamic bonds that connect a relationship, which include: know, trust, rely, commit, and touch. Participants will be encouraged to partake in Eysenck's Personality Questionnaire (EPQ); which uses a 90-item scale to measure the three broad domains of personality: extraversion, neuroticism, and psychoticism; as well as a lie scale to verify valid responding (Pop-Jordanova and Zorcec, 2010). Eysenck's extraversion scale measures sociability and impulsivity. After the one week period, participants' journals will be collected and analyzed.

Future Implications: This research is important because it might assist with understanding court room testimonies and coerced confessions. By looking at the motivations and reasons behind lies and connecting them to an individual's personality type; it is hoped that this study will introduce possible pathways to identifying common deceptions and develop intervention strategies.



Lo Occulto: Racial Trauma in Latinx Communities

Emily Velasco

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Veronica Johnson, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Emily Velasco will graduate with a degree in Forensic Psychology and a minor in Criminology. She is a recipient of the Dean's List award and a member of the Psi Chi International Honor Society. Being a first-generation student and woman of color has shaped her research interests and career goals. She has presented her research at the Macksey Undergraduate Symposium at Johns Hopkins. She is also part of the Critical Interdisciplinary Research Group (CIRG) under the mentorship of Dr. Giazu Enciso Dominguez and Dr. Olivera Jokic. Indicative of her commitment towards representation in academia, she has collaborated with other students giving oral presentations in heightening undergraduate research involvement and quality for a diverse environment. She has presented work highlighting student experiences in the classroom at the 11th Annual Pedagogy at the CUNY Graduate Center. And she has presented at New Mexico State University on learning resilience at Hispanic-Serving Institutions. Emily is currently working with Dr. Enciso-Dominguez on a theoretical discussion on the cross-section of race and generation for ethnic minority, first-generation students seeking mentors in higher education. She is currently interning in the grants and research department of the American Foundation of Suicide Prevention. As part of the CUNY Service Corps, she helps college students gain access to mental health resources at the Counseling Center at Lehman College. She also served the John Jay community as an Urban Male Initiative Peer advocate, mentoring undergraduate and transfer students. This year Emily became an Ambassador for Robbie's Hope, a nonprofit organization aiming to increase awareness of the causes of suicide in young adults. Emily hopes to enroll in a Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program and aims to be a bilingual Clinical Forensic Psychologist.

Project Description

Introduction: Throughout American history, discrimination has devastated communities of racial and ethnic minorities. Latinx communities are the most rapidly increasing population in the U.S., creating an urgent need to understand discrimination in these populations. Due to the frequency of discrimination racial minorities face daily, they are likely to be affected by race-based trauma. Mental and emotional injury caused

by encounters with racial bias and ethnic discrimination is referred to as race-based trauma. These events may include threats of harm and injury, humiliating and shaming events, and witnessing harm to other People of Color due to real or perceived racism. Individuals can have suicidal ideations, nervousness, sadness, hypervigilance, and self-reported overall lower quality of life; due to racial discrimination.

Race-based trauma can be seen as a cycle. An individual experiences a traumatic event such as overtly racial slurs and threats made by anyone, police harassment, and assault or, workplace discrimination. Exposure to racism and a traumatic event can result in psychological affliction, behavioral exhaustion, and physiological distress. Then the individual may engage in health behaviors, like substance use, to cope. Maladaptive reactions to racial discrimination through the use of coping strategies may make an individual more vulnerable to negative mental health outcomes.

There is ample evidence that affirms that the physical and psychological health of people of Color is affected by racism. Studies have also shown Latinx peoples' experiences with racism are associated with poorer physical health. Health behaviors are an individual's actions regarding their health such as; exercise, drinking, sleeping, and smoking. The range of skin color in those who are Latinx ranges from white-passing to dark-skinned. For this review, the phenotype characteristic we will focus on is skin color due to the range and the fact that it is a characteristic that can help identify someone as part of the Latinx community. A study by Espino and Franz (2002) has shown despite efforts to rid of discrimination, many darker-skinned Latinos continue to experience more discrimination than their lighter-skinned counterpart. Socioeconomic status is being looked at as a mediator to compare the difference it makes regarding the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors. A study by Telles and Murguia, (1990) discovered that there are differences in annual earnings, between the darkest and most native-looking Mexican American group and the remainder of the Mexican American population. Williams and associates (2017) considered the differences in emotional stress response to racial trauma among US-born Latinos and Latino immigrants. According to Zamora (2018), U.S born Latinos also face discrimination regardless of their stats, U.S.-born Mexican descendants who do not always have the privilege of escaping broader anti-Mexican prejudice.

Sociodemographic and phenotypic factors have been proposed to modify the relationship between racial trauma- defined as the severe reaction to a discriminatory experience- and health behaviors such as diet, physical activity, smoking, drinking, and age. Research on racism and its effects have not looked at the Latinx community thoroughly and do not account for phenotype, legal status, and socioeconomic status as possible moderators in the relationship between racism and health behaviors. Using the model of race-based traumatic stress, this study aims to understand the way socioeconomic status, skin color, and citizenship status affect the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors among the Latinx community.

There are three research questions in this study:

- I. How do differences in socioeconomic status impact the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors in Latinx communities?
- II. How does skin color impact the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors in Latinx communities?

III. How does citizenship status impact the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors in Latinx communities?

Methods: We expect to have 100 participants for this study. Participants will have access to an online questionnaire. The questionnaire will be available to students through the John Jay undergraduate experience program on the SONA site. To recruit a diverse sample of participants from various gender identities, ages, socioeconomic status, and citizenship status' - we will also recruit participants via social media platforms (Twitter, Instagram, and Linked In). Participants will be recruited through campus-based organizations, and email. We will reach out to organizations that offer services to those in the Latinx communities such as Make the Road to increase the number of participants as well as the variability in ages. Participants will complete the Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale (RBTSSS). On the RBTSSS, the participant is asked to report an encounter with racism that was negative or emotionally painful, sudden, and uncontrollable. This scale will measure how participants felt immediately after a discriminatory encounter and how they feel now looking back at their experience.

To measure skin tone we will be using a 5 point text scale (Very Light Brown, Light Brown, Medium Brown, Dark Brown, Very Dark Brown). We will use The Skin Color Satisfaction Scale to measure how satisfied participants are with their skin color compared to others in their community. We will be using the COMBO Health Behavior Measure. This will measure the smoking habits, drinking habits, eating patterns, and physical activity of participants. And the final measure used will be the Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), a brief measure of psychological distress.

Future Findings: The dependent variables in the study will be health behaviors. The independent variables in this study are race-based traumatic stress symptoms. Moderating variables will be skin color, citizenship status, and SES.

- It is hypothesized that those who are not U.S Citizens will face higher rates of racial trauma and negative health behaviors due to the lack of resources in their environment.
- It is hypothesized that those with lower income will experience greater negative health outcomes compared to participants who report higher income.
- Based on past literature we expect there to be a negative relationship between skin color, racial trauma, and health among Latinos, those in the Latinx community who have darker skin tones may experience more discrimination than white-passing individuals.
- It is anticipated that men will report higher negative health consequences, regarding substances, compared to women. It is anticipated that there will be a positive relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors among Latinos.

Discussion: Inequalities in areas of socioeconomic status, gender, age, and skin color of ethnic groups, as well as the impact it has on racial trauma, need to be further investigated. Research of this nature will aid in the understanding of the correlation of race traumatic stress and health behaviors in Latinx communities. The variance in age may be skewed due to the majority of participants being from university organizations. Due to the RBTSS not being available in Spanish, we may not see the representation of those who are solely fluent in Spanish. A majority of those who are fluent in Spanish may have a different citizenship status than

those who are fluent or comfortable with English. Given that questionnaire is self-reported some participants may not want to disclose their status.

Future Implications: This research can help mental health service providers who may be unaware of the impact of discrimination, fail to recognize experiences of racism as traumatic or fail to ask about experiences of racism at all. Understanding the role socioeconomic status and phenotype have on the relationship between racial trauma and health behaviors will pave the way for future research and have clinical implications for how mental health professionals understand factors germane to racial trauma in Latinx communities.



First Year McNair Scholars

Perceptions of Progressive Criminal Justice Policies and the Link to Justice Education

Alexa Abruzese

Major: Criminal Justice B.S.

Mentor: **Amy Adamczyk, PhD**, Sociology Dept.

Biography

Alexa Abruzese is a first-generation undergraduate student. After completing a semester at Rutgers University, she transferred to pursue a criminal justice education and is now an upper senior at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She is majoring in Criminal Justice BS and minoring in English, and currently maintains a 3.99 GPA. She has been a Dean's List Scholar during her entire tenure at John Jay. Alexa is a member of Alpha Phi Sigma's Criminal Justice Honor Society. She has worked on numerous research projects on terrorism and criminal justice with Professor Jeremiah Perez-Torres and serves as a research assistant to him. She recently received the Student Research Award in Sociology for the work she has done with Professor Perez-Torres. While working on this research, Alexa has begun to conduct her own independent research project in the criminal justice field. Alexa hopes to continue her criminal justice education in a PhD program after graduation and hopes to continue conducting research centered around criminal justice reform. Alexa ultimately hopes to work for the Innocence Project in the future. Outside of academia, Alexa has worked as a retail manager for the past three years. She loves to read and enjoys spending time with her friends and family.

Abstract

Progressive criminal justice policies are widely considered by experts to move the criminal justice system forward. This project will focus on the debate surrounding abolishing capital punishment, implementing bail reform, and implementing drug decriminalization, three progressive policies thought to bring about reform. This study will address the question of how college students in a justice oriented academic institution perceive progressive criminal justice policies compared to college students in a non-justice oriented academic institution, and will seek to address the role justice education has in shaping these views. Surveys will be sent to three different groups: criminal justice majors at John Jay, non-criminal justice majors at John Jay, and all majors at College of Staten Island. By surveying these three groups, this study intends to determine the effects of a justice education on perceptions of these progressive criminal justice policies.



From the Ones Doing the Work: Exploring the LGBTQ+ Service Landscape in Urban Higher

Sam Ascencio

Major: Queer Education Reform and Social Activism and Innovation

Mentor: **Emalinda McSpadden, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Sam Ascencio (He/They/Xe) is a genderfluid junior in the CUNY BA pursuing Queer Education and Social Advocacy and Innovation at xyr home college of John Jay. Xe is a current McNair scholar, CUNY Peer Leader, and HASTACS Scholar. Xyrs projects include the creation of Q'onnections, a paid stipend queer peer mentorship program, and spearheading the creation of John Jay's new LGBTQ+ center. Sam's current research interest is in LGBTQ+ pedagogy, education, program development, and assessment, and xe is currently working xyr current research titled: From the Ones Doing the Work: Exploring the LGBTQ+ Service Landscape in Urban Higher Education under Dr. Emily McSpadden. Sam's work can be found on the CUNY Peer Leaders website, HASTACS digital Friday, Spotify, and in various other forms of media Publication.

Abstract

The nature of this research is to provide and inquire about the basic best practice standards for LGBTQ+ services on college campuses, including the creation of an assessment inventory for current practices. The aim is to provide some guidance toward a better understanding of which types of professional and academic preparation are most appropriate for this brand of leadership. Using thematic analysis, we aim to interview CUNY-wide entities accessed via the CUNY LGBTQI+ Council, Comprised of LGBTQ+ service providers and support staff from various CUNY campuses to determine any trends or patterns in credential or preparation among them. Results will serve as the foundation to develop an assessment tool specific to the needs of CUNY LGBTQ+ students and to determine the nature and quality of campus-based LGBTQ+ service provision through its inquiry.



Culturally Distinct Psychological Stress: COVID-19's Impact on Latinx Subgroups' Distress

Laura Alarcon

Major: Forensic Psychology & English

Mentor: **Rebecca Weiss, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Laura Alarcon was born in Panama and grew up in the Bronx. She is a first-generation, rising senior with a GPA of 3.9. She is double majoring in Forensic Psychology and English. She is also an Honors Program scholar. She was recently accepted into the Office for Student Research and Creativity (OSRC) Scholarship Program. She is an active member in various student clubs, like the Environmental Club, Active Minds, the Computer Science Society, Habitat for Humanity, and others. She is also the Vice President of John Jay's chapter of Psi Chi, the International Honor Society in Psychology. Additionally, Laura works as a research assistant on various projects. She was part of Professor Evan Mandery's Listening Curriculum project, is currently a research assistant in various projects within Dr. Rebecca Weiss' assessment lab, and recently joined Dr. Casey LaDuke's traumatic brain injury study/lab. She has also begun two research projects of her own within Dr. Weiss's lab. Some of her academic goals are to maintain her GPA, continue gaining research experience, graduate with her two BA degrees from John Jay, and attend a PhD program for Clinical Psychology. Laura hopes to eventually work as a clinical practitioner to help young adults while continuing her education by pursuing an MA within the English field. Outside of academia, Laura loves reading and writing stories, spending time with friends and family, befriending animals, bookbinding and other arts and crafts, trying new things, and traveling.

Abstract

The Latinx community encompasses many culturally distinct groups who experience distress differently. This study will examine the distress levels of Latinx subgroups prior to and during the pandemic. This study will run a two-way ANOVA statistical analysis on an existing database to investigate changes in distress levels during the specified timeframes. It is hypothesized that data will suggest an increase in the community's distress levels, an increase in subgroups distress levels from usual levels, higher distress levels for subgroups with a historically stronger cultural presence in New York and subgroups facing pointed discrimination despite having a historically strong cultural presence.



An Examination of the Impact of Incarceration on the Political Behavior of Formerly Incarcerated Black Women in New York

Taliah Alexander

Major: Law and Society

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Alexandra Moffet- Bateau, PhD**, Political Science Dept.

Biography

Taliah Alexander is a junior studying at John Jay College of Criminal Justice where she is pursuing a degree in Law & Society (BA). She is a recipient of the Macaulay Honors scholarship, and this academic year was selected as a Peer Mentor for the John Jay Honors Program where she guides freshmen on how to navigate their first year in college as high achieving students. In addition, she was a member of the Vera Fellows Program and through the program interned at The Women's Project which serves primarily as an Alternative to Detention. Her research interests include political behavior, the carceral system, and critical theory. Upon completing her undergraduate studies, she plans to apply to graduate school and move towards a career in academia.

Abstract

Incarceration has great implications for those who have been in contact with the carceral state, including their political behavior. Felony disenfranchisement has become an increasingly popular topic in political discourse. Previous research has been rigorous in identifying the racial disparities of felony disenfranchisement laws but has yet to touch upon the gendered differences. Furthermore, research on formerly incarcerated women has focused on the family and employment structures. Currently, Black women stand at the forefront of colloquial political conversations yet have not received the same attention in the academic space. This study will examine the impact of incarceration on the political behavior of formerly incarcerated Black Women in New York through an intersectional lens. Utilizing data gathered from semi-structured interviews, the study will assess the conscious and unconscious ways participants engage in their government after being incarcerated in a state prison due to a felony conviction. The results will be vital to not only understand how to engage this population and learn the role civic engagement holds in reentry but also to look beyond voting to expand the academic conversation on the effects of incarceration on political behavior. This can serve to amplify the

voice of a demographic often uncentered in academic research, Black women. Additionally, future research should continue to look closely at the intersection of the criminal legal system, gender, and race.



Juvenile Justice and Mental Health: Examining Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice on Mental Health and Substance Abuse

D'Andrah Almanzar

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Addiction Studies

Mentor: **Kevin Nadal, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

D'Andrah Almanzar is a First-Generation Latina College senior majoring in Forensic Psychology with a minor in Addiction Studies. D'Andrah is working towards completing her CASAC-T certification for Substance Abuse. She is also a Cultural Corps Alumni and a Service Corps Alumni. Her research focuses on 'Examining Racial Disparities in the Juvenile Justice System on Mental Health and Substance Abuse. D'Andrah currently interns at Brownsville Community Justice Center for Center of Court Innovation as a Justice Intern, working to reduce gun violence in the Brownsville Community. As well, D'Andrah interns at Queens Consortium of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse working on providing resources to clinics and organizations on mental health and substance abuse throughout NYC. D'Andrah is a member of the Chi Alpha Epsilon and Psi Chi Honor Societies as well as Dr. Nadal's diversity lab team, and is currently working on a new research project surrounding Gendered Racial Microaggressions on Latinx Women. D'Andrah is a member of Sigma Iota Delta Organization. There, she focuses on philanthropy and fundraising activities. After graduation, D'Andrah plans to obtain a Master's in Forensic Mental Health Counseling and PhD in Clinical Psychology with a Forensic concentration to advocate for at-risk youth throughout New York City. She plans to continue working with individuals involved in the justice system and potentially start her own nonprofit organization focusing on incarceration alternatives for those in the justice system.

Abstract

Previous studies have cited several factors that may influence youth experiences with mental health and substance abuse services – including insurance, lack of services given, racial disparities (Lopez, Nuno 2018). Further, studies focusing on youth of color have found that these youth have significantly lower rates of mental health service utilization and are most at risk for underserved mental health needs. (Rawal et al., 2004). Yet, with an everchanging society, in which factors like technology, social media, campaigns to destigmatize mental illness, and the global COVID-19 pandemic, it is unclear if youth of color still hold similar views about mental health and substance abuse. The current study will use a qualitative design (semi-structured interviews) and recruit a sample of high school to college students between the ages 16-20 years old who are of any minority group: Hispanics, African American, Asian, Pacific Islander, American Indian/Alaskan Native and other non-White

groups. The main findings of this research are to determine youth's perceptions of mental health, to determine what racial disparities impact access to mental health and substance abuse services and to determine the youth's perceptions and thoughts on juvenile youth with mental health and substance abuse.



Analyzing the Link Between Racial Socialization and Academic Success in Black College Students: Examining Race-Based Stress as a Moderator

Katiera Dickinson

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Africana Studies

Mentor: **Veronica Johnson, PhD**, Africana Studies Dept.

Biography

Katiera Dickinson is a junior at the Macaulay Honors College at John Jay College of Criminal Justice, where she is majoring in Forensic Psychology, and minoring in Africana Studies. As a hard-working student, she has earned a spot on the Dean's list since the Fall of her freshman year. Early in her college career, an Interdisciplinary Studies class focusing on stereotypes in the U.S., spurred her interest in exploring social issues, specifically within the Black community. Her research interests include race-based traumatic stress, racial socialization, and Black identity. Her current research project focuses on the relationship between racial socialization and academic success and investigating the role of race-based stress as a moderator. The most interesting process of this research project for Katiera has been immersing herself in previous literature and envisioning how her research would contribute to the knowledge of these issues.

Katiera is also involved with TEDxCUNY, a group aimed to bring TED's mission of "Ideas worth sharing" to the CUNY community. She began as the Head of Community Partnerships in 2019. Katiera eventually rose to become the Organizer and Licensee. In this role, she serves as a liaison between school administration and the group. She has also planned and hosted two successful TEDxCUNYSalons. Her time with TEDxCUNY has taught her the value of giving others the platform to share novel ideas. Katiera also enjoys trying new things, especially by exploring different cuisines, travelling and other activities. On the weekends, Katiera also enjoys watching Netflix, painting, and taking care of her goldfish, Jeremy.

Abstract

Research has identified a specific form of stress experienced by minority groups. This stress, known as Race-Based Stress has shown to be linked with racial identity statuses and psychological functioning. The purpose of this study is to understand the relationship between racial socialization and academic success in Black college students, moderating for symptoms of race-based stress. Data from 150 Black college student were collected using the Comprehensive Racial Socialization Inventory, and the Race-Based Traumatic Stress Symptom Scale. A regression analysis was conducted to examine the moderating effect of race-based stress on the relationship between racial socialization and academic success. The results of this study should indicate how, depending on the presence of race-based stress, the level racial socialization that an individual receives has a significant impact on determining academic success. The findings of this study could be applied to the education system, where often Black students are encouraged to push through challenges they might face, without recognizing the harmful effects it could have on them. Limitations and implications for future research are discussed.



Prison Staff Perceptions

Jia-Yi Mai

Major: Criminal Justice

Mentor: **Keith Taylor, PhD**, Law & Police Science Dept.

Biography

Jia-Yi is a rising senior Criminal Justice major. She plans to apply to graduate programs in Criminal Justice/Criminology in the fall.

Abstract

Researchers have conducted many studies about the environment in prison. However, most of these studies focus on the prisoners and their perceptions of the prison environment and their well-being while incarcerated. Very few studies focus on the perceptions and well-being of the prison staff. The study conducted in this paper is a non-experimental, qualitative survey. This survey study asks the prison staff several questions regarding their perceptions of the prison environment. These perceptions include how they perceive working there has affected their well-being, and, if needed to, what can be done to improve the prison environment and their well-being.



Digital Revolution: How Instagram Influences Body Image Satisfaction in Black College Women

Katherine Marin

Major: English

Mentor: **Crystal Endsley, PhD**, Africana Studies Dept.

Biography

Katherine A. Marin (pronouns: she, her, ella,) is first generation Latinx college student. She is a Washington Heights native and identifies as Dominican-American. Currently she is a Junior studying English with a minor in Art and Creative Writing. She aspires to earn a Doctorate and/or master's degree after John Jay. During her three years at John Jay, she has been a part of the Urban Male Initiative (UMI) and Accelerate Complete Engage (ACE) at John Jay College. In 2021 she worked online in her part-time job as a tour guide to middle schoolers with the program CUNY Explorers.

Abstract

There has been a lot of research on the impact of social media on body satisfaction. However, little of the research examines this impact of Black women. This research project seeks to answer the question, “How do celebrity fashion models' Instagram pages influence Black women college students’ body satisfaction? In order to answer this question, a qualitative study will be conducted which utilizes a small focus group of ten Black college women participants. A questionnaire will be given out to participants to complete, followed by a virtual group interview. This research is important to start the discussion with Black women of their lived experiences around the issue of body satisfaction.



Discipline, Education, and America's Youth: An Exploration of U.S. School Discipline & The Effects on Students

Christian Melendez

Major: Political Science

Minor: Humanities & Justice; Certificate: Dispute Resolution

Mentor: **Nina Rose-Fischer, PhD**, Interdisciplinary Studies Dept.

Biography

Christian Carmelo Melendez is a current Junior at John Jay majoring in Political Science and studying a minor in Humanities & Justice, on top of pursuing their certification in Dispute Resolution. He aspires to apply and be accepted into a dual degree Ph.D./J.D. program within his pursuit of higher education and hopes to one-day practice law within the scope of grassroots community organizing and development. Beginning January of 2021, Christian has been dedicated to both his academic and professional work as a Petitioning Field Director and Canvassing & Outreach Coordinator for Staten Island's 49th City Council District Candidate Ranti Ogunleye, a grassroots organizer and educator who was a teacher and mentor of his since he was 14 years old. Christian continues to be directly engaged to local communities through a myriad of different community organizations and coalitions such as Make the Road NY, Global Kids INC., True 2 Life, etc..., as well as utilizing working relationships created by his experiences within local city council politics with the aspiration of further strengthening the power and relationships held between grassroots community organizations and their ability to create effective and positive change within their communities.

Abstract

The School to Prison Pipeline is a current systemic crisis within the United States that is currently pushing social and racial minority youth out of the U.S. public education system, and into the U.S. juvenile justice system. Critics of current forms of discipline within schools highlight that punitive discipline focuses on punishing students, often adding to the problem that led to disruptive or harmful behavior within schools, nor does it focus on aiding students that are victim to the negative behavior that occurs. This study will investigate the effects of the current educational system, instances of proposed alternatives, and the effects of discipline on youth by collecting data from city educational systems, youth studies, and educational reform reviews. Through the study and review of literature detailing the effects of harsh punitive/zero-tolerance policies within the U.S. education system with a focus on understanding how the ramifications of the pipeline negatively affect America's youth, alongside qualitative data collection of surveys of those who have been within U.S. public high schools I hope to gain a fully encompassed view of my research topic.

Assessing the Differences in Efficacy Between Pharmacological and Non-Pharmacological Treatment Options for Childhood ADHD

Monae NLM

Major: Human Services and Community Justice

Mentor: **Nina Rose-Fischer, PhD**, Interdisciplinary Studies Dept.

Biography

Monae is attending John Jay Honors College, majoring in Human Services and Community Justice. She is also earning certificates in both Dispute Resolution and Addiction Studies. As a McNair Scholar, AHEC Scholar, and former U.M.I. Peer Advocate she has a solid commitment to advocacy. Her parents and grandparents instilled the importance of self-investment and tenacity, so she believes education has the best R.O.I. Monae aspires to pursue a career in public health as an advocate. When she is not advocating for herself or others, she enjoys reading The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The New Yorker, The Economist, and Scientific American. Finally, she is a part of a weekly improv group.

Abstract

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is among the second most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders of childhood. Children with ADHD face challenges in their social interactions, such as rejection by their friends and strained relationships with their parents. There are several treatments used for the management of ADHD in children, including pharmaceutical and non-pharmaceutical treatment modalities. It is unclear which ADHD treatment approach works best in children and adolescents. The purpose of this study is to analyze evidence to determine which treatment option shows greater efficacy. The meta-analysis involved a search of relevant articles from the MEDLINE database, which was accessed using the PubMed search engine, and data extraction using a data extraction sheet. The study only used studies that had full texts because they provided complete information on individual study reporting measurements which were to be used for the meta-analysis. Three randomized control trials were critically appraised and secondary data from the article quantitatively analyzed through forest plot. From the review of the forest plot, it can be noted that the results favor the use of pharmacological treatment methods over non-pharmaceutical treatment methods for ADHD among children and adolescents.



Adult Perceptions of Severity in a Sexual Abuse Case: The Impact of Gender of the Perpetrator and Victim

Yareli Perez

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Elizabeth Jeglic, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Yareli Perez is an undergraduate student, majoring in forensic psychology and minoring in criminology. She is currently a part of the Honors Program, INSPIRE Lab, McNair Program, Psi Chi Honors Society, and now works in the Office for Student Research and Creativity as an Administrative and Research Assistant. In addition, she recently became a student ambassador for the American Psychological Association (APA). Yareli has a deep passion for learning about human behavior, specifically, the reasoning behind criminals' actions. Initially inspired by popular shows such as *Criminal Minds* and *Law and Order*, she decided to explore the field of forensic psychology in more depth by incorporating aspects into her high school curriculum and extra-curricular activities. As part of the McNair and Honors Programs at JJC, she is now conducting research to study the relationship between perception of severity in sexual abuse cases and its connection to the characteristics of the perpetrator and victim involved. She was also a part of Professor Mandery's Listening Research Lab, which studied if people actively listen to others, especially during times of conflict when people have different viewpoints or opinions on a topic. Yareli has additional research experience from her roles as Deputy Lab Manager and Research Assistant at INSPIRE Lab, which focuses on social topics within psychology. She also helps other research assistants prepare for their future within the field of psychology by offering advice on graduate school or career options after graduation. Yareli's goal is to obtain a PhD in Clinical Psychology and become a criminal psychologist to possibly work in a prison setting. With her future career she hopes to gain a better understanding of particularly heinous crimes and participate in some form of activism for victims.

Abstract

Perceptions on sexual abuse cases vary according to the different characteristics of the perpetrator and victim involved. For this reason, this project will examine whether perceptions of severity of crime differ upon the gender of the victim and perpetrator in sexual abuse cases. In order to get a more generalizable sample, the perceptions of adults within the U.S. will be included using their responses to a questionnaire based on a sexual abuse case vignette they read. It is anticipated that cases in which there is a female perpetrator and male victim, the perpetrator will be seen as less responsible/blameworthy for the situation whereas the male victim will be attributed more responsibility/blame. These findings will be discussed as they pertain to the role of both the gender of the perpetrator and victim and see the impact on how people view the degree of severity of sexual abuse cases.



Parental Influence on Juvenile Plea Bargain Decision: The Difference Between Black and White Parents' Advice

Alijah Sepulveda

Major: Forensic Psychology

Mentor: **Emily Haney-Caron, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Alijah Sepulveda is a third-year undergraduate student at John Jay College of Criminal Justice. She is a student in the Macaulay Honors College, as well as a scholar in the Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program. She is currently conducting research exploring differences between Black and White parents' advice concerning plea bargains for their children. The study will ultimately aid defense attorneys when dealing with juvenile clients and their parents. Alijah has been on the Dean's list since her first semester of college. Outside of school, Alijah is the Social Media Coordinator for Macaulay Feminist Society. For this club, she works with other leaders in coordinating events. Additionally, she uses the Instagram page to communicate with members, as well as post weekly informational posts. After graduation, Alijah intends to pursue her doctoral degree in Forensic Psychology.

Abstract

Plea bargains are a common practice in the legal system for both juvenile and adult cases. Plea bargains are agreements between all parties that the defendant will plead guilty, and in exchange, charges are dropped/reduced, or a specific sentence is offered to the judge. The decision to take a plea deal can be influenced by several factors, especially when the defendant is an adolescent. Research has been conducted about the influences on adolescents pending trial, one of the most influential being the role of parents. With these studies in mind, a factor that has yet to be studied is the key differences in parental advice within different demographics. Given the known influence of parental advice on the acceptance of plea bargains, it is important to look at how it differs between White and Black/African American parents. Besides demographics, the trust of the legal system is a key difference between White and Black culture. With this in mind, it is important to look at the differences, and also take into consideration aspects of the legal system that are applicable for certain adolescents. For this study, the differences between parental advice from Black and White parents when their child is offered a plea bargain will be observed. Additionally, the study will focus on the advice provided by parents if the child claims they are innocent, or claims they are guilty. Hopefully by conducting research on this topic, changes can be made with how defense attorneys handle their juvenile clients, as well as their parents.



Colorism: A Qualitative Study on Mental Health Status of LGBTQ+ People of the African Diaspora

Emerson Tejada

Major: Forensic Psychology

Mentor: **Kevin Nadal, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Emerson Tejada is a first-generation graduating senior at John Jay College majoring in Forensic Psychology with a minor in Africana Studies. She earned her Associate degree in Criminal Justice at Bronx Community College, where she was an ASAP recipient. Currently, she is a researcher in Dr. Kevin Nadal's Diversity Research Lab which focuses on racial microaggressions and imposter phenomenon. During her tenure at the lab, she led multiple focus groups, partook in the analysis, and was also able to present the findings from this research at this year's 38th annual winter roundtable at Columbia's Teacher's College in February 2021. She is also a member of the LGBTQ+ Student Leadership Academy 2021 cohort under the City University of New York (CUNY). She aspires to be accepted into a clinical psychology program with a focus on families and the family court system with an overall goal of opening her own practice to aid those within her own community

Abstract

Colorism, the system or culture in which people with lighter skin tones are preferred or privileged over those with darker skin, is controversial and taboo in many communities of color. Within the Black diaspora, colorism has become so prevalent in families and communities, that it has become a reinforcer of white supremacy on a macro level. On the micro-level, previous studies have noted how colorism is a predictor of internalized self-hate, feelings of inadequacy, and imposter syndrome. However, few studies examine how sexual orientation and gender identity influence skin stratification and how colorism could possibly alter the experiences of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, and other non-heterosexual or non-binary (LGBTQ+) people. The purpose of this study is to explore how LGBTQ+ identifying people who are part of the African Diaspora, experience colorism in comparison to their heterosexual counterparts. Further, the study will examine how colorism affects the mental health status of LGBTQ+ people of the African Diaspora.



Identity Changes with CASA Intervention

Ashanti Vanier-Waldron

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Keith Marcus, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Ashanti Vanier-Waldron is currently a senior year at John Jay College. She is majoring in forensic psychology with a minor in criminology. With a Guyanese mother and a Trinidadian father, obtaining a good education was drilled into Ashanti's head from a young age. She grew up in Maryland, but always gravitated to big cities such as New York, where she had more family and experienced more of her Caribbean culture. When the time came to decide where to go for college, Ashanti made no mistake in looking for her dream school in the big city. Psychology has always been a passion for her, and she was thrilled to start her four-year adventure at John Jay. Ashanti knew that she wanted to work with youth, especially youth of color addressing their mental health. While figuring out exactly what she wanted to do, unprecedented times struck during her sophomore year, which drastically changed the world that we once knew. The sudden switch to online learning and limited opportunities left her feeling lost, but she continued to persevere and finish her semester on a strong note. It was during these trying times that she saw a flyer advertising for the Ronald. E. McNair program that sparked her research interest. While taking sociology and psychology classes during the fall semester, Ashanti became heavily interested in youth within the juvenile justice system and the foster care system. She wants to look at how traumatic experiences, mental health disorders, and more contribute to who youth are and how they change as individuals over time. Many people may describe Ashanti as hard working, resilient, and passionate for people and things she cares about. While graduate school is in the near future, Ashanti often battles between clinical, counseling, and psychology and law programs to further advance her studies. With graduation being less than a year away, first-generation future college graduate Ashanti Waldron is excited for her senior year and anticipates that she will carry on John Jay's legacy of being a fierce advocate of justice into the real world.

Abstract

Youth in the foster care system often experience traumatic events such as childhood abuse and neglect and may suffer from mental health disorders. These experiences may have a significant impact on a youth's identity. In this research, I will be looking to see how youth in Court Appointed Special Advocate (CASA) programs establish their identity through language, and if there are any differences before and after the CASA intervention. The data will be extracted from CASA newsletters across the United States, and discourse analysis will be used to analyze the language used to describe identity changes. This study will address the research question on whether or not expressions of identity differ when describing themselves before and after CASA intervention. This study will hopefully produce a typology on various ways that identity can be constructed through language, and to provide a set of discourse markers that can be applied to future research. While it may be easy for language to be

misinterpreted, these findings are expected indicate how language can be used to identify changes in identities, and how beneficial programs such as CASA are to youth across the country.



Sexual Grooming Behaviors of Offenders: Identifying Its Relation to the Victim's Age

Yan Shan Yu

Major: Forensic Psychology

Minor: Criminology

Mentor: **Elizabeth Jeglic, PhD**, Psychology Dept.

Biography

Yan Shan Yu is a rising senior in the Honors Program majoring in Forensic Psychology and minoring in Criminology. Recently, she was accepted into Psi Chi, The International Honor Society in Psychology, and she became an APA ambassador. Yan currently works at the Office for Student Research and Creativity at John Jay College of Criminal Justice as a Research and Administrative Assistant. Aside from being part of the Honors Program, Yan was accepted into the McNair Program where she has started to conduct her own research. Specifically, she plans to delve deep into the crime of sexual grooming and how it impacts victims of different ages. Her interest in this particular topic stems from her realization that this area continues to be a taboo topic in many ways and, therefore, remains underreported. Besides working as a Research and Administrative Assistant, Yan is also the Operations Manager of the INSPIRE lab. The goal of the lab is to examine research questions related to Social Psychology through an interdisciplinary approach. As an Operations Manager, she updates project data collections and, with the leadership team, develops lesson plans for research assistants' professional development. After graduating, Yan plans to pursue her PhD in Clinical Psychology and eventually practice as a licensed psychologist, providing services to and assist those with serious mental illnesses. She also plans to advocate for better treatment regarding the mentally ill.

Abstract

Sexual grooming is the deceptive process by which an offender selects a vulnerable victim and prepares them for sexual abuse to avoid detection. It is estimated that almost half of all cases of child sexual abuse involve sexual grooming. Recently a content validated model of sexual grooming, the Sexual Grooming Model (SGM), has been developed in which 42 grooming behaviors have been identified. However, it is believed that these behaviors may differ by the age of the victim. The present study explores the changing behaviors of the offenders depending upon the age of the child victim. CUNY undergraduate students were asked to complete a self-report survey based SGM. The grooming behaviors of those who endorse a history of child sexual abuse across three developmental age groups are examined. It is expected that findings will show that offenders did use different techniques and behaviors to groom their chosen victim and some grooming behaviors are expected to be more prevalent within a specific age group.

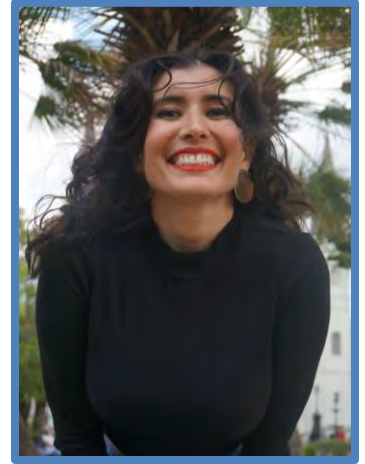
McNair Mentors



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McNair in Graduate School

“You’re eagles! Stretch your wings and fly to the sky.”

~Dr. Ronald E. McNair



The following McNair Scholars have been accepted to the listed graduate schools and programs for the **Fall 2021** semester. We had a *record* number of acceptances into graduate school programs this year! Congrats scholars!

Rachel Rosado graduated with her degree in English. She was accepted into NYU’s Master’s Program in XE: Experimental Humanities & Social Engagement.

Sara Tariq graduated with her degree in Forensic Psychology. She was accepted into NYU’s Master’s Program in Psychology.

McNair Alumni

Brandon Dial (’20) was accepted into St. John’s University’s PhD Program in Clinical Psychology.

Tracy Randall (’11) was accepted into Temple University’s PhD Program in Africana Studies.

Thank you to all of our McNair Mentors!

Congratulations Class of 2021!

McNair Program Staff & Journal Editors



Dr. Gordon-Nembhard became director of the McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program in September 2011. In her first year she held the first McNair mentor's retreat and solidified the mentor-Scholar benchmarks and contract process. She and Dr. Lee have been working to create a comfortable up-to-date computer lab space - allowing scholars to spend longer hours working on their research and socializing with their peers. Dr. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard is a political economist whose research focuses on community economic development, worker ownership and cooperative economics; wealth inequality; Black Political Economy; popular economic literacy; and community-based approaches to justice. She earned her M.A. and Ph.D. in Economics at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst; an M.A.T. in Elementary Curriculum and Teaching at Howard University; and her B.A. in Literature and African American Studies at Yale University.

Dr. Jessica Gordon-Nembhard
Director, McNair Program
Department Chair & Professor,
Africana Studies



Dr. S. Ernest Lee, Jr.
Associate Director, McNair Program
Adjunct Professor Political Science &
Africana Studies

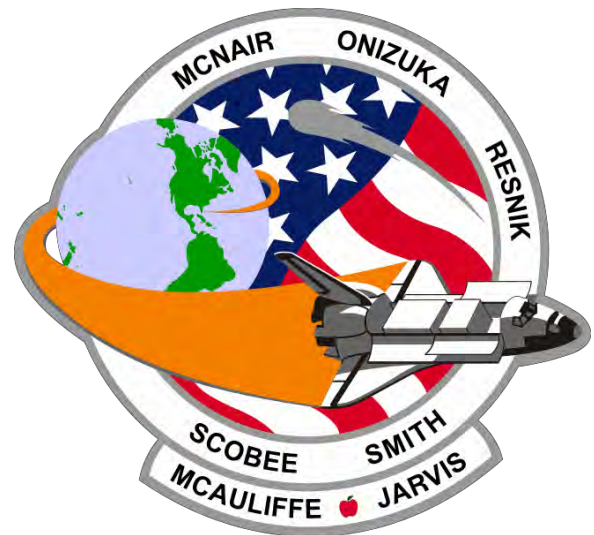
Dr. Lee is responsible for the day to day operations of the Program including teaching the fall Graduate School labs and spring McNair Research Seminar as well as providing academic counseling for McNair Scholars. He also works with the director on grant writing and scholar and mentor recruitment. Dr. Lee wants to ensure that the Program provides a great source of information and support to scholars during the process of their research projects and graduate program applications. In addition to his McNair responsibilities, Dr. Lee also serves as an Adjunct Assistant Professor in both the Political Science and Africana Studies Departments. He earned his B.A. in Government and Law from Lafayette College and his M.A., M.Phil, and PhD from the Graduate Center, CUNY. He also has a Certificate in Africana Studies from the Graduate Center.



Erica Klafehn, B.S.
Graduate Program Assistant

Ms. Klafehn became a part of the McNair staff during the summer of 2018. While at John Jay, Ms. Klafehn majored in Cell and Molecular Biology and double minored in Anthropology and Psychology. She is a Program for Research Initiatives in Science and Math (PRISM) and Ronald E. McNair Program alumna and completed research in identifying the histological morphology of trauma under forensic anthropologist Dr. Angelique Corthals. In addition to assisting with the program's administration, Ms. Klafehn serves as a guide to current and prospective scholars aspiring to obtain a doctorate degree. Ms. Klafehn is continuing her Master's Program in Forensic Science-Toxicology at John Jay with her thesis focusing on the effects of blowfly larval feeding on bone decomposition in sites of trauma, and would like to continue her research in a Ph.D. program in forensic anthropology and entomology.

In Remembrance of 35 Years since the Space Shuttle Challenger's Last Voyage



“Whether or not you reach your goals in life depends entirely on how well you prepare for them and how badly you want them. You’re eagles! Stretch your wings and fly to the sky.”

- Ronald E. McNair



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Lastly, thank you to **Mr. Derek Sokolowski** for program headshots and to **Ms. Erica Klafehn**, Graduate Program Assistant of the McNair Program, for the cover designs and editing of the 2021 McNair Journal.

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