

How to Grab Your Undergraduate Education by the Horns

These ten quick tips will help you make the most of your time as a college student!

- When you have a big project, break it down into small steps and calendar each action item. You can plan this out as soon as you get the class syllabus!
- Timing is everything. Keep a schedule for everything. Remember the UCD bookstore has calendars for sale. And many smart phones have great calendar apps available.
- Prioritize and number your goals. Make sure every day has balance: class time, work time, and you time!
- If at first you don't succeed then go for round two! Perfection is a process!
- Utilize faculty office hours before a crisis strikes, and get to know the TAs' availability.
- Write drafts early enough that your final class project is actually the 3rd or 4th revision. Your professor will be beyond impressed by the extra effort!
- Be the best academic consumer you can be; this is your education!
- Classmates are resources. Share email addresses and assemble study groups.
- We all get sick from time to time. Think ahead of what it will take to catch up. Working ahead means you don't get behind!
- If class seems too hard on the first day, consider speaking with an advisor and replacing it or adding it later in your studies.

McNair Scholars Program

The McNair Scholars Program is housed within Graduate Studies at the University of California Davis. We are located in Student Community Center Suite 2300 and provide year-round staff support and mentorship to our distinguished scholars. Please share the news of this unique program with others in the UCD community. We begin accepting applications in the fall!

Program Benefits:

- Academic Counseling
- Free Tutoring
- GRE preparation seminars
- Assistance in graduate school applications
- One-on-one independent study with a faculty expert in your field

Program Requirements:

- UC Davis GPA of 3.0 or higher
- US Citizen or legal resident status
- Apply at the end of your sophomore year
- Low-income *and* first generation college student, *or* member of a group underrepresented in graduate study (e.g. Chicano/Latino, African-American, or Native American)



Director Siria Martinez
ssmartinez@ucdavis.edu
(530) 754-9777

Program Assistant Rachel Messer
rmesser@ucdavis.edu
(530) 752-7486

Graduate Student Assistants Michael Graziano
mrgraziano@ucdavis.edu

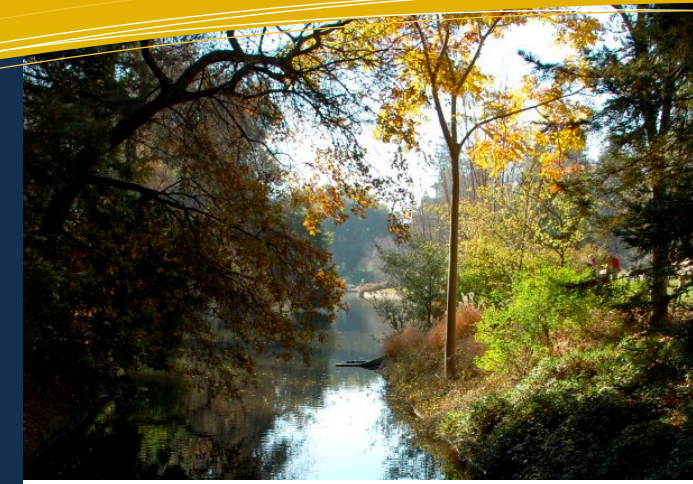
Jean-Yves Merilus
jmerilus@ucdavis.edu

Julie Setele
jasetele@ucdavis.edu



McNair Aggie News

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What Is McNair?

The McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program is a federally-funded program dedicated to increasing the ranks of underrepresented groups in graduate study. The McNair Program provides a select number of promising scholars with mentoring and fellowships to improve their chances of being admitted to PhD programs nationwide.



ON OUR CAMPUS

The McNair Scholars Program is housed within Graduate Studies at the University of California Davis. We are located on the second floor of the new Student Community Center in Suite 2300 with the Undergraduate Research Center. Please share the news of this unique program with others in the UCD community. We begin accepting applications in the spring, and the deadline is June 30!

You Are Not Married to Your Text

Our newest Graduate Student Assistant, Jean-Yves Merilus, gives his advice on writing and revising.

Removing unnecessary parts of my writings was a tough pill for me to swallow during my early years of grad school. After investing so much of my time and energy in putting my Master's thesis proposal together in a topic that I felt confident and passionate about, I was told to change it because it was not doable for a Master's thesis.

In 2008, I got a scholarship to attend Miami University of Ohio (and by the way, I enjoyed every moment of my experience there). Due to the 2008-2009 financial crisis, funding was tight and the university was cutting back on many programs, including Spanish and Political Science (to name a few). Students were told to finish on time or risk losing their funding. This was understandable as financial crises bring with them many uncertainties. Knowing this, I spent countless days meeting with my advisor and preparing so that I could complete the program on time. It was all great until halfway through the program my adviser called me to inform me that my topic was too broad to carry out. It was impossible to complete in two years.

Heartbroken and frustrated, I wondered, why was he telling me this now? Why not earlier? Here I was, halfway to finishing the program, being told to pretty much change my entire topic. I thought of the sleepless nights it would cost me to relearn a whole new set of literature. I thought about my funding if I didn't finish on time. In fact, I thought that my adviser just hated me to the point where he was purposely making my life miserable. All sorts of thoughts came to mind. Deep inside, I knew my adviser did not want failure for me but was actually looking out for my success.

My main problem was my text. I was in love with my text. It was hard for me to see the vagueness and broadness of my topic. When it comes to (*cont'd*)



eliminating sections of my research that did not fit, I had a hard time doing it, thinking of all the hard work I put into it. It was a painful thing to do. I had a hard time understanding that it was quality work, not quantity work that ultimately counts.

In retrospect, I do not regret heeding my adviser's advice even though it was painful. I was able to complete all of my research and work on time. That experience taught me that no matter how much work I put into any topic, I am in no way inseparable from my writing or research. I am not saying you should not defend your work and the arguments you bring forth. Far from it. My point, however, is to be realistic about your work. There are topics that are simply too broad for a senior or Masters' thesis. You must take time and funding into consideration as you plan your research. If you are advised to shorten your topic or narrow your research, don't be depressed or saddened. Your adviser has been through that path that you are going through and is best place to help you do that. Consider it a blessing in disguise and who knows, you may be able to elaborate on your topic as a post grad. Remember, frustration only adds to an already stressful workload. Take advice where it is given and remember that ultimately, it is your adviser who will sign up on your thesis.

Jean-Yves Merilus is a PhD Student in the Geography Graduate Group.



Aaron Alvarado



Rebecca Belloso



Gabriel Bonilla



Jesse Brownbey



Santos Pineda Castillo



Patricia Chavez



Veronica Hernandez



Hector Herrera



Jay Howard



Chris Jenkins



Lily MacIver



Greg Maring



An Nguyen

2013 McNair Junior Scholars



Obdulio Ochoa



Tuong Pham



Scott Pillman



Gladys Preciado



Chad Rainbolt



Deborah Scearce-Miles



Susan Samborsky



John Tran



Raymond Tsao



Tsinat Weldetnesae



Jay Yu



Rachel Zhao