



McNair Program 2014 Alumni Survey Impact Assessment



Name of Assessment Project:	McNair Program 2014 Alumni Survey Impact Assessment
Name(s) of Person(s) Responsible for Assessment Project:	McNair Program Coordinator (Tom Brown)
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Providing Department:	Academic Enrichment Program
Other Units/Departments Involved in Assessment Project:	
Program, Service, or Event Related to Assessment Project:	Annual survey of UCSD McNair Program alumni. This is done annually as a requirement of the funding agency (US Dept. of Education) and in preparation for the completion of our Annual Performance Report to the funding agency.
Assessment Project Description:	<p>The annual survey was sent to all past UCSD McNair Program participants who completed the Program and who we are still tracking.</p> <p>In addition to the survey questions related to the Annual Performance Report, we added 3 questions to assess the impact of the McNair Program on students' post-graduation choices, particularly regarding whether or not to enroll in graduate studies, whether or not to enroll in a PhD program, and whether or not the program helped students to define and achieve their career goals so far.</p> <p>We also added 4 questions aimed at assessing the students' interest in remaining (or becoming) socially connected with other past participants and in becoming connected with current McNair Program participants.</p>
Unit/Program Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes:	<p>Program Goals Related to this Assessment Project:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1.) Program alumni enrollment in graduate degree programs, especially PhD programs 2.) Providing experiential learning that helps students to define and achieve career goals
Relationship to Student Affairs Learning Outcomes:	Advance a Plan for Personal, Academic, and Professional Success, Lead in a Diverse Global Society
Assessment Project Start:	3/4/2014
Assessment Project End:	6/9/2014
Population/Sample:	291 people who had completed the McNair Program were invited to participate in the study. This population consisted of all Program participants we are tracking for the Annual Performance Report and for whom we have current email addresses. Of the 291 who were invited, 133 (45.7%) participated by submitting the survey.

(Note that in the file provided below, 4 of the survey responses were test responses submitted by the creators of the survey; this assessment is therefore based on 133 of the 137 submitted survey responses.)

Type of Assessment: Satisfaction study, Other: Please enter text below
Other Assessment Type(s): Impact Study; Study of Interest in Further Participation
Assessment Methods: Surveys
Other Assessment Method(s):
Data Collection Tools: Assessment Tools:
1.) Mach Form Survey (sent to prospective participants via email)
2.) Excel file of survey responses (attached here)

-  [2014 McNair Alumni Survey Data](#)
-  [McNair Survey Data for Assessment](#)

Data Analysis Methods: 1.) Compile survey results;
2.) compare number of potential participants contacted to number of survey responses received;
3.) use optional responses (explanations of responses to multiple-choice survey questions) as qualitative data

Presentation of Findings: The following survey questions were used in the assessment:
(numbers following each possible response indicate number of participants selecting that response and the percentage of total responses that this number represents)

1.) Do you think that your participation in the McNair Program increased the likelihood that you would pursue a graduate degree (of any kind) following graduation from UC San Diego? *

- (a) Certainly, yes, my participation made it more likely that I would apply to and enroll in a graduate degree program. (n = 99; 74%)
- (b) It probably did increase the likelihood that I would enroll in a graduate degree program, but I am not sure. (n = 26; 20%)
- (c) No, it doesn't seem to have made a difference. I was going to apply for graduate school – or I was not going to apply – regardless of my participation in the McNair Program. (n = 8; 6%)
- (d) No, my participation actually decreased the likelihood that I would apply to a graduate degree program. (n = 0)

2.) Do you think that your participation in the McNair Program increased the likelihood that you would pursue a PhD following graduation from UC San Diego? *

- (a) Certainly, yes, my participation made it more likely that I would apply to and enroll in a PhD program. (n = 70; 53%)
- (b) It probably did increase the likelihood that I would enroll in a PhD program, but I am not sure. (n = 41; 31%%)
- (c) No, it doesn't seem to have made a difference. I was going to enroll in a PhD program – or I was not going to enroll – regardless of my participation in the McNair Program (n = 15; 11%)
- (d) No, my participation actually decreased the likelihood that I would apply for and enroll in a PhD program (n = 3; 2%)

(Optional): To help us understand your response, please comment here:
RESULTS: 43 participants entered something in the text box here (% of all participants) including:
25 who chose response "a" to Question #2; among the most informative of these entries are the following:

"As a student female student of color, who is a first generation college

student-- McNair allowed me to understand how to go about pursuing higher education. I was not well informed prior to McNair about what is required of a good PhD candidate, but because I participated in the program I was able to prepare myself and understand if a PhD was the right path for me."

"McNair made it possible for me to get into a graduate program at University and Chicago for my MA and UC Davis for my PhD. My GRE scores were low, and it was the excellent letters of rec that I got from faculty I worked with via McNair that helped me get into grad school. McNair also provided me with waivers and emotional support. I am indebted to McNair."

"Having the opportunity to conduct research through the McNair program and realizing that it is something that I enjoy helped solidify my decision to apply for graduate. The various panels on the graduate school application process and life as a graduate students immensely prepared me for the application process and helped me feel confident. The GRE preparation class that McNair paid for was invaluable for my grad school application process (I received very good fellowship offers because I had one of the higher GRE scores compared to other applicants in my discipline). The application fee waivers allowed me to apply to a broader range of schools (that I wouldn't have been able to afford on my own)."

11 who chose response "b" to Q #2; A sampling follows:

"I would have earned a Master's no matter what, but I do plan to go back to school eventually to earn a PhD in Literature once I have retired from working as a teacher."

"McNair was a very valuable program that helped me realize that I was not ready for the rigors of a PhD program. It definitely made me want to pursue a graduate degree but due to personal concerns was unable to pursue one right out of UCSD."

5 who chose response "c" to Q #2; Three responses were as follows:

The McNair program certainly helped to prepare me by facilitating the space for me to do independent research with a faculty mentor to craft a superior writing sample for my applications. I planned to apply regardless, but I may not have been so successful with my applications without the experience".

"When I did the program [2004], I did not feel there was much support. I feel that as an undergraduate I did not receive the necessary support when it came to actually applying to programs. I was completely self guided."

"I was already transitioning from my previous career aspiration to be a neuroscience researcher to pursuing a medical degree right before my participation in the program. The program itself was a great experience, but did not have bearing on my career trajectory."

and 2 who chose response "d" to Q#2; The responses were:

"I needed to get some practical experience first before thinking of pursuing a PhD. I think the McNair program was awesome, but it would also have been nice if the program complemented itself with some industry or professional experience to give the student a better sense of what was out there, and to better help him or her predetermine direction in life."

"I gained a much better understanding of the commitment and other requirements to do a Ph.D. and the McNair Program helped me realize a path that better fits my needs and interests."

3.) In your estimation, how important have your experiences in the UCSD McNair Program been for helping you to define and achieve your goals so far? *

(a) Vitally important: I probably would not be where I am today if it weren't for the McNair Program

(n = 68; 52%)

(b) Important: the McNair Program helped me figure out what I wanted to do after graduation and has helped me to achieve my goals so far (n = 55; 42%)

(c) I'm not sure whether or not the McNair Program has made a difference in my life

since graduation from UCSD (n = 9; 7%)

(d) Not important: the McNair Program has made little or no difference in my life so far (n = 0)

(e) Detrimental: my experiences in the McNair Program have had a harmful impact on my life or have made it more difficult to achieve my goals since graduating from UCSD (n = 0)

(Optional): To help us understand your response, please comment here:

RESULTS: 25 of the 122 respondents (20%) to Question 3 submitted something here. A sample follows:

"I knew what I wanted to do after graduation, before I participated in the McNair Program. GRE prep provided by the McNair Program was helpful. But my career of choice is not in research or academia."

"I think it provided me with the experience and connections to help me get into graduate school."

"McNair guides me to understand the steps I needed to take to reach my goal. No one in my family had achieved it before, so I was lost in the process before McNair."

"It was an incredibly valuable program that helped me realize that I needed to change direction of my studies. I am currently now pursuing an MA degree in a different field and McNair was definitely an important part in helping me realize that a PhD in Theatre was not something that was practical for me at the time."

"My adviser for the McNair program was instrumental in supporting me in applying to graduate school. I would not have done that without his support."

"McNair made a huge difference in my life, the fee waivers that McNair provided gave me the confidence I needed to apply to a school like Stanford, I felt like I had nothing to lose and that's why I applied and I wouldn't be here today if it wasn't for the support and guidance I received while I was a student."

"The hands-on research experiences that I received from the McNair Program helped me to find my passion in Marriage and Family therapy, and gave me some of the qualifications/experiences necessary to apply and get into the MMFT program at USC."

"My participation in the McNair Program was a wonderful learning experience that aided me in research skills, time-management, and confidence in my research abilities. It certainly helped me to have the GRE instruction and pressure to do well on the exam, and I made everlasting connections in the program that have altered my life's course in fantastic and immeasurable ways."

4.) (Optional) We are considering connecting recent McNair Program participants – those who have not yet graduated from UCSD or who have graduated within the past few years, and who are still in the San Diego area – connect with our current McNair Scholars by serving as peer mentors. Are you interested in possibly connecting with current UCSD McNair Scholars in the coming academic year?

(a) Yes, I'm interested – please keep me informed of any developments (n = 59)

(b) No, thank you (n = 6)

(c) This doesn't apply to me; I graduated from UCSD more than 5 years ago and/or I am living outside the San Diego area (n = 51)

5.) We are considering holding a reunion event for UCSD McNair Program alumni at UCSD during the 2014 – 2015 academic year. Would you be interested in attending – and perhaps participating by serving as a panelist, speaker, or event volunteer? (check all that apply) *

(a) Yes, I'm interested in attending such an event. (n = 83)

(b) Yes, I'm interested in participating as a panelist, speaker, or event volunteer (n = 34)

(c) No, thank you (n = 32)

6.) Which of the following social networking sites do you currently use? (check all that apply) *

Facebook Twitter LinkedIn Pinterest Google Plus

+ tumblr Instagram None (n =14) Other

7.) If a UCSD McNair Program Alumni page were created on Facebook, would you want to stay connected with other UCSD McNair alumni by following this page? *
(a) Yes (n = 90) (b) No (c) I'm unsure

8.) Would you be interested in helping to create and/or moderate a UCSD McNair Program Alumni page on Facebook? Multiple Choice *
(a) Yes, I'd like to help create and moderate (n = 18)
(b) Yes, I'd like to help create the site (n =)
(c) Yes, I'd like to moderate the site (n = 10)
(d) No

Progress: 100%

**Link Assessment
Project in Campus
Labs Baseline :**

Name	Source
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No items to display.

**Summary of
Findings:**

Two survey questions were designed to help us determine the impact of the McNair Program on students' post-graduate decisions on whether or not to enroll in graduate school and whether or not to enroll in a PhD program, and a third question was aimed at determining the overall impact of the McNair Program on students' lives. The overwhelming majority of respondents indicated that the McNair Program either certainly or likely made it more likely increased the chance that they would enroll in graduate school and in a PhD program, and the majority indicated a certainty that the Program improved their likelihood of enrolling in a PhD program. These results show that for most participants the Program is making a positive difference towards one of the top programmatic goals. In response to Question #3, over 90% of study participants indicated that their experiences in the McNair Program were important in helping them define and achieve their career goals, and over half indicated that the Program was vitally important in that regard. 52% of respondents said "I probably would not be where I am today if it weren't for the McNair Program."

These results are highly gratifying, but hardly surprising. We would have guessed that most students perceive the Program as having made a significant difference for them. In this sense the results don't teach us much. However, in the optional, open-ended text-box explanations we find some points of instruction. These responses tell us that particular program elements are making a difference. Repeated themes suggest that the research and mentorship experience helped students decide what they wanted to do after graduation; that the program enhanced their confidence and encouraged them to pursue their goals; that the emotional support provided by their experiences was helpful; that the Program helped them feel prepared to apply to graduate school and improved their chances of admission; and that the graduate school application fee waivers allowed them to apply to programs to which they might otherwise have not applied. On the other hand, the responses also indicate that we could be doing more to help students during the graduate school application process.

We also included 4 survey questions asking participants about their interest in being socially involved with, and possibly helping with, the McNair Program in the future. Happily, the majority of respondents indicated an interest in serving as peer mentors to current McNair Scholars, and in participating in a McNair Program reunion should one be held in the near future. Many participants also stated an interest in creating and in moderating a UCSD McNair Program Facebook page. These results suggest a strong possibility of enhancing the social connectedness of our alumni. They also show the possibility of having our alumni involved directly in Program activities that have the potential to further enhance the

students' sense of social and emotional support.

Overall, the survey results indicate that the McNair Program alumni tend to see their experiences as valuable and helpful, and that the students feel grateful for their experiences in the Program, such that they want to stay connected with other alumni and to give something back by helping others to have rewarding experiences in the McNair Program.

Impact of Assessment: We are planning no new initiatives on the basis of the assessment results, in large part because we have only recently seen the survey results.

However, one way we will use the results is to keep people connected. We also collected contact information from the respondents and will use that information to keep our alumni informed and involved.

Future assessments will be informed by the results and the weaknesses of this assessment. The current assessment serves as a pilot study of sorts. It confirms what we expected in regards to the Program having an impact. However, because the assessment is based on retrospective questioning, and because those participating in the study are those most likely to feel good about the McNair Program, the results are of limited use. For future assessments we would like to have each student in the Program complete surveys at various points: once they are admitted but before the Program starts; once at the end of the academic year; and once at the conclusion of the Summer Research Program. In this way we can better assess the entirety of the McNair cohort regarding their knowledge about graduate school options and of the graduate school application process; their thoughts on post-graduation plans; and their preparedness for applying to graduate programs. These multiple assessments would allow us to see more clearly the impact the McNair Program is having.

**Lessons Learned:
Supplemental
Information:**

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