The symposium is named in honor and memory of Dr. Jesus Tafoya, Associate Professor of Spanish, who passed away October 6, 2008. Dr. Tafoya devotedly served as a McNair mentor from the beginning of the McNair Scholars Program at the university. Dr. Tafoya, who was from Juarez and El Paso, received his Ph.D. from the University of New Mexico. His poetry and his research fully manifested his love of the Spanish language, the Southwest Borderlands, Mexico, his family, and his students.

13th Annual McNair Tafoya Symposium
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We would appreciate if you would take the time to fill out Poster and Presentation Questionnaires for the scholars. This feedback will help them improve their presentation skills for future endeavors. Thank you again for your time!

Fillable PDF’s have been sent with the invitation. You can email, mail, or place them in the Dropbox link below by September 11, 2020.

https://www.dropbox.com/request/S5AzeBHnUeSK6cr1Sccw
Thank You, McNair Mentors.
Greetings.

On behalf of the McNair Scholars Program staff, the McNair Scholars, and Sul Ross State University as a whole, thank you for your Mentorship during the 2019-2020 service cycle. For many of our best and brightest, this McNair mentoring opportunity may be the only occasion for our students to properly model on the execution of professional business within their chosen field. I know that this year has been marked by unprecedented, and at times unreasonable, challenges. You have met those challenges with ingenuity, enthusiasm, and greatness.

I would like to emphasize the immeasurable value your lent expertise has had for these exceptional students. I would like you to borrow our excitement as we see and hear our students discuss possibilities for their own future. Thank you again for your time, patience, and prowess.

The true courage of space flight is not sitting aboard 6 million pounds of fire and thunder as one rockets away from this planet. True courage comes in enduring, persevering... the preparation and believing in oneself. – R. E. McNair
Tips for Video Conference Meeting Attendees

• **Mute your microphone**
  - To help keep background noise to a minimum, make sure you mute your microphone when you are not speaking.

• **Get familiar with the service layout**
  - Although most modern conferencing services have the same features and even similar usage of symbols and handling, make a point to find these controls prior to the session.

• **Be mindful of background noise**
  - When your microphone is not muted, avoid activities that could create additional noise, such as shuffling papers.

• **Position your camera properly**
  - If you choose to use a web camera, be sure it is in a stable position and focused at eye level, if possible. Doing so helps create a more direct sense of engagement with other participants.

• **Limit distractions**
  - You can make it easier to focus on the conference by turning off notifications, closing or minimizing running apps, and muting your device.

• **Avoid multi-tasking**
  - You’ll retain the discussion better (and be a better participant) if you refrain from replying to call, emails, or text messages during the meeting and wait to work on that PowerPoint presentation until after the meeting ends.

• **Prepare materials in advance**
  - If you will be sharing content during the meeting, make sure you have the files and/or links ready to go before the meeting begins.

• **Sign in early**
  - If it is convenient from your actual position of participation, and if the host has enabled the capability, be sure to join the service. Even in cases where real-time input performance cannot be assessed, both the health and several conditions of the conference can be evaluated.

• **Keep your login information handy**
  - It is not unusual (especially in far west Texas) to have interruptions of network and service: Please keep your relevant links, meeting IDs, and service information handy

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**Zoom Session A:**

**Zoom Session B:**
ABOUT RONALD E. MCNAIR

Ronald Erwin McNair, Ph.D., 1950 – 1986

Ronald E. McNair was born in Lake City, South Carolina, on October 21, 1950. He grew up in the segregated south and did not attend an integrated class until he went to the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he spent his junior year participating in an exchange program from North Carolina A & T University. In 1971, he graduated magna cum laude with a Bachelor of Science degree in physics from North Carolina. He entered the doctoral program at MIT, and in 1976, he earned his Ph.D. in laser physics with a dissertation titled “Energy absorption and vibrational heating in molecules following intense laser excitation.”

McNair became a recognized expert in laser physics while working as a staff physicist for the Hughes Research Laboratory. He was selected by NASA for the space shuttle program in 1978, flew on a space shuttle Challenger mission in 1984, and was a mission specialist aboard Challenger in 1986.

Besides his academic achievements, McNair received three honorary doctoral degrees and many fellowships and commendations. These distinctions include Presidential Scholars, 1967-71; Ford Foundation Fellow, 1971-74; National Fellowship Fund Fellow, 1974-75; Omega Psi Phi Scholar of the Year, 1975; Distinguished National Scientist; National Society of Black Professional Engineers, 1979; and the Friend of Freedom Award, 1981, as well as many others. A science building at MIT is named in his honor. McNair held a fifth-degree black belt in karate and was an accomplished jazz saxophonist. He was married and had a son and a daughter.

After his death in the Challenger space shuttle accident in January 1986, members of Congress provided funding for the Ronald E. McNair Post-baccalaureate Achievement Program to encourage low-income and first-generation college students who are underrepresented in their fields to expand their educational opportunities and pursue graduate studies. This program is dedicated to the high standards of achievement inspired by Dr. McNair’s life.
Room A

**Academic Dishonesty in Higher Education**

Scholar: Valerie Baca  
Mentor: Angela Brown  
Department: Chair & Professor of Mathematics

Academic dishonesty is an ongoing issue that educators face. Due to the evolution of society and technology, new methods to cheat are continuously being discovered. To avoid any type of dishonesty in Higher Education, multiple Universities place an Academic Dishonesty Procedure. Looking only in Texas, there are multiple Universities that have descriptive procedures where others are straightforward. With these procedures in place, students are still tempted to cheat on their coursework. This paper explores the vantage from which students view cheating and leads them to believe they must resort to these actions. There are more than one reason why students believe they need to cheat and in order to solve the issue, there needs to be an understanding. This research will also be taking into consideration how students are handling their shift to online courses due to the current pandemic and the focus on a certain subject, mathematics, and why we believe students cheat in mathematics courses. With the data collected from a survey, there will be an examination of various universities and how well students are aware of the current academic dishonesty procedures in place, have an understanding on why students cheat, and to figure out what will work properly to prevent students from cheating in today’s world.

Room A

**Aspects of Frida Kahlo’s artwork that led to her artistic success in the 20th century and the relevancy of her paintings in both Mexico and worldwide in the 21st century.**

Scholar: Yasmine Barron  
Mentor: Carol Fairlie, Professor of Art  
Department: Fine Arts & Communication

The purpose of the research is to illustrate how a Mexican Woman Artist became so influential. How the significance of her artwork continues to impact and inspire both Artists and women in the 21st century. Since the 1920’s Mexican Society continues to grapple with the same political, economic and social issues defined by Kahlo’s work. The main explanations for the success of Kahlo’s work are the surrealist movement, the effects of the Mexican Revolution 1910-1924 during and after as well as the symbolic relationship that people find to Frida Kahlo’s self-portraits. Studies have found that people find personal relationships and metaphors and symbolism to contemporary situations through paintings. As opposed to an artist’s success in the art world by luck, Frida Kahlo found herself interacting with artistic figures that were well known and established in the 20th century through the surrealist movement. Kahlo was painting imagery, and held political ideas that seemed to be ahead of her time period. The themes and imagery found in Kahlo’s work, especially as it relates to a woman’s plight in life, are very relevant in today’s world.
Room A

“Our Voice Will be Heard”

Scholar: Sedia Woods
Bret Scott, Associate Professor of Communication
Department: Fine Arts and Communication

For generations, oppressed people have been trying to find a voice, a way to reach out. Through many outlets, minorities and those who have historically experienced oppression, have been able to reach a large audience when fighting for justice. Still, it would seem they have no voice and the world doesn’t seem to be listening. Female African American playwrights have found a creative outlet for their message. After reading 25 scripts, poems, and biographies and comparing the lives of 10 African American, female playwrights, I realized all these women were fighting for social justice in their own unique way: through art and entertainment.

The goal of a theatrical performance should be to educate and/or entertain the audience. After evaluating the works of these female African American playwrights and searching for a common theme or words among their works, I found each script sought to educate people. Through these performances one could learn about, and have a better understanding of, social injustice, women’s rights, systematic racism, hate crimes, and poverty. This was their way of fighting for justice. This was their opportunity to be louder with their words by inserting them into entertainment. These women share a common theme, they were all African American and female, historically oppressed people. Through these plays, they made their voices heard and made it known they were no longer going to be “invisible women”.

Room A

‘I am, I am, I am.’: A Study of the American “Confessional” Poets

Scholar: Gabriela Olivas
Mentor: Nelson Sager, Professor Emeritus
Department: Languages and Literature department

The Confessional poetry movement was a revelation in American poetry in the late 1960s. The subject matter incorporated into this type of poetry had never been so blatantly open about the personal lives, everyday experiences, and struggles of an American poet. The movement is primarily associated with the poets Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, W.D. Snodgrass, and Anne Sexton. The relationship between these four poets begins with Lowell—a professor and mentor to the other three poets, in which he not only taught Plath, Sexton, and Snodgrass; but also learned from his students. In this study I will discuss the first Confessional poets and how they influenced one another; consider characteristics such as subject matter, techniques, psychological elements, and the poetic format of a few key poems by each poet in order to demonstrate which elements remain consistent throughout the poetry; and determine whether or not the poets remained in the “Confessional” mode until their final poems.

Keywords: Confessional poetry, American literature, Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, W.D. Snodgrass, Anne Sexton
"The Hidden History of Racism in El Paso, Texas"

Nicolas Moreno  
Mentor: Savannah Williamson, assistant Professor of History  
Department: Behavioral and Social Sciences.

My research for the McNair Scholarship program centers on the History of the Chicano Movement in El Paso. I examine the Movement’s impact on fighting the social racism that was prominent during the years of 1965 to 1975, the continuation of that same racism in 2019 at the presidential rally of President Donald Trump and the mass shooting that took place on August 3rd, 2019. I uncovered a hidden history of racism present in El Paso with the help of Doctor Yolanda Lleyva Chavez, a professor at the University of El Paso, and of my Grandparents, who told me about the racism that they faced during those years. Once determining the factors of how the Chicano Movement impacted El Paso in a political and social change such as the peaceful protests that were taking place during the movement and the firsthand accounts of combating against the racism present in El Paso. I had moved on to the 2010’s more specifically in 2019 I examine President Trump’s controversial rally in El Paso and draw connections between his rhetoric in and around El Paso and his rhetoric about immigrants (and people of color). By placing the El Paso Walmart Shooting that took place on August 3, 2019 within the context of anti-Latinx/anti-Mexican/anti-immigrant history, I argue that racism is still present in El Paso, despite a lack of reporting on racial and ethnic statistics in El Paso. This research contributes to the field of History by highlighting racial tensions within a racially homogenous population, the struggles of Hispanic individuals and communities in Texas, and how the Chicano Movement that started in 1965 is still being fought today.

Altering equine body composition through water treadmill exercise

Scholar: Maria Jose Cervantes  
Mentor: Persephone McCrae, Assistant Professor of Equine Physiology  
Department: Animal Sciences

Despite the increasing popularity of equine water treadmills (WTs) for conditioning and rehabilitation of horses, scientific investigations into the clinical applications are still lacking. The volume of the locomotor muscles exerts a profound influence on performance by impacting the power generated by muscle at varying velocities of shortening. Despite the link between muscle mass and performance, the effects of WT exercise on body composition is presently unknown. Therefore, the objectives of this study are to assess the effects of WT exercise on 1) body weight, torso volume and hindquarter volume, 2) body composition, 3) subcutaneous tailhead fat mass. Materials and Methods: 15 Western performance quarter horses will be exercised for 21 days on a WT in deep water at a walk (1.45 m/s) for 20 min per session. Horses will be examined on days 0 and 22 based on four tests: 1) body weight and body condition scoring, 2) ultrasound assessment of tail head fat thickness, 3) bioimpedance spectroscopy to determine fat and fat-free mass, and 4) 3-dimensional photonic scanning to quantify body volume. Expected results: We expect that following WT training, torso and hindquarter volume will increase, while ultrasound fat depth will decrease. Conclusion: The benefits of exercise in water, such as minimized loading and increased resistance, have resulted in increased use of
equine WTs in the conditioning and rehabilitation of sport horses. The results of this study will be used to further inform the production of equine water treadmill guidelines.

**Room A**

**PSIV-29 - The effects of Saccharomyces cerevisiae fermentation product on the performance of creep fed Boer cross kids in regards to average daily gain and weaning weights on alfalfa and grain supplementation.**

Scholar: Makayla Yantis  
Mentor: Jamie Boyd, Associate Professor Animal Science  
Department: Animal Science

The objective of this study was to determine the effects of a chelated mineral supplement containing Ascophyllum nodosum seaweed extract in lactating multiparous Katahdin ewes on energy levels determined by blood metabolites and lamb finishing weights. The study was conducted Spring 2020 at the Sul Ross State University Feedlot. The study lasted eight weeks. Animals were divided into two groups based on birth weights and twinning with 23 ewes and 39 lambs total. The control group received a non-chelated mineral supplement without Ascophyllum nodosum seaweed extract and treatment animals received a chelated mineral supplement containing Ascophyllum nodosum seaweed extract. Both groups were offered ad libitum access to Bermuda hay and water throughout the study. Ewes were supplemented with a 14% CP sheep pellet that contained no mineral, vitamin, or probiotics. Lambs had access to creep fed alfalfa pellets 2x daily throughout the study. All animals had ad libitum access to salt blocks throughout the study period. Weights on ewes and lambs were measure weekly throughout the study using an electronic scale. Blood samples were collected from the ewes via jugular puncture - prepartum, at lambing, and weeks 2, 4, 6, 8 postpartum and analyzed for BHB, NEFA, and Glucose serum levels. Data was analyzed using Proc Mixed procedures of SAS. No significant difference was seen in blood glucose or BHB levels between treatment groups. However a statistical tendency, defined as P<0.10, was seen in blood NEFA levels at P=0.06 with values of 0.92 (ctrl) and 0.78 (trt) mEq/L. This seems to indicate that there may be an improvement in energy balance in relation to serum NEFA levels with the chelated mineral and seaweed extract product. No significant differences were observed for ewe ADG (P=0.76) or overall lamb weaning weights (P=0.19). However, singleton versus twin weaning weights per treatment were significant (P=0.04). Singleton lambs in the trt group showed an average increase of 1.0 ± 0.36 kg in comparison to singleton lambs in the control group. Overall, the addition of a chelated mineral supplement containing Ascophyllum nodosum seaweed extract shows an improvement in singleton weaning weights and a tendency to reduce serum NEFA levels in ewes.

**Room B**

**Geology and Paleontology of the “Smallpox Well” Region, Terlingua Ranch, Texas**

Scholar: Brandon Jackel  
Mentor: Thomas Shiller, Associate Professor  
Department: Biology, Geology, and Physical Sciences

In 1939, the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH) sent a team of paleontologists to what is now Terlingua Ranch in south Brewster County, Texas. The group collected a number of
vertebrate fossil, east of Terlingua Ranch Lodge near “Smallpox Well”. The fossils were collected from the Aguja Formation, one of the two dinosaur fossil-bearing formations in west Texas. This formation is exposed in the southern Big Bend region; including adjacent northern Mexico. The Aguja Formation is comprised of paralic sandstone, mudstone, coal, and river deposits. During Aguja time, the Big Bend region was a lush, flat coastal plain inhabited by large vertebrates (turtles, crocodilians, and dinosaurs). Vertebrate material known from the “Smallpox Well” study area includes a Deinosuchus tooth (formerly referred to as Phobosuchus), fragments from a small horned dinosaur, and bones from a duck-billed dinosaur. This material was likely recovered from the upper part of the Aguja Formation (upper shale member), in river and floodplain deposits. It is the goal of this study to construct a detailed map and stratigraphic section of the “Smallpox Well” region and document the locations and stratigraphic positions of vertebrate fossil bones.

**Room B**

**Physiological Effect of Anterior Cruciate Ligament Injuries**

Chad Cross  
Billy Jack Ray, Assistant Professor  
Department: Kinesiology & Human Performance

Anterior Cruciate ligament injuries occur all too often in the athletic realm. Each year, an estimated 150,000 to 200,000 ACL injuries to athletes are reported by doctors. When these ACL injuries occur the athletes must have surgery, and when surgery is required the athletes must then deal with the physiological effects of rehabilitation and getting back to the playing field/court. In this research, the physiological effects of post-ACL surgery for athletes will be examined.

**Room B**

**VO2 Max Levels in Athletic and Non-Athletic Individuals**

Scholar: Jacquelin Garibay  
Mentor: Billy Ray Jack, Assistant Professor  
Department: Kinesiology & Human Performance

With the understanding of VO2 max in athletic and non-athletic individuals the researchers can determine whether or not high levels of physical performance can determine the efficiency of an individual’s lungs. Once the outcome is determined the researchers will be able to see if a sedentary lifestyle harms the lungs ability to function at full capacity or not. This will be proven by dividing the individuals into four groups; separated by weight, gender, and lifestyle (Anjali n, et al 2014). This separation will help better understand if the different variables influence the outcome of VO2 max. The study will help to predict an individual’s VO2 max by just looking at the individual’s variables of weight, gender and lifestyle. With a healthy VO2 max level the researchers can determine the health status as well as the effects of a non-sedentary lifestyle of an individual through thoroughly investigating whether or not correlation equals causation.
**Room B**

**College athletes and Non-Disclosure of Head Injuries: What are the philological, psychological and psychosocial factors?**

Kaylee Martinez  
Bibiana Gutierrez, Assistant Professor Psychology  
Department: Psychology, Behavioral & social Sciences

In collegiate athletics, student athletes dedicate an immense part of their time to playing their sport. However, during their pre-season and season, athletes are at risk for enduring injury, especially head injuries. Many athletes who suffer from head injuries do not disclose to trainers, coaches or parents to avoid sitting out for a certain amount of time to recover. Research reports there a limited number of studies done on the non-disclosure of head injuries from collegiate athletes. This study aims to investigate how many collegiate athletes suffer from head injuries and why they choose to not disclose their head injuries. In particular, my investigation will identify the physiological, psychological and psychosocial factors that occur post hit to the head and the symptoms that linger afterward.

**Room B**

**The Reproductive Investment of Native Versus Invasive Cane Toads (Rhinella mariana)**

Scholar: Isabella Garcia  
Mentor: Crystal Graham Asst. Professor of Biology  
Department: Biology, Geology, and Physical Sciences

Invasive species have profound impacts in four main areas: competition, hybridization, predation, and the spread of parasites and diseases. This research investigated the life history of native versus invasive cane toads (Rhinella marina, formerly Bufo marinus), to determine whether invasive populations invest more in reproduction so that they can effectively spread and colonize faster. Comparisons between native versus invasive clutch sizes and egg sizes were conducted to investigate whether invasive cane toads alter their resource allocations to invest in more significant numbers of smaller eggs, allowing the species to colonize and spread more rapidly. Results showed significantly higher numbers of eggs in invasive (Australia, Bermuda, and Hawaii) versus native (Guyana and French Guiana) female cane toads; however, there was no difference in egg size between populations. Findings from this research showed varied outcomes from the hypothesis, as results correlated to show significantly higher numbers of eggs in invasive ranges. However, there was a significant finding that differed from what was proposed in comparison in egg size between populations, suggesting that there is less focus on egg size than egg number in exchange for increased fitness in stressful conditions.
**Room B**

**The Study of Phenotypic Adaptations that Promote Invasion Success in Cane Toads (Rhinella marina)**

Scholar: Sydney Turner  
Mentor: Crystal Graham Asst. Professor of Biology  
Department: Biology, Geology, and Physical Sciences

Invasive species present many phenotypic changes reflecting selection pressures operating on them during the process of invasion. One very well know model invader is the cane toad and the morphological changes seen in invading populations. Changes in the hind limbs specifically are studied to account for their ever-increasing rate of range expansion in Australia. Here, we study the morphological differences in the hind limbs of toadlets bred under standard conditions in the laboratory but sourced from replicate native and invasive populations. Parent toads were collected from the invasive populations (Bermuda, Hawaii, Australia) and two native populations (French Guiana and Guyana). Toads were bred in the lab to produce 8 clutches of invasive tadpoles and 5 clutches of native tadpoles. Tadpoles were then reared into metamorphs and preserved for measurements. 160 invasive and 88 native toadlets were measured; specifically the body length, femur, tibia-fibula, tarsus, and 4th metatarsus to investigate limb length relative to body size. Results showed that invasive toadlets had significantly longer femurs than the native toadlets. No significant differences were found between populations in any other aspects of hind limb morphology (tibia-fibula, tarsus, and metatarsus).

**Room B**

**Investigating mediating factors that support grit for highly successful introverted student athletes**

Scholar: Eduardo Rodriguez  
Mentor: Alicia Trotman, Assistant Professor of Psychology  
Department: Arts and Sciences

Grit has been researched as a psychological skill/attitude that connects more with sports achievement than personality traits. Tedesqui & Young (2017) claimed that lower sport achievement is due to grit seeming to mirror minor qualities of conscientiousness. Berry et al. (2000) contend that extraversion and grit are connected when agreeableness is observed. Introversion, however, has been shown to have a connection with high academic outcomes but not with grit (Ivcevic & Brackett, 2014). Rinn et al. (2019) asserted that introversion has been linked to academic success and participation in honors programs at the college level through examination of students who were most positively correlated with the programs. Furthermore, Crist (2018) found that introverts find their vocation through internal and external influences, where the former is connected to self-regulating behaviors. Hence, my research questions have become (1) If successful introverted student athletes possess conscientiousness, is that the only mediating factor for their high level of grit? and (2) Are successful introverted student athletes self-regulating their behaviors based on their internal influences?
Room A

EACH PARTICIPATE WILL BE GIVEN (10) MINUTES FOR PRESENTATION AND (5) MINUTES FOR Q&A TOTAL OF (15) MINUTES PER SCHOLAR.

4:05 pm

Academic Dishonesty in Higher Education
Valerie Baca

4:20 pm

Aspects of Frida Kahlo’s artwork that led to her artistic success in the 20th century and the relevancy of her paintings in both Mexico and worldwide in the 21st century.
Yasmine Barron

4:35 pm

“Our Voice Will be Heard”
Sedia Woods

4:50 pm

‘I am, I am, I am.’: A Study of the American “Confessional” Poets
Gabriela Olivas

5:05 pm

"The Hidden History of Racism in El Paso, Texas"
Niko Moreno

5:20 pm

Altering equine body composition through water treadmill exercise
Mariajose Cervantes

5:35 pm

PSIV-29 - The effects of Saccharomyces cerevisiae fermentation product on the performance of creep fed Boer cross kids in regards to average daily gain and weaning weights on alfalfa and grain supplementation.
Makayla Yantis

5:50 pm

Closing Discussion

6:00 pm

Symposium Ending
**Room B**

*EACH PARTICIPATE WILL BE GIVEN (10) MINUTES FOR PRESENTATION AND (5) MINUTES FOR Q&A TOTAL OF (15) MINUTES PER SCHOLAR.*

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THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING Sul Ross State University Tafoya McNair Symposium 2020

A special thanks to our new President at Sul Ross State University Pete Gallego and his staff for their support of our scholars.
“DON'T DOWNGRADE YOUR DREAM JUST TO FIT YOUR REALITY. UPGRADE YOUR CONVICTION TO MATCH YOUR DESTINY.”

STUART SCOTT