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Morris Awarded US Department of Education Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement Program Grant

The prestigious grant program prepares eligible students for doctoral study.

The University of Minnesota, Morris has earned a $1.2 million Ronald E. McNair Post-Baccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program grant from the US Department of Education. The grant will fully fund Morris’s McNair project, which will provide eligible students with effective preparation for doctoral study as they seek to obtain the PhD or EdD degree, through September 30, 2022.

Morris’s McNair project will prepare cohorts of low-income, first-generation students and students from groups underrepresented in graduate education for doctoral study. It will build on Morris’s culture of support for student engagement, academic excellence, and scholarly activity, providing McNair Scholars with a cohesive series of activities designed to prepare them for successful admission to and completion of doctoral programs, particularly in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) fields.

It will expand funded undergraduate research and provide critical early support for incoming Morris students. These and other activities, workshops and seminars, along with academic and financial counseling, will foster strong relationships with peers and mentors, hone Scholars’ research skills, build resilience, and provide a roadmap for navigating the academy.

According to Nancy Carpenter, professor of chemistry and McNair program director, Morris’s McNair program builds on the campus community’s existing strengths. Further, it has the potential to benefit the campus and its students in both the short and long term.

“This program complements what we do best: work closely with students on scholarly activities,” she says. “It should help us retain more students to the bachelor’s degree and help us in the very long term by preparing underrepresented faculty members.”

More than one-third of Morris’s degree-seeking students are McNair-eligible: 28 percent are American Indian and students of color, and 41 percent are first-generation college students. Seventy-one percent of entering McNair-eligible students indicate an interest in pursuing graduate study, and nearly 25 percent indicate an interest in pursuing the PhD or other doctorate degree. At Morris 51 percent of students participate in undergraduate research with a faculty member.

About McNair
The purpose of the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement (McNair) Program is to award grants to institutions of higher education for projects designed to provide disadvantaged college students with effective preparation for doctoral study. For more information, visit www2.ed.gov