

Grant from U.S. Dept. of Education to Help Disadvantaged Students Pursue PhDs

ROCHESTER, NY – Congresswoman Louise Slaughter (NY-28) today announced that a 5-year, \$1,282,955 grant from the U.S. Department of Education has been awarded to the University of Rochester. The grant will support the University of Rochester's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program, which assists students from disadvantaged backgrounds pursue and attain PhD degrees.

The Department of Education's Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program provides funds to universities throughout the country. In March, Slaughter signed a letter to Congressional Colleagues urging a substantial increase in funding for the Federal TRIO Office, which oversees the McNair Achievement Program ([view letter here](#)). In April, Slaughter sent a second letter to the Department of Education to oppose a major funding cut to the McNair program.

"Today's award is an incredible boost to the students of the University of Rochester," said Slaughter. "Grants such as these make sure that our brightest minds don't need to mortgage their future in order to obtain the best education in the world. In the process, we are ensuring that Rochester is home to the researchers, innovators and inventors that will power our economy for a generation to come."

"This Department of Education grant will help boost the number of underrepresented minorities pursuing graduate education—a critical need in our increasingly diverse nation," said Joel Seligman, president of the University of Rochester. "Through the work of the Kearns Center, promising undergraduates will receive the resources and mentoring that are key to success at the University and in their subsequent careers."

"Through this program, we support fledgling scholars across all academic disciplines reach their individual potentials, while contributing substantially to the diversity of the educational pipeline from graduate education through to the professoriate," said Beth Olivares, director of the Kearns Center. "We are grateful for the unwavering support of Representative Slaughter who has staunchly supported McNair and other federally-funded TRIO programs for low-income individuals."

Background on the University of Rochester's McNair Program:

Beginning as sophomores, McNair scholars at the University of Rochester participate in seminars that prepare them for the graduate school application process. Working alongside faculty members, students conduct independent research and are encouraged to present their findings at national conferences. Throughout their academic careers, they receive extensive preparation for graduate school, including intensive writing courses and GRE prep. Students in the McNair program also have gone on to win Fulbright, National Institutes of Health, National Science Foundation, and NASA fellowships.

The University's program, which began in 1992, boasts a 99 percent college graduation rate and more than 80 percent graduate school enrollment rate. Since then, 391 scholars (99 percent) have graduated from the University, and over 85 percent have gone on to graduate school, double the national average of 45 percent. One hundred and twenty nine alumni are currently enrolled in graduate programs, 134 have earned master's degrees, and 95 have earned doctoral degrees from programs across the country. McNair alumni are faculty members at American University, Hope College, and University of Alabama, among other institutions, and they work as teachers, entrepreneurs, doctors, attorneys, research scientists, and policy experts in a wide variety of fields.