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Front Matter

Maria Cruz

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Since the McNair Scholars Program's inception at SJSU in 1996, McNair has successfully recruited over 420 low-income and first-generation students and individuals who are underrepresented at the doctoral level. Of those who have completed the program, 99% have earned their bachelor's degree, far exceeding the 16% - 20% for this population nationwide. One hundred percent of our students who are in graduate school are continuously enrolled. This year, 29% of our SJSU alumni who went off to graduate school attained their Doctoral Degree which is no easy feat given that the national average for BIPOC people to receive their Ph.D. is less than 2%. SJSU has McNair alumni teaching or studying at universities across the United States, as well as in Germany, Columbia, Kenya, Australia, Turkey, and Morocco. We are extremely proud of our students and our program's successes.

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A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The San José State University McNair Scholars Program is pleased to present the twentieth SJSU McNair Scholars Research Journal. This journal represents the diverse and practical research experiences of the McNair Scholars during the 2023-2024 academic year.

I would like to congratulate the Scholars for their hard work, dedication, and accomplishments. I also wish to express my sincere appreciation to the faculty mentors for their guidance, time, and commitment to the McNair Scholars, their research, and the program during these trying times. A particular word of thanks goes out to the families and extended support systems that made these outstanding presentations possible.

This year, we are paying tribute to Manae Matsubara, who passed away earlier this year. She graduated from San José State University with a B.S in Molecular Biology and a minor in Chemistry. We were extremely grateful to have her in our program and to get to know her. She was an exceptional young person who had a kind heart and a beautiful smile. She was also incredibly intelligent. In 2019, I had the opportunity to travel with her and a group of students to Hawaii, where Manae presented her research at the Society for Advancement of Chicanos/Hispanics & Native Americans in Science (SACNAS) Conference. Manae's research was called "The Role of Insulin Signaling in Developmental Alcohol Toxicity." She loved conducting research and worked under the guidance of her mentor, Dr. Rachel French. We will miss Manae tremendously and send her family our prayers and thoughts during this difficult time.

We are grateful to these virtuoso McNair Scholars for their continued brilliance and resilience and hope they are striving to continue their dreams as academics and individuals.

We thank you very much for continuing to support our Scholars through your readership of our journal.

Please continue to take care during these unprecedented times.

Maria Elena Cruz, Ph.D.

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