

▶ McNair Scholars Program



**Outstanding Alum
Christa Platt, PhD**

Christa D. Platt earned her Bachelor of Science in criminal justice at Wichita State University. She joined the McNair Scholars Program in 2004. McNair was the place where the desire to pursue doctoral study became a confident reality. It was a place of firsts for Christa—first publication, first academic talk, and first graduate school campus visit. The staff served as advocates, teachers, and mentors and expected her to perform at the highest level.

She earned masters and a doctoral degrees in higher education administration from Illinois State University. Over the course of a decade in higher education, she has gained experiences in specialized retention programming, diversity and inclusion affairs, crisis management, first year experience support, assessment and evaluation, academic probation, peer mentor program development, TRIO programs, and STEM advocacy for underrepresented students. Each experience has guided the steps of her professional and academic path.

Christa thrives on cultivating safe spaces and rich learning opportunities for students, staff, and faculty. Her future goals are to marry her passion for research, teaching, and advocacy in a senior level administration position in order to support student retention and academic success.

Already a proud alum of Wichita State, Christa is honored to be in the family of WSU McNair alums.



**Rising Star
Aja Molinar**

Aja Molinar is a psychology major at Wichita State where she has participated in the McNair Scholars Program for the past two years. Aja is committed in pursuing a doctoral degree in clinical psychology. She seeks out opportunities to build academic, research, and practical skills.

Following a rigorous course schedule, she participates in academic research and volunteers as a cultural investigation and analysis intern for the Death Penalty Defense Unit at the Sedgwick County Public Defender's Office.

She completed her first McNair research project under the guidance of Greg Meissen, PhD. She sought several opportunities to present her findings including the local TEDx event and Wichita State's Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Forum. Her current research under the guidance of Robert Zettle, PhD focuses on etiological perspectives of mental illness as a function of religiosity and ethnocultural factors. She hopes to identify obstructions in reaching religious and underrepresented communities and potential strategies to address them.

After earning a doctoral degree, Aja will pursue a career as a professor and clinician. She hopes to contribute to research regarding cross cultural psychology and the need for cultural competency in the field. She is particularly interested in researching manifestations of mental illness in minority populations, minority underutilization of mental health services, and stigmatization of mental health issues.