INDV 400/460: RESEARCH PROPOSAL
DUE FRIDAY, 10 MARCH 2017 AT 11:59P
INDV 400 ASSIGNMENT: SUBMIT ON BLACKBOARD
Submit this proposal along with other INDV 460 application materials via the “Current Scholars” tab of the McNair website (http://mcnair.truman.edu)

To qualify for INDV 460, Scholars must submit, in addition to other required documents, the Research Proposal they are developing during the INDV 400 course, which outlines in general terms the major aspects of a project designed to be completed during the Summer Research Internship II and supervised by their McNair Faculty Mentor. Scholars will work with their mentors during the fall term preceding INDV 400 to develop their proposal topic and plan.

What is a Research Proposal?
Research is a scholarly investigation or inquiry involving a close and thorough study. Although different methodologies may be employed, research is always systematic and well-grounded in prior studies. A research proposal is a plan detailing an intended project or study that is usually written for an audience of experts in your field. Here’s a metaphor: the proposal is a blueprint that shows how a researcher will build a project. The more deductive the study is, the more detailed the plan can be. The more inductive it is, the more general the outline. For inductive proposals (where the hypothesis or the likely findings are not clear yet), it usually comes here after the introduction; whereas for deductive proposals (where the hypothesis or likely finding are clearer at the beginning), it usually follows the Lit Review.

Because the McNair Program consists of participants from a broad range of fields, you should also articulate your ideas in a way that is accessible to an intelligent, multi-disciplinary audience.

The INDV 400/460 Proposal
The following elements are typically part of a McNair proposal; however, you may adapt is in light of the standards of your academic discipline.

1. Title page. Centered in the middle of the title page should be the following items (one per line): (1) your first and last name; (2) The Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program; (3) Truman State University; (4) your Faculty Mentor’s name with prefix; and (5) Submitted for INDV 460: Summer Research Internship II.

2. Abstract: This is a short summary of approximately 125 words that informs the reader of the general features of your research project. Place this on the bottom of your title page unless your academic discipline requires it elsewhere.

3. Project Narrative: This includes the following main components, which are often (but not always) organized as separate sections of the proposal document.

3.1. Introduction: A good introduction usually addresses the questions, “what is the topic of your project? What is the background/context for the topic?” It contextualized your paper for the reader and helps explain why the research is important/interesting/compelling.

3.2. Literature review: This section is your own argument in response to the question, “what are the important similarities and differences among the claims articulated by research sources on your topic?” Or what do we know or think we know about this topic so far. It enables readers to understand where your study fits in a larger scholarly conversation. In particular, you should consider addressing
- What a (sub)field knows about your research topic;
- What things impact or cause the issue you are discussing;
- How the main arguments, methodology, conclusions, or other features from your research sources are similar to or different from one another;
- How the main arguments, methods, or other features of your research sources relate to your project; and
- What prior approaches have been used and how what you will do is an extension of this work/knowledge.

3.3 [if Inductive] Statement of the Research Problem (also sometimes called the Research Question): This answers the question “why is your primary focus and why topic worth studying?” Depending on your discipline, this may be placed at the end of the Introduction or the end of the Literature Review. It is usually phrased as a statement or as a main research question and typically addresses the following questions: How is your proposed work similar to or different from research on this topic that has been performed before now? Does your work extend that of others, improve upon previous work, fill a gap in the literature, or address a theoretical debate?

[if Deductive] Statement of Hypothesis: The hypothesis states the expected relationship (and direction of the relationship between the independent and dependent variables?)
- Is it a positively (or direct) relationship (as one increases the other increases?)

1 Revised January 2016
- It is a negative (or inverse) relationship (as one increases, the other decreases)?
- Is one a necessary (or sufficient) explanation of the other?
- Describe the expected relationship.

3.3. Proposed methodology: This may be called something else depending on your discipline (e.g. Research Design or Methods, or it may not have a name). It includes a description of the methods and techniques you intend to use in order to conduct your project (i.e. tools, materials, approaches to texts, etc.). It could also include a description of what or who you will study (e.g., unites of analysis/ types of texts) and how you will recruit or gather them. In particular, you should spell out as precisely as you can what procedures for gathering and analyzing data/ideas will be used to complete your project.

3.4. Timeline for completion of project: A week-by-week, detailed description of main steps from the start to the finish of INDV 460: Summer Research Internship II in addition to any steps that are completed (e.g. IRB process) before INDV 460 begins. See Blackboard under Course Readings / "Research Proposal Examples" for some examples. The project must be completed by the last day of INDV 460, so the timeline should reflect this. Often, scholars divide time between data gathering, analysis, and writing.

3.5. Itemized Budget (if applicable): A specific description of requested funds for items or travel that will be required in order to complete your project. The budget table is included with the Timeline table on Blackboard under "Course Documents" / "Template for INDV 460 Timeline and Budget." [TIP: If you have a range in prices, put the highest number. It is easier to obtain less than what is budgeted than more than is budgeted.] [Also, if you have a REU and this assignment is only for 400, you can list things you need instead of itemizing things. If you actually want money form us in the summer, please be as thorough as possible in your budget.]

4. Bibliography: These should be formatted according to the standards of your discipline (MLA, APA, Chicago, ASA, APSA, etc.) and should be accompanied by in-text citations, footnotes, or endnotes in the body of your proposal which match in format. Please discuss with your mentor what the best/ most appropriate format should be for you.

Keep the following in mind as you write your proposal:
✓ Avoid vagueness and jargon. You should write for an intelligent audience but may need to define some discipline-specific terms.
✓ Avoid “I believe,” “I think,” “I feel,” etc. unless the use of first-person voice is accepted in your field.
✓ Work through a number of drafts with feedback from your Faculty Mentor to improve the quality of your writing.
✓ Proofread carefully—your final version should be polished and free of grammar, spelling, and punctuation errors.

Examples of successful proposals from past Scholars are available for you to consult. You will be e-mailed more details about this shortly. However, If you have any questions concerning McNair’s guidelines on proposal format, please contact Dr. Quinn or Dr. Cianciola. If you have discipline-specific questions, contact your McNair Faculty Mentor.