



## 2021 McNair Graduate School Preparation Camp

# Workshop Leaders



### **Dr. Donald Asher, Asher Associates**

Dr. Asher is one of the nation's foremost authorities on the graduate admissions process. Hundreds of thousands of students have seen his lectures, tapes, and teleconferences. He is the author of twelve books, including *Graduate Admissions Essays*, the best-selling guide to the graduate admissions process, and *The Best Scholarships for the Best Students*.

He has been a keynote or featured speaker for the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP), the Ronald E. McNair Scholars National Conference in Delavan, Wisconsin, the Penn State TRIO Training Institute (offered coast to coast), the SREB Compact for Faculty Diversity, the annual Penn State McNair Conference, the University of Puerto Rico-San Juan McNair Conference, the New McNair Directors Training Program in New Orleans, Louisiana, the Maryland McNair Conference, the Oregon Statewide Graduate School Fair, the Indiana Statewide Conference on Undergraduate Research, the Wisconsin Statewide Conference on Undergraduate Research, Caltech's Ph.D. Career Development Days, and at hundreds of colleges and universities throughout the United States. He has been the keynote presenter for over ten years for the Professional Development Series of live teleconferences and webinars offered by the University of Tennessee, where he has *four times* hosted the National Teleconference on Graduate Admissions.

He has been a contributing writer to MSN homepage, MSN Encarta, the *Wall Street Journal's* CareerJournal.com and CollegeJournal.com, jobstar.org, monster.com, careerbuilder.com, the *Los Angeles Times's* career development web site, *USAirways* magazine, *San Francisco Chronicle*, *San Francisco Examiner*, and Dow Jones, Inc.'s *National Business Employment Weekly* and *Managing Your Career* magazine. His work can also be found in professional journals, including national and regional publications of the National Association of Colleges and Employers (NACE) and the National Association of Graduate Admissions Professionals (NAGAP).



### **Dr. Robert Belle, Southern Regional Education Board**

Robert (Bob) Belle joined the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) in November 2002. He is currently the Associate Director, SREB-State Doctoral Scholars Program & AGEP. AGEP (Alliances for Graduate Education and the Professoriate) is a National Science Foundation (NSF) supported program. Prior to joining SREB Bob served as the Director of The Office of Federal TRIO Programs for the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, DC for almost 4 years. During his tenure in the Department of Education he also served as the Acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of Education.

In his current position as the Associate Director, he is responsible for the implementation of a grant from the National Science Foundation (NSF). This grant was awarded to the Southern Regional Education Board in Atlanta, Georgia to serve 100+ Ph.D. scholars from around the country who participate in NSF's Alliance for Graduate Education in the Professoriate (AGEP). Initially, AGEP programs were designed to increase significantly the number of minority and underrepresented students receiving doctoral degrees in the disciplines of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). Bob also has the responsibility for implementing a grant from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Minority Ph.D. Program that increases the number of Ph.D. scholars in STEM. Under Bob's leadership over 1,500+ AGEP & Sloan scholars from around the country have participated in the Compact's for Faculty Diversity Institutes on Teaching and Mentoring. The Institute has received numerous awards for its outstanding record in serving minority and underserved Ph.D. scholars since 1994.

Prior to his work at SREB, Bob was the TRIO Director when the budget for TRIO was \$802.5 million. Under his leadership over 2,400 grants were awarded to grantees from around the country. This was the largest number of grants ever awarded in TRIO. During his time with TRIO Bob reached out to the TRiO community to seek their input on a number of policy and program activities. Bob always encouraged and supported TRIO professionals to continue to grow and enhance their professional skills. Bob was always supportive of McNair programs and demonstrated that support by making sure McNair scholars and directors were able to attend and participate in the Compact for Faculty Diversity Annual Institute on Teaching and Mentoring. With Bob's support over the years more than 700 McNair scholars, Directors and Coordinators have had the opportunity to attend the Compact's Institute.

Bob earned a bachelors degree in Elementary Education from Glassboro State Teachers College, which is now Rowan University; a master's degree in Pupil Personnel Services from Seton Hall University, and a doctoral degree from Lehigh University in Counseling Education. He has teaching experience from the elementary level to the collegiate level. He has been an administrator at the collegiate, state, and national levels. Among his numerous awards and recognitions Bob was one of the initial inductees into The Athletic Hall Of Fame at his alma mater Glassboro State College, Glassboro, New Jersey; a recipient of the Walt Disney Community Service Award for Educational Service; and the Compact for Faculty Diversity Frank Abbott "Extra Mile" Award. In 2006 Bob received the Arturo A. Schomberg Distinguished Service Award from the Association for Equality and Excellence in Education, Inc.



### **Dr. Don Brunson, Vanderbilt University**

Dr. Don Brunson is a native of Baltimore, Maryland. After graduating from Morgan State University with a bachelor's degree in chemistry, he attended the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) on a NIH-NIGMS MARC graduate fellowship and became the first African-American to earn a Ph.D. in Toxicology from MIT. He returned to Baltimore in 1996 upon receiving a two-year post-doctoral fellowship appointment from the Department of Pharmacology and Molecular Sciences of the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine to engage in binding studies of the virus HIV to human cell surface proteins.

Following his appointment at the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, he altered his career path from scientific research to university administration. His professional appointments have included Assistant Director of the MIT Office of Undergraduate Admissions, Special Assistant in the Office of the President of Morgan State University, and Director of the Morgan State University Honors Program. During his tenure as a Morgan State administrator, he served on numerous institutional committees and represented the university on various statewide boards and committees all charged with improving the quality of undergraduate education.

Currently serving as the Assistant Dean of the Vanderbilt Graduate School and the Director of the Graduate School's Enhancing Diversity in Graduate Education Program, Don's other responsibilities include serving as the advisor to the Organization of Black Graduate and Professional Students, co-representative to the National Association of Multi-Cultural Engineering Program Advocates, and representative to the National GEM consortium and the National Name Exchange consortium.



### **Lynn Curry, Central Michigan University**

Lynn Curry has been coaching students on graduate school success for the past ten years. She, herself, is a first generation college student from a low income background and is privileged to be a part of so many personal journeys of growth and accomplishment. Lynn loves to get text messages from her students saying they were just accepted to their top-choice school with a full ride! She especially enjoys exposing her students to new ways of thinking and empowering them to create personal visions for themselves that they can pursue and embrace whole-heartedly. Lynn is from Milwaukee, Wisconsin and attended a small liberal arts school for college - St. Norbert College in De Pere, WI. Her background is in International Affairs with a focus on East Asia. She's traveled extensively abroad (including most of Central America) and has been involved in social justice, environmental health, watershed restoration and natural resource conservation projects and programs over the years. Her graduate work includes examining the intersection of poverty and conservation and her thesis documents the management style of an herbalist/organic farmer in his quest to restore 80 acres of heavily degraded strip mined land in Southeastern Ohio. Lynn's interests migrated into historic preservation while working with the Wisconsin Historical Society and doing community outreach and organizing. She now finds herself "at home" with CMU McNair scholars and is grateful to be a part of the McNair Mission. She believes deeply in the potential of her students and is honored to be a part of their journey.



**Dr. Muriel A.S. Grimmert, GB Herndon and Associates**

Dr. Muriel A. S. Grimmert, lecturer, consultant, and educator, is a specialist in multicultural education, counseling, and mentoring. Having expertise in designing, implementing and managing educational programs that enhance participants' satisfaction levels, persistence and graduation rates, she has worked at the national, regional and state levels on issues related to enhancing access and educational outcomes for gifted, as well as, high-potential low-income, first-generation students. Dr. Grimmert also has held administrative and teaching positions at Carleton College, Columbia

University, Rutgers University, Southern Illinois University/Edwardsville Campus and the University of Nevada at Las Vegas, College.

The portfolio of TRIO programs she supervised includes the Upward Bound, Educational Talent Search, Educational Opportunity Center, Student Support Services, TRIO Dissemination, TRIO Training, and the Ronald E. McNair Postbaccalaureate Achievement Program. In addition to the above mentioned programs, she has been part of the TRIO Training faculty of Pennsylvania State University and the University of Nevada at Las Vegas.



**Dr. John Mateja, Murray State University**

John Mateja grew up on a farm in western Pennsylvania and was the first in his family to attend college. After earning B.S and Ph.D. degrees in physics at the University of Notre Dame in 1972 and 1976, he was a post-doctoral research associate at Florida State University. In 1978, he joined the physics faculty at Tennessee Technological University where he developed one of the first federally-funded research programs in the nation to involve undergraduate in research. In 1988, he joined the Argonne National Laboratory, overseeing the lab's college outreach programs. John became Dean of the College of Science at Murray State University in 1998. During his tenure as Dean, the College successfully competed for a Howard Hughes

Medical Institute award, NSF Collaborative Research at Undergraduate Institutions award, NSF Course, Curriculum and Laboratory Improvement grants, and NSF EPSCoR award. After leaving the Dean's position, John founded MSU's Undergraduate Research and Scholarly Activity office. In 2003 he secured one of Kentucky's first McNair Scholars Program awards from the Department of Education. From 2008-2010, John served as a Program Officer in the NSF's Division of Undergraduate Education. John became the third president of the Goldwater Scholarship Foundation in January of 2016. He has been the President of the Council on Undergraduate Research and the Chair of the American Physical Society's Committee on Education. He is a Fellow of the Council on Undergraduate Research and of the American Physical Society.



**Dr. Louis Ray, Fairleigh Dickinson University**

Louis Ray entered college as a low-income, first-generation college student. He earned a BA in history from St. Lawrence University where he was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. Subsequently, he earned the MFA in writing at Columbia University where he was a member of novelist John Oliver Killens' writers workshop. Beginning as a tutor, Dr. Ray later directed TRIO Student Support Services and McNair projects at Hunter College-CUNY. He earned the PhD in the history of education at New York University where it was his privilege to have Henry J. Perkinson, the renowned educational historian, as his mentor and adviser. Dr. Ray is an associate professor of education at Fairleigh Dickinson University in Teaneck, New Jersey and the author of *Charles H. Thompson: Policy Entrepreneur of the Civil Rights Movement, 1932-1954*, a winner of the American Educational Studies Association Critics' Choice Book Award (2013). Published by Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, his book is the first full-length study of Charles H. Thompson's contributions to US education as founder and editor of *The Journal of Negro Education* (1932-1963), dean of Howard University's College of Liberal Arts (1939-1943), and dean of Howard University's Graduate School (1944-1963).



**Dr. Russell D. Salter, University of Louisville**

Russell D. Salter is a Professor of Microbiology and Immunology, Associate Dean for Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, Director of the Integrated Programs in Biomedical Sciences, and Co-Director of the MD/PhD Program in the School of Medicine at the University of Louisville. He received his doctorate from Duke University and completed postdoctoral training at Stanford University before becoming a faculty member at University of Pittsburgh for 25 years. He joined the University of Louisville three years ago. As a researcher, he studied how receptors on immune cells regulate host defense responses, using cell biology and molecular biology techniques. He received multiple research grants from the NIH and other funding sources, and has served on grant review panels for many years. He has taught undergraduate and medical students basic immunology, but currently focuses on teaching graduate students in courses on Introductory and Advanced Immunology, Responsible Conduct of Research, and Scientific Writing. He served as a Director of Graduate Studies in Immunology for more than 10 years at the University of Pittsburgh, before taking his current position, where he administers seven graduate programs within the School of Medicine.

He is the lead organizer for the CRAFT Seminar series which is an acronym for Career Research Advancement Focused Training. CRAFT is open to all members of the University but is geared toward exposing biomedical trainees to career options. Past presenters at CRAFT have discussed careers in academia, including small college teaching, pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, technology transfer and patent law, medical science liaison and clinical research, science policy, publishing, and more. Russ also works closely with the Graduate School in coordinating career development activities and participating in recruiting events nationally. He has attended SACNAS and ABRCMS meetings as well as local and regional events focused on recruitment of students to STEM careers.



**Dr. Orlando Taylor, Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Research at Fielding Graduate University.**

Orlando L. Taylor, formerly the President and CEO of The Chicago School of Professional Psychology in Washington, D.C., is currently serving as the Vice President for Strategic Initiatives and Research at the Fielding Graduate University. Dr. Taylor came to The Chicago School from Howard University where he served more than 35 years as a member of the faculty, and later, a senior administrator. As the University's Vice Provost for Research and Dean of the Graduate School, he played a significant role in ensuring Howard's

continued national leadership as a diverse institution that produces more African American on-campus Ph.D. recipients than any research university in the United States. He has held many other positions at Howard, including Dean of its School of Communication and Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs.

Dr. Taylor is a national leader in graduate education and within his discipline. He is currently or has served previously as a member of numerous national boards, including the Board of Directors of the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS), for which he served as Board Chair in 2001. He is also a Past President of the Northeastern Association of Graduate Schools and the National Communication Association. He is a former member of the Advisory Committee of the Directorate for Education and Human Resources of the National Science Foundation and of the Advisory Council at the National Institutes of Health. He is also the former president of the Consortium of Social Science Associations and a current member of the Board of Trustees of the University Corporation for Atmospheric Research and the Oak Ridge Associated Universities Board of Directors. He chairs the National Advisory Board for the Center for the Integration of Research, Teaching and Learning, a major NSF-funded center at the University of Wisconsin.