Top to bottom: Tiffany Hughes, president; Drew Dunlop, vice president; Jason Gerald, treasurer; Chris Young, secretary.

Tiffany Hughes visits Niagra Falls after presenting her research at the McNair Conference at the University of Buffalo.

While practicing his presentation for symposium Jonathan Copeland was also rehearsing for his wedding which was on August 1.

Dr. Diane Miller was presented with a plaque for 6 years as Director of the McNair Program. She made it clear that she was not going anywhere. She will still be an active part of McNair.

Mr. Steve Saunders has been appointed interim director of McNair Program.

The 11th Annual McNair Research Symposium was held on July 29 & 30, 2009 in the Tom Jackson Building. Nineteen scholars presented their summer research projects.

From the College of Basic & Applied Sciences we had: Sade Dunn (Biology), Lauren Easley (Pre-PT & Biology) and Suzanne Hicks (Psychology & Biology.)

A large contingent came from the College of Liberal Arts: Jonathan Copeland (Music), Christian Davenport (Social Work), Drew Dunlop (Communications Studies), Johnathan Gilliam (History), Shaun Guffey (International Relations and Global Studies), Tiffany Hughes (English), Nick Mackie (International Relations and Anthropology), Corderyl Martin (Music Performance), Joseph Quaries (English), Christina Runkel (History) and Chris Young (International Relations.)

Two scholars were not available to present their research and will present at a seminar in the fall. Jasmine Gray (Journalism) was conducting research in Kentucky and Lucy Miller (Anthropology) was conducting research in Brazil.

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Symposium Oral Presentation Winners

L—R
Monique Richard, 3rd place
Sandra Plummer, 2nd place
Sade Dunn, 1st place

Symposium Poster Winners

1st place
Sade Dunn
2nd place
Sandra Plummer
3rd place
Suzanne Hicks

In this is-

Important Dates
GRE Prep 9/14, 21 & 28
Student Research Presentations
Financial Mgmt 10/5
Best Professor Seminar Series
Graduate School Interview with Dr. Bob Belle 11/6
MTSU Ambassadors Discover Beauty of China
By Monique Richard

On August 10th 2009, eight of us in the McNair Program stepped off the plane after a 13-hour nonstop flight and were reminded of the hustle and bustle of New York City as we made our way through Beijing, China. The air was thick with smog, humidity, and pollution, but the excitement and hospitality that soon ensued was beyond our expectations. The beauty and mystery of Beijing resided in its people, traditions, and rich culture. We were greeted warmly by the Beijing Normal University students and were well received as we presented our research and continued conversations on our topics while addressing their questions. We were treated to a tour of the Forbidden City, Tiananmen Square, The Temple of Heaven and of course no one will ever forget hiking on The Great Wall. Each masterpiece was more amazing than the previous one and the amount of work, effort, and history in each of these landmarks told a story within itself.

The food was an amazing part of traditional Chinese custom, and they often use the expression “food is happiness.” We ate “family style” with giant communal dishes of fish and cured meat dishes, bottomless traditional tea dressed in white walnuts or garlic cloves, soups, exotic fruits, and was relentlessly fed dumplings and noodles with great health. It became evident that “food is happiness” and that was specific to the Chinese culture.

We climbed about three mountains, drove bumper cars, rode the zip line, visited the zoo, presented our research and ate and ate the delicious traditional Chinese food. Our chopstick precision became even more perfected and everyone in our group understood the Chinese truly try to deliver “happiness” through food, and big meal after big meal was their way of showing welcome and affection.

We shared laughter and jokes, songs and stories, and although we came as the ambassadors, they taught us an invaluable amount of information and insight. China became so much more than a far off country; it became a place of new-found friends and family. I believe we all gained a new appreciation for differences, similarities, and the appreciation of simple necessities like toilet paper! Most of all the connection among humanity and the ability to share, teach, and learn is always a beautiful connection to rediscover.

Lucy Miller Researches Acai Berry in Brazil

This past summer I had the amazing opportunity to practice cultural anthropology fieldwork and research in a small town, Gurupú, Pará, off the Amazon River in Brazil.

Dr. Richard Pace has been doing research in this town for over thirty years and has created a wonderful program that allows anthropology students (and others that are interested) to test out the waters and see what cultural anthropology field work is all about. During my time in Gurupú, I was able to not only research a topic that was specific to the Amazon area, but I was able to live with rural Brazilians and get a fairly good idea of what life is like for them.

My research topic focused on the environmental, social justice, and health aspects of the açaí berry which has been a staple food for rural Brazilians for centuries and is now becoming a “fashion food” in international markets. I spent ten weeks overall in Brazil. My research activities during my time there entailed preparing for research with intense Portuguese language courses, reviewing literary references on açai at the University of Belem, Park, interviewing students in the large cities on their ideas about açai, comparing eating habits of açai in the larger cities to the rural Ammonian town, and finally living in Gurupú, where açai production and consumption is a key part of life.

I lived with a family who ate açai as part of their lunch and dinner everyday. I observed their habits involving the consumption of açai, asked them and others in the community what health benefits they believed açai provided, and was able to inquire about the environmental and economic impacts of açai production and consumption with my key consultant, my home-stay father, who had worked for a nongovernmental organization that focused on the environment and land rights. Overall, I had an amazing research opportunity that not only allowed me to collect good information on the açai berry directly from the source, but I had a life-changing experience. I was able to visit a part of the world that I would have never imagined visiting and that is so different from my own life.