

Turning Things Around

McNair Scholar aims high

Tuesday, September 3, 2019

⋮



Curtis Linton '21 wanted to be an engineer. And he loved playing football. So when he was recruited by head coach Sean MacDonnell to play for UNH, Linton knew he'd found his place. Yes, he'd been recruited by other schools, but they wanted him to focus 100 percent on football. Majoring in engineering would take too much of his time and attention, they feared.

"Coach Mac was the only one who would give me a chance to do both," Linton says. "It's one of the best decisions I ever made, to come here."

“The McNair program has helped me to apply the tools I get from classes and learn in a more productive manner.”

But then Linton got sick the first semester of freshmen year. He lost about 30 pounds. He wasn't prepared for the New Hampshire winter, for it being so dark and so cold. “Up here, you wear the cold,” he says. Coming into his second semester, he was struggling physically and academically. By the time spring break arrived, Linton was failing one course and had two Ds and a C in the other three.

“No one knew, not my mother, not my coach. It was tough; I'd always done well in school,” the Newark, Delaware, resident says. “But then I turned it around and ended the semester with an A, a B and two Cs. My GPA has been on the way up ever since.”



CURTIS LINTON '21

Turning his grades around made Linton eligible to become a [McNair Scholar](#), which, among other things, requires qualified students to have a minimum 3.0 GPA. Part of the federally funded TRIO program that honors the memory of the late Challenger astronaut and noted laser physicist Ronald E. McNair, the program offers outreach and student services to give undergraduates a competitive edge when applying to graduate school and prepare them for success in their pursuit of a doctoral degree. Linton signed on with the program during the fall of 2018.

“The McNair program has helped me apply the tools I get from classes and learn in a more productive manner,” Linton says.

During the summer, Linton, a member of the National Society of Black Engineers, was one of 15 students to present their research at the UNH McNair Scholar research symposium. Following that event, he traveled to California and shared his work on a weightless exercise system for outer space with students and experts at UCLA.

When he was growing up, math and science were things Linton did for fun. He liked them and was good at them and knew he wanted a career in the STEM field. Now, as a [mechanical engineering](#) major, he is looking beyond a bachelor's degree; he thinks he'd like to teach one day as a way to give back some of what has been given to him.

“Coming into UNH, I didn’t have a concrete grasp of what a Ph.D. program was about,” Linton says. “I didn’t know it was research-focused. That really appeals to me. I wouldn’t mind going on to become Dr. Linton.”

- WRITTEN BY:

Jody Record '95 | Communications and Public Affairs | jody.record@unh.edu

PHOTOGRAPHER:

Jeremy Gasowski | Communications and Public Affairs | jeremy.gasowski@unh.edu | 603-862-4465

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING & PHYSICAL SCIENCES



University of New Hampshire

UNH Today is produced for the UNH community and for friends of UNH.

The stories are written by the staff of [UNH Communications and Public Affairs](#).

Email us: unhtoday.editor@unh.edu.

[MANAGE YOUR SUBSCRIPTION](#)

[CONTACT US](#)

Like us on Facebook

Follow us on Twitter

Follow us on YouTube

Follow us on Instagram

Find us on LinkIn

UNH Today RSS feeds

UNH Today • UNH Main Directory: 603-862-1234

Copyright © 2022 • TTY Users: 7-1-1 or 800-735-2964 (Relay NH)

[USNH Privacy Policies](#) • [USNH Terms of Use](#) • [ADA Acknowledgement](#)