



MARCH 12-14

Magic Through Collaboration

CONVENTION PROGRAM

2026 Alpha Chi National Convention

Schedule of Events



Thursday, March 12

- 3:00 p.m. Chapter Delegation Check-In..... Grand Ballroom Foyer Registration Desk**
One advisor or student delegate per chapter should check in at AX Central in the registration booth located just outside the Grand Ballroom to receive the chapter's packet of convention materials. Alumni attending without their home chapter should check in individually. Judges and moderators will receive their packets at the special 5:15 session.
- 4:00 p.m. Hilton Hotel Check-in Begins..... Hilton Lobby**
- 5:15 p.m. Presentation Moderators & Judges Meeting Salon 3**
If you have been selected to serve as a moderator or judge this year, please join us for a quick meeting before dinner to distribute packets and go over this year's procedures. We're excited to have several new advisors helping this year, and we want to ensure everyone is knowledgeable about these important roles.
- 5:45 p.m. Open seating for dinner begins no earlier than 5:45 p.m. (10 seats per table)**
- 6:00 p.m. Opening Dinner & Keynote Speaker Salon 4/5**
"You're Just Getting Started: Walt Disney's Secret to Success," Dr. Jeffrey A. Barnes
Wear your college and/or chapter gear and join us for the official welcome to this year's national convention! Delegates will enjoy a plated dinner and keynote speaker Dr. Jeff Barnes, a.k.a. "Dr. Disneyland."
- 8:00 p.m. Regional Mixers**
Delegates will gather by region to say hello to old friends and welcome new ones. Not sure which region you're in? Check your name badge! (Not all regions meet in a room that matches their region number.)
- Region I Salon 1
Region II Salon 2
Region III Salon 3
Region IV Salon 6
Regions V & VI Salon 7
Region VII Salon 8
- 9:00 p.m. Be Our Guest...at Kahoot! Salon 4/5**
Think you're the Disney expert? Put your skills to the test at a Kahoot Party hosted by your Regional Student Representatives! Join us in Salon IV-V for food, fun, and did we mention prizes?? This event will have you and your fellow Alpha Chi members saying "you've got a friend in me" in no time!

Service for the Good!

Alpha Chi has partnered with No Child Hungry for our 2026 National Service Initiative. On Friday beginning at 10 a.m., delegates may start packaging personal hygiene kits that NCH will deliver to the families of incarcerated people in the Orlando area. If each delegate assembles three kits, we'll easily hit our goal of making 500 kits to support the Orlando community and give back as they host us for the convention!

Friday, March 13

- 8:00 a.m. Regional Breakfasts & Business Meetings** (regional elections)
Grab a breakfast sandwich and head to your region’s meeting! Most regions will be holding elections, so make sure you arrive on time. Food will be set up in the Grand Ballroom Foyer.
- Region I Salon 3
Region II Salon 6
Region III Salon 7
Region IV Salon 2
Regions V & VI Salon 4/5
Region VII Salon 8
- 9:00 a.m. National Business Meeting** Salon 4/5
National Council President Dr. Linda Cowan will preside over this business meeting, and voting delegates should be prepared to exercise their votes. The following items are on the agenda:
- NC Officer Reports
 - Regional Election Results (announced by regional officers)
 - Outgoing Regional Leadership Recognition
 - Installation of New National Council Members
 - Advisor Service Honors
 - Introduction of Service Activity
- 10:10 a.m. Member Presentations Session I**
Four concurrent rooms of member presentations grouped by academic discipline for up to three 15-minute presentations (including 3 minutes of Q&A) with five minutes of travel time between each presentation.
- Please consult the mobile app or the Program of Presenters for presenter details for each section.**
- Section 01: British Literature Salon 3
Section 02: Chemistry Salon 6
Section 03: Psychology Salon 7
Section 04: In the Sciences—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters Salon 8
- 11:20 a.m. Member Presentations Session II**
Four concurrent rooms of member presentations grouped by academic discipline for up to five 15-minute presentations (including 3 minutes of Q&A) with five minutes of travel time between each presentation.
- Please consult the mobile app or Program of Presenters (pdf) for presenter details for each section.**
- Section 05: Mixed Humanities (Group A) Salon 3
Section 06: Health Sciences Salon 6
Section 07: History Salon 7
Section 08: Business Management Salon 8
- 1:00 p.m. Distinguished Alumnus Address & Luncheon** Salon 4/5
All delegates will enjoy a plated lunch and an address by Arizona Alpha member Dr. Thomas Varkey, the 2026 Alpha Chi Distinguished Alumni Award recipient, who will be formally presented with the society’s highest member honor.

- 2:00 p.m. National Service Wrap-Up..... Grand Ballroom Foyer**
Come help us finish strong as we pack any remaining hygiene kits for Orlando-area families.
- 3:15 p.m. The Trisha Yarbrough Collaborative Research Project Presentations Salon 4/5**
The three Collaborative Research Teams in this year’s competition will share their projects’ findings and answer judge and audience questions. Each team competing should attend the full session. (order chosen by random drawing)
- Schrödinger’s Irony***
 Raymond Andrade, Judith Flores Mora, Izaiah Ruiz, Abigail Spain, Victoria Stephens
 Fresno Pacific University, California Zeta
- The High Cost of Creativity***
 Abby Hall, Avery Smith, Chloe Caffey, Chloe Harrison, Faith Savage
 Ouachita Baptist University, Arkansas Beta
- Reimagining the Impossible: Leadership Inside Out***
 Judah Floyd, Luke Lascurain, Mishayla Varner
 Grand Canyon University, Arizona Alpha
- 4:30 p.m. Dinner & Fun OYO in Disney Springs!**
Take your name badge for discounts at participating locations.

Saturday, March 14

- 8:00 a.m. Member Presentations Session III**
Five concurrent rooms of member presentations grouped by academic discipline for up to four 15-minute presentations (including 3 minutes of Q&A) with five minutes of travel time between each presentation.
- Please consult the mobile app or the Program of Presenters for presenter details for each section.***
- Section 09: Chemistry Salon 2**
Section 10: Mixed Sciences (Group A) Salon 3
Section 11: Biological Sciences Salon 6
Section 12: Mixed Humanities (Group B)..... Salon 7
Section 13: In the Humanities—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters..... Salon 8
- 9:30 a.m. Breakfast & Development Sessions I**
Grab a breakfast sandwich and coffee and join the development session appropriate for your delegate type.
- Member Development Session Salon 3**
The Psychology of Procrastination, Pressure, and Sustainable Time Management
 Presented by Dr. Breanna Naegeli, Grand Canyon University
- “I work better under pressure”—but is that actually true? This session unpacks the psychology behind procrastination and time management, exploring why even high performers delay important tasks and how pressure can create the illusion of productivity while quietly increasing stress and burnout. Moving beyond planners and productivity hacks, this presentation examines how motivation, stress, and cognitive load shape our use of time—and why strategies that work in the classroom don’t always translate to the workplace. Members will leave with practical, research-informed tools to manage energy, prioritize effectively, and build time systems that support performance, boundaries, and sustainable work-life balance.*

Advisor Development Session..... Salon 6

Mental Health, Burnout, and Resilience: Surviving the Academic Environment

Presented by Dr. Tanner Babb & Dr. Jeremiah Davis, Huntington University

Academic environments demand sustained performance under chronic stress, often at the expense of mental health. This presentation explores academic stress response, patterns of coping and resistance, and barriers to effective stress management. Emphasis is placed on building resilience and margin, leveraging institutional and personal resources, and developing strategies that support long-term well-being and academic success.

10:30 a.m. Member Presentations Session IV

Five concurrent rooms of member presentations grouped by academic discipline for up to five 15-minute presentations (including 3 minutes of Q&A) with five minutes of travel time between each presentation.

Please consult the mobile app or the Program of Presenters for presenter details for each section.

Section 14: Performing Arts..... Salon 2

Section 15: Psychology..... Salon 3

Section 16: Mixed Sciences (Group B) Salon 6

Section 17: In the Sciences—Graduate Student Presenters Salon 7

Section 18: In the Humanities—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters..... Salon 8

12:20 p.m. Development Sessions II

Member Development Session Salon 3

Power Skills

Presented by Dr. Justine Pas, Lindenwood University

This session highlights why Power Skills—such as critical thinking, effective communication, adaptability, and emotional intelligence—are increasingly valued across all disciplines and careers. By renaming and redefining these durable and transferable competencies from 'soft skills' to Power Skills, the presentation demonstrates that interdisciplinarity is foundational to the future of work. Ultimately, Power Skills ready students to navigate rapidly shifting career landscapes with the human expertise that AI cannot replicate.

Advisor Development Session..... Salon 6

Honors²: Unlocking the Power of Alpha Chi and Honors Program Collaboration

Presented by Dr. April Dye, Carson-Newman University

This presentation explores how intentional collaboration between Alpha Chi and honors programs can amplify student engagement, leadership development, and academic excellence. By aligning missions, sharing resources, and creating joint initiatives, institutions can move beyond parallel efforts to a more integrated honors experience. Through an interactive session, participants will leave with practical strategies and adaptable ideas for building meaningful, sustainable partnerships on their campuses.

1:15 p.m. Closing Ceremonies Salon 4/5

Come decked out in your Alpha Chi blues and greens to celebrate individual, team, and chapter awards as we wrap up the 2026 National Convention!

- National Scholarship Competition Results
- Convention Presentation Prizes
- Distinguished Service Awards
- Collaborative Research Competition Results
- 2026 President's Cup Presentation
- Appreciation & Adjournment

2026 Alpha Chi National Convention

Program of Presenters

Each student and alumni presenter should arrive before the start of their assigned section to identify themselves to their Section Moderator. Be sure your presentation fits comfortably within 12 minutes, after which will be a mandatory 3-minutes for Q&A. As a courtesy to your fellow presenters, we ask you to remain present for your entire section. For full presentation guidelines, visit our [Member Presentations webpage](#).

Convention presentation prizes are typically only awarded for disciplines having three or more presentations. This year, since there were several disciplines that were not represented among the undergraduate presentations, to increase the number of awards, we have combined academic fields with fewer than three presentations into mixed groups of Humanities and Sciences. The good news is that every undergraduate presenter will be eligible for an award.

Likewise, graduate student presentations have been divided into Humanities and Sciences which will each have one winner. Alumni presenters will present in sections with graduate students and compete for one alumni prize.

We hope you have a wonderful presenting experience and go home with valuable tools for building on your successes!

Thank you to all of our wonderful volunteer moderators and judges. We couldn't hold these competitions without your service!

Member Presentations Session I

Friday, March 13, 10:10 a.m. – 11:10 a.m.

Section 01: British Literature Salon 3

Moderator: Daniel Larson, Fresno Pacific University

Judges: Charlene Bustos, Angelo State University; Benjamin Utter, Ouachita Baptist University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following three presentations.

10:10 “If Women Had Written Stories: The Wife of Bath and Janie Crawford” (WINNER)

Avery Morris, Abilene Christian University

British Literature: Is the answer to Chaucer’s question “What do women most desire” found in Hurston's *Their Eyes Were Watching God*? My presentation asserts that Janie Crawford’s story is a modern echo of the Wife of Bath’s prologue and tale: asserting the value of experience, reclaiming narrative power, and achieving self-fulfillment.

10:30 “The Debacle of 'Tamed' or 'Cured': The Horse in Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*”

Judith Flores Mora, Fresno Pacific University

Shakespeare: A presentation about the historical significance of Shakespeare's play, *The Taming of the Shrew*, explored through the unlikely character—Petruccio's horse.

10:50 “More Blood Than Bond: Usurping Father and King in *King Lear*”

Samantha A. McGlaughlin, University of Arkansas at Monticello

Shakespeare: Shakespeare's *King Lear* inverts the roles of the titular king and his jester, proving Lear to be as much an agent of chaos as the Fool.

Section 02: Chemistry..... Salon 6

Moderator: Glênisson de Oliveira, University of North Texas

Judges: Diep Ca, Shenandoah University; Lauren Johnson, University of Texas at Tyler

This is the first section of undergraduate presentations in Chemistry. There will be up to two undergraduate winners selected from all presenters in both Chemistry sections.

10:10 “Vinyl Chloride Leaches from PVC Pipes Due to Common Household Chemicals”

Madeline Jones, Carson-Newman University

We use them every day—but are household chemicals compromising our pipes? This study explores the breakdown of PVC and the leaching of vinyl chloride, offering essential insights into the safety of the systems we rely on most.

10:30 **“Investigating Methods for Small Molecule Polymerization Inside the HK97 Virus-Like Particle” (WINNER)**
Alexis Osborn & Cailey Rocquemore, University of Texas at Tyler
Discover how virus-like particles from the HK97 bacteriophage can be engineered into powerful drug delivery vehicles. This presentation explores a novel one-pot polymerization strategy to increase cargo loading inside VLPs, advancing their potential for targeted therapeutic delivery.

10:50 **“Modifications of Naphthoquinone Scaffold Promises Enhanced Biological Activities, Including Anti-Lung Cancer Properties”**
Brooklyn Penn, Lyon College
Each year, more people die from lung cancer than from colon, breast, and prostate cancers combined. Naphthoquinones include anticancer and antimicrobial properties; however, they also have untamed redox properties. We are working to carefully modify the molecule by adding oxygen and nitrogen to lessen adverse effects.

Section 03: Psychology Salon 7

Moderator: Jessica Henry, Hastings College

Judges: Tanner Babb, Huntington University; Jennifer Hicks, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

This is the first section of undergraduate presentations in Psychology. There will be up to two undergraduate winners selected from all presenters in both Psychology sections.

10:10 **“Examining Athletic Burnout Through the Lens of Athletic Identity and Perceptions of Life Transitions” (WINNER)**
Averi Holsted, Missouri Western State University
This study examines the relationship between athletic identity and perceptions of life transitions following sport and how these factors contribute to burnout among college athletes. The results provide valuable insight for supporting athlete mental health during critical life transitions.

10:30 **“Exposure to Domestic Violence and Sexual Attitudes in Women: Implications for Trauma and Sexual Health” (WINNER)**
Haley Langley, Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Understanding how early trauma shapes female development is essential for effectively supporting, engaging, and connecting with others. This presentation examines the psychological and theoretical implications of exposure to domestic violence during adolescence and how it influences future sexual attitudes and behaviors.

10:50 **“The Application of the Ten Dimensions of Family Stress to the Stress Experience of Immigrant Families”**
Nathan Wilson, Abilene Christian University
I researched the diverse stressors that impact the lives of immigrant families during a research class last fall. Expanding on this research, I applied the Ten Dimensions of Family Stress as a theoretical framework to my findings in order to further characterize and understand immigrant families' experiences.

Section 04: In the Sciences—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters Salon 8

Moderator: Kip Wheeler, Carson-Newman University

Judges: Jennifer Aust, University of Tennessee Southern; Mali Hubert, Tennessee Wesleyan University

Graduate student and alumni presenters will compete separately from undergraduates. There will be two graduate student prizes (1 in the Sciences and 1 in the Humanities) and one alumni prize awarded.

10:10 **“Steric and Electronic Considerations of Ester Hydrolysis: Updating a Longstanding Physical Organic Kinetics Experiment” (WINNER)**
Mara J. Aucoin, University of Texas at Tyler, Grad Student Member
Chemistry: The research in this presentation aims to redesign an undergraduate physical chemistry kinetics experiment to include organic chemistry through comparative analysis of multiple substrate analogs that show steric and electronic influence over rates of ester hydrolysis.

10:30 **“PAX6 in the Lateral Line Mechanosensory Neuromast Organs of Salamanders and Zebrafish: A Molecular, Microscopic, and Computational Investigation”**
Nisa Abidhusen Sindhi, Texas State University, Grad Student Member
Molecular/Cellular Biology: An integrative approach that bridges neurodevelopmental biology and AI-driven Bioinformatics can change textbook assumptions. Join this talk to explore unexpected PAX6 localization within salamander neuromast hair bundles, supported by confocal microscopy. With ongoing TEM and AI-driven protein interaction prediction, we investigate whether PAX6 has a novel cytoskeletal-associated role.

10:50 **“How History Made Mathematics”**
Joni Lindsey, Texas State University, Alumni Member
Mathematics: Understanding major historical events can provide insight to the importance of mathematics and the role it played on the development of the world today.

Member Presentations Session II
Friday, March 13, 11:20 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

Section 05: Mixed Humanities (Group A)..... Salon 3

Moderator: Teagan Decker, University of North Carolina at Pembroke
Judges: Enrique Colón, Harding University; Brian Mattson, Lee University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following five presentations.

- 11:20** **“Return to Whiteness: How 'Return to the Land' Platforms White Supremacy”**
Chloe Jordan, Southwestern University
Communication: Return to the Land is a white-only, brick-and-mortar community in Arkansas that also recruits members online. In an intertextual discourse analysis, this paper analyzes and problematizes the specific ways in which this community leverages the affordances of X (formerly Twitter) to disseminate white supremacist rhetoric.
- 11:40** **“We Resist Metaphor: The Danger of Making Disability Sentient”**
Victoria Stephens, Fresno Pacific University
Communication: This presentation analyzes how the stories we engage with and the metaphors we use shape our beliefs about disability. It discusses the harmful ways disability is represented in fairy tales and our own everyday speech. We can change our metaphors and in turn change our beliefs about disability.
- 12:00** **“When Tutors Make a Mural”**
Kendyl Feuerbacher, Southwestern University
Original Visual Art: What happens when a group of undergraduate students decide to collaborate together in creating a mural? By attending this presentation, you can learn how the piece was made, how the student body was involved, and why the mural was put up in the first place.
- 12:20** **“Mr. Morale & the Functions of Culture”**
Raymond Andrade, Fresno Pacific University
Art/Music/Dance Research: According to Kevin Vanhooser, culture shapes people's experiences. According to Kendrick Lamar, he is not your savior. My presentation analyzes Kendrick Lamar's 2022 album, *Mr. Morale & the Big Steppers*, to explain Vanhooser's proposed four functions of culture.
- 12:40** **“The Never House: How an Animated Project Goes From the Sketchbook to the Screen” (WINNER)**
Amanda Moseng, Huntington University
Original Visual Art: My presentation describes the process and theory behind creating a short animated film. The film, a thriller, centers around a desperate group of people coming together in a crisis situation to defeat a common enemy.

Section 06: Health Sciences..... Salon 6

Moderator: Marshall Johnston, Fresno Pacific University
Judges: Steve Hoekstra, Kansas Wesleyan University; Autumn Marshall, Lipscomb University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following four presentations.

- 11:20** **“Research on a CMOS-based Microfluidic Point-of-Care Testing Device” (WINNER)**
Sophia Morgan Rose Lee, Hastings College
Health Sciences: In this presentation, I will discuss my contribution to an innovative international research project centered on the development of a point-of-care testing device with multi-pathogenic detection that incorporates both microfluidics and filter-free CMOS sensor technology.
- 11:40** **“What Are We Actually Eating? Decoding Food Marketing and Supplement Facts”**
Kaden Herbek, Waldorf University
Exercise Science and Nutrition: Feel like food labels are trying to trick you? You're not crazy. I'm breaking down the industry's biggest scams like "fairy dusted" supplements and hidden chemicals. Come learn how to shop smarter and stop letting brands fool you.
- 12:00** **“More Than Medicine: How Christian Education Equips Healthcare Professionals to Serve the Whole-Person”**
Gracie Rose Porter, Huntington University
Health Sciences: Excellent, intentional care treats the whole person, not just the condition. Patients bring beliefs, hopes, and fears into the exam room with them. Examine how Christian education equips healthcare professionals to respond confidently to faith, prayer, and cultural diversity, strengthening trust and elevating patient-centered care.

12:20 “Recruitment and Retention of Healthcare Providers in Nebraska: Insights from Medicine, Pharmacy, and Dentistry”

Catherine Reed, Hastings College

Health Sciences: Discover how healthcare providers and community leaders view the challenges of recruiting and retaining professionals in rural Nebraska. I will share firsthand insights from medicine, dentistry, and pharmacy and highlights strategies to strengthen the rural healthcare workforce and reduce health disparities.

Section 07: History..... Salon 7

Moderator: Tonia Compton, Kansas Wesleyan University

Judges: Rebekah Crowe, Wayland Baptist University; Myra Houser, Ouachita Baptist University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following five presentations.

11:20 “Prison Camps of the American Civil War: Andersonville and Elmira”

Katelyn Botz, Kansas Wesleyan University

American History: This presentation is an evaluation of the similarities and differences between the worst prisoner-of-war camps on each side of the American Civil War using the personal accounts of Solon Hyde, a Union soldier who spent time in Andersonville, and John King, a Confederate soldier who spent time in Elmira.

11:40 “Inside Lineage Culture: How Overlapping Memberships across Heritage Societies Shape Identity in the DAR”

Rachel Lynne Wall, Flagler College

American History: This poster examines how lineage and heritage societies shape identity, ritual, and belonging across time, focusing on the Daughters of the American Revolution and related organizations. Drawing on oral history and archival research, it traces how individual membership practices reflect longer traditions of women’s civic culture and memory.

12:00 “History of College Fraternities”

Luke Haugland, Waldorf University

World History: This presentation will focus on, as the title of the presentation says, the history of college fraternities.

12:20 “‘The Woman Becomes the Witch:’ Lady Macbeth and Seventeenth-Century Beliefs about Women and Witchcraft”

Lilly C. McKee, University of Arkansas at Monticello

World History: What makes a woman a witch? This presentation situates Lady Macbeth within seventeenth-century British anxieties about female ambition, sexuality, and spiritual disorder, arguing that literary imagination reflected and helped sustain the cultural logic behind real witchcraft accusations.

12:40 “From Headlines to Homeland: The Importance of Translation in Mobilizing Bosniak Diaspora Identity through Post-War Journalism” (WINNER)

Nemanja Medan, Lindenwood University

World History: This presentation provides essential cultural insights into the St. Louis Bosniak community. By analyzing local journalism, I uncover the deep ties between identity, faith, and history and how the community balances assimilation and cultural heritage.

Section 08: Business Management Salon 8

Moderator: Cortney Watson, University of North Texas

Judges: Dennis Hall, Angelo State University; Michelle Putnam, Lipscomb University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following four presentations.

11:20 “How to Develop Archery to Make It Sustainable for the Future” (WINNER)

Piper Colantone, Lindenwood University

This civic engagement project uses qualitative interviews to investigate how to promote archery. By identifying areas of growth and emphasizing the sport’s inclusivity and benefits, this research aims to expand archery’s reach and ensure a sustainable, safe, and active future for diverse communities.

11:40 “Implications of Financial Misrepresentation: Detection, Regulation, and Prevention”

Nickytha Georges, Hastings College

Fake profits, hidden debt, and billion-dollar scandals. We’ll unravel how companies bend the rules, why people commit accounting fraud, and how watchdogs catch them. From Enron to whistleblowers and AI, discover how financial lies come to light and why they never pay off.

12:00 “When AI Meets Accounting”

Xiaoxiao Sun, Goldey-Beacom College

AI is changing accounting faster than ever. Will it replace accountants or redefine them? This presentation explores how AI impacts accounting and what future professionals must prepare for to stay relevant.

12:20 “Applying Lean Consulting, Automation, and Software Solutions to Optimize the Workspace”

Niklas Thiel, Wayland Baptist University

Many businesses lose time to inefficient, repetitive work without realizing it. This presentation introduces a lean consulting approach that combines workplace optimization, automation, and software solutions, showing how these principles can be applied to make working with control panels faster, easier, and more efficient as one real-world example.

Member Presentations Session III
Saturday, March 14, 8:00 a.m. – 9:20 a.m.

Section 09: Chemistry..... Salon 2

Moderator: Glênisson de Oliveira, University of North Texas

Judges: Diep Ca, Shenandoah University; Lauren Johnson, University of Texas at Tyler

This is the final section of undergraduate presentations in Chemistry. There will be up to two winners selected from all presenters in the two Chemistry sections.

8:00 “Removal of Endocrine Disruptors from the Environment by Photocatalytic, Advanced Oxidative, and Filtration Processes”

Madison Rhodes, University of Texas at Tyler

Endocrine disrupting chemicals (EDCs) often exist within aquatic systems and cause lasting issues upon entering the body. This research demonstrates how authors Neval Baycon and Gianluca Li Puma developed an efficient method for removing these chemicals by adding silica to a Nafion/iron catalyst paired with advanced oxidative processes.

8:40 “Investigation of Nickel-Catalyzed Sonogashira Reactions Using Imidazolyl Sulfonates as Leaving Groups” (WINNER)

Merari Williams, Huntington University

This research explores nickel catalysts as a cost-effective alternative to palladium in Sonogashira reactions. Of the several catalysts tested, one emerged as a lead catalyst, consistently producing 20-30% yields. These results suggest that, with further research, nickel could be a promising substitute for palladium in cross-coupling reactions.

Section 10: Mixed Sciences (Group A) Salon 3

Moderator: Pamela Johnston, Fresno Pacific University

Judges: Jeremy Chapman, Lyon College; Austin Hammons, University of Arkansas at Monticello

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following four presentations.

8:00 “Spatial Analysis of Fungi and Forest Types” (WINNER)

Savannah Stanish, Mars Hill University

Environmental Science: Demonstration of several varieties of fungi and their spatial correlation to forest types in North Carolina using GIS.

8:20 “The Use of eDNA in the Monitoring and Detection of Invasive Aquatic Plants”

Isabel Gilbert, Angelo State University

Environmental Science: How can we detect invasive aquatic plants before they become a problem? This talk introduces environmental DNA (eDNA) as a powerful, non-invasive tool for freshwater monitoring, explaining how plant DNA can be tracked across distance and time with no plant spotting required.

8:40 “Extrinsic, Intrinsic, and Gaussian Curvature”

Carter Oxford, Angelo State University

Mathematics: Have you ever wondered where Einstein's Theory of Relativity came from? Maybe you've heard that space is curved, but what does that mean exactly, and what kind of math deals with that curvature? Furthermore, how do we measure that curvature?

9:00 “Doppler Shift Calculation Using Earth-Moon-Earth Radio Propagation”

Elijah Resano, Kansas Wesleyan University

Physics/Astronomy: Space presents many challenges for explorers but also comes as a playground for science experiments. The Doppler Effect is the change in frequency in waves from a moving source. This effect can be measured with light (radio waves) in objects such as a car or, in this case, the moon.

Section 11: Biological Sciences..... Salon 6

Moderator: Amanda Ford, Carson-Newman University

Judges: Steve Hoekstra, Kansas Wesleyan University; Mali Hubert, Tennessee Wesleyan University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following four presentations.

8:00 "Identification of in vivo substrates for LIP-1 DUSP in *C. elegans*" (WINNER)

Robbie Alatrash, Abilene Christian University

Molecular/Cellular Biology: The RAS/ERK signaling pathway is critical in cancer development. Using nematode worms as a model, I performed protein analysis to understand how the pathway is controlled. Future research may lead to the development of new therapies that target this pathway, giving cancer patients a chance at a cure.

8:20 "Testing Zoledronate in a *Drosophila* Model of LMNA-Related Emery-Dreifuss Muscular Dystrophy"

Julia Southwell, Waldorf University

Molecular/Cellular Biology: Can a drug used to treat bone disease affect muscular dystrophy? This presentation investigates zoledronate, commonly prescribed for osteoporosis, in a fruit fly model of LMNA-related Emery-Dreifuss muscular dystrophy. Resulting in a statistically significant survival benefit in females but not males, highlighting sex-specific therapeutic responses.

8:40 "Rooted in Resilience: Strategies of Herbivory Defense in *Raphanus sativus*"

Olivia Robbins, Huntington University

Organismal/Ecological Biology: Several species of soil bacteria have been found to form mutually beneficial relationships with certain species of plants. Come find out how, if at all, these bacteria affect plant defense systems against herbivores.

9:00 "Combining Molecular Analyses with Morphology to Identify Zoantharians at Toco, Trinidad, Southernmost Region of the Caribbean Sea"

Rebecka Roddy, University of Tennessee Southern

Organismal/Ecological Biology: This study delivers a breakthrough in coral reef monitoring by combining morphology and molecular tools to accurately identify elusive zoantharians. By clarifying species diversity in Trinidad's reefs, it strengthens conservation planning, improves biodiversity assessments, and provides essential baseline data for protecting threatened Caribbean marine ecosystems.

Section 12: Mixed Humanities (Group B)..... Salon 7

Moderator: Kelli Williams, Carson-Newman University

Judges: Joni Lindsey, Lake Superior State University; Maria Palaiologou, California State University, Bakersfield

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following four presentations.

8:00 "When Wealth Is Not the Problem: Idolatry in Mark 10"

Gabriel Medeiros, Wayland Baptist University

Religion & Philosophy: This session offers an exegetical look at Mark 10:17–31, arguing that the real problem in Jesus' encounter with the rich man is not money, but a divided heart. By exposing hidden idolatry and misplaced trust, the presentation confronts listeners with what truly stands between them and wholehearted devotion to Christ.

8:20 "Changing Patterns of Religion and Belief in Modern America"

Brayden Royce Chambliss, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Anthropology and Sociology: This presentation explores how religion in America has shifted from a shared institution to a personal, fragmented framework. Using national data and generational analysis, it examines what secularization really means for belief, moral authority, and public identity today.

8:40 "Teaching AI Responsibly: A Case Study in Honors Composition I"

Kadence Berry, Lindenwood University

Education - Pedagogy: As AI reshapes academic writing, students need guidance, not guesswork. This presentation shares findings from a case study testing structured AI instruction in an Honors Composition course. The results reveal how intentional teaching can improve confidence, ethical awareness, and understanding of AI's role in writing.

9:00 "The Literacy Crisis in America" (WINNER)

Lexi Shadden, Tennessee Wesleyan University

Education - Pedagogy: America's literacy rates are plummeting. For America's future, it is imperative to break this decline and turn America towards new heights of education. I will discuss the beginning of this decline, what recent events could have caused or are causing such a change, and some possible solutions.

Section 13: In the Humanities—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters Salon 8

Moderator: Kate Stewart, University of Arkansas at Monticello

Judges: Dennis Hall, Angelo State University; Jodi Pilgrim, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Graduate student and alumni presenters will compete separately from undergraduates. There will be two graduate student prizes (1 in the Sciences and 1 in the Humanities) and one alumni prize awarded.

- 8:00** **“Evaluating Instructional Practices Related to Assignment Completion in a 10th-Grade World History Classroom”**
Jaden Ace Hernandez, Grand Canyon University, Alumni Member
Education - Research & Scholarship: Consistent assignment completion drives learning. My applied evaluation analyzes how instructional communication, tracking, and monitoring affect submissions in a Title I World History classroom. Using qualitative data, I identify gaps and deliver practical recommendations that strengthen routines, equity, feedback, and engagement—without adding new interventions for teachers, leaders, and school improvement.
- 8:20** **“Initial Perspectives on Cell Phone Bans in Texas Schools” (WINNER)**
Holly Jordan Dasher Huckabee, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor, Grad Student Member
Education - Research & Scholarship: Discover early insights into a statewide cell phone ban in schools and how it’s impacting student interaction, engagement, and access. Join us as we explore real experiences from campuses statewide through the lens of social cognitive theory.
- 8:40** **“Intercultural Sensitivity and Ageism in the Context of Career Decision-Making”**
Dontressa Ashford, Grand Canyon University, Grad Student Member
Education - Research & Scholarship: This study’s potential implications for higher education aging awareness are beneficial to career decision-making for professions in the field of aging.
- 9:00** **“Inclusive Instructional Practices for Supporting English Learners With Disabilities in Elementary Classrooms”**
Shamily Latha Ramadoss, Grand Canyon University, Grad Student Member
Education - Research & Scholarship: Discover practical, research-based strategies for supporting English Learners with disabilities through inclusive instruction. This session explores culturally responsive teaching, language development supports, and collaborative practices that promote access, equity, and academic success in elementary classrooms.

Member Presentations Session IV Saturday, March 14, 10:30 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Section 14: Performing Arts..... Salon 2

Moderator: Trey Shirley, Abilene Christian University

Judges: Linda Cowan, West Liberty University; Daniel Larson, Fresno Pacific University

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following five presentations.

- 10:30** **“A Dive Into Classical Music: Anatomy of an Aria”**
Brooke Renee Frampton, Shenandoah University
If you have ever wondered how an opera singer breaks down the music they sing, then this is the presentation for you! Come see an aspiring opera singer delve into the process of analyzing an aria for a performance and hear her perform that aria.
- 10:50** **“The Science of Singing: Why Different Genres Sound Different”**
Jennie Higdon, Ouachita Baptist University
Have you ever wondered what makes opera singers sound different from pop singers? Is it possible for one singer to achieve both unique sounds? What is physically happening when you sing? This live demonstration promises to be entertaining AND educational.
- 11:10** **“‘Deep River’ Arranged by Moses Hogan”**
Morgan Annslee Hunter, Carson-Newman University
This arrangement of a traditional spiritual is emotion-packed. It conveys the longing for freedom that African-American slaves felt and highlights their Christian faith as their assurance of deliverance. The note range is extensive, with the lowest E on the piano and high G in the soprano voice.
- 11:30** **“‘Reviving f-AI-th’ - Two Songs and a Conversation” (WINNER)**
Jaazaniah Salehm, Catawba College
A dream was realized but at what cost? Jaazaniah is a composer and vocalist who also experiences social anxiety. Seeking true freedom of expression, he sprinted to AI video creation only to find out that he’d failed the earth. Today he poses the question: Which is Greater: Worship or Works?

11:50 “Sounds of Resilience: Exploring Polish Identity through a Musical and Historical Lens”

Tiffany Sites, West Liberty University

This project centers my multi-movement original composition that explores Polish identity through significant moments in history. It began as a creation during my study-abroad semester in Poland.

Section 15: Psychology Salon 3

Moderator: Gilbert Eyabi, Anderson University

Judges: Tanner Babb, Huntington University; Jennifer Hicks, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

This is the final section of undergraduate presentations in Psychology. There will be up to two winners selected from all presenters in the two Psychology sections.

10:30 “Exploring the Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Growth Mindset”

Adam N. Canler, Southeastern Oklahoma State University

How do emotional beliefs shape resilience and motivation? This study examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and growth mindset among college students, revealing how emotional competencies may support adaptive beliefs about learning and failure.

10:50 “Beyond the Classroom: The Role of Parents in Academic Achievement”

Allaina Mace, Missouri Western State University

This study analyzed multiple correlations between parental involvement and academic achievement for both high school and college experiences. Academic achievement was defined using GPA, student involvement, and academic self-concept. The goal of this study was to determine if perceived parental involvement was associated with a student’s academic success.

11:10 “Older Adult Interview”

Donalin Mahaffey, Fresno Pacific University

This interview centers on a 102-year-old woman I love and care for, whose life challenges conventional views of aging. Blending theory with lived experience, it reframes late adulthood as a period of resilience, meaning, and wisdom, encouraging social workers to see elders as deeply human rather than declining.

11:30 “False Confessions: Everyone Has Their Breaking Point”

Linda Jo Bieri, Missouri Western State University

Brian Holes spent 30 years in jail before DNA evidence proved he did not commit the crime of murder. The only evidence used to convict him was his confession; his false confession. Why would someone confess to a crime they did not commit? What can be done to prevent it?

Section 16: Mixed Sciences (Group B) Salon 6

Moderator: Jeremiah Davis, Huntington University

Judges: Michelle Putnam, Lipscomb University; Carol Strong, University of Arkansas at Monticello

There will be one undergraduate winner selected from the following five presentations.

10:30 “Deep Learning for Segmentation of Bacterial Flagella in Microscopy Images”

Cristian Del Gobbo, Lyon College

Computer Science/Engineering: This presentation showcases a deep learning approach for segmenting bacterial flagella in fluorescence microscopy images. By combining U-Net and ResNet encoders, we address the challenges of thin structure detection and data scarcity. Results demonstrate strong accuracy and potential for scalable, automated analysis in microbiological imaging.

10:50 “On the Use of Sparse Voxel Octrees for 3D Pathfinding” (WINNER)

Dylan Seung-Man Skelton, Abilene Christian University

Computer Science/Engineering: 3D pathfinding for flying agents often suffers from an exponential blowup or requires heavy manual tuning. This project implements and evaluates existing data-structural and shortest-path ideas in a unified framework, demonstrating orders-of-magnitude reductions in complexity and providing a configuration-light solution released as a community resource.

11:10 “Government Efficiency Under Pressure: How Budget Cuts, Workforce Reduction, and AI Adoption Shape Federal Agency Performance”

Carolynn Kenney, California State University, Bakersfield

Political Science: Are workforce cuts and increasing the reliance on AI truly making the government more efficient? This presentation explores the rise of DOGE, budget reductions, and automation in federal agencies, revealing a hidden paradox: reforms meant to streamline government may weaken the human, ethical, and administrative foundations needed for effective governance.

11:30 “Experiencing Economies: Turning Data into Sound and Artistic Visuals”

Asin Allavudeen, Southwestern University

Economics: What if the economy could be heard and experienced, not just read? This presentation explores data sonification and artistic visual translation, turning abstract economic indicators into intuitive sensory experiences and offering new ways to understand how the economy truly behaves.

11:50 “How to Attract More Tourism to Owensboro”

Diego Laguna, Brescia University

Economics: Tired of spending too much money on vacation? Then come to my presentation!

Section 17: In the Sciences—Graduate Student Presenters Salon 7

Moderator: James Carviou, Missouri Western State University

Judges: Teddi Deka, Missouri Western State University; Steve Hoekstra, Kansas Wesleyan University

Graduate student and alumni presenters will compete separately from undergraduates. There will be two graduate student prizes (1 in the Sciences and 1 in the Humanities) and one alumni prize awarded.

10:30 “The Effects of Food Insecurity in College Students on Mental Health and Attention Bias”

Isabella Ferrara, University of Texas at Tyler, Grad Student Member

Psychology: Food insecurity (FI) impacts college students’ mental health (i.e., depressive and anxious symptoms and disordered eating). The emotion Stroop Task can be used to investigate the relationship between FI, attention bias, and food preoccupation, aiming to further inform interventions that support students.

10:50 “Primed Positivity and its Potential as a Protective Factor of Memory”

Erin Elizabeth Hulsman, University of Texas at Tyler, Grad Student Member

Psychology: What if a moment of joy after learning could strengthen memory? This research tests whether positive emotions boost recall in younger and older adults, revealing how simple emotional experience might support cognitive resilience across the lifespan.

11:10 “Ensuring the Healthy Development of Youth through Gentle Parenting”

Emily Shuck, Missouri Western State University, Grad Student Member

Psychology: What kind of parenting style are you? Your parenting style may be impacting your children more than you know.

11:30 “Breaking the Stigma: Examining Psychological Factors on Eyewitness Testimony”

Meghan Thompson, University of Texas at Tyler, Grad Student Member

Psychology: This is a research study that analyzes how severe mental illness affects eyewitness testimony, specifically the ability to recall memories. No supported research proves or disproves the misconception that eyewitnesses who have mental illnesses are not fit to be eyewitnesses in court.

Section 18: In the Humanities—Graduate Student & Alumni Presenters Salon 8

Moderator: Laura Steil, Mars Hill University

Judges: Austin Hammons, University of Arkansas at Monticello; Jodi Pilgrim, University of Mary Hardin-Baylor

Graduate student and alumni presenters will compete separately from undergraduates. There will be two graduate student prizes (1 in the Sciences and 1 in the Humanities) and one alumni prize awarded.

10:30 “Alliteration: The Other Fixed Form”

Elaine M. Ragland, Lindenwood University, Grad Student Member

Creative Writing - Original Poetry: Fixed form poetry isn't only about rhyme and meter. Alliteration has been a key aspect of traditional poetic forms in early English, German, and the Norse languages for hundreds of years. This is a presentation of original poetry, featuring found and traditional alliterative forms, making old forms new again.

10:50 “Developing an Assertive Professional Voice in Undergraduate Social Work Students: A Pedagogical Framework”

Tifani Smith, Abilene Christian University, Grad Student Member

Education - Pedagogy: How do undergraduate Social Work students learn to speak up professionally? This session introduces a theory-informed pedagogical framework for developing an assertive professional voice through reflection, structured communication strategies, and experiential learning. Attendees will explore how this approach may inform instruction in social work and related helping-profession programs.

11:10 “The Aspect of Physicality in Roman Theatre”

Izaiah Ruiz, Fresno Pacific University, Grad Student Member

Art/Music/Dance Research: Though it has been remarked by critics, new and old, as sensational or lewd in its content, Roman theatre has stood the test of time and served as a foundation of theatre as we know it today. This presentation explores why Roman audiences enjoyed such performance, despite its crude appearance.

11:30 “‘Damaged Goods:’ Portrayals of Male Victims of Childhood Sexual Abuse in DC Comics”

Rebekah Brown, Wayland Baptist University, Alumni Member

American Literature: In superhero comics, a genre rife with hypermasculinity, the choice to represent young male characters intended to be aspirationally strong and invulnerable as victims of childhood sexual abuse is unexpected. The narratives of Superboy and Damage reflect differing societal attitudes toward male CSA victims, as linked to the writers’ genders.

11:50 “Fire, Fantasies, and Futility: Why Hope Hurts in Contemporary Literature”

Laura Hand, Fresno Pacific University, Grad Student Member

World Literature: Contemporary novels promise catharsis yet deliver ambiguity. Reading *The Road*, *Never Let Me Go*, and *The Trees* through Lauren Berlant’s cruel optimism, I argue hope sustains and wounds. Attachments to survival, love, and justice become traps, mirroring climate anxiety and injustice—and forcing readers to confront the fragility of their futures.

End of Presentations List