Dr. Trisha Yarbrough Student Collaborative Research Project Competition

Call for Projects 2025-26

"Magic Through Collaboration: Reimagining the Impossible"

Alpha Chi's collaborative research theme this year is *Magic Through Collaboration: Reimagining the Impossible*. Academic inquiry should move beyond the known and assumptions of what has been possible into new intellectual terrain, fearlessly reimagining areas in which hope for a solution has been lost. Alpha Chi encourages its members to explore beyond their own discipline as they work with other fields to make new discoveries or look at old ones in a new light. This sort of collaboration can lead to "magic" and open us to exciting possibilities through new research or new takes on old solutions.

The 2026 Alpha Chi National Convention will be hosted in Orlando, Florida, near Disney's Magic Kingdom. What a perfect place to be inspired!

Thus, Alpha Chi invites collaborative research projects from student researchers on this year's theme. Each team will develop a focused project that is relevant to the majors and research interests of the team members that contributes something original to a scholarly conversation. The element of "originality" could take several forms: the results of scientific experiments or surveys, viewing existing scholarship through a new lens, or adding a creative element to the research.

Who Benefits from Collaborative Research?

- **Your student researchers**—improving their critical thinking and interpersonal working skills
- **Campus chapters**—maximizing research and creative talents and promoting interdisciplinary collaboration
- **The academic community at large**—the resulting written report may become published in *Aletheia* which shares your peer-reviewed research with the world

Competitive projects are those with divergent disciplines integrating around a common goal, rather than piecing separate projects together—collaborative rather than segmented—with the work effort shared in a balanced way across the team's membership. The paper needs to be scholarly and delivered in a common voice. During the presentation, extemporaneous speaking is preferred, as the judges and audience will have an opportunity to ask questions.

Below are some example projects that invite participants to fuse their unique expertise, challenging them to dream bigger, think bolder, and create something truly magical.

- Students from Psychology, Theater, and Computer Science build immersive virtual reality experiences that let users inhabit the world from the viewpoint of someone drastically different from themselves.

- Art majors, Film scholars, and Communications students could team up and look at the way past decades imagined the future. What can we learn about our own attempts to imagine the future by seeing what past thinkers (mis)imagined?

- Architecture, Social Anthropology, and Comparative Politics majors examine Singapore's public housing from a design, cultural, and governance lens and then contrast it with U.S. housing policies to understand how civic trust and design aesthetics shape perceptions of public housing.

- Criminal Justice, Neuroscience, and Philosophy majors investigate how insights into brain plasticity and empathy development can inform restorative justice programs. Can understanding neural rewiring support reentry frameworks that heal rather than punish?

- A team of students from Engineering, Music, and Physics create entirely new musical instruments that defy convention, perhaps resulting in a performance of sounds never heard before.

Awards & Distribution

$5,000 First Place and **$2,500 Second Place** (The second-place prize is awarded only when the number and quality of projects justify such.)

Each award will be split evenly between the Alpha Chi student team members after each member has submitted to the national office the documentation needed to claim their portion of the prize.

Collaborative Team Composition

- Each team must consist of 3-5 Alpha Chi student members representing at least 3 distinct academic disciplines or departments.
- A team's membership may be comprised of either one chapter's members OR of members from more than one chapter. However, a chapter may only be represented on one team per competition.
- Graduate student members are welcome to participate, but the team composition must be at least 2/3 undergraduate members during the Fall 2025 semester.
- Student members must serve as the principal researchers and writers, but the team is encouraged to identify a faculty mentor who is dedicated to the team's success.

Declaring Intention to Compete

- By **October 1, 2025**, one student team representative must complete the **Intention to Compete Form** (available soon) which will ask for the project's title, an abstract, and information on the team's composition.

Competition Elements

(1) Written Research Report
- 12-20 pages total (page count includes title page, citations, appendices, etc.)
- Double-spaced; 1" margins
- Title page must include each member's name, classification, discipline, part in the research project, and an overview describing how the team planned, divided, and conducted its collaborative project.
- Submit by email no later than **February 15** to office@alphachihonor.org.

(2) Live Presentation with Q&A
- 10-minute presentation followed by a 4- or 5-minute question and answer period (questions or comments from judges will have priority).
- Each team must have at least one student member presenting the project in person to a multidisciplinary panel of judges during the Spring 2026 national convention. If the team has only one student able to present in person, the national office will work with the team to see if including one other team member via Zoom might be possible.

(3) Printed Poster
- Dimensions: max. 3' high x 4' wide. This will accompany the oral presentation.
- Bring poster to Alpha Chi Central at check-in on **March 12** for display and judging prior to presentation.
- To enhance audience visibility, up to 10 visual slides of content from your poster may be shown during the presentation.

Review of Deadlines Prior to Live Presentation
1st **Deadline: 10-01-2025** (declaration of team composition and working title/abstract)
2nd **Deadline: 02-15-2026** (written report)
3rd **Deadline: 03-12-2026** (printed poster)