



## Dr. Trisha Yarbrough Student Collaborative Research Project Competition

### “Living Healthy in an Online World”

*Call for Projects 2026-27 (1<sup>st</sup> deadline Oct. 1)*

Alpha Chi encourages its student membership to explore beyond their own disciplines as they work with other fields to look at existing scholarship through a new lens to benefit a current issue, make new academic discoveries, or develop creative new solutions for existing or anticipated problems. Thus, Alpha Chi invites collaborative research projects from student researchers on this year’s theme.

This year’s competition theme, ***Living Healthy in an Online World***, asks us to consider how recent technological developments are impacting media consumption and distrust, modern civil discourse, mental health, the environment, and scientific progress, just to name a few. It is important that we work to ensure the sustainability of our increasingly online world.

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. Since 2027 is a non-convention year, the event for the final presentations will be held online during a virtual event in early April. **Please review all competition elements on page 2 as the competition has been modified.**

#### 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**—their resulting written report may become published in *Aletheia* which shares undergraduate, 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.

#### Example Projects to Stir Creativity – *Feel free to take one as is or simply use them as inspiration!*

- Majors from political science, communications, and marketing might examine the emergent dangers of “Deep Fakes” used during elections to vilify political opponents and distort voting through targeted online advertisements.
- Students studying history, pre-law, and advertising might build a project exploring the balance between First Amendment rights and in what ways AI-generated advertisements do (or do not) count as a type of Free Speech.
- A group might combine the fields of environmental studies, economics, chemistry, and computer science to look at the best policies to prevent newly built data centers from stressing the local environment without hindering economic growth.
- Majors from psychology, computer science, and criminology might team up to look at what psychological factors make citizens more resistant (or more vulnerable) to new social engineering techniques or the latest online scams.
- Students in business, sports medicine, and biology might fashion an experiment testing which exercise apps sold on the market seem most cost effective in encouraging healthy activity, then determine whether the most popular or best-selling apps are the most medically effective ones.
- Art, music, and math majors might explore how online availability of artwork has statistical connections or correlations with the public’s perception of well-being and peace and whether exploring art and music online has the same results as viewing it in person.

## 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 whose work on the project will represent at least 3 distinct academic disciplines.**
- 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 2026 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

- **Due October 1**, one student team representative must complete this online [Intention to Compete Form](#) which will ask for the project's title, an abstract, and information on the team's composition.

## Competition Elements

### Qualifying Rounds

#### 1. Written Research Report - **Due March 10**

- 12-20 pages (page count includes title page, citations, appendices, etc.); double-spaced; 1" margins
- Title page must include each member's name and Fall 2026 classification, their academic discipline and role in the project, and a project overview describing how the team planned, divided, and conducted its collaborative project.
- Submit report by email to [office@alphachihonor.org](mailto:office@alphachihonor.org).

#### 2. Recorded Video Presentation with Slides – **Due March 25**

- 15-minute recorded video presentation to be made publicly available online on April 2. All team members should be featured in the video.
- To enhance audience engagement, up to 10 digital slides may be incorporated into the video presentation. Make sure they aren't too small to be seen when displayed in your video.
- Submit video by email to [office@alphachihonor.org](mailto:office@alphachihonor.org).

## Selection of Finalists

All team presentations and written reports will be made available for viewing online. The judges will select up to four teams based on the qualifying rounds that will advance to the final round of the competition. **These finalists will be notified by April 2 and given their Q&A time slot.**

## Finalist Q&A Event

During a virtual event currently scheduled for **April 10**, each finalist's presentation will be played by the host of the event and be followed by 5 minutes of live Q&A (questions from judges will have priority). At least two student team members, but ideally as many as possible, should be present for their team's live Q&A portion. This will be the final element of the competition before the judges select the winning team/s, with that announcement at the end of the day's activities.