



**Spring 2025 Interdisciplinary
Student Research Symposium**

Saturday, April 12, 2025

Program



AVE MARIA
UNIVERSITY™

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Welcome

Thank you for being here and for taking the time to learn from our students, who have devoted countless hours towards researching their respective subjects. Their dedication to the pursuit of knowledge has truly made their professors proud.

This Symposium demonstrates the extraordinary variety of scholarship going on at this institution. It is an interdisciplinary event. You will hear from a variety of different majors, from Biochemistry to Marine Biology, from Philosophy to Literature. Overall, we have twenty different majors represented.

St. John Paul II repeatedly underscored the importance of research in *Ex Corde Ecclesiae*, a papal document critical to the mission of Ave Maria University. John Paul II explains that a Catholic University:

“is a place of research, where scholars *scrutinize reality* with the methods proper to each academic discipline, and so contribute to the treasury of human knowledge. Each individual discipline is studied in a systematic manner; moreover, the various disciplines are brought into dialogue for their mutual enhancement.”

He continues:

“In addition to assisting men and women in their continuing quest for the truth, this research provides an effective witness, especially necessary today, to the Church’s belief in the intrinsic value of knowledge and research.”

At this Symposium, our students’ research underscores Ave Maria University’s commitment to the continuing quest for truth. By producing excellent scholarship, our students demonstrate the intrinsic value of knowledge and research.

Excellence in scholarship contributes toward a thriving intellectual climate. In his *Idea of a University*, St. John Henry Newman writes,

“...it [a university] contemplates neither moral impression nor mechanical production; it professes to exercise the mind neither in art nor in duty; its function is intellectual culture.”

Our hope is that this Symposium will contribute towards the end of affirming and further solidifying the intellectual culture here on campus. We hope that you enjoy and appreciate what you get to learn from our students. Please know how grateful we are that you have elected to join us today.

May God bless you and Our Lady keep you,

Ronald Freeze, Ph.D. – Chair of AMU Research Committee

Agnes Berki, Ph.D. – President of Phi Kappa Phi (AMU Chapter)

John Spadaccini, M.S. – Phi Kappa Phi Public Relations Officer (AMU Chapter)

Acknowledgements

The Honor Society of Phi Kappa Phi, AMU Chapter and the Research Committee would like to thank the following for their assistance with the success of the Second Annual Interdisciplinary Student Research Symposium:

Research Committee

- Dr. Dan Davy, ex officio
- Mr. Dan Schreck, ex officio
- Dr. Ron Freeze, Chair
- Dr. Rodney Burton
- Dr. Jessica Schnepf
- Dr. Sam Shephard
- Mr. John Spadaccini
- Dr. Lidiya Zubyska

Student Organizers

- Gabriela Breen
- Kayla Dang
- Kathryn DeGregoria
- Julia Fernandez
- Isabella Kaufman
- Vivianna Gray - Marketing/Promotion

Volunteer Judges

- Dr. Tony Barbosa
- Dr. Agnes Berki
- Dr. Mary Blanchard
- Prof. Jacob Blanchard
- Dr. Barry David
- Dr. Raul Enad
- Dr. Ronald Freeze
- Dr. William Gonch
- Dr. Joseph Guernsey
- Dr. Alexander Henderson
- Ms. Teresa Henderson
- Prof. Mary Hunt
- Prof. LisaAnn Iijima
- Dr. John Jasso
- Dr. Tom Martin
- Dr. Seana McGuire
- Dr. Matthew Mosher
- Dr. Jessica Schnepf
- Dr. Samuel Shephard
- Dr. Stephen Thong
- Dr. Sandra Tirado
- Dr. Dario Valdebenito

Student Volunteers

- Jacqueline Barbaret
- Luke Deakos
- Tyler Delyon
- Danielle DiMaio
- Brennan Lewis
- Alanna McCann
- Gracie Milam
- Kayla Mudron
- William Niziolek
- Victoria Smith
- Maria Talafuse
- Alex Veneziano
- Agnes Worley

Audio Visual Department

- John Paul Hare, Coordinator of Audio/Visual Setup and Staff

Aladdin Campus Dining

- Amy DeStefano, Food Service Supervisor and Staff

Symposium Schedule

- 8:00 a.m. Registration/Information Table
- 9:00 a.m. Opening Ceremony in O'Bryan Performance Hall
Opening Prayer – Fr. Joseph Lugalambi, Ph.D., Director of Campus Ministry
Opening Remarks – Dr. Ronald Freeze, Chair of the Research Committee
Welcome Address – Dr. Roger Nutt, Provost, V.P. of Academic Affairs, and Professor of Theology
- 10:00 a.m. Poster Session
- 11:00 a.m. Poster Session
- 12:00 p.m. Lunch in Student Union Ballroom
- 1:00 p.m. Panel Session 1 in Prince 114, Prince 115 and Prince 116
- 2:00 p.m. Panel Session 2 in Prince 115 and Prince 116
- 3:00 p.m. Closing Ceremony in O'Bryan Performance Hall
Welcome – Mr. Mark Middendorf, President of Ave Maria University
Keynote Presenter – Mr. Danial Schreck, Chief Strategy Officer, Director of The Institute at Ave Maria University, and Vice President of Enrollment
Award Presentation – President Mark Middendorf, Dr. Agnes Berki, Chair of the Biology Department and Professor of Biology, Dr. Jessica Schnepp, Assistant Professor of Literature, and Dr. Lidiya Zubytzka, Assistant Professor of Politics
Closing Prayer - Fr. Joseph Lugalambi, Ph.D., Director of Campus Ministry
- 4:00 p.m. Reception

List of Student Presenters

Student Name	Major(s)	Class Year	Research Advisor
Theresa Battis	Biochemistry	Senior	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Kayla Dang	Biochemistry	Senior	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Luke Deakos	Biochemistry	Senior	Patrick Hillesheim, Ph.D. Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Martin Gonzales	Biochemistry	Senior	Rodney Burton, Ph.D.
Gracemarie Yeh	Biochemistry	Senior	Rodney Burton, Ph.D.
Marija Scheuren	Biochemistry; Theology	Senior	Patrick Hillesheim, Ph.D.
Gabriela Breen	Biochemistry	Junior	Rodney Burton, Ph.D.
Killian Kay	Biochemistry	Junior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Cole Marsden	Biochemistry	Junior	Ronald Freeze, Ph.D. Stephen Thong, Ph.D.
Joseph Cooper	Biochemistry	Sophomore	Patrick Hillesheim, Ph.D.
Michael Gotlund	Biochemistry	Sophomore	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Faith Romero	Biochemistry	Sophomore	Rodney Burton, Ph.D. Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Alexandria Stumpf	Biochemistry; Physics	Sophomore	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Bree McAfee	Biochemistry	Freshman	Stephen Thong, Ph.D.
Zofia Sielaff	Biochemistry	Freshman	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Melissa Vo	Biochemistry	Freshman	Stephen Thong, Ph.D.
Lilly Bohman	Biology	Senior	Ronald Freeze, Ph.D. Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Isabella Kaufman	Biology	Senior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Panna Lukacs	Biology	Senior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Maria Matig-a	Biology	Senior	Rodney Burton, Ph.D. Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Tosin Akinmolayan	Biology	Junior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D. Ronald Freeze, Ph.D.
Zachary Lang	Biology	Junior	Sandra Tirado, Ph.D.
Elizabeth Laville	Biology	Junior	Sandra Tirado, Ph.D.
Tiffany Le	Biology	Junior	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Ava Martin	Biology	Junior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Madeleine Hicks	Biology	Sophomore	Agnes Berki, Ph.D. Ms. Panna Lukacs
Isabela Snyder	Biology	Freshman	Tony Barbosa, Ph.D.
Kate Schexnailder	Communications; Classics & Early Christian Literature	Senior	John Jasso Ph.D.
Noah Peres	Communications	Junior	Fr. Guy Mansini, Ph.D.
Isabela Briggs	Communications	Sophomore	John Jasso Ph.D.
Antonio Iijima	Computer Science Classics & Early Christian Literature	Junior	Saverio Perugini, Ph.D.
Jack Cavanaugh	Economics; Politics	Senior	Lidiya Zubytska, Ph.D.
Frances Sukley	Environmental Science	Senior	Sandra Tirado, Ph.D.

Jenna Josten	Environmental Science; Communications	Junior	Samuel Shephard, Ph.D.
Marlayna Marulanda-Rea	Environmental Science	Sophomore	Sandra Tirado, Ph.D.
Abigail Moreno	Exercise Physiology	Senior	Stephen Wirick, Ph.D.
Matthew King	Health Science	Senior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Clara Schreffler	Health Science; Theology	Senior	Agnes Berki, Ph.D.
Rosie Hall	Literature	Senior	William Gonch Ph.D.
Emily Campau	Literature	Junior	William Gonch Ph.D.
Juliana Marchese	Literature	Junior	Jessica Schnepf, Ph.D.
Donte Brooks	Marine Biology	Senior	Samuel Shephard, Ph.D.
Charlotte Palmer	Marine Biology	Junior	Samuel Shephard, Ph.D.
Bridget Bogan	Philosophy	Senior	Maria Fedoryka Ph.D.
Karen Acosta	Politics	Senior	Independent Research
Kathryn Ray	Politics	Senior	Lidiya Zubytska, Ph.D.
Joshua Ray	Politics	Senior	Seana McGuire, D.C.L.
Ella Rose Gibson	Politics; Psychology	Sophomore	Lidiya Zubytska, Ph.D.
Luke Calnan	Quantitative Economics	Junior	Gabriel Martinez, Ph.D.
John Logan	Theology; Philosophy	Senior	T. Adam Van Wart, Ph.D.

Poster Session

10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Name	Major	Poster Number
Tosin Akinmolayan	Biology	1
Theresa Battis	Biochemistry	2
Lilly Bohman	Biology	3
Gabriela Breen	Biochemistry	28
Donte Brooks	Marine Biology	21
Joseph Cooper	Biochemistry	4
Kayla Dang	Biochemistry	5
Luke Deakos	Biochemistry	6
Martin Gonzales	Biochemistry	29
Michael Gotlund	Biochemistry	7
Madeleine Hicks	Biology	13
Antonio Iijima	Computer Science; Classics & Early Christian Literature	9
Jenna Josten	Environmental Science; Communication	21
Isabella Kaufman	Biology	10
Killian Kay	Biochemistry	11
Matthew King	Health Science	12
Zachary Lang	Biology	8
Elizabeth Laville	Biology	15
Tiffany Le	Biology	5
Panna Lukacs	Biology	14
Cole Marsden	Biochemistry	16
Ava Martin	Biology	17
Marlayna Marulanda-Rea	Environmental Science	18
Bree McAfee	Biochemistry	19
Abigail Moreno	Exercise Physiology	20
Charlotte Palmer	Marine Biology	21
Faith Romero	Biochemistry	22
Marija Scheuren	Biochemistry; Theology	4
Clara Schreffler	Health Science; Theology	23
Zofia Sielaff	Biochemistry	24
Isabela Snyder	Biology	26
Alexandria Stumpf	Biochemistry; Physics	25
Frances Sukley	Environmental Science	15
Melissa Vo	Biochemistry	27
Gracemarie Yeh	Biochemistry	29

Panel Session 1

1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Panel 1A - Literature in Prince 114

Name	Major	Paper Title
Rosie Hall	Literature	"I have always been scared of you": Flannery O'Connor and Sylvia Plath on the Fear of "Foreign Bodies" in Post-War America
Juliana Marchese	Literature	Flannery O'Connor: Calvinist or Catholic?
Emily Campau	Literature	"To smolder and to blaze": Eye Imagery and the Book of Revelation in Flannery O'Connor's "Revelation"

Panel 1B – Rhetoric and Ethics in Prince 115

Name	Major	Paper Title
Isabela Briggs	Communications	The Fisher of Men: The Christian Preacher as the Fulfillment of the Classical Rhetor
Kate Schexnailder	Communications; Classics & Early Christian Literature	To Teach, To Delight, To Move: A Classical Understanding of Intrinsic Motivation
John Logan	Theology; Philosophy	Christian Ethics and Affectivity: A Rehabilitation of the Heart in the Moral Life

Panel 1C – Public Policy in Prince 116

Name	Major	Paper Title
Kathryn DeGregoria	Politics	The Interconnectivity of Immigration: Examining International Migration Policies' Potential Impact on Fertility Rates
Ella Rose Gibson	Politics; Psychology	Baby to Order: Contrasting Surrogacy Ideology and Policy in Thailand and Russia
Luke Calnan	Quantitative Economics	The Effects of Income on Fertility Choices in the United States

Panel Session 2

2:00 p.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Panel 2A – Art and Philosophy in Prince 115

Name	Major	Paper Title
Noah Perez	Communications	“As souls unbodied, bodies unclothed must be...” Contrasting Pornographic and Artistic Representations of the Unclothed Person with St. Thomas
Bridget Bogan	Philosophy	Nakedness For the Sake of Art: Defining the Moral Limits of Unclothed Figures in Art

Panel 2B – Government and Politics in Prince 116

Name	Major	Paper Title
Karen Acosta	Politics	The Republic of Ecuador
Jack Cavanaugh	Economics; Politics	Let Freedom Ring: A Comparative Analysis of the U.S. Democratizations of Japan and Iraq
Joshua Ray	Politics	Beyond Integralism: Aquinas and the Limits of Political Moralism

Keynote Address
O'Bryan Performance Hall
3:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

vita activa: application and the relational animal by Daniel Schreck



Daniel C. Schreck joined the University on the feast of the Annunciation in 2024 as Chief Strategy Officer and inaugural Director of The Institute. He spent nearly two decades in and around New York City, including 14+ years as a partner at Equinox Partners, a hedge fund with a value-investing lineage tracing back to Warren Buffett. Earlier, he worked as an international marketing consultant for Sony Music and was the first director of young adult outreach for the Archdiocese of New York.

Daniel has held various roles in government and non-profits. He was a Presidential appointee in the first Trump administration and served in the representative town government of Greenwich, Connecticut. He has been on the boards of The Knights of Columbus Charitable Fund, Avail NYC, The Culture of Life Foundation, and The Catholic Artists Society. He currently serves as President and Chairman of the Jerome Lejeune Foundation USA.

He holds degrees from Franciscan University (BA, Biology), Athenaeum Regina Apostolorum (Licentiate, Bioethics), and Columbia Business School (MBA). His work has appeared in *The Wall Street Journal*, *Fox News*, and *The New Criterion*. A member of Legatus, Daniel and his wife Annie have nine children and split their time between Ave Maria and off-grid summers in New Hampshire.