

2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

RESEARCHERS, TEACHERS, AND CHANGEMAKERS:
JAX STATE FACULTY AT WORK



NOVEMBER 6TH
MERRILL HALL



FACULTY COMMONS
JACKSONVILLE STATE UNIVERSITY



2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM - PRESENTED BY FACULTY COMMONS

For Questions and Support, Contact: mmecham@jsu.edu - broberts@jsu.edu

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A NOTE FROM FACULTY COMMONS

Dear Jax State Faculty,

Welcome to the 2025 Faculty Research Symposium, our annual celebration of the outstanding research, scholarship, and creative work taking place across Jacksonville State University. Now in its fourth year, this event has become one of my favorite Faculty Commons traditions because it brings together faculty from every corner of campus to share ideas, discoveries, and projects that reflect the very best of who we are as a learning community. Each presentation represents not only hard work and expertise, but also the curiosity and passion that drive our university forward.

This year's theme, *Researchers, Teachers, and Changemakers: Jax State Faculty at Work*, highlights the diversity of scholarship represented here today and the many ways our faculty shape their fields, their classrooms, and their communities. To better reflect that range of impact, we've introduced a new structure for the Symposium, organizing presentations into distinct tracks for Research & Scholarship, Teaching & Learning, and Creative Works. These tracks allow us to showcase not just what our faculty study, but also how they teach, create, and inspire, reflecting the full scope of the work that defines Jacksonville State.

I want to sincerely thank every faculty member who chose to present today. Sharing your work takes time and effort, and your participation helps make this event meaningful for all of us. To our volunteer judges, thank you for giving your thoughtful attention to the work your colleagues are showcasing today. We hope you enjoyed learning from your peers. I also want to say a special thanks to the Faculty Research Symposium Committee for being eager, fun, and energetic during the planning and execution process this year.

And finally, to everyone attending in support of your colleagues, thank you for being part of this day. Your presence embodies the collaborative spirit that makes Jacksonville State such a special place to teach and to learn.

Whether you are presenting, judging, attending, or helping behind the scenes, please know how much I appreciate your contribution. Together, we continue to build a tradition that honors the many ways our faculty create, discover, and share knowledge.

With gratitude and appreciation,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mica Meckam". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Director, Faculty Commons

ABOUT THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM

Presentation Tracks

This year's symposium introduces three distinct tracks to better reflect the variety of faculty work at Jax State. By adding Scholars, Teachers, and Changemakers, we've created space for peer-reviewed scholarship, innovative teaching practices, and emerging ideas or projects still in development. These tracks ensure that all forms of faculty contribution are recognized and celebrated.

1

Scholars (Peer-Reviewed Scholarly/Creative Activity)

This track highlights faculty work that has already undergone formal peer review and has been shared (or is accepted to be shared) through publication, performance, or professional conference. In alignment with JSU's faculty evaluation standards, this track reflects the Boyer model of scholarship, which recognizes the Scholarship of Discovery, Integration, Application, and Teaching. Scholarly/creative activity may include disciplinary research, scholarship of teaching and learning (SoTL), creative works in the literary, visual, or performing arts, or interdisciplinary projects.

2

Teachers (Best Practices in Teaching & Learning)

This track provides a space for faculty to share innovative teaching strategies, classroom practices, or pedagogical approaches that enhance student learning and engagement. Presentations may be individual or panel-based and should emphasize practical applications in the classroom.

3

Changemakers (Ideas for Further Research & Innovation)

This track features early-stage projects, emerging ideas, or innovative approaches that are in development but not yet peer-reviewed or published. Presenters may seek feedback, explore potential collaborations, or share pilot findings.

Symposium Goals

- To provide faculty with an outlet to share research and creative scholarly works with the JSU faculty community.
- To showcase innovative teaching practices
- To provide a collaborative space for faculty to connect with colleagues across disciplines.
- To celebrate the scholarly accomplishments and achievements of the faculty at JSU
- To share and encourage innovative ideas with faculty members outside of one's own discipline.

PRESENTATION FORMATS

Presentation Formats & Judging Information

Short Presentation (15 Minutes)

An abbreviated presentation on a topic of the faculty member's choosing within their selected track. Sessions will include three short presentations grouped into one hour.

Long Presentation (25 Minutes)

Expanded presentation on a topic of the faculty member's choosing within their selected track.

Panel Presentation (1 Hour)

Collaborative discussion of a focused theme related to research, scholarship, teaching, or creative work. Panels may include up to six members and should allow time for Q&A with the audience.

Poster Presentation (1 Hour)

Visual display of individual faculty's scholarly or creative work.

Creative/Other Presentation (1 Hour)

Other presentations include creative, musical, display, or performance pieces. Group presentations are allowed.

Judging Guidelines & Scoring Rubrics



EVENT SCHEDULE

Times & Locations

9:00-10:00 AM Basement, Merrill Hall	Morning Refreshments
9:00-11:00 AM Basement & 1st Floor, Merrill Hall	Concurrent Morning Sessions
11:30-12:30 PM B01, Merrill Hall *Lunch served 11:00-11:30 AM *Keynote Lecture Begins at 11:30 AM	Keynote Luncheon Featuring Dr. Sarah Donley, Professor of Sociology & 2025 Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award Winner
1:00-4:00 PM Basement & 1st Floor, Merrill Hall	Concurrent Afternoon Sessions
5:00 PM Atrium, Merrill Hall	Awards Reception *Faculty Only

FACULTY REFLECTIONS: CONNECTING IDEAS

Concurrent Morning Session Notes (9:00-11:00 AM)

Which session(s) did you attend?

- PRESENTERS:
 - TRACK(S):
 - TITLE:
-

As you listen...

- How do today's presentations across the Scholarship, Teaching and Changemaker tracks spark new questions or possibilities for your own work? Jot down ideas, insights, and potential collaborations that come to mind as you learn from colleagues across disciplines.
-

Notes:

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

9:00-9:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
B10
(Basement)**

**Panel
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Why is an Interdisciplinary Approach Needed for AI ?

Monica Trifas, Associate Professor of Computer Science; Dr Benjamin Gross, Director of the Jax MIX, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology & Political Science; Dr. Christopher Ogden, Associate Professor of Computer Science; Dr. Phillip Ogden, Assistant Professor of Chemistry

Understanding why various fields of study must collaborate on artificial intelligence (AI) development is akin to recognizing that a thriving garden requires more than just seeds; it needs sunlight, water, soil, and the watchful eye of someone who understands growth cycles. AI isn't just a technical construct; it interacts with the intricate weave of human existence, influencing our decisions, shaping our environments, redefining our daily rhythms, and inviting us to consider the nature of humans themselves. Bringing together minds from disparate areas allows us to see AI not merely as algorithms and data but as a powerful force capable of altering the very fabric of individual lives and social relations. Consider the simple act of choosing what to eat or how to travel; AI is increasingly influencing these fundamental aspects, guiding us toward options it deems optimal based on programmed criteria. If those criteria only prioritize efficiency or profit, without accounting for human nature, human well-being, cultural preferences, or environmental impact, the resulting systems could lead us down paths detrimental to our collective and personal flourishing. In summary, AI development benefits immensely from incorporating perspectives beyond purely technical considerations. In this discussion, we present reflections on the development of AI, discussions of the current status of AI, and anticipate the potential benefits and concerns for the future of AI, from the perspective of different substantive fields of study.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

9:00-9:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
B15
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Artificial Intelligence in Digital Forensics: Implications for Workforce Well-Being and Professional Practice

Sadik Arin, Assistant Professor of Criminal Justice and Forensic Investigation; Dr. Ahmet Guler, Associate Teaching Professor of Criminology, Penn State University

Based on a systematic literature review, this research examines how artificial intelligence (AI) is reshaping the job satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and well-being of digital forensics professionals. Using the PRISMA protocol (Moher et al., 2009), the review synthesizes empirical and conceptual studies published between 2000 and 2025 to assess the methodological rigor and real-world impact of AI adoption in digital investigations. The analysis applies the "What Works, What Doesn't, What's Promising" framework (Sherman et al., 1998) and the Maryland Scientific Methods Scale (Farrington et al., 2002) to evaluate evidence strength across 27 peer-reviewed studies. Findings will illustrate how automation, interpretability, and ethical challenges influence job satisfaction, dissatisfaction, stress, and role identity among digital forensic examiners. The study provides a foundation for future empirical testing of Herzberg's Motivation-Hygiene Theory in AI-enabled forensic practice.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Human Rights Shaming and International Arms Embargoes

Hoshik Nam, Assistant Professor of Sociology and Political Science

This study examines whether public condemnations by international human rights bodies influence arms embargoes. It argues that UN human rights condemnations raise the political costs of inaction, increasing the likelihood and effectiveness of embargoes. Using UN and EU embargo data, the analysis finds that condemnations by the UN Human Rights Council correlate with a higher probability of embargo imposition, though this effect weakens when accounting for direct repression levels. The findings also show that naming and shaming strengthen embargo effectiveness by reinforcing international support and stigmatizing violators, suggesting that public condemnation legitimizes embargoes but depends on the broader human rights context.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

9:00-9:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
115
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

A Field-Wide Examination of Assignments in the TPC Service Course

Jess Griffith, Assistant Professor of English, Professional Writing

Using field-wide service course data from 90 institutions, this research will present findings on the types of assignments in the technical and professional service course. Overall, this presentation will provide attendees with a look at the types of assignments within the field of TPC to serve as a baseline for the field, and to offer possibilities of how we can strengthen assignments to better meet students where they are. It is the hope that these field-wide insights can assist TPC program administrators (PAs) and faculty in considering the kinds of assignments that should be included in their own service courses.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Beyond Publication: What Authorship Means to Students in Course-Based Research Experiences

Ashley Turner, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education; Anil Challa and Katelyn Cooper

As conversations about research ethics, authorship equity, and AI-integration continue to evolve, understanding how students perceive authorship in course-based undergraduate research experiences (CUREs) is more relevant than ever. This presentation revisits our 2021 CBE-Life Sciences Education study, Student Perceptions of Authoring a Publication Stemming from a CURE, which examined how first-year molecular genetics students experienced authorship and publication. While students described professional growth and enhanced belonging in science, they also revealed incomplete conceptions of authorship and accountability. In light of 2025's changing research climate, this talk explores "authorship literacy" as a critical skill in CURE design, integrating responsible conduct of research (RCR), transparency, and equity. We will discuss emerging questions around AI's role in authorship, inclusive recognition of contribution, and how explicit authorship training can empower students to ethically navigate collaborative science.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

9:00-9:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
118
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

What We Know and What We're Missing: Emotional Intelligence Research in Educational Leadership and Counseling Practice

Kimberly Warfield, Associate Professor of Professional Counseling and Leadership; Dr. Stacey Gill, Associate Professor, Instructional Leadership; Dr. Shakenya Burch-Oliver, Assistant Professor, Counseling; Dr. Randi Peel, Assistant Professor, Instructional Leadership; Dr. Torsten Dryden, Assistant Professor, Counseling

Emotional intelligence (EI) has emerged as critical for educational leadership and counseling effectiveness, yet significant gaps remain between research and practice. This panel synthesizes cutting-edge research (2022-2025) examining what we definitively know about EI's impact and what critical gaps limit both scholarship and application. Our interdisciplinary team—three instructional leadership professors (former K-12 administrators), one school counselor in higher education, and one mental health counselor in higher education—presents integrated findings across four domains: (1) How principal EI creates cascading effects on teachers and students; (2) EI's protective role in counselor effectiveness and burnout prevention; (3) Gaps in leadership and counselor preparation programs; (4) Cross-sector measurement challenges. Each panelist presents key research findings and critical gaps (3-4 minutes), followed by integrated discussion of research priorities and practical implications. This session bridges academic rigor with practitioner relevance, offering actionable insights for both researchers and professionals.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Flood Hazard Assessment and Roadway Vulnerability-Case Study: Emerald Mountain Expressway on Tallapoosa River Montgomery, Alabama

Saeideh Gharehchahi, Assistant Professor of Geography

Rivers are naturally dynamic and constantly evolving, whereas bridges and roadways are engineered the way to remain stationary in position. The migration of rivers and their associated geomorphic processes make bridges and roadways at river crossings more vulnerable to flood-related hazards, particularly because they are essential nodes in utility and transportation networks. This study integrates precipitation data with landcover and soil data into a two-dimensional (2D) hydraulic modeling approach, to estimate the infiltration rates of different episodes and roadway vulnerability in Tallapoosa River Floodplain.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-10:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
B10
(Basement)**

**Panel
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Routes, Recognition, and Repertoires: Legibility and Lepcha Textiles

Sarah Faulkner, Art and Design

Lepcha textiles, woven from nettle fibers collected from their homelands in the eastern Indian highlands, have long been regarded as markers of the Sikkimese community's indigenous identity. Since at least the seventh century, Lepcha makers in Sikkim have worked within material flows linking the Tibetan Plateau, Nepal, Bhutan, and North India through border corridors of the Silk Road, where textiles, fibers, dyes, tools, and dress cultures moved with traders and migrant artisans. Today's pressures (i.e. heritage tourism, market taste, and state recognition) echo earlier moments when textiles functioned simultaneously as economic goods and cultural signifiers. Combining route-based history, material analysis, and ethnography with archives and policy, I argue that textiles operate as adaptive political technologies that render Lepcha identity legible across Tibetan, Bhutanese, colonial, and state arenas.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-10:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
B15
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

A Life Most Terrible: Moral Collapse and Existential Renewal in The Death of Ivan Ilyich

Cole Woodard, Assistant Professor of Management

This presentation interprets Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* as a philosophical case of moral collapse and renewal. Integrating existential ethics (Sartre, de Beauvoir, Murdoch) with moral psychology (Bandura, Reynolds), the paper explores how avoidance and conformity erode authenticity and how crises of conscience can catalyze renewal. The analysis reframes Conservation of Resources (COR) theory as a moral-existential model that links moral exhaustion to the depletion of awareness, empathy, and meaning. Through Gerasim, Tolstoy shows how unadorned care and honesty restore coherence within systems that reward appearance over truth. The talk will connect these ideas to modern organizational life, where procedural morality and busyness mirror Ivan's world, and will propose a cyclical model of moral balance linking philosophy, psychology, and management practice.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Targeting Access and Enjoyment: A RE-AIM Evaluation of the Girls Empowering Movement

Kelsey McEntyre, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology

The Girls Empowering Movement (GEM) is an out-of-school time initiative designed to enhance girls' access to and enjoyment of physical activity. Guided by the RE-AIM framework (Reach, Effectiveness, Adoption, Implementation, and Maintenance) and using a mixed-methods approach, this study evaluated GEM's reach, its impact on activity access and enjoyment, school-level adoption and implementation, and the sustainability of participation over time. Findings indicated that girl-led programming, supportive environments, and adaptable implementation models expanded participation and fostered positive attitudes toward lifelong physical activity.

TEACHERS TRACK

Student Learning in the Age of AI

Monica Trifas, Associate Professor of Computer Science

Understanding how students learn is crucial to developing good, memorable learning experiences. By using ChadGPT (or equivalent Generative AI tools), we have to take into account the potential offered to explore new venues for our first generation students. In this presentation, I plan to explore a few techniques that can be employed to support meaningful engagement with course content for the STEM disciplines.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-10:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
110
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Societal Impact in AACSB-Accredited Business Schools: Lessons for Higher Education

Cassie Ward, Instructor of Business

This presentation explores how AACSB-accredited business schools contribute to society through teaching, research, and community engagement. It includes examples such as service learning projects that connect students with local organizations, courses that address ethical and societal issues in business, and faculty initiatives that support regional economic development and workforce advancement. These efforts show how business education strengthens communities and prepares students to apply their learning beyond the classroom. Although the examples come from business schools, the discussion extends across disciplines, offering practical ways higher education can link its mission and scholarship to meaningful outcomes for people and communities.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-10:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
115
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Regina Dal Cin: A Nineteenth-Century Bone Setter and Her Role in Italian Modernist Fiction

Carmine Di Biase, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English

Like James Joyce, who mined his brother's memoir for material and put it into stories and novels, so did Italo Svevo, who was Joyce's Italian friend in Trieste. Svevo drew from the diary of his younger brother Elio to write, among other works, his masterpiece, *Confessions of Zeno*. And from an early entry in that diary, where Elio mentions Regina Dal Cin, a folk healer who had made quite a stir in Trieste, Svevo might have found the inspiration behind several of his extraordinary characters, including his crowning achievement, Zeno Cosini.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Mentoring Rural Adolescent Girls Through the Female Antihero in YA Literature

Candice Byers, Assistant Professor of Teacher Education

This phenomenological research study focused on the experiences of rural adolescent girls reading female led multicultural young adult literature with the guidance of a female mentor teacher. Using two multicultural young adult novels one with a strong female protagonist and one with a female antihero protagonist, this five-week study sought to explore the lived experiences of 14 adolescent girls in the rural Southeast. This research underscores the importance of supporting adolescent girls as they grow and develop using a female mentor teacher and multicultural young adult literature with female protagonists.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-10:50 AM

Location & Format

**Room
118
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Containerization on Raspberry Pi: Evaluating LXC under Proxmox VE

Eric Gamess, Associate Professor of Computer Sciences;
Deuntae Winston, Graduate Student of the Master in CSSD

On one hand, containerization is gaining acceptance as a lightweight virtualization alternative to Virtual Machines (VMs). On the other hand, Single-Board Computers (SBCs) are increasing used due to their affordability, versatility, low energy consumption, and growing computational power. In this work, extensive experiments were conducted to assess the capabilities and limitations of Linux Containers (LXC) when deployed on a Proxmox VE cluster, built with Raspberry Pi (RPi) computers. The experiments aimed to determine: (1) the maximum number of containers that can be run simultaneously when varying their operating systems, (2) the maximum number of containers that can be executed in parallel when varying their allocated RAM, (3) the maximum number of containers that can be run concurrently under different SBC memory configurations, (4) the time for container migration, and (5) the network performance between two containers.

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Beyond Indeterminacy: Interactive Sonic Environments in the Age of Virtual Reality

Michelle Grosser, Assistant Professor of Music Theory

A philosophical shift in the 1960s prompted a shift in focus from music as a fixed object to a process that could include the audience. Central to the dissolution of one-way communication from performer to listener were composers such as Cage, Berio, and Stockhausen, who promoted unrepeatable, inclusive music performance that required the composer to loosen control to give performers and audience members sonic structural control over music. Today, as virtual reality becomes more integrated in our daily lives, listeners are afforded more opportunities to interact with and become immersed in music compositions. This project, following suggestions made by Buckley and Carlson, presents the early stages of a framework to understand the opportunities afforded by virtual music engagement. I will consider the perspective of the listener by exploring how spatial control influences the experience of virtual sonic environments and how this breaks down the distinct agencies of composer and listener.

CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS (9:00-11:00)

10:00-11:00 AM

Location & Format

**Room
Atrium
(2nd Floor)**

**Poster
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Effects of Blackcurrant Supplementation on Cognitive and Exercise Performance in Resistance-Trained Adults: A Randomized, Double-Blind, Placebo-Controlled Crossover Trial

Rafaela Rafajlovska; Instructor of Kinesiology

This study examined the dose-response effects of short-term blackcurrant supplementation on anaerobic exercise performance and cognitive function in resistance-trained athletes

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

GeoAI Marketing Academy

Jianping Huang, Associate Professor of Marketing; Mark Sciuchetti, Associate Professor of Geography and Senior Director of Honors and Special Programs

This 9-credit micro-credential bridges Marketing and Geospatial Analytics to meet Alabama's growing demand for skills in modern marketing research, retail analytics, and digital marketing. The program introduces the concept of Spatial Web AI framework, where digital information is anchored to physical locations, merging the digital and physical worlds. Through applied projects, students explore spatial consumer research, neuroscience marketing, and place-based branding, developing future-ready expertise at the intersection of geography science and marketing innovation.

TEACHERS TRACK

Building Blocks of AI Literacy: Teaching Ethics, Understanding, and Engagement to Undergraduates

Laura Pitts, Assistant Professor of Library Services

This poster session will explore one of the AI Literacy 200 classes and utilizing a traditional library information evaluation tool for generative AI output evaluation.

Keynote Luncheon

Featuring the 2025 Faculty Scholar Lecturer Award Winner



2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM - PRESENTED BY FACULTY COMMONS

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Keynote Speaker



DR. SARAH DONLEY
PROFESSOR, SOCIOLOGY &

2025 FACULTY SCHOLAR LECTURER AWARD WINNER

Dr. Donley joined Jacksonville State University in 2014 and teaches courses on gender, social stratification, death and dying, and sociological methods, always emphasizing the relevance of sociology in everyday life. A dedicated mentor, she frequently collaborates with students on research and co-authored publications.

Her work as an intersectional scholar examines how gender beliefs, ideology, and inequality shape experiences across varied social contexts, including funeral directing, online memorialization, LGBTQ+ life in the Deep South, and sexual violence on college campuses and social media. Her current research focuses on the growing role of Death Doulas in end-of-life care in the United States.

Outside the classroom, she enjoys cooking, outdoor activities, video games, traveling, and spending time with her two dogs, Jack and Teddy.

We can Transform Dying from a Medical Experience to a Human Experience: How Death Doulas are Reshaping End-of-Life Care in the United States

This talk looks at the work of death doulas—nonmedical caregivers who provide support, comfort, and guidance to people at the end of life and their families. Based on 40 qualitative interviews with doulas from across the United States, this talk will highlight their emergence, connection to the broader “death positivity” movement, the kinds of support they offer, their efforts to be recognized as professionals, and the challenges they face as they carve out space in end-of-life care.

KEYNOTE DETAILS

- B01 Merrill Hall
- 11:00-11:30 Lunch Served
- 11:30-12:30 Presentation



FACULTY REFLECTIONS: CONNECTING IDEAS

Faculty Keynote Luncheon Presentation (11:30-12:30 PM)

Speaker: Dr. Sarah Donley, Professor of Sociology and 2025 Faculty Keynote Lecturer Award Winner

Presentation: We can Transform Dying from a Medical Experience to a Human Experience: How Death Doulas are Reshaping End-of-Life Care in the United States

As you listen...

- As you listen to today's keynote, consider how the ideas shared connect to your own role as a researcher, teacher, and changemaker. What insights spark your curiosity, challenge your perspective, or inspire you to take action in your work or collaborations beyond today?
-

Notes:

FACULTY REFLECTIONS: CONNECTING IDEAS

Concurrent Afternoon Session Notes (1:00-4:00 PM)

Which session(s) did you attend?

- PRESENTERS:
 - TRACK(S):
 - TITLE:
-

As you listen...

- How do today's presentations across the Scholarship, Teaching, and Changemakers tracks spark new questions or possibilities for your own work? Jot down ideas, insights, and potential collaborations that come to mind as you learn from colleagues across disciplines.
-

Notes:

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

1:00-1:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
B10
(Basement)**

**Panel
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

TEACHERS TRACK

Ethical and Effective AI Integration in the College Classroom

Mysti Nichols, Instructor of English; Dr. Jennie Vaughn, Associate Professor of English; Mrs. Katelyn Walker, Instructor of English

The rapid advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) has sparked both excitement and concern across higher education. As teachers, we are tasked with not only leveraging these emerging tools to enhance teaching and learning but also guiding students toward ethical and responsible use. This panel, presented by Dr. Jennie Vaughn, Katelyn Walker, and Mysti Nichols from the JSU English Department, explores the opportunities and challenges of incorporating AI into the classroom for both instructors and students. Our discussion will highlight practical strategies for integrating AI in ways that support critical thinking, creativity, and student engagement. We will share examples of how AI can be used to improve brainstorming, drafting, and revision processes, as well as streamline grading and feedback workflows for instructors. Equally important, we will address the necessity of explicitly teaching students about ethical considerations—such as academic integrity, bias, and transparency—so they are equipped to navigate AI responsibly beyond the classroom. This panel will foster dialogue on the fears and conflicts surrounding AI in academia, including concerns about plagiarism, over-reliance on technology, and the evolving role of faculty. We will encourage attendees to consider how embracing AI as a teaching partner can prepare students for the realities of a technology-driven world while maintaining the core values of higher education. The session will conclude with an audience Q&A, providing space for participants to share their perspectives, ask questions, and collaboratively brainstorm approaches to using AI as a force for innovation rather than apprehension.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

1:00-1:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
B01
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Test of adaptations in 5000 generations of mutualism

Reshmi Upreti, Assistant Professor of Biology

This presentation focuses on the experimental evolution of microbial mutualism between *Desulfovibrio vulgaris* and *Methanococcus maripaludis*. Over 5,000 generations, these cocultures showed faster growth, evolving from doubling every 20 hours to every 5 hours. Using genomic and phenotypic analyses, the study tracks how mutations accumulate and shape adaptation within mutualistic interactions. Key findings highlight frequent nonsynonymous and missense mutations, especially in genes linked to metabolism, regulation, and transport. Some adaptations suggest altered electron/hydrogen transfer and molybdenum-related changes, indicating deeper interdependence between the two species. This work provides insight into how mutualisms evolve and the genetic basis of microbial cooperation.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Aerial Leak Detection: Thermal and RGB Drone Survey of Anniston's Water Infrastructure

Sean Chenoweth, Professor of Geosciences

This project utilized a small uncrewed aerial vehicle (UAV) equipped with thermal and RGB sensors to detect water leaks across the Anniston, AL Water Works municipal area. Multiple flight surveys were conducted during winter months, leveraging leaf-off conditions and colder temperatures to enhance thermal contrast between leaking water and the surrounding environment. High-resolution imagery was collected and processed in a lab setting to generate detailed thermal and visual maps. These maps were then distributed to field inspectors to verify suspected leak locations. The integration of aerial remote sensing with ground validation provided a cost-effective and efficient method for identifying infrastructure issues, supporting proactive maintenance and water conservation efforts.

SCHOLARS TRACK

Skinned Worlds: Virtual Reality and the Postbiological

Alicia Corts, Associate Professor of Theatre and Film

Skinning is the process by which digital and educational virtual environments give form to identity and meaning. In "Skinned Worlds: Virtual Reality and the Postbiological," Dr. Alicia Corts reframes skinning not as a superficial visual layer, but as a dramaturgical and pedagogical act, one that scripts how learners and participants inhabit, perform, and understand virtual space. By examining how presence is designed and constrained, Corts argues that every "skin" encodes power and access: it determines not just what users see, but who they are allowed to be within immersive worlds.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

1:00-1:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
B02
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

TEACHERS TRACK

No Scalpel Needed: Teaching Anatomy in 3D

David Kean, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology; Jennifer Savage Burgett, Assistant Professor & Clinical Education Coordinator for MAT; Chris M. Clark/Associate Professor and Program Director for MAT

The integration of technology into health professions education has transformed how students learn complex anatomical and clinical concepts. At Jacksonville State University, the Masters in Athletic Training Program has incorporated the Anatomage Table. The Anatomage Table is a state-of-the-art, interactive 3D dissection tool, used in the classroom to enhance student engagement and understanding. This presentation highlights how the Anatomage Table is used to bridge traditional anatomical study with applied clinical practice. Faculty guide students through interactive dissections, regional anatomy explorations, and clinical case scenarios that connect musculoskeletal structures to common injuries and evaluation techniques. By allowing students to visualize and manipulate lifelike 3D cadavers, the Anatomage Table promotes active learning and critical thinking skills that directly translate to improved clinical skills. Attendees will gain insight into how this innovative teaching tool has been implemented within the athletic training curriculum, examples of classroom applications, and reflections on student feedback. The session will demonstrate how technology can elevate anatomy education and prepare students for real-world patient care.

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Unforgivable Curses: Identity Dilemmas in a Fractured Fandom

Brianna Turgeon, Associate Professor of Sociology; Jacob Church, Assistant Professor of Sociology

In 2019, J.K. Rowling, author of the Harry Potter series, posted statements on social media that revealed her transphobic views. Her posts—and her subsequent doubling down—sparked upheaval within the fandom. In their aftermath, fans have grappled with complex identity processes as they decide whether and how to remain connected to the series. Drawing on interview data collected between 2022 and 2024, we examine how fans and former fans engage in identity work as they navigate this dilemma. The interviews (n=31) ask fans or former fans about their opinions about Harry Potter, participation in the fandom, and emotional investment before and after Rowling's transphobic public statements. Our preliminary findings suggest that participants wrestle with tensions between their identities as Harry Potter fans and other valued identities as members of, or allies to, the transgender community. While some resolve this conflict by prioritizing their allyship or trans community membership, many instead describe strategies for balancing both identities by creating and maintaining nuanced boundaries.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

1:00-1:50 PM

Location & Format

Track & Presentation Details

**Room
B02
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Mapping Roman Enslaved Agency

Lindsay Holman, Assistant Professor of History

This presentation will explore the initial phase of an ongoing research initiative to map, contextualize, and interrogate enslaved agency in the Roman world. This project is designed to be a public, digital history project for students and scholars of enslavement in the Roman Empire. During the first phase of the project, I, along with undergraduate students, Cayleigh Fitzsimmons and Madison Sims, translated and mapped sections of Livy's histories in which he detailed enslaved insurrections prior to the big three enslaved revolts (the two Sicilian enslaved Revolts and Spartacus' enslaved revolt). Madison and Cayleigh then wrote contextual essays about what could be learned about Gladiators from Graffiti and the relationship between enslaved revolt and religion. The second phase examines agency as articulated in Latin epigraphy. This presentation will report on the ongoing efforts, obstacles, and breakthroughs of this initiative.

**Room
110
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

SCHOLARLY TRACK

Little House on the Norse Frontier: Interpreting Kotið

Kathryn Catlin, Assistant Professor of Anthropology

Kotið is an unassuming patch of land on a windswept hill in North Iceland. From 2022-2024, a team of JSU students and international archaeologists revealed the story of this place through excavation. What we've learned is transforming the history of Iceland's earliest settlers, around 900 CE. This tiny site was occupied for less than a century. Were the inhabitants independent settlers, or part of nearby farms? Why did they leave when other farms persisted for a millennium? Since last fall, we've refined the interpretations a bit and are gearing up to publish a book. Come to the talk to learn a few answers, a few new ideas, and a lot more questions, and to hear about the contributions JSU students have made to the research!

SCHOLARLY TRACK

The Exponential Puzzle: Why Do Things Decay So Predictably?

Peter Bryant, Assistant Professor of Physics

The spontaneous decay of excited molecular and atomic systems, such as radioactive decay, has been routinely observed for well over 100 years. Interestingly, Quantum Mechanics, which is the appropriate theory for modeling atoms and molecules, does not contain a theoretical object that can represent decaying systems. Previous efforts to define objects with the necessary properties have resulted in incorrect or even impossible predictions for experimental results. In a recent article in the journal Foundations of Physics, we suggest an alternative approach, in which the correct decay behavior is emergent, arising from messy interactions among the messy innards of atoms and molecules. The result may be important for those working on quantum information and engineering projects, such as quantum computers. In this presentation, I will give an accessible overview of the problem and solution, and discuss why it was so much fun to study!

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

2:00-2:50 PM

Location & Format

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

Where Joy Meets Literacy: Bridging Literacy, Technology, and STEM in the Modern Classroom

Aimee Weathers, Assistant Professor, Teacher Education; Krista Gilliland, Assistant Professor; Jessica Cannon, Assistant Professor

This study looks at how technology and STEM can bring joy back into literacy. Using tools like interactive e-books, reading apps, and digital storytelling, students engage more deeply and find reading more accessible and fun. The research also highlights the impact of digital book clubs and online forums for building collaboration and motivation. When literacy connects with STEM and real-world experiences, students develop curiosity and stronger comprehension. Blending digital tools with literacy helps classrooms become places where students are excited to read and learn together.

SCHOLARS TRACK

ESG Peer Effects under Common Ownership

Xiaoqiong (Crystal) Wang, Associate Professor of Finance

This paper examines the peer effects of Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) activities under common ownership, focusing on firms from different industries and diverse locations. We find that firms commonly held by institutional investors tend to comove in their ESG activities even after excluding industry and location links. These findings are robust after controlling for endogeneity concerns. We demonstrate that common owners actively shape ESG practices, leading to greater ESG alignment among their portfolio firms through both "voice" and "exit" strategies. Additionally, the ESG peer effects are stronger in highly competitive industries and those with high stakeholder sensitivity. Our overall results underscore the monitoring role of common institutional investors.

SCHOLARS TRACK

AI vs. Human Reviews: How They Shape Consumer Decisions Online

Jianping Huang, Associate Professor, Marketing; Mark Sciuchetti, Associate Professor of Geography and Senior Director, Honors and Special Programs

Traditionally, human reviews have served as persuasive signals of credibility, evoking emotional resonance that influences consumers' purchasing decisions. However, can AI-generated reviews maintain their persuasive power despite lacking genuine human emotion and personal connections? Drawing on the Elaboration Likelihood Model (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) and Source Credibility Theory (Hovland et al., 1953), we explore whether the absence of emotional authenticity in AI-generated reviews diminishes their effectiveness in shaping consumer behavior.

**Room
B01
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

2:00-2:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
B02
(Basement)**

**Short
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

TEACHERS TRACK

Experimenting with Experience: Connecting Majors & Careers in the General Education Classroom

Joseph McMullen, English

How can we engage students in a general education course in a way that meaningfully connects to their major and/or career goals? Beyond vague references to transferable skills, is there a practical means to do so? Furthermore, is there a way to do so authentically without sacrificing core content specializations? This presentation examines experimental experiential learning lessons and projects that generated favorable results in a World Literature survey course among a highly diverse population of students.

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

From Location to Intelligence: Making Data-Driven Decisions

Dr. Benjamin B. Boozer Jr., Doughtett Professor of Finance;
Courtney Craven, Research Analyst and Operations
Coordinator for the Center for Economic Development and
Business Research.

Using Placer.ai, a location based software, to analyze business and personal financial activity.

TEACHERS TRACK

Game-Based Learning in the First-Year Writing Classroom

Seth Rhoades, Visiting Instructor of English

Game-based learning is the implementation of various elements from the realms of gaming into education to enhance instruction. Specifically, it is useful to the first-year writing classroom as it allows educators to challenge the disinterest that is becoming more common with first-year students, and it also allows educators to engage students with course material in new and interesting ways. In addition to discussing strategies for implementing game-based learning, special attention will also be given to the ways that aspects of table-top roleplaying games can be used to improve student comprehension and engagement.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

3:00-3:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
B10
(Basement)**

**Panel
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

TEACHERS TRACK

Retention, Engagement, and Readiness: A High-Impact, Experiential Learning Model

Laura Pitts, Assistant Professor of Library Services and the Provost's Fellow for Experiential Learning; Seth Johnson, Assistant Dean of the College of Arts, Humanities and Science; Ben Gross, Associate Professor of Political Science

This presentation explores the transformative potential of integrating High-Impact Practices (HIPs) and experiential learning (EL) across the curriculum to enhance student retention, engagement, and career readiness. By embedding active learning strategies into diverse courses, faculty can create more meaningful, participatory classroom experiences that connect theory to real-world application. Attendees will gain insight into how such pedagogical integration supports deeper learning, fosters engagement, and builds pathways for long-term student success.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

3:00-3:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
110
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

SCHOLARS TRACK

A Videogame of the Plague Year: Mapping Defoe's Robinson Crusoe onto Animal Crossing: New Horizons (2020)

Christopher Douglas, Associate Professor of English

Set on an island in a distant locale, the Nintendo Switch game Animal Crossing: New Horizons (2020) borrows game elements from eighteenth-century texts of exploration such as Robinson Crusoe (1719) and Gulliver's Travels (1726) in its recreation of an island setting. Set into its moment of production, the spring of 2020 and the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the action of playing the game during a moment of social isolation also recreated the action of being Robinson Crusoe, by shaping an island to the liking of the game's player. Using game studies scholar Ian Bogost's theories of play as being constructed by the imposition of limitations, this essay explores how Defoe's text is recreated, both textually and experientially, in the act of playing Animal Crossing: New Horizons during the stay at home period of the COVID-19 pandemic, and the continued interest in narratives of isolation and personal agency. -- Published in Digital Defoe in Summer 2025

SCHOLARS TRACK

The Poet Doth Protest: The Political Verse of Edna St. Vincent Millay, Re-examined.

Joanne Gates, Professor Emerita of English

I will focus on the major poems of 1940-1942, when German bombing and recorded atrocities brought America to a decisive affirmation of freedoms by finally entering the war in Europe in spite of isolationist fervor. "There Are No Islands Anymore" and the full 1940 collection this poem was part of, "Make Bright the Arrows," in addition to "The Murder of Lidice" need to be re-evaluated in the context of how they moved their first audiences. Leading up to these are the two short lyrics, "To Inez Milholland" (1921) and "Justice Denied in Massachusetts" (protesting the executions of Sacco and Vanzetti), 1927. Despite the near erasure of Millay's achievements as a voice for justice, there is important scholarship on her that deserves attention.

CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS (1:00-4:00)

3:00-3:50 PM

Location & Format

**Room
115
(1st Floor)**

**Long
Presentation**

Track & Presentation Details

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

When Does the Emergency Department Need Help the Most? Identifying Trigger Conditions of the Full Capacity Protocol
Yajun Lu, Assistant Professor of Management and Marketing

This ongoing research addresses the critical issue of emergency department (ED) crowding, a nationwide challenge with significant implications for patient safety and quality of care. We focus on the Full Capacity Protocol (FCP), a hospital-wide intervention that temporarily transfers admitted patients out of the ED to ease access block. While many hospitals rely on ad hoc or arbitrary conditions to trigger FCP, our work develops a data-driven framework to identify evidence-based trigger conditions. We develop an interpretable crowding index that predicts when ED support is most urgently needed. We validate this approach by quantifying improvements in patient length of stay under alternative FCP conditions. This research has the potential to guide hospitals in deploying ED interventions more effectively, improving patient flow and reducing the adverse impacts of overcrowding.

CHANGEMAKERS TRACK

Gratitude and Well-Being: Links to Empathy, Self-Esteem, Forgiveness, and Health
Heidi Dempsey, Professor of Psychology; Christie Shelton, Provost/EVPAA

This study investigates the relationship between gratitude and key psychological and health-related variables, including empathy, self-esteem, forgiveness, physical health, and mental health. In a pilot study of 44 undergraduate psychology majors—predominantly female (86%) and ethnically diverse (63% White, 16% African American)—gratitude was positively correlated with empathy (perspective-taking and empathic concern), self-esteem, propensity to ask for forgiveness, and general health. It was negatively correlated with stress, depression, anxiety, and anger. Subscales from the RAND health questionnaire (general health, pain, social functioning, emotional well-being, and physical functioning) were also negatively associated with stress, anxiety, and depression. These findings suggest that gratitude may serve as a protective factor, promoting psychological resilience and overall well-being. Future research will examine these associations in larger and more diverse samples to better understand gratitude's role in mental and physical health outcomes.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS...



AWARDS RECEPTION

5:00 PM

ATRIUM

MERRILL HALL

WELCOME
& THANKS

PRESENTATION OF
AWARDS

CLOSING REMARKS

*FACULTY ONLY EVENT:
REFRESHMENTS AND
CELEBRATORY
BEVERAGES WILL BE
SERVED*

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE 2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM VOLUNTEER JUDGES

ALLISON BOSWELL
AMANDA CUNNINGHAM
ARUP GHOSH
BRIANNA TURGEON
CHARLCIE VANN
FALYNN TURLEY
GREGOR KAY
HEIDI DEMPSEY
JENNA RIDLEN
KARLIE JOHNSON
KATHRYN CATLIN
KELSEY MCENTYRE
KIM WESTBROOKS
KIMBER WICKERSHAM
KORY HILL
LAURA PITTS
MAUREEN MCGUIRE
MICHELLE GROSSER
RAFAELA RAFAJLOVSKA
RAIHAN QUADER
SARAH BURNS
SEAN CHENOWETH
TALEAH COLLUM



2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM - PRESENTED BY FACULTY COMMONS

For Questions and Support, Contact: mmecham@jsu.edu - broberts@jsu.edu

SPECIAL THANKS TO THE 2025 FACULTY RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM COMMITTEE MEMBERS & FACULTY COMMONS STUDENT WORKERS



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Faculty Commons



Ms. Brandy Roberts
Faculty Commons



Dr. Gina Mabrey
Kinesiology



Dr. Christopher Clark
Kinesiology



Dr. Sean Chenoweth
Chem & Geo Sciences



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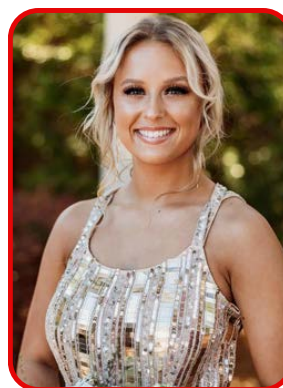
Dr. Jenna Ridlen
Biology



Dr. Aimee Weathers
Teacher Education



Dr. Brianna Turgeon
Sociology



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FC Student Worker



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