

Wednesday, August 27, 2025

Check-in

9:30 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Pre-function Foyer

Graduate Student Poster Session and Networking

11:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.
Terrace Room

Graduate Poster 1 - **Navigating the Storm: From Crisis to Confidence**

Kailee Peterson - Graduate student, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education

Juana Lyles - Graduate student, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education

Crisis is a when, not if, situation. Crisis is any event where balance is disrupted and can show up in many forms. Especially for those involved in outreach and engagement, crisis can be a daunting reality that is not talked about or prepared for enough. These crisis scenarios are not planned, but plans can be made to encounter crisis effectively. This poster presentation gives some strategies to prepare for a crisis, navigate the storm, and debrief afterwards. No matter what your place is in the community, you can benefit from a greater understanding of how to "navigate the storm."

Graduate Poster 02 - **Auburn University CARTT Community Engagement and Family Support Project**

Caroline Glahn – Graduate student, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

Madeleine Levin - Faculty, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Sarah Richling – Faculty, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

The aim of this project is to expand the scope of the services provided to the families of individuals diagnosed with autism or other related disorders at Auburn University Center for Autism, Treatment and Training (CARTT). This grant serves to provide social skills training utilizing evidence-based behavioral strategies for individuals and families to promote the development of self-regulation of children and the reduction in stress of caregivers. The overall objectives of this project are to 1) provide opportunities for family support via a licensed independent clinical social worker with interdisciplinary training in behavior analysis; 2) to provide group intervention for youth with autism and other related disorders; 3) to enhance and develop the clinical skills of graduate and undergraduate clinicians in the Behavior Analysis

program to expand the level of accessibility of applied behavior analysis (ABA) in Alabama. This project will assess success and overall outcomes through the collection of pre- and post-intervention quantitative and qualitative data for individuals, groups and families to examine the effectiveness of the project and develop recommendations and applications for future interventions and research to continue to support the mission of the university and department.

Graduate Poster 3 - **Wish List Solutions: Addressing Food Insecurity by Connecting Anonymous Demand with Supply**

Madison Edwards - Graduate student, Department of Supply Chain Management, Harbert College of Business

In this study, we describe how internet communities are helping food-insecure people in a dignified and confidential way. In our case study, we analyzed 368 Reddit posts, collected over six years, to understand how people request and are given food through anonymous e-commerce wish lists. Unlike traditional food banks, online communities offer resilient and non-judgmental help. Through thematic analysis, we found that the subreddit fosters a sense of shared identity and concern. Donors give freely and without expectations of reciprocation. The anonymity and compassion expressed there provided by the platform allow individuals to request assistance without shame. Using common platforms like Amazon, this community has reimagined food aid to be discreet, rapid and respectful. This research highlights the potential of digital platforms to meet fundamental human needs without compromising individual autonomy and dignity.

Graduate Poster 04 - **Influence of Pedestrian Behavior on the Compliance of Drivers at Uncontrolled Midblock Crosswalks**

Md Roknuzzaman - Graduate student, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

NsongErnest Asiedu - Graduate student, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Pedestrian crossing safety is a critical global concern, accounting for 23% of all traffic-related fatalities. Factors such as misjudging vehicle speeds, improper looking behavior, and reluctance to use pedestrian facilities contribute significantly to pedestrian crashes, particularly at uncontrolled crosswalks where motorists often fail to yield. This study aims to establish a framework linking driver compliance with pedestrian sight distance, looking behavior, waiting time and facility usage at uncontrolled crosswalks through a before-and-after analysis. The research will focus on two Auburn crosswalks - one equipped with a Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacon (RRFB) and another with only a painted crosswalk. In the before phase (4 months), video footage will capture existing pedestrian behavior and driver yielding rates. Following this, an awareness campaign will educate pedestrians on the importance of sight distance, minimum wait time, proper looking behavior and facility usage. The campaign will utilize interactive

banners, graphic panels and QR codes displaying real-time usage and compliance data. The after phase (4 months) will involve post-campaign data collection through video recordings to assess changes in pedestrian behavior and driver compliance. A statistical model will be developed to examine the relationship between driver compliance and pedestrian attributes. Additionally, the study will evaluate the effectiveness of the awareness campaign in improving crosswalk safety by increasing driver yielding rates.

Graduate Poster 05 - The Self as a Protector: Exploring Help-seeking for Mental Health Disorders in Ghana

Nana Adjoa Konadu Attiah - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

While different factors have been found to impact help-seeking for mental disorders globally, the impact of certain psychological variables on mental health help-seeking has not been adequately understood. Specifically, the predictive potential of self-compassion and self-efficacy on mental health help-seeking remains insufficiently explored in sub-Saharan Africa. Both constructs are significant to Western self-perception; nonetheless, their conceptual and statistical interaction in a sub-Saharan African context, which varies in interdependence and biopsychosocial approaches to mental illness, remains under-researched (Adu et al., 2021). As Western countries seek evidence-based biopsychosocial approaches to seeking help for mental disorders, African societies like Ghana endorse faith-based and close relations predominantly (Adu et al., 2023; Nyame et al., 2021). Thus, the present study focused on Ghanaians' intentions and initiative for seeking help from mental health professionals and close relations (friends, significant other, or family members) while considering self-compassion and self-efficacy as predictive and moderating factors. Using a survey, 411 Ghanaians completed measures of self-compassion, general self-efficacy, and mental help seeking intention after reading vignettes of generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and depression. Data was analyzed in Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) v27 using bivariate correlation, hierarchical multiple regression, dependent sample t-test and moderation analysis. The findings revealed that self-compassion and self-efficacy were positively correlated with professional help-seeking for GAD and depression. Additionally, self-compassion predicted professional help-seeking for both GAD and depression, whereas self-efficacy predicted only help-seeking for depression. Self-efficacy moderated the link between self-compassion and professional help-seeking for GAD. Results also revealed that Ghanaians prefer to seek help from mental health professionals for depression in comparison to close relations. The findings of this study highlight the need for mental health professionals to include self-compassion and self-efficacy building techniques in their interventions targeted at tackling GAD and depression. Consequently, enhancing self-compassion and self-efficacy could help understand and promote professional help-seeking for GAD and depression.

Graduate Poster 06 - Assessing Impacts of Particulate Matter (PM2.5) Emission Regulation Changes in Forest Industries of Alabama, USA

Manisha Subedi - Graduate student, College of Forestry, Wildlife and Environment

Alabama, renowned for its extensive forest area and leading forest industries, significantly contributes to the nation's economy - ranking first in loblolly pine stock volume, second in pulp and paper production, and sixth in lumber and panel industries. The recently revised primary annual fine particulate matter (PM_{2.5}) standard from 12.0 µg/m³ to 9.0 µg/m³ by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is expected to present challenges for Alabama's forest industries, particularly in rural areas. This study aims to understand perceptions and investigate the economic, environmental, and operational impacts of the revised PM_{2.5} regulations on sawmills, pulp and paper industries in Alabama. Primary data collection involves focus group discussions with industry and policy maker representatives, and surveys with industry people and landowners to gather data on their perceptions, anticipated impacts, and adaptive strategies. Primary industries (sawmills and pulp and paper mills) will be selected from the online-based Alabama Forest Industry Directory, and total enumeration will be done. The qualitative and statistical test data will be analyzed using MAXQDA and R software. Secondary data will be supplemented through government documents, reports, journal articles, and extensive literature reviews to support the primary data. Funded by the USDA-NIFA, this research spans two years, and the results will be disseminated through reports, presentations, thesis and peer-reviewed publications. The findings of the research will support informed decision-making and strategies for balancing regulatory policies with broader implications for Alabama's forest industry, ultimately fostering a healthier population, a resilient environment, and a thriving economy in rural communities.

Graduate Poster 07 - **Open Databases and Misinterpretation: Balancing Access and Accuracy in the Age of Information/Digital World**

Brianna Crumly-Goodwin - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Adrienne Duke-Marks - Faculty, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Sandra Anti Eyiah - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Angela Mintah - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Nana Adjoa Konadu Attiah - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Open access databases and dashboards have been on the rise in the U.S. for nearly two decades. These resources are lauded as advancing data transparency and increasing community engagement. However, this accessibility also raises important considerations, as different users may draw varied conclusions based on their perspectives, prior knowledge or biases. Specifically, there are calls for concern regarding misinterpretation given a low level of data literacy in the general public. Data literacy refers to both the skills and the mindset needed for an individual to find insights and draw meaningful conclusions from data (Hanegan, n.d). Skills include an

individual's ability to read, analyze, interpret and communicate the data in an effective manner, while the mindset focuses on the ability of individuals to take a critical approach to the interpretation and have an openness to diverse perspectives.

This poster aims to spark conversation on best practices for promoting informed use of open access data resources. We acknowledge the benefits of open data to promote informed decision-making and accountability, yet it is important to assess the risks of misuse or overinterpretation if not properly contextualized. This topic is very relevant in the current climate which places a high importance on data transparency, but not on data literacy or accurate interpretation. This poster highlights the role of open access databases and dashboards play in providing information to lay audiences, emphasizing the importance of promoting data literacy to mitigate misinterpretation.

Graduate Poster 08 - **Beyond Numbers: Creating Research Reports That Inform, Engage, & Inspire**

Melike Coskun - Graduate student, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Jenna Lawlor - Graduate student, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Francesca Adler-Baeder - Faculty, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Kim Gregson - Community Partner, Gregson Consulting, LLC

Dr. Julianne McGill - Faculty, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

The Alabama Healthy Marriage and Relationship Education Initiative (AHMREI) is an applied research project in the Department of Human Development and Family Science at Auburn University. The focus is on promoting healthy relationship functioning for adults and youth by offering and evaluating free education programs in Alabama and collaborating with community agency partners across the state. After each program implementation and impact evaluation cycle concludes, the AHMREI team generates academic publications as well as two publicly available reports based on the quantitative and qualitative data collected on evidence of the program's effectiveness. One of the reports focuses on data visualization, including graphics and charts, while the other report provides both research details and a summary of the program's results for an audience of researchers and non-researchers. These reports enable the program to present its findings to the public, its partners, and stakeholders, acknowledge the contributions of program partners, and celebrate the program's impact, which can be applied in various settings. We aim to outline the process of creating engaging research reports and offer insights into the practical, meaningful and impactful communication of community-focused research reports. First, we will outline the process of creating stakeholder research reports, highlighting two distinct types of reports with their respective purposes and functions. Next, we will outline the process of team collaboration and decision-making regarding the reports' design

and content. Finally, we will discuss the reasons for creating different reports and the purposes they can serve in communication with the partners, stakeholders and the public.

Graduate Poster 09 - **Evaluate the Pedestrian Safety at Crosswalks with On-Street Parking**

NsongErnest Asiedu - Graduate student, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Md Roknuzzaman – Graduate student, Civil and Environmental Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

With the rise in pedestrian-vehicle crashes, transportation agencies are actively seeking alternative strategies to enhance pedestrian safety and reduce crash severity. Midblock locations account for 80% of pedestrian fatalities in the U.S., making them a critical focus for safety improvements. Alabama is ranked the fifteenth most fatal state for pedestrians with pedestrian fatality rate per 100,000 population at 2.54 persons (NHTSA, 2020). The state had 567 pedestrian fatalities between 2016 and 2020.

To further enhance pedestrian safety and compliance rates, studies have explored improvement in roadway geometric features such as medians, refuge islands and curb extensions, which improve pedestrian visibility and perceived safety. Limited driver's sight distances caused by on-street parking pose an additional challenge at crosswalks. To mitigate this, transportation agencies often use advance road signs to alert drivers in advance of pedestrian crossings. Additionally, curb extensions, which extend into parking lanes, provide more pedestrian space and improve visibility at critical crossing points.

A newer approach, daylighting pedestrian crosswalks, restricts parking within a designated distance from crosswalks to ensure clear sightlines. While this method has been legally adopted in several states, it has yet to be implemented in Alabama. This study seeks to evaluate pedestrian safety at crosswalks with on-street parking at four cities in Alabama under different metropolitan planning organizations. Using video footage recording of 60 hours at each crosswalk, the study will evaluate pedestrian waiting time, looking behavior, driver speeding and motorist yielding behavior by employing statistical methods.

The findings of this study will be used to raise awareness on the policy of restricted on-street parking at crosswalks with transportation safety practitioners by providing valuable insights, supporting the development of targeted countermeasures to improve pedestrian safety at crosswalks and enhance overall roadway safety.

Graduate Poster 10 - **Inclusive Counseling and Sex Education for Individuals with Disabilities: Bridging Systemic Gaps in Practice through the Development of Well-Informed Professionals**

Kendall Kaiser – Graduate Student, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education

Sexuality is a universal and lifelong component of human development. Yet, individuals with disabilities consistently face barriers that drastically limit their access to vital education and informed counseling regarding sexuality and sex-related topics. Unfortunately, an inherent part of the present-day disability experience, these barriers are rooted in systemic discrimination, limited professional training, and biased attitudes held by professionals in the educational, medical, and counseling fields.

Despite sexuality being an inherent aspect of the human experience, there is an incredible lack of sex education for all individuals, even more so for individuals with disabilities. Sex-related topics remain absent from most clinical, educational and counseling environments. Due to fundamental barriers in the healthcare system, sex education is widely unavailable, inaccessible and non-inclusive for diverse and minority populations. Research consistently highlights that individuals with disabilities have limited access to well informed, inclusive sex education. Professionals who work with this population demonstrate both inadequate training, as well as an embedded discomfort with these topics. These issues, coupled with hesitancy from parents and guardians, give rise to detrimental consequences: increased vulnerability to sexual abuse, poor sexual health, overwhelming feelings of shame and confusion, as well as inhibited self-autonomy and relationship building skills.

Drawing from current literature and through academic analysis, this presentation explores how professionals in counseling-related fields can develop well-informed practices, as well as disrupt the pattern of discrimination through a blend of education and stigma awareness. Strong emphasis is placed on the urgent need for education, advocacy, and healthy counseling spaces which support the sexual health, autonomy, and validation inherently owed to individuals with disabilities.

Graduate Poster 11 - **More Than a Lesson: How Context and Curriculum Shape Adolescent Knowledge and Intentions**

Sandra Anti Eyiah - Graduate student, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Adrienne Duke-Marks - Faculty, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

For more than four decades, sex education has been an important yet highly contentious public health and policy issue in the U.S. Despite this difficulty, research suggests that the wide implementation of sexual education programs has led to a significant improvement in adolescents' sexual and reproductive health. Primarily, sex education has predominantly relied on two basic approaches: abstinence-based sex education programs (ABE) or comprehensive sexual education programs (CSE). Although these programs have the same primary goal of reducing adolescents' sexual risk behaviors (SRB), their approaches and content vary. ABE teaches adolescents that the reliable way to avoid Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI) and unplanned pregnancies is to refrain from sexual activity, usually until marriage. Although most CSE programs teach young people that the most prominent way to avoid STIs and unwanted pregnancies is abstinence, these programs also emphasize the use of contraceptives. Prior

studies have shown that ABE programs indicated inconsistent effects on sexual health behaviors and outcomes. Empirical evidence on the effectiveness of ABEs exists, while other studies provide evidence highlighting their ineffectiveness. By contrast, most studies provide substantial support for implementing CSE for its impact on risky sexual behaviors. Early studies on sex education primarily focused on the content, age appropriateness, type of sex education, and the efficacy of the programs. Gradually, attention is being given to the settings in which sex education is implemented. In literature, school-based sexual education has received more attention. However, it has been suggested that not all school-based sex education programs are effective. Thus, the primary objective of this study is to investigate the relationship between adolescent knowledge and adolescents' intentions to reduce SRB as well as considering the variations across different approaches to sexual education. Lastly, we seek to examine the moderation effect of implementation setting in the relationship between adolescents' knowledge and intentions.

Graduate Poster 12 - **Educated Choices: How Vaping Knowledge Impacts Adolescents Likelihood to Vape in Future**

Angela Mintah - Graduate student, Department of Human Development and Family Sciences, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Adrienne Duke-Marks - Faculty, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

The increasing prevalence of vaping among adolescents has raised significant public health concerns, prompting the U.S. Surgeon General to classify e-cigarette use as an epidemic in 2018. Research suggests that young vapers face a heightened risk of long-term addiction compared to traditional cigarette smokers. Despite these alarming trends, there remains a critical gap in understanding the cognitive and behavioral factors that influence adolescent vaping decisions. This presentation will examine the role of vape knowledge in predicting adolescents likelihood to vape in future, emphasizing the importance of targeted educational programs. By exploring this relationship this research aims to provide insights into effective prevention strategies that empower teens to make informed health decisions.

Graduate Poster 13 - **Exploring the Relationship Between Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) Participation and Functional Limitations in Older Adults**

Susan Osayande - Graduate student, Human Development & Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Thomas Fuller-Rowell - Faculty, Human Development & Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Food insecurity is a persistent challenge among older adults and may be linked to functional decline. The Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) provides nutritional support to low-income individuals, yet its relationship with long-term functional limitations remains understudied.

Using five waves of Health and Retirement Study (2010-2018) data (n = 11,568), we estimated unconditional and conditional latent growth models to examine how food insecurity, SNAP participation, and their interaction were associated with changes in functional limitations - measured by activities of daily living (ADL) and instrumental activities of daily living (IADL). Functional limitations at baseline were higher among older adults who reported being food insecure, receiving SNAP benefits, or being single, female, or older. However, those who reported both food insecurity and SNAP participation had fewer limitations at baseline compared to food-insecure individuals not enrolled in SNAP. Over time, food-insecure older adults who participated in SNAP showed a slower increase in limitations, despite reporting more challenges initially. Increases in limitations were more pronounced among those who were single or older. These patterns may offer useful insights for community organizations and practitioners supporting aging populations. Next steps involve sharing findings through scholarly and community channels in collaboration with partners, with the goal of informing outreach strategies that support equitable SNAP access and guide future efforts to promote healthy aging.

Graduate Poster 14 - **Waves of Care by AU Outreach in Underprivileged Paradise: Combating and Healing Chronic Illness in Underserved Maldivian Communities**

Suhrud Pathak - Graduate student, Department of Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Jeyaram Bharathi Jeyabalan - Graduate student, Department of Pharmacology, JSS College of Pharmacy, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Nilgiris, Ooty, Tamil Nadu, India

Rishi Nadar - Undergraduate student, Department of Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy, Auburn University, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dr. Chippewa M. Thomas - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Director, Office of Faculty Engagement and the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Mohemed Hameed - Staff, Executive Director at Villa Foundation, Maldives

Dr. Muralikrishnan Dhanasekaran - Administrative Fellow and Alumni Professor Graduate School, Professor, Harrison College of Pharmacy

The Maldives, recognized for its breathtaking islands, is confronting a growing burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), notably diabetes mellitus, insomnia and hypertension. Despite this rising public health problem, there is scant information on the prevalence of these chronic illnesses in the local community. To fill this void, our exploration and outreach activities sought to measure blood pressure, blood glucose and sleep levels among people of various Maldivian islands, providing critical baseline data to inform future health initiatives. A cross-sectional health screening was conducted utilizing accessible sampling to enroll participants from around the Island population. Standardized questionnaires were used to collect demographic data, including age, gender and medical history. Additionally, trained healthcare workers used standardized equipment and a questionnaire to assess blood pressure, blood glucose and sleep levels. Our study found that high blood glucose and hypertension were prevalent, which is consistent with global trends in the increase in NCDs. Age and hypertension

were shown to be significantly correlated, suggesting that older persons require focused screening. Additionally, greater blood glucose levels were associated with a family history of diabetes mellitus, underscoring the significance of genetic predisposition. A subset of participants reported lifestyle behaviors such as regular caffeine (coffee/tea) and betel-nut consumption, and sleep difficulties. Due to the stimulating effects of betel-nut and caffeine, these factors could have an impact on health outcomes and should be investigated further in future research. Our current research and outreach activities underscore the critical need for collaboration between international and local institutions to address shared health challenges. The findings emphasize the urgency of implementing public health programs that promote healthy lifestyles and routine health screenings. Moreover, providing essential insights into the healthcare status of Maldivian populations, the study advocates for proactive, evidence-based interventions to combat the escalating burden of NCDs and to reduce morbidities and mortality.

Graduate Poster 15 - **Global Outreach for Occupational Health: Addressing the Burden of Silicosis in Resource-Limited Settings**

Shannon Kim - Graduate student, Harrison College of Pharmacy

A preventable yet fatal occupational lung disease, silicosis develops from inhaling microscopic crystalline silica dust. In low-resource environments and labor-intensive sectors, especially mining and stone carving, it continues to be a major global public health problem. In Rajasthan, India, an area severely impacted by silicosis and silico-tuberculosis as a result of extensive marble mining, Auburn University graduate students took part in the Study Abroad Program to share their results and observations in this outreach research presentation. The goal of the study was to expose vulnerable worker groups to the epidemiology, socioeconomic factors, and clinical treatment of silicosis firsthand. Students observed active public health and policy initiatives targeted at prevention and care, and they interacted with local communities, public health authorities, and medical professionals to gain a better understanding of the difficulties presented by these occupational lung diseases. Silicosis currently lacks a designated therapeutic agent, especially in the latter stages when lung function is significantly affected. Therefore, most non-pharmacological treatments, such as wet drilling, dust suppression, and wearing protective gear, concentrate on prevention. Nonetheless, new treatment approaches are being investigated. These include antifibrotic therapies that help delay pulmonary fibrosis and maintain lung function, such as pirfenidone and nintedanib. In certain individuals, whole-lung lavage has demonstrated potential in eliminating inhaled particles and alleviating symptoms. Furthermore, the anti-inflammatory and antioxidant qualities of natural compounds, including kaempferol, dioscin, and emodin, are being investigated in hopes of reducing lung tissue damage with no or minimal adverse reaction. This study examines current research on treatment approaches that may lessen the burden of silicosis, in addition to discussing the public health consequences of the disease in Rajasthan. To address complex occupational health challenges in marginalized communities, the experience highlights the significance of translational research, policy measures, and global health involvement.

Graduate Poster 16 - **Addressing Dental Hygiene in Underprivileged Maldivian Island Communities to Decrease Morbidity and Mortality: A Targeted Outreach Initiative to Promote Healthcare**

Keyi Liu - Graduate student, Department of Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Suhrud Pathak - Graduate student, Department of Drug Discovery and Development, College of Education

Jeyaram Bharathi Jeyabalan - Graduate student, Department of Pharmacology, JSS College of Pharmacy, JSS Academy of Higher Education & Research, Nilgiris, Ooty, Tamil Nadu, India

Rishi Nadar - Undergraduate student, Department of Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dr. Chippewa M. Thomas - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Director, Office of Faculty Engagement and the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Dr. Muralikrishnan Dhanasekaran - Administrative Fellow and Alumni Professor Graduate School, Professor, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Oral health is a critical component of overall human and animal health throughout the lifespan. Dental hygiene remains one of the most neglected areas in global healthcare, particularly among underprivileged and geographically isolated populations. In the Maldives, most of the remote island communities experience limited access to basic dental care, resulting in high rates of untreated dental caries, periodontal disease, tooth loss, and associated systemic health issues. The lack of prophylactic healthcare activities, oral health education, and trained professionals further exacerbates the burden of dental problems in these regions. In response to this pressing need, Auburn University, in collaboration with Villa Group Maldives and local stakeholders, launched a focused healthcare outreach initiative targeting underserved Maldivian populations. This initiative involved community-based healthcare screenings, health education and referrals for advanced care. Emphasis was placed on the link between poor healthcare (increased BMI, improper diets, lifestyle and dental hygiene) and broader systemic health risks such as cardiovascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and diabetes mellitus. Through direct AU outreach service delivery, health promotion, and culturally sensitive engagement, the program aimed to increase awareness, reduce preventable oral diseases, and empower communities to adopt healthier behaviors. Interdisciplinary collaboration among students, faculty, staff, and local healthcare providers facilitated mutual learning, professional development, and a deeper understanding of global health equity. Our valid and genuine AU outreach model underscores the importance of integrating dental health into primary care strategies and highlights how academic-community partnerships can drive sustainable impact in under-resourced settings. Future directions include expanding oral health infrastructure, integrating school-based programs, and incorporating personal hygiene as a core component of public health outreach in the region.

Graduate Poster 17 - **Sleep Health in the Maldives: Cultural Influences and Barriers to Care**

Melissa Sanders - Graduate student, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Mia Chambliss - Graduate student, College of Education

Suhrud Pathak - Graduate student, Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Rishi Nadar - Graduate student, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dr. Chippewa M. Thomas - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Director, Office of Faculty Engagement and the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Dr. Muralikrishnan Dhanasekaran - Administrative Fellow and Alumni Professor Graduate School, Professor, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Sleep is essential for preserving one's physical and mental health. However, considering the intricate interactions between holistic, occupational, and cultural factors, sleep disorders such as bruxism, insomnia, and obstructive sleep apnea are still underdiagnosed in the Maldives. In order to evaluate sleep health in addition to blood pressure and glucose levels, researchers performed community-level health screenings and conversations throughout several Maldivian islands as part of a larger health outreach program addressing noncommunicable diseases (NCDs). Trained healthcare volunteers and local employees participated in outreach efforts, conducting screenings and distributed standardized questionnaires to gather clinical, behavioral, and demographic information. Participants often reported sleep difficulties, particularly those who consumed large amounts of stimulants like caffeine and betel nut. Disrupted sleep patterns were also associated with religious and social habits, as well as irregular working hours in the tourism and fishing industries. The stigma associated with mental disorders still prevents many locals from seeking help, and many are unaware that symptoms like bruxism, sleeplessness or persistent exhaustion could be precursors to more serious psychological or physical issues. The results also supported the national burden of NCDs, showing a significant correlation between sleep deprivation and high blood pressure or blood glucose levels, particularly in older persons and those with a family history of diabetes. In addition to providing essential baseline health data, this integrated communication strategy promoted community awareness and discussion about sleep and well-being. The project emphasizes the need for coordinated, culturally sensitive interventions and health education initiatives that support regular screening and good sleep hygiene. Combating the twin burden of NCDs and poor sleep health throughout the Maldives requires empowering local healthcare institutions and encouraging early detection.

Graduate Poster 18 - **Elevating Family Science Through Public Data: Strategies for Impactful Research**

Emily Hanson - Graduate student, Human Development & Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Publicly available government data offers a powerful opportunity for a variety of scholars to conduct rigorous, theory-driven research to understand the well-being of individuals and families without the financial and logistical barriers of primary data collection. This presentation outlines practical strategies for leveraging public use datasets—such as those from the U.S.

Census Bureau—to explore timely, policy-relevant questions about family well-being. Emphasizing accessibility of these data, this presentation will guide attendees through the process of identifying, accessing and analyzing datasets of interest, as well as crafting hypotheses and meaningful research questions.

With a focus on supporting both emerging (e.g., graduate students) and established scholars, this presentation also highlights how public data can serve as a bridge between academia and community stakeholders (e.g., policymakers), fostering mutually beneficial partnerships and informing impactful solutions. To achieve this aim, this project will showcase an interdisciplinary collaboration between the Military REACH lab at Auburn University and the Department of Defense to address a variety of economic security issues among military families, using data from the Household Pulse Survey (2021–2024). Attendees will gain insights into strategies for managing large datasets, developing stakeholder-informed research questions, and translating findings into actionable insights for policymakers and practitioners.

The presentation will also celebrate the role of engaged scholarship by sharing tools developed during the project that support outreach, innovation and knowledge exchange. Ultimately, this presentation aims to inspire scholars to harness public data as a catalyst for meaningful, community-connected research in family science.

Graduate Poster 19 - **Uncharted Territory: Addressing the Lack of Pharmacogenomics Research in the Maldives**

Preston Cook - Graduate student, Drug Discovery and Development, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Pharmacogenomics (PGx), the study of how genetic variations affect drug response, has garnered significant attention as a cornerstone piece in the realm of precision medicine. PGx offers a unique ability to tailor therapeutic strategies based on each individual's genetic profile, optimizing therapeutic outcomes, while minimizing adverse drug reactions. Because of its relative novelty to the healthcare field, there remains a significant gap in the global application of PGx, especially within underserved nations, particularly within the Maldives. The Maldivian healthcare system faces a barrage of challenges, including limited access to specialized care, constrained medical infrastructure, and a growing burden of non-communicable diseases, which have plagued their healthcare system in providing optimal care for the citizens in need. Despite these elongated challenges, PGx studies within this specific population are non-existent, leaving healthcare providers, as well as citizens, with minimal knowledge and insights on population-specific genetic variations that can influence drug metabolism and efficacy. Integrating PGx within this population has great potential to enable precise prescribing and a reduction in trial-and-error treatment, ultimately leading to improved health outcomes for the citizens in need. Bridging this gap in research is imperative, now more than ever before, as it can allow for an advancement in equitable healthcare, while also equipping the Maldivian healthcare providers with the necessary tools and resources to attend to their citizens' needs in the safest and most effective manner.

Graduate Student Poster Awards Announcements

1:00 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.

Terrace Room

AAA Reception

2:30 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.

Legacy Ballroom

Outreach and Engaged Scholars Recognition Reception

5:30 p.m. – 6:00 p.m.

Pre-function Foyer

Outreach and Engaged Scholars Recognition Ceremony

6:00 p.m.

Grand Ballroom

Welcome and Initial Remarks

Dinner Served

2025 Initiative, Program and Partner Recognitions

Dr. LaKami Baker (College of Business) - International Engagement Education and Training
Professor Angela Burque and Dr. Danilea Werner (College of Liberal Arts) - BraveHearts
Center for Place and Purpose

Dr. Doris Hill and Mrs. Maria Gutierrez (College of Education) - Regional Autism Network

Dr. William Powell and Dr. Rosephanye Powell (College of Liberal Arts) - Auburn University

Gospel Ensemble and Choir

2025 Competitive Outreach Scholarship Grant Recipients

Dr. Royrickers Cook Endowed Engagement Award Video Presentation

Presentation of the Dr. Royrickers Cook Endowed Engagement Award

Closing Remarks

Group Photos

Thursday, August 28, 2025

Check-In/Continental Breakfast

8:00 a.m. – 9:00 a.m.

Pre-function Foyer

Plenary I

Podium Talks- Oak I

9:00 a.m. – 11:00am

Podium Talk Oak I: 9:20 a.m. - **Intergenerational Learning in the Classroom and In the Community**

Caroline Gebhard - Community Partner, OLLI

Dr. Elijah Gaddis – Faculty, History, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Kyle L. Kostecky - Faculty, Human Development and Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Jennifer Morse - Outreach and Communications Administrator, Office of Sustainability

The work of learning and teaching can flourish in unexpected contexts. Classes and programs that incorporate multiple generations of learners help to cultivate curiosity, build community and establish lifelong learning as a core value. But Auburn and other universities are rarely equipped to support and encourage inclusive learning across generational gaps. This group presentation will serve as a reflection on and provocation toward more intergenerational learning on the Auburn campus and in our communities.

This presentation will focus on practical approaches to and the results from more than five years of intergenerational learning programs in collaboration with the Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) at Auburn University. Faculty, staff members, and OLLI volunteers will speak to the efficacy of pairing lifelong learners with undergraduate and graduate students at Auburn. Each of our presenters has been seeking to establish enduring intergenerational learning activities in collaboration with OLLI and other campus and community partners. Activities have included dual enrolled classes with lifelong learners and Auburn University students, intentional opportunities for intergenerational discussion and collaboration, field experiences and research projects, and a variety of other projects. Through a variety of ongoing efforts, we are learning about and seeking to implement approaches that will move Auburn toward being an age-friendly university.

Our group of presenters represent a variety of disciplinary perspectives and educational approaches. Each of us is part of a new working group on intergenerational learning at Auburn dedicated to expanding opportunities for intergenerational learning as a central piece of Auburn's outreach mission. We envision this presentation as the first in a series of conversations

and collaborations that will help form collaborations, expand access to learning, and make Auburn a place for lifelong learning and intergenerational collaboration.

Podium Talk Oak I: 9:40 a.m. - **SOUND: Building Support for Sensory-Friendly Spaces**

Dr. Morgan Yordy – Faculty, College of Nursing

Seth Perry – Faculty, College of Nursing

Sensory processing is the brain's interpretation of our senses to determine the physical and/or emotional change required for response. Some persons may experience challenges relating to appropriate sensory processing, often seen in certain populations living with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD). This population often avoids social events due to stress produced by emotional dysregulation. Emotional dysregulation leads to fewer opportunities for interactions with others and is linked to decreased behavioral competence and social skills attainment during childhood development. SOUND: Building Support for Sensory-Friendly Spaces builds on existing outreach and service-learning opportunities to increase awareness and inclusion for persons experiencing sensory processing challenges. Additionally, SOUND is working to enhance learning opportunities for nursing students and grow meaningful community partnerships.

SOUND's objectives are to increase awareness and understanding of sensory processing challenges to enhance emotional regulation and inclusive spaces in community settings, increase understanding among undergraduate nursing students regarding sensory processing challenges, and strengthen and maintain sustainable community partnerships.

SOUND has developed age-appropriate community education programming concentrating on sensory processing challenges and methods to promote self-regulation and behavior management. In addition, student nurses will engage in these educational opportunities to enhance their awareness, knowledge and attitudes toward sensory processing challenges often experienced within the IDD population. This is a mixed-methods study focusing on program evaluation from the perspectives of the participants, students and community partners. Project leads will develop pre/post-training questions for non-minors geared toward knowledge surrounding the education offering and/or overall satisfaction with the community partnership, based on audience. Lastly, a validated 26-question survey developed by Nair and Geetha (2023) will evaluate nursing student awareness, knowledge and attitude about sensory processing and its associated disorders.

We anticipate nursing students' and program participants' awareness, knowledge, and attitude about sensory processing and comorbidities to increase and community partnerships strengthened.

Podium Talk Oak I: 10:00 a.m. - **Trust as the Foundation for University-Community Partnerships**

Dr. Hollie Cost – Faculty, University Outreach

Jim Doody - Community Partner, City of LaFayette

Rachel Snoddy – County Extension Director, Chambers County, Alabama Cooperative Extension

This presentation explores the journey of establishing trust-based relationships between universities and communities as a precursor to launching collaborative initiatives. Using the Auburn University Rural Health Initiative (RHI) as a case study, it outlines a versatile, phased process model that emphasizes trust as the cornerstone of effective partnerships. While the model is centered on rural health, its principles are applicable to a wide range of community priorities.

Attendees will gain valuable insights into strategies for fostering trust and engagement, essential for creating impactful and sustainable collaborations. The presentation will provide practical tools, including conversation guides and assessment instruments, designed to enhance community partnerships. By focusing on trust-building, universities and communities can develop strong, mutually beneficial relationships that pave the way for successful collaborative efforts.

Podium Talk Oak I: 10:20 a.m. - Acting on Health: Applied Theater Interventions to Enhance Vaccine Confidence Among Older Adults

Dr. Salisa Westrick - Faculty, Health Outcomes Research and Policy, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Tessa Carr – Faculty, Theatre and Dance, College of Liberal Arts

Abdul-Khaliq Murtadha - Faculty, Theatre and Dance, College of Liberal Arts

This interdisciplinary study between the Harrison College of Pharmacy, the College of Liberal Arts, and the Department of Theatre and Dance at Auburn University aims to address low immunization rates among older adults through an innovative theater-based intervention. Immunization rates among older adults are notably low, with influenza vaccination at 65%, pneumococcal at 60%, shingles at 34%, and tetanus at 20-30%.

Objective 1 involves developing a performance script informed by field research, with semi-structured interviews conducted in Summer 2025 to gather insights into vaccination attitudes, barriers, facilitators, and personal stories. These interviews will inform the creation of a culturally sensitive and engaging script that addresses vaccine confidence and misconceptions.

Objective 2 assesses the effectiveness of the theater performance, implemented in three local community settings in Fall 2025. The program includes a 30-minute performance followed by a Q&A session with a clinical pharmacist. Pre- and post-performance assessments will measure changes in vaccine confidence and intentions to get vaccinated.

This project exemplifies a harmonious blend of arts and science to advance health in the community. By leveraging the creative power of theater and the scientific rigor of health outcomes research, the project aims to enhance vaccine confidence among older adults. The findings will support the expansion of this initiative to other under-vaccinated populations.

Podium Talk Oak I: 10:40 a.m. - **Leveraging Community-Academic Partnerships to Develop and Implement a Safe Housing Pet Program at a Domestic Violence Emergency Shelter in East Alabama**

Dr. Emma Lathan-Powell - Faculty, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Phillip Moon - Faculty, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Liberal Arts **Emily Lubin** - Graduate student, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts College of Liberal Arts

Hailie Suarez-Rivas - Graduate student, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

Emma Carpenter - Undergraduate student, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Brendan Bergquist - Faculty, Department of Clinical Sciences, College of Veterinary Medicine

Most pets/companion animals in homes with domestic violence (DV) are also abused, and many survivors delay leaving dangerous relationships or living situations due to concern for their pet(s). Yet, only 19% of DV emergency shelters have safe housing programs (SHPs) for pets, and even fewer allow victims to bring their pet(s) to the shelter. While all SHPs aim to reduce harm to survivors and pets, each program is tailored to the unique needs of the community and stakeholder capacity. To date, however, no studies have described the process of launching a DV shelter-based SHP. Using the Exploration, Preparation, Implementation, and Sustainment (EPIS) framework, the authors detail the development and implementation of the first SHP in East Alabama. During the Exploration phase, a newly established community-academic partnership identified the need for a SHP. A feasibility study was conducted to gauge acceptability, demand, and integration of a new DV shelter-based SHP among adult DV survivors with a recent history of residing in a shelter (n=65; Mage=36.2 years; SDage=10.1; 56.9% White). After reading a brief description of the proposed SHP, participants completed a survey assessing their perceptions of its feasibility. 78.6% of pet owners indicated they would have used the SHP if available at shelter entry, demonstrating high demand. In Preparation, the interdisciplinary team of stakeholders was expanded to include university-affiliated veterinarians to ensure adherence to standard-of-care guidelines in shelter and program design and to develop strong connections with animal organizations in the community. Various decision points (i.e., organizational structure [i.e., housed at animal or DV organization], pet location [i.e., on-site at DV shelter or off-site boarding], and pet carer [i.e., volunteer, foster, owner]), program evaluation strategy, and lessons learned will be discussed to provide a model for other DV shelters considering Implementation of an on-site SHP and strategic community-academic victim service partnerships.

Plenary I

Podium Talks- Oak II

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Podium Talk Oak II: 9:00 a.m. - **COACH in Action: Community Engagement to Prevent Substance Use Disorder**

Dr. Anne Taylor - Faculty, COACH Center for Opioid Research, Education and Outreach, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dr. Karen Marlowe - Faculty, COACH Center for Opioid Research, Education and Outreach

The opioid crisis has highlighted the critical need for early, community-based prevention strategies that target youth. In response, the Center for Opioid Research, Education, and Outreach (COACH) at Auburn University's Harrison College of Pharmacy developed a pharmacist-led initiative focused on drug prevention education for middle school students across Alabama. This outreach program aims to increase awareness of the dangers associated with prescription and illicit drug use while also promoting the pharmacist's role in community health and substance use prevention.

The program was implemented in a variety of school settings, including public, private, and magnet schools, and consisted of student assemblies, interactive workshops, and educational sessions for parents. Pharmacists delivered evidence-based, age-appropriate content and engaged students through activities designed to encourage healthy, drug-free choices. Educational sessions also provided exposure to the pharmacy profession, highlighting pharmacists as accessible and trusted healthcare providers.

This presentation will describe the development and structure of the program, including initial outreach, planning logistics, educational materials, and personnel requirements. It will also explore lessons learned from program implementation, alignment with school curricula, and feedback from participating schools and families. The initiative offers a scalable model for replication in a range of community settings, including schools, faith-based organizations, and civic groups. This work demonstrates the valuable role pharmacists can play in community-based prevention efforts and youth health education.

Podium Talk Oak II: 9:20 a.m. - **Innovative Solutions to Food Insecurity in the US**

Dr. Alicia Powers – Managing Director, Hunger Solutions Institute, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Kara Newby – Outreach Programs Manager, Hunger Solutions Institute

Sarah Grace Kashack - Outreach Programs Manager, Hunger Solutions Institute, College of Human Sciences

Dr. Sara González - Faculty, Department of Nutritional Sciences, College of Human Sciences

Hunger Solutions Institute (HSI) in the College of Human Sciences leverages collective efforts to promote development, adoption, and advancement of innovative best practices to address food and nutrition security. As an academic center on Auburn University's campus, HSI achieves this mission through teaching, research and outreach. Integration of teaching, research and outreach across activities is highly prioritized within three areas: Hunger and Healthy Food Access, Hunger and Higher Education, and Hunger and Food Systems. Activities within Hunger and Healthy Food Access include a statewide fruit and vegetable nutrition incentive program for Alabama, called Double Up Food Bucks Alabama. HSI also leads a national nutrition incentive program for healthy fluid milk called Add Milk. Both incentive programs seek to increase the purchase and consumption of healthy foods and beverages within households participating in the

Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program. Activities within Hunger and Higher Education seek to foster collaboration, lead innovative research, and promote data-informed efforts to elevate systemic solutions for college student food insecurity at institutions of higher education. Activities within Hunger and Food Systems focus on asset mapping, technical assistance and capacity building for food enterprises in the middle of the supply chain in order to bolster the local and regional food system in Alabama and beyond. This presentation will provide a description of outreach and research activities within each area along with outcomes and impacts of these activities.

Podium Talk Oak II: 9:40 a.m. - **Improving Disability Initiatives in Planning Practice: An Analysis of Planning and Disability Needs in Alabama**

Dr. Doris Adams Hill - Faculty, Special Education, Rehabilitation and Counseling, College of Education

Dr. Binita Mahato – Faculty, Community Planning, College of Liberal Arts

Universal Design (UD), the practice of designing products, spaces, and structures to be equally accessible to people of all abilities without necessitating adaptation, has been key to creating just environments in our communities and averting exclusionary practices. The objective of integrating individuals with disabilities into mainstream society is predominantly facilitated by planners, policymakers and rehabilitation specialists. However, there is often a lack of collaboration among these stakeholders, which hampers the effectiveness of UD efforts. Disability policy has long prioritized accessible independent living outcomes for different walks of life, such as employment, mobility, education, built environment and many more. Both community planners and rehabilitation specialists are seen to be involved in designing inclusive built environments for people with disabilities. The presenters will discuss how to foster collaboration between community planners and those with expertise in supporting them? The goal is to understand the gaps and barriers of UD initiatives in community planning and the potential collaboration of other disability initiatives to address and overcome such challenges.

Podium Talk Oak II: 10:00 a.m. - **Transformation of the City of Wetumpka: "The Place Where the Star Fell on Alabama"**

David King - Faculty, Geosciences, College of Sciences and Mathematics

The cosmic impact of a large meteorite (actually, a small asteroid) in Elmore County, Alabama, several tens of millions of years ago created a 3.5 mile-wide, circular rim of hills known as an impact crater. Basic scientific research regarding this impact crater, which has gone on at Auburn University for over 25 years, has established this crater as one of the best studied and most well-known of such features in the world. AU crater research has been the scientific driver behind more than two decades of local city tours and school group visits. Now, a city-operated Discovery Center has opened in downtown Wetumpka for the purpose of public education and tourism regarding the crater. There are many new economic opportunities for Wetumpka in the crater enterprise, which are in development thanks to the synergy of basic science and public outreach.

Podium Talk Oak II: 10:20 a.m. - **Go Golden: Catalyzing Intergenerational Wellness through Strategic Collaboration in Geriatric Nursing Education**

Whitnie Willis – Faculty, College of Nursing

Judith C. Quick - Faculty, College of Nursing

Dr. Amy Curtis- Faculty, College of Nursing

Carlie Hunt – Faculty, College of Nursing

Go Golden is a student-led nursing club at Auburn University College of Nursing, created to reimagine how undergraduate nursing students interact with older adults. Traditionally, geriatric nursing education focuses on older adults during periods of illness and dependency, missing opportunities to engage them in moments of wellness and everyday living. This outreach initiative challenges those norms by offering students consistent, meaningful interactions with older adults that foster empathy, relationship-building and mutual respect.

The primary aim of Go Golden is to create recurring, non-clinical engagement opportunities that nurture students' skills in geriatric care, challenge ageist assumptions, and strengthen bonds with the older adult community. The program also seeks to provide a replicable model for integrating community-based geriatric outreach into undergraduate nursing curricula.

Monthly activities are co-designed with local facilities, incorporating input from facility staff, social workers, and residents. Examples include themed seasonal activities such as delivering candy valentines and distributing lucky shamrock activity cards. Looking ahead to the fall semester, Go Golden will collaborate with the facility's therapy group to co-develop and lead physical activities that meet resident needs in a person-centered way. Nursing students engage in interdisciplinary collaboration, learning from social workers, recreation therapists, and therapy staff to enhance wellness and mobility for residents.

Early feedback from students and participating facilities highlights Go Golden's positive impact on both professional identity formation and resident well-being. Students report increased empathy, communication skills, and comfort in engaging with older adults, while facilities note improved resident morale and social connection.

Go Golden demonstrates that student-led, wellness-based outreach initiatives can meaningfully impact both nursing education and community engagement. This presentation will detail the design, implementation and outcomes of Go Golden, providing other institutions with a framework for replicating similar programs that center on wellness and relationship-building in geriatric care.

Podium Talk Oak II: 10:40 a.m. - **Community Outreach and Collaboration Project- Kitchen Renovation at Trinity Lutheran Church**

Dr. Meirav Goldhour - Faculty, Consumer and Design Sciences, College of Human Sciences

During Spring 2025, a collaborative project between Auburn faculty and Trinity Lutheran Church took place to explore the redesign and expansion of TLC's community kitchen.

Dr. Goldhour, Interior design lecturer in the Consumer and Design Sciences Department, worked alongside Shanna Brodbeck, the Church's Vice President of the Administrative Team, and another faculty member, Keith Rahn, Associate Professor at the McWhorter School of Building Science.

The project presented two design options: Option A, which focused on renovating and expanding the existing kitchen, and Option B, which proposed relocating the kitchen to a different room.

Students from the Department of Consumer and Design Sciences Interior Design Program were involved in researching and developing design solutions that considered functionality and space utilization. Dr. Goldhour organized the students into two groups; one section worked on programming for the current kitchen space, while the other developed design solutions for the proposed new location.

Over several weeks, faculty and students held multiple meetings with the leadership of Trinity Lutheran Church to align with their goals and needs. The design ideas and findings, which explored different possibilities, advantages, and disadvantages of each kitchen location, were formally presented to the Church's leadership and members. TLC leadership and members are currently reviewing the next steps for selecting the kitchen location based on the data and design proposals created by the students, and fundraising to support the potential renovation.

Plenary I

Podium Talks- Longleaf

9:00 a.m. – 11:00am

Podium Talk Longleaf: 9:00 a.m. - **Alabama Wildlife Corridors**

Kelly Homan - Faculty, Environmental Design, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Dr. Katelyn Lawson - Faculty, Environmental Science, College of Agriculture

Jordan Bralley - Staff, Environmental Science, College of Agriculture

This talk will explore the ongoing 2025 revision of the Alabama State Wildlife Action Plan (SWAP), focusing on a collaborative effort between Auburn University and the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources to identify and map new conservation priority areas and wildlife corridors across the state of Alabama.

Updated every ten years with the next revision due October 2025, State Wildlife Action Plans (SWAPs) are comprehensive, science-based strategies developed by each U.S. state and territory to conserve wildlife and habitats. SWAPs are required for federal conservation funding and are meant to identify species of greatest conservation need, assess threats and outline actions to protect biodiversity and promote ecosystem health over the long term.

For the state of Alabama, a key component of the 2025 SWAP revision is the work of a cross-disciplinary research team at Auburn University from the College of Agriculture and the College of Architecture, Design and Construction, to create Alabama's first statewide wildlife corridor plan. Wildlife corridors are essential for species movement, genetic exchange and long-term survival of both common and endangered species.

By incorporating corridor planning into the 2025 Alabama SWAP, the state is embracing a forward-looking approach to biodiversity conservation, one that recognizes the critical role of landscape connectivity amid accelerating environmental change. This initiative positions Alabama to join other states across the Southeast's to preserve its rich, yet increasingly imperiled, natural heritage.

Podium Talk Longleaf: 9:20 a.m. - **Pixelating Teacher Sentiments: Exploring Algorithmic Empathy via AI Photo Elicitation in Agricultural Education**

Christopher Clemons - Faculty, Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

This proof of concept initial investigation details the foundational phase of research developing an innovative, agentic AI-driven methodology to enhance photo elicitation. The overarching project goal is an AI platform predicting human emotion from textual data with 80% accuracy, generating visual representations of sentiment for studies involving public school-based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers.

The primary purpose of this initial step is to systematically select a robust and relevant set of textual case studies. These foundational case studies, authentically embodying specific, predefined emotions and professional experiences of SBAE teachers, will serve as integral stimulus material for the subsequent development and validation of the AI-driven research methodology.

Methodologically, this phase involves: 1) Curating eight high-quality case study excerpts from established, peer-reviewed agricultural education journals. 2) Representing four critical emotional themes: work-life balance, anxiety, professional/personal choice conflict, and guilt. 3) A key innovation is deliberately selecting two distinct case studies for each emotion—one clear and explicit, the other vague or subtle. This approach is designed to rigorously test and delineate the capabilities and limitations of human participants and, ultimately, AI image generation in interpreting complex emotional narratives. 4) Establishing the primary emotional content with high inter-rater reliability (Cohen's Kappa > 0.8). 5) Preparing standardized, unbiased excerpts by removing original author analyses to focus on narrative content.

The rigor embedded in this selection phase, including the innovative precise/vague pairing, significantly strengthens the overall study. The findings from this nuanced stimulus set will directly contribute to developing and validating a more efficient and potentially more insightful framework for photo-elicitation studies. This meticulous curation will yield validated textual stimuli crucial for AI model development, offering a novel methodological advancement for understanding human sentiment in agricultural education research.

Podium Talk Longleaf: 9:40 a.m. - **Supporting Green Infrastructure Development in Our Community: Making Maps, Saving Trees, and Showing Up**

Dr. Marilyn Vogel - Faculty, Geoscience, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Nature has been shown to offer physical and mental health benefits, in addition to providing recreation, community building and aesthetic value to communities. In rapidly growing areas like Lee County, administrative structures lag behind in green infrastructure development. Citizens dislike the loss of natural environment (e.g., removal of eagle's nests), disruption and lack of facilities. Degraded quality of life in over-developed areas leads to economic losses including lowered property values and poor retention of skilled labor, who move elsewhere for better surroundings. The Creekline Trail Foundation, a local, volunteer-run non-profit seeks to improve conditions under their rubric of "Neighbors need nature." Over a period of five years, Creekline has installed a ~1 mile long, ADA accessible nature trail in Opelika, AL. This project enlisted the help of numerous experts including Auburn faculty and staff. The AU Geosciences department contributed a creative trail map constructed using basic remote sensing tools and ARC-GIS software. Geoscience also provides landscape management consultation and services such as flood-mitigation and invasive species removal. In practice this means installing fortifying materials and cutting down or pulling out non-native vegetation. Creekline is a soaring success as can be seen from the high volume of use and user feedback. The trail is particularly popular with families of toddlers who can get out and practice walking in a calm, safe setting with a consistent, flat surface (good for strollers), and with users who would lack prior experience with trails and maps. The more these users can experience nature, the better they can understand the importance of ecosystem services (e.g. shade from trees, clean water, mental health). Future engaged scholarship objectives include installation of native plants, facilities that further engage users, and additional creative signage in consultation with Creekline personnel.

Podium Talk Longleaf: 10:00 a.m. - **From Maldivian Underprivileged Island Communities to Global Student Education, Training, and Care: Situation-Based Immersive Exploration of Auburn University's Transformative and Impactful Outreach**

Dr. Muralikrishnan Dhanasekaran - Administrative Fellow and Alumni Professor Graduate School, Professor, Harrison College of Pharmacy

Dr. Chippewa Thomas - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Director, Office of Faculty Engagement and the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Dr. Elizabeth Ivy Quansah - Director, Auburn University Outreach Global

The Maldivian archipelago, composed of widely dispersed islands, encounters substantial healthcare access challenges, leading to severe life-threatening morbidity and early mortality. Maldivian Island communities lack comprehensive healthcare facilities and professionals, making timely diagnosis, prevention and treatment challenging. As dependence on substance abuse,

urbanization and dietary shifts increase, the burden of non-communicable diseases such as hypertension, diabetes mellitus, insomnia, dental disorders and obesity is significantly rising. Simultaneously, mental health concerns, exacerbated by stigma, limited professional support, and post-pandemic stressors remain largely unaddressed. In response, the Office of AU Outreach, Harrison College of Pharmacy (HCOP), and Villa Group Maldives delivered a multi-island outreach initiative focused on physical and mental health. Over 150 individuals were screened in several islands, resulting in the identification of critical cases and the provision of immediate referrals, lifestyle counseling and mental wellness education. Thus, our novel and professional outreach program demonstrated the power of academic-community partnerships to drive impactful, scalable healthcare resolutions. Interdisciplinary collaboration among faculty, students, residents, and local professionals fostered engaged scholarship, upskilled future healthcare leaders, and promoted mutual learning to enhance global healthcare. This novel outreach initiative also highlighted precision medicine, showcasing best practices in global outreach, sustainable community engagement, healthcare literacy promotion and student recruitment. Future directions include expanding mental health support, developing policy, and integrating animal and environmental health into outreach activities using a One-Health framework. Continued venture in local training and infrastructure is essential to build a resilient, self-sufficient healthcare workforce in these islands. Moreover, outreach programs play a critical role in the early detection of emerging health risks and foster interdisciplinary strategies to address them effectively and in a timely manner. Therefore, this model sets a precedent for how academic institutions can contribute to long-term global healthcare by addressing both immediate care gaps and systemic challenges through education, research and cross-cultural engagement.

Podium Talk Longleaf: 10:20 a.m. - **Curtain Call: Inclusive Engagement Through Design-Build Practices**

Cait McCarthy - Faculty, Architecture, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Jordan Young - Faculty, Architecture, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Curtain Call is the winning pavilion design for the 2024 edition of BuildFest in Bethel, NY. Organized by the Bethel Woods Center for the Arts, this non-profit aims to inspire and empower individuals through access to the arts. As a part of this mission, each year BuildFest invites university faculty teams to design and construct large-scale installations on the historic site of the 1969 Woodstock festival. Curtain Call reimagines the original Woodstock stage using wood trusses, asymmetrically placed columns, and a fabric canopy to create a flexible performance space. The pavilion accommodates a range of activities, including concerts, film screenings, pop-up events or quiet lounging in the shade. Over four days, students and faculty participated in a design-build process and gained hands-on experience in fabrication and assembly. Typically, bespoke research-informed structures produced in academic settings present barriers to participation due to expensive equipment and the need for specialized technical expertise. In contrast, Curtain Call used low-cost tools, alternative digital and physical workflows, and immersive educational experiences to make fabrication more accessible to non-experts.

The project combined digital and manual tools to make fabrication more inclusive. A method called Direct Annotative Construction (DAC) was used. Through the use of a low-cost, custom-built 2-axis timber marking machine, construction information (e.g. cut lines, drill points, part numbers, etc.) was annotated directly onto dimensional lumber. Basic power tools such as a compound miter saw, cordless drill and handheld router were then used to process more than 1,300 parts. Components were shipped to the site and assembled using a simple 10-page visual guide during the festival. By embedding fabrication information directly onto materials, DAC allowed students of all experience levels to participate and gain hands-on knowledge of the construction process.

Podium Talk Longleaf: 10:40 a.m. - **Empowering Careers Through Connection**

Lauren Ozment - Staff, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, EAGLES, College of Education

Emmaree Wilson - Staff, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, EAGLES

Betty Patten - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, EAGLES, College of Education

This presentation will explore how inclusive employment practices for both jobseekers and employers, community engagement, and strategic partnerships can break down barriers to employment. By fostering diverse workplace environments and equitable opportunities, this program not only empowers individuals, it strengthens businesses.

We'll discuss the importance of building strong community connections, bridging gaps between employers and job seekers, and creating a culture of inclusion that benefits everyone. Attendees will learn actionable strategies to engage with diverse talent pools, develop inclusive workplace policies, and drive long-term career success for all.

Through collaboration and shared knowledge, we can create pathways that ensure everyone—regardless of background—has access to meaningful employment. Whether you're an employer, job seeker, or advocate for workplace diversity, this session will provide the insights and tools needed to foster a thriving and inclusive workforce.

Plenary I

Podium Talks- Camellia

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.

Podium Talk Camellia: 9:00am - **Artificial Intelligence in Elementary ELA: Pre-Service Teacher Perceptions, Concerns, and Imperatives for Teacher Education**

Dr. Christopher Clemons - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Dr. Jillian Ford - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Dr. Amy Fitchett - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Dr. Jason McKibben - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Dr. James Lindner - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

This study investigated pre-service elementary teachers (N = 32) at Auburn University in the College of Education, Department of Curriculum and Teaching during the summer 2025 semester. The researcher developed an instrument ($\alpha = .906$) incorporating a Likert-type interval measurement with 1 = strongly disagree – 5 = strongly agree. The findings revealed participant optimism about AI's potential and profound apprehension regarding its practical and ethical implementation. Pre-service teachers showed strong awareness of common AI programs (M = 4.61), high personal access to AI technologies (M = 4.48), confidence in their ability to learn AI skills for ELA writing instruction (M = 3.97), and belief in AI enhancing lesson planning (M = 4.00), indicating receptivity.

Participants addressed the potential for student dependency on AI (M = 4.72) and compromised academic integrity (M = 4.66). Concerns were expressed regarding the lack of clear ethical guidelines (M = 4.38) and broader ethical implications (M = 4.31). Pre-service candidate's skepticism was evident regarding AI's capacity to benefit their future students' critical thinking skills in ELA (M = 2.61). Participants were generally confident when applying AI to specific pedagogical tasks, such as analyzing student writing (M=3.09). The findings also indicated a clear need for systemic support; instructor support (M = 3.1), focused mentorship (M = 3.91), and professional learning communities (PLCs) for AI in ELA writing (M = 3.94) were highly valued.

These findings carry significant implications for teacher education and Auburn University. Programs should cultivate comprehensive AI literacy (technical, pedagogical, ethical) and proactively address ethical concerns and academic integrity. Further, educational programs should model effective AI-enhanced pedagogy, encourage critical examination of AI's role in student learning, and establish robust support systems while addressing equity. Future research should include longitudinal studies, intervention evaluations and investigations of AI's impact on student outcomes.

Podium Talk Camellia: 9:20 a.m. - **Collaborative Class Murals and the Power to Educate**

Wendy DesChene - Faculty, Department of Art, College of Liberal Arts

Tierney Brosius, aka Dr. Beetle - Community Partner, Augustana College

Collaborative mural-making can foster cultural exchange, education, and social empowerment. This paper examines how co-creative public Art strengthens communities by engaging students, faculty and leaders in a shared effort to preserve and amplify the stories and issues of the day.

Developed through 20 years of innovative class projects, these large format murals invited students into a meaningful dialogue with community leaders and scientists, deepening students' understanding of their actions in the world. Through research, discussion, direct engagement and collaboration, students moved beyond the studio to co-create a lasting public testament. Installed in prominent, popular communal spaces, these murals are an educational resource and a powerful symbol of the arts' ability to educate while celebrating our world.

Attendees will gain strategies for leveraging public art as a tool for social change, ensuring that creative projects are co-designed with and for the communities. By embedding art within community-driven storytelling, this project models how collective action can bridge cultural divides, amplify underrepresented voices, and contribute to environmental education targeted to specific locations. Participants will gain a deeper understanding of how collaborative art practices can be effectively implemented to create a lasting cultural impact and foster more substantial, inclusive communities.

Podium Talk Camellia: 9:40 a.m. - **Learning to Teach: Perspectives on a Long-term Early Teaching Collaboration**

Jane Kuehne - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Tamarceo Shaw - Graduate student, Curriculum and Teaching

Caleb Norton - Graduate student, Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Lisa Powell - Community Partner, Loachapoka Elementary School

Learning to Teach (LTT) began in Spring 2017 and continues to immerse first-year music education majors into classrooms at our partner school. They plan and teach weekly music lessons supported by practicing elementary educators, with weekly on-site support from AU faculty and graduate assistants. Students in their second semester (first-year spring) work in teams of 3-4 to plan and teach weekly music lessons for multiple grade levels. During their sophomore fall semester, they plan and teach individually, or they may collaborate with a single partner. They also begin observing their peers to gain ideas and provide feedback and peer support. During their sophomore spring (fourth semester), they serve as mentors and sounding boards for the new first-year students. This talk includes a brief overview the LTT early teaching program along with findings from administrator interviews and undergraduate participant reflections. These are part of continual program evaluation for improvement over time. Initial results show that the program is overall successful, though there are areas for improvement. Another especially useful finding that may change how some prepare undergraduate preservice educators, is the clear dedication to Pk-5/6 students' experiences and needs about which administrators spoke. We must remember how our own language about fellow educators, staff and administrators affects preservice (and in-service) educators' views about different school groups (students, teachers, staff, administrators, etc.). Student reflections occur each semester. Those reflections help us understand how this early teaching program affects their views and skill development over time and their identities as music educators. Current student reflections show their transformation from the first tentative days, through both positive and negative experiences, and gaining self-confidence and comfort in classrooms teaching multiple different grade levels. If time allows audio excerpts from their reflections may be included.

Podium Talk Camellia: 10:00 a.m. - **Industry Cohorts: Expanding Access and Opportunity in Graduate Engineering Education**

Krysta Weed - Staff, Outreach & Continuing Education Programs, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Dr. LuAnn Carpenter - Faculty, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Carla Nelson - Staff, Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Auburn University's Department of Industrial and Systems Engineering, in partnership with the Office of Online and Continuing Education, has developed an innovative Industry Cohort Program through which graduate education meets the evolving needs of working professionals and their employers. Through collaboration with industry partners, the program provides customized pathways for employees to earn a master's degree in engineering while continuing full-time employment.

Now in its fifth year, the program has formalized six memorandum of understanding (MOU) agreements with major employers, including Honda and Leidos. Participating companies identify and recommend high-performing employees, creating a strong pathway of dedicated and capable graduate students. Faculty and staff conduct regular visits to company sites to maintain relationships and recruit new cohorts. Because most cohort students are based in Huntsville, Auburn also hosts periodic receptions and networking events there, giving students valuable opportunities to meet their professors in person and connect with fellow online learners. In Spring 2025, 83 students were actively enrolled, with 99 participating in Fall 2024. Since its inception, the program has attracted an estimated 300 graduate students.

The cohort model strengthens institutional partnerships and facilitates industry-informed research opportunities, professional development, and collaborative student support. Recruiting students through established company partnerships is also more cost-effective than individual outreach, allowing Auburn to efficiently scale its graduate enrollment efforts while deepening engagement with industry. Companies benefit from enhanced employee engagement and retention, while students receive access to Auburn faculty mentorship, peer learning communities, and a curriculum tailored to real-world industry challenges.

Podium Talk Camellia: 10:20 a.m. - **The Power of Partnership: COSAM and VCOM's Blueprint for Outreach Excellence**

Jessica Gilpin - Staff, COSAM Outreach, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Kristie Floyd - Staff, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine - Auburn Campus

Dr. Mary Piscura - Faculty, Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine - Auburn Campus

Over the past two years, the Auburn University College of Sciences and Mathematics (COSAM) Outreach Office and the Edward Via College of Osteopathic Medicine (VCOM) – Auburn Campus have cultivated a dynamic partnership that has significantly enhanced STEM outreach and educational programming in Alabama. This collaboration began with COSAM Outreach supporting the growth of VCOM's Anato-Bee program and has since evolved into a robust,

multifaceted relationship. VCOM has become a key exhibitor at COSAM-led events such as Destination STEM and the STEM is Everywhere Expo at the Alabama State Science and Engineering Fair (ASEF), bringing hands-on medical science experiences to K-12 students. The partnership culminated in a co-hosted residential summer camp experience that merged COSAM's Summer Science Institute with VCOM's Summer Enrichment Experience, offering 32 high school students a unique, immersive introduction to both COSAM disciplines and medical fields. This session will explore the development, implementation, and impact of this collaboration, offering a replicable model for leveraging interdisciplinary outreach partnerships.

Plenary I

Roundtable Discussions

9:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.
Legacy Ballroom

Table 1 9:00 a.m. - **Qualitative Insights: Enhancing Performance Metrics Through Participant-Centered Evaluation**

- Dr. Adrienne Duke-Marks** - Faculty, Department of Human and Family Sciences, College of Human Sciences
- Angela Mintah** - Graduate student, Department of Human and Family Sciences, College of Human Sciences
- Sandra Anti Eyiah** - Graduate student, Department of Human and Family Sciences, College of Human Sciences
- Brianna Goodwin** - Graduate student, College of Human Sciences
- Nana Adjoo Konadu Attiah** - Graduate student, College of Human Sciences

Federal agencies increasingly rely on external vendors to assess program effectiveness using quantitative performance measures. Traditional performance measurement frameworks prioritize objective, standardized metrics, while neglecting the qualitative dimensions that offer deeper context. Although quantitative data provides essential information, it fails to fully capture participants' lived experiences with federally funded programs, particularly in areas like sexual health education. Without integrating participant voices, national evaluations risk overlooking key insights that could enhance program design, delivery and community engagement.

We propose that a blended evaluation model will strengthen the validity of program assessments, driving more informed decision-making and impactful improvements in federal programs. During our presentation, we will discuss how participatory approaches utilizing qualitative feedback are overlooked before, during and after the data collection process, subsequently limiting meaningful insights that could radically change our approach.

Table 2 9:00 a.m. - **Elevating Practice: Engaging Educators in the National Board Process**

Dr. Laura Crowe - Faculty, East Alabama Regional Inservice Center, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

The East Alabama Regional Inservice Center (EARIC) has developed a dynamic, sustainable model to support educators through the rigorous journey of achieving National Board Certification (NBC). This presentation will explore how EARIC strategically engages teachers in Region 9 of Alabama through a multi-tiered support system that includes cohort-based mentoring, targeted professional learning communities, and partnerships with National Board Certified Teachers (NBCTs) who serve as candidate support providers. By offering structured guidance aligned to the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, EARIC empowers educators to reflect deeply on their practice, improve instructional effectiveness, and ultimately earn certification.

Attendees will learn how EARIC's model emphasizes accessibility by providing support at multiple entry points, including awareness sessions, pre-candidacy workshops and ongoing one-on-one coaching. The center also fosters collaboration with school districts to identify and recruit candidates, leveraging NBCTs as mentors to cultivate a culture of excellence and professional growth.

Data will be shared demonstrating the model's impact on increasing the number of NBCTs in Region 9, along with success stories that highlight how certification transforms teaching and learning. The presentation will conclude with insights on sustaining growth, including developing district-level NBC networks and integrating certification into teacher leadership pipelines. Participants will leave with replicable strategies to strengthen NBC efforts in any future local cohorts.

Table 3 9:00 a.m. - Oral Health Isn't Cosmetic: Building Strategic Access and Engagement into a Southern Disparities Study

Dr. Zachary Schulz - Faculty, Department of History, College of Liberal Arts

Oral health is often treated as secondary—or even cosmetic—within U.S. healthcare systems. Yet it profoundly shapes overall health, access to care, and community wellbeing. This roundtable presents a community-engaged project in its early stages, developed in collaboration with the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH), to address oral health disparities in Alabama through a mixed-methods study targeting both parents and children. The research was recently approved by IRB and is launching in summer 2025.

We will focus on the strategic design of the study, which integrates narrative and survey-based data collection to capture both quantitative prevalence and qualitative experience of oral disease and care access. Particular attention is given to how the project frames community engagement, designs inclusive outreach strategies (including print and digital access tools), and foregrounds voices often excluded from traditional public health surveillance.

This roundtable will invite discussion on developing engaged research before data collection begins, including ethical considerations, institutional barriers and effective collaboration with state health agencies. It will also explore how outreach methods can be calibrated to address

both visibility and stigma in marginalized rural and urban communities. Participants will be encouraged to share their own experiences designing community-engaged health research—especially projects where institutional support or recognition may be limited, such as in non-tenure-track or cross-disciplinary roles.

By sharing the foundational planning of this work-in-progress, the session aims to demystify early-stage outreach scholarship and highlight how “access” begins not with results, but with relationships, design and intent. This project ultimately asks how oral health, often overlooked, can become a catalytic site for strategic, collaborative engagement in the South.

Table 4 9:00 a.m. - **Empowering Education through Data Science: A Collaborative Initiative by CDSI and PEER**

Dr. Elvan Ceyhan - Faculty, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Nedret Billor - Faculty, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Melinda Lanius - Faculty, Department of Mathematics and Statistics, College of Sciences and Mathematics

This presentation highlights the collaborative outreach efforts of the Center for Data Science Innovation (CDSI) and the COSAM Discipline-Based Education Research (DBER) cluster at Auburn University. United under the 2025 Symposium’s theme of "Catalytic Engagement through Strategic Access, Opportunity & Collaboration," this session will explore how these two groups have sponsored initiatives, such as hosting a Professional development for Emerging Education Researchers (PEER) Institute in Summer 2025, and are working together to expand access to data science education, build interdisciplinary professional development pathways, and foster community and industry partnerships.

CDSI, co-directed by Drs. Billor and Ceyhan, contributes by providing a research and collaboration hub that connects students, faculty and stakeholders through data-driven capstone projects, outreach workshops and workforce development activities. The DBER cluster, led by Drs. McNeal, Burkholder, Ballen, and Lanius, complement this work by mentoring disciplinary faculty and/or students as they transition into education-focused research. The PEER model emphasizes access to methodological training and community-building around discipline-based education research (DBER), with upcoming programming framed around data science themes.

This roundtable will highlight our 2024-2025 activities and engage participants in a discussion of best practices for joint outreach programming, university-industry alignment, and cross-disciplinary faculty development. We invite colleagues across STEM, education and the social sciences to collaborate in building a more interdisciplinary and strategically engaged data science ecosystem at Auburn, in Alabama, and beyond.

Table 5 9:00 a.m. - **Tiger Check - A Community Health Based Initiative Focused on Keeping Alabama Children Healthy**

Erin Thornton - Faculty, College of Nursing

Marilyn Davis - Faculty, Tuskegee University School of Nursing

Dr. Barbara Wilder - Faculty, College of Nursing

Tiger Check, a community-based outreach initiative, focused on impacting the health of school aged-children in rural communities amongst the eastern region of Alabama, began in 2008. This program originated at Auburn University's College of Nursing, where undergraduate baccalaureate nursing students, in partnership with the Macon County school system, began visiting schools to perform health-based assessments on children from ages 4-18. This initiative has grown over the last 17 years into other rural counties in eastern Alabama to include Bullock and Tallapoosa County. This initiative allows nursing students to practice their pediatric assessment skills while also collaborating with a neighboring nursing program at Tuskegee University. These two nursing programs have come together to meet the needs of their communities as well as enhance exposure and experience for nursing students caring for pediatric clients in the community setting.

Over the last three years this collaborative effort has impacted approximately 10,000 children in various eastern Alabama school systems. Nursing students from both nursing programs perform various assessments including physical, vision and hearing screenings to include height and weight measurements. Nursing students perform these assessments and health screenings in a joint effort at each public school. These nursing students come from all different socioeconomic backgrounds and being able to share and impact one another has become an important part of this collaboration. Although the primary focus of this initiative is to positively impact the health of children in rural Alabama, this experience also increases nursing student exposure to children of various ages. Seemingly, having interactions between nursing students and school age children positively impacts nursing students' confidence in pediatric assessments, performing age-appropriate skills on children, and putting knowledge to practice. Overall, the impact is monumental for nursing students as well as the health impact on school-aged children in rural eastern Alabama.

Table 1 10:00 a.m. - **Sectional Pasts: Using Design Drawings as Tools for Knowledge Exchange in Historic Environments**

Sarah Coleman - Faculty, Landscape Architecture Program, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Isaac Cohen - Faculty, Landscape Architecture Program, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

Measured drawings are essential tools through which design disciplines research, plan and communicate about buildings, infrastructures and landscapes. In historic environments, these drawings are often used by institutions to record the "significant" features of a site. Their

purpose is typically to restore these features to a previous condition or to preserve them for future generations.

This project proposes an expanded role for measured drawings. Using the architectural convention of the sectional drawing, it seeks to document historic and ongoing changes in heritage environments. It invites community members and stakeholders to bear witness to transformations that are not typically captured by institutional surveys. These include changes that fall outside the scope of official heritage narratives.

This method produces suites of drawings in order to chart a single site across multiple moments over extended periods of time. These drawings incorporate contributions that go beyond professional surveys and measured data to include oral histories, memories and projections from stakeholder communities. As such, final drawings emerge from a dialogue—an exchange between archival research, institutional methods of measurement, inherited knowledge and lived experience.

The result is a new type of site documentation—one that affords a broader picture of how historic sites have been and are presently conceived, demonstrating their function as living environments which actively shape place and community identities, continually generative of new meanings and relevance.

This presentation will focus on a case study of this method at the Florence Indian Mound in Florence, Alabama. It will document our process of producing and using these drawings as tools of exchange. We will reflect on how they can serve as platforms for conversation, demonstrate more equitable practices of knowledge production, and prepare the ground for new visions of the sites which they depict.

Table 2 10:00 a.m. - **Flexibility is Not a Favor: It's Inclusive Teaching**

Dr. Lisa Moyer - Faculty, Department of Human Development Family Science, College of Human Sciences

Betsy Gilbertson - Staff, Auburn Online

As universities broaden their outreach and engagement missions, classrooms must adapt to support an increasingly diverse student body. Many students bring unique community responsibilities, work commitments and lived experiences that differ from traditional academic norms. Beyond the traditionally "excused" absences such as student illness, family emergencies or a death in the family, many students face other life challenges, including romantic relationship break-ups, mental health issues, pet emergencies and illnesses (some long-term, like IBS) that do not require a doctor's visit. These students often struggle to obtain documentation to "prove" their need for an excused absence. Additionally, students may be reluctant to share personal experiences of crisis or trauma with instructors, especially when confidentiality is uncertain. This creates barriers to students successfully completing courses and earning degrees.

By framing flexible deadlines not as leniency but as intentional access-building engagement practices, this session underscores the pivotal role of classroom policies in establishing a

foundation for student success. These policies empower students to manage their time effectively and efficiently. Providing flexible deadlines for all students aligns with the core principle of Universal Design for Learning, which advocates for equitable access to education. This approach fosters inclusivity and facilitates personalized learning experiences, thereby strengthening the instructor-student relationship and cultivating a more supportive and inclusive learning environment.

The proposed presentation will explore the implementation of flexible deadline policies as a strategic approach to promoting equitable access, academic resilience and student engagement.

Table 3 10:00 a.m. - **Jumpstarting Micro-Entrepreneurship: Catalytic Community Engagement**

Joshua Sahib - Faculty, Lowder Center for Family Business and Entrepreneurship, Raymond J. Harbert College of Business

Engaged scholarship can be a powerful catalyst for local economic empowerment. This session examines Jumpstart, a six-week entrepreneurial bootcamp offered by Auburn’s Lowder Center, which equips micro-entrepreneurs with side hustles or early-stage ideas with foundational skills to launch or refine a small business. Each weekly session is led by a faculty member and covers key modules from Notre Dame’s UPBI framework: strategic business planning, accounting fundamentals, marketing basics and much more. Periodically, guest subject-matter experts—including local service providers and small-business professionals—drop in to offer targeted guidance and answer participant questions. By embedding university-led programming directly into community venues, Jumpstart creates strategic access to practical tools, promotes collaboration among participants and experts, and fosters opportunity for hands-on learning. Preliminary data suggest that participants gain confidence, refine their business models, and strengthen local networks. The Jumpstart program has been offered for a few summers and is hosted in partnership with local organizations such as the Opelika Chamber of Commerce. The hope is to develop new partnerships and continue to offer the program, over time leading to the creation or growth of over 100 micro-enterprises in East Alabama. Attendees will learn more about the program, how the curriculum has been adapted to our local community, strategies for building partnerships, hear some success stories, and see metrics used to evaluate impact.

Table 4 10:00 a.m. - **Collaborative Curriculum Development: A Case Study**

Dr. Sara Wolf - Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership and Technology, College of Education

Lily Wells - Community Member

In most educational environments, (public, private or homeschool) curriculum is typically designed by local authorities or commercial vendors, then delivered by teachers or parents. Students, the primary recipients of instruction, are rarely involved in the broader design and development of the curriculum. While many teachers provide limited opportunities for student

input such as choosing project topics, selecting presentation formats, or picking elective courses, these choices occur within a predetermined structure. True collaboration in curriculum design from the ground up is uncommon. In an unusual and innovative case, a professor with expertise in literature and information literacy partnered with a ninth-grade student to co-design and co-deliver an English Language Arts curriculum for the 2024–25 academic year. The collaboration was initiated at the request of the student’s parents and approached with mutual openness and curiosity about its long-term potential. The project yielded several key insights. First, authentic collaboration greatly increased student engagement. Second, flexibility proved critical in navigating the evolving needs of both collaborators. Third, involving students in assessment and evaluation processes encouraged a deeper commitment to growth and improvement. Despite these benefits, the partnership also encountered significant challenges. Administrative barriers and time management issues emerged as notable obstacles that required careful navigation. Nonetheless, the experience demonstrated the value and complexity of including students in meaningful curriculum design.

Table 5 10:00 a.m. - **A Collaborative Model for Nursing Education: Auburn's Nurse Apprenticeship Program**

Hadley Stewart - Staff, College of Nursing

Abby Bell - Staff, College of Nursing

Hope Carroll - Staff, College of Nursing

The Alabama Department of Labor currently shows over 4,006 open RN positions in the state. The nursing shortage in our state, and also the country, continues to be significant. In 2022, the Auburn University College of Nursing, in partnership with East Alabama Health, the Alabama Board of Nursing, and the Alabama Office of Apprenticeship, began a collaboration in an effort to address this shortage by allowing employers to recruit, train and retain skilled nurses. This program is called the Nurse Apprenticeship Program. The first cohort of 7 students began in August 2022, and to date we have graduated 18 nurses from this program. The program works by hiring students as employees of our partner facility, East Alabama Health, after their first semester of nursing school. Once accepted, the students are able to earn a progressive wage while completing their clinical hours for nursing school and gaining valuable one-on-one experience in the clinical setting. We have found that students who participate in the program excel where they may have previously struggled, have greater confidence in the clinical setting, and get more skills practice opportunities than their peers in the traditional program. We have also seen that students who complete this program have a 94% pass rate on their first attempt at the NCLEX. For East Alabama Health, they are gaining trained nurses who have spent 17 months working in their facility, learning their charting system, protocols and procedures; who have already been assimilated into the hospital’s culture; and who have built relationships with incumbent staff.

Resource Fair

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Terrace Room

Table 1 – **SKILL Academic Coaching at Auburn University, Auburn University Office of Accessibility**

Table 2 – **Office of Public Service, Auburn University Outreach**

Table 3 – **Osher Lifelong Learning Institute, Auburn University Outreach**

Table 4 – **Regional Autism Network, Auburn University College of Education**

Table 5 – **Auburn University Office of Sustainability**

Table 6 – **Outreach Global, Auburn University Outreach**

Table 7 - **Office of Continuing and Professional Education, Auburn University Outreach**

Table 8 - **The Encyclopedia of Alabama**

Table 9 – **Office of Faculty Engagement, Auburn University Outreach.**

Poster Session

11:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

Terrace Room

Poster 1 - **Empowering K-12 Educators through AI Literacy**

Dr. David T. Marshall - Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Dr. Asim Ali - Executive Director, Biggio Center

Dr. Katelyn R. Nelson - Emerging Technologies & Academic Innovation Specialist, Biggio Center

Shuqi Du - Graduate student, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Shawndra Bowers - Staff, Biggio Center

The advancement of artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming education, necessitating strategic access and collaborative opportunities for educators. The Integrating AI for Transformative Learning in K-12 Schools course, developed by the Auburn University Biggio Center, addresses the pressing need for AI literacy among K-12 educators. Designed as a self-paced, modular program, the course equips educators with foundational AI concepts, practical classroom applications, and critical ethical considerations. This poster presentation will showcase how the course's development aligned with strategic engagement principles, emphasizing access, opportunity, and collaboration. The design process involved partnerships with educators, instructional designers and AI experts, ensuring the content was relevant, accessible and inclusive. Digital badges offer micro-credentials to recognize educators' achievements, supporting continuous professional growth. The presentation will highlight the course's impact on fostering AI readiness in schools, promoting equitable access to technology, and building sustainable educational communities. It will also share insights into overcoming barriers and

strategies for collaborative engagement, offering participants actionable ideas to replicate or adapt in their educational contexts.

Poster 2 - Bridging Minds and Communities: Psychology Students Supporting Children's Growth with Circles Opelika

Dr. Tracy Witte - Faculty, Department of Psychological Sciences, College of Liberal Arts

More than 17% of the 31,361 citizens of Opelika, Alabama, live in poverty – a rate higher than the national average. Twenty-eight percent of Opelika's children live in poverty, which is 1.5 times the rate of the Auburn-Opelika metro area. Circles USA is a national organization specifically aimed at poverty reduction. Our local chapter, Circles Opelika, is the only one in Alabama and has existed since 2019. This presentation will discuss engaged scholarship between Dr. Tracy Witte and Circles Opelika. During the weekly Circles of Opelika meetings, children's programming is provided so that childcare is not a barrier to participation. Until recently, the children's programming has been primarily managed by one individual. Although her tremendous efforts were laudable, with the number and age range of children being served, there was a clear need for an influx of new volunteers.

The number of undergraduate psychology majors at Auburn University has grown more than 46% since 2017. With a finite number of faculty, we struggle to provide High-Impact Practices, which are essential for preparing students for graduate school and/or their future careers, for the many undergraduates seeking them out. The need for volunteers for the Circles Children's Program provides an excellent opportunity for the Department of Psychological Sciences to expand our capacity for High-Impact Practice for our students.

The current project focuses on building out the necessary infrastructure for the children's programming that is essential for the success and well-being of the Circles program. In addition to benefitting the Opelika community, this project will also benefit Auburn University psychology undergraduate students by creating a new, rich opportunity to engage in High-Impact Practices. This is consistent with strategic priorities identified by the Dean of the AU College of Liberal Arts and Auburn University's 2035 strategic plan.

Poster 3 - AU SOLVES: Engaging Community Partners with Interdisciplinary Teams to Solve Stakeholder-Identified Problems Through Co-Produced Sustainability Research

Dr. Karen McNeal - Faculty, Department of Geosciences, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Chandana Mitra - Faculty, Department of Geosciences, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Hollie Cost, Assistant Vice President, Office of Public Service, University Outreach

The project aims to connect interdisciplinary researchers with stakeholder communities, provide training in coproduction of science, and offer real-world research and team science experiences to AU graduate students, post-doctoral scholars and faculty. We leverage the existing model and lessons learned from the successful \$3M National Science Foundation Research Traineeship (NRT) award funded Climate Resilience project that was led by AU's Department of Geosciences.

We have scaled up the NRT program's model to the university level to support graduate student career development to solve challenging sustainability related problems with interdisciplinary solutions. This initiative offers resources such as online portals and workshops, facilitating collaborations between faculty, students, community and external stakeholders, and financial support for collaborative teams working with stakeholders. This approach benefits AU by integrating faculty research with graduate student training and fostering stronger partnerships with external stakeholders, ultimately enhancing the institution's research profile. Graduate students gain valuable research experiences, expand their professional networks, and increase their employability post-graduation. Faculty benefit from cross departmental collaboration as they work collectively, streamline broader impacts support, and increase engagement with external stakeholders. Stakeholders receive tailored research solutions, form connections with AU researchers, and contribute to advancing knowledge in their respective fields and sectors. Ultimately, this project enables AU researchers to work with community stakeholders to solve real-world problems across various disciplines and sectors across the sustainability footprint.

Poster 4 - **Cypress Nature Preserve: Designing & Building a Landscape of Learning in Montgomery, Alabama**

David Hill - Faculty, Landscape Architecture Program, College of Architecture, Design & Construction

In the heart of Montgomery, just over one mile from the Alabama State Capitol Building, lies a 250-acre tract of land containing wetlands, ancient river bluffs, natural seeps and deep ravines. This seemingly forgotten land is home to a tremendous diversity of life. To date, more than 125 species of birds, 65 species of trees and 30 flowering plants, as well as numerous ferns, vines, mushrooms and, of course, insects have been identified.

This urban wild (a remnant natural system found within a developed urban area) offers a tremendous resource for ecological observation, hands-on learning and public recreation. This city-owned land has the potential to become the Cypress Nature Preserve, a public landscape that opens these incredibly diverse bogs and thickets up to visitors while also protecting the fragile ecologies and ecosystem services that have developed over time. This hidden gem is a unique ecological system located within walking distance of Montgomery's downtown and Riverfront Park.

Once open to the public, Cypress Nature Preserve has the capacity to provide an outdoor environmental education facility and new outdoor recreational opportunities while promoting the environmental health of Montgomery by providing storm water retention, water filtration, air purification and carbon sequestration. The preserve will also support the continued economic revitalization of downtown by promoting eco-tourism. Users of the preserve will come from all walks of life and interests and we hope it will become a regional hotspot for photographers, bird watchers, hikers, bikers and nature lovers.

This project has the potential to improve the quality of life for people in and around Montgomery, Alabama through improved health, education and play. This project also offers

education benefits to Auburn University students as they cultivate a productive dialogue with a real community, design landscape interventions, and install a productive landscape of learning.

Poster 5 - **Spaces of Self-Expression for Multilingual People**

Dr. Iulia Pittman - Faculty, Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures, College of Liberal Arts

This presentation focuses on the need for spaces of self-expression for multilingual people through off- and on-campus events and through virtual means. Multilingual people do not have many opportunities to share their language and culture in meaningful ways. As a result, they do not feel seen and heard, and this can impact their work and sense of identity. The presenter will give an overview of previous multilingual campus and community events that have led to a greater sense of belonging and understanding of identity. While these events have been well-attended, and the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, the visibility of multilingual people is still fairly low. This presentation proposes a new initiative that represents a platform for multilingual people to share their stories. A podcast series hosted by a faculty member from the Department of World Languages, Literatures and Cultures will invite multilingual people at Auburn University to talk about their multilingual background and how they leverage it into their academic work. Previous events that the host has been involved in and interviews related to her research led to a large network of people who will make up the guest list. The podcast can reach people at Auburn University, in the Auburn-Opelika community, and beyond our local community. Sharing one's story can be a powerful tool that leads to better understanding of identity and can invite others into places of authenticity and self-expression.

Poster 6 - **Developing C.L.E.A.R. (Civic, Legal, Ethical, Analogous, Reasoning) Thinking in secondary social studies**

Dr. Jada Kohlmeier - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Dr. Steven Brown - Faculty, Department of Political Science, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. David Marshall - Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Dr. Jesús Tirado - Faculty, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Matthew Summerlin - Graduate student, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Megan Andrews - Graduate student, Department of Curriculum and Teaching, College of Education

Our three-year, nation-wide, Virtual Lesson Study (VLS) project is engaging 40 secondary social studies teachers to develop the teachers' capacity to design and implement authentic pedagogy. Teachers receive asynchronous historical and constitutional content readings, lectures and synchronous discussions with Dr. Steven Brown in political science. Teachers also receive asynchronous video case models and lectures from Dr. Kohlmeier on authentic pedagogy in social studies.

The teachers were divided into 10 VLS teams facilitated by a leader familiar with authentic pedagogy. The teams developed, over Zoom, a lesson for their curriculum each summer starting in 2024. During the academic year, the teams followed the VLS observation, reflection and revision process twice during the 2024-25 academic year using Swivl for lesson observation and Zoom for reflection and revision sessions. All teachers video-recorded themselves implementing the research lesson and reflected on their own implementation with their Lesson Study Leader.

We used rubrics for authentic pedagogy to score each teachers' research lesson implementation video as well as independently developed lessons they recorded at the start of the project. When we compared the scores from the two lessons, the Lesson Study Lessons scored an average of 5 points higher on an exacting rubric of Authentic Pedagogy Instruction.

Teachers reported benefitting from working with colleagues in districts and states different from their own because they began to see themselves as part of a larger professional community. The Swivl recording technology captured student conversations using microphones that we would not have captured in person, providing insights into students' historical empathy and civic reasoning. Project teachers reported over 95% satisfaction with VLS after year 1.

VLS is encouraging adoption of authentic pedagogy among the 40 participating teachers in our project. VLS is a promising professional development model that can foster teacher collaboration, reflection and instructional refinement across low-resourced school districts.

Poster 7 - **School of Aviation's Multi-Pronged Approach to Local and National Outreach**

Dr. Daniel Siao - Faculty, School of Aviation, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. Rebecca Baughman - Faculty, School of Aviation, College of Liberal Arts

Martin Harris - Faculty, School of Aviation, College of Liberal Arts

Matthew Graham - Staff, School of Aviation, College of Liberal Arts

Dr. James Birdsong - Faculty, School of Aviation, College of Liberal Arts

With a projected high demand for pilots, collegiate flight programs have gained popularity in recent years; however, much of the profession is shrouded in mystery. What are the paths to becoming a professional pilot? What is the flight training process? What does a career as a pilot look like? Are there job opportunities for pilots outside of airlines? These are some of the questions on the minds of young aspiring pilots and their parents.

Auburn University's School of Aviation strives to promote aviation to the next generation of aviation professionals through our outreach efforts. Aviation is a cost-restrictive industry to enter, and many high school students are not aware of the early requirements to begin the process. In this presentation, we will focus on the School of Aviation's outreach programs: Air Race Classic teams, Pilot for a Day, Girls in Aviation Day, Airshow Displays, and Aviation Summer Camps. These events provide the School with a local and national outreach presence.

These events are designed to promote aviation, recruit potential students, and answer some of the aforementioned questions often raised by aspiring pilots. We use a variety of activities, such as participating in flying competitions to visit cities across the country, offering discovery flights

for first-time flyers, inviting the public to meet our student pilots at the airport during pep rallies, offering flying-related crafts for kids, flying aircraft simulators, using immersive technology to demonstrate various aspects of flight, taking aviation-themed field trips, and inviting guest speakers from various sectors of the aviation industry. In this presentation, we propose to discuss each of these events in greater detail, the lessons learned, and our future goals for outreach.

Poster 8 - **Service Learning and Journaling by Undergraduate Elementary Education Majors**

Dr. Jill Salisbury-Glennon - Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Dr. Paris Strom - Faculty, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Amber Johnson - Graduate student, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

Kendrick Wallace - Graduate student, Department of Educational Foundations, Leadership, and Technology, College of Education

The main purpose of this study was to inquire about the types of journaling insights shared by undergraduate teacher education majors (juniors and seniors) based on their school-based service learning experiences. The assignment for the journal reflections was developed for a required course, FOUN 3100 (Child Development, Learning, Motivation and Assessment). The assignment prompts used were designed by the professor. The present study aimed to discover important journal themes that emerged from pre-service teacher experiences in school-based service learning settings. ATLAS.ti was used for the qualitative analysis of the undergraduate service learners' journals.

Findings indicated astute observations regarding classroom management strategies, student motivation and effective strategies for helping students learn. Classroom management was recognized by many as being crucial for optimal learning. Regarding teaching, examples were described by service learners in how they approached tutoring students in reading, math and spelling. Specific tutoring strategies used with success included differentiated instruction, varied explanations and use of concrete manipulatives.

Another emergent theme was the value expressed by pre-teachers in seeing for the first time how key theories from the course could be applied in the classroom which included theories of learning, motivation and development. Another dominant theme inherent across the journals was the extremely high value of face-to-face, verbal dialogue between the child learner and the service learner. It was this type of assistance provided by the service learner that resulted in the highest benefit for both the learner and the service learner. Finally, numerous journals described the collaboration demonstrated among faculty and administration at the school which was encouraging for them as pre-teachers to observe. Related to collaboration, it was acknowledged also in the journals that they will have challenges as they go along in pre-teaching, but it is key to continue seeking help from their support systems (teachers, mentors, peers).

Poster 9 - **From Vision to Venue: How NCNAC and Auburn University Created a National Hub for Nursing Academic Coaching**

Kendall Henderson - Faculty, Nursing, College of Nursing

Brittney Wimberly - Staff, Office of Professional and Continuing Education, University Outreach

The National Consortium for Nursing Academic Coaches (NCNAC) was started in 2021 to connect educators in nursing academia looking for help in supporting their nursing students through academic coaching or student success. The coaching role is broadly defined and includes nursing faculty or staff that help nursing students with topics such as studying skills, time management, test taking or general life skills. NCNAC works to fill in gaps in support for nursing academic coaches, as well as to support one another through research and collaboration. The group is currently composed of over 600 nursing educators from 48 states in the U.S.

On March 21-23, 2025, the first annual Compass Conference, driven by NCNAC leadership and the Auburn Outreach Office of Professional and Continuing Education (OPCE), took place at the Auburn University Hotel and Conference Center.

Conversations regarding the creation of the conference originated during meetings of the Auburn Professional and Continuing Education Council. The Auburn OPCE team and the NCNAC officers built the schedule and sent the call for abstracts in the Fall of 2024.

Around 150 nurse educators, coaches, advisors, and leadership teams from over 50 various colleges and schools of nursing across the United States came together for a time of collaboration, engagement and discussion. The Compass Conference included 26 educational sessions, 4 actionable workshops, and a time for poster presentations. Intentional networking time occurred during breakfasts and walking groups each morning, along with a tour of the Auburn College of Nursing building.

The partnership between the NCNAC group and Auburn's OPCE was invaluable in planning the conference and making it run smoothly. The conference placed Auburn and the nursing field on a national stage, and there are plans to host the conference at Auburn again in 2026.

Poster 10 - **The Auburn University Informal STEM Connectory: One Year of Impactful Work**

Dr. Virginia Davis - Faculty, Department of Chemical Engineering, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Mary Lou Ewald - Faculty, Outreach, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Jess Gilpin - Staff, Outreach, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Dr. Rachel Prado - Faculty, Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry, College of Sciences and Mathematics

Jessica Taylor - Staff, Outreach, Samuel Ginn College of Engineering

Dr. Chippewa Thomas - Faculty, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Director, Office of Faculty Engagement and the Encyclopedia of Alabama

Informal STEM Education (I-STEM) transcends disciplinary boundaries in fueling students' future career interests. The mission of the Auburn I-STEM Connectory is to enhance instruction, research, outreach and extension by aligning existing efforts and expanding Auburn's capacity to meet state and national informal STEM education needs. In its first year, the Connectory hosted over ten events which impacted over 1,000 members of the community. Activities included hosting campus-wide stakeholder meetings, leading a lunch learn and connect series, leading NSF CAREER grant workshops, and collaborating with the Faculty Outreach and Engagement Council. The Connectory also provided insights and letters of support for individual faculty grant proposals and created a directory of evaluators for education initiatives.

Making connections and sharing knowledge are key tenets of the Connectory's work. In the last year, the I-STEM Connectory built an informal STEM education community by founding the East Alabama STEM Ecosystem, partnering with COSAM Outreach to host the Alabama Science and Engineering Fair (ASEF), and working with the Alabama iSTEM Collaborative to host the first ever Alabama Invention Convention competition.

Through these activities and more the I-STEM Connectory aligns with all five goals of Auburn's strategic plan. Our goals for year two and beyond focus on reviving graduate student STEM organizations, continuing to build cross-campus connections through networking and knowledge sharing, growing ASEF, and expanding Invention Convention across the state of Alabama. The I-STEM Connectory will also define needs for physical space, establish formal agreements with more colleges, and formalize its organizational structure including creating working groups aligned with each goal of Auburn's Strategic Plan. With Auburn's unique position as a land, sea, and space grant institution, the I-STEM Connectory will coalesce human and funding resources to become an exemplar in addressing state and national needs for high-quality, accessible STEM education and workforce development initiatives.

Poster 11 - **LCRP: Engaging the Community in Advocacy through Strengths and Values**

Dr. Ashley Brown - Community Partner , Lee County Remembrance Project (LCRP)

Joe Davis - Community Partner, Lee County Remembrance Project (LCRP)

Dr. Sara Demoiny - Faculty, Elementary Education, College of Education

The Lee County Remembrance Project (LCRP) is a grassroots initiative that addresses racial terror, violence and trauma in Lee County, Alabama. In partnership with the Equal Justice Initiative (EJI), LCRP educates the community on racial injustices while promoting healing and advocating for justice. We foster community engagement and advocacy to combat discriminatory practices. This session will focus on the methods LCRP employs to encourage the community to advocate for racial justice and recognition. We will discuss strategies like involving local leaders, using social media for amplification, and educating community stakeholders to encourage advocacy. Within these methods, we encourage community members to find and use

their personal strengths (writing letters and petitions, organizing, calling legislators, shaping protests and more) to take action. We also highlight personal values like fairness to support this work. These methods encourage people to consider the variety of ways they can advocate and reinforces that what they do is impactful in dismantling systemic oppression and racism. Attendees will gain insights into how LCRP mobilizes collective action, fosters inclusive collaboration, and transforms advocacy into tangible social change.

Luncheon and Keynote

12:30 p.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Grand Ballroom

Symposium Luncheon Keynote David Weerts, Ph.D.

David J. Weerts is Professor of Higher Education in the College of Education and Human Development (CEHD) at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and Associate Vice Provost for Public Engagement for the University of Minnesota System. Over the past twenty-five years, Professor Weerts's research and teaching has focused on higher education leadership and organizations, particularly in the areas of university-community engagement, state financing of higher education, and institutional advancement. His research on these topics has appeared in leading academic journals including Teachers College Record, The Journal of Higher Education, Research in Higher Education, and Review of Higher Education.

Professor Weerts is active in national leadership initiatives to support university engagement and outreach across the U.S. and internationally. He served two terms on the executive committee for the Council on Engagement and Outreach for the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities (APLU) and currently serves on the board of directors for the Seed Coalition (formerly Iowa-Minnesota Campus Compact). In addition, he directs the Engagement Academy for University Leaders, a professional development program designed for mid-career and senior leaders of engagement. The program has trained over 1,300 leaders across 160 institutions and 5 countries. Professor Weerts earned a Ph.D. in educational leadership and policy analysis from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He was inducted into the Academy of Community Engagement Scholarship (ACES) in 2025.

Plenary II

2:45 p.m. – 4:30 p.m.
Legacy Ballroom

Education Talk 1 - Fostering Global Citizens Through Education, Service Learning and Culture Awareness.

Dr. Elizabeth Ivy Quansah – Director, Outreach Global, Auburn University Outreach

Dr. Elizabeth I. Quansah from the Office of Outreach Global creates opportunities for global and local engagement, service-learning programs, cultural immersion experiences, and contributions towards community development across the globe. The office provides affordable short-term (1-2 weeks) service-learning experiences to students who cannot afford traditional study abroad programs. It also offers capacity training programs for both domestic and global partners.

Additionally, Outreach Global offers faculty members short-term opportunities abroad for outreach work, community engagement, and research. The Office also brings global experiences to the domestic audience through its annual events such as Global Community Day Festival, Fulbright in the Classroom, and GlobalConnect Camp. These events expose students, faculty, staff, alumni, and the local community to diverse perspectives, culture, history, social awareness, and increase global understanding. The Office of Outreach Global is a unit within University Outreach.

Education Talk 2- **Regional Autism Network**

Dr. Doris Hill - Director, Regional Autism Network, Clinical Professor, College of Education, Auburn University

Maria Guiterrez - Family Navigator, Regional Autism Network, Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, College of Education, Auburn University

Alabama's RAN serves those who have questions, concerns, or resource needs regarding themselves, a family member, friend, client, patient, or a student with diagnosed or suspected autism spectrum disorder (ASD) across 20 counties-the largest RAN in the state.

The Regional Autism Network provides:

- Professional training programs
- Technical assistance and consultation services
- Individual and direct family assistance in the home, community, and school
- Public education programs

We exist to connect people with ASD, their families, educators, and service providers to the information and/or services that best meet their needs in multiple languages, including Spanish and Korean. We travel to events and provide trainings as needed and meet one on one with individuals to meet their needs.

Adjourn

4:30 p.m.

Legacy Ballroom