

Thursday, August 28, 2025

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. Kostelecky - 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.