

S T U D E N T   L I B E R A L

APRIL 14, 2026



CELEBRATE  
MHU STUDENTS



A R T S   M O S A I C

***Please Read Carefully!***

***Remove your SLAM Passport from the program.***

***Add your name and signature to the back of the passport.***

***Your passport is your personal ticket into SLAM activities.***

***It will be stamped at the door as you leave each session you attend.***

***DO NOT LOSE IT!***

***Many professors will ask to see your passport as proof of attendance.***

- ▶ During Oral Presentations, thematically arranged groups of presentations will be happening SIMULTANEOUSLY in MULTIPLE PLACES on campus. Check your program carefully and decide which you want to attend. You will only be able to attend one group of presentations in each session. Please remain in that session for all presentations.
- ▶ The Arts Breaks are also happening simultaneously in MULTIPLE PLACES on campus. The performances begin at 1:30 and last for twenty minutes. They will be repeated at 2:00 so you can attend more than one. You only need to attend one to get your passport stamped.
- ▶ To be eligible for one of the fabulous SLAM door prizes, you must be present at the Closing Celebration at 3:30pm in Belk Auditorium and your passport must have five stamps that show you have attended:
  - Plenary Session II – Sports Gambling Debate AND
  - All 4 other sessions (Oral Presentations I & V, Poster Session III, and Arts Breaks IV)
- ▶ What next? Select one of the exciting presentation groups from Session I. Some may be Standing Room Only, so get there early to get a seat!

***HAVE FUN and GET SLAMMED!***

*The program cover for SLAM is designed each year by a student in MHU's graphic design program. This year's cover design is by Sofia Del Rincon Aldana, a sophomore visual arts major from Pachuquilla, Mexico.*

*The SLAM banners hanging above the stage in Moore Auditorium were designed and created for the very first SLAM in 2007 by students in the Fashion & Interior Merchandising program that existed at Mars Hill at that time..*

# SLAM

## The Student Liberal Arts Mosaic

Mars Hill University

April 15, 2025

### Order of the Day:

8:45–9 a.m.	Gathering in Moore
9–9:35 a.m.	Opening Ceremony
9:45–10:35 a.m.	Oral Presentations, Session I
10:45–11:45 a.m.	Plenary Debate, Session II
11:45 a.m.–1:20 p.m.	Lunch + Posters, Session III
1:30–2:20 p.m.	Arts Breaks, Session IV
2:30–3:20 p.m.	Oral Presentations, Session V
3:30–4 p.m.	Closing Celebration & Prizes

### Fanfare

**8:45 a.m., Moore Auditorium**

*Percussion Ensemble*

*Dr. Brian Tinkel, Director*

*Samba Batucada (Brazilian Traditional)*

Elijah “Wyatt” Bell  
*Music Education*

BrookLynn Pruett  
*Music Education*

Adam Browning  
*Music Education*

Micah Robinson  
*Music*

Isaiah Cedillo  
*Music Education*

Grace Vella  
*Music Education*

Brady Finnegan  
*Music Education*

## Opening Celebration

9 a.m., Moore Auditorium

Invocation

*Brooke Hoffman*

Welcome

*Pres. Tony Floyd*

Welcome from the SLAM Committee

*Brad Skinner*

Charge to Students, Faculty, and Friends

*Joy Clifton*

## Oral Presentations, Session I 9:45 a.m., Various Venues

### Licking the Problem of Team Culture

*Belk Auditorium*

*What Is Team Culture? Defining and Modeling Culture in Collegiate Sports*

Elise “RayRay” Ellis

*Psychology*

*Mammals of the World: Is the Social Tongue Lick an Appeasement Behavior?*

Cecelia Hale

*Zoology*

### Get Bowled Over, Ethically Speaking

*Nash 210*

*MHU Ethics Bowl Team; Demonstration*

Alexis Allen

*Criminal Justice*

Thomas (TJ) Burke

*Business Administration, Religion & Philosophy*

Lashyia Davis

*Social Work*

Torin Musick

*Education*



**It May Be A Long Street, but not a Lost Cause: The Search for Identity and Recognition**  
*Owen Theatre*

*James Longstreet and the Lost Cause*

Elinor Maloney

*History*

*From Campus to Corrections: A Comparative Examination of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Emotion, Recognition and Social Belonging*

Miranda Overby

*Psychology*

**“Curcumin”-stantial Evidence for the Insolubility of the Political Machine**  
*Ferguson Health Sciences 306*

*Increasing the Solubility of Lipophilic Natural Products by Mechanical and Chemical Processes*

Haylee, Dehart

*Chemistry, Biomedical Science*

*The Kingdom of Madison: The Rise and Fall of a Political Machine*

Jordan Hulsey

*Business Administration, Community & Nonprofit Leadership*

**Not Your Usual Free-Wheeling Mickey Mouse Presentation**  
*Floyd Conference Center, Campus Center 317*

*MOW Kitchen Data Analysis*

Ashley Gionet

*History*

Katie Hunt

*Math*

Thomas Jenkins

*Computer Science*

Aaron Willis

*Math*

*Branded Magic: The Effects Nostalgia Has on Buyer Behavior and How Companies Can Leverage the Connection*

Brad Skinner

*Psychology*

**The Swift and Changing Currents that Shape the Delivery of Meals to a Broad Population**  
***Floyd Conference Center, Campus Center 318***

*Exploring the French Broad*

Norah Crotty

*Biomedical Science*

Bayden Jones

*Business Administration*

Samantha Koch

*Integrated Education*

Cooper Ross

*Computer Science*

*Meals on Wheels Route Data*

Anthony Famularo Jr.

*Math*

Kai Runyon

*Math*

Isaac Weaver

*Math*

**Plenary, Session II**

**10:45 a.m., Moore Auditorium**

**IS LEGALIZING SPORT GAMBLING A BAD BET?**

*A debate between teams of students, faculty, and staff,  
with audience participation*

Team “For”

*TJ Burske, Aaron Cuthbertson, Marty Gilbert, Serena McMillan*

Team “Against”

*Alexis Allen, Jo Poenaru, Rhys Thomas, Rachel Wilson*

**Lunch**  
*On your own*

**Poster Presentations**  
***Campus Center 1st Floor***

- Alisa Absher, Psychology: *How Movement Enhances Memory*
- Emmalyn Buskirk, Biomedical Science/Zoology: *Neighbor vs Stranger Recognition in Mice: Behavioral and Acoustic Responses*
- Jessie Hayles, Integrated Education: *Unlock Your Brain: Study Skills Power by You!*
- Alex Kirchhoff, Zoology: *Complex Stream Features Similar to Headwater Streams Are Crucial for Reintroduction of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*)*
- Nevaeh Loudon, Nursing: *The Big 3, Holistic Strategies to Healing Endometriosis*
- Katherine McDonald, Chemistry/Zoology: *Developing a Colorimetric Urinalysis Methodology for Early Detection of Chagas Disease in Canine Populations*
- Samantha Mettie, Psychology: *How Social Media Can Impact Free Will*
- Charlee Rumbough, Psychology: *Lighten Your Cognitive Load to Improve Your Study Skills and Learning*
- Alicia Segovia, Psychology: *Driving Strength: Comparing Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation in Student Grip Performance*
- Savannah Stanish, Ecology & Conservation Biology: *Spatial Analysis of Fungi and Forest Types*
- Ajani Wade, Psychology: *Music Tempo in Relation to Executive Function*
- Sirac Yasin Aslan, Psychology/Business: *Willingness to Buy a Product Based on Marketing Strategy*

**Arts Breaks, Session IV**

**1:30 p.m., Various Venues**

**Seams of the Self**  
***Moore Auditorium***

*The 5th Annual MHU Fashion Show*  
Alexis Allen  
*Criminal Justice*

## Bailey Mountain Cloggers *The Loft*

### *CLUE: Murder Mystery Concert*

Samuel Evans  
*Education*

Leah Wilson  
*Criminal Justice*

Zachary Rumley  
*Visual Art*

Allyson Kirkman  
*Business*

Grace Mayer  
*Psychology &  
Entrepreneurial Leadership*

Celia Hernandez  
*Criminal Justice*

William Holcombe  
*Business*

Keaira Griffin  
*Political Science &  
Community Nonprofit  
Leadership*

Kiara Zeliski  
*Business*

Malia McAmis  
*Psychology*

Chloe Branning  
*English & Criminal Justice*

Sydney Grace Evans  
*History*

Michaela Purdie  
*Integrated Education*

Maddie Carter  
*Biochemistry*

Emma Aldridge  
*Entrepreneurial Leadership*

Gracen Vaughn  
*Biomedical Science*

Shelby Walker  
*Criminal Justice*

Ashley Snodgrass  
*Business*

Madi Gilman  
*Allied Health Science*

Candace Fowler  
*Nursing*

Cassidy Odell  
*Nursing*

Torin Musick  
*Education*

Mylie Hudson  
*Zoology*

Grace Kanarr  
*Criminal Justice*

Sydney West  
*Allied Health Science*

Hannah Beaudoin  
*Integrated Education*

Kellie Winn  
*Allied Health Science*

Emma Sauls  
*Psychology & Social Work*



**Student Art**  
**Weizenblatt Gallery**

*Juried Student Art Exhibition*

**Shakespeare on the High Seas**  
**Owen Theatre**

*Shakespeare On The High Seas: A Theatre for Young Audiences Experience*

Jacob Bailey  
*Music Education*

Briana McFalls  
*Theatre Arts*

Victor S.E. Cramp  
*Theatre Arts*

Nate Ogden  
*Theatre Arts*

Seabron Echols  
*Music Performance*

Mary Milam Shepard  
*Undeclared*

Tatum Griffin  
*Undeclared*

Miranda Sowers  
*Theatre Arts*

Emma Hall  
*Theatre Arts*

**Oral Presentations, Session V 2:30 p.m., Various Venues**

**Be Ever Mindful. Shakespeare Was Right: The Play is the Thing**  
**Belk Auditorium**

*Why We Play What We Play – When Did You Decide?*

Robert Davidson  
*Health & Human Performance*

*Physiological and Psychological Response to Brief Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Undergraduate Students*

Nialah Garcia  
*Psychology/Art Therapy*

**How to be an Influential Member of the Band and not Just Another Brick in the Wall**  
*Owen Theatre*

*Community Innovations Project: Impacting Non-Profits in Western North Carolina One Student at a Time or Real World Solutions as a Non-Profit Student*

Jordan Hulsey

*Business Administration/Community & Nonprofit Leadership*

Matthew Pacheco

*Community & Nonprofit Leadership*

Sara Tilley

*Community & Nonprofit Leadership*

*What Happens When Humans Become the Instruments?*

Charlee Rumbough

*Undeclared*

**A Place Where Every Student Flies 1st Class: Giving Accessibility Wings**  
*Ferguson Health Sciences 306*

*Enhancing Classroom Accessibility at Mars Hill University*

Natalie Capps

*Integrated Education*

Alleigh Flewellin

*Integrated Education*

Samantha Koch

*Integrated Education*

*Cognitive Incapacitation in Aviation: Stress, Workload, Surprise, and Attentional Narrowing as Predictors of Pilot Performance*

Ivy Gunn

*Psychology*

**The Bond of Community**  
***Floyd Conference Center, Campus Center 317***

*Cadenza Unveiling: The Bond of Community*

Marlee Bishop  
*Graphic Design/  
Communications*

Brooke Bachini  
*Graphic Design*

Chloe Branning  
*English/Criminal Justice*

Sydney Grace Evans  
*History*

Shakti Mishra  
*Business Administration*

Kiki Palmer  
*Graphic Design/Photography*

Jennifer Quintero  
*Graphic Design*

Nash Richardson  
*Visual Arts*

**Dungeons, Dragons, and Worms OH MY! TTRPGs and TBPs**  
***Floyd Conference Center, Campus Center 318***

*Tabletop Role-Playing Game Participation and Psychological Well-Being*

Jason Boucher  
*Psychology*

*Effects of Tribromophenol (TBP) on Gordian Worm (Paragordius varius) Larae Viability*

Zavanah Aparicio  
*Zoology*

**Closing Ceremony & Prizes**

**3:30 p.m.,**

**Floyd Conference Center, Campus Center 317/318**

Please bring your completed passport with five session stamps to be eligible for the prize-drawings.

# Abstracts

## Oral Presentations

### **MHU Ethics Bowl Team: Demonstration**

*Alexis Allen, Thomas (TJ) Burke, Lashyia Davis, Torin Musick*

Ethics Bowl is a structured debate format in which competing teams collaborate to deliver oral arguments responding to a case study and prompt with ethical dimensions. MHU has participated in the NC Ethics Bowl for 10 years, including this past February, and the theme this year was “Ethics in Leadership.” Ethics Bowl represents the application and intersection of many different majors in a applicable way, both in terms of the students participating and the universality of the cases they address. It is also a very strong networking experience, because the judges are from the non-profit, corporate, and public service sector.

### **Effects of Tribromophenol (TBP) on Gordian Worm (*Paragordius varius*) Larvae Viability**

*Zavanah Aparicio*

The Southern Appalachia region experienced devastating floods from Hurricane Helene, with flood waters reaching heights up to 27 feet carrying an abundance of homes, debris, and pollutants. Rivers and streams like the French Broad are home to diverse freshwater ecosystems that flow directly beside towns that had been completely muddied with toxins carried in by the storm. Many organisms interact to contribute to the ecosystem, including parasitic species. *Paragordius varius* are free living parasites known as gordian worms that infect aquatic and terrestrial invertebrates. Gordian worms can be used to test the impacts of chemicals such as 2,4,6- tribromophenol (TBP), which was found in Southern Appalachian waterways after Helene. This experiment tests two different TBP concentrations on viability of *P. varius* larvae. This study aims to present effects of TBP found in post-storm water samples on aquatic free-living parasites and results can be compared to other aquatic or terrestrial organisms.

## **Cadenza Unveiling: The Bond of Community**

*Marlee Bishop, Brooke Bachini, Chloe Branning, Sydney Grace Evans, Shakti Mishra, Kiki Palmer, Jennifer Quintero, Nash Richardson*

The spring 2026 Cadenza Literature and Arts Magazine presentation at SLAM (Student Liberal Arts Mosaic) seeks to revive a valued Mars Hill University tradition while celebrating contemporary student creativity. By returning The Cadenza to a public, performance-centered space, this project highlights our motivation to foster artistic community, visibility, and recognition for student creators. The event will feature live readings, visual art showcases, and the formal distribution of the magazine, alongside awards recognizing outstanding contributions in poetry, prose, and visual art. Presenting The Cadenza at SLAM allows contributors and editors to share the creative and editorial processes behind the publication while engaging directly with the supportive campus audience. This project honors the magazine's historical legacy, encourages future participation in campus arts, and reinforces SLAM as a space where student voices are celebrated, rewarded, and preserved within Mars Hill University's cultural life.

## **Tabletop Role-Playing Game Participation and Psychological Well-Being**

*Jason Boucher*

This research examines whether participation in tabletop role-playing games (TTRPGs) is associated with psychological well-being, emotional creativity, and social connectedness. TTRPGs, such as Dungeons & Dragons, involve collaborative storytelling, imagination, and social interaction. Despite their growing popularity, limited empirical research has explored their potential mental health benefits. This study uses a cross-sectional correlational survey design in which adult participants complete an anonymous online questionnaire assessing TTRPG experience, including years of play, frequency, and format. Participants also complete standardized measures of psychological well-being, emotional creativity, and general social connectedness. Individuals with no prior experience will be included as a comparison group. This research aims to contribute to the understanding of how creative and socially engaging leisure activities may support emotional well-being and community connection.

## **Enhancing Classroom Accessibility at Mars Hill University**

*Natalie Capps, Alleigh Flewwellin, Samantha Koch*

This project examines classroom accessibility at Mars Hill University with the goal of fostering a more inclusive learning environment for all students. Guided by standards from professional accessibility organizations and disability advocacy groups, we developed a comprehensive classroom accessibility checklist focused on features that support wheelchair users and those with other disabilities, including clear pathways, appropriate desk height, and unobstructed entrances. Using this tool, we evaluated classrooms across campus to determine whether they met established accessibility criteria. In classrooms that met all standards, we designated and labeled an accessible desk / environment with a blue sticker to ensure it remains available for students who need it. Our presentation raises awareness about both existing accessibility gaps and the importance of protecting designated spaces, encouraging the campus community to actively support equitable access in every classroom.

## **Exploring the French Broad**

*Norah Crotty, Bayden Jones, Samantha Kick, Cooper Ross*

The French broad River has been a life source through many generations providing value in different ways. Our group had the opportunity to canoe and camp along the French Broad across three different days. Join us to hear about the observations and connections we experienced and made while we navigated the French Broad River. Both the difficulties and the joyous moments of directing a canoe through hurricane ravaged waters. Then finally, learn about historical events that took place right along the French Broad River.

## **Why We Play What We Play!**

*Robert Davidson*

“Why We Play What We Play” is a peer-reviewed research presentation about why people participate in the sport(s) that they do throughout their lives. This research consists of 2 parts, the collection of data, the first part is researching about why people (mostly collegiate athletes) participate in the sports that they do though out the world. The 2nd part of the research was collected in-house at the Mars Hill University campus through the use of a survey completed online asking students about why they chose the sport(s) they did early in life and later on in college. This presentation will also include video interviews from fellow MHU students about the topic at hand and how it fits into the data that’s collected. This research hopes to inspire current and future coaches to take into consideration why their athletes chose to play the sport and how they can potentially integrate these reasonings into their coaching philosophy to keep sports enjoyable for all participants.



## **Increasing the Solubility of Lipophilic Natural Products by Mechanical and Chemical Processes**

*Haylee Dehart*

One of the most prominent issues in pharmacology is that of bioavailability. While many biological factors play into bioavailability, a plethora of drug candidates are inhibited simply by being insoluble in water, which prevents absorption and hinders the efficacy of the drug. Most pharmaceuticals overcome this problem by acidifying the drug and selling it as the HCl salt, but this chemical means of increasing solubility inherently changes the drug and impacts its formulation. Thus, increasing solubility by purely mechanical means would afford an increase in bioavailability without time and money lost to the process of formulation. Generally, solubility may be increased via particle size reduction by wet and dry milling, but simple methods like this often fail. In this proposal we will apply modern methodologies, such as nebulization, nontoxic surfactants, nanosuspension, and solid dispersion techniques, to increase the solubility of the plant-based supplement Curcumin to increase its poor bioavailability.

## **What is Team Culture? Defining and Modeling Culture in Collegiate Sports**

*RayRay Ellis*

This presentation introduces a conceptual model of team culture in collegiate athletics and explores how it shapes student-athletes' experiences both on and off the field. Rather than treating culture as abstract concept, this model defines it through everyday team dynamics like communication patterns, cohesion, climate, and group mindset. It is argued that these cultural elements directly influence athletes' sense of belonging and a team's overall performance, both individually and collectively. By framing team culture as something intentional and constantly evolving, this model offers a practical way to think about how teams can actively create environments that promote competitive success while also supporting personal growth.

## **Meals On Wheels Route Data**

*Anthony Famularo Jr., Kai Runyon, Isaac Weaver*

We formatted addresses from Meals on Wheels routes and used a mapping software to find the most efficient path the volunteers at Meals on Wheels would take. Upon doing so, we used the distance the volunteers would be driving to calculate the gas cost with a mpg range of 20-40 as well as taking into account the amount of gas an average car model can carry. When calculating the gas cost we differentiated it by the local areas cost for gas and assigned each route a cost depending on the location and day the volunteers would be driving.

## **Physiological and Psychological Responses to Brief Mindfulness-Based Interventions in Undergraduate Students**

*Nialah Garcia*

This study examines whether structured, repetitive activities reduce state somatic anxiety more effectively than unstructured walking following acute stress. Undergraduate students completed baseline measures of anxiety, affect, and somatic symptoms before participating in a brief stress-inducing speaking task. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of three conditions: mandala coloring, labyrinth walking, or unstructured walking. Self-report measures were administered as baseline, post-stress, and post-intervention to assess changes in physiological and psychological anxiety. It was hypothesized that structured activities would produce greater reductions in state somatic anxiety compared to unstructured walking. Findings aim to contribute to the growing need for accessible, low-cost, non-pharmacological strategies that support young adults experiencing interconnected physical and psychological symptoms of anxiety.

## **Meals on Wheels Kitchen Data Analysis**

*Ashley Gionet, Katie Hunt, Thomas Jenkins, Aaron Willis*

This study analyzes kitchen operational data from a local Meals on Wheels program to identify trends in meal distribution, dietary preferences, and beverage selections. Using R and RStudio for data processing and visualization, monthly meal records were examined to uncover patterns in service volume and client dietary needs. These findings provide actionable insight into client demand patterns and resource allocation, offering the organization a data-driven foundation for planning meal preparation, managing inventory, and anticipating seasonal fluctuations in service demand.

## **Cognitive Incapacitation in Aviation Stress, Workload, Surprise, and Attentional Narrowing as Predictors of Pilot Performance**

*Ivy Gunn*

Aviation safety research has led to a shift away from blaming pilots alone for cockpit errors. This has happened through more understanding of the cognitive and physiological demands that can shape a pilot's performance. Research shows that how pilots perform is not affected by a single variable, but instead by combinations of stress-related and environmental loads. This presentation will examine cognitive incapacitation in pilots due to factors including acute stress, surprise, fatigue, high workload, and physiological strain which can narrow attention, impair visual scanning, and weaken decision-making during critical phases of flight. Then we will consider the role of automation, attentional control, and adaptive factors that either worsen or buffer these effects. Finally, we will argue that aviation safety can be improved through better training, earlier detection, and stronger intervention strategies.

## **Mammals of the World: Is the Social Tongue Lick an Appeasement Behavior?**

*Cecelia Hale*

Although social tongue licks (STLs) have been commonly reported as anecdotal behavioral observations in canines and felines, their use in other mammals and their adaptive function has not been evaluated. Here, we investigated whether STLs function as appeasement behaviors and conflict de-escalation signals in species belonging to Orders Artiodactyla (even-toed ungulates) and Perissodactyla (odd-toed ungulates). We specifically investigated whether the presence of STL during aggressive interactions was associated with reduced likelihood of physical conflict. Behavioral data were collected using publicly available video recordings from YouTube. Experimental observations consisted of videos depicting aggressive interactions among mammals belonging to Artiodactyla and Perissodactyla. For each interaction, the presence, absence, and frequency of STL were recorded, along with whether the encounter escalated into physical conflict or not. Control observations included videos of solitary individuals from the same taxonomic groups, in which STL presence and frequency were similarly documented. Data were analyzed using a non-parametric Chi-square goodness of fit test. The mean STL frequency observed during conflict interactions was 1.89, while non-conflict interactions exhibited a mean of 1.75. Statistical comparisons revealed no meaningful difference between conditions. These results provide no evidence supporting the hypothesis that STL functions as a conflict prevention or de-escalation signal. Instead, findings suggest that the social tongue lick may primarily represent a non-aggressive social/friendly behavior, potentially associated with affiliative interactions or routine communication rather than conflict mitigation.

## **The Kingdom of Madison: The Rise and Fall of a Political Machine**

*Jordan Hulsey*

Madison County was a solidly Republican county after the Civil War. Pro-Unionist sentiment ruled the county even after the end of the war, which allowed Republicans to dominate local politics. This was until the rise of Zeno and E.Y. Ponder: two brothers raised in poverty who brought the Democratic Party and “the gospel of the New Deal” to life in red country. From stolen elections, murders, and fights, the Ponder Machine ruled Madison County from the 1950s until the 1980s. In this presentation, I will discuss the history of the Ponder Machine and the rise and fall of Zeno and E.Y. Ponder.

## **Community Innovations Project: Impacting Non-Profits in Western North Carolina One Student at a Time or Real- World Solutions as a Non-Profit Student**

*Jordan Hulsey, Andrew Pacheco, Sara Tilley*

In the surrounding community of Mars Hill University, we have sought out organizations who could use the help of Community and Non-Profit students. As part of a senior capstone for the major, we were each tasked with collaborating with our community partner to find a problem and construct a sustainable solution. We are presenting work done during our Community Innovations Project, for the following organizations: Brookstone Church, MyVillage Asheville, and Madison County Democratic Party. Though the issues may be distinct, the principles, theories, and goals were very similar as each student worked with marketing, budgeting, researching, and planning sustainable steps. Ultimately, all three students will be sharing how their work has improved the quality and experience of their organization.

## **James Longstreet and the Lost Cause**

*Elinor Maloney*

Due to his many Civil War victories Gen. James Longstreet should presumably have earned an important place in Confederate southern memory. He worked closely with Robert E. Lee and played major roles in battles like Second Manassas, Fredericksburg, and Chickamauga. Many contemporaries regarded him as Lee's most trusted lieutenant, often calling him the 'War Horse' of the Confederacy. With that kind of record, it would make sense for him to be celebrated in Southern memory. But instead his legacy was tarnished, critics blamed him for the Confederate defeat at Gettysburg, and his later support for Reconstruction only deepened the hostility toward him in the postwar South.

## **From Campus to Corrections: A Comparative Examination of Adverse Childhood Experiences, Emotion, Recognition, and Social Belonging**

*Miranda Overby*

Prior research suggests that criminal offenders often report higher levels of childhood trauma, lower social belonging, and difficulty recognizing others' facial expressions. This study examines whether similar patterns exist among college students. Students of Mars Hill participated by completing the Adverse Childhood Experiences questionnaire, a measure of psychological sense of campus belonging, and an emotion recognition task. In the task, participants labeled facial expressions of young, middle-aged, and older men and women displaying six basic emotions: happiness, anger, sadness, neutrality, disgust, and fear. This research explores how early experiences and social connection may influence emotional processing in a university population. It is hypothesized that Mars Hill University students will generally identify emotions more accurately than offender populations. However, students reporting higher levels of childhood trauma and lower campus belonging are expected to demonstrate lower accuracy in emotion recognition. Specific results from the survey will be shared in the presentation.

## **What Happens When Humans Become the Instruments?**

*Charlee Rumbough*

The Mountain Lion Chamber Choir is a 26-voice, student-led ensemble dedicated to artistic excellence, collaboration, and cultural inclusivity. Rooted in a shared passion for choral music, the ensemble brings together singers from diverse backgrounds, creating a dynamic and supportive musical community. Through thoughtful programming, the choir explores a wide range of repertoire spanning classical masterworks, contemporary compositions, and global musical traditions.

Emphasizing both musical precision and expressive storytelling, the Mountain Lion Chamber Choir strives to engage audiences with performances that are both technically refined and emotionally resonant. As a student-driven organization, members take an active role in leadership, artistic decision-making, and community engagement, fostering a sense of ownership and creative exploration. Committed to amplifying diverse voices and perspectives, the ensemble seeks to celebrate the richness of choral music while cultivating an inclusive environment where all members can grow as musicians and collaborators.

## **Branded Magic: The Effects Nostalgia Has on Buyer Behavior and How Companies Can leverage the Connection**

*Brad Skinner*

Nostalgia research has evolved from a simple linear perspective of longing for the past into recognizing the rather more complex interplay of emotions, senses and their effects on the brain. This presentation explores how nostalgic experiences influence consumer decision making and shape overall attitudes toward a brand. Research has shown that by triggering emotional memories, nostalgia can increase brand loyalty, brand trust, repurchase intentions, and persuade consumers to purchase products. The Walt Disney Company will be used as a specific example of how companies can leverage nostalgia to strengthen the emotional connection with consumers. Ultimately, this presentation will argue that companies, while using nostalgic memories, will benefit through financial gain and repurchase behaviors by their customers.

## **Poster Presentations**

### **How Movement Can Enhance Memory**

*Alisa Absher*

This study examines how dance is a cognitively and physically demanding form of movement, that may enhance memory performance. Utilizing research from psychology and health sciences, it argues that dance strengthens memory more effectively than general physical activity due to its use of rhythm, coordination, spatial awareness, and sequencing. Prior studies show that dancers demonstrate improved working memory, spatial recall, and executive function compared to non-dancers. Through analysis of peer-reviewed experimental research, this poster project highlights how repeated choreography, motor planning, and attentional control engage multiple neural systems. These findings support the idea that learning through dance promotes stronger memory retention. Overall, this research suggests that dance can serve as a useful tool for cognitive enhancement by combining physical movement with complex mental processes.



## **Willingness to Buy a Product Based on Marketing Strategy**

*Sirac Yasin Aslan*

This study is about comparing 2 different marketing strategies the first is the foot in the door technique and the door in the face technique. One of those techniques is making a small request towards a customer first and then making a larger one after. This kind of technique is used often online by giving people a free trial on a subscription which will turn into a long-term subscription. The other technique is based on making a large request first and then minimizing the request by giving the customer the feeling of making a good deal by putting a sale tag on a product. Results will compare the success of each strategy from an online survey.

## **Neighbor vs Stranger Recognition in Mice: Behavioral and Acoustic Responses**

*Emmalyn Buskirk*

This study examined whether mice display different behavioral and acoustic responses when exposed to neighbor versus stranger conspecifics, addressing whether social familiarity influences vigilance and vocal communication. Eight adult female mice were divided into two housing groups and observed in 16 experimental trials and 8 control trials. During trials, pairs of mice were placed in a divided enclosure allowing scent and acoustic exchange while preventing physical contact. Behavioral responses were recorded using ethograms, and ultrasonic vocalizations were captured using an ANABAT Swift detector and analyzed in Raven Lite for call amplitude and duration. Mice interacting with strangers more frequently displayed vigilance behaviors such as freezing or hiding, while mice recorded alone more often groomed or explored. However, statistical analyses found no significant differences in call amplitude ( $t(14)=0.11$ ,  $p=0.92$ ) or call length ( $t(14)=0.41$ ,  $p=0.69$ ). These results suggest stranger exposure did not significantly alter vocalizations under the tested conditions.

## **Unlock Your Brain: Study Skills Power By You!**

*Jessie Hayles*

This poster examines how cognitive and metacognitive strategies support effective studying and promote learner autonomy. Using a literature review methodology, research on cognitive learning theory, study strategies, learning styles, and self-regulated learning was synthesized to explore how students can take active control of their learning. Findings suggest that evidence-based cognitive strategies such as spaced practice, retrieval practice, interleaving, elaboration, and dual coding improve retention and understanding. Research also indicates that cognitive styles influence the strategies students naturally select, while deep learning approaches and self-regulation are associated with higher academic success. Additionally, metacognitive instruction (including planning, monitoring, and self-evaluation) enhances performance and encourages students to assume responsibility for their learning. Overall, the research supports the idea that learning is an active process in which students can improve outcomes by intentionally applying cognitive and metacognitive strategies.

## **Complex Stream Features Similar to Headwater Streams Are crucial for Reintroduction of Brook Trout (*Salvelinus Fontinalis*)**

*Alex Kirchhoff*

Southern Appalachian headwater streams are critical habitats for native Brook Trout (*Salvelinus fontinalis*), yet these populations are increasingly restricted by invasive species, habitat degradation, and climate change. Management strategies often emphasize elevation but may overlook the importance of fine-scale habitat structure. In this study, I surveyed ten streams in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, measuring stream features (plunge pools, rapids, runs, fast and slow riffles) alongside temperature, dissolved oxygen, pH, and elevation in paired headwater and lower sections. Using hierarchical clustering and a cluster dendrogram in RStudio, I identified groups of streams with similar habitat profiles. The results highlight how specific combinations of physical and chemical characteristics distinguish suitable Brook Trout habitats and suggest that habitat complexity, rather than elevation alone, can also be used as a potential reintroduction site.

### **The Big 3, Holistic Strategies to Healing Endometriosis**

*Nevaeh Louden*

Endometriosis is a chronic gynecologic condition affecting women ages 13 - 55, characterized by debilitating pelvic pain, infertility, and reduced quality of life. This project explores the research question: What evidence-based holistic practices can be implemented to alleviate pain associated with endometriosis? A narrative review of primary and secondary studies, including cross-sectional, cohort, and randomized controlled trials, was conducted to evaluate pain outcomes, mental health impact, and quality of life measures. Findings support three key holistic interventions including consistent exercise, an anti-inflammatory diet, and mindfulness practices as effective, accessible strategies for symptom reduction. Integrating these interventions into nursing education and patient care may reduce reliance on or improve outcomes for invasive or pharmacologic treatments while promoting patient advocacy, improved mental health, and enhanced overall well-being for women living with endometriosis.

### **Developing a Colorimetric Urinalysis Methodology of Early Detection of Chagas Disease in Canine Populations**

*Katherine McDonald*

The purpose of my research is to develop a more cost effective, accurate way to track Chagas disease. Chagas disease is transmitted from the insect known as a kissing bug, carrying the *Trypanosoma cruzii* parasite that causes Chagas disease. In order to encourage more testing to track the disease rate among humans, studies were done on dogs given their sentinel species position among humans. Chagas disease is best discovered via Polymerase Chain Reaction (PcR) testing which is very costly. Chagas lays dormant for 20-30 years until people experience advanced heart disease and other cardiac disorders. Studies have shown that high levels of urobilinogen in the urine, have been connected to cardiac disorders among humans and canines. Chagas disease is a threat to canines as much as it is to humans. The purpose of this research was to test urine of canines, then PcR test those with high levels of urobilinogen for Chagas disease to see if a rate of infection among canines can correlate to humans and encourage more testing in the United States.

## **How Social Media Can Impact Free Will**

*Sam Mettie*

When you're scrolling, are you making choices—or are choices being made for you? This project explores how social media platforms can influence users' autonomy (free will) through integrated design features and data collection. Focusing on recurring, quiet mechanisms: the privacy paradox (why people share data despite concerns), nudges and choice architecture (how “for you” recommendations steer decisions), and online targeting (how personal data shapes what content people see). Across the research, these systems are not neutral: they can steer attention, emotions, and choices while hiding the real tradeoffs from users. I end by connecting the ethics of these ideas into practice: questioning, checking privacy settings, slowing down before clicking, and intentionally seeking sources beyond what's recommended. These ideas remain under ongoing ethical debates about transparency, responsibility, and manipulation.

## **Lighten Your Cognitive Load to Improve Your Study Skills and Learning!**

*Charlee Rumbough*

This presentation explores cognitive load and its impact on learning and study habits. Cognitive load refers to the mental effort used in working memory and includes intrinsic, germane, and extraneous types. Understanding these categories helps students learn more effectively by adopting strategies that enhance motivation, reduce distractions, and promote focused study. The presentation also examines how learner traits such as prior knowledge and self regulation influence information processing. Additionally, it highlights how teachers can improve learning outcomes through clear instruction and minimizing unnecessary demands. Overall, effectively managing cognitive load supports better learning for both students and educators.

## **Driving Strength: Comparing Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivation In Student Grip Strength**

*Alicia Segovia*

This presentation examines how intrinsic and extrinsic motivation influence an individual's ability to maintain muscular strength using a hand grip hold task. The study aimed to determine which type of motivation most effectively enhances performance. A within-subjects design was conducted over two days, allowing all participants to complete both intrinsic and extrinsic conditions for direct comparison. Results indicated that extrinsic motivation generally improved hand grip endurance compared to intrinsic motivation. However, variability in individual performance was observed across conditions. These findings suggest that external factors, such as encouragement, feedback, and rewards, may have a stronger impact on muscular endurance than internally driven motivation. Overall, the study highlights the importance of motivational strategies in optimizing physical performance outcomes.

## **Spatial Analysis of Fungi and Forest Types**

*Savannah Stanish*

Spatial analysis of mycorrhizal fungi and forest types in North Carolina. Understanding the symbiotic relationship between fungi and trees can help with restoration and reforestation, especially in Western North Carolina after hurricane Helene.

## **The Effects of Music Tempo o Executive Functioning Through Tower of Hanoi Performance**

*Ajani Wade*

Listening to music while studying has become a common habit among college students. This study examined whether the tempo of instrumental background music influences executive functioning during problem-solving tasks. Twelve undergraduate students from Mars Hill University participated in an experimental study and were randomly assigned to either a slow-tempo music condition or a fast-tempo music condition. Participants completed three Tower of Hanoi puzzle patterns while instrumental guitar music played in the background. Performance was measured by recording the number of moves required to complete each puzzle and the time taken to finish each pattern. Results indicated no statistically significant differences between the two groups in either completion time or number of moves. These findings highlight the complexity of cognitive performance and suggest that music tempo alone may not significantly influence executive functioning during structured problem-solving tasks.

## **Arts Breaks**

### **Annual Juried Student Art Exhibition**

The Visual Art Department is presenting the annual Juried Student Art Exhibition in Weizenblatt Gallery. All students who have taken an art class during the school year are invited to participate. The exhibition will show student work in photography, painting, drawing, ceramics, and graphic design.

### **CLUE: Murder Mystery Concert**

*Emma Aldridge, Hannah Beaudoin, Chloe Branning, Maddie Carter, Samuel Evans, Sydney Grace Evans, Candace Fowler, Madi Gilman, Keaira Griffin, Celia Hernandez, William Holcombe, Mylie Hudson, Grace Kanarr, Allyson Kirkman, Grace Mayer, Malia McAmis, Torin Musick, Cassidy Odell, Michaela Purdie, Zachary Rumley, Emma Sauls, Ashley Snodgrass, Gracen Vaughn, Shelby Walker, Sydney West, Leah Wilson, Kellie Winn, Kiara Zeliski*

The Bailey Mountain Cloggers present “CLUE- Who Dun It?”. The performance for SLAM will include several dances that will be showcased in their upcoming Spring Concert April 24-26th in Moore Auditorium. Dances will be a mix of Appalachian clogging dance, percussive dance, hip hop, jazz, and modern dance styles. The show will be based upon the popular board game CLUE. Can you figure out “Who Dun It?”

### **Seams of the Self: MHU’s 5th Annual Fashion Show**

*Alexis Allen, et. al.*

College is a period of fundamental change in the lives of each student. Finding one’s identity in a sea of uncertainty can be challenging, even scary for some young people. Fashion is one way many individuals use to express their identities, interests, and interpretations of current pop culture trends.

This year’s show aims to showcase the personal identities and tastes of each model in their totality, serving both as an opportunity for self-expression and as a reflection of global trends.

### **Shakespeare On the High Seas: A Theatre for Your Audiences Experience**

*Jacob Bailey, Victor S.E. Cramp, Seabron Echols, Tatum Griffin, Emma Hall, Briana McFalls, Nate Ogden, Mary Milam Shepherd, Miranda Sowers*

The Mars Hill University Theatre Department Presents excerpts of their Spring Production of Shakespeare On The High Seas, designed to be engaging to younger audiences to spread the outreach of classical theatre. The show was designed by our program coordinator and director, incorporating a pirate themed sea adventure to set the show with a familiar theme. The actors worked with a text coach and paraphrasing exercises in the early process of rehearsals till the end to ensure a solid foundation of Shakespeare’s language to present the dialogue clearly to the audience. By combining text work with a tropical adventure visual concept, the goal is to entertain audiences in an approachable way, especially students who may be hearing the text aloud and performed with intention for the first time.



## **The SLAM Committee**

Mr. Ryan Bell, Director of First Year Academic Success and Advising  
Mr. Matt Blanks, Voice Area Coordinator  
Mrs. Joy Clifton, Assistant Professor of Kinesiology, Committee Chair  
Ms. Wendy Dover, Instruction Librarian  
Dr. Amanda Knapp, Professor of Chemistry  
Dr. Jonna Kwiatkowski, Professor of Psychology  
Ms. Amber Molnar, Dean of Students  
Mr. Brad Skinner, Student Representative  
Mr. Mike Thornhill, Director of Communications

## **Special Thanks To**

Alpha Chi

*Anna Boyles, Chloe Branning, Ellie Buckner, Larissa Bullman, Chrystal Carrillo Garcia, Haley Eddinger, RayRay Ellis, Emma Gouge, Ean Hensley, Levi Hill, Jordan Hulsey, Laela Jimenez, Peter Klisiewicz, Alyssa Kornegay, Meghan Murphy, Matthew Pacheco, Natalee Powers, Caroline Rizzo, Stefan Schmal, Kenzie Schmucker, Jordan Speece, Savannah Stanish, Eli Taylor, Lia Whitman, Leah Wilson*

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Danielle Hagerman

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Tracy Parkinson

Nina T. Pollard

Laura Steil & Alpha Chi

Brian Tinkel & MHU Percussion Ensemble

The dedicated Students, Staff, Faculty, Alumni, Trustees, and Friends of Mars Hill University

# Notes

# Notes



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