Academic Festival

MAY 11, 2020
Wheaton College Research & Creativity Symposium
Message from the Provost

Dear Students,

For years, Wheaton’s Academic Festival has recognized the amazing work that you, our dedicated students, have accomplished. We have done so through lively gatherings, presentations, performances, poster sessions, and spirited discussions.

This year is no different. And yet everything is different. What anchors us, however, is the belief that it is our privilege to honor your achievements, today as we always have. It is our hope that this recognition and celebration of your work illustrates the many ways you have contributed to the intellectual and creative vitality of our college.

The virtual setting for Academic Festival showcases your work and celebrates a vibrant community of storytellers who demonstrate that resilience, tenacity, and creativity always overcome adversity.

Through your complex reasoning, your sharp research, and your generous thinking, you inspire us and you show us how an abundant life fosters a just world and a brighter future.

Thank you for affirming that knowledge matters, in all of its diverse expressions.

With warm congratulations,

Renée T. White, Provost
Academic Festival Participants

Many Frequencies, Equal Intensity: 2020 Visual Art Majors’ Exhibition
Shannon Connolly, Josephine Coppinger, Sarah Dababneh, Bailey DeBiase, Nathan Domingos, Coby Goodrich, Sophia Hatzikos, Maia Hay, Sasha Kasem-Beg, Yizhuo Li, Mira Lockwood, Elisa McClear, Timothy McCormack, Brianna Medas, Haley Mitsmenn, Alejandra Monge, Shuyi Qi, Jean Tao, Augustus Williams, Molly-Marie Yans

LGBTQ+ Identity Formation and Development Over Time
Tessa Demko ’20, Sociology & Women and Gender Studies
I set out to research how LGBTQ+ individuals come to find an identity and what role language plays in that process. Given the ever-changing nature of the English language alone since the advancement of technology and social media, I was interested to see how language, age, and social location would play a factor in individuals identity formation processes.

Effects of Socioeconomic Status on Undergraduate Education Decisions
Emma Burke ’20, Business and Management, Dylan Janovic ’20, Business and Management, Blake Ferretti ’20, Business and Management
Our study advances the understanding of the multitude of socioeconomic factors that affect the educational decisions of undergraduate students. Our paper outlined the disparities among college majors, summarize a number of theoretical foundations and literature that pertains to college major choice, and state major research questions and phenomenon.

Gender and the Effect on Dating App Usage
Rebecca Livingston ’20 Elementary Education & Business and Management Sienna Witherell ’20, Business and Management
The relationships studied through this research consist of the connection between dating app users and three different dating apps: Tinder, Bumble and Hinge. The study looked into how the gender of dating app users affects their usage of various dating apps. Specifically, the study explored the time spent looking at potential matches, the motivations for using specific apps and the users experiences based on their usage of the apps.
Social Reproduction and Student Development in College Extracurricular Spaces

Amber Wright ’20 International Relations & Sociology
"Social Reproduction and Student Development in College Extracurricular Spaces" was initially created as my final research project for the Sociology major, but I have since had the opportunity to present it in the Undergraduate Postering Session of the Eastern Sociological Society Conference in February of this year. The work focuses on extracurricular participation as a widely understudied facet of college education which shapes campuses by prompting the formation of student social groups, upholding a unique relationship with social inequalities and largely swaying student long term identity formation and career attainment.

Navigating Bronx Housing Court

Sasha Herman ’20 Hispanic Studies & Sociology
My thesis focuses on eviction in Bronx Housing Court, in New York City. My project explores how the spatial organization of housing court and the sociological systems that create and characterize these spaces impact tenants' eviction cases and their ability to access justice.

NaloxBox: A Response to the Opioid Crisis

Mia Len ’22, Business and Management, Natalie Wind ’20 Business and Management and Kamilah Thorne ’20 Business and Management
For our final project in Professor Chowdhury’s course, Introduction to Social Entrepreneurship, my group members and I conducted a case study that was titled "NaloxBox: A Response to the Opioid Crisis". We interviewed and assessed NaloxBox, a social enterprise based out of Rhode Island, that serves communities with overdose response tools in an effort to save the lives of victims of opioid overdoses.

Vision of US: An Advocacy Platform for Members of Generation Z

Alyssa Myers ’23 Undeclared, Tyler Ladden ’23 Undeclared, Kimberlie Dugan ’22 Sociology
During the 2020 May Fellows Colloquium we were posed with the open ended question “Who are We?” To answer that question, we decided that we were members of generation Z, the generation responsible for advocating for positive change in the world, particularly the United States. We, as a group of three Wheaton May Fellows, called ourselves Vision of US and worked together to create a website, infographics, and begin a podcast series titled Acts of Advocacy, all with the goal of inspiring members of our generation to advocate for positive change.
Genetic Modification: Should We Be Better?
Yassmine Raoui ’22 Biology, Neal Canastra ’21 Biology, Han Yang ’22 Philosophy
Our research project titled Genetic Modification: Should We Be Better? explores the ethical, biological, financial, and moral facts and challenges that come along with our society's increased interest with the ability to genetically manipulate an infant's DNA, these modified children are called "designer babies." From our research, we planned a panel consisting of business, biology, and philosophy professors to discuss genetically modified children and the consequences of such a technology. We also created a website examining the consequences of genetic modification on children and we were able to present our findings at the culminating presentation day of the MayFellows Colloquium, which we thoroughly enjoyed.

Jeremy Holt ’20 International Relations & English
"The Sankofa and the Eagle: Pan-African Geopolitics and the Future of American Power": This project, my honors thesis in international relations, deals with the rise of continental integration in Africa as it relates to the United States. Drawing from the history of Pan-Africanist thought and institutions and the conduct of U.S. Africa policy, I look at the ways in which increasing economic and political interdependence in Africa will benefit and hinder the interests of the U.S. and how the U.S. can shape its foreign policy accordingly.

The Importance of Care in Healthcare: Why Immigrants Practice Medical Pluralism
Christine Deeney ’20 Anthropology and Public Health
My thesis incorporated what I have learned so far as a senior in my liberal arts degree in public health and anthropology. I interviewed immigrants on how they have experienced the U.S. healthcare system and found that they practiced agency in employing medical pluralism because capitalist models of efficiency have lead them to feel uncared for. This thesis joined discourse about anthropology's models of cultural competency and how its application feels from the perspective of immigrants.

Anatomy of a Community: Conveying Identity Through Shared Symbols
Jenna Denomme ’23 Undeclared, Adele Rossignol ’23 Psychology & Hispanic Studies, Shelby Hanks ’22 Undeclared, and Gia Orsino ’23 Undeclared
With the Anatomy of a Community: Conveying Identity Through Shared Symbols project, we created an art installation and website with supplemental research to promote conversation on diversity and inclusivity in the Wheaton community. We gathered a wide range of symbols from students and staff that represent their identities, displaying them on a mannequin as a demonstration of how these disparate identities form one united community.
Induced Simultanagnosia in a Saccadic Persistence of Vision Display

*Michael Vallerie ’21 Neuroscience, Augustus Kram Mendelsohn ’20 Neuroscience, and Elizabeth Shelto ’23 Undeclared*

We spent our fall semester creating and experimenting with a saccadic persistence of vision display. This is a device that allows for multiple stimuli to be seen within the time it takes for a subject to quickly look back and forth. Our main goal of this project was to explore whether subjects would see multiple images during the time associated with a saccade or if they would just see one solid image.

Stability and resilience of plant-pollinator networks in an Andean montane community in southern Ecuador

*Rachel Crafford ’20 Environmental Science & Anthropology, Francesca Sajedi ’21 Bioinformatics*

This work focused on using plant-pollinator interaction networks as a measure of how resistant a community in the mountains of Ecuador would be to various environmental stressors. The community consisted of native plants, and both native and introduced European honey bee pollinators. We used various statistical analyses to determine whether or not the plant-pollinator interactions in this community would make it better prepared to resist the negative effects of climate change and habitat fragmentation.

Residential Segregation and Educational Equity in Suburban Detroit

*Margaret Lawler ’20 Sociology*

For my Honors Thesis I looked at how residential segregation in the suburbs of Detroit was created by structures such as redlining and racist real estate practices, and maintained today through individual actions of prejudice. Through interviews with residents of two towns, one a middle class black town, the other an upper middle class white town, I discovered that divides between the two towns were upheld by acts of implicit bias by residents of the whitetown. Additionally, this segregation and wealth inequality between these two towns created inequities within the local public schools.

Poinciana Variations, a piece for string quartet

*Jackson Reed ’21 Computer Science & Music*

"Poinciana" Variations is a piece of music for string quartet, composed for professor Del Case's composition class in the music department. Through the course I was instructed in basic principles of composition, methods for writing for string instruments, and strategies for proofreading and editing scores, but I was also allowed to pursue my own interests and sources of inspiration. As a result, "Poinciana" Variations consists of five diverse settings of a single theme, influenced by jazz and 20th-century music as well as historic string quartets.
Reflecting on 19 years of dance through a movie

Olivia Rockvam ’20 Biology
I was set to choreograph and perform my senior solo for the Wheaton College Dance Company during the weekend of April 23-25, 2020, which would have been my final performance opportunity at Wheaton. Unfortunately, I was not able to do this due to COVID-19 and the on-campus closing of the college for the remainder of the semester. However, I can still complete this “capstone” by talking about it and reflecting on it. I would like to discuss the meaning behind what would’ve been this piece, and how it relates to my goals, values, and aspirations for not just dance, but for my life.

Atheist and Agnostics’ Experiences with Navigating Alcoholics Anonymous

Tariq Jared Arthur Martin ’20 Sociology
Alcoholics Anonymous (AA) is described as a non-religious organization, however, the programming and organizational structure can be defined as religious in nature. Through analyzing literature used in the program as well as Atheist and Agnostics’ experiences as members, I learned about how they find different methods to cope with the religious aspects of the program.

Culturing Internships: How cross-cultural training informs internship experiences

Emily Babb ’20 Mathematics and Economics & Business and Management, Yuyue Gu ’20 Business and Management & Economics, Soheir Mobin ’20 Business and Management & English, Ashraya Sapkota ’20 Business and Management
This research project was the culmination of our experience as undergraduate students and researchers. Focusing on the world of internships, and onboarding practices, my team and I wanted to understand if cross-cultural training was available to interns, as they would be to full-time employees. Our project aimed to empower interns, and the companies they work for, by building an equally supportive and fruitful internship experience.

“Dear Wheaton” from the Theatre & Dance Studies class, Ensemble Experiments

Sarah Rouse ’20 Psychology & Theatre and Dance Studies
During the outbreak of COVID-19, the seniors of the Ensemble Experiment class have worked to create theatrical pieces representing our experiences at Wheaton College and our transition into the world. Wheaton College created a memorable impact on each and every one of our lives, fueling our creating minds to produce monologues, songs, scenes, and a full play.
Count Me In: The Role of Student Activists in Breaking Down Barriers to Student Voting

Zuzka Czerw ’20 International Relations & Anthropology

My senior Anthropology thesis examined the various difficulties students face when voting in U.S. elections and identified methods used to increase voter turnout through interviews with student activists and participant observation along with anthropological literature on social activism. My research found that the work done by student activists can have a great influence on the number of student votes and can help students decide whether to vote in their hometown or college town. Ultimately, the effectiveness of student activism efforts can also be increased through institutional support.

“Blue Bossa” Variations With Existence & Resistance

Kneeco Hanton ’21 Music

The Blue Bossa Variations are a set of "theme and variations" reinterpreting Kenny Dorham’s 1963 Hard Bop and Bossa Nova composition of the same name. As someone who did not grow up with a formal education in Classical music and related time periods, I never intentionally wrote for a string quartet. This piece is my attempt to experiment with many of the compositional techniques and realizations I gained through studying with Prof. Delvyn Case, thus introducing my capabilities as a composer.

Julius Caesar

Take a behind-the-scenes look into the creative process of Wheaton College’s Department of Theatre and Dance biannual mainstage production. A collaborative effort to say the least, this major endeavor includes contributions from over 40 students of all class years and majors, valued faculty and staff members, and outside artists recruited to work on the show. Not your typical Julius Caesar, our politically-charged Shakespearean production was set to take the stage in April 2020.

Julius Caesar Participants

Theatre 020: Rehearsal and Production


Theatre 302: Introduction to Lighting Design

Ben Campbell ’23, Elizabeth Dusza ’21, Oskar Mattes ’22, Tori Mattie ’22, Whitney O’Reardon ’22, Caroline Pike ’23, Jabari Richardson ’20
**Theatre 250: Costume Construction**
Kyra Benedick ’23, Amber Brown ’23, Veda Garrett ’22, Jimun Jeong ’23, Tala Kayyali ’20, June Mello ’22, Talia Smith ’23, Debora Yohou ’23

**Theatre 205: Stagecraft**
Nathan Domingos ’20, Chris Gardner ’20, Mia Garza ’23, Emma Girouard ’21, Xio Rivera ’23, Yanasia Tarr ’22, Dominick Torres ’20, Connor Will ’20

**Independent Studies**
Sarah Maliarik ’20, Taylor Kaufman ’20, Lillie Shepherd ’20, Jordan Zimba ’20

**Scenery and Box Office**
James Stratton ’21, Maia Hay ’20, Rachael Lachance ’20, Molly Wood ’20, Julia Celiana ’21, Delaney Beaudoin ’22, Sara Younk ’23
Acknowledgements

*Academic Festival logo designed by Sydney Beck ’16.*

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Our deepest gratitude is also extended to the Wheaton nominating faculty and mentors who dedicated their time and energy to help our students shine.