
BOWIE
STATE UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL
TRANSFORMATIVE
SYNERGIES
Conference Program
Advancing Research, Innovation & Impact
November 8–10, 2026
The Hotel at the University of Maryland
Hosted by the Bowie State University Graduate School

Table of Contents

TRANSFORMATIVE SYNERGIES | NOVEMBER 8–10, 2026

CONFERENCE VENUE | The Hotel at the University of Maryland • 7777 Baltimore Avenue • College Park, MD 20740

WELCOME & CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

Welcome to Transformative Synergies 4
Program at a Glance 4
Conference Session Themes 5

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 8 | OPENING GALA

Opening Awards Gala & Dinner 6
2026 Awards Gala Honorees 7–8

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9 | CONFERENCE SESSIONS

Morning Plenary & 9:00 a.m. Concurrent Sessions 9
10:15 a.m. Concurrent Sessions 10
Emerging Scholars Colloquium & Luncheon Chat & Chew 10–11
Afternoon & Late-Afternoon Concurrent Sessions 11–12

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 10 | CLOSING EVENTS

Chat & Chew Breakfast Conversation & Closing Plenary 13

FEATURED SPEAKERS & CONVERSATIONS

Tyrome Smith | Awards Gala Master of Ceremonies 13–14
Dean Steven Damo | Distinguished Guest Speaker 14

PRESENTER ABSTRACTS

S1 Intelligence with Integrity: AI, Ethics & Human-Centered Innovation 15
S2 Learning Reimagined: Pedagogy, Literacy & Learner Development 17
S3 Equity in Practice: Identity, Leadership & Inclusive Systems 17
S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience 19
S5 Work, Mobility & Resilient Futures 20
S6 Discovery Across Boundaries: STEM, Science & Transdisciplinary Inquiry 21
S7 Emerging Scholars Colloquium: Research in Motion 23

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

Poster Presentations: Research in Focus (P01–P11) 24–27

SPECIAL THANKS

Faculty & Staff Acknowledgements 28

ABOUT BOWIE STATE UNIVERSITY

Bowie State University, Graduate School & Graduate Research Center 30

Welcome to Transformative Synergies

Hosted by the Graduate School at Bowie State University, Transformative Synergies convenes scholars, graduate students, educators, practitioners, and innovators to exchange research across disciplines and explore possibilities for more resilient communities and institutions.

This program brings together concurrent thematic research sessions, applied workshops, an opening awards gala, and two meal-time Chat & Chew conversations. Monday's Emerging Scholars Colloquium pairs a distinguished research talk with direct graduate-student exchange.

Program at a Glance

SUNDAY | NOVEMBER 8

4:00–6:00 p.m.	Registration
5:30 p.m.	Awards Gala doors open
6:00–8:00 p.m.	Opening Awards Gala & Dinner
8:00–8:30 p.m.	Networking & social time

MONDAY | NOVEMBER 9

7:30–8:30 a.m.	Breakfast
7:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m.	Registration
8:00–8:45 a.m.	Morning plenary
9:00–10:00 a.m.	Three concurrent thematic sessions
10:15–11:45 a.m.	Three concurrent thematic sessions
12:15–2:00 p.m.	Emerging Scholars Colloquium / Luncheon Chat & Chew: featured talk, scholar forum & 11 poster presentations
2:15–3:15 p.m.	Three concurrent thematic sessions
3:30–5:00 p.m.	Three concurrent thematic sessions

TUESDAY | NOVEMBER 10

8:30–9:30 a.m.	Breakfast

9:00–10:00 a.m.	Chat & Chew: Small Numbers. Significant Voices.
10:00–10:30 a.m.	Closing plenary

Conference Session Themes

S1 Intelligence with Integrity: AI, Ethics & Human-Centered Innovation
Responsible AI across governance, culture, education, health, and community life.

S2 Learning Reimagined: Pedagogy, Literacy & Learner Development
Innovative teaching, literacy, educational access, and learner well-being.

S3 Equity in Practice: Identity, Leadership & Inclusive Systems
Identity, leadership, belonging, accessibility, and institutional transformation.

S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience
Movement, trauma, counseling, arts, wellness, and embodied healing.

S5 Work, Mobility & Resilient Futures
Career mobility, workforce transitions, resilience, and equitable opportunity.

S6 Discovery Across Boundaries: STEM, Science & Transdisciplinary Inquiry
Scientific, biomedical, computational, and interdisciplinary inquiry for public impact.

S7 Emerging Scholars Colloquium: Research in Motion: Ideas, Methods & Impact
Luncheon research exchange connecting graduate students with established and rising scholars.



Sunday, November 8

OPENING AWARDS GALA

The conference opens with an evening of celebration, recognition, and collegial connection.

4:00–6:00 p.m. Registration

Registration location: Top of the 7's.

5:30 p.m. Gala doors open

6:00–8:00 p.m. Transformative Synergies Awards Gala & Dinner

Master of Ceremonies: Tyrome Smith. Celebrate achievement, scholarly excellence, creativity, and the collective spirit of discovery.

8:00–8:30 p.m. Networking & Social Time



Awards Gala | 2026 Honorees

Sunday, November 8, 2026 | Transformative Synergies Conference

The Graduate School recognizes exemplary graduate scholarship, creative innovation, meaningful service, and faculty mentorship. The Gala will present 16 individual awards.

The Groundbreaking Research Methodology Award

Honors graduate researchers whose imaginative methods create new possibilities for discovery beyond conventional disciplinary approaches.

- **Ms. Cambly Morales-Lemus**
- **Matthew Akinmolayan**

The Innovative Ideation Award

Celebrates original ideas and promising innovations that translate creative thinking into meaningful solutions.

- **Christian Smith**
- **Agbo Idoko**
- **Atoosa Zarpak**

The Visionary Research Teams Award

Recognizes collaborative graduate research that advances knowledge across disciplinary boundaries and addresses consequential real-world challenges.

- **Matthew Akinmolayan**
- **Abraham Ewnetu**
- **Trinity Bowling**

The Community Impact Award

Recognizes scholarship and professional service that turn research into community partnerships and practical public benefit.

- **Deborah Adeyemi**
- **Earl Nimley**

The Joseph A. Wiseman Award

Honors a graduate student exemplifying excellence in scholarship, leadership, service, and interdisciplinary engagement, in tribute to a founding leader of graduate education at Bowie State.

- **Anjolaoluwa Olojo**
- **Jarrid Denman**

Awards Gala | 2026 Honorees

The Beyond Bowie Alumni Impact Award

Celebrates the continuing accomplishments and public contributions of Bowie State graduate alumni beyond the university.

- **Comfort Adegboye**
- **Amanda Burroughs**
- **Dr. Temilade Ayo Aladeokin**

The Graduate Faculty Catalyst Award

Recognizes a faculty member whose mentorship, teaching, and research leadership have meaningfully advanced graduate student development and scholarly success.

- **Dr. Supriyo Ray**



Monday, November 9

All sessions listed within a shared time block take place concurrently. Participants may select one of the three session options in each block.

7:30–8:30 a.m. **Breakfast**

Salon C & D • Buffet service

7:30 a.m.–3:00 p.m. **Registration**

Foyer B

8:00–8:45 a.m. **Morning Plenary**

Primary meeting room

9:00–10:00 a.m.

THREE CONCURRENT SESSIONS • Choose one

S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience

S4-01 Drama Speaks the Language of Therapy — Danice Holloway Wilson-Bates [Workshop]

S6 Discovery Across Boundaries: STEM, Science & Transdisciplinary Inquiry

S6-01 Learning Across Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Learning Competencies and a Transdisciplinary Philosophy of Science — Ronald C. Williams

S6-02 Guarding the Fourth Trimester: Family Education and Doula Integrated Care as a Prevention Model for Postpartum Psychosis — Alexus Brown

S3 Equity in Practice: Identity, Leadership & Inclusive Systems

S3-01 Leading Through a Polluted Lens: A Conceptual Model of Narrative Contamination in Leadership Discernment — Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran

S3-02 Beyond Teacher Credentials: Mathematics Equity, Instructional Capacity, and Opportunity in High-Poverty Urban Elementary Schools — Dr. Zoraida Brown

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9 | LATE MORNING

10:15–11:45 a.m.

THREE CONCURRENT SESSIONS • Choose one

S1 Intelligence with Integrity: AI, Ethics & Human-Centered Innovation

S1-01 Harmonizing AI Governance, Narrative Health, and Culturally Intelligent Pedagogy for a Resilient Society — Adetunji Oduduwa

S1-02 Pedagogy for a New Era: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Transform Higher Education and Foster a Resilient Future Workforce — Azubike Enwere

S1-03 Human Before Algorithm: Contextual Misperception, Artificial Intelligence, and Dispositional Assessment in Counselor Education — Delicia Williams

S5 Work, Mobility & Resilient Futures

S5-01 Digital Transformation as a Strategy for Long-Term Institutional Viability, Increased Student Enrollment and Accessible Higher Education — Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran

S5-02 Factors Influencing Black School Psychologists' Career Entry and Persistence — Nneka Truss

S5-03 Navigating Our Cranes in the Sky: Earning a Seat at the Table While Transitioning from College to Career: A Qualitative Exploration of Quarter-Life Crisis Among Black Millennial Women Doctoral Graduates — Dr. Tracee Vonne Marie Senghor

S3 Equity in Practice: Identity, Leadership & Inclusive Systems

S3-03 Toward an Endarkened Future: (Re)visioning Third Spaces — Billie Shabazz

S3-04 Contextually Responsive Intersectional Leadership: What Black Women Teach Us About Transcending Organizational Borders Toward a Beloved Educational Community — Valerie Dragon

S3-05 From Educational Equity to Economic Inclusion: Exploring Psychological Safety as a Pathway to Community and Workforce Participation Among Individuals with Disabilities — Linda Orajekwe

Monday, November 9 | Afternoon

12:15–2:00 p.m. Emerging Scholars Colloquium | Luncheon Chat & Chew

The Emerging Scholars Colloquium takes place during lunch. Dean Steven Damo offers a brief featured talk, followed by an informal discussion with faculty scholars and a rising graduate

scholar. Graduate students are invited to ask questions about their own research journeys and receive feedback. Eleven research posters (P01–P11) are also featured for viewing during the luncheon block. See the Poster Presentations section for titles and abstracts.

Salon C & D • Luncheon: 12:30–1:30 p.m.

FEATURED TALK

FUNDED FOR IMPACT: How Research Support Turns Ideas into Discovery

Guest speaker: Dean Steven Damo | College of Arts and Sciences, Bowie State University

INFORMAL SCHOLAR CONVERSATION

THE RESEARCH JOURNEY, UNFILTERED: Scholars in Conversation

Panel: Dean Steven Damo, Dr. Wendy Edmonds, Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran, Dr. Ann Hilliard, Matthew Akinmolayan (rising scholar) and Uchenna Ndolo (recent Alumna). Graduate students are invited to ask questions, share research challenges, and receive constructive feedback.

2:15–3:15 p.m.

THREE CONCURRENT SESSIONS • Choose one

S2 Learning Reimagined: Pedagogy, Literacy & Learner Development

S2-01 Regulation Before Rigor: Designing Lessons the Nervous System Can Actually Access — Bobby Morgan [Workshop]

S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience

S4-02 Barriers to HBCU Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Cultural Betrayal Perspective — Nyair Washington [Panel discussion]

S6 Discovery Across Boundaries: STEM, Science & Transdisciplinary Inquiry

S6-03 Physics-Informed Graph Neural Network Prediction of Downtime in Smart-Microgrids Under Fault and Weather Events — Sola Famakin

S6-04 Chemical and Biological Interventions for Neurodiversity: An Interdisciplinary Examination of Diagnosis, Health Screening, Workplace Inclusion, Policy and Employment Outcomes — Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 9 | LATE AFTERNOON

3:30–5:00 p.m.

THREE CONCURRENT SESSIONS • Choose one

S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience

S4-03 Seeing Movement Differently: Evidence-Informed Clinical Reasoning at the Intersection of Dance, Health, and Human Movement Science — Royce Zackery [Workshop]

S1 Intelligence with Integrity: AI, Ethics & Human-Centered Innovation

S1-04 AI-Powered Surveillance and Predictive Analytics for Public Health and Safety — Adedotun Okeowo Ademowo

S1-05 From Innovation to Accountability: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Responsible AI Governance — Daniel Aboagye

S1-06 Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Higher Education in West Africa: Opportunities, Challenges, and Comparative Perspectives — Earl Doe Doe Nimley

S5 Work, Mobility & Resilient Futures

S5-04 Finding Your Element — Spencer Dean Barron

S5-05 Beyond Placeholders: Integrating Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Development for Sustainable Employment — Jessica Tolover



Tuesday, November 10

8:30–9:30 a.m. **Breakfast**

Salon C & D • Buffet service

9:00–10:00 a.m. **Chat & Chew Breakfast Conversation**

FEATURED DISCUSSION

Small Numbers. Significant Voices.

Exploring Black Leadership and Followership in Glasgow, Scotland

Dr. Wendy Edmonds and Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran

A faculty–student research roundtable examining Black leaders' experiences and perspectives through focus groups and individual interviews, using Followership Theory to explore leadership relationships in a distinctive demographic context.

10:00–10:30 a.m. **Closing Plenary**

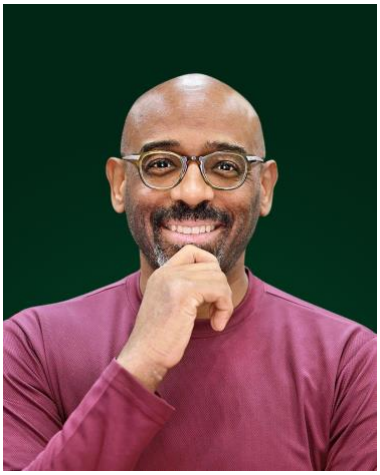
Salon C & D

Featured Speakers & Conversations

OPENING AWARDS GALA | MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Tyrome Smith

Interim Director of Economic Development and Strategic Development | Bowie State University



Tyrome Smith is an executive strategist, innovation architect, and organizational transformation leader with more than 25 years of experience operating at the intersection of national security, economic development, innovation, and human-centered change. He currently serves as Interim Director of Economic Development and Strategic Development at Bowie State University, where he advances initiatives that strengthen entrepreneurship, innovation ecosystems, and strategic growth.

Throughout his career, Tyrome has built a reputation for translating complex challenges into actionable strategies that drive organizational performance and lasting impact. While serving at the National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA), he designed and delivered Lean Startup and innovation curricula to more than 1,500 personnel and led large-scale organizational mergers that affected thousands of employees. His work has consistently focused on helping

organizations navigate uncertainty, accelerate innovation, and build cultures capable of sustained transformation.

Tyrome's executive education includes credentials from McKinsey & Company, UC Berkeley Haas School of Business, and UCLA Anderson School of Management. He has served as a mentor and coach for NSF I-Corps, Techstars, and Founder Institute Türkiye, and as an Entrepreneur in Residence for the University System of Maryland, guiding founders, innovators, and emerging ventures through commercialization and growth.

A respected facilitator, coach, and culture builder, Tyrome operates effectively at every level of an organization, from executive leadership teams to frontline staff. He previously served on the national board of the NIST Manufacturing Extension Partnership (MEP) and is a member of the Stimson Center's Alfred Lee Loomis Innovation Council.

An in-demand keynote speaker, moderator, and master of ceremonies, Tyrome has appeared on stages for organizations including NASA, UNCF, the Federal Laboratory Consortium, and TD Jakes' Good Soil Leadership Conference. He is also co-host of the podcast *What Problem Are You Solving?*, where he explores innovation, entrepreneurship, leadership, and systems change.

Additionally, Tyrome is an AKRI Fellow and faculty member of the Leadership Development and Role Success (LDRS) program, where he applies systems thinking and leadership development principles to help individuals and organizations navigate the human dynamics of change.

MONDAY EMERGING SCHOLARS COLLOQUIUM | DISTINGUISHED GUEST SPEAKER

Dean Steven Damo

Dean, College of Arts and Sciences | Bowie State University



Steven Damo is Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Bowie State University. His research on host–pathogen interactions has received more than 2,000 citations and over $28 million in grant funding. He holds a Ph.D. from the University of California, Berkeley, and completed postdoctoral training at Weill Cornell Medical College and Vanderbilt University. His honors include recognition as a Berkeley Sloan Scholar, Vanderbilt Juneteenth Mentor of the Year, and Chan Zuckerberg/Biohub Science Leadership awardee.

Presenter Abstracts

Abstracts are grouped by conference session and identified by the same codes used in the daily schedule.

S1 Intelligence with Integrity: AI, Ethics & Human-Centered Innovation

Responsible and human-centered uses of artificial intelligence across governance, culture, education, health, and institutional change.

S1-01 Harmonizing AI Governance, Narrative Health, and Culturally Intelligent Pedagogy for a Resilient Society

Adetunji Oduduwa | *Paper*

Artificial intelligence (AI) is transforming education, business, healthcare, and STEM, yet AI readiness is often treated primarily as a technology-adoption challenge. This paper proposes an AI Readiness-to-Resilience Framework (AIRRF) that conceptualizes readiness as an interdisciplinary capability integrating technology, human capability, education, organizational capacity, health, ethics, governance, and cultural intelligence. Using a design-oriented interdisciplinary approach, the framework connects AI Readiness → Capability Development → Responsible Adoption → Interdisciplinary Synergy → Societal Resilience. Two practical tools, the AI Readiness Assessment Matrix and Interdisciplinary Synergy Mapping Model, translate the framework into actionable mechanisms for identifying readiness gaps and strengthening institutional capacity. The paper argues that resilient AI-enabled societies require deliberate harmonization of technological, human, institutional, educational, health, cultural, and ethical capabilities.

S1-02 Pedagogy for a New Era: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence to Transform Higher Education and Foster a Resilient Future Workforce

Azubike Enwere | *Paper*

This paper examines how artificial intelligence (AI) can be used to transform academia and the workplace. The changes brought about by technological advancements across various fields of endeavor require that academic institutions intentionally refine their curricula to foster innovative synergy across disciplines and remain relevant in modern society. The principal focus is a review and analysis of contemporary literature about how artificial intelligence can be harnessed to enhance course curriculum and pedagogical practices to meet the needs of the modern workplace.

S1-03 Human Before Algorithm: Contextual Misperception, Artificial Intelligence, and Dispositional Assessment in Counselor Education

Delicia Williams | *Paper*

Artificial intelligence increasingly shapes educational assessment, yet pattern recognition does not guarantee contextual understanding. This conceptual paper examines how AI-assisted assessment could influence interpretation of professional dispositions in counselor education,

particularly when communication, affect, adaptability, and interpersonal behavior are evaluated apart from cultural, systemic, developmental, and adaptive contexts. Integrating counselor education, social justice, humanistic theory, educational assessment, and responsible AI, the paper argues that technological efficiency should not be conflated with interpretive validity. It proposes contextually intelligent human–AI assessment principles emphasizing transparency, multiple sources of evidence, cultural inquiry, student voice, human accountability, and limits on automated high-stakes decisions.

S1-04 AI-Powered Surveillance and Predictive Analytics for Public Health and Safety

Adedotun Okeowo Ademowo | *Paper*

This work bridges public health informatics, data science, and social policy, and speaks to STEM and social-equity audiences alike. It offers local health departments and city government a model for using predictive analytics responsibly in violence-prevention planning, offers public health informaticians a case study in equity-constrained AI system design, and offers policy audiences a concrete, county-grounded illustration of how emergency response gaps translate into health disparities. The paper directly engages the conference's call to harmonize STEM precision with community health and social equity.

S1-05 From Innovation to Accountability: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Responsible AI Governance

Daniel Aboagye | *Paper*

Artificial intelligence is rapidly transforming organizational decision-making, education, and research, creating opportunities while introducing challenges related to privacy, bias, transparency, accountability, and responsible data use. This study examines how organizations can develop interdisciplinary AI governance frameworks that balance technological innovation with ethical and policy considerations. Drawing on computer science, information systems, data analytics, business, and policy perspectives, the proposed framework emphasizes risk assessment, data governance, algorithmic transparency, human oversight, and accountability. The study contributes a practical approach for responsible AI adoption that promotes trust, equity, and sustainable innovation while supporting informed institutional decision-making in increasingly AI-driven environments.

S1-06 Artificial Intelligence and the Future of Higher Education in West Africa: Opportunities, Challenges, and Comparative Perspectives

Earl Doe Doe Nimley | *Paper*

Artificial Intelligence (AI) in Higher Education in West Africa. This research-in-progress paper examines how generative AI offers promising opportunities to expand access to knowledge, strengthen administrative processes, enhance research outputs, and provide personalized learning opportunities. However, its effective implementation remains complicated by challenges related to institutional readiness, policy frameworks, ethics, access, infrastructure, and equitable participation. Recently, West Africa has experienced policy developments, with Liberia, Ghana, and Sierra Leone introducing the National Digital Strategy in Liberia 2025–2029,

the National Artificial Intelligence Strategy in Ghana, and Sierra Leone's first-ever AI Strategy in collaboration with the World Bank Group, respectively. These efforts are central to national goals, aiming to improve education, digital transformation, and economic growth.

S2 Learning Reimagined: Pedagogy, Literacy & Learner Development

Research and practice that rethink teaching, literacy, educational access, learner well-being, and meaningful participation.

S2-01 Regulation Before Rigor: Designing Lessons the Nervous System Can Actually Access

Bobby Morgan | *Workshop*

Rigor fails when regulation is missing. Teachers respond by lowering the bar. The student who needed access gets less content instead of better conditions. This workshop reframes trauma-informed practice as lesson design. Participants examine four instructional levers they already control: pacing, transitions, task initiation, and choice architecture. Each lever shapes whether a dysregulated learner can enter the work. Participants audit a lesson segment they currently teach, identify where the design escalates rather than settles, and rebuild one section on site. They leave with a completed audit tool and one named change. The behavior is often the design.

S3 Equity in Practice: Identity, Leadership & Inclusive Systems

Scholarship on identity, leadership, disability, access, belonging, and the transformation of organizations and communities.

S3-01 Leading Through a Polluted Lens: A Conceptual Model of Narrative Contamination in Leadership Discernment

Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran | *Paper*

New leaders often enter organizations with limited contextual knowledge, making workplace narratives influential in shaping early perceptions and relationships. This conceptual study examines how strategically positioned narratives may influence leadership discernment and contribute to biased judgments and actions. Grounded in social constructionism and informed by authentic leadership, followership, and leader-member-exchange theories, the study introduces Narrative Contamination in Leadership Discernment (NCLD), a conceptual model explaining how unverified or selectively framed narratives may disproportionately influence leaders' perceptions and decisions. The model positions discernment as a critical leadership capability and offers implications for HRD interventions that promote independent judgment, fairness and progressive organizations.

S3-02 Beyond Teacher Credentials: Mathematics Equity, Instructional Capacity, and Opportunity in High-Poverty Urban Elementary Schools

Dr. Zoraida Brown | *Paper*

This paper examines how teacher capacity, instructional practices, socioeconomic conditions, and educational systems shape opportunities and outcomes in mathematics for Black and

Brown students in high-poverty urban elementary schools. Drawing on a completed explanatory sequential mixed-methods doctoral study, the analysis integrates quantitative findings from 67 schools with qualitative perspectives from mathematics teachers. Findings indicate that teacher education level was modestly associated with achievement, years of experience did not significantly predict performance, and socioeconomic status was a stronger predictor. The paper highlights culturally responsive pedagogy, instructional capacity, professional learning, and policy conditions as critical to advancing mathematics equity and STEM opportunities.

S3-03 Toward an Endarkened Future: (Re)visioning Third Spaces

Billie Shabazz | *Paper*

Social justice advocacy and practice are priorities within the counseling field. Despite being a profession standard, social justice efforts from counseling organizations, educational programs and providers have not resulted in longstanding change. This conceptual paper uses Endarkened Feminist Epistemology to position third spaces (i.e., bookstores, parks, hair salons, etc.) as fertile ground for the change the profession is seeking. Case examples from counseling, education, and sociology will be used to demonstrate ways third spaces can achieve justice-oriented outcomes across disciplines.

S3-04 Contextually Responsive Intersectional Leadership: What Black Women Teach Us About Transcending Organizational Borders Toward a Beloved Educational Community

Valerie Dragon | *Paper*

These findings extend Black women's leadership scholarship beyond representation and identity toward the organizational competencies required to lead complex systems, positioning CRIL as organizational sensemaking and systems transformation rather than individual influence. By challenging models built on technical expertise and managerial efficiency, this work speaks to organizational behavior, public administration, and critical leadership studies wherever leaders navigate power, identity, and institutional constraint.

S3-05 From Educational Equity to Economic Inclusion: Exploring Psychological Safety as a Pathway to Community and Workforce Participation Among Individuals with Disabilities

Linda Orajekwe | *Paper*

Despite advances in inclusive education and disability rights policy, individuals with disabilities continue to experience disparities in community participation, workforce engagement, and economic inclusion. This conceptual paper explores psychological safety as a potential mechanism linking inclusive educational experiences to long-term participation outcomes. Drawing on the Social Model of Disability, Psychological Safety Theory, and Sen's Capability Approach, the paper proposes a framework suggesting that psychologically safe educational environments may foster self-efficacy, self-advocacy, belonging, and social confidence. By connecting educational equity with community and workforce participation, this work offers an interdisciplinary perspective for future research, policy development, inclusive practice, and social change.

S4 Health, Healing & the Embodied Human Experience

Intersections of physical, mental, emotional, and social well-being, with attention to trauma, counseling, movement, arts, and healing.

S4-01 Drama Speaks the Language of Therapy

Danice Holloway Wilson-Bates | *Workshop*

This workshop explores drama-based therapeutic practices as an alternative to traditional talk therapy. Grounded in psychodrama and informed by Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Narrative Therapy, and Trauma-Informed Care, the approach uses action, creativity, and shared storytelling to support emotional processing and connection. Participants engage in journaling, collaborative scriptwriting, role-play, improvisation, and guided reflection to examine personal and generational experiences from multiple perspectives. These structured activities promote self-awareness, resilience, and healthy coping skills while fostering a sense of belonging. By integrating theatrical methods with therapeutic principles, the workshop offers a dynamic pathway for healing and meaningful group engagement.

S4-02 Barriers to HBCU Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Cultural Betrayal Perspective

Nyair Washington | *Panel / facilitated discussion*

“To glorify democracy and to silence the people is a farce; to discourse on humanism and to negate people is a lie.” — Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed. This paper examines both systemic and individual barriers to sexual assault (SA) disclosure among Black diasporic students at HBCUs, using Cultural Betrayal Trauma Theory as a foundation. Researchers explore how intracultural pressure, institutional betrayal, and the accessibility of Title IX policies work in tandem to influence survivors' willingness to disclose. Recruitment efforts included outreach to more than 400 HBCU contacts, SA organizations, social media networks, and professional conferences. This outreach built a how-to guide.

S4-03 Seeing Movement Differently: Evidence-Informed Clinical Reasoning at the Intersection of Dance, Health, and Human Movement Science

Royce Zackery | *Workshop*

This interactive session examines how movement educators reason through complex movement by integrating artistic knowledge with biomechanics, motor learning, performance health, and embodied inquiry. Grounded in an emerging evidence-informed clinical reasoning framework, participants use a ballet-based single-leg rotational task to move through observation, hypothesis, intervention, and reassessment. The session distinguishes seeing a movement pattern from reasoning about why it occurs and what pedagogical response should follow. By treating the moving body as both an object and site of inquiry, the presentation proposes a transferable approach connecting dance pedagogy, human movement science, health, and practice-as-research across disciplinary contexts and educational settings.

S5 Work, Mobility & Resilient Futures

Career development, work and education transitions, organizational resilience, professional identity, and equitable opportunity.

S5-01 Digital Transformation as a Strategy for Long-Term Institutional Viability, Increased Student Enrollment and Accessible Higher Education

Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran | *Paper*

Higher Educational Institutions are increasingly taking on digital transformation projects to boost their efficiency, broaden access with the intent to increase student enrollment for revenue growth and overall organizational sustainability. Digital transformation has been increasingly recognized as a critical approach to attaining competitiveness amongst higher institutional systems; however, empirical evidence that establishes a connection between digital transformation and organizational outcomes remains sparse. As such, higher institutions struggle for long-term viable approaches because of limited understanding of identifying, selecting, or even implementing automation approaches.

S5-02 Factors Influencing Black School Psychologists' Career Entry and Persistence

Nneka Truss | *Paper*

Black school psychologists remain significantly underrepresented in a profession where their presence matters to the students and families who see themselves reflected in them. Grounded in Spencer's (1995) PVEST framework, this cross-sectional mixed-methods study examined what draws Black school psychologists into the field and what factors shape their persistence, surveying 46 practitioners. Equity- and representation-focused motivation emerged as a consistent driver of career entry. Systemic racism and limited resources were rated the most severe risk factors. Community membership in a culturally affirming professional network showed a trending, though non-significant, association with intent to remain, suggesting community as a retention infrastructure.

S5-03 Navigating Our Cranes in the Sky: Earning a Seat at the Table While Transitioning from College to Career: A Qualitative Exploration of Quarter-Life Crisis Among Black Millennial Women Doctoral Graduates

Tracee Vonne Marie Senghor | *Paper*

This qualitative study examined the impact of Quarter-Life Crisis (QLC) on the career transitions, mental health, and identities of 12 Black Millennial and Xennial women doctoral graduates navigating predominantly White spaces. Grounded in Black feminist psychology, the study used narrative inquiry, one-on-one interviews, and Sista Circles to explore participants' lived experiences. Findings revealed challenges related to emotional burnout, career uncertainty, financial stability, intersectionality, identity reconciliation, workplace barriers, and societal expectations. Participants emphasized the importance of community, mentorship, therapeutic and spiritual coping, and professional support. Findings highlight the need for equitable policies, culturally responsive mental health resources, mentorship, and career development pathways.

S5-04 Finding Your Element

Spencer Dean Barron | *Paper*

This project introduces "Human Power Pathways," an interdisciplinary post-secondary transition grid that reshapes traditional K–12 guidance through person-centered theory. Designed to dismantle rigid academic silos, the model equips students with tools for career branding, financial literacy, and multi-track mobility across collegiate, trade, and direct-entry routes. Utilizing interactive data models, the grid evaluates cost-and-timeline predictions, interstate relocation factors, and housing-adjusted savings projections to foster student agency. By integrating educational guidance, economic modeling, and social policy, this project provides a scalable blueprint for building equitable, resilient educational ecosystems that promote sustainable, self-directed post-secondary independence for diverse student populations.

S5-05 Beyond Placeholders: Integrating Mental Health, Vocational Rehabilitation, and Workforce Development for Sustainable Employment

Jessica Tolover | *Paper*

Traditional workforce programs often favor rapid job placement without adequately addressing the interconnected mental health, communication, development, and environmental factors that influence long-term employment success for individuals with disabilities. This paper introduces an integrated interdisciplinary framework that bridges vocational services, mental health counseling, and workforce development with a Gap Services Matrix designed to identify barriers and limitations before employment placement. The framework promotes sustainable employment by aligning individualized support with workforce needs. The proposal is a model that connects education, health, business, and disabilities services to improve and realistic employment outcomes.

S6 Discovery Across Boundaries: STEM, Science & Transdisciplinary Inquiry

Scientific, biomedical, computational, and transdisciplinary approaches to complex challenges and public impact.

S6-01 Learning Across Boundaries: Transdisciplinary Learning Competencies and a Transdisciplinary Philosophy of Science

Ronald C. Williams | *Paper*

This proposal introduces transdisciplinary learning competencies and a transdisciplinary philosophy of science as foundations for addressing complex, technology-intensive, and socially embedded problems. It argues that effective learners and researchers must combine iterative learning, critical reflection, epistemic flexibility, collaborative knowledge integration, and opportunity-oriented application. Drawing from experiential, transformative, social cognitive, systems, sociotechnical, and developmental theories, the framework links learning practice to learning agility and opportunity readiness. It also emphasizes explicit attention to ontology, epistemology, and methodology, integrating positivist, interpretive, idiographic, and nomothetic perspectives. The proposal offers implications for curriculum design, research

teams, innovation ecosystems, workforce development, and equitable social impact outcomes.

S6-02 Guarding the Fourth Trimester: Family Education and Doula Integrated Care as a Prevention Model for Postpartum Psychosis

Alexus Brown | *Paper*

Postpartum psychosis is rare but severe, with risks heightened by sleep deprivation, limited support, and structural inequities that delay recognition, especially for Black mothers. This paper proposes a paired prevention model: a brief prenatal family education module on psychosis warning signs and tiered postpartum support through doulas and overnight infant care. Drawing on the biopsychosocial model, anticipatory guidance, and doula continuity-of-care frameworks, the paper argues that addressing recognition and support together offers a scalable, equity-centered strategy for preventing postpartum psychiatric crises.

S6-03 Physics-Informed Graph Neural Network Prediction of Downtime in Smart-Microgrids Under Fault and Weather Events

Sola Famakin | *Paper*

Power outage duration commonly spans minutes to hours. However, worsening environmental factors often extend it beyond two weeks. Earlier outage duration prediction efforts using probabilistic and analytical tools on classical power networks did well, whereas modern networks require tools sensitive to their unique non-linear behaviors. Lately, Machine Learning and Deep Learning predictive models ranging from Random Forest Regression to Transformer LTT were adopted. These efforts often ignore key issues like fault cascade and network topology. We adopted Physics informed Graph Neural Network to capture these factors. A trained baseline model returned an overall MAE = 0.7100, MSE = 6.2973, RMSE = 2.5094 and R2 = 0.9601. At completion, we expect improved prediction.

S6-04 Chemical and Biological Interventions for Neurodiversity: An Interdisciplinary Examination of Diagnosis, Health Screening, Workplace Inclusion, Policy and Employment Outcomes

Dr. Amina Ayodeji-Ogundiran | *Paper*

Neurodiversity is increasingly recognized as a critical consideration in healthcare, education, and workforce development, yet research examining the intersection of biological sciences, clinical practice, workplace inclusion, and public policy remains limited. This interdisciplinary study explores how chemical and biological interventions, early diagnosis, and health screening contribute to improving health, employment, and quality-of-life outcomes for neurodivergent individuals. Findings from this study are expected to inform interdisciplinary models of care, guide evidence-based organizational policies, and provide recommendations for healthcare systems, employers, and policymakers seeking to improve workforce inclusivity and organizational inclusion.

S7 Emerging Scholars Colloquium: Research in Motion: Ideas, Methods & Impact

Monday luncheon forum where graduate students engage established and rising scholars in a candid exchange about research funding, methods, scholarly development, and emerging work.

Discussion-format colloquium; the featured talk and faculty–student panel are listed in the Monday luncheon schedule.



Poster Presentations | Research in Focus

Monday, November 9 | Emerging Scholars Colloquium & Luncheon Chat & Chew | 12:15–2:00 p.m.

Eleven poster presentations accompany the conference's emerging-scholar research exchange. Presentation codes P01–P11 correspond to the entries below.

P01 From Screening to Structure: DIBELS-Informed Small Group Instruction and the Measurable Impact on Early Literacy Growth in Grades K–4

Ariel Rogers | Poster

This study examines the impact of a structured early literacy intervention model on reading growth among students performing below or well below grade level in Grades K–4. Using DIBELS benchmark data collected across three assessment windows (BOY, MOY, EOY) and spanning multiple school years pre- and post-adoption, this quantitative longitudinal study analyzes the relationship between instructional frequency, session duration, and progress monitoring cadence on student literacy outcomes. Findings indicate significant performance gains following consistent implementation of a minimum 30-minute, five-days-per-week small group model. Results contribute empirical support for structural consistency as a driver of early literacy growth within MTSS frameworks.

P02 Adaptive Multi-Robot Coordination via Reinforcement Learning for Heterogeneous Quadruped Team

Matthew Akinmolayan | Poster

Real-world robot teams rarely come from a single vendor, yet most multi-robot coordination research assumes homogeneous fleets or hand-coded role assignment. This work develops a shared reinforcement learning policy that governs two physically dissimilar quadrupeds differing in locomotion profile, endurance, sensor suite, and control SDK — through cooperative search-and-interact tasks. A capability-conditioned observation space enables one policy to adaptively assign roles as battery state, terrain, and task demands shift. A ROS-based abstraction layer bridges incompatible vendor interfaces, and a scripted leader-follower baseline anchors evaluation against the learned policy. Physical deployment results extend prior simulation-only pursuit-evasion work into real hardware

P03 Seeking Umoja: Black Female School Counselors Cultivating Black Girls' Belonging Through African-Centered Frameworks.

Carolyn Thorpe | Poster

Currently, there is limited research on school counselors' implementation of African-centered psychoeducational groups in schools. Rooted in an African-Centered framework, this project aims to fill that gap and expound upon the notion that small groups are a strong intervention for increased belonging and community in schools. Together, these principles can serve as a resource for school systems to improve the educational and cultural experience of Black students through community and belonging (Thorpe, 2025). This study will explore how Black female school counselors identify their Black female students' need for belonging and

integrates ASCA ethical standards, MSJCC, and African-centered frameworks through Kwanzaa principles.

P04 Too Loud, Too Much, Too Aggressive? Developing the Black Girls Aggression and Discipline Perception Scale BG-ADPS

Iesha Caisey | Poster

Black girls face disproportionate school discipline shaped by racialized and gendered perceptions of behavior. This study examined the reliability and factor structure of the Black Girls Aggression and Discipline Perception Scale (BG-ADPS), a culturally grounded measure of how Black adolescent girls perceive aggression labeling and disciplinary responses in schools. Participants included Black middle and high school girls in Maryland who completed the BG-ADPS online. Analyses included descriptive statistics and exploratory factor analysis. The study assessed the scale's psychometric strength and addressed a gap in culturally responsive measurement by centering Black girls' interpretations of discipline in their school experiences.

P05 TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON INNOVATIVE STRATEGIES TO PROMOTE LITERACY IN READING INSTRUCTION AMONG THIRD TO FIFTH GRADE AFRICAN AMERICAN MALES IN A LARGE SCHOOL DISTRICT IN A MID-ATLANTIC STATE

Nikia Pointer | Poster

This qualitative phenomenological study explores innovative, culturally relevant literacy strategies for African American boys in grades 3–5 in a large Mid-Atlantic school district. Guided by culturally relevant pedagogy and Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, the study examined the literacy challenges these students encounter and educators' assessments of existing instruction. Twelve teachers, reading specialists, and literacy coaches participated in interviews using an established questionnaire. Qualitative analysis identified five recurrent themes: reading engagement, reading interest, vocabulary development, culturally relevant texts, and differentiation through technology. The findings emphasize student-centered instructional practices and the importance of culturally responsive approaches that address individual learning needs. The study offers implications for educators, administrators, families, and policymakers seeking to strengthen literacy achievement and educational equity for African American male elementary students.

P06 Zinc sequestration by S100A12 reduces growth and viability in Group B Strep

Kyndall Neeland | Poster

Co-authors: Briana Whitehead, Aneesa Sawh, Velia Garcia, Rekha Pattanayek, Jennifer A. Gaddy

Affiliations: Fisk University, Bowie State University, Vanderbilt University

Group B Streptococcus (GBS) contributes to adverse pregnancy and neonatal outcomes, with disproportionately high infection rates among Black adults and infants. This study examined whether S100A12, a zinc-binding immune protein, restricts GBS through nutritional immunity. In ex vivo GBS-infected gestational membranes, S100A12 expression increased and localized primarily to monocytes and decidual stromal cells. In vitro, S100A12 reduced GBS growth and viability while increasing biofilm formation.

Zinc supplementation reversed these effects; a zinc-binding-deficient S100A12 mutant exhibited negligible antimicrobial activity and induced less biofilm formation than the wild-type protein. Together, these findings identify zinc sequestration as a mechanism through which S100A12 stresses GBS, limiting bacterial growth while promoting biofilm formation. The study advances understanding of host–pathogen interactions relevant to maternal and infant health.

P07 From Pulse to Picture: Imaging Physiological Signals for Emotion Recognition.

Ngulefeh Fuanyi | Poster

Human emotion leaves measurable traces in the body, in the skin's electrical activity and the timing of the heartbeat. This project asks whether converting these physiological signals into images lets a computer read emotion more faithfully. Using a public dataset of 37 people watching immersive videos, electrodermal and pulse signals are transformed into Gramian Angular Field (GAF) images and classified with a convolutional neural network (CNN), evaluated so no person appears in both training and testing. Imaged skin-conductance rivals hand-engineered features and separates pleasantness well, while cardiac signals prove subtler. Results clarify which bodily signals, and which representations, carry emotion.

P08 Measuring the Boundaries: Heterogeneous Coordination from Abstract Simulation to Embodied Quadruped Teams

Matthew Akinmolayan | Poster

Heterogeneous robot teams can combine complementary capabilities, but coordination policies trained in simplified simulation may fail when transferred to physical platforms. This work evaluates a controller-agnostic transfer pipeline for a scout–fetcher quadruped team across an abstract simulator, software bridge, physics simulation, and hardware demonstrations. A learned multi-agent policy and a hand-engineered scripted controller are evaluated through the same interfaces. Both transfer with little performance loss, while the scripted controller consistently outperforms the learned policy. Calibration based on per-decision displacement restores embodied coordination, but both controllers fail on novel layouts, identifying map generalization rather than embodiment as the primary limitation observed.

P09 Developing the School-based Measure of Clinical Identification of Racism Attribution Scale (SB-MCIRAS)

Temi Unonu | Poster

Black students frequently encounter racialized experiences in educational settings, yet school-based mental health professionals have yet to indicate how they can identify associated indicators of racial stress and trauma. This study presents the development of the School-based Measure of Clinical Identification of Racism Attribution Scale (SB-MCIRAS), a racial stress and trauma assessment designed for Black school-based mental health professionals. Grounded in Chester Pierce's theory of microaggressions and informed by Robert Carter's race-based traumatic stress framework, the instrument measures observed student vigilance,

emotional and physical reactions, and cumulative behavioral strain. The study contributes a culturally responsive approach to identifying racialized distress in Black students and supporting trauma-informed school-based mental health practice.

P10 From Isolation to Ideology: The Digital Recruitment of Young Men into the Manosphere

Albanie Lloyd | Poster

The teenage and young adult years are the most crucial for a man's development. In those years, young men struggle with physical and mental changes, and some have trouble catching up with their peers socially, romantically, and physically. This feeling of not being able to “catch up” results in young men feeling insecure, depressed, and lonely. So, they seek community for men who feel the same. The incel community, a group that bonds through self-harm, pseudo-science, and misogyny, recruits young men into its community during their most vulnerable state. Although incels lack formal leadership, bylaws, or legal status, they can be analyzed as a digitally networked organization due to their ideological coherence, internal hierarchy boundary maintenance, and coordinated discourse practices. Huge influencers of this community monetize from their audiences' insecurities by implementing misogyny, pseudoscience, and self-harm practices in their content. Using social identity theory, this study aims to understand the impact of key manosphere influencers' persuasiveness and the sociological factors driving the popularity of this online community.

P11 Restorative Practices And Students With Disabilities: A Qualitative Comparative Study Of Educational Leaders' Perspectives

Laurie Anderson-Smith | Poster

This research-in-progress examines the relationship between educational leaders’ perceptions of the implementation of restorative practices and student success within a large K–12 school district. Using a quantitative correlational design, the study will pair leaders’ survey responses with existing state- and school-level data related to exclusionary discipline, school climate, and attendance, with attention to outcomes for students with disabilities. Grounded in the Social Discipline Window and Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy, the study considers restorative practices through relational, equity-centered, and trauma-informed perspectives. Findings may contribute to understanding how the implementation of restorative practices relates to supportive school environments, disciplinary outcomes, student engagement, and educational leadership decision-making in contemporary schools.

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