

28th ANNUAL Student Symposium

Wednesday, April 8, 2026

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.



**Manchester University
Student Symposium**

Sponsored by
The Office of Academic Affairs
Wednesday, April 8, 2026
9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Program at a Glance

Look for QR codes posted for the 2026 program

8:45 – 9:00 a.m. Mini Muffins and Coffee in ACEN Lounge by Rooms 146 and 149

Session I:

9:00 a.m. Video Welcome from President Stacy Young (ACEN 146 and 149)

9:10 – 10:30 a.m. Breakout Session 1 – Various Rooms (ACEN 146 and 149)

9:10 – 9:30 a.m. First Presentations

9:40 – 10 a.m. Second Presentations

10:10 – 10:30 a.m. Third Presentations

Session II:

10:40 a.m. Video Welcome from Alumna Emily Burdick (ACEN 144, 146 and 149)

10:50 – 12:10 p.m. Breakout Session 2 – Various Rooms (ACEN 144, 146 and 149)

10:50 – 11:10 a.m. First Presentations

11:20 – 11:40 a.m. Second Presentations

11:50 – 12:10 p.m. Third Presentations

11:30 – 1:00 p.m. Poster/Art Hang-up Time in JYSC (All posters/art up by 1 p.m.)

12:15 – 1:15 p.m. Lunch (not included)

1:15 – 2:15 p.m. Poster and Art Session – Hoff, Lahman & Speicher (JYSC); Link Gallery

2:15 – 2:45 p.m. Keynote – Lahman Room (JYSC)

2:45 – 3:00 p.m. Awards, Closing, and Group Picture

Group picture immediately following closing

Art Exhibitions

Hoff Room – Jo Young Switzer Center
1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

You Choose Silence, But We Belong Here

Elizabeth (Liz) Moss

Major(s): Visual Arts Education

Minor(s): Peace Studies – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Heather Schilling

Link Gallery – Winger

9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.

Senior Art Exhibits

Makenna Cash

Major(s): Digital Media Arts and Studio Arts – Class of 2026

Morgan Metroff

Major(s): Pre-Art Therapy and Visual Arts Education

Minor: Psychology – Class of 2026

Charlotte Wilson

Major(s): Studio Art, Digital Media Arts, Communication – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Jeffrey Diesburg

Oral Presentations: Session I

9:00 – 9:10 a.m.

Video Welcome from President Stacy Young

9:10 – 9:30 a.m.

“B-6/12” and More Historical Authenticity in *The Little Prince*

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Logan Hill

Major(s): English, Educational Studies, History – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Beate Gilliar

Justifications for Genocide: An Analysis of the Evolution of Dehumanizing Language and Its Role in Legitimizing Mass Murder

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 149

Miriam Erbaugh

Major(s): Peace Studies, Philosophy & Religious Studies, Political Science
– Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Katy Gray Brown

9:40 – 10:00 a.m.

How Antoine de Saint-Exupéry Wrote Himself into *The Little Prince*

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Stella Thomas

Major(s): Political Science – Class of 2029

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Beate Gilliar

The Cherokee and Choctaw Nations: The Impact of Forced Removal and Its Legacy

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 149

Kirsten Norton

Major(s): Secondary Education: History – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Uma Ganesan

Oral Presentations: Session I (continued)

10:10 – 10:30 a.m.

The Little Prince, Truly, a Tale for Adults

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Lauren Ray

Major(s): English – Class of 2029

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Beate Gilliar

The Transition from Slavery to Identity; Education and Politics during Reconstruction

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 149

Jacob Wiley

Major(s): History, Peace Studies – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Uma Ganesan

(Oral Presentations: Session II on Following Pages)

Oral Presentations: Session II

10:40 – 10:50 p.m.

Video Welcome from Alumna Emily Burdick

10:50 – 11:10 a.m.

Combined Effects of Heat Stress and Microplastics Exposure to Algal-Cnidarian Symbiosis in Aiptasia

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 144

Gillian Thompson

Major(s): Environmental Studies, Biology, Peace Studies – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Robison

Presidential Power and Forgotten Reforms

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Samuel Hupp

Major(s): Philosophy, Peace Studies, Religious Studies – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Katy Gray Brown

Migration Ecology and Conservation in a Changing Climate

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 149

Josie Kiser

Major(s): Biology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Aron Costello-Harris

Oral Presentations: Session II (continued)

11:20 – 11:40 a.m.

Perceptions of Success in Online vs. In-Person Courses

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 144

Hannah Bailey

Major(s): Psychology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

Avery Stockwell

Major(s): Psychology, Psychology & Religious Culture – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

How Does Your Interest in Education or Teaching Impact Your Participation and Desire to Speak in a 'Spanish for Educators' Class?

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Andrew Morrison

Major(s): Early/Elem Ed: English Learner, Elementary Education, Spanish
– Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mackenzie Coulter-Kern

Removal of *Python bivittatus* from the Everglades and Our Moral Obligation to Preserve the Environment; A Meta-Analysis of Invasive Species

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 149

Dakota Prater

Major(s): Biology, Environment Studies – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sabrina Brown

11:50 a.m. – 12:10 p.m.

Dungeons and Dragons: From Demonized to Worldwide Appeal

Cunningham Academic Center, Room 146

Shaylee Maly

Major(s): History – Class of 2029

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Beate Gilliar

Research Posters

Speicher/Lahman/Hoff Rooms, Jo Young Switzer Center

1:15 – 2:15 p.m.

1. The Impact of Neurodegeneration in Dementia on Cognition and Daily Functioning in Long-Term Care Residents

Chloe Miles

Major(s): Biology

Minor(s): Business – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr Jennifer Robison

2. Familiar Support

Cheyenne Miracle

Major(s): Psychology – Class of 2028

Braiden Hurley

Major(s): Counseling – Class of 2028

Gavin Legac

Major(s): Exercise Science & Fitness, Psychology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

3. Quantifying Protein Interactions with Polystyrene Microplastics

Kayden Addison

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Business Management – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle Watson

4. How Racism Affects Our Daily Lives

Garrett Armstrong

Major(s): Business Management, Criminology, Marketing – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gabriela Ramalho

5. Toward the Synthesis of New Heteroatom-Activated Antibiotic Scaffolds

Milo Hupp

Major(s): Chemistry – Class of 2028

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle Watson

6. Toward the Synthesis of New Heteroatom-Activated Antibiotics

Garrett Hollis

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Chemistry – Class of 2027

Kayden Addison

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Business Management, Chemistry – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle D. Watson

7. Progress Towards the Development of a Dual-Action Sulfa Antibiotic

Amy Liñan

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Biology, Chemistry – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle Watson

8. The Synthesis and Analysis of Small Molecular Weight Styrene Fragments

Henry Blakley

Major(s): Chemistry – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle Watson

9. Using Hetero Diels-Alder Cycloadditions to Generate a Small Library of Potential Antibiotics

Avery Ball

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Nursing – Class of 2026

Owen Ritchie

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Chemistry – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Kyle Watson

10. Concussion and Athlete Confidence Returning to Play

Virginia Gladding

Major(s): Cognitive Neuroscience

Minor(s): Coaching, Peace Studies – Class of 2028

Diego Diaz

Major(s): Business Management, Counseling, Psychology – Class of 2028

Ethan Meyer

Major(s): Psychology, Psychology & Religious Culture – Class of 2028

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

11. Cold Stress and Melatonin Treatment on Soybeans

Nicholas Martinez

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Robison

12. Childhood Parental Modeling and Expectations Relationship to College Experience

Elexis Johnson

Major(s): Political Science, Psychology – Class of 2028

Marques Washington

Major(s): Psychology – Class of 2028

Colen Trulove

Major(s): Social Work, Psychology – Class of 2028

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Marcie Coulter-Kern

13. To What Extent Does Perceived Stress Predict Productivity and Task Performance Beyond Objective Workload Demands?

Rylee Stephany

Major(s): Psychology, Psychology & Religious Culture – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

14. Hidden Particles, Visible Impact: Investigating Microplastics in Moisturizers and Their Effect on Our Skin and Environmental Consequences

Kaitlyn Shields

Major(s): Biology

Minor(s): Environmental Studies – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sabrina Brown

15. Familial Effect on College Student GPA and Comfort

Gavin Legac

Major(s): Exercise Science & Fitness, Psychology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Russell Coulter-Kern

16. Tuskegee Airmen and Their Accomplishments

Clay Kistler

Major(s): Secondary Education: History – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Uma Ganesan

17. Motivations of Juvenile School Shooters

Ash Pierce

Major(s): Criminology

Minor(s): English, Peace Studies – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gabriela Ramalho

18. Defunding Police

Alexander Trusty

Major(s): Criminology – Class of 2028

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Gabriela Ramalho

19. Emerging Trends in Designer Drugs as a Public Health Concern: Implications for Healthcare Awareness and Practice

Maria Gikoska

Major(s): Pharmacy – Class of 2029

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Austin Mondloch

20. Personality and Music

Mason Daring

Major(s): Business Management, Philosophy & Religious Studies, Psychology
– Class of 2027

Cassandra Welter

Major(s): Cognitive Neuroscience, Psychology & Religious Culture – Class of 2028

Montana Green

Major(s): Counseling – Class of 2027

Justice Goree

Major(s): Psychology – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Rusty Coulter-Kern

21. The Impacts of Different Colored Microplastics on Aiptasia

Elizabeth Weitzel

Major(s): Biology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Robison

22. Disgust in a Working Memory Paradigm

Christina Morrow

Major(s): Cognitive Neuroscience

Minor(s): Spanish – Class of 2027

Avery Kruger

Major(s): Psychology, Psychology & Religious Culture – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Mark McCoy

23. Tracing Seasonal Ecological Changes in the Eel River

Will Coggins

Major(s): Environmental Studies – Class of 2028

Josie Kiser

Major(s): Biology – Class of 2026

Lillian Lichtenbarger

Major(s): Environmental Studies – Class of 2027

Kaitlyn Shields

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Biology – Class of 2027

Micah Taylor

Major(s): Environmental Studies – Class of 2027

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Sabrina Brown

24. Pueblo Zoo Internship

Keagen Mabie

Major(s): Biology-Chemistry, Biology – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Jennifer Robison

Keynote Speaker
Lahman Room, Jo Young Switzer Center
2:15 p.m.

**Method to His Madness: How Society's Fears Throughout History Created
Pop Culture's Greatest Villain, the Joker**

Megan Pierce

Major(s): Communication Studies

Minor(s): English, Public Relations – Class of 2026

Faculty Mentor: Dr. Timothy McKenna-Buchanan

Student Conveners, Faculty Evaluators, and Friends:

Maddy Anderson

Joslyn Barnett

Jaden Chin Hong

Merissa Large

Morgan Pocijewski

Briana Thomas

Dr. Tim Brauch

Dr. Kate Crell

Dr. Matt Davis

Dr. Teresa DeLellis

Professor Dustin Diller

Dr. Stacy Erickson-Pesetski

Dr. Beate Gilliar

Dr. Pamela Haynes

Dr. K. J. Kessie

Leon Letter, Chief Academic Officer

Dr. Mark McCoy

Dr. Tim McKenna Buchanan

Dr. Jennifer Robison

Dr. Kyle Watson

2026 Student Symposium Committee

Dr. Katharine Ings, Professor of English (chair)

Dr. Sabrina Brown, Assistant Professor of Biology and Environmental Studies

Dr. Diane Calinski, Professor of Pharmaceutical and Graduate Life Sciences

Darla Haines, Library Director

Allison Keen, Clinical Instructor for Nursing

Blake Moore, Assistant Professor of Business

Dr. Sam Rohr, Associate Professor of Business

Dr. Jacob Mertens, Assistant Professor of Communication Studies

Michelle Pelphrey, Administrative Assistant representing Academic Affairs

Our sincere thanks to all the people who worked to make the 2026 Manchester University Student Symposium a success. Special thanks to Leon Letter, Chief Academic Officer, our student conveners, faculty evaluators, faculty mentors, and Sodexo catering. We recognize and appreciate your dedication to the students of Manchester University.

