

Albany State University Showcases Student Innovation at 14th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium

Albany State University Hosted Its 14th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, Highlighting Student Innovation Across Disciplines.

ALBANY, GA, UNITED STATES, May 1, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- [Albany State University](https://www.albany.edu) (ASU), through its Center for Transformational Student Experiences (CTSE), proudly hosted the 14th Annual Undergraduate Research Symposium, bringing together student scholars, faculty mentors, and academic leaders to celebrate the power of inquiry, innovation, and discovery.



Undergraduate Research Symposium Winners

“

Our students are gaining knowledge while learning how to think critically, solve problems, and lead with purpose.”

*Dr. Robert Scott, President,
Albany State University*

This year’s theme, Artificial Intelligence and the Transformation of Research, set a forward-looking stage for student presentations across disciplines including natural sciences, computational mathematics, social sciences, criminal justice, and public health.

“Each project represents time, discipline, and a willingness to ask important questions. Our students are gaining knowledge while learning how to think critically, solve problems, and lead with purpose. Experiences like this

symposium allow them to apply what they've learned and build confidence in their abilities. That is what truly transforms potential into progress.”

Dr. Robert Scott, President, Albany State University

The symposium featured a keynote address by Dr. Cadavious M. Jones, Dean of the Division of Science and Mathematics at Rust College and a nationally recognized leader in STEM innovation. A Fulbright Fellow and applied mathematician, Dr. Jones has secured more than \$6.3 million in funded initiatives spanning cybersecurity, AgriTech, robotics, and STEM workforce development. His keynote explored how emerging AI technologies are reshaping discovery, expanding access

to knowledge, and redefining the role of undergraduate research in preparing the next generation of scholars.

“This moment belongs to our student researchers. Over the past year, they have asked bold questions, wrestled with complex ideas, and contributed their unique voices to the pursuit of knowledge. Undergraduate research is a high-impact practice that supports student success, retention, and graduation.”

Dr. Nora Osakwe, Executive Director of CTSE

Overall Best Oral Presentation was awarded to C-yanni Outen, a sophomore Criminal Justice major, for her research, Locked Away for a Lie: A Study on False Accusations & their Impact on Incarcerated Individuals. Her work examines the long-term challenges faced by wrongfully convicted individuals following exoneration, highlighting systemic gaps in reentry support and the role of nonprofit organizations in addressing those needs.

Overall Best Poster Presentation was awarded to Kendra Ross, a sophomore Forensic Science major, for her research, Biofilm Formation of Wild-Type and Pressure-Stressed Escherichia coli O157:H7, Salmonella enterica, and Listeria monocytogenes Pathogens of Public Health Concern in Pasteurized Milk, Distilled Water, and on Abiotic Surfaces. Her work examines biofilm formation of harmful pathogens, including Escherichia coli, Salmonella enterica, and Listeria monocytogenes. Her



C-yanni Outen (Best Overall Oral Presentation)



Kendra Ross (Best Overall Poster Presentation)



Student Research with ASU Professors

study provides critical insight into food safety and the prevention of contamination in food processing environments.

First Place Winners — Oral Presentations

- Natural & Applied Sciences: Mykala Eckler, Natural Sciences — Investigating the Synergistic Effects of PFAS Chemicals and Microplastics on the Viability and Motility of Brown Planaria (*Dugesia* sp.)



- Computational Mathematics & Data Science: Garret Godwin, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics — Classification of Gene Expression Data
- Social Sciences & Public Policy: C-yanni Outen, Criminal Justice — Locked Away for a Lie: A Study on False Accusations & their Impact on Incarcerated Individuals
- Criminal Justice, Health & Applied Studies: Manuel Makayla, Criminal Justice — The Impact of Drug Abuse and Misuse in Adolescents
- Special Session (Mathematical Modeling): Ayodeji Williams, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics — Multivariate Linear Model for Agricultural Data (Corn, Soybeans, Wheat)

First Place Winners — Poster Presentations

- Natural & Applied Sciences: Kendra Ross, Natural Sciences — Biofilm Formation of Wild-Type and Pressure-Stressed *Escherichia coli* O157:H7, *Salmonella enterica*, and *Listeria monocytogenes* Pathogens of Public Health Concern in Pasteurized Milk, Distilled Water, and on Abiotic Surfaces
- Computational Mathematics & Data Science:
 - o Jada Rodgers & Kendall Akins, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics — Optimized Campus Route Planning: A Geospatial Application for Albany State University Navigation
 - o Christopher Davis & Collen Lawrence, Mathematics, Computer Science, and Physics — Automated Attendance System Using Fused Biometrics and Proximity
- Social Sciences & Public Policy: Francesca Onumah, Sociology and Psychology — Evaluating the

Harms of Using AI Programs as Therapists Among College Students

- Criminal Justice, Health & Applied Studies: Chelsea Zeon, Business — Forensic Science's Role in Understanding Environmental Racism: Marginalized Communities at a Crossroads
- Grant-Funded Research: Najya Toodle, Natural Sciences — Isolation and Characterization of Bacteria with the Ability to Degrade 1,4-Dioxane in Contaminated Areas
- Coursework / Capstone Projects: Connor Jennings, Education — What Would Be Without The Genius Of Us?
- Global Learning Exploratory: Isaiah Flynt, Mass Communication — Excellent Hispanic Contributions to Albany in 50 Years of Newspapers

The Undergraduate Research Symposium reflects Albany State University's ongoing commitment to providing high-impact educational experiences that prepare students for careers, graduate study, and civic leadership. CTSE extends its gratitude to all participating students, faculty mentors, judges, and staff whose dedication made this event a success.

A full list of student results from the symposium can be found on the [ASU website](#).

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