



2026 Award Winners

Center for African Studies

Award for Graduate Student Research in Global Health

When Everyone Knows You: Confidentiality and Dual Roles in Rural Practice

Zoe Cutillo | Healthcare Ethics | McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Angela Ruby | Healthcare Ethics | McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Joris Gielen, Ph.D.

Center for Community-Engaged Teaching & Research

CETR Award for Graduate Research

Experiential Based Learning Beyond the Classroom: A Qualitative Review of Opportunities in Ethics and Professional Development in Music Therapy Coursework

Gabriella Battistelli | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music

Erika Johnson | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music

Julian Shay | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music

Temitope Ogundele | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music

Faculty Advisor(s): Meng-Shan Lee, Ph.D.

Center for Catholic Faith & Culture

Center for Catholic Faith and Culture Graduate Research Award

Rethinking Recovery: Music Therapy, Agency, and Individualized Engagement

Corey Jenkins | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music

Faculty Advisor(s): Meng-Shan Lee, MMT, Ph.D., MT-BC

Center for Global Health Ethics

Award for Graduate Research in Ethics

Improving Ethical Practices of Care for Healthcare Sufferers

Carter Check | Healthcare Ethics | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Joris Gielen, Ph.D., Gerard Magill, Ph.D.

The Ethical Contribution of Principlism for Interpretation Services in Patient-Centered Care

Aigerim Aliakparova | Healthcare Ethics | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Gerard Magill, Ph.D.

Center for Integrative Health

Award for Graduate Research

The Ethical Contribution of Principlism for Interpretation Services in Patient-Centered Care

Aigerim Aliakparova | Healthcare Ethics | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Gerard Magill, Ph.D.

Center for Migration, Displacement and Community Studies

Outstanding Graduate Research

Communicating Environmental Risk: Lessons from Flint, Love Canal, and PFAS Contamination

Marie Navarro Sullivan | Environmental Science & Management | School of Science and Engineering

Faculty Advisor(s): Phillip Reeder, Ph.D.

Honorable Mention

Assessing the Health Status, Health Needs, and Healthcare Access of Venezuelan Migrants in Host Countries: An Integrative Review

Monica Naumann | Nursing | School of Nursing

Faculty Advisor(s): Rick Zoucha, Ph.D., CTN-A, FTNSS, FETNA, FADLN, FAAN

Alison Colbert, Ph.D., PHCNS-BC, FAAN

Center for Women's and Gender Studies

Award for Graduate Student Research in Women's and Gender Studies

Black Galleries: The Legacies of the Black Home

Reiley Freed | Public History | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Jennifer Taylor, Ph.D., Andrew Simpson, Ph.D.

The Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology, and Law

Top Graduate Research Project

Risk, Rewards, and Responsibility: Ethical Implications for Using CRISPR as a Treatment Mechanism for Parkinson's Disease

Lauren Kenst | Healthcare Ethics | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Gerald Magill, Ph.D.

Honorable Mention

See-Judge-Act in the Age of Viral Violence: Moral Agency, Praxis, and Social Media

Thomas Elias | Theology | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Faculty Advisor(s): Anna Scheid, Ph.D.

Gumberg Library

Gumberg Library Award for Graduate Research

Lost in Translation: A Systematic Review Evaluating Clinical Readiness of AI-Based Speech Recognition Technologies for Dysarthria

Damar Blanchet | Osteopathic Medicine | Nasuti College of Osteopathic Medicine
Abigail Thomson | Osteopathic Medicine | Nasuti College of Osteopathic Medicine
John Altpeter | Osteopathic Medicine | Nasuti College of Osteopathic Medicine
Dina Silvestri | Osteopathic Medicine | Nasuti College of Osteopathic Medicine
Faculty Advisor(s): Phillip Bryant, DO

Honorable Mention

Impact of Early-Life Antibiotic and Probiotic Exposure on the Gut Microbiome: Implications for Childhood Asthma Risk

Elizabeth Whelan | Physician Assistant Studies | Rangos School of Health Sciences
Faculty Advisor(s): Katlyn Kuenzig, MPAS PA-C

History Department: Clio Award for Graduate Research

First Place

The Freikorps & The Sturmabteilung: The Rise of German Far-Right Paramilitaries

Jonah Zolnak | History | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Faculty Advisor(s): John Mitcham, Ph.D., Andrew Simpson, Ph.D.

Second Place

Slavic Pittsburgh: Past and Present

Kyle Louder | Public History | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Faculty Advisor(s): Jennifer Taylor, Ph.D.

Third Place

A Fighting 'Glance': Understanding the Complexities of Disabled Labor Through Pittsburgh

Kaelin Hughes | History | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts
Faculty Advisor(s): Andrew Simpson, Ph.D.

Mary Pappert School of Music

Mary Pappert School of Music Graduate Award

The Music of Oz's Most Powerful

Gabrielle Frens | Music Therapy | Mary Pappert School of Music
Faculty Advisor(s): Noah Potvin, Ph.D.

McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Outstanding Poster or Presentation

And Came "A Flock of White Doves": The Sisters of the Holy Cross and Nursing in the Civil War (1861-1865)

Eliza Grimm | History | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Andrew Simpson, Ph.D.

School of Education

Award for Outstanding Graduate Research

Parent-Reported School-Based Concussion Management Procedures

Kristen Hinshaw | School Psychology | School of Education

Faculty Advisor(s): Ara Schmitt, Ph.D.

School of Nursing

Award for Graduate Research

Awareness of the Medicare Diabetes Prevention Program Among Healthcare Providers Caring for Older Adults

Anannya Pushkarna | Osteopathic Medicine | Nasuti College of Osteopathic Medicine

Faculty Advisor(s): Melanie Turk, Ph.D.

Honorable Mention for Graduate Research

Uncovering the Path: A Mini-Grounded Theory Study of the Adult Attention Deficit

Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) Journey to Diagnosis

Jeffrey Whitaker | Nursing | School of Nursing

Faculty Advisor(s): Melissa Kalarchian, Ph.D.

Richard Zoucha, Ph.D.

School of Science and Engineering

Excellence in Graduate Research

Preparing for Battle: Impacts of Pond Water on Tadpole Microbiome, Immune Priming, and Development

Rosemary Westcott | Biology | School of Science and Engineering

Faculty Advisor(s): Sarah Woodley, Ph.D.

Structural impact of Mg²⁺ on HCV X55 hairpin; preorganization of the monomer loop nucleotides for kissing dimerization

Unnikrishnan Puthumana | Chemistry | School of Science and Engineering

Faculty Advisor(s): Jeffrey D. Evanseck, Ph.D., Mihaela-Rita Mihailescu, Ph.D.

Simon Silverman Phenomenology Center

Award for Graduate Research

Ludic Disgust: Reassessing the Limits of Kantian Sublime through Horror

Katie McCabe | Philosophy | McAnulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): James Swindal, Ph.D.

Honorable Mention

Italian Tensions: Interpretation, Conflict, and the Introduction of Phenomenology in the context of Italian Thought

K. Darius Branche | Rhetoric and Philosophy Communication | McNulty College and Graduate School of Liberal Arts

Faculty Advisor(s): Janie Marie Fritz, Ph.D.

Office of the Provost

Provost's Award for Outstanding Scholarship (3)

Oligodendrocyte Maturation Arrest during Viral Infection

Melanie Salinas | Pharmacology | School of Pharmacy

Faculty Advisor(s): Lauren O'Donnell, Ph.D.

Enhancing Forensic Toxicology Through Post-Mortem Applications: Evaluating the Viability of Skin Swabbing as a Drug Testing Matrix

Hannah Schaeffer | Forensic Science and Law | School of Science and Engineering

Faculty Advisor(s): Stephanie Wetzel, Ph.D.

A machine learning approach for engineer-to-order firms to predict supplier performance in critical supply chains

Maximilian Hradecny | Analytics & Information Management | A.J. Palumbo School of Business Administration

Faculty Advisor(s): Michael Sherwin, Ph. D.

Rangos School of Health Sciences

Rangos School of Health Sciences Award for Graduate Research

Lower Limb Muscle Morphology in Individuals with Coronary Artery Disease: A Cadaveric Pilot Study

Jenna Relkin | Physical Therapy | Rangos School of Health Sciences

Faculty Advisor(s): Dominic Violi, DPT, CSCS