



AT THE CORE

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 22, 2026



UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE FOR FIRST AND SECOND YEAR STUDENTS



UNIVERSITY COLLEGE



AT THE CORE

At the Core highlights the value of liberal arts core courses and our high value on mentoring and undergraduate research. They are at the core of the work we do in University College. At the Core is proudly sponsored by the Department of General Education, University College, and Academic Transition Programs and funded by the generosity of the Dr. Martha Ann Saunders and University College.

AT THE CORE COMMITTEE

Amy Ellison, Lecturer of English, Committee Chair

Tijan Drammeh, Lecturer of Political Science

Jenna Harte, Assistant Professor of General Education

Bonnie Jett, Senior Lecturer of English

Ricky Johnson, Lecturer of Mathematics

Kain Kibodeaux, Lecturer of English

Jade Loicano, Senior Lecturer of English

Sal Peralta, Professor of Political Science

Andy Walter, Associate Dean of University College & Professor of Geography

SCHEDULE AT A GLANCE

9:00-9:30 am: Welcome Address, Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

9:30-10:45 am: Concurrent Panel Session 1, Campus Center

11:00 am-12:15 pm: Concurrent Panel Session 2, Campus Center

12:15-1:30 pm: Lunch & Learn, Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

1:30-2:45 pm: Concurrent Panel Session 3 & Poster Presentations, Campus Center

3:00-3:30 pm: Awards Ceremony, Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

LET US KNOW!

University College wants your first and second-year experience to be amazing!

Scan this QR Code to complete a brief survey about At the Core:



UWG At the Core UNDERGRADUATE CONFERENCE

Wednesday, April 22, 2026

MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

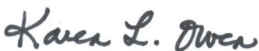
Welcome to the Fifth Annual At the Core Conference!

University College and the Department of General Education are pleased to host At the Core which highlights the value of the liberal arts—our core courses—and to share the transformational influence of faculty-student mentorship and undergraduate research. This work is the core of University College. We focus on empowering every student to become academically and professionally who they dream of being.

Today's conference highlights a nine-month journey of firsts and new academic endeavors for many of our students. Students entered college with high expectations, met new people, adapted to face-to-face and online classes, learned to transition into challenging academic and social environments, and found their place at UWG. University College is fully invested in ensuring that these students appreciate their accomplishments and are prepared to achieve even greater successes at UWG and beyond in their professions.

We are excited to witness how much each At the Core scholar has achieved academically, creatively, and professionally in 2026!

Congratulations on excellence!



Karen L. Owen, Ph.D.
Dean, University College and Honors College

WELCOME ADDRESS

9:00 AM | Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

Welcome: Dr. Karen Owen, Dean of University College

Brief Instruction: Amy Ellison

PANEL PRESENTATIONS

Session I 9:30-10:45 AM

Panel 1: Exploring Viral Phenomena

Campus Center 108.3

Moderated by Dr. Jenna Harte

James Malizia, "The Ice Bucket Challenge"

Cassandra Najacque, "Pretend Play and the Formation of Friendships"

Jadyn Jordan, "Reusable Water Bottles"

Presleigh Moore, "Justin Bieber"

Irleth Hernandez-Perez, "Nostalgia for 2016"

Joseph Manuel Lajara, "100 Men vs. 1 Gorilla"

Panel 2: Intertextuality @ AtC

Campus Center 108.4

Moderated by Prof. Jade Loicano

Guybriel Hawk, "Plastic Empowerment in *Barbie*"

Lanka Charles-Mayes, "Intersectional Feminism in *Barbie*"

Akemi Kyles, "Corruption in Disguise: The FBI's Mission to Destroy the Black Freedom Movement"

Maya Lee, "Visual Culture: Art, Identity, and Mobilization in the Black Arts Movement"

Panel 3: Student Perspectives on American Systems

Campus Center 105

Moderated by Prof. Britney Harris

Amelia Candies, "A Universal Healthcare System for All Residents"

Bailee Smith, "Childhood Trauma and Its Impact on Adult and Criminal Behavior"

Jack Lawrence, "Inaccessibility in America"

Josie Thomas, "Mental Health, Homelessness, and the Path Forward"

Panel 4: Corporeal Labeling and Gendered Deviance: Re-Reading Criminalization in *The Three Musketeers*

Campus Center 104

Moderated by Prof. Mitzi McFarland

Cale Wade, "The Dramatization of Evil: Rethinking Milady as a Product of Institutional Labeling"

Matthew Tassin, "Branded, Broken, and Betrayed: A Character Analysis of Milady in *The Three Musketeers*"

Gregory Anderson, "Milady's Master Status Trifecta: Scorn, Manipulation, and Seduction"

Joel Phelan, "What Drives D'Artagnan? Deconstructing Pride, Deceit, and Honor in *The Three Musketeers*"

Jason Berry, "Capitalism's Latent Affects on the Bodies of Black Women: Analyzing the Disparity of Incarceration of the Black Female Demographic in Relation to Gender, Race, and Class"

Panel 5: We Contain Multitudes: Cultural Shifts and Shared Experiences

Campus Center 302

Moderated by Prof. Amy Ellison

Victoria Obatola, "Ube Fanatics: From Tradition to a Purple Craze"

Gabriella Hall, "The Rise of Secularism"

Sarah Castille, "Superheroes Shaped by Society"

Emma Walden, "You Already Left Kudos Here 😊: How Fandom Interactions Have Changed Over Time"

Panel 6: Health Realities: From Treatment to Practice

Campus Center 303

Moderated by Prof. Stacey Morin

Jordan Collymore, "It's Not in the Kool-Aid: Examining Medical Racism"

Chas Walker, "Polycystic Ovary Syndrome (PCOS), Early Diagnosis, and Improving Women's Reproductive Health Outcomes"

Addyson Schlais, "Mental Health in Animal Care Professions"

Session II 11:00 AM-12:15 PM

Panel 7: Revolution Was in the Air: Literary and Historical Themes of the 1960s

Campus Center 108.3

Moderated by Prof. Griffin Limerick

Dee Hindsman

Kai Jones

Grant Daniels

Jayden Somers

Nicholas Lane

Akemi Kyles

Molly Barnes

Panel 8: "The Part With the Human Beings": Epiphany, Evolution, and Redemption in Margaret Edson's *W;t*

Campus Center 108.4

Moderated by Prof. Bonnie Jett

Kennedy Powers

Tory Johnson

Alicia Kendrick

Breanna Busby

Panel 9: Health and Technology: Issues of Our Time

Campus Center Ballroom 105

Moderated by Prof. Stacey Morin

Imani Bundick, "The Effects of UX Design on Users' Moods and Behavior"

Matt Powell, "Innovation War"

Ge'Bria Mason, "From Orders to Oversight: Are Service Members Truly Valued?"

Tristan Wheeler & Jacob Marsh: "Sharing Texts in Virtual Spaces"

Brionna Warren: "AI and Hiring Biases"

Panel 10: Situational Identities and Mask-ularity: Dumas's Characters Through Criminological and Sociocultural Lenses

Campus Center Ballroom 104

Moderated by Prof. Mitzi McFarland

Jerry Phelan, "Why We Wear the Masks We Wear"

Patrick Sperber, "The Architecture of Rebellion: A Criminological Analysis of Abbé Faria"

Jason Rusch, "A Critical, Intersectional Character Analysis of M. Gerard de Villefort in the Classic Work of *The Count of Monte Cristo*"

Patrick McAlloon, "Hope, Despair, and Triumph in *The Count of Monte Cristo*"

Panel 11: Love, Trust, and a Duel: The Orbit of Influence in Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*

Campus Center Ballroom 302

Moderated by Dr. Katie Chaple

Matteo Azille: "Always Waiting: An Exploration of Aaron Burr's Character in *Miranda's Hamilton*"

Zoe'e Pippin: "Gendered Mirroring in Lin Manuel Miranda's *Hamilton*"

Tomi Oladokun: "The Right Hand of the Father: The Washington-Hamilton Dynamic in *Hamilton*"

Panel 12: Animal, Vegetable, Maltreatment: Social Malady and its Next Generation of Critics

Campus Center Ballroom 303

Moderated by Prof. Pam Murphy

David Jackson III, "Is the Game of Life Really Just about Food?"

Aisley White, "The Raven King and the Pauper"

Melanie Griffie, "Perspectives on Blue"

Jordan Claiborne, "Please Stop Shooting the Elephant"

Madison Vance, "The Problem with Ethical Shopping"

LUNCH & LEARN

12:25-1:00 PM | Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

Featured Speaker: Dr. Jenna Harte

A.I and Y.O.U: Welcoming Our Robot Overlords?

Session III 1:30-2:45 PM

Panel 13: Exploring Viral Phenomena

Campus Center 108.3

Moderated by Dr. Jenna Harte

Chelsea Mitchell, "Love Island"

Caleb Hobbs, "Minecraft"

Zariah Broadnax, "Chick-fil-A Classic Cups"

Bruce Missell, "Internet Personalities"

Paisley Won, "Online Streams"

Paisley Corry, "Get Ready With Me"

Caragan Kidd, "Charli D'Amelio"

Panel 14: Literary Approaches to Popular Culture

Campus Center Ballroom 108.4

Moderated by Prof. Kain Kibodeaux

Chris Shirley, "Climate Monsters: Understanding Climate Change in Guillermo Del Toro's *Pacific Rim*"

Stephen Loftin, "Horror at the Gas Station: Examining Trauma and Narrative Unreliability in Jack Townsend's *Tales from a Gas Station*"

Henk Bishop-Bloom, "Oh, You Graduated?: Questioning the American Dream in Kanye West's *Graduation*"

Catherine Sharpe, "Exploring Mental Health Using Phoebe Bridgers' 'Funeral'"

Panel 15: NIL, Social Media, and College Athletes

Campus Center 105

Moderated by Prof. Stacey Morin

Ta'Lia Simpson, "Social Media's Impact on College Athletes"

Serenity Morris, "NIL and Player Stratification"

Ta'Niya Simpson, "Who Really Benefits? NIL Deals and Inequity in College Football"

Ilyana Spencer, "Fueling Performance: Comparing Red vs. White Meat in Athletic Diets"

Panel 15: "The Part With the Human Beings": Epiphany, Evolution, and Redemption in Margaret Edson's *W;t*

Campus Center 104

Moderated by Prof. Bonnie Jett

Onzika Kone

Aria Thomas

Faith Marchbanks

POSTER PRESENTATIONS

1:30-2:45 | Campus Center Ballroom 108.2

Yareth Arreola-Perez

Isabella Guest

Janet Ramirez Perez

Brooklyn Avalos

Jocelynn Harrison

Coral Rawlins

Kadyn Balson

Kimberly Ortega Hernandez

Sheyla Rodriguez

Joseline Becerra

Natalie Hicks

Gernyvia Scott

Quinton Bethel

Amber Horton

Aaliyah Smith

TJ Bishop

Aiden Hunt

McKenzie Smith

Stephen Bossie

Katelynn Jantz

Rhianna Smith

Imani Bundick

Tori Ledbetter

Chloe Trottier

Kevin Burton

Ruby Lara Mata

Aliyah Tucker

Emma Corso

Kevin Miller

Hannah Veal

Anna Clare Dagenhart

Ke'Asia Milliam

Gavin Vick

Courtney Danforth

Maddi Milligan

Riley Waldrop

Maxson Dean

Camille A Moses

Jada Wilcox

Amara Eke

Abdulsalam Muhammet

Addison Williams

Caden Entrekin

Kiera Nanulaitta

Kaialani Wise

Hannah Fandrich

Ashley Ortiz-Torres

Emalee Yeoman

Ryan Garrison

Sydney Phillips

Jesse Gould

Layla Preston

**MARK YOUR SYLLABUS FOR
AT THE CORE 2027**

April 2027



UNIVERSITY OF WEST GEORGIA