



SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

FRIDAY MAY 2, 2025

8:15am to 9:00am | Welcome Reception

Please join us for international coffee provided by Brooke Novkovic, Director of Global Engagement, Alice Jones Director of Career Development, Andrea Grant, Coordinator of Student Professional Development, Bethany Smeeton, Director of Civic Engagement and Service Learning, and John Rudel, Director of Undergraduate Research and Creativity.

Location: Henry Watts Grand Lobby of the Susan S. Goode Center for Fine and Performing Arts

9:00am – 10:15am | Kick Off Event

Premier Speakers

Location: Joan and Macon Brock Theatre in the Susan S. Goode Center for Fine and Performing Arts
Session Leader: John Rudel

Students may be designated as premier speakers only upon the endorsement of their faculty mentor, recognizing their exemplary contributions to academic excellence. These individuals represent the pinnacle of high-impact learning experiences at Virginia Wesleyan University.

Norah Ciano – Psychology

Topic: The Effect of Anxiety and Mind Wandering on Student Learning

Mentor: Dr. Robert Ariel

Regis Collins – Classics

Topic: The Character of Achilles and the Simile of Iliad 16.7–11

Mentor: Dr. Benjamin Haller

Harry Smith – Biology

Topic: The Effects of Overhead Shades on Coral Bleaching of *Agaricia tenuifolia*, *Porites astreoides*, and *Porites divaricata*

Mentor: Dr. Soraya Bartol

Alexander Smoot – Management, Business and Economics

Topic: Revolutionizing Supply Chain Management: The Role of Artificial Intelligence in Shaping the Future

Mentor: Dr. Michelle Vachris

10:30am – 11:45am | 5 Simultaneous Concurrent Sessions

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Sarah Richards – Art

Topic: The Mad-Genius Paradox and the Tormented Artist: The Correlation Between Mental Health, Creativity, and Its Effects on Artist Identity

Mentor: Dr. Nancy Pettigrew

Samantha Silvia – Social Work

Topic: Social Work in a Free Clinic: Observations of Human Resilience
Mentor: Prof. April Christman

Nathan Prince, Kadie Kennedy – Psychology

Topic: AloeVR: A Mindfulness-Based VR Technology for Students with Learning Differences
Mentor: Dr. Shantanu Tilak

Jocelyn Kaelin – Spanish

Inca Agricultural Practices: The Blueprint for Modern Farming

Mentor: Dr. Diana Risk

Media and Communications Internships

Location: Birdsong Hall, Room 201

Session Leader: Dr. Kathy Merlock Jackson

Student Presenters:

Maria Eduarda de Freitas Bernardo – Internship at City of Chesapeake

Kirkland Butler – Internship at Virginia Wesleyan University Career Development

Corinne DeLawrence – Internship at Studio Center

Cameron Khorassani – Internship at More Laughing Enterprises

Crosson Miller – Internship at Virginia Wesleyan University Athletic Communications

Austin Smith – Internship at More Laughing Enterprises

Billye Youmans' Vocal Studio Disney Song Recital

Location: Beazley Recital Hall/Chapel

Session Leader: Dr. Billye Youmans'

*Session Starts at 11:00am

Student Presenters:

Aviana Medina

Isabella Martinez

Brianna Massenburg

Eleanor Birmingham

Amiya Polansky

Emily Pritchard

Elizabeth O'Shea

Judah King

John Post

Global Religions and Social Justice: Student Research Presentations

Location: Brock Commons

Session Leader: Dr. Tyler Lehrer and The Nusbaum Center

*Session Starts at 11:00am and Ends at 12:00pm

Student Presenters:

Lucas Gordon

Judah King

Harrison Merrill

Andrew Steiner

This panel highlights the dynamic interplay between faith and activism around the globe. As part of an academic competition sponsored by the Robert Nusbaum Center, case studies will be presented by four students in WES 300/HIST 351: Religion and Social Justice.

Joan P. Brock School of Math and Natural Sciences Research Presentations

Location: Blocker Auditorium

Session Leader: Dr. Caitlin Williams

Student Presenters:

Madison Mellon

"Digging Deeper: A Visual Guide to Earth's Soil Taxonomy"

Mentor: *Allison Hammer, Adjunct Faculty*

Landon Rockwell

"Chained Together: Homodimerization of a Signaling Protein in *C. difficile*"

Mentor: *Dr. Caitlin Williams*

Juwon Seaborne

"Investigating the Prevalence, Host Specificity, and Genetic Variation of Rose Rosette Virus in Rosa multiflora Across Hampton Roads"

VWU Masters of Environmental Studies Student

Casey Bennett

"MicroPADs as an Emerging Bacterial Diagnostic Device"

Mentor: *Dr. Maury Howard and Dr. Caitlin Williams*

Miguel Hernandez

"Can Corvids Adapt? The Effects of Anthropogenic Noise Pollution on Referential Calls"

Mentor: *Dr. Soraya Bartol*

Emma Wehr

"Localizing Arabinogalactan Proteins to Sperm of an Ancient Fern"

Mentor: *Dr. Eric Johnson*

12:00pm – 1:15pm | 5 Simultaneous Concurrent Sessions

Art Majors' Thesis Exhibition:

Beyond the Frame

Location: Neil Britton Art Gallery
Session Leader: John Rudel

This is an informal drop-in reception where student artists host gallery visitors and answer questions regarding their artwork.

Student Presenters:

Whitney Leao
Daemon Fields
Yuna Matsuura
India Johnson
Iyonna Valentine

Documentary Film Screening

Location: Barclay Sheaks Gallery
Session Leader: Dr. Stu Minnis

Student Presenter:

Liam Castellano will speak then and host a screening of his film about the VWU student newspaper titled "Eyes & Ears: The Marlin Chronicle"

Recreational Therapy in Action: Integrating Clinical Practice and Research for Community Impact

Location: Greer 255
Session Leader: Dr. Kristen Fedesco

Student Presenters:

Savannah Combs
Lana Sloan
Kayleigh Turner
Ashley Glodek
Stephen Schneider
Destiny Furlong
Lauren Hendricks
Keith Harris
Lauren Hedspeth

Senior Music Major Research Presentations

Location: Beasley Recital Hall/Chapel

Session Leader: Dr. Jason Squinobal

Student Presenters:

Vivianna Ossi
Elizabeth O'Shea
Caroline Tovar
Erin Andrews

Visibility and Survival in Queer Literature

Location: Greer 155
Session Leader: Dr. Kellie Holzer

Student Presenters:

Madx Balint, "*Queer Declassified Life Survival Guide*"
Aiyanna Jones, "*The Fear of Visibility: Deeper Than What the Eyes Can See*"

1:30pm – 2:45pm | Signature Event

Honor Convocation

Location: Joan and Macon Brock Theatre in the Susan S. Goode Center for Fine and Performing Arts

* This event Starts at 2:00pm and ends at 2:45pm

The Honor Convocation at Virginia Wesleyan University is a prestigious annual tradition dedicated to the formal recognition of exceptional student achievement. During this esteemed event, academic departments have the opportunity to acknowledge and award outstanding students for their exemplary performance and contributions to their respective disciplines.

3:00pm – 4:15pm | Signature Event

Academic Fair Poster Session

Location: CMAC in the Jane Batten Student Center

Virginia Wesleyan University students present 140+ posters on research, scholarly, creative, internship, career development, and global engagement experiences. Refreshments will be provided..

4:30pm – 5:45pm | 5 Simultaneous Concurrent Sessions

Crude Realities: The Economic Impact of Global Oil Dependency

Location: Greer 255

Session Leader: Dr. Modupe Oshikoya

Student Presenters:

Jaime Corley
Clarisse Gontier
Elijah Jenkins
Kaiya Jenkins
Carlos Jones
Ines Pouliquen

Education Department Session – Student Teacher Reflections

Location: Blocker Auditorium

Session Leader: Dr. Clair Berube

Student Presenters:

TBA

Africana Studies Research Presentations

Location: Greer 155

Session Leader: Dr. Ophera Davis

Student Presenters:

Ja'niya King
Brianna Massenburg
Rhavyn Bradshaw
LaRue McCloud
Khai Seargeant
Paul Lewis

Theatre Majors Capstone Presentations: Staging Research and other Creative Quandries

Location: Parsons Ensemble Room, Beverly Hall

Session Leader: Dr. Sally Shedd

Student Presenters:

Erin Andrews
Quinton Coleman
Emily Lutz
Dominique Tatum

Art Majors' Thesis Exhibition: Beyond the Frame

Location: Neil Britton Art Gallery

Session Leader: John Rudel

Student artists host this drop-in reception and are available to answer questions regarding their artwork. Gallery visitors are treated to refreshments and this event is free and open to the public

Student Presenters:

Whitney Leao
Daemon Fields
Yuna Matsuura
India Johnson
lyonna Valentine

7:30pm

Orchestra & Jazz Ensemble Concert

Location: Joan and Macon Brock Theatre in the Susan S. Goode Center for Fine and Performing Arts

Session Leader: Dr. Jason Squinobal

Student Musicians:

Luke Arters	Bailey Gray	Zachary Chapman
Jay Boomer	Joaquin Garza	Catherine Ing
Claudia Caruthers	Jocelyn Kaelin	Jalen Major
Ben Daugherty	Steven Medinets	Mason Pifer
Madaline Diaz	Dominique Alexander	

Additional SURF Events Happening on Thursday, May 1st

Music Major Recitals – Thursday, May 1st, 12:00 to 1:00pm

Location: Beazley Recital Hall/Chapel

Session Leader: Dr. Jason Squinobal

Student Musicians:

Jacob Underwood	Tyler Barnett	Joaquin Garza
Issaac Awogboro	Miles Pifer	Zachary Chapman
Aviana Medina	Emily Pritchard	Dominique Alexander
Isabella Martinez	Judah King	
Amiya Polansky	Catherine Ing	