

For Immediate Release: UA Undergrads Showcase Original Research at 2025 History Symposium

Tucson, AZ – April 26, 2025 – Fifty Undergraduate students from across the University of Arizona gathered on Saturday at the main library to present their original historical research to an audience of their peers, university faculty, and friends and families at the second annual “Prospecting the Past: The Arizona Undergraduate History Research Symposium.”

Conference panels were grouped by shared themes, such as “All History is Local: Community Organizing, Corporate Interests, and Campus Culture in Arizona;” “Democracy vs. Authoritarianism on the World Stage: From Individual Resistance to Institutional Complacency”; “Imperial Symbols, Cultural Memory, and Gendered Narratives in East Asian History;” and “Canvas, Carvings, Quills, and Queens: History Through European Art and Literature.” Panel chairs, such as Drs. John Bauschatz, Erika Perez, and Katie Hemphill from the Department of History, asked questions of presenters and guided audience discussions to facilitate a deeper exploration of student projects.

Dr. David Pietz, speaking on behalf of the Symposium Steering Committee, reflected on the second year of the event, saying, “This year we had fifty presentations - ten more than last year. ...[T]his affirms that our students respond enthusiastically to high-impact practices like undergraduate research if presented with these opportunities. We also found that faculty played an instrumental role in recruiting students... Over half of our symposium presenters were nominated by faculty members who responded to our outreach efforts to identify promising students and their projects.”

During the keynote dinner the previous night, guest scholar Dr. Megan Kate Nelson, the 2024–2025 Rogers Distinguished Fellow in 19th-Century American History at the Huntington Library, shared her work exploring the lives of people in the Western US and the places where she found inspiration. Referencing her 2020 book, *The Three-Cornered War: The Union, the Confederacy, and Native Peoples in the Fight for the West*, Nelson recounted her research adventures, using photos, maps, textiles, letters, and her own journeys crossing different landscapes to tell the stories of people whose lives help deepen our understanding of histories that seem otherwise familiar to us. In her closing remarks, she inspired students to reflect on where they also might go to tell stories of the past.

The AZ Undergrad History Research Symposium is a professionally organized conference that offers undergraduate students an opportunity to present original research that explores the historical dimensions of virtually every topic – science and technology, food, migrations, environmental change, racial/gender/sexual identities, politics, animal, economics, and more. This event has been made possible by a grant from the UA Provost's Investment Fund.

The next symposium is planned for the 2026 Spring semester. Undergraduate students from any department who are engaged in historical research are encouraged to follow the UA History Department on social media for future information on how to apply.

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