Recap: Visionary Student Panel
The third annual Visionary Student Panel featured 19 student projects presented by 29 undergraduate students from all six undergraduate colleges and schools. We were thrilled to have over 90 attendees across both nights of the event, and by all accounts it was an evening well spent. One student, who was required to attend for a course, wrote,

“I’m not sure I would have gone on my own, but I am really glad I went. Not only was it quite informative, but it made me incredibly proud to be a Mercer bear knowing that people really are trying to change the world.”

- 2017 VSP student attendee

Students met individually with Hannah Vann to plan their pitches, then gave five-minute presentations at the event that highlighted a problem they care about and their plan to address that issue. Each of the presentations was well-researched, thoughtful, and enthusiastically received by the panel of faculty and staff and the audience. We are proud of each of the students for exhibiting such courage in sharing their passions and ideas with a room full of (mostly) strangers.

The next step for our student presenters is a funding application process. After participation in a grant-writing workshop on October 20, students will submit a written proposal and be notified of the funding decision on November 1. Even those who do not receive funding will still receive other support from Research that Reaches Out. We believe it is important to help our students recognize that creating lasting change is a process, and we are excited to be able to help them for as long as they will allow us.

Thank you to the following faculty and staff for serving on the panel.

Tuesday
• Kristen Bailey
• Stephanie Miranda
• Dr. Samantha Murfree
• Dr. David Nelson

Wednesday
• Brad Belo
• Dr. David Davis
• Chelsea Flieger
• Lauren Shinholster

If you are willing to serve on the committee that evaluates student funding applications, please contact Hannah Vann by October 23.

The SOUL Project Launches Nov. 10-11
Hannah Vann and Dr. Eimad Houry are launching a deliberative dialogue initiative with the support of a grant from Campus Compact’s Fund for Positive Engagement. The initiative, entitled The SOUL Project (Seeking Openness, Understanding, and Learning), will train Mercer students in how to facilitate discussions on difficult topics so that they can lead discussions for their peers and also train Macon high schoolers at Mount De Sales to do the same. Teri McMurry-Chubb, a professor at Mercer Law, will be leading the training on Nov. 10-11. Students can apply to participate at QEP.mercer.edu.

Summer Student Research Program
Application Due Nov. 1
The deadline for faculty to apply to the Summer Student Research program is fast approaching. Applications, due November 1, are available here.

The Summer Student Research Program supports faculty working closely with Macon traditional undergraduates on the Macon campus on projects that align with Explore and Express student learning outcomes. Summer fellows and their faculty mentors will be part of a cohort that receives additional soft skill development including presentation skills and how to use their service-research experience to succeed in meeting their career goals and/or advanced academic study.

If you would like to discuss project ideas and/or applications before you submit, please contact Dr. Kathy Kloepper.

Development Summit Oct. 26
Mark your calendars for the upcoming Development Summit on Thursday, October 26 from 4-8 pm in Willingham. The summit, organized by Dr. Lisa Vu, Assistant Professor of Global Development Studies, will feature Mercer faculty, students, and alumni as they share best practices in community development work at both the local and global levels. The schedule includes:

• Ted Talk-style plenary featuring Mercer alumni Trent White, Branden Ryan, and Sundra Woodford from 4-5 pm
• Breakout sessions featuring Mercer students and faculty from 5-7 pm
• Reception and poster session from 7-8 pm

Additional Funding
• Semester Project Support Round 2 (due December 1)
• Conference Funding (rolling application)

To discuss project ideas and/or applications, contact Dr. Kathy Kloepper.
Veronica Enchaugui and Mary Melissa Roland are implementing a Teen Maze simulation to help Macon-Bibb teens understand the consequences of engaging in risky behaviors.

Adam Landin is developing a hydroelectric generator that harnesses the power of rainwater to supplement coal-powered energy.

Parker Laue and Grant Shelton are developing a long-range drone for use in evaluating agriculture health and planning in rural farming communities.

Sophie Leveille is designing a music curriculum for use in afterschool programs that serve refugee populations.

Daniel Pham and Joseph Land are mapping recycling bins on campus and incorporating it into a “Bear Essentials” map that helps students find essential services on campus.

Samukai Sarnor, Stephanie Duffy, and Christopher Denman are forming a student organization, the Respected Opinions Center, where students can engage in respectful intellectual discussions.

Anna Stallings and Carson Outler are implementing an intergenerational housing model for Mercer students to add quality of life for a local senior housing facility.

James Stair is examining the viability of establishing gender-neutral housing on Mercer’s campus.

Alice Yoon is designing an educational campaign to help students learn how to self-assess their personal well-being.

Laura Ann Harrell, Mary Martinez, and Shruthi Vikraman are bringing the Campus Couches initiative to Mercer to create a space for students to engage with peers outside their social circles.

Juliana Hawkinson is supplying the local children’s hospital with entertaining and engaging games to help families pass time during hospital stays.

Ashila Jiwani and Anna Womick are developing online training modules on ethical medical volunteerism for international service experiences.

Caleb Phillips is evaluating the effects of using warning labels in vaping marketing on the incidence of vaping.

Cole Porter is creating a handbook customized for Georgia towns that are looking to implement best practices in community development and urban planning.

Johna Wright is establishing a program to help high school students with disabilities develop the skills necessary for living on a residential college campus.

Alfred Troy is growing awareness and decreasing the stigma of depression and anxiety with a skateboard/run/walk/dance/bike-a-thon.

John Williams and Catherine Crowe are hosting a series of facilitated dialogues called Daring Discussions where students can talk about social issues.

Maddie Zgonc is creating a curriculum for Macon-Bibb public school students to introduce them to current events and popular culture in the Middle East.

Zac Rice is researching the role of microgrids to reduce reliance on solid fuels in rural areas and resulting health problems from indoor air pollution.