

WEST CHESTER UNIVERSITY



Conference Program

*LEADERSHIP AND THE
GOOD LIFE CONFERENCE*
2025

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Welcome Letter

Dear Friends, Colleagues, and Honored Guests,

Welcome to West Chester University's Leadership and the Good Life Conference! We are thrilled to have you with us.

What started as a pilot Honors College Seminar course at WCU has blossomed into a celebrated and enduring "Life Worth Living" Leadership Hub where we seek to equip others to engage questions worthy of our humanity! Rooted in curiosity, community, and a deep desire to engage life's most important questions, this gathering builds on years of student exploration into what makes a life truly worth living.

With great gratitude to Yale Center for Faith and Culture's Life Worth Living initiative, this conference invites you to do more than attend! It invites you to reflect. What do you believe makes a life good? How do we lead in ways that promote flourishing, not just for ourselves, but for our communities and the world? We hope today is a chance to stretch your thinking, share your wisdom, and spark new collaborations. Your presence affirms a shared commitment to thoughtful leadership, human dignity, and the intentional pursuit of meaning.

We are deeply grateful to the university administrators and generous partners who made today possible. A heartfelt thank you to our keynote speaker, Dr. Angela Gorrell, for the passion and insight you bring to this work. And to all of our presenters: thank you for your research, your stories, and your willingness to engage with this year's theme so generously.

We look forward to learning and growing together.

Welcome to a day that we hope finds you engaging in the life-long process of asking, "What makes life truly worth living?"

Warmly,

Dr. Zachary Wooten, Dr. Matthew Pierlott, Victoria Rodway, MSW
The Leadership Hub Team

Conference Team



Dr. Matthew Pierlott

I came to West Chester University in 2005. In 2010 I was invited to teach a course in the HON Seminar Program, "Ideas of Freedom," and later another course on "The Concept of God." I had already become familiar with the vibrant community of students through colleagues, like Dr. Ruth Porritt, but this was my first experience in the classroom with some of them. I truly enjoyed the engaging discussions from thoughtful individuals across varied majors. Even more, I was impressed with the positive, supportive and constructive interactions among the students.

Dr. Zachary Wooten

Teaching in the Honors College at WCU is one of the greatest joys of my life. I am thankful to learn from both my colleagues and students, and I am glad to belong to a community committed to leadership, service, scholarship, and civic engagement. My teaching, research, and other scholarly inquiry focuses on interfaith leadership, ethics and moral decision-making, grief and crisis leadership, self-awareness and development, visions of human flourishing, and leadership theory. I love helping students develop confidence and cheering them on as they work to strengthen their communities.



Victoria Rodway, MSW

I graduated from West Chester University in 2023 with a bachelor's in social work and Minors in Spanish, Ethnic Studies, and Civic and Professional Leadership. I spent a year post-graduation working in the field of child welfare. I returned to West Chester University in 2024 to pursue my Master of Social Work degree.

During my undergraduate career, I took the Leadership and the Good Life course in the spring of 2020. I then had the opportunity to be a Leadership Studies Fellow for the same course in the fall of 2020, and I continued my passion for talking about what makes life worth living across all walks of life.

Today more than ever, I am honored to be a part of a community that embraces diverse ways of living and thinking.



Conference Schedule

REGISTRATION AND BREAKFAST

8:00am - 8:45am

BPMC 102

OPENING REMARKS

8:45am – 9:00am

Location

KEYNOTE SPEAKER

9:00am - 10:00am

- Dr. Angela Gorrell - Leadership and the Good Life: Why What You Do Matters Now More than Ever

COFFEE BREAK

10:00am - 10:10am

BPMC 102

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

10:10am - 11:40am

ROOM 1 - BPMC 204

- Panel Discussion: Leadership and the Good Life: Ethics, Well-Being, and the Evolving Role of DEI, Beverly Magda, Julia Dunst, Elena Lawrick, Wanda Copeland

ROOM 2 - BPMC 208

- "FREGH Leadership and the Good Life: Exploring the Intersections of Spiritual, Servant, Social," Dr. Adeyinka Oduwole (Yinka)
- "Ambition in Business for a Life Worth Living," John A. Pearce II, PhD
- "Personal Leadership: an ARC Perspective," Mike McGough

ROOM 3 - BPMC 210

- "The Global Flourishing Project: A Guide for Christian Relief, Development, and Advocacy Organizations?," David Bronkema
- "Educational Leadership: Integration of Values and Transformational Leadership Practices in a Diverse and Changing World," Hyacinth Anuncha
- "Empowering the Future: A Leadership Development Model for Graduate International Students at HBCU's and its Role in Well-being," Ozioma Okehielem & Julius Oku

LUNCH BREAK

11:40am - 1:00pm

Philips Autograph Library

Conference Schedule Cont'd

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

1:00pm - 2:00pm

ROOM 1 - BPMC 204

- Interactive workshop: Start Where You Are: Faris Alami's Story of Resilient Leadership, Faris Alami and Kayla Schwartz.

ROOM 2 - BPMC 208

- Living the Questions: Teaching the Skills for a Life of Meaning and Purpose in Secondary Schools, Michael LoStracco
- The Good Life and Reading Well: Equipping Students to Reflect on a Life Well-Lived Beyond the Classroom, James W. Waters, Ph.D.

ROOM 3 - BPMC 210

- Utopia, Ideology, and the Good life, in Paul Ricoeur's Philosophy- Paul Harris
- "The Golem - from Anti-Semitic projections of diff...", Jason Ager

ROOM 4 - BPMC 211

- "Have I Sold Out? Lessons Learned for an Anti-Hierarchical Department Head," Andrew Smith
- "From Global to Transnational Citizenship: Challenging 21st Century Hyper-Authoritarianism", Marcia Morgan

COFFEE BREAK

2:00pm - 2:10pm

BREAKOUT SESSION 3

2:10pm - 3:10pm

ROOM 1 - BPMC 204

- "Leadership and the Good Life, Part 2: Guiding Others to Realign Life & Leadership Around What Truly Matters" Dr. Angela Gorrell

ROOM 2 - BPMC 208

- "Grades and Teaching Ethics: The Obstacle to Humanities Education," Matt Rupert
- "Making Ethical Theory Relevant: Framing Action-Centered Ethical Theories in Terms of Character" Dan Forbes

ROOM 3 - BPMC 210

- "Values, AI, and the Good Life," Steven Scalet
- "Owning the Questions," Lisa Schoenberg

Conference Schedule Cont'd

COFFEE BREAK

BPMC 102

3:10pm - 3:20pm

BREAKOUT SESSION 4

3:20pm - 4:20pm

ROOM 1 - BPMC 204

- Humility East and West: Religious Perspectives on Virtue and Leadership, Justin Henry and Josh Fenska

ROOM 2 - BPMC 208

- "This is Not How We Live: Olypiodorus' Gorgias Commentary on the Pedagogical Primacy of Character in the Flourishing Life," James Ambury
- "Teaching for Virtue," Denise Vigani

ROOM 3 - BPMC 210

- "Reimagining Leadership Assessment Tools for Evolving Workforce Expectations," Caitlin Long, Nicholas P. Nicoletti, Jay Leamy, and Malgorzata "Meg" J. Zuber
- Cultivating Civility & Intellectual Humility: Essential Leadership in Higher Education", Johann Ducharme Timothy Shaffer, and Kristin Duncan

ROOM 4 - BPMC 211

- "Gratitude As An Equalizer of Value," Felix Rowland
- "Unaccompanied, but Not Alone: A Capella as a Good Life Model of Leadership", Spencer Camacho

CLOSING REMARKS

BPMC 102

4:30pm - 5:00pm

NETWORKING AND FAREWELL

5:00pm - 5:30pm

Keynote Speaker



BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Angela Williams Gorrell speaks about finding the life worth living, living open to joy, and courageously navigating complex choices. She has taught at several schools including Yale and Baylor University. She is the author of three books, including a brand new book, *Braving Difficult Decisions: What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do*. You can use the code Gorrell40 to get 40% off of her books at Eerdmans Publishing website. She would love for you to connect with her through her website or Instagram. She facilitates Life Worth Living retreats so if you enjoy what you hear today and want to experience one, please reach out to her.

For more information about Rev. Dr. Angela Gorrell check out her instagram @angelagorrell or her website linked here:

<https://www.angelagorrell.com/about-angela>

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1 BPMC 204

LEADERSHIP AND THE GOOD LIFE: ETHICS, WELL-BEING, AND THE EVOLVING ROLE OF DEI,

ABSTRACT

In an era of shifting social landscapes and evolving Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives, leadership plays a critical role in shaping personal and community well-being, ethical decision-making, and the integration of diverse values. As higher education institutions face increasing uncertainty, leaders must adapt—fostering inclusive environments, promoting ethical engagement, and ensuring institutions not only survive but thrive.

Through guided discussion, panelists will explore key leadership themes, including mentorship and advocacy in small private institutions, the role of directors as stabilizers, and the ethical consequences of diminishing DEI efforts—particularly in STEM and leadership programs. Additionally, they will examine how purpose and values inform leadership decision-making amid political and cultural shifts. As institutional stewards, these women balance advocacy with ethical responsibility, ensuring leadership education remains inclusive, values-driven, and future-focused.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Beverly Magda is the Founding Director of the Harmon Center for Leadership in Technology and an Associate Professor at Cedar Crest College. She specializes in change management, systems integration, and DEIB (Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging). Her leadership advances technology-driven education and organizational transformation, ensuring future-ready learning environments.

Dr. Julia K. Dunst is the Director of Research at Harrisburg University of Science and Technology, overseeing the Research Institute, Institutional Review Board (IRB), and compliance operations. With a background in education, healthcare, social justice, and ethics, she ensures the integrity and advancement of research initiatives while fostering ethical scholarship.

Dr. Elena Lawrick is an Associate Professor of Education and Leadership at Alvernia University. She advocates for equity and female leadership in higher education, focusing on positive transformation and excellence in leadership, teaching, and mentorship.

Wanda Copeland is the Dean of Students at Albright College, where she oversees Student Success Coaches, The Table, and Community Standards. With a background in student advocacy, development, and support services, she brings a holistic mindset to higher education leadership.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1 BPMC 208

FREGH LEADERSHIP AND THE GOOD LIFE: EXPLORING THE INTERSECTIONS OF SPIRITUAL, SERVANT, SOCIAL CHANGE, AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP THEORIES AND PRACTICE FOR A FLOURISHING SOCIETY

ABSTRACT

freg (meaning): fresh word which can mean 'to add a catalyst', 'to run forward and faster', or 'to help something or someone move forward and faster in society.'

Pronounced as "freg" to rhyme with 'leg' or 'peg', since the "h" is silent, FREGH Leadership is a novel model integrating spiritual, servant, social change, and transformational leadership. These approaches emphasize ethical and purpose-driven leadership, which are in alignment with Biblical principles, whilst also improving personal, community, and social transformation. Spiritual leadership prioritises positive values based on ethics and moral behaviour, thereby contributing to good personal and organisational outcomes. Servant leaders place the needs of others first, rather than showing primary concern for themselves. Social Change model of leadership emphasizes individual, group, community, and societal values as the basis for promoting positive social change. Transformational leadership inspires followers to look beyond self-interest and work together for a collective purpose. By bridging faith-based and secular principles, freg leadership provides a comprehensive framework applicable in diverse settings. This paper explores theoretical, theological, and evolutionary foundations of freg leadership, thus contributing to normative leadership theory and offering practical insights for contemporary leadership practices in spiritual and secular spaces.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Adeyinka Oduwole's present role is in strategic management at RCCG Central Office, where he supports the leadership with strategy formulation, implementation, evaluation and overseeing strategic initiatives, reporting to the Continental Overseer. RCCG Central Office is the Europe Headquarters of The Redeemed Christian Church of God (RCCG) With a background in the Social Sciences and Humanities, my PhD at Cardiff University, Wales examined public policy-making in the European Union (EU).

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1 BPMC 208

AMBITION IN BUSINESS FOR A LIFE WORTH LIVING

ABSTRACT

Employed adults spend one-third of their lives at work. It is important for their achievement of a life worth living to have employment that contributes to the satisfaction of their short-term needs and develops the capacity to achieve their long-term ambitions. This paper looks at lifetime priorities to recognize the limits of management thought for understanding employee needs satisfaction and ambitions. The priorities include: 1) self-focusing on goals such as personal growth, fulfillment, success, and independence, 2) building and maintaining deep personal connections with life partners, family members, and friends, 3) impacting a larger segment of society than a close circle of friends and acquaintances, and 4) dedicating oneself to religious or spiritual principles in the belief that behavior consistent with beliefs will be rewarded now and, in an afterlife.

The paper identifies major ambition themes and reports on some of the ways that employers currently facilitate the satisfaction of employees' lifetime goals and how they can be replicated by employers in other contexts. The themes include relationships, careers, creativity, community, happiness, and religion.

Christianity is discussed as an example of the religious theme, and the thesis is developed that commonalities among Christian denominations enable employers to contribute to the fulfillment of ambitions. Examples of corporations are provided that live the values of Christianity and by so doing advance the efforts of their employees to have lives worth living.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. John A. Pearce is the Distinguished Scholar in Residence at Eastern University, where he teaches and mentors doctoral students in the PhD Program in Organizational Leadership. His primary involvement is helping students pursue their research interests. In 2020, Stanford University ranked Dr. Pearce as a "Top 2% Scientist in the World" in an evaluation of the impact of researchers in all scientific fields globally.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1 BPMC 208

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP: AN ARC PERSPECTIVE

ABSTRACT

Personal Leadership: An ARC Perspective examines the essential strategic link between personal and organizational leadership. Sources of leadership power and potential are defined within the context of that relationship. The three critical attributes of ARC leaders, their Accessibility, Reliability, and Commitment, are the core theme and central focus of this seminar/session. Common characteristics of ARC leaders and central elements of their leadership model are offered to help define the ARC theme and refine the ARC focus.

Whether you are at a sun-rising or sun-setting phase in life, or living your way through one of the broad expanses in between, you can and should be a powerful force in your life. You can more thoughtfully lead, more genuinely inspire, more supportively motivate, and more empathetically care for yourself. When you do, your ability to help others thoughtfully lead, genuinely inspire, supportively motivate, and empathetically care for themselves is amped up significantly. Doing so is based on a series of conscious choices you can make each and every day that will directly enhance both your personal and organizational leadership potential.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Michael R. McGough was a teacher, coach, principal, and assistant superintendent in the public schools of Pennsylvania for more than 30 years. In addition to his years in public education, he was a professor of education at York College of Pennsylvania. During his fourteen years at York College, he served as an associate professor, division director, program coordinator, and the chair of the Education Department. He retired from the college in 2015 to continue his career as a leadership consultant.

McGough has served as a Licensed Guide with the National Park Service at Gettysburg National Military Park since 1976. He has earned the distinguished rank of Guide Emeritus. Dr. McGough is the author of several books, numerous articles, and a number of long-running newspaper columns. He has developed and currently presents a series of keynotes, seminars, conference sessions, and blog casts focused on organizational and personal leadership, team processes, and enhancing workplace environments.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1
BPMC 210

THE GLOBAL FLOURISHING PROJECT: A GUIDE FOR CHRISTIAN RELIEF, DEVELOPMENT, AND ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS?

ABSTRACT

The Global Flourishing Project, a four-year survey study involving some 200,000 participants across 22 countries geared towards analyzing the state and determinants of flourishing and well-being in and across these nations and cultures, is set to release its findings in April 2025. While this study has a robust set of questions on religion and spirituality, it begs the question about the extent to which they and the findings based on them will be useful for leaders of Christian relief, development, and advocacy organizations who see the spiritual impact of their programs as being a key marker of sustainable flourishing. This presentation will seek to answer that question by sharing the findings of a qualitative study that will draw on the author's academic research on spiritual metrics and practical work on this topic with a substantial number of these organizations affiliated with the Accord Network. This study will gather data from two main sources. First, it will conduct an analysis that assesses the potential contributions that the Global Flourishing Project's survey questions and methodology might make to the monitoring and evaluation efforts of these Christian relief, development, and advocacy organizations by comparing those survey questions with a sampling of those currently being used by those organizations. That comparison will be focused on the potential contributions and limitations that might be found in the former and the extent to which the work being carried out in the spiritual metrics arena might provide either supplemental and/or alternative ways of approaching and measuring the construct of flourishing. Second, a sampling of 10 monitoring and evaluation leaders in these organizations will be interviewed to discern the extent to which they agree with that analysis, and to gather additional insights from them on the potential usefulness and limitations of the Global Flourishing Project vis-à-vis their own understanding and measurement of flourishing in their relief, development, and advocacy projects.

BIOGRAPHY

David Bronkema is a professor at Eastern University in the PhD in Organizational Leadership program, and is the Templeton Chair of Christian Service through Entrepreneurship. He worked in the field of international development for thirteen years and is co-editor of the journal *Christian Relief, Development, and Advocacy: The Journal of the Accord Network*.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 1 BPMC 210

EDUCATIONAL LEADERSHIP: INTEGRATION OF VALUES AND TRANSFORMATIONAL LEADERSHIP PRACTICES IN A DIVERSE AND CHANGING WORLD

ABSTRACT

In a rapidly evolving global landscape, the integration of values and leadership practices within organizations is critical to navigating the complexities of diversity. Leaders today face the challenge of fostering inclusive environments that not only embrace varied cultural perspectives but also align with core organizational values. The meta-analysis study emphasized the crucial influence of ethically driven leadership and advocated for the integration of values-based approaches within transformational and critical leadership models. It highlighted the necessity of these strategies in a diverse and ever-changing world to effectively navigate the educational, economic, technological, and societal shifts of the 21st century. This research explored the importance of integrating values into leadership practices, emphasizing the role of ethical and authentic leadership in promoting equity and inclusion in diverse settings. Recent literature highlights that organizations with strong values-based leadership are better positioned to achieve enhanced employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention (Gleeson, 2021). Furthermore, values-driven leaders significantly impact their teams by fostering a culture of trust and collaborative decision-making (Cesarz & Venkatesh, 2020).

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Hyacinth Anucha is a Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership at Bowie State University.

Conference Presentations

**SESSION 1
BPMC 210**

EMPOWERING THE FUTURE: A LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MODEL FOR GRADUATE INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS AT HBCU'S AND ITS ROLE IN WELL-BEING

ABSTRACT

Leadership plays a transformative role in shaping individual lives and communities, especially within historically underrepresented educational spaces. This study explores a Leadership Development Program (LDP) designed for graduate international students at Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and its impact on personal and communal well-being. The program integrates leadership theory, cross-cultural competencies, and applied ethics to equip students with the skills necessary to navigate global challenges while fostering human flourishing.

By positioning leadership as a vehicle for personal empowerment, ethical engagement, and societal well-being, this paper argues that intentional leadership development fosters not only academic success but also a life worth living—one marked by purpose, community, and flourishing. This project demonstrates how leadership, when nurtured through holistic and inclusive frameworks, advances human dignity, ethical decision-making, and the greater good.

BIOGRAPHY

Ozioma Okehielem and **Julius Oku Ph.D.** Students in Organizational Leadership
University of Maryland Eastern Shore

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2 BPMC 204

START WHERE YOU ARE: FARIS ALAMI'S STORY OF RESILIENT LEADERSHIP

ABSTRACT

In an ever-evolving business landscape, leadership requires resilience, adaptability, and a commitment to ethical and impact-driven decision-making. Start Where You Are is a leadership development framework designed to empower business and sustainability leaders with the practical tools needed to navigate uncertainty, foster innovation, and drive long-term success from any starting point. This approach recognizes that effective leadership is no longer confined to traditional hierarchies but rather thrives on collaboration, agility, and alignment with sustainability goals.

A powerful example is the story of Faris Alami, a teenage refugee forced to flee a war-torn country without resources or support. With nothing but determination and an unwavering belief in himself, he started where he was—alone in an unfamiliar land. Through resilience, strategic thinking, and an ability to adapt, he not only overcame these challenges but eventually built a globally recognized business. His journey exemplifies the key themes of this session: leveraging existing strengths, embracing uncertainty, and forging a path toward sustainable success despite the odds.

This session offers a structured, hands-on learning experience, guiding participants through a leadership development Canvas that enables self-assessment, strategic planning, and goal setting. Through a series of interactive activities, participants explore four key leadership dimensions: identifying strengths and growth areas, building resilience for sustainable business practices, aligning personal and organizational values with broader sustainability objectives, and creating actionable steps for long-term impact. These exercises equip leaders with the skills to overcome challenges, leverage existing resources, and implement ethical business strategies that drive meaningful change in their industries and communities.

Key takeaways from this session emphasize resilience as a foundational leadership skill, the power of connections in driving sustainable success, and the importance of translating insights into actionable strategies. Participants leave with a personalized action plan, strengthened networks, and a clearer understanding of how to integrate sustainability into their leadership approach. This session fosters an environment of collaboration, ensuring that each leader walks away with theoretical knowledge and the practical tools to apply immediately.

By embedding sustainability principles into leadership frameworks and embracing a philosophy of continuous growth, Start Where You Are provides a transformative roadmap for leaders committed to lasting impact. This approach equips individuals to navigate complex business environments while maintaining a steadfast commitment to ethical and sustainable practices. The session ensures that participants are prepared to lead with purpose, drive innovation, and cultivate a leadership style that aligns with long-term organizational and societal goals.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2
BPMC 208

LIVING THE QUESTIONS: TEACHING THE SKILLS FOR A LIFE OF MEANING AND PURPOSE IN SECONDARY SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT

Amid rising rates of adolescent anxiety, social disconnection, and existential confusion, educators are increasingly called to address not only what students know, but how they make sense of themselves and their world. This presentation explores how secondary schools can equip students with the skills necessary to cultivate meaning in their lives through contemplative education. It outlines how reflective, generative, and attention-training practices can be integrated into the classroom to promote self-awareness, emotional regulation, empathy, and discernment. These practices help students examine their values, navigate the noise of digital culture, and engage more deeply with themselves and their communities. By teaching these skills intentionally, schools can provide students with a durable inner foundation—one that counters the forces of distraction and despair, and helps them live more connected, purposeful lives.

BIOGRAPHY

Michael LoStracco chairs the Religious Studies and Philosophy department at the William Penn Charter School (Penn Charter), a pre-K through 12 Friends school in Philadelphia, where he also clerks the Religious Life Committee. He has over 18 years of experience in independent education, including teaching literature, religious studies, and philosophy courses in the International Baccalaureate diploma program; leading service-learning trips domestically and abroad; and supporting student and community councils with Quaker-based and restorative practices. Michael is the 2024 winner of the Life Worth Living Secondary School Curriculum Design Competition through Yale's Center for Faith and Culture and a visiting scholar with the Center for Spiritual and Ethical Education.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2
BPMC 208

THE GOOD LIFE AND READING WELL: EQUIPPING STUDENTS TO REFLECT ON A LIFE WELL-LIVED BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

ABSTRACT

This presentation recounts an assignment that I utilize in my introduction to ethics course: The Good Life and Contemporary Moral Problems. I call this assignment a Charitable Criticism. By presenting this exercise, its pedagogical goals, theoretical underpinnings, and learning outcomes, I hope it may generate helpful discussion among other educators trying to promote deeper reading, reflection, and engagement with texts that especially engage questions related to a well-lived life.

A Charitable Criticism teaches students how to read deeply by having them engage a single assigned text in three different sections to develop three discrete sets of skills that promote lifelong reflection about the good life and how to live it together. First, it asks students to apprehend the text, specifically in ways that analyze the author's argument, goals, and audience. Second, I ask them to appreciate the text. Here, they are to identify and apply the most compelling ideas to their experiences and thinking. This promotes metacognition since it requires first identifying a strong aspect of the argument, empathizing with the author's thinking, and then applying it to their lives and the moral frameworks they often implicitly operate under. Last, I ask them to offer valid academic criticism of a text. Students are frequently shocked to find that, with some practice, they can identify aspects of arguments that can be strengthened, even among those written by the intellectual giants of ancient and modern times.

BIOGRAPHY

James W. Waters is a Catherine of Siena Scholar in Ethics at Villanova University. As a comparative ethicist, his research and publications focus on environmental ethics, Native American religions and philosophy, social movements, and theories of social change. When not researching or teaching, he enjoys spoiling his chug (a chihuahua-pug mix), Friedrich, playing music, and taking walks outside.

Conference Presentations

**SESSION 2
BPMC 210**

UTOPIA, IDEOLOGY, AND THE GOOD LIFE, IN PAUL RICOEUR'S PHILOSOPHY

ABSTRACT

This paper examines an important tension that can be found in Paul Ricoeur's philosophy, namely the tension between imagination and ideology, and seeks to explore the consequences of this tension for contemporary discussions of the 'Good life.' According to Ricoeur, our traditions and culture provide the basis from which our ideologies are formed and are all part of the wider background from which we draw our language, norms, and ideas. This leads to an ambiguity within Ricoeur's notion of ideology. On the one hand such ideologies can be harmful when they limit the ways we can conceive of ourselves and the possible ways of being-in-the-world. On the other hand, ideologies can also be vehicles for change when they propose new conceptions of the self, new possible ways of being-in-the-world, and new ways of organizing and structuring society. For Ricoeur, the difference between these two notions of ideology pivots on human imagination, especially in the form of fictional utopias. This paper will conclude by critically evaluating the framework provided by Ricoeur and to assess its merits by using both real-world and fictional examples.

BIOGRAPHY

Paul Harris is a Professor in the Philosophy department at West Chester University.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2 BPMC 210

THE GOLEM: FROM ANTI-SEMITIC PROJECTIONS OF DIFFERENCE TO 20TH CENTURY AUSTRIAN ITERATIONS OF PROTECTION AND DICHOTOMOUS BELONGING

ABSTRACT

The Golem in 20th century Austrian-Jewish literature is an ambiguous figure. On one hand it embodies familiar, traditional notions of identity while on the other hand it simultaneously represents concepts of the alien and foreign. In these depictions, the Golem occupies a place that is equally dichotomous, both idyllic and threatening. I argue that 20th century Austrian-Jewish representations of the Golem employ this figure to address a conflicted conception of identity that is intrinsically bound to notions of belonging and manifests through the reconstruction of memory. In these 20th century depictions, the Golem operates as a memory-laden sentry, acting non-violently to protect a community aware of its perpetually indeterminate state.

The threat imposed on Jewish communities in the first half of the 20th century was unparalleled, with deep-rooted European anti-Semitism reaching catastrophic levels during the Holocaust. In the face of such a raging torrent of death and destruction it seems fitting that Austrian-Jewish writers longed and grasped for an ancient symbol of strength and religious tradition to stem the tides of annihilation and to cope in the wake of destruction, protecting and perhaps imagining what the very notion of the “Good Life” might entail. In 20th century Austrian Jewish literature, the Golem makes numerous appearances, each time as a messianic protector and guardian of specific communities under threat. Gustav Meyrink’s 1915 novel *Der Golem*, Leo Perutz’s 1953 *Nachts unter der steinernen Brücke*, Friedrich Torberg’s 1968 short story *Golems Wiederkehr*, Doron Rabinovici’s 1994 collection of short stories *Papirnik* and his 1997 novel *Suche nach M* each draw upon the Golem in unique ways, but always in a protective and redemptive fashion. These texts not only demonstrate the persistent interest in the Golem in Austrian-Jewish literature but were selected to articulate the consistent trend of Golem representation over the course of the 20th century in Austrian-Jewish literature.^[1] In the proposed paper, I will explore some these portrayals and seek to elucidate the common thread connecting the Austrian-Jewish Golem tradition, and the Golem tradition at large.

BIOGRAPHY

Jason Ager Assistant Professor of Humanities, Rosemont College

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2
BPMC 211

HAVE I SOLD OUT? LESSONS LEARNED FOR AN ANTI- HIERARCHICAL DEPARTMENT HEAD

ABSTRACT

Two years ago, I took over as department head of one of the departments with which I have a joint appointment. For multiple reasons, I was deeply reticent about taking the job. Not the least of my concerns was whether I could justify my staunch rejection of social hierarchies when assuming a supervisory position. In this presentation, I lay out some of the lessons I have learned as I have strived to maintain my ethical and political commitments to anti-hierarchalism while navigating institutional expectations that push in the opposite direction. Inspired by Indigenous principles of leadership adumbrated by Leanne Simpson (Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg) and Lee Hester (Choctaw), among others, I have a firm sense of the importance of good leadership for faculty, staff, and student wellbeing. Contrarily, guided by Bayley Marquez's (Santa Ynez Band of Chumash) refusal to identify any institution within the U.S. education system as a salient site of social reform, I raise questions about whether it is possible for one in my position to be a good leader. Weighing Marquez's considerations against my job-related experiences, I conclude by assessing whether I can avoid selling out—i.e., violating my ethical and political commitments—as a department head. I suggest that it possible to avoid selling out, which means I do see ways to mirror good leadership in the sense I specify. But how to do so is far from clearcut. Namely, it may be required at times to look like one is a sellout to be a good leader.

BIOGRAPHY

Andrew Frederick Smith, Department of Biodiversity, Earth, and Environmental Science (BEES) Department Head and Professor of Philosophy and Environmental Studies at Drexel University.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 2 BPMC 211

FROM GLOBAL TO TRANSNATIONAL CITIZENSHIP: CHALLENGING 21ST CENTURY HYPER-AUTHORITARIANISM

ABSTRACT

From Plato's Republic to the early twentieth century Frankfurt School study on The Authoritarian Personality, philosophers have grappled with pitfalls in the relationship between leadership and human flourishing and dangers that can lead to authoritarianism. The Socratic remedy against the risk of developing authoritarian leaders is to permit only those individuals to lead who have no desire to do so. Two millennia later the Frankfurt School analysts diagnosed specific personality traits that can predict authoritarianism in individuals, in an attempt to prevent these traits from flourishing en masse and avoid future iterations of totalitarian nightmares.

Despite such analytic advances in psycho-sociologic understanding within liberal democracies, simultaneous with a dramatic increase in economic, technological, social, political, and educational internationalization, the twenty-first century has ushered in an indubitable shift toward far right-wing authoritarian social movements and governments. An ancient concept recreated in the wake of World War II, “global citizenship” has been propagated by internationalization models in higher education leadership as an antidote to authoritarian personalities and societies. Post-World War II structures arising from the United Nations and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as the Sustainable Development Goals ubiquitous in international education and its internationalization of the curriculum, draw upon the very traits celebrated by the Frankfurt School as anti-authoritarian and leading to a robust society of human flourishing: openness to nonconventional values, lack of deference to preordained authority, tolerance for ambiguity, flexible sexuality norms, and avoidance of prejudice and aggression. However, the 2025 global elections brought even greater increases in authoritarian powers and seriously challenge the predominant global citizenship models at a breathtaking rate.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Marcia Morgan began teaching at Muhlenberg College in 2009. Her teaching, research, and college service focus on themes in ethics (including applied ethics), social and political philosophy, and aesthetics. She has served as director of two academic programs and in additional roles as program director of the Center for Ethics, assistant director and co-director of the Faculty Center for Teaching, and director of the Dana Forum honors research program.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 3 BPMC 204

LEADERSHIP AND THE GOOD LIFE, PART 2: GUIDING OTHERS TO REALIGN LIFE & LEADERSHIP AROUND WHAT TRULY MATTERS

ABSTRACT

Expanded session with our keynote speaker Dr. Angela Williams Gorrell.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Angela Williams Gorrell speaks about finding the life worth living, living open to joy, and courageously navigating complex choices. She has taught at several schools including Yale and Baylor University. She is the author of three books, including a brand new book, *Braving Difficult Decisions: What to Do When You Don't Know What to Do*. You can use the code Gorrell40 to get 40% off of her books at Eerdmans Publishing website. She would love for you to connect with her through her website or Instagram. She facilitates Life Worth Living retreats so if you enjoy what you hear today and want to experience one, please reach out to her.

Conference Presentations

**SESSION 3
BPMC 208**

GRADES AND TEACHING ETHICS: THE OBSTACLE TO HUMANITIES EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

Grades have long been a cornerstone of educational systems, particularly in art and humanities disciplines. However, the reliance on grades often reduces complex, creative, and subjective fields of study to a series of measurable, rigid criteria that are more suited to scientific methodologies than to the exploration of human experience and culture. In this presentation, I will argue that the grading system forces both professors and students to treat the humanities as a body of static knowledge, when in fact, these disciplines should be viewed as dynamic areas of exploration, reflection, and personal development. By quantifying learning and reducing it to a numerical or letter grade, we risk stifling creativity, critical thinking, and the true essence of these fields. I will examine the negative consequences of grading on student engagement and intellectual development, particularly in subjects that demand more nuance and open-ended inquiry. Furthermore, the presentation will offer strategies for reducing the impact of grades in humanities education, such as implementing ungrading practices, shifting focus to process over product, and creating more holistic, formative assessments that encourage intellectual curiosity and personal growth. Ultimately, this talk will propose a shift in how we view and assess learning, advocating for an approach that fosters deeper understanding, passion, and engagement in the arts and humanities.

BIOGRAPHY

Matt Rupert is a professor in the Philosophy department at West Chester University.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 3
BPMC 208

MAKING ETHICAL THEORY RELEVANT: FRAMING ACTION-CENTERED ETHICAL THEORIES IN TERMS OF CHARACTER

ABSTRACT

One of the most frustrating parts about teaching introductory ethics is the difficulty of conveying the nuances of how action-centered ethical theories like utilitarianism and Kantian ethics work. Students often develop superficial understandings of these theories and then gravitate towards ethical relativism when none fully align with their existing moral intuitions. This is to some extent the result of a traditional pedagogy that uses unrealistic dilemmas to emphasize differences between theories at the expense of realistic investigation of their concrete significance for our ethical thinking. I have found that a better approach to teaching basic ethical theories is to present them as "framing" devices which emphasize some ethical values and deemphasize others. One way of helping students to perceive ethical theories in this way is to shift away from presenting ethical theories as yielding simple rules for action towards instead exploring them as descriptions of ways of life. Examining Kantian ethics, utilitarianism, and Ayn Rand's ethical egoism as though they were character-centered theories helps students to develop more nuanced understanding of their significance through a concrete exploration of their lived meaning.

BIOGRAPHY

Dan Forbes is a Professor in the Philosophy Department at West Chester University. Dr. Forbes specializes in History of Philosophy, Spinoza, Metaphysics and Epistemology, and Teaching Pedagogy.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 3 BPMC 210

VALUES, AI, AND THE GOOD LIFE

ABSTRACT

In a world that heralds the presence and integration of artificial intelligence, a perennial philosophical question has new resonance and context: what makes us distinctively human? One fundamental answer, I believe, is the focus of this conference: how activities of ethical leadership can be part of a distinctively good life for humans. This talk will frame how the burgeoning role of AI offers a backdrop and point of comparison for drawing out markers of ethical leadership, such as: being independent, developing a moral vision, integrating frailty and strength, making sure-footed decisions and responses to events, and changing how other people think and feel.

These or other markers of ethical leadership relate to personal well-being, and, after a discussion of markers of ethical leadership, it will be the aim to discuss the relationship between a life of leadership and personal well-being for living a good life. In particular, I will consider three ways that leadership facilitates personal well-being in pursuit of a good life: (1) when facing challenges, the human ability to conceptually frame thought and responses rooted in values can create stable anchors for weathering societal and personal turbulence, as a way to distinctively encounter a troubled moment or time period, which facilitates the possibilities for a good life; (2) reasoning rooted in values supports and manifests an elevated conception of human thinking that can transcend and complement puzzling through how to effectively balance competing interests; (3) the ability to reason with values can join with a human element of connecting with others, and in so doing, this leadership process contrasts against the information gathering of AI and suggests ways of being distinctively human. The talk will draw on but is not limited to Aristotelian and Kantian conceptions of living well.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Steven Scalet is a professor of philosophy at The University of Baltimore and director of its Hoffberger Center for Ethical Engagement. Dr. Scalet is an award-winning educator and the author of several articles as well as the editor of *Morality and Moral Controversies: Readings in Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy*.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 3 BPMC 210

OWNING THE QUESTIONS

ABSTRACT

This session presents a pedagogical method which gives students ownership of class discussion. The method has multiple benefits, but the session will focus specifically on two: putting the onus on students to direct class discussion transforms them into active learners and leaders with responsibility for fostering their own intellectual growth as well as that of peers; and giving them the power to select the philosophical and ethical questions up for discussion ensures the course will focus on questions of significance in the trajectory of their lives.

In the session I will provide a brief demonstration of the method, using Robert Nozick's experience machine thought experiment as source material, and share reflections on my use of it over the past five years in a variety of ethics and philosophy classes at both the introductory and advanced level. I developed this method during the pandemic to facilitate discussion during zoom classes, but continued after the return to in-person instruction because the method led to discussions that were deeper, more interesting, and more enjoyable for all participants. The doubling of the discussion—the way the discussion takes place first in the boards and then again in class—is partly responsible for improvements in the quality of student participation in discussion. But the most significant benefits lie elsewhere, in student ownership of their learning. I am also impressed with how giving power to the students, asking them to decide the direction of our philosophical explorations, has made teaching a richer experience for me. Students have created amazing discussions using questions I had never thought of and questions I would never ask.

BIOGRAPHY

Dr. Lisa Schoenberg is an Associate Professor and chair of the Philosophy Department at Slippery Rock University. Dr. Schoenberg teaches courses in Medical Ethics, Analytic Philosophy, Symbolic Logic, Philosophy of Science, Ethics & Civil Discourse.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4 BPMC 204

HUMILITY EAST AND WEST: RELIGIOUS PERSPECTIVES ON VIRTUE AND LEADERSHIP

ABSTRACT

The theme of the necessity of a balance between self-esteem and humility configures prominently in all of the major world religions. Echoing Leviticus, Jesus issues a paramount commandment to his disciples to “love your neighbor as you do yourself” (Matthew 22:39). Buddhaghosa, the great fifth century systematic theologian of Theravada Buddhism, draws from the canonical discourses of the Buddha to insist that the meditational practice of generating loving-kindness begins with acceptance of the fact that “one loving oneself will not harm others” (Visuddhimagga 297). Both traditions however have checks in place to curb self-love from inflating into vanity or megalomania: “pride” is a variety of moral sin from the traditional view of the Church, being an “evil which comes from inside and defiles a person” (Mark 7:21-23). From the Theravada Buddhist perspective, “pride” (māna) and the inverse but equally paralyzing “conceit of inferiority” (omāna) are likewise forms of egoistic attachment, fatal to spiritual progress and realization.

This panel explores the theological foundations of humility across several religious traditions, interrogating the applications of forms of religious humility for leadership character through “emic” perspectives of the traditions themselves, as well as through “etic” pedagogical case studies and qualitative academic studies on religiously inspired principles of humility in relation to workplace efficiency.

BIOGRAPHY

Josh Fenska is an adjunct professor at Aurora University, and he has served as a pastor in the Chicago area since 2006. He also teaches world religions courses and interdisciplinary courses related to “the good life” at Aurora University.

Justin Henry is a professor in the Religious Studies Department at the University of Southern Florida. He has taught courses on Buddhist and Jain Philosophy and Literature, Hinduism, The God Debate, Religion and Wealth, and New Religious Movements.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4
BPMC 208

THIS IS NOT HOW WE LIVE: OLYPIODORUS' GORGIAS COMMENTARY ON THE PEDAGOGICAL PRIMACY OF CHARACTER IN THE FLOURISHING LIFE

ABSTRACT

The student sitting in the lecture halls of late antique Alexandria might be forgiven for stifling a laugh at his teacher, the Neoplatonist philosopher Olympiodorus, who in the Introduction to his Commentary on Plato's Gorgias asserts that, if we were following sections of Plato's Republic, tragedians and comedians whose characters incline us to grief or pleasure should be physically hit. I have checked the Greek; this is quite literally what he says. No sooner has he said it, though, than he hastens to qualify statement with the insistence, "but this is not how we live." One wonders whether he said it with a tone of regret in his voice.

Whether or not it was intended humorously, this paper takes his remark seriously insofar as it is addressed to students in pursuit of the life of flourishing, a life that, for those in the commentary traditions that thrived in late antique Athens and Alexandria, would have been the philosophical life. To say, this is not how "we live," is a prohibition to those cultivating the life of loving wisdom, a caution that is immediately complicated by the commentator's reminder that Plato also uses characters in his works. For Olympiodorus, that usage is distinctive insofar as it is pedagogical.

Accordingly, while the Gorgias is a dialogue in which Socrates draws the interlocutors toward a particular model of human flourishing, it is also, for Olympiodorus, expected to accomplish the same task with its reader. Far from being a work solely about justice and temperance, Plato's Gorgias is seen as a dialogue in which these virtues are cultivated both on the page and in the lecture hall. Such an interpretation has profound consequences not just for scholarship on Plato specifically or even ancient philosophy more broadly, but for those of us who, like Olympiodorus, are called to model this sort of flourishing for our own students in the contemporary classroom, each and every day.

BIOGRAPHY

James M. Ambury, PhD is an assistant professor of philosophy at King's College, Pennsylvania. He teaches undergraduate courses on ancient and medieval philosophy, mythology and philosophy, theories of love and friendship, and philosophical anthropology.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4
BPMC 208

TEACHING FOR VIRTUE

ABSTRACT

Since at least as far back as the ancient Greeks, ethical virtue has been conceptually linked to a flourishing human life. To have a genuinely happy, meaningful, enjoyable life, the thinking goes, one must develop a virtuous character. It is widely accepted that the cultivation of such a virtuous character is largely a matter of learning by doing. Both Plato and Aristotle draw analogies between acquiring virtue and learning practical skills. Aristotle explains, “we become builders, for instance, by building, and we become harpists by playing the harp. Similarly, then, we become just by doing just actions, temperate by doing temperate actions, brave by doing brave actions” (1103a34-1103b2, trans. Irwin).

My project here is to consider what teaching in this context might involve. Since Aristotle does not say, and in light of the virtue-skill analogy, I turn to the cognitive science of embodied skill for insight. Drawing on the work of Toner, Montero, and Moran (2022), I suggest four main goals of teaching for virtue: 1) stimulating curiosity; 2) training attentional control; 3) developing conceptual knowledge; and 4) cultivating capacities for abstract thought and reflection.

BIOGRAPHY

Denise Vigani is Associate Professor of Philosophy at Seton Hall University in South Orange, NJ. Working in the Aristotelian tradition, her research involves elaborating and elucidating Aristotle’s views on the virtues, developing accounts of individual virtues, and investigating the relationship between virtue and practical reasoning. Much of her work is informed by empirically oriented research in psychology and cognitive science.

REIMAGINING LEADERSHIP ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR EVOLVING WORKFORCE EXPECTATIONS

ABSTRACT

The evolving expectations of today's workforce—emphasizing purpose, belonging, and meaningful engagement—necessitate a reimagining of leadership assessment tools. This study introduces the People-First, Value-Centered (PFVC) Leadership Behaviors Survey, a groundbreaking instrument designed to evaluate leadership behaviors through two key constructs: People-First (empathy, empowerment, and relationship-building) and ValueCentered (accountability, role modeling, transparency, visionary, and stewardship). Drawing upon transformational and servant leadership theories, the PFVC survey explores the motivations behind leadership actions, aligning behavioral intent with employee and organizational needs.

This presentation offers valuable insights for organizational leaders, human resource professionals, and researchers interested in innovative approaches to leadership assessment and development. Attendees will gain a comprehensive understanding of the PFVC Leadership Survey's design, validation process, and practical applications for fostering ideal leadership behaviors. Implications are that PFVC has the ability to be measured alongside important organizational well-being metrics such as burnout, employee engagement, and more.

BIOGRAPHIES

Dr. Caitlin "Cait" Long, PhD (Alvernia '24), MSPAS, PA-C, RYT200, is the Director of Technology Transfer & Innovation Commercialization at Alvernia University's O'Pake Institute, where she leverages her medical, scientific, and entrepreneurial expertise to support innovation and economic development. She is the Managing Director of the Berks Biomedical Innovation Collaborative and an AUTM Foundation Board member, dedicated to advancing life science startups and fostering strategic industry, academic, and healthcare partnerships. As the CEO of Team Lifelong Wellness, LLC, Cait integrates her research on burnout and leadership into wellness consulting.

Nicholas P. Nicoletti is the Interim Director of Alvernia's Ph.D. program in Leadership and an Associate Professor of Political Science. He holds a Ph.D. in Political Science from the University at Buffalo, SUNY, and dual master's degrees in International Studies and Business Administration from St. John Fisher College. His research explores the intersection of domestic politics and international relations, with a recent focus on the effects of moral reasoning on political behavior.

Malgorzata "Meg" J. Zuber earned an LL.M. (2010) and an M.Ed. (2011) from the University of Rzeszow, completing part of her studies at the University of Genoa through the Erasmus Program. She moved to the U.S. in 2012, earning an M.A. (2014) and Ph.D. (2018) in criminal justice and criminology from the University of Massachusetts Lowell. She has taught and trained at multiple universities through Erasmus+ grants and has been at Alvernia University since 2016.

Jay Leamy is the Deputy Chief Probation Officer for Chester County Juvenile Probation and a national, state, and local panelist on aftercare, re-entry, and community collaborations. He has extensive experience training on evidence-based correctional practices, cognitive behavioral interventions, and risk reduction strategies. Jay has also taught undergraduate and graduate courses at West Chester University and Shippensburg University and holds a Ph.D. in Philosophy of Leadership from Alvernia University.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4 BPMC 210

CULTIVATING CIVILITY & INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY: ESSENTIAL LEADERSHIP IN HIGHER EDUCATION

ABSTRACT

In an era of heightened polarization and ideological entrenchment, universities must reclaim their role as bastions of civil discourse and intellectual humility. This proposal explores how higher education institutions can cultivate these essential virtues through leadership practices, pedagogical strategies, and institutional culture. Drawing on interdisciplinary insights from philosophy, business, and leadership education, we examine how fostering civil discourse and intellectual humility not only contributes to human flourishing but also equips students and faculty with the capacity to navigate an increasingly complex and diverse world.

Building on the foundational work of deliberative pedagogy (Shaffer et al, 2017; Longo & Shaffer, 2019), civil discourse practices (Black et al, 2024), and intellectual humility in academia (Ducharme, 2023, 2025), this presentation offers a multi-faceted approach to addressing contemporary challenges in higher education. We consider recent crises in academic freedom, free speech controversies, and the erosion of trust in universities and argue that civility and humility are not luxuries but necessities for sustaining democratic engagement on campus and beyond.

BIOGRAPHIES

Johann Ducharme, Ph.D., teaches and conducts research at the cross-section of entrepreneurship, leadership and intellectual virtues as assistant professor of entrepreneurship in the Department of Business Administration at the University of Delaware.

Timothy J. Shaffer, Ph.D., is the inaugural Stavros Niarchos Foundation (SNF) Chair of Civil Discourse and director of the SNF Ithaca Initiative. Shaffer is also director of Civic Engagement and Deliberative Democracy with the National Institute for Civil Discourse. Shaffer serves as the associate editor of the Journal of Deliberative Democracy, as a country expert on deliberative democracy with the Varieties of Democracy (V-Dem Institute) research project, and as a codirector of the Deliberative Pedagogy Lab.

Kristin Duncan is a dynamic leader whose career is dedicated to empowering others to grow, lead, and thrive. As the Leader of Mastering Your Journey at The Siegfried Group, Kristin plays a key role in amplifying the firm's Higher Purpose: To help people become better leaders and exponentially improve their lives.

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4 BPMC 211

GRATITUDE AS AN EQUALIZER OF VALUE

ABSTRACT

“Good” is lexically ambiguous, having many definitional senses. In contrast with evil, it generates a sense of morality, thus resisting universality. The beneficial sense implies that some are subject to benefit with others excluded. Similarly, the ideal or “most suitable” sense of good brings into question who or what is excluded in the valuative or comparative standard. To avoid these pitfalls, the sense of good considered is “of high quality, standard, or level.” Though vagueness is not eliminated, it offers a sufficient starting point.

Following the lead of Indigenous ethics and Buddhist teachings, a reliable means of experiencing a high quality of life is through gratitude. Gratitude is not a simple platitude nor a simple reaction to reception. It is an active habit of seeing value in what exists, and refraining from displacing value through comparison. Gratitude can be divided into three components: recognition, appreciation, and satisfaction. Recognition is to acknowledge the circumstantiality of one's condition. All factors of an individual's birth are outside of one's control from class status to bodily health to their native tongue. Although facets of a person's life may be changed with effort and intention, the outcomes are subject to providence. Merit-based thinkers often denounce common welfare including free education and healthcare. The problem is not that others are not trying as hard as meritists might claim, but that meritists forsake the myriad support that permitted their own success. Recognition, seeing the ways one's advantages are not of their own doing, makes merit mindsets obsolete.

BIOGRAPHY

Felix Rowland, Philosophy Student at West Chester University

Conference Presentations

SESSION 4 BPMC 211

UNACCOMPANIED, BUT NOT ALONE: A CAPELLA AS A GOOD LIFE MODEL OF LEADERSHIP"

ABSTRACT

To lessen any hesitations, Spencer ensures no one will be asked to sing during this session. Instead, Unaccompanied But Not Alone explores how the compositional and performative practice of a cappella can provide a multi-layered understanding of leadership which informs how individuals can build community and collaborate in the spirit of the Good Life. The musical demonstrations will provide a canvas embodying fundamental leadership concepts through a unique lens to provide new ways to make sense and connect with these practices.

BIOGRAPHY

Spencer Camacho is an instructor of civic and professional leadership in the Honors College and instructor of music theory and production in the Wells School of Music at West Chester University of Pennsylvania. Stationed at the crossroads of leadership and music, Spencer enjoys exploring how musical experiences can inform leadership and interpersonal interactions and how leadership lessons can inform creative processes. A PhD Candidate of Leadership at University of Southern Maine, Spencer is working on his dissertation exploring how a cappella can inform leadership development for collegiate students. You can explore Spencer's work in a cappella, leadership, music, and education on his website: www.CamachoCreates.com

Yale's Center for Faith and Culture

We extend our deepest gratitude to the Yale Center for Faith and Culture for their grant funding that made our conference possible. Their support demonstrates their commitment to fostering meaningful dialogue and advancing scholarship at the intersection of faith, ethics, and public life.

Through their financial support, we were able to bring together diverse voices and perspectives, creating a rich environment for community building. This collaboration exemplifies the Yale's dedication to supporting initiatives that explore the role of faith in contemporary society.

For more information regarding Yale's Life Worth Living initiative visit their website <https://faith.yale.edu/initiatives/life-worth-living>

*Thank
You*



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Thank you for attending our first Leadership and the Good Life Conference.
Your participation made this event possible!