

2026 Forward Thinking Research Symposium Guidelines

Each year, the [Office of Research and Sponsored Programs](#) (ORSP) showcases the exciting research being done at Marquette. In celebrating research across campus, the Forward Thinking Research Symposium provides opportunities to learn more about work being done in other disciplines and fosters professional skills for students. Unlike traditional conferences, where researchers convey results of work already completed, these presentations focus on projects that will take place in the next 6–12 months.

2026 Event Information

Date: December 1, 2026

Time: 1:00 – 3:00 PM

Location: AMU Monaghan Ballrooms

Highlights for 2026

The Symposium will center on brief oral presentations of research projects. Event highlights include:

- Researchers will make five-minute oral presentations - “elevator pitches” - of the work they want to do. Presentations must utilize the PowerPoint template posted on the event website.
- This will be an in-person event, to promote further discussion and collaboration.
- Presenters need to be available Tuesday, December 1st from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
- Presentations should emphasize: WHY this work and your project are important (the purpose), HOW you’re going to do the work in the next 6-12 months (the process), and WHAT you want to achieve (the results).
- Student researchers on the project must do the oral presentation, to help further their presentation skills and articulation of the work in a quick and digestible format. They are encouraged to complete the submission of both the Notice of Intent form & the presentation.
- Presentations should be prepared with the intent of promoting interest in funding for the future work they intend to do. Content should be prepared like a grant proposal.
- Presentations will be evaluated by those in attendance and the top four selected will be offered a \$500 award. This year, awards are being sponsored by:
 - [ORSP](#)
 - [Institute for Women’s Leadership](#) (gender focused projects)
 - [Center for Data Ethics](#) (projects addressing the social/ethical dimensions of data)
 - [Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute](#) (projects involving technology and research)
- A reception follows the oral presentations, to include:
 - Food, drinks, and socializing
 - Posters (not required but may be included to allow for further engagement after the oral presentations)
 - Representatives from some of Marquette’s academic centers, institutes, and initiatives
 - Raffle prize

Pitching Your Project

The primary goal of the event is to celebrate and encourage research on the Marquette University campus. The projects being presented should focus on work that will take place within the next 6-12 months. Presenters may include preliminary results if they have them, but it is not required. A project being presented may be the next logical step in a well-established research program or it may explore an entirely new path.

The oral presentations should be considered a project pitch or elevator pitch — not a full, in-depth view of project plans and/or methodology. Applicants will be expected to “sell” their innovative ideas and future possibilities in a five-minute talk, accompanied by up to five PowerPoint slides. Being able to clearly articulate the significance and impact of your work in a short presentation is an important skill to develop, especially when seeking funding or communicating with various stakeholders. This event is a great opportunity to hone this valuable skill.

We encourage the submission of projects from across the University, with the following objectives:

- Showcase prospective faculty or student-led research projects and the ways in which faculty and students work together
- Provide opportunities for researchers to learn more about peers in other disciplines and encourage interdisciplinary partnerships
- Foster research and professional skills for undergraduate and graduate students
- Disseminate research succinctly and visually to others
- Promote MU resources available to support research efforts, including funding opportunity information and the various MU centers, institutes, and initiatives

For support in creating your presentation, Marquette's The MIC Speakers Lab can help students and faculty develop, organize, edit, practice, and polish the presentation. Visit [The MIC webpage](#) for more information. You can click the blue "Book an Appointment" button on the right to schedule an appointment.

Additionally, the following websites provide some ideas on pitching your project:

- [Association for the Sciences of Limnology and Oceanography](#)
- [Notre Dame](#)

Timeline

- **Notice of Intent to Participate Form submission deadline** – October 15, 2026
- **PowerPoint Slide submission deadline** – November 16, 2026
- **Day of Event** – December 1, 2026 (times are approximate)
 - 12:00 – 12:45 Set up poster (for those presenters that have one)
 - 1:00 – 1:10 Welcome and Introduction
 - 1:15 – 2:45 Oral Presentations
 - 3:00 – 4:00 Reception and Poster Presentations
- Notification of the award winners – Mid-December

Eligibility

- All Marquette University faculty members and students are welcome to participate. **Presenters will need to be available Tuesday, December 1st from 1:00 – 3:00 p.m.**
- **A team of at least one faculty member AND one student** (undergraduate or graduate) must be involved in the planning, advising, presentation or execution of the project.
- Students can make only one presentation, though their names could be associated with other

projects. Ideally, the lead student on the project should make the oral presentation. Each project is limited to one presentation.

- The projects must be "forward-looking" – they must describe a project that **will take place within the next 6-12 months**. Although you may present preliminary results, you do not need to do so in order to participate.
- Presenters must submit a Notice of Intent to Participate form. To submit this online form, please see the **Submitting a Notice of Intent** section below.

Important Note on Proprietary and Confidential Information

As this is an open event, the University is taking no special measures to safeguard the confidentiality of materials being presented. If your project involves confidential or proprietary materials, including those provided by third parties (e.g., the subject of a Material Transfer Agreement) or if your project involves patentable subject matter, contact Sherri Kirsch in ORSP (sherri.kirsch@marquette.edu or 288-5329) to ensure that your presentation does not result in public disclosure.

Submitting a Notice of Intent

The [Forward Thinking Research Symposium website](#) has a link to the Notice of Intent to Participate form for the Forward Thinking Research Symposium. You will need to fill out this form with your project title and the names and email addresses of the lead MU faculty and students involved. You will also need to indicate if you plan to display an optional poster at the event, to supplement your oral presentation.

Deadline for submitting a Notice of Intent is 4:00 pm on Thursday, October 15th, 2026, and is required for participation in the event.

Submitting Presentation Slides

Presentations must be created using the five-slide template provided by ORSP. We encourage you to be creative in how you present your research on these slides. Presentations should include:

1. TITLE and investigator information
2. WHY this work and your project are important (the purpose)
3. HOW you're going to do the work in the next 6-12 months (the process)
4. WHAT you want to achieve (the results)
5. THANKS and acknowledgements

You will need to be able to relay your research succinctly and visually to others. Text should be readable and visual elements (bullet-type charts, figures, tables, equations, etc.) should be used to indicate and highlight important technical content.

After October 15th, the [Forward Thinking Research Symposium website](#) will have a link to submit your slide presentation for the Symposium. This online form will request the following:

- Names, titles, departments and emails of each faculty member involved
- Names and emails of each student involved in the project
- Project title
- Project abstract, consisting of 2-3 sentences summarizing your project
- Four keywords that describe your project
- Copy of your PowerPoint presentation
- Indication if there will be a supplemental poster displayed at the event

Deadline for PowerPoint Presentation submission is 4:00pm on Monday, November 16th, 2026.

Oral Presentations on the day of the Symposium

- Oral presentations will take place from 1:15pm – 2:45pm on Tuesday, December 1st.
- Each presenter will have 5 minutes for their presentation.
- Presentations will take place in the AMU Ballrooms.
- A host will be in each room to start and help with transitions.
- Student(s) must do the presentation.
- Presentations will be loaded on the laptop in the presentation room, prior to the event.
- Presenters should be available for questions after the presentation, in the reception area.

Posters (Optional)

Traditional posters are **not** required for the Symposium but may be set up in the reception area. The posters will be available to attendees before the oral presentations and during the reception after the talks. If you'd like to set up a poster at the event, you will need to note this on the Notice of Intent and the PowerPoint Presentation submission forms.

A 30" by 40" posterboard (orientation can be in either direction—e.g., portrait or landscape) and thumb tacks will be provided for the project team to hang their poster. Posters should be set up the day of the event between 12:00 and 12:45 p.m., right before the oral presentations begin. Please be sure to remove your poster after the event.

Reception and Poster Presentations

Project teams may display a traditional poster in the AMU reception area. Attendees can view posters during the reception after the oral presentations, and presenters should be available during this time for discussion and questions.

Marquette has a rich tradition of sponsoring academic centers and institutes that further education, promote research, and inform policy and service activities. Since solutions to today's most pressing problems are proving to be quite complex and don't belong to a single academic unit, Marquette's centers and institutes promote cross disciplinary research, leveraging faculty and student expertise that span multiple departments. To showcase their missions and programming, several centers, institutes, and initiatives will have tables set up in the reception area.

ORSP promotes this event to the campus community at large and sends personal invitations to the chairs and deans of those students who are presenting and faculty members who are providing mentorship. Participants are encouraged to invite their colleagues and students to attend the Symposium reception, to further discuss the event's projects and presentations. This will help promote the exchange of scholarly research between faculty and students.

Forward Thinking Research Awards

Forward Thinking Research Awards (\$500 each) will be given to four of the highest scoring oral presentations. The awards will be supported by ORSP, the Institute for Women's Leadership, the Center for Data Ethics, and the Northwestern Mutual Data Science Institute. Projects that align with the priorities of these sponsoring groups will be considered for the corresponding awards, as applicable.

Presentations will be judged by those in attendance. Review criteria will align with that of the PowerPoint template and consider the overall presentation:

1. **Why** - Was the Background and Significance information convincing that this work should be done?

2. **How** - Was it understood how the work will be done? Did it seem feasible and reasonable?
3. **What** - Was it clear what the project seeks to achieve? Would this be something you'd want to fund?
4. **Visual Presentation** – Were the presentation slides representative of the work and visually appealing?
5. **Oral Presentation** – Did the presenter/project team deliver their information in a clear, compelling, and convincing way?

The \$500 awards will allow faculty researchers/mentors to purchase supplies or services, pay student assistants, or travel to archives or other places as required to conduct the research. An oral presentation can only receive one award. Awards cannot be used for faculty salaries or for faculty travel to conferences. They are cost-reimbursable awards: an awardee's department will be reimbursed by using an expenditure transfer. Costs must be incurred, and the expenditure transfer completed between date of award notification and June 30, 2027. Awards will be announced mid-December 2026.

Contact Information

If you have any questions, please contact [Project Planning and Development](#) in the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs.