

NOTES FOR 2026 EIU STUDENT RESEARCH CONFERENCE

What: A cross-campus student research event inviting and involving all students from all departments, presenting case-studies, research, proposals, works-in-progress, creative works, and projects that stretch their knowledge and skills. Classes starting before 4 pm would be cancelled on the date of the event in order to allow faculty to schedule student participation in presenting and learning. Students of all ranks (undergrad and grad) would be invited to present academic research, class final projects, case studies, creative work, performances, panels, etc. Online evening sessions would encourage participation by non-traditional students, and students in practicums.

When: Wednesday, April 22, 2026 (during the second last week of the spring semester)

Where: All over campus and (in some instances), online. Main poster sessions in the Union.

Who: All students in all disciplines and their faculty mentors are encouraged to participate in presenting work, but all students are also encouraged to attend, learn, and participate. Community members, prospective students, and alumni will also be invited to attend. The day will be organized by a committee including members from all colleges, the Graduate school, and Booth Library, convened by Richard England, Dean of the Pine Honors College with oversight from the VPAA.

Why: EIU has a lot of research and creative work going on, and many institutional peers celebrate campus research in mid-week presentations. This event would center student achievement, encourage cross-disciplinary discussions, and complement departmental celebrations of student work. Class-time would be replaced by student exposure to peer work with learning shaped through faculty-designed assignments to drive engagement with peer work.

How - Guidance for Instructors on students presenting: Not all students will be prepared to present in every topic, but for instructors working with advanced students, there are diverse opportunities for presentations. In addition to traditional research, case studies, or performances/ exhibits, students can share work in progress, class projects, or panels exploring disciplinary themes or current issues. Presentations can be built into syllabi or rewarded with extra-credit.

How - Guidance for Instructors on non-presenting students: Students are expected to spend time that would have been spent in class going to conference presentations and/or presenting at the conference. Instructors can require students to present research work done in class (where appropriate) or can ask students to attend and respond to presentations through assignments. Some possibilities might include

- comparing the quality or methods of different projects
- summarizing a panel discussion
- reflecting on the relevance of class material to certain projects
- leading the class in a group visit to a certain session relevant to the subject
- encouraging networking by asking students to engage in conversation
- reflective projects on the role that research could have in advancing student careers
- for advanced students, serving as peer moderators

Public meetings and webinars will be held in the fall and early spring to prepare for the event, to ensure the inclusion of diverse voices, and to develop a shared library of possible assignments in consultation with Faculty Development.