



## Cultures of Conspiracy

### The 2020 Alpha Chi Student Collaborative Research Project Competition

Sponsored by Alpha Chi's partner, *Nationwide Insurance*®

Each year Alpha Chi invites collaborative research projects from student researchers, and this year's topic invites an endless number of ideas. Each campus team will develop a focused topic, depending on the majors and research interests of the team members, which allows for both secondary and original research. Projects should be focused on research and the acquisition of new research, not merely a review of literature. The best projects are those with clearly divergent disciplines that integrate around a common goal rather than tacking several different projects together—collaborative rather than segmented—with the work effort shared in a balanced way across the team's membership. The paper needs to be scholarly and delivered in a common voice. During the presentation, extemporaneous speaking is preferred, as the judges and audience will have the opportunity to ask questions.

**\$5,000 First Place Prize (to be used as team decides)**

**\$2,500 Second Place Prize (given if number and quality of projects justify such)**

Here are just a few possibilities illustrating the diversity of topics that could emerge:

- A psychology, political science, and history project that examines a conspiracy theory of the students' choosing (Roswell, Kennedy assassination, Russia and Facebook, etc.)
- A project involving criminal justice, physics, and engineering in which students debunk common conspiracy theories about the moon landing
- A project that combines film studies, literature, and business to analyze how a marketing campaign for a film adaptation of a book exploited conspiracy theory hype (such as with a Dan Brown novel)
- A combined Spanish, history, and geography project that charts the appearance of myths about cryptids like the Cuélebre and Tesgu in the Asturias region of Spain with myths about the Chupacabra and La Llorona in Mexico, mapping the areas where such myths appear and their diminishing frequency across time
- An astronomy, math, and biology project that assesses claims about extraterrestrial visitations on earth, perhaps incorporating the Drake equation

#### Overview

Each team will identify a problem or formulate a hypothesis and conduct the necessary research. A research report of no more than 15 pages (plus title page and citations) will be submitted prior to the convention. The title page must identify the team members and their disciplines as well as a research overview describing how the team planned, divided, and conducted its collaborative project. A panel of judges will evaluate a 10-minute oral presentation on Friday or Saturday morning of the convention. This oral presentation will be accompanied by a printed poster no larger than 3' x 4' (horizontal).

#### Specific Guidelines

- Each chapter may submit one project to the competition. The project should be mentored by a faculty member committed to its success. The team should also communicate regularly with its chapter sponsor.
- Each team must consist of 3-5 Alpha Chi student members, representing at least 3 different departments on the campus. The team composition must be at least 2/3 undergraduates during the fall semester. As long as student members serve as principal researchers, one faculty member may serve as part of the research team. Each member's part in the research project should be carefully documented.
- **To enter the competition, a team representative must email the formal project title and an abstract to [office@alphachihonor.org](mailto:office@alphachihonor.org) no later than Nov. 1. This email must name the faculty mentor and the Alpha Chi members on the team, their classifications, email addresses, and the academic fields they represent.**
- Each team will send at least one student team member to the national convention in Albuquerque to present the project results to a panel of judges. Each team will be contacted with its presentation time.
- **The competition consists of three elements: (1)** a written research report (double-spaced) of no more than 15 pages to be emailed by March 1 to [office@alphachihonor.org](mailto:office@alphachihonor.org); **(2)** a 10-minute oral convention presentation; and **(3)** a printed poster to be brought to Albuquerque to accompany the oral presentation and hung later at AX Central. For visibility and ease of reference only, no more than six (6) PowerPoint slides of enlarged sections of the poster can be brought on USB and a 1-page printed copy of the poster provided to each judge.
- The paper, poster, and presentation must conform to the posted rubric by which all projects will be judged.