

L.I.F.E. UPDATE

Leading the Integration of Faith & Entrepreneurship



MIAMI UNIVERSITY

JOHN W. ALTMAN INSTITUTE
FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Director's Note: A Fall Like None Other

This fall, a number of key milestones were achieved because of the incredible support of our donors, students, and the faculty and staff of the Farmer School of Business. We are truly humbled to continue to pursue the vision of developing world-class knowledge and student experiences at the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship through L.I.F.E. at Miami University. We continued our academic research endeavors, publishing in a top entrepreneurship journal while working on several new research projects with highly esteemed faculty from around the world. As you will see in this update, we gained approval from the faculty and staff of the Farmer School of Business to make L.I.F.E. an official and ongoing course offering. We began planning for the 2nd Annual L.I.F.E. Research Conference and are preparing for the second iteration of the "Integrating Faith and Entrepreneurship" course. The L.I.F.E. Student Group relaunched with new vision for reaching the campus and building a promising pathway for L.I.F.E.-related internships. We were blessed by generous gifts from donors and a visit from Dan Williamson, who together with his wife, Saroya, endowed the L.I.F.E. program earlier this year. It has been a truly incredible fall semester and we are excited for what's next in L.I.F.E.

L.I.F.E. Publishes in Journal of Business Venturing (FT50)

Because roughly 80% of the world's population holds to some belief system, grasping the power of faith as an influencer over the entrepreneurship process is crucial to truly understanding the field of entrepreneurship. Brett Smith (Miami University), Jeffrey McMullen (Indiana University), and Melissa Cardon (University of Tennessee) explore the possibilities and challenges of research at the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship in their recent *Journal of Business Venturing* publication "Toward a theological turn in entrepreneurship: How religion could enable transformative research in our field." The paper outlines a number of avenues for research, addresses challenges researchers may face, and makes a compelling case for how to overcome them.

Journal of Business Venturing is a Financial Times 50 (FT 50) journal, meaning it is one of the premiere business publications in the world. On top of that, JBV is the leading entrepreneurship journal on the list. Publishing in top academic journals not only furthers L.I.F.E.'s intention to penetrate scholarship, it also has a deeply practical relevance as well. By publishing quality research in top journals, professors around the world have access to the content coming out of the Research Lab. You can find the full article at: <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0883902621000495>.

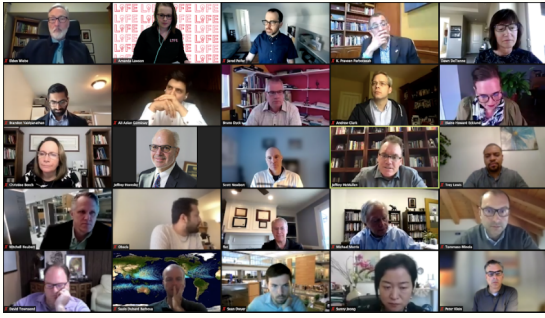
IN THIS ISSUE

**BUILDING THE FIELD
THROUGH ACADEMIC
RESEARCH**

**EXPANDING THE
L.I.F.E. NETWORK
GLOBALLY**

**DEVELOPING
DONORS AND
ENCOURAGING
STUDENTS**

**WORLD CLASS
OPPORTUNITIES FOR
STUDENTS**



Building Global Connections for L.I.F.E.

This past fall, we have been fortunate to engage with a broad audience of academics and practitioners interested in the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship. Building off of the connections made at the L.I.F.E. Research Conference in April, we have worked with several scholars on multiple new research projects. We have been blessed to continue our work with academics, practitioners, and students around the world through our conference, course, and student group. This fall alone, we have worked with partners in France, Italy, Germany, Australia, and England. Our current academic research endeavors include work with scholars in Tennessee, Indiana, and Louisiana, and the students engaged in our course and student organization come from 20+ states and 4 countries.

Academy of Management, August 2021

Alongside David Miller (Princeton University), Brett Smith spoke on a panel hosted by the Christian Management Scholar group at the AoM international conference about the 2021 L.I.F.E. Research Conference.

Faith Driven Investor Conference, September 2021

Founding Director, Brett Smith, spoke about the mission of LIFE to create practically relevant, academically rigorous research. We also shared a current project on how faith-driven investors manage identity multiplicity in the context of impact investing. The conference was attended by over 4,500 people in 53 different countries.

Startup Cincy Week, October 2021

Brett Smith moderated a panel entitled "Founder Therapy," where speakers including Kirsten Moorefield, co-founder of Cloverleaf, Nick Jackson, founder of Speak Love, Sean McCosh, partner of Differential, and Mike Hillenmeyer, Coterie shared their experiences in entrepreneurship and the benefits of gathering to process the highs and lows of entrepreneurship and the ways their faith informs the entrepreneurial journey.

Upcoming: 2nd Annual L.I.F.E. Research Conference

This year's conference will be held virtually on April 7th. Join us for panels, keynotes, and networking opportunities full of great conversations about the exciting interdisciplinary research happening at the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship! With a diverse array of sessions, this year's conference will include a lively debate, research workshop, conversation with an editorial team evaluating proposals for an open special issue on religion and entrepreneurship, and a research pitch competition where winners will receive funding for projects in the field of faith and entrepreneurship! Stay tuned for an announcement on our 2022 keynote speaker!

In the meantime, you can find the videos from last year's conference on our YouTube channel @L.I.F.E. Miami University. Visit the conference website at liferesearchconference.com to learn more and register for the event.

Developing Relationships between Donors and Students

One of the most encouraging days of the semester was when L.I.F.E. donor, Dan Williamson, came to Oxford to visit. Dan and his wife, Saroya, generously endowed the program with a \$1M gift earlier this year. On his visit, Dan met with several Farmer School of Business faculty and staff. During his time on campus, L.I.F.E. Founding Director, Brett Smith, presented Mr. Williamson with a portfolio of progress over the past year. This included program highlights, publications, and goals for the future. Additionally, we compiled several pages of student comments on L.I.F.E.-- what they've learned, how the program has influenced them, and why they believe L.I.F.E. is valuable for Miami University and the Farmer School of Business. The best part of the day was when three students who were part of the inaugural class met with Dan to share stories. Hearing more about their experiences, Williamson also got to encourage them and share his own passion for the work L.I.F.E. does at Miami.



Faith and Entrepreneurship in the Classroom

It's official--In October, the undergraduate curriculum review board and the faculty of Miami University's Farmer School of Business, voted in favor of making the *Integrating Faith & Entrepreneurship* course a permanent course offering at Miami University!

We are excited to be offering the second John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship course on Integrating Faith & Entrepreneurship this spring semester. Building off of our curriculum from last year, this semester's course will include new guest speakers, exciting content, and assignments geared toward helping students understand how and why people integrate their faith in their entrepreneurial ventures. This semester we will emphasize how integration occurs for both individuals and organizationals. We are thrilled to be adding new topics and content to the course thanks to an ever-growing field of practitioners and academics sharing knowledge and stories meant to encourage and teach. We will tackle familiar topics like stewardship, rest, and identity, as well as add some new ones including mentorship and goal setting. The course is already at capacity for registration and we are hoping to add even more seats before the semester begins!

L.I.F.E. Student Internships

For many years, the John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship has had incredible success at placing top-tier students in fast-paced internships--many of which lead to full time offers after graduation. As a part of the Institute, an important component of the L.I.F.E. Research Lab is the ability to not only teach students who will thrive in a variety of industries, but to assist them in their search for companies and organizations that for which they are a good fit. We have been blessed to provide L.I.F.E. students internships with great organizations such as OCEAN and Master Provisions, but this is only the beginning! We have already begun expanding our internship offerings and are excited to announce a growing cohort of companies seeking L.I.F.E. students. If you or someone you know would be interested in a 2022 summer intern, please contact Amanda Lawson at LawsonA8@MiamiOH.edu.

A panel of recent Miami University graduates returned to speak with our class about the challenges and opportunities of integrating their faith into their work. Amanda Lawson (15), Allie Pearson (15), Gavin Morton (19), Adam Motley (14), and Christian Jaekle (15) shared their stories working in a range of companies and industries.



Assistant Director for L.I.F.E., Amanda Lawson, taught on how faith can moderate our definitions of "success" and "failure," as well as how faith helps navigate seasons of both. Students worked together to come up with their own definitions and examples of "success" and "failure," complete with real-world, personal examples of each.

L.I.F.E. Student Group

For the first time in three semesters, Miami student organizations were able to meet in person this fall. Our L.I.F.E. Student Group--founded by students in 2019--was excited to relaunch this fall with new leaders and a wide range of activities meant to build community and develop a toolkit of practical skills for students interested in integrating their faith in their work.

Our students come from a variety of majors and backgrounds and have engaged in bi-weekly meetings with guest speakers on identity, service, leadership, integrity, and much more!



Learn more about the L.I.F.E. Research Lab at www.lifemiamioh.com