



FARMER SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

*John W. Altman Institute
for Entrepreneurship*

Director's Note

As we wrap up another academic year, we are humbled and grateful for the ways students, faculty, alumni, industry partners, and donors have continued to support the L.I.F.E. Program and enabled its growth. This academic year, 33 students participated in the third and fourth iteration of the "Integrating Faith and Entrepreneurship" course; 100 scholars from 15 countries attended the third annual L.I.F.E. Research Conference; our team published two new research papers; we received an anonymous \$3 million gift to continue and expand our efforts. This gift helped propel the program forward in such a way that we have formally established the "Center for L.I.F.E." within the Farmer School of Business at Miami University. You can read more about this below. To support this growth, we hired a new faculty member who will join us this fall, whose research interests align with the L.I.F.E. Program.

Looking forward, we are once again offering a free seminar for PhD candidates who are interested in research at the intersection of Faith and Entrepreneurship. Following the seminar, we are hosting a social for attendees of the Academy of Management Annual Conference where scholars from around the world to come together around the topic of faith and entrepreneurship. Both of these events will be in Boston, MA. On the student-facing side, we are excited to again assist students in securing summer internships and full-time placements after graduation. We will spend our summer gearing up for our Boston events, finalizing additional research projects, and preparing for another semester teaching our course. We are looking forward to sharing our progress with you along the way. You can follow us on LinkedIn for regular updates on all of this and more!

Creating a Center for L.I.F.E.

What began as the "L.I.F.E. Research Lab" in 2018 is taking on a new name following the rapid growth of the program, as well as a \$3 million gift to support this endeavor. The "Center for L.I.F.E." will be housed in the John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship of the Farmer School of Business at Miami University. The Center was officially approved earlier this year and is a major step in furthering the activities of the L.I.F.E. Program. The Center for L.I.F.E. will continue its efforts in producing high-quality academic research and student experiences, while increasing its connection with academic and practitioner partners around the world. We would like to thank an anonymous donor whose incredible generosity was instrumental in the expansion of the program. The following was shared in a Miami University press release regarding the gift: (Quoted from Donna Boen, The Miamian)

"With a new \$3 million gift, Miami intends to expand its pioneering work examining the intersection of faith and entrepreneurship and open doors for other universities to launch and expand similar programs...Miami can expand its pioneering efforts with L.I.F.E. and open doors for other academics at other schools to launch and expand similar programs.

'We are grateful to this donor both for understanding the mission of L.I.F.E. and why it is necessary and then for supporting our pioneering vision and enabling us to continue and expand, making it possible for other institutions to benefit as well,' said Jenny Darroch, dean of the Farmer School of Business and Mitchell P. Rales Chair in Business Leadership."

You can read more about this gift at <https://www.givetomiamioh.org/s/916/22/landing-int.aspx?sid=916&gid=1&pgid=19845&cid=38648&ecid=38648&crd=0&calpgid=4816&calcid=9345>.

Growing the Team



We are thrilled to be welcoming Kylie Heales to the John W. Altman Institute for Entrepreneurship! Kylie was a participant in our PhD Seminar last August and has since finished her dissertation, earning her doctorate from the University of Alberta. Kylie was the recipient of several prestigious awards during her time in Canada and she has earned multiple awards for her academic research. Kylie's focus is social and faith-based entrepreneurship, with a strong theoretical background in institutional logics. She also recently served as a moderator for one of our panels at the LIFE Research Conference. Kylie has also founded several social enterprises, focused on alleviating poverty in East Africa. We are incredibly excited to welcome Kylie to the Miami and LIFE community!

Stay Connected!



L.I.F.E. (Leading the Integration of Faith and Entrepreneurship)



@lifemiamioh



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

Third Annual L.I.F.E. Research Conference

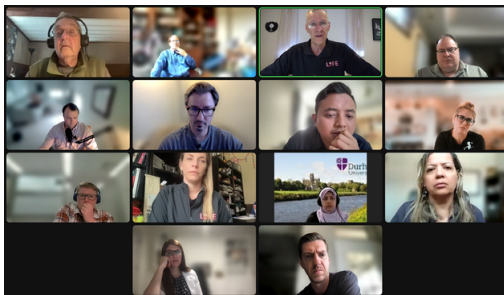
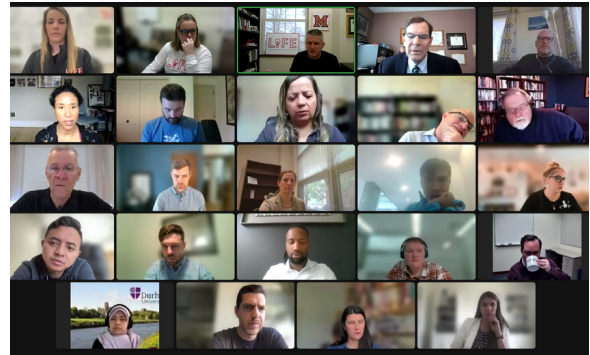
On April 6, 100 academics from 15 countries around the world came together for the third annual L.I.F.E. Research Conference. We were thankful for the 25 scholars who led sessions on Identity, social entrepreneurship, entrepreneurial action, and institutional logics. Also of note was a "State of the Field" panel led by L.I.F.E. Founding Director, Brett Smith (Miami University), Journal of Management, Spirituality, and Religion Editor-in-Chief, Kathryn Pavlovich (University of Waikato), and Small Business Economics Editor, Joern Block (University of Trier). We kicked off the conference with a keynote from highly esteemed psychology scholar, Ken Pargament (Bowling Green State University), who shared about the value and potential for studying psychology, religion and entrepreneurship in tandem. We rounded out the day with a theory workshop by Greg Fisher (Indiana University) and Glen Kreiner (University of Utah).

You can watch videos from the conference on our YouTube channel: @l.i.f.e.miamiuniversity4.



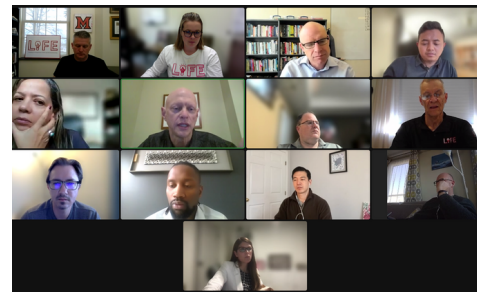
Above: A snapshot of our "State of the Field" panel, led by Joern Block (University of Trier), Kathryn Pavlovich (University of Waikato), and Brett Smith (Miami University), moderated by Trevor Israelsen (University of Victoria).

Below: Our Keynote Address by Ken Pargament (Bowling Green State University) on the implications of psychology in entrepreneurship



Left: Lowell Busenitz (Oklahoma University) shares during our panel on how religion influences institutional theory

Right: Glen Kreiner (University of Utah) and Greg Fisher (Indiana University) explore new ways to build theory around religion and entrepreneurship.



New Publication in Top Entrepreneurship Journal

At the beginning of the summer, Dr. Brett Smith and Amanda Lawson (LIFE Research Lab, Miami University), along with Dr. Saulo Dubard Barbosa (EM-Lyon) and Dr. Jessica Jones (University of Tennessee) published a research paper in the Journal of Business Venturing, a Financial Times top 50 journal. The paper, "Navigating the Highs and Lows of Entrepreneurial Identity Threats to Persist: The Countervailing Force of a Relational Identity with God," explores how entrepreneurs rely on their identity as children of God to balance the highs and lows of entrepreneurship that can wreak havoc on an entrepreneur's identity. We found that a relational identity with God helped to keep entrepreneurs humble in times of entrepreneurial highs, and can affirm their identity in times of entrepreneurial lows, persisting through identity threats and enabling them to continue their work. We would like to thank the many entrepreneurs who were willing to share their experiences with us as we conducted research for this project. You can read the full paper here: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jbusvent.2023.106317>.



Left: Ryan Berg, founder of the Aruna Project spoke to both the LIFE and Social Entrepreneurship classes

Right: One of our students took "creative introductions" to heart by having story time where students learned the value of character and empathy



Left: Gavin Morton ('19) shares his experiences and wisdom with students following our "Recent Grads" panel on the first day of class. We are thankful for an alumni network that is eager to share with our students. Not pictured: Emily Moore ('16) and Lydia Yoder ('17).

Right: Students present projects on Islamic-founded businesses as part of our religious diversity in entrepreneurship project



L.I.F.E. In the Classroom

It was another exciting semester in the "Integrating Faith and Entrepreneurship" course in the Farmer School of Business. Our 15 students came from five different colleges within Miami and participated in a number of hands-on activities surrounding the integration of faith and work. While we brought back several "crowd favorites" like the solitude and silence activity and the calling and vocation project, we were excited to debut some new topics and activities with this class. We introduced a new module on mentorship in the workplace and expanded our efforts on teams, diversity, and employee resource groups (see below for more details). We were also delighted to bring 21 guest speakers to share their experience and wisdom with our students, including 12 returning guests and nine new friends to the L.I.F.E. Program.

Student Experiences Beyond the Classroom

One thing that sets Miami's Entrepreneurship Department apart is its commitment to giving students real-world experience beyond the classroom. In an effort to do the same in our own class, we developed two projects that gave students the opportunity to speak to professionals who are actively engaging their faith with their work. The first was a project on employee resource groups, where students needed to connect with real-world companies to help them develop a space for their employees to discuss and explore faith at work. The second was on the subject of religious diversity; students sought out companies run by people of diverse faiths and learned how their different beliefs influenced how they built and run their company. The result was our students engaging with three major world religions, speaking to several people in SE Asia, creating relationships with companies across the US that are driven by a different faith.

Alumni Spotlight: Milana Yarbrough

Milana graduated in 2022 with degrees in Marketing and Entrepreneurship and is now working in New York City as a Product Marketing Strategist at IBM. When asked about her experience with the LIFE Program, Milana said, "My faith has played a pivotal role in my career decisions. Whether it's asking God for guidance with choosing my first role or simply asking for discernment when building new relationships with co-workers, I am in constant communication with Him and work towards truly living out His values. One thing I learned at LIFE during my time at Miami that has really stuck with me was actually when we visited The Fringe Coffee House and the speaker said 'God is bigger than your biggest mistake.' Now, whenever I think about stepping out on faith and trying new things, I think about how even in the worst-case scenario, God will still continue to love me, keep me, and cover me which gives me the assurance I need to be bold, take risks and embrace change.

