

Ilana Berlin

Econ 110

April 8th 2025

Student Symposium Reflection

I attended multiple panel block and observes multiple posters during the 2025 Steven Galovich Memorial Student Symposium. The first panel I attended, during the 9:00 am to 10:20 am block, was Panel 5; The Natural World: Ecosystems and the Ways We Interact with Them. The topic of the panel were Environmental Science focused as it was hosted by a biology professor, Professor Camila Pizano, and a senior student, Jessica Caal Chamam.

The first presentation in the panel was titled “Corporate Greenwashing” and was presented by Judith Johnson and Adriana Voloshchuk. They defined greenwashing as a company that falsely advertises positive environmental impact to improve public opinion. Though they also noted that this is not an official definition, as there is not legal definition of greenwashing. They discussed the difference between companies taking symbolic green behaviors, such as hosting a march, and sustainable green behaviors, such as switching to solar power.

The parts of the presentation that I found most interesting were the AI use in their project and their regulation incentive comparisons. They talked about using an AI engine

called ClimateBERT to analyze companies environmental project documents for actual impact, and they noted that it tries to take the impact that the writer has for the project into consideration. The environmental regulation incentive that they compared were penalties and rewards. The research that they quotes looked as class A Chinese companies and found that penalties more often reduce greenwashing behavior because rewards can often be abused.

The second presentation was titled Reimagining Lake Forest College's Durand Art Institute Green Space and was presented by Ella Chicone and Anika Kinnear. This presentation was a continuation of a project they completed for a class about turning the unused green space outside of Durand into a prairie and sculpture garden. For their class, they used AI to generate updated images of the space.

The third presentation was one that I found the most interesting in this panel. It was titled Alternative Lawns at Lake Forest College and was presented by O'Malley Galvan. This presentation was about an ongoing project at Lake Forest College and O'Malley's senior thesis. The research was done in collaboration with the Chicago Botanical Gardens. The specific grass alternative that are being studies Sedge Lawns and Mini Meadows, both made with species of plants that are native to the Midwest.

Over the summer three plots of land, one outside Brown Hall and two by the Student Gardens, will be planted with these grass alternatives. Half of the plots in each area will be fertilized with compost coming from the cafeteria and half will be controlled. The goal of the plots is to be less maintenance, require less watering, and be better for pollinators than

typical green grass. Test plots from the Chicago Botanical Gardens already exist in some parks in the Chicago Area.

The final presentation was titled Ant Foraging in Response to A Periodical Cicada Emergence and was presented by Calliope Saban. This research was also a senior thesis. Previous studies have shown that large predators, such as crows, ignore other food sources in favor of cicadas during cicada emergence since the cicadas are so abundant. Calliope's research was to see if ants respond in a similar way even though cicadas are rich in lipids and proteins and ants tend to prefer carbohydrates. They observed that during cicada emergence there was a decreased number of large and medium sized ant species appearing at their traps. This research is also ongoing and the results were relatively insignificant because there were only from one season.