

T.W. Bennett Symposium

FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH WITH PURPOSE | APRIL 23-24, 2025

Schedule-At-A-Glance

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 | USM ABET ENGINEERING WORKSHOP

2 – 2:30 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Introductions and Workshop Overview
2:30 – 3:30 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Room 201</i>	Breakout Session – I (Separate/Parallel for Students)
2:30 – 3:30 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Room 201</i>	Breakout Session – II (Separate/Parallel for Faculty)
3:30 – 4:30 P.M.	Full Group Session - Student and Faculty Presentations
4:30 – 5 P.M.	Consolidate and Prepare Written Outcomes and Recommendations
6 – 8 P.M. <i>Location TBD</i>	No-Host Dinner

THURSDAY, APRIL 24 | T.W. BENNETT SYMPOSIUM

7 – 8 A.M. <i>Trent Lott - Lobby</i>	Registration / Coffee
8 – 10:30 A.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Maximizing Impact of Fundamental Science PLENARY SESSION - FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE WITH A PURPOSE
10:30 - 11 A.M. <i>Trent Lott - Lobby</i>	Refreshment Break and Poster Session
11 - 12 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Inspiring Bridges to Accelerate Research Translation (Panel) TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPACT
12 - 1 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Lunch
1 - 2:30 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Moving Discovery to the Market ACADEMICS WITH A PURPOSE
2:30 - 3 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Lobby</i>	Refreshment Break and Poster Session
3 - 4:45 P.M. <i>Trent Lott - Ballroom</i>	Community and Market Insights to Advance Discovery TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE
4:45 - 5:30 P.M.	Break and Travel to USM Accelerator
5:30 P.M. - 7:30 P.M. <i>USM Accelerator</i>	T.W. Bennett Symposium Networking Event Research with a Purpose Reception (Food and Drinks)

T.W. BENNETT RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM

FUNDAMENTAL RESEARCH WITH PURPOSE | APRIL 23-24, 2025

Schedule and Speakers

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 23 | USM ABET ENGINEERING WORKSHOP

The T.W. Bennett Symposium will host an interdisciplinary ABET Engineering workshop with Southern Miss students and faculty from Polymer Science, Ocean Science, and Computer Engineering to review program progress, identify synergies, and establish best practices. External ABET experts will join to discuss strategies for accelerating research, expediting new company startups, engaging Mississippi's business community, preparing a unique engineering workforce for our state, and advancing research and financial growth at the University.

2 – 2:30 P.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

Introductions and Workshop Overview

Dr. Jeff Wiggins (2023-2025 Bennett Distinguished Professor)

2:30 – 3:30 P.M.

Trent Lott - Room 201

Breakout Session – I (Separate/Parallel for Students)

Facilitator: Dr. Troy Drewry (Ole Miss)

To lead session with USM Engineering Capstone Students from Polymer Science and Engineering, Ocean Science and Engineering, and Computer Engineering.

The goal is to get student feedback on how to improve Southern Miss engineering pedagogy from a student perspective.

2:30 – 3:30 P.M.

Trent Lott - Room 201

Breakout Session – II (Separate/Parallel for Faculty)

Facilitators: Dr. John Misasi (Western Washington University) and Dr. Rebekah Sweat Downes (Florida State University)

To lead session with USM Engineering leads: Dr. Heather Broadhead (Polymer Science and Engineering), Dr. Zhaoxian Zhou (Computer Engineering), Dr. Gero Nootz (Ocean Engineering) and Dr. Kemal Cambazoglu (Ocean Engineering).

The goal is to get faculty feedback on how to improve USM engineering pedagogy from an institutional perspective.

3:30 – 4:30 P.M.

Full Group Session

Student and faculty presentations on workshop findings and recommendations, followed by discussion on interdisciplinary advancements, pre-engineering pedagogy, recruitment strategies, engineering program administration, and more.

4:30 – 5 P.M.

Consolidate and Prepare Written Outcomes and Recommendations

6 – 8 P.M.

Location TBD

No-Host Dinner

Interested participants and guests are welcome to join us for a no-host dinner—an informal chance to connect, network, and unwind. Each attendee will be responsible for their own meal.

THURSDAY, APRIL 24 | T.W. BENNETT SYMPOSIUM

The Symposium highlights contemporary research themes aimed at generating meaningful impacts, focusing on translational benefits for USM, faculty, students, and society. Presentations from recognized leaders in science, business, industry, federal laboratories, and academia will showcase this collaboration. The event emphasizes the importance of “Fundamental Research with a Purpose,” ensuring that research leads to tangible societal benefits. On Thursday evening, the Symposium will conclude with a networking reception featuring food, beverages, and special recognitions for Innovation.

7 – 8 A.M.

Trent Lott - Lobby

Registration / Coffee

8 – 10:30 A.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

**Maximizing Impact of Fundamental Science
FUNDAMENTAL SCIENCE WITH A PURPOSE**

Plenary and Moderator: Dr. Jeffrey Wiggins (2024-2025 Bennett Distinguished Professor)

Speakers: Dr. Robson Storey (USM), Dr. Andy Frazee (Syensqo), Dr. Sam Tucker (Boeing), Dr. Dhriti Nepal (Air Force Research Laboratory), Dr. Heather Broadhead (USM), Dr. John Misasi (Western Washington University)

10:30 - 11 A.M.

Trent Lott - Lobby

Refreshment Break and Poster Session

11 - 12 P.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

**Inspiring Bridges to Accelerate Research Translation (Panel)
TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH AND IMPACT**

Moderator: Dr. Brian J. Cuevas (USM)

Panelists: Dr. Kelly L. Lucas (USM), Dr. Almesha L Campbell (Jackson State University), Dr. Rebekah Downes (Florida State University), Dr. Sam Tucker (Boeing)

12 - 1 P.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

Lunch

1 - 2:30 P.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

**Moving Discovery to the Market
ACADEMICS WITH A PURPOSE**

Moderator: Natalie Guess (USM Innovation & Entrepreneurship)

Speakers: Dr. Donald Sacco (USM), Dr. Olivia McNair (USM), Dr. Vijay Rangachari (USM), Dr. Scott Piland (USM), Dr. Mark Roberson (Reborn C), Dr. Tristan Clemons (USM)

2:30 - 3 P.M.

Trent Lott - Lobby

Refreshment Break and Poster Session

3 - 4:45 P.M.

Trent Lott - Ballroom

**Community and Market Insights to Advance Discovery
TRANSLATING RESEARCH INTO PRACTICE**

Moderator: James Wilcox (USM The Hatchery)

Speakers: Dr. Stacey Hall (USM), Dr. Stephanie Smith (USM), Joel Lawhead (Tek Annoa), Angelica Chardon (Air Force Security), Troy Drewry (USM), Dr. Maria Wallace (USM), Dr. Victoria Scarborough (ChemQuest Group)

4:45 - 5:30 P.M.

Break and Travel to USM Accelerator

5:30 - 7:30 P.M.

USM Accelerator

T.W. Bennett Symposium Networking Event

Research with a Purpose Reception (Food and Drinks)

ABOUT THE T.W. BENNETT SYMPOSIUM

The T.W. Bennett Symposium offers a comprehensive two-day program designed to foster interdisciplinary collaboration and impactful research discussions. This symposium aims to provide a valuable platform for sharing knowledge, exploring innovative methodologies, and shaping the future of interdisciplinary research.

The symposium is made possible through the T.W. Bennett Endowment, established at USM by Mr. and Mrs. T.W. Bennett Sr., in honor of their son, Thomas Waring Bennett Jr., and his passion for the sciences. He was declared missing in action on Dec. 22, 1972, while serving in the United States Air Force.



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