



Public Affairs Conference Summary Report September 24-26, 2024

Executive Summary

The 21st Public Affairs Conference explored the 2024-25 public affairs theme, *Between the One and the Many: Considering Individualism and Community*, which reached over 5,600 students, campus members, the Springfield community and beyond.

This year's theme was led by Public Affairs Fellow, Dr. Joh Schmalzbauer, the Blanche Gorman Strong Chair in Protestant Studies. The 25-member advisory committee representing students, faculty, staff, and community members were vital in developing panel topics, descriptions, and invitations to this year's 43 speakers. The variety of high-profile panelists speaks well to the knowledge and key professional associations and relationships of the committee members.

Conference Results

**5,632
TOTAL**

Final attendance will be
available after recording
views end on 10/18/24

2,356 LIVE VIRTUAL PANEL VIEWS

940 RECORDED PANEL VIEWS TO DATE

2,336 KEYNOTE AND PLENARY SPEAKER VIEWS

POPULAR TOPICS INCLUDED:

- Are we Still Bowling Alone? The State of Community in America
- Harnessing the Power of AI in Healthcare
- Nurturing Genuine Bonds, Free Speech & Regulation in Our Virtual Era
- Can the Spiritual But Not Religious Find Community

Evaluation: 83% rated panels good or excellent | 76% said it offered a new way of thinking about the topic

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**NATIONAL &
INTERNATIONAL
SPEAKERS**

INCLUDED SEVERAL
MSU ALUMNI

Speakers represented experts from diverse disciplines and race/ethnicity groups. A sampling includes:

- Dr. Nancy Ammerman, Boston University
- Orlena Nwokah Blanchard, CROWN Act
- Sarah Cunningham, National Park Service
- Dr. Kim-Anh Nguyen Dang, Duc Dang School of Martial Arts
- Dr. Willy Legrand, IU Int'l University of Applied Sciences – Germany
- Dr. Varun Soni, University of Southern California
- Pete Davis, director/producer of Join or Die
- Ray Suarez and Scott Tong, both acclaimed journalists and authors

Post conference speaker comments:

"It's a small world as I was familiar with the works of other panelists. Great program you have, and thanks for including me." Beth Bailey, Foundation Distinguished Professor of History, Director of the Center for Military, War, and Society Studies, University of Kansas

"The conversations were really fun and interesting." Julie Beck, Journalist, Podcast Host, The Atlantic