Three Minute Thesis Competition
First-Round Heat #1
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, 9:00AM

Judges:

- Eric Godat, PhD, Director of Research Technology, Office of Information Technology
- Rob Pearson, PhD, Director of Postdoctoral Affairs and Career Development, Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies
- Kim Nelson Pryor, PhD, Director for Assessment and Analytics, Division of Student Affairs

Competitors:

1. Milad Tanavardi Nasab, Electrical Engineering PhD: “Adiabatic Computing”
2. Fernanda Da Silva, Economics PhD: “Did Smartphones Pull Parents Away from Their Kids?”
3. Alex Chen, Theoretical and Computational Chemistry PhD: “Accelerating Protein Dynamics Simulations with AI”
4. Syeda Khalid, Cybersecurity M.S.: “Why Do Smart People Fall for Scams?”
5. Ryan Hayes, Quantum Engineering M.S.: “Can We Make Quantum Sensors Harder to Fool?”
6. Syakira Wijaya, Psychology PhD: “Who Parents Are vs. What Parents Do: Distal Characteristics and Proximal Practices Predict Toddler Screen Use and Language Development”
7. Moath Qandil, Electrical Engineering PhD: “Can a Virtual Battery Save a Real One?”
8. Cassandra Hatfield, Education Leadership Ed.D.: “Dyslexia Doesn’t End When Intervention Does”
9. Anarzhan Abilgazy, Computational and Applied Mathematics PhD: “Data-Driven Reduced-Order Models for Inverse Scattering Problems in Lossless and Lossy Media”
10. Sounak Bhowmik, Computer Engineering PhD: “A Quantum Leap in Saving Memories: Spotting Alzheimer's Before It Steals the Mind”

Three Minute Thesis Competition
First-Round Heat #2
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, 10:00AM

Judges:

- Rachel Ball-Phillips, PhD, MBA, Assistant Dean for Fellowships and Awards, Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies
- Adam Neal, PhD, Senior Program Manager, Office of Engaged Learning
- Kaitlin Siebert, MS-LS, CA, Research Engagement Archivist, SMU Libraries

Competitors:

1. Cheng-Yueh Jao, Education PhD: “Rethinking Educational AI Agents through Pedagogical Framework and User Agency”
2. Masoud Deylami, Mechanical Engineering PhD: “Can AI Tell If We Can Make It?”
3. Arnold Charles, Religious Studies PhD: “Grace Isn’t Zelle or Finding a 20 on the Side of the Road. It's a Gift Card!”
4. Sadeepa Sooriyawansha, Computational and Applied Mathematics PhD: “Efficiently Computing the Solvation Energy of Biomolecules”
5. Mohamed Soliman, Mechanical Engineering PhD: “From One Week to Seconds: Designing Our Future, Layer by Layer”
6. Sevda Zafarmandi, Electrical Engineering PhD: “The Brain’s Hidden Conversations”
7. Julia Savage, Molecular and Cellular Biology PhD: “Intercellular Tunneling Nanotubules Induced by the E6*I Splice Variant of High-Risk Human Papillomaviruses”
8. Soarov Chakra Borty, Computer Engineering PhD: “Patient-specific, Time-varying Top-K Multimodal Digital Twin for Alzheimer’s Progression”
9. Alicia Maranville, Computer Science M.S.: “Improving Anesthesia Staffing Decisions Using Data-Driven, Multi-objective Optimization”

Three Minute Thesis Competition
First-Round Heat #3
Tuesday, Nov. 10, 2026, 11:00AM

Judges:

- Rachel Ball-Phillips, PhD, MBA, Assistant Dean for Fellowships and Awards, Moody School of Graduate & Advanced Studies
- Adreana Julander, PhD, Director, Altshuler Learning Enhancement Center
- Charles Wuest, PhD, Director for Programming and Research Associate Professor, Department of English

Competitors:

1. Zhuoyi Wang, Education PhD: "When Words Run Out: How Language Learners Think with Their Hands in Virtual Reality"
2. Leon King, Statistical Science PhD: "AI That Shows Its Evidence—and Its Doubts"
3. Rasiq Hussain, Computer Science PhD: "Can AI Predict Personality from Our Stories?"
4. Md Nayan Dhali, Computational and Applied Mathematics PhD: "Inertia and Vapor Advection Effects on Evaporation-induced Flow Near a Pinned Contact Line"
5. Md Zine E Brahmi, Computer Engineering PhD: "How to Interrogate a Piece of Sand: The Art of Modern Microchip Testing"
6. Emmanuel Nworie, Computational and Applied Mathematics PhD: "Why Small Droplets Survive: Rewriting a Seventy-year-old Rule Inside the Cell"
7. Eleanor Smith, Theoretical and Computational Chemistry PhD: "Synzyme Design of PP2A"
8. Imasha Saparamadu, Computational and Applied Mathematics PhD: "A Tiny Worm, a Big Mystery: Can Mathematics Uncover the Secrets of Aging?"
9. Amira Khedewy, Mechanical Engineering PhD: "Tiny Robots, a Clearer View: Microrobots for Treating Vitreous Hemorrhage"
10. Rylee Davis, Theoretical and Computational Chemistry PhD: "Tiny Peptides, Big Possibilities: Rethinking Alzheimer's Disease"
11. Behzad Parvaresh, Mechanical Engineering PhD: "Predict Before You Print: Using AI to Design Stronger 3D-printed Composites"