

# JOHN CAPPS

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Department of Philosophy  
Rochester Institute of Technology  
Rochester, NY 14623 USA

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WEB: johncapps.net

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## EMPLOYMENT

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|-----------|---|
| 2015-     | Professor, Department of Philosophy, RIT                |
| 2022-2023 | Interim Program Director, Department of Philosophy, RIT |
| 2011-2014 | Chair, Department of Philosophy, RIT                    |
| 2008-2010 | Senior Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts, RIT     |
| 2007-2008 | Associate Dean, College of Liberal Arts, RIT            |
| 2006-2015 | Associate Professor, Department of Philosophy, RIT      |
| 2000-2006 | Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, RIT      |
| 1998-2000 | Assistant Professor, Department of Philosophy, UNF      |
| 1998      | Visiting Assistant Professor, College of Charleston     |

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## EDUCATION

|      |   |
|------|---|
| 1997 | Northwestern University: Ph.D in Philosophy |
| 1994 | Northwestern University: MA in Philosophy   |
| 1991 | St. John's College, Annapolis: BA           |

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## AREAS

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|-----|---|
| AOS | Epistemology, American Philosophy, Pragmatism                   |
| AOC | Logic, History of Philosophy (esp. 20th century Anglo-American) |

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## RESEARCH & PUBLICATIONS

### Articles and Book Chapters

38. 2025. 'At the outset, at least': Pragmatism, mediation, and punishment. *Contemporary Pragmatism*. 22: 28–39.
37. 2025. Truth and the future. *Think*. 23: 55–61.
36. 2024. Epistemology, logic, and inquiry. In Sami Pihlström (Ed.), *The Bloomsbury Handbook of Pragmatism*. London: Bloomsbury.
35. 2024. Responsible other-fashioning: Comments on Todd Lekan's *William James and the Moral Life*. *William James Studies* 19: 59-67.

34. 2023. James and Waismann on temperament in philosophy. *The Pluralist*, 18: 46-65.
33. 2023/2019. The pragmatic theory of truth. *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/truth-pragmatic/>
32. 2022. Pragmatism about truth-makers, *Contemporary Pragmatism*, 19: 350-370. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1163/18758185-bja10052>
31. 2022. The less said the better: Dewey, Neurath, and mid-century theories of truth. *Archiv für Geschichte der Philosophie* 104: 164-191. <https://doi.org/10.1515/agph-2019-0081>
30. 2021. What we talk about when we talk about truth: Dewey, Wittgenstein, and the pragmatic test. *International Journal of Philosophical Studies*. 29:2, 159-180, DOI: 10.1080/09672559.2020.1871055
29. 2020. Pragmatic accounts of belief and truth: A response to Aaron Zimmerman's *Belief: a Pragmatic Picture*. *William James Studies*. 16: 39-56.
28. 2020. Democracy, truth, and understanding: an epistemic argument for democracy. In M.C. Navin and R. Nunan (Eds.), *Democracy, Populism, and Truth*. New York: Springer.
27. 2020. A common-sense pragmatic theory of truth. *Philosophia*. 48: 463-481. DOI: 10.1007/s11406-019-00099-z
26. 2020. Truth and the Goldilocks principle. *Think*. 19: 65-74. DOI: 10.1017/S1477175620000068
25. 2020. William James and the will to alieve. *Contemporary Pragmatism*. 17: 1-20.
24. 2019. Playing fair by William James. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 55(1): 65-70.
23. 2018. Even worse than it seems: Transformative experience and the selection problem. *Journal of Philosophical Research* 43: 113-124.
22. 2018. Did Dewey have a theory of truth? *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 54(1): 39-63
21. 2018. The case for discussion-intensive pedagogy. *APA Newsletter on Teaching Philosophy* 17(2): 5-11. Lenssen Prize Honorable Mention, American Association of Philosophy Teachers.
20. 2018. The Pragmatic origins of ethical expressivism: Stevenson, Dewey, and the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. In S. Marchetti and M. Baghramian (Eds.), *Pragmatism and the European Traditions: Encounters with Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology Before the Great Divide*. New York: Routledge.

19. 2018. From global expressivism to global pragmatism. *Metaphilosophy* 49: 71-89.
18. 2017. A pragmatic argument for a pragmatic theory of truth. *Contemporary Pragmatism* 14: 135-156.
17. 2014. Radical pragmatism: An operator's guide. *European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy* 6: 125-144.
16. 2011. Pragmatic epistemology, logic, and inquiry. In Sami Pihlström (Ed.), *The Continuum Companion to Pragmatism*. New York: Continuum.
15. 2008. With David Hildebrand and Kimberly Bilica. Addressing controversies in science education: A pragmatic approach to evolution education. *Science and Education* 17: 1033-1052.
14. 2008. Introduction. In John Dewey, *Human Nature and Conduct* (pp. ix-xvi). New York: Barnes and Noble.
13. 2007. Naturalized epistemology. In John Lachs and Robert Talisse (Eds.), *American Philosophy: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 532-534). New York: Routledge.
12. 2007. Facts. In John Lachs and Robert Talisse (Eds.), *American Philosophy: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 277-278). New York: Routledge.
11. 2007. Darwin, influence of. In John Lachs and Robert Talisse (Eds.), *American Philosophy: An Encyclopedia* (pp. 152-159). New York: Routledge.
10. 2006. Jamesian truth. *William James Studies* 1. <http://williamjamesstudies.org/jamesian-truth-comments-on-charlene-haddock-seigfrieds-william-james-radical-reconstruction-of-philosophy/>
9. 2004. Sidney Hook and anti-communism. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 40: 803-816.
8. 2004. American philosophy & McCarthyism. *Philosophy Now* 46: 14-17.
7. 2003. Pragmatism and the McCarthy Era. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 39: 61-76.
6. 2002. Achieving pluralism: Why AIDS activists differ from creationists. In T. Burke, M. Hester, & R. Talisse (Eds.) *New Essays on Dewey's Logical Theory* (pp. 239-261). Nashville: Vanderbilt University Press.
5. 2000. Naturalism, pragmatism, and design. *Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 14: 161-178.
4. 1999. The pragmatism of Frederick L. Will. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 35: 475-500.
3. 1996. Dewey, Quine, and pragmatic naturalized epistemology. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 32: 634-667.

2. 1996. Pragmatism, feminism, sameness and difference. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 32: 65-105.
  1. 1995. The bedrock of experience: an assessment of James' proposals for a critical science of religion. In D. Capps & J. Jacobs (eds.), *The Struggle for Life: A Companion to William James' The Varieties of Religious Experience* (238-249). West Lafayette, IN: Society for the Scientific Study of Religion Monograph Series.
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## Books

2. 2009. *You've Got to Be Kidding: How Jokes Can Help You Think*. Wiley-Blackwell, with Donald Capps.
  1. 2005. *James and Dewey on Belief and Experience*. University of Illinois Press, edited with Donald Capps.
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## Reviews

19. 2025. Review of *On Truth in Politics: Why Democracy Demands It* by Michael Lynch. *Notre Dame Philosophy Reviews*. <https://ndpr.nd.edu/reviews/on-truth-in-politics-why-democracy-demands-it/>
18. 2023. (With Camille Lea.) Review of *How to Think Like a Philosopher* by Julian Baggini. *Metascience* 32: 387-389.
17. 2022. Review of *Fixing the Climate: Strategies for an Uncertain World* by Charles Sabel and David Victor. *Dewey Studies* 6: 92-97
16. 2022. Review of *A Philosopher Looks at Science* by Nancy Cartwright. *Metascience*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11016-022-00822-9>
15. 2020. Review of *Sick Souls, Healthy Minds: How William James Can Save Your Life* by John Kaag. *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 56: 110-113.
14. 2020. Review of *Neurath Reconsidered: New Sources and Perspectives* edited by Jordi Cat and Adam Tamas Tuboly. *HOPOS: The Journal of the International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science* 10: 353-357. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1086/707992>
13. 2017. Review of *Cambridge Pragmatism* by Cheryl Misak. *Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.15173/jhap.v5i3.3156>
12. 2013. Review of *Expressivism, Pragmatism, and Representationalism* by Huw Price. *Contemporary Pragmatism* 10: 193-200
11. 2013. Review of *Preludes to Pragmatism* by Philip Kitcher. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 49: 443-447.

10. 2012. Review of *Truth and Skepticism* by Robert Almeder. *Notre Dame Philosophy Reviews* <http://ndpr.nd.edu/news/truth-and-skepticism/>
9. 2008. Review of *The Dynamic Individualism of William James* by James Pawelski. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 44: 550-555.
8. 2006. Review of *How the Cold War Transformed Philosophy of Science* by George Reisch. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 42: 167-171
7. 2004. Review of *Sidney Hook on Pragmatism, Democracy, and Freedom* edited by Robert Talisse and Robert Tempio. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 40: 554-557.
6. 2004. Review of *Philosophical Tools for Technological Culture* by Larry Hickman. *Contemporary Pragmatism* 1: 184-187.
5. 2002. Review of *Ecological Psychology in Context* by Harry Heft. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 38: 468-472.
4. 2001. Review of *Time in the Ditch: American Philosophy in the McCarthy Era* by John McCumber. *The Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 37: 677-681.
3. 1999. Review of *Pragmatism, Reason, and Norms* edited by Kenneth Westphal. *Ethics* 109: 492.
2. 1998. Review of *The Two Pragmatisms* by H.O. Mounce. *Ethics* 108: 837-838.
1. 1998. Review of *Structuring the World* by Sami Pihlström. *The Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy Newsletter*.

## Invited and Conference Presentations

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|------|---|
| 2025 | The 'Truth Isn't What You Think It Is. APA Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco.   |
| 2025 | Pragmatism, Deterrence, and Collective Punishment. SAAP, Washington, D.C.   |
| 2024 | Pragmatism and Pluralism: A Common-sense, Hard-core, Pragmatism-first, Approach to Truth. SAAP at the American Philosophical Association, Portland and SAAP, Boston |
| 2023 | What Pragmatists Should Say About the Future. SAAP, Denver  |
| 2023 | Lekan's <i>William James and the Moral Life</i> . William James Society at SAAP, Denver.  |

- 2022 The “Eclipse” of Pragmatism: Using Text Analysis to Understand the Recent History of American Philosophy (with Evelyn Brister and Kris Edelman). Hickman Legacy Project Conference, Texas State University..
- 2021 Music, Philosophy, Politics: A Response to Simone Gubler’s ‘An Ameliorative Account of Cancel Culture.’ APA Central Division Meeting.
- 2020 Pragmatic Accounts of Belief and Truth: A Response to Aaron Zimmerman’s *Belief: A Pragmatic Picture*. William James Society at the American Philosophical Association, Philadelphia.
- 2019 The Past and Future of Interdisciplinarity: Neurath and Incentives for Unified Science (with Evelyn Brister). SSHAP, Boston.
- 2019 Using and Abusing Truth in the Time of Trump. The Uses and Abuses of History in the Trump Era, RIT.
- 2018 Democracy, Truth, and Understanding: An Epistemic Argument for Democracy. American Section of the International Association for Philosophy of Law and Social Philosophy (AMINTAPHIL), Boston.
- 2018 Campbell’s *Experiencing William James: Belief in a Pluralistic World*. Author Meets Critics session, SAAP, Indianapolis.
- 2018 Truth in the Time of Trump. Hale Ethics Series, RIT.
- 2018 Leveraging Student Discussions in Class (with Wade Robison). Teachers on Teaching Discussion Series, RIT.
- 2017 Dewey, Truth, and Critical Philosophy. John Dewey and Critical Philosophies for Critical Political Times, University College Dublin.
- 2016 Ethical Theory, Ethical Practice: Ethical Frameworks for Real-Life Situations. Oregon Mental Health Consortium, Portland.
- 2015 Pragmatism, Meaning, and Representation. Summer Institute in American Philosophy, University College Dublin.
- 2015 The Pragmatic Origins of Ethical Expressivism: Stevenson, Dewey, and the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. SSHAP, Dublin.
- 2015 The Partial Eclipse of American Philosophy. SAAP, Grand Rapids, MI.
- 2013 Last Chapters for Pragmatism and Logical Empiricism: John Dewey and the International Encyclopedia of Unified Science. Lehigh University.
- 2012 Almeder’s Truth and Skepticism. Author Meets Critics session, APA Pacific Division Meeting, Seattle.
- 2011 Pragmatic Truth. Nazareth College.
- 2011 Truth and Inquiry. Nordic Pragmatism Conference, Copenhagen.

- 2010 Truth, Ethics and Pragmatism. New York Pragmatist Forum, New York.
- 2009 Pragmatic Truth and Scientific Practice. SPSP, Minneapolis.
- 2007 Ethics and Truth. Hale Ethics Series, RIT.
- 2006 Epistemological Lessons of the Evolution/IDC Debate. SAAP, San Antonio.
- 2005 The Value Commitments of Pragmatism. William James Society at the APA Eastern Division Meeting, New York.
- 2005 Response to David Hildebrand's "Diversity, Inclusion, and Exclusion: A Reply to Capps." SAAP, Bakersfield, CA.
- 2004 Truth and Ignorance. The Ethics and Epistemologies of Ignorance, Penn State
- 2004 Truth Matters. Ohio University
- 2003 Response to Bernardo Cantens' "Overcoming the Evidentialist's Challenge: Peirce's Conjectures of Instinctive Reason and the Reality of God." APA Eastern Division Meeting, Washington, D.C.
- 2003 Sidney Hook: The Hero in History and Democracy. RIT.
- 2003 A Feminist Response to Philosophical Skepticism (with Evelyn Brister). APA Central Division Meeting, Cleveland
- 2003 Skepticism, Feminist Epistemology and Contextualism (with Evelyn Brister). Society for Skeptical Studies at the APA Pacific Division Meeting, San Francisco.
- 2003 Response to James Pawelski's "William James on Crossing the Internal Divide: A Reply to Richard Gale." SAAP, Denver.
- 2002 Pragmatism and the McCarthy Era. SAAP, Portland.
- 2001 Response to Hugh McDonald's "Dewey's Holism." SAAP, Las Vegas.
- 2000 Response To Robert Meyers' "Immediacy, Knowledge, and Naturalism." The Future of Realism in the American Tradition of Pragmatic Naturalism, SUNY Buffalo.
- 2000 Can Beliefs Be Prima Facie Justified? The Creighton Club, Skaneateles, NY.
- 2000 Naturalism, Pragmatism, and Design. SAAP at the APA Central Division Meeting, Chicago.
- 2000 Creationism vs. Pragmatism. SAAP, Indianapolis.
- 2000 Is Dewey's Model of Social Inquiry Defensible? SAAP, Indianapolis.
- 2000 Modest Naturalism. Connecticut College.
- 1999 Frederick Will's Pragmatic Naturalism. SAAP, Eugene, OR.

- 1996 Response to Hilary Kornblith’s “In Defense of a Naturalized Epistemology.”  
Can Epistemology Be Unified? SUNY Buffalo.
- 1996 Dewey, Quine, and Naturalized Epistemology. SAAP, Toronto.

## Miscellaneous

- 2021- Organizer, *I Am an American Philosopher* interview series, SAAP Website  
<https://american-philosophy.org/i-am-an-american-philosopher-interview-series/>
- 2023 Peer Review Report for: “Case Report: What—or who—killed Frank Ramsey?  
Some reflections on cause of death and the nature of medical reasoning”  
Wellcome Open Research 7:158 (<https://doi.org/10.21956/wellcomeopenres.19656.r63446>)
- 2022 The Open Texture of Democracy. The Loop: ECPR’s Political Science Blog.  
<https://theloop.ecpr.eu/the-open-texture-of-democracy/>
- 2020 Richard Rorty, Cancel Culture, Political Fallibilism, and Achieving Our  
Country. The Blog of the American Philosophical Association.  
<https://blog.apaonline.org/2020/07/21/richard-rorty-cancel-culture-political-fallibilism-and-achieving-our-country/>
- 2019 Words Divide —Pictures Unite: Otto Neurath, Isotype, and the Unity of  
Science (with Evelyn Brister, Ethan Adler, and Rebekah Walker). Online  
exhibit for RIT’s Cary Graphic Arts Collection.

## SERVICE TO THE UNIVERSITY AND PROFESSION

- 2025 Organizing Committee: John Dewey's Experience & Nature: A  
Centennial Celebration, Southern Illinois University
- 2024-2025 RIT Academic Affairs Committee (At-Large Member)
- 2024-2025 RIT Dismissal Review Committee for NTT Faculty (alternate)
- 2023-2025 RIT Faculty Senate, College of Liberal Arts Senator
- 2022-2024 College of Liberal Arts Distinguished Professor Committee
- 2022-2023 COLA Financial and Resource Allocation Advisory Committee
- 2018-2019 William James Society, Executive Committee (At-Large Member)
- 2016-2017 College of Liberal Arts Promotion Committee
- 2015-2016 College of Liberal Arts Tenure Committee
- 2014-2017 RIT Academic Senate, College of Liberal Arts Senator

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| 2013-2014 | William James Society, Nominating Committee                  |
| 2012-2013 | Chair, College of Liberal Arts Miller Fellowship Committee   |
| 2011-2013 | Graduate Ethics Task Force                                   |
| 2010-2012 | Smoking Policy Task Force                                    |
| 2008-2010 | Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Committee               |
| 2007-2010 | College of Liberal Arts Honors Advocate                      |
| 2007-2009 | Advisor, RITExploration Program                              |
| 2007-2008 | College of Liberal Arts Honors Coordinator                   |
| 2007-2008 | College of Liberal Arts Dean's Search Committee              |
| 2005-2010 | College of Liberal Arts Student Research Fund Committee      |
| 2005-2008 | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Committee        |
| 2005-2007 | Judge, Institute Public Speaking Contest                     |
| 2004-2005 | College of Liberal Arts Research Committee                   |
| 2003-2004 | College of Liberal Arts General Education Steering Committee |
| 2003      | Conference Organizer, Pragmatism and Technological Practice  |
| 2002-2004 | Chair, College of Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee          |
| 2001-2004 | Advisor, RITExploration Program                              |
| 2001-2005 | College of Liberal Arts Curriculum Committee                 |
| 2001-2003 | American Studies Planning Committee                          |
| 2001-2003 | Academic Conduct Committee                                   |
| 2001      | College of Liberal Arts Student Research Fund Committee      |
| 2000-2001 | RIT Philosophy Department Search Committee                   |
| 1998-2000 | UNF Philosophy Department Search Committee                   |
| 1998-2000 | UNF College of Arts and Sciences Curriculum Committee        |

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**REFEREE** *Australasian Journal of Philosophy, Contemporary Pragmatism, European Journal of Pragmatism and American Philosophy, HOPOS: The Journal of the International Society for the History of Philosophy of Science, International Journal of Law, Crime and Justice, International Journal of Philosophy and Theology, Journal for the History of Analytical Philosophy, Journal of the Philosophy of History, Journal of Philosophical Research, Noûs, Philosophical Quarterly, Philosophical Studies, Science and Education, Southern Journal of Philosophy, Synthese, Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society, Cambridge University Press, Palgrave Macmillan, Princeton University Press, Routledge, Southern Illinois University Press, University of New Mexico Press*

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## AWARDS AND GRANTS

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| 2025-2026 | Professional Development Leave                 |
| 2025      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant |
| 2022      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant |

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| 2021      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant   |
| 2020      | Lessen Prize Honorable Mention for “The Case for Discussion-Intensive Pedagogy” American Association of Philosophy Teachers  |
| 2019      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Grant  |
| 2019      | Professional Development Leave   |
| 2017      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant   |
| 2017      | Student Learning Assessment Grant  |
| 2016      | Provost’s Learning Initiative Grant  |
| 2015      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Grant  |
| 2015      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant   |
| 2011      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Grant  |
| 2010-2011 | Professional Development Leave   |
| 2009      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant   |
| 2006      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Grant  |
| 2005-2006 | College of Liberal Arts Miller Fellowship  |
| 2004      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Research Grant   |
| 2003      | Provost’s Learning Initiative Grant (participant)  |
| 2002      | Society for the Advancement of American Philosophy Joseph J. Blau Prize for “significant contribution to the history of American Philosophy”                               |
| 2002      | College of Liberal Arts Faculty Development Grant (with Babak Elahi)   |
| 2002      | Finalist, Eisenhart Provost’s Teaching Award for Excellence in Teaching  |
| 2000      | SAAP Ila and John Mellow Prize for “excellence in advancing the American philosophical tradition toward the resolution of current personal, social and political problems” |
| 1996      | SAAP Douglas Greenlee Prize for “the best paper presented at the annual meeting by a person holding a Ph.D. for no more than five years”                                   |
| 1992-1997 | University Scholar, Northwestern University  |
| 1991-1992 | University Fellow, Northwestern University   |

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## TEACHING

**Courses Taught** Crime, Justice & Ethics, Seminar in Philosophy: Philosophy of Punishment, Theories of Knowledge\*, American Philosophy\*, Contemporary Philosophy\*, Modern Philosophy\*, Symbolic Logic\*, Philosophy of Science\*, Seminar in Philosophy: Truth\*, Seminar in Philosophy: Truth in the Time of Trump, Contemporary Moral Problems, Introduction to Philosophy\*, Critical Thinking\*, Special Topics: Advanced Logic, Special Topics: Cornel West, Special Topics: Barack Obama, Special Topics: Evolution and Creationism, Special Topics: Literature and

Philosophy, Special Topics: American Pragmatism and Realism, Special Topics: The James Brothers, Special Topics: Skepticism

\* Multiple times

**Senior Theses**

Erika Strickland Au, Jeffrey Young\*, Christopher Boone, Ashley Aberg, Anthony Ward, Kayla Emerson\*, Tom Bojarski, Jeremy Berke\*, Paul Taylor, Patricia Cadareanu, Emilio Collins\*, Noah Collins\*, Ricardo Aguilera, Afnaan Qureshi\*

\* Primary Advisor

