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Joint Symposium Celebrates Diversity of Ideas

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[Joint Symposium Celebrates Diversity of Ideas](#)

Summary: The UMM/UMTC Joint Symposium “Biology in the 21st Century: Complex Concepts, Amazing Opportunities” served as a model for intercampus collaboration.

MORRIS, Minnesota (March 9, 2016)—Last month the University of Minnesota, Morris Philosophy Discipline partnered with the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities to host the joint symposium “[Biology in the 21st Century: Complex Concepts, Amazing Opportunities](#).” The event served as a model for intercampus collaboration.

The symposium offered students and faculty chances to take part in a two-day interdisciplinary conversation. It began with a lecture by Alan Love, associate professor of philosophy at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and director of the Minnesota Center for Philosophy of Science (MCPS), followed by a research presentation by UMTC PhD candidate Jack Powers. The next day faculty from both campuses led discussions on intersections of biology and philosophy as well as roundtable discussions on graduate school and career opportunities, American Indians and women in science, and more.

The impetus for the event, according to Love, was Associate Professor of Philosophy Mark Collier’s choice of “Philosophy of Biology” as the theme for the Midwest Philosophy Colloquium and their mutual desire to “do something more” by building into the structure of the colloquium additional opportunities for student participation and discussion. From there, Love leveraged UMTC’s Biology Interest Group (a discussion group of MCPS) “to bring the conversation to Morris” for the benefit of all those involved.

“Our coming to Morris gave us interactions we wouldn’t have had otherwise and might end up being something that fosters future interactions,” says Love. “These interactions are reciprocal; there’s special value in us engaging in this community directly. I have already seen it benefit me. I don’t know if that will be the case for everybody, but I think that it has that kind of potential.”

Love’s co-organizer, Collier, agrees that the symposium’s value lay in leveraging existing resources from across the University system. He adds that there are areas of study, like philosophy of biology, a small campus like Morris may not be able to cover through classes; events like the symposium, though, can bring these areas to Morris for the benefit of faculty and students alike.

“Opportunities like this can have an enormous impact on our campus,” he says. “They can help our students gain broader exposure to some of the leading experts in their fields of study and help faculty gain contacts and collaborators in other campuses of the University.”

While it’s too soon to say what will come of the event, Collier is optimistic.

“It could hopefully serve as a possible model of future collaborations between Morris and UMTC,” he says.

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