



Final Competition

Tuesday, March 31, 2026
6 to 9 p.m. | Reception included

McInnes Room
2nd Floor, Student Union Building
6136 University Ave, Halifax



Program

Welcome and opening remarks

- Ann LaBillois, Elder in Residence
- Dr. Christian Blouin, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies
- Dr. Wanda Costen, Provost and Vice-President Academic

3MT finalist presentations

Judge deliberation and People's Choice Award voting

Announcement of winners and closing remarks

- Dr. Christian Blouin, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies

Reception

Master of Ceremonies — Brett Ruskin

Brett Ruskin is a Senior Reporter for CBC News Network, appearing daily on television screens from coast to coast. He has experience working in newspaper and radio newsrooms in Halifax and Ottawa. Brett is known for covering a wide range of stories, from military operations to provincial politics for local scientific research. He's also known for quirkier occurrences, like when he helped a pregnant woman in a blizzard or was bitten by the groundhog, Shubenacadie Sam.



About 3MT

What is Three Minute Thesis?

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a skills development activity that challenges participants to explain their thesis or project to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes.

What are the rules?

- A single static slide is permitted, presented from the beginning of the oration.
- No additional electronic media or props are permitted.
- Presentations are to be spoken word.
- Presentations have commenced when the presenter starts their presentation through movement or speech.
- Presentations are 3 minutes and competitors exceeding 3 minutes are disqualified.
- The decision of the adjudicating panel is final.

What are the judges looking for?

Comprehension and content

- Presentation provided clear motivation, background, and significance to the research question;
- Presentation clearly described the research strategy/design and the results/findings of the research; and
- Presentation clearly described the conclusions, outcomes and impact of the research.

Engagement and communication

- The oration was delivered clearly, and the language was appropriate for a non-specialist audience;
- The PowerPoint slide was well-defined and enhanced the presentation; and
- The presenter conveyed enthusiasm for their research and captured and maintained the audience's attention.

Judges

Dr. Leslie Phillmore



Dr. Leslie Phillmore is currently the Associate Vice-president, Academic and a Professor with an active research program at Dalhousie University.

As AVPA, Dr. Phillmore supports institutional priorities related to Academic Affairs, including academic quality assurance, program development, teaching and learning, and faculty development. As a Professor in the Department of Psychology and Neuroscience in the Faculty of Science since 2006, she studies learning, memory, and neuroplasticity in songbirds and other birds, supervising research projects of both graduate students and many honours students on spatial memory and vocal communication.

Kristan Hines



Kristan is passionate about helping people achieve their goals – and this is evident in everything she does. For over 20 years, she has tackled some of Atlantic Canada’s most compelling challenges and provided counsel to senior leaders in government and industry across Canada.

A trusted advisor and problem-solver, Kristan brings perspective to the conversation – drawing on her understanding of the Atlantic Canadian landscape, her vast network, and her experience as a political advisor on Parliament Hill and Chief of Staff to a former Premier of Nova Scotia.

As NATIONAL’s Senior Vice President of Corporate and Public Affairs, Kristan brings together experts in strategic communications, government relations, crisis management, and public engagement from across the NATIONAL network to navigate complex issues and position clients for success.

A proud graduate of Acadia and Dalhousie, Kristan is currently the Vice-Chair of the Dalhousie University Board of Governors. In addition, she is Vice-Chair of the Phoenix Youth Programs Board, and a member of the Downtown Halifax Business Commission Board of Directors.

Vanya Ewart



teaching, advising, and mentoring students.

Vanya Ewart is a University Teaching Fellow in the Department of Biochemistry & Molecular Biology at Dalhousie University. She holds a B.Sc. from the Université de Moncton and a Ph.D. from Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her research has focused mainly on fish antifreeze proteins and related freeze resistance adaptations. In addition, she has conducted a variety of applied research projects for industrial clients. At Dalhousie, she is dedicated to

Jen Andrews



Jen Andrews is a Professor in the English Department and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. Her most recent book, *Canada Through American Eyes* (Palgrave 2023), was nominated for the Gabrielle Roy Prize.

Andrew Cochran



Life on the Internet, and Theodore Tugboat.

Andrew Cochran teaches professional communication, AI literacy, and technology innovation. Before joining Dalhousie full-time in 2020, he was Senior Managing Director for CBC Atlantic and Head of Strategy and Transformation for CBC News nationally. Previously, he founded and led the media company Cochran Communications, which produced documentary and entertainment programs for national and international networks, including Pit Pony,

Finalists

Annika Benson, PhD, Biomedical Engineering

Small & mighty: A miniature ultrasound probe for safer brain surgery

Caitlin McCavour, PhD, Plant, Food and Environmental Sciences

Stop treating soil like dirt

Noah Doucette, PhD, School of Nursing

Towards Human Papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine equity and inclusivity

Daniel Basso, MSc, Psychiatry

Adapting to a world not meant for you: An exploration of autism, substance use, and young adulthood

Eshaa Amer, BSc Honours, Psychology and Neuroscience

Beyond baby blues: Postpartum mental health in racialized mothers

Emily Burke, PhD, Chemistry

Turning waste into worth: The SF6 challenge

Sibi Chakravarthy Parivendan, MSc, Computer Science

Farmbook: Using AI and social networks to save lives

Sahil Sahil, PhD, Engineering

Waste to energy: Unlocking the potential of organic waste

Kevin Nguyen, MSc, Physiology and Biophysics

A novel approach to treating aggressive breast cancer

Valerie Schagen, MSc, Biology

The balance between life and death in Lace Plant

Martins Obialor, PhD, Chemical Engineering

The quiet moment before a battery fails

Aisha Rahman Asha, PhD, English

Motherhood in war: Sacrifice and resistance

Claire Floras, PhD, Materials Engineering

If you can't stand the heat, get out of the kitchen: Baking lithium-ion batteries

Prizes

First place

- \$1,000
- Eligible participants have the opportunity to represent Dalhousie at the Eastern Regional 3MT Competition in June at Saint Mary's University in Halifax

Second place

- \$500

Third place

- \$250

People's Choice Award

- \$500 (in addition to any other prize money received)

Remaining finalists

- \$100

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Erika Sommerville, University & Community Transition Officer

NATIONAL Public Relations

Iain Deans, Senior Counsel, Creative Strategy

Kristan Hines, Senior Vice President, Public Affairs

Rachel Cunningham, Senior Consultant

Previous Finalists as Coaches

Ahmed Ramadan (PhD Candidate, Biomedical Engineering)

Cédric Blais (PhD Candidate, Biochemistry and Molecular Biology)

Dr. Sharon Vogel (PhD, English)