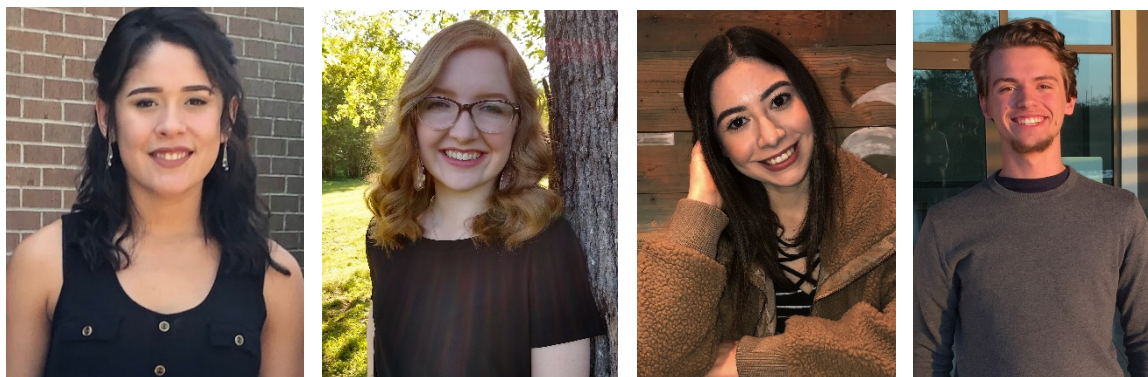


# Fuentes, Cox, Quinones, and Griffin

## Place in 12<sup>th</sup> Annual McGraw Hill Poster Contest



Each spring from 2008 to 2019, NTCC's McGraw Hill Poster contest drew friends of the college and top NTCC students to engage in hundreds of scholarly conversations in the foyer of the Whatley Center for the Performing Arts. This year was different. The Covid crisis shaped a new criteria, where students had to send videos of their presentations and pictures of their posters to eleven community-and-honors-alumni judges. NTCC leaders of the event wondered whether student isolation, and technical difficulties with this process might hamper the quality of the results.

But the twelfth McGraw Hill Poster contest turned out to be unique in many positive ways. Only the most determined twelve students of the nineteen who qualified, submitted materials by 30 April, but for the first time, it was a truly international contest. Judges and submitting scholars came from three continents. Moreover, the final scored averages of the twelve participants came within a width of only three points. It was very close, and each of the students presented original works of their own research.

Presidential Scholars from *Honors Northeast* again dominated the winner's circle. But students outside this vanguard tier of the NTCC honors program, and indeed, outside of *Honors Northeast* itself made the strongest bid for success since 2011. **Karla Fuentes**, sophomore Presidential Scholar from Winnsboro placed first and will win \$400 plus a special McGraw Hill bonus certificate for her study on the possible effect of violent video games on the desensitization of users. Drawing from principles in biology, psychology, and statistics, she found the data inconclusive, but arresting. Her study dramatized the need for a better funded, larger sample to study the problem. Presidential Scholar **Katelyn Cox** from Mount Vernon came in second (\$300) with her Caldwell-Award winning work on the Texas scholar, Walter

Prescott Webb. Cox argued that Webb has his own claim to distinction as a historian. Unlike other great American historians like Frederick Jackson Turner or David McCullough, Webb completed a “grand arc of erudition,” changing viewpoints of the past, influencing present policy, and embracing projects such as the Junior Historians, and the *Texas Handbook* that shaped the future of the profession. **Maritza Quinones**, from Mount Pleasant, another Caldwell winner, took third (\$200) with her work on the “Marvelous Makeover,” the role of Adina De Zavala in creating the Alamo as Texas’s patriotic supersite. Quinones has now established the unique legacy of both serving as an award-winning film scholar for this year’s award-winning film, and starring in it as Adina De Zavala. Finally **Sam Griffin**, from Pittsburg, came in fourth (\$100) for his look at Gene Autry as the ultimate White Hat. Autry’s singing, rags-to-riches story, and film-after-film depiction as a good guy made him central to America’s need for a positive self-conception during years of the Great Depression and World War II.

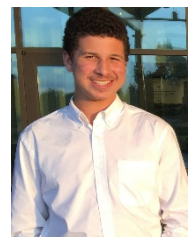
All of the scholars involved presented informative videos that can be viewed on YouTube, with the query, <2020 McGraw Hill Poster Contest>. In addition to the winning scholars noted above, the group also includes:



**Jennika Appelberg** is a member of NTCC’s soccer team who submitted from Vantaa, Finland. Her work on “The Hitler Rubric” involved a consensual way to judge American political leaders, developing a scale on how far they distanced themselves from the quotes and actions of Adolph Hitler.



**Mercedes Collins** the Texas Heritage Bank Scholar from Daingerfield, presented a new-generation perspective on the similarities between the United States and Russia. Parallels from this history of each nation provide reasons to support a rapprochement between the two powers.



**Jalyn English**, Presidential Scholar from Bogata, presented a narrative of his work as the producer of NTCC’s award-winning film on Adina De Zavala. English argued that the “second siege” of the Alamo in 1908 was as significant in establishing the site as the 1836 siege. The NTCC film, a labor of love by the students, is the first cinematic production that shows this.



**Daniel Landaverde**, the recent winner of one of 50 Jack Kent Cooke macro-scholarships nationwide, from Mount Pleasant, described the influence of the British East India Company in the colonial period of American history. He argued that the Tea Party of 1773 was only a small part of this influence. The Company shaped the rise of corporate capitalism in the United States.



**Verania Leyva Garcia**, Presidential Scholar from Mount Pleasant explained her poster on Photosensitization through Cyclometalated Platinum. Leyva discussed her own research involving ligand testing, and the discernment of light emissions. She showed how research in this field could influence outcomes in cancer research, water treatment, and display technology.



**Madison McComasky** from Sydney, Australia, was the captain of NTCC's 2019-20 soccer team. Her work on 'boomeranging intellectuals' described how American intellectuals such as Lincoln Steffens, John Dos Passos, and John Dewey arrested their own leftward embrace of communism. Their rejection of communism and swing to the right in the 1930s and 40s, however, paralleled the trajectories of Australian intellectuals as well.



**Jaidyn Thompson**, Presidential Scholar from Daingerfield presented her work that was based on extended interview with the influential Northeast Texas attorney, Harold Nix. Unlike Mary Ann Glendon's influential work in the 1990s that indicted the rule of lawyers, Thompson interpreted Nix as a Populist, who played a functional role in the region, defending victims of corporate mismanagement.



**Rebecca Yaws** an NTCC sophomore from Harleton, Texas, presented on the emotions of prohibition. Using a bank of early silent temperance films now on YouTube, Yaws illustrated the powerful visuals of this early genre. For a generation used to talk, the silent films illustrated the anxieties and fears caused by drunkenness. Historians have heretofore vastly underestimated and often missed altogether the role of cinema in the success of Prohibition.

The contest this year was beholden to a Whatley Enhancement Grant, the McGraw-Hill Education Corporation and its representative, Casey Slaght, and eleven judges. eight of the judges have been long-term supporters of this event, and they included Elaine Beason, former university professor, Dr. Shirley Clay, NTCC Professor Emeritus, Lisa Ellermann of Region

VIII, Real Estate Broker Edward Florey of Mount Pleasant, college patrons Jerald and Mary Lou Mowery of Mount Vernon, Reverend Dr. Wayne Renning of Mount Pleasant, and Dr. Jerry Wesson, Mount Pleasant Municipal Judge. This year's contest because of its virtual aspect also gained some NTCC alumni as judges. This group included Zachary Richardson, now teaching at El Centro College in Dallas, Gabriela Quezada, studying architecture in Brisbane, Australia, and Cassidy Watkins, working at the San Marcos, Texas Treatment Center. Richardson and Watkins both formally presented posters at the National Collegiate Honors Council. Gabriela Quezada was one of the five NTCC students who have won the annual poster competition of the Great Plains Honors Council.

Andrea Reyes, a Title V Honors/PTK Coordinator, and former Presidential Scholar who has worked long years with the contest, noted: "I am thankful for Dr. Yox's ingenuity in hosting our first virtual event, the support of the judges, and all of the resilient students who stepped up to the challenge. The energy that the scholars bring to this contest year after year could be felt despite the online transition, and I hope that it will continue for many years to come."

The contest was beholden to Andrea Reyes, and Austin Baker, Virtual One Stop Specialist for Title V who solved some last-minute technical difficulties.

This competition and previous McGraw-Hill Poster contests are all available online at [www.ntcc.edu/honorsposters](http://www.ntcc.edu/honorsposters).