

*a convincing argument for the effectiveness of the comedy-horror hybrid in this cult classic.”*

## **Examining the Examiner: An Amicus Brief on Conflicts Between Forensic Technology and Indigenous Religious Freedoms in Favor of Virtual Autopsies**

**Student researcher:** Peyton James, Senior

*Examining the Examiner* began as a classroom project on a topic that intersects technology and culture. Stemming from my degree in anthropology and interests in religion, law, and forensic science, I submitted my research in an amicus brief format incorporating all these aspects. An amicus brief is a legal document in which anyone not a party to a case assists the court by offering information, expertise, or insight that has a bearing on the issues in the case.

This amicus brief supports the use of virtual autopsy in the case of Mushkooub Aubid, a member and spiritual leader of the Mille Lacs Band of Ojibwe, whose death in a single-vehicle car accident in 2015 became the center of controversy when legal authorities insisted on a medical autopsy against the traditions of Aubid’s tribe. Due to Aubid’s history of cardiac issues, his family concluded



*CT scans are one of many forms of technology that can be used to perform virtual autopsies.*

that he experienced a medical event while driving. While the state patrol did not request an autopsy, the local Minnesota medical examiner insisted on one, against Aubid’s religious traditions.

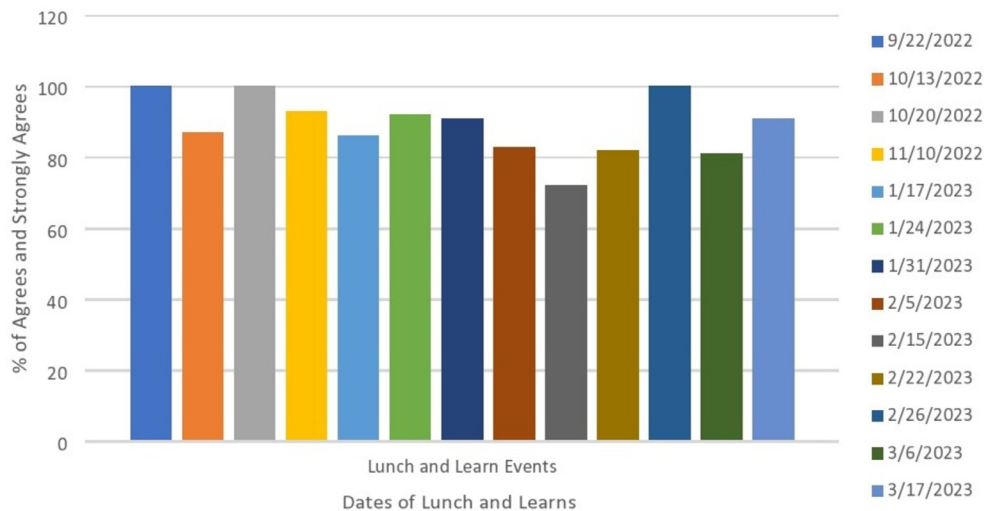
The objective of the amicus is to work with Indigenous People in determining the best way of handling the deceased during forensic investigations that does not inhibit practicing traditions. A practical solution could be a virtual autopsy, which would not leave any tissue damage on the deceased as a conventional autopsy would. With the current technology available in hospitals, performing a virtual autopsy is a viable option. For example, computed tomography scans can locate foreign objects within the tissue or bodily organs, as shown in a 2019 study of individuals in combat-related circumstances. Most notably, a 2014 study shows that virtual autopsies can identify 60–80% of injuries. This insight supports the procedure’s credibility in investigations that may not be caused by foul play.

*Research mentor Risa Cromer writes: “Peyton’s hypothetical amicus brief provides an evidenced-based argument for virtual autopsies within forensic investigations to respect Indigenous people’s rights to religious freedom. Peyton smartly argues that virtual autopsies are a viable alternative that avoids the need to dissect the decedent or interfere in time-sensitive practices related to death and burial.”*

## **Efficacy of the Pedagogical, Cultural, and Advocacy Programming at Purdue University Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center**

**Student researcher:** Michael Kuczajda, Senior

Founded in 2015, the Asian American and Asian Resource and Cultural Center (AAARCC) carries on the work of past groups and individuals providing pedagogical, cultural, and advocacy programming to help educate everyone on campus. AAARCC hopes to help students find a sense of belonging that contributes to creating a successful identity, both professionally and academically, while also helping the community be better educated and more inclusive. Through survey analysis, archival study, and participant observation, it has been shown that events consistently drew interested students (for example, the weekly Lunch and Learn program series), and most



*Between September 2022 and March 2023, a majority of the participants felt that the Lunch and Learn series of events put on by AAARCC taught them something new.*

students stated that they learned something new during those events. Efficacy could be improved by increasing the amount of space, such as by providing a bigger and more encompassing facility; increasing the number of scholarships and awards, both national and campus-wide; and increasing the center’s visibility on campus. These results are significant because they can lead to better program efficacy in the future as well as enable the center to reach more students. These extra resources would not only aid AAARCC in providing better and more effective support for students, but also would allow for more community engagement, both on and off campus.

*Research advisor Pamela Sari writes: “Michael Kuczajda’s research on the efficacy of AAARCC’s programming offers valuable insights into the importance of cultural centers in supporting students in journeys of identities and academic/professional excellence. His research offers reflective points to support cultural center efforts in the context of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging work on campus.”*

## American Foreign Policy and Public Opinion of the Crimean War (1853–1856)

**Student researcher:** Anurag Shah, Senior

During the Crimean War (1853–1856), France and Britain sided with the Ottoman Empire to curb Russian

expansion. America, having friendly relations with Russia and a rivalry with the British, elected to maintain its longstanding policy of neutrality, but also be diplomatically aligned to the Russian cause. This work examines American foreign policy and public opinion (gauged through media representations) during the conflict and explores how the two are related and how they reflect wider trends in 19th-century America.

Strong Russo-American relations led to mutual benefit for both parties as the conflict progressed. Most significantly, the threat of American intervention helped ensure that the freedoms of navigation were respected by all parties, allowing trade to flow between Russia and America. British-American relations, on the other hand, remained poor and culminated in a major scandal during the Anglo-American Recruitment Crisis, a controversy about illegal British recruitment on American soil that generated anti-British sentiment throughout the country.

Newspaper reporting on the Crimean War in America showcased a diverse set of opinions, which were not always aligned to foreign policy. Among the trends in reporting, the most significant was the difference between North and South, reflecting the same tensions that would lead to the Civil War only five years later. The northern free states supported Britain and France throughout the conflict, primarily for ideological and moral reasons. The southern slave states veered toward a strong anti-British