

GRAD IN FOCUS



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LA FAYETTE

Graduate
School

SUMMER EDITION 2025

Message from the Dean

DR. MARY FARMER-KAISER

Summer is often imagined as a time of stillness — a pause, a reset, a chance to return to the work we care about most with fresh eyes and deeper focus. But this year, the world isn't exactly quiet. The headlines are heavy. The pace doesn't slow. And yet, here in graduate education, we must press on.

Last night, I paused to go to Science on the Bayou, and it was just what I needed. Dr. Emily Kane shared research with real public stakes: how failing septic systems disrupt local ecosystems, and how mosquito fish are playing a rock star role in both surviving toxic pollution and helping control mosquito populations. Her lab's work, which collaborates with local mosquito control agencies, is an awesome example of research that serves the public good. But perhaps the most compelling moment for me was when Dr. Kane and PhD student Shubham Yadav began talking about findings that didn't quite make sense — until they did. Shubham stayed curious and really dug in. What could have been missed or dismissed turned out to be something new. I found myself nodding and smiling, reminded that research, like so much else in life, often gets messier before it makes sense.

That stuck with me.

Progress — whether in labs, libraries, or lived experience — is rarely linear. It takes persistence, collaboration, and trust in the process. And the good stuff that I associate with summer — writing, deep research, creative breakthroughs — often comes only after you've waded through confusion and questions. But when it comes, it's worth it.

This issue of our newsletter is full of that good stuff: events, awards, writing support, and resources designed to help you move forward. Wherever you are in your journey this summer, I hope you find time for clarity, momentum, and some community too. Even when things feel unsettled, the work you're doing matters. Keep going.

May your experiments succeed, your writing flow, and your AC stay strong this summer. —Dr. MFK



"Amateurs sit and wait for inspiration, the rest of us just get up and go to work."

STEPHEN KING

On Writing: A Memoir of the Craft





Summer Grad School Events

Mondays - Wake Up and Write!

If the University is open, grad students and faculty gather to write, read, and think at the Alumni Center Board Room on Mondays at 8:30-10:30 AM. The Grad School provides coffee, treats, and quiet. You provide the focus and progress. Parking is easy. No registration is required. Summer sessions begin June 9.

June & July - Dissertation Boot Camp

The Dissertation Boot Camp offers dedicated writing time, coaching, and support for advanced doctoral students actively working on their dissertations. Space is limited to 12 participants per session. Session 1: June 11-13. Session 2: July 9-11. Apply [here](#) no later than May 30.

6/6 - Deadline to Register for the 14-Day Writing Challenge

Sign up for the NCFDD 14-Day Writing Challenge. The challenge is simple: write for at least 30 minutes every day -- Monday through Friday -- for two weeks (6/16-6/29). "Writing," for this purpose, refers to any scholarly activity ranging from the spark of a new idea to polishing a near-complete chapter. Plus, you get access to the WriteNow software! Register by 6/6 [here](#).

6/9 - 7/24 - Summer Session Dissertation Writing

Looking for motivation, shared purpose and accountability, and a dedicated writing space? Dr. Amanda Mayeaux is hosting another dissertation boot camp-style writing space in Bourgeois Hall on Monday-Thursday from 9 AM - 3 PM all summer long! All graduate students are welcome to use the space with registration. Free parking available. Please register [here](#).

6/10 - Writing Personal Statements & Narratives

Combining personal and academic writing can be challenging—especially in applications. In this A21 professional development workshop via Zoom on June 17 from 10–11:30 AM, we'll explore how to write compelling personal statements and narratives for fellowship and grant applications. Register [here](#).

6/12 - Moving from Resistance to Writing

Still putting off your writing even though summer — your "catch-up" season — is already here? Join this powerful NCFDD Zoom webinar on June 12 from 1–2 PM to uncover what's really holding you back, learn how to break through writing resistance, and build the support and momentum you need to finally get it done. Register [here](#).

6/17 - Writing Research Statements

Developing a strong research statement is essential for many academic and research opportunities. In this A21 professional development workshop via Zoom on June 17 from 10–11:30 AM, you'll learn how to craft compelling statements for fellowships and grants, explore common challenges, and gain techniques to enhance your writing. Register [here](#).

6/24 - Revise & Refine: Fellowships & Grants Workshopping

Looking for one-on-one feedback on your fellowship or grant application? This A21 professional development workshop via Zoom on June 24 from 10–11:30 AM offers individual appointments for personalized feedback and workshopping on an application you're developing or planning to submit in the future. Register [here](#).

7/10 - The Art of Saying No

Struggling to say "no" without guilt — and watching your time and energy disappear because of it? You're not alone. Join this NCFDD Zoom webinar on July 10 from 1–2 PM to learn practical strategies for setting boundaries, protecting your time, and saying "no" with confidence. Register [here](#).

DISSERTATION BOOT CAMP

An intensive, two-and-a-half-day writing retreat hosted by the Grad School that is designed to help doctoral students make serious progress on their dissertations.

What?

Why?

- ✓ Focused environment removes distractions
- ✓ Practical tips and writing strategies from support progress
- ✓ Group goal setting builds accountability
- ✓ One-on-one coaching from on-site consultants sharpens formatting
- ✓ Structured time supports sustained writing progress
- ✓ Peer support strengthens motivation and accountability
- ✓ Food and drink keep you fueled and focused



STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION

SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS OPEN NOW

\$500 FOR DOMESTIC STUDENTS
\$1,000 FOR INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

DEADLINE:
JULY 3, 2025
AT 4PM

Click to Apply



Graduate Student Organization

- July 11 - Funding Deadline
- July 14 @ 4:30 pm - Funding Committee Meeting
- July 15 @ 4:30 pm - Communications Committee Meeting
- July 16 @ 5 pm - Advocacy Committee Meeting
- July 18 @ Noon - GSO General Meeting



Planning a literature review to support your research this summer?

Save time, improve your search results, and pick up tips for tracking your own publication metrics by taking a deep dive into new database features and tools.

Register to join the **Dupre Library summer webinar series** [here](#):

June 11th at 10 AM - JSTOR

June 25th at 2 PM - EBSCO

July 9th at 10 AM - Cabell's

July 23rd at 2 PM - Web of Science

Individual research support is also available.

[Schedule a research appointment here.](#)

Doctoral Hooding Ceremony

The Spring 2025 Doctoral Hooding Ceremony was one to remember! While every ceremony is special, this one stood out with two heartwarming moments: a surprise engagement for an Ed.D. grad and a married couple earning their D.N.P. degrees together. We are incredibly proud of all our newly hooded doctors—your achievements make us Ragin' Cajun proud!



Dr. Marti Andries and
Dr. James Andries



Grand Marshal Dr. Paul Leberg
and President Dr. Savoie



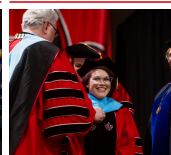
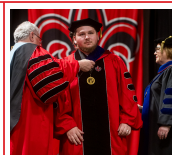
Special thanks to Dr. Patricia Hunt
for taking over our Instagram



The Ceremony



The Proposal!!



Grad Education in the News

[How to Prepare for the 'Worst Job Market in a Generation'](#)
Chronicle of Higher Education, 13 May 2025

[Controlling Costs and Optimizing the Value of Graduate Degrees](#)
Council of Graduate Schools Report, 14 May 2025



Spring 2025 Award Winners

Alumni Association Outstanding Master's Graduate Award Recipient & Finalists

- Taylar Johnson, MS Psychology - Overall
- Caroline Dugan, MA History - Finalist
- Mallory Fontenot, MS Kinesiology - Finalist
- Keely McLeod, MS Kinesiology - Finalist
- Mahek Pathak, MA English - Finalist
- Maxwell Volk, MM Music - Finalist

Neiheisel-Phi Beta Kappa Outstanding Master's Graduate Memorial Award

Honoring excellence in the classical arts and sciences.

- Caroline Dugan, MA History

Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Awards*

Recognizing exceptional contributions to undergraduate teaching by graduate students.

- Tanner Menard, PhD English: Graduate Teaching Excellence Award
- Lily Guidry, MS Industrial Chemistry: Outstanding GTA Award



Tanner Menard and Lily Guidry

Outstanding Doctoral Mentors

Selected by the Office of the VP for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development.

- Dr. Henry Chu, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences
- Dr. Boyun Guo, College of Engineering
- Dr. Amanda Mayeaux, College of Education and Human Development
- Dr. Maria Seger, College of Liberal Arts
- Dr. Frances Stueben, College of Nursing and Health Sciences

Outstanding Master's Mentors

Celebrating faculty who inspire, guide, and elevate graduate students.

- Dr. Farzad Ferdowsi, Electrical & Computer Engineering
- Dr. Aimee Gros, Kinesiology
- Dr. Michael Martin, History
- Dr. Maria Seger, English
- Dr. Jorge Villa, Geosciences



*Dr. Michael Martin, Dr. Aimee Gros, and Dr. Maria Seger.
Not pictured: Dr. Farzad Ferdowsi and Dr. Jorge Villa.*

Most-Loved Graduate Program 2025

- Computer Science (MS & PhD)

GSAW 2025 Research Showcase Poster & Paper Competition Winners

Co-sponsored by UL Lafayette Research and the Graduate School

Awards: 1st – \$500 | 2nd – \$300 | 3rd – \$200

Poster – Applied & Translational

1. Rajib Chowdhury, PhD Systems Engineering, Mechanical Engineering
2. Chloe Guidry, MS Psychology
3. Tasnima Hossain Sulty, PhD Biology

Poster – Foundational & Theoretical

1. Md Mehedi Hasan, PhD Math
2. Md Mustakin Alam, PhD Computer Science
3. Kiara Davillier, MS Psychology

Paper – STEM Foundational

1. Johnathan Allen, PhD Biology
2. Kristel Gatdula, PhD Systems Engineering, Chemical Engineering
3. Gabrielle Atkinson, PhD Biology

Paper – STEM Applied

1. Simin Javaherian, PhD Computer Science
2. Lillian Tsitsi Mambiri, PhD Systems Engineering, Chemical Engineering
3. Lisa Stephanie Dizon, PhD Systems Engineering, Chemical Engineering

Paper – Non-STEM

1. Ashley Kidd, PhD Speech Sciences
2. Muhaiminul Islam Neon, PhD English
3. Kayode Amusan, PhD English

Say It In Six – \$100 Winners

Big ideas, one image, six words.

1. Roberto Salazar (VR in LA film scouting)
2. Morteza Bodaghi (AI for health & safety)
3. Aliyah Watkins (Researching sexual subjugation & supremacy)

1st



Hollywood Meets Bayou—VR Location Scouting

2nd



Health and safety, decoded by AI

3rd



Enslaved Men's Sexual Subjugation and Supremacy

* [Learn more about our Teaching Excellence Award recipients here.](#)



Call for Proposals: Sustainable Development Research Awards – Round 4

With Dr. Brian Bolton, we are excited about Round 4 of UL Lafayette's Sustainable Development Research Awards. This program supports impactful research aligned with economic growth, environmental protection, human experiences, or any of the 17 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). To date, over \$175,000 has been awarded to nearly 100 researchers including grad students, faculty, and staff working to advance sustainability in Louisiana and beyond.

Round 4 aims to award some 20 grants of \$1,500–\$2,500. Now's the time to make sure your application is considered!

Proposals are due by June 4, 2025, at 11:59 p.m.

👉 [Apply here](#) | [Learn more](#)

Writing *Tips & Tools*

from Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



We are all writers here. (Yes, even you, students in STEM and professional programs.) Eventually, for your degree or in your career, you will need to tackle a long-form project that requires writing. Think comprehensive reports, theses, dissertations, synthesis projects—or maybe, if you're especially daring, a book.

The first step in a project of scale is to set clear, manageable goals. If you're not sure what needs to be done, survey available resources and outline potential steps. Let's take the dissertation as our example. ProQuest and Dupré Library contain archives of dissertations from graduates in each doctoral program. Peruse examples from your discipline.

ProQuest's eLearning Dissertation Bootcamp, a free video series, breaks the process of developing a dissertation into simple steps. So does NCFDD, a professional development resource repository with an accessible dissertation success curriculum that enhances skills needed for extended research-based writing projects.

Once you understand the requirements for this type of manuscript and the specific steps to complete it, you can begin. Your program might scaffold these steps over time, or your program might expect you to begin this process through your own initiative. Regardless,

communicate with your committee chair to ensure you understand expectations for the topic, timeline, and final product.

The choice of topic can make or break a dissertation. In *From Student to Scholar*, Steven M. Cahn suggests, "Narrow your focus... Then, narrow it again... A sharply focused choice indicates that you understand the appropriate scope of a dissertation." A project that takes on too much is impossible to complete, regardless of the effort expended.

Most doctoral non-completers fizzle out at the "all-but-dissertation" phase when they are most isolated. As a result, working with mentors is important but so is working with peers. The accountability of regular check-ins aids the writing process, from inspiring you to maintain a consistent writing schedule to generating productive feedback.

Although I've used the dissertation as my example here, these ideas can—and should—be applied to other long-form writing projects. Exchange dissertation resources for resources specific to your project, but the tips remain the same. Most importantly, take care of yourself. Be mindful of your health, take periodic breaks, and stay connected to other interests and people. We all need balance to sustain our energy to the end.



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at Lafayette Graduate School



Get Outside get Involved

Cajun Jam/Farmers & Artisans Market
Every Saturday @ 9 AM - Moncus Park

Creole Culture Day
June 8 @ 10 AM - Vermilionville

June ArtWalk
June 14 @ 5 PM - Downtown Lafayette

Language Cafe
June 19 @ 6 PM - Moncus Park

Youngville Independence Day Celebration
July 3 @ 5 PM - Youngville Sports Complex

Independence Day Festival
July 4 @ 5 PM - St. Julien Park Broussard

Community Drum Circle
July 24 @ 6 PM - Moncus Park

Important Dates and Deadlines

6/9 - Summer Classes Begin

6/11 - Last Day for Dropping or Adding Classes

6/18 - Last Day to Apply for Graduate Degree

7/14 - Last Day to Submit Defended Copy of Theses or Dissertations for Editing and Final Approval

7/28 - Last Day to Submit Final Copies of Dissertations and Last Day to Complete Graduate Written &/or Oral Examinations

**DON'T
FORGET**

Key Resources for Grad Students

Campus Cupboard supplies free, nonperishable items to meet students' temporary food needs. Location: 210 E. St. Mary Blvd

Career Closet provides students with free, gently used professional clothing items for interviews, career fairs, and other professional networking events. Location: 210 E. St. Mary Blvd

Career Services provides services to students in career planning, development, and job-seeking strategies. Location: Agnes Edwards Hall, Room 104

The Counseling and Testing Center offers free counseling, crisis intervention, and short-term psychotherapy for individuals, couples, and groups. Location: Saucier Wellness Center, OK Allen Hall

Uwill Student Mental Health & Wellness offers free immediate access to teletherapy. Help is available 24/7/365. Scan the QR code to get started using your UL email.



The Office of Disability Services establishes eligibility and facilitates services and accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. Location: Agnes Edwards Hall, Room 126

The Statistical Consulting Center provides statistical support to UL Lafayette graduate students and faculty for research involving statistical methods. Location: 432 Maxim Doucet Hall

Graduate Student Organization and **Student Government Association** advocate for all graduate students and offer funding to help offset the cost of research and travel. Locations: gso.louisiana.edu and sga.louisiana.edu

The Shopper Shuttle runs on Friday afternoons on the hour from 2-7pm from campus to Walmart. Location: Catch the shuttle at the Union or Cajun Village

The Writing Lab offers a writing community for students and faculty with a comfortable space where writers work with other writers. Visit to discuss writing, receive feedback and help, and take advantage of tutoring services. Location: Dupré Library First Floor