

GRAD IN FOCUS

MARCH 2026



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
L A F A Y E T T E

**Graduate
School**

Message from the Dean

MARY FARMER-KAISER, PH.D.

Last month I organized the regional 3MT® competition for the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools. I'm not certain when I said yes last summer that I fully appreciated the logistics—65 competitors, six heats, and nearly 30 community judges, all in a city where I do not live. I was feeling both excited and overextended.

And then the conference began, and I loved every bit of it. I loved being there to support our UL Lafayette competitor, Asif Istiak. I loved watching the competitors step up to the 3MT® challenge. And I loved seeing our community judges listen with curiosity, admiration, and understanding.

One judge was Jan Risher, an editor and columnist at *The Advocate*. She later [wrote about the experience](#), sharing that what struck her most was the students' commitment to clarity and connection.

I'm finishing this message from Washington, DC, where I'm preparing to participate in a symposium at the National Museum of African American History and Culture. As I think about presenting my own work tomorrow, I find myself reflecting on Jan's observation—and reminding myself to follow these students' lead. Focus on clarity, on accessibility, on telling the story of the work and why it matters.

(And to stop thinking about the historian in the audience who commented on my very first conference presentation. Some academic nerves never fully go away.)

Jan shared another moment from the competition that I've been thinking about too. When she asked one of the finalists what she took away from the experience, the student responded: "To enjoy what you do—and to enjoy what you do, you have to really know where it connects in the big picture, in the big story. If you find where it fits in the big story, you can narrow it down and find purpose in what you do."

Our work is complex, detailed, and deeply specialized. But its power grows when we step back, find the larger story, and share our work with clarity and purpose.

As we approach GSAW and the Research and Creative Works Showcase, I hope you will consider embracing this challenge. Share your work. Tell the story behind it. And help others see the connections, the purpose, and the impact of what you do.

There are many eager to listen.

"Hiding behind
big words and jargon
would have been easier.
Instead, they told stories.
They translated.
They connected dots."

JAN RISHER

Editor and Columnist
The Advocate





Upcoming Events in March

Mondays - Wake Up and Write!

Every Monday morning when the University is open, grad students and faculty write, read, and think at the Alumni Center Board Room from 8:30-10:30 a.m. The Grad School provides coffee, breakfast treats, and quiet. You provide the focus and progress. Parking is easy. No registration required.

Wednesdays - Wednesdays We Write

Is Wake Up & Write too early? We've got something new for you! Join us in Girard Hall 108F on Wednesday afternoons for writing time and progress on those theses, dissertations, or class projects. Offered in partnership with the Writing Collaborative, this dedicated writing time provides accountability, community, and access to helpful resources. Drop in between 2-5 p.m. and stay as long as you like. No registration required.

3/3 - Afternoon Analytics with the Statistical Consulting Center

Join us on March 3 from 4-5 p.m. in Maxim D. Doucet Room 201 for a presentation featuring the Statistical Consulting Center. Learn SPSS, a user-friendly, step-by-step data analysis tool—no complex coding required—perfect for anyone who wants to better understand their data. [Registration required.](#)

3/5 - Money Matters Lunch & Learn: Entrepreneurship & Side Hustles

Join us for a special evening edition of our Money Matters series, Entrepreneurship & Side Hustles, on March 5 from 5:30-6:45 p.m. in Griffin Hall, Room 315. This later-than-usual session will focus on practical strategies for launching a side hustle and building additional income while in graduate school. [Registration required.](#)

3/10 - Overcoming Writer's Block: Virtual Session

Did you miss the lunch and learn? No worries! Join us on Zoom for another session on "Overcoming Writer's Block" with Dr. Nichole Stanford, Director of the Writing Lab. This time, we'll meet on Tuesday, March 10 from 11:30-12:30 virtually. Whether it's a paper for class or a thesis or dissertation project, Dr. Stanford will provide fresh approaches for breaking through writing barriers. [Get the Zoom link by registering here.](#)

3/12 - NCFDD: How to Develop a Daily Writing Practice Webinar

Join the NCFDD webinar on March 12 from 1-2 p.m. to build a sustainable writing routine. Learn the three biggest productivity myths, what sets "rising stars" apart, and a simple 30-minute strategy to write more with less stress. [Get the Zoom link by registering here.](#)

3/6 - A2i+ Skills in Demand: How Grad Education Prepares You for Corporate Challenges

Discover how the skills you've gained in grad school are highly valued across industries. This A2i+ community webinar will help translate your academic experience to the workplace, leaving you confident and ready to navigate a corporate, government, or non-profit job search. Taking place virtually on March 6 from 1-2 pm. [Get the Zoom link by registering here.](#)

3/23-3/28 - Graduate Student Appreciation Week (GSAW)

Graduate Student Appreciation Week is a week-long celebration recognizing the contributions and achievements of graduate students and graduate education. Join us for special events, research showcases, and lots of opportunities for connection. Event details on following page.

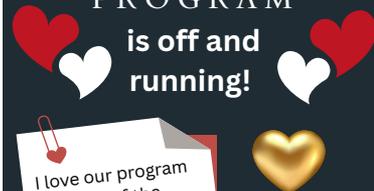
3/31 - Afternoon Analytics with the Statistical Consulting Center: Virtual Session

Join us on March 31 from 4-5 p.m. on Zoom for a presentation featuring the Statistical Consulting Center. Learn how its services support your research — whether you're working with data for the first time or refining a project. The session includes a services overview, a hands-on demo, and time for Q&A. [Get the Zoom link by registering here.](#)

Most Loved

GRAD PROGRAM

is off and running!



I love our program because of the community we create and the support we show one another.

I truly appreciate the inclusive environment where diverse perspectives are respected and encouraged.

I love that our professors are knowledgeable... and hilarious.

This department has also provided us with opportunities I would never have access to at other universities.



Students, faculty, staff, and alumni, tell us why you love your grad program:

- Post on your social channels using **#ULGradLove2026** and include **@ULGradSchool**
- Fill out [this form](#), which sends your love directly to the Grad School to share



Win a **catered lunch** for your department (grad students, faculty and staff) and claim the **traveling trophy!**



GRADUATE STUDENT APPRECIATION WEEK



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MONDAY

WAKE UP & WRITE + GSAW KEYNOTE SPEAKER, DOCTORAL CANDIDACY PINNING, AND ACADEMIC HONORS RECOGNITION

Start your morning with two hours of dedicated writing time at the Alumni Center with Wake Up & Write jazzed up for GSAW week. Join us at 6:00 p.m. for the GSAW Keynote Address by **Dr. Kedrick Nicholas**, one of very own our doctoral grads and interim President of McNeese State University, followed by the pinning ceremony for doctoral students who have advanced to candidacy this year and recognition of grad students earning academic Honors this year.

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TUESDAY

BAYOU BASH WITH SGA: TRIVIA & LINE DANCING GRAD-STUDENT STYLE

Inspired and brought to you by our graduate student leadership in SGA, join us in the Student Union Ballroom from 4-7 PM for Louisiana-themed trivia (and prizes!) from 4:30-5:30 PM, followed by Cajun-style line dancing lessons with a DJ and instructor from 5:45-6:45 PM. And a Bayou Bash wouldn't be complete without some yummy Cajun food. Come and show off your trivia skills, learn some new moves, eat great food, and connect with fellow grad students for some Bayou-inspired fun! Plus ones encouraged. [Registration Required.](#)

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WEDNESDAY

MONEY MATTERS LUNCH & LEARN: INVESTING IN YOUR FUTURE + DAY 1 OF THE RESEARCH & CREATIVE WORKS SHOWCASE

Money Matters with Dr. Brian Bolton, interim Dean of Moody College of Business, will gear you up for the future by discussing how to open and maximize a free Roth IRA; join us in FG Mouton Room 207 for lunch at 11:30 AM and the presentation at 12 PM. [Registration is required.](#) Day 1 of the Poster Presentation portion of the Research & Creative Works Showcase starts on Wednesday afternoon from 2-4 PM in Dupré Library. Don't miss the opportunity to compete for cash prizes and showcase your work. [Learn more and register for the Research & Creative Works Showcase.](#)

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THURSDAY

GRAD GAMES & GOOD VIBES + DAY 2 OF THE RESEARCH SHOWCASE

Grab some grad school friends and join the Graduate School for some fun at the Alumni Center from 11 AM to 1 PM. There will be food, yard games, art supplies, and plenty of good vibes! Day 2 of the Poster Presentation portion of the Research & Creative Works Showcase continues on Thursday afternoon from 2-4 PM in Dupré Library. [Learn more and register for the Research & Creative Works Showcase.](#)

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FRIDAY

LOUISIANA IMPACT RESEARCH SUMMIT + GSAW CLOSING

Join us from 11 AM to 2 PM in Moody Hall, Room 103-103A as graduate students and faculty deliver brief, impactful pitches about research that is making an impact for and by Louisiana. Research & Creative Works Showcase awards, GSAW Photo Competition Winners (don't miss out on that!), and the 2026 Most Loved Grad Program will be announced at the conclusion of the Summit.

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SATURDAY

THE BIG EVENT WITH GSO

Graduate students know how to make an impact with the Big Event. This is when we do our part for UL Lafayette's largest day of service! We'll team up with the Graduate Student Organization to lead an on-campus beautification project with Parish Proud. [Registration required](#) to secure a Big Event t-shirt.

Visit louisiana.edu/graduateschool or scan the QR code to see the full calendar of events and to register for competitions and programming.



Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



There is a common misconception that a literature review summarizes all work published on a subject. In truth, it's a focused chapter that situates your research project within a larger scholarly conversation. To craft a literature review, start with your research question. Consider what conversations your question joins as well as key patterns and unresolved debates in your field.

For a comprehensive search, use a variety of institutional methods to locate sources. Focus on journal articles and book chapters rather than popular sources, and discard those that abandon theoretical or empirical frameworks in favor of opinion. Organize with a reference or project management tool like RefWorks, Zotero, or Workflow. Critically analyze your sources. If it does not directly shape your argument, it does not belong. Once you've got a core list: identify patterns, group by themes, compare methods, and track contradictions.

Before drafting, review parameters for your discipline. Start with an outline and use headings to support your organizational structure. These can be removed later if needed. Begin with the larger scholarly context, then narrow toward the gap or unresolved question your project addresses. Jessica McCrory Calarco offers a great organizational structure: what we know, what we don't know, why it matters, what existing research says about methodologies, and what existing research predicts for answers.

Leave time to revise later. Fresh eyes and emotional distance improve editing.

Finally, remember that a literature review tells a story with stakes. It demonstrates how knowledge was constructed and where it remains unfinished. Readers should come away understanding what has been said and why your work is a vital contribution.

RESEARCH & CREATIVE WORKS SHOWCASE



GRAD STUDENT APPRECIATION WEEK

Showcase your research and creative works to win accolades and awards!

Choose one category—poster, paper, or video—and submit by **Tuesday, March 17 at 11:59 PM.**

- Poster: In-person judging; multiple prizes in multiple categories.
- Paper: Asynchronous judging; multiple prizes in multiple categories.
- Video: Asynchronous judging; prizes for 1st, 2nd, and 3rd in one overall category



Graduate Student Organization



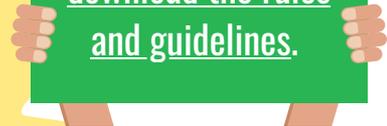
All GSAW week long! Solve clues, find destinations, and submit photos to claim chances to win the **Graduate Student Organization Scavenger Hunt big prize!** Keep an eye out on GSO Social for more info about the scavenger hunt. We can't wait to see what GSO has planned!

Back this year! Photo Contest!



The #ULGradLife Photo Contest challenges you to capture the essence of being a grad student in one photo.

Register and download the rules and guidelines.





SPRING WRITING RETREAT

— ALL FACULTY, STAFF AND STUDENTS ARE WELCOME —

Join the UL Lafayette Writing Collaborative for our Spring Writing Retreat! This is a dedicated time to focus on writing projects, collaborate with peers, and access feedback and helpful writing resources.

Saturday, March 7th
9 a.m. – 3 p.m.

Roy House

Snacks and coffee will be provided, but please bring your own lunch!



REGISTER NOW!



writingcollaborative@louisiana.edu

Spring Awake

Opening March 7th

A Season of Pop Art-Centric Exhibitions and Programming:
Featuring Andy Warhol from the museum's permanent collection and new work by Rachel Libeskind.



PAUL AND LULU
HILLIARD
UNIVERSITY ART MUSEUM
UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

Grad Education in the News



“What Grad Students Need:
[A Crash Course in Institutional Literacy.](#)”
[Inside Higher Education](#), 17 February 2026.

“[I needed a culture shift in my lab. I’m grateful one student spoke up.](#)” [Science](#), 29 January 2026.

Looking Ahead to April

Learn more at
louisiana.edu/graduateschool

- 4/1 - Manuscript Workshop for Students
- 4/15 - Stay Up & Write with GSO
- 4/15 - Dupré Library Deep Dive with Cambridge OA Publishing
- 4/16 - Money Matters Lunch & Learn: Career Planning
- 4/16 - Graduate Brown Bag Research at Dupré Library
- 4/17 - Raising Canes Fundraiser for GSO
- 4/3-4/12 - Spring Break

GSO Winning T-Shirt Design



Order form coming soon!



UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

Graduate Student
Organization



@ULLafayetteGraduateSchool



@ULGradSchool



@ULGradSchool



University of Louisiana
at Lafayette Graduate School

Get Outside get Involved

Downtown Alive!

March 6 @ 6 PM Downtown Lafayette

Yoga in the Galleries

March 7 @ 11 AM Hilliard Art Museum

Louisiana Comic Con

March 14 & 15: All Day Cajundome

Second Saturday ArtWalk

March 14 @ 5 PM Downtown Lafayette

Ragin Cajun Baseball vs. South Alabama

March 15 @ 1 PM - Russo Park

Language Cafe

March 19 @ 6 PM Moncus Park

Lafayette Holi Festival

March 28 @ 11 PM - Girard Park

Important Dates and Deadlines

3/3 - STEM Career Fair - Student Union Ballroom

3/17 - Deadline to register for the GSAW Research and Creative Works Showcase Competitions

3/19 - Last day to drop or add a class in B-TERM

3/20 - GSO Funding Deadline

3/23 - 4/2 - Advising Session for Summer/Fall



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 and even 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

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 Statistical Consulting Center offers consulting to grad students for any research involving statistical methods. Location: 204F Maxim Doucet Hall

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