



LOUISIANA IMPACT RESEARCH AWARDS SUMMIT

A GRAD STUDENT
APPRECIATION WEEK EVENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

MARCH 27, 2026
11:30AM – 3:30PM
MOODY HALL, #103

RESEARCH CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE, PLACE & PURPOSE OF LOUISIANA & BEYOND

11:30-12:00	Lunch Available	1:10-2:00	Research Presentations
12:00-12:10	Dr. Brian Bolton & Welcome	2:00-2:00	Break
12:10-1:00	Research Presentations	2:10-3:15	Research Presentations
1:00-1:10	Break	3:15-3:30	Dr. Mary Farmer-Kaiser

PEOPLE + THEIR PLACES

12:10-12:16

Sustainable Economic and Cultural Development of Louisiana Business Practices in French and Creole

Natalie Keefer – Associate Professor, Education Curriculum & Instruction, College of Education & Human Development
Kathe Managan - Assistant Professor, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts

12:16-12:22

Louisiana's View of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Christine Weill – Assistant Professor, Communicative Disorders, College of Liberal Arts

12:22-12:31

More Than Words: Supporting the Development of a Child with Communication Disabilities Through Engineering the Communicative Environment

Xueao Cao, PhD Student in Communicative Disorders
Gulalek Charyyeva - PhD Student in Communicative Disorders
Faculty references: Judith Oxley and Katherine McQuitty Hays, College of Liberal Arts

12:31-12:37

Visualizing Empowerment? Tourism and the Experiences of Ethnic Minority Women in Northern Vietnam

Ignatius Cahyanto – Associate Professor, Management, B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration

LOUISIANA, NATURE + LIFE

12:37-12:43

Mitigating Environmental Stress Impacts on Louisiana's Native Prairie Species

Andrea Westerband – Assistant Professor, Biology, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

12:43-12:52

Using Machine Learning to Detect Macrobenthic Regime Shifts in a Louisiana Estuarine Bay

Jacob Badcock – PhD Student in Environmental & Evolutionary Biology
Faculty reference: Craig McClain, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

12:52-1:00

Discrete-Time Refuge-Mediated Selection Model

Sajan Bhandari – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Azmy Ackleh, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

BREAK – 1:00 to 1:10

1:10-1:19

Invading Populations by Infections in a Discrete-Time Compartmental Epidemic Models

Jenita Jahangir – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Amy Veprauskas, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:19-1:28

Growth of and Microzooplankton Grazing on Pico- and Nanoplankton Communities Along Environmental Gradients

Emily Mulcahy – MS Student in Biology
Faculty reference: Beth Stauffer, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:28-1:37

Understanding the Electron Transport Chain in Photosystem I During Photosynthesis

Khairum Orthi – PhD Student in Earth & Energy Sciences
Faculty reference: Wu Xu, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:37-1:46

The Role of Road Weather Intelligent Systems in Enhancing Climate Resilience and Transportation Safety in Louisiana

Nelly Ankrah – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Civil Engineering
Faculty reference: Julius Codjoe, College of Engineering

1:46-1:54

Visualization of Hydrate Formation of Flowing CO₂ in Low-Temperature Water for CO₂ Disposal onto Seafloor

Muhammad Towhidul Islam – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Petroleum Engineering
Faculty reference: Boyun Guo, College of Engineering

1:54-2:00

Converting Invasive Giant Salvinia in Louisiana into Renewable Biomethane

Xiaobo Lei – Postdoctoral Researcher, Energy Institute of Louisiana

BREAK – 2:00-2:10

2:10-2:19

A Collaboratively Designed and Managed Flood Resilience Framework for Affected Communities in the Caribbean Region

Gregory Williams – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Civil Engineering
Faculty reference: Emad Habib, College of Engineering

2:19-2:28

Discovering the Early-Time Photodegradation Mechanisms of Emerging Contaminants in Marine Ecosystems

Courtney Poirier Chicola – Postdoctoral Researcher, NASA Regional Application Center and Department of Chemistry
Student reference: Bree Landry

INNOVATION, HEALTH & WELLNESS

2:28-2:37

Shaping Attitudes Toward GLP-1 Drugs: The Impact of Realistic Advertisements on Disordered Eating Behaviors

Maria Lindquist – MS Student in Psychology
Faculty reference: Manyu Li, College of Liberal Arts

2:37-2:43

Accelerating Universal Mental Health Access through AI-Powered Suicide Prevention

Yihe Zhang – Research Scientist, Informatics Research Institute

2:43-2:49

ULL-HT: Unified, Low-Resource, and Language-Assisted Health Tool

Sercan Aygun – Assistant Professor, Computing & Informatics, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

2:49-2:57

A Novel Nanocarrier-Driven Therapeutic Strategy for Inhibiting Tissue Damage in Degenerated Joint Disease

Asif Istiak – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Mechanical Engineering

Faculty reference: Tanvir Faisal, College of Engineering

2:57-3:06

Stochastic Analysis of Interplay Among Drug Mode of Action, Nutrient Availability, and Antibiotic Resistance

Chimezie Izuazu – PhD Student in Mathematics

Faculty reference: Cameron Browne, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

3:06-3:15

Optimization and AI-Driven Advances in Detection Tools for Heart Disease and Cancers

Lovelyn Madu – PhD Student in Mathematics

Faculty reference: Bruce Wade, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Dr. Mary Farmer-Kaiser, Dean of The Graduate School
CLOSING REMARKS & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE



SCAN QR CODE ABOVE TO LINK TO
DETAILED SCHEDULE AND FULL
PROGRAM INFORMATION



FOR MORE INFORMATION REGARDING THE LOUISIANA
RESEARCH COLLABORATIVE, THE LOUISIANA IMPACT
RESEARCH AWARDS AND RELATED PROGRAMS, PLEASE VISIT:
[HTTPS://BUSINESS.LOUISIANA.EDU/RESEARCHCOLLABORATIVE](https://business.louisiana.edu/researchcollaborative)

Showcasing research aligned with the people, place, and purpose of Louisiana, this program is a collaboration between the Graduate School of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette, Academic Affairs, the Office of the Vice President for Research, Innovation & Economic Development, the Graduate School, and Brian Bolton, Professor of Finance and the Dwight W. Andrus, Jr. / BORSF Eminent Scholar Endowed Chair in Finance.