

GRAD IN FOCUS

APRIL 2026



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

**Graduate
School**

Message from the Dean

MARY FARMER-KAISER, PH.D.

April is a time of transition. As we move toward graduation, many of you are preparing for what comes next. You're entering the job market, exploring new opportunities, and thinking about how to translate your graduate experience beyond the university setting.

That translation is essential.

Through your graduate studies—your research and creative work, your writing, your teaching—you are managing complex projects, documenting process and progress, managing people, and driving outcomes. You are also mastering how to move forward in environments that can be uncertain, complex, and changing.

These are essential skills. They are skills that translate across careers. They are skills valued by employers in academic, industry, government, and non-profit sectors. They are the skills that show you can move all that knowledge you have into action.

Graduate education also builds endurance. Your ability to persist, adapt, and continue working toward a long-term goal amidst uncertainty, complexity, and change is an essential skill too. You've built a mindset that appreciates continuity but that is comfortable in uncertainty and even chaos. That mindset is part of why you are ready for whatever comes next.

But these skills don't speak for themselves. You must translate them in ways that make sense to others and that align with the opportunities ahead.

This month's A2i+ workshops can help you translate your impressive skillset. The Trajectory Toolbox will help you build habits for the long term, and the Job Market Roadmap will focus you on applying strategically and interviewing with confidence. Money Matters this month, too, is about career discernment and alignment.

Your grad experience is about your degree, yes, and much more. The work matters, as does how you translate it.

—Dr. MFK

**"The limits of my
language mean the
limits of my world."**

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

Philosopher
Tractatus Logico-
Philosophicus (1921)





Upcoming Events in April

Mondays - Wake Up and Write!

When the University is open, join graduate students and faculty on Mondays from 8:30–10:30 AM in the Alumni Center Board Room for a quiet writing session. Coffee and breakfast treats are provided—just bring you and your focus. No registration required.

Wednesdays - Wednesdays We Write

Not a morning writer? Join us Wednesdays in Girard Hall 108F for dedicated writing time, offered in partnership with the Writing Collaborative. Drop in anytime between 2–5 PM to work on your thesis, dissertation, or other grad projects—no registration required.

4/2 - Manuscript Accessibility & You: Digital Accessibility for Theses, Dissertations, and Synthesis Projects using Word

Join us at 10 AM virtually to learn how to prepare your manuscript to meet digital accessibility requirements for ETDs. The Graduate School will share key tips and host a Q&A. [Register for the Zoom link.](#)

4/7 - Manuscript Accessibility & You: Digital Accessibility for Theses, Dissertations, and Synthesis Projects using LaTeX

Join us at 12 PM virtually to learn how to prepare your manuscript to meet digital accessibility requirements for ETDs. The Graduate School will share key tips and host a Q&A. [Register for the Zoom link.](#)

4/9 - NCFDD: Mastering Academic Time Management

Students and faculty join online 1–2 p.m. for Mastering Academic Time Management, exploring strategies to prioritize research, improve productivity, and build sustainable support systems for academic success. [Register for the Zoom link.](#)

4/15 - Using Summer Strategically: Finding and Writing Grants for Graduate Research

Join us at 2 PM in FG Mouton Room 207 for a workshop on finding funding and developing grant proposals for your research. Learn where to look and how to get started. [Registration required.](#)

4/16 - Grad Money Matters Lunch & Learn: Career & Financial Planning

Our last Money Matters event of the semester will focus on accepting job offers, negotiating salaries, and choosing a retirement plan. Join us in the Griffin Hall Room 315 for dinner starting at 5:30 p.m. and conversation at 5:45 p.m. [Registration Required.](#)



UL Lafayette is an A2i+ partner institution, and that means our grad students have access to a national network of professional development aimed at career paths in industry, government, and non-profit sectors.

[Register HERE for these virtual A2i+ Career Insights workshops through the NC State Grad School site:](#)

Trajectory Toolbox: Habits for Long-Term Success
Friday, April 10, 12-1 pm CST

The Job Hunt Roadmap: Apply Smart, Interview Confidently
Friday, April 24, 12-1 pm CST



Stay Up and Write with GSO



Need a quiet space to focus on your writing?

Head to the Student Union River Room from 7-9 PM for a productive environment, snacks, and a chance to power through your work.

Thanks, GSO for creating another space for grad community and productivity!



GSAW Highlights



Academic Honors & Doctoral Candidacy



SGA Bayou Bash



Resume/CV Workshop



GSO Donut Day



Research Showcase



Money Matters



Grad Games & Good Vibes



Louisiana Impact Research Summit & GSAW Closing Awards



Important Dates and Deadlines

4/7 - Registration begins for Summer Intersession 2025, Summer 2025, and Fall 2025

4/13 - Last Day to drop a class or resign with a grade of W

4/13 - Last day to submit DEFENDED theses/dissertations/synthesis projects for Grad School review and final approval

4/28 - Last day to submit FINAL theses/dissertations/synthesis projects for Grad School review and final approval

4/28 - Last day to complete graduate written and/or oral examinations

Most Loved

GRAD PROGRAM

Department of Communicative Disorders

10 YEARS

#ULGradLove

Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



We witnessed an important shift in university conversations about accessibility over the past year, after federal updates to the Americans with Disabilities Act directed our focus to a set of shared web content accessibility guidelines (WCAG 2.1) designed to make research more widely available to everyone, including people with disabilities.

The WCAG 2.1 recommendations foreground the idea that all digital elements should be presented in ways a user or screen reader can perceive, operate, understand, and use to gather robust information. Prioritizing cleaner structures and better navigation, these recommendations are simply best practice. As part of our commitment to making graduate research and creative works more accessible, we've developed a webpage on [Digital Accessibility for Thesis, Dissertation, and Synthesis Project Writers](#) that outlines the basics and links to practical tools and guidance.

Key considerations described in this resource include alternative text (descriptive text that conveys image meaning), color (considerations about color contrast and how we use links), metadata (document properties identifying the author, title, and language), and tags (markers used by assistive technology to navigate a document and assist with logical reading order).

Depending on your field, you may also need to consider how a user might interact with your tables or equations, both of which can pose possible challenges for screen readers. Adjustments are easiest to make in your original authoring tool. There are tons of great resources already out there, and we're seeing new ones every day.



Over 50 graduate students signed up with GSO to participate in the Big Event this year. That's the largest flock of grad students to date! By working together, we cleared 8 blocks of trash and debris for our local businesses and neighborhoods.

Spring 2026 Award Winners

Alumni Association Outstanding Master's Graduate Award Finalists

- Michael DeJean, MA English
- Braden Doucet, MS Biology
- Steven Guillory, MM Music
- Madeline Moore, MS Environmental Resource Science
- Lauren Venable, MS Psychology

Outstanding Master's Mentors

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

- Dr. Kelly Bixby, School of Music & Performing Arts
- Dr. Jordan Kellman, Department of History, Geography & Philosophy
- Dr. Kelly Robinson, School of Biological Sciences
- Dr. David Squires, Department of English
- Dr. Peng "Solomon" Yin, Department of Mechanical Engineering

Outstanding Doctoral Mentors

Celebrating mentorship contributions to doctoral productivity. Selected by the Office of the Vice President for Research, Innovation, and Economic Development.

- Dr. Jamie Azios, College of Liberal Arts
- Dr. Terrance Chambers, College of Engineering
- Dr. Mark Genung, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences
- Dr. Deedra Harrington, College of Nursing and Health Sciences
- Dr. Dianne Olivier, College of Education & Human Development

Graduate Student Teaching Awards

Recognizing exceptional contributions to undergraduate teaching by graduate students.

- Graduate Student Teaching Excellence Award: Dhvani Heman Mehta, English PhD program
- Outstanding GTA Award: Mojtaba Taghvafard, Applied Language & Speech Sciences PhD program

GSAW 2026 Research Showcase

Poster & Paper Competition Winners

Co-sponsored by the Graduate School with UL Lafayette Research

Awards: 1st – \$500 | 2nd – \$300 | 3rd – \$150

Paper – Empirical & Data-Driven Inquiry

1. Nicholas Miklave, Biology PhD program
2. Kevin Torgerson, Biology PhD program
3. N.I. Md Ashafuddula, Computer Science PhD program

Poster – Empirical & Data-Driven Inquiry

1. Azwaad Labiba Mohiuddin, Computer Science PhD program
2. Jannatul Mawah, Biology PhD program
3. Augustine Fiati, Environmental Resource Science MS program

Paper – Interpretive, Creative & Conceptual

1. Steven Guillory, Music MM program
2. Isuru Rathnayake, English PhD program
3. Nazlican Cafvav, English PhD program



Poster – Interpretive, Creative, Conceptual

1. Mary McMahon, Applied Language & Speech Sciences program
2. Mohamed Ghoneim, Systems Engineering PhD program
3. Morteza Bodaghi, Systems Engineering PhD program

Video Competition

1st – \$200 | 2nd – \$100

1. Asif Istiak, Systems Engineering PhD program
2. Mahek Chirag Pathak, English PhD program



#ULGradLife Photo Competition

One image that sums up your life as a grad student at UL Lafayette.
Award: \$100

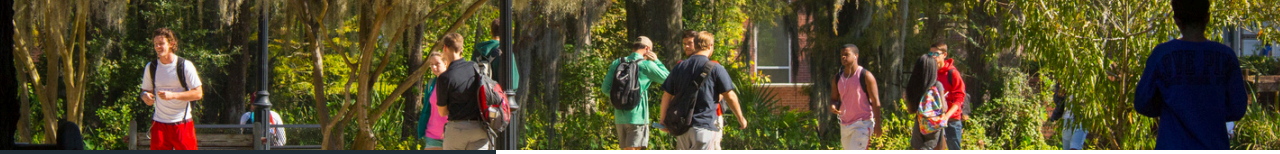


"Motherhood and PhD, paper discussion with my son Adam"
Josna Mary Pious, Biology PhD program



Most-Loved Graduate Program 2026

Department of Communicative Disorders (MS Speech Pathology & Audiology and PhD Applied Language and Speech Sciences programs)



@ULLafayetteGraduateSchool



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@ULGradSchool



University of Louisiana
at Lafayette Graduate School

Get Outside get Involved

Downtown Alive!

April 10 @ 6 PM - Parc Sans Souci

Scott Boudin Festival

April 10-12 All Day - Lions Club Rd. Scott

ArtWalk

April 11 @ 5 PM - Downtown Lafayette

Bach Lunch

April 12 @ 11 AM - Parc Sans Souci

Language Cafe

April 16 @ 6 PM - Moncus Park

Festival International

April 22-26 All Day - Downtown Lafayette

Ragin Cajun Baseball vs. Southern

April 28 @ 6PM - Tigie Stadium

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