

GRAD IN FOCUS

SUMMER EDITION 2026



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

**Graduate
School**

Message from the Dean

DR. MARY FARMER-KAISER

Summer always offers such promise. The semester ends. The calendar opens. For many grad students, it is the season when the work that matters most takes center stage: research and creative work, writing, data collection, analysis, comps prep, and the long-term projects that brought you to graduate school in the first place.

Yet summer's greatest gift can also be its greatest challenge.

Structure is easy to resent. It is much harder to replace.

During the academic year, due dates, classes, and meetings create a framework for our days. Much of that framework disappears in the summer. We gain flexibility, autonomy, and freedom. We must muster the strength to create our own structure.

Research on grad student success points to the value of regular work habits. Those who maintain stable routines tend to make faster progress toward degree completion and report lower levels of stress. Waiting for inspiration is rarely an effective strategy. Showing up is.

The flexibility we enjoy as scholars is one of the great privileges of academic life, but it requires intentional choices about how we spend our days. Protect your peak energy hours for deep work. Break large projects into manageable pieces. And remember that rest is not separate from productivity. It is not a reward. Rest is part of our work.

If creating that structure feels challenging, know that you don't have to do it alone. From daily writing space to dissertation boot camps, the Grad School can support you. Keep reading here to learn more about our Pages in Progress opportunities. Sometimes the most effective strategy is simply placing yourself in a community of people doing the work.

I wish you that community this summer. Protect your best hours. Create routines that support progress. Make room for rest and relationships that restore you. The work ahead is important. And so is the life happening around it.



“... time is an asset
that you are
always spending,
and it can never be
replenished or replaced.”

NICK FEAMSTER, PH.D.

*"Time Management and Productivity Tactics
for Unstructured Work"*





Summer Grad School Programming

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.

All Summer - Summer Session Writing Workshop

Looking for motivation, accountability, and a dedicated writing space? Throughout the Summer session, plan to join Dr. Allison Comeaux's summer writing workshop in Bourgeois Hall, Monday–Thursday from 9 a.m.–3 p.m. Use the space independently or formally register for EDLD 598 (CRN 61241) for additional support. Contact allison.comeaux1@louisiana.edu for more information.

June 15-18 & July 6-9 - 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 15 participants per session. Session 1: June 15-18. Session 2: July 6-9. Apply [here](#) for the July session; June is already full.

June 11 & June 17 - Manuscript Workshop: Navigating Deadlines & Submission

Learn about the full Graduate School manuscript submission process, key deadlines, and how best to avoid last-minute issues. Held via Zoom on 6/11 at 10 AM and 6/17 at noon. Register [here](#).

June 26 - Deadline to Register for the 14-Day Writing Challenge

Join the NCFDD 14-Day Writing Challenge (July 7–19)! Commit to writing for at least 30 minutes each weekday for two weeks. Participants also receive access to WriteNow software. Register by 6/26 [here](#).

July 9 - Manuscript Workshop: Formatting Your Manuscript

Learn how to correctly format your manuscript to meet Graduate School requirements and fix common errors. This session is primarily geared toward Microsoft Word users; LaTeX users are welcome to attend with formatting questions, though LaTeX coding support is outside the scope of this session. Held via Zoom on 7/9 at 4 PM Register [here](#).

Graduate Education in the News

[CLICK HERE!](#)

[Big Changes to Federal Student Loans: What Graduate Students Need to Know.](#) Resource created by the National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators (NASFAA) for graduate students that explains what's changing, when it will take effect (July 1, 2026), and how it may impact you.

[Should You Use AI to Apply for Jobs?](#) Chronicle of Higher Education, [16 July 2026.](#) The dos and don'ts of asking gen AI to help you explore career options and create job documents.

DISSERTATION

BOOT CAMP

An intensive, three-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

REGISTER NOW



UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA
AT LAFAYETTE

STUDENT GOVERNMENT ASSOCIATION
**SCHOLARSHIP
APPLICATIONS
OPEN NOW**

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

DEADLINE:
-July 9, 2026

Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



Previous “Writing Tips & Tricks” columns tackled complicated writing concepts, from methods for developing a strong literature review to considerations about the use of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GAI) tools in graduate-level work. **Today’s topic is much simpler: active voice.**

Academic writing often leans on dense phrases built around weak, passive verbs. Purdue OWL’s resource site offers the following examples:

- Passive: “The entrance exam was failed by over one-third of the applicants to the school.”
- Active: “Over one-third of the applicants to the school failed the entrance exam.”

In the passive example, the subject is the entrance exam, and the sentence performs the verb on that subject. In the active example, meanwhile, the subject is the fraction of applicants, and that subject itself performs the verb.

Active voice both clarifies meaning and reduces the potential for confusion by simplifying sentence structure. It saves your reader time and effort, especially in graduate-level writing where you are engaging with intricate ideas and specific jargon that may be unfamiliar to even those in your own department.

Active voice aids clarity and concision, but it also increases impressions of power and agency within your work for readers. I’ve read too many articles where an author beats the passive “is” to death in hopes of increasing sentence complexity. Avoid unnecessary complications. Ditch meandering paths in favor of sentences that clearly drive your point home to remind readers why your research matters.

Active voice matters in the age of GAI, and so does “voice” more generally. Clear, active writing conveys your distinct way of thinking on the page. Leaning into your voice demonstrates what only you can contribute.

Seven Bs FOR SUMMER PROGRESS

Computer scientist and professor Nick Feamster (University of Chicago) shares some great advice in a Substack piece on effective time management when your work and time is unstructured. The key to productivity? It’s not about working more. Rather, it’s about approaching your time with intention. [Learn more about his seven tactics here.](#)

- **Bits** — break large projects into smaller tasks
- **Budgets** — allocate time deliberately
- **Blocks** — protect deep-work periods
- **Batches** — group similar tasks together
- **Buffers** — leave room for the unexpected
- **Bounds** — set limits for tasks
- **Barriers** — reduce distractions & temptations



Graduate Student Organization

- July 10 - Funding Deadline
- July 13 @ 4:30 pm - Funding Committee Meeting
- July 14 @ 1 pm - Communications Committee Meeting
- July 15 @ 1 pm - Advocacy Committee Meeting
- July 17 @ 5 pm - GSO General Meeting

Spring 2026 Grand Marshals

Serving as Grand Marshal is one of the University's highest honors. Selected by the Graduate Council for their academic excellence, leadership, and service, these faculty members led the commencement procession and represented the very best of our graduate education community. Congratulations to our Spring 2026 Grand Marshals!



Dr. Deedra H. Harrington
LHC Group · Myers School of Nursing
College of Nursing & Health Sciences



Dr. David "Rick" Perkins
Department of Psychology
College of Liberal Arts



Dr. Durga D. Poudel
School of Geosciences
Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Click each photo to learn more about our Grand Marshals and their academic journeys.

Commencement Highlights



[View the Full Commencement Photo Album](#)

The **Instruction Design Studio** at Dupré Library is now open and available throughout the summer for use by all instructors on campus. For **faculty and graduate students in GTA roles**, this new library service supports creative solutions to instruction with an information literacy core.

The studio offers full access to a desktop computer, wi-fi, printer, large whiteboards and markers, instruction design reading nook, and librarian consultations in a makerspace with tools and craft materials.

Book time in the studio (Dupré 155) at bit.ly/dupre-design-studio or contact

learn.library@louisiana.edu
for more information.

Dupré Library



Celebrating our Doctoral and Master's Graduates

Spring 2026 included recording-setting total numbers for doctoral degrees, master's degrees, and graduate degrees and certificates awarded.

The Doctoral Hooding Ceremony also returned this spring after a one-semester absence, thanks to the advocacy of graduate student leaders and the support of University leadership. The ceremony recognized doctoral graduates from Fall 2025 and Spring 2026 and celebrated one of graduate education's most meaningful traditions: the ceremonial hooding of doctoral candidates by their faculty mentors.



President Kolluru with Dean Farmer-Kaiser and graduate student leaders, Brianna Burns-Meaux (SGA Graduate School President) and Clement Okolo (GSO President).

More than a recognition of degree completion, the ceremony honored the mentorship, perseverance, scholarship, and community that define the doctoral journey. As President Kolluru noted when announcing its return, traditions matter because they help us celebrate accomplishments and mark important milestones. The hooding and commencement ceremonies allowed us to come together to do exactly that.

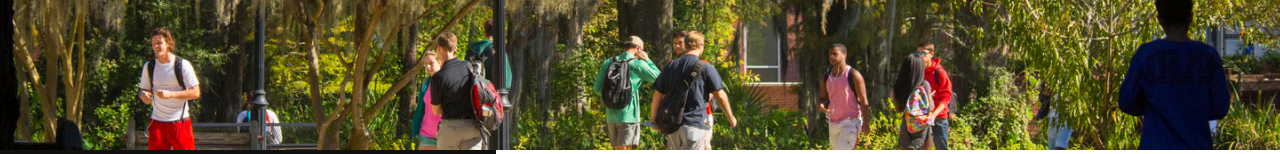


Overall Outstanding Master's Graduate

Madeline Moore graduated with a master's degree in environmental research science. Moore is a **National Science Foundation Graduate Research Fellow**. Her research has included using drones to assist in field sampling of greenhouse gas flux measurements, as well as measuring dissolved methane in aquatic ecosystems using an optical spectroscopy gas analyzer. Results from her work have been **published in the Journal of Visualized Experiments**. She has accepted a position with the state of Louisiana as a coastal resource scientist.

[Learn more about all of the Spring 2026 Alumni Association Outstanding Master's Graduate finalists.](#)





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University of Louisiana
at Lafayette Graduate School



Get Outside get Involved

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

Creole Culture Day
June 7 @ 10 AM - Vermilionville

June ArtWalk
June 13 @ 5 PM - Downtown Lafayette

Language Cafe
June 18 @ 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

Lafayette Stars & Stripes
July 4 @ 5 PM @ Downtown Lafayette

Important Dates and Deadlines

6/8 - Summer Classes Begin

6/11 - Last Day for Dropping or Adding Classes

6/17 - Last Day to Apply for Graduate Degree

7/13 - Last Day to Submit Defended Copy of Theses or Dissertations for Editing and Final Approval

7/27 - Last Day to Submit Final Copies of Dissertations and Last Day to Complete Graduate Written &/or Oral Examinations



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