

GRAD IN FOCUS

SEPTEMBER 2026



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

**Graduate
School**

Message from the Dean

MARY FARMER-KAISER, PH.D.

A new academic year always begins for me with thoughts about all the possibilities. This one seems to be arriving with an equal measure of uncertainty too.

For some of you, grad school is a new chapter you've anticipated for years. For others, it may be arriving after a tough job market altered your plans. If you're an international student, I know this year begins with navigating changing visa rules alongside the challenges of studying far from home. And for those of you entering the final stretch of your graduate journey, you're balancing the work that still has to be done with all the questions about what comes next.

Even beyond our campus, possibility and uncertainty seem close companions. Just last week came the announcement that SpaceX plans to build a \$100 billion spaceport in Vermilion Parish near Pecan Island. The opportunities and the questions are enormous. I especially appreciated one historian's recent reflection that when the U.S. entered the space race in the 1950s, Pecan Island had only 400 residents and no electricity. Now it sits at the center of a historic moment full of possibility and, yes, uncertainty.

What do we do in moments like this? We stay curious.

In an interview with *LIFE Magazine* in 1955, Albert Einstein offered some good advice about the need for questioning and curiosity. That advice seems fitting for grad students at the beginning of a new academic year. After all, grad education teaches us far more than a discipline, a body of literature, or a research method. If we let it, it teaches us a lot about ourselves.

You learn how to respond when the answer—or perhaps even the question—isn't obvious. How to handle failure and rejection. How to change course when plans go awry. How to adapt under pressure. How to persist. How to remain curious when all you want is certainty.

Those capacities matter in research and in creative work. They matter in the lab, the seminar room, the archive, the clinic, the studio, and the library. And they matter in a world changing as quickly as ours today.

So, as this new academic year begins, I hope you'll meet both the excitement and the uncertainty with curiosity. Ask questions, the good ones and the bad ones. Follow the evidence, and be ready to pivot. Be willing to change your mind. Trust the habits you're building, and take care to build some good ones. And pay attention to the process and what it is teaching you about yourself.

You don't have to know exactly where this journey will end to begin it with curiosity.

Welcome to the new academic year.

—Dr. MFK

**"The important
thing is not to
stop questioning.
Curiosity has its
own reason for
existence..."**

ALBERT EINSTEIN

*"Old Man's Advice to Youth:
'Never Lose a Holy Curiosity,'"
LIFE Magazine, 2 May 1955.*





Upcoming Events

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, support from our editors, and quiet. You provide the focus and progress. Parking is easy. No registration is required.

9/4 - Grad School Bingo

Join us for Grad Bingo Night on September 4th, in Griffin Hall room 147, open to grad students, partners, and children. Win gift cards from local businesses, groceries, and athletic gear while enjoying your grad community. Pizza will be served at 5 pm, the first game begins at 5:30 pm. [Register to attend.](#)

9/10 - A2i+ Career Insights: Intro to Management and Leadership Styles

Have you ever considered the difference between being a manager and being a leader? This workshop provides an overview of the distinct characteristics associated with each of these roles. [Register for this virtual session from 2-3:30pm CST via NC State by selecting the Career Readiness A2i+ 9/10 program.](#)

9/16 - Fall 2026 Graduation Workshop

Join us virtually for the Fall 2026 Graduation Workshop to learn what you need to know about the graduation process, important deadlines, commencement, and more. Two sessions are available: [12–1 p.m.](#) and [5:30–6:30 p.m.](#) Plan ahead and make sure you're ready to cross the finish line! Register in advance and receive the Zoom link by clicking the preferred time above.

9/17 - Money Matters: Investing in Your Future

Join us for lunch and a Money Matters conversation with Dr. Brian Bolton focused on investing as a graduate student. Lunch starts at 11:30 a.m. in HLG 315, and the discussion begins at noon. [Advance registration is required.](#)

9/22 - Grad Expo

Fall 2026 Grad Expo will be held on Tuesday, September 22, from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. at the Alumni Center. Graduating students can stop by the Alumni Center to visit the one stop shop in preparation for Commencement. Students should pick which time fits best into their schedule. It is not required to attend all day.

To Infinity and Beyond: Grad Student Advice from the Toys of Toy Story



Woody, Buzz, Jessie, Rex, and even the Aliens have some good advice about thriving in grad school. [As we begin a new academic year, revisit some Toy Story-inspired reminders here](#) about finding your people, trusting the process, celebrating progress, and remembering that you don't have to do grad school alone.

We made you a syllabus. It's a little different from the ones you'll get from your professors.

The **Grad School 101 Syllabus** is our unofficial guide to making the most of your graduate school experience. Because the Graduate School is here to help you thrive in grad school, not just survive it.

During your academic journey, we will help you connect, find resources, develop essential skills, and learn how to cope with grad school pressures.

But first, we want to hear from you. Give us a first week reality check: How are you doing? What's going well? What are you still figuring out? **Returning students: What do you know now that you wish you had known this time last year?** Your answer may be exactly what another grad student needs to hear. [Share your response.](#)

GRAD SCHOOL SYLLABUS

FALL 2026 EDITION

The completely unofficial guide to thriving, connecting & making the most of your grad school experience

COACH
GRAD 101: Thriving (and not just surviving) in grad school

DISSEMINATOR
Dean Farmer, HLG 315, 315-1111

SPICES
Syllabus 101: 10/1/2026 - 10/1/2026

ASSISTANTS
None. You're already the hero.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

To be successful in grad school, you need to be able to:

- ☒ Ask questions
- ☒ Find your people
- ☒ Stay motivated and focused
- ☒ Develop your research and writing skills
- ☒ Manage your time and stress
- ☒ Find your voice
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- ☒ Develop your research and writing skills
- ☒ Manage your time and stress
- ☒ Find your voice

ASSIGNMENTS

Early Monday
Grad School 101 Syllabus

SEPT 4
Money Matters

SEPT 10/NOV
Grad School 101 Syllabus

OCT 27
Grad School 101 Syllabus

REQUIRED COURSE POLICIES

- Be on time
- Be respectful
- Be honest
- Be a team player

YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO

- Be a hero
- Be a genius
- Be a superstar

GRADING

100% - Showing Up

Be present, be engaged, be a team player, be a hero, be a genius, be a superstar.

FIRST-WEEK ASSIGNMENT

Read the syllabus, find your people, find your voice, find your research, find your writing, find your time, find your stress, find your voice.

FINAL EXAM

Make it to the end of the semester. Be a hero, be a genius, be a superstar.

Click the syllabus to download a copy and learn more.



GSO News & Deadlines

Funding Deadline:

Friday, September 18th

General Meeting:

September 25th @ 12 pm

Advocacy Committee Meeting:

September 24th @ 2:15 -3:15 pm

Communications Committee

Meeting:

September 22nd @ 1-2 pm

Funding Committee Meeting:

September 21st @ 3-4 pm

UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTEGraduate Student
Organization

SGA News & Deadlines

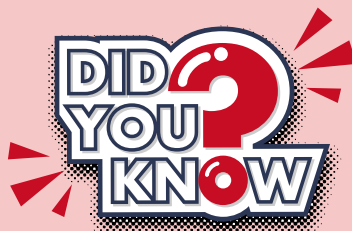
4 Graduate Student Representatives (a President & 3 Senators) Needed!!

Apply by: September 18th at noon,

Applications are available online and, in the SGA Office (Union).

***Must be able to attend the mandatory candidates meeting on September 22nd at 6 pm in the Vermilion Room (Union). Elections will take place October 14th & 15th**

Need conference funding? Learn how SGA can help!

UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTEStudent Government
Association

GSO needs you.

If there's no GSO representative, grad students in your department are not eligible for GSO funding!

Current GSO Representative Vacancies:

- Accounting
- Education Curriculum & Instruction
- Geoscience
- Nursing
- Petroleum Engineering
- Physics

Interested? Talk to your Graduate Coordinator or reach out directly to GSO at gso@louisiana.edu to learn more.



Follow GSO on

UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

Statistical Consulting Center

The Statistical Consulting Center offers statistical consulting to UL Lafayette grad students and faculty on research involving statistical methods.

Successful research requires planning. Contact Dr. Whitman and his team as early as possible as you plan and conduct your research. They will listen to your needs and work with you to understand the questions and objectives of your study. They will actively participate and help you formulate your problems in terms of statistical questions. They are ready to help you solve those problems, and work with you until the solutions are reasonable and understandable. They also will discuss with you what can, and cannot, be achieved using modern statistical methods.

Due to time limitations **graduate students receive priority in scheduling.**

Do NOT wait until the last minute to contact the Stats Center.

There could be a backlog later in the semester.

Schedule your initial consultation now!

Contact Information

Dr. Phillip Whitman, Director

204F Maxim Doucet Hall

phillip.whitman@louisiana.edu



Together with Dr. Brian Bolton, the Graduate School, Academic Affairs, and the Division of Research, Innovation, and Community Development invite graduate students and faculty to submit proposals for the **Louisiana Impact Research Awards**.



Round 5 of these awards will focus on research exploring the **people, place, and future of Louisiana**, with an emphasis on research that advances **Louisiana Vision 2035** and strengthens our state's knowledge, communities, and economy.

**Proposals are due by
October 12, 2026, at 11:59 p.m.**

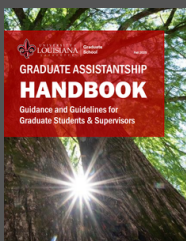
Grad student award recipients will present their work at the **Louisiana Impact Research Summit on April 9, 2027**, during Graduate Student Appreciation Week.



**Learn more about Round 5
and submit your proposal here!**

Graduate Assistantship Handbook

The Graduate Assistantship Handbook-- updated for 2026-2027--identifies expectations, policies, and resources for **both** grad students and assistantship supervisors. [Read the handbook here.](#)



Grad Education in the News

"MIT Says AI Is Forcing A Rethink Of College Itself," *Forbes*, 25 August 2026. (Read the full MIT Ad Hoc Committee on AI Use in Teaching, Learning, and Research Training Report [here](#).)

"How New Visa Limits Are Already Affecting Colleges," *Inside Higher Education*, 24 August 2026.

"DHS Limits Internships for International Students," *Inside Higher Education*, 31 August 2026.

Looking Ahead to October

Learn more and register at
louisiana.edu/graduateschool

10/6 - All Majors Career Fair

10/8 & 10/9 - Fall Break

10/8 - 10/11 - Festivals Acadiens et Créoles

10/14 - Money Matters

10/5 & 10/15 - 3MT Info Session

10/6 & 10/21 - Manuscript Workshop

10/27 - A2i+ Opportunity Machine

10/29 - 3MT Workshop

#ULGradGoodNews

**Your stories inspire us,
so don't hold back.**

Hey awesome grad students! As you navigate your grad studies, generating new knowledge and creative works, we want to hear about the good stuff. Tell us about something cool you did, a recent accomplishment, and what your amazing colleague or mentor did that made you (and them) proud.

Share the good,
and let's celebrate together!
Use <https://bit.ly/ULGradGoodNews>
to tell us something good!



NEED HELP?

Struggling to find the right resources for your research project, thesis, or academic paper? Our dedicated **UL Lafayette librarians** will work closely with you to create a **tailored research strategy**, offering expert guidance on database selection and source evaluation. **Save time and gain confidence** by scheduling a one-on-one research appointment today.

Dean Mary Farmer-Kaiser & Asif Istiak (PhD Systems Engineering 2026), the UL Lafayette 2025-2026 3MT® 1st Place Winner



2026 Inn-eaux-vate Entrepreneurship Pitch Competition



The goals of the competition are to provide an opportunity for students to pitch business ideas to a panel of UL Lafayette alumni judges....and to possible earn seed money to help them start, commercialize, and scale their business innovations.



AWARDS

This year's competition will include more than \$50,000 in prize money, with \$10,000 going to the overall winner.



KEY DATES

Applications Due

October 16

Semifinalists Announced:

October 27

Semifinals:

November 10

Final Pitch Competition

**November 17 from 4-6 PM
LITE Center**



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

Business Administration
(M.B.A.)



LEARN MORE AND SUBMIT YOUR PITCH

<https://business.louisiana.edu>



QUESTIONS?

Email josh.bendickson@louisiana.edu

Can you explain your research or creative work in a way that anyone can understand?

Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) challenges graduate students to present their work and its significance to a non-specialist audience in only three minutes, helping build communication and presentation skills.

Information sessions are coming in October, so now is the time to learn what 3MT is all about, get inspired, and think about how you could tell the story of your research or creative work.

[Watch videos of past participants and learn about the upcoming competition on the Graduate School website.](#)



Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



Developing a Productive Writing Routine

Scholarly writing guides invariably remind us that a productive writing routine is a requisite for academic success. And yet, even those among us who love the written word will often do anything to avoid actually writing.

A. Trevor Thrall in *The Weekly Writing Routine Workbook* suggests that creating a weekly writing routine starts with auditing your existing routine. After reviewing what is (and isn't) working, outline your goals, use these to create a new routine, and revise as needed. Prioritize your writing time, and do so consistently.

"Making wholesale changes quickly is a recipe for overwhelm and discomfort, which typically leads us to seek our old comfort zone, even if we didn't like it there," Thrall acknowledges. "Your goal is to create a lifelong routine." The best way to do this is by implementing changes slowly and letting go of things that don't work for you.

Catherine Sharp (*A Writer's Workbook*) points out that we are often so focused on what a writer should be that we forget we become that very thing by performing the act of writing. When approaching a writing routine, Sharp recommends breaking the task into its component parts to make it more achievable.

You may follow the advice above and find that, still, despite all efforts, you cannot write. Take some time to consider the unacknowledged emotional side of writing: fear, anxiety, the stakes that make the task so much more difficult than it should be. You may have to address these underlying "roadblocks" before you can proceed, even by trying something as simple as writing down your worries on a piece of paper and saving it for later as you return to the task at hand. Lower the stakes as best you can, and simply begin.

International Graduate Students and the Duration of Status Rule Update: What Faculty Need to Know

The U.S. Department of Homeland Security has issued a final rule changing how international students and exchange visitors are admitted to the United States. The Office of International Affairs and Graduate School will host an in-person information session for faculty focused on what these changes mean for international graduate students and graduate education.

While the [Duration of Status Rule Update webpage](#) created by [Global Engagement](#) is a helpful resource for both students and faculty, this session will include an overview of the new rule and time for faculty questions.



WHEN:

Friday
September 4
11:30 am

WHERE:

Moody Hall
Room 103



@ULLafayetteGraduateSchool

@ULGradSchool



@ULGradSchool

University of Louisiana
at Lafayette Graduate School



Get Outside Get Involved

The Mercredi Show (live music)
Sept. 2 @ 6 PM - Pelican Park

Trivia Night
Sept. 13 @ 6 PM - Moncus Park

September ArtWalk
Sept. 12 @ 5 PM - Downtown Lafayette

Language Cafe
Sept. 20 @ 6 PM - Moncus Park

Louisiana Sugarcane Festival
Sept. 24-27 @ New Iberia, LA

Downtown Rising
Sept. 25 & 26 @ 5 PM - Parc International

Dogtoberfest 2025
Sept. 26 @ 11 AM - Adopted Dog Brewing

Important Dates and Deadlines

9/4: Deadline to Apply for Candidacy

9/21: Graduate Foreign Language Examinations

9/22: Grad Expo at the Alumni House

9/25: Deadline for Fall 2026 Degree Candidates
(This is the deadline to apply for graduation!)

Do not
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

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