

GRAD IN FOCUS



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

Graduate
School

OCTOBER 2026



Message from the Dean

MARY FARMER-KAISER, PH.D.

October is my favorite month of the year.

The weather becomes glorious in south Louisiana, and October brings some fun and a moment to catch our breath with Homecoming, Festivals Acadiens et Creoles, and Fall Break. October 10 is also World Mental Health Day, a welcome moment to reflect on how we roll in graduate education.

Last month, I gathered with our University Fellows Community to think collectively and individually about how we're going to roll this academic year. There really is nothing that I enjoy more than an afternoon with grad students.

And what an afternoon it was. The 58 PhD students gathered that afternoon identified big goals. Perhaps more importantly, they shared valuable practical wisdom for how to keep moving—how to keep rolling—through the demanding and at times draining moments of grad school.

Make the work smaller. Break big projects into manageable tasks. Focus on the next step. Do one thing at a time.

Externalize the work. Use to-do lists, planners, calendar blocks, daily or weekly goals. Schedule the work that matters most and let everything else fill in around that work.

Prioritize deliberately. Rank by urgency or importance. Identify daily tasks. Plan tomorrow's work now.

Value consistency over intensity. Work every day. Use 20-30 minute sessions. (We love seeing the Pomodoro method!) Maintain steady routines rather than last-minute scrambling.

Create boundaries around work. Establish working hours. Treat grad school work like a job. Protect personal and caregiving time.

Step away to keep going. Walk, hike, exercise, meditate, listen to music, read for pleasure, watch an episode of Friends, search Pinterest for an inspirational quote.

Maintain a life that supports the work and you. Eat well. Sleep and rest. Make time for hobbies, friends, family, faith, and community.

Manage motivation with mindset. Hypnotize yourself into wanting the hard stuff. Use rewards. Practice gratitude. Use determination to build resilience.

Different strategies work for different folks, at different stages, for different tasks. These PhD fellows span the grad journey, from first semester to last, from taking courses to teaching classes, from searching for a dissertation topic to working to finish the manuscript. Borrow a strategy or two from them as you keep rolling through October and the year ahead.

—Dr. MFK

“For the great doesn't happen through impulse alone, and is a succession of little things that are brought together.”

VINCENT VAN GOGH

Letter to his brother,
Theo van Gogh,
October 22, 1882.





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.

Wednesdays, We Write

Join us every Wednesday from 2–5 p.m. in Girard Hall, Room 108F, for a relaxed, come-and-go writing session for graduate students, hosted in collaboration with the UL Lafayette Writing Collaborative. Bring your writing project, make steady progress, and enjoy a supportive space with complimentary coffee.

10/1 - Afternoon Analytics: How to Design an Experiment That Works

Join us for Afternoon Analytics with the Statistical Consulting Center from 3–4 p.m. in Moody Hall Room 123. Learn the basics of experimental design and how to turn your research questions into effective studies. [Registration is required.](#)

10/5 & 10/15 - 3MT® Information Sessions

Get all the details for this year's Three-Minute Thesis® Competition in Moody 103 at noon on 10/5 from 2–3 p.m. or virtually on 10/15 via Zoom. We'll go over all the basics, including competition rules, tips, and strategies. [Register for 10/5](#) or [register for 10/15](#).

10/14 - Money Matters: Budgeting

Join us for lunch and a Money Matters conversation with Dr. Brian Bolton focused on budgeting as a graduate student. Lunch begins at 11:30 a.m. in FG Mouton Room 207, and the discussion starts at noon. [Registration is required.](#)

10/6 & 10/21 - Manuscript Workshop for Students (virtual)

Join us online from 10–11 a.m. on October 9 or 12–1 p.m. on October 21 for an intro to what to expect and how to prepare when submitting your defended manuscript to the Grad School for review and final approval. [Register for the October 9 link here.](#) [Register for the October 21 link here.](#)

10/20 - Zotero Workshop

Expand your Grad Toolbox with our Zotero Workshop on October 20 at 12 p.m. in FG Mouton Room 208. Learn how this free research tool can help you collect, organize, annotate, and cite sources. [Registration is required.](#)

10/27 - Accelerate to Industry (A2i+) Industry Insights: The Opportunity Machine

Join us for A2i+ Industry Insights on October 27 from 6–7:30 p.m. at Opportunity Machine in Downtown Lafayette. Hear from industry leaders about their experience building and growing innovative companies in our community. [Registration is required.](#)



10/29 - 3MT® Workshop

Join us online at 3 p.m. for a virtual workshop about the 3MT® Competition! We'll focus on tips and strategies to help you refine and perfect your presentation. Whether you're a first-time competitor or a 3MT® veteran, join us to learn more. [Register for the Zoom link.](#)

You can never have too much **GRASS**

Not that kind of grass! It's time to apply for LA-NEXT graduate student supplement (GRASS) awards.

The Louisiana Networks of Excellence for Tomorrow (LA-NEXT), one of the state's recent NSF EPSCoR projects, continues to transform the R&D ecosystem through coordination, facilitation, and capacity building in strategic areas—and one of its key initiatives will fund graduate student researchers in STEM disciplines again in 2027.

LA-NEXT GRASS awards provide up to \$10,000 per year to the graduate student, with an accomplishment-based renewal possible in subsequent years.

Internal ORSP Deadline: Friday, October 9, 2026

If planning to apply, faculty PIs should notify their assigned Pre-Award Grants Specialist immediately. Near-final draft documents are due to ORSP by October 9, 2026. The deadline for ORSP to submit all approved proposals is October 21.

Eligibility

- Students: Graduate students pursuing advanced STEM degrees aligned with the [FIRST Louisiana S&T Plan](#); preference given to Ph.D. students.
- Faculty Mentors/PI: Must be tenured or tenure-track faculty at a four-year Louisiana public institution or a Louisiana Association of Independent Colleges and Universities (LAICU) member institution offering graduate STEM degrees; preference given to faculty in their first two years.
- Institution: Student and faculty mentor must be from the same institution.
- Applications: Each faculty PI may submit only one application.

[View the LA-NEXT Funding Opportunities and the GRASS RFA for complete eligibility, funding, and application requirements.](#)



Graduate Research Fellowship Program

Established in 1952, the NSF GRFP program is designed to support early-career graduate students pursuing research-based master's and doctoral degrees in NSF-supported science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) disciplines.

These awards include three years of significant financial support—\$53,000 each year over a five-year period.

[Learn about applicant deadlines, which vary by field of study, and eligibility requirements.](#)

[Check out the tips, templates, and other resources from NSF to help you prepare a strong application here.](#)

Louisiana Impact Research Awards: Together with Dean Brian Bolton, the Graduate School, Academic Affairs, and the Division of Research and Innovation invite graduate students and faculty to submit proposals for Round 5 of the Louisiana Impact Research Awards.



For the upcoming cycle, applications should advance research and creative works that explore 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.



[Learn more and submit your proposal here!](#)



In Pursuit of a Thesis

“Graduate school is not a sinking submarine. It is demanding, humbling, and occasionally powered by caffeine (ok, daily TBH).”



For UL Lafayette staff member **Mary Baudoin**, returning to college at age 50 has led to two undergraduate degrees and pursuit of a **master's degree in History** at UL Lafayette. Mary offers a candid look at the realities of navigating grad school alongside a full-time job, caregiving, and life's many blessings and tensions. She also reveals the unexpected discovery of a beautiful grad community along the way.

[Read Mary's blog and learn more about the History MA program at UL Lafayette.](#)



Blogs by Graduate Students
for Graduate Students

Grad Education in the News

“How do I rekindle my motivation for earning my PhD?” Nature, Career Feature, 23 September 2026.

“Artificial Intelligence in Graduate STEM Education,” NORC Education, Research Brief and White Paper, July 2026.

“The House Republican Trying to Redefine Graduate Student Loan Caps,” Inside Higher Education, 4 September 2026.

Big Wins for the School of Geosciences

Our AAPG Imperial Barrel Award (IBA) team—including grad students **Myllah Brown**, **Anna-Sophia Henry**, **Ashley Mindt**, **Caitlyn Mullis**, and **Amadeo Suazo**—claimed 1st place in the USA/Canada Region and 2nd in the world in this year's competitions. The IBA program is a premier global energy competition, and this year's team was organized by **Dr. Rui Zhang**, Graduate Coordinator for our MS Geology and MS Environmental Science programs. [Read all about it.](#)

Recent Earth and Energy Sciences PhD graduate, **Dr. Gracie Babineaux** (May 2026), has been awarded the prestigious National Academies of Sciences Gulf Research Science Policy Fellowship. She'll be working with the NOAA RESTORE Science program for the next year.

Dr. Brian Schubert has been included in the “50 Under 50” list of North America's top geoscientists by the Geological Society of America. Dr. Schubert is the Director of the School of Geoscience. [Read all about it.](#)



Your stories inspire,
so don't hold back.

Hey awesome grad students!

From new knowledge and creative projects to exciting opportunities, we want to hear your good news. Ph.D. student Chimezie Izuazu shared his #ULGradGoodNews — now it's your turn.

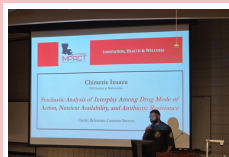
Share the good, and let's
celebrate together!

Use <https://bit.ly/ULGradGoodNews>
to tell us something good!

#ULGradGoodNews

Ph.D. Student Publication!

This month, we're celebrating Chimezie Izuazu, a Ph.D. student in Mathematics, whose first doctoral project has been published in the *Bulletin of Mathematical Biology*, after two years of hard work and countless revisions. The project is especially meaningful to Chimezie, who continued his doctoral studies through the loss of his father last year. “To see this project finally published in honor of the late mathematician, Mary Ann Horn, is more than a professional milestone; it's deeply personal,” he noted. “I'm grateful for the renewed strength to keep going and immensely thankful to everyone who supported me along the way.” Congratulations, Chimezie, on this milestone — and thank you for sharing your good news with us!



Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



October is the midpoint of the fall semester, and as such, it often brings a dip between the excitement of the semester's start and the respite at its end. Inspiration can feel like a disappearing commodity as obligations pile up. And yet, at the same time, October holds real promise.

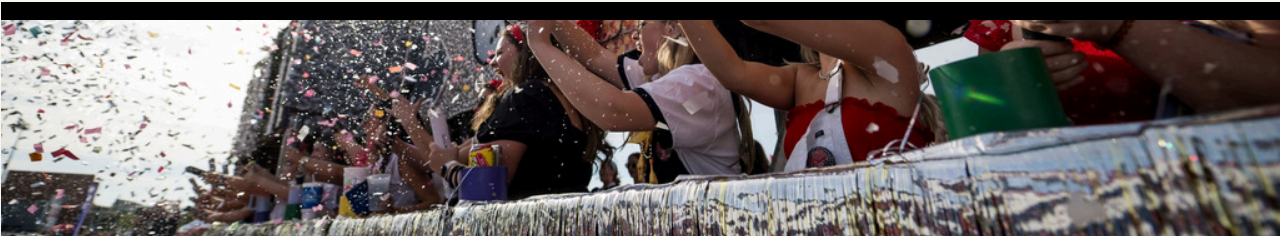
You're deep enough into the semester that the context has been set, but still far enough from the end for course correction and meaningful progress. It's time to abandon inspiration in favor of continuity.

Start with scope. Narrow the writing goal until you can make clear, concrete progress today. Too often, we tend to overwhelm ourselves. It's important to lower the stakes by allowing yourself to write without waiting to feel ready. Write a page, even if it's bad. Write to keep your ideas alive.

John McPhee is one of many writers for whom drafting is a frustrating process. "First drafts are slow and develop clumsily because every sentence affects not only those before it but also those that follow," he writes.

Many early writers wait for inspiration. This tactic can feel like the key to a stronger first draft, but seasoned writers will tell you otherwise. The willingness to trudge forward sentence by sentence, for the sake of progress, allows for breakthroughs in both the writing itself and how you understand your work.

This is the perfect moment to leave behind vague, complicated goals and just write yourself forward. As McPhee reminds us, the first draft can take four times as long as the next three combined. It still has to be written.



We know that success often happens together in graduate education. We're here to support our grad students, to celebrate your wins, and to be in it with you every step of the way.

Stop by the Grad School during Homecoming week to add your car to our **Roadmap to Success** on the second floor, then head up to the third floor to fuel up and snap a photo in our **R1 Gas and Geaux**. Bring a friend, grab a Grad School staff member, and let's show the community that **Together is how we roll!**



The clock is ticking!

November 1
is the deadline to register to compete



3MT® THREE MINUTE THESIS

FOUNDED BY THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND

The Three Minute Thesis (3MT®) is a research communication competition. It challenges you to tell a compelling research story to a non-specialist audience in just three minutes and with only one static slide. The goal is to communicate complex ideas clearly and engagingly. **Accept the 3MT® challenge!** It's time to be creative, concise, and accessible with your communication.

- Win prize money
- UL Lafayette campus winner advances to the regional 3MT® competition at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) annual meeting in February 2027
- Regional CSGS winner advances to the national 3MT® showcase at the Council of Graduate Schools meeting in December 2027

Upcoming 3MT® Information Sessions: Oct. 5 and Oct. 15

Learn the What, When, Where, Why & How!



Our 2025-2026 3MT® Winners: Asif, Mahek, and Hope
[Read about last year's winners here!](#)



Looking Ahead to November

Learn more and register at
louisiana.edu/graduateschool

11/3 - Zotero Workshop (Virtual)

11/5 - Manuscript Workshop

11/11 & 11/12 - 3MT® Preliminary Rounds of Competition

11/19 - Money Matters

11/26 & 27 - Thanksgiving Break



#ULGradLife

Tools, Tips, and Things to Do

Grad school is more than what happens in the lab, library, and seminar room. Embrace #ULGradLife fully by making the most of your time at UL Lafayette and in our local community — from exploring Lafayette to finding tools to help you manage your time, research, writing, and more.

Ready to explore Lafayette? Check out

[16 Must-Do Things in Lafayette While You're in Grad School.](#)

Looking for tools to help you work smarter? Start with

[14 Essential Apps for Grad School Success.](#)

What is?



NCFDD is a professional development, training, and mentoring community that can help you achieve greater writing and research productivity while maintaining a full and healthy life on and off campus.

Who?

YOU! All graduate students, faculty, postdocs, and staff have access to an individual membership by virtue of the University's institutional membership.

How?

Visit <https://louisiana.edu/graduateschool/tools-success/ncfdd-membership> to activate your account. No need to wait, do it now. Select the University of Louisiana at Lafayette and use your University email address to register.

Programs & Resources Offered

- Monday Motivator
- Core Curriculum and Hidden Handbook Webinars
- Guest Expert Webinars
- Dissertation Success Curriculum
- Accountability Meetings
- 14-Day Writing Challenge
- And More!

NCFDD for Faculty Mentors

A Dialogical Approach to Navigating Tension in the Classroom

Teaching with Empathy and Equity at the Graduate Level

Mentorship: Efficient and Effective Practices

Sustaining our Success: Rest, Recovery, and Faculty Well-Being



The Core Curriculum For Graduate Students & Faculty

Skill #1: Every Semester Needs a Plan

Skill #2: How to Align Your Time with Your Priorities

Skill #3: How to Develop a Daily Writing Practice

Skill #4: Mastering Academic Time Management

Skill #5: Moving from Resistance to Writing

Skill #6: The Art of Saying No:

How to Create Healthy Boundaries

Skill #7: Cultivating Your Network of Mentors, Sponsors & Collaborators

Skill #8: Overcoming Academy Perfectionism

Skill #9: How to Engage in Healthy Conflict

Skill #10: How to Manage Stress, Rejection & the Haters in Your Midst



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University of Louisiana
at Lafayette Graduate School

Get Outside get Involved

Downtown Alive!

October 2 @ Downtown Lafayette

Latin Music Festival

October 2-3 @ 200 Garfield St. Downtown

Yoga in the Park

October 7 @ Moncus Park

Festivals Acadiens et Creoles

October 9 - 11 @ Girard Park

Language Cafe

October 15 @ Moncus Park

Bach Lunch

October 23 @ Downtown Lafayette

Acadiana Eats Festival

October 23-24 @ West Villa, Scott

Important Dates and Deadlines

10/8 & 10/9: Holiday-Fall Break

10/26-11/6: Advising for the Spring Semester

10/28: Debt holds added to accounts with outstanding balances

10/29: Academic Resources Trick or Treat

11/9: Registration begins for Winter intersession

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. Use the QR code and your UL email to start.



The Office of Disability Services establishes eligibility and facilitates services and accommodations for 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 provides statistical support to UL Lafayette graduate students and faculty for research involving statistical methods. Location: 432 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