GRAD IN FOCUS

NOVEMBER 2026

UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA LAFAYETTE | Graduate School

Message from the Dean

MARY FARMER-KAISER, PH.D.

I really appreciate a good quad walk. On my own. With a colleague. To connect with an undergrad skeptical about office hours. But most of all, I love time in the fresh air with a grad student who needs to talk through research, grapple with feedback (or lack thereof), hone a thesis statement, contemplate career paths, or prep for a job talk or interview.

And November is the perfect time for a quad walk. Not only is our weather finally more conducive to being outside but now is when we must lock in and make things happen. That project needs to take shape, 3MT prelims are just around the corner, and the deadlines for theses, dissertations, and synthesis projects are looming.

And there's research to back the benefits. In 2014, Marily Oppezzo and Daniel Schwartz published a study that connected walking to boosts in creativity in both real time and the immediacy that follows. Walking outside, they added, "produced the most novel and highest quality analogies." Research has since expanded upon their findings—neuroscience studies have mapped why this happens; environmental psychology studies have explored the "green" bonus; follow-up experiments have replicated the creativity boost in more diverse demographics with some arguing that the quality and originality of ideas scale up during walking; and a study published in Neurology this summer reported that 80+ fast walkers—referred to as "super movers" in the study—were 50% less likely to develop cognitive decline than their peers.

Admittedly, it's not always about the movement for me. Don't get me wrong. Increased physical activity is important (and, I'll add, can take many forms beyond walking). In real time, sometimes it's just about my need to reset and make things happen. Plus, my own walks have had to slow down to a stroll lately, and a good quad-bench-sit has often provided the refocus I needed. There are lots of reasons—and ways—to reset. It could be that your brain simply needs a break from focused work. Leaving familiar surroundings offers environmental change. Taking in some fresh air and listening to nature—what the Stanford study called "outdoor stimulation"—delivers a sensory shift. All of this is good!

Sometimes our best thinking happens in unexpected places. Embrace that. Thinking is not a desk- or lab-bound activity.

Experiment this month with ways to clear your head and lock in, refill those creative juices, and gather your thoughts to think freely, to hone or find a new approach, and—as is the new UL tag line—to move different.

—Dr. MFK

"Only those thoughts that come by walking have any value."

FRIEDRICH NIETZSCHE

The Twilight of the Idols, or How to Philosophize with a Hammer (1889).





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, quiet, & parking. You provide the focus and progress. No registration needed.

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.

11/3 - Virtual Zotero Workshop
Expand your Grad Toolbox with our virtual Zotero Workshop on November 3 at 12 p.m. Learn how this free research tool can help you collect, organize, annotate, and cite sources. Registration for the Zoom link.

11/5- Manuscript Workshop for Students: Formatting
Join us online from 4 to 5 p.m. to learn how to correctly format your manuscript to meet Graduate School requirements and fix common errors. Register for the Zoom link.

11/11 & 11/12 - 3MT® Preliminary Competition
Join the Grad School and our 3MT® competitors for the first round of competition on Wednesday, Nov. 11, from 2–3 p.m. or Thursday, Nov. 12, from 11 a.m.–12 p.m. in Griffin Hall, Room 315. Cheer on the contestants and learn more about research communication and the exciting research happening on campus. No registration required!

11/13 - Career Readiness - A2i+ Career Insights - Skills in Demand: How Graduate Education Prepares You for Corporate Challenges
Join the Zoom from 1-2 p.m. to learn how research, problem-solving, communication, and analytical thinking translate into success in the corporate world. You'll leave with practical insights on how to showcase your skills and confidently navigate today's job market. Register now.

11/17 - Inn-eaux-vate Fall 2025 Pitch Competition
Come cheer on the finalists as they pitch their innovative business ideas to alumni judges! The event runs from 4-6 p.m. at the LITE Center—a great chance for graduate students to network and get inspired by UL Lafayette's brightest minds. No registration required.

11/19 - Money Matters: Debt Management
Join us for lunch and a Money Matters conversation with Dr. Brian Bolton focused on debt management. Lunch will be served at 11:30 am in F.G. Mouton, Room 208. The conversation will begin at noon. Registration is required.

11/21 - NCFDD: Impostorization: Moving Beyond Imposter Syndome
Students and faculty join online from 12–1 p.m. for this webinar on deciphering between impostorization and imposter syndrome and strategies to counter each. Register for the Zoom link.

Writing Tips & Tools

with Jamie Benner, Ph.D.



From Summary to Synthesis

In graduate school, you are learning to position yourself as a scholar in your field.

Synthesis, often mentioned but rarely taught in graduate courses, is a vital skill for meeting graduate program milestones, from early literature reviews to final dissertations.

To synthesize is to “bring together material from two or more sources in order to generate new information or to support a new perspective” (Norton Field Guide to Writing).

Synthesis goes beyond summary. Explanatory synthesis outlines a specific perspective and the reasons for it while argumentative synthesis uses sources to put forth a new argument (Purdue OWL). Both examine relationships between sources to draw original conclusions.

The first step of synthesis is engaged reading. No scholar has read it all, and that’s okay. The solution isn’t to skip reading or to skim haphazardly. It’s to approach reading the way you would research, with specific questions and strategies.

Read critically and take notes. Group your sources by topic and search for patterns. Try writing summaries, freewriting, clustering, or listing to find connections. Review how the authors of your chosen sources perform their own synthesis.

Create a literature synthesis matrix, a table with critical questions to ask of each source, to structure your comparison (Homar and Sabraw, “Scaffolding Text Synthesis”). Questions should include things like, *What is the topic or purpose of the article?* and *What are the study’s findings?*

The techniques you use are up to you, but approach writing rhetorically. Let the specifics of your own research project guide your synthesis. Consider how best to incorporate Aristotle’s three appeals—ethos (appeals to the writer’s credibility), pathos (appeals to the audience’s beliefs or emotions), and logos (appeals to reason)—while avoiding logical fallacies as you begin your intertextual integration.

You may be tempted to rely on AI to summarize sources or generate prose, but, as Homar and Sabraw point out, “graduate writers who slow down to appreciate the grammar of synthesis in authentic texts” become scholars with distinct voices that appeal to audiences in their fields.

First-Generation College Day

Celebrate your journey. Share your story. First Gen Proud.

November 08

FIRST GEN PROUD
UL LAFAYETTE

Your story matters.
We're celebrating our first-generation grad students and the experiences that make their journeys unique. Yes, grad students are first-generation too! Join us by sharing and celebrating through November 8!

1. Add Your Voice to The First Gen Walls
Visit Career Services, Campus Cupboard, Lee Hall or the library to share your thoughts:

- What is the first word that comes to mind when you think about being a college student?
- What do you wish you knew your first year of college?

Come and pick up a sticker or button to show your First-Gen GRAD Pride!

2. Tell Us About Yourself
Complete the brief First Gen form so we can share occasional encouragement, helpful reminders, campus resources, and celebrations throughout your graduate journey.

3. Celebrate First-Gen Week!
Pick up your First Gen sticker or button at the November 7 Alumni Tailgate and cheer on the Ragin' Cajuns against South Alabama. Then, join the First Gen Celebration on November 9 from 11 a.m.–2 p.m. at Rex & St. Mary for giveaways, photo ops, and a chance to connect with fellow first-gen students.

3MT®: THREE MINUTES. BIG IMPACT.

SHARE YOUR RESEARCH, BUILD YOUR CONFIDENCE, WIN THE CASH.

"Clarity is the real complexity."

Mahek Pathak, 3MT® 2025-2026 Competition Finalist

"Having 3MT on your profile is a powerful communication tag that makes people see you as a confident communicator."

Asif Istiak, 2025-2026 3MT® Winner

"3MT showed me how powerful research can become when you can explain it beyond your own field."

Atif Khan, 2024-2025 3MT® Winner

THERE'S STILL TIME TO REGISTER!

Deadline to register: Thursday, Nov. 5
Preliiminary Rounds: November 11-12, 2026
Finals: December 9 @ LITE Center

Grad Education in the News

"2 Ways to Support Students' Mental Health," Chronicle of Higher Education, 18 June 2024

"A rare bright spot for international enrollments?" Chronicle of Higher Education, 30 September 2026.

"Career Prep When No One Knows What's Next," Inside Higher Ed, 29 September 2026.

"College can be a big life change. How can students navigate mental health challenges?" NPR Illinois, 19 February 2026

"The Missed Opportunity for Graduate Student Leadership," Science, 18 March 2026.

MENTAL HEALTH WEEK.

—NOVEMBER 10-12—

Blogs by Graduate Students for Graduate Students

Recognizing Mental Health Challenges

By Ash Helms-Tippit

A Past Grad School Manuscript Support GTA shares her journey with anxiety, highlighting how recognizing mental health challenges can reshape the ways we cope and connect.

👉 Read the full BLOG!

Finding Resources On and Off Campus

We've gone deeper to compile more info about key resources addressing food insecurity, health and wellness, mental health, substance abuse, financial assistance, and domestic violence on campus and in the Lafayette community.

👉 Read the full BLOG!

Looking Ahead to December

Learn more and register at louisiana.edu/graduateschool

12/7-12/11 - Taking on Finals Week

12/17 - Doctoral Hooding Ceremoney

12/18 - Commencement

12/19-1/12 - Enjoying a Well-Deserved Break!

Happy Holidays

Tuesday, Nov. 10

Resource Fair & Ice Cream Social
🕙 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. | 📍 Union Ballroom

Yoga
🕕 6 - 7 p.m. | 📍 Bourgeois Dance Studio



Wednesday, Nov. 11

Hold Onto Hope Backpack Event
🕗 8:30 a.m. - 2 p.m. | 📍 The Quad

Wellness Wednesday
🕘 9 -3 p.m. | 📍 Wharton Hall Room 115

Reflective Collective
Managing Holidays Support Group
🕠 5:30 - 6:30 p.m. | 📍 1606 Johnston St. Room 116

Meditation Flow
🕖 7 - 9:45 p.m. | 📍 Meditation Studio in Bourgeois Hall

Thursday, Nov. 12

Hope & Wellness Pop-Up
🕙 10 a.m. - 1 p.m. | 📍 OK Allen Hall



University of Louisiana Lafayette | Counseling and Testing Center

UL Lafayette Collegiate Recovery Program

NAMI On Campus — University of Louisiana at Lafayette

QPR Suicide Preventation Training

QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training teaches practical, proven strategies to **recognize suicide warning signs** and **help save lives**. Led by Skasa Rideau through the Jacob Crouch Foundation and The Family Tree, this session is open to individuals of all backgrounds.

November 9, 2026
9 - 11 a.m.

Helma Constantine Hall, Student Union

You Are Not Alone Award

A $500 Mental Health Week scholarship that recognizes students who engage in and reflect on their mental health journeys.

LEARN MORE



International Education Week

November 16-20

International Education Week highlights the value of global perspectives and cross-cultural understanding, enriching our campus community and connecting the world.

Share your culture!



Culture Fest

Friday, November 20

11 a.m. - 2 p.m. @ Union Porch

Celebrate cultures from around the world through food, music, dance, fashion, & more!

Sign Up to Participate

NOV 18

International Student Mental Health and Wellbeing Session

🕐 1–2 p.m. 📍 Student Union 👤 Led by Dr. Ismatara Reena

International students and scholars are invited to connect, share experiences, and explore mental health, self-care, stress management, and cultural transitions in a supportive community.

Explore beyond campus: AFS Intercultural Programs is offering a series of free virtual webinars November 16–20 on topics including global citizenship, inclusive higher education, AI and the future of learning. Explore the schedule and register for an online session that interests you.

Battling Fatigue as a Graduate Student

Graduate school can leave you feeling drained and struggling to focus. A few simple changes can help you recharge, regain momentum and study smarter.

- Break larger projects into smaller goals.
- Schedule purposeful breaks.
- Limit distractions. Protect focus time.

Read the Blog

If what you're experiencing feels like more than every day fatigue, visit the Mental Health section of this newsletter for more resources. You are not alone!

Beyond the Books

Grad Student Guide to Fun around Lafayette

TRIVIA & GAME NIGHTS

Trivia Nerd

Find local trivia nights and test your knowledge

Facebook: Trivia Nerd

Pigeon Post Trivia

Gather a team and put your random knowledge to the test.

Facebook: Pigeon Post Trivia

Johnston St. Bingo

Check out local bingo nights and join the fun

Facebook: Johnston Street Bingo

Fat Pat's on Westmark Blvd.

Wednesday night Bingo and other games.

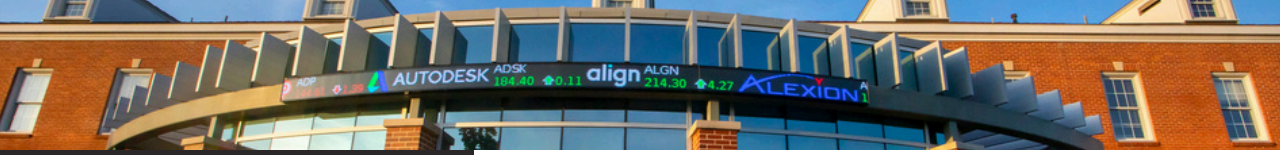
Facebook: Fat Pat's Westmark

Yard Goat

Wednesday bingo nights featuring different sponsors and music.

MORE WAYS TO UNWIND

Lafayette Comedy
Southern Spark Speed Dating
Sticks - $12/hr pool tables



@ULLafayetteGraduateSchool

@ULGradSchool

University of Louisiana at Lafayette Graduate School

Get Outside get Involved

Downtown Alive!
Nov. 6 @ Downtown Lafayette

Festival of Words
Nov. 6 & 7 @ Grand Coteau

Southern Screen Festival
Nov.19-22 @ Acadiana Center for Arts

Yoga in the Park
Every Wednesday @ Moncus Park

Language Cafe
Nov. 19 @ Moncus Park

Native American Culture Day
Nov. 21 @ Vermilionville

Noel Acadien au Village
All December @ Acadian Village

Important Dates and Deadlines

11/16: Last Day to Submit Defended Copies of Theses or Dissertations
11/30: Last Day to Submit Final Copies of Theses or Dissertations
11/30: Last Day to Complete Graduate Written and/or Oral Comprehensive Exams
12/4: Last Day of Classes
12/7-11: Final Exams
12/17: Doctoral Hooding Ceremony
12/18: Commencement Ceremonies



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: Maxim Doucet Hall 432

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