



LOUISIANA IMPACT RESEARCH AWARDS SUMMIT

A GRAD STUDENT
APPRECIATION WEEK EVENT

THE UNIVERSITY OF
LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE

MARCH 27, 2026
11:30AM – 3:30PM
MOODY HALL, #103

RESEARCH CELEBRATING THE PEOPLE, PLACE & PURPOSE OF LOUISIANA & BEYOND

11:30-12:00	Lunch Available	1:10-2:00	Research Presentations
12:00-12:10	Dr. Brian Bolton & Welcome	2:00-2:00	Break
12:10-1:00	Research Presentations	2:10-3:15	Research Presentations
1:00-1:10	Break	3:15-3:30	Dr. Mary Farmer-Kaiser

PEOPLE + THEIR PLACES

12:10-12:16

Sustainable Economic and Cultural Development of Louisiana Business Practices in French and Creole

Natalie Keefer – Associate Professor, Education Curriculum & Instruction, College of Education & Human Development

Kathe Managan - Assistant Professor, Anthropology, College of Liberal Arts

12:16-12:22

Louisiana's View of Speech-Language Pathology Assistants

Christine Weill – Assistant Professor, Communicative Disorders, College of Liberal Arts

12:22-12:31

More Than Words: Supporting the Development of a Child with Communication Disabilities Through Engineering the Communicative Environment

Xueao Cao, PhD Student in Communicative Disorders

Gulalek Charyyeva - PhD Student in Communicative Disorders

Faculty references: Judith Oxley and Katherine McQuitty Hays, College of Liberal Arts

12:31-12:37

Visualizing Empowerment? Tourism and the Experiences of Ethnic Minority Women in Northern Vietnam

Ignatius Cahyanto – Associate Professor, Management, B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration

LOUISIANA, NATURE + LIFE

12:37-12:43

Mitigating Environmental Stress Impacts on Louisiana's Native Prairie Species

Andrea Westerband – Assistant Professor, Biology, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

12:43-12:52

Using Machine Learning to Detect Macrobenthic Regime Shifts in a Louisiana Estuarine Bay

Jacob Badcock – PhD Student in Environmental & Evolutionary Biology
Faculty reference: Craig McClain, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

12:52-1:00

Discrete-Time Refuge-Mediated Selection Model

Sajan Bhandari – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Azmy Ackleh, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

BREAK – 1:00 to 1:10

1:10-1:19

Invading Populations by Infections in a Discrete-Time Compartmental Epidemic Models

Jenita Jahangir – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Amy Veprauskas, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:19-1:28

Growth of and Microzooplankton Grazing on Pico- and Nanoplankton Communities Along Environmental Gradients

Emily Mulcahy – MS Student in Biology
Faculty reference: Beth Stauffer, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:28-1:37

Understanding the Electron Transport Chain in Photosystem I During Photosynthesis

Khairum Orthi – PhD Student in Earth & Energy Sciences
Faculty reference: Wu Xu, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

1:37-1:46

The Role of Road Weather Intelligent Systems in Enhancing Climate Resilience and Transportation Safety in Louisiana

Nelly Ankrah – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Civil Engineering

Faculty reference: Julius Codjoe, College of Engineering

1:46-1:54

Visualization of Hydrate Formation of Flowing CO₂ in Low-Temperature Water for CO₂ Disposal onto Seafloor

Muhammad Towhidul Islam – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Petroleum Engineering

Faculty reference: Boyun Guo, College of Engineering

1:54-2:00

Converting Invasive Giant Salvinia in Louisiana into Renewable Biomethane

Xiaobo Lei – Postdoctoral Researcher, Energy Institute of Louisiana

BREAK – 2:00-2:10

2:10-2:19

A Collaboratively Designed and Managed Flood Resilience Framework for Affected Communities in the Caribbean Region

Gregory Williams – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Civil Engineering

Faculty reference: Emad Habib, College of Engineering

2:19-2:28

Discovering the Early-Time Photodegradation Mechanisms of Emerging Contaminants in Marine Ecosystems

Courtney Poirier Chicola – Postdoctoral Researcher, NASA Regional Application Center and Department of Chemistry

Student reference: Bree Landry

INNOVATION, HEALTH & WELLNESS

2:28-2:37

Shaping Attitudes Toward GLP-1 Drugs: The Impact of Realistic Advertisements on Disordered Eating Behaviors

Maria Lindquist – MS Student in Psychology

Faculty reference: Mark LaCour, College of Liberal Arts

2:37-2:43

Accelerating Universal Mental Health Access through AI-Powered Suicide Prevention

Yihe Zhang – Research Scientist, Informatics Research Institute

2:43-2:49

ULL-HT: Unified, Low-Resource, and Language-Assisted Health Tool

Sercan Aygun – Assistant Professor, Computing & Informatics, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

2:49-2:57

A Novel Nanocarrier-Driven Therapeutic Strategy for Inhibiting Tissue Damage in Degenerated Joint Disease

Asif Istiak – PhD Student in Systems Engineering: Mechanical Engineering
Faculty reference: Tanvir Faisal, College of Engineering

2:57-3:06

Stochastic Analysis of Interplay Among Drug Mode of Action, Nutrient Availability, and Antibiotic Resistance

Chimezie Izuazu – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Cameron Browne, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

3:06-3:15

Optimization and AI-Driven Advances in Detection Tools for Heart Disease and Cancers

Lovelyn Madu – PhD Student in Mathematics
Faculty reference: Bruce Wade, Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

*Dr. Mary Farmer-Kaiser
Dean of The Graduate School*

GRAD STUDENT APPRECIATE WEEK AWARDS

CLOSING REMARKS & LOOKING TO THE FUTURE