

PREFACE

The following report identifies areas that the Graduate Student Organization (GSO) in partnership with others at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (faculty, staff, student organizations, and campus offices) can continue to develop to sustain our graduate students.

Our goal is to **raise awareness** of the role of GSO in advocating, funding, and communicating with and for graduate students to address the issues that they face throughout their graduate education.

Thus, this report will add value to the ongoing University-wide discussion on how to **better support graduate students** to develop professionally.

Using real student responses, this report also strives to **provide a platform for unheard graduate student voices**, candidly sharing ideas and sentiments that may otherwise never find an audience.

Lastly, the Organization has needed to adapt from 2020-2021, and our Department Representatives and Executive Board have put in more work than ever before to increase the Organization's profile and grow operations.

ORGANIZATION INTRODUCTION

All graduate students at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette are automatically members of the Graduate Student Organization (GSO).

We are here to advocate for you! The GSO supports graduate students in several ways:

Advocacy

One of the most important things we do is to represent the needs and concerns of our members to the university administration. The GSO president serves on the University Graduate Council, the Graduate Appeals Committee, as well as other administrative committees the Dean of Graduate School deems appropriate. Student representatives from graduate departments meet each semester to discuss issues that are important to graduate students.

Funding

Graduate students know that conducting research and presenting at conferences puts a strain on our limited budgets. The GSO uses student-assessed fees to help offset the cost of research and travel-related expenses! We also provide one-time grants for purchasing thesis, dissertation, or project supplies.

Communication

The GSO is one of many important relays to get vital information to graduate students. Check out Facebook and this website often for the latest GSO information. Your representative is also a reliable source of information. Find your representative [here!](#)

If there is an issue that you would like to see the GSO address, or if you are interested in helping, please do not hesitate to contact us at gso@louisiana.edu.

Like us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#).



Photos from Kindness Letters (Left), Eid Al Fitr Celebration (Top), GSO's Participation in Big Event (Top Right), and GSO General Meeting (Bottom)

SPRING 2024 REFLECTIONS

By-Law Amendments

During the Spring 2024 semester, the GSO General Council and its department representatives deliberated on numerous proposed amendments. Ultimately, four significant by-law updates were moved, seconded, and approved. These updates are summarized below.

1. Supplemental Funds By-Law Update:

- **Approved Motion:** Moving forward, supplemental funds from Non-Exhausted GSO Funding Categories will be used in funding requests for Exhausted Categories at the Third GSO General Committee Meeting each semester.

2. GSO Representative Role By-Law Update:

- **Approved Motion:** The vocabulary of the GSO By-Law was updated to include GSO Representatives in the online process of funding applications. This includes a letter of approval from a Department's Representative before an application receives full approval.

3. Approved Doctoral Research & Travel Grant By-Law:

- **Approved Motion:** Travel category applications from students with Approved Doctoral Research & Travel Grants will be moved to the Third GSO General Committee Meeting and considered after all other travel applications.

- **Approved Motion:** Approved Doctoral Research & Travel Grant recipients will be considered for GSO Research & Supplies Funds in the same manner as other applicants.
4. GSO Secretary Position By-Law Update:
- **Approved Motion:** The position of GSO Secretary will be opened to the entire Graduate Student population of UL Lafayette, in accordance with existing GSO By-Laws.

These amendments aim to enhance the efficiency and fairness of the GSO's funding processes and administrative roles, ensuring that resources are allocated appropriately and transparently.

Participation

- Full Executive Board Voted in at the last General Meeting:
 - Clement Tochukwu Okolo – President (August 2022)
 - Precious Batubo – Treasurer (November 2023)
 - Tessa Rock – PR Coordinator (November 2023)
 - Abdelrahman Garbie – Vice President (November 2023)
 - Benjamin Vidrine – Secretary (August 2023 – May 2024)
- In-person General Meetings:
 - Held in 210 Magnolia Room AB, the in-person general meetings aided in encouraging community amongst GSO Council.
- GSO Committees' Meetings:
 - Held in 209B - Helma Constatine Forum, 116 Teche, and 210 Magnolia Room A. Attendance virtually was granted on a case-by-case basis.

Spring 2024 Department Representatives Table

Department	Program
Accounting (ACCN)	Vacant
Architecture (ARCH)	Tyrone Wilson
Biology (BIOL)	Kevin Torgersen
Business Administration (BA)	Grayson Stepanek
Chemical Engineering (CHEE)	Elizabeth Boyd
Chemistry (CHEM)	Vacant
Civil Engineering (CIVE)	Ahmed Hossain
Communications (COMM)	Taiwo Oluyinka
Communicative Disorders (CODI)	Mary McMahon
Computing and Informatics (CMIX)	Mehran Shoushtari-Moghadam
Counselor Education (CNED)	Sabreelyn Villalpando
Criminal Justice (CJUS)	Onyeka Enwesi
Educational Curriculum & Instruction (EDCI)	Vacant
Educational Foundations & Leadership (EDFL)	Brianna Doucet
Electrical Engineering (EECE)	Vacant
English (ENGL)	Bilal Khan
Geosciences (GEOS)	Precious Batubo
History (HIST)	Benjamin Vidrine
Industrial Technology (ITEC)	Sohel Ahmed
Kinesiology (KINE)	Sumona Hoque Mumu
Mathematics (MATH)	Md Monzur Murshed
Mechanical Engineering (MECH)	Abdelrahman Garbie
Modern Languages (MODL)	Pierre-Olivier Pire
Music (MUSC)	Morgan Burroughs
Nursing (NURS)	Erica Piazza
Petroleum Engineering (PETE)	Silver Damigoru
Physics (PHYS)	John Miller
Psychology (PSYC)	Jon-Patric Veal

Key:

Vacant
Departments

Departments which
received funding

Departments not able to fund.

Summer 2024 Department Representatives Table

Department	Program
Accounting (ACCN)	Vacant
Architecture (ARCH)	Tyrone Wilson
Biology (BIOL)	Kevin Torgersen
Business Administration (BA)	Darian Cheramie
Chemical Engineering (CHEE)	Elizabeth Boyd
Chemistry (CHEM)	Vacant
Civil Engineering (CIVE)	Farooq Azam Khanzada
Communications (COMM)	Taiwo Oluyinka
Communicative Disorders (CODI)	Mary McMahon
Computing and Informatics (CMIX)	Mehran Shoushtari-Moghadam
Counselor Education (CNED)	Sabreelyn Villalpando
Criminal Justice (CJUS)	Vacant
Educational Curriculum & Instruction (EDCI)	Vacant
Educational Foundations & Leadership (EDFL)	Brianna Doucet
Electrical Engineering (EECE)	Shayan Ebrahimi
English (ENGL)	Bilal Khan
Geosciences (GEOS)	Precious Batubo
History (HIST)	Vacant
Industrial Technology (ITEC)	Sohel Ahmed
Kinesiology (KINE)	Sumona Hoque Mumu
Mathematics (MATH)	Agnideep Aich
Mechanical Engineering (MECH)	Abdelrahman Garbie
Modern Languages (MODL)	Pierre-Olivier Pire
Music (MUSC)	Vacant
Nursing (NURS)	Vacant
Petroleum Engineering (PETE)	Silver Damigoru
Physics (PHYS)	John Miller
Psychology (PSYC)	Taylor Roussel

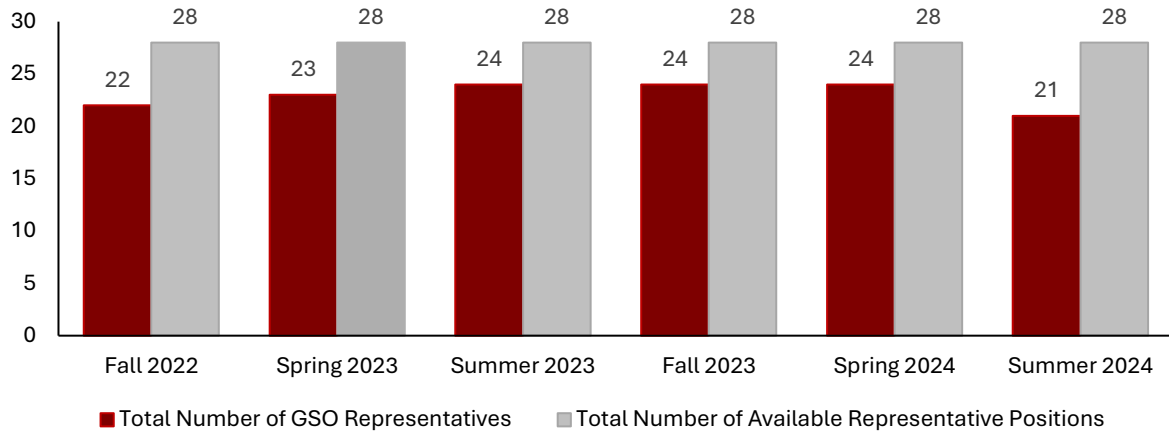
Key:

Vacant
Departments

Departments which
received funding

Departments not able to fund.

GSO Representative Count



Vacancy

- The Departments of Accounting (ACCN), Chemistry (CHEM), and Educational Curriculum & Instruction (EDCL) have been unrepresented for over a year, as has the Department of Electrical Engineering (EECE). Addressing this lack of representation is crucial for our collective advocacy efforts.

GSO Graduates



From Left to Right, Benjamin Vidrine (HIST), Ahmed Hossain (CIVE), Grayson Stepanek (BA), and Erica Piazza (NURS) are graduating in the Spring 2024 Semester

GSO Events

Kindness Letters (February 28th)

- Organized by PR Coordinator Tessa Rock, the Kindness Letters event successfully united our community, spreading numerous positive messages via kindness rocks and in graduate student offices. Highlighted by the Graduate School's enthusiastic involvement and their Most Loved Graduate Program Board, we urge the community to keep spreading goodwill and watch for these tokens of kindness around campus.

UL's THE BIG EVENT (March 16th)

- We demonstrated our commitment to community and environmental stewardship by organizing graduate students to clean up the Azalea Trail at Girard Park. This effort beautified the trail and fostered camaraderie and civic responsibility, reinforcing our dedication to positive impacts within and beyond the university.

Graduate Student Appreciation Week (March 18th – March 22nd)

- To acknowledge the hard work of our graduate students, we provided stress-relief tools like stress balls and toys, offering relaxation and fun. This initiative supports student well-being, helping manage stress and enhance the graduate experience.

Eid Al Fitr Celebration (April 12th)

- The GSO and the Rotary Club of Lafayette collaborated to celebrate Eid, an important event for many Muslim graduate students. This partnership highlighted our commitment to diversity and inclusion, bringing students together for an evening meal to foster community and respect. The celebration marked the end of Ramadan and promoted inclusivity within our university.

DIY Plant Desk Buddy (April 23rd)

- Our DIY Plant Buddy event invited graduate students to personalize their workspaces with a decorated pot and succulent, providing a relaxing, creative break from academics and fostering well-being and community interaction.

Advocacy

- LOGS Shopper Shuttle Initiative
 - LOGS Survey

- Interest in an expanded UL Lafayette shuttle service to aid in accessing essential amenities like grocery stores, bookshops, malls, and specialty shops for international students.
- Facilitation of Stakeholder Meetings
 - GSO played a crucial role in organizing and facilitating multiple meetings among key stakeholders to discuss and plan the initiative.
- Pilot Program Commitment
 - A commitment was secured to pilot the Shopper Shuttle during the 2024 summer semester. This pilot phase is critical for testing the service and gathering feedback.
 - The primary goal for the summer pilot is to assess the needs of the student body and to fine-tune the operations for increased efficiency in the fall semester.
- The initiative reflects GSO's ongoing commitment to improving the quality of life and accessibility of services for the graduate students and international students at the university.

Funding

- Doctoral Research and Travel Grant Program
 - Program intended to cover the costs associated with research duties directly related to dissertation/synthesis projects.
 - Doctoral students are now eligible for grants up to \$1,500 and doctoral candidates are eligible for grants up to \$2,500.
 - Allows students to receive more funds than from GSO.
- Decreased number of funding applications
 - Fall 2023 – **74** applications, 3 cancelled applications.
 - Spring 2024 – **64** applications, 2 cancelled applications.
- Increased Spring 2024 semester funding budget by 50% from \$15,000 to \$22,500 using supplemental funding, approved by funding committee in funding committee meeting #2.
- In Spring 2024, we funded...
 - Architecture (ARCH)
 - Biology (BIOL)
 - Chemical Engineering (CHEE)
 - Civil Engineering (CIVE)
 - Communications (COMM)
 - Communicative Disorders (CODI)

- Educational Foundations & Leadership (EDFL)
- English (ENGL)
- Geosciences (GEOS)
- Mathematics (MATH)
- Modern Languages (MODL)
- Psychology (PSYC)
- Computer Science & Informatics (CMIX)
- Music (MUSC)

We also had 3 applications which were ineligible for funding as they had reached their funding limit for the Spring 2024 semester.

- In Summer 2024, we funded...
 - Biology (BIOL)
 - Communicative Disorders (CODI)
 - Educational Foundations & Leadership (EDFL)
 - Electrical Engineering (EECE)
 - Modern Languages (MODL)
 - Psychology (PSYC)
 - Computer Science & Informatics (CMIX)

In the Spring 2024 semester, after supplementing our initial budget of \$15,000 curated with student fees, with surplus funds of \$7,500, totaling \$22,500, we did not fund 9 applications, 5 of which were ineligible. The eligible applications that were not funded totaled \$1380.00. Surplus supplementary funds of \$1800.00 in the research funds category and \$770.00 in the professional development category were rerouted to the programming and travel categories to fund more applications this semester. Surplus funds of \$2700.00 were left in the research funds category, \$1125.00 in the professional development category and \$367.76 in the GSO operational budget, totaling \$4192.76 in unused funds which will go back into the GSO bank account.

In the Summer 2024 semester, the GSO managed a total of 16 applications with an initial budget of \$5,000. The budget was allocated as follows: \$3,200 for travel funds, \$1,200 for research and supplies, \$500 for professional development, and \$100 for programming. Out of the 8 applications in the travel funds category, 3 were not funded as the allocated budget was exhausted, leaving \$1,100 in eligible requests unmet. In the research and supplies category, \$200 was requested for printing from 2 applications within the same department, both of which were funded. For professional development, one application requesting \$100 for membership fees was approved. The remaining funds of \$1,500 (\$1,000 from Research

and Supplies, \$400 Professional Development, and \$100 from programming) were left unutilized and will be returned to the GSO's general fund.

GSO SPRING 2024 FUNDING TABLE

DEPTS	TRAVEL			RESEARCH (RES.)		PROF. DEV.		P R O G	TOTAL FUNDED		TOTAL REQ.	
	W/ Duties	W/O Duties	Res.	Supplies	Printing	Fees	Exams		(#)	(\$)	(#)	(\$)
ACCN												
ARCH	1					1			2	500	2	600
BIOL	5			3					6	1608	8	1988
BA												
CHEE						1			1	100	1	100
CHEM												
CIVE	3								3	1500	3	1500
COMM	1								1	400	1	500
CODI		2							2	190	2	190
CMIX	6								3	1400	6	2500
COED	1	1							2	382.5 3	2	600
CJUS												
EDCI												
EDFL	1				1				2	500	2	500
EECE												
ENGL	13							1	13	935	14	7000
GEOS		1				1			2	137	2	137
HIST												
ITEC												
KINE												
MATH	1				2				2	200	3	600
MODL	4	1		1					6	1072. 47	6	1772. 47
MUSC								1	1	500	1	500
NURS												
PETE												
PHYS												
PSYC	10			1								
TOTAL	46	5		5	3	3		2	46	9425	64	1848 7.47

Total apps: 64

Total requested funds: \$23,629.71

Total eligible requested funds: \$23,023.92

GSO SUMMER 2024 FUNDING TABLE

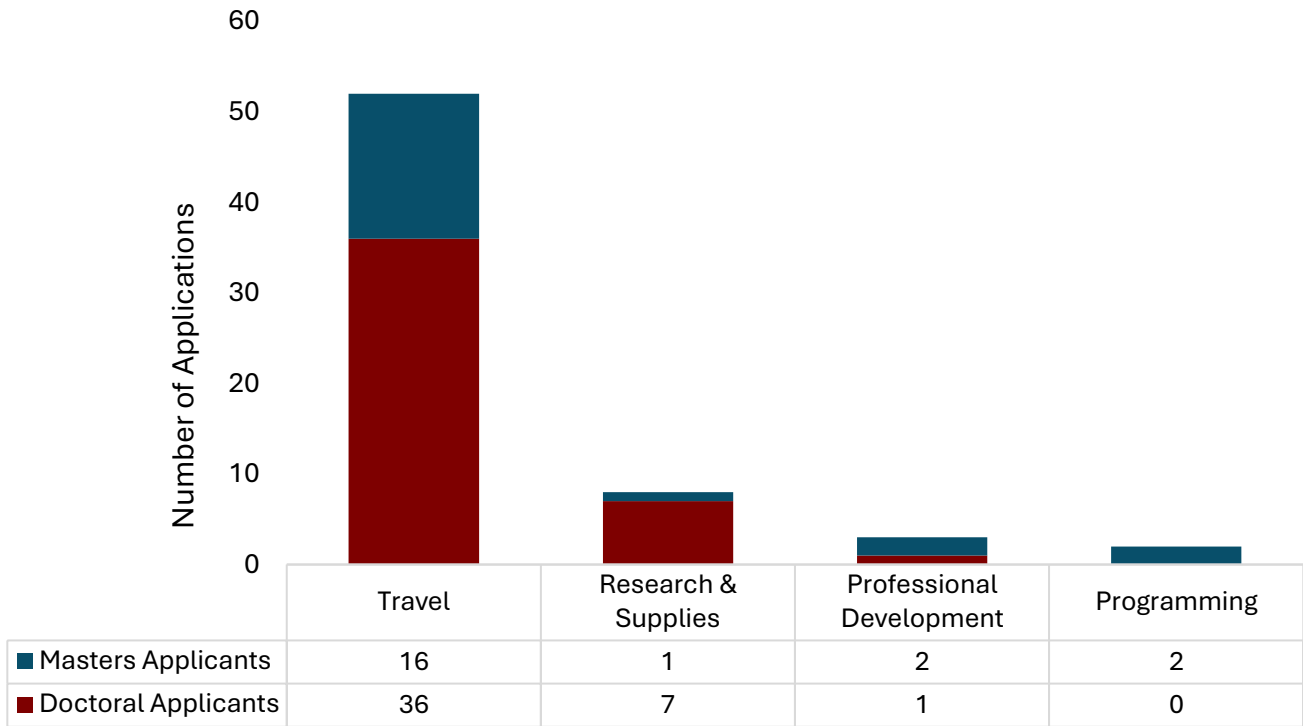
DEPTS	TRAVEL			RESEARCH (RES.)		PROF. DEV.		P R O G	TOTAL FUNDED		TOTAL REQ.	
	W/ Duties	W/O Duties	Res.	Supplies	Printing	Fees	Exams		(#)	(\$)	(#)	(\$)
ACCN												
ARCH												
BIOL	1	1									2	500
BA												
CHEE												
CHEM												
CIVE												
COMM												
CODI	1								1	400	1	400
CMIX	5	1							4	1800	6	2400
COED												
CJUS												
EDCI												
EDFL					2				2	200	2	200
EECE	1								1	500	1	500
ENGL												
GEOS												
HIST												
ITEC												
KINE												
MATH												
MODL	1					1			1	100	2	500
MUSC												
NURS												
PETE												
PHYS												
PSYC	2								2	800	2	800
TOTAL	11	2			2	1			11	3800	16	5300

Total apps: 16

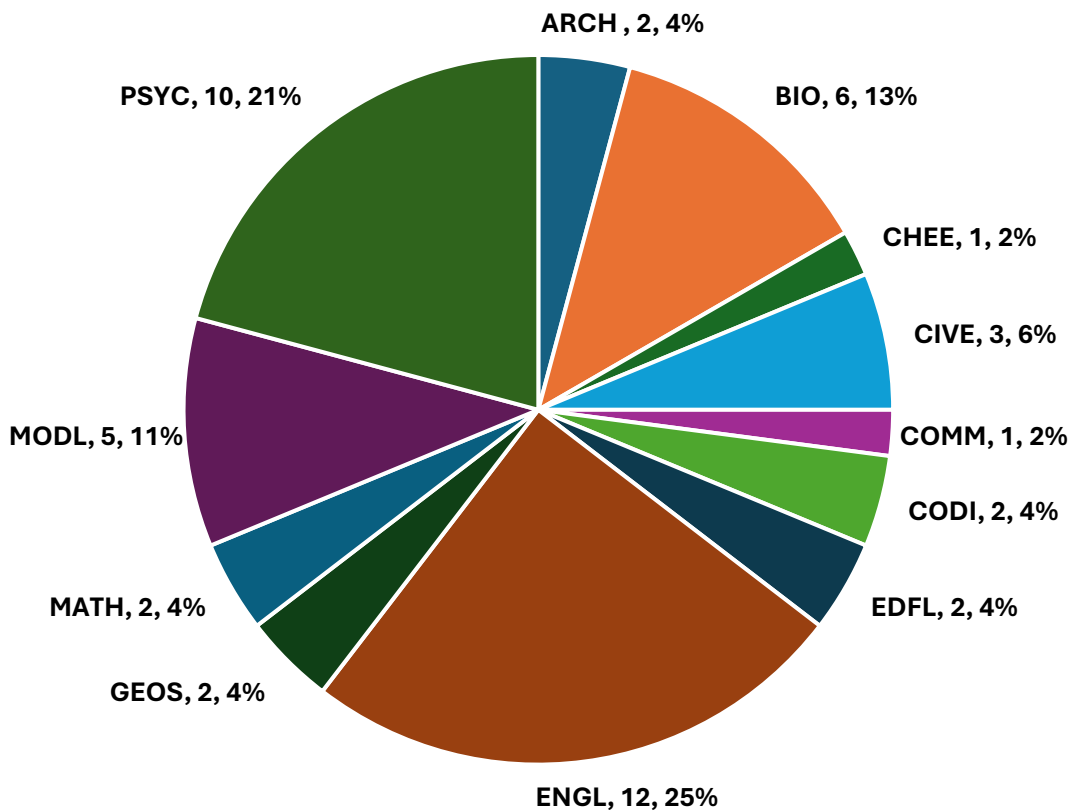
Total requested funds: \$7,830.00

Total eligible requested funds: \$5,300.00

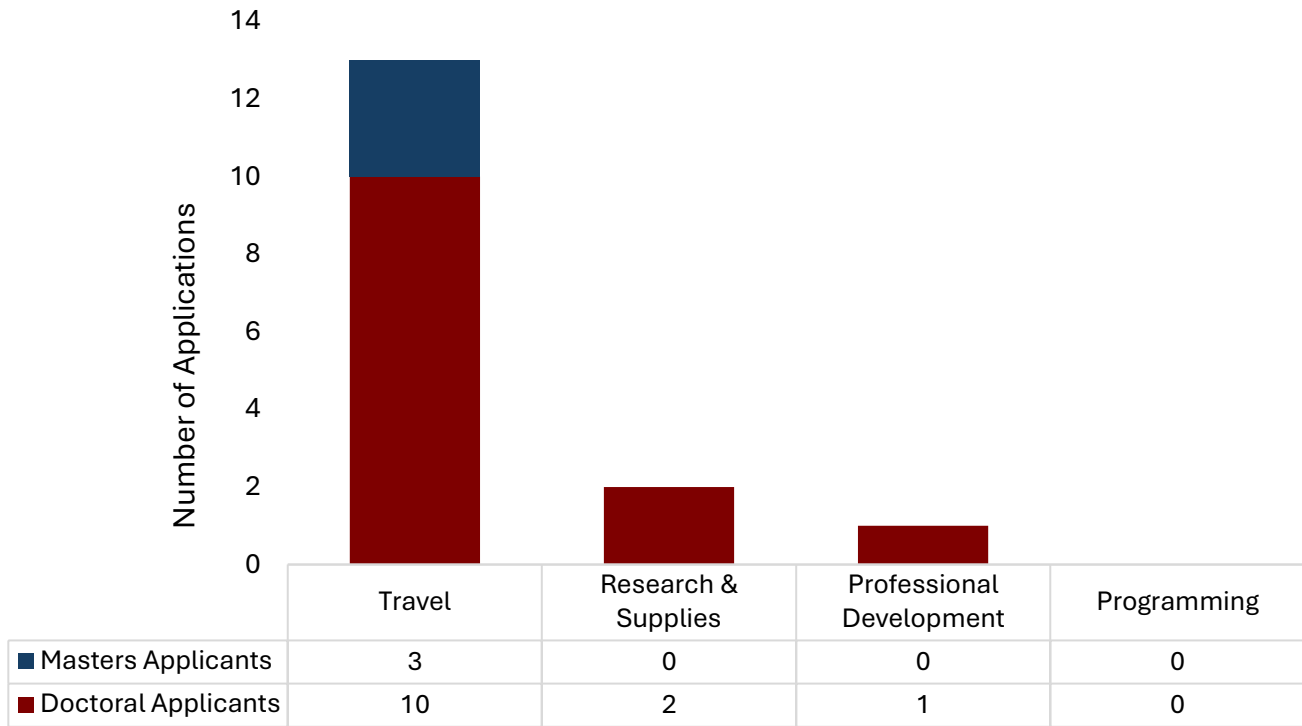
Composition of Spring 2024 Applications



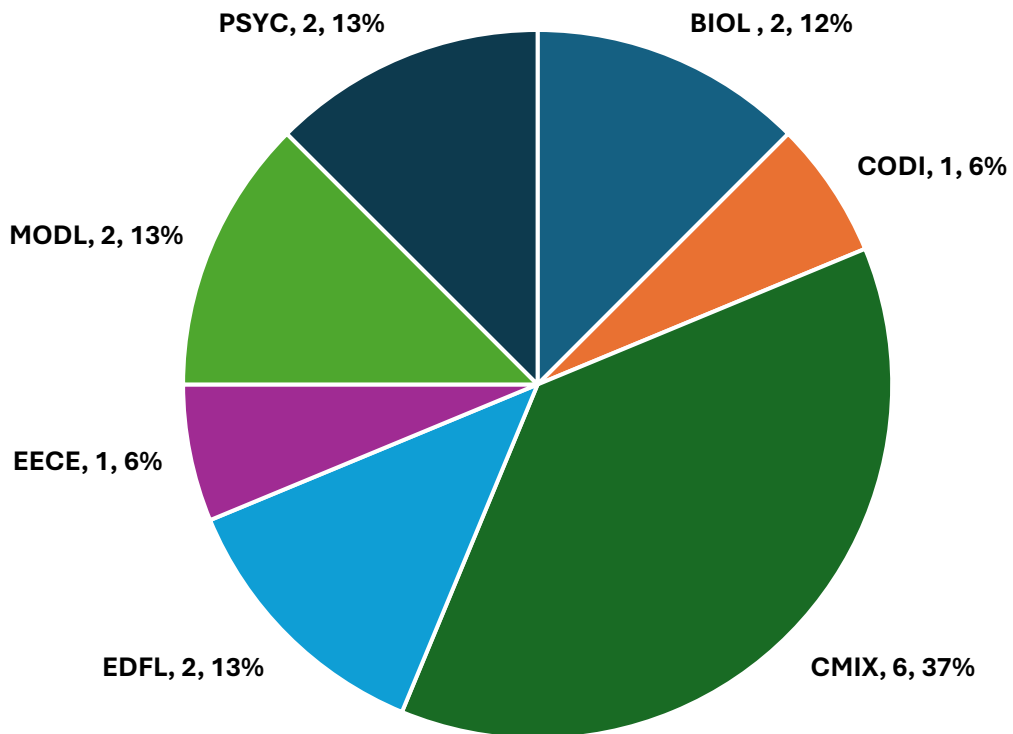
Composition of Spring 2024 Application by Department



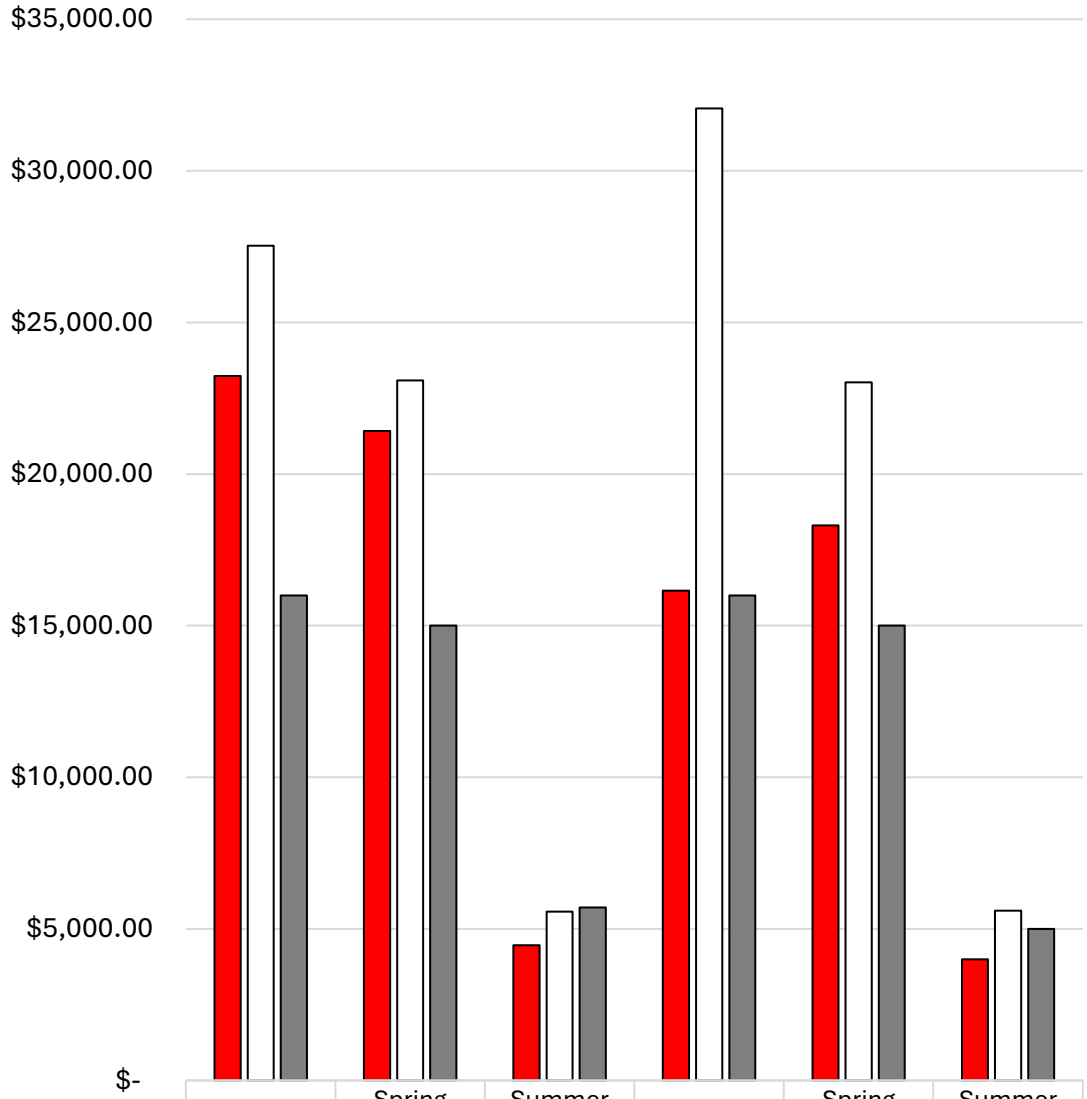
Composition of Summer 2024 Applications



Composition of Summer 2024 Application by Department



Total Funding Requests for the Last Two Years



	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024
■ Total Funded	\$23,240.00	\$21,419.88	\$4,457.86	\$16,154.82	\$18,307.24	\$4,000.00
□ Total Requested Funds	\$27,535.00	\$23,082.88	\$5,563.86	\$32,057.98	\$23,023.92	\$5,600.00
■ Initial Budget	\$16,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$5,700.00	\$16,000.00	\$15,000.00	\$5,000.00

■ Total Funded
 Total Requested Funds
 ■ Initial Budget