# ADVOCACY REPORT
# SUMMER 2023

**University of Louisiana at Lafayette**
**Graduate Student Organization (GSO)**

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# 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 in 2020-2021, and our Department Representatives and Executive Board have put in more work than ever before to increase the Organization's profile and maintain operations despite exclusively remote meetings. This report seeks to **honor the initiative of our graduate student leaders** during this particularly challenging time in searching for new ways to represent (and care for) our fellow students.

# 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.
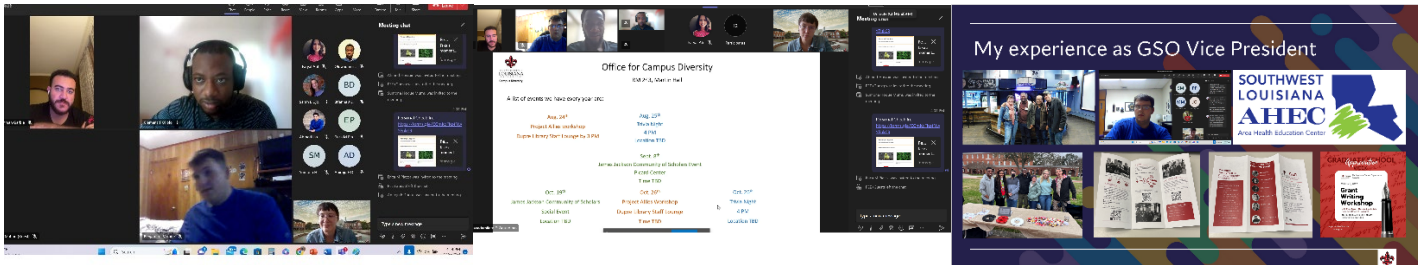
## Funding

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 the Virtual Advocacy meeting, Courtesy of GSO Vice President*

# SUMMER 2023 REFLECTIONS

## By- Law Update Proposals

- A suggestion was made to the Funding committee to use excess research and professional development funds to fund outstanding travel applications either only in the summer semester or all year round.

## Participation

- 3 Executive Board Members:
    - Clement Tochukwu Okolo- President (August 2022)
    - Faryal Atif- Treasurer (April 2023- July 2023)
    - Vacant- PR Coordinator (March 2023)
    - Brice Gutshall- Vice President (October 2022- July 2023)
    - Vacant- Secretary (April 2023)
- Virtual Meetings:
    - To accommodate all Ecouncil Summer semester schedules.

## Summer 2023 Department Representatives Table

| Department | Program |
|---|---|
| Accounting (ACCN) | Vacant (2020- SU2023) |
| Architecture (ARCH) | Brice Gutshall |
| Biology (BIOL) | Kevin Torgersen |
| Business Administration (BA) | Grayson Stepanek |
| Chemical Engineering (CHEE) | Elizabeth Boyd |
| Chemistry (CHEM) | Vacant (FA2022- SU2023) |
| Civil Engineering (CIVE) | Ahmed Hossain |
| Communications (COMM) | Mary Pritchard |
| Communicative Disorders (CODI) | Mary McMahon |
| Computing and Informatics (CMIX) | John Olajire |
| Counselor Education (CNED) | Abby Wolford |
| Criminal Justice (CJUS) | Onyeka Enwesi |
| Educational Curriculum & Instruction (EDCI) | Vacant |
| Educational Foundations & Leadership (EDFL) | Brianna J. Doucet |
| Electrical Engineering (EECE) | Conner Chaney |
| English (ENGL) | Faryal Atif |
| Geosciences (GEOS) | Precious Batubo |
| History (HIST) | Benjamin Vidrine |
| Industrial Technology (ITEC) | Vacant (SP2023- SU2023) |
| Kinesiology (KINE) | Sumona Hoque Mumu |
| Mathematics (MATH) | Md. Monzur Murshed |
| Mechanical Engineering (MECH) | Abdelrahman Garbie |
| Modern Languages (MODL) | Pierre- Oliver Pier |
| Music (MUSC) | Morgan Burroughs |
| Nursing (NURS) | Erica Piazza |
| Petroleum Engineering (PETE) | Anireju Dudun |
| Physics (PHYS) | John Miller |
| Psychology (PSYC) | John Patric Veal |

Key:

Vacant Departments

Departments which received funding

**Departments not able to fund**

# GSO Elections:

- Almost a Full Executive Board going into Fall 2023:
    - Clement Tochukwu Okolo- President (August 2022)
    - Abdelrahman Garbie- Treasurer (July 2023)
    - Vacant- PR Coordinator (March 2023)
    - Faryal Atif- Vice President (July 2022)
    - Benjamin Vidrine- Secretary (July 2023)
- No Summer GSO Events:
    - Because the Summer semester is so quick and people are traveling and getting through their summer classes, we have no events.

# Advocacy

- Connected with a GA from the <u>Office of Campus Diversity</u>, Oluwadamilare D. Ogundiran, to discuss upcoming plans for events with the office such as trainings and social events, and reviewed the bylaws for the Vice Presidential role for elections.

# Funding

- Decreased number of funding applications
    - Spring 2023- **83** applications
    - Summer 2023- **17** applications
- We do not dive into supplemental funding over the Summer Semester. Due to a much smaller Graduate Pool we incumbered $5,700 in student fees.
- We Funded
    - Communication Disorders (CODI)
    - Psychology (PSYC)
    - Computer Science and Informatics (CMIX)
    - Physics (PHYS)
    - Communication (COMM)
    - Biology (BIOL)
    - Modern Languages (MODL)
    - Mathematics (MATH)
    - Civil Engineering (CIVE)

- We were not able to fund
    - English (ENGL)
    - Educational Foundations and Leadership (EDFL)
    - Excluding the 3 ineligible applications due to a lack of enrollment, student requests exceeded the amount of funds in their funding bracket by $338.

# GSO SUMMER 2023 FUNDING TABLE

| DEPTS. | TRAVEL | | Res. | RESEARCH (RES.) | | PROF. DEV. | | PROG | TOTAL FUNDED | | TOTAL REQ. | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | W/ Duties | W/O Duties | | Supplies | Printing | Fees | Exams | | (#) | ($) | (#) | ($) |
| ACCN | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ARCH | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| BIOL | 1 | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 200.00 |
| BA | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CHEE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CHEM | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CIVE | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 100.00 | | |
| COMM | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 500.00 |
| CODI | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 2500.00 | | |
| CMIX | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 500.00 | | |
| CNED | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| CJUS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EDCI | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| EDFL | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 300.00 |
| EECE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ENGL | 1 | | | | | | | | | 0.5 | 362.00 | 0.5 | 38.00 |
| GEOS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| HIST | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| ITEC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| KINE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MATH | | | | | 1 | | | | | 1 | 100.00 | | |
| MECH | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| MODL | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 1 | | 3 | 247.86 | | |
| MUSC | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| NURS | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PETE | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| PHYS | 1 | | | | | | | | | | | 1 | 216.00 |
| PSYC | 1 | | | | | | | | | 1 | 500.00 | | |
| TOTAL | 9 | | | | 2 | 1 | 1 | | 8.5 | 4309.86 | 4.5 | 1368.00 |

Total apps: 13    Total requested funds: $5563.86.00    Total eligible requested funds: $4457.86

Even though the encumbrance for the summer semester totaled $5,700 with student fees alone, **exceeding the eligible need by $1242.14** we were **not able to fund $338** worth of travel requests. We pulled excess funds from the programming category to partially fund a travel request, but due to our bylaws, had to leave excess funds of $1,003.89 in the research funding category and $426.25 in the professional development category.

## Fall Semester Objectives
- update our bylaws to use all excess funds on a first come first serve basis in all funding categories at the last general meeting.
- reconsider applications that didn't receive funding over the summer whether eligible or ineligible.