

Summer 2026 REPORT

University of Louisiana at Lafayette
Graduate Student Organization (GSO)

UNIVERSITY of LOUISIANA LAFAYETTE | Graduate Student Organization

Email: gso@louisiana.edu

Website: gso.louisiana.edu

Facebook: @ULLafayetteGSO

Instagram: @ULLafayettegso

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 Vice-President acts as the advocacy committee chair, leading efforts to ensure graduate student voices are heard. 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 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.

GSO General Council Participation

- Maintained **100% occupancy** on the Executive Board since Fall 2022:
  - Clement Tochukwu Okolo – President (August 2022)
  - Reem Ahmed – Vice President (Spring 2026)
  - Mohamed Ghoneim – Treasurer (Fall 2025)
  - Mahek Pathak– PR Officer (Fall 2025)
  - Mahek Pathak - Interim Secretary (Summer 2026)

Summer 2026 Department Representatives Table

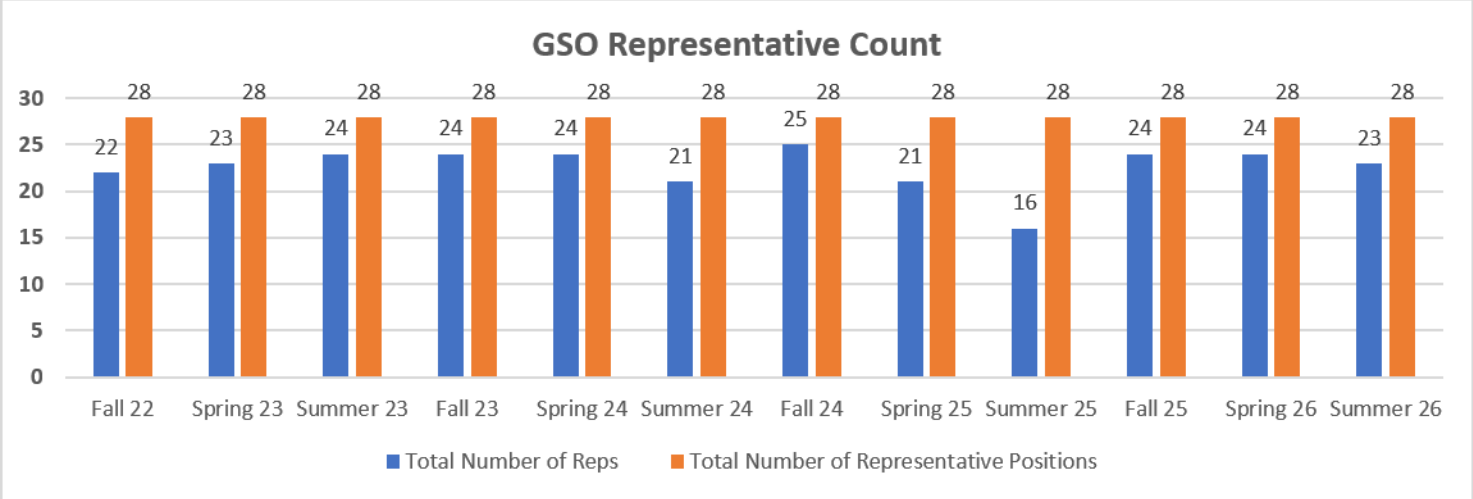
Department	Representative
Accounting (ACCN)	Vacant
Architecture (ARCH)	Ana C. Batista Duran
Biology (BIOL)	Eric Haddad
Business Administration (MBA)	Anna Giroir
Chemical Engineering (CHEE)	Gabrielle Broussard
Chemistry (CHEM)	Joy Bala
Civil Engineering (CIVE)	Sherbaz Khan
Communications (COMM)	Tabitha LeMaire
Communicative Disorders (CODI)	Mary McMahon
Computing and Informatics (CMIX)	Samantha Fowler
Counselor Education (CNED)	Reem Ahmed
Criminal Justice (CJUS)	Taylee Marcks
Educational Curriculum Instruction (EDCI)	Vacant
Educational Foundations Leadership (EDFL)	Humaira Tajeen
Electrical Engineering (EECE)	Mohamed Ghoneim
English (ENGL)	Yazdan Mahmoudi
Geosciences (GEOS)	Vacant
History (HIST)	Sawyer Coco
Industrial Technology (ITEC)	MD Sayem Bin Kashem
Kinesiology (KINE)	Vacant
Mathematics (MATH)	Sarah Egbulem
Mechanical Engineering (MECH)	Md Saiful Islam
Modern Languages (MODL)	Chiraz Amani
Music (MUSC)	Elaine Dean

Nursing (NURS)	Justin Fontenot
Petroleum Engineering (PETE)	Silver Damigoru
Physics (PHYS)	Vacant
Psychology (PSYC)	Sydney K Guidry

Key:

Vacant Departments	Departments which received funding

Note: Departments without a representative are not eligible for funding. The following departments requested funding but were ineligible due to a vacant representative position:



Vacancy

- The Departments of **Accounting (ACCN), Educational Curriculum Instruction (EDCL), and Physics (PHYS)** have been unrepresented for over a year.
- With **~82% of GSO representative positions filled**, GSO has made strong progress in strengthening its leadership structure. Filling the remaining vacancies, particularly in mostly online departments, will further ensure inclusive representation and strengthen our collective advocacy efforts.

Advocacy

Addressing Student Concerns

The Graduate Student Organization (GSO) systematically gathered and analyzed graduate student feedback to identify key barriers affecting student experience and success. Primary concerns in previous semesters included funding for new and continuing students, stipend competitiveness, reinstatement of the Doctoral Hooding Ceremony, parking accessibility, and feedback regarding the combined Doctoral Candidacy and Honors Recognition Ceremony.

No new student concerns required advocacy during the summer. The committee used the meeting to discuss university updates and plan advocacy initiatives for the upcoming fall semester. Members shared the successful outcome of GSO's advocacy regarding the Graduate Assistant payroll transition, with monthly stipend payments remaining in place, and began planning student support initiatives focused on graduate student well-being, academic stress, and international student transitions.

Communications

Over the summer, the Communications Committee met once to discuss ideas for the following Fall semester. We agreed to continue the Stay Up and Write event but moved from 5:00-7:00 PM to 7:00-9:00 PM to accommodate the schedule of more graduate students and increase turn out. Additionally, an idea for a social event, potentially a Halloween Gala Night on October 28, for the Graduate Students was discussed, where grad students can dress up and come. There will be games and prizes, and it will be a great socializing event for graduate students as a break from routine academic work.

Funding

Application Trends for the GSO Applications in recent Semesters:

a. 2020-2021 Academic year – **86** Applications
b. Summer 2023 – **13** applications
c. Fall 2023 – **74** applications
d. Spring 2024 – **64** applications
e. Summer 2024 – **16** applications
f. Fall 2024 – **83** applications
g. Spring 2025 – **95** applications
h. Summer 2025 – **17** applications
i. Fall 2025 - **82** applications
j. Spring 2026 – **88** applications
k. Summer 2026 – **4** applications

- New Legislations were voted on at the Summer General meeting:
  - The GSO Council voted on the following changes in the bylaw:
    - If GSO receives a lump sum for an entire fiscal year (e.g., Summer 2026, Fall 2026, and Spring 2027) rather than a per-semester encumbrance, the General Council shall allocate the funds across the three semesters as follows:
      - **10% of the fiscal-year allocation for the Summer**
      - **45% of the fiscal-year allocation for the Fall**
      - **45% of the fiscal-year allocation for the Spring**
    - Any remaining funds from the Summer or Fall semester shall be carried forward and added to the allocation for the subsequent semester. Because the Spring semester concludes the fiscal year and any remaining funds cannot be carried forward, the General Council

may, by majority vote, approve funding awards that exceed the maximum limits established in Section V of the GSO Bylaws ($400.00, or $500.00 for Tier IV travel) on a case-by-case basis, provided that such awards do not exceed the remaining Spring semester allocation.

- In **summer 2026,** the number of applications (4), the lowest number of applications we have received in summer in the last three academic years.
- **Out of the 4 applications, we did not fund 3 applications** for the following reasons:
  - 2 applicants where their department representative failed to attend at least one of the GSO Committee meetings.
  - 1 applicant is not enrolled in the summer semester.

- For FY 2026–2027, GSO's received an approved budget of **$39,500.** The 100% of the budget significantly **enhanced GSO's capacity to support graduate student research, conference participation, and professional development, strengthening student success, scholarly productivity, and the university's R1 research mission.** The General Council voted to allocate the funds across the three semesters as follows:
  - **10% ($3,950) for Summer 2026**
  - **45% ($17,775) for Fall 2026**
  - **45% ($17,775) for Spring 2027**

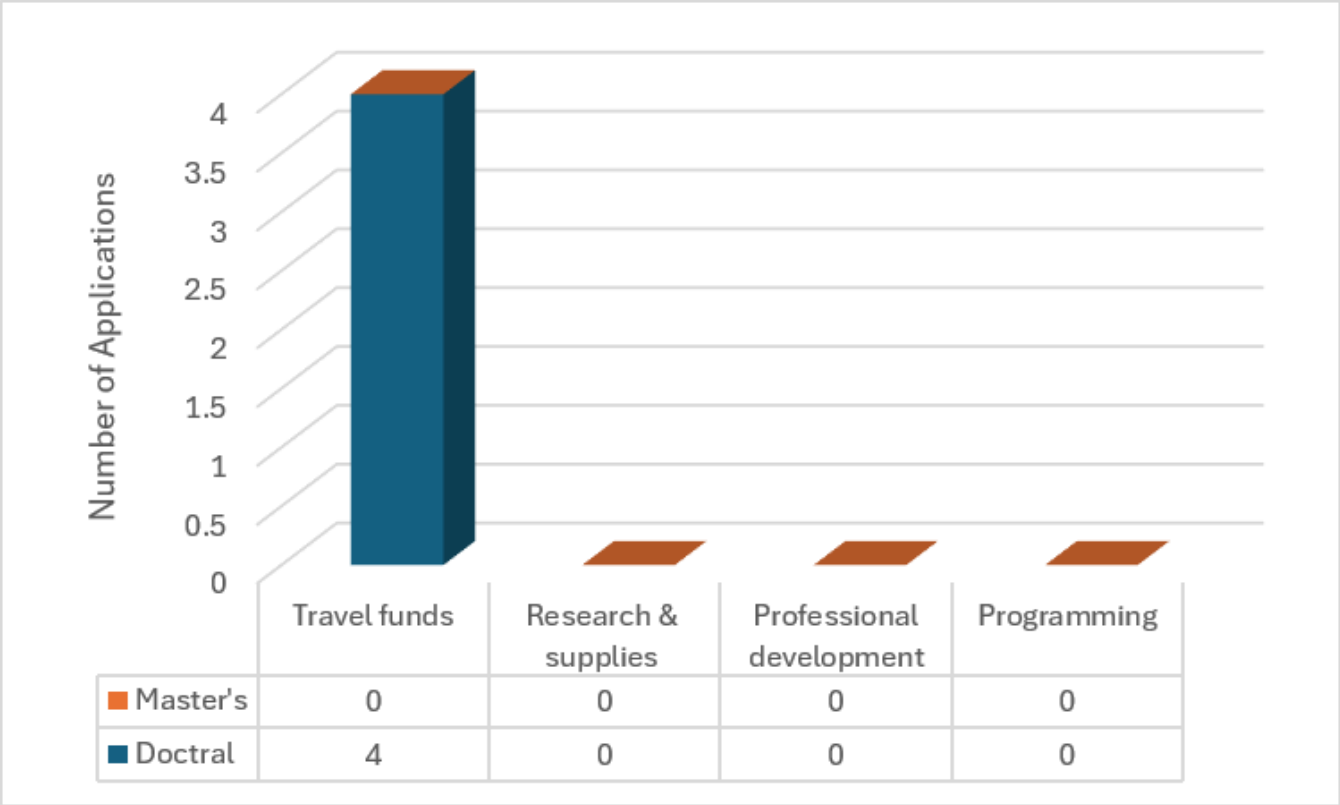
- The funds allocated for Summer 2026 are **$3,950**. To maximize resource utilization and student impact, these supplemental funds were redistributed as follows:
  - $2,528 (64%) in the Travel funds category
  - $948 (24%) in the research funds category
  - $395 (10%) in the professional development category
  - $79 (2%) in the programming category
- Our initial Summer 2026 semester budget was **$3,950**, funded by student fees. This amount was used to fund **1 application ($300)**.
- The total amount requested for this semester is **$4,298.40**.

GSO Summer2026 Funding Table

DEPTS	TRAVEL		RESEARCH		PROF. DEV.		PROG	TOTAL FUNDED		TOTAL REQ.	
	W/ Duties	W/O Duties	Supplies	Printing	Fees	Exams		(#)	($)	(#)	($)
ACCN	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ARCH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
BIOL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MBA	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CHEE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CHEM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CIVE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
COMM	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CODI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CMIX	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	300	-	500
CNED	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
CJUS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EDCI	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EDFL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
EECE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ENGL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
GEOS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
HIST	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
ITEC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
KINE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MATH	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MCHE	-	-	-	-	-	-		-	-	-	-
MODL	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
MUSC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
NURS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PETE	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PHYS	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
PSYC	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
TOTAL	**1**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**300**	**-**	**500**

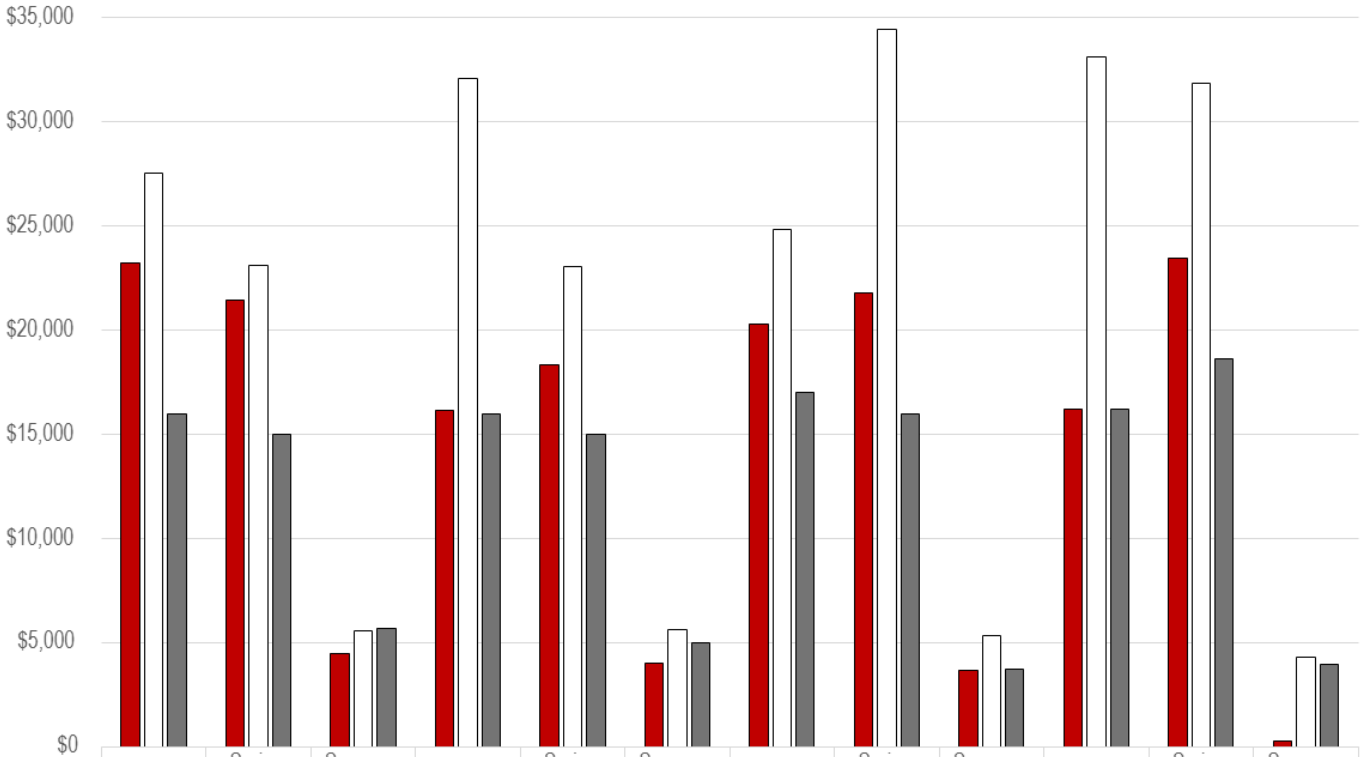
Total apps: 1 Total requested funds: $500 Total eligible requested funds: $300

Composition of Summer 2026 Funding Applications



	Travel funds	Research & supplies	Professional development	Programming
Master's	0	0	0	0
Doctral	4	0	0	0

Total Funding Requests Across the Past Years



	Fall 2022	Spring 2023	Summer 2023	Fall 2023	Spring 2024	Summer 2024	Fall 2024	Spring 2025	Summer 2025	Fall 2025	Spring 2026	Summer 2026
Total Funded	$23,240.00	$21,419.88	$4,457.86	$16,154.82	$18,307.24	$4,000.00	$20,257.97	$21,791.00	$3,662.00	$16,218.80	$23,430.26	$300.00
Total Requested Funds	$27,535.00	$23,082.88	$5,563.86	$32,057.98	$23,023.92	$5,600.00	$24,806.97	$34,427.80	$5,342.00	$33,118.52	$31,826.08	$4,298.40
Initial Budget	$16,000.00	$15,000.00	$5,700.00	$16,000.00	$15,000.00	$5,000.00	$17,000.00	$16,000.00	$3,700.00	$16,219.07	$18,612.93	$3,950.00