



The Student Center for
Research, Creativity,
and Scholarship

presents
The

Advance

Leaf Awards

for

Excellence in

Undergraduate Research,
Creativity, and Scholarship

April 2, 2026

ADVANCE

STUDENT RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

**Student Center for
Research, Creativity
and Scholarship**

Advance Leaf Awards

The Leaf Award celebrates students who have achieved excellence while completing a Student Research Experience (SRE) or disseminating information about a SRE they have worked on. The Advance Student Research Experience (ASRE) Program at UL Lafayette defines a SRE as a sustained effort by a student to apply subject knowledge, skills, and abilities to a project that is valued by the discipline. The Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship (SCRCS) houses the ASRE program, which supports the increase of undergraduate students' productivity and success through engagement in research, innovative projects, and creative endeavors.

Folklore at UL Lafayette begins at new student convocation when students are given an acorn lapel pin for good luck as they begin their academic endeavors and University engagement. There is speculation that good luck comes from rubbing the acorn in the hand of the Edwin Stephens statue, UL Lafayette's first president. In 1901 he planted the first of the famous century oaks on our campus. While attending UL Lafayette, students can participate in many cocurricular activities including scientific research, engineering competitions, honors thesis, artistic or scholarly presentations, or performances. Excellence in student engagement is recognized in many ways across campus. Students or student organizations can be awarded through Ragin Recognition; they are awarded an Oakie. The mighty oak is a symbol of elegant strength that endures over time and provides shade and rest for those who sit under it. Furthermore, it is the leaves that provide the shade. It is the leaves that feed the tree allowing it to grow. It is hundreds of leaves that make the mighty oak, mighty, like the hundreds of students who make UL Lafayette the elegant and strong R1 Research institution that it is.

The academic endeavors of the students who receive the Leaf Award challenge and inspire the faculty and illuminate the possibilities for the future to the staff and administration. They grow and develop into amazing professionals, and they participate in the continuous building of a strong, elegant institution, that is UL Lafayette.

Special Thanks to

HMGT 407: Event Planning & Management class

Lisa K. Bowles, Senior Instructor Hospitality Management

Dalon Bernard	Annabelle Hall	Mallory Naquin
Jordan Bourgault	Jayden Hartley	Britton Owens
Mary Frances Bryson	Averi Landry	Izzy Russell
Nick Dallimore	Makenna Lavan	

School of Architecture & Design

Under the direction of Thomas Cline, the following students produced the Leaf Award plaques.

Dexter Bounds	James Scheuermann	Ray Taix
Cameron McBride	Cooper Stephenson	Hal Wyatt
Janiah Pellerin		

Music

David Mouton, Souled Out Entertainment

LITE Center

Selection Committee

These faculty and staff members worked diligently to review nominations to select winners.

James Boffenmyer	Farzad Ferdowsi	Kari Smith
Jessie Broussard	Joseph Goodman	Zachary Stein
Terrence Chambers	Ruben Henderson	Tricia Templet
Tarah Davis	Ashok Kumar	Hui Yan
Daniel DiCaprio		

Dr. Ramesh Kolluru, President

Dr. Jaimie Hebert, Provost

Dr. Dianne Olivier, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost

Faculty Mentors

SCRCS Staff

Dr. Sherry Kravesky-Self	Jacques Laughlin
Todd Henry	Olivia Hebert
Jessica Thibodeaux	Mykala Walker
Temitayo Olufinmilakin	

Advance Challenge Coins

The challenge coin is given to faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly in conjunction with the Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship to encourage, assist, and support undergraduate students with their research endeavors.

Advance Advocates Challenge Coin Winners

Dr. Brooke Breaux, Assistant Professor & Interim Department Head, Department of Psychology. Dr. Breaux chaperoned several students at NCUR (National Council on Undergraduate Research Conference) Student research conference 2025, taking her students and other students. She is a member of LaCOEUR (Louisiana Council on Excellence in Undergraduate Research) which is our steering committee. She also mentors many undergraduate student research projects.

Dr. Amy Brown, Associate Professor, Department of Psychology. Dr. Brown served as a member of the pilot program team for ASRE Pathways. She is the new faculty advisor for the Advance Ambassadors (Undergraduate Research Student Organization). She mentors many undergraduate student research projects.

Dr. MinSeok Choi, Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction. Dr. Choi mentors many undergraduate research projects in Education. He serves as an ASRE Pathways approver and advisor. He secured and responsibly distributed substantial funding for the benefit of his undergraduate students.

Dr. Laura Guichard Latiolais, Assistant Professor, Department of Accounting. Dr. Latiolais mentors undergraduate student research, facilitates UR FLC (Undergraduate Research Faculty Learning Communities), and included the Advance-SRP (Student Research Program) in her department's certification process. She has mentored several award-winning undergraduate student research projects.

Advance Challenge Coins

The challenge coin is given to faculty and staff who have worked tirelessly in conjunction with the Student Center for Research, Creativity, and Scholarship to encourage, assist, and support undergraduate students with their research endeavors.

Advance Advocates Challenge Coin Winners

Dr. Dianne Olivier, Associate Vice President for Academic Affairs, Vice Provost. Dr. Olivier consistently serves as a champion and a supportive voice for Advance-SRP (Student Research Program) helping to secure funding, and administrative and faculty participation in undergraduate research across campus.

Dr. Ismatara Reena, Assistant Professor, Graduate Coordinator, School of Kinesiology. Dr. Reena helped design the ASRE Pathway in Kinesiology and championed the first online ASRE Pathway within the department and she mentors undergraduate student research.

Jessie White-Sanders, Jessie designed the Advance Workshop series, managed the URC (Undergraduate Research Conference) for several years, and worked closely with the Advance-SRP (Student Research Program) staff in developing the Advance program.

Sarah Armentor, Crystal Hughes, and Susan LeBlanc, Printing Services. This team is being awarded for their work on developing Ink to Impact, a poster printing initiative benefiting undergraduate researchers. Honorable mention goes to Onyeka Nwaezeapu current president of SGA, and the past two SGA presidents, Cade Roy and Colby Hebert.

Advance Leaf Award Nominees

University Faculty and Staff nominated 50 undergraduate students; with some students being nominated twice. There are currently 13,828 Undergraduate Students enrolled at the University. All students nominated for the Leaf Awards are exceptional.

College of the Arts

Bridget Clark
Frank Clavelle III
Matthew Cooley
Caleb Dixon
Katilyn Kemper
Aniyah Mallard

B.I. Moody III College of Business

Administration

Kathryn Carrere
Shelton Edwards
Ainsley Gauthier
Ivy Hailar
Sydnee Johnson
Sydney Montagne
Brooklyn Pearson
Hayley Romero
Kyle Smith
Noah Trammell
Amanda Vincent
Timyra Wilson

College of Education & Human Development

Jacen Agreggaard
Aaliyah Brown
Elijah Jones
Abbey Poirier

College of Engineering

Riley Guillory
Nina Kanonye
Liberty Plasek
Mikaela Woodard

College of Liberal Arts

Elizabeth Drell
Claire Glaeser
Obbie Griffin
Jacques Laughlin
Ashley Mashia
Sedric Newman
Stephanie Soto
Addison Spencer
Ava Thibodeaux
Emma Thomas

College of Nursing & Health Sciences

Torin Cage

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Ethan Adams
Tyler Borel
Susannah Donoghue
Kelsey Doucette
Sydney Francois
Lana Gaspard
Kaitlyn Hill
Bree Landry
Izamar Lara
Reese Provost
Thinh Thai
Clinton Vincent
Joshua Vu

Awards in Business

This category covers research methods in Business, Accounting, Economics, Finance, Hospitality Management, Insurance and Risk Management, Management, Management Information Systems, Marketing, Professional Land and Resource Management.

Shelton Edwards

Mentor: Laura Guichard Latiolais

B.I. Moody III College of Business-Department of Accounting

Ainsley Gauthier

Mentor: Cary Heath & Sarah Skinner

B.I. Moody III College of Business-Department of Economics & Finance

Awards in Creative Work & Media Production

This category covers research which culminates in a Creative or Multimedia Work in areas such as Architecture & Design, Performing Arts, Visual Arts, Broadcasting, and Moving Image Arts.

Caleb Dixon

Mentor: Kari Smith

College of the Arts-School of Music

Aniyah Mallard

Mentor: Stephanie Paine

College of the Arts-School of Visual Arts

Awards in Education

This category covers research methods in Art or Music Education, Early Childhood Education, Elementary Education, Middle School Education, Secondary Education, Curriculum design, Teaching, and Kinesiology.

Susannah Donoghue

Mentor: Dhan Fortela

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Computing & Informatics
(double major)

College of Engineering-William Hansen Hall Department of Electrical &
Computer Engineering (double major)

Bree Landry

Mentor: Courtney Poirier Chicola

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Geosciences

Awards in Engineering & Technology

This category covers research methods in Engineering, Technology. Disciplines represented include Chemical Engineering, Civil Engineering, Electrical and Computer Engineering, Engineering Technology, Mechanical Engineering, Petroleum Engineering, and Computer Science.

Riley Guillory

Mentor: Dilip Depan

College of Engineering-Department of Chemical Engineering

Nina Kanonye

Mentor: Sen Liu

College of Engineering-Department of Mechanical Engineering

Awards in Health

This category covers research methods in health sciences. Disciplines represented include Nursing, Health Information Management, Exercise Science, Kinesiology, Health Services Administration, and Pre-Dental Hygiene.

Torin Cage

Mentor: Tricia Templet & Evie Robison

College of Nursing & Health Sciences-LHC Group | Myers School of Nursing

Reese Provost

Mentor: Ritwij Kulkarni

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences

Awards in Humanities

This category covers research methods in the Humanities (in both traditional and digital forms). Disciplines represented include such fields as Organizational Communication, Public Relations, English, History, Modern Languages, Mass Communication, and Strategic Communication.

Addison Spencer

Mentor: Allison Leigh

College of Liberal Arts-Department of History, Geography, & Philosophy

Ava Thibodeaux

Mentor: Masey Hammons

College of Liberal Arts-Department of Psychology

Emma Thomas

Mentor: Allison Leigh

College of Liberal Arts-Department of History, Geography, & Philosophy

Awards in Life Sciences

This category covers research methods in life science. Disciplines represented include such fields as Biology, Microbiology, Environmental Science, Botany or Agricultural Science.

Tyler Borel

Mentor: Wu Xu

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences

Clinton Vincent

Mentor: Brian Schubert

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Geosciences

Awards in Math & Statistics

This category includes students performing mathematical and statistical research, but it also includes work completed in any other field that applies unique or exceptional mathematical or statistical applications to the work.

Sydney Francois

Mentor: Jimmy Kimball

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-Department of Mathematics

Mikaela Woodard

Mentor: Farzad Ferdowsi

College of Engineering-William Hansen Hall Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering

Awards in Performing Arts

This category covers research which culminates original or extraordinary performances in Music, Theater, Dance, Performing Arts or Moving Image Arts.

Jacen Agreggaard

Mentor: William Plummer

College of Education & Human Development-Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction

Matthew Cooley

Mentor: Wesley Bradford & Quincy Hilliard

College of Education & Human Development-Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction (double major)

College of the Arts-School of Music (double major)

Awards in Physical Sciences

This category covers research methods in physical science or related projects. Disciplines represented include such fields as Geology, Physics, and Chemistry. This category may also be appropriate for Math or Engineering.

Izamary Lara

Mentor: Brian Schubert

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-Department of Chemistry

Liberty Plasek

Mentor: Hui Yan

College of Engineering-Department of Chemical Engineering

Awards in Social Sciences

This category covers research methods in the Social Sciences. Disciplines represented include such fields as Anthropology, Human Development and Family Science, Communicative Disorders, Criminal Justice, Political Science, Psychology, Sociology, Speech Pathology & Audiology.

Elizabeth Drell

Mentor: Amy Brown & Jordan Thibodeaux
College of Liberal Arts-Department of Psychology

Sydnee Johnson

Mentor: Laura Guichard Latiolais & Eddie Metrejean
B.I. Moody III College of Business-Department of Accounting

Awards in Community Impact

This award is given to students who are completing original work that benefits Louisiana, The University of Louisiana at Lafayette or the Local community surrounding UL Lafayette.

Kathryn Carrere

Mentor: Laura Guichard Latiolais & Nicole Bruchez
B.I. Moody III College of Business-Department of Accounting

Abbey Poirier

Mentor: Heather Stone
College of Education & Human Development-Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction

Awards in International Impact

This award is for excellence in work that impacts countries outside the United States. This award will also be given to work that increases collaboration between countries or people from varying countries.

Lana Gaspard

Mentor: Nicholas Kooyers

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences

Claire Glaeser

Mentor: Elena Babatsouli

College of Liberal Arts-Department of Communicative Disorders

Awards in Diversity & Social Justice

Applicants in any of the other categories have the option of also submitting their project for consideration in the Diversity and Social Justice category. These submissions could utilize humanities or scientific methodologies, involve creative work or literature reviews, but should relate in some way to the overall theme of Diversity and Social Justice.

Ivy Hailar

Mentor: Cheryl Metrejean & Laura Guichard Latiolais

B.I. Moody III College of Business-Department of Accounting

Jacques Laughlin

Mentor: Sara Gibson

College of Liberal Arts-Department of Psychology

Awards in Exceptional Performance in Dissemination

This category awards exceptional performance in dissemination of student research experiences (SREs), written or oral communications as well as performances and presentations were considered.

Ethan Adams

Mentor: William Schmidt & Robyn Zerebecki

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences

Matthew Cooley

Mentor: Wesley Bradford & Quincy Hilliard

College of Education & Human Development-Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction (double major)

College of the Arts-School of Music (double major)

Izamary Lara

Mentor: Brian Schubert

Ray P. Authement college of Sciences-Department of Chemistry

Sedric Newman

Mentor: Brooke Breaux

College of Liberal Arts-Department of Psychology (double major)

College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences (double major)

Mikaela Woodard

Mentor: Farzad Ferdowsi

College of Engineering-William Hansen Hall Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering

Provost Awards

This award is for work that is interdisciplinary or work that displays excellence across other award categories.

This award also honors students who have completed exceptional research or creative/scholarly works despite challenging circumstances.

Ethan Adams

Mentor: William Schmidt & Robyn Zerebecki

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-School of Biological Sciences

Caleb Dixon

Mentor: Kari Smith

College of the Arts-School of Music

Izamary Lara

Mentor: Brian Schubert

Ray P. Authement College of Sciences-Department of Chemistry

Abbey Poirier

Mentor: Heather Stone

College of Education & Human Development-Department of Educational Curriculum & Instruction

Mikaela Woodard

Mentor: Farzad Ferdowsi

College of Engineering-William Hansen Hall Department of Electrical & Computer Engineering