

RESEARCH

IN MOTION

THE

STUDENT CENTER FOR RESEARCH,

CREATIVITY, & SCHOLARSHIP

AND

ADVANCE STUDENT RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

NEWSLETTER

ADVANCE
STUDENT RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE



UNIVERSITY of
LOUISIANA
LAFAYETTE

Student Center for
Research, Creativity
and Scholarship

2026

FROM THE DESK OF LEADERSHIP



Greetings,

I am happy to tell everyone that the Advance-Student Research Program (SRP) now includes broad, academically inclusive research experiences for students working in both STEM and non-STEM discipline areas and creates a collaborative spirit that supports and builds an interdisciplinary campus culture. Advance-SRP has also partnered with the office of Institutional Effectiveness to evaluate the impact of undergraduate research on the University. The program works toward building support opportunities for undergraduate students to display their work on and off campus, and actively develops faculty skills, faculty-student mentor relationships, and bridges the gaps between students, faculty, and administration.

To support both institutional financial realities and student learning outcomes, Advance-SRP and the academic departments at UL Lafayette built the Advance Student Research Experience (ASRE) Pathways. The pathways provide a scalable, discipline-specific, scaffold integrating curricular and co-curricular undergraduate research activities across degree programs. 95% of the University's degree-granting programs have implemented ASRE Pathways, collectively developed by 49 degree-granting, academic departments. The scaffold aligns research learning pedagogies (introduction, skills development, and dissemination) with progressive levels of achievement (basic, distinction, and excellence), enabling broad undergraduate student participation while recognizing advanced student engagement through transcript designations. Beyond expanding access to undergraduate research, the program functions as a structured metacognitive tool that encourages students to set academic and professional goals, monitor progress, and apply learning strategies.

The ASRE Pathways program was implemented in Fall 2023 with 5 degree-granting programs and has grown to include 49 degree-granting programs as of Fall 2027. Beginning Fall 2023, 80 undergraduate students from those 5 degree-granting programs signed up to pursue completion of an ASRE Pathway in their major. This participation has grown to 437 undergraduate students in 38 degree-granting programs pursuing completion of an ASRE Pathway as of June 1, 2026. The ASRE Pathways program has awarded transcript designations to a total of 183 students in 27 degree-granting programs over the 6 semesters that the ASRE Pathways program has been active (Fall 2023-Spring 2026). The Advance-SRP Team looks forward to another year of innovation and communication with students, faculty and staff. Thanks for taking the time to enjoy this newsletter.



-Sherry Krayesky-Self

FROM THE DESK OF LEADERSHIP



What a year it has been! As you'll read, our office has been very busy working with students, faculty, and staff. The ASRE Pathways are continuing to grow with the largest group of ASRE Pathways Completers to date! In Fall 2026, we will also implement 3 more departments to the ASRE Pathways program, Music, Dance, and Theatre! I look forward to assisting more students in their endeavors and seeing all the accomplishments they achieve!

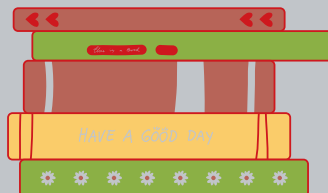


- Jessica Thibodeaux



- Todd Henry

I look forward to the next academic year. The center's goals will be to have more students enroll in our ASRE Pathways program, more nominations for Leaf Awards, restoration of grant funding, including more direct student support, and continued showcasing of the great research achievements of all undergraduates. Undergraduate student success has been and remains our primary focus. We want all undergraduates to succeed here at the University and after they graduate to new and exciting endeavors.





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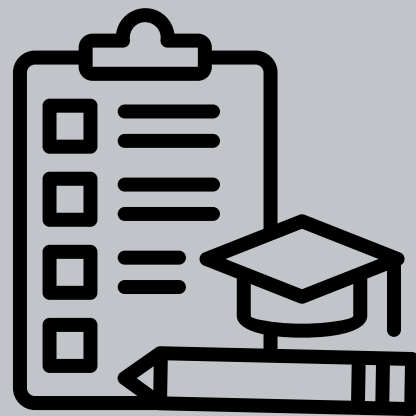
**Student Center for
Research, Creativity
and Scholarship**



The Outstanding Graduate for spring 2026, Abbey Poirier and 5 of 8 Outstanding Graduates for UL Lafayette's Colleges completed their ASRE Pathways and earned transcript designations!

STUDENT SPOTLIGHT ACHIEVEMENT

62 students completed their ASRE Pathways spring 2026 and 28 students completed their Pathways fall of 2025. They all earned transcript designations!



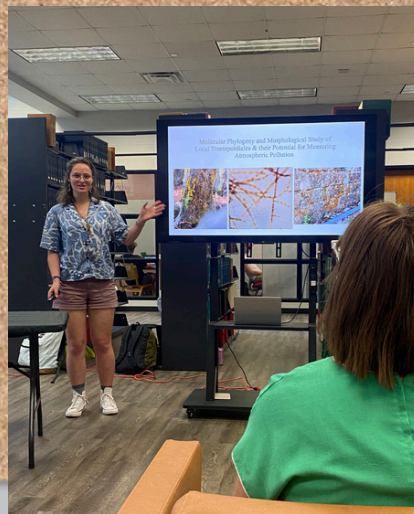
This year, 2026, the Leaf Award winners were recognized by Lieutenant Governor, Billy Nungesser.

UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Elise Gaffga

Elise Gaffga is a junior at UL Lafayette majoring in Biology with a concentration in Ecology, Evolution, and Marine Biology. Elise is pursuing an ASRE Pathway of Distinction in Biology. She presented her research at the Earth Day panel held by Dupre' Library on April 2026 and is passionate about preserving the natural environment.

Elise studies the terrestrial algae, *Trentepohliales*. Her research analyzes the morphological characteristics of multiple species of *Trentepohlia* via their reproductive structures. Polymerase Chain Reaction (PCR) and genetic sequencing enable species identification of local samples. The algae grow in small populations across campus on the surface of walls and tree trunks, yet little is known about the organisms. Comparative molecular phylogeny using the *rbcL* gene sequences will result in the most up to date phylogenetic tree for the *Trentepohlia*. Additionally, Elise is evaluating *Trentepohlia* as potential use for airborne heavy metal pollutants. Establishing the use of *Trentepohliales* as a *bio-indicator* has pushed Elise to work on completing an (Scanning Electron Microscope- Energy Dispersive X-Ray Spectroscopy) SEM-EDS elemental analysis using the Fiber-Ion-Beam scanning electron microscope located in Billeaud Hall.



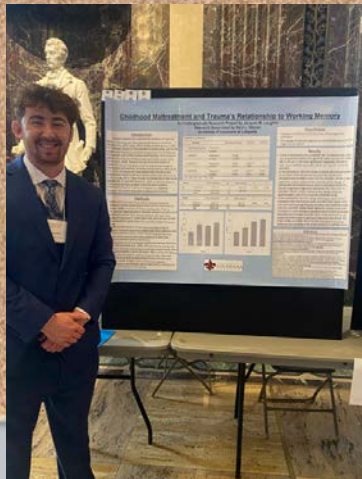
UNDERGRADUATE SPOTLIGHT

Jacques Laughlin

Jacques Laughlin is now an alumnus of UL Lafayette graduating in Spring 2026 with a Bachelor of Science in Psychology and completed an ASRE Pathway of Excellence in Psychology. During spring 2026 he earned a Leaf Award and was awarded the Hait-Lewis Scholarship Award that is given to only two students per year. In his time at UL Lafayette, he was invited to present for New Student Convocation, and shared his research at the Undergraduate Research Conference, Posters at the Capitol, UL System Academic Summit, and numerous other scholarly events. His work regarding childhood maltreatment, trauma, and working memory will continue to be his focus during graduate school.

Jacques was a student employee in the Advance office for four years and was an integral part of creating the Advance Student Ambassadors student organization where he became the first president of the organization. He is now pursuing his master's degree in Psychology at

UL Lafayette.



COMING SOON

FALL 2026 EVENTS TO LOOK FORWARD TO

Upcoming events to look forward to!



10.29.2026: Academic Resources Trick-or-Treat

Student resources from across campus will gather in the library to share their resources and treats!



11.13-14.2026: Undergraduate Research Conference

This state-wide conference is full of exciting presentations and discussions showcasing the amazing research, creative, and scholarly projects of undergraduate students!



Workshops

Multiple student workshops are scheduled for the Fall Semester. Workshops are approved for students participating in the ASRE Pathways program, to earn co-curricular credit. All students are welcome.

ADVANCE-SRP

GATHER AND GROW

NOURISH YOUR PATHWAY (TO SUCCESS)

Advance-SRP wants to connect and support undergraduate students through Gather and Grow Meetings. We want to communicate with all of the students who are signed up to complete an ASRE Pathway so that students do not feel disconnected from our office. As a result, we are implementing a new guideline for students seeking completion of an ASRE Pathway that includes surveys, professional development, and Q&A.

**ATTEND TWO
SESSIONS FALL
2026!**





FALL 2026 UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH CONFERENCE

The annual Undergraduate Research Conference was held on Friday and Saturday, November 14 & 15, 2026. The Conference was sponsored by CGI and provided a keynote speaker in Dr. James Peake. Other keynote speakers included Dr. Farzad Ferdowsi from the College of Engineering and Dr. Clancy Ratliff from the College of Liberal Arts. Students from UL Lafayette, colleges and universities across the state, and even a student from the University of British Columbia!

Awards and Recognitions were sponsored by CGI and selected by a panel of judges for each category. Students were recognized at the poster session.



SPRING 2026 EVENTS TO LOOK BACK ON



Check out everything Advance-SRP hosted, assisted, or attended!

03.09.2026: *Posters at the Capitol*--12 undergraduate students presented their research on the first day of the Legislative session. A resolution was read on the floor of the Legislature regarding student research.

03.25.2026: *Engineering Expo*--Advance-SRP spoke to high school students about the program.

04.02.2026: *Leaf Awards*--Advance-SRP awarded 31 students Leaf Awards for excellence in undergraduate research.

04.16-17.2026: *UL System Academic Summit*--Advance-SRP brought # undergraduate student to present their research.

04.16.2026: *Psychology Undergraduate Student Showcase*--Advance-SRP attended the annual showcase for student research and awarding scholarships.

04.20.2026-05.01.2026: *Undergraduate Research Showcase*--Student posters/projects were showcased in the library.



SPRING 2026 EVENTS TO LOOK BACK ON



Check out everything Advance-SRP hosted, assisted, or attended!

April 20-24 was Research Week

The Council on Undergraduate Research put forth social media prompts for the week. Advance-SRP participated and added student spotlights each day to highlight current students and alumni

04.23.2026: School of Geosciences Undergraduate Research Showcase

05.14.2026: B. I. Moody III College of Business Undergraduate Research Showcase-- Advance-SRP attended and assisted in judging the inaugural showcase for the College of Business.

04.07-09.2026: NCUR--One of our incredible undergraduate researchers attended the annual NCUR Conference and presented her research.

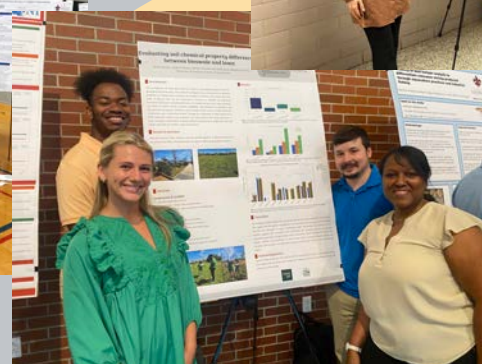
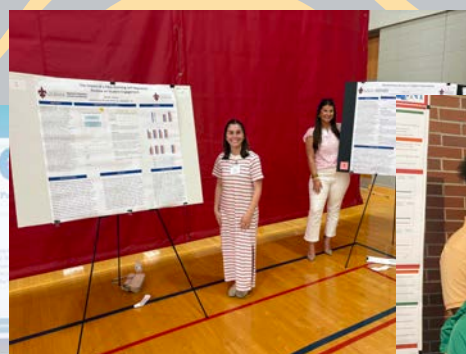
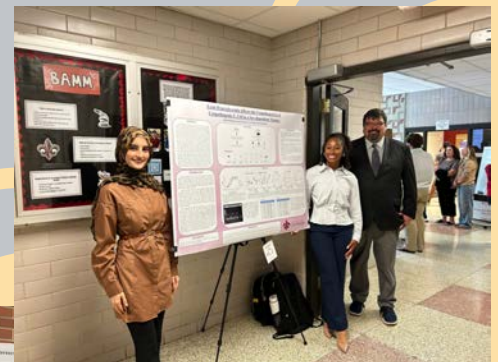
04.24.2026: Biology Undergraduate Research Symposium

04.27.2026: College of Education Symposium

4.29-30.2026: ASRE Pathways Completer Event--62 undergraduate students from 21 departments were awarded their completion coin for completing their ASRE Pathway and graduating with their bachelor's degree.

05.12.2026: STEM Extravaganza

07.31.2026: TexBioMed Final Presentations



POSTERS AT THE CAPITOL 2026

The Louisiana Undergraduate Research Association (LaURA) hosted Posters at the Capitol, on March 9, 2026, inviting universities across the state to select a limited number of students to present their research in poster format to Louisiana legislators. 11 UL Lafayette students were selected to present their work.

Presenter: Sydnee Johnson

Title: "The Ripple Effect: Causes and Effects on University Noncompliance Found in Financial Audits"

College: B.I. Moody III College of Business Administration
Department: Accounting

Presenter: Parker Bristow

Title: "Social Determinants of Cardiovascular Health: A State Level Comparison"

College: College of Education & Human Development
Department: School of Kinesiology

Presenter: Jacques Laughlin

Title: "Childhood Maltreatment, Trauma, and Working Memory"

College: College of Liberal Arts
Department: Psychology

Presenter: Emma Thomas

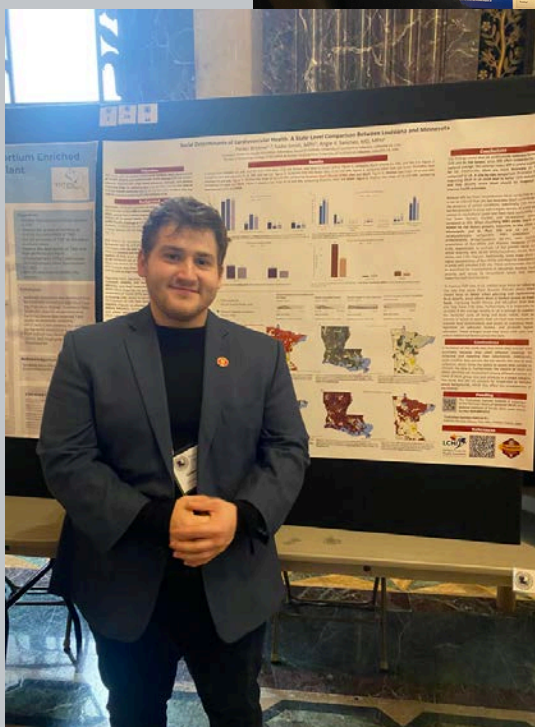
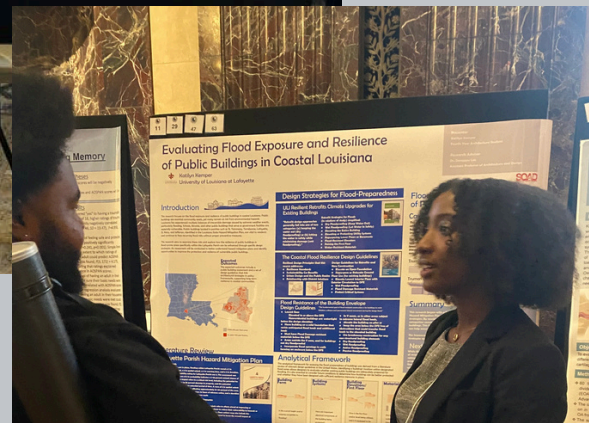
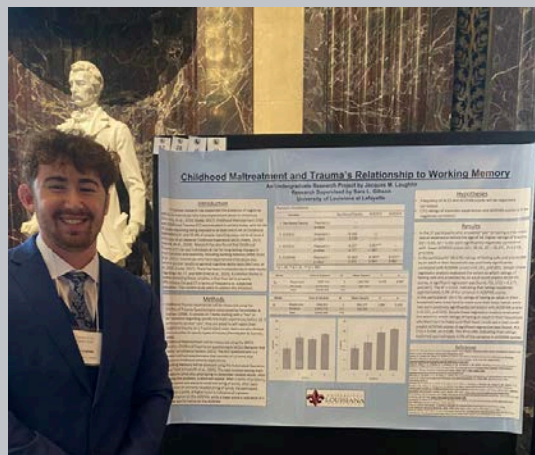
Title: "The History of Chess in New Orleans"

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

Presenter: Chandler Johnson

Title: "Fostering Confidence & Success in Introverted Piano Students"

College: College of the Arts
Department: School of Music



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Presenter: Jayda Bullard

Title:

College: College of the Arts

Department: School of Performing Arts

Presenter: Katilyn Kemper

Title: "Evaluating Flood Exposure and Resilience of Public Buildings in Coastal Louisiana"

College: College of the Arts

Department: School of Architecture & Design

Presenter: Darshan Kumar

Title: "CAPE ESG-Grid Experimental Smart Ground-Station Grid"

College: Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Department: School of Computing & Informatics

Presenter: Leah Notto

Title: "Site-Specific Elastic Biomechanical Properties of Articular Cartilage Degraded with MMPs Representing Different Stages to Osteoarthritis"

College: College of Engineering

Department: Chemical Engineering

Presenter: Lana Gaspard

Title: "Recreating Heat Waves: How Extreme Temperatures Impact Maternal Provisioning & Future Evolution"

College: Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Department: School of Biological Sciences

Olivia Good

Title:

College: Ray P. Authement College of Sciences

Department: Physics



SPRING 2026 LEAF AWARDS

The 2025 Advance Leaf Awards awarded 39 Leaf Awards to 31 undergraduate students for excellence in research, creativity, and scholarship. Chosen from 50 nominations across all colleges, the winners demonstrated how student research enriches both their academic journeys and the broader UL Lafayette community. A signature tradition of the awards ties to UL Lafayette's century oaks: just as hundreds of leaves give the oak its strength, the students honored embody the collective growth and vitality of the university. This year's ceremony also recognized faculty and staff with Advance Challenge Coins for their dedicated mentorship and support of undergraduate research. In the words of the program, "The academic endeavors of the students who receive the Leaf Award challenge and inspire the faculty and illuminate the possibilities for the future." Planned in partnership with students from Hospitality and Event Planning courses, the event highlighted not only research excellence but also collaboration and community spirit.

Golden Leaf Award Winner
2026: Ray P. Authement
College of Sciences.
The Golden Leaf Award
recognizes the UL Lafayette
college with the most
Advance student
participation.



SPRING 2026 ASRE PATHWAYS COMPLETER RECOGNITION

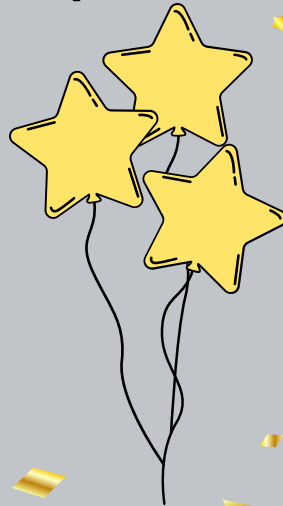


Congratulations
to all of the Spring 2026
ASRE Pathways
Completers! We enjoyed
celebrating you!



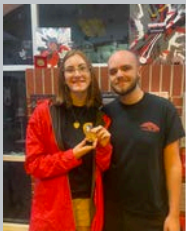
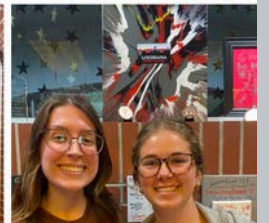
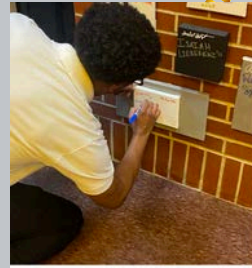
We celebrated the
ASRE Pathways
Completers on
Wednesday and
Thursday, April 29-30,
2026.

This was our largest
group of ASRE
Pathways Completers
yet with 62 completers
from 21 different
departments!



We loved honoring
these students with
their family, friends,
and mentors!

Congratulations to each
and every student for
their excellent work!



Thank you
to all the mentors and friends who
supported these students. Special
thanks to Tiffany Ellis from Dupre'
Library for providing popcorn.

SPRING 2026 EVENTS TO LOOK BACK ON



Faculty Learning Community Showcase

The Advance Student Research Program (SRP) and the Office of Distance Learning at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette partnered to enhance AI literacy, and to train faculty to integrate AI tools into teaching course-embedded undergraduate research experience and/or managing mentored research experiences. Both initiatives seek to improve pedagogy and expand instructional capacity, enabling faculty to reach more students and provide greater access to valuable undergraduate research opportunities.

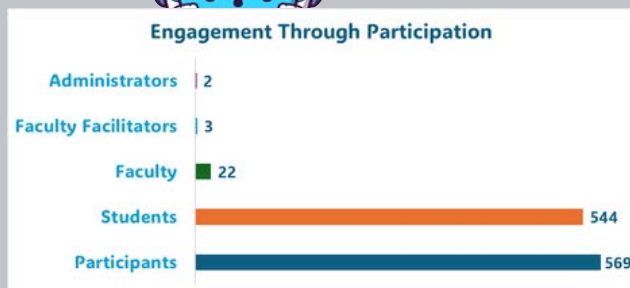


UNIVERSITY OF LOUISIANA AT LAFAYETTE
DISTANCE LEARNING
Academic Affairs Division

Faculty Development: Twenty-two faculty from across disciplines participated in faculty learning communities sponsored by Advance-SRP and Distance Learning. During the fall 2025 semester, participants met regularly to explore strategies, exchange ideas, and design project proposals that meaningfully engage students with AI tools, including opportunities for undergraduate research in the classroom (curricular) or outside the classroom (co-curricular).

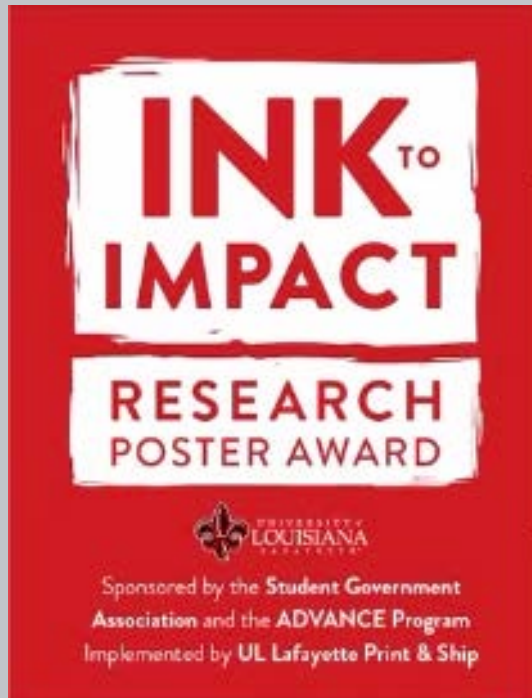
Project Implementation: In the spring 2026, participating faculty piloted their projects in classrooms, research laboratories, or other scholarly settings across both STEM and Non-STEM fields.

Evaluation: Both faculty and student participants took part in an IRB approved evaluation of the pilot projects. Faculty identified effective strategies for integrating AI literacy and AI tools into course embedded and mentored undergraduate research experiences. They also examined the design, implementation process, and assessment plans of scalable, optimized, AI inclusive models. The results of these endeavors were shared during a showcase in May 2026.



SPRING 2026 EVENTS

TO LOOK BACK ON



Free professional poster printing for undergraduate researchers

What?

An award that covers the cost of printing research posters for professional presentations.

Why?

To remove financial barriers and make academic research more accessible.

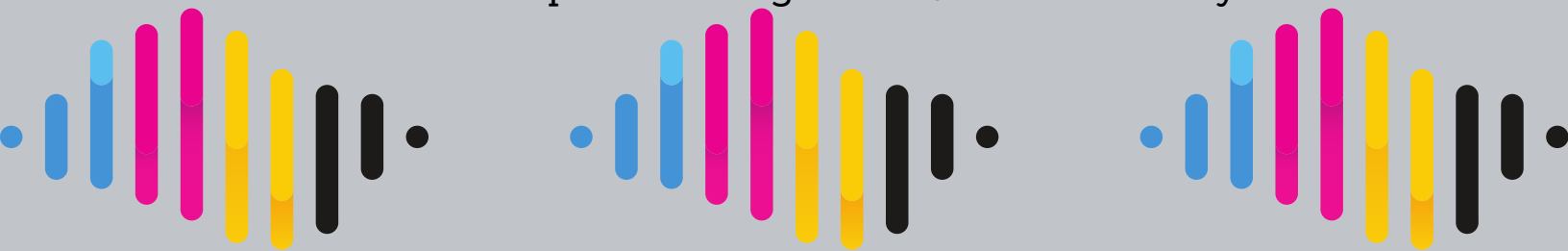
Who Should Apply?

- ▶ Students presenting at external conferences.
- ▶ Students who plan to reuse their posters.
- ▶ Students with no other access to printing funds.

Visit the ADVANCE or SGA websites to apply!

advance.louisiana.edu • louisiana.edu/sga

In partnership with Student Government Association and UL Lafayette Print & Ship, Advance implemented the Ink to Impact Research Poster Award for undergraduate students to print their posters for free in order for students to present their research in professional settings. Multiple posters have been printed during the Spring 2026 semester! This initiative will remain in place during the 26/27 academic year.



SPRING 2026 EVENTS TO LOOK BACK ON



Check out everything Advance-SRP hosted, assisted, or attended!

Workshops

Multiple student workshops are scheduled for the Fall Semester. Workshops are approved for students participating in the ASRE Pathways program, to earn co-curricular credit. All students are welcome. The workshops below took place during the Spring 2026 semester. We look forward to partnering to host more workshops in the Fall semester!

01.30.2026: URAP REU Workshop

02.11.2026: ASRE Pathways Workshop

02.11.2026: How to Use Zotero

02.25.2026: Hello to Hired: Career Fair Prep Pop-In

03.04.2026: Managing Academic Life

03.17.2026: ASRE Pathways Workshop

03.19.2026: How to Use Zotero

03.24.2026: Demystifying Grad School

03.25.2026: Demystifying Grad School

04.13.2026: ASRE Pathways Workshop

04.20.2026: Crafting Your Curriculum Vitae



Approved by
ADVANCE
STUDENT RESEARCH
EXPERIENCE

GET IN TOUCH WITH ADVANCE!

Thank you for taking the time to read about everything Advance-SRP has been a part of this past year and things to look forward to in the next academic year. If you would like to keep up with Advance, follow us on Instagram, Facebook, join our email list, or use our contact information below to reach out!

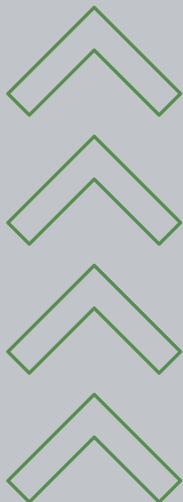
Instagram



Facebook



Email List



Contact Information



Location: Dupre' Library Room 102
Email: advance@louisiana.edu
Phone: 337-412-1382



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