



VALDOSTA STATE GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Bi-Monthly Updates from the Graduate School



**We can't wait to
kick off Fall
semester with you!**

Welcome Back!

Welcome back, Blazers! We are excited to welcome you to the Fall 2026 semester at Valdosta State University! Whether you are returning to further your graduate studies or joining us for the first time, the Graduate School is here to support you throughout your academic journey.

It's important to connect with your advisors early on, engage in campus activities, and utilize the numerous resources offered by the Graduate School. Stay in the loop by reading our updates and following us on social media. We are looking forward to a fantastic semester ahead! Continue reading this newsletter for quick tips, updates, highlights, and other essential information for VSU graduate students.



Welcome, Graduate Students!



On behalf of the Graduate School, I am delighted to welcome you to our graduate community. Whether you are beginning a master's program, pursuing a doctorate, or advancing your professional expertise, you are joining a vibrant community of scholars, innovators, and leaders.

Graduate education is a journey of discovery, growth, and transformation. Along the way, you will expand your knowledge, sharpen your skills, and make meaningful contributions to your field. While this journey will challenge you, it will also provide countless opportunities to gain experience, collaborate with faculty, and achieve your career goals.

As you begin this important chapter, know that you are supported by a dedicated network of faculty and staff who are deeply committed to your success. Our faculty bring expertise, mentorship, and a passion for teaching and scholarship that will help guide your academic and professional development. Our staff stand ready to assist you by connecting you with the resources, services, and support systems designed to help you thrive.

I encourage you to take full advantage of the many services available to you, including writing support through the [Academic Success Center](#), [library resources](#), [research support](#), [career development opportunities](#), [wellness services](#), and student engagement programs through the Association of Graduate Students (AGS). These resources exist to support your goals and help you make the most of your graduate experience.

We are honored that you have chosen to pursue your graduate education with us. We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments, supporting your aspirations, and witnessing the impact you will make on our campus, in your profession, and in your community.

Welcome, and best wishes for a successful, rewarding, and fulfilling year ahead.

Warm regards,

Becky A. K. da Cruz

Associate Provost for Graduate Studies and Research

VSU GRAD CROSSWORD

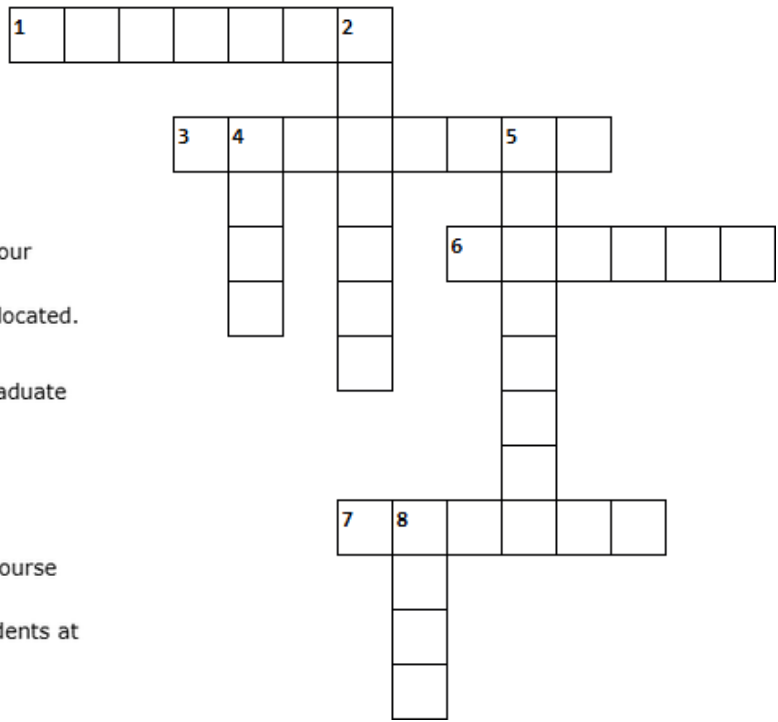
Across

1. What awaits you after successfully completing your degree.
3. The VSU building where the Graduate School is located.
6. A proud member of the VSU community
7. A major research project completed by some graduate students

Down

2. Your go-to person for academic guidance
4. VSU's main library
5. Your guide to assignments, expectations, and course deadlines.
8. Special academic regalia worn by graduate students at commencement.

[Click here to play online or reveal answers](#)



Attn: Doctoral Students!

Dissertation Dive-In

Are you looking for peer feedback, mentorship, and support for your dissertation this semester? If so, we invite you to participate in our Dissertation Dive-Ins! These sessions occur bi-weekly and provide an opportunity to engage with your peers and a faculty member who will facilitate discussions and feedback among you and your doctoral colleagues. If you would like to join, please reach out to **Ms. Rosalyn Martinez** at rcmartinez@valdosta.edu.

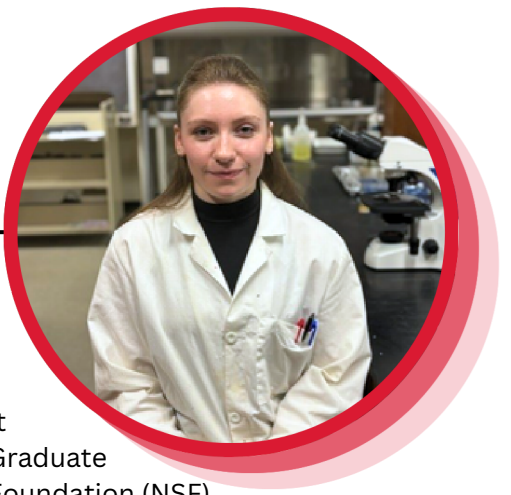


- ☐ Visit the Grad School Website
- ☐ Clean out your VSU email inbox
- ☐ Explore a career opportunity
- ☐ Finish an assignment early

GRADUATE CONVERSATIONS

Shyanne Christner

For this newsletter, we want to highlight recent Graduate alumna, Shyanne Christner. She graduated with her M.S. degree in Biology in Spring 2026. Shyanne also applied and was awarded one of the most prestigious grants that a Biology graduate student can receive: the Graduate Research Fellowship Program (GFRP) through the National Science Foundation (NSF). She will be starting her Ph.D. program at the University of Washington this fall. We caught up with Shyanne and asked her some questions about her experience as a graduate student at VSU.



What led you to start your graduate journey at Valdosta State University?

"I knew from the beginning of my undergraduate that I wanted to pursue a Ph.D., but I didn't want to immediately after graduating my undergrad. A professor told me that VSU offers the 4+1 program for Biology, and suggested it."

Although you have graduated, can you share any strategies on how you managed your time between course/lab workload and other commitments?

"It's really important to me to set aside time to do things that I like (art, related to hobbies). I always get work done first and schedule what to do every day. I like to schedule chunks of time to make sure everything gets done, and I like to do things as early as possible. This let me keep weekends mostly to myself, and as dedicated time for my hobbies."

What myths did you have about Graduate School/your program, and did you find them to be correct or incorrect?

"I was told Graduate School was harrowing and scary. It can be really hard at times, but I would recommend talking to your professors to help. At VSU, the professors are extremely nice and often will give you resources based on what you tell them about your goals. You can go to any professor (even one you are not enrolled in their class) and ask for help."

What is one piece of advice that you would give to a perspective student looking to pursue a graduate degree?

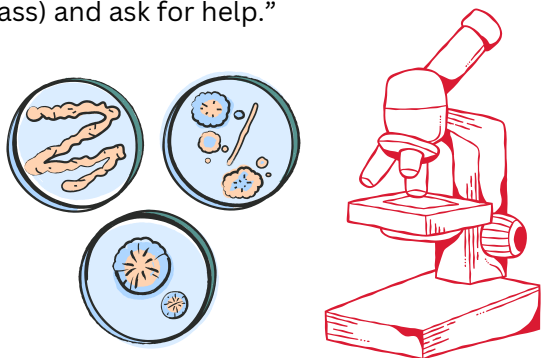
"Along the same lines as the previous answer, talk to your professors. This can help open opportunities for you. For example, I spoke with a professor and mentioned my interest in parasitology and career goals, and they told me about the REU internship that introduced me to the lab I will be working in. They can also give you advice on an idea you may have as well, and help you make your ideas feasible. Talking to them is important for graduate and undergraduate students, and they are less scary than you think they are. They are normal people who want to help."

What emoji would you use to describe your graduate experience and why?

Smiley emoji (😊) on most days, but smiley with sweat drop (😓) on days where situations arise and you have to just keep going and figure it out.

How do you think the master's program in Biology prepared you for your upcoming Ph.D. program?

"I taught a lot in my Graduate program. I would recommend someone who wants to pursue teaching to try to be a GA and teach classes if they can. Teaching labs helped me overcome my social anxiety, and I learned that I enjoyed working with students. It was also really helpful in learning about conflict resolution, and communicating science in a more accessible way. This is even helpful if you are wanting to only teach instead of going into research. Also, it helps with presentations, feeling more comfortable presenting research that you have done yourself, and teaching the information helps to reinforce it. Overall, VSU also gave me the time and many professors to speak with to help me in preparing for my next steps."



Upcoming Dates

Don't get FOMO!

Stay informed about all the important dates and events related to Valdosta State University!

August

August 17 – First Day of Classes

August 20 – Course Registration Ends

August 25 – The Happening

September

September 1 – Last Day to Setup Direct Deposit Info (for Financial Aid Refunds)

September 7 – Labor Day

Did you know?

VSU graduate students can access campus recreation facilities and programs, giving students another way to stay active and connect with the campus community.



Quick Links!

Academic Calendar: Holidays & Semester Deadlines

Graduate School Website: Resources, Association of Graduate Students (AGS), Graduate Assistantships, and so much more!

“Success is the sum of small efforts, repeated day in and day out.”

— Robert Collier

Be Featured in Our Newsletter!

Are you interested in being highlighted in our newsletter? If so, please reach out to us via email at gradschool@valdosta.edu. We would love to interview you and showcase your journey as a VSU Graduate Student in our “Graduate Conversations” section, where we celebrate the experiences of current VSU graduate students.

Stay Connected

Facebook: Valdosta State University Graduate School

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