



# VSU Graduate School Newsletter

May/June 2025

## *Graduation, Research, and Graduate Conversations*



### ***Congratulations to the Class of 2025 graduates!***

There are 550 graduate, specialist, and doctoral students eligible to walk at commencement on May 9, 2025 at 5pm. We are excited for all of our graduates as you move into the next stage of your career.

Additional information regarding the Spring 2025 commencement can be found [here](#). **We want to year about your career achievements. Please email Dr. da Cruz ([bdacruz@valdosta.edu](mailto:bdacruz@valdosta.edu)) where you are heading next. We love to brag about our graduates!**

### ***Graduate Research Symposium and GA of the Year Awards Ceremony***

Thank you to everyone that participated and attended the Graduate Research Symposium and GA of the Year Award Ceremony on April 11th. We had 35 poster presentations, five oral presentations, three 3MT videos, and one musical performance.

**Congratulations to our GA of the Year winners and nominees, poster presentation winners, the 3MT People's Choice winner, and the recipient of the Friend of the Graduate School award:**

- *GA of the Year* - Morgan Wynn; *1<sup>st</sup> Runner Up* - Ireina Hyde; *2<sup>nd</sup> Runner Up (Tie)* - Erin Manning & Karla Timbang
- *Poster Presenters: 1<sup>st</sup> Place* - Jillian Blevins & Gabrielle Howell; *2<sup>nd</sup> Place* - Taylor Holifield, Quentin Dorsey, & Christopher Jones, *3<sup>rd</sup> Place* - Leah Kubiak & Jacee Waters Holton
- *3MT People's Choice Award* - Daniel Marcos Rodriguez
- *Friend of the Graduate School* - Dr. Michael Black

Information about the symposium and photos of the winners can be found on the [Graduate School website](#). Many additional photos from the event can be found on [VSU's Flickr page](#).



### ***Graduate Conversations.... Learning about our fellow VSU Graduate Students***

**Welcome to the first Graduate Conversations, where we introduce you to one of your fellow graduate students! We would like to introduce you all to *Renee' Anderson*!** She is currently working on her Educational Specialist degree in Teacher Leadership. She began her Ed.S. degree program in the summer of 2023 and has 2 classes left!!! Read below to learn more:

**What led you to start your specialist journey at Valdosta State University?** I have always aspired to work with teachers in leadership positions. VSU offers a Teacher Specialist degree, and I like the university.

**Thus far, what is the biggest difference between undergraduate and graduate classes?** My bachelor's degree provided a solid foundation in knowledge and background for teaching. My masters honed in on the skills on a deeper level. My specialist degree is more intense with explaining what we are learning, applying it to our colleagues, and then creating written responses to questions about what we observed and learned.

**Can you share any strategies on how you manage your time between course workload and other commitments?** This is not my first term, but it is a struggle to teach full-time, be a mom and wife, have a life, and balance schoolwork. I lay the entire term out in my planner as soon as the syllabus is distributed. Then, I designate certain days of the week for reading, quizzes, and discussions.

**What myths did you have about Graduate School/your program, and have you found them to be correct or incorrect?** I was worried about everything being online and how I would navigate all the new platforms, and it has been difficult for me. My other two degrees were in person, and I prefer that to online learning.

**What is one piece of advice that you would give to a perspective student looking to pursue a graduate degree?** Go for it! It's never too late or not the right time - that will always be an excuse. I started my third degree at 47, if I can do it, anyone can!

**Although you are in an online program, what are the strategies that your professors use to keep you engaged in the learning material and with your classmates?** The engagement factor is the discussions assigned in each course. It is hard when some courses have under five students because there aren't many options for choices, and you will have to use the same people over.

**What emoji would you use to describe your current graduate experience and why?** 🤔 Because I am frazzled from keeping it all straight, and I am so close to the end of the school year and my degree!

## Faculty Advice Corner: Dr. Jamie Workman



In our inaugural Faculty Advice Corner, we want to introduce you to one of our fantastic graduate faculty members, Dr. Jamie L. Workman in the Leadership, Technology & Workforce Development department. Dr. Workman teaches in the Higher Education Leadership M.Ed. Program as well as research classes for our Ed.D. Students in Leadership, Curriculum & Instruction, and Adult Learning & Development.

**How long have you been teaching at VSU? Graduate courses?** 2024-2025 is my 9<sup>th</sup> year, and I have always taught at the graduate level.

**What is your favorite part about teaching/working with graduate students?** Graduate students, particularly at the doctoral level are here because they want to be here, not because they have to be here. I love their level of engagement and excitement about their research.

**What advice do you provide your graduate students to be successful in the program?** Know that graduate school is very different from undergrad — just because you were successful as an undergrad doesn't mean that you will be as a graduate student (and the reverse can also be true). Know that you may need to learn how to study differently and that for many, graduate school will be more writing intensive than undergrad.

**What advice do you provide to your graduate students to be successful professionally?** Connect with faculty and engage in your profession. Join a professional organization and present at a conference or the graduate research symposium.

**What types of work/careers do the graduates of your degree program get hired into?** Graduates are prepared to work on college campuses, both 2-year and 4-year in a variety of student affairs/student services roles. Some of our graduates go on to teach at the college level (typically courses like a Perspectives course, freshman seminars, or career exploration classes).

### **Upcoming Dates and Deadlines**

Spring Commencement .....	May 9, 2025 at 5 pm
First Day of Maymester .....	May 15, 2025
First Day of Summer I .....	May 15, 2025
First Day of Summer II & III.....	June 10, 2025
Final Draft of Thesis & Dissertations due .....	July 11, 2025