



VALDOSTA STATE GRADUATE SCHOOL NEWSLETTER

Bi-Monthly Updates from the Graduate School



**Fall is officially
here and so is the
fun at VSU!**

***Fall* into VSU: Midterms & Homecoming**

As midterms, fall break, and Homecoming approach, we encourage our Grad community to find a little balance between working hard and enjoying the season. Whether you're learning on campus or from miles away, take time to step away from the assignments, recharge, and enjoy a well-deserved break.

Homecoming also brings a little extra Blazer spirit to the season! This year's theme, the Royal Affair, is the perfect excuse to add a little royal flair to your week, wherever you may be celebrating. Most importantly, remember that distance doesn't make you any less a part of VSU. Our Graduate community stretches far beyond Valdosta, and we hope you return from fall break refreshed, connected, and ready to finish the semester strong!



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**.

Dissertations due: November 20 at 5:00pm



Have you completed a practicum, internship, clinical experience, field placement, service-learning project, study abroad experience, or other hands-on learning opportunity through your graduate program? The 2026 VSU Experiential Learning Expo Graduate Showcase invites you to share your experiences for a chance to win \$100 in categories like Innovation & Entrepreneurship, Community Impact, or Connection to the Profession.

- Date: November 10, 4:00–6:00 p.m. at the Student Union Theater.
- Presentations: 3 minutes, in-person or virtual, using a single-slide infographic.

Important Dates:

- Proposal deadline: September 30, 2026
- Acceptance notifications: October 6
- Infographic training: October 15
- Final infographic due: November 5

Participate individually or with another graduate student. For questions, contact Jessica Millican (jhmillican@valdosta.edu) or Hoa Nguyen (hnnnguyen@valdosta.edu). This is a great chance to enhance your resume and showcase your skills!



GRAD SCHOOL THIS OR THAT

☐ Early Bird | ☐ Night Owl

☐ Paper | ☐ Presentation

☐ Online | ☐ In-Person

☐ Music | ☐ Silence

One-Minute Reset



TAKE 60 SECONDS

1. Look away from your screen
2. Stretch
3. Drink some water
4. Take 3 deep breaths

Now get back to it. You've got this!



Association of Graduate Students

The Association of Graduate Students (AGS) is a student-driven organization focused on enhancing academic, professional, and social experiences for graduate students at Valdosta State University. Through a variety of offerings, including workshops, networking events, leadership opportunities, and advocacy, AGS provides essential support for graduate students during their academic pursuits and beyond. All graduate students are members. To discover more about AGS and its initiatives, scan the QR code or visit the website [here](#).

Think you know your way around the VSU Grad School? Visit the Graduate School website and our previous newsletter to find answers!

1. What building is the Graduate School located in?
2. Name one doctoral degree offered by VSU.
3. What is the Fall 2026 deadline (date AND time) for a defended thesis or dissertation to be submitted for format review?
4. What are the three main course delivery options offered for graduate programs?
5. Name one resource available specifically for graduate students.
6. Find the Graduate Assistantship page. What are two benefits of having a GA position?

🏆 Finished? Be the **first student to submit all the correct answers via email or social media messages to **win a prize!****



Celebrate Homecoming Near or Far!

Whether you're celebrating with us in Valdosta or representing VSU from afar, show off your Blazer spirit during the Royal Affair!

Ways to join the celebration:

📷 Blazer Pride: Wear your VSU gear, decorate your space, or get together with fellow Blazers in your area.

👉 Find your Grad community: Scan the AGS QR code to join the GroupMe and connect with graduate students (including those outside Valdosta).

🏈 Celebrate in Valdosta: Stay tuned for information about possible graduate student Homecoming activities and tailgating.

❤️ Send us your photos! We'd love to feature graduate students celebrating Homecoming in our next newsletter or on social media.

Wherever you are, you are still part of Blazer Nation! 🔥

GRADUATE CONVERSATIONS



Khadijia El-Hazimy

We want to highlight Khadijia El-Hazimy, MPH from University of Bridgeport, who has seamlessly transitioned into the Master of Library and Information Science program at Valdosta State University. Khadijia's journey is a testament to her dedication to lifelong learning and her ability to adapt to new challenges while juggling multiple responsibilities.

What led you to start your master's journey at Valdosta State University?

Pursuing an ALA-accredited MLIS had been a long-time goal of mine, and Valdosta State University's online program was the perfect fit. I wanted the flexibility to balance my education with my work and family responsibilities while building on my MPH in Global Health. My goal is to combine my public health and library science backgrounds to become a health sciences librarian. VSU's strong reputation and flexible online program made it an ideal choice, and every course has reaffirmed that I made the right decision.

Thus far, what is the biggest difference between undergraduate and graduate classes?

The biggest difference is the level of independence and critical thinking expected at the graduate level. Rather than focusing on memorization, graduate courses at VSU emphasize analyzing information, conducting research, and applying knowledge to real-world situations. The assignments consistently challenge me to think deeply and connect what I am learning to actual practice in the field. The online format has also taught me that meaningful learning and strong connections with classmates and professors can happen regardless of location.

Can you share any strategies on how you manage your time between course workload and other commitments?

At the beginning of each semester, I review every syllabus and add all deadlines and assignments to my calendar right away. One strategy that has made a big difference is taking my laptop with me wherever I go whether I am waiting for my children to finish their activities, I use those small pockets of time to read course materials or work on assignments. I also use my computer's text-to-speech feature to listen to chapters and articles while doing other tasks, which helps me maximize my time. Breaking larger projects into smaller steps and working ahead whenever possible has helped me stay on track and avoid last-minute stress.

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

Before starting the MLIS program, I wondered if an online program would feel isolating or make it difficult to build meaningful connections. This was not my first online graduate program, as I completed my MPH fully online. I specifically chose a fully online MLIS program at Valdosta State University because it allows me to balance my education with my responsibilities as a parent. I was pleasantly surprised by the strong sense of community through discussion boards, group projects, and interactions with professors and classmates. This experience has exceeded my expectations.

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

Take the first step and believe in yourself. Stay organized by keeping track of deadlines and breaking large assignments into smaller, manageable tasks. Most importantly, make time for yourself and the things that help you recharge — your well-being matter just as much as your coursework. Graduate school is a journey of personal and professional growth, and with consistency and perseverance, you will be surprised by how much you can accomplish.

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?

Our professors keep us engaged through interactive discussion boards, collaborative group projects, and assignments that connect theory to real-world library practice. They provide timely and thoughtful feedback, encourage meaningful conversations among classmates, and make themselves available for questions and support. These strategies create a strong sense of community, even in a fully online environment.

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

I would choose the books emoji because it represents continuous learning, curiosity, and personal growth. Every course at VSU has expanded my knowledge, strengthened my confidence, and reinforced my passion for librarianship. As a Muslim, this emoji also holds a deeper meaning for me. The first word revealed in the Qur'an was "Iqra'" (اقرأ), meaning "Read," and there is a beautiful Arabic saying, "اطلب العلم من المهد إلى اللحد" (Utlub al-'ilma min al-mahdi ila al-lahdi), which means "Seek knowledge from the cradle to the grave." That philosophy has guided my entire educational journey and continues to inspire my work as a librarian. For me, the 📖 emoji symbolizes not only my profession but also my faith, my curiosity, and my commitment to helping others discover knowledge.



Upcoming Dates

October

October 8 – Midterm

October 12-13 – Fall Break

October 18-24 – Homecoming Week

Don't get FOMO!

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

November

November 2 – Spring & Summer 2027

Registration Begins

November 25-27 – Thanksgiving Holidays

Did you know?

There is a study room solely for VSU Graduate Students in Odum Library! It is located in room 1629 on the very first floor. The access code is 1103. Happy Studying!



Quick Links!

Academic Calendar: Holidays & Semester Deadlines

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

“The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you.”
— B.B. King

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

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