



# GRC NEWSLETTER

THE Graduate School @ Bowie State



May 1, 2026

Issue 15

## ABOUT THE GRC

The Graduate Research Center's mission is to transform the graduate student experience. We cultivate a dynamic academic environment in which graduate students engage in innovative research, receive tailored academic support, and leverage resources for both academic and professional development. We are dedicated to nurturing emerging scholars, fostering interdisciplinary collaboration, and empowering individuals to excel in their academic pursuits through mentorship, fellowship opportunities, and transformative services.



## MAY EVENTS

- May 8: Last Day of Classes (2nd 7-week session)
- May 9: Last Saturday Class
- May 12: Last Day of Classes (15-week session)
- May 13: Reading Day Wednesday
- May 15: Last Day to Change Spring 2025 Graduate Incomplete Grades
- May 20: End of Term
- May 22: Final Grades Due by 11:59 PM
- May 22: Commencement Ceremony
- May 26: Graduation Clearance (for spring 2026)



@BSUGradCenter



GRC@bowiestate.edu



Center for Business & Graduate Studies  
Thurgood Marshall Library, 1185



## *A Message to Graduating Scholars*

As you prepare to walk across the stage, take a moment to reflect on the incredible milestone you've achieved. Your dedication, hard work, and scholarly pursuits have brought you to this moment. You should be immensely proud.

Whether you're stepping into a new career or advancing along your current path, we have no doubt that you'll continue to succeed. Your time in graduate school has not only sharpened your skills—it has also shown your resilience, passion, and commitment to growth.

It has been an honor to support you throughout your graduate journey. We are deeply proud of all you've accomplished and excited for all that lies ahead.

As you transition to your next steps, we hope you stay engaged and connected as a graduate alumnus. Keep reaching for new heights—and always remember to be BOLD.

Best wishes,

The GRC Team



# IDEA TO IMPACT GRANT RECIPIENTS

Earlier this semester, the Graduate School announced its inaugural graduate student funding opportunity, the Idea to Impact Grant. We extend our sincere thanks to all students who applied, as well as to the faculty members who supported them throughout the application process.

We are pleased to congratulate this year's award recipients: Matthew Akinmolayan, Ilesha Caisey, Sola Famakin, Andria J. Gadson, Abdullahi Iro, Carolyn Thorpe, Nneka Truss, and Nyair Washington. We look forward to seeing the impact of your research and the contributions it will make to your respective fields.



**Matthew Akinmolayan**

*"Adaptive Multi-Robot Coordination via Reinforcement Learning for Heterogeneous Quadruped Teams: Boston Dynamics Spot + Ghost Robotics Vision 60"*



**Ilesha Caisey**

*"Too Loud, Too Much, Too Aggressive? Developing the Black Girls Aggression and Discipline Perception Scale BG-ADPS"*



**Sola Famakin**

*"Physics-Informed Graph Neural Network Prediction of Downtime in Smart-Microgrids Under Fault and Weather Events"*



**Andria J. Gadson**

*"Develop Escherichia coli (virulent) & Staphylococcus aureus biofilm system for testing efficacy of compounds with Antibacterial properties"*



**Abdullahi Iro**

*"Chlorophyll Fluorescence Imaging and Auxin-Driven Growth Regulation as Diagnostics for Photosystem II Efficiency in Kale (Brassica oleracea) under Simulated Microgravity Condition"*



**Carolyn Thorpe**

*"Seeking Umoja: Black Female School Counselors Cultivating Black Girls Belonging Through African-Centered Frameworks"*



**Nneka Truss**

*"Factors Influencing Black School Psychologists' Career Entry and Retention: An Examination of Risk and Protective Factors"*



**Nyair Washington**

*"Barriers to HBCU Sexual Assault Disclosure: A Cultural Betrayal Perspective"*



# SPOTLIGHT

## THEODORIC M. WESTON

### Organizational Communications

Meet Theodoric M. Weston, a May 2026 Master of Organizational Communications graduate at Bowie State University whose scholarship explores leadership, representation, and equity in the workplace. Weston's thesis, *Black Gay Men in the Boardroom: Breaking the Rainbow Glass Ceiling*, is a qualitative study examining the experiences of Black gay men pursuing senior leadership roles in corporate America. His research seeks to better understand the barriers, biases, and structural challenges these professionals face while contributing new perspectives to conversations on diversity, inclusion, and executive leadership.

Now in the final semester of his program, Weston is preparing to publish his research and add meaningful scholarship to the growing body of literature on Black LGBTQ+ professionals in workplace settings and leadership spaces. His study uses a two-phase research design that combines content analysis and interviews to document lived experiences and highlight pathways to advancement.

Weston has already shared his work academically, showcasing his research at the 41st Annual Maryland Communication Association Conference held in March 2026 at the Martin Luther King, Jr. Center. His ability to connect research with real-world organizational issues reflects both scholarly rigor and professional relevance.

Beyond the classroom, Weston contributes directly to the Bowie State community through his internship as a Communications Specialist, where he writes stories for the BSYou newsletter highlighting students, faculty, and campus events. He is also developing a feature on undergraduate and graduate research at Bowie State, showcasing how scholars are expanding knowledge across the formal, natural, applied, and social sciences.

Theodoric M. Weston continues to elevate important conversations around leadership, identity, and opportunity. Theodoric M. Weston boldly moves the mission of Bowie State forward—amplifying voices, advancing equity, and using communication to inspire institutional and social change.



# A CONVERSATION WITH THEODORIC M. WESTON

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

Kamryn Kiser: So your thesis, *Black Gay Men in the Boardroom: Breaking the Rainbow Glass Ceiling*—how do you define the rainbow glass ceiling and how does it differ from other forms of workplace barriers or discrimination?

Theodoric M. Weston: I would define it similarly to the glass ceiling that women experience in terms of being overlooked for opportunities or having their leadership capabilities questioned. However, it differs because my focus is on Black gay men. While they are still men, their sexuality—or the perception of it—becomes the barrier. For example, if someone presents as more feminine, that may cause others to question their leadership ability. Even if they do not, simply being openly gay—such as being married to a man—can trigger bias. That's the unfortunate reality of how those perceptions operate.

Kiser: What were some of the most significant patterns or themes you discovered through your interviews and content analysis for your thesis?

Weston: This is very fresh for me since I just defended. I interviewed five Black gay men, and their experiences varied. Some were very open about their identity, while others felt the need to mask it. What stood out most, though, was that many felt their race was a more significant barrier than their sexuality. While they did experience microaggressions tied to both race and sexual orientation, the overarching theme was that racial identity was the primary challenge. It also highlighted how different forms of marginalization can feel layered or even ranked in certain environments.

Kiser: How do you see your research contributing to conversations around diversity, equity, inclusion, and leadership in corporate environments?

Weston: That was really the purpose of my study. I noticed there was very little research specifically focused on LGBTQ+ experiences, and even less that centered race within that context. Often, these perspectives are only briefly mentioned in broader studies. My research focuses specifically on Black, cisgender gay men, so while it doesn't capture every identity within the LGBTQ+ community, it helps begin to fill that gap. I see it as a starting point—something that contributes to ongoing conversations and encourages deeper exploration in this area.



# A CONVERSATION WITH THEODORIC M. WESTON

Kiser: In your role as a communication specialist, how does storytelling influence the way you approach both your academic research and professional work?

Weston: Storytelling is essential because it helps ensure that voices are heard, especially those from underrepresented communities. Not every topic makes headlines, but that doesn't make it any less important. Through both my research and professional work, I focus on documenting these experiences in meaningful, evidence-based ways so they can contribute to future scholarship. Even if the work starts small, it can spark further research and understanding. I think of it as a starting point—a flame. It may grow quickly or slowly, but either way, it creates space for these stories to be acknowledged and built upon.

Kiser: How has your experience at Bowie State University shaped your growth as a researcher and writer?

Weston: My time at Bowie State has really stretched me, especially when it comes to writing and research. Before this, I did a lot of professional writing, but here there was a much stronger emphasis on evidence—citing sources, validating ideas, and grounding everything in research. It pushed me to think more critically and be more intentional about where my ideas come from. I've always considered myself a critical thinker, but this experience expanded that. It challenged me to be more objective, to recognize my own biases, and to stay open to new ideas. Overall, my time here has made me a stronger researcher and a more thoughtful writer.

Kiser: What advice would you give to students who want to research identity, leadership, or underrepresented communities in organizational spaces?

Weston: I would say start by building a strong foundation in research, writing, and analysis. It's important to understand how to develop your own ideas while also engaging with different perspectives. There are so many viewpoints out there that you may not initially consider, so curiosity is key.

You also have to learn how to approach your work with objectivity. Your voice and passion will always be part of your research, but you need to clearly explain why your work matters in a way that others can understand. That means going beyond surface-level conversations and really digging into the data and evidence behind your topic. When researching underrepresented communities, it's important to center both the humanity and the broader context. These are real people with real needs—financial, social, and health-related—and their experiences deserve to be included in research. Even if your work is just a starting point, it can contribute to a larger body of knowledge. Your research might be the spark that encourages future studies or helps someone else better understand a topic. Whether it grows quickly or develops over time, it still matters.





# THESIS WRITING *Retreat*

The Master's Thesis Writing Retreat is an on-campus immersive experience for graduate students developing a thesis proposal or completing their thesis. This focused, supportive retreat combines tailored presentations on each major thesis chapter, one-on-one consultations, and protected writing time to help participants gain clarity, strengthen scholarly writing, and make meaningful progress in a quiet, reflective environment.

- ✓ Focused writing time
- ✓ One-on-one consultations
- ✓ Workshops
- ✓ Lunch



**MAY 28, 2026**  
9:00AM - 3:00PM



**CENTER FOR NATURAL SCIENCES,  
MATHEMATICS AND NURSING**

**REGISTER TODAY**



# Tailored Academic Support

## GRADUATE WRITING SERVICES



Research editors at the Graduate Research Center focus on helping graduate students grow as academic writers and scholars across disciplines. We support students at any stage in the writing process. We provide feedback on a range of work including research papers, literature reviews, dissertation chapters, grant proposals, and conference presentations.

### Offerings:

#### Brainstorming Consultations

Students talk through approaches they are considering for starting an assignment, drafting sections of longer manuscripts, or even working through structural issues in a current draft. The consultation focuses on using dialogue to explore ideas, ask questions, and gain clarity. Brainstorming consultations are scheduled 24 hours in advance and require an assignment sheet or a short project description.

#### Read Ahead Consultations

Students will identify a specific challenge that they are facing in a current draft. An editor will read student work before the consultation. The consultation centers on using dialogue to provide constructive feedback, potential strategies, and resources for overcoming the challenge. Consultations are scheduled 48 hours in advance. Requirements for making the appointment include an assignment sheet or a short project description in addition to 5-8 double-spaced manuscript pages or slides.

#### Thesis/Dissertation Support Groups:

Weekly, noncommittal groups will offer a supportive, flexible space for writers to meet the demands of revising manuscripts and take advantage of dedicated writing time. Sessions will also feature brief workshops focused on enhancing your writing process, trying new revision strategies, using feedback effectively, maximizing writing time, and more.

#### Dissertation Workshop Series:

The Dissertation Workshop Series guides doctoral students through writing and refining key sections of the dissertation. Workshops will focus on writing a clear problem statement, crafting a comprehensive literature review, describing research methodologies, presenting findings, and highlighting a study's significance.

[Schedule a GRC Service](#)

## ACADEMIC ADVISING



Academic advisors at the Graduate Research Center support new and continuing graduate students through the enrollment and registration process, help them understand program requirements, and provide ongoing guidance throughout their academic journey.

### Offerings:

In-person and online advising sessions by appointment only.

**New Student/Doctoral/Certificate Program Advising:**  
Ms. Oji

**New Student/Master's Program Advising:** Ms.  
Bradford-Yancey

## STATISTICS ACADEMIC ASSISTANCE



Statisticians at the Graduate Research Center provide academic support to graduate students by assisting with statistical concepts, data analysis techniques, and software applications. We help students understand probability, hypothesis testing, regression analysis, and other advanced statistical methods. Services include one-on-one or group sessions, guidance in applying statistical methods to research projects, and clarification on complex topics to enhance comprehension and confidence.

### Offerings:

One-on-One or Group Sessions to address challenges directly related to coursework.

## Need to Print?

Graduate programs or students in need of printing large images for conference presentations, abstract presentations, posters, etc., may complete the request form below. Materials will be ready for pickup on Mondays and Wednesdays in room 1185 of the Thurgood Marshall Library.

[Print Services Submission Form](#)



# DR. MCELROY PUBLISHES ARTICLE ON GENERAL EDUCATION SCIENCE

The Graduate School is pleased to share a recent scholarly accomplishment by our Graduate Research Editor, Dr. McElroy. In collaboration with Drs. Dayna Jean DeFeo, Trang C. Tran, and Sarah Gerken, Dr. McElroy contributed to a publication in the *Science & Education* journal.

The article, “[General Education Biology Lab Syllabi in the U.S.](#),” explores how syllabi and learning outcomes can be designed to be more inclusive and accessible for students in biology labs.

Please join us in congratulating Dr. McElroy on this outstanding achievement. This work reflects the Graduate School’s continued commitment to advancing research that promotes inclusive and innovative educational practices.



# FALL 2026



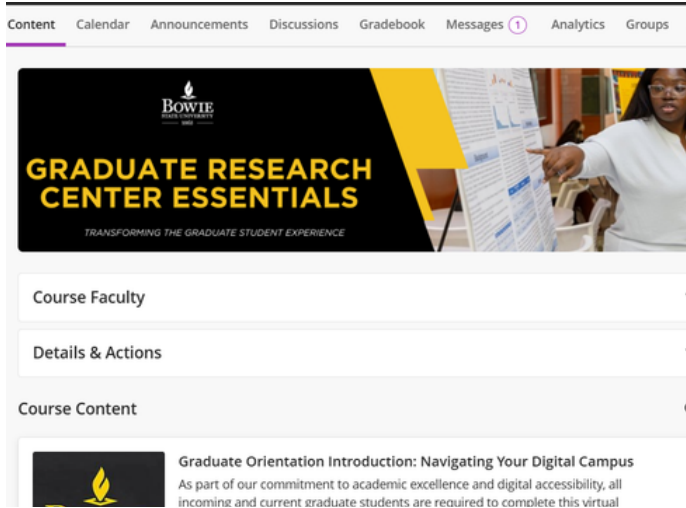
**GRAD STUDENT  
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REGISTRATION  
IS OPEN!**

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[Schedule an Advising Appointment](#)

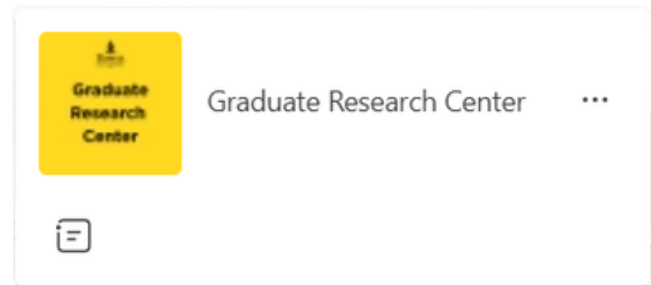
# GRC ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE ON NEW PLATFORMS



The Graduate Research Center (GRC) Essentials Blackboard organization is now open to all graduate students. This module is designed to orient students to GRC services while also providing access to essential Graduate School resources.

Students can easily access the organization by visiting [Blackboard](#), logging in, and selecting “organization” on the navigation pane located on the left. Within the GRC Essentials module, students will complete a brief orientation and earn a digital badge to recognize their participation.

The module will remain available throughout the academic year, serving as a convenient point of reference for all things related to the Graduate Research Center and the Graduate School.



In addition to Blackboard, we are excited to announce the launch of the GRC Team Hub, now available to all graduate students and faculty. The hub serves as a centralized resource, offering easy access to pertinent information about GRC services, university personnel, policies, and more. By streamlining these resources into one convenient space, the Team Hub is designed to support academic success, strengthen communication, and foster engagement across the graduate community.

**JOIN THE  
HUB  
HERE!**



# MEET THE GRC STAFF:

## MRS. RACHEL RAVEN-CHABIN



**Title:** GRC Program Administrative Specialist

**How long have you been with the GRC?** 1 Year and 4 months

**What is your role in supporting graduate students?** I help manage the logistical and administrative tasks that keep the Graduate Research Center running! In particular, I make reservations for students traveling to present at conferences with GRC funding, and I help manage the online booking system for our advising and editing services.

**What do you enjoy most about working with graduate students?** I love helping to provide students with the opportunities and resources they need to make the most of their graduate experience at BSU.

**One piece of advice for graduate students:** Make the most of your time here! Whether it's funding opportunities, work experience, networking, or mentorship from experts in your field, don't leave any stone unturned, and take advantage of the resources BSU has to offer.

**Coffee or tea?** Coffee.

**Favorite way to spend a weekend:** Going to an Orioles game.

**Favorite book:** A Tree Grows in Brooklyn by Betty Smith

**Dream travel destination:** Australia

**Fun Fact:** I've studied five languages (English, Spanish, Hebrew, Latin, and ASL), but I'm only fluent in two (English and Spanish).

**Early bird or night owl**

**Sweet or savory**

**Virtual meetings or in-person**

**Beach or mountains**

"A voice said, 'Look me in the stars / and tell me truly, men of earth / if all the soul-and-body scars / were not too much to pay for birth.'" -Robert Frost





# Graduate Writing Services

Spring 26'

Research editors at the Graduate Research Center focus on helping graduate students grow as academic writers and scholars across disciplines.

AVAILABILITY  
MONDAY-  
THURSDAY

## Brainstorming Consultations

Students use dialogue to explore ideas, ask questions, and clarify approaches for assignments or drafts.

AVAILABILITY  
MONDAY-  
THURSDAY

## Read Ahead Consultations

Students receive constructive feedback and strategies on a draft after an editor reads their work in advance.

AVAILABILITY  
MONDAY-  
THURSDAY

## Final Dissertation Review

Doctoral candidates receive copyediting and formatting feedback on individual dissertation sections in scheduled 30-minute sessions.

EVERY  
LAST  
SATURDAY  
OF THE  
MONTH

## Saturday Workshops

**Saturday, February 28 – Deep Dive into Qualitative Data Analysis**

Learn strategies for organizing qualitative data, developing a codebook, and selecting appropriate data analysis methods aligned with your research design.

**Saturday, March 28 – Chapter 4: Presenting Findings**

Master the process of presenting your findings with clarity.

**Saturday, April 25 – Chapter 5: Implications and Contributions \*Last workshop of the semester\***

Learn how to highlight your study's contributions to the literature, policy, theory, and methodology.

10:00AM -  
12:00PM

[SCHEDULE AN APPOINTMENT TODAY!](#)



# VISIT THE GRADUATE LOUNGE!

Looking for a space to study, collaborate with peers, or work on assignments? Visit the Graduate Lounge in **Thurgood Marshall Library (Room 1185)**. This modern space features seating for 30, 7 computers, 3 private study pods, and a large 80" interactive screen with virtual and touchscreen capabilities.



Thurgood Marshall Library, Room 1185



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Required  
for Entry

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**GRADUATE**  
**LOUNGE**



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