

Hello Graduate Students,

As we begin a new academic year, I want to welcome each of you.

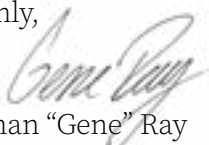


This fall, we are excited to continue expanding support for graduate student success through initiatives such as the launch of the Office of Graduate External Fellowships and Awards (GEFA), which will help students identify and pursue external fellowships, awards, and funding opportunities. We will also continue strengthening professional development opportunities, graduate assistant support, and partnerships across campus.

Throughout the semester, we encourage you to take advantage of the many workshops, networking events, and programs offered by the Graduate College. A full [calendar of events](#) is available on the Graduate College website. Our programming is designed to support four key areas of graduate student success: **academic excellence, professional development, career preparation, and personal well-being.**

Whether you are beginning your first semester, conducting research, preparing for your next career step, or completing your degree, the Graduate College is here to support you throughout your journey. We look forward to celebrating your accomplishments and making Fall 2026 a successful and rewarding semester.

Warmly,



Herman "Gene" Ray
Associate Dean for Graduate Student Success

Seven Graduate Students Receive Scholarships from the Graduate College

The Graduate College is thrilled to announce that it has awarded scholarships totaling \$9,555 to seven graduate students for the Fall 2026 semester. Six students received the Graduate College General Scholarship, and one student received the Graduate College Alumni Scholarship.

The Graduate College scholarship award recipients include:

Graduate College General Scholarship

- Favour Adekanle – M.S. in Data Science and Analytics
- Chancellor Brown – M.S. in Software Engineering
- Marcus Graham – M.S. in Health Management and Informatics
- Daniel Olufelo – Dual Degree MBA/MSIS
- Isabell Sevens – M.A.T.-Teaching/English
- Jennifer Turnipseed – MBA

Graduate College Alumni Scholarship

- Adebola Kayode – M.S. in Data Science and Analytics

KSU Ph.D. Candidate Wins Prestigious AOC Award

Fadi B. Hantouli, Ph.D. candidate in Interdisciplinary Engineering has been selected as the recipient of the [2026 Association of Old Crows \(AOC\) Academic and Educational Excellence Award](#). This prestigious award recognizes exceptional achievements and contributions to the field of electronic warfare and related areas.

The award will be presented at an upcoming AOC event, and Fadi also will be recognized in the *Journal of Electromagnetic Dominance (JED)*.

Want to share news from your program or give a shout out to a student who is doing amazing research? Let us know! Send us your story idea by filling out the [Content Request Form](#).



Graduate Assistant Spotlights: The Graduate College

Each month, we shine the spotlight on graduate assistants at KSU to show our appreciation for the work they do. Whether they are in the lab, the classroom, or in college offices, graduate assistants make meaningful contributions each day across the university.

Kolbe Benham



Kolbe Benham is pursuing a Master of Public Administration with a goal to make a positive impact on people's lives. Drawn to public service and leadership, he chose this field because of a desire to learn the skills that would help him make meaningful decisions that transform communities.

KSU stood out to Kolbe as the ideal place for graduate study because of its strong support for graduate students. He was especially attracted to the university's graduate assistantship opportunities, which offer valuable hands-on experience while students continue their education. "In addition," he said, "the university's career fairs and network opportunities give us the chance to connect with employers and talk about future career paths."

A standout experience for Kolbe was in a Governmental Relations course with Dr. Forney, where students worked in teams representing different levels of government to develop solutions for affordable housing. The project provided valuable insight into the complexities of public decision-making and demonstrated the importance of collaboration, negotiation, and compromise in addressing community challenges.

For prospective graduate students, Kolbe's advice is to build relationships with professors and peers, and step outside of comfort zones. As Kolbe notes, "those relationships can be just as valuable as what you learn in the classroom."

Jaden Cooper



Led by a passion for communications and athletics, Jaden Cooper began his studies in the Master of Arts in Integrated Global Communication program in fall 2025. He said, "My desire to make a meaningful impact through education, athletics, and creative work inspired me to pursue this field."

A proud returning Owl, Jaden came back to KSU for his graduate studies because of the university's strong academic reputation and supportive faculty. His KSU journey has included roles as a Student Assistant, Communications Intern, Game Day Operations Assistant, Graduate Research Assistant, and now Graduate Professional Assistant (GPA). As a GPA, Jaden said one of the most rewarding aspects of the position has been the chance to "collaborate with diverse groups, develop practical skills, and contribute to the positive culture at KSU."

One of Jaden's most meaningful academic experiences was helping organize the Symposium on ASIA-USA Partnership Opportunities (SAUPO) conference under the leadership of Dr. May Gao. The event challenged him to step outside a comfort zone, build new skills, and connect with inspiring professionals.

For anyone considering graduate school at KSU, Jaden's advice is simple: "Take every opportunity to engage with your professors and peers, get involved on campus, and seek out experiences that challenge you to grow."

**Ru Narula**

As a Graduate Professional Assistant in the Graduate College, Ru Narula helps connect students with the right campus resources while also offering a valuable student perspective on new ideas and initiatives. “I get the flexibility to pitch my own ideas with the viewpoint

of a student. Getting to see how my thoughts are implemented is probably my favorite thing about my assistantship,” they said.

With one year remaining in the dual Master of Social Work (MSW) and Master of Business Administration (MBA) program, Ru is learning how to combine a passion for helping others with the skills needed to create community resources for children.

The professionally focused MSW program, along with a hands-on internship experience, has strengthened Ru’s confidence in working with clients and reinforced the many ways social workers support individuals and communities. Beyond the classroom, Ru added that the close-knit cohort has been equally meaningful. “I’ve made some very close friends in the program who I know will support me long after we leave KSU,” they said.

After graduation, Ru aspires to become a published researcher and eventually launch a nonprofit dedicated to educating communities about the importance of “third spaces,” the safe, welcoming places for children outside of home and school.

Ru’s advice to future graduate students considering KSU is to not overthink it. “Picking a graduate school is hard, and it’s super important to consider the pros and cons of all your options,” they said. But Ru also wants to encourage them to trust their gut instincts because sometimes that’s the best guide to finding the right program.

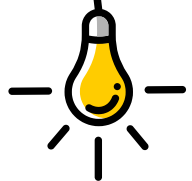
Graham Owenby

Data Science and Analytics master’s student, Graham Owenby began in the Graduate College this past summer as a graduate professional assistant, primarily assisting the college with data. “My current responsibilities include maintaining dashboards and building

reports, and I’m excited to begin contributing to research projects as well,” he said. Graham enjoys collaborating with a team while expanding his professional experience and his perspective on research and problem-solving.

After graduation, he aspires to contribute to a data science team that communicates insights clearly while maintaining the highest standards of integrity. In the long term, he hopes to apply those experiences to research in perceptual neuroscience and neuropsychology.

He encourages anyone who is considering the Data Science and Analytics program at KSU to take the leap. “The faculty seem genuinely invested in student success and create countless opportunities for professional growth, mentorship, and collaboration, both within the program and across the Graduate College. Have faith, embrace new opportunities, and challenge your comfort zone.”

Did You Know?

This fall semester, **700** students are supported with a graduate assistantship. That’s roughly 14% of the graduate student population!

To learn more about graduate assistantships, visit the [graduate assistantships webpage](#).



Upcoming Events

Writing at the Graduate Level

The demands of writing graduate papers, capstones, theses, and dissertations can feel overwhelming. Come to this virtual workshop to gain a better understanding of the expectations of graduate-level writing.

- **September 1, 2026**

12-1 p.m.
Virtual

Reading Academic Articles

Learn how to read academic articles more effectively by identifying key findings, evaluating research methods, and extracting the most relevant information for your coursework or research.

- **September 2, 2026**

12-1 p.m.
Virtual

Fall Semester Meet and Greet

Join us for a relaxed and welcoming social event to kick off the new semester! This is a great opportunity for graduate students to connect, share experiences, and build community across disciplines. Whether you're new to campus or returning, come enjoy light refreshments, meet fellow grad students, and start the semester off right!

- **September 2, 4-6 p.m.**

Academic Learning Center, Room 3550A

- **September 3, 4:30-6:30 p.m.**

Norton Hall, 2nd Floor

Formatting Fridays

Drop into Formatting Friday with your KSU Template questions. All doctoral and master's students graduating this semester are welcome. Specific topics may be highlighted, depending on interest/need. Please review the KSU Template ([Dissertation/Thesis](#)) before attending.

- **Fridays, September 4-October 30, 12 p.m.**

Virtual

Chats with the Graduate College Staff

Join us for an informative and interactive session where you'll:

- Meet the Graduate College staff and get to know your support team
- Learn the ins and outs of GRA/GTA roles
- Understand key milestones in your academic progression
- Discover upcoming student success events and how to get involved

- **September 29, 4:30-6 p.m.**

Norton Hall, 2nd Floor
Marietta Campus

- **September 30, 12-1 p.m.**

Microsoft Teams
Virtual

- **October 6, 4-6 p.m.**

Academic Learning Center, Room 3550A
Kennesaw Campus

For a complete list of events, information, locations, and registration, visit the [Events Calendar](#) on our website or scan the QR code.



Does your college or program have an event you'd like us to share in *The Hootline*?
Fill out the [Content Request Form](#).