

# GRC NEWSLETTER

THE Graduate School @ Bowie State



December 1, 2025

Issue 10

## 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.



## DECEMBER EVENTS

- December 5 – Last Day of Classes (2nd 7-week session)
- December 6 – Last Saturday Class (15-week session and 2nd 7-week session)
- December 9 – Last Day of Classes (15-week session)
- December 10 – Reading Day
- December 12 – Last Day to Change Fall 2024 Graduate Incomplete Grades
- December 17 – End of Term
- December 19 – Final Grades Due by 11:59pm
- December 19 – Fall 2025 Commencement Ceremony



@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.

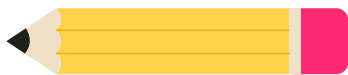
Best wishes,

The GRC Team



# 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 Advising: Ms. Williams**

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

**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](#)



# SPRING 2026



## GRAD STUDENT **CLASS** REGISTRATION IS OPEN!

# DON'T DELAY REGISTER TODAY

[Take Me to Bulldog Connection](#)

[Schedule an Advising Appointment](#)

# Graduate Writing Services

Fall 2025

*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.

DISSERTATION  
MONDAYS@  
12PM

THESIS  
TUESDAYS @  
12:15PM

## Writing Support Communities

A weekly group offering dedicated writing time, peer support, and workshops on revision and writing strategies for dissertating and thesis students.

EVERY THIRD  
SATURDAY  
STARTING  
9/13

9-11AM

## Dissertation Workshops

Workshops guide doctoral students in drafting and refining key sections of the dissertation.

EVERY THIRD  
THURSDAY  
STARTING  
9/18

12-1PM

## Research Reading Club

A discussion group that explores research texts focused on socially just, community-engaged methodologies.

**SCHEDULE AN  
APPOINTMENT TODAY!**



# INTERNATIONAL EDUCATION WEEK

By Hermann Fokou Chendjou



International education is fundamentally about expanding horizons, fostering meaningful connections, and building mutual understanding between people in the United States and around the world. In essence, it is about exploration exploring opportunities for American students to study abroad, exploring exchange programs that bring international students to the United States, exploring academic fields in need of bright minds, including STEM, exploring the global changemakers who once participated in U.S. exchange programs, exploring new languages and cultures, and exploring the vast opportunities international education provides.

We recently celebrated International Education Week (IEW) 2025, held from November 18–22. IEW is a dedicated time to recognize the value of international education and exchange worldwide. This joint initiative of the U.S. Department of State and the U.S. Department of Education align with Bowie State University's commitment to promoting programs that prepare students for a globalized world and to attracting future international leaders to study, learn, and share experiences on our campus.

This year's celebration highlighted the collaboration of many departments and student organizations across campus, including the Entrepreneurship Innovation Center (EIC), the College of Business (COB), the International Business Club (IBC), the Graduate Association of Student Public Administrators (GASPA), the International Students Association (ISA), and the Office of International Education & Student Services (OIESS), among others.

The week was filled with engaging activities, enriched by music and cultural expressions from countries represented within our vibrant BSU community. The International Students Association made a strong and visible impact throughout the week showcasing cultural heritage, sharing perspectives with the BSU community on BSU Radio, and hosting the COB signature event of the week, which welcomed remarks from both the Provost and the Dean of the College of Business.

This year's IEW at BSU was especially memorable. We witnessed remarkable collaboration among departments and student associations, all working together to deliver a celebration that students will remember for years to come. As the grand finale came to a close, one thought was shared by many if this year was such a success, what incredible experiences await us next year? We cannot wait to see you there!



# SPOTLIGHT

## CAROLYN ALSTON

### Organizational Communications Masters Student

Meet Carolyn Alston, a graduate student at Bowie State University pursuing her M.A. in Organizational Communications and currently in her third semester. Alston aims to build a career in marketing and strategic communications, but her academic and professional direction took a deeper and more personal turn after losing her younger brother to gun violence. Through grief and self-reflection, and with her background in communication studies, she recognized that the communication patterns many people learn in childhood are often not healthy or effective. She began to notice how widespread this issue is, affecting not only her own life and loved ones but also many others across families, schools, and communities. Alston began exploring how communication impacts connection, support systems, and emotional well-being at home, in communities, and even in professional spaces.



Last Thanksgiving, Alston conducted a survey with forty individuals between the ages of 14 and 65 to study family dynamics and communication behaviors. She observed a clear shift in healthier communication habits among younger participants compared to many in the older generation. Participants also identified differing sources of influence, with younger individuals being shaped by expanded social dynamics, while older generations often drew from more traditional or limited experiences. These findings strengthened Alston's commitment to developing resources that empower more intentional, empathetic, and constructive communication across generations.

Her growing passion led to the development of Communic8 It!, an educational card game designed to support meaningful communication growth in an engaging, interactive way. The game includes six decks focused on core elements of effective communication: active listening, body language, social context, emotion versus rationale, empathy, and self-reflection. Players roll a colored die to select a corresponding deck, draw a scenario card, and complete the prompted challenge. The result is a dynamic environment that allows players to practice real communication situations while also enjoying light-hearted interactions among family, friends, classmates, or colleagues. Communic8 It! demonstrates how learning communication skills can be both impactful and fun.

Alston's work has already earned recognition, including winning third place in the Morgan State University Entrepreneurship Showcase through the Howard University and PNC Mid South Regional Center for Entrepreneurship—an achievement that highlights both the innovation and social value of her project. Her professional growth also includes participation in the Adobe Max Conference, contributing to her ongoing development as a communications professional and creative thinker.

Beyond her academic success, Alston continues to make meaningful contributions outside the classroom by creating tools that encourage empathy, emotional awareness, and stronger interpersonal connections. Her work reflects not only her own healing but a commitment to helping others reshape how they communicate, build relationships, and understand one another.



# A CONVERSATION WITH CAROLYN ALSTON

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Kamryn Kiser:** What inspired your interest in exploring communication patterns across generations?

**Carolyn Alston:** Great question. It began with my desire to explore communication more deeply. But about two years ago, I lost my younger brother—my baby brother—to gun violence. Going through that grief and engaging in serious self-reflection, combined with my background in communications, pushed me to look even closer at where our communication patterns come from. I realized that many of the patterns passed down from childhood weren't healthy, not just in my family but across my community.

I started to see communication patterns the same way we've come to understand things like diet-related health issues—how we once believed they were cultural, but later learned they were inherited through the habits we grew up with. Communication works the same way. When we grow up with unhealthy patterns, we often repeat them. But when we build healthier relationships, our communication improves, and ultimately, so does the way we live and interact as a culture.

**Kiser:** Can you share what stood out most from the survey you conducted last Thanksgiving on family communication dynamics?

**Alston:** What stood out most were the generational differences. The older generation emphasized the importance of grandparents and extended family—those people who stepped in to teach and guide you when parents weren't available. That structure really influenced social development and values.

But in newer generations, many people don't have those same figures present. There's less intergenerational support, which leads to gaps in learning communication skills and understanding social expectations. That shift really caught my attention.

**Kiser:** How do you hope your work contributes to improving communication within families and communities?



# A CONVERSATION WITH CAROLYN ALSTON

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Alston:** Recently, I saw a clip about violence in Baltimore being down by 60%, and one of the Safe Streets representatives explained that violence spreads like a trend. When you change people's mindset, behaviors begin to change too.

I believe communication works the same way. Unhealthy communication is often passed down from childhood or unhealthy relationships. When we intentionally shift those patterns, other people begin to shift too—it has a ripple effect.

My hope is that the game, along with the workshops I plan to offer, will help people recognize where they fall short, understand that improvement is possible, and learn how to build healthier communication habits.

**Kiser:** Speaking of your card game, Communic8 It!, what motivated you to transform your research into an interactive card game?

**Alston:** So, I don't like to say people don't like to read—I absolutely plan to write a book later—but I wanted to start with something engaging and accessible. People love games, across generations and cultures. A card game brings people together, and it creates a fun, interactive space for learning.

I've always wanted to create a card game; I just didn't know what kind. This idea arrived at the perfect time. Communic8 It! is different from other conversation-based card games because it's strategically designed and competitive. You earn points—there's one champion, but everyone wins. It's fun, it gets people talking, and it bridges generational gaps.

**Kiser:** Absolutely. Can you walk me through how Communic8 It! works and how the six decks help build healthy communication skills? What went into choosing them?



# A CONVERSATION WITH CAROLYN ALSTON

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Alston:** The decks really go back to the survey and conversations I've had with people about their family and communication struggles. Empathy, active listening, and self-reflection were the biggest gaps—those three came up the most.

We also included body language and social context because we learn heavily by observing others and responding to social cues. Each deck challenges players to practice skills in real-life scenarios and lighthearted ones. It gets people thinking, reacting, and reflecting in ways they may never have before.

**Kiser:** Thank you. This will be my last question. What advice would you give to graduate students or aspiring graduate students pursuing a career in communications like yourself?

**Alston:** Stay focused on what you want to do. I've had moments where I wasn't fully focused, and things just weren't connecting. But once you find that it factor, go for it. Don't let up. Opportunities will come, and if you work hard, doors will open.



# SPOTLIGHT

## DR. MATTHEW J. BOWERMAN

### Educational Leadership Doctoral Student



Meet Dr. Matthew J. Bowerman, a Fall 2025 doctoral graduate in Educational Leadership whose work centers on understanding how African American/Black K-12 educators experience and implement trauma-responsive practices in schools. Dr. Bowerman's research takes a deeply human and culturally grounded approach, using a qualitative phenomenological design to explore how educators' personal histories, cultural identities, and lived experiences shape the ways they support students navigating trauma. His dissertation examines how trauma-informed strategies align with the values and realities of African American/Black students and teachers, how educators implement trauma-responsive practices in their classrooms, and how their own schooling experiences influence their professional mindset. Through rich, semi-structured interviews, Dr. Bowerman illuminates the pressing need for consistent, culturally aligned mental health training and resources for African American/Black educators across public school systems.

Throughout his doctoral journey, Dr. Bowerman has achieved a number of significant academic and professional milestones. Graduating with a 4.0 GPA, he will continue his impact at Bowie State University as a newly hired faculty member in the graduate education program beginning Spring 2026. His work has been widely recognized—he is a Montgomery County Public Schools Extended Leadership Award recipient, an Emmy and CINE Golden Eagle Award-winning writer and director of an educational short film, and the author of *Heartleader: A Trauma-Responsive Approach to Teaching, Leading, and Building Community*. His writing has been nationally published, further establishing him as a leader in trauma-responsive education.

Dr. Bowerman's contributions extend well beyond academic research. He recently presented his dissertation work on behalf of Bowie State University at the inaugural Research Symposium at Morgan State University, earning strong praise for his scholarship. Between September and March, he will keynote or present at more than ten educational leadership and research-centered conferences, continuing to influence national conversations on trauma-informed practice. He has also served as a guest teacher at Tulane University and as a panelist for American University, adding to his long record of service, advocacy, and leadership.

Dr. Bowerman extends his deepest gratitude to Dr. Renee Foose, Dr. Otis Williams III, Dr. Brandi Robinson, Dr. Sarah Sirgo, and Dr. Melissa Sadin, all of whom played pivotal roles in shaping and supporting his scholarly and professional journey.

Congratulations to Dr. Matthew J. Bowerman on this extraordinary achievement and the powerful contributions he continues to make in the field of trauma-responsive education.



# A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MATTHEW J. BOWERMAN

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Kamryn Kiser:** Thank you again for meeting with me, Dr. Bowerman. I'll start with the foundation of your work. What inspired you to focus your dissertation on trauma-responsive practices for Black K-12 educators?

**Dr. Matthew J. Bowerman:** My dissertation was a qualitative phenomenological study that examined how African American/Black K-12 educators implement trauma-responsive strategies—and how their own lived experiences as K-12 students shaped that engagement. What made this research powerful is that it explores an area with almost no existing scholarship specifically centering the experiences of self-identifying African American/Black teachers.

Trauma-informed work has been woven throughout my personal and professional life. My own experiences growing up, my time in schools, and the impact of trauma on my journey all led me to the profession. Over the years, working closely alongside African American/Black educators, students, and families, I felt a responsibility—in allyship and partnership—to become more trained, more aware, and more disciplined in this work. Racialized trauma is deeply pervasive, rooted in long-standing cultural and systemic racism, and Black educators experience this every day. My goal has always been to pick up the microphone when necessary but turn it over to the voices who need to be centered.

This research is now fueling broader work—developing a national K-12 trauma-informed framework, advocating for increased Title II and IV funding, and proposing a National Center for Healing-Centered Education focused on supporting mental health, professional sustainability, and culturally responsive trauma-informed instruction for Black educators, students, and communities.

And I should add, although I come from a mixed-race family, I am visibly white. I'm deeply aware of the privilege and history that accompany that positionality. I try to show up transparently—not as a savior, but as a human being with a moral obligation to stand with communities who have been marginalized for generations and to help break the systems that perpetuate that harm.

**Kiser:** Thank you, Dr. Bowerman. You've earned an impressive record of awards, publications, and media recognition. Which accomplishment are you most proud of?



# A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MATTHEW J. BOWERMAN

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Dr. Bowerman:** My most important role will always be husband and dad—I have six children, and that’s the greatest blessing of my life. Professionally, one of the accomplishments that stands out is winning the Emmy Award and the CINE Golden Eagle Award for *Bus Stop*, an educational short film I wrote and directed. I didn’t even know it was submitted; the media company handled that. But what made it meaningful was that it was shaped entirely with my 9th–12th grade students. They helped build the narrative, the emotions, the honesty behind it. We created the film to address bullying and harassment in schools—an epidemic—and the cast included a diverse group of students whose voices carried the heart of the story. The recognition was wonderful, but the real miracle was the depth of work we did together to make the film happen.

**Kiser:** You’ve served as a teacher, school administrator, and faculty member across K–12 and higher education. How have these experiences shaped your approach to teaching and mentoring graduate students?

**Dr. Bowerman:** I’ve been in education for roughly 30 years—teaching theater, dance, voice, English, reading, and special education, and serving as a school administrator for about a decade. I’ve also taught theater at the college level and will be joining Bowie State this spring to teach a mental-health-focused graduate course.

Across all of that, the foundation is the same: authentic relationships and authentic love. Education is a service profession grounded in cultural humility, ethical practice, and trauma-informed, culturally responsive care. I try to model that for graduate students—not just the theory, but the ongoing work of confronting your own biases, understanding your own story, and doing the mental-health and healing work necessary to show up for others.

Higher education, in particular, has significant gaps in trauma-informed practice. Faculty know students show up with trauma, but they often lack training or tools to respond effectively. So my focus is on helping educators build trust, psychological safety, transparency, and vulnerability—because nothing meaningful happens without those.

**Kiser:** How do you envision scaling trauma-responsive education initiatives to reach more schools and communities?



# A CONVERSATION WITH DR. MATTHEW J. BOWERMAN

Interview by Kamryn Kiser

**Kamryn Kiser:** What advice would you give emerging educators and graduate students who want to integrate trauma-informed practices into their work?

**Dr. Bowerman:** Start with your own origin story. You must understand your own trauma, anxiety, wounds, triggers—all the things that make us human but can interfere with our ability to support others. You're not alone in this work, but the work starts with doing your own healing. Unhealthy adults can unintentionally harm children, colleagues, and themselves. You have to be at your healthiest to serve effectively.

After that, focus on building genuine relationships. Trauma-informed work is about cultural responsiveness, vulnerability, trust, and unconditional love. It's about creating psychologically safe spaces for all identities—racial, cultural, gender, religious, and beyond. Those two steps—self-work and relationship-building—are the foundation before any strategy or technique can take root.

**Kiser:** And my final question: now that you've completed your doctoral program, what goals or projects are you looking forward to next?

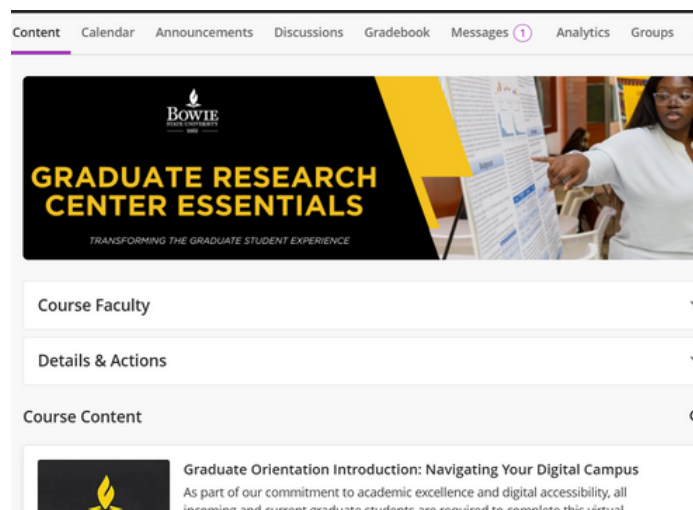
**Dr. Bowerman:** I have several conference proposals out for 2026 related to mental health and the lived experiences of educators of color. I'm already scheduled to present at multiple mental-health and trauma-informed conferences next year. I'm also beginning work on a co-authored book that expands on this research and its implications.

On the policy side, I'll continue pushing forward my proposals for national frameworks, funding, and the healing-centered education center. And I'm committed to staying grounded in my work as a school administrator, instructor, trainer, and speaker—continuing to show up for educators and students in ways that create real, affirming change.

Beyond that, I'm also writing articles on mindfulness, healing, and trauma-informed care in athletic spaces, as well as exploring how the arts can support restoration and wellbeing. Those intersections are incredibly meaningful to me, and I plan to keep expanding that work.



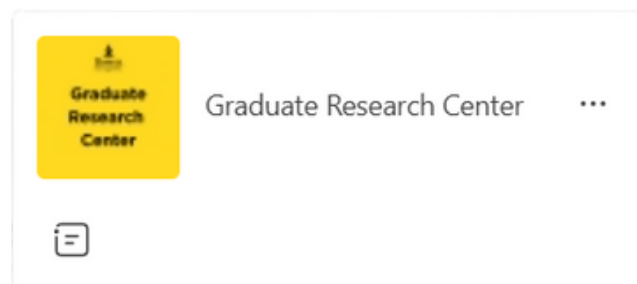
# GRC ESSENTIAL INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE ON NEW PLATFORMS



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

Students can easily access the course by visiting [Blackboard](#), logging in, and selecting Courses. Within the GRC Essentials course, students will complete a brief orientation and earn a digital badge to recognize their participation.

The course 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!**



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# RICE BUSINESS PLAN COMPETITION

The Rice Business Plan Competition (RBPC), hosted by Rice Business and the Rice Alliance for Technology and Entrepreneurship, is the world's largest and most prestigious **graduate-level** student startup competition. Each year, the RBPC brings together the most promising early-stage, student-led university startups from across the U.S. and around the globe to pitch their ventures, gain valuable feedback, and compete for funding.

Mark your calendars for this exciting opportunity to witness innovation in action:

- Applications Open: November 3, 2025
- 2026 RBPC Dates: April 9-11, 2026
- Location: Houston, Texas at Rice Business

[Learn More Here!](#)



# 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



Bulldog  
Card  
Required  
for Entry

**RESERVE THE  
GRADUATE LOUNGE:**



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**YOUR FEEDBACK MATTERS!****GRC Feedback Survey****INTERESTED IN BEING  
FEATURED?**