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LAMDA Outreach at the Louisiana School for the Deaf

Tucked away neatly along the Mississippi River just south of Louisiana State University A&M's main campus, hidden behind a tree line and a multitude of apartment communities, sits the Louisiana School for the Deaf (LSD), established in 1852. Today, the LSD serves deaf and hearing-impaired students from across Louisiana in a variety of capacities. Population data estimates for Louisiana put the number of children born each year with deafness or other hearing impairments at around 2%. With student enrollment totals hovering around 90 students in prekindergarten through twelfth grade, it is clear that not all children who need LSD are being reached. But education and services they offer their current students and the capacity they have to serve the future are truly impressive.

On April 4, 2025, the LAMDA team from Southern University A&M converged in the early morning on the LSD campus for yet another day of outreach. Approaching the gates that morning provided the friendly feeling of entering campus with a warm welcome by security guards and the familiar faces of veteran educators. The broader need driving the day's efforts was 3D printer repair. As you know, offline equipment is no good, and the robotics club needs their 3D printed models. Here enters Dr. Fareed Dawan, lab-tech Sanjay Kodyalam, and their mechanical engineering students. A most telling thing happens next: an interagency effort between LAMDA's team at Southern and LSD IT to address additional problems with software implementation that proved to be an insurmountable barrier for LSD faculty. This is where the rubber hits the road: when knowledgeable, committed adults collaborate freely to support the academic development of students throughout the education pipeline. It came as no surprise to this veteran educator that some members of the collaboration from both LSD and Southern are known as movers and shakers in the broader education community.

The truth is, it is not only about 3D printing. LAMDA's outreach to LSD has also included work across multiple areas of the LSD educational landscape, including their impressive aquaponics lab. There, plant science comes to life for students who benefit significantly from hands-on learning. In the same vein are other programs to inspire and educate students, the auto repair program, and the wood shop, now celebrating the onboarding of a new Ag teacher.



Above: April 4, 2025, Dr. Fareed Dawan and lab-tech Sanjay Kodyalam work with students to repair equipment in the LSD 3D printing lab.

A SWOT analysis is unnecessary when visiting Dr. Natalie Delgado, Executive Director of the Louisiana School for the Deaf. She is quick to herald the addition of the new teacher as her latest move to overcome a significant barrier: the lack of a Louisiana-based training program to provide deaf educators.

Louisiana is currently without a dedicated Deaf education teacher preparation program—leaving a significant gap in the pipeline for qualified educators to serve our unique population. The absence of such a program has deeply impacted our ability to recruit and retain teachers who are both fluent in American Sign Language and trained in the specialized strategies needed for effective Deaf education.

-Dr. Natalie Delgado

Partnering with the LSD represents the commitment of LAMDA not just to the furtherance of cutting-edge research in the nation but to fostering the next generation of thinkers and innovators. For more information about the programming available at the Louisiana School for the Deaf and their outreach activities, visit: <https://www.ssdofla.org/o/lsd>.



Above left: Gabriel Henry (Nursing); Kiera McCarter, Kenneth O'Neal, Skye Taylor, Ashante Gatlin, Myles Snowden, and Ahrmoud Lewis (Mechanical Engineering); students from Southern University.
 Above right: Students in the autoshop program take a break from class to show us around the facility.