

# FINAL FIVE

with Oluwakemi Adio, doctoral candidate,  
Louisiana State University

Originally from Nigeria, Adio received her bachelor's degree in civil engineering from the University of Ibadan in Nigeria and moved to the U.S. to get her master's degree in industrial engineering from Louisiana State University. She is currently a doctoral candidate in the interdisciplinary engineering science degree program at LSU, is minoring in information systems at the College of Business and is an active member of the LSU IISE student chapter.



## What drew you to industrial engineering?

Following my undergraduate program, I wanted to study an engineering field where I can do research that directly affects humans, not abstract or inanimate objects. Essentially, a people-oriented discipline. Industrial engineering succinctly fits the bill.

## How do you apply IE skills to LSU's community outreach program?

I am the incoming VP for the LSU Kitchens on the Geaux, an on-campus student organization that addresses food insecurity on the LSU campus and neighboring Baton Rouge community. One of my major responsibilities is to coordinate the logistics of repurposing food recovered from the LSU dining and catering services and transferring to local partner organizations (e.g. food banks) for subsequent distribution. This task involves freshly prepared meals that could spoil if not properly handled and transported in a timely and efficient manner. I also need to collaborate with student volunteers and the local food bank. My knowledge of operations engineering and management comes in handy to plan and schedule volunteers in relation to food pickup,

documentation for student safety responsibilities and other necessary tasks.

## Where do you see yourself upon graduation?

I think narrowing down to one specific industry closes your mind to other exciting possibilities. In addition, I believe having a doctoral degree shows that you are capable of critical thinking and innovative ability to conduct research and solve problems. Add to that the interdisciplinary component of my master's program and academic background, I see myself working in tech, manufacturing or a service company. I am also interested in pedagogy, either in academia or corporate coaching and training.

One change I would like is to help bring uninterrupted electricity and the possibilities it provides to every nation where this basic amenity is still a mirage. From personal experience, communities that suffer from this lack also have food insecurities, resulting in nutritional deficiencies in children.

## What advice would you give to ISE doctoral candidates?

Any graduate curriculum is streamlined to emphasize research and more research. If you are lucky, there is a little bit of teaching experience. If your goal is to

land a tenure-track faculty position, this curriculum is perfect, but you probably already figured out that such positions are few and far between. Therefore, to improve your chances of alternative career options, the first step is to figure out how to rebrand yourself as a Ph.D. graduate, how to make what you do relevant in contexts that are more broad than specific. Seek opportunities outside of your research area to develop skills such as teamwork, communication, project management, interdisciplinary collaboration, problem-solving, etc., as these skills are highly sought after by employers.

## What would you say to other graduating ISE students?

You made a very good decision in your choice of major, and now the fun part is about to begin. Industrial and systems engineering is a way of life and influences all that you do. The part I like best is that you won't even realize you are applying it. The only slight problem I foresee is choosing a company or industry (from the different varieties in which you could work) that will be a good fit for your interests. This is a good problem to have.

— Interview by Cassandra Johnson