

# ASU urban planning graduate blends expertise in geographic information science with passion for designing cities

**Dorian Lemarchand's journey from online student to on-campus graduate and peer mentor reflects commitment to urban planning and community impact**

By Ariana Pup, ASU News  
May 11, 2026

**Editor's note:** This story is part of a series of profiles of notable [spring 2026 graduates](#).

When Dorian Lemarchand began pursuing his bachelor's degrees online at Arizona State University during the pandemic, he was looking for a fresh start and a chance to rebuild his academic confidence.

What he found was a pathway that transformed his future.

Lemarchand started his university experience through ASU Online, before transitioning to an in-person master's degree program, and graduated in 2025 with dual bachelor's degrees in [urban planning](#) and [geographic information science](#), minors in Chinese and Spanish, and a 4.0 GPA from [ASU's School of Geographical Sciences and Urban Planning](#).

This spring, he graduates with a [Master of Urban and Environmental Planning](#). Along the way, he became a [Barrett, The Honors College](#) student, a [GIS peer mentor](#), a graduate teaching assistant and a student leader across several campus organizations.

"I always knew I wanted to study transportation planning, since middle school," Lemarchand said. "I liked trains as a kid. I have Asperger's, and it's a pretty common interest to have."

Born in France and fluent in English, French, Mandarin Chinese and Spanish, Lemarchand said his global perspective has shaped how he approaches urban planning and transportation research. He hopes to continue that work internationally after graduation while pursuing a career in France focused on sustainable cities and transportation systems.

Below, Lemarchand shares more about his ASU experience.

**Question: How has pursuing multiple degrees complemented your academic experience?**

**Answer:** Obtaining a double major with GIS gave me a leg up in my master's program. I feel really comfortable making maps, doing spatial analysis and interpreting research by thinking geographically. Urban planners are increasingly being asked to use these tools, but without proper training. Even more rare is my fascination with foreign language and culture. I think it is critical to learn from abroad when designing cities.

**Q: Have you received any scholarships or awards during your time at ASU?**

**A:** The [accelerated 4+1 Master of Urban and Environmental Planning program](#) was a huge way to reduce my education costs. During my undergraduate studies, I received the [ASU Moeur Award](#) for maintaining a 4.0 GPA for four consecutive years. I also received the Work+ Community Service Award and tuition support as a graduate teaching assistant.

I was also honored as the recipient of the 2026 ASU Student Employee Community Service Award, a 2025 [Fulbright Taiwan English Teaching Assistant](#) finalist and a second-place undergraduate winner at the 2024 [Urban Climate Research Center Poster Event](#) for my transit access analysis presentation.

**Q: Were you involved in any clubs or extracurricular activities at ASU?**

**A:** I worked as a GIS peer mentor for three years, helping mentor students, hold office hours and support course updates for GIS classes with my supervisor, Assistant Teaching Professor [Wen-Ching Chuang](#). I also served as president and vice president of the French Club à ASU, vice president of the [Chinese English Language Bridge](#) and president of [ASU YouthMappers](#).

**Q: What did you learn through your research and applied experiences?**

**A:** I learned a lot through research opportunities at ASU, including publishing my undergraduate thesis and participating in TransportLab, where faculty and graduate students provide feedback on their latest research. I also met professionals in my field through volunteer work at the [Mpact Transit + Community Conference](#) in 2023.

**Q: What surprised you most during your time at ASU?**

**A:** I came into urban planning expecting to focus mostly on technical skills and quantitative analysis, but through interacting with my peers and professors, I realized how much planning comes down to human experiences and relationships. That perspective became really important in my research.

**Q: What advice would you give to current students?**

**A:** When work, school, friends, family or coworkers get overwhelming, find a calming activity and safe place that you keep just for yourself.

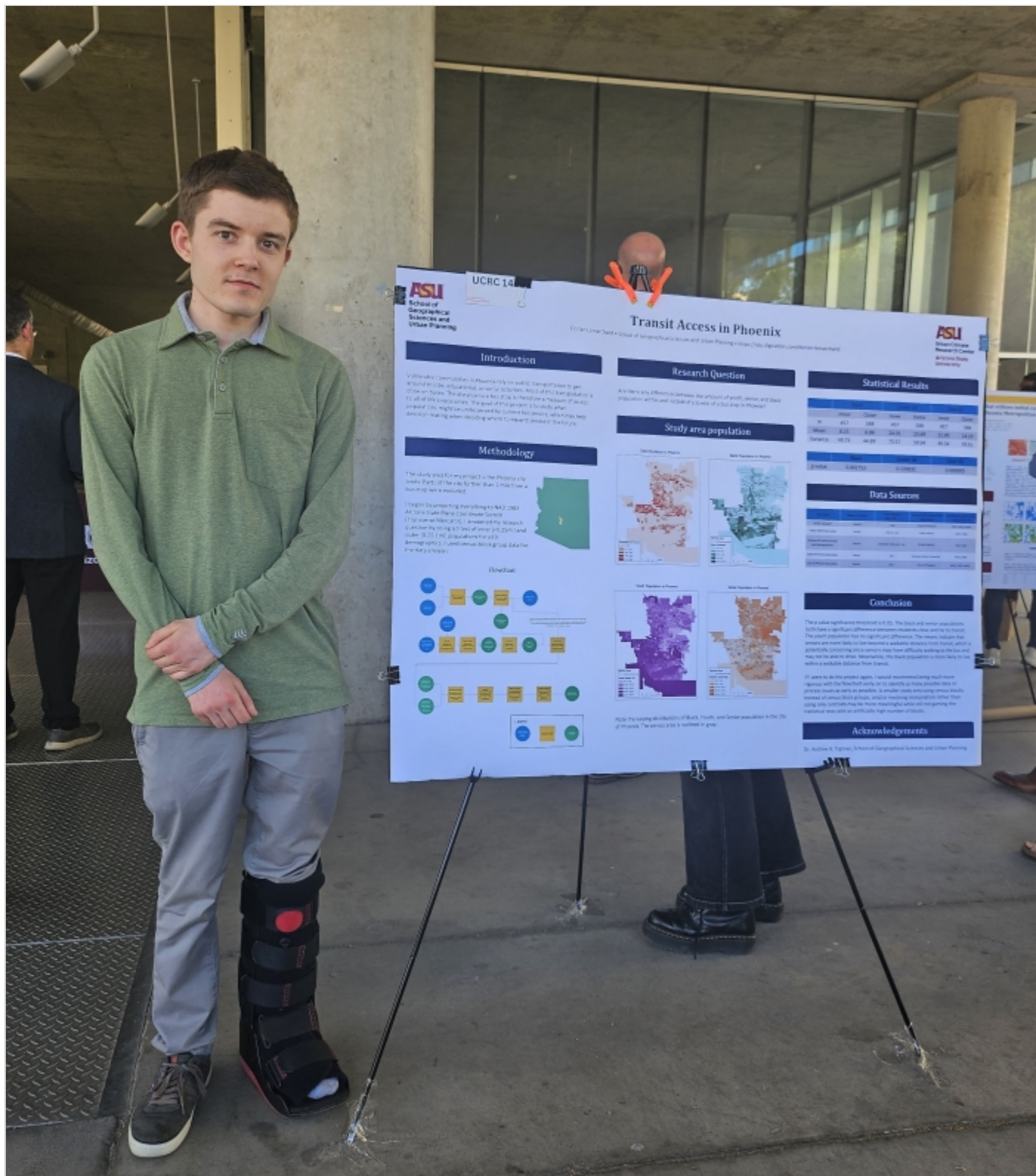
**Q: What was your favorite spot to study?**

**A:** As an online student, I used to “commute” to the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Library in downtown San José, California. As an in-person student, I liked the quiet and shaded Student Services Building.

---

*This story originally appeared on [ASU News](#).*

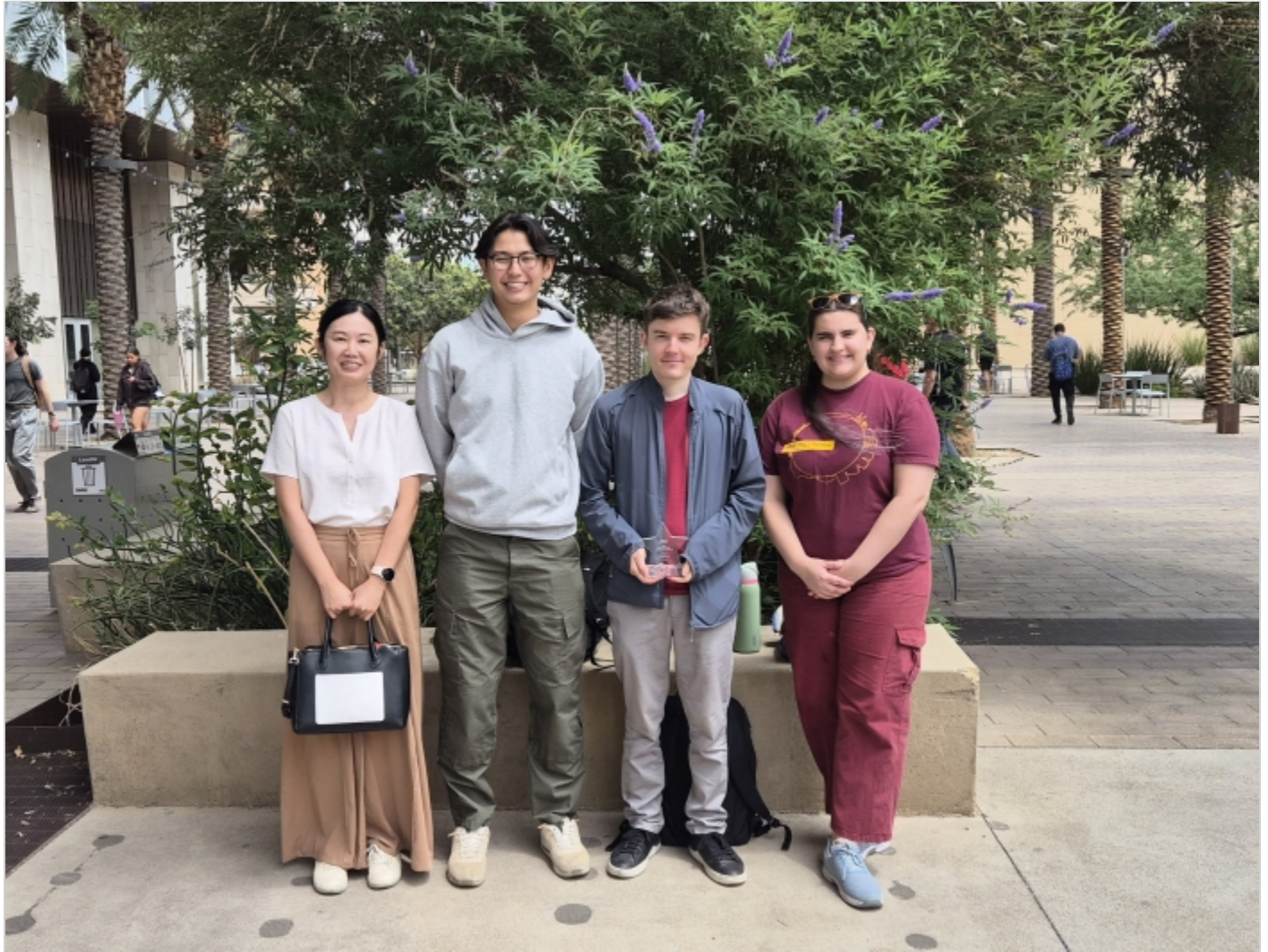
**Main image**







## Gallery



Group photo with Dorian Lemarchand (second from right), Professor Wen-Ching Chuang (left) and fellow GIS peer mentors.





French Club à ASU meeting with Isabelle Toulouse (middle), ambassador for the city of Toulouse, France.



ASU Master of Urban and Environmental Planning student Dorian Lemarchand (center) presents the City of Kingman Gateway Vision Project with his Planning Workshop capstone team during the 2026 MUEP Showcase on May 6.