

Executive Summary

Blueprint for Academic Excellence Graduate School AY2021-2022

Highlights

The Graduate School serves over 6000 graduate students from our state, the nation, and the world to promote the importance and value of graduate education. UofSC graduate students study in 63 doctoral, 130 master's, 33 certificates, and 22 combination degree programs, including 44 online programs. The Graduate School strives to enrich the graduate student experience, provide administrative services for these programs, and promote and protect academic excellence and integrity. To build on our community of engaged scholars and professionals and to further heighten UofSC's reputation as a top-ranked graduate institution, we also fund strategic fellowship and travel awards and design collaborative initiatives to enhance the professional and academic development of our students.

Mission Statement

The Graduate School at the University of South Carolina is a service unit committed to enhancing the experience of graduate students and the faculty and staff with whom they work. We provide timely, consistent, and accurate information; adapt and enforce meaningful policies to ensure academic integrity; track student success; and build bridges across campus and community as we showcase our diverse and talented graduate student body.

Updated: 01/03/2012

Vision Statement

An innovative, flexible and dynamic organization, the Graduate School at the University of South Carolina seeks to become a collaborative guide celebrated for responsive and efficient service. We strive to provide accessible and trusted leadership to the campus and higher education communities.

Updated: 01/03/2012

Values Statement

Faculty and staff in the Graduate School endorse the tenets of the Carolinian Creed as a statement of values for how we relate with each other and with potential applicants, graduate students, faculty, staff and other constituents.

Updated: 11/01/2019



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Goals - Looking Back

No goals have been entered for this section.

Goals - Real Time

Goals for the current Academic Year.

Goal 1 - Serve the needs of students, applicants and other constituents.

Goal Statement	Better serve the needs of students, applicants, faculty, staff, and other members of the university community.
Linkage to University Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract, inspire, challenge and enable our students to become innovative thinkers and transformative leaders. • Assemble and cultivate a world-class faculty and staff. • Create new pathways to research excellence to become AAU eligible. • Cultivate a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus culture where every individual, regardless of background, has the full opportunity to flourish and thrive. • Spur innovation and economic development through impactful community partnerships.
Alignment with Mission, Vision, and Values	Providing services for our graduate students from the initial inquiry, through application all the way to graduation, and to the faculty and staff who support them is our most foundational function.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	Because this goal involves ongoing services and activities rather than discrete initiatives, many of the achievements reflect our action plan for the year. With staffing changes, we have realigned some responsibilities for better efficiency and equity. As we proceed with full implementation of our expanded CollegeNet, we replace other functions in the old internal GMS system with more current technology. With the new website live but under continued enhancement, we now focus on how we can better support unit-level recruitment activities.
Achievements	<p>Select activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic recruiting on campus and across the southeast, and data collection on the yield of these efforts. • Continual monitoring of program coordinators for accuracy, timeliness and customer-service. • Ongoing refinement of internal processes and collaborative efforts with other units including partial implementation of expanded CollegeNet application system • Continued enhancement of the New Graduate Extravaganza so new students can more efficiently access the specific information they seek. • Realignment of staff responsibilities • Continued development of Shorelight graduate programs. • Annual open house for graduate faculty and support staff to

Goals - Real Time

	<p>facilitate direct interaction and provide a venue for questions and concerns.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Utilization of Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council to facilitate improved communication. • Engaging Graduate Council to consider policy and substantive issues. • Maintained a high level of service and responsiveness following the loss of our associate dean and during the pandemic with a transition to remote delivery of services for students, staff, and faculty.
<p>Resources Utilized</p>	<p>Supported by current personnel budget and operating budget; CollegeNet implementation cost \$36,600. Development of CollegeNet application, admission and recruiting products is nearing completion. The recruiting product was shared with college-level recruiters in Spring 2019 and full email campaigns for all programs were initiated in Summer 2019. The application is now integrated directly with Banner and is functional with the new admission system. Final testing of the admission system is underway. A manual and a series of short videos is being developed to assist with training. Once departmental faculty and staff are trained, all admissions processes will be handled in ADMIT for the Fall 2020 admission cycle and after.</p>
<p>Goal Continuation</p>	<p>We will always pursue some form of this goal, since it reflects continual improvement for our core function.</p>
<p>Goal Upcoming Plans</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced communication, e.g., active social media, more effective presentation of Graduate School activities & graduate student achievements, clear communication of campus services, policies & opportunities. • Continued advocacy for campus services tailored to graduate students. • Encourage graduate directors to develop more comprehensive unit policies & procedures for graduate education. • Promote Community of Practice in support of faculty mentoring of graduate students. • Implementation of expanded CollegeNet with appropriate training for graduate directors & administrative staff. Implementation completed with ongoing training. • Improve mechanisms to track inquiries, applicants & graduates more efficiently, make data available to programs to develop targeted recruitment initiatives & program improvement. • Provide better access to standard reports for academic units with OIRAA. • Explore collaboration of the Graduate Student Ombuds with CADO and other campus offices and groups to improve our campus climate and inclusivity.

Goals - Real Time

Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budget. Support of CollegeNet programs is \$43,500 annually. We have submitted as a separate initiative a request for funding to increase student health insurance subsidy by \$500 to \$1500. In addition, we will request the academic deans to increase the minimum graduate assistantship stipend and encourage them to stipends and tuition supplements more broadly.
Goal Notes	The Graduate School supports Graduate Council and its various committees (Academic Policies and Practices; Grievances, Appeals, and Petitions; Fellowships and Scholarships; curriculum) as the sole faculty governance body for graduate education. While curriculum development and academic instruction is the purview of faculty in the academic units, Graduate Council provides a key linkage between the academic component and the administrative functions of the Graduate School and the Office of Academic Programs.

Goals - Real Time

Goal 2 - Professional development, academic enrichment, and student services.

Goal Statement	Provide meaningful professional development, academic enrichment, and student services to enhance student experience.
Linkage to University Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract, inspire, challenge and enable our students to become innovative thinkers and transformative leaders. • Create new pathways to research excellence to become AAU eligible. • Cultivate a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus culture where every individual, regardless of background, has the full opportunity to flourish and thrive. • Spur innovation and economic development through impactful community partnerships.
Alignment with Mission, Vision, and Values	This goal encompasses programs and initiatives to enhance the graduate student experience beyond the administrative processes of application, progression and graduation.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	Academic enrichment and professional development activities address personal life skills and leadership skills. In particular, we are sensitive to supporting doctoral students who are pursuing non-academic skills. Many activities are designed for particular groups of scholars such as the Presidential Fellows, Graduate Civic Scholars, and Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program. We partner with numerous entities across campus for program for program delivery (see collaborations).
Achievements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhanced presence on social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). • Developed asynchronous information and training for thesis/dissertation workshops to supplement synchronous delivery of these workshops. • 7 ETD workshops (all in the fall) • Seamless transition to a new ETD coordinator. • 15 workshops and/or webinars; 3 YouTube videos relative to tips and resources • Participation in the Council of Graduate Schools “PhD Career Pathways” project. • Maintained Presidential Fellows, Graduate Civic Scholars Program, Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program • Ensured faculty leadership for Presidential Fellows, in a time of limited resources, following the loss of our associate dean. • Scaled up professional development offerings to complement discipline-specific offerings. • Graduate student travel program. • Collaborative efforts with an active and engaged Graduate Student Association (e.g., co-sponsored trip to DC to meet SC delegation; co-sponsored presenter for Leadership Week) • Reduced expenses relative to the production of the GJMPP

Goals - Real Time

	Monograph.
Resources Utilized	Personnel; budget for travel, speakers and other related expenses.
Goal Continuation	This goal represents the “value added” of the Graduate School for our graduate students, with extracurricular training and experiences beyond the academic requirements of the graduate programs administered in the schools and colleges.
Goal Upcoming Plans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scale up 3MT to use more effectively. Need to consider accessibility accommodations. • Enhance thesis/dissertation workshops for asynchronous and synchronous access and processes to expand options. • Expand accessibility of professional development programming. • Continue to develop effective mechanisms to track and engage graduate students and alumni more effectively and use data for program improvement. • Continue to solicit information on graduate student needs for professional development topics and ways to enhance the graduate student experience and design/enhance programs to those needs. • Envision how to grow and enhance Presidential Fellows program with additional funding from the Educational Foundation.
Resources Needed	Personnel; budget for travel, speakers and other related expenses; sustainable funding for Presidential Fellows, GJMPP, and other scholarly initiatives.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Real Time

Goal 3 - Communication, Marketing and Recruitment.

Goal Statement	Establish effective internal and external communication, including enhanced marketing and recruitment material, with prospective and current students, graduate faculty and other stakeholders.
Linkage to University Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attract, inspire, challenge and enable our students to become innovative thinkers and transformative leaders. • Create new pathways to research excellence to become AAU eligible. • Cultivate a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus culture where every individual, regardless of background, has the full opportunity to flourish and thrive. • Spur innovation and economic development through impactful community partnerships.
Alignment with Mission, Vision, and Values	As a service unit within the university, we seek to provide effective, open and direct lines of communication to prospective and current students, university faculty, staff and administrators.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	<p>Information about graduate student programs and resources, including accelerated programs to both potential students and other stakeholders.</p> <p>Promote campus resources on website, social media, and through interactive learning experiences.</p> <p>Continued development of website.</p> <p>Using CollegeNet, better communication with prospective students, applicants and newly admitted students.</p> <p>Keep departments informed of transitions as CollegeNet enhancements are implemented.</p> <p>Promote vouchers for application fee waivers to select students.</p>
Achievements	<p>* Social media: Posting across social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn) to disseminate information to and resources for graduate students. *Website: In August 2019, we migrated to the new platform--a more user-friendly interface for key users - graduate students (prospective, current, and alumni), graduate faculty and program admins, broader university community, and the general public. We continue to improve on the content and identify solutions to emergent challenges (addressing accessibility issues) on the new web platform (e.g., inability for GMS to provide connectivity).</p> <p>*Support departments to better use PROSPECT and ADMIT (features of CollegeNet) in support of recruiting initiatives.*Support use of</p>

Goals - Real Time

	vouchers for application fee waivers for select students. Create a plan for benchmarks for social media platforms (e.g., number of unique posts per week)
Resources Utilized	Personnel; communication specialist; training for CollegeNet; budget, time & space for recruitment collaboration & initiatives.
Goal Continuation	With the dedicated resource of a new staff member, communication is an area of intentional growth for the Graduate School. Going forward, we strive to tailor our social media presence for effective communication with current students as well as outreach to prospective applicants and other constituents. We also intend to expand our communication with campus constituents such as graduate directors and other graduate faculty and administrative staff to promote better understanding of academic policies and procedures and to facilitate better collaboration.
Goal Upcoming Plans	Continued development and implementation of content for website. Work with graduate recruiters across campus to foster better collaboration to build on existing efforts, duplication of efforts, and share strategies and best practices for recruitment and communication with future and new students. Provide current information and training for CollegeNet implementation. Establish benchmarks for social media platforms (e.g., number of unique posts per week). Monitor social media for impact, e.g., followers, impressions, etc.; utilize external metrics such as edurank.net to monitor performance. Review and update overview and academic regulation sections of <i>Graduate Bulletin</i> ; work with academic units for program-specific <i>Bulletin</i> content.
Resources Needed	Personnel; training for CollegeNet; budget, time & space for recruitment collaboration & initiatives.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Real Time

Goal 4 - Build awareness of graduate education and advance reputation of UofSC.

Goal Statement	Advance the reputation of UofSC as a top ranked research institution by enhancing public and university awareness of the importance and value of graduate education at UofSC.
Linkage to University Goal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assemble and cultivate a world-class faculty and staff. • Cultivate a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive campus culture where every individual, regardless of background, has the full opportunity to flourish and thrive. • Spur innovation and economic development through impactful community partnerships.
Alignment with Mission, Vision, and Values	Creating avenues to promote our graduate programs, our diverse and talented graduate students and Graduate School initiatives will advance the reputation of UofSC graduate education.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	<p>Continued development and implementation of content for website redesign.</p> <p>Utilize 3MT and similar programs to enhance visibility of graduate education.</p> <p>Collaborative relationship with MAP/Shorelight, Global Carolina, and others to build/enhance international partnerships.</p> <p>Enhanced recruitment efforts in SC, regionally and nationally, including HBCU and other underrepresented minorities.</p> <p>Conducting “Preparing for Graduate School” seminar weekly; developing tailored program for Arts & Sciences.</p>
Achievements	<p>Continual review and enhancement of website.</p> <p>Otega Ejevwo, PhD candidate in chemistry and biochemistry, represented UofSC in the 3MT competition at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) meeting in March 2020.</p> <p>Dr. Mitchell presented “Accreditation Standards That Embrace Diversity Rather Than Impose Conformity: Beyond Learning Outcomes” at the 2020 CSGS meeting.</p> <p>Dr. Mitchell published "Viewpoint: What's going on in College?" Journal of Physical Education, Recreation & Dance, 91(2), 5-7 doi:10.1080/07303084.2020.1696137</p>

Goals - Real Time

	Seventeen recruitment events this Fall spanning from Virginia to Florida. More recruitment to come in the Spring.
Resources Utilized	Personnel; funding for travel to professional meetings/workshops.
Goal Continuation	Graduate education at UofSC has experienced declines in graduate enrollment related to both external factors (e.g., strong economy, evolving immigration laws, and broader challenges to the value of higher education) and internal factors (e.g., constrained financial resources for student support) until Fall 2020. Our efforts to promote the value of the Graduate School and graduate education for our entire campus and community are critically important. While we often talk about the importance of faculty mentorship for student development, the work of our students is fundamental to the scholarship productivity of our faculty.
Goal Upcoming Plans	<p>Continued development and implementation of content for website redesign, e.g., social media streams, current event stories, student and alumni spotlights.</p> <p>Explore how training and resources for 3MT and similar programs can be utilized to enhance presence of the Graduate School and of graduate programs more effectively for recruitment and marketing purposes.</p> <p>Build a stronger, more collaborative relationship with MAP/Shorelight and their recruiting and international counseling partners; collaborate with Global Carolina to monitor and build international partnerships to ensure optimized student/faculty participation and reciprocal benefit.</p> <p>Seek additional presentation opportunities at professional conferences.</p> <p>Coordinate with other graduate programs in the state to elevate the awareness of the value of graduate education to the state and beyond.</p> <p>Enhanced recruitment efforts in SC, regionally and nationally, including HCBU and other underrepresented minorities.</p>
Resources Needed	Personnel; funding for travel to professional meetings/workshops.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Looking Ahead

Goals for the next Academic Year.

Goals - Looking Ahead

No goals have been entered for this section.

Programs or Initiatives

Effective Programs or Initiatives

List your most effective programs/initiatives toward fulfillment of mission.

Scholarly initiatives - professional development and service activities for participants; promotion of interdisciplinary work.

Student travel program. 217 students were funded with a cumulative \$116,500 in travel awards in 2019-2020. Awards ended mid-year due to COVID-19.

Recruitment presence throughout the state and region.

Participation in the PhD Pathways project, through the Council of Graduate Schools, to better understand and enhance the graduate experience.

Offering professional development programming via social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, YouTube, WordPress), webinar (Go To Webinar platform), and using livestreaming (Facebook Live). Scaled up implementation of professional development commenced in fall 2016 and has increased to date.

Program Launches

List any programs/initiatives that were newly launched during the Academic Year or any programs/initiatives you would like to launch in the coming year(s). Describe the program/initiatives, provide financial requirements (including additional staff), and academic year in which you would launch. What key performance indicators are you utilizing to track the success of this program?

Program Terminations

List any programs that were newly terminated or discontinued during the Academic Year. Provide justification as to why the program was discontinued.

Program Rankings

List any nationally ranked or external recognition during the Academic Year. For each, provide the formal name of the program followed by the name of the organization that issued the ranking, the date of notification, effective date range, and any other relevant information.
US News & World Report January 2019

College of Nursing online programs rank No. 6 overall; No. 3 among public programs.

Programs or Initiatives

College of Education online programs, No. 34 in the nation.

US News & World Report March 2019:

No. 1 International MBA program **[1]**

No. 4 social psychology specialization within sociology

No. 22 part-time MBA program (13th among public universities)

No. 22 criminology program (18th among public universities)

No. 23 public health (12th among public universities)

No. 30 nursing master's program (17th among public universities)

No. 30 speech-language pathology program

Other Rankings

Sport Business International (2018) MSEM ranked #6 in the world and #5 in North America (was ranked #15 in 2017)

Shanghai Rankings (2017) - #1 Sports Science Schools and Departments in the US and #4 in the world (includes the department of Exercise Science, HRSM, and Physical Education and Athletic Training)

*National Academy of Kinesiology (2015)***[2]** - #1 PhD program in Exercise Science

[1] According to the International MBA website at USC, the program has been “ranked among the top three programs in the nation by *US News & World Report* for 25 consecutive years.”

[2] The NAK’s report is only done once every five years. The previous two reports posted as pdfs on the NAK’s website were unavailable.

Initiatives and Fees

Initiatives

Describe any new initiatives your unit will need for the coming year.

A separate request has been submitted to increase the student health insurance subsidy by \$500 per student. With the increase in the insurance premium, the current \$1000 per student is well under half the actual cost and well below the SEC and other peer institutions.

Fees

List any new or changed fees that your unit has implemented or had to take on in the last academic year.

Community Engagement

Community Perceptions

Describe how your unit assesses community perceptions of your engagement, and how the unit assesses the impact of community engagement on students, faculty, community and the institution. Provide specific findings.

Collaborations

Internal Collaborations

List your Unit's most significant internal collaborations and multidisciplinary efforts that are internal to the University. Details should be omitted; list by name only.

Academic Program Liaisons

Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council

Athletics

Black Faculty Caucus

Black Graduate Student Association

Bridges to the Doctorate program

Bursar

Campus Wellness/Healthy Carolina

Career Center

Center for Teaching Excellence

Council of Academic Diversity Officers

Division of Information Technology

English Program for Internationals

Financial Aid

Global Carolina

Graduate Student Association

Human Resources

International Student Services

Collaborations

McNair/TRIO programs

Office of Distributed Learning

Office for International Scholars

Office of Academic Programs

Office of Diversity and Inclusion

Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs

Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics

Office of Multicultural Student Affairs

Office of the Registrar

Office of the Vice President for Research

On Your Time

Organizational Development (Human Resources)

Professional Development Advisory Committee

South Carolina Honors College

Student Success Center

Study Abroad

University Advising Center

University Libraries

Veterans Services

Visitors Center

Writing Center

Collaborations

External Collaborations

List your Unit's most significant external collaborations and multidisciplinary efforts that are external to the University. Details should be omitted; list by name only.

Academic Partnerships

American Association of University Women (AAUW) Start Smart Program

Clemson University

Conference of Southern Graduate Schools

Council of Graduate Schools

Graduate Career Consortium

GSS Survey of Earned Doctorates

My Carolina (USC Alumni Association)

National Association of African American Honors Program

National GEM Consortium

Ronald McNair Scholars Program

Shorelight

South Carolina Graduate Deans Association

Southern Regional Education Board

US ETD Association

Campus Climate and Inclusion

Campus Climate and Inclusion

Activities the unit conducted that were designed to improve Campus, Climate, and Inclusion.
Wright Culpepper serves as Diversity Officer for the Graduate School and chairs the graduate student recruitment subcommittee of the Council of Academic Diversity Officers. Active involvement in development of comprehensive Climate Survey for the campus.

Diversity and inclusion through professional development activities.

Developed a mechanism for programs to pay the student application fee to facilitate recruitment of underrepresented students

Dale Moore serves as the Graduate Student Ombuds.

Ongoing support for the GJMPP; a program designed to prepare underrepresented minority students to become professors.

Concluding Remarks

Weaknesses and Plans for Improvement

What is your unit struggling with? What plans do you have to overcome the weakness that you have faced in the next academic year.

Technology and security needs remain a challenge for our website and operational systems. As we decommissioned the old GMS, we accelerated part of the expanded CollegeNet implementation. Full implementation of the expanded CollegeNet will greatly increase our capacity to communicate with prospective students, applicants, and newly admitted students, enhancing our recruitment effectiveness. We continue to implement replacement technologies for GMS. Much of our fellowships and awards processes were handled in GMS. We are currently working on a one-year solution for Spring 2020 with a long-term goal of having a permanent solution via CollegeNET by Spring 2021.

Funding for graduate students is an ongoing challenge for effective student recruitment and retention. While most fellowships and assistantships are provided from the academic units, the Graduate School has some involvement through allocation of campus-level fellowships and provision of a subsidy for graduate assistants who purchase student health insurance. We are requesting additional funding for the student health insurance subsidy for all graduate assistantships, in addition to general encouragement for increased financial support.

Key Issues

Identify key issues or potential challenges your unit will encounter this coming year and the steps you plan on initiating.

Ensuring data security will continue to be a priority for all confidential student information across multiple databases, as student files are imported from various application programs and are accessed in departments to make admission decisions.

Quantitative Outcomes

Explain any surprises regarding data provided in the quantitative outcomes modules throughout this report.

Ongoing collaboration with DoIT to address these evolving security requirements.

While substantial progress has been made in reviewing and updating Graduate School/Graduate Academic Bulletin policies for consistency and current best practices, additional work is still needed.

Cool Stuff

Describe innovations, happy accidents, good news, etc. that occurred within your unit not noted elsewhere in your reporting.

The Graduate School will support academic units in efforts to define and enhance policies and practices at that level (e.g., standards for academic progress, appeal process).

We are sensitive to the decline in graduate enrollment across many academic units and hope to facilitate more effective recruitment, using the tools available in CollegeNet and through better coordination among the college student recruiters.