Executive Summary

Highlights

The Graduate School serves 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 , 122 master's, 26 certificate, and 19 dual degree 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

Updated: 12/31/2069

Blueprint for Academic Excellence
Graduate School
AY2019-2020

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Goals - Looking Back

Goals for the Graduate School for the previous 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	•Educating the Thinkers and Leaders of Tomorrow •Spurring Knowledge and Creation •Building Inclusive and Inspiring Communities •Ensuring Institutional Strength, Longevity, and Excellence
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 & activities rather than discrete initiatives, many of the achievements reflect our action plan for the year. Due to data security concerns with the old internal system (GMS) some components of the CollegeNet implementation were accelerated. In January 2019, the Graduate School hired an administrative coordinator with primary responsibility to strengthen communication with both internal constituents & external partners & audiences.

Achievements	Highlights of quality services for applicants to graduate programs, graduate students, and the faculty and staff who support them include: •Refinement of systematic approach to recruiting throughout the southeast, and data collection on the yield of these efforts. •Continual monitoring of program coordinators for accuracy, timeliness and customer-service approach for processing applications and student paperwork. •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 Information Fair so new students can more efficiently access the specific information they seek. •Continued development of Shorelight graduate programs. •Annual open house for graduate faculty and support staff to facilitate direct interaction and provide a venue for questions and concerns. •Utilization of Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council to facilitate improved communication among colleges and between colleges and the Graduate School. •Engaging Graduate Council to consider policy and substantive issues.
Resources Utilized	Supported by current personnel budget and operating budget; CollegeNet implementation cost $36,600.
Goal Continuation	We will always pursue some form of this goal, since it reflects continual improvement for our core function.

Goal Upcoming Plans	•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. •Replace desktop computers with efficient & reliable equipment. •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. •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 to improve our campus climate and inclusivity.
Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budget. Support of CollegeNet programs is $43,500 annually.
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.

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	•Educating the Thinkers and Leaders of Tomorrow •Spurring Knowledge and Creation •Building Inclusive and Inspiring Communities •Ensuring Institutional Strength, Longevity, and Excellence
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, Bridge Humanities Corps, and Grace Jordan McFaddden Professors Program. We partner with numerous entities across campus for program for program delivery (see collaborations).

Achievements	•Enhanced presence on social media (e.g., Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube). •Increased quality and availability of information and training for thesis/dissertation format preparation and submission. •Participation in Discover USC to showcase graduate student scholarship through poster and 3MT presentations. •Participation in the Council of Graduate Schools "PhD Career Pathways" project. •Maintained Presidential Fellows, Graduate Civic Scholars Program, and Bridge Humanities Corps. •Transitioned Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program to Graduate School. •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)
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	•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. •Complete transition of website to the new platform (delayed because of security issues related to GMS)
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

Goals for the Graduate School that are in progress for AY2019-2020.

Goal 1 - Communication

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	•Building Inclusive and Inspiring Communities •Ensuring Institutional Strength, Longevity, and Excellence
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	Active role in providing information about graduate student programs and resources, including accelerated programs to both potential students and other stakeholders. Promote campus resources for graduate students on website & social media. Continued development of website redesign. Utilize the resources of CollegeNet & GMS to schedule consistent contact with prospective students, applicants and newly admitted students. Keep departments informed of transitions as GMS/CollegeNet are upgraded/replaced.

Achievements	Substantial progress for website redesign (with launch scheduled for Summer 2019) Regular postings on social media were made to connect graduate students to programs, services, and resources available on campus. We currently post about 100 times per month per platform (Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn) with notable growth in numbers of followers and numbers of impressions. Communication plans have been initiated in Prospect (CollegeNet) for several academic programs with more being activated each week. Meeting of graduate recruitment stakeholders across campus scheduled for April 10, 2019. Presentations on Accelerated Plan and Senior Privilege opportunities to the Undergraduate Advisor Network, Honors College, and UofSC System Advisor's Conference
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 redesign. Convene committee of 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 *Graduate Bulletin*; work with academic units for program-specific *Bulletin* content.
Resources Needed	Personnel; communication specialist; training for CollegeNet; budget, time & space for recruitment collaboration & initiatives.
Goal Notes	

Goal 2 - 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	•Assembling a World-Class Faculty of Scholars, Teachers, and Practitioners •Building Inclusive and Inspiring Communities •Ensuring Institutional Strength, Longevity, and Excellence
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	Continued development and implementation of content for website redesign. Explore how training and resources for 3MT and similar programs can be utilized to enhance presence of the Graduate School for recruitment and marketing purposes. Build more collaborative relationship with MAP/Shorelight, Global Carolina, and others to build international partnerships and re-establishing a team of institutional stakeholders. Enhanced recruitment efforts in SC, regionally and nationally, including HBCU and other underrepresented minorities.
Achievements	Substantial progress for website redesign. Ashley Allen, PhD candidate in chemistry and biochemistry, represented UofSC in the 3MT competition at the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools (CSGS) meeting in February 2019. Dr. Murray Mitchell co-presented "Establishing, Monitoring and Enforcing Graduate Faculty Performance Guidelines" and presented a poster "Creating a Community of Practice for Graduate Student Mentoring" at the 2019 CSGS meeting. Dr. Heather Brandt presented at the Graduate Career Consortium 2018 Conference on "Addressing the Professional Development Needs of Graduate Students through Mixed-delivery Formats."

Resources Utilized	Personnel; funding for travel to professional meetings/workshops.
Goal Continuation	Graduate education at UofSC is experiencing 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) so 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	Continued development and implementation of content for website redesign, e.g., social media streams, current event stories, student and alumni spotlights. 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. 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. Seek additional presentation opportunities at professional conferences. Enhance the SCGDA web presence. Coordinate with other graduate programs in the state to elevate the awareness of the value of graduate education to the state and beyond. Enhanced recruitment efforts in SC, regionally and nationally, including HCBU and other underrepresented minorities.
Resources Needed	Personnel; funding for travel to professional meetings/workshops.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Looking Ahead

No goals have been entered for this section.

Programs or Initatives

Effective Programs or Initatives

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

Open House for graduate program directors and administrative staff.

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 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 2018:
#18 Library Science Program
#5 School Library Media Program
#19 Nuclear Engineering Program
#22 Professional MBA
#28 Physical Therapy (MUSC, Charleston)
#30 Pharmacy (MUSC, Charleston)
US News & World Report January 2019
College of Nursing online programs rank No. 6 overall; No. 3 among public programs.
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.

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.

The 3MT (three minute thesis) competition at Discover USC both showcases our students' reach in a format that is broadly accessible and engages community partners as judges.
Many of our professional development activities include alumni who make presentations, write blogs and mentor current students. A new feature - Professional Journeys - engages graduate alumni in professional development programming by writing blogs and/or participating in professional development programs, such as on panels, webinars, and other formats.

Collaborations

Internal Collaborations

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

Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council

Black Faculty Caucus

Black Graduate Student Association

Campus Wellness/Healthy Carolina

Career Center

Center for Teaching Excellence

Council of Academic Diversity Officers

Division of Information Technology

English Program for Internationals

Global Carolina

Graduate Student Association

International Student Services

McNair/TRIO programs

Office for International Scholars

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

Student Success Center

Study Abroad

University Advising Center

University Libraries

Veterans Services

Visitors Center

Writing Center

External Collaborations

List your Unit's most significant 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

Other Collaborations

List your unit's most significant collaborations and multidisciplinary efforts that are not otherwise accounted for as Internal or External Collaborations. Details should be omitted; list by name only.

The Graduate School has a unique structure that requires us to work with every academic unit on campus for course and curriculum development and processing of student application and progression paperwork, at

minimum. By request, we provide information to and meet with accreditation site visitors and other external reviewers. Our faculty and staff serve on a variety of committees: Council of Academic Diversity Officers, Faculty Senate Course & Curriculum, Instructional Development, Intellectual Property, and Council of Academic Program Liaisons. As part of our growing outreach initiative, we have met with the South Carolina Honors College, University Advising Center, Undergraduate Advisor Network, and UofSC System Advisors to promote accelerated study plans for qualified undergraduate students and graduate education at UofSC more broadly. In addition to Shorelight and the Masters Accelerator Program, we are pleased to work with sponsoring agencies for other international students.

Campus Climate & 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 Ombudsman. His responsibilities in this role include guidance to students seeking support as a result of being impacted by bullying, discrimination (e.g., disability, gender, lifestyle, racial, sexual, etc.), violations of the Carolinian Creed and/or classroom civility.

Intentional selection process for scholarly initiatives such as Presidential Fellows, Bridge Humanities Corps and Graduate Civic Scholars Program and for professional development programming to reflect the rich diversity of our university and community.

We are exploring options to bring together GJMPP and SREB scholars for professional development programming and networking. While GJMPP and SREB are the only current programs formally targeting URM students, the goal of increased diversity is a factor in selection process for other programs.

In addition to attending recruiting events at NC A&T and Johnson C. Smith (HBCUs in NC), we also recruited at the National Association of African American Honors Programs annual conference and Ronald McNair Scholars conference in Atlanta and Maryland. We continue to collaborate with the UofSC McNair program by meeting with participants in the summer and encouraging them to stay here for graduate school. Additionally, we have expanded marketing for the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program by encouraging McNair Scholars to apply, as the goals of McNair and GJMPP are consistent with one another. We are collaborating with the College of Engineering and Computing, Clemson University, and the National GEM Consortium to host a GEM Grad Lab for underrepresented minority STEM students to visit campus during a weekend in October. We also continue efforts with several academic units (currently Medicine, Engineering & Computing, and Public Health) to develop formal pipeline programs with Claflin University.

We are very pleased to see the visibility of graduate students in the newly approved Diversity and Inclusion Strategic Plan and look forward to working with CADO and other college representatives to make the goals of increased diversity and engagement a reality, recognizing the need for both more financial support and more academic support for these students.

Initiatives and Fees

Initatives

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

Fees

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

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.   The old Graduate Management System (GMS) is no longer supported by DoIT and has significant security issues, so it can only be used within university networks/VPN; however, it is embedded in many of our internal processes. To eliminate any outside access to GMS, we accelerated part of the expanded CollegeNet implementation, but this is not necessarily the most efficient or strategic approach. The concerns resulted in delays to upgrading the Graduate School website, but we are progressing with redesign that will not have any of the GMS-related functions. 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. Over the next 2-3 years, we will also be replacing desktop computers in the Graduate School since many are old enough that they cannot efficiently run current programs.

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 grateful for the expanded health insurance subsidy for students with graduate assistantships.

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. 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. 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. In addition, we continue to look for strategies to increase the diversity of our applicants and students.

Quantitative Outcomes

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

Numbers of applicants, admissions and new enrollments; graduation rates. While most trends in these numbers are more meaningful and more effectively addressed at the program/unit level, broader trends may suggest changes in campus-level practices.

Implementation of scheduled "spot checks" of document processing to ensure accuracy of student documents from admission, through progression to graduation confirmation/clearance. Goal: 100% accuracy within 10

business days of receipt of documents. At the individual level, failure to achieve document audit standards may result in disciplinary/remedial action through Human Resources.

Cool Stuff

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

Participation in Discover USC is where we celebrate the accomplishments of our graduate students as poster and 3MT presenters. Both presentation modalities help to tell the story of the exciting advances our students are achieving. And, through involving community members as judges, we are ensuring that the message that graduate education at UofSC matters, extends beyond internal boundaries.
Contributing to a collaborative effort among the Nursing programs on the Aiken, Columbia and Upstate campuses for a Master of Science, Nurse Educator degree. The intention is for this program to stand as a model to capitalize on available resources across the University of South Carolina system to meet, in this case, a shortage of qualified professionals in the field. In addition to serving these programs, another goal is to develop a map for others to navigate the approval process across multiple levels of administration and accreditation.

Working with UofSC programs to ensure that complex international MOUs for graduate education align with established policies, in an effort to enrich the opportunities available to our students and to extend the reach and reputation of the University of South Carolina, globally.