Executive Summary

Blueprint for Academic Excellence
Graduate School
AY2022-2023

Highlights

The Graduate School serves over 6500 graduate students from our state, the nation, and the world to promote the importance and value of graduate education. UofSC graduate students study in 64 doctoral, 134 master's, 37 certificates, 23 combination degree programs, and 13 dual degree programs, including 49 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

Table Of Content

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	• 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	Our most foundational function is to provide services for our graduate students and the faculty and staff who support them, from the initial inquiry, through application, and all the way to graduation.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	The plan for this academic year is three-fold: (1) to augment our recruitment efforts by maximizing use of ADMIT and PROSPECT and integrating our new senior diversity recruiter into our overall recruitment strategy (2) to review and update our academic policies and procedures to ensure accuracy, clarity, and accessibility and to support best practices in graduate student mentoring, and (3) to create, advocate for, and amplify graduate student access to support services and resources.
Achievements	• Onboarded several new staff members: Interim Dean of the Graduate School; Interim Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (also serving as Associate Director of the GJMPP); Vice Dean for Graduate Education; Senior Diversity Recruiter; ETD Coordinator; Program Coordinator (replacement hire, following a spring retirement) • Set up agreements with three HBCUs to fund students who enroll in 4+1 programs and graduates who enroll in Master's or Doctoral degree programs at UofSC • Successfully implemented the CollegeNet ADMIT system to process admissions decisions for all graduate applications • Improved mechanisms to communicate with prospective students via CollegeNet's PROSPECT system • Expanded training on use of automated communications to prospective graduate students • Increased graduate student enrollment year-over-year by 7.7%

	as of August 23, 2021 • Instituted a new travel grant application system portal to facilitate easier processing of travel grant applications • Transitioned several key processes to paperless procedures • Participated in SACSCOC and other unit-level accreditation visits, with a focus on graduate education • Raised health insurance subsidies from $1000 to full coverage (roughly $2500) for all full-time PhD students and graduate assistants • Increased the number of students in the Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program (GJMPP) from ~23 to 32 and increased the stipend amount from $6K to $10K per student to make the fellowship more competitive • Advocated for and supported graduate-student focused staff hires in the Career Center and National Fellowships and Scholar Programs offices • Hosted a virtual new student orientation, which was recorded and posted online to maximize distribution and access
Resources Utilized	• Personnel • General operating budget • New strategic funds and commitments, which were used to hire staff, increase the health insurance subsidy, increase support of the GJMPP, and set up new HBCU agreements
Goal Continuation	We will continue to pursue all aspects of this goal, as it represents our core function for graduate education.
Goal Upcoming Plans	• Minor organizational restructuring of Graduate School Staff to create cleaner reporting lines that reflect current goals, practices, and areas of responsibility • New telecommuting option for employees who wish to work remotely • Pilot implementation of the financial agreements set up to support HBCU students enrolling in 4+1 programs and graduate programs at UofSC • Maximize the resources available through CollegeNet's PROSPECT system to better track and communicate with prospective students • Improve admissions procedures to ensure that all applicants receive clear and timely responses to their applications • Leverage data for market analysis • Review stipends and tuition supplements across campus to gain a better understanding of where more support and/or resources are needed • Review and update all policies, procedures, and forms to ensure that information is accurate and easily accessible

	• Update and redistribute the Graduate Director handbook; create a small taskforce to consider the creation of a new Graduate Student handbook • Tweak the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation process to provide better guidance in formatting manuscripts • Offer training in best practices for mentoring graduate students • Launch a Graduate Student Resources Hub • Increase graduate student access to mental health resources • Host a "First Responders" panel • Conduct a climate survey analysis • Offer a broad range of new diversity initiatives centered around the themes of inclusion and belonging, inclusive excellence, and diversity recruitment • Offer a broad range of professional development workshops, including a new series on financial literacy, to be hosted in partnership with Founders Federal Credit Union
Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budgets. However, the continuation of new staff and the success of new strategic initiatives will depend critically upon the continuation of the current strategic fund commitments. A separate initiatives request will be submitted to support the launching of the new Graduate Student Resource Hub and mental health initiative described above.
Goal Notes	The Graduate School supports the Graduate Council and its various committees (e.g., 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	• 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	A key focus for the coming year will be to enhance support services for graduate students by providing better access to resources across campus. This goal encompasses five key areas: (1) The creation of a new Graduate Student Resources Hub (2) A broad and robust set of professional development workshops (3) A broad and robust set of diversity initiatives (4) Greater synergies between the Graduate School and the Student Affairs office, and (5) An increased focus on the graduate student cohort experience.
Achievements	• Hosted 65 professional development events during the academic year • Increased access to professional development workshops through modality expansion (e.g., asynchronous and synchronous online programming, in addition to in-person) • In coordination with the Provost's Office, participated in the inaugural SEC Emerging Scholars event, which provided professional development and career readiness opportunities for a select group of underrepresented scholars preparing to enter the job market • Hosted 169 poster presentations, and 51 "three-minute thesis" (3MT) presentations at Discover UofSC, which was hosted virtually for the first time due to COVID-19 • Onboarded a new ETD coordinator and initiated revisions to training resources with expected implementation in AY2021-22. • Hosted GJMPP and Presidential Fellows professional development and social events designed to enhance the student experience • Hosted campus listening sessions in response to national racial incidents • Hosted a speaker series on mental health and self-care • Participated in the UofSC Future Planning Group (FPG) on mental health, with a particular focus on the needs of diverse populations impacted by COVID

Goals - Real Time

	• Liaised with International Student Services (ISS), the English Program for Internationals (EPI), Education Abroad, the Master's Accelerator Program (MAP), and the Institute of International Education (IIE)/Fulbright to the address the specific needs of international students affected and/or displaced by COVID • Assisted in the implementation of the Graduate Student Association's first Graduate Student Awards' Day • Provided a curated list of events and sponsored a parking pass giveaway for Graduate Student Day
Resources Utilized	• Personnel • General operating budget • Some strategic funds used for GJMPP programming and personnel
Goal Continuation	This goal will be continued, as it represents the "value add" of the Graduate School as a contributor to the overall graduate student experience. Through this goal, we aim to provide a holistic, student-centered approach to graduate student training, with extracurricular activities that reach beyond the academic requirements to facilitate work-life balance, intercultural exchange, professional development, and integrated knowledge.
Goal Upcoming Plans	• Launch the new Graduate Student Resources Hub, with representatives from the Career Center and the National Fellowships and Scholar Programs offices, as well as possibly the Writing Center and English Program for Internationals (EPI) • Offer a series of professional development workshops focused on student services programming in the areas of Career Development, Communication & Professionalism, Financial Wellbeing, Health & Wellness, Inclusive Excellence, Leadership, Service & Teamwork, Scholarly Development, and Teaching & Learning • Launch the new diversity initiatives series e centered around the themes of inclusion and belonging, inclusive excellence, and diversity recruitment. Signature events will include a Grad Cohort podcast series, a Campus Conversations series, a Graduate Student Leadership Symposium, and a Graduate Faculty Professional Development series. • Offer a range of new DEI trainings and work towards the implementation of a new online diversity module to be launched in Fall 2022 in coordination with the EOP office, the GSA, and the ODEI • Hold monthly meetings with the Student Affairs Office and the Graduate Student Association leadership team to ensure better coordination around student services for graduate students • Increase focus on the graduate student cohort experience including continued support of the Presidential Fellows program,

	increased commitment to the GJMPP, a new support structure for Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) fellows, and a renewed commitment to the Graduate Civic Scholars program, with the goal of creating Graduation with Leadership Distinction (GLD) opportunities for graduate students. • Host a "First Responders" panel to educate graduate students about the offices charged with responding to mental health crises, sexual assault, and various forms of discrimination, bias, and uncivil behavior
Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budgets. However, the continuation of new staff and the success of new strategic initiatives will depend critically upon the continuation of the current strategic fund commitments. A separate initiatives request will be submitted to support the launching of the new Graduate Student Resource Hub and mental health initiative described above.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Real Time

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	• 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 lines of communication to prospective and current students, university faculty, staff and administrators.
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	The implementation of this goal includes (1) the creation of a new set of strategic outreach initiatives for prospective students, particularly in the area of diversity recruitment (2) the establishment of a clear and efficient means of communicating with current graduate students, faculty, and staff (3) a review and revision of the webpage to maximize clarity, accuracy, and ease of navigation (4) the creation of an updated set of policies, procedures, and training resources, and (5) a reorganization of Graduate School reporting lines to more clearly reflect existing areas of responsibility.
Achievements	• Continued engagement in website management, social media management, and event marketing • Utilized virtual platforms to hold meetings and host webinars and other programming over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic • Created a communications channel via Teams to store manuals and training videos and facilitate technical support • Developed and implemented training resources to facilitate transition to and use of CollegeNet CRM and application system • Instituted a new travel grant application portal, in collaboration with the Provost's Office, to facilitate easier processing of travel grant applications • Curated a monthly email to keep graduate students, faculty, and staff updated on DEI-related activities and resources • Set up a "gradasst" listserv to ensure that graduate assistants who contribute to the teaching mission receive all communications to instructional faculty • Updated the Diversity, Professional Development, Scholarly Initiatives, and On-campus Help and Activities webpages to better orient students to on-campus activities and graduate student services.

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• Met with the GSA leadership and general body on multiple occasions to hear student concerns and share updates; such communication played a critical role in the health insurance subsidy increase
• Set up agreements with three HBCUs (Benedict, Claflin, and SCSU) to fund students who enroll in 4+1 programs and graduates who enroll in Master's or Doctoral degree programs at UofSC
• Participated in virtual recruiting events over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic
• Improved utilization of CollegeNet for communication to prospective students; adjusted messaging to be more mobile-friendly

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Resources Utilized

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• Personnel
• General operating budget
• New strategic commitments, which were leveraged to set up HBCU financial agreements
• Electronic communication (e.g., virtual platforms, email, listservs, webpages, social media)

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Goal Continuation

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As a service unit, the Graduate School must remain committed to providing clear and effective communication both on and off-campus.

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Goal Upcoming Plans

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• Determine the viability of implementing a bi-weekly or monthly Graduate School newsletter
• Develop dashboards to provide greater transparency and access to relevant graduate student data
• Hold nonthly meetings with the Student Affairs Office and the Graduate Student Association leadership team to ensure better coordination around student services for graduate students
• Assign content managers to each webpage to ensure that content remains clear, accurate, and update-to-date
• Review and update all policies, procedures, and forms (e.g., z-status, graduate faculty status, etc.), as needed, to ensure that information is both accurate and easily accessible
• Update and redistribute the Graduate Director handbook and create a small taskforce to consider the creation of a new Graduate Student handbook
• Tweak the Electronic Thesis and Dissertation (ETD) process (e.g., with earlier submission deadlines, clearer guidelines, and more workshops) to provide better guidance in formatting manuscripts for submission
• Offer Graduate Directors and Graduate Faculty training in best practices for mentoring graduate students, using the skills and resources acquired through a recent training by the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experience in Research (CIMER) at the

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	University of Wisconsin-Madison • Restructure reporting lines in the Graduate School to create reporting lines that reflect current goals, practices, and areas of responsibility • Launch the "Rising Star Fellowship" as a pilot implementation of the financial agreements set up to support HBCU students enrolling in 4+1 programs and graduate programs at UofSC • Promote the new partnership with SC's HBCUs and serve as a liaison to UofSC's academic units • Work across campus to foster better collaboration and best practices for recruitment of new students • Improvements admissions procedures to ensure that all applicants receive clear and timely responses to their applications
Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budgets. However, the continuation of new staff and the success of new strategic initiatives will depend critically upon the continuation of the current strategic fund commitments.
Goal Notes	

Goals - Real Time

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	• 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 better promote our graduate programs, research scholarship, diverse and talented graduate students, and Graduate School initiatives will advance the reputation of graduate education at the UofSC
Status	Progressing as expected (multi-year goal)
Action Plan	This goal will be supported through (1) new and continuing recruitment outreach efforts (2) continued support of events, venues, and materials that showcase graduate student success in research and scholarship (3) support of graduate student access to research, grants, and fellowships, and (4) better tracking of data to identify areas of strength and opportunities for growth
Achievements	• Augmented the capacity of our unit through strategic hires in data analysis, diversity, equity and inclusion, and program support • Incorporated national rankings data into prospect communications • Assisted in the organization of Discover UofSC Day events • Recorded the Discover UofSC 3MT presentations to enable use of content for internal and external audiences • Engaged in presentations, professional development, and conference activities focused on graduate education, including the inaugural SEC Emerging Scholars event, which provided networking, professional development, and career readiness opportunities for a select group of underrepresented scholars preparing to enter the job market, while also showcasing opportunities available at the UofSC • Coordinated with other graduate programs in the state to elevate the awareness of the value of graduate education to the state and beyond • Secured partnerships with South Carolina HBCUs to facilitate DEI efforts and increase enrollment of underrepresented students • Increased emphasis on targeted communications to prospects, applicants, students, and alumni • Participated in SACSCOC and other unit-level accreditation visits, with a focus on graduate education • Sponsored the Senior Associate Dean's participation in the Center for the Improvement of Mentored Experience in Research (CIMER) training at the University of Wisconsin-Madison

Goals - Real Time

Resources Utilized	• Personnel • General operating budget • New strategic funds and commitments, which were used to hire staff and set up new HBCU agreements • Electronic communication (e.g., virtual platforms, email, listservs, webpages, social media)
Goal Continuation	In addition to teaching and learning, graduate students play a critical role in advancing the research agenda at the UofSC. The Graduate School is committed to supporting these efforts, as they elevate the University's reputation and contribute to its stated mission of creating new pathways to research excellence in an effort to become AAU eligible.
Goal Upcoming Plans	• Enhance graduate recruitment efforts in SC, regionally and nationally • Develop a robust and coordinated plan for diversity recruitment under the leadership of our new Senior Diversity Recruiter and interim Associate Dean for DEI, and in coordination with the Director of Recruitment • Continue to coordinate with other graduate programs in the state to elevate the awareness of the value of graduate education to the state and beyond • Continue development and implementation of content for website redesign, e.g., social media streams, current event stories, student and alumni spotlights. • Continue to support unit-level accreditation visits with a focus on graduate education • Continue to support the showcasing of graduate student research at the annual Discover UofSC event • Distribute recordings of 3MT presentations to internal and external audiences • Provide professional development, mentoring, and cohort support for the burgeoning NSF Bridge to Doctorate program fellows • Coordinate with the National Fellowships and Scholars Program through creation of the Graduate Student Resource Hub • Offer Graduate Directors and Graduate Faculty training in best practices for mentoring graduate students, using the skills and resources acquired through the Senior Associate Dean's recent participation in CIMER training at the University of Wisconsin-Madison • Develop dashboards to provide greater transparency and access to relevant graduate student data

Goals - Real Time

Resources Needed	Most activities are supported by the current personnel and operating budgets. However, the continuation of new staff and the success of new strategic initiatives will depend critically upon the continuation of the current strategic fund commitments.
Goal Notes	The Graduate School was to receive strategic funds to support the implementation of a new post-doctoral program that would invite competitive researchers to study at the UofSC and possibly apply for faculty positions. Given the recent transition in leadership, it is unclear whether those funds are still available for this purpose. If they are, the development of the post-doctoral program would also contribute significantly to elevating UofSC's research agenda and thus supporting Goal 4's effort to advance the reputation of UofSC as a top ranked research institution.

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.
- Presidential Fellows Program: A community of scholars pursuing doctoral and MFA degrees across a wide range of academic disciplines. Fellows receive $10K in additional funding per year, plus professional development, and community designed to enhance the value of their graduate studies. Current Presidential Fellows comprise a varied group of 37 engaged scholars from a range of institutions, disciplines, and backgrounds.
- Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program: Open to prospective and current doctoral and MFA students, this program prepares underrepresented minority students to become professors. Scholars are provided $10K per year in additional funding and receive training specifically designed to help them diversify the professoriate. Current GJMPP Fellows comprise a varied group of 32 engaged scholars from a range of institutions, disciplines, and backgrounds.
- Graduate student travel grant program: Applications for travel grants are accepted in four cycles each year. Eligible students must be enrolled in a degree-seeking doctoral or MFA program, must present a paper/poster/creative work at a conference or meeting of national or international standing, and must be the first or sole author of the work.

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.
Due to the on-going challenges related to the COVID-19 pandemic and the need for access to community partnerships, the Graduate Civic Scholars (GCS) Program was suspended for the 2021-22 academic year. However, the faculty leads have been reappointed to work with any students from the 2020-2021 cohort who wish to meet to discuss their projects over the course of this academic year. The faculty leads will also use this year to propose a way to scale up the GCS program so that it meets the requirements for Graduation with Leadership Distinction for graduate students. It is anticipated that the program will accept a new cohort of scholars for the next academic year.

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.
U.S. News & World Report Spring 2021:

Programs or Initiatives

#1 International MBA
#1 Online Nursing Program
#4 Social Psychology
#7 School Library Media
#9 Services for Children & Youth
#17 Library & Information Studies
#23 Criminology
#25 Nuclear Engineering
#25 Part-time MBA
#25 Speech-Language Pathology

Shanghai Rankings 2020:
#1 Sport Science Schools & Departments in the U.S.

SportBusiness Postgraduate Rankings 2020:
#7 in the World – Master of Science in Sport & Entertainment Management (#3 in most useful/most frequently used in current career)
(Full report link here)

National Academy of Kinesiology Review & Evaluation of Doctoral Programs 2020:
#4 Kinesiology (#1 when adjusted for faculty size)

Supplemental Info - Programs or Initiatives

Any additional information on Programs or Initiatives appears as 'Appendix 1. Programs or Initiatives' (bottom).

Initiatives and Fees

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

Graduate Student Resource Hub

The Graduate Student Resource Hub will be launched in Spring of 2022. This space will provide a more integrated graduate student experience that holistically encompasses academic training and professional development for students at UofSC. The hub will house new staff members in the Career Center and the Fellowships and Scholar Programs Offices, both of whom were hired through strategic funds directed to those units to exclusively serve graduate students. We are now in conversation with the Writing Center and the English Program for Internationals about the possibility of having staff from their offices provide writing assistance to graduate students in the hub space several hours each week.

The hub will be located in Room 204 of the Close Hipp building in a space formerly occupied by the English Program for Internationals (EPI). Because of a recent decline in international student enrollment, the EPI has offered to share this space with the Graduate School on a temporary basis. The Career Center and the Fellowships and Scholar Programs Offices will purchase phone lines and locate office furniture, either through purchasing or consolidated services, for their staff members and for the common areas. The Graduate School is hoping to use carryforward funds from its operating budget this year to hire a student from the HESA program to staff the space this spring and to pay representatives from the Writing Center and the EPI to provide some hours of writing assistance in the space. Some one-time funds will also be needed for signage, painting, and other aesthetic upgrades.

Going forward, an initiatives request will be made to add one FTE hire who can provide administrative assistance in the hub and serve as a liaison between the Graduate School and its partner offices and to request 1-2 additional FTEs to serve as full-time writing experts in the hub, working alongside the Career Center and Fellowship Office representatives.

Performance indicators will include the number of hub appointments made, as well as the number of fellowship applications, awards, interviews, and job placements they lead to. Pending the success of this initiative, additional funding might be requested to move the hub to a larger space where additional graduate student services (e.g., the Graduate Student Ombuds, mental health representatives, etc.) might be added in a way that facilitates access, while maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

Mental Health Initiative

While Graduate School is often a stress-inducing time that can contribute to mental health challenges, the recent pandemic has placed an even greater strain on the mental health and well-being of our graduate student population. Given the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the mental health and well-being of our graduate student population, and in recognition of the Council of Graduate School's New Initiative to Support Graduate Student Mental Health and Wellness, discussions are underway to increase graduate student access to mental health resources, ideally in collaboration with the Provost's Office and the UofSC Student Health Services team.

Data provided by Counseling and Psychiatry show that over the last two years, graduate students have been among the largest percentage of students requesting counseling appointments. And there are increasing requests for even greater access and easier

Initiatives and Fees

scheduling. Many graduate students are in the unique position of being both students and instructors. So having to access these services alongside undergraduate students who are potentially their students can jeopardize their right to privacy and confidentiality.

For these reasons, the Graduate School is hoping to hire 1-2 mental health professionals to exclusively serve graduate students on our campus, ideally in a space that is away from where undergraduate students access their mental health services and perhaps in proximity to either the Graduate School itself or the Graduate Student Resources Hub, described above. The goal is to facilitate greater access to mental health support for graduate students, while maintaining both privacy and confidentiality. An initiatives request will be made for the hire of two full-time mental health professionals and perhaps some one-time funds to secure private physical space for in-person meetings, recognizing that telehealth appointments will also likely remain a viable option and perhaps a preference for many.

Fees

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

In addition to the $1000 health insurance subsidy that the Graduate School has covered over the last several years, we have received strategic funds to cover an additional $716/per student (i.e., half of the balance of the insurance for this academic year), as we transition to providing full health insurance subsidies for all full-time PhD students and graduate assistants. Academic units are covering the remaining $716/per student this year but will assume all expenses beyond the $1000 subsidy provided by the Graduate School starting in the Fall of 2022.

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 assessment of community perceptions is primarily driven by ad-hoc feedback from stakeholders, prospects, applicants, students, faculty and administrators. Impact is not systematically assessed at present. However, work done in AY2020-21 includes an analysis of graduate student submissions to the 2018 Climate Survey, as well as an analysis of the student-led COVID-19 survey distributed in 2020 by the Graduate Student Association to better assess student perceptions and student needs. Going forward, climate surveys will be distributed through collaborations between the Graduate School's Vice for Graduate Education, the interim Associate Dean for DEI and the Central Office of Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion to more systematically assess the perceptions of Graduate School engagement and support.

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.

Alumni Association
Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council
Athletics
Black Faculty Caucus
Black Graduate Student Association
Bridges to the Doctorate program
Bursar's Office
Campus Recreation
Campus Wellness/Healthy Carolina
Career Center
Center for Teaching Excellence
Controller's Office
Council of Academic Diversity Officers
Division of Information Technology
English Program for Internationals
Equal Opportunity Programs
Financial Aid
Global Carolina
Graduate Student Association
Human Resources
International Student Services
Leadership and Service Center
McNair/TRIO programs
National Fellowships and Scholar Programs
Off-Campus Living & Neighborhood Relations
Office for International Scholars
Office of Distributed Learning
Office of Diversity and Inclusion
Office of Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
Office of Fellowships and Scholar Programs
Office of Institutional Research, Assessment, and Analytics
Office of Multicultural Student Affairs
Office of Research
Office of the Registrar
Office of the Vice President for Research
On Your Time
Professional Development Advisory Committee
Provost's Office
Registrar's Office
South Carolina Honors College
Student Affairs and Academic Support
Student Life
Student Success Center
Study Abroad

Collaborations

University Advising Center
University Health Services
University Housing
University Libraries
UofSC Bookstore
Veterans Services
Visitors Center
Writing Center
Office of Academic Programs

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.

American Association of University Women (AAUW)
Start Smart Program Clemson University
AMIDEAST
Conference of Southern Graduate Schools
Council of Graduate Schools
Founders Federal Credit Union
Fulbright
Graduate Career Consortium
GSS Survey of Earned Doctorates
Institute of International Education
MAP
My Carolina (USC Alumni Association)
National Association of African American Honors Program
National GEM Consortium
Ronald McNair Scholars Program
SACM
Shorelight
South Carolina Graduate Deans Association
South Carolina HBCUs
Southern Regional Education Board
US ETD Association

Campus Climate and Inclusion

Activities the unit conducted that were designed to improve Campus, Climate, and Inclusion.

•   With the appointment of an interim Associate Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion and the hire of a new Senior Diversity Recruiter, the Graduate School increased personnel resources related to diversity recruitment and retention in an effort to increase enrollment and retention of underrepresented graduate students in addition to promoting campus diversity, equity, inclusion, and engagement

•   Expanded the size and level of (financial) support provided to the GJMPP, including the addition of a new Associate Director and more professional development and social events designed to enhance the student experience

•   Agreements were set up with three HBCUs (Benedict, Claflin, and SCSU) to fund students who enroll in 4+1 programs and graduates who enroll in Master's or Doctoral degree programs at UofSC.

•   Program coordinators participated in inclusion trainings offered by Human Resources

•   Team members served on the search committee to identify top talent in survey design and data analysis to support the efforts of the Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion.

•   Curated a monthly Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion email to provide updates to the graduate community; enhanced the Graduate Diversity website with more resources and information

•   Liaised with International Student Services (ISS), the English Program for Internationals (EPI), Education Abroad, the Master's Accelerator Program (MAP), and the Institute of International Education (IIE)/Fulbright to the address the specific needs of international students affected and/or displaced by COVID

•   Increased accessibility of professional development programming through expansion of modalities offered (asynchronous, synchronous online training in addition to in-person)

•   Broadened professional development topic areas to include mental health and self-care

•   Established Campus Listening Sessions in response to national racial incidents

•   Created a new series diversity-related activities and programming centered around the themes of inclusion and belonging, inclusive excellence, and diversity recruitment

•   Assessed recent climate surveys to benchmark and plan for future programming and initiatives

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.

The Graduate School continues to navigate the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, executing our mission while ensuring a safe and healthy environment for faculty, students, and staff. We continue to explore innovative methods of engagement, including remote work and virtual modalities for programming.

Personnel turnover for roles dedicated to graduate education continue to be a challenge. This includes turnover of new graduate directors and new administrators, who require training to be brought up to speed on policies and procedures specific to graduate students. The Graduate School plans to develop new training materials and workshops to address this continuing challenge.

Budget cuts and increased work expectations without the opportunity for additional compensation have contributed to decreased staff morale. Efforts are underway to identify opportunities to secure more recurring funds and to adjust positions descriptions to ensure that work expectations remain fair and equitable. Morale will also continue to be addressed through social gatherings and celebrations as the pandemic allows.

Key Issues

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

Meeting health and safety needs while continuing to provide seamless support for students, faculty, and staff across programs. This includes balancing demand for in-person and virtual programming. Efforts are underway to identify ideal modality methods by topic area.

Quantitative Outcomes

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

Because of our decentralized funding model, the lack of transparency around stipends has made it difficult to assess how competitive we are in supporting students financially. An effort will be made in the coming year to get a better understanding of how funding packages are distributed across campus and how we compare to peer and peer aspirant institutions.

Cool Stuff

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

While the pandemic has been undeniably devastating to both lives and livelihoods, one unexpected benefit of moving to remote work temporarily has been the forced transition from paper to electronic processing, which has improved the accuracy and efficiency of our procedures in immeasurable ways.

Appendix 1. Programs or Initiatives

2021-22 Program Launches

Rising Star Fellowship

This past summer, the UofSC Graduate School set up financial agreements with three HBCUs (Benedict, Claflin, and SCSU) to fund students who enroll in 4+1 programs and graduates who enroll in Master's or Doctoral degree programs at UofSC. These agreements were set up as part of an on-going effort to increase the diversity of our graduate student population at UofSC. Pending continued support of strategic funds, the "Rising Star Fellowship" will be launched as a pilot implementation of these financial agreements. The new Senior Diversity Recruiter will promote the new partnership with SC's HBCUs and serve as a liaison to UofSC's academic units. Both quantitative and qualitative enrollment metrics will be set up to measure the effectiveness of this initiative.

Graduate Student Resource Hub

The Graduate Student Resource Hub will be launched in Spring of 2022. This space will provide a more integrated graduate student experience that holistically encompasses academic training and professional development for students at UofSC. The hub will house new staff members in the Career Center and the Fellowships and Scholar Programs Offices, both of whom were hired through strategic funds directed to those units to exclusively serve graduate students. We are now in conversation with the Writing Center and the English Program for Internationals about the possibility of having staff from their offices provide writing assistance to graduate students in the hub space several hours each week.

The hub will be located in Room 204 of the Close Hipp building in a space formerly occupied by the English Program for Internationals (EPI). Because of a recent decline in international student enrollment, the EPI has offered to share this space with the Graduate School on a temporary basis. The Career Center and the Fellowships and Scholar Programs Offices will purchase phone lines and locate office furniture, either through purchasing or consolidated services, for their staff members and for the common areas. The Graduate School is hoping to use carryforward funds from its operating budget this year to hire a student from the HESA program to staff the space this spring and to pay representatives from the Writing Center and the EPI to provide some hours of writing assistance in the space. Some one-time funds will also be needed for signage, painting, and other aesthetic upgrades.

Going forward, an initiatives request will be made to add one FTE hire who can provide administrative assistance in the hub and serve as a liaison between the Graduate School and its partner offices and to request 1-2 additional FTEs to serve as full-time writing experts in the hub, working alongside the Career Center and Fellowship Office representatives.

Performance indicators will include the number of hub appointments made, as well as the number of fellowship applications, awards, interviews, and job placements they lead to. Pending the success of this initiative, additional funding might be requested to move the hub to a larger space where additional graduate student services (e.g., the Graduate Student Ombuds, mental

health representatives, etc.) might be added in a way that facilitates access, while maintaining privacy and confidentiality.

Mental Health Initiative

While Graduate School is often a stress-inducing time that can contribute to mental health challenges, the recent pandemic has placed an even greater strain on the mental health and well-being of our graduate student population. Given the significant impact that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the mental health and well-being of our graduate student population, and in recognition of the Council of Graduate School's New Initiative to Support Graduate Student Mental Health and Wellness, discussions are underway to increase graduate student access to mental health resources, ideally in collaboration with the Provost's Office and the UofSC Student Health Services team.

Data provided by Counseling and Psychiatry show that over the last two years, graduate students have been among the largest percentage of students requesting counseling appointments. And there are increasing requests for even greater access and easier scheduling. Many graduate students are in the unique position of being both students and instructors. So having to access these services alongside undergraduate students who are potentially their students can jeopardize their right to privacy and confidentiality.

For these reasons, the Graduate School is hoping to hire 1-2 mental health professionals to exclusively serve graduate students on our campus, ideally in a space that is away from where undergraduate students access their mental health services and perhaps in proximity to either the Graduate School itself or the Graduate Student Resources Hub, described above. The goal is to facilitate greater access to mental health support for graduate students, while maintaining both privacy and confidentiality. An initiatives request will be made for the hire of two full-time mental health professionals and perhaps some one-time funds to secure private physical space for in-person meetings, recognizing that telehealth appointments will also likely remain a viable option and perhaps a preference for many.