

Members Present: Elizabeth Adams, Eric Loomis, Gwendolyn Pennywell, Debra Chapman, James Stefurak, Robert Cloutier, Leigh Minchew, Ben Lee, Blair Saale, Aishwarya Praskash, Ryon McDermott, Tim Sherman, Kevin West, Joyce Pittman, Hayley Mullinax, Evan Butlig, Todd Andel, Edmund Spencer, Harold Pardue, Lorene Flanders, Norma Jean Tanner, Ashley Suggs, Heather Nix, DeAnna Cobb, Avery Robinson

Guests: Ashley Gibson, Julie Estis, Lisa LaCross, Phillip Williams, Tammy Vance, Katherine Brown, Angela Rand

Agenda and materials distributed prior to the meeting.

- 1. Graduate Dean's Report (Pardue):** The Graduate School's annual budget and main sources of funding were briefly discussed. Members were informed that a small budget existed for program marketing and to contact him if a social media or other marketing blitz was of interest. Graduate Assistant tuition is not truly waived, as this is not possible for a state institution. GA tuition is funded through the Scholarship Office. The Post Doc salary scale has increased and there will be a memo disbursed in the near future with more details, potentially effective for the upcoming Fall semester. There was a discussion that Graduate Assistants need a COLA. H Pardue will continue to advocate for this with University leadership. Also in the works is a monthly meeting for the Graduate Dean with the Graduate Directors/Coordinators, as well as a monthly meeting with graduate students. New admit types are being developed for certifications and adult learners in an effort to simplify the admission process for potential students. Norma Jean Tanner was thanked for her efforts in making this happen. High Flex (synchronized remote course instruction) was approved for graduate and adult learners, which is projected to begin in the Fall semester. The R1 committee developing a strategic plan. They are currently evaluating ideas for new PhD programs. Highlights from the recent Alabama Council of Graduate Deans meeting included discussion of the GRE. Requiring the GRE is in decline in AL. Chat GPT was discussed as a potential tool with positive impacts rather than negative, including the potential tools to detect plagiarism. The current batch of Graduate School pdf forms will be converted into SLATE over the summer as other Deans in the state used SLATE from admission to graduation for their students. Mentioned later in the meeting is that fall 2023 graduate Nursing enrollment could be down. Marketing plans and other strategic plans are underway to increase Nursing enrollment.
- 2. Minutes from prior meeting (Pardue):** Motioned, seconded, approved.
- 3. SLATE update (Tanner):** Members were reminded to check the relevant boxes (Program accept or program accept provisionally or decline) when reviewing applications to ensure the applications are moved in the queue. If a necessary box has not been checked, the application will be moved back into the program queue. New programs are being added. If your program has a hard deadline, in which more applications are not desired, please let Admissions know so new applications are blocked. Also let them know if additional reviewers need to be added to programs. The application fee can be waived for competitive students.
- 4. I-20 Deposit update (Nix):** 59 international students thus far have paid the required fee. This fee was instituted to address visa fraud, which has been an issue in previous semesters.
- 5. ACHE update (Gibson):** The School of Computing divided their Master's degree into two programs: Computer Science, MS and Information Systems, MS. A Cyber Security, MS proposal was submitted. A proposal for Exercise Science and Performance Nutrition, PhD was submitted. Some undergrad and grad programs are underperforming and will be receiving memos.

Courseleaf update (Gibson): The testing phase is underway for CAFS (Curriculum Action forms). A Suggs reminded the Council that the zoom training session for Courseleaf was recorded and is available on Canvas. Zoom Q&A sessions are upcoming. The Banner/Courseleaf feed is being tweaked. The Bulletin deadline is May 17th.

GA update (Gibson): GA application deadlines are approaching and posted online (<https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/graduateschool/information.html>). Maymester is included in the summer semester but please let Ashley know if any of your GA's will be taking Maymester courses. The academic calendar is short by a week this year as the Fall semester starts later than usual. The one-week period will not be covered by the GA stipend for GA's appointed on the academic year basis. I-9s are an issue, however Payroll is being copied on GA forms to assist with processing. GA's teaching unsupervised in labs need to pass a background check. A check box on the GA form has been added if this is applicable to your GA's and the departments will be required to cover this expense. An edit on the GA letters will delete the tuition waived sentence as this is not accurate. Multi year GA letters are being considered and a meeting with Payroll to discuss ramifications will be held, including EPAFs. A GA letter draft will be circulated to include the total amount of GA funding to include the monetary value of the course credit hour cost. This amount does differ by College.

6. **LevelUP** (Estis): LevelUP: Uniquely Prepared for What Comes Next Quality Enhancement Plan (QEP) is a campus wide initiative aimed at preparing our students for their next steps, whether career or further education (Handouts disbursed via email the morning after the meeting). Learning Outcomes: Ready (portfolio based activity), Set (midpoint competence review), Go (as program completion nears, students express how their program/experiences relate to their readiness for their next steps). It was noted that tracking our students post-graduation is crucial and improvement is needed. Currently student and faculty/staff email addresses are discontinued after leaving the university and this is a valuable avenue of communication. Assessments and outcomes will be conducted by semester and annually. Revisions to be made as required. South is committed to providing the resources, personnel, and financial needed for LevelUP to succeed.

7. **Graduate Curriculum Committee CAFs** (E Loomis): A vote was requested on a batch of Curriculum Action forms (sent out via email to curriculum committee members) by relevant Council members. All were passed with some edits suggested.

Sociology graduate program (E Loomis): As an informational item, E Loomis announced the Sociology graduate program was phased out due to low enrollment.

8. **Change of format for non thesis track MS students in Biology** (T Sherman): Non thesis track students will be required to maintain a 3.0 gpa or above instead of taking a written comp exam. This is an informational item for other programs to consider.

9. **Thesis/Dissertation Defense Announcements** (D Cobb): The number of defense announcements emailed to the Graduate School office for inclusion in the Daily Digest has decreased noticeably for the Spring semester. The Council was asked how important they felt the defense announcements were. Several council members vouched for the defense announcements and D Cobb asked that this agenda item be considered a reminder to email this information to the Graduate School office for inclusion in the Daily Digest.

Thesis/Dissertation Committee Forms (D Cobb): The number of Thesis/Dissertation Committee forms submitted for Thesis/Dissertation students has also decreased noticeably. Submission of this form is the prompt for an email to go to the relevant students to let them know the website address for Thesis/Dissertation resources, including the submission deadlines, and to introduce myself and let the students know they are welcome to call, email, or come by the office with any questions they may have. This form should be submitted

as soon as the student's committee is formed and the Council was asked to ensure these forms are submitted in a timely fashion

(<https://www.southalabama.edu/colleges/graduateschool/resources/thesisdissertationcompcommitteeappt.pdf>)

Thesis/Dissertation Submission Form (D Cobb): R Cloutier asked a week or so before the meeting why the same faculty members should have to sign twice (signature page and T/D submission form) for thesis/dissertation students. The main relevance of this form is that a plagiarism check statement is included and several Graduate Directors vouched that they wanted to continue to see that this function continues and that they sign this form. The form will be edited to exclude committee members and only include the committee chair, department chair, and graduate director.

<https://www.southalabama.edu/departments/eforms/graduateschool/thesisdissertationsubmissionform.pdf>

10. **3MT - Three Minute Thesis** (H Pardue): The 3MT contest is very popular (akin to sporting events) at other state institutions as reported at the Alabama Council of Graduate Deans meetings. South did hold 3MT some years ago but student interest in participating became very low and we subsequently switched the annual graduate research forum to the current format with selected student presentations, thesis/dissertation awards, and poster session. (3MT enclosure included in agenda email). There was some concern that students at that stage of their thesis research may not have the time to participate or be far enough along to knowledgeably present their research topic. D Cobb expressed that this would need to be a team effort to recruit student participants, judges and that practice sessions, etc. would need to be pursued/set up. To include 3MT, our research forum would need to be held in time for student participation in regional or national competitions. H Pardue proposed we switch the Research Forum to include 3MT as the program and follow with the poster session. This option will be pursued.
11. **New Business** (A Rand): Graduate student space has been established in the Library with plans for upgrades. A report showing the usage by discipline will be emailed to Council members. Public Administration, Medicine, and Physical Therapy are the top student users of the graduate student lounge.
12. **Meeting adjourned** (H Pardue)