



**Graduating Student Survey
Executive Summary
Fall 2020**

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Purpose

The Graduating Student Survey was designed to gather opinions of graduating students related to various components of the educational experience at the University of South Alabama and their post-graduation plans. The Graduating Student Survey was conducted electronically using the Qualtrics survey system. It included Likert scale, multiple choice, and open-ended questions. Participation was voluntary and reminder emails were sent to non-respondents every three days before the close of the survey.

What is in the summary?

The following summary outlines strengths, areas of improvement, activities students may be interested in after graduating, and how students would like to be contacted as alumni.

Scoring, Interpretation, and Rationale

- ◇ Items with 80% or more positive responses (agree or strongly agree) are considered strengths. This is because 80% indicates scoring at least a “B” on these items.
- ◇ Items with more than 20% negative responses (disagree or strongly disagree) are considered areas of potential improvement. This is because these items have lower than 80% positive responses, indicating a “C” or lower.

Highlights

- ◇ The average of all items with an interval scale was 3.23 (SD = .56).
- ◇ All items in the Academic Resources category are included as strengths.
- ◇ All items in the Faculty/Course Work category are included as strengths.
- ◇ All items in the graduate student Experience category are included as strengths.
- ◇ **88%** of those involved in a student organization said it added value to their experiences as a USA student.
- ◇ **88%** of students said they felt safe while on campus.
- ◇ **88%** of students said that if they had to do it over again, they would graduate with the same major.

Means/Standard Deviations for Survey Categories (items with interval scales)

Category	M	SD
Advising	3.1	.55
Career Services Satisfaction	3.34	.87
Academic Resources	3.41	.6
Course Offerings	3.26	.72
Faculty/Course Work	3.29	.56
Educational Opportunities	3.15	.70
Graduate Students	3.36	.58
Student Organizations	3.32	.84

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Safety	3.34	.71
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Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of students who were graduating in the Fall 2020 semester. In total, there were 1,431 graduating students; 627 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 44%. N = number of respondents. Respondent demographics are shown below.

Table 1.1 Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	N	Percentage
African American	102	16.3
Asian American	17	2.7
Hispanic American	25	4
Multiracial	17	2.7
Native American	9	1.4
Non-Resident Alien	16	2.6
Unknown	12	1.9
White	412	65.7
Unavailable	17	2.7
Total	627	100

Table 1.2: Sex

Sex	N	Percentage
Male	102	16.3
Female	508	81
Unavailable	17	2.7
Total	627	100

Strengths

General

- **92%** reported that while attending USA, on average, they were either a full-time undergraduate or full-time graduate student.

Employment/Educational Plans after Graduation

- **88%** of those planning to start a new job after graduation said that their major or field prepared them for the new position.
- **97%** said they plan to continue their education beyond the bachelor's degree.

Advising

- **91%** said their advisor provided accurate information about graduation requirements.
- **81%** said they were satisfied with the quality of advising for planning for graduate/professional school.
- **83%** said they had adequate access to their advisor.

Career Services

- **80%** of those who had experience with Career Services were satisfied with their services.

Academic Resources

- **97%** were satisfied with availability of library resources.
- **94%** were satisfied with labs, studios, and other academic spaces.
- **94%** were satisfied with computing resources (i.e., labs, machines, software).

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- **93%** were satisfied with available technology/instrumentation/equipment.

Course Offerings

- **89%** felt that courses in their major were offered with sufficient frequency.
- **86%** felt that the variety of electives available to them in their major were sufficient.

Faculty/Course Work

- **91%** felt that faculty were interested in their academic success.
- **94%** said that faculty were accessible outside of class.
- **87%** of undergraduates felt that their general education courses at USA prepared them for the courses in their major.
- **91%** said the coursework in their program was engaging.
- **96%** said that, overall, their coursework was challenging.
- **90%** said that the foundational courses in their program prepared them for the upper-level courses.
- **86%** said they felt well prepared to take the licensure exam.

Educational Opportunities

- **91%** said there was ample opportunity to apply what they were learning to real-world problems or jobs.
- **80%** said there was ample opportunity to take part in an internship or co-op.

Graduate Student Experience

- **87%** said their thesis/dissertation advisor encouraged their intellectual growth and curiosity.
- **88%** said their thesis/dissertation advisor provided regular, constructive feedback to them regarding their progress.
- **88%** said they were encouraged to develop their writing skills and submit work for publication.
- **99%** said their graduate program included instruction that emphasized the importance of research integrity and professional ethics.
- **98%** said their graduate program included research projects and/or papers requiring individual effort and independent learning.

Areas of Potential Improvement

Employment After Graduation

- For those looking for a job after graduation, **25%** said they felt that their major or field either did not prepare them (**2%**) or only somewhat prepared them (**23%**) for their new position.

Advising

- **21%** of students were dissatisfied with the quality of advising for career planning.
- **23%** said the frequency with which they met with their advisor was not sufficient.
- **35%** of respondents reported some sort of complaint about their advisor.

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Career Services

- Only **7%** reported visiting Career Services within the past year.

Educational Opportunities

- **21%** said there was not ample opportunity to take part in service-learning.
- **28%** said there was not ample opportunity to work with faculty on research outside of class.
- **25%** said there was not ample opportunity to engage in independent research outside of class.

Overall Experiences

- **21%** said that if they had to do it over again, they would not attend USA.

Opportunities

Staying Connected After Graduation

- 95% (593) reported that they would like to participate in the following as alumni: tailgates at football games (21%); concerts and exhibitions on campus at a discount (20%); and concerts and exhibitions around town at a discount (23%).
- 127 students said they would be interested in mentoring current students.

Sex Differences

Item	Mean for Females	Mean for Males	Effect Size (d)
The information my advisor provided about graduation requirements was accurate.	3.28	3.48	.26
As an undergraduate, I felt that my general education courses at USA prepared me for the courses in my major.	3.29	2.92	.5
There was ample opportunity to take part in service-learning.	3.05	3.31	.33
There was ample opportunity to work with faculty on research outside of class.	2.95	3.21	.3
My interactions with the Department Graduate Coordinator/Chair were handled promptly and accurately.	3.23	3.65	.54
My interactions with the College Director of Graduate Studies Office were handled promptly and accurately	3.30	3.61	.42
My interactions with the USA Graduate School were handled promptly and accurately.	3.25	3.57	.45

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