Graduate Council
AGENDA
Faculty Club
Time: 3:00-5:00
Date: October 21, 2026

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH ALABAMA
GRADUATE SCHOOL

Welcome and roll call/verification of quorum

Members Present: Rebecca Hoglund, Deanna Cobb, Cassidy Harris, Debra Chapman, Angela Rand, Joyce Pittman, Leigh Minchew, Ashley Suggs, Norma Jean Tanner, Heather Nix, Meredith, Tittler, Katie McCorrison, Lisa LaCross, Phil Smith, Ryan Benton, Eric Loomis, Ermano Effuso, Bill Gillis, Sean Walker, Tres Stefurak, Todd Andel, Ashley Gibson

Guests: Matt Howard

1. Introduction

2. Approval of prior meeting minutes March 23, 2026

    a. Dr. Minchew motioned, Dr. Loomis seconded, motion carried

3. Three Member Dissertation Committees— Dr. Matt Howard

    a. Business proposed a three-member dissertation committee. Matt Howard made the proposal. He said the PhD program is growing, and their faculty are being stretched thin. Due to the size, they are having to utilize faculty who have more of a teaching component. They are hoping with the reduced committee number, faculty can be more dedicated to enhance the quality of the participation since they would be on less committees overall.
    b. Concerns were raised on the quality of the reduction as the number of students increase without an increase in the faculty size. It was also noted that the outside committee members often provide a different perspective.
    c. Dr. Gillis was going to get the accreditation standards to share with the grad council to continue the discussion to bring it back to the table when the new dean starts.

4. Graduate Dean's Report— Dr. Todd Andel

    a. Graduate Faculty Appointments-timeliness

        i. When graduate faculty status lapses, this could impact accreditation standards departments and colleges were asked to help ensure forms are submitted in a timelier manner. Colleges were also asked to ensure the form was submitted correctly, including the vote, prior to graduate school submission.

    b. GA stipend amounts

        i. This was noted as problem across all programs, but there were no short term action items that could be taken at the time of the meeting. Dr. Andel mentioned setting a minimum amount for externally funded GAs might be helpful.

    c. Graduate Certificates

        i. It was noted that many existing graduate certificates were built as a part of a grant, but they were not serving to bring in new students. The students who generally enrolled were studnts

already in a graduate program. Dr. Andel said he and Dr. Kent discussed the use of graduate certificates to recruit new students who would not otherwise enroll in a graduate program. In this case, the students may decide to stay and complete the entire graduate degree.

d. AI Document

i. Dr. Andel was going to separate the policy from the form and create those as stand alone documents. The students could read the policy and then sign the separate form. This would reduce the length of the document. Once completed, Dr. Andel was going to circulate to the committee for final approval with a target of spring 2027 to implement.

e. EAB Consulting Update

i. Moved to new business

5. ACHE and GA update —Dr. Ashley Gibson

a. Graduate Student Evaluations

i. She reminded the council that evaluations should be submitted annually, but they can be submitted more frequently if needed. Evaluations serve as documentation on GA performance.

b. Communicating GA duties in advance of the semester start date

i. Dr. Gibson asked the graduate council to ensure programs are communicating with graduate assistants prior to the start of the semester to outline expectations for the student.

6. New Business

A. Graduate Enrollment Initiatives

a. Targeted email campaign for undergraduate students nearing graduation (90 credit hours)

i. It was noted this was tried before Slate was implemented, but it fell off after slate.
ii. The fast-track admission is in place for a few programs, but the departments were not aware the students had been admitted so they were not receiving communication from the departments. Admissions briefed the group on the process so everyone was aware of the communication students were receiving.

b. General Grad Program Marketing brochure

i. Marketing and Communication was asked to come up with some ideas so grad coordinators may receive communication from them.

c. Grad Program Expo (Spring)

i. The grad school can coordinate this, but we will need support from all of the programs. We will look at the dates and spaces we could have this.

7. Adjournment

a. Dr. Chapman motioned; Dr. Stefurak seconded. Motion carried.