



THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF THE COLLEGE OF CHARLESTON 2020 STRATEGIC PLAN

INTRODUCTION

On October 16, 2009, the College of Charleston’s Board of Trustees unanimously approved a new Strategic Plan that will guide the institution for the next decade and beyond. The plan articulates the College’s purpose and core values, and establishes five goals that will enable the College to achieve its envisioned future by 2020. See <http://www.cofc.edu/strategicplan> .

The College intends to maintain the student-centered focus of a small teaching institution, while offering the expansive academic opportunities that are characteristic of a national research university. Undergraduate liberal arts and sciences education will remain the top priority, but the College will expand and pursue new graduate-level programs in academic areas tied to the history, traditions, culture, and environment of the Lowcountry. Emphasizing programs in areas such as marine biology, environmental science, historic preservation, African American history, arts management, hospitality and tourism, and other disciplines that celebrate and enhance the College’s unique location will differentiate the College from universities around the world.

The Strategic Plan establishes a new direction aimed at infusing a culture of innovation, entrepreneurship, philanthropy, advocacy, diversity, and sustainability. An international and environmentally conscious perspective will permeate campus, and every member of the College community will serve as ambassadors for the institution.

To realize its envisioned future, the College must embrace a new financial paradigm that provides sufficient resources to support new initiatives, dramatically increases student financial aid, and enables the hiring of additional faculty and staff.

The Graduate School of the College of Charleston has a crucial role to play in achieving the 2020 vision of the College. Using our unique location as a focus, the

Graduate School prepares professionals to address the environmental, social, and economic health and well-being of the nation. A world-class institution needs a vibrant graduate school. In addition to creating new master's programs and certificates in targeted areas, the College of Charleston of 2020 will offer a few select doctoral programs in areas appropriate to the needs of the region and the strengths of the faculty. These graduate programs help attract the very best faculty and provide additional opportunities of research and mentorship among faculty, graduate students, and undergraduates. They address community needs through economic development, community assistance and outreach, and urban planning. Graduate certificates and executive education opportunities contribute substantial revenue to the College.

CORE PURPOSE

Using our unique location as a focus, the Graduate School prepares professionals to address the environmental, social, and economic health and well-being of the nation.

ENVISIONED FUTURE

The Graduate School of the College of Charleston is known for its high-quality master's programs and three joint Ph.D. programs that build on the historical and environmental foundations of the region. Our master's and Ph.D. programs in marine biology and environmental studies are internationally renowned and our Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction lures educators from all over the region. Interdisciplinary designer degrees and/or certificates include environmental science and law, museum management, communication and health services, marine policy, science education, urban and regional planning, arts management, Atlantic Studies, non-profit management, health administration, Geographic Information Systems, African American Studies, music performance, and innovation technology. Along with our fast-track master's programs in accounting and business administration, our joint master's programs in historic preservation and public administration, and our new master's degrees in the creative arts, these specialized and interdisciplinary programs make Charleston a destination city for graduate work. Programs in North America, Australia, Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia enable our students and faculty to have a world-wide impact.

All graduate students, regardless of program, have various opportunities to personalize their education, whether through collaboration with faculty and/or undergraduate students in research or creative projects; thesis/dissertation work; internships; capstone seminars; study away experiences; or clinical practice. Endowed scholarships provide a full ride for top students and are allocated by student qualifications, not by program choice, enabling a variety of programs to attract the top students in the nation to The Graduate School. Within a year of their graduation, 90 percent of our alumni are employed in professional positions related to their training or are continuing their education in professional or doctoral programs.

The "Big Donor Named Graduate School Building" includes rooms for graduate seminars and meetings, social space and exercise rooms for graduate students and faculty, carrels for graduate students, and computer labs as well as offices for staff. The graduate dean has budgetary responsibility and resources for graduate programming and graduate marketing. Interdisciplinary program directors report to the graduate dean and are provided stipends by the graduate school.

A “Big Name Donor Environmental Studies Center” (ESC) at Dixie serves as South Carolina’s premier ecologically friendly educational facility and is the headquarters for our Peace Corps Master’s Initiative. Located in an area least impacted by new construction, the ESC incorporates the latest techniques in environmentally sustainable development and boasts gold LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification in the five green design categories: sustainable sites, water efficiency, energy and atmosphere, materials and resources, and indoor environmental quality. The structure contains classrooms and laboratories, space for exhibits and public lectures, and dormitory housing for students, researchers, and visitors. Contiguous acreage is dedicated to agricultural initiatives with external partners. The ESC is a hub of multidisciplinary activity, involving faculty, students, and staff from all six academic schools, the graduate school, and the honors college. It offers educational programs for K-12 teachers and school children, weekend executive courses, educational retreats, team-building opportunities, recreational programs, and sustainability workshops. The Dixie campus is an important complement to our renovated and enlarged facilities at the Grice Marine Laboratory. Together they attract scholars from all over the world.

The Graduate School emphasizes quality not size. Approximately 1,000 degree-seeking students are enrolled on the downtown, Grice, Dixie, and North campuses. Cost-benefit and student interest analyses determine the best overall mix of programs and the optimal enrollment level and recruitment market for each. Approximately 2000 adults are enrolled in life-long learning classes, with course offerings, delivery modes, and venues tailored to their needs. These professional development and executive education offerings have separate acronyms and different names and, if appropriate, different degree qualifications and titles from those in the traditional degree programs. These revenue-generating programs fund graduate student scholarships and support services.

Faculty and staff are hired with specific commitments to graduate teaching, research, and mentoring (when appropriate). Involvement with graduate students and programs is perceived as complementing and enriching the undergraduate mission. Endowed chairs allow programs to attract internationally renowned scholars.

GOALS

Goal 1 Statement:

Develop and promote graduate programs in key academic areas that take advantage of our history, culture, and location and/or that provide specialized knowledge and training for professionals.

Goal 1 Description:

We specialize in “designer” degrees and certificates that are related to our location in the South Carolina Lowcountry and that build on our programs’ strengths and those of collaborating institutions. We have partnerships and joint programs with universities and/or governments in North America, Australia, Central and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. External program reviews are combined with cost-benefit and student interest analyses to determine optimal enrollment levels for individual programs, the ideal recruitment market for each program, and the best overall mix of programs. The capacity and quality of graduate programs have expanded from 600 to 1,000 (headcount) degree-seeking students on campus.

Current Reality:

Our master’s programs in marine biology and environmental science benefit from our coastal location, collaborating federal and state labs, and the opportunities available at Grice and Dixie. Our joint historic preservation program, MPA program, arts management and urban and regional planning certificates take advantage of our urban location. Programs that address the economic and social needs of Charleston and the state include a variety of MAT and M.Ed. offerings, accounting, computer science, communication, public administration and urban planning, environmental studies, historic preservation, and legal and medical interpreting. Students already mix and match degrees with certificates, and there is great interest in topics such as marine policy and environmental law.

On the global front, we currently have a bilateral exchange for graduate students with Université de Versailles-Saint Quentin in France. James Cook University in Australia has approached us about a joint degree in marine biology.

But State restrictions on doctoral degrees and on program duplication hinder our ability to add Ph.D. and M.B.A. degrees despite interest in Ph.D.s in marine biology, environmental studies, and education and in daytime M.B.A.s.

External reviews are conducted every seven years unless required more frequently by accrediting agencies, but they have not been combined with cost-benefit and student interest analyses. Current accounting makes it difficult to delineate graduate from undergraduate programs.

Goal 2 Statement:

Create a sense of community among graduate students, faculty, and staff and engage with PK-12 schools, government agencies, NPOs, and businesses for the economic and social betterment of the region.

Goal 2 Description:

A sense of community among graduate students, faculty, and staff begins with program prospects and extends to program alumni. “The Big Donor Named Graduate School Building” on the main campus has rooms for graduate seminars and meetings, social space for graduate students and faculty, carrels for graduate students, and computer labs as well as offices for staff. There is graduate housing contiguous to the downtown, Grice, and Dixie campuses so that half of our graduate students live on or near campus. We have exercise facilities/rooms geared to faculty, graduate and adult students, and their families. Our partnership with CARTA provides no-cost or low-cost “green” transportation between the Grice and Dixie campuses and downtown. Our joint programs have concurrent calendars, identical costs, and single reporting systems. We publicize regularly the economic contributions of our programs to the region. Service learning and community engagement are considered as important components in all graduate programs. Public and private agencies and institutions look to the Graduate School for solutions to economic and social problems.

Current Reality:

Aside from dormitory space for 8 students at Grice, there is no graduate student housing on or near campus, no social space for graduate students, few carrels for graduate students, and no public transportation between campuses. Administering joint degrees is complicated by different academic calendars, tuitions, and grading systems. Students and faculty have to check email accounts and use reporting systems at both universities.

In fall 2007 The Graduate School surveyed current students and prospects about graduate student housing. Of the 258 that responded, 37 percent said they would be interested in graduate student housing. Most preferred to have an on-campus apartment or house, and although they would not mind sharing space, they did not want to share a room. Students were willing to pay up to \$3,300 a year for graduate student housing. They expressed no interest in campus meal plans.

The Graduate Student Association (GSA), formed in 2007, offers opportunities for student networking, both within and among programs, and addresses student concerns about health care costs and parking for graduate and teaching assistants who work on the downtown campus. They have volunteered for the Beach Sweep, Habitat for Humanity, Lowcountry Food Bank, and Dance Marathon for MUSC Children’s Hospital, and hosted networking and charity events with The Citadel and the Charleston School of Law. Since 2007, five individual graduate programs have created their own student association under the auspices of the GSA. Few certificate or non-degree students participate in GSA activities, however.

The Graduate School Office communicates through email, web pages, blogs, Facebook pages, and twitter accounts. Individual programs have varied success keeping in touch with students after graduation, and the graduate school has found it difficult to get accurate addresses of its graduates from the Alumni Office. There is a constant lament that graduate students, faculty, and staff are the red-headed stepsisters of the College, always having to remind others of their existence. There is no Advisory Board to help with networking or fundraising. ORGA offers workshops for grant writing and

administration, compliance issues, and RCR, but the graduate school does not have separate classes in these topics as do many other universities.

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Goal 3 Statement:

Achieve recognition as a national leader in Environmental Studies and Sustainability education with graduates known for their significant contributions to these fields.

Goal 3 Description:

Dixie Plantation showcases a completely green and sustainable long term use plan that meets the requirements of John Henry Dick's will. Our Environmental Studies Center there provides classrooms, laboratories, space for exhibits and public lectures, and dormitory housing and is the hub for multidisciplinary, problem-based instruction for individuals from all age groups and educational levels. The LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certified building serves as South Carolina's premier ecologically friendly educational facility and as a national model for green construction. Contiguous fields provide opportunities for agricultural initiatives with external partners. Our Peace Corps Master's International program and students are located at Dixie.

Current Reality:

While the College has used Dixie Plantation for occasional class field trips (~10 per semester = 30 hours of use), logistics are not currently favorable for extensive utilization. We have not lived up to our obligation to provide an overall sustainable education plan for the Dixie facility. There are no classrooms, laboratories, or facilities for overnight accommodations. Bringing students the 15 miles from the downtown campus to Dixie requires hiring vans or organizing car pools. Dixie has tremendous potential to complement our strong undergraduate environmental studies minor and our award winning MES graduate program. It is unfortunate in our current global climate that our campus has little in the way of green construction. College students in general, and our graduate students in particular, take a great interest in the environment and in sustainability, with such volunteer projects as the Beach Sweep and Recycling Awareness among others.

The environmental studies program, while highly successful and stimulating, has been unable to achieve any sort of national ranking as the program does not offer a PhD in the field. However, the MES and Public Administration programs are both offering courses in environmental policy, a solid foundation for not only the Dixie development but for a potential PhD program and even further collaboration in the future.

Goal 4 Statement:

Establish best practices for distance education/online graduate programs and provide life-long learning opportunities for adults.

Goal 4 Description:

We provide life-long learning opportunities for adults at our Dixie and North campuses. Our numbers of professional development students taking education courses increased from 900 to 1500 per semester by expanding number of classes offered at local elementary and high schools and through weekend and online options. We address needs of active military personnel and others whose business involves considerable travel by creating more flexible course models and schedules. Approximately 500 individuals are enrolled in executive education and other life-long learning classes. These courses provide income for the academic mission.

Current Reality:

The College lags behind The Citadel and Trident Tech in the provision of life-long learning opportunities. Aside from professional development courses offered through the School of Education, Health and Human Performance, there are few programs that address the needs of adults or that offer alternative topics or times from those of the downtown campus. Enrollments in professional development education classes are high, with a spring 2009 enrollment of 862. The North Campus, although a perfect facility for a professional development curriculum with its modern classroom facilities (including sophisticated distance learning equipment), is currently used more as an overflow for traditional classes.

An ad hoc committee has been established to look at creating guidelines for distance education/online learning and to look into expanding offerings into other academic areas besides education. This committee, as part of its mandate, will work at addressing the existing concern about the quality of these courses and the impact that expanding professional development will have on the existing curriculum. There is widespread concern among many faculty about the quality of such classes and their impact on traditional programs.

Goal 5 Statement:

Deliver quality graduates and programs and facilitate research and scholarship through the formation of an integrated school with fiscal responsibility.

Goal 5 Description:

The Graduate School has a separate operating budget that gives the Graduate Dean budgetary responsibility for graduate programming on all campuses. Moneys from premium tuition and other graduate school fees are incorporated into the graduate school budget. There are separate budget lines for graduate student research and for graduate faculty and staff professional development. Interdisciplinary program directors and College-funded staff at the Lowcountry Graduate Center (LGC) report to the graduate school dean. Assistantships are centralized in the Graduate School Office and allocated to programs using an enrollment model. The dean has a separate recruiting and marketing budget for graduate programs. There are dedicated fundraising efforts for graduate students and programs.

Current Reality:

The Graduate School currently has a centralized/de-centralized system – administrative duties such as recruitment, admissions, and record keeping are handled in the Graduate School Office, but fiscal control is located within the schools and the general College fund. This leaves the Dean of The Graduate School without financial leverage. Little attention has been given in the past to budgetary information attached to enrollment models at the graduate level; this means that no adequate cost-benefit analysis has ever been produced. There is no separate budget line for graduate research or graduate marketing, and the existing budget for recruitment is insufficient. The Graduate School received none of the \$40,000 in fees taken for application, admissions, thesis, and graduation last year. In 2008, the Board of Trustees voted to allow the Graduate School to charge a 5 percent higher tuition than the undergraduate; however, this additional tuition does not benefit the Graduate School.

Graduate assistantships – practically our only form of financial assistance for graduate students – have been assigned to departments/offices on a historical basis and most are not under the control of the graduate dean. LGC funds are often allocated without concern for College program priorities, while LGC marketing moneys can only be used for programs at the North campus even though that might not be the best venue for a particular program. While the North Campus is a vital asset, not all programs find the distant facility convenient or appropriate.

STRATEGIES TO CLOSE THE GAP

Strategy 1: Create new organizational structures

- Establish an Advisory Board
- Establish a meaningful graduate school budget with moneys for recruitment, marketing, and programming using tuition premiums, indirect grant costs, foundation moneys, and current funds allocated at department level (including LGC)
- Engage in dedicated fundraising efforts for scholarships, program chairs, and graduate school facilities such as an Environmental Studies Center at Dixie and a graduate school building
- Hire Director for Technology to oversee complex electronic workflow processes and accurate management of reporting requirements across all functional areas of the Graduate School This person would also advise graduate faculty on distance education technology and policies
- Hire Director of Life-Long Learning to oversee professional development and continuing education programs
- Hire two additional recruiters so that there will be one for education; one for sciences and mathematics, and social sciences; and one for humanities and arts
- Introduce reward structures that support collaboration, interdisciplinary studies, and graduate school teaching/mentoring
- Create uniform student allocation models, tuition and fees, calendars, grading policies for joint programs

- Devise systems for delivering quality on-line programs and courses
- Provide hardware and human resources for electronic research administration including opportunity identification, proposal submission, internal routing and processing, tracking and reporting, and compliance committee activities

Strategy 2: Offer new programming from designer degrees to executive education and life-long learning modules

- Create “designer” degrees and certificates that build on our existing program strengths and those of collaborating institutions in the region in environmental science and law, communication and health services, marine policy, museum management, science education, creative arts, Atlantic Studies, African American Studies, music performance, urban and regional planning, arts management, GIS, non-profit management, and innovation technology
- Collaborate with School of Humanities and Social Sciences and School of Sciences and Mathematics to establish a joint MES-MPA degree and a certificate in environmental/marine policy.
- Apply for CGS, NSF, and NEH grants to develop interdisciplinary and innovative degrees that capitalize on our unique location and capabilities
- Follow CGS best-practices to establish PSM in marine policy and science education
- Write a successful Peace Corps MI application for our MES program
- Expand Peace Corps MI degree program to include areas of marine biology, business, urban planning, and education
- Collaborate with the School of Sciences and Mathematics to establish a joint program in marine biology with James Cook University in Australia and to explore the feasibility of Ph.D. programs in marine biology and environmental science
- Work with the School of Business and Economics to establish remote M.B.A. programs in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Xiamen (China), Bahrain, Monterrey (Mexico), Montreaux (Switzerland) and to explore the feasibility of a Ph.D. in applied marketing in Hong Kong or Taiwan
- Offer workshops, campus visits, and summer campus for K-12 students and faculty focusing on environmental policy, sustainability, green technology, creative arts, Lowcountry flora and fauna, historic preservation, and urban planning (these could be at Grice, Dixie, or downtown)
- Offer executive education classes in green technology and sustainability to approximately 100 professionals a year using the Environmental Studies Center (ESC) and its programs as a base
- Dedicate space on Dixie for crop acreage. This would promote community interaction through agencies such as Fields to Families and the USDA and would attract agricultural interns from institutions such as Clemson and NC State
- Create a menu of life-long learning classes and programs based on a survey of community interest and need. These courses would have separate acronyms and different names and, if appropriate, different degree qualifications and titles from those in the traditional degree programs

- Offer sustainability workshops, weekend executive courses, teacher training seminars, educational retreats, team-building opportunities at ESC
- Create summer programs for PK-12, undergraduates, graduates, and adult learners that utilize the resources of ESC
- Design continuing education courses and workshops for industry and government
- Organize an annual international conference focusing on environmental issues and sustainability
- Establish guidelines and observe best practices for distance education/online graduate programs
- Add review of distance education/on-line components of classes to purview of the Faculty Committee on Graduate Curriculum and Continuing Education. Establish a distance-learning resource center equipped with current technologies for advanced online learning and pedagogy
- Work with ORGA to identify and apply for funding as appropriate

Strategy 3: Enhance and build new partnerships and exchanges from within the College of Charleston Community and extending into the international arena

- Partner with high quality programs nationally and internationally to strengthen our training capacities and research/scholarship opportunities in marine biology, environmental studies, language communication (ESOL, interpreting, LALE, CSCI)
- Expand bilateral exchanges with current partners in Europe, Asia, South America, and Australia to include graduate students and faculty as well as undergraduate students
- Collaborate with the Charleston School of Law to develop certificates and degrees in environmental law and marine policy and to offer courses in legal and medical interpreting
- Collaborate with MUSC to develop certificates and degrees in communication and health services
- Collaborate with Clemson to establish joint Ph.D. in curriculum and instruction
- Collaborate with the School of the Arts, with the School of Business and Economics, the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the School of Education, Health and Human Performance to establish certificates and degrees in science education, creative arts, urban and regional planning, and arts management.
- Work with local and global partners to establish Ph.D.s in marine biology, environmental studies, and curriculum and instruction and to offer high quality, fast track M.B.A. degrees
- Collaborate with MUSC and James Cook University in Australia to establish a Ph.D. in marine biology
- Collaborate with SCDNR, NOAA, NIST, USFWS, USACE, and regional NGOs to establish a Ph.D. in environmental studies.
- Collaborate with The Citadel and Asian universities to establish an M.B.A.

- Collaborate with PK-12 schools, government agencies, NPOs, and businesses to improve the economy and society of the South Carolina Lowcountry and the region
- Seek grants that fund programs with PK-12 schools such as the GK-12 NSF award that would partner STEM graduate students and faculty with middle school teachers and students
- Develop and expand research partnerships

Strategy 4: Provide enhanced and new benefits to graduate students

- Offer tuition waivers and additional out-of-state abatements
- Offer full-ride scholarships, higher paid assistantships, and benefit packages to top students in all degree programs
- Provide all graduate students opportunities to personalize their education through collaboration with faculty and/or undergraduate students in research or creative projects; thesis/dissertation work; internships; capstone seminars; study-away experience; or clinical practice
- Create mentoring program matching graduate students with undergraduate students in similar fields of study
- Build a graduate school resources directory that links faculty, students, program alumni, and research associates
- Collaborate with other public institutions to offer benefit packages that include health insurance, parking, child-care options at a reasonable cost
- Work with Alumni Office and Career Center to offer job fairs and networking opportunities geared to those with graduate degrees so that within a year of their graduation, 90 percent of our alumni will be employed in professional positions related to their training or will be continuing their education in professional or doctoral programs
- Encourage program faculty to work closely with the GSA and individual program student associations to contribute to the well being of the College community
- Collaborate with partners in joint programs to establish concurrent calendars, identical tuitions/fees, single reporting systems
- Encourage faculty to include funding to support graduate student collaboration in proposals for external funding
- Provide support to faculty and graduate students in responsible conduct of research, animal care and use, human participants, bio-safety, mentoring, and other regulatory requirements through education, procedural, and advisory means

Strategy 5: Create new faculty and staff lines, incentives, and benefits

- Create incentives for faculty to teach in graduate programs and to mentor graduate students
- Feature graduate programs when recruiting new faculty
- Establish endowed chairs for every program that will allow them to attract internationally renowned teacher-scholars
- Create new faculty line in environmental policy
- Create new faculty line that will enable MPA program to become free standing

- Enable faculty and staff to participate in study-away opportunities by offering flexible programming and financial incentives
- Provide training and incentives for faculty preparing new distance education courses
- Expand professional development funding for graduate staff so that they can enroll in two courses per semester and can attend at least one professional development workshop or professional conference a year
- Define institutional policies related to sponsored programs and responsible conduct of search so that they provide the maximum incentive to faculty and staff to pursue external funding