



Associate/Assistant Graduate Deans Council Meeting

August 26, 2025

2:00-4:00 pm

Darla Moore School of Business – Room 364

The AAGDC Meeting was held on Tuesday, August 26, 2025 at 2:00 p.m. at the Darla Moore School of Business.

Present: Dean Ann Vail, Lucy Yu, Jack Turner, Bill Hauk, Dale Moore, Robin Dawson, Angelina Sylvain, Ben Roth, Tracey Weldon, Danny Jenkins, Doug Pittman, Kenneth Campbell, Satish Jayachandran, Heidi Conte, Stephen Shapiro, Barbara Foster, Jill Stewart, Peter Moyi.

Opening Remarks, Welcome, and Agenda Review – Dean Ann Vail

Dean Vail welcomed the group and asked if there were any additional items for the agenda. A discussion about the Doctoral Advisory Committee was added. She also introduced Harlan Smith.

International Student Arrival and Enrollment – Harlan Smith

- Harlan Smith reports to Sam Todd, Vice Provost and Associate Vice President for Global Affairs, and collaborates with the Dean of The Graduate School on shared challenges.
- New Student Information and Data System: This system will bridge the gap between ISSS (International Student and Scholar Services) and academic units, addressing legal compliance and international student academic progression.
- There will be an advisor of record assigned to each college or school, with possibly two for larger ones.
- International Student Enrollment Update:
 - 440 new international students enrolled at all levels.
 - An additional 80 students are expected in January due to delayed visa approvals.
 - Students must now prove they are solely coming to the U.S. for academic purposes.

- All F1 and J1 visa holders must have a visa interview and social media will be vetted per new government requirements.
- Graduate assistants may not work from abroad; their location will be coded in the system.

New Members of AAGDC Introductions – Dean Vail

- Heidi Conte – New Assistant Dean for Enrollment Technology.
- Barbara Foster – New Chief of Staff for The Graduate School.
- Lucy Yu – New Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Student Engagement.
- Bill Hauk – New Chair of Graduate Council, Associate Professor of Economics, and Director of the 1-year MBA program.

Graduate Expo – Dean Vail

- Date: September 5th, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at Russell House.
- New feature: Workshops based on student requests from last year.
- An “Ask the Graduate School” booth will be available.

Grad Launch – Dean Vail

- Pilot Testing: A Graduate Student Orientation/Onboarding course is being tested with two sections this fall. Both sections have reached capacity, and there is a waiting list.
- The course aims to provide additional onboarding support and foster a sense of belonging. Peer institutions have found it effective.
- Some institutions offer it as mandatory, while others make it optional.

Federal Mandate Related to Digital Accessibility – Dr. Lucy Yu

- Implementation Timeline: USC aims to fully comply with federal digital accessibility requirements by April 2026.
- Focus on electronic dissertations and theses.
- A formatting guide and template will be provided to students to ensure compliance.
- Workshops (both online and in-person) will be held to assist students with compliance.

Program of Study Automation – Dr. Angelina Sylvain

- The University is automating Graduate School forms using Dynamic Forms. The Program of Study (POS) form will go live on September 2nd.
- Paper Forms: Paper forms will be accepted until January 2, 2026. After this date, only electronic forms will be accepted.
- Dean Vail noted the need to improve POS completion, as many students arrive at graduation clearance without a completed POS.
- The new automated system aims to address compliance issues and improve program productivity.

CHE and “Stop-Out” Master’s Program – Dr. Angelina Sylvain

- The Stop-Out Master’s Program is a degree PhD students can receive on their way to completing their PhD.
- Moving forward, PhD students must be enrolled in the master’s program at the point of enrollment to ensure program productivity and avoid issues with the Council of Higher Education (CHE).
- Program coordinators are encouraged to monitor their programs and flag any that need attention.

Student Services Staffing – Satish Jayachandran

- The Moore School is seeking an optimal advisor-to-student ratio. Historically, it was 1:175, but the digital shift may require adjustments.
- Undergraduates follow a more routine checkup model, while graduate students may have more complex needs.
- Different advising strategies for professional part-time and full-time students.
- It was suggested that we consider hiring advisors who could work weekends.

Enrollment Management System: Element1801 – Dr. Angelina Sylvain

- Element451 has been selected as the new enrollment management system, to be known as Element1801 at USC.
- It will replace CollegeNet and will support the entire student lifecycle, from prospecting to graduation.
- Launch Timeline:
 - Kickoff: September 9, 2025.
 - Discovery Phase: September - October 2025.
 - Initial access: February 2026.
 - Full system launch: March 2026.
 - In-person training sessions: February - March 2026.
 - Recurring training sessions: April 2026.
- The importance of collaboration in the transition, including feedback and messaging support from Graduate Directors and faculty was emphasized.

Doctoral Advisory Committee – Danny Jenkins

- Concerns were raised about implementing the Doctoral Advisory Committee (DAC). This third committee would be separate from the comprehensive exam committee.
- Some institutions use DACs for orienting students and introducing them to the program.
- It was clarified that the DAC could overlap with the dissertation committee.
- The group discussed the need for policy adjustments to clarify language and streamline the process.

Next Meeting of the AAGDC meeting will be held on Tuesday, September 23, 2025.