

## Graduate Director Meeting

Spring 2023

March 21, 2023

2:00 to 3:30

1. Discussion of **DegreeWorks** for Graduate Programs
  - a. Aaron Marterer, Registrar
  - b. Joey Derrick, Director of Financial Aid and Scholarships
2. **2022 Graduate Student Needs Assessment**
  - a. Angelina Sylvain, Vice Dean for Graduate Education.
3. **Affirmative Action:** For information purposes, there may be ramifications tied to an anticipated Supreme Court of the United States (SCOTUS) ruling about affirmative action with regard to race in admissions decisions. The College Board has provided [this link](#) to recommendations for how to prepare for the anticipated ruling, along with audio recordings of the UNC and Harvard cases as heard by the SCOTUS. [here is the link in case you have to copy and paste:  
<https://professionals.collegeboard.org/2023-scotus-race-admissions> ]
4. **Graduation with Leadership Distinction.** Many of you are likely aware of this program at the undergraduate level. The question has arisen with respect to whether or not there may be any interest in exploring the creation of a parallel program at the graduate level.
5. **Graduate Council.** This body is the key voice for faculty governance of Graduate issues at USC. There is a proposal (approved by the Graduate Council) currently under consideration to revise procedures for identifying membership on the Graduate Council. This proposal will require attention from the Faculty Senate since a revision to the Faculty Manual would be involved, if any changes are to be made.
6. **Law School Grade Mode Expansion.** Provost Arnett has endorsed an expansion of grade modes that will impact JD students only. Memo attached.
7. **Military Transfer Policy.** This issue is being considered across institutions in the state. We are exploring what this might look like at USC at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.
8. **ACAF 4.00.** Policy regarding Graduate Assistantships including responsibilities and expectations for information about duties, is under revision.
9. **GRE requirements** as stated in Graduate Studies Bulletin are in effect unless noted on the Graduate School's Degree Program page for pandemic waiver through Fall 2023.
  - All admissions for Spring 2024 use the Graduate Bulletin requirements.
  - 2023-24 Graduate Studies Bulletin is now posted
  - Admissions requirements show under the department heading if not showing on individual program listings in the Graduate Bulletin.
  - If any admissions criteria posted in the Graduate Bulletin are not included in an application, the Graduate Director must submit an AAR as an exception and provide an academic justification for the exception.
  - Posting waiver information on department/program webpages does not lessen stated Graduate Bulletin criteria. Send AARs as exception (unless pandemic score waiver is posted on the Graduate School Degree Program webpage for appropriate term).

## 10. Important Information Updates

- a. **GTA/GIA Orientation:** The registration page for Fall 2023 will be available by the end of this Month (March), and will be announced on the listserv. If you have questions about GTA/GIA training, please direct them to Michelle Jardee at [hardeem@mailbox.sc.edu](mailto:hardeem@mailbox.sc.edu)
- b. **All Summer 2023 and Fall 2023 applications showing in ADMIT need an Admission Action Recommendation (AAR)**
  - o Recommended by May 1 for Summer applications, July 15 for Fall applications or within two weeks of submission if received after these dates
  - o Currently 765 Summer applications and 2400 Fall applications need recommendations
  - o “Summer 2023 No Admission Decision” and “Fall 2023 No Admission Decision” are available in ADMIT for Graduate Directors and program staff to run
- c. **Annual changes to the CollegeNet ApplyWeb Application are due to Libby Cross by April 15.**
  - o Original request was emailed to listservs on 3/2/2023.
  - o Programs can customize the prompts for Personal Statement, Resumes, Writing Samples and create program-specific questions to get needed information from their applicants
  - o A new feature to consider is ApplyCam for applicants to respond to a written prompt with a video “essay.” (A written essay is a backup for those who do not wish to provide CollegeNet access to their computer’s audio and video to record the session.)
- d. **Graduate student registration “time tickets” for Summer and Fall 2023 opens April 3<sup>rd</sup>.**
- e. **Students must register for coursework for a semester BEFORE Graduate Assistant hiring is processed** in PeopleSoft HCM to avoid being “recycled” back to the department to have to process all over again.
  - o Summer 2023 Graduate Assistants must enroll in 3 credit hours in the Summer term (1+ credits if approved as Z-Status for the Summer term).
  - o Fall 2023 Graduate Assistants must enroll in 6 credit hours in the Fall term (1+ credits if approved as Z-Status for the Fall term).
  - o Other causes for “Recycled” Hires that should be caught during department/college approvals
    - Minimum pay rate must be \$14/hour
    - Dates and pay on the hire match the dates and pay on the Offer Letter
    - Offer Letter and other uploaded documents must be signed by student
- f. **Health Insurance and Health Insurance Subsidy information**
  - o Health Insurance
    - [https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/new\\_students/health\\_requirements/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/new_students/health_requirements/index.php)
    - Spring 2023 insurance covers all participants through July 31.
    - There is no mandatory insurance for newly matriculated students in Summer terms; however, students can enroll voluntarily and pay the insurance company AHP directly. (No subsidy is provided until Fall)
    - 2023-24 AY rates have not yet been posted. Expected by the end of April.

- Z-Status students (who are not GAs or international) must voluntarily enroll in coverage in the Fall
- Health Insurance Subsidy is automatically applied as a credit to all Full time PhD students' and all Graduate Assistants' Bursar accounts once students are fully enrolled, if the insurance has not been waived.
  - [https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges\\_schools/graduate\\_school/paying\\_for\\_graduate\\_school/health\\_insurance\\_subsidy/index.php](https://www.sc.edu/study/colleges_schools/graduate_school/paying_for_graduate_school/health_insurance_subsidy/index.php)
  - Graduate school will continue to cover \$420 of the Fall subsidy and \$580 of the Spring subsidy for a total of \$1000 per eligible student/per year.
  - Colleges/Departments will cover the remaining balance each semester
  - Financial processes are handled by Business Managers and the University Finance Office once the semester is underway. Check with your college business manager with questions, especially if grant funds should be used to cover the college portion.

**11. Good News:**

Our ETD first place finisher from the Fall competition, Celia Cui, a doctoral student in Pharmaceutical Sciences, represented USC at the Spring regional meeting of the Conference of Southern Graduate Schools in Tampa Florida. Celia competed in a heat of 13 presentations, and was one of 52 competitors from across the southeast. Celia was one of the top two finishers in her heat and won a place in the Grand Finale with her presentation: "Finding the next Viagra: Teaching an old drug new tricks." While not the eventual winner of the competition, Celia was a solid characterization of the quality of graduate work being done here at USC.

**12. Graduate School Dean Search.** Round 1 interviews are under way.

**13. Good of the order?**



UNIVERSITY OF  
**SOUTH CAROLINA**

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School of Law

**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Donna Arnett, Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost,  
Cheryl L. Addy, Vice Provost and Dean of Faculty  
FROM: William C. Hubbard, Dean, School of Law  
DATE: February 24, 2023  
RE: **Expanding the Law School Grading Scale to Include Minus Grades**

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The law school faculty has reached a strong consensus that adding minus letter grades to our grading scale would enhance our ability to assess student performance. The addition of minus grades would offer at least three critical benefits. First, the addition of minus grades would reduce grade inflation, especially in smaller courses that are not graded on a curve. Second, in all courses, the addition of minus grades will enable faculty to provide a more nuanced signaling of relative performance among students. Finally, the addition of minus grades will allow a more logical grouping of grade tiers in courses that grade on a curve.

The sense of our faculty that the addition of minus grades would enhance our ability to assess our students aligns with the standard practices among law schools within the Southeastern Conference. Our research reveals that the University of South Carolina School of Law appears to be the only SEC member law school with a letter-grade based grading scale that does not include minus grades.<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, several law schools in the SEC have grading scales that vary from their University's general grading scale in their inclusion of minus grades. These schools include the University of Arkansas ([law, University](#)), the University of Florida ([law, University](#)), the University of Kentucky ([law, University](#)), and [Texas A&M](#). Our research did not identify a law school in the SEC with a letter-grade based grading scale that varied from its University by lacking minus grades.

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<sup>1</sup> The Southeastern Conference member schools with law schools include the [University of Alabama](#), the [University of Arkansas](#), the [University of Florida](#), the [University of Georgia](#), [University of Kentucky](#), [Louisiana State University](#), the [University of Mississippi](#), the University of Missouri, the University of South Carolina, the University of Tennessee, and [Vanderbilt University](#). Each of these law schools that assigns letter grades, except the University of South Carolina, includes minus grades in its grading scale. The [University of Missouri School of Law](#) and the [University of Tennessee College of Law](#) assign numerical grades rather than letter grades. Links to each law school's grading scale are embedded in this note (or to the general University grading scale when it is uniform with the law school's and no independently published law school scale was identified).

Logistically, this change is feasible. The law school has its own Registrar's Office. That office has indicated that it would be able to implement this change and has identified specific steps we would need to undertake to do so (e.g. recalibrating normalization requirements, scholarship requirements, creating interim categories to account for students graded under two different scales). Separate transcript paper could be created reflecting the law school's distinct grading scale. We expect that the University's Banner software is able to be programmed to accommodate differences in grading scales in different academic units since these differences presently exist at a number of institutions, and thus market demand exists for this capability.

For all of these reasons, the law school respectfully seeks the Provost's assent to add minus grades to the law school's grading scale. The specific scale would need to be adopted by the law school faculty at a future date. A model used at several other institutions is:

Grade	Quality Point
A	4.0
A-	3.67
B+	3.33
B	3.0
B-	2.67
C+	2.33
C	2.0
C-	1.67
D+	1.33
D	1.0
D-	0.67

## The Access and Diversity Collaborative's Higher Education Issue Blueprint

Preparing for the *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC* Decisions  
January 10, 2023 Working Draft

This template is provided as a resource to help stimulate inquiry and engagement around key issues implicated in the *SFFA v. Harvard* and *SFFA v. UNC* cases currently pending before the U.S. Supreme Court. It identifies key issues that have arisen in the SFFA cases, as well as potential issues to consider as colleges and universities engage in contingency/scenario planning in advance of the Court's rulings.

This document does not provide institution-specific legal advice, nor does it predict specific Court outcomes. Any action related to these cases associated with enrollment policy and practice should be pursued with the advice of institution-specific legal counsel.

### Admission

The Policy or Practice	Top Lines re Potential Court Action	<i>Is this policy or practice relevant to your institution?</i>	<i>What changes are worth considering, if any? What resources tied to such change would be implicated?</i>
1. Holistic Review/Judgments Based on Actual Interests/Experiences Associated with an Applicant's Race	Prospects for continuation may be good, especially in light of SFFA's repeated concessions and Court inquiry in oral argument.		
2. The Value of Meaningful Essay Questions	Aligned with holistic review, above. Worthy of focus.		

The Policy or Practice	Top Lines re Potential Court Action	<i>Is this policy or practice relevant to your institution?</i>	<i>What changes are worth considering, if any? What resources tied to such change would be implicated?</i>
3. Judgments Based on Racial Status, Including Shaping the Class Where Students of Color Are Excluded from Final Cut	There are reasonable bases to anticipate rejection of such practices. Exploration of alternatives in design would be worth considering.		
4. Data Collection and Analysis Involving Disaggregation by Race/Tracking Class Composition	Data collection and analysis are not directly implicated in record; expectation that such practices will be permitted is reasonable. Tracking practices that may affect class composition in real time could be implicated; alternative designs are worthy of consideration .		

## Financial Aid and Scholarships

The Policy or Practice	Top Lines re Potential Court Action	<i>Is this policy or practice relevant to your institution?</i>	<i>What changes are worth considering, if any? What resources tied to such change would be implicated?</i>
1. Race-Conscious Scholarships	Not directly implicated, but reasonably questioned in light of “first principles” that are expected. See USED '94 Title VI scholarship policy. Potentially within “status” realm of potential court analysis where awards are based on racial identity, without more.		
2. Adaptation/Integration of Holistic Review Model in Making Awards	Untested in court; logical zone of reasonable risk if court accepts SFFA concession. Policy may be enhanced through better alignment between admissions and aid		
3. Pooling and Matching	Untested in court; logical zone of reasonable risk if court accepts SFFA concession.		

The Policy or Practice	Top Lines re Potential Court Action	<i>Is this policy or practice relevant to your institution?</i>	<i>What changes are worth considering, if any? What resources tied to such change would be implicated?</i>
4. Multi-Year Awards/Donor Engagement	Details will matter. Possible implications for re-design over time.		