



**Graduating Student Survey
Executive Summary
Spring 2021**

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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.**
- ◇ **87% of those involved in a student organization said it added value to their experiences as a USA student.**
- ◇ **81% of students said they felt safe while on campus.**
- ◇ **83% of students said that if they had to do it over again, they would graduate with the same major.**
- ◇ **82% said that if they had to do it over again, they would attend USA.**

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

Category	M	SD
Advising	3.12	.78
Career Services Satisfaction	3.26	.85
Academic Resources	3.36	.55
Course Offerings	3.11	.74
Faculty/Course Work	3.25	.57
Educational Opportunities	3.11	.68
Graduate Students	3.41	.61
Student Organizations	3.32	.81
Safety	3.19	.80

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Sample Characteristics

The sample consisted of students who were graduating in the Fall 2020 semester. In total, there were 1,566 graduating students; 644 students responded to the survey for a response rate of 41%. N = number of respondents. Respondent demographics are shown below.

Table 1.1 Race/Ethnicity

Race/Ethnicity	N	Percentage
African American	110	17.1
Asian American	16	2.5
Hispanic American	23	3.6
Multiracial	13	2
Native American	6	.9
Non-Resident Alien	14	2.2
Unknown	19	3
White	427	66.3
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1	.2
Unavailable	15	2.3
Total	644	100

Table 1.2: Sex

Sex	N	Percentage
Male	168	26.1
Female	461	71.6
Unavailable	15	2.3
Total	644	100

Strengths

General

- **94%** reported that while attending USA, on average, they were either a full-time undergraduate or full-time graduate student.

Employment/Educational Plans after Graduation

- **97%** of those planning to start a new job after graduation said that their major or field at least somewhat prepared them for the new position. **18%** said that their major somewhat prepared them for their new position.

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.
- **84%** said they had adequate access to their advisor.

Career Services

- **85%** of those who had experience with Career Services were satisfied with their services.

Academic Resources

- **97%** were satisfied with availability of library resources.

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- **94%** were satisfied with labs, studios, and other academic spaces.
- **94%** were satisfied with computing resources (i.e., labs, machines, software).
- **94%** were satisfied with available technology/instrumentation/equipment.

Course Offerings

- **83%** felt that courses in their major were offered with sufficient frequency.

Faculty/Course Work

- **93%** felt that faculty were interested in their academic success.
- **94%** said that faculty were accessible outside of class.
- **91%** said the coursework in their program was engaging.
- **94%** said that, overall, their coursework was challenging.
- **90%** said that the foundational courses in their program prepared them for the upper-level courses.
- **84%** said they felt well prepared to take the licensure exam.

Educational Opportunities

- **86%** said there was ample opportunity to apply what they were learning to real-world problems or jobs.
- **81%** said there was ample opportunity to take part in an internship or co-op.
- **80%** said there was ample opportunity to work with faculty on research outside of class.

Graduate Student Experience

- **95%** said their thesis/dissertation advisor encouraged their intellectual growth and curiosity.
- **92%** said their thesis/dissertation advisor provided regular, constructive feedback to them regarding their progress.
- **84%** said they were encouraged to develop their writing skills and submit work for publication.
- **97%** said their graduate program included instruction that emphasized the importance of research integrity and professional ethics.
- **97%** 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, **35%** said they felt that their major or field either did not prepare them (**2%**) or only somewhat prepared them (**34%**) for their new position.

Advising

- **24%** of students were dissatisfied with the quality of advising for career planning.
- **21%** said the frequency with which they met with their advisor was not sufficient.

Career Services

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- Only **10%** reported visiting Career Services within the past year.

Faculty/Course Work

- **22%** said that, as a USA undergraduate, they did not feel like their general education courses prepared them for courses in their major.

Educational Opportunities

- **23%** said there was not ample opportunity to take part in service-learning.
- **22%** said there was not ample opportunity to engage in independent research outside of class.

Opportunities

Staying Connected After Graduation

- Students reported that, as alumni, they would like to participate in the following activities: Tailgates and football games (36%); concerts and exhibitions on campus at a discount (30%); and concerts and exhibitions around town at a discount (34%).
- 167 students said they would be interested in mentoring current students.

Sex Differences

Item	Mean for Females	Mean for Males
I was satisfied with the quality of advising for planning for graduate/professional school.	3.18	2.95
Courses in my major were offered with sufficient frequency.	3.20	2.93
I felt the variety of electives available to me in my major were sufficient	3.17	2.88
There was ample opportunity to apply what I was learning to real-world problems or jobs.	3.24	3.04
The graduate program included instruction that emphasized the importance of research integrity and professional ethics	3.47	3.73
Overall, how safe did you feel while on campus?	3.12	3.38