

A Vision for Graduate Education

at Georgia Southern University

Version 8.8

Approved by the Graduate Committee, January 21, 2010

The vision for graduate education at Georgia Southern University is to provide a learning environment which fosters creative thinking in the minds of our students, and to produce graduates who improve and enrich society.

To support this effort, the university will make it a priority to recruit, support, and retain faculty who are committed to creating and maintaining effective graduate programs. As stated in Georgia Southern's mission, our programs "prepare a diverse and select undergraduate and graduate student population for leadership and service as world citizens. Faculty, staff, and students embrace core values expressed through integrity, civility, kindness, collaboration, and a commitment to lifelong learning, wellness, and social responsibility."

Our academic distinction arises from the integrity and quality of our programs. A graduate degree from Georgia Southern is a valued statement of this distinction, and such degrees are earned only by those individuals who have achieved the standards of this community of learners.

Maintaining Integrity and Quality

The hallmarks of graduate education at Georgia Southern University are integrity and quality. As graduate education grows, we are committed to these principles.

We maintain our *integrity* when we admit students who are qualified to earn graduate degrees, who are taught by graduate faculty who are qualified to teach in graduate programs. The graduate faculty within each college, in conjunction with the College of Graduate Studies, may also define additional standards for identifying qualified students and qualified faculty, thus empowering the college faculty in strengthening their graduate programs according to their needs.

We maintain our *quality* through the use of qualitative measures, including student evaluations of faculty; uniqueness of courses and programs; innovative teaching methods; and the quality of scholarship of students and faculty.

Increasing enrollment will be met with resources to improve programs. Faculty will be provided with the resources needed to sustain the high quality of graduate education at Georgia Southern, regardless of the method of delivery. Such investments in graduate education are vital to maintaining integrity and quality.

Cultivating Our Graduate Culture

As one step in the university's development as a doctoral-research university, Georgia Southern will identify and develop the values which support its graduate programs. In the effort to meet our goal to cultivate a distinct graduate culture, we will ensure that the graduate programs at Georgia Southern are effective, creative, and cutting-edge.

The growth of a graduate culture also includes the belief that the graduate student body is capable of and has a vested interest in developing critical thinking and analytical skills, intellectual curiosity, effective interpersonal skills, and professional dispositions appropriate to the program, the university, and a global society. Graduate programs will be designed to inspire students to not only attain a high level of professional training, but to develop a graduate mindset regarding research and contribution to the advancement of one's profession.

A commitment to multicultural awareness and knowledge is integral to sustainable graduate programs. Abiding by diversity-oriented policies and procedures and ethical practices, the university will continue to contribute to the growth of open, inquiry-based learning. Programs will remain motivated to sustain academic rigor and provide a transformative educational experience.

By fostering a strong bond with the undergraduate culture, it is important that each college create a graduate experience which best reflects each college's unique and vibrant mission and strengths.

Overall, graduate education at Georgia Southern University shall:

- Offer programs which are of high quality, consistent with the overall mission of the university, and which build upon existing strengths;
- Be responsive and supportive;
- Have an efficient, timely and transparent admission process, which is committed to continuous assessment and improvement; and
- Have an open and welcoming environment for all people, so that students, staff, and faculty feel valued, respected, and appreciated.