



## Mission, Vision, and Goals (2014-2017)

### Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide the highest level of leadership in furthering education, life-long learning, and well-being for all citizens of Alabama as members of a global community.

### Vision Statement

Our vision is to become an exemplar for preparing high quality professionals who are committed to maximizing the potential of every citizen to participate fully in a global society.

### Key Long-term Strategic Objective

**UNIVERSITY TARGET: TO REACH AN ENROLLMENT OF 20,000 STUDENTS WITHIN TEN YEARS IN A FISCALLY RESPONSIBLE MANNER WHILE STRENGTHENING HIGH ACADEMIC STANDARDS.**

**College of Education Target:** Increase overall enrollment by 3% each year to a total enrollment of 1,800 by 2017.

#### Operational Plan

1. Evaluate and revise current school-based recruitment plan across all programs and with our educational partners.
2. Implement lower-division retention program focused on improving advisement, mentoring, and service opportunities.
3. Implement strategic actions outlined in College Graduate Enrollment Report (2010-2013).
4. Partner with Eduventures to identify key markets and programs for non-school settings.
5. Chairs will incorporate this target into their respective department assessment plans and for developing and implementing appropriate strategies targeted to specific degree programs

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 1: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE AN INNOVATIVE AND VIBRANT EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS TEACHING AND PROMOTES LEARNING.**

**University Objective 1.1 Improve academic success among undergraduate and graduate students and promote student engagement with learning.**

**Target 1.1.1:** Increase first-year retention rate by 10% to 64% by 2017.

Target 1.1.2: Increase 6-year graduation rate in Education by 4% annually to 40% by 2017.

Operational Plan

1. Evaluate revised freshman experience course and integrate with proposed learning community.
2. Implement Degree Works and train appropriate faculty and staff to improve student advising.
3. Collaborate with mathematics faculty through CISSTEM to secure external funding for programming targeted to improving performance in freshman level math.

Target 1.1.3: Support high impact programs that stimulate student engagement.

Operational Plan

1. Develop dual-enrollment freshman experience course with MGM Teaching and Learning Academy.
2. Document impact of student engagement in campus, P-12, and community activities.
3. Identify barriers to continued enrollment and candidacy in education programs leading to certification and develop action plan to reduce/remove barriers.

**University Objective 1.2: Improve student learning outcomes.**

Target 1.2.1: Sustain passing rates at 90% or higher for qualifying exams across all programs.

Operational Plan

1. Monitor passing rates on standards, comprehensive exams and licensing/certification exams to assess student achievement of knowledge and skills necessary for teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century (e.g., critical thinking, problem-solving, entrepreneurship, interpersonal communication, multicultural competence, teaming and collaboration, and global awareness).
2. Director of Graduates Studies will review pass rates on comprehensive exams and develop plan to improve student success as appropriate.
3. Chairs will be responsible for incorporating this target in their respective departmental assessment plans and for developing and implementing appropriate strategies to meet their targets.

**University Objective 1.3: Recruit a diverse body of students who are well-prepared for college study.**

Target 1.3.1: Increase minority enrollment in graduate programs by 5% to 30% by 2017.

Operational Plan

1. Review, revise, and expand efforts to recruit and retain academically well-prepared students from minority populations and other underrepresented groups.

2. Partner with Development Office to identify prospects and secure support to increase direct scholarships and competitive grants for a greater number of exceptionally qualified minority students.

**University Objective 1.4: Increase innovation, efficiency, and instructional resources for educational programs.**

Target 1.4.1: Promote and evaluate faculty participation in QEP and use of Collaboratory.

Target 1.4.2: Promote and monitor faculty infusion of technology and multicultural/diversity competencies into the curriculum.

Operational Plan

1. Complete construction and monitor use of new technologically-advanced classroom in UCOM in collaboration with Psychology.
2. Encourage interdisciplinary planning, curriculum development, and program initiatives in collaboration with the College of Arts & Sciences and interested colleagues from other colleges.
3. Chairs will be responsible for incorporating these targets into their respective departmental assessment plans and for developing and implementing appropriate strategies to meet their targets.

Target 1.4.3: Continue to improve documentation of planning and assessment, short and long-term.

Operational Plan

1. Expand the use of electronic tools for planning, assessment, and administrative management of the College.

**University Objective 1.5: Provide a welcoming and supportive environment for all members of the University community.**

Target 1.5.1: Implement structured program for diversity training of faculty, staff, and students

Operational Plan

1. Create a welcoming environment by providing culturally-sensitive supports to retain faculty, staff, and students from under-represented groups.
2. Revise, implement, and evaluate action plan to enhance diversity and advance the multicultural competencies of faculty, staff, and students consistent with the University's strategic diversity plan.
3. Integrate instruction and evaluation of the ALSDE standards related to working with diverse populations into the broader curriculum of each affected program.
4. Review, revise, and expand efforts to recruit and retain academically well-prepared students from minority and other underrepresented groups at two-year colleges and HBCUs.
5. Pursue establishment of Program for Students with Intellectual Disabilities.

6. Expand involvement in College Diversity Council and promote outreach to diverse communities.
7. Mentor faculty and staff from underrepresented groups to assume leadership positions in the College.

**University Objective 1.6: Recruit, recognize, develop, and retain high quality faculty.**

Target 1.6.1: Develop program of “Opportunistic Hiring” for recruiting minority faculty.

Operational Plan

1. Develop means to diversify existing faculty through targeted recruitment, visiting faculty program, part-time employment, grants, and endowed professorships.

Target 1.6.2: Evaluate Voluntary Retirement Incentive Program and identify potential retirees as appropriate.

Operational Plan

1. Review current distribution of faculty expertise and identify in context of projected enrollments.

Target 1.6.3: As resources permit, hire faculty to meet enrollment demands in selected disciplines.

Operational Plan

1. Seek authorization to search for faculty in Instructional Technology, Special Education, Mathematics Education, and Science Education.

**University Objective 1.7: Develop and maintain high-quality online and blended courses and programs to accommodate wide-ranging learner needs and experiences.**

Target 1.7.1: Proposed programs approved and scheduled for implementation in fall 2015.

Operational Plan

1. Secure ACHE approval for undergraduate program in Instructional Design and Performance Improvement.
2. Submit proposal to ACHE for undergraduate and graduate programs in Educational Studies.
3. Implement new graduate programs of study in Instructional Technology.
4. Explore alternative formats to increase enrollments in selected classes (e.g., on-line, off campus, on weekends, after hours, intensive scheduling).
5. Create alternative certification programs to increase enrollment and reduce the time necessary to complete all requirements.

**University Objective 1.8: Increase the incorporation of global perspectives into the educational environment.**

Target 1.8.1: Increase student participation in study abroad programs from 2 to 20 by 2017.

Operational Plan

1. Expand faculty and student involvement with potential international collaborators, promote existing collaborations in Europe, Asia, and Central America, and encourage applications for international fellowships.
2. Collaborate with Office of International Education to promote faculty exchange and student study abroad programs.
3. Develop Global Studies concentration within proposed degree programs in Educational Studies.
4. Implement global studies requirement in Ed.D. program.
5. Continue current plan to infuse multicultural competencies and a global perspective into a curriculum that prepares students for life-long learning and collaboration in a diverse world.

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 2: MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE AN INNOVATIVE AND VIBRANT EDUCATIONAL ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS TEACHING AND PROMOTES LEARNING.**

**University Objective 2.1: Increase the opportunity and success for USA faculty, post-doctoral fellows, and students in seeking and carrying out transformative research, discovery, and creative activities.**

Target 2.1.1: Increase faculty participation in externally-sponsored research from 15% to 35% by 2017.

Target 2.1.2: Establish structured program to encourage student participation in faculty-sponsored research.

Operational Plan

1. Continue program of in-service training and grant incentive programs to promote faculty competence in securing external funding for research.
2. Director of Graduate Studies will establish College of Education Graduate Student Research Council to promote doctoral student (i.e., CCP, EDL, and IDD) research and reporting.
3. Enhance faculty capacity for generating researchable questions through targeted college-wide initiatives (e.g., research communities, professional development grants, mentoring).
4. Accelerate college-wide development of translational, clinical, basic, and applied research through collaborations with other faculty, universities, industries, agencies, foundations, and health care providers.

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 3: ENRICH THE QUALITY OF STUDENT LIFE AND THE LIVING/LEARNING ENVIRONMENT.**

**University Objective 3.2: Provide a safe, supportive, inclusive, and civil environment for all students**

that fosters a sense of community within the University.

Target 3.2.1: Expand the range and quality of responsive services for traditional and non-traditional graduate and undergraduate students and improve responsiveness to student-initiated concerns.

- Operational Plan

1. Charge Office of Academic Advising and Office of Graduate Studies with identification of student satisfaction with existing services and prepare improvement plan.

**University Objective 3.4: Provide quality and accessible facilities to address the growing service and programmatic needs of the University.**

Target 3.4.1: Provide quality physical facilities to enhance teaching and learning.

Operational Plan

1. Complete renovation of classrooms in UCOM and evaluate utilization in collaboration with Psychology department.
2. Complete renovations in PE Building and continue to lobby responsible administrators for upgrading facilities.

**University Objective 3.5: Increase faculty and staff participation with student organizations and activities.**

Target: Identify and reward faculty engagement with student organizations.

Operational Plan

1. Nurture the growth of student professional organizations such as SAEA, Chi Sigma Iota, Kappa Delta Pi, and SCEC.
2. Include field in faculty report in Digital Measures to monitor, and reward faculty engagement in student activities.

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 4: DELIVER HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS THAT ENHANCE THE HEALTH AND WELL- BEING OF THE COMMUNITY.**

**University Objective 4.1: Achieve exceptional patient quality outcomes for USA Hospitals, Clinics, and the Mitchell Cancer Institute in comparison to peer groups.**

Target 4.1.1: Assess level of faculty participation in University-sponsored clinics and develop performance evaluation plan tied to client outcomes.

Operational Plan

1. Chairs will be responsible for incorporating this target into their respective

departmental assessment plans and for developing and implementing appropriate strategies to meet their targets.

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 5: STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF THE UNIVERSITY USING STRATEGIES THAT RECOGNIZE AND ADDRESS FINANCIAL AND MARKET REALITIES IN HIGHER EDUCATION.**

**University Objective 5.3: Increase extramural funding from grants and contracts.**

Target 5.3.1: Increase number of grant proposals submitted for external funding by 10% annually.

Operational Plan

1. Challenge chairs to creative incentives to increase faculty participation in seeking extramural funding for sponsored research.
2. Tie graduate assistantships to engagement in faculty-sponsored research and monitor productivity in making awards.
3. Strengthen partnerships with local educational agencies, community agencies, businesses, and other institutions of higher education for sponsored research.

**University Objective 5.4: Continue to expand and strengthen the University's fund-raising programs.**

Target 5.4.1: College will meet annual goal of \$65,000 in philanthropic support for FY 2014.

Operational Plan

1. Set fundraising priorities for MMSI, faculty support, and graduate scholarships.
2. Identify individuals, corporations, and foundations to support fundraising priorities

Target 5.4.2: Strengthen donor pipeline

Operational Plan

1. Improve identification, qualification, and cultivation and stewardship of current and prospective donors.
2. Enlist targeted communication using website and social media.
3. Work with Development Office to move prospects through the donor lifecycle and document actions taken.
4. Actively involve faculty, alumni, students, and retirees in fundraising activities.
5. Develop exemplary MOOCs targeted to continuing education and short-courses for alumni and retirees.

**University Objective 5.5: Collaborate with the USA Foundation to increase institutional support.**

Target 5.5.1: Report tangible scholarly products generated from Foundation-sponsored graduate assistantships

Operational Plan

1. Director of Graduate Studies to prepare report and recommendations regarding assignment of GAs and resulting scholarly productivity.

**Objective 5.6: Be fiscally prudent and pursue opportunities for gains in efficiency.**

Target 5.6.1: Reduce redundant functions among staff administrators

Operational Plan

1. Identify overlapping responsibilities and outmoded procedures; re-assign or revise responsibilities as appropriate.
2. Expand use of video-conferencing for meetings and course delivery to reduce cost and improve efficiency.

**UNIVERSITY GOAL 6: EXPAND AND EXTEND THE CULTURAL, PUBLIC SERVICE, ATHLETIC, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IMPACTS OF THE UNIVERSITY.**

**University Objective 6.4: Provide the most accurate, objective, and reliable data, impact analysis, and projections in the University service area.**

Target 6.4.1: Increase number of projects sponsored by Center for Measurement, Evaluation, and Statistics from 4 to 7 by 2017.

Target 6.4.2: Provide 8 professional development workshops annually on assessment and evaluation topics yearly by 2017.

Target 6.4.3 Cooperate with USA Office of Public Relations to provide balanced and valid interpretation of educational assessment and evaluation data with a minimum of two contacts with local media per year by 2017.

Operational Plan

1. Develop researchable solutions that address the strategic needs of Alabama's citizens in education, life-long learning, and enhancing well-being in a global society.
2. Build Center for Measurement, Evaluation and Statistics within the College to work collaboratively within the University, with local educational agencies, the community, regionally, and nationally.

**University Objective 6.5: Develop strong partnerships with organizations directly involved in regional economic, civic, and cultural development.**

Target 6.5.1: Establish meaningful relationships with civic, government, and business leaders.



## Operational Plan

1. Monitor faculty collaboration with other professionals in P-12 school and community settings to support student teaching, internship supervision, and early engagement in field-based learning experiences.
2. Ensure field placement of student interns with on-site supervisors who have strong content knowledge.
3. Expand opportunities for alumni participation in college activities in coordination with appropriate University offices.
4. Increase the regional, national, and international visibility of the College by organizing videoconferences, issue-based professional meetings, and conferences on education-related topics.



## Graduate Enrollment (2010-2013)

*The states are in financial stress.*

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY: Declining Economy and Rising Debt

*The school systems especially*

*are in financial stress. Teachers*

In its latest report released in September 2012, the Council of Graduate Schools (CGS) reported that U.S. graduate schools saw a 1.7% dip in enrollments of first-time graduate students between fall 2010 and fall 2011, marking the second consecutive year of slight decreases. Across the board, graduate school enrollments remain ahead of where they were a decade ago, but the latest figures reverse increases for the 2007-08 and 2008-09 academic years, when enrollments grew 4.5% and 5.5% respectively. These findings are the result of the CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees, an annual survey that has been conducted since 1997. The number of students undertaking graduate study in Education nation-wide remains among the highest for all broad categories of graduate disciplines, there has been a steady decrease in that number over the past five years.

*Schools*

State data available from the Alabama Commission on Higher Education (ACHE: <http://www.ache.alabama.gov/Reports/Index.htm>) show a 6.6% increase in the number of graduate students enrolled in all programs at 4-year institutions from fall 2008 to fall 2010. These same data show a decrease in graduate enrollment from fall 2010 (33,008) to fall 2012 (32,400) of 1.8%. Total graduate enrollment at USA over the same two periods shows an increase of 3.1% followed by a further increase of 7.3% campus-wide. By contrast, College of Education data show decreases of 17.0% and 23.3% for the same two periods. As of fall 2013, however, the annual decrease in graduate enrollment in the College of Education has slowed to 1.7%.

Despite a 4.3% increase in the number of applications to graduate school nation-wide, enrollment dropped by 1.7% from fall 2010 to fall 2011. Many have speculated that financial

stress on both academic institution and on students has resulted in increased costs for enrollment on people reluctant to assume yet more debt. With the average student loan debt at \$26,549 (<http://ficoforums.myfico.com/t5/myFICO-Blog/Is-Growing-Student-Loan-Debt-Impacting-FICO-Scores/ba-p/1610138>), many a prospective graduate student has chosen not to enroll, especially if they thought they would not receive substantial financial support from the programs they considered. Coupled with a prolonged period of unemployment, adults seem reluctant to risk increased debt in the face of the proffered benefits of an advanced degree.

As will be explored in the paragraphs to follow, these trends tend to hold true at national, state, and local levels and appear to be the consequence of a variety of transformative events. The “explanation” for this decline in graduate enrollment in the College of Education at the University of South Alabama lies in understanding the interplay of two themes: job security and debt burden.

### **THE PICTURE IN FALL 2010**

As reviewed and reported in the College’s most recent *Graduate Enrollment Report 2004-2009* (2010), the downturn in the economy appeared to have played a significant role in the decline in enrollments over the previous five years. This decline was especially pronounced at public universities by and among more vulnerable populations (i.e., working women, part-time students, recent graduates seeking their first position). Moreover, the data supported the conclusion that a set of policy changes at both the college and state levels constrained the applicant pool and contributed to lowering the number while increasing the quality of candidates. In addition, the proliferation of on-line graduate programs, an increased emphasis on paid summer professional development workshops for school employees, and the threat and/or reality of unemployment for school employees and family members appeared to have contributed to the constellation of causes for declining enrollments.

Beginning in fall 2004, the College of Education embarked on an ambitious plan to reform the professional preparation of educators. Three components critical to that reformation were: (1) tight integration among a coherent set of courses and real world applications in the schools; (2) linking theory and practice through intensely supervised clinical experiences in high performing schools; and, (3) building strong partnerships with schools that serve diverse learners effectively and model best educational practices. Implementation of this plan required a restructuring of existing departments to consolidate programs, raising admissions standards for selected programs, improving clinical supervision, encouraging faculty engagement with school-based practitioners, suspending admissions to poor performing programs, developing new programs to meet emerging demands, enforcing or modifying program policies to ensure quality instruction, and centralizing student advisement. Concurrently, state and federal education agencies increased certification standards in key areas, especially, instructional leadership, teacher education, school counselor education, and special education.

Having reviewed similar reforms in other universities, we were aware at the time that such efforts would likely decrease enrollment in targeted programs initially while increasing the competence of our graduates. In three years, it was anticipated that enrollment would begin to show a steady increase of more qualified and committed candidates completing a rigorous

preparation program supported by a faculty engaged in significant partnerships with school-based colleagues in high performing schools. Indeed, nearly all of these things have come to pass with the notable exception of increased enrollment.

Experience nation-wide has demonstrated the popularity of on-line programs for graduate degrees and continuing education. High quality on-line programs, properly marketed and targeted to the professional development needs of teachers and other professionals appear highly attractive to potential graduate students. Alternative pathways to initial certification are likely to grow in number and popularity, creating new markets for non-traditional programs that prepare candidates to meet quality teaching standards. In addition, financial support for persons interested in becoming teachers is increasing, especially in critical areas such as special education, math and science, rural education, and English as a second language.

As cautioned in the previous report a mere three years ago:

*If the past is prologue, then the nation, state, and the University will continue to be challenged substantially to secure the resources necessary to sustain quality programs while seeking new sources for much needed financial support.*

Since issuing this report, the College has focused on the improvement of existing programs to meet anticipated as well as chronic needs. What our own assessment data, state evaluations, and surveys of alumni and their employers tell us is that we are graduating the best professional educators we have ever prepared. Regrettably, our emphasis on improving the academic quality of our programs and their graduates has come at a time when an historic economic recession has eroded the capacity of potential students and the University alike to vigorously pursue graduate education. In this climate, the College of Education has undertaken an integrated set of strategic actions focused on expanding the range of available options for graduate study, increasing financial and academic supports for students, and developing an aggressive marketing plan.

**1. Accreditation Reviews.** All educator preparation programs were reviewed by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Alabama State Department of Education (ALSDE) in fall 2013. All programs were recommended as meeting all standards. The Clinical and Counseling Psychology Program was reviewed by the American Psychological Association in fall 2013 and recommend as having met all standards for initial accreditation. The Counselor Education program has been approved for a site visit in Spring 2014 by the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP).

**2. Provisional Admissions.** Teachers and other professional seeking coursework for recertification have routinely been directed to complete those courses at the undergraduate level. Beginning fall 2013, these individuals are offered the alternative to register as non-degree graduate students for up to 9 credit hours to encourage and test their suitability for graduate school

*3. Local Employment.* Beginning in AY2004-2005 and AY2008-2009, the Mobile County Public Schools System (MCPSS) began employing fewer teachers. In 2004-2005 they employed 4,212 teachers but this year report employing 3,603 teachers based on a review of state funding figures. In addition, the MCPSS has seen student enrollment decrease to 59,117 students over this same time period. Based on anecdotal information shared by master's students in their USA courses, class sizes have increased as the teaching force has decreased, with some teachers being paid a stipend to teach additional classes rather than hiring additional teachers.

*4. Instructional Leadership Re-Design.* In order to meet radically transformed standards for the preparation and certification of Instructional Leaders for Alabama's schools, the master's program in Educational Administration was redesigned. Although USA was the first to meet these new standards, the total enrollment in the former programs fell from 143 students in fall 2005 to 23 by fall 2008. In fall 2012, however, enrollment had risen to 45 following a shift in emphasis to more on-line instruction. .

*5. Reduced Credit Hours to Graduation.* In Summer 2013, all master's programs were reviewed for potential reduction in the number of credits required for graduation. All programs except Counselor Education (CACREP requires 48 hours) and the Alternative Master's program have been reduced to 30 semester hours. Programs leading to state certification are awaiting final approval from the ALSDE.

*6. Instructional Design and Development* has shown a steady increase in the number of students enrolled in the master's program with an increase of 34% enrollment from fall 2008 to fall 2012. The doctoral program, on the other hand, has shown a steady decrease in enrollment of 43.6% over the same period. Significantly, the numbers of graduates awarded the doctorate have increased over this same period.

*7. New Graduate Programs* have been developed to offer the Ed.S. degree for Teacher Leader, a non-certification master's program in Educational Administration, and a doctoral program in Educational Leadership. All of these programs have significant on-line components to support instruction. In addition, permission has been sought from the ALSDE for an innovative master's program designed for career-changers and college seniors unprepared for a career in teaching. Through this 30-hour program, candidates will receive a master's degree, qualify for B certification, and have a year-long paid experience in a public school.

*8. STEM Initiatives.* Responding to the chronic shortage of teachers in STEM disciplines, the college has established a Center for Integrative Studies in Science, Technology, Engineering and Math in collaboration with the colleges of Engineering and Arts & Sciences to develop externally-funded research and development projects intended to improve teaching and learning in the STEM disciplines. In addition, NSF-sponsored Noyce Scholarship programs have been established in math and science to prepare 50 classroom teachers over a five year period.

## **DOCUMENTING THE CONTINUING DECLINE IN GRADUATE ENROLLMENT**

## *The National Picture*

Among American citizens and permanent residents, matriculation fell by 2.3 percent from 2010 to 2011. In contrast, temporary residents increased their enrollment by 7.8 percent. Temporary residents made up 16.9 percent of all students in American graduate schools, and that figure has been growing as foreign governments pay for more of their citizens to obtain education in the United States, particularly in technical areas. Temporary residents represented 45.5 percent of all students enrolled in engineering graduate programs in the United States, and 42.4 percent of those in American mathematics and computer science graduate programs.

The changes in 2011 varied by discipline, with education having the biggest drop-off in new graduate enrollment at 8.8 percent. First-time enrollment in master's and certificate-level programs declined 2.1% between fall 2010 and fall 2011, while doctoral degree programs enrolled 0.5% more new students during the same time period.

Despite the overall decline in first-time enrollments, interest in pursuing graduate degrees remains high and continues to grow. The *CGS/GRE Survey of Graduate Enrollment and Degrees* reported a 4.3% bump in applications for admission to graduate programs between fall 2010 and fall 2011. Engineering, business, and social and behavioral sciences accounted for the largest numbers of graduate applications in 2011 while interest in education and the liberal arts was declining. Other findings of the report for participating institutions include:

- *Graduate Applications*--The average annual increases over the past decade were greatest in health sciences and smallest in education. The largest gains in first-time graduate enrollment from fall 2010 to fall 2011 were in health sciences, business and mathematics and computer sciences, while the largest declines were in education and arts and humanities. Average annual growth in applications over the period 2006-2011 was lowest in education (1.7%). At the master's level, applications to graduate school in education fell by 4.6%.between fall 2010 and fall 2011.
- *First-time graduate enrollment*--Overall, 17.1% of all first-time enrollees were in education in fall 2011 while 2.9% of all first-time graduate students were in physical and earth sciences. While 67.78% of all first-time graduate students were enrolled full-time in fall 2011, the field of education was the only broad field in which more first-time graduate students were enrolled part-time (75%) than full-time (25%) in fall 2011. Decreases in first-time graduate enrollment from fall 2010 to fall 2011 were greatest in education (-8.8%) Among Whites, first-time gradate enrollment fell by 9.5%--10.0% for men, and 8.4% for women among survey respondents. Over 62% of first-time graduate students were enrolled at public institutions.
- *Application acceptance*—Rates were highest in education (at the master's level (71.0%) while they were the lowest in health sciences (42.1%) and engineering (43.1%).
- *Total graduate enrollment*--More than half of all graduate students in fall 2011 were enrolled in programs in education (20.4%), business (16.1%), or health sciences (12.0%). Between fall 2001 and fall 2011, total graduate enrollment increased in all broad fields with average annual gains ranging from a high of 8.9% in health sciences to a low of 0.6% in education. Total graduate enrollment in education decreased (5.8%) between fall 2010 and fall 2011.
- *Graduate degrees and certificates awarded*--About 40% of all doctoral degrees awarded in 2010-11 were in health sciences, engineering, and social and behavioral sciences while about 50% of all master's degrees were awarded in education and business. Education was the largest broad field for graduate certificates with 37.4% of the total.

Table 1. U.S. Graduate Study in Education 2001-2011

	% change 2010-2011	Ave annual % change 2006- 2011	Ave annual % change 2001-2011
Applications to graduate school	-4.0%	1.7%	2.8%
First-time graduate enrollment	-8.8%	-4.3%	0.9%
Total graduate enrollment	-4.9%	-3.8%	0.6%
Total full-time graduate enrollment	-3.5%	-0.1%	1.8%
Total part-time graduate enrollment	-5.8%	-2.3%	0.0%

*The State Picture*

As we reported in 2010, the picture in Alabama over the period 2005-2009 was remarkably similar to the national data over this period, with the exception that the downslide in enrollments continued into 2008-2009. Over the period fall 2009–fall 2011, the 13 largest colleges of education in Alabama showed a decrease of 8.05% compared to USA’s College of Education 29.8%. With the single exception of Samford University (which is a private institution), all the remaining programs for which there are data show a continuing decrease in enrollment into Fall 2012 (see Table 2).

Table 2. Total Graduate Enrollment 2007-2012 for Selected Alabama COEs

	2012	2011	2010	2009	2008	2007
Alabama A&M University	427	434	471	514	494	631
Alabama State University	*	1283	1280	1243	1218	1157
Auburn University	874	882	878	839	761	760
Auburn University Montgomery		328	366	443	377	351
Jacksonville State University		584	645	708	667	701
Samford University	234	189	154	180	183	188
Troy University	1778	2126	2299	2530	2281	2909
University of Alabama	852	860	861	691	929	841
University of Alabama at Birmingham		748	839	894	792	786
University of Montevallo	*	382	434	373	342	318
University of North Alabama	183	183	185	166	150	230
University of South Alabama		408	450	532	641	718

\*Unreported

### *The Local Picture*

What these numbers reveal on national and state levels confirms our own experience locally: The percentage change in the number of students undertaking graduate study in education has been decreasing steadily over the eight years. Significantly, the decrease has been even more pronounced among part-time versus full-time students. Although the national picture shows a slowing of the positive rate of change over the period 2004-2008 with a recovery in 2009, those gains have been erased by two years of decline in 2010 and 2011. State data are similar to the College of Education, which has shown a steady decline in graduate enrollment over the period 2007-2012 at all public institutions (see Table 2).

Three final analyses round out the picture of graduate enrollment in the College of Education: (1) Graduate enrollment by degree program and for Alabama public Institution (2008-2011), (2) Baccalaureate alumni completing graduate degrees in the College of Education (2005-2009), and (3) Graduate enrollment by major and county (2009-2011). A review of graduate enrollment by education major and institution shows a consistently high enrollment in Counselor Education and School Counseling, due almost entirely to an on-line program at the University of West Alabama. Second in popularity are programs in Elementary Education, Secondary Education, and Educational Leadership & Administration. Beyond these programs, comparisons across programs become difficult due to differences in CIP codes that obscure the true nature of individual programs. A closer look at these four graduate programs shows considerable variability in enrollment patterns with Elementary Education declining 44.5% at USA and 27.3 % statewide over the period 2008-2011. Similarly, Counselor Education has shown declines of 52.0% at USA and 40.0% state-wide over the same period, due to enormous fluctuations in enrollment at West Alabama. Conversely, Secondary Education has shown increases exceeding 20% at both USA and state-wide. Finally, despite a modest decrease in enrollment of 3.6% state-wide, USA has shown an increase of 34.7%. Today, enrollment figures for fall 2013 for each of these programs compared to fall 2011 show declines of 14.3 % for Elementary Education and 23.1% for Secondary Education and gains of 28% for Educational Leadership & Administration and 138% for Counselor Education.



Table 3. Graduate Enrollment by Major and Institution, 2008-2011														
Major	Years	AAM	ASU	AU	AUM	JSU	TROY	UA	UAB	UM	UNA	USA	UWA	Totals
Secondary Education & Teaching	2008	131	49	76	134	1	41	141	141	131	29	55	75	1,004
	2009	118	39	87	159		43	161	174	154	32	60	294	1,321
	2010	91	34	83	201		48	176	176	155	33	62	110	1,169
	2011	73	26	84	189		51	161	136	147	24	70	266	1,227
Elementary Education & Teaching	2008	69	116	2	132	102	332	70	110	95	40	101	474	1,643
	2009	63	136	1	127	103	269	61	100	79	52	88	450	1,529
	2010	45			137	85	238	73	116	89		68	512	1,363
	2011	35			126	74	217	66	88	77	40	56	414	1,193
Counselor Education/ School Counseling	2008			57	45	96	39	45	70	77	8	90	1465	1,992
	2009			55	31	93	44	52	70	82	6	76	1564	2,073
	2010		14	75	24	84	139	50	83	86	3	61	1560	2,179
	2011		17	76	21	77	130	46	89	77	10	43	592	1,178
Educational Leadership & Administration	2008	22	96	150	45	274	97	48	94	46	29	23	44	968
	2009	27	25	157	60	245	34	56	109	37	18	40	27	835
	2010	18	95	152	81	213	65	64	145	46	20	32	18	949
	2011	27	86	171	30	176	53	65	150	44	15	31	85	933
Special Education & Teaching	2008	40		140				68	113		17	125	156	659
	2009	58		146		67	1	70	109		25	100	125	701
	2010	28		141		93		84	99		22	76	136	679
	2011	23	29	142		85		78	101		25	38	149	670
Physical Education Teaching & Coaching	2008	19	34	59		111		40	18			35	81	397
	2009	13	39			65		49	22			43	81	312
	2010	10		105		50						40	86	291
	2011	11		93		67		40	21			31	91	354
Early Childhood Education & Teaching	2008	11	41			20	11		53			3		139
	2009	6	51			25	36		48			2	75	243
	2010	7	43			23	15		48			4	52	192
	2011	8	37			13	10		64			7	58	197
Education, Other	2008							15				153		168
	2009							13				149		162
	2010							13				136		149
	2011	128						16						144
School Librarian/ School Library Media	2008											32		32
	2009											32		32
	2010											29		29
	2011											34		34
Reading Teacher Education	2008											18		18
	2009	7										16		23
	2010	15										17		32
	2011	15							3			8		26
<b>Total</b>		<b>1,188</b>	<b>1,007</b>	<b>2,052</b>	<b>1,542</b>	<b>2,242</b>	<b>1,913</b>	<b>1,821</b>	<b>2,550</b>	<b>1,422</b>	<b>448</b>	<b>2,084</b>	<b>9,040</b>	<b>27,239</b>

Because of its heavy reliance upon the school districts of Mobile and Baldwin counties for both supervision of its teacher education candidates and employment of its graduates, it has generally been assumed that variances in the enrollment patterns of our graduate programs is a direct corollary of fluctuations in employment practices in those districts. Indeed our own surveys of graduates and reviews of employment data from the districts support a long-standing claim that 85% of professional educators in those two systems hold one or more degrees from USA. Therefore, it has generally been assumed that if our graduate enrollment is declining it is because people employed by those districts are not going to graduate school. Although the correlation isn't perfect, an analysis of the enrollment data by major for people from these two counties who are enrolled in a graduate program in Alabama tells us a very different story.

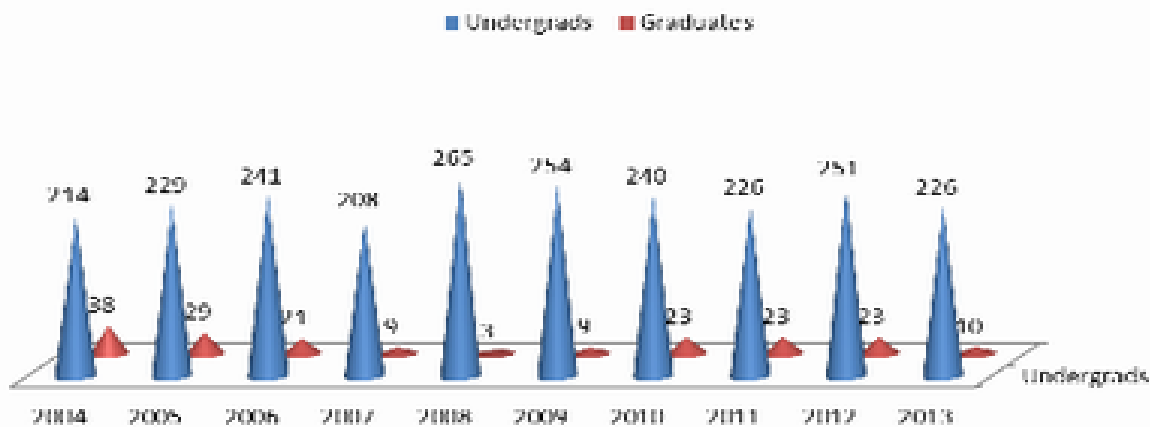


As Table 4 reveals, more than 580 residents of Mobile and Baldwin counties enrolled at universities in Alabama to take graduate courses offered by USA during each of the years 2009-2011. If one assumes none of the people in both Baldwin and Mobile counties who enrolled in graduate school did so at USA, one gets a very liberal estimate of the number of students who sought graduate education elsewhere. By contrast, if one assumes that every person in both Baldwin and Mobile counties who enrolled in graduate school did so at USA, by subtracting the comparable enrollments by major from table 3, one gets a very conservative estimate of the number of students who sought graduate education elsewhere. By such an analysis, only Secondary (45), Elementary (161), and Counselor Education (228) show a surplus of enrollments. Recognizing that either analysis is fraught with difficulties, especially with two-year-old data, one is left to speculate that programs in Elementary, Secondary and Counselor Education show considerable promise for recruiting graduate students, that Educational Leadership is likely meeting the current demand and that USA is not meeting the demand for special educator, which appears to be decreasing.

<b>Table 4. Graduate Enrollment by Major and County (2009-2011)</b>							
<b>MAJOR</b>	<b>2009</b>		<b>2010</b>		<b>2011</b>		<b>Total</b>
	Mobile	Baldwin	Mobile	Baldwin	Mobile	Baldwin	
Secondary Education & Teaching	58	20	54	15	69	21	237
Elementary Education & Teaching	97	33	100	30	88	25	373
Counselor Education/ School Counseling & Guidance Services	124	27	150	19	82	16	418
Educational Leadership & Administration, General	34	5	30	6	28	8	111
Special Education & Teaching, general	62	11	49	17	43	9	191
Education, General	9	2	6	0	19	2	38
Physical Education Teaching & Coaching	24	6	30	7	24	4	95
Early Childhood Education & Teaching	4	2	4	1	8	2	21
Education, Other	80	24	83	26	82	22	317
School Librarian/ School Library Media Specialist	12	4	15	4	18	6	59
Reading Teacher Education	11	2	11	2	5	0	31
<b>Totals</b>	<b>515</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>532</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>466</b>	<b>115</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>651</b>		<b>659</b>		<b>581</b>		<b>1891</b>

Finally, one can see in Figure 1 that the number of undergraduates in the College of Education who subsequently completed a graduate degree in the College has decreased sharply each year since 2004. Although one would expect the numbers to decrease the closer one gets to the present, it is uncertain to what extent there has been an additional reduction in degrees awarded as a consequence of lowered enrollments following the awarding of the baccalaureate degree. Clearly, with less than one in five (at best) of our undergraduates seeking a graduate degree at USA, there is a great opportunity for increasing graduate enrollment among a population of candidates that is already on campus.

**Figure 1. UG Alumni Earning Graduate Degrees**



## EXPLAINING THE DECLINE IN GRADUATE ENROLLMENTS

As noted in our previous report in 2010:

*The downturn in the economy appears to have played a significant role in the decline in enrollments in education, especially at public universities by and among more vulnerable populations (i.e., working women, part-time students, and recent graduates seeking their first position). In addition, a set of policy changes at both the college and state level were implemented that were intended to improve the overall quality of applicants, selected degree programs, and graduates seeking certification. These changes appear to have constrained the applicant pool and thereby lowered the number while increasing the quality of candidates. In addition, the proliferation of on-line graduate programs (NB: University of West Alabama), an increased emphasis on paid summer professional development workshops for school employees, and the threat and/or reality of unemployment for school employees and family members seem to have made their contribution to the constellation of causes for declining enrollments as well.*

Since 2010, we have focused on the improvement of existing programs to meet anticipated as well as chronic needs. We closed and/or suspended admissions to low quality programs, and non-renewed faculty whose performance was not been aligned with these expectations.

In particular, we merged elementary and special education to create an innovative program of K-6 Teacher Education to address a chronic need for special educators to teach in inclusion classrooms. Although the graduates of the program are undeniably the best teachers we have ever prepared, the demand has been significantly lower than anticipated due to a general lack of positions. In 2008, we had predicted that hundreds of thousands of teachers and administrators who were expected to reach retirement age in the next five years would create a huge vacancy for these graduates. Faced with declining finances, school districts have expanded classroom sizes and reduced benefits for new teachers, teachers have delayed retirement, and one in three new teachers leaves the profession within five years. Although the supply of new teachers appears to be adequate to meet the demand in elementary education, critical and chronic shortages remain in special education and the STEM disciplines.

Despite increasing the number and amount of loans to persons pursuing college educations, it appears that the debt from student loans has increased. Two-thirds of college seniors who graduated in 2011 had student loan debt, with an average of \$26,600 per borrower—up 25% from the year before. Although federal support has been increasing to meet the demand for more teachers in critical areas such as special education, math and science, rural education, and English as a second language, these efforts have had little impact on the mounting debt to earn degrees in teaching generally. The focus on transforming the profession to prepare teachers who can bring all children to high levels of academic achievement is countermanded by the call for alternative pathways that support school vouchers, charter schools, and alternative pathways to certification that undercut quality programs of teacher preparation in colleges of education nation-wide.

Finally, we had predicted the demand for educational programs that serve the professional needs of persons outside public education would increase the demand for our programs and services. Already we are experiencing a significant growth in undergraduate programs in Physical Education and requests for collaborative programs in health, psychology, counseling, and special education are increasing. At both the undergraduate and graduate levels, we see a demand for programs in global studies, human resource development, and leadership and organizational development.

## **GOING FORWARD**

Over the past three months, the College has engaged its deans, department chairs, program coordinators, and key faculty in developing a list of strategies for improving enrollment, especially in graduate programs (see *COE Graduate Enrollment Strategies*). Respondents generated a list of strategies which were then consolidated to a single list to remove redundancies and clarify intended meanings. A single list was then circulated to chairs and key faculty to complete a table of milestones, responsible persons, necessary resources, time required to completion and tangible outcomes related to improving enrollment. A revised table (see Appendix A) was then sent to respondents for rating according using a 5-point scale indicating relative ease of implementation versus anticipate level of impact on enrollment. Ease versus impact was then graphed (see Figure 2) and items were grouped into quadrants as listed in Appendix B. Although the resulting list of strategies includes 50 separate items, the overall plan is to concentrate on those items that hold the greatest promise for increasing graduate enrollment in the shortest time, with the fewest new resources, and with the greatest impact. Specifically,

- Take advantage of existing social media and related technologies to market programs (e.g., improved web pages, mobile apps);

- Create financial and other incentives for in-service teachers to enroll in graduate programs (e.g., reduced/scaled tuition);
- Create/Market certificate programs in key areas (e.g., licensed counselors, instructional design and development, coaching);
- Establish recruiting board (see Appendix C);
- Target specific high schools for recruitment and work with principals to identify prospects;
- Promote/Rebrand non-certification programs (e.g. Health, Early Childhood Studies, Instructional Design and Development, Clinical Mental Health Counseling);
- Establish an amnesty program for students who have dropped out;
- Develop recruitment workshop to improve communication skills among front-line staff.

If the data on graduate enrollment tell us anything, it is that high quality on-line programs, properly marketed and targeted to the professional development needs of teachers and other professionals will be highly attractive to potential graduate students. What our own assessment data, state evaluations, and surveys of alumni and their employers tell us is that we are graduating the best professional educators we have ever prepared. Regrettably, our emphasis on improving the academic quality of our programs and their graduates has come at a time when an historic economic recession has eroded the capacity of potential students and the University alike to vigorously pursue graduate education. In this climate, the College of Education has undertaken a set of strategic actions that will require considerable time and/or resources but hold the promise of having a significant impact on enrollment in the future. Specifically:

- Enhance the public image of the College through an aggressive marketing program and public relations campaign targeted to selected audiences highlighting new or re-designed programs, such as Clinical and Counseling Psychology, English for Speakers of Other Languages, Educational Administration, and Instructional Leadership) (see Appendix D);.
- Seek national accreditation for existing programs (e.g., APA for Clinical and Counseling Psychology, CACREP for School Counseling);
- Re-open Educational Administration as a non-certification program targeted to higher education administration and student personnel administrators;
- Appoint recruiting coordinator to direct Recruitment Board and align activities with University recruitment efforts;
- Expand faculty and student involvement with potential international collaborators, promote existing collaborations in Europe, Asia, and Central America, encourage applications for international fellowships, and increase faculty and student exchange and study abroad programs (e.g., Hangzhou Normal University (China), Dongguk University (South Korea), Sangmyung University (South Korea), Inha University (South Korea), University of Costa Rica, University of Jyväskylä (Finland), and University of Salamanca (Spain);
- Integrate clinical supervision into existing graduate programs to attract supervising teachers to graduate programs;
- Recruit Early Head Start workers for Early Childhood Studies Program;
- Develop new certification programs in emerging/promising fields (e.g., global education, human relations training, instructional technology);
- Implement existing renovation plans for PE Building pending approval for new facility;
- Reconstitute Educational Specialists' degree programs focused on Reading Education, Teacher Leadership, and Educational Media;
- Review, revise, and expand efforts to recruit and retain academically well-prepared students from minority and other underrepresented groups through outreach to HCBUs and area churches;
- Expand opportunities for alumni participation in college recruitment in coordination with appropriate University offices;
- Secure increased public/private funding to enhance student recruitment and retention;
- Expand use of alternative formats to increase enrollments in selected classes (e.g., on-line, off campus, on weekends, after hours, intensive scheduling) and expand use of technology to support instruction by increasing number of on-line and hybrid courses;
- Increase direct scholarships and competitive grants for a greater number of exceptionally qualified students (e.g., Noyce Scholarships, Project CRUISE);



## **Appendix B**

### **College of Education**

### **GRADUATE ENROLLMENT STRATEGIES 2013**

#### **High Impact and High Ease of Implementation**

- COE Mobile App
- Incentives for in service teachers in grad programs
- Certificate Programs IDD HPT
- Improved WEB page
- Improve HPELS Web Site
- Establish recruiting board
- Target specific high schools
- Rebrand non-cert Health Program
- Establish amnesty program for those dropped out Ph.D MS
- Improve COE staff interpersonal skills

#### **High Impact, but Difficult to Implement**

- CACREP accreditation
- Appoint recruiting coordinator
- Potential Market (International)
- Offering CT credit for supervising student teachers
- Coordinated Marketing Plan
- Recruit Early Head Start workers for Early Childhood Studies Program
- Contact local school systems re: cohort
- Develop new certification programs
- Improve PE building

#### **Low Impact but Easy to Implement**

- Open enrollment in EDF
- Improve EDM web site
- Recruiting Flyer
- Student Concierge
- Increase Social Media Use
- Update CED Program Web
- Modify courses (more face to face, video conference)
- Provide COE faculty recruitment training
- Send EDM brochures to former students to distribute to all schools in Mobile and Baldwin County
- Advertise in Chamber
- Survey alumni and current students
- T-shirts etc.
- Videos
- Targeted Facebook Ad
- Recruitment and Retention as part of faculty evaluation
- Open House CED
- Mega Conference
- Reduce IDD doctorate hours
- Advertise Certificate programs to non-degree candidates
- Target New COE grads
- Video system in lobby

#### **Low Impact and Difficult to Implement**

- Hire someone for each open faculty spot in COE
- Have an annual alumni reception and encourage people to bring a potential new student.
- Gifted Ed Program (Re-open)
- Have faculty "Adopt" certain departments at USA to recruit (e.g. Business, Computer Science, Psychology).
- Provide \$100 reward for bringing in a friend
- Improve physical appearance COE

Free grant workshops  
Reinstate AA EDM  
Teach EDF from gender studies perspective

## **Appendix C College of Education Recruitment Board**

### ***Recruit, Retain, Reward, Repeat***

**GOAL:** To make student recruitment, retention and recognition of their success a significant part of our culture.

**OBJECTIVE:** To establish a College Recruitment Committee

#### **TASKS:**

##### Faculty

All faculty and staff will be involved in high school and community college recruiting

##### Departments

- Identify a Recruiting Coordinator in each Department
- Establish recruitment goals for our all degree programs
- Identify a target audience
- Communicate with them
- Evaluate our efforts

##### College

- Identify key personnel in the University Recruiting Office as partners
- Establish database of potential candidates from the University Recruiting office
- Recruit candidates from historically underrepresented groups
- Establish relationships with regional community and junior colleges.
- Develop international recruitment initiatives
- Host a breakfast for high school counselors

#### **OVERALL PROCESS:**

As the university identifies students who have a potential interest in the College of Education, we will develop and send to them print materials describing to them the exciting careers available upon graduation from our outstanding programs. These students will be contacted individually, starting with letters and e-mails and telephone calls from our faculty, staff, and students to encourage them to come to campus, tour our facility, meet our faculty, staff and students, and become better informed about the opportunities available.



**Appendix D**  
**College of Education**  
**Marketing Plan: Preliminary Outline**

**1. What's the objective?**

- Increase enrollment, especially among graduate students.

**2. Perform a SWOT analysis for the COE and program(s): (to be supported by research):**

- Strengths – reputation, quality of program/faculty, placement, etc.
- Weakness – lack of funds, no name recognition, lack of uniqueness, placement, etc.
- Opportunities – to launch a new/innovative program to attract more students, to distinguish the programs, etc.
- Threats – competitor programs, their appeals, etc.

**3. Strategies to be employed:**

- Research students about their reasons for attending USA and not attending other comparable schools.
- Have students research counterparts at comparable schools regarding their choice of schools, how and what is different/better, etc.
- Loaded with information – develop a coherent message and deploy a multiple media campaign to attract HS and transfer students. The idea is to “reach” students in every which way possible subject to the resource availability and effectiveness.

**4. Implementation and Evaluation**

- How best to deploy the strategies? Prioritizing strategies? Time lines?
- Metrics employed? How best to measure success or failure?

- What did we learn? Modifications to strategies?, etc.

Note: Research and information gathering are the keys to steps 2-4.