



GRADUATE SCHOOL

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023-2027

Development of the Strategic Plan

The ULM Graduate School Strategic Plan (GSSP) was developed in collaboration with graduate faculty, graduate programs, Graduate School and the Graduate School Strategic Planning Committee. The committee administered an internal Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis to the Graduate School staff and all graduate faculty. The results of the SWOT were compiled in a master document which the committee used in consideration for addressing all areas of focus.

MISSION STATEMENT

The ULM Graduate School will support the University's mission of transformative education with value, opportunity and quality to meet the needs of an ever-changing workforce and advance the pursuit of knowledge

VISION

The ULM Graduate School will support the university's vision of Changing Lives while maintaining equality, inclusiveness and opportunity by providing accessible and transformative experience for all individuals who

GRADUATE SCHOOL SWOT ANALYSIS

	WEAKNESSES
1	Understaffed, high workload with staff turnover
2	Staffing may need to be enhanced for phone coverage, email, social media and marketing
3	Communication to students/faculty about policies, deadlines,
4	ImageNow and Recruit software are not easily navigated
5	ULM program webpages need updating and makeover

13	Graduate Council roles/responsibilities needs revamp members doing activities that should be done by Graduate School
14	student appeals/grade changes should be handled by the dean
15	Insufficient graduate student training, for ex., understanding policies
16	limited financial resources for marketing, staffing, GAips
17	Extremely limited travel funding to attend professional conferences to establish reputation and recruit

24	Develop more online graduate programs overall. Online programs will attract more applicants a faceto-face program at ULM.
25	Creatementorship training for faculty
26	GS could meet with program faculty on a periodic basis or offer a general meeting to review policies and procedures and other matters; or send out a newsletter on a periodic basis
28	community relationships/involvementwith external stakeholders

THREATS	
1	Other universities lowering entrance requirements; taking students from us
2	Other institutions in the area offer more attractive degrees
3	Changing dynamics of Higher Education
4	Anti-educational sentiment in our region
5	Possible saturation of online offerings
6	Growing "gig" economy/precarity rendering additional grad degrees less desirable for employment
7	Changing nature of the workforce
8	More employers not requiring degrees for employment
9	Onlinefor-profits
10	Political instability may lead to funding threats
11	Declining student numbers this is a national trend
12	Projected demographic cliff threatens future student enrollment
13	Sometimes poor quality of research and theses/dissertations
14	Resources for research need improvement (space an issue, some infrastructure in bad shape functional, internal funding for research lacking)
15	No VP for research
16	Graduate education and students should be more central and visible
17	Institutional marketing and support focused on undergraduate programs and students
18	Confusion with program since we have two deans (college dean and grad school dean) When program falls needs to be defined
19	underutilized software and integration
20	Need more flexibility with application software
21	lack of training and access
22	Poor website design across the university
23	Lack of fillable and routable online forms
24	Uncertain economy and higher costs for students
25	Inability to attract qualified full-time faculty to teach at ULM due to below average compensation
26	Inability to attract qualified adjuncts due to low adjunct pay
27	Lack of communication about GS policies and procedures within programs

28	Lack of shared governance, communication, written policies, transparency and availability of policies, archiving of decisions via minutes, collegial collaboration, and consistent application of policies and procedures within programs re: graduate curriculum and policies
29	Lack of transparent communication across campus, from Graduate Council, and within programs (for ex., minutes) means inefficiency and sometimes a crisis conflict-driven approach to problem solving
30	Lack of compliance with existing GS policies and procedures within programs
31	Lack of training for graduate students within programs
32	Inadequate marketing and recruitment in some programs
33	Fixation on numbers and recruiting
34	Inadequate funding for marketing, graduate assistantships, and staff
35	Loss of funding
36	Loss of support
37	Lack of faculty available for admin work during summer months
38	Minutes to council meetings are too vague regarding policy decisions
39	Expanding the size of graduate enrollment in certain programs beyond the capacity of the faculty in those programs to provide quality instruction. Increasing graduate class enrollment beyond a certain point is counterproductive.
40	ULM should exceed SACSCOC required

I
INCREASE GRADUATE STUDENT ENROLLMENT TO 20% ANNUALLY
ULM Strategic Pillar Student Success 1.1, 2(a, b, c, d), 1.3, 1.4a, 1.5

GRAD SCHOOL (GS) STRATEGIC GOAL 1 The Graduate School will work with graduate programs to reduce barriers to entry

Initiatives

- a) Advocate for holistic admissions process for all programs
- b) Advocate for programs to have more entry points
- c) Enforce conditional admissions status for programs that offer lower entry Grade Point Averages.
- d) Redirect admissions criteria from program maintained websites to the graduate school web page/catalog to maintain accuracy of admissions requirements
- e) Seek additional financial aid sources for graduate students
- f) Make the admission process more user friendly to students
- h) Assess current application and enrollment trends by program

GS STRATEGIC GOAL 2 The Graduate School will continue to reduce the conversion time from application to decision

Initiatives

- a) Support programs with simplified requirements by continuing direct admissions
- b) Evaluate programs with elaborate admissions processes to simplify requirements and deadlines
- c) Remove the unofficial transcript requirement from the graduate application which creates delays
- d) Reduce the number of transcripts required for admission (pending University of Louisiana Board approval)
- e) Advocate for a universal transcript system across the UL system

GS STRATEGIC GOAL 3 Simplify the onboarding process

Initiatives

- a) Develop materials which support newly admitted students
- b) Work with Colleges to develop a two year

GSSTRATEGIC GOALS Enhance opportunities and strategies for graduate student success and welfare

Initiatives

- a) Develop a policy for separation of a graduate student from a research mentor, lab or adviser
- b) Work with Career Development to develop graduate designated mentor and mentee workshops and/or to expand graduate participation in the existing ULM Mentorship program.
- c) Empower graduate students to have more impactful role on campus through advanced participation in student governance to represent both in-person and online students
- d) Advocate for and enhance accessibility to campus resources in, including health, education, and welfare for graduate students on campus and online
- e) Work with the office of Student Affairs to include graduate students in all campus events, activities, and announcements and develop events targeted to the graduate population
- f) Explore opportunities for students from underrepresented and marginalized groups to attend university events
- g) Provide additional experiences that help students discover and better understand career paths
- h) Provide additional professional development opportunities for students
- i) Provide a more robust orientation and additional professional development opportunities for graduate students
- j) Work with the Controller's office to offer an extended payment plan with options across the semester

II

MARKETING & RECRUITMENT
ULM Strategic Pillar: Student Success, 1.2

GSSTRATEGIC GOALS Support new program growth and enhance new program quality

Initiatives

- a) Offer a 'no-pay' recruitment day each semester or other incentives
- b) Increase scholarship funding through the ULM Foundation
- c) Hold a Graduate Application Day with assistance for both online and in-person students
- d) Encourage each program to update their fliers and other marketing materials (include 'Why get a graduate degree?', Return on Investment, Industry trends and the answer to 'Why ULM?')
- e) Encourage School Directors to integrate the Faculty Activities Database (FAD) as part of their annual evaluation and update their faculty profiles each year so profiles are current
- f) Update Graduate faculty lists
- g) Work with Deans to ensure faculty profiles are updated to attract graduate students

III

Support new program growth and enhance program quality
ULM Strategic Pillar Student Success 1c3 1.4c Intellectual Activity 3.1 a, b, c;

GS STRATEGIC GOAL 1 The Graduate School will advocate for, promote, and support the development of new programs that fit the mission of the university

Initiatives

- a) Promote and assist programs developing Accelerated Bachelors to Master's degrees
- b) Explore the creation of 4+1 Programs with regional institutions
- c) Promote new and unique interdisciplinary degrees across schools/colleges
- d) Explore opportunities for partnerships internationally

GS STRATEGIC GOAL 2 The Graduate School will collaborate with the Graduate Council to oversee graduate curricula and program review.

Initiatives

- a) The Graduate School Dean will serve on the University Curriculum Committee (UCC) until a Graduate Curriculum Committee is formed and will provide feedback to the UCC and programs on program proposals
- b) A new Graduate Curriculum Committee (under the Graduate Council) will review graduate program curriculum proposals that include program changes, enhancement of existing programs and program proposals. The committee will examine new programs for consistency with the mission of ULM, graduate

IV
Enhance communication with all stakeholders
ULM Strategic Pillars: Student Success 1.3e

GS STRATEGIC GOAL 8 The Graduate School will continue to develop and improve communication

Initiatives

- a) Create more prominent links on website to important searches (catalog, forms, appeals, faculty resources etc.)
- b) Create a student resources webpage that includes a video library
- c) Create a faculty resources webpage for appeals, policies workflow
- d) Develop a communication list serve for graduate faculty
- e) Create an email account for Graduate Council appeals
- f) Create email templates with guides for each different appeal type
- g) Revise communication

VI

Provide staff and graduate faculty with quality assistance and support
ULM Strategic Pillars/University Resources 3d;

GS STRATEGIC GOAL Create a support mechanism to assist graduate faculty and staff that provides support to graduate students and ensures continuity

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Initiatives

- a) The Graduate School will work with the Graduate Council to identify the role of graduate faculty
- b) Clarify Graduate School functions related to all stakeholders
- c) Develop policy database and convert forms to online fillable version using Blackboard
Document Management, appeal, and other processes
- f) Clarify roles and responsibilities of graduate faculty and staff

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VIII
BUDGET