GRAD LAUNCH (GRAD 700)

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UNIVERSITY OF

South Carolina

The Graduate School

BACKGROUND

Grad Launch (GRAD 700)

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COURSE GOALS

Provide structured programming for new graduate students (comparable to what is being done at Georgia, Georgia Tech, and Missouri) to address key needs identified by the Graduate Student Needs Assessment and campus partners by

- Orienting new graduate students to the University of South Carolina and its resources.
- Equipping students with key cocurricular skills for success in graduate study and their future endeavors.
- Improving student persistence by revealing the hidden curriculum of graduate education.
- Helping graduate students develop a sense of belonging within the larger university.

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FORMAT

- Part of term course
  - 1 credit hour
- Co-instructor
- Includes campus visits and guest presentations
  - Career Center, Counseling and Psychological Services, Student Success Center
- Activities and assignments focused on reflection and planning
  - Values reflection
  - IDP
  - Program of Study draft
  - Five year plan
  - Informational interview

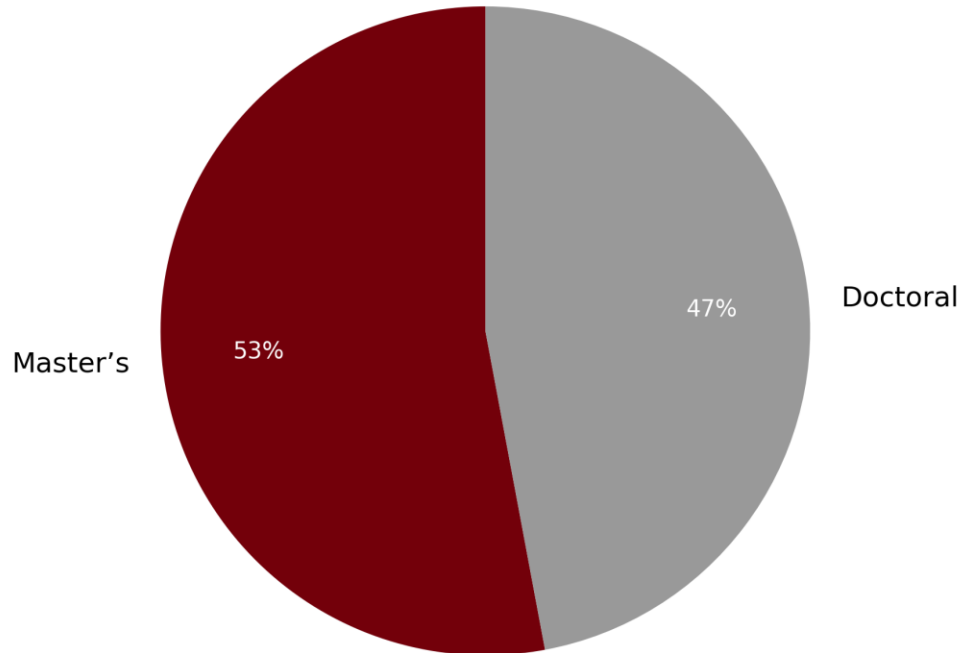|	
Week 1	Knowing Why You Are Here
Week 2	Advising and Mentoring in Graduate School
Week 3	Getting Connected and USC Basics
Week 4	Individual Development Plans
Week 5	Managing Time and Money
Week 6	Mental Health and Imposter Phenomenon
Week 7	Networking and Career Exploration

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INAUGURAL COHORT REPORT

17 participants in Fall 2025

ENROLLMENT BREAKDOWN

Degree Type

Student Demographics

Doctoral 47%

Master's 53%

International 24%

Domestic (incl. 1 permanent resident) 76%

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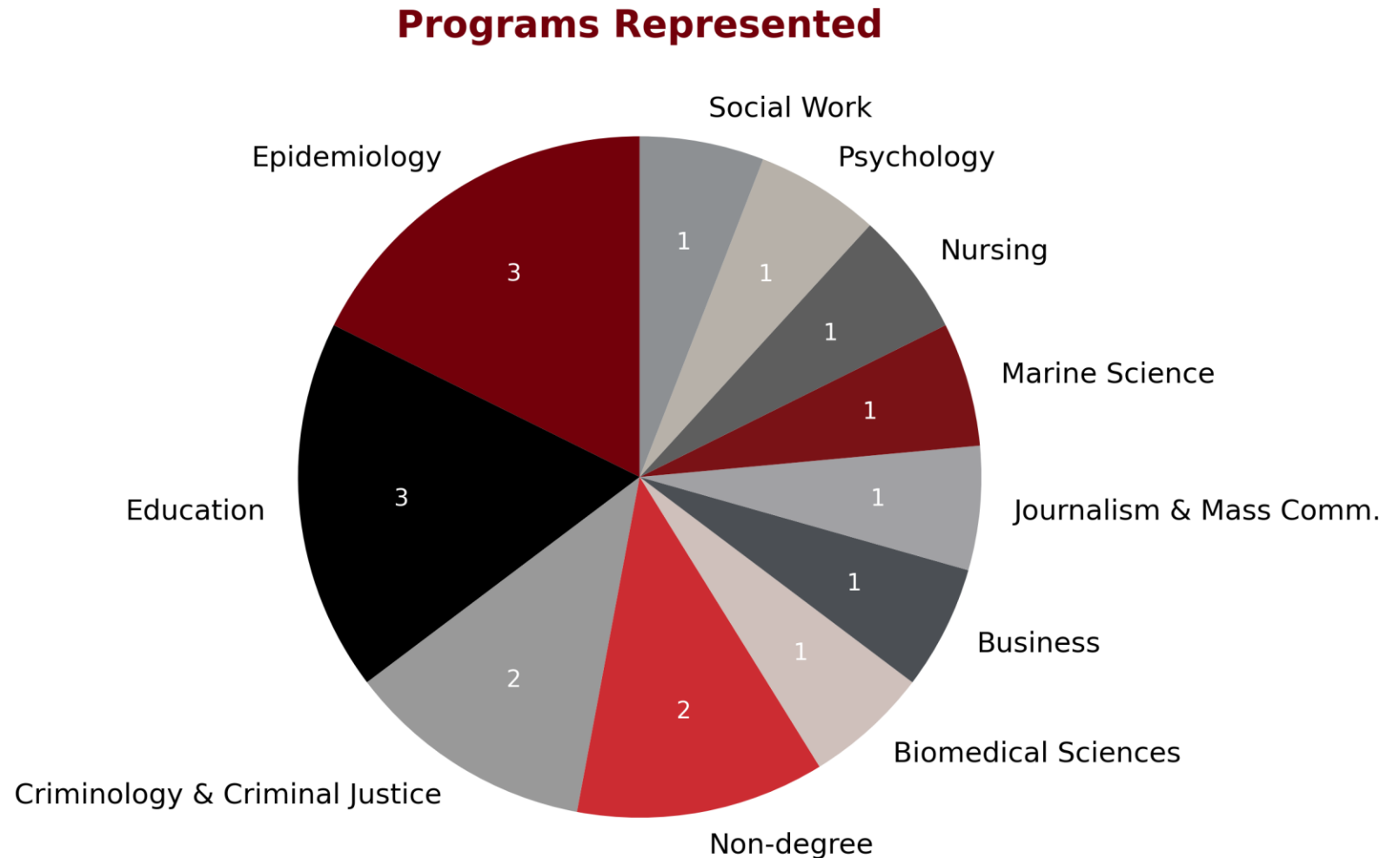**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH CAROLINA**

Charts generated by ChatGPT
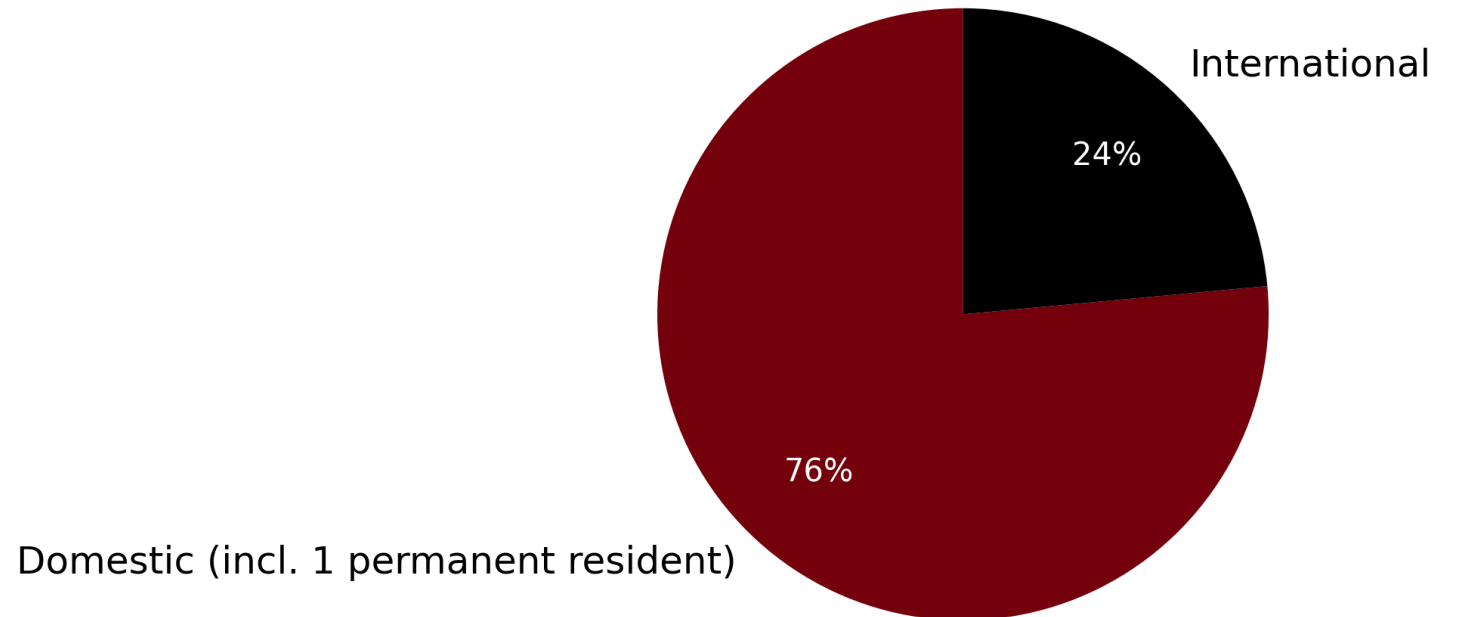
GRADUATE PROGRAM BREAKDOWN

- 6 colleges and schools
  - ASPH
  - CIC
  - COE
  - CON
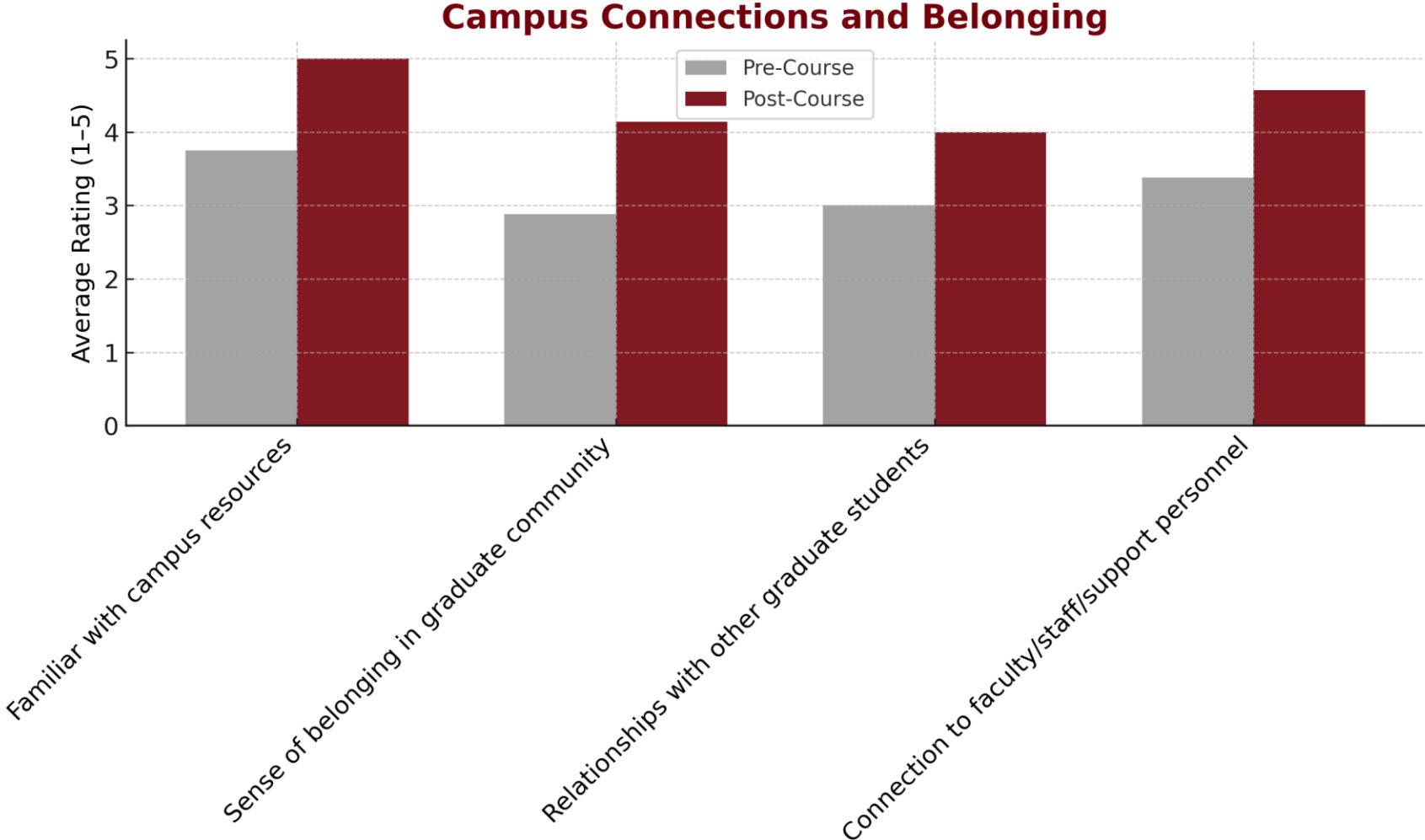 - MCAS
  - SOM
- 10 graduate degree programs

Chart generated by ChatGPT

Programs Represented

Social Work — 1
Psychology — 1
Nursing — 1
Marine Science — 1
Journalism & Mass Comm. — 1
Business — 1
Biomedical Sciences — 1
Non-degree — 2
Criminology & Criminal Justice — 2
Education — 3
Epidemiology — 3

ASSESSMENT DATA: PRE VS. POST COURSE

Pre-course assessme
(n=8) vs. post-course
assessment (n=7)

Academic and Professional Self-Confidence

Graph generated by ChatGPT

ASSESSMENT DATA: PRE VS. POST COURSE

Pre-course assessment (n=8) vs. post-course assessment (n=7)

Campus Connections and Belonging

Graph generated by ChatGPT

STUDENT COMMENTS

MCAS master's student

- "Grad school was nothing like I had expected it would be, and it got a bit scary in the beginning. This course helped me step back and be okay with the fact that it will all come with time."

ASPH PhD student

- "GRAD Launch has not been a theoretical experience—it has led to tangible changes in my daily routines and academic practices. I now maintain a structured calendar for research and coursework, schedule regular advisor meetings, and check in with campus support offices when needed. I have reached out to potential dissertation committee members, engaged in professional development sessions on publishing and data management, and created a comprehensive five-year plan that integrates all aspects of my growth."

Non-degree student

- "The Grad Launch experience has been more formative than I anticipated. What I expected to be an informal orientation became a genuine immersion into academic accountability and community."

MCAS PhD student

- "I loved how welcoming the co-instructors were as they felt like they genuinely cared about us and what we want to do. I appreciate hearing real examples and that they treated us like colleagues instead of students. It also made me feel better about connecting and being apart of USC."

SPRING 2026

- **Share details with your students and colleagues!**
- Offering two sections for Spring semester
  - In-person: 1:10 – 3:10 Friday (Close-Hipp 582)
    - CRN 57406
  - Virtual: 6 – 8 Thursday
    - CRN 57408

- Target audience
  - New cohorts starting in Spring
  - New students who deferred admission from Fall to Spring
  - Any first-year graduate student

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