



Graduate Directors Meeting

August 28, 2025

3:00 – 5:00 p.m.

The Graduate Directors Meeting was held on Thursday, August 28, 2025, at 3:00 p.m. on Teams.

Present on Teams: Dean Ann Vail, Lingyu Yu, Angelina Sylvain, Kesha Clavon, Dale Moore, Barbara Foster, Hong Wang, Rhonda Sherman, Robin Dawson, Robert Moran, Joohyung Park, Dimitris Rizos, Danny Jenkins, Nikki Wooten, Steven Harrod, Tessa Hasting, Rita Dixon, Lyda McCartin, Sarah Gassman, David Hitchcock, Brandon Applegate, Bill Hauk, Fabienne Poulain, Harlan Smith, Myriam Torres, Sheryl Wiskur, Michael Bizimis, Steffen Strauch, Mark Yancey, Hunter Boehme, Matt Klopfenstein, Kathleen Robbins, Brea Hudson, Kenneth Campbell, Susan Steck, Jennifer O’Neill, Andrea Henderson, Donna Wantson, Agnieszka Bolinska, Garrick Queen, Devon Golem, Heidi Conte, Andrea Fleming, Katie Searles, Fang Meng, Daniel Kilpatrick, Nabil Natafqi, Christine Sacco-Bene, Kate Flory, Heather Bonilha, Christy Smith, Stephen Shapiro, Kevin LeBlanc, Edena Guimaraes, Beth Barnes, Andreas Heyden, Whitney Dobek, Anne Bezuidenhout, Caroline Nagel, Lauren Sklaroff, Hong Wang,

Welcome and Agenda

- Dean Vail welcomed attendees and reviewed agenda

Harlan Smith, Director, Division of International Student and Scholar Support USC **International Graduate Students: An Update - Harlan**

- Numbers are quite good and more than anticipated considering some of the challenges being faced currently.
- A more robust international student intake is expected in January 2026 due to visa delays.
- Arrival data to be shared for the graduate and doctoral programs after the formal add-drop deadline.
- Program deferrals for Springs 2026 will begin this week. Important for them to be approved expeditiously.
- Late Arrivals – Determined by solely by ISSS.
- Rules for employment while abroad and studying remotely.
- F1, J1 students, exchange visitors, no longer able to have open ended date to remain in U.S.

Graduate Expo – Kesha Clavon

- There are 763 students registered to date for the Expo on 9/5/25 at 9a in the Russell House Ballroom.
- The registrants represent all academic units across campus and are pretty evenly split between master's and doctoral programs.
- 49% are continuing students – an exciting metric showing that students see the value
- There are 9 concurrent breakout sessions during the Expo.
- Blackboard component offered for the Expo to students unable to attend, which will include all of the exhibitors who have submitted information helpful for the students.
- This is the second year of the Expo and it's a direct response to students' comments in the Graduate Student Needs Survey requesting more services to orient grad students to the campus.

National Name Exchange List – Kesha Clavon

- Discussion of the procedure for accessing prospective student information via the National Name Exchange List (Administered by the Council of Graduate Schools).
- A centralized database where all CGS member institutions have an opportunity to participate.
- The Purpose is to expand access to graduate education.
- Once one USC student enrolls, we have access to the database. Enrollment is March - July
- Students are invited to participate if they have an interest in learning more about graduate school research opportunities and getting information from programs.
- Enrollment typically takes place between March and July. In August the participating institutions have access to that database.
- As of mid-August there were 7800 plus students in that database.
- Heavily undergraduate, but there are master's students as well and their degree goals are listed.

Digital Accessibility – Lucy Lu

- A Federal Mandate related to Digital Accessibility to begin April 27, 2026.
- We have already started using the new template.
- Amy Freeman from the library as well as our IT department state the template, if used properly and as instructed, will make thesis and dissertations compliant.
- The Directors were asked to strongly encourage their students to use the template to avoid unnecessary challenges.

Program of Study Automation – Angelina Sylvain

- With the adoption of the new enrollment management system, there have been talks all summer strategizing about how we might digitalize our forms and we have started with the POS form.
- This project represents the Graduate School's initial steps into streamlining our processes with the goal of creating more consistency, transparency and efficiency for both students and faculty.
- A step by step presentation of the digitized POS form was given, pointing out its advantages over the current system.
- The form is live on September 2nd.
- We will continue to accept paper forms until 1/2/26.

CHE and "Stop-out" – Angelina Sylvain

- CHE does regularly monitor program productivity at both undergraduate and graduate levels.
- Based off of number of students enrolled and number that graduate with minimums expected per program. These are master's programs that are traditionally earned along the way to a PhD, or are earned in lieu of the PhD, if the student ultimately does not complete the doctoral program.
- CHE recently indicated that these programs are not going to have the same leniency to productivity that they have had in the past.
- It is the Grad School's recommendation that academic programs, as well as those with a stop out master's program, have all PhD students enrolled into that program concurrently to ensure program enrollment numbers and completion numbers are not being flagged as unproductive.
- Not every master's program is a stop out program. If you're not sure if you have a stop out program then Trena Houpp should be contacted

Enrollment Management System: Element1801 – Angelina Sylvain

- Element451 was selected as our new enrollment management system.
- We are personalizing the name of the system and calling it Element1801.
- This will allow us to be at a place that no other large graduate program is at in the country. We are leading the way on using some of the tools the Element1801 will provide.
- Element1801 would replace CollegeNet and in addition would serve as our centralized enrollment management.
- It is built for the entire student life cycle from prospect to graduate. It is an intuitive platform and is going to unify data across phases and leverage AI powered tools to simplify tasks and improve communication.
- Less manual work for staff, faculty and administrators and a smoother, more transparent process for applicants.

- The implementation has brought together colleagues from colleges, schools, and administrative offices to ensure the effort reflects the needs of the entire graduate community
- Stakeholder Kickoff is September 9th at 10:00 AM.
- Kennedy and Company is secured as our implementation partner. Timeline was discussed in detail with training for the transition offered in February and March with online and in person opportunities will be provided.
- Heidi Conte, new Assistant Dean for Enrollment was introduced as the person who would be leading the Element1801 implementation. Heidi will be providing regular updates to the stakeholder groups.
- The Element1801 website will be live and available beginning early next week.

Next meeting: September 25, 2025, 3:00 – 5:00, Teams Meeting

Minutes by Barbara Foster