

Identifying Graduate Pathways for Honors College Students

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THE UNIVERSITY OF
SOUTHERN MISSISSIPPI®

The Problem

- Graduate school enrollment overall increased in 2021, then decreased in 2022
 - Slight increase in 2023 due to increased enrollment of international students
- Downward trend is expected to occur, especially as the undergraduate admissions cliff approaches and passes



The Honors College at USM

- Approximately 480 students in the Honors College at Southern Miss
 - Many will go on to graduate school
 - Some we cannot keep (Law, Medical, Physical Therapy, Pharmacy)
 - However, many of them can stay!



Honors College to Graduate School at USM

- 99 HC Alumni have entered USM graduate programs since Spring 2020
 - 22 graduated HC in 2019-2020
 - 17 graduated HC in 2020-2021
 - 21 graduated HC in 2021-2022
 - 14 graduated HC in 2022-2023
 - 16 graduated HC in 2023-2024
- Hard to assess how many alumni have entered graduate school elsewhere (exit survey data)



The Purpose

- Propose pathways at USM that promote increased matriculation of Honors College students into graduate programs
- Work with various school directors and program coordinators to create/execute these ideas

Why?

- Enrollment is good!
- Keep our highly qualified students in the state
 - (hopefully forever)

A silhouette of a bird, possibly an eagle or hawk, with its wings fully spread, perched on a branch. The background is a vibrant sunset sky with orange and yellow hues near the horizon, transitioning to a darker blue at the top. The bird is positioned on the left side of the frame, facing right.

The Process

- Prioritized graduate programs based upon appeal and social capital
 - Health Professions
- Met with administrators in these areas to discuss options and generate ideas for an MOU
- Once several MOUs were in motion, they were announced to the Council of Directors

Initial Program Contacts

- Athletic Training
- Counseling Psychology
- Audiology
- Speech-Language Pathology
- Physician Assistant Studies



Additional Contacts

- Library and Information Science
- History
- School of Kinesiology and Nutrition



End Results

- Completed MOUs for:
 - Athletic Training
 - Audiology
 - Counseling Psychology
 - Library and Information Sciences

End Results

- Benefits gained from students in the Honors College included:
 - Guaranteed interviews* (MSAT, Audiology, Counseling Psych)
 - Guaranteed Admission* (MLIS)
 - Considerations for the 3+2 Accelerated Pathway (MSAT)
 - Considerations for the Honor's Thesis satisfying certain graduate course assignments (Audiology, MLIS)

End Results

- The PA program already has plans in place that provide special admission considerations for USM graduates, so an MOU was unnecessary
- Although discussions were had with SKN and History, those conversations have not materialized into an MOU
- The SLP program's faculty discussed an MOU, and ultimately decided against pursuing one.
 - However, they are considering adding "Previous Research" as a grading component in their application rubric.

Next Steps

- Promotion!
 - Honors College
 - Graduate School
 - Individual programs
- Continued conversations with the programs that were previously interested and initiate conversations with other programs that are good “landing points” for Honors College students



A photograph of a university campus. In the foreground, a black lamp post stands on a green lawn. A yellow banner with the text "GOLDEN EAGLES" and "UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH ALABAMA" is attached to the post. In the background, a large, classical-style building with a prominent dome is visible under a clear blue sky. The right side of the image is partially obscured by a dark grey overlay containing text.

Next Steps

- CAS – 335 students
 - 55 – Biological Sciences
 - 34 – Computer Science
 - 23 – Polymer Science
 - 20 – Chemistry
 - 16 – English
- CBED – 40 students
 - 14 - Accounting
- CEHS – 68 students
 - 40 - Psychology
- CNHP – 47 students
 - 25 – Nursing/Health Sciences

Thank you!