



**ALCORN STATE UNIVERSITY
ALCORN STATE, MISSISSIPPI**



**GRADUATE STUDIES
ACCOMPLISHMENTS**



Office of Graduate Studies ACHIEVEMENTS 2011-2012

Mission: The mission of the Office of Graduate Studies is to provide service and support for post baccalaureate study at Alcorn State University. In fulfilling its mission, the Office of Graduate Studies assists students with: admission processes, monitoring and communicating progress toward completion of degree programs, certifying completion of the degree, and accurate and efficient record keeping. The Office of Graduate Studies also assists departments with: recruiting and admission, promotion and advocacy for current degree programs, promotion and advocacy for the implementation of new degree programs.

Just a little bit of bragging about our Office of Graduate Studies, faculty, staff, and students.

YEAR IN REVIEW:

2011-2012 Graduate Studies Accomplishments

The 2011-2012 academic year was notable for many reasons for the Office of Graduate Studies. We are proud to play an integral role in communicating the mission of Alcorn State University. This annual report is designed to share a snapshot of milestones accomplished that have impacted our growth and successes.

Office of Graduate Studies

Enrollment. We revel at efforts to recruit and retain an increasing pool of professional students seeking advanced degrees. Enrollment in Graduate School continues to grow and develop as an integral part of Alcorn as the University strengthens its commitment to provide intellectually challenging experiences and support rigorous scholarship. For the fourth consecutive year, ASU graduate enrollment has seen significant growth. We welcomed 722 students to campus fall 2011 – an all-time high. Accomplishments of the past year, many of which are listed below, are evidence of graduate enrollment management:

1. Master's level enrollment ranked #2 at Alcorn over a four-year span (672 students) 2008-2011.

2. Graduate student enrollment increased from 615 in 2008 to 722 in 2011.
3. The Specialist enrollment ranked #1 in having the highest enrollment over a four year span (60) 2008-2011.
4. 2011 also witnessed the highest number of first time Specialist admitted students (23).
5. Increase in the quality of prospective students to enlarge pool of outstanding students for degree programs.
6. A significant increase in the number of students enrolled in distance education at the graduate level.

ENROLLMENT GOALS Office of Graduate Studies						
Year	5%	Incr	3%	Incr	2%	Incr
2009	646	+30	630	+18	624	+12
2010	678	+32	649	+19	636	+12
2011	712	+33	668	+19	649	+13
2012	748	+36	688	+20	662	+13
2013	785	+37	709	+21	675	+13
2014	824	+39	730	+21	689	+14

7. Continuous emphasis on graduate academic units developing recruitment strategies to attract a higher number of International students to Alcorn.
8. Enrollment goal of 5% yearly increase exceeded projections and yielded the highest graduate enrollment over a four-year period.

Year	Projected 5% Enrollment	Actual Enrollment
2008		615
2009	646	634
2010	678	702 Exceeded Projected Goal
2011	712	722 Exceeded Projected Goal

Recruitment. Graduate Studies staff participated in several recruitment activities to increase student enrollment. Presentations were made at different venues such as the Alcorn Professional Day, Headstart Symposium, and Natchez-Jefferson Day of Sharing for Instructional Faculty. In addition, emails and informational flyers were sent to all seniors to capture this pool of prospective students. This plan was successful since it resulted in a large number of Bachelor level students applying for admission to graduate school. All activities were targeted to share information with students to inform them about our graduate program, how to apply to graduate school at Alcorn, and to answer questions about graduate student life. At all of these venues we provided flyers and other recruitment materials appropriate for disseminating information to potential students. The overarching goal is to continue to develop additional recruitment tools and strategies.

Diversity. The Office of Graduate Studies continues to promote diversity among students by assigning graduate assistantships to students from the following countries: Canada, Ghana, India, Russia, and United States.

Institutional Effectiveness. We set a series of goals for Graduate Studies commensurate with the strategic plan for our unit to improve services and efficiency of operations. These accomplishments have enhanced operations, services, and support in Graduate Studies. Some of the milestones accomplished:

Goals for 2011-2012

Enhancement of Infrastructure and Technology

- Collect academic information from each graduate unit for entry in the Graduate Studies Catalog and post eCatalog. Prospective students, currently enrolled students, and the University community complete survey to convey their overall satisfaction with the level of information included. The responses will reveal end- users are 'Satisfied' to 'Very Satisfied' with this informational media regarding graduate requirements and other information pertinent to end-users for admission and program continuance.

**Graduate Catalog Survey Feedback
2011 - 2012**

End-users were asked to respond to their level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with contents published in the eGraduate Catalog on the University's website. This information was collected based on visitors utilizing the Graduate Studies webpage. The criterion was targeted for 90% satisfaction. The actual visitor count: **N = 443**; Average rating achieved 98% satisfaction with information in Graduate Catalog. Overall, customers are satisfied with the level of information published about graduate programs at Alcorn State University.

Indicator	Fall Semester 2011 and Spring 2012			
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied
	4	3	2	1
GENERAL INFORMATION Information about the University	98%	1%	1%	0%
ADMISSION REQUIREMENTS Information assisted me in understanding the mission of the Graduate School.	99%	1%	0%	0%
Admission examinations	89%	2%	9%	0%
Overall, how satisfied were you as a prospective student or end-user with the admission process from application to receiving notification of your admission status explained in the catalog?	96%	3%	1%	0%
ACADEMIC REGULATIONS How satisfied were you with the quality of information provided about graduate academic advisement?	89%	5%	4%	2%
How satisfied were you with Deadlines, Forms, Continuation, Graduation	93%	6%	1%	0%
Graduate Student Responsibilities	99%	1%	0%	0%
DEGREE REQUIREMENTS How satisfied were you with the information provided to describe the requirements of each academic unit?	94%	2%	4%	0%
Course Descriptions	98%	2%	0%	0%
Field of Study	97%	2%	4%	0%
OVERALL SATISFACTION	98%			

- Posted Opinion Poll questions on a regular basis to the website to garner feedback from end-users regarding Requirements, admission, news, announcements, programs of study, and other information pertinent to providing quality customer service, improvement of the website, access and navigation.

- Designed and activated a fully functional self-service admission application to give access to students on a local and global basis. 98% of prospective students are using this tool vs. submitting paper apps.

Governance and Professionalism

- Recruit Graduate Assistants to serve as a nucleus group to participate in meetings designed to review and discuss academics, services, and needs of students, existing policies and practices and brainstorm with graduate staff possible options to resolve these issues. Student records will indicate satisfaction of resolved issues.

Record graduating class. Our largest class ever, 226 graduates representing 30 majors, graduated May 2012.

Graduate Studies Hold Reception to Acknowledge 2012 Graduates. The 2011-2012 graduation reception hosted by the Office of Graduate Studies marked another historical event at Alcorn State University. The reception was a celebration in honor of the 226 students. This event was well attended by faculty, staff, students and the University community. We plan to host this event on an annual basis. Accolades were showered on the 2012 graduates as they were recognized for being the second largest class to graduate in the history of the University. Recognition was also given to all graduates and special accolades were bestowed to students graduating with honors with academic averages ranging from 3.91-4.00 With Highest Distinction, 3.82-3.90 With High Distinction, and 3.71-3.81 With Distinction. Prospective graduates had the pleasure of hearing from three special student guests as a culminating activity.

The reception was held in the Clinton Bristow Dining Facility Gold Room on May 9th at 5:00 p.m.

For the first time in hosting the graduation reception, three prospective graduates were invited to deliver motivational words of wisdom to the audience and graduating class. The student speakers made an impressive impact on the audience in excess of 115+ in attendance.

STUDENT SPEAKERS:



Rev. Rickey Van O'Quinn
(A.A., B.A., B.B.S., M.A.T., Ed.M.)



Anastasia V. Khatnyanskaya



Bishop Justin L. Conner

The Class of 2012
 226 Graduates
 Second Largest Class in History of the University to Graduate

First Class in History of the University to be Hooded during the Commencement Exercise

Graduates accepted to the BRIDGES Doctoral Program at Penn State University
Ms. Brenita Jenkins, Cell Biology
Mr. Lucius Daughtry, Pathobiology

Commencement. The Office of Graduate Studies is elated to report that two hundred twenty-six (226) graduate students were included in the Commencement Program as candidates for graduation on May 12, 2012. This was the second largest class in the history of Graduate Studies to graduate.



Graduate Programs and Admissions

Graduate Studies recognizes the need to provide a curriculum of selected programs leading to graduate degrees that reflect today's market. This has been an integral part of Alcorn's mission to attract high quality students. In keeping with the tenets of this mission, the University has developed outstanding graduate programs in business, education, nursing, the natural sciences, computer science, and advanced technology. We pride ourselves in offering graduate students the individualized attention found on small HBCU college campuses. The resources and opportunities offered are designed to actively engage students in advanced learning in current and new degree programs.

Advanced Technologies Offer New Master's Program for Fall 2012.

The Department of Advanced Technologies was approved to offer a new Applied Science and Technology degree at the graduate level which included six concentrations: Computer Systems and Networks, Electrical and Electronic Engineering Technology Geospatial Engineering Technology, Homeland Security Management, Radiological Health Science (Health Physics), and Technology Management. In Year 1 (beginning fall 2012 at least 8 students are expected to enroll). The intent of this new degree program was to provide students with a combined five-year dual degree at the B.S. and M.S. level for the best students graduating in the Robotics and Automation, Computer Networking and Information Technology, and Applied Science programs. This is a 36 hours degree program and the Federal Government has allocated funds to assist with this effort in curriculum development. As a result of this funding and approval of IHL, ASU will provide access

to technical graduate work in southwest Mississippi and the rural counties served to meet a growing demand for college teachers at institutions of higher learning.

Students interested in continuing their studies on the master's level in technical fields have advanced study options fall 2012.

U. S. Department of Education Funds Graduate Programs.

The U.S. Department gave Alcorn's Graduate Studies a vote of confidence in renewal of Historically Black Colleges and Universities grant. The grant was renewed for a third year in the amount of \$500,000 to support three graduate programs: Biology, Computer and Information Science, and the Master of Science in Nursing. The intent of the grant is to support and strengthen graduate programs with low enrollment, high growth, or new programs.

GRE Updates.

Graduate programs at Alcorn remain current with revised test requirements by Educational Testing Service (ETS). All degree programs requiring the Graduate Record Examination for admission completed revisions of their admission guidelines based on ETS revised scoring guides. Each graduate program was asked to devise a contingency plan to intercept students whose Analytical Writing scores do not comply with the cut score for admission. The following academic units have devised technical writing courses to improve the writing proficiency of this pool of students: School of Graduate Nursing, Agriculture Department, Advanced Technologies, Department of Education and Psychology, Biological Sciences, and Computer and Information Sciences. The format of the written qualifying examinations was changed from closed to open book.

Publications.

Our graduate faculty has also been very productive in their advisement of research endeavors, as witnessed by their supervision of published student theses and projects. In 2011-2012 students authored 50 theses and 15 projects that have been published and added to the archives. Prospective graduates, for the first time, submitted theses and projects electronically for review to streamline the review and approval process.

To accommodate the growing archives, Graduate Studies staff made a recommendation that more

space was needed to accommodate volumes of documents received.

Space was identified and approved by Academic Affairs Provost for this expansion. The Archives venue was slated to be in place during the 2012-2013 academic year.

Promotion and Advocacy for Degree Programs

1. Utilized Graduate Council to coordinate well-developed programs for qualified students at the Master's degree level.
2. Revised Student Learning Outcomes in behavioral terms for each degree program to increase rigor and research; published revised outcomes in 2011-2012 Graduate Catalog.
3. Upgraded thesis and non-thesis requirements and manuals to require students to produce quality research studies and publications.
4. Implemented Writing Proficiency Requirement in each academic unit to enhance writing skills of graduate students.

Students

Graduate Student Association (GSA). During the fall semester 2011, Graduate Studies launched a new student association. The Office of Graduate Studies activated the Graduate Student Association (GSA). Dr. Donzell Lee and Ms. Lula Russell met with graduate students to discuss the Graduate Students Association. After several meetings, the students elected officers. One of the main objectives during the spring semester 2012 will be to increase membership.

GSA Members of the Executive Committee

Shasheena Hooper	<i>President</i>
Amanda Davidson	<i>Vice President</i>
Harrieha Howard	<i>Secretary</i>
MarShelia Mallory	<i>Assist. Secretary</i>
Charles Mawusi	<i>Treasurer</i>
Jesse Spann	<i>Parliamentarian</i>

Accomplishments for 2011-2012 Academic/Social:

- Graduate Professional Day-55 students visited the graduate booth for information about graduate school

Outreach:

8 student participants

82 hours of volunteer recruitment:

- Conducted media poll to recruit graduating seniors to apply to graduate school at Alcorn
- Recruited prospective graduate students to re-enroll to pursue second master's degree.

Graduate Student Invited to Proctor Assessment.

The Bloomberg Institute hosted a test session on campus at Alcorn (Natchez Campus) February 24, 2012 and invited a graduate student to assist in proctoring this event. Anastasia Khathyanskaya, Master Business Administration student, was selected to proctor the Bloomberg Assessment Test.

Biological Sciences Students Given Opportunity to Evaluate BRIDGES Program.

As a part of Alcorn State and Penn State's participation in the Bridges to the Doctorate Program, graduate Biology students at Alcorn were recruited to assess how well the program is meeting its goals. Students participated in a survey to give critical feedback about their aspirations and interests. This study was approved by The Pennsylvania State University Office of Research Protections for the review of human participant research. The data collected in the evaluation process was intended to be utilized for research purposes only. Ten students participated in this anonymous survey.

Giving

Graduate Studies Participate in 2012 ASU Annual Fund Campaign. Graduate Studies vision for the unit is to foster the development of scholarship, leadership, service, and character. In keeping with this target, the staff decided giving to Alcorn was foremost on its agenda for the 2011-2012 calendar. This commitment to advance the mission

of the University by pledging a monetary contribution was

the least staff could do to assist in fulfilling critical needs including scholarship funding, enrichment agendas, recruitment and selection activities.

One hundred percent of the Graduate Studies staff has taken a giant step in support of the annual Always Alcorn Annual Fund Campaign. In January 2012, each employee committed a monthly gift through payroll deduction to assist in providing greater opportunities and experiences as an investment in our next generation of leaders. "We wanted to be actively involved in investing in our students' futures. We realize our gifts will contribute to the educational enhancement of our students and that was our motivation for giving," according to Dr. Donzell Lee, Dean of Graduate Studies (2011-2012).

On the Move: eBusiness

Moving the Graduate Office into the mainstream of corporate America, the Office of Graduate Studies, in its effort to improve how it does business, wants to create a collaborative and comprehensive paperless plan to implement its institutional effectiveness goal to become a premier eBusiness Center. Priority initiatives have been targeted to realize these outcomes. The plan will deliver services in a totally automated environment that we hope to realize by 2014.

Graduate staff collaborated to craft more effective eBusiness strategies, programs, and channel technology tactics. In executing this vision, the following milestones have been achieved:

1. **Self-Service Application.** Successfully launched the online application process, including electronic requests for letters of recommendation. Five (5) Self-Service Admission applications were made available to prospective students to streamline the application process.
2. **Electronic Thesis Submission.** Gave prospective graduates access to submitting theses and projects for review electronically.

3. **Electronic Score Reports.** Identified decryption software to allow electronic exchange of test reports from ETS, setup, test with ETS score reporting techs, train School of Graduate Studies Data manager how to use the decryption application to download electronic score reports for GRE, PRAXIS and TOEFL; setup server in collaboration with ETS to receive electronic scores via the Internet. Installed decryption software to receive standardized test scores such as GRE, Praxis electronically to reduce wait time in processing admission applications.
4. **eGraduate Catalog.** Posted electronic graduate catalog to give students interested in advanced study an electronic document that will give them user-friendly access to graduate school information.



5. **Opinion Poll.** Created layout space in CMS to accommodate Opinion Poll questions on webpage to garner feedback from students and the University community.
6. **Web Site.** It is critical to successful communication to establish web presence for those customers who conduct business online due to convenience or career limitations which will not allow them to participate in a campus

visit. The Office of Graduate Studies wants to position itself to be competitive in attracting prospective students and delivering quality services to its constituents. This will be accomplished through the comprehensive eBusiness initiatives included in this plan as projects to move towards a paperless environment. The Graduate Studies website will continue to be improved and developed. In accordance with ASU's web standards.

7. Reports On Demand. Streamline manually created spreadsheets by Enrollment Manager to convert to Reports On Demand for easy access and efficiency. Five of ten reports have been identified to generate in ROD; additional reports are being reviewed for streamlining; final list will be given to CITS for planning and project management.

8. Electronic Balloting. Polling of Graduate Council using electronic voting to approve graduate faculty for membership.

Applications for Admission Available Online. New students looking to apply for graduate admission to Alcorn State University can now apply online through the university's Self-Service system.

This service is made available to prospective students in an attempt by the Office of Graduate Studies to enhance its enrollment management efforts. Returning students are also encouraged to apply for admission using the new online application service on the university's web site at www.alcorn.edu. There are five admission types to address the enrollment needs of prospective students: First Time Graduate, Readmission, Second Master's, Non-Degree, and Specialist in Elementary Education. Since the online applications were launched, a number of prospective students have already utilized this new service to apply for admission for summer and fall 2012. The rollout plan included communications to inactive graduate students, undergraduate seniors, currently enrolled students and prospective 2012 graduates, local school districts and businesses. The Office of Graduate Studies has future plans to expand its media blitz to announce this new service to communities beyond the local area.

Service and Support



Service is at the heart of everything we do. One of the initiatives of graduate studies staff was to participate in ASU's Child Development Center Halloween activity. The infants, toddlers, and preschoolers enjoyed the office decorations and treat bags they received during their Trick or Treat visit to Graduate Studies.

Informal Education. Collaboration and mini information sessions were conducted with constituents in the university community inquiring about graduate programs and how Alcorn can meet their needs; assisted educational entities in providing information to students for advanced degrees and services beyond graduate level program offerings at Alcorn.

Technical Assistance. Technical assistance is given to our customers in accessing the webpage and links to ascertain information about our programs and services.

