Inaugural Graduate Education Summit

January 26, 2024
8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Joseph F. Rice School of Law
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8:30 a.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Joseph F. Rice School of Law
8:30 – 9:00
Registration  
*Perrin Lobby*

Gamecock CommUnity Drive – food, business clothing, school supplies, household supplies

Book Signing with Leonard Cassuto and Robert Weisbuch

9:00 – 10:30
Opening Session  
*Karen J. Williams Courtroom*

**Welcome**  
Ann Vail, Ph.D.; *Dean, The Graduate School*

**Building a Better Graduate Education**  
Leonard Cassuto, Ph.D.; *Professor, English and American Studies, Fordham University*

Robert Weisbuch, Ph.D.; *Former President, Drew University; Former President, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation; Former Professor of English, Department Chair and Dean at the University of Michigan*

Join Drs. Cassuto and Weisbuch as they discuss their perspective detailed in their acclaimed work, “The New PhD: How to Build a Better Graduate Education.” Through their advocacy, they challenge the traditional confines of academia, proposing a graduate experience that is both humanely enriching and socially responsive. Their call to action is clear: streamline the journey to degree completion, broaden the horizon of post-graduation careers, foster public scholarship, and curate a curriculum that resonates with contemporary society. In this enlightening discourse, they will delve into innovative strategies for revamping the dissertation process, cultivating diversity within the student body, and ensuring comprehensive support systems that address financial, cultural, and emotional needs.
10:30 – 11:00
Break  Perrin Family Event Space

11:00 – 12:00
Break Out Sessions: Choose One

**Advising and Mentoring Our Students:**
The Faculty Role in Mentoring and Advising  Room 389

As integral architects of student success, faculty members are not merely educators but also mentors and advisors who provide the scaffolding for students’ academic and professional growth. This session will delve into effective strategies for advising and mentoring, with a particular focus on how faculty can foster a nurturing environment that supports the holistic development of graduate students.

Leonard Cassuto, Ph.D.; **Professor, English and American Studies, Fordham University**
Presider: Jean Taylor Ellis, Ph.D.; **Interim Associate Dean, Student Success and Engagement**

**From Global to Local: Rethinking Support Systems for USC’s International Community**  Room 284

Join Dr. Christina Yao and her research team as they unveil comprehensive insights into the multifaceted challenges confronting international graduate students. With a special focus on the University of South Carolina, this session delves into the nuanced experiences of these students, revealing critical concerns such as spousal support, housing, and food security. Dr. Yao will guide attendees through tailored considerations and strategic practices aimed at overcoming these barriers, fostering an inclusive and supportive environment for the university’s diverse international cohort.

Christina Yao, Ph.D.; **Associate Professor and Program Coordinator; Higher Education and Student Affairs M.Ed.; Department of Leadership, Learning Design, and Inquiry**
Sandy Greene; **Graduate Student, Education Administration, Department of Leadership, Learning Design, and Inquiry**
Gaurav Harshe; **Graduate Student, Education Administration, Department of Leadership, Learning Design, and Inquiry**
Katie Hopkins; **Graduate Student, Education Administration, Department of Leadership, Learning Design, and Inquiry**
Designing Graduate Programs for the Future: USC Examples

This session will provide an overview and discussion of USC examples of program reform and modernization. Panel members will describe the process of program revision in their program. They will highlight their motivations for change and how they were addressed. Considerations throughout the process will be described, the various strategies for evaluation of curricular decisions will be shared, and lessons learned will be identified.

Juan Caicedo, Ph.D.; Chair, Department of Civil Engineering
Maryah Fram, Ph.D., MSW; Associate Professor and Ph.D. Program Director, College of Social Work
Stephanie Y. Mitchem, Ph.D.; Interim Director, Women’s and Gender Studies Program; Professor, Religious Studies
Moderator: Robert Weisbuch, Ph.D.; Former President, Drew University; Former President, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation

12:00 – 1:00
Lunch Buffet

Graduate Council and Graduate Directors Lunch

1:00 – 2:00
Educational Evolution: Embracing AI in Graduate Teaching and Research

As AI’s role in academic settings becomes increasingly prevalent, the imperative to navigate its use with discernment and strategic foresight is more crucial than ever. This discourse will illuminate pioneering examples where AI has been integrated into the fabric of graduate learning, enhancing both research and pedagogy. This session will
explore the transformative potential of AI to advance graduate education, aid in recruiting, and encourage student success. Specific, practical demonstrations of AI usage will be given during the presentation.

Wes Fondren, Ph.D.; Associate Professor, Edwards College of Humanities and Fine Arts; Associate Dean, College of Graduate and Continuing Studies; Coastal Carolina University
Presider: Angelina C. Sylvain, Ph.D.; Vice Dean, The Graduate School

2:00 – 2:15
Break Perrin Family Event Space

2:15 – 3:00
Break Out Sessions: Planning for the Future: What’s Next?

Cultivating Civil Rights and a Community of Care Room 284

This is an interactive session focused on one’s rights at the University related to discrimination, harassment, and sexual misconduct. This presentation includes a discussion of the supports and options available through the Office of Civil Rights and Title IX. The presentation will allow participants to explore strategies to intervene in situations where harm is happening. The presenters will encourage open and honest dialogue to empower all to treat members of our community with dignity and respect.

Molly Peirano; Associate Vice President for Civil Rights and Title IX; ADA Coordinator
Kionna Keels; Education Specialist
Presider: Jean Taylor Ellis, Ph.D.; Interim Associate Dean, Student Success and Engagement
Reimagining the Graduate School Admissions Process  Room 389

Explore the joint venture of the Organizational Excellence Office and The Graduate School to enhance graduate admissions. This session will reveal Phase 1’s achievements in streamlining internal procedures and preview Phase 2’s focus on departmental improvements. Discover insights from stakeholder surveys and contribute to shaping the future steps for a more efficient application experience.

Stacey Bradley, C.P.A., M.B.A.; University Organizational Excellence Officer
Tony Geary; Program Coordinator, The Graduate School

Advising and Mentoring our Students Working Group  Room 301

Join us as we build on the lessons from “Advising and Mentoring Our Students”, convening as a team to work towards a more comprehensive advising/mentoring framework. This team will craft actionable mentorship strategies to enhance graduate student advising, streamline faculty-student engagement, and support diverse academic and professional trajectories. During this session we will work to refine mentorship practices, ensuring they meet the contemporary needs of students and the academic community.

Leonard Cassuto, Ph.D.; Professor, English and American Studies, Fordham University
Angelina C. Sylvain, Ph.D.; Vice Dean, The Graduate School

Designing Graduate Programs for the Future Working Group  Room 131

Join us for a dynamic working group discussion led by Robert Weisbuch. Our dialogue will extend beyond traditional academic models to embrace innovative structures for graduate degrees that address contemporary challenges. We will explore the art of crafting programs responsive to current and future needs, touching upon the redesign of capstone experiences and the transformation of dissertation and thesis requirements to align with new paradigms in higher learning and professional practice. Participants will collaborate to turn these discussions into practical reforms for immediate and future academic application.

Robert Weisbuch, Ph.D.; Former President, Drew University; Former President, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation
Ann Vail, Ph.D.; Dean, The Graduate School
3:00 – 3:30  
Closing Session  
Karen J. Williams Courtroom

The Future of Graduate Education at the University of South Carolina

Ann Vail, Ph.D.; Dean, The Graduate School

3:30 – 5:00

Conversation with the Authors –  
Graduate Students Only  
Room 135

This is a unique opportunity for graduate student leaders from the Graduate Student Association (GSA), Presidential Fellows, Rising Stars Fellows, SREB Fellows, and Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program to interact directly with the keynote speakers and authors of “The New PhD.”

Dive deep into the intricacies of graduate education reform, explore the authors’ vision for a revitalized academic landscape, and engage in a lively discussion about the future of graduate programs. Whether you’re a student leader looking to make an impact in your academic community or a fellow striving for excellence in your field, this session promises to be an enlightening experience that will broaden your perspectives and inspire innovative ideas for the future of graduate education. Don’t miss this exclusive chance to connect and be a part of shaping the future of higher education.

Leonard Cassuto, Ph.D.; Professor, English and American Studies, Fordham University

Robert Weisbuch, Ph.D.; Former President, Drew University; Former President, Woodrow Wilson National Fellowship Foundation
The Graduate School Staff

Dr. Ann Vail, Dean
Dr. Murray Mitchell, Senior Associate Dean
Dr. Angelina Sylvain, Vice Dean for Graduate Education
Dr. Jean Taylor Ellis, Interim Associate Dean for Student Success and Engagement
Dale Moore, Assistant Dean
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Melodie Capole, Program Coordinator for the Colleges of Engineering and Computing; Hospitality, Retail and Sport Management, and Pharmacy; International Admissions Coordinator
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Libby Cross, Director of Operations
Wright Culpepper, Director of Recruitment and Student Affairs
Barbara Dingle, Program Coordinator for the Colleges of Education and Arts and Sciences
Dr. Andrea M. Fleming, Associate Director, Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program
Tony Geary, Program Coordinator for the Schools of Music and Medicine and College of Social Work
Holly Gentry, Assistant Director of Operations
Rhittie Gettone, Administrative Assistant
Laura Kotti, Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Coordinator
Cherrie Markey, Executive Assistant to the Dean
Dr. John McFadden, Director, Grace Jordan McFadden Professors Program
Jeannie Moore, Program Coordinator for Darla Moore School of Business, College of Information and Communications, and Joseph F. Rice School of Law
Cassandra Nelson, Program Coordinator for Shorelight/AP Program and Educational Online Programs
Garrick Queen, Director of Admissions
Robert Sutherland, Business Manager
Kim Weston, Program Coordinator for Colleges of Nursing, Arts and Sciences, College of Education Interdisciplinary Programs
David Wilson, Administrative Assistant
Sarah Zilinsky, Program Coordinator for Arnold School of Public Health