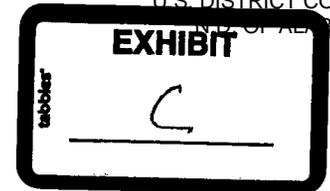


7/10/23, 5:34 PM

USA: A Brief History | About the University of South Alabama



[HOME](#) / [ABOUT USA](#) / [USA: A BRIEF HISTORY](#)

USA: A Brief History



The University of South Alabama (USA) was founded in 1963 without a single building to call its own. Approaching 60 years and many buildings later, USA is a vibrant university that continues to serve as a catalyst for transformational change that impacts our state, the Gulf Coast region and the world.

USA's story began in the early 1960s, when Mobile's civic leaders saw the need to improve access to higher education in southwest Alabama. Realizing the region had outgrown the small extension program that operated out of a building downtown, they formulated plans for a four-year, degree-granting institution. On May 3, 1963, a bill creating a new, independent university successfully passed the Alabama Legislature, and USA was born.

Classes began in June 1964 at a new, \$1 million building in west Mobile with an initial enrollment of 276. The extent of the pent-up demand for education became obvious when the first fall semester began. Enrollment leaped to 928 – and it continues to grow. Today, USA enrolls more than 13,500 students annually and has awarded more than 90,000 degrees. Its alumni are leaders in business, industry, healthcare, education and the arts.

The first campus building is now named the Frederick Palmer Whiddon Administration Building, after USA's first president. Whiddon had a vision that established the University, and he remained at its helm until retiring in 1998. His successor, longtime faculty member and administrator V. Gordon Moulton, oversaw a new era of growth into the 21st Century. Dr. Tony G. Waldrop, selected in 2014 as the University's third president, continued the USA tradition of visionary leadership focused on discovery, health and learning.

As new programs attracted more students, the University's footprint and facilities expanded. Almost from the moment USA accepted its first students, leaders began ambitiously working toward establishing a medical school. The Whiddon College of Medicine charter class began in 1973, and USA's focus on health education was later complemented by the College of Nursing and the Pat Capps Covey College of Allied Health Professions.

Today, USA provides a high-quality education in business, the liberal arts, education, engineering, computing, the sciences and healthcare. South's 1,200-acre campus has been transformed over the past decade with new facilities and resources. It offers more than 100 undergraduate, graduate and doctoral programs through its 11 colleges and schools. On the east side of Mobile Bay, USA's Baldwin County campuses provide Eastern Shore residents with convenient access to healthcare and educational programs.

USA is a comprehensive research institution where faculty have created an environment that supports curiosity and discovery. Its researchers are problem-solvers and pioneers in developing new technologies and promoting bold ideas to create targeted solutions for today's complex world.

USA Health – through Children's & Women's Hospital, University Hospital, Mitchell Cancer Institute, Academic Physician practices, Health Care Authority practices and the Whiddon College of Medicine – provides care across our region and, along with the College of Nursing and Covey College of Allied Health Professions, is an

7/10/23, 5:34 PM

USA: A Brief History | About the University of South Alabama

extraordinary training ground for future physicians and healthcare professionals.

A charter member of the Sun Belt Conference, USA fields 17 Division I sports teams, and is routinely recognized for excellence in both athletics and academics. Today, USA is the proud home to Hancock Whitney Stadium, which hosts all Jaguars home football games and other events. The University of South Alabama continues upward and onward as the Flagship of the Gulf Coast.

USA Timeline

▼ 1960s

▼ 1970s

▼ 1980s

▼ 1990s

▼ 2000s

▼ 2010s

▼ 2020s