Members Present: M Reece (liaison), S. Cole, J. Luo, L. Kamendulis, T. Mickleborough, B. O’Loughlin,

Members Absent: N. Ellis, K. Gilbert

Student Government Representative: R. Shei

Secretaries: D. Szemcsak, S. Todd

Minutes: Moved to approve the March 13, 2014 minutes; L. Kamendulis, all were in favor.

Agenda: Moved to approve agenda with one addition and a change in the order of agenda items; T. Mickleborough, all were in favor.

Graduate Student Government update by Ren-Jay: R. Shei distributed to Committee members the results of a forum that was open to the Student Government’s Department Representative Council to receive input regarding graduate student meetings during start-up week before the start of fall classes. In addition, R. Shei informed the Committee that the Graduate Student Government offered to host an evening with students and faculty to give new students and faculty a chance to get to know each other; they are also willing to host any event they are invited to attend.

M. Reece agreed to relook at the new graduate orientation as a whole, and move to the Graduate Student Government hosting it, which he will plan to work on over the summer.

Announcement: S. Todd reminded Committee members the signatures of departmental Graduate Directors are required for all Ph.D. admission decisions before decisions may be processed and admission letter results sent to applicants. She also requested they send her the names of their fellowship award recipients.

Doctoral Minors - The University Graduate School now requires a more structured approval process: M. Reece informed the Committee that it has just recently been brought to his attention by the Graduate School that doctoral minors not listed in their School Bulletin are not considered official. Such minors are considered to be self-designed minors and require individual approval of the Graduate School’s Associate Dean, David Daleke, on a cases-by-case basis. M. Reece added that students have gotten as far as their doctoral candidacy and the doctoral defense before this issue was discovered.

M. Reece explained that while it is important to identify whether or not students’ doctoral minors are official or self-designed as soon as possible, he sees resolution of this issue as a 3-step process, which avoids trying to go back and identify students who are pursuing a self-designed minor or minors (if pursuing a second minor) and whose doctoral course prescriptions or doctoral candidacy have already
been officially approved without the required approval of David Daleke. M. Reece’s suggested 3-step process is as follows:

- Amend the doctoral course prescription form in order to catch this issue as early as possible, which will require documentation from the Graduate School Bulletin for official minors or a memo showing approval from David Daleke for self-designed minors.
- For students who already have an approved course prescription, but who have yet to apply for candidacy, their minors will be reviewed at the point of candidacy application and will follow the same process as course prescription to document minors are official or self-designed to be sure to catch all of these.
- For students who have advanced to candidacy or defense of their dissertation, the same documentation process will be followed as requested by the Graduate School.

M. Reece added that a process needs to be put in place for verifying the status of our students’ minors with the Graduate School and our faculty need to understand where this issue originated. However, it does lead to an opportunity for our School to establish official minors, and stated that a minor in Environmental Health needs to be established. He went on to say that the Graduate School doesn’t understand that the majority of our students go outside our School for their minors.

J. Luo brought to the Committee for consideration, proposals from Dr. Ka He, Chair of the Department of Epidemiology and Biostatistics, for Ph.D. minors in both Biostatistics and Epidemiology. The following motion was made:

Motion to approve the Ph.D. Biostatistics and Epidemiology minors; L. Kamendulis 1st, S. Cole 2nd, all in favor.

L. Kamendulis requested the Committee also consider a Ph.D. minor in Environmental Health. The following motion was made:

Motion to approve the Ph.D. minor in Environmental Health; T. Mickleborough 1st, L. Kamendulis 2nd, all in favor.

S. Cole asked that changes to the Ph.D. minor in Leisure Behavior be considered. The following motion was made:

Motion to approve suggested changes to the Ph.D. minor in Leisure Behavior; T. Mickleborough 1st, L. Kamendulis 2nd, all in favor.

M. Reece will work on the wording of the proposed Ph.D. minors and move them to the April 25th Academic Council meeting and from there to the University’s CCC on May 25th.
SOPHAS: M. Reece informed Committee members it was agreed at the Deans and Chairs meeting that the SOPHAS graduate application system will start in the fall. It was the opinion of the Chairs that an e-mail should be sent to faculty from the Graduate Studies Committee informing them of the plan to begin using SOPHAS beginning this upcoming fall. They also asked about the possibility of having representatives from SOPHAS come back to our School to give a presentation, which the Graduate Directors will attend.

M. Reece explained the application fee for the first application through SOPHAS is $125.00 with a $35.00 fee for each additional application. The School will pay $55.00 for each SPH application. He suggested to the Chairs as a “thank you for bearing with us”, that only for the first year of our School using SOPHAS, new students who matriculate will receive a $100.00 credit to their bursar account. Departmental Chairs agreed with M. Reece’s suggestion.

M. Reece informed the Committee that he doesn’t feel it is the responsibility of the GSC to inform faculty of SOPHAS. S. Cole stated that she thinks this is an administrative decision which should be handled by the Dean’s Office. A possible message from the Dean was suggested, which should state this as a continuing effort toward an electronic review of graduate applications and point out the positives of moving to SOPHAS. It should also state that there will be an orientation this fall to provide information on SOPHAS.

M. Reece informed Committee members that there will be an application cut-off date of around August 3rd or 4th, which allows SOPHAS to “lock-down” and then re-open in a month. He explained that after July 31st, our School will have a hard cut-off date for graduate applications to prevent having both paper and SOPHAS applications being processed at the same time. He said that he will be requesting information over the summer in reference to application deadlines for example, and advised Committee members to be careful of setting early deadlines due to SOPHAS’ prevention of allowing the submission of applications past set application deadlines. He suggested the use of preferred and absolute deadlines for our programs. He informed the Committee that it is reasonable to say applications won’t be processed after July 31st for the fall semester; and that there will be an early meeting this fall to discuss SOPHAS.

Next GSC Meeting: September 2014 in Dean’s Conference Room