EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In the School of Information and Library Science (SILS) at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, faculty and students work together on committees for the purpose of sustaining and improving the School's mission, vision, and administrative infrastructure. Student representation on these committees brings the voice of current students into discussions and strategic planning efforts. Concrete examples and direct feedback from students helps inform faculty and administration of our needs and concerns. Student representation also fosters communication and cohesion among constituents by highlighting issues and developments under consideration and providing a point of dialog. Serving on a committee is a rewarding opportunity for doctoral students because it helps them learn about how the school is governed (which helps prepare them for faculty positions attained after graduation) and it can be added to their CVs as contributions to the profession.

According to the SILS Bylaws, there are currently five standing committees: Master's Committee, Personnel Committee, Research & Doctoral Committee, Undergraduate Committee, and Information Resources & Technology Committee. Only three of these five require a doctoral student member: Personnel, Research & Doctoral, and Information Resources & Technology. However, the Undergraduate Committee has had doctoral student representation in the past. Descriptions of these committees can be found in the SILS Bylaws.

In the 2008-2009 school year, there were seven ad hoc committees: Bylaws & Faculty Handbook Update, Diversity Committee, Search Committee – Faculty, Search Committee – Research Manager, Staff Excellence Awards Committee, Task Force on Curriculum, and the Task Force on Informatics Degree Program. The Diversity Committee, Search Committee – Faculty, and the Task Force on Curriculum had a doctoral student representative. Evelyn Daniel indicated that the Diversity Committee will most likely be made into a standing committee in the 2009-2010 school year.

Thus in the 2009-2010 school year there will be four standing committees requiring doctoral student representation: Personnel Committee, Research & Doctoral Committee, Information Resources & Technology Committee, and the Diversity Committee. It is also possible that approximately three ad hoc committees, if continued, will also require doctoral student representation.

Currently, a consistent, universally-understood process for placing doctoral students on faculty committees does not exist; and it varies from year to year. Many students and faculty are uncertain as to how these placement decisions are made. However, many faculty believe the Doctoral Student Association (DSA) is responsible for assigning students to committees; and Evelyn Daniel has confirmed this with the current DSA president. Furthermore, committee positions are not always publicized to all doctoral students at the right time, time enough for the DSA to complete placements before committee work is to begin.

Doctoral student placement on these committees needs to be determined at the beginning of the fall semester; and service on a committee is intended to continue until the end of the school year. However, some positions are filled later in the school year and some students do not vacate a committee position at the end of the year, which prevents others from having an opportunity to serve.

The main goal of this task force was to devise a consistent, transparent, and equitable process for placing doctoral students on faculty committees. Consistency in this context means that the task force
will attempt to design a process that can be implemented year in and year out. Transparent refers to desire to make information about this process publicly available to faculty and students and to help ensure doctoral students are aware of the process and how to work within it. Regarding equity, the task force pursued solutions that would attempt to give as many doctoral students an opportunity to serve if they desire such an opportunity. Thus the main goal can be broken into three subgoals:

1. Consistency
2. Transparency
3. Equity

The scope of this project was limited to the DSA’s placement of doctoral students on faculty committees. It was not within the task force’s purview to provide recommendations for the needs of Master’s students or undergraduate students. The task force was not charged with investigating or deciding upon matters related to DSA elections or with doctoral student interest and activities with other groups and professional societies such as ASIS&T or ACM. The task force’s reach stops once doctoral students are placed; so it was not within the task force’s scope to determine how a committee should function or how a student should behave once on that committee.

DETAILED PROCESS DESCRIPTION

The following is the task force’s proposed process. Each component of the process references one or more of the three subgoals outline above.

**Communicating the Process** (Goals 1 and 2)

The task force recommends that the DSA publish the finalized procedure (and committee descriptions) on the DSA website and that it either provides the URL to the procedure or a print copy of it to students during orientation. We also encourage the professor of the first-year doctoral seminar and the DSA to work together to ensure that some class time is devoted to the discussion of committees and this process early in the fall semester. Specifically, our recommendation would be for the professor to discuss the importance of serving on committees and invite students who have previously served on committees to share their experience. Again, the URL to the procedure could be announced at this time. Further, we recommend the DSA print a few copies of the procedure and make an electronic copy available to the SILS office to hand out should any doctoral student inquire about the process upon visiting the office. We also believe that the process should be discussed in a faculty meeting and that copies of the process (either electronically or in print) be given to all faculty members.

In sum:
- Publish process on the DSA website.
- Provide URL or print copy of process to students during orientation.
- Make time for discussing committees and the process in the first-year doctoral seminar.
- Make copies (either electronic or print) available in the SILS office.
- Discuss the process with the faculty and provide copies (either electronic or print).

**Timeline**

- **August 1:** Send out call for interest email.
- **August 10:** All interested students must have replied or they risk losing a potential spot on a committee.
- **August 25:** The DSA announces placement decisions to students.
- **August 30/31:** Placed students must confirm their acceptance of the placement. The DSA announces placement decisions to faculty.
These deadlines were chosen for the purpose of getting the process moving as early as possible so as to (a) provide the DSA sufficient time to make placement decisions before committee business gets underway, (b) to give committees sufficient lead time to orient students to committee responsibilities, and (c) help foster the inclusion of students on the first day of committee business (rather than coming in later in the year).

**Placing Students on Committees**

1. (Goals 2 and 3) By August 1st, the DSA sends out an email to all doctoral students (including incoming students) announcing the need for committee representation on all committees for the upcoming school year. (In other words, students who served the previous year must have rotated off to make all spots available.) See Appendix 1 for email template. This email should include a link or attachment to the documented process and committee descriptions (including those ad hoc committees that require doctoral student representation for that school year). The email should ask the students who are interested to reply to the email within two weeks with the following information:
   a. A maximum of three committees they would be willing to serve on in order of preference
      *Example: 1. Diversity, 2. Personnel, 3. Information Resources and Technology*
   b. Year in school
      *Example: First Year*
   c. Expected or completed date of the dissertation proposal defense.
      *Example: May 2010*
   d. If they have served on a committee previously; and if so, how many times and what committees they have previously served on
      *Example: I have served once on the Personnel committee*

2. Students who are interested in serving respond August 10th. They provide the information requested in step 1.

3. (Goal 3) The DSA then evaluates all interested students according to these priorities:
   a. A student who has never served has priority over one that has. If the decision is between two or more students that have served previously, then the student(s) who has served fewer times gets priority over others who have served more. The rationale for this is to ensure that as many students as possible get a chance to serve.
   b. A student who is further along in the program, who is closer to or at or past their proposal defense, gets priority over newer students who are further away from graduation. The rationale is that the further along you are in the program, the less time you have available at SILS to serve on a committee.
   c. Committee preferences will attempt to be honored as best as possible given the other two (a and b) priorities.

Priority a is the most important. If all other things are equal and two interested students are being considered and one of them has served before or more than the other one, then the other one is placed before the one who has already served. If there are more students interested than there are available committees, the DSA would place interested students according to the three priorities above and then inform the remaining students that they will be placed on a waiting list should things change and a spot become available. If there are fewer students interested than there are available committees, the DSA would send a second email explaining that spots were still open and students were needed. Further, the email would indicate that if the DSA doesn’t receive sufficient interest, they will start recruiting students.

4. The DSA would notify students of placement decisions by August 25th.

5. Students would reply by August 30th to the DSA, confirming they will accept the placement.

6. Once placement decisions are made, the DSA would notify the faculty committee chairs of their student representatives.

7. If someone drops off a committee, the DSA would refer to the waiting list to select the next appropriate candidate using the three priorities in step 3. If no students were on the waiting list, the DSA would send out an email announcing the available spot and asking for interest. If the
DSA received no response, they would start recruiting.

**Term of Service**

We strongly recommend that every student rotate off all committees at the end of the school year; and that all committees open up at the beginning of each school year. Term of service should be one year only. If a student would like to serve the following year on the same committee, then that student should have to follow the same process as all other students and respond to the call for interest email at the beginning of the school year. This improves the chances of giving as many people who are interested the opportunity to serve.

**Committee Responsibilities**

Student service on a committee involves representing the views of ones' doctoral student peers which in turn requires student representatives to continually get feedback from their fellow students. To this end, serving on a committee is viewed as a critical learning opportunity and a way to contribute to the School thus all students should have an equal chance of serving regardless of specific professional qualifications.

**Waiting List**

Students on the waiting list can also serve as interim committee appointments in the event that students placed on faculty committees must be out of town for (or otherwise unable to attend) a significant number of committee meetings. For example, if Joe has been placed on the Research & Doctoral committee but must be out of town for an extended period of time, making it impossible for him to attend more than 2 meetings, the DSA can ask Jane, who is on the waiting list, to fill in for Joe while he is out of town.

**APPENDIX 1: SAMPLE CALL FOR INTEREST EMAIL**

Provided below is a template that can be used for the call for interest email:

Good Day Doctoral Students,

It’s that time of year again – time to place doctoral students on faculty committees. Serving on a faculty committee is a wonderful experience because you get to learn about how the school is governed which is good preparation for being a faculty member or for serving on any type of committee in the future. PhD student representation on these committees is vital to keeping our needs and interests as students in the discussions and planning efforts of the school. Likewise we need to hear about the direction and activities of these committees. Additionally, it provides you with a nice bullet point in the “Service” section of your CV which makes you a more marketable job candidate. Serving on a committee helps you round out the academic-scholar triangle of research, teaching, and service.

The following committees need a doctoral student representative this school year:

- List committee 1
- List committee 1
- ...
- List final committee

Visit [http://DSAWEBSITE-URL.HERE](http://DSAWEBSITE-URL.HERE) to learn more about this process and to see descriptions of these committees. We do our best to place students in an equitable manner by trying to ensure that as many students as are interested get an opportunity to serve.

If you are interested in serving on a committee, please respond to this email by
DATE-HERE. Please include the following information:
- A maximum of three committees you would be willing to serve on in order of preference
- Your year in school (first, second, third, etc.)
- The date upon which you expect to or have completed defending your dissertation proposal (month and year are sufficient if you don’t know the exact date)
- How many times and what SILS faculty committees you have served on previously

Thanks,
NAME-HERE

APPENDIX 2: DSA WEBSITE AND PRINT POLICY

For the DSA website, we recommend a page devoted solely to this process. The task force is willing to create this webpage content for the website. This content should mimic the print policy. The webpage should contain:
- How the process works, the mechanics of the process
- A listing of all committees, both standing and ad hoc, with descriptions of each committee and bullet points about the typical duties/responsibilities of doctoral student representatives.
- A link to the SILS Bylaws.
- A link to past committee assignments (both faculty and student placements).
- The name and contact information for the Associate Dean for Academic Affairs, who is responsible for working with the DSA to place students on committees.

APPENDIX 3: EXAMPLE SCENARIO

The following is a possible scenario demonstrating how the process should work. Suppose that for the 2010 school year, these six committees required doctoral student representation: Personnel, Research & Doctoral, Information Resources & Technology, Diversity, Search – Faculty, Curriculum Task Force. DSA sends out the call for interest email two weeks before orientation and sets a deadline for response by September 7th. Seven students express interest. Their email responses include the following information:

- Jane
  - Year in School: First Year
  - Prior Committee Service: None

- John
  - Year in School: Third Year
  - Expected/Completed Proposal Defense: Expected in January 2011
  - Prior Committee Service: None

- Bob
  - Committee Preferences: 1. Personnel, 2. Research & Doctoral
  - Year in School: Third Year
  - Expected/Completed Proposal Defense: Expected in May 2011
  - Prior Committee Service: None

- Shiela
  - Committee Preferences: 1. Research & Doctoral, 2. Diversity, 3. Search - Faculty
  - Year in School: Second Year
  - Expected/Completed Proposal Defense: Expected in April 2013
  - Prior Committee Service: 1 year

- Juan
Committee placement is as follow:

- Jane - Diversity
  The only other person that wanted Diversity was Shiela; and although Shiela is closer to graduation, she has already served on a committee.

- John – Personnel
  Both John and Bob are third-years and both want Personnel as their first choice; but John indicates he is closer to graduation than Bob. Therefore, John is placed on Personnel and Bob receives his second choice of Research & Doctoral.

- Bob – Research & Doctoral

- Shiela – Wait Listed
  Shiela is not placed on Research & Doctoral instead of Bob because Shiela has served before and is not as far along in school as Bob. She is not placed on Diversity instead of Jane because Shiela has already had an opportunity to serve. So her third choice is evaluated but is in conflict with Juan’s first choice. Juan and Shiela are both second-years, expect to graduate around the same time, but Shiela has already served. So Juan is placed on the Curriculum Task Force instead of Shiela.

- Juan – Curriculum Task Force

- Betty – Information Resources & Technology
  Rob, like Betty, has Information Resources & Technology as his first choice. However, Betty is further along in school. Thus, she has fewer opportunities left to serve. So Betty is placed on Information Resources & Technology.

- Rob – Curriculum Task Force
  Because Rob’s first choice went to Betty (because she is further along in school) and his second choice went to Bob (because Bob is further along in school), his third choice is evaluated. It is in conflict with Shiela’s remaining choice; but Shiela has already had an opportunity to serve. So Rob is placed on the Curriculum Task Force.

APPENDIX 4: COMMITTEE DESCRIPTIONS

Information Resources and Technology Committee
The general charge for this committee is to consider the kinds of information resources support required for faculty and students of the school and to assess the adequacy of the current resources. The committee reviews policies and procedures of the school's library and the computer laboratory. It advises the school's Librarian and its Director of Information Technology and Services and reports to the dean on proposed policy changes. This committee facilitates liaison among the persons responsible for the SILS library and the computer laboratory and raises issues for discussion by the faculty. This committee is composed of at least three faculty members, an undergraduate student, a master’s student,
and a doctoral student. The Director of Information Technology and Services, the Assistant Director of Information Technology and Services for Instructional Technology, and the SILS Librarian serve as ex officio members of the committee.

**Personnel Committee**
This committee is charged with reviewing all tenure track faculty members for reappointment, tenure, and promotion. The committee also reviews all persons holding adjunct appointments for reappointment and promotion. Its recommendations are made to the dean. This committee also reviews policies and procedures on faculty personnel matters and makes recommendations for changes to the faculty. The committee assigns faculty for peer observations. The Personnel committee may be asked to serve as a search committee for new faculty, sometimes augmented by additional members. This committee is composed of at least three faculty members and is usually chaired by a full professor. Preferably, the other members include one assistant professor (untenured) and one associate professor, a Ph.D. student and a master's student.

**Research and Doctoral Committee**
This committee has two primary responsibilities: to foster research at SILS and to oversee the doctoral program. The committee fosters research by recommending and sometimes arranging colloquia on research topics, facilitating the development of research proposals, advising the Dean on faculty support relative to research activities (e.g., travel, research space, etc.), reviewing applications from visiting scholars, and other matters involving research. The committee initiates changes in the doctoral program and the parts of the curriculum that support it, studies proposals for change to the program submitted by others, and recommends action to the faculty. The committee must assure that the set of courses and experiences offered by the school for its doctoral degree are appropriate and that their catalog description is accurate. The committee reviews all proposed changes to courses most appropriate to the doctoral program and recommends their approval or disapproval to the faculty in a timely manner. This committee also reviews applications to the doctoral program and makes admission recommendations to the dean. This committee is also the responsible agent for ensuring that the School's practices are in accord with the university requirements governing the use of human subjects in research. As such it serves as the Human Subjects Review Committee for the school. The committee is further responsible for considering the research activities of the School and developing ways to enhance the school's research profile. This committee is composed of at least three faculty members including the coordinator of the doctoral program, and a doctoral student representative.

**Diversity Committee**
Will be a standing committee reflected in the SILS Bylaws; but no formal description as of 8/22/09.

**Undergraduate Committee**
This committee's primary responsibility is to monitor the undergraduate program, to initiate changes to the program and the parts of the curriculum that support that program, to study proposals for change submitted by others, and to recommend action to the faculty. Thus the committee must assure that the set of courses and experiences offered by the school for its undergraduate program are appropriate and that their catalog descriptions are accurate. The committee is to review all proposed changes at the undergraduate level and recommend their approval or disapproval to the faculty in a timely manner. This committee also serves as the review committee for applications for admission to the undergraduate program and makes recommendations on admission to the dean. Additionally, the committee oversees the publicity and publications relating to the program. The Undergraduate Committee is composed of at least three faculty members including the coordinator of undergraduate programs, and an undergraduate student. The assistant student services manager is an ex officio member of the committee.

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**APPENDIX 5: COMMITTEE-SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS**

**Undergraduate Committee**
The task force also recommends that the faculty consider adding a doctoral student representative to this committee because doctoral students are frequently responsible for teaching undergraduates. Many doctoral students have the pulse of the SILS undergraduate population and could offer valuable insight. The doctoral student position on the Undergraduate Committee, we believe, should have a requirement for appointment: the doctoral student should have experience teaching undergraduates. Those eligible for placement on the committee would have taught at least one undergraduate course in prior years or will be teaching a course during the year of their committee appointment. When more than two students are interested in the position, the DSA will place a student according to the three overarching priorities outlined in this document.

APPENDIX 6: PROCESS REVIEW

We recommend that this process be reviewed during the summer of 2011, two years after it has been implemented; and then again every 5 years.