AGENDA

I. Reading, Correction and Approval of Minutes
   (August 26, 2020)

II. Graduate Council Committee Reports
   A. Administrative Committee
      Committee Report (Ron Walcott)
   B. Appeals Committee
      Committee Report (Christof Meile)
   C. Policy and Planning Committee
      Committee Report (AnnaMarie Conner)
      *Action Item:* Revise current policy regarding oral comprehensive exams and thesis and dissertation defenses to allow for flexibility in holding remotely.
   D. Program Committee
      Committee Report (Elizabeth Knight)
      *Action Item:* From the Biomedical Health Science Institute, a name change request to be called the Biomedical & Translational Sciences Institute.

III. Old Business

IV. New Business

V. Information Items
   A. Curriculum Report: The Graduate School has approved 13 new courses, 74 course revisions, and 0 deletions.
   B. Next meeting: Wednesday, October 14, 3:30pm, via Zoom

VI. Adjourn
Policy regarding oral comprehensive exams and thesis and dissertation defenses
For discussion at the August 26, 2020 meeting of the Graduate Council

Context:
• Per the policies circulated with the agenda and included below, oral exams and defenses are generally to be held in person. Departments can request deviations that will apply to all students in their programs.
• As a response to COVID-19, the Graduate School dean in the spring issued an exemption allowing these meetings to take place remotely.
• This temporary provision expired when the university entered Phase III reopening.

For consideration by the Graduate Council:
• The dean of the Graduate School requests that the Graduate Council consider a blanket approval for fall semester allowing all oral comprehensive exams and thesis/dissertation defenses to take place remotely. This approval would expire at the end of the term, and exams/defenses would again be expected to take place in person, unless similarly extended.
• During the semester, the dean of the Graduate School requests that the Policy and Planning Committee of the Graduate Council consider whether the Graduate School should permanently allow exams and defenses to take place remotely.

Current policy:
I. Comprehensive Exams

A student must pass formal, comprehensive written and oral examinations before being admitted to candidacy for the degree. These examinations are administered by the student’s advisory committee.

The written comprehensive examination, although administered by the advisory committee, may be prepared and graded according to the procedures and policies in effect in the student’s department. The oral comprehensive examination will be an inclusive examination within the student’s field of study. An examination of the student’s dissertation prospectus (proposal) may precede or follow the oral comprehensive examination but may not take the place of the oral comprehensive examination. All members of the student’s advisory committee must be present simultaneously for the oral examination and prospectus (proposal) presentation.

The oral comprehensive examination is open to all members of the faculty and shall be announced by the Graduate School. The graduate coordinator must notify the Graduate School of the time and place of the examination at least two weeks before the date of the examination.

Following each examination, written and oral, each member of the advisory committee will cast a written vote of pass or fail on the examination. To pass each examination, the agreement of the advisory committee is achieved with no more than one dissenting vote. An abstention is not an appropriate vote for the comprehensive examination. The results of both examinations will be reported to the Graduate School within two weeks following the oral examination.
II. Master’s Thesis Approval and Defense

https://grad.uga.edu/index.php/current-students/policies-procedures/academics/types-of-degrees-offered/masters-degrees/

The defense of the thesis will be chaired by the student’s major professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. The advisory committee must approve the student’s thesis and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the thesis must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester. If a University program would like to deviate from the above policy, the following steps must be taken: (1) request approval from the Graduate School for the revised policy that will be used for program level defenses, (2) documentation in the program’s handbook on the revised policy approved by the Graduate School for the program. Such deviations must be applied to all students in the program.

III. PhD Dissertation Approval and Defense


The defense of the dissertation will be chaired by the student’s major professor and attended by all members of the advisory committee simultaneously for the entire defense period. The defense will consist of a public presentation followed by a private defense during which only the student and advisory committee will be in attendance. The public presentation is open to anyone who wishes to attend. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the defense, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the defense in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. The advisory committee must approve the student’s dissertation and defense with no more than one dissenting vote and must certify their approval in writing. An abstention is not allowable for the final defense. The results of the defense of the dissertation must be reported to the Graduate School at least two weeks prior to graduation for the current semester. If a University program would like to deviate from the above policy, the following steps must be taken: (1) request approval from the Graduate School for the revised policy that will be used for program level defenses, (2) documentation in the program’s handbook on the revised policy approved by the Graduate School for the program. Such deviations must be applied to all students in the program.
Policy regarding oral comprehensive exams and thesis and dissertation defenses
For discussion at the September 23, 2020 meeting of the Graduate Council

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- Per the policies circulated with the agenda and included below, oral exams and defenses are generally to be held in person. Departments can request deviations that will apply to all students in their programs.
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The oral comprehensive examination is open to all members of the faculty and shall be announced by the Graduate School. The graduate coordinator must notify the Graduate School of the time and place of the examination at least two weeks before the date of the examination. The student and committee chair must appear in person for both components of the exam, but other committee members can participate via teleconference or video conference, provided that the comments of all participants can clearly and consistently be heard. If the major professor is not able to attend the exam in person, they can designate a substitute chair who is a current member of the committee. Under extenuating circumstances, the exam can be held completely remotely if approved by the graduate coordinator and the department head.

Following each examination, written and oral, each member of the advisory committee will cast an electronic vote of pass or fail on the examination. To pass each examination, the agreement of the advisory committee is achieved with no more than one dissenting vote. An abstention is not an appropriate vote for the comprehensive examination. The results of both examinations will be reported to the Graduate School within two weeks following the oral examination.
II. Master’s Thesis Approval and Defense
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July 23, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

I write to request a change in the name of the existing Biomedical & Health Sciences Institute (BHSI) to the Biomedical & Translational Sciences Institute (BTSI). The BHSI is a unit of the Office of Research. The justification for the proposed name change is included.

Thank you.

[Signature]

David Lee
Vice President for Research
University of Georgia
PROPOSAL FOR ACADEMIC UNIT NAME CHANGE

Date: July 23, 2020

Department/Division: Office of Research

School/College/Unit: -

Proposed Effective Date: ASAP

NAME CHANGE:

Current Name: Biomedical & Health Sciences Institute (BHSI)

Proposed Name: Biomedical & Translational Sciences Institute (BTSI)

JUSTIFICATION:

Attach a justification and rationale for the requested changes, and include any relevant documentation. If this change is in response to an accreditation body, please include that language in the proposal.

Attached.

APPROVALS:

Attach documentation of approval from all involved units.

The BHSI reports to and is a unit of the Office of Research. The Vice President for Research currently serves as its director.
Justification for the Proposed Change in the Name of the BHSI

The Biomedical Health Sciences Institute (BHSI) is a unit of the Office of Research and the Vice President for Research, Dr. David Lee, has been serving as the interim director for the past several years. The BHSI was established in 2001 to foster the growth of biomedical and health sciences, and to support the development of interdisciplinary programs in these areas. The Institute was conceived to provide the overarching support for basic biomedical research that at other major research universities might be provided by a major medical school. Since then, biomedical and health science research has grown dramatically at UGA, to the point that NIH funding now comprises over half of UGA’s sponsored research portfolio, and indeed UGA has more NIH funding annually than Georgia’s health sciences university in Augusta. This is due in part to the creation of the College of Public Health and a number of other successful research centers and institutes, including the Center for Tropical and Emerging Global Diseases, Bioinformatics Institute, Regenerative Bioscience Center, Center for Molecular Medicine, Center for Vaccines and Immunology, and Center for Drug Discovery—as well as the contributions of the BHSI to these developments. Additionally, several of UGA’s colleges and some of its already well established centers, most notably the Complex Carbohydrate Research Center, have developed biomedical programs and the interdisciplinary Neuroscience Curriculum was established in order to train graduate students in this important area. In short, UGA’s ecosystem for biomedical and health science research has evolved dramatically since 2001, and the BHSI is now in the unique position to focus and leverage biomedical research and education across the campus and state.

There is a strong and expanding emphasis at UGA on developing and promoting translational research in the biomedical and health sciences. The University is poised to play an important role in accelerating findings from basic research into pre-clinical and clinical studies. This goal motivated the establishment of the Clinical and Translational Research Unit on UGA’s Health Sciences Campus, as well as UGA’s incorporation as an institution into the state-wide Georgia Clinical and Translational Science Alliance (CTSA), a premier NIH-funded program designed to speed new bench discoveries into improved clinical care and outcomes. In addition to supporting clinical trials, the Georgia CTSA funds training and graduate education for junior faculty, students, and post-doctoral fellows wishing to learn about and engage in clinical and translational sciences. The majority of our peer and aspirational institutions that are CTSA funded have established graduate, post-doc, and workforce training programs in Clinical and Translational Research. Given this growth and ongoing opportunities to lead clinical and translational sciences, we envision a focusing and rebranding of the BHSI to make clear its key role in this important next step. We propose to change the name of the BHSI to reflect this by requesting that it be renamed to the Biomedical and Translational Sciences Institute (BTSI).