At the University Council on Graduate Study meeting on April 8, 2008, the following attendees were present:

**Attending:** Patricia Beeson (Chair), Ray Burdett (SHRS), J. Patrick Card (A&S), Steve Carr (A&S), Nicole Constable (A&S), Valerie Copeland (Social Work), Robert Devaty (A&S), Eleanor Feingold (GSPH), Robert Gibbs (PHARM), Amanda Godley (Education), Barbara Repasi Heron (Registrar), Donald Hoffman (Dental), Byron Kohut (GPSA), Margaret Mahoney (Law), David Miller (GSPIA), Robert Parker (Engineering), Louis Pingel (Education), Jayant Rajgopal (Engineering), Mark Roberts (SOM), Mae Smethurst (A&S), Martin Weiss (SIS), Stephanie Hoogendoorn (Provost’s Office)

**Guests:** Dean Clifford Brubaker (SHRS) and Thomas Platt (SHRS)

**Approval of Minutes**

The minutes of the February 12, 2008 meeting were approved as written.

**Announcements**

Members are invited to attend the 2008 Provost’s Award for Excellence in Mentoring Reception to be held on Tuesday April 15.

**Program Proposal: Master of Science Degree Program in Physician Assistant Studies**

The Master of Science in Physician Assistant Studies is a professional master’s degree program proposed by the Department of Rehabilitation Science and Technology in the School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences (SHRS). Physician Assistants are health care professionals licensed to practice medicine with physician supervision. This profession has consistently been named as one of the fastest-growing occupations in the country by the Bureau of Labor Statistics. Graduates of this proposed program can expect to find employment in office-settings, hospitals, academic medical centers, public clinics, and prisons.

Dean Clifford Brubaker and Thomas Platt presented an overview of the proposed program. SHRS attempted to establish a physician assistants program in 1995 but Nursing opposed the program. Today health care is completely different, and there is a growing, significant need for mid-level care providers, including both physician assistants and nurse practitioners. Nursing fully supports this program. Additionally, a large number of students from the SHRS emergency medicine program would like to enroll in a physician assistants program at the University of Pittsburgh.

A council member asked what would distinguish this program from other programs. Dean Brubaker responded that the clinical resources for this program are superior. Cross training with Nursing may be possible. Partnerships with UPMC for funding and employment opportunities are also being discussed.
A council member asked why this program consisted of so many credits. The program reflects the requirements set by the accrediting agency.

Several council members noted that the program consists of all new courses and asked how so many new courses would be developed. The presenters responded that all existing resources would be used whenever available.

A council member asked about the size of the program. Programs in the SHRS range from 35 to 50 students with a typical class size of 40.

The presenters were excused and members continued their discussion. Council members asked that the proposal be corrected so that the credit requirements are consistent and that the admission requirements for math and literature agree with undergraduate degree requirements. Council members also wanted to convey their encouragement to seek out shared resources for the new courses listed in the proposal.

Council voted unanimously to approve the proposal with a provision that a revised proposal addressing their above concerns is submitted to Vice Provost Beeson.

**Student Affairs Subcommittee Update** (postponed)

The meeting was adjourned at 4:10 p.m. The next meeting of Council will take place on May 13, 2008.