The Graduate Organization for Modeling, Analysis and Simulation (GoMAS) was established in the spring of 2012. The group is focusing on increasing communication, interaction and collaboration among the graduate students interested in Modeling & Simulation at Old Dominion University. They hope to encourage interdisciplinary collaboration by bringing together students from different departments, who may be using the same tools to solve different research problems.

According to Jana Eggleston and John Gounley (members and officers of GoMAS), the unifying idea behind forming this group is that Modeling and Simulation is rapidly permeating all disciplines. It is present in most scientific journals these days and a lot of academic publications are expecting that professionals can take results from any type of research and present them in a model form.

"Anything can be quantified and turned into numbers. If you can turn it into numbers, you can model it," says Eggleston, a doctoral student of ecological sciences and a GoMAS member.

A model is a visual representation of a world system, therefore applicable to all disciplines. The challenge, as Eggleston says, is to encourage modelers from different disciplines to interact with each other and realize that all researchers do modeling of one kind or another. Among the planned organization events are workshops in modeling and simulation software, along with monthly discussions of research methodologies and modeling and simulation techniques.

"A lot of the models are open source code so you can go online and get help, but there is a big difference between getting help online and having somebody in person look at your problem and give you directions," says John Gounley, GTA in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics and GoMAS officer.

John is certain that the greatest benefit of these workshops is that they will give researchers opportunity to learn the basic functions of software packages, such as "R". These newly developed skills will enable them to run data simulations without spending a long time learning the ins and outs of an entire program.

The group currently consists of 25 members. Dr. Holly Gaff of the Department of Biological Sciences is the faculty advisor for GoMAS, and the 2012 officers are Ilyas Ustun, Sharon Vaturi, Becca Kennedy, John Gounley, Robyn Nadolny, and Kevin Byron.

"Having Modeling and Simulation experience on your CV is just having one more thing to boost your marketability in a competitive job environment," Eggleston says. "Being part of this organization and attending all of the workshops will be nothing but beneficial for anyone who is interested."

Did you know?

1. All doctoral students, who have passed comprehensive exams, are required to be registered for at least one graduate credit hour (fall, spring, and summer) until the degree is completed. This includes the semester in which they graduate. Failure to comply with the requirement will result in charges to the student's account for one graduate credit hour plus required fees for each semester. Students are not eligible for graduation until all charges are paid.

2. All graduate students must complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI) seven core RCR training modules. The training takes anywhere between 3 1/2 to 4 hours. The modules do not have to be completed all at once. They can be saved and resumed at the student's convenience. Completion of the RCR modules will be tracked through the CITI website and must be completed within twelve months after first enrolling.

Model Graphic provided by Wikipedia Commons

Graphic by Robert Smith?. S-Z-R model of a zombie outbreak spread

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Office of Graduate Studies
Greetings

Hello,

My name is Iva Stoyneva and I am the new Graduate Assistant at the Office of Graduate Studies. It is my great pleasure to be involved in the creation of The Graduate Newsletter. As a first year graduate student in the master’s program in Lifespan and Digital Communication, I am very excited to be a part of the graduate community here at Old Dominion University. I am looking forward to collaborating with you in creating an informative and fun publication that will keep everybody up to date with important graduate events, opportunities and exciting success stories. Should you have any questions, suggestions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me. We welcome your feedback.

I wish everybody an excellent semester!

Best,
Iva Stoyneva

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