

VII. STANDING COMMITTEES

A. Academic and Student Affairs Committee

Information School: Establishment of the Master of Science in Information Science

RECOMMENDED ACTION

It is the recommendation of the administration and the Academic and Student Affairs Committee that the Board of Regents grant authority to the graduate faculty of the Information School to offer the Master of Science in Information Science (MSIS), effective spring quarter 2010. The graduate degree program will have provisional status with a review to be scheduled in the 2015-2016 academic year, at which time the review of the Information School's Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program will occur. At such time that continuing status is granted, the review cycle would be consistent with that of the PhD program.

BACKGROUND

In January 2009, the Graduate School received a proposal from the graduate faculty in the Information School requesting authority to offer a Master of Science in Information Science degree program. The MSIS is a part of the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) degree program which the Information School currently offers. Graduate students are admitted to the PhD degree program; no students will be admitted into the MSIS who intend to pursue the degree. Establishment of the MSIS will not alter the existing PhD programs' admission process, curriculum, degree requirements, faculty, location, delivery mode, scheduling, or cost. It would align the doctoral program with current University of Washington policy to include master's degrees. The PhD program currently serves 30-35 FTE students per year and would continue to do so.

The General Examination assesses a student's ability to demonstrate and apply their knowledge of the field, and ability to scope, design and write a dissertation. Establishment of the MSIS degree program would provide three possible outcomes for students on the General Examination: 1) Pass and continue to PhD candidacy with the option of receiving the MSIS, 2) Pass and receive the MSIS but not continue to PhD candidacy, and 3) Fail.

The MSIS is an important option for students who do not continue to PhD candidacy. Currently, students who pass three of the four General Examination components must leave the University with no degree that acknowledges their two years of intensive graduate study and successful completion of the three General Examination sections. Occasionally, a student will pass all four sections of the General Examination and determine they are unable or unwilling to continue toward completing the doctoral program. The MSIS would provide appropriate academic recognition for students' who successfully complete all

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doctoral course work and meet the required General Examination evaluation criteria. It is especially important for some international students to return to their countries with a degree in hand.

Employer demand exists for post-baccalaureate level students in Information Science. The MSIS would meet existing state and regional workforce needs. Students who receive the MSIS would be better prepared to teach and conduct research, and would provide an excellent foundation for teaching at community or technical colleges. The required teaching practica would give students an advantage over those with master's degree in the sciences and technology who have no opportunity for specific teaching experiences other than as teaching assistants. MSIS graduates would be more qualified than many with a graduate degree to teach part time or as a lecturer in a university in a graduate or undergraduate program with an information focus, or to teach general research methods in such a setting.

January 4, 2010, the Higher Education Coordinating Board's Education Committee considered the proposal and recommended that the MSIS degree program be approved by the full Board. On January 29, 2010, the Higher Education Coordinating Board approved the MSIS degree program.

The Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School, the Dean of the Information School, and the Provost have reviewed and approved the recommendation. The Higher Education Coordinating Board will be informed of the Board of Regents' action on the Master of Science in Information Science degree program.