

TOPIC: RECOMMEND APPROVAL OF MASTER OF COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEMS AT COLORADO STATE UNIVERSITY

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I. SUMMARY

This item recommends approval for Colorado State University (CSU) to offer a Master of Computer Information Systems (MCIS) degree. Note that this proposal is more of a name and curricular change of an emphasis area in an already approved master's degree than it is a completely new degree.

II. BACKGROUND

COMMISSION AUTHORITY

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education's role and responsibility in the review of new academic programs at institutions operating under a performance contract is defined in §23-5-129, which states that:

(6) While operating pursuant to a performance contract negotiated pursuant to this section, the governing board of a state institution of higher education...

(b) Need not consult with nor obtain approval from the Colorado commission on higher education to create, modify, or eliminate academic and vocational programs offered by the institution, so long as such creations, modifications, and eliminations are consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. Institutions shall submit information to the department demonstrating that the creation or modification of an academic or career and technical education program is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. The Colorado commission on higher education shall have the authority to override the creation or modification of an academic or vocational program if the change made by the governing board is inconsistent with the institution's statutory role and mission.

OVERVIEW OF PROPOSED PROGRAM

This proposed degree is more of a name change with a curricular change than it is a completely new degree. This proposed MCIS degree is replacing an emphasis area within CSU's currently approved Master of Science in Business Administration (MSBA) degree. According to CSU faculty, these days "the typical student comes to the program with five or more years of full-time professional experience with more than half being seasoned professionals returning to school to update their skill sets and technical knowledge." The

proposed MCIS degree addresses industry needs, emerging trends in industry and will assist students in advancing in their careers. The following is summarized from CSU's proposal:

The curricular structure of the proposed MCIS degree is more appropriate to the needs of the current students than the existing MSBA. The student in the graduate program has morphed over the decade to one who demands more than technical content. Today's student demands an education in computer information systems applied to the business environment. Employers tell the department that students they hire must have not only the technological skill sets and knowledge base but also their prospective employees must be able to step into a position and apply their academic experience to the business environment immediately. This is one more point that gives credence to the change from an academic based curriculum to a professional-based curriculum. As with the currently approved MSBA program, the proposed MCIS is based on the demographics that are heavily nontraditional students seeking academic advancement to support or advance their profession credentials.

Additional information on this proposed degree, unrelated to fit with statutory role and mission, is attached (Attachment A).

ROLE AND MISSION SUPPORT

This degree supports CSU's statutory role and mission, which states in part:

...Colorado state university shall be a comprehensive graduate research university with selective admission standards offering a comprehensive array of baccalaureate, master's, and doctoral degree programs.... C.R.S. 23-31-101

III. STAFF ANALYSIS

Pursuant to Colorado Revised Statutes 23-5-129(6)(b), C.R.S. department staff finds that CSU's proposed Master of Computer Information Systems degree is consistent with the institution's statutory role and mission. CSU's Board of Governors approved the degree on May 3, 2013.

IV. STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Staff recommends that the Commission approve Colorado State University's proposal to offer a Master of Computer Information Systems.

V. SUPPLEMENTAL INFORMATION

Copies of all relevant materials are on file in the Academic Affairs Division and are available upon request.

STATUTORY AUTHORITY

§23-5-129, C.R.S. Governing boards - performance contract - authorization - operations