

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-011-189

Change of name and CSU concentration code for the Master of Science in Business Administration (MSBA) (05011) to Master of Science in Information Security (MSIS) (07021)

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 08/22/2019

Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded

Date: 09/04/2019

Academic Senate

Date: 09/25/2019
First Reading
10/23/2019
Second Reading

BACKGROUND:

Currently, the Master of Science in Business Administration (MSBA) program contains only one option: the Information Assurance option offered by the Computer Information Systems (CIS) department. Its current curriculum (effective Fall 2018) consists of 10 courses, 31 semester units in total. In referrals [AP-011-189](#) and [AP-012-189](#), the CIS department proposes to:

1. Discontinue the Information Assurance option in the MSBA ([AP-011-189](#) and [AP-012-189](#))
2. Change the name of MSBA to Master of Science (MS) in Information Security ([AP-011-189](#))
3. Change the CSU Degree Code of the program from 05011 to 07021, which corresponds to changing the CIP code (used by the US Department of Education) to 11.0103 ([AP-011-189](#))

These changes are proposed with the goals of maintaining currency, making the program more marketable, and increasing enrollment.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Associate Deans, all colleges

Department Chairs, all departments

Dr. Laura Massa, AVP for Academic Programs

Dr. Daisy Tang, Chair of Computer Science Department

Dr. Halima El Naga, Chair of Electrical & Computer Engineering Department

Dr. Mohammad Husain, Associate Professor, Computer Science Department

Dr. Ron Pike, Associate Professor, Computer Information Systems Department

Dr. Zhongming Ma, Associate Professor, Computer Information Systems Department

DISCUSSION:

The CIS department stated that the latest curriculum in the MSBA Information Assurance option aligns with similar programs that carry the designation “Information Security”, both in and outside the CSU system. Therefore, the CIS department proposes to discontinue the Information Assurance option in MSBA and change the program name from MSBA (Master of Science in Business Administration) to Master of Science in Information Security. The CIS department suggests that the name change will make the program more marketable and competitive, will increase enrollment, and will help graduate placement in the field of information security.

After consulting all associate deans and department chairs, the AP Committee received comments from the Computer Science (CS) department in the College of Science, the Geography and Anthropology department in CLASS, and the Collins College of Hospitality Management. Most comments were brief and generally supportive; the most extensive criticism came from Computer Science.

According to the CS department, Information Security is an interdisciplinary field and faculty from three different departments (CS/CIS/ECE) contribute to it. Each department brings a unique perspective to this effort. The MSBA Information Assurance option offered

by the CIS department focuses on Information Auditing & Forensics (courses include CIS 4333 Information Systems Auditing, GBA 6810 Digital Forensics, GBA 6770 Advanced IS Auditing, GBA 6850 Advanced Computer Forensics, etc.), which has been adequately captured by the current option name “Information Assurance” in general. The CS department argued that the proposed title change to “Information Security” will create confusion among students and adversely affect other departments (including CS) who also offer Information Security-related programs. For example, Information Security-related courses offered by the CS department cover web security, wireless network security, and security related to mobile apps. Therefore, the CS department

1. Does not support the title change from MSBA to MS Information Security
2. Suggests that the title change from MSBA to MS Information Systems (similar to CSU San Bernardino and Long Beach) with an option in Information Assurance

In response, the AP Committee engaged in extensive discussion with faculty from both departments. The CIS Department indicated that “Information Assurance” is a term primarily used in certain public sector jobs, but is not used more widely in the field; therefore, “Information Assurance” is not a viable name for the program. In support of this point, CIS faculty provided the AP Committee with information on the job titles of recent MSBA graduates (see attachment), many of whom work in roles that appear to have substantial security-related responsibilities.

Faculty from both departments conceded that security is a multi-faceted issue relevant to multiple disciplines, and a committee member who has taken courses from a program held up as a relevant comparison concurred with this assessment. A number of compromise positions were proposed by committee members, but no compromise was found that both CS and CIS would accept.

The questions before the committee, therefore, are (1) whether one department can bar another from using a term for a subject studied by people in multiple fields, and (2) whether students will find it confusing when a business program uses the word “Information Security” and mistakenly conclude that this is an engineering or computer science program. On the first question, the AP Committee strongly believes that if a topic is studied by people in multiple departments then multiple departments should be able to offer programs focused on that topic, and label their programs accordingly. This opinion was reinforced by input from multiple AP Committee members with expertise in interdisciplinary fields. On the second question, the AP Committee believes that students considering graduate study have an obligation to conduct an in-depth examination of programs that they are thinking of applying to, rather than just looking at labels. Students should take note of whether their program faculty are primarily in business, CS, engineering, or other fields, and investigate faculty expertise and course offerings before deciding to apply. Therefore, any reasonably accurate label should be suitable for a graduate program, and the CIS department clearly does have suitable expertise to label their program as studying facets of information security.

Additionally, CS faculty noted that efforts are underway to develop a Center focusing on cybersecurity issues, as a venue for faculty collaboration in this matter. However, this

Center is in its early stages and has no degree-granting authority. Therefore, the offering of a degree through this Center rather than through the CIS department is not a viable compromise measure.

The CS Department raised additional concerns about the appropriateness of the Program Code 07021. However, the AP Committee found that many CSU Master's programs offered by business schools use the code 07021 (see attachment).

The AP Committee also made repeated attempts to solicit input from faculty in ECE, as they have people with expertise relevant to this area, but received no response.

RECOMMENDATION:

The AP committee recommends changing the name of the MSBA program to MS in Information Security, and changing the CSU Program Code to 07021.

Attachments:

- 1) List of CSU Master's programs in Information Systems.
- 2) List of job titles of recent MSBA alumni.