

CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA
ACADEMIC SENATE

ACADEMIC PROGRAMS COMMITTEE

REPORT TO

THE ACADEMIC SENATE

AP-005-234

New Self-Support Counterpart to the Master of Science in Information Security

Academic Programs Committee

Date: 11/08/2023

**Executive Committee
Received and Forwarded**

Date: 11/29/2023

Academic Senate

**Date: 12/06/2023
First Reading**

BACKGROUND: The Computer Information Systems (CIS) Department in the College of Business Administration currently offers BS and MS degrees in Information Security. There is high demand to accommodate students coming through the pipeline in need of graduate education, as well as unmet needs within the current cybersecurity workforce.

In collaboration, the Colleges of Business Administration (CBA) and Professional and Global Education (CPGE; formerly the Extended University) have proposed a new self-support version of the existing MS in Information Security. This proposed program is 31 credits, just like the existing state-support program, and the curriculum would be identical to the state-support program. The chief difference is that the self-support program would be face-to-face, to meet the needs of international students who cannot get a visa if their program is fully online, while the state-support program is online, per the demonstrated preferences of most current students.

RESOURCES CONSULTED:

Associate Deans, all colleges

Dr. Sandeep Krishnamurthy (Dean, College of Business Administration)

Senate Budget Committee

Dr. Drew Hwang (CIS department chair)

Dr. Zhongming Ma (CIS faculty member)

DISCUSSION:

After receiving this referral, the Academic Programs Committee conducted campus-wide consultations. No concerns were raised by other campus constituencies.

In its own investigation, the AP Committee concentrated on three key questions: The discrepancy between the face-to-face nature of the self-support program and online nature of the state-support program, potential supplanting issues, and the sustainability of the budget.

At first, the face-to-face nature seemed worrisome, as students and faculty in many disciplines find in-person classes to offer distinct advantages over online instruction. However, the CIS department surveyed 62 undergraduate students in CIS and other relevant disciplines in the College of Business Administration, of whom 34 are considering an MS, and found that fully-online was the preferred format. The preference arises from a combination of factors, including the fact that many MS students in this discipline have full-time jobs or demanding part-time jobs, the prospect of serving students throughout California, and the digital nature of the discipline lending itself to online work.

In light of these facts, the state-support program already converted to fully online in 2022. The AP Committee is thus satisfied that the self-support face-to-face program is not supplanting what would otherwise be a preferable state-support modality. Instead, a significant audience for this program is international students who would not be eligible for a discounted state-support program in any modality, and also would not be eligible for a student visa if attending a fully online program.

Furthermore, the courses will be taught as overloads, subject to the usual CSU caps on overload, ensuring that faculty time and effort are not shifted away from existing state-support programs, and will be taught using CPGE facilities.

Finally, the AP Committee reviewed the budget. It is constructed on the assumption that the first cohort will be 15 students, 75% of the usual target of 20 students. Under these assumptions the program still meets its costs and produces a surplus. The support model for faculty time and program administration is consistent with the usual practices for joint programs between CPGE and CBA. The forecast further assume reaching and then exceeding the target of 20 students (eventually reaching 30), remaining at a size that program faculty can accommodate with reasonable efforts supported in the proposed budget. The conservative assumptions here give the AP Committee confidence that this program is sustainable.

RECOMMENDATION:

The Academic Programs Committee recommends approval of the new Self-Support Master of Science in Information Security.