THE UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK
PROGRAM/CURRICULUM/UNIT PROPOSAL

- Please email the rest of the proposal as an MSWord attachment to pcc-submissions@umd.edu.
- Please submit the signed form to the Office of the Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs, 1119 Main Administration Building, Campus.

College/School:
Please also add College/School Unit Code-First 8 digits: 01203500

Unit Codes can be found at: https://hyperion.umd.edu/reports/units.htm

Department/Program:
Please also add Department/Program Unit Code-Last 7 digits: 1350101

Type of Action (choose one):
☐ Curriculum change (including informal specializations)
☐ Curriculum change for an LEP Program
X Renaming of program or formal Area of Concentration
☐ Addition/deletion of formal Area of Concentration
☐ Suspend/delete program
☐ New academic degree/award program
☐ New Professional Studies award iteration
☐ New Minor
☐ Request to create an online version of an existing program

Italics indicate that the proposed program action must be presented to the full University Senate for consideration.

Summary of Proposed Action
Proposed name change of the Master of Library Science degree program to the Master of Library Science and Information Studies program.

Departmental/Unit Contact Person for Proposal:
__________________________________________________

APPROVAL SIGNATURES - Please print name, sign, and date. Use additional lines for multi-unit programs.

1. Department Committee Chair ________________________________________________________________
2. Department Chair ____________________________________________________________
3. College/School PCC Chair __________________________________________________________
4. Dean ____________________________________________________________
5. Dean of the Graduate School (if required) __________________________________________________
6. Chair, Senate PCC ____________________________________________________________
7. University Senate Chair (if required) __________________________________________________
8. Senior Vice President and Provost __________________________________________________
OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE

The College of Information Studies (Maryland’s iSchool) has four degrees: a Master of Human Computer Interaction, a Master of Information Management, a PhD in Information Studies, and the degree from which the College was founded the Master of Library Science (MLS). The MLS degree was established in 1965 and since then information field has moved well beyond libraries. We propose that the name be changed to Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) so as to better reflect the current and future information climate.

The MLS Program’s mission statement goes a long way in describing the variety and breadth of the field:

The Master of Library Science Program educates students in the knowledge, skills, habits of thought and inquiry, and ethics of the library and information professions to enable them to be leaders in the state, national, and global information society.

The MLS degree and its graduates focus on and hold positions many kinds of institutions including libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, nonprofit organizations, government agencies, research institutions, and many more. Potential careers following the MLS degree are numerous and varied, with librarianship being just one of many diverse possibilities. Non-librarian careers include, but are certainly not limited to competitive intelligence, data science, digital preservation, database management, user experience specialists, curators, etc. With the continued changes to the information professions it has become essential that the MLS degree name be updated to reflect the new face of librarians and information. Failing to include the word “information” in the title of the MLS degree can be limiting for students who wish to pursue one of the many non-librarian careers for which the degree prepares them. Potential employers, not familiar with the degree or the curriculum, may pass over those applicants who lack the “I” (information) in their degree acronym.

In addition to improving employability of graduates the degree name update will also bring the College of Information Studies in line with our ALA Accredited Program peers. Out of the 61 accredited programs, only 6 still use MLS as their degree designation. Meanwhile 45 of 61 include “I” (information) in their degree designation\(^1\). Of the top ten ranked programs from U.S. News and World Report (Maryland is 10\(^{th}\))\(^2\) only 3 (including Maryland) are MLS degrees. Updating our name to better reflect the program’s curriculum, the types of careers our graduates are prepared for, and to better reflect the national standards is an essential part of ensuring the future of the MLS Program.

---

\(^1\) [http://www.ala.org/CFApps/lisdir/directory_pdf.cfm](http://www.ala.org/CFApps/lisdir/directory_pdf.cfm)

IMPACT

As an ALA accredited program the iSchool will have to notify the ALA of the change of program name as part of its biennial narrative (next due in Fall 2015) or in a letter of justification of name change and subsequent letter confirming the official change of name are all that are required.

Within the College the administrative impacts on the name change are relatively minimal. The College will need to update the website, promotional and recruitment materials, job titles (such as the MLS Program Manager), stationery, and signage. As updates to these materials are already annual duties, the impact is minimal. We will also need to provide press releases and information regarding the change to our current students and alumni to alert them to the changes and inform them of any potential impacts on them.

Curriculum, learning outcomes, and other curricular activities will not be impacted by this change because the diversity of opportunities, skills, and institutions impacted by the information professions are already present.