



AGENDA ITEM

A-2. UNC Degree Program EstablishmentsCourtney Thornton

Situation: Elizabeth City State University requests authorization to establish the following program:

- Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Interdisciplinary Studies (CIP 30.0000)

UNC Charlotte requests authorization to establish the following program:

- Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Health Systems Management (CIP 51.0701)

UNC Wilmington requests authorization to establish the following degree program:

- Master of Science (M.S.) in Data Science (CIP 11.0802)

Background: Per UNC 400.1, UNC General Administration, in consultation with the campuses, brings recommendations to the UNC Board of Governors for new degree programs that meet identified academic program needs.

Assessment: Establishment of the above-listed programs is recommended.

Action: This item requires a vote by the Committee, with full Board vote through the consent agenda.

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Bachelor of Arts in Interdisciplinary Studies
(B.A., CIP 30.0000) at
Elizabeth City State University**

I. Program Highlights

- Rigorous, interdisciplinary program designed for individuals who have begun, but not completed, their college careers, with emphasis on skills for advocacy in the interest of the public good.
- Requires general education core, interdisciplinary studies core, a focus area (business, sociology, psychology, health, reason and argument), and a track. Tracks include politics/government and law; humanities; service for the aging; politics, economics, rhetoric and law; culture and society; Africana studies, public health; social and behavioral sciences; STEM and health; children/community services; children and family development; cultural citizenship; or other individualized track.
- Option would exist for students to complete degree online
- 124 credit hours
- 35 full-time, 18 part-time students projected at steady state
- Resources needed to launch the program are minimal, as no additional personnel are required. Modest levels of supplies and materials, communications, printing and advertising, travel, and equipment will be achieved through reallocation of institutional resources.

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** Several UNC institutions offer similar degree programs that provide flexible pathways to a baccalaureate degree, particularly for part-way home students. They include: ASU B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies; East Carolina University B.S. in University Studies and B.A./B.S. in Multidisciplinary Studies; NC A&T State B.A. in Liberal Studies; NC Central B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies; NC State B.A./B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies; UNC Asheville B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies; UNC Greensboro B.A./B.S. in Liberal Studies; UNC Pembroke B.I.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies; UNC-Chapel Hill B.A. in Interdisciplinary Studies; WCU B.A./B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies; WSSU Bachelor's in Interdisciplinary Studies. Several are approved for online delivery, including ECU's University Studies program and programs at UNCG, UNCP, and WSSU. UNCP and NC A&T State are approved for off-site delivery locations as well.
2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** The proposed program aligns with the ECSU mission "to promote economic, social, and environmental progress for the people of northeastern North Carolina, the state, and the nation...through teaching, research, and community engagement, the institution's rich heritage and its current multicultural student-centered focus provide a firm foundation for its endeavors. It serves the needs and aspirations of individuals and society; producing graduates for leadership roles and life-long learning." The program is designed to provide a pathway to degree completion for current and part-way home ECSU students.

- 3. Demand (Local, regional, state).** To determine need for the proposed program, ECSU administered needs assessments to five targeted groups: partway home and former ECSU students; area community college students; personnel at Norfolk area military institutions; personnel at the Elizabeth City Coast Guard base; working adults living 25-75 miles from ECSU. Their study design required a minimum of 100 questionnaires to be collected for each group, although some groups exceeded this target. Results revealed significant demand across all groups. For example, of the 124 surveys completed by persons at the U.S. Coast Guard base, 73% (98) indicated some interest in the program, and 69% (68) indicated if the program were offered, they would seek to enroll within a year. The proposal detailed similar levels of response and interest in the other categories surveyed. The highest interest came from partway home and former ECSU students (those who did not complete at ECSU between 2005 and 2012). Of the 104 surveys collected from this group, 77% expressed interest, and 72% indicated they would consider enrolling within one year. When surveyed about their interest in online degree delivery, 58% of partway home respondents favored an online degree offering through ECSU. Only 19% of partway home respondents had interest in completing an online degree elsewhere. Projected enrollments align with those of other similar existing programs in UNC.
- 4. Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** Although there are a number of existing similar programs in the UNC system, the scope of opportunity with part-way home student populations is significant. Additionally, some in ECSU's native student population may elect to pursue this degree for an interdisciplinary experience that suits their needs and interests and that they cannot access through other degree programs on the campus.
- 5. Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** According to NCWorks, more than 40% of all jobs in North Carolina require a bachelor's degree, with top desired skills being problem-solving, decision-making, flexibility, and interpersonal skills. The proposed degree would prepare graduates with a strong foundation in liberal arts and sciences and civic responsibility that is well suited for application in a wide range of fields. Targeted occupations of a program graduate may include Child Welfare Worker; Community Outreach Coordinator; Volunteer Coordinator; Community Development Officer; Human Resources Specialist; Public Health Agent; Policy Analyst; Compliance Officer; and many more. The proposal included detailed analyses of these and other position titles available in North Carolina and northeastern North Carolina, including numbers of positions and salary ranges, as well as a detailed national employment matrix for related industry profiles.
- 6. Faculty Quality and Number.** Eleven core faculty from psychology, sociology, social work, education, management, criminal justice, history, and public health will direct the launch of the program.
- 7. Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** Facilities, library, and information technology resources required to launch the proposed program are in place and adequate. Blackboard is ECSU's online course delivery system.
- 8. Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** As noted above, the proposed program draws upon existing faculty and coursework from a large number of departments at ECSU. The program will be housed in the Department of Social and Behavioral Science.

- 9. Impact on Access and Affordability.** The proposed program provides another affordable access point and opportunity for degree completion for partway home students.
- 10. Expected Quality.** The proposed program builds off of existing courses and faculty expertise in place at ECSU. Currently, 54% of the courses identified for the program have been offered online at least once since 2013, with the average number of online offerings per course at 2.7 since 2013. In fall 2016, another 18% of the courses were offered online, leaving about a quarter of remaining course offerings for initial online development and delivery. A recent survey of ECSU students in online courses showed high satisfaction levels (75-82%) with academic advising, career services, registration, and financial aid services online.
- 11. Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** As noted above, the interdisciplinary nature of the degree program requires significant cross-campus collaboration at ECSU. Flexible degree programs such as this one require significant attention to student advising that does not readily lend such programs to inter-institutional collaborations. Additionally, data showed that partway home students with some credits from ECSU preferred to complete at ECSU.
- 12. Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. The proposal was reviewed by the ECSU Faculty; Midlevel and University Curriculum Committees; Academic and Administrative Councils, and the ECSU Board of Trustees. No issues, concerns, or opposition was raised throughout the campus process and comment periods.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. Throughout the review process, ECSU responded to questions from UNC General Administration regarding the curriculum requirements and presentation, faculty, program delivery considerations, program administration, and budget. Reviewers from four UNC system institutions evaluated the proposal and in most response categories found the proposal “acceptable” or “acceptable with some considerations.” Reviewer questions centered on the distinctiveness of interdisciplinary and general studies programs, skills and career pathways, and faculty support and development to teach in the program. ECSU responded that, although an interdisciplinary studies core is required, the program is designed to offer the flexibility needed for students with high transfer credit hours. They also pointed to data collected that indicates many ECSU partway home students sought a major that better matched their life/career interest and needs. ECSU clarified that courses throughout the program may include experiential learning components but that all students will have an appropriate experiential learning and interdisciplinary skill-building opportunity through the final capstone course. They provided additional information about how faculty will be prepared to advise students and to teach the introductory and capstone interdisciplinary studies courses.

Benefits of program approval include high leverage of existing faculty, resources, and curriculum capacity to meet an identified need of the ECSU service area. For these reasons, we do not recommend any alternatives to implementing the degree program.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve Elizabeth City State University's request to establish a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Interdisciplinary Studies degree program (CIP 30.0000) to enroll students starting Spring 2017.

Interdisciplinary Studies Programs: An Overview

In Fall 2016, UNC General Administration surveyed thirteen constituent institutions with existing baccalaureate degrees in interdisciplinary/multidisciplinary/university/liberal studies and surveyed state- and national-level data to provide a landscape of the purpose, learning objectives, curriculum, student demographics, post-graduate outcomes, and observed trends in these programs. The following are highlights from our findings.

1. The foremost purpose of interdisciplinary studies (IDS) programs is to allow students to pursue coursework from multiple disciplines that, as a whole, are not offered through traditional degree programs.
2. Common elements across UNC programs include introductory and capstone IDS courses and approved courses of interdisciplinary study that range from 24-48 required credit hours.
3. Within UNC, six IDS programs solely offer self-designed curricula, two offer defined concentrations, and five allow for both self-designed curricula and defined concentration options. Some common concentrations across UNC programs include international studies, legal studies, and race/class/gender/culture studies.
4. Some UNC IDS programs only accept students who hold associate degrees while others serve a largely native student population (Table 1). For programs serving a large transfer or partway home population, students bring in an average range of 34-60 credit hours.

Table 1. IDS Student Composition by Campus, Fall 2016

Institution	% Native	% Transfer
UNCP	N/A	100%
UNCG	6%	94%
FSU*	21%	79%
ECU (US)	29%	71%
ASU	62%	38%
WSSU	64%	36%
ECU (MULT)	66%	34%
NCSU	85%	15%

**FSU's data is for the entire life of their program, not Fall 2016 only*

Note: NCAT, UNCA, UNC-CH, and WCU did not report this data; NCCU's program was approved in July 2016

5. ECU finds post-graduation employment and graduate education outcomes are high, ranging from 87-94%. According to NC Tower, 74% of 2011-2012 UNC IDS graduates were either employed in NC or enrolled in a public university in NC; this is only slightly below the 79% average for all UNC graduates in the same period.
6. Programs in NC and nationally are growing rapidly. According to NCES, the number of IDS baccalaureate degrees conferred grew by 72% nationwide between 2003-2004 and 2013-2014 while the total number of baccalaureate degrees conferred only grew by 34% in the same period.
7. Some UNC IDS programs note seeing an increase in “human services” related topics, and well as an increased interest of graduates to pursue teacher licensure.

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Bachelor of Science in Health Systems Management
(B.S., CIP 51.0701) at
University of North Carolina at Charlotte**

I. Program Highlights

- Designed to prepare students as generalists in the health systems management field, able to enter either the workforce or graduate education upon graduation.
- The large student population of UNC Charlotte's College of Health and Human Services exceeds the capacity of its health and human services disciplines, which are regulated by professional accreditation agencies. A generalist health management degree would enable UNC Charlotte to serve the needs of students interested in the field while ensuring timely matriculation and graduation.
- Core courses provide overview of the U.S. healthcare system and foundational knowledge specific to health systems management, including human resource management, organizational theory, leadership and ethics, policy and law, accounting and finance, quality management and performance improvement, and technology management.
- Service-learning or other healthcare capstone experience required
- General education, major courses, and elective credits total 120 credit hours
- 300 full-time and 50 part-time students projected at steady state
- Resources needed to launch the program include three tenure-track faculty and two lecturers by Year 4; administrative assistance, a stipend to a service-learning coordinator, two graduate teaching assistants, and minimal supplies and materials, travel, and communications support. Source of needed funds include internal reallocation of resources and enrollment growth funding.

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** Appalachian State University, East Carolina University, Fayetteville State University, UNC Chapel-Hill, Western Carolina University, and Winston-Salem State University offer baccalaureate degrees in health care administration and management. Of these, only ECU's program offers an online option, and WCU is approved for site-based delivery in three counties surrounding the institution. Several private institutions also offer related degrees, including Mount Olive College, Gardner-Webb University, and Pfeiffer University.
2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** The proposed program is aligned with UNC Charlotte's mission to address the educational and health needs of the greater Charlotte region. Health and Society is one of six major themes of the UNC Charlotte Division of Academic Affairs Plan, 2016-2021. The proposed program would extend the existing capacity and expertise of the College of Health and Human Services, which currently offers professionally accredited baccalaureate programs in athletic training, exercise science, nursing, public health, and social work. The capstone requirement also aligns with the institution's stated desire to provide experiential and community-engaged learning opportunities for undergraduates.

- 3. Demand (Local, regional, state).** UNC Charlotte's College of Health and Human Services (CHHS) has a large proportion of students who seek health-related careers but for whom there is insufficient space due to restraints imposed by accrediting agencies. Students are admitted into a pre-major and apply for acceptance to the upper-division major in the sophomore year. A large number of the pre-major student population are qualified but may not be admissible into major programs in a timely manner due to capacity limitations in existing baccalaureate offerings. While some students remain and graduate from UNC Charlotte with a non-CHHS degree, significant numbers of students leave the institution each year. Hence, the main impetus for this proposed program is to better serve a large pool of students who have already chosen UNC Charlotte as their preferred institution and health and human services as their desired major area. In June 2015, UNC Charlotte surveyed all health and human services pre-majors to determine their interest in the proposed degree as an alternative to their current pre-major degree programs; 562 responded. Across all pre-major programs, an average of 68.3% of respondents indicated they would consider a Health Systems Management major if not admitted into their chosen major on the first try; an average of 84.7% of respondents across the pre-majors indicated it was important to remain in a health-related major. An average of 31% of respondents across all pre-major respondents indicated a Health Systems Management major would likely be their first choice if offered.

UNC Charlotte also utilized Hanover Research for an analysis of student and employer demand. Hanover found that overall growth in student demand for healthcare management programs has grown substantially in recent years and outpaced the capacity of undergraduate programs in health sciences and nutrition. Completions in healthcare management between 2009 and 2013 grew 21.1% nationally, 13.9% regionally, and 8.5% in North Carolina.

- 4. Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** A primary impetus of this program proposal is to serve a cadre of existing students who desire to declare a major in health and human services and complete their degree at UNC Charlotte but are faced with program size limitations.
- 5. Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** Hanover Research found that managers in medical and health services settings are projected to be among the fastest growing occupations in coming years. Employment projections from the Bureau of Labor Statistics and NC Department of Commerce predict above-average ten-year employment growth for Medical and Health Services Managers, at 23.2% national and 12.5% state-level projected growth.

UNC Charlotte also sought information about student outcomes from existing UNC programs. According to the website for Appalachian State University's Healthcare Management program, typical starting salaries for entry-level positions obtained by their graduates are \$30,000-\$45,000 and may include duties and position titles such as human resources management, information systems analyst, marketing, public and/or consumer relations, billing and reimbursement analyst, or supervision in patient care areas. Additionally, ASU and ECU report that many baccalaureate graduates in healthcare management go on to pursue graduate education in areas such as occupational or physical therapy, MBA, MPH, MHA, health informatics, and other related areas.

- 6. Faculty Quality and Number.** Seven existing faculty in the Department of Public Health Sciences will be directly involved in the program launch. By Year 4, UNC Charlotte plans to add three tenure-track faculty and two lecturers to accommodate the projected student demand.

7. **Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** Library, facilities, and information technology resources are adequate to launch the program.
8. **Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** The proposed program will draw significantly upon the existing capacity and expertise of CHHS, which currently offers professionally accredited baccalaureate programs in athletic training, exercise science, nursing, public health, and social work.
9. **Impact on Access and Affordability.** By offering the proposed degree program, more students will be able to stay at UNC Charlotte and complete a valuable health-related baccalaureate degree, saving them the time and expense of transfer.
10. **Expected Quality.** All existing degree offerings in CHHS have achieved professional accreditation.
11. **Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** The proposed program will serve an on-campus baccalaureate student population at UNC Charlotte.
12. **Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. The proposal was reviewed by the UNC Charlotte CHHS new degree planning committee, Dean's office, CHHS Faculty Curriculum Committee, and the full CHHS faculty prior to its forward to the UNC Charlotte Undergraduate Course and Curriculum Committee and the UNC Charlotte Faculty Council. No opposition was raised throughout the campus review process, and minor suggestions were incorporated into the proposal at various stages of review.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. Throughout the review process, UNC Charlotte responded to questions from UNC General Administration regarding student demand, professional accreditation, post-graduate outcomes, curriculum requirement, faculty capacity, and budget. Reviewers from five UNC system institutions evaluated the proposal, and all reviews were "acceptable" or "acceptable with some considerations" in every category. UNC Charlotte responded to their questions on enrollment growth and planning, program requirements and curriculum, and program accreditation. UNC Charlotte reiterated that the program is intended to contribute to student retention and degree completion. Some reviewers sought additional information on the elective courses and pathways available to students. UNC Charlotte discussed their intentional decision to not require one or more specific minors within this degree program but rather to rely on careful advising to support a wide range of student career goals. Finally, since other UNC programs are accredited by the Association of University Programs in Health Administration (AUPHA), several reviewers questioned UNC Charlotte's stated decision to not seek AUPHA accreditation at this time. UNC Charlotte responded that neither employment opportunities nor admission to graduate programs are limited to graduates of AUPHA-certified programs at this time. The potential to consider AUPHA certification certainly exists for the future, but it is neither the primary motivation nor the near-term focus of the new degree program initiative.

Benefits of program approval include improved capacity of UNC Charlotte to serve an existing pool of students with a value-added degree in their field of interest and with opportunity for employment or graduate study. For these reasons, we do not recommend any alternatives to implementing the degree program.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve UNC-Charlotte's request to establish a Bachelor of Science (B.S.) in Health Systems Management degree program (CIP 51.0701) to enroll students starting Fall 2017.

**Request for Authorization to Establish a
Master of Science in Data Science
(M.S., CIP 11.0802) at
University of North Carolina at Wilmington**

I. Program Highlights

- Designed to prepare students with advanced data analytics skills in demand across industry sectors through a combined focus on computer science, applied statistics, and applied business analytics
- Required courses in scientific visualization, pattern recognition, statistical foundations and time series, categorical data analysis, machine learning, and computational methods for large datasets.
- Capstone projects and internships required.
- Designed to meet Professional Science Master's (PSM) affiliation criteria.
- 36 credit hours
- 30 full-time students projected at steady state
- Resources needed to launch the program include three Data Science cluster faculty hires, through internal reallocations, and adjunct faculty needs and graduate stipends through enrollment growth funds. Differential tuition of \$2500 per FTE per year will be requested upon program approval. Differential tuition will support specialized computational needs for infrastructure and data analysis services, as well as some advertising and communication costs.

II. BOG Academic Program Planning Criteria (UNC Policy 400.1)

1. **Existing Programs (Number, Location, Mode of Delivery).** Appalachian State University, North Carolina State University, and UNC Charlotte offer related master's degree programs in the area of data analytics and/or business analytics. All are approved for on-campus delivery. The programs at NC State and UNC Charlotte are also designated as Professional Science Master's affiliates.
2. **Relation to Campus Distinctiveness and Mission.** The program is designed to align with UNCW's mission stating, "Our commitment to student engagement, creative inquiry, critical thinking, thoughtful expression and responsible citizenship is expressed in our baccalaureate and master's programs..." The proposed program closely aligns with UNCW's Strategic Plan 2016-2021 Goals 2 and 3, to advance research and to prepare students for post-graduation success.
3. **Demand (Local, regional, state).** UNCW maintains healthy enrollments in its existing master's degree programs in computer science and in mathematics, as well as in a related Applied Statistics certificate offering. UNCW undergraduate students are expected to be strong feeders into the proposed program; in spring 2015, over 50 UNCW undergraduates attended an interest session for NC State's master's in analytics, and during the proposal process, UNCW began assembling and maintaining an interest list. Related programs offered by NC State and by UNC Charlotte show strong applicant pools with acceptance rates ranging from only 10-20%.

- 4. Potential for Unnecessary Duplication.** NC State University and UNC Charlotte provided letters of support for the proposed program, confirming that the industry demand for graduates with analytic skills outpaces the capacity of the university system.
- 5. Employment Opportunities for Graduates.** A 2011 McKinsey report estimates that the nation will face a severe shortage of professionals, estimated 140,000-190,000 individuals, with deep analytical skills. They also estimate another 1.5 million managers and analysts to be required with the know-how to use the analysis from data scientists in order to make effective decisions. Analyses from Indeed.com show a more than 500% increase in job postings related to analytics and data science from 2009-2014. Existing degree programs in UNC also report nearly 100% graduate placement rates and, in the case of NC State, average starting salaries for program graduates approach \$100,000. The proposal included support letters from SAS, ATMC, PPD, Trillium Health Resources, Live Oak Bank, and General Electric. Several of these industry representatives agreed to serve as advisory board members (a requirement for Professional Science Master's programs) and/or to provide internship and student learning experiences.
- 6. Faculty Quality and Number.** Sixteen faculty across information technology, electrical engineering, computer science, and statistics will be directly involved in launching the program. Among them, one has direct experience in developing a professional science master's in data management and analytics at a previous institution.
- 7. Availability of Campus Resources (library, space, etc.).** Library and facilities resources are adequate to launch the program. The program will require additional hardware and software, to be covered through differential tuition.
- 8. Relevant Lower-level and Cognate Programs.** The proposed program will draw upon expertise in UNCW's existing master's in computer science and information systems, also an affiliated PSM program, and the master's in mathematics. Both programs currently exhibit strong enrollments of 30-35 students a year.
- 9. Impact on Access and Affordability.** The differential tuition amount requested is similar to that charged by UNCW's MBA and MS in Accountancy programs and is competitive when compared to UNC Charlotte and NC State tuition differentials.
- 10. Expected Quality.** As evidenced by support letters, the proposed program will enjoy strong industry support and engagement. Also stated earlier, the proposed program will build upon related disciplines at UNCW with successful master's degree programs in computer science and mathematics. These departments have already demonstrated success in placing students in employment positions such as biostatisticians, SAS programmers, data analysts, database managers, and others.
- 11. Feasibility of Collaborative Program.** The proposed program represents significant collaboration between two departments at UNCW – computer science, and mathematics and statistics.
- 12. Other Considerations.** None.

III. Summary of Review Processes

Campus Review Process and Feedback. The proposal was reviewed and approved by a program committee composed of chairs of related departments before going to the UNCW Graduate Council, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Dean of the Graduate School, Provost, and Chancellor for review and approval. More than twenty faculty across campuses were consulted throughout the process. No substantive issues were raised during the review process, and edits regarding the curriculum plan were incorporated along the way.

UNC General Administration Review Process and Feedback. Throughout the review process, UNC Wilmington responded to questions from UNC General Administration regarding the professional science master's focus and commitments, student demand, program classification, budget and resources. Reviewers from six UNC system institutions evaluated the proposal. Reviewers affirmed the strong demand and need for graduates with advanced analytic skills and applauded the collaboration among disciplines. While most reviewers in most categories found the proposal to be "acceptable" or "acceptable with some considerations," reviewers supported those ratings with several substantive comments across various aspects of the program proposal. UNC Wilmington responded to questions related to the relationship with the business school, regional and local demand for graduates, student demand, collaborative opportunities, program requirements and curriculum, faculty sufficiency, and budget.

UNCW responded to questions about the program's approach to including business skills by highlighting a quote from a SAS support letter, which stated:

"Programs that are run independently, such as that of NCSU, often do an excellent job training their students in statistical methods and basic business concepts. Programs such as those of UNC Charlotte and Appalachian State reflect that they are run through business schools and do an excellent job of teaching business skills and basic data analysis. What is unique about the proposed UNC Wilmington program is that it is a collaboration between the departments of mathematics, statistics, computer science, and the business community, resulting in an emphasis on teaching not only traditional data analysis methods but also more current machine learning methods and programming skills. This is exactly the mix of skills that my consulting art at SAS Institute needs and, I believe, that the larger community of data science needs."

UNCW strengthened its student demand and employer demand evidence with support letters from local and regional businesses who support the proposed program. They also noted a recent regional survey conducted through several other universities (Campbell, UNC Pembroke, and others) that has yielded additional evidence of student interest in the proposed program. They clarified their decision-making related to select core course and elective courses and expanded the information provided on faculty scholarship and external funding. Some reviewers questioned the small number of planned student assistantships. UNCW responded that they anticipate the professional science master's designation will attract students willing to pay because of the demand for skills and corresponding salary upon completion of the program.

Benefits of program approval include an affordable, industry-informed degree offering that meets a critical gap for advanced skills as seen at national, regional and local levels. For these reasons, we do not recommend any alternatives to implementing the degree program.

IV. Recommendation

It is recommended that the Board of Governors approve UNC Wilmington's request to establish a Master of Science (M.S.) in Data Science degree program (CIP 11.0802) to enroll students starting Fall 2017.