MEMORANDUM

TO: Jennifer Preece
    Dean, College of Information Studies

FROM: Elizabeth Beise
        Associate Provost for Academic Planning and Programs

SUBJECT: Proposal to Modify the Curriculum of the Master of Information Management
         (PCC log no. 11068)

At its meeting on October 5, 2012, the Senate Committee on Programs, Curricula and Courses approved your proposal to modify the curriculum of the Master of Information Management. A copy of the approved proposal is attached.

The change is effective Spring 2013. Please ensure that the change is fully described in the Graduate Catalog and in all relevant descriptive materials, and that all advisors are informed.

MDC/
Enclosure

cc: William Idsardi, Chair, Senate PCC Committee
    Sarah Bauder, Office of Student Financial Aid
    Reka Montfort, University Senate
    Erin Howard, Division of Information Technology
    Donna Williams, Institutional Research, Planning & Assessment
    Anne Turkos, University Archives
    Linda Yokoi, Office of the Registrar
    Mark Shayman, Graduate School
    Ann Weeks, College of Information Studies
College/School:
Please also add College/School Unit Code-First 8 digits: 01203500
Unit Codes can be found at: https://hypprod.umd.edu/Html_Reports/units.htm

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

Type of Action (choose one):

☐ Curriculum change (including informal specializations)  ☐ New academic degree/award program
☐ Renaming of program or formal Area of Concentration  ☐ New Professional Studies award iteration
☐ Addition/deletion of formal Area of Concentration  ☐ New Minor
☐ Suspend/delete program  ☐ Other

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

Summary of Proposed Action:
The College of Information Studies (INFO) proposes to allow students in the Master of Information Management (MIM) degree program to choose to complete a Master's Thesis. The Master's thesis will not be required; however, all students choosing to take the thesis option must meet all University and Graduate School requirements, in addition to those established by the College.
Proposed Addition of the Thesis Option to the 
Master of Information Management (MIM) Degree 
College of Information Studies (INFO)

The College of Information Studies, Maryland’s iSchool, proposes to add the Master’s Thesis option to its Management of Information Management (MIM) degree program. The MIM Master’s degree program was approved in 2002 and enrolled its first students in Fall 2003. This innovative program was originally designed primarily to address the growing need for professionals with the know-how to strategically manage information and technology in public and private-sector organizations. The MIM degree is targeted at individuals who have some previous work experience. Most students choose to pursue a concentration in either Strategic Management of Information (SIM) or Socio-Tech Information Systems (SIS). In addition to the two concentrations, students may choose to design an individual program plan to address their individual career plans.

Although initially designed as a professional degree, in recent years increasing numbers of students have expressed an interest in engaging in research projects with faculty members and ultimately pursuing a Ph.D. in Information Studies. To support the interests of these students, the College proposes to offer the Master’s Thesis option for students in the MIM program. The thesis option is available, but not required, in the other two Master’s degree programs offered by the College, the Master of Library Science (MLS) and the Master of Human-Computer Interaction (HCIM). The requirements for the thesis option in the MIM degree program will parallel those defined in the MLS and HCIM programs and would be in compliance with all requirements established by the Graduate School. Although the thesis option will be available, it will not be required for any student in the MIM program.

Proposed Requirements

A student may choose to earn the MIM under the thesis option by completing 30 credits of course work and 6 credits of INFM 799 Master’s Thesis Research or, with the advisor’s approval, 3 credits of INFM 799 Master’s Thesis Research and 3 credits of Master’s Thesis Research in another department of the University.

The Master’s Thesis option will allow students to develop and complete a substantial research project with the oversight of a faculty member. It would be particularly well suited for students who anticipated pursuing a Ph.D. degree or a professional position in which they would be expected to conduct or evaluate research. Although several alternative research opportunities exist within the College of Information Studies, including independent study (INFM 719), research conducted as part of courses, and research projects being conducted at centers and labs affiliated with the College, the Master’s Thesis would be larger in scope and would require substantial independent initiative and work. Students who choose to complete a Master’s Thesis will be able to develop a novel research question; apply an appropriate methodology to answer
the question; and present the findings to an academic audience through published papers and oral presentations.

**Thesis Process**

A thesis is a major undertaking that involves a significant commitment by the student and the faculty members that support the student. In order to successfully meet all the requirements, the student must work closely with his or her advisor and Thesis Committee Chair to design an appropriate research plan and course schedule. Students in the MIM program who choose to elect the thesis option must identify a Thesis Committee Chair and inform the Student Services Office (SSO) in writing before registering for Master’s Thesis Research (INFM 799 or equivalent). Students considering a thesis option should begin the process of identifying a suitable Thesis Committee Chair in their first semester.

Students who elect the thesis option may choose to return to the coursework-only option by informing the Student Services Office in writing. If such an election is made, credits earned for INFM 799 or any similar course in another department will not be included in the computation of courses required for graduation.

**Course Requirements**

- 30 credits of coursework, not including thesis research, including
  - Core and required MIM courses (INFM 600, 603, 605, 612, and 736) unless a waiver petition based on equivalent prior experience has been approved.
  - INST701 *Introduction to Research Methods*, or another appropriate research methods course in any department that is approved by their Thesis Chair.
  - At most 3 credits of INFM 719 or an equivalent independent study course in another department, which may be used for preparation of the thesis proposal.

- A total of 6 credits of Master’s Thesis Research, of which at least 3 credits must be INFM 799, and 3 credits may be a Master’s Thesis Research course in any department approved by the Thesis Committee Chair. These 6 credits may be completed in a single semester or spread over two semesters.

- Students must have a GPA of at least 3.5 in the MIM program at the point of registration for Master’s Thesis Research (INFM 799).

In addition to all requirements established by the College, students choosing the thesis option will be expected to be in compliance with all conditions established by the Graduate School. An excerpt from the Graduate School Catalog, as well as information about the College’s requirements for the thesis option for MIM students, will be added to the iSchool website and iSchool Master’s Student Handbook. Information from the Graduate School catalog that will be included may be found as Appendix A.
Sample Course Plan

Below is a sample course plan for students in the MIM program, who might select the thesis option.

Fall Semester I
INFM 600 Information Environments 3 credits
INFM 603 Information Technology and Organizational Context (unless waived) 3 credits
INFM 605 Users and Use Context 3 credits

Spring Semester I
INST 701 Introduction to Research Methods 3 credits
Elective related to proposed thesis topic 3 credits
INFM 719 Independent Study (proposal preparation) (or elective) 3 credits

Fall Semester II:
INFM 799 Master’s Thesis Research 3 credits
INFM 612 Management of Information Programs and Services 3 credits
Advanced Technology Course 3 credits

Spring Semester II:
INFM 799 Master’s Thesis Research 3 credits
INFM 736 Team Experience (unless waived) 3 credits
Elective 3 credits

Timeframe for Implementation

After receiving University approval, information about the thesis option will be communicated to students through the MIM-Talk listserv, which is available to all students in the program; added to the iSchool web page; and included in the iSchool Student Handbook. Information about the thesis option and its requirements will be presented to potential students at Information Sessions describing the Program, and for newly enrolled students at the New Student Orientation, which is scheduled just before the beginning of the fall semester. Students will be allowed to select the option as soon as approval is granted from the University.

Impact on Other University Departments

The addition of this option does not affect any other department in the University or any articulation agreements.
Appendix A

The following requirements, which are excerpted from the Graduate Catalog (http://www.gradschool.umd.edu/catalog/masters_degree_policies.htm), will be included in all information about the thesis option in materials prepared for students in the Master of Information Management (MIM) degree program.

Approved Program

The entire course of study undertaken for any master's degree must constitute a unified, coherent program that is approved by the student's advisor and Graduate Director and meets Graduate School requirements.

Credit Hours

A minimum of thirty semester hours in courses acceptable for credit towards a graduate degree is required (some degree programs require more than 30 credits). For a master's degree with the thesis option, six of the 30 semester hours must be thesis research credits (799). For the master's degree with the non-thesis option, a minimum of 18 credit hours in courses numbered 600 and above is required, as well as one or more scholarly papers, some portion of which must be written. In many cases, successful completion of comprehensive examinations is required by the program.

Coursework Level

The graduate program must include at least 12 hours of course work at the 600 level or higher; no fewer than 12 hours of course work credit must be earned in the major subject approved by the graduate program in which the student is enrolled.

Prerequisites and Inclusion of Credit

If the student is inadequately prepared for the required graduate courses, additional courses may be deemed necessary; such courses will not be considered part of the student's approved program of study.

Single Credit Application

Credits to be applied to a student's program for a master's degree cannot have been used to satisfy any other previously earned degrees (see policies governing the applicability of previously taken courses to University of Maryland degrees).

Thesis Requirement

A thesis must be submitted for the Master of Arts or Master of Science degrees except for those programs for which a non-thesis option has been approved by the Graduate Council. Approval of the thesis is the responsibility of an Examining Committee appointed by the Dean of the
Graduate School on the recommendation of the student's advisor. The advisor is normally the chairperson of the committee, and the remaining members of the committee are members of the graduate faculty who are familiar with the student's program of study. The chairperson and the candidate are informed of the membership of the Examining Committee by the Graduate School staff on behalf of the Dean of the Graduate School.

The Master's Thesis Examination

A final oral examination of the thesis will be held when the student has completed the thesis to the satisfaction of the student's advisor, all other requirements for the degree have been completed, and a 3.0 grade point average (computed in accordance with the regulations described under "Grades for Graduate students") has been earned.

Establishment of the Thesis Examining Committee. The Thesis Examining Committee is appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, in accordance with the policies listed below:

- **Eligibility.** A student is eligible to be examined on a thesis if the student: (a) has met all program requirements for a thesis examination, (b) is in good standing as a graduate student at the University, (c) is registered for at least one credit, (d) has a valid Graduate School-approved Thesis Examining Committee, (e) has at least a 3.0 grade point average, and (f) if this is the second examination, the examination has been approved by the Graduate School.

- **Thesis Examining Committee Membership.** The Committee will include a minimum of three members of the Graduate Faculty, at least two of whom will be Full Members. The Chair of the Committee normally will be the student's advisor, who will be a Full or Adjunct Member of the Graduate Faculty, or who has been granted an exception to the policy by the Dean of the Graduate School.

- **Membership on a Thesis Examining Committee.** requires nomination by the student's advisor and Graduate Director in the student's graduate program, and approval by the Dean of the Graduate School. The nomination of a Thesis Examining Committee should be provided to the Graduate School at least six weeks before the date of the expected thesis examination. The thesis examination cannot be held until the Graduate School approves the composition of the Thesis Examining Committee. Furthermore, if the Graduate Faculty status of any member of an approved Thesis Examining Committee changes, the approval of the Thesis Examining Committee may be voided, and a new Committee nomination form will be required for approval by the Graduate School.

- **Chair.** The Thesis Examining Committee will have as chair the student's advisor, who must be a Full or Adjunct Member of the Graduate Faculty or, by special permission, has been otherwise appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School. Thesis Examining Committees may have co-chairs upon the written recommendation of the Graduate Director and with the approval of the Dean of the Graduate School.
Procedures for the Oral Examination:

- **Oral Examination Requirement.** Each master's thesis student must defend orally his or her master's thesis as a requirement in partial fulfillment of the master's degree (an additional comprehensive written examination may be required at the option of the program.)

- **Committee Preparation.** The members of the Thesis Examining Committee must receive the thesis at least seven working days before the scheduled examination. Should the Thesis Examining Committee deem it reasonable and appropriate, it may require submission of the thesis more than seven working days in advance of the examination.

- **Attendance at the Examination.** Oral examinations must be attended by all members of the student's officially established Thesis Examining Committee as approved by the Dean of the Graduate School. All examinations must be open to members of University of Maryland Graduate Faculty. Programs may wish routinely to open thesis examinations to a broader audience. In such cases, program policies must be established, recorded, and made available to all master's students. Should a last-minute change in the constitution of the Thesis Examining Committee be required, the change must be approved by the Dean of the Graduate School in consultation with the program's Graduate Director and the chair of the student's Thesis Examining Committee.

- **Remote Participation in Examinations.** The Graduate School policy is that all members of the Thesis Examining Committee must be physically present in the examination room during the entire defense and during the committee's private deliberations following the examination. Participation by telephone is not permitted under any circumstances. While re-affirming this policy, the Graduate Council approved a policy to permit remote participation by video teleconferencing under the following circumstances:
  
  - Permission to conduct a remote-participation defense must be obtained by the thesis chair from the Graduate School in advance. In making this request, the chair must indicate in writing that he or she has read the rules for a remote defense listed below.
  - A competent video technician must be present at both the University site and the remote location for the entire duration of the defense in the event that technical difficulties arise.
  - Only one remote site may be used during the defense.
  - The candidate and the committee chair must both be present in the examination room. Neither may be at the remote site.
  - The department/program must pay for all of the costs of the video teleconferencing arrangements.

- **Location of the Examination.** Oral examinations of theses must be held in University facilities that are readily accessible to all members of the Thesis Examining Committee and others attending the examination. The chair of the Thesis Examining Committee selects the time and place for the examination and notifies the other members of the
committee and the candidate.

- **Emergency Substitutions**. The Graduate School is aware that last-minute emergencies can prevent a committee member from attending a scheduled thesis examination. We are prepared to work with the thesis supervisor and/or Graduate Director to make last-minute substitutions in committee membership to allow the defense to take place as scheduled. Please follow these steps to assure a smooth substitution:
  
  o The request must be sent in writing. Fax or e-mail requests are acceptable. A telephone call to the Dean of the Graduate School to alert the Dean that the emergency request is coming will facilitate the process.
  
  o The proposed substitute must be a member of the Graduate Faculty consistent with the rules for committee membership. Thus, if a Full Member could not attend, the substitution of an Adjunct or Special Member of the Graduate Faculty would not be acceptable.
  
  o Once the written request has been received, the substitution will be made, usually within the hour, provided that the revised committee meets the requirements for committee membership.
  
  o When the substitution has been made, a written confirmation, in the same format as the request was received (fax or e-mail), will be sent out, along with a telephone confirmation. The substitution is not official, however, until the written confirmation has been received in the department or program.
  
  o A defense that is held with one or more substitute members on the committee, but without prior written confirmation from the Graduate School that the substitution(s) have been approved, will be voided and the defense will have to be repeated.
  
  o A copy of the written request and the written confirmation will be placed in the student's file for future reference.

- **Invalidation of the Examination**. The Dean may void any examination not carried out in accordance with the procedures and policies of the Graduate School. In addition, upon the recommendation of the Thesis Examining Committee or any member thereof, the Dean of the Graduate School may rule an oral examination to be null and void.

- **Conclusion of the Examination**. After the oral examination, the student and any others who are not members of the Thesis Examining Committee will be asked to leave the room and the Thesis Examining Committee will discuss whether or not the thesis (including its examination) has been satisfactory.

- **The Committee has the following options**:
  
  o To accept the thesis without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
To accept the thesis with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the Report of Examining Committee. The chair will check the thesis and, upon his or her approval, sign the Report of Examining Committee.

To recommend revisions to the thesis and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised thesis for the Thesis Examining Committee's approval. The Thesis Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee when they approve the revised thesis.

To recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Thesis Examining Committee to review the thesis and complete the student's examination.

To rule the thesis (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails.

Following the examination, the chair must inform the student of the outcome of the examination. The chair signs the Report of the Examining Committee indicating which of the above alternatives has been adopted. A copy of this statement is to be included in the student's file at the graduate program office, and a copy is given to the student.

- **Passage or Failure.** The student passes if all members of the Thesis Examining Committee accept the thesis (including its examination) as satisfactory. One or more negative votes constitute a failure of the candidate to meet the thesis requirement. In cases of failure, the Thesis Examining Committee must specify in detail and in writing the nature of the deficiencies in the thesis and/or the oral performance that led to failure. This statement is to be submitted to the program's Graduate Director, the Dean of the Graduate School, and the student. A second examination may be permitted if the student will be in good standing at the time of the proposed second examination. A second examination requires the approval of the program's Graduate Director and the Dean of the Graduate School. If the student fails this second examination, or if a second examination is not permitted, the student's admission to the graduate program is terminated.

- **The Decision to Accept the Examination as Satisfactory Must Be Unanimous.** Students may present themselves for examination only twice. The report of the committee, signed by each member, must be submitted to the Dean of the Graduate School no later than the appropriate date listed in the Schedule of Classes if the student is to receive a diploma at the Commencement ceremony for the semester in which the examination is held.

**Submission and Publication of the Thesis**

Theses are to be submitted to the Graduate School in electronic format after final approval of the document by the Thesis Examining Committee. See the University of Maryland Thesis and Dissertation Style Guide (http://www.gradschol.umd.edu/current_students/ctd_style_guide.html) for the details of this process.

Theses submitted to the University through the ETD process will also be deposited in the UM
Library's online electronic archive, DRUM (Digital Repository at the University of Maryland, available at http://dram.lib.umd.edu). This is a free public archive of academic work by University faculty and graduate students. The submission of the thesis to the University in fulfillment of degree requirements grants the University the one-time, non-exclusive right to publish the document on DRUM.
Selecting a Thesis Committee

Before beginning the thesis, the student must select a Thesis Committee Chair who is interested in working with the student and who meets the criteria specified in the Graduate School Policies. Students should carefully choose their Committee Chair, selecting someone who is willing to work with them and who ideally has expertise in the area the student wishes to study. The Chair works closely with the student on the design, implementation, and data analysis, and the writing of the thesis. The Chair need not be the student’s current academic advisor; however, upon submission of the Thesis Committee nomination form, the Chair becomes the student’s advisor. It is technically possible to have a co-Chair, but unless there is a compelling reason it is discouraged because of the added complexity for the student and faculty members. Students may want to talk with several faculty members about potential thesis topics at the early stages to get new ideas, refine existing ideas, and consider who may be the most effective Chair for them.

The student and the Chair will work to identify and refine the problem to be studied and how the study will be conducted. As a thesis is a research study, the problem selected and methods chosen should reflect a rigorous approach to a valid research problem in the area of Library and Information Studies. Any method or combination of methods appropriate to research in the field—quantitative, qualitative, analytical, historical, evaluation—may be used.

Early in the process, the student and Chair assemble the Thesis Committee. In addition to the Chair, the Thesis Committee must include at least two other members who meet the criteria specified in the Graduate School Policies. Three Committee members are typically recommended. The Thesis Committee nomination form should be submitted as soon as the Committee has been determined, but it has to be submitted no later than the dates published by the Graduate School. Committee members are responsible for approving a proposal and evaluating the Thesis itself (see below for a discussion of each of these).

Proposal & IRB Approval

Under the direction of the Chair, the student must develop a proposal that describes the work to be accomplished as part of the thesis. The Thesis Committee must approve the proposal before the student can register for LBSC 799 Master’s Thesis Research. The proposal can be helpful in determining the specific research questions, methods, timelines, and scope of the project, as well as providing an opportunity for Committee members to provide early input into the thesis.

Before research on the thesis can begin, any relevant Research Assurances, including the use of human subjects in the research, must be submitted to and approved by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) following their established procedures. This process can take many weeks or even months, depending upon the nature of the research, so students are encouraged to submit their IRB applications as early as possible.

Coursework
The Master’s Thesis option requires a commitment of 9 credit hours spread over at least 2 semesters. The first 3 of these 9 hours must be completed before beginning the thesis: the 3-credit hour LBSC 701 Research Methods in Library and Information Studies, or, with the advisor’s approval, another appropriate research methods course that may be offered by another department on campus (e.g., Education, Psychology). The student may consult the Thesis Chair for recommendations about which methods courses are appropriate. After completion of the methods course and approval of the Thesis Proposal by the Thesis Committee, the student must take 6 credits of LBSC 799 Masters Thesis Research, which may be completed in one semester or spread over multiple semesters. Students are not able to register for LBSC 799 over the summer semester.

Students must have a grade point average in the MLS program of 3.5 at the point of registration for LBSC 799. They also may not have more than 3 credits of Independent Study (LBSC 709).

**Thesis Defense**

After completing the research, the student will draft a thesis document and share it with the Chair. Once the Chair has reviewed the document and any necessary revisions have been made, the student will schedule an oral defense. This will be scheduled so that all Committee members can attend (see Graduate School Policies for details on emergency cancellations, remote attendance, and related issues). The oral defense typically occurs within the College of Information Studies. Thesis defenses are open to the entire University community and are announced, including student and Committee member names, time, location, title and abstract, to the University via the College’s electronic lists.

Prior to the defense, the Chair of the Committee will secure the Report of the Thesis Examining Committee created by the Graduate School. This document is used to record the outcome of the defense after its completion.

During the oral exam, the student presents the research questions, methods, and findings to attendees. He or she also typically fields questions from attendees and Committee members. After the oral examination is complete, the Thesis Committee meets together without the student and decides on the outcome. Once decided upon, they share the outcome with the student, and when appropriate those still in attendance.

The Committee has a number of options in determining the outcome of the thesis and defense. These options are laid out in the Graduate School Policies and read as follows:

1. To accept the thesis without any recommended changes and sign the Report of Examining Committee.
2. To accept the thesis with recommendations for changes and, except for the chair, sign the Report of Examining Committee. The chair will check the thesis and, upon his or her approval, sign the Report of Examining Committee.
3. To recommend revisions to the thesis and not sign the Report of Examining Committee until the student has made the changes and submitted the revised thesis for the Thesis
Examining Committee's approval. The Thesis Examining Committee members sign the Report of Examining Committee when they approve the revised thesis.

4. To recommend revisions and convene a second meeting of the Thesis Examining Committee to review the thesis and complete the student's examination.

5. To rule the thesis (including its examination) unsatisfactory. In that circumstance, the student fails.

To pass, a student must receive passing votes from all Committee members. One vote of failure means that the student does not pass. The Committee may call a second examination as a result of a failed defense. If the student fails the second defense, or if no second defense is called, the student loses standing as a graduate student at the University of Maryland (see Graduate School Policies for details).

**Publishing and Final Submission**

Following the completion of the Report of the Thesis Examining Committee, the student must submit that form and the *Thesis and Dissertation Electronic Publishing Form* signed by the student and the Chair to the Office of the Registrar (see Graduate School Policies for details).

To be successfully submitted, a thesis must conform to the electronic thesis guidelines and style guide. To facilitate the submission of the thesis, the student should consult these resources early in the process of writing the thesis and follow the requirements accordingly.

The thesis and accompanying forms must be submitted by the deadlines posted by the Graduate School.