



University System of Ohio
Board of Regents

John R. Kasich, Governor
Jim Petro, Chancellor

REQUEST AND RECOMMENDATION

**OHIO UNIVERSITY
Master of Science in Geography**

Request:

Ohio University requests approval for a new Master of Science in Geography degree.

Background:

Ohio University currently offers a Master of Arts (M.A.) in Geography, but is seeking approval to offer an additional degree, a Master of Science (M.S.) in Geography. Geography is a broad discipline, spanning both the social/human and physical sciences, and the proposed M.S. degree reflects the strength and breadth of the existing curriculum and the research specializations of the faculty in the physical geography area. The new degree will reflect existing faculty and student interests in areas such as meteorology/climatology, GIScience, and biogeography/geomorphology. It will enable students concentrating on the physical sciences to earn the degree that reflects their coursework and research experiences and will enhance their position in the job market. The proposed M.S. degree also provides better alignment with the undergraduate geography degrees at Ohio University, where six out of seven degree options culminate with the B.S. degree.

Curriculum and Enrollment:

The program will be at least 40 semester hours (65-75 quarter hours until calendar conversion is complete) in length and will include both a thesis and a non-thesis option. As compared with the M.A. degree, the M.S. degree will require students to take the majority of their coursework in physical geography or geospatial techniques, and all M.S. students will be advised by faculty members from the physical geography area. The proposed curriculum makes use of existing courses; therefore no new course development is required to offer the new degree. The Department of Geography anticipates that roughly half of the graduate students in the department will pursue the M.S. in Geography degree, resulting in about twelve master's students at any given time, or about six incoming students a year.

Faculty and Resources:

The Department of Geography has five full-time faculty members who will teach in the new M.S. in Geography degree program. Adequate facilities and staff are in place to support the proposed program, and no additional costs are involved for the new offering.


Recommendation:

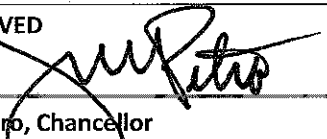
After reviewing the concerns of some RACGS members regarding the sufficiency of the faculty and potential issues related to the rigor of courses which both undergraduate and graduate students are enrolled, the Regents' Advisory Committee on Graduate Study voted to

recommend the program to the Chancellor for provisional approval. RACGS further recommends that the Chancellor require Ohio University to submit a progress report for the M.S. in Geography four years after the program begins to demonstrate the sufficiency of faculty for the number of M.S. students enrolled and the graduate rigor of the physical geography courses in which both graduate and undergraduate students are enrolled.

Provisional approval of graduate programs in public institutions is functionally the same as full approval—the program is viewed as approved by the Chancellor of the Board of Regents for accreditation and student recruiting purposes.

End of Comment Period: November 29, 2011
No Comments Received, Recommend Approval

RECOMMENDATION	
The Vice Chancellor of Academic Affairs has verified that this institution has met the standards and requirements of the Ohio Board of Regents.	
 (Shane DeBorja, Director of Program Approval)	12/2/11
Stephanie Davidson, Vice Chancellor	Date

APPROVED	
	12-21-11
Jim Petro, Chancellor	Date

MLC